

The Wanton Young Laird o' Logie.

THE following story belongs to the times of the inventor of baronetcies and divine kingcraft—in other words, to the reign of His Most Gracious Majesty, James VI. of Scotland. According to Spottiswoode, the hero was one “John Weymis, younger of Logie,” in the North of Fife, and ballad-makers have commemorated the incident in the song entitled “The Wanton Young Laird o' Logie.”

James's reign, in Scotland especially, was little else than a series of rebellions, conspiracies, and turbulence. For this he had himself mostly to blame. He was a laggard in meting out punishments for crimes, and a laggard in the administration of the country's laws. Consequently, ecclesiastical commotions vied with monarchical disorders as to which would be the more violent, and no sooner was the King out of the frying-pan than he was into the fire. In 1592 Francis Stuart, Earl of Bothwell, had concerted a daring scheme against the King's person while His Majesty was residing in the Palace of Falkland.

“There's mony a gallant gentleman
Wha's blude ye hae garr'd to spill,”

says the old minstrel. You remember, probably, that it was this “infamous successor of the more infamous Hepburn” who sowed so much dissension among the nobles during Queen Mary's reign, that brought the bonnie Earl of Moray prematurely to his grave.

Bothwell found willing conspirators, even among the King's attendants at Court. The wanton young laird, who held at the time the position of Gentleman of His Majesty's chamber and

was a great favourite with the King and Queen, seems to have thrown in his lot with the intriguers—for what reason, unless he was influenced by mere wantonness, it is impossible to determine. Anyhow, the plot being discovered, young Wemyss, *alias* Logie, was safely immured in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh. The ballad which narrates his wonderful escape commences in the true spirit of minstrelsy :—

I will sing, if ye will hearken,
 If ye will hearken unto me ;
 The King has ta'en a poor prisoner—
 The wanton young laird o' Logie.

Young Logie's laid in Edinburgh chapel,
 Carmichael's the keeper o' the key ;
 And May Margaret's lamenting sair,
 A' for the love o' young Logie.

Margaret Twinslace, the May Margaret of the minstrel, was Logie's sweetheart and one of the Dutch maids of Queen Anne's Court. When the tidings reached Holyrood that the reckless Knight had been cast into the Tolbooth's gloomy dungeons Her Majesty "sighed right mournfully"; and, wondering what would become of the golden-haired damsel whose heart the gay youth had secretly stolen, went to apprise her of the melancholy news. It crushed the pretty maiden's heart like an avalanche.

May Margaret sat in the Queen's bower
 Kinking her fingers ane by ane,
 Cursing the day that she was born,
 Or that she e'er heard o' Logie's name.

The course of true love never did run smooth. So thought the gentle Dutch girl. In compassion her Royal Mistress seated herself by her side, and poured into her ear all the soothing words of comfort of which she was capable.

" Lament, lament na ! May Margaret,
 And of your weeping let me be ;
 For ye maun to the King himsel',
 To seek the life of young Logie."

May Margaret has kilted her green cleiding,
 And curled back her yellow hair—
 "If I canna get young Logie's life,
 Farewell to Scotland for evermair."

With feelings of hope intermingling with despondency, the young lady hastened to the room of state and, being admitted to the royal presence, dropped beseechingly at the monarch's feet. When King James beheld the woe-begone countenance of the suppliant he was much affected, and asked in surprise—"Why, what's the matter, May Margaret, and what means a' this courtesy?" "A boon, a boon, I beg of thee, most noble liege," sobbed the sorrowful maiden as the tear-drops fell fast and free, "and the first boon that I come to crave is to grant me the life o' young Logie." At this the King became most righteously and most royally angry, but calmed himself sufficiently to reply:—

"Oh, na ! oh, na ! May Margaret,
 Forsooth, and so it manna be ;
 For a' the gowd o' fair Scotland
 Shall not save the life of young Logie."

Blindly, and with a breaking heart, she tottered out of the audience-chamber and down the stairs to acquaint the Queen of the result of her interview with the King. As she staggered along her lips muttered mournfully—"A' the money, he says, in fair Scotland, wadna save my lover's life." And so, tearing her long yellow hair and wringing her fingers in her distress, she reached the Queen's boudoir. "Cease lamenting, Margaret," said the good Anne of Denmark ; "I will to the King mysel', and seek young Logie's release."

The Queen she tripped up the stair,
 And lowly knelt upon her knee ;
 "A boon, a boon, I crave, my liege,
 Grant me the life o' young Logie."

“ If ye had asked me castles and towers,
 I wad hae gien them, twa or three ;
 But a' the money in fair Scotland
 Wadna buy the life o' young Logie.”

