

CARDINAL BEATON AND HIS VICTIMS.

[The following Sketch is an abridgment, with some slight modifications, of a series of short historical papers from the pen of Mr. James Turnbull, published in 1838 and 1839, in a Periodical which is now extinct.]

KING JAMES V. of Scotland died on the 18th of December, 1542, leaving an only child, a daughter, born ten days pre-

viously, and afterwards well known to every age as Mary Queen of Scots. The state of Scotland at the time was most perilous. Many of the nobility had fallen in battle; some were in exile, and others in captivity; while they who remained in Scotland were alienated from one another by differences regarding religion. The people also were divided and without confidence in their rulers; and, in addition to all other evils, they were involved in war with England. This was a state of things suited to the ambitious views of the churchmen,—who attempted to take advantage of its peculiarities for their own exaltation. They seem to have imagined that, could they acquire, they would easily retain, the supreme dominion, since the crown had devolved upon an infant female, and her mother was entirely devoted to the interests and views of their chief, Cardinal David Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews. This man had been destined to the priesthood from his boyhood, and had studied the arts of priestcraft and the mysteries of popery in France, and had succeeded his uncle in the primacy of the Scottish church in 1539; and he possessed a vigorous intellect, cultivated by education, and matured by experience, and transcended all his predecessors in crime.

At the death of James V., no fears or scruples hindered the Cardinal from attempting to secure for himself and his party the chief honours of the state. When the King was on his death-bed, and his mind was agitated and wavering, the Cardinal plied him with arguments and motives—not regarding Christ, repentance, or immortality; no, his heart yearned not then, as it should have done, over the soul of one who had been an ardent worshipper at the altars of sensuality, and whom the grossest debasements had distinguished—but to appoint for his daughter a certain form of regency in which he (the Cardinal) should be supreme. He desired four, himself the chief of these, to be appointed to that dignity; and the persons whom he wished to be appointed were

such as would have sympathized with him in all his designs. He desired this, knowing that his associates, though having only the name of office, would be a shelter to him from the consequences of any measures he might adopt for the aggrandizement of his party, and the rendering of the superstitions of his church perpetual; that they, in short, would have the danger and the odium of whatever was unpopular. We are ignorant whether the King gave or could give any assent; but even though his mind, enfeebled and agitated, may have yielded, Beaton trusted not thereto, knowing that it was too fragile a thread upon which to suspend his claims to the possession of the high dignity of the realm, at a period when the clouds of political and religious animosity were accumulating in the horizon. By his direction, as is now well known, a will was forged by one Balfour, a priest, professing to have been written in the presence, and according to the instructions, of the King, in which it was appointed, according to the proposition which Beaton had made, that there should be a council of regency, and he its head. There are insinuations made by writers of these times, of a hand, which had once stretched the sword and swayed the sceptre, having been employed, after it was stiffened in death, in affixing a signature to this document. Let us hope that this mockery of the dead was spared, for without it, the transaction was sufficiently base. By whatever means it was obtained, a will, purporting to be that of the King, signed and attested according to form, was produced,—in conformity with the provisions of which, Beaton immediately assumed the high office of chief regent and governor, with Huntly, Murray, and Argyll as subordinates.

He was exalted only to be cast down. Henry of England, with much dignity and generosity of feeling, released the nobles he had in captivity, and, at the same time, suspended the war, though in it his success had been almost uninterrupted. He would not—as a less noble foe would have done—

take advantage of the condition of the kingdom, however much he had been provoked by injury and insult. The effect was immediate. The nobles refused to submit to the haughty prelate. The deed upon which his claims rested was disputed, denied—the fraud being detected. Hamilton, Earl of Arran, and heir-presumptive to the crown, was raised, by the acclamation of all, except Beaton and his party, to be Governor of the kingdom. This was wormwood to the Cardinal. It was not only that he himself was driven from the dignity he had dishonourably attained; but Hamilton was the object of his peculiar aversion, from his being generally regarded as most favourable to the doctrines of the Reformation, and because he was distinguished by his honesty,—a principle which, at that time, was not in very great repute among the clergy. But Beaton required to yield; and events soon transpired which seemed to justify the fondest expectations which the reformers entertained of the government of Arran.

