

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SCOTS IN DENMARK.

The Sinclairs of Roslin—Stuart of Ardgowan—Learned Scots in Copenhagen—The Earl of Bothwell : his marriage with a Norwegian Lady—Wiffert's Levy—Scoto-Danish Exploration of Greenland—Numerous Scotch adventurers in Denmark—Danish Count killed by a Scottish officer.

IN the times of which we chiefly write, when our countrymen rose to rank and power in nearly every European court and army, the favourite creed and toast of these wanderers were, "Peace at home and plenty wars abroad," while the old Highland version was, we are told, "O Lord, turn the world upside down, that honest fellows may make bread out of it."

In northern Europe, Denmark was a favourite field for some of these military spirits.

In 1379, Haco, King of Denmark, created Sir Henry Sinclair of Roslin, Earl of Orkney, a title confirmed by Robert II, while these isles were still a portion of Scandinavia. Sir Henry was the only son of that Sir William Sinclair who perished in battle against the Moors at Teba in 1331. According to Sir Robert Douglas, he married Florentina, daughter of the King of Denmark; and Nisbet in his *Heraldry* adds that he was made by Christian I, Lord of Shetland, Duke of Oldenburgh (in Holstein), a statement doubted; and that he was Knight of the Thistle, the

Cockle, and the Golden Fleece—the gift of the different sovereigns of these orders. The old tradition, that before one of this family died the beautiful chapel of Roslin appeared to be full of light, is supposed to be of Norse origin, imported by them from Scandinavia, as the tomb-fires of the North are mentioned in many of the Sagas.

In 1469 James III married Margaret, daughter of the King of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, whose dowry was Orkney and Shetland.

In 1506, when Sir David Sinclair directed his body to be buried in the cathedral of St. Magnus, at Kirkwall, his golden chain of office as a chief captain of the palace of Bergen, which post he held with that of “Governor of Hetland,” under the Scottish crown, was bequeathed to the altar of St. George, in the Domskerke of Roes Kilde, the ancient capital of Denmark.

In 1506 we find James IV interfering in behalf of his ally, John, King of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, against whom the latter country had revolted, and despatching conciliatory letters to the Archbishop of Upsala and the citizens of Lubeck, who were about to assist the Swedes—letters which were models of elegance and vigour (*Pinkerton*)—and by his influence the insurrection was suppressed; but when war with England came, in 1513-15, inspired only by ingratitude, neither Denmark nor France responded to the Scottish government. Yet, in 1518, Christian II applied to it for assistance in suppressing an insurrection which had broken out among his Swedish subjects, and asked for 1,000 Highlanders. This request was declined, on the plea that the disposition of the English court was uncertain. In

this matter Christian sent as his ambassador Alexander Kinghorn, a Scottish physician, established in Denmark.

In 1519, however, a body of Scottish troops, with plenty of ammunition, was sent to Copenhagen under James Stewart of Ardgowan to fight in that war which saw the massacre of Stockholm, the adventures of Gustavus Vasa, and the termination of the Union of Calmar. In the dead winter of 1520 the army under Otto Krumpe, composed of Germans, Scots, and French, passed the Sound; and fought the peasantry under Sture, who was slain by a cannon-ball. The Swedes were cut to pieces, and all who fell were refused the rites of Christian burial, and Christian was crowned King at Stockholm, where he placed the Scottish and German troops in garrison; but the tyrannical conduct of Christiern (or Christian), which ultimately led to his deposition, and the piratical seizure by Danish privateers of a rich merchant-ship belonging to Leith, completely alienated his Scottish allies, who returned with the Laird of Ardgowan (*Epist. Reg. Scot., etc.*), whose representative is now Sir Michael S. Stewart, Bart., of Ardgowan and Blackhall.

With the army of which they formed a part, Paraselsus was the principal physician. The capital of Denmark (says Schiern) "had, as we learn from 'a grace for the Scottish nation,' issued in 1539 by Christian III, an entire guild of Scotsmen, which, among other institutions, formed an hospital in Copenhagen for 'their sick countrymen,' and during the first half of the century many of these were professors of the university there, to wit—Peter David and Johannis Maccabeus (John MacAlpin) for theology;

Alexander Kinghorn, medicine; Thomas Alame, philosophy; while many Danish students were attending the University of Aberdeen." Thus the fugitive Bothwell had doubtless a warm welcome in Denmark in 1560.

