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# AYRSHIRE

Its History and Historic Families

BY

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VOLUME I



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## INTRODUCTION

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A work that purports to be historical may well be left to speak for itself. That the story of the county of Ayr is worth telling there is no occasion to demonstrate ; it is because it is worth telling—and well worth telling—that this book has been written.

The author anticipates, with the confidence that some experience has given him, that the History of Ayrshire will be read by many leal sons and daughters of the ancient shire, not only within the bounds, but in other parts of the United Kingdom, and beyond the seas. His hope is that it may have some effect in stimulating their pride of birth, and in the men and women who have made Ayrshire what she is—a worthy mother of her children.

The story is one of ups and downs, of fightings for freedom and faith, of local and feudal jarrings and turmoils, of steady persevering through it all on the pathway of progress. Much broken and chequered, it is nevertheless a consistent whole.

The second volume is given to the history of the leading families of the shire. In its preparation the author has received much valuable assistance from members of those historic houses ; and he takes this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging their kindness. He has avoided endless genealogies, his object having been to show the part the families themselves played in the making of the county, in Scottish national life, in the work of the United Kingdom. And in this part of the book the reader will find a multitude of incidents and episodes that cast many an instructive light upon the general procession of events.

The History is dedicated to the County herself, with all the loyalty that is due to her, by one of her many sons.

# HISTORY OF AYRSHIRE

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## CHAPTER I

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### EARLY AYRSHIRE

There was a time—there must of necessity have been a time—when Ayrshire, in common with the rest of Scotland, was a No Man's Land. For untold ages the creative forces of Nature, fire and flood, ice and the convulsive heavings of Mother Earth, had been preparing a habitation for the use of man. Giant icebergs had slowly crept down from the north, and, when they had done their share of the work, had as slowly receded to the realms of the Arctic. Earthquakes and volcanoes had wrought in Titanic compact, and when their age-long groaning and travailing together had subsided and given place to the calm that comes from rest, and had ceased from their labour, the waters, widespreading and devastating, had concentrated themselves into lochs and rivers and the solitudes of the marshy lands. The streams had patiently furrowed out their own channels that they might reach the sea, the source and fountain of their being. Cold and bleak and bare the hills stood in their places, giant remains of the heaving and the convulsions that had given them birth. Rank and rugged, the forests had spread themselves abroad over the country, the homes and haunts of a fauna that were after the old-world type. With the slow lapsing of the centuries, with the betterment begotten of less trying weather conditions, with the aid of the suns and the

showers, the mists and the frosts, the land gradually formed itself into a fitting habitation for man. And when the fulness of his time had come, man appeared on the scene.

When Ayrshire was first peopled none can say. There is room for surmising that the original inhabitants, judged by the scant relics of their presence that the soil has grudgingly yielded, were a small race of people : but there is absolutely nothing to show whence they came and whither they went, or to lead to the conclusion that they ever attained to any considerable degree of civilisation. There may be a certain latent satisfaction experienced by the man whose home is by the waters of the Nile, or who dwells where once the Euphrates flowed an orderly and well-regulated flood through the plains of Mesopotamia, when he reflects that many centuries ago the people who dwelt in the walled cities, and whose armies marched far and near to conquest, to annexation, to sovereignty, were a great and a mighty race. But such a contemplative reflection must needs be clouded when he contrasts the high estate of the former days with the comparatively low estate of the present. So far as Scotland is concerned there need be no looking back with regret. The march of civilisation, of wealth, of progress has been steadily onward and forward. The years may have known reaction and retrogression, but not the centuries. It is inevitable that in a country such as Scotland that has had consistently and systematically to win its way towards the future by struggle, by war of tribe with tribe, of people with people, of race with race, there should have been occasions when the baneful past was temporarily able to reassert itself ; but if one could from some high vantage ground look backwards and see the evolving centuries, each playing its appointed part, there can be little doubt, if any at all, that he would recognise the systematic and well-ordered character of the forward movement. Even as it is, through Celtic rivalries, and Roman invasion, and reassertion of the Celtic supremacy,

and the embittered struggling that preceded the consolidation of the kingdom under one common head, and the long wars with England, and the striving for rights of unfettered faith and free conscience, down to the present time, it is possible to recognise the steadiness and the inevitableness of the development. We have therefore nothing whatever to regret in leaving the past behind us. For in no material respect whatever were the former days better than these.

There does not seem to be any reasonable occasion for doubting that at the opening of the Christian era Ayrshire was inhabited by a Celtic race. There is mystery indeed, and room for considerable diversity of opinion as to whether the inhabitants were Picts, or Caledonians, or Britons, and as to when the Scots first appeared upon the scene. There is no such consistency in the nomenclature of the tribes of the period as to warrant any hard and fast conclusion on the matter. Strictly speaking, Ayrshire was not within the definitely Pictish area, which extended southward no further than the Firth of Clyde, but it was near enough to the borderland to have been leavened by the Pictish influence, and to have received many settlers from beyond the frontier.

But, however that may have been, it is probably sufficient for any practical purpose to know that the Damnii, who were in occupation of the county when the Romans first visited North Britain in the second century, were a purely Celtic people. The place names of the shire afford indisputable evidence that they were. Even at that early period the Celt was strongly wrought upon by the natural features of the country. The rivers appealed powerfully to him, so too did the hills and the dales and the forests. He did not call his early settlements, save in very exceptional instances, after the men who founded them, or even after the chiefs of the tribes who were the pioneers of these far off years, but after their natural environment. He came to the river that has given its own name to the county, and, finding

its stream pellucid and clear, he called it the "Ayr." He journeyed or coasted northwards to where he found another river mingling its waters with those of the Clyde estuary; its banks were green, and he designated it the "Ir-vin." A little southward from Ayr he looked upon the peat-stained stream that carries to the sea the tribute of the clouds that break upon the hills and the muirlands above Dalmellington, and he named it the "Dun." Southward still he travelled, and, following the rocky course of another river, he bade it bear for all time to come the name "Gerr-avon," or the rough river.

So also with many of the parishes. Thus Dundonald owes its derivation to "Dun," a hill, and "Donald," the name of a man; Craigie to "Craig," a rock; Mauchline to "Magh," a plain, and "lyn," a pool; Dalgain, the original name of the parish of Sorn, to "Dal," a plain, and "Gain," sandy; Cumnock to "Cum," a hollow, and "Knock," a hill; Auchinleck to "Ach-an-leac," the field of the flat stone; Ochiltree to "Uchil-tre," the high tower, or dwelling place; Dalmellington to "Dal-mulin," the mill-meadow, with the Saxon "ton" added at a later date; Børr to "Bar," a summit, or a height; Ballantrae to "Bail-an-trae," the house on the shore; and Ardrossan to "Ard," high, and "Rossan," a little promontory. And, if we carry the inquiry further afield we find Celtic derivations everywhere. One example of a group, taken from "The Statistical Account of Scotland" (1798), must suffice:—

"Most of the names of places in this parish (Sorn) are Gaelic. Some of them I shall here mention, with the explanation which I have received from a friend in the Highlands: 'Glen-shamrock,' clover-vale; 'Dal-charnach,' the field of cairns; 'Daldorch,' oak field; 'Dal-diling,' a field liable to be overflowed; 'Car-leith,' a winding torrent; 'Auchin-cloich,' stone field; 'Barbaich,' comely grove; 'Blairkip,' the field of archers; 'Auchmannoch,' hill field."

There comes a time in Ayrshire history when the annals are largely those of the Church ; so far as these early Caledonians are concerned, they are mainly those of the battlefield. For the Celts were ever a warlike race. Ptolemy (A.D. 120) tells how insubordinate they were, and how they troubled the peace of the southland, and how it became necessary for the Emperor Severus to come to Britain and attempt their subjugation. They could not brook the very proximity of the power of Rome, and when Severus did come, and his legions with him, the task to which he set himself was wholly beyond his power. According to Ptolemy they were little better than squalid savages, without cities, ignorant of agriculture, possessing their wives in common, and tattooing their bodies with pictures of all kinds, of which crude ornamentation they were so vain that, on the authority of Herodian, " they wore no clothing." Tacitus, on the other hand, writing about half a century earlier, describes the Caledonians as a noble race of barbarians, who fought in chariots as well as on foot, with long swords and short shields, and whose fair red hair and large limbs argued, in his opinion, a Teutonic origin. Between the two truth will probably lie. They were essentially men of battle, they were organised in tribes and as a common people for purposes of defence, they had a regular system of government, they paid great regard to their dead, and, according to their lights, they were an essentially religious people.

As yet they were strangers to the leavening influences of Christianity. No early missionaries of the Cross had yet visited these shores. The reign of the Druids, in the spiritual sense, was in full swing. It was they, we have it on the authority of Cæsar, who attended to divine worship, who performed public and private sacrifices, and who expounded matters of faith. They were the instructors of youth, they dispensed justice, they fixed rewards and punishments. Unfortunately, they did not commit their lore to writing ; but, " beyond all things, they are desirous to inspire a belief that men's souls do



not perish, but transmigrate after death from one individual to another, and they hold that thereby people are most strongly urged to bravery, as the fear of death is thus destroyed." Besides, they discussed the nature of things and the power and might of the immortal gods; they were adepts in the magic arts, and were versed in the mysterious powers of animals and plants. The oak was sacred to them; so was the mistletoe that grew upon the oak. Sun worshippers, performing their mystical rites in the seclusion and shadow of the groves, offering up human sacrifice to the God of Day, holding the keys of the eternal world in one hand, and the terrors of their religion in its direct application on earth in the other, the Druids wielded an enormous influence. That Druidism flourished in Ayrshire in its day cannot well be called in question, but absolutely dependable remains of the Druids there are none.

In the account of Tarbolton parish furnished (1842) to the "New Statistical Account of Scotland," by the Rev. David Ritchie, A.M., the rev. gentleman notes that Bol, or Bel, was the name of the god of the Druids, and he finds it in the second syllable of the name of the parish, and describes certain superstitious rites which were annually performed on the "tor," or hill, which forms the opening syllable of the word. "On the evening preceding the Tarbolton June fair" he says, "a piece of fuel is demanded at each house, and is invariably given, even by the poorest inhabitant. The fuel so collected is carried to a particular part of the hill, where there is an altar, or circular fireplace of turf, about three feet in height, and is placed upon the altar. A huge bonfire is kindled, and many of the inhabitants, men and women, old and young, assemble on the hill and remain for hours, apparently chiefly occupied with observing a feat performed by the youths, who are to be seen leaping with indefatigable zeal upon the altar or turf wall inclosing the ashes of former fires and supporting the present one. It appears," he adds, "from sacred Scripture that the worship of Baal consisted in part of

leaping upon his altar." Whether Tarbolton was really the site of a Druid altar, whether it is "the town or hill where Baal was worshipped," is perhaps a matter for interesting conjecture, but the incident of the name, even when backed by the immemorial custom followed by the youths of leaping upon the altar as the priests did of old in their contest with Elijah, can hardly be accepted as irrefragable proof that in Scotland's early Celtic days Tarbolton was a seat and centre of Druidism. A century back every "standing stone" was looked upon as a Druidical remain, but neither is the evidence regarding these sufficiently tangible to warrant their unimpeachable association with the priesthood that obtained generally throughout Scotland before it was forced to give place to the fitter faith of Christianity. It is sufficient for historical purposes to know that the Druids had their day here, as elsewhere, and that they were the interpreters to our Celtic progenitors of a religion that, with all its superstitions, and its mysterious and cruel rites, had nevertheless about it an ethical moral value that helped to make the fathers live virtuously, bravely, and patriotically, that enabled them to give their lives for home and country, and that bade them look forward to the rewards of the world to come.

Upon this Celticism, slowly and rudely developing upon its own lines, came the high civilisation of Rome. It is worth bearing prominently in mind that the Roman occupation was in reality an occupation and not in the full and expansive sense in which we use the word to-day, an immigration. They may have come with the ultimate intention of staying, and of colonising the country, but they did neither. It was not until the first century was nearing its close that they obtained anything like a permanent or an abiding footing in Scotland; and such scant remains of their presence as Ayrshire can show to-day seem to indicate that, so far as the county was concerned, they came as soldiers, lived as soldiers, and departed as soldiers. The Celts remained the people. Theirs was the social life of the

district, theirs was the language that continued to be spoken, theirs were the customs that were handed on unimpaired to their descendants who were to re-establish their sway when the crying necessities of Rome itself had recalled the hardy legions to the banks of the Tiber. No doubt they profited greatly in many respects as the result of the Roman sojourn. The Romans could not do otherwise than impress themselves upon the life of the countryside. They were rulers, with a uniquely complete code of laws and a well-ordered system of government. They were builders and road makers of high repute. They were educated and cultured beyond anything that the Celts had to show. If they ruled with an high hand, they nevertheless ruled on consistent principles; and if they dealt in drastic fashion with the warring hordes by whom they were surrounded, they inspired none the less a respect—the respect that is never denied to force—that must needs have had its own influence in shaping the destinies of the people for whose government they held themselves responsible.

But, as we have said, there is no reason to believe that they impressed themselves in any great degree upon the shire of Ayr. With one or two exceptions every remain of their presence within the bounds savours of the camp. According to the Statistical Account, the foundation walls of Roman villas were unearthed last century on the shore of Largs; and close by Newfield, in the parish of Dundonald, a Roman bath was brought to light in a place “flooded with water except during a very dry season;” A Roman watergate was unearthed in the Sandgate of Ayr early last century, and some forty years later another watergate, probably part of the same general, original system, was brought to the light of day in Newmarket Street when an old house was being demolished to make room for a new one. The latter, which the writer remembers seeing when a boy, and into which, stooping, he was able to walk, was about four feet in height by about two and a half in breadth, arched, and exceedingly well built. It is

conceivable that, instead of being a Roman watergate, it might have been an underground passage leading from the castle of Ayr, that stood in the thirteenth century overlooking the river, to the open country beyond the burgh port, but the style of the building was not after the Scottish method, the walls were smooth and wholly free from projections, and the completeness, the neatness, and the excellence of the work appeared rather to indicate that it was a relic of the days when the Romans were in camp or in residence in the little settlement beside the waters of the clear-flowing river. At Parkmoor, in Tarbolton parish, there were the remains of a camp, and in Galston parish the minister, the Rev. Robert Stirling, writing in the summer of 1837, was able to furnish the following interesting account of an encampment in the vicinity of Loudoun Hill :—

“ It is evidently a Roman camp, chosen and fortified with all the military science for which that celebrated people were distinguished. Its ramparts, though much reduced by time and the depredations of the husbandman, may be distinctly traced throughout its whole extent, and the Prætorian and Decaman gates are in a state of tolerable preservation. The original camp to which these remarks apply is 180 yards long and 114 broad ; but there is another enclosure upon a lower level towards the south, which seems to have been added upon a subsequent occasion, to accommodate a larger force, or perhaps originally designed for the quarters of the allies. The addition lengthens out the parallelogram to 258 yards. It does not appear that there have been any gates at the extremities of the Principia, and indeed it is not to be expected from the nature of the ground, which on the right and left slopes downwards for twenty or thirty yards with the declivity of a rampart. Upon one of those slopes there was found in the year 1831 a silver coin in good preservation, having this inscription :—‘ Cæsar Avgustus, divi F. Pater Patriæ.’ The facts and observations taken in connection with the existence of a Roman military

way, which may still be traced on the opposite bank of the Irvine, furnish incontestable evidence that the parish of Galston has received at least one visit from the masters of the world. . . . In connection with these Roman remains may be mentioned another military station on the Galston bank of the Aven about two miles further to the south. It is nearly surrounded by the river, and fortified, where it is not so, by a rampart and ditch. It may not improbably be conjectured to have contained a detachment of the army stationed on Allanton Bog (the scene of the larger encampment)."

At various other points of the shire individual relics have been unearthed—a bronze tripod and a pitcher of earthenware in Dalrymple, bronze vessels in Loudoun, and similar remains in Maybole—sufficient, with the traces of building and of fortification, to demonstrate the presence of the Romans during the period of their occupation of Scotland. When the Rev. Alexander Cuthill, one of the parish ministers of Ayr, was writing his contribution to the *New Statistical Account* in 1837, he was able to say that "there are manifest indications that the whole of the lower part along the sea coast, from river to river, had been the scene of some great struggle in which the Romans and the natives of the island were combatants, and that probably in more than one conflict. Throughout the whole of this space, Roman and British places of sepulchre are found, with Roman armour, swords, lances, daggers, and pieces of mail, and brazen camp vessels, intermixed with British urns of rude baked clay, hatchet and arrow heads, and other implements of warfare used by the Caledonians." According to Spottiswoode, "in the year 360 Maximus, a Roman Prefect, excited the Picts to enter into alliance with him against the Scots, and the Romans and Picts encountered the Scots at the Water of Doon in Carrick." Whether the Scots had arrived in Ayrshire at that period in sufficient numbers to have been able to face a Roman-Pictish combination in the open field may

very seriously be questioned; but there is no inconsiderable confusion among the historians, both of nomenclature and of dates, where these early Scots are concerned, and the evidences of battle given up by the soil between the estuaries of the Ayr and the Doon certainly lend character to the story of that long forgotten conflict. That the Scots were prepared to assert themselves, even against the Romans, there is no reason to doubt. From the beginning they were a warlike and an assertive race. Ayrshire was the scene of their incoming from Argyllshire, and therefore the great battle which strewed the plain with the dead, and littered it with their arms and armour, cannot be cavalierly relegated to the category of the mythical.

It was in the year 422 that the Romans, who, as has been proudly asserted, never really conquered Scotland, were withdrawn from Great Britain altogether to meet the sterner necessities that awaited them at home. They had come hither to win a kingdom to the Empire enthroned on the seven hills; they returned to defend the very citadel of the Empire itself. With their departure the Celts reasserted themselves. But they had not their troubles to seek. Jealousies and rivalries within beset them; and from beyond the Firth of Clyde, from the shores of Argyllshire and from Ireland, the Scots had already begun to make their influence felt. In conjunction with the inhabitants of Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire, Dumfriesshire, Liddesdale, Teviotdale, Galloway, and the greater part of Dumbartonshire, and of Stirlingshire, those of Ayrshire formed themselves into a confederacy that became the Kingdom of Alclud. With their capital on the banks of the Clyde, and with the rock of Dumbarton for their main stronghold, they engaged in a series of desperate wars, sometimes with the Picts, sometimes with the Scots, more frequently with the Saxons of the Kingdom of Northumbria. Their fortunes rose and fell. They defeated Aidan of Cantyre at Airdrie in 577; in 642 they routed and slew in battle Donald-Breac, King of Cantyre; in 749 they gained a

signal triumph over the Picts and slew the brother of their King; and they matched themselves not unequally against the Cruithne, or Picts, of Ireland, defeating them, according to the Ulster Annals, at Mauchline. Their misfortunes included defeat in the sixth century at the hands of the celebrated King Arthur; in the eighth century Eadbert the Northumbrian, marching through Nithsdale, took possession of Cunningham and of Kyle; five years afterwards, in 755, the Picts and Saxons combined, captured and sacked Alcluyd. After such fashion rolled the stormy tide of their life. Highly endowed with the gift of never knowing when they were beaten, they pursued their warlike way, King succeeding King, until 843, when the Picts and Scots became one people under Kenneth II.

So far as history goes, Ayrshire, while by no means escaping the ravages of the conflict, does not seem to have been called upon to bear the brunt of the campaigning. But it was not invariably so. In 836 Alpin, the King of Cantyre, cast envious eyes upon the broad plains of Ayrshire, and longed to call them his own. The story is not by any means fully told, as to its details, but it is quite sufficiently authenticated that he crossed the firth with a powerful army, landed somewhere in the vicinity of Ayr, and struck the road leading into Galloway. Along this highway he marched, spreading consternation all around. His coming had been unexpected, the Alcluydensians were not ready to receive him, and he succeeded in reaching the country hard by Dalmellington, a locality of great natural advantages for war, before the warriors of the homeland had gathered in sufficient numbers to give him battle. Who it was that led the Alcluydensian host none now can tell; some chieftain of high degree with military skill sufficient to avail himself of the opportunities afforded by the locality for purposes of defence as well as of attack; his name, nevertheless, if not his memory, has perished. Many a less important conflict has been sung; this one was fought, so far as the chronicler of

mighty deeds is concerned, in silence. It was a fierce combat that took place. Alpin led his men in person and went into the battle with them, and after a sustained and fateful struggle, the Scots broke and fled, leaving their gallant leader dead upon the field. And to this day, in Dalmellington parish, remains Laight Alpin, the traditional scene of the Scots King's last fight.

One would like, if at all possible, to treat the memory of Coilus, or Coil, or Coll, with considerable respect, if for no other reason than that it is said to have been from him that the Kyle district of Ayrshire received its name. There were so many chiefs and Kings in these far-off days that there is nothing at all improbable about the personality of this worthy. Buchanan accepts him without any questioning as King of the Britons; so, too, does Bellenden; and if we are to dismiss him into the place of the shades merely because there has been a conflict of opinion as to his personality, then it is to be feared we shall also have to regard as mythical a great deal of hitherto accepted ancient history. The story of the conflict in which he lost his life is very shortly told by Hector Boece:—"Kyle is namit frae Coyll, Kyng of the Britons, quhilk was slain in the same region." Neither is Buchanan's account of the battle erring on the side of length:—"The Scots and Picts surprised the camp of the Britons in the night, and put almost the whole of them to the sword. Coilus, King of the Britons, was among the slain in this engagement, and the district in which the battle was fought was afterwards distinguished by his name." There has been a dispute among the early historians as to the exact place where the battle was fought. According to one set of authorities, the scene of the conflict was in Carrick, near the Doon; according to others, the opening engagement was fought by the Doon, but Coil and his army retreated northwards and were overtaken and slain at a moor—thenceforward known as Coyls-field. What lends some importance to this latter explanation is an examination that was made into the reputed grave



of the British King in 1837. The account of it, from the pen of the minister of the parish of Tarbolton, is so interesting that we reproduce it at length :—

“ To the south of Coilsfield House, and immediately west of the farm offices, is a circular mound enclosed by a hedge, and planted with oak and other trees. On the centre and highest part of the mound are two large stones, masses of basalt, which, according to tradition, mark the spot where the mortal remains of King Coil were deposited. The names borne by places in the vicinity are in keeping with this tradition. The beautiful mansion adjoining, one of the seats of the Earl of Eglinton, is named Coilsfield—*i.e.*, the field of Coil. Kyle, the name of the central district of Ayrshire, is supposed to be the same word, Coil, spelt in accordance with the vulgar pronunciation of the name. A little brook that empties itself into the Fail, is called ‘ The Bloody Burn,’ and so testifies of the name by which its waters had, on some memorable occasion, been polluted ; and a flat, alluvial piece of ground along the Fail, opposite the mouth of the Bloody Burn, is still called ‘ The Deadmen’s Holm,’ probably from its having been the burial place of the soldiers. . . . The two large stones were removed. The centre of the mound was found to be occupied by boulder stones, some of them of considerable size. When the excavators had reached the depth of about four feet, they came on a flagstone of a circular form about three feet in diameter. Under the circular stone was, first, a quantity of dry, yellow coloured sandy clay, then a small flagstone laid horizontally covering the mouth of an urn filled with white coloured burnt bones. In removing the dry clay by which this urn was surrounded, under flat stones, several small heaps of bones were observed, not contained in urns, but carefully surrounded by the yellow coloured clay mentioned above. The urns in shape resemble flower pots ; they are composed of clay and have been hardened by fire. The principal urn is  $7\frac{7}{8}$  inches in height,  $7\frac{7}{8}$  inches in diameter, and  $\frac{5}{8}$ ths of an inch in thickness. It has none

of those markings supposed to have been made by the thumb nail, so often to be observed on sepulchral urns, and it has nothing of ornament except an edging or projecting part about half an inch from the top. No coins, or armour, or implements of any description could be found. Other urns were found less indurated, and so frail as to fall to pieces when touched."

A place of burial, beyond any doubt, but whether of King Coilus or of some other hero warrior who had fallen in some forgotten combat, it would be rash too absolutely to attempt to declare. Many such mounds, many of these primitive burying places, have first and last been uncovered in Ayrshire. It is to be feared that the contents of not a few of them, returned to the sunlight in days when as yet archæology had not asserted itself, and when quarries were made out of ancient castles and walls of ruined monasteries, were rudely scattered to the winds of heaven, and that the literal ploughshare of ruin was driven across the graves where the dust of the warriors was resting. It is seldom well to disturb the dead; the antiquarian is conscious of a certain measure of iconoclasm when he explores their tombs—what then shall be said for the thoughtlessness of those who destroyed the cairns, or unearthed the funeral urns merely as the curiosities of a day, and thought no more of them? But for all the iconoclasm, a sufficient number of remains have been carefully disinterred to tell that even at a very early part of the Celtic period Ayrshire was inhabited throughout its length and breadth, and that, in these centuries of warring and of struggle for the good land, many a man must needs have gone down in the hand to hand fray.

In the cairn made famous by Burns at Alloway where hunters found the murdered bairn, there were urns found, and bones; the cairn itself was desecrated and despoiled early last century, and the probability is that it would long ere this have been forgotten had not Tam o' Shanter ridden by it that awesome night of the witches' dance in Alloway's auld haunted kirk. "A

few years" prior to 1837, at a place called The Moat in Ochiltree parish, "an urn was found with calcined bones." The parish of West Kilbride has yielded several tumuli, with urns in them containing calcined human bones and ashes. The urns were of coarse red clay, of very rude manufacture, well proportioned nevertheless and modelled in the vase form. Stevenston parish has been unusually rich in these unknown graves, with their grey and black pottery. Kilbirnie had an interesting tumulus, circular in form, six feet in height, and an hundred feet in diameter, that was explored in 1836, containing "nothing but bones very much decayed," and many of which, on being handled and exposed to the air, crumbled into dust. In 1826 the weavers of Ayr, during a period of depression in trade, were employed in levelling the "sandy knowes" of Wallacetown, and they turned up "a good many urns and ancient similar relics." Stair and Stewarton have in their time also contributed their quota, and other parishes have done likewise. The story that all these tumuli, all these mounds, have to tell is a very interesting one. They are in their own way the records of a period when Ayrshire was on the anvil. They are the proof that the fathers treated their dead with the highest respect, that they valued worth then as much as we do now. And in all probability there were laid to rest beneath the cairns many a man whose name was on every lip, whose deeds were sung by the bards, and of whom the people had many things to say when, probably with axe in hand and with his face to the foe, he went home to his reward.

So far as Ayrshire is concerned there is no reason why we should deal in any detail whatever with the period of the Scots or Scoti, who came by way of Argyllshire from Ireland. The first Prince of the British Scots mentioned in the annals of authentic history was Fergus, son of Erc, who crossed over in 495 or 498. No doubt before his day wandering bands of Scots had reached Ayrshire from the opposite coast of Argyll;

but with his arrival from Ireland on the western seaboard the movement of which he was the head assumed a definite footing. He is said to have been converted to Christianity ere yet he left his native country, by St. Patrick ; and some colour is given to this story by the fact that his great grandson, Conal, was the paramount head of the British Scots, when St. Columba migrated to the Hebrides, and that it was he who gave that famous missionary Iona for a home and for a sanctuary. As the years went on the Scots extended their power. They crossed the English border and fought with the Northumbrians ; they struggled bravely with the more powerful monarchy of the Picts and with the Britons of Cambria ; for a time they appear to have been in subjection to the Northumbrians ; in the ninth century they acquired a predominance in Northern Britain ; and Kenneth Macalpine, the lineal descendant of Fergus, in 843 claimed the Pictish Kingdom as the true heir in the female line, and was acknowledged King of the Picts, as well as of the Scots, that same year. With the union thus consummated the two races coalesced ; under a succession of Sovereigns, unity and comparative tranquility were secured ; under Constantine (904-953), the royal residence was fixed at Scone, the position and the rights of the Christian Church were placed on a recognised legal basis, and an unsuccessful campaign was waged in England. Later still, Lothian and Strathclyde were added to the Scottish dominions, and then the acquisition of Merse and Teviotdale advanced the Kingdom on the eastern border to the Tweed. When Malcolm II. died in 1033, he was succeeded by Duncan. Then came Macbeth, a usurper indeed, but a strong, a vigorous, and a prudent ruler, who gave large gifts to the poor, and made a pilgrimage to Rome ; and after him Malcolm Canmore.

In all the trials, as in all the developments, that were the accompaniments of that period, Ayrshire shared. When the Alcluydensian Kingdom went to war with its neighbours, the shire went with it. The result of warrings

from without and of dissensions within, a large body of the Alcluydensians migrated to Wales, aided the Welsh in a successful campaign against the Saxons, and obtained a tract of country as a reward. Towards the end of the ninth century the Norse Vikings began to find their way round to the estuary of the Clyde, and no doubt they made many a descent on Ayrshire. Its castles and other strengths not seldom afforded the people shelter from these freebooters of the north seas. Hardy Norsemen, equally at home by land and by sea, it was their business in life to fight, to kill, to plunder. The very sight of their war galleys off the coast was sufficient to strike terror into the countryside; for they were remorseless slayers of men and spoilers of substance and of cattle. Amid it all the nation went steadily forward. It was gradually, and as by fire, amalgamating into one hardy race—Scot, and Pict, and Briton, with not infrequent Saxon incomers from the south, and Scandinavians, who, having entered into possession of lands and heritages, discarded the life of the rover and settled in occupation upon shore. The constituents were unimpeachable. There was hardness throughout. The times were trying and testing almost beyond conception, but it is thus that nations are made. "On earth Peace" has never been the motto of the Empire builders. "Albanach! Albanach!" was the slogan of the Scots, and they cried it to ultimate victory.

The chroniclers were so busy telling their tales of battles and of bloodshed that they had little time or inclination to supply any reliable data by which to gauge the advance of the people in material prosperity. We know that the chiefs met in council on the moathills, at Girvan, at Dalmellington, and elsewhere, and dispensed justice. When the Romans invaded the country agriculture was practically unknown. Cæsar distinctly avers that the people subsisted on the spoils of the chase, and that there was no such thing as tillage. It is improbable that the Romans permitted such a state of matters to endure, but it is not until after the

dawning of Christianity that we know for certain that cereal crops were sown, that the ground was tilled, that the harvests were gathered in. According to the Celtic traditions, the Picts began at a very early period—long before the Roman invasion—to put colours in their cloths, and ornamental borders on their garments. Raiment is described of crimson, of blue, of black, of green, of yellow, of grey, striped and speckled, and a hero is spoken of who wore a crimson five-folding tunic with a shirt or cloth of gold, while another chief shone resplendent in “a cloak mottled with the splendour of all the most beautiful colours,” and a blue five-bordered shirt fastened with clasps of white bronze. The art of dyeing, therefore, appears to have been well understood. These are but scant sidelights upon a scene otherwise dark, yet they enable us to see that in some material respects these early fathers were not wholly the barbarians that we take them to have been.

Anything like the systematic attempt to drain the country is an affair of comparatively modern times. As late as the end of the eighteenth century a great part of Ayrshire, comprising most of the low-lying land, was swamp, and the people suffered severely from those fevers and agues that are indigenous to fen land. What must it have been a thousand years ago and more, when the forests were far stretching, when the muirs and mosses were many, when in the hot suns of summer and autumn the mists rose in all directions from the marshes, and when in winter and during the later rainy seasons, chills and colds were the accompaniments of life? Nowhere is growing civilisation more observable among an advancing race than in the civilising of the land itself, the curtailment of the pools of water, the preventing of rivers overflowing their banks, the recovery of the soil to purposes of agriculture, and the general adaptation of the country to the needs of the dwellers in it.

In what may be fairly regarded as the Celtic days—for, Scot, or Pict, or Briton, the people were equally

Celtic—a great deal of the life of the inhabitants of Ayrshire was necessarily spent in the fens; and thus it came about, in all probability, that the crannog builder began his work of raising his dwellings in the waters and out of the waters. At what particular period he was first in evidence it is impossible to say. That he was a Celt does not admit of doubt, and it appears to be an inevitable inference, from the fact that there is good reason for concluding that there were crannogs in Ireland long before there were any in Scotland, that it was the Scots who brought the lake dwelling craft with them. The crannog period is generally assigned to the sixth and on to the tenth centuries; and the discovery of the remains of those interesting dwellings at Lochlea, in Tarbolton parish, at Lochspouts, in the parish of Maybole, and at Kilbirnie loch has opened up a wide field for speculation. There was a science, and no mean science either, in building a crannog. It was no easy task, with the rude tools and implements that the fathers had at their disposal. They had to sink their foundations deep and solid in the ooze and mud at the bottom of the lochs; they had to knit together the uprights that were bolted to the foundations; and they had to erect their structures with careful regard to the life of the tribe or community that were to make their homes in them, and to the disintegrating influences that were always at work for their destruction. There are few directions in which the native Celtic ingenuity shines out more conspicuously than in this.

It is important to notice that the treasures revealed in the careful searches that have been made in the crannog “middens” indicate that the builders were skilled in the use equally of stone, of bone, of horn, of wood, and of iron. At Lochlea the discoveries included stone hammer-stones; an anvil, “just such an instrument,” says Dr. Munro in his “Ancient Scottish Lake Dwellings,” “as a shoemaker of the present day would gladly pick up for hammering leather;” whetstones; a polished celt, bearing evidence of having

been well used; a flint horse shoe-shaped scraper; a large knifeflake of whitish flint; and spindle whorls. Besides these were found querns, the rude handmills used for the grinding of the bere and the barley, and sling-stones. The bone instruments included two chisels, or spatulas, and various small implements used for purposes difficult to determine, one of them at least artificially sharpened, others smoothed along the edges as if for cutting. Deers' horns had similarly been turned to practical account. Among the debris were two hammers or clubs formed from the lower portions of the antlers of stags by cutting or sawing off their branches, portions sharpened at the point like daggers, what were supposed to be spear heads, a hook, a bodkin, and clubs. Among a large assortment of wooden implements were bowls, plates, ladles, a mallet, a hoe, clubs, and pins, together with objects which to all appearance had been used for culinary or for agricultural purposes. The metal objects embraced a gauge, a chisel, two knives, a small punch, a large nail, an awl, two spear heads, five daggers, a large ring, a saw, an iron shears, a three-pronged instrument, a pickaxe, and various bronze articles, including a bridle-bit. In addition to these were objects of leather, beads, a small ring, pottery said to have been of Samian ware, a crucible, portions of armlets made of lignite or jet, lumps of what were taken to be blue and red pigments, large quantities of the horny coverings of insects like beetles, and a shell. The fauna embraced the bones of the ox, the pig, the sheep, the red deer, the roe deer, the horse, and the reindeer; and the flora, brushwood, elm, birch, bark, and hazel nuts, "one gnawed by a squirrel!" The discoveries of Lochspouts were, generally, after the same character, and included beads, broken Samian ware, a double-spiral ornament of bronze wire, a jet ring, a rock crystal, an amber bead, and a jet pendant in the form of a rectangular cross inscribed in a circle, and to all appearance a relic of an early Christian type. Everything was crude, but there were many evidences of considerable ingenuity.



From that apparently somewhat prosaic list one can almost after a fashion reconstitute the life of the Ayrshire lake dweller. The period in whose evolution he shared was stormy, it was an age of wars and of constant rumours of wars, the veritable era when right was might, and when only the strong could hope to win through. Then, as for many a day afterwards, the chief of the clan, the head of the great family or sept, enjoyed a paramountcy which none within the closely racial circle might dispute. To him the clan looked for protection, and it was imperative that he should find it for them. Out in the open, where he has his hunting grounds, in the forest wilds that he claims for his own, is the wherewithal for the home and for the sustenance of life. There is wood for building, there is a lake adapted for the crannog that is to be his stay and shelter in the days of storm and of trouble, the red deer and the roe are afield in the glades, there is rude pasture land for his beeves and grazing for his sheep, and there is meadow land that may after its own fashion be amenable to cultivation. To the lake he takes his handicraftsmen, and they begin to build. The stone axes are plied upon the trees, and the giants of the woodland fall. It involves enormous labour of hatchet and of fire to strip the trunks of their branches, to cut the wood for the foundation to the needed lengths, and to sharpen the ends of the piles so that they shall go down the more easily into the soil. The platform is laid, the uprights follow, an outer circle and an inner, and the intervening space is filled up with stones, with wood, with clay, until it becomes a composite mass hardened and solidified, and ready for the platform on which the crannog proper is to stand. It is no unsightly or mean dwelling that arises above the lake, but an house fit for the habitation of the whole family, a home with its own comforts, strong for defence, hard of access without the consent of its garrison. This is the heart of the tribal life. In the centre is the hearthstone, with its open fire burning upon it. Here, on crude spit, the meat is

roasted. Here the fire stones are heated to boil the water in the wooden goblets. Here, seated on the ground, the crannog women and girls slowly turn the upper stone of the quern on the lower, and grind the grain to make their cakes, and the meal for their porridge. Between the lake dwelling and the shore there stretches a gangway, removable in the event of hostile attack. Under the shelter of the fort the dug-out canoe rocks on the waters. The men pursue the chase in the woodland, with bows and arrows, with long-shafted spears tipped with stone. They fashion to themselves weapons for use in battle, and wherewith they may repel assault upon their strong citadel.

And as all the world over, the women decorate themselves with ornaments, with beads, with armlets, with jet adornments. They tyre their hair with shining gear of metal, they comb their locks with combs constructed at infinite labour, crude to look at but sufficient for their purpose. They enrich their store with Samian wares, they use pigments of red and of blue for their personal adornment, they enhance their charms by many means so that these shall seem the greater in the eyes of their lords and their suitors. It is a primitive community this, and yet it can well be believed that when the stranger, following the winding paths that run through the forest, comes upon the crannog in the evening, outstanding against the sky, with its life, and its evidence of industry, and its sense of strength—a home, a fort, a centre of influence, a triumph of skill—he pauses to admire the completeness of its proportions and recognises how admirably adapted it is for the stormy life of the countryside, and what a sense of security it must afford to those who are privileged to enjoy its shelter.

It is probable that some of these crannogs endured for centuries. They are known to have been in use elsewhere in Scotland well within the authenticated historical period, and the treasures revealed by the careful examination of the middens and among the

ooze at the bottom of the water indicate that, while the builders were not unfamiliar with the tools of the essentially stone age, they were not destitute of iron implements as well. If their range of knowledge was narrow compared with ours, it was at least sufficiently wide for their day and generation ; and they were very far from being the rude barbarians whom we should naturally expect to find emerging from the misty exhalations of the fens.

When Macbeth "died with harness on his back," Malcolm Canmore, in 1058, ascended the throne of Scotland. For centuries England had been a Saxon country, but in 1066 William, Duke of Normandy, came to do battle with the Saxons, slew their King, and became master of England. Two years later the Saxon royal family sought refuge in Scotland, they were received in generous welcome by Malcolm in his tower of the forest of Dunfermline, and the Scottish King wedded the Princess Margaret. Many Saxon nobles similarly crossed over the border into Scotland ; and although the years that followed were characterised by fierce fighting with England, the prevailing tendencies were towards the broadening of civilisation, the passing of just and generous laws, and the spreading in all directions of the Christian faith as urged and interpreted by the Church of Rome. One of Malcolm's sons, King David, was "the sore saint to the Crown." On the ruins of many Culdee establishments he placed settlements of Augustinians, Benedictines, and Cistercians. He promoted the administration of justice, encouraged agriculture, developed trade and commerce, and consolidated Scotland from a loose cluster of provinces into a united and a homogeneous country. He put down crime, violence, and robbery with a firm hand, and, with a view to the maintenance of order and the well-being of civic life, he granted charters to many of the more populous places under which they became royal burghs, endowed with full local dispensation of justice and with extensive trading rights and privileges.

And as the result of his example, and of the religious fervour that sprang from it, the Scottish nobles gave themselves in large numbers to the endowment of the Church, and to the promotion of the movement that ended in the founding of the monasteries.

When Christianity first made its appearance in Ayrshire, and by whom it was originally introduced, none can tell. It was during the period of the Roman occupation in the year 360 that St. Ninian was born of noble parentage on the shores of the Solway Firth. Of studious and ascetic habits, he was moved by the Spirit to make a pilgrimage to Rome. On his way home he visited St. Martin at Tours, and later, when he founded the Candida Casa, or church of Whithorn, he named it after Martin, the news of whose death had just at that time reached him. It is evident that St. Ninian was a Christian ere yet he left Scotland for Rome, and the inference is clear that the tenets of the Man of Galilee had by the middle of the fourth century obtained a footing in this part of the country. As a result of the persecution under the Roman Emperors many Christians were scattered abroad. There was doubtless too a leaven of Christianity among some of the soldiers who took part in the occupation of Scotland, and it is therefore probable that the introduction of the faith dates back to a very early period. It is easy to understand with what suspicion, with what aversion, it was viewed by the Druids. Theirs was largely a religion of morality, of symbols, of works. It was an ancient faith, their sun worship. They had a firm grip on temporal as well as on spiritual power, and it cannot be imagined that they willingly yielded up their supremacy to the simple creed of salvation by faith through the Christ that was brought to Scotland by the outed wanderers for the Cross.

In almost every nation the changing of faiths has been marked by persecution and by martyrdom, and the early Pictish and Scots Christians had doubtless to endure tribulation and suffering like their neighbours.

But, as elsewhere, they endured, and in the end won through. Ninian was specifically the apostle of Galloway, and the bounds of Galloway reached to the Doon. In his cell at Whithorn he trained his missionaries and sent them forth to proclaim the new evangel. They wandered far and near among the tribes, heathen, rude, uncultured, prone to the sacrifices of the Druids, and seeking the light by many a glass darkly. It may have been that as time went on converts were secured even from the established priestly order; but be that as it may, the Christian religion had come to stay. The Scots who had come over from Ireland brought its tenets with them—a fact vouched for by the many place names of the county that can be traced to the Irish saints and holy men who had already become famous for the pioneering work they had accomplished in the good cause.

By degrees Druidism was overcome. Under what circumstances it closed its history can only be conjectured, but all earlier and later experience points strongly to the probability that it fought Christianity in the open as long as it was able to do it, that when it could no longer prevail by might it essayed to do so in secret in the deeper depths of the oaken groves and by the lonely rocking stones, and that gradually it gave place as the minds of men were broadened and purified by the progress of the suns and by the educative missionary zeal of the wandering evangelists and of the saints who settled in their cells at almost every point of the shire. With the migration of Columba to Iona in 563, and the splendid missionary efforts a century later of St. Cuthbert and St. Oswald, Christianity was exalted a living faith common to the whole country, and installed itself an organisation destined to be the paramount influence in moulding the character of Scotland for all time to come.

## CHAPTER II

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### IN THE DAYS OF THE MONASTERIES

We have already seen how largely the Celtic language has influenced the nomenclature of the county. Hardly less remarkably has Christianity given to it of its own in wealth of place names. Kil St. Ninian at Girvan owes its name to the apostle of Whithorn; Kilbirnie got its name from St. Bride; Kilkerran from St. Kieran; Kilmarnock from Ernan of Ruthven in Ireland, transmuted to Mernock or Marnock; Kilmaurs from Maura, a virgin who flourished in the ninth century and who died near the scene where the church was erected to her memory; Kilwinning from St. Finnan—Welsh, St. Winnan—of Clonard; Kirkcudbright-Innertig, at Ballantrae, from St. Cuthbert; Kilhenzie, from St. Kenneth of Aghaloe in Ireland; Kirkoswald, from St. Oswald; St. Quivox is a corruption of Caemhog (pronounced Keevoc), the name of an Irish saint who died at an advanced age about the middle of the seventh century; Colmonell bears witness to another Irishman, St. Colman Eala, an abbot in Westmeath; Balkissock commemorates St. Kessock, who is said to have been martyred at Luss in Dumbartonshire; Kirkbride recalls St. Bride, or St. Bridget of Kildare.

“Our Lady,” the Virgin, had many memorials. In Monkton parish was “Our Lady Kirk of Kyle,” a square building with a chapel in the centre. There is a

Lady Acre on the lands of Crosshill, in Kilwinning; a Lady-yard in Tarbolton; a Lady-land in Kilbirnie. Ayr had its Lady-landis. The Lady Glen in Dailly parish took its name from a chapel dedicated to the Virgin that stood at the foot of the glen. Kirkoswald parish has its Ladybank estate. Prestwick has its Ladyton, while not far off the coast is the Lady Isle. Maybole has its Lady Corse (or Cross), Lady Well, and Ladyland, all connected with the "Auld College." At Chapel-House, in Dunlop, there stood a chapel to the Virgin, and the steps that crossed the burn adjacent were the Lady Steps. In the regality of Crossraguel Abbey in Kirkoswald there was a Lady-Rowis-Meadow, and there is a stream in the same parish called Ladyburn.

Beside the Stinchar, in Colmonell parish, is a place called Hallow Chapel, where once stood a chapel dedicated to All Saints. Chapel Donan, near Girvan, was dedicated to St. Donan of Gigg. Chapel is a farm about two miles from Cumnock, named after a chapel that was dedicated to All Saints. At Chapel House, in Dunlop Parish, were to be seen till about 1830 the ruins of a pre-Reformation place of worship dedicated to the Virgin. The Cross is memorialised in Crosshill, a village and a quoad sacra parish in Carrick; in Crosshill, Easter and Wester; in Kilwinning parish, where we have also Crossholm and Corsehill Muir, a rising ground on which witches used to be burned; in Corsecraig in Stevenston parish; in Portincross, West Kilbride; in Corse, Ballantrae parish; in Crosby, both in Cunningham and in Kyle; in Crosshouse, a village in the parish of Kilmaurs, and Corshouse in Carrick; in Lady Corse, near Maybole, and in St. Mark's Cross, referred to in the charters of Ayr as "on the lands of Brackinhirst between the baronies of Dalrymple and Alloway." Crossraguel Abbey has been connected etymologically with Crux Regalis, or Cross of King Oswald, but a difficulty in the way of accepting this interpretation lies in the fact that in charters Crossraguel

is spelt more than forty-one ways, and that the *Crux Regalis* form does not appear in any of the Abbey Charters till 1547-48, when we find it in a discharge by Abbot Quintin—himself no mean authority, by the way—to the Earl of Cassillis. Corsehill burn separates the parishes of Dunlop and Stewarton.

In Coylton parish is Knock Mirren, the hill of St. Mirren. Sorn has its St. Cuthbert's holm. The parish of Dailly was formerly known as Dalmakeran, or Dalmaelkeran, signifying respectively the Field of St. Kieran, and the Field of the Servant of St. Kieran. As the pre-Reformation Church was dedicated to St. Michael, it would seem as if in course of time the Archangel had supplanted the saint, but a relic of the earlier dedication survives in the name of Kilkerran—the Church of St. Kieran—an estate in the parish. Kirkmichael parish was named after a Kirk dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. About two miles south-west of the village of Barr, on a rising ground above the Stinchar, are the ruins of Kirkdominie, the Church of our Lord. St. Connel is remembered in Connel Burn and Connel Park, New Cumnock, and he was patron of the church of Cumnock. Troon has its St. Meddan's. And the very names of Monkton and of Prestwick are reminiscent of the Church.

It is not to be imagined that all these names, and the many more that might be added, were attached to the churches, or the lands, or the landscape, during the earlier period of Christianity. The Culdee Church, which was superseded by that of Rome, appears to have been a somewhat loose organisation. Its early history, which begins after the period of the Columban missionaries, is shrouded in a good deal of obscurity, and at its best it never appears as an institution to have covered the country. On the one hand, it is said to have been pure; on the other, at least somewhat lax. But Scotland owed much to its individual Culdee ecclesiastics, as it owed much to the monasteries by which they were succeeded, and the network of chapels and shrines and



of priests of various degrees that everywhere radiated from them. Not only were the early ecclesiastics in Ayrshire, as well as elsewhere, the spiritual guides of the people, they were also their instructors in many secular things, arts and agriculture and worldly knowledge. They were centres of light and leading. The priests wandered afield within the radius of their own districts, evangelising as they went. But they never were, these Culdees, the national Church in the sense to which King David I. elevated the Church of Rome, and there does not appear to be any real foundation for the long accepted belief that their policy was after the Presbyterian order, or that they kept their doctrines pure and undefiled to the last, or that they were only suppressed by force and fraud. What they did was to prepare the country for the founding of the Roman establishment, which was a complete system in Scotland from the beginning; and having done their work they were ready for supercession, and disappeared within a century of King David's foundation of the hierarchy of Rome.

How thoroughly organised the Church of Rome was from the beginning may be seen from a glance at the Ayrshire monasteries. Of these the chief was the splendid abbey of Kilwinning, founded for Tyronensian monks in 1140 by Hugh de Morville, a Baron of Norman descent, who came into Scotland during the reign of David I., became Constable of Scotland, and acquired a grant of extensive lands in Cunningham. In their day the de Morvilles were the chief of all the families in North Ayrshire. The Loudoun family were their vassals, so also were the Cunninghames, long a mighty power in North Ayrshire; and the Rosses, one of whom, Steven, obtained from Richard de Morville the lands that he called after himself, Stevenston. Smitten with the fervour that radiated from the throne, and perhaps in gratitude for the valuable gifts that he had received from the Crown—it may even have been as a contingent to the acceptance of these gifts—the Constable of Scotland built and endowed the abbey whose remains,

standing to-day amid their somewhat prosaic surroundings, enkindle regrets for the vandalism that suffered this ancient fane to be destroyed in all its beauty and all its hallowed, clustering associations, and for the decadence in church architecture of the centuries on which our lot to live has fallen. Hugh de Morville endowed in no niggardly fashion, he conceived in no mean or narrow spirit. On the banks of the Garnock the monastery grew under the patient hands of the builders, strong and beautiful; and as one looks to-day upon all that is left of it, he can imagine right easily how it must have gladdened the eye of the traveller coming across the sands and the waving knowes from the south, with the western sun upon its towers and its architectural graces. This was a house built to God, not for the years, but for the centuries; and it might have been intact and serviceable as ever even now, had it not fallen upon days that were evil for its destruction.

St. Winnan, to whom the abbey was dedicated, was, as has been said, an Irishman; he was of the eighth century, and his festival was held on the 21st of January. Tradition ascribes to him the power over disease and over the elements. In the parish of Holywood a fountain sprang up at his intercession, and remained in high repute till the beginning of the sixteenth century. In Kilwinning there is a well called after him, whose waters also had healing virtues. And he could ban the waters as well as bless them; for, when one of his angling friends fished the Garnock without any encouragement in the shape of a decent "rise," he pronounced so practical a malediction that the river forthwith "left its bed and followed another course adverse to nature." To this holy man de Morville founded the abbey "solid and great, all of freestone cut; the church fair and stately after the model of that of Glasgow, with a fair steeple of seven score foot of height, set standing where I myself (*i.e.*, Timothy Pont) did see it." Its revenues were much enhanced by grants

from other members of the de Morville family, and by successive monarchs and noblemen, "for the health of their souls." It owned nearly the whole of the land in Kilwinning parish, as well as rich properties in Dalry, Beith, and Kilmarnock. To it belonged the patronage and the teinds of the following parishes, subject to the burden of stipends for the regular clergy, viz. :— Kilwinning, Irvine, Kilmarnock, Loudoun, Dalry, Ardrossan, Kilbirnie, West Kilbride, Beith, Dunlop, Dreghorn, Stevenston, and Stewarton — all in Cunningham; Dumbarton and Kilmarnock, in Dumbartonshire; South and North Knapdale, in Argyle; Kilmory and Kilbride, in the island of Arran. Its monks, originally brought from Kelso, were called Tyronenses, from Tyron in the diocese of Chartres, where their Order was first settled under St. Bernard. Its fountains, blessed of the patron saint, continued efficacious for healing, and one of them is said to have run blood on the approach of war, and to have specifically done so for eight days and nights in the year 1148. The discovery of a pipe leading from the abbey to the fountain, in 1826, has been interpreted as offering occasion for deducing whence the blood, or its equivalent, came; it ran down, not from the fountain to the abbey, but from the abbey to the fountain. "Through it, therefore," according to the Statistical Account, "blood, or some liquid resembling it, had been caused to flow into the fountain, and thus the credulity of the people was imposed upon by the appearance of a miracle, which served to enhance the fame of the monastery and the power of its priesthood." One of its abbots swore fealty to Edward of England in 1296; another, more patriotic than he, fell with his Sovereign on the fatal day of Flodden.

It is evident that an enormous influence must have been wielded by the abbot of Kilwinning. In his official capacity he was almost the sole landowner of the parish, he had rich heritages in Dalry, in Beith, and in Kilmarnock. A lord of the soil and of the people who

dwelt upon it, he dispensed all the ecclesiastical patronage of North Ayrshire, the spiritual as well as the worldly estate of the inhabitants being subject to him. The keys of heaven in one hand, earthly power and dominion were in the other. He ruled the monastery, and the monks did his bidding near and far—in Arran, in Dumbarton, in Argyll. No mean potentate indeed ! And he had need to be endowed with the wisdom that springeth from the earth, from contact with men of each and every degree, as well as with the knowledge that comes from above.

The abbey of Crossraguel stands by the wayside on the Girvan road between Maybole on the north and the village of Kirkoswald on the south. Never in its brightest and best days was it a fane of the consequence of Kilwinning ; nevertheless, in the day when it stood in its placid comeliness in this rural part of Carrick, it must have presented a restful and attractive appearance to the passing traveller. The original grant for its foundation was given by one Duncan, Earl of Carrick, to whom the whole of the division of the shire had been apportioned by William the Lion. The Earl's intention was to found a monastery for Cluniac monks, an Order founded at Cluny, in Burgundy, in the year 940. The Cluny fathers were a reformed Order of Benedictines, and they so grew and multiplied that by the twelfth century they had nearly two thousand monasteries affiliated with the parent establishment. Among the peculiarities of the monks were two solemn masses every day, a suspension of labour on all private sacred days except outside the hours of divine service, constant silence in the daytime, manual labour accompanied by a steady repetition of the Psalms, discipline of the strictest nature, and the learning of the Psalter by heart. According to a satirist : " When you want to sleep, they wake you ; when you wish to eat, they make you fast. The night is spent in praying in the church, the day in labour. No repose is taken, save in the refectory. And what is to be found there ? Rotten eggs, beans

with their pods on, liquor fit for oxen. For the wine is so poor that one might drink it for a month without intoxication." Without a doubt, these Benedictines were ascetics.

In their interest, then, the Earl of Carrick founded Crossraguel, granting to Paisley Abbey, whence the monks were to come, some of his lands, with the patronage of the churches of Dailly, Straiton, and St. Oswald of Turnberry. The monks of Paisley attempted to evade the conditions of the gift. They enriched themselves with the erection of no more than a cell at Crossraguel. This was not pleasing to the Earl, who made complaint to the Paisley Abbey, with the result that the Bishop of Glasgow, who was called in to arbitrate, ordered forthwith the erection of a monastery which should be free from the Paisley jurisdiction, and presided over by an abbot who should be chosen by the monks. Duncan's gifts were supplemented by his son Nigel, and although the Paisley Abbey attempted again to get Crossraguel under the control of its ecclesiastics, it failed. When Bruce, the father of the great King Robert, came to Turnberry, he extended his powerful protection to the monks, and supplemented their landed possessions with others, and King Robert in his turn remembered it substantially "in view of divine charity, and for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his ancestors and successors," and erected the lands into a free barony, with complete tenure of land and full jurisdiction over the inhabitants. The monks judged in litigious suits, they exacted toll, they enforced the bonds of mutual warranty, and in certain cases they were endowed with the right of capital punishment. These powers were, as a rule, the pertinents of the Crown, and it is a mark of the high esteem in which King Robert held the abbot and monks of what was, in the Carrick sense, his own monastery, that he so fully endowed them. In return they clung manfully to him, and did not even desert him when he and his cause alike were banned by the Pope of Rome.

Upon the life of the monastery and upon the power exercised by its ecclesiastics, the charters published by the Ayrshire and Galloway Archæological Association in 1886, throw many interesting lights. Nearly the whole of Ayrshire south of the Doon owed allegiance to the monks. The regality extended over eight parishes—Girvan, Dailly, Straiton, Ballantrae, Kirkoswald, Maybole, Kirkmichael, Barr. They drew their revenues from lands and other secular sources, and from teinds and other parish emoluments. They owned fertile farms on the banks of the Girvan and the Doon, hill land and muir land among the uplands of Straiton and of Barr. They had cottars who paid a small rent in money for their crofts, and farmers who paid it chiefly in grain. They took toll of bere, of horse corn, of capons, of muir fowl, of salted salmon. They were diligent in developing their coal pits and the resources of the extensive forest by which the monastery was surrounded. And they had mills that were a valuable source of revenue to them, and “brewlands” and “brewhouses” hard by the abbey itself. As landlords, considering the extent of their possessions, the almost royal powers that they exercised within their boundaries, and the spiritual force they wielded, there can hardly have been their equals in all Ayrshire. They were, besides, instant in the development of the fine arts, music and architecture, and in the pursuit of knowledge, philosophy, science, theology, and other literary pursuits. It may perhaps be doubted whether in the end their wealth in land and in properties, and in spiritual as well as in secular influence, was not an occasion of weakness to them. Sooner or later it was bound to beget jealousies, and when in process of time the Reformation drew on, many were they, and they were of many a degree, who thought they had something to gain from the secularising of the ecclesiastical patrimony. But for nigh three centuries the lines of the monks of Crossraguel must have fallen upon pleasant places, for theirs was indeed a goodly heritage.

It appears to be open to reasonable doubt what the exact nature of the monastic establishment at Mauchline, which goes under the name of the Mauchline monastery, was. According to Chalmers, the author of the "Caledonia," it was a cell of the monastery of Melrose, it is included by Spottiswoode among the thirteen monasteries of the Cistercian monks that were in Scotland at the time of the Reformation, Dr. Walcot places it in the list of "Priories" attached to Melrose, and Dugdale asserts that it was a monastery founded by David I. The Chartulary of Melrose never uses the word "monasterium" in referring to it; it speaks of its "terrae," or lands, and its "ecclesia" or Church, and a deed that was formulated from Mauchline is not specified as having been issued "apud monasterium de Mauchline," as similar documents are that emanated from duly recognised monasteries, but simply "apud Mauchline." On the other hand allusion is made to one Richard Biger, "Monk of Mauchline," and it is argued that, if there was one monk, there were also in all probability, other monks as well. However that may have been, it is undeniable that there was at Mauchline at a very early period, a religious establishment of considerable extent, that it had valuable lands attached to it and some church patronage, and that it was a foundation of Cistercian monks, an order of Benedictines formed to carry out the principles of St. Benedict, their original founder, on very strict lines. It has been surmised that the founder of the Mauchline establishment was one of the Stewards. No doubt the Stewards, as time went on, did add to its endowments. Walter, the Son of Alan, granted to the monks of Melrose the lands of Mauchline, and pasture in his forest on the upper reaches of the river Ayr, and extending to the boundaries of Clydesdale; he gave them also a carracute of land to improve in the places most convenient, and also a fishing at the mouth of the river Ayr. Their successive charters were confirmed by William the Lion, by Alexander II., and by Alexander III. The antiquity of the

establishment, and its connection with the Stewards, are therefore absolutely guaranteed.

Comparatively few are the sidelights thrown upon the early story of this institution. Its headquarters were in what is still the village of Mauchline, and they may have been of considerable extent. The tower remains under the name of Mauchline Castle, a precious relic of early Scottish ecclesiastical architecture, but so far as the church and the other outbuildings are concerned, these have long since disappeared. Mauchline was then surrounded by forest ; it was, in fact, part of the great forest of Kyle, and the Cistercians had pasture in it for their flocks and herds. Long stretches of the river Ayr were within their demesne, with many a fertile holm, and they had every opportunity for carrying on the art of agriculture and for instructing the people in the methods best known to them of bringing the soil under cultivation. They had ample jurisdiction over their estates of Mauchline, Kylesmure, and Barmure, and these were formed into a regality, the courts being held at Mauchline. On the Greenock water, in what is now the parish of Muirkirk, they had a chapel ; on St. Cuthbert's holm, in the parish of Sorn, they had another. They had the liberties of buying and selling and taking toll within their own jurisdiction, and there are good *prima facie* grounds for believing that they did well by the district of which they were at once the spiritual and the territorial head. Unfortunately such literature as they possessed disappeared with the Reformation, but the glimpses that we can get of them during their long sojourn in Kyle-Stewart leave, as we have said, the impression that in their day and generation they were an influence for good within their own sphere.

The monastery of Fail, in the parish of Tarbolton, a settlement of Red, or Trinity friars, called also Mathurines from the house of this order in Paris which was dedicated to St. Mathurine, was founded in 1252. By whom cannot now be said. The monks enjoyed the honourable designation of "fratres de redemptione



captivorum," because it was part of their duty to redeem Christian captives from slavery. But, unfortunately for their reputation, their claim to distinction arises mainly from the reference made to them in the sarcastic lines preserved by Ramsay in "The Evergreen," and quoted by Sir Walter Scott in "The Abbot"—

The Friars of Fail drank berry-brown ale,  
The best that e'er was tasted,  
The monks of Melrose made gude kail  
On Fridays, when they fasted.

Another version of the stanza rather amplifies the charge of generous living against the fathers of the Tarbolton monastery—

The Friars of Fail  
Gat never owre hard eggs, or owre thin ale.  
For they made their eggs thin wi' butter  
And their kail thick wi' bread ;  
And the Friars of Fail they made gude kail  
On Fridays when they fasted,  
And they never wanted gear enough,  
So long as their neighbours' lasted.

Like their neighbours in Ayrshire of the early ecclesiastical order, these friars appear to have been well endowed with lands. Their "minister," as he was called, was provincial of the Trinity order in Scotland, and is said, in virtue of that office, to have had a seat in Parliament. It seems as if they had been infested in certain lands, and in the patronage of the Church of Tarbolton in the fourteenth century by John de Graham, Lord of Tarbolton, but that these had been taken from them again because they had been obtained by undue influence. These lands included Coilsfield, "Dernehunche, and Auldtounebrune;" and in order to obtain them the friars had, through "Brother John," their chief, presented Graham with a "White Horse." This was but an incident in their career, however, for they had a long and apparently a flourishing existence, they had their home in what must have been a very handsome monastery on the banks of Lochfail, they

enjoyed lands and rights, privileges and patronage, of their own, they were important as landlords as well as spiritually, and they formed a considerable centre of influence in a part of the country that was sparsely populated.

It was in Ayr, as far back as the thirteenth century a royal burgh and a town of great importance, that the Dominicans or Black Friars first established themselves in Scotland. Before their day the royal burgh had its Church of St. John's, a fane of note with its four main altars in the aisles, its eight chaplains to minister at them, its organ, its choristers, and its band—the same Church in which the Scottish Parliament met in 1315 to declare the succession to the Scottish Crown in Bruce and his heirs for ever. The monastery of the Black Friars stood on the banks of the river in close proximity to that of the Grey Friars, which, however, was not founded till 1472, and which, like its older neighbour, was destroyed at the Reformation. The Dominicans had revenues from the mills and from the town. They were frequently the recipients of royal gifts, they acquired great wealth from the bequests of the burgh and from individuals, they had cruives for the fishing of salmon, theirs were the lands of Dankeith in the parish of Symington, the Wallaces of Craigie were good to them, and the lands and orchards immediately contiguous to their monastery were one of the sights of the town. It is evident that for many a year this foundation must, in its own way, have been highly serviceable to, and equally appreciated by, the community. Founded in 1230, in the reign of Alexander II., the monastery grew in influence as it went. The town was evidently a full participator in the religious life of the period; so much so that, after more than two hundred and thirty years' experience of the Preaching Friars, it itself endowed a similar establishment of Franciscans, or Grey Friars. Necessarily the influence wielded by the Black Friars, as well as later by the Grey, must have been largely local; and when it is remembered that St. John's

Church had at least eight chaplains besides a rector, and that the foundation on the banks of the river is not likely to have had fewer than a score of monks, it will be seen how close the connection was between the royal burgh and the spiritual fathers. The population cannot well at the period have exceeded three thousand, yet here, within the regality, there were at least thirty chaplains or friars—a number materially added to in the fifteenth century—or about one to every hundred of the people. Even at this early period, and with the Reformation three hundred and thirty years off, it is possible to see that the multiplication of ecclesiastics was not without its dangers, and that these were bound in their very nature to become chronic whenever the Church began to get out of touch, or into disfavour, with the people. Just as the great lords were jealous of the monks of Kilwinning and of Crossraguel, and aspired to become possessors of their lands and heritages, so the burghers cast longing eyes upon the estate of the monks within their bounds, and longed to add it to their own. But for the time being, and for long, all went well.

The convent of Dalmulin, founded by Walter, the second Lord High Steward of Scotland in 1229, and occupying a site on the north bank of the river Ayr in St. Quivox, had a brief, and so far as its story has been handed down to us, an uneventful career. It was instituted for monks and nuns of the order of Simpringham—an English foundation somewhat similar to that of St. Augustine—and was dedicated to the Holy Virgin. It was staffed from Lincolnshire, where the Order had its seat, and the monks and nuns found the Ayrshire climate somewhat too trying for them—so much so that, after a few years, they returned to England, and the convent, which was then granted by the founder to the abbots of Paisley, speedily fell into a ruinous condition. During its brief continuance, however, it was endowed with many lands, fishings, mills, and other properties.

The Carmelite convent in Irvine was a creation of the fourteenth century, and therefore it hardly comes

into the category of the religious houses that may be said to have owed their rise to the passing over Scotland of the religious wave set flowing by David I., the *sair sanct* for the Crown. But these did not by any means embrace all the ecclesiastical edifices of Ayrshire in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Ayr, as we have seen, had its Church of St. John, itself no unimportant or inconsiderable establishment; the Church of Dundonald, which was affiliated with Dalmulin convent, was founded in 1229; Galston church was in 1252 granted to the Friars of Fail; Monkton Church, dedicated to St. Cuthbert, was in 1163, along with the church of Prestwick, gifted to the Monastery of Paisley; the "Chapel of Riccarton" was affiliated with Dalmulin, and in 1238 handed over to the monastery of Paisley; St. Quivox, or as it was then called Sanchar, was a rectory in 1212; Symington is believed to date back to the thirteenth century, and belonged to the convent of Fail; Tarbolton was for a short period an appanage also of Fail, but succeeded in maintaining itself a free rectory. In Carrick, Ballantrae church was granted to Crossraguel in the thirteenth century; Colmonell church was gifted to the Bishop of Glasgow in the twelfth century; Dailly church belonged to the monks of Paisley before it was transferred to Crossraguel; Girvan church was at least as old as the early Crossraguel period; Kirkmichael church was granted to the prior and canons of Whithorn by John de Gemilstoun, in the thirteenth century, if not before it; Kirkoswald church was in the original grant of Duncan, Earl of Carrick, to Crossraguel; the church of Maybole goes back to 1193; and the church of Straiton was there in the days of Duncan, the first Earl of Carrick. It was the same with many of the churches in Cunningham. They were there before de Morville founded the stately fane of Kilwinning on the green banks of the Garnock.

It will be seen that as early as the fourteenth century the ecclesiastical life of Ayrshire was very highly organised. In proportion to its population the country

had many more ecclesiastics than it has to-day. Allowing by no means generously for the abbeys and convents, and churches, their number cannot have been much less than three hundred, and probably exceeded that figure considerably. The monastic order was at least as embracing as that of the subsequent Presbyterial. The Church of Rome had a far greater hold than even the Presbyterian Church had on the lives and lands of the people; and, without entering into any disquisition on matters of faith, it is not difficult to understand that there must have been prevailing secular reasons, such as would commend themselves to every interest not of the Church, for the Reformation. Its subsequent weakness had many of its germs in its original strength.

## CHAPTER III

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### THE NORSE VIKINGS AND THE BATTLE OF LARGS

When David I. one May morning in 1153 was, true to his high reputation for personal sanctity, found dead on his knees in the attitude of prayer at Carlisle, he was succeeded by his grandson Malcolm, and he in turn, in 1165, by William the Lion—so named because he substituted for the dragon on the royal standard of Scotland the figure of the lion, which it still bears. William's reign, which, lasting for forty-nine years, terminated in 1214, was mainly occupied with the consolidation of his Kingdom, and towards the accomplishment of that beneficent end, he travelled far and wide within its bounds. Among his royal residences was the castle of Ayr, and it was while he was living there, some time between 1202 and 1207, that he granted to the town its charter as a royal burgh, conferring thereby upon the burgesses all liberties and free customs enjoyed by the inhabitants of his other burghs. This interesting document is still preserved in the archives of the town. Apart from its immediately local interest, it affords an admirable example of King William's anxiety to constitute ruling, and trading, and governing subordinate authorities for the general good.

William the Lion was succeeded by his son Alexander II., who came to the throne at the age of sixteen, and who died when he was fifty-one; and after him by Alexander III., who began to reign, a child of eight, in 1249, and who, fourteen years later, when he was but yet a young man of three and twenty, led the Scottish army that crushed the Norsemen on the shore of Largs.

At that period the western islands were largely tributary to the Norsemen. In their war galleys, the terror of the western seas of Europe, they had sailed round the stormy Cape Wrath, pillaging and conquering as they sailed; and by that might which was then the equivalent of right, they had annexed the Hebrides to the Crown of King Acho. The presence of the Vikings so near the mainland was a constant danger to Scotland. They leagued themselves with England, and with the great feudal lords of Galloway, of Argyll, and of Moray, when these were at war with the central power. The young Scottish King was alive to the peril, and, being from the first a man of action, he mustered a powerful fleet and drove out all the Norse chiefs of the Isles who refused to acknowledge themselves the vassals of Scotland. These carried their complaints to Acho, the King of Norway—Acho the Tamer of the Ravens—Acho in whose veins ran the blood of the Immortals—and he mustered a great fleet in Bergen to be ready against the summer of 1263 to punish the Scots.

The Norwegian story of the great invasion that culminated in the battle of Largs, has been sung for us by Sturla in the Raven's Ode. The tale thus told is rich in its poetic beauty, graphic in its descriptive touches, and reminiscent of the best of the old Norse literature. It is valuable, too, as giving the Viking side of the story of the expedition, whose defeat freed Scotland for ever from these pirates of the nor'land seas. Before, therefore, dealing with it more prosaically, let us look at the great armament and its fate from the point of view of the enemy.

It was in the summer of 1262 that word was brought to the Court of Norway of the disasters that had befallen the Hebridean Kings, or chiefs; how that the fierce Earl of Ross, with Kiarnach, the son of Mac-camel, had ravaged the islands, given men, women, and children to the sword, wrecking homes and despoiling churches; how the Scots had impaled the hapless infants on the points of their long spears, and shaken them down to their very hands; how torture, and fire, and murder had everywhere marked their going; and how the leal subjects of the Scandinavian monarch had been robbed and spoiled. The Norsemen met in Council. They were not the men to accept humiliation from Scots or from any men born of women, and they resolved upon vengeance; and all that winter through the hardy Norsemen were busy with the building of galleys, with the preparing of their munitions, with the mustering and training of men, with arming and getting ready for the fray. And when May day came there lay in the bright sun at Bergen a goodlier fleet than had ever before sailed the northern seas.

How the heart of the singer thrilled as he looked upon the clustering vessels! Goodly among and beyond them all was the noble galley in which King Acho himself sailed; seven and twenty benches it had for the rowers, bright with the shields of the warriors, the sun glinting upon their polished steel; terrible with the fierce heads of the golden dragons. And far and near the eye ranged over the staunch little craft, manned by as hardy a race of sailors as ever faced the open sea, the poops clustered thick with the warriors ready and glad to give account of themselves. Complete was the armament. The omens also were favourable. Was it not told how the last Alexander of Scotland had thought to descend in his might upon the Orkneys, and how he had been warned back from his mission of conquest by a vision of the three saints—St. Olaf in his royal robes, stern of aspect; St. Magnus majestic of mien, St. Columba uncouth and uncomely? He had refused to obey the



vision, and fell death had smitten him and carried him hence. Undeterred by the fate of his father, another Alexander had arisen to carry on the crusade, ill-omened, ill-starred, and was it to be imagined that such as he could prevail ?

So with sails all set and the long sweeps keeping rhythmic time, the Protector of Thrones bore west from the streams of Gotelfa, his wooden coursers breaking to the roaring waters, while the canvas of the keels that rode the surf reflected the beams of the unsullied sun around the umpire of wars. It was midsummer, in the bright month of July, when the Norsemen reached the Orkneys. From the islands the course was set for Caithness, where tribute was exacted, and the tribes were panic-stricken at the mighty power of the great son of the Immortals. Thence the fleet steered for the Sound of Skye, and the lord of Kintyre and Isla swore fealty, and gave generously to the fleet of his wealth of cattle. The chiefs of the Hebrides bowed their heads in subjection to the cleaver of the battered helm. Expeditions were sent forward to the Mull of Kintyre and as far as the Island of Bute, and destruction followed hard in their path. They glutted the swift, sable-clad birds of prey, the foes of Acho dropped, and the surfeited raven from the fields of slaughter winged his flight for the Hebrides. The dwellings of men flamed, fire glowed red in their granaries, and south from the floating pines marched the warrior host.

The Norse King came into the Firth of Clyde, and negotiations were opened with the monarch of Scotland. He would not relinquish his sovereignty over Bute, Arran, and the Cumbræes ; and the while the fleet waited in the hope of wiser counsels obtaining, the Scandinavians drew their light boats across the narrow neck of land that separates Loch Long from Loch Lomond, embarked on Loch Lomond, and wasted the houses on the islands and the mansions upon the shores of the winding bays. By this time the summer was spent and the autumn equinox was drawing on apace. The

winds, begotten of the powers of magic, began to rave and the billows to roar, ten of the warships succumbed to the furious elements in Loch Long, and the main body of the fleet, lying beneath the shelter of the Cumbraes, began to drift towards the shore of Largs. Six anchors had been cast out to windward from the King's own galley, yet still she dragged across the raging waters, but a seventh anchor, the great sheet anchor itself, was dropped into the main; it caught, and held, and the drifting was stayed. But five other galleys were less fortunate. These found resting place on the rocks of the Ayrshire coast; and the black night descended upon a scene of wreck and of battle. For when the galleys stranded, the Scots came down to the water's edge, and rained upon the beleaguered sea kings their spears and darts, and pressed them sore. The gale moderating, Acho sent reinforcements to the help of his warriors. The Scots withdrew from the hard fought field where the breastplates rang, and all night long the Norsemen remained on shore beside their vessels.

