

THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE.

GLENCOE, the scene of one of the foulest atrocities which ensanguine the page of British history, is a wild, gloomy, alpine vale, about 10 miles long, in the district of Lorn, in Argyleshire. "Entering it from the eastern extremity, the mountains rise in stupendous masses all around, forming an amphitheatre, vast in extent, and preserving a stillness and solemnity almost terrific, which is heightened by the desolate appearance of the vale; and, perchance, the hollow scream of a solitary eagle may excite a temporary feeling of horror. The bare rocks immediately in front shoot up perpendicularly, while those more distant appear in an innumerable variety of fantastic forms; and their singularity is increased

with the deep furrows worn by the winter-torrents from the top of the mountains. Immense masses of rock are also seen near the path through the glen, which, in the course of ages, have been loosened from the side of the mountain, and hurled along with the currents of rain to the depth of the glen. Its general appearance has a strong tendency to excite a feeling, that the place has been proscribed by Heaven as the habitation either of man or beast."

Amid this vast, tremendous solitude,
Where nought is heard except the wild wind's sigh,
Or savage raven's deep and hollow cry,
With awful thought the spirit is imbued!
Around—around for many a weary mile,
The Alpine masses stretch, the heavy cloud
Cleaves round their brows, concealing with its shroud
Bleak, barren rocks, unthawed by Summer's smile.
Nought but the desert mountains and lone sky
Are here :—birds sing not, and the wandering bee
Searches for flowers in vain; nor shrub, nor tree,
Nor human habitation greets the eye
Of heart-struck pilgrim; while around him lie
Silence and desolation, what is he!

When the affairs of James VII. were becoming desperate in Scotland, and he himself had escaped from Ireland to France, the principal Jacobite leaders in the Highlands, including both chiefs and officers, held a meeting at Auchalader in Glenorchy, and there opened a negotiation in person with the Earl of Breadalbane as the representative of King William's government, and agreed with him to a three months' cessation of hostilities. To induce the chiefs to submit to the Government, money and other inducements were held out to them by Breadalbane, at whose disposal a sum of £15,000 had been placed by King William. They, however, declined

to come to any definite arrangement at this time, and requested liberty to send Sir George Barclay and Major Menzies to France, to obtain the sanction of King James, to enter into a treaty with the Government,—a request which was reluctantly granted. After learning from these officers the miseries to which the clans were reduced, and the utter hopelessness of attempting another campaign under existing circumstances, James allowed them to make the best terms they could with the Government. Accordingly, and in terms of a proclamation issued by the Government on the 27th of August, 1691, promising an indemnity to all persons who had been in arms, and who should take an oath of allegiance to the Government before the 1st of January following, all the chiefs, with the exception of Mackian or Alexander Macdonald of Glencoe, gave in their adherence, and took the oath within the prescribed time. A dispute had arisen between Macdonald and the Earl, at the meeting in Glenorchy, respecting certain claims which the Earl had against Macdonald's tenants for plundering his lands, and which the Earl insisted should be paid out of Macdonald's portion of the sum of money proposed by Government to be distributed among the chiefs. The failure of the negotiation arose principally out of this dispute, and was extremely irritating to the Earl,—who threatened Macdonald with his vengeance, and, in pursuance of his threat, entered into a correspondence with Secretary Dalrymple, the master of Stair.

Macdonald, though slower than the other chiefs to avail himself of the indemnity offered by the Government, yet resolved to give in his adherence and take the oath of allegiance before the period of the indemnity expired; and accordingly he proceeded to Fort-William for the purpose, and arrived there on the 31st day of December, 1691, being the last day allowed by the proclamation for taking the oaths. He immediately presented himself to Colonel Hill, the governor of Fort-William, and required him to administer the oath.

of allegiance to the Government; but the colonel declined to act, on the ground, that under the proclamation the civil magistrate alone could administer it. Glencoe remonstrated with Hill on account of the exigency of the case, as there was not any magistrate whom he could reach before the expiration of that day, but Hill persisted in his resolution. He, however, advised Glencoe to proceed instantly to Inverary, and gave him a letter to Sir Colin Campbell of Ardkinlass, sheriff of Argyleshire, begging of him to receive Glencoe as "a lost sheep," and to administer the necessary oaths to him. Hill, at the same time, gave Glencoe a personal protection under his hand, and gave him an assurance that no proceeding should be instituted against him under the proclamation, till he should have an opportunity of laying his case before the King or the Privy-council.

