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BY

PATRICK FRASER TYTLER, ESQ.
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JAMES THE FIRST.

1424—1437.

The return of James the First to his dominions had been signalized, as we have seen*, by a memorable example of retributive justice, from the sternness of which the mind revolts with horror. We must be careful indeed to regard his conduct to the house of Albany, not through the more humane feelings of our own age, but in relation to the dark feudal times in which he lived. To forgive, or rather not to revenge an injury was a principle which in such days was invariably regarded as a symptom of pusillanimity. James had a long account to settle with the house of his uncle. The blood of his brother, the broken heart of his father, the usurpation of his hereditary throne for eighteen years, and the scenes of rapine and cruelty which had been permitted to take place during his captivity in England, all called upon him to whet the sword of justice with no ordinary edge; to make an impression upon a people accustomed to laxity and disorder, which should powerfully affect their minds, and convince them that the reign of misrule was at an end. In assuming the government, his object was to be feared and respected; but making every allowance for such considerations, and taking fully into view the circumstances under which he returned to his kingdom, it is impossible to deny that in the catastrophe of the family of Albany, the King appears to have attended to the gratification of personal revenge, as much as to the satisfaction of offended justice.

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* Vol. ii. pp. 314, 315.

The effects however of his conduct upon a feudal age were such as might easily have been anticipated, and within a wonderfully short interval matters appeared to be rapidly approaching that state when as James himself had predicted "the key should keep the castle, and the braken bush the cow." The first cares of the monarch were wisely directed to the internal administration of the country. From without he had at present nothing to dread. England was at peace, the marriage with Jane Beaufort had secured the interest of the governors of that kingdom, during the minority of Henry the Sixth. France was the ancient ally of Scotland, and the commercial interests of the Netherlands were too essentially promoted by their Scottish trade not to be anxious to preserve the most friendly relations. James therefore was permitted to direct his undivided attention to his affairs at home, and his great principle seems to have been to rule the country through his Parliament; to assemble that great national council as frequently as possible, to enact or to revive wholesome and salutary laws, suited to the emergency in which he found his kingdom, and to insist on their rigid observance. In the same Parliament which beheld the downfal of the house of Albany, we have seen that the administration of justice and the defence of the kingdom formed two principal subjects of consideration; and his attention to the commercial interests of the state was equally active, though not equally enlightened. The acts of the legislature upon this subject are pervaded by that jealousy of exportation, and the narrow policy in restricting the settlement of Scottish merchants in foreign parts which mark an unenlightened age. During the detention of the monarch in England, the Flemings as allies of that kingdom, had committed repeated aggressions on the Scottish merchant vessels, and the king on his return had removed the staple of the Scottish commerce to Middleburg in Zealand. Soon after, however, an embassy from the States of Flanders arrived at the Scottish Court, with the object of procuring the restoration of the trade, and James not only received the Envoys with distinction, but consented to their request on the condition of more ample privileges being conferred on his subjects who traded to these parts*.

About this time the Queen was delivered of a daughter, and with an affectionate recurrence to the virtues of the sainted consort of Malcolm Canmore, the Princess was christened Margaret. The event was received with almost as much satisfaction in France as in Scotland, and Charles the Seventh, anxious to procure the assistance of that country in his protracted struggle with the arms of England, immediately opened a negociation for the marriage of the Dauphin with the infant daughter of James. Stewart of Derneley, Constable of the Scottish Army in France, and the Archbishop of Rheims visited the Scottish Court; the king returned his answers to their proposals by Leighton, Bishop of Aberdeen, and Ogilvy, Justiciar of Scotland, and it was determined that after five years the parties should be solemnly betrothed, and the Princess conveyed to the Court of France*. It was another part of the prudent policy of James to cultivate the friendship of the church, to secure the co-operation of the numerous and influential body of the Catholic Clergy in the execution of his schemes for the reduction of the country, under a system of order and good government; and with this view we find him about the same time dispatching an embassy to the Court of Rome, and directing a Commission to the Bishop of St. Andrews, by which that Prelate was empowered to resume all alienations of ecclesiastical lands which had been granted under the administration of the two Albanies. The deed also conferred upon him the dreaded power of placing the party under the anathema of the Church.