The day succeeding, the main battle was joined. Within sight of the stretching coast line lay the great galley of the Norse sea king. Acho himself would fain have joined in the fray, but his warrior counsellors, girt in their armour and their hearts warm for the combat, otherwise advised, and he remained on board his ship, unwilling, and anxious of heart. The Scandinavian host numbered from eight to nine hundred steel clad warriors. The Scots attacked in force, their knights, five hundred strong, riding on horses protected by breastplates and many of them sheathed in tempered armour, wrought in the cunning workshops of Spain; behind them the bowmen, well accoutred, the arrows on the strings of their bending yews, and other bands poising their quivering spears. They came as a whirlwind to drive all before them, and so impetuous was their rush that the Norsemen gave way, and many of them, concluding that the day was already lost, jumped into their boats and made for the fleet. Their comrades bade

them return, but few of them obeyed, and it was a sadly lessened force that remained to carry on the combat ; but these formed themselves into an impenetrable phalanx and wrought mightily in their valour. Among the fiercest of the Scottish Knights was Fergus, clad in costly mail, with helmet of gold and set with precious stones, who rode upon the Norsemen and encountered their bravest leaders, and who, after the courtly fashion of the age, challenged the best of them to single combat ; but stout Andrew Nicolsen smote him so trenchant a blow that the keen blade cut cleanly through chain protection and armour and leg, nor stayed in its descent until it had reached the saddle of his horse ; whereupon Fergus reeled and fell dead, and the Norsemen stripped him of his knightly belt. The cuirasses rang, the Scandinavian heroes prostrated the illustrious warriors of the land, the birds of prey were gluttonously filled with lifeless limbs. And so the battle raged till the sun had westered and was standing, before the down going, over the black crests of the mountains of Arran. “ The champions of Norway’s lord saluted the stout harnessed barons with the rough music of battle. The train of the supporter of thrones, courageous and clad in steel, marched to the din of clashing swords. At the conflict of corselets on the blood red hill, the damask blade hewed the mail of hostile tribes, ere the Scots, nimble as the hound, would leave the field to the followers of our all-conquering King.” And thus, according to Sturla, the sun went down on victory for the Vikings.

The following morning the Norsemen went ashore for their dead and to gather in the spoil of the field, and then they sailed for the westward. Longer they could not wait, for the storms of the growing autumn were coming on, the clouds were dark, and the seas were white with foam. So they bore away, past Arran, past the Mull of Kintyre, round into the waters flecked of the Hebrides. As they went they restored their Hebridean Kinglets and taught the usurpers a lesson, and sailing north, they

landed on the Scottish mainland and took tribute of gear and of cattle. So they came to Kirkwall—ancient Kirkwall, with its cathedral to St. Magnus—and there they halted, for the ocean was boisterous that rolled between them and far-off Bergen, the nights were dark and cold, and winter was hastening down from its home in the further north. There they resolved to remain till the Spring. Acho sickened and dwined. He was well advanced in years, and the anxieties of the campaign, the hard life on board ship, and the loss of so many warriors—albeit their spirits were in the happy abodes of Valhalla—were telling upon him. As the days shortened his health declined, and the time came on when he should die. How could the great sea king prepare himself better for the abodes of the Blessed than in having read to him the chronicles of his fathers, the mighty deeds of the heroic stock whence he had sprung? These were recited in his dying ears, the stirring tales of old renown, until at last, duly prepared, fit and meet to join the noble army of the Vikings in the life beyond, he passed away. Sad of heart, his chiefs bore all that was mortal of him to the cathedral of St. Magnus, where they laid him down in front of the high altar, and all the long winter through they kept watch and solemn ward by his bier. By and by the Spring came, with its longer suns and its brighter skies and its bluer seas, and when the winds were fair and favouring, the Norsemen carried their dead monarch on board that great galley of his that had been the joy of all the beholders, and he sailed on his last voyage. It was a sad homecoming to the loved land of the Norsemen. They crossed the deep, and out from Bergen came Prince Magnus and a retinue of other Vikings, and received the body of the King. His last voyage was done; “and the breakers of tempered metals stood crowding round the grave of the ruler of the nation, while in their swimming eyes appeared no look of joy.”

So far the Raven's Ode, a poetic attempt to gild a story of defeat, a saga for Norse hearts and for Norse

patriotism, a tale of Viking valour and of Viking worth. We need not grudge to Sturla his song when, as the result of the battle of Largs, Scotland was free for ever from the Norsemen. Let us rather go back and in more prosaic words tell again how the battle of Largs was won.

Sooner or later, as Alexander plainly saw, the fight had to be fought. Scotland could not afford to have the Norse power entrenched even in the Hebrides. She had enough to do holding some of the great Highland clans in check, and so long as the sea pirates of the nor'land were by to assist them in their quarrels with the Crown, the hopes of peace and of a united Kingdom must needs be clouded and uncertain. When, therefore, Alexander drove out the petty Kinglets or tributary chiefs who owned subjection to Acho from their seats of power and of influence in the western isles, he must have reckoned with the retaliatory expedition that sailed in all the bravery of its many galleys from the port of Bergen.

The Scottish monarch, however, did not commit the mistake of underrating the courage or the power of the enemy. No wise man who knew the Scandinavians as he did could possibly have done so. And he had recourse to strategy as well as to ample preparation for war. He deliberately played a waiting game. He permitted the expedition to sail the seas unchallenged and to raid the islands and the western Highlands. He did not even attempt seriously to thwart them when they rounded the Mull of Cantyre and their fleet rocked on the waters of the estuary of the Clyde. As they came along with oar and sail through the autumn seas they dropped anchor off the mouth of the river Ayr in order to assault the royal burgh town. The burghers had been on the outlook for them. From the high square tower of the Church of St. John's their watchmen had descried their white canvas as they crossed over from Cantyre, and forthwith the inhabitants who were not in a position to take to the open country, the

sanctuaries of the forest of Kyle and of the high lands beyond, flocked into the castle that stood overlooking the river. The exact site of the fortress is unknown, but it seems from tradition, and from the natural strength of the position, to have stood on the sandhills on the southern bank of the Ayr. It was powerfully built, large and roomy; and within its walls gathered the inhabitants. The Vikings landed their men and made an assault upon the castle, but in vain; and as they could not afford to spend their time on a venture that was doubtful of issue and that could hardly, even if it had succeeded, have materially served their cause, they re-embarked and sailed away for the shelter of the Cumbraes.

As the main body of the Norse fleet lay here, Alexander opened negotiations with Acho. His object was to gain time. He was counting on the autumn equinox and the gales that are frequently attendant on it. Acho claimed Arran, Bute, and the Cumbraes, and these Alexander refused to give him. But he temporised till the fall of the year made the days shorter, the nights longer, the skies more cloudy, and the weather more stormy and uncertain; and he had at length the satisfaction of beholding the seas wrought and tempestuous, the enemy's galleys straining upon their cables, some of their vessels dragging their anchors and drifting from the comparative shelter of the Cumbraes into the open channel of the Clyde's estuary, and some of them taking the ground on the shore of Largs. Here, on the Ayrshire seaboard, the Scots and their King were waiting in force, horsemen and bowmen and spearmen, mailed Knights and men at arms, a comparatively powerful army, disciplined and gallant and patriotically enthused. When the drifting galleys took the ground the Scots descended in force upon them. Night put an end to the opening scene in the eventful struggle, and it was on the succeeding day that the battle was joined. Details of the combat are few and unreliable. According to Buchanan, Acho was overpowered by the superior

numbers of the Scots, "and reduced to the shameful necessity of flying with the greatest precipitation to his ships." The Norwegians, he adds, "left sixteen thousand men on the field of battle, and the Scots five." How complete the rout was may be gathered from those verses from the old ballad of "Hardyknute," which tells the story of the battle :—

In thrawis of death, with wallowit chiek  
 All panting on the plain,  
 The fainting corps of warriors lay,  
 Neir to arysis again.

Neir to return to native land  
 Nae mair wi' blithesome sounds,  
 To boist the glories of the day,  
 And schew their shining wounds.

On Norway's coast the widowit dame  
 May wash the rocks with tears ;  
 May long look over the schiples seis  
 Befoir her mate appears.

Ceise, lady, ceise, to hope in vain,  
 Thy lord lyis in the clay ;  
 The valyant Scots nae reivers thole  
 To carry life away.

The chief scene of the fight is said to have been a plain to the south of the town, immediately below the mansion of Haylee, but the memorials of the conflict are not confined to this spot. In Dalry parish, adjacent to that of Largs, there is a Camphill farm ; on a stream known as the Routdon burn, there are Burleygate and Killingcraig, and still further south there is Keppingburn, where Sir Robert Boyd, one of the ancestors of the Earls of Kilmarnock, is said to have intercepted a body of fleeing Norsemen. There are the remains of a tumulus known as Acho's Tomb, the authenticity of which does not, however, seem to be very satisfactorily assured. At one time there stood a cross at a place known as the "Broomlands," which was supposed to have marked

the spot where the battle waxed hottest. Thus it is referred to in "Hardyknute":—

There on the lea, quhair stands a cross  
Set up for monument;  
Thousands fell fierce that summer day,  
Filled kene waris black intent.

That "summer" day, as we have pointed out, was October 3; obviously more than the orthography of the writer of the ballad was at fault; otherwise the summer season of the thirteenth century in Scotland was much more prolonged, in name if not in reality, than it is now.

Without concerning ourselves unduly as to details, it is enough to know that the hard fought fight of Largs ended in a notable Scottish victory, and ended for ever the Norse influence in Scotland. It confirmed Alexander III. in his sovereignty, as no Scottish sovereign had been before his day, cleared the seas of the pirates whose sails had long been a terror on the Scottish coasts, and opened up for the Kingdom the prospects of a brighter day. Unfortunately the hopes thus engendered were not destined to be soon realised; for in 1285, while as yet Alexander was in the full measure of his usefulness, his horse stumbled and fell with its rider over a cliff; and, as has been said, that one false step of a horse on the brow of the black rock of Kinghorn, changed the course of a nation's history.

Alexander was succeeded by his daughter Margaret, an eight years old child, known to history as the Maid of Norway. The little girl was in Norway when her father died. Edward I. of England was quick to recognise the opportunity thus afforded for the union of the two Kingdoms through the marriage of his son with the Scottish princess. But it was not to be. The Maid of Norway sickened and died while on her way home to be wedded; and as a result Scotland was plunged into that unhappy contest for the Crown which began with the selection of Baliol, that produced untold warrings



and contendings, that brought Sir William Wallace upon the scene, and that culminated in the crowning triumph of Bannockburn and of Robert the Bruce. Many were the dark days that were to ensue. Scotland was to go down into the long and trying valley of decision, and there, through much fiery trial and perseverance, win for her children the glorious privilege of independence.

## CHAPTER IV

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### SIR WILLIAM WALLACE

The competition for the Scottish Crown that followed the untimely death of the Maid of Norway is a matter of national rather than of local history. There were in all twelve competitors. Robert Bruce claimed as a grandson, and John Baliol as a great-grandson, of William the Lion's brother David, Earl of Huntingdon. Bruce was the son of David's second daughter, Baliol the grandson of his eldest daughter. Bruce, therefore, was nearer to the royal stock, Baliol more in the direct line. The question was submitted to Edward I. of England, and he decided in favour of Baliol; then he proceeded to humiliate Baliol with a view to the establishment of his own overlordship in Scotland. Baliol submitted a while, then refused, with the result that Edward marched upon Scotland at the head of a powerful army, defeated the Scots at Dunbar, reduced Scotland to subjection, brought Baliol to his feet, sent him a prisoner to the Tower of London, and placed garrisons in every considerable town and castle in the country. And thus it seemed as if he had achieved the great purpose and ambition of his life. At last, he might have been forgiven for concluding, Scotland was his. Wales he had already subdued; and nothing now remained but to consolidate and establish his hold in Great Britain from John o' Groat's to Land's End, and

reign the first King of a United Kingdom. But, fortunately for Scotland—fortunately also for the ultimate and permanent union of the Kingdom with England—Edward was to fail of his mission. Not yet was the union to be achieved. Before that beneficent end was to be attained, there were to be centuries of turmoil and warring, of devastation and of gallant men by the thousand going down in the conflict. Scots and Englishmen alike were to be tried in the fire, and were to emerge from the furnace, heated more than seven times, purified and hard knit together in an indissoluble bond.

It was when Scotland lay prostrate at the feet of the conqueror that Sir William Wallace appeared upon the scene. Wallace was of Ayrshire descent. The name "le Waleys" signifies "the Welshman." This does not mean, however, that he was of Welsh extraction. Strathclyde was part of ancient Cumbrae, or Wales, as distinguished from Scotland proper, and Wallace's forbears had long been settled in the Scottish westland before the national misfortunes called the hero of his race and of his country to the forefront of the battle. His father, Malcolm Wallace, was the younger son of Adam Wallace, of Riccarton, and he held the lands of Auchinbothie in Ayrshire as well as of Elderslie in the county of Renfrew. His wife, Margaret Craufurd, the mother of the hero, was of the best Ayrshire stock; a daughter of Sir Hugh Craufurd, of Loudoun and Corsbie, scion of an Anglo-Danish family, who, driven into Scotland at the Conquest, became owners, during Edgar's reign, of considerable territory. Wyntoun thus describes his lineage:—

He was cummyn off gentillmen,  
In simpill state set he was then;  
His fadre wes a manly Knycht,  
His modyre wes a lady brycht.

The year of Wallace's birth is uncertain; it was probably, however, about 1270. Blind Harry avers

that he was forty-five at the period of his execution in 1305, but this is inconsistent with what we know of his history otherwise.

It cannot be denied that great uncertainty surrounds the story of Wallace's career. Blind Harry's narrative was not written until about two hundred years after his death; and while he may have derived his information largely from the "fair Latin" of Master Blair, chaplain and companion to Wallace, it is quite evident that he was primarily a Scot writing and reciting for Scots, and that his tale abounds with inaccuracies. He describes himself as a "bural man"—that is, a humble and unlearned person. He obtained support by repeating his poems in the halls of the opulent, and it is not difficult to conceive that he was minded to make the most of the traditions that had clustered about his hero's career, and which, like many other traditions, no doubt gathered as they grew. Before Blind Harry's day, however, John of Fordun had (1371-90) composed his "Scotichronicum," in which ample details are given of the patriot; and these had been substantially supplemented by Andrew of Wyntoun, whose "Cronykil" was completed in 1426. Other details are found in the works of Hemingford and Trivet, two contemporary English historians, in the State papers of the time, in public repositories not only in London, but in Paris, Brussels, Lille, and Ghent, and in the "Scala Chronica" of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton, who wrote in the middle of the fourteenth century, and whose father had fought in their campaigns in Scotland, under both Edward I. and Edward II. The authentic materials cannot be called voluminous; nevertheless, taken in conjunction with the story as told by Blind Harry, far more than enough remains to demonstrate that Wallace was a man of remarkable capacity, of extraordinary courage, of patriotism absolutely unsullied, and every way worthy of the high position which he has held these long centuries in the affection of the Scottish people. He never bowed the knee, he never bent his neck to the yoke. When

others made friends of the mammon of expediency, he remained stern and unbending. While opportunism was the order of the day among the Scottish nobility, and the end was regarded as amply justifying the means—subserviency to-day and broken troth to-morrow—he never subordinated the line of duty to the necessities of the passing hour.

What concerns us is to deal with Wallace, not so much in his relation to Scotland at large, as in his relation to Ayrshire specifically. Like Robert the Bruce, like Robert Burns also, he is a national possession quite as much as an Ayrshire heritage; and while warrant might be ample for the tracing of his footprints as the footprints of one who has shed unequalled lustre on the county of his origin, the scheme and scope of our work compel us rather to confine ourselves in the main to his goings and doings within our own area. These are necessarily taken largely from the pages of Blind Harry, and in some respects are subject to the necessary reservation that must attach itself to the traditions incorporated in the poem of the Homer of Wallace wight.

Wallace was born at Elderslie. With a view to his education he was first placed under the care of the priest of Dunipace, who imbued him with sentiments of patriotic ardour. From Dunipace he went to school at Dundee, and it was while he was residing there that he first came into hostile touch with the English. The English constable of the town, Selby, had a son, who, meeting Wallace one day attired in green and wearing a dagger, demanded that he should give the dagger up. This he refused to do, and in the scuffle that ensued he smote young Selby mortally. The deed begat a necessity for instant flight. Sheltered from his pursuers by the wife of a crofter at Longforgan, near Dundee, he was thence transferred to Kilspindie, in north-west Haddingtonshire, and taken in charge by his mother and uncle. Thence they removed to Dunipace, and from that to Ayrshire, where Wallace was under the

protection of his uncle, Sir Reginald Craufurd, who had rendered homage to Edward, and by whose influence it was hoped to secure for the adventurous youth the King's pardon for the rash act he had committed in Dundee. Wallace, however, refused to curry favour or to win immunity from the consequences of his deed by acknowledging Edward as his Sovereign, and Sir Reginald, becoming afraid of the consequences that might accrue from sheltering one who was an outlaw, was under the necessity of informing him that he could no longer yield him refuge or entertainment. This he followed up by conducting him to Riccarton, where he was placed under the care of his father's brother, Sir Richard Wallace, with whom he resided from February to April, 1297.

Here occurred the first of those individual adventures over which Blind Harry so loves to linger. Fortunately for the latter-day reader, a modernised version of "The Life of that Noble Champion of Scotland, Sir William Wallace, Knight," was issued in 1722 by William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, with the title of "A New Edition of the Life and Heroic Actions of the Renoun'd Sir William Wallace;" and another edition of the translation was printed at Ayr by J. & P. Wilson in 1802, under the somewhat lengthy designation of "The History of the Life and Adventures and Heroic Actions of the renowned Sir William Wallace, General and Governor of Scotland: wherein the old obscure words are rendered more intelligible, and adapted to the Understanding of such as have no leisure to study the meaning and import of such Phrases without the help of a Glossary." Hamilton's work is a somewhat sorry performance. He does not rate it very high himself, for in his dedication to "the high, puissant, and noble Prince James, Duke of Hamilton, Chatelherault, and Brandon," &c., he asks forgiveness for "the low strains" by which he aspires "to make the history of an ancient Hero intelligible to the age he lives in, in order to form their minds to virtue by setting so glorious a model

before their eyes." Forgetting the weakness of the measure in appreciation of the motive, let us as far as possible leave Hamilton to interpret for us some of the incidents with which the career of Wallace was identified in Ayrshire. Thus, then, to begin with, is "How Wallace fish'd in Irvine Water":—

Dreading no harm nor danger from his foes,  
 Wallace a fishing for diversion goes,  
 To try what sport and pastime he might get ;  
 None with him but a boy to bear his net.  
 Lucky he was, fished most successfully,  
 Till the Lord Percy and his Court rode by ;  
 Which did confuse and much perplex his mind  
 Because he had forgot his sword behind.  
 Five of that trooping train in garments green,  
 Mounted on horseback, having Wallace seen,  
 To him advanced, and blustering language gave,  
 Then damn'd and swore, "Zounds, Scot, thy fish we'll have."  
 With modest grace good Wallace did reply,  
 "I'll share the half with you most cheerfully."  
 One of them answered, "That would be too small,"  
 Then lighted down and from the boy took all,  
 Which in his knapsack speedily he puts,  
 The mickle sorrow be in's greedy guts !  
 Then Wallace said, "I'm sure in modesty,  
 You'll leave us some if gentlemen you be.  
 An aged Knight that lives in yonder house,  
 Let him have some—pray be so generous."  
 The clown, he boasting, said not one word more,  
 But this, "The river has enough in store,  
 We serve a lord shall dine on them ere long."  
 Then Wallace, fretting, said "Thou'rt in the wrong."  
 "Whom thou's thou here ? Faith, thou deserv'st a blow,  
 Poor prating Scot, how darest thou talk so ?"  
 Then at him runs, and out his sword does draw,  
 But Wallace poult-staff kept the rogue in awe.  
 That trusty tree, as the poor scoundrel found,  
 Laid him and sword both quickly on the ground.  
 Wallace the sword caught fast into his hand,  
 Which did the saucy fellow soon command.  
 Then a back stroke so cleverly he gave,  
 His neck in two most cleanly there he clave.  
 The other four, alighting from their horse,  
 Do him attack with all their strength and force ;  
 Yet though they him surround on every side  
 With hardy blows he paid them back and side.

Upon the head so fierce he struck at one,  
The shearing sword cut through his collar bone ;  
Another, on the arm, that stood near by  
He struck, till hand and sword on the field did lie.  
Three slew he there, two fled with all their might  
Unto their horse in a confounded fright.  
Lost all their fish, no longer durs't remain,  
And three fat English bucks upon the plain.

The survivors received scant sympathy from Percy, who thought that, if one Scot could thus deal with five Englishmen, the misfortune in their particular case was not worth avenging. When Sir Reginald heard the news, however, he was in a sad plight. He foresaw whither it might lead ; but Wallace at once relieved him of his apprehension by announcing that he would forthwith leave and push his fortunes wherever he could. From Riccarton he went to the house of Auchincruive, a mansion romantically situated on a rocky eminence overlooking the river Ayr, and about three miles distant from the county town. The old house has long since gone ; another has taken its place ; but the scene upon which the patriot looked may still be realised—a scene of a rocky river bed, of the Ayr winding its way by little passes in the broken rocks, or the flood driving its brown waters impetuously over them, the high banks on either side of the stream, the adjacent country rich in foliage, deeply wooded, and all forming a picture pleasant to the eye and much reminiscent. The owner, Aley Wallace, was also, like the Sheriff of Ayr, Sir Reginald Craufurd, one of Edward's "homagers"—that is, he had signed the roll of homage—and he was afraid to shelter Wallace within the walls of his dwelling. But the Laglane wood was hard by, its recesses and its shelters, and there was a cave in the cliffs overhanging the river, and in this wood, and sometimes in this cave, the patriot remained secluded, the while he gathered about him a small band of devoted followers—men like himself, who scorned the Southron's ascendancy and were for a free Scotland. To the wood and the river Burns repaired in his day and explored every foot that he thought might have



conducted to the sanctuary of his hero, and "his heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merit."

From the wood Wallace issued forth at intervals, and performed prodigies of valour. Attended by his groom, he repaired to Ayr, then swarming with English soldiery. Here he encountered a huge English fellow—

Who greatly bragged of his prodigious strength,  
Which cost him dear, as you shall hear at length.  
A greater burden, said this prince of sots,  
He'd bear, than any three good sturdy Scots ;  
And with a staff, like a stage-dancer's pole,  
For one poor groat he would permit and thole  
The strongest man to beat him on the back ;  
So imprudently did the carle crack.  
Which story, when it came to Wallace' ear,  
To smile and laugh he scarce could well forbear.  
He told the fellow that he would be willing,  
For one Scot's blow to give an English shilling.  
The greedy wretch did freely condescend,  
Which quickly brought him to his fatal end ;  
For Wallace hit him such a dreadful thump  
Upon his back close to his great fat rump,  
That to the view of all were present there  
He clave his rig-bane, and he ne'er spake mair.

The death of their countryman brought the English soldiery about Wallace. With the pole he so smote one that forthwith "brains and bones did flee," and with another blow disposed of a second ; then drawing his sword he cut a lane through the Southrons till he reached his horse. Before he mounted he had perforce to rid himself of two troublesome antagonists.

His anger kindled, to such height it grew,  
With one good stroke the foremost there he slew,  
A blow he got upon the other knave,  
Till his good sword down through his body drave.

Having thus slain five Englishmen, he rode away to the recesses of the Langlane wood ; soon, however, to revisit the town and give fresh evidence of his extraordinary prowess. But this time it had been better for him that he had not come at all. Sir Reginald

Craufurd, the Sheriff of Ayr, had sent his servant to the market place to buy some fish. He was returning with his burden when Percy's steward demanded that he should hand over the fish to him ; and when he demurred, the steward began to bully him. Wallace was standing by, and he interposed. In reply the steward struck Wallace with his hunting staff. The familiar result ensued ; Wallace drew his dagger and killed him on the spot. Immediately he was surrounded by the town guard, " fourscore at least, well-harnessed Englishmen." He fairly excelled himself in the art of slaughter. Drawing his sword—

He cleverly unto his feet did get  
And stick'd the foremost fellow that he met,  
Upon the knee another hit he so  
That moment made the bone asunder go,  
Nor can I say the third had better luck,  
Who got his neck in two most cleanly cut.  
Thus Wallace rag'd and ramped lion-like,  
And made the carles strangely fidge and fyke.  
No wonder, for they got most grievous wounds,  
So desp'rately he clawed their Southron crowns ;  
And though the gate with sword and spears they keep,  
He hew'd them down like heartless, silly sheep.

But in spite of all his valour, the hero was at last overcome and carried off to prison, where he was forced to subsist on a diet of herrings and water, and " the refuse of everything was good." The result was that he pined away, closed his eyes, and fainted. Thinking him dead, the English threw him over the castle wall, where he was found by his old nurse, and conveyed to her house. Here, much to her surprise, he came to, and in process of time recovered and left Ayr secretly. On his way thence he was beset by three Englishmen ; the neck of the first he cut in two, the second went down to a stroke on his crown, and the third collapsed to a blow on the ribs. Having thus disposed of his assailants, he rode on to Riccarton, where he received a cordial welcome from Sir Reginald Craufurd and his sons, and from Sir Robert Boyd, " that worthy was, and wight."

In all this there is a great deal that is apocryphal. It may well be believed that Wallace was, single-handed, more than a match for any man of his time, but it does not follow that he should have hewed the Southrons down "like silly sheep" in this desperately wholesale fashion. In Laglane wood, and no doubt judiciously visiting his friends in Ayrshire who were true to the national cause, the patriot gathered together a number of followers, and became powerful enough to repulse parties of English troops that issued from the castle of Ayr. The chief supplies of the garrison were obtained from Carlisle, and Wallace, learning that a convoy was on its way thence with stores, he assembled his men on Mauchline Muir, and marched to Loudoun Hill—a locality that had been visited by the Romans in the day, and that was destined to become one of the landmarks in Scotland's later struggles for civil and religious liberty—where he intercepted the convoy, routed the victuallers, and seized their supplies. The result was not only a material gain to the Scots; it brought also numerous supporters to the national cause and to its leader.

From Ayrshire Wallace passed into Lanarkshire. Before doing so, however, he paid another visit to Ayr in disguise, and, according to the Minstrel, again distinguished himself in the accustomed fashion. In the gate of the town he encountered an English fencer, or buckler player, who challenged him to combat. Wallace accepted the invitation, and at the first blow clave his antagonist from the crown of his head to the shoulder. A tumult ensued. Eight score of Southrons fell upon the hero and the fifteen men by whom he was accompanied. Through the helmet of the foremost he "scattered all his pow;" a second he struck upon the breast so that the good sword went clean through him; and "many a feckful chiel that day was slain." In the end the Scots cleared a bloody path to their horses, and hied them away to the sanctuary of the Laglane wood. Thence penetrating into Lanarkshire, Wallace took

refuge in the forest of Clydesdale ; and it was while he was in hiding here that there occurred that conflict in Lanark town that has been described as his first great stroke on behalf of his country. This affair is set forth by Wyntoun, and garnished by Blind Harry. Hard beset on the street by the English, Wallace and his men, by the aid of a gentlewoman who admitted them to her demesne, succeeded in escaping to the Cartland Crags. For her kindness the gentlewoman was slain by the English, and in revenge Wallace and his men returned to Lanark, slew Hesilrig, the English Sheriff, and his son, and so stimulated the patriotism of the Lanark burghers that they slaughtered the Southron troops and terminated the Edwardian rule in the town. From the Clydesdale forest Wallace and his men marched to Dumbarton and entered into possession of the castle, and then assailed Roseneath castle, which also capitulated to his valour. On his way thence to Stirling he captured the peel of Gargunnoch, then spent a few days in hunting in the forest of Kincardine, marched upon Scone and broke up the Court of the English Justiciary, and reduced Kinclaven castle and set it on fire.

At this time Robert the Bruce, the Earl of Carrick, was a homager of the English monarch, and, acting for Edward, he made an attack on the territories of Sir William Douglas, who had, with true Douglas ardour, espoused the national cause, and, scattering his followers, threw his wife and children into prison. Edward was loath to believe that the Scots' insurrection had attained to serious dimensions, and he thought it sufficient to despatch the Bishop of Durham to the scene of revolt with a force comprising no more than an hundred and twenty cavalry. The bishop, a powerful adherent of the church militant, proceeded to Glasgow, and secured possession of its episcopal palace. Wallace heard the news when he was besieging the new castle of Ayr, and, at once raising the siege, he marched upon Glasgow at the head of two columns. Reaching the city by a forced night march, he placed one column under the command

of his uncle, the laird of Auchinleck, the other under that of a valiant lieutenant, Sir Robert Boyd. A violent conflict followed at a spot long after known as "the bell o' the brae," the Scots achieving a decided victory. Escaping, the Bishop of Durham hastened south to tell Edward of the formidable dimensions of the insurrection, and Edward issued instructions to Percy, the Governor of Ayr, charging him to suppress all national gatherings, and to arrest those who took part in them. He instructed Bruce also to raise a thousand men in Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick, and to be instant in quelling the revolt. And, resolved to leave nothing to chance, he commanded Sir Robert Clifford to lead an army into Scotland comprising three thousand foot soldiers and three hundred cavalry. On his way through Annandale Clifford was subjected to a fierce night attack, which compelled him to set on fire a portion of his tents so that he might discover the movements of his aggressors. Striking his camp, he marched hastily to Ayr.

It is evident that by this time the patriotic movement was on the fair way to attaining almost national dimensions. It had the support of such men as Wishart, the Bishop of Glasgow, Sir William Douglas, and Sir Richard de Lundin; and the Earl of Carrick, having broken faith with Edward, had allied his fortunes with those of the insurgents. But it is equally clear that there was serious dissension in the Scottish camp. It is impossible to believe that Bruce was running the desperate risks involved with any desire to restore Baliol to the throne; the probability rather is that the great lord of Carrick and of Annandale was fighting for his own hand. This may have been the cause of the weakening of the Scottish councils at this critical period in the nation's struggle for freedom. Whatever it was, it ended in a temporary collapse. The Scots were encamped at Irvine, and there the English sought them. In place of cementing their differences, the Scots leaders took to quarrelling among themselves, and Sir Richard de Lundin was so disgusted that, declaring he could no

longer side with men who could not harmonise with one another, he led his men into the English camp. The capitulation of the Scots followed. Bruce, the Steward and his brother, Douglas, and Lindsay, craved the pardon of Edward, and set their seals to a confession that they had risen in arms against the King of England, and "committed arsons, homicides, and various robberies." "We therefore," proceeded this remarkable document, "make submission to the will of our lord the King aforesaid, to make whatever amends as may be his pleasure for these homicides, arsons, and robberies." It does not appear that Wallace was present at the capitulation of Irvine, but it is certain that he did not join in it. On the contrary, scorning to yield, he withdrew with all who would follow him into the forest of Selkirk. Douglas repented of his submission, and being, according to the Constable of Berwick, who had taken him prisoner, "very savage and very abusive," he was conveyed a prisoner to the Tower of London, where he died sometime before January, 1299.

To about this period—it is, unfortunately, impossible to be more specific—belongs the tragic story of the burning of the barns of Ayr. Attempts have been made to relegate this incident to the region of mythology; but while one may reasonably be somewhat sceptical as to many of the details furnished by Blind Harry, there can be little doubt of the truth of the incident itself. It was evidently, from the days of Wallace down to those of the Minstrel, the accepted story of the countryside. The tale, like many another tale of the same description, modern as well as ancient, may have grown in the telling, but it is inconceivable that the whole thing should be a deliberately devised concoction, without any foundation. According to local tradition, the barns of Ayr, in which part of the English forces were quartered—and it is clear from accepted history that Ayr was very strongly held by the English—were situated not far from the banks of the river, and on the ground now occupied by the Moravian church; and it is interesting to note the

fact that when the ground was being dug in the end of the eighteenth century for the foundations of the church, the workmen found great quantities of human bones. It is well known, and it can be incontestably demonstrated without going beyond the bounds of Ayr, that the sand prevents the bones of those who have been committed to its tender keeping, from going to decay, and it is at least worthy of record that this collection of all that remained of some of those who had borne their part in the life of the town long ago, was found at the very spot associated with the burning of the barns, and the slaughter of the English soldiery. While, therefore, there must be considerable reservation in matters of detail, we accept the fact of the conflagration with its fatal consequences to the Southrons, and leave it to the blind Minstrel, through the medium of his translator into comparatively modern verse, to tell the story.

There was a Court of Justiciary appointed to be held at Ayr at midsummer, and to it were summoned the Ayrshire barons who had identified themselves with the national cause. The intention of the English was to strike a decisive blow at the friends of Wallace within the county. The Court of Justiciary was to be no Court in the ordinary meaning of the word, but a place of execution. The leaders of the movement, and particularly Wallace, were to be summarily dealt with, and thus the insurrection in the westland nipped in the bud. When Wallace, on his way to Ayr with Sir Reginald Craufurd, the Sheriff of the town, reached Kingcase, at Prestwick, he asked his uncle "where was the English charter of the peace," or safe conduct. At Crosbie, said Sir Reginald, and bade Wallace go and get it. Wallace, fortunately for himself, acted on the instruction, and the Sheriff and his friends, relying upon the spirit of the safe conduct, even if they had not the precious document itself in their hands, rode on to the county town. Dreading no wrong, they repaired to the barns, whither they had been summoned; and with this dreadful result:—

Sir Rannald first, that ancient Knight comes in,  
 And then the bloody murder does begin.  
 A running cord they slipped o'er his head  
 Then to the baulk they hauled him up dead.  
 Sir Bryce the Blair after Sir Rannald passed  
 The cruel dogs to death him hastened fast,  
 No sooner enters than he's in the snare,  
 And on the bloody baulk was fastened there.  
 A gallant knight, Sir Neil Montgomery,  
 Was hanged next, which pity 'twas to see.  
 Great numbers more of landed men about  
 Went in, but none alive at all came out.  
 The Wallaces and Craufurds, stout like steel,  
 Great cruelty from barbarous Southron feel.  
 The Kennedys of Carrick slew they also,  
 And the kind Campbells that were never false,  
 Nor did rebel against the righteous crown,  
 For which the Southron hanged and hew'd them down ;  
 The Barclays, Boyds, and Stewards of good kin,  
 No Scot escaped that time that entered in.

Such, according to the Minstrel, was the Southron hour  
 and power of darkness. The revenge was in keeping.  
 Wallace was intercepted by a woman as he was hastening  
 towards Ayr, who told him the sorry story. Riding to  
 the Laglane Wood, he gathered his men about him, and  
 they marched to the scene of the massacre. The English  
 soldiery, having satiated their lust for blood upon their  
 foes, had followed it up by wine and wassail, and were  
 not in a condition to realise the need for maintaining  
 watch and ward ; besides, they were four thousand  
 strong, and what need was there for sentry ? Wallace  
 placed his men quietly around the barns, and then  
 applied the torch.

With that the fiery flames ascend aloft,  
 To sleeping folk such wak'ning was not soft.  
 The sight without was terrible to see,  
 Then guess what cruel pain within might be ;  
 Which to the bloody monsters there befel,  
 Next to the torments, I may say, of hell.  
 The buildings great were all burned down that night,  
 None there escaped, squire, lord, or knight,  
 When great, huge roof-trees fell down them among,  
 O such a sad and melancholy song !



Some naked burned to ashes all away,  
 Some never rose, but smother'd where they lay.  
 Others attempting to get to the air,  
 With fire and sword were burnt and choked there.  
 Their nauseous smell none present could abide,  
 A just reward, for murder will not hide.  
 Some sought the door, endeavouring out to get,  
 But Scotsmen them so wisely did beset,  
 Out of the burning flames who ever got  
 Immediately was cut down on the spot ;  
 Or driven back with fury in the fire,  
 Such wages got these hangmen for their hire.

Thus the barns of Ayr burned weel. But the events of that night of terror did not end there ; for the prior of Ayr, Drumlaw, and his seven brethren, armed themselves and went round to the various houses in which English soldiery were lodged, and either slew them on the spot or drove them into the Friars' well.

Thus slain and drowned were all that lodged there,  
 Men call it since, The Friar's Blessing of Ayr.

After the capitulation of Irvine in 1297, in which Wallace bore no part, the patriot proceeded northward. He recovered the castle of Forfar from the English, reduced that of Brechin, and besieged the stronghold of Dunottar in Kincardine. In Aberdeen he had a successful encounter with the English, and then marched to Dundee ; and he was engaged in storming its castle when word was brought to him that the Earl of Surrey, at the head of a powerful army, was advancing towards Stirling. Raising the siege of the castle of Dundee, he hastened to meet him, and encamped his troops at the Abbey Craig. The battle of Stirling Bridge followed. The Scots remained quiescent until about five thousand of the enemy had crossed the narrow bridge, then by a swift movement closed the narrow way. From that moment victory was assured. The Scots fell fiercely upon those who had reached the hither side of the Forth, and when they had dealt with these in drastic fashion, they crossed the river by a ford and completed the rout. Then fell in succession into their hands the

castles of Dundee, Dunbar, and Roxburgh, and the town of Berwick. Wallace was everywhere recognised as the national champion. He overran Northumberland and Cumberland, as far as Newcastle and Carlisle. These operations occupied his energies till the close of 1297. By the middle of February the following year he withdrew again across the Border, and Surrey was again at Roxburgh. It was about this time that Wallace assumed the title of Governor of Scotland for King John.

By midsummer Edward had advanced into Scotland by way of Berwick, and in July, at the decisive battle of Falkirk, the hopes of the Scots were crushed by defeat. There appears to be considerable doubt as to what Bruce was about all this time. His name is not mentioned in the Falkirk Roll as among those who fought for Edward, but both Wyntoun and Fordoun affirm his presence, and refer to his prowess on the field. "It is commonly reported," says Fordoun, "that Robert of Bruce, who was afterwards King of Scotland, but then fought on the side of the King of England, was the means of bringing about this victory, for, while the Scots stood invincible in their ranks, and could not be broken by either force or stratagem, this Robert the Bruce went with one line under Anthony of Bek, by a long road round a hill, and attacked the Scots in the rear; and thus those who had stood invincible and impenetrable in front were craftily overcome in the rear." There are different versions, at the instance of the English historians, of an incident that is said to have occurred at Edward's headquarters after the battle. According to one story, as Bruce was seated at dinner, Edward looked at his blood-stained hands and remarked, "See how that Scot eats his own blood!" According to another, Bruce took the opportunity of reminding Edward of his promise to make him King, and received the haughty rejoinder, "Do you think I have no more to do than to conquer Kingdoms for you?" But, in spite of these very definite assertions and stories, and of the fact, which cannot be gainsaid, that the Earl of Carrick's

policy was, at that period, of a vacillating character, it is not even certain that Bruce was at Falkirk. If he was, his subsequent action is inexplicable, for when he left the English camp and retired to his castle in Carrick, he was followed by Wallace, with whom he joined in an attack upon the castle of Ayr. Edward repaired thither to find the castle a ruin, and after a brief stay, which lasted for five days, according to one authority, and for fifteen, according to another, he marched the main body of his troops into England, satisfied that he had practically asserted his supremacy over Scotland.

We need not trace the course of the national history, or the wanderings and deeds of the Scottish patriot, from the period of the rout of Falkirk to the death of Wallace at West Smithfield by the hands of the English executioner. Comparatively little of the story, either of the land or of the man, was evolved in Ayrshire. We get glimpses, nevertheless, of the county's share in the evolution, and of the most devious way that was still being taken in his own interest by Robert the Bruce. Edward came north again, and many were the sore experiences that eventuated. The castles of Ayr, Turnberry, and Lochryan were held by English troops. In October, 1301, the Constable of Ayr was Sir Montesin de Noillun. Sir Montesin's office was by no means a sinecure. He had to endure an assault at the hands of four hundred armed Scots, and these, having delivered their attack, had passed on into Carrick to besiege Turnberry, and had apparently maintained their investment until the succeeding February, when they were compelled to retreat by the advance of a relieving force of Southrons. The English experienced some difficulty in forwarding supplies to their garrisons, but both Ayr and Turnberry had wheat, malt, great and small fish, and red wine sent to them. Prior to April, 1302, Bruce is named as having come with some of his Carrick tenants to the King's peace, and he so ingratiated himself with the English King that Edward granted "to the tenants of his liege Robert de Brus, Earl of

Carrick, those lands in Cumberland lately escheated for rebellion." The year following, when Edward was prosecuting the siege of the castle of Stirling, he obviously regarded Bruce as one of his tried and trusted friends. He had summoned him to repair to Roxburgh with a thousand men. He had accepted, on the precept of Sir Aymer de Valence, a supply of grain in advance of his "wages." And in December of that year he is described as "Sheriff of Lanark." "The cloak is well made," Edward said to him, and counselled him also "to make the hood," meaning that having begun well for the English cause he should go forward in its prosecution. And he supplied an engine of war for the siege of Stirling castle. How amply Bruce atoned for his vacillation we shall see in the following chapter. Up till now he had been in a strait betwixt two, and had tried, with the familiar result, to serve two masters. He had yet to go deep down into the Valley of Humiliation before he could climb the heights on the further side.

In the summer of 1305 Sir William Wallace fell into the hands of the English. In connection with this event the name of Sir John de Menteith has been covered with infamy. Sir John was at the time Governor of the castle of Dumbarton. The immediate facts of the treachery are involved in some mystery, but there is reason to believe that Menteith was acting in conjunction with one Rawe Rae (Ralf Ray), in whose house in Glasgow Wallace was taken. For his share in the transaction this man received a reward of forty marks, and Menteith was rewarded with a sum equal to £151. Attempts have been made to whitewash the character of Menteith, and to purge it from the indelible stain that attaches to it, but his acceptance of the blood money speaks for itself. At the same time it must be borne in mind that Scotland, at the date of Wallace's apprehension, lay prostrate at the feet of England, that many of the best of her sons, and who afterwards were to earn undying renown as soldiers in the war of independence, were in the English service, and that the Governor of Dumbarton castle may

have thought that his act would eventually conduce to the peace of the country. But whatever may have been his motives, Scotland never forgot the act itself, and never forgave it.

Wallace was put upon his trial in the great hall of Westminster. Charged as a traitor to the King, he replied that he had never sworn fealty to the King of England, and that therefore he could not be a traitor to him. The sentence that followed was a foregone conclusion. It was adjudged, according to the record of the period—

“ That the foresaid William, for his manifest sedition, plotting the King’s death, perpetrating annulment of his Crown and dignity, and bearing banner against his liege lord, should be led from the Palace of Westminster to the Tower of London, and from the Tower to Allegate, and so through the middle of the city to Elmes, and be there hanged and afterwards drawn, for the robberies, and homicides, and felonies which he had committed in the realm of England and country of Scotland; And because he was an outlaw and had not been restored to the King’s peace, that he should be beheaded; and thereafter, for the vast injury he did to God and Holy Church in burning churches, vessels, and biers, wherein the bodies of the saints and relics of them were placed, the heart, liver, and lungs, and all the inner parts of the said William, whereout of such perverse imaginations preceded, should be cast into a fire and burned; and also, because he had done the foresaid sedition, depredations, fire-raising and homicides, and felonies, not only to the said King, but to the whole people of England and Scotland, the body of the said William should be cut and divided into four quarters, and the head set on the Bridge of London, in sight of those passing both by land and water; and one quarter suspended on the gibbet at Newcastle-on-Tyne, another quarter at Berwick, a third quarter at Stirling, and a fourth quarter at St. Johnstoun, for the dread and chastisement of all that pass by and behold them.”

All of which was pronounced for doom, and so befel.  
Thus was stemmed

the patriotic tide  
That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart ;  
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,  
Or nobly die, the second glorious part.

No need remains to pronounce any panegyric upon Sir William Wallace. That has been done by countless pens and by lips whose name is Legion. We subjoin only the lines of Wordsworth, not more chastely expressed than they are literally true :—

Wallace fought for Scotland ; left the name  
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,  
All over his dear country ; left the deeds  
Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,  
To people the steep rocks and river banks,  
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul  
Of independence and stern liberty.

## CHAPTER V

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### ROBERT THE BRUCE

Among the many historic ruins of Ayrshire—the castles and peels of early days—none is of greater historic interest than that of Turnberry, once the home of Robert the Bruce. Seated on its rock overlooking the sea, in the Carrick parish of Kirkoswald, scarcely more than enough of it remains to tell what a powerful keep it must have been in the days of its beauty and its excellency. The castles of a later period, the peels of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, were of the order represented to-day by Cassillis, by Baltersan, and by all that is left of Greenan. The long wars with England that followed on the triumphs of the great lord of Carrick so impoverished the country that the nobles had not the wherewithal to reproduce the strongholds, like Dundonald and Dunure, and like Turnberry, that had been erected when as yet Scotland was a country relatively of considerable wealth. They had to think of how to defend themselves, not only against the possible attacks of the common foe, but in those disastrous conflicts which they waged with one another, and which were largely the result of the disordered state of society begotten by the national perils from without and the consequent weakening of the authority of the Crown; and so they built themselves the peels, or keeps, the lofty towers that were least susceptible to attack and most easily defended. That Turnberry, in the heyday of its

might and its prosperity, was a castle of great strength, and generous in its proportions, is beyond any doubt. The part it played in the troublous times when Bruce was its lord, so demonstrates, and all that is left of it verifies the conclusion.

The Bruces were originally a Norman family. Among the barons and knights who followed the standard of William, Duke of Normandy, in his conquest of England in 1066, Robert de Brus appears to have been a distinguished character; so much so that he was rewarded with the gift of no fewer than forty-three manors in the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire, and fifty-one in the North Riding. His son, Robert, resided at the Court of Henry I. of England when David, afterwards King of Scots, was also in residence; and, as the result of the intimacy that sprang up between the two young men, King David made him a grant of the lands of Annandale, in Dumfriesshire. Then came a third Robert, and a fourth, and after him a William, who in turn gave place to the fifth Robert, who married Isobel, second daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon, the younger brother of William the Lion. It was this union that brought the royal blood into the family of the lord of Annandale, and that constituted the sixth Robert Bruce one of the competitors with Baliol for the Scottish Crown, which was afterwards won by his illustrious grandson. Robert, the seventh of the name, succeeded to his power and to his claims; and with him begins the close association of the Bruce family with Carrick.

The connection was most romantically begun. The lady of Turnberry of the period—probably the year was 1273—was Marjorie, the only child of Niel, the second Earl of Carrick, upon whose death, in 1256, she had, while yet a young girl, succeeded to the Earldom. About ten years later she married Adam de Kilconquhar, who, in her right, and after the Scottish custom, became Earl of Carrick. This Earl joined in the crusade against the Saracens of 1268, and died at Acon in Palestine, in



1270, without issue. Possibly in memory of her lord, she greatly augmented the endowment granted to Crossraguel Abbey by her grandfather, Duncan, the first Earl. But she was not a widow content to accept the slings and taunts of cruel fate without striving after some of the compensations of this life. And one day, when engaged in hunting with her attendant squires and ladies, she encountered the lord of Annandale as he was pursuing his way through Carrick. Bruce was at the time twenty-eight years of age. He is said to have accompanied Louis, King of France, on his last expedition to the East against the Infidels; and he certainly followed the banners of Edward in 1269 into Palestine, and was ever afterwards highly regarded by that Prince. The young Countess, struck by the noble mien of the lord of Annandale, sent a messenger after him to invite him to Turnberry; but knowing who she was, and that she was a ward of the King, and that the Sovereign would resent any interference with her in the most remote degree, he politely declined. The Countess was not thus to be baffled, however, and, with some show of force, she had him brought to Turnberry, where she so pleasantly entertained him that, casting responsibility towards the Crown to the winds, he married her after a courtship that lasted no more than a few days. The King was angry, and seized her castle and estates, but the lady offered substantial atonement for her feudal delinquency by the payment of a fine, and the union thus hurriedly entered upon was matrimonially followed by the happiest results. Bruce succeeded, in right of his wife, to the Earldom of Carrick, and, as the years passed on, no fewer than twelve children, five sons and seven daughters, were born to the lord and lady of Turnberry. Of these, the eldest son, but not the first born child, was the eighth Robert of the Annandale family; the second son, Edward, afterwards made Earl of Carrick and Lord of Galloway by his brother, fell in the battle of Dundalk, in Ireland, in 1318; the third and fourth, Thomas and Alexander, were taken prisoners

in Galloway in 1307, and were put to death at Carlisle by order of Edward I. ; and the fifth, Nigel, or Niel, was captured at Kildrummy Castle in 1306, and executed similarly on the command of the English monarch. Of the seven daughters one, Mary, was seized at Tain by the Earl of Ross, delivered over to the English, and confined by the order of the King in a cage in the Castle of Roxburgh; and a second, Christian, was a prisoner in England from 1306 till 1314, when she was exchanged for some English prisoners; and her husband, Sir Christopher Seton, was put to death at Dumfries by the command of Edward I. In the face of such a record as that, it is no wonder if Robert the Bruce hated the English monarch and the English tyranny.

As yet, however, at the time with which we are dealing, the future King of Scotland was but a boy. The Turnberry domestic circle was unbroken, and it requires no great stretch of imagination to picture the happy family of boys and girls playing on the green fields to landward of the keep, and upon the yellow sands that stretch to either side of the cliffs from which the fortress strength looked out to the rock of Ailsa, to the Mull of Kintyre, to the long chain of the Arran hills, and to the sea boundless on the western horizon. It is, perhaps, somewhat of a moot point where Robert the Bruce was born. There is no record of the place of his birth. The day we know—the 11th of July—and the year we know—1274—but the historian has not thought it worth his while to say whether the event took place at Turnberry, or at Lochmaben Castle, the ancestral home of the lord of Annandale. There can be no absolute certainty on the point, but there is, at least, a *prima facie* case for concluding that the birth took place at Turnberry. In becoming Earl of Carrick, Bruce assumed a higher title than he had enjoyed before his marriage, and, in that sense, Turnberry may be said to have become his headquarters. The character of the mother too must be taken into account. It is evident that she must have been a woman of strong and forceful

will. It was she who courted the Annandale lord; at all events, she openly took the initiative. She carried him home with her; it was not, as is customary, he who took his young wife to his ancestral halls. It is beyond any doubt that the English, at a later period, regarded Turnberry so much of a Bruce strength as to think it worthy of being occupied by a strong garrison. And the records of Crossraguel Abbey demonstrate that the Countess had a strong affection for her native district of Carrick. Beyond these considerations, it must be remembered that Edward of England was at the time promoting his claims to the overlordship of Scotland, with the eventual intent of adding it to his English domains, that Lochmaben Castle was of easier access to his forces than the somewhat remote castle on the Carrick seaboard, and that the Bruces must have felt greater security in Turnberry than they could possibly have done in Annandale. If therefore it cannot be assumed positively that Robert the Bruce was born at Turnberry, the inferences point directly towards that conclusion; and the fact cannot be ignored that when Bruce embarked on his final struggle for the Kingship of Scotland, his first resounding and effective blow was struck hard by the gateway of Turnberry. Does not this demonstrate that his old home lay very near to his heart, and that he had every good cause for believing that the friends of his youth could be depended upon to stand by him in the great work to which he had put his hand?

With the earlier years of the life of Robert the Bruce—and here we must put all the other Roberts behind us, and centre on the one great Robert who wrested the sovereignty of Scotland from the English monarch on the field of Bannockburn—we need not deal, neither with his opening attempts towards the realisation of his ambitions. He had a hard task to perform. In his youth, there is reason to believe, he resided for some time at the English Court. He was the owner of large estates in England, and naturally enough

he was loath to give them up. Considerations of policy led him, as far as he possibly could, to maintain himself on friendly terms with Edward. In 1296, as Earl of Carrick, he swore fealty to Edward at Berwick, and the following year he renewed his oath of homage at Carlisle. Abandoning the cause of England shortly afterwards, he sided with Wallace, and led his Carrick vassals to his support, but, on the capitulation of Irvine, he hastened to make his peace with the English monarch. The year of the Scottish defeat at Falkirk, 1298, and after that fateful fight had been fought, he again rose against Edward, had his lands wasted by the English, and, in revenge, sacked and set fire to the castle of Ayr, then occupied by an English garrison. From then till 1306 he bided his time, in public an adherent of Edward, in private buttressing his position by a secret alliance with Lamberton, Bishop of St. Andrews, one of the most patriotic of the Scottish clergy. On the 10th February, 1306, he encountered the Red Comyn, a nephew of Baliol, and a rival claimant for the Crown, in the convent of the Minorite friars at Dumfries. A quarrel ensued, and Bruce, in a paroxysm of fury, stabbed Comyn with his dagger. Rushing out to his attendants, "I must be off," he cried, "for I doubt I have slain the Red Comyn." "Doubt!" exclaimed Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, "I mak' siccar;" and, rushing into the convent, he despatched Comyn where he lay, weltering in his blood, before the high altar. The die was cast. Two months later Bruce was crowned King of Scotland at Scone. But his time to reign had not yet come. An English army drove him into the fastnesses of Athole; the Lord of Lorn, the Comyn's uncle, chased him into the West Highlands; and he was fain to escape with a few devoted followers to the small island of Rathlin, on the north coast of Ireland, where he spent the winter. His estates were confiscated, he was excommunicated by the Pope's Legate at Carlisle, and finally he was supposed to be dead. Truly his fortunes seemed at that period to have come to the vanishing point. But in Bruce's case, as

in many others, when the night was darkest it was even then drawing on to the dawning of the day.

Early in the spring of 1307. Sir James Douglas, who had accompanied the banished King in his wanderings, obtained leave to cross over from Rathlin with Sir Robert Boyd and a small body of followers to the island of Arran, in order to make an attempt upon the castle of Brodick, then held for the English by Sir John Hastings. It is hardly possible to conceive a more hopeless expedition than that of those hardy adventurers. They left Rathlin in an open boat, and, reaching Arran in safety, they went into hiding near the castle, in the hope of being able to take it by surprise. In this they were fortunately successful. Watching their opportunity they fell upon the garrison, unsuspecting of danger, in the open, and then rushed the castle, obtaining thereby shelter and abundant store, not only of provisions, but also of arms. Here, later on, they were joined by the King himself, with a fleet of thirty-three galleys and three hundred men. None knew better than Robert the Bruce how vain it must be to attempt the recovery of his Crown and his country with so scant a following, but he had all the confidence that high personal courage and enthusiasm can afford, and he had sufficient faith in his vassals in Carrick and in Annandale, and in his fellow-countrymen generally, that they would not be slow to follow if only they were boldly led. Across the Firth of Clyde lay the flat lands of Ayrshire. There was his home, there were his hopes, and, desperate as the enterprise was that lay before him, he resolved to undertake it. Bruce was wary, however, and wise, as well as bold and resolute, and he despatched a messenger to Ayrshire to ascertain what prospect there was of his appeal being responded to. The messenger crossed, and travelled the countryside. He found that the English were everywhere in force, that the land was quiet and subdued, if not content, and that there was but scant occasion for believing that the venture could in any degree be successful. The King had instructed him,

should he find the people well affected and ready to rise, to light a beacon on an upland in Carrick ; and, from the Arran shore, Bruce eagerly waited and watched for the signal. The time appointed arrived, and the King saw the smoke arising on the further shore. He accepted the omen cheerfully, and his small fleet put to sea. Fortunately for him, the winds were contrary, and night had fallen before the galleys grounded on the sands in the vicinity of Turnberry Castle. Here he was met by his messenger with the depressing intelligence that success could not be hoped for, that the people were supine, that the ascendancy of the Southron was complete. Why then, demanded the monarch, had the bonfire been lit ? The messenger explained that it had not been kindled by his hand. But nevertheless it had blazed, the King had seen its smoke against the day sky, and its red glare upon the night. That was a superstitious age, and, in all probability, Bruce and his followers accepted the omen as a heavenly call to go forward. Besides, the position was desperate. To have retreated would have meant ruin ; in going forward there was at least a chance of success ; and, acting upon one of those happy inspirations that frequently mean so much to those who can translate them into action, he led his men towards the outbuildings, where were quartered the greater part of the men who formed the garrison of Turnberry.

Strong upon its rock, defended on its landward side by a rampart and ditch, the gates closed, and Percy and a sufficient number of his followers within to give a stern account of themselves, none knew better than the Lord of Turnberry himself how fruitless an assault upon the fortress must be. But, as has been said, the greater part of the men comprising the garrison were housed without the walls. Upon these fell the opening vengeance of the Scottish monarch. No doubt, from the security of the keep, Percy heard the shouts of the assailants and the answering cries of the attacked ; he knew there was stern work proceeding without, and that it must needs

be going hard with his men ; but he was ignorant of the strength of the attacking Scots, and he remained in safety where he was. According to Barbour, the English slain that night numbered two hundred ; only one Southron remained alive when the conflict was over, and he was fortunate enough to escape to the castle. Bruce waited in the vicinity for three days to rest his followers, and in the hope that the country would flock to his standard ; then, finding that there was no worthy response even from his own vassals, and that the English commander had no mind to come forth from the security of his battlements and have it out in the open, he withdrew into the mountainous parts of Carrick.

The tidings of what had befallen at Turnberry were not long in spreading. The castle of Ayr was held by a powerful body of English soldiers ; scattered over the whole south and west of Scotland were other English garrisons ; there were many of the Scottish nobility who would willingly have handed Bruce over to King Edward, had it been in their power to do it ; there was no evidence of any inclination on the part of the common people to risk their lives and their liberties in what must have seemed to them an altogether hopeless enterprise ; and the King and his followers accordingly secreted themselves in the hills above Dailly and awaited the evolution of events. Bruce dispatched his brother Edward into Galloway, in order that he might be guarded against surprise from that quarter ; and it may well be believed that from this high vantage ground he cast many an anxious gaze upon the plains that lay beneath his ken. For well the King knew that he would not long be left alone.

The story of Bruce's wanderings and adventures, largely dependent on the authority of Barbour, equally the father of Scottish poetry and Scottish history, reads like a romance. There is no good reason, however, why it should be treated as if it were fable. Barbour is supposed to have been born about 1316 ; he was contemporary with the men who had taken part in the

Scottish War of Independence; his poem of "The Brus" is distinguished by great simplicity and clearness of style; he has depicted in rough but faithful outline the men and manners of a truly heroic age; he was highly esteemed of the Scottish Court; and none knew better than he that to have drawn wildly upon his imagination would have subjected him to the opprobrium of those for whom he wrote. There is no good reason, therefore, why his narrative should be regarded as fabulous. Possibly, if such a thing were indeed possible, he may have overdone the individual prowess of the King, but that is an assumption there is really no sufficient reason for making. With Barbour then as our guide, let us follow the Bruce in his wanderings through Ayrshire and the adjacent shires, and tell the doughty deeds by which he raised an apparently hopeless cause to the crowning glory of national independence.

Aymer de Valence was in command in the Lothians, and forthwith he despatched Sir Ingram Bell with a strong body of men to bring King Robert into subjection. Sir Ingram thought it wiser, in view of the fact that Bruce was encamped in the wilds, and in ignorance of the strength of his followers, to attempt his downfall by treachery. He accordingly despatched three men, a father and two sons, to take him at unawares. These were familiar with the district, and, knowing that it was Bruce's custom to retire on occasion into a thicket for purposes of meditation, they arranged the time of their coming for such a period as might best enable them to catch him unprotected. And so they found him. Bruce had a strong intuition of danger. He knew the treachery that everywhere abounded, and when he saw them advancing, he ordered them to remain where they were. The conspirators observed that he was alone, save for a page boy, and the father urged his right, as a distant relative of the King, to be at his side in the hour of danger. As they continued their approach, Bruce took the bow from his page that the lad had been carrying, fitted an arrow upon the string, and, taking



aim at the father, transfixing him in the brain. Undeterred by the fall of their father, the two sons pressed on, but two to one were odds that Bruce little esteemed at any time, and, although he was armed with nothing more than a short sword, he despatched them both. The deed got him considerable renown throughout the immediate district, and was a warning to the English that they must take his capture more seriously; it gave heart also to Bruce's own followers, and it augured well from the opening for the ultimate success that must be achieved.

For the time being, however, it brought no gain of men to the King; on the contrary, so desperate did his cause appear to be that some of his followers deserted him. In the hope of broadening the interest in the struggle, Sir James Douglas, whose fidelity nothing could shake, whose courage nothing could daunt, paid a visit to his own native countryside of Galloway, and, while Bruce was thus weakened, a party of Gallovidians essayed his capture, in considerable force. Hearing that they were in quest of him, he retired into a morass, and maintained a constant watch lest he should be taken at unawares. There was only the one narrow way by which access could be had to the moss, and that across a small stream, commanded on the inner side by a fairly high bank. Attended by two of his followers, Bruce was scanning the surrounding country, when his quick ear detected the questioning of a bloodhound. The baying came steadily nearer, and the King knew that danger was at hand. He despatched his two followers with an urgent call for his men, and took up his position on the morass side of the burn. There, when they approached, the Gallovidians found him standing alone, armed at all points, and with his long sword naked in his hand. There were few men of his time who could fight as Bruce fought. Courageous to a high degree, skilled in the use of sword and battle axe alike, calm and confident, he realised the possibilities of the strong right arm. To the Gallovidians it seemed as if Providence had placed

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their enemy at their mercy, and they rushed forward to his capture. The first man to essay the crossing of the stream went down dead into the waters, and others following shared in rapid succession the same fate. One man, mounted, put his horse at the brook, but he fared no better than the rest. With quick succeeding blows, Bruce smote both man and horse. The horse, sorely wounded, tumbled where he stood. Conscious that its body might serve the enemy's purpose in enabling them to gain the bank on which he stood, the King pricked it with the point of his sword. Stung with pain, it sprang to its feet, gave one or two convulsive jumps, and fell a second time, but in a position less perilous for the defending monarch. By this time the little burn was dyed with blood, and the Gallovidians drew back. But they were still many to one, they were not lacking in courage, the Bruce also was well worth overcoming ; and again they pressed forward. Only to slaughter, for as they reached the fatal spot at which the long swing of the sharp sword blade could find them, down they went one by one with the inevitableness of fate. It was a great and a grim slaughter.

Bruce's two followers had lost no time in bringing up the men encamped in the morass. On their approach the Gallovidians drew back, then fled. According to Barbour, no fewer than fourteen men lay dead together. The King himself was uninjured. No sooner was one peril surmounted, however, than another overtook him. Three or four hundred men joined his standard, but the nobles stood aside, fearful lest any manifestation of their sympathies should involve them in the common destruction, and the English forces had begun to move seriously to the arresting of what threatened to prove, if it were not speedily checked, a serious revolution. With about four hundred followers, Bruce crossed the country to the strengths of the Cumnock hills, only to learn that Aymer de Valence, with eight hundred soldiers at his back, was marching upon his track. With de Valence was John of Lorne and a strong party of

Highlanders. John of Lorne had a sleuthhound that had once belonged to the King, an animal of high sagacity, and he assured the English General that if only it were once put upon his track, nothing could prevent it following up the trail. Bruce withdrew further into the hills, for he could not meet the enemy in the open, and the English pursued him on the one side of the uplands, the Highlanders on the other. The latter struck his track, and the hound led them on. Bruce divided his men into three small forces. Two of these he instructed how to escape, after fixing a rendezvous for their later meeting; the third he led forward in person. The dog proved equal to his reputation. He undeviatingly took the right way. A second time the King broke up his men into three parties, but again it was of no avail, and the nearer the hound approached him, the more eager was it to press on. More than once the flying monarch, oppressed by the weight of his armour, was on the point of collapsing among the heather, but his men urged him on, and he persevered.

In due time, faint but still fleeing, he reached the mountainous country that surrounds Loch Doon; and here he and his foster-brother took their way alone, the remainder of the party breaking up and each man seeking safety for himself. Coming to one of the lanes that carry the brown tributes of the mosses to the lochs, he jumped into the water and pursued his way along the bed of the stream for a distance sufficient to throw the pursuers, Highlanders and sleuthhound alike, off the scent. Following the example of Bruce, the men of Lorne broke up into groups and sought their prey in all directions; and as Bruce and his foster-brother were enjoying a sorely-needed rest, they were discovered by five of the Highlanders. To an ordinary man the odds would have been great; to Bruce they were but small; and with his foster-brother by his side he awaited their approach. They were nothing loath. Three of their number assailed the King, the other two his foster-brother. At the first blow Bruce killed one of the men

of Lorne, and the other two momentarily drawing back, he sprang to the assistance of his comrade, and cut down one of his assailants. Rounding again to his own immediate opponents, he despatched them in quick succession; and his foster-brother having similarly disposed of his antagonist, the jaded warriors rested for a brief space and then resumed their flight, finding sanctuary in the stretching forest of Buchan. When the remainder of the men of Lorne chanced upon the bloody scene of the combat, great was their amaze to find the five dead bodies upon the moss; and they ceased from further pursuit.

Holding on his way in the direction of Newton-Stewart, the King was speedily face to face with a new danger. This time it was in the guise of three men who joined themselves to him and his foster-brother as they were pursuing their journey. Bruce, who had only too good reason for being suspicious of strangers, asked them whither they were going. One of them answered that they were search of the King that they might join his standard. If that were so, rejoined Bruce, then they could go with him. Something in Bruce's demeanour sufficed to suggest to the men in whose presence they were, and their suspicion was strengthened when they were ordered to march in front. At nightfall the five wayfarers entered an humble house on the roadside, and had supper together, and then they all laid themselves upon the floor to rest. The King had warned his foster-brother to be wary, and had instructed him to remain awake during the first half of the night; but the young man was so fatigued that he went sound to sleep. Fortunately Bruce himself remained awake, and watchful, and it was not long before he espied the three conspirators, as they proved to be, whispering together and getting their daggers ready. At once he sprang to his feet, waking his foster-brother as he did so. The men were upon him at once. As his companion was rising he received a fatal wound, but the King as usual was equal to the occasion; and, after a short,

sharp contest he slew them all. The death of his foster-brother saddened him much, the more so that he had to leave him in such company, where he had fallen. Resuming his eventful journey, he reached Newton-Stewart in safety, and at once, joining Douglas and his men, led an attack in person upon a body of English soldiery, whom he routed, and not a few of whom he slew with his own hand.

Returning in a few days to Ayrshire, he went into hiding again in the wilds of Carrick, and it was not long ere he had to repel another assault upon his person. This time he was abroad without his armour, hunting, and accompanied by his two powerful dogs. Three men approached him, bending their bows as they advanced. The King could not afford to despise the danger attendant on well-directed arrows; and halting, he taunted the men with their cowardice, and challenged them to come forward like men and fight it out. This they did. Bruce smote the foremost to the ground almost before he had time to raise guard to defend himself. One of the dogs seized another and held him until a blow from the King's sword descended with deadly precision on his head. The third made haste to escape, but the dogs pulled him down, and Bruce did the rest. Then, winding his horn, he called his followers about him, and hunted no more that day.

The tidings of these deeds of prowess rang through Ayrshire. The men of Kyle and of Carrick, and later of Cunningham, began to gather in. The English Sovereign was highly incensed at the growth of the rebellion, and Sir Philip de Mowbray was despatched to Ayrshire with a thousand men to quell the rising. Bruce heard of the coming expedition, and sent Sir James Douglas to meet the English by the way. This he did most effectively. Not far from Kilmarnock, at a place known as the Nether Ford, where the road lay between two deep morasses impassible by cavalry, he placed himself in ambush. While the English were passing through the defile and across the ford, Douglas attacked them with

such impetuosity that they became panic-stricken and fled in disorder in the direction of Bothwell, leaving about sixty of their number dead on the field. Mowbray himself was so far advanced in the pass that he could not retreat, but he put spurs to his horse, forced him through the ranks of the Scots, and escaped by Kilmarnock, Kilwinning, Ardrossan, and Largs to Inverkip, where there was an English garrison.

The continued and the growing success of the Bruce cause in Ayrshire created "grit anger" in the heart of Aymér de Valence; he recognised that at last the spirit of independence was beginning to assert itself in the hearts of the people, and that the movement must either be crushed or else become formidable. Up till now, weighed against the power that England could easily have put in the field, it had been as nothing; it might easily, speaking after the manner of men, have been arrested; but "it now first appears," according to a letter of date May 15, 1307, written from Scotland by one in the English interest, "that he (*i.e.*, Bruce) has the right, and God is openly for him." Every effort to trap him had failed. He had literally been hemmed in, surrounded by English troops, all the known avenues to escape blocked, and yet, passing along the moors from Dalmellington to Muirkirk, he had, in May of that year, appeared in considerable force in the northern part of Ayrshire. De Valence himself took the field against him, and, with that knightly chivalry that was characteristic of the times, he sent a challenge to Bruce to meet him in battle. The King had but six hundred fighting men, and about as many "rangale," or rabble—camp followers and unattached sympathisers—to oppose to the three thousand disciplined and fully armed men of the English commander; nevertheless, he accepted the challenge, and took up his position on the face of Loudoun Hill, protected on either hand by peat mosses, impassible by cavalry. In front, across the hard ground, he dug three trenches, connecting the mosses with one another, leaving an open passage in the hope that it

might induce the English to attack from that quarter. De Valence came marching upon the scene, accompanied by a brilliant staff, the troops gay in the full panoply of war, their flags flying, their drums beating, and their trumpets sounding shrill defiance. As compared with the Scots, they were infinitely the stronger army, but Bruce knew his own business, he had reckoned on having to cope with the better organised, the stronger, and the fully equipped force of the enemy, and, in choosing his ground and in preparing it, he had neutralised to a large extent the advantages of the military superiority that he had to encounter.

The battle was fought on the 10th of May. According to Barbour, Bruce addressed his army on the eve of the struggle. He pointed out that the intention of the foe was to reduce them to slavery, or else to slay them. It was therefore their duty to meet them hardily. The Southrons much outnumbered them, but the ground on which they must advance was of such a character that in the actual fighting it must be man for man, and therefore the result must be to those who most heroically should display their prowess. The King's words created high enthusiasm, and they were responded to by answering shouts of determination to stand for Scotland and the good cause. "Then go we forth," returned Bruce, "where He that made of nothing all things lead us, and save us, and help us to our right!" De Valence similarly exhorted his men to be steadfast and to quit themselves valiantly. The preliminary speeches have too obviously the stamp of careful authorship to be accepted in their literal accuracy, though it is by no means unlikely that the opposing commanders did indeed endeavour to fire their men with enthusiasm for the combat.

The battle was opened by de Valence, who advanced his bowmen. These shot their shafts in clouds upon the Scots; but they were wholly ineffective against men lying in trenches, and accordingly the English cavalry were advanced to clear the trenches. This was

exactly what Bruce had calculated upon. As the horsemen reached the edge of the ditch, the Scots brought their long pikes into play. Where they could not reach the men, they could at least reach the horses, and they plunged their pikes into their bowels, and so maddened them with pain and with terror that they broke, galloped wildly back from the edge of the ditch, and threw into inextricable confusion the ranks of the main body advancing to the support of the routed horsemen. Bruce was quick to seize the occasion. By word and deed alike he encouraged his men. Rushing forward, they hurled their spears into the breaking forces of the foe, and so at once neutralised the advantage of numbers pertaining to the English; and so pressed forward their assault that the Southrons broke and fled, leaving the ground strewn with the dying and the dead. It was a short, sharp battle, rudely fought; but war is war, and men must fight as they can. And within a few hours of the opening of the battle, the Scots were driving the English legions in disastrous flight across the plain.

From the field of Loudoun Hill, Aymer de Valence retreated to Ayr. Three days later, Bruce encountered Sir Ralph de Morthemmer and defeated him, and he also sought shelter in the strength of the sanctuary of Ayr—in that ancient castle of the three towers that is supposed to have occupied the highest point of the sandhills overlooking the river, which was more than four centuries afterwards selected by the Commander of the forces of the English Commonwealth for the chief bastion of the fort which he constructed to hold the southwest of Scotland in check. Bruce followed and laid siege to the castle, but he lacked either the men or the munitions of warfare to carry it by assault, and, on the approach of a powerful relieving force, he raised the siege and retired once again to the shelters of the southern Highlands.

In June of the same year, King Edward died at Burgh-on-Sands on his way to the invasion of Scotland. The passing of "*Scottorum Malleus*," the Hammer of



the Scots, was a great gain to Scotland and the cause of Robert the Bruce. It deprived England of a capable, resolute, dominating head, and substituted for the greatest of the Plantagenets a weak and a pleasure-loving monarch.

Bruce was not the man to neglect his opportunity. It was on May 10th that he had fought and won at Loudounhill. On June 1st he was at Bothwell, ordering six hundred men to reinforce the garrison at Ayr; on the 11th he had taken up his own headquarters at Ayr; from July 16th to 19th he was at Dalmellington, and by the 24th he had scoured the hill country as far as the Glenkens. Returning to Ayr in the end of the month, he issued a despatch requiring wines and victuals to be sent from Dumfries for nine knights whom he was leaving in charge of the town. Edward II. began by taking the field in person and marching into Scotland with the intention of crushing the rebellion, but he was not composed of the same stern stuff as his father, and when, in the middle of August, he had advanced up Nithsdale, and had got into Ayrshire as far as Cumnock, he gave orders for the army to retreat. Why, it is not difficult to surmise. Campaigning in a dangerous country was much less to his liking than were the dissipations of his own capital. He appointed Sir Ingram de Umfraville warden of Carrick. In Galloway, Edward Bruce, a soldier only less distinguished for physical prowess, for energy, and for the capacity to avail himself of every occasion of harassing and worrying the common enemy than his brother, wrought valiantly. He tamed the pride of the Macdougalls, and, having driven out the English, his royal brother was free to deal with the other branch of the same family, the Macdougalls of Lorne. Thus the work went on, the English King occasionally showing signs of awaking to activity, and as regularly foregoing his resolutions when the time came for giving effect to them, and the Bruce making occasional raids into England, harrying the northern counties, and returning to Scotland with great

wealth of spoil. In midsummer of 1312, he held a Parliament at Ayr, and then sent his brother Edward on a raid upon the English borders, which was productive of good, tangible results. Stung at last into active retaliation by the misfortunes that the Scots were raining upon his country, by which they had for all practical purposes rid themselves of his sovereignty, and by which they had ruined his prestige, the English monarch, at the head of a powerful army, marched upon Scotland.

It does not fall within our province to deal with the events that immediately preceded the Battle of Bannockburn, nor with the battle itself. To the historic field Bruce led a strong contingent of the men of the south-western counties. It was in Ayrshire that he had found the men to espouse his cause when that was at the lowest ebb. They had stood by him in the most evil report, and without flinching, against overwhelming odds. King Robert was more to them than even the rightful monarch of Scotland—he was the lord of Turnberry as well. With a faithfulness to which there are few parallels, they had refused to desert his fortunes when his back was at the wall. They were the staunch men and true who had repulsed the onslaught of the English cavalry on the marshy lands of Loudoun. They had marched with him to Ayr and delivered an ineffective assault upon its castle. They had accompanied him in his wanderings among the hills of Carrick, and among the mosses and in the wilds of the high lands of Kyle. And when Bruce arrayed his army on the field of Bannockburn, they were still by his side, confident in their chief and in the righteousness of his cause, and resolved as ever to do, if need be to die, for the gallant son of ancient Turnberry. Tradition has it that he was supported that memorable day by contingents from Newton-on-Ayr and from Prestwick, and there is no sufficient reason to doubt, not only that he was, but that in the Scottish army, gathered from near and from far—Highland clansmen, hardy sons of the Borders,

stout sons of Gallcway, warriors of the east and of the midland—there were patriot bands from all the Ayrshire towns, and from the stretching countryside, and that they played their part as manfully and as hardily as their fellows. But Bannockburn was a nation's battle, and as such it was all glorious.

