

PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM

MANUSCRIPTS

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I.

ATTACK ON STIRLING, 28TH APRIL, 1578.—Page 37.

A MINUTE and interesting account of the successful attack on Stirling Castle, which led to the restoration of Morton to the supreme power in the Government, will be found in the following letter from Sir Robert Bowes to Lord Burghley.

BOWES TO BURGHELY.¹

“EDINBURGH, *April 28th, 1578.*”

“May it please your Lordship. On Saturday last, about six in the morning, the Earl of Mar, accompanied with the Abbots of Dryburgh and Cambuskenneth, and their servants ordinarily lodged in the Castle of Stirling, came to the castle gate, with pretence to go a-hunting; and finding there the Master and his servants, the Abbots called the Master aside, charging him that he had much abused the Earl of Mar his nephew, and far overseen himself in withholding the custody of the King and castle from the Earl. The Master after reasonable excuse made, found that they pressed to possess the keys, and command the piece; and reaching himself to an halbert, his servants came to assist him. Dryburgh and some with him stayed the Master; Cambuskenneth and his complices assaulted the rest; when Buchanan, one of the Master’s men, was sore hurt. After the fray pacified, the Master and the Abbots withdraw themselves to the hall to debate the matter; and Argyle, being then a-bed, rose speedily, and came with a small number to the hall, where, hearing that the Master and the Abbots were in

¹ Orig. British Museum, Caligula, C. v. fol. 89.

quiet communication, he retired himself to his chamber, and, arming himself, he assembled his servants, that with the Master were able to have overmatched the other. But the Master being then fully satisfied, Argyle was likewise soon after appeased; and then yielding possession for the Earl, they agreed at length to remove thence, and draw to concord, specially to satisfy the King, who of the tumult, as is reported, was in great fear, and teared his hair, saying the Master was slain. And as I am informed, his Grace by night, hath been by this means so discouraged, as in his sleep he is herewith greatly disquieted. After all this was ended, the Earls of Argyle and Mar, the two Abbots and Mr Buchanan,¹ advertised by their letters this Council of this accident; declaring that the parties were well reconciled; and persuaded the Council to proceed forwards in the course determined for the government, as no such matter had happened. Argyle departed out of the castle, and he is now gone to levy his forces, meaning to return within two days at the farthest.

“In this uproar, the eldest son of the Master was so crushed in the throng, as he died the next day. The Master is fallen into vehement disease with danger of his life.

“Upon the coming of the said letters from Stirling, on Saturday about nine in the afternoon, the Council assembled; and after some hot humours digested, they despatched Montrose that night towards Stirling, to understand, and certify to them the true state of the matter, to persuade quietness about the King's person, and to continue this present government established until the next Parliament.

“Montrose, after long abode at the Lord of Livingston's house, came to Stirling in the next day, and was received into the castle. He putteth the Council in good hope that the matter is well pacified, and that this government shall not by this accident be impeached. Whereupon the most part of this Council, pretending to have the King's letters commanding their repair to him, are departed this day towards Stirling; but what shall ensue hereof is greatly doubted.

“Lochleven being speedily advertised of the doings of the Abbots, came the same day to Stirling, and with some difficulty, (as outwardly was showed,) was let into the castle with one servant, whom presently he returned to Lochleven to the Earl of Morton, and himself remaineth still in the castle. The Earl of Morton,

¹ This was the celebrated Buchanan.

upon the first advertisement, came to Lochleven; despatched his servant to the Earl of Angus, to put all his friends and forces in a readiness on an hour's warning. And many noblemen, being friends to these two Earls, have done the like; nevertheless they show no force nor assembly as yet.

"The Lords of the Council have likewise levied all their powers, drawing some part with all possible speed towards Stirling, and leaving the residue in readiness upon warning.

"Some are of opinion, that the Council will be readily received and welcomed to the King and to all the castle, without further change; and many think that, by the means of the Abbots, the King shall cause them to retire to their own houses, till his pleasure be further known. And in case they disobey the same; then to lay siege and take the castle. That then the King will cause the Earl of Morton and other nobles to levy their power within the realm, to raise the siege, and rescue his person from their violence. What storm shall fall out of these swelling heats doth not yet appear. But I think, verily, and that within two or three days, that it will burst into some open matter; discovering sufficiently the purposes intended; wherein, to my power, I shall seek to quench all violent rages, and persuade unity and concord among them; which, if this sudden chance had not happened, might easily have taken place. Thus referring the rest to the next occasion,

"And with humble duty, &c.

"ROBERT BOWES."

II.

COMPOSITION BETWEEN MORTON AND HIS ENEMIES.—Page 43.

Lord Hunsdon's letter from Berwick to Lord Burghley, referred to in the text, and preserved in the British Museum, Caligula, C. v. fol. 101, gives some interesting particulars of the composition between Morton and his powerful opponents. It is as follows:—

HUNSDON TO BURGHELEY.

"BERWICK, *August 19, 1573.*

"My very good Lord—I will not trouble your Lordship with any long discourse touching this matter in Scotland."

Hunsdon then refers Burghley to Mr Bowes' letter, "who,"

