

Ladies of the Covenant

Lady Anne Lindsay,

Duchess of Rothes.

LADY ANNE LINDSAY was the eldest daughter of John, first Earl of Lindsay and fifteenth Earl of Crawford, Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, by his wife, Lady Margaret Hamilton, second daughter of James, second Marquis of Hamilton. [*Douglas's Peerage, vol. i., p. 387.*] Her paternal grandmother was the excellent Lady Boyd, already noticed; and her maternal grandmother was Lady Anne Cunningham, Marchioness of Hamilton, of whom some account has also been given.

Her father, who was the son of Lady Boyd by her first husband, Robert, ninth Lord Lindsay of Byres, was, as we have seen before, a man of sound religious principle, and a stedfast supporter of the second Reformation cause. He warmly opposed, though without success, the passing of the act rescissory in the first parliament of Charles II, by which all the parliaments, since 1633, were annulled, and all the proceedings for reformation between 1638 and 1650 were denounced rebellious and treasonable; and he declared himself against the establishment of prelacy, assuring his majesty that a measure so opposed to the feelings of the Scottish people would be followed by the worst effects. A strenuous defender of the lawfulness and obligation of the national Covenants, he refused to take the Declaration, abjuring them as unlawful oaths; [*By the fifth act of the second session of parliament, 1662, the Declaration was ordained to be taken by all admitted to any public trust or office under his majesty's government in Scotland, and those already in office were also require to subscribe it.*] for which Charles II, though he much respected him, incited by Archbishop Sharp, deprived him of his office as lord high treasurer of Scotland. His answer, when Charles asked him whether he would take the Declaration, is worthy of being recorded: "As I have suffered much," he said, "for your majesty, even nine years' imprisonment, forfeiture, and the ruin of my fortune, so I am resolved to continue your majesty's loyal and faithful subject, and to serve you in whatever I can with a good conscience; but as for renouncing the Covenant and taking the Declaration, that I cannot do with a safe and good conscience." And when Lauderdale - afraid lest his enemy Middleton should obtain the office of treasurer - urged him to take the Declaration, by the argument that he would thus, by retaking his place, be in a better capacity for promoting the interests of the nonconformists than he could be in a private station, he replied, like a man of principle, that he was taught not to do evil that good might come. [*Row's Life of Robert Blair, p. 441.*] Resigning his situation as lord high treasurer, he retired to his house at Struthers, and spent the remainder of his days in privacy. "He was a man," says Douglas, "of great virtue, of good abilities, and of an exemplary life in all respects. He died at Tynninghame in 1676, aged about eighty." [*Douglas's Peerage, vol. i., p. 386.*]

Lady Anne's mother was also eminent for virtue and piety. Row speaks of her as "the Earl of Crawford's most religious lady, who was most deservedly praised of all that knew her;" and he informs us that, "when all about her, and all Crawford's friends in Scotland, were lamenting the loss of his place, she heartily rejoiced and blessed God that he had kept a good conscience, and himself free of perjury and Covenant breaking, &c., trusting in God that He would provide for him and his." [*Row's Life of Robert Blair, p. 442.*] Robert Blair, who knew her personally, speaking of her on his death-bed, said, "My Lady Crawford, set her alone, set her alone among women." [*Row's Life of Robert Blair, p. 495.*]

Lady Anne, thus descended from godly parents, enjoyed the inestimable benefit of a religious education; and her parents had the satisfaction of witnessing the fruits of their instructions and example in the eminence of her piety, which she exemplified throughout life by a conversation becoming the gospel. The fervour of her

