

LADIES OF THE COVENANT

LADY CATHARINE HAMILTON, DUCHESS OF ATHOLL.

AMONG the “devout and honourable women not a few” in our country, who, in former times, adorned a high station by their exalted piety and their zeal for God, the subject of the present notice is entitled to a prominent place. It is chiefly from her Diary [*Her Diary is printed in the Christian Magazine for 1813, to which it was communicated by the late Rev. Mr. Moncrieff, minister of the Secession Church in Hamilton.*] that we derive the information we possess concerning her, and it is mostly a record of her Christian exercise and experience; so that few incidents in her history are now known. Her life, indeed, appears to have been of a regular and little varying tenor, hardly connected with any of those signal events and conjunctures which give to biography much of its attraction; and a sketch of it does not, therefore, admit of a varied and striking narrative. But it may, notwithstanding, be interesting and instructive to the serious reader, to peruse a few illustrations of her eminently devout and Christian character. To those ladies who have already engaged our attention, she was similar in spirit and in sentiments; and she could look back to many of her ancestors, on whom God had conferred the highest of all nobility, the titles of which “are not written in old rotten or moulded parchments, but are more ancient than the heavens.” She commenced her Diary about the year 1688, in the twenty-fifth year of her age, and continued it down to the period of her death. From the commencement it displays remarkably sound views of evangelical truth, and much maturity of religious experience; and throughout, it breathes a spirit singularly amiable, and fervently pious. As many parts of it are very much alike, instead of giving it entire, it will be sufficient to select a few passages as a representation of the general character of the whole.

CATHARINE HAMILTON was the second daughter of William, third Duke of Hamilton, and Anne Duchess of Hamilton, of whom a notice has already been given. She was born at Hamilton Palace in 1662, and in 1683 was married to John Lord Murray, eldest son of the first Marquis of Atholl, afterwards first Duke of Atholl, in the twenty-first year of her age. She enjoyed the great blessings of an eminently pious mother, who anxiously endeavoured to imbue her young mind with Divine truth and the fear of God. Under this religious training she greatly profited; and she appears to have been from her earliest years of a serious and contemplative turn of mind. At an early period she had acquired an extensive acquaintance with the Scriptures, and an accurate knowledge of the distinguishing truths of the gospel. Nor did this knowledge merely float in the head; it deeply impressed her heart, resulting in early proofs of her genuine piety. Near the beginning of her Diary there is the following entry: - “O my soul! remember Friday the 18th of November 1681, and Thursday the 24th, wherein the Lord thy God was pleased to give thee sweetest consolation in himself, and some assurance of his reconciled countenance at Hamilton.” This was in the nineteenth year of her age, two years previous to her marriage. But her husband, in a note on this passage, states that he had heard her say, that she had given herself up to God some years before the time referred to. Thus, ere she had reached womanhood, she had surrendered herself to God, and the whole of her subsequent life evinced the entireness and the sincerity with which the surrender had been made. Christ she then chose as her Saviour, God as her portion, the Divine glory as her chief end, the Divine law as her infallible guide; and from her God and Saviour, she sought and found grace and strength to proceed in the Christian course. It is indeed interesting to see a young lady in exalted station thus escaping the fascinations of worldly pleasure and gaiety, with which the young are so apt to be entangled, and making the concerns of the soul and of eternity, which the young are so prone to defer to a future season, the chief object of her attention.

“Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunn’d the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen,
That labour up the hill of heavenly truth,
The better part with Mary and with Ruth,
Chosen thou hast.” *[Milton.]*

In her Diary the allusions to the period of the persecution are few and only casual, but they plainly indicate her detestation of the ferocious intolerance of that period, and her sympathy with those good men who, for standing up in defence of their religious rights and liberties, were banished to foreign climes, or pined in dungeons, or whose blood was shed on scaffolds. Speaking of the forfeiture of the estate of the Earl of Argyll, which took place in the close of the year 1681, and of the Marquis of Atholl, who raised and headed some of the troops which were afterwards led against the Earl, having accepted and retained some of his forfeited lands, she says, “I was always convinced that it was a most unjust forfeiture that of the late Earl of Argyll, and so was grieved that my husband’s father should have any part of it given to him.” At the same time she records with much satisfaction, that her husband had no hand in the oppression of the Argyll family, and would never consent to share in the spoils. “My husband,” says she, “had no part in it [the forfeited estate], and did at the time disapprove of his father’s meddling with it, and would never, though he pressed him to it, take anything of it.”