Glencoe left Fort-William immediately, and so great was his anxiety to reach Inverary with as little delay as possible, that although his way lay through mountains almost impassable, and although the country was covered with a deep snow, he proceeded on his journey without even stopping to see his family, though he passed within half-a-mile of his own house. At Barcaldine he was detained twenty-four hours by Captain Drummond. On arriving at Inverary, Sir Colin Campbell was absent, and he had to wait three days till his return, Sir Colin having been prevented from reaching Inverary sooner, on account of the badness of the weather. As the time allowed by the proclamation for taking the oaths had expired, Sir Colin declined at first to swear Glencoe, alleging that it would be of no use to take the oaths; but Glencoe having first importuned him with tears to receive from him the oath of allegiance, and having thereafter threatened to protest against the sheriff should he refuse to act, Sir Colin yielded, and administered the oaths to Glencoe and his attendants on the 6th of January. Glencoe, thereupon, returned home in perfect reliance that, having done his utmost

to comply with the injunction of the Government, he was free from danger.

Three days after the oaths were taken, Sir Colin wrote Hill, acquainting him of what he had done, and that Glencoe had undertaken to get all his friends and followers to follow his example; and about the same time he sent the letter which he had received from Hill, and a certificate that Glencoe had taken the oath of allegiance, together with instructions to lay the same before the Privy-council, and to inform him whether or not the council received the oath. The paper on which the certificate that Glencoe had taken the oaths was written, contained other certificates of oaths which had been administered within the time fixed, but Sir Gilbert Elliot, the clerk of the Privy-council, refused to receive the certificate relating to Glencoe as irregular. Campbell, thereupon, waited upon Lord Aberuchil, a privy-councillor, and requested him to take the opinion of some members of the council, who accordingly spoke to Lord Stair and other privy-councillors,—all of whom gave an opinion that the certificate could not be received without a warrant from the King. Instead, however, of laying the matter before the Privy-council, or informing Glencoe of the rejection of the certificate, that he might petition the King, Campbell perfidiously defaced the certificate, and gave in the paper on which it was written to the clerks of the council.* That no

* Whether, in thus acting, Campbell was influenced by Secretary Dalrymple, who has obtained an infamous notoriety by the active part which he took in bringing on the massacre of Glencoe, it is impossible to say; but it is not improbable that this man—who, a few weeks before, had exulted that as the winter was the only season in which the Highlanders could not escape, they could easily be destroyed “in the cold long nights”—was not an indifferent spectator to Campbell’s proceedings. In fact, it appears that the secretary contemplated the total extirpation of the clans, for, in a letter to Sir Thomas Livingston, dated the 7th of January, he says: “You know in general that these troops posted at Inverness and Inverlochic, will be ordered to take in the house of Innergarie,

time, however, might be lost in enforcing the penalties in the proclamation, now that the time allowed for taking the oath of allegiance had expired, instructions of rather an equivocal nature, signed and countersigned by the King on the 11th of January, were sent down by young Stair to Sir Thomas Livingston on the same day, enclosed in a letter from the secretary of same date. By the instructions, Livingston was ordered "to march the troops against the rebels who had not taken the benefit of the indemnity, and to destroy them by fire and sword;" but lest such a course might render them desperate, he was *allowed* to "give terms and quarters, but in this manner only, that chieftains and heritors, or leaders, be prisoners of war, their lives only safe, and all other things in mercy, they taking the oath of allegiance; and the community taking the oath of allegiance, and rendering their arms, and submitting to the government, are to have quarters, and indemnity for their lives and fortunes, and to be protected from the soldiers." As a hint to Livingston how to act under the discretionary power with which these instructions vested him, Dalrymple says in his letter containing them: "I have no great kindness to Keppoch nor Glencoe, and it is well that people are in mercy, and then just now my Lord Argyle tells me that Glencoe hath not taken the oath, at which I rejoice. It is a great work of charity to be