devotion, the benevolence of her disposition, the humility of her demeanour, and the sanctity of her deportment, are all honourably mentioned by her contemporaries. Law describes her as “a discreet, wise, virtuous, and good lady.” [*Law’s Memorials*, p. 202.] And others who knew her, speak in the highest terms of her christian excellence. In her youth, which was contemporaneous with the best days of the Covenant, she was strictly educated in the Presbyterian faith, to which she continued to adhere in its every variety of fortune, in its adversity as well as in its prosperity. After the restoration of Charles II, she was exposed, by the circumstances in which she was placed, to great temptations to become indifferent or hostile to the principles of Presbytery. Her husband, John, sixth Earl of Rothes, to whom she had been previously married, was a member of the persecuting government of Charles, and she was under the necessity of mingling, to a considerable extent, with the unprincipled and persecuting statesmen of that period. But her convictions and feelings remained unaltered, and the ejected ministers, on whose side her sympathies were enlisted, she was ever ready, to the utmost of her ability, to befriend. Some of them she succeeded in continuing in their charges after their persecutors had marked them out for ejection. Mr. Black, minister of Leslie, for example, a man whom she highly esteemed, and under whose ministry she sat when residing at Leslie House, was, though a nonconformist, through her intercession with the Bishop of Dunkeld, continued in the exercise of his ministry in his own parish, when that prelate, in 1664, summarily deposed all the other nonconforming ministers in his diocese. [*Row’s Life of Robert Blair*, p. 473.] The friendly interest she took in the persecuted ministers, she evinced in many other ways. “Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,” she often ministered to their temporal necessities, and entertained them with hospitality and kindness when they visited her at Leslie House. On these occasions they endeavoured to keep out of the eye of the duke, for, though not naturally inclined to cruelty, yet from political considerations, he put on the appearance of severity. He was not, however, ignorant that they were harboured and reset by the duchess, but he connived at them on her account; and on happening, as he sometimes did happen, to see any of them about the house, being a man of humour, he was in the habit of saying to her, “My lady, I would advise you to keep your chickens in about, else I may pick up some of them.” [*M’Crie’s Memoirs of Veitch and Brysson*, p. 295. Among other instances of the persecuted finding shelter in similar situations, it may be mentioned that, previous to the civil wars, while Dr. Scott, dean of York, was employed at cards, or other games, to which he was much addicted, Mrs. Scott was attending a conventicle in another room; the Dean’s house being reckoned the safest place for holding such assemblies. *Brooke’s Lives of the Puritans*, vol. iii., p. 528.] Other anecdotes of a similar kind are still current, and have been recorded by Miss Strickland, in her very interesting work, entitled “Lives of the Queens of England.” After noticing that the duchess “favoured the doctrines of the Covenanters, and, as far as she could, protected their preachers, who were frequently concealed in the neighbourhood of Leslie House,” she adds, “The duke . . . never sent out his officers to apprehend any of these persons without previously endeavouring to provide for their escape, by giving a significant hint to his compassionate duchess in these words, ‘My hawks will be out tonight, my lady, - so you had better take care of your blackbirds!’ The local traditions of Leslie add, that the signal by which her Grace warned her spiritual protégés of their danger, was a white sheet suspended from one of the trees on the brow of the hill behind the house, which could be seen from a considerable distance. Other telegraphic signs the good lady had, no doubt, to intimate the absence of her spouse when they might safely come forth and preach to their hill-side congregation.” [*Vol. ix., p. 117.*]

Nor was she backward to intercede with the duke and the other members of the government for the persecuted ministers. Well assured of her friendly disposition, they confidently applied to her to exert in their behalf the influence which, from her situation, she had with the duke and the other members of the privy council. An instance of this in the case of Mr. Robert Wylie, when he was indulged minister of Fenwick, is preserved among his MSS., which form a part of Wodrow’s Collections. All the indulged ministers having, on the 3d of September, 1675, got a charge of horning to pay their respective proportions of the ordinary fees due for the parishes where they resided, to the clerk and bursar of the diocesan synod of Glasgow, Mr. Robert Wylie, with several others, refused, from scruples of conscience, to make payment. [*Wodrow’s History*, vol. ii., p. 297.] He accordingly applied for a suspension, and sent a petition to the privy council, praying for relief from that imposition; and, at the same time, he transmitted a copy of the petition to the duchess, to give her an idea of the case, accompanied with a letter, requesting her friendly intercessions with the lords of his majesty’s privy

council in furtherance of his petition. The letter, which is written in a tone that bespeaks the confidence he reposed in her sympathy and friendship, is as follows: -

“Fenwick, 2d December, 1675.