After the persecution had closed, she took a deep interest in the prosperity of the Presbyterian church; and knowing that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation,” she was particularly concerned that the parishes of Scotland should be supplied with devoted evangelical ministers. Lay patronage having been abolished at the Revolution, her husband had not the power of presenting ministers to vacant parishes; but as the heritors of each parish, being Protestants, and the elders, were to propose a suitable person to the congregation, to be either approved or disapproved by them, *[The reasons of the congregation, if they disapproved of the person proposed, were to be laid before the Presbytery, which was to judge of them.]* heritors and elders, it is obvious, had great influence in the settlement of ministers; and she was extremely desirous that her husband should use this influence in procuring the settlement of pious and able gospel ministers. To prevail on him to do this, her prayers and counsel were not wanting; and, by the blessing of God, they had the desired effect. Writing at Falkland, May 9, 1691, in reference to the settlement of a minister in that place, she says, “O Lord, help me always to remember thy goodness to me. Thou hast many times prevented me with thy mercies, and disappointed my fears; and, now again, lately, I have had another proof of it. Thou only knowest what a burden it was to me, the fear I was in that my husband should have obstructed a good minister being settled in this place; and now, glory to God that has given me to see him the main, nay, I may say the only, instrument of bringing a godly minister, the Rev. Mr. John Forrest, to this place. O Lord, grant he may in the first place reap the benefit of his ministry to himself, and bless it in a special manner to *him*, that he, finding the good of it, may yet be more instrumental in bringing in good ministers to the places he has interest in.”

Falkland at that time was a very irreligious and profane place. During the persecution, though there were in it a few intelligent and pious persons, who refused to conform to prelacy, and to whom Mr. John Welwood and other proscribed ministers frequently preached privately, in some of their houses, yet the great body of the population had no scruples in conforming to prelacy; so that when the curate of the parish dispensed the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, a great multitude assembled, and he could boast, what many of his brethren could not do, of the large number on his communicants’ roll. *[Diary of Jean Collace, Wodrow MSS, vol. xxxi, 8vo, no. 7.]* In this place where “Satan had his seat in much peace,” where ignorance and profanity so greatly abounded, it could not be expected that the people would set much value upon the gospel, or that they would feel anything like a general desire for the settlement of an evangelical and devoted minister among them. It was, therefore, a very merciful providence that others, who better understood and appreciated the worth of an efficient gospel ministry, successfully exerted themselves in procuring for them this great blessing.

At this time, the subject of our notice was residing at Falkland Palace, which was a favourite retreat of James VI, probably on account of his attachment to hunting, for which the adjacent forest afforded excellent opportunities, but which, after his succession to the crown of England, ceased to be a royal residence, though it was visited by Charles I and Charles II. In 1658, it fell into the hands of the Atholl family. From the entries in her Diary, Lady Murray appears residing there from January 1689, till May 1691.

During this period her husband was threatened with a consumption, and his health continued for more than a year in a very precarious state. This caused her deep anxiety; and her reflections in regard to his condition, evince the struggle she felt between natural affection and submission to the will of God. Writing at Cupar, Sabbath, May 17, 1691, after averting to his illness, she adds, "Thou knowest that I have this day promised, if thou wilt be pleased to spare and recover him, to endeavour, through thy strength, to live more watchfully and holily; but, ah! Lord, how unable am I for anything that is good, if thou assist me not. True is thy word which thou hast said, holy Jesus! that without thee we can do nothing, John xv. 5. But I shall be able to do all things, even the hardest, if thou assist. Therefore, this day, with all my soul I beg of thee, that thou wilt give me entire submission to thy holy will and pleasure, whatever it shall be: That even if thou shouldst see fit to take away the desire of mine eyes, I may lay my hand on my mouth and be silent, since it is thy doing, who canst do nothing wrong. And be with me in the midst of my troubles, and support me under them, as thou hast been graciously pleased to do this time and heretofore, for which I desire, from the bottom of my soul, to bless and magnify thy name, who canst abundantly make up the loss of all earthly comforts. Be thou then in place of all unto me, blessed Jesus! and let never any idol be in my heart, where thou oughtest to be in the chief room. But thou hast not only allowed of a lawful love to my husband, but commanded me to have it. Therefore it is lawful, and my duty, to pray for him. Spare him, O Lord! for Christ's sake, and bless him with long life in this world, that he may glorify thee in his generation, and be an instrument of doing good to the people among whom thou hast set him, and be a blessing to his family. O God, hear me! and grant unto me, for Christ's sake, O grant, that the shaking of this rod over my head may be a mean to bring me back to my duty, which it will be, if thou grant thy blessing with it, which I beg for thy Son's sake, for whose sake alone I desire to be heard."

