

## THE BATTLE OF LANGSIDE.\*

A.D. 1568.

THE escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven Castle, after a severe and insulting imprisonment of ten months, is well known to every reader of her unfortunate history. - On the 2d of May, by the assistance of George Douglas, a brother of the laird or baron of Lochleven, she safely landed on the shore of the lake, where she found some faithful followers ready to attend her. On that night she arrived at Niddrie Castle in West Lothian, attended by Lord Seton and a gentleman named Hamilton; and here, surrounded by her friends, she could not refrain from repeating with ecstasy,

---

\* Chalmers' Life of Queen Mary, and of the Earl of Moray; Dalryell's Memoir of the Earl of Moray; Stuart's History of Scotland; Cleland's Annals of Glasgow; Statistical Account of Scotland Crawford's History of Renfrew; Tytler's History of Queen Mary.

“ I am once more a queen.” On the following day she proceeded to Hamilton, where she was received by the Earls of Argyle, Cassillis, Eglinton, and Rothes, Lords Sommerville, Yester, Borthwick, Herries, Maxwell, and other noblemen, with their friends and followers, to the number of one thousand men. In a general council she solemnly stated that the resignation of the government had been extorted from her, and those noblemen declared in consequence that resignation null and void. They also resolved that in the meantime the Queen should take possession of Dumbarton Castle, and there remain till her subjects flocked to her standard. A bond of defence, obliging themselves to protect the person of the Queen, her honour, and her right to the crown, was subscribed by eight earls, nine bishops, eighteen lords, twelve abbots and priors, and nearly one hundred barons, aided by the powerful influence of the House of Hamilton. The Queen surveyed her strength, and found she could muster 6000 combatants.

The Regent Moray was at that time holding a justice-court at Glasgow, and, though taken by surprise, he refused to retire to Edinburgh or Stirling as he was advised, but resolved to meet the Queen's party in the field. He erected the banner of the young King, her son, and the Earls of Morton, Glencairn, and Mar, Lords Home, Lindsay, Ruthven, Sempill, Sir James Kirkaldy of Grange, and other persons of distinction, with the vassals of the family of Lennox, and a number of the citizens of Glasgow, resolved strenuously to support him. They encamped on the lands of Barrowfield, in the eastern suburbs of the City of Glasgow, in the expectation that the Queen's army would give them battle; but receiving intelligence, on the 13th, that the Queen's army, under the command of the Earl of Argyle, was on the march to convey her to Dumbarton Castle by the south side of the Clyde, the Regent speedily crossed the river with his troops, about four thousand strong, and took an advantage

ous position on a rising ground near the village of Langside, about two miles south of Glasgow.

Mary dreaded the acknowledged military renown of her brother the Regent, and knew that among his supporters there were noblemen and gentlemen of undoubted valour and considerable experience. A defeat would again involve her in all the miseries of a captivity, which would be increased in rigour and vigilance, if she indeed escaped the more fatal revenge of her enemies. Some among her followers reminded her that she was now supported by the chief of the nobility—that the affection of her people towards her was daily increasing—that a short delay would enable her to bring such a force into the field, as would utterly intimidate Moray, and compel him to retire, or to entrust himself to her clemency. But the advice of the Hamiltons, and especially of Hamilton, Archbishop of St Andrews, prevailed. It was considered that, as the Queen's army was more numerous than the other, it must be stronger, and thus secure of victory, they would be enabled at one blow to destroy the great opponent to their ambition. It was therefore decided that they should give battle to the Regent.

On the other hand, Moray was no less anxious that this unexpected contest should be decided. He was surrounded by dangers, and the consternation of his adherents could not be concealed. Some of them began to carry on private negotiations with the Queen; others forsook him openly, and not a few retired altogether, to await the issue of the impending crisis of affairs. Yet amidst these discouragements the indomitable genius of Moray appeared, and enabled him to act with vigour. He declared against retreating, which he knew would discourage his own followers, and animate those of the Queen. While pretending, therefore, to listen to some overtures of accommodation, he was busily engaged in collecting and organizing

his adherents, and, though inferior to the Queen's army in numbers, he had such confidence in the valour of his troops as to break off the negotiations.