“MADAM, - I humbly crave pardon that I presume to trouble your ladyship with any petty business that concerns me; but being desirous to live quietly and with bosom peace, to close my days in the work of the gospel, I hope it will not offend your ladyship that I entreat for your honour’s help to hold of the inconveniences that may apparently fall upon me, if not prevented. Madam, the matter is this: I am charged with letters of horning to pay fees to the clerk of the bishop’s synod, and dues to a bursar of prelatie choice; which, considering the Presbyterian principles grounded on the scriptures, and the standing obligation of the oath of God upon the conscience, I have no freedom to do; and therefore sent for a suspension of the charges, which I hear was granted, but the clerks are loath to give it out until they would know the council’s mind. [*The difficulty of obtaining a suspension arose from the fact that the payment of the clerk’s and bursar’s fees was required by the council’s act of indulgence, Sept. 2, 1672.*] Being desirous to leave no means unessayed to hold weights off my conscience and troubles off my person, I have sent a petition, to be presented to the most honourable lords of his majesty’s privy council, holding forth the grounds of my refusal, and supplicating that their lordships would grant me the free exercise of my ministry, with reservation of my principles and liberty of my judgment, and that their lordships would be pleased to discharge all legal procedure against me, as the petition does more fully purport; a copy whereof, for your ladyship’s information, I have herewith enclosed, knowing that the draught will be kept as a secret with your honour, and made use of only for your private information, that your ladyship may the better know the affair, and how to speak to it as occasion offers, And now, madam, my humble request to your ladyship is, that you would be pleased to speak to such members of the council as your honour thinks convenient, in order to the inclining of them to give a favourable answer unto my petition, that now, in my old days, when I am labouring under manifold infirmities, I may have liberty to close the latter part of my time in the peaceable preaching of the gospel, without pressing me with impositions grating upon my conscience, and putting a crazy person to unnecessary tossings. Madam, I do again beg pardon for this presumption; and wishing all abounding of grace, all the blessings of the everlasting covenant to be plentifully poured out upon your ladyship and all yours, I rest, madam, your ladyship’s,

[THOMAS WYLIE.]’

[*Mr. Wylie’s MSS. among the Wodrow MSS., vol. xxx., 4to, no. 16. There is no signature to the letter. It is addressed on the back, “For the Countess of Rothes.”*]

That the friendly endeavours of this lady would not be wanting to promote the success of Mr. Wylie’s petition there can be little doubt, from what we know of her character; and her intercessions, judging from the result, were not without success. The relief which Mr. Wylie so earnestly solicited was at length granted by the government; for in a new proclamation, issued on the 1st of March next year, two of the rules, according to which the indulged ministers, by the Indulgence 1672, were required to act, are omitted, the one regarding their waiting on diocesan meetings, and the other respecting their paying dues to the clerk and bursar of the diocesan synod. Mr. Wylie, however, continued to feel uneasy under the other restrictions of the Indulgence. [*Wodrow’s History, vol. ii., p. 336.*]

On the introduction of field preaching into Fife the duchess used to attend these much maligned and proscribed meetings. One of the places which, in those troublous times, she frequented to hear the sermons of the field preachers was Glenvale, a beautiful sequestered spot in the parish of Strathmiglo, Fifeshire, “lying between West Lomond and Bishop Hill. 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.’ [*M’Crie’s Memoirs of Veitch, &c., p. 295. M’Crie’s Sketches of Scottish Church History, 2d edition, p. 420.*]

In this favourite place of resort, which, in point of romantic scenery, may bear comparison with the wild recess

in Cartland Crags, where the Covenanters of the west met for the same purpose, immense multitudes from all the surrounding districts often assembled for the worship of God. "In the year 1678," to quote from a well attested account of the Sufferings of the Presbyterians in Kinross-shire, "the field meetings were kept very frequently through the whole shire, but oftener in Glenvale, because it was the centre of that large congregation, which extended to Cupar of Fife on the east, to Kirkaldy on the south, to Salin and Dollar on the west, and to Perth on the north. There were five or six parishes engaged together to keep up the preaching of the gospel among themselves; and by turns each parish sent to Edinburgh and brought a minister, so that they seldom wanted sermon on the Lord's day." [*Wodrow MSS., vol. xxxiii., folio, no. 143.*] In attending these "seditious meetings" and "rendezvouses of rebellion," as they were stigmatized by the privy council, the duchess incurred the heavy penalties under which they were interdicted; but, like others of the ladies of the members of the government, who were led by curiosity or piety to field conventicles, she was overlooked, the council not deeming it prudent to carry the persecution into the bosom of their own families. The leniency which the Duke of Rothes exercised towards these field meetings in Fife, it is believed, was owing, in no small degree, to their being favoured and countenanced by the duchess. On one occasion when forty individuals, who had been apprehended for a conventicle in Glenvale, were brought before him in Leslie, and he was asked what was to be done with them: "Put them (said he) in Bailie Walker's back room, the place they all like so well." The bailie was a religious man, and meetings for social prayer and conference were often held in his back room. When asked what farther orders he had to give respecting them, the duke answered, "Give them plenty of meat and drink, and set them about their business in the morning." [*M'Crie's Memoirs of Veitch, &c., p. 295*] He knew that Glenvale was a favourite place of resort for his own lady, and that these poor individuals brought before him had done nothing to merit punishment, were guilty in fact of holding no principles, and following no practices, for which she might not have been equally impeached.