and to destroy entirely the country of Lochaber, Lochiel's lands, Keppoch's, Glengarie's, and Glencoe," and he adds, "I assure you your power shall be full enough, and I hope the soldiers will not trouble the Government with prisoners." In another letter to Sir Thomas, written two days thereafter, by which time accounts had reached him that Glencoe had taken the oaths, he expresses satisfaction that "the rebels" would not be able to oppose his designs, and as their chieftains were "all papists," he thinks it would be well that vengeance fell upon them. The Macdonalds were chiefly marked out by him for destruction, and after saying that he could have wished that they "had not divided" on the question of taking the oath of indemnity, he expresses his regret to find that Keppoch and Glencoe were safe.

exact in rooting out that damnable sect, the worst of the Highlands." The purport of this letter could not be misunderstood; but lest Livingston might not feel disposed to imbrue his hands in the blood of Glencoe and his people, additional instructions bearing the date of 16th January, and also signed and countersigned by King William, were despatched to Livingston by the master of Stair, ordering him to extirpate the whole clan.* In the letter containing these instructions, Dalrymple informs Livingston that "the King does not at all incline to receive any after the diet but in mercy," but he artfully adds, "but for a just example of vengeance, I entreat the thieving tribe of Glencoe may be rooted out to purpose." Lest, however, Livingston might hesitate,

* These instructions are as follow :

WILLIAM R.

16th January, 1692.

1. The copy of the paper given by Macdonald of Aughtera to you has been shown us. We did formerly grant passes to Buchan and Cannon, and we do authorize and allow you to grant passes to them, and ten servants to each of them, to come freely and safely to Leith; from that to be transported to the Netherlands before the 15th of March next, to go from thence where they please, without any stop or trouble.

2. We do allow you to receive the submissions of Glengarry and those with him, upon their taking the oath of allegiance and delivering up the house of Invergarry; to be safe as to their lives, but as to their estates to depend upon our mercy.

3. In case you find that the house of Invergarry cannot probably be taken in this season of the year, with the artillery and provision you can bring there; in that case we leave it to your discretion to give Glengarry the assurance of entire indemnity for life and fortune, upon delivering of the house and arms, and taking the oath of allegiance. In this you are to act as you find the circumstances of the affair do require; but it were much better that those who have not taken the benefit of our indemnity, in the terms within the diet prefix by our proclamation, should be obliged to render upon mercy. The taking the oath of allegiance is indispensable, others having already taken it.

4. If M'Ean of Glencoe and that tribe can be well separated from the rest, it will be a proper vindication of the public justice to extirpate that set of thieves. The double of these instructions is only communicated to Sir Thomas Livingston. W. REX.

a duplicate of these additional instructions was sent at the same time by Secretary Dalrymple to Colonel Hill, the governor of Fort-William, with a letter of an import similar to that sent to Livingston.*

Preparatory to putting the butchering warrant in execution, a party of Argyle's regiment, to the number of 120 men, under the command of Captain Campbell of Glenlyon, was ordered to proceed to Glencoe, and take up their quarters there, about the end of January or beginning of February. On approaching the glen, they were met by John Macdonald, the elder son of the chief, at the head of about twenty men, who demanded from Campbell the reason of his coming into a peaceful country with a military force. Glenlyon, and two subalterns who were with him, explained that they came as friends, and that their sole object was to obtain suitable quarters, where they could conveniently collect the arrears of cess and hearth-money—a new tax laid on by the Scottish parliament in 1690—in proof of which, Lieutenant Lindsay produced the instructions of Colonel Hill to that effect. The officers having given their parole of honour that they came without any hostile intentions, and that no harm would be done to the persons or properties of the chief and his tenants, they received a kindly welcome, and were hospitably entertained by Glencoe and his family till the fatal morning of the massacre. Indeed, so familiar was Glenlyon, that scarcely a day passed that he did not visit the house of Alexander Macdonald, the younger son of the chief, who was married to his niece, and take his "morning drink,"