When the Regent marched from Glasgow and occupied Langside, his object was to intercept the Queen in her progress to Dumbarton—an enterprise which would necessarily involve a battle. On the 13th of May the Queen and her forces appeared, and each army was provided with a few pieces of ordnance of rude construction, which were latterly played with little effect. The locality where the battle was decided is an eminence in the northern extremity of the parish of Cathcart. Here the ground rises to a considerable height on the south and east sides, and slopes rapidly towards the north and west. Around are various undulating eminences, which give a finely diversified appearance to the country. The Regent succeeded in gaining the hill above the village of Langside, which he was enabled to secure. The Earl of Argyle is said to have been suddenly seized by a fit of epilepsy, which retarded the Queen's troops, but he soon recovered, and ranged his forces into two columns upon an opposite hill. The Regent also formed his army into two columns, part of which he posted in the small village of Langside, and among some gardens and inclosures. In this situation he waited the approach of the Queen's troops, whose cavalry could be of little use on such uneven ground.

The contest began by the Queen's cavaliers charging those of the Regent, who gave way, but the former were soon thrown into confusion by a shower of arrows from his bowmen. The Hamiltons, who led the vanguard, ran so eagerly to the attack that they exhausted themselves, and left their main body far behind. This column or wing of the Queen's army, in which her greatest strength lay, marched gallantly down to the plain, where the Regent advanced with his first column. Here there was a fierce

encounter with swords and spears, during which the issue of the conflict seemed doubtful as to victory on either side, though the Queen's troops were exposed on one flank to a continual fire of musqueteers. But the Regent at this crisis brought forward his second column, consisting of his choice troops, to support him, and this decided the fate of the day. The Queen's soldiers were panic-struck, a general rout ensued, and the defeat was total and irretrievable.

The Queen witnessed this annihilation of all her hopes, overwhelmed with anguish and despair. A place is still pointed out upon an eminence, commanding a view of the field of battle, and near the old ruinous castle of Cathcart, where she stood, and a hawthorn bush, known by the name of *Queen Mary's Thorn*, and probably planted at the time by some devoted adherent, long marked the spot, till it decayed through age. Another was planted by the proprietor in the latter end of the last century, to preserve the remembrance of this interesting locality.

The Queen's troops fled in all directions, pursued with impetuosity by the victors, but few were killed in the rout. The Regent rode up and down the field, beseeching the soldiers to spare their friends, their countrymen, their fellow-subjects. About three hundred fell in the field, on the Queen's side, and nearly four hundred were made prisoners, among whom were Lords Seton and Ross, the Masters of Cassillis and Eglinton, and other persons of distinction. The loss in the Regent's army was comparatively trivial.

Haunted with the terrors of captivity, and with no guard to protect her, the Queen could not attempt to reach Dumbarton Castle, through a country now completely in the possession of the Regent. Lord Herries directed her flight to Galloway, and she never rested till she reached the Abbey of Dundrennan near Kirkcudbright



sixty miles from the field of battle, without having a second habit of dress, and without money. Here, in defiance of the remonstrances of Lord Herries and the Archbishop of St Andrews, she resolved to seek a refuge in England, and to court the protection of a sovereign who had never ceased to disturb her reign, and to encourage faction in her kingdom,

The Regent returned to Glasgow with his victorious soldiers, and proceeded to the Cathedral, where he publicly returned thanks to God for a victory which was almost bloodless on his side. He was sumptuously entertained by the Provost, Magistrates, and Council. Having expressed his obligations to the citizens for their fidelity and bravery, he requested to be informed if he could be of any service to the Corporation. "This condescension," says the author of the Annals of Glasgow, "was so unexpected that no immediate reply was given. At length Matthew Fawside, who was deacon of the Incorporation of Bakers, thinking this a fit opportunity, informed the Regent that the Incorporation which he represented had liberally supplied the army with bread during the time it had been quartered in the neighbourhood of Glasgow—that the mill at Partick belonged to the Crown, and that the tacks-men exacted exorbitant multures, which greatly affected the price of bread to the community—and that if it pleased his Lordship to give the Corporation a grant of the mill, it would be acknowledged as a public benefit. This oration had the desired effect, as the Regent instantly gave the Corporation a grant of the mill, and of certain lands connected with it." This property is still the possession of the Incorporation of Bakers in Glasgow.