She afterwards records her gratitude to God for her husband's recovery to health.

Having resolved in the summer of 1697, to go to Hamilton to visit her mother, and to enjoy the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which was to be celebrated there on the 19th of July, she spent the Sabbath preceding at Edinburgh, where her husband, now Earl of Tullibardine, then was. [*He was created Earl of Tullibardine, Viscount Glen Almond, and Lord Murray, for life, July 27, 1696.*] She was careful, at all times, to sanctify the Lord's day, but this being the Sabbath preceding that on which she purposed to commemorate the Lord's death in the sacrament of the Supper, she endeavoured, in a particular manner, by meditation and prayer, to have her mind brought into a suitable frame for the solemn service which she had in prospect. "Edinburgh, Sunday, July 12, 1697. - O my soul, bless God the Lord, that ever he put it into thy heart to seek him, for he hath promised that those that seek him shall find him. This day I was reading the sixteenth chapter of John, verses 23, 24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you,' &c. O gracious promises! Then I began to think what it was I would ask of God. The thought that immediately occurred to me was, Jesus Christ to dwell in my heart by faith and love. Methought, that if God would put it in my offer to have all the universe, with all the glory, honour, riches, and splendour of it, I would rather have Christ to be my King, Priest, and Prophet, than have it all. O that he would always rule in me, and conquer all his and my enemies - my corruptions, temptations, and sins, I mean - and always assist and strengthen me to serve him faithfully and uprightly. Now, blessed Jesus, thou who hast said, 'Whatsoever we ask in thy name, the Father will give it,' this is my petition, and my request; fulfil thy word to me. Thou art faithful that hast promised; therefore I desire to believe and trust that thou wilt perform. O never forsake me, nor leave me to myself. Lord, I do believe and hope that thou wilt, through the riches of free grace, and thy meritorious satisfaction, redeem and save me from eternal death and damnation; but I beg not only so, but to be redeemed from the

power of sin, corruption, and vain imaginations. Oh! they are strong and stirring. O wilt thou not subdue them! Lord, I desire to obey thee, and to be of good cheer, and believe that, as thou hast overcome the world, so thou wilt overcome my sins, in thy own due and appointed time. And now, Lord, thou knowest I am designing, if thou shalt permit, to partake of thy holy Supper. O prepare me for it, and let me not be an unworthy receiver. Do thou there meet with my soul, and renew thy covenant and faithfulness unto me, and enlarge my heart and soul, and give me supplies of grace and strength to serve thee. Oh! I have often played the harlot, and gone astray with many lovers, Jer. iii. 1. Yet thou sayest, Return again unto me, and often, as in this chapter, invitest me to return. O Lord, I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord, my covenanted God. Thou knowest that, this day, I know not of any fraud or guile in this declaration. If there be, Lord, search me, and try me, and discover it unto me, and take it away, and cleanse me from all mine iniquities. O let this be my mercy this day.”

By the observance of the Lord’s Supper at this time she was much refreshed and comforted. On the Wednesday after, she solemnly calls upon her soul not to forget to render to God thanksgiving and praise, for having dealt so bountifully and mercifully with her. “Thou hast been pleased,” she says, “to give me at this time, what thou wast graciously pleased to do, the two last times I communicated, namely, a promise in Scripture, which thou madest me formerly believe in, and rest quietly upon, which was the 16th verse of the fifteenth chapter of John: ‘I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.’ . . . A little before going to thy table, thou knowest what darkness and confusedness I had, though still, blessed, blessed be thy holy name! there remained the hope and confidence of thy being reconciled to me through the blood of the Lamb, represented to me at thy table, as shed for my sins; but thou wast most graciously pleased before I went to thy table, to make me go there with solid peace and satisfaction, firmly believing that thou calledst me, and that I had a right to go there. Also when I was at thy table, it was said by thy minister - I doubt not by thy guiding and directing Spirit - What is your request, and what is your petition? Then it occurred again unto me what I had done before, when reading the 23d and 24th verses of the sixteenth of John, to entreat Jesus Christ to dwell in my heart by faith, and never to leave me, nor forsake me; and there [at the Lord’s table] I did, thou knowest, O Lord, with the sincerity of my soul, accept of the Lord as my covenanted God, and did most earnestly entreat the assistance of thy Holy Spirit and strength to be with me for ever, that I may never go out of thy way, but be helped to live uprightly and holily all the days of my appointed time.”