* From the following extract it would appear that not only the Earl of Breadalbane, but also the Earl of Argyle, was privy to this infamous transaction. "The Earls of Argyle and Breadalbane have promised that they (the Macdonalds of Glencoe) shall have no retreat in their bounds, the passes to Rannoch would be secured, and the hazard certified to the laird of Weems to reset them; in that case, Argyle's detachment, with a party that may be posted in Island-Stalker, must cut them off."

agreeably to the most approved practice of Highland hospitality. If Secretary Dalrymple imagined that Livingston was disinclined to follow his instructions, he was mistaken; for immediately on receipt of them, he wrote Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, who had been fixed upon by the secretary to be the executioner, expressing his satisfaction that Glencoe had not taken the oath within the period prescribed, and urging him now that a "fair occasion" offered for showing that his garrison served for some use, and as the order to him from the court was positive, not to spare any that had not come timeously in, and desiring that he would begin with Glencoe, and spare nothing of what belongs to them, "but not to trouble the Government with prisoners," or in other words, to massacre every man, woman, and child. Hamilton, however, did not take any immediate steps for executing this inhuman order. In the meantime, the master of Stair was not inactive in inciting his blood-hounds to the carnage, and accordingly on the 30th of January he wrote two letters, one to Livingston, and the other to Hill, urging them on. Addressing the former, he says: "I am glad Glencoe did not come in within the time prefixed; I hope what is done there may be in earnest, since the rest are not in a condition to draw together help. I think to harry (plunder) their cattle, and burn their houses, is but to render them desperate lawless men to rob their neighbours, but I believe you will be satisfied, it were a great advantage to the nation that thieving tribe were rooted out and cut off; it must be quietly done, otherwise they will make shift for both their men and their cattle. Argyle's detachment lies in Lelrickweel, to assist the garrison to do all of a sudden." And in his letter to Hill, he says: "Pray, when the thing concerning Glencoe is resolved, let it be secret and sudden, otherwise the men will shift you, and better not meddle with them than not to do it to purpose, to cut off that nest of robbers who have fallen in the mercy of the law, now when there is force and oppor-

tunity, whereby the king's justice will be as conspicuous and useful as his clemency to others. I apprehend the storm is so great that for some time you can do little, but so soon as possible I know you will be at work, for these false people will do nothing, but as they see you in a condition to do with them."

In pursuance of these fresh instructions from the secretary, Hill, on the 12th of February, sent orders to Hamilton, forthwith to execute the fatal commission, who, accordingly, on the same day, directed Major Robert Duncanson of Argyle's regiment to proceed immediately with a detachment of that regiment to Glencoe, so as to reach the post which had been assigned him by five o'clock the following morning, at which hour Hamilton promised to reach another post with a party of Hill's regiment. Whether Duncanson was averse to take an active personal part in the bloody tragedy about to be enacted, is a question the solution of which would neither aggravate nor extenuate his guilt as a party to one of the foulest murders ever perpetrated in any age or country; but the probability is, that he felt some repugnance to act in person, as immediately on receipt of Hamilton's order, he despatched another order from himself to Captain Campbell of Glenlyon, then living in Glencoe, with instructions to fall upon the Macdonalds precisely at five o'clock the following morning, and put all to the sword under seventy years of age. Campbell was a man fitted for every kind of villany, a monster in human shape, who, for the sake of lucre, or to gratify his revenge, would have destroyed his nearest and dearest friend, and who, with consummate treachery,

" Could smile, and murder while he smiled."

