

mately settled, the King building a villa cottage for him at Sans Souci. There he lived, a young woman a Turkish foundling saved by his brother at the sack of Ockzakoff refusing to marry away from him, and even there, wrote his kinsman, 'the feats of our barelegged warriors in the late war accompanied by a pibroch in his outer room have an effect on the old Don which would delight you.' At last on 28th May 1778, he passed away, never losing in his illness his sweetness of temper, and, with a touch of his old jocular humour, offering to the British Minister to convey any commissions he might have for Lord Chatham who had died a fortnight before. And still the ruin of Inverugie remains the best monument of his ancient race, and emblem of his shattered fortunes, and the rock of Dunottar typifies no less faithfully the soldier brother who stood as firm in the stress of battle.

ART. VII.—THE TWO GREATEST OF SCOTTISH
CATERANS.

THE directors of the Highland Railway, solicitous for the welfare of their passengers, show at one of the best known, and not least important of their stations, a special thoughtfulness, which is, perhaps, not so much appreciated as it deserves to be by the tourist rushing to find health and golf at Nairn, or the sportsman bent upon demonstrating the temper of English stoicism by facing the discomforts of a soaking Twelfth of August upon a Scottish moor. The traveller who has been surfeited with the leafy riches of Perthshire scenery, has rushed through the Pass of Killiecrankie with the fervour of Macaulay's prose, if not with the roaring fury of the Highland clans, and has panted up the ascent to Dalnaspidal, relieved as it is from absolute dreariness by the brawling Garry, is glad to rest for a few minutes at Kingussie Station, stretch his legs on the platform, and drink the cup of tea which is offered for his acceptance. During the brief respite from the

occasionally too severe task of realising the grandeur of the Grampians which is here offered him, his eye cannot fail to note a grey pile of ruins, surmounting a conical green mound, about three-quarters of a mile distant on the south side of the Spey, which has now superseded the Garry in the landscape as the Garry superseded the Tay. If he has time to make enquiries, or to consult a guide-book, he ascertains that these ruins are popularly known as Ruthven Castle, but that they are in reality all that is left of the barracks erected by the British Government about the middle of the seventeenth century to aid in keeping the always turbulent Highlands in order. But if he is wise enough to halt for a few days at Kingussie, and make it his head-quarters while he is engaged in exploring the beauties of Speyside, he will learn a great deal more about the history of Ruthven Castle. No fortress in Scotland has suffered more the brunt of war; none has been so often destroyed and so often rebuilt. "Standing at a crossing point of tracks north, south, east, and west, in the great valley of the Spey, it saw and felt every raid westward by the Gordons, Grants, Mackintoshes; eastwards by Macdonalds, Camerons, Macleaus, and Campbells; southwards by them all, with Macphersons, Mackenzies, and many more; and northward by the regular forces of the kingdom." Huntly, when fighting "the bonnie Earl of Moray," repaired it. Argyll besieged it when it was held by Macphersons. Montrose, Monk, Lilburn, and Mackay in turn garrisoned it. Dundee burned it. It was in front of Ruthven that the remains of the defeated army of Prince Charles—a force of several thousands strong which, well led, might have accomplished much—rallied after the disaster of Culloden, and it was there that most of them received, with rage and grief, the somewhat cold-blooded *sauve qui peut* transmitted to them by an aide-de-camp.

Yet the more one studies Ruthven Castle and that Highland region which it appears even yet to guard with dignity, but with a mournful ineffectuality, against invasion from the South, the more one historic figure seems to overshadow all the others that have for six centuries been associated with it. This is the extraordinary man, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Badenoch,

Buchan, and Ross—the strong son of a weak father, the strong father of a still stronger son—who, about the close of the fourteenth century, was granted Ruthven Castle by the Crown as he was granted the other inheritances and strongholds of the Red Comyn. Everybody is familiar with his portrait as it is given in the story which Sir Thomas Dick Lauder has named after him. Nearly seven feet in height, of herculean strength, impatient of parental control, the slave of fierce passions and miserable superstitions—his atrocities, his almost regal hospitalities, his empty terrors, and finally his abject humiliation, give a certain fascination to one of the dullest even of historical romances. Yet it is this Wolfe of Badenoch that lives to the present day.

‘The name by which he is best known in history—the Wolfe of Badenoch—describes him to the life. Cruel, vindictive, and despotic—a Celtic Attila as he has been called—he resembles one of those half-human, half-bestial barons depicted in Ereckmann-Chatrian’s romances, who were the terror of France and Germany during the middle ages.’

So he is designated by the latest historian of the Badenoch region, Sheriff Rampini, in the excellent *History of Moray and Nairn* which he has contributed to Messrs. Blackwood’s series of County Histories. Mr. Rampini then proceeds to condense the best part of Dick Lauder’s romance into this account of the historic outrage which, in 1390, gained for the Wolfe everlasting infamy. The story could not have been better or more succinctly told:—

‘By his wife (Euphemia, Countess of Ross, and, when Alexander Stewart married her, widow of Walter de Leslie) he had no children, and he had accordingly left her to live with another woman—a certain Mariot, daughter of Athyn—who had already borne him several sons. The outraged Countess applied to the bishops of Moray and Ross for redress, and in 1389 they, as consistorial judges, pronounced, at Inverness, degree of adherence in her favour against her husband, ordering him at the same time to find security for his future good behaviour towards her in the sum of £200. This was more than the Wolfe could brook, and he determined upon revenge. He seized upon some lands belonging to the Bishop of Moray in Badenoch. The Bishop promptly excommunicated him. All the savagery in his nature was now roused. Sending out the fiery cross he gathered his fierce caterans together—‘Wyld, wykkyd Hielandmen,’ Wyntoun calls them—and swooping down from his stronghold of Lochindorb, he burned the town of Forres, the choir of the church of St. Lawrence

there, and the manse of the archdeacon in the neighbourhood of the town. Intoxicated with success, he resolved upon still further reprisals. Tramping over twelve miles of heather and holt which in those days separated the towns of Forres and Elgin, he arrived in the cathedral city one morning early in June, 1390. It was the day of the feast of the Blessed Abbot Botolph. The honest burgesses were awakened from their peaceful slumbers by the noise of crackling timbers and blinding clouds of smoke. The whole town was in flames. Meanwhile the ruthless incendiaries were at work on the public buildings. The parish church of St. Giles was blazing, the hospital Maison Dieu was in a similar condition; so were the eighteen noble and beautiful manses of the canons situated within the precinct walls; "and, what is most grievously to be lamented, the noble and highly adorned church of Moray, the delight of the country and ornament of the kingdom, with all the books, charters, and goods of the country placed therein."