England perforce ceased from troubling. Bruce conferred upon his gallant brother Edward the Earldom of Carrick, and in 1315 that ill-starred expedition for the conquest of Ireland, that ended so disastrously at Dundalk, in the death, on October 5th, 1318, of Edward, by that time the crowned King of Ireland, was promoted. But before the expedition sailed, as it did from Ayr in May, six thousand strong, King Robert assembled a Parliament at Ayr, on Sunday, April 25. In her time Ayr has witnessed many stirring events, but it may be questioned whether among them all she ever took part in a more brilliant or exciting series of scenes than those of the few weeks with which we are now dealing. The war with England was at an end, peace had in a measure—for the era was still stormy and in measure uncertain—asserted itself, and the long interrupted trade and commerce had once more begun to be manifest. Ayr could remember well the long occupation of the English soldiery. It was but yesterday, so to speak, that the English standard had been flying from the battlements of the castle. Bruce had assaulted it in vain. The townsfolk had heard with unabated interest of the deeds of the monarch among the uplands of the county. They had rejoiced in his growing strength, in the accession of power to his cause, but they had been compelled to rejoice inwardly and to walk warily the while the English flag had flown over them. Now the evil day was at an end, the town was gay with the gathered hosts of the Scottish nobility, the streets were resonant with the tread of the force that was to accompany Edward Bruce to Ireland, in the river lay the fleet that was to bear them westward, and King Robert himself was there. From then till now, it is a far cry, but words are not

needed to emphasise the fact that it was a great time for Ayr.

In these days the Church of St. John's stood in all its beauty amid the sandhills by the seashore, and within its walls the Scottish Parliament assembled. The chief business was urgent enough. As years went, the King was still a comparatively young man—he was but forty-one—but the strenuous manner of his life, his marchings, his wanderings, his nights spent in the open, and his manifest anxieties had enfeebled his constitution, and rendered his tenure of life uncertain. At that time he had only one child, the Princess Marjorie; and it was to arrange for the succession to the Crown, in certain events, that the Scottish Parliament had met. It was resolved that should the King die without heirs male, the succession should devolve upon his brother Edward, the Earl of Carrick, and his heirs male; whom failing, upon the Princess Marjorie. In the event of the heir to the Crown succeeding under age, the Earl of Moray was to be guardian of the throne and of the Kingdom; and, should all the possible or prospective heirs die, Moray was to administer the affairs of the realm until the prelates and magnates should declare who it was that should succeed. In circumstances such as these, it was of enormous importance who it was that should wed the Princess Marjorie, and the choice that fell upon Walter, High Steward of Scotland, was one that was destined to have incalculable results upon the history of Scotland, and of Great Britain, for many a day to come. Unfortunately, the Princess did not long survive her wedding. On March 2, 1316, in giving birth to her only child, afterwards Robert II. of Scotland, she died.

In one of the forays on the Border country, the activity and resourcefulness of a young Ayrshire knight, Sir William de Keith of Galston, saved what at one time threatened to prove a desperate situation. The Scots had captured Berwick from an English garrison, and, after the manner of the time, the soldiers had proceeded

to loot the town. Their dispersion did not escape the notice of the governor of the castle, who ordered an immediate sortie. Sir William de Keith at once rode through the town, and recalled the men to their standards, with the result that the English were driven back, and were finally, though not until they had sustained a siege of sixteen weeks, compelled to surrender through famine. Sir William lived to acquire considerable renown in these wars. He accompanied Douglas to Spain in 1330, when that gallant knight was on his way to Jerusalem with the heart of the Bruce, commanded at Berwick when that town was taken by the English in 1333, was ambassador to England in 1335, and was killed at the siege of Stirling the following year.

It was on June 7, 1329, that King Robert died at Cardross. His last injunction to his old comrade, Sir James Douglas, is well remembered:—"I wish as soon as I be dead that my heart be taken out of my body and embalmed, and that you convey it to the holy sepulchre where our Lord lay, and present it there, seeing my body cannot go thither. And, wherever you come, let it be known that you carry with you the heart of King Robert of Scotland, at his own instance and desire, to be presented at the holy sepulchre." How Sir James set forth to keep the vow that he had vowed, how Bruce's body was laid to rest in Dunfermline, how Douglas fell in Spain in battle with the Moors, and how the heart of King Robert was brought back to Scotland and buried in Melrose Abbey—these things pertain to the pathetic incidents of these trying days of battle and of high emprise.

That the Bruce continued through life to have a warm side for Carrick is evident from the substantial recognition he offered to Crossraguel Abbey and its Benedictines. At Berwick, June 4, 1324, he granted to the abbot and monks, by charter, his whole lands of Dungrelach, "to be held in pure and perpetual alms-gift for the weal of his soul, and of the souls of all his ancestors and successors." At Cambuskenneth, July 20, 1327,

he issued another charter, "whereby," to quote the abstract given in the "Charters of the Abbey of Crossraguel," issued by the Ayrshire and Galloway Archæological Association (1886), "in view of divine charity, and for the salvation of his soul, and the souls of his ancestors and successors, he grants and confirms to the religious men, the abbot and convent of Crossraguel, all and sundry, the churches, lands, rents, and possessions, which they had by the gifts, grants, and infestments of Duncan, Nigel, and Edward, Earls of Carrick, and also of Sir Robert Bruce his father, and Lady Marjory his mother, of venerated memory, and of all other nobles and faithful in Christ, of his Kingdom; to be held in free, pure, and perpetual alms, freely, quietly, purely, wholly, and honourably, with all their freedoms, rights and easements, according to their charter thereof, and as they were wont to enjoy the same in the time of Alexander, of good memory, illustrious King<sup>s</sup> of Scots, who last deceased; charging all justiciars, sheriffs, and other officers, to beware of contravening the terms of this grant."

The ancient burgh of Prestwick is proud, as it well may be, to claim connection with the Bruce. According to tradition, it was in recognition of the services rendered to him in the field by a gallant band of Prestwick men, that he bestowed upon the community the lands known as "Freedoms." In later life the King suffered severely from leprosy, or from some skin disease after the same character, and he found great benefit from repairing to a well in the parish, no doubt one of the old wells of healing which were formerly in such high repute, and drinking of its waters. In gratitude for the benefit he had received, the King built and endowed an hospital, or lazar-house, not far from the well, still known as the well of Kingcase; and the remains of this establishment endure to this day. The endowment came from the lands of Robertloan—obviously a reminiscence of the monarch himself—and from Spittalshiels in the neighbouring parish of St. Quivox, and its purpose was to support eight lepers,



each of whom was to have eight bolls of meal and eight merks a year, or, if there were but one, he was to have the whole ; and the tax continues to be paid down till now, although leprosy has long since ceased to trouble the people of Scotland. Within comparatively recent times, a scrofulously affected woman received a dole from the Bruce bequest.

If one were deliberately to set himself to dissect the character, the motives, the actions, of the greatest of all the children of Carrick, it would not be at all difficult to find incidents in his career that, taken by themselves alone, would appear to cast a dark shadow upon his fame. When Bruce was of the age of twenty-two, in 1296, he did fealty to Edward I. at Berwick ; the following year he renewed his fealty, then took the field with the insurgent Scots at Irvine, capitulated, renewed his fealty, raided the lands of Douglas, gave his infant daughter to Edward a hostage for his loyalty, and was received to the King's peace ; in 1299 he was one of the three guardians of Scotland in name of Baliol, and the same month attacked Edward's garrison in Lochmaben Castle ; in 1302 he came with his tenants into the King's peace and attended Edward's Parliament ; in 1303 he received advances of pay from Edward and was appointed his Sheriff of Lanark ; in 1304 he was Constable, for the English monarch, of the castle of Ayr, received Edward's thanks for good service, attended the King's Parliament in St. Andrews, received Edward's thanks for forwarding engines for the siege of Stirling, and, while he was doing homage for his English estates, joined in a league, with the Bishop of St. Andrews, against the English ascendancy ; and in 1305 he was with Edward at Westminster, attended his Parliament, and was probably, according to Sir Herbert Maxwell, a witness of the trial and execution of Wallace. Taken by itself, that is not a nice or a consistent record. But one must bear in mind the changing conditions in Scotland at the time, the frequent apparently hopeless lot of the Scottish cause, the certainty that consistent

antagonism to England would not only have inevitably resulted in the forfeiture of all his lands both in England and Scotland, but would almost to a certainty have brought himself to the scaffold; and the likelihood, again amounting almost to a certainty, that we are not in possession of all the circumstances that attended upon the Bruce's career. The times were stormy and unsettled, and men's minds change rapidly in periods of crisis and of revolution; they adapt themselves to circumstances which for the moment appear to be overpowering and overwhelming, and they are not in a position, as we are who can look at the whole drama from its opening to its close, to know what the end is to be. Beyond all, the towering and obliterating fact remains that when Robert the Bruce did sternly and seriously put his hand to the plough, when he elected to cast everything to the winds for Scotland, he never looked back. He had done with vacillation, with indecision. By his courage, his patriotism, his unswerving fidelity to duty, his sufferings, his contendings, and his triumphs, he amply atoned for the apparent weakness of his earlier years, and earned for himself easy place as beyond any doubt the greatest of all the Kings that ever sat upon the throne of Scotland.

Before passing from the essentially Bruce period in Ayrshire history, mention must be made of the part played by Sir Christopher Seton, a knight who had high and honourable rank in the distinguished ancestry of the Eglinton family. Sir Christopher was married to a sister of Bruce. He was, therefore, directly and immediately linked with his fortunes, a partaker in his ambitions and hopes, and a sharer in his councils. With the strength and vigour of his Norman lineage, he scorned the dangers appertaining to the desperate struggle, into which he threw himself with the ardour of kinship and the gallantry of his race. He was with Bruce when his small band of followers were routed at the battle of Methven. Three times that day was the King unhorsed. So nearly, according to Barbour, had



Sir Philip de Mowbray taken him prisoner, that he cried, "I have the new made King." Sir Philip was reckoning without his host, for, hardly had he given voice to his vaunting, than Sir Christopher felled him to the ground. He was with Bruce in the Minorite convent at Dumfries, when the King, in the heat of controversy and of passion, slew the Red Comyn; and he was there also, at Scone, when Bruce was crowned King of Scotland. These were all unforgivable sins in the sight of Edward. He might conceivably have pardoned Seton for his share in the fight of Methven, had that stood alone, and had it been subsequently atoned for by submission and loyalty, but the English monarch had no forgiveness to extend to those who were by when the Red Comyn was slain. That was an outrage doubly dyed, accursed in the slaughter, and accursed in the holy place where Comyn was stretched lifeless upon the ground, and Edward had doomed all those who shared in the abounding guilt to certain death. When, therefore, Bruce was compelled to flee the country and to take refuge in the Isle of Rathlin, off the coast of Ireland, Sir Christopher sought shelter in the castle of Loch Doon.

The castle of Loch Doon is one of a group of ancient keeps, or fortalices, round which a great deal of the history of the shire is entwined. In its day it was a stronghold for troublous times. Its ruins testify to its strength, it was surrounded by the waters of the inland loch, it was in the heart of a mountainous country difficult of access and scant of supplies for an invading force, and there was no "artillery," even of the by no means despicable kind that existed at the period, that could be effectively brought to bear against it. Its danger to Sir Christopher lay in other directions than those pertaining to the siege; in the changing conditions and fortunes of the times, in the danger that pertained to every man of rank and circumstance who championed the national cause, in the desire of all, save those irretrievably committed to the cause of Bruce, to stand

well with the English Sovereign. Its Governor was Sir Gilbert de Carrick. He gave Seton shelter, and, after a fashion, he defended his charge against the English force that invested it, but it was not long before the castle fell into the hands of the enemy. It is said, on good authority, to have been "pusillanimously" given up, and, according to evidence under a commission of the Great Seal, "the delivery of Sir Christopher de Seton to the English was imputed to Sir Gilbert de Carrick." The remission to Sir Gilbert, at the instance of the English Sovereign, certainly points in that direction. Barbour avers that Seton was actually betrayed by a person of the name of Macnab, "a disciple of Judas, a false traitor that aye was of his dwelling night and day." Tradition has it that, as the price of his perfidy, Macnab received in gift a stretch of land on the shores of the loch, and some countenance is given to the story by the fact that part of a farm at the lower end of the loch is still called Macnabston. If Barbour's version be true, Macnab was one of the followers and domestics of Sir Christopher: hence the deeper dye of the "traitoury." It is not improbable that Macnab may have been a tool of the governor of the castle, that there was a complete understanding between the two, and that the pusillanimous defence, the fall of the fortress, and the capture of Seton, were all parts of the plan by which Sir Gilbert de Carrick was to ensure his own safety.

However it happened, the castle fell into the hands of the enemy, and Sir Christopher had to pay the price of his association with Bruce. According to one story, he was conveyed to London and executed there; according to another, and a more probable, he met his death at Dumfries, not far from the spot that had been desecrated by the killing of the Red Comyn. Bruce marked his sense of his gallantry, and his appreciation of the good work he had done for the cause, by erecting a chapel at Dumfries to his memory, where mass was said for his soul. This must necessarily have

been done at a considerably later period ; for, at the time when Seton was executed, the King's prospects were of the most hopeless description. He was a fugitive, in hiding, with but few followers, condemned to inaction, hardly even befriended of his own kith and kin, a King without a crown, a desperate adventurer in an enterprise the success of which nothing but the eye of faith could ever have descried.

Ayrshire's connection with the Bruce family did not cease with the monarch himself. From Turnberry by the sea, on the Carrick coast, however, the interest passes to the Castle of Dundonald, the cradle of the Stuart dynasty. If Carrick gave Scotland the Bruces, Kyle gave the nation her Stuarts. This also was a Norman family. It was Walter, the first Lord High Steward, who built Dundonald, and he lived much in the castle, founding, among other religious institutions, the churches of Monkton and Prestwick. Dying in the middle of the twelfth century, he was succeeded by his son Alan, a favourite at the Court of William the Lion, and he, in 1204, by another Walter, in 1230 Justiciary of Scotland. Alexander, the fourth Steward, was a famous fighter in the Crusades, and later commanded the Scottish forces at the Battle of Largs. James, the fifth Steward, was one of the Regents of Scotland at the opening of the times made troublous and fateful by Sir William Wallace, and after him came James, who fought through the greater part of the campaign with Bruce, and was one of the principal leaders of the Scots at Bannockburn. This was he who wedded Marjory Bruce, and the only child of their union, Robert Bruce Stewart, was the first of the Stewart, or Stuart, Kings. His mother, unfortunately, died in the act of giving him birth, and at the age of twelve he lost his father. Like many another son of his race, he had a life that was not without its sorrows and its troubles. When but seventeen he was in the heat of the Battle of Halidon Hill ; after that he was a disinherited wanderer on his possessions in Bute when Edward III. and the traitorous Baliol

overran Scotland; emerging from his seclusion, he captured Dunoon Castle, surprised the garrison of Dumbarton, and regained the West of Scotland; was appointed Regent when only nineteen years of age; was the chief instrument in expelling the English from the whole of Scotland; procured the return of David II. from France; was again Regent during David's captivity in England; and was imprisoned for several years by that ungrateful monarch, a base reward for the conspicuous service that he had done him. In 1371, on David's death without issue, he ascended the throne at the age of fifty-five.

The first wife of Robert II. was Elizabeth Mure of Rowallan. Her birthplace is still pointed out, the remains of what in its day was doubtless an abode of strength, as well as a seat of happiness, standing, close by the present Rowallan Castle, a little off the highway between Kilmaurs and Fenwick. The two were cousins, but many times removed, and for long years it was a moot point in controversy whether their relationship did not invalidate the marriage, but early last century there was discovered, in the archives of the Vatican, a dispensation from Pope Clement VI. granting the pontifical sanction thought to be necessary to the wedding. Elizabeth Mure was a woman of great personal beauty. She was an Ayrshire lass of the purest type, and, wedded to an Ayrshire lord, the children of the union were unmistakably the bairns of the county. Unfortunately, the Lady Elizabeth died before her husband came to the throne. David II. was childless, and so it may have been that she looked forward to royal estate, if not for her liege lord and herself, at least for their children. But unless this fair daughter of Rowallan was gifted with supernatural foresight beyond the others, it is not to be imagined that she was able to look down the vista that was to be unrolled in such pain and turmoil, in such stress and struggle, in romance mingling with folly and with the baser passions, and descry even darkly the vicissitudes that were to be attendant upon

her offspring and their descendants. For them the line was often to run through the valley of the shadow, and across the dark mountains. But, nevertheless, though attenuated, it was to be a straight and an unbroken line, and it runs still in the person of the monarch who sits upon the throne of the greatest empire that this world has ever seen. Ayrshire may well claim to be a royal county. Carrick for the Bruce, Kyle for the Steward, Cunningham for the mother of the Stuart monarchs—surely a threefold cord of fame of which the county may well be proud!

Robert II. lived much in Dundonald Castle, and some two or three years before his death, after the great national victory of Otterburn, he resigned the throne to his son, and retired to his quiet home on the hill of Dundonald, where, having attained to the ripe age of fourscore and four years, he died on the 13th of May, 1390. During his years of retiral he seems, from the Exchequer Rolls, to have lived well, and to have had a brave funeral. The people called him “Blear E’e,” because—a fact largely due to his birth—his eyes were red and watery, but he had shown himself a man of valour, he had loved sport in the days of his strength, and he had been a good King, concerned for the wellbeing of the turbulent country that he had been called to rule. After him came Robert III. He also identified himself with Dundonald, and his descendants after him, though in lessening degree, down till the days of James V.

In 1773 there came upon a visit to Dundonald, Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great lexicographer, and Boswell with him, and the latter tells how Johnson, as he noted the comparatively scant proportions of the ancient keep, “was very jocular at the homely accommodation of ‘King Bob,’ and roared and laughed till the ruins echoed.” But happiness, even Kingly happiness, is not an affair of Courts and gilded palaces, and it is probable that the years that Robert II. spent in his seclusion in Kyle Steward were not the least enjoyable and solacing of his life.

## CHAPTER VI

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### CENTURIES ON THE ANVIL

Dying, Robert the Bruce left Scotland free. He left her, none the less, impoverished, unsettled, and still a prey to English ambitions and to the jealousies that were seldom far away when the nation was being ruled by a Regent.

David Bruce was still a minor when his father, wearied and worn out by excessive labours and by the character of the life he had led in his struggle for the Crown and for national independence, passed to his well-earned rest; and Edward Baliol, the grandson of the competitor with the older Bruce, seized the opportunity of reasserting the family claim to the succession. Baliol had the support of the English barons, and of many of the disinherited and disaffected Scots lords. Entering Scotland with a considerable army, in the Spring of 1332, he captured and burned a castle in Roxburghshire commanded by Robert de Colville, who is supposed to have been one of the Colvilles of Ochiltree. In August of the same year he surprised and routed a host of 30,000 Scots at Dupplin, Perthshire, with a loss to the defeated of 13,000, and with them the Regent Mar himself. In this battle the Earl of Carrick, the natural son of Edward Bruce, who had been created Earl of Carrick by King Robert, was slain, and his brother, the Lord of Galloway, who had succeeded to the title, was so overwhelmed by the disaster that he forthwith swore allegiance to Baliol. But on the

succeeding Christmas Eve, the victor was surprised by Randolph, and by a younger brother of Sir James Douglas, and was driven into England; and the new Lord of Carrick, who had no great difficulty in demonstrating that his fealty had been wrung from him as the result of a combination of untoward circumstances that he could not control, obtained pardon. He does not seem to have enjoyed his honours long, however. In July, 1333, the Scots encountered the English at Halidon Hill, an eminence in Northumberland overlooking the Tweed, and were again defeated, upwards of ten thousand of them—according to some authorities, fourteen thousand—being left on the field; and among the slain was the Earl of Carrick.

Thirteen years after the Battle of Halidon Hill, a person styling himself Alexander Bruce, and claiming to be the Earl of Carrick, appeared in Scotland. His story was that he had fallen into the hands of the English and been carried away captive by them, that he had discreetly maintained his anonymity in their hands, and that ultimately, under the guise of a citizen of Aberdeen, he had succeeded in procuring his ransom. Then, as now, apparently, a clever adventurer had no great difficulty in obtaining credence for a plausible story. This pretender obtained access to Court, and was examined as to the truth of his narration, but, finding his efforts resultless, he made his way into Carrick, and appeared upon the scene of what he claimed to be his paternal inheritance. He was forthwith apprehended and put upon his trial as an impostor, and he closed his career upon the scaffold at Ayr. But for many years afterwards there were not wanting those who believed him to have been the genuine Lord of Carrick, and a victim to the wiles of those who were directly interested in compassing his death.

As the result of the disastrous issues at Dupplin and at Halidon Hill, Scotland for a time was, for most practical purposes, largely at the mercy of England, and overrun by troops of marauders, but, with that

extraordinary power of recuperation that stood the Scots in such good stead in many an hour of need, they rallied to the young King, who had already shown of what stuff he was made, fighting as a volunteer under the Earl of Moray in some of his excursions into England; and, in 1341, David unfurled the royal standard and called his loyal subjects to arms. The Ayrshire gentry responded to his call, Eglinton and Boyd, Craigie and Fullarton among them, and in 1346 he entered England at the head of an army of 30,000 men. Marching southward as far as Durham, the Scots laid waste the country with fire and sword. At Neville's Cross they encountered an English army, and were decimated and demoralised by the English archers. King David was but a poor substitute for his father in such an hour of need. He was urged to disperse the archers with cavalry, but in vain, and in less than three hours the Scottish army was a rout of fugitives. The King was taken prisoner, and, mounted on a tall, black horse, so that he might be the better seen of the citizens of London, he was conducted a captive to the Tower, where he remained for eleven years. Then, that he might obtain his release, he made a treaty with Edward, by which, as he had no children of his own, he constituted him his heir. Among the other captives were Thomas Boyd, believed to be of the Kilmarnock family; Andrew Campbell of Loudoun, and Roland Wallace of Kyle; and Gilbert de Carrick, who is believed to have been one of the early progenitors of the Kennedys, was mortally wounded.

Following the Battle of Durham, Baliol, backed by a body of English, and by a strong force of Galloway men, made another inroad upon Scotland, and on his way south, according to Fordun, he ravaged Ayrshire and Nithsdale in the most ferocious manner. Still, none the less, the Scots held fast by their independence. They repudiated the treaty that their King in captivity had signed; and Edward, recognising that he could hope to make nothing of a country which he could



overrun but which he could not hope to conquer, and which was a constant drain upon his exchequer, gave David his liberty. He died childless in 1371, and was succeeded on the throne by Robert, the son of Walter Stewart and Marjory Bruce.

The previous connections of the Stewarts with Ayrshire had been long and close. They had great possessions within the county, they had been associated with its public life, they had been pious in the founding and the endowment of its monasteries, and the square-built halls of Dundonald Castle knew them well. Robert II. never at best was a strong man, and he was a weak monarch. His eldest son, whom his predecessor on the throne had created Earl of Carrick, enjoyed also the title of Lord Kyle. Under the new monarch, the tension with England was less severe. Edward III. had given up all pretensions to the Scottish Crown, though there is no reason to believe that the English Government had ever relinquished the traditional hope of annexing the northern to the southern Kingdom. In 1382-3, Robert II. gave a license to the servants of the Earl of Carrick to carry barley from England into Scotland, and corn was allowed to be sent to various parts of Scotland; and in 1396 leave was granted to the Earls of Carrick and of Fyfe to buy and carry into Scotland wine and barley. But while these proofs of intercommunication were forthcoming, and while King Robert would gladly have reigned in peace, he was unable to restrain the turbulence of his barons. These, particularly the great Scottish lords on the Borders, organised a series of predatory raids upon England, and the English Border lords, nothing loath, reciprocated in like manner. The Scots were incited to action by the assistance, in men, in armour, and in money, of France; and among those who shared in the French bounty were the Earl of Carrick, to whom five thousand five hundred livres were given, and William Cunninghame of Kilmaurs, whose share was five hundred livres.

It was during this period of Border raiding and devastation that the Battle of Otterburn was fought, during the moonlight night of August 19, 1388; "the hardest and most obstinate battle," Froissart calls it, "that ever was fought." Under the Earls of Douglas, Dunbar, and Moray, a force of 2000 foot and 300 lancers had carried fire and sword through Northumberland and Durham. In a passage of arms before Newcastle, Douglas had carried off Percy's pennon, and had declared that he would plant it on his castle at Dalkeith. "By God, Earl of Douglas," said Hotspur, "you shall not even carry it out of Northumberland." The Scots tarried at Otterburn to give Percy an opportunity of winning his pennon back. Hotspur hastened after them with 8000 foot and 600 horse, and came upon the Scots while they were at supper. A desperate engagement at once began. While Douglas was hewing his way before him with his ponderous mace, he fell mortally wounded with three spear thrusts. "Long since," he said to the kinsmen who gathered about him, "I heard a prophecy that a dead man should win a field, and I hope to God it shall be I." His friends, returning to the fray, cried anew the Douglas's war cry, and towards morning they gained a complete victory, losing three hundred men, while the English loss, including Hotspur and his brother Ralph, was 1880.

In the English ballad of "Chevy Chase," which tells the story of the battle, there is an incident recorded that can never be without its interest for Ayrshire readers. It was an English arrow, according to the ballad, that struck Earl Douglas low. With the true chivalry of the period, Earl Percy kneeled on the ground by the side of his fallen foe, took the dead man by the hand, and sorrowed for his untimely death. His grief was swiftly and tragically ended:—

A Knight among the Scots there was  
Which saw Erle Douglas dye,  
Who straight in wrath did vow revenge  
Upon the Lord Percy.

Sir Hugh Mountgomerie was he called,  
 Who, with a speare most bright,  
 Well-mounted on a gallant steed  
 Ran fiercely through the fight.

And past the English archers all,  
 Without or dread or feare,  
 And through Erle Percy's body then  
 He thrust his hateful speare.

With such a vehement force and might  
 He did his body gore,  
 The staff ran through the other side  
 A large cloth-yard, and more.

So thus did both these nobles dye,  
 Whose courage none could staine ;  
 An English archer then perceived  
 The noble Erle was slain.

He had a bow bent in his hand  
 Made of a trusty tree ;  
 An arrow of a cloth-yard long  
 Up to the head drew he ;

Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerie  
 So right the shaft he set,  
 The grey-goose wing that was thereon,  
 In his heart's bloode was wet.

We have said that the English loss included Hotspur, and the balladist is graphically specific in detailing in what manner he fell, and in what tragic fashion his death was avenged upon Sir Hugh Montgomerie by the English Bowman, but there is good reason to believe that neither the one nor the other was slain upon the field, but that Montgomerie made capture of Percy—who is called Sir Henry Percy in the History of the Eglinton Family—and brought him with him to Scotland where he turned him to such good account that he was able, by the ransom that was paid for his release, to build the castle of Polnoon, the chief residence of the Montgomeries in the barony of Eaglesham in Renfrewshire. With Hotspur also he brought the famous pennon that had cost so much, and it remains with the Montgomeries to this day.

The story is told of Archibald William, the thirteenth Earl of Eglinton, that, in connection with the great Tournament of 1839, the then noble head of the Percy family had made overtures to him for the restoration of the pennon. "There's as good lea land at Eglinton," was his answer, "as ever there was at Otterburn; let Percy come and take it if he can."

For such a peace-loving monarch, these warrings of the barons were too much. Without the Earl of Douglas, who was his son-in-law, and upon whom he largely depended for the enforcement of the royal will, he found he could not hope to keep his refractory subjects in check, and, resigning the Crown to his son, Robert III., he retired to his palace of Dundonald, where he spent the remainder of his life amid a more placid environment than any he could hope for so long as he remained at the head of affairs. He died, April 19, 1390. By a charter of 1404, Robert III. established the principality of Scotland as an appanage for his eldest son, and annexed to it the barony of Cunningham, the barony of Kyle Stewart, the lands of Kyle Regis, the smaller Cumbrae, and the whole lands of the earldom of Carrick; and it is in virtue of this charter that the Prince of Wales enjoys to this day the title of Earl of Carrick. There are no events of outstanding interest, so far as Ayrshire is concerned, connected with this period, if we except the slaughter of one Neilson of Dalrymple, and others, by Sir Thomas Boyd of Kilmarnock. Details of this event there are none; it is interesting, however, as the first recorded incident in the Ayrshire feuds that were destined ere long to rage in all their virulence, to prove so disastrous to the county, and to continue, almost without intermission, by the space of full two hundred years.

Throughout the reign of James I. (1406-1437), the ablest of the Stuart Sovereigns, Ayrshire enjoyed comparative quiet. The county was alike clear from the reprisals made by the King upon the fierce nobles who had held the nation in thrall and from the intrigues

by which it was sought to undermine the royal power, and seems, on the whole, to have done what it was possible for the westland lords to do, to promote the reforms that James instituted for the behoof of the people as a whole. There were family feuds that went on apace, with disastrous consequences to life and estate. but these were confined to a few powerful families, the heads of which, if they had not had their hands full at home, would in all probability have exercised their too assertive energies in the larger troubles of the Kingdom.

When James I. was murdered in the monastery of the Dominicans at Perth, his son, James II. (1437-1460) was a child of six, and another Regency followed, with all its inevitable consequences of unbridled ambition, distraction, weakness, and dispeace. It was fortunate for the Queen mother, for the young King himself, and for the nation, that a wise counsellor and chancellor was found in James Kennedy, youngest son of the lord of Dunure. Kennedy was consecrated Bishop of Dunkeld in 1438, and he had no sooner entered upon spiritual office than he set himself to reform the evils that even then had begun to assail the Church and to bring her into conflict with the people. He went to Florence and obtained the necessary powers from Pope Eugenius IV. ; and, returning to Scotland as Bishop of St. Andrews, he wrought so zealously in the work of reformation, that it was recorded to his honour that "no man then living did remember to have seen the Church in such an estate." Honest, clear-sighted, and resolute, he proved a wise adviser to the boy King in the attempts that he endeavoured to make to bring the turbulent nobility under subjection. Not only did he control the King's education, but, on the death of the Queen Dowager, the whole power of the State was placed in his hands, and he ruled with great wisdom and discretion. He was still a power in the land when James II., not yet thirty years of age, was killed by the bursting of a cannon at the siege of the castle of Roxburgh ; and when James

III. (1460-1488) succeeded to the throne at the age of eight, he was spared to give him for five years the benefit of his sagacious counsel and guidance. His death in 1465 was regarded as a national calamity.

When Kennedy died, the youthful Sovereign fell into the hands of Lord Boyd of Kilmarnock and his brother, who abused their power. They humoured their royal charge in everything, and gave him a dislike for public business. He was permitted to indulge his love of pleasure and amusement at will, with the result that he was, as has been said, "shaped into a feeble idler, a crowned trifler, incapable of a King's work, or a man's." Kennedy had appointed Sir Alexander Boyd, Lord Boyd's brother, tutor of the Prince in his martial exercises. According to the popular histories of this reign, Alexander Boyd was a mirror of chivalry in all noble and knightly accomplishments, and he had therefore no difficulty in gaining an influence over his royal charge and in transferring it to his brother. Lord Boyd formed a powerful league for the concentration of influence and for securing the perquisites and privileges of office in his own hands, and in those of his friends. The league included Gilbert, Lord Kennedy, the elder brother of the Bishop, Lord Montgomerie, and Lord Cathcart, and the members of it bound themselves, during the whole continuance of their lives, to stand together and to oppose any who might endeavour to remove the King's person from the hands of the lord of Kilmarnock, and of Lord Kennedy, whom he had most closely associated with himself in maintaining his guardianship of the royal ward. The ambitious project of the Boyds was not long in being realised. Lord Boyd and his friends, among whom was Andrew Ker of Cessford, proceeded to Linlithgow, July 10, 1466, and persuaded the King to dismiss from his presence those who had been ordered to attend upon him by the Estates, and to accompany them to Edinburgh. Lord Kennedy seems to have appreciated the dangers of such an enterprise, and, probably with a view to the exculpation

of himself from its hazards, threw himself in the way of the cavalcade, and attempted "with well-dissembled violence" to lead the King back to the palace, but a blow from the hunting-staff of Sir Alexander Boyd put an end to his interference.

For a time the power of the Boyds waxed greater and greater. At a meeting of Parliament in the Autumn of the same year, Lord Boyd was solemnly pardoned by the King for his abduction, and appointed Governor of His Majesty and his brothers, and of the royal castles. He was created by another charter Governor of the Kingdom of Scotland until the King should come of age. He married his son, Thomas, to Mary, the eldest sister of the King, the Isle of Arran was given her as a dowry, and her husband was raised to the dignity of Earl of Arran. In 1467, Lord Boyd himself was constituted Great Chamberlain of Scotland for life. He renewed the league with his friends for mutual protection and support. Large estates in Ayrshire and elsewhere were given to the Earl of Arran and his Countess. Arran was placed at the head of the Commission that visited the Courts of Europe for the purpose of finding a wife for the King, and that concluded a treaty with the King of Denmark, under which the latter covenanted to give his daughter, Margaret, in marriage to the young King of Scotland. In 1469 he returned to Denmark with a royal retinue to bring home the Queen elect. This was the culminating point in his greatness and in the fortunes of the Boyds. When, in the Summer of that year, the ship arrived in Leith roads with the bride, the Countess of Arran hastened on board to convey evil tidings to her husband. In his absence his enemies, and the enemies of his house, had been at work, and had undermined his influence with the Sovereign. There was even a serious danger that Arran, instead of being accorded a public welcome, as the envoy of his royal brother-in-law, might be placed under arrest; and Arran, realising his danger, lost no time in securing his own personal safety, and fled with his wife to Denmark.

This was the beginning of the end, and the fall of the house of Boyd was as swift as its rise had been, and far more inevitable. Lord Boyd mustered his vassals and marched to Edinburgh in the hope of overawing Parliament and reasserting his power ; but he was now advanced in years ; his friends, marking how the royal wind was blowing, refused to respond to his call ; his small army became disheartened when they saw the royal standard unfurled to the breeze ; and the veteran justiciar, deserted of all save his immediate followers, fled to England. Sir Alexander, his brother, was taken to the Castle Hill of Edinburgh, November 22, 1469, and was beheaded. The Countess of Arran deserted her husband in his exile and returned to Scotland, and he, a wanderer and forsaken, died at Antwerp, where—a poor solatium—a magnificent monument was erected to his memory by Charles the Bold. The family estates were forfeited ; the lordship of Bute and castle of Rothesay, the lordship of Cowal and castle of Dunoon, the earldom of Carrick, the lands and castle of Dundonald, the barony of Renfrew, the lordship and castle of Kilmarnock, and other goodly heritages in various parts of the country.

Even in the chequered and kaleidoscopic history of Scotland in her most stormy and uncertain times, there have been few examples of so speedy a rise and so rapid a fall as that of the Boyds of Kilmarnock. In comparison with their neighbours, they were certainly no worse than most of them. They did not conspicuously abuse their powers or oppress the country. As compared with some other nobles of the period, Lord Boyd acted with considerable moderation. They were ambitious, however ; and “ by that sin fell the angels.” They grasped at influence, at rank, at estates, at emoluments, and every accession to their dignity and to their wealth was at somebody’s expense, and created bitterness in quarters not likely to be unmindful of it. The Earl of Arran is represented by contemporary writers as both bounteous and courteous. He is described in a letter written to



Sir John Paston, Knight, by his brother, as "one of the lightest, delyverst (nimblest), best-spoken, fairest archers; devoutest, most perfect, and truest to his lady of all the knights that ever I was acquainted with; so would God my lady liked me as well as I his person, and most knightly conditions, with whom I pray you to be acquainted as to you seemeth best." It seems probable that the Countess of Arran was in the plot against her husband. She fled with him to Denmark indeed, but only to return to Scotland again; and, later, having procured a divorce from her husband, she was married to James Lord Hamilton, to whom, it is said, she had been pledged previously. The lady may have been innocent, but the whole environment is suggestive. In any event, the fall of the Boyds was complete. Their brief day was brilliant while it lasted, but, when their day waned to night, there was no coming morrow of glory behind it.

James IV. closed his reign in the thirty-fifth year of his age. The rebel barons, Albany and Angus at their head, had raised the standard of rebellion. Securing the person of Prince James, the heir-apparent, they brought him into the field at the battle of Sauchieburn, which was fought within a mile or two of the decisive scene of Bannockburn. The battle went sore against the King, he sought safety in flight, and, his horse falling, he was carried into a mill, where he was stabbed to the heart with a dagger by one of his pursuers. In this affair, Hugh, third Lord Montgomerie, who was afterwards created Earl of Eglinton, and Lord Kilmaurs, upon whom was conferred the title of Earl of Glencairn, fought in the victorious army. John Ross of Mountgreenan, the King's Lord Advocate, was on the losing side, and, after the accession of James IV., he was deprived of his honours and estates, the latter being given to Patrick Hume of Fastcastle. During the reign of James IV. (1488-1513), Ayrshire was largely outwith the range of its excitements, and enjoyed a period of comparative tranquillity.

To help the King of France to resist invasion by Henry of England, the Scots monarch had a fleet fitted out and placed under the command of Hamilton, the new Earl of Arran. Had the Earl done his duty, he would have sailed south into waters where his services might have been of some use, but in place of doing so, and for some unexplained reason, he and his command sailed into the port of Ayr, and then, when they had victualled and watered, departed for Carrickfergus in Ireland, where they landed and stormed the town with wanton barbarity. When they had wreaked their vengeance upon the citizens, and looted them of their portable and valuable possessions, they returned to Ayr loaded with booty. The King was naturally highly incensed at the folly or stupidity of Arran, and gave orders for his supercession, but before these could be put in force the fleet had weighed anchor for the south. James had his hands full. He had quarrelled with his brother-in-law, Henry VIII., and had invaded England with a powerful army. The English army, superior in numbers, and led by the Earl of Surrey, himself a tower of strength in the day of war, found them, September 9, 1513, encamped on the height of Flodden, a broad-backed ridge forming the termination of the Cheviot Hills.

There is no need to tell the familiar story of that too fateful day. Surrounded by his nobles, the King fought with desperate valour, and it was not until the night came down that the carnage ceased. Besides the King himself, there lay dead on the field two bishops, two mitred abbots, twelve earls, thirteen lords, and five eldest sons of peers, and the total loss to the Scots was about ten thousand men. The English dead were about five thousand. Among the Scots dead were David, the first Earl of Cassillis, whose second wife, Margaret Boyd, was a daughter of the dispossessed Earl of Arran, and a third cousin of James IV.; and the Earl of Glencairn. The Abbot of Kilwinning was also slain; and among the knights and gentlemen of lesser note were Sir David Dunbar of Cumnock and Mochrum, and Robert Colville,

the laird of Ochiltree. The Earl of Eglinton, who had espoused the cause of the young Prince at Sauchieburn, and had been materially enriched and advanced by him after he had ascended the throne, does not seem to have been at Flodden. On the death of the King, however, he was appointed one of the tutors of the royal child, then an infant of eighteen months.

Again the unavoidable Regency produced its inevitable results. A powerful faction, wrought upon by the internal jealousies of the Kingdom, not less than by English influence and by English gold, espoused the cause of the hereditary enemy; among them the Earl of Glencairn and Mure of Caldwell. Glencairn threw himself into the work of anarchy, and turned his feudal jealousies against the Montgomeries into various overt acts of violence, which the Montgomeries did not fail to reciprocate. The Master of Kilmaurs, afterwards fourth Earl of Glencairn, was in receipt of a regular pension from Henry VIII., and he was one of the chiefs of an expedition, commanded by the Earl of Angus, that scaled the walls of Edinburgh, one November night in 1524, and put an end to the government of the Secret Council, and gave Angus control of the young King, whose majority was declared when he was of the age of fourteen. Of this Secret Council Glencairn was a member, and he was a leader in the army, raised by Lennox and Chancellor Beaton, that afterwards encountered, and that was defeated by, the royal troops. Gilbert, the second Earl of Cassillis, had distinguished himself in opposition to the triumphant Douglasses, and his lands in consequence were forfeited and given to the Earl of Arran, who does not, however, seem ever to have taken possession of them. "By large gifts, and the sacrifice of the Abbey of Kilwinning," Beaton made his peace with his enemies, "and counted himself happy in being permitted to retire from Court;" and the lands of the insurgent lords were forfeited. But the Douglas triumph was not of long duration. In 1528, the young King, who by this time was sixteen years of age, escaped from

Falkland to Stirling in the guise of a yeoman, and among those who hastened to congratulate him on having regained his liberty were the Earl of Eglinton and Lord Montgomerie.

From that period until the death of James V., in 1542, Ayrshire had enough ado with her own affairs, the broils of the barons, their raidings, and their blood feuds. Within the limited area of the shire they reflected, in many respects, the life of the period in Scotland. Things, nevertheless, were working on to something better. The Reformers were beginning to assert themselves and to claim freedom from spiritual thralldom, and events were slowly maturing that were destined in the end to prove an incalculable blessing to the long distracted country.

With the death of James V., in 1542, there followed still another Regency, with all its familiar baneful and disruptive consequences. It was the rout of Solway Moss, the defeat of ten thousand Scots by a mere handful of English, that broke the heart of the King. As he lay on what proved to be his deathbed in the palace of Falkland, suffering from a low fever, word was brought to him that the Queen had borne to him a daughter. "It will end as it began," he said; "it came with a woman, and it will go with a woman"—alluding to Marjorie, the daughter of Robert the Bruce, with whom the Crown of Scotland had come into the Stuart line, and foreseeing the troubles that were likely to eventuate in the person of the infant Princess, the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. In the rout of Solway Moss, the Earls of Cassillis and Glencairn had been taken prisoner. Most of the other Ayrshire leaders had "abided from the army" on that occasion, the Earl and the Master of Eglinton, Neil Montgomerie of Lainshaw, Charles Mowat of Busby, John Craufurd, brother of the Laird of Kilbirnie, and Charles Campbell of Skerrington among them.

Both Cassillis and Glencairn had espoused the reformed cause. Gilbert, the third Earl of Cassillis, had

been in early life a pupil of the famous George Buchanan, who held him in high esteem, and with whom for some years he travelled on the Continent of Europe; and, during his imprisonment in England, he had been committed to the care of Archbishop Cranmer, who is said to have been the means of converting him to Protestantism. He obtained his release under a bond to advance the cause of the King of England in Scotland, and to join with others in obtaining possession of the person of the young Queen. Glencairn's whole life, according to Chalmers, in the "Caledonia," "consisted of acts of treason;" which probably means no more than that he had associated himself with the English party in Scotland, whose Protestant sympathies were so pronounced that they were ready to play any part in their promotion, even to the extent of sacrificing the independence of the nation, in order to achieve their purpose. With them, too, were Lord Boyd and Lord Ochiltree, the former of whom eventually proved himself a tried friend to the Queen, to whom he faithfully adhered until the total suppression of her interest. The head of the essentially national party, who would have none of the wiles of the English Sovereign, was Cardinal Beaton, a Roman Catholic Prelate of great power and ability, and of corresponding ambition; and he prevailed so successfully with the Scots nobles as a body, that Cassillis seems to have fallen in with a project, mooted by the friends of England, for his assassination; a project which Henry VIII. "did not dislike." Ultimately, the Cardinal did fall a victim to assassination, but before that the ardour of Cassillis in that direction had abated, and he was in no way concerned in the murder of Beaton in the Castle of St. Andrews in 1646. The fact seems to be that the Earl, after the manner of the time, felt himself, as many another Scottish noble had to do over a long succession of years, compelled to adapt his line of conduct in public affairs to suit his own interests, and not to endanger these in such a fashion as to imperil his estates.

It is only by bearing this fact prominently in mind—by remembering the uncertainties of the period and the dangers that were inseparable from actively promoting the cause either of the English party in Scotland, or of the powerful national coalition that regarded with the utmost jealousy every attempt that was made to strengthen the position of the English cause in Scotland—that one can appreciate what may appear to be the double-dealing of many of the gentry. It was no light matter for them to forfeit their estates, their honours, their dignities; and so, while they were fain to identify themselves with either the one cause or the other, they were careful to keep an eye on the future and not to commit themselves so irretrievably as to involve themselves in ultimate ruin.

Thus while, as has been said, Cassillis and Glencairn had compacted to promote the English cause in Scotland, and had espoused the proposal to wed the young Queen with the heir-apparent to the English throne, we find them, together with the Douglasses, signing, in 1543, a bond or agreement stipulating for “themselves and all others their complices and partakers, to remain true, faithful, and obedient servants to their sovereign lady and her authority, to assist the lord governor for defence of the realm against their old enemies of England, to support the liberties of holy church and to maintain the true Christian faith.” As one of the pledges of their loyalty, the Master of Kilmaurs, Glencairn’s eldest son, surrendered himself; within two months, nevertheless, they had dispatched a messenger to England to urge invasion of Scotland, and had suggested how it was to be accomplished; an army by land, and a fleet to descend upon the west coast. King Henry found them uncertain allies. “They have not stiked,” he declares in a minute to the Duke of Suffolk, “to take upon them to set the Crown of Scotland upon our head;” but, “where has now become all their force and courage? What meant they to take upon (them) to great maistry and to be able to perform in deed so little?” This was

written in November, 1543; the following month brought a minute of a letter from Suffolk to Henry's pensioners in Scotland, with an account of the sums of money that had been distributed to them, 200 merks to Glencairn, 200 merks to Cassillis, and £100 sterling to Hugh Campbell, the Sheriff of Ayr.

It was evident by this time that the English party in Scotland was becoming steadily weaker, and it was not long until the only two nobles left to it were the Earl of Lennox and the Earl of Glencairn, the latter one of the ablest and most powerful men of his time in Scotland, whose son, the Master of Kilmaurs, had capacity sufficient to execute the schemes matured in the mind of his father. Henry endeavoured to knit them to his cause by granting a handsome pension to Glencairn and his son. For practical purposes they had renounced allegiance to their own proper Sovereign, but they compromised with their own consciences by undertaking to see that the Word of God was truly taught in their territories, esteeming the Bible the only foundation from which all truth and honour proceed. Glencairn took up arms against the Regent, and boldly confronted the forces of the Crown with five hundred spearmen on a wide common outside Glasgow. Glencairn was defeated by superior numbers, after a fierce conflict in which his spearmen were severely decimated and his second son slain, the rest of the party being either dispersed or made prisoners. The Earl himself found safety in flight, and the cause of Henry in Scotland was rendered desperate. In June, 1544, the principal Scots nobility signed an agreement to support the authority of the Queen mother as Regent of Scotland, and to this bond Cassillis adhibited his name.

The Earl of Lennox attempted to retrieve the English cause by an invasion of the west coast from his ships. His object was to seize Dumbarton. In this he failed, but he invaded Kintyre, and, landing his men on the Ayrshire seaboard, plundered the coasts of Kyle and Carrick. No doubt Lennox expected to effect a junction

with Glencairn, but the lord of Kilmaurs had had enough of it for the time being, and, when Lennox went south and reported the failure of his enterprise, the English Chancellor inveighed against "the old fox and his cub," whose services he had so lately purchased, and whose excuses for their failure to respond were regarded as falsehoods. In the November of 1544, a Scottish force of seven thousand men marched south to the Borders and laid siege to Coldingham, then held by the English. The assumption that the internecine troubles were at an end, and that Scotland was once more united, was dissipated by the discovery that the Douglasses and their friends were still in secret correspondence with England, and in the demoralisation that ensued the Scots were chased from the field by an English force no more than two thousand strong. In this disgraceful rout, Angus, with whom were Glencairn, Cassillis, and Sir Hugh Campbell, the Sheriff of Ayr, opposed no resistance whatever to the enemy. In danger from both sides, as men must be who are playing a double game, they made friends with the mammon of unrighteousness—in this case with the more powerful Scots lords, the while they did not break with their English allegiance—and succeeded in obtaining absolution from a charge of treason that was hanging over their heads; a "remission for all treasons committed by them, in return for the good service done, or to be done, to the realm."

In 1545, Cassillis was again advising the English monarch regarding the invasion of Scotland, and openly advising the Scots nobles to come to terms with Henry, assuring them that the King would forget what had passed, and that he would forbear to avenge the injuries he had received. Cardinal Beaton's influence, however, prevailed, and Cassillis, recognising that he could not hope to succeed so long as that wily and astute man had the ear of the nobles, conceived the idea of removing him from the scene altogether. He addressed a letter to Sir Ralph Sadler, the English Ambassador, in which he made an offer "for the killing of the Cardinal, if only



His Majesty would have it done, and promise, when it was done, a reward." To this plot Glencairn was privy. The King's reply was very politic :—" If he were in the Earl of Cassillis's place, and were as able to do His Majesty's good service there, as he knoweth him to be, and thinketh in him a right good will in him to do it, he would surely do what he could for the execution of it, believing verily to do thereby, not only an acceptable service to the King's Majesty, but also a special benefit to the realm of Scotland, and would trust verily the King's Majesty would consider his service in the same." It was in this same communication that Henry " did not mislike the offer," but he was too strategic to commit himself, and in his reply he managed to leave the whole responsibility with Cassillis and his friends. But they, while willing enough to slaughter the Cardinal, had no mind to commit themselves to such a desperate venture without the direct countenance of Henry, and without some definite assurance of the reward; and so far as any of the Ayrshire nobles were concerned, the scheme went no further.

In such fashion, with plot and counter plot, with intrigue and counter intrigue, runs the story of the times. It is hard to define, it is impossible to explain, the workings of the policy of Cassillis, Glencairn, and their friends. In 1557 we find Cassillis resisting the making of a Scots invasion of England, and declaring, on the other hand, to Lord Westmoreland, one of the English Commissioners, that he would never be French, and that the Scots " would die, every mother's son of us," rather than be subject to England. The year following he was one of the Scots' Commissioners to France—he who had been so powerful a supporter of the English marriage—to arrange for the marriage of Queen Mary with the Dauphin. This was the last public act of his life. While on his way home, he was one of the Commissioners who met with a mysterious death at Dieppe, where, it is supposed, they were poisoned because they refused to sanction the Dauphin wearing

the Crown Matrimonial of Scotland. Glencairn continued the pursuit of that policy that won for him the name of "the Old Fox." That he was sincerely zealous for the cause of the Reformation, by that time coming rapidly to the front, there can be no doubt, but he played his part with the astuteness of a statesman who for long felt the necessity of maintaining his own position intact whatever might befall. His zeal for the Reformation brought him into active resistance to Mary of Guise, the Queen Regent, with whom, in company with Sir Hugh Campbell of Loudoun, he remonstrated plainly regarding her dealings with the western preachers of the new faith, and whose army, when it was in the act of besieging Perth, he compelled to negotiation by his appearance on the scene backed by two thousand five hundred men whom he had led with him from Ayrshire.

Throughout all the reign of the Queen of Scots the realm remained distracted, a prey to rival and contending factions. With the multitudinous troubles of the times we do not deal. Mary had no more faithful or devoted friend than Robert, fourth Lord Boyd. When, in 1568, the unfortunate Queen watched from the hill top the decisive Battle of Langside, which drove her into exile in England, and ultimately to her death at Fotheringay, Boyd was by her side. The prisoners included the Lord Ross, the Masters of Eglinton and Cassillis, the Sheriff of Ayr, and a son of the Abbot of Kilwinning. On the other side, Lord Ochiltree was severely wounded, "receiving his chief wound with a sword in his neck, given by the Lord Harris." In addition to Lord Boyd, the noblemen that were with the Queen included Gilbert, fourth Earl of Cassillis, who had adhered to the Roman Catholic faith, and who continued in communication with Queen Mary after she was a prisoner in England; and Hugh, third Earl of Eglinton, who also remained true to her interest after her defeat. The latter had been closely associated with Mary at various points in her career. He had opposed her marriage with Bothwell, however, after the death of Darnley, and had been one

of those who had leagued themselves together to take the young Prince James from their power. And later, when James VI. had fallen under the influence of the Earl of Lennox and Captain James Stewart of Ochiltree, for some time Earl of Arran, he had joined with Glencairn and other nobles to take him, by force if necessary, from their hands. The which they did by means of the Raid of Ruthven.

But by this time the fight was one for the faith, and, in the matter of her religion, Scotland had exchanged the old order for the new ; the new, nevertheless, that was destined in its later developments to bring a fresh and terrible series of trials upon the long distracted nation.

## CHAPTER VII

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### THE AYRSHIRE VENDETTA

It could serve no good purpose to examine into the *morale* of the series of blood feuds that were characteristic of the Ayrshire of the sixteenth century. They had begun earlier, and they extended into the opening years of the seventeenth century, but it was the sixteenth century—the period of the first Reformation—that was essentially the era of the vendetta. It was one of the products of the times, due to the disturbed condition of the country, the lack of control at the instance of the Crown, and the power wielded by the great nobles. The Reformation, though not on the religious side, had a share in accentuating it, if not in its origin; for first the prospective, and then the actual overthrow of the Church of Rome in Scotland, with the consequent transference of rich lands and heritages to the nobility, begat a series of interested jealousies that, as the times went, could only have resulted in those appeals to force that were so much more effective at headquarters than anything merely after the manner of moral suasion could have been. The blood feud cannot possibly be defended on the social or moral code of the twentieth century, but it was the custom of the country; it was a recognition of the fact that, whether might was right or not, it was the only thing that could practically avail. The Crown was not strong enough to put the rival feudalists down, and so it stood aside in large measure, and let the rivals fight it out.

In 1488, King James IV., with a view to the establishment of peace and good government within his realm, appointed representatives in the various districts of Ayrshire to keep the peace for him. There were "the Lord Kennedy for Carrick, the Schereff of Are for Are, the Laird of Cragy for Kile, the Lord of Montgummerry for Cunynghame." These had power to search and seek out offenders, to execute them after legal trial, and to compel "other Lords" within their bounds to rise and assist them whenever they thought it necessary to call upon them. Up to 1448-9 the office of King's Bailie for Cunningham had been vested in the Earl of Glencairn, the head of the great house of the Cunninghames, and the rival of the Earl of Eglinton for ascendancy and power of dominion in North Ayrshire, and it was the transference of the chief magistracy to Eglinton that had given life to the long and bloody feud that forthwith set in.

Before proceeding to tell the somewhat tragic story of this famous vendetta, it is interesting to note, from the judicial records of the period, that the Montgomeries themselves, whose chief was the Bailie, were not exempt from the attention of the Court of Justiciary. In 1505 the Master of Montgomerie was summoned to the Court of Justiciary at Dumfries for the wounding of William Cunninghame of Craigens. He failed to appear, and the case was continued, with what ultimate result the records do not show. In 1508 the Earl of Eglinton obtained a remission for the "spuilzie" of twelve horses, besides boots, spurs, swords, and other goods, from the servants of the Lady of Home, for lifting four and twenty of her cows furth of Galloway, and for wounding one of her servants. And in 1511, at the Justiciary of Ayr, the Earl and nine others were conjunctly fined in eight hundred and twenty-six pounds six shillings and eightpence Scots money—the Scots value of money at the time was but a twelfth of the sterling value—for felony and oppression done to a burgess of Irvine, for the theft from his house of pots, pans, plates, and pewter

vessels, for cruelly striking his wife with "back strokes," for putting him, first in confinement in the Tolbooth of Irvine, and then in the stocks, and for cruelly pulling out his wife's hair in great quantities. This offence throws a curious and a very dark sidelight upon the manners of the times, and the extent to which looting went, on occasion. It looks as if the burgher's wife had defended herself against the spoilers of her pots and pans and other domestic utensils, and that the marauders had retaliated upon her in a fashion that quite merited the heavy punishment inflicted upon them by the Lords of Justiciary.

The first serious overt act in the feud was the sacking and burning of Turnlaw, or Kerelaw Castle, one of the smaller fortress keeps of the Cunninghames, in the parish of Stevenston, which, even in its ruins, bears witness to its sufficiency for the troublous times when, looking out on the one hand towards the Castle of Montgomerie on the banks of the Lugton, and on the other to the Castle of Ardrossan, another of the many keeps of the Eglinton clan, it was so situated in the very heart of the enemy's country as to make it a special object of aversion to the Montgomeries. They descended upon it when it was bereft of the men-at-arms, who could have given account of themselves and of their charge behind the shelter of its powerful bulwarks, and consigned it to the flames. These could not reduce the massive masonry, but they cleared it out, and left the keep, what it remains to this day, a ruin. The Cunninghames delayed their vengeance. They did not forget the deed recalled to them by the blackened walls of their erst fair and stately fortalice, but they bided their time. The weeks grew into months, the months into years, and the years stretched out until, in 1505, Cunninghame of Craigens, the King's Coroner for the neighbouring shire of Renfrew, was waylaid by the Master of Montgomerie and seriously wounded. The Master, as we have seen, was summoned to the Court of Justiciary, but he did not answer to the summons. In January of 1507, the Cunninghames came in some force

upon Lord Montgomerie, and a hot conflict ensued. Lord Montgomerie was wounded, and lives were lost on both sides. Two years later the differences between the two families were adjudicated upon by arbiters mutually chosen, and these decided in favour of the Earl of Eglinton. For the time being that settled the question of the Bailieship, but it did not the more because of that find approval with the Earl of Glencairn and the Cunninghames. They could not forget that the chief local position and honour had been theirs, and that they had been taken from them.

But just then the magnates of Cunningham had other matters to think of, as had all Scotland besides. Troubles were brewing with England, and were working onwards to Flodden. It was characteristic of the Scottish nobility of the period that they recognised that the nation had the first call upon the loyalty and the services of her sons; and so for the time they let their feudal antipathies go to rest, and representatives of both families were present on September 9, 1513, when James IV. fought his last battle, when the Scots lost, according to different estimates, from 5000 to 12,000 men, and, when night fell upon the still unbroken ring of the Scottish centre, the dead monarch in the "thickest" of the slain. The rout of Flodden threw Scotland into a condition of distraction, two great opposing factions arose, and Glencairn took sides against the Regent, the Duke of Albany, who landed from France, where he had resided, at Ayr. In 1516 Glencairn was engaged in the conspiracy to depose Albany, and the following year the Master of Glencairn was an active participator in the work of anarchy. For twelve years after the accession of James V. there is a blank in the official Justiciary records, but among the remissions and respites still extant is one that appears to indicate that the Cunninghames had not forgotten their grudge against their rivals of Eglinton. It runs as follows:—

"April 24, 1517.—Remission to Sir William Cunnynghame, Knight, Master of Glencarne, son and

heir-apparent of Cuthbert, Earl of Glencarne, and twenty-seven others, for the cruel slaughter of Mr. Matthew Montgomery, Archibald Caldwell, and John Smyth, committed on forethought felony; and for the hurting of John (Master of) Montgomery, son and heir-apparent of Hugh, Earl of Eglintoune," etc.

In the distracted state of Scotland, no penal consequences of any kind followed this encounter. The Duke of Albany exerted himself in 1523 to promote amity between the lords of Cunningham, but, although he succeeded outwardly, and they agreed to lay aside their quarrels, it soon became evident that the truce was to be honoured in the breach rather than in the observance. The Earl of Eglinton was evidently blessed with a long memory. He remembered the outrage done upon his son and heir and his followers, nor did he cry quits for that untoward event until he had taken the life of Edward Cunninghame of Auchenharvie. When and where the laird of Auchenharvie was slain does not appear from the records, but the deed must have been one of considerable heinousness; for when, in 1526, the Earl of Eglinton, with Hugh Campbell of Loudoun, William Wallace, tutor of Craigie, and many more were absolved from the consequences of treasonably arraying themselves in battle against Albany, "and for all crime that may follow thereupon, and for all other treasons, slaughters, etc., in any time byegone," special exception was noted for "the slaughter of the deceased Edward Cunynghame of Auchenharvy." The exception, however, may have been due in some degree to the fact that eleven days before, the Earl and his son, James Montgomerie, and Archibald Crawford of Haining had been fined £100 each for not answering to the summons to account for the laird's death at their hands. Shortly afterwards some of Lord Eglinton's dependents slew Archibald Cunninghame of Waterstoun, no doubt also in pursuance of the vendetta.

By the slaughter of Archibald Cunninghame of Waterstoun, the Montgomeries had filled up the cup of



their offending. The Earl of Glencairn could no longer ignore the fact that his rivals were asserting themselves in a fashion that called for stern reprisal, and it can hardly be doubted that he was urged to revenge by the heads of the houses that looked to the lord of Kilmaurs as their chief. They called their dependents about them, mustered in force, and, led by the Master of Glencairn, and assisted by their friends from Renfrewshire, raided the lands of the Montgomeries, destroying not only the houses, but the very corn in the fields, and finally consummated their vengeance by giving Eglinton Castle itself to the flames. Fortunately for the family whose home was in the great tower on the banks of the Lugton, they had taken refuge in Ardrossan Castle.

So, briefly, the story of this raid is told in the chronicles of the period, but the event itself is of too great consequence to be passed over as if it were nothing more than a mere incident in the feud. The North Ayrshire that witnessed it must indeed have been an unsettled place, when the one great family of the division could thus carry all the terrors of war into the domain of the other. Kerelaw had been burned by the Montgomeries, Craigens had been waylaid and wounded, Auchenharvie had been slain, Waterstoun had similarly fallen a victim to the men of Eglinton ; and, behind and beyond these was the occasion of the trouble, the taking away from Glencairn of the Bailieship. These were all stones of stumbling, they were all rocks of offence. For the Cunninghames the highways of the bailiary had become dangerous, none could tell what a day might bring forth, and nothing remained but to do by the Montgomeries, though on an infinitely larger scale, what the Montgomeries had done by them. The raid, no doubt, was planned in secret. No time was given to the Montgomeries to be ready against it ; and when the Master of Glencairn led his men out from the shelter of Kilmaurs Castle, nothing remained for them but to pillage, and burn, and slay. They hasted on their errand. There was harvest in the fields; it was destroyed.

There were sheep on the pastures and cattle on the braes; they were either killed or driven off. The houses of the Eglinton retainers were burned, families were rendered homeless, despoiled of goods, and gear, and corn, and stock. The passage of the raiders was marked by the curling smoke that rose up to the sky behind them, by the desolation they created, by the smouldering barns and the roofless dwellings. Eglinton was unprepared to receive them, and the castle fell into their hands. As Kerelaw had gone up in fire and smoke, so should the ancestral home of the Montgomeries. The torch was applied, and the spreading flames did the rest. They spared nothing, neither the oaken floors nor the carved ceilings, nor the tapestry, nor the paintings, nor the ornaments, nor the furniture. They ransacked the muniment room, and the records of the family back to the very days of the Norman Conquest, and the Charter to the lands of Montgomerie, given under the Great Seal, were changed into tinder. The wreck, the ruin, was complete.

Looking across the country from the strength of Ardrossan, the lord of Eglinton could see the smoke of his home that darkened the sky, and, when the night fell, he could see the glare above that pulsed against the gloom. Can it be doubted that he vowed vengeance?

But a second time the feud was stayed in its progress by events in the larger, the national area, and, before the next great blow was struck in the feud, that Earl of Eglinton had died, there was another lord in Kilmaurs, and all the men of that generation had ceased from their raiding.

Fifty-eight years had passed before the feud broke out again in an act of savage violence. Whether direct occasion led up to it cannot now be said. In the interim much had occurred to fan the flames of feudal antipathy. The Reformation had been consummated. There had been a division of the Church lands and influence. The Earl of Glencairn, the head of the Cunninghame family, had obtained for Alexander Cunninghame of Montgreenan

the Commendatorship of the Abbey of Kilwinning, in some measure a partial counterpoise for the loss of the Bailiesship of the division. There may have been individual matters of faith, or of policy, at stake; whether or not, the general state of the times was inimical to the spirit of amity between clans with a record of feudal hatred so long and so engrained as that of the rival lords of North Ayrshire. The embers were smouldering all the time, and it only required a touch of the torch to rekindle the conflagration in all its fury. And the touch of the torch was not lacking.

It was the Spring of 1586, and Hugh, the fourth Earl of Eglinton, then in the early prime of life, set forth to ride to Stirling, where the Court was sitting at the time. On his way, and within easy ride of the castle on the banks of the Lugton, was the house of Lainshaw, close by the ancient town of Stewarton. The baron who dwelt there, a scion of the house of Eglinton, was wedded to Margaret Cunninghame, a daughter of the rival faction, and who, according to the story that has been handed down, had, notwithstanding her alliance, retained intact and unimpaired her family hatred for the Montgomeries. The story of what befel, and its consequences, is thus told in a manuscript history of the Eglinton family :—

“The principal perpetrators of this foul deed were John Cunninghame, brother of the Earl of Glencairn, David Cunninghame of Robertland, Alexander Cunninghame of Corsehill, Alexander Cunninghame of Aiket, and John Cunninghame of Clonbeith. The good Earl, apprehending no danger from any quarter, set out on the 15th April, 1586, from his own house of Eglinton, towards Stirling, where the Court then remained, in a quiet and peaceable manner, having none in his retinue but his own domestics, and called at the Lainshaw, where he stayed so long as to dine. How the wicked crew, his murderers, got notice of his being there I cannot positively say. It is reported, but I cannot aver it for a truth, that the Lady Langshaw, Margaret Cunninghame,

who was a daughter of the house of Aiket (others say it was a servant who was a Cunninghame), went up to the battlement of the house, and hung over a white table napkin as a signal to the Cunninghames, most of whom lived in sight of the house of Langshaw; which was the sign agreed should be given when the Earl of Eglinton was there. Upon that the Cunninghames assembled to the number of thirty-four persons, or thereby, in a warlike manner, as if they had been to attack or to defend themselves from an enemy, and concealed themselves in a low ground near the bridge of Annick, where they knew the Earl was to pass, secure, as he apprehended, from every danger, when, alas! all of a sudden the whole bloody gang set upon the Earl and his small company, some of whom they hewed to pieces, and John Cunninghame of Clonbeith came up with a pistol, and shot the Earl dead on the place. The horror of the fact struck everybody with amazement and consternation, and all the country ran to arms either on the one side of the quarrel or the other, so that for some time there was a scene of bloodshed and of murder in the West that had never been known before. The Earl of Glencairn disowned all knowledge of, or having any accession, directly or indirectly, in this foul murder; and indeed left his friends to the law, which confirmed everybody of his innocence of the wicked fact. In the meantime the friends of the family of Eglinton flocked to the Master of Eglinton, his brother, to assist him in revenging his brother's death, from all quarters; and, in the heat of their resentment, killed every Cunninghame without distinction they could come by, or even so much as met with on the highways, or living peaceably in their own houses. Sir Robert Montgomery of Skelmorlie killed, in the town of Paisley, John Maxwell of Stainly, because he was a friend and ally of the Cunninghames, and he is said to have shot dead the Commendator of Kilwinning, Alexander Cunninghame of Montgreenan, the Earl of Glencairn's brother, at his own gate, though he was so nearly allied to him that his wife was Sir

Robert's cousin-german, a daughter of the family of Blair."

That the Commendator was thus slain appears to be undoubted, but there would seem to be a doubt as the person by whom the deed was done, and the time when it was done ; for, while the date of the assassination is placed in the year 1582-3, the Commendator was still alive 1587-8.

" In revenge Patrick Maxwell of Newark killed both this Sir Robert Montgomery of Skelmorlie and William Montgomery, his eldest son, in one day. It would make a little volume to mention all the bloodshed and murders that were committed upon this doleful occasion, in the shire of Renfrew and bailiewick of Cunninghame. Aiket, one of the principal persons concerned, was shot near his own house ; Robertland and Corsehill escaped. Robertland got beyond seas to Denmark and got his peace made by means of Queen Anne of Denmark, when she was married to King James VI. Clonbeith, who had actually imbued his hands in the Earl's blood, and shot him with his own hands, was by a select company of the friends of the family of Eglinton, with the Master at their head, hotly pursued, He got to Hamilton, and (they) getting notice of the house to which it was suspected he had fled, it was beset and environed, and John Pollok of that ilk—a bold, daring man, who was son-in-law of the house of Langshaw at the time—in a fury of passion and revenge found him out within a chimney. How soon he was brought down, they cut him in pieces on the very spot. The resentment went so high against everyone that was suspected to have any the least accession to this horrid bloody fact, that the Lady Langshaw, that was a Cunninghame of the house of Aiket, was forced, for the security of her person and the safety of her life, to abscond. It was given out that she was gone over to Ireland, but she was concealed in the house of one Robert Barr at Pearce Bank, a tenant and feuar of her husband's for many years. But before her death she was overlooked, and returned to her own house, which was connived at ; but never durst present

herself to any Montgomery ever after that. This," adds the Manuscript History of the Eglinton Family, "is a genuine account of this long lasting and bloody feud, and it is nowhere else extant, in all its circumstances, but in this memorial."

The story may well be left there in its graphic nakedness of unadorned detail. In some respects it may not be entirely accurate, but the main and the essential outlines are otherwise corroborated, and it is evident that the recrudescence of the feud aroused not only a feeling of horror in the West of Scotland, but stimulated the authorities to the exercise of a more rigorous discipline in their dealing with the Ayrshire feudalists. As the years wore on the power of the Crown was becoming more effective, the arm of the law was becoming stronger, and it was essential in the interest of the nation at large that the lawlessness of the westland lords should be repressed. It was not only in Cunningham that the vendetta was active, but in Carrick as well. There in the southern bailiary of the shire the Kennedys were still at war with one another, the Tragedy of Auchendrane was still dragging along its fatal length, and the consummation of the horror was not, in the evolution of events, due until the opening years of the seventeenth century. In the winter of 1595-6 Robert, the Master of Eglinton, James, Earl of Glencairn, and Cunninghame of Glengarnock were cited as participants in deadly feud, to appear before the King and Council at Holyrood House "to underly such order as shall be prescribed touching the removing of the said feuds" with certification that, if they fail, "they shall be repute holden and pursued with fire and sword as enemies to God, His Majesty, and to the common weal and quietness of their own native country, with all rigour and extremity." On January 17, the Earl of Glencairn, who had failed to appear, was ordained to be denounced a rebel, and on the 29th of the same month Cunninghame of Glengarnock was similarly put to the horn. It would appear, however, that not only the Earl

of Glencairn but a number of his friends and followers who had actually taken part in the tragedy had been granted a remission for their offending, for on the following February 12 complaint was made by Dame Helen Kennedy, the Countess of Eglinton; Hugh, Earl of Eglinton, the only son of the slaughtered Earl; the Master of Eglinton, and the kith and kin of the family, in which they sought reduction of the pardon so far as a number of those who had received it were concerned. Their complaint ran as follows:—"That where the said deceased Earl being most shamefully and cruelly slain by John Cunynghame of Ross, brother to James Earl of Glencairn, Alexander Cunynghame called of Polquhene, his servant, Alexander Cunynghame of Aikatt, William Cunynghame, his brother, Patrik Cunynghame in Bordland, John and David Maxwell, brothers to Patrik Maxwell of Newark, and John Ryburne, upon set purpose, provision, and forethought felony, the said complainers pursued them for the same slaughter, criminally, before the Justice and his Deputes; and they, taking the crime upon them, absented themselves from trial and were therefore denounced and registered at the horn; whereat most contemptuously they remained divers years thereafter, till now of late, as the said complainers are informed, that the said persons have purchased a Remission or Respite for the said slaughter, whereby they intend to take away the said complainers' lawful pursuit, so that, instead of justice, which they ever looked for, conform to His Majesty's solemn vow and promise made to that effect, they are now moved to lament to his Highness the want of justice, through the said Respite or Remission," etc. They further state that there has been "no satisfaction made to the said complainers for the said slaughter," and that therefore the respite should be held, *ipso facto* null. The Master of Eglinton appeared for the complainers, and the Earl of Glencairn and William Cunninghame of Caprington for the defenders, and the King and Council "remitted the matter to be decided before the Justice

or his Deputes in accordance with law." So far, however, as can be ascertained, the respite was in no way rescinded, and, with the lapse of time and the establishment of good government, the feud ended.

From their relative importance and the long period of time over which they extended, the feud of Eglinton and Glencairn, and that in which the Kennedys of Carrick, torn by internecine strife, made war with one another, have naturally bulked most largely in the story of the vendetta in Ayrshire ; but they were not by any means the only blood feuds that made exciting the shire life of the period. As early as 1439, there was serious trouble between the Boyds, the progenitors of the Earls of Kilmarnock, and the Stewarts of Darnley. According to the "History of the Stewarts," because of "auld feud which was betwixt them," Sir Alan Stewart was treacherously set upon at Polmaise Thorn, between Falkirk and Linlithgow, by Sir Thomas Boyd, and slain. In revenge, Sir Alexander Stewart collected his vassals, and, Sir Thomas Boyd being in nowise averse to fighting it out in "plain battle," a desperate encounter between the rivals took place at Craignaught Hill, in Neilston parish, in Renfrewshire. The conflict was fought out to the bitter end. The combatants engaged one another so relentlessly that, when tired out with fighting, they called a halt and rested preparatory to beginning again. This they did more than once. In the end, Sir Robert Boyd was cruelly slain, and many brave men on both sides, and at the close of the day victory rested with the Stewarts. On May 31, 1445, the Boyds avenged the death of their chief by slaying Sir James Stewart of Ardgowan.

There are two different versions of a curious incident that occurred in connection with a dispute in which a member of the Kennedy family figured in a remarkable fashion. According to Pitcairn's MS. History of the Kennedys, the story dates back as far as "the fourth year of the reign of Robert III., which was about the year of God 1394." The Kennedy involved in it was a



younger brother of the Dunure family. From his custom of carrying a dagger, he bore the name of Alschunder Dagour, or Alexander of the Dagger. He had incurred the wrath of Douglas, the lord of Wigtown, by an overt act of feudalism against him at Glenapp, and by engaging in a conflict the same day at the water of Doon against Lindsay, laird of Craigie; and Douglas had caused proclamation to be made that whoever should bring him his head should receive by way of reward the forty merk land in Stewarton parish, Cunningham. Alexander, a man of bold and desperate character, and not wanting apparently in a grim sense of humour and in resource, resolved on winning the proffered estate for himself. Accordingly he summoned to his aid a hundred of the family dependents, and on Yule day morning he arrived at Wigtown when the Earl was at Mass. The first indication the Earl had of the untimely disturbance of his devotions was the trampling of the horses outside the chapel. Immediately after, Alexander of the Dagger entered, and, pulling out a deed from his pocket, which had previously been prepared for the occasion, addressed him thus:—"My lord, ye have hicht this forty mark land to anyone that would bring you my heid, and I know there is none so meet as myself. And therefore (I) will desire your lordship to keep (faith with) me, as ye had to any other." The Earl had no alternative to subscribing the deed, and Kennedy, folding it up and putting it away carefully, remounted his horse and was speedily on his way homewards. As in the case of many of these old-world stories there is some difficulty in fitting in this one with definite persons and dates, and it may be left therefore to speak for itself.

The other version of the story, which appears in "The History of Galloway" (quoting from Codcroft's "House of Douglas and Angus," p. 144), assigns the date somewhat openly to the period embraced in the life of Archibald Douglas, fifth Earl of Douglas, who died at Restalrig, June 26, 1439. Lord Kennedy had offended

him so mightily that he offered the lands of Stewarton to any one who would bring him his head. Lord Kennedy forthwith, as above stated, rode off to Wigtownshire, and presented himself to the Earl when he was at his devotions in the church of St. Ninian. The boldness of the act filled the Earl with admiration, and he not only signed the paper, but forgave Kennedy all his faults, and made him his friend. The central fact of both stories is the same, and it is certainly sufficiently striking to warrant its being handed down.