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* Fordun, vol. ii., p. 484.

The collection of the sum due for the King's ransom was a matter of grave consideration; and in the first Parliament after his return, a tax of twelve pennies in the pound was directed to be levied upon the whole lands of the kingdom †; but as the zeal of the people cooled, complaints were made of the impoverishment and distress which were occasioned by so general a burden; and James, admonished by the defalcation in the second collection, with equal prudence and generosity, directed that no further efforts should be made to levy the imposition*. In his third Parliament, which assembled at Perth on the 12th of March, 1425, the administration of justice, throughout every portion of the kingdom, was provided for by the institution of a new ambulatory court, denominated the 'Session.' It consisted of the Chancellor and certain persons of the three estates, to be selected by the King, who were to hold their sittings, three times in the year, at whatever place the royal will should appoint, for the determination of all causes and quarrels which might be brought before them †. Another material object was the amendment of the laws, and their promulgation throughout the most distant parts of the country. For this purpose a committee of six of the most able and learned counsellors, to be chosen from each of the three estates was directed to examine the books of the law, Regiam Majestatem and Quoniam Attachiamenta, to explain their obscurities, reconcile their contradictions, and, in the ancient and simple language of the times, 'to mend such as need mending.' Copies of the statutes of the realm were directed to be distributed to all sheriffs throughout the country; and these judges were, in their turn, enjoined to publish them in the principal places of their sheriffdom, and to furnish copies to all prelates, barons, and other persons of authority, who applied for them.

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* Fordun, vol. ii., p. 484.

† Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 4.

Although enjoying a profound peace both at home and abroad, James did not neglect that warlike policy which is its best preservation; armed musters, or 'weapon schawings,' were appointed to be held in every county, under the superintendence of the sheriff, four times in the year, at which all, capable of bearing arms, were compelled to attend for the purpose of having their weapons inspected, and devoting a portion of their time to the cultivation of warlike exercises. The baron, the yeoman, the wealthy burgher, the hind, the vassals of the church, were all equally called out on such occasions. Every yeoman, between sixteen and sixty years of age, was obliged to furnish himself with a bow and a sheaf of arrows; gentlemen, possessing ten pounds value in land, were to arm themselves with sword, spear, and dagger, a steel cap and iron greaves, or leg-harness; and those of less substance, in proportion to their estate; whilst it was made incumbent on all merchants trading beyond seas, to bring home along with their other cargoes, a good store of harness and quilted armour, besides spears, bows, and bowstrings. During his residence in England, and his campaigns in France under Henry the Fifth, the Scottish monarch had personally witnessed the fatal superiority of the English archers. He had himself arrived at great perfection in this martial exercise, and he was anxious to promote it amongst his subjects.

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* Fordun, vol. ii. p. 482.

† Acts of Parliament, vol. ii., p. 11.

The King next directed his attention to a still more arduous inquiry,—the state of the Highlands and Isles; but he soon found, that without his personal presence in these remote districts, little success could be anticipated. He determined, therefore, to remedy this defect, and set out on a progress to Inverness, with a resolution not to return till he had effectually reduced the northern portion of his dominions under the control of legitimate authority. The condition of the Highlands at this period, so far as we can discern it by the feeble light of contemporary history, was in a high degree rude and uncivilized. There was to be found in them a singular admixture of the Scoto-Norman, Celtic, and Scandinavian races. The tenure of lands by charter and seisin, the rights of the overlord, the duties of the vassal, the bonds of manrent, the baronial jurisdiction, the troops of armed retainers, the pomp of feudal life, and the ferocity of feudal manners, were all there to be met with in as full force as in the more southern parts of the kingdom. 'Powerful chiefs of Norman name and Norman blood had penetrated into their remotest fastnesses, and ruled over multitudes of vassals and serfs, whose strange and uncouth appellatives proclaim their difference of race in the most convincing manner*.' But the gloomy castles and inaccessible fortresses of these northern regions were also inhabited by many fierce chiefs of the pure Celtic race. They spoke a different language, lived under a totally different system of manners from the Norman barons, and regarded all intrusion into a country which had been originally their own, with mingled feelings of disdain and abhorrence. Over their separate septs or clans, these haughty potentates exercised an equally despotic authority as the baron over his military followers; and whilst both disdained to acknowledge an allegiance to the monarch, of whose existence they were scarcely aware, and derided the authority of laws which they hardly understood, the perpetual disputes which arose between them, and the jealousy and ferocity of their followers, led inevitably to such scenes of spoliation, imprisonment, and murder, as threatened to cut off the country beyond the range of the Grampians from all communication with the more pacific parts of the realm. It was, if possible, to put a period to this state of things, that James now determined to visit his northern dominions.

