

In the meantime, amid a constant series of petty feuds and tumults, which, originating in private ambition, and individual hostility, are undeserving the notice of the historian, one, from the magnitude of the scale on which it was acted, as well as from the illustrations which it affords us of the extraordinary manners of the times, requires a more particular recital. The religious house of Arbroath had appointed Alexander Lindsay, eldest son of the Earl of Crawford, their chief justiciar, a man of the most ferocious habits, but of great ambition and undaunted courage, who, from his fierce aspect, and the extreme length and bushiness of his beard, was afterwards commonly known by the appellation of the "Tiger, or Earl Beardy." The prudent monks, however, soon discovered that the Tiger was too expensive a protector, and having deposed him from his office, they conferred it upon Ogilvy of Innerquharity, an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the Master of Crawford, who instantly collected an army of his vassals, for the double purpose of inflicting vengeance upon the intruder, and violently repossessing himself of the dignity from which he had been ejected. There can be little doubt that the Ogilvies must have sunk under this threatened attack, but accident gave them a powerful ally in Sir Alex-

eu aucuns enfans, l'an 1445, à Chalons, en Champagne, auquel lieu fut inhume son corps en la grande eglise la, ou demeura jusqu'au regne de Roy Louis, qui le fait lors apporter en l'Abbaie de Saint Laon de Thouars, en Poitou, ou il gît." See same work, p. 307.

ander Seton of Gordon, afterwards Earl of Huntly, who, as he returned from court, happened to lodge for the night at the castle of Ogilvy, at the very moment when this baron was mustering his forces against the meditated assault of Crawford. Seton, although in no way personally interested in the quarrel, found himself, it is said, compelled to assist the Ogilvies, by a rude but ancient custom, which bound the guest to take common part with his host in all dangers which might occur so long as the food eaten under his roof remained in his stomach,¹ With the small train of attendants and friends who accompanied him, he instantly joined the forces of Innerquharity, and proceeding to the town of Arbroath, found the opposite party drawn up in great strength on the outside of the gates. The families thus opposed in mortal defiance to each other, could number amongst their adherents many of the bravest and most opulent gentlemen in the country; and the two armies thus composed exhibited a splendid appearance of armed knights, barbed horses, and embroidered banners. As the two lines, however, approached each other, and spears were placing in the rest, the Earl of Crawford, who had received information of the intended combat, being anxious to avert it, suddenly appeared on the field, and galloping up between the two armies, was accidentally slain by a soldier, who was enraged at his interference, and ignorant of his rank. The event naturally

¹ Lesley De Rebus Gestis Scotorum, p. 286. History of Scotland by the same author, p. 18.

increased the bitterness of hostility, and the Crawfords, who were assisted by a large party of the vassals of Douglas, infuriated at the loss of their chief, attacked the Ogilvies with a desperation which soon broke their ranks, and reduced them to irreclaimable disorder. Such, however, was the gallantry of their resistance, that they were almost entirely cut to pieces; and five hundred men, including many noble barons in Forfar and Angus, were left dead upon the field.¹ Seton himself had nearly paid with his life the penalty of his adherence to a barbarous custom; and John Forbes of Pitsligo, one of his followers, was slain; nor was the loss which the Ogilvies sustained in the field their worst misfortune; for Lindsay, with his characteristic ferocity, and protected by the authority of Douglas, let loose his army upon their estates, and the flames of their castles, the slaughter of their vassals, the plunder of their property, and the captivity of their wives and children, instructed the remotest adherents of the justiciar of Arbroath, how terrible was the vengeance which they had provoked. What must have been the state of the government, and how miserable the consequences of those feudal manners and customs, which have been admired by superficial enquirers, where the pacific attempt of a few monks to exercise their undoubted privilege in choosing their own protector, could involve a whole province in bloodshed, and kindle the flames of civil war in the heart

¹ Auchinleck Chronicle, p. 38.

of the country. It does honour to the administration of Kennedy, that, although distracted by such domestic feuds, he found leisure to attend to the foreign commercial relations of the country, and that a violent dissension which had broken out betwixt the Scots and the Bremeners, who had seized a ship freighted from Edinburgh, and threatened further hostilities, was amicably adjusted by envoys dispatched for the express purpose to Flanders.¹

The consequences of the death of the Earl of Crawford, require particular attention. That ambitious noble had been one of the firmest allies of Douglas; and the lieutenant-general, who was well aware that superior power, and an extensive command of armed vassals, were the sole supports of an authority which he had very grossly abused, immediately entered into a league with the new Earl of Crawford, and Alexander, Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, in whose mind the imprisonment and degrading feudal penance inflicted upon him by James the First, had awakened feelings of hatred, and desires of revenge, the deeper and more determined only from their being long repressed. The alliance between these three nobles was on the very face of it an act of treason, as it bore to be a league offensive and defensive against all men, not excepting the sovereign; and it was well known that Crawford, from his near connexion with the forfeited house of March, inherited a dislike and jealousy of the royal family, which, fostered and increased

¹ See Appendix, D.

