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THE STORY

OF THE

SCOTTISH CHURCH.

FROM THE

REFORMATION TO THE DISRUPTION.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

It may be proper to premise that the substance of the present volume was originally delivered, for the most part, in the form of popular lectures, and designed for the use of the younger members of the Church, with the view of inducing them to take a deeper interest in the Church of their fathers. This circumstance accounts for the popular and almost conversational tone thus imparted to the narrative. The object of the volume is chiefly to exhibit the more prominent features of our Church history; and it will be found to consist, in a great measure, of a series of illustrations characteristic of the several periods to which they relate, many of them of a highly dramatic kind.

The author candidly avows himself a Presbyterian of the old school; and he has been at no pains to conceal his sentiments. In support of the main facts of the history, which have been amply authenticated in larger works, accessible to all, he considers it superfluous to adduce authorities. But he has advanced no statement, the truth of which he did not endeavour to ascertain by personal investigation; and, in disputed cases, the authorities to which he refers will speak for themselves. The leading facts of our ecclesiastical history, so far as is requisite to form a candid and enlightened judgment on them, are placed beyond all dispute, having been admitted by respectable historians of all creeds and principles. The discrepancies which may appear in their

accounts consist chiefly in the opposite interpretations which they put on the same facts, and the different conclusions which they draw from the same events—interpretations and conclusions which will vary according to the author's sentiments and prepossessions, and vary with regard to the facts and events of the present day as well as those of the past. Convinced that no writer of Church history who has any principles to which he attaches importance can describe the scenes and characters with which these principles are identified, without imparting to the description more or less of the colour of his own mind, the author does not attach much value to the high professions of impartiality with which some historians have ushered their productions into the world. The topics included in this extensive survey are so various, and, as they approach modern times, touch upon so many points which may be held disputable, that the author can hardly expect to escape from some censure; but while he has aimed to authenticate his statement of facts by appealing to the best sources of information, he is not conscious of having justly incurred the charge of misrepresentation, or of having been misguided in his personal reflections by prejudice or by partisanship.

The first portion of the present Work was published in the year 1846, under the title of "Sketches of Scottish Church History," embracing the period from the Reformation to that of the Revolution. It then appeared in two small volumes. This portion has now been revised throughout, and whatever was only of passing interest, in the Appendices or elsewhere, has been removed. But the body of the narrative has been almost entirely retained. The continuation of "The Story"—from the Revolution to the Disruption, is recently written, and is now published for the first time. Thus, in its present form, the whole book comprises, within reasonable compass, a connected "Story of the Scottish

Church," from its earliest development at the Reformation, with the varying fortunes of its progress, its revivals, its sufferings, and its declensions—down to the aspect which it bears at the present day.

No Church in Christendom, it is believed, affords so many incidents of stirring interest, or furnishes to readers of the present day so many lessons of paramount importance.

Several years ago, the proposal to complete my "Sketches of Scottish Church History," by bringing down the narrative to the present day, was suggested to me by a highly respected member of the firm of Blackie and Son; but, owing to various other avocations, the design, though partially prepared for, was never till now carried into effect. The continuation is now completed, and the whole appears as a continuous story, down to the period which, it is believed, marks an historical epoch, sufficient to guide the student of history in forming his judgment with regard to present events in the light of a connected and comprehensive review of the past. Seldom, if ever, has the sacred emblem of the Church of Christ—the Burning Bush—so appropriately adopted by the Scottish Church after the Revolution in 1690, been more amply verified than in its whole history, according to its ancient motto,

NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR.

T. M'C.

EDINBURGH, *December*, 1874.

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THE

STORY OF THE SCOTTISH CHURCH.

PART I.

FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I. 1529—1540.

State of religion before the Reformation—Popery in Scotland—Origin of the Reformation—The early martyrs of the Reformation—Patrick Hamilton—Stratton—Kennedy and Russell—Woman at Perth—Persecuting character of Popery.

For several centuries before the Reformation, if we except the Waldenses, who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses of the Alps, the followers of Huss in Bohemia, and the Lollards of Kyle in Scotland, there was not a nation in Christendom that had not bowed the knee to the authority of the Roman church. The pope, affecting to be the vicar and representative of Jesus Christ, not in the lowliness of his character when on earth, in which he set an example to his followers, but in the splendour of his royal dignity in heaven, had risen to such a pitch of arrogance, as to assume the honours, not only of the head of the Church, but of supreme governor over all the kingdoms of the earth. Our Lord has said, "My kingdom is not of this world," teaching us that his church is distinct from, and independent of, worldly kingdoms, and claims no temporal dominion over men; but the Church of Rome, in direct contravention of this statute, and interpreting literally those passages of Scripture in which the glory of the church is portrayed under images drawn from earthly things, transformed herself into a worldly monarchy, and challenged, in civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs, the homage of the greatest princes of Europe. If at any time one of these monarchs ventured to disobey the mandates of the Italian priest who happened for the time being to be seated in the chair of St. Peter, he was immediately excommunicated, and

his kingdom laid under an interdict; the effects of which were, that his subjects were absolved from their allegiance, and his assassination was declared a meritorious service, entitling the murderer to heaven—all other princes were summoned to make war against him—the churches throughout the country were shut up—the sacraments were suspended—the dead were buried in the highways, and the muffled bells rang a funeral peal, as if some fearful curse hung over the devoted land. In such circumstances the stoutest potentate had been made to tremble, and submit to the most humiliating penance. Two of them—one, the King of England, another, the King of France—were compelled to hold the pope's stirrup while he mounted on horseback; a third was ordered to lie prostrate on the earth, while the haughty pontiff, placing his foot on his majesty's neck, exclaimed, "Thou shalt tread upon the serpent, and trample on the dragon and lion;" another was whipped by proxy, the cardinal of Lorraine having received the lashes in the name of his royal master, lying flat, as an old historian expresses it, "like a mackerel on a gridiron;" while another, Henry IV., emperor of Germany, having offended the pope, travelled to his residence to beg his forgiveness; and there did he stand at the gate, barefooted and bareheaded, for the space of three days, ere "his holiness" would admit him to his presence; and after all, the haughty pontiff deprived him of his crown, and transferred it to another.

The spiritual power claimed by the pope was, as it still is, not less extraordinary. Not content with assuming the prerogatives and even the titles of the Deity, the lordship of conscience, the gift of infallibility, and the power of absolving men from the consequences of sin in a future world, he went so far as to "exalt himself above the Most High." He presumed to consecrate vice, and dispense with the obligations of the divine law; he invented new sins, and created new worlds in which they might be punished. Indulgences were openly sold for money, by which the deluded people were taught to believe that their guilt would be forgiven, and the souls of their departed friends redeemed out of a place which they termed purgatory.[1]

[1] Bellarmine, the standard author of the papists, goes so far as to aver, that "if the pope should command vice, and prohibit virtue, the Church

Popery, however, with all its sanctified pretensions, was only a vast conspiracy against the civil and religious liberties of mankind, the ramifications of which extended over nearly the whole earth, and every member of which, from the pontiff down to the meanest monk, was sworn to advance the interests of the body. Swarms of priests and confessors infested every country—penetrating, like the plague-frogs of Egypt, into the recesses of every family, from the chamber of the king down to the hut of the cottager, and polluting everything they touched. This motley band, by means of auricular confession, made themselves masters of the secrets of every court, every household, and every bosom; a regular system of espionage was established, by which secret intelligence of every movement might be conveyed to head-quarters; and the complicated machinery, obeying the touch of some unseen hand, could be made to bear, with decided and irresistible effect, on the accomplishment of its designs.

Some may be surprised how such a system of organized oppression could have been tolerated so long without combined attempt to shake it off. But we shall cease to wonder when we consult the Scriptures, where we learn that the antichristian system is the masterpiece of satanic cunning, expressly devised for deluding mankind—"whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." We shall cease to wonder when we consider that Popery is the religion of the corrupt heart of man, admirably contrived to foster its pride, and feed its lusts and passions; offering pardons which may be procured for money, and presenting objects for worship which may be seen and handled; enlisting all the fine arts—architecture, music, painting, and statuary—into its service; appealing to every sense; enthralling the mind by the mystery and plausibility of its doctrines; fascinating the imagination by the gorgeousness of its ritual; and overwhelming reason itself by the magnitude of its pretensions. And we shall cease to wonder, when we think on the power which

would be bound to believe vice to be good, and virtue to be evil, unless she would sin against conscience." (See Bruce's *Free Thoughts on Popery*, p. 20.)

the popish clergy were able to wield in support of their system; that the slightest heretical whisper was sufficient to consign the suspected person to the dungeons of the Inquisition; and that, if he persisted in holding his opinions, he was doomed to expiate, in the flames of a cruel death, the crime of having dared to question the dogmas of the infallible Church. For, after all, the Church of Rome would have found it impossible to withstand the opposition which, from time to time, her arrogance provoked, had not "the kings of the earth," intoxicated with "the wine of her fornication"—in other words, seduced, corrupted, and enslaved by her idolatries—"given their power to the beast," by lending themselves to be the tools of her policy and the executioners of her vengeance.

The state of religion in Scotland, immediately before the Reformation, was deplorable in the extreme. Owing to the distance of this country from Rome, it was the more easy for the clergy to keep up on the minds of the people a superstitious veneration for the papal power; and our ancestors, who heard of the pope only in the lofty panegyrics of the monks, regarded him as a kind of demigod. Of Christianity, almost nothing remained but the name. Such of the doctrines of our holy religion as were retained in the profession of the church, were completely neutralized by heresies subversive of them, or buried under a mass of superstitious observances. An innumerable multitude of saints were substituted in the place of Him who is the "one mediator between God and man." The exactions made by the priests were most rapacious. The beds of the dying were besieged, and their last moments cruelly disturbed, with the view of obtaining legacies to their convents. Nor did the grave itself put a period to their demands; for no sooner had the poor farmer or mechanic breathed his last, than the priest came and carried off his corpse-present; and if he died rich, his relations were sure to be taxed for masses to relieve his soul from purgatory. In Scotland alone, the number of convents, monasteries, and nunneries amounted to upwards of a hundred and fifty.[1] These were inhabited by shoals of monks and friars; the monks being confined to their cloisters, and the friars permitted to wander about preaching and begging. The profli-

[1] *Appendix to Spot- ,oode's History.*

gacy of the priests and higher clergy was notorious. The ordinances of religion were debased, "divine service was neglected, and, except on festival days, the churches (about the demolition of which such an outcry has been made by some) were no longer employed for sacred purposes, but served as sanctuaries for malefactors, places of traffic, or resorts for pastime."[1] One anecdote will sometimes show the state of matters better than whole pages of description. It seems that a chief part of the priest's office in those days was *cursing*. A letter of cursing cost a *plack;* and nothing was more common with the country people, when any part of their property, even the most trifling article, was amissing, than to pay the priest for cursing the thief. The process is thus described in a friar's sermon, quoted by Knox: "The priest whose duty and office it is to pray for the people stands up on Sunday and cries, 'Ane has tint a spurtill;[2] thair is a flail stoun beyond the burne; the gudewife on the other side of the gait has tint a horne spune: God's malison and mine I give to them that knows of this geir and restores it not!'"[3]

Persecution and the suppression of free inquiry were the only weapons by which such a system of corruption and imposition could defend itself. Every avenue by which truth might enter was carefully guarded; the Scriptures were effectually kept from the view of the people by being locked up in a dead language; the most frightful pictures were drawn of those who had separated from the communion of Rome; and if any person hinted dissatisfaction with the conduct of churchmen, or proposed the correction of abuses, he was immediately marked as a heretic, and if he did not consult his safety by flight he was immured in a dungeon, or committed to the flames. Such were the power and the vigilance exercised by the clergy, that it was not safe to utter a word against them, even in one's sleep. It is recorded as a fact, that one man, a precentor or chanter as he was called, was actually apprehended, and had he not recanted, would have suffered death, merely because he was overheard saying in his sleep one night, "The deevil tak the priests, for they are a greedy pack!"[4]

[1] M'Crie's Life of Knox, i. 23.
[2] Lost a porridge-stick.
[3] *Knox's History, p. 14.*
[4] Ibid. p. 15.

As an illustration of the gross ignorance which then prevailed among the clergy, Buchanan informs us that in 1545, when severe laws were enacted against the reading of the New Testament, such was the blindness of the priests, that many of them, scandalized at the term *new*, maintained that it was a dangerous book lately written by Martin Luther, and cried out, "they would have no *new* testaments; give them the *old* one!"[1] When Thomas Forrest, usually called Dean Thomas, or the vicar of Dollar, was examined before the Bishop of Dunkeld on a charge of having ventured to preach from the gospel or epistle for the day, and "shown the mysteries of the Scripture to the people in their own language, so as to make the clergy detestable in their sight," the following conversation took place: "My joy, Dean Thomas," said the bishop, "I love you well, and therefore I must give you my counsel how you shall rule and guide yourself." "I thank your lordship heartily," replied the vicar. "My joy, Dean Thomas," continued the bishop, "I am informed that you preach the epistle or gospel every Sunday to the parishioners, and that you take not the cow nor the uppermost cloth from your parishioners; which thing is very prejudicial to the churchmen. My joy, it is too much to preach every Sunday; for in so doing you may make the people think that we should preach likewise. But it is enough for you when you find any good epistle, or any good gospel, that setteth forth the rights of the holy church, to preach that, and let the rest be." "Truly, my lord," said the vicar, "I have read the New Testament, and the Old, and all the epistles and gospels, and among them all I never could find any evil epistle, or any evil gospel; but if your lordship will show me the good and the evil epistles and gospels, then I shall preach the good and omit the evil." "I thank God," replied the bishop, with great vehemence, "I have lived well these many years, and *never knew either the Old or New Testament!* Therefore, Dean Thomas, I will know nothing but my portuise and pontifical."[2] From this saying there arose a proverb which was commonly applied in Scotland, for many years after, to persons who were grossly ignorant: "Ye are like

[1] Buch. Hist. p. 219, fol. edit.

[2] "My breviary and book of ceremonies."

the Bishop of Dunkeld, that kent neither new law nor auld."[1]

The fate of the vicar was decided in 1538. Having happened to quote, on his trial, the words of Paul, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand in an unknown tongue," he was asked where he found that? "In my book whilk is in my sleeve," answered the vicar. Upon this the public prosecutor started up, pulled the New Testament out of his hand, and holding it up before the people cried, "Behold he has *the book of heresy* in his sleeve, whilk makes all the pley[2] in the kirk!" "Brother," said the vicar, "God forgive you; ye ought to say better, if ye pleased, than call the evangel of Jesus Christ the book of heresy; for I assure you, dear brother, there is nothing in this book but the life, latter will, and testament of our Master and Saviour Jesus Christ, written by the four evangelists for our comfort and instruction." This, however, could not avail him. The pope had condemned the English Bible; and the poor vicar, Testament and all, were burned at the stake.[3]

But the time had now arrived, in the all-wise providence of God, when the eyes of men were to be opened to the abominations of this mystery of iniquity. The Reformation, it is well known, commenced in Germany in 1517, when the heroic Martin Luther declared war against indulgences; but it was a considerable time before its blessed light reached the shores of Scotland. As we intend to confine ourselves to the history of the Reformation in our own country, we shall not enter into any general account of its rise and progress abroad. But there is one feature of this glorious work which has been too much neglected by those who have written its history,[4] and to which, as it characterized the Reformation in our own land no less than in others, we cannot refrain from adverting—we mean the strictly *religious character of its origin.* Without denying that many who took a prominent part in promoting it were actuated by worldly and selfish motives, and without overlooking the influence of

[1] Spotswoode, p. 66; Row's MS. Hist. an. 1538.
[2] Confusion.
[3] Pitscottie, p. 356.
[4] This was written before the appearance of the admirable *History of the Reformation, by Merle D'Aubigné.*

secondary causes, which contributed to its advancement, such as the revival of learning, the invention of the art of printing, and the posture of political affairs in the countries where it was introduced—it ought never to be forgotten, that the reformation of religion in the church was the result of its revival in the souls of men. The first reformers were, without exception, men of piety and prayer—men who had deeply studied the Bible and their own hearts; and it was by discovering in the Scriptures the true doctrines of salvation which alone can purify the heart and pacify the conscience, that they were led first to see the corruptions of the Church of Rome, and then to seek their removal. The Reformation was the triumph of truth over error. It was the preaching of the pure gospel by the reformers, and especially the great doctrine of justification by faith through the righteousness of Christ, that gave its death-blow to the papal system. It is true, that had the reformers not received the support of the civil power, in all human probability the infant reformation would have been strangled at its birth, as it actually was in Spain and Italy, and the whole of Europe might have been yet lying under the dominion of antichrist. And it is a striking fact, that since the era of the Reformation, Protestantism has made little farther progress in Europe, and that those nations which refused to receive the Protestant religion continue Popish to this day; while in those that embraced it, the gospel continues to flourish in proportion to the zeal with which it was welcomed, and the purity in which it was established. But though, in accomplishing his gracious designs, God employs earthly means, and makes use of events in the political world, it is not the less on that account the work of God. History is a record of the operations of divine providence; but it is also a record of human guilt and folly, as exhibited not only in the malicious opposition of the enemies of religion, but in the unworthy motives and mistaken policy of its professed friends. And the first lesson which the student of church history requires to learn, is to distinguish between these two things—to remember that the work may be of God, though the manner of working is of man; and not to confound the cause of truth and righteousness with the follies, the errors, and mismanagements of the *instruments employed* in advocating and advancing it.

The first person who was honoured to carry the tidings of the Reformation to Scotland, and to seal them with his blood, was Patrick Hamilton.[1] This amiable and accomplished young gentleman was of noble extraction, and nearly allied to the royal family, being nephew of the Earl of Arran and of the Duke of Albany. He was destined for the Church, but while pursuing his studies he acquired some knowledge of the reformed doctrine, and with the view of obtaining better information he went abroad and paid a visit to Luther and other reformers in Germany. The result was, a deeper persuasion of the truth, accompanied with a strong and unconquerable desire to impart to his benighted countrymen the beams of that saving knowledge by which his own soul had been enlightened. His friends, aware of the danger to which he would expose himself by so doing, used every argument to dissuade him from making the attempt. But the motion was from God, and could not be resisted. On arriving in Scotland about the commencement of the year 1528, his spirit, like that of Paul, was stirred within him, when he beheld the ignorance and superstition which prevailed; and wherever he came he denounced, in the plainest terms, the corruptions of the Church. His clear arguments, aided by his fervent piety, mild manners, and exalted rank, could

[1] Patrick Hamilton, though not the first who introduced or suffered for the reformed opinions in Scotland, may be considered the proto-martyr of the Reformation, inasmuch as he was the first who suffered in that glorious cause after the standard of the Reformation had been unfurled by Luther. Before his time, two individuals, at least, had suffered martyrdom for their religious opinions—James Resby, an Englishman, and scholar of Wickliffe, who was burned in 1422; and Paul Craw, a Bohemian, and a follower of Huss, who underwent the same cruel fate at St. Andrews about ten years afterwards. In 1494 thirty persons, chiefly gentlemen and ladies of distinction, were accused of heretical sentiments, but conducted their defence with such boldness, that they were dismissed with an admonition. In 1525 there was an act of parliament passed, prohibiting the importation of Luther's books into Scotland, which, they said, had always "been clean of all sic filth and vice." If we may judge from the character of the Scots, who have been accused of being usually "wise behind the hand," it is highly probable that such books had already been introduced into this country.—*Life of Knox*, ii. 28. "The more the subject is investigated," says Dr. M'Crie, "the more clearly am I persuaded it will appear, that the opinions of Wickliffe had the most powerful and extensive influence upon the Reformation. We can trace the existence of the Lollards, in Ayrshire, from the time of Wickliffe to the days of George Wishart; and in Fife they were so numerous, as to have formed the design of rescuing Patrick Hamilton by force *on the day of his execution.*"—*Life of Melville*, i. 8.

not fail to produce a powerful sensation; and the clergy took the alarm. James Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews, was at that time primate of the church and chancellor of the kingdom—a cruel and crafty man, who scrupled at no means, however flagitious, for effecting his purposes. Afraid to proceed openly against Hamilton, he advised that he should be decoyed to St. Andrews, on the pretext of a friendly conference with him about his doctrine. The open-hearted young man eagerly embraced the proposal, and fell into the snare. It is needless to dwell on the revolting consequences. He was easily induced, by some insidious priests, to declare his sentiments. At the dead hour of night he was dragged from his bed, taken to the castle, and after confessing his faith before the archbishop, was condemned to be burned at the stake as an obstinate heretic. On the afternoon of Friday, February 28, 1528, this gentle and gracious youth was led to the place of execution, where a stake was fastened, with wood, coals, powder, and other inflammable materials piled around it. When he came to the place, he stripped himself of his gown, coat, and bonnet, and giving them to a favourite servant, "These," he said, "will not profit in the fire; they will profit thee. After this, of me thou canst receive no commodity, except the ensample of my death, which I pray thee to bear in mind; for albeit it be bitter to the flesh, yet is it the entrance into eternal life, which none shall possess that deny Christ before this wicked generation." When bound to the stake he exhibited no symptom of fear, but commended his soul to God, and kept his eyes steadfastly directed towards heaven. The executioner set fire to the train of powder, which however did not kindle the pile, but severely scorched the side of the martyr. In this situation he remained unmoved, till a new supply of powder was brought from the castle. Meanwhile, the friars who stood around him cruelly molested him, crying out, "Convert, heretic; call upon our Lady; say, *Salve regina.*" "Depart, and trouble me not," he said, "ye messengers of Satan." One of them in particular, called Friar Campbell, rendered himself conspicuous for his rudeness in disturbing the last moments of the martyr. "Thou wicked man," said Hamilton addressing him, "thou knowest that I am not an heretic, and that it is the truth of God for which *I now suffer*—so much didst thou confess unto me in private

—and thereupon I appeal thee to answer before the judgment-seat of Christ." At length the fire was kindled, and, amidst the noise and fury of the flames, he was distinctly heard pronouncing these last words: "How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this realm? How long wilt thou suffer this tyranny of men? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

The martyrdom of this engaging and accomplished youth produced a sensation very different from what his murderers anticipated. They expected by this bold stroke, aimed at a person of such high rank, to intimidate all others, and suppress the rising Reformation. The effect was precisely the reverse. It roused the minds of men from the dead sleep into which they had fallen—led them to inquire into the causes of his death—created discussion—and ultimately, what Hamilton had failed to do by his living voice was accomplished by his cruel death.

Knox informs us that many even in the University of St. Andrews began to "call in doubt what they had before held for a certain verity, and to espy the vanity of the received superstition." And he relates, in his own homely way, an anecdote which shows how matters stood: "Short after this," he says, "new consultation was taken that some should be burnit. A merry gentleman, named John Lindesay, familiar (servant) to Bishop James Beatoun, standing by when consultation was had, said, 'My lord, gif ye burn any man, except ye follow my counsell, ye will utterly destroy yourselves. Gif ye will burn them, let them be burned in *how*[1] *cellars:* for the reek of Mr. Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it did blow upon.'"[2] The impression made by Hamilton's death on the popular mind was greatly aided by the fearful death of Friar Campbell, who had insulted him at the stake. This wretched man soon after went distracted, and died in the utmost horror of mind, with the last appeal of the martyr ringing in his ears.

Notwithstanding all warning and advice, however, the flames of persecution were kindled throughout the country, and numbers suffered between the years 1528 and 1540. We shall select only two or three instances. The first presents a curious illustration of the impolicy of superstition, and at the same time of the wonderful power of divine grace

[1] *Hollow, deep.* [2] Knox, p. 15.

in qualifying for martyrdom an individual who was as unlikely to suffer, and who as little thought of being called to suffer such a death, as any one who peruses this account. In the history of the French Church we read of an honest country gentleman, who had paid little regard to any form of religion, but who was so pestered and annoyed by the priests with some unfounded suspicions of heresy, that he began first to inquire what heresy was, and from one step to another was led to suffer willingly and intelligently for a religion of which he had formerly known absolutely nothing. The following case is somewhat similar: Mr. David Stratton[1] was a gentleman of property on the sea-coast of Angus. He was the proprietor of some fishing-boats, out of which the Bishop of Murray demanded tithe. Stratton, who was a man of stubborn disposition and rough manners, was so incensed at the increasing pride and covetousness of the clergy, that he ordered his servants to cast every tenth fish they caught into the sea, and sent word to the bishop that "if he wanted his tithe, he might come and receive it where he got the stock." He was forthwith summoned to answer for heresy. Heresy was a thing he had never dreamed of. He had hitherto been notorious for his contempt of all religion. But now he was led to make inquiry, and happily sought the acquaintance of John Erskine of Dun, afterwards one of the leaders of the Reformation, from whose conversation he derived singular advantage. At this time Tyndal's translation of the New Testament had found its way into Scotland, and was privately circulated with great industry. One copy supplied several families. At the silent hour of night they would assemble together in a private house, and having ascertained that there were no spies near them, the sacred volume was brought forth from its concealment, and while one read, the rest listened with mute attention. One day Mr. Stratton retired with the young laird of Lauriston to a solitary place in the fields to hear the New Testament read to him (he was unable to read himself); and it so happened that, in the course of reading, this saying of our Lord occurred, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. x. 33). These words produced the most extraordinary effect on the mind of Stratton; he sud-

[1] *Stratton was brother to the laird of Lauriston.—Life of Knox*, i. 35.

denly became as one enraptured or inspired; and throwing himself on his knees, his hands stretched out, and his eyes fixed for some time steadfastly towards heaven, he burst forth in the following strain: "O Lord, I have been wicked, and justly mayest thou abstract thy grace from me; but, Lord, for thy mercy's sake, let me never deny thee nor thy truth, for fear of death or corporal pains." The issue proved that the prayer had been heard. Being brought before the bishop's court at Holyrood House, he refused to recant, boldly defended the truth, and was sentenced to be hanged and burned. The execution took place at the rood of Greenside between Edinburgh and Leith, "to the intent," it is said, "that the inhabitants of Fife, seeing the fire, might be stricken with terror." He died triumphantly, anticipating a joyful immortality.

The next case we shall notice presents an affecting proof of the triumph of divine grace over constitutional timidity, and the love of life so natural to youth. Alexander Kennedy was a young gentleman of liberal education, residing in Glasgow; he had a turn for Scottish poetry, and at the time we refer to he had not passed the eighteenth year of his age. He was apprehended along with Jerome Russell, who was of the order of Grayfriars, and is described by Knox as "a young man of meek nature, quick spirit, and of good letters." Kennedy, on being brought before his judges, and threatened with the dreadful doom of being burned alive, was at first inclined to recant. In a short time, however, he recovered his composure. The poor lad seemed all at once to have been strengthened from on high; and after having thanked God for having preserved him from apostasy, he rose from his knees: "Now," said he, addressing his judges, "I defy death. Do with me as you please; I thank God *I am ready*." His companion, Russell, though naturally mild, was roused by the irritating language of his persecutors. "This is your hour and power of darkness," he said to them; "now ye sit as judges, and we stand wrongfully accused: but the day will come when our innocence will appear, and ye shall see your own blindness, to your everlasting confusion. Go on, and fill the measure of your iniquity." On their way to the place of execution, Russell, observing some symptoms of depression *in the appearance of his youthful* fellow-sufferer, thus en-

couraged him: "Brother, fear not; greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world. The pain that we are to suffer is short, and shall be light, but our joy and consolation shall never have an end. Let us, therefore, strive to enter in to our Master and Saviour by the same strait way which he has trod before us. Death cannot destroy us, for it is already destroyed by Him for whose sake we suffer." And so both of them, after kneeling down and praying, cheerfully yielded themselves to the executioners—they were fastened to the stake—the faggots were lighted—and their spirits ascended, as it were in a chariot of fire, to the realms of everlasting glory.

The next story is of a more harrowing description. It is that of a female, the wife of one Robert Lamb, at Perth, who suffered at the same time with her husband. Lamb's crime was, that he had interrupted a friar who was preaching that a man could not be saved without praying to the saints; and the only charge against his wife was, that she refused to pray to the Virgin Mary when in child-birth, declaring that she would only pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ. For these crimes Lamb was condemned to be hanged, and his wife to be tied in a sack and drowned. The circumstances attending the last scene of this poor woman's life were sufficient to have moved any heart but that of a popish inquisitor. Warmly attached to her husband, she implored, as a last and only favour, that she might be allowed to die in his company. This affecting request was barbarously refused; but she was allowed to accompany him to the place of his execution. On the way she exhorted him to patience and constancy in the cause of Christ; and on parting with him she said: "Husband, be glad; we have lived together many joyful days; and this day on which we must die we ought to esteem the most joyful of all, because now we shall have joy for ever. Therefore I will not bid you good night, for we shall meet in the kingdom of heaven." After witnessing his death she was ordered to prepare for her own, and was taken for that purpose to a pool of water in the neighbourhood. Here the tenderness of the mother began to manifest itself. She implored her neighbours to be kind to her fatherless and motherless children; and, with a look of anguish, *she took from her* bosom the infant she was suckling, and

committed it to a nurse whom she had provided. Yet all this did not shake her fortitude or her faith; she rose superior to her sufferings, and calmly resigned herself to death.

On hearing of the courage and constancy of these early martyrs of the Reformation, one cannot fail to admire the power of faith in the gospel of Christ—that faith under the strengthening influences of which, in more ancient times, even "women endured torture, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." The mental heroism of these sufferers closely resembles that of the primitive martyrs of Christianity, and far excels the most splendid and admired examples of courage recorded in Roman history. The conduct of the wife of poor Robert Lamb may remind some of the noble matron of Rome, the wife of Pœtus, who, when condemned to die with her husband, plunged the dagger first into her own bosom, and then, handing it to her husband, said with a smile, "Pœtus, it is not painful." We see in both the same noble contempt of death; but, when more narrowly examined, how different do the cases appear! Putting out of view the vast difference between the causes in which they suffered, the Roman lady was obliged to die; she could not have escaped by making any concessions. The Scottish mother might have saved her life by saying a few words, such as "Hail Mary, queen of heaven!" Hers was a voluntary sacrifice on the altar of faith and a good conscience.

Our admiration of the power of divine grace in these worthies must increase when we consider that, at this time, the number of the reformed was comparatively very small—that the sufferers met with little sympathy from their neighbours—and that there was, as yet, no public preaching of the gospel in Scotland, so that it could only be from reading the Scriptures that any acquired the knowledge of the truth; and yet, in spite of these disadvantages, a single ray of that truth, darting from a single text, was sufficient to open their eyes, and, in the faith and hope of the gospel, they would cheerfully submit to death in the most frightful forms.

It is true that the victims of popish cruelty in Scotland were few when compared with those who suffered in other countries; but no thanks to Popery for that! What our ancestors *endured was merely* a sample of the bloody tragedy

which it was now enacting in almost every nation in Europe. Thanks, rather, under Providence, to the stout hearts and stalwart arms of our reformers, who arrested its sanguinary career soon after its commencement, braved its power even on the throne, and never ceased till they had proscribed it by the laws of the land.

We may be told by some that all the cruelties of which we have been speaking are to be traced to the barbarism of the age, and to ignorance of the principles of liberty, which, they say, were not understood even by Protestants for many years afterwards. This, however, is a mere theory, unsupported by facts—the language of persons who are fond of reducing everything to general principles. Protestantism disavows, by the very right of protest which it claims for itself, the right of persecuting others for conscience' sake. But Popery, like every form of superstition, is, in its very essence and spirit, a system of intolerance. It aims at universal dominion; it denies the right of private judgment in matters of religion; it lays the conscience and understanding of every man at the feet of his priest; and, when it has once taken possession of his mind, it hardens the heart, and fits it for perpetrating atrocities which human nature, undebased by its influence, shudders to hear of, and shrinks from beholding. Our ancestors knew it better than we do; and it was one of their articles of indictment against it, which shows that they had feelings which were shocked, and a sense of human rights which was outraged by it—that it was "a cruel, bloody, and tyrannical superstition."

How thankful ought we to feel to a kind and ill-requited Providence, that we have been delivered from such a system of oppression—that we are not called to suffer as our forefathers were for professing the gospel of Jesus Christ—that we are permitted to enjoy, in unmolested peace, our religious privileges! If David would not drink of the water of Bethlehem, because it was in his eyes "the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives," but "poured it out unto the Lord," how dearly ought we to prize, and how devoutly ought we to improve, to the glory of God, privileges which have been transmitted to us at the expense of the blood of his dear saints!

CHAPTER II.

1544 — 1559.

The last martyrs of the Reformation—George Wishart—Walter Mill—Commencement of the Reformation—Scotland reformed by her nobles and people—Arrival of John Knox—Demolition of the monasteries.

In 1539 James Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews, the murderer of Patrick Hamilton, died, and was succeeded in the primacy by his nephew, Cardinal David Beaton. This prelate inherited all his uncle's hostility to the reformed doctrine, with even a larger share of his ambition, craft, and cruelty. When James V. died of a broken heart, he forged a will in the name of the deceased monarch, appointing himself governor of the kingdom; and had this policy succeeded, there can be little doubt that he might have arrested, to an indefinite period, the progress of the Reformation in Scotland. Some idea may be formed of the wholesale measures which this man had devised for the extirpation of Protestantism, as well as of the numbers of the reformed at this period, when it is stated, that before the death of the king the cardinal had presented him with a list of *three hundred and sixty* of the chief of the nobility and barons, with the Earl of Arran at their head, who were suspected of heresy and doomed to destruction.[1] A merciful Providence interfered to defeat this atrocious plot. The forgery was discovered; and Arran, who was friendly to the Reformation, was elected governor of the kingdom.

Baffled in his ambitious designs, Beaton retreated, like a chafed tiger, to his castle at St. Andrews, and, taking the law into his own hand, he sacrificed to his vengeance all the Protestants who came within his reach. But the special object of his hatred was Mr. George Wishart, a reformed

[1] *Crawfurd's Lives*, p. 79.

minister, brother to the laird of Pitarrow. All the accounts of this martyr transmitted to us unite in representing him as a person of the most amiable and venerable character. He is described as a tall man of dark complexion, graceful in person, and courteous in manners, of profound learning, and remarkable for humility and charity. His piety was so fervent, that he used to spend whole days and nights in prayer and meditation. As a preacher, he had a wonderful command over the feelings of his audience, and many were converted under his ministry. Wishart's popularity, however, was gall and wormwood to the Romish clergy, and especially to Beaton, who tried various plans, for some time unsuccessfully, to get him decoyed into his den. Hearing of his success in Ayr, the cardinal sent the Bishop of Glasgow to apprehend him. The bishop, whom Knox calls "a glorious fule,"[1] found the preacher surrounded by so many gentlemen, that he durst not execute his commission; but he took possession of the church; and the gentlemen having threatened to expel him by force, "Let him alone," said Wishart, who could not endure violence of any kind, "his sermon will not do mekill hurt; let us go to the mercat cross." The bishop's sermon, according to Knox's account, was a very harmless one indeed. "He preached to his jackmen, and to some auld boisses[2] of the town: the sum of all his sermon was, They say we sould preach; why not? Better late thrive than never thrive. Haud us still for your bishop, and we sall provide better the next time."[3]

In Wishart's character piety was beautifully blended with benevolence. He was so liberal to the poor, that he parted not only with his money, but even with his body-clothes, to supply their necessities. The town of Dundee, which was the first of the Scottish burghs that embraced the Reformation, having been visited with a severe plague in 1544, he no sooner heard of it than he hastened to the scene of death with as much earnestness as others were fleeing from it. "They are now in trouble, and need comfort," he said; "and perchance the hand of God will make them now to magnify and reverence that word which before, for fear of men, they set at light part." He was received with great joy by the inhabitants; sermon was intimated for the very next day; and

[1] *A vain-glorious fool.* [2] Old topers. [3] Knox's Hist. p. 44.



as the plague was still raging in the place, he took his station upon the head of the East Gate, the infected standing without and those that were free within; and there he preached to them on these appropriate words in the 107th psalm, "He sent his word and healed them;" adding, by way of paraphrase, "It is neither herb nor plaister, O Lord, but thy word heals all." "By the which sermon," says Knox, "he raised up the hearts of all that heard him, that they regardit not death, but judgit thame mair happie that sould depairt, than sic as sould remain behind."

But, in truth, the life of Wishart was in greater danger from his persecutors than from the pestilence. One day, as he was descending from his elevated position after sermon, he observed a man standing at the foot of the stairs, and immediately suspecting his purpose he laid hold of his hand, saying, "My friend, what would you do?" taking from him, at the same time, a dagger, which he held concealed under his gown. The wretch was so confounded, that he confessed on the spot that he was a priest, who had been bribed by Cardinal Beaton to assassinate Wishart. The people would have torn him to pieces, but the good minister took the assassin in his arms, and saved his life. "No," said he, "he has done me no harm, but rather good; he has let us understand what we may fear; in times to come we will watch better."

The singular promptitude and penetration displayed by Wishart on this occasion may be explained on ordinary principles. Knox himself tells us that he marked the priest, "because he was maist scharp of eye and judgment." But the following incident, which occurred soon after, is not so easily explained. When at Montrose, he received a letter purporting to come from an intimate friend who had been taken suddenly ill, and was anxious to see him before his death. Wishart set out in the company of a few friends, but had not proceeded above a quarter of a mile when he suddenly stopped, and said to them, "I am forbidden of God to go this journey; will some of you be pleased to ride to yonder place (pointing to a little hill), and see what you find, for I apprehend there is a plot laid against my life." They went to the hill and discovered some sixty horsemen *concealed behind it, ready to intercept* him. It turned out

that the letter was a forgery of the cardinal's, and Wishart once more escaped; but, with a presentiment soon after verified, he said to his friends on their return, "I know I shall end my life in the hands of that bloodthirsty man; but it will not be after this manner." "I know assuredly my travel is nigh an end," he said on another occasion, with something like the spirit of ancient prophecy, "but God will send you comfort after me. This realm shall be illuminated with the light of Christ's gospel, as clearly as any realm ever was since the days of the apostles; the house of God shall be built in it; yea, it shall not lack (whatsoever enemies shall devise to the contrary) the very copestone. Neither shall this be long in doing; for there shall not many suffer after me."

Shortly after this Wishart was basely betrayed into the hands of the cardinal by the Earl of Bothwell, under a pledge of personal safety. He was conducted to St. Andrews, and after a mock trial, during which he was grossly insulted, mocked, and even spit upon, by his judges, he was condemned to the stake as an obstinate heretic. The crimes of which he was accused were, such as denying auricular confession, purgatory, the mass, and other inventions of the Romish Church; and he defended himself with great meekness and fidelity. Of one real heresy only did his enemies accuse him, namely, of holding that the souls of men slept after death till the resurrection; and of this he was so anxious to clear himself, that he formally disclaimed it at the stake. So determined was Beaton on accomplishing his object, that though Arran, the governor, wrote to him to delay the trial, declaring that "he would not consent to his death until the cause was well examined, and protesting, that if the cardinal should do otherwise, the man's blood should be required at his hands," the haughty prelate, setting all authority at defiance, proceeded to carry the sentence into effect at his own hand. On the day of execution the guns of the castle were planted so as to command the street and the scaffold, in case of any attempt to rescue the prisoner; and the front tower of the palace was elegantly fitted up with cushions and tapestry, that there, seated at their ease, the cardinal and his clergy might enjoy the spectacle. That morning the devoted *minister was invited* to breakfast with the governor of the

castle. He replied, "Very willingly, and so much the rather that I perceive you to be a good Christian, and a man fearing God." Bread and wine having been set upon the table, he said, "I beseech you, in the name of God, and for the love you bear to our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be silent a little while, till I have made a short exhortation, and blessed this bread, so that I may bid you farewell." He then spoke about half-an-hour on the institution of the supper, and the death of Christ; after which, he blessed the bread and wine, and having tasted them himself, distributed them to the governor and his friends. "As for myself," he concluded, "there is a more bitter potion prepared for me, only because I have preached the true doctrine of Christ; but pray for me that I may take it patiently as from his hand." He was then brought out, and fixed to the stake with a heavy chain. The fire was lighted, and the powder fastened to his body exploded. "This flame hath scorched my body," said the sufferer, "yet hath it not daunted my spirit. But he who from yonder high place beholdeth us with such pride, shall, within a few days, lie in the same as ignominiously as now he is seen proudly to rest himself." The fire having now been kindled, he was first strangled, and his body was soon consumed to ashes.[1]

This happened on the 1st day of March, 1546. Nothing could be more unlikely, at the time Wishart uttered this memorable prediction, than that it should be fulfilled. The cardinal himself paid no regard to it; he dwelt securely in his fortified castle; the people of the town were at his command; and he had powerful friends throughout the country. A late writer is so perfectly sure that our ancestors could, in no instance, receive premonitions of future events, that he maintains it to be "more probable" that Wishart was privy to some conspiracy against the cardinal, "than that he should be endowed with the spirit of prophecy."[2] But is there anything inconsistent with reason or religion in supposing that God may, on special occasions, such as in times of hot persecution, have granted to his faithful and prayerful servants premonitions and forewarnings of coming events, beyond what could be discovered even by "an extraordinary

[1] Spotswoode, *pp. 79, 82; Pitscottie*, p. 457; Knox, p. 53.
[2] *M'Gavin's edition of Scots Worthies*, i. 37.

degree of sagacious foresight?" "That the Supreme Being," says Dr. Cook, "may, in seasons of difficulty, thus enlighten his servants, cannot be doubted." To hold that this opinion is inconsistent with the perfection of the Holy Scriptures, is to mistake the matter entirely. Our worthies never pretended to be endowed with the spirit of prophecy, in the sense in which this is true of the ancient prophets; they did not lay claim to inspiration, nor require implicit faith to be placed in their sayings as divine; they did not propose them as rules of duty, nor appeal to them as miraculous evidences of the doctrines they taught. But they regarded such presentiments as gracious intimations of the will of God, granted to them in answer to prayer, for their own encouragement or direction; and they delivered them as warnings to others, leaving the truth of them to be ascertained and proved by the event.

To insinuate, as some have done, that Wishart—the meek, the unworldly, the beneficent, the tender-hearted Wishart, who repeatedly interceded for the life of his enemies, prayed for their forgiveness at the stake, and kissed the executioner before he did his office—was "privy to the conspiracy" afterwards formed against Beaton, is the strangest exhibition of prejudice which modern times afford. The charge has been revived of late, in a more malignant spirit, by some writers whose sympathies seem to be all in favour of the popish clergy, and with whom, in estimating the justness of the accusation, it is apparently enough to know that Beaton was a bishop, and Wishart a reformer. Some idea may be formed of the credulity, if not the charity, of these gentlemen, when we mention that the whole evidence on which they proceed is a passage in some manuscript correspondence of the period, in which mention is made of "a Scotishman called Wyshert," who, it seems, had been employed as a sort of go-between, or confidential servant, in some conspiracy formed by Henry VIII. against the life of the cardinal! After what we have stated of the character of Wishart our readers may be safely left to judge whether *he* was likely to be the person employed on this menial and degrading service; or whether, knowing that such a conspiracy had been formed, he was a man capable of telling it at such an awful moment, for the purpose of being *accounted a prophet*; as if, after the manner of modern for-

tune-tellers, he had first acted as a spy, and then pretended to predict what he had discovered! In the hands of writers actuated by such a spirit, or guided by such evidence, no man's character can be safe, and no man's memory can be sacred. But "the memory of the just is blessed;" and it is consoling to think that, in this case, as in many others of a similar kind, Providence has preserved materials sufficient to vindicate the character of the reformer, and make the odious charge recoil on the heads of his accusers.[1]

The truth is, that the plot which had been concerted against the cardinal by Henry VIII. had completely failed, and his assassination was the result of a more private conspiracy which was formed some time after Wishart's death. This conspiracy, as we are informed by our historians, was first proposed by a hot-headed young man of the house of Rothes, named Norman Lesley, who was instigated by some personal pique against Beaton, and was heard to swear that "these two" (holding out his hand and dagger) "were the two priests that would give absolution to the cardinal."[2] With him were associated his brother, John Lesley, William Kirkaldy of Grange, James Melville of Carnbee, and some others, not exceeding twelve persons in all. Early on the morning of Saturday, 29th May, 1546, this small band surprised the castle of St. Andrews, turned out the attendants, burst into the chamber of the cardinal, and after upbraiding him with

[1] See an able and triumphant "Vindication of George Wishart the Martyr, against Mr. Patrick Fraser Tytler," which appeared in the *Edinburgh Christian Monitor* for 1823, vol. iii. p. 475, where the author shows the absurdity of supposing that a gentleman of Mr. Wishart's rank and character, the brother of a Scottish baron, would be designated by his friends "a Scotishman called Wyshert," and proves by direct historical testimony that this person could neither be the martyr nor his brother the laird of Pitarrow. Mr. Tytler attempted a reply in the same periodical (iv. 90), in which, however, he does not venture to repeat his charge against Wishart, or to answer the arguments of his critic. More recently the charge has been revived by the Rev. C. J. Lyon of St. Andrews, who has been satisfactorily answered by the Rev. W. Lothian of the same place. In his *History of Scotland* Mr. Tytler does not venture to repeat the charge as to Wishart's share in the conspiracy, though he still insinuates that, from his connection with the conspirators against Beaton, he must have known of it; it is just *possible* that he might not! (vol. v. 417). This is pure conjecture. And to attempt fixing such a serious charge on the memory of this venerated martyr of the Reformation, merely on conjecture, without adducing a single proof of his implication in the plot, is altogether unworthy of the dignity of history—to say nothing of its impartiality.

[2] Buchanan, *b. 15; Spotswoode, p. 82;* Pitscottie, p. 483.

his perfidy and cruelty, fell upon him with their swords. He died exclaiming, "I am a priest—fy, fy—all is gone!" The inhabitants of the town, awakened by the terrified inmates of the castle, ran to the palace, eagerly demanding a sight of the cardinal; and the conspirators, in order to satisfy them, exposed his dead body on the very tower from which he had, a few months before, in savage pomp, witnessed the execution of George Wishart.

Far be it from us to vindicate this act of bloody revenge. The rude and unsettled state of the times, and the arbitrary violence of Beaton, who had set the example of acting in defiance of all law in the murder of Wishart, may palliate the irregularity, but cannot excuse the atrocity of the deed.[1] Viewed as an event in providence, we may recognize in it a just judgment from God on a cruel persecutor; while, at the same time, considered as the deed of man, we condemn the instruments whose passions were overruled for accomplishing it. Beaton died unlamented, as he had lived undesired; and the general feeling as to the manner of his death was expressed in the following couplet of Sir David Lyndsay:[2]—

"As for the cardinal, I grant
He was the man we weel could want,
And we'll forget him soon;
And yet I think, the sooth to say,
Although the loon is weel away,
The deed was foully done."

The martyrdom of Wishart did not arrest the progress of the Reformation, nor did the fate of Beaton stop the fury of persecution. New preachers, many of whom had fled from England on the accession of "Bloody Mary," supplied the place of those who had been put to death, and converts, both

[1] The *History of England* records instances of the murder of bishops, much more numerous and more revolting than any similar cases in Scotland. The murder of Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, in the twelfth century, by four English barons—that of Sudbury, archbishop of York, in the next century, by Wat Tyler's mob—of Walcher, bishop of Durham—Ayscoth, bishop of Salisbury, and others, who fell victims to their own ambition, oppression, and illegal practices, might be cited to show that the assassination of Beaton is not without its parallels in prelatic England; not to speak of the cold-blooded judicial murders of Archbishop Cranmer, and Bishops Latimer, Ridley, and Hooper.

[2] The Scottish poet, whose ingenious satirical poems contributed greatly *to the downfal of the* Romish clergy.

from among the clergy and laity, were daily added to the reformed faith. The inhabitants of Edinburgh, almost in a body, resolved no longer to attend mass, but to make an open separation from the Church of Rome, an example which was followed by many others in town and country. In vain did the queen, the widow of James V., who was now regent of the kingdom, try to stem the torrent. The clergy sunk every day in public estimation, and various causes contributed to accelerate their downfal. Instead of setting themselves to reform the notorious abuses of the Church, they made an ostentatious display of the most puerile of her ceremonies; instead of prudently bending to circumstances, they rose to a higher pitch of arrogance than ever. The very year of Wishart's martyrdom Cardinal Beaton and the Archbishop of Glasgow had a mortal quarrel in that city, the point of dispute being which of their crosses should be carried foremost in a procession. The cross-bearers happening to meet, a scuffle ensued, and they pommelled each other with their crosses, till both were thrown to the ground. Some time after, a momentous controversy arose about the propriety of saying the *pater-noster* to the saints. A monk called Friar Totts, in a sermon preached in St. Andrews at the request of some doctors in the university, engaged to prove that all the petitions in the Lord's prayer might, with great propriety, be addressed to the saints. "If we meet with an old man in the streets," said he, "we will say, Good morrow, father; how much more may we call the saints, *Our fathers!* And seeing we grant they are in heaven, we may say to every one of them, Our father which art in heaven," &c. This stuff might have gone down a few years before, but the temper of the times had changed; the audience could not refrain from laughter, and the preacher was obliged to leave the town, glad to escape from the persecution of the boys, who cried after him on the street, "Friar Paternoster!" A scene of a different kind occurred in the metropolis. St. Giles, it seems, was the patron saint of Edinburgh, and on his feast-day it was the custom to parade his image through the town, with drums, trumpets, and all sorts of musical instruments. When this day arrived in 1558 (just two years before the Reformation) the clergy resolved to have it observed with all due solemnity, *and the queen, fearing* a tumult, agreed to honour



the scene with her presence. But, lo! when the hour of procession arrived, the saint was missing; some evil-disposed person had stolen him out of the receptacle in which he was usually kept. This occasioned some delay, till another image, of smaller dimensions, was borrowed from the Grayfriars, which the people, in derision, called "Young Sanct Geill." All now went forward peaceably till the queen retired to dinner, when some young fellows, provided for the purpose, came forward and offered to assist the bearers of the image. "Young Sanct Geill" was soon jostled off into the street and smashed in pieces. The result was an Edinburgh riot —no jest at any time; and the priests were glad to save themselves by a hasty flight. Down went the crosses; off went the surplices, caps, and coronets. "Such an uproar," says Knox, "came never among the generation of antichrist in this realm before!"[1]

There was only one thing needed to seal the ruin of the popish clergy in Scotland—the continuance of the cruelties by which they endeavoured to put down the opposition they had raised. And, like those beasts of prey whose dying struggles are more formidable than their first attack, Popery expended the last efforts of its expiring power in a deed of transcendent cruelty. Walter Mill, an old decrepid priest, who had been condemned as a heretic in the time of Cardinal Beaton, but had escaped, was at last discovered by the spies of his successor, Archbishop Hamilton, and brought to St. Andrews for trial. He appeared before the court so worn out with age and hardships, that it was not expected he would be able to answer the questions put to him; but, to the surprise of all, he managed his defence with great spirit. He was condemned to the flames; but such was the horror now felt at this punishment, and such the general conviction of the innocence of the victim, that the clergy could not prevail on a secular judge to ratify the sentence, nor an individual in the town so much as to give or sell a rope to bind the martyr to the stake, so that the archbishop had to furnish them with a cord from his own pavilion. When commanded by Oliphant, the bishop's menial, to go to the stake, the old man, with becoming spirit, refused. "No," said he, "I will not go, except thou put me up with thy hand; for I am for-

[1] *Knox*, p. 95; Spotswoode, p. 118; Row's MS. Hist.

bidden by the law of God to put hands on myself." The wretch having pushed him forward, he went up with a cheerful countenance, saying, "I will go unto the altar of God." "As for me," he added, when tied to the stake, his voice trembling with age, "I am fourscore years old, and cannot live long by course of nature; but a hundred better shall rise out of the ashes of my bones. I trust in God I shall be the last that shall suffer death in Scotland for this cause." So saying, he expired amidst the flames, on the 28th August, 1558. He was indeed the last who suffered in that cause; and, as Spotswoode observes, his death was the death of Popery in this realm. This execution roused the horror of the nation to an incredible height. The citizens of St. Andrews marked the spot on which the martyr died by rearing over it an immense heap of stones; and as often as the priests caused it to be removed, the sullen and ominous memorial was restored by the next morning. The knell of Popery had rung; and Scotland was prepared to start up as one man, and shake itself free of the monster which had, for so many centuries, prostrated its strength, and preyed upon its vitals.

As a final resource to support their sinking credit the priests contrived once more to get up a miracle, the last they attempted in Scotland. Public notice was given, that on a certain day, at the chapel of our Lady of Loretto, near Musselburgh, they intended to put the truth of their religion to the test, by curing a young man who had been born blind. A great multitude collected to witness the miracle; and there, sure enough, was the young man, apparently stone blind, accompanied by a procession of monks, who, after solemnly invoking the assistance of the Virgin, made him open his eyes, to the astonishment of the beholders. But among the crowd there was one Colville of Cleish, a brave gentleman and a good Protestant, who immediately suspected the trick. He took the young man home to his lodgings, and locking the door, prevailed upon him, partly by threats and partly by promises, to reveal the whole secret. It appeared that while in the service of the nuns of Sciennes, near Edinburgh, the boy had acquired the faculty of turning up the white of his eyes, and keeping them in that position so as to appear blind. The monks *having come to the* knowledge of this, thought

of turning it to some account, and having kept him for some years concealed, so as not to be easily recognized by his old acquaintances, they had first sent him out to beg as a blind pauper, and now produced him to act his part on the occasion referred to. To confirm his narrative, the lad "played his paivie" before Colville, by "flypping up the lid of his eyes, and casting up the white," to perfection. Upon this, Colville exposed the whole story, and made the young man repeat his exhibition at the cross of Edinburgh, to the confusion of the whole fraternity of monks and friars, who would, no doubt, have wreaked their vengeance on their former tool, and made him blind enough, had not Cleish stood beside him with his drawn sword while he made his confession, and placing him, when he had done, on his own horse, carried him off to Fife.[1]

It is a great mistake to suppose that the Scottish Reformation originated with the common people, or in the spirit of rebellion. It would be much nearer the truth to say that Scotland was reformed by her noblemen and gentlemen. At both the periods of her Reformation the flower of her nobility took the lead; her principal reformers were men of superior education as well as high rank; and many of the first Protestant preachers were converted ecclesiastics, who continued to officiate in the Church, after having abandoned the mummeries of Popery, and become genuine pastors of Christ's flock. And though, unfortunately, the crown was unfavourable to the Reformation, it was not until every other method had been tried, and tried ineffectually, that the Protestant noblemen and gentry found it necessary to bind themselves by solemn oaths for mutual defence, and to hazard their lives in the cause of religion.

The first *band* of this description was formed in December, 1557, and was subscribed by the leading nobles and gentlemen of the land. The demands of these reformers were at first exceedingly few and simple; but it is remarkable that, among these, even at this early stage of the Reformation, the most prominent place was given to the popular election of ministers. They requested "that public prayers, and the administration of the sacraments, should be celebrated by ministers in their mother-tongue, that all the people might

[1] *Row's Hist. MS.*, p. 356; Life of Knox, i. 321.

understand them; that the election of ministers, *according to the custom of the primitive Church, should be made by the people;* and that they who presided over that election should inquire diligently into the lives and doctrines of all that were to be admitted."[1] The principal persons among the nobility and landed gentry "into whose hearts the Lord God of our fathers did put such a thing as this, to beautify the house of the Lord," and whose names deserve to be held by all Scotsmen in everlasting remembrance, were—Archibald, earl of Argyle; Lord James Stewart, afterwards Earl of Murray, and commonly called the Good Regent, the Earl of Glencairne, the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Rothes, Archibald, lord of Lorne, Lords Ochiltree, Yester, and Boyd; Sir James Sandilands of Calder, John Erskine of Dun, and a large proportion of the lesser barons. The feudal system, which then prevailed in Scotland, gave these noblemen and gentlemen the virtual command of the whole community; they reigned on their estates like so many princes. These were not the men, when once enlightened by the truth, tamely to submit to priestly domination. They had long been disgusted by the manners of the higher clergy, who, though in general mean or base-born persons, had claimed precedence of the ancient nobility, thrust themselves into places of power, and appropriated to themselves the greater share of the national wealth. On the other hand, they saw that the reformed preachers, who were in general the sons or relatives of persons of rank, were men of principle and self-denial, mainly bent on the promotion of the spiritual interests of their countrymen. For some time they contented themselves with protecting these good men from the vengeance of the prelates, and providing, by an act of council, that "it should be lawful for every one that could read to use the English version of the Bible, until the prelates should publish a more correct one"—an act which, by giving "free course to the word of the Lord," had great influence in promoting the Reformation.

Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews, hearing that Argyll kept one of those ministers, Mr. John Douglas, in his castle as his chaplain, sent the earl a coaxing letter, in which, after declaring he felt "bound in conscience" to inquire into this

[1] *Spotswoode, p. 169;* Knox, p. 120.

matter, and representing the danger to which he exposed himself and his honourable family by defection from the Church, he exhorted his lordship to rid himself "in some honest fashion" of Douglas, that perjured apostate who had seduced him, offering to provide him with a learned preacher, who, he would "lay his soul in pawn," would teach him no other than true doctrine. The earl's answer is respectful but spirited, and contains some shrewd hints which the archbishop could not fail to apply to himself: "Your lordship declares that there are delations of sundry points of heresy upon that man called Douglas. I have heard him teach no articles of heresy, but that which agrees with God's Word. Your lordship regards your conscience; I pray God that ye do so, and examine your conscience weill. He preaches against idolatrie; I remit to your lordship's conscience gif that be heresie or not. He preaches against adulterie and fornicatioun; I refer that to your lordship's conscience. He preaches against hypocrisie; I refer that to your lordship's conscience. He preaches against all manner of abuses of Christ's sincere religion; I refer that to your lordship's conscience. My lord, I exhort you, in Christ's name, to weigh all these affairs in your conscience, and consider if it be your dutie, not only to thole this, but in like manner to do the same. Your lordship says you would take the labour to get me a man to instruct me in your catholick faith. God Almichtie send us mony of that sort, that will preache trewly, and naething but ane catholick universal Christian faith; for we Hieland rude people has *mister of them* (much need of them). And if your lordship wald get me sic a man, I sould provide him a corporal living, with great thanks to your lordship. And because I am able to sustean more than ane of them, I will request your lordship to provyde me as many as ye can; for *the harvest is grit, and the labouraris are few.*"

We beg to make a remark here, once for all, on the style of these extracts and anecdotes. Since the introduction of the English dialect into our country the Scottish has been disused by almost all except the humbler classes of society, and hence has become associated in some minds with rudeness and vulgarity. But at the present era of our history, and for many years after, the language of the court, the *bench, and the pulpit* of our kings and queens, and the finest

ladies and gentlemen of the day, though differing materially in its pronunciation from the coarse dialect or *patois* which now prevails, was universally Scottish. This very obvious statement seems called for when we find such sentiments as those we have now given actually stigmatized as "vulgar scurrility!" There can be no question that much of the disgust which some profess to feel at the sayings of our worthy ancestors may be traced to the mere circumstance that their thoughts and feelings, truly noble and refined as they were in themselves, and as they might have appeared in an English dress, were unfortunately uttered in their own mother-tongue.

But to proceed. The nobility and gentry resolved to do everything in their power to suppress idolatry, and advance "the preaching of the evangel," as they well termed the Reformation; and yet, anxious to proceed in the most orderly manner, presented supplications to the queen regent, humbly craving the reform of some of the most glaring abuses of the Church. The queen, however, who was a determined Papist, a Frenchwoman, and acting under foreign influence, instead of listening to these petitions, had concerted with the bishops to summon the reformed ministers to Edinburgh; and, in order to get the gentry out of the way, had issued an order for them to march to the border. The gentlemen of the west, on their way through Edinburgh, discovered the plot, and were so indignant that they went resolutely in a body to the palace, entered the queen's chamber, where they found her surrounded with her priests, and bitterly complained of the deception. Her majesty attempted to soothe them with fair speeches; but Chalmers of Gadgirth, a gruff old baron, who was very zealous in the cause, cut her short by saying, "Madam, we know that this is the malicious device of these jaivels (the bishops), and of that bastard (Hamilton, the archbishop) that standeth by you; but we vow to God we shall make a day of it! They oppress us and our tenants to feed their idle bellies; they trouble our preachers, and would murder them and us! Shall we suffer this any longer? No, madam, it shall not be!" So saying he clapped on his steel bonnet, and the rest of the gentlemen followed his example. Alarmed for the bodily safety of the bishops, who were trembling *from head to foot*, the queen interfered, and



sent the unceremonious gentlemen away with fair promises of protection to the ministers.

These promises were not long kept. The queen, after dissembling a while with the reformers, at length threw off the mask, and avowed her determination to suppress the Reformation by force. It is often seen that, on the eve of some great deliverance to the Church, her enemies are permitted, before their final overthrow, to gain a temporary advantage; and so it was now. The queen's brothers, the princes of Lorraine, who were the most ambitious of men and the most bigoted of Papists, had formed a gigantic conspiracy for dethroning Elizabeth and recovering England and Scotland to the dominion of Rome. For this purpose it was deemed necessary to despatch French troops into our country, to subdue the refractory Scots and extinguish the heresy which had sprung up among them. Our fathers, it may be easily supposed, viewed these foreign allies with no small jealousy. The lords and gentlemen, taking the alarm, began to prepare for self-defence; but not till they had used every expedient, without success, to prevent matters from coming to an extremity. The queen declared that, "in spite of them, all their preachers should be banished from Scotland, though they sould preach as weel as St. Paul;" and when reminded of her former promises, she replied that "it became not subjects to burden their princes with promises further than they pleased to keep them." A proclamation was issued prohibiting any person from preaching without authority from the bishops; and on hearing that this proclamation was disregarded she summoned four of the preachers, Paul Methven, John Christison, William Harlow, and John Willock, to stand trial at the justiciary court of Stirling, for usurping the ministerial office, and exciting sedition among the people. The trial was appointed to take place on the 10th of May, 1559.

Such was the critical state of affairs when a person suddenly appeared on the stage, the report of whose arrival in Scotland spread a panic among the Popish clergy from which they never recovered, and who was destined to do more for the cause of the Reformation than all the nobles of Scotland, with their armed followers, could have effected;—need I *say that person* was John Knox?

As the life of this reformer forms the subject of a work with which many of the readers of these pages may be familiar, we need not dwell on his previous history. Suffice it to say, that John Knox was born at Gifford, a village near Haddington, in the year 1505; that he was a fellow-student of the famous George Buchanan, who was classical tutor to James VI., and one of the most learned men of his age; and that it was not long before both Buchanan and Knox embraced the reformed religion, with all the ardour of youth, and all the firmness of strong and cultivated minds. Knox had formed a strong attachment to George Wishart, and waited constantly on his person, bearing the two-handed sword which was carried before him from the time that the attempt was made to assassinate him at Dundee. When Wishart was apprehended Knox insisted for liberty to accompany him; but the martyr dismissed him with this reply, "Nay, return to your bairns (meaning his pupils), and God bless you; *ane is sufficient for a sacrifice.*" After the assassination of Beaton he retreated for safety to the castle of St. Andrews, which was then held by the conspirators. Knox had, before his conversion, entered into priest's orders; and while he remained in the castle he was unexpectedly called upon to officiate to the Protestants who had there sought refuge. But the castle having surrendered, he was sent, with other prisoners, to the galleys. Upon regaining his liberty he repaired to England, where he remained till the death of that good prince, Edward VI., when the fires of persecution, kindled by the bloody Mary, compelled him to flee to Geneva, and he accepted the charge of the English congregation in that city. But during all his wanderings his heart was fixed on his native country. With the friends of the Reformation there he kept up a constant correspondence; and he at last resolved to devote himself, at all hazards, to the work of emancipating Scotland from the darkness and thraldom of Popery. He arrived, as we have already seen, at a period when his presence was much required, and at a crisis for which his character was admirably adapted. Possessing firm and high-toned principle, the foundations of which were deeply laid in sincere piety and profound acquaintance with the Scriptures; endowed with talents of no common order, and an *eloquence popular and* overwhelming; ardent in his

feelings, indefatigable in his exertions, daring and dauntless in his resolutions, John Knox was the man, and almost the only man of his time, who seemed to be expressly designed by the hand of Providence for achieving the lofty and adventurous enterprise to which he now consecrated himself, spirit, and soul, and body.

His arrival in Scotland was not long concealed from the clergy. On the morning after he landed at Leith a person came to the monastery of the Grayfriars, where the provincial council was sitting, with the information that John Knox was come from France, and had slept the last night in Edinburgh. The priests were panic-struck with the intelligence, the council was dismissed in confusion, a messenger was despatched to the queen, and within a few days Knox was proclaimed an outlaw and a rebel. Undismayed by this sentence, he did not hesitate a moment on the course he should pursue. He determined to present himself voluntarily at Stirling, where the Protestant ministers had been summoned to stand their trial. Having remained only a single day in Edinburgh, he hurried to Dundee, where he found the principal Protestants already assembled, with the intention of accompanying their ministers to the place of trial, and avowing their adherence to the doctrines for which they were accused. Accompanying them to Perth, Knox preached a sermon in that town, in which he exposed the idolatry of the mass and image-worship. The audience had peaceably dismissed, when one of the priests, as if in contempt of the doctrine just delivered, began to celebrate mass. A boy uttered some mark of disapprobation, and was struck by the priest; the boy retaliated by throwing a stone at his aggressor, which happened to break one of the images. This, in the excited state of the public mind, operated as a signal to some of the people who lingered on the spot; and in a few minutes the altar, images, and all the ornaments of the church were torn down and trampled under foot. The noise soon collected a mob, who flew, by a sudden and irresistible impulse, on the monasteries; and notwithstanding the interposition of the magistrates, and the entreaties of Knox and the other ministers, the fury of the people could not be restrained till these costly edifices were *reduced to a heap* of smoking ruins. This tumult was quite



unpremeditated, and confined to the lowest of the inhabitants, or, as Knox calls them, "the rascal multitude." The queen-regent, however, glad of a pretext to crush the Reformation, magnified this accidental riot into a designed rebellion, and imputing the whole blame to the Protestants, assembled an army to avenge the insult.

Nothing was farther at this time from the minds of the reformers than to excite rebellion, or to gain their purpose by violent and unconstitutional means. "Cursed be they," was their language to her majesty, "that seek effusion of blood, war, or dissension. Let us possess Christ Jesus, and the benefit of his evangel, and none within Scotland shall be more obedient subjects than we shall be." They soon discovered, however, that the pledge of their allegiance was to be the renunciation of their religion; and that nothing would satisfy the queen and her advisers but the suppression of the Reformation by fire and sword. This brought matters to a crisis. When Lord Ruthven, who was sheriff and provost of Perth, was commanded by her majesty to go home and suppress the reformed opinions in his jurisdiction, he told her very plainly, "that in what concerned their bodies his charge was to keep them in order, but what concerned their souls was neither in his commission, nor would he meddle with it." And Lord James Stewart, having been severely blamed by Francis, the husband of Mary Queen of Scots, for taking part with the reformed, and charged "upon his allegiance" to leave them, boldly replied, "that he had done nothing against his allegiance, but what was lawful for maintenance of the liberties of the country and propagation of the gospel, which it was no more lawful for him to abandon than to deny Jesus Christ."[1] If, therefore, any confusion ensued, if our reformers were compelled to assume a hostile attitude, the blame must rest with those who reduced them to the alternative of either resisting their sovereign or submitting to have themselves and their country enslaved. Finding all their endeavours to obtain the peaceable enjoyment of their religion to be fruitless; perceiving that the queen, who had so often deceived and disappointed them, had now become their declared enemy—the leading Protestants, who now began to be called the *Lords of the Congregation*, saw the

[1] *Lord Herries' Hist. Memoirs*, p. 37, 42.

necessity of arming and combining in self-defence. For this purpose they drew up another engagement or bond, in which they renounced Popery, and pledged themselves to mutual support in the defence and promotion of the true religion. This bond received numerous subscriptions. And now, having taken their ground, and finding their numbers daily increasing, they saw that the only effectual method to prevent the odious chains of ecclesiastical tyranny from being rivetted on themselves and their posterity, was to make a united and determined effort to shake them off for ever. They demanded the reformation of the Church, and each of them engaged, in his own sphere, to take immediate steps for abolishing the Popish service, and setting up the reformed religion in those places where their authority extended, and where the people were friendly to their design.

St. Andrews was the place fixed on for commencing these operations. In the beginning of June, 1559, the Earl of Argyle and Lord James Stewart, afterwards earl of Murray, who was prior of the abbey of St. Andrews, made an appointment with Knox to meet him on a certain day in that city. Travelling along the east coast of Fife the reformer preached at Anstruther and Crail, setting before the people the danger in which the civil and religious liberties of the nation were placed by the invasion of foreign and mercenary troops, sent to enslave them by a Popish faction in France, and bidding them prepare themselves either to die like men, or live as freemen. Such was the effect of his exhortation, that altars, images, and all monuments of idolatry in these places were immediately pulled down and destroyed. The Archbishop of St. Andrews, apprised of his design to preach in that town, and apprehending similar consequences, assembled an armed force, and sent information to the lords that if John Knox dared to present himself in the pulpit of his cathedral "he should gar him be saluted with a dozen of culverings,[1] whereof the most part should light on his nose." The noblemen having met to consult what ought to be done, considering that the queen, with her French troops, was lying at Falkland, twelve miles from St. Andrews, while they "were only accompanied with their quiet households," and fearing lest his appearance in the pulpit should lead to the sacrifice

[1] A species of fire-arms.

of his life, and the lives of those who were determined to defend him, agreed that Knox should desist from preaching at this time, and urged him very strenuously to comply with their advice. The intrepid reformer, however, disdained all such fears, and would not listen to their solicitations. "God is my witness," said he, "that I never preached Christ Jesus in contempt of any man, or to the worldly hurt of any creature. But to delay to preach to-morrow (unless the body be violently withhalden) I cannot of conscience; for in this town and kirk began God first to call me to the dignity of a preacher, from the which I was reft by the tyranny of France and procurement of the bishops, as ye all well enough know, and it is no time now to recite. This only I cannot conceal, which more than ane has heard me say, when the body was far absent fra Scotland, that my assured hope was, in open audience, to preach in Sanct Androis before I departed this life. And therefore, my lords, seeing that God, above the expectation of many, has brought the body to the same place, I beseech your honours not to stop me to present myself unto my brethren. And as for the fear of danger that may come to me, let no man be solicitous; for my life is in the custody of Him whose glory I seek; and therefore I cannot so fear their boast nor tyranny, that I will cease from doing my duty when God of his mercy offereth the occasion. I desire the hand nor weapon of no man to defend me; only I crave audience, which if it be denied here unto me at this time I must seek farther where I may have it."

This bold reply silenced all remonstrance; and the next day being the Sabbath, 10th June, 1559, Knox appeared in the pulpit, and preached before the Lords of the Congregation and a numerous assembly, without experiencing the slightest interruption. He discoursed on the subject of our Saviour's ejecting the buyers and sellers from the temple, and overthrowing the tables of the money-changers: "Take these things hence: it is written, My Father's house shall be a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." From this he took occasion to expose the enormous corruptions introduced into the Church under the Papacy, and to point out what was incumbent on Christians in their different spheres for removing them. On the three following days he *preached in the same place;* and such was the influence



of his doctrine, that the provost, bailies, and inhabitants harmoniously agreed to set up the reformed worship in the town; the Church was stripped of images and pictures, and the monasteries were pulled down.

The demolition of the monasteries and other religious houses, which marked the commencement of our Reformation, has furnished a rich topic for declamation to many, who refer to it as a proof of the bigotry and barbarism of our reformers. We allow they may have gone too far, under the excitement of the moment; and "can any man think," says honest Row, "that in such a great alteration in a kingdom every man did everything rightly?" But let us do them justice. Had the queen-regent, instead of resorting to violent measures to suppress the Reformation, listened to the petitions of her noblemen for inquiry into the abuses of the Church, or even allowed her subjects liberty to profess the gospel, these excesses would never have occurred. It was only when this liberty was denied them, and they were required to submit unconditionally to the will of the Popish clergy, that the people had recourse to this method of redress. "After which answer," says Sir James Balfour, "the congregation goes to the staitly monastry of Scone, and pulls it doun, and solemnly burns all the Roman trashe, as images, altars, and the lyke. Then proceed they fordward to Stirling, Cambuskenneth, and Linlithgow, and there demolish and pull doun all whatsoever carried any symboll of the Roman harlot."[1] The churches and cathedrals, be it observed, were generally spared; it was only the monasteries, and places identified with the reigning superstition, that fell a sacrifice to the popular fury. And when we consider that these formed the strongholds of Popery, against which the nation was now at war, and the receptacles of a lazy, corrupt, and tyrannical priesthood, who had so long fattened on the substance of a deluded people, there appears more good policy than some are willing to admit in the advice which John Knox is said to have inculcated: "Down with those crow-nests, else the crows will *big* in them again."[2] Another view of the matter, equally capable of defence, is suggested by an anecdote which he relates of a woman, who, when the flames of the monasteries in Perth were ascending to heaven,

[1] *Annales of Scotland*, i. 316. [2] Row's MS. Hist. p. 6.

and some were lamenting their destruction, exclaimed, that if they knew the scenes of villany and debauchery that had passed within these walls they would "admire the judgments of Heaven, in bringing these haunts of pollution to such an end."[1]

[1] Knox, Hist.

CHAPTER III.

1560 — 1572.

National establishment of the reformed religion—First meeting of the General Assembly—The First Book of Discipline—Constitution of the Church of Scotland—Anecdotes of John Knox and Queen Mary—The murder of the Good Regent—Death of John Knox.

There was a striking difference between the Scottish and the English Reformation. In England the reigning powers took the lead, and the people followed, as they best might, in the wake of royal authority. In Scotland the people were converted to the Protestant faith before the civil power had moved a step in the cause; and when the legislature became friendly to the Reformation nothing remained for it to do but to ratify the profession which the nation had adopted. The consequence has been, that the Church of England, with all her excellencies (and they are many), has never ventured to advance beyond the limits prescribed by Queen Elizabeth; while the Scottish Church, carrying the legislature along with her, has made various steps in reformation—has, on more than one occasion, improved her standards, pointed her testimony to the times, and discarded from her creed and constitution everything which seemed, even by implication, to symbolize with the apostasy of the Church of Rome.

In the month of August, 1560, when, through the friendly aid of England, the French troops had been expelled from Scotland, and when, after the queen-regent's death, a free parliament was assembled, Popery, as a matter of course, was abolished, and the Protestant religion substituted in its place. Considering the suddenness with which this change was effected the business was wisely and well conducted. *A petition was* presented to the parliament by the ministers

and others, in the name of the people, requesting them to secure, by legal enactments, the profession of the true religion. The parliament then requested the ministers to lay before them a summary of Christian doctrine which they could prove to be agreeable to Scripture; and in the course of a few days the ministers presented a confession, consisting of twenty-five articles, which the parliament, after due examination, formally ratified and approved. This confession agrees in all points with those of the other reformed churches, and is not materially different from the Westminster Confession now in use, which was afterwards adopted by the Church of Scotland. It was remarked, that when it was read over, in the audience of the whole parliament, in which there were several lords and bishops known to be disaffected to the Reformation, only three of the noblemen voted against it, giving no other reason for their dissent than, "We will beleve as our forefatheris belevit;" "the bishops spak nathing." Upon which the Earl-marshal, after declaring his own approbation of the articles, protested, "that if any ecclesiastics should after this oppose themselves to this our Confession they should be entitled to no credit, seeing that, having long advisement and full knowledge of it, none of them is found, in lawful, free, and quiet parliament, to vote against it."

This amounted, it will be observed, to a national establishment of the Protestant religion. The nation, by its rulers and representatives, passed from Popery to Protestantism; and in its civil capacity ratified (not the gospel, indeed, which no acts of parliament can ratify, but) the profession of the gospel which the people, in their religious capacities, had already embraced. And thus it appears that there was a civil establishment of the true religion in Scotland before there was even an established Church, for the reformed Church of Scotland was not as yet regularly organized, much less endowed. The legal recognition of the Presbyterian Church as an organized society was a subsequent step, and indeed not fully obtained till several years after this; the settlement of regular stipends on the ministers was still later. And yet, by the act of the state to which we have referred, the Protestant religion became the national religion of Scotland. These are the plain facts; and we leave every one to form *his own judgment on them.* But if the *principle* of civil



establishments of religion is to be debated at all, at this point must the battle begin; and the question to be decided is, whether it was right or wrong for the nation of Scotland to declare, by an act of its parliament, that Popery was abolished, and that Protestantism was thenceforth the national religion.

By the same parliament which established the Protestant religion another act was passed, which has been severely blamed, even by friends of the Reformation, prohibiting the celebration of mass, under severe penalties, which amounted in extreme cases even to death. The only apology which some can find for this dubious act of policy is that the principles of religious liberty were not then so fully understood, and that it is no wonder our ancestors carried with them a portion of the intolerance of the Romish Church, from which they had so lately escaped. Our reformers, however, had no idea of converting their creed into a penal code, or of punishing all who departed from it as heretics. They regarded Papists as enemies to the state, and the leading principles of Popery as subversive of all good order in society. The proscription of the mass, the characteristic symbol of Popery, was certainly the most effectual way of putting down the civil nuisance. The truth is, they would not allow the mass to be a point of religion at all; they regarded it as manifest idolatry—an opinion in which every sound Protestant will coincide; but having, erroneously we think, conceived that the Mosaic law against idolaters was still binding on Christian nations, they applied the statute to it as a civil crime. Whatever may be thought of this interpretation of the civil law it was obviously a very different thing from the spirit of Popery, which, stamping the whole of its creed with the attribute of infallibility, and denying all hope of salvation to those beyond its pale, enforces all its dogmas with civil pains on those whom it accounts heretics. And that the object of our reformers was not to punish the persons of heretics, or religious opinions as such, but to stay the plague of idolatry and profaneness in the land, appears from two facts which we shall now state. The first is, that the penalties actually inflicted on "mass-mongers," as they were termed, were entirely of the ignominious kind usually *allotted to* persons convicted of infamous crimes, and

intended to brand the practice as odious and disreputable.[1] And the other fact, to which we refer with pride (and England, with all her boasted liberality, cannot say so much), is, that NOT A SINGLE PAPIST SUFFERED DEATH IN SCOTLAND FOR THE SAKE OF HIS RELIGION. We hear of four priests condemned to death for saying mass in Dunblane; but the sentence was remitted, and they were merely set in the pillory. Candour will ascribe this as much to the lenity and liberality of our Protestant ancestors, as to the reluctance of the Popish clergy to suffer martyrdom for conscience' sake. Very few of them, indeed, appear to have had much conscience in the matter, except on the point of their worldly emoluments; and the only instance on record of their taking the Reformation to heart, is that of a poor priest in Cupar of Fife, who was so much distressed at seeing his altars and images demolished by the crowd, that on the following night he went and hanged himself.

The first meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was held at Edinburgh on the 20th of December, 1560. It consisted of forty members, only six of whom were ministers; and its deliberations were conducted at first with great simplicity and unanimity. As a proof of this, it may be mentioned that seven different meetings of Assembly were held without a moderator or president.[2] It may appear still more extraordinary to some to be told that none were appointed to represent the sovereign in the General Assembly, as commissioner, for at least twenty years after the Reformation; though during that time there were no fewer than thirty-nine or forty assemblies, and though the supreme magistrate, especially during the regency of Murray and Lennox, was very friendly to the Church and her inter-

[1] "Upon the secund day of October, 1561, Archibald Dowglas, provest of Edinburgh, with the baillies and counsale, causit ane proclamatioun be proclameit at the croce, commanding and charging all and sundry monks, freris, priestis, and all utheris papists and profane persons, to pas furth of Edinburgh within twenty-four hours next efter following, under the pane of burnying of disobeyaris upon the cheik, and harling of them throw the toun in ane cart: at the quhilk proclamatioun the quenis grace was very commovit. And the samyn day Mr. Thomas Macalyean was chosin provest of Edinburgh, and Archibald Dowglas dischargit, for making of the proclamatioun forrsaid without the quenis advyise, togidder with all the baillies" (*Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland*, p. 69).

[2] *Life of Knox, ii. 18.*



ests.[1] At the second General Assembly there was some debate raised by Maitland of Lethington about the propriety of their meeting without the queen's authority. "The question is," said Lethington, "whether the queen alloweth such conventions." "If the liberty of the kirk," said a member, "should depend upon the queen's allowance or disallowance, we are assured we shall be deprived, not only of assemblies, but of the public preaching of the gospel." "No such thing," said Lethington. "Well, time will try," replied Knox; "but I will add, Take from us the freedom of assemblies, and take from us the evangel; for without assemblies how shall good order and unity in doctrine be kept?" The greater part of the nobles and barons having expressed their concurrence in this sentiment, they requested her majesty's friends to inform her, that if she entertained any suspicion of their proceedings she might appoint some one to hear their deliberations; and this matter being amicably settled, the Assembly convened in virtue of the intrinsic power granted by Christ to his Church, and concluded their work without so much as petitioning for the countenance of the civil power. So early did the Church of Scotland assert the royal prerogatives of the King of Zion.[2]

What a wonderful change had now come over the face of Scotland! A few years before this idolatry was rampant, and, to use the words of Patrick Hamilton, "darkness covered this realm." Now superstition has vanished, and the light of truth has arisen on the mountains and valleys of our land. A year ago it was blasphemy to say a word against the mass; now the mass itself is denounced as blasphemy. Not a cross, not an image, not a cowl, not a mitre is to be seen; and were it not for the smoking ruins of some monastery, or the vacant niches of a cathedral, it could hardly have been known by a stranger that Popery had ever existed in the country. Still, however, the victory was not secured. Still, the dignitaries of the Church retained their titles, and claimed all their temporal privileges. Still, though the Popish service was proscribed, the Protestant worship, except in a few places of note, was not substituted in its place. There was a sad dearth of preachers; the mass of the people, in town and country, were so poor as hardly to be able to provide for

[1] *Stevenson, Introd. i. 117.* [2] Calderwood, p. 30; Knox, p. 295.

their own subsistence; and it became a matter of indispensable necessity that some means should be adopted to provide them with religious instruction.

Under the Papacy no regular provision had been made, either for the support of the poor, who were shamefully neglected, or for the maintenance of a working clergy. Two years before the Reformation a kind of proclamation was issued and affixed to the gates of the monasteries and other religious houses, in the name of "the blind, the lame, bedrals, widows, orphans, and other poor," complaining that the alms of the Christian people had been unjustly stolen from them by monks and friars, who are described as "haill of body, stark, sturdie, and abill to work;" and charging them "to remove furth of the hospitals which they now occupied, that we, the lawful proprietors thereof, may enter and enjoy the commodities of the kirk, which ye have wrangouslie haldin from us." The preaching friars were left to shift for themselves, and derived a miserable subsistence from the contributions of the faithful, while the higher clergy and the monks lived in luxurious ease. The reformed church, however, having discarded these drones and dignitaries, and depending for success on the preaching of the word, required funds for the support of a ministry equal to the spiritual need of the whole population; and our reformers justly considered that, after the poor had been provided for, they had a claim on the revenues of the Church for the support of such a ministry.

But other and more powerful claimants for the property of the kirk appeared in the nobility and landed gentlemen, whose ancestors had swelled the revenues of the Church by large donations of land and money. Many years before the Reformation, the laird of Grange, who was treasurer to James V., and a secret friend of the Protestant cause, advised his majesty, "gif he wad do weill and be rich, to tak hame again to the profit of the crown, all vacant benefices, by little and little, as they may fall by decease of every prelate." The king relished the proposal so highly that, as Sir James Melville informs us, he determined to carry it into effect; and the style in which he attempted it affords a curious illustration of the rudeness of the times. At his first meeting with the prelates, "he could not contean him any langer, and *after many sour reproofs*, he said, 'Wherefore gave my

predecessors sa mony lands and rents to the kirk? Was it to maintain hawks, and dogs, and harlots to a number of idle priests? Pack you off to your charges, and reform your own lives, and be not instruments of discord between my subjects and me. The King of England burns you, the King of Denmark beheads you; but, by ——, *I shall stick you with this same whinger.*' And therewith he drew out his dagger upon them, and they fled in great fear from his presence."[1] Knox tells us another anecdote, which shows how the nobility felt on this point. After a dispute between the reformers and some of the Popish clergy, in which the latter were so sorely baffled that they could give no direct answer to the arguments against the mass, the noblemen present said, "We have been miserably deceived heretofore; for if the mass may not obtain remission of sins to the quick and dead, wherefore were all the abbacies so richly doted with our temporal lands?"

It was very natural, therefore, when the Reformation revealed the falsity of the pretences on which so much of their wealth had been obtained by the church, and the costly establishments of the prelates were abolished, that the landed gentry should claim a portion at least of the forfeited property. But in doing this, they showed a degree of avarice and rapacity hardly to be expected from persons who had taken such an active part in reforming the Church. Though the Protestant religion had been established by the law of the land, the Church, as we have said, was still unendowed; and the ministers were supported very sparingly, on the benevolence of the people, or of the gentlemen who received them into their houses. Knox and his brethren, perceiving how matters were going, and that the whole ecclesiastical property would soon be swallowed up, insisted that a considerable proportion of it should be reserved for the support of the poor, the founding of universities and schools, and the maintenance of an efficient ministry throughout the country. At last, after great difficulty, the privy-council came to the determination, that the ecclesiastical revenues should be divided into three parts—that two of them should be given to the ejected prelates during their lives, which afterwards reverted to the nobility; and that the third part should be divided

[1] Sir J. Melville's Memoirs, p. 63.

between the court and the Protestant ministry. "Well!" exclaimed Knox, on hearing of this arrangement, "if the end of this order be happy, my judgment fails me. I see two parts freely given to the devil, and the third must be divided between God and the devil. Who would have thought, that when Joseph ruled in Egypt, his brethren should have travelled for victuals, and have returned with empty sacks unto their families? O happy servants of the devil, and miserable servants of Jesus Christ, if, after this life, there were not hell and heaven!"[1]

But there was another thing that tried the temper of the nobility, and the patience of the reformers, as much as the settlement of the patrimony of the Church; and this was the ratification of the order, government, and discipline of the Church. For this purpose, in the year 1560, a commission was given to John Knox, with Messrs. Winram, Spotswoode, Row, and Douglas, to set down the heads of discipline, as they had already done those of doctrine. This was effected, and a plan of government was soon drawn up, and cordially approved of by the General Assembly, under the name of *The First Book of Discipline.* When this book, however, was submitted to the privy-council, it was warmly opposed by some of the nobility, who dreaded that its provisions would interfere with their selfish plans for appropriating the revenues of the Church. On this account, though subscribed by a number of the nobility, barons, and burgesses in parliament, it did not receive a formal ratification. But it was still regarded by the Church as a standard book, and continued to regulate her practice and guide her decisions.

The constitution of the reformed Church of Scotland, as

[1] Even this pittance, it would appear, was not fully or regularly paid to the ministers. Various means were taken to elude a settlement; and in 1567 we find the General Assembly, in their instructions to their commissioners whom they sent to deal with the privy-council, thus expressing their disappointment: "That Satan, by his instruments, had of long time, and by many subtile ways, laboured to hinder the progress of true religion within this realm; and that now the same was in hazard to be utterly subverted, chiefly through the poverty of the ministers that ought to preach the word of life unto the people; some being compelled to leave their vocation, and betake them to civil callings; others so distracted through worldly cares, as they could not wait upon the preaching of the word so diligently as they wished." To prevent this, and also to provide for the "poor and indigent members of Christ," they entreated that the patrimony of the church should be restored to the *just possessors.* (*Spotswoode*, p. 209.)



laid down in *The First Book of Discipline*, was purely Presbyterian, and remarkably simple. It recognizes four classes of ordinary and permanent office-bearers—the pastor, the doctor, the elder, and the deacon. The two former were distinguished merely by the different work assigned to them—the pastor being appointed to preach and administer the sacraments, while the doctor's office was simply theological and academical. The elder was a spiritual officer, ordained to assist, in the discipline and government of the Church, those "who laboured in word and doctrine;" and to the deacon was assigned, as of old, the oversight of the revenues of the Church and the care of the poor. The affairs of each congregation were managed by the kirk-session, which was composed of the pastor, elders, and deacons; the weekly exercise, afterwards converted into the presbytery, took cognizance of those matters which concerned the neighbouring churches; the provincial synod attended to the wider interests of the churches within its bounds; and the General Assembly, which was composed of ministers and elders commissioned from the different presbyteries of the kingdom, and which met twice or thrice a year, attended to the general interests of the National Church. These were the general features of the system, in the formation of which it was the study of our reformers to imitate, as closely as possible, the model of the primitive churches exhibited in the New Testament; while, in all the subordinate details of their discipline, they steadily kept in view the apostolic rule, "Let all things be done unto edification." Though shackled, in point of practice, by the imperfect provision made for the settlement of churches, and labouring under the disadvantage of not having obtained a civil ratification to their discipline, which would have settled the point at once, they declared it as a principle founded on the word of God, that "it appertaineth to the people, and to every several congregation, to elect their own minister." Indeed, from its very infancy, the Church of Scotland was, essentially and pre-eminently, the church of the people. Their interests were consulted in all its arrangements; and the people on their part, who had been mainly instrumental in its erection, felt deeply interested in its preservation. They watered the roots of their *beloved* Church with their blood; and when it "waxed a

great tree," and they were permitted to lodge under the shadow of its branches, they surveyed it with the fond pride of men who felt that they had a share in its privileges, and therefore a stake in its prosperity.

Owing to the paucity of ministers, and as a temporary expedient till presbyteries were fully organized, it was judged proper, after supplying the principal towns, to assign to the rest the superintendence of a large district, over which they were appointed to travel, somewhat in the character of missionaries, for the purpose of preaching in vacant parishes, planting churches, and inspecting the ministers and readers within their bounds; of their diligence in which services they were to give a report to the Assembly. These persons were called superintendents. With strange inconsistency, those very writers who taunt the Scottish Church with being republican in her constitution, have laid hold of this circumstance as a proof that she was originally prelatical! But in point of fact, these superintendents differed from other ministers in little else than the greater amount of labour allotted to them. They were the servants of the Church courts, and were as much amenable to them as any functionary in the excise now is to her majesty's board of commissioners. They were admitted in the same manner as other pastors, being elected by the people and ordained by the ordinary ministers. They were equally subject to rebuke, suspension, and deposition as the rest of the ministers of the Church. They could not exercise any spiritual jurisdiction without the consent of the provincial synods; and they were accountable to the General Assembly for the whole of their conduct. Nor was there anything in the appointment of these superintendents inconsistent with the genius and spirit of presbytery—a system which, if we may so speak, possesses a plastic character, capable of accommodating itself to any country, to any form of civil government, and to every condition of the Church. The grand peculiarity of presbytery, which distinguishes it from diocesan episcopacy or prelacy, lies not in the want of superintendence—for the pastor with his session forms the true primitive parochial episcopacy, while to the presbytery belongs the superintendence of the congregations within its bounds; nor does it consist *in the equality of its orders*, for it has various orders:



nor even in the temporary and delegated precedence of one over the rest of his brethren, for this belongs to every moderator in a church court; but it lies in the parity of its ministers, and placing the supreme jurisdiction in a General Assembly, the members of which, as in our houses of parliament and courts of justice, assume no pre-eminence in authority over one another. If there was any danger of superintendents becoming prelates, it arose from the tendency of human nature, in certain circumstances, to abuse powers conferred for the best of purposes. Our ancestors soon began to perceive this; and so suspicious were they of anything approaching, or likely to lead, to a lordly domination over the brethren, that they refused to these superintendents the name of bishops, and as presbyteries were set up, this office gradually ceased on the death of the first incumbents.[1]

Different opinions will, of course, be formed of the polity adopted by the Scottish Church, according to the leanings of individuals; and our object being not to discuss principles, but to state facts, we leave the reader to form his own conclusions. Our reformers, it is certain, drew their plan immediately from the Scriptures; and, to use the words of Row, who had the best means of information, they "took not their example from any kirk in the world—no, not from Geneva." They have often been blamed for having swept away, from a morbid antipathy to Popery, not only the abuses and corruptions of the Church, but everything that was decent in its worship, and dignified in its government—leaving the Kirk of Scotland as bare and barren of ornament as her native mountains. We allow that, having satisfied themselves that the Church of Rome was the antichrist of Scripture, they were anxious to strip their establishment of everything that bore the least resemblance to her characteristic features. And they did this in conscientious obedience to the call, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." But we deny that any point of order or doctrine was rejected merely because it had been held by the Romish Church. With respect to *decency*, we defy any Church to show more

[1] Life of Knox, ii. 9, 283; Row's MS. Historie, p. 12. Gilbert Rule, in *his Good Old Way*, has answered all the arguments in favour of the contrary *view of the subject, in The Fundamental Charter.*

regard than was paid by our reforming ancestors to the precept, "Let all things be done decently and in order." And as to *ornaments* and *dignities*, people's ideas of these things will differ, according to the views they take of what true ornament or dignity is. If they refer to worldly ornaments and dignities, of these the Reformed Church of Scotland did not, and would not, boast; she disclaimed them as incompatible with the simplicity of Christ, and demeaning to the spiritual glory of His Church. But there is an "honour which cometh from God;" and of this distinction she was emulous—in this, if we may so speak, she was proud to excel all other churches. The basis of her constitution, of which we have presented an imperfect sketch, may be given in few words:—"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN." Recognizing no earthly head, rejecting all earthly control, she stood forth the immaculate spouse of Christ; and holding in her hand the Word of God, as the charter of her rights, she pointed to her exalted King, seated on the throne of heaven. Placed on such a footing, the ministry of the gospel must command respect. That it has done so, is testified by the fact, that while the prelates of Rome, with all their mitres, croziers, and surplices, sunk into general contempt, being hated by the people for their tyranny, and scorned by the nobles for their arrogance, the humble presbyterian pastor, faithfully discharging the duties of his office, met with respect and affection from all classes of his flock. And that it must continue to do so, may be augured from the principles on which presbyterianism is founded—the principles of common sense as well as of Scripture, and which, however they may be now slighted by some, will, by the blessing of God, survive the hostility that aims at their subversion, and flourish in a higher state of purity than ever they attained in the palmiest days of presbytery, long after the boasted fabrics of human wisdom and human folly have crumbled into dust.

The infant Reformation had scarcely been established, when its safety was endangered by the arrival in Scotland of Mary Queen of Scots. This princess having been married in early life to the French dauphin, was educated in the court of France, under the auspices of her uncle, the Cardinal of *Lorraine, and nursed up in a blind* attachment to Popery



and arbitrary power. Every means had been employed, before she left France, to prejudice her mind against the reformers, and the religion which had been embraced by her subjects. The willing tool of an artful and deep-laid policy, she was taught that it would be the glory of her reign to bring back her kingdom to the obedience of Rome, and to co-operate with the Popish princes of the Continent, who had formed a plan for the universal extirpation of heresy. She arrived at Leith, in August, 1561, and was received by the good people of Edinburgh and Leith with every demonstration of joyous loyalty. She had hardly landed, however, when orders were issued for the celebration of the mass in her private chapel. The ministers regarded this direct breach of the law passed by the parliament as a sure sign of the queen's resolution to set at defiance all that had been done against Popery and in behalf of the reformed religion. Many, however, of the common people, animated by the sudden fervour of loyalty inspired by the presence of their young and lovely queen, began to justify her, and declare their resolution to defend her in the enjoyment of her own religion. Even the lords of the congregation, though at first highly incensed at her conduct, were no sooner admitted into her presence, than, soothed and flattered by the fair speeches of this insinuating princess, they began to cool in their religious zeal. The effects of this transformation on the nobility are thus curiously described by an old historian of the period:—"Every man, as he came up to court, accused them that were before him; but after they had remained a certain space, they came out as quiet as the former. On perceiving this, Campbell of Kinyeancleuch, a man of some humour, and zealous in the cause, said to Lord Ochiltree, whom he met on his way to court, 'My lord, now ye are come last of all; and I perceive that the fire edge is not yet off you; but I fear that, after the holy water of the court be sprinkled upon you, ye shall become as temperate as the rest. For I have been here now five days, and at first nothing was heard but—Down with the mass, hang the priest; but after they had been twice or thrice at the abbey all that fervency passed. I think there be some enchantment, whereby men are bewitched.'"

There was one man, however, whom neither the blandishments of the court, nor the defection of his friends, could

induce to desert his principles, or cool in his attachment to the cause of the Reformation. Knox, the intrepid reformer, perceiving that the queen was determined on prosecuting her designs, and that preparations were making for the celebration of mass in a more public and pompous manner than she had ventured on at first, took occasion to denounce the evils of idolatry from the pulpit, concluding his sermon with these remarkable words: "One mass is more fearful to me, than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm, of purpose to suppress the whole religion." On hearing of this sermon, the queen sent for Knox, and held a long conference with him. She charged him with having taught the people to receive a religion different from that which was allowed by their princes. He replied, that true religion derived its origin and authority, not from princes, but from God; that princes were often most ignorant on this point; and referred to David, and to the primitive Christians. "Yea," said the queen; "but none of these men raised the sword against their princes." "Yet you cannot deny," said Knox, "that they resisted; for those that do not obey the commandment, do in some sort resist." "But they resisted not with the sword." "God, madam, had not given to them the power and the means." "Think you, then," said the queen, "that subjects, having the power, may resist their princes?" "If princes exceed their bounds, madam," replied the reformer, "no doubt they may be resisted, even by power. For no greater honour is to be given to kings than God has commanded to be given to father and mother. But the father may be struck with a frenzy, in which he would slay his children. Now, madam, if the children arise, join together, apprehend the father, take the sword from him, bind his hands, and keep him in prison till the frenzy is over, think you, madam, that the children do any wrong? Even so, madam, it is with princes that would murder the children of God that are subject to them."

On hearing these bold sentiments, so different from anything that she had been accustomed to, Mary stood for nearly a quarter of an hour silent and amazed. At length, addressing the reformer, she said, "Weel, then, I perceive that my subjects shall obey you, and not me." "God forbid," *answered he; "but my travail is* that both princes and subjects

obey God. And think not, madam, that wrong is done to you when ye are willed to be subject to God; for he it is that subjects the people under princes: yea, God craves of kings that they be, as it were, foster-fathers to his Kirk, and commands queens to be nurses unto his people." "Yea," quoth she, "but ye are not the Kirk that I will nourish. I will defend the Kirk of Rome; for it is, I think, the true Kirk of God." "Your will, madam, is no reason; neither doth your thought make that Roman harlot to be the true and immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ." He added, he was ready to prove that the Roman Church had, within five hundred years, degenerated farther from the purity of religion taught by the apostles than the Jewish Church, which crucified Christ, had degenerated from the ordinances God gave them by Moses. "My conscience is not so," said the queen. "Conscience, madam, requires knowledge; and I fear that right knowledge ye have nane." "But I have both heard and read." "So, madam, did the Jews, who crucified Christ Jesus; they read the law and the prophets, and heard them interpreted after their manner. Have you heard any teach but such as the pope and cardinals have allowed? and you may be assured that such will speak nothing to offend their own estate." The queen, after some further reasoning, told him, that although she was unable to contend with him in argument, she knew some who would answer him. "Madam," replied Knox, fervently, "would to God that the learnedest Papist in Europe were present with your grace to sustain the argument, and that you would wait patiently to hear the matter reasoned to an end!" "Well," said she, "you may get that sooner than you believe." "Assuredly," said Knox, "if ever I get that in my life, I get it sooner than I believe; for the ignorant Papist cannot patiently reason; and the learned and crafty Papist will never come to your presence, madam, to have the ground of their religion searched out. When you shall let me see the contrary, I shall grant myself to have been deceived in that point." Thus ended this extraordinary conference. On taking his leave of her majesty, the reformer said, "I pray God, madam, that you may be as blessed within the commonwealth of Scotland, as ever *Deborah was* in the commonwealth of Israel."[1]

[1] *Knox, p. 290*; M'Crie's Life of Knox, ii. 32, &c.

Some time after this, the queen, although she had obtained intelligence of the massacre of Vassy in France, where her uncle, the Duke of Guise, had attacked a congregation of Protestants peaceably assembled for worship, and butchered a number of them, gave a splendid ball to her foreign servants, at which the dancing was prolonged to a late hour. Against this conduct Knox had inveighed in severe terms from the pulpit, and he was again summoned before her majesty. In his defence, he declared that he had been misrepresented, which he would show the queen, provided she would be pleased to hear him repeat, as exactly as he could, what he had preached the day before. Mary was obliged, for once, to listen to a Protestant sermon. When he had finished, she told him, that if he heard anything about her conduct which displeased him, he ought to come to herself privately, and she would willingly listen to his admonitions. Knox easily saw through this proposal, which was evidently intended to prevent him from saying anything in public that might be displeasing to the court. He excused himself on the ground of his office; and, retiring, he jocularly observed, "Albeit at your grace's commandment I am heir now, yit can I not tell what uther men shall judge of me, that at this time of day am absent from my buke, and waiting upon the court." "Ye will not always be at your buke," said the queen, in a pet, and turning her back upon him. As he left the room, "with a reasonable merry countenance," he overheard one of the Popish attendants saying, "He is not afraid!" "Why should the pleasing face of a gentilwoman afray me?" said he, regarding them with a sarcastic scowl; "I have luiked in the face of mony angry *men*, and yit have not been affrayed above measour."

At this time Knox was the only minister of Edinburgh, and there was only one place of worship—St. Giles'—which, however, was capable of accommodating no fewer than three thousand persons. We may conceive the effect produced on this immense multitude by the eloquent declamations, the fervent appeals, and overwhelming invectives, of such a preacher as Knox. And we need not wonder that the proud, the self-willed Queen of Scots, who had lived amidst the flatteries and pleasures of a licentious court, and who *would not listen to the advices of* her most sage and favourite



counsellors, should have ill brooked the unsparing rebukes of the Scottish reformer. Their last interview was more stormy than the preceding, and presents so characteristic a view of Knox, that, familiar as it may be to many of you, we cannot avoid noticing it. He had deeply offended her majesty by protesting against her marriage with Darnley. "Never had prince been handled," she passionately exclaimed, "as she was; she had borne with him in all his rigorous speeches; she had sought his favour by all means; and yet," said she, "I cannot be quit of you. I vow to God I shall be once revenged!" On pronouncing these words, she burst into a flood of tears. When she had composed herself, Knox proceeded calmly to make his defence. "Out of the pulpit," he said, "few had occasion to complain of him; but there he was not his own master, but was bound to obey Him who commanded him to speak plainly, and to flatter no flesh on the face of the earth." Mary again burst into tears. Her courtiers tried to mitigate her grief and indignation by all the arts of blandishment; but during this scene the stern and inflexible mind of the reformer displayed itself. He continued silent, with unaltered countenance, until the queen had given vent to her feelings. He then protested, "that he never took delight in the distress of any creature; that it was with great difficulty he could see his own boys weep when he corrected them, and far less could he rejoice in her majesty's tears; but seeing he had given her no just cause of offence, and had only discharged his duty, he was constrained, though unwillingly, to sustain her tears, rather than hurt his conscience and betray the commonwealth by his silence."

This apology inflamed the queen even more than the offence; she ordered him instantly to leave her presence, and await the signification of her pleasure in an adjoining room. There he stood alone, none of his friends venturing to show him the slightest countenance. In this situation he addressed himself to the ladies of the court who were sitting in their rich dresses in the chamber: "O fair ladies, how pleasing were this lyfe of yours, if it sould always abyde, and then, in the end, that we might pass to heiven with all this gay gear! But fye upon that knave Death, that will come, whether we *will or not!*"

The subsequent history of the unfortunate Mary is too well known to require notice. For a short time a dark cloud hung over the Reformed Church. The queen by her alluring manners gained over a party of the nobles. The Earl of Murray and other Protestant noblemen were compelled to take shelter in England; mass was openly celebrated, and Knox, for his fidelity in warning the people against the consequences, was accused of high treason, and placed in such imminent hazard of his life, that his friends advised him to quit Edinburgh for a season. To crown all, Mary joined the league which had been planned by Catherine of Medicis and the Duke of Alva, those bloodiest of all persecutors, and which bound her to join with them in the *extermination* of all heretics—in other words, she signed the death-warrant of the great mass of her own subjects, nobility, gentry, ministers, and commons.[1] But these gloomy appearances were soon dispelled by her own infatuated conduct. Disgusted with Darnley, and irritated by the assassination of David Rizzio, an Italian musician, whom she had made her secretary,[2] she abandoned herself to the counsels of the Earl of Bothwell, who, to gain his own ambitious ends, plotted the murder of the king. The unfortunate Darnley was decoyed to Edinburgh, and lodged in a house in the outskirts of the town. On the morning of the 10th February, 1567, the whole city was awakened by a tremendous explosion, which was found to proceed from the house in which the king was lodged having been blown up with gunpowder. His dead body was found lying in the neighbourhood. The whole kingdom was thrown into a ferment; the murder was traced to Bothwell, the queen's favourite; and the suspicions of all fell upon the queen as an accomplice in the barbarous deed. These suspicions were soon confirmed by her marriage with the murderer of her husband, and led to a complete change of government. The Protestant noblemen were restored; the queen was obliged to abdicate the throne, and ultimately to flee into England, and her infant son was proclaimed King of Scotland, by the title of James VI.

[1] Tytler's History of Scotland, vii. 18–20.

[2] Rizzio or Riccio was suspected, on good grounds, to be a pensioner of Rome. (Tytler's Hist. vii. 19.) His overbearing pride created him many enemies, and among *others the husband* of Mary, who never rested till he had *procured his destruction.*

Poor Mary might have lived and reigned happily, had she not been a determined Papist. But she died the victim of foreign intrigues more than of her private vices. The latter might have been tolerated by her subjects; but she dealt in larger crimes, and lent herself to traffic with the religion, liberties, and lives of her countrymen. Her memory has shared a similar fate; for her injudicious admirers have sought to vindicate her at the expense of the reformers and the Reformation. In defence of these, again, others have been compelled to tell the truth; and the reputation of the beautiful but frail princess, which was too tender to admit of handling, has been fairly crushed in the collision.[1]

In awarding their due meed of praise to the instruments employed by Providence in accomplishing the Scottish reformation, it would be ungrateful to pass without notice the services rendered to the cause by James, earl of Murray. This excellent nobleman, who succeeded to the regency after the deposition of his sister, Queen Mary, was universally respected and beloved as a governor. Warmly attached to the Reformation from its commencement, and evincing by his private virtues the sincerity of his religious professions, he entered office at a critical period, and it may be said that to his prudence and decision Scotland owed, under God, the preservation of the reformed religion. To the unfortunate queen, while she retained the reins of government, he testified all brotherly kindness; but when she had forfeited the regards of all good men, and the loyalty of all good subjects, the noble firmness with which he upheld the dignity of government, and prosecuted the murderers of the late

[1] The history of Queen Mary is so inseparably intertwined with that of the Reformation, that her honour can only be upheld and defended by sacrificing that of the reformers. Even at this distant date (1874), a *Life of Mary* has appeared in two volumes, by M. Petit of Paris, translated by M. de Flandre of Edinburgh, in which a complete justification of the queen is studiously attempted, at the expense of ruining the character of John Knox, George Buchanan, James, earl of Murray, and the whole race of their Protestant followers in Scotland whom her religion had consigned, but failed to bring to the stake. Than this specimen of posthumous martyrdom, few things could more clearly evince the insatiate malice of Popish vengeance, and its readiness on any fitting occasion to repeat itself, with the same disregard to historical justice, on all those who would venture to speak in behalf of the Protestant champions of three hundred years ago. Mr. Froude, in his recent history of England, is the only genuine historian who has lately *succeeded in sweeping* away the ashes which had gathered around the pile *of this Popish holocaust.*

king, exposed him to the vengeance of these mean-spirited assassins. One Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, whose life the regent had spared after it had been forfeited to the laws of his country, smarting under an injury which he unjustly ascribed to the man who pardoned him,[1] lay in wait for his victim as he rode through Linlithgow, and firing through a window, mortally wounded him, and then made his escape on horseback. This dastardly deed, which, in the manner as well as the spirit in which it was perpetrated, has nothing to redeem it from a resemblance to the base attempts of a modern Fieschi, has been actually applauded by some of the partisans of Mary; while they hold up their hands in horror at the execution of Archbishop Hamilton, who confessed on the scaffold his participation in the infamous transaction! But Murray's memory is embalmed in the page of impartial history. De Thou, the great French historian, affirms, that "he was a man without ambition, without avarice, incapable of doing an injury to any one, distinguished by his virtue, affability, beneficence, and innocence of life." And Spotswoode, who must have conversed with many personally acquainted with Murray, says: "He was a man truly good, and worthy to be ranked among the best governors that this kingdom hath enjoyed, and therefore to this day honoured with the title of *The Good Regent.*"[2]

Knox did not long survive the good regent, whose untimely death he, in common with the whole country, deeply deplored.

[1] Life of Knox, ii. 165, and note W. The story, so often retailed, of Regent Murray's cruelty to Hamilton's wife, has been found out to be a complete forgery, resting solely on the authority of Crawfurd's Memoirs, a book which has been proved to be a tissue of fabrications from beginning to end. (See *Preface to Historie of King James the Sext*, Bannatyne edit.) Murray's assassination was the result of a plot, in which the lairds of Fernherst and Buccleugh had a chief share. One of their followers, on the day after the murder, and before it could be known on the borders, said, in reply to another who threatened him with the regent's displeasure, "Tush, the regent is cauld as the bit in my horse's mouth." (*Bannatyne's Mem.* p. 4, Ban. edit.)

[2] See the character of Murray cleared from the aspersions of Dr. Robertson and other historians, in Life of Knox, vol. ii. note W. Mr. Tytler, who manifests such horror at the assassination of David Rizzio, passes the murder of Regent Murray without any expression of sympathy for the victim or abhorrence of the crime. He even attempts to anticipate any such emotions in the breasts of his readers, by repeating, as an undoubted fact, the story about Hamilton's wife, and reiterating the charge of betraying Norfolk, which *even Hume has said he could* prove to be "no way dishonourable." (*Tytler's Hist. of Scot.* vol. vii.)



Having returned to Edinburgh, he resumed with his usual ardour his ministerial labours, in which he was now ably assisted by his colleague, John Craig. But a stroke of apoplexy, from the effects of which he never fully recovered, and his incessant cares, brought on him prematurely the infirmities of age, and he was soon unable to make himself be heard in the large church of St. Giles. The following description of his personal appearance at this time, given by James Melville in his Diary, is exceedingly striking. "Of all the benefits I had that year (1571), was the coming of that maist notable prophet and apostle of our nation, Mr. John Knox, to St. Andrews. I heard him teach there the prophecies of Daniel. I had my pen and my little book, and tuk away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text he was moderat, the space of an halff-houre; but when he enterit to application, he made me sa to grew and tremble, that I culd nocht hald a pen to wryt. I heard him oftimes utter those thretenings, in the hicht of their pryde, whilk the eyes of monie saw cleirlie brought to pass. Mr. Knox wald sumtyme come in and repose him in our college-yard, and call us scholars to him and bless us, and exhort us to know God and his wark in our country, and stand by the guid caus. I saw him everie day of his doctrine (preaching) go hulie and fear (cautiously) with a furring of martriks about his neck, a staff in the ane hand, and guid godlie Richart Ballenden, his servand, haldin up the other oxtar, from the abbey to the paroche kirk, and by the said Richart and an other servant, lifted up to the pulpit, whar he behovit to lean at his first entrie; bot or he had done with his sermon, he was sa active and vigorous, that he was lyk to ding that pulpit in blads and flie out of it."[1]

But the time was fast approaching when this zealous servant of Jesus Christ was to rest from his labours. Feeling his end approaching he desired that some one should read to him every day the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, the 53d of Isaiah, and a portion of the epistle to the Ephesians. To his colleague, elders, and deacons, assembled in his room, he said: "The day approaches for which I have long and vehemently thirsted, when I shall be released from my great labours and sorrows, and shall be with Christ. I know that

[1] Melville's Diary, p. 26, Ban. edit.

many have complained of my too great severity; but God knows that my mind was always void of hatred to the persons of those against whom I thundered the severest judgments." On Sabbath, after lying quiet for some time, he suddenly exclaimed, "If any be present, let them come and see the work of God." He then burst out into these rapturous expressions: "I have been these two last nights in meditation on the troubled state of the Church of Christ, despised of the world, but precious in the sight of God. I have called to God for her, and commended her to her husband, Jesus Christ. I have fought against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things, and have prevailed." Having seemed to fall into a slumber, interrupted with heavy moans, and being asked why he sighed so deeply, he replied, "I have during my life sustained many assaults of Satan, but at present he has assailed me most fearfully, and put forth all his strength to make an end of me at once. The cunning serpent has laboured to persuade me that I have merited heaven and eternal blessedness by the faithful discharge of my ministry. But blessed be God, who has enabled me to quench this fiery dart, by suggesting to me such passages as these: 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' and, 'by the grace of God I am what I am.'" A little after, he said, "Now, for the last time," touching three of his fingers as he spoke, "I commend my soul, spirit, and body, into thy hand, O Lord." He then gave a deep sigh, saying, "Now, it is come!" His attendants perceiving that he had lost his speech, requested him to give a sign that he heard them, and died in peace; upon which he lifted up one of his hands and sighing twice, expired without a struggle. He died in the 67th year of his age, November 24, 1572. His funeral was attended by the Regent Morton, all the nobility in town, and a vast concourse of people; and when his body was laid in the grave Morton pronounced over it the short but emphatic epitaph: "There lies he who never feared the face of man!"[1]

Such was the end of one whose name, while he lived, was a terror to the enemies of the Reformation, and whose memory, since the day of his death, lay under a load of unmerited reproach from which it has only lately been

[1] James Melville *has it thus: "Here* lies he that neither feared nor flattered *any flesh." (Diary, p. 47.)*



rescued. In the popular histories of the day John Knox was held up as a fierce and gloomy bigot, equally a foe to polite learning and innocent enjoyment; and in his conduct towards the Queen of Scots, to whose winning loveliness the rugged reformer afforded an inviting though most invidious contrast, he was represented as acting the part of a barbarian. We have cause to rejoice that the cloud of popular prejudice against our reformer has been dispelled, and his character placed in its proper light. It has been shown, that though sternly upright and fearlessly courageous in the discharge of his duty, he was a tender-hearted and generous man; that his firmness as a patriot was based on the sincerest piety; and that the real design, as well as the effect of his measures, was to emancipate his country from superstition, ignorance, and barbarism, substituting in their place the blessings of education, liberty, and religion. The attempts made to revive the exploded calumnies of his enemies, whether by the sentimental admirers of Queen Mary, or by the lovers of despotism and apostolic succession, have met with no credit or sympathy from the public; and, to their honour, the breasts of all true Scotsmen have once more learned to vibrate in unison with the manly worth, the sacred patriotism, and the high-toned principle of the Scottish reformer.

CHAPTER IV.

1572 — 1586.

Attempts to alter the constitution of the Church of Scotland—Tulchan bishops—Anecdote of Campbell of Kinyeancleuch—Andrew Melville—Second Book of Discipline—The National Covenant of Scotland—Excommunication of Montgomery—Melville's intrepidity—Scenes between James VI. and the Presbyterian ministers.

Knox at his death left the affairs of the Kirk in a very unsettled state. Hitherto the Church of Scotland had contended chiefly for the honour of Christ in his priestly and prophetical offices, against the corruptions of the Papacy; she was soon called to struggle for the glory of his office as the King of Zion, against the encroachments of civil power and prelatic ambition. Even before the death of Knox an attempt was made to alter her form of government. In the year 1572 a convention, composed of superintendents and other ministers supposed to be favourable to this design, met at Leith, and, through the influence of Morton, were induced to consent that the titles of archbishop, bishop, &c., should be retained; and that qualified persons among the ministers should be advanced to these dignities. The General Assembly, which was held the same year, condemned this innovation; but it served the design of Morton, which was, that these bishops should be nominally put in possession of the whole benefices, but should rest satisfied with a small portion to themselves, and enter into a private bargain to deliver up the rest to him and other noblemen who acted with him. The ministers who were so mean as to accept of bishoprics under this disgraceful and simoniacal paction, exposed themselves to general contempt, and were called, by way of derision, *tulchan bishops*—a tulchan being a calf's *skin stuffed with straw*, which the country people set



up beside the cow to induce her to give her milk more freely. "The bishop," it was said, "had the title, but my lord had the milk." They were, indeed, mere phantom bishops, for most of them had no episcopal ordination; and they had no share in the government of the Church.[1]

Still, the introduction of these nominal dignitaries threatened the future peace of the Church; and the prospect of the confusion to which it might give rise embittered the last hours of Knox, whose "dead hand and dying voice" were raised against the innovation. Hume of Godscroft informs us that the reformer "rebuked Morton sharply for divers things, but especially for his labouring to set up and maintain the estate of bishops;"[2] and shortly before his death he admonished the same nobleman to maintain the Church of God, and his ministry; warning him that if he did not, "God would spoil him of all, and his end would be ignominy and shame"—a prediction which Morton acknowledged, before his execution, he had "fand true indeid."[3]

The history of the Church during Morton's regency, from 1572 to 1578, presents little more than a series of struggles between the court and the Kirk, all occasioned by the attempts of the regent to intrude that spurious kind of prelacy which we have now described. For some time he appeared likely to obtain the advantage. The old heroes of the Reformation were fast dying out; and their successors, dreading the regent's resentment, or unwilling to show an example of insubordination by resisting his authority, were yielding up, inch by inch, the liberties of the Church. We have no doubt, the idea which many have formed of the presbyterian clergy, from the common accounts of the period, is, that they were a body of rude fanatics, who took delight

[1] The first tulchan bishop was Mr. John Douglas, a simple old man, whom Morton presented to the see of St. Andrews. "That was the first time I heard Mr Patrick Constantine," says James Melville, "the week after the bishop was made. In his sermon he made three sorts of bishops,—my lord bishop, my lord's bishop, and the Lord s bishop. My lord bishop, said he, was in the papistry; my lord's bishop is now, when my lord gets the benefice, and the bishop serves for nothing but to make his title sure; and the Lord's bishop is the true minister of the gospel." (*Diary*, p. 25.) This Mr. Patrick *Constantine* was the same person with Patrick Adamson, who afterwards *agreed to become one of* "my lord's bishops."

[2] *History of House of Douglas*, ii. 284. [3] Bannatyne, 358.

in opposing the civil power, and setting themselves up as spiritual dictators to king and subjects. The truth, however, as attested by history, is, that the greater part of the Scots ministers were a simple and facile race of men, easily deceived or overawed; that persons of weak or worldly minds were easily found, who, from fear of offending the great, or losing their livings, fell in with the measures of the court; and that, had it not been for a few active and energetic spirits, stirred up from time to time by a gracious Providence to stem the tide of defection, they would, on more than one occasion, have bartered away their dearest privileges without a struggle. Such, we are sorry to say, was the case at the period of which we now speak.

An incident occurred in 1574 which displayed their pusillanimity as well as the grasping avarice of the regent. Among other plans for replenishing his coffers Morton had fallen on the expedient of uniting three or four parishes under the care of one minister. Mr. John Davidson, who afterwards became minister of Prestonpans, and made a considerable figure in the history of the Church, and who was at this time a young man and regent in the University of St. Andrews, had composed a poetical dialogue, which he called "A Conference betwixt the Clark and the Courtier," and in which he exposed, in terms more plain than pleasant, the mischievous and disreputable character of the practice.[1] Morton was highly incensed at this *jeu d'esprit*, and threatened the author with prosecution. The poem was presented to the General Assembly for their judgment, and it was too evident that his brethren were afraid to give it the sanction of their approbation. On this occasion the honest spirit of Campbell of Kinyeancleuch (the same who rated the nobility so severely for truckling to Queen Mary) again manifested itself. Perceiving that the Assembly were trifling in the matter, he turned to Mr. Davidson and said, "Brother, look for no answer here. God hath taken away the hearts from men, that they dare not justify the truth, lest they displease the world. Therefore, cast you for the next best." "What is

[1] Among other lines, the poem contained the following:—

"Had gude John Knox not yet been deid,
It had not cum unto this heid:
Had they myntit till sic ane steir,
He had made heavin and eirth to hear."



that?" said Davidson. "Go home with me," replied his sagacious friend. "Nay," added he, seeing that the young minister hesitated, "ye may lawfully flee when ye are persecuted." Davidson, finding that Morton was determined against him, accepted the kind invitation, and set off under the laird's protection to Kinyeancleuch. On their journey Campbell was seized with a severe and fatal illness. Feeling the near approach of death, this faithful and pious gentleman could not restrain his emotions when he thought of the state in which he left the Church of his native land. "A pack of traitors," he exclaimed, referring to some of the ministers, "have sold Christ to the regent, as manifestly as ever Judas did? *What leal heart can contain itself unbursting?*" And he burst out into tears, accompanied with sobs and lamentations. He then stretched out his hand to Mr. Davidson, saying, "Take my best horse with you, and ride away with my blessing. The Lord bless you: gird up your loins, and make to your journey; for ye have a battle to fight, and few to take your part but the Lord only."[1]

I cannot pass this incident without giving utterance to a reflection which I have no doubt has already occurred to my readers. How seldom amongst our people in this day, and, alas! how much more seldom amongst our gentry, do we meet with a similar example of such tender-hearted concern for the interests of Zion! Amidst all the professions of zeal that we hear, how rarely, among any class of Christians, does the low state of religion in the Church draw a tear from the eye, or a sob from the heart!

The state of ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland during this period was very singular. A species of secular and nominal prelacy was upheld by the court, while the Church, established by law, remained presbyterial. The Assembly would grant the bishops no authority, even as their representatives in parliament, and demanded that, in all matters ecclesiastical, they should be subject to the Church courts. This anomalous state of things could not last long without producing jealousies and dissensions. The churchmen who were raised to these titular dignities disdained to submit to the trial and censure of the General Assembly; and the Assembly, on the other hand, soon discovered that the continuance of bishops, even in

[1] Calderwood's MS. Hist. iv. ad. an. 1574, Adv. Libr.

name, was dangerous to the liberties of the Church. In August, 1575, while they declined interfering with the civil arrangement regarding these prelates, the Assembly decided that "the name of bishop is injurie to all them that has a particular flock over the which he has ane peculiar charge;" and in several subsequent meetings various acts were passed to the same effect, which, says Row, "were afterwards riven out of the registers of the General Assembly (ye may easily judge by whom);"[1] yet, by God's good providence, a principal act was concluded, and remains undestroyed, in the year 1580, when it was declared that "the office of ane bishop, as it is now used and commonly taken within this realm, has no sure warrand, authority, or good ground out of the Scripture of God, but is brought in by folly and corruption, to the great overthrow of the kirk of God."[2]

While matters were in the state now described the cause of truth was revived, and a new spirit infused into the councils of the church, by the arrival in Scotland of another champion of the Reformation, whose name deserves a place next to that of Knox—Andrew Melville. This accomplished scholar and divine had been residing for ten years on the Continent, where he enlarged the learning which he had acquired at home, and which had procured him a very high character in the literary world. Endowed with all the firmness, intrepidity, and integrity of Knox, Melville was enabled, from his superior literary endowments, to confer lasting benefits upon his country, by introducing salutary reforms into its universities, and reviving a taste for letters. He was successively appointed principal of the University of Glasgow, and of the new college, St. Andrews; and being also a minister and a professor of divinity, he had a right to sit in the church courts. It was not long before he was called to lend the powerful aid of his talents in the struggle of the Church against prelacy. And among other services he had a chief hand in the composition of the *Second Book of Discipline*, which, after long and deliberate discussion, was approved and adopted by the General Assembly in 1578.

[1] He refers to Archbishop Adamson, who obtained possession of the registers, and mutilated them in those places where prelacy had been condemned.

[2] Row's MS. Hist. ad. an. 1575; Booke of Univ. Kirk, pp. 152, 194; Ibid. Ban. *edit. i. 342, ii. 453.*



Of this book, which, though not ratified by parliament, still forms a standard work in the Church of Scotland, we may remark that it defines the government of the Church still more exactly than the *First Book of Discipline*, which was drawn up hastily, to meet the emergency of a sudden conversion from Popery. It traces the essential line of distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power; declaring, that Jesus Christ has appointed a government in his Church distinct from civil government, which is to be exercised in his name by such officers as he hath authorized, and not by civil magistrates, or under their direction. Civil authority, they say, has for its direct and proper object the promoting of external peace and quietness among the subjects; ecclesiastical authority, the directing of men in matters of religion and conscience; yet as they are both of God, and tend to one common end, if rightly used, viz., the glory of God and making men good subjects, they ought to co-operate within their respective spheres, and fortify, without interfering with, one another. They claim the right of church courts, as courts of Christ, to convene and settle business independent of the civil power. These courts were divided into sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies. They admit of no superiority of office in the church above a teaching presbyter, or minister of the gospel—no pastor of pastors. None are to be intruded into the ministry contrary to the will of the congregation. And among the abuses which they desire to see reformed by the state is lay-patronage, which they declare leads to intrusion, and is incompatible with "lawful election, and the assent of the people over whom the person is placed, as the practice of the apostolical and primitive kirk and good order craves."

Of the discipline thus briefly sketched we shall only say, that while Presbyterians never alleged an inspired prescription for every part of its details, they consider its leading and characteristic principles to be of divine origin, or, to use the language of Calderwood, "to be taken, not out of the cistern of men's invention, but from the pure fountains of God's Holy Word." At the same time, its subordinate arrangements are supported by the general rules of Scripture. They are simple, well calculated to preserve order and unity, and promote the edification of the flock of Christ; and, when

duly observed, they will be found as much opposed to clerical domination as to popular confusion.

Impolitic as Morton's administration was, it was not nearly so bad as that which succeeded. A party of discontented nobles having gained access to the young king, persuaded him to assume the government into his own hands. Morton resigned, and in 1578 James VI. ascended the throne, in the twelfth year of his age. This young prince had been carefully brought up under the superintendence of the Countess of Mar and the celebrated George Buchanan, who early instilled into his mind the elements of learning and the principles of religion. It must be owned that Buchanan was not exactly the man fitted to inspire his royal pupil with favourable ideas of Presbytery. He had become recluse and testy in his old age; and the impression which he left on the mind of James may be gathered from what the king used long after to say of one of his old English courtiers: "That man makes me always tremble at his approach; he minds me so of my old pedagogue."[1] Buchanan, on his part, seems to have entertained a very low opinion of the mental capacity of his pupil; for, on being reproached for having made the king a pedant, he is said to have replied, that "it was the best he could make of him." Unfortunately, at the commencement of his reign, James fell into the hands of two unprincipled courtiers—the one a Frenchman, whom he created Duke of Lennox; and the other, Captain Stewart, a notorious profligate, who afterwards became Earl of Arran. These men, besides polluting his morals, filled his head with the most extravagant notions of kingly power, and the strongest prejudices against the Scottish Church, the strict discipline of which, for obvious reasons, was peculiarly obnoxious to persons of such character. To the impressions then made on the vain and weak mind of James we may trace all the troubles which distracted his reign in Scotland.[2]

The reign of James, however, may be said to have had an auspicious commencement. On the 17th October, 1579, he made a sort of triumphal entry into Edinburgh, when he was received by the inhabitants with every demonstration of loyalty. Entering at the West Port, the houses in the streets through which he passed were covered with tapestry; and

[1] *Irving's Life of Buchanan, p. 159.* [2] M'Crie's Life of Melville, i. 257.



various allegorical devices, in the quaint style of the times, were contrived to give *eclat* to the procession. The silver keys of the city were delivered to him by a young boy, emerging from a splendid figure of the globe, which opened as his majesty approached. Four beautiful damsels, representing the four cardinal virtues, each addressed him in a short speech; while another lady, personating religion, invited him to enter the church, where he heard a discourse. Thereafter Bacchus, crowned with garlands, and bestriding a puncheon, welcomed the king to his own town; wine was liberally distributed to the poor; musicians, stationed at different places, greeted him with the melody of their viols; and finally, amidst the sound of trumpets, and the shouts of the people, his majesty proceeded to the Abbey.[1]

In the following year the king gave a proof of his attachment to the Protestant cause, highly gratifying to his people, by agreeing to a solemn deed, which marks one of the most important eras in the history of the Church of Scotland—we refer to the NATIONAL COVENANT. Before the Reformation several bonds or covenants had been entered into by the Protestant nobility, gentry, and others, in which they pledged themselves to defend and support the true religion against its enemies; and to the confederation thus solemnly cemented may be traced much of the success which attended their struggles against Popery. The same practice had been previously adopted, with the happiest effects, by the Protestant princes of Germany and the Protestant Church of France. In Scotland, however, where the Protestant had become the established religion, this solemnity assumed the peculiar form of a national deed; and our ancestors were naturally led, by similarity of circumstances, to imitate the covenants of ancient Israel, when king, priests, and people, swore mutual allegiance to the true God. In following this practice, they justly considered themselves warranted by the light of nature and the precepts of the moral law, by the promises which refer to gospel times, and by the examples of holy Scripture.

The National Covenant of Scotland was simply an abjuration of Popery, and a solemn engagement, ratified by a solemn oath, to support the Protestant religion. Its *immediate* occasion was a dread, too well founded—a dread

[1] MS. in Adv. Lib.; Calderwood's MS. Hist. ad an., 1579.

from which Scotland was never entirely freed till the revolution—of the re-introduction of Popery. It was well-known that Lennox was an emissary of the house of Guise, and had been sent over to prevail on the young king to embrace the Roman Catholic faith. Foreseeing that James would succeed to the throne of England on the death of Elizabeth, the crafty politicians of Rome, ever watching to regain their ascendency in that kingdom, saw the advantage of winning over the Scottish monarch. The pope himself sent him flattering letters; Jesuits and seminary priests were introduced into the country in disguise; and letters from Rome were intercepted, granting a dispensation to Roman Catholics to profess the Protestant faith for a time, provided they preserved a secret attachment to their own religion, and embraced every opportunity of advancing the papal interests.[1] Such an unprincipled conspiracy against true religion and civil liberty, a conspiracy so dangerous at all times to a country divided in religious sentiment, demanded a counter-combination equally strict and solemn, and led to the formation of the national covenant of Scotland. This was drawn up at the king's request, by his chaplain, John Craig. It consisted of an abjuration, in the most solemn and explicit terms, of the various articles of the Popish system, and an engagement to adhere to and defend the reformed doctrine and discipline of the reformed Church of Scotland. The covenanters further pledged themselves, under the same oath, "to defend his majesty's person and authority with our goods, bodies, and lives, in the defence of Christ's evangel, liberties of our country, ministration of justice, and punishment of iniquity, against all enemies within the realm or without." This bond, at first called "the king's confession," was sworn and subscribed by the king and his household, for example to others, on the 28th of January, 1581; and afterwards, in consequence of an order in council, and an act of the General Assembly, it was cheerfully subscribed by all ranks of persons through the kingdom; the ministers zealously promoting the subscription in their respective parishes.

But while this solemn transaction had a powerful influence in quieting the public mind, and rivetting the attachment of

[1] *Life of Melville*, i. 173. Note V.



the nation to the Protestant faith, it did not prevent the royal favourites from prosecuting their obnoxious measures. On the death of Boyd, nominal archbishop of Glasgow, Lennox offered the vacant see to several ministers, on condition of their making over to him most part of its revenues by a private bargain; but they had firmness to reject the base temptation. The offer was at last accepted by Robert Montgomery, minister of Stirling, a man, says Dr. Robertson, "vain, feeble, presumptuous, and more apt to have alienated the people from an order already beloved, than to reconcile them to one which was the object of their hatred."[1] The consequence was, a keen altercation between the court and the General Assembly, which continued for some time.

At length, in 1582, matters were brought to a crisis. The king having written a letter in favour of Montgomery, the Assembly of that year answered it "discreetly and wisely, yet standing to their poynt," and were proceeding to confirm a sentence of suspension against Montgomery, when he rushed out of the house; and a messenger-at-arms appeared, who charged the moderator and Assembly, "under pain of rebellion and putting them to the horn," if they should direct summons against him, or in any way trouble him in his ministry, for aspiring to the see of Glasgow. This was a case of what has been called collision between the jurisdictions civil and ecclesiastical. The question was, not whether the individual ministers should obey the law of the land, but whether the Church should obey the state, or, in other words, yield up her spiritual independence. The Assembly did not hesitate a moment. Montgomery was summoned to their bar, to answer, among other offences, for having procured the charging of the Assembly with the king's letters; and not compearing, he was laid under the awful sentence of excommunication.

The Presbytery of Glasgow having assembled to carry this judgment into effect, Montgomery entered the meeting with the magistrates and an armed force, to stop their procedure. The moderator, refusing to obey the mandate, was forcibly pulled from his chair by the provost, who tore his beard, struck out one of his teeth, and committed him to the tol-*booth*. But still the presbytery continued sitting, and they

[1] Robertson's History of Scotland, book vi.



remitted the case to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, which appointed Mr. John Davidson, who had now returned to Scotland and was settled at Liberton, to excommunicate Montgomery. The court stormed and threatened; but the intrepid young minister, at the risk of his life, which was menaced by Lennox, pronounced the sentence before a large auditory, and it was intimated on the succeeding Sabbath in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and many of the adjoining churches.[1]

To show the disrepute into which prelacy had fallen in Scotland, and the respect paid to a sentence of the ecclesiastical courts, we may mention, that when Montgomery shortly afterwards came to Edinburgh, the inhabitants, as soon as they heard he was in town, rose up in a body and demanded that he should be expelled. Lennox attempted to shield him from their fury by a proclamation that all men should accept of him as a good Christian and a true subject. But the Frenchman knew not the temper of the people he had to deal with. They insisted that the excommunicated archbishop should no longer pollute the town with his presence, and waited for his coming out of the council-room, where he had sought refuge, the men armed with sticks and the women with every kind of missile. Montgomery was glad to crave the convoy of the provost out of town by a back passage, called the Kirk Wynd. In making his way through this narrow defile he was discovered and pursued by the mob, with "Aha, false thief! mansworn thief!" and taking to his heels, he narrowly escaped, at the expense of two or three buffets on the neck, when in the act of getting out at the wicket-gate of the Potterrow Port. It is said that King James, who was fond of all sorts of practical jokes, even at the expense of his friends, when he heard of this rude popular ebullition, "lay down on the Inch of Perth, and laughed his fill, saying that Montgomery was a seditious loon."[2]

In the meantime Melville was not idle. In a sermon preached at the opening of the General Assembly he inveighed against those who had introduced what he called the *bludie gullie* of absolute power into the country, and who sought to erect a new popedom in the person of the king. Adverting to the designs of the popish powers, "This," he

[1] Row's MS. *Hist. ad. an. 1582;* Calderwood's Hist. Ib.
[2] *Calderwood's MS. Hist.* vol. v., ad. an. 1581; MS. Notes in Adv. Lib.



exclaimed, "will be called meddling with civil affairs; but these things tend to the wreck of religion, and therefore I rehearse them." Being afterwards employed with others to present a bold remonstrance to the king and council from the Assembly on this subject, he displayed a spirit which reminds us of the first reformer. Arran, looking round with a threatening countenance, exclaimed, "Who dare subscribe these treasonable articles?" "WE DARE," replied Melville, and advancing to the table he took the pen from the clerk and subscribed.[1]

In these contendings the ministers had hitherto received no support from the nobility; but in August, 1582, a few noblemen, disgusted with the conduct of Lennox and Arran, forcibly took possession of the king's person, with the view of delivering him and the country from their disgraceful influence. The nobles seem to have treated him, while he was in their hands, very much as they would have done a spoiled child, who did not know how to use his liberty without doing mischief to himself and all around him. On attempting to escape he was seized by the master of Glammis, upon which he burst into tears. "No matter," Glammis roughly replied, with his leg planted across the door, "better that bairns weep than bearded men." This enterprise, which is known in history as "the raid of Ruthven," was ill planned; and it soon issued in the restoration of the unworthy favourites, the banishment of the lords engaged in it, and troublesome consequences to the Church. The king never forgave the attempt, which he ascribed to the influence of the ministers, and which thus served to prejudice him still more than ever against the discipline of presbytery. It does not appear that the ministers had any share in the plot; but candour requires us to state that they imprudently involved themselves, by passing an act of approval.

For about a year, while the two worthless favourites were removed from court, the Church enjoyed a respite; and the faithful ministers who had been banished were, to the great joy of the people, restored to their charges. The following scene will illustrate the estimation in which these pastors were held. John Dury, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, *had proved* a great eye-sore to the court, and particularly to

[1] Life of Melville, i. 183.



the Duke of Lennox, whose open profligacies were as openly rebuked by the unsparing preacher. Lennox became so enraged, that, not content with having summoned Dury to the council at Dalkeith House, and procured his banishment from Edinburgh, he caused him to be attacked by his French cooks, who nearly murdered him, on his way from the council, with their spits and large knives. During his banishment the Assembly ordered the Presbytery of Edinburgh to keep his charge vacant; and after the raid of Ruthven Dury was restored to his flock. The people, hearing of his approach to the city, went out in great crowds to meet him at the Nether Bow. Here, with a gravity characteristic of Scottish mobs on much less solemn occasions, they arranged themselves in the form of a triumphal procession, in the midst of which the minister was conducted along the street—the multitude, with uncovered heads and loud voices, singing the 124th Psalm, in the peculiar metre, and in all the four parts of the old tune:—

"Now Israel
may say, and that truly," &c.

The sounds of the rejoicing melody reached the ears of the duke, whose house stood in the High Street; and when, on looking out of his window, he saw his old enemy thus restored in triumph, "in a French passion" he tore his beard, imprecated curses on John Dury, hastened out of town, and never returned again to Scotland.[1]

The scene, however, soon changed. The Earl of Arran, who was really the worse of the two, was restored to favour; the nobles who had engaged in the *raid* were banished; and a cloud descended on the Church. In February, 1584, Melville was summoned before the privy council to answer for certain treasonable speeches he was alleged to have uttered in a sermon; and finding that the unprincipled Arran was determined to send him to the castle of Blackness, then the Bastile of Scotland, he yielded to the importunities of his friends, and escaped from the storm by retreating to Berwick.

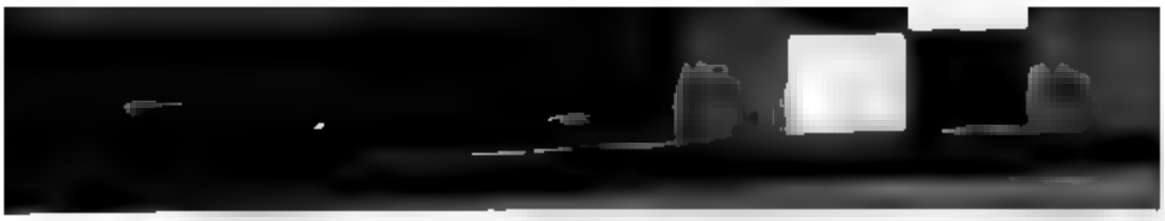
In May following the parliament overturned the independence of the Church, by ordaining that no ecclesiastical assembly *should be held* without the king's consent; that

[1] *Melville's Diary, p. 95; MS. Notes in Adv. Lib. M. 8*



none were to presume to say a word, privately or publicly, against the proceedings of his council; that to decline the judgment of the king and privy council, in any matter whatever, should be punished as treason; and that all ministers were to acknowledge the bishops as their ecclesiastical superiors. These acts of parliament were called by the people the *black acts*—a name they well merited, whether we consider the base character of the administration that decreed them, the malicious hostility to the liberties of the Church which they betrayed, or the melancholy consequences to which they led. Suspecting that the ministers would publicly condemn these Erastian acts, orders were sent to the provost and bailies to apprehend James Lawson and Walter Balcanqual, ministers of Edinburgh, in the event of their doing so, and pull them out of the pulpit. This, however, did not deter them from denouncing the acts on the following Sabbath; and on Monday morning, when they were proclaimed at the cross, they publicly protested against them, with all due formalities, in the name of the Church of Scotland. Orders were immediately issued for their apprehension; but they saved themselves by a timely flight, and, with upwards of twenty other ministers who followed their example, took refuge in England.

Some may be surprised to hear of the liberties then used by Presbyterian ministers, and perhaps disposed to blame them for introducing secular matters into the pulpit. But did not the government first set the example of intermeddling with what did not belong to them, when they claimed an Erastian power over the Church? Some individuals among the clergy may have used unbecoming language; but not to mention other considerations, it ought to be remembered that at that period the pulpit was almost the only organ by which, in the absence of a free press, public opinion was or could be expressed, and the ecclesiastical courts were the only assemblies in the nation which possessed anything like liberty or independence. It was the preachers who first taught the people to express an opinion on the conduct of their rulers; and the assemblies of the Church set the earliest example of a firm and regular opposition to the arbitrary measures of the court. But they stood upon higher ground still: for we distinctly maintain, that the ministers of Scotland



would never have thus denounced the acts of government, unless these acts had infringed, directly or indirectly, on the liberties of the Church and the prerogatives of the King of Zion; and when they did so, it was from no contempt of royal authority, but from conscientious obedience to that higher power "by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice." In fact, the Assembly about this time passed an act prohibiting the use of rash and irreverent speeches in the pulpit against his majesty, and deposed one of their number for having been guilty of that offence.

But the reader will be less surprised at the freedoms which the ministers took with the king, when we mention what freedoms the king used with the ministers. Nothing, indeed, pleased James better than a public disputation with the clergy. Having been in Edinburgh a little before this time he attended worship in the High Church. Balcanqual advanced something to show that ministers had as great authority as bishops; upon which James, who plumed himself on his skill in divinity, and thought he could handle a text better than any divine in his kingdom, rose up from his seat, and interrupting the preacher—"Mr. Walter," said he, "what scripture have ye for that assertion? I am sure ye have no scripture so to allege." The preacher said he would show his majesty that he had scripture sufficient. "If ye prove that by scripture," said the king, "I will give ye my kingdom;" adding that it was the practice of the preachers to busy themselves about such causes in the pulpit, but he "knew their intent weil enouch," and would look after them. This interlude continued upwards of a quarter of an hour, after which the king sat down and patiently heard out the sermon.

There is a similar story told of James which is less generally known. Patrick Adamson, who had been presented to the see of St. Andrews, had gone up to England on pretence of business, and obtained episcopal consecration there in a clandestine manner. On his return to Scotland, however, he found the zeal of the Assembly and the people running so high against the order, that he durst not openly avow his prelatic character. While in this predicament the king brought him from St. Andrews to Edinburgh to preach before him in the High Church, and accompanied him with his own



guard, to protect him from the people. On entering, his majesty, finding the pulpit pre-occupied by Mr. John Cowper, one of the ordinary ministers, who was just beginning to officiate, cried out, "Mr. Cowper, I will not have you preach today; I command you to come down out of the pulpit, and let the *Bishop of St. Andrews* go up and preach to me." "Please your majesty," said Cowper, "this is the day appointed to me to preach, and if it were your majesty's pleasure I would fain supply the place myself." By this time the king discovered, from the surprise and commotion of the people, that he had unwittingly let out the secret of Adamson's new dignity; and, correcting himself, he replied, "I will not hear you at this time; I command you to come down, and let *Maister Patrick Adamson* go up and preach this day." "I shall obey, sir," said Cowper, coming down from the pulpit. But the whole assembly was now in uproar and confusion. The archbishop, surrounded with the king's body-guard, mounted the pulpit, and was seen bowing with great reverence to his majesty; but not a word could be heard for the outcries and lamentations of the people, who kept running out and rushing in, creating the most extraordinary noise; in the midst of which the king, coming still lower down with his titles, cried out in great wrath, with an oath, "What d—l ails the people, that they will not tarry to hear *a man* preach?"[1]

Patrick Adamson, who was formerly introduced to our notice, gave great annoyance to the Church about this time, and no individual in the nation was more heartily disliked. He was known to have been the chief adviser of the measures for overturning the presbyterian discipline, and he had employed his pen to traduce the characters of some of the best and noblest of the land who had opposed them. With all his learning and talents, he was of a mean-spirited and cowardly disposition. Trusting to the favour of the court, though he had been first suspended by the Assembly, and afterwards excommunicated by the Synod of Fife, he determined to show his contempt of these ecclesiastical censures, by preaching in the parish church of St. Andrews on the Sabbath after the latter sentence was pronounced. But somebody having whispered to him, as he entered the church, that a great

[1] *Prynne's Antipathie of Lordly Prelacy to Regal Monarchy*, p. 338; Row's *MS. Hist.* p. &c.



crowd of gentlemen had gathered, and were threatening to take him out of the pulpit and hang him, he became so frightened that he fled for refuge to the steeple, and it required all the persuasions and bodily strength of the bailies to get him "ruggit out" and carried home.[1] At last, deserted by the king and deprived of his annuity, he was indebted for support to Andrew Melville, to whom he had been a most bitter enemy; and falling into ill health, he earnestly petitioned the Synod of Fife to be released from the sentence of excommunication. This was granted, upon which he presented to them a formal recantation of his prelatical sentiments, and died, in February 1592, expressing his deep regret for the part he had acted against the Church.[2]

The puerilities of James VI., his conceit of arbitrary power, and ridiculous passion for intermeddling with church affairs, have not escaped the notice of historians; but as an offset to these failings some are fond of painting, in the most gloomy colours, the fanaticism and puritanic severity of the Presbyterians. That the Church courts did, in some instances, carry their notions of discipline to an excess bordering on intolerance can hardly be denied; and considering the rude materials with which they had to deal, it is not at all surprising; but our forefathers were far from being morose ascetics, or foes to innocent amusements. Military exercises, athletic games, archery, and music, were commonly studied and practised even by the gravest ministers.[3] Nor did they object to a little merriment, even in the midst of their most solemn

[1] Melville's Diary, p. 164.