Two persons, William and Rough, (the former a black friar,) who were distinguished by their faithfulness in preaching the gospel, were, in compliance with very general and earnest applications, appointed by the Governor to the public declaration of the truth. It was in vain that the priests vented their indignation against this and similar measures. Beaton himself, so far from wielding the despotism of which he was formerly possessed, was, in consequence of his opposition to this appointment, subjected for a short time to a species of confinement, which, though slight, sufficiently demonstrated that his power and glory had departed for a season. But an enactment of the legislature raised the hopes of the reformers to the highest degree. It had been forbidden by law to any one to read any portion of the scriptures in their own or in the English tongue, or any tract, or explanation of any part of scripture. This prohibition was abolished; and it was now declared lawful for all to peruse, in

their own or in the English tongue, the Bible, or any religious treatise containing wholesome doctrine. This was received as a blessing of the greatest magnitude by those who, though thirsting after a knowledge of the gospel, dared not, without the danger of being punished as heretics, read even the Lord's Prayer in their own language. It was received as an inestimable boon, though clogged by particulars in which the parliament and the church were declared to be possessed of authority to regulate what was proper to be read by the people. The effect was instantaneous and powerful. Everywhere the New Testament became read; men, in consequence, assumed a bolder tone; while many whom timidity had formerly restrained avowed their rejection of the superstition of popery.

The change of affairs in Scotland was most acceptable to England, newly emancipated from the slavery of Rome. Henry, who had anxiously sought to maintain peace with Scotland, but whose desires and efforts had been frustrated by the priesthood, now used all means to unite the kingdoms in close and inseparable alliance. He sought the hand of the infant Queen of Scotland for his son Edward, then a boy. Though strenuously opposed by the whole power of the churchmen, his wishes were cordially responded to by the Governor and nobility; and the contract of marriage was solemnly sworn to, and sealed, in the chapel of Holyrood. Mary having become, by the most sacred engagements, the betrothed of the heir of the throne of England, men rejoiced over the event as the dawn of a day of unbroken happiness. How vain are human hopes, and how wise the exhortation, 'Rejoice with trembling!' The event which caused so much joy was only the little spot of beauty which, for a moment, relieves the dark bosom of the storm.

Unable openly to accomplish their designs, the Cardinal, with the Queen and the French party, sought success by stratagem. The Governor was weak while honest. Taking ad-

vantage of his weakness, they accomplished his destruction, and involved his adherents and the nation in calamities, under the sweep of which all for a time was desolate. The wise and faithful were gradually removed from his counsels, and their places supplied by the crafty abettors of former evils. The preachers whom he had appointed required to seek safety in flight; and those who were his former friends and the promoters of reformation became banished from court. They knew that he was most sensitive regarding every thing which infringed, however slightly, upon his claims as heir-presumptive to the crown. He had gazed upon the lustre of the diadem till his perceptions were dimmed. His strongest affections were wound around the honours and the exalted happiness which he believed it contained within its—to him—magic circle. Each of its gems had the longings to obtain it of his whole heart.

This ruling passion was known and cherished by his new and unprincipled associates, until they had prepared him to sacrifice all consistency and honour for its gratification. They taught him, and he believed, that if union were preserved with England, and the Reformation existed and made progress, the crown must be torn from his reach,—that it must be torn from him unless he joined his interests to those of France, and, by crushing heresy, obtained the friendship of the pope. By what means did they persuade him of this, when he had been exalted to the highest dignity in opposition to the combined power of the church, and when, in union with England, he might have courted the hatred and braved the power of Europe? His father was twice married; and his second marriage was, according to Rome, unlawful, he having divorced his first wife. The Governor was of the second marriage: and he was made to believe that, his father's second marriage having been illegal, he was illegitimate, and therefore could not, in the event of the death of Mary, succeed to the throne, but that the pope could, by his

dispensing power, render the marriage valid, and his claim indisputable. He believed; and, rather than forfeit his claim, he forfeited a good conscience, and, for a broken reed, cast away the support of popular influence upon which he was secure. Religion was again a sacrifice at the altar of ambition.

The Governor did not fully, at least openly, yield, until the Cardinal and bishops, with the few of the nobles who adhered to their faction and idolatries, with the Queen mother and her daughter who had assembled at Stirling, threatened to deprive him of his office of governor for disobedience to their 'holy mother the kirk.' Abandoned by the wise, and left to the influence of his own fears and ambition, he resolved on the ignoble course of unlimited submission to the will of his enemies; he humbled himself before Beaton, confessing whatever was dictated to him as offences,—abjuring the doctrines of the Reformation, and pledging himself to the annulling of the contract made with England; and having done this, he received absolution and unqualified assurance of the affectionate support of the church. Beaton would have cast him off, now that his conduct had rendered him powerless, now that he had rendered himself an object, not of pity, but of loathing; but he retained him to bask in his deceitful smiles, so that he might use him as a willing or unconscious agent in promoting the schemes by which he was about to minister to his own ambition and the cupidity and revenge of the church.

He had now another object to be gained, the regaining for the church a supremacy in the general mind. For this purpose, he and the Governor—whom he took with him either to prevent the influence of his former friends, or to show his power as did the conquerors of old when captive kings were dragged at their chariot wheels, or to involve him so deeply in his purposes and actions that an impassable gulf would be dug between him and his former associates—

passed through several places in the north, and at last came to Perth, where, by reddening their hands in the blood of the saints, they sought to give power to the polluted and merciless system faithfully and graphically described as "the mother of the abominations of the earth."

