

PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM

M A N U S C R I P T S

CHIEFLY IN

HER MAJESTY'S STATE PAPER OFFICE,

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PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

I.

HISTORICAL REMARKS ON KNOX'S IMPLICATION IN RICCIO'S MURDER.

History, p. 26.

It has long been known, that some of the principal supporters of the Protestant cause in Scotland were implicated in the assassination of Riccio; but it has hitherto been believed that their great ecclesiastical leader Knox was not privy to this murder. From the language, in which the event is told in his history it might be inferred, indeed, that he did not condemn the assassination of one whom he regarded as a bitter enemy to the truth.¹ "After this manner above specified," says he, "to wit by the death of David Rizzio, the noblemen were relieved of their trouble, and restored to their places and rowmes,² and likewise the Church reformed, and all that professed the Evangel within this realm, after fasting and prayer were delivered;" but in weighing this passage it is to be remembered, that although the Fifth Book of Knox's history was probably composed from notes and collections left by the reformer, it was not written by him.³ The late Dr. Macrie, his excellent biographer, has this sentence upon the subject, which from the authority deservedly attached to his life of Knox may be taken as the present popular belief upon the point. "There

¹ Knox's History, p. 344.

² Offices.

³ Mc'Crie's Life of Knox by Dr. Crichton, pp. 250, 416, and Prefatory Notice to Bannatyne's Memorials, p. 20.

is no reason to think that he (Knox) was privy to the conspiracy which proved fatal to Riccio. But it is probable that he had expressed his satisfaction at an event which contributed to the safety of religion and of the Commonwealth, if not also his approbation of the conduct of the conspirators.”¹

As Dr. Macrie had not the advantage of consulting those letters upon this subject which I have found in the State Paper Office, and by which the whole secret history of the conspiracy against Riccio has been developed, we are not to wonder that he should have spoken so decisively of Knox's innocence of any previous knowledge of the plot. I shall now state as clearly as I can, the evidence upon which I have affirmed in the text that he was precognizant of the intended murder—adding, at the same time, some letters which may be quoted in his defence.

The reader is already aware that Riccio was assassinated on the 9th of March, 1565-6; that Ruthven, Morton, Lethington, fled on the queen's escape and meditated advance to Edinburgh (March 18th), and that while other accomplices secreted themselves in Scotland, Morton and Ruthven took refuge in England. Such being the state of things, on the 21st of March the Earl of Bedford then at Berwick, of which he was governor, thus wrote to Cecil,—

“You shall understand that the Lord Ruthven is come hither for his own safety, who, passing thro Tiviotdale came to Wark Castle, and being troubled with sickness, and therefore weak, tarried the longer upon the way thence, afore he came here. I received him, (as I have learned that the ancient order is in like cases) and so mean to do such other as shall for like purpose come. He keepeth most commonly his bed for that small time that he hath as yet tarried here, and therefore is not so likely to depart hence of some good time.

“The Earl Morton is gone towards Carlisle, and from thence will take his way towards Newcastle, and so hitherward for some time, to talk with the Lord Ruthven. The Lord Lindsay and the Laird of Liddington are both gone to the Earl of Athol for their safeguard—Liddington, as I hear, will come hither if by any means he can, whereof as it cometh to pass you shall further understand.

¹ Life of Knox, p. 253, edited by Dr. Crichton.

“The Earls of Argile, Glencairn, and Rothes, have received their dress,¹ and so are in quiet, or at the least in hope they shall be quiet. The Earl of Murray, the Lairds of Grange and Patarro, and the tutor of Pitcur have refused the like dress, as the other have received, seeming thereby the less willing to receive the dress offered them for that these lords their friends were excluded out of the favor and pardon, and so hardly putt at—yet it is thought they will receive it, for so in any wise have these lords now abroad desired them.

“Their King remaineth utter enemy to these lords now abroad, notwithstanding his former doings with them. Hereof and for that Mr. Randolph *writeth also more at large of the names of such as now be gone abroad*, I shall not trouble you therewith.”² * * *

This letter was written from Berwick eleven days after the murder, and about a week after the flight of the conspirators, here called “those that be gone abroad,” and we see, that in the last sentence Bedford mentions to Cecil, that he will not trouble him with any farther details, as Mr. Randolph was at that very time writing to him, and would send in his letter the names of the conspirators who had gone abroad.

This letter of Randolph is accordingly in the State Paper Office, and pinned to it I found the promised list of names.³ I shall first give the letter, and then the “list.” The letter, which is addressed to Cecil, is wholly in Randolph’s hand—the list is in the hand of a clerk who I find at that time was employed in his confidential correspondence by Bedford.³ The letter, which is addressed to Cecil, is as follows:—

RANDOLPH TO CECIL.

Berwick, 21st *March*, 1565-6.

“May it please your honor,

“Since Mr. Carew’s departure hence, this hath happened. The queen, to be revenged upon the lords that gave the last attemptate and slew David, is content to remit unto the former

¹ Pardon.

² MS. Letter, St. P. Off. B.C. Bedford to Cecil. Berwick, this 21st *March*, 1565.

³ This list is now bound up with the volume. See the handwriting of letter, St. P. Off. B. C. Bedford to Cecil, 27 *March*, 1568,

lords, with whom she was so grievously offended, all that they had done at any time against her, who, seeing now their liberty and restitution offered unto them, were all content saving my Lord of Murray, to leave the other lords that were the occasion of their return, and took several appointment as they could get it, of which the first was the Earl of Glencairn, next Rothes, Argile, and so every one after other, saving, as I said, my Lord of Murray, with him Patarro and Grayne, [Grange] who, standing so much upon their honours, and promise, will not leave the other, without some likelihood to do them good.

“The lords of the last attemptate, which were these: Morton, Ruthven, Lindsay, and Liddington, finding these men fall from them whom they trusted so much in, and for whose cause they had so far ventured themselves, found it best to save themselves in time, and therefore, upon Sunday last,¹ every one of the four above named, departed their several way, my Lord of Morton towards the West borders, my Lord Ruthven through Tividale, and so came to Wark, and yesterday to this town. The Lord Lindsay into Fife, Liddington to Athol, to my L. there, either to be saved by him, or to purchase his pardon of the Q. which is thought will be so hard as may be, and therefore is he looked for very shortly to be in this country, if he can escape.

“Besides these that were the principal takers in hand of this matter, there are also these, the Laird of Ormiston, Hawton, his son-in-law, Cawder, his nephew, Brunston, Whyttingham, Andrew Car of Fawlsyde, Justice Clerk brother, George Douglas, and some other. Of the town of Edinburgh divers, so that as I judge, there are as many like to take hurt in this action, as were in the former. What is become of any of these I know not as yet, saving Andrew Car that came to this town with the L. Ruthven and his son.

“The Q. upon Monday last,² returned to Edinburgh. In her company the Earls Bothwell, Huntly, Marshall, Hume, Seton, with as many as there [they] were able to bring with them. Where she was wont to be carried in a chair by four of her

¹ *i. e.* Sunday, 17th March.

² *i. e.* Monday, 18th March.