[2] Row's MS. p. 83, Life of Melville, i. 314–316. Adamson's recantation may be seen in Defoe's Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, p. 196. Dr. M'Crie observes, that "the circumstances in which the archbishop subscribed his recantation necessarily throw a degree of suspicion over the sincerity with which it was made, and detract from its value as a testimony in favour of presbytery. But there is not the least reason to doubt the genuineness of the document itself."

[3] Speaking of John Dury's week-day exercises, James Melville says: "The gown was na sooner aff, and the byble out of hand fra the kirk, when on ged the corslet, and fangit was the hagbot, and to the fields." (*Diary*, p. 96.) Of himself honest James says: "I lovit singing and playing on instruments passing weel, and wald gladly spend time where the exercise thereof was in the college; for twa or three of our condisciples played fellon weill on the virginals, and another on the lute and githorn. I had my necessars honestly enough of my father for archery and goff; but nocht a purse for catchpull and tavern." *Private, or rather academic theatricals, of an innocent description, were likewise very common.*



assemblies. The commissioners of the Church having met at St. Andrews to protest against the inauguration of Adamson as archbishop, one came in and told them that "there was a corbie crouping" on the roof of the church. "That's a bad omen," said David Fergusson, minister of Dunfermline; "for inauguration is from *avium garritu;* the raven is *omnimodo* a black bird, and therefore ominous; and if we read rightly what it speaks, it will be found to be *Corrupt! corrupt! corrupt!*"

David Fergusson, several of whose witty sayings are recorded by his contemporaries, and who is described as "a merrie wise man," was distinguished no less by his intelligence and integrity than his good humour. He was now the oldest minister of the Church, having been one of the six who were honoured to plant the reformed religion in Scotland, and he retained his vivacity to the last. King James, who resided frequently at Dunfermline, used to take great pleasure in his conversation. Having once asked him how it happened that, of all other houses, that of the master of Gray, who was a Papist, should have been shaken by an earthquake during the night? "Why," said Fergusson, "please your majesty, why should not the deevil be allowed to rock his awn bairns?" "David," said James to him one day, "why may not I have bishops in Scotland as well as they have in England?" "Yea, sire," replied Fergusson, "ye may have bishops here; but remember, ye must make us all bishops, else will ye never content us. For if ye set up ten or twelve louns over honest men's heads, and give them more thousands to misspend than honest men have hundreds or scores, we will never all be content. We are Paul's bishops, sire—Christ's bishops; haud us as we are." To this his majesty replied by uttering a profane oath. "Sire," said the minister, "*ban not.*"[1] Mr. Fergusson, who was a shrewd observer of character, used to forewarn his brethren, that if James should come to the throne of England he would not rest till he had introduced prelacy into Scotland; and his prediction was too soon realized.

[1] "Swear not." Row's Hist. pp. 40, 314.



CHAPTER V.

1592 — 1616.

Re-establishment of the Presbyterian discipline in 1592—*King James and Andrew Melville—Renewal of the National Covenant in* 1596—*Pretended riot of* 17*th December—Schemes for the introduction of Prelacy into the Church of Scotland—The Gowrie conspiracy—Robert Bruce—James at the Hampton Court Conference—Aberdeen Assembly in* 1605 *—Scheme of constant moderators—Extraordinary scene at Perth—Bishops admitted by the packed Assembly of Glasgow in* 1610—*Consecration of the bishops—Archbishop Gladstanes—Court of High Commission.*

We need not dwell on the events which led to the re-establishment of the Presbyterian discipline in the year 1592. Suffice it to say, that the signal overthrow of the Spanish armada, the invasion of which discovered the hostile intention of the Popish princes of the Continent the prudent counsels of Chancellor Maitland, who supplanted the king's unworthy favourites—and the blessing of God on the faithful warnings and contendings of the ministers, led to the happiest results. James was persuaded to desist from imposing upon the nation a hierarchy which none desired but himself; nay, he professed to have become a convert to Presbyterianism. At one time there can be no doubt he was sensible of its advantages; for, in answer to an English divine who expressed his astonishment why the Church of Scotland was never troubled with heresy, he said, evidently in good earnest, "I'll tell you how, man. If it spring up in a parish, there is an eldership to take notice of it; if it be too strong for them, the presbytery is ready to crush it; if the heretic prove too obstinate for them, he shall find more witty heads in the synod; and if he cannot be convinced there, the General Assembly, I'll warrant you, will not spare him." At a meeting of the General Assembly in 1590 he pronounced a high panegyric on *the Church of Scotland.* He "praised God that he was



born in such a place as to be king in such a Kirk, the purest Kirk in the world. The Kirk of Geneva," continued his majesty, "keepeth Pasch and Yule.[1] What have they for them? They have no institution. As for our neighbour Kirk in England, their service is an ill-mumbled mass in English: they want nothing of the mass but the liftings. I charge you, my good people, ministers, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity; and I, forsooth, as long as I brook my life and crown, shall maintain the same against all deadly." The future behaviour of James furnishes an awkward commentary on this speech, and leaves us too much room to question its sincerity; but at the time that it was delivered the Assembly received it with every demonstration of joy; "there was nothing heard for a quarter of an hour but praising God, and praying for the king."[2]

Shortly after this, in June, 1592, the parliament formally restored presbytery, having passed an act ratifying the government of the Church by sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and national assemblies; the black acts were repealed; and, with the exception of the law of patronage, which was still suffered to remain in the statute-book, the jurisdiction and liberties of the Church were secured on what appeared to be the most stable footing against all future aggressions.[3] This act, which still continues the legal charter of the Church of Scotland, has been always regarded by Presbyterians as a great step in the national Reformation. It was never, indeed, viewed as the basis of her ecclesiastical constitution, which is to be found in her Confession of Faith and Books of Discipline; but it was a clear civil recognition and ratification of that constitution, giving her the advantage of legal ground, sanctioning her liberties, and reducing within proper bounds the prerogatives of the crown; and had the Church been remiss in exertions to obtain such a settlement, or declined to accept of it, she would certainly have acted a part equally foolish and criminal. The question was, whether Presbytery or Prelacy should be the established form; and a refusal on the part of the Presbyterians of an establishment, crippled as

[1] *Easter* and Christmas. [2] Calderwood, Pref. iv. p. 256.
[3] *Act for abolishing of the acts contrair to the trew religion.* Act. Parl. Jac. vi. *Jan. 1592.*

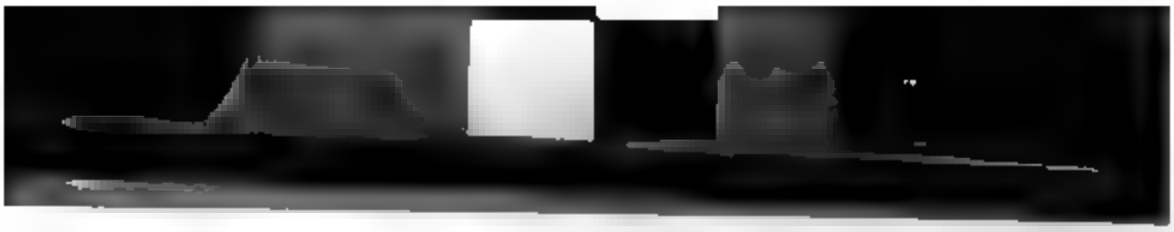


it was with certain conditions from which they were resolved to seek deliverance, would have been equivalent, at that time, to surrendering their liberties into the hands of an overbearing monarch, who was quite prepared, in such a case, to place the whole country under an arbitrary hierarchy. As it was, this important act was not obtained without a struggle; the royal consent was given with reluctance; and the representatives of the Church, who were waiting for it with trembling anxiety, were not relieved from their fears till they heard it proclaimed at the cross of Edinburgh.[1]

The Church of Scotland did not long enjoy this civil establishment in peace. She soon became involved in troubles arising from the dubious and vacillating policy of the king. Although a desperate popish plot for the extirpation of the Protestant religion, concerted by the King of Spain, and headed in Scotland by the Earls of Huntly, Angus, and Errol, had been discovered in the beginning of 1593—though Jesuits were flocking into the country, and murders had been committed on some eminent Protestants, James, either from motives of policy or from personal fear, because, as he used to say, "the Papists were dexterous king-killers,"[2] could not be prevailed upon to act a decided part against the traitors. The popish lords were no sooner proclaimed rebels than the declaration was withdrawn, and some of them were even admitted to court. Against these proceedings the clergy remonstrated with the utmost boldness, both in the pulpit and ecclesiastical assemblies. "The king," says Sir James Balfour, "was tossed like a tinnes ball betwixt the preceisse ministers and the treacherous Papists. Mr. Robert Bruce told him to his face out of the pulpit, that 'God would raise more Bothwells against him than one, gif he did not revenge God's quarrel against the Papists, before his awn particular'" —referring to the insurrection of the Earl of Bothwell, against whom he supposed the king to be more zealous than against his more dangerous enemies. Mr. Patrick Simpson was still

[1] M'Crie's Life of Melville, i. 324; Melville's Diary, pp. 199–201. By accepting, or rather taking the benefit of this establishment, the Church cannot be viewed as sanctioning patronage, against which she still continued to protest, in her standards, and by her living voice, as an unwarrantable encroachment *on her true liberties.*

[2] *"Just," says Toplady, "as some Indians are said to worship the devil, for fear he should do them a mischief."* (*Works*, ii. 207.)



more plain; for, preaching before his majesty on the words, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" he openly rebuked him for not prosecuting Huntly, the murderer of "the bonnie Earl of Murray." "Sir," said the preacher, "I assure you the Lord will ask at you, Where is the Earl of Murray, your brother?" "Mr. Patrick," replied the king before all the people, "my chalmer door was never stecked upon you; ye might have told me anything you thought in secret." "Sir," said Simpson, "the scandal was publick."[1]

But the most remarkable exhibition of boldness on the part of the ministers was that made by Andrew Melville. In 1596, when the design of recalling the popish lords was ascertained, Melville accompanied a deputation of the clergy to Falkland, to remonstrate against a measure which they judged to be fraught with danger to the country. They were admitted to a private audience, and James Melville, whose temper was the reverse of that of his uncle, and who was employed to speak for the rest, because, as he says himself, "I could propone the mater in a mild and smooth manner, quhilk the king lyked best of," was beginning to open the case, when he was interrupted by his majesty, who accused them, "in maist crabbit and coleric maner," of holding seditious meetings, and of alarming the country without any reason.[2] This was too much for Andrew Melville, who could no longer keep silence. He took the king by the sleeve, and calling him "God's sillie vassal," he proceeded to address him in the following strain—"perhaps," says his biographer, "the most singular, in point of freedom, that ever saluted royal ears, or that ever proceeded from the mouth of a loyal subject, who would have spilt his blood in defence of the person and honour of his prince:"[3]—"Sir," he said, "we will always humbly reverence your majesty in public; but since we have this occasion to be with your majesty in private, and since you are brought into extreme danger both of your life and crown, and along with you the country and the Church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge our duty, or else be traitors both to Christ and you.

[1] *Balfour's Annals of Scotland*, i. 395; Row's MS. Hist. p. 100.
[2] *James Melville's Diary*, p. 245, Ban. edit.
[3] M'Crie's Life of Melville, i. 391.

Therefore, sir, as divers times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience; but again I say, you are not the head of the Church; you cannot give us that eternal life which we seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it. Permit us, then, freely to meet in the name of Christ, and to attend to the interests of that Church of which you are a chief member. Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land, in spite of all his enemies; his officers and ministers convened for the ruling and welfare of his Church, which was ever for your welfare, when these same enemies were seeking your destruction. And now, when there is more than extreme necessity for the continuance of that duty, will you hinder and dishearten Christ's servants and your most faithful subjects, quarrelling them for their convening, when you should rather commend and countenance them, as the godly kings and emperors did?" During the delivery of this confounding lecture his majesty's passion, which was very high at its commencement, gradually subsided; and the ministers were dismissed with fair promises.

Different opinions will, no doubt, be formed of the conduct pursued by these undaunted presbyters. Those who are accustomed to regard the interests of truth as of paramount, because eternal, importance, will admire it as moral heroism; while others, judging by an inferior standard, may denounce it as officious insolence.[1] It is no doubt perfectly easy for us, at this distance of time, to sit down in safe tranquillity, and sagely to pronounce that this or the other measure was too precipitate, and that the zeal of certain persons was quite irregular. But, as it has been well remarked, "if we look backwards, and impartially consider the state of things at that period, and the different circumstances affecting it, our

[1] Some having blamed Andrew Melville with being too *fiery*, he replied, "If you see my fire go *downward*, set your foot on it and put it out; but if it go *upward*, let it go to its own place." "Meaning (says Livingstone) that his zeal was not for himself or outward things." (*Characteristics*, art. '*A. Melville.*')



censure must needs be more modest; and we shall probably find ourselves inclined to admit of an apology for that which cannot obtain our approbation. In the midst of a storm at sea it is not surely to be expected that things should be managed so calmly and prudently as in moderate weather and an easy voyage."[1] "However," says a modern historian, "from our being placed under happier circumstances, we may shrink at the broad indecent reproach which, from the pulpit, was frequently directed even against the sovereign himself; however we may be convinced that such a practice now would be useless or intolerable, we must, if we calmly investigate the period at present under review, be satisfied that we, in a great degree, owe to the intrepidity of the clergy the liberties which we enjoy; and that had they remained silent the king would either have destroyed every vestige of freedom, or, what was more likely, his throne would have been subverted, and Scotland delivered into the hands of a merciless and bigoted tyrant."[2]

The year 1596 is memorable in the history of the Church of Scotland, both for the happy revival of religion, and the lamentable manner in which it terminated. For some time its power had been visibly decaying; various corruptions had crept into the Church, and numerous offences were chargeable both on ministers and people. To meet these evils some extraordinary effort was necessary; and for this purpose the General Assembly of 1593 had appointed a commission for a general visitation of the whole presbyteries throughout the realm. But the honour of giving a new impulse to the religious feelings of the nation is due to that zealous minister to whom we have repeatedly alluded, John Davidson, minister, formerly of Liberton, now of Prestonpans. Lamenting the evils which abounded, and the inefficacy of all the means hitherto used to correct them, he proposed, in an overture to the General Assembly, that, after a solemn confession of the corruptions and offences of ministers and persons of all estates, not excepting the courts of justice and the king's household, they should renew the National Covenant, "making promise before the majesty of God to amend their conduct." This proposal was cordially agreed to, and the Assembly was

[1] Dr. Macqueen's Letters on Hume's History of Great Britain, p. 83.
[2] *Dr. Cook's History* of the Church of Scotland, ii. 19.

held in the Little Church of Edinburgh, on Tuesday, 30th of March, 1596. On this solemn occasion Davidson, who was chosen to preside, preached so much to the conviction of his hearers, and in their name offered up a confession of thier sins to Heaven with such fervent emotion that the whole assembled ministers melted into tears; and rising from their seats at his desire, and lifting up their right hands, they renewed their covenant with God, "protesting to walk more warily in their ways, and to be more diligent in their charges." This scene, which continued during three hours, was deeply affecting, beyond anything that the oldest person present had ever witnessed. As the greater part of the ministers were not present to join in the sacred action, the Assembly ordained that it should be repeated in the different synods and presbyteries, and afterwards extended to congregations; and the ordinance was obeyed with an alacrity and fervour which spread from presbytery to presbytery, and from parish to parish, till all Scotland, like Judah of old, "rejoiced at the oath."[1]

But the satisfaction diffused by this exercise was of short duration; it seemed designed, as a brief moment of sunshine, to prepare the faithful ministers of the Church for the coming storm. It was remarked by many that the Church never had another Assembly like this during the reign of James; and Calderwood, after detailing its proceedings, closes his account with these emphatic words: "*Here end the sincere General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland.*"[2] On the 17th of December of the same year, when the minds of the people were in a state of high excitement from rumours of the designs of the Papists, information was conveyed to the ministers that Huntly, one of the popish lords, had been all night in the palace, and that his retainers were waiting for orders to enter the capital. Alarmed at this intelligence, Lord Lindsay and Mr. Bruce were appointed to wait on the king, to set before him the dangers that threatened religion. "What dangers see you?" said his majesty. Bruce mentioned their apprehensions as to Huntly. "What have ye to do with that?" said James; "and how durst you convene against my proclamation?" "We dare do more than that," said Lord Lindsay; "and we

[1] Melville's Diary, 229–243; Calderwood, p. 317.
[2] *Calderwood's (printed) History*, p. 323.



will not suffer religion to be overthrown." Meanwhile the panic had been communicated to the people, and some evil-disposed persons, taking advantage of it, raised the cry, "To arms! to arms!" "These are not our weapons," said Bruce, attempting to calm the assembly, and after some confusion, which issued in no violence, the tumult was soon quelled. Such was the whole affair of the 17th of December, which the king professed to resent so highly that he removed the court to Linlithgow, and made it a pretext for overthrowing the liberties of the Church.[1]

The real secret of James' antipathy to presbytery was his ambition to be regarded as head of the Church, a claim to which Presbyterianism, from its very nature, stands directly opposed. His sentiments on this subject were discovered in two publications which appeared shortly after the event now related. The first of these, which is entitled "The True Law of Free Monarchies," is an unvarnished defence of arbitrary power, and may help us to understand the meaning of his favourite maxim, "No bishop, no king." The king, according to James, is to be "a free and absolute monarch," at liberty to do what he pleases with his people, "who," says he, "are not permitted to make any resistance but by flight, as we may see by the example of brute beasts and unreasonable creatures, among whom we never read or hear of any resistance to their parents, *except among the vipers*." In the other treatise, "Basilicon Doron," which was addressed to his son, Prince Henry, he maintains "that the office of a king is partly civil and partly ecclesiastical; that a principal part of his function consists in ruling the Church; that it belongs to him to judge when preachers wander from their text; that parity among ministers is irreconcilable with monarchy, and the mother of confusion; and in short, that Episcopacy should be set up, and the principal Presbyterian ministers banished from the country."

With principles so opposite to the spirit of freedom and of the Scottish Church, it is not surprising that James and the Presbyterian ministers should have been perpetually at variance. The clergy, jealous of their religious rights, openly and vehemently denounced the king's proceedings from the

[1] *Life of Melville*, i. 407–410; Melville's Declining Age of the Church of Scotland, p. 5; Baillie's Hist. Vindication, p. 68–71.

pulpit; and the king, on the other hand, threatened all with civil pains who ventured to condemn his measures, or question his authority as supreme potentate of the Church. "There would never be peace," he said, "till the marches were rid between them." Determined, however, to "rid the marches" in his own person, he summoned one of the most zealous of their number, Mr. David Black, minister of St. Andrews, to answer before the privy council for certain treasonable speeches, as he termed them, which he had uttered in the pulpit. Black, in his own name, and in that of his brethren of the ministry, sent in a declinature to the council, denying their authority to sit as judges of his doctrine, *in the first instance*, or till he was tried by the Church courts. They saw clearly that this prosecution was put out as a *feeler*, to ascertain how far the Church would yield; and, to use their own language, they feared "that their yielding on this occasion would be held as an acknowledgment of his majesty's jurisdiction in matters that are mere spiritual, which might move his majesty to attempt further in the spiritual government of the house of God, and end in either a plain subverting of the spiritual judicature, or at least a confounding thereof with civil, if at any time profane and ambitious magistrates might by such dangerous beginnings find the hedge broken down, to make a violent irruption upon the Lord's inheritance; which the Lord forbid."[1] This faithful struggle for the liberties of the Church issued, as might have been expected, in the defeat of the weaker party, and Black was banished from St. Andrews.[2]

It was the delight of James, however, to gain his object by policy rather than violence; and at length, by a series of stealthy, wheedling, and disgraceful manœuvres, which he dignified with the name of *kingcraft*, he succeeded in overturning the Presbyterian polity. His first attempt of this nature was made shortly after the tumult to which we have referred, when he requested the Assembly to appoint some of their number, with whom he might advise respecting affairs

[1] Declinature of the King and Council's Judicature in Matters Spiritual, &c., by Mr. David Black, 18th Nov. 1596.

[2] The king was afterwards so far reconciled to Mr. Black, as to allow his admission into the vacant parish of Arbirlot. There he lived peaceably for six years, and died of an apoplectic stroke, when he was in the act of dispensing the communion elements to his people.



in which the Church might be interested; and the Assembly rashly complied, appointing fourteen ministers to act as commissioners for the Church. "This," says James Melville, "was the very needle which drew in the episcopal thread." Next year the king stole another step towards his purpose, by prevailing upon the parliament to declare that prelacy was the third estate of the kingdom, and that such pastors as he pleased to raise to the dignity of bishops should have a right to vote in parliament. The next step was to prevail on the Church courts to allow their commissioners to enjoy this enviable privilege. The commissioners themselves do not seem to have been unwilling to comply; and they endeavoured to persuade their brethren that his majesty's object was merely to maintain the dignity of the ministerial office, and in nowise to bring in the Popish or anglican bishops. But the more clear sighted saw through the stratagem, and protested against it. The venerable Fergusson compared it to the wooden horse by which the Greeks succeeded in taking Troy. And John Davidson, now an old man, but retaining all the spirit of his youth, cried out, "Ay, busk, busk, busk him as bonnilie as ye can, and fetch him in as fairly as you will, we see him weill enough; we see the horns of his mitre." At length, in March, 1598, in an Assembly summoned to meet at Dundee, for the especial convenience of the *northern ministers* whom James had bribed to come up, it was decided, by a majority of ten, that the ministry, as the third estate of the realm, should have a vote in parliament.

Still, in spite of this disgraceful compliance, it required all the craft and finesse of the king to constitute these representatives of the Church *bona fide* bishops. After various conferences, and proroguing one Assembly after another, an Assembly, which met at Montrose in 1600, agreed to a number of *caveats* or cautions, to prevent the commissioners of the Church (for by that name they were to be designated) from abusing their powers. But the strictest caveats, sanctioned by the most sacred promises, were feeble ties on an unprincipled court and perfidious churchmen. The king, conceiving that matters were now ripe for accomplishing his purpose, quietly nominated three of the ministers, David Lindsay, Peter Blackburn, and George Gladstanes, to the *vacant bishoprics* of Ross, Aberdeen, and Caithness. And

these individuals, thus nominated without the knowledge or consent of the Church, sat and voted in the ensuing parliament, directly in the face of those cautions which they had so lately vowed to observe. "It was neither the king's intention," says Spotswoode, "nor the mind of *the wiser sort*, that these cautions should stand in force; but to have matters peaceably ended, and *the reformation of the policy* made without noise, the king gave way to these conceits." [1]

The triumph of James, however, was not complete so long as the General Assemblies continued to manage the affairs of the Church; and it required other ten years of sad struggling and manœuvring before he gained a victory, of which it is hard to say whether it was more disgraceful to the victors or more disastrous to the vanquished.

About the time of which we now speak several ministers were involved in trouble by an event in which they had no concern, and solely through the pragmatical obstinacy of the king. All who have read the history of Scotland are acquainted with "The Gowrie Conspiracy," an enigma in the life of James VI. which still seems to defy solution, and is involved in as much mystery as it was at the time of its occurrence. John Ruthven, earl of Gowrie, an accomplished young nobleman, had just returned from his travels on the Continent, and was universally beloved by all who knew him. He was a zealous Protestant, and had spent a quarter of a year at Geneva with Beza, the great reformer, who had conceived for him the highest esteem and admiration, and who could never afterwards hear his name mentioned without tears. The citizens of Perth respected him so highly, that they elected him provost in 1593, and continued him in the office during his absence. Suddenly, in August, 1600, when he had not been three months at home, the king, with a large retinue, came to Gowrie's house in Perth, saying he had been invited by the earl's brother, Alexander Ruthven. A scuffle took place, and the inhabitants, on reaching the spot, found their provost and his brother weltering in their blood. James and his friends gave out that these two noblemen had attempted to assassinate him, and that they had been killed in the act, on the king giving the alarm. This story

[1] Spotswoode, p. 454; Calderwood, p. 402 *et seq;* Calderwood's Course of Conformitie, *passim.*



is so full of glaring improbabilities, that one cannot help sympathizing with the opinion of Sir Thomas Moncrieff, who, meeting the king near the Bridge of Earn on his return from Perth, and hearing his account of the affair, is said to have replied, "May it please your majesty, it is a strange story indeed, *if it be true.*"[1] Nothing throws so much suspicion on the king's account as his extreme spite at any who whispered the smallest doubt of its truth. It was not enough that the ministers returned thanks to God for his deliverance; they were required to declare their full belief in his story. On his return to Edinburgh, Monday, 11th August, 1600, James went, accompanied by some of the nobility, to the cross, where his chaplain, Patrick Galloway, preached to the people convened on the street a sermon, in which he endeavoured to persuade them that Gowrie and his brother had verily conspired the king's death, and were slain in the execution of the enterprise; and the king himself, rising up after him, made a harangue to the same purpose.[2] He next caused a narrative of the affair to be published;[3] but in spite of all his efforts the clergy as a body, and not a few of the laity, persisted in their incredulity.[4] They remembered, among other things, that Gowrie was a stanch friend of the Protestant religion, and in favour with Queen Elizabeth, while the Popish lords, under whose influence the king now acted, were the deadly enemies of the house of Gowrie. Incensed at their conduct the king summoned the ministers into his presence, and partly by arguments, partly by threats, they were all convinced or silenced, except Mr. Robert Bruce, who steadily refused to "stain the glory of his

[1] The Muses Threnodie, &c., by Cant, p. 170; Account of Gowrie Conspiracy in Scott's MSS. Adv. Lib.

[2] Discourse by Mr. Patrick Galloway, delivered on occasion of the Gowrie Conspiracy, August, 1600. (*Ban. Misc.* i 141.)

[3] This narrative is introduced in Moyse's Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland, p. 265.

[4] The citizens of Perth would never believe that their provost was guilty, although their minister, William Cowper, used every means to persuade them. (Scott's *MS Records*, Adv. Libr. ad. an. 1600.) In the tumult which succeeded the discovery they surrounded the earl's house, and seeing the king standing in his hunting-coat at the window they cried out, "Give us out our provost, or the king's green coat shall pay for it!" Ruthven of Forgun, on seeing him, cried up, "Come down, thou son of Signior Davie! thou hast slain an honester man than thyself." (*Calд. MS. Hist.* ad. an. 1600, *Cant's History of Perth*, pp. 206, 253.)

ministry" by hypocritically acknowledging himself persuaded of the guilt of Gowrie, and against whom his majesty was pleased to maintain his own veracity by the unanswerable arguments of deprivation and banishment.[1]

Robert Bruce, who has been thus introduced to our notice, was a noble character, and deserves a more particular description. He was second son to the laird of Airth, from whom he inherited the estate of Kinnaird. In his youth he was educated with the view of his rising to the bench; but his conscience was so deeply impressed with an inward call to the ministry, that he could obtain no rest till he was permitted to attend the theological lectures of Andrew Melville at St. Andrews; and on one occasion, in conversation with James Melville, alluding to the conflict of mind through which he had passed, he said: "Before I throw myself again into such a torment of conscience as I have had in resisting the call to the ministry, I would rather choose to walk through a fire of brimstone, though it were a mile in length." With all his fervency, however, such was his lowliness of mind that, when a preacher, he could not be prevailed upon to enter upon the ministry, until he was, somewhat improperly, entrapped into it. At a sacramental occasion in Edinburgh, in the church to which he was afterwards called, one of the ministers desired him to sit beside him while serving a table; and having left him, as if for a little, he sent word to Mr. Bruce, who was still sitting opposite to the elements, that unless he continued the service the work must necessarily be closed. The eyes of all were fixed on him—many requested him to supply the minister's place; and Bruce, thinking he had been seized with a sudden illness, proceeded with the services in a manner which produced the most unprecedented effect on all present. Having thus commenced, he continued to discharge the duties of the ministry; and some time afterwards, when the commissioners for the Church would have had him consent to be ordained by the imposition of hands, Bruce, with characteristic spirit, refused to submit to the ceremony, on the ground that it would imply that his former ministry had been unlawful. King James had such a high opinion of him, that when he

[1] Narrative by Mr. Robert Bruce of his Troubles, A.D. 1600. (*Ban. Misc.* p. 163.)



went to bring his queen home from Denmark, in 1590, he nominated him an extraordinary councillor—an office which Bruce discharged so well, that his majesty declared "he would be obligated to him all his life."

The heroic independence and unbending rectitude of Bruce's mind were never more strikingly displayed than in his conduct in regard to the alleged Gowrie conspiracy. For his firmness in this matter he was banished to France. Having been permitted to return to his native country, he signified that his doubts were in a great measure removed, but still refused to give a public profession of his faith in the king's story, or to make the humiliating submission which was enjoined. He had never, he said, refused to do the duty of a subject; but to utter in the pulpit, under the authority of his office, anything of which he was not fully persuaded, he was not at liberty. "I have a body and some goods," continued he; "let his majesty use them as God shall direct him. But, as to my inward peace, I pray his majesty in all humility, to suffer me to keep it. Place me where God placed me, and I shall teach as faithful and wholesome doctrine to the honour of the magistrate as God shall give me grace. But to go through the country and make proclamations here and there will be counted either a beastly fear or a beastly flattery; and in so doing I should raise greater doubts, and do more harm than good to the cause, for people look not to words but to grounds."[1] The consequence of this was, that Bruce was not allowed to resume his ministerial labours in Edinburgh. We shall have occasion to meet again with this valuable servant of Christ.

The time had now come when James was to be no longer molested nor thwarted in his designs on the Church by the inconvenient and uncourtly firmness of the Scottish ministers. In March, 1603, on the death of Elizabeth, he succeeded to the crown of England, and was received by his new subjects with every demonstration of unbounded loyalty. He was

[1] Life of Melville, ii. 81. The king acknowledged to Mr. Bruce that he ordered Alexander Ruthven to be struck. "I grant," said he, "that I am art and part in Master Alexander's slaughter, but it was in my own defence." "Why brought ye him not to justice?" said Bruce "you should have had God before your eyes." "I had neither God nor the devil before my eyes, man!" said the king, interrupting him, "but my own defence." (*Calderwood, MS. Hist.* ad. an. 1600.)



not long seated on the English throne when a conference was held at Hampton Court, to hear the complaints of the Puritans, as those good men were called who scrupled to conform to the ceremonies, and sought a reformation of the abuses, of the Church of England. On this occasion, surrounded with his deans, bishops, and archbishops, who breathed into his ears the music of flattery, and worshipped him as an oracle, James, like King Solomon, to whom he was fond of being compared, appeared in all his glory, giving his judgment on every question, and displaying before the astonished prelates, who kneeled every time they addressed him, his polemic powers and theological learning. Contrasting his present honours with the scenes from which he had just escaped in his native country, he began by congratulating himself that, "by the blessing of Providence he was brought *into the promised land*, where religion was professed in its purity; where he sat among grave, learned, and reverend men; and that now he was not, as formerly, a king without state and honour, nor in a place where order was banished and beardless boys would brave him to his face."[1] After long conferences, during which the king gave the most extraordinary exhibitions of his learning, drollery, and profaneness, he was completely thrown off his guard by the word *presbytery*, which Dr. Reynolds, a representative of the Puritans, had unfortunately employed. Thinking that he aimed at a "Scotch presbytery," James rose into a towering passion, declaring that presbytery agreed as well with monarchy as God and the devil. "Then," said he, "Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me and my council, and all our proceedings. Then Will shall stand up and say, It must be thus. Then Dick shall reply, and say, Nay marry, but we will have it thus. And, therefore, here I must once reiterate my former speech, *Le Roy s'avisera* (the king will look after it). Stay, I pray you, for one seven years before you demand that of me; and if you then find me pursy and fat, and my wind-pipes stuffed, I will perhaps hearken to you; for let that government be once up I am sure I shall be kept in breath; then we shall all of us have work enough, both our hands full. But, Dr. Reynolds, till you find that I grow lazy, let that alone." Then, putting his hand to his hat,

[1] Dr. Barlow's Summary of Hampton Court Conference, p. 4.

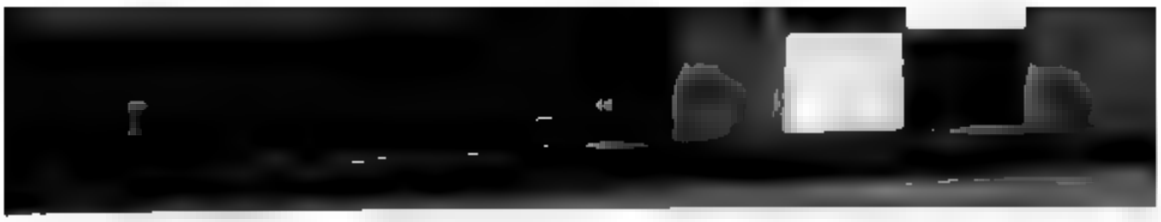


"My lords the bishops," said his majesty, "I may thank you that these men plead for my supremacy; they think they can't make their party good against you, but by appealing unto it. But if once you are out, and they in place, I know what would become of my supremacy; for *no bishop, no king*, as I said before." Then rising from his chair he concluded the conference with, "If this be all they have to say, I'll make them conform, or I'll harry them out of this land, or else do worse."[1]

The English lords and prelates were so filled with admiration at the quickness of apprehension and dexterity in controversy shown by the king, that, as Dr. Barlow informs us, "one of them said his majesty spoke by the instinct of the Spirit of God; and the lord-chancellor, as he went out, said to the Dean of Chester, I have often heard that *Rex est mixta persona cum sacerdote* (that a king is partly a priest), but I never saw the truth thereof till this day!"[2]

In these circumstances, buoyed up with flattery by his English clergy, and placed beyond the reach of the faithful admonitions of the Scottish ministry, we need not wonder to find James prosecuting, with redoubled ardour, his scheme of reducing the Church of Scotland to the English model. The bishops being now established, his next object was to procure something like an acknowledgment of them by the Church, to effect which it was necessary to destroy every vestige of freedom in the constitution of her Assemblies. The first attempt of this kind had been made in 1599, when the king dismissed the Assembly, and summoned another to meet at Montrose in 1600, solely by virtue of his *royal prerogative*. This was entirely contrary to the establishment ratified by parliament in 1592, according to which the time and place of meeting were to be nominated by the preceding Assembly, with his majesty's consent.[3] Under various pretexts James had infringed this rule, proroguing and altering the time of Assemblies at pleasure; and at last the Assembly which should have met at Aberdeen in July, 1605, was prorogued indefinitely. Now was the time to decide whether the Church was to stand firm, or to yield her liberties, without a struggle, into the hands of the king. In the midst of

[1] Collier, Eccl. Hist. p. 681, Hampt. Court Conference, *ut sup.*
[2] Dr. Barlow's Summary of the Conference, pp. 82, 84. [3] Row's Hist. p. 143.



a tempestuous winter, which kept many from coming up, a few faithful men having convened at Aberdeen, determined at least to constitute the Assembly, and appoint another meeting. The king having heard that it was to be held at Aberdeen, sent instructions to Stratton of Laurieston, as commissioner, empowering him to dissolve the meeting, just because it had not been called by his majesty. The brethren present resolved to constitute before reading the communication; and John Forbes, minister of Alford, was chosen moderator. While they were reading the king's letter a messenger-at-arms arrived, and in the king's name commanded them to dissolve, on pain of rebellion. The Assembly agreed to dissolve, provided it were done in the regular way, by his majesty's commissioner naming a day and place for the next meeting. This the commissioner refused to do, the object of the king being to reserve to himself the right of calling it or not at his sovereign pleasure. The moderator accordingly, at the request of his brethren, appointed the Assembly to convene at the same place on the last Tuesday of September, and dissolved the meeting.[1]

Such is a short account of the Assembly at Aberdeen, which brought so many faithful ministers into trouble. Their conduct on this occasion was marked equally by respect to the royal authority and fidelity to the great Head of the Church; and it deserves the warmest approbation of every friend of religion and civil liberty. No sooner, however, was his majesty informed of their proceedings, than he transmitted orders to his privy-council to proceed against the ministers as guilty of high treason. Fourteen of them, having defended their conduct, were committed to various prisons; and six of the principal ministers, who were obnoxious for their fidelity, were selected for prosecution. Their names, which deserve to be recorded, were, Mr. John Forbes, the moderator; Mr. John Welch, minister at Ayr; Mr. Andrew Duncan, at Crail; Mr. Robert Dury, at Anstruther; Mr. John Sharp, at Kilmany, and Mr. Alexander Strachan, at Creigh.

[1] Life of Melville, ii. 214–216. History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland, written by that faithful servant and witness of Christ Mr John Forbes, p. 46, *et seq.* (*MS. penes me.*) Petrie's Hist. of the Catholic Church, p. 570–580.



At three o'clock in the morning, in the depth of winter, and through roads almost impassable, these good men were summoned to stand trial for high treason before the court of justiciary at Linlithgow, where they were met by a number of their brethren, who had come to countenance them during their trial. The prisoners made an eloquent defence. The concluding speech of Forbes, the moderator, is remarkably impressive. "My lord," said he, addressing the Earl of Dunbar, when he saw they were about to pass judgment, "I adjure you before the living God, that you report to his majesty, in our names, this history out of the book of Joshua." He then related the account of the league between the Israelites and Gibeonites, and the manner in which God avenged the violation of that covenant many years afterwards on Saul and his house (Jos. ix. 3–19; 2 Sam. xxi. 2). "Now, my lord, warn the king, that if such a high judgment fell upon Saul and his house for destroying them that deceived Israel, and only because of the oath of God which passed between them, what judgment will fall on his majesty, his posterity, and the whole land, if he and ye violate the great oath ye have all made to God, to stand to His truth, and to maintain the discipline of His Kirk according to your powers." Then reading over to them the last sentence of the national covenant, he added, "So take this to heart, as ye will be answerable to God in that dreadful day of judgment, to which we appeal, if ye wrongously condemn us."

But what avail innocence and eloquence against the arts of corruption and the influence of terror? The Earl of Dunbar had been sent down for the express purpose of securing the condemnation of the ministers; the jury were packed, and a verdict was at last obtained at midnight, finding, by a majority of three, the prisoners guilty of high treason. On hearing the verdict the ministers embraced each other, and gave God thanks for having supported them during the trial. Arriving at Edinburgh, they were met by their wives, who were awaiting with much anxiety the result of the trial. On being told that they had been convicted by so few votes of the crime of treason, "they joyfully," says Row, "and with masculine minds, thanked the Lord Jesus, who had given them that strength and courage to stand to their Master's cause, saying, They are evil entreated, as their Master was

before them—judged and condemned under silence of night."[1]

It was thought that they might be set at liberty after a little confinement; but orders came down from London in November, 1606, to banish them out of his majesty's dominions. They were accordingly brought from the castle of Blackness to Leith, and the ship being ready, and many of their friends having attended to see them embark, "they fell down upon their knees on the shore," says our historian, "and prayed two several times, verie ferventlie, moving all the multitude about them to tears in abundance; and after they had sung the twenty-third psalm, joyfullie taking leave of their friends and acquaintances, they passed to the ship, and after encountering a storm, were safely transported and landed in France."[2]

Previously to this, it was thought expedient to remove Andrew Melville and a few of the more zealous brethren out of the way. They were summoned to London, on the pretext of consultation with the king, and they were not long there when they were prohibited from returning to Scotland. Melville, on account of a Latin epigram, which he wrote for his own amusement, containing some satirical reflections on the English service, was committed to the Tower of London; and, after a confinement of four years, was banished to France, where he died, at Sedan, in the year 1622.[3]

Meanwhile, the king, intent on bringing his favourite project to a conclusion, went a step farther, and proposed that the bishops should be appointed *constant moderators;* in other words, that they should have a right, in virtue of their office (*ad vitam aut culpam*), to preside in all meetings of presbyteries, synods, and General Assemblies. This new aggression on the liberties of the Church, the object of which was clearly seen through,[4] met with fresh opposition from the Church courts, and gave rise to many unseemly and disgraceful scenes. As an illustration, we may describe the scene that

[1] Row's MS. Hist. ad. an. 1606. "The people said, it was certainly a work of darkness to make Christ's faithful servants traitors. O, if the king were never in greater danger than by such men!" (*Petrie's Hist. of the Church*, p. 580.)

[2] Row's MS. Hist. p. 176. [3] Life of Melville, ii. 156–319.

[4] They were plainly intended to prepare the way for the introduction of prelates. "The constant moderators were (as was said at that time) the little theeves, entering at the narrow windows to make open the doors to the great theeves." (*Course of Conformitie*, p. 50.)

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took place in Perth, at the opening of the synod there, in March, 1607, when Mr. William Row, a bold and zealous champion of Presbytery, presided as moderator. The king had sent Lord Scoon,[1] a man of violent temper and dissolute habits, to force them to accept a constant moderator. Scoon sent notice to Mr. Row, that if, in his preaching, he uttered a syllable against constant moderators, he should cause ten or twelve of his guards to discharge their pieces in his face; and during the time of sermon he stood up in a menacing posture to outbrave the preacher. But Mr. Row, no way dismayed, knowing what vices Scoon was most addicted to, and particularly that he was a notorious glutton, drew his picture in the beginning of his discourse so much to the life, that Scoon, seeing all eyes directed towards him, was glad to sit down and cover his face. After which the minister proceeded to prove that no constant moderator ought to be tolerated in the Church; but being aware that Scoon understood neither Latin nor Greek, he wisely avoided naming the constant moderator in English, giving him the learned title of *prœstos ad vitam*. Sermon being ended, Scoon said to some of his attendants, "You see how I charmed the preacher from meddling with the constant moderator; but I wonder what man it was he spoke so much against by the name of *Prestos ad vitam*." When told that this was a learned phrase for *constant moderator*, Scoon's rage knew no bounds, and he resolved to prevent the synod from meeting, unless they chose for their moderator one of those who had been nominated by the king. Upon their refusing to submit, and proceeding to elect one of their number, Scoon rose in great wrath, threatened, and gave abusive names to them, and even attempted to snatch the roll of the members out of the moderator's hand; but Row, who was a man of great bodily strength, kept down the commissioner in his chair with the one hand—exhorting him to "speak with reverence and reason"—and holding the roll in the other, deliberately called over the names of the members who chose Mr. Harrie Livingston as their moderator. "Let no man be so bold as come there!" cried Scoon, rising to intercept Livingston on his way to the moderator's chair. "Let us begin at God," said Livingston, kneeling down, when he had got to the

[1] Sir David Murray, Lord Scoon, and afterwards Viscount Stormont.



middle of the table, "and let us all be humbled in the name of Jesus Christ." "The d—l a Jesus is here!" exclaimed the commissioner, with shocking profaneness, overturning at the same time the table around which the ministers were kneeling. But they continued to kneel, undisturbed by his violence, till the prayer was ended and the meeting constituted. During this time Scoon stood with his head uncovered, calling for the bailies of Perth, and commanding them to ring the common bell, and remove these rebels—an order which, though he was at that time their provost, none of them chose to execute. Baffled in this, on their adjourning he ordered the doors of the church to be locked, so that when the ministers returned they were compelled to hold their synod in the open church-yard, the members kneeling down on the graves for prayer, amidst the tears of the populace, who crowded around them, deeply sympathizing with the dishonour thus offered to their church, and soon furnished them with tables and stools from their own houses.[1]

The extraordinary scene which we have just described, disgraceful as it was to the individual who occasioned it and to the government that employed him, reflects no discredit on the ministers of the synod of Perth, who deserve praise for their firm and yet respectful opposition to such a despotic invasion of their privileges. And it shows the impolicy of all state interference with the proper jurisdiction of the Church—an interference which must issue either in the tame submission of the Church, in the things of God, to the authority of man, or in a collision between the civil and sacred jurisdictions, which all wise governments have, for their own sakes, carefully avoided.

It is needless to dwell on the other steps by which James succeeded in accomplishing his object. It is enough to observe, that at length, in an Assembly held at Glasgow in 1610, by dint of bribery and intimidation, he obtained the consent of the Church to receive the bishops as moderators of diocesan synods, and to confer on them the power of excommunicating and absolving offenders, of ordaining and deposing ministers, and visiting all the churches within their respective dioceses.

[1] Row's Hist. p. 180; Livingston's Characteristics, art. "W. Row;" Scott's MS. extracts from Kirk-session Register of Perth, vol. i. 1607.



It would be absurd to consider this convention at Glasgow as a free and lawful General Assembly of the Church. Royal missives were sent to the presbyteries nominating the individuals whom they should choose as their representatives, and whom the bishops had previously selected as most likely to favour their designs; and the Earl of Dunbar, the king's commissioner, was furnished with instructions to spare no expense, and scruple at no means, for securing that everything should be done according to the royal pleasure. The bribery practised at this Assembly was shamefully notorious. Golden coins, called *angels*, were so plentifully distributed among the ministers, that it was called, by way of derision, the *angelical* Assembly. Sir James Balfour informs us that Dunbar had, at a former Assembly, in 1606, distributed for the same object, "amongst the most needy and clamorous of the ministry, to obtain their suffrages, forty thousand merks, to facilitate the business intended, and cause matters go the smoothlier on."[1] This was a trifle, however, when compared with the other expenses which it cost the king to establish Prelacy. Mr. Row may have somewhat exaggerated the sum, but he states, that "in buying the benefices of the bishops out of the hands of the noblemen who had them, in buying votes at Assemblies, in defraying all their other charges, such as coming to and living at court prelate-like, &c., the king did employ (by the confession of such as were best acquainted with, and were actors in, these businesses) above the sum of three hundred thousand pounds sterling money—a huge thing, indeed," he adds; "but sin lying heavie on the throne, crying aloud for wrath on him and his posteritie, is infinitely sadder than three hundred thousand pounds sterling."[2]

The pretext under which this disgraceful bribery was practised, was that of defraying the expenses of the poor ministers who had come from a distance. "But," says Row, "the contrare was well knowne, for both some neare Glasgow, who voted the king's way, got the wages of Balaam, and some

[1] "Which *mystery of state*," adds Sir James, with great simplicity, "came thereafter to light by the view of the Lord-treasurer Dunbar's accompts; a gross fault in him, which, if revealed in his lifetime, might have cost him his head, for his small prudence and little circumspection in leaving such an item on record to be looked on by posterity." (*Annals of Scotland*, ii. 18.)

[2] *Row's MS. Hist.* p. 209.

gracious ministers in the north, who voted *negativè*, got no gold at all." Those who were mean enough to accept of these bribes returned home in disgrace, self-condemned and taunted by their brethren for having sold the liberties of the Church, which they had solemnly pledged themselves to defend before their departure. Altogether, it must be owned, this Assembly is a blot on the escutcheon of the Church of Scotland. It is true that it was neither legal in its constitution nor free in its deliberations, and on this account it was, with other Assemblies held at this period, declared null and void by the famous Assembly of 1638; it is true, also, that many of the faithful ministers protested against it at the time. But still, it is lamentable to think that so many ministers could be collected out of the parishes of Scotland, weak enough to yield to the threats, or base enough to take the bribes of a despotic and domineering government, bent on overturning the liberties of the Church. It was well for the bishops that the bolder spirits who had opposed their encroachments were out of the way, that the flower of the ministry had been banished out of Scotland; for, as Archbishop Gladstanes acknowledged in a letter to the king announcing their success in Glasgow, "had Andrew Melville been in the country, they had never been able to get that turn accomplished."

Blinded and misled as the members of this convention were, they had no idea of sanctioning the doctrine of the divine right of Episcopacy; they conceived that the form of presbyteries would still be kept up, with the bishops as moderators. No sooner, however, had the bishops gained their object at Glasgow than three of them set off to London, and having received episcopal ordination from the English prelates, they returned to consecrate the rest, without consulting presbytery, synod, or Assembly. It thus appeared that they considered themselves quite independent of the Church of Scotland, and conceived they had a right to govern their brethren, in virtue of the powers communicated to them by the bishops of another church with which she had no connection. In short, they now alleged that they had received *new light* on the subject of church government, and had discovered that Prelacy was more agreeable to Scripture and antiquity than Presbytery. With such senti-



ments, they soon began to exercise the supreme jurisdiction with which they supposed themselves invested.

At the meeting of the synod of Fife, Gladstanes, archbishop of St. Andrews, took the chair. It had been previously arranged by the ministers that, after protesting against this usurpation, they should march out in due order, leaving the bishop alone in possession of the chair. Mr. John Malcolm, minister of Perth, as being the oldest member, was selected as the fittest person to take the lead in this proceeding. Before entering on business Malcolm rose up, and begged to ask by what authority, and on what grounds, the order of our Kirk, established in so many famous General Assemblies, and ratified by the king's acts, was altered; which, said he, "we cannot see but with grief of heart, seeing we acknowledge it to be the only true form of government of Christ's Kirk." "I am astonished," said the bishop, in a high passion, "to hear such an aged man utter such foolish talk. Can you be ignorant, sir, of what was done by the General Assembly in Glasgow?" Other members, however, coming forward in his support, Gladstanes became calmer. "It's a strange thing, brethren," he said, "that ye are so troubled about such an indifferent matter. What matter who be moderator, provided nothing be done but to all your contentment?" "Ye pretend the word," said they, "but ye let us see no warrand; we know nothing ye seek but gain and preferment in this course." Upon this, the bishop, starting up, exclaimed with vehemence, "God never let me see God's face, nor be a partaker of his kingdom, if I should take this office upon me, and were not persuaded I had the warrand of the word!" The rest of the members looked to Malcolm, expecting him to walk out, as had been concerted; but as Row observes, he was "a man who had not a brow for that bargain," and he was prevailed upon to remain by Mr. William Cooper (afterwards made a bishop), who stood up and said, "Brethren, I beseech you remember that these things are not so essential points as to rend the bowels of the Kirk for them. Are these things such as to cast your ministry in hazard for them? What joy can ye have for your suffering, when ye suffer for a matter so indifferent as, who shall be moderator? who shall have the imposition of hands? Wherefore serves it to fill the people's ears with contentious doctrine concerning the



government of the Kirk? Were it not much better to preach sincerely, and wait on and see what the Lord will work in these matters?" Gladstanes, as we may easily conceive, highly applauded this speech; he declared that no honest man could be of another opinion; and such was the influence it had, coming as it did from one highly respected among his brethren for piety and prudence, that they carried their opposition no further.[1]

This is the first time in the history of the Scottish Church that we have met with anything resembling the sentiments now generally known by the term *latitudinarian;* and it is rather suspicious that, on this occasion, these loose principles should have been employed with success to cajole good men into a surrender of the privileges of the Church, and into the adoption of a scheme which, in their judgment and conscience, they condemned. The same strain of reasoning which Cooper employed, with sincerity we doubt not, on the present occasion, has too often since that time furnished a pretext for introducing the most extensive changes into a religious profession, and overthrowing the liberties of the Christian Church. If Prelacy were indeed a matter of such indifference, why plead for it "the warrand of the word;" and why involve a whole church in disorder by attempting to intrude it on a reluctant people, who were perfectly well pleased with the government they enjoyed? But, in fact, nothing can be properly called a matter of indifference which affects the honour of the great King and Head of the Church; and we can conceive nothing more impertinent or disgusting than the cant of liberality, when assumed by men who, in the act of robbing the Church of her dearest rights, affect to mourn over the contentions which are the fruits of their own selfish policy.

It has been observed that "James' bishops," as they were called, "were prudent and humble men, and gave great respect to all honest and deserving ministers as their brethren," very different from those that succeeded them about twenty years afterwards, whose ambition, in aiming at civil offices, induced the nobility to join with those who sought to re-establish Presbytery.[2] This remark is so far true, and the

[1] Row's MS. Hist. ad. an. 1610; Cald. MS. Hist. vol. v. fb.
[2] Guthrie's Memoirs, p. 15; Scott's MSS. in Adv. Lib.



reasons are very obvious. James' bishops were all originally Presbyterian ministers, who were well acquainted with their co-presbyters, and had not learned those imperious airs which Archbishop Laud taught their successors. His majesty, too, in their selection, took care in general to fix upon those who, in addition to their servility, possessed the talents and temper best fitted for conciliating their brethren. Hence we find among them such men as William Cooper, bishop of Galloway, who, though Spotswoode accuses him of fondness for popularity, and Calderwood charges him with various delinquencies, seems, on the whole, to have been a good, peaceable, and amiable man—a sort of Leighton among the early bishops. A very different character was Archbishop Gladstanes of St. Andrews, who had formerly been minister of Arbirlot, in Angus. Vainglorious, obsequious, and time-serving, this prelate was a tool exactly to the taste of James, before whom he crouched with all the servility of an eastern slave. "Most gracious sovereign," he thus addressed him, "may it please your most excellent majesty, as of all vices ingratitude is most detestable, I finding myself, not only as first of that dead estaitt quhilk your majesty hath re-created, but also in my private condition so overwhelmed with your majesty's princely and magnifick benignitie, could not bot repaire to your majesty's most gracious face, that so unworthy a creature micht both see, bless, and thank *my earthly creator*. As no estaitt may say that they are your majesty's creatures as we may say, so there is none whose standing is so slippery, when your majesty shall frown, as we; for at your majesty's nod we must either stand or fall."[1] Gladstanes did not long enjoy his poor dignity, having died in May, 1615. According to the testimony of his contemporaries, he was a notorious glutton, and brought on himself such a miserable death, that his body required to be buried immediately after; yet "the solemnity of the funeral was made in the month of June following; and the day of his funeral being windy and stormy, blew away the pall, and marred all the honours that were carried about the empty coffin."[2]

[1] Original letter to the king, Sept. 11, 1609: MS. in Adv. Lib., M. 6, 9.

[2] Row has recorded a prayer which he is said to have used after supper, too coarse to be here related. Wodrow's Biographical Collections, Maitland edit. vol. i. part i.

Gladstanes was succeeded in the primacy by John Spotswoode, a shrewd and crafty politician, and the author of a *History of the Church of Scotland*, which, as has been well observed, might more properly be called "Calumnies against the Church of Scotland." This historian, as appears from his private correspondence, was engaged in all the jesuitical plots of the government for overturning Presbytery, which he had sworn to support, and could hardly be expected to give a fair account of transactions in which his own credit was so deeply implicated, and for his share in which he was afterwards excommunicated by the Church which he had betrayed. His falsehoods and misrepresentations have been so completely exposed, that to appeal to him *now* as an authority on any point of history affecting the cause of Presbytery, may be set down at once as a mark of blindfolded prejudice.[1]

It could hardly be expected that men thus intruded into the government of the Church, under the wing of royal prerogative, would find it easy to gain either respect to their persons, or submission to their authority. In fact, the people despised them, and the ministers continued to preach, to rule, and to administer ordinances, as if no such persons as bishops existed. The king found it necessary, therefore, in the absence of all respect for their episcopal powers, to arm them with civil authority. For this purpose he erected *the court of high commission*, a sort of English inquisition, composed of prelates, noblemen, knights, and ministers, and possessing the combined powers of a civil and ecclesiastical tribunal. This nondescript tribunal, the proceedings of which were regulated by no fixed laws, was empowered to receive appeals from any church court, to summon before it all preachers charged with speaking against the established order of the Church, and on finding them guilty to depose and excommunicate, or to fine and imprison them. But though thus invested with powers which enabled them to set at defiance both the ecclesiastical and the civil jurisdiction, it must be admitted that, for several years, the bishops had the prudence to refrain from exercising their authority to the extent which the king desired. "They took little upon

[1] I refer here particularly to the exposure made of Spotswoode's numerous misrepresentations in Dr. M'Crie's Life of Melville, *passim*. Index, vol. ii. 548.



them," says a Presbyterian writer, "and were very little opposed, until the Assembly at Perth, in the year 1618."[1] During this interval, though the meetings of the General Assembly were suspended, sessions, presbyteries, and synods continued to conduct business much in the usual way, and the Church, if it did not enjoy prosperity, was at least suffered to remain in a sort of dead calm, till the waters were again disturbed by the tyrannical interference of the king.

[1] Blair's Life, p. 13.



CHAPTER VI.

1617 — 1630.

The king attempts to introduce the English ceremonies—Prosecution of Mr. David Calderwood—The five articles of Perth—Black Saturday—Disputes between the ministers and people—King James and the bookseller—Ejected ministers—John Welch—Robert Bruce—Robert Blair—Patrick Simpson—Andrew Duncan—George Dunbar—John Scrimgeour—Robert Cunningham—Revivals at Stewarton and Kirk of Shotts.

In the spring of 1617 King James paid a visit to Scotland, having, as he expressed it, "a natural and salmon-like affection to see the place of his breeding—his native and ancient kingdom." He had been led by the bishops to believe that the people and their ministers were now quite submissive to all his wishes on the point of Church government. He was determined, therefore, to try next whether they would submit, with equal ease, to the ceremonies of the English Church. Among other directions for his reception he ordered repairs to be made on the chapel of Holyrood House; an organ was sent down, and the English carpenters began to set up statues of the twelve apostles, made of carved wood, and finely gilded. The people began to murmur—"First came the organs, now the images, and ere long we shall have the mass." The bishops became alarmed, and at their solicitation the king, though mightily offended, agreed to dispense with the gilded apostles. It was very strange, he said, that they would admit figures of "griffins, monsters, and deevils" into their churches, and refuse those of holy apostles. His other wishes, however, were gratified. A splendid altar was erected, with two closed Bibles, two unlighted candles, and two empty basins. In the king's chapel the English liturgy was ordered to be read daily; the communion was taken in a kneeling posture; and the roof of that venerable pile, for



the first time since the Reformation, echoed to the sounds of choristers and instrumental music.[1]

In the parliament, which was held soon after his arrival, James manifested his determination to have his example imitated in all the churches of the kingdom. With this view he prevailed on them to pass an article, ordaining, "that whatsoever his majesty should determine in the external government of the Church, with the advice of the bishops, and a competent number of the ministry, should have the strength of a law." In vain did the more prudent of the clergy warn him of the danger of such an enactment. "To have matters ruled as they have been in your General Assemblies," said his majesty, "I will never agree; for the bishops must rule the ministers, and the king rule both."[2] Intelligence of this having reached the ministers, a number of them, out of several parts of the country, met and drew up a supplication to the king and parliament, in which, after protesting against any innovations in the Church without the consent of a free General Assembly, they pleaded that their Church had attained to a purity in doctrine, discipline, and worship, which had been acknowledged rather as a pattern to be followed, than as one requiring to be modelled in conformity with other churches less reformed; that, under their form of government, ratified by various acts of parliament during his reign, they had enjoyed a peace and freedom from schism which the introduction of any novelty would miserably destroy; and that his majesty had repeatedly assured them of his determination not to impose upon them the English forms, which had allayed all their suspicions: they therefore prayed that he would not suffer the article, of which they had heard, to pass into a law, "to the grief of this poor Church, that the universal hope of thousands in this land, who rejoiced at your majesty's happy arrival, may not be turned into mourning."

This faithful and respectful petition, which was signed by fifty-six names, through the cowardice of the person intrusted with it was never formally presented; but a copy of it having come into his majesty's hands, he was highly incensed, and though he found it expedient to defer giving his sanction to the obnoxious article, he determined to wreak his displeasure

[1] Cald. MS. Hist. ad. an. 1617. [2] Spotswoode, p. 531.

on some of the most zealous of the ministers, who were summoned to appear before the high commission at St. Andrews. As a specimen of the manner in which they were treated at this court, we may select the case of Mr. David Calderwood, the author of the well known *History of the Church of Scotland*, who has given an account of the whole affair in his own simple and graphic manner. "What moved you to protest?" asked his majesty. Calderwood answered, that "it was an article concluded in parliament, which cut off our General Assemblies." The king then inquired how long he had been a minister; and having been told, he said, "Hear me, Mr. David, I have been an older keeper of General Assemblies than you. A General Assembly serves to preserve doctrine in purity, and the Church from schism, to make confessions of faith, and put up petitions to the king in parliament. But for matters of order, rites, and things indifferent, that belongs to the king, with advice of his bishops." From this royal doctrine Mr. David tendered his humble dissent. The king then challenged the last clause of the protestation, in which the ministers declared that they must be forced rather to incur the censure of his majesty's law than to admit any imposition not flowing from the Church lawfully convened. Calderwood answered, "That whatsoever was the phrase of speech, they meant no other thing but to protest that they would give passive obedience to his majesty, but could not give active obedience unto any unlawful thing which should flow from that article." "*Active* and *passive* obedience!" exclaimed the king. "That is, we will rather suffer than practise," said Calderwood. "I will tell thee what obedience is, man," returned his majesty: "what the centurion said to his servants, 'To this man, Go, and he goeth; and to that man, Come, and he cometh'—that is obedience." "To suffer, sire," replied Calderwood, "is also obedience, howbeit not of that same kind; and even that obedience is not absolute, but limited, being liable to exception of a countermand from a superior power." The king here whispered something to Spotswoode, who, turning to Calderwood, said, "His majesty saith, that if ye will not be content to be suspended *spiritually*, ye shall be suspended *corporally*." To this wretched witticism the prisoner replied, addressing himself to his majesty, "Sire, my body is in your



majesty's hands, to do with it as it pleaseth your majesty; but as long as my body is free, I will teach, notwithstanding of their sentence."

After some further altercation Calderwood requested leave to address the bishops, which was granted. He argued with them that they had no power to suspend or deprive him in this court of high commission; "for," said he, "ye have no power in this court but by commission from his majesty; and his majesty cannot communicate that power to you which he claims not for himself." This home-thrust at the authority of the court, which neither the king nor the bishops could well parry, threw the assembly into confusion. We give the rest of the scene in Calderwood's own language:—"The Bishop of Glasgow rounding in his ear, 'Ye are not a wise man; ye wot not who are your friends;' he rounded likewise to the bishop and said, 'Wherefore brought ye me here?' Others, in the meantime, were reviling him, and some called him a proud knave. Others uttered speeches which he could not take up for confusion of voices. Others were not ashamed to shake his shoulders and dunch him on the neck, he being yet upon his knees." The king demanded, in the meantime, if he would abstain from preaching for a certain time, in case he should command him by his royal authority, as from himself; and Calderwood, thinking he still referred to the sentence of the commission, and being disturbed by the shaking, tugging, and cross-questioning, replied, "I am not minded to obey." Upon which he was hurried off, and committed to Lord Scoon, to be imprisoned for declining the king's authority. Scoon, who seems to have taken a malicious pleasure in performing such services, was conducting his prisoner along the street, when some one asked, "Where away with that man, my lord!" "First to the tolbooth, and then to the gallows," said Scoon. Mr. Calderwood having thus discovered his mistake, took the earliest opportunity of assuring his majesty that it was not *his* authority, but that of the commission, which he had disowned; but it was not deemed safe to allow so bold a champion of Presbytery to stand in the way; so he was banished out of the country. Lord Cranston earnestly pleaded that the period of his banishment might be delayed on account of the tempestuous season of the year. This petition was refused. "If he be drowned in the seas,"



said the king, "he may thank God he hath escaped a worse death."[1]

Irritated at the unexpected opposition to his measures, James vented his rage on the bishops, whom he called "dolts and deceivers," because they had made him believe they had managed matters so well that his presence was all that was wanted to settle them. In the month of November, 1617, he convoked a meeting of the clergy, for it could not be called a General Assembly, at St. Andrews, and there proposed to them five articles of conformity with the English Church, which having been next year agreed upon at another meeting in Perth, are generally known by the name of *The Five Articles of Perth*. As these articles occasioned much disorder in the Church, and led to very serious consequences, we may here enumerate them, and subjoin a few remarks to explain the opposition made to them by the Church of Scotland. They were as follows: 1. Kneeling at the communion. 2. The observance of certain holidays, viz. Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. 3. Episcopal confirmation. 4. Private baptism. 5. Private communion.

These articles may appear to some too insignificant to require or to justify the resistance which was made to them by the faithful portion of the Church. But by several of these articles, as might easily have been shown, the most sacred doctrines of Christianity were involved in danger. We can only hint at a few of the leading objections against them.[2]

The first article, viz. that of kneeling at the communion, was particularly obnoxious, from its tendency to countenance the popish doctrine of the adoration of the host. Although this ceremony is retained by the English Church as expressive of veneration rather than worship, the Scottish ministers were justly apprehensive that the adoration addressed at first to an invisible Being might soon be transferred to the visible symbol, and again degenerate into an idolatrous worship of the elements. They maintained, besides, that

[1] Calderwood's Hist. p. 682; The Bannatyne Miscellany, p. 205. Calderwood's fate was neither to be hanged nor drowned, he being, soon after the re-establishment of Presbytery in 1638, appointed minister of Pencaitland, and dying peaceably at Jedburgh, 29th October, 1650.

[2] The disputes on Ritualism lately introduced into the Church of England, and leading by no circuitous road into the superstitions of Romanism, throw considerable light on the objections of the Scottish Church.

the practice of sitting at a communion-table, in token of their fellowship, which was the common mode of all the other reformed churches, was much more agreeable to the example of the first supper, than that of receiving the elements individually from the hands of a priest, while kneeling at an altar.

Against the holidays they objected, that the nativity of Christ was of an uncertain date; that the institution of Christmas was an imitation of the idolatrous Saturnalia of the Romans, to coincide with which it was changed by the Roman Church to the 25th of December; that Easter and Pentecost were revivals of the ceremonial law of the Jews; that the anniversary days of the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ were no more consecrated by these events, than were the forms of the manger in which he was born, of the cross on which he suffered, and of the sepulchre in which he was buried; that they tended, wherever introduced, to diminish respect for the only day which God had made holy, viz. the Christian Sabbath; and that those who kept them came under the charge of "observing days, and months, and years," a practice expressly condemned in Scripture.

The third article, respecting confirmation, was objected to chiefly from having no foundation in Scripture, and because it implied a confirmation of baptism, as if that ordinance, administered by presbyters, were not complete without the imposition of hands by a bishop.

The fourth and fifth articles, viz. the private administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper our fathers condemned as inconsistent with the nature and design of these institutions, both of which are Church ordinances, and therefore to be administered only when the Church is assembled, and as leading to superstitious notions of the virtue of the mere outward signs. Though important ordinances, they denied them to be essential to salvation; and to insist on either baptism or the eucharist being administered privately seemed to them not only inconsistent with Scripture, but fitted to revive those popish doctrines against which humanity and reason alike protested—that all unbaptized infants are excluded from bliss, and that the reception of the consecrated host on a death-bed is essential to salvation.



But while our fathers had good reasons for condemning these ceremonies, as unwarranted and superstitious, there was another source of alarm which will be better understood by many in our own day than any we have now mentioned. They well knew that the moment these articles received the sanction of the civil power the bishops would forcibly impose them on all, both ministers and people, who, whatever might be their private opinions, would be obliged to practise them under the severest penalties.[1] Need we wonder, then, that they should have strenuously protested against this direct imposition on conscience—this tyrannical encroachment, which left them no alternative between surrendering their Christian liberty, or incurring the consequences of disobeying the law of the land?

Such, then, were the celebrated articles which James sought to intrude on the Scottish Church. The Assembly which met at St. Andrews, much to his chagrin, postponed the consideration of them; and on the 25th of August, 1618, the last Assembly which met in James' reign, and for twenty years afterwards, was held in Perth, for the purpose of extorting something like a sanction to the obnoxious ceremonies. "This Assembly," says Row, "was not made up of commissioners sent from presbyteries, but of bishops, doctors, deans, and such ministers as were the bishops' followers; then the king had his commissioners, and there were sundry noblemen and gentlemen who were written for by the king and bishops, to keep the said Assembly; and sundrie commissioners, sent from presbyteries, were not called upon, nor got they any vote there, the moderator knowing what they would say." "There was set in the Little Kirk," says Calderwood, "a long table, and forms at every side for noblemen, barons, burgesses, bishops, and doctors, and at the head of it a cross table, with chairs for his majesty's commissioners and the moderator. The ministers were left to stand behind, as if their place and part had been only to behold. But this apparently was done of policy, that they might carry some majesty on their part, to dash simple ministers."[2]

In an Assembly thus constituted, it need not surprise us

[1] Gillespie's Dispute against English-Popish Ceremonies, p. 4-7.
[2] Row's Hist. ad. an. 1618; Calderwood, p. 698.



that a majority was found willing to vote with the court. Archbishop Spotswoode, unable to answer the reasonings of those who condemned the articles, burst out in a passion with these words, which were remembered long after,—"This matter shall not be carried either by arguments or votes: if it were but we bishops, with his majesty's commissioner, we will conclude the matter, and see who dare withstand it!"[1] Having told them he would send up the names of all who voted against them to the king, the question was put, "Will you consent to the articles, or disobey the king?" The articles were carried by a considerable majority; but a minority of *forty-five*, even out of this packed Assembly, whom no promises could allure or menaces deter from voting according to their consciences, saved the Scottish Church from absolute degradation.

When this mock Assembly rose the bishops prepared to enforce the obnoxious rites. In a few weeks they were ratified by the privy-council, and in July, 1621, they obtained the sanction of parliament. It was remarked, that at the very instant when the Marquis of Hamilton, the commissioner, rose to touch this act with the royal sceptre, in token of ratification, a black thunder-cloud which had for some time hung over the city, enveloping it in extraordinary darkness, burst, as if immediately over the parliament-house, into a tremendous storm; three brilliant flashes of lightning following in quick succession, and rendered more frightful by the surrounding gloom, darted in at the great window, and seemed to strike directly in the face of the commissioner; this was succeeded by terrible peals of thunder, and such a tempest of rain and hail, that it was with great difficulty, and after long delay, the members were able to reach their homes. On this account, as well as of the sad work transacted on it, this day got the name, which it long retained among the people, of *Black Saturday*.[2]

Our fathers, who lived under the realizing belief of a superintending Providence, directing with the same hand the elements of nature and the events of time, were accustomed to see and hear God in everything. These appearances, in the excited state of the public mind, were considered as ominous of the wrath of Heaven at this flagrant breach

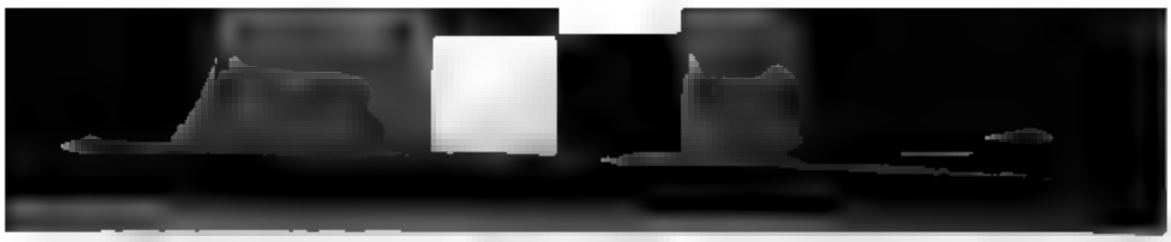
[1] Blair's Life, p. 15. [2] Row's Hist. ad. an. 1621; Calderwood, p. 783.



of national engagements, and betokening approaching judgments. Whatever may be thought of the warrantableness of thus interpreting the appearances of nature—appearances which, it must be allowed, are naturally fitted, and must therefore be intended, to inspire us with awe of the divine Majesty—the fears to which they gave birth, in the present instance, certainly do more honour to the piety of our Presbyterian ancestors, than the raillery which Spotswoode puts into the mouths of others, who said, "it was to be taken as an approbation from heaven, likening the same to the thunderings and lightenings at the giving of the law of Moses!" [1]

The bishops had now obtained all that seemed necessary to their complete ascendency. They had procured the sanction of what they called a General Assembly; and the parliament had ratified their articles, which were now the law of the land. All that remained was, that the law should be obeyed. But this was not so easily accomplished. When Christmas-day, 1618, arrived, the churches of Edinburgh were opened, and some of the time-serving ministers, in obedience to instructions from the king, observed the festival. But notwithstanding all the exertions made by the bishops and magistrates, few or none could be prevailed upon to attend; the people flocked out of town, or went about their ordinary affairs; the kirks were almost deserted, and in some of them the dogs were playing in the middle of the floor. Mr. Patrick Galloway, one of the ministers, a vainglorious man, who had offered to sign the protestation with his blood, and who was formerly so zealous, says Calderwood, that "he took it ill if he were asked to eat a Christmas pie" —now appeared in the pulpit, fretting and fuming because he was not followed in his present course, and denouncing famine of the word, deafness, blindness, and leanness upon all those who came not to his Christmas sermon. Another of the ministers, Mr. William Struthers, inveighed from the pulpit against the people of Edinburgh, in a strain of the most violent vituperation. And yet this man had been formerly so zealous against the bishops, that he could scarce give a comment upon the chapter after meals without a stroke at them; and on one occasion it is recorded of him,

[1] Spotswoode, p. 542.



that being in Glasgow, and happening to observe Bishop Spotswoode coming down the street, he went into a shop and fell into a swoon. On administering a little aquavitæ he recovered; and being asked what accident had befallen him, "What!" he exclaimed, "saw ye not *the character of the beast coming?*"[1]

These trifling anecdotes carry their own moral with them. He has studied history and observed life to little purpose, who has not discovered that those who make the most flaming professions when professions may be made without danger, or who show an overstrained strictness about matters of really small moment, are generally the first to yield when the trial of principle arrives, and turn out the most bitter opponents of their brethren who, though they made less noise about their faithfulness, prove nevertheless faithful in the evil day.

Of all the articles of Perth there was none that proved more obnoxious than that of being compelled to kneel at the sacrament. The people are, in general, more ready to take alarm at trifling innovations in the service where they are required to take an active share, than even in matters that more nearly concern the truth as it is in Jesus; but this ceremony was so identified in their minds with the idolatry of Rome—so clearly derived from worshipping the body of Christ in the host—that they shrunk from it with horror. In some churches, we are told, they went out, and left the minister alone; in others the simpler sort, when the officiating clergyman insisted on their kneeling, cried out, "The danger, if any be, light upon your soul, and not upon ours!" The elders and deacons refused to officiate, and the ministers were reduced to a sad dilemma. This led, as might have been expected, to unseemly altercations, in which the dignity of the clerical character suffered from rude collision with the common people. One of the deacons, named John Mein, seems to have given them more than ordinary provocation, by the steadiness with which he stood to his point and answered their arguments.

"What will ye say," said Mr. Galloway, "if I prove kneeling out of the Scripture? Ps. xcv. 6, 'O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker.' Heard ye me on that text last Sabbath?"

[1] Calderwood's MS. History, ad. an. 1618.



"Yes, sir," answered the deacon, "and thought ye proved nothing. If you can prove kneeling out of Scripture, I will be content to go with you. But ye allege only the 95th psalm, which was 1600 years before the institution."

"May not that content you which has contented the Kirk of Scotland?" asked Struthers.

"Sir, that is a point of papistry," said John, "to believe as the Kirk believes."

"What will you say to this, then," cried Galloway; "the Kirk has concluded it, and the king and council has confirmed it. Would you set yourself above both Kirk and king?"

"Sir," replied John, smiling, "ye were wont to say to us langsyne, 'Thus saith the Lord;' but now ye change your tune, and say, 'Thus saith the Kirk and the king.'"[1]

King James, whose ill humour seems to have increased with age, was particularly incensed at the people of Edinburgh for their opposition to his favourite ceremonies. One James Cathkin, a bookseller of that city, was apprehended in London, in 1619, on the charge of having circulated Calderwood's treatise against the Perth articles, and was brought before his majesty; when the following characteristic conversation took place. His majesty asked him where he dwelt? He replied, "If it please your majestie, I was born in Edinburgh, and dwells in Edinburgh."

"What religion are you of?" asked the king.

"Of the religion your majestie professes," said Cathkin.

This was too much for his majesty, who exclaimed, with a tremendous oath, "You are none of my religion! you are a recusant—you go not to the church!"

"If it please your majestie, I go to the Church," said Cathkin.

"Were you there on Christmas-day?"

"No."

"And why were you not there?"

Cathkin replied, that holidays had been "casten out of the Kirk;" and ventured to hint that "it had been good if our ministers had acquainted the session of the Kirk before they had brought in these novelties upon us."

"Plagues on you and the session of your kirk baith!" said the king. "When I was in Scotland I keeped Yoole

[1] Calderwood's MS. Hist. ad. an. 1619.

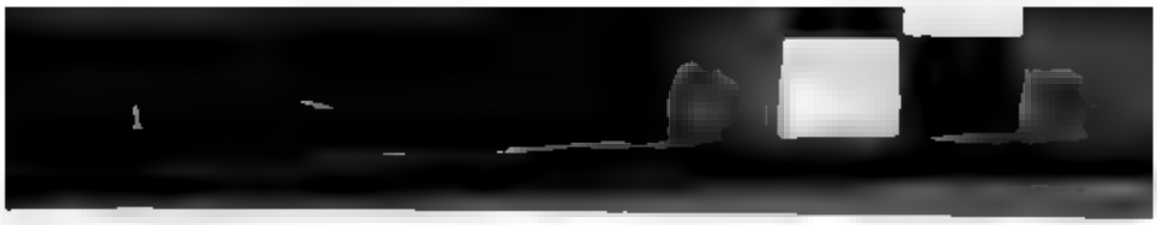


and Pasch[1] in spite of all your hearts; and," added he, pointing to Cathkin, who was on his knees before him, "see, my lords, these people will kneel to me, and will not kneel to God. I never can get order of thir people of Edinburgh. I forgave them the seventeenth day!" (alluding to 17th Dec. 1596.) "Ye are worse than Turks and Jews." And so saying, he wound up with an execration against the "souls and bodies" of the whole population of Edinburgh, whom he consigned to the devil and his place of torment, in language too gross for repetition.[2]

The history of the Church during the subsequent years of James' reign presents little that is interesting or important. We may therefore devote the remaining portion of this chapter to a few sketches of the most eminent of those ministers who flourished and suffered during this barren portion of our ecclesiastical annals.

The reader will recollect the six ministers who were tried for high treason at Linlithgow, and banished, for having held an Assembly at Aberdeen in 1605. Among these worthy sufferers in the cause of Christ and his royal prerogative as King of Zion, the most remarkable was Mr. John Welch. He was by birth a gentleman, his father being laird of Collieston, an estate in Nithsdale; and he was settled as minister, first at Selkirk, and afterwards at Ayr. The accounts given of his piety and of his perseverance and success in prayer are such as almost to exceed belief in this lukewarm age; but the incidents recorded in illustration of these belong properly to the province of the biographer. The following, however, may be quoted as being, if not a better attested, at least a more easily credited narrative. In France, the country of his exile, Mr. Welch applied himself with such assiduity to the study of the language of the country, that he was able, in the course of fourteen weeks, to preach in French, and was chosen minister to a Protestant congregation in the town of St. Jean D'Angely. War having broken out between Louis XIII. and his Protestant subjects, this town was besieged by the king in person. On this occasion Welch not only exhorted the inhabitants to a vigorous resistance, but mounted the walls, and rendered his personal assistance to the garrison. The king was at length admitted to the

[1] Christmas and Easter. [2] The Bannatyne Miscellany, vol. i. pp. 197–206.



town on a treaty; and being displeased that Welch preached during his residence in it, he sent the Duke D'Espernon with a company of soldiers to take him from the pulpit. When the preacher saw the duke enter the church he ordered his hearers to make room for the Marshal of France, and desired him to sit down and hear the word of God. He spoke with such an air of authority that the duke involuntarily took a seat and listened to the sermon with great gravity and attention. He then brought Welch to the king, who asked him how he durst preach there since it was contrary to the laws of the kingdom for any of the reformed to preach in places where the court resided. "Sir," replied Welch, "if your majesty knew what I preached, you would not only come and hear it yourself, but make all France to hear it; for I preach not as those men you use to hear. First, I preach that you must be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, and not your own; and I am sure your conscience tells you that your good works will never merit heaven. Next, I preach that as you are King of France there is no man on earth above you. But these men whom you hear subject you to the pope of Rome, which I will never do." Pleased with this reply, Louis said to him, "*He bien, vous serez mon ministre* —Very good, you shall be my minister;" and addressing him by the title of "father," assured him of his protection. He was as good as his word; for in 1621, when the town was again besieged, he gave directions to take care of his minister, and he was safely conveyed with his family to Rochelle.

Having lost his health, and the physicians having informed him that his only chance of recovery was to return to his native country, Mr. Welch ventured, in the year 1622, to come to London; and his wife, who was a daughter of the celebrated John Knox, having obtained access to James, petitioned him to allow her husband to return to Scotland. On this occasion the following singular colloquy took place: The king asked her who was her father. She replied, "John Knox." "Knox and Welch!" exclaimed he, "the devil never made such a match as that." "It's right like, sir," said Mrs. Welch; "for we never speired[1] his advice." He then asked her how many children John Knox had left, and if they were lads or lasses. She said, three, and they were *all lasses*. "God be

[1] Asked.



thanked!" cried the king, lifting up both his hands, "for if they had been *three lads*, I had never *bruiked*[1] my three kingdoms in peace!" She again urged her request that he would give her husband his native air. "Give him his native air," replied the king, "give him the devil!" "Give that to your hungry courtiers," said she, offended at his profaneness. He told her at last, that if she would persuade her husband to submit to the bishops, he would allow him to return to Scotland. Mrs. Welch, lifting up her apron, and holding it towards the king, replied, in the true spirit of her father, "Please your majesty, I'd rather kep[2] his head there!" Welch languished a very short time in London, having been released by death in May, 1622.[3]

The reader will recollect the noble part acted by Robert Bruce in the case of the Gowrie conspiracy. Will it be believed that this high-minded gentleman was persecuted till his death by the mean jealousy of the bishops, who set spies on his conduct, committed him to various prisons, and procured orders to drag him like a common felon from one corner of the kingdom to another? From the descriptions of contemporaries it appears that Bruce's appearance and manner corresponded with the dignity of his mind. "He had," says Livingstone, who was well acquainted with him, "a very majestick countenance, and whenever he did speak in public or private, yea, when he read the Word, I thought it had such a force as I never discerned in any other man. He was, both in public and private, very short in prayer with others; but then, every sentence was *like a bolt shot up to heaven;* yea, I have heard him say that he wearied when others continued long in prayer; but being alone, he spent much of his time in that exercise. It was his custom, after the first sermon, to retire by himself for prayer; and one day some noblemen who had far to ride sent the beadle to learn if there was any appearance of his coming. The man returned and told them, 'I think he shall not come this day, for I overheard him always say to another, that *he will not go, and cannot go, without Him*, and I do not hear the other answer him a word at all.'"[4] It is needless to say who "the other" person was whose silence astonished the ignorant beadle.

[1] Enjoyed. [2] Receive. [3] M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. ii. pp. 271–274.
[4] Livingstone's Characteristics, art. "R. Bruce."



The manner of Bruce's death, which took place in August, 1631, was beautifully in accordance with the tenor of his life. On the morning of his departure, his illness consisting chiefly in the debility of old age, he arose to breakfast with his family, and having eaten an egg, he desired his daughter to bring him another. Instantly, however, assuming an air of deep meditation, he said, "Hold, daughter, my Master calls me!" and having asked for the family Bible, and finding that his sight was gone, he said, "Cast up to me the 8th chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and place my finger on these words, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'" "Now," he said, "is my finger upon the place?" and being told it was, he added, "Then God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night!" And so saying the good man expired.

The memoirs of Robert Blair, who was first settled at Bangor in Ireland, and latterly at St. Andrews, exhibit the history of a mind deeply exercised about eternal things, and may be regarded as a fair specimen of the warm and manly piety, chastened by knowledge and rendered firm and consistent by the admixture of public principle, which distinguished many in these times. The most singular feature in the religious history of these good men was their wonderful success in obtaining answers to their prayers for temporal favours. We will introduce one or two instances of these "returns of prayers," as they were termed, with an observation made by Mr. Blair, after recounting an extraordinary incident in his own life: "If any one who may read these things shall be offended, seeing revelations have now ceased, and that we are to keep close to the will of God revealed in the Scriptures; I answer for their satisfaction, that if any creature, be he angel or man, add anything to that perfect rule of faith and manners, or reveal anything contrary thereto, let him be accursed. This we leave to Papists and sectaries. But, in the meantime, it ought not to be denied that the Lord is pleased sometimes to reveal to his servants, especially in a suffering condition, some events concerning themselves, and that part of the Church of God in which they live."[1]

[1] Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Robert Blair, p. 78.



There is much implied in these words, "especially in a suffering condition." We know not what it is to suffer for the gospel, and therefore know not "the consolations of Christ" which *abound* under these sufferings. It is only when the Master sees his servants sick and exhausted, and ready to perish in his service, that he brings forth such cordials to recruit their spirits.

Patrick Simpson was first ordained minister of Cramond, but was afterwards transported to Stirling, where he continued till his death. He was a very learned man, and was the author of a history of the Church, and of some of her ancient councils. On being blamed by one of his friends for wasting so much time in the study of pagan writers, he replied that his purpose was "to adorn the house of God with these Egyptian jewels." In 1601 his wife, who was a woman of singular piety, fell sick, and under her indisposition was assailed by the most fearful temptations, supposing herself to be delivered up unto Satan. Having fallen into one of those fits of despair on Sabbath morning, when Mr. Simpson was going out to preach, he was exceedingly distressed, and betook himself to prayer; and on his returning to the company present he assured them that "they who had been witnesses to that sad hour should yet see the adversary of her soul meet with a shameful defeat." Her distraction continued till the Tuesday morning preceding her death, when, on coming from his retirement, he said to the attendants, "Be of good comfort, for I am sure that ere ten o'clock of the day that brand shall be plucked out of the fire." He then prayed at her bed-side, and upon his alluding to Jacob wrestling with God she sat up in the bed, drew the curtains aside, and said, "Thou art this day a Jacob, who hast wrestled and prevailed; and now God has made good his word which he spake this morning to you, for I am plucked out of the hands of Satan, and he shall have no power over me." Shortly after this she expired, uttering only the language of comfort, hope, and joy.[1] Patrick Simpson took an active share in the struggles of the Church against the encroachments of the bishops; he nobly refused a bishopric when offered to him; and he died almost broken-hearted when the Perth articles were agreed upon, in March, 1618.

[1] Livingstone's Charact. art. "P. Simpson;" Wodrow's Analecta



The next instance partakes almost of the nature of romance. Andrew Duncan, minister of Crail, in Fife, was distinguished by his sufferings in defence of the Presbyterian polity. He was another of those who were banished for having attended the Assembly at Aberdeen; and on his return in 1619 he was again brought into trouble, being summoned before the high commission court of the bishops for opposing the Perth articles. On this occasion he boldly admonished his judges of their sin and danger. "Pity yourselves," he said, in his protest, "for the Lord's sake; lose not your own souls, I beseech you, for Esau's pottage; remember Balaam, who was cast away by the deceit of the wages of unrighteousness; forget not how miserable Judas was, who lost himself for a trifle of money, which never did him good. Better be pined to death by hunger than for a little pittance of the earth perish for ever, and never be recovered so long as the days of heaven shall last and the years of eternity shall endure." Spotswoode, the archbishop, on glancing at the faithful document, tossed it from him in disdain; another of the bishops, picking it up, said, "He calls us Esaus, Balaams, and Judases." "Not so," said Mr. Duncan; "read again; beware that you be not like them." He had soon an opportunity of exemplifying his doctrine; for having been banished to Berwick, to live "upon his own charges," he was almost literally "pined to death by hunger." With a numerous family, and a wife far advanced in pregnancy, he was reduced to the utmost hardship. One night in particular, when the children were crying for bread and there was none in the house to give them, the poor exiled minister occupied himself alternately in praying to God, pacifying his children, and comforting his partner. He exhorted her to wait patiently on God, who was now trying them, but would undoubtedly provide for them, though he should rain down bread from heaven. They had neither friend nor acquaintance in that place to whom they could make their case known. Early next morning, however, a man brought them a sackful of provisions, and went away without telling them whence it came, though entreated to do so. Shortly after this, during the night, when the good man knew not where to apply for aid to his suffering wife, a lady came to their door, and having sent the servant back with her horse, to return



for her at a certain time, requested permission to act the part of servant and nurse. She continued to do so till her services were no longer required, and on her departure presented the astonished and grateful couple with a box containing linen, cordials, and money; but, notwithstanding all their entreaties, would neither tell who she was nor whence she came.

This practice of banishing ministers from one part of the country to another must, particularly in those cases where they had large families, have been very grievous and oppressive; yet they seem to have endured it with great cheerfulness. One of them, George Dunbar, minister of Ayr, who had a number of young children, was twice thrust out by the bishops. At that time there were few such things as coaches or carriages in the country; and it may amuse some of my readers to learn that the children on these occasions had to be transported in *creels* placed on horseback. When the bishop's messenger came the second time to Mr. Dunbar's house to turn them out, one of his little daughters, who had no doubt suffered by the former transportation, cried out to the man, "What! and is Pharaoh's heart hardened still?" All that her father said, on hearing the summons, was, "Margaret," addressing his wife, "prepare the creels again."[1]

Some are apt to imagine that all the ministers of a certain period and persuasion were possessed of the same character, and sourness of temper has been supposed to have been the characteristic feature of Presbyterians. A minuter acquaintance with them would correct such an impression; for we meet with all different sorts of temperament among them—melancholy and lively—grave and facetious—rude and gentle. In short, they resembled each other only in their piety and fidelity. Robert Boyd of Trochrig was a man of profound learning, sagacity, and integrity, and had he not been driven about by the bishops from one place to another he might have proved an ornament to his native country. He was successively principal of Glasgow and Edinburgh universities, and minister of Paisley; but in none of these situations was he allowed to remain in peace; and from the last place, to the disgrace of Paisley, he was driven by a rascally mob with stones and dirt, so that he retired in disgust to his property of Trochrig. He was a man of grave and severe character,

[1] Livingstone's Characteristics.

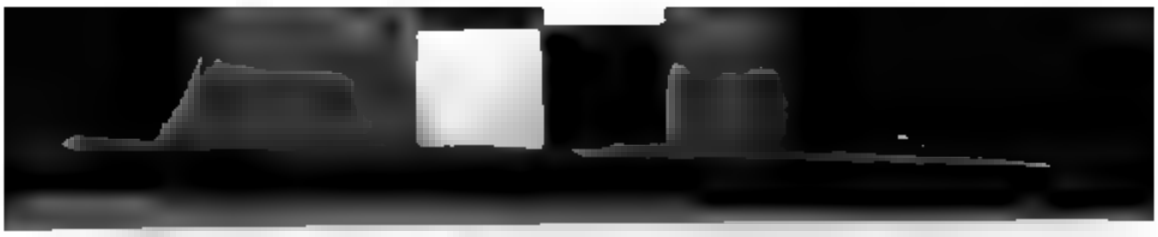


but he tells us that his brother, whose untimely loss he deplored, was constantly laughing and joking.

John Scrimgeour, minister of Kinghorn, who stood boldly out against Episcopacy, was, as Livingstone tells us, "a man rude-like in his clothing, in his behaviour, and some of his expressions, but of a tender loving heart." Though a great scholar, he used to say he wished that all books were burned except the Bible and a few notes upon it. His temper was so irritable, that, like Jonah, he could not restrain himself from expressing his displeasure even before God. A favourite daughter being supposed near death, he used in secret prayer the following extraordinary language: "Thou knowest, O Lord, I have been serving thee in the uprightness of my heart according to my measure, and thou seest that I take pleasure in this child; and cannot I obtain such a thing as this at thy hand?" with other expressions of a similar nature, which, though the prayer was granted, he said "he would not utter again for all the world." On his death-bed his body was racked by a very painful disorder; and in the interval of one of the attacks he said to Mr. Livingstone: "John, I have been a *rude stunkard man* all my days, and now by this pain the Lord is *dantoning* (subduing) me, to make me as a lamb before he take me home to himself."

A very different character from this, though essentially like, was Robert Cunningham, minister of Holywood in Ireland. "He was," says the same writer, "the one man, to my discerning, of all that ever I saw, that resembled most the meekness of Jesus Christ in his whole carriage; and was so far reverenced by all, even the most wicked, that he was often troubled with that scripture, 'Woe to you when all men speak well of you.'" The sweetness of his disposition endeared him so much to his brethren, that they could not endure to hear of any one harming him; and Mr. Blair, on learning that the Bishop of Down intended to depose him, told the prelate, with solemn earnestness: "Sir, you may do to me and some others as you please, but if ever you meddle with Mr. Cunningham your cup will be full!"

The death-bed scene of this amiable man corresponded with the gentleness of his nature. Having been thrust out of his charge in Ireland, he came over to his native country, but never held up his head again. "The bishop," he said.



"has taken away my ministry from me, and I may say my life also, for my ministry is dearer to me than my life."[1] During his sickness he was heard to say, "I see Christ standing over death's head, and saying, Deal warily with my servant; loose now this pin, now that, for this tabernacle must be set up again." A little before his departure, March, 1637, his wife sitting by his bed-side, with her hand clasped in his, he commended to God first his congregation, then his brethren in the ministry, and his children, and concluded with, "And last, O Lord, I recommend to thee this gentlewoman, who is no more my wife!" Thus saying, he softly disengaged his own hand, and gently moved that of his wife a little way from him. At this affecting farewell she burst into tears, and in the act of attempting to allay her grief he fell asleep in Jesus.[2]

The general state of religion in Scotland during the earlier part of the seventeenth century was very far from being satisfactory. In the large towns, which had enjoyed the labours of a faithful ministry, the good fruits were apparent in the holy lives of many; but in consequence of the niggardly provision made for the support of a settled ministry, many parishes in the country were left, in a great measure, desolate; the place of ministers being often supplied by readers who, for a small salary, were engaged to read portions of the Scriptures, and the prayers which were contained in the Book of Common Order, prefixed to the Psalms in metre. It may be easily imagined that this class of men, little raised above the peasantry from which they were chosen, without learning, without authority, would ill supply the place of a regular and well-trained ministry. The General Assembly, long before, were deeply affected with this state of spiritual destitution, and many were the plans proposed and the efforts made to supply the country with good and faithful pastors. But, in the absence of all funds for their support, this was found impracticable; and on the entrance of Prelacy the case became still worse, two-thirds of the benefices formerly appropriated to the maintenance of the ministry being claimed by the bishops to support the dignity of their station. Under the

[1] George Wishart, the eminent martyr, regarded his suspension from preaching in the same light. "He grew pensive, and being asked the reason, said, 'What do I differ from *a dead man*, but that I eat and drink?'" (Clark's *Gen Martyr* p. 563).

[2] Livingstone's Characteristics.



rule of these prelates, who were too much taken up with their own projects of worldly ambition to pay much regard to the interests of religion, the pulpits were filled for the most part with a time-serving clergy, and the people allowed to sink into spiritual apathy.

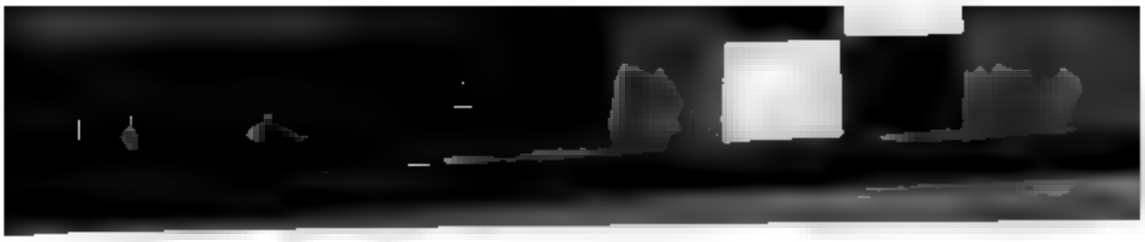
At this period, therefore, the state of religion in Scotland was very peculiar; some spots being favoured with a faithful ministry and richly cultivated, while others were left in their native sterility; and the character of the people corresponded, being something like the prophet's figs, "the good, very good, and the evil, very evil." In some parishes where the gospel was preached piety flourished to an uncommon degree, and discipline was exercised with a rigour which, in the present day, would be considered intolerable. In other places the people remained destitute of all privileges and all restraint, in a state of ignorance, superstition, and crime, very little better than that which existed in the days of Popery. This accounts for the apparent contradictions which the records of the time may be found to contain. The country, in fact, was but partially civilized, and the ministers of religion had to contend not only with the ordinary fruits of human depravity, but with strange forms of evil, engendered and fostered in the shades of that long dark night from which they had lately escaped.

The most singular, certainly, of all the crimes which characterized this age, and which has occasioned most speculation, was that of *witchcraft*. The prosecutions instituted both before civil and ecclesiastical tribunals, against those who were charged with this offence, exhibit a very strange picture of society. It does not come within our present province to enter upon this subject; nor is it necessary to discuss the policy of those laws which were enacted in the reign of James VI. against this crime, and under the operation of which so many unhappy individuals were subjected to a cruel death. We know that the unholy arts of necromancy, sorcery, and divination, practised among the heathen nations of antiquity, were prohibited by the law of Moses under the penalty of death, as involving the worship of false gods, or treason against Heaven; and that witchcraft is among the sins condemned in the New Testament. Whether the "god of this world" is now permitted to exercise his power in the same



manner as then over the souls and bodies of men may admit of question; but it cannot be denied that even the pretence or profession of holding intercourse with evil spirits and practising diabolical arts, amounts to a crime of no light consideration, either in a moral or civil point of view; and it is certain that at this period of our history there were individuals who avowedly acted as the agents of Satan, and practised on the credulity and the superstitious fears of their neighbours to an extent of which we can form no conception, often employing their arts to the vilest of purposes. It is melancholy to think that so many wretched creatures should have fallen victims to these delusions; but while we condemn the cruelties exercised in their discovery and punishment, we should bear in mind the peculiar state of society at the time. It is unfair to single out the clergy as eminently chargeable with these prosecutions, in which they only participated with persons of all ranks—with the king on the throne, the judges on the bench, and the most learned men of the age. And it is quite preposterous to confine the charge to the Presbyterian ministers; for the trial and burning of witches went on with even superior activity and cruelty during the reign of Prelacy, both before and after the Restoration.

In the midst of all this corruption, however, and in spite of the banishment of so many faithful ministers, the gospel flourished in some places to an unprecedented degree. The persecutors might remove the labourers from the field, but they could not destroy the fruits of their labours. A spirit of grace and supplication was poured out on their bereaved flocks, and they were wonderfully enabled in patience to possess their souls, so that no sufferings could induce them to abandon their principles, or resign themselves to despair. "Nay," says the author of memoirs in reference to this period, "when the darkness was at the greatest, and when, to the eye of reason, there seemed scarcely a ray of hope, the Presbyterians declared that utter desolation shall yet be to the haters of the virgin daughter of Scotland. The bride shall yet sing as in the days of her youth. The dry olive-tree shall again bud, and the dry dead bones shall live." Many faithful ministers, such as Dickson, Bruce, Livingstone, and Henderson, had great boldness given them to preach the gospel, with the connivance, or in spite of the mandates of



the bishops: and two remarkable *revivals* took place, one at Stewarton in 1625, and the other at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630, which deserve to be recorded.

The parish of Stewarton at the period referred to was favoured with an excellent minister, Mr. Castlelaw; but it is remarkable that the principal instrument of the revival was not he, but the minister of the neighbouring parish of Irvine, Mr. Dickson. This good man had been formerly professor of moral philosophy in the University of Glasgow, and was settled in Irvine in 1618. His zeal against the Perth articles exposed him to the rage of the bishops, who summoned him before the high commission court, and after subjecting him to the most insulting treatment, banished him to Turriff, in the north of Scotland. To all this Dickson meekly replied, "The will of the Lord be done; though ye cast me off, the Lord will take me up. Send me whither you will, I hope my Master will go with me, as being his own weak servant." By the intercession of the Earl of Eglinton, whose countess, though reared in her youth at court, was an ornament to her Christian profession, and exerted all her influence for the promotion of religion and the protection of its faithful ministers, the pastor was restored to his beloved people. After his return in 1623 his ministry was singularly honoured of God for the conviction and conversion of multitudes. Crowds under spiritual concern came from all the parishes round about Irvine, and many settled in the neighbourhood to enjoy his ministrations. Thus encouraged, Mr. Dickson began a weekly lecture on the Mondays, being the market-day in Irvine, when the town was thronged with people from the country. The people from the parish of Stewarton, especially, availed themselves of this privilege, to which they were strongly encouraged by their own minister. The impression produced upon them was very extraordinary. In a large hall within the manse there would often be assembled upwards of a hundred persons, under deep impressions of religion, waiting to converse with the minister, whose public discourses had led them to discover the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to cry, "What shall we do to be saved?" And it was by means of these week-day discourses and meetings that the famous Stewarton revival, or *the Stewarton sickness*, as it was derisively called, began and spread afterwards from



house to house for many miles along the valley in Ayrshire through which the Stewarton water runs. Extravagances, as might be expected, took place during this period of excitement, from which some took occasion to bring reproach on the whole proceedings;[1] but these were checked and condemned by Mr. Dickson and others, who conversed with them; and the sacred character of the work was attested by the solid, serious, and practical piety which distinguished the converts. Many who had been well known as most abandoned characters and mockers at religion, being drawn by curiosity to attend these lectures, afterwards became completely changed, showing by their life and conversation that the Lord had "opened their hearts to attend to the things spoken" by his servant.[2]

The impulse given by this revival continued from 1625 to 1630, when it was followed by a similar effusion of the influences of the Spirit in another part of the country. This took place at the Kirk of Shotts. And here also it is observable that the honour of originating the revival was reserved not to the minister of the parish, though a good man, but to one of those faithful servants who suffered for their nonconformity to the innovations of the time; the Lord thus signally accomplishing his word, "Them that honour me, I will honour." The circumstances which led to this revival were the following: Some ladies of rank who had occasion to travel that way had received civilities at different times from Mr. Hance, the minister of Shotts; and on one occasion, when their carriage broke down near the manse, he kindly invited them to alight, and remain till it was repaired. During their stay they noticed that the house was much dilapidated, and in return for his attentions they got a new manse erected for him in a better situation. Mr. Hance, on receiving so substantial a favour, waited on the ladies to thank them, and wished to know if there was anything he could do to testify his gratitude. It is pleasing to know that at this time, as well as afterwards, the noblest of the daughters of Scotland distinguished themselves by their zeal in the cause of religion. These ladies loved the gospel, and the persecuted ministers

[1] "The ignorant and proud secure livers called them the *daft* people of Stewarton."—*Life of Robert Blair*, p. 18.

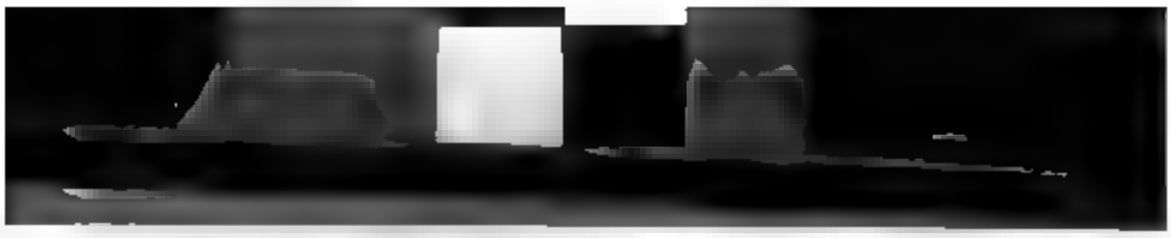
[2] Gillies' Historical Collections, vol. i. p. 306.



who were contending for its purity. They, therefore, gladly seized the opportunity of asking Mr. Hance to invite such of them as they named to assist at the sacrament, that they might enjoy the benefit of their ministrations, and afford to others an opportunity of partaking in a privilege at this time rarely enjoyed. The minister gladly consented; and information of it spreading abroad, an immense concourse of people gathered from all parts to attend the dispensation of the ordinance, which was fixed for Sabbath, the 20th of June, 1630.

Among the ministers invited on this occasion, at the request of these ladies, were the noble and venerable champion, Robert Bruce of Kinnaird, who was still able to preach with his wonted majesty and authority, and John Livingstone, chaplain to the Countess of Wigton, who was afterwards settled some time in Ireland, but who at present was only a preacher, and about twenty-seven years of age. Much of the spirit of light and love was imparted during the services of the communion Sabbath; and so filled were the communicants with the joy and peace which they had experienced, that, instead of retiring to rest, they joined together in small companies, and spent the whole night in devotional exercises.

It had not been usual before this time to have service on the Monday after the dispensation of the Lord's Supper; but God had vouchsafed so much of his gracious presence on the preceding days of this solemnity, that they knew not how to part on this Monday without thanksgiving and praise. John Livingstone was with difficulty prevailed on to preach the sermon. In the memoirs of his life, written by himself, he gives the following memorandum in reference to this discourse: "The only day in all my life wherein I found most of the presence of God in preaching was on a Monday after the communion, preaching in the church-yard of Shotts, June 21, 1630. The night before I had been with some Christians, who spent the night in prayer and conference. When I was alone in the fields, about eight or nine of the clock in the morning, before we were to go to sermon, there came such a misgiving of spirit upon me, considering my unworthiness and weakness, and the multitude and expectation of the people, that I was consulting with myself to have stolen away somewhere and declined that day's preaching, but that I thought I durst not so far distrust God, and so

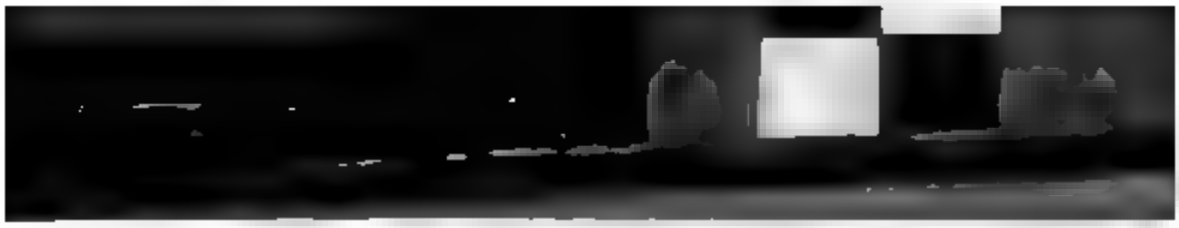


went to sermon, and got good assistance about an hour and a half upon the points which I had meditated on: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh' (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26). And in the end, offering to close with some words of exhortation, I was led on about an hour's time, in a strain of exhortation and warning, with such liberty and melting of heart, as I never had the like in public all my lifetime."[1]

To this sermon, under the blessing of God, no less than five hundred people ascribed their conversion. And in gratitude for such a remarkable token of the divine countenance on this day the Church of Scotland has ever since devoted a part of the Monday after a communion Sabbath to the duty of public thanksgiving.

Some remarkable incidents occurred on that Monday, one of which, as illustrating the striking effect produced by Mr. Livingstone's discourse, may be now related. "Three young gentlemen belonging to Glasgow had made an appointment to go to Edinburgh to attend some public amusements. Having alighted at Shotts to take breakfast, one of their number proposed to go and hear sermon—probably more from curiosity than any other motive; and for greater expedition they arranged to come away at the end of the sermon, before the last prayer. But the power of God accompanying the sermon was so felt by them, that they could not go away till all was over. When they returned to take their horses, they called for some refreshment before they mounted; but when it was set upon the table they all looked to one another, none of them daring to touch it till a blessing was asked; and as they were not accustomed formerly to attend to such things, one of them at last said, 'I think we should ask a blessing to our drink.' The others assented at once to this proposal, and put it on one of their number to do it, to which he readily consented. And when they had done, they could not rise till another had returned thanks. They went on their way more sedately than they used to do, but none of them mentioned their inward concern to the others, only

[1] Life of Mr John Livingstone, p. 14.



now and then one would say, 'Was it not a great sermon we heard?' another would answer, 'I never heard the like of it.' They went to Edinburgh, but instead of waiting on diversions or company, they kept their rooms the greater part of the time they were there, which was only about two days, when they were all quite weary of Edinburgh, and proposed to return home. Upon the way home they did not discover the state of their minds to one another; and after arriving in Glasgow they kept themselves very much retired, coming seldom out. At last one of them made a visit to his friend, and declared to him what God had done for him at the Kirk of Shotts. The other frankly owned the concern that he had been brought under at the same time; and both of them proceeding to the third, and finding him in the same state of mind, they all three agreed to have a fellowship-meeting. They continued to maintain a practice suitable to their profession for the remainder of their lives, and became eminently useful in their day and generation."[1]

From this and other well-attested instances it appears that the revival on this occasion was not characterized by those excesses which have brought discredit on similar scenes in our own country and elsewhere. The word of God sank deep into the hearts of the hearers, forcing them to retire, like the stricken deer, into solitude, there to weep and mourn till the dart was extracted by the hand that had launched it, and the balm of consolation was poured into the bleeding wound. It was some time before the modesty of the converts would permit them to own the change wrought upon them, till, like the spring of living water, which cannot be controlled or concealed, the grace of God evinced its power by bursting from the once "stony heart," and pouring itself forth in the pure, peaceful, and fruitful stream of a holy conversation. And it is worthy of remark, that then, as it has often been both before and since, the Most High was visibly preparing his Church by a copious effusion of his Holy Spirit, manifested in the general revival of religion, for the struggles which awaited her, in asserting his righteous claims against the powers of this world, and carrying into effect the noble enterprises which were before her. We now enter on the history of what has been termed the Second Reformation.

[1] Gillies' Hist. Collections, vol. i. pp. 308–311.



CHAPTER VII.

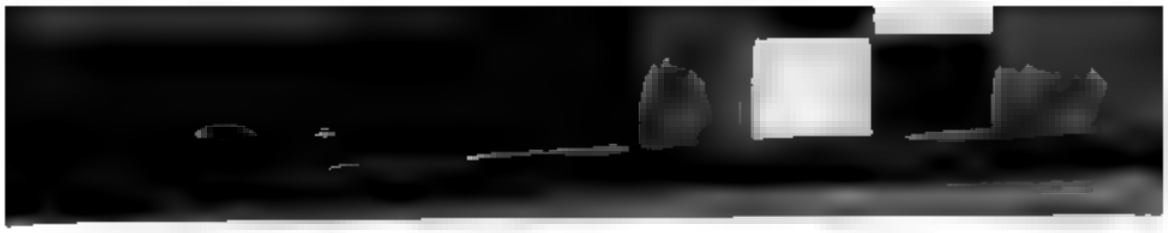
1633 — 1638.

Accession of Charles I.—His visit to Scotland—Laud's Service Book—Its reception in Scotland—The covenant renewed—State of parties—Alexander Henderson—Earls Loudoun and Rothes—Hamilton's visit to Scotland—Glasgow Assembly, 1638—*Presbyterian form of worship.*

Charles I. succeeded to the throne of England in March, 1625. Naturally reserved, imperious, and obstinate, he had imbibed from his father, James VI., the most extravagant notions of monarchical authority. He was taught to hold, as a point of religious rather than political faith, that the king, in his sole person, was superior to all law, civil or ecclesiastical. Whatever might be his private virtues (and they have been greatly exaggerated), there can be no doubt that his conduct as a prince, from the commencement of his reign, was violent and unconstitutional. Yielding himself to the influence of his queen, a popish princess, and to the guidance of High Church counsellors, who flattered his love of arbitrary power, Charles soon began that course of opposition to parliament and people which ended in his ruin.

In June, 1633, he paid a visit to Scotland to receive the crown of that ancient kingdom. Our sagacious countrymen were not long in discovering the real character of their new monarch. The first thing that excited their suspicions was the open profanation of the Lord's-day in the royal household. Laud had by this time republished King James' infamous *Book of Sports*, afterwards ratified by Charles, for allowing of pastimes on the Lord's-day, "which," says Whitelocke, "gave great distaste to many others as well as those who were usually called Puritans."[1] It was, therefore, with feelings of no ordinary alarm that the inhabitants of Edin-

[1] Whitelocke's Memorials, pp. 17–19.



burgh witnessed the example given by the court, when they heard the sacred quietude and peaceful devotions of their Sabbath disturbed, for the first time, by the sounds of unholy mirth and boisterous revelry.[1]

Charles was crowned "with such rites, ceremonies, and forms, as made many good Christians admire," says Row, "that such things should be used in this reformed Kirk." During this ceremony Laud openly insulted one of the bishops, who, less ostentatious than the rest, did not appear in full episcopal costume. Thrusting him from the left hand of the king, he said, "How dare you, sir, appear in this place without your canonicals?" On the following Sabbath, the king heard sermon in the High Church, and when the ordinary reader was about to commence the psalm, one of the bishops came down from the king's loft, and after some angry words pulled him from the desk, substituting two English choristers in their vestments, who, with the assistance of the bishops, performed the service after the English form.[2] Thereafter Guthry, bishop of Moray, mounted the pulpit, and addressed the king with such fulsome panegyric, that his majesty, fond as he was of such incense, blushed for shame.

In the parliament which met immediately after, the king began his campaign as the champion of Prelacy, by proposing an act empowering him to regulate ecclesiastical vestments. From the specimen which they had seen at the coronation, the parliament was startled at the motion; and when the act was read for their approval, Lord Melville, an aged nobleman, rose and said, "I have sworn, sire, with your father and the whole kingdom to the Confession of Faith, in which these innovations were solemnly abjured." Others of the noblemen began to make similar objections, upon which Charles pulled out a list from his pocket, and said, "Gentlemen, I have all your names here, and I'll know who will do me service, and who not this day." Notwithstanding this illegal and disgraceful threat the votes carried against his majesty; the clerk, however, suborned for the purpose, declared that they were in his favour; and when the Earl of Rothes contradicted this the king declared that the report of the clerk must be held decisive, unless Rothes chose to

[1] Row's Hist. p. 279. [2] Ibid.

challenge his veracity at the bar of the house, and, on failing in his proof, to suffer the penalty of *death*. The nobleman, disgusted at this conduct, or unwilling to expose his majesty, declined the perilous task, and the articles were ratified as the deed of parliament.[1]

The gratulations with which Charles had been received on his arrival were now exchanged for very different symptoms. On expressing his astonishment at this change of the public feeling, he was honestly told the reason by Lord Loudoun: "Sire, the people of Scotland will obey you in everything with the utmost cheerfulness, provided you do not touch their religion and conscience."

Prelacy had now been established in Scotland for thirty years, and yet the antipathy against it was becoming every day more intense. The conduct of the prelates and of the clergy, especially that of the younger portion of them whom they had obtruded on the flocks of the banished ministers, did not tend to abate this feeling. These novices, who had neither piety nor learning to recommend them, disdained to mingle with the people; they aped the manners of the higher classes, and even among these assumed a haughtiness of demeanour which filled our nobles with indignation. An incident, bearing on this point, is related by Sir James Balfour. Charles was extremely desirous that the primate of Scotland (Spotswoode) should have precedence of the chancellor; "which," says Sir James, "the Lord-chancellor Hay, a gallant stout man, would never condescend to, nor ever suffer him to have place of him, do what he could." Once and again the king attempted to gain this point, so anxious was he to humble the nobility and exalt the clergy; and on his coronation he sent Sir James to the doughty old chancellor, with a request that he would "but only for that day give place to the archbishop." Lord Hay's reply was in the true spirit of a Scottish chief. "He was ready to lay down his office at his majesty's feet, but since it was his royal will that he should enjoy it with all the privileges of the same, never a stoled priest in Scotland should set a foot before him, so long as his blood was hot."[2] The prosecution of

[1] Burnet's History of his Own Times, i. 24, 25; Row's Hist. pp. 250, 252; Rushworth, ii. 183.

[2] That is, so long as he lived.

Lord Balmerino, indicted for high treason, for having attempted to use the privilege of petition, viewed in connection with similar proceedings in England, tended greatly to alarm the Scots nobility. In addition to all this, a spirit of repentance seems to have been poured out on the people, leading many seriously to reflect on the share they had in procuring the calamities now impending over the church. They began to contrast the days they had enjoyed under the pure ministration of the gospel with those in which they now lived; and their faithful pastors now banished far away with the worthless hirelings who had been intruded upon them. The result was deep compunction for their contempt of former privileges and breach of solemn engagements, on account of which they now considered themselves to be justly punished by Heaven.

Thus it will be perceived, that about this period everything was prepared for an explosion; and yet this was the time fixed for introducing fresh innovations of a character still more obnoxious than all the preceding. No change had as yet been attempted on the form of public prayer, which was still conducted, externally at least, as it had been practised since the Reformation. A collection of prayers, prefixed to the psalms in metre, usually called John Knox's liturgy, had been long in use. It was originally meant as a help to weak ministers, at a period when it was difficult to find well-qualified persons to supply the pulpits; and the prayers in this book were still used in the churches by the *readers*, who were employed to read the Scriptures to the people before the ministers began the proper service of the day, and in some places on the morning and evening of every week-day. In the pretended Assembly of 1616, held at Aberdeen, it was ordained that a new liturgy, or book of common-prayer, should be formed for the use of the Church of Scotland; and the task of preparing it is said to have fallen on Cowper, bishop of Galloway.[1] But this project was not carried into effect—probably from their knowledge of the aversion of the Scots to fixed forms of prayer. The people did not question the lawfulness of set forms, but their necessity; they had been long habituated to hear them read, though not by their *ministers;* and they considered it altogether at variance with Scripture, with the practice of antiquity, and with the very

[1] Books of Universal Kirke, p. 995, Pet. Ed.; Scott's MSS., in Adv. Lib.



nature of prayer, that the Church should be shackled and bound to an invariable formulary in this part of divine worship. To the English liturgy they objected, not only on the ground that it restricted the minister to a prescribed form of words, but because it recognised a number of superstitious practices which the Scripture condemned, and which not only the Puritans, but many of the best and most enlightened members of the Church of England had long desired to see reformed. But the English liturgy, undesired as it was, would not have excited such a sensation as that which Laud attempted to force on the people of Scotland. For our especial benefit, it pleased his grace of Canterbury to draw up a new service-book of his own, much more nearly resembling the popish breviary; and in various points, particularly in the communion-service, borrowing the very words of the mass-book.[1]

To prepare the way for the introduction of this *Anglo-popish* service, as it was called, a book of canons was sent down for the regulation of the clergy; next came orders for every minister to procure two copies of Laud's liturgy, for the use of his church, on pain of deprivation—even before the book had been seen by any of them; and lastly, when the minds of the whole nation had been wrought up to a state of alarm by reports of a design to reintroduce the popish worship, down came the long-expected service-book, with orders from the king and council that it should be read in all the churches.

Brief as was the space during which the ministers were permitted to examine the contents of this book, they had time sufficient to discover its character, and warn the people against it. The pulpits resounded with accusations against its orthodoxy, and denunciations of the tyranny of the bishops in imposing it on the once free reformed Church of Scotland. In the midst of these preparations arrived the fatal day appointed for commencing the use of the service-book—the 23d of July, 1637.

On the morning of this Sabbath, one Henderson, a reader in the High Church of St. Giles, and a great favourite with

[1] "The Booke of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other parts of Divine Service, for the use of the Church of Scotland. Edinburgh, 1637."



the people, read the usual prayers about eight o'clock; and when he had ended, he said, with tears in his eyes, "Adieu, good people, for I think this is the last time of my reading prayers in this place." The Dean of Edinburgh was appointed to perform the service after the form of the obnoxious liturgy. An immense crowd had assembled. At the stated hour the dean was seen issuing from the vestry, clad in his surplice, and he passed through the crowd to the reading desk, the people gazing as they would at a show. No sooner, however, had he begun to read, than his voice was drowned in a tumultuous clamour, raised chiefly by persons of the lower classes, denouncing the innovation. An old woman named Janet Geddes, who kept a green-stall in the High-street, no longer able to conceal her indignation, cried out, "Villain, dost thou say mass at my lug!" and with these words, launched at the dean's head the stool on which she had been sitting. Others followed her example, and the confusion became universal. The service was interrupted, and the women, whose zeal on this occasion was most conspicuous, rushed to the desk in wild disorder. The dean threw off his surplice and fled, to escape being torn in pieces. The Bishop of Edinburgh then ascended the pulpit, and endeavoured to allay the ferment; but his address only inflamed them the more. He was answered by a volley of sticks, stones, and other missiles, with cries of "A pope! a pope!—antichrist!—pull him down!—stone him!" and on returning in his coach, had he not been protected by the magistrates, he might have fallen a victim to the fury of the mob—a martyr to Laud's liturgy![1]

[1] In an old manuscript lately printed (*Appendix to Rothes' Relation*, p. 193, Ban. edit.) there is a satirical account of this scene, differing in a few particulars from that given above, and adding several others. According to this account, the epithets bestowed on the clerical functionaries by the crowd were much more distinguished for their strength than their delicacy. "The dean, Mr James Hanna, was mightily upbraided. Some cried, 'Ill-hanged thief! if at that time when thou wentest to court thou hadst been weel hanged, thou hadst not been here to be a pest to God's church this day.' A certain woman cried, 'Fy, if I could get the thropple out of him!' One did cast a stool at him, intending to have given him a ticket of remembrance, but *louking* (jerking down his head) became his safeguard at that time." There is little doubt that one folding stool was made use of for the purpose here expressed; and if the missile employed was anything like what is commonly called "Jenny Geddes's stool," preserved in the Antiquarian Society's museum, it was well for the dean that he had learned to *louk*.



Nothing can be more ridiculous than the attempts made at the time by the prelatic clergy, and which have been revived of late by their advocates, to magnify this incidental tumult into a regularly organized conspiracy. The terror into which the bishops were thrown, and the disgrace they felt at being defeated by a handful of women, naturally led them to exaggerate the whole affair; and they may have really believed, perhaps, what some absurdly asserted, that the authors of the tumult were men disguised in women's clothes. We need not wonder at this, when we consider that even Baillie, a good Presbyterian, whom we shall frequently have occasion to quote, says, in his letters at this period, "I think our people are possessed with a bloody devil, far above anything that can be imagined." But Baillie soon found he was mistaken: at that time he had not made up his mind on the question, and indeed seems to have been incapable of it from pure bodily fear. "The Lord save my poor soul!" exclaims this good, but rather weak-minded man, "for as moderate as I have been, and resolving, in spite of the devil and the world, by God's grace so to remain to death—for as well as I have been beloved hitherto by all who has known me, yet *I think I may be killed*, and my house burnt upon my head!"[1] But indeed there is not the vestige of a proof that it was premeditated, or even foreseen, by any class of people; and none will assert it who have read the accounts transmitted by those who were on the spot, and who had no temptation to conceal the truth.

This tumult, however, simple as it was in its commencement, proved the death-blow of Laud's liturgy. Though at first confined to the humbler orders, and the result, as we have seen, not of any premeditated scheme, but of an impulse given to long-suppressed feelings, the quarrel was soon taken up by the higher classes. The infatuated conduct of the prelates (the younger part of them especially) to enforce the obnoxious mandate of the court, roused the whole country to follow the example set by Edinburgh. Petitions and remonstrances poured into the privy-council. New riots, in which the gentry began to participate, took place, and it was found absolutely necessary to suspend the use of the liturgy. In Glasgow, similar indignation was excited by an attempt to

[1] Baillie's Letters and Journals (Bannatyne edit., 4to.) i. 24.



impose this book; and there, as in Edinburgh, the women seem to have borne the principal share. One Mr. William Annan, minister of Ayr, who preached in defence of the service-book, had well-nigh fallen a victim to their fury. During the day he was pursued with threats of vengeance; and on venturing out at night, he was beset by some hundreds of ladies, chiefly the wives of honest burgesses, who attacked him with "fists, staves, and peats, but no stones;" tore his coat, ruff, and hat to pieces, and after beating him soundly, allowed him to go home. His humiliation, however, was not yet complete; for next morning, on mounting his horse, the animal, startled by the mob which began to collect around him, unhappily fell and rolled over him "in very foule myre;" and the discomfited divine, covered with mud, made his escape out of Glasgow, amidst the derisive shouts of the populace.[1]

About this time the excitement in Edinburgh was so great that many noblemen and gentlemen, commissioners from various places, with their retainers, and great crowds of people from all quarters, came up to town, waiting with the utmost anxiety the king's answer to a supplication for the suppression of the service-book. Had that answer been conciliatory, had any concessions been made at this critical juncture, it is probable that Prelacy might have survived, and a civil war been prevented. But the fatal infatuation of Charles prevailed. A new proclamation arrived, enjoining strict obedience to the canons, and instant reception of the service-book, condemning all the proceedings of the supplicants, as they were called, and discharging all their public meetings, under pain of treason. The supplicants, apprised of this measure, which, had it been tamely submitted to, would, in all probability, have extinguished every spark of freedom in the country, resolved to proceed in a body to the Scottish privy-council, which was to meet at Stirling on the 20th of February, 1638, and present, in name of the Kirk and kingdom, a protest against the proclamation as soon as it was made.

This was deemed the legal course for securing their liberties, and the manner in which they went about it shows their zeal and determination. The Earls of Traquair and

[1] Baillie's Letters, i. 91.



Roxburgh, after in vain attempting to dissuade them from their purpose, resolved to steal a march on them, by secretly starting from Edinburgh at two o'clock on Monday morning, the day before the meeting of council, expecting to have the proclamation ratified and published ere the supplicants were aware of their departure. In this, however, they were disappointed. Traquair's servant having stepped into an alehouse before leaving Edinburgh, to fortify himself for the cold ride of a February morning by a glass of "Scotch twopenny," incautiously let out the secret of his journey to some of his boon companions, and among them was a servant of the Lord Lindsay, who immediately communicated the news to his master. Lindsay lost not a moment in sounding the alarm among his friends, and he himself, with the Earl of Home, mounting their horses at four o'clock the same morning, overtook the two earls at the Torwood, passed them by taking a turn round the wood, and reached Stirling an hour before them. In course of time Traquair and Roxburgh rode leisurely up the streets of that ancient burgh, and proceeded, with the aid of some other councillors, to pass the proclamation, when, to their mortification and astonishment, the two lords of the covenant appeared, and, in all due form of law, protested against it.[1]

On the news of this spirited protest reaching London, the court was greatly incensed, and none more so than Laud, who was supposed to have had the chief hand in urging the king to these extreme measures, and who on this occasion betrayed his wounded pride in a very ridiculous manner. On his way to the council-table, he was met by the celebrated Archie Armstrong, the king's fool, who said to him, "Wha's fule now? Doth not your grace hear the news from Striveling about the liturgy?" Laud was silly enough to complain of this jest as an insult; and it was ordained, by order of council, that "Archibald Armstrong, for certain scandalous words of a high nature spoken by him, against his grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, should have his coat pulled over his head and be banished the court." Some one having met Archie, after the execution of this sentence, attired in black, asked him what had become of his fool's coat. "O," said he, "my Lord of Canterbury hath taken it from me because

[1] Rothes' Relation, p. 63; Baillie, i. 33; Guthrie's Memoirs, p. 33.

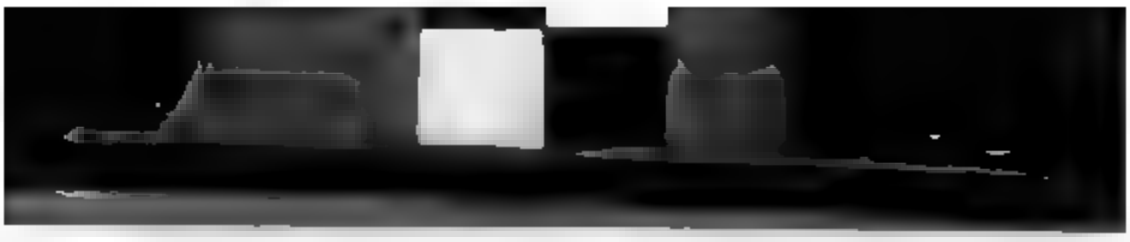


either he or some of the Scotch bishops may have use of it for themselves; but he hath given me a black coat for it to cover my knavery withal."[1]

The same promptitude and decision in protesting against the proclamation was manifested at Edinburgh; and at length the council, apprehensive of danger from such large masses of people collected in town, agreed that if they would disperse the crowd the commissioners might appoint some of their number to represent the rest, who should remain and attend to the public interests. To this the commissioners agreed, and erected four *tables* as they were called—one for the nobility, another for the barons, a third for the boroughs, and a fourth for the Church. But before separating to return to their homes, the commissioners, considering the critical state both of Church and nation, agreed to renew the national covenant, with a bond applicable to the present conjuncture, binding themselves "to adhere to and defend the true religion, and forbearing the practice of all innovations already introduced into the worship of God; and to labour by all means lawful to recover the purity and liberty of the gospel as it was professed and established before the aforesaid innovations." This covenant was sworn and subscribed, with much solemnity, in the Greyfriars' Church at Edinburgh, on 1st of March, 1638.

A fast was appointed. After sermon the covenant was read; upon which the Earl of Loudoun, whose manner was peculiarly impressive, made an address to the assembled multitude, dwelling on the importance of this bond of union in present circumstances, and exhorting all to zeal and perseverance in the cause of the Lord. Thereafter Mr. Alexander Henderson, then minister at Leuchars, offered up an impassioned prayer for the divine blessing; when the noblemen present stepped forward to the table, subscribed the deed, and, with uplifted hands, swore to the observance of its duties. After them the gentry, the ministers, and thousands of every rank, subscribed and swore. The immense sheet of parchment was speedily filled, and numbers, for want of room, were obliged to sign only with their initials. The enthusiasm was universal; it seemed as if a new era had dawned on them; every face beamed with joy, and the city presented

[1] Rothes' Relation, App. p. 208; The Scots Scouts' Discoveries, 1639.



one scene of devout congratulation and rapture. "Behold," says a writer speaking of that time, "the nobility, the barons, the burgesses, the ministers, the commons of all sorts of Scotland—all in tears for their breach of covenant, and for their backsliding and defection from the Lord; and, at the same time, returning with great joy unto their God, by swearing cheerfully and willingly to be the Lord's. It may well be said of this day, Great was the day of Jezreel. It was a day wherein the arm of the Lord was revealed—a day wherein the princes of the people were assembled to swear fealty and allegiance to that great King whose name is the Lord of hosts."[1]

"To this much vilified bond," it has been well said, "every true Scotsman ought to look back with as much reverence as Englishmen do to their magna charta. It was what saved the country from absolute despotism, and to it we may trace back the origin of all the efforts made by the inhabitants of Britain in defence of their freedom during the succeeding reign of the Stuarts."[2] But it must be viewed in a still more sacred light. It was the "oath of God," sworn in his name, in agreement with his word, and in defence of his cause; and the effects bear a striking resemblance to those recorded in holy writ, as the native fruits of similar exercise in ancient Israel. The minds of the people were at once solemnized by the service, and cemented in defence of their religious privileges. They felt themselves bound to God, and to one another, not only by the common obligations of the divine law, which lie upon all men, independent of their own consent, but by the superadded obligation of a voluntary oath

[1] Wilson's Defence of Reformation Principles, p. 242.—All the Presbyterian writers of that time bear witness that the divine presence accompanied this solemn service in a remarkable manner, and that its happy influences were everywhere manifest. The general assembly of 1640, in their letter to the Swiss churches, say, that "when they began to descend and search deeper into their hearts, the remembrance of their violated covenant pierced and penetrated their consciences, wherefore, being led by serious repentance, they resolved to renew the covenant, with confession," &c. (*Epistola*, &c., subjoined to *Historia Motuum*.) And in another document they declare, that "the Lord from heaven did testify his acceptance of that covenant by the wonderful workings of his Spirit in the hearts both of pastors and people, to their great comfort and strengthening in every duty, above any measure that hath been heard of in this land." (*Reasons against the rendering of our Sworn and Subscribed Confession of Faith*.)

[2] Aikman's Hist. of Scotland, iii. 445.



—an oath sworn by the nation, and registered in heaven. They looked on themselves as embarked in a holy cause, in which it was an honour to suffer, and martyrdom to die. The prelates were thunderstruck at the event; and Spotswoode, the archbishop of St. Andrews, who had sagacity enough to foresee in it the doom of the whole prelatical fabric, exclaimed, in despair, "Now, all that we have been doing these thirty years bypast is at once thrown down!"[1]

The state of parties in Scotland at this remarkable era was very singular, and in some respects unprecedented. It is customary with High Church historians to speak of the country as divided into two parties—the royal or prelatical, and the presbyterian; and they would even have us to believe that the latter was a mere "faction," composed of rebellious persons, guided, or rather goaded on by fanatical leaders. This, however, is just a specimen of the defamatory style uniformly adopted by the enemies of the truth, whenever the ministers of religion bestir themselves to vindicate the liberties of the Church, or obtain the reformation of her abuses. The real state of matters was precisely the reverse. The two parties mentioned certainly existed in the country; but it is quite ridiculous to say that the nation was *divided* into them. The prelatical party may be said to have been composed of the bishops alone, with a few of their underlings among the clergy, whom they had intruded into the Church —a party so insignificant, in point of number, rank, wealth, or influence, that they may truly be called a faction—a faction opposed to the whole nation.[2] At the head of this

[1] Bishop Guthrie's Memoirs, p. 35.

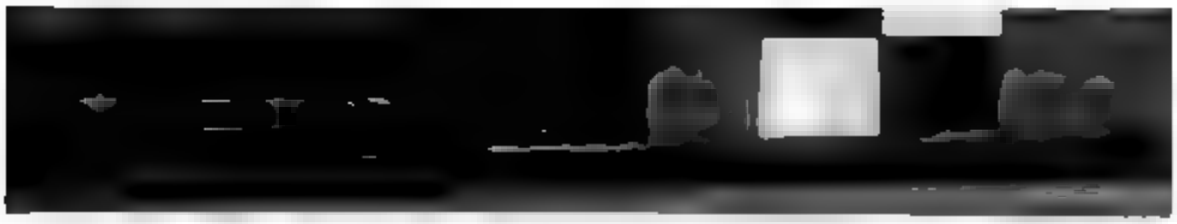
[2] The misrepresentation referred to is only an echo of that circulated at the time by the deposed bishops who fled into England, and who gave out that "many, and some of the chiefest amongst the covenanters, were men of unquiet spirits and broken fortunes," &c. To this the noblemen and gentlemen replied: "It is known by all who are acquainted with this country, that almost the *whole kingdom* standeth to the defence of this cause, and that the chiefest of the nobles, barons, and burgesses, are honoured in the places where they live for religion, wisdom, power, and wealth, answerable to the condition of this kingdom; that the meanest of the commons who have joined in this cause, are content of their mean estates with the enjoying of the gospel, and no less known, that our adversaries are not for number any considerable part of the kingdom, and that the chiefest (setting aside some few statesmen, and such as draw their breath from court) are known atheists, or professed Papists, drowned in debt, denounced his majesty's rebels for a long time past, are under caption of their creditors, and have already, in their imaginations, divided among them the lands of



faction, however, Charles, unhappily for himself and the country, had now openly placed himself. It was long before his good subjects, in the excess of their loyalty, would believe that he could be the author of the harsh and arbitrary proclamations issued against them from the English court: they ascribed the whole to the machinations of Laud, and the misrepresentations of the Scottish bishops, who, pretending to be frightened by the uproar about the liturgy, had fled to court, carrying to his majesty, and disseminating through England, the most false and exaggerated reports. There can be no doubt now, from unquestioned documents, that these prelates, by their infatuated counsels, were the principal means of plunging the nation into a civil war; but *their* loyalty, it seems, taught them to transfer all the responsibility, and consequently all the odium, of their measures, from their own heads to that of the monarch, on pretence of supporting the royal prerogative. To this rash policy, Charles, with an infatuation which seems to have been inherent in the Stuarts, was induced to yield; for he sent down a message informing his subjects in Scotland, to their grief and dismay, that the liturgy had been imposed by his own express orders, and that the measures of the bishops had his entire approbation;—and, as if this had not been enough, he gave the sanction of his name to an infamous libel against the Scottish nation, drawn up by one Dr. Balcanqual, and filled with the most unfounded statements and injurious reflections, which was published under the title of "The King's large Declaration."[1] Thus the whole was converted into a personal quarrel between Charles and his subjects; and the question came to be, whether the people of Scotland should submit, in matters of religion, to his arbitrary dictates, irrespective of parliament

the supplicants, which they hoped to be possessed in by the power of England." (*The Remonstrance of the Nobility, Barons,* &c., Feb. 27, 1639, p. 14.)

[1] Baillie describes this declaration as "a number of silly fables invented for our disgrace," "heaping up a rabble of the falsest calumnies that ever was put into any one discourse that I had read, to show that we were the most desperate traitors that yet had lived, and mere hypocrites, who, in matters of religion, had never been wronged, but had only sought pretences of religion to cover our plots of rebellion." Exactly the view given of them by prelatical writers ever since, who, indeed, generally refer to this work of Balcanqual as their sole authority! (*Baillie's Letters,* i. 140, 175, 208, Ban. edit.).



or General Assembly, or at once assert their privileges as Christians and their rights as freemen?

In opposition to the contemptible faction which we have described, the Scottish parliament, the most ancient and respectable of the nobility, barons, and gentlemen, with the mass of the common people, were decidedly Presbyterian. Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable, during the whole of this singular period, than the unanimity which prevailed on all the questions at issue between them and the court. With the single exception of Aberdeen, which was under the influence of the Marquis of Huntly, and the Aberdeen *doctors*, who, owing to their distance from the immediate scene of action and lack of intercourse with their brethren, remained attached to the cause of Prelacy, the whole nation cordially joined in the cause of the covenant. No compulsion was used to procure subscriptions, for none was needed. Some individuals, indeed, among the clergy, who refused to sign, might be treated somewhat unceremoniously; but this was rather an expression of the popular dislike at the measures with which they were identified, than an attempt to force their consciences. Everything like personal violence was deprecated and repressed by the leaders of the covenant; and both Rothes and Baillie lament that their good cause should have been injured by any approach to such practices. So far from persons being compelled to sign the covenant, great care was taken to prevent improper or incompetent subscriptions. None were allowed to subscribe but such as had communicated in the Lord's supper. "Some men of no small note," says Henderson, "offered their subscriptions, and were refused, till time should prove that they joined from love to the cause, and not from the fear of man." "The matter was so holy," says the Earl of Rothes, "*that they held it to be irreligious* to use violent means for advancing such a work." A unanimity so singular can only be ascribed to a remarkable effusion of the Holy Spirit, the genuineness of which was attested by the general revival of practical religion that marked the whole progress of the work. "I was present," says Livingstone, "at Lanark and several other parishes, when, on Sabbath, after the forenoon's sermon, the covenant was read and sworn; and I may truly say, that in all my lifetime, excepting at the Kirk of Shotts, I never saw



such motions from the Spirit of God. All the people generally and most willingly concurred. I have seen more than a thousand persons all at once lifting up their hands, and the tears falling down from their eyes; so that through the whole land, excepting the professed Papists, and some few who adhered to the prelates, people universally entered into the covenant of God." Nay, such was the enthusiasm that some subscribed it with their blood, and others would not be prevented from signing, even in the presence of the prelatical ministers and their underlings, who, with oaths and imprecations, and in some cases with drawn swords, attempted to intimidate them from coming forward.[1]

If we search for the secondary causes of such an excitement among a people proverbially sober and intelligent, the whole might be traced to three main sources of dissatisfaction and alarm—Arminianism, Popery, and despotism. It would be easy to enlarge on each of these topics, showing the close connection in which they then stood to each other, and the ample grounds our forefathers had for apprehension. To ignorance of these causes, or to a wilful suppression, we may trace all the misapprehension which still exists, in so many quarters, regarding the struggles of our reforming ancestors at this period. Suffice it here to say, that Arminianism, as then maintained in England, was fitted, if not intended, to pave the way for the introduction of Popery; that Laud and his divines were radically popish; and that Popery was then, as it has ever been in theory and practice, whatever it may be in profession, decidedly favourable to absolute despotism in the state.[2] The doctrine advocated by these divines, and

[1] Baillie's Letters; Rothes' Relation; Livingstone's Life.—It may be proper to state that the counties north of Aberdeen, particularly Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, and Inverness, cordially entered into the covenant. "It was professed by all that it was the joyfullest day that ever they saw, or ever was seen in the north, and it was remarked as a special mark of God's goodness towards these parts, that so many different clans and names, among whom was nothing before but hostility and blood, were met together in one place for such a good cause, and in so peaceable a manner, as that nothing was to be seen and heard but mutual embracements, with hearty praise to God for so happy a union." (*Rothes' Relation*, p. 106.) At Inverness, the town-drummer having been ordered to invite the inhabitants to sign the covenant, added to the proclamation, of his own accord, something about pains and penalties, which, Rothes says, "gave occasion to our adversaries to calumniate our proceedings." (*Ib.* p. 107.)

[2] Hist. Essay on the Loyalty of Presbyterians, p. 188; Bennet's Memorial of the Reformation, pp. 162–165; Rushworth, part ii. p. 76.



by the doctors of Aberdeen, was, that the king was supreme judge in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil; and that, though all the subjects should be massacred in one day, or ordered to submit to the Turkish religion, under penalty of being spoiled of liberty, goods, and life, they had no alternative but to submit to his will.[1] This shows what sort of people our ancestors had to deal with. The question was not about obedience to law, but submission to an arbitrary prince, who held that his will was above all law; and who was supported by a clergy defending him in these extravagant claims, by popish powers urging him to exercise them, and by a large army in England levied to enforce them. In such circumstances, had Scotland yielded, she would have entailed on herself indelible disgrace. She did not yield; and the consequence was a struggle, which, commencing in this country, was soon transferred to England, and issued in a revolution that shook the throne, and involved the three kingdoms in a protracted civil war. During this contest, whatever may have been the designs of parties in England, the Scots distinguished themselves as much for true loyalty to their king as for fidelity to the cause of God, and patriotic devotion to their native country.

It is usually seen, that when Providence has some great work to accomplish in the Church, instruments are raised up admirably fitted for the part they are designed to perform. At this juncture it is pleasing to find that, notwithstanding the oppression under which the Church had laboured for thirty years, individuals arose, out of the ranks of the nobility, the barons, and the ministry, who, in point of talents, piety, and natural dispositions, seem to have been expressly formed for the struggle. Among these, the first place is due to Alexander Henderson, then minister of Leuchars in Fife, and who, for personal worth, as well as his prominent share in the transactions of this period, deserves particular notice. In the early part of his life, Mr. Henderson had been, to say the least, neutral in the contest between Presbytery and Episcopacy; there is even reason to think he was a defender of the corruptions introduced by the bishops. As a proof of this, he accepted a presentation from Archbishop Gladstanes to the

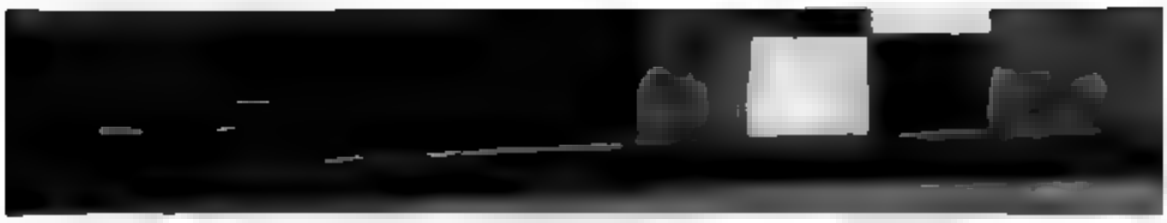
[1] Baillie's Letters, i. 89; Duplyes of the Ministers and Professors of Divinitie in Aberdeen. 1638.

parish of Leuchars; and such was the repugnance of the people there to his induction, that, on the day of ordination, they barricaded the church doors, so that the ministers, with Henderson, were obliged to effect their entrance by the window. Some time after, having heard that Robert Bruce was to preach at a communion in the neighbourhood, Henderson, attracted by curiosity, went secretly to hear him, and placed himself in a dark corner of the church, where he might remain most concealed. Bruce came into the pulpit, and after a pause, according to his usual manner, which fixed Henderson's attention, he read with his wonted dignity and deliberation, these words as his text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." These words, so literally applicable to the manner in which he had entered upon his ministry, went "like drawn swords" to his inmost soul. He who wished to conceal himself from the eyes of men, felt that he was naked and opened before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. In short, the discourse of this powerful preacher was, by the divine blessing, the means of Henderson's conversion; and ever after he retained a great affection for Bruce, whom he called his spiritual father.