The clergy of Perth sympathizing in their views and purposes, had a number of persons suspected of heresy brought before them. Among these were six persons, five men and a woman, whom they accounted worthy of death. One of them had interrupted a friar while impressing upon the mind of another that he could not be saved without praying to saints; three of them were charged with having spoken disrespectfully of an image, and with having eaten a goose on Friday; the fifth with having adorned his house in mockery, as was supposed, of the "three-crowned diadem of St. Peter;" and the woman with having refused, when in distress, to invoke the aid of the Virgin Mary. These were the charges against them. Examples were wanted of the power of the church; and the priests had long been deprived of banquetting on the sufferings of the righteous. The accused were brought before them, only to be condemned. Four of them were sentenced to be hanged, one to be burned, and the woman to be bound in a sack and drowned in the Tay. Their history has not been preserved. We are acquainted with only their names, the accusations against them, and their execution. Their names, which shall not perish, were: James Hunter, Robert or William Lamb, William Anderson, James Finlayson, James Rennalt, or Rawleson, and Helen Stark. On one day the four men condemned to be hanged, and the woman, met their doom; and on the following day, the sixth victim embraced the stake. However great the interest connected with all of these persons, the chief interest arose from the circumstances and fate of the poor woman, who was the first female martyr in Scotland, and whose murder fixed the deepest stain on the bloated memory of Beaton.

Her husband was one of the four who died upon the gibbet. They were fondly attached to each other. They had long rejoiced in mutual affection, and been the light of each other's mind. Children had strengthened every tender tie. She sought no respite, though they had little ones—though a babe was being suckled at her breast. She had many, and these very strong, inducements to desire to live; but she sought only this—it was not mercy—though to her it would have been happiness—she sought that she might be permitted *to die with her husband*. The poor petition was spurned. Again she pleaded—but her prayer was presented to the savage—she pleaded that she might be put to death before her husband, that she might be spared the agony of beholding his dying struggles; but this also was rejected, and scornfully. She sought refuge in God. She cast her burden on him, and he sustained her. She was no more the weeping trembling woman, but the Christian heroine. She soothed the troubled bosom of her husband. The influence of her love mingled with that of Christ's, over his mind, as he passed from the scene of the triumph of guilt over innocence and godliness, to—may we not believe?—the fellowship of the souls that were beneath the altar for the testimony of God, and whose voice, as he died, must have thus pleaded:—‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?’

Having witnessed, (and with what feeling must it have been?) the sufferings of her husband, she took her babe from her bosom, where it was fondly nestling, and bathed its smiling happy countenance with her tears. Warm were her caresses as she pressed it for the last time to her throbbing breast, and prayed that the great Shepherd would carry in his bosom this lamb of his flock. Kindness and sympathy had gathered a few of her neighbours around her, who had known her virtues, and who now, bold by outraged feeling, dared to soothe her with their words, and who, overcome by tender emotions,

mingled with hers their tears. To them she gave her infant; and then, having done with earth—the last fond tie being broken—she prepared herself in faith and confidence to meet death. She was bound, as had been decreed, and cast into the river. Its waters closed over her, and then flowed on peaceful as before. How unlike the conscience of her murderers! This was in 1543.

Having thus renewed the sufferings of the godly, and apparently imagining that the sword of persecution would be of sufficient edge and temper to destroy all existing and future heresies, the Cardinal seems to have imagined that, to establish his own power, and the authority and splendour of the church, he required only to prevent the importation from England of the doctrines of the Reformation. In peace this was impossible, and therefore war was courted and obtained. The Governor and others, unfaithful to their sacred engagements, and seeking war by a variety of injuries which could not be submitted to, war again raged between two nations whom every motive should have retained in close affection. Doubtless the prelate imagined that the tide of war would roll, in irresistible majesty, over the power and the doctrines of his enemies. Their doctrines, however, had a foundation which could not be shaken,—one to which God had given strength; and though the Cardinal persecuted, the doctrines extended.

We pass over a number of minor efforts which were made by him for their suppression, and advert to the martyrdom of one whose dying groan was the funeral knell of the tyrant's power and glory,—one by whose death the scattered elements were so united and brought into operation, that the friends of the reformation confronted their foes, and were victorious. It would have been enough to have rendered the death of this saint imperishable, that it was the means of bringing into the field of moral action that man to whom, under God, Scotland owes most,—whose arm, in the future, was to be the first in

the strife,—and around whom our fathers gathered, with brave hearts, and planted, amidst the ruins of the spiritual despotism by which they had been debased and made miserable, that broad and glorious banner of civil and religious freedom, which still floats over us in the breeze of victory.

