

## SEIGNEUR DE LA BEAUTE.\*

A.D. 1517

DURING the Regency of the Duke of Albany, who chose to retire for a season to France, leaving the government in the hands of the Earls of Arran, Huntly, and Argyle, there was in Scotland a French gentleman of noble birth, whose real name was Anthony D'Arcie, but whose handsome person and manly accomplishments procured for him

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\* Pitcairn's Criminal Trials; Home's History of the Douglasses; Pinkerton's History of Scotland; Lindsay of Pitscottie's History; Ridpath's History of the Borders; Carr's History of Coldingham Priory, and of the Eastern Portion of Berwickshire anciently termed Coldinghamshire; Sir Walter Scott's Border Antiquities.

the soubriquet of *Seigneur de la Beauté*, or, as the common people pronounced the latter word, *Seigneur Bawtie*. Of the early history of this gentleman little is known. He came to Scotland with the Duke of Albany, with whom he was in terms of intimate friendship, and on the occasion of the temporary absence of that prince in France he was entrusted with the government of the Eastern and Middle Marches of Merse and Teviotdale, and with the command of the important castles of Home and Dunbar. The circumstance of a foreigner being elevated to these important offices was certain to move the indignation of the irascible and turbulent Borderers, and the Homes in particular were exasperated at the intrusion into an office of a Frenchman in the room of their own acknowledged chief Lord Home. The Seigneur de la Beauté, moreover, made the castle of Home his chief residence, and he is accused of looking down from that stronghold as from a watch-tower "upon the Homes, showing them his triumph at the slaughter of the chief of their clan, and reproaching them for submitting to his yoke."

The country was at the period now specified in a dreadful state of insubordination, and like the ancient Israelites, when they were without a king, or before the adoption of monarchical government by them, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." There was indeed this difference that there was a king in Scotland, but James V. was a mere infant; the Regent Albany was a personage whose manners and inclinations were altogether foreign; the Scottish nation were groaning at the severe defeat and calamity of Flodden Field; the executive government, in a word, was inactive, and the people were turbulent, ferocious, and easily excited.

Lord Home, the same nobleman who was at the battle of Flodden, and who is very unjustly, or at least unwarrantably, accused of having acted as a coward and a traitor on

that memorable occasion, although it is indisputable that he assisted to vanquish the right wing of the English army, was deprived in 1515 of his office of Warden of the Eastern Marches, and a considerable portion of his estates was assigned to the Regent. The whole clan of the Homes were furious at this insult offered to their chief, whose power and influence had been long unbounded, and Lord Home made an alliance with the Earl of Angus, who had won the hand of the Queen Dowager, sister of Henry VIII., to rescue the young King from the hands of his keepers. The vigilance of Albany defeated this design, and the parties connected with it were compelled to seek shelter on the Borders. Angus and his royal consort fled first to Lamberton, and then to the Nunnery of Coldstream, where he remained a few days, till he received permission from Henry VIII. to take refuge in England.

Albany prepared to take the most summary vengeance on Lord Home, and the latter had induced all his kinsmen and vassals to put their fortalices in such a condition as would enable them to withstand the power of the Regent. An army, mustering 10,000 men, assembled on the Boroughmuir of Edinburgh, and marched into the territorial possessions of the Homes. The fortress of Fastcastle was surprised, and proceeding into the interior of the country, the Regent thought proper to mark his course by the ravages of fire and sword. The fortalices of Renton and Blackadder were destroyed, and those of Wedderburn, Buncle, Home, and Billy, were compelled to surrender.

Lord Home, accompanied by his brothers William and David, the latter of whom was Prior of Coldingham, fled to England, and solicited the assistance of Henry VIII., which he had been induced to expect. The English monarch, however, disappointed him, and his Lordship returned to the Scottish frontier. Here a snare was laid for him by the Regent. An offer of amnesty was made, and Albany

sent an invitation to meet Lord Home in his Lordship's own castle of Dunglass, which was readily accepted; but no sooner did Home arrive, unsuspecting of any evil intentions, than he was arrested, hurried off to Edinburgh, and committed a close prisoner to the castle. Fortunately for Lord Home, his brother-in-law the Earl of Arran was the person to whose custody he was committed, and that nobleman not only allowed him to escape, but fled with him to the western counties, where he summoned his vassals, and Albany was once more set at defiance. But, although reinforced by Angus and his followers, the Regent compelled them to disperse, and Lord Home again sought shelter on the Borders, where he lurked till, by the intercession of the English monarch, he and Angus were permitted to return to their estates.