After this wonderful change, which went much deeper than a conversion to Presbyterianism, Henderson continued to discharge the duties of his retired parish in a manner much more conducive to the edification of his people, and laid up those stores of learning for which he afterwards found so much use. He became a decided opponent of the prelatical measures; and when matters came to extremity, his talents as a public speaker, his piety and learning, his gentlemanly and ingratiating manners, and his profound sagacity in business, pointed him out to all his brethren as the fittest person for taking the lead in their affairs.[1]

Among the nobility who entered with heart and soul into the cause of the covenant, the most distinguished were the Earls of Loudoun and Rothes. John Campbell, earl of Loudoun, was a nobleman whose patriotism, prudence, eloquence, and fortitude, justly entitle him to be regarded as the

[1] Life of Alex. Henderson in Dr. M'Crie's Miscel. Writings. Part i. Life of A. Henderson, by Rev. Dr. Aiton, minister of Dolphington.



chief assertor both of the civil and religious rights of his country. From his youth, he attached himself to the Presbyterian interest, which he saw was identified with the cause of civil liberty. On the commencement of the contentions in 1638, he took an active share in opposing the despotic measures of the court; and on one occasion roundly told the king's commissioner, in language which was soon re-echoed in tones of thunder from every part of the kingdom, "That they knew no other bands between a king and his subjects but those of religion and the laws. If these are broken," he said, "men's lives are not dear to them: *boasted* (threatened) we shall not be; such fears are past with us." Loudoun may be called the Brutus of Scotland during this epoch of her history; firm as a rock, nobly upright, sternly conscientious. The Earl of Rothes, with the same high principles, was a man of a different stamp. Lively and facetious, polite in his address, and indefatigably active in all his movements, this young nobleman, who died at the age of forty-one, was at the head of all the enterprises of the covenanters, and rendered essential service to the cause.[1]

In the month of June, after the swearing of the covenant at Edinburgh, the king sent down, as his commissioner to Scotland, the Marquis of Hamilton, a nobleman of insinuating manners, chiefly with the view of conciliating the Scots, and inducing them, if possible, to renounce that oath. The covenanters had by this time become very suspicious of the designs of Charles, for which they had too good reason; for from a correspondence between the king and Hamilton, afterwards discovered, it was found that Charles was at this time making preparations for an invasion of Scotland. After describing these, he says to Hamilton, "Thus you may see that I intend not to yield to the demands of these traitors

[1] In 1641, Rothes being in London shortly before his death, came into high favour at court; and from some expression in Baillie's letters, it has been surmised, very unreasonably and uncharitably, that had he lived much longer, he would have changed sides and become an apostate. There is not a word spoken by Baillie that can be construed into such a suspicion, which seems, indeed, to rest on no better foundation than the conjecture of the strongly biassed mind of Clarendon. Among the other noblemen who engaged at this time in the cause of the covenant, may be mentioned, Earls Eglinton, Montrose, Cassils, Home, Lothian, Wemyss, Dalhousie, and Lords Lindsay, Yester, Sinclair, Boyd, Fleming, Elcho, Carnegy, Balmerino, Cranston, Cowper, Johnston, Forester, Melville, &c. &c.



the Covenanters. And as concerning the explanation of their damnable covenant, I will only say, that so long as this covenant is in force, whether it be with or without explanation, I have no more power of Scotland than as a duke of Venice, which I will rather die than suffer."[1] On his arrival in Scotland, however, Hamilton soon found that he had to deal with a people who were determined to "die rather than suffer" such an infringement of their rights, and who had now adventured too far to retrace their steps either with safety or a good conscience. No sooner, therefore, did he give a distant hint of his instructions, than the Covenanters declared, that "there was not a man joined but would rather quit his life than his part in that covenant."[2] Alarmed at the arrival of some military stores at Leith, they blockaded the castle, and placed armed guards at the city gates; and it required all the artifice of the commissioner to allay the storm which he had injudiciously excited.

On the 9th of June, Hamilton, who had been residing at Dalkeith, entered Edinburgh with great pomp, and it was arranged that the manner of his reception should present a demonstration of the power and zeal of the Covenanters. For this purpose the circuitous road by Musselburgh, along the beach of the sea, was selected. The nobles, to the number of thirty, and all others who had horses, rode to the end of the long sands at Musselburgh, to accompany his grace to the palace. The people, to the number of sixty thousand, were ranged, under the directions of Sir George Cuningham, in ranks along the sea-side, extending to several miles. At the eastern extremity of Leith links, on the side of a rising ground, stood about seven hundred ministers, all in their cloaks—an exhibition of their numbers and unity in the cause. While riding slowly along through this prodigious array, and hearing so many thousands beseeching him on all sides, with tears, that he would advise the king to deliver them from the bishops and their books, and restore to them their beloved ministers, the marquis was deeply affected, and protested, that had the king been present to witness the scene, he would never think of forcing his obnoxious measures on such a people.

[1] Burnet's Memoirs of the Duke of Hamilton, p. 60; Peterkin's Records of the Kirks (Introduct.), p. 24. [2] Rothes' Relation, p. 151.



It is needless to dwell on the temporizing measures by which Hamilton endeavoured to bring over the Covenanters. One of his plans deserves notice, as showing the unprincipled character of the means resorted to by the king. With the view of counteracting the covenant as sworn in the previous March, and sowing dissension among the Covenanters, he ordered Hamilton to subscribe, in his name, the National Covenant, as sworn in 1580, with a general bond for the maintenance of "the religion now presently professed," and to require all his subjects in Scotland to follow his example. The design of this manœuvre was very obvious. In the covenant, as sworn in 1580, no particular mention was made of Prelacy, though there can be no doubt it was implicitly abjured by that covenant; and under the ambiguous phrase, "the religion presently professed," it was clearly intended to screen Prelacy, and involve those who had renewed the covenant in the alternative of either virtually renouncing their oath against Prelacy, or incurring the charge of disobedience. When, therefore, the king's proclamation appeared, on the 22d of September, enjoining the swearing of "the king's covenant," as it was called, the Covenanters, with great reason, protested against the stratagem. They maintained that, as that covenant was understood and explained, they could not swear it, having already subscribed it with an express clause renouncing Prelacy and the innovations which had accompanied it.[1] "If we should now enter upon this new subscription," said they, "we should think ourselves guilty of mocking God, and taking his name in vain; for the tears that began to be poured forth at the solemnizing of the covenant are not yet dried up and wiped away, and the joyful noise which then began to sound forth hath not yet ceased. As we are not to multiply miracles on God's part, so ought we not to multiply solemn oaths and covenants on our part, and thus to play with oaths as children do with their toys, without necessity." And they concluded by demanding a free General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in which, without limitations prejudging the question, the prelates and all their innovations might be subjected to a fair and impartial trial.[2]

[1] Reasons against Rendering our Subscribed Covenant; Baillie's Letters, 103–119. Rothes' Relation, p. 122.

[2] Protestation of the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, &c., subscribers of



All the manœuvres of Charles and his bishops to outwit, intimidate, divide, or gain over the Covenanters, having thus signally failed, the king found himself under the necessity of complying with the wishes of the people, and summoning "a free General Assembly," which was indicted to meet at Glasgow, on Wednesday, November 21, 1638; and the Marquis of Hamilton was appointed his majesty's commissioner. This Assembly was appointed to inquire into the evils that distressed the country, and to provide suitable remedies; and the bishops having been generally accused as the authors of these disturbances, they were subjected, by his majesty's proclamation, to the censure of the Assembly.[1]

This famous Assembly met at Glasgow on the day appointed. A more noble, grave, and competent body of men never perhaps convened to deliberate on the affairs of the Church. It consisted of 140 ministers, freely chosen by their different presbyteries, with 98 ruling elders, of whom 17 were noblemen of the highest rank, 9 were knights, 25 were landed proprietors, and 47 were burgesses of great respectability, capable of representing their respective communities in parliament. Some of the noblemen and gentlemen, hearing that an attempt would be made by the Marquis of Hamilton, the king's commissioner, to overawe the Assembly by a large retinue of followers, came accompanied by their usual retainers in arms. The Assembly was conducted throughout with the utmost gravity and decorum, although honest Baillie makes grievous complaints of the manner in which they were incommoded and jostled by the crowd, who were very naturally anxious to witness their proceedings; and he gravely lectures the Scottish people in general for not taking a lesson on "modesty and manners" in church, "from Canterbury, yea, from the pope, yea, from the Turks or Pagans." "We are here so far the other way," says he, "that our rascals, without shame, in great numbers, make such din and clamour in the house of the true God, that if they minted to use the like

the Confession of Faith and Covenant, lately renewed within the kingdom of Scotland, made at the Mercate Cross of Edinburgh the 2nd of September, immediately after the reading of the proclamation, dated September 9, 1638. pp. 12-23.

[1] Reason for a General Assemblie, 1638, p. 5. See the royal proclamation, indicting a free General Assembly at Glasgow, Records of the Kirke of Scotland, p. 81.



behaviour in my chamber, I would not be content till they were down the stairs."

The order and dignity which characterized the proceedings of the Assembly itself, meeting as it did in a period of such excitement, were mainly owing to the consummate tact, firmness, and address of its moderator, Alexander Henderson. For the exercise of these qualities he found abundant occasion in the course of the seven days during which the commissioner kept protesting and disputing against their constitution. The king had called a "free General Assembly;" but it soon appeared that he had never any intention of allowing it to meet. His secret correspondence with the commissioner, now published to the world, displays the duplicity of his character in the most extraordinary light.[1] He exhorts Hamilton to use all his endeavours to divide the Assembly, by sowing the seeds of jealousy between the laics and the clergy; if this failed, he was to protest against all their proceedings, and on no account to allow them to proceed to the censure of the bishops. The bishops, who had been subjected by the king's proclamation to the censure of the Assembly, instead of appearing at the summons, sent in a declinature, in which, with ridiculous effrontery, they refused to acknowledge its authority, chiefly on the ground that the moderator was not a bishop, and because the meeting was partly composed of laymen, as they were pleased to call the ordained elders of the church;—thus setting themselves up as judges of a court before which they were cited as criminals, and presuming, in their own persons, to settle the grand point at issue, relating to the government of the Church, which was to come before the Assembly.

The first question, therefore, came to be, Whether the Assembly found themselves competent judges of the bishops? On this question being put by the moderator the commissioner, after a long speech, in which he extolled his majesty's grace and condescension, presented to them a proclamation in the king's name discharging the service-book, the articles of Perth, and the high commission, and declaring that the bishops should be answerable from time to time to the General Assembly. The obvious design of this was to quash all

[1] See Records of the Kirke of Scotland, by Alex. Peterkin; Part ii. Burnet's Memoirs of Hamilton, pp. 89–93.



further proceedings against the bishops, whom Hamilton persisted in styling the "lords of the clergy"—to divide the Assembly—and, at the same time, by apparently granting all the popular demands, to throw on the members, should they continue their sittings, the odium of unreasonable opposition to "a pious and gracious prince," who had done so much for the people. As to subjecting the prelates to the censure of the Assembly, it was sufficiently clear, from their declinature, that nothing was further from their intentions, or more unlikely to happen.

In these circumstances it required more than ordinary prudence in the moderator to act a part at once respectful to royalty and true to the interests of the Church. Henderson nobly discharged the task. "It well becometh us," he said in reply, "with all thankfulness to receive so ample a testimony of his majesty's goodness, and not to disesteem the smallest crumbs of comfort that fall to us of his majesty's liberality. With our hearts do we acknowledge before God, and with our mouth do we desire to testify to the world, how far we think ourselves obliged to our dread sovereign; wishing that the secret thought of our hearts and the way wherein we have walked this time past were made manifest. It hath been the glory of the reformed churches, and we account it our glory after a special manner, to give unto kings and Christian magistrates what belongs unto their place; and as we know the fifth command of the law to be a precept of the second table, so do we acknowledge it to be the first of that kind, and that next to piety towards God, we are obliged to loyalty and obedience to our king. It has pleased his majesty to descend so far to his subjects' humble petitions, for which we render to his majesty most hearty thanks—offering, therefore, to spend our lives in his service. And we would do with him as the Jews did with Alexander the Great. When he came to Jerusalem he desired that his picture might be placed in the temple. This they refused to grant unto him, it being unlawful so to pollute the house of the Lord; but they granted to him one thing less blamable, and far more convenient for the promulgation of his honour—to wit, that they should begin the calculation of their years from the time that he came to Jerusalem, and likewise that they should call all their male



first-born by the name of Alexander: which thing he accepted. So, whatsoever is ours we shall render to his majesty, even our lives, lands, liberties, and all; but for that which is God's, and the liberties of his house, we do think, neither will his majesty's piety suffer him to crave, neither may we grant them, although he should crave it."[1]

On hearing this noble reply the commissioner said, "Sir, ye have spoken as a good Christian and a dutiful subject." The "dutiful subject" had spoken; it remained for the "good Christian" to act. Henderson repeated the question for the third time—"I now ask if this Assembly find themselves competent judges of the prelates?" "If you proceed to the censure of their persons and offices," said Hamilton, "I must remove myself." "A thousand times I wish the contrary from the bottom of my heart," replied the moderator; "and I entreat your grace to continue to favour us with your presence, without obstructing the work and freedom of the Assembly." The Earl of Rothes seconded this request, using various arguments to prevail on the commissioner to remain, and even trying to coax him into good humour, but without effect. Hamilton began to shed tears, lamenting that such a weighty burden should have been laid on such a weak man, and acted his part so well as to draw tears from many. This scene continued for some time, when, perceiving that they were determined to proceed, he rose up, and after repeating his protestations, he, in the name of the king, as head of the Church, dissolved the Assembly, and discharged their further proceedings.

There are critical periods in the Church, when the vital principles on which it is founded are at stake, and when to yield would entail, not only disgrace on the individuals most concerned, but ruin on the cause in which they are embarked. And such was the present. The Assembly had indeed been convened by the king's authority, but they were not bound to dismiss at his bidding. Neither the laws of the land, nor the constitution of the Church, as ratified by these laws, allowed any such power to the sovereign. The covenant had already been pronounced by the lord-advocate and

[1] This account of the Glasgow Assembly is taken from a MS. Journal of the Assembly in my possession, compared with another in the possession of David Laing, Esq.



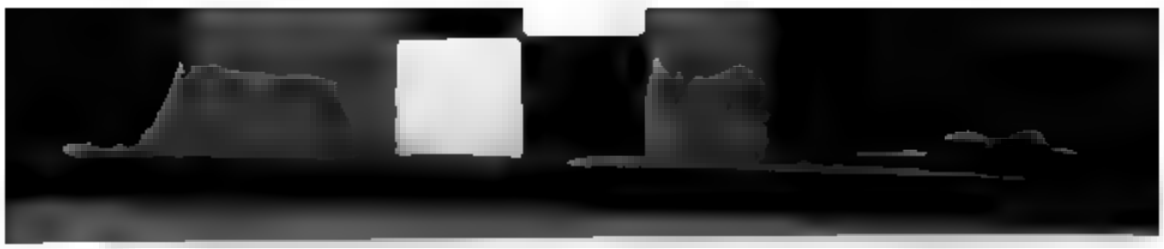
other legal officers to be perfectly agreeable to law, and it was in pursuance of that engagement that the Assembly had now met, though, for the sake of good order, they had requested the sanction of royalty. And none can accuse them of rebellion in refusing to obey the command of the commissioner, except those who hold that the power of the king is supreme in ecclesiastical matters, and are prepared to re-enact the despotism which compelled our fathers to assume the attitude of resistance. Had the Assembly broke up in obedience to this unconstitutional mandate, it would have amounted to a virtual acknowledgment of the king's claim to be head of the Church, and to a denial of the headship of Christ. Besides, they would have been guilty of basely betraying the liberties of the Church, when these were placed in manifest peril, and when they had a fair opportunity of asserting them. Our fathers were men of another spirit. As Christians, they chose "to obey God rather than men," "not fearing the wrath of the king." As Presbyterians, they felt themselves called upon to contend for the distinguishing glory of Presbytery—the independence of the Church. As freemen, they claimed the protection of law, in opposition to the mandates of the sovereign. As an Established Church, they stood on the vantage-ground of having their spiritual privileges recognized and secured by national constitution; and as Covenanters, they had pledged themselves to maintain and defend these privileges at all hazards.

While the commissioner, therefore, was in the act of retiring, a protestation, which had been prepared that morning in anticipation of such an event, was presented by Rothes, and read by the clerk, in which, for reasons given at length, they declare, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, THE ONLY HEAD AND MONARCH OF HIS CHURCH, from a consciousness of our duty to God and his truth, the king and his honour, this kingdom and her peace, this Assembly and her freedom, and the safety of ourselves and our posterity, in our persons and estates, we profess with sorrowful and heavy but loyal hearts, *we cannot dissolve this Assembly.*" They likewise protested, that "if any stir should arise by impeding of their lawful meetings, the cause should not be imputed to them, who did ardently desire the commissioner's abode, but to the prelates, who had declined them, being



conscious of their guiltiness." This protest having been read, the moderator delivered a cheering address, in which, with admirable dexterity, he converted the departure of the commissioner into an encouragement for them to remain. "All who are present know," he said, "the reasons of the meeting of this Assembly; and albeit we have acknowledged the power of Christian kings for convening of assemblies, yet that may not derogate from Christ's right; for he hath given divine warrants to convocate assemblies, whether magistrates consent or not. Therefore, seeing we perceive his grace, my lord commissioner, to be so zealous of *his* royal master's commands, have we not also good reason to be zealous toward *our* Lord, and to maintain the liberties and privileges of his kingdom?" This, with similar exhortations from other members, made such an impression, that with the exception of one or two who slunk away, they all remained at their post. Lights were ordered to be brought in, and the question being put, "If they would abide the whole time of the Assembly and adhere to the protestation?" the whole Assembly rose, and, as one man, decided in the affirmative. Lest, in the confusion of so many voices, any dissenting vote should have been unheard, the roll was called, and one by one they declared their resolution to remain till the business of the Assembly was finished.

Before the roll was called an incident occurred which greatly encouraged the Assembly. A young nobleman, Lord Erskine, son of the Earl of Mar, who had formerly refused to sign the covenant, stepped forward to the table, and begged the audience of the Assembly. In a low tone, but with great earnestness, and an utterance almost choked with tears, he said, "I request you, for the Lord's cause, right honourable and worthy members of this Assembly, that ye would receive me into your number; for I have remained too long obstinate to your wholesome admonitions, being moved and stirred up by my own private ends rather than any checks of conscience, which ends I cease to reckon before you; but I am ashamed of them, and that I should have dallied so long with God. Therefore I request you, for Christ Jesus' sake, that ye would receive me into your number, and suffer me to subscribe our covenant." "Which words," says the record from which I quote them, "because



he spake them with a low voice, the moderator rehearsed to the Assembly, professing he could scarce utter them for tears, so that all almost who did hear him, through joy, were constrained to weep." "We all embraced him gladly," says Baillie, "and admired the timeousness of God's comforts." This was followed by another gratifying occurrence. The Earl of Argyll, who had hitherto appeared neutral, though he warmly sympathized with the Covenanters, and had retired with the commissioner in hope of adjusting the quarrel, returned on the following day; and though not a member of the court, he cheerfully consented, at the request of the moderator, to remain and countenance their proceedings. The accession of such a nobleman, who was known to stand high in the royal favour, tended greatly to encourage the Assembly; and his example was followed by many others of the king's counsellors. While Henderson, however, congratulated them on this "human encouragement," he took care to guard his brethren against placing too much reliance on it. "Though we had not a single nobleman to assist us," said he, "our cause were not the worse nor the weaker."

The first step taken by the Assembly was to nullify the six pretended Assemblies which had been held since the accession of James to the English throne, including the Assemblies from 1606 to 1618. These, for various reasons which even Hume allows to be "pretty reasonable," were declared to have been "unfree, unlawful, and null Assemblies." They next proceeded to the censure of the prelates, fourteen in number, who were charged with a great variety of moral as well as ecclesiastical delinquencies. Of these, two archbishops and six bishops were excommunicated, four deposed, and two suspended. The task of publicly pronouncing these sentences devolved on the moderator; and on the following day, before an immense auditory, Henderson discharged his office in the gravest and most impressive manner. After sermon on Psalm cx. 1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool," he pronounced on the degraded prelates, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the awful sentence of deposition and excommunication. Never were the religious feelings of the people of Scotland wound up to such a pitch of intensity as on this remarkable occasion.



To see the Church of Scotland again rising in her might, after a slumber of more than thirty years, and with her first awakened effort prostrating those prelates who had so long lorded over her with more than clerical pride and power, appeared to them as a dream. A sensation of mingled awe and wonder pervaded the Assembly; and as the more solemn part of the service approached, the interest became so intense, that even the reporters who took notes of the proceedings became too much agitated to continue their task. It is only necessary to add, that this Assembly condemned the service-book, the canons, and the high commission; that they renounced the five articles of Perth; and that, after declaring Prelacy to have been abjured by the National Covenant, and to be contrary to the principles of the Church of Scotland,[1] they, in the name of that Church, and as a church of Christ, unanimously voted its removal, and restored Presbyterian government to all its former integrity.

The Assembly having now sat from the 21st of November to the 20th of December, and held no less than twenty-six sessions, Henderson addressed them in an eloquent concluding speech. After apologizing for his own weakness in the part he had taken in the proceedings, and complimenting the ministers on the diligence and fidelity they had displayed, he thus proceeded:—

"And now we are quit of the service-book, which was a book of slavery and service indeed; the book of canons, which tied us in spiritual bondage; the book of ordination, which was a yoke put upon the necks of faithful ministers; and the high commission, which was a guard to keep us all under that slavery. All these evils God has rid us of, and likewise of the civil places of kirkmen, which was the splendour of all these evils; and the Lord has led captivity captive, and made lords slaves. What should we do less than

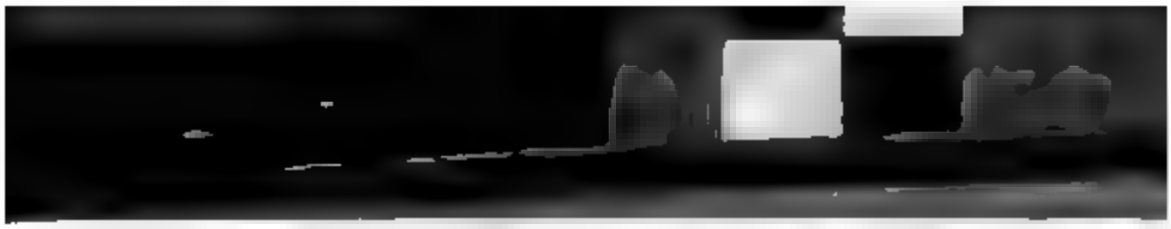
[1] In other words, the Assembly decided, upon various grounds, that Prelacy was abjured in the National Covenant of 1580, and was included under the phrase of "the pope's wicked hierarchy." While the Assembly was still sitting the Marquis of Hamilton issued a "Profession and Declaration," in which he endeavoured to prove that Episcopal government was not abjured by that covenant. Shortly after there appeared "An Answer to the Profession and Declaration made by James, Marquis of Hamilton, his Majesty's High Commissioner," in which his arguments were fully answered by the Covenanters. Hamilton's Explanation of the Covenant, and the Answer, are inserted in the Large Declaration, pp. 327–337.



resolve, first, since the Lord has granted us liberty, to labour to be sensible of it, and take notice of it? For we are like to a man newly awakened out of a dream, or like a man that has lien long in the irons, who, after they are taken off and he redeemed, he feels not his liberty, but thinks the irons are on him still. So it is with us. We do not feel our liberty; therefore it were good for us to study to know the bounds of our liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free, and then again to labour earnestly that we be not more entangled with the yoke of bondage.

"Then, for these nobles, barons, burgesses, and others, who have attended here, this I may say confidently, and from the warrant of the word, 'Those that honour God, God will honour them.' Your lordships, and these worthy gentlemen, who have been honouring God, and giving testimony ample of your love to religion this time bygone (though I will not excuse your former backslidings), if ye will go on, the Lord shall protect you, bless you, honour you; and your faith shall be found, in the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ, unto praise, honour, and glory. And I must say one word of these nobles, whom Jesus Christ has nobilitated indeed, and declared sensibly to be worthy of that title of nobility: Ye know they were like the tops of the mountains that were first discovered in the deluge, which made the little valleys hope to be delivered from it also; and so it came to pass. I remember reading, that in the eastern country where they worship the sun, a number being assembled early in the morning to that effect, all striving who should see the sun first, a servant turned his face to the west, and waited on. The rest thought him a foolish man, and yet he got the first sight of the sun shining on the tops of the western mountains. So, truly, he would have been thought a foolish man, a few years ago, that would have looked for such things of our nobility; yet the Sun of Righteousness has been pleased to shine first upon these mountains; and long, long may he shine upon them, for the comfort of the hills and refreshing of the valleys; and the blessing of God be upon them and their families, and we trust it shall be seen to the generations following.

"Last, I must give a word of thanksgiving to this city, wherein we have had such comfortable residence, and to



the principal magistrates of it, who have attended our meeting. The best recompense we can give them is to pray for the blessing of God upon them; and to give them a taste of our labour, by visiting their college, and any other thing that consists in our power; that so the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ may be established among them, and that the name of this city may from henceforth be, '*Jehovah-shammah* —The Lord is there.'" The 133d Psalm was then sung, beginning thus:

"Behold, how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are
In unity to dwell."

The apostolical blessing was pronounced, and Henderson dismissed the Assembly with these memorable words, uttered in a solemn and emphatic voice: "*We have now cast down the walls of Jericho; let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite!*" "And so," says Baillie, "we all departed with great comfort and humble joy, casting ourselves and our poor Church in the arms of our good God."

The Assembly of 1638 may be regarded as one of the noblest efforts ever made by the Church to assert her intrinsic independence, and the sole headship of Christ. Single martyrs have borne witness to the same purpose—single ministers, and even congregations, have stood out boldly for the same truth; but here we have the whole Church of Scotland, by her representatives, in her judicial capacity, lifting up her voice and proclaiming, before the whole world, the sovereign rights of her Lord and King. No church, except one constituted on the Presbyterian model, could have borne such a testimony, or gained such a triumph; and the simple fact, that such a noble stand was *once* made by the Church of Scotland should endear her to the hearts of all who, whatever may be their denomination, are the genuine friends of liberty, of the Christian religion, and of the best interests of man.

There can be no doubt that the original demands of the Covenanters came short of the abolition of Episcopacy; and that they would have been contented, at the outset, with some limitation of the power of the bishops, and their subjection to General Assemblies, with the discharge of the



articles of Perth and of the high commission court, and with the free entry of ministers. But by degrees their eyes were opened to discover the root of all these evils—the Prelacy itself; and nothing tended more to produce this discovery than the measures of the court, which may be said to have driven them, step by step, into the right course, beyond their first intentions, and in some cases against them. This is repeatedly referred to in the speeches delivered at the Glasgow Assembly, and in their public papers, with dutiful acknowledgments to that mysterious Providence "who had made the wrath of man to praise him," and secured to himself the whole honour of a reformation accomplished by instruments who could not assume any of the credit to themselves.

Having described the external reformation thus effected, let us now take a glance into the interior of a Presbyterian kirk, and see how the public worship was conducted about 1638. At eight o'clock on Sabbath morning appeared in the desk the reader, whose office it was to read the prayers from Knox's liturgy, and portions of Scripture, before the minister entered the pulpit. These readers were found so useful to the ministers, that, though the office had been declared by the General Assembly to be without warrant, they were still allowed to officiate, and continued to do so till the Westminster Assembly, when, much against the inclination of our Scots commissioners, they were condemned. The last relic of these ancient functionaries appeared in the practice, which was common till of late in some of the parishes of Scotland, of the precentor or schoolmaster reading some chapters of the Bible before the ringing of the last bell.[1]

Immediately on entering the pulpit the minister kneeled down and began with prayer, the people generally kneeling also. It was customary at some part of the service to repeat the Lord's prayer and the doxology; but in other respects the worship was unfettered by forms, the officiating minister guiding the devotions of his flock, as Justin Martyr describes those of the primitive Christians, "according to his ability, without a prompter." Prayer being ended, the congregation joined in singing a portion of the Psalms; a part of the service in which they took great delight, and in which they

[1] Baillie's Letters, i. 413; Scott's MSS., Adv. Lib.



were so well instructed, that many of them could sing without the aid of a psalm-book.[1] No such pains had been taken to instruct the people of England in this part of divine worship. So far from being able to sing the Psalms "without buik," many of them were not able even to read them; and hence the Westminster divines found it necessary to enact, that, "for the present, where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, do read the Psalm line by line, before the singing thereof"[2]—an act of toleration which our Scottish ministers yielded with no small reluctance. "Then," says Lightfoot, in his Journal of the Assembly, "was our directory read over to the Scots commissioners, who were absent at the passing of it; and Mr. Henderson disliked our permission of any to read the Psalms line by line; and this business held us in some debate."[3]

The Psalm being sung, the minister offered up another short prayer, beseeching the influences of the Spirit to accompany the word preached. And then followed the sermon; which having been succeeded by prayer and praise, the congregation was dismissed with the apostolic blessing. The Presbyterian discourses of this and the succeeding period, though some of them may not please a fastidious taste, and others are disfigured by a certain homeliness of style, hardly compatible, in our eyes, with the dignity of religious subjects, uniformly possess the sterling merit of rich evangelical senti-

[1] From a very early period the Psalms of David, which were translated into metre by Sternhold and Hopkins, were sung in the Scots churches, and great pains were used to instruct the people in psalmody. From a curious document in the handwriting of Calderwood, we find that "men, women, and children were exhorted to exercise themselves in the Psalms," and that "sundry musicians of best skill and affection, for furtherance of the act of parliament anent the instructing of the youth in musick, have set down common and proper tunes to the whole psalms, according to the diverse forms of metre" (*Bannatyne Miscellany*, p. 231). In 1631 there appeared a new version of Psalms, said to have been composed by King James; and Charles, among his other ill-judged innovations, insisted on this version being used instead of the old one. But our fathers had various objections to it. Calderwood says, "The people are acquainted with the old metaphrase more than any book in Scripture; yea, some can sing all, or the most part, *without buik*, and some that cannot read can sing some Psalms" (*Ibid.*) Mr. Row informs us that in the new version "there were some expressions so poetical, and so far from the language of Canaan, that all who had any religion did dislike them; such as calling the sun *the lord of light*, and the moon *the pale ladie of the night*," &c. (*Row's MS. Hist.* p. 263).

[2] Directory for Public Worship. [3] Lightfoot's Works, xiii. 344.



ment and Christian experience; and in this respect present a striking contrast to the Episcopal sermons of the same time, which are, in general, the driest, most jejune, and most pedantic productions imaginable.

The dress of the ministers was extremely simple. In 1610 King James, among other cares for his mother Kirk, sent directions from court that all ministers should wear black clothes, and when in the pulpit should appear in black gowns. In general, however, the Presbyterian ministers preferred the old Geneva cloak, which had much the appearance of a gown. As to the people generally, they seem to have conducted themselves during divine service with suitable decorum; though the following extract from the minutes of the kirk-session of Perth would indicate that clergymen were occasionally exposed to annoyances similar to those of which they have had to complain in more modern times:—"John Tenender, session-officer, is ordained to have his red staff in the kirk on the Sabbath-days, therewith to wauken sleepers, and to remove greeting bairns furth of the kirk."[1]

According to the form now described public worship was conducted in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation down to the period of which we are writing; and it has continued, with a few inconsiderable variations, to be the form observed from that time to the present. Laud's service-book did not survive the tumult of July, 1637; and no attempt was made, even during the persecuting reigns of the Stuarts, to impose another book of prayers on the Scottish Church.[2]

[1] Scott's MS. Register, ad. an. 1616.

[2] The Countryman's Letter to the Curate; Sir G. Mackenzie's Vindication, p. 9; Dr. M'Crie's Miscellaneous Writings, p. 277.—The English liturgy was not introduced into Scotland till about 1711. Attempts were made to introduce it in 1707, but neither then, nor for several years afterwards, was it generally used, many of the Episcopal clergy being greatly opposed to it, and continuing till their death to conduct the worship much after the Presbyterian form. (*Defoe's History of the Union*, Preface 20–27. *MS.* in my possession.)



CHAPTER VIII.

1639 — 1640.

The bishops' war—Preparations of the Covenanters—Encampment at Dunse Law—Pacification at Birks—General Assembly, 1639—Private meetings—Lord and Lady Loudoun—Civil war renewed by Charles.

It does not fall within the scope of our history to enter on a minute description of the hostilities which commenced shortly after the dissolution of the Glasgow Assembly of 1638, or to settle the much disputed question, Who began the civil war? Those acquainted with the numerous causes which conspired to bring about this collision will not place much weight on the meeting of that Assembly. It has been alleged by many that Charles' concessions were such as ought to have satisfied the Scots; but they well knew that these concessions were not sincere, that he only waited the opportunity to retract them, and that he had been all the time making warlike preparations to prostrate their liberties at his feet. One thing is certain, that whoever may have been to blame in commencing hostilities, the Scots used every effort to prevent, and showed every disposition to terminate them. Aware that their proceedings at Glasgow would be misrepresented, and eagerly taken advantage of, they sent up a supplication to the king, in which they most humbly and respectfuly explained the reasons of their conduct. All, however, was of no avail. No sooner was it known at court that the Assembly had continued to sit after being discharged by the commissioners, than the king meditated revenge. He was so highly incensed at the Covenanters, says Burnet, that "he resolved neither to think nor talk of treating with them, till he should appear among them in a more formidable position." They had touched him on the tender point of the royal prerogative. As the champion of Prelacy he deemed

himself bound in conscience to resent the insult offered to the order. In short, his pride was piqued, and nothing would satisfy him but unconditional submission. The only answer he made on reading their supplication was, "When they have broken my head, they will put on my cowl." He immediately raised an army in England, with which he advanced to the border, ordered a fleet to blockade the Firth of Forth, and despatched the Marquis of Hamilton with another army, to land in the north, and join the forces under the command of the Marquis of Huntly. As the parliament of England, with whom Charles had also quarrelled, refused to grant him supplies for this outrageous undertaking, the bishops, by the advice of Laud, came forward with large contributions. The inferior clergy in the English Church declined all interference in the quarrel; but the Papists, who expected everything from the triumph of the king's party, and acted under the private directions of the queen, were not slow in contributing to the object.[1] The war thus commenced, having been instigated by the advice, and supported by the money, of the prelates, and being, moreover, mainly designed to support their Episcopal pretensions, was commonly called by the English the "bishops' war," and Charles was termed in ridicule, "Canterbury's knight."

The posture of Scotland at this crisis was sufficiently alarming; but our fathers were not to be intimidated. They would not submit to be trampled on by a bigoted court, and an infuriated bench of bishops. "Certainly," says Baillie, "our dangers were greater than we might let our people conceive; but the truth is, we lived by faith in God, we knew the goodness of our cause, and we were resolved to stand to it at all hazards whatsoever, knowing the worst to be a glorious death for the cause of God and our dear country." Animated by such pious and patriotic sentiments, the nation rose almost simultaneously, and made vigorous preparations for meeting the threatened invasion. Charles, who had boasted in his letters and proclamations that he would force the Scots to unconditional submission, soon discovered the truth of which the Marquis of Hamilton forewarned him, that "while the fire-edge was upon the Scottish spirits, it would not prove an

[1] Clarendon's State Papers, vol. ii.; Hardwick's State Papers, vol. ii. pp. 118–124, &c.; Prynne's Hidden Works of Darkness, p. 177, &c.



easy task to tame them."[1] An army was soon levied by the orders of parliament, and placed under the command of General Leslie, a brave old veteran who had been trained to war under that noble champion of Protestantism, Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden. Beacons were erected along the country, so constructed, that when a fire was lighted at the foot of a long pole, they were to stand to their arms; when another fire was kindled on a grate fixed to a transverse beam, they were to repair to their regiments; and in case of imminent danger, the whole army was summoned to the scene of action by the lighting of a tar-barrel placed on the top of the pole. By a series of vigorous measures, the Covenanters soon made themselves masters of all the fortified places in Scotland. Apprehending danger from the king's fleet, they took care to fortify the town of Leith; and such was the zeal manifested by all classes, that about one thousand five hundred of both sexes, including ladies as well as gentlemen, wrought in the trenches till the fortifications were completed.[2]

But while thus providing for self-defence, the Covenanters took care to vindicate themselves from the calumnies of their enemies.[3] The king having denounced them as traitors and rebels, even before they took up arms, and every effort being used by the bishops to render them odious in the eyes of the English, they published a paper, in which they "take God to witness that religion was the only subject, conscience the motive, and reformation the aim, of their designs;"[4] and that they had no intention of invading England, or casting off their dutiful obedience to his majesty's lawful commands. And when they found themselves compelled to take up arms, another paper appeared,[5] prepared by Henderson, in which

[1] Burnet's Memoirs of the Duke of Hamilton, p. 140.

[2] "Noblemen, gentlemen, and others wrought at it; and none busier in bearing the rubbish than ladies of honour." (*Guthrie's Memoirs*, p. 54.)

[3] Some of these calumnies, though fully refuted at the time, are retailed even to this day. For example, the Glasgow Assembly is charged with having restrained the liberty of the press; whereas they only prohibited any from printing "anything that concerned the Kirk, without authority from the Kirk, *under the pain of Church censure*—a privilege ordinarily used from the time of the Reformation." (*Remonstrance of the Nobility*, &c., 1639, p. 16; *Printed Acts of Assembly*, 1638.)

[4] Information to all Good Christians within the Kingdom of England, p. 4. Edin. 1639.

[5] Instructions for Defensive Arms. Edin., 1639.



the real state of the quarrel was explained, and their conduct in resorting to self-defence vindicated by many unanswerable arguments.

At length the blazing tar-barrel announced that the invasion had taken place. A squadron of twenty-eight ships of war, carrying between five and six thousand English troops, under the Marquis of Hamilton, appeared in the Firth of Forth; but the people flocking from all quarters to the point of danger, the fleet was literally pent up on both sides, and the soldiers durst not set a foot on shore. None distinguished themselves more on this occasion than old Lady Hamilton, the mother of the marquis, who was so zealous a Covenanter that she came on horseback to Leith at the head of an armed troop, with two pistols at her saddle; protesting, as is affirmed, that she would kill the marquis with her own hand if he should venture to land in a hostile way: for which purpose, it is said, she had loaded her pistols with *balls of gold* instead of lead. It is certain she paid him a visit on board his ship while he lay in the Forth. What passed at this interview we are not informed; but the people augured the best from it. "The son of such a mother," they said, "will do us no harm."[1] Hamilton was soon glad to make his escape when he heard the tidings from the Borders. The Scots encountered at Kelso a part of the English army much superior to their own in numbers, and at the first onset the English threw down their arms and fled, with the loss of three hundred men. "It would," says an English writer, "make too much sport with the English courage and bravery, which is so well confirmed in the world, to give an account how like scoundrels this army behaved."[2] "The English soldiers," says Baillie, "were a great deal more nimble at flying than fighting; and it was difficult to tell whether the arms of their cavalry were more weary with whipping, or their heels with jading their horses."[3] The real fact was that the English had no heart in the

[1] Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 30. The story about the "balls of gold" rests on the authority of Gordon of Straloch's MS. (none of the purest sources, to be sure); but the heroism of the old marchioness is noticed by Spang. (*Hist. Motuum*, p. 357.)

[2] Defoe's Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, p. 189.

[3] Baillie's Letters, i. 210. Ban. edit.



business.[1] Whitelocke tells us that though "the Scots had been proclaimed rebels in England, and a prayer was published to be used in all the churches against them; yet nothing could alter the opinion of the English officers and private soldiers, who said 'they would not fight to maintain the pride and power of the bishops.'"[2] They had been impressed into the service against their will; while the Scots, a nation sometimes vanquished but never subdued, felt at the time, as Baillie says, that they would not have been afraid "though all Europe had been on their borders."

Encouraged by their success, but still standing on the defensive, the Scots encamped at Dunse Law, a hill near that town, in the beginning of June, 1639. The appearance they presented on this occasion is described with such *naïveté* by Baillie, that we cannot give it better than in his own words:—

"It would have done you good to have cast your eyes athort our brave and rich hills as oft as I did with great contentment and joy; for I was there among the rest, having been chosen preacher by the gentlemen of our shire. I carried, as the fashion was, a sword and a couple of Dutch pistols at my saddle; but I promise for the offence of no man except a robber in the way; for it was our part alone to pray and preach for the encouragement of our countrymen—which I did to my power most cheerfully. Our regiment lay on the sides of the hill almost round about. Every company had fleeing at the captain's tent-door a brave new colour stamped with the Scottish arms and this motto, *For Christ's Crown and Covenant*, in golden letters. Our soldiers were all lusty and full of courage; the most of them stout young ploughmen; great cheerfulness in the face of all. They were clothed in olive or gray plaiden, with bonnets having knots of blue ribands. The captains, who were barons or country gentlemen, were distinguished by blue ribands worn scarf-wise across the body. None of our gentlemen were anything the worse of lying some weeks to-

[1] The king wrote to Hamilton that he was now fully satisfied of what that nobleman had told him in the gallery at Whitehall, viz. "That the nobility and gentry of England would never incline to invade Scotland, and thereby *begin an offensive war*." (*Mem. of D. Hamilton*, p. 139; *Nalson*, I. 231.)

[2] Whitelocke's Memoirs, *ut sup.*

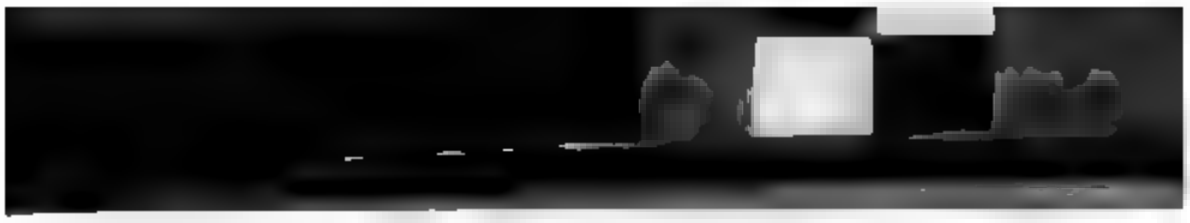


gether in their cloaks and boots on the ground. Our meanest soldiers were always served in wheat bread, and a groat would have got them a lamb leg, which was a dainty world to the most of them. We were much obliged to the town of Edinburgh for money: Mr. Harry Rollok by his sermons moved them to shake out their purses. Every one encouraged another. The sight of the nobles and their beloved pastors daily raised their hearts. The good sermons and prayers morning and evening under the roof of heaven, to which their drums did call them instead of bells, also Leslie's skill, prudence, and fortune, made them as resolute for battle as could be wished. We were feared that emulation among our nobles might have done harm; but such was the wisdom and authority of that *old little crooked soldier* (General Leslie), that all, with an incredible submission, gave over themselves to be guided by him, as if he had been the great Solyman. Had you lent your ear in the morning, and especially at even, and heard in the tents the sound of some singing psalms, some praying, and some reading the Scripture, ye would have been refreshed. True, there was swearing and cursing and brawling in some quarters whereat we were grieved; but we hoped, if our camp had been a little settled, to have gotten some way for these misorders. For myself, I never found myself in better temper than I was all that time till my head was again homeward; for I was as a man who had taken my leave from the world, and was resolved to die in that service without return."[1]

Such were the people whom Charles compelled to rise in self-defence. The motto on their banners, FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT,[2] was meant to vindicate their appearance in arms by proclaiming to the world that it was solely in behalf of the rights of conscience and religion. This gave a religious character to the whole enterprise, which it was of vital importance to keep in view; for Charles and his bishops had taken great pains to represent them as a set of lawless rebels, actuated by a factious spirit, and aiming at the subversion of royal authority. It was

[1] Baillie's Letters, i. 211, Ban. edit.

[2] That is, for the royal headship of Christ over his church, and for the covenant in support of it.



chiefly, too, to contradict this calumny, and show the sacredness as well as justness of their quarrel, that the ministers took such a prominent part in the war both in the pulpit and in the field, and, I may add, in the cabinet also. From not attending to this circumstance they have been reproached not only by prelatical writers, but by others from whom better things might have been expected. To such as condemn defensive war even when the dearest rights of a people are invaded, and who would adduce such passages of Scripture as: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," and, "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword," which were quoted at the time by the advocates of slavish submission to a despot, with the view of preventing a whole nation from using the only weapons by which they could vindicate their civil and religious liberties—to such persons we can only reply as one did of old, "We are not careful to answer you in this matter." Away with such pusillanimity! Scotland has ever been a loyal nation; but touch her on the point of conscience and it will be found that, like her emblematic thistle, she cannot be touched with impunity. She has ever been more anxious to secure her religious rights than to enjoy civil privileges; her love of liberty has hitherto been entwined with her love of religion; and if these twin-sisters should ever be dissevered, we fear that the blow which divides them will prove fatal to both. We shall say no more in vindication of our Scottish ministers than that their magnanimous spirit in coming to the field presents a striking contrast to the conduct of the bishops, who, after inciting the unfortunate monarch to fight against his subjects, accompanied him only to York, and then left him in the hour of peril to finish as he best might the war which they had urged him to begin.[1]

The issue of the affair at Dunse Law was, that the king, perceiving the determined front opposed to him, and his own troops daily deserting, proposed a negotiation for peace. Commissioners from the army of the covenant, among whom were the Earls of Rothes and Loudoun, and Alexander Henderson, having first required a safe-conduct under the king's own hand, were admitted to an audience with his majesty, in his camp at Birks, on the south side of the

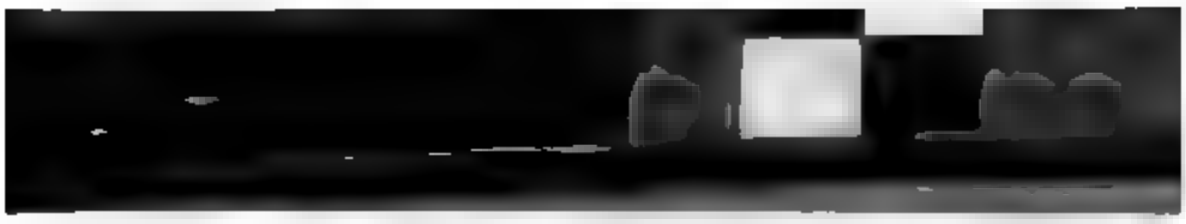
[1] Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, p. 189.



Tweed; and upon being required to state their demands Loudoun, falling on his knees, said, that "they only asked to enjoy their religion and liberties, according to the ecclesiastical and civil laws of the kingdom." In particular, they entreated that the acts of the late Assembly at Glasgow should be ratified by parliament; that all matters ecclesiastical should be determined by the assemblies of the kirk, and matters civil by parliament; and that those incendiaries who had endeavoured to set two neighbour kingdoms at variance might be tried by the laws of their country, and punished according to their deserts. A treaty was at length agreed upon, of a very general and ambiguous description, but which the Covenanters, in their extreme desire of peace, gratefully accepted.[1] The commissioners were sumptuously entertained by the officers of the king's army: Rothes kept them all in good humour by his jests and anecdotes, and thus, as one of the English wits observed, the bishops were beaten on this occasion, "neither by *civil* law, nor by *canon* law, but by *Dunse Law*." The commissioners returned, thankful for, rather than proud of, their success, and the army was disbanded, though, having intelligence of a treacherous design to break the treaty, they still kept the officers on half-pay. "Yea," says Baillie, who was a high loyalist, though a stanch Covenanter, "had we been ten times victorious in set battles, it was our conclusion to have laid down our army at his feet, and on our knees presented nought but our first supplications. We had no other end of our wars; we sought no crowns; we aimed at no lands and honours; we desired but to keep our own in the service of our prince, as our ancestors had done; we loved no new masters. Had our throne been void, and our voices been sought for the filling of Fergus' chair, we would have died ere any had sitten down on that fatal marble but Charles alone."[2] Such, we have reason to believe, were the sentiments of the whole Scottish nation at this time. Such was their loyalty, as it appears in all their public papers, and, as it was proved, through all the political changes that

[1] "In the course of the negotiation the Scots told the king that if he would give them leave to enjoy their religion and their laws, they would, at their own expense, transport their army to assist in the recovery of the Palatinate—a memorable circumstance unnoticed by historians. (*Macaulay's Hist.*, ii. 295; *Sydney's State Papers*, ii. 600.)

[2] Baillie's Letters, i. 215.



followed, down to the restoration of Charles II., which was brought about mainly by the Presbyterians. And such were the men who are stigmatized to this day as republican and anti-monarchical rebels!

Charles, we may easily believe, was much mortified at being compelled to treat with men whom he had doomed to destruction; and he resolved, on the first opportunity, to break through all his engagements. He began by blaming the Scots for not discharging their officers, and for pressing the covenant upon his subjects. To these complaints it was answered, that as General Leslie, and those who had accompanied him, had relinquished their posts of honour and profit in Sweden to serve their native country, they judged themselves bound in honour to give them entertainment; and that as to the covenant, they could aver that none had, to their knowledge, been forced to subscribe it. The king then attempted a new stratagem: he sent an order for fourteen of the leading noblemen and ministers to hold a conference with him at Berwick, with the purpose, there can be no doubt, of entrapping them. Six of the number waited on his majesty, but he declined imparting his pleasure till the whole fourteen were present; and the six were dismissed, like Joseph's brethren, upon promise that they should return and bring up the rest with them. This step excited the utmost alarm in Edinburgh: they had now began to distrust the king in everything; they suspected a plot against their leaders; and when the fourteen, among whom was Mr. Henderson, were setting out on their way to Berwick, they were stopped at the Watergate by a multitude of the lower classes, who took their horses from them, and ordered them to stay at home—an order which, as may be supposed, they were not very unwilling to obey.[1]

Notwithstanding this affront, by which he was deeply offended, the king found himself obliged to sanction a meeting of the General Assembly, which was appointed to be held at Edinburgh, in August, 1639. The Earl of Traquair was sent as commissioner, with secret instructions to prevent, if possible, the condemnation of Episcopacy, and to protest, at the close of the Assembly, that any concessions made by him,

[1] A True Representation of the Proceedings of the Kingdome of Scotland since the late Pacification. Printed in the year of God 1640, p. 21.



with which the king might be dissatisfied, "his majesty should be heard for redress thereof, in his own time and place." The Assembly was placed in a somewhat awkward predicament, in consequence of an agreement entered into by the Scots commissioners at the pacification at Birks, that no reference should be made to the proceedings of the Glasgow meeting. This agreement, however, which showed their ardent desire for a peaceful settlement of the contention, was qualified at the time by a declaration, that though his majesty could not approve the Glasgow Assembly, it was not his majesty's mind that any of the Presbyterians "should be thought to disapprove or depart from the same." Accordingly, when Traquair would have had them consider all that was done against the bishops at that time as null and void, the Assembly firmly answered, that they were careful not to offend the king by requiring any formal approbation on his part of the Glasgow Assembly; but that, "*while they breathed*, they would not pass from that Assembly." Finding them determined, the commissioner, to their great joy and astonishment, announced his seemingly gracious concessions, and, with consummate duplicity, pledged himself, in his sovereign's name, to sanction an act of Assembly, embracing all the points for which the Covenanters had struggled, assenting to the abolition of Episcopacy and of all the innovations and evils condemned by the Glasgow Assembly, and undertook to get this act ratified in parliament. This artifice succeeded: the suspicions of the Presbyterians were lulled, and the declaration of the commissioner threw them into raptures of devout joy and chivalrous loyalty. The stern heroes of the covenant were melted into tears; and the venerable patriarchs of the old Presbyterian Church, who had served at her altars for half a century, and who had mourned her degradation in silent sorrow or sad captivity, poured out their hearts in thanksgiving to God and the king in the most affecting terms.[1]

"Old Mr. John Row being called upon, with tears said, 'I bless, I glorify, I magnify the God of heaven and earth, that has pitied this poor church, and given us such matter of joy and consolation; and the Lord make us thankful first to our gracious and loving God, and next, obedient subjects to his majesty.'

[1] Records of the Kirk of Scotland, p. 273.



"Mr. John Weymes, being called on, could scarce get a word spoken for tears trickling down along his grey hairs, like drops of rain or dew upon the top of the tender grass; and yet withal smiling for joy, he said, 'I do remember of a glorious reformation in Scotland. I do remember when the Kirk of Scotland had a beautiful face. I remember since there was a great power and life accompanying the ordinances of God, and a wonderful work and operation upon the hearts of the people. This mine eyes did see; mine eyes did see a fearful defection after, procured by our sins; and no more did I wish, before mine eyes were closed, but to have seen such a beautiful day as, to my great comfort, I now see this day, and that, under the conduct and favour of our king's majesty. Blessed for evermore be our Lord and King, Jesus; and the blessing of God be upon his majesty, and the Lord make us thankful!'

"The moderator (David Dickson) said, 'I believe the king's majesty made never the heart of any so blyth in giving them a bishoprick as he has made the heart of that reverend man joyful in putting them away. Would God the king's majesty had a part of our joy that we have this day.'"[1]

The same Assembly condemned the book entitled the "King's Large Declaration," and understood to be the production of Dr. Balcanqual, as an infamous libel, "dishonourable to God, to the king's majesty, and to the national Kirk, and stuffed full of lies and calumnies." To crown their triumph, they obtained the sanction of the commissioner and of the Scottish privy-council to the covenant as it had been sworn the preceding year; and it was accordingly ordered to be subscribed by all ranks and classes within the kingdom.

So much has been said about the Scottish Presbyterians at this period compelling the leges to swear the covenant, that a few words may be necessary to explain this part of their history. We have already seen that, at first, no compulsion was used, with the consent either of the Church or of the parliament, in imposing the covenant. Aberdeen was almost the only town that could complain of being forced into the bond; and for this the Aberdonians had themselves to blame, having taken up arms against the Covenanters, and thus set

[1] MS. Journal of the General Assembly, 1639 (*penes me*), p. 372; Records of the Kirk, p. 251.



themselves against the whole country.[1] So that when Montrose was sent in 1639, to that "unnatural toun," as it was called, he took it upon himself, without any authority, to compel the bailies and chief persons to subscribe the covenant. The same conduct, we regret to say, was followed by Colonel Munro, a Highland gentleman, who had distinguished himself abroad, and who, being accustomed to pillage in the German wars, suppressed the king's adherents in the north with unjustifiable severity. Having been sent to Aberdeen to oppose the Marquis of Huntly and the Earl of Aboyne, who were levying forces and fortifying that part of the country against the Covenanters, the colonel's first exploit, for which he had no warrant from Church or state, was to impose the covenant on all whom he suspected of disaffection: and for disobedience to this injunction, Mr. Irvine of Drum, and twelve other gentlemen, with twenty-six burgesses of Aberdeen, were sent up as prisoners to Edinburgh, till, as Munro said, "they should learn to speak the country language." These are the only instances in which we hear of any severe measures to enforce the covenant; and when it is considered that they were adopted during the heat of a civil war, and committed, in the first instance, by one who proved a renegade, and in the other, by a rough soldier of fortune, who had no notion of conscientious scruples in the matter, they are hardly worth the indignation that has been wasted on them.

[1] The following letter affords decided evidence that the leaders of the covenant had not the slightest intention of enforcing it by civil pains and penalties. It was written by the Earl of Rothes to his cousin, Patrick Leslie, who was provost of Aberdeen: "LOVING COUSIN.—Because your town of Aberdeen is now the only burgh in Scotland that hath not subscribed the Confession of Faith [so the covenant was then termed], and all the good they can obtain thereby is, that if we sail fairly, as there is very good condition offered, they shall be under *perpetual ignominy*, and the doctors that are unsound *punished by the Assembly*, and if things go to extremity because they refuse, and in hopes of the Marquis of Huntly's help, the king will perhaps send in some ship or ships and men there as a sure place; and if that be good for the country judge ye of it. It is but a fighting against the high God to resist this course. . . . Do all the good ye can in that town and the country about: ye will not repent it; and attend my Lord Montrose, *who is a noble and true-hearted cavalier* . . . . I am your friend and cousin,—ROTHES. *Leslie, 13th July*, 1638." (*Rothes' Relation*, App., p. 216.) The passage in the above letter respecting the Marquis of Montrose, who at this time professed great zeal for the covenant, is worthy of notice. We shall find this "noble and true-hearted cavalier" appearing, a few years after this, in his true colours.



But why, it may be asked, did they procure an order to enforce subscription to the covenant by civil pains and penalties? Far be it from us to defend persecution for religious opinions, or to justify the Covenanters in any instance where it can be shown they were guilty of this; but to form a candid judgment on the question, we must consider the circumstances in which our fathers were placed. In a time of civil war it is found necessary to administer tests and exact compliances which would be thought intolerable in a time of peace; and as this war was raised entirely on religious grounds, the covenant, which was intended as a bond of mutual defence and confederation, was the only effectual means of distinguishing friends from foes. Had there been a party in the country conscientiously opposed to Presbytery, and yet favourable to the struggle made by the Presbyterians for civil liberty, a civil test would have been quite sufficient. But no such party existed. Those opposed to Presbytery were all the advocates and abettors of civil despotism; those who would not abjure Prelacy would have wreathed around the necks of their countrymen the galling chains of civil and ecclesiastical thraldom. The name of *malignants*, which this party now acquired, shows the light in which they were generally regarded. But the best vindication of the Presbyterians is to be found in their actual practice. Though they considered it necessary to obtain the sanction of the civil power to the covenant, by which it was constituted a legal and national deed, and though severe laws were afterwards passed against those who refused subscription to it which cannot in themselves be defended, yet it is not possible to point to a single instance in which any were put to death; and very few instances occurred in which any were subjected to hardships for refusing to subscribe it.

Superficial thinkers have been accustomed to indulge in sage reflections on the intolerance of our Scottish ancestors; professing to wonder that on escaping from persecution they should have become persecutors themselves; and charitably concluding that, had they possessed the power, they would like all dominant sects have abused it as much as their opponents. As their history becomes better understood, such sentiments are found to require considerable qualification. Men of sense and candour, guided by the spirit of a



less flimsy religion and the light of a sounder philosophy, are beginning to discover that the intolerance of the Covenanters, if it indeed deserves that name, was all on the side of liberty; that the power which they claimed was wielded in the promotion of morality and liberal education; and that their measures, severe and trenchant as they may be thought, if successful, would have issued in the entire demolition of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny.

The proceedings of the General Assembly of 1639, while they diffused general joy through Scotland, gave mortal offence to the king, who blamed his commissioner for having exceeded his instructions, so that when the Scottish parliament met for the purpose of ratifying the acts of Assembly, they were prorogued by royal mandate till June, 1640.[1] Against this arbitrary proceeding the members remonstrated, and sent the Earl of Loudoun with other deputies to London, to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne. The result was that Loudoun was sent to the Tower on a charge of high treason; and if we are to believe the secret history of the period, the king resolved to despatch him privately, without trial or even charge, after the manner of an Eastern sultan. About three o'clock in the afternoon he sent an order to Sir William Balfour, the lieutenant of the Tower, to see Lord Loudoun's head struck off within the prison before nine the next morning. When the sentence was communicated to the prisoner, he heard it with the utmost composure; but the lieutenant, anxious to save him from death and his majesty from disgrace, apprised the Marquis of Hamilton, and both immediately repaired to the king, whom they found in bed, and earnestly besought him to reverse the warrant. At first Charles stormed, and declared with an oath that it should be executed; but on Hamilton setting before him the danger of the measure he yielded, and sullenly tore the warrant in pieces.[2]

[1] Even this parliament the king refused to sanction. The estates, however, met at the time appointed, June 1640, and, in the absence of the king's commissioner, voted themselves a legal parliament, and among other acts, ratified the General Assembly at Glasgow, and rescinded all laws in favour of Prelacy.

[2] Burnet's Mem. of Hamilton, p. 161; Rushworth, iii. 99; Oldmixon's England, i. 140; Scots Staggering State, &c.—"This is so extraordinary an event," says Mr. Brodie, "that I rejected it in the first instance but, on a maturer reflection, I have seen it in a different light." (*Hist. British Empire*, ii. 515.)



We notice this incident chiefly for the purpose of introducing another not so generally known regarding the lady of this illustrious nobleman. On hearing of her husband's imprisonment, Lady Loudoun presented in person a petition to the Scottish parliament, beseeching them to interfere in his behalf from consideration of the loss which his family and the country would sustain by his death. The parliament having cheerfully acceded to this request, her ladyship returned them thanks. "But," said the heroine, "I hope your lordships will not suffer your loving apprehension of my husband's danger to restrain you from any course which your lordships think advantageous for the Kirk and kingdom. To these I desire your lordships to have regard only, and never to prejudice them in the least for any compassionate consideration of my dear husband's suffering."[1] Had this speech been delivered by the lady of a cavalier, it would doubtless have called forth universal and unbounded admiration. But Lady Loudoun was a Covenanter; and it is probable that in certain quarters this will share the fate of similar instances of female heroism and self-denial at this period, which our High Church historians can only account for on the supposition that these ladies, in their zeal for securing to their husbands the crown of martyrdom, must have been contemplating the advantages of a second match! Such writers are as incapable of appreciating the sacred enthusiasm of these high-spirited women as they are of understanding the manly principles which animated their husbands and brothers in this noble cause.

While thus involved in outward trouble, the Presbyterians were threatened with intestine discord from a dispute which arose in 1639 regarding private meetings. During the tyranny of the prelates, it had been customary for religious persons, particularly in Ireland, to meet in private houses for prayer and Christian conference; and the Scottish exiles, on returning home from that country after the expulsion of the bishops, felt naturally desirous to keep up these meetings from which they had derived much comfort in the time of their troubles. Some of them are said to have been tinctured with Brownism or Independency, and they were accused of various excesses and disorders. It seems un-

[1] MS. Register of Rescinded Acts, 1640, in Register Office.



questionable that some of the more forward had, in their zeal for such means of private edification, spoken in disrespectful terms of the ordinary ministry, or of some ministers who had opposed them. This roused the ire of Mr. Harry Guthrie, minister of Stirling, and afterwards Bishop of Dunkeld, who brought the matter for adjudication before the Assembly which met at Aberdeen in July, 1640. The consequence was a keen dispute, in which Samuel Rutherford defended the private meetings; while Calderwood, who, from having witnessed the extravagances of the Brownists in Holland, entertained a great dread of anything approaching to Independency, argued against them. Much to the dissatisfaction of many, this Assembly condemned the practice; but the question having been renewed in the Assembly of 1641, was amicably settled by their agreeing to certain regulations, drawn up by Henderson, for preventing the abuse of such meetings.[1]

It is needless, as it is painful, to dwell on the subsequent proceedings of the infatuated monarch. Yielding to the solicitations of his prelatical counsellors, and having obtained funds from them for renewing the war, Charles once more, in spite of all his promises, denounced the Scots as rebels, and, without any provocation, prepared to invade the country. On this occasion the Scottish army did not wait his approach, but entered England, and encountering the enemy at Newburn, gained another decisive victory on the 28th of August, 1640. The result was another treaty, begun at Ripon and afterwards transferred to London. Mr. Henderson having been included among the commissioners for conducting this treaty, it was deemed advisable by the General Assembly that he should be accompanied by some of the ablest of his brethren, who might be useful in combating the errors of the times, and devising means for settling the unhappy differences which prevailed. The persons selected for this purpose were Mr. Robert Baillie, Mr. George Gillespie, and Mr. Robert Blair, who set out in high spirits for the English metropolis. "We rode," says Baillie in a letter to his wife, "upon little nags, each attended by his servant. We were by the way at great expenses; their inns are all like palaces;

[1] Guthrie's Memoirs, p. 78, *et seq.*, Baillie's Letters, i. p. 107; M'Crie's Miscellaneous Writings, p. 38, Ap. ii.; Records of the Kirk, p. 294.



and no marvel—they extortion their guests. For three meals, coarse enough, we would pay, together with our horses, sixteen or seventeen pound sterling, and some three dishes of creevishes, like little partans, two and forty shillings sterling." Such was the humble guise in which the founders of the Solemn League went up to London, where they found everything prepared for an important change. "Mr. Blair and I," says Baillie, "preached to our commissioners at home; for *we had no clothes for outgoing*. Many ministers used greater freedom than ever here was heard of. Episcopacy itself beginning to be cried down, and a covenant cried up, and a liturgy to be scorned. The town of London and a world of men mind to present a petition, which I have seen, for the abolition of bishops, deans, and all their appertenances. Huge things are here in working! All here are weary of bishops."[1] But to form a proper idea of the causes which led to this revolution the scene must now be transferred for a little to England.

[1] Baillie's Letters, i. 271, 274. Ban. edit.



CHAPTER IX.

1640 — 1647.

The scene changes to England—The Star-chamber—Irish massacre—The Long Parliament—The Solemn League and Covenant—Westminster Assembly—George Gillespie—Westminster Standards—Presbyterianism in England—Presbyterianism in Ireland—Erastianism and sectarianism.

From the unhappy hour when judicial toleration was granted to Popery, on the arrival of Charles' queen in England, there followed a series of arbitrary measures which alarmed the jealousy of the English nation. Archbishop Laud, who ruled the Church with a rod of iron, had been striving to reintroduce the worst errors of Romanism, and whatever might be his private motives, it was evident to all that the real tendency of his measures was to restore the authority of the pope. The proceedings of the infamous Star-chamber, over which he presided, had roused the indignation of all classes. Many of the best ministers in the land had been imprisoned, pilloried, or driven into banishment, for nonconformity. Multitudes of people, despairing of religious liberty at home, had submitted to voluntary exile, and fled to America, where they planted a colony in New England. Even this last resource was grudged them, and means were taken to prevent the emigration of the Puritans, as they were called. Among the rest, it is said, two individuals who had incurred the vengeance of the prelates, were on the point of embarking for the New World, when the government issued orders to prohibit the ship from sailing—these were John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell. And thus, if the report be true, in the inscrutable arrangements of Heaven it was ordered that these persons should remain to act their distinguished part in the revolution which followed; and that the royal party should, in pursuance of their own reckless policy,

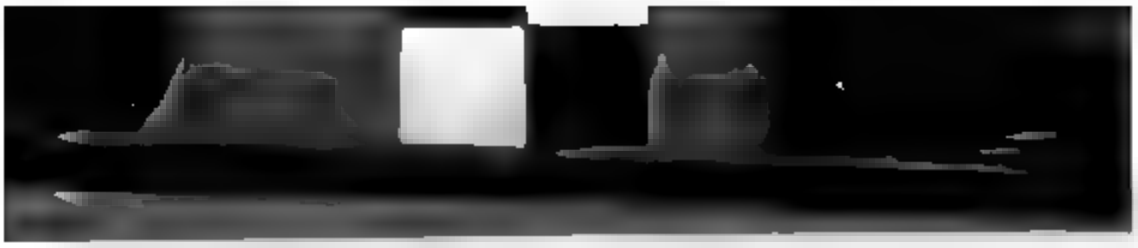


forcibly detain the very instruments destined for their own destruction.

As a specimen of the cruelties exercised by the Star-chamber, we may notice their treatment of Dr. Alexander Leighton, father of the celebrated archbishop of that name. This worthy man, who was a professor of divinity in St. Andrews, was apprehended in London, at the instigation of Laud, and on the charge of having published a book, entitled "Zion's Plea against the Prelacy," was thrown into prison. There he lay in a filthy hole, infested with vermin, for fifteen weeks; and when served with his libel, he was reduced to such a state of distress that his hair and skin had come off his body, and he was unable to appear at the bar. In this wretched condition he was condemned, unheard, to suffer the following sentence in November, 1630. On hearing it pronounced, we are told that Laud "pulled off his cap and gave God thanks," but the bare recital of it, in the petition of Dr. Leighton, some years afterwards, at the trial of the archbishop, sent such a thrill of horror through the parliament, that the clerk was repeatedly ordered to stop till the members had recovered themselves. "This horrid sentence was to be inflicted with knife, fire, and whip, at and upon the pillory, with ten thousand pounds fine; which some of the lords of court conceived could never be inflicted, but only that it was imposed on a dying man to terrify others. But Laud and his creatures caused the sentence to be executed with a witness; for the hangman was animated with strong drink all the night before in the prison, and with threatening words, to do it cruelly. Your petitioner's hands being tied to a stake, besides all other torments, he received thirty-six stripes with a treble cord; after which he stood almost two hours in the pillory, in cold, frost, and snow, and then suffered the rest, as cutting off the ear, firing the face, and slitting up the nose. He was made a spectacle of misery to men and angels. And on that day sevennight, the sores upon his back, ears, and face not being cured, he was again whipped at the pillory in Cheapside, and there had the remainder of the sentence executed, by cutting off the other ear, slitting up the other nostril, and branding the other cheek!"[1]

In June, 1637, similar punishments were inflicted on Mr.

[1] Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, ii. 385; Ludlow's Tracts, p. 23.



Prynne, Dr. Bastwick, and Mr. Burton, three eminent Puritans, whose only crime was writing against Laud and his ceremonies. The generous spirit of the English people revolted at such exhibitions, which only rendered their perpetrators odious, and prepared the way for their downfal. The sufferers at the pillory, instead of being mocked by the spectators, met with their cordial sympathy; and symptoms began to appear very plainly indicating that had Laud been placed in the same degrading position, with his "mean sallow visage, pinched features, and peering eyes," the very picture of the superstitious littleness of his mind, the spectacle would have been hailed with shouts of universal satisfaction.[1]

In 1641 an event occurred which awakened the whole population of England, as well as Scotland, to a full sense of the danger to which their religion and liberties were exposed—we refer to the horrible massacre of the Protestants of Ireland by the Roman Catholics. The exact amount of the share which Charles had in this infamous transaction is involved in considerable perplexity;[2] but certain it is, that the avowed object of the leaders in the insurrection was to subjugate the parliament of England and the Scots army, and make common cause with the king in his struggle for arbitrary power. Religious rancour, goaded by superstition, lent its energies to this design. The ignorant natives, schooled by their priests into the belief that they would merit heaven by putting the heretics to death, received the sacrament before commencing the work of carnage, and they

[1] New Discovery of the Prelates' Tyranny, in their late Persecutions of Dr Bastwick, Mr. Burton, and Mr. Prynne, Ludlow's Tracts, p. 25.

[2] The truth of history requires us to state, that not only was Charles strongly suspected at the time of having encouraged the rebellion, but that evidence exists calculated to leave the dark stigma uneffaced from his character. It is certain that the rebels produced a commission, with the king's broad seal attached to it, in vindication of their atrocities; and it is equally certain that Charles granted commissions under the great seal, empowering the Irish leaders to take up arms in his behalf. (*Reid's History of Presb. Church in Ireland*, ii. 303.) It is stated, on what appears the strongest authority, that when the Marquis of Antrim pleaded for the restoration of his estates in the reign of Charles II., the ground of his claim was, that Charles I. had given his consent and authority for what he had done, and that the letter was read before parliament, and produced a general silence. (*Calamy's Life of Baxter*, p. 143.) This is confirmed by further evidence in Bennet's Memorial of the Reformation, p. 196. See also "Declaration of the Commons assembled in Parliament, Concerning the Rise and Progress of the Grand Rebellion in Ireland." London, 1643.



swore they would not leave a Protestant alive in the kingdom. The scene of slaughter opened on the 23d of October, 1641, and continued without intermission for several months. The Protestants of Ulster were attacked with a savage ferocity unparalleled in the annals of civilization. No mercy was shown to sex or rank, age or infancy. The mother was reserved only to see her helpless children butchered before her eyes, and then to suffer the same fate. Some wretches were prevailed upon, by the promise of life, to become the executioners of their dearest relatives; and after having incurred this tremendous guilt, were executed in their turn. Others, after being tempted by the same promise to disown their faith and conform to the popish rites, were coolly told, that, lest they should relapse, it would be charity to send them immediately to heaven, and were forthwith put to death. In these tragical scenes the women, under the influence of religious frenzy, were as active as the men; and mere children, hardly able to wield the knife, were urged by their parents to stain their little hands in blood. But time would fail us to recount the cruelties and indignities committed on the unhappy Protestants.[1] Suffice it to add, that at the first outbreak of the rebellion, according to the lowest computation, forty thousand, while according to other accounts, currently believed at the time, no less than between two and three hundred thousand altogether, fell victims to the vengeance of Popery.[2]

[1] The bare mention of these execrable atrocities is enough to make the ears tingle. Not to speak of the multitudes who perished in the field of battle and in dungeons, thousands were driven into the water, like so many beasts, and knocked on the head or shot if they attempted to swim for their lives; others were dragged through the water with ropes about their necks; others buried alive; others hung up by the arms, and gradually slashed to death, to see how many blows an Englishman would endure before he died, women were ripped up—their children were thrown to the swine to be devoured before their eyes, or, being taken up by the heels, had their brains dashed out against trees; while others were found in the fields sucking the breasts of their murdered mothers, and without mercy buried alive. Multitudes were inclosed in houses, which being set on fire, they were miserably consumed in the flames, or cut to pieces on attempting to escape! These fearful butcheries, accompanied with the most hellish blasphemies and imprecations on the part of the murderers, and the most heart-rending shrieks and lamentations from their terrified victims, present a scene unparalleled in British history, and only next in horror to the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France.

[2] Sir John Temple's History of the Irish Rebellion; Brodie's Hist. of the British Empire, iii. 209; Reid's Hist. of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland,



When the tidings of this massacre reached Scotland, Charles was in Edinburgh, endeavouring to conciliate the Scots, in the hope of obtaining their aid against the English parliament. With this view he sanctioned all their proceedings against Episcopacy, and even ratified the acts of the Glasgow Assembly—concessions for which he has been severely censured by some historians, and of which he himself is said to have repented; and yet these very writers, while they allow that he was forced by circumstances into these concessions, and never meant to give them effect, are loud in their condemnation of the Scots, for not giving him credit for his good intentions, and for taking part with the English parliament in the subsequent struggles! But the charge is as absurd as it is disingenuous. For how could they expect the peaceable enjoyment of their own discipline, so long as Charles continued to wage war with his parliament—a war instigated by the counsels of the avowed enemies of the Presbyterians, and plainly designed to establish arbitrary power? The duplicity of the king, and his attachment to Prelacy, were too well known to encourage them to place much reliance on professions which, made only in the hour of his need, would be too easily revoked in the event of his success. From the triumph of Charles in such a contest they had nothing to expect but revenge; their only hope, as Presbyterians and as patriots, lay in the success of the English parliament.

This parliament, so well known in history by the name of the Long Parliament, has been loaded with such uniform and indiscriminate abuse, that it may surprise our readers to learn that, during the first years of its history, it consisted of independent gentlemen of the most unblemished reputation,

i. 308–336.—Dr. Reid says, "It is vain to hope to discover the exact number of Protestant sufferers during the first or earliest stage of the rebellion. Suffice it to say, that the lowest probable computation presents an awful sacrifice of human life." We consider forty thousand a very moderate computation indeed, if not "the lowest probable," in estimating the number involved in a massacre which so many writers have calculated at hundreds of thousands, which almost depopulated the northern counties of Ireland, and which continued, with brief intermission, to rage for two years. Clarendon, who was not likely to put the matter in the worst light for the Papists, tells us that "about forty or fifty thousand of the English Protestants were murdered before they suspected themselves to be in any danger;" and that "*an incredible number* were destroyed." (*Clar. Hist.* ii. 299.)



and of whom Clarendon himself is obliged to say, "As to religion, they were all members of the Established Church, and almost to a man for Episcopal government. Though they were undevoted enough to the court, they had all imaginable duty to the king, and affection for the government established by law or ancient custom; and without doubt the majority of that body were persons of gravity and wisdom, who, being possessed of great and plentiful fortunes, had no mind to break the peace of the kingdom, or to make any considerable alterations of the government of the Church or state."[1]

It would be interesting to trace the steps by which the public mind of England was gradually prepared for the complete extirpation of the hierarchy. Neal ascribes it to the arrogance of the prelates, who, instead of being content, like their predecessors, with an acknowledgment of the lawfulness of their office, began to plead for its divine right; "and as the parliament increased in power, the Puritans stiffened in their demands, till all methods of accommodation were impracticable."[2] But he conceals the fact, which could be easily proved from other writers, that the great body of the English Puritans, including under this term many of the Established clergy, had long been decidedly Presbyterian in their sentiments. At no period of our history was the subject of Church government so thoroughly discussed. It became the all-engrossing topic of the day; and it is computed that, on this controversy alone, there issued from the press, between 1640 and 1660, no fewer than 30,000 pamphlets. The question, from its close connection with public affairs, soon became a national one; the trial of Archbishop Laud brought out sad disclosures; public feeling ran every day higher against the prelates; and at last the parliament, deeply sensible of the necessity of some reform in the English Church, summoned an Assembly of Divines to meet at Westminster on the 1st of July, 1643, for the purpose of taking this subject into their serious deliberation. To aid them in this object, they invited the General Assembly of the Scottish Church to send up some of their number as commissioners; and they resolved to sympathize with the Scots, by co-operating with them in the cause of liberty and reformation.

[1] Clarendon, i. 184. [2] Neal's History of the Puritans, ii. 409.



Every step taken by the English parliament was viewed with intense interest in Scotland. It appears from the correspondence carried on during the treaty in 1640 and 1641, between the English and Scottish commissioners, hitherto unpublished, that even at that early period the Scots contemplated, and earnestly pleaded for, a uniformity in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, between the two Churches of England and Scotland. Their primary motive in making this proposal was certainly to secure the peaceable enjoyment of their own form, which, they knew, could not be expected so long as the two churches continued so much divided. At a time when religion was such a governing principle both over rulers and subjects they held that "unity in religion" was the only effectual cure for the civil dissensions by which the country was rent asunder. But they had still nobler motives for such a uniformity. While they disclaimed all intentions of dictating terms of union, they could not fail to see, and seeing, to avail themselves of the opportunity of promoting, the interests of truth, and extending to their brethren in England the blessings of a purer worship and more scriptural form of polity. "We have not been so forgetful," they say, "of ourselves, who are the lesser, and of England, which is the greater kingdom, as to suffer any such presumptuous thoughts to enter into our minds. Yet charity is no presumption, and the common duty of charity bindeth all Christians at all times both to pray and profess their desire that all others were not only almost but altogether such as themselves, except their afflictions and distresses." "This unity of religion," they add, "shall make ministers to build the Church with both their hands, whereas now the one hand is holden out for opposition against the other party; and shall turn the many unpleasant labours of writing and reading of unprofitable controversies into treatises of mortification and studies of devotion. It is a thing so desirable, that all sound divines and politicians are for it; and as we conceive so pious a work to be worthy the best consideration, so we are earnest in recommending it to your lordships, that it may be brought before his majesty and the parliament as that which, *without forcing of conscience*, seemeth not only to be a possible but an easy work." They then proceed, with great modesty, to suggest a reformation in the English Church,



concluding with a recommendation, that it "be peaceably governed by churchmen in assemblies; and the state, in parliament and council, governed by civil men and not by churchmen; thus the work shall be better done; the means that uphold their unprofitable pomp may supply the wants of many preaching ministers, and, without the smallest loss to the subjects, may be a great increase to his majesty's revenues; his majesty's authority shall be more deeply rooted in the united hearts, and more strongly guarded by the joint forces of his subjects; and his greatness shall be enlarged abroad by becoming the head of all the Protestants in Europe, to the greater terror of his enemies, and securing of greatness to his posterity and royal succession."[1]

Whatever may be thought of the sound policy of these sentiments, it must be allowed that the design was a noble one; that the plan was sublimely comprehensive, that the spirit in which it was proposed was truly Christian, enlightened, and catholic; and that these are the last men who deserve to be branded as traitors and rebels. Let us at least do them the tardy justice of admitting, that had their pious wishes been fulfilled, it is possible that our country might not have been seen, as it is at this day, inflamed with intestine discords, and emitting a thousand fiery particles of dissent, that threaten a universal conflagration.

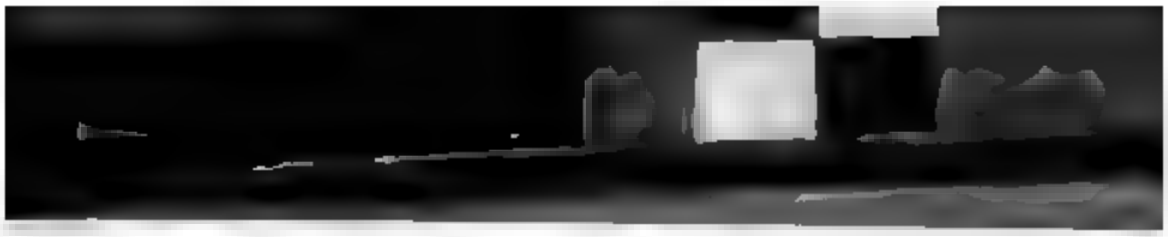
The English parliament, when these propositions were first made, were not prepared to adopt them throughout; but when, in August, 1642, the royal standard was raised at Nottingham, and the country involved in civil war, they began to see the necessity of acting on them, and to court an alliance with the Scots. And yet, deeply as our fathers sympathized with the proceedings of the parliament, it was not without a severe struggle, and not till every effort had been tried, and tried in vain, to effect a reconciliation, that they were compelled, as a last resource, to join with the parliament in maintaining the liberties of the country. "Necessity," said Henderson, in a speech to the English parliament, September, 1643, "necessity, which hath in it a kind of sovereignty, and is a law above all laws, and therefore is said to have no law, doth mightily press the Church and kingdom of Scotland at this

[1] Copies of letters and other documents relating to Scotland, 1640-41, MS., in my possession.



time. It is no small comfort to them that they have not been idle and at ease, but have used all good and lawful means, by supplications and remonstrances to his majesty, for quenching the combustion in this kingdom; and after all these, that they sent commissioners to his majesty, humbly to mediate for a reconcilement. But the offer of their humble services was rejected, from no other reason but that they had no warrant nor capacity for such a mediation; and that the intermixture of the government of the Church of England with the civil government of the kingdom was such a mystery as could not be understood by them." In these circumstances, his majesty having denied the Scots a parliament, they were compelled to call a convention of the estates, to deliberate on the perilous aspect of matters in the country; and commissioners having been sent from the English parliament, their consultations issued in a Solemn League and Covenant between the three kingdoms, "as the only mean, after all others have been essayed, for the deliverance of England and Ireland out of the depths of affliction, preservation of the Church and kingdom of Scotland from the extremity of misery, and the safety of our native king and his kingdom from destruction and desolation."

The General Assembly which met in Edinburgh, August, 1643, was rendered remarkable by the presence of the English commissioners, and the formation of this solemn league between England, Ireland, and Scotland. This Assembly met in the New Church aisle of St. Giles', which was then first fitted up for their reception, and in which, till within a few years ago, the Assembly continued to meet. In the prospect of the important discussions to come before them all eyes were again turned to Henderson, and he was a third time called to the moderator's chair. On the 7th of August the long-expected English commissioners, who came by sea, arrived in Edinburgh. Four of them, Sir William Armyn, Sir Harry Vane, Mr. Hatcher, and Mr. Darley, appeared for the parliament; and two ministers, Mr. Steven Marshall, a Presbyterian, and Mr. Philip Nye, an Independent, appeared for the Assembly of Divines. The arrival of these gentlemen at such a crisis excited a thrilling interest through the whole community, of which we, in present circumstances, can hardly form a conception. Trembling for their liberties,



which they conceived, and with too good reason, to be involved in the struggle now maintained in England; alarmed by the discovery of new popish plots, and by constant rumours of wars, massacres, and victories, they hailed the appearance of these strangers as the family of Noah did that of the dove with the olive branch, and fondly augured from it the cessation of the national deluge. The General Assembly, at that time the watchful sentinel of the liberties of the country, welcomed them with heartfelt enthusiasm, regarding their visit as the omen of that religious as well as civil union with England for which they had so long thirsted and prayed. Henderson cautioned his brethren to conduct themselves, now that the eyes of strangers were upon them, with even more than their ordinary decorum; and a deputation of ministers and elders was appointed to wait on the commissioners, and courteously to invite them to the Assembly. Yet such was their care to avoid even the appearance of introducing civil matters, that, while the Englishmen were cordially granted free access as spectators, they were courteously requested, in any transactions with them as commissioners, to retire to a loft of the New Church adjoining the Assembly room, where the correspondence between them and the Assembly would be conducted.

It was at first intended, by some at least of the English, that there should be merely a civil league between the two kingdoms, pledging themselves to mutual support against the common enemy; but through the influence and arguments of Henderson, in which he was supported by the whole Assembly, and powerfully aided by the critical circumstances in which England was placed, it was agreed that there should also be a religious union, cemented by the three kingdoms entering into a solemn league and covenant. Henderson presented the draught of one which he had composed to a meeting of the three committees, from the parliament of England, the Scottish Convention of Estates, and the General Assembly, which, after some slight alterations, they adopted. On the moderator producing it the effect was quite electrifying. "When the draught was read to the General Assembly," says Mr. Blair, who witnessed the scene, "our smoking desires for uniformity did break forth into a vehement flame, and it was so heartily embraced, and with



such a torrent of affectionate expressions, as none but eye and ear witnesses can conceive. When the vote of some old ministers was asked, their joy was so great that tears did interrupt their expressions."[1] The covenant was received with the same cordiality by the Convention of Estates.

In the month of September, 1643, the city of London witnessed a spectacle equally interesting, but to Englishmen much more novel and extraordinary. On the 25th of that month both houses of parliament, with the Assembly of Divines and the Scottish commissioners, met in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster. After divine service the Solemn League was read article by article in the pulpit from a parchment roll, the whole assembly standing uncovered, and swearing to it with their hands lifted up to heaven. On this solemn occasion our countryman, Mr. Henderson, delivered an animated address, in which he warmly recommended the duty as pleasing to God, exemplified in other kingdoms and churches, and often accompanied with the most blessed fruits. "Had the pope at Rome the knowledge of what is doing this day in England," he said in conclusion, "and were this covenant written on the plaster of the wall over against him where he sitteth, Belshazzar-like, in his sacrilegious pomp, it would make his heart to tremble, his countenance to change, his head and mitre to shake, his joints to loose, and all his cardinals and prelates to be astonished. The Word of God is for it, as you have been now resolved, by the testimony of a reverend assembly of so many godly, learned, and great divines. In your own sense and experience you will find, that although, while you are assaulted with worldly cares and fears, your thoughts may somewhat trouble you; yet at other times, when, upon seeking God in private or public, as in the evening of a well-spent Sabbath, your disposition is more spiritual, and leaving the world behind you, you have found access unto God through Jesus Christ, the bent of your hearts will be strongest to go through with this work. It is a good testimony that our designs and ways are agreeable to God, if we affect them most when our hearts are farthest from the world, and our temper is most spiritual and heavenly, and least carnal and earthly. As the Word of God, so the prayers of the

[1] Memoirs of the Life of Blair, p. 98.



people of God in all the reformed churches are for us and on our side. *It were more terrible than an army, to hear that there were any fervent supplications to God against us.* Blasphemies, curses, and horrid imprecations there be, proceeding from another spirit, and that is all."[1]

The Solemn League having been thus adopted by the English parliament, was sent back to Edinburgh, where it was ordained by the commission of the Church and the Committee of Estates to be sworn and subscribed throughout the kingdom—the former enjoining it under ecclesiastical censures, and the latter under pain of being punished as enemies to his majesty's honour and the peace of these kingdoms.

It may be proper here to say a few words respecting a deed which exercised such an important influence on the destinies of the Church and the nation. In this covenant our fathers bound themselves and their posterity, *first*, to endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, "according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed churches," and the bringing of the three churches to the nearest possible conjunction and uniformity in religion; *secondly*, to the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy; *thirdly*, to the preservation of the rights of parliament, of the liberties of the kingdoms, and of his majesty's person and authority; and, *lastly*, they pledge themselves to personal reformation, and a holy life. Our limits prevent us from entering on a lengthened vindication of this covenant from the numerous objections that have been brought against it. It is hardly necessary to expose the vulgar prejudice, which, taking advantage of a term now become obnoxious, would identify the *extirpation* of Popery and Prelacy with the extirpation of the *persons* of Papists and Prelatists. The only points of objection worthy of notice are the mixture of things sacred and civil in the same bond, and the enjoining of it under civil penalties. The same answer may suffice for both, and is to be found in the extraordinary circumstances in which our ancestors were

[1] Two speeches delivered before the subscribing of the Covenant, the 25th of September, at St. Margaret's, in Westminster—the one by Mr. Philip Nye, the other by Mr. Alexander Henderson. 1643.



placed. A combined attack having been made upon their civil rights and their religious liberties, it became warrantable, and even necessary, to unite both in their means of defence. So far as it can be shown that in any case they resorted to violence to enforce the covenant, we do not vindicate them; but indeed it cannot be proved that it was forced upon any, or that civil injury was incurred by any for simply refusing it. The truth is, that the great body of the people of all ranks entered with heart and soul into the solemn pledge; and the acts of the Church and the state enjoining it, if candidly interpreted and compared with the commentary of their practice, will be found to have been nothing more than a judicial sanction of the measure, with a formal intimation that the Church would hold its opponents as enemies to religion, and that the state would regard them as enemies to the liberties of the country. But whatever errors or excesses may have characterized the mode in which it was managed by men, the work itself may nevertheless have been of God; and if the matter of that covenant was agreeable to the divine will, if the nation voluntarily entered into this solemn engagement with the Lord of hosts, it will not be easy to show that either lapse of time or change of circumstances could dissolve the obligation. Nations as such, in the eye of reason as well as Scripture, possess a permanent identity in all the stages of their history, and are, equally with individuals, the subjects of God's moral government. Since, therefore, the three kingdoms were brought in the good providence of God to swear allegiance to him, as well as amity to each other, they could not draw back without perjury; and the serious conclusion is, that in all their subsequent departures from the reformation thus so solemnly covenanted, their sinful conduct is aggravated by the guilt of having broken their vows to the most high God.[1]

It has been repeatedly asserted that the Independent party in the English parliament outwitted our Scottish divines, by getting the clause inserted in the covenant which binds them to reform the Church of England "according to the Word of God;" by which, it is said, they tacitly understood Independency, while the Scots understood it of their beloved Presbytery. We have already seen that, if there was any address shown in

[1] Sermons on Unity of the Church, by Dr. M'Crie, Appendix.



the concoction of the league, the praise is due to the Scots, who succeeded in getting more than they ever expected from the English, when they prevailed on them to make it a religious as well as civil bond. They certainly understood Presbytery to be the system most agreeable to the Word of God, and to the example of the best reformed churches; but it is quite a mistake to suppose that they were "taken in" by Sir Harry Vane, or artfully led to expect the conformity of England as the bribe for their assistance. The truth is, our ancestors entered into this league with England rather in the hope, and with the desire, that they might be brought into a nearer conformity with the Presbyterian discipline, than with any sanguine expectation of seeing this accomplished. They never supposed that England would submit to their polity without some alteration suited to their circumstances, and accordingly they joined with them in constructing a new Confession and Directory. "We are not to conceive," says Henderson in a letter dated 1642, "that they will embrace our form. A new form must be set down for us all. And although we should never come to this unity in religion and uniformity of worship, yet my desire is to see what form England shall pitch upon before we publish ours."[1] In short, nothing is more apparent from the whole of their correspondence, than that they went up to the Westminster Assembly with very slender hopes of being able to prevail on the English to submit to Presbytery; and the result filled their hearts with unfeigned astonishment, as well as gratitude to that God whose hand they constantly recognized in all their proceedings. "The seven years of ensuing providence," says Henderson, in the dedication of a sermon preached in 1644, "may carry us as far beyond the present intentions, whether of the enemies of religion or our own, as the seven years past have done *beyond our former intentions* and theirs. The pulling down of Popery in the Christian world, and the pulling down of Prelacy in Britain, are equally feasible to the Almighty, who delighteth to turn our difficulties and impossibilities into the glorious demonstrations of his divine power, and who putteth motions into the hearts of men, which they turn into petitions and endeavours, and God, by his power, bringeth forth

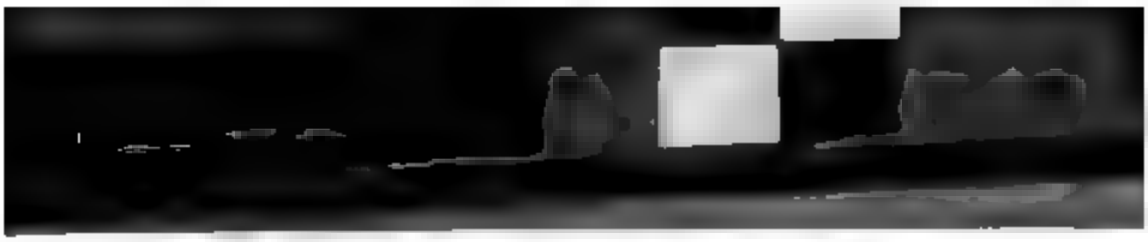
[1] Baillie's Letters, MS., ii. 305.



into reality and action: the conception, birth, and perfection is all from himself."

But it is time to take some notice of the labours of our Scottish ministers in the Westminster Assembly. This famous Assembly was convened, as we have seen, by the parliament on the 1st July, 1643. It was to consist of 120 divines, with 30 lay assessors, of whom 10 were lords and 20 were commoners. The divines were, for the most part, clergymen of the Church of England, selected not for their peculiar views on the point of church government, but for their well-known learning, piety, and abilities. Some of them were keen advocates of Prelacy, but these, so soon as they saw how matters were likely to be carried, retired from the Assembly. A convocation of more grave, judicious, and learned divines was never, perhaps, collected in Christendom. Their theological writings, which still continue to be standard works, amply confirm this commendation; and, above all, the "Westminster Standards," as Presbyterians have denominated the Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and other formularies of the Church of Scotland, which were the result of their labours, would be alone sufficient to entitle their memory to the veneration and respect of all who love the truth.

The parliament of England having solicited the General Assembly to send up some of their number as commissioners, four ministers were appointed—Alexander Henderson, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, and George Gillespie. With these were associated the following elders: the Earl of Cassilis, Lord Maitland, and Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston. Our worthy commissioners reached London in November, 1643, and on being introduced to the Assembly at Westminster, were cordially welcomed by a speech from Dr. Twisse, their learned and excellent prolocutor. The following description of the appearance of the Assembly, as it presented itself to our commissioners, from the pen of Mr. Baillie, is given in his usual homely and graphic style: "The like of that Assembly I did never see, and, as we hear say, the like was never in England, nor anywhere is shortly like to be. Here no mortal man may enter to see or hear, let be to sit, without an order in writ from both houses of parliament. They did sit in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, in the



place of the convocation; but since the weather grew cold, they did go to the Jerusalem Chamber, a fair room in the Abbey of Westminster, about the bounds of the college forehall, but wider. At the upmost end there is a chair set on a frame, a foot from the earth, for the Mr. Prolocutor, Dr. Twisse. Before it, on the ground, stand two chairs for the two Mr. Assessors, Dr. Burgess, and Mr. White. Before these two chairs, through the length of the room, stands a table, at which sit the two scribes, Mr. Byfield and Mr. Roborough. The house is all well hung, and has a good fire, which is some dainties at London. Foranent the table, upon the prolocutor's right hand, there are three or four ranks of forms; on the lowest we five do sit; upon the others, at our backs, the members of parliament deputed to the Assembly. On the forms foranent us, on the prolocutor's left hand, are four or five stages of forms, ranged round the room, whereupon their divines sit as they please. We meet every day of the week but Saturday. We sit commonly from nine to one or two afternoon. The prolocutor, at the beginning and end, has a short prayer. Ordinarily there will be present above threescore of their divines. After the prayer, the scribe reads the proposition and Scriptures, whereupon the Assembly debates in a most grave and orderly way."[1]

The Scottish commissioners soon found ample employment. After the labours of the day in the Assembly, they were engaged in committees, or in writing letters and pamphlets, till the midnight chimes at Westminster rang them to bed. They had no conception that they would have been so long detained in London, for the Assembly continued to sit, with little intermission, for nearly *five* years. The chief burden of the debates fell upon our divines, who were harassed by them night and day. Many an anxious look did they cast towards home; and often did they plead that they might be allowed to return to their quiet duties in their own parishes; but duty to the Church and nation forbade it. "Many a perplexed night have we of it," says Baillie; "if our neighbours at Edinburgh tasted the sauce wherein we dip our venison, their teeth would not water so fast to be here as some of them do."

The first subject that came before the Assembly, and

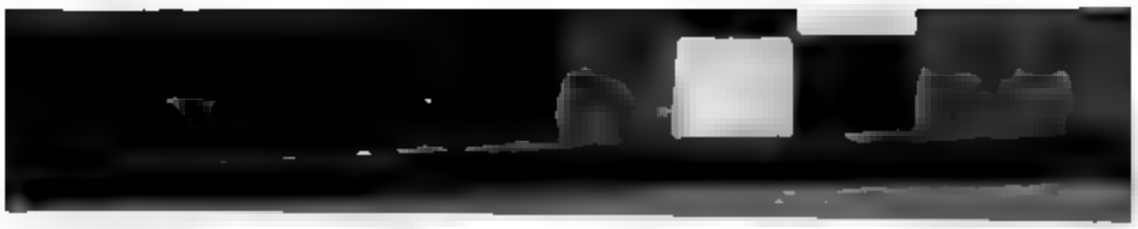
[1] Baillie's Letters and Journals, ii. 107, 108.



which occupied the greater part of their time, was the thorny question of Church government. Our Scots ministers soon found, to their high satisfaction, that the great body of the Assembly was favourably disposed to the Presbyterian discipline. And had the matter been left to the mere force of numbers, little time would have sufficed to decide it. Out of an Assembly of seventy or eighty members, there were only five Independents and one or two Erastians. In this insignificant minority, however, there were two or three possessed of considerable talents for public speaking and ingenuity in debate, and they continued to take up the Assembly's time, by pertinaciously disputing every point, and protesting against every decision. The Assembly, anxious for unanimity, bore all this with astonishing patience. The Independents occupied them no less than *three weeks* in debating the point of sitting at a communion table. "The unhappy Independents," says Baillie, "would mangle that sacrament. No catechizing nor preparation before; no thanksgiving after; no sacramental doctrine or chapters in the day of celebration; no coming up to any table, but a carrying of the elements to all in their seats athort the church: yet all this, with God's help, we have carried over them to our practice. We must dispute every inch of ground. Great need had we of the prayers of all God's people." This obstinacy was the less justifiable in the Independents, as the Scottish ministers had agreed to drop several of their ancient practices in order to please them.

Many days were spent on the question of ruling elders. But the most important and lengthened debate in this Assembly was regarding the divine right of presbyterial government. The question was, Whether many congregations may, and by divine institution ought, to be under one presbyterial government? After a debate which occupied thirty days, the divine right of Presbytery was carried by an overwhelming majority. Five Independents[1] entered their dissent, and, as is usual with the losing party, complained of unfair usage. But never was the charge made with less feasibility. The length of time during which the discussion was protracted shows that ample opportunity had been given them to bring forward

[1] The names of "the dissenting brethren" were Messrs. Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, Burroughs, and Bridge.



their objections; and the debate, which was afterwards published at length, proves how ably and fairly they had been met. It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the earnest desires of the Assembly, and their own promises, the Independents, though they were constantly finding fault with the presbyterial form, would never present any model of their own in its place.[1]

In these debates our countrymen took an active and important share. To the masterly management and sagacious counsels of Henderson, the Assembly owed in a great measure the happy unanimity which prevailed among them. To the services of George Gillespie, who was then in the prime of life, his colleague, Mr. Baillie, bears repeated testimony. "None in all the Assembly did reason more pertinently than Mr. Gillespie; he is an excellent youth; my heart blesses God in his behalf. I admire his gifts, and bless God, as for all my colleagues, so for him in particular, as equal in these to the first in the Assembly." On arriving in London, Gillespie went straight to the Assembly, and stood behind the crowd, while Goodwin was pleading the cause of Independency. He was observed by Henderson, who mentioned his arrival to the prolocutor; and Gillespie was requested to come forward and reply. In vain he pleaded to be excused—he was obliged to come forward, making his way through the crowd in his travelling boots; and, deeply blushing, he commenced a speech which occupied an hour and a half, and ended in a triumphant refutation of the Independent's logic. On another occasion, when the Parliament and Assembly had met for conference on the much-contested question of church order, an elaborate discourse was delivered by the learned Selden in favour of *Erastianism*, which subjects the church to the state in the administration of discipline—a doctrine highly pleasing to the parliament at that time. Mr. Gillespie, who appeared busily engaged in taking notes of the speech, was requested by his brethren, who well knew his talents, to stand up and answer it. He at first modestly refused. "Rise, George,"

[1] Baillie's Letters, ii. 27, 33, 172, &c. Reasons presented by the Dissenting Brethren (Independents) against Presbyterial Government, 1648. Answer of the Assembly of Divines to the Reasons, &c., 1648. Papers for Accommodation, 1644, printed 1648. Reasons by the Dissenting Brethren for not giving in a Model of their Way. Answer of the Assembly to said Reasons, 1645. Answer to the Apologetical Narration, &c.

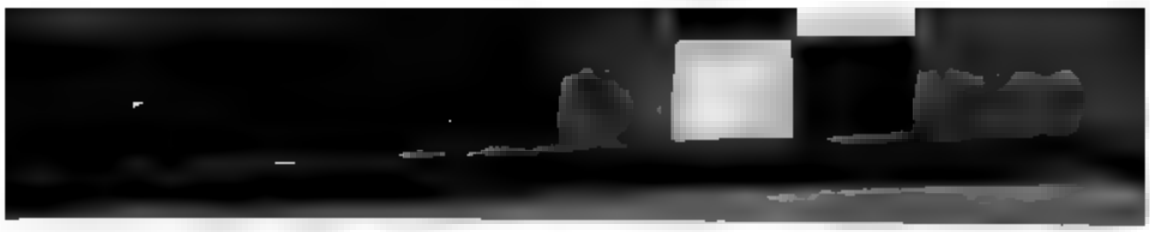


said one of his friends; "rise up and defend the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to govern, by his own laws, the church which he has purchased with his blood." He complied, and, after giving a summary of the arguments of his antagonist, he confuted them, to the admiration of all present. Selden himself is said to have observed, in astonishment, "This young man, by his single speech, has swept away the learning and labour of my life." On looking at Gillespie's notes, it was found that he had written nothing but "*Da lucem, Domine*—Lord, give light," and similar brief petitions for divine direction.[1]

The same modest and devout spirit characterized his last moments. Mr. Gillespie died in 1648, in his thirty-sixth year. During his last sickness he enjoyed little sensible assurance, but was strong in "the faith of adherence," clinging to the promises of God. When asked if he felt comfort, he replied, "No; but though the Lord has not allowed me comfort, I shall yet believe that 'my Beloved is mine, and I am his.'" "Brother," said one of the ministers who stood around his bed, "you are taken away from evil times; what advice have you to give to us who are left behind?" He replied, that he had little experience in the ministry, having been only nine years a minister; "but," he added, "I have this to say, that I have got infinitely more in my work from prayer than from study, and know much more help from the assistance of the Spirit than from books." "And yet it is well known," says Wodrow, "that he was an indefatigable student."[2]

Having finished the discussion on government and the Directory for Worship, the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms next occupied the attention of the Assembly. These, however, though they cost much labour, excited less controversy. The first draught of the Confession was prepared chiefly by our Scots commissioners, but it is hardly possible now to state what share individuals had in it. It is generally believed that the Shorter Catechism was drawn up by Dr. Arrowsmith. The following character of this distinguished man is given by one who appears to have been well acquainted with him: "He was a burning and a shining light, who, by his indefatigable study of the sublime

[1] Wodrow's Analecta, Adv. Lib. [2] Ibid.

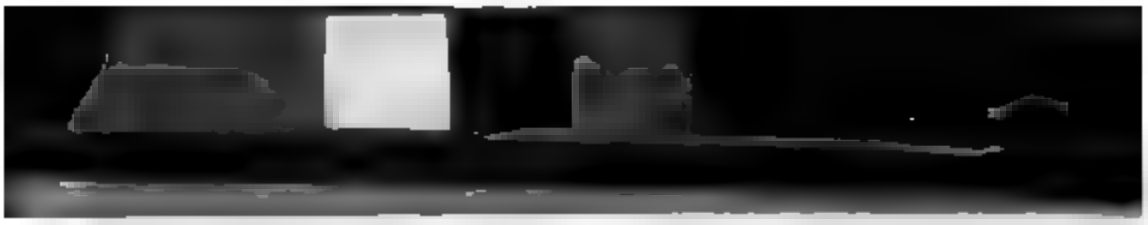


mysteries of the gospel, spent himself to the utmost to explicate the darkest places of Scripture. He was a holy and learned divine; firm and zealous in his attachment to the cause of Christ, from which no worldly allurements would shake his faith or move his confidence. He was a man of a thousand. His soul aspired after more than his weak and sickly body was able to perform."[1]

When the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms were agreed to, the Scottish commissioners took leave of the Westminster Assembly, and, after an absence of about four years, returned to Scotland, and gave an account of their proceedings to the General Assembly which met in August, 1647. This Assembly, of which Mr. Robert Douglas was moderator, is memorable in our history for having received the Westminster Confession of Faith as a part of the uniformity of religion to which the three kingdoms had become bound in the Solemn League. The only reservation which they made in approving of this Confession, was in regard to the authority of the magistrate in calling assemblies, ascribed to him in the 31st chapter, which they understood "only of churches not settled in point of government;" asserting their freedom "to assemble together synodically, as well *pro re nata* as at the ordinary times, upon delegation from the churches, by the intrinsical power received from Christ, as often as it is necessary for the good of the Church so to assemble." This explanation was necessary, in consequence of the Erastian principles which had now begun to prevail in the English parliament, and to hinder them from settling the discipline of the Church. Whatever construction might be put upon those parts of the Confession by the rulers, the Assembly thus declared the sense in which they "understood" them. This act still remains in force in the Scottish Church, and is prefixed to all our copies of the Confession—a standing memorial of the jealousy with which the Church of Scotland watched over her spiritual independence as a Church of Christ.[2] We may here state, once for all, that

[1] Brook's Lives of the Puritans, iii. 317. Baillie informs us that Dr. Arrowsmith was "a man with a glass eye, in place of that which was put out by an arrow, a learned divine, on whom the Assembly put the writing against the Antinomians." (Vol. i. 414.)

[2] The famous Hundred and Eleven Propositions, drawn up by order of the General Assembly in 1645, in which the respective powers about religious



and the Covenanters, we find Montrose among the keenest partizans of the covenant. He was a member of the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638; he was among the first to take up arms, and having been sent to the north, as we have seen, without any orders to that effect, he forced the authorities of Aberdeen to take the covenant. When the Scottish army invaded England, the lot of his regiment being first to cross the Tweed, he was the foremost person to plunge into the river, which he did most courageously, to the admiration of all. Soon after this exploit, however, having been admitted to an interview with the king, he began to show a disposition to desert to the Royalists. Naturally haughty, jealous, and conceited—anxious to distinguish himself, and impatient of all rivalship, superiority, or control—it is supposed, on authority which has never yet been disproved, that he was induced to change sides from seeing Argyll preferred before him in the council, and General Leslie in the field. In 1640, he was detected in a clandestine correspondence with the king at a very critical conjuncture; but having craved pardon for the offence, he was generously forgiven. In the following year he was accused of complicity in a plot to assassinate the Earls of Argyll and Hamilton, generally known by the name of *The Incident*, which is still involved in considerable mystery. In 1643 he threw off the mask, openly joined the king's party, and raised an army for the purpose of ruining the cause which he had so solemnly pledged himself to maintain.

The character of Montrose, as might be expected from the prominent part which he took in defence of the king, is variously estimated by historians, according to their political leanings and predilections. In the eyes of the admirers of Charles and arbitrary power, who are animated by any-thing but [illegible] charitable feeling towards the Covenanters, Montrose appears [illegible] in a character little inferior to that of the most illustrious heroes of antiquity—invested with all the dazzling interest of romance—"a high-spirited gentleman, accomplished in mind and body; his heart overflowing with lofty and generous sentiments." And they dwell with rapture on the splendid victories which he achieved over his countrymen, while they bewail his untimely fate as that of a martyr, and can hardly find epithets sufficiently strong to

express their detestation of the "bigots and barbarians" by whom it was inflicted. By others, again, he is represented as a mean-spirited, vindictive, and ruthless bravado—as the blackest criminal, destitute of either public or private principle—the chief of a lawless banditti committing murder and devastation in the spirit of cold-blooded, indiscriminate, unmanly vengeance; and justly meriting, on these accounts, the ignominious end to which he was brought. It is extremely difficult, in drawing the character and tracing the history of such a man as Montrose, to avoid extremes; and that both of these pictures are extremes can hardly be denied. Mindful of the ancient adage, that "no man ever became most depraved all at once," we are unwilling to believe that this nobleman, when he first took up arms in the cause of Charles, contemplated the atrocities into which he was afterwards led, by placing himself at the head of a barbarous and disgusting horde, who had no feelings in common with his countrymen, and whose sole object in following him was pillage and plunder; and he may have persuaded himself that, in perpetrating these atrocities, he was actuated by a pure regard for the interests of his sovereign. But it is vain to deny, and indeed impossible to explain his conduct, without admitting that there were mingled with this romantic and mistaken feeling, motives of private animosity against Argyll and the other chieftains of the covenant; and that, having forfeited the forgiveness, and roused the resentment of the nation, by imbruing his hands so deeply in the blood of his countrymen, he became equally reckless and daring—determined, apparently, to elevate himself on the ruins of his country, and gain the darling object of his heart, though he should convert Scotland into a field of slaughter and desolation. His humanity and discretion while acting under the banner of the covenant, were such as to elicit the warm commendations of Baillie and his party, who dreaded nothing so much as tarnishing the honour of their victories with deeds of needless severity. To what extent his character may have been altered by becoming a renegade from his religion and a traitor to his country, we shall not say; but the change which marked his conduct may be estimated from the following brief recital of his subsequent career.

The regular troops of Scotland being then engaged under



General Leslie in England, Montrose suddenly appeared in Perthshire, in September, 1644, at the head of an army composed of Highlanders and wild Irishmen, most of the latter of whom had been engaged in the bloody scenes of the Irish massacre, and he gained an easy victory at Tibbermuir over the raw and undisciplined recruits who were hastily called out against him. Having made himself master of Perth, he advanced northward to Aberdeen, flushed with success. Here, also, the troops of the Covenanters, unprepared for such treachery, were taken by surprise; and after a brave resistance of two hours, were compelled to retreat. A drummer, who had accompanied a commissioner sent to summon the town to surrender, having got drunk, and been unhappily killed on his return, Montrose, irritated by their refusal to submit, made this incident a pretext for indiscriminate slaughter, and gave the inhuman "charge to his men to kill, and pardon none."[1] Orders so congenial to the savage dispositions of his soldiery were promptly fulfilled to the letter. The scene which followed is given in the homely language of Spalding, a contemporary, and a townsman of Aberdeen, whose account being that of a stanch Loyalist and an admirer of Montrose, cannot for a moment be suspected of exaggeration: "The livetennand (Montrose) followis the chase in to Abirdene, his men hewing and cutting down all manner of man they could overtak within the toune, upon the streits, or in their houses, and round about the toun as our men wes fleeing, with brode swords, but (without) mercy or remeid. Thir cruell Irishis, seeing a man weill cled, would first tyr him (that is, strip him), and save the clothes onspoyled, and syne kill the man. Montrois followis the chase in to Abirdene, leaving the body of his army standing close unbroken till his returne, except such Irishis as faucht the field. He had promesit to them the plundering of the toun for their good service. Alwaies (yet) the livetennand (Montrose) stayit not, bot returnit bak fra Abirdene to the camp this samen Frydday at nicht, leaving the Irishis killing, robbing, and plundering of this toune at their plesour. And nothing heard bot pitiful houling, crying, weeping, murning, through all the streitts. Thus thir Irishis continewit Frydday, Satterday, Sonday, Mononday." The conduct of these

[1] Spalding's Hist. of the Troubles, ii. 264, Bannatyne edit



monsters to the unhappy women whom they found in the town cannot be rehearsed. But to complete the picture, the same historian (too faithful to be quoted in this part of his narrative by the panegyrists of Montrose) adds, "It is lamentable to hear how thir Irishis, who had gotten the spoyl of the town, did abuse the same. The men that they killed they would not suffer to be bureit, bot tirrit them of their clothes, syne left their nakit bodies lying above the ground. The wyf durst not cry nor weep at her husband's slauchter befoir her eyes, nor the mother for the son, nor the dochter for the father; which, if thay war heard (doing), then war thay presently slayne also."[1]

This horrible scene of carnage, lust, and rapine, was perpetrated in the presence, under the authority, and by the express orders, of "the gallant Montrose," who was lodged in the town, and kept the main body of his troops in the neighbourhood, that his Irish followers might revel at pleasure, and reap the full reward he had promised them "for their good service," and the next day he marched off with the rest of his army, leaving the city at the mercy of the inhuman instruments of his vengeance. And yet this reckless and infatuated man could so far forget himself as to declare, before his execution, that he "did all that lay in him to keep back his soldiers from spoiling the country; and for bloodshed, if it could have been thereby prevented, he would rather it had all come out of his own veins." If the remembrance of his former behaviour, in forcing the inhabitants of this town to embrace the covenant, could make no impression on his sense of shame, we might have thought that their well-known partiality to the cause of Charles might have recommended them to his mercy; and the army of the Covenanters, by whom alone resistance had been made, having fled, his conduct in giving up the unoffending and unarmed to pillage and massacre is deprived even of the feeble defence of his taking reprisals upon the enemies of the king. But next to the guilt of being accessory to such atrocious proceedings, which have at least the palliation of being done in civil war, is that of attempting to vindicate them; and when we hear Dr. Wishart, the panegyrist of Montrose, coolly describing the scene, by telling us that "he entered the city and allowed his men

[1] Spalding's Hist. of the Troubles, vol. i., Bannatyne edit.



two days to *refresh themselves*;" and a later historian, who surveys it in the nineteenth century, callously declaring that Montrose "stands as completely exonerated as any general under whose command blood ever flowed or misery followed,"[1] we are almost tempted to say that his conduct, bad as it was, was not so inexcusable as the spirit which dictated such vindications.

For four days did this monstrous cruelty continue, and it ceased only then, because the approach of Argyll obliged the rebels to evacuate the town. As Montrose was not in a situation to cope with Argyll, he retreated northward, and having gained fresh adherents, he penetrated, in the midst of winter, into Argyllshire, and, in the absence of its chief, overran that district with a vindictive barbarity of which only the ferocious Irish of that age and the savages of the mountains could have been found capable. The houses and the corn were burned, the cattle destroyed, and all the males fit to bear arms who fell into their hands massacred in cold blood.[2] Argyll, resenting this invasion as a personal wrong, hastened to the scene; but his soldiers, being mostly raw recruits from the Lowlands, were easily routed by Montrose at Inverlochy. The conduct of Argyll on this occasion, in taking to his boat on the lake instead of leading his men, has given occasion to his enemies to reproach him with pusillanimity. Baillie vindicates him from this, by informing us that, "having a hurt in his arm and face, gotten by a casual fall from his horse, whereby he was disabled to use either sword or pistol, he was compelled by his friends to go aboard his barge." Be this as it may, it should be remembered that Argyll was a senator, not a soldier; he never professed to excel in that martial daring which, in the eyes of some men, is deemed almost sufficient to atone for the absence of every moral and religious qualification. His firmness as a patriot, his fidelity to his country at this awful crisis, and the services he rendered to the cause of the covenant by the wisdom of his counsels and the energy of his measures, exposed him to the slanders of the cavalier party, who, while they ridiculed his religious principles, which they were incapable of appreciating, were too glad of an occasion to exaggerate his defi-

[1] Napier's Montrose and the Covenanters.
[2] Brodie's Hist. of the British Empire, iii. 534; Spalding's Troubles, &c.



ciency in point of mere animal courage—a quality in which it was their chief glory to excel. These slanders, transmitted by successive historians, continue to be repeated to the present day; and the memory of this nobleman lies under a cloud, which is only beginning to clear away, as the principles for which he contended are beginning to be better understood.

Meanwhile the troubles of the country continued to increase. Almost every man who could bear arms having been called to serve in the wars, agricultural operations were suspended, and the consequence was, that famine, and its general attendant, pestilence, soon made their appearance. It might truly have been said, in the language of the prophet, "the sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within; he that is in the field shall die with the sword, and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him."[1] The plague, which spread quickly through the southern parts of the country, had slain its thousands. The greatest alarm prevailed in consequence of the excesses of Montrose, whose hands were by this time deeply imbrued in the blood of his countrymen; and who, elated by his successes, conceived himself already master of the whole kingdom. "Only give me leave," wrote this vain-glorious man to the king, "after I have reduced this country to your majesty's obedience, and conquered from Dan to Beersheba, to say to your majesty then, as David's general did to his master, 'Come thou thyself, lest this country be called by my name.'"[2] The savages, under the conduct of this leader, and of one Alaster Macdonald, a popish outlaw, exercised everywhere the most "horrid and unheard-of cruelties," so that the inhabitants fled in all directions at the slightest notice of their approach; and nothing was heard but the cries of women and children, wailing over the loss of husbands, fathers, and brothers.

In these circumstances, the country may be said to have been saved from absolute ruin by the firmness of the Scottish

[1] Ezek. vii. 15.

[2] The letter in which this bravado occurs was found among Montrose's papers after his defeat at Philiphaugh (*Burnet's Hist.* i. 52). Welwood states that this letter "had as ill effects as the worst of King Charles' enemies could have wished, for it dashed out in a moment all the impressions his best friends had been making upon him for a considerable time, towards a full settlement with his people" (*Welwood's Memoirs*, p. 65).



Church. At an extraordinary meeting held in February, 1645, the General Assembly addressed a spirited remonstrance to the Scottish parliament, urging them to execute exemplary punishment on the authors and abettors of the civil war. They also addressed "a solemn and seasonable warning" to all classes, and to the armies both in England and Scotland, pointing out the various sins of which they had been guilty, and which they viewed as the causes of God's wrath against the land, and urging them to the duties of fasting, repentance, and prayer. In this paper, after having described the prevailing miseries, sins, and dangers of the country, they say: "Unless men will blot out of their hearts the love of religion and the cause of God, and cast off all care of their country, laws, liberties, and estates, yea, all natural affection of themselves, their wives, children, and friends, and whatsoever is dearest to them under the sun, they must now or never appear actively, each one stretching himself to, yea, beyond his power. It is no time to dally, or go about the business by halves. If we have been so forward to assist our neighbour kingdoms, shall we neglect to defend our own? or shall the enemies of God be more active against his cause than his people for it? God forbid. If the work, being so far carried on, shall now miscarry and fail in our hands, our own consciences shall condemn us, and posterity shall curse us; but if we stand stoutly and stedfastly to it, all generations shall call us blessed." The effect of these exhortations, which were echoed through all the pulpits of the land, was highly encouraging. "The Covenanters," as one observes, "betook themselves to their old shift of fasting and prayer." The minds of the people, instead of yielding to despair, were roused to more vigorous exertion. Shortly afterwards, the country was delivered from its fears by the defeat of the royal forces at Naseby in England; and this permitting the return of the regular troops under Lieutenant-general David Leslie, the Marquis of Montrose was speedily discomfited at Philiphaugh; from which time it may be considered that the strength of the king's cause was broken, and "none of his men of might could find their hands."

Much has been written of the severity of the Covenanters to the prisoners after this victory; and, particularly, in putting to death a number of the rebels, who were some time afterwards compelled to surrender at discretion at Dunavertie in



the Highlands.[1] It is impossible for a Christian mind to contemplate these horrors of war without shuddering, nor will we undertake to vindicate all the measures of the Presbyterians at this trying period; but certainly, if ever severity was justifiable, it was in the case adverted to. What can be more preposterous than to gloat, as some writers have done, with evident delight, over the massacre of *six thousand* trembling fugitives after the battle of Kilsyth—a feat which Montrose and his savages accomplished in their shirts, with "the sleeves tucked up, like a butcher going to kill cattle;" and yet to affect the utmost horror at the military and judicial execution of some two or three hundred rebels, chiefly Irish, taken with arms in their hands, and reeking with the blood of our countrymen?[2] Blinded by prejudice, such writers can see no distinction between the cry for justice against these murderers, which rose from every quarter of the country, and a base thirst for private revenge; nor will they condescend to make the smallest allowance for the outraged feelings of a people smarting under the threefold scourge of war, famine, and pestilence, towards those whom they regarded as the authors of all their miseries, and in whom they often recognized the very ruffians who had been engaged in the murderous scenes of the Irish rebellion.[3] Cruelty, in every form, is justly an object of detestation; but it betrays a strange perversion of mind to sympathize in its perpetration, and only to revolt at its punishment.

The period which we now approach was, without exception, the most trying and perplexing in the whole history of the Scottish Church. When we consider the circumstances in which our ancestors were then placed by the course of events, we will make great allowances for them, and not hastily condemn them for measures which we cannot fully

[1] Sir James Turner, who was on the spot, and no friend to the Covenanters, distinctly refutes Bishop Guthrie's account of this affair; and declares that no quarter was promised to these prisoners (*Turner's Memoirs*, p. 74).

[2] Napier's Montrose and the Covenanters, ii. 422–473.

[3] Such was the impression produced by the atrocious conduct of the Irish Papists, that they were regarded in England as well as Scotland as having placed themselves beyond the rules of civilized warfare. In 1644 the English parliament passed an ordinance, that no quarter should be given to the Irish who were found in arms against them. (*Oldmixon's England*, i. 269.)



approve. Distracted between the conscientious duty they owed to the great Head of the Church, and the allegiance they owed to their earthly sovereign—earnestly desirous to see Charles on the throne, and yet unwilling to offend the English parliament, to which they looked for protection against his despotic encroachments—dreading sectarianism on the one hand, and Prelacy on the other—never had the rulers of the Church found more difficulty in steering the sacred vessel. Though events did not answer their expectations (and we must not judge of their actions by the events), it is impossible for any well-constituted mind not to admire the straightforward, consistent principles with which they prosecuted their course during this stormy epoch, manifesting the most devoted loyalty to their unhappy prince, and at the same time a steady adherence to the cause of liberty, and to their religious engagements—a course that affords a striking contrast to that pursued by the other two parties. Indeed, one of the strongest attestations to the general rectitude of their conduct appears in the fact, that by the friends of both of these parties they have been equally blamed, of old and of late, for opposite extremes: the Republican party sneered at their excess of loyalty, while the Royalist party denounced them as the most base and disloyal of demagogues.

The king, after his defeat by Cromwell, had betaken himself, in the spring of 1646, to the Scottish army, at that time lying in the north of England, obviously with the design of inducing them to take part with him against the English parliament. This unexpected step placed the Scots in a situation of extreme embarrassment. Their army had been levied and sent into England expressly to aid the parliament against the royal forces: they were supported by the money of the parliament, and considered themselves solemnly bound, by the brotherly covenant, to advance its cause. At the same time, they had begun to suspect that some of the parliamentary leaders entertained designs against the king's person; and to refuse him the "shelter and defence" for which he professed to have thrown himself into their hands, seemed as inconsistent with their engagements in the covenant, which bound them to "preserve and defend the king's majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the



true religion and liberties of the kingdom," as it was repugnant to every feeling of honour and generosity. He was received with every mark of respect; and had he complied with the only terms on which they could engage to support him, there can be little doubt that he would have escaped all his subsequent calamities. These terms were—That he should dismiss his popishly affected counsellors, and subscribe the Solemn League. The Scottish commissioners were fully aware of the advantage to their cause by the accession of such a convert; but, from the state of feeling in the country, they were equally convinced of the impracticability of success on any other terms. They entreated him on their knees, and with tears in their eyes, to comply with conditions so essential to both nations, as well as to his own interests; assuring him that, in the event of his compliance, not only would the whole Scottish people prove faithful to him, but that the great body of the English would join in replacing him securely on the throne of his ancestors. To all these solicitations Charles, who was buoyed up with false hopes by his prelates, turned a deaf ear. His only answer was, that he was bound, by his coronation oath, to defend the Prelacy and the ceremonies of the English Church; and that, ere he wronged his conscience by violating that oath, he would forfeit his crown and his life. It may appear to have been harsh to insist on the king taking a covenant which bound him to extirpate Prelacy, while he professed to believe it to be a form of divine institution; but when we consider that this form had been already abjured and abrogated by the three kingdoms, it does not seem too much that the sovereign should have been required to adopt the national faith. The interests of a whole nation were not to be sacrificed to the personal scruples of the monarch, especially when these related merely to a form of ecclesiastical government which could not be shown to have any foundation in Scripture, and the divine right of which had only of late been asserted for political purposes. His majesty's professions of regard to his coronation oath, after the specimens he had given of his duplicity, and after so often violating that oath in regard to the civil liberties of his subjects, met with little credit. They did not impose even upon Baillie, who says: "As to his conscience, none would believe him,



though he were to swear it, that he had any conscience on the subject." The real grounds of his refusal to comply were, as has been amply shown by others, purely of a political kind. We shall merely add, for the sake of anticipating another objection, that although "covenanting," as it has been practised by churches, is a religious duty, requiring certain religious qualifications for the right performance of it, yet the Solemn League, as well as the National Covenant of Scotland, were properly national and public deeds, binding, indeed, to the external support of a certain profession of religion, but not necessarily implying spiritual qualifications in those who entered into them. Religious vowing is, in its own nature, a moral duty founded on the law of nature, and competent to nations as well as individuals; and our covenants may be vindicated on the same principle as the oaths which Britain still exacts from those who hold the highest official stations. The real source of all the prejudice against these deeds has been, that they were sworn in support of Presbyterianism.

That no means might be left untried to relieve the royal mind from scruple, Alexander Henderson was, by the king's special request, appointed to confer with him at Newcastle on the points of difference between Prelacy and Presbytery. Henderson declined a public disputation with his majesty's divines, on the ground that he had seldom found any good result from such controversies. "All that I intended," said he, "was a free yet modest expression of my motives and inducements which drew my mind to the dislike of Episcopal government, wherein I was bred in my younger years in the university." Instead, however, of a familiar conference, the points in dispute were discussed in a series of papers which passed privately between his majesty and Mr. Henderson. The result may be imagined. His majesty in his answers carefully evaded the main argument. Henderson quoted Scripture, and Charles the fathers; and the time was consumed in a heroic but hopeless attempt, by this most unsatisfactory of all modes of discussion, to convince the king on points where neither his pride nor his policy would yield. These papers are eight in number—five by his majesty, and three by Henderson. "After perusing them," says one who was well versed in the controversy, "it is diffi-



cult to read without a smile the panegyrics which the Episcopalian writers have bestowed on the *incomparable wisdom* of his majesty, and the triumph which he obtained over Mr. Henderson in the controversy."[1]

Grieved and heart-broken by the infatuation of the king, whom he perceived to be obstinate to all means of extrication, this devoted servant of Christ, who was labouring at the same time under a severe distemper, which he was persuaded would prove mortal, returned by sea to Edinburgh on the 11th of August, 1646. Though sick and exhausted, he enjoyed great peace of mind, and conversed much to the comfort of his brethren who visited him. Having revived a little, he was one day so unusually cheerful, that his friend Sir James Stuart could not refrain from congratulating him on the change. "Well," said Henderson, "I will tell you the reason. I am near the end of my race, hasting home, and I am as glad of it as a school-boy when sent home from the school to his father's house. In a few days I will sicken and die. In my sickness I will be much out of ease to speak of anything; but I desire that you may be with me as much as you can, and you shall see that all shall end well." Soon after this, as he foretold, he departed in peace. His body was interred in the Grayfriars' Churchyard, and a monument was erected over his remains with a suitable inscription. After the Restoration this monument was defaced by orders from the government; but it was afterwards repaired, and still remains in a very perfect state. Not satisfied with their vengeance on his tombstone, his enemies attempted to blast his reputation. Laying hold of his having died soon after his conference with the king, they circulated the report that he had become a convert to their cause, and that his death had been hastened by remorse for the part he had acted against his sovereign! They had even the effrontery to publish a forged document, purporting to be his death-bed declaration, in which they put into his mouth sentiments which he would have sooner died than avowed. This disgraceful and unprincipled trick, which resembles those so often resorted to by Papists, was exposed at the time by the General Assembly, who, immediately upon its appearance, appointed a committee to examine the pamphlet, and afterwards published a

[1] Life of Henderson by Dr. M'Crie, Miscel. Writings, p. 58.

and the Covenanters, we find Montrose among the keenest partizans of the covenant. He was a member of the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638; he was among the first to take up arms, and having been sent to the north, as we have seen, without any orders to that effect, he forced the authorities of Aberdeen to take the covenant. When the Scottish army invaded England, the lot of his regiment being first to cross the Tweed, he was the foremost person to plunge into the river, which he did most courageously, to the admiration of all. Soon after this exploit, however, having been admitted to an interview with the king, he began to show a disposition to desert to the Royalists. Naturally haughty, jealous, and conceited—anxious to distinguish himself, and impatient of all rivalship, superiority, or control—it is supposed, on authority which has never yet been disproved, that he was induced to change sides from seeing Argyll preferred before him in the council, and General Leslie in the field. In 1640, he was detected in a clandestine correspondence with the king at a very critical conjuncture; but having craved pardon for the offence, he was generously forgiven. In the following year he was accused of complicity in a plot to assassinate the Earls of Argyll and Hamilton, generally known by the name of *The Incident*, which is still involved in considerable mystery. In 1643 he threw off the mask, openly joined the king's party, and raised an army for the purpose of ruining the cause which he had so solemnly pledged himself to maintain.

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express their detestation of the "bigots and barbarians" by whom it was inflicted. By others, again, he is represented as a mean-spirited, vindictive, and ruthless bravado—as the blackest criminal, destitute of either public or private principle—the chief of a lawless banditti committing murder and devastation in the spirit of cold-blooded, indiscriminate, unmanly vengeance; and justly meriting, on these accounts, the ignominious end to which he was brought. It is extremely difficult, in drawing the character and tracing the history of such a man as Montrose, to avoid extremes; and that both of these pictures are extremes can hardly be denied. Mindful of the ancient adage, that "no man ever became most depraved all at once," we are unwilling to believe that this nobleman, when he first took up arms in the cause of Charles, contemplated the atrocities into which he was afterwards led, by placing himself at the head of a barbarous and disgusting horde, who had no feelings in common with his countrymen, and whose sole object in following him was pillage and plunder; and he may have persuaded himself that, in perpetrating these atrocities, he was actuated by a pure regard for the interests of his sovereign. But it is vain to deny, and indeed impossible to explain his conduct, without admitting that there were mingled with this romantic and mistaken feeling, motives of private animosity against Argyll and the other chieftains of the covenant; and that, having forfeited the forgiveness, and roused the resentment of the nation, by imbruing his hands so deeply in the blood of his countrymen, he became equally reckless and daring—determined, apparently, to elevate himself on the ruins of his country, and gain the darling object of his heart, though he should convert Scotland into a field of slaughter and desolation. His humanity and discretion while acting under the banner of the covenant, were such as to elicit the recommendations of Baillie and his party, who [illegible] sufferings at the royal standard, and, at the head of a rude and savage band of "Highland kernes and Irish runnagates," was spreading devastation over the country. The close connection in which this nobleman once stood to the Covenanters, and the fierce hostility which he subsequently displayed against them, demand a brief notice of his character and history.

At the commencement of the contests between the court

and the Covenanters, we find Montrose among the keenest partizans of the covenant. He was a member of the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638; he was among the first to take up arms, and having been sent to the north, as we have seen, without any orders to that effect, he forced the authorities of Aberdeen to take the covenant. When the Scottish army invaded England, the lot of his regiment being first to cross the Tweed, he was the foremost person to plunge into the river, which he did most courageously, to the admiration of all. Soon after this exploit, however, having been admitted to an interview with the king, he began to show a disposition to desert to the Royalists. Naturally haughty, jealous, and conceited—anxious to distinguish himself, and impatient of all rivalship, superiority, or control—it is supposed, on authority which has never yet been disproved, that he was induced to change sides from seeing Argyll preferred before him in the council, and General Leslie in the field. In 1640, he was detected in a clandestine correspondence with the king at a very critical conjuncture; but having craved pardon for the offence, he was generously forgiven. In the following year he was accused of complicity in a plot to assassinate the Earls of Argyll and Hamilton, generally known by the name of *The Incident*, which is still involved in considerable mystery. In 1643 he threw off the mask, openly joined the king's party, and raised an army for the purpose of ruining the cause which he had so solemnly pledged himself to maintain.

The character of Montrose, as might be expected from the prominent part which he took in defence of the king, is variously estimated by historians, according to their political leanings and predilections. In the eyes of the admirers of Charles and arbitrary power, who are animated by anything but a charitable feeling towards the Covenanters, Montrose appears in a character little inferior to that of the most illustrious heroes of antiquity—invested with all the dazzling interest of romance—"a high-spirited gentleman, accomplished in mind and body; his heart overflowing with lofty and generous sentiments." And they dwell with rapture on the splendid victories which he achieved over his countrymen, while they bewail his untimely fate as that of a martyr, and can hardly find epithets sufficiently strong to

express their detestation of the "bigots and barbarians" by whom it was inflicted. By others, again, he is represented as a mean-spirited, vindictive, and ruthless bravado—as the blackest criminal, destitute of either public or private principle—the chief of a lawless banditti committing murder and devastation in the spirit of cold-blooded, indiscriminate, unmanly vengeance; and justly meriting, on these accounts, the ignominious end to which he was brought. It is extremely difficult, in drawing the character and tracing the history of such a man as Montrose, to avoid extremes; and that both of these pictures are extremes can hardly be denied. Mindful of the ancient adage, that "no man ever became most depraved all at once," we are unwilling to believe that this nobleman, when he first took up arms in the cause of Charles, contemplated the atrocities into which he was afterwards led, by placing himself at the head of a barbarous and disgusting horde, who had no feelings in common with his countrymen, and whose sole object in following him was pillage and plunder; and he may have persuaded himself that, in perpetrating these atrocities, he was actuated by a pure regard for the interests of his sovereign. But it is vain to deny, and indeed impossible to explain his conduct, without admitting that there were mingled with this romantic and mistaken feeling, motives of private animosity against Argyll and the other chieftains of the covenant; and that, having forfeited the forgiveness, and roused the resentment of the nation, by imbruing his hands so deeply in the blood of his countrymen, he became equally reckless and daring—determined, apparently, to elevate himself on the ruins of his country, and gain the darling object of his heart, though he should convert Scotland into a field of slaughter and desolation. His humanity and discretion while acting under the banner of the covenant, were such as to elicit the warm commendations of Baillie and his party, who dreaded nothing so much as tarnishing the honour of their victories with deeds of needless severity. To what extent his character may have been altered by becoming a renegade from his religion and a traitor to his country, we shall not say; but the change which marked his conduct may be estimated from the following brief recital of his subsequent career.

The regular troops of Scotland being then engaged under

General Leslie in England, Montrose suddenly appeared in Perthshire, in September, 1644, at the head of an army composed of Highlanders and wild Irishmen, most of the latter of whom had been engaged in the bloody scenes of the Irish massacre, and he gained an easy victory at Tibbermuir over the raw and undisciplined recruits who were hastily called out against him. Having made himself master of Perth, he advanced northward to Aberdeen, flushed with success. Here, also, the troops of the Covenanters, unprepared for such treachery, were taken by surprise; and after a brave resistance of two hours, were compelled to retreat. A drummer, who had accompanied a commissioner sent to summon the town to surrender, having got drunk, and been unhappily killed on his return, Montrose, irritated by their refusal to submit, made this incident a pretext for indiscriminate slaughter, and gave the inhuman "charge to his men to kill, and pardon none."[1] Orders so congenial to the savage dispositions of his soldiery were promptly fulfilled to the letter. The scene which followed is given in the homely language of Spalding, a contemporary, and a townsman of Aberdeen, whose account being that of a stanch Loyalist and an admirer of Montrose, cannot for a moment be suspected of exaggeration: "The livetennand (Montrose) followis the chase in to Abirdene, his men hewing and cutting down all manner of man they could overtak within the toune, upon the streits, or in their houses, and round about the toun as our men wes fleeing, with brode swords, but (without) mercy or remeid. Thir cruell Irishis, seeing a man weill cled, would first tyr him (that is, strip him), and save the clothes onspoyled, and syne kill the man. Montrois followis the chase in to Abirdene, leaving the body of his army standing close unbroken till his returne, except such Irishis as faucht the field. He had promesit to them the plundering of the toun for their good service. Alwaies (yet) the livetennand (Montrose) stayit not, bot returnit bak fra Abirdene to the camp this samen Frydday at nicht, leaving the Irishis killing, robbing, and plundering of this toune at their plesour. And nothing heard bot pitiful houling, crying, weeping, murning, through all the streitts. Thus thir Irishis continewit Frydday, Satterday, Sonday, Mononday." The conduct of these

[1] Spalding's Hist. of the Troubles, ii. 264, Bannatyne edit

monsters to the unhappy women whom they found in the town cannot be rehearsed. But to complete the picture, the same historian (too faithful to be quoted in this part of his narrative by the panegyrists of Montrose) adds, "It is lamentable to hear how thir Irishis, who had gotten the spoyl of the town, did abuse the same. The men that they killed they would not suffer to be bureit, bot tirrit them of their clothes, syne left their nakit bodies lying above the ground. The wyf durst not cry nor weep at her husband's slauchter befoir her eyes, nor the mother for the son, nor the dochter for the father; which, if thay war heard (doing), then war thay presently slayne also."[1]

This horrible scene of carnage, lust, and rapine, was perpetrated in the presence, under the authority, and by the express orders, of "the gallant Montrose," who was lodged in the town, and kept the main body of his troops in the neighbourhood, that his Irish followers might revel at pleasure, and reap the full reward he had promised them "for their good service," and the next day he marched off with the rest of his army, leaving the city at the mercy of the inhuman instruments of his vengeance. And yet this reckless and infatuated man could so far forget himself as to declare, before his execution, that he "did all that lay in him to keep back his soldiers from spoiling the country; and for bloodshed, if it could have been thereby prevented, he would rather it had all come out of his own veins." If the remembrance of his former behaviour, in forcing the inhabitants of this town to embrace the covenant, could make no impression on his sense of shame, we might have thought that their well-known partiality to the cause of Charles might have recommended them to his mercy; and the army of the Covenanters, by whom alone resistance had been made, having fled, his conduct in giving up the unoffending and unarmed to pillage and massacre is deprived even of the feeble defence of his taking reprisals upon the enemies of the king. But next to the guilt of being accessory to such atrocious proceedings, which have at least the palliation of being done in civil war, is that of attempting to vindicate them; and when we hear Dr. Wishart, the panegyrist of Montrose, coolly describing the scene, by telling us that "he entered the city and allowed his men

[1] Spalding's Hist. of the Troubles, vol. i., Bannatyne edit.

two days to *refresh themselves;*" and a later historian, who surveys it in the nineteenth century, callously declaring that Montrose "stands as completely exonerated as any general under whose command blood ever flowed or misery followed,"[1] we are almost tempted to say that his conduct, bad as it was, was not so inexcusable as the spirit which dictated such vindications.

For four days did this monstrous cruelty continue, and it ceased only then, because the approach of Argyll obliged the rebels to evacuate the town. As Montrose was not in a situation to cope with Argyll, he retreated northward, and having gained fresh adherents, he penetrated, in the midst of winter, into Argyllshire, and, in the absence of its chief, overran that district with a vindictive barbarity of which only the ferocious Irish of that age and the savages of the mountains could have been found capable. The houses and the corn were burned, the cattle destroyed, and all the males fit to bear arms who fell into their hands massacred in cold blood.[2] Argyll, resenting this invasion as a personal wrong, hastened to the scene; but his soldiers, being mostly raw recruits from the Lowlands, were easily routed by Montrose at Inverlochy. The conduct of Argyll on this occasion, in taking to his boat on the lake instead of leading his men, has given occasion to his enemies to reproach him with pusillanimity. Baillie vindicates him from this, by informing us that, "having a hurt in his arm and face, gotten by a casual fall from his horse, whereby he was disabled to use either sword or pistol, he was compelled by his friends to go aboard his barge." Be this as it may, it should be remembered that Argyll was a senator, not a soldier; he never professed to excel in that martial daring which, in the eyes of some men, is deemed almost sufficient to atone for the absence of every moral and religious qualification. His firmness as a patriot, his fidelity to his country at this awful crisis, and the services he rendered to the cause of the covenant by the wisdom of his counsels and the energy of his measures, exposed him to the slanders of the cavalier party, who, while they ridiculed his religious principles, which they were incapable of appreciating, were too glad of an occasion to exaggerate his defi-

[1] Napier's Montrose and the Covenanters.
[2] Brodie's Hist. of the British Empire, iii. 534; Spalding's Troubles, &c.

ciency in point of mere animal courage—a quality in which it was their chief glory to excel. These slanders, transmitted by successive historians, continue to be repeated to the present day; and the memory of this nobleman lies under a cloud, which is only beginning to clear away, as the principles for which he contended are beginning to be better understood.

Meanwhile the troubles of the country continued to increase. Almost every man who could bear arms having been called to serve in the wars, agricultural operations were suspended, and the consequence was, that famine, and its general attendant, pestilence, soon made their appearance. It might truly have been said, in the language of the prophet, "the sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within; he that is in the field shall die with the sword, and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him."[1] The plague, which spread quickly through the southern parts of the country, had slain its thousands. The greatest alarm prevailed in consequence of the excesses of Montrose, whose hands were by this time deeply imbrued in the blood of his countrymen; and who, elated by his successes, conceived himself already master of the whole kingdom. "Only give me leave," wrote this vain-glorious man to the king, "after I have reduced this country to your majesty's obedience, and conquered from Dan to Beersheba, to say to your majesty then, as David's general did to his master, 'Come thou thyself, lest this country be called by my name.'"[2] The savages, under the conduct of this leader, and of one Alaster Macdonald, a popish outlaw, exercised everywhere the most "horrid and unheard-of cruelties," so that the inhabitants fled in all directions at the slightest notice of their approach; and nothing was heard but the cries of women and children, wailing over the loss of husbands, fathers, and brothers.

In these circumstances, the country may be said to have been saved from absolute ruin by the firmness of the Scottish

[1] Ezek. vii. 15.

[2] The letter in which this bravado occurs was found among Montrose's papers after his defeat at Philiphaugh (*Burnet's Hist.* i. 52). Welwood states that this letter "had as ill effects as the worst of King Charles' enemies could have wished, for it dashed out in a moment all the impressions his best friends had been making upon him for a considerable time, towards a full settlement with his people" (*Welwood's Memoirs*, p. 65).