But although Sheriff Rampini accepts the 'Celtic Attila' theory of the Wolfe—does not the 'Boar of Ardennes' in *Quentin Durward*, come nearer the reality than the 'Celtic Attila?'—he does not swallow tradition and Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's reading of it absolutely. He declines to believe in the final triumph of the Church and the abasement of its savage enemy.

'The popular tradition that before his death, which occurred on the 20th February, 1394, he repented of his crimes, and actually did penance for his sacrilege, rests on no higher authority than that of the clerical scribe who wrote the "Quædam Memorabilia"—an unauthoritative chronicle of events in Scottish and English history between the years 1390 and 1402—appended to the Chartulary of Moray. None of the old historians mention it. Fordun says nothing about it; neither does Wyntoun; neither does the "Liber Pluscardensis." It is hardly likely that an event which would have so eminently vindicated the authority of Mother Church should have been omitted by such devoted Churchmen. Until further confirmation is obtained we must set down the story as one of those pious fibs which unfortunately are not uncommon in the writings of ecclesiastical chroniclers, whose zeal for the honour of their subjects was often in inverse proportion to their own veracity.'

But the visitor to Strathspey who can afford to spend a few days revelling in its scenery finds more traces of the Wolfe of Badenoch than the ruins of Ruthven Castle and the possibilities suggested by its commanding site. If he accepts the wisdom which is certain to be offered him by a multitude of

counsellors, he will make his way by driving from Kingussie, or by walking from Aviemore, to the most beautiful of all the minor Highland lochs, Loch-an-eilan, on the borders of the Rothiemurchus forest—a sheet of water some two or three miles in circumference, and literally embosomed amid woods and hills, from the highest of which, the great white Ord Ban, clad with birches almost to its summit, a view can be had of eight lochs, and, in fine weather, a glimpse can be had even of Ben Nevis. But the word Loch-an-eilan means ‘Lake of the Island,’ and on this island, which is but a short distance from the shore, stand the ruined walls of what must have been a tolerably strong fortress. On enquiry he will find that this castle was built by the same Wolfe of Badenoch who occupied Ruthven Castle, and sacked Forres and Elgin.

But the Wolfe of Badenoch is identified in romance if not in sober history even less with Ruthven or with Loch-an-eilan, than with Loch-in-dorb, that ‘lake of black water’ which is some ten miles from Grantown and three from Dava, the nearest station to it on the Highland line. For it was from Loch-in-dorb that in 1393 Alexander Stewart descended on the Laigh of Murray and burnt Forres and Elgin. Tradition indeed, associates Loch-in-dorb with ‘fair women and brave men,’ who lived long before the Wolfe and the fascinating ‘Mariota filia Athyn’ for whom he forsook his Countess and defied the terrors of the Church. Was it not in Loch-in-dorb that in 1336 Sir Andrew Moray, Regent of Scotland in succession to the Douglas who was killed at Halidon Hill, besieged Catherine de Beaumont, widow of David de Hastings, Earl of Atholl, and ‘a’ the ladyis that were lovely,’ because she and they were partisans of England? The castle of Loch-in-dorb fell into the hands of the Comyns and was, of course, transferred with the rest of their lands to Alexander Stewart when he became lord of Badenoch. It must have been a place of considerable size and great strength, for the ramparts which rise round the whole edge of the island to the height of nearly thirty feet enclose five courts, one of which seems to have been used as a kitchen garden, and doubtless supplied

materials for those barbaric feasts which found a place if not in history, at least in the story of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder.

Alexander Stewart therefore, had at least three fortresses in his possession of commanding strength in themselves and also of supreme strategical value—Ruthven, Loch-an-eilan, and Loch-in-dorb. Even the novice in military matters can see that the man who occupied them, must have had a keen eye to the possibilities of political power involved in the planting of fortresses in the proper places. With such power as he had placed in his hands, he might, it is evident, have been something more than merely Lord of Badenoch and King's Seneschal in the region between the Perthshire Highlands and the Moray Firth. He might have been to all intents and purposes an independent monarch. And the question is was he not? The object of those of the following pages which are devoted to him as distinguished from that still more brilliant adventurer and leader of caterans, his son, is to show with the help of such historical authorities as appear to be now available that at least he may have been.

Who was Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan and Wolfe of Badenoch? Robert II., the only child of Walter the High Steward of Scotland by Marjory Bruce, who was born in 1316 and ascended the throne of Scotland in February, 1370, and whose character and personal appearance have been admirably hit off by Froissart with a stroke of genuinely French realism as 'a man not valiant with red blear eyes who would rather be still than ride,' would seem when not more than twenty years of age to have formed an irregular connection with Elizabeth, daughter of Adam Mure or More of Rowallan, the result of which was a large family. Elizabeth had entered into a marriage *per verba de presenti* with Hugh de Clifford when she was eleven years of age, and Clifford nine. But the marriage had never been ratified; and on 12th October, 1344, in anticipation of her intended marriage to the Steward, that bond was dissolved by papal authority. Another papal dispensation, dated 22nd Nov., 1347, removed two further impediments to this marriage, which arose from Robert 'being related to Elizabeth in the fourth degree of consanguinity, and having.

had illicit intercourse with a lady related to her in the third and fourth degrees.' They were undoubtedly married in 1349, but although there was a dispensation legitimating the *multitudo probis utriusque sexus*, which had previously been born, it remained a point admitting of doubt among canonists whether such a provision in the absence of any assertion either of a previous marriage, or of ignorance of the impediments, conferred the full status. By 1355 Elizabeth Mure must have been dead, for in that year Robert obtained a dispensation which enabled him to marry Euphemia, daughter of the Earl of Ross and widow of the Earl of Moray. Of the legitimacy of the family which was the result of this union there was never any question whatever, and any legal doubts as to the capacity of the first family to succeed to the throne were obviated by two settlements of the crown made soon after the accession of Robert II. Alexander Stewart was the fourth son of Robert, by Elizabeth Mure, and if he was illegitimate, so must have been his eldest brother, John, who succeeded his father under the designation of Robert the Third. It would appear that Alexander was always a favourite with his father.