The name of George Wishart is indelibly engraven on the heart of every one who has even slightly investigated the annals of our country. It is a name which has never been dimmed, by a breathing of scorn, even from enemies; to the Christian, it is the name of one who walked in brightness amidst the gloom of our troubled land. He was of the family of Pittarrow, in Mearns,—a family, several of the members of which were subsequently imitators of his spiritual heroism. He completed his education at Cambridge, where, in addition to scientific and classical information, he acquired just views of the salvation that is in Christ; and he returned to Scotland, in the year 1544, with the commissioners who had been sent by Henry to treat for the continuance of peace. He commenced his labours as a preacher of the gospel in Montrose; but, persecution gathering around him, he went to Dundee; and there he lectured publicly on the epistle to the Romans, to the admiration of all, and the conviction of many. Private insinuation and public denunciation of the doctrines of the New Testament which he taught, and which some of the clergy affirmed was a heretical book written by one Martin Luther, whom the devil had sent into the world for the destruction of the souls of men, having proved equally unavailing, he was publicly, and by authority, commanded to depart from Dundee. He knew the vanity of attempting to resist, single-handed, the power that was arrayed against him; and he went into Ayrshire,—then a sanctuary to the persecuted; and he there preached in many parish churches, and often in the fields, and was always attended by many hearers, and made a great impression throughout the country. “The word of

the Lord was precious in those days;" and "the Spirit of the Lord was present to heal."

Wishart's labours in Ayrshire were interrupted by the information that the plague—formerly a frequent visitant of Scotland—was in Dundee. He was deeply interested, for the people of that place were near his heart; and he hastened to Dundee, as if its destinies had depended on his presence. The day following his arrival there—while powerfully impressed by the scenes of misery around, in which the dying were blended with the dead, and the wailings of the bereaved mingled with the cries of the suffering and the fearful—having felt in his own mind the power of the gospel to sustain and comfort, he assembled the people at the east port of the town, and, placing the healthy within and the diseased without the gate, preached to them the safety and consolation which are in Christ. In application to their state he selected as his text, "He sent forth his word and healed them;" and their circumstances produced intensity of feeling and earnestness of attention. His instructions had power. The awakening was general, and the effects abundant,—all of which, however, shall not be known till that day when, from the book of God's remembrance, there shall be recounted the influence of every sermon which has been addressed to the perishing. The same place was his pulpit daily. There he held forth the word of life; while he also, from house to house, visited and taught the dying and the diseased. How like to his Master while thus occupied!

Could it have been imagined that, while Wishart was thus superior to all personal considerations, and anxious only that sinners might be turned unto the Lord, his enemies would have chosen such a time to circumvent his life? The spirit that betrayed Christ must have been in them. They felt themselves condemned by his labours; their malignity was aroused, and they sought to obtain his assassination. Beaton hired a person—a priest too—to accomplish their purpose,

who sought to carry it into execution on the very spot where Wishart preached. The latter's warfare, however, was not completed; and God averted the danger. But the discovery tended to entwine Wishart more in the affections of the people; and it also stimulated him to renewed zeal in his labours, leading him to think that his time would be short,—that he would one day fall by the hands of his enemy; and his intercourse with God became, in consequence, still more frequent, and his pleading with him still more fervent and enlarged.

When the plague was removed, or at least its power was broken, Wishart went to Montrose. There his time was occupied in preaching and private meditation. Beaton sought again for his destruction. Having failed to induce the Governor publicly to arrest his progress, for the Governor—whether withheld by friends, or deterred by remorseful recollections of former events, or whether the slavery of the Cardinal was beginning to become galling to him—would not be persuaded. Beaton's rage was measureless. He could not with safety give public expression to his malignity; but again he endeavoured to insnare Wishart. By false letters purporting to be from Wishart's friends, requiring his assistance, he sought to bring him within his power. When almost successful, the deceit was discovered, and Wishart was spared for a season; but the circumstance threw over his mind a deep foreshadowing of his approaching martyrdom.

According to his own phraseology, "when God had put an end to one battle, he found himself called to another." His friends in Ayrshire, earnestly requested him to meet them in Edinburgh, "for they would require disputation of the bishops, and he should be publicly heard." He assented and, at the time fixed, he left Montrose, in opposition to the tearful entreaties of the faithful. He was like Paul, when that apostle had set his face to go up to Jerusalem, and would not be hindered, though knowing the dangers that were around him. During his journey, he was

deeply exercised in spirit, and felt much the necessity of prayer. "I am assured," said he, "that my travail is near an end; therefore call to God with me that now I shrink not when the battle waxes most hot."

With a few friends he arrived at Leith, where, not finding those whom he had expected, and having no intelligence of them, he remained for a time in secret. This became irksome to him. "What differ I," he would say, "from a dead man, but that I eat and drink?" On the Sabbath he, at last, preached in Leith; but apprehensive of the consequences, from the known hostility and the power of the clergy of Edinburgh, and from a daily expectation that the Cardinal would be there, he was taken by a few gentlemen of the Lothians, who had come to him, and who remained with him as his guides and protectors, to Long-Niddry, Ormiston, and Brownston, residing for only short periods in one place, that his refuge might not be discovered. But his crown was almost gained.

