

THE RAID OF STIRLING.*

A.D. 1571.

THE unjust murder of Archbishop Hamilton of St Andrews at Stirling Bridge under colour of law was the signal for the loyalists to fly to arms. The indignation and rage of his kinsmen the Hamiltons were loudly expressed, and hostilities were renewed with peculiar fierceness and animosity. The watchwords were—“*Remember the Archbishop of St Andrews! For God and the Queen! A Hamilton!*” Every gentleman of the name vowed to avenge the murdered prelate, whose unhappy fate was long remembered with execrations on the perpetrators, and a direful retribution was demanded.

The Earl of Lennox, the personal enemy of the Hamiltons, succeeded Moray as Regent. Elated by the prosperity of his affairs, and supported by an English army, which hovered on the Borders under the Earl of Sussex, he proclaimed the Duke of Chatelherault, chief of the House of Hamilton, the Earls of Huntly, Argyle, and other leaders of the Queen's party, traitors and enemies to their country. He followed up this bold measure by sending a body of three hundred mounted troopers to Hamilton, who seized the ducal residence, and plundered it of the Duke's plate and household furniture, all of which Lennox ordered to be sold at the market-cross of Linlithgow, and appropriated the money to his own use.

These and other indignities, in addition to the murder of the Archbishop of St Andrews, exasperated the Hamiltons

* Historical Memoirs of the House of Hamilton; Spottiswood's History; Douglas' Peerage.

and the adherents of Queen Mary beyond all bounds. Sir William Kirkcaldy had seceded from the King's party, as it was called, and in 1571 that great man planned an enterprise worthy of his military genius. On the 3d of September three hundred mounted troopers, chiefly Borderers, under the command of the Earl of Huntly, Lord Claud Hamilton, Scott of Buccleuch, and Spence of Wormiston, with about eighty infantry, left Edinburgh a little before sunset, guided by Captains Bell and Calder. Their real object was an attack on Stirling, but to conceal their design they pretended that they were going to Jedburgh to reconcile a well known feud between the inhabitants of that burgh and Ker of Fernihirst. Having seized all the horses brought on the previous day to the market, and also those they found on the road, they were enabled to mount their foot soldiers. Leaving the city by the Cowgate Port, they proceeded southward till they came near Libberton, when they wheeled to the right, under a rising ground which concealed them from the view of the city, and by a rapid march during the night they arrived before Stirling about break of day.

Captain Bell was a native of the town, and was intimately acquainted with all its streets, lanes, and localities. He acted as guide, and assigned to every man his post. The Regent Lennox was residing in the town, attended by his supporters and friends, and the valiant Captain knew all their residences. In a few minutes the house of every person of distinction was surrounded, and the slumbering inmates were roused by the loud shouts of the loyalists, exclaiming—"God and the Queen! A Hamilton! Remember the Archbishop of St Andrews!" Before they had time to offer any opposition, or to recover from their surprise, the Regent Lennox, the Earls of Glencairn, Argyle, Eglinton, Montrose, and Buchan, Lords Sempill, Cathcart, and Ochiltree, were forcibly mounted behind troopers, and ready

to be conveyed to Edinburgh. The Earl of Morton was the only person who defended his house with obstinate valour, but he at length yielded to Scott of Buccleuch, the husband of his niece, who, having set the tenement on fire, compelled the Earl to surrender.

But the time lost by Morton's obstinacy was of the greatest advantage to his party, for the Borderers, who had at first behaved with great prudence, began to disperse, rifling the shops and houses of the inhabitants, and plundering the stables of the nobility. The Earl of Mar, governor of the castle, hearing the noise and uproar in the town, sallied out of the fortress at the head of about thirty musqueteers, assisted by some of the town's people. Entering by a back passage into his then unfinished house, the edifice still in existence called *Mar's Work*, which, from its situation, commanded the market-place, he planted two pieces of cannon, and began firing with such success on the Queen's party, who were considerably dispersed, that he drove them to the east end of the town. A number of them fell in this assault, and many were seized by the inhabitants. The Regent's soldiers pressed so closely upon them that they were obliged to leave their prisoners, and consult their safety by a speedy retreat. In all probability not one of them would have escaped death or captivity, if it had not been for the plundering rapacity of Buccleuch's Border marauders, who having seized and carried off all the horses in the town, thus prevented the victors from pursuing them.

Captain Calder seeing the day lost resolved to make sure of one victim. Coming in contact with the Regent, he ran him through the body with a broadsword. This was done to revenge the murder of the Archbishop of St Andrews. Sir David Spence of Wormiston did all he could to save the Regent, and he lost his life in the attempt. Some of Mar's soldiers came up to the place where the wounded

Regent was, and literally cut him to pieces, notwithstanding the entreaties of Lennox to preserve him.

The Regent was able to proceed to the castle, and to the inquiries of his attendants as to the nature of his wound he answered, that if the *baby*, meaning the young King his grandson, "is well, all is well." When it was ascertained that his wound was mortal, he prepared for death with great composure. Calling the nobility around him, he addressed them in a suitable manner. "I am now, my Lords," he said, "to leave you at God's good pleasure, to go into a world where there is rest and peace. You know it was not my ambition, but your choice, which brought me to the charge I have this while sustained, which I undertook the more willingly, because I was persuaded of your assistance in the defence of the King, whose protection by nature and duty I could not refuse. And now being able to do no more, I must commend him to Almighty God, and to your care, entreating you to continue in the defence of his cause, wherein I do assure you in God's name of the victory; and make choice of some worthy person fearing God and affectionate to the King to succeed unto my place. I must likewise commend unto your favour my servants, who never have received benefit at my hands, and desire you to remember my love to *my wife Meg*, whom I beseech God to comfort." Having thus spoken, he betook himself to his devotions, and soon afterwards expired.

The lady whom Lennox designated *his wife Meg* was Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter of Archibald Earl of Angus and Margaret, Dowager of James V. and sister of Henry VIII. Four sons and four daughters were the offspring of this marriage. Only two of those children survived to manhood—the celebrated Lord Darnley, and Charles, who succeeded his father as fifth Earl of Lennox, but he did not long enjoy his honours, as he died at Lon-

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don in 1576, in the twenty-first year of his age. His mother died at Hackney in 1577, in the sixty-second year of her age.