Robert was certainly not long in giving practical evidence of his partiality for his possibly rebellious, but unquestionably capable son. There seems to be some doubt as to whether it was on the 22nd February, 1370, or the 22nd February, 1371, that King David died. If the latter is the correct date, only a few weeks passed before the king showed that it was his fourth son that he delighted to honour. It is on record that charters of the lands of Badenoch, with the fortress of Lochindorb, were granted to Alexander Stewart on 30th March, 1371. In June of the same year he had a grant made to him of the lands of Strathaven. In October of the following year he was made Justiciary of Scotland north of the Forth, and king's seneschal or lieutenant from the border of Moray northwards. Alexander's career of honour and prosperity unquestionably lasted nearly twelve years. Between 1376 and 1379 fresh charters of land were granted to him in Banffshire, Sutherlandshire, Invernessshire, and Aberdeenshire. In

or shortly before 1382 he married Euphemia, Countess of Ross, daughter of William, Earl of Ross, and widow of Sir Walter Lesley. She and her predecessors had come to possess one half of the lands of the earldom of Buchan, in consequence of the marriage of the brother of a former Earl with the younger daughter of Earl John Comyn; and, on her marriage she resigned these lands (designated the barony of Kynedward) to the King, who, on 22nd July, 1382, re-granted them to her and her husband, Sir Alexander Stewart, who, from that date forward is called Earl of Buchan. Three days later, as is proved by an examination of the public records, grants were made to him of properties in almost every district of Scotland, including the islands of Skye and Lewis. Alexander Stewart was now at the height of his prosperity; at this time indeed, he was probably the most powerful subject of the Scottish Crown with the possible exception of the head of the house of Douglas. His marriage does not appear, however, to have brought him happiness. At all events, his next appearance in Scottish history, and that which is better known than any other, is unfortunately due in a sense to that unhappiness. Whether it was because his wife proved childless or not, it is beyond question that he deserted her for another woman of whom all we know is that she is designated as 'Mariota filia Athyn.' It may be considered certain, however, that his connection with Mariota dated a considerable time before his marriage with the Countess of Ross. By her he had five sons—Alexander, who, as will be seen, played an even more distinguished and erratic part in the history of Scotland than his father, Andrew, Walter, James, and Duncan. In 1389 some of these must have been grown up, though whether they were quite so old as they are represented in Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's story may perhaps be doubted. In that year, lawlessness and disorder, more especially in the border country or debateable land between Highlands and Lowlands, would seem to have given trouble to the Scottish Estates, for they issued an Order in Council at a meeting which was held at Perth in January of that year that 'the sons of Sir Alexander Stewart who were prisoners at Stirling should be kept at

security and not liberated without the authority of the Estates.'

It would not have been unnatural if Alexander Stewart's sons had sided with their father and mother in the great quarrel in which they were involved with Alexander Bur, or Barr, who was bishop of Moray between 1362 and 1397. The popular view of the origin of this quarrel has already been given in the language of Sheriff Rampini. The offended and deserted countess appeals for redress to the Bishop of Moray. He and his brother of Ross hold a consistorial court, at which the lord of Badenoch is 'ordained to live with the countess whom he had deserted for Mariota, filia Athyn, and he becomes bound not to maltreat his wife under a penalty of £200.' Getting into a savage passion, the extravagances of which are duly detailed by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, the Wolfe retaliates by seizing some lands belonging to the Bishop. This is followed by excommunication, and that in turn by the burning of Forres and Elgin in the early summer of 1390. It is not improbable, however, that Alexander Barr and Alexander Stewart were bitterly opposed to each other from the very moment the latter was appointed by his father his lieutenant and Justiciary north of the Forth. The Bishop of Moray, thanks to the activity of his predecessors, and particularly of the patriotic and also eminently astute Andrea de Moravia, was a great secular as well as spiritual potentate, and a landed proprietor in no fewer than five counties—Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Nairn, and Inverness. His diocese, according to Cosmo Innes, 'seems to have extended along the coast from the river Forn, its boundary with Ross to the Spey. Bounded by Loch Aber on the south, it included the country surrounding Loch Ness, the valleys of the Nairn and Findhorn, Badenoch and Strathspey, the valleys of the Avon and Fiddich, and all the upper part of Banffshire, comprehending Strathyla and Strathbog in Aberdeenshire.'

It is highly probable that Bishop Bar found himself in opposition to Alexander Stewart from the very commencement of the latter's occupation of the lands of Badenoch. Possibly he apprehended trouble in connection with his spiritual and

ecclesiastical authority from a man who had no doubt a reputation as an audaciously free liver. But it seems certain that the two Alexanders came first into serious collision over a question of property or at least of 'superiority' in land. In the first year of his father's reign he is mentioned (*Exchequer Rolls*, vol. ii.) as 'intromitting with the rents of the Earldom of Moray.' He is further represented as in 1373 entering into possession of the 'abthanice' of Dull, and in 1376 refusing to pay customs at Inverness. Finally in 1380 the two potentates appear in open quarrel. 'In 1380,' says the *Registrum Moraviense*, 'Alexander Stewart, Lord of Badenoch, in the most formal manner, cites the holders of certain lands of Badenoch to appear and produce their titles at the Standard Stauns of the Rathe of Kyngucey. Amongst others, the Bishop of Moray appeared upon this citation, not however to prove his titles to his lands of Badenoch, but to protest against the jurisdiction and the whole proceedings of the Earl, whom he refused to acknowledge as his overlord.' Here, therefore, we have the origin of the quarrel between the two Alexanders—obviously both obstinate and self-willed men—in a dispute as to overlordship. Essentially, therefore, it was of the commonplace kind of which a great deal was heard from about this date forward in Scottish history till the Reformation, one of the secondary results of which was, as is perhaps too notorious, the seizure of the best and bulk of the Church lands by the nobles. It is extremely probable, however, that the Bishop of Moray now set himself deliberately to destroy the authority of the man whose life he condemned and whose overlordship he flouted. Probably Sir Thomas Dick Lauder is essentially in the right in representing the old king as ultimately turning against his son. Two blows were struck against Alexander in 1389 by the Church and by Parliament. As has been already seen, the Bishop of Moray, who had secured the co-operation of the Bishop of Ross, pronounced in favour of the Earl of Buchan's wife as against his mistress. In December of the same year, 'Sir Alexander Stewart of Badenoch was deprived of the office of Justiciary north of the Firth; and the mention in the Parliamentary record of his frequent and repeated

neglect of duty as the ground of his deposition, is suggestive of his having held that office for some time.’*

But Alexander Stewart was not a man to allow himself to be crushed by his enemies without letting them see the stern stuff he was made of. The common story is that his first move was the seizure of certain lands in the bishopric of Moray. It has already been seen that in 1380 the bishop and the earl had had a dispute over the property and overlordship of certain lands. In the *Registrum Moraviense* for 1381 and 1383 we have these two remarkable statements, which would seem to indicate that the bishop had seen it advisable, in spite of his defiance of 1380, to recognise certain of the Earl's claims as just: ‘Alexander Dominus de Badenoch quietas clamat terras Episcopi de Logan-Kenny, Ardynche, et terras capellarum de Roth et Demachtan. . . Episcopus ad formam concedit Alexandro Domino de Badenoch et duobus heredibus terram de Ratmorchus.’ It is at least possible, therefore, that the seizing of the bishop's lands which, according to tradition, was followed by excommunication, had nothing to do with the episcopal interference in Stewart's domestic concerns. But one can readily believe that the earl was boiling over with indignation against the persistent antagonist who had questioned his overlordship, had interfered in his private affairs, and had discredited him in the eyes of his father and of the Scots Parliament. He only waited for a fitting opportunity to strike—and to strike hard, effectually, and once for all. The opportunity soon came. Robert the Second died at his castle of Dundonald, in Ayrshire, on the 19th April, 1390. He was succeeded by his son, Robert the Third, originally John, one of the most unfortunate and quite the weakest of the Stewarts. There was confusion in Scotland—the confusion inseparable from the commencement of a new reign—and Alexander probably knew what a weakling the new king was. He did not wait for the coronation, but in June hurled his caterans from Loch-in-dorb on his enemy.