Before this crisis in his misfortunes, Bothwell had been in Denmark, and there had met the Lady Anne, whose father, Christopher Thronson (of the Rustung family), was admiral of Christian III, and whose mother, Karine, was daughter of the deacon of Trondheim.

In Resen's *Annals of Frederick II*, under date June, 1560, information is given that the Lord James, Earl of Bothwell, High Admiral of Scotland, came to Denmark, and was well received by the king, by whom and the Duke of Holstein he was conducted through Jutland, as he wished to travel in Germany. In the same year he was in France.

Anne complained that Bothwell "had taken her from her fatherland and home into a foreign country, away from her parents, and would not hold her as his lawful wife, which with hand, mouth, and letters he had promised to do," at the time when it was rumoured at home he was making a rich match in Denmark. (F. Shiern, *Life of Bothwell*.)

Though the Earl of Bothwell, who was latterly the evil star of Mary's life, was not a soldier of fortune, his connection with Norway and Denmark is so little—if at all—known in Scotland, that we may be pardoned for inserting it here.

In Suhm's *Samlinges, or Collections for the History of Denmark*, we find it stated that the famous—or infamous—earl was married early in life to a Norwegian lady, Anne,

daughter of Christopher Thronson, prior to his marriage with Lady Jean Gordon, of the house of Huntly, and that his possessing, through the former, certain estates in Orkney was reason for his being made duke of these Isles in 1567.

After his flight from Orkney, and his defeat at sea by the gallant Kirkcaldy of Grange, Bothwell sailed into Karmesund, a harbour, when he was found by Captain Christian Alborg, commander of a Danish warship named the *Biornen*, or Great Bear, who demanded his licences for sailing an armed ship in Danish waters, and, as he failed to produce them, compelled the earl to accompany him up the Jelta Fiord to Bergen. Captain Alborg in his declaration records that "among the Scottish crew there was one disguised in old and patched boatswain's clothes, who stated himself to be the chief ruler of all Scotland."

This was the earl, with whom he reached the castle of Bergen, or Bergenhaus, on a tongue of land in the Bye-fiorden. The governor of the fortress, a wealthy Danish lord named Erick Rosenkrantz, appointed a committee of twenty-four gentlemen to interrogate the prisoner. These met on the 23rd September, 1567. Among them were the bishop and four councillors of Bergen, from whom Bothwell obtained permission to reside in the city.

Magister Absalom Beyer, the pastor of Bergen, who left behind him a diary entitled *The Chapter Book*, running from 1533 to 1570, recorded therein the following, which is inserted by Suhm in his *Samlingen*:—

"1567, September 2.—Came in (to Bergen) *Royal David*, of which Christian Alborg is captain. He had captured a Scottish noble, James Hepburn, Earl of Both-

well, Duke of Orkney and Shetland, who had been wedded to the Queen of Scotland. He was suspected to have been in the plot against the king's life. The council of the kingdom having revolted against the queen, this earl escaped, and has come hither to Norway.

“1567, September 17.—I upbraided the Lady Anne, daughter of Christopher Thronson, that this Earl of Bothwell had taken her from her native country, and yet would not keep her as his lawful wife, which he had promised to do, with hand, mouth, and letters, *which letters* she caused to be read before him; and whereas he has *three wives living*—first, herself; secondly, another in Scotland, from whom he has bought (divorced?) himself; and thirdly, Queen Mary. The Lady Anne opined ‘that he was good for nothing.’ Then he promised her an annual rent from Scotland, and a ship with all her anchors and cordage complete.

“September 25.—The earl went to the castle, when Erick Rosenkrantz did him great honour.

“September 30.—The earl departed on board the *David* and was carried captive to Denmark, *where he yet remains* in the castle of Malmo, at this time, 1568.

“October 10, 1567.—Part of the earl's men were returned to Scotland on board a small pink which Erick Rosenkrantz had lent them, and it is said they were all put to death on their landing.”

The only discrepancy here is in one statement of the pastor and the committee: the former calls the Danish ship the *David*, and the latter the *Biornen*; but perhaps Captain Alborg commanded *two* so-named.