In 1440 a high-handed act, though none the less characteristic of the times, was committed in Ochiltree parish by Douglas. It arose from the troubles that then beset Scotland, and which were largely caused by an attempt of Douglas to distract attention from himself and his arrogance by fomenting a quarrel with England. In his main purpose he failed, but he was not a man whom it was safe either to cross or to attempt to thwart. It so happened that there had been a quarrel between Auchinleck of that ilk and Colville of Ochiltree, and that the former had been slain. Auchinleck had evidently been a follower of Douglas, and when the great lord of Wigtownshire heard that he had been slain, he proceeded to Ochiltree with a strong body of retainers, took the castle, with slaughter of some of the inmates, and laid the lands waste. Thus blood called for blood, and it rarely failed of its answer. The trouble did not end here. In 1502, Robert and Henry Douglas were permitted to compound for "art and part of the oppression done to Sir William Colville of Ochiltree, in occupying, labouring, and manuring his lands of Farnesyde and Hardane, and taking or keeping his house or peel in Hardane, without any lease or title of law." This illegal occupation, if it ever really took place at all, may have been one of the sequents to the deed of sixty years previous. In the same year John Douglas, brother to the laird of Bon Jedworth, William his brother, and a number of others, were "convicted of art and part of oppression and convocation of the lieges, and coming upon Sir William

Colville of Ochiltree, Knight, at his lands of Hardane-hole." This act had apparently taken place not long before ; indeed, the oppression, the occupation of Sir William Colville's lands, and the convocation of the Douglasses and their followers for their raid upon their old enemy in Kyle, were doubtless part of the same transaction. The offending, in other words, was neither more nor less than an incident in the blood feud.

Probably no more suggestive series of sidelights could be thrown upon the feudal broils and the social lawlessness of the gentry than those presented in the proceedings of the Justiciary of Ayr, 1508. The presiding Judge was Andrew, Lord Gray. On an occasion such as this the town must have presented an animated appearance. The country nobility had their town houses in it, and when, for business or for pleasure, they repaired thither, they had, perforce of the disturbed condition of society and the rivalries of the families within the jurisdiction of which Ayr was the centre, to bring a sufficient number of retainers with them for safe conduct, for the preservation of their dignity, and for the rightful assertion of their position. They could not depend upon justice apart from force. The High Court of Justiciary might pronounce sentences of outlawry upon Kennedys and Boyds, upon Cunninghames and Montgomeries, upon Craufurds and Kerrs, upon Campbells and Mures, and put them to the horn at the Mercat Cross, but, if they generally found it necessary for a while to fly the district and take refuge in England, or in France, or upon the Scottish Borders, they knew that their banishment was only an affair of a few years at the most, and that when the feeling begotten of their offending died down, or was obliterated by some fresh act of violence, they could depend on receiving a remission for their offending, and on being permitted to return to Ayrshire to take up the vendetta where they had left it off. In some measure the law was recognised, but the extent of its recognition was but limited, and justice was still largely an affair of the strong arm.

The Ayr of the period was but a small place, as towns go nowadays, and the burghers cannot have done otherwise than take a keen interest in the proceedings of the Court. They were in some measure themselves partisans. On occasion they could turn out with their steel caps on their heads and do battle for their friends ; and when the diet fell to be called, as it was at this Court presided over by Andrew, Lord Gray, against Boyds, Mures, Cunninghames, Wallaces, Shaws, Craufurds, Montgomeries, Hamiltons, and Kerrs, it is easy to understand how the ancient and royal burgh must have been moved to its deepest depths. First of all, Patrick Mure, brother to the Laird of Rowallan, Neil Smith of Gardrum, and twenty-five others, were charged with and convicted of convocating the lieges and coming to the Kirk of Stewarton, in company with John Mure of Rowallan, in connection with a dispute over the office of parish clerk of the church, against Robert Cunninghame of Cunninghamehead, and his servants, the same year. There was not much difficulty over this case. The Laird of Rowallan and Andrew Arnot of Lochrig became sureties to satisfy the parties as the Lords of Justiciary should declare their pleasure. Then James Mure, another brother of the Laird, was brought up on a charge of oppressing John Mowatt, junior, the young Laird of Busby, in Stewarton, in company with his brother. Again the Laird became surety. Following the Mures came Robert Cunninghame of Cunninghamehead, on three separate charges. The first had to do with the disturbance over the Stewarton parish kirk clerkship ; the second was for oppression done to Elizabeth Rosse, Lady Cunninghame, in occupying and manuring her third part of the lands of Cunninghamehead, in the year 1503, and so " breaking the King's Protection upon her ;" and the third was for oppression done to the Abbot and Monastery of Kilwinning, and to Hew, Earl of Eglinton, their tenant, in the " spuizie " of the teind-sheaves in the parish of Pearecton, and so again outraging the royal protection. What befel the Laird of Cunninghamehead

is not recorded, but in all probability he offered sufficient security, and Lord Gray accepted it. Thomas Wallace was the next panel at the bar. He was evidently a follower of the gentleman who had preceded him, and he had been there when the fray occurred between him and Mure of Rowallan. The Laird of Cunninghamehead became his surety; and, when that had been satisfactorily arranged, the Court adjourned for the day.

November 5th was chiefly occupied in redding up a few of the troubles of the Craufurds of Kerse and their friends. First came John Shaw of Haly, William Shaw, dwelling with him, and eight others who had behaved themselves somewhat unmannerly towards Margaret Montgomery, Lady Creechdow. They had gone to her "place" about the feast of Midsummer, had cast her goods forth from her house, spoiled her of sundry of her effects, and beaten her servants. Worse than that, they had ejected her and "cast her forth of her house and place of Garlauche," thrown down and destroyed a stack of hay and a stack of bere, containing seventy threaves (a threave generally consisted of twenty-four sheaves), and destroyed the grain. Not content with that, they had "shut up sixty-five 'soumes' of grass (a soume of grass was as much as one cow or five sheep could pasture), without penning them in a pin-fold." And, to complete their offending, they had cast a stone out of the window at Lady Creechdow, breaking her head and felling her. This was obviously a raid on the lady's property. The offenders were permitted to compound in the usual way, David Craufurd of Kerse becoming security to satisfy Lady Creechdow. John Shaw of Kerse followed, producing a remission for having slain John Boyd with a stone. For this also Kerse became surety. The Court, however, had straightway further dealing with the same offender. He had gone to the house of Duncan Fergusson, the young Laird of Kilkerran, at Burnfoot, and had forcibly broken into the house; he had forcibly kept the lands of Burnfoot waste by the space of a year; he had gone to the place

of Andrew M'Knacht, where he had committed "hamesucken" (*i.e.*, serious assault committed upon a person in his own house)—and stabbed his . . . (word obliterated in the record) with whingers and swords, and had oppressed John Boyd, the victim in the preceding case, "wishing to slay him at the time of the slaughter of . . . M'Ilhenze." Again Kerse offered himself as surety to satisfy the parties, and again he was accepted by the Court. The next and last offence dealt with for the day was embodied in a charge against David Craufurd of Kerse himself, David Craufurd younger, John Craufurd, Proctor Thomas Galbraith, David Campbell of Clovingall, Peter Rankine of Schelde, William his son, Albert Cathcart, Allan Cathcart of Drumriewane, Esplin Craufurd, and James Barbour, for coming to the Bailie Court of Carrick, when the Bailie, Hew, Earl of Eglinton, was dealing with a brief of the Laird of Kilhenzie, and impeding him from holding his Court. John Shaw became security for Craufurd and his friends, as Craufurd had done for him, to satisfy the parties; and Craufurd was fined in five pounds, the others in forty shillings each.

On November 6th, Cuthbert Robinson in Auchentiber was fined five merks (5s 7½d) for assaulting Arthur Farnlie in his own house, striking him, and casting his son into the fire, and had to find security to satisfy the Crown and the parties. His surety was Sir David Kennedy. On November 10, Hew, Earl of Eglinton, produced a remission for the "spuilzie" of twelve horses, boots, spurs, swords, and other goods from Arthur Boyd and other servants of the old Lady of Home, for the wounding of the said Arthur Boyd, for a cattle raid upon the lands of Lady Home in Galloway, in which he and his men had lifted twenty-four cows, and for casting Arthur Boyd into prison at Eastwood. The Earl was himself accepted as security to satisfy the parties. And, on the following day, John Hamilton in Bargany produced a remission for the "spuilzie" of corn, bere, pots and pans from men dwelling in

“Cregforguse,” and for lifting four horses, eight cows, and four oxen from John Thomson, furth of his lands of Knockminshech.

This concluded the assizes. The most notable feature in the proceedings is the leniency of the Court in its dealings with what were in some instances highly serious offences. Five merks were sufficient to mark the law's relation to such a deed as casting a young man into the fire. For the interruption of the proceedings of the Court of the Bailiary of Carrick, a more substantial reckoning was exacted. Otherwise the compensation was wholly in proportion to the damage done or the loss sustained, and the amount of it was a matter for subsequent arrangement. Even manslaughter was not regarded very seriously.

To follow the Ayrshire feuds in all their wanderings, and in their relation to the different families engaged in them, would necessarily involve a great deal of repetition and of recapitulation. The criminal records of the period are necessarily brief. They deal with a multiplicity of cases, and with men whose names are legion. While in the main the quarrels of the various families ran in certain grooves, they were subject none the less to divergence into side channels, and to deflection by secondary and minor issues. Of many of the deeds done there is no record save that of the indictments, or “dittays” of the High Court of Justiciary, and we are left to draw such inferences as may suggest themselves of the occasions whence they sprang. What is of essential consequence is that we should present a true picture of the times and of the family feuds of the sixteenth century. This can be done without attempting to trace all these side issues to their sources, and what we purpose therefore is to pursue still further the course we have been following, and deal with the outstanding events of the period and the series of excitements and tragedies that resulted from them, leaving the minor incidents in the realm of the antiquarian, to whom they more properly belong.

Between the Kennedys of Carrick and the great feudal lords of Kyle, the Craufurds of Kerse, who were the warders of the Kyle marches where these sloped downwards to the waters of Doon, and the Campbells of Loudoun, hereditary Sheriffs of Ayr, whose baronial tower was on the upper streams of Irvine, there was long and bitter feud. The fact that they resided in different divisions of the same county can hardly have accounted for the genesis of the turmoil, but there is reason to believe that, once the family rivalries had sprung up, they were at least materially accentuated by the residence of the rivals themselves in different and distinct areas of the shire. The national troubles that followed Flodden placed men in antagonism to one another. Under the Regency of the Duke of Albany, there were two great Scottish factions. The Earl of Cassillis was among the patriot Scots, and opposed to the English faction. The Campbells were on the other side. Probably the antipathies were of an older date than that ; at all events, by 1526 they had reached a very critical point. In that year the Earl of Cassillis was slain at Prestwick by a strong party of the adherents and followers of Loudoun. It does not appear that the Sheriff of Ayr was himself upon the scene of slaughter, but that it was a carefully prepared and premeditated act is obvious from the fact that the Loudoun party comprised no fewer than 1400 men. The Earl had been at Court, which was then sitting at Stirling, and was on his way home to Carrick, attended only by a small body of his men. According to the story, the Countess of Loudoun, a Wallace of the Wallaces, had a hand in arranging for the Earl's removal from the scene. She consulted with the Craufurds of Lefnorris, and Kerse, and Drongan, and with William Campbell of Cessnock ; and these called in their men from the broad plains of Kyle, and rode away to the Prestwick sandhills, where they concealed themselves, and where they waited the coming of the chief of the Kennedys. He came in due time, riding on towards Ayr, but he was destined never



again to reach his own countryside. As he passed, the Kyle men ambushed him, and, falling upon him in overwhelming numbers, cut him down and left him lying dead among the "knowes." The event created intense excitement throughout all the district. The Earl had been a man highly esteemed. He had been one of four Scotch peers to whom was entrusted the safe keeping of the young King, James V., during the temporary absence of the Regent, the Duke of Albany, in France. Like his neighbours, he had taken part in the family warrings of the shire, and had been put upon his trial for "art and part of the cruel slaughter of Martin Kennedy of Lochland." For this offence he had been acquitted, and he had compounded with the King for the "unlaws" done by his followers. It is evident that he enjoyed the fullest confidence of the whole Kennedy clan, and it is not hard therefore to understand that when the news of his slaughter travelled southwards of the Doon, it created a powerful sense of indignation and evoked a stern call for vengeance.

The State interposed with a summons against the Sheriff of Ayr and his friends. The summary account of the proceedings in the Criminal records is interesting in various respects. It runs thus:—

"October 6 (Sabbath), 1527—Hugh Campbell of Lowdoune, Sheriff of Air. James, Earl of Arran was amerced a hundred pounds for not entering the Sheriff of Air to underly the law for the cruel slaughter of Gilbert, Earl of Cassillis. Campbell was denounced Rebel, and all his moveables ordained to be escheated. Geo. Craufurd of Lefnorris, and William his brother; John Campbell of Cesnock; Bartholomew Craufurd of Kerse; David and Duncan his brothers; John Craufurd of Drongane; John and William his sons, with a great number of others, found caution to underly the law for this crime on the third day of the next Justiciare at Air. Dame Isabella Wallace, Lady Lowdoune, also accused for the same crime, was proved to be sick by Sir William Bankhede her curate, and two witnesses. Many other

accused subsequently failed to appear and were denounced rebels."

It will be seen that the Court to which the Sheriff and his friends were summoned was held on the Sabbath. The Earl of Arran had obviously become security for the Sheriff's appearance, and his failure to produce him resulted in his being fined in a hundred pounds. And the indictment establishes at least a *prima facie* ground for the conclusion that Lady Loudoun was privy to the deed. Besides those directly implicated, Campbell had many friends. William Cunninghame of Glengarnock, Mungo Mure of Rowallan, John Hamilton of Colmyskeithe, James Wallace of Carnall, Adam Wallace of Newton, John Fullarton of Crosbie, the Cunninghames of Caprington, Bartonholm, and Aiket, William Wallace, tutor of Craigie, George Ross of Haining, John Lockhart of Bar, John Craufurd of Drongan, and others, were charged with intercommuning with, and otherwise resisting the Sheriff of Ayr, and were either fined or else found caution to appear.

But while the law was thus permitted to take its course, the Kennedys took theirs. On July 28, 1528, Alexander Kennedy of Bargany and Hugh his son, John Mure of Auchendrane and James his brother, with Kennedys from Kirkmichael, Blairquhan, Coiff, Knockdon, Glentig, Barmaclannochane, Drumellan, Dunane, Zet, Benane; Sir Thomas Blacator, curate of Girvan, Thomas Corry of Kelwood, William Kennedy, the Abbot of Crosraguell, and Mungo Eccles of that Ilk, were arraigned on a charge of being art and part in the cruel slaughter of Robert Campbell of Lochfergus, Alexander Kirkwood, and Patrick Wilson, the last two no doubt followers of the Campbells; and caution was found for their subsequent appearance. Another group who were compelled to find similar suretyship comprised James Kennedy of Bardrochat, Thomas Murdoch of that Ilk, James Kennedy, brother of the Rector of Douglas, James Makrinnyll of Barneil, and seven others. What ultimately befell them is not recorded, but it is a

fairly safe assumption that they made their peace by finding security to satisfy the friends of the deceased.

There was, however, according to tradition, another and a sterner revenge than this. Authentic history is silent on the point, but the incident is so much in keeping with the spirit of the times in Ayrshire, and with the policy propounded in the sacred invocation, "Avenge my cause, O God," and with the bearing of the banner of revenge, that it cannot be dismissed as wholly illusory. It may be hoped, however, for the sake of those who are alleged to have taken part in it, that their vengeance did not exact the price handed down in the tradition. According to this story, it was Kennedy of Bargany who championed the cause of the slaughtered Earl and of the clan untimely deprived of their head. He had waited patiently on the action of the law of the land, and had waited in vain. Justice had tinkered with the situation, probably because it was not in a position to do anything else. The lords of Kyle were not only strong of themselves and in their followers; they had powerful friends at Court and in the country furth of Ayrshire; and as the months wore by, it became evident to Bargany that if vengeance was to be exacted, it must be at the instance of the Kennedys themselves. And that was their way. So when the harvest had been gathered in and the November days were shortening, Bargany called his friends together and they resolved to strike; to march across Kyle to the upper streams of Irvine, to where Loudoun Castle was seated among its woods and braes, and to exact vengeance on the spot, and in the very heart and centre of the enemy's country. The Kennedys had many men for such an enterprise, for their lands were wide. Carrick was theirs from the hills beyond Straiton to the sea, from Cassillis house on Doonside to Ardstinchar tower on the waters of Stinchar, and away down by Glenapp into Galloway. These men they gathered together, and they came in glad response, and, before the lords of Kyle were aware of their intent, they were on the march for Loudoun. It was a long march.

Some five and twenty miles had to be traversed, but the men were hardy and the horses they rode were accustomed to the rough roads, the hill tracks, and the open country, and they arrived at Loudoun Castle ere yet Kyle had roused to its danger. The Sheriff of Ayr had taken himself off. He was in hiding somewhere to escape the myrmidons of the law. The Countess had been warned of what was in store, probably by some roughrider who had hasted at the mandate of Kerse to apprise her of the impending danger, and, leaving Loudoun, she had repaired to the strong tower of Achruglen, on the Loudoun side of the valley of Irvine, and within easy distance of Loudoun Castle. Achruglen was a powerfully built peel, constructed for just such an emergency as that which was to befall. With anything like a garrison, it could have been held against the Kennedys, but men at arms it had few, or none ; and all the opposition it could offer was that of closed gates and doors, and the rude strength of its buttressed masonry.

The Kennedys rode to Loudoun and found it empty, and then they held their way for Achruglen. The Countess, her son and the heir to the Earldom, and her daughters were within. Bargany summoned the lady to surrender. With the heart of a Wallace and the courage of the Campbell race with whose fortunes she had linked her own, she refused, and Bargany went forward with his vengeance. He evoked the aid of fire, that most terrible of all destroyers. Piling brushwood around the doors, it was not long till the smoke was curling round the battlements and rising above them into the November air. The flames followed, they caught the woodwork, they established their hold, and the work of the vendetta progressed.

There is a ballad that tells in somewhat quaint, but still sufficiently graphic detail, what followed. Poetry does not in this case soften the realism, but it obviates the necessity for following the story in prose ; and, as the ballad is the main authority for the story, we leave it to pass on the tragedy. With the authenticity of the

ballad we need not particularly concern ourselves. It is said by the author of the account of Galston in the *Statistical Account of Ayrshire* (1842), to have come down from time immemorial, and "that the wandering minstrels changed the names in their songs to suit them as far as possible to similar events in the histories of the different families which they visited." The ballad, it may be said, has been localised elsewhere, but it synchronises with the Ayrshire tradition. We take up the story at the point where the besieger bids the lady save herself by "coming down":—

Come down, come down, my Lady Loudoun,  
 Come down then unto me.  
 I'll wrap thee on a feather bed,  
 Thy warrant I shall be.

O I would give the black, she says,  
 And so would I the brown,  
 If that Thomas, my only son,  
 Could charge to me a gun.

Out then spake the Lady Margaret,  
 As she stood on the stair,  
 The fire was at her goud garters,  
 The lowe was at her hair.

I would give the black, she says,  
 And so would I the brown,  
 For a drink of yon water,  
 That runs by Galston town.

Out then spake fair Annie,  
 She was baith jimp and sma',  
 O row me in a pair o' sheets  
 And tow me down the wa'.

O hold thy tongue, thou fair Annie.  
 And let thy talkin' be,  
 For thou must stay in this fair castle  
 And bear thy death with me.

O mother, spoke the Lord Thomas,  
 As he sat on the nurse's knee,  
 O mother, give up this fair castle,  
 Or the reek will worrie me.

I would rather be burnt to ashes sma',  
 And be cast on yon sea foam,  
 Before I'd give up this fair castle,  
 And my Lord so far from home.

My good Lord has an army strong,  
 He's now gone o'er the sea,  
 He bade me keep this gay castle,  
 As long as it would keep me.

I've four and twenty brave milk kye  
 Gangs on yon lilly lea,  
 I'd give them a' for a blast o' wind,  
 To blaw the reek from me.

O pittie on yon fair castle,  
 That's built with stone and lime,  
 But far mair pittie on Lady Loudoun,  
 And all her children nine.

To the same period may be assigned that other well known traditionary story, "The Flitting of the Sow." This, however, has such authenticity as can be given to it by its incorporation in a highly graphic ballad from the pen of Sir Alexander Boswell. As told in the poem the story is this. While old Craufurd of Kerse sat in his hall surrounded by his stalwart sons, a messenger from Bargany was introduced. On Lammas morn, he declared, the Kennedys would "tether a sow" upon the lands of Kerse," and "deil a man o' Kyle shall flit her." Kerse accepted the challenge. When Lammas morn came round the Craufurds mustered for the fray. Kerse was too old to accompany them himself, and when they had ridden away he seated himself outside the castle and waited impatiently for tidings of the conflict. By and by "lichtsome Will of Ashentree cam' breathless peching owre the lea":

Lang, lang or he could parley hear,  
 The auld man cried fu' loud and clear,  
 "Is the sow flitted?—Tell me, loon,  
 Is auld Kyle up and Carrick down?"  
 Mingled wi' sobs, his broken tale  
 The youth began, "Ah, Kerse, bewail  
 This luckless day! Your blithe son John,  
 Now wae's my heart! lies on the loan,  
 An' he could sing like ony merle!"

“ Is the sow flitted ?” cried the carle.  
“ Gie me my answer short and plain,  
Is the sow flitted ? yammerin’ wean !”  
“ The sow (deil tak’ her) ’s owre the water,  
And at their backs the Craufurds batter,  
The Carrick cowts are cowed an’ bitted.”  
“ My thumb for Jock ! The sow’s flitted !”

There is another version of the story. According to this, three of the Craufurds of Lochnorris were present at the battle, one of whom returned loudly bemoaning the loss of his two brothers. His widowed mother suddenly cut short his lamentation by exclaiming, “ Is the sow flitted ?” “ Aye is she,” replied the youth, “ and five score of the Kennedys are drowned in Doon.” We need not doubt the reality of the encounter—for the sixteenth century was fertile in such encounters in Ayrshire, and many were the rocks of offence and the occasions of stumbling between the Kennedys and the lords of Kyle—and as for the interchange of words that culminated in answer to the question “ Is the sow flitted ?” it is evident that it has come down to us as part of the countryside talk, or gossip, of the period. It sounds callous to-day, almost beyond that which has been written, but its very callousness is proof of the depth and bitterness of the rivalries of these feudalists to the death.

## CHAPTER VIII

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### THE AYRSHIRE VENDETTA

(CONTINUED)

The story of the great Carrick feud—of the internecine struggle in which Kennedy made war upon Kennedy—has often been told. The romancer has made free with it. He has woven it into connected form, and given life to it by a selection of its salient points and by accentuating those special phases of it that have lent themselves most readily to his purpose. Between the history and the romance of this memorable blood feud, however, there are many gulfs fixed, and what we purpose now is to discard utterly the romantic side of the story, which has necessarily owed a great deal to the imaginative and the constructive powers of the romancist, and to tell the tale in its historical sequence, without any deviation from the record. Previous to the outbreak of the quarrel, the Kennedy clan stood solid. There was no break in its ranks. From the water of Doon down into Galloway the territory was for nearly every practical and immediate purpose ruled by the Earl of Cassillis. The keeps and peels with whose ruins Carrick is studded, were held for the most part by men who were thirled to the great lord whose home, on the southern bank of the Doon, looked across the river to the Dalrymple forest and to the stretching lands of Kyle, or else by men who were, by common interest, by intermarriage, by sympathy, affiliated with Cassillis.



The little towns and the villages were loyal to the chief, and, from north to south of the territory, and from the border hills of the Stewartry to the shores washed by the western sea, no man, as the familiar rhyme has it, could dare to ride or bide except he courted Kennedy. Kennedy had his castles on the high rocks of the sea coast. They stood in their strength on the banks of the Girvan, and of the Stinchar, and of the lesser streams. The Straiton uplands knew them; Knockdolian looked down on them; they dominated the plains. The fighting men of Carrick rode together on mutual errand bent. They raided Kyle in spite of Kerse and his friends. They repulsed the inroads of the Kyle raiders. The Earl of Cassillis ruled as a king within his own borders, and he was so omnipotent within the bailiary that he was able to regard even the interference of the State with the consciousness that, as things went in the country, he was fit to hold his own.

Like many another great quarrel, that which split the Kennedy camp in twain sprang from a comparatively small beginning. There was a certain "Black Bessie Kennedy," whose third husband, William Kennedy of Brounston, had infested her in the Brounston lands. These had previously been infested in the Earl of Cassillis. In the dispute that followed, Black Bessie made over her rights to Kennedy of Bargany, who gave her in lieu of them the six-pound land of Newark. The lady went to reside at Bargany, but, on the solicitation of Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean, uncle, and tutor—or guardian—to the young Earl of Cassillis, she left Bargany House, the laird of which was in consequence highly incensed against Culzean. The latter used his influence to get John Mure of Auchendrane appointed Bailie of Carrick, and then, when the Earl returned home from a visit to the Continent, to have him dismissed from the office. Thus Sir Thomas of Culzean incurred the anger both of Bargany and Auchendrane. High words passed between Culzean and Auchendrane. The former threatened Mure that "he would be the last Laird of Auchendrane

that ever should be," and Mure retorted that Sir Thomas "should not live to see the same." The trouble was materially complicated through an act that followed on the death of John Baird of Kilhenzie, who had been married to Bargany's sister. The young laird of Kilhenzie, the son of a former marriage, took from her by force some portion of victual which had been left her by her husband, and Bargany, in turn, invaded Kilhenzie with ten or twelve horsemen, and carried off a corresponding quantity of victual. The Earl of Cassillis espoused the cause of young Kilhenzie, who was one of his dependants, and he would forthwith have marched upon Bargany, and blown up the gate with powder, had he not been assured that the laird of Bargany would in all probability be on the alert, and that his scheme therefore might miscarry. He resolved to bide his time.

By this time there were all the materials for a serious outbreak. Events had constituted Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean an object of suspicion and distrust both to Mure and to Bargany; and his nephew, the lord of Cassillis, had shown clearly that he resented the independence of Bargany, and had, by removing Mure from the Bailieship, ensured the enmity of one who was both strong and unscrupulous; a man of years and of large experience, and possessing a good deal of influence over the fiery young laird of Bargany. The author of the "Historie of the Kennedies," whoever he may have been—and the authorship of the "Historie" is doubtful—was evidently a partisan of the Bargany faction. His work is distinctly biassed in that direction, and therefore what he has to say that is otherwise unsupported by authentic history, must be accepted with considerable reservation. If he is to be depended on, the Earl was minded "to root out this house of Bargany out of memory," and to begin by obtaining admission to Ardstinchar Castle, one of the most southerly of the Kennedy strongholds in Ayrshire, through the treachery of a servant, and "blowing up the house in the air."

When, however, he communicated his intention to his uncle, Sir Thomas Kennedy pointed out that "the old laird and the young lady had been honourable householders all their days, and that they would be greatly lamented by all men; and the young laird had now married his wife"—a Queen's maiden, and a sister of Lord Ochiltree—"out of the King's house, and his death would be thought much of by the King and Queen; and also the deed would be thought very cruel to put so many innocent souls to death." He counselled rather that they should waylay and slay the young laird and his brother while they were hunting in the fields for their pastime, concluding that, because of their death, "the old man shall die for sorrow." To this plan the Earl agreed. Tidings of the premeditated deed, however, reached the ears of Bargany, who taxed Culzean with it. The latter explained that he had only given the advice in order to deflect the Earl from his purpose; but the explanation failed to commend itself to the young laird and his brother, who still regarded their lives as endangered, and who nurtured a feeling of hatred against those who, they had reason to believe, were bent upon their assassination.

We need not accept too implicitly the details of this unholy scheme. It may not have been inconsistent with the spirit of the times, but, as we have seen, there was ample occasion for quarrel already, without saddling Cassillis and Culzean with so bloodthirsty an intent. Still further complications arose through the raising of an action at the instance of the Earl against young Bargany—the old laird having in the meantime died (November 7, 1596)—upon the "assignation which he had got from Black Bessie of the lands of Newark." Bargany appears, in his ignorance of the law, to have permitted the action to go undefended, and the result of the Earl's legal victory was that he kept the decret he had obtained hanging over Bargany's head. Smarting under the incubus, and with all the impetuosity of somewhat ill-guided youth, Bargany had a meeting

with the lairds of Auchendrane and Dunduff, and with the Master of Cassillis, the Earl's brother, who was also at sharp variance with his uncle, and an attempt to take the life of Sir Thomas Kennedy followed soon after.

Here in matters of detail we are on the sure ground of the records of the Court of Justiciary. On February 15, 1597, Matthew Dunduff of that ilk, who had become surety for the appearance of those charged with waylaying Culzean with intent to murder him, appeared at the bar, and was amerced in 900 merks for the non-appearance of the other conspirators. These included John Mure of Auchendrane, John Mure, son to Quintin Mure, in Carcloy, and three others of less degree. Mure himself had become security for the appearance of Alexander Kennedy, son to Hew Kennedy of Craigneil, David Mure, servant to the laird of Bargany, and John Dunduff or Stewart, natural son to Matthew Dunduff. Neither did any of these answer to the summons, and all "were adjudged to be denounced our sovereign lord's rebels and put to his highness' horn," and all their moveable goods and gear to be "escheat," or forfeited, to the Crown. The offence, according to the indictment, took place on January 3, under silence and cloud of night. The conspirators, armed with hagbuts and pistols, had repaired to the town of Maybole. They had stalled their horses at the guidwife of Knockdai's yett, then secreted themselves in the yard of Thomas Nasmyth, adjacent to Sir Thomas Kennedy's Maybole house, regarding that as the fittest place for the accomplishment of their "cruel, ungodly, and barbarous" purpose. "And they, perceiving the said Sir Thomas Kennedy, with Dame Elizabeth M'Gill, his spouse, Thomas Kennedy, their eldest son, Margaret and Helen Kennedy, their daughters, coming through the yard betwixt the two hedges, kept themselves concealed until the said Thomas Kennedy was within six ells to them where they lay; who suddenly beset the said Sir Thomas, his spouse, and bairns, ere he could be aware of them, he dreading no harm nor injury of any person,

and specially of the persons above written, they staying with him in apparent favour and friendship, at the least without any profession of feud or upgiving of kindness ; and then shot and discharged eight shots of hagbuts and pistols at the said Sir Thomas." These all missed fire. Sir Thomas and his friends made haste to escape. The conspirators pursued them for some distance, but, " by the provision of God and the darkness of the night," they escaped out of their hands. According to the indictment against the Laird of Dunduff, Alexander Kennedy, son of Craigneil, had foregathered with Sir Thomas, and had learned from him his intentions, and having ascertained when he was to repair to Maybole, he had bidden him goodnight, and had " taken off his hat according to his wonted familiarity with him as before."

Matthew Dunduff was kept a while in ward in the Castle of Edinburgh, but was released on finding security to pay a thousand merks for his share in the outrage, and the fine that had been imposed on him for the absence of his fellow conspirators for whom he had been accepted as surety. As has been said, the rest were declared outlaws. They no doubt either removed from the district until the scandal begotten of the offence had died down, or found shelter in the houses of their friends. Culzean, according to the author of the " Historie," " gat the house of Auchendrane and destroyed the house in the plenishing, and wrecked all the yarding ; and also they made many sets to have gotten himself, but God preserved him from their tyranny." The destruction of Auchendrane's goods and gear doubtless added to Mure's rancour. Things were made still worse by the Earl of Cassillis raising an action against Bargany for byegone teinds, and obtaining a decret for forty thousand merks against him. Bargany, however, managed to gain a suspension, and, through the intervention of the King, a compromise, under which Bargany was to pay a certain sum in full of all claims against him, was arranged. Then the Earl

went down into Galloway to deal with his vassals there, in the matter of putting a decret in force against them. The Galloway men, however, bound themselves together in a league against their feudal lord, and besieged him in his house of Inch. Fortunately for him, he had the minister of Colmonell with him, and he was permitted to pass through the ranks of the besiegers on a representation that he was going to his kirk. In place of doing that, he hurried to Bargany Castle with a message from the Earl to the laird that "if he would come and make (*i.e.*, effect) his relief, he would mend all his misbehaviour that he had done to him, and think of him by all his kin to his life's end." Bargany at once put himself at the head of a strong force of his friends and retainers, and rode to Inch, where he succeeded in effecting an amicable arrangement between the Earl and his vassals; but later, when Bargany reminded him of his promise, he found it convenient to forget what he had said. This offended Bargany more and more. And the area of disturbance was still further widened by a quarrel between Cassillis and Blairquhan, which resulted in a combination of forces against the chief, that included Lord Ochiltree, Bargany's father-in-law, Bargany himself, Blairquhan, and Girvanmains. Whereat, says the "Historie," "my lord took ane great fear."

By this time Carrick was seething from north to south, and there was serious danger of a violent outbreak, and that in force. Auchendrane, who was a man of capacity and of foresight, realised the dangers that were impending, as also did other leaders of the rival factions, and a general amnesty was arranged. One of the outward and visible tokens of the compromise was the wedding of the younger Mure to the daughter of Sir Thomas Kennedy. Whether this was a wedding of affection on the part of the two persons more immediately concerned, we cannot say. There is at least a strong probability that Helen Kennedy was to some extent sacrificed to the necessities of a dangerous hour; and whether or not, it turned out to be a sorry

day for her when she allied herself in marriage with the son and heir of Auchendrane. John Mure, younger, was a man of strong passions and base tastes; and not even his becoming the son-in-law of Sir Thomas Kennedy inspired him with any regard for the Knight of Culzean. Apart from that, the antipathies of the Carrick rivals had reached a very high point. There were hatred and distrust everywhere, and, in the social conditions of the time and of the district, it would have been little short of a miracle had the amnesty evolved in general amity and in a complete forgetting and forgiving of the past. The bridegroom received with the bride a dowry of four thousand merks, for three thousand of which Bargany became debtor, and Culzean gave Bargany a discharge for "the whole sum of the twelve thousand merks obtained by him contrary to the Laird of Bargany for the debt owing to Black Bessie of Denhame." Bygones were to be bygones, Auchendrane was relieved from his outlawry, Dunduff and Culzean were brought into the compact of friendship, and the Master of Cassillis was placated and ceased from his antipathies.

So at least it was all intended. The hope was engendered that Carrick might at last enjoy peace. But in this case, as in many others, the best laid schemes were destined to miscarriage, and Carrick was doomed to lengthened warrings, to dispeace, and to bloodshed.

Hardly had peace been patched up before the trouble broke out afresh. Bargany held the teinds of the ten pound land of Girvanmains from the Earl of Cassillis. They were evidently not forthcoming, for the Earl applied for and obtained a decret against them and resolved to attach the crop to himself so as to realise the unpaid money. Word of his intent reached Bargany, and he and Girvanmains gathered their friends together and took possession of the stackyard where the corn stood, so that, when the Earl arrived, he was unable to put his decret in force. Determined not to be outdone, he proceeded to put into immediate execution a decret

of a somewhat similar character that he had against the lands of Dungarth, and he sent his servants to reap the corn. Bargany again interfered in force, and, taking possession of the grain that had been cut, he removed it to Ardstinchar, averring that, although Cassillis had a decret against the land, it did not include the crop. This happened on a Saturday, and on the following Monday Cassillis marched in force upon the field to reap the corn that still was standing. Once again Bargany appeared in opposition to him, and the two parties met, Bargany not less than nine hundred strong, and the Earl even more numerously attended. Here were all the materials for a decisive conflict. Of the opposing parties, however, that of Bargany was the better armed, and the Earl was therefore ready to give ear to the mediation of Lord Cathcart, who was wedded to a near relative of the Earl, and of his son, the Master of Cathcart, who was espoused to Bargany's sister. The issue of the negotiations was that Bargany had the corn, and that he agreed to find security for the duty on the land to the Earl.

Naturally the Earl resented this constant interference of "the bold Bargany." It constituted an intrusion on his prerogative as chief of the clan, and threatened his ascendancy in Carrick; and accordingly he took such legal means as lay to his hand for bringing Bargany to a due sense of his position. This the Laird hotly resented, and, according to the "Historie," conceived the idea of taking the Earl's life, as he was riding from Ayrshire into Galloway. The arrangement was that as he was passing south in the vicinity of Ardstinchar Castle, the young Laird of Blairquhan, and Girvanmains, should fall upon him and slay him; but luckily for the Earl he was accompanied by Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean, and when the conspirators discovered this they stayed their hand. If the "Historie" is to be believed, Culzean himself was in the plot against the Earl, and had arranged to stay behind so that he might not be compromised in the slaughter. His presence was



resented by Mure of Auchendrane, whose accustomed hand was in the plot, and he proceeded to Castle-Kennedy to reason with him for his breach of faith. Cassillis granted an interview on an island, and the Earl, finding that Mure was there, gave orders that the boat should not take him away, his intention being to keep him a prisoner. Then he taxed Auchendrane with complicity in the plot. Mure indignantly denied the charge, and offered to make his denial good against the man who had so wrongfully accused him. When Cassillis was called away to dinner, Auchendrane's servant signalled to him that he was in danger; and, taking the hint, he and "the guidman of Ardmillan," by whom he was accompanied, hastened to the boat and, rowing across to the mainland, rode off to Ballantrae, where Bargany was in waiting, and where he communicated to him what had transpired. Bargany, much irate, despatched the guidman of Ardmillan and the young Laird of Carleton to demand the Earl's authority for the assertions he had made. The Earl denied that he had ever said any such thing, and accused Auchendrane of having invented the story. Auchendrane was mightily wroth at this and threatened to publish the Earl at the market cross of every town, if he denied what he had said to him. To complicate matters still worse, the Earl put in force a decret against Blairquhan and deprived him of Kelly Castle and Killenhow; and this so excited Blairquhan to fury that he sent his son to be in constant attendance on Bargany and to stir up strife between him and the Earl.

The Bargany factionaries concluded, not without reason, that the Earl's informant of the scheme for his slaughter was Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean, and they resolved to have his life. Ascertaining that he was going to ride into Galloway, they lay in wait for him at the back of Ardmillan Hill, and he would in all probability have fallen a victim to their fury had it not been for the working of one of those cross purposes which render the following of the feud so intricate, and which show the

desperate social conditions that must have obtained in Carrick at that period. Auchendrane, whose son, it will be remembered, was married to Culzean's daughter, had a tryst with Sir Thomas Kennedy, and he had therefore good reason to fear that if he were killed, complicity in the deed might be brought home to him. He was not particularly concerned to preserve Culzean's life, but he was anxious not to compromise himself in any way, and accordingly he sent a letter to Culzean warning him of the impending danger. To test the validity of the warning, Culzean, when he came near the spot where he had reason to believe the conspirators might be concealed, sent his servant riding on before him. The liars in wait at once seized him, and Sir Thomas sought safety, and, proceeding to Edinburgh, made complaint to the King. The King sent for Bargany, who denied all knowledge of the plot, and Culzean retorted upon him that he could prove it and gave the names of Mure and David Kennedy of Maxwellton as confirmatory of his assertion. These also were summoned into the royal presence, and they exonerated Bargany from participation in the scheme. In the hope of allaying the animosities, the monarch caused the whole of them to drink wine together and to be friends. This they were quite ready to do, but the friendship dictated by royalty did not long outlive their appearance in the royal presence, and it was not long before the rival factionaries were quarrelling on the street close by the Castle of Maybole, and the Earl, on the outlook for his opponents, intercepted Lady Bargany and her sister as they were riding towards Ayr with a small company. When Cassillis discovered who they were, and that the Laird was not with them, he permitted them to proceed; but this fresh insult so angered the partisans of the Laird that they lay for the Earl by the highway as he was riding from Craigneil to his home on the banks of the Doon. The plot failed, but the Earl heard of it, and he made up his mind to strike at Bargany, the head and front of all the offending, and to do it without loss of time.

The month of December drew on--the December of 1601. All these old families of Carrick had their town houses, some of them in Maybole, some in Ayr as well, and when the winter evenings were long and the sparsely peopled country was lonely, they were in the habit of rallying to the common centre. A little town in those days had its season, and it was then a scene of life and of gaiety. So it was with Ayr. It was the county town. Thither repaired the lords and the barons and the lairds of Kyle; there were Montgomeries and Cunninghames who came into it from North Ayrshire; and from the long plains of Carrick the Kennedys and their friends rode up to it across the Doon. Many were the troubles witnessed of the ancient High Street, many the broils that called for the armed intervention of the burghers, and many the men who went down in the tuilzies that were fought out on the causeway. It so happened that the family of which the Laird of Bargany was the head had business in town that winter. They all knew that it was not safe for the Laird to be abroad, that the Earl was on the outlook for him, that death might overtake him hard by any good ambush, and it had therefore been agreed that he should not come up to Ayr to meet with his friends. But Bargany was bold, and Bargany was impetuous, and he elected to take the risks. Accordingly he called about a dozen horsemen around him and rode to Ayr. The Earl heard of it, as he well might, for Bargany had ridden past his house and within a mile of it; and he communicated with his friends in the royal burgh and set spies on the Laird whose business it was to let him know when he should set out for Girvanside again.

Bargany knew his danger, and he consorted with the men of Ayr. The burghers were after the fighting order, and their sympathies were with Bargany and against Cassillis; and so, when the Laird asked them to see him through, eighty good men and true rallied to his cause and were there in marching or in riding order when the time had come to leave. John Mure of

Auchendrane was there too, and the young Laird of Carleton, and other partisans of the Bargany cause. It was a short, dark day, the 11th of December, and the snow was falling thick, when the expedition emerged from the burgh port and left the town behind them. They made for the bridge of Doon, now the old bridge, then the one and only bridge, and paused a little before beginning the ascent of Carrick. Mure fell a reasoning with the Laird, and counselled him to return to Ayr. He had not enough men, he told him, to do his turn. But the Laird paid no heed to the advice. He told the men of Ayr to witness that he meant no harm against his lord, that he had no other wish than to ride quietly home, and he appealed to them to say whether they would see him through. They said they would—they would see him through to the death if need be. And when these interchanges were past they faced the slope of Carrick Hill, the while the snow drave down on them so heavily that no man could see a lance's length ahead of him. The way was rough, the landscape was white, the trees and the hedges were heavy with snow; a more inhospitable day for the ride into Carrick could not well be conceived. Steadily, none the less, they plodded on, till they came to the Lady Corse, about a mile to the north of Maybole. There runs a burn here—the Brockloch burn.

The Earl and his men—two hundred of them, and twenty of the two hundred musketeers—had reached the Brockloch burn before Bargany and the men of Ayr got there, and they were in readiness to receive them. The details of the encounter are not very illuminating, but they amply suffice to tell how Bargany came by his end. With Auchendrane, Cloncaird, and other three followers he had sustained a charge of thirty of the Earl's horsemen. Auchendrane had been wounded in the thigh, and his horse had been brought to the ground, James Bannatyne's horse was slain, Bargany's page, Edward Irving, had been killed by a lance stroke, and John M'Alexander had received the contents of a

musket in the leg. Bargany only was pressing on, determined, if he could, to reach the Earl. The horsemen attendant on Cassillis beset him :—

“ Especially Hew Kennedy of Garryhorn, and Patrick Rippethe, and Quintin Craufurd of Sillyhole, younger. Garryhorn brake a lance on the Laird, and the other two struck at him with swords, and so forced him to retire. And then a fellow called John Dick, who had been far obliged to him before, at whose hands he expected no harm, hacked a lance at him and struck him through the throat ; for Bargany feared not him, and so took no tent to him, but to them that were striking at him. The lance brake in him and stuck, three-quarters of it, in his throat ; the which stayed his breath. Then Quintin Craufurd, coming up to him, struck his sword in his face, for he had no force to hold out against the stroke, he being breathless by the first stroke ; but his horse, being a very good gelding, bore him to his own men, near whom he fell dead for lack of breath.”

It was not quite so, however, for Bargany did not die on the scene of conflict. His followers retreated leaving him where he had fallen, evidently under the impression that he was dead, and the Earl and his men gathered round him. According to the story, the Earl would fain have had the work completed offhand, but his friends advised him against it. They pointed out that in all likelihood he was bound to succumb ; and even if he did not, they urged that it would be better that the Earl, as Justiciary for the district, should obtain power to have him tried at his own bar and legally destined to the scaffold. This reasoning prevailed, and Bargany was carried by his friends back to Ayr, where he lived long enough to exercise his influence to get Auchendrane, who had been taken prisoner by the Earl, set at liberty. But his hour was at hand. “ Doctor Low was he that handled his wounds ; who had no skill, but laid to plasters to the wounds, not considering the danger of the blood that had fallen down to his heart. And that,” adds the “ Historie,” “ was the cause of his

death, for, from the same freezing about his heart, he had no longer time." After his death his body was laid in the Kirk of Ayr in a "colme of lead," for a considerable time until his burial place at Ballantrae was made ready. Bargany had a great and a notable funeral. Before his bier was carried the banner of revenge, the words inscribed on it, "Revenge my cause, O Lord," and behind it stretched a cavalcade so notable and so long that the like of it had never before been seen in the countryside, and men spoke of it for many a day after.

The author of the "Historie" pays a high tribute to the bold Bargany. "He was," he says, "the bravest manne that was to be gotten in any land; of high stature and well made; his hair black, but of a comely face; the bravest horseman and the best of many at all pastimes. For he was fierce, and fiery, and wondrous nimble. He was about the age of twenty-five years when he was slain, but of his age the most wise he might be; for, if he had had time to have experience to his wit, he had been by his marrows." In all probability the character picture is not overdrawn. At the same time it is evident from the records of the time that Bargany was a typical product of the feudal order. To say that he was rash and unscrupulous, careless of life, and ready to avail himself of any means that came to his hand for the removal of his enemies, is only to say that he was after the manners and the morals of Carrick in the end of the sixteenth century and in the opening years of the seventeenth.

The Earl of Cassillis had no great difficulty in obtaining a remission from the Crown for the slaughter of the Laird. Some of those who had accompanied Bargany, among them Blairquhan, younger, Kennedy of Girvanmains, Hew and Thomas Kennedy of Bennan, and Walter Mure of Cloncaird, had been rebels at the time of the encounter by the Brockloch burn, and the Earl had been endowed with power to pursue them with fire and sword. On this ground he was formally relieved from the consequences of the combat.

With Bargany dead, the Earl of Cassillis reasserted his supremacy. He pursued a number of those who had been associated with his rival, and had them put to the horn, with the result that they were glad to come to terms with him. For he was not only the head of the Kennedy family, and the supreme feudal power in Carrick, but the Justiciary for the district as well; and in that capacity he was endowed with legal power to apprehend them at any time and have the pains and penalties of the law put in force against them. But the feud did not end for all that. Thomas Kennedy of Drumurchie, the Laird's brother, and Walter Mure, the Laird of Cloncaird, with a few friends, remained banded together, and they were strong enough to be troublesome. Then the Earl offended Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean. The eldest son of the latter had died in France, and there was a vacancy in the Provostship of the College Kirk of Maybole in consequence. Culzean expected that the preferment would go to his next son, but the Earl gave it to a notary called Gilbert Ross. The coldness that resulted impelled Culzean to try and make his peace with the Bargany factionaries, but, although Auchendrane endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation, his attempt was abortive, and Mure warned Sir Thomas that, if he came within "their danger," he would most certainly be "tane." Culzean's position was therefore highly critical. He was at variance with the chief, the Bargany factionaries had sworn to be avenged upon him, and Auchendrane was not to be trusted, as the sequel was shortly to prove.

Culzean was minded to ride to Edinburgh on business. Before setting out he sent a message to tell Mure to meet him the following day in the outskirts of the town of Ayr that they might talk over matters connected with his journey to the Scottish Metropolis. The messenger, Culzean's servant, Lancelot Kennedy, was unable to deliver the message himself, but he got the schoolmaster of Maybole to write a letter to Mure conveying the tidings, and the letter was carried to Auchendrane by

William Dalrymple, a "poor scholar," of Ayr. Next day, May 11, 1602, Culzean and his servant set forth on their journey. He rode leisurely along the coast till he came to Greenan Castle, a peel that stood, and the ruins of whose tower still stand, on a precipitous cliff about three miles south-west of Ayr, and there he spent the night with Kennedy of Baltersan, then in occupation of the keep. His movements had been observed by the Bargany men, and, gathered together in Auchendrane, they made their arrangements for the following day. Culzean, in order to keep tryst with Mure, had to ride through the outskirts of the royal burgh. A chapel stood about a mile south of the town—the chapel of St. Leonard's—and it was surrounded by trees, and stood among sandhills which afforded excellent hiding ground for the conspirators. These consisted of Bargany's brother, Thomas Kennedy, Walter Mure of Cloncaird, Thomas M'Alexander, and Thomas Wallace, with William Irving, a Borderer, and a lad, Gilbert Ramsay. They were in a position to see Culzean leave Greenan. All unsuspecting, and accompanied only by his servant, he rode along till he entered amid the sandhills and the wooded environs of St. Leonard's; and then they "brake at him" and slew him "most cruelly with shots and strokes." They also robbed him of a thousand merks in gold, of a ring with several diamonds, and of his gold buttons. Culzean's servant appears to have escaped. When the deed had been done and the assassins had made off, he returned to the place where his master lay in his gore, and, placing his body on the back of his horse, returned to Maybole. Five days later the body of the murdered Knight was buried in the family vault in the College Kirkyard amid every evidence of deep sorrow and of respect. The murderers were at once put to the horn and denounced as rebels, but as they had sought safety in flight, or in seclusion, none of them were brought to justice.

There is every reason for believing that the Earl of Cassillis from the very first associated John Mure of



Auchendrane with the deed. Mure had been wise enough to remain at home in his tower on the banks of the Doon when the others, the younger men, had gone forth intent on vengeance, but there was strong *prima facie* evidence that he had connived at bringing Culzean within the toils. The Earl bent his energies therefore on bringing Mure to justice. It mattered very little to him whether it was done by the ordinary process of the law, or by the rough and ready methods of the blood feud. He put his brother, the Master of Cassillis, upon his track in the hope that he might be able to kill him offhand, and granted an obligation, peculiar of its kind, covenanting to reward him and his accomplices as soon as they had fulfilled his, and their purpose. This agreement ran thus :—

“ We, Johne, Earle of Cassillis, Lord Kennedy, etc., Binds and Obliges us, that howsoon our brother, Hew Kennedy of Brounstoun, with his complices, takes the Laird of Auchendrane’s life, that we shall make good and thankful payment to him and to them of the sum of twelve hundred merks, yearly, together with corne to six horses, aye and until we receive them in household with oursel; beginning the first payment immediately after their committing of the same deed. Moreover, howsoon we receive them in household, we shall pay it to the two serving gentlemen the fees, yearly, as our household servants. And hereto we oblige us upon our honour. Subscribed with our hand at Maybole, the 3rd day of September, 1602.

“ JOHNE ERLE OF CASSILLIS.”

Auchendrane recognised his danger, and faced it boldly. There was but the one link that connected him with the tragedy of the St. Leonard’s plantation, and that was the lad William Dalrymple, the poor scholar of Ayr, who had carried the letter to his house informing him of Culzean’s intention to ride to Edinburgh. With Dalrymple in his hands he had nothing to fear. He accordingly had him brought to Auchendrane and kept

there a prisoner ; and, satisfied that he could now set the Earl at defiance, he received with comparative calmness the summons to appear at the bar of the Privy Council on a charge of being art and part in the murder of Sir Thomas Kennedy. Realising none the less the need for presenting a strong front at once to the Court and to the Earl of Cassillis, he persuaded a number of lairds of greater or less degree to ride with him to Edinburgh. These included Lainshaw, Rowallan, Auchinleck, Blair, Caldwell, Bombie, Hazlehead, and Blair younger, and these represented not only a considerable force in influence and in striking power themselves, but also, in several instances, the greater influence of important families and feudal combinations that were behind them. They made a brave show as they set out from Ayr to the Metropolis. They were all well armed, and powerfully escorted, and they rode as men who felt they would have to be reckoned with before misfortune should be permitted to befall John Mure. When the case was called, Auchendrane boldly protested his innocence, and demanded of the Lord Advocate that he should give proof of the charge which he had brought against him. This, as Mure well knew, was what the Lord Advocate could not do ; for he had the one and only witness who was essential, safely confined in his own tower on Doonside, and without Dalrymple it was impossible satisfactorily to prove anything. The group of western lairds added their protests to those of Mure, and clamoured loudly for his release. The Lord Advocate explained that Dalrymple had disappeared, and suggested that Mure was responsible for his non-appearance, but the suggestion Auchendrane indignantly flouted, and he called God to witness that he knew nothing of him. The Court, accustomed to such scenes, but realising that nothing more could meantime be done, ordered Mure to find caution in a thousand pounds Scots for his subsequent appearance ; and this having been done, he and his friends trooped out into the High Street of Edinburgh and returned to

Ayrshire. Mure lost no time in getting home again. He knew that the Earl of Cassillis would take vengeance after his own fashion as soon as occasion should offer ; and immediately on his arrival in Carrick he changed his residence from Doonside to Newark House on the northern slope of Carrick Hill, a fitter place for defence and more easily held against such a force as that which Cassillis could bring to bear against it. The wisdom of this course was apparent even before he could have the transference of residence completed, for while he was riding between the two houses, he narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the Master of Cassillis who, with a party of followers, was lying in ambush for him. These were seen by his wife as she was riding on ahead, and she had warning conveyed to him ; and that just in time to enable Mure to get safely within the strength of Newark as the Kennedys came clattering at his heels.

So long as Dalrymple remained in Ayrshire and within possible reach of the Earl of Cassillis, there was danger, and Auchendrane therefore determined to get rid of him by sending him out of the country altogether. In these days it was a far cry even to Arran, and there was safety in its depths and immunity from danger in its solitudes. Thither Dalrymple was sent under the care of Montgomerie of Skelmorlie. It is inconceivable that Auchendrane should have explained why ; for while Skelmorlie was a noted feudalist and come of a race that was ever ready to go a long way in the promotion of the feud, he was also an honourable man and would not have lent himself to the covering up of crime, even feudal crime, in this unworthy fashion. Dalrymple found Arran lonely, and it was not long before he reappeared in Ayrshire. Auchendrane, however, was on the alert, and a second time he seized him. There were wars in Flanders, and there was a body of Scottish Horse under the Duke of Buccleuch. The dragoons were liable to death in many forms, in the field, in the assault, in the camp, in hospital. What more likely than that Dalrymple, if only he were sent off

to Flanders as a soldier, should never return? To Flanders therefore he must go. So he was sent across country to the east coast and shipped off to the seat of war. For the time being Auchendrane breathed freely. Feeling in Carrick was beginning to subside; besides, Mure himself was a man well advanced in years, and he was able to look forward to closing life without being called to account by Cassillis for the one unforgivable deed done in the body. Two or three years passed. Many a soldier went to his account, but not Dalrymple. He had suffered many things, privation, hunger, sickness, wounds, but the life was yet whole within him, and one day he was sent back to Scotland and—to the horror of John Mure—took up his residence in Ayr. Danger was imminent. The position was desperate, and something desperate must be done if all these years of suspense and of dread were not to have been lived in vain.

Auchendrane had a son, James. James, it will be remembered, had been wedded to Helen Kennedy of Culzean. He seems to have been a desperado of a rougher and readier type than his father. The latter had shrunk from the one and only effective means of putting Dalrymple out of the way. To have killed the poor scholar offhand would have been at variance with the feudal code—the code of honour by which the vendetta was regulated. James had no such qualms of conscience—no such niceties in discrimination. And now that Dalrymple was on the scene again, and might any day fall into the hands of Cassillis, Auchendrane himself began to see things in another and a darker light, and the plot upon which he now entered in conjunction with his son had for its ultimate intent the disappearance for ever of Dalrymple from the scene. They contrived that he should be housed with James Bannatyne, a follower and a dependent of the Mures, in the farm of Chapeldonan, near Girvan, and that Bannatyne should bring him to keep tryst with them on the seashore by night; and the fact that, as they rode southward in the mirk to fulfil the appointment, they

carried spades with them, is proof that they were deliberately bent on murder. The Tragedy of the Sands is thus narrated by Sir Thomas Hamilton, the Lord Advocate, in a letter to a Scottish nobleman, but obviously intended for the eye of the King, the Scottish Solomon :—

“ James Bannatyne did bring Dalrymple about ten o'clock in the night to the sands of Girvan, where John Mure, elder of Auchendrane, and James Mure, younger of Auchendrane, were attending their coming. At meeting, Auld Auchendrane began to declare to his man Bannatyne that he had been in perpetual fear since Culzean's slaughter, to be discovered guilty thereof ; that, for eschewing the danger, he had sent furth of the country this Dalrymple, who brought to him the letter of advertisement of Culzean's diet, and, when as he had matters at that point as, by his pains, young Culzean and Thomas Kennedy were made to allow of the conditions which he had set down for reconciliation of the quarrel, this man was unhappily returned, by whom his whole device would be disappointed and his danger renewed. That he saw no remedy but to rid Dalrymple furth of this life, since he could not otherwise be kept out of the way. Whereunto Bannatyne making answer that it was a cruel purpose to murder the poor innocent youth, especially seeing they might send him to Ireland to be safely kept there till the agreeance was perfected between Culzean and Drumurchie ; Auld Auchendrane seemed to incline somewhat to this expedient ; and in the uncertainty of his resolution, turning towards the part where his son stood, on purpose, as appeared, to have consulted with him, young Auchendrane perceived them no sooner near, but, thereby assuring himself of their assistance, in execution of that which his father and he had formerly concluded, he did violently invade Dalrymple, rushed him to the ground, and never left him, till helped by his father, with his hands and knees he had strangled him. And then thinking to have buried him in the sands, whereby no mark should remain which

might raise any suspicion of his murder in that place, they pressed to make use of a shade and shawl which young Auchendrane had brought with him for the purpose ; but finding that no hole was sooner cast by them in the sand but was as soon filled up again with the water and sand that shot into it, they were forced, after long travail, to draw him into the sea as far as they durst wade, hoping that an outerly (*i.e.*, an off-shore) wind should carry his dead corpse to the coast of Ireland. Which not succeeding to their expectation, the corpse staying all the next day in the very place they left it, they passed that day in marvellous anxiety for fear of discovery ; till the next night, searching for the corpse to have buried it, they could not by any search find it, because the wind had carried it to sea, where it was tossed continually by the space of five nights till the Friday following, that God, designing to use that means for manifestation of their hid iniquities, brought Dalrymple's corpse back to the very place where, six or seven days before, he had been murdered ; which being perceived by some country people, the corpse was carried by them to the next churchyard and there buried.

“ But the report of so strange an accident having raised suspicion in the Earl of Cassillis and some of his friends . . . it was thought fit that intimation be publicly made in Ayr, being the head burgh of the shire, and at the parish kirks to landward, that such a corpse, being found dead upon the coast, was to be seen at the Church of Girvan. Which being accordingly published, the corpse was raised, and among others, sighted by Dalrymple's mother and his sister who, after diligent consideration of the proportion and marks of his body, assured themselves and others that he was the murdered man.”

The identification of the body of William Dalrymple created great excitement in Carrick. What added materially to the sensation was a story that spread far and wide, and that, like other stories of the same character, grew more detailed and specific as it travelled.

Among those who repaired to the church to see the corpse was a lady of the Culzean family. She took with her a little girl, Marie Mure, the daughter of the younger, and the grand-daughter of the older Mure. This child wandered into the church, and, as she stood looking at all that was mortal of the murdered man, blood sprang forth from the corpse. Such was the tale. In those days the belief still obtained that this was Heaven's way of pointing the finger of eternal Justice at the murderer. It had begun to give way, but it had still so much credence attached to it that even the Senators of the College of Justice were prepared to listen to reasoning founded on the superstition; and as a matter of fact this very instance was cited as an undeniable proof of Providential agency in the detection of the crime of murder. With the spreading of the story, men began to associate Auchendrane and his son with the crime, and the feeling grew strong that they must be called to account for it.

The Earl of Cassillis, who had quietly and watchfully bided his time, once more set the law in motion. Mure, on the other hand, driven to desperation and fearful of what a day might bring forth, thought only of how to protect himself. It was for that he lived, it was to that end he devoted all his energies. To begin with, he had Bannatyne sent to Ireland; but, as it was with Dalrymple in Arran, so it was with the Carrick farmer in Ireland. He returned to Ayrshire at the instance of the Earl of Abercorn. Auchendrane resolved at once to take his life, and he employed an assassin to slay him; and, to make assurance of safety doubly sure, he actually covenanted with another cutthroat to do by him what he was to do by Bannatyne. In the hope of diverting attention from the tragedy on the Girvan shore, he planned an attack, after the orthodox feudal method, upon Hugh Kennedy of Garriehorne, and, accompanied by a retainer, he waylaid him on the highway and made a determined attack upon him; but this time he had to deal, not with a defenceless, but with an armed and bold

and ready man. Garriehorne accepted the combat, beat his opponents off, and wounded Auchendrane severely. The law meanwhile was moving steadily, if slowly, and at length it magnified itself in the apprehension of the Mures, father and son, and had them conveyed to Edinburgh and imprisoned in the Heart of Midlothian—the Tolbooth. As before, however, direct incriminatory evidence was lacking. Bannatyne, afraid of the Mures on the one hand, and of the probable consequences of giving himself up to justice, on the other, was in concealment. The Mures roundly denied the accusation that the Lord Advocate brought against them. The authorities were in a quandary, and they would in all probability have felt themselves compelled to drop the case had it not been that King James, who took a great personal interest in it, and who was satisfied in his own mind that the Mures were guilty, refused for the time being to sanction their liberation. Sterner methods of ascertaining the truth were accordingly taken.

The Privy Council had not yet dispensed with the torture as an adjunct to the ascertaining of the truth, and it was resolved to apply the boot to the younger Mure. But even the agony wrung from him by the driving home of the wedge that shattered the ankle bones failed to do more than elicit protests of innocence from James Mure. "He did," in the words of the Lord Advocate, "endure the extremity of that insufferable torture with such constancy, that, whereas it was hoped that the verity of the accusation and extremity of pain should have forced him to a true confession, the event proved so far contrary, as he, resolving with silence, and sufferance of a short pain, to redeem his liberty and to add the hope of many years to his life." As the result of his protestations, Auchendrane was set at liberty, but James Mure himself was still kept in prison.

While the Earl of Cassillis had bided his time in the matter of Auchendrane, he had been instant in the reassertion of his feudal supremacy. As an instance of



how strenuously he had pursued his purpose, his dealing with Thomas Dalrymple, the brother of the Laird of Stair, may be cited. Dalrymple was a cousin of Bargany, and a nephew of the old Laird of Bargany who died 1597. He was thus a second cousin of the Earl of Cassillis, and he was on the Bargany side of the feud. He was "ane pretty little manne, and werry kynd. He was kindly handitt, quha was ane manne that had never offendit manne," but he was one of those who had plotted to waylay and slay the Earl on his way home from Craigneil, so that, if he never injured any one, it was not for want of trying. Riding along by night close by the the bridge at Girvan, he was captured by the Earl, taken to Craigneil Castle, granted an assize, and hanged forthwith at the "yett." But all availed nothing so long as Mure remained at liberty, and in this respect, as in others, the Earl was to have satisfaction. By the influence of the Earl of Abercorn, Bannatyne was brought back from Ireland and confronted with Cassillis. The latter was not satisfied with the manner in which the farmer of Chapeldonan had been placed at his mercy, and he refused to hold him in bondage. While, however, he offered him his liberty, he told him that after ten days "he would bestow all his own travails, and the assistance of all the friends he had in the world, to apprehend him, wherever he might be had, either quick or dead." In these circumstances he counselled him to repair to the Privy Council and make confession. To this course Bannatyne was further impelled by the knowledge that Auchendrane was moving heaven and earth to have him slain. He accordingly made confession, and, the way being now clear for the trial of the Mures, Auchendrane was rearrested and carried off to Edinburgh.

On July 17, 1611, the Mures, father and son, were placed at the bar of the High Court, and with them James Bannatyne. The older Mure was charged with being "art and part of the treasonable murder of the deceased Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean, Knight, Tutor of Cassillis," etc., and all three with the murder of William

Dalrymple. Through the counsel who represented them, the Mures contested the relevancy of the indictment under various heads, but in vain. The Court held the libel relevant. This document, still preserved in the Justiciary records, tells the whole story of Auchendrane's complicity in the plot against Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean, and the steps that he took to keep Dalrymple out of the way. Its interest culminates when it comes to deal with the tragedy on the sands of the Girvan shore. Following the lines of the story, as told by the Lord Advocate, it reaches the critical moment when James Mure "cruelly invaded the said William Dalrymple for his slaughter, rushed him to the ground, and, setting his knees upon his arms, he put his hands to the said William's throat, and there worried and slew him. In the which fact ye, the said John Mure of Auchendrane, helped with your own hands to hold him down and smother him." Then follows the gruesome story of how the murderers attempted to get rid of the corpse, and of how neither the sand would hide it nor the ocean bear it away, and how at last the wind and tide brought back the dead body to the very spot where the murder had been done.

The jury heard the evidence, direct and incriminating, and then retired to the Council House of the Tolbooth, where they considered what verdict they should bring in. To this they agreed:—"The Assyse, for the most part, find John Mure, elder of Auchendrane, to be guilty, culpable, and convict, of art and part of the treasonable and cruel murder of the deceased Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean, Knight. And, siclyke, the said persons of Assyse, for the most part, find and declare the said John Mure, elder of Auchendrane, and James Mure of Auchendrane, younger, and either of them, to be guilty, culpable, and convict, of art and part of the treasonable and cruel murder of the deceased William Dalrymple, in manner specified in the dittay. And last, they all, in one voice, find and declare the said James Bannatyne, called of Chapeldonan, to be guilty, culpable,

and convict, of art and part of the said treasonable murder of the said deceased William Dalrymple, committed by the said persons in manner contained in the dittay.”

In face of such a verdict as that, there could be but the one sentence—the sentence of death. Accordingly, the Mures, older and younger, and Bannatyne, were condemned “to be taken to the Market Cross of the burgh of Edinburgh, and there, upon a scaffold, their heads to be struck from their bodies, and all their lands, heritages, tacks, steadings, rooms, possessions, teinds, corns, cattle, inside plenishing, goods, gear, titles, profits, commodities, and rights whatsoever, directly or indirectly pertaining to them, or any of them, at the said treasonable murders, or sinsyne, or to the which any of them had right, claim, or action, to be forfeit, escheat, and inbrought to our sovereign lord’s use, as culpable, and convict of the said treasonable crimes.” “Which,” added the officer of Court, the deemster, “is pronounced for doom.” Bannatyne received the King’s pardon, and was forthwith liberated.

For the Mures there could be no hope. Their sins had found them out, and they must die. It is probably never a very satisfying study that of men under sentence of death, and least of all when, as not infrequently happens, they are held up to the world as monuments of saving grace. None can limit Heaven’s power to forgive or to change the heart, but it is one thing to recognise that, and another to acclaim the murderer a saint, even *in extremis*. It is interesting, none the less, to note the spiritual exercise of the Mures, as that is told in the words of the Lord Advocate. “Neither could wise men,” he says, “neglect to admire how loath the Devil is to quit his possession of a sinner’s soul, having so contended to maintain Auld Auchendrane in his denial and impenitence, that, after his conviction, there was no appearance that he should either confess or publicly repent the crimes for which he was condemned, until, after a notable conflict between his

son and the Devil, who still persuaded him that there was no hope of mercy to a sinner who had wilfully and oft perjured himself with horrible execrations, some godly bishops and ministers by long conferences and comfortable assurances given to him of the readiness of God's free grace and mercy to all sinners who, with unfeigned repentance, are displeased for their sins, and can dispose their souls to hope for pardon and beg it at His hands—he was moved to make plain and particular declaration of the unhappy murder of Dalrymple committed by his father and himself, according to Bannatyne's confession and their conviction. Whereby, finding his conscience wonderfully disburdened, and his soul fully replenished with God's sure hope of abundant mercy, did cheerfully dispose himself to death as the only way to a blessed and ever permanent life; and, using his best persuasions to his father that, as they were conjoined in blood and likewise conjoined in the equal guiltiness of so heinous a sin, so he would consent that they might join in repentance and true conversion, he did so much prevail with him that, being assisted by the godly travails of the bishops and ministers, the father was brought to so free and sensible contrition as, in the last hours of their life, and at the time of their death, their godly resolution to make haste to receive the eternal joys, which they expected assuredly at God's merciful hands, gave as great comfort to the beholders of their execution as their wicked lives had been offensive to those who knew the actions thereof."

In due time the Mures were executed, and with their death the blood feud in Carrick may be said to have come to a close. By this time the State had been able to assert its authority over every part of the Kingdom, and the contending factions in the West had been forced to recognise that they could no longer hope to outrage the law of the land with impunity. The Earl of Cassillis had, however, amply asserted his own position. He had yielded nothing of his kingship of Carrick. One by one his opponents had either been driven from the scene, or

had been compelled to acknowledge his supremacy ; and, all things considered, it cannot be said that he acted with greater sternness or vindictiveness than the circumstances had warranted.

The Mures, whose heads fell to the gleaming knife of the old Scottish " Maiden," were not the last of their race. The family was represented in the eighteenth century by a poor and a distressed man. Overburdened by debt, he found himself compelled to yield to the mandate of the Court, and to submit to arrest at the hands of a bailiff. As he was being taken away from his ancestral home on the banks of the Doon, from the tower which in its time had witnessed so many remarkable and stirring scenes, the eye of the bailiff fell upon the dule tree, a majestic plane that stood in front of the tower, and he offered to forego the debt if only Mure would give him the tree. " What !" exclaimed the last of the Mures, proud though in his poverty, " Sell the dule tree of Auchendrane ! I would sooner die in the worst dungeon of your prison." To prison accordingly he went. It is long since a devastating winter storm destroyed the dule tree ; and as the years went on the grey old tower was removed to make way for the abode of peace, and of philanthropy, that was the home of Sir Peter Coats, one of the founders of the great thread industry of Paisley, for a number of years before his death.

We have dealt in considerable detail with these great feuds in Ayrshire ; and it is not necessary, therefore, that we should do more than glance at the smaller feuds in which the leading families of the shire were involved, and at the quarrels of the families of less territorial consequence. Many of the latter are so obscure, both as to their causes and their consequences, that it is now wholly impossible to discover whence they sprang or how they terminated. That they were ruthlessly waged, however, is undeniable, and even a summary of the events that have been handed down to us, in the judicial and family records of the period, is

sufficient to demonstrate, equally with the story of the more important struggles for ascendancy, how distraught must have been the social conditions of the shire in the sixteenth century. The time was one of great changes and excitements, national and religious, in the country, and, looking back to it from the standpoint of the present time, it appears not a little strange that the men who were able to make their influence felt on the direction of the affairs of State should not have recognised the duty of maintaining the peace at home.

The Boyds of Kilmarnock, a family of many chequered experiences, appear to have been objects of attack both to the Montgomeries and the Cunninghames. Not long prior to 1530, the Earl of Eglinton slew James Boyd, "the King's sister's son." The affray took place "in the Queen's lands and barony of Rowallan at the siege of Kilmarnock," when the Montgomeries forcibly uplifted the profits of the "mailing" of the Low Mill and its pertinents. In 1530 peace was proclaimed between the two houses, the Earl of Eglinton agreeing to pay by instalments two thousand merks to Robert Boyd of Kilmarnock for the slaughter of his chief, and receiving in return a discharge for all his bygone spoilings and slaughters. A little later the Earl of Glencairn put forward a claim to the barony of Kilmarnock, and proclaimed a Court to be held "at the Knockanlaw." The guidman of Kilmarnock and Mungo Muir of Rowallan appeared upon the scene on the day fixed, with their friends and retainers at their back, and stayed Glencairn from the function which he had intended to hold, by the simple expedient of offering him battle. This was more than he was prepared for, and he was compelled to forego his intention. In 1547 there was a skirmish on the streets of Irvine between Lord Boyd and Sir Neil Montgomerie of Lainshaw, in which the latter lost his life. Being a scion of Eglinton, Sir Neil's death rekindled the Earl's antagonism to the Boyds, and Lord Boyd felt himself compelled to go into hiding. Sometimes he found shelter with John Muir of Rowallan, sometimes

apparently in the open field. While thus in hiding "in the bogside beside Irvine," he was discovered by the son of the slaughtered Laird of Lainshaw, who convened his friends and accomplices with the intention of slaying him; but Rowallan, hearing of their purpose, gathered his adherents and placed himself by the side of Lord Boyd, affirming his readiness to adventure his life and everything he had in defence of his safety. In the circumstances the attempt was abandoned. This feud went on at intervals till 1560 or 1561, when it was patched up on rather curious conditions. Lord Boyd was to appear at "the cross, mercat, or kirk" of Irvine, as Montgomerie of Lainshaw might think proper, and there solicit forgiveness for himself and his friends for the deed that he had done, and to pay at the same time eighteen hundred and forty merks. And three of Boyd's friends, who had apparently been with him at the skirmish in the Irvine streets, Charles Mowat of Busbie, Robert Boyd of Clerkland, and William Blair of Hendrescroft, gave bond at the same time to Lord Boyd, that they should depart the country and remain in France during the pleasure of Sir Neil Montgomerie. The Montgomeries, on the other hand, gave securities that they would regard the quarrel at an end on these conditions being fulfilled. These were "the Earl of Eglinton, as chief and principal of the father's side, the Earl of Argyle, as chief and principal by the mother's and guiddam side, and the Earl of Cassillis, as chief and principal of the guiddam by the father's side." In September, 1570, John Muir of Caldwell was slain by Alexander Cunninghame, younger, of Aiket, with a party of friends and servants—no doubt an incident in the feud that had for so many years been running between the Glencairn family on the one hand, and the Boyds and Muirs on the other. Shortly afterwards a quarrel eventuated between the Boyds and the Muirs themselves. Sir Robert Colville of Ochiltree, maternal grandfather to Lord Boyd, had been beset by the Muirs and slain. In revenge, Lord Boyd, the Master of Boyd,

James Boyd of Keppis, Alexander Boyd, Bailie of Kilmarnock, and other friends, to the number of sixteen in all, armed as for battle, "with jacks, spears, secrets, steel bonnets, swords, long culverins, daggs, and pistolettes," beset John Muir in the Well near the Kirk of Prestwick, on his way home, riding alone from Ayr. With such a force Muir had no chance, and he was slain on the spot. Muir of Rowallan, the head of the family, pursued Lord Boyd for satisfaction. The Regent Mar, anxious if at all possible to bring these troubles to a close and to restore the westland to peace, interfered, and, under his influence, the parties agreed to come to a settlement. Lord Boyd consented to pay to Janet, the wife of the deceased John Muir, as compensation for the slaughter of her husband, "two hundred and thirty-three pounds, six and eightpence" by instalments—the Master of Rowallan acting on behalf of the widow and her children. The feud, however, still continued. In 1594, Muir of Rowallan had committed "violence, injury, and intolerable oppression" upon William Hunter in his attempt to uplift certain teinds to which he seems to have been justly entitled. The King, knowing the natural feeling of hostility to the Muirs that existed in Lord Boyd, instructed the latter to protect Hunter, and expressed his surprise that such interference on his part should have been necessary in respect of the power and authority possessed by Lord Boyd within the bounds. Lest the royal and official mandate should not have the desired effect, the Queen supplemented it with a private note of her own. This communication ran as follows:—

"Truist cousing, we greit you weill. Understanding that the Laird of Rowallan, baith violentlie and unjustlie perseweth the King's servand, William Hunter, and stayeth him fra uplifting his teinds, quhairunto he hes sic interest by his wyffe, we requiest you therfor that ye wold countenance, assist, and protect the said William Hunter, and by your powerfull favour warrand him fra other injurys, quhairin ye sal do to us very agreeable



pleasour ; as ye sal haife the pruiifes thairof quhensoever ye sal suits for the same at our hands. Our right truiist counsigne, we committ you to God. At Halyrud hous, the 9 of Januar, 1594.