With this sanguinary order in his pocket, he accordingly did not hesitate to spend the eve of the massacre at cards with John and Alexander Macdonald, the sons of the chief, to wish them good night at parting, and to accept an invita-

tion from Glencoe himself to dine with him the following day, although he had resolved to imbrue his hands in the blood of his kind-hearted and unsuspecting host, his sons, and utterly to exterminate the whole clan within a few hours! Little suspecting the intended butchery, Glencoe and his sons retired to rest at their usual hour; but early in the morning, while the preparations for the intended massacre were going on, John Macdonald, the elder son of the chief, hearing the sound of voices about his house, grew alarmed, and jumping out of bed threw on his clothes, and went to Inverriggen, where Glenlyon was quartered, to ascertain the cause of the unusual bustle which had interrupted his nocturnal slumbers. To his great surprise he found the soldiers all in motion, as if preparing for some enterprise, a circumstance which induced him to enquire at Captain Campbell the object of such extraordinary preparations at such an early hour. The anxiety with which young Macdonald pressed his question, indicating a secret distrust on his part, Campbell endeavoured by professions of friendship to lull his suspicions, and pretended that his sole design was to march against some of Glengarry's men. As Alexander Macdonald, the younger son of Glencoe, was married to Glenlyon's niece, that crafty knave referred to his connexion with the family of Glencoe, and put it to the young man, whether, if he intended any thing hostile to the clan, he would not have provided for the safety of his niece and her husband. Macdonald, apparently satisfied with this explanation, returned home and retired again to rest; but he had not been long in bed when his servant, who, apprehensive of the real intentions of Glenlyon and his party, had prevented Macdonald from sleeping, informed him of the approach of a party of men towards the house. Jumping immediately out of bed, he ran to the door, and perceiving a body of about twenty soldiers with muskets and fixed bayonets coming in the direction of his house, he fled to a hill in the neighbourhood, where he was joined by his brother

Alexander, who had escaped from the scene of carnage, after being wakened from sleep by his servant.

The massacre commenced about five o'clock in the morning at three different places at once. Glenlyon, with a barbarity which fortunately for society has few parallels, undertook to butcher his own hospitable landlord and the other inhabitants of Inverriggen, where he and a party of his men were quartered, and despatched Lieutenant Lindsay with another party of soldiers to Glencoe's house to cut off the unsuspecting chief. Under the pretence of a friendly visit, he and his party obtained admission into the house. Glencoe was in bed, and while in the act of rising to receive his cruel visitors, he was basely shot at by two of the soldiers, and fell lifeless into the arms of his wife. One ball entered the back of his head, and another penetrated his body. The lady, in the extremity of her anguish, leapt out of bed and put on her clothes, but the ruffians stripped her naked, pulled the rings off her fingers with their teeth, and treated her so cruelly that she died the following day. The party also killed two men whom they found in the house, and wounded a third, named Duncan Don, who came occasionally to Glencoe with letters from Braemar. While the butchery was going on in Glencoe's house, Glenlyon was busily pursuing the same murderous course at Inverriggen, where his own host was shot by his order. Here the party seized nine men, whom they first bound hand and foot, after which they shot them one by one. Glenlyon was desirous of saving the life of a young man about twenty years of age, but one Captain Drummond shot him dead. The same officer, impelled by a thirst for blood, ran his dagger through the body of a boy who had grasped Campbell by the legs, and who was supplicating for mercy. Glenlyon's party carried their cruelty even so far as to kill a woman, and a boy only four or five years old. A third party, under the command of one Sergeant Barker, which was quartered in the village of

Achnaion, fired upon a body of nine men whom they observed in a house in the village sitting before a fire. Among these was the laird of Auchintrincken, who was killed on the spot, along with four more of the party. This gentleman had at the time a protection in his pocket from Colonel Hill, which he had received three months before. The remainder of the party in the house, two or three of whom were wounded, escaped by the back of the house, with the exception of a brother of Auchintrincken, who having been seized by Barker, requested him, as a favour, not to despatch him in the house, but to kill him without. The sergeant consented, because, as he said, he had experienced his kindness; but when brought out he threw his plaid, which he had kept loose, over the faces of the soldiers who were appointed to shoot him, and also escaped. Besides the slaughter at these three places, there were some persons dragged from their beds and murdered in other parts of the glen, among whom was an old man of eighty years of age. Between thirty and forty of the inhabitants of the glen were slaughtered, and the whole male population, under seventy years of age, amounting to two hundred, would have been cut off, if, fortunately for them, a party of four hundred men under Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, who was principally charged with the execution of the sanguinary warrant, had not been prevented by the severity of the weather from reaching the glen till eleven o'clock, six hours after the slaughter, by which time the whole surviving male inhabitants, warned of their danger and the fate of their chief and the other sufferers, had fled to the hills. Ignorant of this latter circumstance, Hamilton, on arriving at Kinlochleven, appointed several parties to proceed to different parts of the glen, with orders to take no prisoners, but to kill all the men that came in their way. They had not, however, proceeded far when they fell in with Major Duncanson's party, by whom they were informed of the events of the morning, and who told them that as the