An evidence of the tender-hearted sympathy of the duchess with the persecuted Covenanters is furnished in the following anecdote: - Archbishop Sharp, having on one occasion come to dine with the duke, complained to him at dinner that two of his tenants, David and James Walker, were keepers of conventicles. This complaint the archbishop strongly and vehemently urged, though the duchess, of whose attachment to the Presbyterian interest he could not be ignorant, was present; for deference to her feelings was overborne by his inveterate malignity against these worthy men. The duke, who expressed his surprise at this information, said, that "he should take an effectual course with them, and see them both strangled." [*i.e. hanged.*] The archbishop insisted that he should not forget them, for they were incendiaries through all Fife; upon which the duke gave orders to his man servant, who was standing at his back, to send immediately to the town of Leslie, in the neighbourhood of which they lived, and bring them down to him after dinner, promising to the archbishop that they should give the government no farther trouble. To this discourse, the duchess, though it appears she made no remarks, listened with great pain - the two men, who were eminent for piety, being her christian friends, for whom she entertained a high esteem; nor had she much respect for Sharp, who, besides being first a traitor to the Church of Scotland, and then its persecutor, had injured her father for being a more honest man than himself. It may therefore be easily believed, as Wodrow observes, that "this spoiled my lady duchess's dinner." She was aware that the duke, who was ambitious of place and power, had, to secure the favour of Sharp, whose influence at court was great, and to keep the prelatial clergy at his devotion, done acts of violence which he was not naturally inclined to commit; and was therefore afraid that in the present instance, to gratify the prelate, he would subject these good men to persecution. Her fears were, however, happily disappointed. The two nonconformists immediately came down to the palace at Leslie. After dinner, the duke accompanied Sharp to his coach; and, on being again reminded by the prelate not to spare the two delinquents, he told him they were come, and assured him he should not fail to handle them severely. But on his coming up stairs and calling for them, he simply asked them, in a friendly way, the prices of the markets, what grain it was best for him to sow in such and such parts of his lands about Leslie, and similar questions, after which he dismissed them without any mark of displeasure or asking them a single question in reference to the subject as to which he had professedly brought them to his house. "The duchess," says Wodrow, "retired from dinner in deep concern for the men, and gave orders to a servant to bring them in to her, when the duke parted with them, by a back

gallery. Accordingly they came. The duchess was all in tears, and almost trembling, asked what had passed. They told her, 'Nothing but kindness.' Whether this was to be attributed to the duchess's prayers in their behalf, or to the duke's natural temper, who was not inclined to violence, I am not to determine; but the fact is certain." [Wodrow's *Analecta*, vol iv., p. 42. Mr. John Loudon, who was sometime a tutor in the family of Rothes, and afterwards a minister of the Church of Scotland, was Wodrow's informer. He received this anecdote from the duchess herself.]