“ ANNA, R.”

What befell as the result of the kingly order and the queenly request cannot now be told. The interesting point of the matter, so far as Ayrshire is concerned, is the proof that the incident offers that the enmity between the two families had not been assuaged by the formal agreement come to twenty-two years previous. Indeed, these agreements seldom or never seem to have served the purpose of ensuring friendship between the rival feudalists. They answered the end for the time being, but the animosities were too deeply engrained to be dissipated by parchment friendships, and there was no lack of occasion for their recrudescence. Neither did they cease, in their extreme manifestation, until the Crown was powerful enough to lay its heavy hand on the rivals and compel their submission.

The Justiciary records abound in instances of trials for feudal offences. In 1530, John Cunninghame of Caprington, Alexander Cunninghame of Luglane, Adam Stewart of Shawtown, and Adam Cunninghame of Clavanis, were denounced rebels for non-appearance to underlie the law for the cruel slaughter of John Tod, and with them David Boswell of Auchinleck for the same offence. In 1537, Gilbert, Earl of Cassillis, Fergus M'Dowall of Freuche, John Kennedy, younger, of Drumellan, Alexander Kennedy of Glentig, James Kennedy of Knockdon, and twenty-three others, had to find security for coming upon John Dunbar of Blantyre and his four servants in Ayr, armed in warlike manner, cruelly invading them for their slaughter, wounding three of the servants, and mutilating two of them in the hand and in the thigh. John Cunninghame of Caprington, David Boswell of Auchinleck, and George Douglas of Pennyland, had to answer for attacking John Samson in Ayr and mutilating him in the thumb

of his right hand. In 1538 a burghess of Ayr, Alexander Lockert, was convicted of convoking the lieges of the town in great numbers and assaulting Alexander Kennedy of Bargany in his town house, and breaking the door and the windows of the house with stones. The sentence is unrecorded; in all likelihood he found security to the satisfaction of the Court to satisfy Bargany. Thomas Craufurd of Auchenames had to find the usual security for having taken Sir Thomas Craufurd, chaplain, prisoner, and detained him in Auchenames house, and for wrongfully ejecting a widow, Margaret Love, and her son, from the lands of Kebbilstone. Richard Lauder and twelve others were put to the horn for convoking, to the number of an hundred armed persons, against Andrew Cunninghame, son of Sir William Cunninghame, Master of Glencairne, cruelly wounding him, stealing his sword, whinger, belt, and purse, and for taking his servant prisoner and putting him in the stocks for four and twenty hours.

A somewhat curious case was that of James Reid, who was tried and convicted of the cruel slaughter of John Reid of "Trumberry." There appears to be some doubt where this Trumberry was. It is doubtful whether Turnberry is meant, and it has been suggested that it may have been Cronberry. James Reid had come upon John Reid on his own lands of Darndougall, in the month of April, 1530, and had slain him "upon auld feud and forethought felony." He had previously attacked John Reid at the Leynheid of the Schaw, and, after he had escaped, some friends had tried to arrange terms between them, but the accused had refused to be conciliatory, and had said "that there would be more betwixt them till one of their skins was cuttit." Accused had lain in wait for his victim, and when he had seen him coming, he and his brother had run before their father and had slain him. James Reid denied the charge, alleging that the deceased and his friends, to the number of ten persons, had pursued him and his father for the slaughter of the latter; that they had turned to defend

themselves, and that John Reid happened to get a stroke that killed him. On these grounds the accused besought the Judge, for God's sake, for "remede." Because he was a poor man he applied for a lawyer to speak for him, "as ye will have thank, reward, and merit of God and of your own souls therefor." The King interested himself in this case, and the venue was changed from Ayrshire to Edinburgh, so that the accused might have a fair trial and free from malice. In the end, Reid was found guilty and beheaded.

In 1550, two sons of Hugh Craufurd, senior, two sons of William Craufurd of Barquhorn, and other two men, were declared rebels for not appearing to answer to a charge of having cruelly slain William Mathy and Findlay Sym, and forcibly abducted Lady Leifnorris and detained her in captivity. There were other charges of a feudal character against them as well. Among many cases of a somewhat analogous character, we find that John Lockhart of Bar had pursued Lord Stewart of Ochiltree for his slaughter; that John Cunninghame of Glengarnock, his two brothers, and thirty-two others, had broken into the house of Humphrey Galbraith for his slaughter; that Robert Grahame of Knockdolian had slain Gilbert M'Ilwrick; that Alexander Dunlop of Dunlop had been art and part in the cruel slaughter of his own son; that the Kennedys of Bargany had broken into the house of Penkill and invaded Adam Boyd, his wife, children, and servants, wounding his wife with stones; and that Bernard Fergusson of Kilkerran, his brothers, Thomas and David, and fifty-one others, had come within the Tolbooth of Ayr, where the Sheriff's deputes were sitting, and invaded John Craufurd of Camlarg with drawn swords and staves. To this list many more instances of a like character might be added, but enough has been said to demonstrate what Ayrshire was during the period that the blood feud ran. There are numerous instances also of raids and forays committed by the partisans of the different families upon the lands of their neighbours, the lifting of horses,

cattle, and sheep, and occasionally the appropriation of household goods and plenishing. It is only in rare instances that actual punishment was enforced. The principle of compensation for lawless acts, even when they were of a very serious character indeed, was perfectly understood; and the heads of the families could always be depended upon to stand by their adherents in the time of need. Outlawry was but little regarded. Many a prominent man was put to the horn, in some instances for successive offences, but the worst offenders appear to have been sheltered by their friends, or to have accepted voluntary banishment with the calm assurance that ere long the scandal or the offence would be forgotten. Life in Ayrshire was certainly not without its excitements in the sixteenth century; indeed, as compared with that period, it has to be confessed that we live in times that, for a regular series of sensations, are downright tame and humdrum.

## CHAPTER IX

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### THE FIRST REFORMATION

Many circumstances had combined to prepare Ayrshire specially for the Reformation. It is affirmed, and not without some ostensible reason, that there had been an immigration of Lollards from the Continent of Europe, and that some of these had found their home in the westland; and it is said that the forefathers of John Howie of Lochgoin, the historian of the "Scots Worthies," were among those who had left their own land for conscience sake and that they had sought the seclusion of the muirlands of the Fenwick district. If these things be so, it is not difficult to understand that, even as early as the fifteenth century, the Reform movement that in the end swept the Church of Rome out of Scotland altogether, had a prepared people awaiting its arrival in force upon the Ayrshire scene. There can be no doubt, however, that the Church of Rome herself was largely responsible—indeed, mainly responsible—for her own overthrow. She had long since ceased as a whole to be the hard-working, unselfish Church that she was in the days of her youth. She had been grasping of lands, of heritages, of influence. She had annexed many of the fairest estates that Scotland had. In Ayrshire she lorded it over each of the three divisions of the county. The parishes were all under her control and influence, in secular things as well as sacred. She took tithe of the fruits of the field, of the minerals that were brought up from underneath the soil, of the produce of the mill and of the brewery. She had

incurred the hostility of the poor by laying upon them burdens heavier than they could bear, and the jealousy of the rich by adding field to field that they thought might well be theirs. The abbeys were flourishing, but religion was at a low ebb. The streets of the towns were thronged with prosperous monks and friars of each degree; the people on the other hand, were poor, distressed, burdened. Is it any wonder that they were naturally prone to change, and that they were prepared to accept anything that offered them relief from the troubles that beset them on every hand?

There is nothing to which a people will cling more firmly than their faith; and it may therefore be accepted as indisputable that, when the Scots turned their backs upon Rome, the Church of Rome herself had tried them beyond endurance. It was not from Lollardy alone, then, that the initiative came. The Lollards were "Psalm singers"—for so their name implies—and they no doubt played their own part in the education of the people; but the predisposing causes were many. They were spiritual, they were political, they were national, they were local; and behind them all, as we have said, was the decadence of the Church herself. The men of faith wanted the light, the people wanted freedom from their burdens, the nobles had an eye on the lands, and Scotland was torn and rent by contending factions. Everything was moving on in the same direction, and the Church, instead of realising that the end was approaching and endeavouring to put her house in order to stay the impending disaster, set herself to the task of rolling back the tide which it is evident enough, as seen from the standpoint of the later years, was steadily marshalling its forces for her destruction.

That the Protestant faith had early obtained a powerful hold in Ayrshire is evident from the fact that in 1494, when James IV. was King, about thirty persons were arraigned for heresy before a Provincial Synod convened by Archbishop Blackadder in Glasgow. Chief among these were George Campbell of Cessnock, Adam

Reid of Barskimming, John Campbell of Newmills, Andrew Shaw of Polkenet, Helen Chalmers, wife of Robert Mure of Polkelly, and Isabel Chalmers, wife of William Dalrymple of Stair—sisters, and daughters of Gadgirth—and all of them were of the districts of Kyle and Cunningham. Adam Reid made a bold and spirited defence, and carried the war into the enemy's camp; and the King, with a wisdom and a consideration that would have stood some of his successors in good stead, advised them to be content with the faith of the Mother Church, and dismissed them with an admonition. Of this incident an early, and a nameless, minstrel, in an address to Barskimming House, romantically situated on the banks of Ayr, sang—

Hence to my view, with fame he nobly stands,  
 The owner once of all these lovely lands,  
 Who in his Sovereign's presence check'd  
 A prelate monk with beads bedeck'd,  
 And showed thy darkness, foul, fell Superstition,  
 Braving the terrors of the Inquisition;  
 And poured clear Gospel truths so from his tongue  
 That on it princely youths enraptured hung.  
 Hence saw, through priesthood's flimsy, half-screen'd light  
 The glorious sun of heaven, refulgent, bright.

The next open manifestation of hostility to the Church of Rome occurred in 1533, when Andrew Stewart, Laird of Ochiltree, was accused before Bishop Dunbar of Glasgow of casting down an image in the Kirk of Ayr. St. John's was rich in altars and in priests. It was a fane of great consequence at the period; a church, too, of fame from the days when the Scots Parliament had met within its walls after Bannockburn to reassert the Kingship of Scotland in Bruce and his heirs for ever. Stuart had manifestly been of powerful reforming sympathies, and of somewhat ill-regulated zeal. In the height of his indignation he had cast down the image to the ground. The Church could not permit an outrage such as this to go unchecked. Stuart was cited to answer for his misdeed at Glasgow, and being sharply dealt with, he recanted and promised submission for the

future. Riding home to Ochiltree, and crossing one of the intervening rivers in flood, his horse stumbled and fell. As he was being swept along in the current he caught hold of a large stone, to which he clung, the while he bade his friends on the bank take warning by the judgment that had overtaken him for his sacrifice of principle, and recanted his recantation. After that he was swept away and drowned.

By 1545 the nation was in what can hardly be regarded as anything else than a chronic condition of turmoil and intrigue. There was a French party and an English party. Cardinal Beaton, an ecclesiastic of great determination and force of character, was the leader of the former, and perhaps the more strictly patriotic of the two parties. The Earl of Cassillis was on the side of Henry VIII., and he was so strongly partisan in the English cause that he not only favoured an invasion of Scotland from the south, but was willing to undertake the killing of the Cardinal. The Earl of Glencairn was on the same side. Their efforts, however, were in vain, and the Cardinal triumphed. Under the protection of these two Earls, George Wishart undertook a tour in the West, visiting Ayr among other places, and he is said to have made many converts to the Protestant cause by the force of his eloquence. On the death of Henry VIII., and of Cardinal Beaton, the rival factions coalesced, and both of the Earls were appointed members of the Secret Council. In 1554 Mary of Guise assumed the Regency of Scotland. She made special friends with Lord Boyd of Kilmarnock, whom she urged to defend her "derest dochter," promising to protect him against all those who should assail him because of his loyalty. Cassillis was sent to Paris as one of the Commissioners to arrange the terms of the settlement, and to be present at the marriage of Mary to the Dauphin of France.

Meanwhile the Reform movement was making rapid headway in Scotland. Elizabeth was on the throne of England, and, with her powerful influence to back them, the Scottish Lords of the Congregation, and Glencairn



among them, were fearlessly lending their support to the growing cause. But this did not suit Mary of Guise, and, induced by the Roman Catholic clergy, she summoned a number of the Reformed preachers to answer for their conduct. When they made their appearance at Holyrood, they did not come alone. They were supported by a powerful body of gentlemen from the West. The Queen Regent apparently did not like the look of things, and she desired a postponement of the interview for fifteen days. But the Barons had not undertaken their journey to Edinburgh to be thus treated, and they surrounded the palace and insisted on being ushered into the royal presence. The Queen Regent could do naught else than see them. When they stood in her presence, Chalmers of Gadgirth took speech in hand, and he spoke boldly. "We know, Madam," he said, "that this is the device of the Bishops who now stand beside you. We avow to God we shall make a day of it. They oppress us and our poor tenants to feed themselves; they trouble our ministers and seek to undo them and us all. We will not suffer it any longer." When he had so spoken, the Barons, who had been standing by uncovered, put on their steel caps. The Queen Regent was intimidated, as she well might be, and made haste to protest that she meant no harm against the ministers. Two years later, in 1559, Mary of Guise, who had until then acted with considerable discretion, a second time called the Reformed preachers into her presence, and a second time the Barons accompanied them. After the manner of the Reformers then, and in later times, they demanded to be convinced of the falsity of their position from the Bible. This the Regent did not essay to do. Then they reminded her of her former promise of toleration. "Promises," she replied, "ought not to be urged upon princes unless they can conveniently fulfil them." Such a reply could only provoke the Barons to indignation, and they did not hesitate to reply plainly. "If, madam," they said, "you are resolved to keep no faith with your subjects,

we will renounce our allegiance ; and it will be for your grace to consider the calamities that such a state of things would entail upon the country." A second time Mary of Guise thought better of it, but as soon as she was free from the influence of these Protestant Barons, she summoned the ministers a third time to answer for their conduct. Her lack of good faith brought on a tumult in Perth which resulted in the demolition of the monasteries in the Fair City. She thereupon marched an army against Perth, and, confident in her strength, refused all terms of surrender ; but the arrival of the Earl of Glencairn from the West with two thousand men—a very plain indication how completely Ayrshire had gone over to the Reformation—changed the whole situation, and a cessation of hostilities was agreed upon. The Lords of the Congregation, however, had too good reason to distrust the promises of Mary of Guise, and an agreement, pledging themselves to mutual support, was prepared, and signed, among others, by the Earl of Glencairn, Lord Boyd, Lord Ochiltree, and Matthew Campbell of Terringzean. Things remained distracted and unsettled, however, further troubles ensued, the Reformers marched to Edinburgh and were able to dictate terms to the Regent. The year following Mary of Guise died in the Castle of Edinburgh, worn out by trouble and care. On her deathbed the leaders of the Congregation—Glencairn among them—had an interview with her, and they were received with a kindness and a cordiality that drew tears to their eyes.

The criminal records supply various evidences of the law's dealing with the offenders. In 1550 John Lockart of Bar, and Charles Campbell of Bargour were fined in absence "for their theftuous and violent carrying off, furth of certain parish churches, religious houses and chapels, within the shires of Lanark, Renfrew, and the Stewartries of Kyle, Carrick, and Cunningham, of certain eucharistic chalices (*i.e.*, communion cups), altars and ornaments of the Mass ; and also for casting down and breaking choral stalls, and other stalls and

glazed windows, etc., in the years 1545, 1547, and 1548." The same year John Willock, a converted friar of Ayr, was denounced a rebel for usurping the authority of the Church, and for taking upon himself the service thereof, and also for convocation and gathering of the lieges of the burgh of Ayr, he being not admitted or approved by the Ordinary of that place; and, without his license, haranguing and preaching to the said lieges, and persuading and seducing them to his own seditious doctrines and heresies, thereby usurping the King's and Queen's authority, and stirring up the lieges to commit sedition and tumults, contrary to the Proclamations. In 1551 Alexander Dunbar of Cumnock was denounced a rebel for intercommuning with Norman Leslie, one of the murderers of Cardinal Beaton, and furnishing him with meat, drink and lodging, in the months of December and January previous. And there are other cases of a similar character.

John Willock, the converted friar of Ayr, and a native of the county, was a man of considerable gifts and experience. He was born early in the century. On completing his education he entered one of the religious houses of Ayr. According to Spottiswood, he was a Franciscan, according to Bishop Lesley, a Dominican. Early embracing the Reformed faith, he relinquished his monastic habit and went to live in England. In 1539 he was a preacher in St. Catherine's, in London, and was imprisoned in The Fleet, as Foxe says of him in his "Book of Martyrs," "for preaching against Confession, holy water, against praying to saints and for souls departed, against Purgatory, and holding that priests might have wives." After his liberation he became chaplain to the Duke of Suffolk, the father of Lady Jane Grey; later he escaped to the Continent and practised as a physician in Enbden in Friesland. His patroness there, Ann, Duchess of Friesland, selected him to proceed on a mission to Scotland respecting the trade between the two countries; and during two successive visits, in 1555 and 1556 on this errand, he took occasion

to preach to and encourage "the brethren, who," according to Knox, "did show them that they had an earnest thirst for godliness." Returning a third time in 1558 he undertook the office of the ministry. In 1559 he officiated in Edinburgh in the room of John Knox, and continued his ministrations throughout the year; for which he received the thanks of the Town Council. After the Reformation he was several times Moderator of the General Assembly, and he was appointed Superintendent of the West, residing chiefly in Glasgow. He is supposed to have died about 1574.

It is evident that Willock was a man of good and varied parts, and therefore that he was a worthy antagonist to Quintin Kennedy, the Father Abbot of Crossraguel. Of this famous ecclesiastic something must be said. Born about 1520, he must at the time have been in the full vigour of his manhood, and by no means the veteran ecclesiastic that he is generally supposed to have been. He was the fourth son of Gilbert, second Earl of Cassillis, and of Isobel, daughter of Archibald, Earl of Argyle. From his youth he was destined for the Church, and had enjoyed all the advantages of an academic training. From St. Andrews University he went to Paris, where he completed his theological training. On his return to Scotland he was successively vicar of Girvan, and of Penpont, and in 1549 he was promoted to the abbacy of Crossraguel. He was a man of high personal character, well instructed in the canon law, a close student of the "Fathers," and possessed of the courage of the race whence he had sprung. With the growth of Reformation doctrines and of the Reformation cause at his own door, it behoved the Abbot to be at work, and accordingly, in 1558, he issued "Ane Compendius Tractive, conforme to the Scripturis of almightie God, reason, and authoritie, declaring the nerrest and onlie way, to establische the conscience of any Christian man, in all matteris (quhilks ar in debate) concernyng faith and religioun." This "Tractive" he dedicated to his dearest and best beloved.

nephew Gilbert, Master of Cassillis. Two years later the Abbot wrote "An Oration in favour of all those of the Congregation, exhorting them to espy how wonderfully they are abused by their deceitful Preachers." This was published (1812) by Sir Alexander Boswell from the manuscript in the library of Auchinleck. Kennedy died 22nd August, 1564, aged about forty-four.

It is by the *Compendius Tractive*, and his disputations with John Willock and John Knox, that the Abbot is best remembered. The following summary of the contents of the *Tractive*, given by Keith, is reprinted in "The Miscellany of the Wodrow Society":—"It is divided into eighteen chapters. The author begins by showing that God has both a Witness and a Judge in all controversies about matters of religion. The Witness, or Testimony is, he says, the Holy Scripture (and for this he cites St. John, chapter 5); the Judge is the Kirk, or Christian congregation. But because the whole Kirk cannot meet together in one place, in order to decide questions; and though they could, yet all the members have not a capacity to decide thereof; therefore the principal member is appointed to be the Overseer, Judge, and Guide, even as the head in the human body governs and directs all the other members of the body. He maintains that ecclesiastical Councils have always consisted of the most devout and best learned men, who have always concurred uniformly in all material points concerning Faith—*i. e.*, things necessary to be known in order to salvation—but acknowledges that in points of Religion—that is, as he explains it, in Ceremonies, Civil Ordinances and Laws—they may have appointed some things at some certain times, which the circumstances of people have required to be altered afterwards; which, he says, is no more than what God himself has been pleased to do, by the Ceremonies of His own appointment. And he affirms that, though the lives of the principal members of the Christian congregation should be suffered to be not so exemplary as might be wished, yet, even in that case, God will take care to direct their

decisions right. In support of this he gives the instance of Caiphas prophesying, because he was the High Priest ; and advice of our Sa-viour to hearken to the Scribes, because they sat in Moses' chair ; and the answer of the Priests to Herod's question, where Christ should be born. And the author all along intersperses several not unprofitable observations, together with such solutions of the objections as appeared to him not unsatisfactory."

From his position, his gifts, and his earnestness, the Abbot of Crossraguel was a worthy defender of the older faith ; and when Willock came to Ayr and preached the doctrines of the Reformation, he withstood him. In a letter which he addressed to the Archbishop of Glasgow, he tells how he was constrained to oppose himself to " this wicked limmer's heresy and doctrine," and so caused his writings to be made manifest to all the honest men of the town, constraining Willock " to refuse the interpretation of the doctors alleged by him and all others, but (only) so far as they were agreeable with the Word of God, which was as good as rycht nocht. When the day of reasoning came," he continues, " I caused a gentleman of this country (who is very expert), pass with a notary and witnesses to the house where our reasoning would have been, and take documents that I was ready to confirm my promise according to my writings, and that the reasoning ceased on his part, in so far as he never gave me answer to my writings. Your lordship shall understand that when the day of our reasoning came (which was Sunday last was), then convened about four or five hundred men to tortify him. Truly, my lord, if I had pleased, I could have had twice as many, for my brother's son, my Lord Eglinton, and all their friends and servants were in readiness as I would please to charge, but always I would neither suffer themselves, nor yet their servants to come, for if I had failed otherwise it had not failed cummyer (strife) ; therefore I was only companied with religious men, with so many gentlemen as I caused bear witness to the matter ; for I took documents both at the Mercat Cross and at the

Parish Kirk openly, he being at his preaching, of the which the principles of the brother were marvellously miscontendit." It appears from this that the disputation was broken off through the Abbot's fear of breaking the peace, and there is little doubt that this was so. The correspondence relative to the disputation between him and Willock is characteristic of the period. Willock would acknowledge no other authority than Holy Scripture, which he claimed the right to interpret for himself; the Abbot, on the other hand, stoutly refused to give up his auxiliaries, Irenæus, Origen, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine, and other venerable fathers and doctors. In the end Willock gave way in the matter and the disputation was fixed; but, as the Abbot has said, it did not take place because of the large assembly by whom the Reformer was accompanied. It is interesting, none the less, to know who the county gentlemen were whom Willock named as those who were specially to support him. These were:—Alexander, Earl of Glencairn; Robert, Lord Boyd; Andrew, Lord Ochiltree; Sir Hugh Campbell of Loudoun, Sheriff of Ayr; John Wallace of Craigie, George Campbell of Cessnock, John Lockhart of Bar, Hugh Wallace of Carnell, David Craufurd of Kerse, John Muir of Rowallan, John Fullarton of Dreghorn, Robert Campbell of Kinzeanleuch, John Cathcart of Carleton, Andrew Schaw of Sornbeg, and George Corry of Kelwood. It is obvious that the cause of the Reformation had obtained a very strong hold on the shire. It is manifest also that affinity for the Reformed cause did not make its supporters among the gentry any the less enamoured of the blood feud, for, as we have seen in a previous chapter, more than one of the gentlemen named were prominent leaders in the vendetta.

It would have been interesting to have known under what circumstances the actual work of the Reformation was carried through in Ayrshire. There must have been a day of the Church's passing. For months before the ecclesiastics had seen it coming, and in many cases they

made ready against it by the removal of their books and valuables and the disposal of such heritages as it was in their power to convert into money. No doubt they hoped against hope. Was it for this that the monasteries had been built and that many succeeding generations of monks and friars had lived? Must it come to this, that they should leave the sacred fanes, the hallowed altars, the goodly lands, the places of many associations? And must they go out, hardly knowing in most cases whither they were going? With the resistlessness of a Fate events rolled on. There were disobedient crowds in the streets, there were mobs that shouted at the gates of the monasteries, there were strenuous men urging the people to rise and shake off the yoke. In some instances the ecclesiastics girded up their loins and fled by night; in others they may have waited till the enemy was at the gates. The people of Ayr arose and pulled down the monasteries that had stood these many years on the banks of the river. Robert Campbell of Kinzeanleuch, who had been foremost in Ayrshire in the promulgation of the Reformed faith, was instant in "pulling down the rookeries so that the crows would fly away." There were some, like Lockhart of Bar, who paid scant regard to the friars and the Church houses; Campbell, on the other hand, as we learn from a quaint ballad published in Edinburgh in 1505, and entitled "A Memorial of the Life and Death of two worthye Christians, Robert Campbell of Kinzeanleuch, and his wife Elizabeth Campbell," was more considerate, although he played a prominent part in the work of destruction:—

But whether it was night or day  
 Guid Robert was not mist away.  
 When they puld doune the Friers of Ayr,  
 Spier at the Friers gif he was thair.  
 The Laird of Carnell, yet in Kyle,  
 Quha was not sleepand al this while,  
 And Robert wer made messengers,  
 Sent from the rest to warn the Friers,  
 Out of these places to deludge,  
 Howbeit the Carls began to grudge;



Either with good will or with ill,  
 The keys they gave thir two untill :  
 After their gudes they had out tane,  
 So greater harm the Friers had nane.

The Reformation formally and by Act of Parliament constituted in 1560, the Estates passed an Act "for demolishing such cloisters and abbey churches as were not yet pulled down." In Ayrshire, and in the western Lowlands generally, the work of demolition was entrusted to the Earl of Glencairn, who went about his work all too literally. The stately and splendid fabric of Kilwinning he destroyed—an act of vandalism to be sorrowed over to this hour. Crossraguel was spared a year or two, doubtless in deference to the influence of the Earl of Cassillis, but it too had so be unroofed and rendered unfit for purposes of worship; and the smaller monasteries everywhere in Kyle and Cunninghame shared the same fate. It is idle to bewail their overthrow, and yet one cannot refrain from regretting that, in their rage against the Church of Rome, the Reformers were not less thorough in their dealing with the stone and lime. But they were resolved to break completely with the past. They had done with the ornate in faith, and they had no mind that there should be a Restoration. Rome was associated in their minds with the splendid religious houses that had given home and centre of influence to the monks and friars. They were the outward and visible symbol of Roman Catholicism, and therefore they had to go.

With the Reformation the Church lands became secularised. They went back in many cases to the families whose predecessors had originally donated them. The Earl of Eglinton obtained finally the various possessions of Kilwinning Abbey, under several grants of the King, and Acts of Parliament. When Quintin Kennedy, the last Abbot of Crossraguel died, George Buchanan obtained from the Queen a grant of a pension of £500 yearly for life from its revenues, but the Earl of Cassillis seized possession, and it required all the

authority of the Queen and the Council to maintain his rights; and Allan Stewart of Cardonald, who was afterwards appointed Commendator, had his rights wrested from him by fire in the black vault of Dunure. The Priory of Mauchline was converted into a temporal lordship to Hugh, Lord Loudoun, and his heirs. In 1567 Queen Mary granted to the magistrates and community of Ayr for special purposes the whole property of the Preaching Friars with the ground whereon their convent stood, and their gardens, subject to a lease for nineteen years which the Queen had granted to Charles Crawford, one of her superior servants. The property remaining to Fail seems to have been regarded by the son of the first Reformed minister of Failford as his inheritance; in 1619, however, the benefice of the ministry was granted to Walter Whyteford, and it was confirmed in 1633 to Dr Walter Whyteford, one of the King's chaplains, and sub-dean of Glasgow. The burgh of Irvine was infested in the buildings, property, and revenues of the White Friars, the temporalities of the College Kirk of Maybole passed to the Earl of Cassillis, and those of Kilmaurs to the Earl of Glencairn. In such fashion the possessions of the Church of Rome were distributed. Whether the change in every case was for the better, so far as the people were concerned, we need not enquire. According to Chalmers, the author of the "Caledonia," "the monks (of Mauchline) did fifty times more good to the country than the Loudouns ever essayed," but Chalmers is hardly an unprejudiced or an unbiased witness. No doubt, however, there were many jealousies, and many disappointments; indeed, it is possible to trace these in the feud that raged in North Ayrshire between the Montgomeries and the Cunninghames.

In 1562 John Knox came west into Ayrshire to confirm the churches. The preceding year Quintin Kennedy, who must now be described as the ex-Abbot of Crossraguel, had published a work in defence of the Mass. Father Quintin did not, apparently, share in the

drastic dealing that befel the ministers of the old faith generally. He was still preaching in Kirkoswald. Whether this was the result of some toleration extended by the Reformers to the man himself because of his high character, his earnestness, and his unquestioned piety, or whether it was because he enjoyed the special protection of the Earl of Cassillis, who was a power in Carrick that even the leaders of the Congregation could not afford to ignore, it would be idle to enquire. The fact itself, however, is worth noting as a proof that the Reformers were not so intolerant in every instance as they are represented to have been. Even the great protagonist of the Protestant cause recognised Kennedy's position. He did not take steps to expel him forthwith from the pulpit of Kirkoswald; on the contrary, he would have gone to hear him preach, if only the ex-Abbot had permitted him, though only, it must be confessed, with a view to engaging in a controversy on the validity and efficacy of the Mass, a sacramental rite that lay very near to Father Quintin's heart. But when Knox intimated his intention to be present in Kirkoswald church, Kennedy at once declined the encounter on the ground that it could only provoke to angry disputation and public tumult. Knox, however, was not to be denied. If Kennedy would not take up his challenge, he would at least preach the Word himself; and accordingly he repaired to Kirkoswald on the Sunday and preached from the ex-Abbot's pulpit. Kennedy was none the less desirous to meet Knox in debate, and he accordingly wrote a letter to him offering to meet him in any house in Maybole that he pleased, so long as the supporters of each did not exceed twenty. Public disputation he would not have, as he would nowise be the instrument of discord. Knox at first demurred to the condition. "If ye fear tumult, as ye pretend," he wrote, "that is more to be feared where many of evil mind have a few quiet and peaceable men in their danger, than where a just multitude may gainstand violence, if it be offered. But I wonder," he went on to

say, "with what conscience ye can require private conference of those articles that ye have publicly proponed. Ye have infected the ears of the simple! Ye have wounded the hearts of the godly, and ye have spoken blasphemy in open audience! Let your own conscience now be judge if we are bound to answer you in the audience of 20 or 40." Knox's suggestion was that the meeting should take place in St. John's Kirk in Ayr. In the course of his letter he had declared that his coming into these parts was not to seek disputation, "but simply to propone unto the people Jesus Christ crucified." Upon this Kennedy fastened in his answer. "Praise be to God," he said, "that was no newings in this country, or ye were born." He gave Knox a *quid pro quo*, for the denunciation that the Reformer had meted out to him. "Where ye say ye stand in the protection of the Almighty, so do all good Christian men as ye, but apparently ye put as little in God's hands as ye may, that goes accompanied in every place where-soever ye go with sic multitude, whether it be for devotion, or protection, or rather tumultuation, God knows, for I know not." This was very plain speaking to the leader of the Reformation, but he does not seem to have resented it in any way whatever. Kennedy remained firm in his resolve not to meet the Reformer openly, lest tumult and lawbreaking should eventuate, and after some further correspondence the disputation was fixed to take place in the house of Andrew Gray, the last Provost of the Collegiate Church, in the Back Vennel of Maybole.

It would serve no good purpose to deal with the reasoning at any length. It was, as has been said, the Mass that was the specific subject of dispute. What was the Mass? Knox demanded. "I define the Mass," said Kennedy, "as concerning the substance and effect, to be the sacrifice and oblation of the Lord's body and blood, given and offered by Him, in the latter supper; and take the Scriptures to my warrant, according to my article as it is written; and, for the first confirmation

of the same, ground me upon the sacrifice and oblation of Melchisedec." "Your lordship's ground," was Knox's answer, "is the figure of Christ, in that, that he did offer unto God bread and wine, and therefore that it behoved Jesus Christ to offer in His latter supper His body and blood, under the forms of bread and wine. I answer to your ground yet again, that Melchisedec offered neither bread nor wine unto God, and therefore it, that ye would thereupon conclude, hath no assurance of your ground." After this fashion the contendings rolled backward and forward for three days, but without either party being convinced otherwise than as he had previously been minded. At the close both Knox and Kennedy were willing to resume later on in Edinburgh, but the adjourned disputation never came off. Knox claimed the victory; so also did those whom he calls "the flatterers and collaterals" of Kennedy.

The people of Maybole were for the most part on the side of the Reformer, but it is evident that the old faith had not by any means lost its hold upon Carrick. On May 15th, 1563, Hew Kennedy of Blairquhan, Malcolm, Commendator of Whithorn, David Kennedy, Sir Thomas Montgomery, and Sir William Taylor were charged before the High Court with making "a convocation of our sovereign lady's lieges to the number of two hundred persons armed with jacks, spears, guns, and other weapons invasive," and coming on the 8th, 10th, and 11th days of the preceding April to the Parish Kirk of Kirkoswald and College of Maybole respectively, and "irreverently and indecently" observing "the sacraments of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, otherwise and after another manner than the public and general order of this realm." The Prior of Whithorn, Sir Thomas Montgomery, and Sir William Taylor—the "Sir" in these two cases being in all probability the usual courtesy title that had been given to dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church—were sentenced to be put in ward within the Castle of Dumbarton, and Hew and David Kennedy within

the Castle of Edinburgh, there to remain during the will and pleasure of the Queen. It is impossible to withhold a certain degree of admiration from these two hundred loyal and dutiful sons of the Mother Church who thus risked their liberties to enjoy ordinances after their former use and wont, and in the fashion that lay most closely to their hearts. It is not difficult to picture the excitement that their presence in Maybole must have created as they marched into the ancient capital of Carrick armed as for war. The douce Presbyterians must have stood with darkened brows and hands uplifted in protest against the enormity of the outrage that was being done under their very eyes. Was it for this that the priestly staff of the College Kirk had been cleared out, that the images and the crosses had been hurled down from their places, that the wayside Abbey of Crossraguel had been dismantled, that the minister had been installed where the priest had stood, that the Romish endowments had either been Protestantised or secularised, that the Reformation itself had been made statutory? The incident, however, was rather a memorial of the close of the Romish dispensation than an indication of its recrudescence. It was the good-bye of the two hundred to the faith in which they had been trained; and after that, so far as Carrick was concerned, the cause of the Reformed Kirk had free course and prevailed. There were dark enough days awaiting it, nor were these very far away, but these were to be the product not of Popery but of Prelacy.

The landed gentry of Ayrshire went over in a body to Protestantism. How little chance these Carrick Catholics had of obtaining legal absolution for their offending may be gathered from the list of "the fifteen good men and true" who constituted the assize—John Maxwell of Terregles, Andrew Lord Stewart of Ochiltree, the Laird of Lochinvar, the Laird of Glengarnock, the Laird of Caprington younger, the Sheriff of Ayr, the Laird of Cunninghamehead, Hew Wallace of Carnell, the Laird of

Craufurdland, John Fullarton of Dreghorn, the Laird of Rowallan, Hugh Cunninghame of Waterston, James Chalmers of Gadgirth, John Dunbar of Michrume (Mochrum ?), Gavin Dunbar of Baldtone. More than one of these had been early and active promoters of the Reformation, and others represented families that had materially profited in their estate through the distribution of the Church lands.

It was inevitable that when the Kirk took up the burden of religion in Scotland it should be lacking in men to carry on the work of the ministry; and the nobles took care that it should be "founded upon the the rock of poverty." They were loath to give up any of the proceeds of the lands that they had succeeded in annexing. It was for these that not a few of them had cast their influence into the scale of the Reformation. John Knox had dreamed of the Church lands being so nationalised that they should provide for the Church, for education, and for the poor, but such an enlightened policy as that did not suit those who had been concerned solely for their own aggrandisement. Money in those days went vastly further than it does now; still, the hundred merks—amounting at that period to no more than £5 11s 1½d sterling—was a miserably small stipend—and it was all that could be given in 1561 to an ordinary minister—even when it was supplemented by the Kirk lands, or glebes, which may have been worth on an average about twenty-eight shillings sterling more. The ministers duly qualified were utterly inadequate in point of numbers to meet the necessities of the situation, and so Readers were appointed from among the more qualified laymen, whose duty it was to exhort as well as to read the Scriptures, and these were paid with the wretched pittance of about £1 13s 4d each. How miserably the Church in Ayrshire was staffed may be gathered from the following statement of its officialism in 1574, by which time the stipends had been considerably increased. It must be borne in mind that in every case it is Scots money that is referred to, the value of which

was but one twelfth that of money sterling. The letters "k. l." stand for "Kirk lands" :—

## Largs, Kilbride, Ardrossan—

Alexander Callendare, minister ..	£133	6	8	and k.l.
— (vacant), reader at Largs ..	16	0	0	and k.l.
John Maxwell, reader at Kilbride ..	20	0	0	
George Boyd, reader at Ardrossan ..	The whole vicarage.			

## Kilwinning, Dunlop, Beith—

William Kirkpatrick, minister ..	100	0	0	and k.l.
David Mylne, reader at Kilwinning	20	0	0	
Hanis Hamilton, reader at Dunlop (the whole vicarage) ..	78	0	0	
Thomas Boyd, reader at Beith ..	20	0	0	and k.l.

## Stevenston, Dalry, Kilbirnie—

Archibald Craufurd, minister ..	100	0	0	
Alexander Mitchell, reader at Steven- ston .. .. .	20	0	0	
Andrew Blair, reader at Dalry ..	17	15	6½	
Archibald Hamilton, reader at Kil- birnie .. .. .	26	13	4	

## Loudoun, Kilmarnock, Riccarton—

Robert Wilkie, minister ..	133	6	8	
James Hall, reader at Loudoun ..	16	0	0	and k.l.
— (vacant), reader at Kilmarnock	20	0	0	
— (vacant), reader at Riccarton	16	0	0	and k.l.

## Kilmaurs, Dreghorn, Stewarton—

Gavin Nasmyth, minister .. ..	100	marks.		
Alexander Henrysoun, reader at Kil- maurs .. .. .	30	0	0	
— (vacant), reader at Dreghorn ..	20	0	0	
William Montgomery, elder, reader at Stewarton .. .. .	37	1	1½	and k.l.

## Cumnock—

John Rynde, minister .. ..	60	0	0	
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## Auchinleck, Ochiltree—

John Inglis, minister (with the Kirk- land of Irvine) .. .. .	120	0	0	and k.l.
John Gemmill, reader at Auchinleck	13	16	4	and k.l.
John M'Clanochane, reader at Ochiltree	10	0	0	

## Irvine, Peirstoun—

John Young, minister .. ..	140	0	0	
Thomas Andrew, reader at Irvine, and vicar thereof .. ..	20	0	0	
David Whyte, reader at Peirstoun	20	0	0	and k.l.



Mauchline, Galston—			
Peter Primrose, minister .. ..	120	0	0 and k.l.
— (vacant), reader at Mauchline..	The whole vicarage.		
Rankine Davidson, reader at Galston	33	8	10 $\frac{2}{3}$
Dalmellington, Dalrymple, Coylton—			
James Davidson, minister .. ..	60	0	0
David Cathcart, reader at Dalmel- linton .. .. .	32	0	0
George Feane, reader at Dalrymple	20 marks and k.l.		
John Campbell, reader at Coylton ..	20 marks and k.l.		
Ayr, Alloway—			
James Dalrymple, minister (paying his own reader at Alloway) ..	149	6	8
Thomas Greig, reader at Ayr ..	13	6	8
James Ramsay, reader at Alloway	16	0	0 and k.l.
Dundonald, Crosbie, Craigie, Symington—			
George Campbell, minister .. ..	100	0	0 and k.l.
Robert Burne, reader at Dundonald and Crosbie .. .. .	24	0	0 and k.l.
David Wilson, reader at Craigie ..	16	0	0 and k.l.
John Miller, reader at Symington ..	20	0	0 and k.l.
Tarbolton, Barnweil, St. Quivox, Prestwick, Monkton—			
John Nisbet, minister .. ..	133	6	8 and k.l.
David Curll, reader at Tarbolton ..	20	0	0
Robert Gaw, reader at Barnweil ..	13	bolls meal and k.l.	
Hew Kennedy, reader at St. Quivox	16	0	0 and k.l.
John Wylie, reader at Monkton and Prestwick .. .. .	20	0	0 and k.l.
Straiton, Maybole, Kirkbryde, Kirkmichael—			
John M'Corne, minister .. ..	133	7	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ and k.l.
John Anderson, reader at Straiton	19	13	4
Michael Hamilton, reader at Maybole and Kirkbryde .. .. .	27	6	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
— (vacant) reader at Kirkmichael	16	13	4 and k.l.
Colmonell, Innertig—			
James Greg, minister .. ..	200	0	0
Allan Cathcart, reader at Colmonell	20	0	0
Alexander Kennedy, reader at Innertig .. .. .	26	13	4 and k.l.
Dailly, Girvan, Kirkoswald—			
John Cuninghame, minister .. ..	93	6	8 and k.l.
Thomas Falconer, reader at Dailly..	20	0	0 and k.l.
James Young, reader at Girvan ..	23	6	8
John M'Cavell, reader at Kirkoswald	20	0	0 and k.l.

The county of Ayr had thus no more than sixteen ministers, and these must needs have had many a trying

experience. As the years passed on their numbers steadily increased and the Church's organisation became more firmly consolidated, but only to be tried and tested ere the century had done more than run its course, by the foolish and far-reaching efforts of James I. and VI. to bring Scotland within the fold of Prelacy.

## CHAPTER X

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### FROM THE FIRST REFORMATION TO THE RESTORATION

The closing years of the sixteenth, and the opening years of the seventeenth century introduce us to two men, the one a son of the house of Ochiltree, who was destined to play a prominent part in the affairs of the nation and to exercise a malignant influence on James VI. ; the other, John Welsh, the minister of Ayr. Both of them, strangely enough, were closely connected with John Knox. The Reformer, when well advanced in years, had wedded a daughter of Lord Stewart of Ochiltree, one of the moving spirits in the Ayrshire march towards Protestantism, and Captain James Stewart of the Royal Guards was therefore his brother-in-law. Welsh's wife was a daughter of John Knox. The King like the other three unhappy Stuarts who were to follow after, and in the last of whom that royal race was to close its destiny as occupants of the throne of Great Britain, had but scant regard for Presbytery. The system was too democratic for him, and the men who directed it were too independent and outspoken. With them, as Andrew Melville told King James to his face, there were two Kings and two Kingdoms in Scotland. There was King James, the head of the Commonwealth, and there was Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth was, and of whose Kingdom he was not a King, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. That was a doctrine which the monarch, aspiring to be the head of the Church as well

as of the State, could not brook. It was his to reign by Divine right, and he was not going to be thwarted in his resolve.

James Stewart was the second son of Lord Ochiltree. He had, like many another Scotsman of the period, gone to the Continent of Europe, and had served, a soldier of fortune, in the wars of France and Sweden. He had visited Russia, and had learned the ways of the Muscovite, and had thrown aside the early training that he had received in Kyle. He was daring to excess, ambitious, subtle, and profligate; and, in conjunction with another Stewart, a Franco-Scot who was created Earl of Lennox, he acquired an enormous influence over the mind of the monarchial pedant who was to unite in his own person the thrones of Scotland and England. On the last day of 1580, while the Council was in session under the presidency of the King, and the Earl of Morton in his place, he craved an audience; and, admission being granted, he fell on his knees and accused the Regent Morton of having been art and part in the murder of Darnley, the King's father. Morton disdainfully repelled the charge, but it did not save him. Five months afterwards he was brought to trial before a jury of his peers, and the following day his head fell to the gleaming axe of the Maiden. After that, for a while the favourites had things all their own way. Captain James Stewart was made Earl of Arran, and between him and the Earl of Lennox, they not only corrupted the morals of the Sovereign, but instilled in him those autocratic notions which disturbed and tormented the nation so long as he sat upon the throne, and which he passed on to his son, who so exaggerated and accentuated them, that England rose up in judgment against him and sent him to the scaffold at Whitehall. The Raid of Ruthven took James out of their hands, expelled Lennox from the country, and laid the Earl of Arran up in Stirling Castle, but it did not take long for the monarch to recover his freedom, and Arran returned to Court, haughtier and more powerful than ever. He enriched

himself beyond measure with the forfeited estates of men who had fallen into disgrace. He was Governor of Edinburgh Castle, of Blackness, of Stirling, of Dumbarton, the four strongest and most important fortresses of Scotland. He was High Chancellor too, and Lieutenant-General of the whole kingdom. There was nothing, in short, in wealth and in honours to which he did not attain. With five thousand men in his train he rode south to meet with the English envoy to arrange terms of amity with the sister country, and when he returned to Edinburgh he was welcomed with the booming of cannon.

The Earl of Arran fell when he appeared to be in the zenith of his power. The King found a new favourite in the Master of Gray, who forthwith came to terms with the banished lords, Angus, Mar, Glamis, and others. Lord John Maxwell, a powerful Border noble, joined the plot, and when, with an army of eight thousand men, they advanced upon Stirling, Arran fled. He was stripped of his titles and his possessions, and driven to lead an obscure and a wandering existence, mostly in the North of Scotland. In 1586, in the hope of being reappointed to the office of High Chancellor, vacant through the death of Lord Thirstane, he went south and had an interview with the King, which greatly encouraged him; and, until the way should be clearer, he resolved to visit his friends in Kyle. What befell is thus told by Archbishop Spottiswood:—

“Taking his journey by Symington, nigh unto Douglas, he was advised by his friends in those parts to look to himself, and not ride so openly, because of Torthorwald, that lived not far off, whose uncle (the Regent Morton), he had followed, as he spake, to the death. His reply (as he was a man proud and disdainful), ‘that he would not leave his way for him, nor for all the house of Douglas,’ being overheard by a fellow and reported to Torthorwald, did so inflame him, the old ulcer remaining uncured—as he avouched to have his life at all hazards. So, getting intelligence that he had

taken horse, he rode after him, with three of his servants; and overtaking him in a valley called Catslack, after he had stricken him from his horse, did kill him without resistance. It is said that when Captain James saw the horsemen following, he asked how they called the piece of ground on which they were. And when he heard the name of it, he commanded the company to ride more quickly—as having gotten a response to beware of such a part! Mr Wood relates (Wood's Peerage) that his head was cut off and carried on the point of a lance, in a kind of triumph, through the country, and his body was exposed to dogs and swine before it was buried! In accordance with the usual feelings of those times, dictated by a blind and barbarous revenge (which was in those days considered as indicating proper spirit in a man of gentle blood), Sir James was in his turn murdered on the streets of Edinburgh."

It was even so. William Stewart, son of Sir William Stewart, and a nephew of the fallen and slaughtered favourite, twelve years afterwards stabbed Torthorwald as he walked the High Street of the Scottish capital; and Lord Ochiltree was compelled to give "his great oath" in presence of his Majesty's Privy Council, that he was in no way art or part in the murder. Arran's was a miserable ending. He had indeed a meteoric career in the days of his power and ascendancy. He fell because it was not meet that he should stand; fell, too, at the hand of the avenger of blood, upon the high places of the open field.

The parish minister of Ayr was a man of a higher and a better type. The son of the Laird of Coniston, in Nithsdale, he seems in early life to have been of a wild and roving disposition, and even to have gone the length of associating with a gang of Border thieves. On his conversion he returned home, studied for the ministry, and was settled successively in Selkirk and Kirkcudbright before being called to Ayr. There is some doubt as to the exact period of his translation to the county town. "The History of Mr. John Welsh,

Minister of the Gospel at Air " (1706) fixes the date at 1590, but as he was born in 1570, and had already occupied two charges, the probability is that the sixteenth century was drawing to a close before his induction to the ministry of St. John's, the ancient church of the town standing amid the bent lands adjacent to the coast.

These were the days when feudalism and the feudal nobility were making their last stand against the right of the Crown to rule and to govern in every part of the Kingdom. The Reformation had not effected much change in the manners or morals of the people. They had discarded Romanism. They had pulled down the rookeries in order to prevent the return of the crows, but otherwise they had in a large measure held on as before. With the spiritual side of the movement of Reform there had co-existed the temporal, the political side as well. Many of the nobles had become Protestants because they wanted to annex the rich Church lands; and many of the people because they were heart sick of the Church of Rome. The religious stream ran strongly, but its channels were narrow and contracted. There was no general observance of the Sunday. The folks went from the kirk to the archery butts, and in Ayr the old minister accompanied them. The country around was turbulent and unsettled, and the streets of the royal burgh were the scene of many a brawl.

How a community of this sort ever came to call John Welsh is a mystery, for, both in Selkirk and in Kirkcudbright, where he had previously been settled, he had been distinguished by his zeal for religion as a practical thing, and not merely as a faith suited to the political needs of the people or as opposed to the faith which, with great travail, it had supplanted. It would seem as if Welsh's coming was resented by no inconsiderable section of the inhabitants, for when he arrived in Ayr he could hardly find anybody to take him in. There was, however, a prominent merchant, John Stewart, for some time the Provost, who opened his doors to the

young minister, gave him cordial welcome, and stood staunch as a friend to him through all the troubles and vicissitudes that waited on his career. There is something to be gained even in the worst of experiences; and probably Welsh had learned a good deal of human nature among his Border associates, and had ceased to fear the possible infliction of physical violence; at anyrate, he did not hesitate to rush into the heart of the frays and fightings on the causeway, unarmed, but with a headpiece to protect him from wounds, and separate the combatants; and after he had done so, he would have a table spread on the street, and would get the recent fighters to sit down with him and partake of food in company. Apart altogether from thus working on the time-honoured idea that one ought not to quarrel with a man with whom he has broken bread, the steel-bonnetted minister had probably enough knowledge of human nature to understand that the way to the hearts of some folks lies through their stomachs.

Welsh did not labour in vain. The brawlers and the fighters could understand a man for whom swords and battleaxes had no terrors, and by degrees peace came to be restored, and Welsh to be looked up to as the head of the community. It grieved him to see his old colleague, Mr. Porterfield, hurry out of the kirk and rush off to get his bow and quiver of arrows, in order that he might repair to the archery butts; and he circumvented him in another fashion. Around him he drew the most religious men of the town, and on the Sabbath afternoons they met for prayer and spiritual communion with one another, and then he invited Porterfield to take his rightful place at their head. This the old man could not well refuse to do; he came, and thenceforward he was conspicuous at the Wappenschaw by his absence. Here, also, in the method of his acting, there was wisdom, and the result was accordingly.

Welsh was thus more than a mere enthusiast. He was a man of sound wisdom and discretion, and he so conducted himself that the burgh authorities made him



their counsellor and friend, whenever they needed special advice in critical matters. In illustration of this, one day two travelling packmen came to one of the ports and asked admission. They had come from a town where the Pest, or the Plague, was running its course ; and the watchman bade them halt where they were until he had consulted with the magistrates. These, in turn, sent for the minister and placed the matter before him. A while he was silent, and in prayer ; and then he counselled the authorities to deny them admission, for, said he, the Plague was in their packs. Rebuffed at Ayr, they went off to the unwall'd town of Cumnock, and sold their wares, with the lamentable result that the pestilence broke out and raged so disastrously that the living could hardly bury the dead. As for his manner of preaching it was, according to the "History," "spiritual and searching ; his utterance tender and moving. He did not much insist on scholastic purposes, he made no show of his learning. I heard one of his hearers (who was afterwards minister at Moor-Kirk in Kyle), say that no man could hardly hear him and forbear weeping. Sometimes before he went to sermon, he would send for his elders and tell them he was afraid to go to the pulpit, because he found himself sore deserted and thereafter desired one or more of them to pray, and then he would venture to pulpit. But, it was observed, this humbling exercise used afterwards to be followed by a flame of extraordinary assistance."

It was all but inevitable that a man of this type should come into conflict with any power that endeavoured to abrogate the spiritual rights of the Church ; and so. "when King James' purpose of destroying the Church of Scotland, by establishing Bishops, was rife, it fell to be his duty to edify the Church by his sufferings, as formerly he had done by his doctrine." The King, acting on the advice of a foolish and a short-sighted band of counsellors, forbade the holding of a General Assembly, and the great bulk of the ministers of Scotland, tacitly admitting his headship, at once conformed to his edict. But, as usual,

in Scotland, when the liberties of the people were threatened, there was a band of men found ready and willing to stand in the breach and to refuse to recognise the right of any man, temporal monarch or spiritual overlord, to usurp their rights, and these resolved, after many communings, and in full recognition of what the consequences might be to themselves, to convoke a General Assembly to be held in Aberdeen in 1605. Their purpose was to assert the right of the Kirk to independent spiritual jurisdiction; not to discharge any business; and all they did was to hold their meeting, to constitute the General Assembly, and then to dissolve. It was a far cry at that period from Ayr to Aberdeen, and it took Welsh longer to make the journey than he had anticipated. When he reached the ancient northern city, the Assembly had already met and dissolved; but Welsh did not hesitate for a moment to declare his entire approval of what his brethren had done, and so accepted his full share of responsibility in the illegality that they had committed. King James, who was as intolerant as he was meddling, was wroth over the procedure, and he took steps forthwith to punish the offenders. He had Welsh apprehended with the rest, as guilty of a "treasonable fact," and he was carried off a captive to Blackness Castle, thence to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, and from that he was banished to France, never to see Scotland again.

That there was deep sorrow in the town of Ayr when Welsh was compelled to leave it we cannot doubt. During the few years of his ministry he had established a position to which there is no analogy in the ecclesiastical history of the royal burgh. Before leaving Blackness Castle he wrote what the old chronicler calls his famous letter to Lillias, Countess of Wigtown. In more respects than one this is an interesting letter. Like men of all generations who have been called on to suffer, he was comforting himself with visions of the eternal rest, and he borrowed the rich, strong language of the Bible to express the depth and intensity of his feelings. "Why

should I think it a strange thing," he writes, "to be removed from this place to that where the songs of Moses and the Lamb are sung joyfully, where we shall not be compelled to sit by the rivers of Babylon and to hang up our harps on the willow trees, but shall take them up and sing the new Hallelujah? What is there under the old vault of the Heavens, and in this old worn earth, which is under the bondage of corruption, groaning and travailing in pain, and shooting out the head, looking, waiting, and longing for the redemption of the sons of God? I look to get entry into the New Jerusalem at one of these twelve gates whereupon are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

. . . Jesus Christ is the door and the porter; who then shall hold me out?" Having thus, and at great length, given vent to his hopes and his aspirations, he declares the occasion of his imprisonment. Welsh's claim for the spiritual independence of the Church is absolute. She is a "most free kingdom, yea as free as any kingdom under heaven, not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and conventions, and assemblies, but also to judge of all her affairs in her meetings and conventions amongst her members and subjects." "She is free in her government from any other jurisdiction, except Christ's." And again, "all things which belong to Christ's crown, sceptre and kingdom, are not subject, nor cannot be, to any other authority but to his own altogether." There is no compromising here.

Having thus laid down in language wholly unmistakable the nature of the cause for which he was ready to suffer, he looked ahead and foresaw the troublous times that were to come upon Scotland. Wishart had foreseen them ominously darkening the horizon, and Knox had put his hand to a similar foreboding. To their prophesies Welsh added his own testimony—"That the Kingdom of Scotland should be blood; that the Kingdom shall be drawn in blood. A burnished and a glittering sword is already drawn out of the scabbard that shall not return until it be made drunk with the

blood of the man in this land ; first the heavy intestine sword, and then the sword of the stranger. O doleful Scotland ! well were he that were removed from thee, that his eyes might not see, nor his ears ear, all the evils that are to come upon thee. Neither the strong man by his strength, nor the rich man by his riches, nor the nobleman by his blood, shall be delivered from the judgments. There is a great sacrifice to be made in Bozrah, in thee, O Scotland, of the blood of all sorts in the land ; Ephraim shall consume Manasseh, and Manasseh Ephraim, brother against brother, and every man in the judgment of the Lord shall be armed to thrust his sword into the side of his neighbour, and all for the contempt of the glorious Gospel. . . . I know not whether I shall have occasion to write again. And therefore by this letter, as my latter will and testament, I give testimony, warning, and knowledge of these things to all men according to the Lord's direction to the Prophet—' Son of man, I have made thee a watchman.' Therefore I give warning to all men hereby, that no man's blood be required at my hand." In those days the Kirk Session dealt much more extensively with the morals of the people than they do now ; the elders were magistrates as well as elders, and they meted out fines and punishments upon the offenders. As might be expected, discipline did not suffer in the hands of John Welsh. He dealt with " violators of the Sabbath " and fined them, as well as compelling them to make public confession in the church. For " brek of Sabbaths," the Session ordained that a man and woman should be incarcerated in the thieves' hole. Children were forbidden to run about the streets on the first day of the week. The sons of Lockhart of Bar, and John Maxwell, were cited to appear for desecrating the day by playing various games, and were let off on a promise thereafter to keep the Sabbath holy to the Lord. Scandalmongers, and scolds, and " flyters " had a sorry time of it as well. There was a blasphemmer who took a piece of flesh and cast it from him with the remark that it was the flesh of

Christ, and another, a woman, who cursed both her body and soul, and these had similarly to do penance for their iniquity. Welsh put down the singing and the selling of lewd and suggestive songs. He prevented travellers who had come to town on the Saturday leaving it again before Monday. And there was one very vicious woman who had committed the unparalleled audacity of slandering her own guidman, who was "ordained to stand in her linen sheets at the Cross four market days, as also to stand at the kirk doer certain days upon the Sabbath and within the kirk in the place of public repentance; this form to continue aye and until there appear certain signs of her repentance." Verily the way of the social transgressors of the period was hard; but whether this strict dealing was conspicuously effective may perhaps be doubted. No doubt then, as now, there was a class who had little or nothing to lose in the way of character; and upon these the terrors of the law had probably comparatively little effect. It is, however, clear that Welsh tried to grapple with evil in every form and among all classes, and that he spared no pains to demonstrate in face of the public his resolve to make the way of the transgressors hard to themselves.

When he was a prisoner in Edinburgh, his wife spent a large part of her time with him. But once, at least, a natural longing seized her to see her little children in Ayr. Welsh was unwilling to let her go, but he yielded to her solicitations, and gave his consent. When the day came round for her to depart to the west country, he strictly charged her not to take the ordinary way to her own house when she reached Ayr, nor to cross the bridge into the town, but to pass the river by the ford above the bridge; "for," said he, "before you come thither, you shall find the Plague broken out in Ayr." "Which, accordingly," adds the chronicler, "came to pass. The Plague was at that time," he continues, "very terrible. And Welsh being necessarily absent from his people, it was to him the more greivous; but when the people of Ayr came to him to bemoan

themselves, his answer was that Hugh Kennedy, a godly gentleman in their town, should pray for them, and God should hear him. This counsel they accepted, and the gentleman, convening a number of the honest citizens, prayed fervently for the town (as he was a mighty wrestler with God), and accordingly after that the Plague decreased."

In the town of St. Jean D'Angely in France, where Welsh was minister for some years, he gave proof of the same courage that had characterised him on the streets of Ayr, and in his associating himself with the forbidden General Assembly of Aberdeen. The reigning monarch of France at the time was Louis XIII., and he made war upon the city because of its pronounced attachment to the Reformation faith. The inhabitants resisted, and, dwelling within a walled and fortified place, they succeeded in keeping the royal forces at bay. But there came a day when they were sore put to it. Outside the walls there was a rising ground, and on this the besiegers succeeded in planting a cannon in such a position as to command the artillery of the townsmen, and, in large measure, dominate the whole place. So destructive was the fire from this powerful piece that the artillerymen deserted their posts, and the leaders of the Protestant party began to talk of submission. The news was carried to Welsh, and he hurried out to reconnoitre. He saw the position at a glance, and recognised the imminence of the peril, but instead of knuckling down to the difficulties and the dangers of the situation, he made up his mind to try and dismount the enemy's cannon. A Burgundian cannonier, inspired by Welsh's courage, agreed to return to his post, and the minister went with him, and lent him active assistance. He hurried off to the powder house, and, getting hold of a ladle, he filled it with gunpowder, and started to carry it to the gun. As he was in the act of crossing the open space that separated the store room from the wall, the King's gunner discharged his piece with such accurate aim that the ball struck the ladle and carried it away.

But Welsh was in no way dismayed. Back he hastened to the powder house for another charge, and in a few minutes he reappeared bareheaded and carrying the powder in his hat. The artilleryman took it and rammed it home, and then the ball was similarly placed in the cannon. Welsh bade the cannonier take accurate aim, assuring him that Heaven would help him. The Burgundian did so, the gun was discharged, and, to the great joy and satisfaction of the townsfolk, the shot landed fair on the cannon of the enemy and dismantled it. This so discouraged the King that he offered the inhabitants honourable terms of surrender, to which they acceded. They were to enjoy the liberty of their religion, their civil privileges were to be continued in full, and their walls were not to be demolished. The King, on the other hand, was to have free entry to the town, and to remain in it on friendly terms with his loyal subjects. The siege was accordingly suspended, and Louis XIII. with his retinue marched into St. Jean D'Angely, and was received by the population as their sovereign, to whom it was their duty to render obedience in all matters of State.

While the monarch was thus resident in the town, Welsh went on preaching as usual. This was contrary to the custom that apparently obtained, that no minister or priest should preach under such circumstances, without first having secured the royal permission. It was not long before the monarch heard what the Protestant minister was about, and he despatched one of his courtiers, the Duke D'Esperson, to summon him into his presence at once. The Duke, accompanied by a guard of soldiers, entered the church when Welsh was in the middle of his sermon. Seeing him come, the minister paused in his discourse, and bade the worshippers make room for him, so that he might hear the Word of the Lord ; and so taken aback was the royal messenger with the manner of his reception that he took the seat that was offered him and listened attentively to what the minister was saying. At the

close the Duke delivered his orders to Welsh, and told him that he must go with him into the presence of the King, and to this Welsh willingly consented. The King reproached the Duke with not having executed his orders at once, and received for answer the assurance that there was no man in France who spake like this man; but, he added, he had brought him with him, and the King could deal with him as he chose. On Welsh being called forward, the King asked him how it was that without his permission and contrary to the laws of France, he had dared to preach where he was, almost within the very precincts of the Court itself. "Sire," answered Welsh with characteristic courage, "if you did right you would come and hear me preach, and make all France hear me likewise. For I preach not as those men whom you are accustomed to hear preach. First, I preach that you must be saved by the death and merits of Jesus Christ, and not your own, Next, I preach that, as you are King of France, you are under the authority and command of no man on earth. These men whom you hear, subject you to the Pope of Rome, which I will never do." The King was mightily pleased with the reply. "Well, well," he said, "you shall be my minister," and forthwith he dismissed him with instructions that he was to be let alone and not molested in the exercise of his ministry. Shortly afterwards the King left the city in peace.

But the troubles of St. Jean D'Angely were not at an end, for not long afterwards the war broke out anew, and the royal army appeared once more outside the walls. This time Welsh recognised the futility of resistance, and, when the people went to him for advice, he told them frankly that "their cup was full, and that they should no more escape." So it came about. The King took the city, but, as soon as it fell into his hands, he commanded the Captain of his Guard to seek out Welsh and to preserve him from all danger; and, later on, he sent horses and waggons to transport him and his family to Rochelle, where he sojourned for a time.



By the time that Welsh had been sixteen years in France, he had attained to the age of fifty. But he was a much older man than his years. The cares of the ministry had pressed heavily upon him. He had been subjected to the rigours of imprisonment, to the suspense begotten of a dangerous position. He had long been an exile from his own country. He had been a hard worker, and had given no small share of his nights to his devotions. He had fought, and toiled, and laboured. With prayer his knees had become hard and stiff, the flesh rigid and the joints unyielding, and he was, in addition, beset by a trouble that was said to be of a leprous character. To his wife and friends it was abundantly evident that his days were numbered, and that they could not be many at the best; but they thought also that if only they could get him back again to Scotland, where he could breathe his native air and wander among the scenes of his earlier days, he might still be granted some measure of recovery. Appeals were made to King James to sanction his return, but in vain. In the hope of moving him by personal solicitation, Mrs. Welsh succeeded in obtaining an interview with him; and it was when she stood a suppliant, but still an independent suppliant, as became the daughter of John Knox, at the throne, that there occurred one of those incidents, one of those conversational interchanges, that are worthy of being held in memory as proofs of the true spirit of the Scottish Reformation movement. "Who was her husband?" asked the monarch. "John Welsh" was the reply. "And who was her father?" "John Knox." "Knox and Welsh," the King retorted pettishly, and with scant regard to the poor woman's feelings, "the devil never made such a pair." "True, your Majesty," Mrs. Welsh made reply, "his leave was never speer't." King James tried to barter his concession on terms that would ensure that Welsh should yield to the royal claims to spiritual jurisdiction. If only he would submit himself to the rule of the Bishops, he might go back to Scotland. "Your Majesty," Mrs.

Welsh answered, raising her apron, "I'd rather kep' his head there." Need it be said that the King refused the request. But, on pressure, he conceded to the Reformer permission to come to London and dwell there. That was better than nothing, and, bidding good-bye for ever to France, Welsh repaired to the English Metropolis. Weak and all as he was, he was as anxious as ever he had been to preach, and the Sovereign was again approached to grant him the necessary permission; but it was not until he ascertained that he was in very weak health, and rapidly nearing the end of the journey, that he consented. Word was conveyed to the dying Reformer, and he brightened up at the prospect. He had no difficulty in getting the use of a pulpit and in securing the presence of a congregation; and, assisted to the church, he preached his last sermon. At the outset he manifested in speech and in action the greatness of the weakness and the intensity of the suffering that he endured, but as he proceeded he gathered strength, he rose superior to sickness, and he reasoned of matters spiritual with all the old strength, and courage, and earnestness. It was his last effort. Taken home, he was put to bed, and two hours later he died. His years were fifty-two.

John Welsh was a man, judged by all the records that we have of him, of an exceptionally strong and fine character. He had not only the assurance that he was in the right, but the courage to go forward and to take the consequences. He had the faith of one of the Old Testament prophets, and if in his case it did not remove mountains, it sufficed to carry him through. He was shrewdly gifted with knowledge of his fellowmen, and he was able to look forward, to determine how events were likely to work out, and so to warn his fellowmen of those things which were almost certain to eventuate; and if he had not an occasional prophetic flash that lit up for him the darkness of the future, his diagnosis of the troubles that awaited Scotland was sufficiently accurate to stamp him, with Alexander

Peden, and in a measure with John Knox, as one of the seers of the days in which he lived. It is not needful that we should implicitly accept the early and the popular estimate of Welsh's prophetic character. The days were troublous in which he lived. There was a Stuart on the throne deeply convinced of his own divine inspiration and determined to have his way, and he was surrounded by counsellors highly jealous of the strength and of the claims of Presbyterianism, who were keenly alive to the monarch's weakness and to the use that could be made of it, and Welsh's wisdom enabled him to read the signs of the times. He was of those who know how to stand straight in the presence of a great man. Though but a few years in Ayr, his memory is cherished even now. Perhaps the most eloquent tribute ever paid to his worth was that of David Dickson, the minister of Irvine, many years afterwards, when he was being congratulated on the fruits of his own ministry. "The vintage of Irvine," he answered, "was not equal to the gleanings of Ayr in the days of John Welsh."

One who has been strictly indoctrinated in the Protestant faith, and who has accepted and assimilated the traditions of the Covenanters, is not unlikely to overestimate the spiritual results of the first Reformation. The comparatively early Presbyterian divines were not in all cases by any means the models of faith and of works that many assume them to have been. The great majority of them were, no doubt, men of principle and of good lives; but a change of faith does not necessarily imply a renewal of the inner man, the Kirk had to make the best of the materials that lay to her hand, and it is not very surprising, therefore, if the records of the period demonstrate that there were men in the ministry of the country parishes here and there whose conduct, whose mode of living, whose walk and conversation, would have disgraced any Church, or any faith under the sun.

The Covenanting forces went down before Montrose—the great Montrose and the chivalrous, as he was

regarded on the one hand; the renegade Covenanter, the Stuart intriguer, the leader of a barbarous host, and the enemy of all that was best in Scotland, as he was stigmatised by the Presbyterians, on the other—and the Kirk had to find a reason for it. He had defeated the hastily gathered levies of the Covenant at Tippermuir, in Perthshire; he had possessed himself of the city of Aberdeen, and permitted his troops to kill, rob, and plunder in the granite city at their pleasure; he had laid waste a considerable portion of Argyllshire; he had beaten General Bailie at Kilsyth; and he had so prevailed—though his triumph was but short—as to feel himself warranted in assuring Charles I. that he was in the right way to make the Kingdom again submit to his power. Why were these things so? the Kirk asked itself; and, after the manner and custom of the times, the ministers of the faithful and rigid order attributed the evils of the day to the sins and backslidings of the nation, and not least to the defections of the ministry of the Church itself. A Commission of the General Assembly in 1645 drew up a list of the abounding shortcomings. These included worldliness on the part of many of the ministers, lightness of carriage of themselves and their families, ambiguousness, slander, and silence in the public cause. Worse than these was their “*tipling and bearing companie in untymous drinking in taverns and aill-houses, or anywhere else, whereby the ministerie is made vyle and contemptible.*”

The Presbytery of Ayr was sorely exercised thereanent, and also because of the “*disaffected persons*” within their bounds—men who had either gone back on their first love, or who, not knowing how things might turn out in the State, and determined to be on the winning side, whatever might happen, were making friends to themselves of the Mammon of unrighteousness. These included men like John and Hew Kennedy, sons to the Laird of Blairquhan, Garrihorne, Ardmillan, younger, Kilkerran, elder, and his son, the Laird of Drongan, the Laird of Caprington, the Laird of Craigie,

and the Laird of Girvanmains. The most of them responded to the call of the Presbytery, and made explanation of their conduct. One of the most notable of the offenders was Sir John Mure of Auchendrane. He was charged with convocation with the rebels at Kilmarnock and at Bothwell, with having kept committee with them at Ayr, with having entertained some of them at his house and ridden with them to view the country, with having convened with them at Loudoun Hill, and with having gone with them to Philiphaugh. These charges he admitted, but he denied having issued an edict, at Straiton Kirk on the Sabbath day, to meet the rebel Commissioners at Maybole; having sworn horrible oaths, also at Straiton, "that we have been altogether too long misled with a number of damned devils;" declared that there was not a more religious nobleman in all the Kingdom than my Lord Marquis of Montrose; and cursed the Solemn League and the subscribers to it, and sworn that all the judgments that had come upon this land were occasioned by the Covenant. How far Mure was free from the charges he repudiated is open to doubt; it is beyond question that he was one of the most powerful supporters that Montrose had in Ayrshire. The North Ayrshire malignants included the Laird of Knock, in the parish of Largs; Cuninghame of Lainshaw, Cuninghame of Craighens, and Lord Boyd of Kilmarnock, a steady and consistent royalist. The Presbyteries dealt with the recalcitrants, according to the measure of their offending, by censures, greater or smaller. Lord Boyd had to make his public repentance in the Kirk at Kilmarnock; a mild course sanctioned in his case, on consideration that he was about to remove furth of Ayrshire immediately.

But the scandals in the ministry of the Church itself were worse than the political malignancy, and they present a somewhat lamentable picture of the times. There were, at least, four ministers in the Ayr Presbytery who had fallen away from any proper sense of duty, the ministers of Straiton, Auchinleck, Muirkirk, and

Monkton. John M'Quorn was the minister of Straiton. He was paralytic, but it did not prevent him from systematically frequenting the alehouses. He began his drinking early in the day and, having refreshed himself with a midday nap, he forthwith began again. Sometimes he was so drunk that, when his parishioners came to him to be examined, he was unable to deal with them. His sympathies were entirely royalist. He permitted the edict to be read in the church calling upon the people to assemble at Maybole in opposition to the cause of the Kirk, and, after the edict had been read, he adjourned with the malignants to an alehouse, where they drank, smoked tobacco, and indulged in "horrible swearing" against the Covenant. He had openly declared it unlawful to take up arms against the King, that the King was the head of the Church, that the covenant with England was unlawful, and that he could not understand why the people should take up arms against their Sovereign, seeing he had given them everything that they wanted. The Covenanters he nicknamed Puritans. He would ask the people, when they came to be catechised, "Are ye a Puritan?" Mr. John M'Quorn was manifestly a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to the rigid Presbyters, alike in his morals and in his principles.

Worse even than he was the minister of Monkton—Hamilton by name. Two of his parishioners, James Blair of Monktonmains, and James Blair of Monktonhall, had been appointed respectively Captain and Lieutenant of the district "for leading the people of God in such public service as should occur." He railed upon them from the pulpit the Sunday ensuing, called them "drunken blosterers, profane and debauched companions," and added that the curse of God was upon them and would light upon all who followed such leaders and commanders. "Lord," he prayed, "Thou hast scraped their names out of the Bcok of Life, and will let them run on to destruction, for their cup is not yet full." From the pulpit he pointed his finger at

Monktonhall, and remarked, "There is our pretended Lieutenant!" and, at a parish committee, he declared of the same officer that "it was more fitting he was made a drummer than any other officer." The Lieutenant resented it. He declared that the minister's conduct towards him was "hard for flesh and blood to comport with." Hamilton's morals were none of the best. His servant girl was "proclaimed" to be married to an Irishman named M'Cracken. He persuaded her to break her engagement, and the same day that had witnessed the proclamation of the one set of banns witnessed also the proclamation of the banns between himself and the servant girl. So great was the scandal caused, that the following Sunday some of the respectable parishioners—the much-abused Lieutenant among them—prevented him from preaching in Prestwick Kirk. The ministers in the neighbourhood, to whom he applied to marry him, refused to do it, and he had perforce to go to Cambuslang, where the minister, himself under censure, performed the ceremony. The time of the marriage, not less than the circumstance of it, was an offence. The battle of Kilsyth had been fought and lost, the people of God were lying out in the open fields in the defence of the Gospel, yet this unworthy minister of the Word had asked a Mr. Scott to come and marry him, "that they might be merry and jovial two or three days together." Mr. Hamilton's delinquencies did not end here. He was in the habit of using phrases in the pulpit that were the occasion of merriment—such as, "Weel kens the mouse that the cat is out of the house," "I am the carle cat, howbeit I be singed," "Half binkes are sliddery," "If you have brewn weel, you will drink the better," and "Many speak of Robin Hood, but few speak in (*i.e.*, within reach of) his bow." He eschewed any study whatever. For six and twenty years his "sermons" consisted of readings from the Scripture Commentaries. He had not even a Bible in the pulpit till the Presbytery insisted on his getting one. Under pressure he seems to have written a sermon, and every

Sunday he took it with him and placed it in the Bible. Sometimes he turned a dozen pages of the manuscript at one time, sometimes fewer, while the people amused themselves by laying wagers how many pages he would turn; and sometimes he broke away and delivered himself of curses and imprecations upon the people of the parish. In addition to all that he was a veritable niggard in the providing of wine for the Communion. He had a grant sufficient to buy wine enough for two parishes the size of Monkton and Prestwick, instead of one, but he bought so little that he had to make up the deficiency with water. When the Presbytery considered all these things, they took the only course open to them, and passed sentence of deposition. There have been cases within comparatively recent times of gross dereliction of duty on the part of the Church Courts; but it must be remembered that lapsing on the part of the ministers from the strictest good conduct, such as would not be tolerated to-day in any Church, was not looked upon with the same stern eye in the earlier days of Presbyterianism as it is now. Even bearing this in mind, however, cases like those of M'Quorn and Hamilton are proofs of the comparatively low state both of religion and morality in the first half of the seventeenth century, and of the easygoing discipline that was exercised by the Church Courts. An effective Church order, any more than a good ministry, is not the product of one generation, but of many years of stern experience.