survivors had escaped to the hills, they had nothing to do but to burn the houses and carry off the cattle. They accordingly set fire to the houses, and having collected the cattle and effects in the glen, they carried them to Inverlochry, where they were divided among the officers of the garrison. That Hamilton would have executed his commission to the very letter, is evident from the fact, that an old man, the only remaining male inhabitant of the desolate vale they fell in with, was put to death by his orders.

After the destruction of the houses, a scene of the most heart-rending description ensued. Ejected from their dwellings by the devouring element, aged matrons, married women, and widowed mothers, with infants at their breasts and followed by children on foot, clinging to them with all the solicitude and anxiety of helplessness, were to be seen all wending their way, almost in a state of nudity, towards the mountains in a piercing snow-storm, in quest of some friendly hovel, beneath whose roof they might seek shelter from the pitiless tempest, and deplore their unhappy fate. But as there were no houses within the distance of several miles, and as these could only be reached by crossing mountains deeply covered with snow, the greater part of these unhappy beings, overcome by fatigue, cold, and hunger, dropt down and perished miserably among the snow.

' " O tell me, Harper, wherefore flow
Thy wayward notes of wail and woe,
Far down the desert of Glencoe,
Where none may list their melody?
Say, harp'st thou to the mists that fly,
Or to the dun deer glancing by,
Or to the eagle that from high,
Screams chorus to thy minstrelsy?

No, not to these, for they have rest,—
The mist-wreath has the mountain-crest,
The stag his lair, the erne her nest,
 Abode of lone security.
But those for whom I pour the lay,
Not wild-wood deep, nor mountain grey,
Not this deep dell, that shrouds from day,
 Could screen from treach'rous cruelty.

Their flag was furl'd, and mute their drum,
The very household dogs were dumb,
Unwont to bay at guests that come
 In guise of hospitality.
His blithest notes the piper plied,
Her gayest snood the maiden tied,
The dame her distaff flung aside,
 To tend her kindly housewifery.

The hand that mingled in the meal,
At midnight drew the felon steel,
And gave the host's kind breast to feel
 Meed for his hospitality!
The friendly hearth which warmed that hand,
At midnight arm'd it with the brand,
That bade destruction's flames expand
 Their red and fearful blazonry.

There woman's shriek was heard in vain,
Nor infancy's unpitied plain,
More than the warrior's groan, could gain,
 Respite from ruthless butchery!
The winter wind that whistled shrill,
The snows that night that cloaked the hill,
Though wild and pitiless, had still
 Far more than Southern clemency."

While this brutal massacre struck terror into the hearts of the Jacobite chiefs, and thus so far served the immediate object of the Government, it was highly prejudicial to King William, who was considered its chief author. In every quarter, even at court, the account of the massacre was received with horror and indignation ; and the Jacobite party did not fail to turn the affair to good account against the Government, by exaggerating, both at home and abroad, the barbarous details. The odium of the nation rose to such a pitch, that had the exiled monarch appeared at the head of a few thousand men, he would probably have succeeded in regaining his crown. The ministry, and even King William, grew alarmed, and to pacify the people he dismissed the Master of Stair from his councils, and appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the affair, and pretended that he had signed the order for the massacre among a mass of other papers, without knowing its contents. This is the only defence ever offered for King William, but it is quite unsatisfactory. For 1st, It is inconceivable that Secretary Dalrymple or any other minister, would have ventured to prepare such an extraordinary order without the express authority of his majesty, or would have obtained his signature to it without first acquainting him of its purport. 2d, The fact that neither Dalrymple nor any other minister was impeached for such an act, makes it extremely probable that William was privy to its contents. 3d, The unusual mode of signing and countersigning the order would have made William desirous to know the import of such a document, had he not been previously aware of its nature. 4th, His refusal or neglect to order the principal parties concerned in the massacre to be brought to trial, after the estates of parliament had addressed him for that purpose, and the fact of his promoting those guilty individuals in his service, show that he could not do so without implicating himself.