The burning of Forres and Elgin was doubtless an act of

* *Acts Parl. Scot.*, I., p. 556.

barbarity, but it was a masterpiece in its way. The march upon the doomed towns was brilliantly conceived and skilfully carried out. Both bishop and burgesses were completely taken by surprise. Nor is there the slightest evidence of a trustworthy nature that any punishment was inflicted upon the victorious Wolfe. There is, of course, the story that 'Lord Alexander Stewart, by special commission from Lord Alexander Barr, Bishop, was absolved by Lord Walter Trail, Bishop of St. Andrews, in presence of the Lord the King, the Earl of Fife, Lord William de Keith, Malcolm de Drummond Lord of Marre, and Lord Thomas de Erskyn, and many others at Perth, before the doors of the church of the Predicate Brothers, and thereafter before the high altar, from the sentence of excommunication on condition that he made satisfaction to the church of Moray, and that he send to the Pope for absolution from the former sentence of excommunication made against him.' But, as has already been seen, historical scepticism, perhaps too rudely, declines to see in this story of the repentance at Perth anything more than 'One of those pious fibs which, unfortunately, are not uncommon in the writings of ecclesiastical chroniclers.' Had the Wolfe's 'satisfaction' taken a tangible form, it is incredible that there should not have been some record of it.

According to tradition Alexander Stewart predeceased his opponent by three years, and died on 30th February, 1394. It is a remarkable, if not a suspicious circumstance, that if this tradition can be relied upon, he must, in spite of the record of his life, have died in the very richest odour of sanctity. The common belief is that he was buried in Dunkeld Cathedral. There, indeed, are still shown the grave of the 'Dominus de Badenoch' and a monument to him, consisting of his effigy recumbent in armour and as large as life, supported by a row of ornamental figures. This monument is somewhat defaced, and we are generally told that this mutilation was the work of a party of Cameronians stationed at Duukeld in 1688. Why the Cameronians should have directed their wrath against the tomb of a man who did as much harm to a Roman Catholic cathedral as could have been accomplished by any Protestant

mob of the Reformation period is not quite clear. On this account, and perhaps for other reasons as well, historical scepticism has lately attacked the belief that the Dominus de Badenoch, whose effigy is to be seen in Dunkeld Cathedral, is the redoubtable Alexander Stewart. In a paper on 'The Monumental Effigies of Scotland,' which appears in the proceedings of the Antiquarian Society of May 13, 1895, Mr. Robert Brydall expresses the opinion that 'the tomb is that of another Dominus de Badenoch, who died on 20th July, year illegible, and that the armour is that of the fifteenth century.' But if Stewart died in 1394, how comes it that in the *Registrum Moraviense* we find this injunction under the year 1398, *Rex mandat comiti Buchanie ut castrum de Spyny Episcopo reddat.* This is clearly no mistake for 1389, for the king addresses the the Earl of Buchan as *Dilectus frater*.*

What a field for conjecture, but unhappily for conjecture only, is opened up by this record in the *Registrum Moraviense*? It would seem certain, however, that the Wolfe had not confined his war of aggression—or of self-defence—against the bishopric of Moray to the lifetime of Alexander Barr. Scarcely had the new bishop, known as William of Spynie, entered upon office than he was attacked, and apparently with success,

* I may as well give the exact words of the 'Preceptum Regis ad reddendum Episcopo castrum de Spyni,' because they seem absolutely conclusive as to the date of the demand made upon the Wolfe and the name of the aggrieved prelate. Robertus Dei gratia Rex Scotorum dilecto fratri nostro Alexandro Senescalli comiti Buchanie salutem. Cum venerabilis in Christo pater Willelmus permissione divina Moraviensis ad nostram nuper accedens presentiam coram quibusdam baronibus ac nobilibus consilii nostri nobis fecerit fidelitatem suam reverenter et debite ut tenetur; ob quod liberavimus eidem Episcopo a manibus nostris omnes terras suas et possessiones episcopatus Moraviensis. Quare vobis mandamus et firmiter precipimus quatinus visis presentibus indilate et [a] quovis obstaculo impediementi libere liberetis et liberari faciatis a manibus vestris et etiam a manibus quorumcunque custodum seu deputatorum vestrorum castrum de Spyni cum pertinentis suis presuli antedicto; nullas petentes expensas ab eodem pro ipsius castri custodia pro temporibus transactis quoquomodo; prout honorem vestrum servare et nobis complacere volueritis specialiter in hac parte. Datum sub testimonio nostri magni sigilli. Apud Perth tertio die mensis Maii anno regni nostri nono.

in his stronghold. That Alexander Stewart should have struck at Bishop William in his own stronghold of Spynie is another proof that he was one of the greatest masters of foray warfare that Scotland has ever produced.

It seems impossible, therefore, to settle when Alexander Stewart died. Too much emphasis should not perhaps be placed on a curious story, which, however, receives some countenance from one of the indexes to the fifth volume of the Exchequer Rolls, and which represents 'Sir A. Stuart comes Buchanie' obtaining his discharge for £7 8s. 11d. as his contribution to the common good at Perth on 7th July, 1404. It may be assumed, however, that he was dead by the 20th September, 1406, for in a charter granted to his then all-powerful brother, the Duke of Albany, we find that ambitious and selfish prince designated 'Dux Albanie et comes de Monteith et Buchan.' As Alexander Stewart died without lawful issue, his lands reverted to the Crown. Doubtless they were granted to Albany by the feeble king. They reverted once more to the Crown, and finally Badenoch was granted to the Earl of Huntly in 1452.