Albany made this show of deference to the request of Henry VIII., but he was resolved to inflict his long meditated vengeance against Lord Home. A parliament was summoned to meet at Edinburgh in September 1516, and the most anxious solicitations were sent to Lord Home to attend, holding out to him flattering promises of reward, while it was in the most courteous language hinted that if he failed to appear, it would be construed into an act of contempt of the Regent's authority. Having already experienced Albany's bad faith in the meeting at Dunglass, Lord Home hesitated to put himself again in his power, but the Regent's artifices prevailed, and his Lordship, accompanied by his brother William, proceeded to Edinburgh. Leaving his brother in the town, Lord Home repaired to the monastery of Holyrood, where the Regent was then residing, and met with the most flattering reception. His brother was invited to the monastery, and at first all suspicions of treachery were dissipated; but both of them had not been long together within the precincts of Holyrood when the gates were ordered to be closed, all means of escape or res-

cue were cut off, and Home and his brother were arrested as traitors. The crimes alleged against Home are unknown, and it is clear that he must have been pardoned for all former transgressions, otherwise he could not have sat in the Parliament. Ridpath, in his *Border History*, enumerates the *supposed* charges, the chief of which are, Lord Home's alleged assassination of James IV. after the battle of Flodden, and some gross and unknown crime imputed to him by Albany, probably the same, over which it was necessary to draw a veil. The first is alleged by Buchanan, who to confirm his fable adds, that the Earl of Moray, an illegitimate son of James IV. by a daughter of Lord Kennedy, appeared in evidence; forgetting or ignorant that in 1519, when that nobleman returned from France, he was only twenty years of age, as appears from a letter of Lord Dacre to Cardinal Wolsey, and was not in Scotland at the time. The second charge is set forth by Drummond of Hawthornden, and is altogether improbable, as Albany, who had recently arrived in the country, could only know what must have been known to others, and as he was Regent, he could hardly appear as the accuser. Probably James Hepburn, *Bishop of Moray*, is meant, who, although a kinsman of Lord Home, had been opposed in his endeavours to procure the archbishopric of St Andrews by his Lordship's father, who had successfully advanced the interest of Andrew Forman, in revenge for which the Laird of Hailes, and other desperadoes of the name of Hepburn, soon afterwards assassinated David Home, Prior of Coldingham.

Albany had influence to cause Lord Home to be tried by a jury of his peers, and both he and his brother were condemned. Lord Home was beheaded at Edinburgh on the 8th and his brother on the 9th of October 1516, and their heads were affixed on the Tolbooth, where they remained till the 21st of July 1520, when George Home, brother to the "umquhile Alexander Lord Home," came to Edin-

burgh with a great company of followers, and in presence of the Provost took down the heads of his two brothers from the "Tolbuith gavell, quhair they were fixt with iron." They returned on the 25th, having caused great "solemn funeralls and obsequies be maid in the Black Fryars, for the soulis of the saidis Lord Home and his brother, whereat there were great offerings and banquets, and returned to their awin dwellings."

It is now time to return to Seigneur de la Beauté, who figures considerably in the affairs of Scotland at this period. It is already stated that he was appointed to be Lord Warden of the East and Middle Marches, and that he commanded the castles of Dunbar and Home. This greatly irritated the Homes, who spent nearly a year in meditating the revenge of their kinsmen. The appointment also gave great offence to the Scottish nobility, who naturally felt jealous at the promotion of foreigners to such offices of distinction. The Scottish writers, it may be here observed, strangely disfigure the name of this distinguished French knight. He is called *Bastie*, *Labasty*, *Bawty*, and *Bautie*, but Lindsay of Pitscottie distances them all by designating him *Tillibatie!*

The Seigneur de la Beauté was not long allowed to enjoy his newly acquired honours, though he is admitted to have acted with great vigour in repressing Border maraudings. During the temporary absence of the Regent in France in 1517, the Homes got up a *mock siege* of the Castle of Langton, merely for the purpose of drawing out the Warden. Their plan succeeded, and De la Beauté left Dunbar with a pretty strong force, believing that the siege was a serious one. This was on the 19th of September. He was waylaid by David Home of Wedderburn, with whom he had a quarrel, in the neighbourhood of Langton, who surprised and killed him and other four Frenchmen. Lindsay of Pitscottie quaintly says that "being ane stranger, and not knowing the ground weill, he laired his

horse in ane moss, and there his enemies came upon him, and slew and murdered him very unhonestlie, and cut off his heid, and carried it with them. It was said that he had long plett hair in his neck, quhilk David Home of Wedderburn knitt to his saidle-bow and kept it." His head was affixed on the Tolbooth of Dunse.