He preached, as we learn, in Inveresk church, subsequently in Tranent, where, while urging his hearers to diligence, he publicly declared his belief that his remaining course would be short. His preaching in these places was with power. About Christmas he went to Haddington, where a very great concourse of people was expected; but by the power of Bothwell, who was instigated by the Cardinal, the people were prevented from assembling. On the first occasion, few attended; and on the second, the number was still smaller. His mind was much troubled, so that he said to John Knox, who had attended him during the time he was in the Lothians, and had derived much benefit from his ministry, "I am wearied of the world,"—assigning as the cause, that "men appeared to be wearied of God." He dealt faithfully in his discourse—his last sermon—with the people. While he directed them to 'the hope set before them' in the gospel, he boldly reproved their sins, and unfolded to them, in their

magnificence, the terrors of the Lord. He affectionately, but solemnly, bade farewell to the few loved ones, the faithful in Christ, who gathered round him at the close of this his concluding testimony to the truth.

Wishart went on the same evening to Ormiston. John Knox would have gone with him, and entreated to be permitted; but Wishart forbade, saying, "No, no; one is enough for a sacrifice." There were with him the lairds of Ormiston, Brownston, and Calder. The evening was spent in religious exercises, after which, and some discourse, approaching to the cheerful, he sought his pillow and found repose. His time, however, had come. About midnight, and without warning, the house was surrounded by a party of soldiers, conducted by Bothwell. Resistance, obstruction, or an attempt to escape, would have been equally vain, even though Beaton had not been, as he was, at Elphinstone, with a superior force. So soon as Wishart was aware of the circumstances in which his friends and he were placed, he bade them open the gates, saying, with cheerful resignation, "The blessed will of my God be done." The Earl of Bothwell and a few gentlemen were admitted, who gave solemn assurances that Wishart should be in perfect safety. Bothwell, especially, promised either to preserve him from all injury, or, if he should perceive that the doing of this would be impossible, to restore him to the place where he found him, notwithstanding any opposition which might be made by the Cardinal or his party. These assurances were implicitly relied on; and, therefore, Wishart's friends, with lessened sorrow, gave him up to Bothwell. He was carried immediately to the Cardinal at Elphinstone; who, having obtained possession of his much desired victim, immediately sent the party who had apprehended him to secure also the lairds of Ormiston, Brownston, and Calder, who had been with him. Brownston alone escaped. The others were sent to Edinburgh, and lodged in the castle. Ormiston effected his de-

liverance; but Calder was not released for a considerable time, and then only upon submission to Beaton.

Wishart was conducted to Edinburgh; but Bothwell, perceiving danger from having him there, and seemingly feeling some sense of obligation from his promise, carried him from Edinburgh to his mansion at Hailes. He would perhaps have been faithful to his engagements; but the condemnation of Wishart being reckoned necessary for the security of religion, and of the party then in power, and the weaknesses or rather sinful propensities of Bothwell being known, the Cardinal and the Queen Mother, by ministering to his covetousness and sensuality, induced him to deliver up his prisoner unconditionally. Wishart was now placed within the grasp of Rome's vengeance; and its Cardinal must have exulted at the anticipation now before him of trampling on another spirit that had detected and exposed her superstitions, and defied her unholy power. The Governor also, weak and wavering—who was everything by fits and nothing long at a time—yielded; and then the lamb was irrecoverably in the paw of the lion.

About the end of January, 1546, Wishart was removed to St. Andrews, whither the Cardinal had summoned the bishops and all of eminence in the church. He wished to give dignity and importance to his purpose, and, by example, to influence the priesthood generally to vigorous efforts; or, perhaps, by involving them in the condemnation of Wishart, he sought to isolate them from the sympathies of the reformed, so that they might act against them as personal enemies. The summons was obeyed. The clergy assembled in all the pageantry with which antichrist arrays and surrounds the priests of his idolatry, and were attended by the military in the trappings of war. All this was in order to the laying of an unresisting sacrifice on the altar of spiritual despotism,—to make the death of God's servant a means of perpetuating the alienation from God of the human mind; and it was

devised by men who professed themselves ministers of righteousness and messengers of peace. Ought we to wonder that the infidel has so often mocked?