Though the nation had long desired an inquiry into this

barbarous affair, it was not until the 29th day of April, 1695, upwards of three years after the massacre, that a commission was granted. A commission had, indeed, been issued in 1693, appointing the Duke of Hamilton and others to examine into the affair; but this was a piece of mere mockery, and was never acted upon; but it now became necessary to satisfy the call of the nation by instituting an investigation. The Marquis of Tweeddale, lord-high-chancellor of Scotland, and the other commissioners now appointed, accordingly entered upon the inquiry, and, after examining witnesses and documents, drew up a report which was subscribed at Holyrood-house, on the 20th of June, and transmitted to his majesty. The commissioners appear to have executed their task with great fairness; but, anxious to palliate the conduct of the King, they gave a forced construction to the terms of the order, and threw the whole blame of the massacre upon Secretary Dalrymple. They do not seem to have discovered any evidence to implicate the Earl of Breadalbane, but merely say, in reference to him, that it "was plainly deponed" before them, that, some days after the slaughter, a person waited upon Glencoe's sons, and represented to them that he was sent by Campbell of Balcalden, the chamberlain or steward of the Earl, and authorized to say, that, if they would declare, under their hands, that his lordship had no concern in the slaughter, they might be assured the Earl would procure their "remission and restitution." While the commissioners were engaged in this inquiry, they ascertained that, in his negotiations with the Highlanders, the Earl had acted in such a way as to lay himself open to a charge of high treason, in consequence of which discovery, he was committed prisoner to the castle of Edinburgh; but he was soon liberated from confinement, as it turned out that he had professed himself a Jacobite, that he might the more readily execute the commission with which he had been intrusted, and that King William himself was a party to this

contrivance. The report of the commissioners was laid before the parliament of Scotland on the 24th of June, which, although it voted the execution of the Glencoe-men to be a murder, resolved *nemine contradicente*, that the instructions contained in the warrant of the 16th of January, 1692, did not authorize the massacre.

The probability is that the rancorous political partizanships of the period, the unacquaintance of many of the leaders of the antagonist parties with one another's true characters, the contortion of ordinary facts and communications by powerful though unconscious prejudices, and the misconceiving of opinion and statement in consequence of the hereditary animosities of the clans, combined to produce such contretemps and intricacies of thought and purpose among all the principal persons connected with the massacre as even they themselves were never fully able to unravel or comprehend. Neither the commissioners nor the parliament, though they acted near enough the event to command every source of information, and remote enough from it both to escape excitement and to baffle mystification, were capable of understanding it; and though the Earl, the Secretary, and the King, and all the actors and advisers had met for the express purpose of mutual explanation, they might possibly have arrived at no distincter a conclusion than that all had more or less misunderstood one another and become jointly implicated in one tremendous mistake. Animosity and revenge may no doubt be charged in the gross with the main guilt of the atrocious tragedy; but they acted rather remotely than immediately,—rather through a mist than in clear light,—rather amidst the peculiar confusion of the times than on a proper arena of their own; and they seem to have been mightily aided by sheer misapprehensions, and must not be charged exclusively, or perhaps even principally, on any one of the advising or acting parties, and least of all on King William or his responsible government. Whatever amount

of mistake the King and his Secretary may have committed, or however culpably they may have fallen into that mistake from prejudice or partiality or reprehensible ignorance, they obviously were free from malice,—they had no share in the animus of the horrific ‘murder,’—the whole drift of their government testifies loudly to their innocence. Would we could say as much for the immediate actors! They certainly were very far from being the only parties to blame,—and they would not have dared to behave as they did unless they had believed themselves to be acting under high sanction; but they manifestly went with a will to the work,—and if they did not even consciously or violently overstretch their commission, they at least had a liking for it, and may be supposed to have cherished little wish to abate any of its rigour.