Neither the maiden's tears nor the Queen's solicitations could shake “ the wisest fool in Christendom ” from his firm purpose. The madcap youth was doomed to die. May Margaret was in a pitiful plight, and in despair threatened to lay violent hands upon herself, saying—

“ I'll take a knife and end my life,
 And be in the grave as soon as him.”

“ Oh, fie ! na, na ! ” then spoke the Queen ;
 “ Fie, na ! fie, na ! this mauna be !
 I'll set ye on another way
 To win the life o' young Logie.”

The brave and noble Queen has determined to gain the upper hand of the British Solomon, and set her heart upon the liberation of the wanton laird. So, drawing her fair companion close beside her, she whispers in her ears a subtle scheme whereby the two lovers may be united. Fair Margaret had her misgivings : she dreaded the wrath of an angry monarch, but, urged on by the motherly affection and advice of the Queen, hastened to put the plan in operation.

She has stown the king's redding-kaim,
 Likewise the queen her wedding-knife ;
 And sent the tokens to Carmichael,
 To cause young Logie get his life.

She sent him a purse o' the red gowd,
 Another o' the white monie ;
 She sent him a pistol for each hand,
 And bad him shoot when he gat free.

Meantime the moments drag drearily for the occupants of the ladies' bower. In fear and apprehension they listen for the reassuring signal. Contrary to custom, fortune took the side of

love and heroism. The plot succeeded. King Jamie, wearied with the day's work, has retired to rest, when suddenly a pistol-shot rings out on the silent night air. He starts up in his bed and hearkens. And as he listens, he hears steps, familiar steps, under the walls of the palace; hears a voice, a familiar voice shouting under the Queen's window—"Peace be to our royal Queen, and peace be in her company!"

"Oh, whaten a voice is that?" quo' the King;

"Whaten a voice is that?" quo' he.

"Whaten a voice is that?" quo' the King;

"I think it's the voice o' young Logie."

"Gae oot, gae oot, my merry men a',

And bid Carmichael come speak to me;

For I'll lay my life the pledge o' that,

That yon's the shot o' young Logie."

The luckless keeper of the Tolbooth who had, as he supposed, set his prisoner free by virtue of the Royal tokens which the Queen's messenger brought to him, soon presented himself, quite at a loss to understand so hasty a summons. James frowned and in an angry voice demanded how it was the culprit had escaped.

Carmichael turned him round about

(I wat the tear blinded his e'e);

"There came a token frae your Grace,

Has ta'en the laird away frae me."

"Hast thou play'd me that, Carmichael?

Hast thou play'd me that?" quoth he;

"The morn, therefore, at twelve o'clock

Your men and you shall hangèd be."

Once more the Queen attempted to beard the lion in his den. "Na, na," she cried, "this mauna be. Fie, my dear love, if ye be gaun to hang them a', ye maun indeed begin wi' me."

Carmichael's awa' to Margaret's bower,

Even as fast as he may drie—

"Oh! if young Logie be within,

Tell him to come and speak to me."

May Margaret turned her round about
 (I wat a loud laugh laughed she) :
 "The egg is chipped, the bird has flown,
 Ye'll see nae mair o' young Logie."

The tane is shipped at the pier o' Leith,
 The tother at the Queen's ferrie ;
 And now the lady has gotten her luv—
 The wanton young laird o' Logie.

Spottiswoode's account, though meagre, gives us a little more insight into what turned out to be, after all, a serio-comic drama. A seemingly inevitable tragedy was converted by the Queen's fearlessness into a most ludicrous comedy. The Archbishop says :—"Coming one night, whilst the King and Queen were in bed, Mistress Margaret showed the keepers that the King called for the prisoner, to ask of him some questions. The keepers, suspecting nothing, for they knew her to be the principal maid in the chamber, conveyed him to the door of the bedchamber ; and making a stay without, as they were commanded, the gentlewoman did let him down at a window by a cord that she had prepared. The keepers, waiting upon him, stayed there till the morning, and then found themselves deceived. This, with the manner of the escape, ministered great occasion of laughter ; and, not many days after, the King being pacified by the Queen's means, he was pardoned, and took to wife the gentlewoman who had hazarded her credit for his safety."

It is a pleasure, too, to know that the unfortunate Carmichael did not suffer for his mistake. His was a name not unknown either in history or romance. He was the hero of the ballad called the *Raid of the Reidswire* in 1575, being at that time Scottish warden of the middle marches. Four years before the incident related above he received the captaincy of the King's Guard, and to his care state criminals of rank were committed. On the 16th of June 1600, he was murdered by a band of Border dalesmen at Raesknowe, near Lochmaben, whither he was journeying to hold a court of justice.