Church. At an extraordinary meeting held in February, 1645, the General Assembly addressed a spirited remonstrance to the Scottish parliament, urging them to execute exemplary punishment on the authors and abettors of the civil war. They also addressed "a solemn and seasonable warning" to all classes, and to the armies both in England and Scotland, pointing out the various sins of which they had been guilty, and which they viewed as the causes of God's wrath against the land, and urging them to the duties of fasting, repentance, and prayer. In this paper, after having described the prevailing miseries, sins, and dangers of the country, they say: "Unless men will blot out of their hearts the love of religion and the cause of God, and cast off all care of their country, laws, liberties, and estates, yea, all natural affection of themselves, their wives, children, and friends, and whatsoever is dearest to them under the sun, they must now or never appear actively, each one stretching himself to, yea, beyond his power. It is no time to dally, or go about the business by halves. If we have been so forward to assist our neighbour kingdoms, shall we neglect to defend our own? or shall the enemies of God be more active against his cause than his people for it? God forbid. If the work, being so far carried on, shall now miscarry and fail in our hands, our own consciences shall condemn us, and posterity shall curse us; but if we stand stoutly and stedfastly to it, all generations shall call us blessed." The effect of these exhortations, which were echoed through all the pulpits of the land, was highly encouraging. "The Covenanters," as one observes, "betook themselves to their old shift of fasting and prayer." The minds of the people, instead of yielding to despair, were roused to more vigorous exertion. Shortly afterwards, the country was delivered from its fears by the defeat of the royal forces at Naseby in England; and this permitting the return of the regular troops under Lieutenant-general David Leslie, the Marquis of Montrose was speedily discomfited at Philiphaugh; from which time it may be considered that the strength of the king's cause was broken, and "none of his men of might could find their hands."

Much has been written of the severity of the Covenanters to the prisoners after this victory; and, particularly, in putting to death a number of the rebels, who were some time afterwards compelled to surrender at discretion at Dunavertie in

the Highlands.[1] It is impossible for a Christian mind to contemplate these horrors of war without shuddering, nor will we undertake to vindicate all the measures of the Presbyterians at this trying period; but certainly, if ever severity was justifiable, it was in the case adverted to. What can be more preposterous than to gloat, as some writers have done, with evident delight, over the massacre of *six thousand* trembling fugitives after the battle of Kilsyth—a feat which Montrose and his savages accomplished in their shirts, with "the sleeves tucked up, like a butcher going to kill cattle;" and yet to affect the utmost horror at the military and judicial execution of some two or three hundred rebels, chiefly Irish, taken with arms in their hands, and reeking with the blood of our countrymen?[2] Blinded by prejudice, such writers can see no distinction between the cry for justice against these murderers, which rose from every quarter of the country, and a base thirst for private revenge; nor will they condescend to make the smallest allowance for the outraged feelings of a people smarting under the threefold scourge of war, famine, and pestilence, towards those whom they regarded as the authors of all their miseries, and in whom they often recognized the very ruffians who had been engaged in the murderous scenes of the Irish rebellion.[3] Cruelty, in every form, is justly an object of detestation; but it betrays a strange perversion of mind to sympathize in its perpetration, and only to revolt at its punishment.

The period which we now approach was, without exception, the most trying and perplexing in the whole history of the Scottish Church. When we consider the circumstances in which our ancestors were then placed by the course of events, we will make great allowances for them, and not hastily condemn them for measures which we cannot fully

[1] Sir James Turner, who was on the spot, and no friend to the Covenanters, distinctly refutes Bishop Guthrie's account of this affair; and declares that no quarter was promised to these prisoners (*Turner's Memoirs*, p. 74).

[2] Napier's Montrose and the Covenanters, ii. 422–473.

[3] Such was the impression produced by the atrocious conduct of the Irish Papists, that they were regarded in England as well as Scotland as having placed themselves beyond the rules of civilized warfare. In 1644 the English parliament passed an ordinance, that no quarter should be given to the Irish who were found in arms against them. (*Oldmixon's England*, i. 269.)

approve. Distracted between the conscientious duty they owed to the great Head of the Church, and the allegiance they owed to their earthly sovereign—earnestly desirous to see Charles on the throne, and yet unwilling to offend the English parliament, to which they looked for protection against his despotic encroachments—dreading sectarianism on the one hand, and Prelacy on the other—never had the rulers of the Church found more difficulty in steering the sacred vessel. Though events did not answer their expectations (and we must not judge of their actions by the events), it is impossible for any well-constituted mind not to admire the straightforward, consistent principles with which they prosecuted their course during this stormy epoch, manifesting the most devoted loyalty to their unhappy prince, and at the same time a steady adherence to the cause of liberty, and to their religious engagements—a course that affords a striking contrast to that pursued by the other two parties. Indeed, one of the strongest attestations to the general rectitude of their conduct appears in the fact, that by the friends of both of these parties they have been equally blamed, of old and of late, for opposite extremes: the Republican party sneered at their excess of loyalty, while the Royalist party denounced them as the most base and disloyal of demagogues.

The king, after his defeat by Cromwell, had betaken himself, in the spring of 1646, to the Scottish army, at that time lying in the north of England, obviously with the design of inducing them to take part with him against the English parliament. This unexpected step placed the Scots in a situation of extreme embarrassment. Their army had been levied and sent into England expressly to aid the parliament against the royal forces: they were supported by the money of the parliament, and considered themselves solemnly bound, by the brotherly covenant, to advance its cause. At the same time, they had begun to suspect that some of the parliamentary leaders entertained designs against the king's person; and to refuse him the "shelter and defence" for which he professed to have thrown himself into their hands, seemed as inconsistent with their engagements in the covenant, which bound them to "preserve and defend the king's majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the

true religion and liberties of the kingdom," as it was repugnant to every feeling of honour and generosity. He was received with every mark of respect; and had he complied with the only terms on which they could engage to support him, there can be little doubt that he would have escaped all his subsequent calamities. These terms were—That he should dismiss his popishly affected counsellors, and subscribe the Solemn League. The Scottish commissioners were fully aware of the advantage to their cause by the accession of such a convert; but, from the state of feeling in the country, they were equally convinced of the impracticability of success on any other terms. They entreated him on their knees, and with tears in their eyes, to comply with conditions so essential to both nations, as well as to his own interests; assuring him that, in the event of his compliance, not only would the whole Scottish people prove faithful to him, but that the great body of the English would join in replacing him securely on the throne of his ancestors. To all these solicitations Charles, who was buoyed up with false hopes by his prelates, turned a deaf ear. His only answer was, that he was bound, by his coronation oath, to defend the Prelacy and the ceremonies of the English Church; and that, ere he wronged his conscience by violating that oath, he would forfeit his crown and his life. It may appear to have been harsh to insist on the king taking a covenant which bound him to extirpate Prelacy, while he professed to believe it to be a form of divine institution; but when we consider that this form had been already abjured and abrogated by the three kingdoms, it does not seem too much that the sovereign should have been required to adopt the national faith. The interests of a whole nation were not to be sacrificed to the personal scruples of the monarch, especially when these related merely to a form of ecclesiastical government which could not be shown to have any foundation in Scripture, and the divine right of which had only of late been asserted for political purposes. His majesty's professions of regard to his coronation oath, after the specimens he had given of his duplicity, and after so often violating that oath in regard to the civil liberties of his subjects, met with little credit. They did not impose even upon Baillie, who says: "As to his conscience, none would believe him,

though he were to swear it, that he had any conscience on the subject." The real grounds of his refusal to comply were, as has been amply shown by others, purely of a political kind. We shall merely add, for the sake of anticipating another objection, that although "covenanting," as it has been practised by churches, is a religious duty, requiring certain religious qualifications for the right performance of it, yet the Solemn League, as well as the National Covenant of Scotland, were properly national and public deeds, binding, indeed, to the external support of a certain profession of religion, but not necessarily implying spiritual qualifications in those who entered into them. Religious vowing is, in its own nature, a moral duty founded on the law of nature, and competent to nations as well as individuals; and our covenants may be vindicated on the same principle as the oaths which Britain still exacts from those who hold the highest official stations. The real source of all the prejudice against these deeds has been, that they were sworn in support of Presbyterianism.

That no means might be left untried to relieve the royal mind from scruple, Alexander Henderson was, by the king's special request, appointed to confer with him at Newcastle on the points of difference between Prelacy and Presbytery. Henderson declined a public disputation with his majesty's divines, on the ground that he had seldom found any good result from such controversies. "All that I intended," said he, "was a free yet modest expression of my motives and inducements which drew my mind to the dislike of Episcopal government, wherein I was bred in my younger years in the university." Instead, however, of a familiar conference, the points in dispute were discussed in a series of papers which passed privately between his majesty and Mr. Henderson. The result may be imagined. His majesty in his answers carefully evaded the main argument. Henderson quoted Scripture, and Charles the fathers; and the time was consumed in a heroic but hopeless attempt, by this most unsatisfactory of all modes of discussion, to convince the king on points where neither his pride nor his policy would yield. These papers are eight in number—five by his majesty, and three by Henderson. "After perusing them," says one who was well versed in the controversy, "it is diffi-

cult to read without a smile the panegyrics which the Episcopalian writers have bestowed on the *incomparable wisdom* of his majesty, and the triumph which he obtained over Mr. Henderson in the controversy."[1]

Grieved and heart-broken by the infatuation of the king, whom he perceived to be obstinate to all means of extrication, this devoted servant of Christ, who was labouring at the same time under a severe distemper, which he was persuaded would prove mortal, returned by sea to Edinburgh on the 11th of August, 1646. Though sick and exhausted, he enjoyed great peace of mind, and conversed much to the comfort of his brethren who visited him. Having revived a little, he was one day so unusually cheerful, that his friend Sir James Stuart could not refrain from congratulating him on the change. "Well," said Henderson, "I will tell you the reason. I am near the end of my race, hasting home, and I am as glad of it as a school-boy when sent home from the school to his father's house. In a few days I will sicken and die. In my sickness I will be much out of ease to speak of anything; but I desire that you may be with me as much as you can, and you shall see that all shall end well." Soon after this, as he foretold, he departed in peace. His body was interred in the Grayfriars' Churchyard, and a monument was erected over his remains with a suitable inscription. After the Restoration this monument was defaced by orders from the government; but it was afterwards repaired, and still remains in a very perfect state. Not satisfied with their vengeance on his tombstone, his enemies attempted to blast his reputation. Laying hold of his having died soon after his conference with the king, they circulated the report that he had become a convert to their cause, and that his death had been hastened by remorse for the part he had acted against his sovereign! They had even the effrontery to publish a forged document, purporting to be his death-bed declaration, in which they put into his mouth sentiments which he would have sooner died than avowed. This disgraceful and unprincipled trick, which resembles those so often resorted to by Papists, was exposed at the time by the General Assembly, who, immediately upon its appearance, appointed a committee to examine the pamphlet, and afterwards published a

[1] Life of Henderson by Dr. M'Crie, Miscel. Writings, p. 58.



declaration of its falsehood and forgery; in which, "out of the tender respect which they bear to his name, they declare that, after due search and trial, they do find that their worthy brother, Mr. Alexander Henderson, did, from the time of his coming from London to Newcastle, till the last moment of his departure out of this life, manifest the constancy of his judgment touching the work of reformation in these kingdoms —as divers reverend brethren who visited him have declared to this Assembly, particularly two brethren, who constantly attended him from the time he came home till his breath expired."[1] This was certainly sufficient; and yet this base slander, which has been refuted by our best historians,[2] and which has done more discredit to the cause of Prelacy than anything that Henderson ever said against it, continues to be retailed by writers of that party down to the present day.

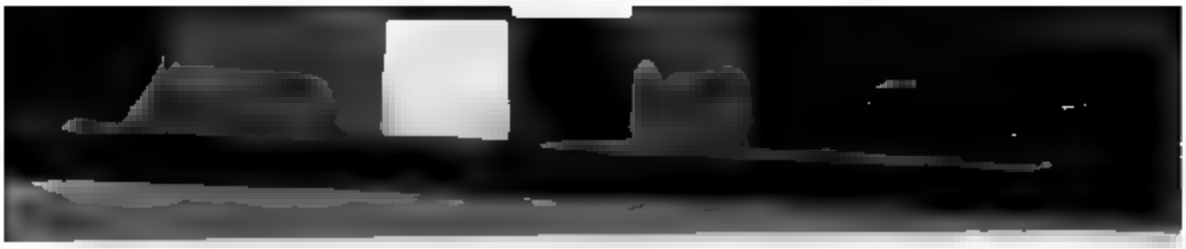
The next scene which occurs in this dramatic portion of our history is the surrender of the king's person into the hands of the English. It must be gratifying to every lover of his country to know, that late investigations have freed the memory of our Scottish ancestors from the stigma which was so long attached to their conduct in this transaction. It is hardly worth while to notice the ridiculous story of the Scots having *sold their king*, which was got up at the time, in consequence of some arrears having been paid to the Scots army for their assistance. Instead of being given as a bribe, this money was reluctantly paid by the parliament as a debt for past services; and this matter was adjusted in August, 1646, five months before the question as to the disposal of the king's person was settled, with which, in fact, it had no connection. The money was payable simply on the condition of their delivering up the fortresses on the borders, and marching into Scotland—with no stipulation, on either side, as to the king's person.[3] But the transaction, though thus stripped of its mercenary character, may seem still to reflect on the generosity of our countrymen. Even in this point of view it is capable of a complete vindication; and had our space permitted, it could be demonstrated that the Scottish

[1] Acts of Assembly, p. 422, edit. 1682.
[2] Laing's History of Scotland, ii. 327.
[3] Whitelocke, 229. Answer of the Commons to the Scots Commissioners' Papers, 19.



leaders acted, on this trying occasion, in the most upright and honourable manner. To carry the king with them to Scotland, while he refused all terms of accommodation with his parliament, would have been to renew the civil war in their own country, under circumstances more unfavourable than ever. His consenting to the establishment of Presbytery in Scotland, while he retained his designs of subverting the Reformation in England, afforded no rational prospect of peace; and the Scottish Church, with a noble firmness, which is condemned by many who are loud in their praises of the firmness of Charles, would not accept of a boon, which, in the circumstances, was nothing better than a bribe, and which would have involved them in a compromise of their sacred engagements with England. On the other hand, to deliver him up unconditionally to the pleasure of the English parliament, as the English demanded, was an alternative to which they would not listen; and months were spent in negotiations, in the course of which the pertinacity of the Scots on their right to be consulted in the disposal of the king's person, threatened to issue in an open rupture with the parliament. The speeches of the Scots commissioners who went to London to treat this delicate question, on being sent to press, were seized and suppressed by order of parliament, and the printer was imprisoned. They were published, however, in Scotland; and, breathing as they did the most devoted loyalty, they created a sensation in behalf of the unfortunate monarch, which his subsequent fate roused into universal indignation.

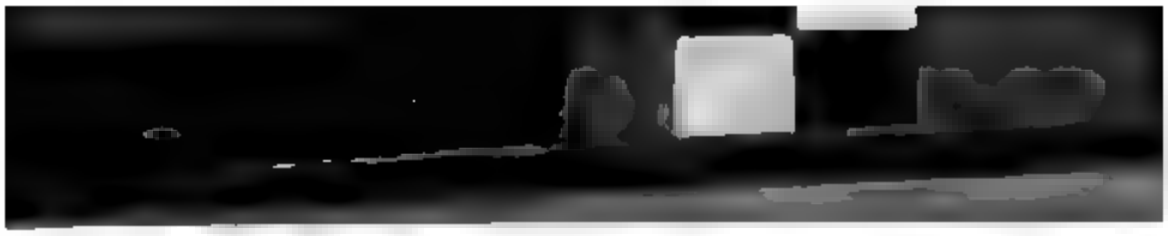
The point for which the Scots commissioners contended was, that the king should, in accordance with his own earnest and repeatedly expressed desire, be permitted to return to some of his palaces in the neighbourhood of London, "with honour, safety, and freedom." "We do hold," said Lord Loudoun, "that the disposing of the king's person doth not properly belong to any one of the kingdoms, but jointly to both. And after Scotland hath suffered the heat of the day and winter's cold, have forsaken their own peace for love of their brethren, have set their own house on fire to quench theirs; after we have gone along with you in all the hardship of this war, and (without vanity be it spoken) have been so useful in the cause; and that the king hath cast himself into the



hands of the Scottish army, and that, by the blessing of God, we are come to the harbour of a peace—we cannot expect that the honourable house will think it agreeable with the conscience or honour, that the person of the king should be disposed of by them as they think fit, or by any one of the kingdoms alone. The king doth, with all earnestness, desire to be joined with you. Nor can there be a more real testimony of our respect and affection to England, than that we desire he may be with you, and be advised by you; neither can you have any greater honour, than that his majesty is willing to return to you. And if so kind an offer should be refused, and the king driven to despair, it is to be feared these kingdoms will be involved in greater difficulties than ever. For though Scotland be most willing and desirous that the king should return to his parliament with honour, safety, and freedom; yet if any such course should be taken, or any demand made for rendering of his person, which cannot stand with his honour and safety, or which cannot consist with our duty, allegiance, and covenant, nor with the honour of that army to whom, in the time of his extreme danger, he had his recourse for safety, *it cannot be expected that we can be capable of so base an act.* And whatever hath been moved by us concerning the king, we desire it may be rightly constructed, as proceeding from such as have not wavered from their first principles; for when the king was in the height of his power we did not, and I hope never shall, flatter him; and when the enemy was in the height of their pride and strength *Scotland did fear no colours!* And now, when the king is at his lowest ebb, and hath cast himself into our army for safety, we hope your lordships will pardon us, from our sense of honour and duty, to be very tender of the person and posterity of the king, to whom we have so many near relations, and not like the worst of us, that we cannot so far forget our allegiance and duty, as not to have an antipathy against the change of a monarchical government, in which we have lived through the descent of so many kings, and under which both kingdoms have been governed so many ages, and flourished in all happiness."[1]

In their reply to these truly loyal and patriotic sentiments the parliament expressed great indignation at the suspicions

[1] Several Speeches spoken by the Right Honourable the Earle of Loudoun, Lord High Chancellor of Scotland, at a Conference, &c. Oct. 1646.



which the Scots seemed to entertain of their intentions. "Let not your expressions obliquely infer," said they, "that the parliament of England will not do what becometh them to the king, since all the world doth know that this kingdom hath in all times showed as great affection to their kings as any other nation." The English house of peers, who were inclined to befriend Charles, and considered his presence in London necessary to prosecute their designs in his favour, and against the sectarian army, now became as anxious as the commons for the removal of the Scottish army out of England. Embarrassed by these conflicting claims—despairing of being able to conquer the obstinacy of Charles, whose last message, when presented to the house of peers, "made all," as Burnet informs us, "even those that were best affected, hang their heads, and send it down to the house of commons without a word"—and perceiving no other course which they could pursue with safety or success, the parliament of Scotland at length, considering that, "as his majesty has frequently expressed his desire to be near his two houses of parliament, and that these houses had desired he might come to Holmby House, promising the safety and preservation of his royal person, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom, according to the covenant, they declare their concurrence for his majesty going to Holmby House, or some other of his majesty's houses in or about London, there to remain till he give satisfaction to both kingdoms in the propositions of peace; and that, in the meantime, there shall be no harm, prejudice, injury, or violence done to his royal person—that there shall be no change of government other than has been for three years preceding—and that his posterity shall in no wise be prejudiced in their lawful succession to the throne and government of these kingdoms." Who could have anticipated, that within three years after, the English, to whose honour and fidelity the Scots committed the person of their common sovereign, would have brought him to their bar as a criminal, and to the scaffold as a traitor? When Charles returned to his parliament there was no human probability of such a catastrophe; his affairs were in a better train than ever, had it not been for what has been well termed his own "perverse fatality;" and before we can condemn the Scots as accessory to his death, we must suppose them to



have possessed a sagacity which foresaw the issue of the most complicated negotiations, to have calculated on the obstinacy of the king resisting every proposal, and to have anticipated the bloody termination of the conflict—a catastrophe which took the whole nation by surprise, and filled Europe with astonishment.[1]

The year 1648 was distinguished by the famous *engagement* projected by the Duke of Hamilton, the professed object of which was to rescue Charles from the English army, now under the command of Cromwell, and which had obtained by force possession of the king's person. This ill-fated expedition was condemned by the Scottish Presbyterians, because no provision was made, in the event of its success, that the king should secure the liberties of the nation according to the terms of the covenant. These terms, indeed, bound

[1] In a treatise published by the committee of estates, 1650, in answer to Montrose's declaration, they vindicate themselves and the Scottish nation, with unanswerable force, from the charges above referred to. "Our chief study and endeavour," say they, "hath been to render unto God the things that are God's, and to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to our neighbours the things that are theirs. We hope it is made clear and evident to all that will judge impartially, that there was no treaty betwixt this kingdom, their committees or armies, with the king, before his coming to our army, nor after his coming, but with the advice and consent of both houses of parliament, and that it is a malicious and wicked device, and manifest untruth, that we should have sold our king. We abhor the very thoughts of it." After stating that "the agreement for paying their arrears was made five months before the king, with consent of both kingdoms, went from Newcastle to Holmby," they proceed to vindicate themselves from disloyalty and imprudence in giving consent to his majesty's going to the parliament. "Who would, at that time, have foreseen that an army, raised by the parliament for their own defence, and which, in profession, so highly esteemed and magnified the authority of parliament, would not only disobey their orders, but also attempt such horrid things as they have since adventured upon? Surely, when the Scots army came out of England, it would have seemed not only improbable but incredible. The kingdom of Scotland did intrust his majesty's person to the honourable houses of parliament of England, who were as deeply engaged by duty, oaths, covenants, and solemn professions, for his majesty's preservation, as the kingdom of Scotland, and, no question, they would have preserved his majesty's person from all violence or injury whatsoever, had they not met with the unexpected violence against their own persons, for until the army did, by the power of the sword, imprison and seclude the far greater part of the house of commons, and make void the power of the house of peers, they durst not attempt anything against his majesty's person. And what wonder if we, who were strangers, could not perceive the depth of such designs (if at that time there was any framed design of that kind, which we very much question), when the houses of parliament did not foresee their own ruin?"



them to "stand to the defence of our dread sovereign the king's majesty, his person, and authority;" but at the same time, "to the defence of the liberties and laws of the kingdom;" and the reason assigned for this was, that "some among themselves had laboured to put into the hands of the king an arbitrary and unlimited power, destructive to the privileges of parliaments and the liberties of the subject." So that, as has been justly remarked, "in proof of the regard of our fathers to civil liberty, we may appeal to those very covenants which have been so absurdly decried by ignorant and prejudiced moderns, but which, in reality, constituted at that time the only *Magna Charta* of Scottish freedom."[1] The Covenanters, with equal sagacity and regard to liberty, protested against the admission, into places of power and trust in this army, of those who were termed *malignants*—that is, persons notoriously hostile to the cause of civil and religious freedom, and inclined to favour the arbitrary measures of the court. It was perceived at once that to suffer this, in the circumstances of the country, was equivalent to delivering up the military into the hands of the king, and abandoning all that they had been contending for. But though the Church protested against the enterprise, it was sanctioned by the estates; the command was intrusted to notorious malignants, and Hamilton dragged a reluctant army of fifteen thousand men into England, where, as might have been expected, from the total want of spirit and mutual confidence among them, they were easily routed by the English army under Cromwell, near Preston, with the loss of two thousand killed and eight thousand prisoners.

The battle, fatal to so many of our countrymen, proved fatal also to the infatuated monarch. The sectarian army, or, as Cromwell called them, his "obedient lambs," elated by their successes, repaired to London, and took the administration into their own hands. Their first step was to *purge* the House of Commons by excluding all the Presbyterian members, which was done by a guard of soldiers under the command of Colonel Pride. The Commons thus reduced to sectaries, commonly called the Rump Parliament, appointed what they termed a high court of justice; and Charles, on being arraigned before this nondescript tribunal, and refus-

[1] Preliminary Dissertation to Wodrow's History by Dr. Burns.



ing to own their jurisdiction, was condemned as a traitor, and sentenced to be beheaded. The awful sentence was executed on the 30th of January, 1649, before an immense concourse of spectators. Cannons were planted at all the avenues leading to the place of execution, in case of tumult; and when the axe fell, and the executioner exposed the bleeding head to public view, one dismal universal groan burst from the horror-stricken crowd, who were immediately dispersed in all directions by troops of dragoons.

The behaviour of Charles at his death presents his character in a light much more favourable than any of the public actions of his life. That cold reserve and inflexible obstinacy which distinguished his whole conduct, assumed in his last moments the sublimer aspect of chastened and tranquil magnanimity. His private virtues have been acknowledged by all; but such were the imperfections of his character, that these virtues were unprofitable to the public, and, by their abuse, proved pernicious to himself. His bigotry, his stubbornness, and, above all, his ambition of inordinate power, which he refused to share with any but the prelates, brought misery upon his country, and ruin upon himself. His life was a series of political blunders; and his death, though little better than a judicial murder, may warn princes to the end of time against abusing the power with which they are intrusted, not for their own exclusive benefit, but the welfare of the community.

When the news of the execution of Charles I. reached Edinburgh, on Sabbath, February 4, 1649, it is impossible to describe the mingled feelings of astonishment, horror, and indignation which filled all ranks of persons;[1] and if anything were wanting to prove the devoted and disinterested loyalty of the Scottish Presbyterians, the step they instantly took places it beyond all question. The very next day, without calculating the consequences, Charles II., the son of the deceased monarch, was proclaimed king at the cross of Edinburgh by the committee of estates. The proclamation, however, was guarded by the proviso, that "before being

[1] While the Episcopal clergy timidly stood aloof, the English Presbyterians boldly protested against the execution of Charles, and condemned it in every possible way. (*Bennet's Memorial*, p. 223; *Loyalty of Presbyterians*, pp. 241, 245.)



admitted to the exercise of his royal power, he shall give satisfaction to this kingdom in those things that concern the security of religion, according to the national covenant and the solemn league and covenant"—the only terms on which the Scots considered themselves warranted, in consistency with their engagements to England, and from regard to their own civil and religious liberties, to invite him to the throne. As a proof of his sincerity in prosecuting the ends of these covenants, he was to be required to dismiss from his councils and from places of trust all who were suspected of disaffection to the covenanted cause. Commissioners were immediately despatched to Charles, who was then at the Hague in Holland, to treat with him on these terms; but at first, imitating the policy of his father, he refused to listen to any stipulations; in consequence of which the commissioners returned without accomplishing their object. The negotiations were renewed with better success the following year; but meanwhile, let us attend to the proceedings of the Church during the intervening period.

During the whole of this period of civil convulsion the Church prospered and improved in no ordinary degree. The minds of men were kept on the alert, and led to serious inquiry, by being compelled to contend, amidst almost perpetual changes, perils, and alarms, for their religious principles and privileges. The constant practice of catechising the young and old left few ignorant of the doctrines of religion, or of the profession for which they were contending. All felt personally interested in the public struggle. The ministers, though not without their faults and extravagances, were distinguished as a body for their theological learning, their piety, and assiduity in their functions. Bishop Burnet, who is sufficiently ready to depreciate them, is obliged to own, "They had an appearance that created respect. They were related to the chief families in the country either by blood or marriage, and had lived in so decent a manner that the gentry paid great respect to them. They used to visit their parishes much; and had brought the people to such a degree of knowledge, that cottagers and servants would have prayed extempore. As they lived in great familiarity with their people, and used to pray and talk oft with them in private, so it can hardly be imagined to what degree



they were loved and reverenced by them."[1] Great efforts were made during this stormy period to purify the Church from unworthy ministers; a step which was followed by the revival of religion, and a visible reformation of manners, in several parishes. Many excellent acts were passed by the General Assembly. To this period, also, we are indebted for the full establishment of parochial schools, which have contributed so much to elevate Scotland above other nations in point of general intelligence; and which, being originally designed as nurseries for the Church of Christ, as well as seminaries for useful learning, were placed under the superintendence of presbyteries, and conducted on religious principles. This valuable institution, which was projected by the reformers, and brought into extensive operation long before it received the support of the government, we entirely owe to the efforts of the Church courts; and, indeed, their care to promote the interests both of common education in the Highlands and Lowlands, and of classical learning, manifested in numerous acts regarding schools and universities, reflects the highest credit on their enlarged and enlightened views, at a time when our ancestors are generally charged with the most narrow-minded bigotry. Making allowances for the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, and by which they were occasionally driven into extreme measures, the estimate of Kirkton cannot be considered beyond the truth when he says of this period (1649), "Now the ministry was notably purified, the magistracy altered, and the people strangely refined. Scotland hath been, even by emulous foreigners, called Philadelphia; and now she seemed to be in her flower."

In these exertions for the good of their country the Church had the co-operation of the ruling powers, who passed several acts contributing to the advancement of religion. Among these we cannot omit the celebrated act passed in 1649, for the total abolition of patronage. Without entering into the much litigated question of patronage, we shall state a few facts in illustration of its history in the Church of Scotland. The opinion of the first reformers on the subject may be gathered from the fact, that they held the election of the people essential for the pastoral relation between a minister

[1] Burnet's History, i. 225.



and a congregation. In the First Book of Discipline, which continued to be the rule of the Church for many years, and the authority of which was not superseded by the Second Book, it is laid down as a principle, that "it appertaineth to the people, and to every several congregation, to elect their minister;" and that "altogether this is to be avoided, that any man be violently intruded or thrust in upon any congregation." It would appear they did not at first perceive that patronage was incompatible with this principle; and for some time they went on harmoniously together in practice.[1]

In the year 1565 Queen Mary, having suspected that the General Assembly, by certain articles which they presented to her majesty, intended to interfere with her right of presentation, the Assembly replied, "Our mind is not that her majesty, or any other patron of this realm, should be defrauded of their just patronages; but as the presentation of benefices pertains to the patron, so ought the collation thereof, by law and reason, pertain to the Kirk." Her majesty had misunderstood them; whatever they might think of patronage, they did not intend *by these articles* to interfere with the rights of the queen, far less to "defraud" the patrons; the struggle at that time was for the right of collation. Still the form of electing by the congregation was continued in one shape or another; and such was the care of the clergy to preserve the liberties of the people, that during the Presbyterian administration no complaints of

[1] In 1561 Knox admitted John Spotswoode as Superintendent of Lothian, and the form of procedure, which was published in a treatise at the time, may serve to illustrate this point. The sermon being finished, Knox declared, "That the lords of secret councill had given charge and power to the churches of Lothian to *chuse* Mr. John Spotswoode, superintendent," &c. "When no objection was moved, the people present were asked if there was any other they desired to be put in election with the said Mr. John; and next, if they would have him to be their superintendent; if they would honour and obey him as Christ's minister, and comfort and assist him in everything pertaining to his charge? It was answered, by some appointed for that purpose, 'We will; and do promise to him such obedience as becometh the sheep to give unto their pastor, so long as he remaineth faithful in his office.' The people's consent being thus declared, Mr. Knox proposed the following questions to Mr. Spotswoode," &c. This treatise, entitled "The Form and Order of the Election of the Superintendent, which may serve in the election of all other Ministers," may be found in Dunlop's Confessions, vol. ii., and in Wodrow's Biographical Collections, Maitland edit. vol. i. part 1, p. 75.



intrusion were ever heard.[1] They soon, however, discovered that patronage in its exercise interfered with the freedom of election; and accordingly, in the Second Book of Discipline, begun in 1573, and finally agreed to in 1578, among "certain special heads of reformation which we crave," they mention the abolition of patronage.[2] If it should be asked, How the Church of Scotland could continue to enjoy her benefices under a system which she declared to be "contrary to the Word of God, and to the liberty of election?" we reply, That she did so under a solemn protest against it; that it was not in her power to rescind the law, this being the province of the state; and that she was constantly looking for deliverance from it as a yoke. In 1582, when an act was passed to prevent some abuses of patronage, it was declared that its provisions "should no ways be prejudicial to the laic patrons and their presentations, *until the time the laws be reformed according to the Word of God.*"[3] In 1596 the Assembly ordained, that "because by presentations many are forcibly thrust into the ministry, and upon congregations that utter thereafter that they were not called of God, it would be provided that none seek presentations to bene-

[1] In 1563 Robert Ramsay is suspended by the Assembly, "for entering in the ministrie within the superintendent of Angus his bounds, *without election* or his admission." (*Booke of the Universal Kirk*, part i. p. 44. Pan. edit.) Even the bishops introduced by Morton were "chosen by the flock then present," anno 1574. (*Ibid.* p. 349.) Indeed, the parliament of 1640 declare it as a well known fact, that it had been the practice of the Church of Scotland to settle parishes "on the sute and calling of the congregation, ever since the reformation." (*Act Parl. Scot.* v. 299.)

[2] "The libertie of the election of persons called to the ecclesiastical function, and observed without interruption so long as the Kirke was not corrupted by antichrist, we desire to be restored and retained within this realm. So that none be intrused upon any congregation, either by the prince, or any inferior person, without lawful election, and the assent of the people over whom the person is placed, as the practice of the apostolical and primitive Kirk, and good order craves. And, because this order which God's word craves, cannot stand with patronages and presentation to benefices, used in the pope's kirk, we desire all them that truly fear God earnestly to consider that forasmuch as the names of patronages and benefices, together with the effect thereof, have flowed from the pope and corruption of the canon law only, in so far as thereby any person was intrused, or placed over kirks having the care of souls; and forasmuch as that manner of proceeding hath no ground in the word of God, but is contrary to the same, and to the said liberty of election, they [patronages] ought not now to have place in this light of reformation." (*Second Book of Discipline*, ch. 12.)

[3] Calderwood, p. 124; Booke of the Universal Kirk, p. 247. Peterkin's *edit.*



fices without advice of the presbytery." They also ordained, "That the trial of persons to be admitted to the ministry hereafter consist not only in their learning and ability to preach, but also in conscience and feeling and spiritual wisdom; and such as are not qualified in these points, to be delayed to further trial, and till they be found qualified." The events which followed soon after, with the introduction of Prelacy, rendered all attempts of this nature hopeless; but no sooner did the civil power become favourable, than the Church renewed her exertions to shake off the burden. The famous Assembly at Glasgow, in 1638, not only ratified the Second Book of Discipline, in which patronage is so explicitly condemned, and the foresaid act of Assembly, 1596, but enacted, "That no person be intruded in any office of the Kirk contrary to the will of the congregation to which they are appointed." With these principles the practice of the Church of Scotland at that time fully corresponded; "so that," says Henderson, in a treatise published in 1641, "no man is here obtruded upon the people against their open or tacit consent and approbation."[1] In 1646 we find the Assembly "recommending to several presbyteries and provincial assemblies to consider the interests of particular congregations in the calling and admission of ministers;" and at length, in compliance with the urgent desires of the Church, the parliament, March, 1649, cordially and completely abolished patronage, leaving it to the General Assembly to fix upon such a plan of admission to the sacred office as they in their wisdom might see fit. The preamble of this act, as expressing the views of our reforming ancestors, deserves attention: "Considering that patronages and presentations of kirks is an evil and bondage under which the Lord's people and ministers of this land have long groaned, and that it hath no warrand in God's word, but is founded only on the canon law, and is a custom merely popish, brought into the Kirk in time of ignorance and superstition; and that the same is contrary to the Second Book of Discipline, in which, upon solid and good ground, it is reckoned among abuses that are desired to be reformed, and unto several acts of General Assemblies; and that it is prejudicial to the liberty of the people and planting of kirks,

[1] The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland.

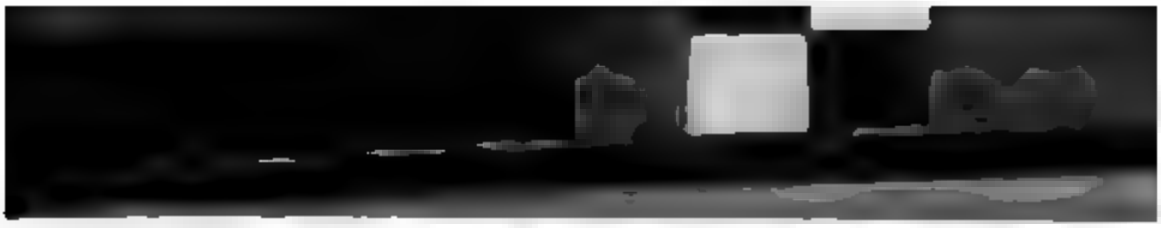


and unto the free calling and entries of ministers unto their charge: and the said estates being willing and desirous to promote and advance the reformation aforesaid, that everything in the house of God may be ordered according to his will and commandment, *do discharge for ever hereafter* all presentations of kirks, whether belonging to the king or any laic patron, presbyteries, or others within this kingdom." The General Assembly, in July following, "highly commend the piety and zeal of the estates of parliament in promoting so necessary a point of reformation;" and, with some variety of opinion as to the particular mode in which elections should be conducted, they agreed on a plan which, though imperfect, and only intended to be temporary, was attended with the best effects. According to this the election was placed in the session, with consent of the congregation, who might obtain a hearing of any preachers they chose by petitioning the presbytery. In the case of dissent by the major part of the congregation from the person agreed upon by the session, the matter was to be remitted to the judgment of the presbytery, who, "if they do not find their dissent to be grounded on causeless prejudices, are to appoint a new election."[1]

But to return to our narrative:—In the following year the Scots renewed their negotiations with Charles at Breda; and upon hearing that Montrose had failed in his foolhardy expe-

[1] Sir James Balfour informs us that "the current was carried for the Church way, in respect Argyll, the chancellor, and Archibald Johnston, durst doe no utherwayes, lest the leaders of the Church should desert them, and leave them to stand on their auen feett, which without the Church none of them could weill do." (*Histor. Works*, vol. iii. ad. an. 1649.) This is, at least, a testimony to the zeal of the Church in the matter; but Sir James had no ground for accusing the nobles, as a body, of insincerity.

The chief dispute in the Assembly, 1649, regarding the mode of election, turned on the question, Whether the part which the congregation had in the election was that of nomination or consent? The progress of Independency in England filled many with a dread of everything that seemed to favour the views of that sect, who ascribed to the people the whole power of admission to the sacred office. Calderwood, "who, in the time of his exile, had seen the wild follies of the English Brownists in Arnheim and Amsterdam" (*Guthrie's Memoirs*, p. 79), Baillie, and others, who had been engaged in the Independent controversy, were averse to admit that the people possessed the right of *election*, but all agreed that the right of election should be within the Church: that patronage was, in every form, hostile to the liberty of election and the independence of the Church—and that no minister should be intruded into any congregation against their will.



dition against the Covenanters, and been executed as a traitor, he thought proper to comply with their proposals; and setting sail with the commissioners landed in Scotland, at the mouth of the Spey, on the 23d of June, 1650. It would be well for the credit both of his majesty and of our venerable ancestors, if historical truth would allow us to draw a veil over the transactions which followed. Before Charles landed on the Scottish shore he agreed to swear and subscribe the covenant. Mr. Livingstone, who accompanied the embassy, and was very jealous of the king's sincerity, would have deferred this ceremony till he was brought to a better state of mind; but he was overruled by the rest, and prevailed on reluctantly to administer the solemn test. In August following, finding that the Church still entertained strong suspicions of his insincerity, the king subscribed a declaration at Dunfermline, in which he professed to lament the opposition his father had made to the work of reformation, and solemnly declared that he renounced Popery and Prelacy, and "would have no enemies but the enemies of the covenant—no friends but the friends of the covenant." Mr. Gillespie, the minister who put the pen into Charles' hand to subscribe this declaration, assured him, "that if he was not satisfied in his soul and conscience, beyond all hesitation, of the righteousness of the subscription, he was so far from over-driving him to do it, that he obtested him, and charged him, in his Master's name, not to subscribe that declaration, no, not for the three kingdoms." "Mr. Gillespie," answered the king, "Mr. Gillespie, I am satisfied, and therefore will subscribe it."[1] The truth is, that in religious matters Charles would subscribe anything. It was afterwards discovered, that before he left the Continent he had embraced Popery, and in this religion, if he can be said to have had any religion, he continued till his death, though on his restoration he subscribed the articles of the Church of England; thus juggling in sacred things to the last, and imposing on the English Church, as he now did on the Scottish, by false professions.[2] Even at this time, while coming under the most sacred engagements to support Presbytery, he was secretly concerting measures to ruin that cause, by introducing its enemies into the army and legislature, and dividing the Presbyterians. The stern

[1] Life of Mr. John Livingstone. [2] Burnet, i. 131; ii. 457.



obstinacy of his father appears virtue itself, when contrasted with the cool perjury of his profligate and unprincipled son.

It is impossible, on the other hand, to vindicate the conduct of the leaders among the Presbyterians, in accepting or requiring these protestations from such a man as Charles, under the circumstances of the case. The truth is, that these tests were exacted by a party in the Church and state —the moderate party, as it may be termed—who were most friendly to Charles, and were driven to these measures to silence the scruples of their brethren, and secure the co-operation of the country in restoring the king to his throne. With the same views, and hopeful that his majesty would prove faithful to his engagements, which were absolutely necessary to his success, they prevailed on the commissioners to "forbear mentioning in the Assembly (July, 1650) anything which might make the king or his way odious, in the entry of his government." And thus were laid the foundations of that lamentable schism between the Resolutioners and Protesters, which was not healed even at the period of the Restoration.[1]

The people of Scotland, ignorant of the real character of Charles, and confiding in his professions, were overjoyed at the arrival of their prince. "In a special manner at Edinburgh," says Nicol, in his Diary, "by setting furth of bail-fyres, ringing of bells, sounding of trumpets, and dancing all that night through the streets. The puir kaill-wyffes at the Trone sacrificed their creels, and the very stools they sat upon, to the fire." These rejoicings were soon interrupted by the approach of Cromwell, and the shameful defeat at Dunbar, when no less than three thousand Scots fell on the field of battle, among whom were several ministers, who, being viewed with an evil eye by the sectaries, found no mercy at their hands. If we may believe a historian who is far from favouring the Covenanters, the English owed this victory as much to the lenity of the Scottish leaders as to their presumption. Sir Edward Walker tells us that the committee of war would not allow the attack to be made on Cromwell when they might have routed him, "saying it were pity to

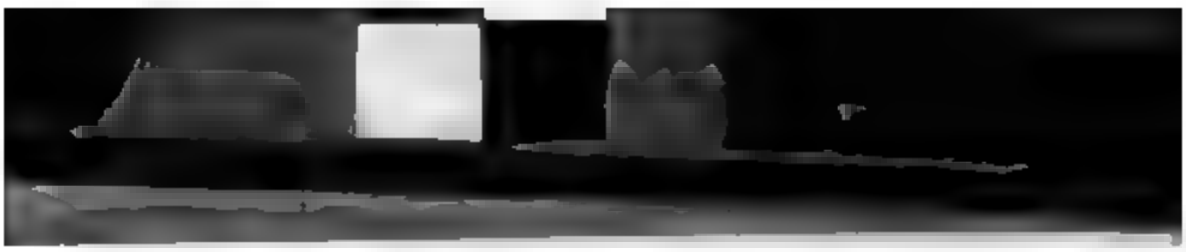
[1] Row's Supplement to Life of Blair, MS., p. 82; Burnet's History of his Own Times, i. 102; Hind let Loose, pp. 87, 88, Cruickshank's Introd. i. 38.



destroy so many of their brethren; but seeing that next day they were like to fall into their hands, it were better to get a *dry victory*, and send them back with shame for their breach of covenant."[1] The unfortunate Covenanters, who were sincere, at least, however far they might be mistaken in their attempts to serve the monarch for whom they shed their blood, met with little sympathy; and it is with no ordinary feelings of disgust that we learn, from Clarendon, that Charles rejoiced at their defeat. "Never," says that cold-hearted historian, "was victory obtained with less lamentation; for, as Cromwell had great argument of triumph, so the king was glad of it, as the greatest happiness that could befall him, in the loss of so strong a body of his enemies!"

Charles, indeed, soon gave evidence that he looked on the Presbyterians as his "enemies." One Saturday morning, when at Perth, shortly after the battle of Dunbar, and while Cromwell lay in Edinburgh, his majesty, on pretence of hawking, left the town on horseback, attended by a few domestics, and set off at full speed to the hills. Here he was met by the Earl of Buchan, not, as he expected, at the head of an army prepared to deliver him out of the hands of the Covenanters, but with a miserable escort of some sixty or seventy Highlanders. He was led to a wretched hovel, where, throwing himself on an old bolster and some rushes, he was found by a party sent in pursuit of him, and brought back next day to Perth in time to hear the afternoon sermon. This ill-timed flight, which was called *the start*, filled the minds of all his friends with the deepest grief. "To my own heart," says Baillie, "it brought one of the most sensible sorrows that in all my life I had felt." Jealous as many of the stricter Presbyterians were of him before, when he "took the start," they lost all confidence in him. And in October, 1650, a long and pointed remonstrance was addressed to the com-

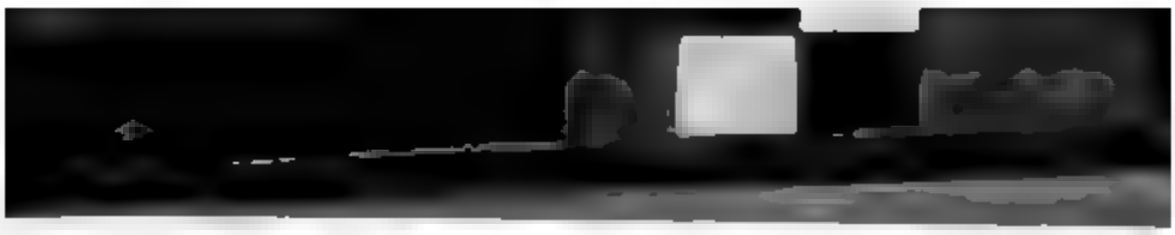
[1] Sir Edward Walker's Journal, Disc. p. 180. Much misapprehension exists as to the share which the ministers had in provoking David Leslie to engage. Some of them, no doubt, were too forward; their notion of purging the army, even of private soldiers suspected of malignancy, was sufficiently absurd; and their expectation of supernatural success to their army, because thus purified (the error of the age), was equally unwarranted. But it was Leslie's own conceit to draw down the army from the hill at night which proved its ruin, and none were more indignant at him than the protesting ministers. (*Pamphlets, Adv. Lib. A. 1. 4. 3, 22, Baillie*, ii. 350.)



mittee of estates, signed by a number of gentlemen, officers, and ministers, connected with the forces in the west country, complaining of their rashness in admitting the king to swear the covenant, and charging them, in very severe terms, with having "turned aside, forgotten their late vows, and brought the calamities of war upon the nation by their unfaithful conduct."

In the midst of all these disorders of church and state Charles was solemnly crowned at Scoon, on the 1st of January, 1651. The sermon before the ceremony was preached by Mr. Robert Douglas, one of the ministers of Edinburgh. He chose for his text those strikingly appropriate words, 2 Kings xi. 12, 17: "And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king. And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people." This sermon has been printed, and it is certainly an ingenious, able, and faithful discourse. "Many doubt of your reality in the covenant," said the preacher, addressing his majesty; "let your sincerity be evidenced by your steadfastness and constancy; for many, like your ancestor, have begun well, but have not been constant. Take warning from the example before you; let it be laid to heart; requite not men's faithful kindness with persecution; yea, requite not the Lord so, who has preserved you to this time, and is setting a crown upon your head." After sermon, the National Covenant and Solemn League were distinctly read, and the king solemnly swore them. Thereafter, the oath to defend and support the Church of Scotland was administered to the king, who, kneeling and holding up his right hand, used these awfully solemn words: "By the Eternal and Almighty God, who liveth and reigneth for ever, I shall observe and keep all that is contained in this oath." The whole ceremonial was gone about with as much formality as circumstances admitted; but the dangers with which they were environed threw a gloom over the scene, and the mournful forebodings of the more faithful of the clergy were speedily confirmed.

The shameful defeat at Dunbar proved hardly less disas-



trous to the Church of Scotland than to the Scottish army. The successes of Cromwell, who now threatened to overrun the whole country, emboldened Charles and his courtiers to press for the removal of those restraints which were laid on the royal party by the act of classes passed in 1649. This act, so called from its dividing the malignants into different classes, according to their degrees of disaffection to the covenant, excluded many of Charles' friends from the army and civil judicatories. To have some pretext for repealing this obnoxious statute, which guarded the privileges of the Church as well as the liberties of the nation, it was deemed of importance to obtain the approbation of the General Assembly. This, however, was not easily obtained. A large party in the Church had, as we have already seen, become justly suspicious of the sincerity of Charles, and severely blamed their brethren of the royal or moderate party for precipitance in exacting from him professions which were contradicted by all that they knew of his principles and conduct. As proofs of his insincerity, they referred to the fact, that while in treaty with the Scots Covenanters he had secretly confirmed a peace with the Irish rebels, and sent a commission to Montrose to invade Scotland—which was found among the papers of the latter after his defeat. And in their remonstrance they protested against the Dunfermline declaration, which the moderate party had drawn up, as "teaching his majesty dissimulation and outward compliance, rather than any cordial conjunction with the cause and covenant."[1] These remonstrances gave great offence to the ruling party in the Church, and the breach was widened by their subsequent procedure. A few members of the commission of the Assembly, favourable to the royal party, having met at Perth in December, 1650, the parliament submitted to their judgment the following question: "What persons are to be admitted to rise in arms, and to join with the forces of the kingdom, and in what capacity, for defence thereof, against the armies of the sectaries, who, contrary to the solemn league and covenant and treaties, have most unjustly invaded and are destroying the kingdom?" In answer to this ensnaring question, so plausibly worded, the commission passed two resolutions, favourable, under certain

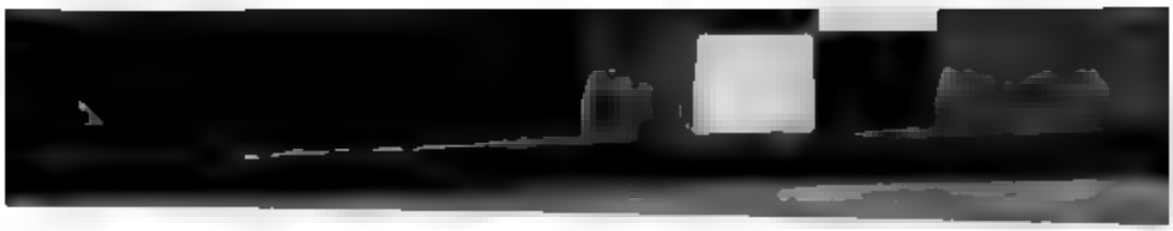
[1] Westland Remonstrance, *apud* Sir J. Balfour's Works, iv. 143.



limitations, to the admission of all fencible persons in the land. No sooner had these been obtained, than the parliament, without paying any regard to their limitations, rescinded the act of classes; and the consequence was, that the most notorious malignants, some of whom had served under Montrose, and all of whom were enemies to the second reformation, were nominated to the highest posts in the army, and to places of power and trust in the state. In consequence of these resolutions, a sad division took place in the Assembly which met at St. Andrews and Dundee, July, 1651. Those who adhered to the resolutions or answers given by the commission were called Resolutioners; those who joined in a protest againt them were denominated Protesters. The debates between the parties, as might be expected from the spirit of the time, were violent, tedious, and involved; each side professing to be actuated by regard to the reformation, and mutually charging each other with marring it. The Resolutioners, who formed the majority in this Assembly, went so far as to depose three of the most eminent and active of the Protesters, namely, James Guthrie, minister of Stirling (who was afterwards martyred), Patrick Gillespie of Glasgow, and James Simpson of Airth. The Protesters, on the other hand, asserted the nullity of this Assembly, and protested against all their proceedings.[1]

Such was the origin of the first schism that had taken place in the Church of Scotland since the Reformation. The controversy involved a number of questions, casuistical and political, of which we cannot afford room even for an abstract. Much may be said on both sides. Great allowances must be made for the Resolutioners, who contended for the necessity of enrolling all that were capable of bearing arms. But it is not difficult for us, who have the light of subsequent history, to see that the Protesters, as their brethren were afterwards compelled to acknowledge, "had their eyes open, while the Resolutioners were blind." The perfidious conduct of Charles at the Restoration, and twenty-eight years of bloody persecution, furnish a melancholy commentary on the truth of this conclusion. "I must confess, madam," said

[1] Nullity of the Pretended Assembly at St. Andrews and Dundee, &c. Printed 1652. Vindication of the Freedom and Lawfulness, and so of the Authority, of the late General Assembly, &c. Printed 1652.



Mr. Dickson to a lady who came to visit him on his death-bed, "that the Protesters have been much truer prophets than we were."[1] It is needless to speculate on what might have been the result had the Church acted otherwise; it was the will of Providence that she should be subjected to a long period of trial; and in a little time, as Wodrow expresses it, "the whole honest Presbyterian ministers were struck at, and sent to the furnace to unite them."

By the advice of his new counsellors Charles undertook an expedition into England, the result of which is matter of well-known history. His defeat at Worcester, in September, 1651, which Cromwell in his despatches called "a crowning mercy," was not such matter of congratulation to the king as that at Dunbar; it completely ruined his hopes; and, after many narrow escapes, he effected a passage to France, leaving the whole country at the mercy of the conqueror. It is hard to say whether our worthy fathers were more alarmed at the secular weapons of Cromwell's soldiers, or at the monstrous heresies which they imported. They beheld with dismay an army of sectaries impregnated with all the errors of the times, and quite as ready to combat the pastor in the pulpit, as to meet his people in the battlefield. Cromwell himself, who delighted as much as even James VI. in a theological debate, entered into a curious controversy with the clergy who had taken refuge in the castle of Edinburgh, which held out after the city was captured. While his soldiers battered the ramparts with their artillery, the General attempted to storm the minds of the besieged theologians with his Independent missives, which were met on their part by regular and firm rejoinders. Meanwhile their pulpits were usurped by the gifted lay-preachers of the army, holding forth in buff and bandoleers to crowded and astonished auditories. "General Lambert," says Nicholl, "having urgit the toun of Edinburgh councel to appropriate to him the East Kirk, being the best kirk in the toun for his exercise at sermound, the same was rendered to him for that use; wherein there was divers and sundrie sermounds preached, as weill by captanes, and lievtenants, and troupers of his army, as by ordinar pastors and English ministers; which captanes, commanders, and troupers, when they enterit the

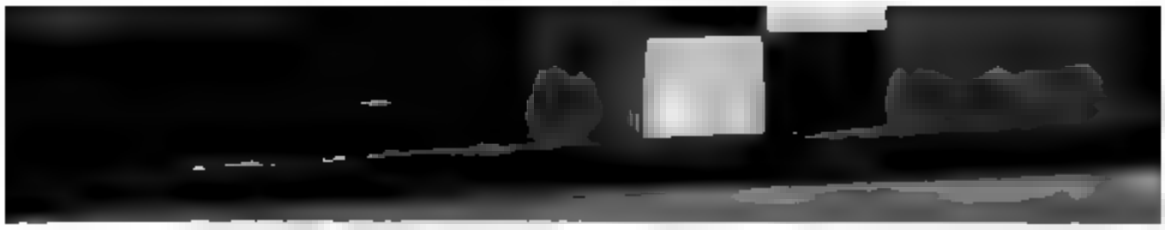
[1] Wodrow's Anal. MS.



pulpits, did not observe our Scots forms, bot when they ascended, they enterit the pulpits with their swords hung at their sides, and some carrying pistolls up with them; and after their entry, laid asyde within the pulpits their swords till they had ended their sermounds. It was thocht," adds our simple annalist, "that these men war weill giftit, yet were not ordourlie callit according to the discipline observit within this kingdom of Scotland."[1]

In various places throughout the country Cromwell's soldiers behaved very rudely. They would come into the churches during the time of service, take up their seat, by way of contempt, on the stool of repentance, and after sermon publicly challenge the minister to dispute with them on the doctrine which he had been preaching.[2] But the ministers generally got the advantage of these intruders, and even before Cromwell showed a becoming spirit. Though a proclamation had been issued prohibiting any to pray for King Charles, many of them continued to do so in spite of the prohibition, and even in the face of the soldiers, who threatened to fire on them if they attempted it. When Cromwell came to Glasgow the magistrates and some of the ministers fled at the first news of his approach. Among those who remained was Mr. Zachary Boyd, famous for his extraordinary translation of the Bible into metre. This divine, nothing daunted by the presence of Cromwell and his soldiers, who came to hear him, "railed on them all to their face in the High Church." Tradition informs us that Cromwell's secretary was so annoyed with the plainness of the worthy paraphrast, that he asked leave in a whisper, "to pistol the scoundrel." "No, no," said the Protector, "we will manage him in another way." In the evening he asked the clergy to sup with him, and concluded the entertainment, it is said, with an incredibly long prayer.[3] Cromwell, it would appear, could stand a sermon levelled at his civil authority better than a reflection on his powers as a theological disputant. Marching into a meeting of the ministers in Edinburgh on one occasion, he made a harangue to them nearly an hour

[1] Nicholl's Diary, ad. an. 1651; Bannatyne edit.
[2] Lamont's Diary, p. 58.
[3] MSS. in Adv. Lib.; Brown's History of Glasgow, p. 104; Baillie, ii. 359.



in length, in his usual style of rhapsody, and copiously interlarded with quotations from Scripture. The members looked at each other in bewildered amazement, till at length an old minister, Mr. John Semple, of Carsphairn, rose up and said: "Moderator, I hardly know what *the gentleman* wald be at in this long discourse; but one thing I am sure of, he was perverting the Scripture." For this speech the honest minister was punished by six months' imprisonment.[1]

The General Assembly, however, was a court too free in its constitution to suit the temper of Cromwell, any more than that of James or Charles. The successful dictator, who had dissolved the Long Parliament, and openly scoffed at *Magna Charta*, was not likely to suffer the continuance of an Assembly, the members of which had been so active for the king. Accordingly, on the 20th of July, 1653, when the General Assembly had convened in Edinburgh, and the clerk was beginning to call the roll, the church in which they met was surrounded by a troop of horse, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Cottrel, who, with another officer, entered the Assembly, and standing upon a bench, demanded to know by whose authority they had met—whether by authority of the late parliament, or of their late king, or of the Protector? Mr. David Dickson, the moderator, replied that they were an ecclesiastical synod, a spiritual court of Christ, which meddled not with anything civil, and that their authority was from God, and confirmed by the laws of the land yet unrepealed. The colonel then demanded a list of the members, which the moderator told him he should get, if he would have a little patience till they had called the roll; but Cottrel declared this would be too tedious an affair, and ordered them to be gone, otherwise he had instructions how to proceed. Upon this, the moderator, in the name of the Assembly, protested against such unexampled violence, and was proceeding to dissolve the meeting with prayer, when he was rudely interrupted, and ordered to the door; a mandate with which he and the rest of the Assembly at last complied.[2] "He led us all through the whole streets," says Baillie, "a mile out of the town, encompassing us with foot companions of musketeers and horsemen—all the people gazing and mourning as at the saddest spectacle they had

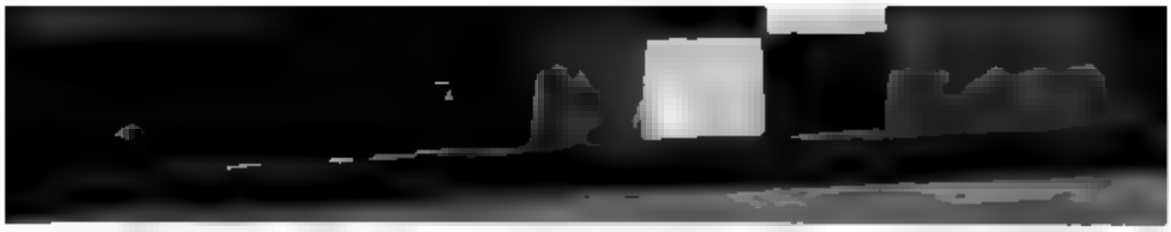
[1] Wodrow's Anal. MS. [2] Lamont's Diary, p. 69.



ever seen. When he had led us a mile without the town, he then declared what further he had in commission;—That we should not dare to meet any more above three in number; and that, against eight o'clock to-morrow, we should depart the town, under pain of being guilty of breaking the public peace; and the day following we were commanded off the town, under the pain of present imprisonment. Thus," adds Baillie, "our General Assembly, the glory and strength of our church upon earth, is by your soldiery crushed and trode under foot, without the least provocation from us, at this time, in word or deed."[1]

This unconstitutional encroachment, though it came with a bad grace from one who boasted himself the patron of toleration and liberty of conscience, was, after all, the less to be regretted at this period, as the meetings of the church courts were chiefly occupied with unseemly discussions between the Resolutioners and Protesters. The melancholy consequences of this breach in the Scottish Church soon became apparent after the defeat of Charles had subjected the whole of Scotland to the arms of Cromwell. The English conquerors, as was natural, were partial to the Protesters, who had been opposed to the party that brought over the king; and Cromwell endeavoured, by all the arts of his masterly policy, to gain them over to his interests. He succeeded in inducing some of them to take *the tender*, which was an acknowledgment of his authority and that of the English commonwealth without a king or House of Lords. With great difficulty he prevailed upon them, and ultimately on the Resolutioners also, to cease praying for King Charles; but Mr. Patrick Gillespie was the first, and we believe the only, minister in Scotland who publicly prayed for the Protector. Mr. Gillespie was, it may be presumed, a great favourite with the usurper, and he, with some of his brethren, received a commission in 1655, empowering them to settle the affairs of the Kirk. In this document, it is somewhat curious to find that Cromwell declares himself clearly in favour of an established church. "Being thoroughly sensible," his highness says, "that whatsoever union of nations is made where the true religion is not the foundation thereof, it will prove tottering and unstable, he hath there-

[1] Baillie's Letters, ii. 369.



fore expressly commanded his council here to endeavour the promoting the preaching of the gospel, and the power of true religion and holiness; and to take care that the usual maintenance here be received and enjoyed by such ministers as are of a holy and unblamable conversation, disposed to live peaceably under the present government, are able and fit to preach the gospel, and shall be approved according to an ordinance of his highness of the 8th of August, 1654."[1] It appears from this commission that Cromwell was determined to be patron-general to the whole Church of Scotland; it is obviously so framed as to admit only such as were Protesters; and what is very curious, in the ordinance to which he refers, with the view of securing his own men, it is expressly provided that, in the induction of ministers, "respect shall be had to the choice of *the more sober and godly sort of the people, although the same should not prove to be the greater part*"—a somewhat arbitrary and invidious distinction, which, it must be allowed, left ample discretion to those who were intrusted with the administration.

It does not appear that the Protesters availed themselves of the power with which this commission invested them;[2] though it is certain that very unseemly contests happened at various settlements about this period, particularly in the west country, where the protesting party mustered very strong. Baillie has given some very lamentable accounts of the intrusion of ministers upon congregations by that party, with the aid of the English soldiery; but it must be remembered that this writer was a bitter opponent of the Protesters, and he is chargeable with having not only exaggerated their conduct, but resorted to very unworthy means to defeat the negotiations which were set on foot for healing the breach between them and their brethren the Resolutioners. It is but justice to add, that the great body of the Protesters were far from being favourable to republicanism or to the usurpation of Cromwell. Lamont informs us, in his Diary, that at a communion at Sconie in Fife, where Alexander Moncrieff and Samuel Rutherford officiated. "all that had taken the

[1] Nicholl's Diary, pp. 163–166.

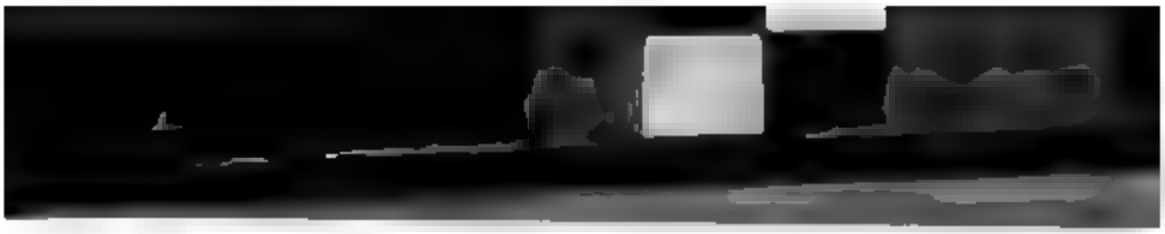
[2] A considerable party among the Protesters, including Warriston and James Guthrie, were opposed to this ordinance; and very few settlements took place under it. (*Baillie's Letters*, and *Macward's Papers*.)



tender were debarred from the table, as also the English." The same scrupulosity was not felt by Mr. James Sharp, who afterwards, as Archbishop of St. Andrews, rendered himself infamous in history for the persecution of his brethren; he swallowed *the tender*, and paid his court to the usurper, with the same ease that he afterwards renounced the covenant, and truckled to the king. James Guthrie, on the other hand, whose death he had a share in procuring, though a Protester, not only refused the tender, but incurred considerable risk in maintaining his loyalty. "I have it from good hands," says Wodrow, "that Mr. Guthrie defended the king's right in public debate with Hugh Peters, Oliver's chaplain, and from the pulpit he asserted the king's title in the hearing of the English officers."[1]

These dissensions among the ministers must have been unfavourable to the interests of religion. The Protesters, who had been deposed, continued to exercise their ministry, and each party held communion exclusively with those of their own sentiments. On too many occasions the pulpit was converted into an arena of contention; and the people beheld the spectacle, hitherto unknown in Scotland, of ministers preaching, and even praying, against each other. In September, 1655, Patrick Gillespie, who was principal of Glasgow College, having come to Edinburgh, was invited by Mr. Stirling, a Protester, to preach for him in the West Kirk. The rest of the ministers, hearing of it, refused to countenance him with their presence. "Mr. Patrick," says honest Nicholl, "at his coming to the pulpit, was interuptit by ane of the late king's servants, called captane Melvill, wha, sitting near to the pulpitt, did ryse and call to him, saying, 'Mr. Gillespy, how dar ye cum thair to the pulpitt to teach and preach? Ye aught not to cum thair, because ye are deposed from the ministrie by the General Assemblie, and ye have been ane enymie and traitour both to kirk and kingdome!' and sum more to that purpose; and with that he raise and went out of the church, and sindry uthers with him, alleging, that he aucht not to be heard in pulpitt, being a deposed minister. Yet Mr. Patrick Gillespy, not being much dasched, proceedit, and after a short prayer, read his text, quhilk was the 29th verse of the 26 chaptour of the Acts of the Apos-

[1] Wodrow's Hist. i. 163, Burns' edit



tles, in these words: 'And Paul said, I wald to God that not only thow, but also all that heir me this day, both war almost and altogidder such as I am, except these bands.'"[1]

This was no doubt sufficiently deplorable. But each party was disposed to exaggerate the public evils. Nicholl, who is a stanch loyalist, complains grievously of the increase of crime in Scotland during this period; but indeed little weight can be attached to the opinions of this writer, who betrays great weakness of mind. The following specimens of his lugubrious reflections are rather amusing. He complains bitterly of the taxes levied in Edinburgh for the support of the English army, especially the plack laid on the pint of ale—for the imposition of which he seriously considers a storm of wind and rain which happened, as a judgment on the city! "And then," says he, "thair wyne, aill, and beir were all sophisticat—drawn over and kirned with milk, brimstone, and uther ingrediants; the aill made strong and heidy with hemp seed, coriander seed, Turkie pepper, sute, salt, and uther sophistications. Whairwith the magistrates of Edinburgh did take no ordour; nather yit with blown mutton, corrupt veill and flesche; nor yit with fusted breid and lycht loaves, and with fals missoures and wechts." "Mairover," he adds, "befoir the English airmy came into Scotland, there was a lecture every day in the afternune at the ringing of the four hour bell, quhilk did much good both to the soull and body; the soull being edifeit and fed by the word, and the body withheld in from unnecessary bibbing, quhilk at that hour of the day was in use and custome." But what distressed him most of all was, that notwithstanding of all these burdens, the ladies dressed as fine as ever: "The moir poverty, the pryde of men much moir aboundit; for at this time it was daylie seen that gentill-women and burgessis wyffes haid moir gold and silver about thair gown and wylicoat tails, than thair husbands had in thair purses and coffers!"[2]

And yet, notwithstanding some public grievances, which, after all, were not more than might have been expected in a country occupied by a victorious enemy,[3] and notwithstand-

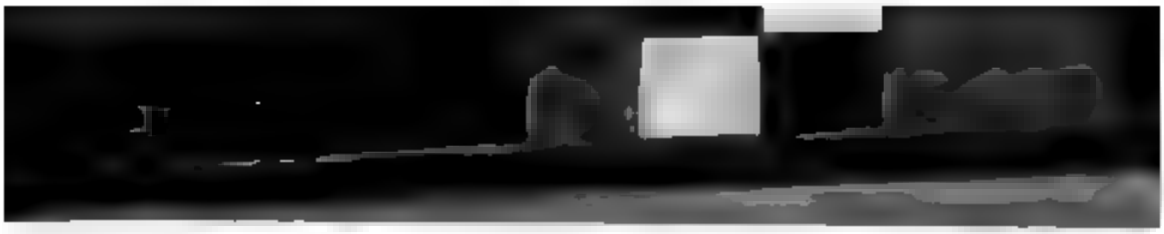
[1] Nicholl's Diary, ad. an. 1656. [2] Ibid. pp. 168, 170, 189.

[3] It is generally allowed that public justice was never more impartially executed than during Cromwell's government in Scotland; and it is even said



ing the prevalent heats and divisions which must have frustrated to a great degree the good effects of the Reformation, it appears from the most indubitable evidence, that religion prospered in no ordinary measure during the time of this invasion. "It is true," says Kirkton, "that they did not permit the General Assembly to sit (and in this I believe they did no bad office, for both the authority of that meeting was denied by the Protesters, and the Assembly seemed to be more set upon establishing themselves than promoting religion): also, the division of the Church betwixt Protesters and Resolvers continued for six or seven years with far more heat than became them; and errors in some places infected some few; yet were all these losses inconsiderable in regard of the great success the word preached had in sanctifying the people of the nation; and I verily believe there were more souls converted to Christ in that short period of time than in any season since the Reformation, though of triple its duration. Nor was there ever greater purity and plenty of the means of grace. Ministers were painful; people were diligent. So, truly, religion was at that time in very good case, and the Lord present in Scotland, though in a cloud." Again, referring to the state of Scotland before the Restoration, he has these remarkable words: "At the king's return every parish had a minister, every village had a school, every family almost had a Bible—yea, in most of the country all the children of age could read the Scriptures, and were provided of Bibles either by their parents or ministers. Every minister was a very full professor of the reformed religion, according to the large Confession of Faith framed at Westminster. None of them might be scandalous in their conversation, or negligent in their office, so long as a presbyterie stood. I have lived many years in a parish where I never heard an oath; and you might have ridden many miles before you heard any. Also, you could not, for a great part of the country, have lodged in a family where the

that the decisions of the English judges whom he set up were more agreeable to the spirit and principles of the Scots law than the previous decisions of our native judges had been. A young lawyer making this observation to a Scots judge, who died many years ago, received this singular reply. "No thanks to them! they had neither kith nor kin in the country take *that* out of the way, and I think I could be a good judge myself." (Brown's *Hist. of Glasgow*, p. 124.)



Lord was not worshipped by reading, singing, and public prayer. Nobody complained more of our Church government than our taverners; whose ordinary lamentation was—their trade was broke, people were become so sober!"[1]

This high testimony is fully borne out by that of other witnesses, as unimpeachable as honest Kirkton. They tell us what fell under their own observation; and those must have been no mean attainments, either in piety or morality, which came up to the standard required by the Presbyterians of these times.[2] No doubt many hypocrites may have been concealed under the mask of rigorous devotion; but, whatever might be the case in England during the same period, it is certain that hypocrisy was not then the reigning vice in Scotland. We grant that crimes and outbreakings of a very flagrant nature were occasionally taking place, which some, not considering the rude state of society at the time, would set down as a proof of its general demoralization. It is certain, too, that immediately before the Restoration a sad declension became apparent, which was the more remarked from its contrast with the previous prosperity. But there can be no question that the piety of that period was both more intense and more widely diffused than it has ever since been in Scotland. It is not by looking into the records of church courts, which indeed almost supplied the place of courts of police, nor into the "Acknowledgments of Sins," published about that period, that we can form a proper estimate of the moral state of the country. Such documents only serve to show that in those days the discipline of the Church was administered with a fidelity which is now too little known, though not a whit less needed, and that our fathers were affected by the existence of public evils which are no longer so candidly acknowledged, only because they are not so deeply laid to heart.

An English merchant, who had occasion to visit Scotland

[1] Kirkton's Hist. of the Church of Scotland, pp. 63, 64.

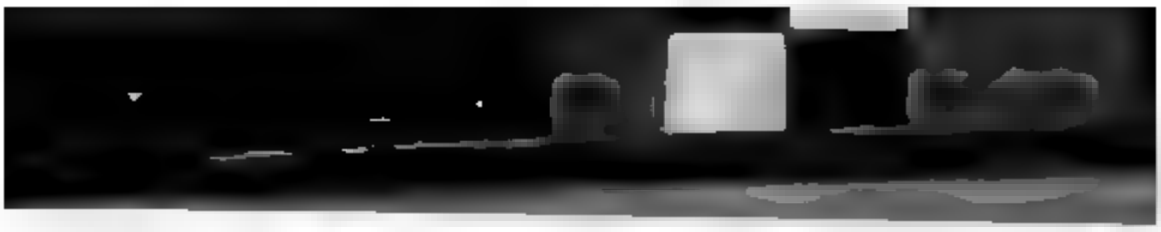
[2] "Old Mr. Hutcheson, minister at Killellan, used to say to Mr. Wodrow, 'When I compare the times before the Restoration with the times since the Revolution, I must own that the young ministers preach accurately and methodically, but there was far more of the power and efficacy of the Spirit and the grace of God went along with sermons in those days than now, and, for my part (all the glory be to God!) I seldom set my foot in a pulpit in those times but I had notice of some blessed effects of the Word.'" (Gillies' *Hist. Collections*, i. 315.)



in the way of business about the year 1650, happened to hear three of the most eminent of the Scottish ministers of that age—Robert Blair, Samuel Rutherford, and David Dickson. Being asked, on his return, what news he had brought from Scotland, the gentleman, who had never shown any sense of religion before, replied, "Great and good news! I went to St. Andrews, where I heard a sweet majestic-looking man (Blair); and he showed me *the majesty of God*. After him, I heard a little fair man (Rutherford); and he showed me *the loveliness of Christ*. I then went to Irvine, where I heard a well-favoured proper old man, with a long beard (Dickson); and that man showed me *all my heart*." "The whole General Assembly," says Wodrow, "could not have given a better character of the three men."[1]

Robert Blair we had occasion to notice before. He was a man of mild and amiable temper, and was exceedingly active in endeavouring to heal the unhappy dissensions between the Resolutioners and Protesters, in which he professed to be neutral. Mr. Blair was originally settled at Bangor in Ireland, on which occasion, as he refused to be ordained after the Prelatic form, the bishop of the diocese agreed to be present with the other ministers only in the character of a presbyter. Driven by a less charitable bishop from Ireland, he took refuge in his native country, where he was first settled at Ayr, and afterwards translated to St. Andrews. Polite and affable in his manners, he was chosen by Charles I., after the death of Henderson, as his chaplain in Scotland; an office which he discharged with the most scrupulous fidelity. He was a shrewd observer of character. When Cromwell came to Edinburgh, he and Guthrie and Dickson were deputed to hold a conference with the General. Blair, who was best acquainted with him, begged him to answer three questions. "What was his opinion of monarchical government?" Oliver replied that he was favourable to monarchy. "What did he think anent toleration?" He answered as confidently that he was against toleration. "What was his judgment about the government of the Church?" "Ah, now, Mr. Blair," said Cromwell, "you article me too severely; you must pardon me that I give you not a present answer to that question." On retiring, Mr.

[1] Wodrow's MSS., Adv. Lib.

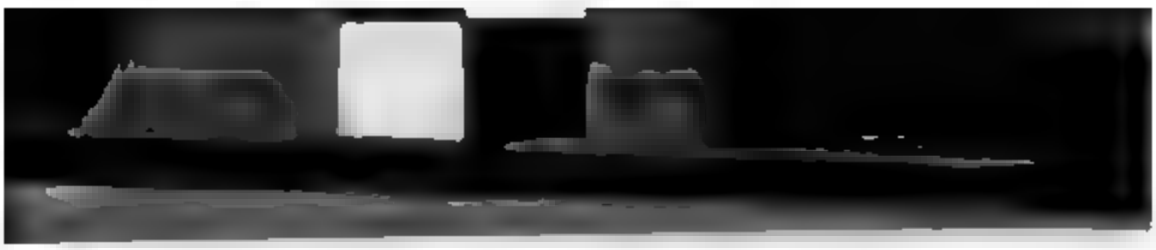


Dickson said, "I am glad to hear this man speak no worse;" to which Blair replied, "If you knew him as well as I, you would not believe one word he says; for he is an egregious dissembler."[1]

Samuel Rutherford is one of those characters whom every one thinks he should know by his writings as familiarly as if he had seen him face to face. Eager, ethereal, and imaginative, ever soaring and singing, the high notes of his devotion fall down on the ear with a singular effect, as if the music came from heaven rather than from earth.[2] Rutherford was the most popular preacher of his day; but it is not so generally known that he was as much distinguished for his learning and metaphysical attainments as for his eloquence and devotion. He received invitations to the chair of philosophy in more than one of the foreign universities; but such was his love to his native country, that he would not desert her in the midst of her troubles. The following anecdote of his infancy, though it approaches the marvellous, is so characteristic of the future man and the age in which he lived, that it deserves to be preserved. While amusing himself with some of his companions, Samuel, then a mere child, fell into a deep well: the rest of the children ran off to alarm his parents, who, on reaching the spot, were astonished to find him seated on an adjoining hillock, cold and dripping. On being questioned how he had got there he replied, that "a bonnie white man came and drew him out of the well." The minutest particulars concerning such a person are interesting: the following are curious:—"I have known many great and good ministers in this Church," said an aged contemporary pastor who survived the Revolution, "but for such a piece of clay as Mr. Rutherford was, I never knew one in Scotland like him, to whom so many great gifts were given; for he seemed to be altogether taken up with everything good, and excellent, and useful. He seemed to be always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always catechising, always writing and studying. He had two quick eyes, and when he walked it was observed that

[1] Memoirs of Blair, p. 107.

[2] His Letters, with all their faults, which are those of the age, have excellences which must be felt to the end of time. "Hold off the Bible," said Richard Baxter, "such a book the world never saw the like."

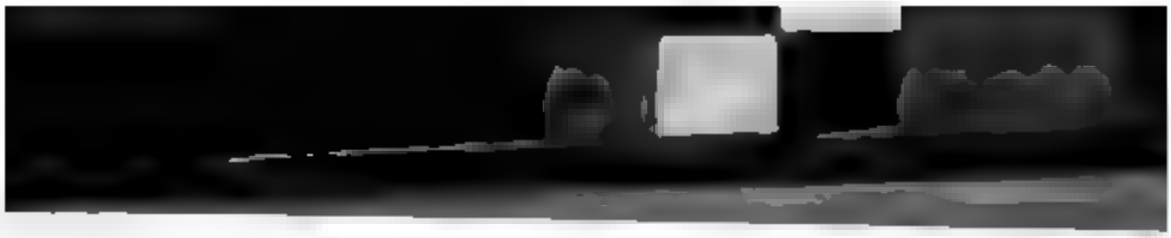


he held aye his face upward. He had a strange utterance in the pulpit, a kind of *skreigh* that I never heard the like. Many times I thought he would have flown out of the pulpit when he came to speak of Jesus Christ. He was never in his right element but when he was commending him. He would have fallen asleep in bed speaking of Christ."[1] Rutherford was a stanch Protester; but controversy, though he excelled in it, seemed to be alien to his nature. "One day when preaching in Edinburgh, after dwelling for some time on the differences of the day, he broke out with—'Woe is unto us for these sad divisions, that make us lose the fair scent of the Rose of Sharon!' and then he went on commending Christ, going over all his precious styles and titles about a quarter of an hour; upon which the laird of Glanderston said in a loud whisper, 'Ay, now you are right—hold you there!'"[2] Rutherford died in 1661, shortly after his book called *Lex Rex* was burned by the hangman at Edinburgh, and at the gates of the new college of St. Andrews, where he was regent and professor of divinity.[3] He departed just in time to avoid an ignominious death; for though everybody knew he was dying, the council had with impotent malice summoned him to appear before them at Edinburgh on a charge of high treason. When the citation came, he said, "Tell them I have got a summons already before a superior judge and judicatory, and I behove to answer my first summons; and ere your day arrive, I will be where few kings and great folks come." When they returned and reported that he was dying, the parliament, with a few dissenting voices, voted that he should not be allowed to die in the college! Upon this Lord Burleigh said, "Ye have voted that honest man out of his college, but ye cannot vote him out of heaven." Some of them profanely remarked, "he would never win there; hell was too good for him." "I wish I were as sure of heaven as he is," replied Burleigh; "I would think myself happy to *get a gripe of his sleeve to haul me in.*"[4] Among his brethren who came to pray with

[1] Patrick Simpson, *apud* Wodrow's MSS. [2] Wodrow's Anal. MS. iv.

[3] "It was much easier to burn the book than to answer it," says Wodrow. When Charles II. read *Lex Rex*, he said, with his native shrewdness, that it would scarcely ever get an answer; and his words have proved true.

[4] Walker's Remains, p. 171; Reid's Memoirs of the Divines in the Assembly at Westminster.



him on his death-bed, were Mr. Wood, a Resolutioner, but an excellent man, and Mr. Honeyman, who afterwards was made a bishop, and distinguished himself for his opposition to the cause of God. It was observed that when Mr. Wood prayed, the dying man was not much affected; but when Honeyman was engaged, he wept all the time of the prayer. Being afterwards asked his reason for this, he replied, "Mr. Wood and I will meet again, though we be now to part; but alas for poor Honeyman! he and I will never meet again in another world; and this made me weep."[1] When dying he frequently repeated, "Oh for arms to embrace him! oh for a well-tuned harp! I hear him saying to me, Come up hither!" "And thus," says Howie,[2] "the renowned eagle took its flight into the mountains of spices."

David Dick or Dickson was a very different character, yet almost equally eminent. We have already seen the success which accompanied his ministrations when at Irvine. He was afterwards translated, first to Glasgow, and afterwards to Edinburgh; in both of which cities he officiated as professor of divinity. His contemporaries have preserved many of his remarkable sayings, which show him to have been a man of great shrewdness and sagacity, mixed with a peculiar vein of humour. He was singularly successful in dissecting the human heart, and winning souls to the Redeemer. Mr. Dickson took an active share in the disputes between the Resolutioners and Protesters, in which he supported the former party, though he lived to see and confess that they had been completely deceived. He was a man of strong nerve and undaunted resolution in the discharge of his duty, of which the following anecdote may serve as an illustration: On one occasion, when riding between Edinburgh and Glasgow, he was attacked by robbers. Instead of giving way to his fears, Dickson boldly admonished them of their danger in regard to their souls, and concluded by earnestly exhorting them to try some other profession more safe and creditable than that in which they were engaged. Some years after this, when quietly seated in the College of Edinburgh, he was surprised by receiving the present of a pipe of

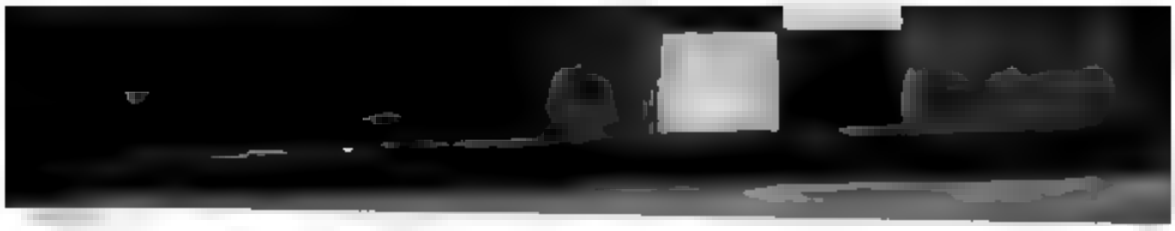
[1] Wodrow's MSS.

[2] Using an expression of Burgess in his funeral sermon on Robert Fleming.



wine accompanied with a message that the gentleman who sent it requested the pleasure of drinking a glass of the wine with him next evening in his study. The request was granted; and, in the course of conversation, the gentleman, after finding that the minister retained no recollection of having seen him before, informed him that he was one of the robbers who had attacked him—that he had been seriously impressed by his admonition—and that, having adopted his advice, he had prospered in foreign trade, and now came to thank his benefactor.

But, perhaps, one of the noblest characters of the period, though less known, was Mr. Robert Douglas, minister of Edinburgh. He had formerly been a chaplain in the army of Gustavus Adolphus; and when leaving his service, that celebrated prince and warrior pronounced the following eulogium on his character: "There goes a man who, for wisdom and prudence, might be a counsellor to any king in Europe; who, for gravity, might be a moderator to any assembly in the world; and who, for his skill in military affairs, might be the general of any army." Like many of the ministers of this period, he was connected by birth with some of the best families in the land. Majestic in his appearance, and princely in his bearing, there was something so authoritative about him, that one has said he never could look at him without a sensation of awe. Though a Resolutioner, he took an active part in endeavouring to secure the liberties of the Church of Scotland after the Restoration, and carried on a correspondence with James Sharp, when in London, in which the designs of that unhappy apostate were artfully covered over with high professions of regard to the Presbyterian interest. Mr. Douglas, though deceived for a time by Sharp's duplicity, at length discovered his real character. We are informed, that when Sharp returned to Scotland, affecting no ambition for the Prelacy, he pressed the acceptance of the see of St. Andrews upon Mr. Douglas. He told him he clearly perceived that the king was determined on introducing Episcopacy, and that he knew none fitter for the primacy than Mr. Douglas, who had better accept, lest a worse should be appointed. The honest Presbyterian saw into the secret soul of the hypocrite; and when he had given his own decided refusal, demanded of his former friend what



he would do himself were the offer made to him. Sharp hesitated, and rose to take leave. Douglas accompanied him to the door. "James," said he, "I perceive you are clear—I see you will engage—you will be Archbishop of St. Andrews: take it, then," he added, laying his hand on Sharp's shoulder, "*and the curse of God with it!*"[1]

"The subject," says Sir Walter Scott, relating this scene, "might suit a painter." We may add, with equal truth, that the subject affords matter of solemn warning to the Christian minister, and of serious reflection to all. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

[1] Kirkton, p. 134.



CHAPTER XI.

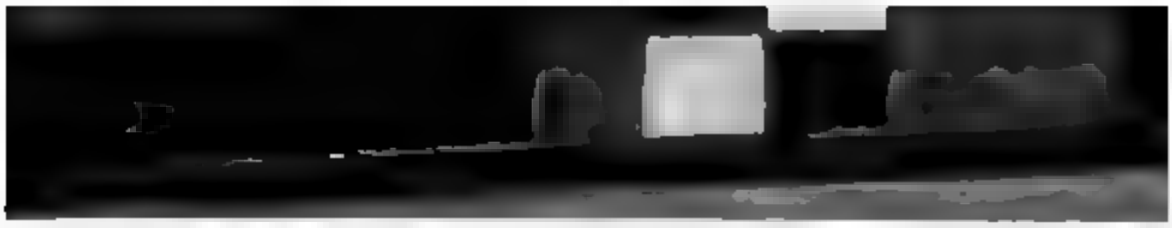
1660 — 1663.

Restoration of Charles—The Reformation overturned by the act rescissory — Trial and martyrdom of the Marquis of Argyll—Martyrdom of James Guthrie—Re-establishment of Episcopacy—Treachery of Sharp—Consecration of the Scottish bishops—Ejection of the Presbyterian ministers—Introduction of the curates—Execution of Lord Warriston.

We have now reached the period of the Restoration, when the Church of Scotland was thrown into the furnace of persecution—when she was stripped of the glory of her Reformation, and subjected for a long series of years, like the Church of ancient Israel, to captivity and bondage. The restoration of Charles took place on the 29th of May, 1660. Never did a more rapid, more complete, or more melancholy change pass over the character of a people, than that which Scotland underwent at this era. "With the restoration of the king," says Bishop Burnet, "a spirit of extravagant joy spread over the nation, that brought on with it the throwing off the very profession of virtue and piety: all ended in entertainments and drunkenness, which overran the three kingdoms to such a degree, that it very much corrupted all their morals. Under the colour of drinking the king's health there were great disorders and much riot everywhere. Those who had been concerned in the former transactions thought they could not redeem themselves from the censures and jealousies that these brought on them, by any method that was more sure and more easy than by going into the stream, and laughing at all religion—telling or making stories to expose both themselves and their party, as impious and ridiculous."[1]

Charles was not long seated on the throne, when, abandoning himself to pleasure and debauchery, he proceeded to

[1] Burnet's History of his Own Times, i. 130.



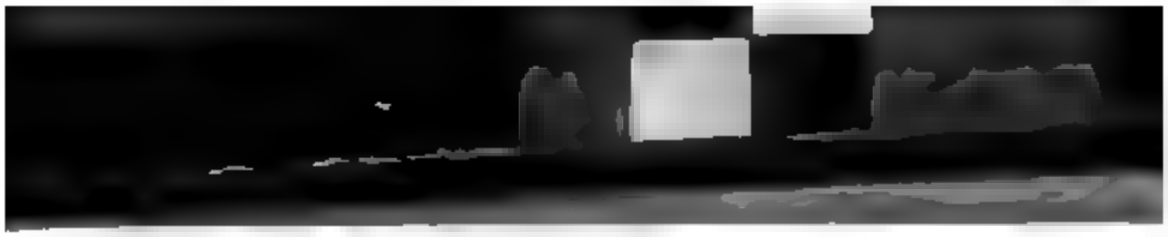
overturn the whole work of reformation, civil and ecclesiastical, which he had solemnly sworn to support. The first Scottish parliament, usually called Middleton's parliament, from the name of the commissioner, the Earl of Middleton, a dissipated and unprincipled character, sat down in January, 1661. The most shameless bribery and illegal influence were employed to pack this parliament with members favourable to the designs of the ruling powers. The first step for the subversion of the civil and religious liberties of Scotland, and which laid the foundation of all the persecutions that followed, was the passing, early in the year 1661, of the act of supremacy, for securing what was termed the *royal prerogative*, in other words, for making the king supreme judge in all matters civil and ecclesiastical. To this was afterwards added the oath of allegiance, which bound the subject to acknowledge the supreme power of the king in all matters civil or religious, and made it high treason to deny it. Wodrow has justly observed, that "slavish principles as to civil rights and liberty still lead the van to persecution for conscience' sake." By these acts the servile parliament laid the civil liberties of the nation at the feet of a despot; but it is easy to see that they must have fallen with peculiar severity on the conscientious, who had always contended for the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only King of his Church. At last, tired of annulling acts of parliament passed during the previous period of the Reformation, the Scottish councillors in the same year passed a sweeping act annulling the parliaments themselves. By this measure, which was called the act rescissory, all the proceedings for reformation between 1638 and 1650 were declared rebellious and treasonable; the National Covenant and Solemn League were condemned as unlawful oaths; the Glasgow Assembly of 1638 denounced as an unlawful and seditious meeting; and the ordering of the government of the Church was declared to be an inherent right of the crown. In short, all that had been done for religion and the reformation of the Church during the second Reformation was completely annulled. "It was a maddening time," says Burnet, "when the men of affairs were perpetually drunk." Middleton himself seldom came sober to the House; and it is well known that this infamous act, which still stands unrepealed in our



statute-book, and which no modern reformer has ever proposed to repeal, was proposed by the miserable junto at a debauch, and carried in the midst of drunken acclamations.

It was not enough, however, that the work of reformation should be buried under legal enactments; its grave must be watered with the blood of the noblest of its supporters. The first victim selected was the Marquis of Argyll. This nobleman had protested against the execution of Charles I.; he was among the first who invited Charles II. to Scotland, and he had placed the crown upon his head; but all this could not atone for the active share he had taken during the civil wars in guiding the affairs of the nation, and opposing the court. Charles held him in mortal aversion for the liberty he had taken in privately warning him against malignants, and for heading the Presbyterians in imposing on him the covenant as the condition of their submission. Accordingly, on going up to London to congratulate the king on his restoration, Argyll was thrown into the Tower, and afterwards transported by sea to Edinburgh, to stand trial for high treason. No less than fourteen charges were brought against him, all of which he so satisfactorily disproved, that his judges were on the point of sending to the king to state the difficulty of finding any plausible ground for his condemnation, when they were relieved from their embarrassment by an act of the basest description. A rude knocking was heard at the parliament door, and a packet was handed in, containing a number of confidential letters which had passed between Argyll and Monk, and which the latter had sent to be produced at the trial. This cold-blooded treachery sealed the doom of the Marquis. Monk, who had been the active agent of Cromwell, was made Duke of Albemarle; and Argyll, who had only yielded to the usurper after resistance was vain, was sentenced to be beheaded!

The Marquis received his sentence with great serenity; and, on its being pronounced, said, "I had the honour to set the crown upon the king's head, and now he hastens me to a better crown than his own!" On arriving at the Tolbooth he found his excellent lady waiting for him. "They have given me till Monday to be with you, my dear," said he, "therefore let us make for it." The afflicted wife, throwing herself into his arms, could not refrain from expressing



her indignation at the unjust sentence. "The Lord will require it!" she cried, "the Lord will require it!" "Forbear, forbear," said the Marquis, seeing his friends dissolved in tears around him; "truly I pity them, they know not what they are doing. They may shut me in where they please, but they cannot shut out God from me. I am as content to be here as I was in the Tower; was as content there as I was when at liberty; and hope to be as content on the scaffold as any of them all."

The Marquis was constitutionally timorous; but in prison, referring to this, he desired those about him to observe that the Lord had heard his prayers, and delivered him from all his fears; and, indeed, the efforts of his friends were chiefly needed to repress his ardent longing for dissolution. The night before his execution, being engaged in settling some of his worldly affairs, his heart became so overpowered with a sense of the love of God, that he could not conceal his emotions. "I thought," said he, "to have concealed the Lord's goodness—but it will not do. I am now ordering my worldly affairs, and God is sealing my charter to a better inheritance, and just now saying to me, *Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.*" On repeating these words he burst into tears, and retired to the window to weep there; he then drew near the fire, and made as if he would stir it a little, to conceal his emotions—but all would not do; and, coming up to Mr. Hutchison, his chaplain, he said, "I think His kindness overcomes me; but God is good to me that he lets not out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it."

Taking leave of his friends to go to the scaffold, the noble martyr said, "I could die like a Roman, but choose rather to die as a Christian. Come away, gentlemen; he that goes first goes cleanliest." On his way out of prison he requested an interview with James Guthrie, and embraced him in the most affectionate manner. "My lord," said Guthrie, "God hath been with you, he is with you, and will be with you; and such is my respect for your lordship, that, if I were not under sentence of death myself, I could cheerfully die for your lordship!" When on the scaffold he showed the same composure, and spoke at some length with great pertinency. He forgave all his enemies, and said he would condemn none.



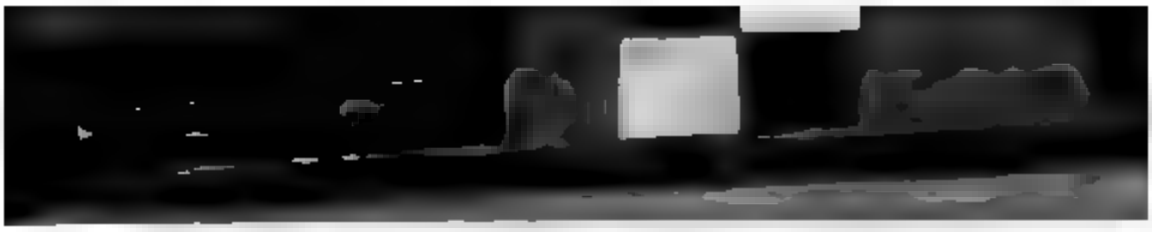
"God," said he, "hath laid engagements on Scotland. We are tied by covenants to religion and reformation; those who were then unborn are yet engaged; and it passeth the power of all the magistrates under heaven to absolve from the oath of God. These times are like to be either very sinning or suffering times; and let Christians make their choice; there is a sad dilemma in the business, SIN or SUFFER; and surely he that will choose the better part will choose to suffer. Others that will choose to sin will not escape suffering; they shall suffer, but perhaps not as I do (pointing to the maiden, the instrument of execution), but worse. Mine is but temporal, theirs shall be eternal. When I shall be singing, they shall be howling. I have no more to say but to beg the Lord, that when I go away, he would bless every one that stayeth behind."

On approaching the maiden Mr. Hutchison said, "My lord, now hold your *grip sicker*"—meaning that he should hold fast his confidence in Christ. Argyll answered, "Mr. Hutchison, you know what I said: I am not afraid to be surprised by fear." At this awful moment, his physician having touched his pulse, found it beating at its usual rate—calm and strong. He knelt down cheerfully, and having given the signal by lifting up his hand, the loaded knife of the maiden fell and struck off his head, which was affixed to the west end of the Tolbooth.

Thus fell, on the 27th of May, 1661, the Marquis of Argyll, whose name and memory still bear the obloquy of the cause in which he suffered. Fain would we stay our narrative to wipe off the foul slanders that have been heaped on him. We have only room to say, and we do it on the best authority—in the words of honest Howie of Lochgoin—"That he had piety for a Christian, sense for a councillor, courage for a martyr, and a soul for a king. If ever any was, he might be said to be a true Scotsman."[1]

James Guthrie, minister of Stirling, was the next victim. He was a son of the laird of Guthrie, and descended of an ancient and honourable family. "Perhaps," says Wodrow, "he had the greatest mixture of fervent zeal and sweet calmness in his temper of any man in his time." When every one about him was excited, he remained unruffled; and it

[1] Scots Worthies, art. *Marquis of Argyll.*



was usual with him, on such occasions, to say, "Enough of this; let us go to some other subject; we are warm, and can dispute no longer with advantage." His great crime in the eyes of the government was in reality the same as that for which Argyll had suffered—his eminent zeal in the cause of the Covenanted Reformation. He had been an active promoter of the measures of the Protesters; but what sealed his doom was his having been selected in 1650 to pronounce the sentence of excommunication against the Earl of Middleton, now the king's commissioner. A story is told, though with some variations, of a message having been sent to Mr. Guthrie by the king (some say by a nobleman), to delay pronouncing that sentence. The messenger arrived on Sabbath morning as he was putting on his cloak to go to church; and the last bell having been rung, Mr. Guthrie was perplexed, not knowing how to act on such a short notice. "My heart," said his wife, "what the Lord gives you light and clearness to do, that do, without giving any positive answer to the messenger." He went, and to the messenger's astonishment pronounced the sentence of excommunication. Though the commission of the Church relaxed Middleton from it shortly after, yet it is believed he never forgave nor forgot what Guthrie did that day, and that this worthy man fell a sacrifice to his personal revenge, as well as to Sharp's ambition.

His indictment charged him with various offences, amounting, in the eyes of his adversaries, to the charge of high treason; and among the rest, his being the author of a pamphlet, entitled "The Causes of the Lord's Wrath,"[1] and his accession to the Westland remonstrance, formerly mentioned. Guthrie's speech in his own defence was a most eloquent and triumphant vindication; but neither the acknowledged piety of the man, the innocence of his character, nor the eloquence of his address, had any weight on his judges, who were determined that he should suffer, in order to strike terror into the rest, and pave the way for the innovations which they contemplated. He was condemned to be hanged at the cross of Edinburgh as a traitor, on the 1st of June, 1661, and thereafter his head to be struck off and affixed on

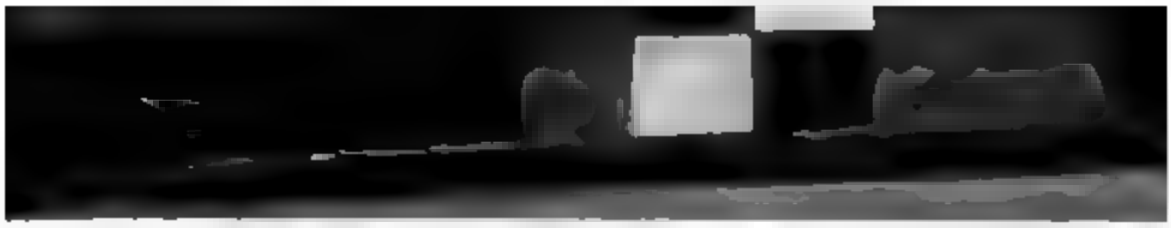
[1] For a full account of this and other works of the Protesters see "History of the Church of Scotland during the Commonwealth," by the Rev James Kettle.



the Netherbow; his estate to be confiscated, his coat-of-arms torn and reversed, and his children declared incapable, in all time coming, to enjoy any office, dignities, possessions, lands, or goods, movable or immovable, or anything within this kingdom." This dreadful doom he received with the utmost composure, saying, "My lords, let never this sentence affect you more than it does me; and let never my blood be required of the king's family."

This good man seems to have laid his account with suffering in the cause long before there was any appearance of it; for it is told of him, that on coming into Edinburgh to subscribe the covenant, he met the executioner of the city as he was entering at the West Port, a circumstance which, incidental as it was, made such an impression on his mind, that he was heard to say, "he took the covenant with the resolution to suffer for the things contained in it, if the Lord should call him thereto." On the night before his execution, when sealing some letters, he was observed to stamp the wax crosswise, thus marring the impression. "I have no more to do," said he, "with coats-of-arms." At supper with his friends that night he was cheerful even to pleasantry. On his way to the scaffold, his arms being pinioned, he requested that one of them might be slackened so far as to allow him to support his tottering frame on a staff while walking down the street to the place of execution. On the fatal ladder "he spoke an hour," says Burnet, who saw him suffer, "with the composedness of one who was delivering a sermon, rather than his last words." Referring to the covenants he said, "These sacred, solemn, public oaths of God, I believe, can be loosed or dispensed by no person, party, or power upon earth, but are still binding upon these kingdoms, and will be so for ever hereafter; and are ratified and sealed by the conversion of many thousand souls since our entering thereinto. I take God to record upon my soul," he added, "I would not exchange this scaffold with the palace or mitre of the greatest prelate in Britain." He forewarned all of the wrath of God upon Scotland, and of the sufferings they might expect, if they continued faithful; and just before he was turned over, lifting the napkin from his face, he cried, "The covenants, the covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving!"[1]

[1] Wodrow, book i. sect. iv. Burnet, vol. i. p. 181.



It would be improper to omit noticing the well-known anecdote, which is said to rest on good authority, that a considerable time after the death of Mr. Guthrie, when the Earl of Middleton was passing the Netherbow, a few drops of blood fell from the head of the martyr on the carriage, and that the marks could never be effaced. But the following is better deserving of attention, as an illustration of the profound respect in which the faithful clergy of Scotland were then held by the people. The headless corpse of James Guthrie was put into a coffin and carried into the Old Kirk aisle, where it was decently prepared for interment by a number of ladies of high respectability. Some of them having been observed to dip their napkins in the blood of the martyr, Sir Archibald Primrose challenged them for doing so, representing it as a piece of popish superstition; when one of them, who was afterwards married to Sir Thomas Burnet, replied, "We intend not to abuse it to superstition or idolatry, but to hold that bloody napkin up to Heaven, with our address that the Lord would remember the innocent blood that is spilt." While thus employed, a genteel young man[1] approached, and poured on the body a phial of rich perfume, the odour of which filled the whole church. On observing this one of the ladies exclaimed, "God bless you, sir, for this labour of love which you have shown to the slain body of a servant of Jesus Christ!" The young man, without speaking a word, made a low bow and retired.[2]

Having thus removed out of the way two of the most

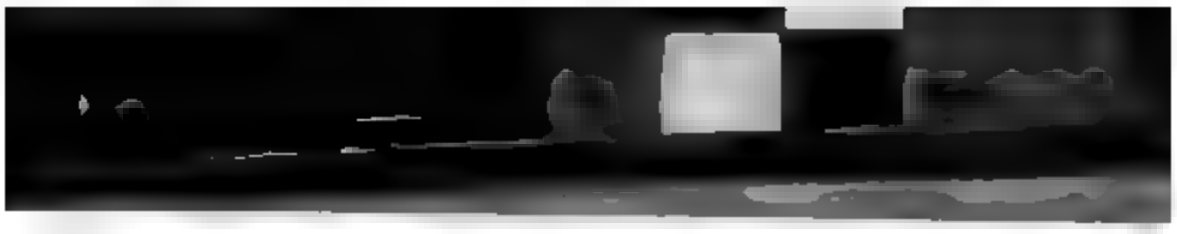
[1] It was afterwards discovered that this was Mr. George Stirling, who became eminent as a surgeon in Edinburgh

[2] Wodrow's Analecta, MS. iv.—In a "Tale of the Times of the Martyrs," written by the late celebrated Edward Irving, which appeared in *The Anniversary for 1829*, there is an interesting account, given on the authority of a venerable old lady in Glasgow, of the manner in which James Guthrie's head was taken down from the pole to which it was affixed, and buried beside his body. According to Mr. Irving's account, this daring exploit was performed by a nephew of James Guthrie, who was affianced to the daughter of the provost of Edinburgh, a violent enemy of the Covenanters, and who was obliged to flee the country in consequence of the provost seeking his life as the forfeit of his noble conduct. The tale has certainly some foundation in fact, but both the dates and persons must have been confounded by tradition, for we have every reason to believe that Guthrie's head remained on the Netherbow Port for twenty-seven years, when it was taken down by Alexander Hamilton, then a student in Edinburgh, and afterwards Guthrie's successor in Stirling. (*Scots Worthies*, i. 248, *M'Gavin's edit.*)



active and influential supporters of Presbytery, the court proceeded with its design of re-establishing Episcopacy. Though Charles had sworn, only about a year before, to maintain the Presbyterian discipline, he sent a letter in August, 1661, to the Scottish council, in which, after reciting the inconveniences of that form of government, and asserting its inconsistency with monarchy, he says, "Wherefore we declare our firm resolution to *interpose our royal authority* for restoring the Church of Scotland to its right government by bishops, as it was before the late troubles." A parliament was called, which, through intimidation, and various other means, was induced to approve of this resolution; and a proclamation was immediately issued, announcing the restoration of the bishops, prohibiting meetings of synods and assemblies, and forbidding all preaching against the change, on pain of imprisonment. And thus, by the mere will and mandate of the king, and without consulting the Church in any form, Prelacy was again established in a land which had always opposed it, and where the former attempt to plant it had been followed with the most disastrous consequences.

Nothing leaves a darker blot on the history of our country than the ease and despatch with which this change was effected. When, in the beginning of the following year, presbyteries, and even sessions, were discharged from meeting until authorized by the bishops, the greater part of the presbyteries, instead of making a stand for their religious liberties, tamely submitted to the proclamation; so that the Presbyterians justly exposed themselves to the taunt which an English historian casts on them, that "Presbytery fell without the honour of a dissolution." It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose, because Prelacy met with so little resistance at its first introduction, that the body of the people were favourable to the change, or indifferent to their ancient polity. Many, no doubt, especially among the nobility, had become wearied of Christ's yoke; many, too, worn out with intestine discords, were disposed to hail peace on almost any terms; and the general licentiousness of manners introduced with the Restoration contributed greatly to foster these dispositions. But it was not to such causes that Prelacy was indebted for its triumph. It was brought in partly by



stratagem, and partly by the force of royal proclamations, fenced with the terrors of imprisonment, confiscation, and the gibbet. The secret history of the time reveals the real source of these proclamations, in the plottings of a set of unprincipled courtiers, whose sole object was to enrich themselves by the fines and confiscations of those who had taken an active share in the previous reforming period. For this purpose Scotland was excluded from the act of indemnity long after its benefits had been extended to England; and our country was left at the mercy of a succession of harpies, who first preyed upon her vitals, and then upon one another.

The treachery of James Sharp has been already adverted to. To this person, who was at first minister of Crail, and afterwards promoted to the see of St. Andrews, the Church of Scotland had unhappily intrusted the management of her cause at court about the time of the Restoration, and he was sent to London for the express purpose of securing the preservation and liberty of the Presbyterian Establishment. While thus employed he was secretly gained over by some of the English High Church politicians, to enter into their measures for the re-establishment of Prelacy, and engaged to betray the Church which confided in him; expecting, as the reward of his treachery, to be made primate of all Scotland. With a deep dissimulation, seldom equalled in the history of ecclesiastical crime, he carried on a correspondence with his brethren, in which he artfully concealed the intentions of government, lulled their suspicions, and prevented them from using any means to avoid the catastrophe, all under professions of the warmest devotion to the cause of Presbytery and the covenant.[1] When he came down to Scotland he practised the same deception so successfully, that his brethren never suspected his design till it was ripe for execution.

It is doubtful, however, whether all these causes combined would have succeeded in prostrating the liberties of the Church, had they not been aided by the lamentable dissension between the Resolutioners and Protesters within her own pale. This breach remained still unhealed; and it was

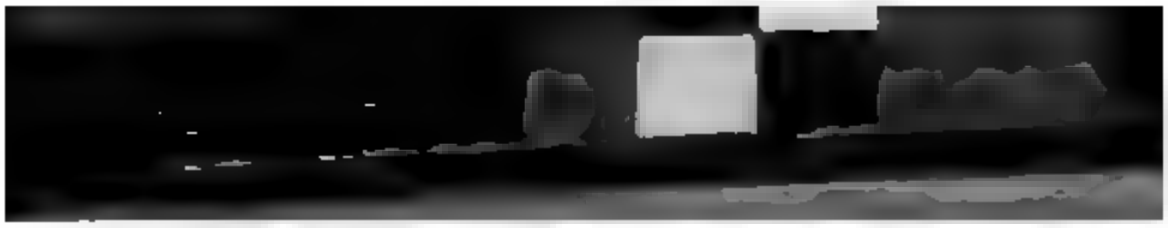
[1] This correspondence is preserved in the introduction to Wodrow's History, where it will stand a monument of Sharp's infamy to the latest posterity.



the policy of Sharp and others to prevent the two parties from coalescing. By their mutual jealousies they were prevented from joining in any common measure for the safety of the Church. In addition to all this, most of the eminent men who had guided her councils during the reforming period were now in the dust, or sinking under the weight of years. The Earl of Loudoun, the most eloquent and courageous of the champions of the covenant, died in March, 1662. He knew that, next to the Marquis of Argyll, none was more obnoxious than he to the present rulers, and often entreated his excellent lady to pray that he might be removed by death before the next session of parliament; and his request was granted. Many of the old ministers died from pure grief at seeing the goodly fabric which had cost Scotland so much to rear, and which was hallowed in their eyes by so many sacred associations, threatened with destruction. Among these we may notice Robert Baillie, principal of the University of Glasgow, to whose Letters we owe so much of our information regarding the preceding period. This excellent man, who was distinguished for his learning, and had done much for the advancement of the second Reformation, became latterly a keen partisan on the side of the Resolutioners; and his prejudice against the Protesters has given a strong tinge to all his representations of them and their proceedings. But he lived to see the error into which his party had been led by their extreme loyalty. We are assured on unquestionable authority that "he died under a rooted aversion to Prelacy in this Church."[1] And he himself, in the last of his Letters, expresses this sentiment in the most feeling manner: "We are in the most hard taking we have seen at any time. It is the matter of my daily grief, and I think it has brought all my bodily trouble on me, and I fear it shall do me more harm."[2] This was written in May, 1662, and in July of the same year his earthly troubles were ended.

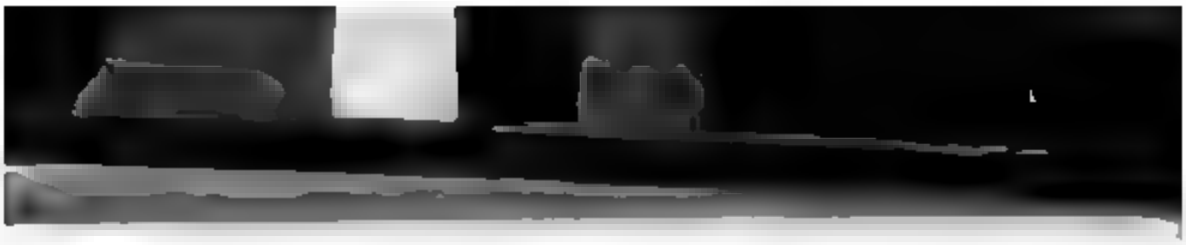
Still, however, with the exception of a few in the northern counties, the great body of the people were attached to Presbyterianism; a great proportion of the nobility and gentry were on its side; and as to the ministers, they were so decidedly Presbyterian, that out of all the presbyteries

[1] Wodrow, i. 128, fol. [2] Baillie's Letters, ii. 462.



and synods of Scotland, not one, with the exception of *the synod of Aberdeen*, disgraced itself by petitioning in favour of Prelacy. The defeat of Presbytery was owing, not so much to the fainting of the standard-bearers in the day of battle, as to their want of union, and their being outmanœuvred by their opponents, who showed themselves greater adepts in policy and worldly wisdom—qualities which, however useful in their place, are not very becoming in the ministers of Christ, in whom we rather admire that simplicity of purpose which may often render them the dupes of worldly politicians, or even betray them into perilous positions. And when we consider that the system of Prelacy was thus intruded on the nation without asking the consent of a single Church court, that its foundations were laid in blood, and that the country continued to struggle against it during all the twenty-eight years of its ill-omened existence, it is preposterous to allege that Prelacy was ever acknowledged by the Scottish people. Not the shadow of such an acknowledgment was ever made by the Church—not even such as was extorted during the reign of James VI. And without such an acknowledgment the mere act of government in thrusting Prelacy on the nation did not, and could not, make it the act of the Church. Whatever Erastians may say, the state could no more undo than it could create the Presbyterian Church of Scotland; which remained unaffected in her identity, though under a cloud and in temporary captivity till the Revolution, when "the captive daughter of Zion shook herself from the dust, and loosed herself from the bands of her neck."

Prelacy having been established by law, it became necessary to provide Scotland with bishops. Of the old prelates none remained but one Sydserf, and he, it seems, was not deemed of sufficient dignity to confer Episcopal ordination, a "flower," says Kirkton, "not to be found in a Scottish garden;" so that four of the ministers chosen for this office, viz. Sharp, Fairfoul, Hamilton, and Leighton, were summoned to London, where the ceremony of ordination was performed in Westminster Abbey. To crown the disgrace of their defection, the English bishops insisted on their acknowledging the nullity of their Presbyterian orders, by submitting to be ordained first deacons, then presbyters, and



lastly, bishops. Sharp pretended at first to scruple at this degradation; but he soon submitted with the rest; on which the Bishop of London observed, that "it seemed to be Scots fashion to scruple at everything, and to swallow everything." If the bishop formed his opinion of our nation from the present sample, it was very natural so to express himself; for, with the exception of Leighton, every one of them had formerly professed great opposition to that form of government in which they now assumed such a conspicuous share. Sharp, who was made Archbishop of St. Andrews, it is needless to characterize. Burnet informs us that Fairfoul, who was made Archbishop of Glasgow, was a "factious man, insinuating and crafty; but he was a better physician than a divine. His life was scarce free from scandal; and he was eminent in nothing that belonged to his own function. He had not only sworn the covenant, but had persuaded others to do it. And when one objected to him that it went against his conscience, he answered, there were some very good medicines that could not be *chewed*, but were to be *swallowed* down." Hamilton, who was made Bishop of Galloway, had equally distinguished himself for his zeal in the cause of the covenant. Leighton, who was appointed to the diocese of Dunblane, was a character in every respect different from the rest. Evangelical in his doctrine, and latitudinarian in his ecclesiastical views, "he did not think that the forms of government were settled by such positive laws as were unalterable, but looked on Episcopacy as the best form." The sanctity of his character, and amiableness of his manners, which have been quoted as the redeeming qualities of Scottish Prelacy, were in fact its exceptions; for on these very accounts he was disliked and suspected by Sharp and his associates, as a tool unfit for their purposes. Leighton condemned and deplored the measures which were taken for obtruding Prelacy upon Scotland; and when the bishops returned to Edinburgh in a sort of triumphal procession, he left them in disgust before reaching the city, and entered it as privately as possible.[1]

[1] "Leighton often said to me," says Burnet, "that in the whole progress of that affair there appeared such cross characters of an angry Providence, that how fully soever he was satisfied in his own mind as to Episcopacy itself, yet it seemed that God was against them, and that they were not like to be the men to build up his church; so that the struggling about it seemed



On the day after the arrival of the bishops, May 8, 1662, the parliament passed an act restoring them to all their ancient prerogatives, spiritual and temporal; another restoring patronage, and ordering all entrants to take collation from the bishop; and, not to burden the reader's memory with other acts rooting out every vestige of the previous reformation, they passed the following declaration, which all persons in public trust were required to subscribe, and which became a convenient engine of persecution: "I do sincerely affirm and declare, that I judge it unlawful for subjects, under pretext of reformation, or any other pretext whatsoever, to enter into leagues and covenants, or to take up arms against the king or those commissioned by him, and all those gatherings, petitions, &c., that were used in the beginning and carrying on of the late troubles, were unlawful and seditious. And particularly, that these oaths, whereof the one was commonly called the national covenant (as it was sworn and subscribed in the year 1638, and thereafter), and the other entitled a solemn league and covenant, were, and are in themselves unlawful oaths; and that there lieth no obligation upon me, or any of the subjects, from the said oaths to endeavour any alteration of the government in Church or state, as it is now established by the laws of the kingdom." It was absurd enough to require a person not only to declare himself not bound by these covenants, but to pronounce absolution on all who had taken them. But the matter assumes a graver aspect when it is considered that God was a party in these engagements, and that by this shameful act not only were these sacred deeds condemned by the law of the land, but the subjects were compelled to perjure themselves by formally renouncing a solemn obligation, which, if the matter of these covenants was lawful, unquestionably lay both on themselves and on the whole nation.

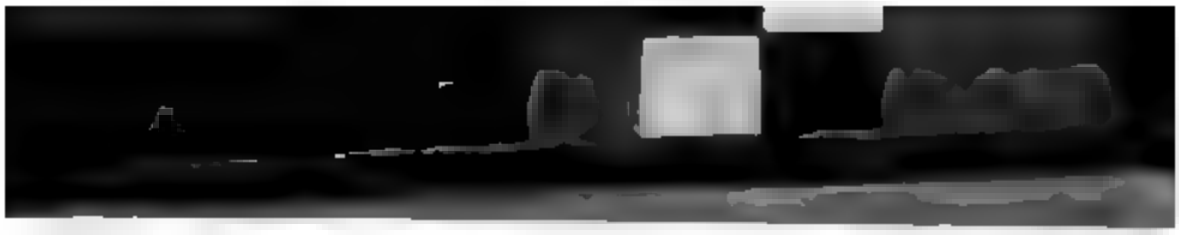
The spirit of the ruling party was not long confined to parliamentary enactments. The 29th of May, 1662, being

to him like a fighting against God. He who had the greatest hand in it (Sharp) proceeded with so much dissimulation; and the rest of the order were so mean and selfish; and the Earl of Middleton, with the other secular men that conducted it, were so openly impious and vicious, that it did cast a reproach on everything relating to religion, to see it managed by such instruments." (*History of his Own Times*, i. 201.)



the anniversary of the king's restoration, was ordered to be kept as a day of public thanksgiving, or, as they profanely termed it, "a holiday to the Lord." On this day the covenants were torn in pieces at the Cross of Edinburgh by the hands of the common hangman. The town of Linlithgow at the same time signalized itself by an act of wanton insult on these sacred bonds still more revolting. After divine service the streets were filled with bonfires, and the fountain in the centre of the town was made to flow with wine. At the cross was erected an arch upon four pillars, on one side of which appeared the figure of an old hag with the covenant in her hand, and the inscription, "A glorious reformation." On the top was another figure representing the devil, with this libel in his mouth, "Stand to the cause." On the king's health being drunk, fire was applied to the frame, and the whole was reduced to ashes amidst the shouts of a mob inflamed with liquor. This ignominious burning of the covenants was got up by the provost and minister of the place, both of whom had been Covenanters. By the more respectable class of the inhabitants it was witnessed with horror, as a daring affront to the God of heaven.

Still, though the Church courts, the official public organs of the Church's voice, had been closed, the ministers were allowed to occupy their pulpits; and it was deemed intolerable by Sharp and his associates that they should do so without acknowledging their authority. Diocesan meetings were therefore appointed in the different districts assigned to the bishops; but these, except in the north, were very ill attended. At length the parliament ordained that all ministers should wait upon these Episcopal courts, on pain of being held contemners of royal authority. To enforce this act, the Earl of Middleton and his commission made a tour to the west country. The scenes of prodigality, debauchery, and profaneness which took place during this circuit were of such a kind as could not be rehearsed here without exciting feelings of intense disgust. On arriving at Glasgow, Fairfoul, the archbishop, complained to Middleton that, notwithstanding the act of parliament, not one of the ministers had owned him as their bishop, and suggested to him the propriety of passing an act and proclamation, banishing all those ministers from their manses, parishes, and dioceses,



who had been admitted since 1649, when patronage was abolished, unless they obtain a presentation from the lawful patron, and collation from the bishop of the diocese before the 1st of November. This was the first step toward the persecution; and it will be observed that it commenced under pretence of enforcing the old obnoxious law of patronage. Those who had been admitted since 1649 were of course young persons; they were men of piety, zeal, and popular talents; and having been admitted to their charges by the free call of the people, they were greatly esteemed and beloved. The council agreed to issue the proclamation on the 4th of October, thus giving them less than a month's warning. "Duke Hamilton told me," says Burnet, "they were all *so drunk* that day, that they were not capable of considering anything that was laid before them, and would hear of nothing but executing the law without any relenting or delay." And indeed it is difficult to conceive how any set of men in their sober senses could have adopted a course so infatuated, or so plainly fitted to alienate from any government the best men of the country, and enlist against them the best feelings of our nature. The military were ordered to pull the ministers out of their pulpits, if they should presume to go on with their functions. Sir James Lockhart, of Lee, alone protested against this mad step, as calculated only to augment the public odium against the bishops; and asserted that the young ministers, before they would acknowledge Episcopacy, would suffer more than the loss of their stipends. The archbishop maintained that there would not be *ten* in all his diocese who would refuse to comply. Middleton, who had no idea of men throwing themselves and their families on the wide world for the sake of a good conscience, sneered at the bare supposition. To his utter amazement, and to the unspeakable mortification of the bishops, nearly *four hundred* ministers chose to be ejected from their charges rather than comply. Turned out of their homes in the depth of winter, and deprived of all maintenance, they exhibited to their congregations a firmness of principle which elevated and endeared them more than ever; while the sudden and simultaneous shutting up of four hundred churches in one day, by which almost the whole of the west, and a great part of the south of Scotland, were deprived



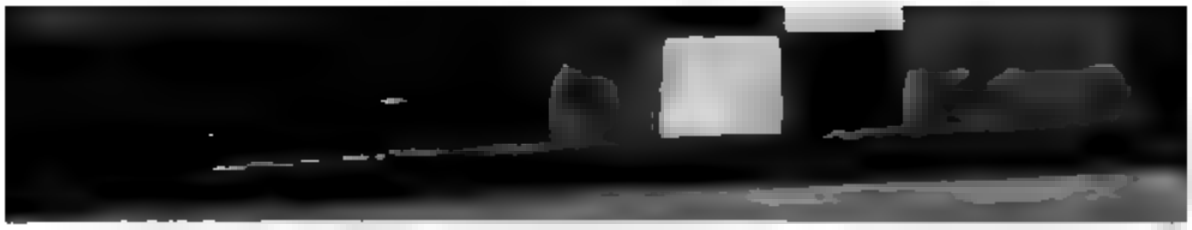
of their pastors, and a third of the ministers of the Church silenced, did more to seal the doom of Prelacy, than any other plan that could have been devised. "The honest people," says Kirkton, "encouraged their ministers to enter upon the course of suffering; and many in Scotland rejoiced to see their ministers give that proof of their sincerity; for there were some who affirmed that not twenty ministers in Scotland would lose their stipends for refusing to sit with a bishop."

"Scotland," says Wodrow, "was never witness to such a Sabbath as the last on which those ministers preached; and I know no parallel to it save the 17th of August, to the Presbyterians in England."[1] The people were dissolved in tears, and at intervals as the minister proceeded there were loud wailings and involuntary bursts of sorrow. As an instance we may refer to the parish of Irongray, of which John Welsh was minister—a faithful and courageous champion of the covenant. An order was sent to apprehend him, which was executed by one Maxwell, a Papist. The whole parish assembled to convey their minister a little on his way, and the mournful procession followed him with tears and lamentations till he came to the water of Cluden, where he was to take horse. There he was beset by his affectionate parishioners, who clung to him on all sides, and refused to part with him. With a heart almost broken but resolved not to be detained, Mr. Welsh, after some of the ministers had knelt down and prayed, mounted his horse, the people still holding him. In order to extricate himself he dashed into the water and rode quickly away; but multitudes both of men and women rushed into the stream, and followed him on the other side as long as he was in sight, rending the air with their cries and lamentations.[2]

Another eminent minister expelled from his charge at this time, and who distinguished himself for the boldness with which he continued to preach in the fields, was John Blackader, of Troqueer. One of his sons, then a mere child, relates with much simplicity what happened on this occa-

[1] St. Bartholomew's Day, when two thousand ministers were ejected for nonconformity—a stroke of policy from which the Church of England has not recovered down to this day—and, perhaps, never will.

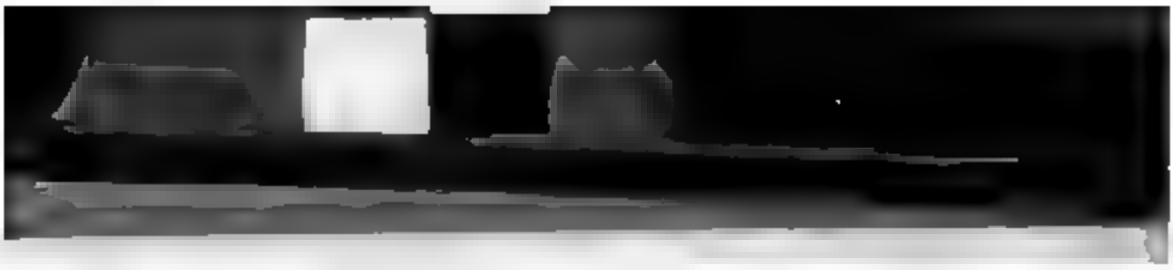
[2] Memoirs of John Blackader, p. 105.



sion: "A party of the king's guard of horse, called Blew-benders, came from Dumfries to Troqueer to search for and apprehend my father, but found him not; for what occasion I know not. So soon as the party entered the close, and came into the house with cursing and swearing, we that were children were frightened out of our little wits and ran up stairs, and I among them; who, when I heard them all roaring in the room below like so many breathing devils, I had the childish curiosity to get down upon my belly, and peep through a hole in the floor above them, for to see what monsters of creatures they were; and it seems they were monsters indeed for cruelty; for one of them perceiving what I was doing, immediately drew his sword and thrust it up where I was peeping, so that the mark of the point was scarce an inch from the hole, though no thanks to the murdering ruffian, who designed to run it up through my eye. Immediately after, we were forced to pack up bag and baggage and remove to Glencairn, ten miles from Troqueer. We who were the children were put into cadgers' creels, where one of us cried out, coming through the Bridge-end of Dumfries, 'I'm banisht, I'm banisht!' One happened to ask, Who has banished ye, my bairn? He answered, 'Bite-the-sheep has banisht me.'"[1]

The next point with the bishops was to supply the vacant pulpits; but this was not so easily accomplished as the emptying of them had been. Few or none in the south could be induced to enter them, and the prelates were obliged to have recourse to the north country, where, ever since the days when James VI. summoned his "northern men" to outvote the Assembly, there has been a general accommodation to despotic measures, whether it might be to obey the king, or to "please the laird." There they procured a number of raw young lads and hungry expectants, "unstudied and unbred," says Kirkton, "who had all the properties of Jeroboam's priests, miserable in the world, and unable to subsist, which made them so much long for a stipend. So they went to their churches with the same intention as a shepherd contracts for herding a flock of cattle. A gentleman in the north, it is said, cursed the Presbyterian ministers, because, said he, 'since they left their churches, we

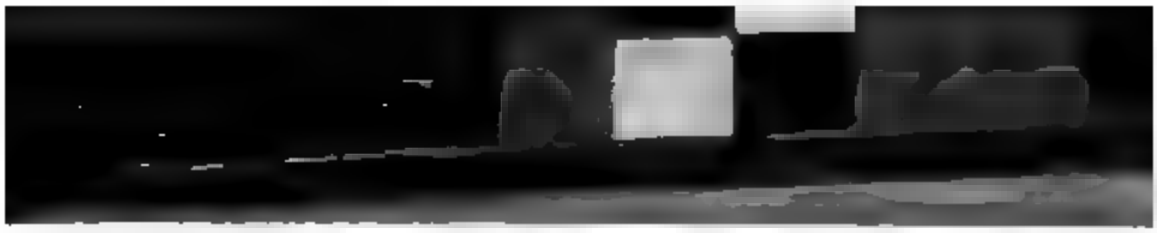
[1] Memoirs of John Blackader, p. 106.



cannot get a lad to keep our cows; they turn all ministers.'" "They were the worst preachers I ever heard," says Bishop Burnet; "they were ignorant to a reproach, and many of them were openly vicious. They were a disgrace to their orders and the sacred function; and were, indeed, *the dregs and refuse* of the northern parts. Those of them who arose above contempt or scandal were men of such violent tempers that they were as much hated as the others were despised." In short, the patrons themselves were ashamed to present such creatures, and they were generally thrust in by the bishops.

These were not the men likely to reconcile the people to the loss of their favourite pastors. We need not be surprised to hear, that in different churches attempts were made to resist their entrance; these, however, were chiefly by women and boys. At Irongray, the women, headed by one Margaret Smith, opposed the military who were guarding the curate, intrenching themselves behind the kirk-dyke, and fairly beating them off with stones. For this feat Margaret was brought into Edinburgh, and condemned to banishment; but she told her tale so innocently, that she was allowed to escape. Other women, who followed the same course in many other places, were condemned to do penance, by having papers stuck on their heads, and afterwards being severely whipped. These, Kirkton tells us, were "ordinarily the actions of the profane and ignorant, not approved by the sober and judicious Presbyterians;" and we may judge how strong the feeling was against the intruders, when further informed that careless fellows thought there was no "surer way of atoning for the excesses of the last night, than by insulting a curate the next morning." It was chiefly, too, by small annoyances that they showed their contempt for the *curates*, as they called them. Some would steal the tongue of the kirk-bell; others would barricade the door, so as to oblige the intruder to climb up literally by the window. A shepherd boy, having found a nest of ants, emptied them one day into the curate's large boots, as he was going to the pulpit; and then the sport of the mischievous urchins was to behold the reverend gentleman, after exhibiting a variety of antics, under the torture of the insects, obliged to bring his service to an abrupt conclusion.[1] Another instance of the

[1] Kirkton's History of the Church of Scotland, pp. 260, 261.

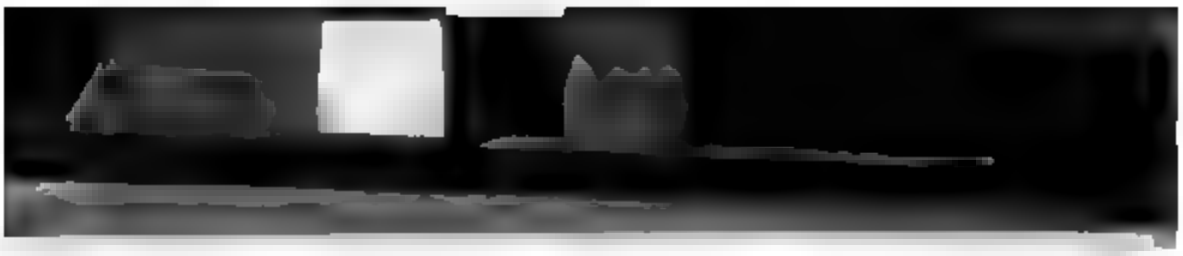


same contempt for these worthless underlings may be recorded: A curate in the west country, deeply mortified at the extreme thinness of his audience, sent a threatening message to the women, that if they did not make their appearance at the church next day he would inform against them. The women obeyed the mandate, but each came with a child in her arms; and the curate had not long proceeded in his service, when first one child began to cry, then another, till the whole joined in the chorus, and the voice of the preacher was drowned in a universal squall. It was in vain that he stormed and cursed at the women; they told him it was his own fault, and that they could, on no account, leave their children at home.[1]

Matters, however, soon assumed a more serious aspect. At Edinburgh the ministers were required either to comply with the present order of things, or desist from preaching, and retire from the city. The whole of them submitted to the sentence, except one Robert Lawrie, who, being the only minister left behind, as a sort of nucleus to the new race of ministers, was designated by the people *the nest-egg*. Prosecutions were next set on foot against some of the ministers who had dared to preach against the defections of the times —among whom were Mr. Donald Cargill, Mr. Thomas Wylie, Mr. M'Kail, and Mr. John Brown of Wamphray, whose names are well known in the succeeding history. Many of the ministers escaped death by a voluntary banishment.[2]

[1] Wodrow's Analecta, MS.

[2] Among others banished at this time was Mr. John Livingstone, minister of Ancrum, who soon afterwards died in Holland. The reader will recollect that it was he who was honoured as the chief instrument of the wonderful revival at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630. The case of this worthy man affords a striking illustration of the remark, which has been often verified, that true piety will generally lead even those who have taken no prominent share in ecclesiastical discussions, to act a conscientious part in public matters which involve religious principle. In a letter which he wrote to his parishioners, whom he was not permitted to revisit before his departure, he says: "I have often told you that, for my part, I could never make it a chief part of my work to insist upon the particular debates of the time, as being assured, that if a man drink in the knowledge and the main foundations of the Christian religion, and have the work of God's Spirit in his heart, to make him walk with God, and make conscience of his ways, such an one (except he be giddy with self-conceit) shall not readily mistake Christ's quarrel, to join either with a profane atheist party, or a fanatic atheist party; but the secret of the Lord will be with them that fear him, and he will show them his



The fate of Archibald Johnston, Lord Warriston, who suffered about this time, deserves more than a passing notice. Besides affording a striking illustration of the instability of human greatness, it sets in a very strong light the spirit which animated the rulers of that dark period. Archibald Johnston makes his first appearance on the stage of public life in the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638, when he was chosen clerk. A profound and accomplished lawyer, an eloquent speaker, and of the most active business habits, he took a prominent share in all the subsequent proceedings of the Covenanters, and was among the chief leaders in promoting the league between Scotland and England. His zeal in this cause, and his success in thwarting all the machinations of the royal party, and bringing some of them, particularly Montrose, to deserved punishment, during the civil war, exposed him to the special vengeance of the government at the Restoration. Their enmity to his person on these accounts knew no bounds, though they attempted to conceal it under the pretext of an indictment, charging him with having served under Cromwell, who had made him clerk-register, and advanced him to the bench. Convinced that nothing would satisfy them but his blood, Warriston retreated to the Continent, where he lived for some time in concealment. His enemies, however, with the slow but sure determination of the blood-hound, tracked him out; and at last one of their emissaries, a worthless creature of the name of Murray, usually called "crooked Murray," discovered the good old man at an exercise in which he always took much delight—at his prayers. Before this time, in addition to the infirmities of old age, he had been shamefully treated during an attack of illness at Hamburg, by Dr. Bates, one of the king's physicians, "who," says a writer that must have been acquainted with the facts, "intending to kill him, did prescribe unto him poison

covenant. And I have thought it not far from a sure argument that a course is *not approven of God*, when generally all they that are godly, and all profane men turning penitent, scunner at it, and it may be cannot tell why and generally all the profane, at the first sight, and all that had a profession of piety, when they turn loose, embrace it, and it may be cannot tell why. There may be diversity of judgment, and sometimes sharp debates among them that are going to heaven, but certainly one spirit guides the seed of the woman, and another spirit the seed of the serpent, and blessed are they that know their Master's will, and do it; blessed are they that endure to the end.'



for physic, and then caused to draw from this melancholy patient sixty ounces of blood, whereby he was brought near unto the gates of death, and made in a manner no man, having lost his memory, so that he could not remember what he had done or said a quarter of an hour before; in which condition he continued till his dying day."[1] In this melancholy condition, he was dragged on board ship, conducted from Leith bare-headed and on foot, and lodged in the tolbooth of Edinburgh. On being first brought before the council, the poor old man, broken with disease, and bewildered with his situation, began to supplicate his judges in the most moving tones for mercy; at which Sharp and the other bishops who were present raised an inhuman laugh, and insulted the enfeebled prisoner to his face. The scene had a different effect on the rest of the audience; for, says Sir George Mackenzie, "it moved all the spectators with a deep melancholy; and the chancellor, reflecting upon the man's great parts, former esteem, and the great share he had in all the late revolutions, could not deny some tears to the frailty of silly mankind."[2] Warriston, however, afterwards recovered his self-possession, apologized to the court, on the grounds already mentioned, for his obvious weakness, and submitted with resignation to the sentence of death. While in prison the tenderness and spirituality of his frame, and the thankfulness with which he received any little attention, gained the hearts even of those that had formerly hated him. His great concern was that he might be supported, and not left to faint in the hour of trial. On his way to the scaffold he frequently said to the people standing by, "Your prayers, your prayers." He delivered his last words on the scaffold with the utmost composure, using a paper to aid his shattered memory. On ascending the ladder, in doing which his tottering frame was assisted by some friends in deep mourning, he cried with great fervour, "I beseech you all who are the people of God, not to scare at sufferings for the sake of Christ, or stumble at anything of this kind falling out in these days, but be encouraged to suffer for him; for I assure you, in the name of

[1] Preface to the Apologetical Relation, published in 1665. Burnet says, "He was so disordered in body and mind, that it was a reproach to a government to proceed against him." (*Hist.* i. 297.)

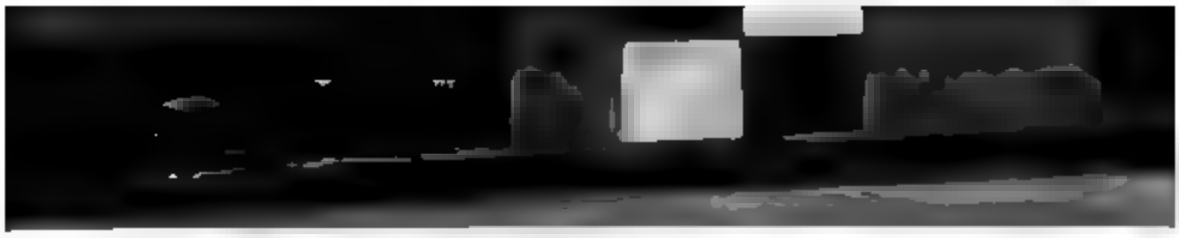
[2] Mackenzie's Hist. of Scotland, p. 134.



the Lord, he will bear your charges." While they were adjusting the rope around his neck he added, "The Lord hath graciously comforted me." He then prayed, "Abba, Father, accept this thy poor sinful servant, coming unto thee through the merits of Jesus Christ." And crying out, "O pray, pray! praise, praise!" he was turned over, and expired without a struggle, with his hands lifted up to heaven.

Thus died Archibald Johnston, Lord Warriston, July 22, 1663. We consider it due to the memory of this excellent man to have dwelt thus long on the last scene of his life; for as there was no man who did more in his day for the advancement of the Reformation, so there is none whose character has been so grossly insulted and misrepresented; while his sufferings at the close of his eventful life have of late, very much in the spirit of those who inflicted them, been made the subject of cruel mockery and heartless triumph. But "the triumphing of the wicked is short;" and the time we trust has now come when the attempt to revive such calumnies against our persecuted ancestors will only prove the signal for the raising of a hundred voices to vindicate their memory.

To form a fair estimate of the character of Archibald Johnston, we must view it apart from the peculiar complexion of his religious and political creed. Granting the goodness of the cause he espoused, which rests on surer grounds than the merits or demerits of its supporters, he cannot be justly charged with having acted either dishonourably or with unbecoming violence in the prosecution of his measures. The sole offence with which his enemies could charge him, was his having accepted office under the usurper: a crime, if crime it was, shared by many besides him, and which was confessed and regretted by none more cordially than himself. But Warriston belonged to a class rarely to be met with now: he was a religious statesman. The standard of his policy was the Word of God; his great and governing aim, the divine glory. And on this account his name has suffered obloquy from a quarter where all who would follow his steps may expect similar treatment, so long as society is composed, as it still is to such an alarming extent, of the godless and unbelieving.



CHAPTER XII.

1663 — 1666.

Field-meetings in Fife—The bishops' drag-net—High-commission court—William Guthrie of Fenwick—Oppressions of the soldiery—Rising in the west—Skirmish at Pentland—Tortures and executions—Hugh M'Kail—The executioner of Irvine.

In our last chapter we noticed the commencement, in 1663, of those field-meetings or *conventicles*, as they were called by their enemies, which gave so much offence to the prelates. At first these meetings were very rare, being held chiefly in the west and south country. The people having been secretly apprised of the place of meeting, assembled in some remote sequestered glen unarmed and unoffending, and after hearing the gospel from the lips of their beloved pastors—endeared to them the more by their having suffered for the truth which they preached—peaceably dispersed, and returned to their homes. One of these sacred "trysting-places," celebrated for many meetings of this nature, was Glenvale, a beautiful sequestered valley in Fife, lying between West Lomond and Bishophill, and opening to the west. About the middle of the valley it expands into a fine amphitheatre on the south capable of containing many thousand persons; on the north side is a large projecting rock, which is said to have been occupied by the ejected ministers as a pulpit. In this splendid temple "not made with hands" many assembled from the surrounding country to worship the God of their fathers, and anecdotes connected with these scenes are still preserved by the older natives of the district. On one occasion it is said they were surprised by a small party of the king's troops who came upon them from the west, and looking down saw the whole congregation lying in the valley below, hanging entranced



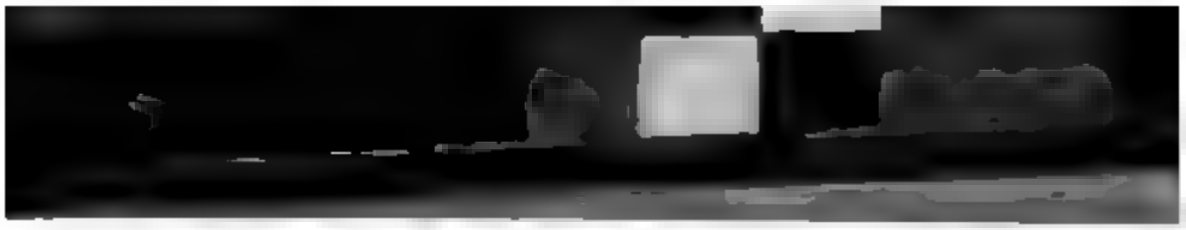
on the lips of the minister who was then in the midst of his sermon, and unconscious of the approach of the enemy. The soldiers were preparing to attack them when they were dissuaded from the attempt by Crawford of Powmill, who observed, "Take care what ye do—I see Bilton among them" (a famous marksman); "if you meddle with them, he is certain to make some of you sleep in your shoes."[1]

On another occasion, when a meeting was held in the parish of Kinglassie, a gentleman of the name of Baleddie came upon them with a few followers. But they observed him at a distance, and before his arrival they had the minister concealed among them in disguise. When Baleddie came and found himself disappointed in his object, which was to apprehend the minister, he rode around the multitude in high wrath, cursing, and threatening to fine the whole of them. While thus employed one of his aunts who was present, a woman of determined spirit, and possessed of great influence in the country side, rose up and said, "Baleddie, begone, and do not molest these honest people who are met peaceably to hear the gospel; or, if you do not, I will lay you by the heels." "O, Aunt Mary," said Baleddie, "are *you* there?" and turning his horse's head he rode off. After this the minister resumed his place, and the people dispersed without further molestation.[2]

How long matters might have continued in this comparatively peaceful state had these meetings been tolerated, it is hard to say. Incensed, however, at finding their curates despised and deserted, the bishops procured "an act for separation and disobedience to ecclesiastick authority," ordaining that all ministers who ventured to preach without the sanction of the bishops, should be punished as seditious persons; and that every one who absented himself from public worship in his own parish church should be subjected

[1] Crawford of Powmill, though a rude, profane man, and by no means friendly to the Presbyterians, sometimes interfered for their protection. A party of soldiers having one day come to apprehend a neighbour of his, a tenant at Pittendriech, the poor man, who was building a stack at the time, threw down his fork and ran to Powmill, and meeting with the laird, implored him for shelter, crying, "O, laird, where shall I run?" "O, never fear," replied Powmill, "run into the house, and get into my bed, they'll never think of seeking a saint in hell." (*Memoirs of Veitch and Brysson*, p. 295.)