When George Dunbar, the minister of Ayr, for protesting against the rule of the Bishops, was denounced as a rebel and sentenced, in 1624, to be banished to Ireland, his successor, William Annand, was of the Episcopal order in the Church, and "resolutely opposed to all things which he considered Puritanical." He also swore occasionally, and indulged at times too freely in the cup that inebriated. He observed Saints' days, he took the collection on the Communion Sundays when the people were seated in the church, instead of at the doors in the usual fashion, and, worst of all, he kneeled



when he himself partook of the Communion. These fallings away from use and wont were most displeasing to the people, so much so that they rose in protest one Sacrament Sabbath day, and left the church, and Mr. Annand alone in it. He was a man of outstanding ability, none the less, and he defended the Liturgy of Archbishop Laud, in 1637, before the Synod of Glasgow, "as well in my poor judgment," says Baillie, "as any man in the Isle of Britain could have done." After supper the same night, he must needs go and see the Bishop, and, as he went, hundreds of enraged women attacked him "with neaves, staves, and peats." They beat him sore, tore his clothes, and so treated him that, but for the noise they made, causing the people in the houses to set out many candles on their window sills, he might have lost his life. The next day he rode away, but, as he was getting on to his horse, "the horse fell above him in a very foul myre," no doubt to the delight of the women who were present to affront him more, and who reasoned no good to him from the unlucky omen. When the National Covenant was signed in the Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, in February, 1638, it was brought the following month to Ayr to be signed. Mr. Annand was not present, but Mr. Burn of Kirkoswald took his place, preached from the text, "Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God," and administered the Covenant. This put Mr. Annand "in great dump," so much so that he could stand it no longer, and, giving up his parish, departed for Edinburgh. This, however, did not end his troubles. His "miscarriages" formed the basis of a libel against him, and although he retracted his Episcopal notions and signed the Covenant, he had sinned too grievously to be forgiven, and the General Assembly unanimously deposed him from his holy office.

The events that brought the Roundhead soldiers to Ayr are matters of national rather than of local history. Charles I., then a young man of four and twenty, had succeeded to the Crown, vacant by the death of his

father, James I. and VI., in 1625. He had, unhappily for himself, and more unhappily for the people and the peace of Scotland, inherited all his father's exalted notions regarding the divine right of Kings. He had begun his career as Sovereign by attempting to procure an Act of Revocation, under which the Scottish nobles would have to restore to the Crown the lands they had acquired consequent upon the Reformation. The nobles, however, were of sterner stuff than to yield to such a demand. It was not for nothing that they had won the the broad acres that once belonged to the Church of Rome, and they formed a defensive league, which they would very speedily have converted into an offensive, and a formidable combination, had it been necessary. Lord Nithsdale was to have formulated the plan in Parliament, but he forebore. And little wonder; for had he attempted to bring forward his Act of Revocation, the hostile Barons would have fallen upon him, and upon his supporters, in open Parliament, and slain them. Learning this, he refrained from bringing forward the measure. But the harm had been done. Hostility, wrath, suspicion, had been aroused, and they are difficult things to allay. Still Scotland could forgive a great deal when it was done by a Stuart King, and when, in 1633, Charles made his first entry into Edinburgh, he received a welcome, the genuineness, the spontaneity, and the enthusiasm of which can hardly find a parallel. The King had set himself to the task of putting the Episcopal Church in Scotland on its feet, and, in order to do that, he found it necessary to bring down Presbyterianism. The attempted introduction of Laud's Liturgy, in 1637, created a ferment. When the Dean in the High Church of Edinburgh opened the book, uproar arose. "Out! thou false thief, dost thou say mass at my lug?" cried Jenny Geddes, a woman who kept a cabbage stall at the Tron, as she threw her stool at his head. Commotion ensued. It spread all over Scotland, it extended to England, it found expression in Glasgow, when Mr. Annand, the minister of Ayr,

preached before the Synod a sermon in defence of the Service Book. Petitions against the obnoxious liturgy poured into the Privy Council from all parts of the country. The King refused all concession. He insisted on the book being used, and forbade the petitioners to meet.

The Presbyterians did the only thing open to them as independent men. They met, barons and squires, counties and towns, high authorities and minor jurisdictions, and, on the opening day of March, 1638, the National Covenant was signed in Greyfriars Church and churchyard in Edinburgh. James, Earl of Loudoun, was there, a born leader of men, and the most eloquent man of his time, and he spoke "with great courage and power" in recommending the bond. The Earl of Eglinton, the famous Greysteel, subscribed the Covenant, so did the Earl of Cassillis, and many of the lesser barons of Ayrshire. The temper of the nation was roused. "We know no other bonds between a King and his subjects," declared Lord Loudoun, "than those of religion and the laws, and if these are broken, men's lives are not dear to them. Threatened we shall not be; such fears are past with us." Such was the spirit of the times. The King met it in his usual way. He could not mistake it, he was forced to recognise it, and to feel it; and he temporised. The Presbyterians demanded a free Parliament and a free General Assembly. He sanctioned the granting of the Assembly, but he also instructed his Commissioner, the Marquis of Hamilton, to prevent inroad upon the position of the Bishops, and to dissolve the Assembly rather than sanction such a thing. The Commissioner dismissed the Assembly, but it sat on all the same, restored Presbyterianism, and condemned Prelacy. The result was an appeal to arms. Ayrshire responded heartily to the call of Presbytery. When the Earl of Eglinton, who had carried the spurs at Charles's coronation in Edinburgh, and the sword of State at the riding of the Scots Parliament in 1633, "came away," says Baillie, it was with "the whole countryside at his

back." The same determination prevailed over all Kyle and Carrick, and when the Presbyterian army encamped on Dunse Law, it included a very powerful west country contingent. The minister of Kilwinning, Robert Baillie, had declared a year previously "that all resistance to the supreme magistrate in any case is simply unlawful;" but events had been too much for him, and he was in arms with "half-a-dozen good fellows" at his back, whom he had supplied with musket and pike at his own expense. Baillie is one of the last men whom one could associate with the sterner side of the camp; nevertheless, he rode with a pair of pistols at his saddle-bow and girt with a sword. "For I was as a man," he writes, "who had taken my leave of the world, and was resolved to die in that service without return." The King recognised that he could not cope with the hostile army, and he came to terms with them. But while they burned their camp and broke up their army, the Scots kept their best officers on half-pay. The result proved the wisdom of their forethought.

Within a year the Scots were again in the field, and marching into England to meet the King, who was advancing against them. Terms might again have been arranged, but the discovery of a letter from the Presbyterians to the King of France, asking the aid of that monarch, stiffened Charles's resolution. One of the signatories to the letter was the Earl of Loudoun, and he came perilously near losing his life over it. He had gone up to London under safe conduct, with the other Scottish Commissioners, in 1640; and the King, having learned that he had signed the letter, had him thrown into the Tower, and determined to execute him without even the semblance of a trial. Through the influence of the Marquis of Hamilton, however, Loudoun was liberated. Wodrow tells how it was accomplished. Hamilton went into the presence of the King and asked him to recall the warrant. The King was very angry, he had done it, he said, after full consideration of the consequences, and he would be obeyed! "The Marquis,"

proceeds Wodrow, "insisted that it would breed ill-blood in Scotland; that it was against all law and equity to cut off privately a nobleman that was come up on the public faith, and that without hearing of him; that this would infallibly make the breach with Scotland irretrievable; and insisted upon other topics, but in vain. The King continued resolute, and the Marquis took his leave of him, with telling him he would immediately take his horses and go to Scotland; that he would not stay in London to be a witness of the misery His Majesty was bringing upon himself; and that he was of opinion that to-morrow, before this time, the city of London, upon hearing of this unaccountable step, would rise, and, for what he knew, tear him to pieces!—or some expression to that purpose—and so he retired." After he was gone downstairs, a message from the King came to him, ordering him to return. The threatening from the City of London stuck with the King, and when the Marquis came back, the King said—"Well, Hamilton, I have yielded to you for this once; take you the warrant and do as you please with it!" Wodrow gives the story at the instance of a "Mr. Frazer," and adds that Frazer had assured him, on the authority of the Duke of Hamilton (about 1723), that the warrant itself, and a narrative of the whole, under the Marquis's hand, were among his papers at Hamilton.

When the rival armies met at Newburn, in Northumberland, the attack on the royalist forces was led by the Earls of Loudoun and Eglinton, and it was delivered with such impetuosity that the English, who had probably not much heart for the enterprise, fled panic-stricken to York. The Scots took possession of all Northumberland and Durham, and remained in Newcastle for about a year. Charles had again to come to terms, and it was getting harder for him to do, on account of the increasingly strained character of his relations with his English subjects. The Irish Rebellion of 1641, with its horrors of massacre and outrage, did not make it any the easier for him, nor did the difficulty,

constantly growing greater, of obtaining supplies of public money, tend to smooth his course. He called Parliament together—the Long Parliament, as it was called—and had the mortification of seeing the ecclesiastical fabric in England, which he had made it the business of his reign to buttress, shaken to its foundations. It was then that the Westminster Assembly of Divines, to which the Earl of Cassilis, “the grave and solemn Earl,” and a man of strong Covenanting sympathies, was one of the Scotch Commissioners, met, and drew up the Confession of Faith, the Directory of Public Worship, and the Shorter Catechism. In the Summer of 1642, Charles appealed to the nation against the Parliament. The Scots, while they remained loyal to the Crown, recognised also that their interests were involved in the coming struggle in the south; and in 1643 the Solemn League and Covenant was drawn up in defence of the reformed religion, the rights of Parliament, the liberties of the Kingdom, and the preservation of the King’s person and lawful authority. The spirit of this bond has been expressed by Robert Burns—

The Solemn League and Covenant  
 Cost Scotland blood, cost Scotland tears;  
 But it sealed Freedom’s sacred cause—  
 If thou’rt a slave, indulge thy sneers.

When it was proposed to send an army south to aid the Parliamentary forces in England, the nobility of Ayrshire were divided in their counsels. Loudoun, Eglinton, and Cassillis favoured the project; and they had the support of the smaller barons and of the large majority of the gentry of the shire, but there was, none the less, a considerable minority, led by the Earls of Glencairn and Dundonald and by Lord Bargany. The former group took the field in force. Eglinton and Cassillis had each a regiment of his own when the hostile armies encountered, July 2, 1644, at Marston Moor, near York. The courage of Greysteel and his men saved a critical situation. The royalists had driven part of the

Parliamentary and Presbyterian forces before them and were in hot pursuit ; but the Earl and his own men kept their ground, though not without sustaining considerable loss in their encounter with Prince Rupert's horse. The Earl and his son were both wounded, and four of their lieutenants were slain, as well as many of the private soldiers. The battle ended in the total defeat of the royalists. When Cromwell, who had led a fierce charge upon the royal cavalry, was compelled to leave the field, owing to a wound in his neck, his brigade was led by Major-General Crawford of Skeldon. After the battle the Scots advanced upon Newcastle, which they stormed and took.

Even at this period in the struggle of the rival forces in the nation, Charles might have prevailed. Notwithstanding all that had come and gone, when the unhappy monarch, in the guise of a groom, made his escape from Oxford and from the encircling dangers, and presented himself, nine days later, in the camp of the Scots, they received him with all the respect due to his position. He remained with them for eight months, and then, under promise that " there should be no harm, prejudice, injury, or violence done to the royal person " by the Parliament of England, Charles was sent south once more, and for the last time. He was incapable of refraining from intrigue, and while he was negotiating with the leaders of the Parliament, he was also in touch with his friends in the country ; with Montrose in the north, and with a powerful body of royalists distributed over almost every part of the Kingdom. The Scottish Estates were in favour of sending an army into England in order to secure the safety of the person of the monarch. The Kirk was against it. The Duke of Hamilton succeeded in raising an army of 14,000 men, and marched across the Border. He had the support of Lord Montgomerie, the eldest son of the Earl of Eglinton, of Lord Cochrane, and of Kilkerran ; but Greysteel himself, antagonistic to the movement for despatching an army into England, was one of those who joined with Argyll

in raising a force, chiefly in the west country, to expel from Edinburgh the Convention that had sanctioned the expedition under Hamilton. The adventure ended in disaster, and on the 30th of January, 1649, the head of King Charles I. rolled on the scaffold at Whitehall.

Scotland had been divided sharply enough for its national security before the death of Charles I. For the time being, when the news of the tragedy of Whitehall ran like wildfire over the country, the people were as a body fairly well united in their indignation upon the slayers of the King; but, unfortunately again, the religious and sectarian differences that rent the State were of such an accentuated character as to make it impossible for them to agree about anything. The country rang with disputations, and excited itself over antagonisms which, viewed from the vantage ground of more than two hundred years, appear to be of comparatively insignificant account. The Kirk was, so far as its mainstay was concerned, ultra-Presbyterian; it had obtained a grip on the nation, and it was not to be shaken off. It had erected a standard of orthodoxy, and it was resolved that everybody should live up to it at pain of its displeasure. Not only were those who had taken part in the luckless "Engagement" placed under a ban, but even so staunch a Covenanter as the Earl of Eglinton, one of the leaders of the party who had turned the Estates out of Edinburgh, because they favoured the engagement, was forbidden to hold office or to serve the country because of his personal loyalty to Charles I., and was subjected to a "purgation" such as prevented him from opposing the advance of Cromwell. It is idle to dwell upon what might have been—and probably in the condition in which Scotland was at the time, what happened was the best for all concerned—but it is conceivable that more conciliatory courses and less bigotry might so have strengthened the Scots army that "the drove of Dunbar" would never have taken place. Suffice it, however, to look the facts in the face, and pass on.



Those who had not attained to the Church's standard were Malignants. That was their general designation. The Malignants again were divided into classes. There were compliers, forcers, urgers, seducers, promoters, and the like. The Presbytery of Ayr, in December, 1648, formulated a series of "heads" under which these faithless ones were to be dealt with according to their demerits. The simple complier, who confessed his compliance, was to be called by name in the Kirk, and rebuked on the Fast day. Those who took forcible measures to compel others to send out their men in defence of the King's cause, were to be suspended from the Covenant. Those who had "poinded" others to raise funds for the cause, were to be excluded from the Covenant till they had restored the poind and given signs of repentance. Those who had actively supported Lord Montgomerie, at that time on the opposite side from his father, and who had given out orders for the troopers to quarter, were to confess their sins and to be sharply rebuked; and, if they were elders, they were to be suspended from office. The "prime contrivers of bands" were to be cited before the Presbytery. In such fashion, under fifteen heads, the Malignants, major and minor, were to be dealt with.

But that was nothing to the treatment of the Engagers at the hands of the Scottish Parliament, where the Kirk was in the ascendant. The mildest punishment inflicted upon them was to be declared incapacitated from public service for a year; from that it rose to incapacity for five years, then ten years, then "for ever." This Parliamentary and Presbyterial dealing combined, brought the nobles and the gentry to their bearings. The eloquent Earl of Loudoun, the Lord Chancellor, bowed his head to the Kirk; so also did Lord Cochrane of Dundonald, Lieut.-Colonel Hew Montgomerie of Coilsfield, the Laird of Dunduff, David Campbell, yr., of Skeldon, the Laird of Knock, Craufurd of Baidland, and others. It mattered not that they were in a position to affirm that the Engagement was in no sense a breach

of the Solemn League and Covenant; the Kirk had declared against it, and that was enough. In the Summer of 1648 there had been a gathering of the more zealous Covenanters on Mauchline Muir, that had been broken up by the royalist forces with some loss of life. Among the ministers who had taken part in it were John Nevy of Loudoun, John Adair of Ayr, Gabriel Maxwell of Dundonald, Alexander Blair of Galston, Matthew Mowat of Kilmarnock, Thomas Wylie of Mauchline, and William Guthrie of Fenwick. Parliament declared that rising not only lawful, but also a zealous and real testimony to the truth and for the Covenant; and the Presbytery of Ayr dealt, by process of censure, with those who had railed against it, or against those who had taken part in it.

After the execution of Charles I. it grew increasingly evident to all classes in the country that the position was too menacing to be confronted by a nation torn asunder by internecine strife; and it was resolved to put the country into a state of defence. While this was being done, Commissioners, among whom were the Earl of Cassillis and Robert Barclay, Provost of Irvine, were sent across to Holland, where Charles II. was in residence at the Hague, and where Sir John Cochrane was British Minister to the Hamburg Senate, to arrange terms with the heir to the throne for his taking up the kingly succession. The negotiations occupied a considerable time. The Marquis of Montrose was endeavouring to raise the clans for the Stuart cause, and, so long as there seemed to be any hope of his succeeding, Charles temporised; but when word came that Montrose had been taken prisoner, and the hopes of an absolute monarchy were finally crushed, Charles came to terms with the Commissioners, and signed the Solemn League and Covenant. This was accepted by the representatives of Scotland as sufficient proof of his fealty to the Covenanting cause; he was brought to Scotland and received with the most extravagant enthusiasm, and, on his entry into Edinburgh, his reception was as joyous

as that of his father had been before him. Cromwell saw how things were tending. He recognised that the Commonwealth and the Monarchy could not both occupy the field, that either the one or the other must go down ; and, true to his genius for action, he lost no time in marching upon Scotland at the head of an army of sixteen thousand foot and horse. Charles, as a letter from him to Sir John Cochrane proves, was by no means blind to the weakness of his own position, or to the dangers attendant upon a conflict with Cromwell ; but he had made his choice, and he could not do otherwise than go forward.

Ayrshire had a Committee of War that comprised, among others, the Lord Chancellor Loudoun, the Earls of Eglinton and Cassillis, and Lord Cathcart. As we have said, however, the exclusion of the Malignants and Engagers from public service materially weakened both the strength and the calibre of the Scottish army. Ayrshire had its contingent, none the less, in the field. The levy cost the town of Ayr (September 18, 1650) 5800 merks ; troops were raised partly by voluntary levy, and partly by a system of conscription ; and horses were taken wherever they could be found, the owners being paid according to their value. Fortune favoured Cromwell. There is no doubt that he was in a perilous condition through sickness, and the lack of provisions, among his men, and that his retreat upon Dunbar partook somewhat of the character of a strategic movement towards the rear. On the afternoon of Monday, September 2, 1650, the Protector observed that the Scots were drawing nearer with the intention of giving him battle on the following day, and he resolved to take his chance in the dark. Before dawn the Scots were aroused by the booming of the English cannon and the flashing of their musketry all along the line, followed close by the fierce charge of the Ironsides. The battle was over. The Scotch cavalry were driven in upon the foot soldiers, panic was succeeded by rout, and it is estimated that, while Cromwell lost hardly more than a

score of men, the Scottish slain numbered about three thousand, besides ten thousand prisoners, with all their artillery, great and small—thirty guns.

The Scots were not long in recovering from the disaster of Dunbar. They collected another army, crowned Charles II. at Scone, with holy solemnities, and swore to live and die with their King, "against all manner of folk whatever, according to the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant." The Earl of Glencairn, the most pronounced of all the Ayrshire nobility in the royalist cause, proceeded to the Highlands with Middleton and rallied to Charles a force of clansmen. Still the bickering and the quarrelling went on regarding Malignancy and the wisdom of permitting any but the most approved of the Covenanting band to take the field; and Charles, afraid lest he should be handed over to the Parliamentary forces, with whose religious views the Covenanters were in much fuller sympathy than with his own, escaped from Perth, where the Court then was, and rode northwards to join the more dependable body led by Glencairn and Middleton. Colonel Robert Montgomerie was sent after him with a body of horse, and persuaded him to return. The Earl of Eglinton exerted himself to raise a regiment in the west country, but was surprised by a party of Cromwell's horse, and put in prison, first in Hull and then in Berwick; and the same year his son, General-Major Montgomerie, was taken prisoner after a resolute defence of Powick Bridge, in which he was severely wounded, and sent to Edinburgh Castle, where he lay till 1658, when he escaped, thus securing his liberty two years before his father, who was not granted his freedom till the Restoration. As before, disaster befell the Scots. Unable to make headway against Cromwell in Scotland, they marched into England, 14,000 strong. Here Cromwell overtook them at Worcester, September 2, 1651, and, after a desperate engagement, from which only about a thousand horse got away and fled, closed the invasion by the practical annihilation of the little army. This was the Protector's

“crowning mercy,” and, indeed as he said, “it was a stiff business.” Returning to Scotland, the forces of the Commonwealth took possession of the country, and, before the close of the year, a strong Roundhead garrison, quartered in Ayr, held the shire, and the south-west of Scotland generally, in check.

Under the military rule of General Monck it did not take Scotland long to settle down. The Scots had had enough of fighting, they had grown wearied with the incessant conflict that had been waged between the Kirk and the Crown, and they felt the need of a strong hand upon the national rein. They were not long in discovering that, ecclesiastically, they were their own masters, that they could hold their Calvinism strictly or more leniently as they felt inclined, without any fear of civil consequences. Peace and order everywhere prevailed, and the Scots appreciated the luxury of being able to go and to come across the open country in perfect safety.

In the Highlands it took things longer to settle. The Earl of Glencairn was the sort of man to whom a royal enterprise, be it ever so daring or desperate, appealed. With a mixed company of clansmen, representing Glengarry, Lochiel, M'Gregor, Mar, and other chiefs of pronounced Stuart affinities, he ranged the Highlands awhile, by Lochearn and Loch Rannoch, Cromar and Badenoch, in Inverness-shire and Sutherlandshire; but their adventure was never really dangerous to the peace of the nation at large; and, ultimately, after a few minor skirmishes, which only demonstrated their weakness in face of the organised and disciplined soldiers of the Commonwealth, they were glad to capitulate. The Government, however, did not forget those who had been hostile to them. Lord Cochrane and Lord Boyd were subjected to heavy fines; the Earl of Loudoun, the Earl of Glencairn, Lord Mauchline, Lord Montgomerie, and Lord Bargany were omitted from the Act of Grace; but Cromwell showed consideration for their ladies, allowing the Countess of

Loudoun an income of £400, and Lady Bargany £200, from the estates of their respective husbands.

With a view to holding the West of Scotland in check, obtaining easy access to the Western Highlands, and keeping the sea open against contingencies, Cromwell resolved upon the construction of a strong fort at Ayr. It is one of the regrettable incidents of the latter days that the greater part of this fort should have been permitted to disappear. It enclosed an area of twelve acres, with the sea on the north-western, and the river on the north-eastern face. The ground plan was a hexagon, with bastions at the angles, but the sides facing the sea on the one side, and the town on the other, were longer than any of the others. The main bastion was situated on rising ground, and its guns not only overlooked the harbour, but could be turned upon any or all of the other bastions, so that, in the event of any of these being surprised, it could be swept from the loftier elevation. Between the bastions were curtains, which could have been raked with ease. The curtains ranged from 237 to 512 feet in length, and outside that next the town, was a broad, deep ditch, across which entry to the fort was obtained by a bridge and a heavy gate, above which were the arms of the Commonwealth. It was not without considerable difficulty that the fort was constructed. The builders were very much troubled with water. They had of necessity to lay their foundations upon the sand—"a shattering sand that, as we dig in one place, another place falls upon us"—and the cost is said to have been so great as to extort from Cromwell the remark that it looked as if the fort had been built of gold. The strength of the fort was undeniable. "It is a most stately thing," Colonel Lilburne wrote to the Lord-General, "and will be very strong," and, contemplating its completion, another Roundhead warrior declared that "it will be a place of as great strength as will be in England and Scotland." It appears to be more than doubtful whether Cromwell himself ever was in Ayr at all. One of the chief officers

in the fort, if not indeed the Colonel-Commanding, was Colonel Alured, described by Carlyle as " a swift devout man, somewhat given to Anabaptist notions."

It could not have been otherwise than a grievance with the people of Ayr that Cromwell should have built his stately fortress in such a fashion as to enclose the old parish church of the town—the Church of St. John's. It dated back to the end of the twelfth century, it had witnessed the gathering of the Scottish barons under Robert the Bruce, after Bannockburn, it had many hallowed associations of the first Reformation and of John Welsh, and around its walls slept the dust of many generations of the burgesses. The Roundheads cared for none of those things when military considerations were at stake. Their cause was more sacred in their eyes than either kirk or kirkyard; but when they secularised St. John's and converted it into an armoury, they gave the town a thousand merks English towards the erection of another parish church; and, selecting a site on the the friars' lands on the banks of the river, the Council built the church which remains to this day.

Apart from this example of vandalism, which cannot have been else than grievous to the community, there is no reason to believe that Ayr suffered, either in its material or its moral wellbeing, from the ten years' sojourn of the Ironsides. The general morals of the troops were excellent. There were, almost as a matter of course, exceptions to the rule. As with every other great movement, so with that which brought about the Commonwealth, men were attracted to it in the interests of liberty. It offered them freedom from the rule of an absolute monarchy. It established them in the exercise of rights, and of privileges, which had previously been denied to them. It did not confine itself, in the appeals that it made to the nation, to religion, or to purity, or to the higher morality; it accepted, on the contrary, all who honestly and honourably rallied to its standard, and therefore it was inevitable that the ranks of its soldiery should embrace men of almost every kind.

The rule, however, cannot be proved by the exception, and while it has to be recognised that all the Roundheads were not of the religious sort, or stern and upright according to the recognised order, the fact, none the less, remains indisputable that the Cromwellian forces attained to, and maintained, a very high degree of moral excellence, and that they were a good and not an evil influence in the communities which they dominated during the Republican decade. The session records of Ayr demonstrate that there were troopers who broke the Sabbath, and who ignored the claims of morality. But they did not escape the penal consequences of their actions. There was at least one English soldier who was scourged along the streets for a breach of the seventh commandment. On the other hand, there were Roundheads who identified themselves with the Presbyterian order—not by any means a sign of grace, but an indication of greater catholicity than might have been looked for in these staunch adherents of Independency. The session had their test for such. The Covenant was their touchstone ; and, once they were satisfied that the Englishmen had an intelligent appreciation of it, they were ready to open the Presbyterian doors and bid them enter in. It is a tradition of old repute that many of the inhabitants were taught by the Roundheads how to lay out their gardens more tastefully than they had been in the habit of doing ; and it is beyond doubt that, when the Restoration of Charles II. came about in 1660, and the troops marched away, some of the soldiers elected to remain behind and to take up their residence among the people of Ayr. The Cromwellians were like their neighbours—there were good and bad among them, but the records and the indications all point to the fact that the good much predominated over the bad.

And certainly both town and county had experienced much greater peace and happiness during the Roundhead occupation than they were destined to enjoy again for many years to come.



## CHAPTER XI

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### FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE HIGHLAND HOST

On the Restoration of Charles II., Scotland was almost immediately plunged into a fresh sea of troubles. During the Commonwealth period the strong arm of the Protector had maintained peace, and a certain balance of the religious sects. The law had been well observed, and strict justice had been dispensed in every part of the United Kingdom; but no sooner had the King returned to the throne than troubles, and plots, and excitements began anew, and Scotland was fated to endure much, both in the way of oppression and of persecution, during the eight and twenty years that were opening. Powerful efforts had been put forth to bind Charles to the Covenants, and to some extent these had succeeded, but there is little reason to doubt that the King never seriously intended to abide by his promises, and, whether he did or not, he was at once relieved by the new Parliament from any conditions or limitations beyond what already existed at common law.

Soon after the Restoration, the Earl of Cassillis, a nobleman of pronounced Presbyterian sympathies, and Dalrymple of Stair, proceeded to London, and were graciously received at Court; and Stair, who received the honour of knighthood, was reappointed one of the Judges of the Court of Session—a position to which he had been originally raised by Cromwell, on the advice

of General Monck. At the opening of the Parliamentary session of 1662, the Act for restoring Episcopacy was carried without much difficulty, and was followed by another Act ordaining that all persons in public trust should subscribe an obligation which declared it unlawful for subjects "upon pretence of reformation, or other pretence whatsoever, to enter into leagues or covenants, or to take up arms against the King or those commissioned by him; and that all these gatherings, convocations, petitions, protestations, and erecting and keeping of Council tables that were used in the beginning, and for carrying on of the late troubles, were unlawful and seditious." The Earl of Cassillis refused to take the declaration, and was deprived of his offices of public trust. Sir James Dalrymple, whose title as one of the Judges of the High Court was Lord Stair, took the Declaration, with the verbal qualification that "he was content to declare against whatever was opposite to his Majesty's just right and prerogative," retained his position, and received a baronetcy. The King did not forget the services or the sufferings of the Earl of Glencairn in the royalist cause, and, in addition to his being appointed Principal Sheriff of Ayrshire, and head bailie of Kyle Stewart for life, he was made Lord High Chancellor.

In Ayrshire the new order of things speedily begat fierce resentment. A large number of the ministers would have none of the overlordship of the Bishops, and they had the great body of the people behind them. Middleton, the King's Commissioner, accompanied by a quorum of the Privy Council, came west in order to enforce submission. For a time he took up his headquarters in Ayr, and it is recorded that he and his companions maintained a wild orgie all the time; that one midnight they drank the Devil's health at the Cross; and that they did other things which Wodrow, the Church historian, "leaves to such as shall write a history of the morals of this time." Their policy of coercion availed little or nothing. None of the clergy in the

diocese of Glasgow, which embraced Ayrshire, applied for institution under the Bishops, and in October of 1662, Middleton's Commission, sitting in Glasgow, passed an Act that all ministers must either submit to the Bishops or remove themselves out of their churches, manses, and parishes within a month. Upwards of three hundred ministers were "outed" at once. Of fifty-seven in the Presbyteries of Ayr and Irvine, thirty gave up their charges, and the number was subsequently increased, over Scotland, to about four hundred, including a few in Ayrshire who had retained their position at the opening of the struggle. In many respects their compulsory disruption may be regarded as the beginning of the acute and determined stand made by Presbytery against the Episcopal and monarchial encroachments. It involved great hardships to many of the outed Presbyters, but it did not in any way weaken either their own resolution or their hold upon their congregations and the country generally. The burghs of Ayr and Irvine refused allegiance to the royal mandate. The "curate" who was appointed to Ayr by the Archbishop of Glasgow, Alexander Burnet, had to submit to a process of boycotting. When he called a meeting of the session hardly any of the elders attended it, and the minutes have frequent entries like this—"Apud Air; presentibus, Master George Whyte, minister, and the Clerk."

One of the most outstanding and outspoken of the Ayrshire ministers was William Guthrie of Fenwick, a man of singular piety and devotion to the cause of his people, and so much esteemed generally that, according to the *Scots Worthies*, he enjoyed the friendship of the Chancellor, Glencairn, and of the Earl of Eglinton. Glencairn himself requested the Archbishop of Glasgow to leave him alone. "That shall not be done," was the Bishop's rejoinder, "it cannot be, he is a ringleader and keeper up of schism in my diocese." In due time Guthrie was suspended, but, according to Wodrow, it was difficult to find any curate who would undertake the

unpopular duty of reading the edict of suspension from his pulpit. The curate of Cadder at last consented. On the Sunday, when the formal sentence of deposition was to be passed, Guthrie met with his attached congregation between four and five in the morning, preached two sermons, with a short interval between them, and dismissed them before nine o'clock. When the curate went to the pulpit his congregation consisted of the twelve soldiers who formed his escort, "and a few children, who created some disturbance till they were chased away by the soldiers." Guthrie remained in Fenwick till 1665, in which year he died in the forty-fifth year of his age.

The insistence of the Government was met by the resistance of the people. "Conventicles and unwarrantable meetings" were declared illegal, but were nevertheless held. John Welsh, the outed minister of Irongray in Dumfriesshire, grandson of John Welsh of Ayr; Alexander Peden, "the Prophet;" and other famous field preachers, disregarded the laws that sought to prevent their preaching. In the Summer of 1666, Welsh held a conventicle at Galston, where he baptised a number of children, and Peden did likewise at Ralston, in Kilmarnock parish, and aggravated his offending by "riding up and down the country with swords and pistols, in grey clothes." The independence of the Town Councils was interfered with, fines and exactions were imposed upon suspect Presbyterians, the nobility and gentry were enjoined to have the law rigidly put in force; and the result was that a number of the country people in Galloway and in Ayrshire, with contingents from other western shires, rose in rebellion. The leader of the movement was Colonel James Wallace of Auchans, a scion of a family that had, in the person of Sir William Wallace, mightily distinguished itself in fighting for the liberties of Scotland. Marching with his followers hither and thither in the hope of raising the countryside, he came by way of Mauchline to Ayr. He had reckoned on securing the aid of Major-General Montgomerie, a

son of the Earl of Eglinton, and of the laird of Gadgirth, but was disappointed to find that they were both at Eglinton waiting upon General Dalziel. The insurgents rendezvoused by the Doon, in the hope of securing assistance from Ayr, but in this also they were doomed to disheartenment. From Ayr they went to Ochiltree, from Ochiltree to Cumnock, from Cumnock to Muirkirk, at which they arrived "as wet as if they had been dragged through a river," and where they spent the night in the church without any food. On their way through Lanarkshire they were joined by about forty men from Cunningham. They had various discussions as to whether they should pursue their enterprise further, seeing that there was so little encouragement where they had most expected it. Colonel Wallace recognised the dangers of the undertaking, but he had put his hand to the plough and he was not going back. At Lanark the Covenants were sworn and a manifesto drawn up. Ultimately the "army," less than a thousand strong, encountered General Dalziel at Rullion Green, on the slopes of the Pentland Hills, and sustained a crushing defeat, some fifty of the countrymen being killed, and many of them taken prisoners. Colonel Wallace escaped in the darkness of the night, and managed to flee to Holland, where he spent the remainder of his days.

The Government behaved with considerable rigour towards the insurgents. December 4, 1666, they issued a proclamation declaring them rebels, and ordering that none should harbour, or assist, reset, supply, or correspond with them under pain of treason. The persons named in the proclamation included Colonel Wallace, Robert Chalmers, brother to Gadgirth, Patrick Macnaught, Cumnock, and his son John; the laird of Kersland, the laird of Bedland, John Welsh, and others. One of the first batch of offenders who were put upon their trial was John Ross, Mauchline. Ross's head was ordered to be exposed at Kilmarnock, and his right arm was affixed upon one of the gates at Lanark.

George Crawford of Cumnock was hanged in Edinburgh. Robert Buntine, Fenwick, and Matthew Paton, shoemaker, Newmilns, were hanged at Glasgow. Ralph Shield, a clothier in Ayr, was hanged in Edinburgh. At Ayr, December 24, 1666, twelve more of the prisoners were sentenced to be executed, eight of them—James Smith, Alexander M'Millan, James M'Millan, George M'Cartney, John Short, John Graham, James Muirhead, and Cornelius Anderson—in the town of Ayr. Popular feeling was so hostile to the act that the public hangman found it convenient to get out of the way, and could not be found. The Irvine hangman was brought down, but neither would he imbrue his hands in the blood of the "rebels." In the circumstances the authorities were at their wits' end what to do. Ultimately the Provost persuaded Cornelius Anderson, one of the men under sentence of death, to undertake the work upon promise of pardon. Even he showed signs of relenting, and it was only by keeping him primed with brandy that he could be persuaded to do the deed. It is said that Anderson acted as executioner at Irvine, when other two of the insurgents were hanged, and that shortly afterwards he died in distraction and in great misery. The remaining pair were taken to Dumfries and hanged there. Thus the authorities hoped to strike terror into the hearts of the people and to subdue them to allegiance; but, as might have been expected of a people with a heredity like that of the Scots, the result was otherwise.

The policy of "thorough" went on. General Dalziel, who attained to unenviable pre-eminence, in the nomenclature of the Covenanters, as "the bloody Dalziel," took up his headquarters for some time in the town of Kilmarnock. Here he thrust many into "that ugly dungeon called the thieves' hole," where they were so crowded together that they were unable to lie down. David Findlay, from Newmilns, was brought before him charged with having been with the army that was routed at Rullion Green. He denied the fact, but, because he would give no information as to whom he

had seen at Lanark, he was sentenced to death; and his request for one night's time to prepare for eternity was denied him. Rigid enquiries were made into the conduct of such as there was reason to believe had been sympathetic with the "rising," or who were affected in that direction. In their absence a batch of Presbyterians, including William Muir of Caldwell, Robert Ker of Kersland, younger; John Cuninghame of Bedland; Robert Chalmers, brother to Gadgirth; and Alexander Peden, were sentenced to be "executed to death and demeaned as traitors" as soon as they could be found, but their sentence was commuted later, on condition that, within a certain specified time, they should give bonds for keeping the peace and obeying the law.

While the so-called rebels were thus being punished, steps were taken to ensure the peace and quiet of the countryside. By a proclamation dated March, 1667, all persons within the shire were ordered to bring in the arms and ammunition that they had in their possession and deliver up the same to the Sheriff or his depute under heavy penalties, the half of which were to go to the informer. Along with this was another proclamation prohibiting all persons who absented themselves from ordinances, and did not go to their own parish church, to keep horses of greater value than a hundred merks; and in the event of their failure to do so the authorities were empowered to seize the horses without either payment or satisfaction, and to give them to the informer. The following October, Commissioners—the Master of Cochrane, Sir John Cochrane, Lord Stair, Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie, Mr. John Cunninghame, advocate; Mr. James Cunninghame, Sheriff-depute of Ayr; Mr. Hugh Montgomerie, Sheriff-depute of Renfrew; and ex-Provost Cunninghame of Ayr, for the shires of Ayr and Renfrew—were appointed to receive bonds from those suspected of disaffection, declaring that they would keep the peace and would not rise in arms against the King, and compelling them to give security for their good conduct. Complaints were

forwarded to the Privy Council concerning various acts of oppression done by the military authorities, but the satisfaction given to the complainers was not of the kind to encourage them to find fault with their oppressors. In the Summer of 1668 a company of foot soldiers was ordered to be stationed at Dalmellington, and another at Cumnock, to keep the districts in order ; and in the Autumn sixty troopers were sent into Kyle to search for and to apprehend any rebels rising in arms. The laird of Cunninghamhead and the laird of Rowallan were taken to Stirling Castle and confined in different rooms, close prisoners. This rigour was continued the following year. Newmilns, Mauchline, and Kilmarnock had each to endure the attentions of the military.

But still the conventicles went on, and a fresh expedient had to be adopted for coping with them. Commissioners were appointed to collect fines for nonconformity. The Commissioner for Kyle and Carrick was a poor advocate named Fife, Cunningham was given to a brother of the Earl of Dumfries, and a nephew of Lord Cochrane had Renfrewshire assigned to him. These, however, do not seem to have done much in the way of gathering in money, and their reign was brief. The offending ministers had a hard time of it. For preaching and baptising irregularly, a group of these, including William Fullarton, St. Quivox ; John Spaldin, Dreghorn ; Alexander Blair, Galston ; Andrew Dalrymple, Auchinleck ; John Hutchison, Maybole ; James Veitch, Mauchline ; Hugh Campbell, Riccarton ; John Gemble, Symington ; and John Wallace, Largs, were cited by Major Cockburn, an officer of the Guards, to appear at Ayr. Cockburn seems to have exceeded his instructions, and to have behaved with needless severity. In some cases he even went the length of turning the ministers' families out of doors, at four and twenty hours' notice, to their great detriment and loss. The Court before which the ministers appeared, comprised of county noblemen and gentlemen, were inclined to treat them leniently, but the Archbishop



demurred to this, and through the influence of Lord Cochrane the ministers were cited to appear before the Council at Edinburgh the following week. This they accordingly did. They frankly acknowledged preaching since they had been set aside, denied having been at conventicles, and admitted that they had permitted outsiders to be present at family worship with them; and, having been cautioned, they were ordered to appear later before the Council. When the time had come for their reappearing, they deputed Mr. Fullarton, the outed minister of St. Quivox, to speak for them. This he did with considerable boldness, craving indulgence for themselves to preach, and compassion for the poor afflicted people of the country. Again the ministers were dismissed with a caution, which is said to have so angered Lord Cochrane that he declared that "the ministers should turn all upside down before he meddled with them again." The same day, however, another declaration against conventicles was issued, throwing the responsibility of suppressing them upon the heritors under a penalty of fifty pounds sterling.

At Midsummer of 1669 the first Act of Indulgence was passed. It gave powers to such outed ministers as were able to show that they had lived peaceful and orderly lives, to return to their parishes, and to preach and dispense ordinances in them, permitting them also to hold meetings of Kirk Session, and to keep Presbyteries and Synods; and it went so far as to grant them an allowance of four hundred merks for their maintenance, out of the vacant churches, until they should be found in parishes for themselves. The Episcopal party were not satisfied with the Act; it went too far in the direction of conciliation for them, and in some of the districts they took steps to prevent it being put in force. Nevertheless, under it, places were found for a number of the outed men, including Ralph Rogers, formerly of Glasgow, at Kilwinning; George Hutchison, of Edinburgh, at Irvine; Robert Miller in his old parish of Ochiltree; William Maitland, of Whithorn, at Beith;

John Bell, of Ardrossan, at the same kirk ; and John M'Mechan, of Dalry, at the same kirk. These men were appointed under a "form," of which this is an example — "Forasmeikle as the kirk of Ochiltree is vacant, the lords of His Majesty's Privy Council, in pursuance of His Majesty's command signified by his letter of the 7th of July last, and in regard of the consent of the patron, do appoint Mr. Robert Miller, late minister there, to teach and exercise the other functions of the ministry at the said kirk of Ochiltree." Later John Gemble of Symington was reponed in his own parish, Andrew Dalrymple of Auchinleck at Dalgain, James Veitch of Mauchline in his own parish, Alexander Blair of Galston in his own parish, David Brown of Craigie in his own parish, William Tullidaff of Dunboig at Kilbirnie, Alexander Wedderburn of — at Kilmarnock; and Kilmours and Dreghorn were given respectively to George Ramsay and John Spaldin, superseded elsewhere.

The effect of this consideration was good, but it was not destined to be so permanently, for in October, of the same year an Act was passed "asserting His Majesty's supremacy in all cases ecclesiastical, and over all persons." This the Covenanters resented as a direct usurpation of their personal liberty, as indeed it was, and there was renewed disaffection, which was met by the Crown by a return to rigorous dealing with those who had been engaged in the Pentland rising, and other sympathisers with the Reformed cause. John Cunningham of Bedland was apprehended in Ireland, and was consigned to ward in Dumbarton and then in Stirling Castle. From Fenwick Major Cockburn brought in Robert Gibson, Robert Paton, Robert Harper, and William Cuthbertson, and they were ordered to be transported to work in the plantations in Virginia. Four years previously Sir William Cunninghame of Cunninghamhead, Sir William Mure of Rowallan, and Sir George Maxwell of Nether Pollock, had been incarcerated; and towards the end of 1669 they

petitioned Lord Lauderdale for their freedom in these words—"That whereas, being detained more than these four years prisoners, to our heavy prejudice in our persons, families, and affairs; and seeing we are, through the grace of God, still resolved to continue in all faithful duty and loyalty to our dread Sovereign, and due respect to the peace and welfare of the Kingdom; may it therefore please your grace, in consideration of the premises, to order our releasement; whereby your grace shall not more evidence His Majesty's goodness, and your own affection to His Majesty's service, than oblige, to all thankful acknowledgment, your grace's most humble suppliants and servants." Their liberation followed.

There was nothing of which the State disapproved more than the conventicles. These they regarded as the heart and centre of sedition. The indulged ministers were narrowly watched, and closely examined, lest they should take part in these field preachings, and the nature and extent of their pulpit work was strictly scrutinised. In April, 1670, a fresh Commission was appointed to deal with disorders in the west country, with instructions for dealing with offenders. "Certain disloyal and seditious persons," the Act constituting Commission declared, "especially in the shires of Ayr, Lanark, Renfrew, and others, have of late contravened the said Acts, by deserting their own parish kirks, keeping conventicles, disorderly marrying, baptising their children, making attempts upon, and offering certain injuries unto loyal and peaceable ministers, dealing with and menacing them to leave their churches, and committing of several other disorders, to the high contempt of our authority and the great scandal of religion." These offenders and malcontents were to be dealt with as the Commission should see fit, by fines, or imprisonment, or by the poinding of their goods; and that the Commissioners might be able to put the law in force, powers were given to them to employ the military in their service. When the Committee came to Ayr, the

first business they had to do was of a somewhat farcical character. Mr. Jeffray, the curate of Maybole, came before them and alleged that some of his parishioners had attempted to murder him, that they had fired a pistol shot at his breast, and that he owed his life to the bullet having found lodgment in a book he was carrying in his breast coat pocket. It appeared, however, that the curate, while he had duly fired a pistol into the book, had forgotten to do the same by his coat, and his complaint was laughed out of court. Later in the year the Maybole parishioners accused Mr. Jeffray of profane swearing, striking, fighting, and plain drunkenness, and the Archbishop, satisfied that these things were so, forbade him to exercise the office of the ministry.

There is no record, so far as we have seen, of the proceedings of this Commission. Some idea of the stringency of the regulations for the conduct of the indulged ministers may be had from the fact that when the father of the minister of Ardrrossan fell sick, his son had to obtain special permission before he could go and see him in his house a mile distant, and then only on condition that he should enter no other house either going or coming. Other ministers had similarly to obtain permits before they could leave home on their own private business. In February of 1671, we find Cunninghame of Bedland still a prisoner in Dumbarton Castle. His health was suffering from his long incarceration, and, on his giving security for ten thousand merks, he was permitted to ride out every day on condition that he returned to his prison at night. It fared worse with his joint prisoner, the laird of Kersland. He made application to go and live with his wife and family in some place where he could superintend the education of the children at school and college, with the result that he was transferred to the tolbooth at Aberdeen, whence, after a short time, he was sent to Stirling Castle.

There is no room for doubting that the Government were anxious to conciliate the Presbyterians. They

could not drive them from their Presbyterianism, but they might by degrees bring them into line with the prelatie order; and, subject to the compliance of the ministers with their requirements, they gave them a large measure of liberty to dispense ordinances within the areas assigned to them. They tolerated nothing, however, in the nature of independence, and seldom left them long alone or without inquiry into their methods. In 1673, the Earl of Eglinton and the Earl of Cassillis were ordered to enquire into the holding of conventicles in the county. One of the results of this inquiry was that a number of the ministers were cited to appear before the Council in Edinburgh. One of these was Mr. Blair of Galston. Blair was outspoken. "I can receive no instructions from you," he told the Council, "for regulating the exercise of my ministry, for if I should receive instructions from you I should be your ambassador." Some of the other ministers attempted to soothe the displeasure caused by these bold words, but without effect. They were all dismissed but Blair, who was ordered to be imprisoned in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh. This was in July, and he remained in close confinement till December, by which time his health had completely broken down. Then he was liberated under a bail bond of five hundred merks, to return to the Tolbooth in a month. In January his freedom was extended by another fortnight, and by that time says Wodrow, "this excellent person died, in much joy and full assurance of faith."

In June, 1673, Alexander Peden, "Peden the Prophet," was captured in the house of Hugh Fergusson of Knockdow, in Galloway, on a charge of having taken part in the Pentland rising. Peden was one of the most popular, and one of the boldest of the Covenanting field præachers. He was accredited by the peasantry with gifts of prophecy. When he was taken captive, Fergusson, his host, was taken also, for harbouring him, and Major Cockburn, who appears to have been one of the most zealous servants the State had, received

fifty pounds sterling in recognition of the important capture he had made. Peden was sent to the Bass, where he spent the next three or four years.

The unfortunate heritors, in whose districts conventicles had taken place, were visited with severe penalties in the shape of fines. There is no record of what they had to pay in Ayrshire, but in Renfrew eleven gentlemen had to pay no less a sum than £368,031 Scots, a sum equal to more than £30,000 sterling. The lives of the suspects had not much store set by them. Archibald Beith, a curate in Arran, was tried and sentenced to death, for having been art and part in the murder of Allan Gardiner, merchant in Irvine, but the sentence was not carried out, and in a few weeks he was set at liberty. When Parliament was sitting in 1674, a report was laid before it of the continued disaffection of the west country. In spite of all that could be done to prevent it, the conventicles went on. John Osburn, the minister of Dundonald, preached every Lord's day at Enterkin's house in Tarbolton, and Anthony Shaw, who was confined by order to Paisley, preached at Knockdolian's house in Colmonell and at the church of Ballantrae. At Tarbolton and Barnweil indulged ministers from other places baptised, and married, and dispensed the sacrament, and in other parts of the country things, from the prelatie point of view, were no better. The report bore that many shocking immoralities were committed at the conventicles—a charge repudiated by the Covenanting party as altogether calumnious.

The conflict between the State and the Covenanters went on through 1676. So long as the latter were able to convene in great numbers in the open country, there was little or no hope of reducing them to subjection. The field preachings were the public meetings of the period, and the State recognised that all their efforts must prove futile unless they could be put down. John Welsh preached at a great gathering at Coilsfield, and there were regular unlicensed meetings held at Dalreoch

house, Colmonell. The Earls of Dumfries and Dundonald, Lords Cochrane and Ross, and Sir Thomas Wallace, were appointed to inquire into the "disorders." and to put them down, but their efforts to do so were, so far as the main object aimed at was concerned, resultless. This year Ker of Kersland, after having been eight years in prison, obtained his liberty. He had been confined in various prisons, latterly in the Tolbooth of Glasgow. A great fire broke out in the city, and the people, to save the lives of the prisoners, gave them their liberty. Kersland joined the persecuted party, with whom he associated for about two years, attending conventicles and otherwise identifying himself with the cause, and then he escaped to Holland, where he remained till his death in 1680.

So the conflict went on through 1676 and 1677, every effort of the State to stop the field meetings being met by counter agitation on the part of the Presbyterians, and things at length came to such a pass that the Government resolved on a supreme military effort to bring the holding of the conventicles to a close. There had been a noted gathering in the parish of Maybole, and a group of ministers had dispensed the communion. The congregation had been drawn from all parts of the shire adjacent, and the ministrations of John Welsh and his friends had been singularly successful. The prelatie party magnified this and other gatherings into formidable movements of sedition, they were unquestionably breaches of the law of the land, and in the Council there was a strong party, including the Earl of Glencairn, who thought that the time had gone by for the pursuance of moderate measures. Instructions were issued of the most peremptory character to a Commission, represented in Ayrshire by Lord Glencairn, to bring the districts into fuller subjection, to have lists prepared of the conventicle keepers, to poind their goods, to apprehend or to imprison them, and to administer a bond binding the signatories, under heavy penalties, never again to go to house or field preachings.

These steps were preliminary to the introduction into the west country, and specially into Ayrshire, of the Highland Host ; perhaps the worst infliction, although fortunately it did not last long, from which Ayrshire ever suffered. Before this desperate step was taken, the county was warned of what might ensue, in a communication addressed by the Council to the Earls of Glencairn and Dundonald and Lord Ross. This letter is of special interest as showing the state of the shire from the point of view of the Council and their friends. " There having been frequent intimations sent in here," it ran, " of extraordinary insolencies committed not only against the present orthodox clergy, by usurping their pulpits, threatening and abusing their persons, and setting up of conventicle houses, and keeping of scandalous and seditious conventicles in the fields, the great seminaries of rebellion ; but likewise of the great prejudice that is likely to arise to His Majesty's authority and government, and to the peace of the Kingdom in general ; we did therefore think it necessary, in a frequent meeting of Council this day, to require your lordships to send particular expresses with sure bearers, to call together the commissioners of the excise and militia, and justices of the peace specified in the list here enclosed ; and when they meet at Irvine, the 2nd day of November next, that you seriously represent to them how highly, in His Majesty's name, we resent the foresaid outrages and affronts done to the government in the shires of Ayr and Renfrew, which have been frequently represented to be the most considerable seminaries of rebellion in this Kingdom, though none hath more eminently tasted of His Majesty's clemency, nor hath His Majesty indulged any shire so much as these, . . . we are fully resolved to repress by force, and His Majesty's authority, all such rebellious and factious courses, without respect to the disadvantage of the heritors, whom His Majesty will look upon as involved in such a degree of guilt as may allow the greatest of severity as may be used against that country."



The three noblemen named met with the heritors and the other representatives of civil authority in the county at Irvine, and placed the Council's instructions before them plainly. The gentlemen declared their loyalty, but came unanimously to three "resolves":— (1) "That they found it not within the compass of their power to suppress conventicles;" (2) "that it is their humble opinion from former experience that a toleration of Presbyterians is the only proper expedient to settle and preserve the peace and cause the foresaid meetings to cease;" (3) "that it is their humble motion that the extent thereof be no less than His Majesty had graciously vouchsafed to his Kingdoms of England and Ireland." The Council received these "resolves" with indignation, and set about, by commission dated December that year, raising the Highlanders.

The publication of the instructions to the commanders of the Highland Host created alarm all over Ayrshire. These were of a character that might well fill any countryside with dismay. The Host were to deprive the people of all classes of their arms and ammunition; in case of refusal, they were to quarter the Highlanders upon them, and inflict such punishment as they should see fit; they were to summon the heritors and compel them to give bond and security for themselves and their tenants not to attend conventicles, and, in the event of refusal, were to proceed against them by "fining, confining, imprisoning, banishing, or other arbitrary punishment;" they were to deal with the tenants and heads of families after the same fashion; they had powers to quarter the forces upon anybody, unless specially exempted, they should see fit; and if any persisted in holding conventicles, they were to be indicted criminally as rebels and traitors. The country, in other words, was handed over to them to reduce to subjection; and it must be remembered that the Highland Host was almost wholly composed of men who were not only of a different faith from the Ayrshire Presbyterians, but who can hardly be said to have been

quite civilised, and who were certainly instinct with all the predatory habits of the clans.

The nobility and gentry of the county made a serious effort to stay the hand of the Government, but in vain. They commissioned nine of their number to proceed to Edinburgh and represent the peaceableness of the shire and the loyalty of its inhabitants. "They could not discern," they placed it on record, "the least tendency in the people to disorder or rebellion, and therefore they deprecated that severe procedure of sending among them so inhumane and barbarous a crew." But Lauderdale would have nothing to do with them, he would not even speak to them or give them access to his presence, and they had to return to the westland to tell their friends that their mission had been a failure. And the Highland Host marched upon Ayrshire.

## CHAPTER XII

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### FROM THE HIGHLAND HOST TO THE REVOLUTION.

It was in the opening weeks of 1678 that the Highland Host marched into Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. By the end of February they had all been ordered off again, except five hundred men, who remained behind till April. Their stay, these five hundred excepted, did not last most than six weeks, but it is well within the mark to say that these were the worst six weeks that ever Ayrshire had. The object of the Council, as has been said, was to crush the conventicles ; in other words, to destroy the right of public meeting. Round the defence of that right, the greater part of the eight and twenty years of the persecution revolved in the westland. It was clear to the Government that, so long as the Covenanters could assemble together and listen to the stimulating and strengthening exhortations of the field preachers, they could not hope to crush the Reformation movement, and year after year every possible effort was put forth to prevent the great assemblages of the people and their consorting together in support of their principles and their right to maintain them. Every attempt of the Council up to this date had proved futile ; now it was to be seen whether invasion by a half-civilised, an undisciplined, and a savage horde of Highlanders would not suffice to break the Covenanting spirit.

The Highland Host numbered in all about 8000 men, comprising about 1000 regular foot soldiers, Angus militia and Perthshire men about 2200, the balance made up of the clansmen of Athole and Breadalbane and other chiefs, with a few troops of horse. In addition to four field guns, they brought with them spades, shovels, and mattocks, as if they were bent on reducing fortifications; shackles and thumbscrews for the terrorising and punishment of the people; and daggers so constructed that they could be fixed, as bayonets were later, to the mouths of the muskets. Ayrshire was regarded as the chief seat and centre of the offending; and though it is impossible to say exactly how many men were quartered upon it, it may be seen, from specific instances of their numbers in different places, and from the great cost of the enterprise to the shire, that they must have numbered thousands.

It was an important part of the business of the leaders of the Highland Host to administer what was known as the Bond. Wise in their day and generation, they spread its meshes wide enough to catch all sorts of people. Upon the landowners, upon the heritors, upon persons in authority, they always kept an eye; it was for these to hold the people under them in subjection, and to see that they did not break the law; and, if they failed in their duty, then the work of recovering fines and exactions from them was comparatively easy. Here is an example of the Bond, which shows what a far-reaching and ingathering measure it was:—

“ I . . . . ., undersubscribing, do faithfully bind and oblige me that I, my wife, bairns, and servants respectively, shall in no ways be present at any conventicles and disorderly meetings in times coming, but shall live orderly in obedience to the law, under the penalties contained in the Acts of Parliament thereanent; as also I bind and oblige me that my whole tenants and cottars respectively, their wives, bairns, and servants, shall likewise refrain and abstain from the said conventicles, and other illegal meetings not authorised by

the law, and that they shall live orderly in obedience to the law ; and, further, that I nor they shall not reset, supply, or commune with forfeited persons, inter-communed ministers, or vagrant preachers, but shall do our utmost endeavour to apprehend their persons ; and in any case my said tenants, cottars, and their foresaids, shall contravene, I shall take and apprehend any person or persons guilty thereof, and present them to the judge ordinary, that they may be fined or imprisoned therefore, as is provided in the Acts of Parliament made thereanent, otherwise I shall remove them and their families from off my ground ; and if I shall fail herein, I shall be liable to such penalties as the said delinquents have incurred by the law."

In the event of landowners refusing to take the Bond, they were liable in two years valued rent of their heritages, if they or their tenants or man servants contravened the spirit of the ordinance ; while those who consented to sign the obligation were to be tenderly dealt with as to their byegones. That nobody in local authority should have any excuse for non-compliance, the Committee of Privy Council appointed for Ayrshire summoned the heritors, life renters, and landlords, to meet with them in the Tolbooth of Ayr, for the Kyle district, and elsewhere for Carrick and Cunningham, and ordained publication of their injunction to be made at the Market Cross of Ayr, and in the various parishes upon a Sabbath day after divine service. Notwithstanding the danger of refusal, very few of the heritors, great or small, took the Bond. The Earl of Dumfries did it, and the Laird of Auchmannoch, and the Town Council of Ayr. The Lord Cathcart, Sir John Cochrane, the laird of Cessnock, and the laird of Kilbirnie were among those who were specifically dealt with, but in vain. Peremptory refusal was also made by the Earls of Cassillis and Loudoun, and the Lords Montgomery, Cathcart, and Bargany, and the burgh of Irvine. The Town Council of Ayr, having accepted, received a bond of relief.

For all practical purposes Ayrshire stood solid against the policy that enacted and exacted the Bond ; it was not a union of Presbyterian fanatics, but of the whole county. The "regular clergy," those who enjoyed the protection of the State, called for severe measures to be taken against "the great and leading men," they demanded that the indulged ministers should either be stinted of their liberty or else removed from their charges altogether, they deprecated anything like weakness in dealing with the leaders of the people, and, in order to buttress the prelatic cause, asked that the garrison of Ayr should be strengthened. But all their efforts to induce submission were in vain. Of nigh upon a thousand heritors, great and small, no more than fifty or sixty subscribed the Bond.

Meanwhile the Highland Host were scattered over the county. For fourteen days eight hundred men were quartered upon Straiton, at free quarters ; "their continual trade," says Wodrow, "was shooting of sheep, robbing men and women night and day, and perfect thieving and stealing." Kirkoswald had a regiment to itself, the men quartered upon those who favoured the reformed cause. Dalmellington had to endure the infliction of nine hundred Highlanders, "and they had their sixpence a day, besides free quarter and prodigious plunder." Not content with free quarter, the Highlanders "openly robbed upon the high road and in houses ; some they stripped naked when several miles distant from their houses, and many at and in their houses, and everywhere took from the country people pots, pans, wearing clothes, and everything which made for them, and money wherever they could reach it ; and under all none durst complain ; when any offered but to do it, they were knocked down and wounded ; and the whole neighbourhood was dealt the worst with on that a count ; yea, people saw it was needless to complain. And as if this had been but little, they pillaged houses, and that even in towns privileged with protections ; others in the country

they broke in upon, and rifled and killed their cattle, far beyond what they made use of for their provision. In some places they tortured people by scorching their bodies at vast fires, and otherwise, till they forced them to discover where their money and goods were hid to avoid their thievish hands." They drove away horses, they threatened to burn houses, they levied blackmail wherever they could get it, they insisted upon being provided with brandy and tobacco. "To crown all," adds Wodrow, "it is well known these vile miscreants, openly, in cities and towns, offered to commit rapes, and it is fit to draw a veil over their excesses of unnatural and horrid wickednesses up and down the country." "In a word," writes a contemporary recorder, "when considered in its full extent, and in all its heinous circumstances, it (the invasion) is a complication of the most atrocious crimes that almost ever have been conceived or perpetrated."

Many instances have been recorded of individual oppression. At Cunninghamhead, the house of Sir William Cunninghame, Highlanders lived at heck and manger for a month; what meal there was in the granary that they could not eat, they destroyed; they used fire to open lockfast places; and the Colonel of the troop threatened a farmer upon whom he had quartered himself that, if he did not hand over his money, he would hang him in his own barn. They robbed various merchants in Kilmarnock of large sums of money, Nine Highlanders foisted themselves for six weeks upon one of these, William Dickie. When they went off they robbed his house, from which they carried sacks full of household stuff and goods, and a hose full of money. When Dickie ventured to remonstrate, they broke two of his ribs and threatened to cut off his head, and they so frightened his wife, by putting the point of a little dirk into her side, that she, being with child, died very soon after of the terror. It was believed that they intended to plunder the town before leaving it, and strong and successful representations were made

to the officers to prevent the barbarity. Mr. Wedderburn, the minister, was one of those who remonstrated, and when he was interceding to spare the place, one of the Highlanders so pushed him on the breast with the butt end of his musket, that he contracted a sickness from which he died. The loss to Kilmarnock was estimated at more than £2800 sterling, an enormous sum in these days for a town like Kilmarnock to have to pay under such untoward circumstances.

What the Highland Host cost Ayrshire can never be told in money, but even in the matter of money the loss to the county was enormous. When the Highlanders had come and gone, the noblemen and gentlemen drew up "an account of the losses sustained by quartering, robbing, and spoiling of the soldiers and Highland Host." The tale is not quite complete. It omits the parish of Dalrymple and the burgh of Irvine. There is no reason to believe that Dalrymple escaped any more than its sister parishes, and it is absolutely certain that Irvine, which had refused to take the Bond, was not forgotten by the invaders. Stated in Scots money, the sum total reaches the formidable figure of £137,499 6s. In sterling money—a pound Scots represented only one-twelfth of a pound sterling—the amount is £11,457; adding Irvine and Dalrymple, probably about £12,500. This does not appear to be such a very large sum of money, but it must be borne in mind that the population of the county at the period cannot have much exceeded—if it exceeded it at all—fifty thousand persons, old and young, or less than twelve thousand families. The equivalent sum to-day would not be less than £60,000; and the point does not need to be argued that if Ayrshire had in one year to contribute such a sum involuntarily, in addition to the ordinary taxation otherwise exacted from the people, it would be a very grievous burden indeed. Those who were responsible for the drawing up of the account were careful not to overstate their case, and there were some who placed the total loss at double the figure named. When the Highlanders



marched off they were loaded with spoil. They carried away many horses, goods out of the merchants' shops, webs of linen and woollen cloth, bedclothes, carpets, wearing clothes, pots, pans, gridirons, shoes, and some silver plate. Some two thousand of them were held up at the bridge of Glasgow by the students and citizens, and compelled to disgorge their plunder, but the greater part of them succeeded in carrying their spoil clear away and in reaching the Highlands with it. The minor troubles inflicted upon the inhabitants were manifold. In Ayr and other towns the burgesses who refused to sign the Bond had their burgess tickets cancelled and destroyed, and were thus debarred from all the privileges of citizenship and from participating in trade and commerce. A general policy of disarmament was carried rigorously out. Garrisons were placed in Blairquhan, in Cessnock, in Barskimming, and in other private houses, in order to hold the districts in subjection, and every means was taken to teach the leaders of the people the costliness of their independence.

But so far as breaking the spirit of the people was concerned, the invasion accomplished nothing. It found them strong for their rights, it left them where it found them. It was but an incident in a long and weary struggle, in which patience and quiet determination were eventually to win. And the struggle had still ten years to run.

There was, as has been said, practical unanimity in the attitude assumed by the nobility and gentry of the shire towards the Highland Host. This does not imply, however, that the whole of the upper classes, or even the majority of them, were in sympathy, generally, with the reformed, or Covenanting, cause. By far the larger number of them were anxious for peace. They were not much concerned with church formulas or observances. They were not concerned either for the differences between ministers who were "indulged," and ministers who were not indulged, or even between the Presbyterians and Episcopalians. What they saw in regard to

the Highland Host was that the invasion was unwarranted, uncalled for, likely to do more harm than good, and sure to exasperate the people. If modern terms may be employed to define their attitude, they were Conciliationists rather than Coercionists.

The Earl of Cassillis, however, and Lord Bargany, were both on the Presbyterian side and against the Government, and both, in consequence, incurred the hostility of the superior powers, State and prelate. The Earl of Cassillis was in a very trying position. His personal interests were so great that he could not afford to treat them lightly. If he had flown in the face of the Government, the Council would almost to a certainty have retaliated by punishing him both in his person and his property. He had, therefore, without sacrifice of his own convictions, to temporise and be politic. In his denunciation of the invasion, however, he spoke out without qualification. "There is a great body of men," he wrote to the Duke of Monmouth, "who are gathered together and brought into the West of Scotland, upon free quarter, whereby there is the greatest complaint of violence, rapine, and all manner of oppression that ever was heard in the world; they are all now quartered in the shire of Ayr, where my small fortune for the most part is. All men of virtue, ingenuity, and discretion, think it very strange that, when there is no rebellion, or the least shadow of an insurrection, that one part of the Kingdom should be let loose upon the other; but especially that a multitude of men should be brought into a civil country, who have nothing to show that they are men, but the external figure; differing in habit, language, and manners from all mankind." What followed immediately on this outspoken protest, which cannot have been pleasing to the authorities, is not clear; but in the course of the correspondence that followed the Earl was commanded by the King to deliver in writing under his hand the true state of the case. This he did in considerable detail. He told how the people had been deprived of their arms, how he

had obeyed the royal warrant to demolish the meeting houses in Carrick and otherwise fulfilled the mandates of the Council, and how, notwithstanding, fifteen hundred men had been quartered upon Carrick, the most part on his estates. He admitted refusing to subscribe the Bond, declaring that it was contrary to law and could not be put in force. He had never attended or seen any conventicles in Carrick, and, yet, he complained, he had been actually denounced a rebel at the Market Cross of Ayr, and a warrant issued for apprehending his person. His conscience assured him, the Earl added, that he had never violated any of His Majesty's laws or commands.

The Council issued a special defence of their action in relation to the Earl of Cassillis. He had neglected to dissipate conventicles, he had permitted meeting houses to be built, and had thus contemned the royal proclamation. Therefore, it was craved by the Council, of the King, that he should be "sent down prisoner, to be tried and judged according to law." As for the demolition of the meeting houses, that, it was alleged, had been done by the people themselves. In the end the Earl succeeded in warding off any further proceedings, but he suffered so severely, none the less, in his finances, through the staunchness of his adherence to the Reformation cause, that he was compelled to part with his estates in Wigtownshire and with some of his Ayrshire lands as well.

Lord Bargany's trouble was of a more direct and threatening character. It did not come to a head until 1680, by which time the skirmish of Drumclog had been won by the Covenanters, and the battle of Bothwell Bridge had been lost. It was, *prima facie*, an attempt to identify him in sympathy, directly and forcibly expressed, with the Covenanters in their rebellion and appeal to arms; it was also, as Bargany had reason to believe, a plot, personally conceived, to deprive him of his lands, so that these might come into the possession of the plotters. Under strong suspicion of complicity

with the reformed cause, he was apprehended and sent a prisoner to the Bass. He asserted his innocence boldly and forcibly, and loudly demanded to be brought to trial. Charges were formulated against him that he had cursed the nobility because they would not identify themselves with the rising, that he had asserted his regret that Lord Lauderdale had not been assassinated, that he had been in correspondence with John Welsh, "that factious trumpet of sedition and treason," that he had persuaded various persons to join the rebel army, that he had kept certain notour rebels in his house, that he had disclaimed against the sacred order and function of Episcopacy, that he had sworn that he never would be at rest till the curates, "who were all but knaves and rogues," were rooted out, and that, when he heard of the murder of Archbishop Sharp, he had said "it was happy, for he was a great enemy to the cause of God and His people, the Kirk of Christ, or other like words." Bargany was brought before the Court more than once, but no attempt was made to prove the charges against him, and ultimately he was liberated, to appear when called upon, under heavy caution. As soon as he obtained his freedom, he set himself to discover who it was that had been responsible for the charges that had been made against him. He had reason to believe that Sir Charles Maitland and Sir John Dalrymple had suborned Cunninghame of Montgreenan and others to bear witness against him, upon a promise that they would receive a share of his confiscated estates; but, when he demanded a public investigation, the Duke of York interposed his authority to prevent it. That Bargany's sympathy was with the Covenanting cause there could be no question, for at the Revolution he demonstrated it in the most practical way, by raising a regiment of 600 foot, for the public service.

With the departure of the Highland Host from Ayrshire, the contest between the Government and the Covenanters went on as before. The conventicles were

resumed, a strong force of soldiery was sent to garrison Ayr, a reward of five hundred pounds sterling was offered to any person who should apprehend John Welsh, the Earl of Glencairn was appointed a special Commissioner for the county, and for Dumbartonshire as well, to put the law in force against the nonconformists, and the local judicatory was strengthened by appointing the Earl of Dumfries, the Earl of Eglinton, and the Earl of Cassillis, Sheriffs for Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick respectively, with Mr. James Cunninghame, Mr. John Montgomerie of Beith, and Blair of Blairston as their respective deputies. Considerable excitement was caused by the murder of two soldiers at Newmilns by five horsemen and about as many men on foot. The soldiers had been sent to quarter upon a countryman at Loudounhill. About two o'clock of an April morning they were awaked by a loud knocking at the door of the barn where they were sleeping, and one of them, thinking that it proceeded from a comrade who had gone into Newmilns, rose to open the door. He was speedily undeceived. "Come out, you damned rogues," said one of the party, and forthwith he was shot through the body and fell dead without speaking a word. The other soldier got up, and was proceeding to the assistance of his comrade, when he received a shot in the thigh, from which he died a few days later. The deed was never brought home to anybody, and it seems to have excited pretty general execration. The noblemen, gentlemen, and heritors of the shire, knowing how seriously it would be regarded by the authorities, made haste to wash their hands of it, and to express their horror and detestation of the murder, and they deputed the Earl of Loudoun, Lord Cochrane, and Sir John Cochrane, to make their position clear and to assure the Council that they would not be wanting, in their capacities and stations, in anything that became good Christians and loyal subjects.

On Saturday, May 3, of the same year, the Archbishop of St. Andrews, James Sharp, was assassinated on the

Magus Muir in Fife. There is probably no deed of violence in the history of Scotland the morale of which has been so much discussed as this. That Sharp was murdered cannot be gainsaid. The sterner sort of Covenanters, embittered by the persecution and by the rigours under which they had suffered, and believing that Sharp was largely the occasion of them, regarding him also as a traitor to their cause, and a renegade Presbyterian of the worst class, made no secret of their opinion that the deed was no more than an act of summary justice meted out to a persecutor, that it was justified to the last degree, and that the Archbishop met with nothing more than his deserts. The Government, however, took a very different view of the matter. They looked upon the killing as an act of foulest murder, and made every conceivable effort to bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice. Upon the heads of David Hackston of Rathillet, John Balfour of Kinloch, better known as Balfour of Burley, and their accomplices, they set a high price, and the soldiers scoured the country in all directions in the hope of bringing them to justice. The general feeling of moderate men of the period appears to have found expression in the lines of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, upon the death of Cardinal Beaton—

As for this cardinal, I grant,  
 He was the man we well might want,  
     God will forgive it soon ;  
 But of a truth, the sooth to say,  
 Altho' the loon be well away,  
     The fact was foully done.

It must be borne in mind that the nobility and gentry in their feudal struggles with one another had made wayside assassination too common, and too respectable, to be regarded in its true light, and that the reformed party had been worked up into a high state of frenzy and excitement by the sufferings they had undergone. They were at war with the Government ; and we have it upon the highest authority that oppression driveth a

wise man mad. The justification of the deed by the Covenanters is itself a striking proof of the mental condition to which the persecution had reduced them.

Sharp's death in May was followed the same month by the Declaration of Rutherglen, which was, in effect, an act of open rebellion, by the battle of Drumclog on June 1, in which Claverhouse and his dragoons were defeated by a strong body of Covenanters on the Lanarkshire march with Ayrshire, not far from Loudoun Hill, by serious disturbances in the city of Glasgow, occasioned by the presence of the Covenanting army, and by the complete rout of that body, eleven days after the victory of Drumclog, at Bothwell Bridge. These are events of general history, and we need not refer to them further than to say that Ayrshire was strongly represented in both of these conflicts, and that many individuals connected with the shire were doomed to suffer, either for having taken part in the engagements, or for their open sympathy with those who had fought in them for the reformed cause. The "rebels," whose names appear in a proclamation issued shortly after Bothwell, include Captain Paton of Meadowhead, Whiteford of Blairquhan, younger, John Welsh, Richard Cameron, Cunninghame of Montgreenan, John Cunninghame, sometime of Bedland, two sons of the Lord Cathcart, and Blair, Fenwick.

