

In the meantime, Douglas dispatched the Lord Hamilton into England, where, in a meeting with the Yorkists, an immediate supply of money and of troops was promised,¹ upon the condition that the conspirators should give a pledge of the sincerity of their intentions, by taking the oath of homage to the English crown,—a piece of treachery to which Hamilton would not consent, although there is reason to believe it met with few scruples in the convenient conscience of Douglas. Before, however, this test had been taken, the royal vengeance burst upon the principal conspirator with a violence and a rapidity for which he appears to have been little prepared. James, at the head of a force which defied all resistance, attacked and stormed his castle of Inviravon, and, after having razed it to the ground, pressed forward without an instant's check, to Glasgow, where he collected the whole strength of the western counties, and a large force of the Highlanders and Islesmen. With this army he marched to Lanark, invaded Douglasdale and Avondale, which he wasted with all the fury of military execution; and, after delivering up to fire and sword the estates belonging to Lord Hamilton, passed on to Edinburgh; from thence, without delay, at the head of a new force, chiefly of Lowlanders, he invaded the forests of Selkirk and Ettrick, and compelled all the barons and landed gentlemen of whom he entertained any suspicion, to renew their allegiance, and join the royal banner, under the penalty of having their castles levelled with the ground, and their estates

¹ Auchinleck Chronicle, p. 53.

unmercifully laid waste and depopulated.¹ He next besieged the castle of Abercorn, which, from the great strength of its walls, and the facilities for defence afforded by its situation, defied for a month the utmost attempts of the royal army.² Battered and broken up at last, by the force of the immense machines which were brought to bear upon the towers, and exposed to the shot of a great gun, which was charged and directed with unerring aim by a French engineer, the place was taken by escalade, and the principal persons who had conducted the defence instantly hanged. The walls were then dismantled, and the great body of the garrison dismissed with their lives. During the siege, a desperate but ineffectual attempt to disperse the royal army was made by Douglas, who concentrated his forces at Lanark,³ and, along with his kinsman, Lord Hamilton, advanced to the neighbourhood of Abercorn, where, however, such was the terror of the royal name, and the success of the secret negotiation which Bishop Kennedy contrived to institute with the leaders in the rebel army, that in one night they deserted the banner of their chief, and left him a fugitive. Exposed to the unmitigated rigour of the regal vengeance, Hamilton, whose treachery to Douglas had principally occasioned this calamity, was immediately committed to close confinement, whilst Douglas, hurled in a moment from the pinnacle of pride and power to a state of terror

¹ Auchinleck Chronicle, pp. 53, 54.

² Original letter from James the Second to Charles the Seventh of France. Pinkerton's Hist. vol. i. p. 486.

³ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 76.

and destitution, fled from his late encampment, under cover of night, and, for some time, so effectually eluded pursuit, that none knew for certain in what part of Scotland he was concealed.¹

In the meantime, the success of the king was attended with the happiest effects throughout the country, not only in affording encouragement to the friends of peace and social order, who dreaded the re-establishment of a power in the House of Douglas, which repeated experience had shown to be incompatible with the security of the realm, but in bringing over to the royal party those fierce feudal barons, who, either from terror, or the love of change and of plunder, had entered into bands or associations with the House of Douglas, and now found it their interest to abandon a falling cause. In consequence of this universal panic and desertion, the castles, which, in the commencement of this great rebellion, had been filled with military stores, and fortified against the government, were gradually abandoned, and taken possession of by the friends of the crown. Douglas castle, with the strong fortresses of Thrieve in Galloway, Strathaven, Lochindorb, and Tarnaway, fell successively into the hands of the king; and the Earl of Douglas, having once more reappeared in Annandale at the head of a tumultuous assemblage of outlaws, who had been drawn together by the exertions of his brothers, the Earls of Moray and Ormond, was encountered at Arkinholme,² and totally defeated

¹ Auchinleck Chronicle, pp. 53, 54.

² Arkinholme, on the River Esk, opposite Wauchop Kirk.