Hamilton was a place endeared to her by many sacred as well as tender recollections. Not only was it her birthplace, the dwelling-place of her infancy, and her parental residence; but God there first visited her soul in mercy - an event the most important in her history, when viewed in the light of eternity. In after life she looked back to this period with feelings of the deepest gratitude to God; and Hamilton was to her ever after a consecrated spot. “This was the place,” says she, after recording her experience of the goodness of God to her on that sacramental occasion, “where thou first lookedst upon me in mercy, and saidst unto me, when I was in my blood, Live, about sixteen or seventeen years ago. But, Oh!” she adds, “I have been often a transgressor and revolter since; but thou wast faithful, and didst not break thy covenant with me, nor alter the thing that had gone out of thy mouth, Psal. lxxxix. 34, but rather performedst thy promise, verses 31, 32, ‘That if I should break thy statutes, and keep not thy covenant, thou wouldest visit my transgressions with the rod, and mine iniquities with stripes, but thy loving kindness thou wouldest never take away from me, nor suffer thy faithfulness to fail.’ Blessed be thy holy name, thou art the same yesterday, today, and for evermore, on which I rest. Amen, Amen.”

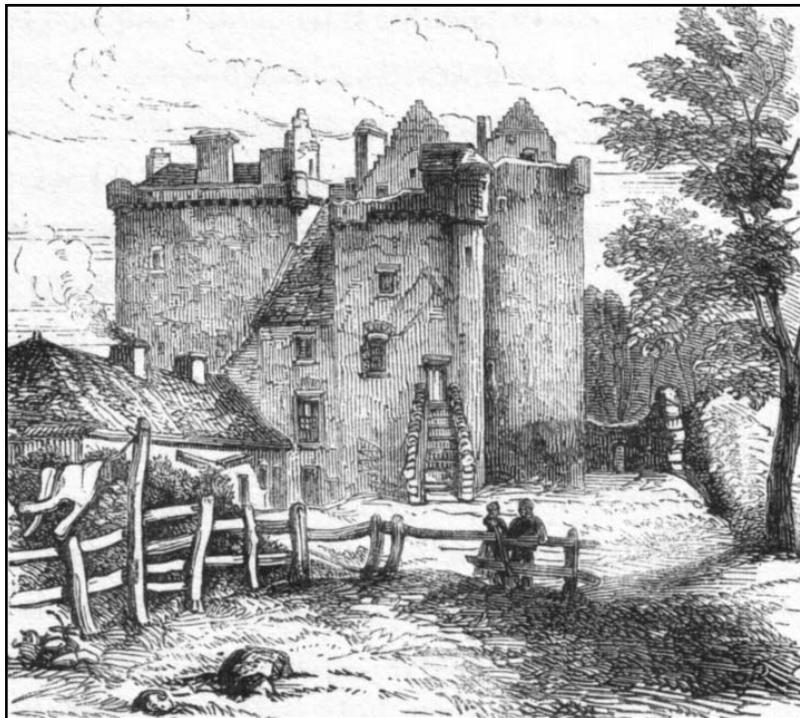
In the beginning of September 1697, she and her husband left Edinburgh for London. On Sabbath, September 5, they rested at Alnwick, the seat of the Duke of Northumberland; and, on Saturday, the 18th of that month, they arrived at Kensington, where they remained the greater part of a year. During the time of her residence at Kensington, though, from her living at court, her obstacles to retirement and meditation were increased, there is ample evidence from her Diary that much of her time was spent in reading the Scriptures, in spiritual

meditation, in self-examination, and prayer.