[2] Traditional.



to certain pains and penalties. This act, which was called the bishops' *drag-net*, was followed by the most vexatious oppressions. In the end of 1663 and beginning of the following year troops were sent into the west under the command of Sir James Turner, a mercenary and unprincipled soldier, who had formerly fought under the banner of the covenant, but who now found a more lucrative service under the bishops in plundering the Presbyterians. The process adopted by this officer was very simple and summary. The curate after sermon read a roll of the parishioners, and handed over the names of the absentees to Turner, who was at once the judge of the party and the executioner of the sentence. Vast sums were levied under the pretext of fines for non-attendance at church; and if the tenant was unwilling or unable to pay the money on the spot, the soldiers were sent to quarter upon him till the poor man was "eaten up;" his cattle were disposed of for a mere trifle; the bread was torn from the mouths of his children and thrown to the officers' dogs; and whole families, reduced from comfort to beggary, were compelled to wander about the country for subsistence. Those who travelled to a distance to hear such of the Presbyterian ministers as were still permitted to occupy their pulpits met with no better treatment. A party of soldiers would sit carousing in the ale-house till the service was concluded, when they went armed to the church door and questioned each individual as he came out whether he belonged to the parish. If they did not, and were unprepared to pay the fine, the men's coats and the women's plaids were taken from them; and it was no uncommon spectacle to see the soldiers returning from these expeditions on the Lord's-day laden with spoil as if they had been stripping the slain on the field of battle.

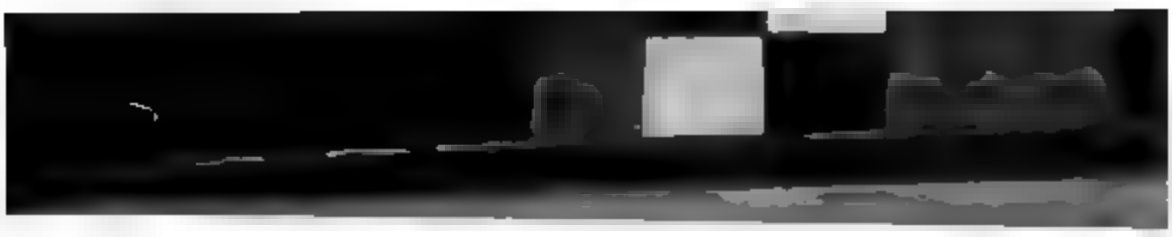
These oppressive measures, however, proving insufficient to suppress the practice, the bishops soon found more active work for their military assistants. In the beginning of 1664 a new court was erected by the advice of Sharp, composed of bishops and laymen, termed the *high-commission court*, the chief object of which was to carry into effect the ecclesiastical laws, and punish all who opposed the government of the Church by bishops. The powers conferred on this court were so extraordinary that the chancellor and other noble-



men became justly suspicious of the growing authority of the bishops, and after continuing for two years it was abolished. But during these two years it was not idle. Ministers were banished or imprisoned; women were publicly whipped; and even boys, after being scourged and branded, were sold as slaves and sent to Barbadoes. Among other proclamations against the Presbyterians at this time, too tedious to mention, there was one making it sedition to give charity or collect any contributions for the support of the poor ejected ministers; and another for dragooning people to the church by imposing fines or quartering soldiers upon them until they complied.

As a specimen of the spirit of the times we may notice the case of William Guthrie, minister of Fenwick, and author of that excellent little treatise, "The Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ." He was cousin to James Guthrie, whose martyrdom we have recorded. Affable in manners and facetious in conversation, as well as diligent and devout in his office, Mr. Guthrie was universally beloved and respected. When he first came to Fenwick the people were so rude and irreligious that many of them never came to church, and did not even know the face of their pastor; and various were the expedients he tried to overcome their prejudices. Disguising himself sometimes as a traveller, at other times as a sportsman, he would solicit from them a night's lodgings; and by the humour of his conversation and joining in their amusements, "he gained some to a religious life whom he could have little influence upon in a minister's gown."[1] By various arts he succeeded in inducing them all to come to church; and the pulpit was the first place which discovered to them who it was that had allured them to the house of prayer. In one of these excursions he peremptorily insisted on the goodman of the house performing family worship, and would not allow him to go to bed without his at least making the attempt. The man after many ineffectual excuses at last began, "O Lord, this man will have me to pray, but thou knowest that I cannot pray." "Stop," said Mr. Guthrie, "you have done well enough; I could not pray a better prayer myself." Having prayed with the family he made them promise to attend church the next Sabbath,

[1] Memoirs of Mr W. Guthrie, prefixed to his Works, edit. 1771, p. 11.



when they discovered their strange guest in the person of their parish minister; a discovery which ultimately issued in their becoming exemplary in their attendance at church.[1]

Mr. Guthrie's extraordinary reputation pointed him out as a special object of dislike to the Archbishop of Glasgow, who could not prevail upon him in any way to acknowledge his authority. The Earl of Glencairn, then chancellor, being on a visit to the archbishop, asked him, as a particular favour, that Mr. Guthrie might be overlooked; the prelate, however, refused, saying, with a disdainful air, "That shall not be done—it cannot be; he is a ringleader and keeper up of sedition in my diocese." The chancellor said little, but when he came down stairs his attendants observed him agitated to such a degree that "the buttons were springing off his coat and vest." Being asked the reason, he replied, "Woes me! we have advanced these men to be bishops, and they will trample upon us all."[2]

In July, 1664, Mr. Guthrie was suspended; but the archbishop could not prevail on any of his curates to intimate the sentence; "there was such an awe upon their spirits," says Wodrow, "which scared them from meddling with that great man." At last one of them, the curate of Calder, was induced, by a bribe of five pounds sterling, to execute the will of the prelate. With great difficulty Mr. Guthrie prevailed on his people to refrain from violently opposing the party who were sent with the curate; for they were quite prepared to sacrifice their lives in the cause of their beloved pastor. The miserable curate who had sold himself to this work of iniquity preached to his own party without disturbance; but, we are assured, never preached again. "He died in a few days," it is said, "in great torment, of an iliac passion; and his wife and children died all in a year or thereby.

[1] On one occasion, at a meeting of his brethren, Mr. Guthrie, who had been more than ordinarily gay and cheerful, was asked to pray, which he did in such a solemn and affecting manner, that the grave Mr. Durham could not help expressing his amazement, telling him that if he had laughed half so much he could not have prayed for a long time after. Mr. Guthrie replied, that were it not for his laughing, his disease would soon make him sad enough. "But," said Mr. Durham, "are your people not offended at your joining in their plays and sports?" "No," said the good man, "they are rather blithe to see me do it." (*Wodrow's Analecta, MS.*)

[2] Wodrow's Anal. MS. ii. 145, Hist. Account of Senators of Justice, p. 350



His reward of five pounds was dearly bought; it was the price of blood, the blood of souls."[1]

Here we cannot refrain from adverting to the decided piety of those who suffered at this period in the cause of the covenant. Without a single exception, they were men of conscience, men of prayer, many of them of deep-toned devotion; and all of them, either previous to their being singled out for suffering, or before they died, gave remarkable evidence of their being sustained and comforted by the hopes of the gospel.[2] This, in the case of the ministers, had not only a vast influence in securing them the sympathies of the people, who were not blind to the contrast between them and the careless, irreligious curates who supplanted them, but even gained them the involuntary respect of their enemies. The Earl of Glencairn, who died about this time, earnestly sought, on his death-bed, the services of a Presbyterian pastor. The Earl of Rothes and the Earl of Annandale, both bitter persecutors of the Presbyterian ministers during their lives, were equally anxious to have their attendance, and actually obtained it, during their last moments. Such instances made the Duke of York one day observe, that "he believed that Scotsmen, be they what they would in their life-time, were all Presbyterians at their death."[3]

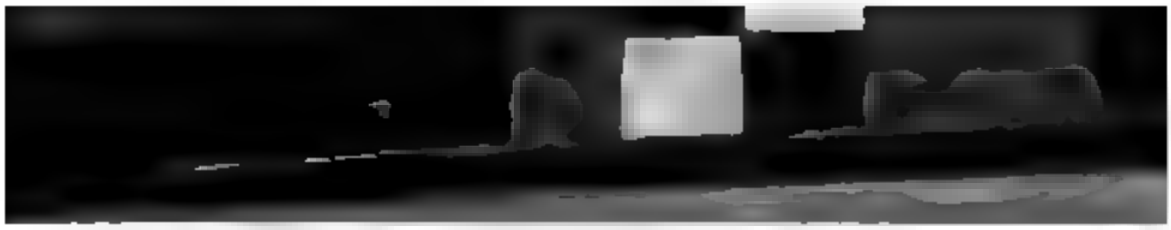
Meanwhile, during the year 1665, the oppressions of the soldiery became perfectly intolerable, particularly in the west, where Sir James Turner and Sir William Bannatyne vied with each other in plundering and harassing the unhappy peasantry. A faint idea of these exactions may be formed, when we state that, within a few weeks, the curates and soldiers gathered upwards of 50,000 pounds Scots from the west country, purely for nonconformity. In Galloway and Dumfriesshire they levied a still larger sum, in addition to the fines imposed by the state on landed proprietors, which amounted to many hundreds of thousands.[4] To crown the whole, after committing these outrages, the soldiers would compel the poor people to sign a declaration that they had been used by them

[1] Scots Worthies, p. 294.

[2] "There was never a Presbyterian troubled in his conscience on his death-bed, because he kept his covenant, and disowned bishops, but many a poor curate was sore tormented for what he had done." (*Kirkton*, p. 195.)

[3] Wodrow, I. 219.

[4] See Wodrow's Lists.



with the greatest tenderness and civility![1] It seemed as if government intended to try the utmost limits to which the endurance of the people would go. In the course of five years they had seen the legal securities for their beloved Reformation one after another rescinded, their civil liberties laid low, their ministers scattered, and a set of men intruded into their churches, whose practice, not to speak of their principles, made them little better than public nuisances. And now, simply because they would not consent, at the command of their rulers, to renounce their religion, they found themselves placed under a barbarous military execution; while all liberty of petitioning, or addressing the throne, for redress of their grievances, was discharged under the highest penalties. Few people in any other country would have submitted so long, under such circumstances, as they did, silently and without a murmur, still hoping that Providence would open a door of relief, and that the cry of their oppression might come up to Heaven.

But oppression, long continued, will make even wise men mad. A circumstance, purely accidental, which took place in November, 1666, led to a partial and ill-advised rising in the west country, which was followed by the most disastrous consequences, not only to those immediately engaged in it, but to the whole body of the Presbyterians through the country. While the brutal soldiery of Sir James Turner were at the height of their insolence, and a great part of the west had been laid waste by their devastations, many families, even of the best rank, being forced to hide themselves in moors and mountains—four fugitive countrymen passed through the village of Dalry, in Dumfriesshire. A party of soldiers had seized a poor old man, who could not pay his church fines, and were threatening to strip him naked, and roast him on a red hot gridiron. The countrymen interfered, and were pleading with them to desist, when the soldiers fell upon them with their swords, and a scuffle ensued, which ended in one of the soldiers being wounded, and the rest compelled to deliver up their prisoner.[2] On this the countrymen, knowing what they might expect for this act of

[1] Kirkton, p. 281.

[2] Wodrow, i. 241; Kirkton, p. 289; Blackad. Mem., p. 136; Turner's Memoirs.



humanity, resolved, as a first measure of security, to seize on a party of soldiers stationed in the neighbourhood. This, with the aid of some of their companions, they accomplished, one of the soldiers only being killed on attempting resistance. Subsequently they were joined by some of the gentlemen of the country, who, raising a small force, surprised Sir James Turner in his bed at Dumfries, making him prisoner, and disarming his soldiers.[1] The news of this rising struck a terrible panic into the bishops, and those at the head of affairs in Edinburgh, who immediately ordered General Dalziel to march to Glasgow, despatched an exaggerated account to London, and issued a proclamation ordering all to lay down their arms, and submit within twenty-four hours. This, however, being without any promise of indemnity, amounted to little more than a summons to the gallows. The insurgents, therefore, only thought of increasing their numbers and fighting it out. On reaching Lanark, they were nearly three thousand horse and foot, but ill-accoutred and undisciplined. Here the leaders of the party drew up a short declaration, stating the design of their appearance in arms, which they declared to be simply "sinless self-defence," in the way of adhering to their solemn covenant, and deliverance from their manifold grievances, "the just sense of which (they say) made us choose rather to betake ourselves to the fields for self-defence, than to stay at home burdened daily with the calamities of others, and tortured with the fears of our own approaching misery." In token of their cause being a religious one, they joined in renewing the covenant, confessing the late heinous violations of it, and pledging themselves to stand to its defence. But oppressed as the Presbyterians in the west had been, they were not prepared for an expedition which they regarded as premature and hopeless. The devoted little band, instead of finding new accessions as they advanced, had the mortification to see their numbers daily dropping away. Colonel Wallace, a brave and enterprising officer, who had taken the command, used all his efforts to keep them together; but on approaching Edinburgh, from which they were led to expect great support, they found the

[1] "On arriving at Dumfries, they marched to the cross, and drank the king's health, a labour they might well have spared, for they had cruel thanks." (*Kirkton*, p. 232.)



whole city in arms against them.[1] Harassed with long marching in the midst of a severe winter, surrounded by their enemies behind and before, half-drowned and half-starved, "they looked," says Kirkton, "rather like dying men than soldiers going to conquer." Yet in this pitiable plight, reduced to nine hundred men, they resolved to stand their ground; and at the Pentland Hills, on a spot named Rullion Green, the conflict began by an attack of a body of horse under the command of Dalziel. This attack was nobly met; the royal troops were repelled by Major Learmont, at the head of a body of the Covenanters, among whom were two Irish ministers, Mr. Crookshanks and Mr. M'Cormack, who had been active in encouraging the people to this undertaking, and bravely fell on the first onset. It is said, that had they followed up their advantage, the Covenanters might have gained the victory:[2] but their horses being untrained, and themselves spent with fatigue, superior numbers and discipline prevailed; and after a desperate conflict, they were defeated, with the loss of fifty killed, and as many taken prisoners. The rest made their escape in the darkness of the night. This skirmish was fought on the 28th of November, 1666. It is allowed, even by Sir James Turner, who was present, having been kept a prisoner among the Presbyterians, and who has written a minute though rather disingenuous account of the whole affair, that "the rebels, for their numbers, fought desperately enough."[3]

Thus ended this most unfortunate and ill-timed rising—an attempt which was disapproved of and lamented by the great body of the Presbyterians, and which can only be justified by the oppressive conduct of the bishops and their underlings, clerical and military, who goaded the poor people to such a pitch of irritation, that the wonder is how they bore it so long. To brand it, however, by the odious name

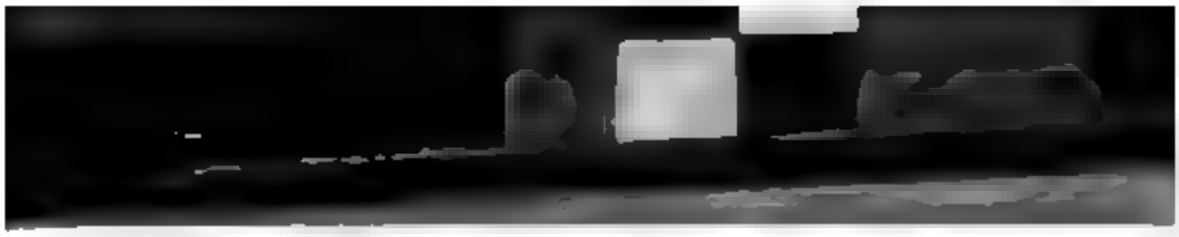
[1] See an interesting Narrative of the Rising at Pentland, by Colonel Wallace; Mem. of Veitch and Brysson, p. 388, *et seq.*

[2] Wodrow, i. 251, on the information of a minister who was present.

[3] At one time he tells us that he had not "seen less of divine worship anywhere than he saw in that army of theirs." "I am sure," he says, "in my quarters my guards neither prayed nor praised for anything I ever heard," and yet, in the same breath, he complains of the tediousness of their graces before and after meat, which gave him even more annoyance than the scarceness and bad quality of his victuals, the main theme of his lamentations. (*Turner's Memoirs.*)



of rebellion, would be an abuse of terms, and a libel on the worthy men who were engaged in it, all of whom disclaimed seditious motives, or any design to overturn the government. All of them, without exception, at this period, owned the king's authority, and submitted to everything save Episcopacy; and this they could not do without renouncing that covenant which, they conscientiously believed, was obligatory on themselves and on the whole land. Their simple object was to free themselves and their countrymen from the horrible oppression under which they groaned, and to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne, to which they had no ordinary means of access. They cannot be condemned for this without condemning the very principles upon which our ancestors acted, with more success, at the period of the Revolution. And had they succeeded, there can be no doubt that, instead of being stigmatized as rebels, they would have earned the praise of patriots. But while the tyranny under which they suffered is sufficient to justify their resistance, and vindicate them from the charge of rebellion, the end for which they suffered, and the spirit in which they died, entitle them to the honour of martyrdom. This distinction is so well stated by one of themselves in his "dying testimony," and is so necessary to the right understanding of the quarrel, that it may be here introduced:—"Although the insupportable oppressions under which I and many others did groan, were enough to justify our preserving and defending of ourselves by arms, yet know that the cause was not ours, but the Lord's; for we suffered all our grievous oppressions, not for evil doing, but because we could not in conscience acknowledge, comply with, and obey Prelacy, and submit unto the ministry of ignorant, light, and profane men, who were irregularly and violently thrust upon us; neither did we only or mainly design our civil liberties, but the liberty of the gospel, the extirpation of Prelacy, the restoration of our faithful pastors, the suppression of profanity, promoting of piety, the saving of ourselves from unjust violence, until we had presented our grievances and desires; and, in a word, the recovering of the once glorious, but now ruined work of reformation, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the national covenant and solemn league and covenant, to which I declare my



adherence, and through grace shall seal the same with my blood."[1]

We may conclude this brief defence of our fathers with the words of a worthy minister, who survived the dangers of this period, and lived to see the Revolution: "It is easy to lie always under the sun-blinks of royal favour, and to scandalize others as enemies to the king and to authority; whereas, if themselves were but far less and shorter while crossed and crushed in their interests, as we have seen examples enough to give us a taste of this" (referring to the rebellions of the Jacobites), "they would be much more impatient, and readier to cry out against their sovereign and rulers; and, *it may be, readier to put their hand to the hilt of their sword*, than most of the Presbyterians."[2]

All who were engaged in, or suspected of being accessory to, this ill-fated enterprise, were treated with the most unrelenting severity. With regard to the poor prisoners, "very quick despatch was made with them." They were crowded, like so many cattle, into a dungeon; and though they had been taken prisoners in battle, upon quarter asked and given, the greater part of them were brought to trial, and condemned as traitors and rebels.[3] "It was a moving sight,"

[1] The Testimony of John Neilson of Corsack, who died at Edinburgh, December 14, 1666. (*Naphtali*, p. 323.) Some have blamed them because they made the defence of the gospel one of their declared objects, and among others, Dr. M'Gavin, in his notes to his edition of the *Scots Worthies*, condemns this, while, at the same time, he owns that "in a civil and political view, they suffered enough to provoke resistance." He would have allowed them to fight for an object purely civil and political, but because religion was mixed up in the quarrel, he conceives that they ought to have suffered "with the meekness of lambs led to the slaughter," in which case, "their murderers might have become ashamed or tired of their work!" (*Scots Worthies*, p. 294.) We question much whether this is the language either of nature or of common sense. The sword of persecution can only reach religion through the side of our civil freedom, and therefore, although the Presbyterians at Pentland, being religious men, professed it as their chief object to defend themselves in the enjoyment of their religion, on which they placed most value, they may be vindicated for doing so on the simple ground, that before their enemies could have struck at the sacred ark of religious freedom, they must have first trampled on all their civil and natural rights as free-born Britons. It is to be regretted that Dr M'Gavin should have meddled with the *Scots Worthies* at all. He has spoiled the simplicity of Howie's style, by attempting to modernise it, and done little more than betrayed his sectarianism by the comments he has made on the text.

[2] Patrick Simpson, minister of Renfrew, MS.—P S. against *Hackton's Ghost*, p. 73.

[3] Out of the fifty prisoners, thirty-five were brought to the scaffold, of



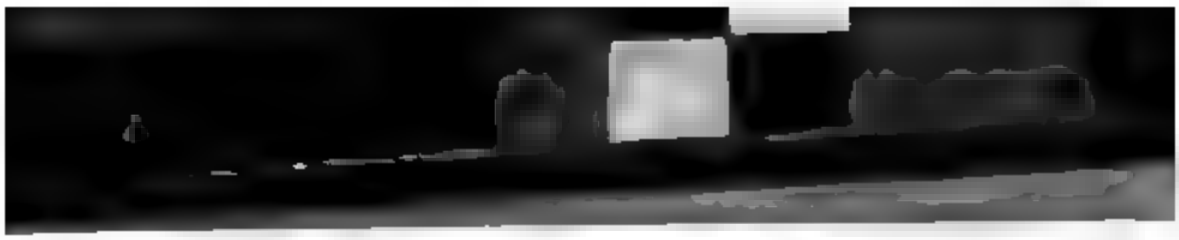
says Burnet, "to see ten of these prisoners hanged upon one gibbet." They all declared their innocence of the crime of treason or rebellion. "We are condemned by men," they said, "and esteemed by many as rebels against the king, *whose authority we acknowledge.* But this is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that we suffer not as evil-doers, but for righteousness, for the Word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ, and particularly for our renewing the covenants, and, in pursuance thereof, defending and preserving ourselves by arms against the usurpation and insupportable tyranny of the prelates, and against the most unchristian and inhuman oppression and persecution that ever was enjoined and practised by unjust rulers upon *free, innocent, and peaceable subjects.*"[1] Again, "we declare, in the presence of God, before whom we are now ready to appear, that we did not intend to rebel against the king and his just authority, *whom we acknowledge for our lawful sovereign.*" "I am condemned," said another, "I shall not say how unjustly, as a rebel against man; but the Lord God of gods He knoweth, and all Israel shall know, that it is not for rebellion against God, but for endeavouring to recover the blessed work of reformation, and for renewing of the covenant, from the obligation whereof (seeing I made my vow and promise to the Lord) neither I myself nor any human authority can absolve me. And if any account this rebellion, I do plainly confess that after the way which they call heresy, I worship the God of my fathers."[2] All of them, indeed, laid their blood at the door of the prelates, and expressed their confidence that if the king only knew the cause in which they suffered, he would never consent to their death. But all access to the royal ear was carefully barred; and even on the scaffold, when, for their own vindication, they said anything reflecting on the bishops or the defection of the times, their voice was drowned by the beating of drums.

One of those who suffered was Mr. Alexander Robertson, a preacher. He was a man of great boldness and resolution,

whom twenty were executed at Edinburgh, seven at Ayr, and the rest in different parts of the country.

[1] Joint Testimony of the ten who were executed December 7, 1666; Naphtali, pp. 306, 311.

[2] Testimony of Neilson of Corsack, in Naphtali, p. 329.

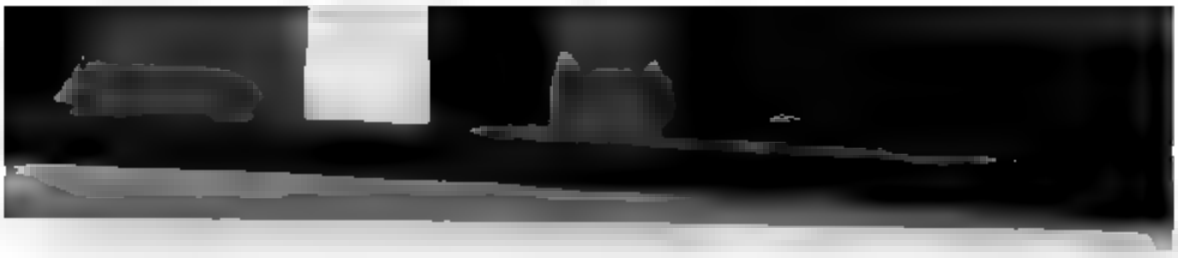


was among the first in Edinburgh who proposed joining the insurgents in the west, and it was in his chamber that the consultations were held on this subject. He acted as a captain in the army that fought at Pentland, though he, with others, attempted to dissuade Colonel Wallace from persevering in the attempt, after finding that so few came forward to join them. This martyr, as well as his companions, solemnly disclaimed, in his dying speech, any rebellious purpose against the government: "I do solemnly declare, as a dying man, that I had no worse design than the restoring of the glorious work of reformation according to the covenant, and more particularly the extirpation of Prelacy, to which his majesty and all his subjects are as much obliged as I. And let that be removed, and the work of reformation be restored, and I dare die in saying, that his majesty shall not have in all his dominions more loving, loyal, and peaceable subjects, than those who, *for their non-compliance with Prelacy*, are loaded with reproaches of fanaticism and rebellion." [1]

The firmness with which these sufferers endured not only an ignominious death but the tortures which often preceded it, astonished their adversaries and left a strong impression on the multitude. The two persons, however, who were most distinguished both for their high character and their extraordinary sufferings on this occasion, were John Neilson of Corsack, and Mr. Hugh Mackail, preacher of the gospel. Neilson was a gentleman of property, remarkable for the mildness and generosity of his disposition. He was the means of saving the life of Sir James Turner; for he not only gave him quarter, but on some of the party having offered to shoot him, Corsack interfered, saying, "You shall as soon kill me, sir; for I have given him quarter." [2] Mackail was a young man of twenty-six years of age; and having been licensed at the very time when Prelacy was

[1] His last speech is to be found in *Naphtali*. I have quoted the above, however, from a copy of it in my possession, written by his own hand, and dated on the very day of his execution. The copy, which plainly bore marks of blood, I found among some rubbish in the council chambers at Edinburgh. It could only be for their non-compliance with Prelacy that they were put to death, for they distinctly tell us they were offered their lives, if they would have subscribed the declaration acknowledging the bishops.

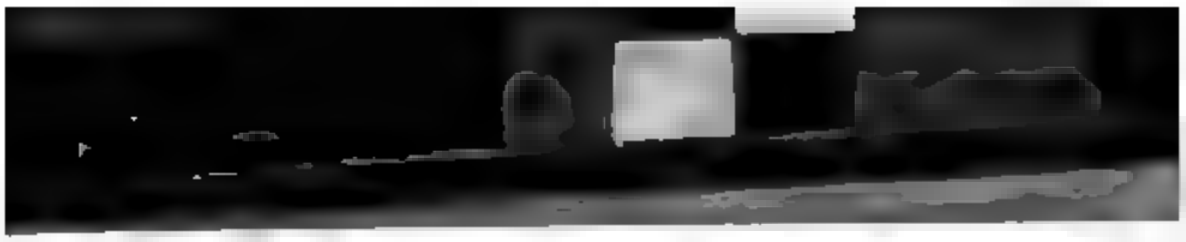
[2] Crichton's Memoirs of Blackader, p. 138.



introduced, he gave mortal offence to the rulers by the first sermon he preached in Edinburgh, in which he declared that "the Church of Scotland had been persecuted by a Pharaoh on the throne, a Haman in the state, and a Judas in the Church."[1] This was the real source of their enmity against him, for he had very little to do with the rising at Pentland. Both these worthy gentlemen were subjected at their trial to the diabolical torture of the *boots*—an instrument of cruelty which had not been used in Scotland for upwards of forty years before, and the very appearance of which the people had forgotten; but the bishops had taken care that a new pair should be made for the occasion, and they were brought into frequent use during the subsequent years. This instrument was made of four pieces of narrow boards nailed together, of a competent size for the leg. Into this case after the criminal's leg was inclosed wedges were driven down with a hammer, which caused intolerable pain, and frequently mangled the limb in a shocking manner, compressing the flesh and even forcing the marrow from the bone. The two martyrs bore this horrible torture with the most astonishing fortitude, though poor Corsack, the "meek and generous gentleman" as he is described by those who knew him, was so cruelly tormented that he shrieked enough to move a heart of stone; while the unfeeling Rothes frequently called out to the executioner to "give him the other touch."[2] Mackail was treated in the same manner, and received ten or eleven strokes of the hammer without any expression of impatience. The object of all this cruelty was to ascertain the secret causes and agents of this rebellion as they called it, but it was in vain; torture itself could not extract more from them than what they knew; and before receiving the last stroke Mackail solemnly protested in the sight of God that he could say no more though all the joints in his body were in as great torture as that poor limb; and that, to the best of his knowledge, the rising in the west was

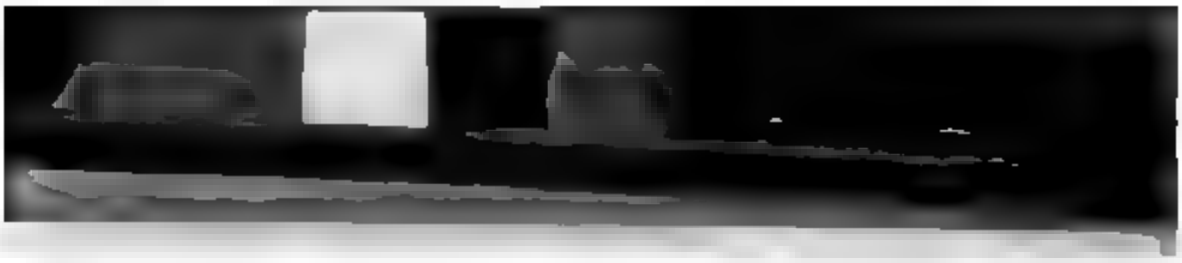
[1] Mackail was at first chaplain to Sir James Stuart of Kirkfield. Wodrow describes him as "universally beloved, singularly pious, and of very considerable learning." After giving offence by the sermon referred to, he went to the Continent, where he improved himself by travelling. He seems to have had a turn for elegant literature, as appears from the Latin verses which he composed in prison.

[2] Wodrow, i. 258, 259, fol.



purely accidental, arising from a discontent between the people there and Sir James Turner.

The behaviour of this excellent young man in prison after condemnation was equally remarkable for Christian fortitude, humility, and faith. His cheerfulness never forsook him. Some having asked how his shattered limb was, he replied, "The fear of my *neck* now makes me forget my leg." He prayed with and encouraged his fellow-sufferers, frequently exclaiming, "What, Lord, shall be the end of these wonders?" His appearance on the scaffold, Saturday, December 22, excited "such a lamentation," says Kirkton, "as was never known in Scotland before; not one dry cheek upon all the street, or in all the numberless windows in the market-place." The extreme youthfulness and delicacy of his appearance, the comeliness and composure of his countenance, struck every beholder—a thrill of mingled pity and horror ran through the crowd; and while those addicted to swearing cursed the bishops, others were fervently praying for the youthful martyr. After delivering his last speech, and on taking hold of the ladder to go up, he said in an audible voice, "I care no more to go up this ladder and over it, than if I were going to my father's house." Then turning to his fellow-sufferers he cried, "Friends, be not afraid; every step in this ladder is a degree nearer to heaven." Before being turned over he removed the napkin from his face, saying, "I hope you perceive no alteration or discouragement in my countenance and carriage; and as it may be your wonder, so I profess it is a wonder to myself; and I will tell you the reason of it: Besides the justice of my cause, this is my comfort, what was said of Lazarus when he died, that the angels did carry his soul to Abraham's bosom; so that as there is a great solemnity here of a confluence of people, a scaffold, a gallows, and people looking out of windows; so there is a greater and more solemn preparation of angels to carry my soul to Christ's bosom." He then ended with that noble burst of Christian eloquence so much admired and so often imitated: "And now I leave off to speak any more to creatures, and begin my intercourse with God, which shall never be broken off. Farewell, father and mother, friends and relations; farewell, the world and all delights; farewell, meat and drink; farewell, sun, moon, and



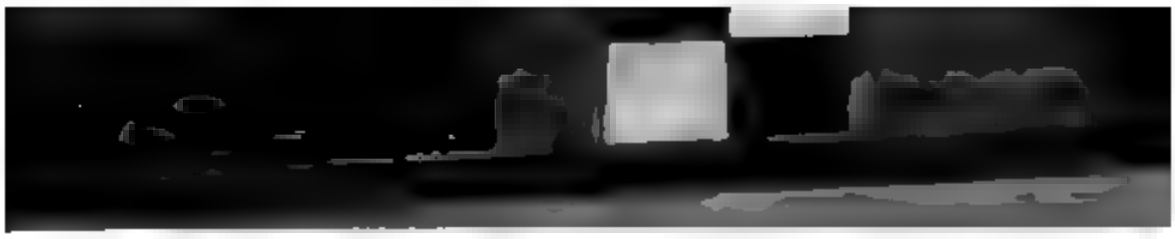
stars! Welcome God and Father, welcome sweet Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new covenant; welcome blessed Spirit of grace, the God of all consolation; welcome glory; welcome eternal life; and welcome death!"

These were atrocious scenes; but they derive a darker shade from the fact, which rests on the best authority, that before these executions were finished a letter had come down from the king, addressed to Sharp as president of the council, discharging them from taking any more lives; and that this letter, instead of being instantly communicated to the council, was kept back by the archbishop till all who had been condemned were executed. From other sources it seems probable that this letter arrived before the execution of Mackail; in which case the death of that youth must be viewed as the personal act of the infatuated Sharp, who never forgave him for that word—"a Judas in the Church."[1]

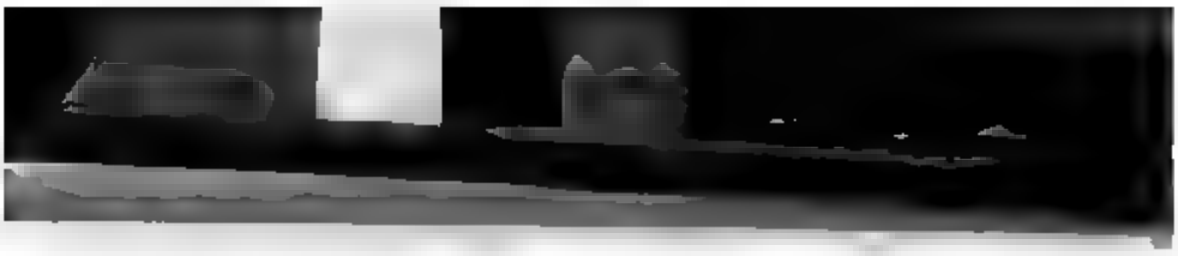
Though we have already dwelt sufficiently long on these details, we cannot help noticing the fate of two young gentlemen, the Gordons of Knockbreck, in Galloway, who were executed at this time. These youths, who were distinguished for piety, learning, and talents, as well as for ardent attachment to each other, had suffered much from the rapacity of the soldiers. As they were pleasant in their lives, so in their deaths they were not divided; for when on the point of being turned over they clasped each other with affectionate ardour, and endured the pangs of death in each other's arms.

In the west country numbers were executed for the same cause. But there, so convinced were all classes of the innocence and moral worth of those who suffered, that no executioner could be prevailed upon to carry the sentence into effect. At last one of the prisoners, bribed and dragged into service, executed his companions, but soon afterwards died himself in despair. In Irvine, the hangman, a poor simple Highlander named William Sutherland, peremptorily refused to execute the good men merely for opposing the bishops, whom, he said, "he had never liked since he knew

[1] This fact was not forgotten by those who assassinated him; for when he cried pitifully for mercy, he was told, that "as he had never showed mercy to any, so mercy he should have none himself." (*Wodrow, Kirkton*, p. 255.)



how to read his Bible." Solicitations, promises, and threats, were all used with him, but in vain. They threatened him with the *boots*. "You may bring the boots and the spurs too," said William, "you shall not prevail." They swore they would pour melted lead on him—they would roll him in a barrel full of spikes; but the Highlander stood firm. They then put him in the stocks, and the soldiers having charged their pieces and blindfolded him, rushed on him with frightful shouts and imprecations; but all in vain. Confounded at his fortitude, they declared "that the devil surely was in him." "If the devil be in me," said William, "he is an unnatural devil, for if he were like the rest he would bid me take as many lives as I could; but the Spirit that is in me will not suffer me to take good men's lives." "Tell me," said one of the judges, "who put these words into your mouth?" "Even He who made Balaam's ass to speak and reprove the madness of the prophet," replied William. At length, finding that they could make nothing more of him, they allowed him to escape.



CHAPTER XIII.

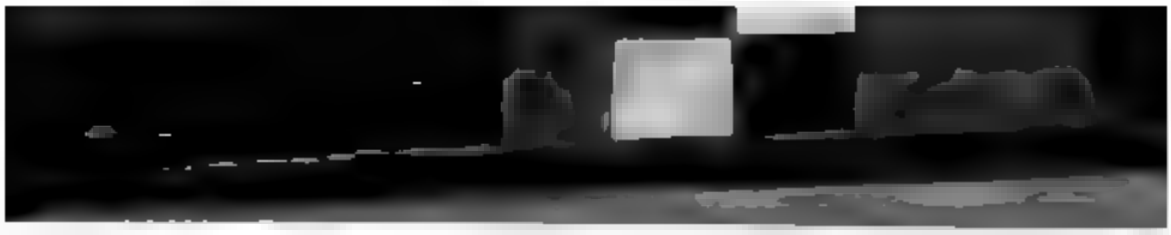
1666 — 1677.

General Dalziel—Anecdotes of the persecution—Mitchell's attempt to assassinate Sharp—The indulgence—The bishop's evangelists—Leighton's accommodation—Field meetings—Description of a Scottish Covenanters' communion.

Our last chapter concluded with an account of the executions which followed the defeat at Pentland. These, however, afford a very imperfect idea of the sufferings entailed on the Presbyterians, particularly in the west of Scotland, in consequence of that ill-fated insurrection. The enemies of the Church are seldom at a loss for want of instruments fitted for their persecuting measures; and at this period they found one remarkably well qualified in the person of General Dalziel, who was sent with a body of troops into the West.

Thomas Dalziel of Binns was a rigid veteran, who had served under the Czar of Muscovy against the Turks and Tartars, and in that barbarous warfare had become inured to blood, pillage, and torture, and hardened against all feelings of humanity. His beard, which he had never shaved since the execution of Charles I., hung down, white and bushy, almost to his girdle; and his whole appearance was as savage as his manners. Such was the bigot, who, ignorant of everything but martial law, blinded by prejudice and heated by habitual intemperance, was commissioned to rectify the disorders which religious oppression had created, and reconcile a free people to civil and ecclesiastical bondage.

As a specimen of his doings in the west country, it may be mentioned, that a sergeant having apprehended a man named Finlay, who had acknowledged that he was accidentally at Lanark when Colonel Wallace and his men passed through on their way to Pentland, brought him before Dal-



ziel; and simply because he would not, or rather could not, give any satisfactory account of the rich Whigs he had seen there, the general ordered him to be instantly taken out and shot. When the poor man was carried out, neither he nor the lieutenant who was to execute the sentence believed the general to be in earnest; and he so earnestly begged "one night's time to prepare for eternity," that the lieutenant returned to Dalziel, and entreated that he might be spared till the next day. The brutal commander repeated his order, saying to the officer, "I'll teach you, sir, to obey without scruple." The poor man was instantly shot, stripped naked, and left lying on the ground. The sergeant who had conveyed the prisoner from his own house, and who had gone to sleep, no sooner beheld this bloody spectacle next morning, than he sickened at heart, refused all sustenance, and died in a few days.[1]

On another occasion, one of the *Whigs*, as they were called, being hotly pursued, ran into the house of a poor country woman, escaped by another door, and threw himself into a ditch, where he concealed himself so effectually under the water, that the soldiers could not discover his hiding-place. Incensed at missing their prey, they seized on the poor woman, who could give no other account of the matter than that she saw a man run through the house; and dragging her to head-quarters at Kilmarnock, they threw her into a dungeon full of toads and other reptiles, where the shrieks of the poor creature were heard by the whole neighbourhood, not one of whom durst come to her relief, for fear of sharing the same fate. Another woman, whom they charged with being accessory to her husband's escape in female clothes, they tortured, by binding her and putting lighted matches between her fingers for several hours, till she lost one of her hands, and died in a few days from the effects of the barbarous treatment.

But it would occupy too much space to recount the various tortures and oppressions which were employed on the wretched peasantry. "Sir James Turner and Sir William

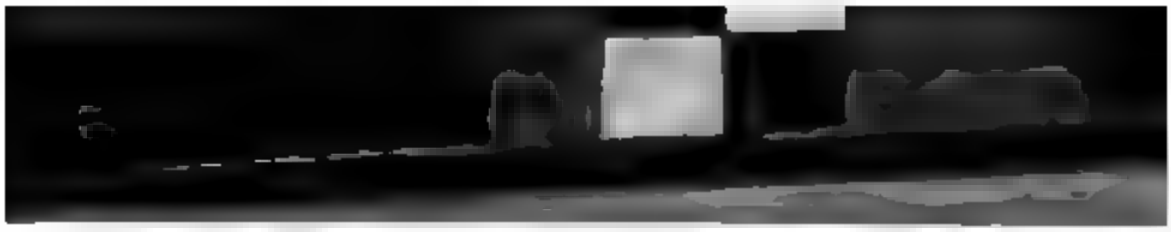
[1] This deed, which was too much for the heart of the unsophisticated soldier, is vindicated by a modern commentator on our history, who merely observes of it, that "General Dalziel was a *very strict disciplinarian in military matters.*" (*Note to Kirkton's History by Sharpe*, p. 256.)



Bannatyne had, by their cruelties, driven the poor people of Galloway into despair, but they were saints compared to Tom Dalyell and his soldiers. Meantime the poor Whigs either wandered in a strange land, or lurked, under dissembled names, in remote places of the country, or hid themselves in caves or coal-pits; and indeed it was a sad winter, the first time ever Scotland endured so much tyranny."[1] "Dalziel acted the Muscovite too grossly," says Burnet. "He threatened to spit men, and to roast them; and he killed some in cold blood, or rather in hot blood; for he was then drunk, when he ordered one to be hanged because he would not tell where his father was, for whom he was in search. By this means all people were struck with such terror, that they came regularly to church; and the clergy were so delighted with it, that they used to speak of that time as the poets do of the golden age. They never interceded for any compassion to their people; nor did they take care to live more regularly, or to labour more carefully. They looked on the soldiery as their patrons; they were ever in their company, complying with them in their excesses; and (if they were not much wronged) they rather led them into them, than checked them for them."[2]

It is very difficult for us to form an idea of the state of things from general descriptions. We shall select a particular example. A son of the Rev. John Blackader gives the following artless but graphic account of one of these scenes, which took place when he was a boy of ten years of age: "About this time (the end of winter, 1666) Turner and a party of sodgers from Galloway came to search for my father, who had gone to Edinburgh. These rascally ruffians beset our house round, about two o'clock in the morning, cursing on us to open the door. Upon which we all got up, young and old, excepting my sister, with the nurse and the child at her breast. When they came in the fire was gone out: they roared out again, 'Light a candle immediately and on with a fire quickly, or else we'll roast nurse and bairn and all in the fire, and mak a bra' bleeze.' When the candle was lighted they drew out their swords, and went to the stools and chairs, and clove them down to make the fire withal; and they made me hold the candle to them, trem-

[1] Kirkton. [2] Burnet's Hist. i. 349.



bling all along, and fearing every moment to be thrown quick into the fire. They then went to search the house for my father, running their swords down through the beds and bed-clothes; and among the rest they came where my sister was, then a child, and as yet fast asleep, and with their swords stabbed down through the bed where she was lying, crying, 'Come out, rebel dog.' They made narrow search for him in all corners of the house, ransacking presses, chests, and flesh-stands. Then they went and threw down all his books from the press upon the floor, and caused poor me hold the candle all this while, till they had examined his books; and all they thought whiggish, as they termed it (and brave judges they were!), they put into a great horse-creel and took away. Then they ordered one of their fellow-ruffians to climb up to the hen-bauks, where the cocks and hens were; and as they came to one, threw about its neck, and down to the floor wi't; and so on, till they had destroyed them all. Then they went to the meat-amry, and took out what was there; then to the meal and beef barrels, and left little or nothing there. All this I was an eye-witness to, trembling and shivering all the while, having nothing but my short shirt upon me: So soon as I was relieved of my office, I begins to think, if possible, of making my escape, rather than to be burnt quick, as I thought, and they threatened. I goes to the door, where there was a sentry on every side, standing with their swords drawn; for watches were set round to prevent escape. I approached nearer and nearer, by small degrees, making as if I were playing myself. At last I gets out there, making still as if I were playing, till I came to the gate of the house; then, with all the speed I had (looking behind me now and then, to see if they were pursuing after me), I run the length of half-a-mile in the dark night, naked to the shirt. I got to a neighbouring toune, called the Brigend of Mennihyvie; where, thinking to creep into some house to save my life, I found all the doors shut, and the people sleeping. Upon which I went to the cross of the toune, and got up to the uppermost step of it; and there I sat me down, and fell fast asleep till the morning. Between five and six a door opens, and an old woman comes out, and seeing a white thing upon the cross, comes near it; and when she found it was a little boy, cries

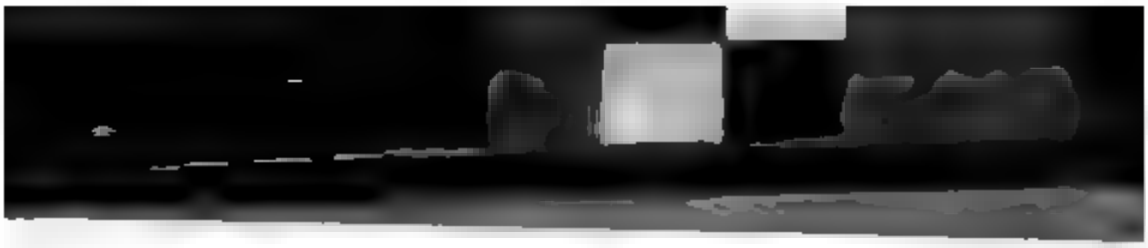


out, 'Save us! what art thou?' With that I awaked, and answered her, 'I'm Mr. Blackader's son.' 'O my puir bairn! what brought thee here?' I answers, 'There's a hantle of fearfull men, with red coats, has burnt all our house, my breether and sister, and all the family.' 'O puir thing,' says she, 'come in and lye down in my warm bed;' which I did; and it was the sweetest bed that I ever met with."[1]

All this time the *finings* were imposed with increased severity; and it enhances, in no small degree, our disgust when we are informed that the persecutors were incited as much by avarice as by cruelty in their measures. The rising at Pentland was a rich harvest to the soldiery, and a perfect windfall to debauched and impoverished country gentlemen. These, no doubt, were actuated, in a great measure, by hostility to the principles of the Presbyterians, but still more by the motive which was avowed by Sir William Bannatyne, who, on one occasion, when a farmer asked him for what he was fined, honestly replied, "Because you have gear, and I must have a part of it."

The year 1667 brought a temporary respite, in consequence of a change in the administration. The Duke of Lauderdale supplanted the cruel Earl of Rothes in the royal favour, and, though in London, took on him the management of affairs in Scotland. Lauderdale had been once a Presbyterian, and it is said retained his attachment to that form of government even after it had been subverted He was now, however, a courtier; and being anxious to please the king, while, at the same time, he was unwilling to press matters with the Presbyterians, his great policy, for some time at least, was to effect an accommodation between them and the prelatic party. Violent in his passions, coarse in his manners, and devoid of all religious principle, he was not the person best fitted for accomplishing such an object. But his measures at first showed at least a desire to do so. The standing army, much to the discontent of the officers and of the council, who had shared the plunder between them, was disbanded; an indemnity was passed in favour of such as had been at Pentland, provided they signed a bond of peace; Turner and Bannatyne were called to account for their extortions and misdemeanours, and dismissed his majesty's

[1] Memoirs of Rev. J. Blackader, pp. 130–133.

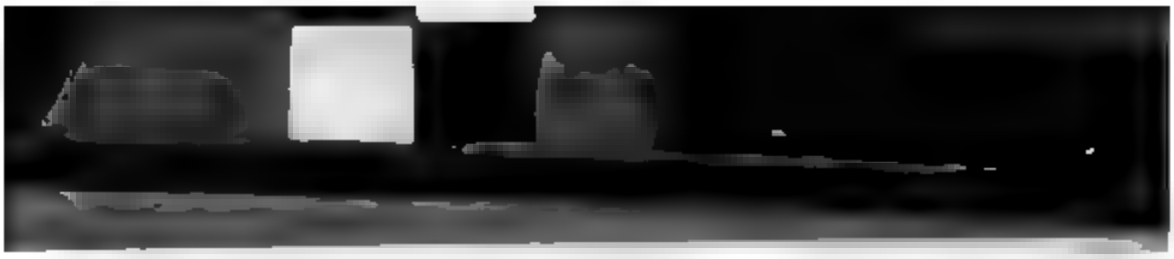


service; and Archbishop Sharp was disgraced, in consequence of the king having discovered his duplicity, from two letters he sent to court, one of which, directed to Lauderdale, affirmed that all was going on well in Scotland; while the other, addressed to another nobleman, gave quite an opposite account. There was even some talk of allowing liberty to Presbyterian ministers to exercise their ministry without any dependence on the bishops.

This favourable turn of affairs, however, received a considerable check by an incident which occurred the following year (1668). It is hardly possible to exaggerate the odium into which Archbishop Sharp had fallen throughout Scotland. He was regarded as at once a traitor to his country, an apostate from his religion, a persecutor, a hypocrite, and a profligate. Without giving implicit credit to all the reports which were propagated against his private character, his public conduct was unquestionably enough to brand him with infamy. As abject in adversity as he was arrogant in prosperity—fawning and obsequious to those in power, insolent and supercilious to all others—grasping and ambitious, but ready to stoop to the lowest artifices for gaining his objects—it is no wonder he should have been alike despised by the nobility, whom he aped, and obnoxious to the common people, who regarded him as the prime mover of all their oppressions. The wonder is, how, in such an age, when the passions of men ran so high, without the artificial embankments, or the regular channels which, in modern times, restrain them or afford them legitimate vent, he should have escaped so long without some personal injury. Of this, indeed, he himself professed to entertain some alarm; and at one time the provost of Edinburgh appointed a guard to secure his lodging. The soldiers employed in this duty, as if they had been tainted with the popular feeling, or ashamed of their office, determined that if they must keep the prelate safe, he should get no sound sleep: every half hour they gave him a false alarm; one sentinel crying, *Stand!* and another, *Present, fire!* as if some were coming to assault him; till he was obliged, for the sake of rest, to retreat into the castle.[1]

His apprehensions, so far as the great body of the people

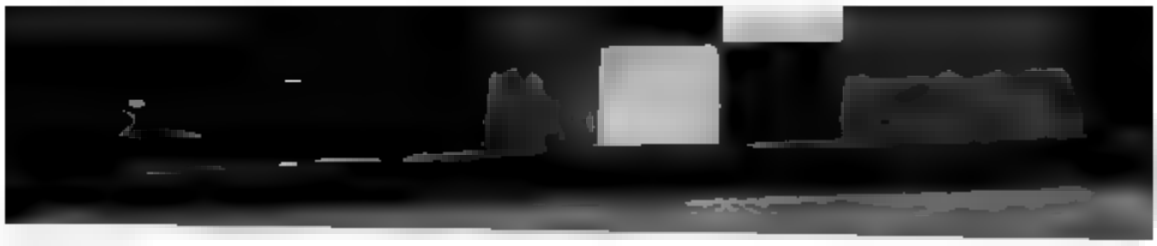
[1] Kirkton. p. 254.



were concerned, were perfectly unfounded; but who can answer, in such circumstances, for the wayward conduct of individuals? One *James Mitchell*, "a weak scholar," who had been involved in the insurrection at Pentland, and had been excluded from the indemnity, took it into his head to be avenged on the archbishop, whom he regarded, not only as the instigator of the sanguinary persecutions against his brethren, but as actuated by a particular malice towards himself, and as having used every means to prevent him from obtaining mercy at the hands of government. Whatever might be his views or motives, it is certain that his enterprise was entirely his own act, projected and perpetrated without advice or concert with any other person. He seems to have been a zealous and conscientious man; though, it we may judge from this action, his zeal was neither enlightened by knowledge nor tempered by moderation. In June, 1668, having armed himself for the purpose, he watched the archbishop in Edinburgh, and on his entering his coach discharged a pistol at him loaded with three balls. The archbishop escaped unharmed, but one of the balls struck the wrist of Honeyman, Bishop of Orkney, who was in the act of entering the carriage at his back. After this, Mitchell coolly walked to his lodgings, changed his clothes, and returning to the street, mingled with the crowd. "The cry arose that a man was killed; the people's answer was, *It's but a bishop!* and so there was no more noise."[1] Notwithstanding all the exertions of the council to discover the assassin, he could not be found till six years afterwards, when we shall have occasion to notice his fate. Honeyman lived some years after, though his wound never seems to have been properly healed. As to Sharp, we are informed that at first he took it very devoutly. Burnet says, that when he called on him he observed, with a very serious look, "My times are wholly in thy hand, O thou God of my life!" "This," adds the bishop, "was the single expression savouring of piety that ever fell from him in all the conversation that passed between him and me."[2]

This fanatical and foolhardy attempt furnished a pretext to the council for molesting the peaceable Presbyterians, whom, without the slightest evidence, they charged with

[1] Kirkton, 279. [2] Burnet, i. 400.



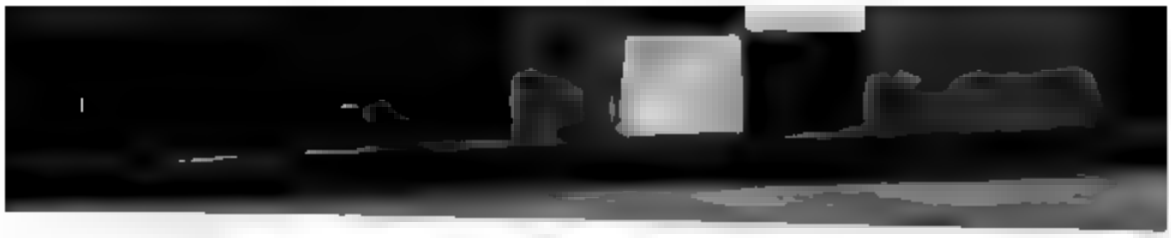
having been privy to the design of Mitchell. Nothing, indeed, is more characteristic of the malice that animated the rulers of these times, than the disingenuous and disgraceful policy by which, on this and many other occasions, the crime of one, or of a few individuals, was made the crime of the whole party. But if there was little public sympathy with the act, there was still less with the eagerness shown to bring the actor to justice. It was remarked as very surprising, that though a strict search was made in Edinburgh for the aggressor on the bishops—though the town was at that time full of those who were lurking in consequence of their share in the rising at Pentland—yet few, if any, were apprehended. Among the narrow escapes which were made, none was more singular than that of Maxwell of Moncrieff, a gentleman of extensive property. On the hue and cry being raised, this gentleman betook himself for shelter to the house of his stabler, who kept an inn. The landlord told him very coldly that he had no place to put him in, but pointing to a large empty meal-barrel which stood in the public drinking-room, said that if he chose he might hide himself under that. He had hardly got into this strange receptacle when the constable and his men came in to search the house, and sat down to drink in the very room, with the barrel at the end of their table. "I know," said one of the fellows, "there are a great many Whigs in town, and maybe some of them not very far off." "I would not wonder," said another of them, with an oath, and striking on the top of the barrel, "but there may be one of them under *that*." At this the rest laughed, as a good jest; and they went away, leaving the gentleman to escape, after having tasted, it may be supposed, the bitterness of death.

The year 1669 is remarkable for the famous act of *Indulgence*, granted by the king on the 7th of June, and which professed to give relief, on certain conditions, to those ministers who could not conform to the established order. It is needless here to enter into a history of this act, which, whatever might be the intentions of its original projectors (the Earls of Tweeddale and Lauderdale), became in reality the occasion of a most lamentable division among the Presbyterians. The two great objections which were made against it were, 1st, That it implied an acknowledgment of the Eras-



tian supremacy claimed by the king and the government over the Church. 2d, That it imposed restrictions on ministerial liberty, by confining the ministers within certain bounds, and forbidding, under the name of sedition, all condemnation of the late innovations in Church and state. Several of the ministers, anxious to resume their labours, were induced to accept it, declaring that they held themselves responsible for the exercise of their ministry, not to the king, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom they received it; and promising to behave themselves in the exercise of it with all becoming prudence. They argued that this acceptance was merely embracing the liberty to preach, which belonged to them of right, and no more implied a recognition of the supremacy claimed by the civil powers who granted it, than a prisoner's walking out of his cell to the liberty of which he had been unjustly deprived, implied an acknowledgment of the authority by which he had been imprisoned. They were less successful, however, in reconciling with their former vows their submission to the restrictions imposed on their ministry. We should judge charitably as to their motives, considering the circumstances; but it is much to be questioned how far their compliance was consistent with the principles of Presbyterianism, and how far they could be justified in accepting of this boon, while their brethren who refused were exposed to severe hardships in consequence of their compliance. There can be no doubt that the example of those who accepted became a powerful argument with the persecutors against all who conscientiously refused the indulgence, and who were stigmatized thenceforth on this account as impracticable bigots, condemned even by their own brethren.

With respect to the indulgence itself, it was neither calculated to reconcile the divisions of the country, the elements of which still raged in the form of bitter antipathies between the supporters of Presbytery and Episcopacy—nor was the measure agreeable to either of the parties. The bishops dreaded it as the forerunner of their downfal, and were only reconciled to it by the artifices of Sharp, who promised to have it so clogged with restrictions, from time to time, as to convert it into "a snare and a bone of contention to the Presbyterians." In this he succeeded so well, that within a few years a complete breach took place between the *indulged*



and *non-indulged*, the latter of whom charged the former with defection and perjury, and became almost as much alienated from "the king's curates," as they called them, as from "the bishops' curates."

In the same spirit of accommodation another plan was attempted, with as little success, in the following year (1670). Finding that the people, notwithstanding all the laws passed against deserting their parish churches, still preferred the services of the non-indulged Presbyterians, the council resolved to send a deputation to the West, composed of the ablest and subtlest of the Episcopal clergymen, to try if they could effect by reasoning and cajolery, what they had failed to do by force of arms. Leighton, now archbishop of Glasgow, took an active part in this negotiation, being anxious to employ lenient measures, with the view of uniting the Presbyterians and Episcopalians. The deputation consisted of six members, among whom the chief personage who figured in the debates which ensued was Gilbert Burnet, afterwards bishop of Salisbury; another was Mr. James Aird, commonly called Bishop Leighton's *ape*, "because he could imitate his shrug and grimace, but never more of him;"[1] the rest were obscure characters, of whom nobody had ever heard before. The common people called them "the bishops' evangelists." There never was a more complete failure than this attempt to convert the Presbyterians. They could never gather a congregation, and never pretended to have made a single proselyte. The people, familiarized with the points of the controversy, were able to answer all the arguments which "the bishops' evangelists" could produce, and stood firm to their principles, unabashed by the presence of the noblemen who accompanied the deputation, and steadily refusing the offers of money by which they attempted to bribe the poorer classes to hear the curates. "The poor of the country," says Burnet, "came generally to hear us, though *not in great crowds*. We were indeed amazed to see a poor commonalty so capable to argue upon points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes in matters of religion; upon all these topics they had texts of Scripture at hand, and were ready with their answers to anything that was said to them. This measure of knowledge was spread even among the

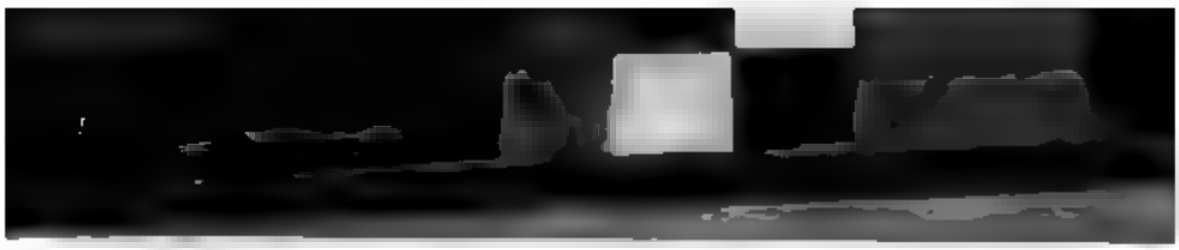
[1] Kirkton, p. 294.



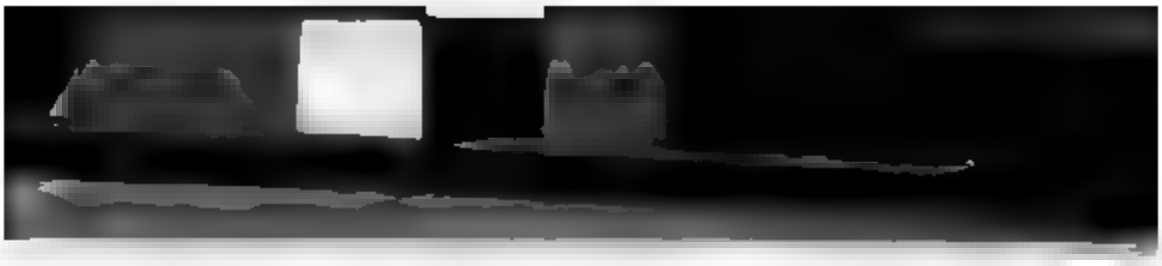
meanest of them, their cottagers and their servants."[1] "So," says another, "they return disappointed of that senseless wyle, the like of which they never essayed, first or last, but only this once—force and cruelty being their ordinary arguments."[2]

Disappointed in this object, Archbishop Leighton, in the end of this year, introduced his famous *Accommodation*, the object of which was to reconcile Presbyterianism with a moderate Episcopacy. The meetings of presbytery were to be kept up, as they had been previous to 1638; the bishop was to be constant president or moderator, but to waive the right of putting a negative on their proceedings; in other respects, the form of Episcopacy was to be maintained, and no minister was to be ordained or inducted without his presence. In short, the bishop was to govern the Church, in conjunction with inferior presbyters in presbyteries and synods. It was easily seen, from the very first, that this was a mere snare to entrap the Presbyterians into subjection to the bishops; it was materially the same with the old device of *constant moderator*, by which King James formerly introduced Episcopacy; and submission to it, after Prelacy had been so solemnly condemned and abjured by the Church of Scotland, would have involved them in a shameful breach of vows, for which no example could be drawn from the practice of their fathers. Long conferences were held with the ministers on this subject, but without success; nor can we, after all that has been said about the stiffness and bigotry of the Presbyterians, either wonder at or wail over the result. Such compromising measures are seldom conceived in good faith, or followed with happy consequences. Episcopalians there have been, and there are, like Archbishop Leighton, with whom we would delight to live in fellowship, and for whom we "would even dare to die." But as systems of policy, Prelacy and Presbytery are plainly incapable of amalgamation; the genius of the one is directly opposed to that of the other; and any plan of accommodation must necessarily involve the sacrifice, on one side or on the other, of principles essential to their proper efficiency. Besides, the real design of the accommodation was not union, but the extinction of Presbytery; and had our ancestors yielded to it Prelacy would certainly have triumphed. The motives of Leighton we are not disposed to

[1] Hist. i. 451. [2] Memoirs of Blackader, p. 169.



suspect; it would appear that he was actuated by a sincere desire to produce peace; but it is equally undeniable that, with all his readiness to concede, he was a keen supporter of Episcopal authority, and contemplated, as the result of his measure, its ultimate ascendency. Burnet speaks highly in praise of the part which the archbishop and he acted in this affair; but he adds: "Thus was their treaty broke off, to the amazement of all sober and dispassionate people, and to the great joy of Sharp and the rest of the bishops, who now, for a while, seemed even pleased with us (that is, Leighton and Burnet), because we had all along *asserted Episcopacy*, and had *pleaded for it in a high and positive strain.*" How could he then find fault with the opposite party for asserting Presbytery, and pleading for it in as "high and positive a strain?" And what peace could be expected from a union in which both parties were allowed to hold such conflicting opinions? "The reproaches," says one of the Presbyterian ministers employed in this conference, which was managed by them with the utmost candour and good temper—"the reproaches of *ungovernable* and *unpeaceable* may indeed be bitter unto ingenuous spirits, let be sincere lovers of the Prince of peace; and the persecution of men may possibly proceed to afflict and vex; but seeing that, through Satan's and the world's known enmity against the Lord and all his followers, these things are, in place of the opprobrium, become rather the badge of truth, only let our conversation be as becometh the gospel, and let us stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the pure ordinances of God's house once given unto us, nothing terrified by our adversaries. There is, I confess, one temptation, which doth more speciously insinuate, and that is, the loss of the liberty of the gospel, which men may possibly, in their displeasure, abridge or totally take from us. But as this solicitude is not more praiseworthy, when devolved on our Lord and Master, than subtly deceitful, when its application is, *Spare thyself;* so let none of these things move us, neither let us reckon our lives dear unto ourselves, so that we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus. Let, therefore, truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity be our main study, and faith and entire submission our only establishment: knowing, and on this resting, that not

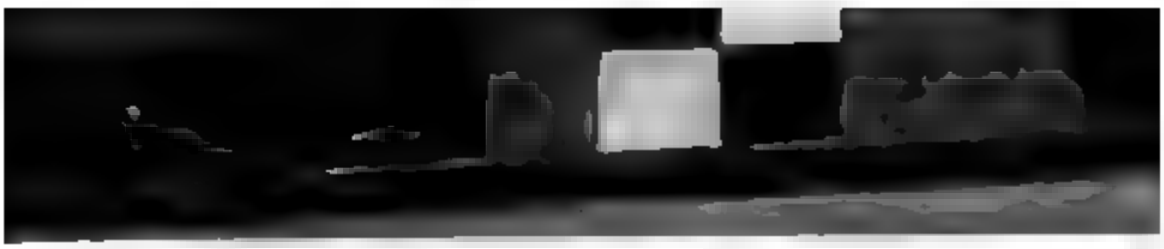


only our peace here shall be our portion, and the end everlasting life; but that God can as easily of our ashes raise up ministers to himself, as of stones children to Abraham."[1]

The effects of the indulgence, so coolly anticipated by Sharp, soon began to appear. Before this time field-meetings had been very rare, and were held, for the most part, in private houses or barns; now, however, they began to be held in the open fields, and were resorted to by great multitudes from all quarters. The ministers who officiated were those who had refused the indulgence, or to whom, from their known hostility to the prelatic government, the benefits of that act were not extended. In those times few gentlemen rode to any distance unarmed, and as many of them brought their weapons to the field-meetings, though merely for personal defence, the bishops began to represent them as tumultuary assemblages, and "rendezvouses for rebellion." Among the first "armed conventicles," as they were termed, was one kept by Mr. Blackader and Mr. Dickson at Beath Hill, above Dunfermline, on the 18th of June, 1670. An immense multitude had assembled. While the minister was preaching, a lieutenant of militia came up on horseback, evidently with the view of reconnoitring, and was in the act of riding off to bring up his troops when some of the gentlemen told him very civilly to wait till the service was over. The officer began to bluster, when one of the gentlemen, drawing his pistol, told him, that unless he remained quiet he would shoot him on the spot; so that he found himself obliged to sit peaceably on his horse until public worship was concluded, when he was set at liberty. Exaggerated accounts of this "horrid insult" were speedily conveyed to Edinburgh; the ruling powers took the alarm, and immediately the severest edicts were passed against "conventicles." All field-meetings were made treasonable, and in the case of the ministers it was declared capital if any were present at them—a piece of bloodthirsty legislation which the king is said to have condemned, and which was not, for some time at least, carried into execution.

Instead of repressing conventicles, all the efforts employed by government only seemed to augment their number, and increase the boldness of those who frequented them. Ever

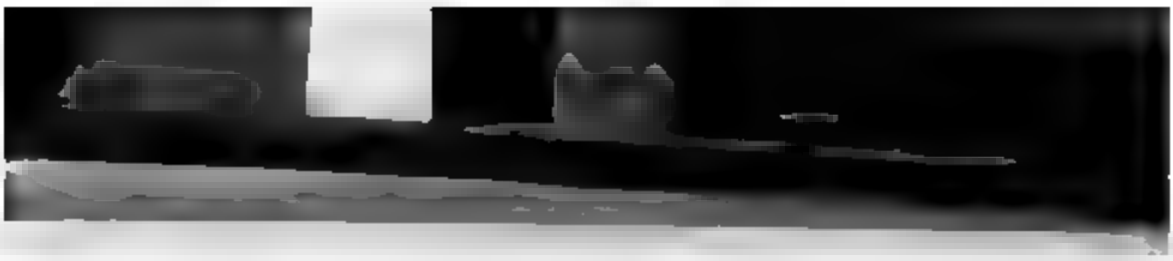
[1] Case of the Accommodation Examined, p. 96.



since the severities exercised on those who were at Pentland the cause of Prelacy had been on the decline; the people, who were almost to a man against the indulgence, began to leave the churches empty, and follow the proscribed preachers, whom they admired for the zeal, the fidelity, and the freedom with which they delivered their message. They still disclaimed all designs except self-defence in the enjoyment of their religious privileges; but they met in such numbers and array, as to set the militia at defiance. On one occasion a very large meeting was held within sight of the palace of Archbishop Sharp. The effect of these services was very remarkable; the ministers were visibly countenanced in their labours, and instances are on record of the most abandoned characters, and even of the troopers themselves, who had come to disturb the meeting, having been suddenly struck with conviction, and brought to repentance.

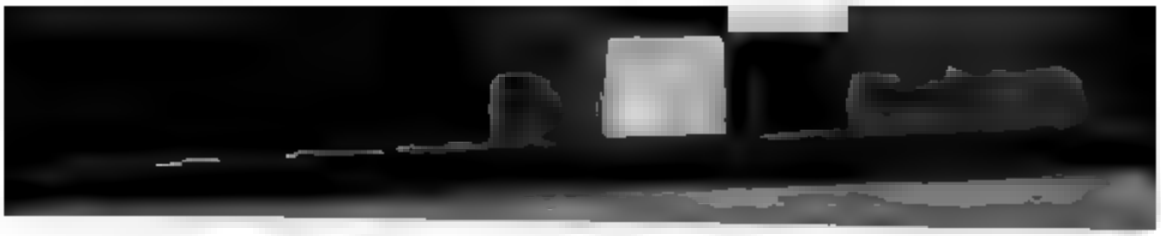
In course of time they began to celebrate the communion also in the open fields; and these were, indeed, to the weary wanderers, many of whom had suffered for their love to the gospel, "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." The following account of one of these communions, held at East Nisbet in the Merse, is drawn by Mr. John Blackader, who was a leading minister on the occasion which he describes, and will afford a better idea of the scenes to which we refer than any ideal picture:—

"Meantime the communion elements had been prepared, and the people in Teviotdale advertised. Mr. Welsh and Mr. Riddell had reached the place on Saturday. When Mr. Blackader arrived he found a great assembly, and still gathering from all airts. The people from the east brought reports that caused great alarm. It was rumoured that the Earl of Hume, as ramp a youth as any in the country, intended to assault the meeting with his men and militia, and that parties of the regulars were coming to assist him. He had profanely threatened to *make their horses drink the communion wine, and trample the sacred elements under foot.* Most of the gentry there, and even the commonalty, were ill-set. Upon this we drew hastily together about seven or eight score of horse, on the Saturday, equipped with such furniture as they had. Pickets of twelve or sixteen men were appointed to reconnoitre and ride towards the suspected



parts. Single horsemen were despatched to greater distances to view the country and give warning in case of attack. The remainder of the horse were drawn round to be a defence, at such distance as they might hear sermon, and be ready to act if need be. Every means was taken to compose the multitude from needless alarm, and prevent, in a harmless defensive way, any affront that might be offered to so solemn and sacred a work. Though many, of their own accord, had provided for their safety—and this was the more necessary when they had to stay three days together, sojourning by *the lions' dens, and the mountains of leopards*—yet none had come armed with hostile intentions.

"We entered on the administration of the holy ordinance, committing it and ourselves to the invisible protection of the Lord of hosts, in whose name we were met together. Our trust was in the arm of Jehovah, which was better than weapons of war, or the strength of hills.—The place where we convened was every way commodious, and seemed to have been formed on purpose. It was a green and pleasant haugh, fast by the water side (the Whittader). On either hand there was a spacious brae, in form of a half round, covered with delightful pasture, and rising with a gentle slope to a goodly height. Above us was the clear blue sky, for it was a sweet and calm Sabbath morning, promising to be indeed one of the days of the Son of man. There was a solemnity in the place befitting the occasion, and elevating the whole soul to a pure and holy frame. The communion tables were spread on the green by the water, and around them the people had arranged themselves in decent order. But the far greater multitude sat on the brae face, which was crowded from top to bottom—full as pleasant a sight as ever was seen of that sort. Each day at the congregation's dismissing the ministers with their guards, and as many of the people as could, retired to their quarters in three several country towns, where they might be provided with necessaries. The horsemen drew up in a body till the people left the place, and then marched in goodly array behind at a little distance, until all were safely lodged in their quarters. In the morning, when the people returned to the meeting, the horsemen accompanied them: all the three parties met a mile from the spot, and marched in a



full body to the consecrated ground. The congregation being all fairly settled in their places, the guardsmen took their several stations, as formerly. These accidental volunteers seemed to have been the gift of Providence, and they secured the peace and quiet of the audience; for, from Saturday morning, when the work began, until Monday afternoon, we suffered not the least affront or molestation from enemies; which appeared wonderful. At first there was some apprehension, but the people sat undisturbed, and the whole was closed in as orderly a way as it had been in the time of Scotland's brightest noon. And truly the spectacle of so many grave, composed, and devout faces must have struck the adversaries with awe, and been more formidable than any outward ability of fierce looks and warlike array. We desired not the countenance of earthly kings; there was a spiritual and divine Majesty shining on the work, and sensible evidence that the great Master of assemblies was present in the midst. It was indeed the doing of the Lord, who covered us a table in the wilderness, in presence of our foes; and reared a pillar of glory between us and the enemy, like the fiery cloud of old that separated between the camp of Israel and the Egyptians—encouraging to the one, but dark and terrible to the other. Though our vows were not offered within the courts of God's house, they wanted not sincerity of heart, which is better than the reverence of sanctuaries. Amidst the lonely mountains we remembered the words of our Lord, that true worship was not peculiar to Jerusalem or Samaria—that the beauty of holiness consisted not in consecrated buildings or material temples. We remembered the ark of the Israelites which had sojourned for years in the desert, with no dwelling-place but the tabernacle of the plain. We thought of Abraham and the ancient patriarchs who laid their victims on the rocks for an altar, and burnt sweet incense under the shade of the green tree.

"The ordinance of the Last Supper, that memorial of his dying love till his second coming, was signally countenanced and backed with power and refreshing influence from above. Blessed be God, for he hath visited and confirmed his heritage when it was weary. In that day Zion put on the beauty of Sharon and Carmel; the mountains broke forth



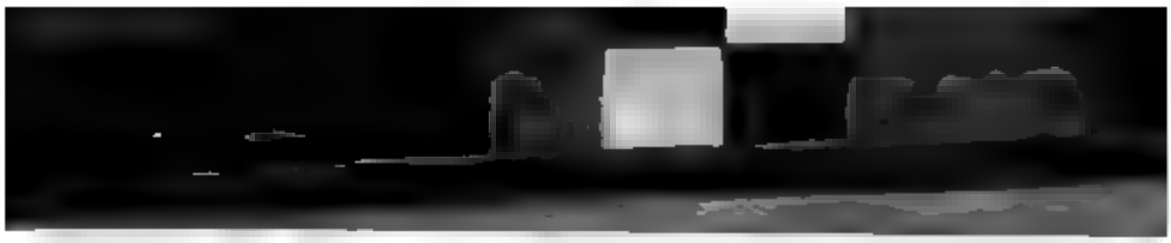
into singing, and the desert place was made to bud and blossom as the rose. Few such days were seen in the desolate Church of Scotland; and few will ever witness the like. There was a rich effusion of the Spirit shed abroad in many hearts; their souls, filled with heavenly transports, seemed to breathe in a diviner element, and to burn upwards as with the fire of a pure and holy devotion. The ministers were visibly assisted to speak home to the conscience of the hearers. It seemed as if God had touched their lips with a live coal from off his altar; for they who witnessed declared, they carried more like ambassadors from the court of heaven, than men cast in earthly mould.

"The tables were served by some gentlemen and persons of the gravest deportment. None were admitted without tokens as usual, which were distributed on the Saturday, but only to such as were known to some of the ministers or persons of trust to be free of public scandals. All the regular forms were gone through. The communicants entered at one end and retired at the other, a way being kept clear to take their seats again on the hill-side. Mr. Welsh preached the action sermon and served the first two tables, as he was ordinarily put to do on such occasions. The other four ministers, Mr. Blackader, Mr. Dickson, Mr. Riddell, and Mr. Rae, exhorted the rest in their turn; the table service was closed by Mr Welsh with solemn thanksgiving; and solemn it was, and sweet and edifying to see the gravity and composure of all present, as well as of all parts of the service. The communion was peaceably concluded, all the people heartily offering up their gratitude, and singing with a joyful voice to the Rock of their salvation. It was pleasant as the night fell to hear their melody swelling in full unison along the hill; the whole congregation joining with one accord, and praising God with the voice of psalms.

"There were two long tables and one short across the head, with seats on each side. About a hundred sat at every table. There were sixteen tables in all, so that about three thousand two hundred communicated that day."[1]

We are unwilling to injure by any reflections of ours the impression which this beautiful and authentic description of

[1] Blackader's Mem. MSS. Adv. Lib.; Crichton's Memoirs of Blackader, *pp.* 198–206.



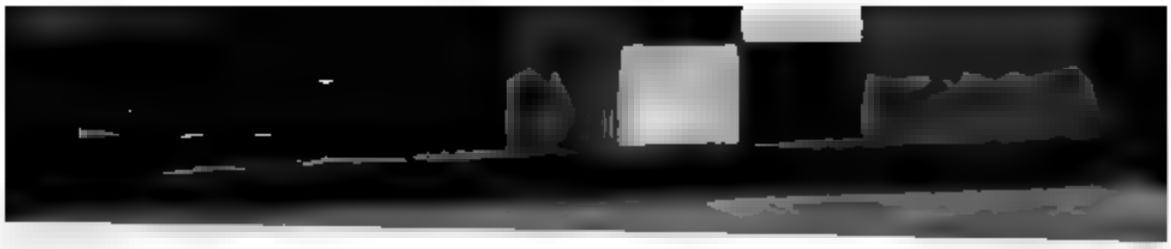
a Scottish Covenanter's communion is fitted to leave on the reader. But we cannot conclude the present chapter without observing how much their enemies have belied these brave, pious, and much-enduring men, when they represent them as animated by the spirit of the gloomiest bigotry and the wildest fanaticism—enemies to all civil order, and strangers to everything that can humanize and exalt mankind. We have seen how peaceful, how holy, how harmless, their intentions were; and after reading such a description from the pen of an old Presbyterian minister, can we suppose they were really men of coarse and vulgar minds, so incapable of relishing the beauties of external nature, or entering into the finer feelings of the heart, as they have been represented? Even in a literary point of view it is exquisitely fine, and presents a striking contrast to the rant and extravagance usually put into the mouths of the Covenanters. And on contemplating such a scene as that now described the reflection is apt to rise—Were these the men who in a few years afterwards were trampled on by the dragoons of the bloody Claverhouse, shot in the fields, or dragged as felons to attest by a more ignominious death on the scaffold, how dearly they loved and how deeply they feared the God of their fathers? If in after years some were driven by oppression almost literally mad—if, hunted from mountain to moor, and from moor to mountain, they gave way to excesses with which in the hour of cool reflection and in the day of peace we cannot sympathize, these certainly cannot be traced either to the character of the men or the religion they professed; but to the ruthless violence and tyranny of their enemies, who were thus rendered responsible not only for the blood they shed, but for those very excesses which they made the pretext for shedding it.

It may be interesting to state here, that of the five ministers who officiated at this communion, and who held frequent meetings of the same kind, four were afterwards imprisoned on the Bass Rock, namely, Messrs. Blackader, Dickson, Riddell, and Rae; the other, Mr. John Welsh, though the most active at these conventicles, they could never apprehend. Mr. Blackader, the amiable, the undaunted, and the faithful minister who drew the above description, died in the Bass, in his seventieth year, of a distemper con-



tracted in that damp and unwholesome prison. His only crime was that he had preached at these conventicles, and that he would not submit to any restrictions on his ministerial freedom. And yet none of these men advocated extreme measures. They belonged to what was termed "the moderate party" among the Presbyterians; and declined to take part with those who threw off all allegiance to the government, and all communion with those who accepted the indulgence. When Sir Robert Hamilton, who headed the small party afterwards known as Cameronians, ordered them to preach against the indulgence, Mr. Rae, in name of the rest, replied, "that he had been wrestling against Erastianism in the magistrate for many years, and he would never truckle to the worst kind of Erastianism in the common people—that he would receive no instructions from him nor any of them as to the matter of his sermons; and wished Hamilton might mind what belonged to him, and not go beyond his sphere and station."[1]

[1] Wodrow, vol. iii. p. 93.



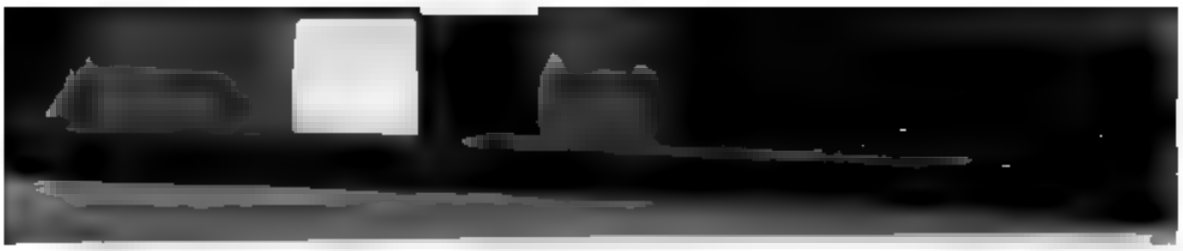
CHAPTER XIV.

1677 — 1679.

The blinks—Trial and execution of Mitchell—Assassination of Archbishop Sharp—Severe proceedings against the Presbyterians—Sir George Mackenzie—Graham of Claverhouse—The Highland host—The Cess—The skirmish at Drumclog—Battle of Bothwell Bridge.

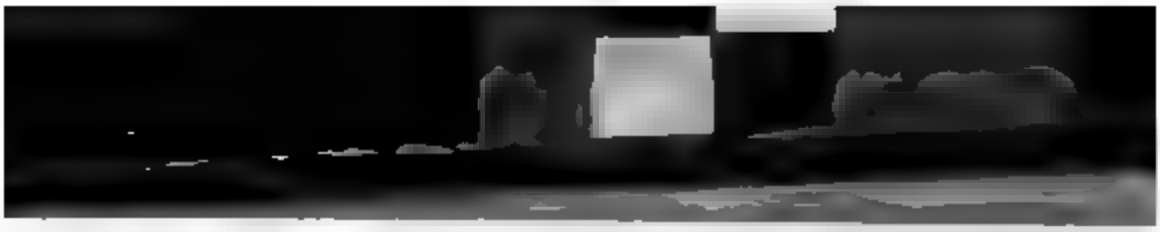
The interval between 1669, when the indulgence was introduced, and 1676, the year immediately preceding that on which we now enter, was a period of comparative quiet to the Presbyterians, who, though still molested in various ways for their nonconformity, continued, notwithstanding the severe edicts passed against them from time to time, to convene in large numbers for public worship in the open fields. Many of the landed proprietors and tenantry suffered severely from the fines imposed on them for this offence, but they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and the brief intervals of peace during which they were permitted to enjoy the precious ordinances of religion, and which were emphatically termed in rustic phrase *the blinks*, amply compensated for the passing storms that preceded and followed them. Hitherto these meetings, or conventicles as they were called, though held in wild and unfrequented parts of the country, and attended by some in arms for self-defence, had been conducted with all the decorum of a worshipping assembly collected within the walls of a chapel. As we advance, however, the scene assumes a sterner aspect. Through the unrelenting violence of persecution these decent congregations were transformed into what their persecutors had at first, either from terror or in malice, falsely represented them to be—battalions of armed men resolved to defy opposition, and prepared to take the field against their aggressors.

Several causes concurred to produce this change. By a



series of oppressive measures the minds of the people at large had become soured against the government, and particularly against the bishops, whom they regarded as the chief instigators of all these proceedings. But certain incidents, originating in the imbittered feelings of individuals, prepared for the explosion. Among these may be mentioned the cruel treatment and execution of James Mitchell the preacher, who, some years before, had attempted the life of Archbishop Sharp. How he had contrived to elude his pursuers since that daring exploit we are not informed; but in 1674 he was recognized at a minister's funeral and apprehended. Sharp, it is said, retained a lively recollection of the features of the man, but there was no other proof; and though Mitchell freely confessed his accession to the rising at Pentland, he would not acknowledge that he was the person who made the attempt on the archbishop, until he obtained an assurance of his life. This was given him by the chancellor in these solemn words: "Upon my great oath and reputation, if I be chancellor, I will save your life." Sharp also is said to have sworn with uplifted hand that no harm should come to him if he made a full discovery.[1] Upon these assurances Mitchell made a full confession. Having thus induced him to become his own accuser, the council consulted what should be done with him. Some were for cutting off his right hand; others, alleging that he might learn to practise with his left, proposed that both hands should be amputated; others, that he should be sent to the Bass Rock, now used as a place of confinement for the Covenanters. Previous to this, however, it was thought necessary to make him repeat his confession in a court of judicature. On being brought up for this purpose, the judge, who was no friend to Sharp, whispered to the prisoner in passing to the bench, "Confess nothing, unless you are sure of your limbs as well as your life." Alarmed at this suggestion, and knowing that his former confession, being extrajudicial, could not be legal evidence against him, Mitchell refused to repeat or judicially subscribe it. The council pretended to take offence at this, and passed an act, in which, after stating the fact that the prisoner "did confess upon his knees that he was the person, *upon assurance given*

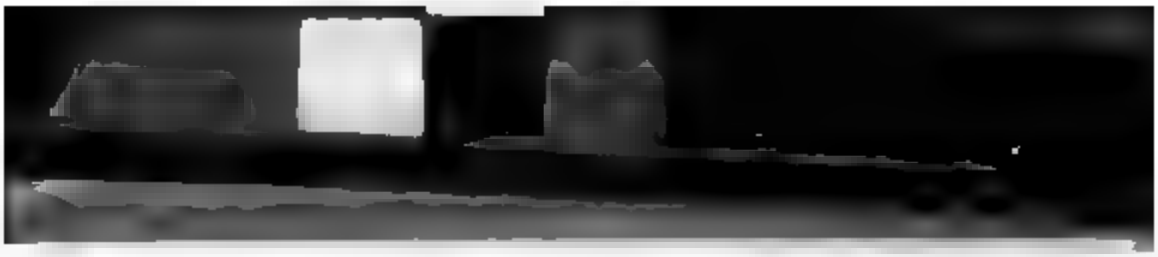
[1] Burnet's Hist. i. 176.



him by one of the committee as to his life, who had warran. from the lord-commissioner and secret council to give the same," they declare that since he had retracted his confession, they likewise recalled their promise of pardon; "the meaning of which," says Burnet, "was this, that if any other evidence was brought against him the promise should not cover him; but it was still understood that this promise secured him from any ill effect by his own confession."[1]

Whatever the understanding of the council might be, Mitchell was sent to the tolbooth, where he lay for two years, forgotten by all but Sharp, who could not rest in peace so long as his enemy was in life. In 1676 he was again brought before the council, to be examined by torture concerning his share in the Pentland insurrection. The firmness with which the prisoner bore this shocking and disgraceful treatment, invested his character with an importance which did not otherwise belong to it. He boldly refused to become his own accuser. "Sir," cried the president, pointing to the *boots* lying on the table before him, "we will cause a sharper thing make you confess—you see what is on the table!" "My lord," said Mitchell, "I confess that by torture you may cause me to blaspheme God, as Saul did compel the saints; but if you shall, my lord, put me to it, I here protest before God and your lordships, that nothing thus extorted from me shall be made use of against me in judgment. To be plain with you, my lords, I am so much of a Christian, that whatever your lordships shall legally prove against me, if it be a truth I shall not deny it; but, on the other hand, I am so much of a man and a Scotsman, that I can never hold myself obliged by the law of God, nature, or the nation, to become mine own accuser." The executioner was called, and having bound the prisoner in an armchair, he asked which of the legs he should put in the boot. They said he might take either of them he pleased; and he was about to select the left one, when Mitchell said, "Since the judges have not determined, take the best of the two, for I freely bestow it in the cause," and put his right leg in the engine. "My lords," he then said, "not knowing that I shall escape this torture with my life, I beseech you to remember, he who showeth no mercy shall have judg-

[1] Burnet's Hist. i. 177.

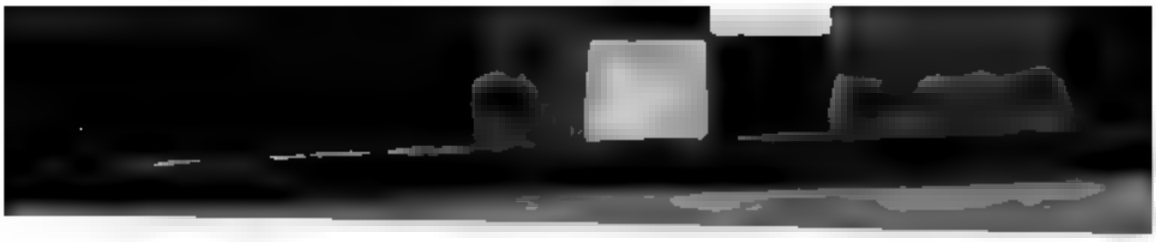


ment without mercy. And I do entreat that God may never lay it to the charge of any of you, as I beg that he may be pleased, for His Son Christ's sake, to blot out my sins, and never lay them to my charge, here or hereafter." Nine strokes were given to the wedges of the horrid instrument, and after every stroke, to the question if he had any more to say, he replied, "No more, my lord." At the ninth he fainted, through agony, and the executioner exclaimed, "Alas! my lord, he is gone, he is gone;" upon which he was carried to prison in the chair in which he had suffered.

He was afterwards sent to the Bass; and two years longer did this maimed prisoner, against whom nothing had as yet been legally proved, lie in confinement, till, Sharp being determined to have his life, he was brought to trial in January, 1678. The prisoner's counsel pleaded in his behalf the promise of life which had been given him; but to the astonishment of the whole country, it was confidently denied by Rothes, the chancellor, and the other lords of council, that any such promise had been made. Sharp, likewise, solemnly denied that he had given any such assurance, and that, too, in the face of the deposition of the person to whom he had made it. It was then proposed to examine the registers of the council to ascertain the fact; but Lauderdale said he was sure it was not possible, and would not give himself the trouble to look for it. Mitchell was condemned to suffer death; and as soon as the court broke up, their lordships went up-stairs, where, to be sure, they found the act recorded, and signed by Rothes, as president of the council. Some proposals were then made for a reprieve; but Sharp insisted that the sentence should be fulfilled, on the ground that if favour were shown to such an assassin, it would be, in effect, exposing his person to any man who would attempt to murder him." "Then," said Lauderdale, with his usual coarseness, "let Mitchell glorify God in the Grassmarket."[1] And there, accordingly, he was executed on the 18th of January, submitting to his fate with the utmost heroism and resignation.[2]

We cannot be expected to vindicate the crime with which

[1] Burnet, i. 181.
[2] Wodrow, i. 375-377. and 510-513, fol.; Naphtali, App.



this person stood charged. Had it been legally proved against him, his ignominious end was no more than what the law demanded, and little more could have been said than that this was another added to the list, if not of martyrs to the truth, at least of victims to the tyranny by which the truth was oppressed. With the exception of this one rash act perpetrated under mistaken notions of duty, the character of the man seems to have been irreproachable, notwithstanding the aspersions of those who have attempted to vindicate the judges by blackening the reputation of the criminal.[1] But even had Mitchell been as unprincipled as they would represent him, this could never justify the shameful breach of public faith and perversion of justice manifested in his treatment.[2]

On this tale of perfidy and cruelty we would not have dwelt so long, had it not been closely connected with another deadly tragedy. We refer to the assassination of Archbishop Sharp. The details of this transaction are too well known; for it has been the policy of the enemies of our Presbyterian ancestors to paint it in the most hideous colours, and bring it forward on all occasions, as quite sufficient to justify all

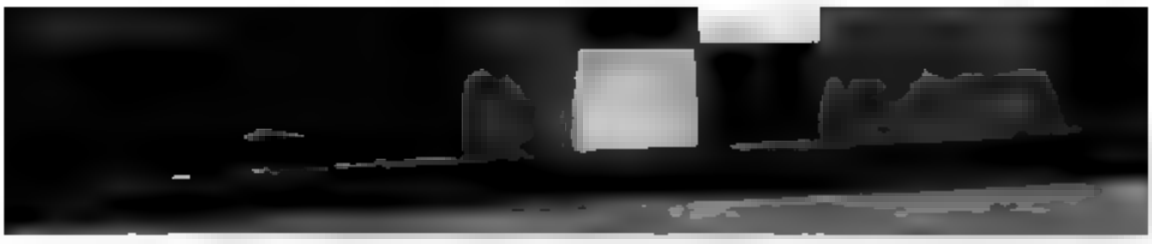
[1] We allude to Dr. Hicks, Lauderdale's chaplain, and to the writer of a scurrilous pamphlet, published after the Revolution, which was filled with such notorious falsehoods, that even Hicks disclaimed it publicly, but which falsehoods have been repeated by Mr. C. K. Sharpe, in his edition of Kirkton's History (See *Wodrow*, ii. 454.)

[2] "And thus," says Fountainhall, "they hunted this poor man to death, a prey not worthy of so much pains, trouble, and obloquy, as they incurred by it, and some of their own friends and well-wishers desired they had never dipped in it, but only kept him in perpetual imprisonment, for it made a wonderful noise in the country, who generally believed the law was stretched to get his neck stretched, and they feared preparatives; and satires and bitter verses immediately flew abroad like hornets in great swarms, which were caressed and pleasantly received, speaking much acrimony, and an almost universal discontent. He was but a simple melancholy man, and owns the fact, in the papers he left behind him, as an impulse of the Spirit of God, and justifies it from Phinehas killing Cosbi and Zimri, and from that law in Deuteronomy commanding to kill false prophets that seduced the people from the true God. *This is a dangerous principle, and asserted by no sober Presbyterian* On the scaffold they beat drums when he began to touch the chancellor. They say Major Johnston undertook to stab him if he had attempted to escape, or any had offered to rescue him The secret council would have given him ane reprievall, *if the archbishop would have consented.*" (*Fountainhall's Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs.*) All the facts stated in the text are confirmed by Fountainhall, who represents the conduct of Sharp and the council in a light still more odious than is done in the text (*Hist Notices*, p. 181, *et seq.* See also his *Historical Observes*, App. No. 3.)



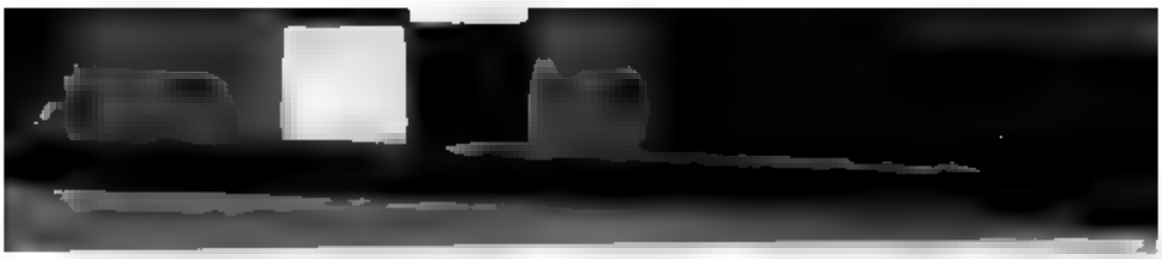
the severities they suffered, and verify all the calumnies heaped upon them. The circumstances of the case, in which the accounts on both sides materially agree, were briefly and simply these; A fellow of the name of Carmichael, a bankrupt merchant, and once a bailie in Edinburgh, had long acted in Fifeshire as a subordinate agent of Sharp, in prosecuting the nonconformists. In this office Carmichael recommended himself by his extreme severity, harassing, fining, torturing, and imprisoning men, women, and children. From these oppressions it was vain to seek redress; they were inflicted under the sanction of that very law to which, in other circumstances, the sufferers would have had recourse for protection; and, with their spirits fretted and chafed by the atrocities of this minion of oppression, they were driven to adopt a mode of relief which can never be vindicated, and from which they themselves would, in better times, have recoiled. On the 3d of May, 1679, twelve persons, including some gentlemen of good family, met together, and resolved to rid themselves of Carmichael by putting him to death, or at least by frightening him from that part of the country.[1] While watching for their victim, they were unexpectedly apprised that the archbishop himself was in the neighbourhood, and would shortly pass that way. In their excited and enthusiastic state, they looked upon this substitution as a sort of providential call upon them to free the country from one whom they justly regarded as the principal cause of all the bloodshed and oppressions of their brethren. "It seems," said they, abusing the language of Scripture, "that the Lord hath delivered him into our hands." During the hurried consultation which ensued, about mid-day, in a place called Magus Moor, near St. Andrews, the carriage of the archbishop drove up. He was on his return from Edinburgh, where he had only two days before succeeded, after a great struggle, in prevailing on the council to agree to a

[1] Among these the principal persons were David Hackston of Rathillet, and John Balfour, or Burley, as he was sometimes called—both brave men—though it does not appear that Balfour was a religious character, which Hackston certainly was. James Russell, another of the conspirators, who afterwards drew up an account of the transaction, was "a man of a hot and fiery spirit," and appears to have been the chief instigator of the attack on the archbishop. The whole of them may be justly termed enthusiasts, and no fair specimen of the sober and serious portion of the Presbyterian population.



severe proclamation against conventicles, making it treason for any to be found at field-meetings in arms; and on the following week he was to have taken a journey to court, to use his interest for more vigorous and stringent measures against the Presbyterians. The bishop was accompanied by his daughter, and no sooner saw the approach of the conspirators than he took the alarm, and ordered the coachman to drive with all possible speed. The carriage, however, was soon stopped—the servants disarmed, and the prelate sternly ordered to come out, and prepare for death. "I take God to witness," said the leader of the party, "that it is not out of any hatred of your person, nor from any prejudice you have done, or could do to me, that I intend now to take your life; but because you have been, and still continue, an avowed opposer of the gospel and kingdom of Christ, and a murderer of his saints, whose blood you have shed like water." He was then reminded of his perjury and cruelty, particularly in the case of James Mitchell. To all this, Sharp only replied by abject entreaties for mercy. He promised them indemnity—he offered them money—he even engaged to lay down his episcopal function if they would spare his life. But the conspirators had gone too far to recede. They remembered his past perfidy, and paid no respect to his promises; they remembered his inhumanity, and told him that as he had shown no mercy to others, he was to expect none from them. They earnestly and repeatedly called on him to pray, and prepare for death; and upon his refusing to do so, one of them fired upon him in the coach. The wretched man was at length compelled to come out, and on his knees he repeated his cries for mercy, appealing particularly to Hackston, who stood aloof, refusing to lay hands on him, but declining to interfere on his behalf. One only of their number pleaded for his life; the rest, after in vain attempting to prevail on him to prepare for his fate, fell upon him with their swords, and, in spite of the frantic outcries of his daughter, despatched him with numerous wounds.

It is impossible to justify this bloody and desperate action on any sound principles; and the great body of the Presbyterians, though they regarded it with awe, as the judgment of Heaven, yet viewing it as the deed of man, condemned



and disclaimed it. The mind revolts from contemplating such a scene, and the horror which it inspires is enhanced rather than abated by the reflection, that the wretched victim too well deserved his fate, and was hurried into eternity without manifesting any signs of repentance for his past life. From all accounts, it appears that the whole affair was unpremeditated, unthought of till within a few minutes of its execution; that it was the deed of a few desperate and hard-driven men, who acted without any concert with their brethren; and that it arose from their proceeding on the indefensible principle, that, the doors of public justice being shut, it became the duty of private individuals to execute the vengeance of God on notorious oppressors of the Church. At the same time, it is impossible not to feel indignant at the attempt of government at the time to fasten this crime on the whole body of Scottish Presbyterians. In a proclamation issued on the day after the assassination of Sharp, after describing the offence in the most exaggerated terms, it is added, "Daily instances whereof we are to expect, whilst field-conventicles, those rendezvouses of rebellion, and forgers of all bloody and jesuitical principles, are so frequented and followed." "These field-conventicles," says Wodrow, "were hitherto as free of any such doctrine as the churches were, and neither taught nor vindicated this attempt upon the bishop; and if we shall judge of principles from incidental actions of some in a society, we know where to lodge many murders in cold blood, for one alleged upon the frequenters of conventicles. And as in the whole of these twenty-eight years I am describing, there are but four or five instances of anything like assassinations attempted that I mind of, and *none of them ever defended* that I know of; so, in a few months time, we shall find twenty times that number cut off, without any process or ground, by people upon the other side."[1] There can be no question that the period was characterized by a striking disregard of human life. Allowances must be made for this on both sides. But when we hear the wailings of certain modern writers over the death of Archbishop Sharp, and the execrations which they launch not only against the actual perpetrators, but the whole of the Presbyterians of these times, we are tempted to inquire why

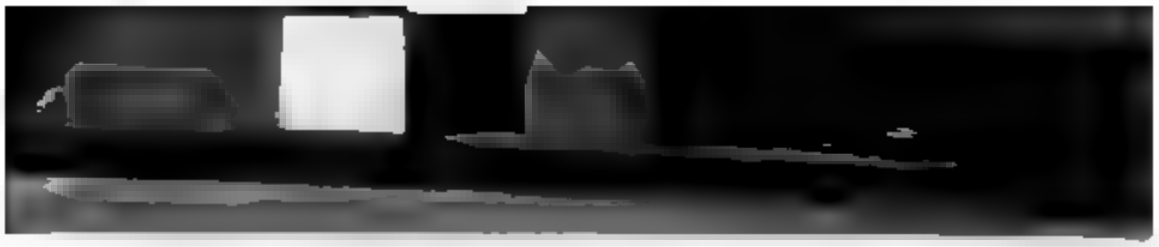
[1] Wodrow, i. 35, fol.



so much indignation should be expended on this deed, while not a drop of sympathy is allowed for the hundreds of poor people who were slain in fields, and in cold blood, by a ruthless soldiery, for no other crime than a bare suspicion that they were Whigs, or because they would not answer the ensnaring questions put to them in such a way as to please their military judges and executioners? If it is alleged that these persons were put to death at least under the sanction of law—we might answer in the words of the patriotic Lord Russel, who suffered shortly after this, that "killing by forms of law is the worst sort of murder." And if it is because the deed assumed the form of assassination that their sympathies for Sharp are so powerfully awakened, we are entitled to ask, Why are they not prepared to manifest the same virtuous abhorrence of the same crime in all similar cases?[1]

It is a remarkable fact that, notwithstanding all the efforts made by the government for apprehending the actors in the assassination of Sharp, none of those actively concerned was ever discovered. Hackston, indeed, afterwards suffered; but it was for his appearance in arms, not for his share in this transaction. The only individual executed expressly for the archbishop's death, was a poor weaver named Andrew Guillan, whose only share in the affair was that he was called

[1] Where is their sympathy for Dr Dorislaus, who, because he had acted as assistant counsel against Charles I., was assassinated by twelve individuals under the employment of the Marquis of Montrose, while he was unsuspiciously seated at table in his lodgings at the Hague? Where is their sympathy for Ascham and others, who were shortly after murdered by the Royalists? Where is their indignation at the assassination of Colonel Rainsborough, with regard to which Mrs. Macaulay remarks, that Clarendon, "to his eternal infamy, applauds every circumstance of the foul, unmanly deed" (*Druitt*, iv. 137, 264.) And what Presbyterian writer has ever spoken of the death of Archbishop Sharp in any way approaching to the following by a Royalist writer, describing the assassination of Captain Manning, the spy? "His treachery being discovered, he was, by his majesty's command, sent to a strong castle But his perfidiousness was so highly resented at court, that one of his majesty's servants (though contrary to order) pistolled him as he was lighting out of the coach at the castle gate, which, though it came far short of his desert, yet was not so well done, in sending the devil his due before his time, and robbing the hangman of his labour" (*England's Triumph*, p. 52.) It is Gibbon, we think, who declares he is more shocked and disgusted by reading the accounts of the execution of Servetus at Geneva, and the murder of Archbishop Sharp, than by all the tales of persecution, heathen or Christian. This frank acknowledgment of the infidel betrays the real truth, and leaves us no room to doubt that hatred to true piety, and not mere disgust at its perverted form, was the real source of the feeling expressed.



out of his house to hold the horses of the actors; and even he was discovered merely by a trick of the advocate at his trial. At one of his examinations, the lawyer was aggravating the crime, and looking to Andrew, observed how shocking it was to murder the bishop when he was on his knees praying. The simple man was so struck with the falsehood of this, that, forgetting his situation, he lifted up his hands and cried out, "O dreadful! he would not pray one word for all that could be said to him." This sealed his doom. But the fact that such a deed should have been committed in open day, by such a number, and yet not one of the actual perpetrators discovered, affords a striking proof of the universal detestation into which Sharp had fallen.

If any of the Presbyterians expected the fall of the archbishop to free them from persecution, they were grievously mistaken. Indeed, if we may judge from the consequences, we should say that Providence intended to teach them that it is not by such methods that his Church is to look for deliverance. The death of Sharp occasioned more bloodshed than ever he had effected during his life, and of the many years after, the first question put to any suspected Presbyterianism, was, "Do you think the death of Sharp in this period was murder?" a question which many had to answer in the affirmative, though conscience must not allowed, which to answer it at all, while some boldly declared that in their work and opinion it could not be called murder. Those who declined answering, did so partly from being indignant at the question about a deed with which they had no concern; and partly because, though they themselves would have had no freedom to engage in it, they could not bring themselves to condemn the motives of the actors, or to rank them with common murderers.[1] This, however, did not avail them; their silence was taken as consent to the murder, and they were exceedingly accordingly. The annals of the inquisition itself many cruel,

[1] Sir Walter Scott's *latest* opinion as to Sharp's death was that might "Such was the progress of a violent and wicked deed," he told, "instead and desperate men. It brought much scandal on the Presbyterian unjustly, for the moderate persons of that persuasion, comprehending most numerous, and by far the most respectable of the body, disdained so cruel an action, although they might be at the same time of opinion that the archbishop, who had been the cause of many men's violent death, merited some such conclusion to his own." (*Tales of a Grandfather*, ii. 295.)

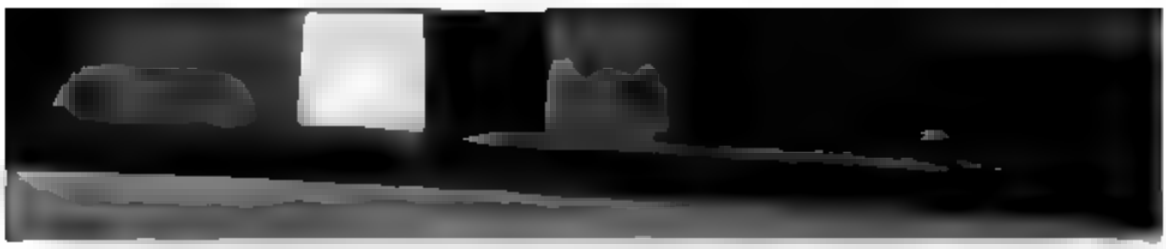


be searched for intolerance equal to this—that men should be condemned to death, not for any crime they had done, but for the *thoughts* they entertained, or rather for the thoughts their judges presumed them to entertain, about a crime committed by others!

The place of Sharp at the council board was soon supplied by others animated by the same spirit, and determined to prosecute the same measures with a rancour heightened by revenge. Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, who had been made king's advocate the preceding year, was a person in all points qualified to execute the designs of the prelates. Harsh, haughty, and tyrannical in his disposition, mean and unscrupulous in his measures, and ingenious only in glossing over their atrocity, he was the fittest instrument that could have been found to execute the cruel laws under which he attempted to hide and justify the malignity of his nature. Burnet calls him "a slight and superficial man;" a very imperfect descr[illegible] of one whose errors were those of the heart [illegible] e head, and who is more justly characterized they were[illegible] nt lines of the author of *The Sabbath*:—

locks to [illegible] hose favourite art was *lying* with address,
locusts, [illegible] whose hollow promise helped the princely hand
disgust [illegible] To screw confession from the tortured lips.
laid hand[illegible] hypocrite! thy character, portrayed
mitted[illegible] y modern history's too lenient touch,
Truth loves to blazon with her real tints;
di[illegible] To limn of new thy half-forgotten name,
[illegible] Inscribe with infamy thy time-worn tomb,
fi[illegible] And make the memory hated as the man."

[illegible] may be thought strange, considering the little sympathy [illegible] ards the rulers at this time, how they could succeed in [illegible] ocuring so many convictions. But this is easily explained. [illegible] the first place, they took special [illegible] to select the jury the[illegible], such classes of society or part[illegible] country as were when [illegible] rable to their measures. [illegible], at the trial of Mitto show th[illegible] was mostly composed of disbanded soldiers. enemy's land[illegible] f the jurymen, as was frequently the case, pans, [illegible] reluctance to convict, they were brow-beaten by the [illegible], or threatened by the king's advocate with an *assize of error*. This relic of barbarous times was a power intrusted to the public prosecutor, to bring any of the jurymen, or a majority of them, to trial, for not having decided accord-



ing to the law as laid down to them. Of this absurd and tyrannical engine to intimidate the jury Mackenzie made ample use; he no sooner observed any symptoms of hesitation, or a desire to befriend the prisoners at the bar, than, with a terrific frown, he would swear that if they did not give their verdict according to law, he knew what to do with them!

The sacred seat of justice being thus polluted and converted into an engine of tyranny, the prelates found another instrument equally well adapted for their purpose in the open field. We refer to John Graham of Claverhouse, a name, the very sound of which, till of late years, sent a shudder through every Scottish breast. Later attempts to invest it with the best attributes of the hero, have only revived that infamy under which it will certainly descend to the latest posterity. We shall not attempt to describe the character of this person. The unvarnished account of the actions of his life—a life spent in the pursuit of a military renown, acquired by massacring, in cold blood, the helpless, unarmed, and unoffending peasantry of his country—will furnish the best commentary on his character, as indeed it is the only picture of the man that has been handed down to us by genuine history.

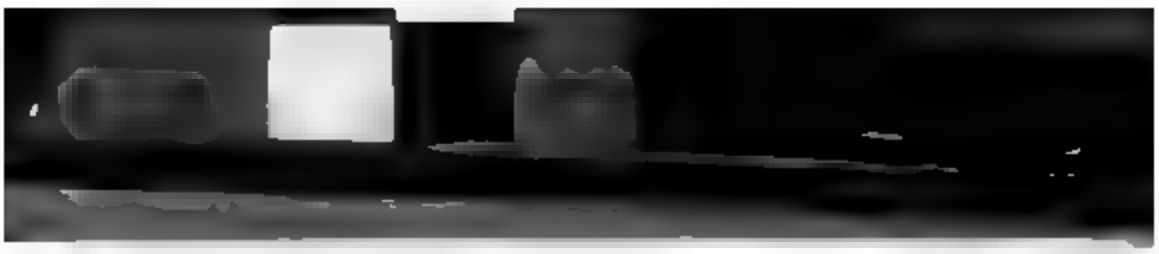
Among other schemes devised by the rulers of this period for provoking the Presbyterians to rebellion, we must not omit the invasion of the Highland host, as it was called, which had taken place the preceding year. The Duke of York and his friends, being anxious to find, or to create, some pretext for keeping up a standing army in England, with the view of advancing their design to restore Popery, it was agreed that a body of troops, levied in the Highlands, should be sent as a quarter on the west country, where the strongest opposition had been manifested to Prelacy, and where it was expected that the plundering habits of these half-cultivated mountaineers would be sure to stir up an insurrection. This nefarious design was readily acceded to by our Scottish councillors, who hoped to divide among themselves the estates that might be confiscated. "On Valentine's day," we are told, "instead of drawing mistresses they drew estates, and great joy appeared in their looks upon a false alarm that was brought them of an insurrection."[1] The more surely to effect their purpose, they prepared a bond, by which all noblemen, barons, and heritors,

[1] Burnet, ii. 184.



were to hold themselves obliged, under the heaviest penalties, not only to abstain from all conventicles themselves, but to prevent their "tenants, wives, bairns, and servants," from attending them; and in the event of their contravening this order, to apprehend them and bring them to justice. Some of the Ayrshire nobles and gentry, regarding this measure as levelled at them, went up to Edinburgh to remonstrate against it; which, says Burnet, "put Duke Lauderdale into such a frenzy, that, at the council table, he made bare his arms above the elbows, and swore by Jehovah he would make them enter into these bonds." Hearing that they intended to represent the state of matters to his majesty at London, an order was passed prohibiting any gentleman from leaving the country without permission from the council. Having thus made their preparations, the Highland host, to the number of eight thousand men, was mustered in January, 1678. Composed of "the very scum of that uncivilized country," squalid and half-clad, and carrying with them, besides the ordinary implements of war, "a good store of shackles, as if they were to lead back a vast number of slaves, and of *thumb-locks* to make their examinations with," they descended, like locusts, into the western shires, exciting everywhere mingled disgust and alarm. Being quartered upon the lieges, they laid hands on all portable goods within their reach, and committed every species of outrage short of murder, making no distinction in their exactions between those that had taken and those that had refused the bond. At length the rulers, finding their object defeated, and that the people bore all without showing any symptoms of insurrection, dismissed the Highlanders, after a campaign of about three months, laden with spoil. "When this goodly army returned homeward," says Kirkton, "you would have thought, by their baggage, they had been at the sack of a besieged city; and, therefore, when they passed Stirling bridge, every man drew his sword, to show the world they had returned conquerors from their enemy's land; but they might as well have shown the pots, pans, girdles, shoes, and other bodily and household furniture with which they were loaded."[1] Those who passed through Glasgow could not boast even of these trophies; for, on approaching the bridge, they found it blockaded by the

[1] Kirkton, p. 300.



students of the university, who compelled them to disgorge their prey, and allowed them to pass, forty at a time, as bare as they had come from their native hills.[1]

It will be necessary, however, to return to the west country, where the invasion of the Highland host was succeeded by oppressions which at length exasperated the country people to resistance. Among these we may notice the imposition of the *cess*, as it was termed, a tax raised expressly for maintaining the army intended to put down field-conventicles. A more odious tax can hardly be conceived. That they should not only be severely fined and punished for attending these meetings, but compelled to pay for the means of suppressing them, was such an outrage on the feelings of the people, that we might be prepared to hear it would be almost universally resisted. Yet the greater part submitted to the tax, contenting themselves with a protest against its use; thus declaring their readiness to suffer for religion if they should be called to account, and at the same time avoiding even the appearance of evil by refusing the magistrate's just right to levy cess and custom on the subjects. This, however, proved another "bone of contention;" the stricter and more rigid of the Presbyterians considering that by paying the cess they shared in the guilt of the purpose to which it was avowedly applied. The ministers who were banished to Holland loudly inveighed against the practice; and it was no doubt very easy for them, placed at a distance from the scene of oppression, as it may be for us who are free from all such exactions, to protest against those who yielded to them. But much may be said in behalf of those who submitted against their will to an imposition which they could not resist, and which, had they resisted, would have been wrested from them with the loss of all they possessed. On the other hand, the principles upon which some of the Presbyterians afterwards resisted the impost, and which are vindicated at great length in the *Hind let Loose*, were founded on the tyrannical character of the governors, and necessarily led to the casting off all allegiance or submission to the civil government.

Meanwhile the severe edicts passed against all who appeared at conventicles had only the effect of inducing them

[1] Wodrow, ii. 413.

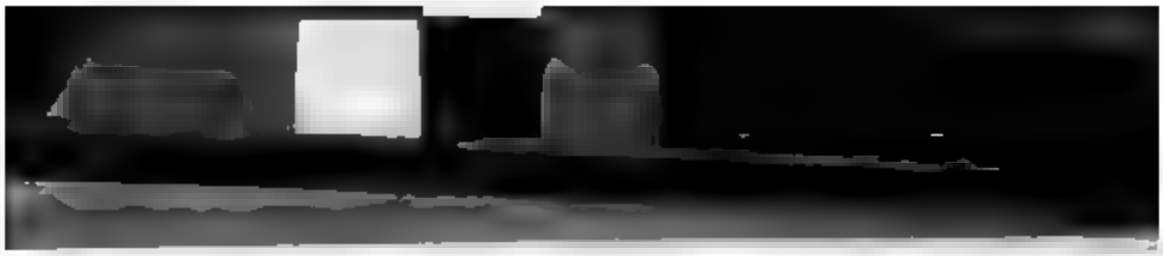


to meet in greater numbers. On the 29th of May, 1679, the day appointed for celebrating the restoration of Charles, a body of them amounting to eighty armed men, under the guidance of Sir Robert Hamilton, came to Rutherglen, where they extinguished the bonfires kindled in honour of the day, and affixed a declaration to the cross condemning all the proceedings of government since the Restoration; in confirmation of which testimony they publicly burnt at the cross all the acts which had been emitted against the work of the Reformation, "as our enemies," said they, "perfidiously and blasphemously have burnt our holy covenants through several cities of these covenanted kingdoms." Without stopping to inquire how far this decisive step was consistent with prudence, we cannot fail to admire its honesty and boldness. The country, however, was not prepared for a general rising, and no due means had been taken to follow up the movement, or to meet the consequences. The government took the alarm, and Claverhouse was despatched to the west with a body of dragoons, having unlimited power to kill and destroy all whom he found in arms. On his way he came suddenly upon the town of Hamilton, where he seized Mr. John King, chaplain to Lord Cardross, with about fourteen others, and carried them away prisoners bound two and two, his men driving them before them like so many sheep.

On Sabbath morning, the 1st of June, 1679, intelligence was brought to a large field-meeting held that day at Loudonhill, of the approach of Claverhouse and his dragoons; upon which all who were armed resolved to leave the meeting, face the soldiers, and, if possible, relieve the prisoners. Accordingly, about forty horse and one hundred and fifty or two hundred foot, came up with Claverhouse and his party near Drumclog, in the parish of Evandale, about a mile east from Loudonhill.

The particulars of the skirmish which followed are well-known, having furnished matter for fictitious as well as authentic narratives by writers of opposite parties, coloured according to their principles or prejudices.[1] The following

[1] A very animated and graphic account of the battles of Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge appeared some years ago in an American work, and is reprinted in the recent editions of the *Scots Worthies*. It is said to have been taken from the lips of the laird of Torfoot, a veteran Covenanter, who had emigrated to America. The laird's description of the manly prowess, the



are the simple facts, in which all authentic accounts agree. After a short and very warm engagement, Balfour of Burley with some horse, and Colonel Cleland with some of the infantry, boldly crossed the morass which lay between the combatants, and attacked the dragoons of Claverhouse with such impetuosity that they were soon put to flight, leaving about forty killed on the field. Claverhouse's horse was shot under him, and he himself narrowly escaped. Before commencing the engagement he had given the word, "No quarter," and ordered those who guarded King and the other persons to shoot them, in the event of his troops being worsted; but the soldiers were soon compelled to flee for their own safety, and the prisoners escaped. The dragoons taken by the Covenanters received quarter, and were dismissed without harm, much to the displeasure of Hamilton, who insisted on their being dealt with as they intended to have dealt with the Covenanters.

Panic-struck and filled with rage at his defeat, Claverhouse fled from the field of Drumclog, and never slackened rein till he reached Glasgow. Thither he was pursued by Hamilton, who made an attempt to take the city; but the inhabitants not only refused to rise, but shamefully maltreated some of his soldiers, who fell wounded in their streets. At this time Sir Robert's troops amounted, according to his own account, to about six thousand horse and foot. They consisted, it is true, chiefly of raw undisciplined countrymen, ill supplied with arms or ammunition; but had they been properly managed, such was their courage and determination, that they might have kept the royal troops in check, and procured, if not victory, at least honourable terms. Unhappily, however, a spirit of disunion began to appear among their leaders, who, instead of combining against the common enemy, spent their time in hot disputes about points in which the most hearty and genuine friends of the Presbyterian cause differed from each other.

These disputes referred to the indulgence; and it may ap-

generosity, and cheerful devotion of the Covenanters, presents a most striking contrast to Sir Walter Scott's picture in his tale of *Old Mortality*. Both descriptions are highly coloured; but while the main facts are the same, there appears much more verisimilitude in the tale as told by the Covenanter, than in that of the novelist. The integrity of the American editor seems to be placed beyond all question.



pear strange that there should have been any controversy about a subject with regard to the sinfulness of which all of them were agreed. The question agitated was not whether the indulgence was lawful, but whether the acceptance of it should be expressly condemned in the proclamation to be made by those who were in arms, and numbered among their causes of fasting. This was opposed by some as inexpedient, because it would hinder many from joining them who were cordial friends to Presbytery; and it was proposed that this point should be reserved for the determination of a free General Assembly.[1] At the head of this party was Mr. John Welsh, whose expulsion from Irongray was formerly noticed, and who was not only in his own judgment opposed to the indulgence, but had been intercommuned for preaching in the fields for many years. Among all the eighteen ministers present, there was not one who had accepted the indulgence, or who approved of it. Sixteen of these ministers while they condemned the Erastianism of the indulgence, and deplored the conduct of their brethren who had accepted it, were not prepared to exclude them from their ranks, or refuse aid from them in the common cause. Though they themselves could not conscientiously submit to the restrictions, or the acknowledgments implied in that insidious measure, they were disposed to make allowances for such of their brethren as had yielded under strong temptation or plausible arguments; and they argued, that whatever ecclesiastical censure their conduct might afterwards be found to deserve, to deny them in the meantime the opportunity of vindicating their rights and liberties, civil and religious, by excluding them from the army, would be no less presumptuous and unjust in principle, than it was preposterous in the present circumstances of the country.

This liberal view of the subject was opposed by only two of the ministers, namely, Mr. Cargill and Mr. Douglas; but these were supported by a considerable number of the lay leaders of the army, at the head of whom was Sir Robert Hamilton.[2] Hamilton appears to have been a pious man, and of good intentions; but of narrow views, severe in his

[1] M'Crie's Miscellaneous Writings, Review of Tales, &c., p. 437.

[2] He is generally styled Sir Robert in the accounts of this period. He was a gentleman of good family, being brother to Sir William Hamilton of



temper, and altogether unqualified by want of military talents and experience, for the command which he assumed. He is charged, and apparently not without reason, with having been active in pushing Cargill, Cameron,[1] and some other ministers, to those extremes which produced a breach between them and their brethren, with whom they had until of late acted in concert.[2] This party now began to maintain that the king, by assuming an Erastian power over the Church, had forfeited all right to the civil obedience of his subjects; a principle which had never been known in the Church of Scotland before, and which was afterwards carried to a great extent by Richard Cameron and his followers, who from him were termed Cameronians. On the present occasion they insisted that there should be inserted in the statement of their quarrel a decided condemnation of those who had taken the benefit of the indulgence; and proceeding on a mistaken view of the principles advocated by the Church of Scotland in the time of the Engagement, and by the Protesters in their contendings against the public resolutions, they refused to admit any into their ranks but those who would condemn and testify against the indulgence.[3]

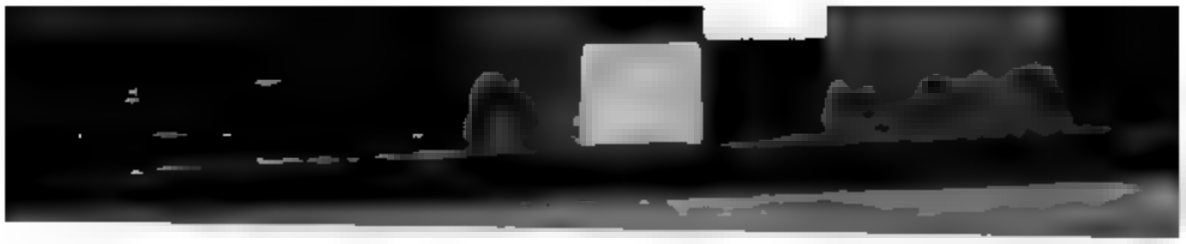
The violence, pertinacity, and extravagance of this party, prevailed over the more sober counsels of their brethren; and the consequence was, that several of the latter left the army in disgust. Still, however, the great body of the people remained, and though placed in the most unfavourable

Preston, to whose title and estates he would have succeeded had he not disowned the authority of William and Mary. (*M'Crie's Mem of Veitch*, &c., p. 452.)

[1] Richard Cameron was not present at Bothwell, being at that time in Holland, but he returned to Scotland shortly after. He declared to the ministers who licensed him, "that he would be a bone of contention among them; for if ever he preached against a national sin in Scotland, it should be against the indulgence, and for separation from the indulged." (*P. Walker's Biograph. Presbyter*, i. 292.)

[2] M'Crie's Mem. of Veitch, &c., Notices of James Ure, p. 452. I am sorry I cannot retract the judgment here pronounced on the character of Hamilton, the correctness of which has been challenged by some, but which is borne out by the whole of his history, and refers entirely to his public management, without any reflection either on his piety, his integrity, or his courage.

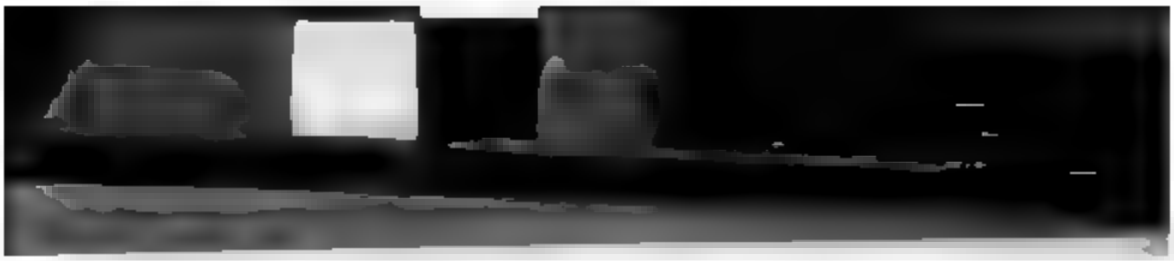
[3] M'Crie's Memoirs of Veitch, &c., p. 453; Wilson's Relation of the Rising at Bothwell Bridge, p. 13, *et seq* This writer's account is tinged with much party prejudice, and requires to be compared with other authorities. He lays the whole blame of the failure at Bothwell on Mr. Welsh and his friends, whom he terms the *Erastian* party.



circumstances for meeting the enemy, they drew up with determined front at Bothwell Bridge, where they awaited their approach. The Covenanters behaved with the utmost gallantry, but, overpowered by superior numbers, they soon gave way, and the royal army obtained an easy victory over troops divided and disheartened by the conduct of their leaders. The dragoons of Claverhouse, burning with revenge for their recent defeat, pursued the fugitives, and more were killed in the flight than in the field. Four hundred fell in battle; twelve hundred surrendered themselves prisoners, many of whom were reserved to suffer a more ignominious death on the scaffold. A system of indiscriminate carnage took place after the fight, on all in the neighbourhood whom the soldiers suspected of being Presbyterians, whether they had been on the field or not; so that multitudes perished of whom no account was taken, and no record has been preserved. This, however, was but "the beginning of sorrows." Scotland was placed under martial law, or rather at the mercy of military executioners; and many who never had been near the field of battle, nor taken part in the rising, were slaughtered in the fields or public roads, while engaged at their usual labour, on the bare suspicion of their being inclined to favour the cause in which their countrymen had fallen.

The conduct of the government towards the prisoners was characterized by the most disgraceful inhumanity. An act of indemnity, indeed, was passed, but with so many limitations, that the governors were left at ample liberty to select as many victims as they chose, to glut their vengeance, and appease the manes of Sharp. The two ministers, King and Kid, who had been rescued by the Covenanters at Drumclog, were afterwards apprehended and brought to trial. These gentlemen proved most satisfactorily that, though found among the insurgents, they had taken no share in their proceedings; that they were, in fact, detained among them by force; that they had refused to preach to them, and so far from encouraging them to rebellion, had used every argument to persuade them to return to their former loyalty and obedience; and that they had seized the first opportunity of escaping before the battle at Bothwell Bridge.[1] Notwith-

[1] Petition of Messrs. John King and Kid, Wodrow, iii. 133; Burns' edit.



standing these proofs they were first tortured with the boots, and though nothing more could be elicited from them, they were condemned to die. On the afternoon of the same day (August 14, 1679) on which the king's indemnity had been published by the magistrates of Edinburgh amidst the sound of trumpets and ringing of bells, these two innocent men were led forth to execution. As they approached the gibbet, walking hand in hand, Mr. Kid remarked to his companion with a smile, "I have often heard and read of a *kid* sacrifice." On the scaffold they behaved with a serenity and fortitude becoming the cause in which they suffered. Both of them bore faithful witness to the covenanted Reformation, as attained between 1638 and 1650, testifying against the public resolutions, the act rescissory, and other defections from that cause; but solemnly disclaiming the charge of rebellion under which they suffered, and vindicating themselves from the imputation of Jesuitism with which their enemies attempted to blacken their characters. "For that clause in my indictment," said Mr. Kid, "upon which my sentence of death is founded, viz., personal presence twice or thrice with that party whom they called rebels, for my own part, I never judged them, nor called them such. I acknowledge, and do believe, there were a great many there that came in the simplicity of their own hearts, like those that followed Absalom long ago. I am as sure, on the other hand, that there was a great party there that had nothing before them but the repairing of the Lord's fallen work, and the restoring of the breach, which is wide as the sea; and I am apt to think that such of these who were most branded with mistakes will be found to have been most single. But for rebellion against his majesty's person or lawful authority," he added, "the Lord knows my soul abhorreth it, name and thing. Loyal I have been, and wills every Christian to be so; and I was ever of this judgment, to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." "I thank God," said Mr. King, "my heart doth not condemn me of any disloyalty. I have been loyal, and do recommend to all to be obedient to the higher powers in the Lord. And that I preached at field-meetings, which is the other ground of my sentence, I am so far from acknowledging that the



gospel preached that way was a rendezvousing in rebellion, as it is termed, that I bless the Lord that ever counted me worthy to be a witness to such meetings, which have been so wonderfully countenanced and owned, not only to the conviction, but even to the conversion of many thousands. That I preached up rebellion and rising in arms against authority, I bless the Lord my conscience doth not condemn me in this, it never being my design; if I could have preached Christ, and salvation in his name, that was my work; and herein have I walked according to the light and rule of the word of God, and as it did become (though one of the meanest) a minister of the gospel."[1] Having made these solemn declarations of their principles, the two ministers were strangled to death, and their heads and arms having been cut off on another scaffold, were affixed beside the withered remains of James Guthrie.

Five of the common prisoners were then selected for execution, and though not one of them had been implicated in the death of Sharp, of which they were accused, though never convicted, they were sent to be executed on Magus Moor, and their bodies were hung in chains on the spot where the primate was killed. No reason can be assigned for this shameful act of the government, but that, in their rage at not discovering the real perpetrators of that outrage, they determined, in spite of all proof, to throw the odium of it on the whole body of the Presbyterians.

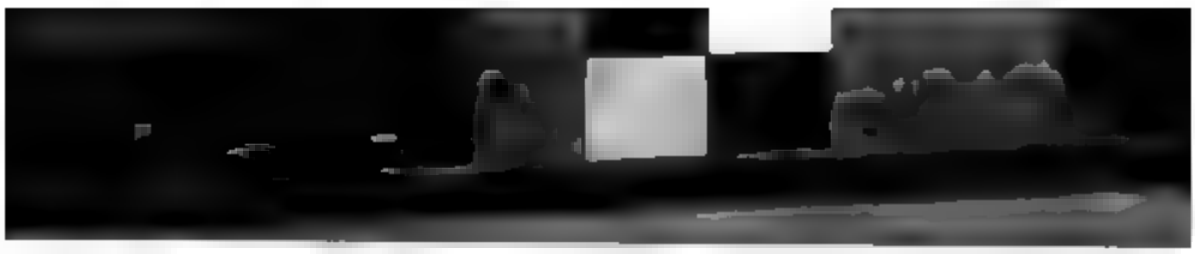
The fate of the rest of the prisoners was hardly less deplorable. Twelve hundred were huddled together into the Greyfriars' churchyard, with no other lodging than the cold earth, and no covering to shelter them from the weather —exposed to the brutal insults of the soldiers who guarded them, and who, if any of them attempted to lift a hand or a head to relieve their posture, shot at them without mercy. In this condition they were confined for five months. A few of them contrived to make their escape over the wall; some were set free upon signing a bond, obliging themselves never again to take up arms against his majesty; and out of four hundred who remained, some died in prison, others, worn out with hunger and suffering, were freed on petitioning for liberty to sign the bond. The rest, to the number

[1] Naphtali, pp. 427. 437. 438.



of two hundred and fifty-seven, were banished as slaves to Barbadoes. Early in the morning (November 15, 1679), these poor prisoners, many of whom were labouring under diseases produced by their barbarous confinement, were taken out of the churchyard, and, without any previous warning, were put on board a ship in Leith roads, under the command of one Paterson, a Papist, who had contracted with government to transport them. There the two hundred and fifty-seven were stowed into a place hardly capable of containing a hundred persons, so closely packed that the greater part were obliged to stand, in order to make room for their sick and dying companions to stretch themselves; many of them fainted, or were suffocated from want of air; and the seamen, as if the spirit of persecution had infected their usually generous natures, treated them with cruelty too shocking to be described. At length the vessel was overtaken by a storm on the coast of Orkney, and foundered on the rocks. All might have easily escaped; but, after securing the crew, the inhuman captain ordered the hatches to be locked upon the prisoners. Some forty or fifty contrived to save themselves by clinging to the boards of the ship, but two hundred met with a watery grave. The wretch who was guilty of this cold-blooded murder was never called to account. But the fate of those who perished was merciful, when compared with that of their companions who escaped this martyrdom. These were banished as slaves to the plantations in Jamaica and New Jersey, where they were compelled to labour under a burning sun, in the same gang with the negroes; and of two hundred and sixty who were so disposed of at different times during the persecution, very few remained to be released from their bondage at the Revolution.

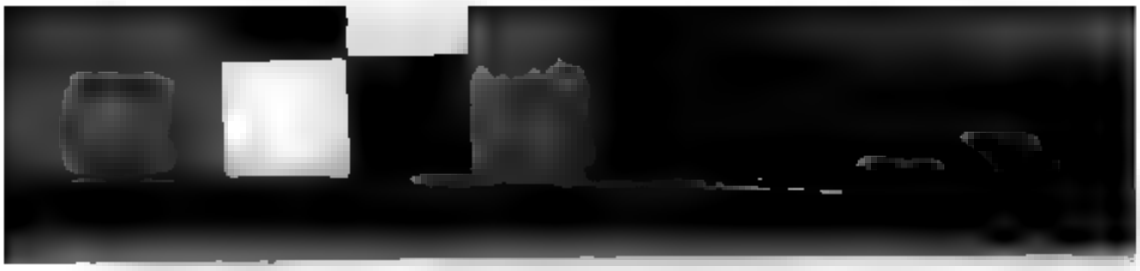
The rising at Bothwell may be vindicated on the same principles as that at Pentland, and on principles somewhat different from those on which several who were actually engaged in the attempt and suffered for it were inclined to vindicate themselves. Some of these excellent men now went the length of disowning the authority of the king and government altogether. They contended that, by overturning the true religion, by setting up Prelacy and Erastianism, by ruining the covenanted work of reformation, and by perse-

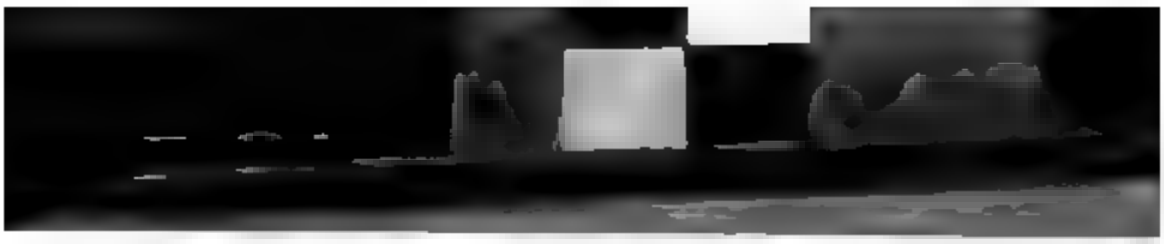


cuting to the death its faithful adherents, Charles had perfidiously violated the conditions of his coronation oath, and forfeited all right to their allegiance. Another party, however, much more numerous though less conspicuous, because less violent and extreme, defended their appearance in arms on other grounds. While they condemned the proceedings of the government as arbitrary and tyrannical, they were not prepared to renounce their allegiance to it in civil matters; they held with the compilers of our Confession, that "infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him;" and though they lamented as much as their brethren the general defection of all classes from the engagements of the covenant, they could not see how this denuded the sovereign of his authority, which they were ready to acknowledge so long as he was, by the common consent of the nation, recognized as its ruler. At the same time, they considered themselves warranted to assume the attitude of self-defence against the intolerable oppressions and illegal encroachments which had, "contrary to all law and humanity," been practised on them; and the reasons on which they justified their appearing in arms were chiefly these—that all other modes of redress had been closed against them; and that they found it necessary for the defence of the Protestant religion and Presbyterian government, and for the preservation of his majesty's person and throne from the projects of Popish adversaries. A declaration embodying these views was prepared and presented at the council of war, before the battle of Bothwell Bridge; but through the opposition of the more violent leaders it was unhappily rejected.[1] There is reason to believe that this paper contained the sentiments of the most judicious, as well as of the great majority of the suffering Presbyterians; and that, had it been adopted, it might have recommended their cause more to the country at large, procured greater accessions to their numbers, and perhaps have insured success at an earlier period of the contest.

In venturing these remarks we are far, very far, from allowing that those of the Covenanters who openly cast off allegiance to Charles suffered justly. However much they

[1] This declaration is given in Wodrow's Hist. iii. 96.





CHAPTER XV.

1679 — 1685.

Sketches of celebrated field-preachers—John Blackader—John Welsh—Archibald Riddel—Martyrdom of Mr. Hume—Richard Cameron—Hackston of Rathillet—The Gibbites—The Society people—Barbarities of the persecutors—Martyrdom of Isabel Alison and Marion Harvie—True grounds of the sufferings of our martyrs—Martyrdom of Margaret Wilson—Military executions—John Brown of Priesthill—Westerraw and Lagg—Retaliations—Enterkin Path—Patience of the sufferers—Death of persecutors.

One object of these sketches being to afford the reader a correct idea of the most distinguished characters who appeared in the history of our Church, as well as of the scenes in which they acted, we may take occasion here to notice some of the field-preachers who rendered themselves the special objects of the vengeance of the government at this period. And we shall commence with those who, though neither indulged nor approving of the indulgence, did not disown the authority of government, or refuse allegiance in civil matters; but who, loyal as they were, suffered for resisting the Erastian encroachments made by the civil rulers on the royal prerogatives of the King of Zion.

Among these a chief place is due to Mr. John Blackader, to whom we have had occasion already ro refer. Bold in spirit, steadfast in the faith, and dauntless in the exercise of his office, he was one of those denominated the *three first worthies*, because he, with Mr. Welsh and Mr. Semple, was among the first to unfurl the banner of the covenant in the Lomonds, and preach the gospel in the fields of Galloway and Nithsdale.[1] The sufferings he underwent, and the hazards he encountered in the course of his eventful life, would furnish materials for the most interesting romance. His eloquent

[1] Blackader's Sufferings, Adv. Lib. Crichton's Memoirs, p. 314.



and powerful discourses in the fields and fastnesses of Teviotdale were blessed, not only for the refreshment of the persecuted Presbyterians, who flocked from all quarters to hear him, but for the conversion of many of the inhabitants of these neglected districts, who, living in ignorance of the gospel, had hitherto been addicted to rapine and every species of outrage. Possessing a cultivated and well-balanced mind, warm-hearted but cool-headed and sagacious,[1] he lamented the excesses into which some of his brethren were driven, and used all his efforts to prevent those divisions and irritations which he foresaw would lead to the most disastrous results.[2] This excellent man, who was allied to a family of rank, though disclaiming all rebellious sentiments and practices, was at last apprehended; and because he would not bind himself to refrain from preaching wherever Providence might call him, was sent to the Bass, in the unhealthy dungeon of which, after a long imprisonment, he contracted a disease which terminated his useful life.

Mr. John Welsh was the son of Josias Welsh, minister of Temple-patrick in Ireland, who was designated "the cock of the north," and grandson to the celebrated John Welsh of Ayr. He was consequently great-grandson of the illustrious reformer John Knox; and he seems to have inherited from this line of truly noble ancestry the piety, the zeal, and the indomitable fortitude which distinguished them. He was settled in the parish of Irongray; and the reader cannot have forgotten the affecting scene which took place when he was ejected from his charge in 1662. But though compelled thus to leave the scene of his pastoral labours Mr. Welsh did not remain idle; he was constantly engaged in preaching at field-meetings, and frequently, notwithstanding all the edicts passed against him, he returned and preached, sometimes once a week, in his old parish, and baptized all the children. Nothing is more remarkable than the escapes which this faithful and undaunted minister met with on these occasions. He was present at Pentland and at Bothwell

[1] "Grace formed him in the Christian hero's mould.
Meek in his own concerns—in's Master's bold;
Passions, to reason chained, prudence did lead;
Zeal warm'd his breast, and reason cool'd his head."
(*Epitaph on Mr. Blackader's Tomb, Memoirs*, p. 310.)

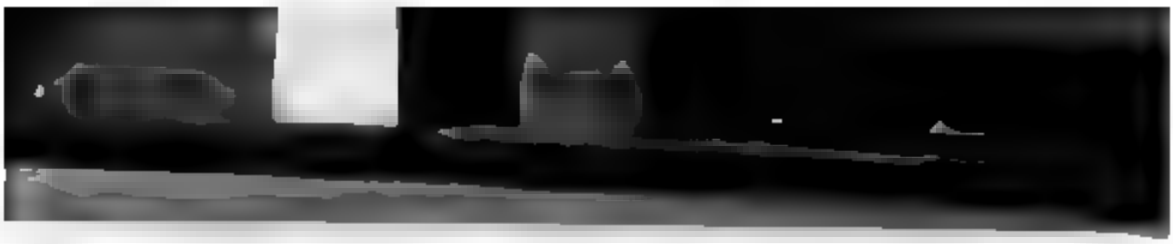
[2] Letter of Mr. Blackader to Mr. MacWard, Wodrow MSS. fol. 59.