The duchess was greatly tried in her domestic life. Besides being connected with the persecuting government of Charles, the duke was unprincipled and profligate, devoting himself "without either restraint or decency to all the pleasures of wine and women." [Burnet's *Own Times*, vol. i., p. 175.] "He gave himself," says Fountainhall, "great liberty in all sorts of pleasures and debaucheries, particularly with Lady Anne, sister to the first Duke of Gordon, whom he took along with him in his progress through the country with hat and feather; and by his bad example infected many of the nobility and gentry." [Fountainhall's *Diary*, quoted in Kirkton's *History* by the editor, p. 204.] But trying as this was to the duchess, the admirable prudence and gentleness which marked her temper and conduct under it all, so impressed the duke as to make him ashamed of the manner in which he was treating her. "It was," says Kirkton, "confidently reported that his infamous converse with Lady Anne Gordon touched his own conscience so much, that one day, being under the dint of his own conviction, and reflecting upon his misbehaviour towards his worthy lady, (whom he could not but admire,) he threw all the wretched love-tokens his miss had given him into the fire, upon suspicion and fear he was detained her captive by the power of witchcraft, as very many said he was." [Kirkton's *History*, p. 212.]

Still more calculated to excite in the mind of the duchess the most poignant distress, were the circumstances connected with his death. His days may be said to have been shortened by his intemperance. So strong was his constitution that he could outdrink two or three sets of drunkards in succession, and after the greatest excesses an hour or two of sleep so completely recruited him, that he could go about business without any apparent disorder either in body or mind. This could not always last; it ultimately undermined his vigorous constitution,



Funeral Procession of the Duke of Rothes

producing such disease of stomach, that when not hot within and full of strong drink he had perpetual cholics, so that he was always either sick or drunk. [*Burnet's Own Times, vol i., p. 175.*] He was seized with his last illness in Edinburgh. On his death-bed his conscience was awakened; and as he looked back on his past life, and forward to a coming judgment, the horrors of despair settled on his soul. He sent for some of his lady's ministers, - those men who, when entertained by her at Leslie House, were afraid to meet him in the days of his robust health, - he sent for them now, that, if possible, they might minister relief to his troubled conscience. Two of them, Mr. John Carstairs, and Mr. George Johnston, who were then in Edinburgh, came to Holyroodhouse, where he lay; and while they spoke to him freely of the sinfulness of his former ways, as fidelity demanded, true to their office, as messengers of peace, they told him that pardon and mercy were to be obtained through the blood of Jesus for the greatest sinners of Adam's race, even at the eleventh hour. Mr. Carstairs, a man unequalled in his day in the gift of prayer, engaged in that exercise; and so weighty and affecting were his sentences, as to draw tears from almost every one present. But all availed not to pacify the conscience of the dying nobleman. He said to Carstairs, "We all thought little of what that man Cargill did in excommunicating us, but I find that sentence binding upon me *now*, and it *will* bind to eternity." The Duke of Hamilton, who witnessed the scene, deeply moved, said, "When in health we hunt and persecute these men, but when dying we call for them: this is melancholy work!" The dying duke expired at Holyroodhouse on the 27th July, 1681, in the 51st year of his age. His funeral obsequies were performed with unusual pomp. His body was first privately brought up from Holyroodhouse to the high church of St. Giles, accompanied with a train of coaches; thence it was conducted, with the greatest magnificence, to the royal chapel of Holyroodhouse, by a numerous procession, the order of which is given by Arnot in his History of Edinburgh. [*Pp. 168, 611.*] From the chapel of Holyroodhouse, it was next conveyed with the same funereal pomp to Leith, thence it was transported to Burntisland; and the day after, it was met by the gentlemen of the county of Fife, (of which he was high sheriff,) by whom it was accompanied to the family burying place at Leslie. The body was laid in the grave with sound of open trumpets, and the honours placed above the grave. This superfluity of display was common during the reign of Charles II at the funerals of the great. Under that reign it was a matter of policy, in prosecution of the designs of the government for the establishment of absolute power, to encourage every circumstance which could mark the distinction of ranks, and hence the nobility and gentry gratified their vanity not only by the splendour of their retinues, but also by the extravagant pomp with which they conducted the funerals of their departed friends, as if they could thus keep up the distinctions of rank and elevated station, after death had levelled them in the dust.

"Sorry pre-eminence of high descent
Above the vulgar born." *

* *To such an extent, however, did this foolish vanity and absurd extravagance proceed, that the parliament which met at Edinburgh, September 13, 1681, passed an "act restraining the exorbitant expense of Marriages, Baptisms, and Burials."* - See the Acts of the Parliament of Scotland.