At the commencement of a new year it was her practice, in a particular manner, to review her past life; to take an account of the manner in which she had spent the year that was gone, never to be recalled; to mark the rapidity with which she was advancing in the journey of life, and to embrace God anew, as her God for time and for eternity. On the first day of the year 1698, when in the thirty-sixth year of her age, she thus writes: - "I have this day renewed again my covenant with my God, though in great weakness, yet, I hope, in sincerity. I have given up myself, soul and body, to be at his disposal, as he sees meet. O that he would be pleased to give me new strength to serve him in newness of life this new year, and that as days are added to my natural life, so grace may be added to my spiritual. O that with the old year, which will never return again, I may have left off my old, sinful, crooked, and worldly ways, and never return to them again. Lord, thou who searchest the heart, and triest the reins, knowest that this is more the desire of my soul than all gold or silver, or honours or pleasures upon this earth. Therefore, O deny me not the earnest request of my soul this day, and fulfil that scripture thou broughtest to my mind this morning in prayer, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5."

On the first day of a subsequent year, 1699, which was Sabbath, she thus writes at Huntingtower: - "This day I have been reflecting how I have spent the last year, and alas! I find great cause to mourn, for I have been very earthly-minded and carnal, and, with Martha, cumbered about many things, and have much neglected the one thing needful. Lord, pardon me, for Jesus Christ's sake; I desire to repent and be humble. O that thou mayest help me to spend this year better, if thou sparest me. But I find all my resolutions ineffectual unless thou assist me: but if thou wilt put to thy helping hand, and give me the lively influences of thy Holy Spirit, duties will not only be easy but pleasant to me. I have been endeavouring, though, alas! in much deadness and weakness, to renew my covenant with thee; and this day I desire to confirm all that I have ever done before, to resign myself and all that is mine to thee. Holy Lord, accept of me, and give me sincerity and truth, and say thou that thou acceptest of me."

Huntingtower (formerly called Ruthven Castle), at which these reflections were written, was another place where she and her husband sometimes resided. This Castle, which is in the parish of Tibbermuir, is a very ancient building, though it does not appear ever to have been a place of great strength. It was formerly the seat



Huntingtower Castle.

of the Gowrie family, and the place where James VI was sometime confined by the Earl Gowrie and others in the enterprise usually called the *Raid of Ruthven*; but the Castle, with the adjoining barony, became the property of the Atholl family, by a marriage with the Tullibardine family, who had received it from James VI, after the Earl of Gowrie had lost it in consequence of his conspiracy. It is now the seat of a calico-printing establishment.

To the spiritual welfare of her children Lady Tullibardine's pious emotions, wishes, and prayers were, in an especial manner, directed. When, in May 1698, the Earl went to Oxford with their eldest son John, purposing to leave him there at school, should it be found a suitable place for carrying on his education, she records her earnest desire not only that her son might be accomplished in every kind of secular learning, but that, as God had distinguished him by a high birth in this world, he would also confer upon him the higher distinction of being holy in character, and a promoter of true godliness. "I could not remember," she adds, "that I had dedicated him in the womb so much to God as I had done the rest; but this day [Sabbath, May 22] I have resigned him, and all the rest of my children, wholly to be the Lord's. O accept of the gift, so far as they are mine to give; they are thine by creation, O let them be thine by adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and redemption. Fulfil to me, O Lord, the 127th and 128th Psalms, that my children may be thy heritage, and the fruit of my womb thy reward; that thus I may be blessed out of Zion, that thus I may be blessed of those that desire to fear thy name, and that I may see the good of thy Jerusalem, and peace upon thy Israel. And O, forget not my absent husband, the father of these children, whom I have given up unto thee, and make him say Amen to the bargain; and be thou his God, and my God, and the God of our seed, from henceforth from this day and for ever. Amen. And to thee, holy Father, blessed Redeemer, and sanctifying Spirit, be the glory and praise of all."

In June this year she returned to Scotland with the Earl, who went north to attend the Scottish Parliament, [*Carstairs's State Papers*, p. 381.] and during their stay at Edinburgh, their lodgings were in the Abbey. They next went to Huntingtower; and from the dates in her Diary she appears residing there from November 1698 to May 1701.