Master David Home of Godscroft enters into a minute detail of this atrocious murder, and labours to exculpate Home of Wedderburn from the charge of premeditating the assassination of Seigneur de la Beauté. His story of the circumstances which originated the murder is to this effect. Cockburn of Langton died, leaving Cockburn of Clerkington in Mid-Lothian, and Chirnside of East Nisbet in Berwickshire, curators to his son then a youth. The brother of the deceased Laird of Langton, who was married to a sister of Home of Wedderburn, a *brisk man*, was enraged at being deprived of an office which he considered to belong to himself by relationship and the custom of the country. With the assistance of Home of Wedderburn he besieged the Castle of Langton, which the tutors of the young laird had seized. The Warden D'Arcie, or De la Beauté, happened to be at Kelso when he heard of these violent proceedings, which tended to disturb the peace of the district over which he presided, and summoned Home of Wedderburn to meet him on the road between Kelso and Dunbar, which the latter agreed to do on the condition that he was to be allowed the entire liberty of departing when he thought proper. They met a few miles north from Kelso, and for some time conversed amicably, but at length the Warden insisted on Home using his influence with Cockburn and his associates to induce them to abandon the siege, which he positively refused to do. A long altercation ensued, during which both became greatly irritated, and the Warden in a towering passion, with a threatening voice and countenance, told Home that it was his imperative

command to him to force them to raise the siege, and if he did not do so it would bring ruin both on himself and them. Home replied that he had met him on that particular occasion solely on the promise of being allowed a safe return, and that he would now proceed home, where he would do what he pleased. He immediately stopped, and while the Warden's attendants were passing, he considered what was proper to be done. He feared that if Seigneur de la Beauté reached Dunbar, he would easily draw together a sufficient force to crush his friends. They had already come up to a place which lies to the north of the village of Fogo, near the rivulet of that name, and not a mile distant from Langton Tower, then besieged by Cockburn, Home of Wedderburn's brother-in-law. The latter sent a messenger to the besiegers, acquainting them with the whole affair, requesting them to order their men to be up in good time mounted on their best horses, and advising them to make a feint, with all possible noise and tumult, as if they intended to attack Seigneur Beauté with drawn swords. These proposals were readily entertained by the besiegers, a select party of whom mounted their choicest horses, and rode to the place where the Warden and Home were disputing, bawling out the name of the Knight of Wedderburn, flourishing their swords, and endeavouring, by their noise and their ferocious looks, to strike terror into the hearts of their opponents, who, including French, were in number five hundred horsemen, while the reinforcement of the Homes from the siege of Langton Castle amounted to only eighteen, being all servants and ordinary attendants. When the Warden saw the Scots who were with him slipping off, until he was left with the few of his own countrymen, he began to flatter Home of Wedderburn, excused his anger, and proposed a mutual agreement. Home, who thought that he had



already gone too far to be safe under any treaty, acted on the offensive, and reproached the Warden for being accessory to the murder of Lord Home. When Seigneur Beauté saw the turn of the conversation, and that he was deserted by his Scottish followers, who were attached to him merely on mercenary principles, and would on no account assist him against their own countrymen, he took to flight. The quaint writer, who sets forth the preceding story, as his version of a very atrocious murder, says:—"He rode on an extraordinary fine horse, which had been formerly the property of Alexander of Home [Lord Home], and it is generally believed, that if he had been saddled in the Scots fashion, he would have been carried off; but being weighed down with his trappings, which were extremely weighty, and unaccustomed to French furniture, his running was thereby obstructed. Yet he sprang away, and passed the Corney Ford, which is just half way between Dunse and Langton, before those who came from Langton could come up to him. When the rest of the pursuers were at a considerable distance, one Dickson, or as some say Trotter, who was very young, and one of Home of Wedderburn's pages, was not far from him. This boy had been left at home, but hearing the tumult he flew to it on one of his master's horses, and with his sword drawn he kept pace with Beauté step for step, every now and then making a thrust at him. Beauté threatening, ordered the boy to keep back, and bravely defended himself by flying, till he came to the stoney ground between Dunse and Preston, where being more intent on his pursuer than the road, his horse stumbled and threw him. Starting to his feet, he was very roughly handled by the young man, till John and Patrick Home, Wedderburn's brothers, coming up, slew him, and cutting off his head, it was brought to Dunse, there exposed to public view, and afterwards carried to the castle

of Home. His body was buried in the place where he fell, and *Beauté's grave* is at this day shown by the country people in the neighbourhood."

A writer on the local history of that district informs us that the spot where the unfortunate Seigneur was killed is on the farm of Swallowdean, a very few miles east of Dunse, and is still distinguished by a moss-covered stone, and "his fate seems to have excited a very general sympathy among the common people; the tragic catastrophe is still narrated in their cottages, dressed up of course with many wonderful embellishments. The hoary peasant tells his grandchildren the tale he heard in his boyhood, that a supernatural being appeared to the Chevalier, warning him as he valued his life to avoid crossing the Corney Ford—a passage across a streamlet which flows between Dunse and Langton, and his death is usually ascribed to his having neglected this friendly advice of the weird." The following ballad, founded on the fate of Seigneur de la Beauté, or Bawtie, as he is commonly termed, is worthy of insertion in this narrative, more especially as it is not generally known.