The duchess had to the duke two daughters, Lady Margaret and Lady Christian. Lady Margaret, the eldest, became, on her father's death, countess of Rothes, having inherited his extensive property in the counties of Aberdeen, Elgin, Fife, Forfar, Inverness, Kincardine, and Perth, and the earldom of Rothes, but not his other titles of Duke of Rothes, Marquis of Ballinbreich, &c., which, being limited to the heirs male of his body, became extinct at his death. She was married in 1674 to Charles, fifth Earl of Haddington, the marriage contract being dated the 7th of October that year. The second daughter, Lady Christian, was married first to James, third Marquis of Montrose, to whom she had issue, and afterwards, in 1687, to Sir John Bruce of Kinross, baronet, to whom she had no children. [*Douglas's Peerage, vol. ii. p. 432.*]

Amidst all her domestic trials, the duchess found much comfort in her children, who, following her instructions and example, adorned the high stations they filled, and were patterns to their sex. Her eldest daughter, in particular, who succeeded the duke, a lady of a cultivated understanding and of much practical wisdom, was

almost unequalled in her day for the depth of her piety, and the extent of her beneficence.

Among the nonconforming ministers whom the duchess befriended and patronized, was Mr. Alexander Wedderburn, one of the most popular ministers of his day, who was ejected from Forgan, in Fife, after the Restoration, and who subsequently became indulged minister at Kilmarnock. Previous to his death, which took place about the close of October, 1678, [*The illness which issued in his death was brought on by a thrust he received from the butt of the musket of a Highlander during the invasion of the West by the Highland host in 1678, at the time when he was interceding with these savages to spare the town of Kilmarnock, which they were resolved to plunder. His last illness continued about four months.*] this excellent minister, having consented to the posthumous publication of a series of sermons which he had delivered upon 2 Samuel xxiii. 5, and which, after his death, were published partly from short-hand notes taken by some of the hearers, and partly from his own notes, it was his desire that the volume should be dedicated to the duchess. But as before its publication she had been removed by death, Mr. Wedderburn's widow, Helen Turnbull, dedicated it to the duchess's daughter, "the truly noble Margaret, countess of Rothes," which she was induced to do not only in consideration of the christian excellence of that lady, but also from respect to the memory of her sainted mother; and as a memorial of the duchess we now quote it. "Madam," says Mrs. Wedderburn, "Before that pious and eminent person, the duchess of Rothes, your ladyship's renowned mother, was by death removed, I designed, according to the intention of my husband, (who is now entered into the joy of his Lord,) to dedicate this part of his labours to her Grace. And now, when these papers, by advice of faithful and godly ministers, are to be exposed to public view, I judged it my duty to pay that respect to her Grace's memory as to prefix your ladyship's name thereunto, (which, no doubt, if my husband were alive, he himself would have done,) which I the more confidently adventure upon, as that I know your ladyship to be the lively portraiture of the graces and virtues of your noble and now glorified mother, and to be of such wisdom and prudence, humility and self-denial, as to excuse anything of unsuitableness that may be in this for one of my station and sex."

A few brief notices of Margaret, Countess of Rothes, may form an appropriate sequel to the preceding sketch of her mother. Crawford describes her as "a lady of incomparable piety and goodness;" [*Crawford's Peerage of Scotland, p. 430.*] and Wodrow speaks of her as that "excellent lady who scarce had a parallel for religion, and every thing good in her age." [*Wodrow's History, vol. iii., p. 300.*] Having embraced the same religious sentiments as her mother, she was a friend to the persecuted Presbyterians, of which the government were well aware, and as an instance of the arts resorted to for depriving the sufferers of shelter from every quarter, it may be mentioned that the privy council, who found sheriff courts a powerful means of carrying on the persecution, persuaded that on succeeding her father, she would appoint a sheriff depute for Fife, who would befriend the sufferers, had recourse to a most dishonourable expedient, in order to deprive her of the power of appointing a substitute to hold such a court in her name. On the 6th of October, 1681, the privy council "order intimation to be made to her by the Earl of Haddington, that she cannot hold any sheriff court, nor any in her name, until she take the test." "The parliament, in one of their acts," says Wodrow, "as we have seen, except the heirs of the duke from some hardships of this nature, [*Wodrow refers to the act concerning public debts, passed September 17, 1681, discharging such noblemen, barons, and burgesses, as "during the time of the late troubles and rebellion, did give their bonds for several great sums of money" "of the said debts and bonds granted thereupon," upon condition of their taking the test, "excepting always the heirs, executors, and successors of the deceased Duke of Rothes, late Lord Chancellor, who, in respect of his eminent loyalty and service to his majesty, are hereby absolutely exonerated and discharged of the said debts without necessity of taking the foresaid test upon the account foresaid allanarly.*"] yet the council urge this excellent lady with this oath, as what they knew she would never take, that the offices might fall into the managers hands." [*Wodrow's History, vol. iii., p. 300.*] The council succeeded in their design. Both the Countess and the Earl of Haddington, her husband, refused to take the test. Accordingly the sheriffdom of Fife was lodged in the hands of the Earl of Balcarres, who, in that same year, appointed Alexander Malcolm sheriff depute of that county, a man who proved as severe a presser of conformity, as the government could desire, subjecting such as refused to take the test to severe oppression by fines, imprisonment, and other kinds of suffering. [*Wodrow's History, vol. iii., p. 390.*]