Other passages in the *Chapter Book* record that in 1563 the Lady Anne moved in the best circle in the province, which she could not have done as Bothwell's mistress; and that she was known as the *Skottifruen*, or Scottish lady. Her second sister, Dorothy, was married to John Stewart, a gentleman of Shetland; and her third, Elsie, was thrice married—the last time to Axel Mouatt, a Scottish gentleman settled in Norway.

The royal order issued by King Frederick for imprisoning Bothwell in Malmo was issued from Fredericksborg, 28th December, 1567. (*Les Affairs du Comte de Bodeul.*)

He lived two years after his well-known confession, and died in the fortress of Dragsholm, on the northern coast of Zealand, between Halbek and Kallondsborg, in April, 1578, and was interred in the church of Faareville.

According to the *Privy Seal Register*, Axel Wiffirt, a servant of the King of Denmark, Frederick II, was licensed to levy 2,000 soldiers in Scotland, and to convey them away armed as *coulvreniers* on foot "as they best can provide them," to serve the Danish monarch in his war against the Swedes. The accoutrements of these troops were a habergeon with sleeves, a matchlock, salade, sword, and dagger. This was in July, 1568.

In 1571, Crawford states in his *Memoirs* that Captain Michael Wemyss, an experienced soldier, was coming from Denmark with his company, consisting of a hundred men, to serve under the Earl of Morton against the adherents of Queen Mary: probably the former were some of Axel Wiffirt's levy.

During Bothwell's captivity in Denmark a Scottish

officer named Captain John Clark made a great figure there. He had commanded a body of soldiers in the insurrection which ended at Carberry Hill; and in the subsequent autumn passed, with 80 Scots, into the service of Frederick II, who on the 15th June, 1564, gave him a commission, dated at Bordesholm, over 206 Scottish cavalry. He is described by Resen as a brave and well-trained captain, who, with his lieutenant, David Stnart, after a bloody encounter, stormed the castle of Halmstad, which commanded the Kattegat, from the Swedes. In a letter dated Roskilde, Oct., 1568, he styles himself—"I, John Clark, commander of the Scottish military detachments" (*Schiern*), when engaging to produce the murderers of Darnley to the Scottish government.

In 1569, he with his Scottish troops was quartered at Lonskrona, on the coast. His lieutenant then was Andrew Armstrong. They quarrelled with Frederick II about commissariat matters, Clark demanding 17,000 dollars on his discharge; and for this and other matters he was summoned to appear for examination at Copenhagen, before a court of which Alexander Durham, Richard Scougal, and Cagnoli, a kinsman of Riccio, were members, while his "Scottish Riflemen," to the number of 300 or more, were nearly perishing of hunger in Jutland—the reward of their service during Frederick's Seven Years' War.

Clark died in 1575, a prisoner of state, in the castle of Dragsholm, in Denmark; the king of which had come, says Schiern, "to regard the Scottish soldiers with a strange dislike."

“In 1605 the King of Denmark sent three ships, of which John Cunningham, a Scotsman, was admiral, to Greenland. They went a great way up Davis’ Straits. In a place called Cunningham’s Ford they found stones, out of a hundredweight of which they extracted 26 ounces of fine silver. They brought with them three of the natives of Greenland to Denmark.” (*Atlas Geographicus*, vol i.)

During the reigns of seven kings, traces of the former had been lost, having become inaccessible by floating ice. The fiord and a cape still bear the name of Cunningham.

Many Scots now went to Denmark. A Highland regiment, raised among the Mackays, embarked for service there in March, 1625, for the service of King Christian. In June, Sir James Leslie levied another of 1,000 men, and Captain Alexander Seaton raised 500 more. The forces of Leslie and Mackay soon mustered in all 4,400 men; and a letter of Philip Burlamachi, a London merchant, shows that he paid, by the king’s order, £3,000 for their transport from Scotland to Hamburg.

In 1626 the king paid £8,000 to the Earl of Nithsdale, the Lord Spynie, and Sir James Sinclair of Murkle for levying three regiments of 3,000 men each “for his unkeil the King of Denmark’s service,” making 13,400 soldiers sent by Scotland to that country in two years. In three years Mackay’s regiment had 1,000 men and 30 officers killed or wounded.