Alexander Stewart had five sons by Mariota 'filia Athyn,' Alexander, Andrew, Walter, James, and Duncan. They seem from various vague allusions in historical records to certain 'lawless disturbances' in which they figured, and which led to their being imprisoned and 'bound over to keep the peace' more than once, to have heartily espoused the side of their father in his numerous quarrels. The eldest, Alexander, was destined to have a more brilliant career as a political and military free lance than even the Wolfe, although it was never his fate to govern a practically independent kingdom as it is now manifest his father did. But as the commander who, on the bloody field of Harlaw in 1415, stayed the victorious and ravaging progress of Donald, Lord of the Isles, and his Highland host, he has been declared by Burton and other historians to have done more for the civilisation of Scotland than even the victor of Bannockburn. It is to be regretted that even painstaking Scottish writers should have confounded the two great caterans. Thus, in one of the most trustworthy, accurate, and

deservedly popular of modern encyclopædias, I read that 'the male line of the Celtic Earls of Mar expired in 1377 with Thomas, thirteenth earl, whose sister Margaret married William, first Earl of Douglas. Their daughter, Isabella, in 1404, married Alexander Stewart, the "Wolfe of Badenoch" who, after her death in 1419, was designated Earl of Mar.' In this inaccurate fashion we have allusion made to the marriage of the second Alexander Stewart—an event which, extraordinary and melodramatic though it was, is but an incident in a life fuller of romance and vicissitude than that of any Scotsman, with the possible exception of Montrose.

The good Fordun has thus summed up the career and the extraordinary moral transformation of the Earl of Mar: 'In juventute erat multum indomitus et ductor catervanorum, in virum alterum mutatus placenter trans montes quasi aquilonem gubernabat.' The first important appearance of the second Alexander Stewart as a *ductor catervanorum* has been recorded by Burton in his *Scot Abroad* and his *History of Scotland*. What he says in the former may be quoted. 'This worthy (the Wolfe) had a favourite illegitimate son also called Alexander. He, as natural, followed his father's footsteps, and collected a troop of barelegged ruffians who reived and ravaged far and near. The Lindsays, Ogilvies, and other gentlemen of Angus, resolved to put a stop to this, and collected a body of men at arms and Lowland bowmen, a sort of force which held the Highland caterans in utter scorn as a set of rabble to be swept before them. The Wolfe cubs, however, alighted on the tactic which in later times made a Highland force terrible—a concentrated rush on the enemy. This the small body of Highlanders caught on the rugged banks of the Isla, and they were at once swept away, mail-clad horsemen and all, before the horde of savages they had despised.' Then Burton goes on to tell in the rugged verse of Wyntoun how Sir David Lyndsay pinned a Highlander to the ground with his lance, and how the doomed man, writhing up ('up throwing,' says Wyntoun), struck a savage blow at his conqueror with his sword. Scott utilised this incident, which has been recorded of other battles than that on the banks of Isla,

including 'the red Harlaw' itself, and indeed is a common occurrence in savage warfare.

There is no record of the extent to which Stewart and his Highlanders pursued their victory, in which a large number of Lowland, and especially Perthshire, gentlemen fell. Still less is there evidence of its being avenged. The feeble Government of the day proclaimed him and his chief associates outlaws 'for the slaughter of Walter Ogilvy and others,' but no punishment was ever inflicted upon them, and it is not impossible that the Wolfe (for at the time of this raid the Earl of Buchan was certainly alive) and his son extended their authority into Perthshire. If it could be proved that it is actually the Wolfe who is entombed in Dunkeld Cathedral, such a view would be greatly strengthened.*

Although Alexander Stewart, the second, did not succeed on his father's death to the lordship of Badenoch, and does not appear to have thought himself strong enough to seize it, he had early in the fourteenth century obtained a high reputation as a leader of freebooters—a fact which encourages the belief that it was he and not his younger brother who overthrew the Perthshire knights in 1392. That a large number of his father's retainers adhered to him may be considered certain. At their head he considered himself equal to any undertaking. Nor was his confidence ill-founded, as appears from the next

* Bower attributes the Isla exploit to *Duncan* Stewart, and it is of course possible that the daring and successful leader of the caterans was Alexander Stewart's youngest brother. Some Scottish historians have followed Bower. Among them is Dr. Mackintosh, who thus tells the story given above in the volume on Scotland, which he contributed in 1890 to Mr. Fisher Unwin's 'Story of the Nations' series: 'The Wolfe's natural son, Duncan Stewart, led a party of his adherents across the mountains and plundered the Lowlands. In 1392 the landed gentry mustered and met him at Fasklune, but he completely defeated them. The Government ordered Duncan Stewart and his accomplices to be proclaimed outlaws for the slaughter of Walter Ogilvy and others; but it is evident that Duncan Stewart was not harmed, for in subsequent history he re-appeared as the Earl of Mar.' Here Dr. Mackintosh is not so accurate as he usually is. Duncan Stewart may have been victorious at Fasklune, but it was Alexander who became Earl of Mar.

episode in his career which, even as told in the comparatively prosaic story of the *Douglas Peerage*, is aflame with mediæval romance:—‘Isobel, Countess of Mar, succeeded her brother, James Earl of Douglas and Mar in his earldom of Mar, 1388. She married, first, Sir Malcolm Drummond of Drummond, as appears from a charter of Robert the Third to Malcolm Drummond, Earl of Mar, of a pension of £20 money furth of Inverness, in recompense and satisfaction of the third part of the ransom of Sir Randolph Percy, which exceeded £600. In this charter Drummond is called the king’s brother, and Malcolm Drummond, Dominus de Mar, witnessed a charter of King Robert III., 1398. He died, without issue, before 27th May, 1403, when she was granted a charter in her viduity. She took as her second husband Alexander Stewart, natural son of Alexander, Earl of Buchan, fourth son of King Robert the Second. His first appearance in life was at the head of a formidable band of robbers in the Highlands of Scotland. He cast his eyes on the Countess of Mar, stormed her castle of Kildrummie, and, whether by violence or by persuasion, obtained her in marriage. On the 12th August, 1404, under the title of Isobel, Countess of Mar and Garioch, she granted her earldom of Mar and Garioch, with all other lands, etc., belonging to her by right of inheritance, to Alexander Stewart and the heirs to be procreated betwixt him and her; which failing, to his lawful heirs and assignees whatsoever, to be held as freely as she or her predecessors, Earls of Mar or of Douglas, held the same. . . . It would seem that Alexander Stewart, enterprising as he was, soon became sensible that to seize the castle, to wed the heiress, and to carry off the earldom from the countess’s lawful heirs, were measures too bold, even in an age of misrule. He, therefore, endeavoured to palliate his conduct, and on the 19th September, 1404, he presented himself at the castle gate of Kildrummie, and surrendered to the countess not only the castle but all its furniture and the title-deeds therein kept. In testimony of this he delivered the keys into her hands, freely and with a good heart, for her to dispose of them as she pleased. The countess, holding the keys in her hand, of mature advice, chose the said Alexander for her