Wodrow, in his *Analecta*, under the year 1730, has preserved the following memorial of this lady: - "I am told

that the late Duchess or Countess of Rothes, was one of the most extraordinary persons for religion and good sense, and eminent acts of charity, that was in the last age; that her life, could it be recovered, would make a beautiful figure in our Biography. I have little hope of recovering it. In the late dear years 1697 and 1698, she was remarkable for her charity. She distributed many bolls of meal among the poor every week, and it was calculated that she dealt out most of the yearly rent of the estate that way, She had a day in the week, Friday, I think, when sick and indisposed persons came to her; and she spoke with them, and gave them medicines gratis; and some cheats, pretending to be objects of charity, she discovered, and severely punished them. She was most intimate with John Archer, Alexander's father, and many eminent christians in that neighbourhood. She was eminent in prayer and wrestling, and had many singular answers of prayer. It's a pity so little about her can now be recovered." [Vol. iv., p. 172.]

The countess died on the 20th of August, 1700. Sir James Stewart, Lord Advocate of Scotland, after the Revolution, says, in a letter to Principal William Carstairs, dated August 22, 1700, "The good Countess of Rothes died Tuesday last, much regretted by all, and very deservedly." [Carstairs' State Papers, p. 625.] She was succeeded by her eldest son, John, seventh Earl of Rothes, who, like his predecessors for at least four preceding generations, was distinguished for the excellence of his christian character. He died in 1722, in the prime of life, in the full assurance of faith. A few hours before his departure, he called his children one by one, and took farewell of each of them, speaking to each in particular, and to them all for nearly two hours, with the greatest seriousness and solidity, recommending religion to them as what alone would avail them, when about to pass from time into eternity. [Wodrow's Correspondence, vol. ii., p. 641.] The well known Colonel Blackadder, who was present with him at the last, says that he never witnessed so christian, calm and courageous a death. The colonel drew up an account of his death-bed scene, which is printed from the Wodrow MSS., in the Christian Instructor for November 1825.

In the preceding notices of the Duchess of Rothes, of her predecessors and descendants, it is interesting and instructive to see piety passing downward from parents to children for five successive generations. This we are no doubt to trace to the sovereign grace of God, for genuine religion is not transmitted from parent to child, as a healthy constitution is transmitted. But it is also to be traced to the instrumentality of parents, and particularly of religious mothers, in the godly upbringing of their children. The Duchess of Rothes's mother, the Duchess herself, her daughter and her son, all enjoyed the benefit of the religious instructions, the persevering prayers, and the holy example of godly mothers. To the pious endeavours of both parents to instil the principles of piety into the minds of their children, God has annexed a special blessing; but it may be expected in particular that the labours of christian mothers in this good work will be followed by the happiest effects. From their offspring being in infancy constantly under their care, and afterwards in childhood and youth more frequently in their society than in that of the other parent, mothers have a more powerful influence than fathers in forming their character; and how often, as must be known to all who are but slightly acquainted with christian biography, have those who have been distinguished in their day for piety and extensive usefulness in the church and in the world, had to trace their piety and their usefulness to the instructions, counsels, and admonitions they had received in their first and more tender years, from their God-fearing mothers!