They met in the abbey church. After a sermon, bold yet cautious, had been preached by Dean Winram, who was suspected of favouring the opinions of the reformed, and who most probably was appointed to that duty with the design of obliging him either to lay open his supposed opinions, or so to retract them by advocating the power and doctrines of the church, that he should be for ever separated from all association with the reformers. Wishart was then placed in the pulpit, that he might be the more exposed while he listened to his accusation, and gave, if permitted, his defence. His accusation was read, with great violence and bitterness, by one Lauder, a priest, who, in the true spirit of the master he was serving, spat, at the conclusion of it, in Wishart's face, saying, "What answerest thou to these sayings, thou renegade, traitor, thief?" a phraseology which was repeated at the beginning of the several charges, and fully demonstrated that justice was not among the proud and powerful on the judgment-seat. It is not necessary to record the several articles upon which Wishart was condemned. To call the proceedings against him a trial would be a mockery of the word. Suffice it to note that his accusation seems to have been framed in order to produce a sensation among the multitude, and to make them recoil from Wishart as if he had been an incarnation of every thing worthless, and account his baptism of fire a punishment too brief and slight for his atrocities. Among the charges against him, were his denying the authority of the church and of the pope, his opposing the seven sacraments, auricular confession, extreme unction, and transubstantiation, and his teaching that purgatory had no existence, that no sin was committed by eating flesh on Friday, and that to pray to saints or angels was sinful.

Wishart's defence was calm, firm, and unanswerable. His pleading was so powerful that the prelates themselves said, "If we give him license to preach, he is so crafty, and in holy scripture so exercised, that he will persuade the people to his own opinion, and raise them against us." The testimony was an invaluable, though an unintentional one, both to his ability and his knowledge. But though it undoubtedly expressed their genuine sentiments, they showed that no conviction in his favour could change their stern and unholy resolution. He was, in all forms which a malignant ingenuity could suggest, sought to be ensnared; but the grace of God was sufficient for him. He witnessed a good confession; his eloquence was fringed with heaven's lightning; yet die he must; no voice said, spare; no heart dictated mercy; even pity was not allowed to modify the formula of his martyrdom. The flames were his doom.

The Cardinal pronounced his sentence, and remanded him to his prison till the fire should be prepared. He was unmoved; he breathed a prayer to God that he would pardon the guilty tribunal, and was led away. By sending two friars to him to receive his confession, his persecutors seem to have been unwilling that he should have the enjoyment of the few moments of life that remained to him; for they knew he would not receive such messengers. He rejected their services, and requested that Winram, who had that day preached, might be sent to him. Winram immediately joined him. Their conversation, or spiritual exercises, of whatever kind, were brief. All was ready for Wishart's sufferings and victory. He was brought to the place of execution with a rope about his neck and a chain around his body, and was bound with them to the stake. The guilty mind of the Cardinal, or his knowledge of the number and power of the reformers, made him take all possible precaution to prevent a rescue. Among other means for this, the guns of his castle were pointed down upon the spot where Wishart suffered;

while the soldiery were prepared to resist any attack. Such a measure as this was unnecessary. There was no banding together of the righteous to deliver, deterred as they must have been by the impossibility of working advantage to the sufferer, while they would only increase the enmity of their persecutors, and endanger their own safety.

When bound to the stake, Wishart's courage did not forsake him, nor was his joy in God dimmed by even a passing cloud. He exhorted the assembled multitude to faith, repentance, and purity, defended himself from the calumnies of his enemies, and spoke of the blessedness and glory of better times, when the ark of God would float triumphant upon the waters. He prayed humbly and fervently, not for himself only and the persecuted of God's people, but for his persecutors, for their penitence, their pardon, and illumination. The multitude were powerfully impressed by his resignation, his heroism, and his agonies. They could not refrain their expressions of sorrow; they mourned aloud; and their mourning subsequently ripened into detestation of his murderers, and a purpose of revenging his death. To hinder his influencing them farther, the rope around his neck was tightened until he was almost strangled. The fire blazed around him, and he continued suffering yet rejoicing till his soul entered into the joy of his Lord; and, very soon, all that remained of his body was a few smouldering ashes.

From a regard to our common nature, we would, if possible, conceal the conduct of the Cardinal on this occasion, which nothing but intense malignity could have caused. It might have been supposed that his knowledge that the murder was being perpetrated, that the blazing pile was shooting up embers upon his very walls, would have satisfied his thirst for vengeance, or that, if he must farther be gratified by a sight of his victim, a stolen glance through his casement would have sufficed. Was conscience dead that he desired more? He chose for himself the window directly opposite

the place of execution, which was on the western side of his castle; and from this thrown open and cushioned, he looked out, attired in all the pomp of official array, upon the agonies of the saint. Emotion burned upon his countenance as the sufferer seemed to writhe amidst his tortures; and joy sparkled in his eyes, and the smile gathered upon his lips, as the body wasted away until its form became undistinguishable from the burning mass which his decree had kindled. Nor was he alone gloating over the tragic scene. The archbishop of Glasgow, with passions equally debased, and feelings equally excited, gazed, in the same pomp, from another window upon the martyr; and, wherever a full view could be obtained, their coadjutors also were seen gazing with satisfaction. They seemed as if all sympathy had perished from their minds.