As Bawtie fled frae the Langton tower  
Wi' his troop along the way,  
By the Corney Ford ane auld man stood,  
And to him did Bawtie say—

"Pry thee tell unto me, thou weird auld man,  
Whilk name this foord doth bear."

"'Tis the Corney Foord," quoth the weird auld man,  
"And thou'lt cross it alive nae mair."

"Gin this be the Corney Foord indeed,  
The Lord's grace bide wi' me,  
For I'll ne'er get hame to mine ain dear land,  
That lies sweet owre the sea :

"For I was told by a seer auld,  
That when I did cross this foord,  
My hours were numbered ilka ane,  
And I'd fa' aneath the sword."

“ Then ride thee fast, thou knight sae braw,”  
 The auld man now did say,  
 “ Thou’rt safe if thou canst reach Dunbar  
 Afore the gloamin’s grey.”

Then Bawtie fled wi’ furious speed  
 Away like the wintry wind ;  
 But the fiery Home and his savage band  
 Hard pressed on him behind.

’Mang the lang green broom on the Slaney muir,  
 Some fell, and some were slain ;  
 But Bawtie spurred on wi’ hot speed  
 The Lammermuir hills to gain.

Syne doon the hill to the east o’ Dunse  
 He rode right furiouslie,  
 Till near the home o’ auld Cramecrook  
 Deep lair’d in a bog was he.

Then fiery Home, wi’ a shout and yell,  
 Cried, “ Bawtie, I’ll hae ye now !”  
 As his steed sank deep in the yielding marsh,  
 Where the white bog rashes grow.

And the men of the Merse around him ran,  
 Wi’ their lang spears glentin’ gay ;  
 Grim Wedderburn, wi’ fury wild,  
 Rush’d on to the bluidy fray.

The fray was sharp and soon was past,  
 And some faces there lay pale,  
 And the herd boy stood on the hill aghast  
 At the slaughter in the dale.

Then weapons guid were stain’d wi’ the bluid  
 O’ the Warden and his men ;  
 Grim Home hewed off young Bawtie’s head,  
 And left his bouk i’ the fen.

They stripped the knight of his broidered vest,  
 Eke his helmet and his mail :  
 Syne they shroudless laid him doon to his rest,  
 Where strife shall nae mair assail.

Then light and gay the Homes return'd  
 Wi' Bawtie's head on a spear,  
 Whilk their chieftain tied to his saddle bow  
 By its lang flowing hair.

And they've set his head on the towerin' wa's  
 O' the castle of Home sae high,  
 To moulder there i' the sun and the wind,  
 Till mony lang years gae by.

The leddies o' France may wail and mourn,  
 May wail and mourn fu' sair,  
 For the bonnie Bawtie's lang brown locks  
 They'll ne'er see waving mair!

Home of Wedderburn, his brothers John and Patrick, Cockburn, and other Borderers, concerned in the slaughter of the Warden, were cited to appear at Edinburgh before the Court of Justiciary in the month of February following, and it is almost unnecessary to add that none of them obeyed a summons which would be in reality a warrant for execution. They were accordingly declared to be traitors and rebels, and their estates were confiscated. The Earl of Arran, at the head of a powerful force, and well provided with engines for demolishing the strongholds of the proscribed and outlawed Borderers, entered Berwickshire, to put into execution the decrees of Parliament. Home of Wedderburn took refuge in the Castle of Edington on the banks of the Whiteadder, a few miles from Berwick, where he defied all the attempts of the Earl to apprehend him. Arran, after placing garrisons in the castles of Home, Langton, and Wedderburn, having obtained the keys of the last named fortalice from a person unknown while he was at Lauder, returned towards Edinburgh. Yet Home, though his castle and estate were in the custody of the government, possessed great influence over the inhabitants of the Merse while in his retreat at Edington. Such was his authority, that we are told "none almost pretended to

go to Edinburgh, or any where else out of the country, without first asking and obtaining his liberty." The only person of distinction who resented this *surveillance* was Blackadder, the recently installed Prior of Coldingham, but his refusal to submit cost him his life. Having accidentally met with the imperious Border chief while engaged in hunting, an obstinate encounter took place between their respective followers, which only terminated by the slaughter of the Prior and six of his attendants.

Sir David Home also soon recovered all his fortalices held by the Regent's soldiers. His castle of Wedderburn was recovered by him in the most characteristic manner of a Border chief. Some of the garrison, who had gone to Dunse for provisions, were taken prisoners by Home's followers. Sir David led them before the battlements of his castle, and threatened to put them and the whole garrison to the sword if they did not instantly surrender. They at first refused, but seeing him making serious preparations to hang his prisoners, they surrendered on the condition that they would be allowed to depart undisturbed.