The Western Highlanders themselves, we believe, have all along deplored the fate of the massacred and reprobated the conduct of the assassins. “The belief,” says General Stewart, “that punishment of the cruelty, oppression, or misconduct of an individual, descended as a curse on his children to the third and fourth generation, was not confined to the common people. All ranks were influenced by it, believing that if the curse did not fall upon the first or second generation, it would inevitably descend upon the succeeding. The late Colonel Campbell of Glenlyon retained this belief through a course of thirty years’ intercourse with the world, as an officer of the 42d regiment, and of Marines. He was grandson of the laird of Glenlyon, who commanded the military at the massacre of Glencoe, and who lived in the laird of Glencoe’s house, where he and his men were hospitably received as friends, and entertained a fortnight before the execution of his orders. He was playing at cards with the family when the first shot was fired, and the murderous scene commenced. Colonel Campbell was an additional captain in the 42d regiment in 1748, and was put on half pay. He then

entered the Marines, and in 1762 was major, with the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel, and commanded 800 of his corps at the Havannah. In 1771, he was ordered to superintend the execution of the sentence of a court-martial on a soldier of marines, condemned to be shot. A reprieve was sent, but the whole ceremony of the execution was to proceed until the criminal was upon his knees, with a cap over his eyes, prepared to receive the volley. It was then he was to be informed of his pardon. No person was to be told previously, and Colonel Campbell was directed not to inform even the firing party, who were warned that the signal to fire would be the waving of a white handkerchief by the commanding officer. When all was prepared, and the clergyman had left the prisoner on his knees, in momentary expectation of his fate, and the firing party were looking with intense attention for the signal, Colonel Campbell put his hand into his pocket for the reprieve, and in pulling out the packet the white handkerchief accompanied it, and catching the eyes of the party, they fired, and the unfortunate prisoner was shot dead. The paper dropped through Colonel Campbell's fingers, and clapping his hand to his forehead, he exclaimed, 'The curse of God and of Glencoe is here, I am an unfortunate ruined man.' He desired the soldiers to be sent to the barracks, instantly quitted the parade, and soon afterwards retired from the service. This retirement was not the result of any reflection or reprimand on account of this unfortunate affair, as it was known to be entirely accidental. The impression on his mind, however, was never effaced. Nor is the massacre and the judgment which the people believe has fallen on the descendants of the principal actors in this tragedy, effaced from their recollection. They carefully note, that while the family of the unfortunate gentleman who suffered is still entire, and his estate preserved in direct male succession to his posterity, this is not the case with the family, posterity, and estates, of those

who were the principals, promoters, and actors in this black affair."

The same author, to illustrate the force of principle, when founded on a sense of honour and its consequent influence, relates another anecdote in reference to this massacre, which also deserves to be here repeated. "When the army of Prince Charles, in the ranks of which were Macdonald of Glencoe, the descendant of the murdered chief, and all his followers, lay at Kirkliston in the year 1745, near the seat of the Earl of Stair, the grandson of Secretary Dalrymple, who took such a prominent part in the massacre, the Prince, anxious to save the house and property of Lord Stair, and to remove from his followers all excitement to revenge, but at the same time not comprehending their true character, proposed that the Glencoe-men should be marched to a distance from Lord Stair's house and parks, lest the remembrance of the share which his grandfather had had in the order for extirpating the whole clan, should now excite a spirit of revenge. When the proposal was communicated to the Glencoe-men, they declared that, if that was the case, they must return home. If they were considered so dishonourable as to take revenge on an innocent man, they were not fit to remain with honourable men, nor to support an honourable cause; and it was not without much explanation, and great persuasion, that they were prevented from marching away the following morning."