Colonels Sir Donald Mackay, Seaton, and Forbes, wounded at Oldenburg; Captains Boswal and Learmouth of Balcomie, killed at Boitzenburg; Sir Patrick M’Ghie,

Forbes of Tulloch and Munro, wounded at Oldenburg; Forbes and Carmichael killed at Bredenburg; Mackenzie of Kildare and Kerr, wounded at Eckernfiord; Lieutenant Martin, killed at Boitzenburg, and six others at Stralsund and elsewhere; seven ensigns were wounded at Oldenburg and one at Stralsund, where the quarter-master, chaplain, and 500 Highlanders fell. (*Munro's Expedition with Mackay's Regiment*, fol., 1637)

“The regiment received colours whereon his Majesty (Christian IV) would have the officers to carry the Danish cross, which the officers refusing, they were summoned to compeare before his Majestie at Raynesburg to know the reason of their refusal.” Captain Robert Ennis was sent home to learn the wish of James VI, “whether or no they might carrie, without reproach, the Danish Crosse on *Scottish Colours*. Answer was returned that they should obey the orders of him they served.” (*Ibid.*)

The escort of the Duke of Holstein's ambassadors to Muscovy and Persia in 1637 would seem to have been mostly Scottish soldiers, and one of them, a sergeant named Murray, distinguished himself amid a brawl that ensued in the Persian capital, when, among several others, a Danish gunner was killed as he was in the act of levelling a cannon against the enemy.

Sergeant Murray, “being eager to avenge his death, charged the natives so furiously that he slew five or six of them, till, an arrow taking him directly in the breast, he plucked it out, and, having killed another with his firelock, fell dead upon the spot.” (*Voyage du Chev. Chardin, etc.*)

Sir Thomas Gray, one of the many Scots who in several

capacities served Christian IV, was military governor of the castle of Bergen, where, in 1647, he hospitably entertained the fugitive Marquis of Montrose, who went from there across the Norwegian Alps to obtain an interview with Christian IV.

At the close of the century the chief huntsman of Frederick II was a Scotsman named Graham, when the latter sumptuously entertained Queen Elizabeth's envoy, Mr. Vernon, at Yagersburg, a few miles from Copenhagen, as we are told in *Travels through Denmark in 1702*.

Under Christian VII the governor and commandant of Rendsborg, a strong border fortress between Holstein and Schleswig, was Sir Robert Keith, Bart., of Ludquhairn, a major-general in the Danish army, and there he died on the 14th January, 1771. He was a gallant veteran, and had been A.D.C. to his kinsman, Marshal Keith, for many years.

The killing of the Danish Count Rantzau Aschberg by a Scottish officer made some noise in Europe in November, 1773. The count was concerned in some way with the administration of Struensee, who so soon became hateful to the nobility and cabinet, and whom a plot to overthrow had been formed, under the queen-mother, by which he was ultimately disgraced and brought to the scaffold, with his friend Count Brand.

The cause of Rantzau's death was involved in some mystery.

Before leaving his seat of Aschberg he received a letter without any signature, informing him not to set out on a journey he intended, as a certain person would follow, and

certainly slay him on the road. Disdaining this anonymous hint, the count departed for Switzerland, whence he was travelling to Spain by way of France. When on the frontier of the former country he was suddenly confronted by a Scotsman, Lieutenant Osborne, of the Danish service, who stopped his carriage on the highway and offered him a brace of pistols, desiring him to choose one and fight a fair duel, "as he owed him satisfaction."

The count, having no second with him, refused to fight, on which Osborne shot him through the head and rode away. "As the count," says a print of the time, "was brought up at the court of Denmark, and consequently knew the secret history of the Danish cabinet; his journey, in the present critical period, to France and Spain, after his falling into disgrace; his being killed thus by a zealous Scotsman, and the notice taken of the matter by the courts of France, cause his death, attended with all these circumstances, to make a great deal of noise."

We have not traced Osborne's career further in this matter; but, as in Sweden, many Scottish names are still to be found in Denmark; thus, in March, 1886, we find the Danish frigate *Eyen* is commanded by Captain D. MacDougall, who exchanged salutes with our batteries on the 3rd of that month at Portsmouth, when sailing from Naples to Copenhagen.