husband, and in free marriage, gave him the castle, with its pertinents, the earldom of Mar, etc., to be held by her said husband and herself and the heirs to be procreated betwixt them; which failing, to the said lady and her lawful heirs; upon all which the said Alexander took instruments. In terms of this declaration the lady, under the title of "Isabella de Douglas Comitessa de Mar et de Garioch," granted a charter, 9th December, 1404, that it might appear to have been granted without force on the part of Alexander Stewart or fear on hers. By it she granted *in nostra pura et libera viduitate Alexandro Senescallo in liberum maritagium* the whole Earldom of Mar. . . This charter was ratified under the Great Seal, 21st January, 1405. . . After this, Alexander Stewart was uniformly styled Earl of Mar and Lord of Garioch. . . The Countess died without issue, when in the terms of the charter last recited, the fee of the Earldom should have devolved on the heir of line, Janet Keith, wife of Sir Thomas Erskine, the more especially as King Robert III. had bound himself to Sir Thomas not to ratify any contract or accept of any resignation by which Isobella Douglas, Countess of Mar, etc., might attempt to alienate these earldoms or any part of these lands, given under his Great Seal, 22nd November, 1393. But this was disregarded by King James the First, whose great aim was to unite the ancient earldoms to the Crown, and thus to sap the foundations of a formidable aristocracy. Alexander Stewart, conscious that he had nothing but a life-rent right, used the device of resigning the earldom into the king's hands. Immediately upon this, a charter of the earldom was granted by the king, 28th May, 1426, to Sir Alexander Stewart and Sir Thomas Stewart, his natural son; to Sir Alexander for his life, and after his death to Sir Thomas and the lawful heirs male of his body, which failing, to return to the Crown. Thus the earldom, instead of descending to the heirs-general of the ancient earls, was limited to the heirs male of the body of Sir Thomas Stewart.'

It might well be believed that there could not be a more successful and complete exploit in the way of 'taking the kingdom of love by violence' than this of the second Alex-

ander Stewart—the seizure of the countess and the castle, the offer to set her free, and the final marriage sanctioned by the king. But tradition, accepted by more than one historian, has given a darker hue to the story, and has even imported into it an element of Borgian horror. Sir Malcolm Drummond, the first husband of the Countess of Mar, was said to have been murdered, and it was further averred that the murderer was the man whom she accepted, in the long run willingly, as her second husband! In the *Exchequer Rolls* (IV., p. 79), the crime is fastened on Stewart as if there had been no doubt upon the matter:—‘One of the characteristically daring acts of these days was the murder of Sir Malcolm Drummond, brother of the Queen, and Countess of Mar, by a band of Highland marauders, headed by a son of the lord of Badenoch, Alexander Stewart, followed by an attack on the castle of Kildrummie, where the widowed Countess resided, made by the same Alexander, who, obtaining forcible possession of that lady, married her, and got with her her earldom and estates.’ Tytler is not quite so decided—‘He who was murdered to make way for this extraordinary intrusion of the son of Buchan was the king’s brother-in-law, and there seems to have been little doubt that the successful wooer and the assassin of Drummond were one and the same person.’ Wyntoun’s account in the *Cronykill* of the death of Drummond and the ‘intrusion’ of Stewart, is even more guarded. Only one conclusion can with safety be drawn from Wyntoun’s homely narrative—Malcolm Drummond undoubtedly predeceased his wife. There was a general belief at the time that his death was due to foul play, and that he had been set upon and murdered—or starved to death—by a body of Highland caterans. The fact that his widow subsequently entered or was forced into a marriage with Alexander Stewart was quite sufficient to start the story that he was the instigator of Drummond’s murder. On the face of it, the story is incredible that the countess, especially after public opinion in Scotland had virtually forced Stewart to set her at liberty and give her freedom to marry whomsoever she chose, should have cast in

her lot with a man whose hands she knew to be red with the blood of the lover and husband of her youth.

Stewart had by fair means or foul, at all events successfully accomplished his object. He had obtained a position almost as powerful as that of his father. He was life-renter, at least, of the great estates of Mar and Garioch, and the most powerful noble in Aberdeenshire. He had become the master of one of the strongest fortresses in the country. The large and picturesquely-situated Castle of Kildrummie, standing on a rocky eminence flanked by two ravines, and covering with its outworks and courtyards an area of between two and three acres, had been one of the seats of the kings of Scotland, and had defied for a time the forces and the admirable strategy of Edward the First. It is not quite certain when the wife he had won by such a marvellous combination of audacity and astuteness died, although 1419 is vaguely given by certain writers. Perhaps she did not long survive her second marriage. Historical records still in existence seem to render it probable that she was dead before February, 1408. After her death, or perhaps even before it, Mar had resolved on the career his circumstances enabled him to enter upon. He was not to be content, like his father, with the 'splendid isolation' of a great but essentially barbaric chief. He would sink the *dux cateranorum* in the brilliant courtier, the astute diplomatist, the chivalrous knight, the politic statesman. It may safely be inferred from certain of the valuable publications of the Spalding Club throwing light upon the antiquities of Aberdeenshire, that as soon as Mar was assured of his position by charters under the seal of Robert the Third—two followed close upon each other, being dated 9th December, 1404, and 21st January, 1405—he set to work, Highland chieftain though he was, to cultivate friendly relations with his neighbours, the essentially Lowland and Saxon burghers of the rising town of Aberdeen. He succeeded in this, as in almost every enterprise he turned his hand to. He was destined one dark but glorious and memorable day to earn the gratitude of Aberdeen and of Scotland.

No less skilfully and successfully did he now set himself to

play the part of a great Scottish nobleman in the eyes of England and the Continent. His recognition as Earl of Mar synchronized with the patching up of a peace between England and Scotland. At all events, the nobles of the larger kingdom felt freer to challenge the chivalry of the smaller to friendly 'joustings.' Mar seized the opportunity. On the 5th September, 1406, he is found obtaining a 'safe conduct' from the King of England for himself and seventy followers, for a passage of arms with Edmund, Earl of Kent. It would seem tolerably certain that Mar paid two visits to England in 1406. On the second occasion he went along with the Earl of Crawford as an ambassador to conclude peace with England. That he should have been chosen to fill a post of such a kind would seem, if not to give the lie direct to the story of the murder of his wife's first husband, at all events to make it quite clear that he was recognised as one of the ablest of Scottish noblemen.

Without dogmatising too much on the subject of dates it is pretty safe to assume that Mar spent the bulk both of 1406 and 1407 in England, and that he made the best of his time by showing himself at once a gallant knight and a master of statecraft. In 1408 he sought fresh fields and new pastures.