There have been many unsupported statements made regarding the last hours of Wishart. It has been affirmed by some that when, at his request, Dean Winram came to him, he desired that the Lord's Supper might be administered to him according to his own views of the ordinance,—that, in other words, he wished to partake of both bread and wine. Winram is represented as having consulted with the bishops, who are said to have indignantly forbidden him, at the same time charging Winram with being a supporter of the opinions for which Wishart was condemned. Disappointed in his expectations, we are informed that, being with the captain of the castle, and a few friends, Wishart, after religious discourse, after having spoken of the love and death of Jesus, took bread and wine, and administered to them the sacrament himself, partaking along with them, and closing the service by prayer immediately before the entrance of the executioners to prepare him for the stake. It is also affirmed that when Wishart was amidst the flames, the captain of the castle, who was strongly attached to him, approached so near, while comforting him, as to suffer injury, and that while the

captain was entreating him to be of good courage, Wishart said, "This fire torments my body, but noway abates my spirit," and then, looking towards the Cardinal, added, "He who, in such state from that place, feedeth his eyes with my torments, within few days shall be hanged out of the same window to be seen with as much ignominy as he now leaneeth there in pride." These words have been often quoted as an evidence that some measure of the inspiration of the Spirit rested on the persecuted in Scotland. Apart altogether from the theological objections to the idea, which, when calmly investigated, will be found insuperable, and the fact that an examination of most of the sayings which have been received as prophetic, would prove them to have been only the anticipations of minds accustomed to observation, from the character of the times, or the complexion of some particular event,—there is no evidence that these words were spoken by Wishart. The passage is undoubtedly an interpolation. George Wishart was judged, sentenced, and burned on the first day of March, 1546.

Not long after Wishart's death, reports reached the Cardinal that there were persons who had determined to revenge the martyr's death. We have, however, reason to believe that the murder of Wishart was only one of a series of actions of pride, oppression, and despotism, by which Beaton had sought to elevate himself to a place of supremacy over every natural right and legal institution, and by which he had goaded on his enemies to vengeance. Apart from religion, his actions had created against him the greatest enmity, and seemingly would have brought him to a tragical end. Though reports of designs against him reached his ear, he not only felt secure, but was boastful of how he would defeat them. He vaunted that he had laid snares, that he had "limed a bush" for those who threatened him, and that they could not possibly escape. Much of his confidence resulted from the connexions he had formed with the nobility, and the power which

he possessed over them. He also relied on the Queen-Mother, whom he ruled, and the aid of France, which he had purchased at the expense of war with England. When urged to consult his safety by those who were dependent on his continuance in power for the promotion of their own purposes and hopes, he was wont, in his own coarse style, to reply: "A fig for the feud, and a button for the heretics! Is not my Lord Governor mine? Is not his eldest son my pledge? Have I not the Queen, the Pope, and the King of France? Is not my daughter the wife of the eldest son of the Earl of Crawford?"

Among the persons who had determined on his destruction, John Leslie, brother of the Earl of Rothes, was the chief. Other causes than those connected with religion had made him his foe. There was joined with him Norman Leslie, son of the Earl of Rothes, and Sheriff of Fife, who had formerly been the faithful and zealous abettor of the Cardinal in all his schemes, but who, in consequence of some disputes, willingly allied himself with his enemies. He, with five other persons, came to St. Andrews on Friday the 28th May, 1546, where, according to agreement, they found other ten persons, among whom were John Leslie, and William Kirkaldy of Grange. The united parties consulted on the means of putting Beaton to death. He had called a meeting of the gentlemen of Fife; who were to have assembled at Falkland on the Monday following, for the purpose, as afterwards appeared from his papers, of crushing the friends of the Reformation, and also of securing those persons who, from other than religious causes, were the objects of his fear or hatred. The appointing of this meeting was the occasion of hastening on his death. The Leslies, and those associated with them, fearing that they would have directed against them the whole strength of his vengeance, resolved to anticipate him. Having, on that evening, arranged their plans, they separated to meet and execute them in the morning. When we consider their purpose, let

it be remembered that, apart from religion, there were causes sufficiently powerful to have incited them to it, and that several of those by whom it was accomplished acted on the principle of personal revenge. It is necessary to remember this; as Beaton's death has sometimes been attributed exclusively to religious feeling, and employed as an argument of reproach against those who were the leaders in the spiritual emancipation of our country.

