

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

I.

DIURNAL OF OCCURRENTS IN SCOTLAND.¹

Authenticity of the First Part of this Work.

THE frequent references in the text to the first part of this work, as an original and valuable authority, renders it necessary for me to explain the reasons why I have been led to form a different opinion of its authenticity from that given by its learned editor. In the Prefatory Notice to the volume, there is this sentence, "to those who are at all acquainted with the minute details of Scottish history in the sixteenth century, a very slight perusal of the work will suggest, that in its different parts it is of very unequal value. From the era of the battle of Floddon, and the death of King James the Fourth, in the year 1513, at which it commences, down to the termination of the government of the Earl of Arran in 1553, its details, comparatively meagre and occasionally inaccurate, are obviously not recorded by a contemporary chronicler, but must have been derived from tradition and other imperfect sources. Yet, even in this first and least valuable portion of the work, will be found many minute facts and notices that would be vainly looked for in the ordinary histories of the reign of King James the Fifth, and the first ten years of the reign of Queen Mary."¹ In pronouncing this first portion of the *Diurnal of Occurrents* the work, not of a contemporary chronicler, but of some subsequent writer, deriving his materials from tradition, and other imperfect sources

¹ Published by the Bannatyne Club.

² Preface, p. 1.

the Editor appears to me to have fallen into an error, which could scarcely have been avoided by one who compared the Diurnal of Occurrents with our earlier historians, Lesly and Buchanan, or even with the later volumes of Maitland. It not only is contradicted by them in some important particulars, but it contains events, and these not minute, but grave and material facts, which are not to be found in either of these authors. These events, however, can be proved to have occurred by evidence, of which the authenticity is unimpeachable; and it is the discovery of their perfect truth which has induced me to consider the greater portion of the first part of the Chronicle, entitled the "Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland," as the work of a contemporary, who wrote from his own knowledge, and not a compilation from traditionary sources. I say the greater portion, because such a character belongs not to the whole of the first part; and it appears to me, that this valuable original matter has fallen into the hands of some later and ignorant compiler, who, preserving the purer ore, has in some places mixed it up with baser and more erroneous matter of his own.

To support these conclusions, let me give some proofs; the years 1543, 1544, occurring in the Regency of Arran, form an obscure æra in our history; and did we possess no other guides than the common historians, Lesly, Buchanan, or Maitland, we should be left in a maze of confusion and contradiction. The revolutions in state affairs are so sudden and so frequent during this period; the changes in the politics and the conduct of the different factions so rapid, and so apparently contradictory, that without some more authentic guides, the task of unravelling or explaining them would be hopeless. It is upon this period that the original correspondence in the State Paper Office throws a flood of clear and useful light, introducing us to the actors in these changes, not through any second hand or suspected sources, but by supplying us with their original letters to Henry the Eighth, and his ministers. Now, to come from this observation to the work entitled the Diurnal of Occurrents. When it is found that it, and it only, contains various facts, demonstrated by these original letters to be true, and which sometimes are not mentioned, sometimes are positively contradicted by our general historians; such a circumstance will be allowed, I think, to create a strong presumption in favor of its value and authenticity; that a work, which stands this severe test, should

have been, not a contemporary, but a later production, compiled from tradition, and imperfect sources, seems to me nearly impossible.

To take an example from the period of which I have already spoken. In the year 1544, in the *Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 33, we find this passage,—“ Upon the thrid day of Junii, thare was ane general counsall haldin at Stirling, quhairat was all the nobelles of Scotland, exceptand the Erle of Lennox and Glencairn ; quhair the governor was dischargit of his auctorite ; and maid proclamation through the realm, that nane obeyit him as governor ; and als thair thei chesit thrie erlis, thrie lords, thrie bishops, thrie abbotes to be the secreit counsale ; quhilk lastet not lang, for everie lord ded for his awin particular profit, and tuk na heid of the commonweill ; but tholet the Inglismen, and theivis to overrin this realm.” In the same chronicle, p. 34, is this sentence,—“ Upon the last day of Julii, thare was ane Parliament sould have been halden in Edinburgh ; and the governor, with his complices furneist the town, and held it, becaus he gat word the queenis grace drowarie was cummit out of Striveling to the Parliament ; becaus thai yet being in hir company was full of dissait, sho past to Stirling with meikle ordinance and swa the Parliament was stayit.” Again, in the same chronicle, p. 36, we find this passage,—“ Upon the 5th day, (1544) the governor held ane parliament in Edinburgh—Upon the 12th of November, the queen’s grace drowrier (dowager) held ane parliament in Striveling, and thereafter the parties suld have met, and stayet in hope of aggreance, and the cardinal raid betwix them, quha come to Edinburgh and tuke the governor to Stirling with him, quhair gude aggreance was made to be bund to hir grace, and twentee four Lordis counsall.” It will be at once perceived, that these passages embody the history of an important revolution, which, for nearly six months changed the whole face of affairs in Scotland. In May 1544, Arran was the unchallenged governor of the kingdom ; in June, the queen dowager arose against him, was joined by the whole body of the peers excepting Lennox and Glencairn, held a general council at Stirling, in which he was discharged from his office, made proclamation through the realm, that none should obey him, and appointed a new secret council for the management of the affairs of the state. In July, as is shown by the second extract, an attempt was made by Arran, who still claimed the name and

authority of governor to hold a parliament in Edinburgh; but the queen dowager advanced with great force to the city; the governor fortified it against her; she retreated to Stirling, and the parliament was delayed. Three months after this, in the beginning of November, Arran, the governor, assembled a parliament at Edinburgh; the queen issued writs for a reval parliament, to be held on the 12th of the same month at Stirling; and the cardinal dreading the effects of this miserable disunion, acted as a peacemaker between the two parties, and at length brought them to an agreement.

Now, of these very important events, no notice whatever was to be found in our general historians; nay, the tenor of their narratives seemed to contradict them; the question, therefore, at once came to the credibility of the Diurnal of Occurrents. In this dilemma I was delighted (the reader, who knows the satisfaction of resting in researches of this nature upon an authentic document, will pardon the warmth of the expression) to meet with the following paper in the State Paper Office, which, it will be seen, completely corroborated the assertion of the Diurnal as to the deprivation of the governor. It is dated June 1544, and entitled "Copy.—Agreement of the principal Scots nobility, to support the authority of the queen mother as regent of Scotland against the Earl of Arran, declared by this instrument to be deprived of his office." This valuable paper in its entire state, will be given in the forthcoming volume of State Papers relative to Scotland, published by government. In the mean time, the following extract will be sufficient for my purpose. After stating the fact of a convention having been held at Stirling on the 3rd of June; it proceeds thus to describe their deliberations and proceedings. "After long and mature consultacion had, in the said matiers, by the space of iii. or iv. daies contynuall, fynally (they) fand that oon great part why inobedience hath ben within this realme, sithins the king's grace's; and that other inconveniences which have happened, was, and is in my lord governor, and his counsaile, that was chosen to have ben with him for the time; and for remedye herof in times commyng; and that perfit obedience maie be to our soverain ladie's auctorite, (that) unite, concorde, and amitee maie be hadd among all our soverain ladie's lieges;