One of the immediate results of the "rebellion" was the scouring of the west country by soldiers in search of rebels. Claverhouse was specially active in this work. During his residence in Ayr, where he and his dragoons appear for a while to have taken charge of the town, he dismissed the Town Council, and appointed a Council which he thought would better answer the Royalist purpose, but which was not so profoundly loyal as to win anything like wholesale appreciation. Claverhouse had been elected a burgher. His brotherhood with the Freemen, however, does not appear to have been of a specially affectionate character; and the country as a whole felt the weight of a severe military regime. The

soldiers quartered free wherever they felt inclined. They were frequently in Kilmarnock, Dalmellington suffered much from the cost of their visitations, and the remote parish of Barr did not escape. Great numbers of people were cited to appear at a Circuit Court held in Ayr, as well, and were compelled to subscribe a bond in which they promised never to take up arms against the King; on doing so they were granted an indemnity for past misdemeanours. There were many indications indeed of a readiness on the part of the Government to forget the past, if only they could have the future assured. The cost of keeping the countryside in order was a severe strain upon an impoverished treasury, the work was greater than the soldiery could accomplish, and the sturdy, patient resistance of the Presbyterians boded ill for the ultimate success of the persecution. But with this readiness to conciliate there was also the determination of the authorities to support the episcopal regime and to have an end put to the conventicles; and in neither respect was any real progress made towards a better understanding. So the struggle went relentlessly forward.

Fresh fuel was added to the flame by the Declaration of Sanquhar, June 22, 1680. On that day a party of horsemen, including Richard Cameron, Michael, his brother, Thomas Douglas, and Donald Cargill, rode up the High Street of the old Nithsdale burgh, gathered round the Cross, and emitted a declaration in which they disowned Charles II. as a tyrant who had forfeited his right to the Crown, and declared war against him. They protested also against the Duke of York, "that professed Papist," succeeding to the monarchy, and, having affixed their declaration to the Cross, rode off again. There could be but the one response to such a challenge. A royal proclamation was at once issued denouncing the Camerons and their friends as traitors, and calling upon every loyal subject to lend his aid to have them apprehended, and parties of horsemen were sent to scour the country in the hope



of discovering where they were. It was no very difficult matter to find them. Many individual Covenanters were able to obtain shelter and to remain safe in the Ayrshire uplands, among the muirs and mosses, and in isolated caves and hidden recesses by the rivers Ayr and Lugar; but a band of upwards of a score of horsemen and about forty foot, could not go long undiscovered. It was in Ayrsmoss that they were found, a lonely, bleak stretch of muirland intersected by deep morasses—"a dreary moorland solitude," A. B. Todd calls it in his "Homes and Battlefields of the Covenanters," "without bush or brake, nothing but thousands of acres of black, heathery moor, and bleak benty hills, with here and there a few hidden holms lying in the loopy windings of the lonely river"—at a spot about four miles distant from Muirkirk, by Bruce of Earlshall in command of a troop of dragoons. The result of the conflict was a foregone conclusion. The soldiers outnumbered the peasants considerably, and were in every respect better armed and disciplined for the contest. Hackston of Rathillet, in command of the Covenanters, elected to fight on a green knoll, surrounded on three sides by the moss, and he drew up his men, the horsemen on the wings and the foot in the centre. The fight was gallantly contested by the fugitives, who are said to have slain twenty-six of the enemy on the field and wounded a considerable number more. Nine of the Covenanters were killed, Richard Cameron and his brother Michael, Captain John Fowler, John Gemmell, John Hamilton, Robert Dick, Thomas Watson, Robert Paterson, and James Gray; and two others died of their wounds. Hackston and two others were taken prisoners. The Laird of Rathillet was one of the men upon whom the Government were most anxious to lay their hands. He had been with Burley that day the Archbishop of St. Andrews had come by his death on the Magus Muir, and had taken part in the slaughter. In the skirmish he had been severely wounded. He was carried on horseback to Edinburgh, suffering great physical pain

all the way, brought before the Council, and sentenced to death. The manner of Hackston's execution casts a very lurid light on the code of the humanity that obtained at that period in Scotland. First his right hand was struck off, next his left; then he was hanged up, and lowered down while yet alive, and his bowels and heart cut out; and afterwards his head was cut off and his body quartered. No coffin was to be provided for him, and none of his friends was to dare to presume to be in mourning for him.

The passing of what was known as "the Test" in 1681 was provocative of much trouble. The test was an oath which was to be administered to all persons in public trust, and the provisions to which objection was most strenuously taken by the Covenanting party were the assertion of the King's headship in all matters, ecclesiastical as well as civil, and a condemnation of the Covenants. Declarations such as these struck at the very root of the reformed movement. The Earl of Cassillis pronounced strongly against the test, and was superseded in his jurisdiction in Carrick, at the instance of the Government, by the Laird of Ardmillan. General Dalziel was instructed to put the bond in force in Ayrshire, either personally, or through the medium of whatever officers he should think fit to send thither. He was to repair to the town of Ayr, "and there to meet with the Earl of Dumfries and the Commissioners of that shire, where the laird of Claverhouse is to be present with you and there to confer with them anent the security of that shire and to follow the rest of the instructions sent down." These were to bring the rebels to justice, to learn what submissions those had to make who were prepared to cast themselves upon the mercy of the King, to think particularly "upon some fit ways for seizing of any rebels, or vagrant preachers, skulking upon the confines of the shires next to Ayr and Galloway," to take care that the people went to their own parish churches, "to be careful to fall upon ways to know if any of the rebels' estates, and rents, and

moveables, be possessed by their wives, children, or friends, to their behoof, and to send in lists of any guilty of such contrivances," and generally to settle the peace of the shire.

The Laird of Ardmillan, who had a powerful coadjutor in Major White, quite justified the confidence the Government had reposed in him. For not hearing the curates, John Boyd, schoolmaster in Cowend, formerly an indweller in the shire of Ayr, had his house spoiled three times, was compelled to pay £40 Scots to Ardmillan, was sent a prisoner for three months to Edinburgh, was fined again in £100 Scots, and was reduced to great straits. The laird went through almost every parish, fining and imprisoning nonconformists, and taking them bound, under heavy penalties, to attend church regularly. In Dalmellington parish, where Major White held one of his Courts, which may be taken as a sample of the rest, the following persons were dealt with as stated because they had repaired to Straiton and heard one sermon there :—Roger Dunn, in Colmston, was fined an hundred merks ; John Edgar, in Dalharro, fifty merks ; Robert Dunn, in Lassinhill, an hundred merks ; Peter M'Whirter, in Waterside, an hundred merks, and some time after £100 Scots for his wife not keeping the church ; David M'Gill, in Drumgrange, fifty merks ; John Wright, in Barclayston, fifty merks ; James Dunn, in Bluewhat, an hundred merks ; Ronald Robb, twenty-five merks and four days' imprisonment ; and because John Cunningham, in Kierhill, failed to appear, his house was plundered and his family obliged to disperse. The Earl of Dumfries did similar work for Auchinleck and Cumnock. All whose children had been baptised by any other man than the incumbent were fined £50 Scots, and their cattle were driven off and their effects poided until they paid it. A man called Andrew Paton, in Auchinleck, had to pay £50 Scots because he had kept his child unbaptised for six weeks, though afterwards he had carried it to the curate. Henry Stopton,

Auchinleck, was fined £60 Scots because he refused to tell who baptised his child, and other parishioners were dealt with in a similarly drastic fashion. One of the results of this species of persecution was that a good many of the people hypocritically attended the ministry of the curates in order to escape the consequences of nonconformity. It was evident, according to Bishop Burnet, "that they did not mean to worship God, but only to stay some time within the church walls. Hence an impious and atheistical leaven began to corrupt many of the younger soil, which made great progress in that kingdom which before was the freest of it of any nation in Christendom." It can hardly have been a matter for surprise that this should have been so.

The sufferers included Patrick Warner, who was afterwards, and for more than twenty years after the Revolution, minister of Irvine, a man of conspicuous zeal in his work, and entirely sympathetic with the reformed faith. Mr. Warner had been for three years in the East, one of the chaplains of the East India Company, but his heart was with his friends at home, and he returned to Scotland, and allied himself both with Welsh and other field preachers and also with the indulged ministers. After the defeat of the Covenanters at Bothwell Bridge he went to Holland, from which he returned in 1681, and was married to a daughter of William Guthrie, one of the burning and shining lights of the Covenanting cause. While he was living quietly in Edinburgh his house was broken into, his books and manuscripts were taken away, his money and his clothes were stolen, and he was carried off a prisoner. Under examination he conducted himself very discreetly; none the less he was required to give his bond to preach no more unless he conformed, or remain in perpetual prison, or leave the kingdom under a penalty of five thousand merks that he would not return. The last alternative was clogged with the condition that during the ten days he was to be permitted to prepare for his banishment he would not preach, and as he would not

consent to this he was returned to prison. A fortnight later a well-timed jest secured his liberation. "What shall we do with him, Hugh?" said the Chancellor to the Clerk. "My lord," said the Clerk, "if you would take my advice, instead of taking him obliged not to preach, I would take his engagement to preach thrice a day while he stays in the kingdom, and so you will burst him, and be quit of his din." The matter was laughed over, and Mr. Warner was liberated without condition, after having endured more than three months' incarceration in the Tolbooth. A merchant in Carrick, Thomas Gray, who had nothing laid to his charge except nonconformity, was conveyed on horseback to Edinburgh, and, after eleven days' imprisonment, put on board a ship at Leith that was bound for Holland, and there compelled to fight in the wars in the Low Countries.

The struggle went on from one stage to another. To follow it in all its windings might be interesting as a study in the possibilities of how to reduce a countryside to subjection, on the one hand, and in the power of the Scottish people to resist a policy that they regarded as oppressive, and as a direct interference with their rights, on the other. But, historically, there is no necessity for retraversing the already familiar paths. Enough if we indicate the general trend of events, and supply a few out of many available illustrations of the determination of the State to enforce its authority, and of the people of Ayrshire to set it at naught.

One of the most effective of the servants of the Government in Ayrshire was Major Andrew White. He was endowed with powers of a very embracing character. He was instructed to pursue and to punish all persons guilty, or suspect to be guilty, of attending conventicles, of having their children baptised by the wandering ministers, of non-attendance upon the curates, and, in cases where they had crossed the march into the adjacent parishes of Renfrew, to follow and take them there. There was a surgeon in Kilmarnock, Jasper Tough, who

would not conform to the extent of hearing the incumbent preach. Thrice he was fined, he was imprisoned for fifteen days, he was bound over in a penalty of five hundred merks to appear when called, he was forced to abscond to escape the persecution, and when he returned he was again fined heavily and imprisoned. Fortunately for the surgeon, there were but few of his profession in the district, and he could not very well be done without, and in the end the authorities relaxed their severity towards him. When White came to a district, he called all the men and women to compear before him, and dealt with them more or less rigorously according to their offending. His soldiers quartered freely upon the people, they exacted considerable sums of money from them, and the terror of their presence resulted in many persons conforming who otherwise would never have thought of doing so. The Major had the support of a special body of Commissioners, John Boyle of Kelburne, Ardmillan, Colonel Buchan, and Captain Inglis, whose main business it was to enforce compliance with the Test. There was a special roll drawn up of the suspects in all parts of the country, and these were rigorously dealt with. The roll for Ayrshire is said to have consisted of three hundred sheets of paper. White succeeded in apprehending John Nisbet, of Loudoun parish, and, with a view to impressing the locality, received instructions to have him put on trial at Kilmarnock. Nisbet, who defended his position boldly, was hanged at Kilmarnock, April 4, 1683. Gabriel Cunningham, the indulged minister at Dunlop, was put to the horn and declared an outlaw, because he had been corresponding with a "notorious traitor," Cunningham of Bedland. When the time drew near for the holding of the Circuit Courts, the curates exerted themselves to have everything in readiness for proceeding against the malcontents. "Vast numbers of persons," we are told on the authority of Quintin Dick, a conspicuous reformer in Dalmellington parish, "were cited out of every parish in the shire, to give information

of any they knew had been at Bothwell, or Ayrsmoss, or any other rising, or such as had reset and conversed with them. Great numbers were given up. The persons delated, whether of the risings or the converse, though themselves had never been in arms, were charged before the Circuit to purge themselves from suspicion by taking the Test. All who compeared, and took it not, were imprisoned, and such as did not appear by sound of trumpet and tuck of drum, were denounced at the Cross at Ayr. Most part of such as were imprisoned gave bond and caution to appear at Edinburgh against such a day, and enter themselves. When they came there, they were either imprisoned or gave bond to appear at another day, and severals had a third bond to give before the expiration of the second, and before the expiration of that they were allowed to prove themselves 'alibi' (elsewhere) at the time of the rising, and to purge themselves from reset and converse by taking the Test. And such who did not so were either imprisoned or denounced rebels at the head burgh of the shire, and their names printed in a fugitive roll, so that all who conversed with them, or harboured them, might be as guilty as they."

Those who were charged with being in arms with the rebels at Bothwell included Matthew Campbell of Watershaugh, Robert Lockhart of Bankhead, James Brown, son to James Brown, portioner in Newmilns; John Paterson, portioner in Dandillan; Adam Reid, portioner in Mauchline; John Wilson, portioner in Lindsayhill; John Crawford of Forshaw, Adam Brown of Duncanziemuir, John Halbert, Colonel Burns, and James M'Neilly of Auchnairn. Lockhart and Brown alone appeared. They confessed having been at the rising, craved mercy, and offered to take the Test. They were sentenced to death, but there is no record of effect being given to the sentence, and it may be presumed that remissions were granted to them. The rest were denounced as traitors, and sentenced to be executed when apprehended. William Boswell, a young

gentleman of Auchinleck, who had out of curiosity stopped his horse to see a company of men being drawn up in order to march to Bothwell, was obliged to take the Test, and to pay a thousand pounds in order to preserve his lands from forfeiture. For nonconformity, James Dunn, of Benquhat, was seriously harassed in his family. Of his four sons, one, with a son-in-law, was killed by the soldiers, two were severely hunted, and the fourth, Quintin, fourteen years of age, was taken to Ayr, and consigned to the Tolbooth, without anything being laid to his charge, nor was he liberated until his father had paid down £240 Scots. Later, Quintin again got into trouble, was transported beyond seas, and sold as a slave.

The Town Council and parish records of Ayr afford abundant evidences of the troubles that during those years afflicted the royal burgh. Provost William Cunningham was complained against in consequence of his sympathy for the rebels. Shortly before the battle of Bothwell Bridge he had, according to the official information, "suffered a party of these rebels to enter the burgh, and take down the heads of several rebels affixed to the public places there, as also to publish their traitrous declaration at the Mercat Cross, and was so far from opposing these insolencies and attempts, and vindicating His Majesty's authority, that, on the contrary he did most undutifully and rebelliously countenance the said rebels, and allowed them the town drummer and officers to their publishing the said traitrous declaration; and not only so, but gave warrant for formal billets, or orders for quartering these rebels through the town, under his own hand, after that the Clerk of the Burgh had refused most dutifully so to do until he was commanded and had the said warrant." For these and other offences the Provost was fined in £200, absent members were denounced as rebels, and sentence upon others was delayed. The Council was declared also to have voided its right of free election, was discharged from sitting, and a new Council



nominated in its place. Vaxley Robson, who is supposed to have been one of the Cromwellian soldiers who remained behind at the Restoration, was made Provost ; Robert Hunter and William Brisbane, Bailies ; Robert Dalrymple, Dean of Guild ; Adam Hunter, Treasurer ; and Hew Muir, Andrew Crawford, Ralph Holland, Robert Leslie, Robert Fultoun, David Smith, John Kennedy, Alexander Anderson, James Campbell, John Caldwell (merchant), Thomas Douglas (carpenter), and James Chalmers (merchant), Councillors ; and these were instructed to take the Test and to carry on the work of the town. This usurpation of the rights of the municipality created great dissatisfaction. By way of protest, the two teachers of the Grammar School resigned office, and Bailie Robert Hunter and other members of Council left it in order to weaken its authority. The majority declined to take the Test. As for Hunter, his freedom was forfeited, and his burgess ticket " lacerated and riven " at the Market Cross after tuck of drum. He was heavily fined also, and ordered to be imprisoned until the fine was paid.

The years that followed were what came to be known as the " Killing Time." For the most part it was that period when the persecutors, as if realising that they had but a short time left, dotted the Ayrshire uplands and the town and village graveyards with martyrs' graves. One may learn something of the intensity of the bitterness that filled the breasts of the Covenanting party, as he reads the inscriptions on these crude monuments—monuments that were no doubt erected years after the Revolution of 1688, when the persecution was a memory, and when it was safe to speak out what the people felt regarding those who had been responsible for all their suffering. In Ayr, a man named Andrew M'Gill, from Ballantrae, was hanged for his adherence to the Covenants. John Fergushill and George Woodburn were shot at Midland, in Fenwick parish ; a similar fate befel Peter Gemmell, a young man of twenty-one years ; and James White,

caught at devotions at the house of Little Blackwood, similarly died the death of the martyr. It was alleged in White's case that his head was cut off, taken to Newmilns by a dragoon, and kicked about as if it had been a football. John Low was shot at Newmilns for having been one of a party who relieved "eight of Christ's prisoners" from the dragoons. John Smith was shot at Muirkirk "for his adherence to the Word of God and Scotland's Covenanted Work of Reformation;" and in the same parish, Claverhouse, with his own hand, shot John Brown of Priesthill, "the Ayrshire carrier," in presence of his wife. In Mauchline five men were executed "according to the then Wicked's Laws," flung into a hole under the gallows, and buried there. Near Barrhill lie John Murchie and Daniel M'Ilwrick, "murdered contrary to divine laws by bloody Drummond." And in Straiton, Thomas M'Haffie, who gave unsatisfactory answers to compromising questions, was shot by a party of dragoons. But as the persecution grew hotter, the sands began to run out in the glass of the persecutors. Charles II. had died, and James VII. had taken his place on the throne, and had redoubled the rigours of coercion; with the inevitable result that the nation rose upon and compelled him, who had thrown away three Kingdoms for a Mass, to flee the country. Here ended the persecution.

There does not seem to have been so much "rabbling of the curates" in Ayrshire as might have been expected; or is it that history is all but silent as to their treatment? On January 10, 1689, a band of Cameronians descended upon Ayr, and that day, being the Sabbath, there was neither sermon nor collection, "because," according to the Session records, "both ministers were discharged upon their peril to preach, either by themselves or others, by an armed party of rebellious hillmen." The curate of Sorn is said to have been frightened out of the manse, and out of the parish as well, by a stout yeoman armed with a scythe. "He was seen making his escape by the rear of the tenement," says the story, "and has

not since been heard of." The parson of Kilmarnock, "Master Robert Bell," had a sorry time of it. On his way home from Riccarton he was taken prisoner by an armed mob, who escorted him home to the manse. There they ate everything they could get. Conveying him to the Cross, they set him on the topmost step, and kindled a fire of faggots at his feet. Into the flames they thrust the Prayer Book, the leaders addressed the crowd in defence of their action, and followed up their oratory by tearing off the parson's cloak. Throughout it all, Mr. Bell seems to have behaved with considerable spirit, declaring that he was ready to die for his principles. In the end he was permitted to go home, but he realised that his time had come to depart, and so he bowed to circumstances.

It is little wonder that the curates were thus "rabbled." Eight and twenty years of conflict and of persecution had tried the countryside sorely, and the wonder is that, when the power was returned to their hands, the people did not use it more demonstratively than they did. But this abnegation was characteristic of them. They had won through by endurance, not by fight, by capacity to "thole" rather than by active resistance to the State; and when the Revolution gave them the upper hand, their triumphing was neither loud nor revengeful. None the less, it was many a long day before Ayrshire forgot the killing times; indeed, there is some reason to believe that, even in the matter of feeling, the county in some quarters has not forgotten it yet.

The records of the town of Ayr afford proof of how Ayrshire remembered the past, both in the rising of 1715 and in that of 1745. The people were determined to have none of the Stuarts, identified as they had been with the long years of the persecution. In both rebellions the authorities stood valiantly by the existing order; they raised, armed, and disciplined effective forces of volunteers; they watched the ports by night that no evil should befall; and, when the risings had

passed, they were foremost to express their loyalty to the Crown, and their gratitude to Heaven that the arm of the oppressor had been broken.

NOTE.—The share that Ayrshire men took in the Union of the Parliaments is dealt with in Volume II., in the records of the leading County Families.

## CHAPTER XIII

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### THE SOCIAL MARCH OF THE SHIRE THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

With the close of the feudal period, the incoming of the second Reformation, and the union of the Parliaments, Ayrshire left behind it the era of stress, of turmoil, of the major troubles. Henceforward the story is of progress in the ways of peaceful development, of energies diverted from frays and from fights for the faith to commercialism, to industrialism, to land reform, to the betterment of agricultural conditions, to the elevation of the people socially and morally.

But before leaving the earlier period, it will not be uninteresting to look at the ordinary conditions of social life, so far as these have been permitted to unfold themselves for our instruction. The times, as we have seen, were stormy and unsettled in the shire—in matters of Church as well as of State, and in the relation in which the great families stood to one another. When men's minds are taken up with questions involving a change of faith, and when men themselves are ranged in hostile camps under conditions that render the highway and the causeway alike dangerous ; when life is little thought of and crime goes unpunished ; and when everywhere there is a striving and a travailing towards specific ends that cannot be attained by peaceful means, there is neither much time nor much inclination for the softer

and more refining amenities of existence. And yet we should be taking but a partial and a one-sided view of the sixteenth century if we were to ignore the fact that life then had its charms and its attractions even as now, that literature had its votaries and poetry its devotees, and that men and women were prone to the cultivation of the beautiful as well as of the practical.

Even prior to the sixteenth century, Ayrshire had produced men famous in other walks than those of war, and racial rivalry, and statecraft. The fourteenth century had evolved Sir Hugh de Eglintoun, the "guid Sir Hew" referred to by Dunbar in his "Lament for the Makars," and believed to have been one of the early Scottish poets, although none of his work remains to testify to his powers of song. James Kennedy, archbishop, prelate, and statesman, who was the founder of the College of St. Salvator, St. Andrews, was born at Dunure in 1405. Between forty and fifty years later, Carrick produced Walter Kennedy, styled by Douglas "the greit Kennedy," still known by his "Flying" with Dunbar and two short poems; and about the same period there was born, also in the southern division of the county, a poet called Quintin Shaw, the author of an "Advyce to a Courtier," referred to by Dunbar in his "Lament of the Makars"—

And he has now taen, last of aw,  
Gude, gentle Stobo and Quintin Shaw.

From Cumnock had come Gavin Dunbar, Bishop of Aberdeen, Privy Councillor to James IV., the builder of a bridge across the Dee, and the author of a Treatise against the Reformers. And there were other sons of the shire who, in their day and generation, had walked worthily in ways that were not those of the sword or of faction.

The sixteenth century also produced a few outstanding men of the same pacific type, as well as a multitude of those who threw themselves into the struggle that ended with the Reformation from Popery.

Ladyland, Kilbirnie, gave birth to Hew Barclay, a minor poet as well as a "Popish plotter." Hazlehead, Beith, was the home of Alexander Montgomerie, the poet, the author of "The Cherrie and the Slae," "The Flyting between Montgomerie and Polwart," and "The Minde's Melodie." His fame rests solely on "The Cherrie and the Slae," which leapt at once into popularity. Its earlier portion is a love piece, its later a moral poem, the whole characterised by freshness, descriptive power, and great mastery of the intricacies of rhyme. Another poet, of the minor order, was Marc Alexander Boyd of Pinkill, who combined with poesy, learning, gambling, and soldiering; and the same century was responsible for Zachary Boyd, also of Pinkill, the author of "The Last Battel of the Soul," Rector of Glasgow University, and the translator of the Scriptures into metre. The times, however, were out of joint for men who were affected towards literature, and, leaving the Reformers out of account, it must be recognised that they were few and far between. It is grateful, nevertheless, to meet them, lonely as they are, in the ways that were almost wholly given up to violence and strife.

Early in the seventeenth century, Timothy Pont, a born topographer, the son of the Provost of Trinity College, Edinburgh, and himself minister of the parish of Dunnet, Caithness-shire, made a careful survey of the district of Cunningham, and, although the notes that he left behind him are brief, they have nevertheless a value of their own that is wholly exceptional in enabling us to catch glimpses of the life led by the gentry, and by the people, of North Ayrshire. Then, as now—indeed, in all probability, much more then than now—the rivers swarmed with fish. The brooks and burns flowing nigh to the Renfrewshire march abounded with "divers sorts of fishes," the "trouts" being the best, and their environs were so rich in waterfowl, in partridges, and in hares, that they afforded excellent sport for the falconer. Cunningham had even then a high reputation for butter,

particularly the parishes of Dunlop and Stewarton ; so much so that the division " in effect served a great part of the kingdom, one acre of ground here yielding more butter than three acres of ground in any of the next adjacent counties." Down by the coast the district was " marvellously well beautified with goodly dwellings and edifices of noble and gentlemen, and the dwellings of the yeomanry were very thick powdered over the face of the country, all for the most part well and commodiously planted and garnished." So thickly was the district about Stewarton and along the banks of the Irvine populated for the space of three or four miles " that well travelled men in divers parts of Europe (affirm) that they have seen walled cities not so well or near planted with houses so near each other as they are here, wherethrough it is so populous that, at the ringing of a bell in the night a few hours, there have been seen convene 3000 able men, well-horsed and armed."

There was but one Presbytery in the division, and it met at Irvine weekly to exercise jurisdiction ; and the civil jurisdiction was that of a bailiary, the Bailie being the Earl of Eglinton. Irvine had three fairs yearly, one in August, another in September, and a third in October ; every Saturday Kilmarnock had " a great market ;" Beith had a weekly market, in addition to a fair in August ; and there were yearly fairs in Loudoun, Kilmaurs, Dunlop, Stewarton, Kilwinning, Kilbirnie, Dalry, West Kilbride, and Largs.

The houses of the gentry were not by any means without their special beauties and attractions. Blair Castle was well-beautified with gardens, orchards, and " partiery " on the banks of Garnock. Broadstane was a pretty dwelling with " a pretty prospect to the beholder." Craufurdland was a fair building, well planted. Eglinton was a fair and strong, ancient house, seated and watered by the river Lugton, well planted and beautified with gardens, orchards, and parks. Fairlie Castle also was rich in its orchards and gardens, and Hazlehead was well wooded and " commodiously



beautified." The speciality of Kelburne Castle was its very beautiful orchards and gardens, in one of which there was a "spacious room adorned with a crystalline fountain cut all out of the living rock." There was a fair park at the house of Kilmaurs, Kilmarnock Castle was almost environed with gardens, orchards, and a park, and there were many other houses that answered to the same description. Ardrossan had a goodly parochial church; Dunlop Kirk was pleasantly seated at the confluence of three small brooks; the church of Kilwinning was fair and stately, "after the model of that of Glasgow, with a fair steeple of seven score foot of height, yet standing when I myself did see it;" and Kilmarnock had a pretty church, "from which the village, castle, and lordship takes its name." There is, in short, abundant evidence that, notwithstanding the long feuds through which North Ayrshire, in common with the rest of the country had just come, the district was by no means lacking in the comforts and in the luxuries of existence, that the people as a whole were in circumstances of comparative comfort, that the country gentlemen were alive to all the advantages that forestry could give them, and that they had beautified and enriched their dwelling-houses by the careful cultivation of all the fruits that the climate could bring to maturity. Then, as now, wealth was tuned to account in every way that could add to the pleasure of country life. There was sport for the huntsman, for the falconer, for the fisher. The "trouts" and the "salmonds" were abundant. It is questionable whether the royal fish was appreciated as it is in these days of its comparative scarcity, for at a very much later period than that with which we are dealing—as late, indeed, as the middle of the eighteenth century—the poorhouse authorities in the town of Ayr could afford to feed their paupers on "salmond" twice a week. Between the civil authorities on the one hand, and the Kirk on the other, after the Reformation had placed Presbytery on a recognised footing—a position, none the less, com-

paratively insecure, and from which it was destined to be driven—the morals of the people were well regarded.

Whatever faults Mr. William Abercrombie, the curate of Maybole, had, he had at least one feature in his character that redeems him in the eyes of the historian. The people did not like him, and it is said that they made it very hot for him. But while he was in the ancient capital of Carrick, he kept his eyes open, and he placed on record his impressions of the southern bailiary. Naturally he took rather an unfavourable view of the people. "Their ease and plenty," he says, "disposes them to be unruly and turbulent, so that the servants are insolent, and all of them but uneasy subjects, so that in the late times Carrick has been a sanctuary, or rather a nursery, of rogues, bearing arms against authority upon pretext of religion." Carrick produced so much grain that it not only supplied all its own inhabitants but had to spare for neighbouring places, "so that from hence are yearly transplanted considerable quantities of meal, both to Galloway and the fishing in Clyde." It was so rich in cattle that it sent yearly great droves into England, and there was, besides, abundance of hens, capons, ducks, geese, and turkeys, at easy rates. In their season, the solan geese, brought in from Ailsa Craig, were a favourite article of food. The sea supplied fish in plenty, the lochs and rivers pike, trout, and eels. The men were "generally tall and stately, well-limbed and comely; and women are nowhere better complexioned." They were a healthful sort of people, lived to a good age, and loved ease.

Mr. Abercrombie deals in succession with the houses of the gentry. Of Greenan Castle he thought little—it was too open to the cold and moisture arising from the sea to be a desirable habitation. Newark was a good old castle with its ground enclosed for a park and a well planted orchard. "The Cove," as the tower that preceded Culzean Castle was called, had its gardens and orchards, with excellent terraces, and the walls

were laden with peaches, apricots, cherries, and other fruit. Ardmillan extorted the curate's admiration, which may possibly have been due to the fact that the laird was well affected towards Prelacy, and was one of those who were conspicuous in haling the nonconformists to prison and to judgment. "It looks like a palace," he writes, "built round courtways; surrounded with a deep broad ditch, and strengthened with a movable bridge at the entry; able to secure the owner from the sudden commotions and assaults of the wild people of this corner, which on these occasions are set upon robbery and depredations; and to enable him the better to endure a siege he is well provided of well in his court; and a handmill in the house for grinding meal or malt, with which two lusty fellows set a-work will grind a firloft in the space of an hour. It is well surrounded with good cornfields and meadow, with large parks for pasturage and excellent good gardens and orchards that yield plenty of apples and pears, and one more particularly that for its precocity is called the early pear of Ardmillan, and of a very pleasant taste."

The chief house on the water of Doon was Cassillis, the principal mansion of the Kennedys. One of the peculiarities of Cassillis was that it had "a fine stone stair, turning about a hollow casement, in which are many opens, from the bottom to the top, that by putting a lamp into it gives light to the whole turn of stairs." In the river there were cruives for the taking of salmon, there were ponds for other fish, the gardens were large and fenced about with exceedingly high stone walls, and the fruits grown were similar to those of Ardmillan. Auchendrane had its orchards and gardens, its parks and cornfields; so also had Blairston (Low Auchendrane) and Bridgend, close by the "exceeding wide" bridge of Doon, the only bridge in these days on all the river. Blairquhan Castle was great, "the fine building and huge bulk a plain demonstration of the sometime greatness of the family;" well provided with wood, covered, with planting of "barren" timber, and

surrounded with large orchards. Cloncaird had the familiar gardens and orchards ; so also had Kirkmichael, " as desirable a dwelling as in all the country," where first in Carrick apricots and peaches were planted. The leading feature of Kilkerran was its woods, so extensive that they looked like a forest, and then came Drummochrin, " a small interest, but a most lovely thing, being every way commodious and convenient for living easily that it is, as it were, an abridgement of this country, having all the accommodations that are dispersed through it all compressed within its short and small bounds. It hath gardens, orchards, wood, water ; all the fishes that swim in rivers ; all sorts of cattle, sheep, cows, swine, and goat ; all sorts of fowl wild and tame ; all manner of stone for building, freestone and limestone ; coal, moor, moss, meadow, and marle ; a wauk-mill and a corn mill ; and all manner of artisans and tradesmen within its bounds ; and yet the revenue not above £100 per annum." " The best house of all that country " was Dalquharran, with its great woods, and its mighty oaks. The old castle of Bargany was to Pont " an argument of the sometime greatness of the family, being a huge, great, lofty tower in the centre of a quadrangular court that had on each of three corners fine well built towers of freestone four storeys high." The new house was " mighty commodious " and had every modern contrivance and accommodation; pretty gardens besides, and orchards. Lower down the river were Killochan, the mansion house of the Cathcarts of Carletoun, and Trochrig, a residence of the Boyds ; and so on to Girvan, with its strange tower of Ballochtool, " a monument of the builder's folly, being raised five storey high, without staircase, and no more but one room to each storey ;" with neither garden, nor orchard, nor planting, but standing in the midst of its rich cornfields.

There were many big houses on the Stinchar worthy to rank with those of Doon and Girvan. These the narrator dismisses summarily, with the exception of

Knockdolian, the seat of the M'Kubbens, "about which is shewn what art and industry can do to render a place, to which Nature has not been very favourable, very pleasant, by planting of gardens, orchards, walks, and rows of trees, that surprise the beholder with things so far beyond expectation in a country so wild and mountainous." The only town in Carrick with a corporate municipality of its own was Maybole. At a period earlier than that of Mr. Abercrombie, the High Street "had many pretty buildings belonging to the several gentry of the country, who were wont to resort here in winter and divert themselves in converse together at their own houses; but," adds the curate, "many of these houses of the gentry being decayed and ruined, it has lost much of its ancient beauty." On the Green the youths in former days had played at football, but that game had apparently for the time-being gone out of fashion, and had given way to "gowff and byasse bowls." The residents were prone to gardens and pretty orchards.

The picture thus briefly outlined is very far indeed from being an unattractive one. We know that Carrick, at the period when Abercrombie was in Maybole, and the Presbyterian minister was "outed," was seething with trouble. But, as a rule, that did not much disturb the gentry, if we except the chief of them all, the Earl of Cassillis, and the Lord Bargany. The bailiary, from the Doon to the Stinchar, and from Straiton to the sea, was dotted with castles and pleasant dwellings, scenes and centres of sociality, and sport, and of discourse upon the upheavals in Church and State. The gentry had begun to sigh for greater winter glories and attractions than those of Maybole, or even of Ayr. Fashion was calling them to Edinburgh, then humming with higher national life; but in Spring and until the shortening of the Autumn days Ayrshire everywhere had a resident landlordism; and if the county as a whole was waiting the advent of the agricultural reclamer, and was rude, and without order, it was none the less Home to the people of every degree.

It was in 1579 that Ayrshire, in common with the rest of Scotland, enjoyed the advantages incidental to the first Poor Law Act. These were the days when the vagabonds, and the strong and idle beggars, had a sorry time of it. The magistrates were empowered to commit them to prison, or to put them in the stocks and irons, to have them scourged, and even to have them burnt through the ear with a hot iron. The offender who had left his master's service within the year, and against his master's will, was similarly liable to scourging and burning; and, "after sixty days, should he be found again in his idle and vagabond trade of life, he shall suffer the pains of death as a thief." The strolling players, the jugglers, the gipsies, the fortune tellers, the minstrels, songsters, talebearers, the wandering shipmen and mariners, were in the same category with the vagabonds and the strong beggars. Save under special circumstances, the poor were confined in their mendicancy to their own parishes; if they refused to return to them when they were found wandering, they were liable, for a first offence, to be scourged and burned through the ears, and for the second to be treated as thieves and put to death. Beggars' children, between five and fourteen, could be taken from their parents and "given to any person of honest estate," to be kept by them till the male child was twenty-five and the female eighteen, and, in the event of their running away, the punishment ran from scourging and burning to death, according to the degree of offending. Prisoners were literally kept on bread and water, and the allowance of the former was no more than one pound of "ait breade" a day. In spite of these severities, vagrancy went on increasing, till the whole country was overrun with beggars, sorners, and other vagabonds, who lived more by plunder than anything else. Comparatively scant heed was paid in many directions to the liberty of the subject. For most practical purposes the servant was little better than a bond slave to his master during the term which he had covenanted to serve him. The

feudal servitude of the miner approximated to absolute slavery in many instances. Severe physical punishment awaited him in the event of his running away ; and, as we have seen, a man might even go to the scaffold if he persisted in neglecting the obligations of service under which he had either voluntarily or involuntarily come. There was a great gulf fixed between the well-to-do and the poor. It was for the former to command and the latter to obey. And yet, as in the provisions of the first Poor Law Act, there was even then a recognition of the duty that the rich owed to the poor, even if it was only the duty of maintaining them against starvation and controlling their actions and their goings.

Still, as human nature will have it, the people adapted themselves wonderfully to their environment, and, no doubt, rich and poor alike enjoyed themselves after their own fashion and lived happily enough. For us who have followed after, it appears to be almost an impossibility that life could have had the charms that are inseparable from a comparatively well-ordered condition of society, but, as has been said, men never miss what they never had, and therefore it is not by any means a baseless assumption that, in those days when there was division in the Kirk and in the State, when the blood feud was raging, and when the raiders were abroad harrying and rieving, the folks were happy enough, according to their lights. They stood in the lot in which Heaven had placed them, and they had learned therewithal to be content.

## CHAPTER XIV

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### THE SOCIAL MARCH OF THE SHIRE A CENTURY BACK

If there is considerable difficulty in obtaining a bird's-eye view of the social conditions of the Ayrshire of two or three hundred years ago, there is none whatever in seeing, through the eyes of the contemporary observers, how the fathers lived in the end of the seventeenth and the opening years of the eighteenth centuries. For not only have we that invaluable record, "The Statistical Account of Scotland," in which every parish is treated by its parish minister—save in a few exceptional cases where the kirk was vacant and the chronicle was given to some well known citizen to write—but also the official reports of such shrewd and painstaking observers as Colonel Fullarton of Fullarton, and Mr. William Aiton, who, though in his "General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr" he describes himself as "writer, Strathaven," was a native of and had a close and intimate personal knowledge of the shire. In dealing with social life, a great deal naturally depends on the point of view of the observer. Colonel Fullarton was a man of altogether exceptional capacity. He had some of the prejudices of his class, and more than a latent fear of the subversive principles which, springing from the French Revolution, threatened to overturn the



established order, but he was none the less keenly alive to the weaknesses that engrafted themselves on the social economy of the period, and there is every evidence in his report to the Board of Agriculture (1793) of an earnest desire to be scrupulously just and fair.

Colonel Fullarton deserves to take high place among the sons of Ayrshire. Born in 1754, he had all the advantages of training and education that the times afforded. From the beginning he was ardent in the acquisition of knowledge. His tutor, during his Continental tour, was Patrick Brydone, a man of eminent literary attainments. Burns associated the two in the verse—

Brydone's brave Ward I well could say  
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye ;  
Who called on Fame, low standing bye,  
    To hand him on,  
Where many a patriot named on high,  
    And hero shone.

In 1775, when but one-and-twenty years of age, he was principal Secretary to the British Embassy at the Court of France. Five years later he organised an expedition to fight against the Spaniards in Mexico, but troubles ensued in Africa and in India, and the expedition was despatched to take part in an attack on the Cape of Good Hope. That also miscarried, the Government concluding that it would be improper to use the force in the enterprise, and Colonel Fullarton proceeded to India, where he covered himself with laurels. Returning home, he was chosen to represent the county in Parliament, but his career in the Legislature was interrupted by his being again sent to India, where he commanded the Southern Army on the Coromandel Coast, and where, in 1783 and 1784, he fought with an energy and a brilliancy of execution, and a success, that stamped him a soldier of high capacity. Again, on his homecoming, he was sent to Parliament as member for the county. When the French War broke out in 1793, he raised the 23rd Light Dragoons, "Fullarton's

Light Horse," and also the 101st Regiment of Infantry. In 1801 he was appointed Governor of Trinidad, a position he held till 1803, when he came home again and resumed his activities in his native county and country, finally dying in London in 1808 at the comparatively early age of fifty-four. Needless to say, the report of a man of this experience of the world and breadth of vision, must be regarded as of altogether exceptional value.

Forty years before Colonel Fullarton wrote of Ayrshire, there was hardly a practicable road in the county, the farmhouses were hovels, the cattle starving, the people wretched. Almost no butcher meat was used, excepting what almost every family killed and salted for itself; the staple diet consisted of porridge, oatmeal cakes, milk, and cheese. In Ayr, which had a population of over 5000, not more than fifty head of cattle were killed in the year. There were few manufactories in the county. A succession of bad seasons reduced the common people to absolute want, and hundreds of families had to fly for subsistence to the north of Ireland. In these seasons of misery the poor people "were not infrequently obliged to subsist by bleeding their cattle and mixing the blood so procured with what oatmeal they could procure." But, when things were at their worst, they began to brighten. With the turn of the century, Ayrshire woke up. Minerals began to be developed, mills were started, the natural resources of the soil were developed in every direction, the Ayrshire Bank found the proprietors in ready money, enterprising landlords began to drain their lands, to plant them with belts and plantations of trees, to teach the farmers the value of system and of feeding, as well as depleting, the soil. In the new departure the Earl of Eglinton led the way, and other landed proprietors, notably Mr. Fairlie of Fairlie, Mr. Oswald of Auchincruive, the Earl of Dumfries, Sir Adam Fergusson, Bart., of Kilkerran, Mr. Steele of Gadgirth, Mr. Smith of Drongan, and Mr. Campbell of Newfield,

followed, with the result that by the time Colonel Fullarton was reporting on the agricultural conditions, the county was well abreast of the rest of Scotland. The relations between landlords and their tenants were, as a rule, harmonious. But not always. "In the vicinity of some towns, where the notions of manufacturers predominate, the farmers," according to Colonel Fullarton, "have been so far perverted as to form Associations binding themselves under severe penalties never to offer any mark of civility to any person in the character of a gentleman. The consequences are that they become boorish and brutal to every individual of the human species, and savage to the brute creation. These outrageous manners are considerably increased by the harshness and austerity which characterise different sectaries who abound in the county." The gallant Colonel looked with an equally severe eye on the movement for political reform. "The plough and the spade," he says, "have never threatened any peril for the country." Not so with those allied to the manufacturing interests. And "when persons of this description, joined by others of distempered minds, insult society with permanent sittings, bulletins, secret committees, sections, municipalities, conventions, and tocsins, to which the guillotine in due season would have been added, it is time for the sounder part of the community to form a phalanx round the throne in defence of the constitution." The improvements in commercial conditions had not been accompanied by a corresponding improvement in manners. "On the contrary, the cordial manners of the former generation are wearing fast away, and in their place is substituting a regardless, brutal, and democratic harshness of demeanour." Smuggling was prevalent, with a consequent pernicious custom of drinking spirits, while the ill-regulated distilleries were destructive to the health and dispositions of the people. The system of education had largely broken down. Then, as earlier and since, the poorest persons would frequently starve themselves to give

education to their children, but the lack of adequate means for the remuneration of the schoolmasters had resulted in no small measure in the appointment of a class of men who were unworthy of their position, though no doubt quite as good as could have been expected in consideration of the wretched pittance on which many of them had to exist—a pittance no greater than that of the labourer, and much less than that of the relatively well paid cotton or carpet weaver. It was frequently remarked, Colonel Fullarton tells us, that the dominies were neglectful of the manners of the rising generation, “rather encouraging them in rough and boorish incivilities than in those acts of reciprocal kindness and urbanity which afford the best and most pleasing characteristic of any people.”

The gallant Colonel was no less faithful in dealing with the men of his own class. Many of the county families were of ancient standing, but the majority of them had been compelled to sell their property, “embarrassed by the reigning spirit of conviviality and speculation, disproportioned to their income. Indeed,” he continues, “considering the expense and inattention to affairs connected with the situation of a country gentleman, and natural tendency of counting upon imaginary rentals long before they became real ones, including too the prevailing course of entertaining, drinking, hunting, electioneering, show, equipage, and the concomitant attacks upon the purse, and misapplication of the time, it appears surprising that any property unentailed should remain above two generations in the same succession.” To men of this class the starting of the Ayrshire Bank, Douglas, Heron, and Co., was a godsend. They mortgaged their lands for ready money. They executed improvements without regard to any early return from them. They acted as if a gold mine had been opened in the county town. And when the crash came, when the Bank “broke” in a disaster that shook the whole west country and involved the large majority of the shareholders in ruin, and they were

compelled to meet the advances that had been made to them, they had no alternative to selling their estates. It is surely an ill wind that blows good to nobody. The failure of Douglas, Heron, and Co. was ill, almost beyond conception, and yet it was not without its attendant compensations. It had enabled the impoverished landlords to improve their estates, and the improvements remained ; and in compelling them to sell out, it brought into Ayrshire a new class of landowners, some of whom had amassed money abroad, some of whom had made it in commerce at home, who were able to live up to the responsibilities upon which they had entered. Under the disaster itself Ayrshire had staggered, but it was not long in recovering, and in resuming the march of improvement from which straight course it has never again deviated.

As we have seen, the Ayrshire of the middle of the eighteenth century was in many ways a wretched and a backward place. By the end of the century an enormous change had come over its general appearance. In 1793 there was issued a work entitled "Observations made in a Journey through the Western Counties of Scotland in the Autumn of 1792," by Robert Heron. Heron had come up from the south through Carrick, and had reached Ayr ; and, after he had recalled the rise and fall of the Ayrshire Bank, he proceeded to summarise what had been accomplished for the county mainly through its instrumentality. "Clumps of wood were scattered over the knolls, belts were stretched along the edges of the lawns, the water was taught here to stagnate into pools, and there to wind with an artificially meandering course. The strata of limestone were quarried and burnt ; the beds of coals were opened up ; skilful farmers were invited hither from Berwickshire and from England. Kyle and Cunningham were opened up by roads in every direction, and the middle and the northern districts of Ayrshire soon came to exhibit nothing but one continued series of towns, villages, ornamented farmhouses, villas, and palaces, divided by

fields upon which taste had superinduced almost every suitable ornament, while enlightened industry had called forth all their fertility. The progress and improvement of the town of Ayr had been favourably affected by the same causes which had been so beneficial to the circumjacent country. However celebrated by Ptolemy under the appellation of Vidogara ; however flourishing in commerce under the reign of our Jameses ; however benefited in the more advantageous direction given to the industry of the inhabitants by the soldiers settled there by Cromwell ; however improved by the Acts of Parliament procured in its favour between the periods of the Revolution and the Union, the city of Ayr may now look back on every former period of its history as less splendid than its present condition." In Newton-upon-Ayr, Heron was struck by the new houses, the neat-sashed windows, the clean dressed women, and the cheerful air of manufacturing industry. The country beyond on the road to Irvine was rich in cultivation, the roads were excellent, the farmhouses and the cottages were neat of aspect, the villas were numerous and elegant, and trees were scattered profusely over the country in every variety of arrangement. And so on to the march with Renfrewshire—in every direction there were indications of taste, of prosperity, and of comfort. Surely an enormous change for the better to have come over the shire since the days of half-a-century earlier, when depression and want were everywhere visible, and the great body of the inhabitants had enough ado to eke out a miserable existence.

Mr. Aiton's contribution, issued in 1811, was after the same character as that of Colonel Fullarton. It was a report to the Board of Agriculture. Colonel Fullarton had written largely from the point of view of a country gentleman ; Mr. Aiton wrote from the standpoint of a professional man of the middle class. He also, however, was none the less a shrewd observer, and his report casts many a suggestive and interesting sidelight upon

the social conditions. With these alone we need concern ourselves. Taking the farmers as a class, their leading features seemed to Mr. Aiton to be "industry, enterprise, liberality of sentiment, generosity, sobriety, loyalty to their Sovereign, obedience to the laws, and a due sense of religion." Many of them, however, were much hurt in their principles "by trafficking with low dealers in horses, cattle, calves, and country produce, who are generally knavish and deceitful to the utmost of their capacity." Indeed, many such farmers did not scruple to use deceit and cunning in order to come at money. "And the cant words, or proverbs, which they use, show that they consider it as no way improper to take undue advantage in their bargains—such as 'All is our own we can make;' 'He meant to cheat me, and I have cheated him;' 'The biter is bitten;' 'Let diamond cut diamond;' 'There's no friendship in trade;' 'Every man for himself.' To take advantage of the laird, or his factor, or other superiors," he adds, "is highly gratifying, not only to those who may have the address to do so, but to all their neighbours. They call that 'cheating the gentry,' which they reckon exceedingly clever." Added to that, among the lower class farmers, not only were their houses mean and dirty, but they themselves were "seldom so clean in the skin as was necessary for their health and comfort." They performed more or less regular ablutions upon their hands and faces, "but the other parts of their bodies were often covered with scales of dust, which greatly obstruct perspiration and bring on diseases which proceed from such obstructions."

Mr. Aiton lived at a time when theological strife was keen. The pulpits, as he says, rang with declamations against Arians, Socinians, Arminians, Pelagians, Unitarians, the Whore of Babylon, and the Man of Sin. It was the high day of the "inexplicable quibble." With these things he had no sympathy whatever; neither with Dissent in any shape or form. The M'Millanites, or Cameronians, he says, "pretend that it

is unlawful to pay taxes to any but a Covenanted King, but when those that are charged on them become due, they satisfy their consciences and their preachers by paying them, not from choice but as a burden imposed contrary to their wish." The Burghers and Anti-Burghers were "generally too much disposed to pry into and expose the conduct of their own members, and they employed a number of officious carls, as elders, to search after scandal among the people. They still kept up the ridiculous farce of public repentance for breaches of the seventh commandment." The Relief he looked upon as a Church that had rejected all standards of principle, without creeds or standards, without drilling or discipline, except the stool of repentance for acts of incontinency. Oratory in the preacher, and a disposition in the members to contribute to the support of the Gospel are the leading qualifications required. Seat rents cover a multitude of sins, and is the *sine qua non* of membership. One expects eldership there, which he had long sought for in vain in the parish church, and another wants baptism to his child, which he could get nowhere else. Some have quarrelled with their minister about pecuniary matters, some pretend to superior sanctity, others wish to bring more customers to their shop. Some follow the multitude, others their sweetheart, and many cannot tell how they are gathered together." This, in its turn, had a sort of reciprocity effect on some of the parish church ministers, who courted popularity, and were even fierce in their zeal. But, adds Mr. Aiton, these evil results were wearing away; and even the Relief Church, for which apparently he had the least regard of all, "with all their latitude of principle, and sails set to every wind, had difficulty in keeping up three congregations in the county." The Buchanites of Irvine, who followed one of the most remarkable religious impostors of any age—the Woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, and who made at least two separate attempts to ascend to heaven—he characterises as "the top swarm of Relief."



For an official reporter on the agriculture of the county, Mr. Aiton allows himself certainly no inconsiderable latitude. Neither need we take him too seriously in his attacks upon the Dissenters of the beginning of the nineteenth century; and the less so that there is abundance of proof, even in the records of the parish ministers themselves, that Ayrshire was by no means so given up to religious disputation and eccentricity as he represents it to have been. Here, however, is a picture of the ordinary Sunday service, which is probably not very far out of the true perspective:—"The people seldom take their seats in the church in proper time and in a composed and becoming manner. When the weather permits they stand in groups round the church, retailing the news of the day, or conversing on their ordinary business, till the minister is about to enter the pulpit, when they rush into the church in a tumultuous and irregular manner, and sometimes a large portion of the congregation enter the church after the service is begun. The doors are allowed to remain open, and dogs, cats, hens, chickens, etc., enter and disturb the worship. It is not uncommon for the dogs to fight several battles among themselves in the church, in the time of divine service, and there are instances of the owners of these dogs coming to blows in the church in support of favourite tykes. The people are frequently, during the service, and even during the more solemn parts of it, gazing round them at the audience, or making signs or gestures to their friends. If any person enters or retires during the service, every eye in the church is fixed on them, and nothing from the pulpit is attended to for a time. As the Psalm at the close of service draws near a period, and during the most solemn act of pronouncing the blessing, the congregation are employed in putting up their Bibles and hymn books, collecting their staves, hats, etc., and the females in tucking up their coats and preparing for the road. No attention is paid to that most solemn part of the service. The people are throng while the minister is pronouncing

it, and whenever it is finished, the congregation start as if it were for a race." Mr. Aiton is equally severe on the custom that obtained of the elders and other religious persons visiting the sick, singing Psalms and praying over them. They came to the bedside of the patient in relays, he avers, often with disastrous results to the sick man, and, in the case of infectious troubles, with the still worse result of spreading the epidemic over the parish.

Turning to labour and its conditions, Mr. Aiton gives a very interesting table of the wages paid in Ayrshire during the course of the preceding century. We subjoin the figures for 1720, 1760, and 1809:—

	1720.	1760.	1809.
Ploughman, per half year	£1 0 0	£2 10 0	£12 0 0
Ploughman, of inferior merit .. .. .	0 10 0	1 10 0	8 0 0
Best dairy or servant maid .. .. .	0 8 4	1 0 0	5 0 0
Inferior dairy or servant maid .. .. .	0 6 0	0 16 0	3 0 0
Herd .. .. .	0 4 0	0 12 0	2 0 0
Tailor, per day, with food	0 0 2	0 0 4	0 2 6
Masons and wrights, etc.	0 0 4	0 1 0	0 3 0
Labourers, per day, without food—men .. .. .	0 0 3	0 0 8	0 2 6
Labourers, per day, without food—women .. .. .	0 0 2	0 0 6	0 1 6
Carpenter, shoemaker, with food, per day .. .. .	0 0 2½	0 0 7	0 2 0

For day labourers the hours were from six in the morning till six at night, with an hour off for breakfast and another for dinner. In the case of servants employed by the half-year, necessity was their mistress; "they rise at any hour or sit up all night." In character they industrialists stood high; indeed, in Mr. Aiton's opinion, "there could not be found a body of farm servants and country labourers more hardy and robust, or who

worked with greater diligence, activity, and conscientiousness than those in the county of Ayr."

Ayrshire had in the early years of the nineteenth century not less than two hundred fairs or races. These were attended by about 1000 persons each, at a cost in money to the county of not less, in Mr. Aiton's opinion, than £50,000. Nor was the loss of the money the only, or even the greatest drawback. They were scenes of riot and debauchery. The whisky was new, and adulterated with vitriol or other poisonous matter, and it was highly injurious to health and to morals alike. The familiarities between the lads and lasses were of the most familiar and coarsest description. The fairs and races were attended by a great number "of the most deplorable of the human race," some of whom sold nauseous and unwholesome sweets, which had often become loathsome "when handled by creatures labouring under the worst of diseases, and abominably nasty." Others were low jockeys with hack horses, whose exhibition of racing was calculated to shock the feelings of humanity. "Three or four meagre, jaded, starved animals are mounted upon by as many unfeeling blackguards, in a state of intoxication, galloped on a rough, hard road for several miles, and cruelly cut and blooded with whip and spur for the amusement or sport of the rabble." It was fortunate for a town or village when the fair was held late in the week, for the drinking and intoxication went on till the Saturday night, the only gainers being the change-house keepers, and those who kept dram shops, "the generality of whom are nuisances in society, deadweights on morality, capable of doing any mean and improper thing to entice, for profit to themselves, the unwary to sacrifice their health and their morals." It was generally the Justice of Peace Clerk who granted the certificates of character to the applicants for licenses, and, when he got his fees paid, he cared very little for the character of those who paid them. On one occasion, Mr. Aiton tells, shortly before the date of his report, when these "characters "

were being sold at one and sixpence each, an ale wife, who grudged the price, roared out that she could not see the propriety of her and others "buying characters from a man who never had a good one of his own."

There was no check at that period on the system of indiscriminate begging that prevailed all over the county. The mendicants went remorselessly from door to door. The streets and the country roads were infested with vagrants, and often with tinkers and gipsies, who added theft to their begging whenever occasion offered. In the town and villages there were houses that were the recognised howffs of the Bohemians. To these they returned at night to consume the spoils of the day in eating, drinking, swearing, and high carousal—"jolly beggars" of the most variegated description, of different nations, religions, ages, and occupations, and until far on in the night the noise of their revelry, not infrequently of their quarrelling and fighting, was a nuisance to the whole neighbourhood. A ridiculous custom prevailed of carrying cripples about from house to house. All the cripple required for a transit outfit was a hand barrow; the good natured country people did the rest. The vagrant was set down at the door of some farmhouse, and after he had been liberally supplied with food, and with a handful of meal for his wallet, two of the men about the place lifted him and carried him to the adjacent farm, where the same proceedings were gone through. It mattered nothing how busy the farmer and his servants were. Even when they were employed in the harvest field, and a cripple was deposited at the house, two of the workers were taken from the field and converted for the time-being into animals of burden for a mendicant whose only claim on them was the claim of common humanity, and who, in many instances, was nothing better than a rank impostor, whom the application of a dog whip would have induced to scurry off on his own legs.

In these days, as now, the immoderate drinking of ardent spirits, and the consequent drunkenness and demoralisation, constituted a serious problem. "The

drinking of spirituous liquors," says Mr. Aiton, "continues to be the leading vice of the people of Scotland. It has ruined many families and involved immense numbers in misery." The county abounded in low inns. There were no fewer than 649 licensed alehouses, and 650 with licenses to sell spirits—no doubt, in the vast preponderance of cases, the two went together—besides "some hundreds more" that dealt in liquor without any regular license whatever. These houses had, of course, an enormous share in fostering the abounding poverty, and in taxing the resources of the Church and of that portion of the people upon whom fell the duty of caring for the poor. With the "stent," or tax, imposed under the Act of 1740, "the virtuous feeling of decent pride, which prevented many from applying for public aid, gradually diminished, and they came to claim a share in the stent as a matter of right." The only poorhouse in Ayrshire was a small one in the county town, and practically nothing was done by the community to prevent the downfall of the large class who were only too prone to lapse into pauperism, vagrancy, and crime. Mr. Aiton urged the starting of "bridewells" in Ayr, Irvine, and Kilmarnock for reformatory purposes, in the case of vagrants and persons who had committed petty offences. We need hardly feel any surprise that his suggestion was not acted upon; for, nigh a century after the day when he was engaged writing his report, the vagrant still remains a serious problem for the authorities.

The records of the parish of Ayr contain a list of the inmates of the poorhouse in 1756, with a detailed narrative of their belongings. We subjoin half a dozen of the entries, which are curious in their way:—

James Blair, aged 74—he has brought to prhouse a feather bed and bolster, 3 pr. of blankets, a chest, 2 chairs, 4 shirts, an old coat, the clothes he has on, a chimney and tongs, 3 stockings. He has some title to the rents of houses in the Sandgate, which he declares himself willing to make over to the prhouse.

William Holmes, aged 80, born in Ayr. Has nothing but what's on him.

John Neil, aged 74, born in Bridgend of Doon, 60 years in Ayr—a bedstead and roof, a pot, a girdle, 1 pair tongs, 1 pair blankets, a chaff bed and bolster, 1 armchair, 2 stools, 2 timber plates, the clothes he wears, a beef barrel, a cask.

Margaret Baird, aged 80, born in Ayr—a wheel, some old blankets, 2 old beds, a covering, a kettle pot, a luggie, 3 spoons, 2 stools, old tongs, 2 skirts, a pair cards, a reel.

Marion Kay, aged 86, born in Govan, 40 years in Ayr—a blanket, a covering, a chair, a pillow, a rock and spindle, 3 shirts, 2 gowns, 3 suit head cloths, stockings and shoes.

Thomas M'Fadzine, aged 8 years, born in Ayr—a bastard, grandson to Ann M'Dill.

Interesting and valuable as these disquisitions are from the pens of two such racy observers as Colonel Fullarton and Mr. Aiton, preference must, nevertheless, be given to the Statistical Account, wherein the ministers of the various parishes recorded their experiences and their impressions of the life of the people in the closing years of the eighteenth century. The rev. gentlemen were, in a sense that cannot be said to obtain nowadays, the natural centres, in the personal sense, of the parishes. There were, it is true, large numbers of Dissenters in many of the parishes, and some in them all, but the great body of the people were attached to the Church of Scotland. Public life was not broken up as it is now, and supervised in various departments by specific authorities. By virtue of his position, the minister had the care of the schools and of the poor largely under his control, and he was in a position to know almost everything that was going on around him. And if sometimes he looked with a kindly eye upon the weaknesses of his parishioners, it may be taken for granted that, in sketching their character and the workings of the social machinery,

he was, as a rule, recording under a deep sense of responsibility. No country can boast a better or more reliable account of any period in its development than can Scotland; and Ayrshire's share of it is not less reliable than that of other counties.

We need not deal in any detail with the matter of wages. Their amount is a matter of the needs of the people and the purchasing power of money, and it can well be understood that a remuneration of ten or twelve shillings a week at one period may, in all the circumstances, have really been greater than twenty-five or thirty shillings a week a century later, when the relative proportions fell to be gauged on entirely different lines. An illustration, taken from the report of Dr. Dalrymple and Dr. M'Gill on the parish of Ayr, will suffice to demonstrate the truth of this. In 1791, a labourer with a wife and five children was able to earn 7s a week, and sometimes a little more. On an average he purchased three pecks of meal and a large quantity of potatoes, half a cart of coals at tenpence or a shilling, and soap to the value of twopence. His general purchases, regarded by the year, included three stone of wool at 7s 6d the stone, and ten pounds of lint at tenpence a pound. Thus, while the wages were small, they sufficed. Necessarily, none the less, when work was scarce and there were compulsorily idle days, the labourer and his wife and family were easily reduced to absolute penury, and suffered great hardships. Beef and mutton at fourpence a pound were beyond his reach. It was only on special occasions that he could afford to give sixpence or eightpence for a pound of butter, or fourpence to sixpence for a pound of cheese. At the same time, the stipend of the minister of the first charge, including the value of the glebe, was about £130 per annum, and that of the minister of the second charge £105, while the entire living of the minister of Newton did not exceed £80 a year. Such incomes as these would to-day be looked upon as beggarly pittances, but for the period they were no doubt regarded by the

general community as ample. It is questionable whether, taking the whole body of the parochial teachers of the period, and including all their emoluments from every source, their incomes averaged £20 a year. In many instances they fell considerably below that figure ; indeed, it was part of a complaint publicly made by the teachers of Scotland as a body that the majority of them were existing on less than the wages of the ordinary tradesman, and that about a third of them were paid worse than the common labourer. How many of them lived at all is a mystery, and it is no matter for surprise to learn that in some of the districts the dominies were, either morally or intellectually, of a very low order.

As compared with to-day, the value of lands and heritages was very small. In 1809, the total value of lands and heritages in the county was £292,093. Ten years before it was £162,350. The increase during the ten years was very large, and it affords a striking evidence of the prosperity of the shire during the decade. To-day the valuation returns for the shire, and the towns of Ayr and Kilmarnock, are upwards of £1,650,000. This includes the valuation of the railways, which have been the great factor in the increase. Leaving these out of account, the total may be set down at a million and a half sterling ; in round figures, more than five times that of a century back. The return of the beginning of last century is valuable here as bearing on the relative wealth of the two periods, and it goes a certain length in explaining how it was that money went so much further then than it does now, and in showing that the incomes of the professional men and the wages of the artisans and labourers were in proportion to their requirements. These, however, were much simpler and less complicated than they are to-day.

To return to the social conditions as seen from the point of view of the parish ministers. Ayr spent about £300 a year on the poor. The town had a reputation for generosity ; so much so, that there was a regular immigration to it of elderly and needy people from the



surrounding districts, who had only to spend three years within the burghal bounds before becoming eligible as sharers on its charity. The people were regarded as humane and kind, and as generally contented with their circumstances, but they suffered in some instances from the demoralising custom of smuggling. Newton had only £50 to spend on its poor, and was much troubled with the influx of beggars from Ireland. There were too many public houses, and the health of the inhabitants was much injured, according to Dr. Peebles, by the too frequent use of spirituous liquors. In Monkton and Prestwick nobody was allowed to beg. The same rule was strictly observed in Dundonald. The "great weddings" were fast going into disrepute, but the country funerals were still badly regulated. Until within a short period of the minister's narrative "a pipe and tobacco were provided for every one of the company," but the custom had been laid aside. It was still customary, however, for the guests to meet three or four hours before it was time to "lift," with occasional results that were far from being to edification. The minister of Symington testified that his people were in general sober and industrious, attentive to their callings, and regular in their attendance at church. But the girls of the middle, and even of the lower ranks, had obviously a craze for dress. They had given up the blue cloaks, and the plaids, and the plain caps of twenty years ago, and they despised even the scarlet mantle, once the emblem of distinction; and now, says the minister, "the silkworms of the East must be pillaged to deck the heads and shoulders of our milkmaids." The servant men, also, were forgetting the past. They had given up the Kilmarnock bonnets, and were actually wearing hats! The young fellows no more wore the clothes spun by their mothers, but English broadcloths, fashionable cotton stripes, and fine linen; and "every stripling, as soon as he arrives at puberty, must have a watch in his pocket, whereas, only forty years ago, there were but three in the parish."

With the exception of one unfortunate woman who had been banished, no person belonging to the parish had been judicially impeached or convicted of any crime within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Wallace-town suffered from an influx of disorderly people, driven thither by the desire of the magistrates of Ayr and Newton to maintain order, but, all things considered, there was "as much peace and decency of behaviour" among the inhabitants generally "as could well be expected." The people were "a mixture of English, Irish, and Highlanders."

Galston had retained one rather curious custom. "It is usual," says the minister, "for even the women to attend funerals in the village, dressed in black or red cloaks. Another singular custom prevails here—When a young man wishes to pay his addresses to his sweetheart, instead of going to her father's, and professing his passion, he goes to a public house; and having let the landlady into the secret of his attachment, the object of his wishes is immediately sent for, who almost never refuses to come. She is entertained with ale, or whisky, or brandy, and the marriage is concluded on. The second day after the marriage a creeling, as it is called, takes place. The young wedded pair, with their friends, assemble in a convenient spot. A small creel or basket is prepared for the occasion, into which they put some stones. The young men carry it alternately and allow themselves to be caught by the maidens, who have a kiss when they succeed. After a great deal of innocent mirth and pleasantry, the creel falls at length to the young husband's share, who is obliged to carry it generally for a long time, none of the young women having compassion upon him. At last his fair mate kindly relieves him from his burden, and her complaisance in this particular is considered as a proof of her satisfaction with the choice she has made. The creel goes round again, more merriment succeeds, and all the company dine together and talk over the feats of the field." There still existed in Galston a religious

prejudice against inoculation for smallpox, with the result that the disease made frequent ravages. The people were in general sober, industrious, and charitable, but, adds the minister, "it is to be regretted that instead of the wholesome beverage of ale, they are now compelled, by the high duties on that article, to betake themselves to the use of whisky, which is equally destructive to the health and to the morals of the people."

The writer of the account of Mauchline was the Rev. William Auld, who, at the period of his review of the parish, was drawing on to the close of his long and interesting life. For nigh fifty years he had been the minister, and he could look back to the former times for purposes of comparison. He had seen many changes. When first he was settled in Mauchline there were only two or three families in the parish who made use of tea daily; he lived to see it used by one-half of the people every day, and by them all occasionally. At the earlier period "good twopenny strong ale and home spirits were in vogue, but now even people in the middling and lower stations of life deal much in foreign spirits, rum-punch, and wine. In former times the gentlemen of the county entered into a resolution to encourage the consumption of their own grain, and, for that purpose, to drink no foreign spirits; but, in consequence of the prevalence of smuggling, and the heavy taxes laid on home-made liquors, this patriotic resolution was either forgotten or abandoned. As to dress," adds the rev. gentleman, "about fifty years ago there were few females who wore scarlet or silks, but now nothing is more common than silk caps and silk cloaks, and women in a middling station are as fine as ladies of quality were formerly. The like change may be observed in the dress of the male sex, though perhaps not in the same degree."

Judging him by his contribution to the "Statistical Account," the minister of Muirkirk, the Rev. John Sheppard, who wrote of his parish in 1793, was a man with a keen sense of the beauties of his upland home,

a shrewd humour, and an excellent appreciation of character. The stray mountain ash growing in the wilderness, "seldom seen except by the inhabitants of the air and the stocks that pasture around, or their solitary keeper as he moves along to call his wanderers home" appealed to him. He had scant sympathy with the poachers with their nets, who dragged the river and robbed the angler of his sport—"the angler, who seldom fails to pour forth blessings liberally upon them as he returns home with his basket much lighter than usual." He missed the song birds of the hedgerows and the woodland, and yet he found his solace and his compensation when he heard the eerie cry of the whaup announcing that the severity of the winter was past and that the time for the singing of birds had come; and he tells with glee of the Muirkirkian who went south to England and was taken to hear the song of the nightingale. "It's a' verry guid," was his comment, "but I wadna gie the wheeple o' a whaup for a' the nightingales that ever sang." Muirkirk beggars were not permitted to wander into other parishes, and they seldom if ever begged in their own. For all that, the district was rife with mendicants, because the police of the large towns were in the habit of banishing their undesirables, and so punishing the adjacent country for the burghal iniquities. To the vagaband banishment, or, as it was called, "enlargement," had no terrors. There was, says the minister, a soldier who, convicted of malpractices, was sentenced to be banished from Scotland for life. "Bless your honour," said the culprit, "put your sentence soon in execution." Among growing persons, the greater number of deaths was due to consumption; of children, the greater number died of "the natural smallpox." The natives were powerfully attached to the place of their birth, and even when they removed to lands more fruitful and better cultivated, they "wearied sair for the Muirkirk." In winter they were great curling enthusiasts. They played, one description of men against another, one trade against

another, the whole parish against another parish, "earnestly contending for the palm, which is generally all the prize, except perhaps the victors claim from the vanquished the dinner and bowl of toddy, which, to do them justice, both generally take together with great cordiality." The amusement itself, adds the minister, "is healthful, it is innocent, it does no bodily harm—let them enjoy it;" "There is another custom," he adds, "less noted indeed, but seemingly of equal antiquity, commonly known in the language of the country by the name of rocking; that is, when neighbours visit one another in pairs, or three or four in company, during the moonlight of winter or spring, and spend the evening alternately in one another's houses. The custom seems to have arisen when spinning on the rock, or distaff, was in use, which therefore was carried along with the visitant to a neighbour's house. The custom still prevails, though the rock is laid aside; and when one neighbour says to another, in the language of former days, 'I am coming over with my rock,' he means no more than to tell him that he means to spend an evening with him."

The inhabitants of Sorn had abundance of fuel, and they wore woollen clothes, and to these the minister attributed the general exemption from consumption. They still cherished the belief that the smallpox was one of the fruits of Predestination, and looked upon inoculation as an impious interference with the divine decrees and a vain attempt to stay the irreversible workings of a mysterious Providence. In 1796, six children, from one to twelve years of age, and some of them "beautiful and promising in an uncommon degree," died from the scourge, while in three families in which inoculation had taken place, the children recovered. The inhabitants were reluctant to tell the precise number of their horses or black cattle—no doubt for reasons connected with taxation. There were still some of the "old diminutive breed" of the former remaining, and the cattle were "partly of the

small, ancient breed, but mostly of a mixed breed between that and the Cunningham kind." The people lived largely on potatoes, and, as a rule, raised sufficient flax for their own domestic purposes. With exceptions, they were "on the whole a peaceable, sober, industrious people, contented with their lot, regular in their attendance upon public worship, and attached to the principles of the British Constitution." Very few of them ever enlisted in the regular army. The minister of Cumnock thought it worth while to emphasise the fact that in 1790 there were an uncommon number of twins born, not only in his parish, but in the country generally, and in other countries as well; "a fact," he observes, "remarked at the time, but never attempted to be accounted for." The rev. gentleman gives a somewhat qualified estimate of his parishioners. "At present," he says, "the great body that make up the inhabitants of the parish may be said to enjoy work or to be idle; strangers in general to intemperance, their living is chiefly supplied by the dairy; the manufacturers excepted, who, with a few others, may be said to be better acquainted with a meat diet and with the use of beer, which, it were to be wished, could be substituted for the prevalent use of spirituous liquors. Education is little valued. And next to the occupations peculiar to their several lines of life, their leading object is to converse and dispute about religious subjects and Church government, concerning which there is a considerable diversity of opinion amongst them." The Ochiltree folks were looked upon by their minister as in general remarkable for the simplicity, integrity, and purity of their manners. The children of the farmers were pretty numerous, "four neighbouring farmers having two of them eight and two of them nine children apiece." The patron of the parish had given the people a minister agreeable to their wishes, "and what are called the New Light doctrines, contrary to our Confession of Faith, though prevalent in other parts of Ayrshire, have obtained very little countenance in Ochiltree." When

Mr. Steel, a prominent Ayrshire land improver, and one of the most advanced and enlightened men that the county had in these days, was first settled in Stair—he succeeded to the property of Gadgirth in 1748—the tenants and labourers were poor, ill-clothed, and worse fed ; the farmhouses were small, ill-furnished, and mean in their appearance. In 1793, the date of his account, notwithstanding the advanced rents they had to pay, the tenants were in much better circumstances, and their taste for cleanliness, dress, and every decent accommodation had increased in proportion to their wealth. The inhabitants were sober, honest, and industrious, and had remained attached to the Established Church. Waggons and carts had been introduced, and had taken the place of the sacks or creels carried on horses' backs, in which all the grain, manure, coals, and other articles had been transported when Mr. Steel first went to live in the parish. These beneficial results, it should be added, were largely due to the rev. gentleman himself.

The Maybole of these days was singularly free from Dissenters. Out of 2500 persons of the age of eight years and upwards, only three, two women and one man, were Seceders ; and even these, adds the minister, came but lately into the parish. In Kirkmichael parish, the dominie received the starvation pittance of £5 12s 6d. The farmers employed both cotmen and young lads, who lived in the house. They thrashed in the morning, and winnowed at night, and thus obtained all the advantage of daylight for outdoor labour. While the people were respectable, intelligent, and anxious to educate their children, it is interesting to find that the minister was inclined to think that religiously they were deteriorating. This, we suspect, has been the complaint of the conservatively orthodox of every generation. This is what he has to say on the subject—"As to their religious character, there is certainly less apparent seriousness, and less respect to the external ordinances of religion than were to be seen in former times. It

is to be regretted that a proper respect to religion should ever be diminished ; it gives ground to suspect that there is not a real regard to it. If this increases and becomes general, the consequences will be dreadful." Whisky was not looked upon as a genteel drink in Kirkmichael, the general beverage among the farmers being good porter, " which they find to afford nourishment, as well as cheerfulness, when moderately used." The language was a mixture of Scotch and English, and it was spoken, at least in the ears of the minister, without any particular accent. For forty years prior to 1794, there had been neither " putrid fever " nor " flux " in Kirkoswald. For the first half of the forty years, a fever had prevailed every six or seven years, accompanied with considerable inflammation, " but by the application of the accustomed remedies of bleeding, and taking great quantities of weak diluted drink, it was not very mortal, notwithstanding its infectious character." During the second twenty years, the fevers had been " of the slow, nervous kind," but they were neither very prevalent nor very mortal. This change for the better, the minister thought, might have been largely due to the introduction of tea and sugar, which had come to be used in the family of almost every farmer. The people were respectable and religious, and refined in dress and manners. This refinement, the minister was ingenuous enough to recognise, may have been due to the smuggling that prevailed. The smugglers had to go abroad to get their wares ; and " persons of this description, being obliged to enter much into society in their own country, thereby acquired a turn for entertainment and hospitality at home." Withal, they had preserved their sobriety of demeanour and decency of Christian character, and they were a marked improvement on their forefathers in the beginning of the previous century who, according to the Session Records, violated the Sabbath by fishing and openly selling the fish in the Maybole market, while others winnowed their corn, washed and dried their clothes, got drunk, and even fought in the churchyard



when divine service was going on. The parish, however, was cursed by the streams of beggars, mostly Irish, who passed along the coach road from Ayr to Portpatrick, and who were importune and violent in their cravings.