'The next yere eftyer folowand,
A thousand foure hundyr the auchtand,
The Erle of Marr past in Fraunce
In his delite and his plesance,
Wyth a nobill company
Wele arayt, and dantely
Knychtis and squieris, gret gentlimen,
Sixty or ma, ful noumeryt then
Men of counsale and of wertew
Off his Court and retinew.'

We now come to an incident in Mar's wonderful career which is quite as notable as the seizure of the castle of Kildrummie, and even more mysterious. It is thus told in the *Historical and Genealogical Account of the Stewarts*, published in 1739. 'He (Alexander Stewart) went into the service of the Duke of Burgundy. He was designed "Dominus de Garrioch et Doffle in Brabantia." He claimed the sovereignty

of Holland in right of Jacquet, or as Abercromby calls her Jane, his second wife, daughter to the Earl of Holland, but, being denied his claim, he fought with the Hollanders at sea, and gained the victory and a great prize; and at length made peace or a hundred years' truce with them.' This story is evidently based on the narratives of Boece and Drummond of Hawthornden. Another version of the same story is given by the first Principal of King's College, Aberdeen, who, about a century after the death of the victor of Harlaw, collected all the traditions regarding him and committed them to Latin, which was translated by the Archdeacon of Moray. 'He was ane man of singular virtew, in his tender yeris, and was at the siege of Lodium, quhen it was tane by Phillip, Duke of Burgundee. And for the gret glore that he wan at the said tornay, he was maryit on ane lady namit Jane, countes of Holland. Nocht less, he was put fra her; uncertane quethir it come be the said countes, becaus scho had ane othir husband, or becaus the inhabitants desirit nocht to be mingit with uncouth blude. Within schort time efter, he returnit in Scotland and send his servandis in Holland, descreing the proffet of his land. And becaus he got nocht bot repols thair of, he held continewall waris on the Hollandaris quhill they war constranit to pleis him for all the proffetis bygane, and tuke peace for Scottis for ane hundredth yeris. This Erle of Mar was ane richt industrious and civill man; for he brocht out of Hungary into Scotland, sindry gret hors and meris, to spreid the cuntre be their generatioun. Thus was the cuntre, within few yeris efter, fillit ful of gret hors; howbeit afore his time was nocht but small naggis in this realme.'

Let us, so far as is now possible, attempt to rescue the truth from its environment of miraculous legend. There is no doubt whatever as to the battle of Liège and the brilliant part played in it by Mar. The early history of Liège was a long struggle between its bishop-princes and its liberty-loving burghers. Philip of Burgundy but anticipated in 1407, and in the interest of John of Bavaria, 'the elect of Liège'—an 'intruded presentee,' in fact—what Charles the Bold did nearly sixty years after. Indeed, as late as 1684, 'the elect of Liège'

only succeeded in effecting an entrance into the city with a foreign army at his back. Similarly Mar, Scrimgeour, and their gallant company, anticipated by their services to Philip and John the effective aid rendered by Crawford, Le Balaféré, and Quentin Durward to Charles the Bold and Louis the Eleventh. There are too many allusions to the presence and achievements of Mar and his company in the various chronicles of the period for us to have any doubts on the matter. Guillaume Paradin, in his *Annales de Bourgogne*, says: 'Semblablement s'y trouva le Comte de Marausse Ecossais acre bien quatre combattants.' Des Ursins also mentions Mar. There is, indeed, no special allusion to him by any of the German writers on this period, but the explanation of the omission no doubt is that these historians regarded Mar and his detachment of 'combattants' as volunteers, and not as an integral portion of the besieging Burgundian force.

Mar's marriage is much more of a mystery—

' The Erle of Mar, of his prowes,
That hiely commendits wes,
A lady weddit, gret of land,
The*Lady of Duffyl in Braband.'

Thus Wyntoun, with his usual confidence. The writer of the history of the family of Horn (Nisbet, II., p. 71), says that the Earl of Mar's wife was Mary de Hornes, and that he got with her the lordships of Duffel and Walhem. Boece gives her name as Jacoba, while, as has been already seen, the Aberdeen historian styles her Jane. It will probably never be ascertained who it was that Mar married or if his marriage is a myth. It is highly probable, however, to say the least of it, that in some way or another he obtained a grant of lands in Brabant. There is a charter by 'Alexander Stewart, Earl of Marr and Garioch, and *Dominus de Dufle in Brobant*, to his brother, Andrew Stewart (Andrew fought by his side at the Battle of Liége), of the lands of Sandbalch, in Banffshire, which is confirmed by Robert Duke of Albany.' In 1440, Robert, Earl of Mar and Lord of Erskine, is found granting a charter which confirms a previous 'charter made by the deceased Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar and of Garioch, and lord of

Dufle in Brabant.' It is possible, therefore, that Stewart contracted a second marriage, which was as unfortunate as the first in this respect that there was no issue of it, and that it made him a life-renter of Dufle as the first had made him a life-renter of Mar and Garioch. It is practically certain that he was granted lands in Brabant, which of course, on his death without heirs, lapsed to their superior. It may be assumed, however, that he did not marry the Countess of Holland. That lady, if all stories are true, gave her relatives a great deal of trouble by her imprudent marriages; indeed, she is even said to have been deposed from her office on account of them. But the Earl of Mar is not in the 'official list' of her husbands. The story told by Boece and Drummond of Hawthornden of his waging war with a powerful fleet bears a suspicious resemblance to a similar one told of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. Yet, as will be seen later on, a grain or two of truth may be mixed up with the tradition.

Not later than Christmas of 1408—there is some doubt as to whether it was in that year or in 1407 that the battle of Liège was fought—Mar was back in Paris, and, according to Michel, was the cynosure of all, and especially of female, eyes. On the 29th of December we find a 'safe conduct' granted by the King of England to 'the Earl of Mar and thirty persons in his train passing from France through England to Scotland.' It may be assumed that he and they were back in Kildrummie Castle some time in the course of 1409. They soon found enough of work to do.