On the morning of Saturday, the 29th May, Beaton was hurriedly and violently put to death. The scene was awfully tragical, but does not need to be described here, as it has already been very fully detailed on pp. 322—325 of the second volume of these Tales. When we allow our minds to rest on the Cardinal's cruelties and aggravated crimes, we are ready, under the impulse of our feelings, to justify the manner of his death. When, however, we permit ourselves to think calmly upon the event, our minds recoil from the men who circumvented his death as murderers, however strongly they professed—and in the case of some of them we believe sincerely—that they were acting under the impulse of religious principles. That he deserved to die, we grant, but not by the assassin; for we cannot sustain the plea that, when there were no constitutional means for bringing him to account for his atrocities, when the fountains of justice were sealed up, when every court was impressed with the image of the injustice and cruelty of his mind, persons acting in a private capacity were warranted to punish him. That some of them acted under the belief that they did God service, tends only to show the defectiveness of the knowledge of the reformers, and how much, upon some points, there was affinity between their faith and that of their persecutors, and also between their feelings and desires.

The servants of the Cardinal, who had been ejected by the assailants, aroused his friends in the city. The castle was soon surrounded by a multitude, clamorous about the safety

of Beaton. It was in vain that they were entreated to depart, since they could not in any form be of advantage to the dead. The provost of the city, with other officials, the abettors of the Cardinal in many crimes, cried out: "What have you done with my Lord Cardinal!" Finding that the multitude would not disperse without seeing Beaton, (for they seem never to have imagined the possibility of his death, but to have thought that the sacredness of his character would have been a defence against any spear,) his body was carried to a window—the window, it is said, from which he had looked on the martyrdom of Wishart—and shown lifeless to the multitude. The spectacle seems to have appalled them; and it was well fitted to do so. How strongly it contrasted with what they had seen of the proud man, of his pomp and glory, when the might of a nation was in his arm, when its destiny was seemingly pendent upon his will, and when the ignorant and admiring, though oppressed, thousands that surrounded him, supposed that, equally as on earth, he had power in the kingdom of God! The dishonoured corpse, as exhibited from the window of that palace, on the construction of which he had lavished thousands, gave a lesson the most impressive, that human ambition is vain, and that every fabric of cruelty and crime is based upon the sand. It produced an instantaneous and deep impression of fear upon the assembled multitude. They fled to their homes lest they should be implicated in the consequences of the action, which they must have regarded as one not only of blood but of sacrilege. Yet great though the departed had been, no voice chaunted his requiem, no voice breathed the wonted supplication that the disembodied spirit might have glory. His body lay surrounded by enemies, in whose hearts each one of his wounds created feelings of exultation; and the joys of revenge blended with the charms of hope. They looked on the body; and, as they did so, they thought as do the oppressed when they have burst their chain, and, nerved by a remembrance

of their wrongs, have torn the despot from his blood-stained throne, and trampled his diadem in the dust; or as when the image of idolatry, before which the lovely and the pure has often been presented as an offering, and to satisfy whose thirst for blood, the blood of childhood has streamed plentifully, is dashed from its pedestal, and is prostrate and broken, as Dagon before the ark of God. They gazed, imagining they had done well; for whether they were under religious or under earthly feelings and principles, they all believed that they had secured their personal liberty by the death of him who was planning their destruction. Their first care was how to dispose of his body. They had no means of interring it; and, the weather being hot, they required to conceal the dead for the safety of the living. They accordingly wrapped it in a cypse of lead—"giving him," according to the phraseology of Knox, "salt enough"—and put it at the bottom of the sea-tower in the palace. Could anything have warmed into a consciousness of sin the silent dead, it would have been this place chosen as the depository of his body. It was a place which had been constructed by him for the imprisonment of heretics, and in which the victims of his tyranny had suffered all the accumulated anguish which can be heaped upon the prisoner. Its walls had often echoed to their groans and the utterance of their grief, as there came back fresh upon their minds the memory of other years,—and also of their hope, while, though fettered and condemned, they anticipated the joy and sublimity of their rest with God, after the fires of their persecutors had consumed all that was mortal of them.

The death of Beaton produced results which bore assimilation to the views previously entertained of him. The court was agitated. It felt itself helpless. The Queen and her favourites, whom he had mingled in hostilities with England, now dreaded the vengeance of that country, and looked to France as their only refuge from the impending storm.

The ambitious, in the path of whose hopes he had been a hinderance, rejoiced, anticipating that henceforth there would be no obstruction to the gratifying of their desires,—though professedly they were enraged at his death. Various opinions existed among the reformed respecting the manner of his death; but they all had this happiness that, by whatever means, their deadliest foe was removed,—a happiness, however, which was fringed by apprehensions of the consequences, knowing that they would all be implicated, and that the combined power of the court of France, of the Pope, and of the Queen, would be brought to act against them.

In the meantime the number of those who occupied the castle was increased by many of the most influential of the reformers joining themselves to them; and events soon occurred by which popery, with civil tyranny, perished, and our country acquired a liberty and a purity of ecclesiastical institutions by which, though her limits were confined and her soil sterile, she became the most distinguished among the nations,—national glory depending not on numbers, wealth, or power, but on freedom and religion. The morning of a day bright and blessed had dawned on Scotland. Men were startled from their dreams, and, devising in godliness and acting in zeal, left the image of their character on the destiny of their country.