From her Diary we are at no loss to discover her warm attachment to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. But while espousing from conviction the Presbyterian cause, she held her principles in a spirit of charity and forbearance. Hers was not a religion which would deny the validity of a Divine ordinance, because not administered in the way she judged most agreeable to the Word of God, or which would deny the Christianity of all who did not belong to the church of which she was a member. So high were the Scottish Episcopalians of that day on the doctrine of episcopal succession, as to deny that Presbyterian ministers were lawful ministers; maintaining that without episcopal government there could be no regular ordination of ministers, and consequently holding that all the services of the Presbyterian ministers as such were so many irregular nullities. Even some of the more wild among them went so far as to declare, that those who were not of the communion of the Church of England were in a state of damnation, and left to the uncovenanted mercy of God. [*Wodrow's Correspondence*, vol. i. pp. 202, 400.] But these opinions the Duchess justly regarded as extreme and untenable, and the remarks she makes on them, while indicating her entire want of sympathy with such extravagant sectarianism, and her regret that it should be obtruded on the church, to create division and offence, are yet marked by great mildness of temper. "Dunkeld, April 4, 1706. - I was this day reflecting upon the sad divisions of this church; and now it is become a doctrine preached up by the Episcopalians, that the Presbyterians are not lawful ministers, and that what they do is not valid, so that those they baptize are not baptized; and that the people owe them no obedience in their ministerial authority. I was made to think it was matter of great lamentation, and presaged very sad things to this nation, and the more that it was so little laid to heart, and that there is so great neglect, to say no worse, of the gospel which is preached so powerfully amongst us."

The Duchess was seized with her last illness at Hamilton Palace, whither she had gone on a visit to her

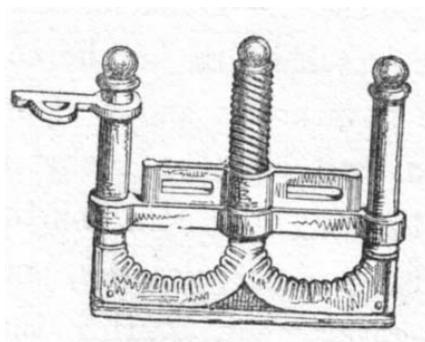
mother, about the close of the year 1706, and she died there in January 1707, in the forty-fifth year of her age. Her husband, to his great grief, was absent during the closing scene, having been attending the last Parliament of Scotland, at Edinburgh, and not having been apprised of her dangerous condition in sufficient time to be able to reach Hamilton, to see her in life, the symptoms not having assumed a decidedly alarming aspect till shortly before her death. But by her mother, the Duchess of Hamilton, and other sympathizing friends, she was waited upon with all manner of affectionate tenderness and care. To the last she retained the full possession of her faculties, and as her life had been eminently holy, so her latter end was peace. She had long been under the training of her heavenly Father, and now she maintained a tranquil resignation to his sovereign will. Her confidence as a guilty sinner - for such she felt herself to be - in the great propitiation, and in God's everlasting covenant, remained unshaken throughout the mortal conflict, producing the sure anticipation of future blessedness, and enabling her to triumph over all the terrors of the last enemy.

Not much more than two hours before her death, the medical gentleman who attended her, finding the vital powers fast sinking, informed her friends present of her dangerous situation, This was on the 9th of January, a little before ten o'clock at night. Mr. Findlater, one of the ministers of the parish of Hamilton, being immediately sent for, to administer to her religious comfort, and to pray with her, hastened to the Palace; and, at the request of the Duke of Atholl, he wrote a short account of the circumstances attending her death. When he came into the room, an attendant told her that Mr. Findlater was present, to whom, being in a state of great prostration, she answered, "Tell him I cannot speak; desire him to pray." After prayer he spoke to her a few words encouraging her against the terror of death, from the nature of God's covenant with her, and her interest in it. She then regretted her want of strength to speak, that she might show what interest she had in the covenant, and what God had done for her soul. She owned that she had frequently renewed her covenant with God, and given her consent to it, and that now this was her greatest comfort. Her want of strength to declare to those about her, so fully as she desired, her experience of the goodness of God, and her calm and brightening hope of endless felicity, was indeed her greatest grief. This she regretted not only to Mr. Findlater, but also to her nurse who attended her, to whom she called frequently a little before her death, "O pray, pray that I may have a little ease, that I may declare God's goodness to me." Having withdrawn for a short time to the next room, Mr. Findlater returned to her chamber, and, thinking she had become more oppressed, asked her how it was with her. She answered, "Very weak - and dying." But she knew in whom she had believed, and seemed to comfort herself with these words, which the minister quoted, and which she repeated after him, "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." She then desired him to pray. He asked her what he should pray for to her; what was that one thing she would seek from the Lord, above all things. "Pray," said she, "but for as much strength as that I may declare the goodness of God to me;" straining herself apparently, and speaking with a more elevated voice than formerly. He asked her whether she desired to live, or to die and be with Christ, which was best of all. She said, "*That* is best of all indeed." In time of prayer he heard her repeat some words of Scripture after him; particularly when mention was made of the covenant being ordered in all things, and sure, she said, "*That* is all my salvation and all my desire;" "which," says Mr. Findlater, "were the last words she spoke in my hearing. Though her body was greatly pained," he adds, "yet her soul seemed full of the joy of the Lord, which is unspeakable and full of glory." He again left her chamber a second time. During his absence, her mother, seeing her weak, asked her if she had anything to say to her. She answered - and the answer shows how unabated affection for dear surviving earthly friends may mingle with the calm resignation that bids farewell to life, and with the joy arising from the certain prospect of everlasting blessedness - "Dear mother, be kind to my Lord," which were the last words she spoke, as the Duke feelingly records. When Mr. Findlater came into her room the third time, she could speak none, and in a moment or two after he had again prayed. with her, she fell asleep in Christ, about a quarter of an hour after twelve o'clock at night.