'The roistering leader of ragamuffins, coming home with his foreign experience, became a mighty general and sage statesman, and, like many others who pass from disreputable into creditable and profitable courses, he achieved the suppression of those who, while he was sowing his wild oats, were his companions and tools.' Thus, in his *Scot Abroad*, Burton somewhat flippantly alludes to the great service which Mar, aided by his companions-at-arms, was able to render to his neighbours more immediately, and his countrymen in general, and the importance of which has been adequately recognised in the satirist's own *History of Scotland*. Of late a tendency has been shown

to dispute Burton's view of the importance in its bearing on the future of Scotland, of the battle fought at Harlaw, eighteen miles from Aberdeen, on the 24th July, 1411, between the Highlanders under Donald, Lord of the Isles, and the Lowlanders of Mar, Garioch, Buchan, Angus and Mearns, under the Earl of Mar. It has been said that only a temporary check was given to the 'Highland Host' by the victory of Stewart, and that even the pretensions of Donald were revived by his son Alexander. But, on the other hand, it may be questioned if ever the caterans had such an opportunity as that which, thanks to the generalship of Mar, they lost at Harlaw. Scotland was in a state of anarchy when Donald, with his Islesmen, burst upon Aberdeenshire, and threatened to burn its capital. The king was a prisoner in England. Regent Albany, who nominally governed Scotland, was not such a weakling as his son Murdoch, who succeeded him, but he was now an old man of threescore and ten. Moreover, he was universally detested by the other Scotch nobles for his selfish rapacity. It was, indeed, on account of a private quarrel that Donald raised the flag of rebellion. On the death of the Wolfe of Badenoch, the earldom of Ross fell nominally into the hands of the Crown, really into those of Albany. Donald claimed the earldom in virtue of his wife—the claim was subsequently allowed by James the First when put forward by the next Lord of the Isles—and took up arms in support of it. The chances are that had Donald been able to push south, he would have been joined by hosts of malcontents, and that he would have been able with perfect ease to overthrow such government as existed in Edinburgh. So strong a king as England then possessed in Henry IV. would not have been slow to take advantage of the situation thus created to accomplish the work which had proved too much for even such capable monarchs as Edward the First and Edward the Third. It might be too much to say that Alexander Stewart saved the independence of Scotland as effectually as did Robert Bruce at Bannockburn, but it is not too much to say that he was as great a benefactor to his country as was that High Steward of Scotland who, in 1193, and in the reign of Malcolm IV.,

overthrew and slew at Renfrew the first Lord of the Isles, the redoubtable Somerled. Of the courage and capacity of the man who, with a force of probably not more than 1,200 men, and many, if not most of them, the undisciplined though brave citizens of Aberdeen, had the courage to attack a ferocious enemy six, if not ten times, as numerous, and who, when that force had been cut to pieces and had lost all its best leaders but himself, still held his ground, there never has been any question whatever. The soldier to whom belong the honours of Harlaw was one of the greatest commanders that Scotland ever produced.

From 1411 to his death in 1435, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar, was one of the foremost men north of the Tweed. The fact that he is so often mentioned in public documents as 'Regis locum tenens' would seem to prove that for a time he held his father's old post of king's seneschal beyond the Highland line, if not of justiciary north of the Forth. Five years after Harlaw we find him travelling in England in winter doubtless to visit the friends he had made in his 'jousting' days. Charters seem to prove that in 1419 and 1423—the latter the year when James I. was released by the King of England—he held the post of Admiral of the Realm of Scotland. We shall probably never know the entire truth of Mar's achievements at sea, so curiously reflected in the extraordinary story of his war upon the Dutch. But in the British Museum there is a letter from the Duke of Bedford to his father, Henry IV., written apparently in 1405, and stating that 'the Earl of Mar, Alexander Stuart, is at sea between Berwick and Newcastle, despoiling English vessels.' In an English State document also there occurs this passage:—'The King to Robert Tempest, Sheriff of Northumberland, and John Elyngeham, his Sergeant-at-arms. Having lately ordered Robert Umfraville, then Sheriff, and others, to inquire into whose hands the merchandise of certain Scots wrecked in a Flemish ship at Werkworth, had come, and detain them till redress was made under the truce for a cargo of wheat and beans value 200 marks, shipped for the garrison of Calais, and goods worth £500 belonging to Richard Whytington and others of London, in the *Thomas* of London,

captured at sea by the Earl of Marr and other Scots, and learning that these Scots goods and prisoners of the greatest value were in the hands of Robert Ogle and others, commands the Sheriff to see they are at once delivered to Umfraville.' It is odd—or rather would have been odd in the case of a less extraordinary man—to find Alexander Stewart anticipating the naval exploits of the Bartons and Sir Andrew Wood, and even, after the manner of Drake singeing the beard of the time-honoured Dick Whittington.

When eight months after his accession to the throne of Scotland James the First set himself resolutely to break the power of the turbulent nobles, he found in the Earl of Mar a loyal supporter. Stewart figures in 1424 as one of the assize which at Stirling found Murdoch, Duke of Albany, his son Walter, his brother Alexander, and their grandfather, the Earl of Lennox, guilty of treason. In 1430 James named him one of the 'conservators' appointed on behalf of Scotland to conclude a truce with the King of England. The following year Mar, who was now probably between sixty and seventy years of age, sustained his one defeat. At all events the Scottish chronicles tell this story—

'Donald Balloch, a near relative of the Lord of the Isles, collected a fleet and army in the Hebrides, ran his galleys into the neck of sea which divides Morven from the little island of Lismore, and, disembarking at Lochaber, broke down upon that district with all the ferocity of northern warfare, cutting to pieces a superior force commanded by Alexander, Earl of Mar, and Alan Stewart, Earl of Caithness, whom James had stationed there for the protection of the Highlands. The conflict took place at Inverlochy. The Earl of Caithness, with sixteen of his personal retinue, and many other barons and knights, were left dead on the field, while Mar, with great difficulty, succeeded in rescuing the remains of the Royal army.'

The probability is that the importance of this surprise has been greatly exaggerated, for it is quite certain that James defeated Donald Balloch's superior, Alexander, the Lord of Isles, when he wasted the crown-lands near Inverness, and burned the town, and compelled him to implore mercy at Holyrood. In any case, it will be seen that Mar was able to

show a little of his old generalship by saving the remnants of the Royal army.

According to most of the old Scottish chroniclers Mar died on the 26th July, 1435. So highly was his memory respected that on the anniversary of his death a mass was said yearly for his soul's repose at the altar of St. Katharine in the cathedral church of St. Mary and St. Machar at Aberdeen. 'Septimo Kalendas Augusti obitus magnifici ac potentis Domini Alexandri Stuart comitis de Mar et de Garwyach ac locum tenentis Domini Regis Scotorum.* This commemoration was provided out of the bounty of Master John of Clat, canon of Brechin and Aberdeen.

The Earl of Mar's son, Thomas, predeceased him, and his estates lapsed to the Crown. The fabric of power which he had built up may be said to have disappeared at his death as completely as had that constructed by his father before him. It was left for the heads of other branches of his family to continue his work and to demonstrate that 'charm of the Stewarts,' the irresistible and immortal character of which is only now being thoroughly understood. But even among them there are no more notable figures than the two Alexanders as we get glimpses of them through the mists of history—the grim old baron, the father, who held after his own curious fashion, that 'clericalism is the enemy,' and struck doughty blows at it with his mailed fist, and the brilliant versatile son, who after a youth of extraordinary and audacious adventure, became one of Scotland's greatest captains, statesmen, and patriots.

Z.

* *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, Vol. II., p. 202.