Bridge; and at the latter place he took an active but unsuccessful part in endeavouring to allay the animosities about the indulgence, and counselling the younger and more violent leaders to adopt moderate measures. "He was," says Kirkton, "a godly, meek, humble man, and a good popular preacher; but the boldest undertaker (adventurer) that ever I knew a minister in Christ's Church, old or late; for notwithstanding all the threatenings of the state, the great price of £500 set upon his head, the spite of bishops, the diligence of all blood-hounds, he maintained his difficult task of preaching upon the mountains of Scotland many times to many thousands for near twenty years, and yet was kept always out of his enemies' hands. It is well known that bloody Claverhouse, upon intelligence that he was lurking in some secret place, would ride forty miles in a winter night; yet when he came to the place he always missed his prey. I have known Mr. Welsh ride three days and two nights without sleep, and preach upon a mountain at midnight on one of the nights. He had for some time a dwelling-house near Tweedside; and sometimes, when Tweed was strongly frozen, he preached in the middle of the river, that either he might shun the offence of both nations, or that two kingdoms might dispute his crime."[1] After all his dangers he died peaceably in his bed in London, on the 9th of January, 1681.

The intrepidity and self-possession of this worthy minister, to which, no doubt, under Providence, he owed many of his escapes, are illustrated by the following anecdote: On one occasion, being pursued with unrelenting rigour, he was quite at a loss where to flee, but depending on Scottish hospitality, he called at the house of a gentleman of known hostility to field-preachers in general, and to himself in particular, though he had never seen Mr. Welsh before. He was kindly received. In the course of conversation Welsh was mentioned, and the difficulty of getting hold of him. "I am sent," said Welsh, "to *apprehend rebels;* I know where he is to preach to-morrow, and will give you the rebel by the hand." The gentleman, overjoyed at this news, agreed to accompany his informant next morning. When they arrived, the congregation made way for the minister and his

[1] Kirkton's History of the Church of Scotland.



host. He desired the gentleman to sit down on the chair, at which, to his utter astonishment, his guest of the previous night stood and preached. During the sermon the gentleman seemed much affected; and at the close, when Mr. Welsh, according to promise, gave him his hand, he said, "You said you were sent to apprehend rebels, and I, a rebellious sinner, have been apprehended this day."

There is only one instance recorded in which Welsh spoke in a prophetic or foreboding strain; but it is one of the most remarkable we have met with. A profligate youth at the University of St. Andrews, who had come to hear Mr. Welsh preach, threw some missile at him in mockery, which struck him. Mr. Welsh paused, and before the whole multitude, which was very large, said, "I know not who has put this public affront on a servant of Jesus Christ; but be he who he may, I am persuaded there will be *more present at his death* than are hearing me preach this day!" It turned out to be a son of Sir James Stamfield of Newmilns, near Haddington; and, strange to say, some years after, this unhappy youth was executed for the murder of his own father.[1]

As a specimen of the manner in which peaceable Presbyterians who suffered at this period vindicated themselves, we might refer to the case of Mr. Archibald Riddel, brother to the laird of Riddel, who was charged, in 1680, with preaching at conventicles. Mr. Riddel denied that he had been preaching in the fields, but allowed that he had done so in private houses, while the people stood without doors. Preaching, even in private houses, without the consent of the incumbent of the parish, was now accounted high treason, as well as preaching in the fields. "Will you be content," said the lord-advocate, "to engage not to preach in the fields after this?" "My lord, excuse me," said Riddel, "for I dare not come under any such engagement." "This is strange," observed the advocate, "that Mr. Riddel, who has had so much respect to authority as not to preach in the fields since the indemnity, will not, out of the same respect, be content to engage to behave hereafter as he has behaved heretofore." "My lord-advocate, I can answer somewhat for the time past, but not for the time to come; I have not, since the indemnity, judged myself under a necessity to preach out of a

[1] Kirkton; Wodrow.



house, but I know not but He who has called me so to preach, may, before I go out of the world, call me to preach upon tops of mountains, yea, upon the seas, and I dare not come under any engagements to disobey his calls." "If I were of Mr. Riddel's principles," said the advocate, "and did judge in my conscience that the laws of the land were contrary to the laws of God, and that I could not conform to them, I would judge it my duty rather to go out of the nation and live elsewhere, than disturb the peace of the land by acting contrary to its laws." "My lord," replied Mr. Riddel, "if I do anything contrary to the laws, I am liable to the punishment due by the law." "That is not sufficient," said the advocate; "a subject that regards the public good of the land should, for the peace and welfare thereof, either conform to the law or go out of the land." The reply of Mr. Riddel to this reasoning, which has been the convenient logic of persecuting governments at all times, is worthy of notice: "My lord, I doubt *that* argument would militate against Christ and his apostles as much as against us; for they both preached and acted otherwise against the laws of the land; and not only did *not* judge it their duty to go out of the land, but the apostles, on the contrary, reasoned with the rulers—*Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye.*" "Will you promise not to preach in the open fields?" cried the judge from the bench. "My lord, I am willing to undergo what sufferings your lordship will be pleased to inflict on me, rather than come under such an engagement."[1]

Another case of the same kind is that of Alexander Hume, of Hume, in 1682. This worthy gentleman, whose only real offence consisted in his having attended conventicles, was accused, without any proof, of having had intercourse with some of "the rebels;" and indeed it was part of the cruel mockery of justice then in vogue, to insert as a preamble in every indictment against the Presbyterians all the insurrections that had taken place, with the murder of Archbishop Sharp, though they had nothing more to do with these acts than the judges who sat on the bench before them —a practice resembling that of the bloody inquisitors of Spain, who clothed the victims whom they condemned to the fire for heresy with cloaks, on which hideous likenesses of mon-

[1] Wodrow, iii. 198, 199.

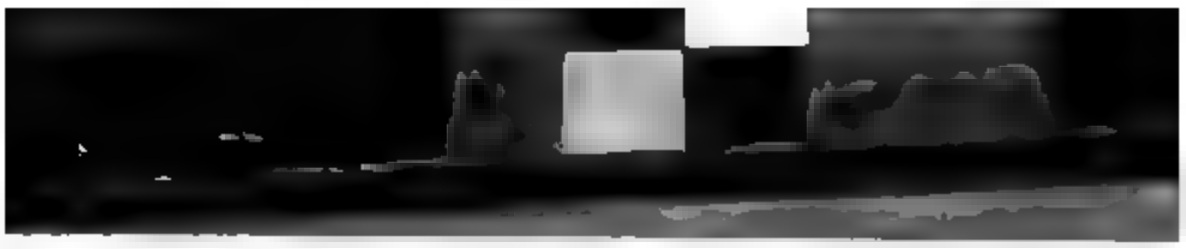


sters and devils were painted, to inflame the bigotry and repress the sympathy of the spectators. It is said that a remission of Mr. Hume's sentence came down from London several days before his execution, but was kept up by the Earl of Perth, a bigoted Papist and persecutor; and that when his lady, Isobel Hume, fell on her knees before Lady Perth to entreat for her husband's life, urging that she had five small children, she was repulsed in the most insulting manner, and in terms which cannot be here repeated. On the scaffold this pious and excellent sufferer vindicated his character from the aspersions of those who had thirsted for his blood. "The world represents me as seditious and disloyal," he said; "but God is my witness, and my own conscience, of my innocency in this matter. I am loyal, and did ever judge obedience unto lawful authority my duty, and the duty of all Christians. I was never against the king's just power and greatness; but all a Christian doth must be of faith, for what clasheth with the command of God cannot be our duty; and I wish the Lord may help the king to do his duty to the people, and the people to do their duty to the king." He then added, "My conscience bears me witness, I ever studied the good of my country. I hope I shall be no loser that I have gone so young a man off the stage of this world, seeing I am to make so blessed an exchange as to receive eternal life, the crown of glory. I bless his name he made me willing to take share with his persecuted people; for I hope I shall also share with them in their consolations. Farewell, all earthly enjoyments: farewell, my dear wife and children—dear indeed unto me, though not so dear as Christ, for whom I now suffer the loss of all things; I leave them on the tender mercies of Christ. And now, O Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus, receive my soul!" The fatal cord having been adjusted, he concluded by singing the last verse of the 17th psalm:—

> "But as for me, I thine own face
> In righteousness will see;
> And with thy likeness, when I wake,
> I satisfied shall be."[1]

These instances sufficiently prove that there were many

[1] Wodrow, iii. 418–420.



among the Presbyterians who suffered at this period perfectly unimpeachable in their loyalty, and whose only crime, even in the judgment of their accusers, was that they would not, and could not, comply with the dictates of human authority when these conflicted with the divine. And they show the falsehood of the pretence set up by the persecutors, that none were condemned during this period for their religion, but simply for sedition and rebellion. It is certain that there were some who went the length of disowning Charles and his government, and did not scruple to do so in the face of their persecutors; but the examples we have given (and many more might have been added) are sufficient to prove that, even in the case of those who went this length, it was not simply because they refused allegiance to the tyrant that they were condemned to die; but that they would have suffered with equal certainty though they had professed the utmost loyalty, provided they qualified that profession by declaring that they could not obey him in matters of religion.

At the head of those who set the authority of the government at defiance, and disowned all allegiance to the civil rulers, stood Richard Cameron. He was originally of the Episcopal persuasion, but having been led to hear the gospel preached in the fields he forsook the curates, and took license from the outed ministers. He entered on his labours with all the ardour of a new convert, who, tracing his first serious impressions to field-preachings, could not bring himself to think with patience of those who availed themselves of the indulgence. Finding that he could not help preaching against it, though he had come under a promise to refrain from it, he retired for a time to Holland, but returned in 1680, after the stipulated period, burning with a desire to disburden his conscience. His sermons were filled with predictions of the fall of the Stuarts, and the sufferings of Scotland which would precede it. But his course was brief; for in July of that same year Bruce of Earlshall, a violent persecutor, came upon him and his followers with a troop of dragoons, at a meeting held in a desert place called Ayrsmoss. On seeing the enemy approach, and no way of escape, the people gathered close around their minister, when he offered up a short prayer, repeating thrice the



memorable words—"*Lord, spare the green, and take the ripe!*" He then turned to his brother Michael, saying, "Come, let us fight it to the last; for this is the day that I have longed for, and the death that I have prayed for—to die fighting against our Lord's avowed enemies; and this is the day we will get the crown." And there, accordingly, he died, fighting manfully back to back with his brother. The enemy, foiled in their object, which was to bring him to an ignominious end, wreaked their vengeance on the inanimate body of the hero. They cut off his head and hands, and carried them to his father, who was then confined in the tolbooth of Edinburgh, tauntingly inquiring if he knew to whom they belonged. "I know, I know them," said the poor old man, taking them and affectionately kissing them; "they are my son's, my dear son's. Good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me nor mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days." They were then fixed upon one of the ports of the city, the hands being placed closed to the head, with the fingers upwards, as if in the posture of prayer. "There," said one of his persecutors, "there's the head and hands that lived praying and preaching, and died praying and fighting."[1]

In the same skirmish at which Cameron fell, David Hackston of Rathillet was taken prisoner. Having been one of those present, though passive, at the death of Archbishop Sharp, a large reward was offered for his apprehension; and having fallen into the hands of his enemies, they determined to pour upon him all the vials of their revenge. Upon his trial he boldly refused to own that the bishop's death was murder; and he was the first of those who, at the bar, openly declined the king's authority, as a usurper of the prerogatives of Jesus Christ. Being brought to the scaffold, first his right hand was struck off, and then his left; he was next drawn by a pulley to the top of the gallows, and suffered to fall with all his weight three times; while yet alive, his heart was torn out of his body, and then—but we refrain from adding more. Even at this distance of time the flesh creeps, and the blood runs cold at the bare recital of the cruelties perpetrated, under the sacred name of justice, on this unhappy gentleman.

[1] Biograph. Presbyter. i. 205; Wodrow, iii. 220.



Had our space permitted, we might have spoken of Donald Cargill, who was executed about the same time; Alexander Peden, and other remarkable characters of the period.[1] We shall only observe regarding them, that as the persecution waxed hotter they became more distinguished for that prophetic spirit which has furnished as much ground of profane ridicule to their enemies, as matter of superstitious veneration to some of their indiscriminate admirers. Here, also, the middle course appears to be the safest and the most rational. That they were men of God cannot be questioned, for they were men of prayer; and that they were favoured with very extraordinary pre-impressions of what was to come, which were actually verified in many instances, cannot be denied without questioning facts which have been amply attested. But in the case of some of them, it is equally vain to deny that much must be ascribed to the workings of imagination, excited almost to frenzy by the incessant watchings, turmoils, and apprehensions of a life imbittered by persecution, and spent in lonely caves and gloomy deserts. Placed in such circumstances, they were exceedingly prone, if not to create ideal pictures of coming misery, at least to exaggerate the reality. If the remains of some of these worthies appear to us sometimes rhapsodical, and at other times even bordering on irreverent familiarity, we must remember that, not only were the younger ministers of that period deprived by persecution of the advantages of a liberal education, or at least of leisure for study, but that, to appreciate their eloquence, we must have been born in the same century, and stationed on the same spot, and environed with the same perils as their hearers; and we ought not to criticize with the nicety of modern taste, productions which, homely enough as they came from the lips of the speaker, must have become still more so after passing from mouth to mouth in the traditions of a devout but unlettered peasantry.[2]

[1] Peden's character has been much exaggerated by friends as well as foes. Though enthusiastic, it does not appear that he was chargeable with one-half of the stories which have been told of him Wodrow denies, on the best authority, the genuineness of the strange book, entitled *Peden's Prophecies*. (Vol. iv. 397.) It is certain, however, that many of his prognostications were remarkably verified. The most striking of them was his announcement of the death of Charles II. (*Walker's Biograph. Presbyter.* i. 57.)

[2] We refer particularly to the Lives of Patrick Walker, now collected in



It would be equally unjust and ungenerous, however, to confound the high-toned and regulated enthusiasm of such men with the wild dreams and frantic extravagances of fanaticism. About the close of the persecution, a small sect arose, named the Gibbites or Sweet Singers, whose opinions and practices were highly extravagant and even impious. They derived that name from John Gibb, a sailor in Borrowstounness, who seems to have been labouring under insanity, but who prevailed on about thirty persons, chiefly women, to adopt his ridiculous notions. They denounced all besides themselves as backsliders, protested against all kinds of toll, custom, and tribute, and not only abstained from the use of ale, tobacco, and other excisable articles, but, that they might be placed beyond the reach of all such temptations, undertook a pilgrimage to the Pentland Hills, where they remained for some days, with a resolution to sit till they saw the smoke of the desolation of Edinburgh, which their mad leader had predicted. Like all other fanatics, they soon began to renounce the authority of Scripture, and some of them actually burned their Bibles. Against this sect none opposed themselves more zealously than Cargill and his followers, who regarded the ravings of Gibb as an impious caricature of their principles. The Duke of York and our Scottish rulers heard of them with undisguised satisfaction, as opportunely furnishing a pretext for exciting odium against the Covenanters. The Gibbites, as well as the Quakers, were gently dealt with, connived at, and even encouraged, while the faithful witnesses, with whom they were identified, were persecuted without remorse.[1]

The truth of history, however, requires that we should state here some of the steps taken by that party of the Presbyterians usually called Society People or Cameronians. One Henry Hall of Haughhead, in Teviotdale, a gentleman who was intimate with Mr. Cargill, and had suffered great persecution, was apprehended at Queensferry with a paper in his possession disowning the government, and containing some very strong and exceptionable sentiments. This paper, it

the *Biographia Presbyteriana*, and similar works, of which the enemies of Presbyterians have taken so much advantage

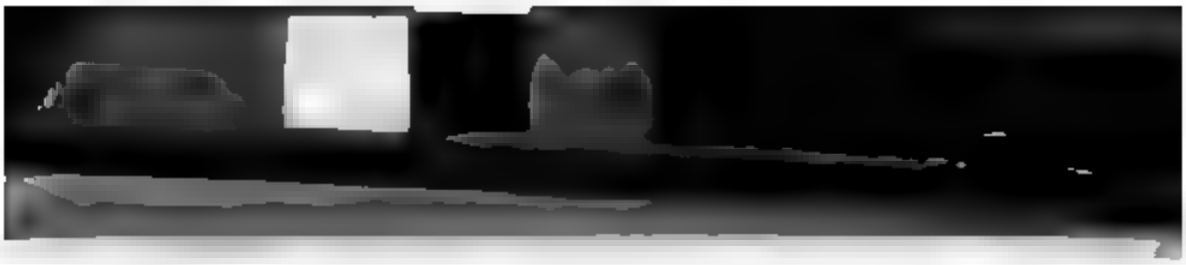
[1] Wodrow, iii. 518, &c.; Life of D. Cargill, in Walker's *Biograph. Presbyter.* ii. 16–21.



appears, was merely a scroll drawn up by Hall and Cargill, and more like a manifesto for a general rising of the people, than fitted for a suffering and subdued handful. It was never sanctioned by any meeting; but having fallen into the hands of the governors, it was held as indicating the sentiments and designs of all the Presbyterians. The *Queensferry Paper*, as it was called, was thenceforth quoted and used against all suspected of Presbyterianism. Shortly after this Cameron and Cargill, with some others, having broken off from the rest of the Presbyterian ministers, published a declaration at Sanquhar, differing a little from, but in the same strain with, the Queensferry Paper. The *Sanquhar Declaration* openly declared war against Charles as a tyrant and usurper. This was followed up by one of the most singular scenes, perhaps, recorded in the history of the times—*the Torwood excommunication*. In a meeting held at Torwood, in Stirlingshire, in September, 1680, Mr. Cargill, after divine service, pronounced, with all solemnity and formality, the highest sentence of excommunication against King Charles, the Duke of York, the Dukes of Monmouth, Lauderdale, and Rothes, General Dalziel, and the advocate, Sir George Mackenzie; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ casting them out of the church, and delivering them up unto Satan.[1]

These proceedings, we may well believe, irritated the ruling powers more than ever; and though unshared in and unapproved of by the rest of the Presbyterian ministers, they were eagerly laid hold of as pretexts for still greater severities against the whole of them. The furnace was "heated one seven times more than it was wont to be heated." Into the history of the persecutions which followed we cannot minutely enter. It would, indeed, be a task as superfluous as disagreeable; for the subsequent period, down to 1688, exhibits little more than a series of executions, civil and military, differing from each other only in their degrees of horror and atrocity. Conceiving that they had now at length obtained what Bishop Burnet declares they had long thirsted for—a feasible pretence for laying the whole country under

[1] Torwood Excommunication: being the Lecture and Discourse going before, and the Afternoon Sermon following after, with the Action of Excommunication itself, pronounced at Torwood, Sept. 1680. By that Faithful Minister and Martyr of Jesus Christ, Mr. Donald Cargill. 1741.



martial law, and fattening on the spoils of a population driven to despair by their oppressions—burning with rage, under a guilty consciousness that the charges brought against them by the Society People were perfectly true—and what is equally certain, smarting under the very excommunication which they pretended to despise—they "cried Havoc! and let slip the dogs of war." Statutes and proclamations fiercer than ever were levelled at the heads of ministers who preached, and all who attended, at conventicles—letters of *intercommuning* were passed against many of the most obnoxious, by which all were prohibited, under pain of death, from having any intercourse with the proscribed individuals—all suspected of these practices were dragged to the circuit courts and strictly questioned—the prisoners were tried *super inquirendis*, that is, on the evidence extorted from their own lips by insidious questions, or the application of the torture by the boots, by the thumbkins, or by lighted matches tied between the fingers until they burned the flesh to the bone; and upon the evidence thus procured, without a single witness to bring home the crime, many were condemned. No rank, no sex, no age, was exempted from these inquisitorial proceedings. The father was compelled by torture to bear evidence against the son, the son against the father, the wife against the husband, the husband against the wife; and, loyal as they might be themselves, if found guilty of sheltering, or even of speaking with an intercommuned fugitive, even though the dearest relative, without informing against him, they were held guilty of his crime, and liable to suffer death.

The cruelties of this period, it has been justly and not too strongly remarked, "were savage, worthy of cannibals; they were refined, worthy of fiends."[1] By degrees the whole frame of government seemed converted into one vast court of inquisition, in which the Episcopal clergy of all ranks held a conspicuous place as informers, witnesses, or judges. The infliction of death seemed to be regarded by these inquisitors as too easy a punishment; the poor victims were insulted in the court, and even struck when awaiting their doom on the scaffold. "When James Robertson (who was executed with two others in 1682) offered to speak upon the

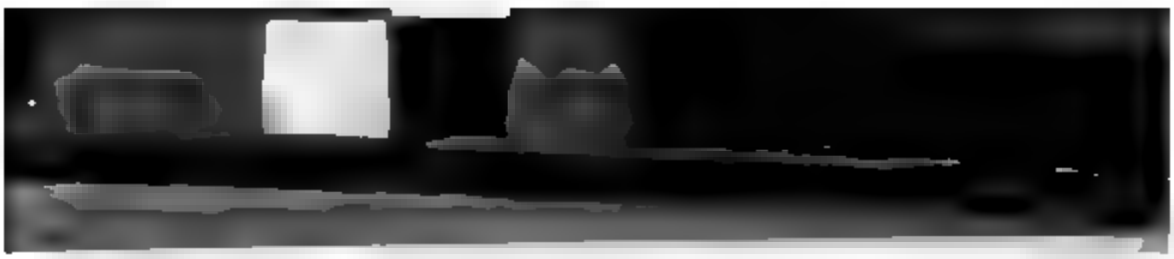
[1] Lorimer's Hist. of Prot. Church of France, p. 324.



scaffold, he was interrupted by the ruffling of drums; and when complaining of this, Johnston, the town-major, *beat him with his cane* at the foot of the ladder in a most barbarous manner."[1] Even mere children did not escape from the malignity of the persecutors. "A party of the enemy," says one who himself shared in the sufferings he describes, "came to search for some of the persecuted party. When the people of the house saw the enemy coming, they fled out of the way; but the cruel enemy got my dear brother into their hands. They examined him concerning the persecuted people where they haunted; but he would not open his mouth to speak one word to them. They flattered him, they offered him money to tell where the Whigs were, but he would not speak; they held the point of a drawn sword to his naked breast; they fired a pistol over his head; they set him on horseback behind one of themselves to be taken away and hanged; they tied a cloth on his face, and set him on his knees to be shot to death; they beat him with their swords and with their fists; they kicked him several times to the ground with their feet; yet, after they had used all the cruelty they could, he would not open his mouth to speak one word to them; and although he was a comely proper child, going in ten years of age, yet they called him a vile, ugly, dumb devil, and beat him very sore, and then went on their way, leaving him lying on the ground, sore bleeding in the open fields."[2]

Nothing, however, presents the government in a more odious and despicable light than their treatment of the tender sex. The cruel usage of "comely proper children going in ten years of age" may be ascribed to the indiscriminate fury of a ruthless and unreflecting soldiery; but when we see simple unlettered females dragged from the duties of the kitchen or the farmyard, to answer for their religious belief before learned chancellors and mitred dignitaries, and sent to expiate their errors on the scaffold, we cannot reflect on the conduct of their persecutors without feelings of mingled indignation and contempt. The trial and execution of Isabel Alison, a young unmarried woman

[1] Wodrow, iii. 415.
[2] Memoirs of the First Years of James Nisbet, Son of John Nisbet of Hardhill, written by himself, p. 70.



in Perth, and another young female, Marion Harvie, may, as Wodrow has remarked, be well regarded as "a flaming proof of the iniquity of the period." Isabel had occasionally heard Mr. Cargill and others preach in the fields; and having in her simplicity acknowledged that she held converse with some who had been declared rebels, a party of soldiers was forthwith sent to carry her to Edinburgh. When brought before the council the most ensnaring questions were put to her, and she was induced by threats and promises to acknowledge that she had conversed with Rathillet, Balfour, and other characters obnoxious to the government, to express her approbation of the Sanquhar Declaration, and disown the authority of her judges. Marion Harvie, it would appear, was still more humble in station than her companion. She was a servant girl, only about twenty years of age, and belonging to Borrowstounness. They had nothing to lay to her charge but what she owned, namely, her being present at field-conventicles. When interrogated as to the Sanquhar Declaration and other papers, she declared she knew nothing about them. Some of the councillors told her that "a rock, a cod, and bobbins would set her better than these debates." "And yet," says Wodrow, "they cast them up to her, and murder her upon them." After being examined before the council, these two poor women were brought before the criminal court. "This was the constant practice at this time, the one day to bring such as fell into their hands before the council, and there engage them by captious questions into a confession of statutory crime, and next day to panel them before the justiciary, where, if they were silent, they were asked if they would quit the testimony they had given yesterday." The answers given by these females to the interrogatories of their judges, which are recorded by themselves with great simplicity, manifest much good sense and quickness, with a mixture of those mistaken views as to the civil government into which it was very natural for such persons to fall. Both of the women were condemned to be hanged in the Grassmarket, and the bloody sentence was executed on the 26th of January, 1681. Just when they were going out to the place of execution, Bishop Paterson, whose character, if we may believe the uniform testimony of the time, was stained with vices of the lowest description,



had the insolence to come into the prison and interrupt their devotions. "Marion," he began, "you said you would never hear a curate; now you shall be forced to hear one before you die;" upon which he ordered one of his curates to pray. As soon as he began, she said to her fellow-prisoner, "Come, Isabel, let us sing the 23d Psalm." They did so, and drowned the voice of the curate. But this was not the only circumstance calculated to disturb and annoy these humble sufferers in their dying hour. They were executed in company with five profligate women who had been found guilty of murdering their own children, and railed on by one of the Episcopal functionaries, who assured them "they were on the road to damnation; while, without any evidence of their penitence, he was sending the other wicked wretches straight to heaven. However," it is added, "they were not commoved, but sang some suitable psalms on the scaffold, and prayed; and thus died with much composure and joy." Marion was remarkably supported. "Behold," she cried, "I hear my Beloved saying unto me, 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.' I am not come here for murder! I am about twenty years of age. At fourteen or fifteen I was a hearer of the curates and indulged, and then I was a blasphemer and a Sabbath-breaker, and a chapter of the Bible was a burden to me; but since I heard this persecuted gospel, I durst not blaspheme, nor break the Sabbath, and the Bible became my delight." Upon this the major called to the executioner to cast her over, and "the murderer presently choked her."[1]

If we are asked, What were the grounds of all this suffering? we would reply in general, that the main cause in which our martyrs suffered and died, was that of the covenanted Reformation. In other words, they died for approving of the various steps of reformation which the Church and nation of Scotland had been led to take during both the first and second reforming periods, and particularly between the years

[1] Cloud of Witnesses, Scots Worthies, ii. 299–317; Wod. iii 275, 276. Fountainhall's Histor. Observes, pp. 26, 27. This last writer observes, very coolly, "Some thought the threatening to drown them privately in the North Loch, without giving them the credit of a public suffering, would have more effectually reclaimed them nor (than) any arguments which were used." How true is it that "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel!"



1638 and 1650; they died for their adherence not only to the Protestant religion, but to Presbyterianism in opposition to Prelacy and Independency; they died for their adherence to the Confession of Faith, and the other Westminster standards, as the standards of that uniformity agreed upon and sworn to by Scotland, England, and Ireland; they died for maintaining the continued obligation of the national covenant and the solemn league, and for condemning the sad defections from these attainments, and the glaring violations of these engagements with which all ranks and classes were chargeable. These were the main and real grounds on which they endured so much, in the forms of torture, banishment, imprisonment, and death. It is plain that had they not held these principles, or had they been less faithful in maintaining them, they would never have writhed under the rack, nor dyed the scaffolds and the fields with their blood. Of all the martyrs during the period of the persecution, from the first to the last—from the coroneted head of Argyll down to the courageous and devoted Renwick—from "the lyart veteran" down to the mere child who was hardly capable of understanding the points of quarrel, though he could deeply feel the injustice of his persecutors—not one suffered without owning this cause. Here there was no wavering, no faltering, no symptom of disunion or disagreement among the band of sufferers. With one mind and one mouth they bore their testimony to the same work, and gloried in sealing it with their blood.

It generally happens, however, that the testimony of the Church is made to bear upon some single point, essentially involving the whole cause of truth, and testing the fidelity of its followers. And at this period that point was the royal prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only King and Head of his Church. It should never be forgotten that the overthrow of the Reformation at the period of the restoration of Charles, with the scenes of bloody persecution which followed, are to be traced to the act of supremacy by which the king was declared supreme in all matters and causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil. Against this gross Erastian usurpation the Presbyterians protested from the beginning; and as the whole series of persecuting measures afterwards adopted by the government proceeded on this impious as-



sumption of the powers of Christ, it is easy to see how the whole contendings of the faithful party in the land were reduced to the point of asserting His sole headship over his Church. This became with them "the word of Christ's patience;" and nobly did they "keep it in the hour of temptation." They justly deemed it worthy of all the sufferings they could endure; and they shrank from uttering the slightest word which might compromise the truth, or indicate the least relaxation of their testimony in its behalf.

Seldom have the rulers of this world been brought to acknowledge cordially, thoroughly, and practically, that the Church has a Head in heaven, to whom she is bound to pay implicit and undivided homage. And too often has the recognition of this principle, which is so honourable to Christ, and which forms the highest element in every well-constituted establishment of Christianity, been clogged with limitations, enabling the civil powers, when so disposed, to assume the spiritual prerogative, and assail the independence of the Church. It is equally true, however, that this has seldom, if ever, been attempted *avowedly* in opposition to the sacred rights of the Redeemer. Those who suffer for resisting the encroachment are uniformly represented as rebels, and charged with factious opposition to the will of the monarch, or the law of the land.

None were more sensible of the real cause for which the Covenanters suffered, or felt more bitterly conscious of its importance, than those who were most active in conducting the persecution. But with the meanness and malignity which are the invariable characteristics of the persecutor, they attempted, by various stratagems, to shift the odium from themselves to their victims, and represent them as suffering for any other cause than the true one. Among these stratagems were the "ensnaring questions" which they put to the prisoners, such as, "Was the rising at Bothwell rebellion, or not?" "Will you pray for the king?" By these questions, which they well knew many of them would not answer, or would answer in such a way as to betray their condemnation of the government, they attempted, in the absence of all evidence, to fix upon them the stigma of rebellion; while, in reality, their offence consisted in refusing to hear the curates, or having attended field-meetings. It was not un-



common to offer the poor people their lives, provided they would simply say, *God save the king*. Many refused to do this; and when we consider the construction put upon the phrase by their persecutors, we need not wonder at it; for by uttering the salutation, they meant them to acknowledge not only the civil authority, but the ecclesiastical supremacy of the king. When the prisoner at the bar asked the meaning in which they put the words, he was told they meant owning his person and government, and approving all his titles as head of the Church and state. Sir George Mackenzie has had the hypocrisy to assert that none suffered during this reign who would say, *God save the king*.[1] This is most certainly a falsehood, for many suffered who were quite ready to say it. But when we consider, not only that the poor people who refused to do so looked upon it as a virtual renunciation of all their principles, but that their persecutors regarded it in the same light, it is hardly possible to conceive a piece of more shocking and ingenious cruelty. This test, though really intended to elicit a renunciation of their religious profession, was, at the same time, so plausibly worded as to make the refusal of it appear little better than mere obstinacy, and to represent those who refused it as a set of fools, dying under a frantic delusion, fitted to excite derision rather than pity. But it was like the grain of incense which the early Christians were required, by their persecutors, to let fall on the altars of the Pagan deities—the slightest token, indeed, but still a token quite intelligible and well understood, of their renouncing the Christian faith. The following case will show how far these innocent sufferers were from being unwilling to use the terms prescribed, provided they were not understood in a sense completely eversive of their principles—or, in other words, meant to involve them in perjury.

Gilbert Wilson was a farmer in good circumstances in Wigtonshire. He and his wife were both conformists to Prelacy; but their children having imbibed better principles, refused to hear the Episcopal incumbent. For this reason, though yet scarcely of the age to make them obnoxious to the law, they were pursued, and driven to bogs, hills, and caves for shelter. At last Gilbert's two daughters, Margaret and Agnes, the one eighteen years old, the other a mere

[1] Vindication of the Government during the Reign of Charles II.



child about thirteen, were apprehended, and both of them, by their merciless judges, were condemned to death. By going up to Edinburgh and paying a large sum of money the father succeeded in purchasing the life of Agnes, his youngest daughter; but Margaret, along with an old woman of sixty-three, was adjudged to suffer death, by being bound to stakes planted in the sea within flood-mark, near Wigton. Margaret's relations used all means to prevail upon her to take the oath, and promise to hear the curate; but she stood fast in her integrity, and was not to be shaken. She and her aged companion were tied to the stakes, in the presence of an immense crowd, and surrounded with soldiers. The old woman's stake being a good way beyond the other, she was the first that suffered; and while she was struggling in the water some one asked Margaret what she thought of her friend now. "What do I see," she replied, "but Christ in one of his members wrestling there? Think you that *we* are the sufferers? No; it is Christ in us, for he sends none a warfare upon their own charges." The water covered her while she was engaged in prayer; but before life was gone, they pulled her up till she recovered the power of speech, when she was asked by Major Windram, who commanded, if she would pray for the king. She replied, that "she wished the salvation of all men, and the damnation of none." "Dear Margaret," said one of the by-standers, deeply affected, "say *God save the king*." She answered with great steadiness, "God save him, if he will, for it is his salvation I desire." "Sir," they cried to the major, "she has said it; she has said it!" The major, approaching her on hearing this, offered her the *abjuration oath*, charging her instantly to swear it, otherwise to return to the water. The poor young woman, thus cruelly deluded with the hope of life, firmly replied, "I will not; I am one of Christ's children! let me go." Upon which she was again thrust into the water, and drowned.[1] Thus died these two women, simply because they would not take the abjuration oath, which bound the swearers never to take up arms against the king on any pretext whatsoever, and called on them to "abhor, renounce, and disown" all who had done so. What possible danger the government could apprehend from old

[1] Wodrow, Cloud of Witnesses, &c.



women of sixty-three, and girls of eighteen, taking up arms against the king, it is hard to say. Every feeling of humanity rises up to execrate an administration which could have recourse to such gratuitous and unmanly cruelties in support of its authority.

These, however, bad as they were, were the most decent of the proceedings of this period—they were conducted with at least the forms and the semblance of justice. The year 1684 introduced a practice more barbarous and revolting, when the common soldiers were empowered, without indictment or process, to put to death any suspicious persons they might meet with, upon their refusing to take the oaths, or answer the questions they put, to their satisfaction. To enumerate the cruelties and murders exercised under this barbarous law would be a vain attempt. The case of John Brown, the carrier, whom Claverhouse shot before his own door, and in the presence of his wife, is too well known to be more than adverted to. "Go to your prayers immediately," cried Claverhouse, "for you must die." Poor Brown prayed, then kissed his wife and children; "God bless you all," he said—"may all purchased and promised blessings be multiplied." "No more," vociferated Claverhouse: "You six there," counting six soldiers, "shoot him instantly." The men, hardened as they were, had been so much affected by Brown's prayer, that they hesitated to obey the order; upon which Claverhouse, drawing his pistol, shot him dead with his own hand. "What thinkest thou of thy husband now, woman?" fiercely demanded the ruffian. "I ever thought much good of him," sobbed the poor widow; "and *now* more than ever." "Wretch!" said Claverhouse, "it were but just to lay thee beside him." "If you were permitted, I doubt not but your cruelty would go that far," cried the poor woman; "but how will you answer for this morning's work?"

"To *man* I can be answerable," said the remorseless Claverhouse, "and as for God, I will take *him* into my own hand!"

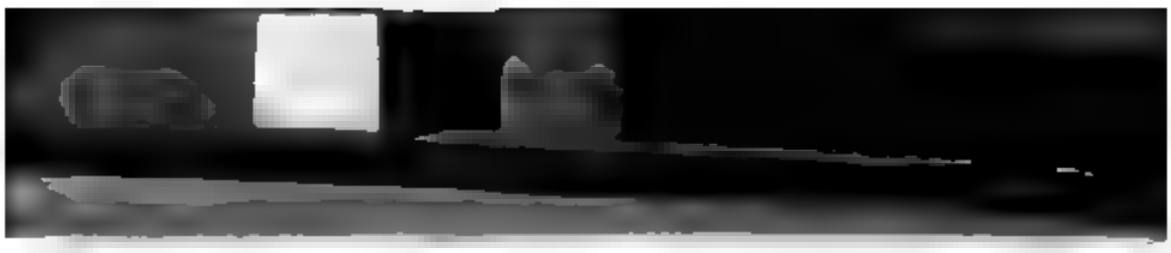
He then marched away, leaving the poor widow with her husband's mangled corpse! She set the children on the ground; she gathered up the scattered brains, and covering his body with her plaid, she sat down and wept over him.



The Duke of York had declared "there would never be peace in Scotland till the whole of the country south of the Forth was turned into a hunting-field." And in the years 1684 and 1685, there was every appearance that his threatening would be realized. During this, the hottest period of the persecution, and emphatically termed by the people *the killing time*, the lives of the lieges were left at the mercy of military executioners, who scoured the country, hunting in all directions in search of fugitive Presbyterians. Bloodhounds were employed to discover the retreats of "the wanderers," as they were called, who, on being found, were immediately brought out and shot, without any proof, process, or inquiry. The slightest pretext was sufficient. If the person whom they met could not produce a pass—if he made the least scruple to swallow the oath—or if, after doing so, the soldiers should still suspect him, he was instantly deprived of life. If a countryman was seen running across the road, or walking more hastily than usual through a field, he was shot at as a suspected person.

A specimen or two of these doings may suffice.[1] A lieutenant and three soldiers passing along the road found a poor man sleeping on a bank, with a small pocket Bible lying near him. This circumstance having roused their suspicions, they awoke the man, and asked him if he would pray for the king? He replied that he would with all his heart. The lieutenant was about to let him go, when one of the soldiers said—"But, sir, will you renounce the covenant?" The man hesitated a moment; but on the question being repeated, he firmly replied: "Indeed, sir, I'll as soon renounce my baptism." Upon this, without further ceremony, they shot the poor man on the spot. On another occasion some soldiers perceived a countryman lying in a field engaged in reading. They called to him, but the man being deaf, and not making any reply, they fired at him, on which he started to his feet. Again they cried to him, and before he could recover from his amazement a second shot laid him dead on the field. Five of the wanderers had taken refuge in a cave near Ingliston, in the parish of Glen-

[1] The instances here adduced are selected chiefly from Wodrow, who was at great pains to ascertain, by written attestations, the truth of the information he collected. The first is taken from Defoe's Memoirs.



cairn. Their place of concealment was discovered to the enemy by a base "intelligencer," who had formerly associated with them, pretending to be one of the sufferers. When the soldiers came up they first fired into the cave, and then rushing in, brought them forth to execution. Without question put, or offer of mercy, the whole five were immediately shot, by orders of the commanding officer. One of them being observed to be still alive, a wretch drew his sword and thrust him through the body. The dying man raised himself, and, weltering in his own blood and that of his companions, cried out, with his last breath—"Though every hair of my head were a man, I would die all those deaths for Christ and his cause!"

In the bloody proceedings of this period the names of Johnston of Westerraw, and Grierson of Lagg, vie with that of Claverhouse in infamous notoriety. Westerraw was an apostate from Presbyterianism, and, like all apostates, more bitter and unrelenting in his hatred to his former brethren than the worst of their old oppressors. Claverhouse having apprehended a young man named Andrew Hislop, whose only crime was, that one of the wanderers had permission to die in his mother's house, brought him to Westerraw, on whose property the alleged crime was committed, and who, to signalize his loyalty, instantly passed sentence of death on him. Claverhouse, who seems to have had some relentings from reflecting on the murder of Brown, urged delay; but Westerraw insisting, he yielded, saying, "The blood of this poor man be upon you, Westerraw; I am free of it." He then ordered the captain of a Highland company who were travelling with him, to execute the sentence. This the gentleman peremptorily refused, and drawing off his men to some distance, swore he would fight Claverhouse and his dragoons rather than comply. Claverhouse then ordered three of his own men to do it. When they were ready to fire, they desired Andrew to draw down his cap over his eyes. "No!" said the undaunted youth, "I can look my death-bringers in the face without fear, and I have nothing whereof I am ashamed;" and holding up his Bible, and charging them to answer for what they were to do at the great day, when they would be judged by *that book*, he received the murderous *fire* without shrinking.



Grierson of Lagg was, if possible, a still more revolting character. The cruelties which others inflicted merely under the impulse of passion and malice, seem to have afforded this monster absolute delight. He would jeer at the victims whom he butchered in cold blood, and exult over their agonies with a kind of fiendish glee. When they requested a few moments to prepare for death, "What!" he would exclaim, with oaths and imprecations, "have you not had time enough to prepare since Bothwell?" Having been challenged by one of his companions for cruelty to one whom he knew to be a gentleman, and particularly for not allowing his dead body to be buried, Lagg answered with an oath, "Take him if you will, and salt him in your beef-barrel!" It was quite customary with this hero and his companions, in their drunken orgies, to personate devils, and lash one another with whips, in jesting imitation of hell!

"Wonderful," says Wodrow, "were the preservations of the persecuted about this time. The soldiers frequently got their clothes and cloaks, and yet missed themselves. They would have gone by the mouths of the caves and dens in which they were lurking, and the dogs would snook and smell about the stones under which they were hid, and yet they remained undiscovered." But the reader may be more inclined to wonder at the patience of these sufferers, and at the fact that, notwithstanding the extraordinary provocation they received, there is not one well-authenticated instance of their having taken revenge on their persecutors.[1] The only instance in which they even attempted, after the defeat at Bothwell, to oppose force to force, took place at Enterkin Path, where a small body of countrymen succeeded in rescuing some prisoners from a detachment of dragoons. Enterkin Path is a steep and dangerous ascent on a mountain of that name in Dumfriesshire, with a tremendous precipice beneath. Along this path the dragoons were conveying to Edinburgh nine prisoners, bound together in couples upon horses, when their progress was arrested by a voice from the hill above. "It was misty," says Defoe, in his account of

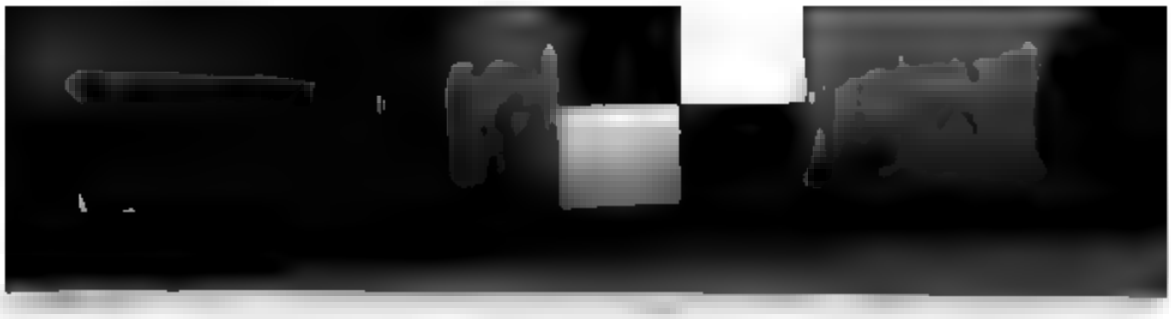
[1] Two soldiers found killed at Swine Abbey, and a curate, named Peirson, who lost his life in a scuffle, are the only cases resembling retaliation which were adduced against the Covenanters at this time, and in neither of these could it be shown that the sufferers had any share.



this affair, "as indeed it is seldom otherwise on the height of that mountain, so that nobody was seen at first; but the commanding officer, hearing somebody call, halted, and cried aloud, 'What do you want, and who are ye?' He had no sooner spoken, than twelve men came in sight upon the side of the hill above them. One of the twelve answered by giving the word of command to his men, 'Make ready!' and then calling to the officer, said, 'Sir, will you deliver up our minister?' The officer answered with an oath, 'No, sir.' At which the leader of the countrymen fired immediately, and aimed so true that he shot him through the head, and immediately he fell from his horse; the horse, fluttering a little with the fall of the rider, fell over the precipice, rolling to the bottom, and was dashed to pieces. The rest of the twelve men were stooping to give fire upon the body, when the next commanding officer called to them to hold their hands, and desired a truce. It was apparent that the whole body was in a dreadful consternation; not a man of them durst stir, or offer to fire a shot! 'Go, sir,' said he to the minister, 'you owe your life to this d—— mountain.' 'Rather, sir,' said the minister, 'to the God that made this mountain.' When the minister was come to them, their leader called again to the officer, 'Sir, we want yet the other prisoners.' They were also delivered. 'Well, sir, but,' says the officer, 'I expect you will call off those fellows you have posted at the head of the way.' 'They belong not to us,' says the honest man; 'they are unarmed people, waiting till you pass by.' 'Say you so?' said the officer; 'had I known that, you had not gotten your men so cheap.' Says the countryman, 'An ye are for battle; we'll quit the truce, if you like.' 'No,' says the officer, 'I think ye be brave fellows; e'en gang your gate.'"[1]

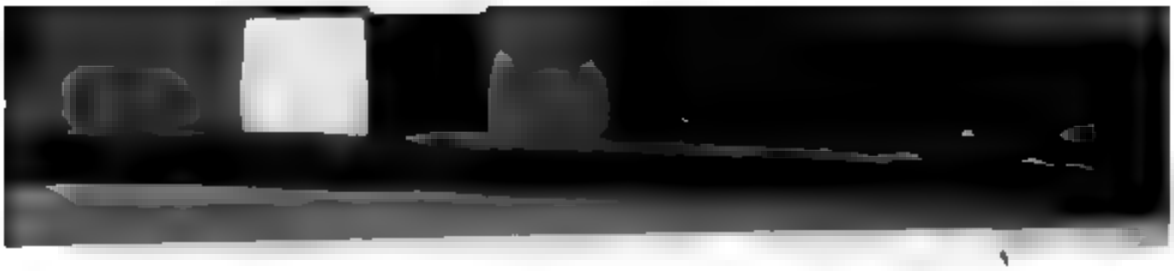
Such is the only instance in which the severities of this time can be said to have roused these persecuted people to forcible resistance. "The Society People," indeed, who were now the special objects of the vengeance of government, being the only class who still persisted in holding field-conventicles,

[1] Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, part iii. pp. 189–195. Defoe had either heard another version of this story, or improved on what he heard. Wodrow states that the soldiers fired first on the countrymen. (Vol. iv. p. 137.)



published, in October, 1684, "A declaration anent intelligencers and informers," in which they not only declared war against Charles, but solemnly warned all who chose, "either with bloody Doeg to shed their blood, or with the flattering Ziphites to inform persecutors where they were to be found," that they would not let them pass unpunished. "Call to your remembrance," they said, "*all that is in peril is not lost, and all that is delayed is not forgiven!*" While we must disapprove of this step, as unwarranted by Scripture, and affording too much countenance to the dangerous principle of the infliction of justice by private individuals, we cannot blame its authors with much severity, when we reflect that they were deprived of the protection of law, and hunted like wild beasts in the caverns and on the mountains to which they fled for shelter. The threat was never carried into execution; and yet it gained its object, by intimidating for a while the spies and traitors who made a traffic of their blood. It was the cry of the oppressed, wrung from them by extremity—the instinctive raising of the hand to protect the head—the language of human passion, wound up to the desperate calmness of defiance, which imparts dignity to the sufferer, while it makes the persecutor pause and tremble.

Yet it would be wrong to suppose that this was a general feeling among the persecuted. On the contrary, never perhaps was the gentle, forgiving, and long-suffering spirit of the gospel more strikingly illustrated than in the sufferings of this period. "They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." On the scaffold they forgave their enemies, and prayed for their executioners. Some of them carried submission even to an excess; and nothing conveys a more affecting idea of the "great fight of afflictions" they endured, than the simple fact, attested by Wodrow, that many of them, seeing their friends cut down around them in such numbers, and their own lives in such constant jeopardy, were seized by a *tædium vitæ*—a weariness of life—which made them careless of danger, and induced them even to court the crown of martyrdom. The brutal judges, aware of this, instead of sending them directly from the bar to the gibbet, would remit them to jail, scoffingly informing them that they would not be admitted to the joys of martyrdom so soon as they



expected! On one occasion a poor half-witted countryman, being present at an execution, was so much horrified that he could not forbear railing aloud against the hangman, calling him "a murdering dog." He was immediately seized by the soldiers, and some time after brought before the council. Being interrogated if he had been at Bothwell Bridge, he replied, "Ay, that I was!" "Had you a sword about you?" "Ay," said he, "and pistols too." A child, it is said, might have beaten this champion, and taken all from him. Some of the more humane of the councillors, perceiving his weakness, proposed to "send him away, and not trouble themselves with such a mad fellow;" but others proceeding to pose him with questions about the king's authority, which he denied point blank, the poor creature was condemned and executed.[1]

But though these persecutors escaped the human vengeance which they provoked—though not one of them was called to account, or suffered death, or even any personal hardship worth mentioning, at the Revolution, it was remarked that few of them escaped the judgments of Heaven. Of those who took the most active share in these bloody persecutions, very few came to an ordinary or peaceful death. The Duke of Rothes was seized with such remorse on his death-bed, that, as we remarked before, he was fain to send for some of the persecuted ministers to comfort him. They came, but the wretched man was beyond the reach of consolation; their prayers were drowned in the groans he uttered under the horrors of a guilty conscience. His friends, shocked at the scene, were compelled to leave him; and the Duke of Hamilton, on taking his departure, said, in tears, "We banish these men from us, and yet, when dying, we call for them; this is melancholy work!" Cruel and bloody as were the deaths of our martyred fathers, they were enviable compared with those of their murderers. Over the grave of the martyr we bend with a pleasing melancholy; for there was "hope in his death." From the death-bed of the persecutor we recoil, hopeless and horrified, and instinctively breathing the prayer, "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men!"

[1] Vindication of the Presbyterians in Scotland from the malicious aspersions cast on them in a late pamphlet by Sir G. Mackenzie, p. 24.



CHAPTER XVI.

1685 — 1688.

The Test—Trial of the Earl of Argyll—Sir Hugh Campbell—Mr. William Carstairs—Baillie of Jerviswood—Hunie of Polwart—Execution of Argyll—Prisoners in Dunottar Castle—James' indulgence—Execution of Renwick—Character of Scottish Prelacy—Alarm of the country—The Revolution.

To understand the following part of our history, we must revert for a little to the famous test, enacted in August, 1681. This engagement, which was in the form of a long complex oath, bound the swearer to acknowledge the supremacy of the king in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil—to renounce the covenants—to condemn all Assemblies as illegal which were held without the royal sanction, and on no pretext to attempt the alteration of the government in church or state. At the same time, with glaring inconsistency, it included a profession of the true Protestant religion contained in the old Scots Confession of 1567—a clause introduced, it is said, much against the will of the Duke of York, whose main design in imposing the oath was to extirpate Presbyterianism, and thus prepare the way for Popery. He knew very well that no honest Presbyterian would submit to such an oath, and he took care, in the act enjoining it, to exempt himself and the Papists from the necessity of swearing it.

Nothing gives a darker picture of the time than the history of this self-contradictory test. Though at first proposed only for persons in public trust, it was soon converted into a general test of loyalty, and imposed on all, even the simplest rustics. Few had sufficient firmness of principle to refuse it, so much had all sense of religion been worn off from the minds of men by the numerous oaths that had been imposed, and by which conscience was debauched, and a spirit of



atheism engendered. Some outcry was made against it at first; but, after all, not one of the councillors refused it, except the Earl of Argyll. The prelatic clergy with very few exceptions, and the bishops without one exception, swallowed the oath. The divines of Aberdeen, after publishing their objections against it, which closely resembled those of the Presbyterians,[1] tamely submitted with the rest.

In the midst of this shameful degeneracy the Earl of Argyll, son of the Marquis of Argyll, who was martyred in 1661, distinguished himself by his patriotic firmness and fidelity. When called upon, as a member of privy-council, to take the test, he made the following declaration: "I take it, in as far as it is consistent with itself and the Protestant religion; and I do declare, I mean not to bind up myself, in my station and in a lawful way, to endeavour any alteration I think to the advantage of the church or state, not repugnant to the Protestant religion and my loyalty." With this explication, he was allowed to take the test; but the Duke of York, determined to get rid of this patriotic nobleman, whom he disliked for his father's sake, and for his sound Protestant principles, made it the pretext of a prosecution against him for *high treason!* After a trial remarkable for the greatest mockery of justice and perversion of law which ever disgraced our civil judicature, the Earl was brought in guilty, and committed to the castle. Finding that the Duke of York, his inveterate enemy, was resolved on his destruction, he was induced by his friends to avail himself of the means of escape; and, on the 20th of December, about nine o'clock at night, he stole out of the castle, in the disguise of a page, holding up the train of his step-daughter, the lady Sophia Lindsay.[2]

At this time, the prospect of the accession of the Duke of York, his well-known devotedness to the Romish Church,

[1] For example, the following is one of their exceptions: "How can I swear that I believe the king's majesty to be the only supreme governor over all persons and in all causes, when the forementioned Confession obliges me to believe Jesus Christ to be the only head of the Church; and when I believe all ecclesiastic authority to be derived from Christ, and not from secular princes; and when I believe the king's power to be cumulative, and not destructive of the intrinsic power of the Church?" &c. (*Wodrow*, iii. p. 304.)

[2] Fountainhall's Decisions, i. 167.—A minute account of the manner in which he effected his escape to Holland, with the aid of Mr. Veitch, is given *in* M'Cric's Memoirs of Veitch, &c., p. *127, et seq.*



and the obvious tendency of his policy, filled the country with a dread of the restoration of Popery. This feeling pervaded all classes, of which, perhaps, there cannot be a better proof than the fact, that it descended even to schoolboys and apprentices. On Christmas, 1681, a few days after the escape of Argyll, they publicly burned the Pope in effigy at the cross of Edinburgh. The students at the university having been severely punished for this the preceding year, the preparations were on this occasion conducted so quietly that none suspected the design. Having fixed a chair on the spot where the gallows stood, they tucked up his holiness in a red gown and mitre, with two keys over his arm, a crucifix in the one hand and the test in the other; and having applied fire to the figure, "it brunt lenty at first till it came to the powder, at which he blew up in the air."[1] The boys at Heriot's Hospital adopted a more ingenious mode of testifying their sentiments. Finding that the dog which guarded the outer gate of the hospital held "a public office," they voted that he ought to take the test or be hanged. They offered him the paper, which he absolutely refused; they then rubbed it over with butter, which they called "the explication of the test;" and when again presented, he licked off the butter, but rejected the paper; upon which, after a long trial, in ridicule of the absurd reasoning of the crown lawyers on Argyll's case, they found the dog guilty of *leising making*, and actually hanged him.[2] In Glasgow the same spirit was manifested in a different manner. The students put on favours and coloured ribbons, in token of their being Protestants. For this some of their leaders were arrested, and, among others, the young Marquis of Annandale, who briskly defended himself and his companions. In addressing the bishop who sat as their judge, he had called him only "Sir." "William," said his regent, "you do not understand whom you are speaking to; he is a greater person than yourself." "I know," said Annandale, "that the king has made him a spiritual lord; but I know likewise that my father's son is not to be compared with the son of the piper of Arbroath."[3]

[1] Fountainhall's Hist. Obs. p. 55.
[2] Ibid. p. 56. In this work a curious account of the trial of the dog is inserted, p. 303.
[3] Wodrow, iii. 345.



It has been often said, and generally supposed, that the Presbyterians who suffered during this period were chiefly persons in the lower ranks of life. This, however, is an error which may easily be rectified by a glance at the annals of the persecution, and the lists of proscribed individuals. These will be found to comprehend some of the highest of the nobility, and the greater part of the gentry and substantial yeomanry of the country. The poorest classes were in general hostile to the Covenanters, and too often lent themselves as informers against them.

Among the gentlemen who suffered at this period we may briefly notice Sir Hugh Campbell of Cesnock, the Rev. William Carstairs, Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, and Sir Patrick Hume of Polwart, who were all brought into trouble in consequence of being suspected of accession to the Rye-house plot, in 1684, for their supposed share in which those illustrious patriots, Lord Russel and Algernon Sidney, had suffered death. Sir Hugh Campbell was brought to trial on this charge; but finding no evidence to implicate him in the plot, they determined to ruin him by a charge of accession to the rising at Bothwell, and permitting conventicles to meet on his estate. Sir Hugh proved his innocence of these crimes beyond all doubt; but one witness remained, named Ingram, who had been heard to swear that he would be revenged on him for some supposed injury, and on whose evidence his prosecutors depended. Ingram held up his hand to take the oath. "Take heed what you are about to do," said Sir Hugh, looking him steadily in the face, "and damn not your own soul by perjury; for, as I shall answer to God, I never saw you in the face before, nor spoke to you." The man was staggered by this appeal, and refused to depone the promised falsehood. A loud shout of applause proclaimed the delight of the audience at this failure of the proof. The disappointed judges were incensed; and Sir George Mackenzie, the lord advocate, declared in a passion that "he never heard of such a *Protestant roar*, except in the trial of Shaftesbury." The jury having brought in a verdict of "Not guilty," were insulted, and threatened with imprisonment for joining in the applause; the witnesses were kept in confinement; and Sir Hugh himself, though he escaped with life, was committed a prisoner to the Bass,



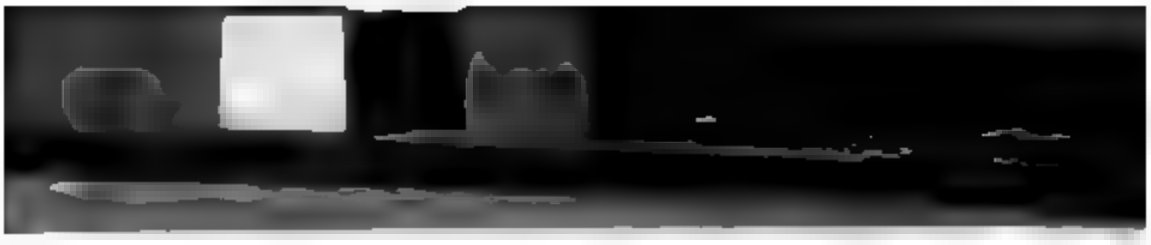
and deprived of his estate, which was given to one of his judges.

The Rev. William Carstairs, afterwards principal of the University of Edinburgh, and well known as the confidential correspondent of King William, was suspected of the same plot; and refusing to betray any of his friends, was subjected, about the same time, to the torture of the *thumbkins*—an instrument newly introduced, which inclosed the fingers, and, by means of a screw, was made to compress the joints so as to produce the most exquisite pain.[1] The minister endured this torture with the greatest fortitude, steadily refusing to answer any questions which might implicate his friends. After some time, however, worn out by rigorous confinement, he agreed to make some disclosures upon receiving a solemn promise from government that "nothing he said should be brought, directly or indirectly, against any man in trial." His evidence involved Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, as one who had met with others to consult what steps should be taken for the support of the Protestant religion, in the event of the Duke of York succeeding to the crown. To the disgrace of the government, as well as his own unspeakable distress, this evidence was not only published and hawked about the streets, but adduced by the king's advocate as "an adminicle of proof" against that worthy gentleman. Mr. Carstairs lived to take a prominent part in the Revolution. He was as yet more distinguished as a politician than as a clergyman; and from the influence he possessed over King William in the management of the civil affairs of Scotland, he was generally known at court by the name of "Cardinal Carstairs."[2]

Robert Baillie of Jerviswood was one of the most amiable and engaging characters of this dark period of our history. Gentle in disposition and bland in manners, yet firm and faithful to his religious principles, pious and learned, he

[1] After the Revolution Mr. Carstairs procured the instrument by which he had been tortured, which is still in the possession of his descendants. It is said that King William, being curious to see it, inserted his royal fingers in the thumbkins; and Carstairs, at his desire, having given the screw a turn, his majesty exclaimed, "Hold, hold, principal; another turn, and I would confess anything."

[2] The character of this worthy and much-respected minister has suffered from the misrepresentations of it in the very *moderate* account of his life drawn up by Dr. M'Cormick, and prefixed to his state papers.



united accomplishments rarely to be found among the gentlemen of his age, with the virtues of the patriot and the martyr. Attached to the cause of liberty and Protestantism, his well-tried loyalty could not shield him from the malice of a government bent on subjecting the nation to Popery and despotism. He was thrown into prison, where he contracted an illness which brought him to the gates of death. His enemies, eager to obtain possession of his property, and afraid he might die in their hands before his attainder enabled them to reach it, made sure, in the first place, of £5000, by fining him to that amount; and when to all appearance a dying man, and unable to stand, they dragged him from his sick-bed to the bar on an impeachment of high treason. He appeared in his night-gown attended by his sister, who administered cordials to prevent him from sinking during the trial. His pretended crime was "intercommuning with rebels"—in other words, having harboured or conversed with fugitive Presbyterians; along with which they attempted to combine a charge of accession to the Rychouse plot, by shamefully producing against him the evidence they had procured from Carstairs.[1] The evidence completely failed; even the judges were satisfied of his innocence; but the council had determined he should die. In vain he appealed to their sense of justice. "Did you not," he said, addressing Mackenzie, who acted as king's advocate, "did you not own to me privately in prison that you were satisfied of my innocence? And are you now convinced in your conscience that I am more guilty than before?" The whole audience fixed their eyes on the person thus addressed, who appeared in no small confusion, and replied, "Jerviswood, I own what you say; but my thoughts *there* were as a private man: what I say *here* is by special direction of the privy-council;" and, pointing to the clerk, he added, "He knows my orders." "Well," said Jerviswood, on hearing this unprincipled avowal, "if your lordship have one conscience for yourself, and another for the council, I pray God forgive you; I do." Then, turning to

[1] Jerviswood had been arrested on this charge in England, and was offered his life if he would consent to turn king's evidence. He replied to this, with a smile, "They who can make such a proposal to me, know neither me nor my country." (*Dalrymple's Memoirs of Great Britain*, i. 69.)



the justice-general, he said, "My lord, I trouble your lordships no longer."

The trial concluded at one o'clock in the morning, December 24, 1684; and his sentence was, to be taken *that same day* (no time could be lost), between two and four o'clock, to the Market Cross of Edinburgh, there to be hanged on a gibbet till dead, and thereafter his head to be struck off, and his body quartered. When this doom was pronounced, he said, "My lords, the time is short, the sentence is sharp; but I thank my God who hath made me as fit to die as ye are to live."

When sent back to prison, "he leaned over the bed and fell into a wonderful rapture of joy, from the assurance he had that in a few hours he should be inconceivably happy." Being asked how he was, he answered, "Never better, and in a few hours I'll be well beyond conception! They are going to send me in pieces and quarters through the country; they may hack and hew my body as they please, but I know assuredly nothing shall be lost, but all these my members shall be wonderfully gathered, and made like Christ's glorious body." On the scaffold he behaved with the utmost serenity, though unable, from bodily exhaustion, to go up the ladder without support. He began to say, "My faint zeal for the Protestant religion has brought me to this end" --when the drums were ordered to beat, and he resigned himself to the executioner. "Their spite against the dead body of this saint was very great; and I am told," says Wodrow, "the quarters of it lay in the thieves'-hole for three weeks, before they were placed as in the sentence."[1] "And thus," says Bishop Burnet, "a learned and worthy gentleman, after twenty months' hard usage, was brought to such a death in a way so full, in all the steps of it, of the spirit and practice of the courts of the Inquisition, that one is tempted to think that the steps taken in it were suggested by one well studied, if not practised, in them." It is gratifying to reflect, that while the names of his persecutors have been forgotten, or are only remembered with execration, the memory of this excellent gentleman is still embalmed in the

[1] Wodrow, iv. 104–112, and *Addenda*.—"Mr. Baillie of Jerviswood had his life taken from him at the cross; and everybody was sorry, though they durst not show it." (*Lady Murray's Memoirs*, p. 41.)



memory of Scotland, and in the hearts of all good men, and that his descendants have risen to opulence and honour in the country.[1]

Baillie's friend and companion in tribulation, Sir Patrick Hume of Polwart, escaped from prison, and lay for a long time in a place of concealment so remarkable, that it is not surprising he should have eluded all the efforts of his pursuers. With the assistance of a faithful domestic, to whom alone the secret was imparted, his wife and daughter conveyed a bed during night to the family burying-place in a vault under ground at Polwart church, where Sir Patrick remained safe during a whole month, with no light except what was admitted through a small aperture at the one end of the vault. As night approached, his noble and amiable daughter, Grisell, afterwards Lady Grisell Baillie,[2] repaired to this gloomy receptacle with his victuals, and remained with him till daybreak. The following interesting account of these midnight interviews is given by Lady Murray, the daughter of the youthful heroine: "Lady Grisell had at that time a terror for a churchyard, especially in the dark, as is not uncommon at that age, by idle nursery stories; but when engaged by concern for her father, she stumbled over the graves every night alone without fear of any kind entering her thoughts, but for soldiers and parties in search of him, which the least noise or motion of a leaf put her in terror for. The minister's house was near the church; the first night she went his dogs kept such a barking as put her in the utmost fear of a discovery; my grandmother (the wife of Sir Patrick) sent for the minister next day, and upon pretence of a mad dog, got him to hang all his dogs. There was also difficulty of getting victuals to carry him without the servants suspecting; the only way it was done was by stealing it off her plate at dinner into her lap. Many a diverting story she has told about this and other things of a

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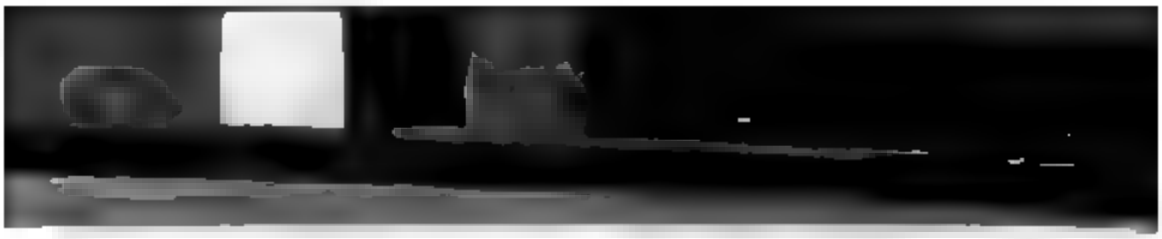
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like nature. Her father liked sheep's head; and while the children were eating their broth, she had conveyed most of one into her lap: when her brother Sandy, the late Lord Marchmont, had done, he looked up with astonishment, and said, 'Mother, will you look at Grisell; while we have been eating our broth, she has ate up the whole sheep's head!' This occasioned so much mirth amongst them, that her father at night was greatly entertained by it, and desired Sandy might have a share of the next. His great comfort and constant entertainment (for he had no light to read by), was repeating Buchanan's psalms, which he had by heart from beginning to end, and retained them to his dying day."[1] Sir Patrick Hume ultimately escaped out of the country, and after the Revolution was created Earl of Marchmont and chancellor of Scotland. The good old Presbyterian retained the same composure and cheerfulness of mind till his death, which was at the age of eighty-four.

In February, 1685, died Charles II., and was succeeded by his brother, the Duke of York, under the title of James VII. of Scotland, and II. of England. The accession of an avowed Papist to the throne, in itself a flagrant breach of the constitution, was followed by other steps paving the way for popish ascendency. The Scottish parliament, more ready than the English to favour the projects of James, without even requiring him to take the coronation oath, vowed the most slavish submission to his will. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to avert the catastrophe. Among these was the invasion of the Earl of Argyll, the progress and issue of which are matters of civil history. The last moments of this unfortunate nobleman come more properly within our province. His whole demeanour, after his apprehension, was marked by a calm fortitude and Christian resignation becoming the son of the protomartyr of the covenant. His last Sabbath on earth was spent with the most heavenly devotion. To his sister, the Lady Lothian, who was much affected on taking farewell of him, he said, "I am now loosed from you and all earthly satisfactions, and long to be with Christ, which is far better. It seems the Lord thought me

[1] Memoirs of George Baillie of Jerviswood, and of Lady Grisell Baillie, by their daughter, Lady Murray of Stanhope, p. 36-38.



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not fit to be an instrument in his work; but I die in the faith of it, that it will advance, and that the Lord will appear for it. I hear they cannot agree about the manner of my death; but I am assured of my salvation; as for my body, I care not what they do with it. Sister," he added, while his heart filled at the thought of his afflicted wife, "*be kind to my Jeanie.*" About an hour before his execution he dined with great cheerfulness, and having been accustomed to sleep a little after meals, he lay down, and took his usual repose. An officer of state, coming to visit him at this time, would not believe that he was asleep, till the door of the apartment was softly opened, and he was permitted to look in. He instantly rushed home in a state bordering on distraction. "Argyll within an hour of eternity, and sleeping as pleasantly as a child!" His conscience smote him when he thought how differently he would have felt in the same circumstances. On the scaffold the earl's deportment was equally becoming. Having addressed the multitude, prayed, and forgiven his enemies, the Episcopal clergyman who attended said aloud, "This nobleman dies a Protestant." Argyll stepped forward and said, "I die not only a Protestant, but with a heart-hatred of Popery, Prelacy, and all superstition whatsoever." He then laid his head on the block, and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive me into thy glory!" he gave the fatal sign by raising his hand, and the axe severed his head from his body.

Though the Earl of Argyll had been for several years a member of the government, and in this capacity may be said, in one sense, to have participated in the guilt of their procedure, yet he seems to have been all along animated by a genuine love to liberty and religion. His unsuccessful effort to free his country from the chains of despotism entitles him to our gratitude as a patriot; and the manner of his death ranks him in the list of our martyrs.

The unfortunate attempt of Argyll led to still greater severities against the Presbyterians. The jails of Edinburgh being filled with prisoners, it was resolved, on hearing the first news of the invasion, to transport a number of them to Dunottar Castle, a fortified place on the east coast of Scotland, near the village of Stonehaven, the ruins of which still remain. Some of them were allowed to escape on taking



the oath of supremacy. The rest, who stood faithful, to the number of one hundred and sixty-seven persons, men and women, after being driven like cattle through Fife and along the coast of Angus, were thrust promiscuously into a dark vault under ground, full of mire, and with only one window looking to the sea. In this horrid situation they were pent up during the whole summer. Many of them died from disease, and the lives of the rest were made bitter by the barbarity of their keepers. It seemed to be the policy of government to compel these poor people to forswear themselves, by pushing them to the utmost verge of human endurance; and their inflexible fidelity had only the effect, uniformly observed in the history of persecution, of inflaming the rage and malignity of their persecutors. Twenty-five of the prisoners made their escape one day down the rocks on which the castle was built; but fifteen of these, betrayed by the low people of the neighbourhood, were apprehended, and cruelly tortured. They were bound hand and foot on a form, with a fiery match betwixt every finger, six soldiers waiting on by turns to keep the matches alive. Some of them expired under this diabolical treatment, while others were shockingly mutilated, the very bones of their fingers being burned to ashes.

Soon after this a change took place, which gave a temporary respite to the suffering Presbyterians. James, having awakened the jealousy of the nation by the dissolution of his parliaments and the admission of Papists to places of power and trust, found it necessary, for the accomplishment of his darling purpose, to ingratiate himself with the dissenters. With this view he published, in 1687, various acts of indulgence, professedly with the view of giving "liberty of conscience," and "allaying the heats and animosities among the several professors of the Christian religion," but really in order to rescind all penal statutes and disabilities affecting the Papists. In the very act of granting these indulgences James challenged a dispensing and absolute power, directly at variance with all civil and religious liberty. "We have thought fit to grant," said he, in one of his proclamations, "and by *our sovereign authority, prerogative royal, and absolute power, which all our subjects are to obey without reserve*, do hereby give and grant our royal toleration." Besides this



unconstitutional stretch of authority, the indulgences were at first clogged with various restrictions. The toleration was only extended to "moderate Presbyterians," and to such as were willing to accept of the boon, permitting them to meet in private houses, but discharging them to meet in barns or meeting-houses, and with a renewal of all the former severities against preaching in the fields. In this shape not one of the Presbyterians accepted of the indulgence. In April of the same year, however, James published his "Declaration for Liberty of Conscience," in which still farther concessions were made; and this was followed in July by a third toleration, abolishing all penal statutes against nonconformity to the religion established by law, and taking off all the former restrictions, except the prohibition of field meetings. Of the benefit of the indulgence in this form many of the Presbyterian ministers deemed it their duty to accept.

"The Cameronians," says Dr. Cook, "who had renounced their allegiance to a tyrannical sovereign, acted consistently when the indulgence was offered to them, and they boldly refused to take advantage of what had flowed from so polluted a source."[1] It is impossible not to admire the heroism of these men, who ventured, in their individual capacities, to anticipate the judgment uttered in the following year by the voice of the three kingdoms. Though with some of their principles of opposition to government we do not agree, yet it cannot be denied that the daring fidelity of this persecuted remnant presents a striking and honourable contrast to the pusillanimity of the nation in submitting so long to a tyrant, who, by casting off all regard to the constitution, had given the signal of defiance to all the friends of civil and religious liberty. Nor can we justify the conduct of those Presbyterian ministers who accepted of the indulgence, and particularly of some who went so far as to thank the king for the insidious measure as "a gracious and surprising favour." To exercise their ministry without molestation was no more than to resume those rights of which they had been wrongfully deprived; but to do so in the way of pledging their loyalty, without protesting against the monstrous usurpation of power

[1] Cook's History of the Church of Scotland, iii. 431.



from which the indulgence flowed, and the design for which it was obviously granted—the establishment of Popery—was a recognition of spiritual tyranny in the act of accepting religious liberty. The readiness with which they grasped at this dangerous boon indicated a spirit worn out by long persecution, and which manifested itself, after the Revolution, in too tamely submitting to encroachments on their spiritual independence. But it is easier for us to censure them for what they did, than to say how we would have acted in the same trying circumstances. Meanwhile the ministers did all in their power to gather up the scattered fragments of their constitution. On the 30th of August, 1687, the synod of Glasgow and Ayr met in a house at Glasgow, and resolved on measures for the licensing of preachers and the settlement of congregations. They were thus prepared, in some measure, for what Providence intended to do for the deliverance of their beloved church.

Prelacy had now ruled over the Church of Scotland for nearly twenty-eight years, during which time its reign had been traced in blood, and upheld by oppression. It is a curious fact, that during all this time no attempt was made to introduce the ceremonies of the English Church. The form of worship differed very little from that practised by the Presbyterians. Our prelatic clergy had no liturgy, no ceremonies, no surplice, no altars, no crossing in baptism.[1] What is more remarkable, they had no confession of faith, no standard of doctrine or discipline, no rule to guide their practice, except the will of the bishops, which, again, was regulated by the will of the king. A more nondescript church, perhaps, never appeared on earth; it was neither Popery, Prelacy, nor Presbytery, but a strange jumble of all the three—the king being pope, his council the cardinals, the bishops moderators, and the dragoons of Dalziel and Claverhouse, what Mackenzie once called them, the "ruling elders." The king, as supreme head of the church, deposed ministers, set aside bishops, and gave directions both as to the matter and manner of preaching. In 1670 a law was actually passed condemning the practice of lecturing! The minister might preach as long as he chose from a single

[1] Sir G. Mackenzie's Vindication, p. 7.



verse; but was forbidden, on pain of treason, to select two or more for the purpose of exposition.

From the days of Archbishop Laud the Prelatists (we deny their exclusive claim to the title of *Episcopalians*) of Scotland (with the exception of Leighton, who retired in disgust at their proceedings, and Charteris, with a few others, who refused the test) were not only Arminian in their doctrine, but quite prepared to symbolize and coalesce with Popery, had James succeeded in his designs—not so much from conviction, as from absolute lack of all principle, and exclusive devotion to their benefices.[1] Scottish Prelacy, indeed, has ever betrayed a strong leaning towards Popery: and as this proved its ruin at the Revolution, so it is one of the most hopeful symptoms of its being destined never to rise again, that its efforts to do so, in modern times, have been marked by the same fatal predilection.[2] Our danger unquestionably lies in the plausible pretensions of a "moderate Episcopacy."

As the termination of its reign approached, Prelacy again dipped its hands in blood. After all others had ceased to hold field-meetings, contented with the liberty they enjoyed, or unwilling to expose their people to almost certain destruction, by an unequal war with the royal forces, one individual alone continued to outbrave the government by persevering in the practice. This was Mr. James Renwick. Born of poor but pious parents, he was early devoted to the work of the ministry, and after finishing his course at the university, he went abroad, and received license in the United Provinces. In September, 1683, he returned to Scotland, and joining himself to the Society People, became their minister. With the ardour of youth, and the zeal of a martyr, he entered into all the extreme measures of his party; he penned the Sanquhar Declaration, and preached with great keenness against all who accepted the various indulgences and tolerations of the period. It may be easily

[1] See Letter of the Scots Bishops to the King, Nov. 3, 1688, in Wodrow, iv. p. 408, Cook's Hist. iii. pp. 436, 437.

[2] William Forbes, who died Bishop of Edinburgh in 1634, was a confirmed Puseyite of the 17th century as appears from his *Considerationes Modestæ et Pacificæ*, in which he pleads for meeting Rome "midway" in all the leading tenets of that system. "This," says Dr. Irving, "is reforming backwards." (*Lives of Scottish Writers*, vol. ii. p. 6.)

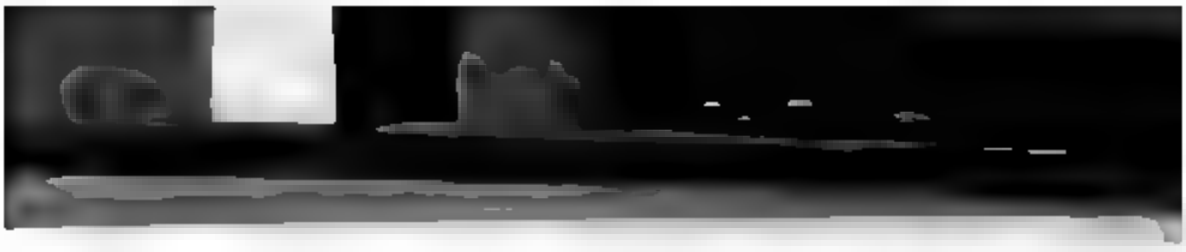


conceived that such a character would be obnoxious to the government. Young as he was, they thirsted for his blood, and set a high price upon his head. After a variety of hair-breadth escapes, he was at last apprehended in the beginning of February, 1688. When brought before the council, he boldly avowed his principles, disowning the authority of the king, and acknowledging that he taught his people that it was unlawful to pay cess, and lawful to come in arms to the field-meetings to defend themselves against the king's forces. The council, struck with his ingenuousness and extreme youth, employed various methods to induce him to qualify or retract these sentiments, but in vain. He stood firm, and was brought to the scaffold. There he displayed the same noble intrepidity of mind, mingled with a spirit of cheerful and elevated devotion. "Lord," he said, in his last prayer, "I die in the faith that thou wilt not leave Scotland, but that thou wilt make the blood of thy witnesses to be the seed of thy Church, and return again and be glorious in this land. Now, Lord, I am ready; the bride, the Lamb's wife, hath made herself ready!" He died, February 18, 1688, in the twenty-sixth year of his age.[1]

We are told that "the drums beat all the time, from his first ascending the scaffold, till he was cast over, without intermission." The government were too conscious of the injustice of their cause, and too much afraid of the impression likely to be produced by the home truths which came from the lips of this faithful witness, to allow him to be heard. But they failed to stifle his testimony; and his death may be said to have sealed their doom. He was the last that suffered martyrdom in Scotland. God grant he may be the last that ever will!

During these twenty-eight years of persecution, it is computed that not less than eighteen thousand people suffered death, or the utmost hardships and extremities on account of religion. Of these about one thousand seven hundred were banished to the plantations; and of this number two hundred were lost in shipwreck, by the carelessness, or rather, as it appears, the cruelty of the seamen. About seven hundred and fifty were banished to the northern islands, and doomed

[1] Life and Death of James Renwick, by Shields; Biograph. Presby. vol. ii., Wodrow, iv. 445.



to wear out a miserable existence on these then unpeopled shores. Those in addition who suffered imprisonment, and the privations accompanying it, are computed at above two thousand eight hundred. Those killed in the several skirmishes and insurrections are reckoned at six hundred and eighty, and those who went into voluntary banishment about seven thousand. About four hundred and ninety-eight were murdered in cold blood; three hundred and sixty-two were executed by form of law. The number of those who perished through cold, hunger, and other privations, in prison, or in their wanderings upon the mountains, and their residence in caves, cannot be well calculated, but will certainly make up the sum total to the number above specified.[1]

But, as De Foe has beautifully remarked, "it would be endless to enumerate the names of the sufferers; and it has not been possible to come at the certain number of those ministers, or others, who died in prison and banishment—there being no record preserved of their prosecution in any court of justice; nor could any roll of their names be preserved in those times of confusion anywhere, but under the altar, and about the throne of the Lamb, where their heads are crowned, and their white robes seen, and where an exact account of their number will at last be found."[2]

The time, however, was fast approaching when this system of ecclesiastical tyranny, with the civil despotism to which it owed its existence, was doomed to fall; and when hope was at the lowest, and the cloud at the darkest, it pleased Divine

[1] Scots Worthies, Supplement, p. 568. The above is given as the fullest summary I have met with of the sufferings of this period. The computation, though probably well founded, is higher than that in other accounts. That given in the "Answer to Presbyterian Eloquence," p. 26, is confessedly imperfect. In a pamphlet entitled "Short Memorials of the Sufferings and Grievances of the Presbyterians," printed in 1690, pp. 33–38, the numbers are given as follows: "Banished as slaves, since 1678, seven hundred. (This does not include those banished before and after the affair at Pentland.) Slain in the several skirmishes, about four hundred some odds. Executed on scaffolds, under colour of law, one hundred and forty." This, however, does not appear to include those executed by the assizes held in different parts of the country, and by private gentlemen acting under commission. "As for the number of such as have been forced to voluntary exile to foreign countries," this writer says, "we think it impossible to come to any reckoning of them." Wodrow, who had the best means of information, seems to have despaired of drawing out a complete list of the numbers who suffered during the persecution.

[2] Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, p. 158



Providence to send deliverance. In January, 1689, the tyrant James fled from the country, and was succeeded on the throne by King William, amidst the acclamations of an emancipated people. Presbytery was restored to the Church, and liberty to the nation, of Scotland; and the sufferings of a twenty-eight years' persecution were terminated by a bloodless and glorious REVOLUTION.



CHAPTER XVII.

1688 — 1689.

State of Scotland before the Revolution—Countenance shown to Popery—Riots in Edinburgh—Causes which led to the Revolution—Character of James II.—Alarm of the English clergy—Conduct of the Scottish bishops—The Revolution in Scotland—The Cameronians—Robbing of the curates.

The state of Scotland, as the hour of deliverance approached, was in the last degree gloomy and portentous. For some time previous to the Revolution everything promised fair for the re-establishment of Popery, the darling object of the bigoted and infatuated James. The highest places of power and trust were filled by avowed Papists, or men devoted to the court. The Earl of Perth, who had become a convert to Romanism, was now chancellor of the kingdom. By the king's express orders some of the Scottish prelates were turned out, and others, who promised to be more compliant, were substituted in their place. The indulgences which had been granted to the Presbyterians, as we have already observed, had been too tamely submitted to by many of the ministers, who, worn out by a long course of persecution, were too glad, even at the risk of appearing to own the Erastian power claimed by the monarch in dispensing the crafty boon, to embrace the opportunity of a breathing time to visit their flocks and administer to them the ordinances of religion.[1] The death of the heroic Renwick had deprived

[1] It admits of being questioned whether the indulgences of James might not in the end have defeated their object, and proved the means of reviving instead of destroying the strength of Presbytery. It is certain that the Scottish parliament was opposed to them, and that the prelatic clergy dreaded they would have the effect, as they said, "of bringing back the fanatic party, then almost entirely ruined and scattered through the world." (*Balcarras Mem.* p. 8; *Memoirs of Ker*, p. 10.)



the Cameronians of their head, and seemed to have stifled the last voice that had dared openly to assert the cause of religious freedom. The country, overawed by an unprincipled soldiery, levied from the refuse of society, may be said to have been placed under martial law. The prisons were literally crowded with persons suspected of disaffection to the government, and all who refused on oath to renounce the covenant. To such a degree had suspicion seized on the minds of the prelatic clergy, that the slightest appearance of disrespect exposed a man to danger. Mr. Gordon, minister of the Scotch Church at Campvere, who had come over to visit his friends, happening to pass the Archbishop of Glasgow on the streets of Edinburgh without lifting his hat, his grace, in high wrath, thus accosted him: "What are you, sir!" "Why do you inquire?" replied Gordon. "Why do you look with so thrawn a countenance?" pursued the archbishop. "My countenance is not thrawn, sir," said the minister; "I look as I ordinarily used to do." "If your countenance be ordinarily so," said the archbishop, "it is a very thrawn countenance!" "Sir, I have the same countenance that God has given me." "You should not look uncivilly upon gentlemen," replied the prelate, abruptly leaving him. Shortly after this strange interlude, Mr. Gordon was summoned before the chancellor, was imprisoned in the castle, and narrowly escaped with his life.

Meanwhile, Popery was receiving every kind of favour and encouragement. The children of the nobility were, in some instances by force, taken from their relatives, and sent abroad to be educated in Jesuit colleges. Schools under the care of popish priests, in which the poor were educated gratuitously, were erected in different parts, particularly at Holyrood House, where a printing press was also established for the publication of popish tracts. Romish ecclesiastics, of various shades, transported in shoals from the Continent, walked about the streets in their canonicals, and Edinburgh promised fair to assume, what James boasted of having effected with the English metropolis—"the appearance of a Catholic city." At the same time, as a fair specimen of the toleration which might be expected under popish ascendency, all attempts to enlighten the country by publications on the errors of Romanism were strictly suppressed, under pretext



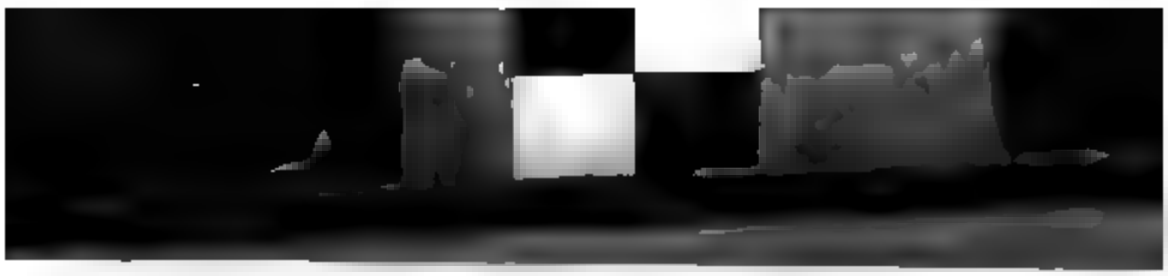
of their being "insulting to the king's religion." Booksellers' shops were ransacked by orders of the chancellor, and all such works were seized and committed to the flames.[1] One James Glen, bolder than the rest, got himself into trouble by declaring to the macers of the court, on their coming to search his premises, that he had one book in his shop more severe against Popery than all other books in the world; and on being required to show it, producing to them a copy of the Bible.[2]

This preposterous attempt to suppress public opinion produced its usual effects. Intestine dissatisfaction daily increased, and found utterance in pasquinades and riots. The following characteristic scene may be given as an illustration of the popular feeling some time before the Revolution:—"Feb. 1, 1688. There was a tumult and riot in the town of Edinburgh, being a convocation of the apprentices and the rabble against the avowed and public meetings for saying of mass and other popish worship; who disturbed the chancellor's lady and others at their skailing, by throwing dirt, and otherwise affronting them. This was taken so ill that some of the boys being apprehended, the privy council met this day, and ordained a baxter (baker) lad to be whipped through the Canongate. While the hangman is going about it, the boys again rose, beat the hangman, rescued the lad, and so continued all night making disorder. The council called in to the assistance of Graham's company Major White's men in the castle, and likewise the king's foot-guards, and the soldiers being drunk, they shot with ball among the boys, and killed a woman and a man, and Robert Mein, the postmaster's apprentice, though he was in no confluence at all; which some called a murder. Then all were commanded off the streets, and all ordained to hang out *bowets*[3]

[1] "Feb. 8, 1688. Alexander Ogstoun, bookseller in Edinburgh, is threatened for selling Usher's *Sermons against the Papists*, and the *History of the French Prosecutions*, and all the copies are taken from him, though popish books were publicly printed and sold." (*Fountainhall's Decisions*, i. 496.)

[2] Fountainhall, i. 398.

[3] "The bowets that were formerly ordered by the common council to be hung out for illuminating the streets by night, not answering, it seems, a new order was made at this time (October, 1684), for a lantern and candle to be hung out at the first story of every tenement or land, at five of the clock in the evening to burn till ten, from the 29th of October to the 1st of March, on the penalty of five merks Scots for every omission." (*Maitland's Hist. of Edinburgh*, p. 105.)



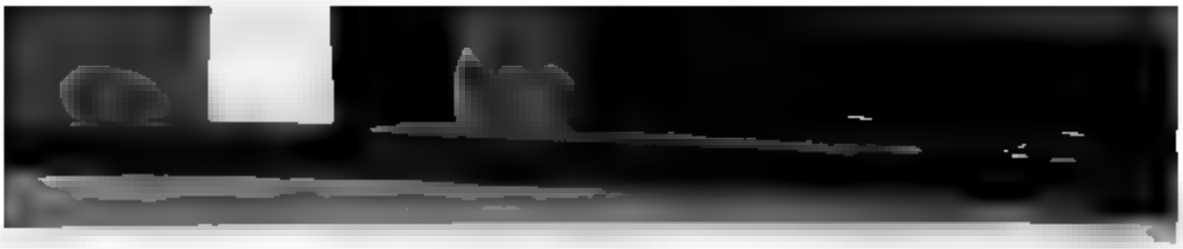
(lanterns); and some being apprehended, the next day a *tooman* and two men were scourged; but to show how afraid they were of the common people's inclinations, they had them guarded all the way betwixt two files of musketeers and pikemen, for fear of being deforced again."[1]

A minute investigation of the causes which led to the Revolution does not come within our province. Historians are generally agreed in tracing that event mainly to the infatuated policy of the monarch. From the day of his coronation, when he refused to take the oath to maintain the Protestant religion, to the day of his abdication, when, in his flight to France, he threw the great seal into the Thames, the administration of James II. was a medley of outrages on the constitution, and of political blunders, only to be explained by the intense bigotry that blinded him to every other consideration save that of reviving Popery. Without capacity or energy, he was consistent only in his fanaticism, and obstinate only in his infatuation.[2] His gloomy reign was marked by many deeds of cruelty, unredeemed by an act of clemency, or even by those warlike achievements which shed a fictitious splendour over the atrocities of other despots. Had he been content to rule according to the laws of the land, and enjoy the exercise without aiming at the ascendency of his religion, no reign promised to be more prosperous. But the sacrifices which the god of this world exacts from his slaves are often far more costly than those required from the servants of Christ. When the interests of Antichrist appear to require it, the dearest ties of nature must give way; the man must risk his life, and the monarch his crown. To secure the triumph of Popery, James yielded to the ghostly advices of his confessors, and rushed blindly on his own ruin. His last indulgence, by showing too plainly his design, brought matters to a crisis.

The bishops and clergy of England were the first to sound the alarm. The popular dread of Popery, never altogether

[1] Fountainhall, Decis. i. 309.

[2] In point of consistency in his religion, as well as correctness of moral conduct, James had certainly the advantage of his brother Charles II., who, though professing himself a member of the Church of England, was a Papist at heart, and received the rites of the Romish communion the day before his death. (*Ellis' Orig. Letters*, 2d ser. vol. iv. 76. *The Phœnix*, vol. i. 566.)



extinguished since the days of bloody Mary, was revived by the prospect of its restoration. The popish controversy was resumed; and, as the natural effect, the English clergy were not only led to adopt the weapons they had formerly employed against dissent, but to abate in their hostility towards evangelical dissenters. They promised them full toleration, and even proposed "an universal blessed union of all the reformed churches, both at home and abroad, against our common enemies."[1] This undesigned approximation to the main object of the solemn league of 1643, brought about by the similarity of circumstances, was attended with other coincidences equally striking. We see the same stringent application of the royal supremacy, met by a similar resistance on the part of the Church; we see the same claim of independence made by the clergy, met by the same charge of rebellion on the part of the Crown. In the trial of the bishops before the court of commission, under the presidency of the infamous Jeffreys, we witness the unseemly spectacle of ecclesiastical judges summoned to appear before the civil, and shut up to deny the competency of the court. One of the bishops, desiring to know the commission by which the court sat, we hear Jeffreys bawling at the top of his voice: "What commission have you to be so impudent in court? This man ought to be kept in a dark room. Why do you suffer him without a guardian?" And "among the deputies at the bar, and probably undistinguished from the rest by the ignorant and arrogant chancellor, who looked down upon them all with like scorn, we see Sir Isaac Newton, professor of mathematics in the university."[2] And, in short, we feel as if we were transported back to the kirk of St. Giles in 1637, when we learn that "Sprat himself chose to officiate as dean in Westminster Abbey; where, as soon as he gave orders for reading the declaration (of indulgence), so great a murmur arose that nobody could hear it; but before it was finished, no one was left in the church but a few prebendaries, and choristers, and the Westminster scholars; and he himself could hardly hold the proclamation in his hands for trembling."[3]

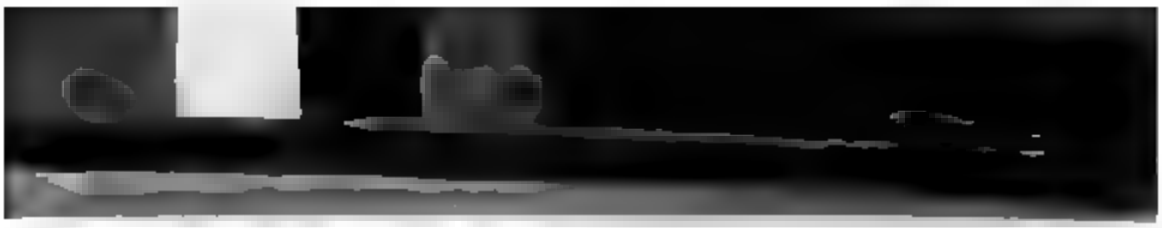
[1] Calamy's Life of Baxter, p. 365.
[2] Sir James Macintosh, History of the Revolution, p. 138.
[3] Macintosh, ib. p. 250.



Thus, with few exceptions, the English clergy—a class the most devoted to monarchy, and who might otherwise have kept the whole country in submission to the house of Stuart—were hopelessly alienated by an encroachment on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church, so glaring that, even as men of honour, they were compelled to assume the attitude of resistance. We say compelled; for sad must have been the dilemma, and sore the struggle, before such a step could be taken by men who had been accustomed to preach the indefeasible right of kings, who had treated all that doubted with the fiercest scurrility, and had boasted of it, perhaps with reason, as the peculiar characteristic of the Church of England.[1] James himself was astonished to see these men lifting up the heel against him. But he forgot that though their theory may sound well, so long as it favours its supporters, it becomes a very different matter when turned against them; and that nothing tends so effectually to discover the fallacy of the argument as to feel its edge. Had his majesty been less precipitate, he might have been more fortunate; but by seeking too much, he lost both substance and shadow. The clergy became alarmed, and not being prepared to change their creed in a day, they gladly hailed any change that might save at once their consciences and their livings. Even as it was, the Revolution came upon the English Church entirely by surprise. The Prince of Orange met at first with a very cold reception; many of the clergy "ran away at his approach, and were ashamed to make so quick a turn."[2] Little credit, after all, is due to their having opposed a course of policy so utterly reckless as that of James, a policy against which some of his best friends repeatedly warned him, at which even the pope is said to have been astonished, and which exposed him to the well-known taunt of the cardinal, on seeing the dethroned monarch at Versailles:—"There goes a man who has lost three kingdoms for a mass!"

The alarm of the English clergy, in the prospect of the restoration of Popery, was not without foundation. Nothing, indeed, strikes the devout student of this portion of our history with more thorough conviction than the wonderful escape which, under the special providence of God, our

[1] Macintosh, Hist. Rev. p. 153. [2] Burnet, Hist. an. 1688.



country made, at the Revolution, from being again brought under the dominion of the pope. Our historians have not, in general, attached sufficient weight to the accommodating genius of Popery, or to the predisposing causes which operated in its favour.[1] Public morals had been debauched, and religious principle undermined, by the unblushing profligacy which disgraced the reign of the second Charles. In England, the last spark of patriotism and public spirit seemed to have been quenched in the blood of Russel and Sidney. Ignorance pervaded the mass of the population, who were prepared for almost any form of religion the government chose to prescribe. The hardiest and best portion of the dissenters, through dint of persecution, had been gradually wasted away, or drained off to the New World;[2] while the rest, crushed in spirit, and split into congregational fragments, without any common bond of union, were incapable of acting in concert, and presented an easy conquest to the enemy. With the exception of a few Presbyterians, they tamely licked the hand of the tyrant, thankful for the "indulgence," which allowed them to preach the gospel, and careless about the encroachments of that arbitrary power which would soon have banished them and the gospel out of the land.[3] When to all this we add, that James had a powerful ally in Louis XIV., whose dragonades for the extirpation of Protestantism from France he heartily applauded, and on whose assistance he confidently relied; that the other Popish powers of the Continent were ready to support him; and that he could boast of having already reduced Ireland to the pope, our deliverance must appear little short of a miracle. The country was saved through the infatuation of a single man—saved through the intervention of another, the prince of the pettiest state in Europe—saved in spite of the most powerful combination of enemies, who seemed smitten at the critical hour by a sudden paralysis—and saved by the instrumentality of a church which had always been the fast friend

[1] Bruce's Free Thoughts on Popery, p. 316, &c.

[2] By the lowest computation, "in England alone, from the restoration of Charles, in 1660, to the first indulgence of James, above fifteen thousand families had been ruined, and more than five thousand persons had died in bonds for mere matters of conscience to God." (*Macintosh, Hist. Rev.* pp. 167, 175; *Bogue and Bennet, Hist. Dissent.* i. 106.)

[3] Clarkson's Life of Penn.



of despotism, and the leaders of which shrank in dismay from the Revolution they were employed to accomplish.

At this eventful crisis of our history, which brought the real principles of men to the test, the conduct of our Scottish prelates offers a striking contrast to that of their brethren in England. While the English clergy, forgetting in their alarm for the safety of the Protestant religion their high notions about passive obedience, were presenting a firm front to the usurpations of James, our Scotch bishops were crouching at his feet. No sooner did they hear of the proposal of the Prince of Orange to come over and deliver these realms from the gripe of Popery and arbitrary power, than they addressed a letter to King James, dated November 3, 1688 (by which time William had sailed from Holland); in which, after addressing the tyrant in a strain of the most fulsome adulation, they assure him of their "firm and unshaken loyalty;" praying "that his enemies may be clothed with shame, and that on his royal head the crown may flourish;" not doubting, they add, "that God, in his great mercy, will still preserve and deliver your majesty, by giving you the hearts of your subjects and the necks of your enemies."[1] This letter may be reckoned a genuine sample of the spirit of Scottish Prelacy, from the Reformation down to the present period; and "when it is recollected that it was addressed to a sovereign who had unambiguously shown his intention to subvert the freedom and the religion of Britain, and that it was meant to defeat the enterprise of a prince who had emblazoned on his banners —'the Protestant religion and liberties of England,' there can be little hesitation as to the light in which it is to be regarded."[2]

But the hour of deliverance had come. On the 4th of November, 1688, William, prince of Orange, landed on the shores of England. He immediately published a declaration, in which, after detailing the causes of his expedition, he announced, that neither he nor his princess (the daughter of James), intended to claim the crown, but to leave the succession to be decided by parliament, and that their sole object was to deliver the nation from the threatened mischiefs of Popery and arbitrary power. This declaration was received

[1] Letters of the Scots bishops to the king, Wodrow, vol. iv. 468.
[2] Cook's History of the Church of Scotland, vol. iii. 435.



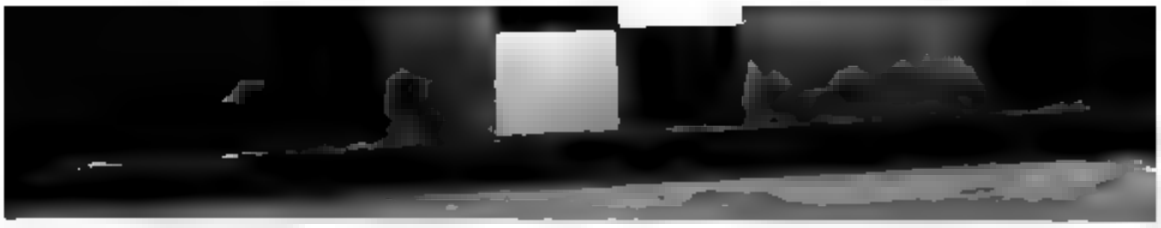
everywhere with extraordinary enthusiasm. The coincidence of the period 1688 with that of 1588, in the preceding century, which had witnessed the destruction of the Spanish Armada, contributed to enhance the expectations of all the friends of Protestantism. The nation appeared to "awake" as from a troubled dream; to "shake herself from the dust" of her prostration, and, in one day, to "put on her strength" for the struggle, and "her beautiful garments," for celebrating the victory.

The news of the prince's arrival and of the flight of James soon reached Scotland, spreading dismay among the friends of the late government, who were quite unprepared for the event. In the absence of the regular troops, which had been ordered to England, the privy-council issued hasty orders for a levy of all fencible men, from sixteen to sixty.[1] The orders were answered by shouts for the Prince of Orange. The metropolis became the centre of resort from all places of the kingdom, and it was quickly seen that the authority of the late king was at an end. The power of the council and the bishops dwindled into contempt. The symbols of office dropped from their hands, and they who had ruled with a rod of iron began to consult for their own safety. It is a striking illustration at once of their guilt and their cowardice, that among the last acts of their expiring power was an attempt to obliterate, as far as possible, the remaining vestiges of their despotism. They hastened to set at liberty those whom Claverhouse had imprisoned for refusing to renounce the covenant, and to take down and bury out of sight the heads of the martyrs—some of which had remained bleaching in the sun for twenty-eight years on the gates and market-crosses of the town—lest the horrid spectacles might be appealed to as monuments of their cruelty, and "might occasion the question to be moved, by whom, and for what, they were set up there?"[2]

Let it not be supposed, however, that this arose from any relenting in behalf of the Presbyterians. On the contrary, up to the last moment, "till they saw the cloud hovering and the storm ready to break upon their heads," our pre-

[1] Balcarras, pp. 28, 32; Wodrow, iv. 467.

[2] Sufferings and Grievances of Presbyterians in Scotland, particularly of those of them called, by nickname, Cameronians, p. 28.



latic rulers maintained their character as persecutors. It was not till the trumpets of the Prince of Orange were heard pealing the signal of the nation's redemption, that the sword of persecution was sheathed. The jailer heard it, and reluctantly unbarred his dungeon. The dragoons of Claverhouse heard it when their victims were kneeling before them with muffled faces ready to receive the fatal shot, and their fingers were withdrawn from the trigger.[1] Persecutors and persecuted were alike astonished at the suddenness of the change. They were like men that dreamed. But they awakened to very opposite feelings. The persecutor slunk away, rankling with disappointed rage; while the Church of Scotland, after twenty-eight years' oppression, rose from the earth, unmuffled and unmanacled, to hail the dawn of a glorious revolution![2]

The events which led to the establishment of the Revolution in Scotland, interesting as they are, belong rather to civil than ecclesiastical history; and we may now suppose them to pass in rapid review before us. The Earl of Perth, justly afraid of his personal safety, flees from Edinburgh in the disguise of a fisherman; is detected in Fife, and thrown into the jail of Kirkcaldy. The administration falls into the hands of the friends of William. The castle of Edinburgh, under the Duke of Gordon, a Papist, still holds out for the king. The citizens of Edinburgh being alarmed by a report that a number of Papists had got into the town, and designed to burn it that night, the whole turn out of their houses into the streets—mothers are seen running with their children, "crying out they would all be murdered by the Irishes!" Finding no appearance of the enemy, the mob is easily in-

[1] Sufferings and Grievances, &c., p. 29.

[2] "This," says Defoe, "puts me in mind of a brief story within the compass of my own knowledge, of a gentleman who was set upon by a furious mastiff dog: the gentleman defended himself with a sword for some time, but the mastiff, after being very much wounded, got within his point and fastened on his arm. The gentleman being in great distress, and fearing every moment that he would quit his arm and fasten upon his throat, had no other way to master this great dog, but being a large heavy man, he cast himself flat down upon the dog, with his other elbow lying on the dog's breast, and thus with the weight of his body crushed the beast to death; and upon this he observed, that as the dog died gradually under him, so fast and no faster his teeth loosened in his arm; his fury ended with his life, and both ended together." (*Mem. of the Church of Scotland*, p. 289.)



duced to march in the direction of Holyrood House. Irritated by the opposition of the few soldiers left to guard the palace under Captain Wallace, who fire on them and kill some of the crowd, they burst open the gates, take reprisals on the soldiers, gut the chapel of its ornaments, popish books, and all monuments of idolatry, and make a bonfire of them. In fine, the convention of estates, summoned by William to settle the affairs of government, meet on the 14th of March, 1689, and declare, "That James VII., being a professed Papist, did assume the royal power, and acted as king, without ever taking the oath required by law; and had, by the advice of evil counsellors, invaded the fundamental constitution of the kingdom, and altered it from a legal limited monarchy to an arbitrary, despotic power; and hath exerted the same to the subversion of the Protestant religion, and violation of the laws and liberties of the kingdom; whereby he hath *forfaulted* his right to the crown, and the throne has become vacant."[1]

At this period the party which took the most prominent share in helping on the Revolution was that known by the name of Cameronians—so called from their following the principles of Richard Cameron, who was the first among the Presbyterians that openly threw off his allegiance to the reigning monarch, on the ground of his open tyranny and usurpation of the rights of Jesus Christ. This class of Presbyterians, who may be viewed as forming at that time a political party as well as a religious sect, were distinguished from their brethren by making their views of civil government a religious question, and acting upon these views to the extent of openly declaring war against the tyrant on the throne. They had thus the start of the rest of the nation: and whatever may be thought of the arguments on which they rested, or of the prudence and expediency of such a small minority in the nation assuming the attitude of resistance, there can be no question that the political principles which they professed were adopted and acted upon by the nation at large when the tyrant was hurled from the throne

[1] "The Scots were as unanimous for the *dethroning* King James as the English were for *abdicating* him. They were not satisfied with the soft word *abdication;* they resolved roundly that he had *forfaulted* (forfeited) *the crown*." (*Oldmixon's Memoirs*, p. 28.)



at the Revolution. Compared with those who tamely submitted to the will of the government, it is impossible to deny them the palm of superior courage and consistency. Composed for the most part of the respectable yeomen and humbler classes of society, they numbered in their ranks a few of the landed gentlemen of the country; and in the societies which they kept up for social worship and consultation, in the absence, or after the removal of their pastors, they maintained a character for an ardent piety and a strictness of discipline corresponding to the high principles of their profession. "Their standing on the mountains of Scotland," says an eloquent divine, "indicated to the vigilant eye of William that the nation was ripening for a change. They expressed what others thought, uttering the indignation and groans of a spirited and oppressed people. While Lord Russel, and Sidney, and other enlightened patriots in England, were plotting against Charles, from a conviction that his right was forfeited, the Cameronians in Scotland, under the same conviction, had the courage to declare war against him. Both the plotters and the warriors fell; but their blood watered the plant of renown, and succeeding ages have eaten the pleasant fruit."[1]

As this class had suffered more than any other from the persecutions of the preceding reign, we need not wonder to find them among the first to hail the Prince of Orange as their deliverer. "Now it was seen," says Defoe, "and made plain to the world, that the suffering people in Scotland acted upon no principles of enthusiasm, blind zeal, or religious frenzy, as their enemies suggested; that they were no enemies to monarchy, civil government, order of society, and the like, as had been scandalously said; but that they kept strictly to the rule of God's word, adhered to an honest cause, and acted upon just principles."[2] This is partly borne out by the public declarations, as well as actings, of the Cameronians at the present period. In one of their papers presented to King William they say, "We have given as good evidence of our being willing to be *subjects* to King William, as we gave proof before of our being unwilling to be *slaves* to King James. Before we offered to be soldiers

[1] Charters' Sermons, p. 277.
[2] Memoirs of the Church of Scotland, p. 301.



we first made an offer to be subjects."[1] This offer was made in their petition, addressed to the meeting of the estates, in which, after beseeching them by all that is holy and just, and by the blood of their murdered brethren, to declare the crown vacant, they say, "We cry and crave that King William, now of England, may be chosen and proclaimed King of Scotland, and that the regal authority be devolved upon him, with such necessary conditions of compact as may give just and legal securities of the peace and purity of our religion, stability of our laws, privileges of our parliaments, and subjects' liberties, civil and ecclesiastic, and make our subjection both a clear duty and a comfortable happiness. And because kings are but men, mortal, mutable, and fallible, particularly we crave, that he be bound in his royal oath, not only to govern according to the will and command of God, ancient laws, &c., but, above all, that he and his successors profess and maintain the true Protestant religion, abolish Popery and all false religion, heresy, idolatry, and superstition; revive the penal laws against the same; re-establish and redintegrate the ancient covenanted work of reformation of this church, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the Word of God, Confession of Faith, covenants, National and Solemn League, upon its old foundations, as established from the year 1638 to 1650: and that he restore and confirm, by his princely sanction, the due privileges of the church, granted to her by Jesus Christ, her only head and supreme, and never assume to himself an Erastian supremacy over the Church in causes ecclesiastic, or unbounded prerogative in civils above law; but as the keeper of both tables of the law of God, in a way competent to civil authority, interpose his power for the ejecting out of the church the prelates, the main instruments of the church's and nation's miseries, and from all administration of the power and trust in state such malignant enemies as have promoted the ruin thereof. *Upon these, or the like terms*, we tender our allegiance to King William, and hope to give more pregnant proof of our loyalty to his majesty, in adverse as well as prosperous providences, than they have done, or can do, who profess implicit subjection to absolute authority, so long only as Providence preserves its grandeur."[2]

[1] Sufferings and Grievances, &c., p. 41. [2] Sufferings and Grievances, 43, 44.



It may be thought that this high profession of loyalty is considerably qualified by the conditions on which it is tendered—conditions which seem to limit civil allegiance by religious qualifications, and some of which savour of intolerance. But it will be granted by all who are friendly to the ancient principles of the Church of Scotland, that this party insisted for no more, in substance, than what it was the *duty* of the nation to exact, and of the king to grant; and that it would have been well for the country and the church had such been the terms on which the government was settled; in which case many of the calamities and corruptions which followed might have been prevented. It may be remarked, too, that though the principles laid down in this petition must have led, if carried out, to an entire change in the constitution of the English Church, yet the petitioners do not directly insist on this as a condition of their allegiance, but appear to confine their demands to Scotland; and by saying, "On these or *the like* terms," they reserve a liberty for themselves to judge of the expediency of their continuing their allegiance to William's government, in the event of their not obtaining the full realization of their desires—a liberty of which many of them afterwards availed themselves, though some dissented from the Revolution settlement, and dissociated themselves both from church and state.

We may now advert to the share taken in public affairs by the class of Presbyterians to whom we have referred. And here it may be proper to give some account of a transaction in which they were the chief actors, and which was not only eagerly improved at the time by the enemies of the Revolution, but which is to this day grossly misrepresented by historians of High Church principles—we allude to what was called the *rabbling of the curates*.

Soon after the convention of estates had declared the throne vacant, and before William had been proclaimed King of Scotland, the country may be said to have been in a state of anarchy. "There was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes." It is remarkable, that during this interval, this "surcease of justice,"[1] there was no insurrection against the local authorities, no lives

[1] "We may count it a surcease of justice from August 1688, to the 1st of November 1689." (*Fountainhall*, i. 526.)



sacrificed, no outbreaks of any importance, or leading to any serious results. When it is considered that the nation had been groaning for such a length of time under the most unprovoked oppression, it is astonishing that no reprisals were attempted on those who had been the instruments of tyranny, and that the recoil of the nation on its ancient abutments was not accompanied by any disruption of social order. In one point only the people considered themselves entitled to improve the opportunity of this interregnum. The *curates*, as they called the prelatic incumbents (for they would not allow them the name of ministers), were of all others the most obnoxious to the common people. They were the living monuments of the usurpations of Prelacy. All of them had been thrust in by the bishops, under the law of patronage, against the inclinations of the people. In many cases they had acted the part of spies and informers to the government, and aided the soldiers in the harassing and bloody persecution; few of them preached the gospel, and not a few of them had disgraced their profession by their lives. They were regarded, therefore, in the light of hirelings and intruders, filling the place, and eating the bread, of those faithful ministers whom they had driven into the wilderness, and whose blood was to be found in their skirts. No class of men had more reason to dread retribution, now that the tyrant was deposed and the military withdrawn; and the wonder is that they did not fall sacrifices to the popular fury. Nothing, however, worthy of the name of persecution awaited them. On Christmas-day, 1688, several of these curates, particularly in the west of Scotland, were ejected from their churches and manses, chiefly through the agency of those called Cameronians or Hill-men. The example was followed in different parts of the country. The plan taken for effecting these measures displays a solemn earnestness and high feeling of conscientiousness characteristic of the party. Regarding themselves as specially called to perform this act of justice by the circumstances in which Providence had placed them, and even by the vows under which they lay for the extirpation of Prelacy, the Covenanters brought out the obnoxious incumbent to the churchyard, the cross, or some place of public resort. He was then solemnly charged with his former misconduct. Not a drop of his blood was



spilt, not a sixpence worth of his property was touched,[1] excepting his fringed gown (a clerical vestment, which, being worn at that time by the curates, was regarded by the people as the badge of Prelacy, and was on that account, from that time till very lately, obnoxious to all Presbyterians). His gown was taken from his shoulders, torn over his head, and trampled under foot. This ceremony being ended, the disrobed curate was paraded to the boundaries of the parish, and dismissed with an emphatic warning never to return.

The curates, it appears, were sadly alarmed on these occasions, expecting nothing else but to be murdered in cold blood. We learn this from Patrick Walker, the eccentric pedler, who published lives of Cameron, Peden, and other Covenanters. Patrick candidly confesses that he himself was present at fifteen of these rabblings; and so far from being ashamed of his share in them, he records it with evident satisfaction.[2] "The time of their fall was now come," says he, "which many longed for, even for long twenty-eight years. Faintness was entered into their hearts, insomuch that the greater part of them could not speak sense, but stood trembling and sweating, though we spoke with all calmness to them. I inquired at them what made them to tremble; they that had been teachers and defenders of the prelatical principles, and active and instrumental in many of our national mischiefs? How would they tremble and sweat if they were in the Grassmarket going up the ladder, with the rope before them, and the lad with the pyoted coat at their tail! But they were speechless objects of pity."[3] This rabbling, as it was called, continued till April of the year following, and during this time upwards of three hundred curates are said to have been ejected.[4] It may be easily conceived what an outcry these persons would make after recovering from their panic, and finding themselves dispossessed of their livings. The most exaggerated reports of their treatment by the rabble were transmitted by them to Edinburgh, where they were collected

[1] Sufferings and Grievances of the Presbyterians.

[2] "There was never any public work that I put my hand to wherein I took so much delight." (*Patrick Walker.*)

[3] Remarkable Passages in the Life of Richard Cameron, &c., *apud Biograph. Presbyteriana.*

[4] Account of the late Establishment of Presbyterian Government, anno 1690, p. 65. London, 1693.



by Dr. Munro (himself smarting under his expulsion from the University of Edinburgh), and published under the title of "The Case of the present afflicted Episcopal Clergy in Scotland truly represented." This highly-coloured caricature was sent up to London, to prejudice the Presbyterian cause. That in some cases there may have been rudeness and incivility is not to be wondered at. Walker admits, that "there were some loose men, brought up under their own wings, who were very rude, in eating, drinking, and spoiling of their houses;" and complains of this being laid in the names of the Covenanters, who were entirely innocent of such transactions. But judging even from their own representations of "the case of the afflicted clergy," it appears perfectly ridiculous to dignify the annoyances and hardships of which they complain with the name of persecution. We are informed, for example, that "with tongue and hands they committed all outrages imaginable against the ministers, their wives, and children;" but when we come to learn the particulars, it only appears that, "having eat and drunk plentifully, at parting they carry the minister out of his house to the churchyard, and there expose him to the people as a condemned malefactor, gave him a strict charge never to preach more in that place; and for the conclusion *of all this tragedy*, they caused his gown to be torn over his head in a hundred pieces!" A conclusion worthy of the *tragedy* indeed! One Mr. William Bullo of Stobo seems to have run the greatest risk of martyrdom. "A number of the rabble," he says, "*offered* to *stob* him;" and on his remonstrating with them, "they said, 'You —— rogue, do you take on you to admonish us? We'll shoot you presently through the head.' 'Then,' said he, 'since you will do it, God have mercy on my soul.' Then they laid many strokes on him with the *broad* side of their drawn swords, and told him they would forbear his execution *that night*." Of course, execution was delayed *sine die*. Another of the curates, Mr. John Little, seems to have nearly fallen a victim to a regiment of fifty women, armed with cudgels, "who," he says, "after tearing his coat off, compassed him about, four at each arm; others of them beating his head and shoulders with their fists; others of them *scratching and nipping his back*."[1] Such was

[1] Case of the Afflicted Clergy, pp. 5, 56, 59. Mr. Little could not have



"the case of the afflicted Episcopal clergy of Scotland truly represented!" And such were the martyrs for whom some Episcopal writers of the present day still demand our commiseration! "The moral and moderate clergy," says Wodrow, "were very civilly used; and if the profane, the firebrands and instigators of all the barbarities so fresh in the people's memories, met with some wholesome severities, it is not much to be wondered at; and considering the confusion of the time, and the hand that persons that never joined with Presbyterians might have in it, it may be matter of admiration that the provoked people ran not a far greater length."[1] It is worthy of remark, too, that none complained of these pretended severities but the outed curates themselves; nor does it appear that, among the whole number who were thus summarily turned off, any solitary individual had either excited an affectionate wish for his detention, or was accompanied by the regret of his flock at his departure.

been very materially damaged by this treatment, when, as he tells us, he said to the women, that "if they would let him into the kirk, he would preach a sermon to them."

[1] Wodrow's Correspondence, vol. i. p. 208.



CHAPTER XVIII.

1689 — 1690.

The Cameronian guard and regiment—Colonels Cleland and Blackader—Viscount Dundee—Battle of Killiecrankie—Skirmish at Dunkeld—Success of the Revolution in Scotland—Difficulties of William—Scottish Episcopacy abolished—Factions in Parliament—Earl of Crawfurd's measures—Revolution settlement of the Church of Scotland—Its character and defects.

No sooner was it known that the convention of estates was to meet in March, 1689, than the Covenanters of the west resolved on repairing in a body to Edinburgh, to aid in protecting the meeting from the apprehended attack of the Jacobites. Their assistance was far from being unnecessary; but for some time, to avoid suspicion, they were secretly lodged about the town. On the alarm being given, they issued from their lurking-places, "bearing," says a modern writer, "beneath their blue bonnets, faces either sullen with the recollection of wrongs, or beaming with expectation of revenge, and carrying under their gray plaids, for the work they were called upon, the swords and pistols which they had used against the house of Stuart at Pentland and Bothwell."[1] This description of the Covenanters is chargeable with the prejudice and exaggeration common to the Jacobitical school, to which the writer belonged. That these much-injured and long-suffering men complained, and had reason to complain, of the ill-judged lenity of the government at the Revolution to their murderers and oppressors, may be true; but to insinuate that they were actuated by a spirit of personal revenge is inconsistent not only with their avowed intentions, but with the whole of their character and history. Two individ-

[1] Chambers' History of the Rebellions, Constable's Miscellany, vol. xlii. p. 33.



uals, it is true, were now sitting in that convention, who had good reason to dread the vengeance of the Covenanters, had such a spirit existed; and who, conscious of their misdeeds, were now trembling for their safety. These were, the infamous Sir George Mackenzie, long known in Scotland by the name of "Bluidy Mackenzie," and the not less notorious Claverhouse, now Viscount Dundee; who, the one by his judicial murders, and the other by his military butcheries, committed on helpless old men and women, had certainly earned no title to the tender mercies of their countrymen. Neither of them was long in making his escape. Sir George fled to England, where he soon after died miserably. Dundee, whose hand was too deeply dyed in the blood of Scotland to expect much favour from the government of William, to whom he had offered his services without success, and, fretting under the disgrace of being superseded in his command, was now plotting the restoration of the infatuated James, under whose sanguinary and bigoted rule alone he felt that his wishes could be gratified or his merits appreciated. "The wicked fleeth," it is said, "when no man pursueth." Surrounded by a Cameronian guard, Claverhouse no doubt felt himself less at his ease than when boldly riding up, in the midst of his dragoons, to attack an unarmed conventicle. It is reported that he had one day a casual rencounter on the street with Colonel Cleland, the gallant leader of the Covenanters, who is supposed to have challenged him to single combat.[1] However this may have been, he pretended that he was in daily danger of his life, and insisted on the Cameronians being dismissed. Meeting with no sympathy in the convention, and expecting as little in the civilized parts of Scotland, Claverhouse betook himself to the Highlands, where, having been denounced as a rebel, he openly raised the standard of James VII.

The sudden rising of Dundee having led to measures for the defence of the country, those of the Covenanters known by the name of Cameronians, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Douglas, raised a regiment of eight hundred men, without beat of drum or expense of levy, under the command of the Earl of Angus, a nobleman hardly twenty years of age, and only son of the Marquis of Douglas. Such was the origin of

[1] Somers' Tracts, *apud* Life and Diary of Colonel Blackader, p. 17.



the Cameronian regiment;[1] and never, perhaps, was a body of troops so organized. Composed exclusively of those holding the extreme views of the Covenanters, who had disowned the tyrannical government of James, and who were almost alike inimical to the prelatical and the indulged clergy, every man in the ranks was a religious enthusiast, in the best sense of that term—fired with zeal, based on stern and uncompromising principle, and aiming not merely to free his country from civil thraldom, but mainly to restore the reign of Presbytery and the Covenant, and put down all their opposers. The same zeal, however, which had succeeded so well in filling up the ranks of the regiment, was not found so favourable to its unanimity or subordination. The men insisted on their right to choose their own officers; elders were appointed to superintend the moral and religious behaviour of the corps; and rules were laid down, more applicable, it must be owned, to a church than a regiment. Discussions ensued, of a kind similar to those which had divided the counsels of the Covenanters at Bothwell. It was keenly debated among them whether it was not a "sinful association" to enlist under the same banner with other regiments, composed of those who had been malignants and abettors of tyranny, or who had not cleared themselves from the scandal of unlawful engagements. Owing to their pertinacity in these unreasonable scruples Colonel Cleland, on whom the command of the regiment was devolved, very nearly lost temper, and he refused to accede to their demands, as subversive of all military discipline. But the matter was finally compromised by their agreeing on a brief general declaration, drawn up by Sir Patrick Hume of Polwart, and explained by Mr. Alexander Shields, who "backed it with some persuasives, going from company to company." It was to the effect that they "appeared in his majesty's service in defence of the nation, recovery and preservation of the Protestant religion, and, in particular, the work of reformation in Scotland, in opposition to Popery, Prelacy, and arbitrary power, in all its branches and steps, until the government of church and state be brought back to their lustre and integrity, established in the best and purest times." These terms, it might be sup-

[1] This regiment is now the 26th in the British infantry, and known still by the name of "The Cameronians."



posed, were sufficiently guarded; but though the majority were induced to comply with them, there were still some, including Howie of Lochgoin and Sir Robert Hamilton, who continued long after to protest against "Angus' regiment" as an association with malignants.[1]

The Cameronian regiment was particularly fortunate in the officers who first commanded it. Two of the most distinguished of these were, Lieutenant-colonel William Cleland, and Captain (afterwards Colonel) Blackader. Colonel Cleland was the son of the factor of the Earl of Douglas,[2] and lived much in the castle with Lord Angus, who had a great attachment to him. He received a liberal education in the University of St. Andrews, and distinguished himself very early in life by his poetical talents.[3] Brave, even to excess,[4] chivalrous, and fond of enterprise, imbued with sound religious principle, and with what, in that age, was its inseparable adjunct, a sound hatred of civil and religious despotism, he was raised, before completing his seventeenth year, to the rank of an officer among the suffering Presbyterians. Thenceforth his career was a succession of hairbreadth escapes and adventures, of which the unhappy distractions of the times have prevented us from obtaining any definite accounts; and it is only occasionally, as he dashes on through the smoke and turmoil of battle, that we can catch a glimpse of him. The first is at a conventicle at Divan, in Fife, riding down the hill with another gentleman, to meet the military, who were advancing to disturb the meeting, when he was with difficulty prevented by Mr. Blackader from "breaking after them;" and the royal troops, alarmed at the preparation made for their reception, "fled to Cupar, with-

[1] Shields' Memoirs, *apud* Wodrow's Analecta, Ban. edit. vol. i. The Declaration of a poor, wasted, misrepresented remnant of the suffering Anti-popish, Anti-prelatic, &c., true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland. 1692.

[2] Wodrow's History, vol. ii. p. 481, where Cleland's father is called "garner-keeper," which is misprinted "game-keeper" in Dr. M'Crie's Memoirs of Veitch, &c., p. 108.

[3] A collection of his poems was published in 1697, containing "Hollow my Fancie," "A Mock Poem upon the Expedition of the Highland Host in 1678," &c. "These poems," says Dr. M'Crie, "are chiefly in the Hudibrastic style, and discover considerable talent." (*Mem. of Veitch*, &c., p. 108.) This is admitted by Sir Walter Scott in his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," vol. i.

[4] "Extremely brave," says the Earl of Balcarras. (*Memoirs*, p. 114.)



out looking over their shoulder, in a dismal fear."[1] His next appearance is at Drumclog, ordering his men to fall flat on the ground as soon as the enemy presented their pieces —a manœuvre to which the success of the Covenanters on that occasion was mainly ascribed. We next find him fighting with great desperation at Bothwell, after which he flees to Holland. Again he is in Scotland, along with the ill-fated expedition of Argyll, in 1685,[2] and is recognized by a friendly Covenanter, sitting along with some brother officers, in an inn at Burntisland, waiting for a passage back to Holland, "singing and making as merry as they could, that they might not be discovered."[3] And now he is back once more to old Scotland, in company with the heroes of the Revolution, to deliver her from the grasp of Popery and arbitrary power. Though Cleland's name appears among the officers who sided with Robert Hamilton at Bothwell, there is reason to think that he afterwards left that party; and though still a zealous Presbyterian and Covenanter, his principles did not hinder him from joining with the government at the Revolution. It must be allowed that he seems to have entertained a grudge at, and some contempt for, the Highlanders—feelings common at that time in the Lowlands of Scotland, towards a race only known for their savage appearance, and their predatory invasions on the property of their neighbours. And it is somewhat remarkable, that the last engagement in which he conquered and fell was with those very "redshank squires," as he calls them in his poems, whose meanness and servility, added to their cruelties and excesses, had left such a strong impression on his youthful imagination. How much is it to be regretted that so little more is known concerning one who united in his character the gentleman, the poet, the patriot, the soldier, and the Christian!

The other officer in the Cameronian regiment whom we have noticed—Lieutenant-colonel John Blackader—is better known from his published Diary and Life. He was the son of the famous John Blackader, one of the proscribed ministers, who, after a long persecution, died in the Bass; and he was, like his father, a stanch Presbyterian, though disposed

[1] Memoirs of Rev. John Blackader, p. 212.
[2] Wodrow, vol. iv. pp. 284, 292.
[3] Life of James Nimmo, MS., p. 127; Memoirs of Veitch, p. 456.



to moderate measures; a lover of the gospel and of good men, and at the same time a valiant and successful soldier, having served with distinguished honour under the great Duke of Marlborough in most of his engagements. He is one among the very few who deserve the inscription that has been put on his monument—that he was "a brave soldier and devout Christian." As a specimen of this the following is worthy of being recorded: At one period of his military life Colonel Blackader received a challenge, which he refused to accept. His adversary threatened to post him as a coward, to which he is said to have coolly replied, "that he was not afraid of his reputation being impaired by that." Knowing that at that very time an attempt was determined on against the enemy, of a kind so very desperate that the Duke of Marlborough hesitated to what officer he should assign the command, and had resolved to decide it by throwing the dice, the colonel went to him and volunteered to undertake the duty. His offer was accepted, and by the providence of God he came off with great loss of men, but without any personal injury, and with the complete establishment of his character, not only as a brave man and an able officer, but also with general estimation as a consistent Christian.[1]

We now return to our history. And here it may be proper to premise, that the historians of this period, down to our own times, are for the most part either avowed Jacobites, or so tinctured with Jacobite prejudices as to give, unconsciously perhaps, a colouring to their narratives injurious to the cause of the Revolution, and the principal characters engaged in promoting it. This renders it necessary to devote more attention to this part of our subject than it would otherwise demand of us. Fired with ambition to emulate the dashing exploits of Montrose, to whose family he was related, Claverhouse had strained every nerve to collect an army, and at length found himself at the head of a large and motley band of Highlanders and Irish. Loudly have our Jacobite writers boasted of the romantic admiration entertained for Dundee by these roving mountaineers; and loftily have they talked of their devoted loyalty to James, and their chivalrous love of war. The sober truth of history, however,

[1] Memoirs of Rev. John Blackader, p. 344.



compels us to divest these descriptions of the captivating air thrown over them by romance, poetry, and political partiality. As for the Highland chiefs, "it was neither out of love to King James nor hatred for King William," says General Mackay, "that made them rise—at least the wisest of them, as Lochiel of the Camerons, whose cunning engaged others that were not so much interested in his quarrel; but it was out of apprehension of the Earl of Argyll's apparent restoration and favour, because he had some of his forfeited estates, and several combined Highlanders held lands of the earl's." The bravery and nobleness natural to the Highland character, and which have been elicited in later times, through the influence of education and Christianity, were then undeveloped. And to suppose that the poor serfs—"the miserable inhabitants of a Highland barony"—at the command of "a barbarous Highland chief, exercising a sway over his vassals as absolute as that of a Norman baron of the tenth century"[1] —were animated with the refined and heroic sentiments which have been so largely ascribed to them, is rather too absurd for belief. Pelf and plunder, on a scale somewhat humbler, though not less harassing, than that of their masters, had, for them, more captivating charms than lofty ideas about hereditary right, or even the chivalrous sport of "glorious war." All the efforts of their leader failed to keep their thievish propensities within decent bounds. "They were marching off every night, by forties and fifties, with droves of cattle, and laden with spoils."[2] In spite of all his influence the army of Dundee, at first six thousand strong, had dwindled away, by repeated desertions, to two thousand Highlanders and five hundred Irish, the whole force with which, according to the Jacobite statements, he encountered the army of General Mackay at the Pass of Killiecrankie.

This celebrated fight took place on the 17th of July, 1689. Mackay, the royalist general, had no doubt a slight advantage in point of numbers, having at the most about three thousand foot and a few companies of horse; but his army was mostly composed of raw recruits, and all of them were total strangers to the wild mode of warfare peculiar to their

[1] Chambers' History of Rebellions, p. 190.
[2] M'Pherson, p. 357.

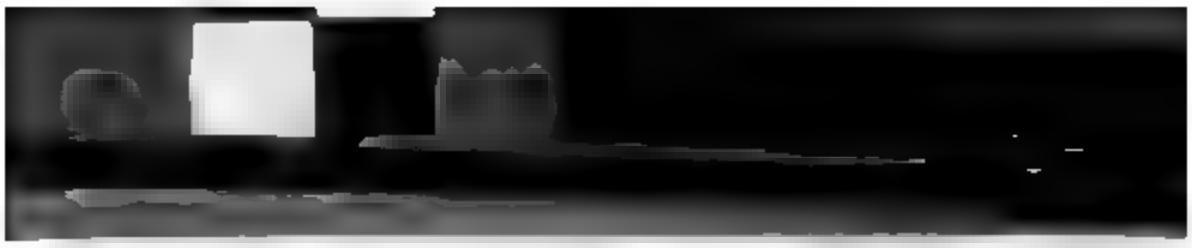


opponents.[1] The Highlanders rushed down the hill with their wonted impetuosity, barefooted and stripped to the shirt, and uttering the most unearthly yells. Mackay's troops, thus assailed by what appeared to them a band of ferocious savages, were struck with a sudden panic; some of them gave way, the whole fell into confusion, and their brave general, finding it impossible to rally them, was compelled to retreat. As he spurred his charger, single-handed, through the thickest of the enemy, they made way wherever he went; upon which he remarks in his memoirs, "that if he had had but *fifty* resolute horse such as Colchester's with him, he had certainly, to all human appearance, recovered the day."[2] The whole was the work of a few minutes. Marvellous are the stories told of the prowess displayed by the Highlanders in mowing down the fugitives; but night coming on they soon fell upon the baggage, and gave up all further thoughts of pursuit. And thus terminated the battle of Killiecrankie—if battle it can be called—in which there was no time for evolutions, no attempt at resistance, and hardly the appearance of conflict. The following sensible reflections of Mackay upon his defeat are worthy of the high name which he bore for unfeigned piety and unshaken courage: "Resolution and presence of mind in battle being certainly a singular mercy of God, he denieth and giveth it when and to whom he will; for there are seasons when the most firm and stout-hearted quake for fear. And though all sincere Christians be not resolute, it is because it is not their vocation; for I dare be bold to affirm that no sincere Christian, trusting in God for support, going about his lawful calling, shall be forsaken of him. Not that sure victory shall always attend good men, or that they shall always escape with their lives—for experience doth teach the contrary; but that God, upon whom they cast their burdens, shall so care for them that they shall be preserved from shame and confusion; and that they have his promise (by whom are the issues against death and innumerable means inconceivable to us to redress the disorder of our affairs) to support their hope in the greatest difficulties."[3]

But the victory was dearly purchased by the rebels in the

[1] Life of Lieutenant-general Mackay, by John Mackay, Esq., of Rockfield, p. 42, where the gross exaggerations of Jacobite writers, as to the numbers of Mackay's troops, are fully exposed.

[2] Mackay's Memoirs, p. 56. [3] Ibid.



death of their leader, Claverhouse, viscount Dundee. He fell early in the action, pierced by a musket-ball which entered at an opening of his coat-of-mail beneath the arm. The Jacobite writers, anxious to make the most of this, the first and the last victory achieved by their favourite hero, have persisted, down to the present day, notwithstanding the clearest evidence to the contrary, in giving the most fabulous accounts of his dying moments. According to them, after receiving his fatal wound he was carried to a house in the neighbourhood, where, says one of them, "amidst the bustle consequent upon his victory, and the painful sensations arising from his personal condition, he commanded his mind sufficiently to write a dignified account of the battle to his royal master." And then follows the letter in which this "dignified account" is given.[1] Alas, for the honour of Claverhouse and the comfort of his admirers!—there is not a word of truth in the story. It has been proved, beyond all dispute, that Dundee fell at the commencement of the action, and died on the field; so that the letter describing the engagement and announcing the victory can only be regarded as a clumsy forgery.[2] But more humiliating still, it has been proved not only that Claverhouse expired on the spot where he fell, but that he was soon after stripped and plundered by his own party—by those very Highlanders who are said to have almost worshipped him! When his friends went to search for his body, says an eye-witness of the scene, "it was at first with much difficulty distinguished from the rest of the bodies that fell that day; for he, dying of his wounds in a very little time after the engagement, *his body was presently stripped by his own party, and left naked among the rest in the field.*"[3]

With regard to Dundee, who has been so long the idol of

[1] Chambers' History of the Rebellions in Scotland.

[2] See this matter placed beyond all controversy in the Letters of Lord Dundee (printed by the Bannatyne Club), pp. 82–84. Balcarras, the friend of Claverhouse, confirms what we have above stated. (*Account*, pp. 105–108.) And the account given by James VII. himself shows the falsity of the story referred to, which had evidently been got up by the prelatical clergy, or some unscrupulous partisans, to serve the political purposes of the day. The forgery, thus proved, was never acknowledged by Mr Chambers.

[3] Proceedings in Scotland, 7th September. Life of Colonel Blackader, p. 78. Balcarras, p. 108. See also Letters of Dundee, as formerly referred to, where the evidence is collected.



the Jacobites, if we except his unsuccessful attempt to retrieve the fortunes of James at Killiecrankie, it is difficult to discover what claims he had to be regarded by any party with such admiration. Let him receive his due meed of praise as a man of high spirit and unshaken fidelity to his master; let it even be granted that he showed an honesty of purpose not always exemplified by his associates, or even by the silly and infatuated prince in whose cause he fell;—still enough remains to blight his character in the eyes of impartial posterity; and every renewed attempt to vindicate his atrocities only serves to show, as in the case before us, that it were truer wisdom on the part of his admirers to let his name fall, if possible, into oblivion.

After the death of Dundee the command of the rebel army devolved on Colonel Canon, an Irish officer, who, on hearing that the Cameronian regiment were stationed in Dunkeld, remote from succour, resolved to attack them in the hope of cutting them off to a man. "The enemy," says Mackay, "had not such prejudice at any of the forces as at this regiment, whose opposition against all such as were not of their sentiments made them generally hated and feared in the northern counties." The shameful manner in which this valiant little band was treated, by being left in the heart of the Highlands to brave the combined forces of the rebels, by being denied all supplies when threatened with an attack, excepting a barrel of figs sent to them instead of powder, and by having a troop actually withdrawn from them after the attack had commenced, affords too good ground for the suspicion which they afterwards expressed, "that they were sent to Dunkeld, as would seem, on design, *by some*, to be betrayed and destroyed."[1] We cordially exempt General Mackay from having had any share in this shameful piece of policy, which, had it proved successful, would evidently have excited little indignation in the breasts of some, whose sympathies being all on one side required to be kept in reserve for the massacre of Glencoe.[2] But their betrayers as well as their enemies were destined to be disappointed. Whatever may be thought of their principles, the heroic spirit of the Cameronian regiment on this occasion has extorted praise even from the

[1] Grievances of the Cameronians, p. 56.
[2] Chambers' History of the Rebellions, p. 121.



most bigoted partisans, as it led them to "perform one of the most unexceptionably brilliant exploits which occurred throughout the whole of this war."[1]

On Saturday night 17th August, 1689, this regiment, or rather a portion of them, amounting only to seven or eight hundred men, arrived at Dunkeld, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Cleland. The next day the enemy approached and sent a threatening message calling on them to surrender at discretion; to which the gallant colonel replied: "We are faithful subjects to King William and Queen Mary, and enemies to their enemies; and if you shall make any hostile appearance we will burn all that belongs to you, and otherwise chastise you as you deserve." When the morning of Wednesday dawned it revealed the spectacle of between four and five thousand men drawn up on the surrounding hills, which appeared literally covered with armed troops. The Cameronians seemed devoted to destruction, and some of them, despairing of success, had collected their baggage and prepared to retreat; but encouraged by the exhortations of their pastor, and the example of their dauntless leader, they entrenched themselves behind the houses and succeeded in boldly repelling the repeated attacks of the enemy. "Their powder was almost spent," says one account, "and their bullets had been spent long before, which they supplied by the diligence of a good number of men who were employed all the time of the action in cutting lead off the house (Dunkeld House), and melting it in little furrows in the ground, and cutting the pieces into slugs to serve for bullets. They agreed, that in case the enemy got over their dikes they should retire to the house, and if they should find themselves overpowered there, to burn it and bury themselves in the ashes."[2] The Highlanders fought hard to dislodge them from their post; but at length, wearied with repeated assaults, in which they suffered much loss without gaining any advantage, they retreated from the scene of action. The Cameronians beat their drums, flourished their colours, and shouted after them with expressions of contempt and defiance; but in vain. The Highlanders could

[1] Chambers' History of the Rebellions, p. 121.

[2] Exact Narrative of the Conflict at Dunkeld, betwixt the Earl of Angus' Regiment and the Rebels, collected from several officers of that regiment.



not be induced by their officers to renew the contest. "They could fight," they said, "against men, but they had no notion of fighting any more against devils." The engagement lasted from seven in the morning till eleven at night; and when all was over the conquerors sang psalms, and offered thanksgivings to the Almighty, to whom alone they ascribed their deliverance. Comparatively few of them had fallen; but they had to deplore the loss of their youthful and valiant leader, Colonel Cleland, who, in the act of urging on his men, was shot by two bullets at the same moment, one passing through his head and the other through his liver. His last act showed the spirit of the hero. Feeling himself mortally struck he attempted to get into the house, that the soldiers might not be discouraged by the sight of his dead body; but he fell before reaching the threshold.

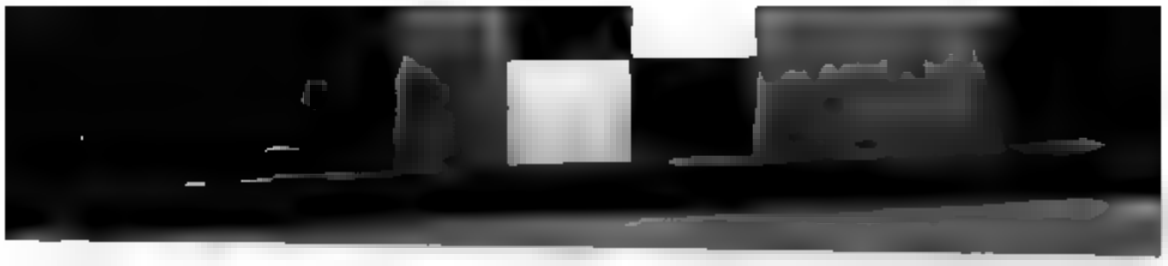
This victory decided the campaign, and may be said to have secured the success of the Revolution in Scotland. The Cameronians offered to raise two or three other regiments in King William's service; but the offer was declined by Mackay, who considered their peculiar views inconsistent with due military subordination. It did not accord with the policy of the new government to revive the darling object of the Cameronians—the Covenanted Reformation; and they no doubt dreaded the consequences which might have resulted from having to deal with a few more regiments animated by such a spirit, and capable of such achievements as the victory at Dunkeld. What these consequences might have been it is needless now to conjecture; but it is quite possible that, in such a case, William might not have found it so easy as he did to dictate terms to the Church of Scotland—the Union might not have taken place—and the Presbyterian establishment might have been placed on a basis more scriptural and more secure than that on which it stands in our day.

The Prince of Orange was well apprised in Holland that he could expect no support from the Episcopalians of Scotland, and that his best, and indeed his only friends in that country, were the Presbyterians. His "declaration for the Kingdom of Scotland" gave every assurance of his readiness to redress the grievances of the Presbyterians; and being himself of that persuasion, the highest expectations were



formed of what he would do for the Church of Scotland. Accordingly, in the Claim of Right, which was the basis of the Revolution settlement, the convention of estates inserted a clause to the following effect: "That Prelacy and the superiority of any office in the church above presbyters is, and hath been, a great and insupportable grievance and trouble to this nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation, they having been reformed from Popery by presbyters; and therefore ought to be abolished." That William was at first sincerely desirous to gratify the Presbyterians in this matter there is little room to doubt; but on coming to the throne of England he found it would not be so easy as he had been led to suppose. The difficulties with which he was environed were, it must be allowed, of no ordinary description. On the one hand, there was the Church of England, at all times a powerful body, and which, as it had been mainly instrumental in bringing him over, it would be dangerous to offend by severe measures against the Scottish Episcopalians. On the other hand, the parishes of Scotland, amounting to nearly nine hundred, were occupied by prelatical incumbents; and the question was, How were these to be disposed of? If they were to be ejected at one blow from their benefices, not only would the inevitable consequence be their entire alienation from the government, but it would be found extremely difficult to fill up their places. Of upwards of four hundred ministers who had been ejected after the Restoration to make room for Prelacy, only about ninety had survived to witness the restoration of Presbytery. The old race of Presbyterian pastors had thus become almost extinct; and the colleges were filled with students who had studied under Prelacy, and were resolved to submit to that form of government had it continued.[1] Episcopalian writers have always denied, with great confidence, that Prelacy was contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people at the Revolution; Presbyterian writers have as stoutly maintained that it was. Both may have had some foundation for their calculations. Presbytery, there can be no doubt, was the choice of the great body of the intelligent and religious portion of the nation, especially in the south; while Prelacy was

[1] Wodrow's Analecta, vol. ii. p. 269.



more congenial to many of our gentry, and generally submitted to in the north. And if we may credit Keith's account of the proposal made to Ross, the bishop of Edinburgh, when he went up to London, immediately after the Revolution, Scotland owes its Presbyterian establishment neither to the good faith nor the gratitude of William, but to the infatuated attachment of the Scottish prelatists to the house of Stuart. "The Bishop of London," says Ross, "directing his discourse to me, said, 'My lord, you see that the King (William), having thrown himself upon the water, must keep himself a-swimming with one hand. The Presbyterians have joined him closely, and offer to support him; and therefore he cannot cast them off, unless he could see how otherwise he can be served. And the king bids me tell you that he now knows the state of Scotland much better than he did when he was in Holland; for while there he was made believe that Scotland generally all over was Presbyterian; but now he sees that the great body of the nobility and gentry are for Episcopacy, and it is the trading and inferior sort that are for Presbytery; wherefore he bids me tell you that if you will undertake to serve him to the purpose that he is served here in England, he'll take you by the hand, support the church and order, and throw off the Presbyterians.' To this proposal the honest bishop replied, by saying that he would not promise either for himself or his brother prelates that they would follow the example of England; they were determined to adhere to their rightful king, James II. 'And so,' said the Bishop of London, 'the king must be excused for standing by the Presbyterians.'"[1]

Without entirely crediting the story, there can be little doubt that the circumstances to which we have adverted must have added to the embarrassments of William, and contributed to strengthen him in his desire that Scotland would embrace at least a modified Episcopacy, or some compromise between Prelacy and Presbytery, and thus not only unite the two contending parties, but lead to that union between England and Scotland which he regarded as of essential importance for the furtherance of his general policy. That he did attempt to gain this object is evident from the measures pursued by his commissioner, the Duke of Hamilton.

