

SIEGE OF INNERWICK AND THORNTON CASTLES.*

A. D. 1547.

IN the parish of Innerwick, in the county of Haddington, there still exist the ruins of an ancient castle, near the village of the same name, which originally belonged to a younger branch of the Family of Hamilton. From its appearance and situation the Castle of Innerwick was probably one of those small fortalices erected as Border defences, of which an old Scottish writer observes that there were two in every league. The Castle is romantically built on the summit of a rocky eminence which overhangs a wooded glen, separating it from a fortress of a similar description called Thornton, now entirely erased.

* Patten's Diarie of the Duke of Somerset's Expedition, &c., in Fragments of Scottish History, edited by Sir John Graham Dalyell; Grose's Antiquities of Scotland.

This fortalice was besieged, taken, and destroyed by the English under the Duke of Somerset, in his celebrated expedition into Scotland in 1547, and the proceedings are thus narrated by Patten, an officer of the English army. He says that while a body of miners was left to blow up the walls of Dunglass Castle, the army marched a mile and a half northward, and arrived at two *peels* or *holds*, called Thornton and Innerwick, both erected on a craggy foundation, and divided a stone-cast by a deep ravine wherein runs a small rivulet. Thornton then belonged to Lord Home, and was held for that nobleman by a person named *Tom Trotter*, who chose to abscond, under the pretence that he would send assistance to the small garrison he left to defend the place.

Innerwick was kept by Hamilton, the son and heir of the proprietor. Somerset summoned the parties in Innerwick and Thornton to surrender, but an indignant refusal was the reply. The order was immediately given by the English commander to assault both *peels*, which indeed it was madness to attempt to retain against such a numerous army. The fortalice of Thornton was attacked by a battery of four great pieces of ordnance, while a chosen party of Sir Peter Newton's hackbutters were ordered to watch the loop-holes and windows on all sides. A similar party were stationed against Innerwick, and those soldiers exerted themselves so successfully that they effected an entrance into the fortalice. The besieged had betaken themselves to the battlements. Here they were fired at from beneath, and were soon compelled to ask mercy from the English commander. Somerset sent a messenger to assure them of his clemency, but before this functionary could reach the fortalice eight of the besieged had fallen, and one who leaped over the walls was slain while crossing the rivulet in the glen.

The peel of Innerwick was taken possession of by the

English, who burnt it to the ground, with all the outer buildings and the corn stalks. But the garrison of Thoruton made a more determined resistance. They were only sixteen in number, and Tom Trotter had locked them up in the fortalice, taking the keys with him. It may be noticed that this personage forgot to return to their assistance. At length, perceiving the folly of holding out the place any longer, they exhibited a "white linen *clout* tied on the end of a stick, crying all with one tune for mercy." They were answered that they were traitors, and that it was too late to ask terms, which induced them to pull in their *white clout*, supplanting it by the signal of defiance, and they recommenced the defence, throwing stones on their assailants, and doing as much injury as lay in their power, with "great courage," observes Patten, "on their side, and little hurt of ours."

It was too evident that the English were determined to possess the fortalice, and the besieged exhibited their flag of surrender a second time, calling from the walls for mercy. "Nay, nay," was the reply, "never look for it; arrant traitors ye are." They petitioned that if they must die they would be allowed some short interval for the exercises of religion. Sir Miles Patrick sent a messenger to Somerset with this petition, which was granted; the besieged then proceeded to the Duke, and "humbled themselves before him," after which act of humiliation they were committed to the custody of the provost marshal. It appears that their lives were spared, to the great regret of Patten, who gives his opinion of this act of clemency in the following manner:—"It is somewhat here to consider, I know not whether the destiny or the hap of men's life, the more worthy men, less offenders, and more in the judge's grace, were slain; and the beggars, the obstinate rebels, who deserved nothing but cruelty, were saved." The fortalice was so shattered by the cannon that the greater part of the

building fell to the ground, and what remained was rendered completely useless. Innerwick still remains a melancholy ruin, but the peel of Thornton has long disappeared.