The Duke of Atholl was much affected by the death of his beloved wife, of whose great worth he was deeply sensible, and it enhanced his sorrow that he enjoyed not the melancholy satisfaction of seeing her on her deathbed. At the close of her Diary he thus records the mournful dispensation: "It hath pleased the great and

only wise God, who doeth what he sees fit in heaven and in earth, to take from me, to himself, my dear wife, Catharine, Duchess of Atholl, and in her my chiefest earthly comfort. She died at Hamilton between the ninth and tenth of January 1707, between twelve and one o'clock, Friday morning. I was at that time in Edinburgh attending the last Parliament of Scotland, and was not timeously advertised of her dangerous condition, so that I wanted the satisfaction of being with her in her last hours, which was an extraordinary great addition to my irreparable loss. Mr. Findlater, minister of Hamilton, was sent for but two hours before her death, till which time the doctor that was with her did not declare she was in any danger. I desired Mr. Findlater to put in writing what she had said concerning the state of her soul; which shows that she died in the same holy disposition and frame in which she had lived."

As the Duke highly esteemed and loved the Duchess while she lived, so he continued to cherish her memory after she was gone. From several parts of her Diary, there is reason to believe that he was not neglectful of the most important interests, and that his religious impressions were very much owing to her prayers, counsel, and example. He greatly valued the memorials of her Christian experience and exercise contained in her Diary, which she expressly left as a dying legacy to him, in the hope that he might profit by it; and the solemn and affectionate thought of her virtues and graces, now when she had entered eternity, enforced with new power the motives to religion. He now seemed, as it were, to hear her in that document, speaking to him from the eternal world, bidding him make the salvation of the soul the one thing needful, and follow in the path which had conducted her to immortal happiness. Even ten years subsequently to her death, he employed himself in transcribing a copy from the original, written with her own hand, prefixing to the copy the following notice: "This book, with some other papers written by my dear wife, were left by her to me just before her death. She recommended them to me by a paper she caused me to write at that time, calling them her treasure, which she desired I might make good use of. - Dunkeld, March 1717. ATHOLL." In politics the Duke was shifting, but he continued to his death warmly attached to the government and worship of the Church of Scotland. "He was a most zealous Presbyterian," says Douglas "and, after he joined the cavaliers, still courted and preserved his interest with the Presbyterian ministers, professing always to be firm to their kirk-government, hearing them always in their churches, and patronising them much more than those of the Episcopal persuasion, which induced many of the Tories to doubt his sincerity." [Douglas's Peerage, vol. i. p. 150.] His continuing to adhere steadily to the Presbyterian church, after joining the cavaliers, was so inconsistent, that it could hardly fail of rendering him an object of distrust to the party which he joined. But the inconsistency is easily explained, when we take into account that he was probably not a stranger to true religion. Circumstances prevailed in making him desert the Whigs, among whom he very likely saw not a little of the selfishness, corruption, and want of principle, which have often disgraced politicians of all classes; but the religious element kept him close to the Church of Scotland, to which almost all the piety of Scotland was at that time confined. In the former case, he may be said to have acted according to early educational influence; in the latter, according to the happier influence which his Duchess had exerted upon him while she lived, and which her memory continued to exercise upon him after her death.



Thumbkin, time of Charles I.