[1] Keith's Catalogue of Scottish Bishops, pp. 43, 44.



But he soon found that he had to contend with an opposition too powerful to be overcome.

The convention having been converted into a parliament, in which the Earl of Craufurd acted as president, one of its first measures was an act passed on the 22d of July for the abolition of Episcopacy, and another carried next session for rescinding the act of supremacy passed in the reign of Charles II. The former passed without a dissentient voice. "There was not one single person among us," says Craufurd, "that had the confidence to urge anything for Prelacy, and they were but a handful that spoke of restricting Presbytery."[1] This does not look like very great zeal on the part of the Scottish nobility and gentry for the Prelatic government. These acts afterwards received the royal sanction, but it was found impossible, on various accounts, to proceed further with the settlement of the Church during this session of parliament. The delay was owing, in a great measure, to the manœuvres of the Duke of Hamilton, who pressed very pertinaciously for some sort of mongrel Episcopacy. But there were other causes that contributed to the delay, and the private correspondence of the principal actors brings out curious disclosures of the various motives that were at work.

The Scottish parliament was divided into three great factions: the first composed of the Jacobite party, still very strong in the country, and waiting their opportunity; the second, of the high Presbyterian party, headed by Sir Patrick Hume of Polwart, and denominated the Club; and the third, of the moderate Presbyterians, to whom belonged Lord Melville, the secretary of state, and Earl Craufurd, the president of parliament. The policy of the Jacobites was to embroil matters, and keep up the discontent of the country; for which purpose they sided sometimes with the Episcopalians, and at other times with the extreme section of the Presbyterians. Polwart's party, or the Club, was sincerely desirous to see Presbytery restored to its original purity; and some of them,

[1] Earl Craufurd to Lord Melville, July 6, 1689. Leven and Melville Papers, p. 145. "As it was left to the nation," says Defoe, "by the Prince of Orange, to settle religion in such a manner as was most desired by the people, not a dog wagged his tongue against the Presbyterian establishment, not a mouth gave a vote for Episcopacy." (*Memoirs of Church of Scotland*, p. 299.)



if not all, contended for the divine right of that form of government, and the obligation of the national covenants. The moderate party, again, were content to have the Presbyterian government set up by authority, without any reference to its divine right, or to the attainments and engagements of the second reformation.

Amidst these contending factions, each aiming at its respective designs, it was no easy matter for those at the helm of affairs to steer their way. The Earl of Craufurd, an excellent old man, whose sincere piety appears in his correspondence, was extremely anxious to have his beloved Presbytery established in its purity, "upon such foundations," said he, "as shall give the magistrate his full due, without parting with what is essential to that government." "I hope the Lord," says he, "in his own time, will dissipate those fogs that blind some of us, and enable us to erect a second temple, the glory of which shall outshine what was our first in our purest times. Sure I am there is a great concern for this on the spirits of many godly persons and sincere well-wishers to our king."[1]

The good old president, however, finds it a most "crushing" employment to manage the refractory spirits in the parliament. "The matter of patronages is improven by some with great cunning, to mar our present establishment, and all the misfortunes of the late times, and the stretches of violent men acting beyond their principles, adduced as arguments for clogging of pure Presbytery." Then the Club, with their sturdy Presbyterianism, demanding why their grievances were not redressed, annoy him no less on the other side. He hears reports out of doors that the king intends to establish Episcopacy, at which the Jacobites are rejoicing, while the Presbyterians, were it not for fear of these same Jacobites, are ready to cast off the authority of William. "We have nothing but heats, debates, jealousies, and divisions amongst us." He is ready to sink under his "continual concern for stilling of members both in and without our house, and his unsuccessfulness in it." "It does exceedingly alter my health, insomuch, that if duty to my king, and faithfulness to my country, did not fix me here, I would reture to the meanest cottage, and be restricted to the nar-

[1] Leven and Melville Papers, p. 137.



rowest diet, before I lived so much in the midst of flames as I now do."[1]

But the tough old earl perseveres, and finally carries the day in spite of them all. The scheme which he adopted, regarding it apart from its intrinsic demerits, and merely as a piece of policy, was certainly ingenious. The Episcopal clergy of the synod of Aberdeen, who had conformed to the government, had presented an address to parliament, craving them to call a national synod or assembly; and Hamilton, the commissioner, favoured the petition. But no; the sagacious Craufurd detected the trick. He saw that if they obtained the sanction of government to such a meeting, they would far out-number the honest Presbyterians, and that the very first step they would take would be to depose them, to replace the rabbled curates, and petition for the restoration of Prelacy. His first object, therefore, was, as he expresses it, to "purge the Church," by ridding it of those who, on pretence of conforming to the government, really sought to undermine it; and for this purpose he proposed to test their loyalty by issuing a proclamation against the owning of King James, and appointing public prayers for William and Mary, as king and queen of Scotland; with certification that those who refused should be deprived of their benefices. His next proposal was, that, to secure the Presbyterian government without offending the prejudices of the English Episcopalians, they should recur to the act 1592, usually called the charter of Presbytery, making no mention of the second reformation period from 1638 to 1650. The next thing was to get quit of patronage. "There will be a necessity of taking off patronages," says he; "for though those that daily pray for the king (James) were laid aside, many in this nation would present to churches such as were not of our party. Then according to the tenor of the king's declaration, such ministers as are alive would be restored to their own churches; and *after these preliminaries*, the constitution 1592 may come well in; but if we *begin* there, I should conclude our interest for the time buried."[2]

[1] Leven and Melville Papers, p. 156.

[2] Craufurd to Melville, July 16, 1689. Lev and Mel. Papers, p. 172. "I am sorry that the business of patronages should be so much contended for by some few. If we design not simony, I see no advantage to any in point of interest, and it seems evidently to be a heavier yoke upon the church,



From this it appears that, in the opinion of this sagacious politician, since Prelacy had been abolished, and the supremacy was likely to follow, there was sufficient security, in the event of the Church being purged of Jacobites, and thereafter placed under the healthier regimen of popular election, for the establishment of "pure Presbytery," and for all the substantial rights of the Church of Scotland. The plan, no doubt, implied the entire omission of all the acts passed in favour of Presbytery during the second reforming period, together with the national covenant as sworn in 1638, and the solemn league in 1643—thus leaving all these acts and deeds under the stigma of rebellion affixed to them by the act rescissory passed under the second Charles; but in the existing state of parties and temper of men's minds it was deemed wholly impracticable to obtain more than a simple recognition of Presbytery as it had been granted by James VI. The most industrious efforts were made by the Episcopal party to poison the minds of William and his English councillors against the Presbyterians, by falsely representing them as enemies to monarchy, and as bound by the solemn league to extirpate all the supporters of Episcopacy and the liturgy with fire and sword.[1] Some handle, it is to be feared, was given to these accusations by the injudicious violence and language of the rabble in the west country.[2] At the same time some of the treatises which had been put forth by the Cameronian party during the persecuting period, such as Sheilds' *Hind Let Loose*, the Queensferry Paper, &c., in which the principles of the Covenanters had been driven, under the

and the matter of calls might be so adjusted as there needs no complaining upon that side, they being restricted to persons that are fixedly in parochs, and under the inspection and regulation of presbyteries. The same to the same, July 23, 1689," p. 187

[1] "King William would likewise consider how many thousands of them have and do own, that the covenant (which is again voted the standard of all pure religion) is the fundamental contract 'twixt God, king, and the people. And because King Charles II broke it, therefore they declared that he had fallen from his right to the crown; and because King James II. never took it, that therefore he had no right to the crown, and by public proclamations declared it lawful to kill them, and all who adhered to them, &c., and accordingly killed several of their soldiers and servants in this quarrel. From all which the query naturally arises, What measure King William must expect if he will not take the Covenant? and consequently swear to root out Episcopacy in England." (*Case of the Afflicted Clergy in Scotland*, 1690, p. 107.)

[2] Ibid. pp. 34, 35.



pressure of persecution, to an extravagant length, were republished by the Prelatists, and widely circulated in England, to prejudice the public mind against what was called Scotch Presbytery. The English clergy were becoming alarmed. What was to be done? "Let bygones be bygones," was the maxim of the Earl of Craufurd. Let them give up Prelacy, let them grant us our beloved Presbytery, and we will say nothing of the covenants. Let them yield up what they acquired by the kingcraft of James VI., and we will surrender what we acquired by the swordcraft of the Long Parliament.

His plan met the approval of Lord Melville. "As for the settlement of church government," writes his lordship to Craufurd, "I see so many difficulties in it as things presently stand, what from one party, and another, that I cannot see through it. *Men must take what they can have in a cleanly way, when they cannot have all they would.* I should think it were not amiss that they should be at pains to draw up somewhat for removing the aspersions cast on them and their way, and show what are their principles and demands, and the soberer the better. I am afraid our divisions and management may do great hurt to the public settlement, *and may endanger the bringing that on about which men seem to fear;* for it is scarce to be imagined that some men's way and procedure, if as related, can be acceptable." The threat thrown out at the close of this extract evidently refers to the establishment of Episcopacy; and the danger of this was, as we have seen, by no means problematical. But suffice it here to state, that everything went on as Craufurd and Melville had preconcerted. Many of the Jacobite clergy fell into the snare laid for them by the crafty president. They neither read his proclamation, nor prayed for William and Mary, nor kept the day of thanksgiving for the deliverance of the nation. Some of them were discovered to be in correspondence with the exiled king, and abetting his friends in arms. Prosecutions were instituted against the delinquents before the privy-council, after the adjournment of parliament; and *one hundred and seventy-nine* of them were speedily deprived of their benefices. Loud was their outcry when they felt the lash of old Craufurd. They complained of persecution, and attempted to lay the whole blame on the intolerant spirit of Presbytery. The complaint and the charge were, as we have



seen, alike unfounded. The Presbyterian ministers were happily never consulted in the matter; and the president had always his answer ready. "I shall once more repeat, that no Episcopal man since the happy Revolution, whether laic or of the clergy, hath suffered by the council upon account of his opinions in church matters, but allenarly (solely) for their disowning the civil authority, and setting up for a cross interest. If I make not this good, I shall willingly forfault my credit with his majesty and all good men."[1] To this, of course, it was impossible either for them or his majesty, or any other party, to make any satisfactory reply. It is hardly necessary, at this time of day, to say a word in reply to the charge of persecution brought against his policy. "The observation," it has been well said, "is ill-timed. The atrocious orders issued in the two preceding reigns, under the guise of Episcopacy, remain recorded and undisputed; and the equally atrocious executions of them are written in characters of blood never to be effaced. But where is to be found a single order issued by the Presbyterians for persecuting the Episcopalians? Which of the Episcopal clergy suffered from the Presbyterian authorities beyond deprivation? or which of their laity ever suffered at all? That those who openly prayed for King James, or refused to pray for William and Mary, after their recognition by parliament and the nation, should be deprived, excites neither surprise nor regret; but even many of them were continued."[2]

After the administration of this purge, the parliament, which met in April, 1690, proceeded to the settlement of Presbytery. An act was passed formally rescinding the *act of supremacy;* that act which had been the fruitful source of all the persecutions for conscience' sake under the late unhappy reigns. This was followed by another restoring

[1] Lev. and Mel. Pap., 21st Jan. 1690, pp. 376, 377. The trials of the ejected clergy occupy a large share of the privy-council records. Here was a just retribution, could these men have but seen it, for the mode in which they were accustomed to vindicate their persecution of the Presbyterians. All the executions, confiscations, and sufferings inflicted on the Covenanters, are vindicated by Sir George Mackenzie, on the same ground which Craufurd here alleges for the ejection of the Episcopal clergy—"solely for their disowning the civil authority," and yet it was only a party among the Covenanters who really had disowned the civil authority.

[2] Preface to Leven and Melville Papers, by the Hon. William Leslie Melville, p. xxx.



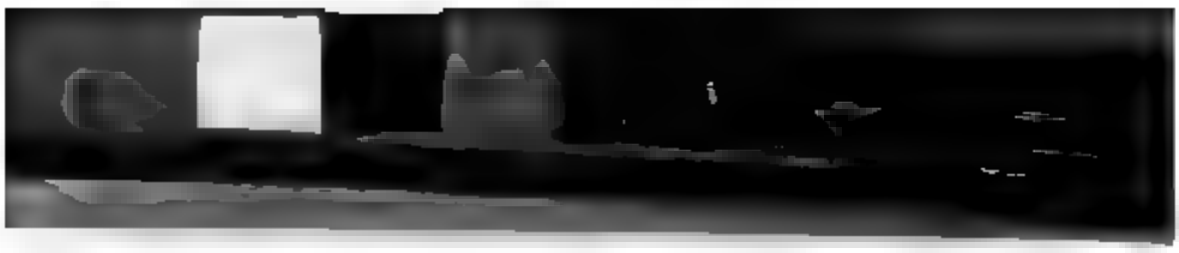
to their churches all the surviving Presbyterian ministers ejected from January, 1661, and ordering the removal of the prelatic incumbents who occupied their old parishes. At the same time some justice was done to those who suffered under the persecution by rescinding their fines and forfeitures; and the tyrannical laws of the late administration against conventicles and nonconformity, and its oppressive tests and oaths, and the penalties imposed on all who took the covenants or owned their obligation, were repealed. And at length, on the 7th of June, came the important act "ratifying the Confession of Faith, and settling Presbyterian church government." In this act, after repeating that Prelacy is an insupportable grievance, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people, the Presbyterian form is characterized as "the government of Christ's church within this nation, agreeable to the Word of God, and most conducive to the advancement of true piety and godliness, and the establishing of peace and tranquillity within this realm." The act then ratifies the Confession of Faith, "now read in their presence, and voted and approved by them as the public and avowed Confession of this church;" and establishes the Presbyterian form of church government as established by the act 1592, reviving that act in all its heads, excepting that part of it relating to patronages, which is hereafter to be taken into consideration; and declaring that the church government be established in the hands and exercised by those Presbyterian ministers who were outed since the 1st of January, 1661, and such ministers and elders as they might receive. On the 19th of July an act was passed completely abolishing patronage, and declaring that in the case of the vacancy of any parish, "the heritors of the said parish, being Protestants, and the elders, are to name and propose the person to the whole congregation, to be either approven or disapproven by them, their reasons, if they disapproved, to be judged of by the presbytery." And as a compensation for relinquishing the right to present, the patrons, besides being empowered to raise three hundred merks from the parish, received those teinds to which none could show an heritable title, and which had been always considered the proper patrimony of the Church. Such were the legislative enactments for the re-establishment of the Presbyterian



Church. Its government was committed into the hands of the surviving Presbyterian ministers, with such as they might assume into connection with them. And that these measures might take full effect, a meeting of the General Assembly was appointed to be held in Edinburgh on the 16th of October, 1690.

Much has been said both for and against the Revolution settlement; and in fact it is just one of those things for and against which much may be said. Without looking to the results, and placing ourselves in the situation of our Presbyterian fathers at the time, it may be regarded, in many respects, in the light in which they received it—as a great boon. Newly delivered from the fires of persecution, and anticipating nothing but the gloomy reign of Popery, it was no small matter of gratitude to find themselves safe under the wing of a Protestant government, and no small matter of wonder to see themselves, though reduced to ninety, recognized as the only true and lawful representatives of the Church of Scotland. Such an establishment, let it come as it might, was a triumph of Presbytery over Prelacy, and it inflicted a stigma on the whole proceedings of the foregoing reigns. The securities obtained were no doubt valuable, so far as they went; and, as has been well observed, "these acts gave nothing to the Church which she did not previously possess; they did not even pretend to restore what had been taken away; but they broke the fetters which had been forcibly imposed, and allowed the Church to resume the exercise of her own indestructible energies and inalienable rights, derived from her own divine and only Head and King."[1] And certainly, had the Church done her duty, the defects of her settlement might have proved less injurious. The abolition of patronage was of itself a great acquisition to the Church; and though the act was faulty, both in giving the right of nomination to the heritors as such, a mere civil qualification, and in limiting the rights of the people to the mere making of objections to the choice of the heritors and elders, yet, in point of practical working, the people enjoyed substantially the right of election, and not a single instance of intrusion occurred. Nothing can be more absurd than to say that the patronage was merely transferred to the heritors

[1] Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland, p. 555.



and elders. The act of 1690 proposes expressly to "cass, annul, and make void the power heretofore exercised by any patron, of presenting ministers to any kirk now vacant." It was drawn up by Presbyterians, who were opposed to patronage; and all that was granted to the heritors and elders was merely a right to *propose* the man to the choice of the congregation.

The defects of the Revolution settlement unhappily bear a full proportion to its advantages. The Westminster Confession was indeed ratified as the public and avowed Confession of this Church; but without any reference to the act of the General Assembly of 1647, by which the inherent right of the Church to call her own assemblies was explicitly asserted—a fatal omission, as soon appeared, when the king claimed the power of calling and dissolving the assemblies at pleasure. Though Presbytery was established as "agreeable to the Word of God," Prelacy was abolished simply because it was "contrary to the inclinations of the people"—a strange compromise, and very different from the bold condemnation of Prelacy in former times. Even in the manner of ratifying the Confession there was too much the appearance of enacting it, or giving it a sanction which it never had before; so unwilling were they even to seem to acknowledge anything as part of the covenanted uniformity. Nor did they ratify the Catechisms or the Directory; though it would appear that this was thought unnecessary.[1]

But the main error in the whole settlement lay in the entire overlooking of the securities granted to the Church during the second reforming period of her history, together with the solemn engagements come under by the whole land, and

[1] The only explanation I can find of this matter is in an Episcopal account of that period, in which it is stated that "after the Confession had been approved, it was moved that the Catechisms might be read over also; but the Confession had worn out some three or four hours to them, and most part were wearied with it, and beginning to discover, some by looks, some by whispers, that they were no way willing at that time to hear any more such long lectures, and so it was moved by the Duke of Hamilton, that the Catechism and Directory might be forborne; for, as he said, they had now voted the Confession of Faith, and that was a sufficient standard, and so they might leave the rest to the ministers, to be managed according to their discretion" His proposal, after some demur on the part of the ministers, was agreed to. (*Account of the late Establishment of Presbyterian Government*, 1690, p. 43.) Melville's instructions contain only "the Confession of 1644."



more especially by the kingdom of Scotland; and leaving the whole of the attainments of that period, with the exception of the Confession, buried under the infamous "act rescissory," which, standing as it does in the statute-book to this day, brands them with the charge of rebellion. Besides the dishonour thus done to the work and the oath of God, the Church of Scotland was deprived of valuable securities which she might have pleaded in law, and which might have served to place her more effectually and decidedly above the reach of the arbitrary power of the crown.

Anxious to conciliate the Episcopalians of Scotland, who were powerful as a political party, William's concessions to the Presbyterians were made with a bad grace, and had all the appearance of being wrested from him by necessity. He appears to have been extremely jealous of the royal prerogative, and afraid of yielding up too much to the Presbyterian clergy.[1] His line of policy has been ascribed by some to the violence of the Presbyterians; by others, to his love of power; and by others, again, to his favourite design of uniting the two kingdoms under one ecclesiastical government.[2] It may, with more justice, be traced to his educational and Erastian prejudices, which led him to regard no form of church government as of divine right, and all forms to be alike under the control of the state; to the misrepresentations of the Presbyterian party, conveyed to him by the Jacobites; and, above all, to the circumstances in which he was placed, by having established Episcopacy in England—a step which put it out of his power, without glaring inconsistency, to do full justice to the Church of Scotland. The consequence was, the adoption of a middle course, which, while it fell short of what was due to the cause of truth, can hardly be said to have given satisfaction to any party, either in Church or state. The Presbyterians complained of it as an equivocal and partial concession of their claims; while the Episcopalians denounced it as an act of positive injustice, sharpened by the insult offered to their religion, as "an insupportable grievance" to the nation. None, save a few time-serving politicians, received it as a satisfactory arrangement.

[1] This appears particularly from his instructions sent to his commissioner, and his remarks on the act 1690.

[2] M'Cormick's Life of Carstares, pp. 43. 44.



The whole scheme, indeed, was one of mere expediency, and, as might have been expected from the various conflicting interests that had to be consulted in its formation, it was a piece of compromise from beginning to end. Accordingly, it was full of self-inconsistencies; and it might be easily shown, that while, in one sense, it gave up all to the Presbyterians, it was so worded, that in another sense it gave up all to the government. Such a composition of patch-work policy may have been very ingeniously adapted to the exigencies of the times; but experience has shown how dangerous it is to deal thus in the matters of God. To the radical defects of the Revolution settlement we can trace all the subsequent corruption and declension of the Church of Scotland; and more recent events have read to us an impressive commentary on the same subject, in the reckless encroachments which have been made on the constitution of that church. Above all, when we view it in the light of Scripture, we see no excuse that can justify so manifest a falling away from the high Christian principle and lofty views of duty which guided our rulers in Church and state during the times of the covenant. Expediency has a thousand reasons to suggest why it must have been so, and could not have been otherwise; but Christianity, looking down from a loftier sphere, condemns all alike for bringing themselves into circumstances where their policy, in order to be acceptable or successful, must be so anomalous and equivocal—condemns England for having receded from her engagements and setting up Prelacy—and condemns Scotland for having submitted, without protest, to an establishment so far short of what the Word of God and her own pledges required. And it will not be till Christian principle obtains the ascendency in the hearts of men and in the councils of the Church and state, that we shall see the disorders introduced by human policy rectified, and the Church established on a settled and safe foundation.



THE

STORY OF THE SCOTTISH CHURCH.

PART II.

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE DISRUPTION.

CHAPTER I.

1690 — 1703.

First meeting of the General Assembly after the Revolution—Remnants of the persecuted Covenanters—Semple, Erskine, Thomas Hogg—Indulged Presbyterians—The curates—Constitution of the Church—William Carstares—Moderation—Shields, Linning, and Boyd—Reasons of a fast—Scurrilous lampoons on the Assembly—Learned Presbyterians at the Revolution—Blank meetings of Assembly—Massacre of Glencoe—Midnight interview between Carstares and King William—Parish schools—Execution of Aikenhead for blasphemy—Moral and social condition of Scotland—Rabbling by the Jacobites in the North—National fast—The heresy of Bourignonism.

The history now brings us to the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland after the Revolution. This remarkable Assembly met on the day appointed, 16th October, 1690. Glancing around that Assembly, consisting of those ministers who had been ejected from their charges, and who bore the marks of the fiery trials that followed, one is struck with the number of gray heads and furrowed cheeks. Twenty-eight years had elapsed since this annual convocation of the Scottish Church had met, and so effectually had time and persecution thinned the Church during these years that only ninety of the ministers remained, and of these only sixty who had been ejected from their charges in 1662. Of these patriarchs there are some who had been at Bothwell Bridge—who had been "intercommuned"—and who could speak of the horrors of Dunnottar and the Bass Rock. There, for example, is old Gabriel Semple of Jedburgh, who assisted in the renovation of the covenants at Pentland, a gentleman by birth, and the companion of the heroic Welsh during his



hair-breadth escapes. There is Henry Erskine, of Chirnside, who had suffered so much during his banishment, and who when threatened with the torture, unless he promised never again to preach at conventicles, replied, "My lord, I have my commission from Christ, and though I were within an hour of my death I durst not lay it down at the feet of any mortal man." And there sits another confessor, Thomas Hogg of Kiltearn, the man who would spend whole nights in prayer; who, when apparently dying, was ordered by Archbishop Sharp into the lowest vault of the Bass, where, however, he miraculously recovered his health, and used facetiously to observe, when any one spoke against that primate, "Commend me to Sharp as a good physician;" the man whom the Highlanders have not yet forgotten, and whose tombstone, placed by his directions at the threshold of the church, bore the inscription—"THIS STONE SHALL BE A WITNESS AGAINST THE PARISHIONERS OF KILTEARN, IF THEY BRING ANE UNGODLY MINISTER IN HERE."

But who are those more important-looking personages grouped around the table of the moderator? In one of the private letters of the period, addressed to the prime-minister in Scotland, he is requested "by all means to send ministers to London, who would know how to behave themselves at court, to wait upon his majesty anent the affairs of the Church;" and in the first letter directed by William to the Assembly the line of policy which they are expected to follow is thus significantly indicated—"*Moderation* is what religion enjoins, neighbouring churches expect from you, and we recommend to you." And there sit the persons referred to,—the leaders of the Revolution Church. Good and worthy men they are in the main; certainly men of a different stamp from the older divines to whom we have pointed. They are chiefly composed of the Professors and Principals of universities, and of those of the Presbyterian clergy who had accepted of the indulgences granted by the late Prelatic government. It was hardly to be expected that men who had availed themselves of the temporary and insidious favours vouchsafed them by a Popish despot, would object to the mild terms offered by a Protestant prince, the avowed friend of civil and religious liberty. This is the first time we meet with that inauspicious term "moderation," which



came to be applied afterwards to a party in the Church of Scotland; but as applied to the policy of William, it would be unjust to suppose that it implied that spirit of worldly compliance, flowing from religious indifference, which came to distinguish the party so called during the succeeding century. Those who now ruled the destinies of the Scottish Church were men under the influence of religious principle, and sincerely attached to Presbyterian government, but anxious to avoid under their altered circumstances the extreme language and inordinate measures into which some of their brethren had been driven by the violence of despotic power and religious persecution.

Seated among this ruling junto of the Church, though not yet a formal member of the Assembly, we observe the portly figure of Mr. William Carstares. He is now the court chaplain and privy-counsellor of William III. The son of a worthy Presbyterian minister, and himself attached to Presbyterian principles, he had received an excellent education and was a first-rate classical scholar. In such an age he could not fail to incur censure and calumny. "He is a fat man," says one of his enemies, "a good friend when he is sincere, but always smiling when he designs most mischief." "I have known him long," said King William, "I have known him thoroughly, and I know him to be a truly honest man."

In concert with King William, Carstares had already drawn up the constitution of the Scottish Church, which had to be settled in the Assembly of 1690. The following "Remarks," being the joint production of the king and his chaplain, may be said to contain its leading features:—

"1st. Whereas in the draught it is said that the Church of Scotland was regained from Popery by presbyters without Prelacy, his majesty thinks that though this matter of fact may be true, which he doth not controvert; yet it being contradicted by some, who speak of a power that superintendents had in the beginning of the Reformation which was like to that that bishops had afterwards, it were better it were otherwise expressed.

"2d. Whereas it is said their majesties do ratify the Presbyterian Church government to be *the only government of Christ's Church in this kingdom*, his Majesty desires it



may be expressed otherwise, thus,—to be the government of the Church in this kingdom established by law.

"3d. Whereas it is said that the government is to be exercised by sound Presbyterians, and such as shall hereafter be owned by Presbyterian judicatories as such, his majesty thinks that the rule is too general, depending as to its particular determinations upon particular men's opinion, and therefore he desires that what is said to be the meaning of the rule in the reasons that were sent along with the act may be expressed in the act itself, viz. that such as subscribe the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, and are willing to submit to the government of the Church, being sober in their lives, sound in their doctrine, and qualified with gifts for the ministry, shall be admitted to the government."

This constitution, it is plain, was intended not to dictate to the Church her own opinion of Presbyterian government, but to indicate the ground upon which it was established in Scotland, and to protect his majesty from the imputation of inconsistency in establishing at the same time Prelacy in England. The members of the Scottish Church were left at perfect liberty to advocate their own views on the scriptural authority and historical antecedents of their own scheme of government. Carstares himself, it appears, afterwards wrote a treatise in defence of Presbytery, in distinction from the Prelatic and Independent systems.[1] But it was not held to be indispensably necessary to the civil establishment of Presbytery in Scotland, that the ruling power should be prepared to declare, in the deed of ratification, his own opinion on this important question. Personally, William was latitudinarian in his views of church government, but he would on no account employ force in imposing any form of that government on his subjects; and it was with the view of avoiding this extreme, on the side of Presbytery as well as that of Prelacy, that he counselled his friends in Scotland to study that "moderation" which religion enjoined, and which neighbouring reformed churches on the Continent expected from them. William was at first indeed desirous to admit all the Episcopal ministers on a footing of equality with the Presbyterians, but this was found impossible, in consequence of the policy pursued by the Earl of Crauford, and the im-

[1] Story's William Carstares.



placable zeal of the Jacobites themselves. Still, in compliance with the king's urgent importunities, the more respectable of the incumbents were retained in their charges, and permitted to take their seats in the Church courts, on condition of their subscribing the Confession of Faith, without any formal acknowledgments of their share in the late persecutions, or any expression of desire to retain their services on the part of the parishioners. Though little is said of their subsequent character, or the active interference of this party with the councils of the Church, it may be easily conceived that the accession of such men as the curates, of whose qualifications as a class Bishop Burnet speaks with so much contempt, would not contribute materially to the purity and strength of the Scottish Church, and that they would prove a dead weight on any effort to revive its ancient discipline. Thrust upon the people by bishops and patrons during the past twenty-eight years of persecution, in the place of those godly and devoted men whom they had driven into exile, or consigned to untimely deaths, these spurious growths of a hated Episcopacy, many of whom had acted as spies and informers against their brethren, could hardly be hailed as the genuine pastors of a Church which they never loved, and which by their very presence they reminded of having trampled upon its rights and privileges.

Thus constituted, the Assembly of 1690 having met on the appointed day, Lord Carmichael appeared as Lord-Commissioner, and Mr. Hugh Kenedy was elected Moderator. It soon appeared that the members were prepared to exemplify the moderate and temperate measures which had been so strongly recommended to them. They assured his Majesty that it was not their design to molest any incumbent for his judgment on the government of the Church; or to depose any except for ignorance, error, or scandalous lives. They carefully avoided any special reference to the grievances and sufferings of the preceding period. The most tender care was taken to avoid giving any offence to the pride of Prelatic England, by any special allusion to the Solemn League and Covenant, by which the three kingdoms had abjured the hierarchy and solemnly sworn to reform the churches according to the Word of God. No reference was made to the infamous Act Rescissory by which Charles had swept



away the whole acts of Church and state in Scotland passed in favour of the second period of Reformation, for their testimony in behalf of which so many scaffolds had been erected, and so much blood had been shed on Scottish moors and mountains. Two or three voices were raised in condemnation of these national sins, but they were speedily hushed. Mr. John Hepburn, minister of Urr in Galloway, who afterwards distinguished himself by his extreme opposition to the measures of the Church and state, endeavoured, but in vain, to obtain a hearing; and the Assembly, while receiving into their communion Messrs. Shields, Linning, and Boyd, the only ministers representing the followers of Cameron, Renwick, and Cargill, refused to listen to a long recapitulation of their principles and contendings, by which they sought to propitiate the societies with which they had been connected. The Assembly then set themselves to the task of repairing the ecclesiastical platform of the Church, and appointing a fast, in which the causes were touched upon with a very lenient hand. Among the grounds of humiliation, they deplore that the sins of the nation were aggravated by the violation of solemn vows (without, however, mentioning the names of any of these vows), they allude to the evils wrought by asserting the supremacy of the crown, the introduction of Prelacy, and the persecutions which followed.

It is easy to imagine the angry mood of the Scottish Prelatists when they saw the Presbyterian Church, which they had treated with so much harshness and contempt, re-established in their room, re-invested with its ancient emoluments, its academic chairs, its ecclesiastical and political influence; while they, in their turn, were summarily dislodged in the event of their non-compliance with the new régime from manses, glebes, and stipends, and churches, and reduced to seek shelter in obscure meeting-houses, where they were barely tolerated as a small sect, the object of popular odium and national suspicion. The bitterness of their disappointment knew no bounds, and it burst out in the shape of abusive lampoons against the General Assembly. The scurrility, the buffoonery of these productions, could only be equalled by the shocking profaneness which betrayed a source deeper than political animosity.[1] Even in later histories

[1] We refer to such scurrilous pasquinades as *Presbyterian Eloquence*



they have been upbraided for the paucity of their number, and for the narrowness and bigotry of their sentiments, which have been traced to their reflecting the sentiments of the common people, to whom they had so long been indebted for their support. These suppositions are not borne out by historical evidence. Few as the Presbyterian clergy now were, the older were scholars, and the younger had been chiefly educated abroad in the Low Countries. How many of these men obtained the means of support during the years of their persecuted fortunes it is hard to say; certainly it is never said it was by stipends or subscriptions from their scattered flocks. And from its commencement the Revolution Church could boast of several able divines in the theological chairs of the leading universities. Not to speak of Gilbert Rule, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, the controversial apologist of the Revolution, the names of Thomas Blackwell, Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, author of the ingenious work, *Ratio Sacra, or the Reasonableness of Revealed Religion*, and of *Methodus Evangelica, or the Right Method of Preaching;* of Thomas Halyburton, professor of divinity in St. Andrews, the author of *Natural Religion Insufficient, and Revealed Religion Necessary*, the well-known work against the Deism of Lord Herbert, and of *The Great Concern of Salvation;* and of William Wisehart, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and four times elected as moderator of the Assembly, the author of that elaborate work, *Theologia, or Discourses of God*, are still known in connection with their writings, still held in esteem for sound philosophy and evangelical piety.

It is a curious fact, that after the first Assembly of the Revolution Church in 1690, partly owing to the unsettled state of the Church and country, but mainly to the secret plottings of the Jacobites or of those who were unfriendly to the Presbyterians, the meetings of the supreme court were either postponed or summarily dissolved by edicts from the

Displayed, ascribed to Curate Calder, and *The Assembly, a Comedy*, well known to be the production of Dr Archibald Pitcairn. These flagitious pieces, especially the first-mentioned (for the other is rather too bad for modern citation), are still referred to, not by novelists only, but even by historians, who are not ashamed to parade among their high authorities these low and unsavoury missiles, which were thrown at the heads of such men as Dr. Gilbert Rule and the Rev. David Williamson.



king, so that for three years the annals of the Assembly present a total blank.

During this period occurred the infamous massacre of Glencoe, an event which involved all the parties implicated in it, not excepting the government of William, in a cloud of disgrace which has not even yet been wholly dispelled. Taking advantage of the failure of Macdonald of Glencoe, one of the Jacobite clans, to comply in time with a proclamation of amnesty, a band of soldiers, at the instigation of Sir John Dalrymple, afterwards Earl of Stair, was sent to take revenge, in the spirit of savage feudalism. On the 13th of February, 1692, this band, after having been treated in the most hospitable manner, put to the sword the unsuspecting chieftain and devoted the peaceful glen to fire and slaughter.

There is no reason for suspecting that William had any personal share in this atrocious transaction, or that he knew anything beyond the simple fact that an amnesty had been granted to the Highlanders, extending to a limited time. Much has been written on this mysterious affair. The following episode may throw some light upon it.

In 1694 Carstares was residing as court chaplain in the palace at London, when he received a letter from his brethren in Edinburgh, entreating his influence to save their Church from a dilemma which threatened to involve them in immediate collision with the government. This was the imposition of the oath of allegiance, accompanied with what was termed the Assurance, by signing which they declared William king *de jure* as well as *de facto*. No honest Presbyterian then denied the king's rightful prerogative, but they had insuperable objections to take a civil oath as a qualification for a sacred office; and the privy-council, among whom were some of the old persecutors, had recommended his majesty to allow no one to sit in the ensuing General Assembly till he had taken the oath and signed the Assurance. The packet reached the king in the absence of Carstares, and he, with the advice of the infamous Tarbert, and of the trimming Lord Stair, of Glencoe notoriety, who calumniously represented the refusal of the clergy to take the oath as arising from disaffection to his majesty's title and authority, peremptorily renewed his instructions and despatched them to Scotland without a moment's delay. Scarcely was



this done when Carstares arrived, and on learning the nature of the despatch, demanded it from the messenger in his majesty's name. On hastening to the palace he found the king in bed, and insisted on seeing him. His majesty on awakening was astonished to find his faithful friend on his knees. "I am come," said Carstares, "to beg my life," showing the packet he had taken from the messenger. The king frowned ominously; but after listening to the account of matters from Carstares, told him to throw the orders into the fire, and substitute a new set of instructions, on receiving which, dispensing them from the oath on the very morning when the Assembly was to meet, the apprehended danger was averted, and the Church relieved from a perplexity which threatened her with dissolution at the very outset of her renovated establishment.

The artful stratagem by which the unsuspecting Assembly might have been entrapped, the quick despatch by which the deed might have been accomplished, allowing not a single day to elapse for deliberation or escape, and the cunning shown in making the whole responsibility devolve on the King, on the pretext of zeal for upholding his authority, account for the success of Carstares in unfolding the real character of the transaction to his Majesty. And the exact counterpart which these circumstances bore to those which led to the massacre of Glencoe leaves us no room to doubt that Tarbert and Stair were equally concerned in both of these manœuvres.

Several years of comparative peace ensued, during which the Assembly was chiefly occupied in reviving the old measures for promoting useful learning for which the early Presbyterian Church was so much distinguished from the days of John Knox. The efforts which were made by the Church in 1638 and 1642 were now renewed, after the nation had recovered from the paralysis of persecution, by passing an act which "ratifies and approves all former laws and customs for establishing and maintaining schools within the kingdom," and for supplying the want of these in various parishes. One is forcibly struck with the zeal shown for providing such means of instruction for the Highlands and Islands, and for sending to them suitable ministers, able to preach the gospel in their native tongue. Thus were again



renewed and extended those wholesome institutions, then unknown in England, and to which Scotland has been so largely indebted for her superior intelligence among the nations.

The following incident, which occurred in 1697, may be here mentioned, on account of the attempt which has been lately made by means of it to blacken the Presbyterian ministers of the period. Thomas Aikenhead, a student of twenty-one years of age, was indicted at the Justiciary Court for the crime of "blasphemy, or railing and cursing against God and the persons of the Holy Trinity"—a crime which by the law of Scotland, passed, strangely enough, during the reign of the immaculate Charles II., was declared punishable by death, even in the case of recantation. The young man was convicted, and actually executed between Edinburgh and Leith. Some accounts would have it that he died penitently; others, with more apparent truth, that he put forth some offensive declarations even on the scaffold.[1] This being the first and only execution for blasphemy in Scotland, might have been allowed to rest in merited oblivion, had it not been revived, and formed the topic of an acrimonious charge by a late historian. Lord Macaulay, founding on the testimony of a single witness of very doubtful character, accuses the ministers of Edinburgh of having refused to intercede in favour of the unhappy youth. They "demanded," he says, "not only the poor boy's death, but his speedy death, though it should be his eternal death." "Even from their pulpits they cried out for cutting him off." "The preachers," concludes the historian, "who were the boy's murderers, crowded around him at the gallows, and insulted Heaven with prayers more blasphemous than anything that he had ever uttered. Wodrow has told us no blacker story of Dundee."[2]

Fortunately, we might say providentially for the vindication of those good men so unfairly vilified, a discourse has come to light which was preached before the lord-chancellor and

[1] The last supposition is borne out by the fact that the Rev. Thomas Halyburton in his work on Deism, published some years afterwards, considers it necessary to answer, *seriatim*, some of Aikenhead's declarations on the scaffold, asserting that "the indigested notions of this inconsiderable trifler scarce deserve the consideration we have given them, and much less did they become *the awful gravity of the place where they were delivered*."

[2] Macaulay's History of England, vol. iv. p. 761, &c.



other judges and magistrates, at the very time when Aikenhead was in prison and shortly before his execution. The preacher was the Rev. William Lorimer, of London, who had been invited to the chair of divinity in St. Andrews. The discourse was not published till the year 1713, when the author was an infirm old man, above seventy; and it is prefaced by a long and minute account of the whole transaction, in which every point of the charge made by Macaulay against the ministers is contradicted. The author disclaims any desire "in the least to excite the government against that poor man," and adds, "I am sure the ministers of the Established Church used him with an affectionate tenderness, and took much pains with him to bring him to faith and repentance and to save his soul; yea, and some of the ministers, to my certain knowledge, and particularly the late reverend, learned, prudent, peaceable, and pious Mr. George Meldrum, the minister of the Tron Church, *interceded for him with the government, and solicited for his pardon;* and when that could not be obtained, he desired a reprieve for him, and I joined with him in it. This was the day before his execution. The chancellor was willing to have granted him a reprieve, but could not do it without the advice of the privy-council and judges; and to show his willingness he called the council and judges, who debated the matter, and then carried it by plurality of votes for his execution, that there might be a stop put to the spreading of that contagion of blasphemy; but *though the ministers could not prevail with the civil government to pardon him,* yet I hope they prevailed with God, through Christ, to forgive his great sin and to save his soul."[1]

This episode may serve to introduce a few reflections on the moral and social condition of Scotland at the Revolution. Seldom has any country suffered so much in this as well as other respects. Thirty years of ruthless persecution and reckless misrule had swept over the country, during which the best and holiest feelings had been rudely trampled under the feet of a military despotism; the better class of the

[1] "Two Discourses: Occasioned by what is mentioned in the Preface, and now published to the glory of God in Christ. By William Lorimer, minister of the gospel. London: 1713." "Macaulay on Scotland, a Critique," which first appeared in the "Witness" newspaper, 1856, from the pen of the present writer.



community, distinguished for industry and sobriety, had been subjected to confiscation, by which their property was ruined and their dependants plunged into poverty; bands of marauders from the rudest districts of the Highlands, hardly reclaimed from the ignorance of Popery, were let loose upon the peaceful and industrious natives in the lowlands, against whom any charge of nonconformity to Prelacy could be brought; so that, as Fletcher of Salton writes in 1698, Scotland was overrun with a band of reckless and unprincipled vagrants amounting to two hundred thousand, prepared for every kind of mischief and disorder. Set free from the restraints of religion, and finding themselves under a set of rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, by whom the very semblance of piety exposed the person to insult and oppression, many had abandoned themselves to every species of immorality and profaneness. Intemperance, impurity, cursing and swearing with profanation of the Lord's-day and everything holy, prevailed to the most alarming extent. A more difficult task than that intrusted to the Presbyterian Church in the earlier days of the Revolution can hardly be imagined. Among the annoyances to which the Presbyterian Church was subjected none were more formidable than those created by "the planting of kirks" in the rural districts, particularly in the north, with suitable ministers. When the Jacobite incumbent had been ejected from the Church for scandal or disaffection it became a serious affair for the presbytery to supply his place by sending a man of better morals and more loyal principles. With the help of some neighbouring laird it was easy to collect a rabble of the vagrant class above noticed to obstruct the settlement. Hence arose numerous cases of rabbling by the curates, differing very widely from that previously described as having been endured from some of the Cameronians by the "afflicted clergy" of the same class in the west country. A case in point may be given for illustration. The presbytery of Aberdeen had deputed on this mission to a neighbouring parish minister, Mr. Farquhar of Nigg, a man of extraordinary courage and physical strength. He is said on one occasion, when offended by hearing a military officer indulging in a volley of profane oaths, to have seized the offender by the neck, and hung him over the pier of



Aberdeen, threatening to drop him into the water unless he made an ample apology. Our Presbyterian Samson, on reaching the scene of dispute, found that the bellman had been stopped in the discharge of his duty and was being roughly handled by two of the surrounding crowd; these he speedily put *hors de combat* by bringing their heads into violent collision; after which, turning to the astonished people and ordering the bell to be rung, he cordially invited all to accompany him into the church and listen to his service.[1]

On turning to the annals of her Assembly it appears from the numerous acts that passed, that those intrusted with her administration were deeply impressed with the extent of the evils they had to encounter, and anxious to meet them by all the means within their power. Days of national fasting and humiliation were appointed; ministers were required to be careful in the exercise of discipline; and some of the most faithful and zealous of them were commissioned to supply vacancies and to visit the more destitute parts of the country. Our attention is chiefly drawn to the year 1700, when the position of Scotland was peculiarly critical. Smarting under the wrongs and miseries of the Darien expedition, which they traced to the interference of the English government; suffering under the accumulated scourges of bankruptcy, poverty, death, and disease, the national jealousy and rancour against England were never more incensed among an energetic and enterprising population. The General Assembly, deeply touched with patriotic sympathy, rose to something like the sacred heroism of its predecessors during the civil wars. The Commission had already, in 1698, issued a *Seasonable Admonition*, in which they declare, "We do believe and own that Jesus Christ is the only Head and King of his Church, and that he hath instituted officers and ordinances, order and government, and not left it to the will of man, magistrate, or church, to alter at their pleasure. And we believe that this government is neither Prelatical nor Congregational, but Presbyterian, which now, through the mercy of God, is established among us: And we believe we have a better foundation for this our church government than the inclination of the people, or the laws of men."

[1] Traditional anecdotes, supported by unprinted acts of General Assembly, 1694.



And now, in 1700, they appoint a national fast, which received the civil sanction, in which, after referring to the sad condition of the nation, and the many public calamities which they acknowledge as divine judgments and trace to "our continued unfaithfulness to God, notwithstanding of our solemn covenants and engagements," they advert to "the atheistical and execrable principles, subversive of all religion, so much vented and spread amongst us, and the sins which prevailed among persons of all ranks and qualities, and earnestly call upon all to evince repentance, and to cry for mercy from an offended God. It is pleasing to notice, in the same document, the sympathy evinced for the persecuted Protestants in France, Piedmont, and the Palatinate, the anxiety for the spread of the gospel in New Caledonia, with other glimpses of the truly Catholic and Christian spirit which animated the Church of Scotland in her better days.

The Assembly of 1701 introduces a curious case of heresy. Dr. George Garden of Aberdeen had been charged with publishing an *Apology for Antonia Bourignon*, a French visionary who pretended to divine inspiration, and with having adopted some of her views which were of a very strange and incoherent character. Under the pretext of promoting charity and union among Christians she denied the doctrine of election and the divine foreknowledge, and asserted a twofold humanity in the person of Christ, one derived from Adam, and subject to corruption and rebellion of will against God, and the other derived from Mary his virgin mother, and maintained a state of perfection in this life and of purification in the future world. Dr. Garden was solemnly deposed from the ministry, and so shocked was the Church by finding one of their ministers involved in such sentiments that a question was introduced into the ordination service formally abjuring "Bourignonism"—an article which, strange to say, stands unaltered in the formula of the Established Church, and which must be accepted before ordination by all entrants to the ministry even in the present day, when few, it is presumed, are aware of the nature of the heresy which they are called upon to abjure.



CHAPTER II.

1703 — 1715.

Queen Anne's accession—Abrupt dissolution of the Assembly, 1703—Speech of Carstares at the Assembly of 1705—Unpopularity of the Union in Scotland—The Act of Security and coronation oath—Reticence of the Scottish Church on the Union—the visit of Dr. Edmund Calamy to the Assembly—Re-imposition of patronage—The oath of abjuration—Character of Carstares—His zeal for Presbytery—His death—The covenants renewed at Auchinsaugh—Jacobite insurrection under the Earl of Mar—Defence of Presbytery by Mr. Anderson of Dumbarton—Publication of Wodrow's "History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland."

In March, 1702, died King William, and was succeeded by his sister-in-law Anne, whose sympathies were all in favour of the Tories and High Church Episcopalians. This pretentious party now swaggered with the highest presumption. Carstares, who deeply lamented the death of his royal master, could no longer find himself useful at court, came down to Edinburgh, where he succeeded Dr. Rule as Principal of the University, in May, 1703. "Clouds were darkening the northern sky. The political atmosphere was charged with the elements of storm. That passionate and tortuous strife was beginning which was to end in the Union; and Jacobite stratagems, Episcopal pretentions, Presbyterian jealousies, national prejudices, personal dishonesties, and political corruptions, weltered together in illimitable babble and confusion."[1]

The very first Assembly which Carstares was called to attend, in 1703, furnished a scene of this description. When the Confession of Faith was confirmed at the Revolution, the Act of 1647, by which the Assembly qualified its reception by asserting the intrinsic power of the Church to convoke and dissolve her own Assemblies independently of

[1] Story's William Carstares, p. 275.



the civil power, was unfortunately overlooked. The consequence of this neglect was seen, when, even under the moderate government of King William, the power of the Church to hold, to prolong, or to dissolve her judicial meetings was on more than one occasion disputed and overruled by the arbitrary dictate of the crown. On the present occasion, when several synods, aware of the omission and the danger of yielding to the consequences, had moved that the Assembly should proceed to assert more distinctly the intrinsic power of the Church, it was abruptly dissolved, in her majesty's name, by the Earl of Seafield, her commissioner. This act of royal supremacy filled the Assembly with consternation. "It came upon us like a clap of thunder," says Thomas Boston. "This was one of the heaviest days I ever saw—beholding a vain man trampling under the privileges of Christ's house; and Mr. George Meldrum, the moderator, obeying the presumptuous order with as much confusion as a school-boy when beaten." But honest Boston, who was as much confused as the rest, contents himself with going home to enter this "heaviest day" in his private diary. The Church of Scotland had fallen from her independence since the palmy days of the Glasgow Assembly of 1638, when the Duke of Hamilton had dissolved it in the name of Charles I., and took his departure; and when Henderson ordered the candles to be lighted, and the business of the Assembly to proceed, in spite of dukes, bishops, and kings.

In the prospect of the incorporating Union with England, now fast approaching, great hopes were entertained by some of the enemies of the Scottish Establishment that, from the divided state of the country, it would be split up into irreconcilable parties. These fears, however, were destined to disappointment by the temperate measures which, mainly through the influence of Carstares, the great body of the ministers were led to adopt. Some of the more violent were induced to enter their protests against it from the pulpit. Mr. Hepburn of Urr was particularly offensive by his contumacy and irregularity. He had even excited the government against him by openly renouncing his allegiance, and had been thrown into prison, from the barred windows of which he continued to testify against the whole nation. After having tried the

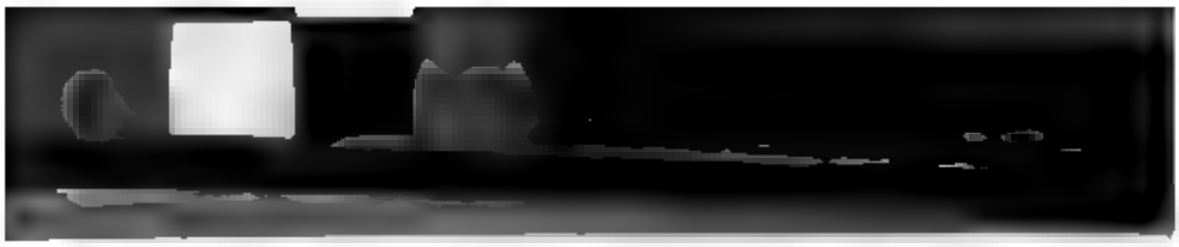


forbearance of the Church courts to the utmost limit, he was finally condemned, and notwithstanding his popularity with a considerable body of the people was quietly deposed from his charge.[1] In his address at the close of this Assembly Carstares said, "I hope, reverend brethren, that I shall not be judged by you to be much out of my way if I allude, with respect to the enemies of our Church, to that which we have in the 48th Psalm. No doubt many who wish not well to our interest have these days past come hither to spy out our liberty, and to catch at something that might be matter for their drollery; but they have seen the beauty of our harmony, the calmness with which our debates have been managed, the order that hath been in our proceedings, and the civil authority of the magistrates and the spiritual power of the Church kindly embracing each other. They saw it; they marvelled. They were troubled, and hasted away."

"His manner of speaking in church courts," says M'Cormick, "was calm, sententious, and decisive, which along with his influence over the most considerable members of the house, gave great weight to his opinion in every debate. Such was their respect for his character, that one sentence from him would often extinguish in a moment the most violent flame in the house. This authority which he had acquired he knew well how to maintain. In matters of lesser moment he seldom spoke at all; in business of consequence he spoke only in the close of the debate, and it was a rare instance in which any adventured to speak after him." Carstares is said to have been the first who introduced and closed the meetings of Assembly as moderator by reading a regularly composed address.[2]

The Church's interests, in prospect of a union with Prelatic England, had often engaged the Scottish parliament. Lord Belhaven had been zealous to maintain that the treaty offered no security to the Church adequate to the danger which she would incur; and Fletcher of Salton indulged his fancy in eloquent declamation against the measure. The Jacobites eagerly tried to fan the flame of discontent and apprehension; but the great majority of the clergy were too wise, and were too wisely counselled by Carstares to be led

[1] Acts of the Assembly, 1705. [2] M'Cormick's Life of Carstares, p. 74.



away by the zeal of injudicious allies or the false sympathy of covert foes. The Commission of the General Assembly, which, in virtue of its ordinary powers, continued to act when the Assembly was not in session, represented the Church during the progress of the treaty with calmness and dignity; and in its addresses to parliament temperately stated those points in the measure which were considered defective. The Commission complained of the English sacramental test as the condition of holding civil and military office, and urged that no oath or test of any kind, inconsistent with Presbyterial principles, should be required from Scottish Churchmen. They recommended that an obligation to uphold the Church of Scotland should be embodied in the coronation oath. They represented the necessity of a "Commission for the Plantation of Kirks and Valuation of Tiends;" and they concluded their fullest and most formal representation with an intimation, that, knowing as they did that twenty-six bishops sat in the House of Lords, which, on the conclusion of the treaty, would have jurisdiction in Scottish affairs, they desired to state, with all respect, but all firmness, that it was contrary to the Church's "principles and covenants" that "any churchman should bear civil offices, and have power in the commonwealth."[1]

These representations were not without their effect. The bench of bishops was not of course removed, but it was provided that the unalterable establishment and maintenance of the Presbyterian Church should be stipulated by an act prior to any other act that should ratify the treaty, and should then be embodied in the Act of Ratification; and that the first oath the British sovereign should take on his accession and before his coronation, should be an oath to maintain "the government, worship, discipline, rights, and privileges of the Church of Scotland,"—the first oath still taken by the sovereign down to the present day.[2]

The Union between England and Scotland, in 1707, is matter of civil history, and only calls for notice here from the effects in which it involved the Church of Scotland. Whatever material good may have resulted from it to the nation at large, it is certain that, owing to various causes of the most opposite description, no public event was at the

[1] Story's William Carstares, p. 296. [2] Hill Burton, vol. i. p. 466, &c.



time more unpopular in Scotland. The adherents of the exiled family regarded it as fatal to their projects, by uniting the two kingdoms in support of the new dynasty. The more extreme Presbyterians disliked it, as bringing them into closer union with a Prelatic country. The people in general looked upon it with undefined suspicion and mistrust, as stripping them of their ancient national independence and legislature, and handing them over to English mercenaries and tax-gatherers. Daniel De Foe narrowly escaped being mobbed in Edinburgh as an agent and advocate of the union. Strange approaches to mutual consultation against the common enemy took place between the friends of the Pretender and of the covenant. The only party which remained neutral was the Revolution Church, which, under strong pressure, was kept quiet; but even this was only effected, as indeed the union itself could only have taken place, by the passing of the Act of Security, in virtue of which "the Presbyterian form of church government was *ratified and established to continue without any alteration to the people of this land in all succeeding generations.*" It is impossible that human language could express, or that human laws could establish, a more firm security. And this Act of Security was "*fixed as a fundamental and essential condition of any treaty of union to be concluded between the two kingdoms without any alteration thereof or derogation thereto in any sort for ever.*"

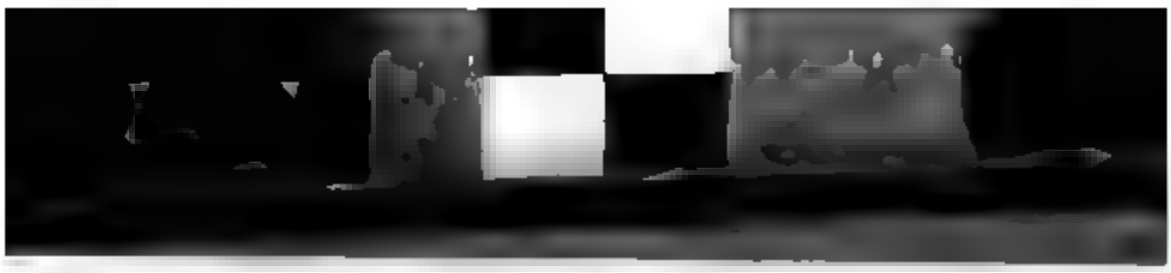
It is a striking fact, and may at first be deemed unaccountable, that in none of the acts of the General Assembly, printed or unprinted, is the subject of the union so much as named. This avoidance of the subject which must have been uppermost in every mind, may be traced to the fact that it was impossible to touch upon the question, either in the way of approval or disapproval, without awakening dissent, and involving the whole Church and nation in inextricable confusion. To escape this, the only available method was to pass it by in silence. By affecting this piece of dignified reticence on a subject so deeply affecting the honour of his country as well as the interest of his Church, Carstares displayed, it must be owned, more dexterous tact and management than courage or public spirit. But the peace of the Church was thus preserved, and from all



the friends of the union, including her Majesty, the sagacious leader received thanks for his efforts in securing its success.

In the year 1709 the Assembly had the honour of receiving a visit from the celebrated nonconformist Edmund Calamy. This Presbyterian divine was received with every mark of respect; he was placed at the right hand of the moderator, and was admitted to all the meetings of the Assembly, public and private. He had an opportunity of listening to all the cases brought before the committees before they were introduced to the Assembly. And he speaks with special gusto of a fish-dinner given to Carstares to which he was invited. "That which I take to have been more remarkable," adds Calamy, "was that not one in all the company was for the *jure divino* of the Presbyterian form of church government, though they freely submitted to it." It would have been well for the interests of English Presbyterians had Calamy with his friends "freely submitted to the Presbyterial rules of government as set down in *Pardovan's Collections*, on the government, &c., of the Church of Scotland,"[1] though not acknowledging the *jure divino* in the Anglican sense of that term, according to which he and his brethren were excluded from the ministry of the Christian Church, as well as from the privileges of her Universities, an extreme of bigotry and intolerance wholly unknown to the Church of Scotland, which he himself experienced as soon as he had crossed the Border. In that genuine liberality of spirit which under the reign of Presbytery she has always manifested, he received the degree of D.D. from the University of Edinburgh, a distinction which was afterwards repeated by the Universities of Aberdeen and of Glasgow, but which, according to their view of the *jure divino* of Prelacy, he could not receive from any University in his native country. Unfortunately, however, like the rest of his Presbyterian brethren in England, Calamy had practically abandoned all the rules of Presbyterian government; and although orthodox himself, when he found the Assembly following out against a recreant minister the "Form of Process" they had wisely adopted two years before for regulating their courts in matters of discipline, he professed himself to be quite scandalized at the proceedings which he witnessed. On being asked what he

[1] By Walter Steuart of Pardovan, published in 1709.



thought of them he replied, "Well, now, in England we should think that this was the Inquisition revived!"[1]

Thus, with a Confession of Faith founded upon the Word of God, and with rules of discipline flowing in reasonable consequence from the leading principles of the Christian constitution, asserting as they do in their "Form of Process" that the "Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted government and governors in his house, with power to meet for the order and government thereof," the Post-union Church bid fair, if left to herself, to carry into effect the great objects for which the Church has been instituted. For some years this was happily fulfilled. The people, under the management of the Church courts, were left at liberty to choose the pastors to whom they were willing to commit their spiritual interests, and the courts on their part were anxious to provide them with pious, learned, and faithful ministers. Great care was shown to preserve the purity of doctrine, and to maintain its efficacy by the pastoral visitation of families. The settlement of ministers by the act 1690, with the exception of some cases in which the Jacobite heritors in the north interfered, was accomplished in the most tranquil and orderly manner. At the same time the Church manifested a tender regard for the relief of the poor by transferring it from the justices of the peace, by whom it was sadly neglected, to the surveillance and care of their own parishes. Everything seemed to promise a peaceful and happy régime, but unhappily, in 1712, this prospect was overturned by the sudden reimposition of patronage. In spite of the Queen's letter, and of her repeated assurances to maintain inviolate the privileges of the Scottish Establishment, in direct contravention of the Act of Security, the English parliament, urged by the Tories and the High Church party, carried through this measure with the most indecent haste, and even precipitation. It is now more superfluous than ever to inquire into the reasons put forth for perpetrating this piece of national perfidy and injustice. The real object of the measure was the insatiate spite of the Jacobite faction, who hoped in this way to render the Presbyterian settlement odious to the people of Scotland. The only pretext suggested were the heats and divisions which they alleged had flowed from the act of 1690, which,

[1] Calamy's Account of his own Life, vol. ii. p. 155.



as we have already shown, proceeded from the very parties now implicated in the proposed change. Like the wolf in the fable, who blamed the lamb for polluting the stream, they charged the Presbyterians with creating disorders for which they alone were responsible. It may suffice to state that when the Assembly sent Messrs. Carstares, Blackwell, and Baillie to remonstrate against this shameful deed, these representatives were not only refused permission to speak on behalf of Scotland and her Church, but had no sooner turned their backs homeward than the House of Commons carried through the bill and transmitted it to the House of Lords, by whom it was passed into law, and received the royal assent, almost in a single day. Along with this deadly and insulting blow the Jacobites, under the instigation of such fanatics as Sacheverel and other *jure divino* Prelatists, induced the parliament to pass at the same time two measures which they felt confident would prove equally offensive to the Scottish Church. These were the Act of Toleration, as it was called, by which the Jacobites were permitted to set up their chapels under the express sanction of law; and the other was the introduction into the oath of abjuration of a clause providing that the successor to the British crown must belong to the Church of England, which they well knew could not be sworn by the Presbyterians without violating all their cherished predilections and engagements. This manœuvre had almost succeeded in producing a schism in the Scottish Church; it was felt to be more personally offensive than patronage itself; and although Carstares contrived to introduce an explanation with the view of covering the clergy from the odium of the imposition, it had the effect of dividing the Church into two parties, styled jurants and nonjurants, and alienating from those who took the oath a large body of the people.

"Carstares," says his modern biographer, "like the other great divines of the Scottish Church in her best days, took no narrow and provincial view of the position and character of the National Establishment. To him the Church of Scotland, while the rightful representative of the religious life and belief of the Scottish people, was but one branch of the great Reformed communion, and was bound to live in brotherly alliance with all the other ecclesiastical bodies



which maintained reformed doctrine and Presbyterian government. He desired to strengthen the ties which bound the Church of Scotland to the Presbyterians of the Continent, of England, and of Ireland. With a view to this he had already done what he could to procure the appointment in the Scotch universities of some professors from those of Holland. He was in favour of sending young Scotsmen to finish their education abroad, and of thus keeping up the old connection, which associated the names of Crichton, of Buchanan, of Mair, of Melville, and of many Scottish scholars and divines, with the honourable traditions of the continental universities. And now, as head of the University of Edinburgh, he wished to render the seminary over which he presided attractive to those Presbyterian and Nonconformist students whom exclusive tests debarred from an academic career in England and Ireland. His plan was the establishment of what is now called a 'college hall,' under the wing of the university, in which these students should be accommodated; but its execution was delayed too long, and at last the death of Carstares extinguished it." With this testimony we heartily concur; though we hesitate to class him, even as a prototype, with the "Moderates" who succeeded him towards the middle of the eighteenth century. In the decided enemy of patronage, which was forced upon the Church in spite of his anxious remonstrances,—in the firm friend of evangelical truth and of Presbyterian principles,—we fail to discover any resemblance to the worldly, half-hearted, and tyrannical men who rose to power by pleading for an unmodified and unpopular patronage, who drove from the communion of the Church some of her best friends, and dragged the remaining half reluctantly by the force of Assembly votes to conclusions which they only suffered to pass from fear of schism. In the best sense of the modern phrase he may be said to have been before his time, a Pan-Presbyterian divine, too friendly to every section of that Church to rank himself the exclusive friend of any one of them. Few of the statesmen or clergy of his day had a more blameless career, or died more lamented. His services to the Scottish Church during the difficult and stormy passages of the Revolution and the union procured him the name of "Cardinal Carstares;" he was four times



elected moderator of her Assembly; and as Principal of the University of Edinburgh no man bestirred himself more effectually in behalf of the academic institutions of his country. Over his grave in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, in August, 1715, the tears of his personal friends mingled with those of his public opponents, some of whom were largely indebted for their support to his unostentatious beneficence.

It is a singular coincidence that at this period the two parties which during the bloody persecution of the preceding century were brought into deadly collision with each other now appeared confronted, at opposite sides of the field. The followers of Cameron and Renwick, who now assumed the name of the "Old Dissenters," still kept up a separate standing from the Church of Scotland, in the form of societies throughout the country, who acknowledged the ministry of Messrs. Macmillan and Macneill. Though far from being entirely free from intestine differences, these societies agreed in renewing the covenants at Auchinsaugh, near Douglas, in July, 1712, and publishing a lengthened acknowledgment of sins and engagement to duties, in which hardly a step taken by the Church and nation in former or later days passed without notice or censure. This circumstantial document does not appear to have produced any impression on the great body of Presbyterians. Unlike the solemn league, which when originally sworn gave expression to the will of a whole nation, united under the circumstances as one man to carry its grand object into effect, this renovation could only be regarded as the act of the few scattered individuals who engaged in it under circumstances wholly altered. Even politically viewed, the movement was unpropitious. The only party in the nation who could sympathize with their protest against the union were the Jacobites, who from the most opposite principles were seeking to involve the whole country in confusion. This was soon seen from the misguided insurrection of 1715, under the Earl of Mar.

The attachment of Scotland to the family of the Stuarts presents in all its phases an historical problem, surrounded with mysteries which even still excite wonder and defy solution. Even religion will hardly account for it, far less the reciprocation of benefits; for Scottish Presbyterians deeply resented the execution of the first Charles, and were mainly



instrumental in the restoration of his son, by whom they were only requited with treachery and bloodshed; and though James and his sons were such bigoted Papists that they would make no concession for regaining their inheritance, but, as the French prelate observed, "lost three kingdoms for the sake of a mass," it was strange that Scotland, hitherto so noted for its horror of Popery, should be willing at this period, and to such an extent, to take up arms in behalf of a Popish sovereign. The more enlightened portion of the country, it is true, shuddered at the prospect of such an embrace; but several of the ancient nobility, especially in the Highlands, with their clans and retainers, joined this ill-advised and worse-conducted expedition, which, but for the failure of the French in sending the needful supplies, might have involved the whole country in the miseries of civil war. This burst of Jacobite enthusiasm cannot be traced to any religious principle, Popish or Protestant. It was simply an outburst of national feeling, under the operation of the natural law which pays no regard to spiritual or ecclesiastical distinctions, but is guided by personal, family, or feudal associations. With the exception of a few interested partisans, the same feeling may account for the romantic interest which is still attached to the fortunes of the Stuart race. It is on the same principle that, in spite of the dictates of the understanding and the conscience, we all feel that the heart and the imagination go forth in sympathy with the heroes of pagan story, with the Horatii and Curiatii of ancient Rome, and experience a natural admiration for the cloud-capped heroes of Ossian, and for the mistaken and infatuated but enthusiastic champions of Jacobitism, as sung by the bards and minstrels of the Chevalier.

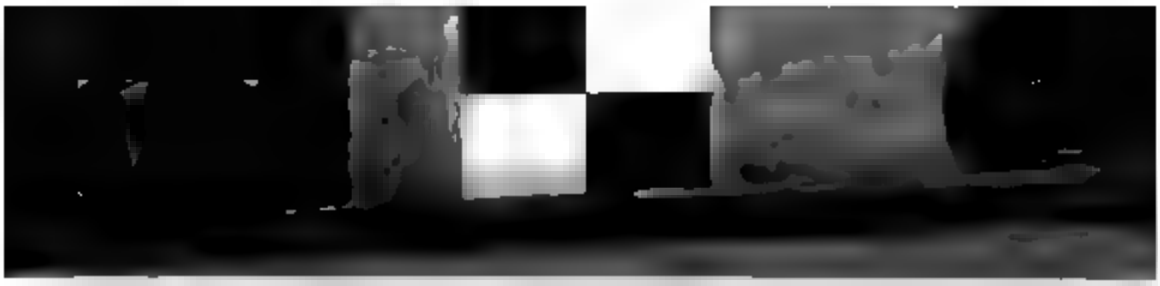
About this period we may notice some of the literary men who flourished, and who have left us the fruits of their labours. We have already mentioned some of the learned men who filled the chairs of theological learning. We cannot omit here the name of Mr. William Jameson, who was appointed to be lecturer on history in the University of Glasgow in 1692, and continued to discharge its duties till his death in 1720. He may be regarded as a prodigy of learning, having been totally blind from the day of his birth. His works were various and profoundly learned, including



The Sum of the Episcopal Controversy; An Examination of the Ignatian Epistles; The Fundamentals of the Hierarchy, in answer to Dr. Munro; *Cyprianus Isotimus*, being a reply to Bishop Sage; &c. The name of Mr. William Dunlop, professor of divinity in the Edinburgh University, is well known from his *Collection of Confessions*, and his *Life of William Guthrie of Fenwick*, originally prefixed to the *Christian's Great Interest*.[1]

Connected with this period of our story are two works, bearing so closely on the Church of Scotland that they cannot pass unnoticed. The first of these was controversial, the author being Mr. John Anderson, minister of Dumbarton, entitled *Defence of the Church Government, Faith, Worship, and Spirit of the Presbyterians*, published in 1714, in answer to Rhind's *Apology for Leaving the Presbyterian Communion*. Previous to this Mr. Anderson had published several smaller pieces, such as *Dialogues between the Curate and the Countryman*, and a *Reply to Bishop Sage respecting the English Liturgy*. But in this larger work he handles the whole question in a masterly style of wit and learning, which has been seldom equalled and never surpassed. The second work was Wodrow's well-known *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to the Revolution*, a work of the deepest research, on which he was engaged from the year 1707, though it was not published till 1721, when it appeared in three large volumes at separate times. Robert Wodrow was minister of the small parish of Eastwood, near Glasgow, and was remarkable for the patient assiduity and fidelity with which he prosecuted his literary labours. He opposed patronage and the oaths imposed by government, but was "a man of peace;" and few have done more in their day to reflect light on the Church which he loved. His *History* gave too faithful a picture of the times for the author to escape the voice of party calumny. Of this he himself was fully aware; and sending a copy to Cotton Mather he says, "Our Prelatists and Jacobites, I hear, are much chagrined, and no doubt I may expect rudeness from that quarter, but I am persuaded the facts can never be disproven; and however they may nibble at the style, method, and some things that may have escaped me in so large a work, the *proofs I have given of their severities must*

[1] Wodrow's Correspondence, vol. i. p. 23 and p. 472.



stand."[1] The proofs to which he refers are taken from the Acts of Council and Justiciary, which he consulted and copied, together with the various sources of information to which he applied. In no case has he been found guilty of mis-statement or exaggeration. It must have been to him matter of genuine surprise had he been foretold that even in our enlightened century the spirit of Prelacy and Jacobitism would survive so long, that his honesty and fidelity would not only excite chagrin, but provoke to obloquy and vituperation. The truthfulness of Wodrow's *History* is now placed beyond all reasonable question. Its facts are stated on the irreversible evidence of national documents, unquestionable testimony, and undeniable evidence. The personal character of the author stands very high. He was far from being a bigot or fanatical in any sense, and was accessible to truth from every quarter. He never indulges in recrimination, even upon those who took the most active part in the sufferings of the time. Seldom, if ever, did he seek to enlist the sympathies of his readers in behalf of the sufferers, or to awaken indignation against their persecutors. Though a nonjurant and anti-patronage man in principle, he took no active share in the government of the Church, was not a Marrow-man, or disposed to high or strict notions in ecclesiastical matters. He was rather prejudiced than otherwise against the "Old Dissenters;" and if his narrative is open to censure at all it is in doing scrimp justice to that party of the Covenanters who followed the extreme opinions of Cargill and Renwick, for which he has incurred the suspicion of such writers as Howie of Lochgoin. But the idea of his falling into the opposite fault of misrepresenting and exaggerating the conduct of the persecutors is too ludicrous to find a place in sober history. During the long period of years spent in the preparation of his standard work, his industry in accumulating by correspondence every living and local proof which could throw light on the facts founded on the public documents to which he appealed, must have been extraordinary; and the records of the Church, to which he applied for help in prosecuting his researches, proclaim the solidity and trustworthiness of the work which bears the impress of their approbation.

[1] Wodrow's Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 594.



CHAPTER III.

1717 — 1732.

Professor Simson and James Webster—Dr. Pitcairn's process for defamation—Scottish Baxterianism—Trial of Simson—Sentence on Simson—The Auchterarder Creed—Thomas Boston—He relates his discovery of the "Marrow of Modern Divinity"—It is re-published by James Hog of Carnock—Principal Hadow preaches against it—Character of the work—It is condemned as erroneous by the Assembly, 1720—Grounds of the condemnation—The committee for purity of doctrine—The twelve queries and the twelve Representers—Protest of the Representers—Striking change on the religion and taste of the Scottish Church—Allan Ramsay's Circulating Library—Final sentence of Professor Simson—Professor Campbell on enthusiasm—Deposition of John Glas—His singularities—Death of Thomas Boston.

Hitherto the Scottish Church had remained sound in the faith. Hardly any case of heretical pravity had been brought before her supreme court. After the Union, however, it could not be expected that Scotland would escape the contagious influence of the errors, the heresy, and the scepticism which sprang up at this period in the southern part of the island. The first who disturbed the doctrinal harmony of the Church by his English novelties was Mr. John Simson, professor of divinity in the University of Glasgow, who was "processed" in 1714 and for two succeeding years by the Rev. James Webster of Edinburgh, for teaching certain Arminian heresies and loose sentiments regarding natural religion. It is hardly possible to convey to the ordinary reader a distinct and intelligible idea of Mr. Simson's principles. Judging from his subsequent history, he would seem to have adopted Arian sentiments; but he was one of those ingenious sophists who delight in puzzling the more simple of his brethren by denying their constructions of his strange language, and their inferences from his startling positions. At



the same time arrogant and conceited, he betrayed the consciousness of his real aberrations by secretly boasting of the sympathy of the more enlightened portion of the Assembly.

A very different character was his opponent, James Webster, minister of Edinburgh. An old sufferer under the covenant, he was one of those zealots, who, too honest and straightforward to conceal his convictions, was too bold and warm-tempered to evade the consequences of giving them expression. Referring to the abjuration oath in a sermon, he declared that "sooner than take it he would go with his wife and family and live upon one meal in the day," a piece of boldness which so highly pleased the Jacobites, that they would never drink the health of the Pretender without coupling with it that of Mr. Webster. The conversation having turned at a public dinner upon an auction at which a large price was bid for a heathen book, while nothing was offered for a copy of the Bible, Dr. Archibald Pitcairn, who was known to be a sceptic, observed scoffingly that "it was no wonder that the Scripture could not go off, for it is written, *Verbum Dei manet in æternum*—the Word of God endureth for ever." Webster was not the man to allow this jest to pass; he plainly observed that "this was the language of a professed Deist." A process was raised against him for defamation by the indignant doctor, and was carried on with great heat on both sides. Pitcairn, who was a stanch Jacobite, threatened to take revenge on his fanatical reprover; Webster had suffered too much in his youth as a stanch Presbyterian to pay any regard to his threats, and it was only by the intervention of the authorities that the affair could be settled.

Such was the opponent of Professor Simson. The process began in 1714, and for three long years did the zealous old man keep up the chase on his wary antagonist, tracking him through all his windings with "twenty articles, and as many witnesses and documents for every article." He offered to prove in an hour that he was guilty of Socinianism, Arminianism, and Jesuitism; and not being sure of getting justice from the forms of the Assembly, he had the charges placarded in the public streets. He continued to the last to maintain the character now given him. He died in May, 1720, having enjoyed in a high degree the respect and confidence of his



people. In his last illness, we are informed, he was very comfortable in the prospect of eternity, and said, "I have sweet peace of those appearances for which I have often been accounted a fool." Speaking of his death Boston says, "He was a man maintaining the purity of the doctrine of the gospel, a nonjurant to the last breath; and during or about the last time he was in the judicatory where the matter of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* was considered, expressing his concern that they should beware of condemning it."[1] He was the father of the celebrated Alexander Webster, the founder of the Widows' Scheme.

The sentence of the Assembly on Simson was as lenient as even he could desire, being to the effect "that Mr. John Simson hath given offence, and vented some opinions that bear and are used by adversaries in a bad and unsound sense, and he is prohibited and discharged from venting such opinions as either ascribe too much to corrupt nature, *or tend to encourage sloth among Christians, or slacken people's obligation unto gospel holiness.*" The latter part of this sentence had no connection with the case of Simson, but was obviously meant as a side-blow to the more faithful party who were his prosecutors. While the lash of discipline descended gently on the shoulders of the Glasgow professor, and rather emboldened him to persevere in his heretical tendencies, no mercy was found for those of another party who were supposed to have "slackened people's obligation to gospel holiness."

The presbytery of Auchterarder, in their zeal to uphold evangelical truth, symptoms of opposition to which had begun to appear in the case of Simson, had drawn up a list of propositions for the subscription of candidates, which came to be called the "Auchterarder Creed." One of these was to this effect, "I believe it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God." The proposition was unhappily worded; for the duty of every sinner must, no doubt, be to forsake sin. But the good men of Auchterarder presbytery plainly designed to guard against the legal strain of preaching according to the Baxterian or Neonomian system, which teaches that repentance and new

[1] Boston's Memoirs; Bower's Hist. of the University of Edinburgh, ii. 133; Wodrow's Correspondence.



obedience are necessary as prerequisite qualifications, in order to warrant our coming to the Saviour. Be this as it may, the Assembly, on hearing that a student had been refused his extract of license for refusing to subscribe this article, held up their hands in amazement, and declared their "abhorrence of the aforesaid proposition as unsound and most detestable."

From this expression of feeling it was apparent that the leading ministers of the Assembly had become deeply tainted with the Baxterian theology. The influence of that system among Presbyterians in both Scotland and England was very powerful, and in some cases proved detrimental. On no point was Richard Baxter more strenuous than the priority of repentance to faith; founding upon certain passages of Scripture in which the two graces are thus arranged. It is hardly necessary to remark, that on a sounder principle of exegesis it admits of being shown, that while such passages proclaim that the grand *end* of the gospel is to bring men to repentance, they plainly teach that the gospel is the only *means* by which that *end* can be effectually gained. Thus, the text to which the Auchterarder proposition referred calls upon "the wicked man to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts."[1] But while this is "the *end* of our faith," it is obvious that no man will actually receive this nor take a single step towards its reception by returning to the Lord, unless previously persuaded that "he will have mercy and will abundantly pardon." This was unquestionably the doctrine of our early reformers; but the introduction of Arminianism in the seventeenth century superinduced a change in the tone of our theology, rendering our divines more jealous in employing language which might appear to favour the Antinomian heresy, and embarrassing them in making the free and universal offers of mercy to mankind. They began to talk of *conditions*, qualifying the sinner for receiving the overtures of mercy. Symptoms of this change early appeared in the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*,[2] in which the elect penitent sinner

[1] It has been beautifully said by an old bishop, "Faith is the star that goeth before the face of repentance; the pillar of fire that guideth her in the night of her sorrows, and giveth her light, and telleth her how to walk that she stumble not." (Lectures upon Jonah, delivered at York, 1594, by Rev. John King, Lord Bishop of London.)

[2] This appendix to the Confession of Faith, written by David Dickson, came to be surreptitiously bound up with it. (See Dunlop's *Collection of Confessions*.)



is described as entering into a formal bargain or stipulation with God on certain terms or conditions. Very different was the evangelical strain of Hugh Binning, Samuel Rutherford, and Archbishop Leighton. The two lines of antagonistic sentiments now came into open and violent collision.[1]

While the Assembly were expressing their "abhorrence" of the Auchterarder Creed in 1717 two members might have been seen engaged in earnest conversation. One of these was a member of the presbytery, Mr. John Drummond of Crieff, "a good man, though nothing of a scholar," who had been "staged" before the Synod of Perth for a sermon in which he had said some very good things in very unguarded language. The other was a man of middle stature and mild countenance; little more than forty years of age, but "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," he looks prematurely old. This was Thomas Boston, author of *The Fourfold State*, *The Crook in the Lot*, and other productions, long familiar as the Bible to the Scottish peasantry. Thomas was the son of an old Covenanter, "a miller and maltster withal," in the good old town of Dunse, and long remembered sleeping on his father's bosom, when that worthy was incarcerated for his principles in the Canongate tolbooth. After struggling with many difficulties he was settled first at Simprin, then a separate parish from Swinton, and next in the moorish district of Ettrick. The deficiences of early education were compensated by a youth of study, and by natural gifts, admirably qualifying him for impressing as a preacher and writer the minds of his countrymen; though, from constitutional timidity, he did not shine as a speaker in public debate. Imagining that we overhear his conversation with Mr. Drummond, we may hear him tell-

[1] "I know it is not possible that a lost soul can receive Christ till there be some preparatory convincing work of the law to discover sin and misery; but I hold that to look to any such preparation and fetch an encouragement or motive therefrom to believe in Christ, is really to give him a price for his free waters and wine. It is to mix in Christ and the law in the point of our acceptation. He must examine himself, not to find himself a *sensible humble* sinner, that so he may have ground of believing, but that he may find himself a *lost perishing* sinner, void of all grace and goodness, that he may find the more necessity of Jesus Christ." (*Works of Hugh Binning*, vol. i 285.) "There is no writer of whom I am fonder than Matthew Henry, but it is impossible not to perceive that Baxterian or Neonomian sentiments and expressions frequently occur in his admirable commentary." (*Dr. M'Crie, Life*, 328.)



ing his friend: "When I was a student I heard Mr. Mair often speak of being divorced from the law, dead to it, and the like; but I understood very little of the matter. However, my thoughts being, after my settlement at Simprin, turned that way, as I was sitting one day in a house there I espied above the window-head two little old books, which, when I had taken down, I found entitled, the one *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and the other *Christ's Blood flowing freely to Sinners*. These, I reckon, had been brought home from England by the master of the house, a soldier in the time of the civil wars. The first I relished greatly. I found it came close to the point I was in quest of, and to show the consistency of those things which I could not reconcile before; so that I rejoiced in it as a light which the Lord had seasonably struck up to me in my darkness. By the end of 1700 I had digested the doctrine of the book, and I began to preach it."[1]

How slight are the links by which Providence works out its purposes! This "little old book," published seventy years before, and brought home in his knapsack by the soldier of the Commonwealth, and "espied above the window-head" of his cottage at Simprin, the only copy perhaps in Scotland, fell like a single grain of seed upon congenial soil, when it fell upon the heart of Thomas Boston, and was destined to no small notoriety. The book, borrowed by Mr. Drummond, comes into the hands of James Hog, of Carnock, who republishes it in 1717 with a recommendatory preface. Mr. Hog was a pious man, of the old-fashioned type, having a very tender conscience, the keen edge of which he had kept up by constantly whetting it on a self-accusing diary. Shrinking from the ensnaring oaths and the unevangelical tone of the divinity of the day, he regarded this book as a new cruse which might supply the salt of a powerful antidote. But he did not calculate on the recoil of alarmed orthodoxy in high places, aided by a little clerical spleen. Principal Hadow of St. Andrews is said to have retained a grudge at Mr. Hog ever since they had quarrelled when prosecuting their studies in Holland. He was a worthy man, and orthodox too, as appears from the part which he afterwards took in the Arian heresy of

[1] Boston's Memoirs.

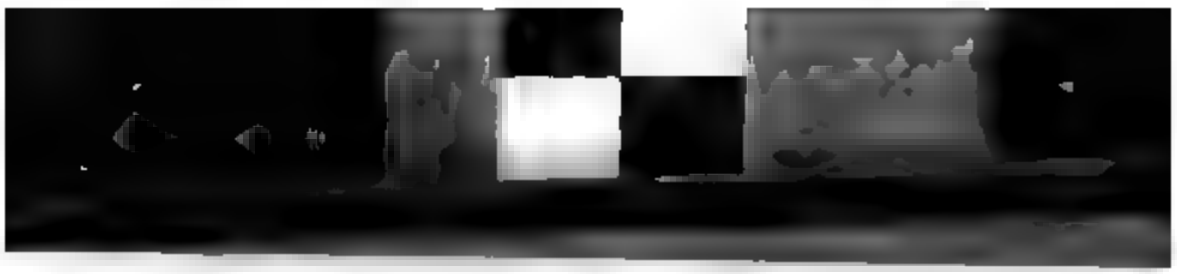


Simson, but one of the Dicksonian or Baxterian school. Coldly correct in the phraseology of orthodoxy, he wore it, not so much in the graceful folds of life as in the cerements of the grave. No sooner did he see the *Marrow* published with Hog's imprimatur than he began to preach against it, denouncing it as fraught with the most odious notions of an Antinomian tendency. This sermon, published in 1719, at the request of the Synod of Fife, led to a host of polemical pieces on both sides of the question, which issued from the press during the four following years. Among these pamphlets may be mentioned, *The Political Disputant*, *The Snake in the Grass*, *The Cromwellian Ghost Conjured*, and *The Sober Enquiry*, by Mr. Riccalton of Hobkirk.

The book which created all this stir was published in 1646 (not, as Principal Hadow had incautiously asserted, by "an Independent barber," but) by Mr. Edward Fisher, a gentleman by birth, the son of an English knight, and Master of Arts in the University of Oxford.[1] It is in fact a compilation from the writings of the reformers, Luther and Calvin, with English divines, as Ainsworth, Ames, Bolton, Hall, Hooker, and others, all of whom at the time of the publication were held to be of *modern* date, though at the period when it was republished it had "outlived the fitness of that title." It had passed the censorship of the Westminster Assembly, and bore the approval of its leading divines.

The style is that of a dialogue between *Evangelista*, a minister of the gospel, *Nomista*, a legalist, *Antinomista*, an Antinomian, and *Neophytus*, a young Christian. It is written in a frank and pleasant style, though in some cases it indulges in paradoxical expressions, which require to be explained, and in Boston's edition, where these explanations are given at great length, it may be seen how easy it was for the opposing party to misrepresent, and how difficult it was for its friends to vindicate its well-meant but unguarded statements. In point of fact the advocates of the *Marrow* were not so careful to vindicate the book itself as to uphold the great evangelical principles of the gospel which its assailants endangered by its condemnation. In this respect the "*Marrow* controversy" resembled that produced by the *Augustinus* of Jansen, which though only a repetition of

[1] Wood's Athenæ Oxon. vol. ii. 198.



the doctrines of Augustine, was condemned as heretical by the Jesuits, as shown in the *Provincial Letters* of Pascal.

We need not dwell on the various steps of the process followed against the "*Marrow* men," as they were then called.[1] Suffice it here to state that the General Assembly having sounded the alarm by issuing instructions to their Commission to "inquire into the publishing and spreading of books and pamphlets tending to the diffusion of that condemned proposition (in the Auchterarder case), and promoting a scheme of opinions relative thereto which are inconsistent with our Confession of Faith," the commission appointed a committee under the imposing name of "The Committee for Purity of Doctrine;" and to ripen the affair for the Assembly, Warden of Gargunnock, Brisbane of Stirling, Hamilton of Airth, and Hog of Carnock, were summoned before this committee in April, 1720, and subjected to a series of interrogatories. The Assembly met in May that year, when a lengthened overture was introduced in condemnation of the *Marrow*, under the five following heads, viz. that assurance is of the nature of faith, that the atonement of Christ is universal, that holiness is not necessary to salvation, that the fear of punishment and the hope of reward are not proper motives of a believer's obedience, that the believer is not under the commanding power of the law. To those charges were appended a variety of passages selected from the *Marrow*. After a brief discussion the General Assembly found that "the said passages which relate to the five several heads of doctrine above mentioned are contrary to Holy Scripture, our Confession of Faith and catechisms; and the distinction of the law as it is the law of works and as it is the law of Christ, as the author applies in order to sense and defend the six Antinomian paradoxes above written, is altogether groundless; and that the other expressions above set down, excerpted out of the

[1] The reader is referred to an "Account of the Marrow Controversy" which appeared in the *Christian Instructor* (for August, October, and November, 1831, and for February, 1832), drawn up with great care and candour by the late Dr. M'Crie. The author does not enter in the pages of that periodical into the merits of the controversy, but it is well known that he was decidedly on the side of the Marrow doctrines condemned by the Assembly; and he has left behind him, in an unfinished state, a minute account of the points involved in the controversy, both as then managed and as afterwards discussed between James Hervey and Robert Sandeman.



said book, are exceeding harsh and offensive. And therefore the General Assembly do hereby strictly prohibit and discharge all the ministers of this Church, either by preaching, writing, or printing, to recommend the said book, or in discourse to say anything in favour of it; but on the contrary they are hereby enjoined and required to warn and exhort their people in whose hands the said book is, or may come, not to read or use the same."

This decision, which was hastily adopted without due examination of the book in question, and under a vague alarm occasioned by certain expressions taken from the context and held up in the most odious light, gave great offence in various quarters of the country. A representation drawn up by Ebenezer Erskine, then minister of Portmoak, and signed by twelve ministers, remonstrating against the judgment as injurious to various points of evangelical truth, was prepared for the ensuing meeting of the Assembly of 1721. But this Assembly having been suddenly dissolved, in consequence of the indisposition of the Earl of Rothes, the king's commissioner, the case was remitted to the commission, who were empowered to summon the subscribers of the representation before them, and prepare for a final decision in the Assembly of May, 1722. The Committee for Purity of Doctrine meantime "turned the cannon against them" by preparing "twelve querries," which, as if they had taken aim at each of them separately, were directed against the "twelve representers."[1] The prosecution against the *Marrow* men was conducted chiefly by Principal Hadow, Professors Hamilton and Blackwell, and Mr. Allon Logan of Culross.

A general idea of the controversy may be given in a few sentences. (1.) The Purity Committee held that there were certain precepts in the gospel that were not included in the law, and which might be called gospel precepts. The Representers maintained that all precepts were included

[1] The names of the twelve brethren who signed this representation were the following, viz.—Messrs. James Hog of Carnock, Thomas Boston of Ettrick, James Kid of Queensferry, John Bonnar of Torphichen, John Williamson of Inveresk and Musselburgh, Gabriel Wilson of Maxton, Ebenezer Erskine of Portmoak, Ralph Erskine and James Wardlaw of Dunfermline, Henry Davidson of Galashiels, James Bathgate of Orwell, and James Hunter of Lilliesleaf



under the moral law, and that the gospel, strictly viewed, had no precepts, but consisted simply of promises of mercy and salvation. (2.) The Purity Committee held that the believer was bound to personal obedience to the moral law, in order to obtain eternal happiness, though not in order to justification. The Representers held that though personal obedience was necessary to salvation, yet holiness was rather to be regarded as a part of salvation, than as the condition of obtaining it. (3.) The Purity Committee held that believers, though delivered from the condemning power, were still under the commanding power of the covenant of works: the Representers that believers are delivered from the commanding power of that covenant, in the sense of an obligation to seek a perfect righteousness in our own persons for eternal life. (4.) The Purity Committee would not allow that appropriation of Christ and his salvation entered into the nature of saving faith, or that faith implied any kind of personal assurance of salvation through his blood. The Representers pleaded that faith must, from its very nature as a reception of the Divine testimony, imply an appropriation of the Saviour, or a cordial embracing of him and his salvation as ours, not indeed in possession but in the offers and promises of the gospel; and that, fixing on the Divine Word alone as its warrant and ground, faith must involve a full assurance of its truth. (5.) The Purity Committee disliked the doctrine that God had made a free gift and grant of Christ to all mankind, as savouring of universal redemption. The Representers, while they believed that the purchase and application of redemption were peculiar to the elect, held that the warrant to believe was common to all men, not as elect but as lost sinners. (6.) The Purity Committee contended that the hope of heaven and the fear of hell were not to be excluded from the motives of the believer's obedience. The Representers held that the believer's obedience flows from filial love and gratitude, and that neither the hope of heaven as the reward of obedience, nor the fear of hell, were evangelical motives, but slavish, legal, and mercenary.

It will be seen from this brief summary that the points for which the Representers then contended were essentially the same with those which are still held to be characteristic



of the gospel by all evangelical Christians, within and without the pale of the Establishments, whether in Scotland or England, and throughout the whole world. It only remains to be added, that the Assembly of 1722 brought the matter to a conclusion, so far as judicial proceedings were concerned, by condemning the representation and ordering the Representers to be rebuked and admonished at their bar. The admonition and rebuke having been received with all gravity, Mr. Kid of Queensferry, who had been selected for the task on account of his great courage, stepped forward and gave in a protest, subscribed by all the Representers, which he desired to be read. This being refused, "he left it on the table, and gave gold with it." In this document, which was immediately published, they solemnly protested against the Act of 1720 and 1722, condemning the *Marrow* as "contrary to the Word of God and the standards of the Church and our covenants," and declared, "it shall be lawful to us to profess, preach, and bear testimony unto the truths condemned by the said acts of Assembly, notwithstanding of the said acts or whatsoever may follow thereupon." This being a protest against a decision of the supreme court of the Church, might have subjected the parties to summary deposition; a catastrophe which was averted by the solicitations of the government, who dreaded the effects of a breach in the Church at a time when the country was threatened with invasion. "Had not this influence been exerted, there is reason to think that the sentence would have been more severe, and in that case the secession would have taken place ten years earlier than it actually happened."[1]

The state of religion in Scotland was gradually declining. The influence of the Union with England was telling more and more sensibly on the moral habits and social tastes of the Scottish people. The Church did not escape from the change. Honest Wodrow, the historian of the sufferings of the Church of Scotland, who was a sort of ecclesiastical Boswell, and picked up all the gossip affecting the Church, and noting it in his "Analecta," was now an old man. Stepping into the General Assembly in 1726, he says, "There was the greatest number of young faces I ever saw in an Assembly. Their very garb and habit were not what hath been in former meetings.

[1] See account in *Christian Instructor* by the late Dr. M'Crie, *ut supra*.



And indeed the very decency and gravity proper for such as have their eye to divinity is not to be seen about them. And I am told several of them go openly to the dancing school at Edinburgh, and very nice and exact as to that. The Church of Scotland," he adds, "was never so low in point of Principals and Professors of divinity in colleges as at this day; and what influence this must have on learning and entrants to the ministry, I fear after ages will find."[1] This ominous prediction was speedily verified. Whatever might be said of the progress of general literature, there can be no question that theological learning was sadly at a discount. Instead of the ponderous tomes of the preceding century, and the dingy productions of the covenant, youthful aspirants preferred the gay pages of Addison, the Tatler, Pope, Swift, and Shaftesbury. Our Scottish poet, Allan Ramsay, had just opened his circulating library in the High Street of the metropolis, from which emporium loose plays and trashy novels and romances of the worst London type were scattered broadcast over the land, vitiating alike the morals and the tastes of the rising generation.[2] At the same time, the effects of the late controversy were hostile to the more faithful who had shown themselves favourable to the *Marrow*. Good Thomas Boston, who for profound piety had few equals in the Church, complains that, in consequence of the share he had taken in that question, he "was staked down" at Ettrick, a place which his physicians held to be injurious to his health. Another generation had arisen, who knew not the Joseph of the old covenanting Church. Even the more aged opponents of the *Marrow*, who were of the orthodox stamp and appealed in their reasonings to the Confession of Faith, were fast leaving the stage; and the young men who succeeded them cared neither for the *Marrow* nor the Confession. From both they had escaped into the region of heathen philosophy. Some idea of the change of style which had entered the pulpit may be gathered from the mode in which theology was taught in the professorial chair,

[1] Wodrow's Analecta, vol. iii. 514; iv. 145.

[2] Strange as it may now appear, the immoral effects of this species of reading had gone to such an extent that the civil government felt obliged to interpose their authority in order to repress the contagion. (*Analecta*, vol. iii. 515.) Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd* and other poems had certainly no such injurious tendency.



when Professor Campbell of St. Andrews, in his publication *The Apostles not Enthusiasts*, denounced such expressions as "consulting the throne of grace," "laying their matters before the Lord, and imploring his light and direction," as "terms of art much used by enthusiasts."

A still more serious matter occupied the Church in 1729. Professor Simson of Glasgow, emboldened by the leniency formerly shown him, had sunk into the heresy of Arianism, as upheld by Dr. Samuel Clarke. After a lengthened process, during which he skilfully evaded by at one time denying, and at another appearing to grant the numerical oneness of the Trinity, and attempted to escape by involving the mystery in the darkening medium of metaphysical subtlety, he was suspended from preaching and teaching, and declared to be "unfit and unsafe to be further employed in the instructing of youth designed for the holy ministry in this Church." Several members, among whom it is only fair to mention Principal Hadow, pleaded for a higher censure, but were induced to yield by pity for Simson's family, and by learning that he did not intend to trouble the Church further.[1] Against the sentence of the Assembly, as inadequate to express suitable condemnation of the heresy, Boston, overcoming his nervous timidity, rose to enter his dissent in his own name, and that of all who would adhere to him, adding, amidst the solemn silence which ensued in the Assembly, "and for myself alone, if nobody shall adhere." This was the last of his public appearances in the General Assembly.

About the same time with the trial of Mr. Simson another case of a very different kind came before the Assembly. The Rev. John Glas of Tealing was charged with holding peculiar notions on the constitution of the Christian Church. From manuscript records in our possession, it appears that the whole case had been managed in a very serious and faithful spirit by that well-known divine, the Rev. John Willison of Dundee. John Glas, doubtless a good man, whose works show that he was neither destitute of piety nor of acquaintance with theology, began with opposing our national covenants, which were still held by many Presbyterians in high veneration; he next assailed all civil establishments of religion, in a treatise entitled, *The Testimony of the King of*

[1] Wodrow's Correspondence, vol. iii. 434.



Martyrs concerning his Kingdom, founded on the words of our Lord before Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." In this discourse his object is to assert the pure spirituality of the Church, to prove that ancient Israel was merely a typical church with a typical king, and that under that economy the Church and the commonwealth were one and the same.[1] His arguments were adopted by the late Dr. Wardlaw of Glasgow, and have since furnished a storehouse for those who have advocated what has been called voluntaryism of the highest type. The Church courts treated Glas with great lenity and forbearance, though in his earlier zeal he treated their remonstrances with the highest disdain, bursting off in the midst of them, ordering the bell to be rung, and mounting the pulpit to repeat his obnoxious tenets. At length he was deposed in 1729, more, however, for contumacy than for erroneous teaching; and ten years afterwards the same Assembly which deposed the Seceders proposed to restore Glas to the ministry. But before this act of clemency could take effect he had openly proclaimed himself an Independent in his views of church government, and in a congregation which he had gathered in Dundee, and afterwards in Perth, he practised a variety of "singularities," in imitation of the primitive Church, and founded on a literal interpretation of New Testament language—such as love-feasts, abstinence from blood and from things strangled, the holy kiss, the washing of feet, and lay preaching, the pastors still following their ordinary avocations. Writing about Glas in 1731 Wodrow says, "The poor man is still going on in his wildnesses, and comical things are talked of his public rebukes for defects and excesses in the Christian kiss he has introduced to his meetings. He is advancing tradesmen to the ministry, and turning out the soberer members of his congregation with much imperiousness, because they cannot see those gifts and qualities which he, it seems, finds in the ignorant people he will make ministers of, who, they say, exceedingly expose religion in their probatory discourses."[2] The sect still exists under the name of the Glassites in Scotland, and under that of the Sandemanians, after his son-in-law, Robert Sandeman, in England; but we are not aware that

[1] The works of Mr. John Glas, vol. i. sect. 3, pp. 26–32.
[2] Wodrow's Correspondence, vol. iii. 481.



they boast, or indeed that they are disposed to boast of gaining many converts. One precept only, namely, that of having a community of goods, and not laying up treasure upon earth, they have failed to practise in a literal sense; and the maxim of brotherly love, being qualified by a strict separation from all other Christians, has been confined in its active exercise to a very narrow circle of objects.

Among the good men of whom, at this critical period, the Church of Scotland was deprived, we have to mention the name of the pious and excellent Thomas Boston. He died in 1732, the year before the Secession took place; and it is sad to read the wailing with which he concludes his memoirs: —"Man is born crying, lives lamenting, and dies with a groan. This world has been a stepmother to me, I have waited for thy salvation, O my God."[1]

[1] Boston's Memoirs, p. 354.



CHAPTER IV.

1733—1740.

The Secession—The occasion of the movement—The cause of the Secession—Erskine's synod sermon—He is rebuked by the Assembly—His protestation signed by Messrs. Wilson, Moncreiff, and Fisher—Indignation of the Assembly—The protesters suspended by the Commission—First meeting of the four brethren in the Associate Presbytery—They decline to return to the Established Church—They publish their testimony—Evangelical character of the movement—Fisher's Catechism—Ralph Erskine's sonnets.

But a breach involving more serious consequences in its ultimate results was now impending on the Scottish Church—we refer to the rise of the Secession. The real origin of this movement, if we may judge even from recent measures, has been misunderstood. It has been generally ascribed to direct opposition to the act of Queen Anne restoring patronage. To that act the Original Seceders were decidedly adverse, and it is numbered among the hostile measures of the state in their testimony. To form a correct idea on the subject, we must distinguish between the *occasion* and the *cause* of the Secession. The immediate *occasion* which gave rise to it was the action of the Church rather than that of the state. In 1731 the General Assembly had an overture before them "concerning the planting of vacant churches;" it was "a kind of supplement to the law of patronage," being intended to apply to those cases in which the patrons neglected or declined to exercise the right of presentation: it was enacted "that the minister should be chosen by the majority of the elders and of the heritors, if Protestants." This enactment gave great dissatisfaction in the Church. The call of the Christian people was entirely ignored; the right of the elders and heritors by the act of 1690 to *nominate* the minister for the approbation of the people was converted



into an absolute right to *choose* him; and the qualification of "heritors, being Protestants," extended the privilege to Prelatists and Jacobites instead of confining it to members of the Church of Scotland. The measure having been sent down to the presbyteries, a great majority of these disapproved of it; but in spite of this, the Assembly, breaking through the Barrier Act, a fundamental law of the Church, passed the obnoxious measure. In addition to this, protests and petitions for redress, signed by forty-two ministers and seventeen hundred people, were refused to be heard or recorded.

Thus precluded from all the ordinary methods of expressing his sentiments and disburdening his conscience, Ebenezer Erskine, minister of Stirling, who was deeply grieved at the growing corruptions of the Church, and at the arbitrary conduct of the prevailing party in the Assembly, embraced the only opportunity left to him of declaring his sentiments, which he did with great "plainness of speech," in a sermon which he delivered, as moderator, in opening the Synod of Perth and Stirling, in October, 1732. Taking for his text Psalm cxviii. 22, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner," he boldly denounced, under the name of the builders, the leading rulers of the Church, asserted the supreme rights of the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church; and assuming the lofty attitude of an "ambassador for Christ," declared that if Christ were here present he would say, in relation to that act of Assembly, "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me;" adding, "I am firmly persuaded that, if a remedy is not provided, that act will very soon terminate in the overthrow of the Church of Scotland, and of a faithful ministry therein; in regard that the power of electing ministers is thereby principally lodged in the hands of a set of men that are generally disaffected to the power of godliness, and to the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government of this Church." This sermon gave great offence to the synod, who voted that the preacher should be rebuked, against which sentence he appealed to the next Assembly. In May, 1733, Erskine was rebuked and admonished at the bar of the Assembly, when he solemnly protested against the sentence, and was joined in his protest by Alexander Moncreiff of Abernethy, William Wilson of Perth, and James Fisher



of Kinclaven. Even at this stage it is not unlikely that the matter might have here ended, had it not been for one of those incidental circumstances which often issue in important events. The paper on which the protest was written having fallen from the table, was picked up by one of the members, who on perusing it was so struck with the style in which the Assembly was arraigned for the sentence which it had pronounced that he rose, and in a heat of passion stigmatized it as amounting to a treasonable insult on the supreme court. We now reach the real *cause* of the Secession. Hitherto some door was left open for bearing witness to the truth; even under this protestation the faithful ministers might have contrived to justify their continuance in the Church with all its corruptions. But now this door was to be shut, and they were compelled to leave a Church where not a voice was allowed to be heard in the form of protest or complaint. The Assembly rose in a state of indignation. They were ordered to appear to answer for their protest before the ensuing Commission, which, in the event of their refusing to retract it, was appointed to proceed against them, and which in November, by the casting vote of the moderator, Mr. John Gowdie, declared them to be no longer ministers of the Church. Thus thrust out of ministerial communion with the Established Church, the four brethren found themselves called upon to meet together, and declare a Secession from it.

They met therefore at Gairney Bridge, a village near Kinross, December 5th, 1733, and there, after serious consultation and solemn prayer, constituted the first meeting of the Associate Presbytery. These founders of the Secession were all men of distinguished ministerial talents, besides being persons of gentle birth and superior education. The Erskines were related to the ancient family of Mar, and were the sons of Henry Erskine, the famous Covenanter. Ebenezer, the eldest, exhibits in his portrait a man of stately presence and noble countenance. His younger brother, Ralph, who subsequently joined the Secession Presbytery, is marked by a softer and more loving expression. William Wilson of Perth, the apologist of the Secession, presents a mild and intellectual countenance. Alexander Moncreiff is distinguished by the boldness of his lineaments, "with a face like



a lion," and was generally known as Culfargie, from the name of his property.[1] James Fisher, quick and penetrating, has the face of an eagle.

Pausing a moment here, it is impossible to overlook the Divine Providence which guides events, apparently fortuitous, to unforeseen results, and maketh the wrath of man to praise Him. The two parties in the Church must have been nearly equally divided at this time, when the vote of a single man in the Commission of Assembly might have turned the scale in the opposite direction. And in point of fact the evangelical side prevailed so far, for several Assemblies, in seeking to restore the Seceders to the Established communion, by passing several acts tending to undo the rash legislation which had led to their separation; and notwithstanding the sentence passed by the tyrannical majority against them, the brethren continued for seven consecutive years to retain their several churches, willing, as they said in the language of their parting protest, to hold communion with all who were adhering to the principles of the Presbyterian Covenanted Church of Scotland, and who, in their several spheres, were striving against the evils opposed to them. It thus appears that they could hardly realize at first the idea of setting up a separate Church, in opposition to the Church established by law. And it may appear surprising that, considering how few they were in number, they did not embrace the opportunity of returning to the fellowship of their brethren within the Church, when the door was opened for them on such favourable terms. This may appear more strange after the Assembly of 1734 released them from the sentence which had been pronounced, and their synod was enjoined to receive them, and use every possible persuasion to induce them to return to the mother Church. All these efforts proved unsuccessful. Few that know the men from their lives and writings would think of branding them as "popular demagogues," or of ascribing their conduct to vanity or pride. Ebenezer Erskine was a man of high spirit and ardent temperament, and may well have been provoked

[1] So frequent were his fits of abstraction in the favourite exercise of mental prayer, that in one of his pauses during sermon on one occasion an honest woman is said to have whispered to her neighbour, "See, Culfargie is awa' to heaven, and left us a' sittin' here." (*Memoir of Moncreiff*, by Dr. Young of Perth, p. 58.)



by the imperious treatment he received from the rulers of the Church; it may even be alleged with some plausible reason that, when invited by his brethren to resume the moderator's chair, he might have treated the sentence of the Commission as a nullity, without insisting on its being formally abjured as a sin. But the truth is he was too glad to avail himself of the providential deliverance which it afforded him from the toilsome task of steering against the adverse tide by perpetual protests, and felt more at ease in joining with his brethren who were like-minded with himself in a large and comprehensive testimony, which he knew the Church in its present spirit would never concur in adopting.

It may be added that having been secluded from the Established Church, the Seceders were naturally led to insist upon conditions of return much more stringent than any they dreamed of demanding as necessary to their remaining in its communion. Thus, they actually required, that if any minister or probationer should accept of presentation from a patron, he should be forthwith liable to deposition or the deprivation of licence. Such an unreasonable demand shows how hopeless it was to expect the return of the Seceders when once separated from the Establishment.[1] In concert therefore with his seceding friends, whose number was now augmented by his brother Ralph and three others, their first testimony appeared in 1737.

Into the nature of this document it is unnecessary now to enter. The primitive Seceders held distinctly the nationality of religion. They earnestly testified for the various steps of the state in behalf of the ecclesiastical reformation in Scotland in the days of Knox, Melville, and Henderson, and identified their cause particularly with the period of the second Reformation, between the years 1637 and 1650. At the same time they contended for the spiritual independence of the Church, as the unworldly kingdom of Christ. Thus they preserved, in their own way, that patriotism and nationality, all sense of which seems to be obliterated in other religious communities, both at home and abroad, but which, in Scotland, is sure to spring up in great national

[1] Gib's Display, vol. I. p. 19; Testimony of the United Associate Synod (1828), p. 36.

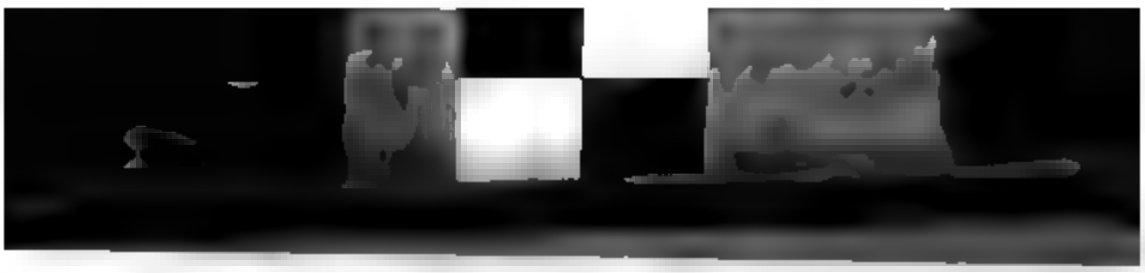


emergencies, guiding and animating her people, as the war-cry of "Scotland for ever!" has done her soldiery in the day of battle.

That an historical retrospect, in one form or another, was required to explain and justify their separation from the National Church, is beyond all question. But the juridical form which this narrative assumed as an ecclesiastical testimony rendered it unfit for popular use, and gave the whole an ungracious aspect, which was enhanced by their converting this chapter of church history into a term of ministerial and even of Christian communion. Thus, in their extreme aversion to incur the charge of schism, they were led into that course of narrowness and exclusiveness for which they were blamed from the commencement of their history. On the same principle they condemned the practice of what was called "occasional hearing," or joining in the acts of worship with other churches. To this may be added the practice of renewing, in some of their congregations, the national covenants, "in a bond suited to their circumstances."

The attempt thus made to re-enact on a diminutive scale these national deeds failed to resuscitate the vitality or even to revive the memory of the departed past, to which it bore no shadow of resemblance. But for these peculiarities, which the early Seceders considered essential to identify them with the Church of the first and second Reformations, many might have adjoined themselves to a society which contended for the honour due to the supreme Head of the Church, for the liberties of his people, and for the purity of that gospel which "liveth and abideth for ever."

From its commencement the Secession was an evangelical movement. The absence of a faithful discipline in the Establishment, which was becoming more and more lax and careless in administration, was amply compensated by the "wholesome rigour in the main" practised by the Seceders in maintaining purity of communion; and in many parts of the country, during the dark reign of Moderatism, the lamp of gospel truth was kept alive by their ministrations. Although the Marrow controversy cannot be said to have originated the Secession, there can be no doubt that the truths involved in it were uniformly held and faithfully



preached in her pulpits.[1] There is no part of the Secession testimony on which we dwell with more unmixed satisfaction than on that bearing the unpromising title of "Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace," which we owe to the united labours of Ebenezer Erskine and Alexander Moncreiff, which formed an enlargement of their testimony with respect to injuries done to the doctrine of grace by several acts of Assembly, relative to the book entitled the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*.[2] It is equally worthy of remark that to Messrs. Erskine and Fisher we are indebted for the well-known work called *Fisher's Catechism*, which was very generally employed by ministers as their text-book at the public examinations of their people, when both old and young were duly catechised; this was, in fact, a profound system of divinity, and was specially devoted to an explanation of the "Marrow doctrines."

The evangelical character of the doctrine taught in the Secession admits of being amply proved from the sermons of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, once the favourite family reading of the pious peasantry of Scotland. These discourses have the marked diversities of their respective authors. None of them make any pretensions to elegance of diction, nor can they even boast of original thought or graphic illustration. But they are rich throughout in the exhibition of gospel truth, glowing with Scripture imagery, and breathing the life of Christian experience. The private diaries of these good men, lately published by Dr. Fraser, a descendant, divulge the real secret of their success in the pulpit—a close walking with God. "Were I to read," says James Hervey, "in order to refine my taste and improve my style, I would prefer Bishop Atterbury's sermons, Dr. Bates' works, or Mr. Seed's discourses. But were I to read with a single view to the edification of my heart in true faith, solid comfort, and

[1] *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church*, by the Rev. William M'Kelvie, D.D., pp. 4, 5. Speaking of Dr. M'Crie's evidence on patronage, in which he denies the *influence* of the Marrow controversy in originating the Secession, this author says, "The learned doctor overlooks the fact that the Secession was more a popular than a clerical movement, and that, though certain ministers took the lead in it, they were as much influenced by the people as the people by them." None, however, could be more deeply convinced than Dr. M'Crie that the ministers of the Secession were uniformly and pre-eminently distinguished for their advocacy of the Marrow doctrine.

[2] Gib's Display, vol. i. p. 171; Fraser's Life of E. Erskine, p. 493.



evangelical holiness, I would have recourse to Mr. Ralph Erskine, and take his volumes for my guide, my companion, and my familiar friend.[1] "At night," says Augustus Toplady, "I spent three or four hours reading Erskine's sermons, particularly the following ones—'The Rent Veil of the Temple,' 'The Harmony of the Divine Attributes,' 'The Believer exalted in Imputed Righteousness' (E. Erskine); and 'Faith's Plea on God's Word and Covenant' (R. Erskine). The reading of these sweet discourses was wonderfully blessed to my soul."[2]

In the pulpit the two brothers, while widely differing in style, were equally appreciated. Ebenezer, at the commencement of his ministry, had been accustomed, like many of his brethren, to preach a jumble of legal and evangelical doctrine, with a constrained manner and a faithless memory, which he tried to aid by fixing his eye on a certain stone in the wall; but on coming to the knowledge of the truth, all was changed. None succeeded so well in "bringing the Saviour and the sinner together," when proposing the overtures of the gospel in the tones of a deep voice, looking on his audience with perfect self-possession and a singular dignity of address. "Did you ever hear Ebenezer Erskine in the pulpit?" asked one of his brethren of a young minister, who replied that he had not. "Well then, sir," was the answer, "you never heard the gospel *in its majesty*."

Equally zealous in the cause of truth, his brother Ralph shone more in the lowlier virtues—"the meekness and gentleness of Christ." Classical in his taste and attainments, his inventive genius might have tempted him to indulge in imaginative flights, but his piety kept him simple and on a level with the flock he fed.

A traditional anecdote regarding him has become so current in Scotland as to deserve a place in illustration of his character. He was fond, it seems, of music; and some of his more strait-laced hearers feeling scandalized by a report that he played on the violin, a deputation of grave elders was appointed to wait upon him. Ralph produced his violoncello, and treated the elders to a solemn psalm tune; with which they were highly gratified, and assured the people that "the minister did not play on the wee *sinfu' fiddle* they had im-

[1] Brown's Life of Hervey. [2] Toplady's Works, vol. i. p. 37.



agined." He was one of those divines, by no means uncommon in the last century, who delighted in versification, giving vent, in the form of lyric poetry, rather to the feelings of a devout heart than to the fires of poetic imagination. His *Gospel Sonnets* were at one time popular with his co-religionists. To compare these simple rhymes with the master-pieces of lyric poetry would not be doing them justice; but in some of his lines there is a pathos flowing from the felt truth and dignity of his theme, which finds its way to every congenial heart. Such is the following from "Heaven Desired by Saints on Earth:"—

"Death from all death hath set us free,
And will our gain for ever be:
Death loosed the massy chain of woe,
To let the mournful captives go.

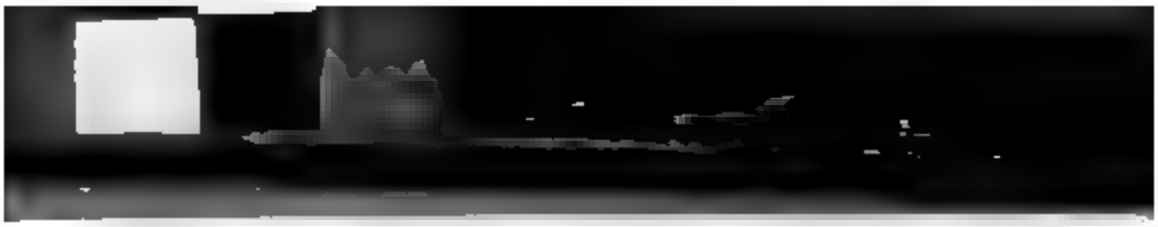
"Death is to us a sweet repose:
The bud was oped to show the rose;
The cage was broke to let us fly,
And build our happy nest on high."

But his love to the "Marrow doctrine" shines out in every stanza of his poems. Each point is touched off in the quaint metricals of "The Believer's Espousals," "The Believer's Jointure," "The Believer's Riddle," and "The Believer's Principles." Law and gospel, righteousness and grace, faith and sense, pardon and purification, stand out clearly defined in dualistic couplets. The perfect freeness of the gospel was the burden of his sonnets as it was the key-note of his sermons:—

"Come down, Zaccheus, quickly come,
Salvation's brought into thy home;
In vain thou climb'st the legal tree,
Salvation freely comes to thee.

"Thou dream'st of coming up to terms,
Come down into my saving arms;
Down, down, and get a pardon free,
On terms already wrought by me."

At length the controversy reaches heaven, where there is a "Contention," each redeemed sinner rivalling to outbid the other in their claims to sovereign grace: —



"Tis I, said one, 'bove all my race
Am debtor chief to glorious grace;
Nay, said another, hark, I trow,
I'm more obliged to grace than thou.

"Stay, said a third, I deepest share
In owing praise beyond compare;
The chief of sinners, you'll allow,
Must be the chief of singers now."

These humble but ingenious sonnets will now, it is believed, be more appreciated than they were at the time, when the Church politics in which the author was so deeply embarked, and when the doctrinal views which the poems breathed, were so much disrelished by men of literary taste. James Hervey prized them highly. When requested on his death-bed to write a recommendation of Ralph Erskine's Works, which were published at the price of two guineas, he pointed to the little volume of the *Sonnets* which lay on his table, and said, "There is a production of Mr. Erskine, which I value at much more than two guineas"



CHAPTER V.

1741 — 1742.

George Whitefield in Scotland—His interview with the Seceders—Its failure—The work at Cambuslang—Conflicting judgments on the revival—Pamphlet by Dr. Webster—Opposition of the Seceders—Progress of the Secession—Debate on the revival between John Erskine and William Robertson when students at the University.

In the year 1741 Scotland received a visit from the famous George Whitefield. His arrival was ushered in by an awkward *contre-temps* between him and the Seceders who had just left the Established Church. A friendly correspondence had been opened between him and the enthusiastic and warm-hearted Ralph Erskine, who had expressed his admiration for the English Methodist, with whose Calvinistic views he sympathized, and whose wonderful success in the work of evangelization had awakened in him the deepest interest. To this communication Whitefield had responded in the most ardent terms. He had heard with sincere delight of the zeal with which Ralph and his brother had contended for the pure gospel, and agreed with them in their views of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. With the history of the National Covenants he was not well acquainted, but he could assure them that, though episcopally ordained, he would not now submit to receive ordination at the hands of a bishop for a thousand worlds, and that regarding them as the Lord's disciples he desired to sit at their feet and to be taught the way of God more perfectly. In short he promised to pay them a visit at Dunfermline. The cooler and more cautious Ebenezer Erskine, foreseeing the difficulties with which Whitefield would have to contend if he really wished to fraternize with them, forewarned him that he would find them a sect everywhere spoken against. Disclaiming all party views he wrote him that it would be very



unreasonable to urge him that he should co-operate with them as a member of their presbytery, or wholly to embark in every branch of their reformation. "All intended by us at present is," he says, "that when you come to Scotland your way may be such as not to strengthen the hands of our corrupt clergy, who are carrying on a course of defection, and worming out a faithful ministry from the land, and the power of religion with it. Far be it from us to limit your great Master's commission to preach the gospel to every creature. We ourselves preach the gospel to all promiscuously who are willing to hear us. But we preach not upon the call and invitation of the *ministers* but of the *people*, which, I suppose, is your own practice now in England."[1]

It is to be regretted that of the interview which ensued no record personal or official has been preserved. But if the terms on which Whitefield was received by the Seceders corresponded, as there can be no reason to doubt they did, with the tenor and spirit of this admirable communication, we have the less reason to deplore the absence of particulars. It appears that on passing through Edinburgh the popular Methodist was eagerly and hospitably welcomed by the evangelical clergy of that city. Among others the celebrated Dr. Alexander Webster, the jolly and popular minister of the Tolbooth Church, seems to have been specially desirous to secure his company. "With the fire of a profane poet," it has been said, "and the manners and accomplishments of a man of the world, Webster possessed the unction and fervour of a purely evangelical divine."[2] From the share which he afterwards took in the issues of Whitefield's visit to Scotland, as well as from his well-known character, we may conclude that he would eagerly avail himself of such an opportunity to convey to his distinguished guest some idea of the humble Seceders into whose arms he was about to throw himself. Narrow, bigoted, and impracticable men, zealots too for the solemn league, as could be seen from their "Act, Declaration, and Testimony," to which they would be sure to demand his unqualified subscription as the condition of admission into their fellowship—how could he think of adjoining himself to such a society? The Established churches were open to him, where he could preach free and untrammelled by any

[1] Fraser's Life of Ebenezer Erskine, p. 426. [2] Eminent Scotsmen, ii. 506.



such terms. Thus "harnessed," as Ralph Erskine expressed it, Whitefield came to Dunfermline, where he found himself surrounded by four or five "grave and venerable men," as he describes them, who formed the Associate presbytery, and who proposed that their conference should be opened with prayer. The meeting was ill-timed; the bells were ringing for church, and the people were crowding noisily and impatiently to see and hear the great English stranger. Whitefield was equally impatient to close an interview from which he had been led to expect no agreeable result. From his "natural turn for pleasantry," for it seems "his whole carriage was often mixed with needless laughter," as the more saturnine John Wesley complained,[1] he appears to have been amused by contrasting the whole scene with the flattering convivialities of the metropolis, and particularly on hearing a discourse delivered by some grave brother, who descanted from the pulpit, foolishly enough, on "Prelacy, the Common Prayer Book, the surplice, the rose in the hat, and such like externals." "If the pope himself would lend me his pulpit," says Whitefield, "I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Jesus Christ therein." Met in secret conclave with the Seceding brethren, he was not slow to express the same contempt for all church organizations. He who had previously written about his willingness to "sit at their feet and to learn the way of God more perfectly," now declared that he was "of the communion of the Church of England, and had no freedom to separate from that Church unless they cast him out; but that his great business was to preach the gospel and gather in sinners to Christ." Upon this Ebenezer Erskine, with his wonted solemnity of manner, gently reminded him that he should consider how the souls he had gathered in were to be preserved, quoting the example of Paul and Barnabas, who, after they had gathered churches, visited them again, and "ordained them elders in every church." Whitefield laying his hand on his breast said in his wonted tone of effusion, to which the cast in his eye gave a peculiar effect, "I do not find it here." "But, sir," replied Moncreiff with his usual warmth, slapping the Bible which lay upon the table, "but, sir, I find it here!" And so terminated this unhappy conference.

[1] Tyerman's Life of John Wesley, vol. ii. 168.



Upon the whole, reviewing the scene from this distant point, we hardly know whether most to admire the simplicity or the honest conscientiousness of the primitive Seceders in expecting so much from the co-operation of a person like George Whitefield. It was vain to anticipate that one educated in a school so unlike that of the Scottish Church, and whose erratic course rendered him impatient of all order and restraint even in his own communion, should have been prepared to enter into the ecclesiastical conservatism of the Secession. Had the intercourse taken place a hundred years before the circumstances might have proved more congenial, and even a century after the parties might have been better prepared for mutual understanding. But in 1741 it is hardly possible to conceive a period of history less likely to issue in a cordial and intelligent union between English evangelism and Scottish secederism. It was, besides, preposterous to expect that a small section of the Scottish Church, just starting into existence, should be able to secure for itself the ministrations of one who was sure to be followed wherever he went by eager and enraptured multitudes from all classes of the community.

Having thus parted with the Seceders, Whitefield placed himself at the disposal of the evangelical ministers still adhering to the Established Church, by whom he was received with open arms. At Edinburgh and Glasgow he preached with great eloquence and success. On his part two things seem to have particularly struck him in his Scottish hearers. The first was the rustling of leaves produced by opening their Bibles in search of his text, and the next the look of intense scrutiny with which they listened to his discourse. It would be wrong to form a judgment either of his style or matter from his printed sermons. Too careless or too busy to write for the press himself, we are indebted for these to the hasty notes taken on the spot. In the summer of 1742 he was induced to attend at a communion in Cambuslang, a parish in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, where he was informed the people were in a state of unusual religious commotion. The minister of that parish, Mr. M'Culloch, was a pious, painstaking man, the very last to take a prominent part in a religious revival, but bent upon keeping his flock alive to the influences of religious truth. He held numerous prayer-



meetings, at which he read and commented on the missionary journals of Whitefield. He preached for nearly a year on the subject of regeneration. His neighbouring pastor, Mr. Robe of Kilsyth, had followed a similar course, having discoursed for upwards of two years on the new birth and the mysterious operations of the Holy Spirit. This intensely subjective treatment of Christianity kept up with continuity for such a length of time may no doubt have had some effect in preparing the minds of the people for what followed. In these circumstances Whitefield arrived on the scene accompanied by various other clergy, and followed by crowds from the adjacent parishes, anticipating much from the advent of the wonderful preacher, and the peaceful village was inundated by an extraordinary assemblage The narrow precincts of the rural kirk being found incapable of accommodating the multitudes, the services were conducted in an amphitheatre formed by an adjacent wood. The communion tables, instead of their usual complement of about two hundred, were now filled by thousands. As the services proceeded, though the speakers were not demonstrative, the people began to evince symptoms of unwonted sensation; groans and outcries were heard proceeding from various quarters, accompanied with fainting fits, prostrations, and bodily convulsions. This unwonted spectacle was followed by the persons thus affected being brought under deep convictions of sin, and fears of divine wrath, terminating in the case of several hundreds in their being filled with peace and joy, and in most cases issuing in a holy and consistent conversation during the rest of their lives.

Such was "the work at Cambuslang," a movement of the character of which we shall only say that it may be traced to the intensely subjective kind of preaching into which the two excellent men were no doubt led by the example of Doddridge, whose *Lectures on Regeneration* were then highly popular. It is doubtful, however, how far such a strain is congenial with the design of the gospel, or conducive to that peace and joy which flow from believing in it. Subjective feelings and frames of mind, if unduly dwelt upon, may issue in leading the sinner to look *within* himself for comfort, instead of "looking unto Jesus" and coming unto him "just as we are" at his own invitation. Thus the objective gospel, or the



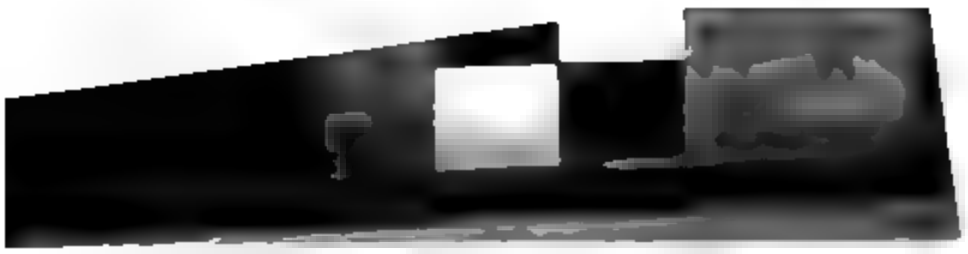
preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified, is not only the true gospel method of salvation, but the only proper source of the subjective gospel; Christ is made of God unto us not only "righteousness" but "sanctification," and this sanctification is not to be produced by our looking into the work of the Spirit in his internal operations, but is the gradual outcome of looking to Him who is our sanctification. For that Spirit, it is promised, "shall not speak of himself," but "take of the things that are Christ's and show them unto us." The painful and perplexing state into which the mind may be thrown by realizing the guiltiness of the soul, though it may give way for a while to an equally sudden access of joy on discovering the way of relief, is in danger either of lapsing into over-confidence or sinking into apathy, unless the eye of faith is turned objectively to Him who is at the same time the source of our spiritual life and strength, and of our pardon and peace with God.

The influence of this singular movement appears to have extended to various parishes in the west country. From the most authentic accounts the local excitement seems to have gradually died away.[1] Various opinions prevailed on the subject. The evangelical clergy of the Establishment gladly hailed the movement as a divine testimony in behalf of a church charged by the Seceders with so many defections. "But," says Sir Henry Moncreiff, "many of those called the high party gave at that time no countenance to Mr. Whitefield, and were by no means satisfied with the transactions at Cambuslang, or those who were concerned in them. The synod of Perth and Stirling sent an overture to the Assembly for censuring those ministers who had employed Mr. Whitefield in their pulpits. And others (among whom was Mr. Bisset of Aberdeen, the highest of the high, though he was a man of considerable talent) preached publicly against him, and most vehemently declaimed against those who employed him."[2]

It is not so easy to explain the share taken in this controversy by Dr. Alexander Webster, which appears hardly com-

[1] The Revivals of the Eighteenth Century, particularly at Cambuslang, by the Rev. D. M'Farlan, D.D., Renfrew, p. 92.

[2] Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D., by Sir H. Moncreiff, Bart., D.D., p. 496.



patible with his general character. "He shone," says Dr. Somerville, "above all his contemporaries in social life and the pleasantry and gaiety of his conversation, and his command of amusing anecdotes, and the sprightliness of his wit, always good-natured and inoffensive, rendered him the most delightful companion to persons of every age and rank. His innate sagacity, his love of convivial festivity and mirth, the preference which he always showed in the choice of his company for persons who notoriously differed from him in theological sentiments and party attachments, occasioned doubts with respect to the sincerity of his public conduct, and staggered the confidence of some of those with whom he acted in ecclesiastical affairs. The part he took in the events which happened at Cambuslang, by publishing his belief in their supernatural character, appeared to many an extravagance irreconcilable with the shrewdness and knowledge of mankind in which he surpassed all his party friends, and excited a suspicion of the affectation, rather than the genuine impulse of popular enthusiasm. But (adds the same author) I am disposed to put confidence in Dr. Webster's sincerity."[1]

Dr. Webster's treatise is in the shape of a letter, entitled *Divine Influence the True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang and other Places in the West of Scotland*, and is written in his usual nervous and elegant style.

But the most singular position on this question was that assumed by the Seceders. In the heat of their zeal, and indeed, partly by the disappointment of their hopes from the operation of Whitefield, partly by the advantage which some of their evangelical friends in the Established Church had of his wonderful success among them, as an offset to the testimony against its corruptions, they were led to the opposite extreme of ascribing the whole work at Cambuslang to Satanic agency. Not that they regarded the success of the Methodist as indicating that their "declamations against religious ordinances within the Established Church were either originally unfounded, or had become at last unfounded" for no such charge against the Established Church appeared in their testimony, nor can any such declamation be found in their writings. The real cause must be sought in the temporary irritation above referred to. But it

[1] Own Life and Times, by Dr. Somerville, of Jedburgh, p. 106.



must be granted with the same author, that "had they imputed his success to the enthusiasm of his followers, or to other natural causes, they would have found many coadjutors within the Established Church who had no partiality for the Secession. But when they went so far as to impute to infernal agency what had so little affinity with the works of the devil, they lost more in the esteem of the public by this single circumstance than by any event which had occurred since the date of the Secession."[1]

It may be here stated, that notwithstanding this unhappy outbreak on Whitefield and the work at Cambuslang, the Secession continued to prosper and extend in all parts of the country. After the General Assembly had, in 1740, formally deposed the refractory members, and deprived them of their manses and emoluments, it appears that the Associate Presbytery could number in 1742 twenty-six ministers; and even after the mournful quarrel which soon followed, when they were divided into two parties, under the unsavoury epithets of Burgher and Antiburgher—a distinction now obsolete, and involving a controversy as bitter at the time as it was unseemly and superfluous, they still increased in number, and maintained, during the rest of this century, with unabated zeal and fidelity, their attachment to evangelical and Presbyterian principles.

Much of this success they owed to the progressive tyranny and defection of the national Church. The local excitement at Cambuslang, &c., was not followed, like those at Stewarton and Kirk of Shotts in former days, by any revival of reformation in the Church of Scotland. On the contrary, our subsequent narrative can only lead us to mark her gradual and rapid declension in Christian faithfulness and piety, during which the efforts of her best friends could only keep up an ineffectual opposition, while "truth was fallen in the street, and equity could not enter."

While the subject of Cambuslang was yet agitating the public mind, and dividing friends and families, two young students of divinity, destined in after life to take a leading

[1] Life of Dr. Erskine, by Sir H. Moncreiff, p. 494. Of the famous Adam Gib, who was mainly to be blamed for the intemperate language against the work at Cambuslang, we are informed that he lived to lament having written so violently against it. (Dr. Fraser's *Life and Diary of R. Erskine*, p. 351.)



part in the councils of the Scottish Church, might have been found ranged on opposite sides of the question, in a debating society connected with the Edinburgh University—these were John Erskine and William Robertson. Erskine contended for the supernatural character of the work, Robertson argued against it; and the contention was so bitter that it ended in the dissolution of the society, and in the temporary estrangement of the two champions. About the same time Erskine produced his tract on "The Signs of the Times," in which, while he traced the bodily agitations at Cambuslang to physical causes, he vindicated the genuine effects of evangelical preaching, and expressed his hopefulness of their spiritual results, with all the warmth and energy of twenty-one.



CHAPTER VI.

1743 — 1759.

Robert Blair, author of "The Grave"—Dr. John Erskine—His character and writings—His quarrel with John Wesley—His figure in the pulpit—His letter on the American war—Paganized drones—Contrast of the use now made of the classics from that of the renaissance in the days of Erasmus—Manifesto of the Moderates—Their new policy in establishing a tyrannous superiority of the Assembly over the inferior courts—Case of Inverkeithing—Deposition of Mr. Gillespie of Carnock.

In tracing the story of the Church of Scotland it is pleasant to leave behind one for a while the region of stormy debate and religious polemics, and to retire into the peaceful shades of literature. With this view we may turn in passing to the character of Mr. Robert Blair, the well known author of *The Grave*. He was the son of Mr. David Blair, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and the father of the celebrated Lord-president Blair. Inheriting the piety and talents of his illustrious ancestry in the last century, he was ordained in 1731 as minister of Athelstaneford, in East Lothian. As his fortune was easy, he lived very much in the style of a gentleman of elegant taste and manners. Learned and devout, he was at once an accomplished botanist, a serious and warm preacher, and a laborious pastor. It may be enough to state in his praise that he was the friend of the excellent and lamented Colonel Gardiner, and the correspondent of Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge. Writing to the last of these authors, he says, in regard to his poem of *The Grave*, published in 1743:—"In order to make it more generally liked, I was obliged sometimes to go cross to my own inclination, well knowing that whatever poem is written upon a serious argument must, upon that very account, be under serious disadvantages; and therefore proper arts must be used to make such a piece go down with a licentious age, which



cares for none of these things." It was hardly possible to pass a more stinging rebuke of the age than that implied in this sentence. "Licentious," indeed, must the times have been when it required the use of poetic arts to make "such a piece go down" as *The Grave*. The poem is doubtless as "serious" as its subject; but the lessons which it so emphatically reads on the vanity of riches, rank, beauty, science, and all earthly distinctions, are such as present themselves every day in vain to the unheeding children of the world; while the reflections on such cases as the suicide and the infidel, are admirably calculated to awaken to thoughtfulness and impress with concern. Familiar as the extracts from this standard poem may be to every English reader, the following may serve to recall some of its most striking beauties:—

"Tell us, ye dead, will none of you, in pity
To those you left behind, disclose the secret?
Oh! that some courteous ghost would blab it out;
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be.
I've heard that souls departed have sometimes
Forewarned men of their death: 'Twas kindly done
To knock and give the alarm. But what means
This stinted charity? 'Tis but lame kindness
That does its work by halves. Why might you not
Tell us what 'tis to die? . . .
Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shine
Enlightens but yourselves. Well, 'tis no matter;
A very little time will clear up all,
And make us learned as you are, and as close."

. . . . . .

"How shocking must thy summons be, O death,
To him that is at ease in his possessions;
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnished for that world to come?
In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help;
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh! might she stay to wash away her stains,
And fit her for her passage. . . .
But the foe,
Like a stanch murderer, steady to his purpose
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track, but presses on;
Till forced at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin."



In these lines some miss the rhythmic charm of Goldsmith, but they are preferable to the doleful conceits and funeral bake-meats of Young in his *Night Thoughts*. The early departure of the author, who died at the age of forty-seven in 1746, imparts a swan-like tone of sadness to this the only relic of his genius.

We return to the public history, and the first name that presents itself is that of Dr. John Erskine.

John Erskine, born in 1721, was the son of a distinguished lawyer, of the family of Lord Cardross, and destined originally for the legal profession. But his early predilection for theological studies could not be overcome. While a mere boy at college he published a refutation of Dr. Archd. Campbell's work on *The Necessity of Revelation*, which led him into a friendly correspondence with Dr. Warburton, the author of *The Divine Legation*, and afterwards Bishop of Gloucester. After being settled, first at Kirkintilloch, and next at his native parish at Culross, discharging the duties of his office and prosecuting his literary studies with much diligence, he was translated to Edinburgh, where he was associated as colleague with his college companion, Robertson, and with whom, though widely differing from him in religious sentiments and church politics, he continued for many years to labour in uninterrupted fellowship. His death did not occur till 1803, at the age of eighty-two. A life extending over such a large portion of the last century, embracing so many stirring events in which he took an active share, would seem to afford a fair opportunity for judging of the times. And yet neither the productions of his pen, nor his appearances in public debate, throw much light upon the questions of the day. His personal character, as a man of sincere piety, profound learning, ability, candour, and uprightness, secured him at all times a respectful hearing, and did honour to the sentiments he espoused, and the party with whom he voted. But he does not appear to have taken a decided stand in contravention to patronage, or headed any movement in favour of the independence of the Church.[1] No man in his day wrote more tracts, on a great variety of topics, religious, literary, political,

[1] The grandfather of Dr. Erskine, Colonel Erskine of Carnock, one of the brightest names in the roll of Scottish gentry, who strove for the liberties of the Church against the Stuarts, was one of a deputation sent by the General



and ecclesiastical. But from carelessness in the style of their composition, and their style of typography, they failed to invite the general interest which their substantial merits deserved. As in his own outward man, these productions presented no elegance or embellishment, and their multiform learning, painfully gathered from ancient and continental writers, like an ill-assorted library, offered few inducements to the loungers and tattlers of the day, and even now hardly command attention. His very candour and diffidence, the most amiable traits of his character, by doing every justice to his opponents, even when widely differing from their sentiments, failed to impart to his own the influence due to them.

We cannot omit to specify the essential service which Dr. Erskine rendered to the cause of truth, by his republication in 1765 of Hervey's *Aspasio Vindicated in Eleven Letters to Mr. John Wesley.* These letters exhibit the spirit of the Christian controversialist in the most amiable light. To this republication Erskine prefixed a preface, in which he exposed the disingenuousness of that patriarch of Methodism in giving instructions to his preachers in Scotland to abstain from giving publicity to his controversial writings, in which he had vented his Arminian views, as the Scotch had been so long accustomed to the *poison* of Calvinism that they would not submit to be fed by the more heavenly manna of Wesleyan divinity. This timeous republication, under the high sanction of Dr. Erskine's name, of a vindication of gospel truth, written in a beautiful Christian spirit seldom exemplified in polemical warfare, not only served to defend the amiable Hervey, but inflicted a blow on Wesleyanism from the effects of which, in spite of its triumphs in England, it has not recovered in Scotland down to the present day. During the American war Erskine published a powerful pamphlet, entitled, *Shall I go to War with my American Brethren?* In this piece the true cosmopolitan spirit of Christianity, imbibed from his brotherly correspondence with Jonathan Edwards and other friends in that

Assembly to London in 1735 to protest against the act of Queen Anne restoring patronage. This was the last act of old zeal against the unnational statute, though for many years the commission was instructed formally to renew the protest of the Church.



country, he advocated a policy of conciliation, which, in the mutual animosity then prevailing between the mother country and its colonies, was not listened to.[1]

The figure of Dr. Erskine preaching in Greyfriars, in "his black wig, narrow chest, and stooping posture; hands which, placed like props on either side of the pulpit, seemed necessary rather to support the person than to assist the gesticulation of the preacher; no gown, even that of Geneva, a tumbled band, and a gesture which seemed scarce voluntary," must be familiar to the readers of *Guy Mannering*. It is hardly possible, however, to conceive a greater contrast in point of religious sentiment and church policy than that presented by Dr. Erskine and his colleague, Dr. William Robertson. They seemed to have been reared in opposite schools, and lived in ages infinitely remote from each other. Beyond the mutual respect in which they held each other, there could be no ministerial sympathies between the friend of James Hervey and the friend of David Hume. Erskine was a Calvinist and a Presbyterian. Robertson was a litterateur and a man of the world. Nor was Erskine himself unconscious of the immense gulf which lay between them. "What you say," writes Dr. Warburton to him, "of the state of learning and religion among you is very curious but very melancholy. The *paganized Christian divines* you speak of are what formerly passed among us under the name of the Latitudinarians, of late, Bangorian divines. But Socinus lies at the root." The pagan sentiment which now sprung up in Scotland differed materially from the literary *renaissance* which paved the way for the Reformation, and which, in the hands of such men as George Buchanan and Andrew Melville, became the handmaid of religion. In this age of religious decadence classical learning and philosophy usurped the authority of the mistress, and what Erasmus feared in his time was realized, when he said that he "would rather be a Christian with the barbarians than a pagan with the

[1] In the spirit, not less than in the mode of its publication, this tract exhibits a striking contrast to that of Mr. Wesley, who "abridged that famous pamphlet" (Samuel Johnson's *Taxation no Tyranny*), "and, without the least reference to its origin, *published it as his own*, in a quarto sheet of four pages, with the title, 'A Calm Address to our American Colonies by the Rev. John Wesley, M.A. Price one penny.'" (Tyerman's *Life and Times of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 188.)