The salary of the schoolmaster of Straiton was the same as that of his comrade in Kirkoswald, £5 12s 6d, and it is not surprising to read that there was very little choice of men when the frequent vacancy occurred, or that the teachers only made the village school a stepping-stone to a higher and more lucrative position. The parish suffered in population from the conjoining of small farms so as to make large ones. It had been the home of a considerable number of smugglers, but the extension of the excise laws had reduced their profits and increased their risks, and they had taken to less dubious ways of earning their living. The decay of smuggling had, however, reduced some families, that were wont to live plentifully, to great poverty, and had even compelled them to turn to the parish for support. There were, however, few if any beggars. The inhabitants of Dailly were comprised in 368 families, with an average of nearly four and a half persons to each family. "As marriage is not discouraged," says the parish minister, "either by a deficiency of the necessaries of life, or by an excess of its luxuries, the number of those who continue unmarried after the usual age of entering into that connection is comparatively very small." Almost all the people were of Scottish origin, only a few being from Ireland. Many of the women in the lower ranks employed themselves "in working up the inferior wool of the country into a coarse and flimsy cloath, which was carried to the fairs of Ayr and Maybole, and bought up for exportation at the rate of eightpence to tenpence per yard." With the proceeds they bought finer wool, which they made into clothes for themselves and their families. The improvement in the style of living during the twenty or thirty years prior to 1794 had been so great as to amount almost to a revolution. At the beginning of the period the

dress and mode of living were "dirty, mean, and pernicious;" at the close of it the huts had given way to neat cottages, the dress was "much less inelegant," and, in some instances, the rising wages had tended to vanity in dress, and even to dissipation. There was not much chance, however, of the labourers laying by money, and when they were old they had frequently to look to the parish for aid. Besides these, the parish provided for "idiots and furious persons, and the children of those who died in poverty." The farmers were much less addicted as a class than they had been to intemperance, and were generally attentive to the education of their families.

Half a century before 1794 there were only about twenty-four houses in Girvan, and the population was little over an hundred; at the date mentioned, the inhabitants numbered a thousand. The increase was mainly due to the development of the fishing industry, but the practice of smuggling had contributed "in no small degree" to the rise in population and the growth of prosperity. With the exception of about a score of Seceders and two Roman Catholics, all the people belonged to the Established Church. Barr, among the hills, rejoiced in its good health; for fifty years "an eminent surgeon" had never known an epidemical distemper within its bounds. "Consumptions" prevailed, none the less. The instances were many of persons living to eighty and upwards. There was, in 1794 a woman of ninety, "who remembers well the young men in this place learning the use of arms in 1715, and was reaping on a corn ridge when they passed by to join the loyalists." Dissent was at a discount in Colmonell, the poor were few, and the people as a whole were sober, industrious, and religious. The farmers had a grievance in being compelled to carry all their grindable grain to particular mills, or to pay a stipulated multure, which was frequently not less than a tenth of the value of the stuff carried to the mill; sometimes even higher. In Ballantrae the marriages, "as would be expected"

from the situation of the parish and the modes of life were, as a rule, prolific. The average number of olive branches was about six, and in exceptional instances they ran up to fourteen. The people enjoyed the comforts of society "in a superior degree to others in similar conditions of life," and were healthy, easy, contented, and generally cheerful. Epidemical disorders, save those usual to children, were unknown, and "deaths, except from particular accidents, were confined to infancy and old age." Inoculation was little practised. In the rural districts of the parish the folks, as a rule, had sufficient ground to enable them to keep a cow or two, and three or four sheep. A calf sold at from thirty to fifty shillings, and paid two-thirds of the rent; so that, with home-grown bread and potatoes in plenty, the folks were able to live comfortably and to give their children a decent set-off in the world. The school was endowed, and the master luxuriated in an income of about £40 a year. About the beginning of June the coast was visited by numbers of sailfish, which remained for about three or four weeks. These were from twenty to thirty feet in length. "The people of the village kill them with harpoons for the oil, which is made of the liver. The liver of a good fish will yield from forty to fifty gallons of oil, which they sell to tanners, etc., and use part of it themselves to burn in place of candles." The law was unrepresented in the parish, either by Justice of the Peace, or constable, or Sheriff's officer, and there was no surgeon. The lack of a medical man is not to be wondered at, however, because, according to the minister, "it is doubtful whether half-a-dozen such parishes would give bread to one." Finally, "the minister is married, and has a son and a daughter"—surely a poor turnout for a parish that averaged its families by the half-dozen! It is not "as would be expected."

The account of Irvine is dated 1793. There were few, if any, manufactures. As a rule, the young men were sailors, or went out to the West Indies or America

as storekeepers and planters ; many also going to India, and occasionally returning with large fortunes. There were three master shipbuilders, a tanwork, a ropework, and a bleachfield, a great many grocers' and small huckster shops, four or five hardware shops, weavers of silk gauze, muslins, etc., besides the members of the Incorporated Trades, which included no fewer than six barbers. There was one whisky still, which consumed about 950 bolls of malt yearly, and one small brewery. Most of the retailers and many private families brewed their own beer. A spinning jenny had been introduced the previous year, and employed about eighty hands, whose wages ran from a shilling to nine shillings a week. The people were exceptionally industrious, sober, and cheerful, and it was a rare thing for anybody to be abroad on the streets after midnight. They were happy in one another's society, and entertained cheerfully and well, their entertainments being, as a rule, substantial rather than showy. Poverty was none the less rife.

In the account of Stevenston there is an interesting entry relating to the price of coal, which, though it has no bearing on the social condition of the people, may be reproduced. "The price of coal here to the shipmasters is," says the minister, "6s per ton. The British duty is about 1s 2d per chaldron ; the duty by the Irish Parliament 8d a ton ; additional duty or tax laid on by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, for paving the streets, 1s 2d. The price in the Dublin market is fluctuating, never below 16s per ton ; seldom above 20s ; sometimes it rises to 30s ; and last winter, when the ships were kept in their ports for more than two months by westerly winds, it rose to 36s per ton." The makers of salt were considerably handicapped by the smuggling in of Irish salt. Ireland was able to manufacture salt cheaply, and though the parish minister was ready to grant to the sister isle every indulgence that her situation required, he thought it rather unreasonable that the advantages she enjoyed should be such as to enable her

to hurt the manufacturers and the revenue of Great Britain. Of the inhabitants, three or four were very near ninety years of age. Two had recently died beyond that age, and one sometime previous considerably beyond 100—a Highlander who had been at the battle of Killiecrankie. The poor were “sufficiently numerous.” The parish had much improved in its trade and in the social uplifting of the people within the preceding thirty years, but neither the minds nor the morals of the inhabitants. Sailors and miners were inclined to dissipation. Liquor was too cheap, and there were too many inns and houses for selling spirits—34 in the parish—with melancholy consequences to health, industry, and morals. “It soon renders them weak and crazy, turbulent and riotous, idle and worthless. It opens a door to pilfering and all other evils connected with idleness.”

One of the shrewdest of all the ministerial observers of the latter end of the eighteenth century was the Rev. Thomas Pollock of Kilwinning. Thanks to the climate, longevity in that ancient town and parish was by no means rare, and the people, as a rule, were in the enjoyment of good health; but a notable exception had to be taken so far as smallpox was concerned. The inhabitants were opposed to inoculation, and in 1791, when some eighty children were affected with the disease, more than one-half of them died “from ignorance and the most superstitious prejudices. The parents, regardless or insensible of consequences, instead of inoculating their children, crowd into those houses in which the disease is of the most malignant nature, and at a time when it is most infectious. The very worst kind of this dangerous and loathsome disease is in this manner communicated and spread, and thousands of valuable lives are lost to the community. This impious presumption,” adds the rev. gentleman, “these illiberal and groundless prejudices, are not peculiar to this parish; in every other country parish of Scotland the bulk of the people think and act pretty much in the same way.”

Comparing the period with which he was dealing with half-a-century earlier, Mr. Pollock noted a great advance in the social and industrial conditions. Both farmers and tradesmen had come to the regular use of broadcloth, and mistresses and their servants "had their silk cloaks and bonnets, their muslin and calico gowns, and their flounced petticoats, with cotton and thread stockings." Oatmeal was less in use, and tea and wheaten bread more; and farmers, tradesmen, and labourers all lived a great deal on butcher meat and potatoes. In the town there were no fewer than thirteen public houses, "far too many for the number of inhabitants, and too often nurseries of idleness and vice. Whisky is what they chiefly drink. From its cheapness, the dissipated and profligate indulge themselves in it to excess, to the hurt and frequently the ruin of their families." There was a good deal of poverty, and it was increasing; and the poors' funds were not sufficient for their support. "One very general and principal cause of this decrease is that men of rank and fortune are very irregular, and even criminally negligent, in their attendance upon divine service upon the Sabbath. This conduct, however fashionable, is not only disrespectful to religion, disgraceful to the laws of their country, and pernicious in the highest degree to the morals of the people at large, but must eventually bring upon themselves assessments or poors' rates." Hardly less satisfactory to the rev. recorder was the condition of education, which, "to the disgrace of an enlightened and liberal age," had been "amazingly neglected." The salaries had been fixed by the State, when as much could be bought for a penny as could be purchased in the end of the eighteenth century for a shilling, and had become scanty and starvation pittance, with the consequent danger of having the schools filled with grossly ignorant dominies, or with men of indecent or immoral lives.

Dealing with Loudoun, the Rev. George Lawrie thought it worthy of note that the schoolhouse had a slated roof. He had the prevailing assurance that the

climate was exceptionally pure and sanitary. Except smallpox and measles, he had never known an epidemic. "I never saw an ague," he says, "and scarcely ever an infectious fever; a putrid fever never; a purple fever carried off several people about twenty years ago, from improper management, by immediately bleeding, which was found to be very fatal by those of the Faculty who first tried it. Some years ago, nine children died of a disease called the closing, or croup. Scrophula, or white swelling, is frequent from poor living, sedentary living, and bad air in weavers' shops where they never have a fire." West Kilbride, like other parishes, suffered severely from the smallpox. The inhabitants, as a whole, were a quiet, sober, decent people. "Living chiefly among themselves, they were strangers, and so far, perhaps, happy strangers, to the more free and licentious manners of the world around them." The great occasion of the year was the Midsummer fair. That, however, was falling off, and was not to be compared with earlier years, when it was "a congress between the Highlands and Lowlands, and occasioned a vast concourse of the people for some days. The spectacle of boats from all quarters, the crowds of people, the sound of music; ashore, dancing and hilarity, day and night, on the green; and, further up, a new street or town, formed of the stands of merchants, and filled with a press of people, formed altogether an amusing spectacle." There was no smuggling worth mentioning, "unless the pitiful and occasional help given to the poor seamen, in their little adventures, can be called such." The principal business of West Kilbride was the raising of flax, which the women wove into coarse linen during the winter. Among them they made about seven thousand yards of the fabric, and sold it to the Glasgow and Paisley dealers at from a shilling to fifteenpence a yard. The manufacture of silk and cotton employed the greater number of the men; the other industries were fishing, and the making of kelp from the seaweed on the shore. One of the chief grievances of

which the minister had to complain was that his manse abutted on the churchyard. The people were industrious, sober, and decent, regular in their attendance at church, attentive to the sermon, respectful, affable, and discreet. They were also happy, contented, comfortable, honest, and peaceable. In earlier years the parish had been conspicuous in the number of its sons who served in the Navy, but the attractions of trade had begun to beguile them from the sea; a fact which caused the minister to observe that "there is some reason to dread that the ingenuous, frank, and manly character of the tar may, in time, give place to the petulance and effeminacy, the turbulent, factious, and fanatical spirit which experience has proved to be but too generally attached to people who follow the more domestic occupations." Like many of his neighbours, the minister of Fenwick had to report an incursion of the smallpox. In 1792 the trouble went through the whole parish, and the number of persons affected with it was great, but it was half a year before one died, and only three died in all. So strong was the superstition against any interference with the natural course of the trouble, that some of the people deemed it a sin to give their children anything by way of preparation. The great majority of the population were of the class called Burgher-Seceders, who, says the minister, "left the Establishment at the settlement of the present incumbent;" there were also Anti-Burghers and Reformed Presbyterians. In their circumstances the people were on the whole easy, and had good reason to be contented; and there was not a beggar in the parish. They were much more extravagant in dress than they were ten years earlier. There were four ale and whisky houses, besides the stage at King's Well, and "the quantities of whisky made use of were amazing." It is interesting to note that in the account of the parish, the farm of Lochgoin, the home of the Howies, the best known of whom was the author of the "Scots Worthies," is called "Serdgoin."



In Kilmaurs, inoculation for smallpox had not become general, "owing," according to the minister, "to the prevalence of a religious persuasion that the Divine Government, without any care on the part of man, will accomplish whatever is best for him. So deeply are the tenets of this kind impressed, that all attempts to show the necessity of using those means by which the Providence of God operates, both in temporal and spiritual concerns, are 'houted' and despised. Much," he adds, "have the teachers of religion to answer for, who establish faith upon the ruins of practice." There was plenty of work for everybody who cared to put his hand to, and a good market for all sorts of produce at Kilmarnock. In earlier years Kilmaurs had been famed for its cutlery, and there were still to be seen in the parish breakfast knives, "superior, it is said, to anything of the kind that has yet been made in Sheffield or Birmingham." With better times had come better dress and manners. "Long may such sources of comfort continue," says the minister, "for though the human mind is apt to be intoxicated by prosperity, and the conduct to be thereby tinctured with levity, yet in circumstances of this kind the heart is more easily trained to virtue, and the good less liable to hypocrisy. Some," he continues, "have complained in the Statistical Account of their parishes that these works of art, which bring so many people of different sex, age, and tempers together, are unfriendly to the interest of morality. But an attentive observer must be convinced that the vices which are the most hurtful to society, do not prevail so much where an open and unrestrained intercourse takes place, as where secrecy and the *tempora mollia fandi* are frequently enjoyed. Besides, that virtue which proceeds from the absence of temptation, is merely negative, and, though it may prevent punishment, is not surely the object of reward. That propensity to human nature which is found in the human constitution, should operate in favour of virtue as well as vice; and therefore, as in every society

there are some virtuously inclined, why should the influence of good example be less powerful than that which is bad? Human nature should never be disparaged too much, nor more expected of it than consists with the situation in which it is placed." To these moralisings the rev. gentleman adds the following somewhat mingled characterisation of his parishioners :— " The people are in general industrious, and, where their interest is concerned, they have address sufficient for maintaining or preserving it. Suspicion among themselves in transacting business, and design covered by an affected simplicity towards superiors are perhaps sometimes discernible. Compared with the times which are honoured with the character of pure, the vices which now appear are fewer and less atrocious. Like every other community, ours consists of a mixture of characters. Justice requires it to be told that much civility, kindness, integrity, and candour are practised by many."

Like his brother of Kilmaurs, the minister of Dunlop had the gift of telling his story in a readable and interesting fashion—a gift which a good many of the Ayrshire ministers of the period rather lacked or failed to put into practice when they were describing their parishes. The language, he tells us, which the people spoke, was a mixture of Scotch and English, and was spoken in a slow, drawling fashion. They pronounced sow "sai-w," and mow "mai-w." They retained a special favour for great and expensive funerals. When a wealthy person died, it was usual to invite two or three parishes to attend his funeral; and, as the people were limited to no particular hour, a great part of the day was taken to coming to it and waiting on it; a custom which was not only a waste of time, but oppressive to those who could not afford the expense, but who, from vanity or pride, must continue the custom. The people were of the principles of the Church of Scotland, and these had the happiest influence on their civil and religious conduct; they as rarely left their Kirk, as

they were disloyal to their King. Otherwise, they flourished, because they were diligent, and, being self-respectful, they were not, as a rule, frequenters of taverns. The minister deals in a very interesting fashion with his predecessors, and although his stories of their excellencies hardly come within the natural scope of these chapters, room must be found for two anecdotes concerning a Mr. Rouat, whose gifts and popularity were altogether exceptional. The church officer complained one day to the servant at the manse that Mr. Rouat was too much among the "gentles." But there was Scripture warrant for that, replied the girl. "What was it?" asked the beadle. "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The good man was convinced and relieved, and was thereafter quite pleased with the gentles. When the Sacrament was about to be dispensed by a minister who came after Mr. Rouat, Miss Dunlop, afterwards Lady Wallace, came to church rather early, and expressed to an old servant her satisfaction at seeing the house so decently filled. "Madam," said the old man, "this is nothing to what I have seen in the church in Mr. Rouat's time. I have heard the balks cracking at six o'clock in the morning." "The balks cracking! What do you mean, James?" asked Miss Dunlop. "Yes, madam," was James's reply, "I have seen the folks in his time sitting on the balks o' the kirk, like bykes o' bees." The rev. narrator found nothing to complain of in the fact that there were no large public works in the parish, and he gave reasons, substantial in themselves so far as they go. "Works that depend so much on the labour of the young, and that must necessarily crowd so many of them together, must be hurtful to their health, and holding out an early and a strong temptation to indigent and negligent parents to part with their children at a time when they should be attending to that education which is necessary to form their minds and secure their usefulness, they must be, eventually at least, hurtful to their manners; not to mention that by collecting so many people of all

descriptions into one place, they may materially affect, if not exhaust, the funds of the poor." And, discounting the giving of indiscriminate charity, he adds the trite remark—"Charity thinketh no evil, but charity must think the truth; and, while it does, it must as infallibly lead us to discountenance begging, as it will lead us to be merciful and full of compassion to the poor."

The great obstacle to agricultural improvement in Largs parish was a species of traffic in horses that was peculiar to the district. Farmers, mechanics, and even servants who could afford to buy a horse were engaged in it. Some of them had as many as a dozen horses worth from £15 to £20 each, and these they hired out to the farmers for twenty or thirty miles round. They were usually let out from a guinea to forty shillings each, according to their value, from the 1st of February to the 24th of March, but most commonly to the 10th of April, when they were all returned. During that period there were so many horses available that the farmers were able to compress their ploughing and harrowing into two or three weeks. After that they were either let out for ordinary hire, or turned adrift in the higher parts of the parish. The inhabitants were in general sober, industrious, and economical, and were given to provide for the future. The great event of the year was the fair, which opened on a Monday and lasted till the Thursday. For forty or fifty miles round the people gathered in for business or for pleasure, and sometimes as many as a hundred boats were to be seen riding in the bay. There was such a vast multitude, according to the minister, that they could not all be provided with beds. This did not inconvenience the Highlanders very much, for they spent the night dancing to the bagpipes and carousing on the green. So many were the dances that the fun went on without ceasing all through the fair. There were few scenes, in the opinion of the reverend gentleman, more worthy of attention to the philosopher, who wished to contemplate human nature in its simplest and most undignified forms,

or to the benevolent man, who rejoiced to see that a great part of human happiness belonged to the virtuous poor.

The most interesting feature of the life of Kilbirnie parish was the parish minister himself, Mr. Malcolm Brown. Above ninety years of age, he could not write the account himself, and it was done for him by his assistant. His judgment and memory were sound and good, he could walk straight and steady, ride a mile once or twice a week, preach occasionally, and marry and baptise all that offered. His wife was "a strong, active, lively, and sensible woman," and both enjoyed the respect and esteem of everybody who knew them. In Beith, as well as in some of the neighbouring parishes, the subdivision of property was greater perhaps than in any other part of Scotland. The parish had an hundred and five heritors, besides smaller proprietors in the village. The climate was not, in the view of the minister, favourable to longevity. There was a great deal of sickness. The diseases most common were fevers and consumptions, the croup and the smallpox. In 1760 the linen trade was value for about £16,000; by the end of the century it had declined considerably, but linen was still a considerable article of merchandise, and the farmers raised great quantities of flax. Silk gauze was also largely manufactured. This parish had been much troubled by vagrancy, and the inhabitants had bound themselves together neither to lodge vagrants nor to give them alms. In the parish school the education embraced Latin, Greek, French, English, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and mathematics, and the schoolmaster's salary was £11 a year, "subject to the deduction of £3, to be divided equally among the teachers of three small schools in the country, who are chosen by the people in the neighbourhood, and are entitled to this encouragement upon their keeping school for four months of the year." The minister mentions as worthy of note the finding of various specimens of "figured stones" (fossils) in the parish,

“petrifications of marine productions, the exuvia of the ancient ocean.” These curious and uncommon productions of Nature, he adds, “were probably the first of the kind discovered in this part of the world; at least they were the first that some of the ablest chemists in the country had seen.” Stewarton had very little of general interest to record. It had Burghers, and anti-Burghers, and Cameronians, but they all lived in harmony with the minister and people of the Established Church. The chief trade, as it had been for over a century, was bonnet making, and the making of French or Quebec caps, which brought in an income of about £50 a week. There was a daily arrival and despatch of letters.

At the period with which we are dealing all sorts of local government were entirely “unreformed,” and the people were quite satisfied with them as they were. Middle-aged persons could look back upon a way by which the country had advanced by leaps and bounds. They had seen Ayrshire awake to a sense of her possibilities, banks started, manufactures introduced, minerals developed, farming improved, the villages grown instinct with life. These were the product of the old conditions of administration, and it may well be believed that they thought they had no great reason to complain of them. The awaking was to come before the nineteenth century would be very old, and when Parliamentary and Municipal reform would be in the air; but as yet the Corporations were wholly unreformed.

The administration of the burgh of Ayr was vested in a Provost, two Bailies, Dean of Guild, a Treasurer, and twelve Councillors, two of whom were from the incorporated trades. The method of their election is thus described:—“Upon the Wednesday preceding the Friday before Michaelmas Day, the Magistrates and Council (seventeen in number) meet in the Court Hall and elect, first, one of their number, who is denominated old Councillor, then six new Councillors, for the ensuing year, four of whom are merchants, and two trades;

these, with the Magistrates and other members of Council, meet in the same place the Friday following, and make the leets for Provost, Bailies, Dean of Guild, and Treasurer; and upon the first Monday after Michaelmas Day, these twenty-three members, with three deacons (termed extraordinary deacons) from three different incorporations, meet as above, and elect the Provost, Bailies, Dean of Guild, and Treasurer, and as many members from the old Council as, with the office-bearers and new Councillors, make seventeen, which form the Magistrates and Council for the ensuing year. The Magistrates may be re-elected many years without intermission, the Provost excepted, who must be changed at least every two years; and the Magistrates, etc., remain a year in the Council after going out of office.

“After the election of the Magistrates and Council,” continues the Rev. Dr. M’Gill, from whom we are quoting, “each of the nine incorporated trades, viz., the smiths, tailors, weavers, dyers, squaremen, shoemakers, skinners, coopers, and fleshers, elect a deacon; who, with the late deacon of each incorporation, meet on the Saturday following and elect a convener, who must be one of that number. These form what is denominated the convener’s board, of which he is president, but he is neither a magistrate nor member of Council from office; but he, or any deacon, may be elected a Councillor, except the deacons of the fleshers and coopers, who can neither be chosen Councillors nor vote for the Magistrates.”

The entire municipal system was, as will be seen, official in the highest degree. The Provost and Magistrates walked every Sunday to church in state behind the halberdiers. It is a misfortune that, while they were supremely concerned for the spiritualities, they were not more concerned for the burghal temporalities. The lands of Alloway had been let to tenants during the first half of the eighteenth century at the yearly rent of 1s 3d an acre, “which they were not able to pay, and often became bankrupts and beggars.”

In 1755 the town sold the lands for £7200, the new proprietors continuing to pay the old rent as feu duty. These lands, which comprised the full half of the country parish of Ayr, included Rozelle, Doonholm, Greenfield, Mountcharles, Belleisle, etc. The lands of Borrowfield had gone long before, when money was extremely scarce, and at a nominal feu duty. Had these unreformed civic fathers but stuck fast by the burghal property, what a wealth it would have represented to-day! The Racecourse was a common "for feeding milk cows, and free to every burgess." The whole land rent of the parish amounted to about £3700. There had been earlier great herring fisheries off Ayr, but for eight and twenty years prior to 1791 no herring had appeared. There was plenty of salmon and white fish. The salmon, a few years earlier, had sold at about three-halfpence a pound in summer and autumn, but the price had gone up to twopence halfpenny and sometimes more; and white fish had risen in value from a penny to three-halfpence. For the Doon fishings the Earl of Cassillis paid a rent of £90 a year, and there was a cruive six miles up the river for which he paid £13 more. The fishings of the Ayr river belonged to the Society of Writers, and were rented at £85, with £1 extra to the town for each coble used, and £2 in all to the minister of Monkton. The vessels belonging to the port were thirty-three in number, of which eighteen, with an aggregate tonnage of 1894 tons, were engaged in the foreign trade.

Ayrshire has come a long way since the end of the eighteenth century, but on the whole there seems no reason to doubt that the forefathers of the period were fairly prosperous and happy. If they did not possess all the advantages we enjoy, they had a much more restful and easy existence; and their enjoyment of life was obviously just as great as that of their descendants can possibly be.



## CHAPTER XV

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### THE SOCIAL MARCH OF THE SHIRE THE COMING OF THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE

We have seen, in tracing the social march of the shire, that the great awaking in commerce, in finance, in agriculture, in the arts and sciences, began in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Until then it was the old-world life that was being lived. There was a great deal of orthodoxy, there was much predestination. The people were content to take things very much as they found them. That which had already been was that which should again be. What was good enough for the fathers was good enough for their children. The gentry in a large measure lived lives of ease, of too profuse hospitality, of reckless extravagance. They mortgaged their lands in such a fashion that it was only a question of time when they should have to part with them ; and when, in 1772, the Ayrshire Bank collapsed, there was a widespread transference of possession, and many families that had for many generations been resident on the soil of the county passed away from it never to return. The farms were wretched holdings, undrained, uncultivated, hardly fit in bad seasons to maintain the half-starved cattle in life, and the peasantry, "Scotland's pride," were seldom far removed from absolute want. The towns were Sleepy Hollows ; in the villages there was slumbering and sleeping. If the

dietary, when it was abundant, was strengthening, it was very meagre. Men grew old before their time. Infectious diseases, cholera, smallpox, etc., were plagues. Sanitation was unknown, and when the Angel of Death put in his sickle and reaped his harvest, it was the "judgment" of Heaven, because of the abounding sins of the people.

But when the eighteenth century had rolled along two-thirds of its course, there was a shaking among the dry bones, and the spirit of enterprise breathed upon them a new life. The towns woke up to a sense of their responsibilities and of their possibilities, capital was forthcoming for the working of the minerals and for the establishing of ironworks, the necessities of transit found outlet in horse railways, in canals, and in improved roads; cotton mills were started, the waters of the rivers found work to do in driving the busy water wheels that set the machinery humming and the looms going; the large landed proprietors began methodically and steadily to improve their estates; farmers gathered in agricultural Clubs and Societies to discuss how best the soil could be brought into higher cultivation; system was put into the breeding of cattle, of horses, of sheep; and by the close of the century the shire was on the march in almost every direction.

Neither in this connection can Robert Burns and his unparalleled influence be forgotten. Burns had known the old life, and he breathed the new. He was a product of many conditions, as all men must necessarily be more or less, but he incarnated them and incorporated them as none had done before. There was bound up in him all the fulness of the Scottish love of independence, and Heaven had gifted him to sing it in undying song. The weight of unremunerative toil was upon him, the burden that bears down with relentless severity upon the sons and daughters of poverty; but he was blessed with a heart above and beyond it all, and, like an Atlas, he took the weight upon his shoulders and raised it, and lightened it upon the shoulders of others. He had seen

the extent to which religion could be abused by rote, by Pharisaism, by stagnation, by the resolve to make it the one thing that was not to go forward, by the attempt to stereotype it, and to keep the people subject to it with the aid of the awful terrors of the Law; he realised that even the Kirk stood in need of purification, and of the lopping off of many of the excrescences that were making the expression of the national faith a scoffing and a byword; and he lampooned and satirised the practices and the tendencies and the manifestations of decadence that had attached themselves to a religion that had begun to settle upon its lees. He had tasted the joys, he had experienced the sorrows, of the conviviality that was characteristic of the age into which he was born, and of the free intercourse between the sexes that could not well have worked out in any other way than it so frequently did; and his experiences bade him sing love songs for the people, the like of which had never been sung before, and convivial songs that reflected the riotous bacchanalianism of the period—love songs sometimes shaded by sorrow, bacchanalianism sometimes tempered and rebuked by its aftermath of remorse. There was little in Nature, animate or inanimate, that he did not love, and to which he was not in a measure akin. Burns became, what he has remained ever since, part of the life of the people, first around him, and then in swift eddying circles, until, as has been said, “the world was his dominion and his home the heart of man.” He taught the peasant his dignity, he put the spirit of independence into the poor man, he glorified patriotism, he purified the songs of Scotland by giving her something higher, richer, better, than anything to which she had been accustomed. And in any attempt at gauging the influences that began to permeate the life of Ayrshire, together with the life of the nation as a whole, when the eighteenth century was nearing its close, this chief of all the sons of the shire cannot be assigned anything else than a foremost place. How much he symbolised and

incorporated in himself, countless biographers and panegyrists have told, and many more will arise to tell it over again.

The pace once set, the march of progress went on. The opening years of the nineteenth century marked a period of great political energy and zeal, and of demand for broader and more comprehensive liberties. France, driven into revolution by the follies of the throne and the overweening pretensions of the nobility, had risen upon the tyrants, had swept them from power, had quenched the monarchical and the governing hierarchy in blood and in terrorism, and had for the time-being placed the people in their room. It is of the nature of the spirit of liberty that it should fly all abroad, and in due time it made its influence felt in this land of settled government. With a hundred years intervening, it is not difficult to understand why it should have been that the ruling classes, in the county as well as beyond its borders, were concerned against eventualities, why they should have organised the yeomanry into cavalry corps, armed and disciplined and ready for the rising that appeared to be looming up against the horizon of the future, or why the towns should have hastened to protect themselves by the enrolment and drilling of volunteers, against a proletariat that vaunted the rights of man and that demanded a share in the government of the country. Probably the situation was never really so alarming as it seemed to be, but, whether or not, there can be no doubt that the preparations that were made to hold the reformers in check had their effect upon the more fiery spirits of the democratic crusade. The hardness of the times, the scarcity of money, the scarcity too of food, combined to make the situation occasionally both exciting and dangerous. When work was slack, and wages had gone down to a wretched pittance that hardly sufficed to keep body and soul together, and food was dear, and hope seemed dead, and wives and children were crying for food to eat, the mob were given to take the law into their own hands.

Ayr, in 1815, was the scene of what was known as a meal mob. Meal, the staple food of the great mass of the inhabitants, was selling at three shillings a peck, and the children were starving. The tenant of the Nether Mill took occasion to raise prices and turned a deaf ear to every appeal that was made to him to lower his price, and between starvation on the one hand and indignation at the unfeeling conduct of the miller on the other, the popular passions were excited, and the mob determined to take by force what they could not buy for money. With great deliberation they resolved to sack the mill. They openly proclaimed their intention on the public thoroughfares, and fixed an evening for the assault. The Magistrates did what they could to meet the situation. They issued warnings against the danger and the consequences of mob law, they swore in many special constables to defend the mill, and they mustered their own little band of civil guards for the same purpose. But all their show of force, and all their warnings, were of no avail. When the hour appointed came round, the mob, angry, determined, and regardless of warnings, clustered in thousands in front of the mill. The campaign was opened with a shower of stones, these were followed by a general assault that swept away the opposing strength of law and order, and all the evening women and children were busy carrying away the miller's "corner" in meal to their homes. A few punishments, not very serious, followed. Such was the manner of the times. The people found their mandate not only in their own sufferings, but in the Scriptural pronouncement, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him," and they thought it no wrong to accompany their execrations with deeds of violence.

Withal, the march of progress, though not unretarded and not unchequered, was forward. The Radical movement, which came to a head in 1819-20, greatly excited the country. Throughout Ayrshire the working classes as a body responded to the call of the

reformers. In the towns and in almost every village of any size they met to discuss the situation and to decide how best the wrongs might be righted. Some of the more advanced went so far as to prepare schemes for a more equal division of the property of their neighbours, some even met in the gloaming and in the moonlight so as to be proficient in the use of arms and in drill. Pikes were collected and stored away, so as to be in readiness against the day of the rising. Revolutionary literature, most of it printed in London, inspired the zeal of its readers to do and dare in the cause. Great demonstrations were held at Ayr and at Kilmarnock under the watchful eye of the authorities, and so marked was the enthusiasm that bands of men marched distances of twelve and fifteen miles to be present at them. To cope with the threatened troubles, the town of Ayr was garrisoned by soldiers, the Ayrshire Yeomanry Cavalry were kept on the alert, and the Volunteers, locally known as the Dandies, were placed under arms, ready by night as well as by day to march to the scene of the conflict. The Government organised a system of espionage that long remained in extremely unsavoury odour with the people as a whole. There came round a Sunday that was long remembered, when a courier in hot haste rode into town to communicate the tidings that the rebels were "up" in Lanarkshire. The alarum bells clanged furiously, the soldiers and the Yeomanry made haste to respond to the call and marched away amid a scene of great excitement, and the royal burgh was left in charge of the Volunteers. There was no "rising" worthy of the name, and so effective were the measures taken to ensure the keeping of the peace, that the Radical movement was reduced to a constitutional demand for reform. It was not all wasted energy, however, for it led the way to the first Reform Bill; it was an essential part of the education of the men in high places, and it helped to convince them that the time had come when the basis of Parliamentary representation should be materially broadened.

Up to that period, too, the Corporations had been unreformed. The Town Councils were partly self-elected, and partly composed of the representatives of the Incorporated Trades, who kept the regulation of trade and industry in their own hands, and they had degenerated into private cliques and congeries of citizens, who took good care of themselves, and conducted the business of the community as seemed best to them. No man could start in business for himself, except by the grace of the trade corporations. No outsider had any chance of becoming one of the conscript fathers. The whole thing was a ring safeguarded at every point in the interest of those lucky enough to be within the charmed circle. As the result of further agitation, however, the monopoly was broken down, the Councils were thrown open, by means of popular election, to the general body of the electorate, the Trades were relegated to their proper place, and the people felt for the first time what it meant to rule themselves. The franchise was restricted, no doubt, and many years had to elapse ere the working classes were to be raised to the dignity of electors and of fully endowed citizens, but the concessions served their time, and they sufficed to create a sense of content and of restfulness that must have been exceedingly welcome to those who had borne the burden and heat of the agitation, and who, like many other reformers, having attained their ends, were content to tarry awhile before making a new departure. It was not for long, however, that the land had rest. The working classes were disappointed and dissatisfied with the results of the Reform Act of 1832, and in 1838 the Chartist movement was in full swing. Again, over all the shire, the Ayrshire reformers responded to the call. The points of the "People's Charter" were six in number--manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, vote by ballot, annual Parliaments, abolition of property qualification for Members of the House of Commons, and payment of Members of Parliament for their services. The agitation was carried to

over a period of ten years, but the nation failed to respond to it, and, although it was prosecuted with tremendous energy and with great ability, it gradually died out.

If the present generation of dwellers in the ancient royal burgh of Ayr were thrown back into the pre-railway days, they would no doubt think that it was a remarkably slow and self-centred place into which they had come. In these later days, cosmopolitanism is more or less evident in every community. The railways have made it easy for people to travel far and near, comfortably and cheaply. Not only are they in the habit of bringing great numbers of strangers to the town, the large majority of them to pay tribute at the birthplace of Robert Burns, and to visit the scenes which he has made famous; they have also induced a migration of the general public of the United Kingdom, such as was unknown before the country was opened up to railway enterprise. There is some reason indeed for asserting, with considerable confidence, that the pure Ayrshire stock exists only in a very small, and a diminishing quantity. Ireland has contributed largely to the leavening of the people, our own Scottish Highlands have given us richly of their sons and daughters, the English contingent is by no means inconsiderable, and the Continent of Europe, notably Germany, Italy, and Russian Poland, with contingents from Scandinavia and France, has of late years brought in men and women of strange races, whose fusion with the native race must, as time goes on, further change its character. It is inevitable that something should have been lost through this immigration; it is equally certain that more has been gained—greater breadth, wider catholicity, an added lightness and brightness of demeanour, an increased receptiveness to outward influences, a breaking down of the barriers behind which the Ayrshire folks of a century ago had ensconced themselves, to the satisfying conviction that there were no folks like their own folks. Whether they take as high a view of the responsibilities



of life, whether they are as true to their conscientious convictions, and whether they are as independent in the enunciation of their views, and as ready to suffer for them as their forefathers were, are matters that need not be discussed. The world has changed, and Ayrshire has changed with it.

While the life of the county town, in the early years of last century, was what the present generation would regard as humdrum and slow, it had, nevertheless, certain features that were by no means without their special attractiveness. For one thing, Ayr was a rallying point for many of the county families, who have long since deserted it, and whose presence induced not a few persons of the higher ranks to take up their residence within the bounds of the regality. Lord Cockburn gives us an interesting glimpse into this select society. He was at Ayr on Circuit in 1844. By that time the process of the greater centralisation had set in. It had become easy to reach London; it was but the consideration of a forenoon to repair to Edinburgh. In his earlier career as a lawyer, while yet he was pushing his way forward as an advocate, Cockburn had been in the habit of visiting Ayr periodically, and he was able to contrast the latter period with the former. Ayr was then, he says—during the earlier period—“filled with the families of gentlemen, from the county, from India, and from public service, and was a gay, card-playing, dancing, scandal-loving place. There seemed to be a dinner, or a tea, and card party, every day at several houses of Kennedys, and Boswells, and Crawfords, and Dalrymples; lots of old colonels and worthy old ladies; and to get up a ball, nothing was wanted but for somebody to suggest it, and they would be footing it away in a few hours. The taste for scandal probably remains, but all the rest is gone. There are more people in the town now, and they live in better houses. There was no Wellington Square, and scarcely a suburban villa in my day. But the sort of gentry who formed its soul exists no longer. The yellow gentlemen

who now return from India take their idleness and their livers to Cheltenham and Bath. The landowners don't even reside in the shire, or, at least, few of them, but leave their seats cold, under a general system of absenteeism. The Municipal Reform Act has deprived the burgh even of the wretched political importance of its Town Council. The inhabitants whose station, age, habits, or characters, gave respectability to the comfortable county town, are gone; and their very families—the scenes of such mirth, beauty, kindness, and enjoyment—have entirely disappeared. The fashion of the Ayr world hath passed away. The great family of Cassillis had formerly a large mansion for their winter residence in Maybole! The meaning of this was that the clustering together of the adjacent families made even Maybole agreeable; or that the inconvenience of living in that village was less than that of going ten miles further to Ayr. These were the days of no roads and of detached communities. All things now are melted in one sea—with a strong Corryvreckan in it, sweeping everything towards the Metropolis. This has been the process in all provincial capitals. Improved harbours, railroad stations, better trade, and larger masses of migratory people have succeeded; and those who prefer this to the recollections of the olden time will be pleased. My reason is with the modern world, my dreams with the old one. And I feel, as to the ancient days, that much of their enchantment arises from distance.”

“I find,” adds Lord Cockburn, “that Ayr still boasts of its peculiar female beauty. I scarcely ever knew a provincial town that did not. Ayr is not behind, but, though on the look-out, I can't say that my eyes were particularly dazzled. There was one fair figure, however, that haunted my memory—that of her who in the former days was Marion Shaw, and is now the widow of Sir Charles Bell. Beauty such as hers was enough for one city. That portion of it which belonged to the mind is as bright and as graceful as ever, and there are

few forms with which Time has dealt so gently. But the place knows her no more." Miss Shaw, "the beautiful Miss Shaw," as she has been called, is one of the figures in the picture of the Ayr Fish Cross, 1814. It cannot be said that, as there delineated, her features bear out the characterisation of Lord Cockburn, but these were not the days of photographs, and if one were to judge of this celebrated beauty from the interesting engraving of the period mentioned, the most he would be warranted in concluding is that the young lady in question was a bright and comely damsel, plump and happy. This picture has, however, its own story to tell of the days with which we are dealing. These were the times when the most of the marketing was done in the open street, and when, to all appearance, it was not beneath the dignity of the leading gentlemen of the town to take their part in the marketing. The picture includes Provost Hunter, the Rev. Dr. Auld, and Dr. Philip Whiteside, who all appear to have foregathered at the Fish Cross to buy the fish brought in by the morning boats, and dispensed by the somewhat amazonian dames whose husbands and sons had toiled the night through to fill the "woven willows."

When Ayr had its "season," and when many of the county families were content to have their winter quarters in the town, it was inevitable that a good deal of money must have been in circulation among the merchants, and spent on amusements. The theatre was a small building. Crowded to the door, it could not well have accommodated more than about five hundred persons; and yet the manager could afford to offer Paganini, the famous violinist, £100 for one night's entertainment. We say "offer" advisedly, for, as a matter of fact, Paganini never received more than one-half of the covenanted sum. It was his custom to insist on payment before playing. The manager of the theatre, by means of a cock-and-bull story, to the effect that the gentry were determined that he should stay over a second night, and that many of them intended to

pay for both nights at the one time, persuaded him to go upon the stage on receipt of £50; and, when he had seen Paganini well under weigh, he pocketed what remained of the money and made off with it. The Frenchman was exceedingly and most justly angry over the trick had been played upon him; but neither Paganini's wrath, nor the character of the swindle, appears to have troubled the manager very much; for, after the Frenchman had left the district, he reappeared upon the scene smiling, and quite satisfied that he had made a very good thing out of the unholy transaction. Neither does his conduct seem to have smelled very offensively in the nostrils of his patrons. Possibly the facts that Paganini was a Frenchman, and that he had the reputation of being a miser, covered the sin. In these latter days, he would be a somewhat rash *impresario* who would bargain to give the most talented musician alive £100 in a town like Ayr for playing to an audience of four or five hundred persons. In the former times, the county folks were prepared to pay for having a society of their own, it was essential that they should have their excitements in the way of entertainments, and they did not grudge putting their hands into their pockets to pay for them. The Keans, Edmund and Charles, were in Ayr on more than one occasion. The elder Kean had played in the town as a strolling actor, and, because of what the critics of the lower order had regarded as his mannerisms, they had hissed him off the stage. The great tragedian did not forget it, and it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to come at all; when he did come, the little theatre was crammed to the door, the audience was brilliant, and the enthusiasm tremendous. Macready was a prime favourite, so was Mrs. Siddons, so also John Templeton, the famous tenor. And G. V. Brooke gained the initiatory part of his experience as manager of the theatre. The Ayr of the opening years of the twentieth century is a much larger and wealthier place than it was in the pre-railway period, and there is no lack of

county gentry and of retired persons, either within or contiguous to its borders, but it is no longer a place with a winter "season" of its own; "town," and the town houses of the gentry are elsewhere, and most of those composing the class who used to seek its winter shelter, and its winter gaieties, now seek them elsewhere—and far elsewhere.

Whatever may be said for the new order and fashion of events generally, it can hardly be doubted that it has in a large measure broken up that friendly feeling that, in other days, used to exist between the provincial towns and the county families. Some of the chief families of Ayrshire are, for the most part, resident, and they have their reward in the friendship and in the respect of the people as a whole. Some of the leading county gentlemen are also leaders in the conduct of the business of the shire, and the respect is theirs which is never denied to those who do their duty by their day and generation. But absenteeism, nevertheless, prevails widely, and is responsible for much of the broadening of the social gulf. It was one thing to be attached to a laird who dwelt among his own people, as his fathers had done through long succeeding generations; it is another to be attached to the laird who is hardly even known by sight to his own tenantry, and who for all practical everyday purposes is a stranger in the land of his sires. The departure of the winter season in towns like Ayr was inevitable, and there can be neither surprise nor complaining because of it; but that is one thing, and the systematic absenteeism another, and the latter must needs be accompanied by deleterious results.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance, even from the social and moral point of view, of the introduction of railways upon the scene of Scottish life. Commercially, industrially, they have created a revolution. This fact is so self-evident that there is no need to do more than recognise it; but the influences that have impressed themselves upon the conditions of society may not seem at first sight so apparent.

Events, as we have seen, had been gradually preparing themselves for a new departure. Life had become swifter and keener. There was a throbbing of energy in every direction, and in the matter of communication between city and town, and between the country districts and the populous centres, the canals, the highways, and the packet ships were insufficient for the requirements of the public. The stage coaches lumbered along at the rate of six, eight, or ten miles an hour. The carriers' carts did good work, but they did it slowly and leisurely. The horses that dragged the canal boats along never were in any hurry. And the sailing vessels, to which the coasting trade had necessarily to be entrusted, were creatures of the winds and of the waves, liable to be kept indefinitely in port by continued adverse breezes, and storm stayed in roads and bays, and at anchorages, when it was of the utmost importance that the goods that were stowed away in their holds should reach their destinations without loss of time. Upon this easy-going, slow-moving old-worldness came the railway locomotive and the iron railroad. It is interesting to note the character of the considerations that influenced the promoters of the Glasgow and Ayr Railway, when they resolved to apply to Parliament for powers to link up the city with the town, and to compete for the traffic that the district proposed to be covered had to offer in return for their energy and their expenditure.

The data that fell to be considered by these promoters consisted of the existing passenger and goods traffic, by highway, sea, and canal, and with that the certainty of an increase as the result of improved communication. The coach traffic between Glasgow and the Ayrshire districts, which it was proposed to connect by road with the city, was put down at £16,091 6s 6d; the steamboat passengers were regarded as value for £11,113 15s; and the Glasgow, Paisley, and Johnstone passengers were put down as good for £4131 6s. The goods traffic, and the mails and packets, promised to bring up the total

revenue to £80,398 17s 4d. It was estimated that maintenance, locomotive power, management, and incidents would cost £26,799 12s 5d, which would leave as nett profit £53,599 4s 11d. The prospectus proposed a capital of £550,000 in 11,000 shares of £50 each, and it was estimated that the line projected between Glasgow and Ayr was capable of execution at an expense of £11,000 per mile. The line, it was confidently anticipated, would not only increase the normal traffic, but be the parent of new sources of income, notably from minerals and from agricultural sources, and even what is now known as the passenger "coast" traffic—dimly perhaps, but still foreseen by the astute and far-seeing capitalists who were the fathers of the new scheme. The public responded readily to the call for money, the shares were taken up, the necessary powers were obtained from Parliament for the comparatively moderate sum of £23,000—the Edinburgh and Glasgow line cost £53,600 to get it through Parliament, and the Brighton line £150,000—work on the undertaking was begun about the middle of May, 1838, and finished in August, 1840. It was a great day in Ayr, and all along the route, that witnessed the first train run; and when the long row of glittering and gaily bedecked carriages arrived, with what an enthusiastic recorder describes as their "inmates," there went up such a loud and long continued peal of welcome from the joyous multitude as he had "seldom ever heard." It did not take long to demonstrate the success of the undertaking. At their second half-yearly meeting, held early in 1841, the directors were in a position to report that they had carried 510,332 persons, not one of whom had sustained the slightest personal injury; that there were 19 engines on the line, and one yet to be delivered; that the supply of goods waggons was not at all equal to the demand; and that the prospects for the future were in the highest degree satisfactory.

The thronging multitudes might well cheer the passage of the first railway locomotive. It was the

pioneer of a new and a great era. It represented swifter transit for passengers. It brought Glasgow within two hours' reach of Ayr, in place of being nigh upon a day's journey by coach. It meant a development of the commercial, industrial, agricultural, and mineral resources of the countryside, to a degree that not even the most enthusiastic railway promoter could have anticipated. It was the harbinger of new life, of fresh activities, of added possibilities beyond the dreams of the fathers. It was the forerunner of many ventures that were predestinated to make the up till then Sleepy Hollows, self-centred and self-satisfied, hum with energies, to add to the populations of the centres, increase the wages and enhance the comforts of the working classes, send up the valuations of lands and heritages, add to the accommodations and the pleasures of the people, and introduce the more cosmopolitan order inseparable from the wider contact of man with man. Up till that day, to travel forty miles had been an experience and a time-wasting luxury; henceforth it was to be as nothing, and town, and tower, and cottage were to be linked up as they never had been before. Something, no doubt, was lost—something must always be lost when a great gain is to be achieved—but the vintage of the pre-railway days was hardly to equal the gleanings of the railway era.

From the time the railways began, it was inevitable that the country people should seek their markets and their pleasures in the towns. The village fair, the village "race," had for many a long day been an institution. It was a combination of business and of pleasure. There were some fifty of these fairs in Ayrshire. They were resorted to by the whole district for buying and selling. The travelling merchants were there to purchase, to dispose of their wares, to barter, and much honest and legitimate trading was done. But the merchants and the customers for genuine merchandise were comparatively few in number. It was not business but pleasure that prevailed. The



parish took holiday, and it is significant that it was generally recognised that the later the fair was held in the week, the less disastrous it was to the morals of the people. From all quarters gathered in motley crowds of vagrants, of vendors of dirty sweet stuffs, of public entertainers. The ale houses, badly conducted for the most part, and far too many of them either for necessity or morality, were crowded from morning till night, and from night till morning, and enormous quantities of raw, fiery, adulterated liquor found a ready sale. The fair that opened on Tuesday might ostensibly closed on Wednesday night, but the weaklings, the drouths, the hangers-on, carried their carouse forward till the close of the week, and until the Sunday came round with its compulsory cessation from frolic and debauchery. The races were a blot upon sport, in many cases upon humanity as well. There were competitions confined to lame horses, and the poor creatures were driven by whip and spur over the generally rugged and uneven course, while the crowds yelled in thoughtless merriment over their sufferings. Displays such as these could not do otherwise than blunt the better feelings of the onlookers; what was death, or worse, to the horses, was amusement to them. The "feeing fairs" in the towns, to which the farm servants resorted in great numbers, were only less objectionable. They represented the half-yearly chance that came the way of many of the rustics for the enjoyment of a holiday, and so they made the most of them with drinking, and horseplay, often with worse, and it was not until the spring or autumn nights were darkening that they bethought themselves of going home.

The railways changed all that. The village fairs became unnecessary when the farmers and the merchants could meet in the market towns whenever they chose. The rural joys of the village green faded away in the light of the attractions offered by the centres of population. The people were no longer content with the little world of the parish; there were other fields

fairer and more attractive than that to be explored, and which were worth seeing. The excursion by rail was in every way better than the resort to the local centre, with its drinking and its dancing. The register office in town by degrees established itself as a far better and safer place for the engagement of farm hands than the street had proved to be. Cheap railway fares brought the country places in close touch with the towns for shopping, though, no doubt to the detriment of the village merchant. With greater intercommunion, industry was not long in feeling its own strength, and in recognising what a Samson it was. From being a disordered series of congeries, each one separate from and independent of its neighbour, it began to mass, to draw together, to organise, and to assert itself; and it cannot be doubted that the results have been highly beneficial to all concerned. The facilities offered by the railways enabled the manufacturers in the smaller towns to place their goods on the market, on equal terms with those made on the spot of sale. Under the earlier conditions, the shoemaking of Maybole or Kilmaurs, the lace fabric manufactures of Galston, Newmilns, and Darvel, and the cabinetmaking of Beith, could hardly have existed with any hopes of success. And if, unhappily, it is true that the populations of the essentially and distinctively agricultural parishes have diminished, it must, nevertheless, be regarded as a moral and a physical gain to the nation at large that so many of the sons and daughters of toil have been kept in the smaller towns and not driven perforce into the cities.

And with this same intercommunication, with its consequent intercommunion, there has been a corresponding broadening of the vision at large. This may not have been attained without its drawbacks, some of them possibly of a somewhat serious character. If there is more of cosmopolitanism, there is less steadiness and fixity of purpose. If men's thoughts are more catholic, and their sympathies wider, there is some

reason to think that there has been a decadence of fixed principle, and that a good deal of the so-called liberalism in matters of belief is due to a carelessness concerning all the issues that are involved. In these respects the tide may roll back in due time ; there is no sufficient reason why it should not, unless we are to assume that never again will the pace be slower, and the changes less rapid than they have been since the day that the railway locomotive ran its first missionary race. But recognising that everything has not been gain, and that progress must in some degree be paid for by loss, it remains, none the less, indisputable that the march has been triumphantly onwards. Ayrshire is not the same place that it was sixty or seventy years ago. Almost all along the line it has made steady way. Its towns are larger, more populous, throbbing with a stronger life ; its people are more prosperous, healthier, better educated, broader minded ; its outlook upon the world at large is less contracted ; it has more of the " man to man the world o'er " feeling that its poet prayed for in undying song. It no more drowns away the livelong day in its villages, as aforetime it was wont to do ; and, as things appear to promise now, it has a greater future still before it. For its energies are still gathering way as they go, and it is seeking no discharge in the warfare of progress.

## CHAPTER XVI

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### THE SECESSION IN THE COUNTY

Between the emergence of the Church of Scotland from its long struggle with Episcopacy victorious, and the foundation of the Secession Church in 1733, nearly half a century elapsed. The Church, if she had been largely purified by the fires of persecution and of trial, had also been scorched in them. As was the case after the first Reformation, when she had to avail herself of the materials that lay to her hand and minister to the people with the aid of readers and of Presbyterianised priests, many of whom were naturally enough of a very pliable character, and without any special fitness for teaching the doctrines of the reformed faith, she had to fill the pulpits with the best men upon whom she could lay her hands. Some of these, in Ayrshire as well as beyond it, were sorry substitutes for the stronger, sterner, and more rigid men who had gone down in the struggle, and others were of what was known as the Moderate order, ministers of good personal character, sound on the moral side of their work, but lacking in that spiritual enthusiasm and fervour that had carried the Church through the Covenanting period. Their comparatively easy-going methods found, on the whole, general enough favour. They suited the great body of the people, who were content to enjoy rest from the strife of tongues and of factions that had so long prevailed. They did not spare their congregations of

lengthy discourse and lecture, they were ecclesiastically and theologically orthodox, and they guarded zealously the manners and morals of their parishioners. The true stock of the Covenant, however, hungered after greater spirituality, and, as time went on, small groups of the evangelicals formed themselves into Praying Societies, which met more or less regularly in the towns and villages, and maintained the religious enthusiasm which otherwise threatened to grow cold and to give way to a code of orthodoxy and of morality.

The members of these Praying Societies were zealots of the best sort. It was nothing to them, after a week of hard and unrelieved labour, to walk eight or ten miles on the Sabbath morning to the seat of the nearest meeting place, if only they could find the friends and the faith that they desired. They were sure of hospitality wherever they went, as their successors continued to be when they went up to the Communion within reach, until within a comparatively recent period. In some little hall, in some upper room, or in some retired country nook, when the days were long and the sun shone, they held spiritual converse with one another. And when the day was done and the services were at an end, the pedestrians faced the return journey to their own homes without a thought of the long Scotch miles they had to negotiate, content to arrive at their destination when the stars were shining on the midnight, or the moon lit up the sleeping country. To these people—and they were not few in Ayrshire—the advent of the Secession was a godsend. They were the voices crying in the wilderness to herald its approach; and when, in 1733, the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, of Stirling, and his three brethren, because they had taken strong and unrelenting ground of hostility to the obnoxious law of Patronage, were declared by the General Assembly “no longer ministers of the Church,” and formed themselves into the first Associate Presbytery, they were ready to welcome the Secession and to form their Praying Societies into congregations.

Qualified labourers in the Secession vineyard, however, were few, and years were to elapse before Ayrshire was even to be sparsely represented in the ministry of the new Church. Events in the Parish Church of Kilmaurs led to a start being made in 1738 in that district. Fenwick, true to its Covenanted traditions, and still alive to the powerful influence radiated by William Guthrie, its parish minister in the days of the persecution, was ready to respond to the opportunity afforded in the neighbouring burgh through a forced settlement that sent the Magistrates, Town Councillors, and Kirk Session, with one exception, into the arms of the Seceders ; and a congregation was regularly formed in Kilmaurs. This was the parent Secession Church in the county. It became the centre to which the Praying Societies both looked and repaired. Auchinleck, which had maintained its Society without a break from the times of the persecution, followed the same year, and Tarbolton two years later. These were the beginnings of the Secession in Ayrshire ; neither large beginnings, nor in the most populous places. But in these days the influences did not always come from the centres, and the country folks had the true Scottish grit that sufficed to carry them through when the cause which they believed to be that of the right demanded faithfulness and effort.

Various circumstances gave the cause an impetus. In Dalry it was the preaching of William Wilson of Kinclaven, one of the four Secession fathers, who had at one time been assistant to the parish minister ; in Saltcoats it was the example of James Mair, who also had formerly ministered as assistant to the parish minister ; at Galston and Newmilns the people resented the reading of the Porteous Act from the Established Church pulpit, on the ground that the Act itself (which bore on the Porteous riots in Edinburgh) was harsh, that its reading was out of place and uncalled for, and that it was a degradation of the pulpit. It was not, however, till November, 1740, that Ayrshire had a

Secession minister of its own. This was David Smyton, called to Kilmaurs. Smyton's task was no easy one. Four Sabbaths in the year he had to preach at Fenwick, four at Ayrsmoss, six at Dalry, two at Kilwinning, the remainder in Kilmaurs and in Stewarton, which were united in the one charge. There were members of his congregation scattered over the whole county, from Beith to Colmonell, from Ardrossan to Loudoun. He had to visit and to baptise over a wide area, and to give the members of his flock a word in season wherever he found them. He had need to be a strong, resolute, earnest man, and so he was. No considerations of weather or of distance were ever sufficient to daunt him. When Prince Charles Edward made his descent upon Great Britain, the leader of a forlorn hope and in the interest of a beaten cause, Smyton and his Session passed a resolution declaring their readiness to take up arms for the Crown and for the Protestant faith; and, although they refused to take the oath of allegiance, the Government had faith enough in them to put arms in their hands and to send an officer to drill the little corps which they organised.

Smyton's strong will carried him through many difficulties; unfortunately, it also led him to take up an unyielding position in a matter that, even for these days, hardly seems to have been worth taking up a testimony concerning. In the dispensation of the Sacrament, he conceived that it was essential that the bread must first be lifted before being blessed, and that it should be enjoined on all the ministers of the Church to follow the practice. The Presbytery of Glasgow could not be persuaded that the matter was essential, one way or the other, and they decided for toleration and the exercise of forbearance. But this catholic neutrality, this Laodiceanism, did not suit the reverend father of the Ayrshire Seceders, he remained obdurate, formally renounced the authority of the Church, and was suspended. When he returned to Kilmaurs, an "outed" man, he strangely enough forgot to lift the

bread before asking a blessing on it. Smyton had two followers in the ministry, and they endeavoured to get up a "cause"—the cause of the Lifters against the Anti-Lifters—but the people could not be persuaded that the point was of any cardinal importance, the movement died down, and the dissenters returned to their ecclesiastical allegiance. Smyton died in 1789 in the forty-ninth year of his ministry.

It was by somewhat slow degrees that the scattered groups of Seceders were formed into congregations and obtained ministers of their own. After Kilmaurs, Colmonell was the first, in 1760, to be completely equipped. Auchinleck and Kilwinning followed in 1763, Ayr in 1772, Newmilns in 1773, Kilmarnock in 1775, and other settlements followed steadily until the Secession Church was fairly represented in almost every part of the shire. Several of its ministers were men of considerable mark. Robert Smith of Auchinleck was the author of a treatise on "Original Sin;" John Clarkson of Ayr, described as the Whitefield of the Secession, was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures; Robert Jaffray of Kilmarnock published "Reasons of Secession from the National Church;" James Moir of Tarbolton, a champion of orthodoxy, found scope for his zeal for the truth in "A Distinct and Impartial Account of the Process for Socinian Heresy against Dr. M'Gill of Ayr," and in a treatise "On the Scripture Doctrine of Redemption."

Probably the best known man in the Church's ministry in the West was James Robertson, of Kilmarnock. To extensive and varied attainments he added eloquence, power, and originality. In his illustrations he was homely. He told his people, for example, that they could no more expect to win Heaven by their good works than they could hope to get across to Arran on a feather. Not that he undervalued good works. "Everything was bonnie in its ain place; water, for instance, is good for mony a purpose, although ye're a' 'ware we canna theek kirks wi't." Robertson



conducted a highly successful mission in the Orkneys, and had the pleasure of seeing the fruits of it in the formation of churches. He went south as far as London and, entering a Jewish synagogue, began an argument with the officiating priest, reading from the Hebrew Bible. He also dealt with the errors of Dr. M'Gill. Cumnock was likewise fortunate in its minister, John Hall, the first of the Seceders to obtain the degree of Doctor of Divinity. For twenty years before his settlement in 1777, the Seceders had been on such excellent terms with the parish minister that they were in no hurry to have a minister of their own. A change in the pulpit of the Parish Church resulted in a corresponding change in the relations of the Seceders to the Establishment, and in Mr. Hall they obtained a pastor who became a considerable power in the district. He was but one and twenty years of age when he was ordained. People flocked in crowds to hear him on Sacramental occasions; men, probably women as well, walked to wait upon his ministry in his own kirk, from Muirkirk and Dalmellington. He refused a call to London, but on receiving, for the second time, an invitation to Edinburgh, he was instructed to proceed thither by the Church, and so closed nine conspicuous years of usefulness in his first charge, not only to the great regret of his people, but to their indignation as well. For, so displeased were they with the action of the ruling authorities, that they threatened to secede from the denomination because they had loosed the pastoral tie that had been so fruitful for good. Two years later, however, the Cumnock congregation obtained a second excellent man in the person of David Wilson, also a man of power in the pulpit and of great popularity, one of whose special gifts was that he had committed most of Ralph Erskine's "Gospel Sonnets" to memory, and knew how to use them effectively, even to the extent of being able to intone them at the Communion table addresses in a way that appealed straight to the feelings, and to the hearts, of his hearers.

The Seceders, however, were nothing if not controversialists, and, in the earlier years of their history as a denomination, what are now regarded as matters of comparatively little importance, and to be left to the determination of every man on the lines that approve themselves to his own conscience, bulked very largely in their eyes. Within fifteen years of the first Secession, the Church had been divided into two hostile camps, the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers. The ground of divergence was the Burgess Oath, then obligatory on those in the chief cities and some of the larger towns in Scotland who were desirous of becoming burgesses. They had to protest before God "that they professed and allowed with their hearts the true religion, presently professed and allowed by the laws" of Scotland. The Anti-Burghers held that to take this oath was to condone the errors of the Established Church from which they had seceded. The Burghers, on the other hand, regarded this interpretation an undue wresting of the words from their plain meaning, and they pleaded for toleration. But that was not the age of toleration. A thing must be either right or wrong, it involved matter of principle, and where principle was involved there could be no compromise. The dispute waxed hot, the Seceders took sides with all the ardour of the theological Scot of the period; and in 1747 the Church split in two, the one party taking the name of the General Associate Synod, or popularly the Anti-Burgher Synod, the other being known as the Associate, or Burgher Synod. Up to that period there had been no Presbytery in Ayrshire, nor was it until forty-seven years after Mr. Smyton's ordination in Kilmaurs, that the Secession had a judicatory of its own confined to the shire. Now, in place of one, it was destined to have two.

Of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers, the Anti-Burghers were the first to erect a Presbytery, which they called the Kilmarnock Presbytery, in Ayrshire, consisting of seven congregations, Kilmaurs, Colmonell, Auchinleck, Kilwinning 1st, Ayr 1st, Newmilns, and

Kilmarnock (Clerk's Lane). Though few in number, they were blessed with one or two ministers of outstanding qualifications. One of these was George Paxton, D.D., of Kilmours, whose learning and pulpit gifts were recognised by the Church in his appointment to the Professorship of Theology; who combined with his scholarship and his assiduity a fine strain of poetry that found expression in a volume entitled "Village and other Poems;" who published extensively works of a more erudite and theological character; and who, after his translation to Edinburgh, preached for many years to a crowded congregation. The minister of Stewarton, Thomas M'Culloch, was also a Doctor of Divinity, too conspicuous in his qualifications to be left in the old bonnetmaking town, and he ended his days as Principal of Dalhousie College, Halifax. Kilmarnock enjoyed for a time the ministrations of John Ritchie, D.D., a famous participant in the Voluntary Controversy, a man of exceptional physical strength, which he utilised in taking almost incredible journeys on foot, and in swimming in the waters of the bay of Ayr—his native town—and in the delivery of lengthy harangues on his favourite topic, extending occasionally from three to five hours, and so eloquent throughout that, it is said, the people never wearied of them. And Newmilns had also a D.D. in the person of John Bruce, who reached the fifty-sixth year of his ministry, and who was accredited with many of the lovable qualities that are associated with St. John the Divine.

The Burghers had their Presbytery of Kilmarnock as well, and it consisted of eight congregations, Kilmarnock (Fulton's Lane), Cumnock, Tarbolton, Dalry, Fenwick, Galston, Saltcoats (Countess Street), and Mauchline. In 1798 they added Maybole and Wallacetown Church in Ayr, the latter receiving their minister under somewhat unique circumstances. William Schaw, who was settled at Lochwinnoch, had been appointed by the Presbytery to moderate in a call, and, after having preached the sermon, he invited nominations. Up rose one of the

members and said they could not do better than nominate himself, and this having been done and approved of by the meeting, he was duly chosen. The author of a number of theological works, which show him to have been a man of culture as well as of great earnestness, he received the D.D. degree. The Irvine people were tried by one and twenty years of waiting before they could get a minister of their own, and then they began in a barn used for the purpose of making malt—their “manger cradle” as “Robertson of Irvine” later called it in his own poet fashion. The first minister of the Saltcoats congregation, James Boreland, opened his ministry in a quarry on a cold November day, caught cold, and died in six months, and his successor, Henry Fraser, fell heir to a large fortune, lost his faith, and was deposed within nine months. He afterwards became a doctor, wrote several medical books, and showed his versatility by contributing to the Edinburgh Encyclopædia the article on “Grammar.” His successor in Saltcoats only remained four years, and then left for America.

For seventy-three years, from the time of the great division, the Secession was rent in twain, but long before this independent protesting came to an end, negotiations were on foot for reunion. These proceeded slowly, as negotiations of the sort are prone to do in Scotland. The Churches have discovered by experience that nothing is to be gained by haste. The ecclesiastical mind works slowly when there is principle at stake, even after the events that crystallised the principle originally into form and action have become historical. The Burgess Oath never was worth disunion; but that is a twentieth century conclusion, and it was scouted in its day. The progress of the years was needed to break down the barrier, but it was broken down at length, though not altogether. There were Anti-Burghers who were rigidly concerned for the Covenants and their continued obligation; not the Covenants in the whole and exact letter of the seventeenth century, but a strong faith in

their general binding character. Scotland, they held, had been covenanted to God, and she could not get quit of it without a breach of faith. Every effort was made to convince and to conciliate the minority, and in the end only seven ministers in the Synod of the Church refused to enter the union. Of these, four were in the Anti-Burgher Presbytery of Kilmarnock, Peter M'Derment of Auchinleck, Robert Smith of Kilwinning, George Stevenson, D.D., of Ayr, and John Blair of Colmonell. With them were Dr. Paxton, formerly of Kilmaurs, and Dr. M'Crie, the historian. These became the Associate Synod, which in time came to be the Original Secession Church. As the result of the amalgamation, the United Secession Church prospered. Within twenty years it added seven congregations within its bounds to the Presbytery, Girvan, Muirkirk, Kilwinning, West Kilbride, Catrine, Patna, and Troon. The Church was further strengthened, four years after the union, by a further amalgamation, this time with the Relief.

The Relief began in 1782 with the deposition of the Rev. Thomas Gillespie, the parish minister of Carnock, near Dunfermline, because he refused to take part in the ordination of a presentee, who, under the law of Patronage, was being forced by the Presbytery upon an unwilling people. Gillespie was joined later by ministers of the Church of Scotland, the Secession Church, and Independents, all of whom wanted relief from patronage or other ecclesiastical ills. For their day and generation the ministers and members of the Church were very advanced. They discarded the Covenants as a bond of communion, and threw open the Communion Table to members of all the evangelical denominations. Latterly they were closely allied with the Secession, and in the end, in 1847, they joined with them in forming the United Presbyterian Church. In Ayrshire they had only four congregations, Irvine, Saltcoats, Kilmarnock (King Street), and Ayr (Catheart Street). The Irvine church was sorely tried with the Buchanite heresy.

Ordained in 1782, the Rev. Hugh White within eighteen months came under the spell of Mrs. Buchan, one of the rankest religious impostors that ever lived, who represented herself as the mystic woman of Revelation, and managed to persuade White that he was the apocalyptic child whom she had brought forth. The Presbytery dealt sharply with the minister, the burgh magistrates would have none of Mrs. Buchan, whose imposture included a species of free love, and the heresy was cleared out of the county, though not until the congregation had been temporarily wrecked, and a considerable number of its members had followed Mrs. Buchan and her dupe, on their way to "the new Jerusalem," which, geographically, so far as they were concerned, terminated in Dumfriesshire. Otherwise the history of the Relief in Ayrshire was comparatively uneventful. In their day the members were regarded with much suspicion by the Established Church for the laxity of their views, and they had to submit to a good deal of obloquy. It can hardly be said that their designation was a very happy one; but, in spite of that, and of the assaults to which they were exposed, the members of the Relief community succeeded in holding their own, and they were a valuable accession to the Seceders when the amalgamation took place.

Some years before this event occurred, however, the Secession Church had a trial, the result of which was destined to be of considerable importance in the religious life of Scotland. On October 1, 1840, the United Secession Presbytery met in Clerk's Lane Church, Kilmarnock, to ordain James Morison. Mr. Morison had been a highly successful student, he was a clever and close reasoner, his pulpit style was fluent and graceful, and his earnestness was unmistakable. But he was a suspect. He had issued a tract, "The Question—What must I do to be saved?" The Presbytery regarded it as unguarded and calculated to mislead. Mr. Morison, on the contrary, thought it sound, but, in deference to the views of the brethren, he agreed to withdraw it from

circulation, and "seek other means of expressing his sentiments, less liable to be misunderstood." The audience in the church were kept waiting an hour, while the Presbytery interviewed the young minister; then the ordination proceeded in the usual way. But this was only the beginning of the matter, not the end of it. The tract complained of was republished, and it was followed by other two treatises, "Not Quite a Christian," and "The Atonement." Mr Morison was preaching strange doctrine, many of his people were perplexed, the aid of the Presbytery was invoked, and a series of charges formulated. The great Atonement controversy had begun.

There were eight counts in the libel against Mr. Morison. He was charged with teaching (1) that Christ made atonement for the sins of the individual as He made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and that the realising of that statement to be true is saving faith and gives assurance of salvation; (2) that all men are able of themselves to believe the Gospel unto salvation; (3) that no person should be directed to pray for grace to help him to believe, and that no person's prayers could be of any avail until he believed to salvation; (4) that repentance, in Scripture, meant only a change of mind and not godly sorrow for sin; (5) that justification is not pardon, but that it is implied in pardon; (6) that election comes, in the order of nature, after atonement—a doctrine tending to get rid of the doctrine of election altogether; (7) that there were unscriptural and unwarrantable expressions in Mr. Morison's publications calculated to degrade the atonement—for example, that it is a "talismanic something;" and (8) that Mr. Morison was not prepared to say that all men by nature are deserving of death—natural, spiritual, and eternal—on account of Adam's first sin. He was also charged with having reissued his first publication after he had promised to withdraw it. The meeting of Presbytery lasted, with a short interval, from eleven in the morning till eleven at night, Mr.

Morison speaking for several hours. It ended in the Presbytery admonishing him and suspending him from the ministry of the Church, "aye, and until he retract his errors and express his sorrow to the Presbytery for propagating such errors." This course was taken in opposition to a proposal that the Presbytery should adjourn till the following day, so as to give further time for friendly conference. The vote was 20 to 5. The case went to the Synod on appeal, and the judgment of the Presbytery was homologated. A committee was appointed to deal with Mr. Morison, and a friendly three hours' conference followed, but he maintained his position, protesting against the finding of the Synod, and was expelled from the denomination. Of his six elders in Kilmarnock, four were on his side and two opposed to him. None of the ministers of the Presbytery followed him into secession. The withdrawal was very quietly accomplished. In the county at large Mr. Morison had a considerable and a growing following, and the result was the formation of the Evangelical Union Church, which, in Ayrshire as well as elsewhere, as time went on, met with marked success. Mr. Morison was honoured with the degree of D.D. and as the years passed and the veteran Doctor celebrated his jubilee, the congratulations which he received for his valuable work, chiefly in connection with his Commentaries, included generous tributes from the United Presbyterian Church and its distinguished Principal, Dr. Cairns.

The history of the Secession in Ayrshire we need not further pursue. From the formation of the United Presbyterian Church down to the end of the nineteenth century, and from the union of the Church with the Free Church in the ties of United Free Presbyterianism—a trio of words that represents a great deal to the mind of the Scot familiar with all that Presbyterianism has endured that it might be free, and the many paths it has trodden that it might arrive at union—the march has been onward and forward. It has represented a great triumphing over difficulties. It has been main-



tained through many a dark day and over many a rough road. And it is a march, too, that is still going on. There is a movement even now for a wider and more expansive fusion of the national Presbyterianism, and the knowledge of the story of the past, from the days of the first Secession downwards, only requires to be blended with a little healthy faith in order to convince the observer that that which hath already been is that which shall again be, and that some day, perhaps not very far distant, Scotland will be largely reunited in the one historic and national Zion. The history that repeats itself points to no less a consummation.

In matters ecclesiastical it is never safe to dogmatise, however. The Church history of Scotland has many and varied lessons for those who care to read it and to try to interpret its inner meaning. It cannot possibly be questioned that of late years the current has, in its main channel, been flowing steadily towards Presbyterian reunion. Theologians are much less concerned than they were in the olden days for the binding obligation of the many deep mysteries that pertain to Calvinism. They are recognising that the essentials of the faith are one thing and the non-essentials another, and many matters that were regarded as fundamental in their day are now treated as affairs on which men may reasonably differ without any sacrifice of Church fellowship. They are seeing, as they cannot but see, that the people of Scotland are not, as a whole, concerning themselves, as their fathers used to do, with questions of denominationalism; that they are looking more to the practice and to the fruits of religion than to the severely doctrinal principles that are underlying it, and that they are standing aloof from the Church altogether in far larger numbers than in the days gone by; and that, if they are to hold their own, they will have to adapt themselves to the broadening public vision, and to the toleration that is one of the products of expanding education, catholic knowledge, and growing cosmopolitanism. And that being so, there may even be wider unions

awaiting the Church in Scotland than any that appear as yet to be defining themselves upon the horizon.

But one can never tell in what ecclesiastical direction the Scot may develop. There is never a march of progress without some attendant reaction, and he would probably be a dreamer of dreams and a seer of visions who attempted to forecast a time when all the Scottish Presbyterians would be embraced in the one fold, all within the pale of the one great national Zion; a Church Calvinistic enough to be distinctly individualistic, yet sufficiently catholic to include the various denominations that are still maintaining their independence of one another. But these are general and not historical considerations, and their elucidation may well be left to those whom they shall primarily concern.

END OF VOLUME I