Ciceronians." The eighteenth century was an age of scholars and philosophers; the history of it exhibits a galaxy of illustrious names in all the branches of science and letters, many of which still shine with unabated lustre. But it was an age of religious scepticism. Our younger divines, emulous of distinction in the fashionable world, threw off the old garb of Presbyterian divinity, and assumed the genteeler airs of classical taste and philosophic morality.[1] Our literary men were pure secularists. Into this eclipse of faith Dr. Robertson was destined to fall. Devoting himself to the study of history, he treated it in a spirit thoroughly secular and worldly. Even in his *History of Scotland*, crowded as it was with incidents and personages instinct with religious life, there is no more sympathy for supernatural truth, nor more distinct recognition of an overruling Providence, than in his friend Hume's *England*. It is true, that neither his published works nor his public career can be charged with positive impiety or heresy, but in both cases they are marked by the total absence and negation of religious truth.

Unfortunately, he resolved on applying the same negative infidelity to his ecclesiastical policy. In the management of Church affairs he placed himself at the head of the Moderate school, and resolved on instituting a new line of policy in opposition to the evangelical party. Hitherto a species of armed neutrality prevailed between the patrons and the people. The patrons were unwilling to intrude their presentees upon reclaiming congregations; and the scruples of the more conscientious members of presbytery were respected by permitting them to absent themselves from the settlement, which was effected by what was termed a "Riding Committee," who were sent often from a distance on horseback to complete the obnoxious settlement. But the patrons now assumed a bolder front,

[1] Our national bard has touched off the Moderate preachers of his day who faithfully preserved the style now introduced:—

"Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he doth define,
But ne'er a word of faith in
That's right that day."

—*Burns' Holy Fair.*



and as they generally presented an unevangelical and unpopular candidate, the Moderates, for the strengthening of their party, now proposed to compel the presbytery to perform the deed in their own persons, at the peril of answering for their disobedience at the bar of the supreme court.

To prepare the way for this change of policy an elaborate and skilfully concocted document, partly philosophical, partly historical, drawn up by Dr. Robertson of Gladsmuir, was issued before the meeting of Assembly in 1752. It was in the form of *Reasons of Dissent* from the decision of the previous commission in March for refraining from pronouncing censure on the Presbytery of Dunfermline, in the case of the settlement at Inverkeithing. This manifesto embodied the principles of the Moderate party, afterwards pursued by Dr. Robertson and by his followers. In general it was founded on the same negative scepticism and purely secular principles which pervade his historical works. Without positively rejecting revelation, or disavowing the Confession of Faith, a formal subscription of which was still demanded as an essential condition, it practically ignored them both. The Church, instead of being a spiritual society, essentially differing in its constitution, purposes, and designs from worldly communities, being founded by Christ as its head, and governed by his will revealed in the Scripture, was described as essentially the same with any civil society—a moral police, regulated on the same principles as a board of trade or court of excise. Having thus shifted the Church from its spiritual foundation, advantage was taken of the Presbyterial system as one implying a subordination of courts, and it was ingeniously argued, in opposition to Independency, that the inferior courts must in all cases yield subjection to the superior, and the whole of them to the General Assembly as the supreme judicatory. Proceeding on the same principle, it was concluded, that as in the civil community the will of individuals must yield to the decision of the society pronounced by the ruling power, there is no alternative left to the individual or the inferior court but either to obey the order of the superior court or to withdraw from the society. This manifesto was answered at the time in another paper, drawn up by a committee, of which Principal Wishart was one. The answer is good so far as it goes, though in the



circumstances it was found difficult to vindicate the awkward temporary expedient of a "riding committee." The introduction of patronage was the main cause which led at once to the unconstitutional policy of Robertson, and contributed to its plausibility and success. Like the intrusion of a foreign substance into the tissue of the living body, it became a fruitful source of irritation, annoying the more healthy members by their efforts for its expulsion. At the same time by enforcing this obnoxious and extraneous statute, they compelled those whose consciences shrunk from complying with it to assume the ungracious aspect of rebels to a constitution of which they were the most zealous and devoted adherents.

The next step, therefore, which the Moderates adopted was to secure the co-operation of the civil power. This is very apparent from the speech delivered by the royal commissioner, the Earl of Leven, in opening the Assembly of 1752. Departing from the formal terms in which such addresses were usually worded, the commissioner indulges in a finished harangue, in which he dictates to the Assembly the policy which, in present circumstances, they were bound to pursue, and in the composition of which the fine hand of the historian of Scotland, at once gentle and firm, is as plainly conspicuous as the principles announced in his manifesto, and now to be proposed, were shrewdly anticipated by being put into the mouth of royalty. "One thing, however," said the Earl of Leven, "as a well-wisher to the government and good order of this Church, I cannot pass over in silence. Allow me, therefore, to hope that as it is our happiness to have regular meetings of our national Assembly, countenanced by our gracious Sovereign, you will be careful to support her dignity and authority, and not destroy with your own hands our *most valuable constitution*, secured by law so dear to your forefathers, so excellent in itself, and which your enemies have so often in vain attempted to wrest from you. The main intention of your meeting is frustrated if your judgments and decisions are not held to be final: *if inferior courts continue to assume that liberty they have taken upon themselves, in too many instances, of disputing and disobeying the decisions of their superiors. It is more than high time to put a stop to this growing evil*, otherwise such anarchy and confusion will be introduced into the Church as will inevit-



ably not only break us in pieces amongst ourselves, but make us likewise the scorn and derision of our enemies, for, believe me, *subordination is the link of society*, without which there can be no order in government. When I have said so much I may likewise be indulged to add, that as I ever was, and ever will be, against *severities* of every kind, I hope you will take the *gentlest method possible* to convince your mistaken brethren of their past error, and at the same time such as may *effectually restrain others from following their unjustifiable conduct*."[1]

Viewing this speech as the practical application of the principles laid down in Dr. Robertson's manifesto, it is not difficult to discover its object. To the maxim announced with so much solemn emphasis, that "subordination is the link of society," no objection can be taken. It is the rule of Presbyterial government, as it is that of all kinds of society, civil and ecclesiastical. But, like all other general rules, it admits of exceptions. Thus in ordinary life the father is the superior, to whom the child must, in general cases, be subordinate; but if the father should order the child to commit a sinful action, it will be admitted that the child is not bound in this case to obey the order of his superior. If the civil ruler should issue a command contrary to the will of God, it will be admitted that the Christian, while subject in all other things to his authority, ought to reply, with the apostles, "We must obey God rather than man." In the Church there may be a subordination of courts, and the inferior courts are no doubt bound to yield obedience to the superior in matters affecting the external management of the affairs of the Church. For this provision is made in the Confession of Faith (chap. i. 6), where it is stated that "there are some circumstances regarding the worship of God and the government of his Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed." Language could not more plainly indicate that this refers exclusively to cases of a conventional nature, such as those contained in the "Form of Process," for the ordering of church courts in matters of discipline. But in his manifesto Dr. Robertson

[1] Morren's Annals, vol. i. 260.



quotes this passage as if it referred to all cases of worship and government, and implied that they ought to be decided in the Church, as in the state, according to the same principle common to "human actions and societies." It is hardly necessary to state that this does not apply to the Church of Christ, which is founded upon principles totally alien from those which regulate the "kingdoms of this world;" that Christ is the sole head of his spiritual kingdom; that there are no such persons known in Scripture as superiors or lords over God's heritage; that he has taught his servants "to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded them;" and that, therefore, from the lowest to the highest court in his house these servants are bound to him as their superior and lord paramount. It is only by observing this rule that the order of the Church can be really preserved; and for any majority in the supreme court, acting in contravention to the revealed will of the great Head of the Church, to claim the right of superiors, and compel the inferior courts to obey their decisions, is to introduce an element of discord and confusion which must inevitably issue in the dissolution of the whole society.

Without dwelling further on the policy thus inaugurated, it may now be stated that the object which the Moderates had in view at present was to carry into effect the will of the patron in the settlement of one Mr. Richardson, in the parish of Inverkeithing. The opposition of the great body of the people, and the unwillingness of the majority of the Presbytery of Dunfermline to proceed with the obnoxious settlement, had occasioned the delay of several years. It was now proposed to convert this case into a precedent for attempting the introduction of the new policy. The vote of the Assembly, it was resolved, should over-rule both people and presbytery, and, by a *coup-de-main*, the will of the patron be declared predominant. The vote was easily obtained, and the Presbytery of Dunfermline was ordered to convene and ordain Mr. Richardson by a certain day. Three of the Presbytery might have obeyed the order, but the Assembly were determined that their authority should be obeyed by the very men who they knew were conscientiously opposed to their commands; six refused the obnoxious service, and were cited before the Assembly to answer for their disobe-



dience. The procedure reminds one of a court-martial, where one of the delinquents is shot as an example to the rest. The vote was taken, Shall one of the six be deposed? and it carried,—Depose, by 93 to 65. The next vote was, Which of the six shall be deposed? and it carried, that the sentence should fall on Mr. Thomas Gillespie of Carnock. It is not easy to say why, for Mr. Gillespie was a peaceable man, who had never troubled the Church courts. But he had entered a solemn protest, in which he gave deep offence to the Moderate party, by reminding them that "patronage was a sore grievance, against which the Church had remonstrated in 1736, and which had been introduced by the Jacobites in 1711 expressly with the view of distressing the Presbyterian Church, and rendering it odious to the people, who might thus be more easily prepared for overturning the Protestant succession. The motion to depose Mr. Gillespie was made by Mr. John Home, of Athelstaneford, and seconded by Mr. Wm. Robertson, of Gladsmuir. Their speeches have not been preserved; but some idea may be formed of their strain from the preparatory policy which has been described. On being summoned to the bar to receive his sentence, the good man meekly replied—"Moderator, I humbly submit to the will of Providence, but rejoice that to me it is given in Christ's behalf, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." On returning home he would not enter the church from which he had been ejected, nor even suffer the bell to be rung, but preached to the people under the open canopy of heaven, taking as his text, "Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."[1] This act of Church power gave occasion to a second secession from the Establishment, which in an incredibly short period sprung up in various parts of the country, and grew into a large and prosperous church, under the name of the Synod of Relief.

[1] Scots Magazine, vol. xiv. p. 263.



CHAPTER VII.

1752 — 1773.

Infidel writings of Hume and Lord Kames—General sentence against them pronounced by the Assembly—They are defended by Dr. Hugh Blair—Home and the tragedy of "Douglas"—Dr. Witherspoon, his "Characteristics"—His sermons—His influence in the Church courts—Mr. Andrew Crosbie, advocate—The Schism Overture—Palmy days of Moderatism—Examples of violent settlements at Kirk of Shotts and St. Ninians.

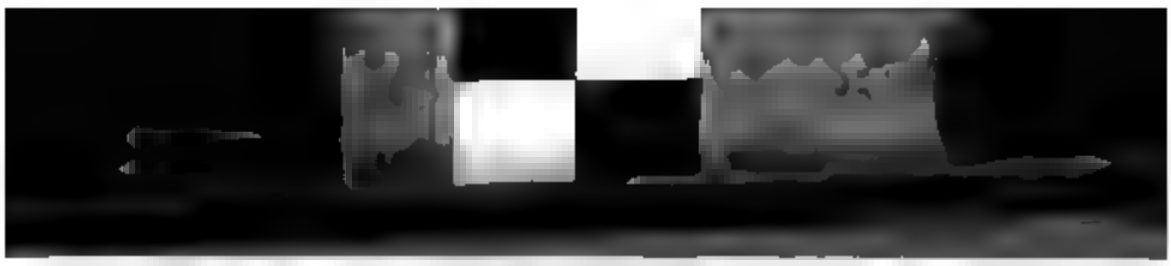
It is painful to think that at this period, when the very foundations of the Christian faith were assailed by the infidel publications of David Hume and Lord Kames, neither in the National Church, with its lofty pretensions, nor by any other theological body, a single champion appeared to defend the citadel against the common enemy. Hume himself seemed at first surprised that any theologian should interfere with his philosophical speculations, though plainly tending to subvert the evidence of miracles in proof of Divine revelation. "I wish," he said, "that the parsons would confine themselves to their old occupation of worrying one another, and leave philosophers to argue with temper, moderation, and good manners." The only person who bestirred himself to bring these infidel publications before the Assembly of 1755 was a superannuated preacher, Mr. George Anderson, chaplain of Watson's Hospital; and thus obliged to say something, the Assembly declared that being "filled with the deepest concern on account of the prevalence of *infidelity and immorality*, the principles whereof have been, to the disgrace of our age and nation, so openly avowed in several books published of late in this country, and which are but too well known amongst us, express the utmost abhorrence of those impious and infidel principles which are subversive of all



religion, natural and revealed, and have such a pernicious influence on life and morals."[1] But in pronouncing this general censure of the books they avoided mentioning the authors, both of whom, especially David Hume, were known to be the personal friends and associates of Robertson and other Church leaders. And the edge of the censure was considerably taken off when, a few days after the meeting of Assembly, there appeared a defence, written, it was well known, by Dr. Hugh Blair. His vindication of these writers is based upon the advantages which flow from the "freedom of inquiry and debate," which "the spirit of moderation," it appears, was readier to accord to the advocates of infidelity than to the champions of truth, whose zeal must be kept down by the arbitrary enactments of a Church court.

But though this formidable Goliath was not encountered by any theological David, clad in the simple panoply of truth, or with those spiritual weapons which "cast down imaginations" and "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," it is some comfort to know that Hume did not pass without being answered by two philosophers who were shortly after raised up in the Scottish universities to expose the plausible metaphysical subtleties by which he sought to undermine the Christian faith. These were Dr. Thomas Reid, afterwards of Glasgow, and Dr. George Campbell of Aberdeen, the former of whom quietly disposed of his infidel reasonings by his principles of "common sense," while the latter clearly evinced the fallacy upon which his famous argument against miracles is founded. A year or two hardly elapsed when Mr. John Home was destined to take his place as a panel at the bar in a cause very unlike that for which the good Gillespie had suffered. In 1756 he had carried his tragedy to Garrick, in the confident hope that it would be enacted at Drury Lane, and had the mortification of its being rejected by that manager as unfit for the stage. But the high praises bestowed on it by his Scottish friends, working on his natural vanity, induced him to have it represented in the Edinburgh play-house, then situated in the Canongate, under the management of one Mr. Digges. The reception which it met there was flattering in the extreme. The scene being laid in the Highlands, and the story being founded on

[1] Morren's Annals.



an old Scottish ballad, the piece was rapturously hailed by the audience, whose curiosity was not the less excited by its being the production of a minister of the Scottish Church. Several of his clerical brethren, to encourage the author, or not unwilling to share with him in the offence which they foresaw might be occasioned, attended the representation. The report was even circulated that some of them had previously assisted at a rehearsal of the play, when the part of Lord Randolph was played by Dr. Robertson, and the gentle Anna was personated by Dr. Blair of the High Church! This ridiculous story is denied by Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk, who took an active part in attending the representation, but the play-going propensities of the party with whom he acted were too notorious to escape the lash of the flying satires of the day.

> "Hid close in the green-room some clergymen lay,
> Good actors themselves—their whole lives a play."

At a time when the acting of plays was deemed so prejudicial to good morals that they were held to be illicit by the Scots law, and the public could only enjoy them when smuggled in under the guise of a musical concert, the least that the Edinburgh Presbytery could do in such a case was to issue a solemn admonition, in which, after lamenting the irreligion of the times, they warned the youth especially against the dangerous enticements of the theatre. But the countenance shown by the presence of the clergy on this occasion could not be passed without censure. Home's friend Dr. Robertson exerted all his powers of persuasion to mitigate the sentence, but the author of *Douglas*, who had a few years before moved the deposition of the conscientious Gillespie, now found it necessary, in 1757, to escape the same degradation by abdicating his pulpit.

Among the many publications to which this extraordinary occurrence gave rise we naturally turn to the pamphlet issued by Dr. John Witherspoon of Paisley, as indicating the view then generally entertained of the stage by evangelical writers. As might have been expected he is very decided in showing "that contributing to the support of a public theatre is inconsistent with the character of a Christian." In reply to those advocates of the stage who urged that it was not to be



condemned on account of its abuse, and that tragedy might be converted into a school of virtue, while comedy might be made subservient for the correction of vice, he has successfully demonstrated that whatever may be thought of the drama as a literary performance (a distinction which, by the way, he fails to make so clear as was necessary), the entertainments of the stage have been held, even by heathen as well as Christian writers, to be injurious to public morals.

Dr. John Witherspoon's manner in the Assembly, it has been said, "was inanimate and drawling, but the depth of his judgment, the solidity of his arguments, and the aptitude with which they are illustrated and applied, never failed to produce a strong impression on the Assembly. To singular sagacity he united a large share of sarcastic wit, which was displayed in several of his publications, but particularly in the *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, a ludicrous and acrimonious description of the principles, political sentiments, and private characters of many of the Moderate clergy."[1] The *Characteristics* thus described were certainly a clever *jeu d'esprit*, and widely read at the time; but the style of wit they display, like that of similar pieces of the day, is too broad and outspoken to be relished now, and the "maxims" under which it is conveyed can only be perused with the grave face of an inquirer into the prevailing features of Moderatism in the eighteenth century. Without either the eloquence of Shaftesbury or the coarseness of Swift, wanting the ingenious point of the *Provincial Letters* or even the droll piquancy of Ulric Hutten, Witherspoon ridicules his Moderate divine by personating a partisan "fierce for Moderation," who tenders his pupil the leading maxims of the school enforced by the most absurd and inconclusive reasonings. In these maxims the moderate man is characterized by his predilections towards heretics and for offenders charged with "the good-natured vices;" he is counselled to avoid all devotional appearances, and to assume as far as possible the airs of a finished gentleman; in questions of settlements to consult the inclinations of the patron and landed gentry, but by no means to yield to the inclinations of the common people; to stigmatize all his opponents as either fools or knaves; and to band with his party be the

[1] My Own Life and Times, by Dr. Somerville of Jedburgh, p. 100.



cause what it may. It is to be hoped that the traits here drawn applied only to the worst of the party, but it generally presents a very melancholy picture of the age. Deeply as the satire of this piece was felt by those at whom it was aimed it is doubtful whether it was productive of any beneficial effect, and it is much to be regretted that Dr. Witherspoon is better known as the author of the temporary caricature, which he would not, however, publicly acknowledge, than for the abler and weightier services which he rendered to the Church and the world. As a theologian Dr. Witherspoon discovered a richer vein of evangelical truth and a more searching tone of scriptural appeals to the heart and conscience than the generality of such writings in his day. This appears very plainly in his *Essay on the Connection between the Doctrine of Justification by the Imputed Righteousness of Christ and Holiness of Life*, which is inscribed to the Rev. James Hervey, and his *Practical Treatise on Regeneration.* His sermons are equally evangelical and practical. In the simple elegance of their style they are superior to those of the Bostons and Erskines, who did not cultivate the arts of literary refinement. Now, for the first time in Scotland, Evangelism came forth walking in cordial union with learning, philosophy, and elocution. His manner in the debates of the Assembly, though said to have been "inanimate," was in fact the result of self-imposed restraint on a temper naturally quick and impulsive. In the pulpit this was less observable. As one reads his discourse on *Glorying in the Cross* one feels transported first to the Golgotha of the Redeemer's sufferings, and as the light discloses the glorious Sufferer and His redemption, the grounds of the Christian's glorying are brought out with a force and fervour reaching the loftiest heights of pulpit eloquence. "Mistake me not, my brethren," cries the preacher, "I am not speaking against learning in itself; it is a precious gift of God, and may be happily improved in the service of the gospel; but I will venture to say, in the spirit of the apostle Paul's writings in general, and of this passage in particular, 'Accursed be all that learning which sets itself in opposition to the cross of Christ! Accursed be all that learning which disguises or is ashamed of the cross of Christ! Accursed be all that learning which fills the room that is due to the cross of Christ! And once more, accursed be all that

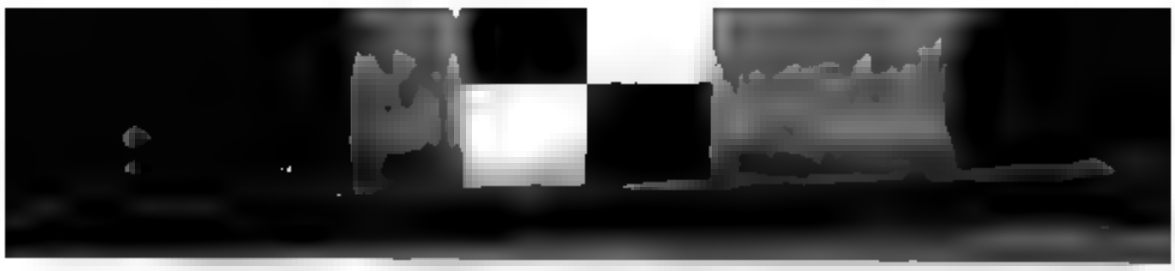


learning which is not made subservient to the honour and glory of the cross of Christ!'"[1]

From his writings it may be seen that Dr. Witherspoon possessed not only the talents but the true spirit of a Church reformer. For nothing was he better fitted by his native sense of order and precision in the conduct of business, on account of which he was considered at length as the head and leader of the orthodox party. Before he had acquired this influence their counsels were managed without union or address, in consequence of which it had happened, as it often does among scrupulous and conscientious men who are not versed in the affairs of the world, that each pursued inflexibly his own opinion as the dictate of an honest conscience, and could not be induced to make any modification of it to accommodate it to the views of others, which he was apt to regard as the result of worldly policy. Hence resulted disunion of measures and consequent defeat by the opposite party, who were under the guidance of able men, better trained to the tactics of worldly prudence. By the management of Dr. Witherspoon, who combined the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, they began to act with more harmony and concentration. One day, after he had succeeded in carrying some important measure in the General Assembly, Dr. Robertson, accosting him in his pleasant and easy manner, observed, "I think you have your men better disciplined than formerly." "Yes," replied Witherspoon, "by urging your politics too far you have compelled us to beat you with your own weapons."[2] It is much to be regretted that a man so well qualified and so much needed to guide the counsels of the Scottish Church was so soon separated from his Church and nation. He was induced after repeated importunity to accept the office of Principal of Princeton College, New Jersey, in the year 1768, and there he continued for twenty-seven years in the active discharge of his duties as professor, as author, and as a member of

[1] The reader is specially referred to his sermons on the "Deceitfulness of Sin," and on "The Charges of Sedition and Schism against Good Men," as favourable specimens of the power of this admirable writer. (*Witherspoon's Works*, vol. ii. &c.)

[2] "Some Account of the Life and Character of the Author, from a Sermon preached on Occasion of his Death, 6th May, 1795, by John Rodgers, D.D." (*Witherspoon's Works*, vol. vi. p. 13.)



Congress, to earn the reputation and promote the interests of his adopted country.

In these struggles of the reforming party to maintain the original principles of the Church of Scotland it is painful to observe the limited help which they received from the lay members of the Church. An honourable exception must be made in favour of Mr. Andrew Crosbie, advocate in Edinburgh, one of the most eminent lawyers of that century. The appearances of Mr. Crosbie, both as a pleader in the Church courts and as an author, were doubly welcome to the friends of evangelical truth and Presbyterian liberty, not only on their own account as vigorous defences of the Church against the encroachments of a rampant and unrestricted patronage, but as coming from a profession then so generally prejudiced against the rights of the people.[1]

But the time had now come when the Church of Scotland, viewed as represented by the General Assembly, sunk into the lowest stage of Moderatism. Having obtained a numerical superiority in the supreme judicatory, Dr. Robertson, now become Principal of the University of Edinburgh, ruled with undisputed authority. In the settlement of ministers the call of the people was treated as a useless formality, and the presentation of the patron became all in all. The universal opposition of a whole parish was totally disregarded, and even the solemn act of a whole presbytery in repeatedly repudiating an obnoxious presentee, and finding him wholly unfit for the office which he sought, was equally unavailing. The members of the presbytery, though actuated by no personal or vindictive feelings, but guided in the discharge of their duty solely by a conscientious regard to their ordination vows, received imperative orders to ordain the man of the patron's choice; the aid of the civil authorities was invoked to enforce, if necessary, the decree. Thus by a strange perversion of Christianity the sacred office of ordination to the ministry was effected in various instances literally at the point of the sword.

Two examples of this extraordinary procedure may suffice

[1] Mr. Crosbie is understood to have sat for the portrait of Councillor Pleydell in *Guy Mannering*. But on one important point the author of that novel thought it advisable to deviate from the truth of history. Pleydell represents himself as a member of the Scottish Episcopal Communion. Crosbie was, in point of fact, a Presbyterian of the old school.



to prove what may now be reckoned almost incredible. One Laurence Wells, a worthless, illiterate fellow, whose morals were as defective as his grammar and divinity, was presented in 1762 by the Duke of Hamilton to the Kirk of Shotts. The parishioners, man, woman, and child, opposed the settlement. Of the numerous heritors, only one would sign his call. The presbytery unanimously, upon trial, rejected him as unfit. The case hung in suspense for six years. But the patron insisting upon his right, the Assembly appointed the presbytery to proceed on a certain day in 1768 to his ordination, and the people having shown a determination to prevent the ministers from assembling, a body of troops were sent to protect them in the obnoxious task. Bands of the people, mostly females, waylaid the ministers on the roads leading to Shotts, and turning their horses, led them back to their respective manses, so that on reaching the kirk the soldiers found neither presbytery to protect nor mob to disperse, and were obliged to retire ingloriously with the disappointed presentee. He was soon after ordained to the deserted Kirk of Shotts, ten miles off, at the table of the presbytery in Hamilton. To salve the wounded pride of the junto in the Assembly, and complete the triumph of the noble duke, one of the women convicted of having taken part in spiriting away the members of presbytery from the scene, was condemned to walk through the streets of Glasgow with her hands pinioned behind her back, followed by the hangman, and committed to the house of correction. The parishioners in a body moved off to a meeting-house still visible in the neighbourhood, and leaving the miserable intruder to officiate in an empty church to the beadle and precentor.[1] For the violence exhibited by the people on this occasion no defence is meant to be set up, but certainly the procedure which led to it was of all kinds of tyranny the most gratuitous and the most senseless. In England patronage is an appanage of some value, opening to the younger branches of the family a means of livelihood not in the most honourable way; but in Scotland it is a mere nominal privilege, entailing on its possessor no interest whatever, temporal or spiritual. In this case it professed to do honour to the Duke of Hamilton by transferring to him the right of thrusting, at his own pleasure,

[1] Acts of the General Assembly, 1768; Scots Magazine for 1768.



into the pulpit a disreputable individual, whose church he ignored, and whose ministrations he never meant to favour by his presence. At the same time, by thus ousting from the church some thousands of the parishioners, and obliging them to support a minister of their own choice, the heritors and the parish were burdened by a legal assessment for the maintenance of the poor, while the natural consequences ensued in weakening the Establishment, swelling the ranks of dissent, and alienating the middle from the higher orders of society.

The only other instance of violent intrusion which may be cited as characteristic of the policy of Moderatism, is that of St. Ninian's, near Stirling. To this populous parish Mr. David Thomson, minister of Gargunnock, an infirm old man, had been presented in the year 1767, much against the inclinations of the people, and the presbytery contrived for seven years to delay his settlement, till at last, in 1773, the General Assembly issued peremptory orders that the induction should take place on a certain day, and that every member of presbytery should attend, or answer for his absence at their bar. Mr. Robert Findley, their moderator, undertook the task, but instead of preaching as usual, called upon Mr. Thomson to stand up in his place, and addressed him in a style seldom if ever directed to a clergyman in these circumstances. He told him that they had met by the authority of the General Assembly, which assumed to itself powers superior to any parliament — that august body never enacting any laws without consent of the people; he reminded him that he had been opposed by six hundred heads of families, sixty heritors, and all the elders of the parish except one. An eloquent minister of their Church had told him lately he would go twenty miles to see him deposed, and he could assure him that he and twenty thousand more friends to their Church would do the same. He had maintained a good character till his obstinate adherence to this presentation for the last seven years; and now, bending under years, if admitted this day, he could have no pastoral relation to this people. He would be nothing else than *stipend-lifter* of St. Ninian's. He would be despised, hated, and insulted. "And now, sir," he concluded, "I conjure you by the mercies of God, give up this presentation; I conjure you for the

sake of the great number of souls of St. Ninian's, who are like sheep going astray without a shepherd to lead them, and who will never hear you, will never submit to you, give it up; and I conjure you by that peace of mind which you would wish in a dying hour, and that awful and impartial account which in a little you must give to God of your own soul, and of the souls of this parish, at the tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ, *give it up!*" In the midst of the ominous silence which succeeded this address, Mr. Thomson, lifting up his countenance, said in a low, melancholy tone of voice, "I forgive you, sir, for what you have now said; may God forgive you; proceed to obey the orders of your superiors." Mr. Findley, feeling, no doubt, that to put the questions in the formula to such a candidate would be only adding solemnity to the farce, concluded by saying—"I, as moderator of the presbytery of Stirling, admit you, Mr. David Thomson, to be minister of the parish of St. Ninian's, in the true sense and spirit of the late sentence of the General Assembly, and you are hereby admitted accordingly."[1] He then, without praying for patron, presentee, or presbytery, after singing a few lines of a psalm, dismissed the congregation. Accounts of this strange proceeding having been transmitted to the Assembly, Mr. Findley was cited to appear at the bar of their next meeting, where, after giving his explanation, he was sentenced to receive a severe rebuke. The venerable old man quietly folded his arms, and leaning down on the bar of the Assembly, said in good broad Scotch, "Aweel, come awa' wi' the rebuke, moderator, *it 'ill break nae banes.*"[2]

It is with no pleasure that we revive these sad memorials of a period which Dr. Chalmers truly described as the "dark age of the Church of Scotland," and which few of her friends can now recall without awakening feelings of regret and shame. Even now they are only worthy of record as illustrating a phase of Scottish life and character during the last century.

[1] Scots Magazine, vol. xxxv. p. 614; Struther's History of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 609.

[2] Violent Settlements during the Reign of Moderatism (by the Rev. James Begg, D.D.); Witness newspaper, March 23d, 1842.



CHAPTER VIII.

1774 — 1800.

Dr. Robertson as leader in the Assembly and as a preacher—Anecdote of Dr. Erskine and John Newton—Catholic claims—Pluralities—Proposal to abolish subscription to the Confession of Faith—Retirement of Dr. Robertson from the leadership—His last days—John Logan and the Paraphrases—Dr. Blair's sermons—Dropping of the protest against patronage—Poems of Robert Burns—Disastrous influence of the Moderate clergy on morals—Effects of the French Revolution—The debate on missions, 1796—Interdicts against chapels of ease and Sabbath schools—Death of Dr. Erskine.

In 1763, Dr. Robertson, having been translated to Edinburgh, became the avowed leader of the Moderate party, and was ultimately translated to Greyfriars as the colleague of Dr. Erskine. His talents admirably suited him for the part which he had to perform. Displaying the same qualities which distinguish him as a writer of history, the same elegance of diction, the same judicial calmness, and the same apparent candour in balancing the claims of opposite parties, he seldom failed, with such an audience as he addressed, to confirm the wavering, to conciliate the reluctant, and to secure the votes of his well-trained followers. As a theologian the only means of judgment which he has left us consists in the publication of one sermon on *The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, of which it may be said that it would have formed a good article for an encyclopædia on the favourable character of the times for the introduction of Christianity. In the pulpit he is said to have never addressed the passions or affections. In point of doctrine, as well as in church polity, it is hardly possible to imagine a greater contrast than that which existed between Dr. Robertson and Dr. Erskine, and yet they appear to have lived on terms of uninterrupted intimacy and fellowship.



The following anecdote curiously shows how the most conscientious persons may clearly discern glaring inconsistencies in others while quite unconscious of their own. Mr. John Aikman, when a student of divinity, called on Dr. Erskine to ask if he had any commands for London, which he intended to visit. "None whatever," replied the doctor; "only if you see John Newton commend me to him most kindly. But do you know, Mr. Aikman, there is one thing that surprises me exceedingly: that he, being so faithful an evangelist, should continue in a Church where the dogma of baptismal regeneration is admitted in any shape, whether direct or equivocal, into her formularies. That is a compliance which I could not sanction." The student, on arriving at London, lost no time in conveying to Mr. Newton the good wishes of Dr. Erskine, but without mentioning the remarks by which they were accompanied. "Oh," replied Newton, "my good old friend Dr. Erskine; I am always happy to hear of him. He is indeed a man of God. But do you know, Mr. Aikman, there is one thing that surprises me very much about Dr. Erskine, and that is, that one so truly evangelical in his doctrine can remain as the colleague of Dr. Robertson, who certainly preaches to his people another gospel. That, Mr. Aikman, is a compliance which my conscience would not sanction."[1]

Alarmed at the repeated secessions created by the high-handed proceedings of the Moderate party, under the pressure of which not only were the soundest members of the Church alienated from her fellowship, but the funds by which the poor had been supported were withdrawn, and the vitality of the Church as a national establishment was endangered, some of the more enlightened of the clergy introduced, in 1765, the Schism Overture, calling upon the Assembly to take the matter into their serious consideration.[2] But even this salutary proposal was opposed by Dr. Robertson and his fol-

[1] Lives of the Haldanes, by James A. Haldane, Esq., p. 120.

[2] In this overture it was declared that "it is credibly affirmed that there are now one hundred and twenty meeting-houses erected, to which more than a hundred thousand persons resort." Mr. Adam Gib considered this number of persons to have been greatly exaggerated, but adds that "if the Seceders be once satisfied about proper entertainment being given to Christianity in the Established Church, they will then most humbly crave to be entertained in her communion." (*Herron's Annals*, ii. 307.)



lowers, who seemed resolved to put down all attempts to revive the popular element, or to yield in any degree to the interests of Evangelism even when this appeared expedient for the interests and even for the preservation of the Established Church.

The question of Catholic emancipation, which agitated the country in 1779, occasioned lengthened debates in the Assembly, and led to the adoption of an overture against that measure, in which the venerable Dr. Erskine took an active part, and on which he published a pamphlet, strongly expressive of his fears regarding the contemplated movement made at that time to remove the penal statutes against Popery. In the succeeding year the Assembly was involved in serious disputes on the question of pluralities—in other words, whether the office of a minister in the possession of a pastoral charge could be combined with that of a professor in any of our universities. This measure was carried in favour of the Rev. Dr. Hill, of St. Andrews. It evidently took its origin in an attempt to graft upon the limited livings of the Scottish Church something like the sinecures and fellowships of the wealthier establishment of England, and it obviously tended, as it actually led, to the inefficient discharge of the duties incumbent upon one or other, if not both of the offices thus conjoined. But the most notable attempt at legislation was that made by a party in the Assembly for the abolition of subscription to the Confession of Faith. This party was headed by such men as Messrs. MacGill and Dalrymple of Ayr, the former of whom had published a work directly advocating the principles of Socinianism. It is generally supposed that this bold attempt led to the retirement of Dr. Robertson from taking an active part as a leader in the Assembly. His motives in taking this step have never been fully explained.

The retirement of Principal Robertson, though not occasioned by any failure of his energy, mental or physical, was not long in being succeeded by his death. Henry Cockburn, the late barrister and judge, when a bright, blue-eyed boy at the High School, in his corduroys and smart jacket, frequently met the feeble, bent figure of the Principal taking his last walks in the Meadows, or sauntering through the garden at the Grange, contemplating the blossoms of the fruit-trees, and observing, with his pleasant old smile, that



before they reached their maturity he would be in his quiet grave. He was impressed with the belief that his death was not far distant. "But," adds Dugald Stewart, his biographer, "*like his great contemporary Hume*, he contemplated its approach not only without terror, but with cheerfulness and complacency." Not a word seems to have escaped his lips (else it would surely have been told) indicating the presence of a "better hope" than Hume could have cherished to cheer the dying hours of the accomplished leader of the Church of Scotland.

The period which intervened between 1770 and the death of Robertson was not distinguished by any interesting events. In 1742, owing in some degree to the influence of the Cambuslang revival, a desire was shown to add some metrical pieces to the Psalms to be used in public worship,[1] and a committee was appointed to prepare a few passages from Scripture for this purpose. The report of this committee was given in the year 1745, but the unsettled state of the country at this time prevented any progress till 1749, when the Assembly agreed to transmit the collection, amounting to forty-five, to presbyteries, and leave the use of them to the option of sessions. The collection thus made was, upon the whole, creditable to the parties employed on it, both in point of composition and design. It breathed throughout an evangelical tone of sentiment, and conveyed, though in simple rhymes, the spirit of the sacred text. But forty years, during which it served to guide the devotions of the people, had wrought their changes on the tastes and sentiments of the Church. A little before 1781 the leading clergy, who had gradually shifted away from the simple faith of their fathers, began to feel dissatisfied with the old translations and paraphrases, and a new committee, containing the names of John Logan, Hugh Blair, and Cameron, was appointed to revise them. The version thus produced, which is that presently used in the Established Church of Scotland, was approved by the Assembly.—"And in the meantime they allowed this collection of sacred poems to be used in public worship in congregations where the minister found it for edification."[2]

[1] An Act of Assembly in 1647 refers to the translation of other Scripture songs in metre. (*Appendix to Baillie's Letters*, &c. vol. iii. 543.)

[2] Acts of Assembly, 1st June, 1781.



As enlarged it embraces sixty-seven pieces, and is arranged in the order of Scripture. The translations bear evidence of more elegance of diction than those of 1745, on which they are for the most part founded, though in many respects manifesting that classical glare and falsetto embellishment which passed for poetry during this period. In some respects they are chargeable with graver blemishes of a theological character. Thus Romans vi. 2 appears in the edition of 1745 as follows:—

"Great God! forbid th' impious thought,
Nor let it e'er be said,
That we whose sins are crucified
Should raise them from the dead."

This has been replaced in the edition of 1781 by the following elegant rendering of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration:—

"When to the sacred font we came,
Did not the rite proclaim,
That, washed from sin and all its stains,
New creatures we became?"

We need only further contrast the couplets on Titus iii. 1–9, which in the old version run thus:—

"Lord, we confess our num'rous faults;
How great our guilt has been!
Foolish and vain were all our thoughts,
And *all our lives were sin*."

"'Tis not by words of righteousness,
Which we ourselves have done;
But *we are saved by sov'reign grace,*
Abounding thro' his Son."

with the following more poetical lines adopted in the version of 1781:—

"How wretched was our former state,
When, slaves to Satan's sway,
With hearts disorder'd and impure,
O'erwhelmed in sin we lay!"

"Vain and presumptuous is the trust,
Which in our works we place,
Salvation from a higher source
Flows to the human race."



With the exception of the well-known pieces from Watts and Doddridge, the best of these Paraphrases must be traced to the pen of Michael Bruce,[1] a student in the Secession, who was prematurely cut off about the age of twenty-one, in the year 1767. His poems, particularly the lines to "The Cuckoo," were full of natural beauty. The manuscript volume of these poems was unfortunately intrusted to Logan, who undertook to publish them; but who, instead of doing so, retained them till 1770, and then published some of them, including the lines to "The Cuckoo," *in his own name*. His paltry excuse, when the father of the deceased poet begged for his son's manuscript with tears in his eyes, that it had been accidentally destroyed, forms one of the most piteous tales recorded in the annals of literary plagiarism.[2]

Some idea of the taste and temper of the times may be gathered from the popularity which attended the publication of Dr. Blair's sermons. An elegantly bound copy of these discourses formed at this time an indispensable present to every newly-married couple. Samuel Johnson admired them as specimens of English composition; but beyond this praise, it is hard to tell where lies the charm that once gave them renown. As sermons they are deficient in every excellence of the Christian pulpit; and as moral essays, they show how the professed ministers of Christ could become in Scotland as well as England, in the words of Bishop Horsley, "little better than the apes of Epictetus."

Principal Robertson was succeeded as leader of the Moderate party in the Church by Dr. Hill of St. Andrews, more orthodox in his theology, though following closely in the footsteps of the church policy of his predecessor. Dr. Hill, with all his talents, failed to reach the eminence or secure the confidence of the renowned historian. His reign was not distinguished by any prominent events, unless we number among these a succession of triumphs gained in the Assembly by Moderatism, which, under his administration,

[1] The paraphrases in the present version which have been ascribed, on the best authority, to Michael Bruce, are the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th, the 18th, 23d, 31st, 48th (altered from the edition 1745), and the 53d.

[2] The Works of Michael Bruce, edited with memoir and notes by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, Kinross, p. 51. The whole story has been lately confirmed in a searching article from the pen of Principal Shairp, LL.D., of St. Andrews, in *Good Words* of Nov. 1873.



may be said to have achieved a complete victory. A clever pamphlet issued in 1782, by Dr. Thomas Hardy of Edinburgh, professor of church history, a man of truly moderate views, in which he avowed that "the experience of seventy years, joined to the revolt of one hundred thousand people, are the proofs that absolute patronage is irreconcilable with the genius of Presbytery," led to a regular discussion on the subject of popular calls, which issued, in 1784, not only in the rejection of that measure, but in dropping from the annual instructions given to the Commission of Assembly the now formal and farcical protest against the grievance of patronage which had been kept up since the days of Queen Anne. The year 1790 was signalized by the publication of a work by Dr. M'Gill of Ayr, entitled *A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ;* in which the grossest Socinianism was openly avowed. After long litigation in the inferior courts he was induced by his friends in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr to avoid the sentence of deposition by agreeing to make some very unsatisfactory explanations. His sentiments were understood to be held, though not so openly avowed, by many of the Moderate ministers in the west, who were generally known by the name of the "New-light" party—a name familiar to the readers of Burns.

The poems of Robert Burns throw considerable light on the state of religion at the time. Much has been said, and by none more pathetically than by himself, on the "thoughtless follies which laid him low, and stained his name." His peculiar antipathy to the "Old-light," or Evangelical clergy of the Church, admits of being traced, in a great measure, to the malign influence of the worthless clergy of the neighbourhood, who, in an evil hour, induced him to prostitute his genius, by joining their party and turning his satire against the most distinguished of their opponents. To this it must be added, that unable to enforce a strict internal discipline in the admission of applicants to the holy communion, the more faithful ministers in the Establishment were in the habit of beating "the pulpit drum ecclesiastic" against the unworthy with a violence rarely exemplified in the present day.[1] The portrait of Mr. John Russel of Kilmar-

[1] It is a curious fact that the Seceders, whose stricter professions and lives

nock, and afterwards of Stirling, drawn by the late Hugh Miller, cannot be charged with profane exaggeration:—"He was a large, robust, dark-complexioned man, imperturbably grave, and with a singularly stern expression stamped on his dusky forehead. He was not a little popular as a preacher. His manner was strong and energetic, and the natural severity of his temper seems to have been more than genius to him when expatiating, which he did often, on the miseries of the wicked in a future state."[1] The reader will scarce fail to remember the picture of the preacher dashed off by Burns in his *Holy Fair*, or to see that the poet's arrows, however wickedly shot, came from no bow drawn at a venture:—

"Black Russel is nae spairin';
His piercing words, like Highland swords,
Divide the joints and marrow;
His talk o' hell, where devils dwell,
Our vera sauls does harrow
Wi' fright that day."

During this stage of Moderate ascendency its disastrous effects on the moral condition of the country were manifest in many more instances than that of poor Burns. With some honourable exceptions, in which the unpopular sentiments of the incumbent were partially atoned for by the virtues of clerical propriety, and by the pleasing manners of the scholar and the gentleman, the general character of the clergy underwent a sad and degrading change. Imitating the vices of the upper classes, their example proved fatally contagious to the middle orders, such as the farmers and factors, with whom they associated. All seriousness was decried as fanaticism. The task of unfolding this humiliating picture has been rendered superfluous by the late publication of the posthumous autobiography of Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk. With a cool audacity, dead alike to all sense of popular odium and clerical decency, this "Jupiter," as he was styled, of the

it might be thought would have exposed them to the special ridicule of Burns, wonderfully escaped the shafts of his satire. This illustrates a tradition which has come to our knowledge on the best authority, that, in his latter years, the poet on being rallied by some of his gay associates on attending the ministry of a Secession pastor, replied, "That man, sir, believes in what he preaches."

[1] Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland, by Hugh Miller, p. 413.



Moderate Olympus, gloats over scenes of debauch which the more modest of the school must wish had been buried with himself in oblivion. But the following reminiscences from the pen of one who lived at the period prove that the scenes were far from being unusual or overdrawn:—"Principal Hill and Dr. Finlayson ruled the Assemblies, and the parishes were occupied by the pupils of such divines as Simpson, Leishman, Baillie, and Wight. Many of them were genuine Socinians. Many of them were ignorant of theology as a system, and utterly careless about the merits of any creed or confession. They seemed miserable in the discharge of any ministerial duty. They eagerly seized on the services of any stray preacher who came within their reach. When they preached their sermons generally turned on honesty, good neighbourhood, and kindness. To deliver a gospel sermon, or to preach to the hearts and consciences of dying sinners, was as completely beyond their power as to speak in the language of angels. And while their discourses were destitute of everything that a dying sinner needs, they were at the same time the most feeble, empty, and insipid things that ever disgraced the venerated name of sermons. The coldness and indifference of the minister, while they proclaimed his own aversion to his employment, were seldom lost on the people. The congregation rarely amounted to a tenth of the parishioners, and the one-half of this small number were generally, during the half-hour's soporific harangue, fast asleep. They were free from hypocrisy. They had no more religion in private than in public. They were loud and obstreperous in declaiming against enthusiasm and fanaticism, faith and religious zeal. But though frightfully impatient of everything which bore the semblance of seriousness and sober reflection, the elevation of brow, the expansion of feature, the glistening of the eye, the fluency and warmth of speech at convivial parties, showed that their heart and soul were there; and that the pleasures of the table, and the hilarity of the light-hearted and the gay, constituted their paradise, and furnished them with the perfection of their joy."[1]

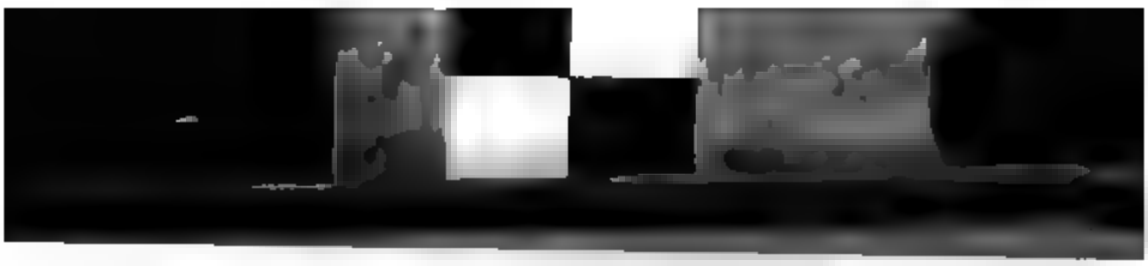
The period of which we now write was one of intense political excitement. The thunderstorm of the French Revolu-

[1] Autobiography of Dr. Hamilton of Strathblane, edited by his son, Dr. James Hamilton of London.



tion, which threatened every day to reach the shores of Britain, occupied the thoughts of all, to the exclusion of everything else, not even excepting religion. For some years previous to the social shock the friends of civil and religious liberty in our country were induced to cherish the most sanguine hopes of success to that cause from the change; but these were doomed to be bitterly disappointed by the triumph of infidelity, and by the civic horrors which deluged the capital in blood, and disgraced the actors in the national tragedy. The influence of this political catastrophe on the fortunes of evangelical piety in Britain were, in many respects, unfavourable. The daring principles of French infidelity, espoused and propagated by such writers as Paine, found their way into the minds of the common people much more readily and effectually than the subtle scepticism of Hume had done, pandering, as it did, to lower tastes, and thoroughly undermining the faith of our mechanics, as well as those moving in the higher circles of art and science. The overthrow of the throne in France being accompanied by a total contempt of all religion, and threatening the subversion of all order and authority, enlisted the prowess and patriotism of the better classes of our countrymen on the side of our own constitution in Church and state, and all the defects of both were overlooked and condoned for the sake of the great principles which were at stake. As French ambition succeeded in putting down all opposition on the Continent, the British nation stood alone, unfettered and unsubdued, and by her military and naval victories bidding defiance alike to invasion and to change.

In this condition of the country it was vain to expect anything like evangelical progress. All attempts that might be made to awaken or arrest the attention of the public, whether ecclesiastical or even literary, were apt to be viewed with suspicion or treated with indifference. Yet it is to this period we must trace the gradual rise of the Evangelical party in the Church. Though the Moderates continued to rule for some time in the ascendency, betraying their old spirit of opposition to every evangelical movement, and even a more decided tendency than ever to yield to Erastian domination, the late outburst in France rendered them more scrupulous to avoid the charge of irreligion, which had now



become identified with revolution, anarchy, and bloodshed. They even began to suspect all learning in the direction of infidelity as savouring of sedition. At the same time the shock sustained by society stirred up the minds of the better disposed to strengthen the bonds of society by a wider diffusion of that gospel which proclaims, and is the only sure method to produce peace on earth and good-will towards men. This led to the introduction of two overtures in 1796, calling upon the Assembly to take up the cause of Christian missions. The discussion on these overtures is one of the strangest debates on record, in which politics and religion, the old hatred of evangelism and the newly-inspired terror of French infidelity, mingled in the most grotesque conflict and confusion. On this occasion the cause of missions was supported by the ingenious though unhappy friend of the poet Burns, who spoke of Christianity as ameliorating the condition of the lower orders of society, extirpating the domestic slavery of Europe, and taking its place in the van of civilization as the pioneer of improvement, intellectual and moral. "The Church of Scotland," said Robert Heron, "had been complimented by a late distinguished philosopher, David Hume, as more favourable to the cause of Deism than any other religious establishment. Now was the time for them to prove to the world that the compliment was undeserved, by zealously countenancing and assisting the honest endeavours of their fellow-Christians throughout the country." On this the late eloquent and ingenious Hugh Miller makes the following reflection:— "'The *bruit* goeth shrewdly,' said De Bracy to his companion in arms, the Templar, 'that the most holy order of the temple of Zion nurseth not a few infidels in its bosom.' Hume, intending to be very complimentary, said nearly the same thing of the Church of Scotland. Was the compliment deserved, and if so, what peculiar aspect did the infidelity of our Scottish clergymen assume? Was it gentlemanly and philosophic, like that of Hume himself? or highly seasoned with art, like that of Voltaire? or dignified and pompous, like that of Gibbon? or romantic and chivalrous, like that of Lord Herbert of Cherbury? or steeped in ruffianism and vulgarity, like that of Paine? or redolent of nonsense, like that of Robert Owen? or was it not rather of mark



enough to have a character of its own?—an infidelity that purposed to be anti-Christian on Bible authority,—that at least, while it robed itself in the proper habiliments of unbelief, took the liberty of lacing them with Scripture edgings? May we crave the attention of the reader, instead of directly answering any of these queries, to the facts and reasonings employed by the Rev. Mr. Hamilton of Gladsmuir, in opposing the motion of poor Robert Heron."

Mr. Miller then gives some extracts from the speech of this youthful champion of Moderatism, in moving the *dismissal* of both the overtures calling on the Assembly to take up the cause of missions, declaring that he could hardly translate the sentiments uttered by Mr. Hamilton into his own language, without subjecting himself to a charge of exaggeration and injustice. Suffice it to say, that the orator, with an affectation of reverence for the Word of God, maintained "that the gracious declaration of Scripture ought to liberate from groundless anxiety the minds of those who stated in such moving language the condition of the heathen." He went further, and ventured even to borrow the infidelity of Rousseau, and more than insinuated that in communicating Christianity to the Indian or Otaheitian we should only introduce the vices of European nations, whilst the influence of our religion would not refine his morals or insure his happiness. The minister of Gladsmuir especially laboured to show the absurdity of making revelation precede civilization. "Men," he said, "must be polished and refined in their manners before they can be properly enlightened in religious truths." And, as he drew to the close of his harangue, he demanded, with an air of triumph, "Where did we find the great apostle of the Gentiles? was it amongst barbarians, such as those to whom it was now proposed to carry the gospel? or was it not rather in the polished cities of Corinth, of Athens, and of Rome?" It was when this orator sat down that Dr. Erskine rose, with a dignity worthy of the descendant of Lord Cardross—a dignity to which his character, his learning, and his age added weight—and in a calm, firm, and energetic tone uttered those crushing words, which thrilled through the Assembly,—"*Moderator, rax me that Bible!*" pointing to the silent witness for God's truth which still lay upon the table. The Bible was handed to him, and the



Assembly seemed awed and electrified, and a death-like silence reigned through the vaulted aisle, whilst the aged man of God turned up and read, in a distinct and audible voice, the account of Paul's reception at Melita, when "the barbarous people showed us no little kindness." "Think you," said Dr. Erskine, "that when Paul wrought his miracles at Malta, and was taken to be a god, he did not also preach Christ to the barbarians, and explain whose name it was through which such power was given unto men?" The rest of this speech was equally effective, appealing to the ancient history of the Church and to the testimony of Paul, who held himself "debtor both to the Greeks, to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise," and preached Christ as "all in all," in whom "there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." But if the Moderates felt abashed by the discomfiture of their champion they consoled themselves with the strength of the majority by which they rejected the appeal on behalf of missions to the heathen.[1]

Time was just closing its wings on the eighteenth century, when, in the year 1799, Moderatism put forth the final efforts of its expiring ascendency by placing under the ban of the Assembly such institutions as chapels of ease, Sabbath-schools, and of interchange of communion with evangelical ministers of other churches. Everything, in short, was interdicted which bore the slightest aspect or tendency towards Evangelism and had not the sacred brand of patronage. Mr. Simeon of Cambridge, and the famous Rowland Hill, with his grotesque Methodism, met with a reception very different from that of Whitefield some sixty years before; and like swallows who have prematurely anticipated the spring, they were glad to take their flight southwards again, chilled with the dead winter which still prevailed in the Establishment.

The Haldanes, too, Robert and James, fired with evangelistic fervour, had commenced their disinterested labours, erecting spacious tabernacles in needy and neglected districts, and sowing far and wide the good seed of gospel

[1] The Headship of Christ, by Hugh Miller, p. 150, &c.; Lives of Robert and James Haldane, p. 125. The reminiscences recorded in the last-mentioned memoir seem to be those of James Haldane, who was present during the scene here described.



doctrine to the conversion of thousands, till their generous usefulness was curtailed by an unhappy sectarianism.

The death of Dr. Erskine, in 1803, terminated a lengthened pilgrimage devoted to the service of the Scottish Kirk, the blackest period of which he redeemed by the brightness of a holy life, while to the progress of its growing corruptions he offered an unceasing though unavailing protest. When upwards of sixty the indefatigable old man managed to acquire, without the aid of a master, the Dutch and German languages, so as to publish his *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, consisting chiefly of excerpts and summaries from continental works: a task now superseded by modern translations, and beyond which the venerable author could never be persuaded to embody the results of his studies.

The commencement of the present century may be said to mark the water-shed where the river of the Scottish Church separates itself into two opposite channels; that of Moderatism still running on, though in a gradually lessening stream, while that of Evangelism swells into an expansive size, till it gained a decided ascendency. The events which remain to be told are such as have occurred within the memory of many readers, and need not be dwelt upon at any length.



CHAPTER IX.

1800 — 1834.

Symptoms of anti-establishment views—Sir Henry Moncreiff—Reminiscences by Dr. Henry Grey—Pioneers of the Evangelical and reforming party—Dr. Andrew Thomson—Dr. Thomas M'Crie—Dr. Thomas Chalmers—Gradual rise of the evangelical tide—First murmur of opposition to the independence of the Church—President Hope and Dr. M'Gill—Deposition of Mr. Campbell of Row—The Indian Mission—Dr. Inglis and Alexander Duff—The Veto measure of 1834—Galaxy of eminent Non-intrusionists—Mr. Alexander Dunlop—Sheriff Graham Spears—Dr. Candlish and Dr. Cunningham—Opposition of Dr. M'Crie to the Veto—Success of the measure—Efforts of Dr. Chalmers in Church extension—The voluntary controversy.

The early portion of the present century exhibits no features fitted to awaken the interest of the student of history. In the Scottish Church no event of any public importance occurred to disturb the stagnation into which it had fallen. The people, habituated to the grievance of patronage, had ceased to remonstrate against the evils from which they had no hope of escape, and took little interest in the affairs of a church which had disowned them. Those of them who groaned under the incubus of a tame and useless ministry betook themselves to the Secession, or some of the numerous sects around them. And even among them no case of general interest sprung up, and no remarkable man appeared on the public stage to challenge attention by the energy or eccentricity of his character. The only movement which excited notice, but hardly beyond the pale of the bodies themselves, was in the two branches of the Secession, where a disposition was shown by the generality to change their position by adopting views hostile to national establishment of religion. To one of these sections belonged the late Dr. M'Crie; and in concert with a few of his brethren, among whom was



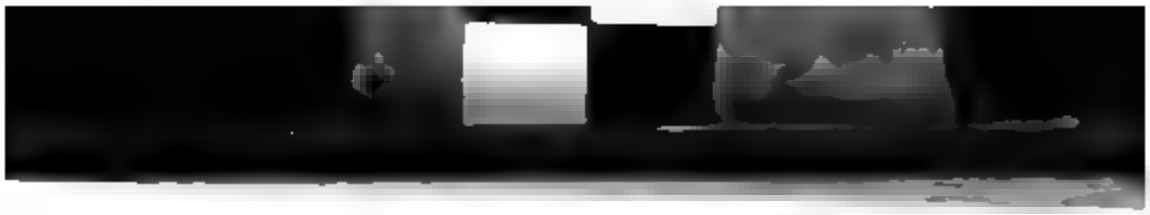
the venerable and learned Professor Bruce, he opposed his synod for prescribing new terms of fellowship by altering or annulling the 23d chapter of the Confession. This led to his being deposed, and, after a painful and protracted litigation, deprived of his place of worship; it involved him in a controversy, of which he has left an account in the *Statement* which he published in 1807.[1] But this controversy, deeply as it affected the principles afterwards better known under the name of "Voluntaryism," made no impression at the time on the country at large or the Established Church, or on the parties more immediately interested in them, and was allowed to pass unnoticed as a mere sectarian controversy. The case, however, opens up a very curious question of law and equity. The courts of law dealt with it simply as a question of contract with the majority of the synod, and accordingly gave their decision in favour of that body, refusing to look at the plea of conscience advanced by the old Seceders, who may therefore be said to have suffered for conscience sake.

Dr. Erskine was succeeded in the conduct of the Evangelical party by his friend and biographer, the Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff. This venerable patriarch, whose chivalrous bearing, as he flashed along our streets, will recall to those who remember him the aspect of some bold baron of the olden times, continued to rule the fortunes of the party with that vigorous decision which never failed to command respect. Few men were better fitted than he to uphold a good cause in difficult and depressing times. The principles which he upheld were those of the Word of God; and he gave evidence sufficient to show how he would have acted, if required at the bidding of a civil court to renounce them. "The spiritual independence of the Church he would have laid his head upon the block rather than abandon."[2]

More from the personal influence which his high position enabled him to exert, when consulted on filling the more important vacancies that occurred, than from any active part

[1] Statement of the Difference between the Profession of the Reformed Church of Scotland, as adopted by Seceders, and the Profession contained in the New Testimony lately adopted by the General Associate Synod, particularly on the Power of the Civil Magistrate respecting Religion, National Reformation, National Churches, and National Covenants. By Thomas M'Crie, Minister of the Gospel, Edinburgh. 1807

[2] Memorials of H. Cockburn, vol. i. 294.



which he assumed in the counsels of the Church, he contributed in furthering the progress of Evangelism. If the preceding century may be described, as it was by Dr. Chalmers, to be the dark age of the Church of Scotland, the present may be viewed as the dawn of a new day. As in nature, that dawn is ushered in gradually, and it is difficult for a while to distinguish between the light and the darkness, so it was here; it soon became apparent, however, that Moderatism began to recede, and evangelic light to prevail.

"In my earlier days in this city while attending college," says the late Dr. Henry Grey, when describing what occurred to him as characteristic of the evangelical clergy at the beginning of the present century, "the gospel ministers were few, though of precious character and in high estimation. Dr. Erskine, venerable in years and wisdom, was, from the pulpit as well as in private intercourse, an instructor of my youth. Dr. Davidson (then Mr. Randall), Dr. Hunter, Sir Harry Moncrieff, and Mr. Paul of the West Church, were fathers and guides to me in the paths of duty and of usefulness. Mr. Black of Lady Yester's was a shining light, too soon withdrawn, but long and deeply lamented; and surpassed by none for the ardour of his charity and the fulness of his many gifts. My honoured father and friend, Dr. Balfour of Glasgow, wielded a mighty power throughout the Church, both here and in his own city, and wherever his ministry extended. These and other names within the Established Church of Scotland, together with Drs. Jamieson, Peddie, M'Crie, and others beyond it, held up the gospel lamp in this city, and reared a succession of earnest hearers of the Word, who hailed with joy each new messenger who bore the credentials of one coming 'in the name of the Lord.'"[1]

Among the causes which contributed to this reaction the eye is insensibly turned to a series of distinguished men, providentially raised up, in various spheres of activity, and who contributed, by their personal qualifications, their literary labours, or their singular gifts, to act as the precursors of a brighter day.

Among these it is impossible to overlook the name of Dr. Andrew Thomson of St. Georges, Edinburgh. The son of an excellent minister of the Scottish Church, he evinced from

[1] Thoughts in the Evening of Life. A Sketch of the Life of Rev. Henry Grey, D.D. By Rev. C. M. Birrell. 1871.



his earliest years the mingled humour and force by which he was afterwards distinguished. His humorous talent betrayed itself at first in his power of mimicry. Mounted on a chair, the back of which served as a pulpit, the lively boy could "take off" to the life the ministers who came to assist his father at the communion. It is told that the venerable Dr. Fleming of Lady Yester's was present, and enjoyed the exhibition amazingly. "But, Doctor," observed one of the company, "he can take *you* off as well as the rest." The Doctor insisted on hearing himself. Little Andrew at first stoutly refused, but after great pressing complied. The imitation was complete. The Doctor's face visibly elongated, and he cried out, "Stop there, Andrew, yours is a most dangerous faculty." In future life, except in the form of story-telling, he never afterwards indulged in this "faculty." Satire, indeed, was a style in which he often excelled; and there may have been some truth in the jest which Dr. Macknight, the clerk of the Assembly, addressed to him on observing him thrusting his head through the rails of the house, "Dr. Tamson," he said, with his lugubrious solemnity, "I fear there is too much *raillery* about you."

Whether viewed as a preacher, as a polemical writer, as a speaker on the platform, or as a debater in the General Assembly, there were few to equal Dr. Andrew Thomson. On coming to Edinburgh his magnificent church was crowded by the élite of the city. His robust and well-formed person, his manly and finely-toned voice, his graceful elocution and eloquent appeals, were universally admired. In dealing with sinners nothing could be more simple, earnest, and direct than the style of his ministrations. But while providing for all so freely the wine and milk of the gospel, the preacher did not leave them merely to indulge in the selfish enjoyment of eating and drinking of "the things which accompany salvation," but followed up the banquet by introducing his audience to all the topics which could occupy the thoughts or engage the interest of Christian men. Aware of the causes assigned by Foster for the unpopularity of evangelical religion in his day, he set himself to meet infidelity on its own ground, and to encounter the worldling with his own weapons. The consequence was that the tables were completely turned in favour of evangelical doctrine. The scorner stood abashed,



and the "lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God" shrunk like the crest-fallen rake who is dragged in the morning to answer for his midnight orgies. They well knew that he who now lectured them on their folly was no bigot or narrow-minded enthusiast; but a "fellow of infinite jest," who could on all proper occasions contribute his share to the innocent pastimes of life. He was a first-rate musician, and a composer of sacred music, to the promotion of which, in divine service, he lent himself with much energy. While thus careful to proclaim, as a Christian minister, the verities needful to personal salvation, he was not less zealous and conscientious in maintaining, as a Presbyterian minister, the principles revealed for the guidance and government of the Church. The boldness with which he acted in the case of the orders in council for the celebration of the funeral of the Princess Charlotte, by refusing to open his church for divine service on that occasion, rather than countenance the invasion implicitly made on the spiritual independence of the Scottish Church, can only be appreciated by those who take into view the reproach sure to be incurred at the time, not only from the sympathy universally awakened by the calamity, but from the general ignorance and apathy which rendered the faithfulness of the eminent pastor hard to be understood by any party within or without the Establishment.[1] The public spirit which animated himself he inspired in others, wherever the interests of religion were concerned. Thus he evinced a warm zeal for the purity of the Word of God, which he held to be deeply dishonoured by the British and Foreign Bible Society, when, for the purpose of securing a larger circulation for the Scriptures on the Continent, they mixed up the Apocrypha in their copies with the books of the sacred canon. In this serious quarrel with the leading members of the Earls Street Committee in London, which issued in the establishment of an independent society for Scotland, he may be said to have taken the foremost and most decided position in opposition to most of the evangelical bodies in the kingdom. His powerful voice resounding from press and platform was widely responded to against this injudicious concession to Popery, and issued in the wider triumph of unadulterated

[1] "Free Thoughts on the Religious Celebration of the Funeral of the Princess Charlotte." Dr. M'Crie's Miscellaneous Writings, p. 557.



Scripture. In those efforts he was largely aided by his contributions and those of his friends to the pages of the *Christian Instructor*, a periodical which he started in 1811, and which offered a fair field for advocating the ancient principles of the Scottish Church. At the same time his appearances at public meetings, whenever the cause of scriptural truth, of religious liberty, or of human welfare seemed to demand them, were signalized by the same popularity and success. Few who lived at the time can have forgotten the effect of his eloquent appeals in behalf of the immediate emancipation of our colonial slaves. On the ecclesiastical arena the splendid, although for the time ineffectual, onslaughts on long-established abuses, such as patronage, pluralities, and the various forms in which disregard was shown by the Moderate party to the edification of the Christian people, were equally conspicuous. In short, on every occasion, except in the conclusive vote of the Assembly, he may be said to have come off victorious. No vulnerable point in the arguments or characters of his assailants can be said to have escaped his keen eye, or to have evaded the lightning touch of his sarcastic eloquence, whether it might be that of the pretentious judge who provoked it by the pompous solemnity of his attack, or the hoary relic of Moderatism who boasted that no member of presbytery could be the worse of returning home from his duties with "a Hawick gill under his belt;" or even the poor player who assumed, under the castigation of the bold preacher, the airs of injured innocence. But the transcendent genius of Dr. Thomson was just beginning to tell upon the public measures of the Church, when the city of Edinburgh and the nation at large were called upon to deplore his sudden and premature removal. On February 9, 1831, in the zenith of his power, he was struck down without a moment's premonition on entering the threshold of his own house. Few of the Scottish clergy have left behind them a career so brilliant while it lasted, or a blank so deeply felt and lamented.[1]

[1] "Others will praise him, as for me, I can only deplore him! And my deploration shall not turn on the splendid talents with which his Master adorned him—the vigour of his understanding—the grasp of his intellect, or the unrivalled force of his masculine eloquence but on his honest, firm, unflinching, fearless independence of mind a quality eminently required in the present time, in which I may say he was single among his fellows, and which claimed for him respect as well as forbearance, even when it betrayed its possessor into excess." (*Life of Dr M'Crie*, p. 323.)



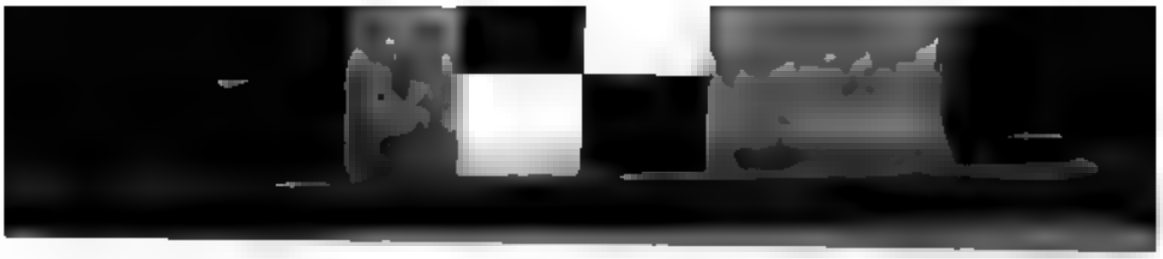
Closely allied with Dr. Thomson in sentiment and spirit, though moving in a very different social and ecclesiastical sphere, another deserves to be here noticed, as one whose writings materially contributed to prepare the way for the struggle which awaited the Scottish Church—we refer to the late Dr. Thomas M'Crie. Having been led, as we have seen, at an early period of his life to contend with his brethren for the principles of the first and second Reformation in opposition to the incipient symptoms of the Voluntary controversy which then arose in the Secession, he was induced to study the historical records of the Scottish Church, which issued in the publication of the *Life of John Knox*. The appearance of this work in 1811 had the effect of relieving the character of that reformer from the obloquy and abuse which more than two centuries of prejudice and calumny had gathered around him, and replacing him on that high pedestal of honour and admiration in which he was once held by his countrymen. This revival of the memory and renown of the Scottish reformer had all the effect of a new discovery, and produced an entire change on the literary tone as well as popular feeling of Scotland. It was followed in 1821 by the *Life of Andrew Melville*, which opened up a new field for illustrating the literary character, and more fully unfolding the ecclesiastical principles of the Scottish Church. Meanwhile the *Tales of my Landlord* appeared, in which Sir Walter Scott drew his pictures of the Covenanters during the persecuting reign of the Stuarts in a spirit and style so much calculated to misrepresent and caricature the suffering Presbyterians, and so obviously favourable to the worst of their persecutors, that Dr. M'Crie was induced, with the encouragement of his friend Dr. Thomson, to write a lengthened review in vindication of the Covenanters, which appeared in successive numbers of the *Christian Instructor*, in January, 1817. The severity of this vindication, though rendered necessary not only by the shocking barbarities of the time, but by the artifices of the novelist to throw a veil over them, was felt to be equal to its success, and in spite of the efforts of high-church Episcopalians to revive the slanders of the period, it proved more widely acceptable and popular than even the larger works of the same author. It opened up an era in the history of the Scottish Church, with every



step of which he was perfectly familiar, and which afforded him a favourable opportunity of exhibiting Presbytery in its native contrast with Prelacy, armed with arbitrary power and revelling in all the horrors of religious persecution. And it thus prepared the Church for passing through the trial of a new revolution by reviving the memory of what her fathers had done and endured for the sake of religious principle, as Wodrow had done for a previous revolution in his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*. Hallam says of Dr. M'Crie:—"It is impossible to think without respect of this most powerful writer, before whom there are few living controversialists that would not tremble, but his Presbyterian Hildebrandism is a little remarkable in this age."[1] "There was no Hildebrandism in him," says Lord Cockburn in his recent journal, "except that sort and degree of it which is inseparable from genuine Scotch Presbyterianism. Gregory VII. claimed absolute power, religious, civil, and ecclesiastical, over the world. A Scotch presbytery only claims an exclusive authority over such persons as choose to place themselves under its jurisdiction in regard to the spiritual affairs of their own Church. To this extent M'Crie, being a good Presbyterian, was a Hildebrand. It was not wonderful the biographer of John Knox should have a horror of Popery, which made him except that religion from the usual rights of civil toleration. All his works and opinions recommend charity and mildness. He was a tall, thin, apostolic-looking person, not known in society, into which, indeed, he never went; very modest, very primitive, absorbed in his books and his congregation, and, except when there was likely to be a concession to Catholics, never interfering in public matters."[2]

But beyond all doubt the mainspring of the whole evangelical movement in the Scottish Church was Dr. Thomas Chalmers. This meteor shot up suddenly into our horizon in 1815. Transported from the quiet hamlet of Kilmany to the Tron Church of Glasgow his *Astronomical Discourses* burst on the astonished gaze of multitudes, at once proclaiming the marvel of his recent spiritual change, and proving the

[1] Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. ii. p. 672.
[2] Journal of Henry Cockburn, being a continuation of the Memorials of his Time, vol. i. p. 100.



prelude of his future fame. Seldom, if ever, in the history of the Church has such a luminary appeared, shining from first to last with such intense and sustained brilliancy. He was, as Lord Cockburn truly says, "the greatest of living Scotchmen," and in drawing his portrait, as his lordship justly observes, "it is not difficult for one who, like me, had known him for thirty-six years, to explain how he was so." But life-like as the picture is, one cannot help feeling that it is impossible for the pen of any writer, more than the pencil of the painter or the chisel of the sculptor, to convey an adequate idea of the man as he really was, to those who have never seen him, never heard him, and never known him. "He was not a man of what is called learning in any sense of the word. He was less profound than varied; more discursive than exact. But the largeness of the fields that he cultivated may be seen in what he produced. . . . Still he was inferior to several of his surviving countrymen in pure literature and science; which, indeed, after he became devoutly serious, he scarcely cultivated for their own sakes, but only as auxiliary to his graver pursuits. But he was unapproached in the force and splendour with which he promoted the practical objects to which his mature life was devoted. These objects were all centred in the advancement of that evangelical religion which he deemed the one thing needful; and this, in his view, included the whole Christian and civic economy of our population. Education, therefore, and pauperism, and religious accommodation, and ecclesiastical rights and policy—everything, in short, not purely political, that directly concerned the moral elevation of the people, came within his sphere, but all subordinately to the diffusion and maintenance of what he thought vital religion. To the furtherance of this, his soul's work, and its kindred branches, he brought qualities which do not merely set him above every Scotch clergyman who has appeared since the Reformation, but rank him with the most powerful, and distinguish him as the most brilliant, of recent philanthropists. . . . The strong peculiarities of his style and diction aid his effect by stamping the page with the author's own individuality. As an orator he 'fulmined over Greece.' Immortal happiness was his sole ultimate aim. This gave great weight to his authority, hallowed his public appear-

ances, and facilitated an eloquence which it allured all to admire. His moral excellence cannot be estimated too highly. Besides affection and honesty, which comprise most goodness of the heart; and gentleness and frankness, which include the best parts of a good manner, he was deeply imbued with two qualities which too rarely attend public eminence—humility and simplicity. No detractor could pretend to think so little of him as he really thought of himself. He was utterly guileless; as unspoiled by applause as ever Scott was. He might have been lived with without its ever being suspected that he was anything but a contented, good-hearted man. . . . That man of bold thoughts and of burning imagination, on whose opinions and words the country hung, as soon as the paroxysm of exertion was over, became as soft and as artless as an infant. Nor was he without that attraction of personal peculiarity which, when unaffected, generally enhances the interest of amiable greatness. Every one loved the quaint, picturesque oddity of his look, figure, and manner; his self-coined diction and thick articulation; his taste for cumbrous jokes, and the merry twinkle of the eye, and the funny expression of the corners of the lips, which showed that graver cares had not quenched the frolicsomeness that had distinguished his youth. We were the fonder of him for his honest nationality. His opinions, and tastes, and tones, and manners, and language, and objects, were all saturated with Scotland. The very sight of him first excited a momentary smile at his external peculiarities, then suggested the idea of some high theme, scentless of the earth of vulgar anxiety, recalled his eloquence, and gave him our veneration."[1]

These graphic sketches may suffice to indicate the character of the men under the influence of whom the Evangelical party gradually rose to eminence and power in the Scottish Church. Their influence, indeed, in carrying measures of constitutional reform was retarded by the partial ascendency of Moderatism, but indications of the coming storm began to appear so early as 1826. The debate on pluralities that year was signalized by a precocious sentiment uttered by Lord-president Hope, who, as if he had scented afar off the

[1] Journal of Henry Cockburn, being a continuation of his Memorials, pp. 180, 189.



approaching battle, declared his serious doubt whether the Church had any other rights than those which she derived from the statutes of human law; but the incipient Erastianism of the judge was put down by the indignant replies of Dr. Stevenson Macgill of Glasgow, and of Mr. (afterwards Lord) Moncreiff. About the same time the zeal of the Assembly in behalf of evangelical truth was manifested in the deposition, in 1831, of Mr. Campbell of Row, who had adopted the views of Mr. Erskine of Linlathen on the subject of universal pardon.[1] But never was the rising of the evangelical tide more clearly discernible than in the revival of the missionary spirit in the Assembly. In place of the disgraceful vote of 1796 the Assembly now passed unanimously, and even by acclamation, a resolution to embark in the missionary cause, by sending a mission to India. The convenership was intrusted to Dr. Inglis, a clergyman of eminent talents, and who, though not popularly viewed as one belonging to the Evangelical side, had given evidence in his later years of an increasing bias towards Calvinistic sentiments; and by a singular guidance of the good hand of God upon them, they were led to select as their first missionary the apostolic Alexander Duff.

But the crowning event which gave predominance to the Evangelical party at this stage of their history was the conflict in which they engaged for the spiritual independence of the Church. On this occasion, as we have seen in other epochs of the Scottish history, when the Church was called to "wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high places," it pleased Providence to raise up "a band of men whose heart God had touched,"—men of congenial spirits with the work allotted to them. As the question was one involving the knowledge of law, civil and ecclesiastical, it is remarkable how many distinguished lawyers, and of the most brilliant ornaments of the Scottish bar, were enlisted in the cause of the Church. Among these were Lord Moncreiff, a first-rate jurist, to whom, as son of the venerable patriarch Sir Henry Moncreiff, was assigned the task of leading the

[1] He was deposed on the ground of the Act of Assembly, 1720, which condemned the *Marrow*. On this account Dr. M'Crie, who was present on that occasion, regretted it as proceeding from confounding the doctrine of universal pardon with that advocated in the *Marrow*, and in this he was supported by Dr. Andrew Thomson in his work on universal pardon.



Church. In this distinguished array of illustrious names were Sheriff Graham Speirs and Alexander Dunlop, who, for genuine piety and singular talents, were as strikingly fitted for the work to which they were called as Johnston of Warriston and Colonel Hutchinson were in their day. Lord Cockburn, whose high position entitled him to speak with authority, has recorded their virtues in a strain of eulogy the candour of which can only be equalled by its truthfulness. Of Sheriff Speirs he says:—"He was a most excellent and valuable man, and of a sort of which we have few. Sensible without what may be called talent, intelligent without learning, effective in plain speech without eloquence, and industrious without slavery, he had all the qualities necessary for practical use, with an almost total exemption from all those calculated for exhibition or ornament. The parts of his mind, as the Scotch sometimes say of the parts of the body, were all 'well put to,' that is, well fitted. Deeply religious, those who were not so, instead of being repelled by any severity, were attracted by his reasonableness and toleration. I don't think I ever knew a layman (Lord Moncreiff not excepted) to whom such religious authority attached in virtue of mere solemnity of character and gravity of manner. Had he lived during the civil war he would have been one of Cromwell's colonels. Tall, serious, honest, fearless, pious, and very dark, with lofty objects and pure principles, a sound head and a generous heart, Spiers would have been a second had he not been the first Colonel Hutchinson."[1] While on mentioning the name of the saintly, the gentlemanly, and truly Christian statesman, Alexander Dunlop, the same amiable writer, as if he had already caught a portion of the spirit which he describes, and was unable to part company too soon with it, or to speak too highly of one whom he regarded as the "chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," goes on to say:—"Dunlop is the purest of enthusiasts. The generous devotion with which he has given himself to this cause has retarded, and will probably arrest, the success of his very considerable professional talent and learning. But a crust of bread and a cup of cold water would satisfy all the worldly desires of this most disinterested person. His luxury lay in his doing justice for his favourite and oppressed Church,

[1] Journal of Henry Cockburn, vol. ii. p. 205.



which he espouses from no love of power or any other ecclesiastical object, but solely from piety and love of the people. There cannot be a more benevolent or honourable gentleman. Immovable in his principles, and by no means impervious to occasional contempt or indignation, neither these feelings, however just, or any other provocation, ever surprises him, even for a moment, out of his gentleness; nor is it possible for the influences of religious controversy to bias his candour. I have all along heard him discuss all these very inflammable matters in private, and while all parties, and nearly all men, have been raging and traducing, I have not only never heard a harsh word from him, but I have never been able to detect the lurking in his heart of an unkindly thought, even towards his least tolerable opponents. Any of these opponents who are candid might safely trust the explanation of their statements or views in their absence to the impartiality of Dunlop. I know no other person who so thoroughly unites the society and the agitation of churchmen with the liberality of a layman and a gentleman."[1]

Among the numerous band of ecclesiastics whom this conflict summoned into the strife, the names of Dr. Candlish and Dr. Cunningham, whose memories still linger so fresh in the minds of this generation, occur so frequently that it may seem almost superfluous to say that, in the struggles of the period to which we have come, they stand conspicuous. In Dr. Candlish we discover pure spirit triumphing over physical impediments, and "mounting up with wings as eagles." In Dr. Cunningham we see a mighty physique imparting to the movements of the noble spirit within, something of its own terrific force, and even occasionally dominating over its expression.

With these were conjoined in hearty counsel and co-operation many of the graver seniors of the Church, marked in their respective districts by their piety, usefulness, and ability, who, being then in advanced life, "are fallen asleep," but the savour of whose names still survives; while others then in the prime of life, though now descending into the vale of years, or, alas! departed, lent their efficient support. Such were Dr. David Welsh, the moderator at the Disruption, and afterwards professor of church history, a man of rare accomplishments; Dr. Patrick Macfarlan of Greenock, who occupied a high

[1] Journal of Henry Cockburn, vol. i. 326.



place among his brethren; Dr. Robert Gordon, the most admired and honoured of preachers; Dr. Nathanael Paterson, author of the well-known *Manse Garden*, and himself the most amiable of living men; Dr. Thomas Guthrie, the *facile princeps* of orators, the witty and bold Carment of Rosskeen, and the apostolic Macdonald of Ferintosh; while, among the lay elders of the party, the names of Earle Monteith, Makgill Crichton, Sheriff Jamieson, Fox Maule (afterwards Earl of Dalhousie), Dr. James Miller, &c., will awaken a host of recollections; not to mention Dr. Robert Buchanan, Dr. Charles Brown, and Dr. James Begg, who "remain unto this present."

The imperfect list we have now given may serve to recall many other names equally worthy and dear to those old enough to remember them. And certainly a more illustrious galaxy of devoted men never shone in the roll of the Scottish Church before, and has never since been equalled.

Under such leaders, and encouraged by numerous overtures from the various presbyteries and synods of the Church, the reforming party felt determined in 1833 to come to a trial of strength with their opponents by carrying a measure of non-intrusion. The times seemed favourable for such an attempt. The agitation produced by the reform bill of the preceding year had prepared men's minds for the assertion of popular rights in the Church as well as in the state; and the recent Voluntary controversy which had begun to be agitated among the Seceders and Dissenters throughout the country, had the effect of stirring up the genuine friends of religion to contemplate those measures of reform which seemed necessary to preserve the existence and justify the expediency of an Established Church. In the Assembly of 1833, therefore, in a brilliant speech, it was moved by Dr. Chalmers and seconded by Lord Moncrieff that it should be declared as the constitutional principle of the Scottish Church that "no pastor should be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people." In making this proposal Dr. Chalmers assumed, and did not propose to deny, any more than his seconder, the patrimonial rights of the patron; but the question came to be how the people were to be protected against the intrusion of an unfit and an unacceptable presentee. With many the restoration of the call to its ancient efficiency seemed the



readiest and most constitutional way of enforcing the principle of non-intrusion; but the practice of Moderatism had reduced this plan to a mere nonentity or empty form, so that in the eyes of the people it possessed no significance, and afforded no means of expressing their concurrence. They therefore proposed a veto on the presentation. This motion was lost in this Assembly by a small majority, indicating the very close approximation of the parties.

The following year, 1834, completed the triumph of the reforming party. Lord Moncrieff, in a masterly speech, showing conclusively from the ancient history and constitution of the Church that she had uniformly asserted, and in her best times conclusively settled the principle that no pastor could be ordained contrary to the will of the people, moved that this principle should be approved, by imparting to them, under certain circumstances and regulations, the privilege of a veto on the nomination of the patron. The same Assembly took up the case of the *quoad sacra* or chapel of ease ministers, who had been long kept from exercising any part of their judicial functions. The scanty benefices of the Scottish clergy could only suffice for a very thinly peopled country; and the unexhausted teinds, which ought to have supplied the spiritual destitution of a constantly increasing population, were appropriated by the selfishness of the landed proprietors. During the reign of Moderatism no means were taken to provide church accommodation or pastoral superintendence for the augmented mass of people. Provided they could secure their own isolated and stereotyped benefices, the Moderates cared little what became of the people, or how many might be driven out of the pale of the Church, and handed over to Dissenting communities. The chapels of ease, set up in populous towns, might supply religious ordinances to those willing to support them; but these charges not being under patronage, were generally filled by evangelical ministers, and every means were adopted to prevent them from becoming members of Assembly, and thus increasing the reforming minority. The measure, therefore, was strongly opposed; and it was not till the Assembly of 1834 that the chapel of ease ministers were allowed to exercise the function of ruling as well as teaching, according to the constitution of the Church and of Presbytery itself.



The veto law of 1834 met indeed with decided disapproval from one quarter, on principles widely different from those of Voluntaryism or of Moderatism. In 1833 Dr. M'Crie published anonymously a pamphlet entitled, *What ought the General Assembly to do in the Present Crisis?* The design of this tract was indicated in the motto from Shakespeare with which it was introduced:

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

The object was to impress on the members of the ensuing General Assembly the importance and necessity of taking a decisive step in the matter, instead of resting in any half measure, which would neither satisfy the country nor save the Establishment. The question in the title was thus briefly and emphatically answered, "WITHOUT DELAY PETITION THE LEGISLATURE FOR THE ABOLITION OF PATRONAGE." Having been summoned to give evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, he plainly declared the same principle, and did not refrain from expressing his disapproval of the veto, as likely to be found illegal by the civil courts. The same sentiment he did not scruple to announce from the pulpit. Regarding the veto as virtually recognizing the continuance, and calculated, if not intended, to perpetuate the monstrous grievance of patronage "They say," he observed, "that they have muzzled the monster; it is a mistake, they have only muffled it, and they have muzzled the people." Dr. M'Crie died August 5, 1835, but even before that time he had begun to take a deep interest in the efforts of the Church to assert her spiritual independence, which issued in her adoption of the policy which he had recommended.

Meanwhile the progress of the Church was daily advancing. For some time the veto wrought delightfully. Out of 200 ministers presented, only ten were vetoed. During the four years succeeding the ascendency of the Evangelical party in 1834 no fewer than 187 additional churches were erected within the pale of the Establishment; and the amount of money contributed to the Church extension fund amounted in the same time to the munificent sum of £205,930.



The efforts of Dr. Chalmers alone in the multiplication of churches in Glasgow and throughout the destitute parts of the country were truly gigantic. In following out his favourite theory, that in matters of religion it is not safe to leave the demand to regulate the supply, he earnestly pleaded for the importance of a national church, whose endowments might enable her to furnish all classes of the community with the means of grace. He pleaded for national endowments not from opposition to voluntary contributions, but to implement their deficiencies, on the principle laid down by the apostle, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?" To stir up the government and the people at large to a sense of the importance of making such a provision he undertook a mission to England, where he delivered several lectures on the subject of establishments, without, however, inducing the government to take any active share in the promotion of his philanthropic designs.

Everything seemed to promise the Church an opportunity of converting the Establishment into an efficient engine for promoting the moral and religious welfare of the nation.

The only party to whom this success boded no good were the Dissenters, whose ancient zeal against patronage was now converted into the new channel of anti-establishments, as soon as they saw that the evils of the one were likely to be corrected for the advantage of the other. The press teemed with Voluntary pamphlets. The Seceders, having abandoned the principles of the old Church of Scotland, had ceased to take any interest in her modern efforts to regain her freedom, and were concerned only to retain in efficiency the sectarian position into which they had been thrown by the Moderate policy of the last century. In some of the larger towns their congregations had greatly increased; and having caught the political spirit of modern times, the efforts at reformation put forth by the Established Church found them in the anomalous posture of opposition to them, and arrayed on the side of patronage. They could not contemplate without alarm the accession of popularity to the Established Church from the removal of such a monstrous evil as an unrestricted patronage, and the probable ascendency of an evangelical ministry. While some argued theoretically against establishments,



the great majority found it easier practically to range themselves in opposition to the few cases, such as the Edinburgh annuity tax, in which the principle was unfortunately brought to press upon the individual, rather than the community at large. One of their leaders, Dr. John Brown, an able and respectable clergyman in Edinburgh, published a pamphlet entitled, *What ought the Dissenters of Scotland to do in the Present Crisis?* in which he argued that "the Dissenters having invested money in churches and endowments *on the faith of the abuses of the Establishment*, it is unfair in the government, or in any liberal man, to do anything towards the correction of these abuses."[1]

A sudden and unexpected blow soon arrested this favourable career, and involved the Church in a collision which issued in her disruption from the state.

[1] H. Cockburn's Journal, vol. i. p. 273.



CHAPTER X.

1838 — 1841.

The Auchterarder case—Specimen of the pleadings—Judgment of the Court of Session—Appeal to the House of Lords—Case of Lethendy—The Presbytery of Dunkeld cited to the bar of the Court of Session—Hugh Miller and the "Witness"—The Marnoch intrusion—Suspension of the seven Strathbogie ministers—Speech of Dr. Gordon in St. Cuthbert's—Lord Aberdeen's bill—Interdict served on the Assembly—Deposition of the Strathbogie ministers—Culsalmond.

This peaceful and promising state of the Church was broken up by the unfortunate case of Auchterarder. To this parish the patron, the Earl of Kinnoull, presented one Mr. Robert Young. This presentee, after having twice officiated in the pulpit, produced before the presbytery a call, which out of a parish containing 3000 souls, was signed by only two individuals, whose names, destined to future immortality, were Michael Tod and Peter Clarke. A case more fitted for testing the virtues of the Veto Law could hardly be imagined. Out of 300 persons entitled to exercise the privilege, no fewer than 287 came forward to record their names at the presbytery table as dissentients against Mr. Young's call and settlement. The patron and the presentee both resolved on bringing the case before the courts of law in 1837. Never in the history of the Scottish Church has any case given birth to such a complicated and lengthened litigation. When it is considered that the report fills two well-sized volumes, it will be seen that no summary, however condensed, can be here attempted. But a slight attention to the pleadings in this case may explain the nature of the controversy in which the Church was now involved with the civil courts. Mr. Hope, the dean of faculty, who was the leading counsel against the Church, and the prime adviser and



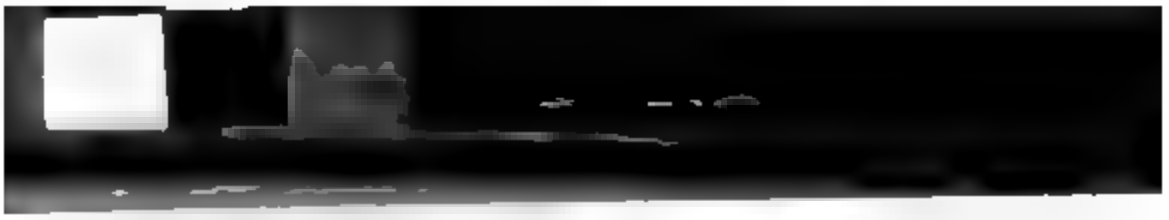
mover of the measures taken against her, in his opening address plainly laid down the principle, that after annulling the Popish system in Scotland, the state had *created* the Reformed Church in its room, and that from the state she received her whole government and jurisdiction. He denied, therefore, that the Church possessed, by a divine commission, any authority to exercise a spiritual government: all her authority was founded on human statute and not upon any laws instituted by Christ, and they must therefore be entirely subject to the ordinary laws of the land as administered by the courts of justice. On this radical theory, so confidently announced by the dean, the whole subsequent procedure of the Court of Session in this and the following cases may be said to rest. It is needless to say to those acquainted, however superficially, with the history and principles of the Church of Scotland, that this was a gross and altogether groundless assumption It was, therefore, not difficult for the solicitor-general, Mr. Rutherford, who appeared for the Church, to show that the statutes establishing the Church did not *create*, but simply recognize its discipline and government, as well as its doctrine; that the powers of the Church are to be learned only from her standards and practice; that even the Act 1592 ordered "all presentations to benefices" to be laid before the presbytery of the bounds, who were "to put order to all matters and causes ecclesiastical within their bounds, *according to the discipline of the Kirk;*" that the only competent remedy in the event of the civil court finding their procedure illegal, was that the patron might retain the fruits of the benefice in his own hands, but that the state had never made the Court of Session the supreme judge over the Church, and that the civil judges were totally unfit to sit in judgment on matters purely spiritual, such as the fitness of a minister for a particular charge.

To this sober verdict of juridical wisdom the Christian mind of the country yielded its cordial and ready assent. The case presented no aspect of mystery and no room for doubt to those who were guided by the dictates of inspired truth, and who remembered that the Head of the Church had empowered his ministers to go forth in his name, and disciple all nations, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing



them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Equally plain did the case appear to the simple Presbyterian who had read his Bible and had looked into the history of his Church, where so many of his fathers contended for the same principle, and walked with firm step from the council chamber to the scaffold, with no other testimony to support them, or which they deemed worthy of being supported, than that which was upheld by the apostles, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." To those who looked into the standards of the Church, established by law, the point was equally conclusive, for, to go no farther, in the *Confession of Faith*, ratified at the Revolution, it is declared, "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed."[1] And even natural men, under the guidance of no higher principles than common sense and the love of fair and honourable dealing, could not see their way to any other conclusion. The case was carried against the Church by a majority of eight to five of the judges in the Court of Session. The minority of the judges in the Auchterarder case included such men as Lords Moncrieff, Glenlee, Fullerton, Cockburn, and Jeffrey—men who stood, as they still stand, high in the estimation of their country, and in the annals of jurisprudence. "Above all," says one of them, "we are immovably certain that the Church has the law on its side, and that the opposition to it by lay members of the Establishment proceeds chiefly from Toryism anxious to enable patrons to keep down the people."[2] They held, therefore, that the veto law was legal, and that even if illegal it did not belong to the Court of Session to interfere with the spiritual proceedings of the church courts under it. The other eight judges declared the veto to be illegal, and therefore pronounced that "the Presbytery of Auchterarder had acted to the hurt and prejudice of the patron and presentee illegally and in violation of their duty, contrary to the provisions of the statute of 10th Anne and other statutes."

[1] Confession of Faith, xxx. 1, 2. [2] Journal by Henry Cockburn, i. 255.



From this sentence the Church appealed to the House of Lords, and there, after hearing counsel, the judgment of the Court of Session was confirmed. From such a tribunal, indeed, the Church of Scotland had little reason to expect any sympathy with her claims to spiritual jurisdiction, still less when the house was guided by the judicial opinions delivered by Lord Brougham. Hardly could the supreme counsel of the empire have chosen as their adviser one more deeply prejudiced against the Evangelical party in the Scottish Church than Lord Brougham, who, connected with the family of the famous Principal Robertson, of the palmy days of Moderatism, combined the bitter antipathies of the old Moderates with the reckless liberalism of the modern school of politics. In a rambling extemporary oration he gave vent, with his usually vituperative vehemence, to his surprise that such a case as that of Auchterarder should have created such an amount of difficulty and dissension. With him the opinions of the Scottish judges who had decided favourably for the Church were treated with the utmost contempt. He denied the existence of an independent jurisdiction as belonging to the Church at all, and treated it as an "indecency" even to suppose that the courts of the Church of Scotland would ever dream of refusing to obey *any* sentence which the supreme civil court might think fit to pronounce. No one can peruse the speeches of Lord Brougham and Chancellor Cottenham, who coincided with him, without being satisfied that it was not by any means the mere veto law that was now at stake, but the non-intrusion principle itself in every shape and form of it, and that the Church's whole right of self-government in matters spiritual was denied.

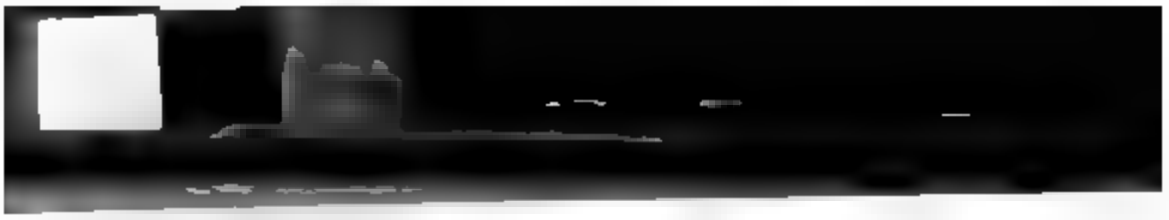
Meanwhile the Church and the courts of law were brought into direct collision in another case, that of Lethendy. In this case one Mr. Clark, who had been previously vetoed by the people, was induced to apply for an interdict against the presentation granted to Mr. Kessen. The Presbytery of Dunkeld were instructed to complete the settlement of Mr. Kessen notwithstanding the interdict of the civil court. This was the first case involving a direct collision between the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The Commission of the Church held that the ordination of a minister was a purely



spiritual or ecclesiastical act, with which the civil tribunals had nothing whatever to do. This decision was supported by Dr. Brunton and several other members of the Moderate party. Mr. Hope, the dean of faculty, who took an active share in opposing the Evangelical party, openly threatened the members of presbytery with imprisonment in the event of their proceeding; but in spite of all menaces they went forward in the discharge of their spiritual duty, and ordained Mr. Kessen. Irritated by this disobedience to their mandate, the presbytery were summoned to appear at the bar of the Court of Session, and they having complied with this summons, the country beheld the strange spectacle of a spiritual court appearing as criminals at the bar of the civil court. The high respect in which the people of Scotland are disposed to hold their spiritual rulers was amply borne out on this occasion by the members of presbytery, who were accompanied to their place at the bar by Dr. Gordon, whose well known and venerated appearance, as he took his place by the side of his brethren, was hailed with a buzz of admiration, which was with difficulty suppressed. Their moderator, Mr. Stirling of Cargill, having, with modest and becoming dignity, read the simple reasons of their ecclesiastical procedure, one of the twelve ermined judges delivered the reprimand of the civil court, upon which they were dismissed from the bar. It is now understood that their lordships had differed privately as to the sentence which should be pronounced.[1] It only remains to be mentioned, as showing the spirit of those then opposed to the Church, that they had recourse to another mode of making her feel the weight of their legal revenge, that at the instance of this worthless presentee Mr. Clark, the presbytery were saddled with an action for damages amounting to several thousands of pounds—a sentence which, but for the interposition of friends, might have reduced the honest men to ruin.

In 1840, when the non-intrusion party were in the thick of the contest, they had the good fortune to secure a powerful champion in the person of the late lamented Hugh Miller. The public press, from ignorance of religious principles involved in the struggle, or from pure obliquity of vision, was

[1] The president, the justice-clerk, and Murray were rather for the jail. *H. Cockburn's Memorials*, vol. i. p. 234.



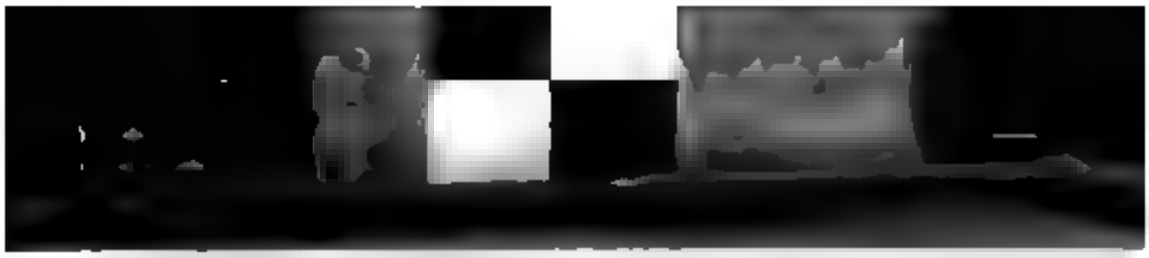
either hostile or indifferent to the cause. Mr. Miller had already distinguished himself as a writer in his *Scenes and Legends;* and by a successful letter to the lord-chancellor had shown his familiar acquaintance with the points now in dispute. With a strong taste for geological science, a thorough intimacy with the stores of elegant literature, and with the gift of conveying his thoughts in a style of rare wealth and beauty, his mind was deeply imbued with recollections of the past history, and attachment to the principles of Presbytery, the high independence of whose spirit he breathed, and in the atmosphere of which alone his genius expanded. To enlist such a writer on the side of non-intrusion was felt to be an important element of success, and the *Witness* newspaper was started. His conduct as editor of that periodical during the momentous struggle which issued in the establishment of the Free Church it is hardly possible to overestimate. The journal took its place at once throughout the country as a leading organ on the question, and contributed most materially, by the intrinsic merit of its articles, and by the admirable spirit which it inspired, to the triumph of the cause which it espoused.

As time advances the battle thickens, and the collision becomes more decided than ever. The northern district of Aberdeenshire, so studded with Moderate clergy from the days of Prelacy, soon furnished a case of intrusion which outstripped all the rest, and proved a source of litigation more complex than any that had preceded it. The parish of Marnoch, in the Presbytery of Strathbogie, having become vacant, the trustees of the Earl of Fife presented a Mr. Edwards, who having previously acted as assistant, was unanimously vetoed by the people. Not a single member of the congregation could be induced to sign his call, saving and excepting one Peter Taylor, the publican at whose house the presbytery dined. The Commission of Assembly having rejected this presentee, the majority of the presbytery, amounting to seven, unlike the presbyteries in the other cases, who were favourable to the views of the reforming party in the Church, resolved to proceed with the obnoxious settlement. After a series of manœuvres, which, however, were defeated, the case of the recusant presbytery was brought before the Commission which met in December,

1839, when they peremptorily refused to obey the orders of their ecclesiastical superiors, being resolved to carry their object into effect by condemning the veto as illegal, and by following the order of the civil court as in the case of Auchterarder. In consequence of this direct act of disobedience to their spiritual superiors, when the gentlest measures were only met by the rudest and most offensive repulses, the Commission were compelled in self-defence, and from pure regard to the rules of the Church, which had been openly defied, to pass upon the seven ministers of Strathbogie the sentence of suspension.

The position of the Moderate clergy presented a striking contrast to that which their fathers assumed during the ascendency of their party in the last century. So long as they commanded a majority of votes in the General Assembly nothing could be more arbitrary and unyielding than their determination to enforce their sentences on the inferior courts of the Church. Thus, in 1752, as may be seen by referring to that period of our narrative, so strict were they on enforcing this subordination, in the case of Inverkeithing, that they deposed Mr. Gillespie, simply because he had failed personally to fulfil the orders of "his superiors"—the General Assembly. No sooner, however, had they failed to secure an ascendency in that Assembly than an entire change came over their ecclesiastical policy: the orders of the General Assembly were openly disobeyed, and the courts of civil law became the "superiors" whom they held themselves bound to obey. The great body of the Moderates, with Dr. Cook at their head, now joined in common league with the refractory ministers of Strathbogie. Even Mr. Robertson of Ellon, following in the wake of his patron, Lord Aberdeen, though occasionally staggered at the extreme language of these sworn Erastians, was ready to throw his protection around the "conscientious" fugitives from discipline in the north. Dr. Candlish took the opportunity on this occasion to point out at once the inconsistency of the Moderate party, and of explaining the vast difference between the two cases in which the Church formerly and now exercised her claim of jurisdiction. After having proposed that the Commission should proceed to censure against the Strathbogie ministers, he went on to say:—"Respect for the con-

sciences of individual ministers is the plea which perhaps may be urged now as a reason why we should not visit severely the members of this presbytery, who tell us that they cannot conscientiously obey us. Most heartily do I wish, sir, that at all periods in our history such respect had always been paid to conscience. We would not have had to regret the exclusion from our Church of men whose only fault was, what we now regard as their highest glory—that the authority of conscience in them was paramount and sacred. I ask this house now to consider the difference between what we propose in reference to the case of Marnoch, and what was done in regard to such men as I have referred to in such a case as that of Dunfermline. I implore this Commission to remember those dark and dreary days, and to think how Commissions of the General Assembly then dealt with the consciences of those holy men. Were they, I ask, contented with taking steps to secure that their sentences should not be frustrated, or even to provide for their being actually carried into effect? No, but with a refinement of cruelty and ingenuity of torture, they seemed wantonly and gratuitously to seek out pretexts for outraging the tender consciences of brethren, and driving them to extremities when there was not a shadow of any practical necessity for doing so. What else could be the meaning of the Church's proceedings, when, not content with having their severe sentences against the liberties of the people executed by those who were willing to be her agents, she insisted that the best and the most godly ministers of the day should—against their consciences and the light of Holy Scripture as they viewed it—become themselves their instruments in enforcing her tyranny. Well would it be for us in these times, when such an outcry is raised about what is called our ecclesiastical despotism, when so much is said about our attempting to obtain and exercise arbitrary power, well would it be for us, and for themselves, if the godly people of Scotland would have some regard to the facts of history, and would call to mind the persecutions of these godly ministers, who were not merely prevented from obstructing the execution of the Church's decrees—*that* they made no attempt to do—but in the mere wilfulness of despotic authority must be compelled themselves to bear a part in it. I say it would be well if



our people would contrast the proceedings of the present majority in the Church courts with the proceedings of the dominant party in the days of old, when, without any pretence of necessity, with a degree of unfeeling and unrelenting rigour altogether inconceivable, with no motive apparently but that of outraging the conscience and causing schism, they not merely required unacceptable presentees to be settled, but most needlessly, when there were ministers enough who held it lawful, specially required those who held it sinful, on pain of deposition, to settle them. These, sir, were the men who loved ecclesiastical power, and delighted in deliberately asserting a despotism almost worthy of the Papal domination. We, sir, have no such delight: we have no wish that the members of the Presbytery of Strathbogie should experience any unnecessary exercise of our authority. It is true, indeed, that we desire to assert and vindicate the authority of the Church in this and in all other cases. We are prepared at all hazards to maintain the authority of her jurisdiction against the encroachments of the civil arm. . . . We must, therefore, in the present case vindicate the supremacy of the General Assembly and its Commission; but I ask you again to observe that the measure which I propose is strictly preventive, and has for its single object not to compel men to perform an act which it hurts their consciences to perform, but to prevent them from doing what if left alone they might feel themselves bound to do, but what, surely, if they are prevented by the interposition of our authority, they cannot reasonably take blame to themselves for leaving undone."[1]

It had now become apparent that the only method by which the Church could escape the constant painful recurrence of these scenes of collision with the civil courts was by an appeal to the government of the country; but all negotiations with this view proved ineffectual. The Whig government, under Lord Melbourne, postponed all interference in it till turned out by the Tories, under Sir Robert Peel. It is unnecessary we should enter into the political negotiations of the deputations and non-intrusion committees, or the disputes which issued in the rejection by the Church of Lord Aberdeen's bill. It may be sufficient to state that by this bill the

[1] The Ten Years' Conflict, by Robert Buchanan, D.D., vol. ii. pp. 32–34.

whole responsibility of rejecting an unacceptable presentee was made to rest upon the judgment, or what was usually called the *liberum arbitrium*, of the presbytery, and that no security was afforded for giving effect to the conscientious objections of the people. The Assembly of 1840 was characterized by a splendid speech of Dr. Chalmers in moving the rejection of this bill. "The leading principle of Presbyterianism," he said, "is that there is a distinct government in the Church, and which the state must have approved of ere it conferred on her the temporalities; and we must be as uncontrolled by the state in the management of our own proper affairs as if we did not receive a farthing from the treasury. I take this principle to be the peculiar glory of the Church of Scotland. . . . This great fundmental principle of the Church of Scotland —the principle of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Church in matters spiritual—once familiar, as Bishop Burnet tells us, as a household word in the mouths of the peasantry of our land —has faded in the quiet of centuries, and has fallen from the memories and even the understandings of men. Our ark is in the midst of conflicting billows, but our flag is all the more unfurled by the storm which has been raised; and now, spread abroad and expanded by the gale, it serves only to make the motto of our establishment more patent to all eyes —The Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of our Church. We have nailed that colour to the mast, and we will keep by it in all its fortunes, whether in the tempest or in the sunshine."

The Commission held in August the same year was engaged in preparing a libel against the Strathbogie ministers. The contumacy of these clerical delinquents was renewed by their refusing to appear in answer to the summons of the Assembly, pleading that they did not intend to submit to the sentences which had been passed against them, as they had applied for and received an interdict from the Court of Session against the whole proceedings which the Assembly had taken against them. The speech of Dr. Chalmers on this occasion was a signal display of eloquence and power. He indignantly repelled the taunts of the Church's adversaries; and when he flung back on the dean of faculty, Mr. John Hope, the prime mover of this agitation, his well-known adage, that "what firmness has done before, firmness may do again," the burst



of enthusiasm which followed showed how well the stroke had told, and how thoroughly it was responded to.

The Strathbogie delinquents having procured the interdicts of the civil courts, were now determined to complete what they had begun, in the face of the Church and all its censures, by effecting the settlement of their favourite presentee, Mr. Edwards. This singular piece of ecclesiastical effrontery was actually carried into effect at Marnoch on the 21st of January, 1841. On that wintry day, when the surrounding district was covered with snow, the seven suspended ministers of Strathbogie assembled in the parish church, which was soon filled by the members of the congregation, and a crowd of spectators gathered by curiosity from the adjacent parishes. Being questioned by one of the elders of the parish whether they appeared by the authority of the General Assembly, the recusant members refused to answer unless the parties chose to appear at their bar; and Mr. Duncan, as agent of the parishioners, after stating their objections to the settlement, requested the parishioners of Marnoch to follow him out of the church, and leave them to force Mr. Edwards on the parish. The scene that followed was truly impressive. In a body the parishioners rose, and gathering up the Bibles which they had been wont to leave from Sabbath to Sabbath in the pews, they silently retired. The deep emotion that prevailed among them was visible in the tears which might be seen trickling down many an old man's cheek; and in the flush, more of sorrow than of anger, that reddened many a younger man's brow. "We never witnessed," said an onlooker, "a scene bearing the slightest resemblance to this protest of the people, or approaching in the slightest degree to the moral beauty of their withdrawal; for, stern though its features were, they were also sublime. No word of disrespect or reproach escaped them. They went away in a strong conviction that their cause was with the Most Powerful, and that with Him rested the redress of all their wrongs. Even the callous-hearted people that sat in the pew, the only pew representing intrusionism and forced settlements, were moved, and the hearts of some among them appeared to give way. 'Will they all leave?' we heard some of them whispering. *Yes, they all left, never to return*, until the temple is purified again, and the buyers and sellers—the traffickers in religion—are driven

from the house of God. THEY ALL LEFT. Nothing that happened on that eventful day of the Marnoch intrusion was more remarkable than the resolution which, immediately after leaving the church, the people unanimously adopted, of retiring at once to their homes."[1]

When the parishoners of Marnoch left the church, their places were filled on the instant with the crowd of strangers who, up till that time, had not been able to gain admittance. The order previously preserved was of course no longer maintained. The intrusionist ministers were pelted with snowballs; and Mr. Thomson, the pretended moderator, attempted to make his way to the pulpit to begin the ordinary services, but in vain. One of the county magistrates having been sent for to quell the riot, declared, on looking around him, that he saw no riot to quell. He remarked that he did not see a Marnoch parishioner in the meeting; and a young man in the gallery having been pointed out as one, and asked by the magistrate why he was there when the rest had left, he answered that he was there merely because he could not get out; and a way being opened for him, he also departed. The service therefore proceeded, and the solemn farce of ordination was concluded.

While the religious portion of the public were entering heart and soul into the contest of the Church in behalf of the liberties of the Christian people, it may be here stated, as a curious incident of the period, that the general public, more careless about the momentous issues of the question, were amused by the stirring incidents portrayed in a series of caricatures got up at the time in a somewhat hostile spirit, in which the leading non-intrusionists were represented in such a way as to throw around them an air of ridicule. Behind these passing lampoons, in the more serious thoughts of the people, the cause of sober truth prevailed and triumphed.

The Assembly of 1841 met on the 20th of May, when Dr. Gordon was chosen moderator. The main business brought before this Assembly was the bill introduced by the Duke of Argyll before the House of Lords, but the consideration of which had been postponed till after the meeting of Assembly. The object of this bill was substantially to approve of the

[1] From the *Aberdeen Banner*, under the editorship of Mr. Troup.



Veto Act of 1834; and there can be no doubt that if it had been carried into a law, it would have settled the peace of the Church. The debate upon the bill was opened by Dr. Candlish in a speech so full of conciliation, candour, and generosity—a speech which appealed so powerfully to all the better feelings of men's hearts—that for once the heat of *controversy* was allayed, and for a moment it almost seemed as if, on this question at least, the two parties were about to be at one.

The earlier part of his speech was chiefly occupied with an exposition of the bill itself, which he showed to be in substantial harmony with the principles of the Church, both as to non-intrusion and spiritual independence. The motion he had to propose consisted of a series of resolutions, embodying an approval of the Duke of Argyll's bill as a measure "which, if passed into a law, would be received with thankfulness, as an important boon to the Church and to the country, and that the Church and country are under deep obligation to his grace the Duke of Argyll for this new proof of that enlightened patriotism and zeal which have distinguished the illustrious family whose name is honourably enrolled among Scotland's martyrs and confessors." He then appealed to his brethren on the opposite side of the house, urging that, without compromising their former opposition, they might, for the peace of the Church, agree to this measure, if carried, and thus put an end to the sad contention. The motion was carried by two to one; the only objection being founded on the improbability of such a measure being passed by the House of Lords.

Difficulties without number crowded on the Scottish Church during 1841. Every attempt was made by the Moderates to obstruct the proceedings of the reforming party. The suspended ministers of Strathbogie applied for another interdict prohibiting any member of the Scottish Church from entering to preach within the bounds of the presbytery; and this interdict was passed, though never put into execution, several of the leading ministers, including Dr. Candlish, Dr. Chalmers, and Dr. Gordon, having boldly resisted this new attempt to control their spiritual province, and entered the proscribed bounds. For this act of contravention to the orders of the civil court, in which so many of his brethren had shared, Dr.

Candlish was not only held up to opprobrium by Lord Aberdeen in the House of Lords, but deprived of the chair of Biblical criticism, to which he had been all but appointed by the home government, who shabbily withdrew the appointment at the last moment in favour of Dr. Robert Lee. The painful duty of finding the libel proven against the suspended ministers of Strathbogie devolved on the Assembly of this year. The motion for their deposition was founded on three grounds—they had broken the laws of the Church, violated their ordination vows, and sinned against Christ. The sentence of deposition was pronounced, and Mr. Edwards of Marnoch was deprived of his license. On the evening of Saturday the 29th of May an extraordinary scene was enacted. The house was in the midst of a discussion on the eldership when the moderator announced that he had received a communication from Mr. Alexander Peterkin, agent for the Strathbogie ministers, intimating that there was a messenger-at-arms in attendance at the door of the house prepared to serve the officials of the Assembly with an interdict which had been issued that morning by the lord-ordinary, one of the judges of the Court of Session, against the moderator and all others, to prohibit them from carrying into effect the sentence of deposition which the Assembly had pronounced on the seven ministers. When the surprise created by this singular proceeding had somewhat subsided, a deputation was appointed to wait upon the commissioner, who was then at Holyrood Palace, requesting his presence at the Assembly. His grace soon appeared, and the moderator, Dr. Gordon, having communicated to him the facts of the case, he replied, "I shall at all times endeavour to be present with you when you require my presence. It is my duty to do so; and in the exercise of that duty I trust I shall not be found wanting, whether that duty call upon me to uphold the rights of the Assembly, or to support and maintain the rights and prerogatives of the crown, if they shall be attempted to be infringed from any quarter whatever." This violent and unconstitutional intrusion was finally disposed of on the Monday following by the passing of some resolutions, calmly but firmly asserting the rights of the Assembly, which it was resolved should be communicated to the legislature, and to the Queen in council. Bating this



uncourteous interruption, it deserves to be stated that never were the proceedings of the Assembly conducted in a more peaceable spirit, or in a more orderly manner. It seemed evident that the nearer the Disruption approached, those whose temporal interests were to be so seriously affected by that event were acquiring, with the Divine blessing, more solemn, calm, and sustaining views of their position.

While the members of Assembly were thus prepared for the catastrophe awaiting them, an opportunity was soon given of showing how completely the same feeling was shared by the community at large. After the Assembly a large public meeting was held in St. Cuthbert's Church, at which 1200 office-bearers attended, with an immense crowd of people. This meeting was presided over by the moderator, Dr. Gordon, one of the most accomplished and highly popular clergymen of his age. In his opening address this distinguished man gave expression to the general feeling then entertained by the mass of the people of Scotland. "I cannot help," he said, "repeating what was stated this forenoon by a very revered friend of mine, as a motive to gratitude, that the very painful circumstances which have brought us to the present crisis have at the same time so simplified the great question at issue, that I cannot conceive how any person of common understanding, who gives his attention to it for a moment, can now fail to perceive the real state of matters in regard to the Church of Scotland. For a long time it was involved in all the *tortuosities*—I cannot find a better word at the moment—of legal questions; and I could well sympathize with many of our people who had neither opportunity nor time for investigating those great principles on which the question rests, if they did not understand the bearings of it. But now it has come to this, and no man can fail to see it, that if we define the principles of the Church as they have been recently laid down in certain documents and speeches, we must intrude ministers on all the parishes of Scotland; for if it can be in one, it can be in all—that we are bound and restricted to intrude ministers without even the shadow of a call from Christian congregations over whom they are to be placed. And more than that, it has come to this, plainly and distinctly, that I, a minister of the Church of Scotland, who have solemnly sworn before God, and as I shall answer to him at the great

day of judgment, that I believe in my heart and conscience that Christ is the great Head of the Church, and that he has appointed office-bearers in it, distinct and apart from the civil magistrate, to whom he has committed the keys of his spiritual kingdom; who are to loose and to bind, to lay on and to take off, spiritual and ecclesiastical censures:—it has come, I say, to this, that I am called upon either to renounce these principles, or to renounce the privileges which I hold as an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland. I am called on to say whether I will or will not renounce this dogma—whether I will declare that this article of the Confession of Faith is null and void—an article which I cannot, I dare not relinquish, because I have sworn to maintain it. But I am told that in maintaining these principles I am acting in violation of the law of the land. Why, fathers and brethren, I took the oath to maintain that article in the Confession of Faith with the perfect knowledge and sanction of the state; for the state had embodied that article in an act of parliament. And when I came forward before my people, and fell upon my bended knees, and received the hands of my fathers and brethren upon my head, setting me apart to the office of the holy ministry, did the state, or did any servant of the state, interfere to say,—I protest against such an act,—I protest against your taking such pledge,—because, if you take it, you may at a future period traverse some of the findings of the courts of law. No such protest was taken against my ordination, and therefore I stand here an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland, and declare that I took the oath to maintain the great principles for which we are now contending, with the perfect knowledge and sanction of the state itself. They may have changed their opinions; I have not changed mine."[1]

Not such was the tone in which the proceedings of the Assembly were soon after commented on in the House of Lords. On the 15th of June the Earl of Aberdeen, when presenting a petition from the deposed ministers, took occasion to say that the presumption manifested by the General Assembly in those proceedings was never equalled by the Church of Rome!

In the same year another case of violent intrusion occurred in Aberdeenshire, that of Culsalmond, in the Presbytery of

[1] Ten Years' Conflict, vol. ii. pp. 309–311.



Garioch. In this case the majority of the presbytery were resolved to ordain a wretched old man of the name of Middleton in spite of the dissent of the people and the laws of the Church. The total disregard which they manifested towards both of these proved so offensive to the feelings of the parish, that, unlike the case of Marnoch, the people, instead of leaving the church, crowded it with a noisy and tumultuous assembly, so that the presbytery were compelled to betake themselves to the manse, where, with barred doors, they completed what they termed an ordination.

CHAPTER XI.

1842 — 1843.

Gathering clouds—The Forty—The quoad sacra *ministers—Assembly of 1842—Motion for the abolition of patronage—The "Claim of Rights"—Preparation for leaving the Establishment—The Convocation—Dr. Chalmers' sermon—Dr. James Hamilton's picture of the Convocation—The converging lines of the Conflict.*

Hitherto the non-intrusionists were a united, firm, and determined band. But in the spring of 1842 a party, originating in the west, began to show symptoms of a disposition to desert the cause by adopting something like the *liberum arbitrium* of Lord Aberdeen's Bill. The defection of this party, amounting to forty, a name which from this time clave to them as a *soubriquet*, had a wonderful effect in raising the hopes of hostile politicians. The private communications which the leading men of this party held with the members of government tended to increase their ignorance of the real state of matters. "Five hundred ministers, did you say, would leave the Establishment! bah! we know better; five-and-twenty will be the outside of it." About the same time Mr. Young, the baffled presentee to Auchterarder, renewed for a second time this interminable case: the amount claimed by him in name of damages was £10,000 in the event of the presbytery refusing to induct him into the charge; a sum which ultimately rose, with expenses, to £16,000. This brought the matter to a crisis. The question came to be this—If the civil courts could rightly coerce and compel the Established Church by civil pains and penalties to perform an act so purely spiritual as that of ordaining one to the holy ministry in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only way in which the consistency of such an act of civil supremacy could be preserved was that suggested by Dr.



Cunningham, by "ordaining him in the name of the Court of Session!"

The state of disorder and anarchy which this collision produced awakened the desires of all good men to avert the threatened catastrophe by the adoption of legislative measures of conciliation. Among others, the excellent Sir George Sinclair attempted, by mutual consultations between the contending parties, to introduce a measure which he hoped might succeed in pouring oil on the troubled waters. In this well-meant attempt he failed; nor was the Duke of Argyll more successful in the bill which he introduced. That bill, which was favourable to the Church, and went to support the veto, was violently opposed in Parliament, and the efforts of Fox Maule (afterwards Earl of Dalhousie) and Mr. Campbell of Monzie were foiled in attempting to carry it.

The Assembly of 1842, at which Dr. Welsh was moderator and the Marquis of Bute commissioner, the last held in the Establishment under the reign of the reforming party, was signalized by two things deserving special notice. The one was the carrying of Dr. Cunningham's motion against patronage. This motion, though opposed by some, chiefly from reluctance to involve the Church still more deeply in her struggles with the government, which still held out some prospect of passing a measure of relief, was carried by 216 to 147. On this occasion the resolution against patronage was supported by Dr. Chalmers, who had come round to the conclusion that a mischief which could not be restrained must be destroyed. The other measure was the adoption, in the form of overture, moved by Dr. Chalmers, of the famous CLAIM OF RIGHTS. This memorable document, which has been called "The modern Solemn League and Covenant of the Church of Scotland," and which is, in fact, a final appeal of the Scottish Church to the legislature against the encroachments of the civil courts, had been intrusted to Mr. Alexander Dunlop, the jurist of the Free Church. "Its style, grave and perspicuous,—its tone, calm and solemn,—its facts, well chosen, accurately stated, and lucidly arranged,—its argument, direct and powerful,—its conclusion, clear and resolute,—it must ever be regarded, by all intelligent and candid readers, as every way worthy of the great occasion on which it was to be em-

ployed, and of the remarkable event with which it is destined to be inseparably associated in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland."[1]

"The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, taking into consideration the solemn circumstances in which, in the inscrutable providence of God, this Church is now placed; and that, notwithstanding the securities for the government thereof provided by the statutes of the realm, as unalterably settled by the treaty of union, and the oath required to be taken by each sovereign at accession, inviolably to maintain and preserve the same—which securities might well seem, and had long been thought, to place them beyond the reach of danger or invasion—these have been of late assailed by the very courts to which the Church was authorized to look for assistance and protection, to an extent that threatens the subversion of the said liberties, government, and discipline, with all the grievous calamities to this Church and nation which would inevitably flow therefrom, do solemnly, and in reliance on the grace and power of the Most High, resolve and agree on the following CLAIM, DECLARATION, and PROTEST."

The document therefore consists of these three parts—first, the *claim*, which specifies the legal securities referred to; secondly, the *declaration*, in which they declare that they cannot intrude ministers on reclaiming congregations, or carry on the government of the Church subject to the coercion attempted by the Court of Session; thirdly, the *protest*, in which they hold that all infractions made by Parliament of the Union settlement shall be held void and null, and that while the Church will accord full submission to such sentences in so far only as these may regard civil rights, it shall be free to the members of the Church, or their successors, at any time hereafter, when there shall be a prospect of obtaining justice, to claim the RESTITUTION of all such civil rights and privileges, and temporal benefits and endowments, as for the present they may be COMPELLED to yield up, in order to preserve to their office-bearers the free exercise of their spiritual government and discipline, and to the people the liberties of which respectively it has been attempted so contrary to law and justice to deprive them. The motion

[1] Dr. Robert Buchanan, Ten Years' Conflict, vol. ii. pp. 357.



proposing this document was carried by a majority of 131, the numbers being, for the motion of Dr. Chalmers, 241, and for that of Dr. Cook, 110. The commissioner agreed to convey the claim of rights and the petition against patronage to the throne.

By this solemn instrument the Church publicly proclaimed that there was now but one of two alternatives before her—either to get her claim acknowledged and allowed by the legislature, or to abandon her civil establishment. But though the leaders of the Church felt and saw that the latter alternative too surely awaited them, it was of importance, at this crisis, to ascertain the numbers who were prepared to adopt this decisive step. It was agreed that a convocation should be held of those who were willing to adhere to non-intrusion principles, and a circular, subscribed by thirty-two of the most venerable ministers of the Church, was widely circulated throughout the country, convening the important meeting at Edinburgh on Thursday the 27th of November, 1842. Nearly 500 came together, and it was plain that no ordinary call could have brought from the remotest headlands of a rugged land such a company in the dead season of the year. Proceedings were opened with a sermon in St. George's Church by Dr. Chalmers on the text, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The discourse delivered on this occasion on a text so felicitously chosen, and so strikingly appropriate, produced upon the audience a very powerful impression. The meeting then adjourned to Roxburgh Church. Dr. Chalmers took the chair. It was agreed that during each sederunt three of the brethren should engage in prayer, and in this way confession and supplication assumed a prominent place in the business of each meeting. None but ministers were present. In order to encourage each minister freely to speak his mind this privacy was requisite, and it tended greatly to impart a confiding and conversational tone to their proceedings. We give the account of the meeting in the language of one who was present, and whose fame is now in all the churches—Dr. James Hamilton of London:—

"For our own part," he says, in one of those small publications once so widely circulated, but now difficult to procure, "it made us feel that the innermost side of good men is the

best side, and that whilst listening to the brotherly tone of their communings, so unlike the defiance and disdain of high debate, and to the noble sentiments of Christian heroism and self-renunciation which were ever and anon expressed, we wished that the world were present. And during the devotional exercises, and at intervals throughout the deliberations, when sudden light or consolation broke in, in a way which brought tears to many eyes, we would have liked that all Christians in the kingdom could be present, for we felt assured that the Lord himself was there. And then, when we looked at the materials of the meeting and saw before us, with few exceptions, all the talent, and, with still fewer exceptions, all the piety of the Church of Scotland, we wished that those were present in whose power it lies to preserve to the Scottish Establishment all this learning and this worth. There was the chairman, who might so easily have been the Adam Smith, the Leibnitz, or the Bossuet of the day, but who, having obtained a better part, has laid economics, and philosophy, and eloquence on the altar which sanctified himself. There was Dr. Gordon, lofty in simplicity, whose vast conceptions and majestic emotions plough deeper the old channels of customary words, and make common phrases appear solemn and sublime after *he* has used them. There were Dr. Keith, whose labours in the prophecies have sent his fame through Europe, and are yearly bringing converts into the Church of Christ; and Mr. James Buchanan, whose deep-drawn sympathy, and rich Bible lore, and Christian refinement, have made him a son of consolation to so many of the sons of sorrow. There were Dr. Welsh, the biographer and bosom friend of Thomas Brown; Dr. Forbes, among the most inventive of modern mathematicians; and Dr. Paterson, whose *Manse Garden* is read for the sake of its poetry and wisdom and Christian kindness, where there are no gardens, and will be read for the sake of other days when there are no manses. And there was Dr. Patrick M'Farlan, whose calm judgment is a sanction to any measure, and who, holding the richest benefice in Scotland, most appropriately moved the resolution, that rather than sacrifice their principles they should surrender their possessions. And not to mention 'names the poet must not speak,' there were in that assembly the men who are dearest of all to the godly throughout



the land—the men whom the Lord hath delighted to honour—all the ministers in whose parishes have been great revivals, from the apostle of the north, good old Mr. Macdonald, whose happy countenance is a signal for expectation and gladness in every congregation he visits; and Mr. Burns, of Kilsyth, whose affectionate counsels and prayers made the convocation feel towards him as a father; down to those younger ministers of whom, but for our mutual friendship, I could speak more freely. When we looked at the whole, knowing something of all, we felt, first, such an assembly never met in Scotland before; secondly, it will depend on them, under God, whether Scotland can ever furnish such an assembly again; and, thirdly, what a blot on any reign, and what a guilt on any government, which casts forth such a company! And then, after some sadder musings, came in this thought, Yet what a blessing to the world if they were scattered abroad, everywhere preaching the word!"[1]

Six days were spent in deliberation. Nearly all agreed that the Church of Scotland was ruined by the late decision, and that she could not submit to these encroachments of the civil courts without losing her character as a true Church of Christ. The next question was, What should be done? It was agreed to make a final application to the legislature for relief—for protection to the Church courts in the exercise of their spiritual jurisdiction—and if this application were refused, it was the almost universal conviction that it would be the duty of ministers and people, rather than protract the struggle and embroil the country, to leave the Establishment.

The converging lines of the conflict were now drawing to a point. And as the crisis approached, the character of the two parties in the long struggle became apparent in the tactics which they respectively pursued. While the non-intrusionists were setting their house in order, and preparing themselves quietly and prayerfully to depart in a peaceable, legal, and orderly manner from the Establishment, bidding adieu to their parsonages, glebes and gardens, and other familiar privileges of an established church, their opponents, on the other hand,

[1] The Harp on the Willows: or the Captivity of the Church of Scotland; addressed to the People of England. By the Rev. James Hamilton, Minister of the National Scotch Church, Regent Square. Fiftieth Thousand. 1843.

seemed resolved that, so far as they were concerned, the final scene should partake of the heat and hurry of a summary ejectment. Early in the year 1843 the case of the *quoad sacra* ministers and chapels of ease was introduced, and all the intricacies of law were thrown around the Church by an interdict against the Chapel Act in the case of Stewarton. The lawsuits against the Church, with complaints of violated interdicts depending in the Court of Session, amounted to upwards of fifty, in not one of which the Church was likely to prove successful. In the House of Commons the motion made by Mr. Fox Maule to take the case of the Church of Scotland into consideration was negatived by a large majority. The claims of the Church were rejected by the government. While no redress was promised on the part of Lords or Commons, it became apparent, from the speeches in both Houses, that the leading members of the legislature, even at this late moment, completely misunderstood and misconstrued the real position of the Church. Instead of regarding the question as it affected the Church and people of Scotland, they persisted in representing it as a quarrel between the clergy, or rather the majority of the clergy, and the civil courts, and spoke of the former as contending for a new law which might enable them to overrule the law of the land. Sir Robert Peel expressed his fears, lest by yielding in this matter to the Scotch Church they might be compelled to apply the same principle to the Church of England, and Lord Brougham plainly announced that it would amount to the destruction of their Erastianism. These fatal decisions in March, 1843, cut off the last hopes of the non-intrusion party; and already they began to prepare themselves for the approaching issue. For two months previous to the Assembly the powers of this world seemed anxious to exhaust their last efforts to shake the confidence of the Church. A dark cloud still hung over it in the shape of the condemned Chapel Act; illuminated only by lurid flashes of interdicts from the civil authorities. Dr. Cook, at a meeting of the commission, before the Assembly met, moved that the names of the *quoad sacra* ministers should be expunged from the roll; and on his motion being lost, retired with his followers from the meeting; thus indicating their resolution to oppose all who took their seats in the Assembly at the bidding of the Church and under



the ban of the civil power, in the hope of thereby obtaining a majority. Meanwhile the Strathbogie ministers who had been deposed appointed their own representatives to appear at the ensuing Assembly, on the faith of their being supported by the civil courts; while the non-intrusion party appointed others to appear on their side, thus occasioning a double return of members to the Assembly. In that dark hour, "when neither sun nor stars appeared, and no small tempest lay on them, and all hope that they should be saved was taken away," a large meeting was held within three days of the Disruption in St. Luke's Church, where the self-sacrificing band renewed their mutual pledges, and joined in invoking the Divine aid in the prospect of the struggle before them. It has often been seen in the history of the Christian Church that the hour before deliverance comes is the darkest, and that the light of the approaching day is enhanced by the deep gloom which preceded it; and we are strikingly reminded in such a case of the ancient prediction, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."



CHAPTER XII.

1843.

The Disruption—Scene, as described by Hugh Miller, in St. Andrew's Church—Scene, as given by Dr. James Hamilton, of the first meeting of the Free Church at Tanfield—The cheerfulness and contentment of the retiring Assembly—Trials after the Disruption—Site-refusing—The Free Church of Scotland.

We borrow our description of the scene of the Disruption, 18th May, 1843, as it came at the time from the pen of an eye-witness, well able to convey the impressions of the moment. "The morning levee," says Hugh Miller, "had been marked by an incident of a somewhat extraordinary nature, and which history, though in these days little disposed to mark prodigies and omens, will scarce fail to record. The crowd in the chamber of presence was very great; and there was, we believe, a considerable degree of confusion and pressure in consequence. Suddenly, whether brushed by some passer-by, jostled rudely aside, or merely affected by the tremor of the floor, communicated to the partitioning, a large portrait of William III. that had held its place in Holyrood for nearly a century and a half dropped heavily from the walls. 'There,' exclaimed a voice from the crowd, 'there goes the Revolution Settlement.'

"For hours before the meeting of Assembly the galleries of St. Andrew's Church, with the space railed off for the accommodation of office-bearers not members, were crowded to suffocation, and a vast assemblage continued to besiege the doors. The galleries from below had the over-bellying appearance in front described by Blair, and seemed as if piled up to the roof behind. Immediately after noon the Moderate members began to drop in one by one, and to take their place on the moderator's right; while the opposite benches remained well nigh empty. . . .



"The benches on the left began slowly to fill; and on the entrance of every more distinguished member a burst of recognition and welcome shook the gallery. Their antagonists had been all permitted to take their places in ominous silence. The music of the pageant was heard outside. The moderator entered attired in his gown; and the appearance of the lord high-commissioner, preceded by his pages and mace-bearer, and attended by the lord-provost, the lord-advocate, and the solicitor-general. The Evangelical benches had filled as densely as those of their opponents; and the cross benches, appropriated in perilous times like the present to a middle party, careful always to pitch their principles below the suffering point, were also fully occupied. Never before was there seen so crowded a General Assembly; the number of members had been increased beyond all precedent by the double returns; and almost every member was in his place. The moderator opened the proceedings by a deeply-impressive prayer; but though the silence within was complete a babble of tumultuary sounds outside, and at the closed doors, expressive of the intense anxiety of the excluded multitude, had the effect of rendering him scarcely audible in the more distant parts of the building. . . .

"The Moderator rose and addressed the house in a few impressive sentences. There had been an infringement, he said, on the constitution of the Church—an infringement so great that they could not constitute its General Assembly without a violation of the union between Church and state as now authoritatively defined and declared. He was therefore compelled, he added, to protest against proceeding further, and unfolding a document which he held in his hand, he read in a slow and emphatic manner the Protest of the Church. For the first few seconds the extreme anxiety to hear defeated its object—the universal hush, hush, occasioned considerably more noise than it allayed—but the momentary confusion was succeeded by the most unbroken silence, and the reader went on to the impressive close of the document, when he flung it down on the table of the House and solemnly departed. He was followed at a pace's distance by Dr. Chalmers; Dr. Gordon and Dr. Patrick Macfarlan immediately succeeded, and then the numerous sitters on the thickly-occupied benches behind filed after them in a



long, unbroken line, which for several minutes together continued to thread the passage to the eastern door, till at length only a blank space remained. As the well-known faces and forms of some of the ablest and most eminent men that ever adorned the Church of Scotland glided along in the current to disappear from the courts of the state institution for ever there rose a cheer from the galleries, and an impatient cry of 'Out, out,' from the ministers and elders not members of Assembly, now engaged in sallying forth to join with them from the railed area behind. The cheers subsided, choked, in not a few instances, in tears. The occasion was by far too solemn for the commoner manifestation of either censure or approval. It excited feelings that lay too deep for expression. There was a marked peculiarity in the appearance of their opponents—a blank, restless, pivot-like turning of head from the fast-emptying benches to one another's faces; but they uttered no word, not even in whispers. At length, when the last of the withdrawing party had disappeared, there ran from bench to bench a hurried, broken whispering:—'How many?' 'How many?' 'A hundred and fifty.' 'No.' 'Yes.' 'Four hundred.' 'No.'—And then for a moment all was still. The scene that followed we deemed one of the most striking of the day. The empty vacated benches stretched away from the moderator's seat in the centre of the building to the distant wall. There suddenly glided into the front rows a small party of men whom no one knew—obscure, mediocre, blighted-looking men, that, contrasted with the well-known forms of our Chalmerses and Gordons and Candlishes and Cunninghams, Macfarlans, Brewsters, and Dunlops, reminded one of the thin, blasted ears of Pharaoh's vision, and like them too seemed typical of a time of famine and destitution. Who are these? was the general query; but no one seemed to know. At length the significant whisper ran along the House '*The Forty*.' There was a grin of mingled contempt and compassion visible on many a broad, Moderate face, and a too audible titter shook the gallery. There seemed a degree of incongruity in the sight that partook of the ludicrous. For our own part we were so carried away by a vagrant association, and so mixed up Ali Baba, the oil kettle, and the forty jars, as to forget for a time that at the doors of these unfortunate men lies the ruin of the



Scottish Establishment. The aspect of the Assembly sunk, when it had in some degree recovered itself, into that expression of tame and flat common-place which it must be henceforth content to bear, until roused haply into short-lived activity by the sharp paroxysms of approaching destruction.

"A spectacle equally impressive with that exhibited by the ministers and elders of the Free Church as they winded in long procession to their place of meeting, there to constitute their independent Assembly, Edinburgh has certainly not witnessed since those times of the Covenant, when Johnston of Warriston unrolled the solemn parchment in the churchyard of the Greyfriars, and the assembled thousands, from the peer to the peasant, adhibited their names. The procession, with Dr. Chalmers and the moderator in his robes and cap of office at its head, extended three in depth for a full quarter of a mile. The lord-provost of the city rode on before. Rather more than 400 were ministers of the Church —all the others were elders. Be it remembered that the number of ministers ejected from their charges at the Restoration, and who maintained the struggle in behalf of Presbytery during the long persecution of twenty-eight years, amounted in all to but 376; but then as now the religious principles which they maintained were those of the country. They were principles that had laid hold on the national mind, and the fires of persecution served only to render their impress ineradicable. We trust in a very few weeks to see the four hundred increased to five. Is it not strange how utterly the great lessons of history have failed to impress the mean and wretched rulers of our country."[1]

Let us now accompany the retiring Assembly to their new hall in Tanfield, Canonmills, and here we take up the account from another eye-witness of the same, the late Dr. James Hamilton of London:—"Humble in its original destination," says this deeply-impressed actor and spectator of the imposing spectacle, "and prepared in haste, but of vast dimensions, and crowded with an eager auditory, their new place of meeting was emblematic of that new dispensation in the history of the Church of Scotland which had now begun. The emblems of royal patronage were absent. There was neither canopy nor throne. No civic pomp was seen. Magistrates had laid aside

[1] From the *Witness* of Saturday, May 20th, 1843.

their robes of office, and none of Scotland's nobles had come. But the heart of Scotland was there, and it was soon borne in on every mind that a greater than Solomon was there. None who heard can ever forget the fulness and world-forgetting rapture, the inspiration of the opening prayers; and when that mighty multitude stood up to sing it seemed as if the swell of vehement melody would lift the roof from off the walls. And when at last the adjournment for the day took place, and in the brightness of a lovely evening the different groups went home, all felt as if returning from a Pentecostal meeting. A common salutation was, 'We have seen strange things to-day.' Some, contrasting the harmony and happiness of the Free Assembly with the strife and debate of other days, could not help exclaiming, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' Many remembered the text of Dr. Chalmers' sermon six months before in opening the Convocation, 'Unto the upright light shall arise in the darkness.' And at the family worship of those memorable evenings such psalms as the 124th and 126th were often sung, and were felt to be 'new songs.'

"It would be pleasant to dwell upon many of the features of the Free Church Assemblies, especially on those deputations and messages of sympathy and congratulation which they received from so many churches, and on those tributes of approbation and encouragement, which, coming in from so many quarters, made them recognize the good hand of the Lord upon them, but we have only room to state that Tuesday the 23d of May was, after special devotional exercises employed in subscribing the 'ACT OF SEPARATION AND DEED OF DEMISSION," by which 470 ministers did "SEPARATE FROM AND ABANDON THE PRESENT SUBSISTING ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT IN SCOTLAND, AND RENOUNCE ALL RIGHTS OR EMOLUMENTS PERTAINING TO THEM BY VIRTUE THEREOF.'

"Though subscribed with the utmost calmness and alacrity it would not be easy to estimate the sacrifice which that Deed of Demission implied. It is something to renounce the dignity of an established church, and the comforts of an endowed one. These ministers did both, and some will best understand the sacrifice when told that the gift thus laid on the altar is a revenue of more than A HUNDRED THOUSAND



POUNDS A YEAR. But this is a very gross and vulgar way of stating it, for who will estimate in pounds and pence the home-ties which have since then been broken? . . . . Many a noble, manly heart was like to burst that recent Sabbath, when minister and people took their last look of the beautiful house where they and their fathers had worshipped, and gathering up their Psalm-books and Bibles, which had lain on the book-board so long, they left the vacant pulpit and the empty pews, 'a place in which to bury strangers.'"[1]

To these reminiscences we have only to add that these sacrifices have been made by churchmen, and not by a few enthusiastic ones, and with no bitterness; with some just pride, but with no boasting, no weak lamentations, but easily, contentedly, and cheerfully.

Not that the Church had yet wholly escaped from her trials; her very success, especially in securing the adherence of the great mass of the people throughout the parishes of Scotland, both in the Highlands and Lowlands, was productive of a twofold effect. One of these effects, which proved disadvantageous to her internal usefulness, arose from the difficulty of procuring a supply of ordinances for the immense population which crowded around her. Feeling herself bound in duty from the position she had taken to provide for the spiritual wants of a whole nation, as a supplement to Establishment, which had failed to fulfil its design and obligations, it was no easy matter in her infant state to accomplish this object in an efficient and thoroughly satisfactory manner. Her efforts, being spread over such an immense area, were restricted in a great degree to the home field of operation. The other effect, if less prejudicial, was in many instances more vexatious and annoying. The lairds and landed proprietors, who were in many cases hostile to the principles of the Free Church, sought to keep down her congregations by refusing sites for churches and manses, and thus denying them the benefits of toleration enjoyed by every other Dissenting community. In several parts of the country, where the rights of proprietors extended over large districts, Free Church congregations were obliged to assemble for public worship even

[1] Farewell to Egypt: or, the Departure of the Free Church of Scotland out of the Erastian Establishment. By the Rev. James Hamilton of London. 1843.



on the highroad and within water-mark on the sea-beach; and affecting instances occurred where the pastor, instead of the quiet manse in which he prosecuted his literary labours, was compelled to seek shelter in some neighbouring hut, hardly defended from the winter storm as it fell upon his miserable pallet. But such extraneous efforts to revive some of the worst features of former persecutions could only last for a while, and were ultimately defeated by the persevering endurance of the people.

We have now finished our Story of the Scottish Church; and we are not disposed to carry our narrative any further. Thus, then, freed from the bondage of the state, but still carrying aloft the national character for which she had all along contended as the Church of her native land; filling the country with her churches and manses, her ministers and elders; retaining intact the whole staff of her foreign missionaries in India and Africa, and furnished at home with her theological colleges in the three metropolitan districts of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen; with an evangelical clergy planted in almost every parish in Scotland, from the Solway Firth to the most distant island of the northern and western sea, embracing almost entirely the whole extent of the Highlands; supported by a sustentation fund, affording to each clergyman a sum amounting now to about £150 per annum; unanimously proclaiming in every pulpit the same blessed Head in the salvation of immortal souls, the Scottish Church commenced her career as THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.



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