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* History of Scotland, vol. iii., p. 251.

Surrounded by his barons, who were accompanied by troops of armed retainers, and attended by a military force which rendered resistance hopeless, he took his progress to Inverness, from which he issued to these northern chiefs his writs commanding their attendance at a Parliament to be held in that burgh. It is singular that they did not dare to disobey his summons, and the fact seems to point to some proceedings upon the part of the King of which all record has been lost, but bitterly did they repent their weakness or their credulity. Scarcely had they entered the hall of Parliament, when they were seized, manacled hand and feet, and cast into separate prisons, whilst the Monarch is described by Fordun as turning triumphantly to his courtiers and reciting some monkish rhymes, applauding the skill by which they had been circumvented, and warning them of the folly of entertaining any hope of mercy. Amongst these victims the most noted were Alexander of the Isles, Angus Dhu or black Angus of Strathnarvern, with his four sons, Kenneth More or big Kenneth, his son-in-law Angus of Moray, Alexander Macrory of Garmoran, John Macarthur, William Lesley, and James Campbell. Macrory, Macarthur, and Campbell, men notorious for the lawlessness of their lives and the murders which they had committed, were instantly tried, convicted, and executed. Of the rest, some were imprisoned, others were suffered on a trial of amendment to return to their homes, whilst Alexander of the Isles, after a temporary restraint, was restored to his liberty and permitted again to place himself at the head of those vassals whose allegiance, as well as his own, he solemnly engaged should never again be brought into question.

But the promises of this fierce chief, who had long been accustomed to a life of independence and piratic warfare, were broken so soon as he saw the gathering of his clansmen and the white sails of his galleys. At the head of an army of ten thousand men, embracing the whole strength of Ross and the Isles, he broke down from his northern retreats, and sweeping every thing before him, let loose the hottest of his wrath against the lands belonging to the crown, whilst he concluded his expedition by rasing to the ground the royal burgh of Inverness *.

The Highlander, however, had yet to learn the uncommon energy of the King, and the royal wrath overtook him with a strength and a rapidity for which he was not prepared. Scarcely had he time to divide his spoil, when he found himself furiously attacked in Lochaber by a force hastily levied and led by James in person, which scattered his undisciplined troops, more solicitous to escape with the plunder which they had secured, than to risk its loss by making head against the enemy. Deserted by

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* Fordun a Hearne, vol. iv. p. 1485. † Ibid. p. 1286.

the clan Chattan and Cameron, who deemed it prudent to make their peace before the King's wrath was kindled to the uttermost, and convinced of his inability to maintain the struggle, the Island Prince, whose pride was yet unconquered, dispatched ambassadors to sue for peace, but they were dismissed from court with the utmost contempt, and the haughty monarch, deriding this feeble effort of a fugitive and outlaw to assume the state of an independent prince, commanded his sheriffs and officers to bring the rebel dead or alive into his presence. Hunted like a noxious animal from place to place, aware of the stern character of the King, and distrusting the fidelity of the few followers who were left, the unhappy man was driven at last to sue for life in a humiliating form. On a great solemnity when the King, surrounded by his prelates and nobles, stood in front of the high altar at Holyrood, a wretched-looking mendicant, squalid from suffering and misery, clothed only in his shirt and drawers, and holding a naked sword in his hand, threw himself on his knees before the monarch, and holding his weapon by the point, presented it to James and implored his clemency. It was the Highland Prince who had secretly travelled to the capital, and adopted this mode of conciliating the royal indignation*. James granted him his life, but instantly shut him up in Tantallan Castle under the charge of the Earl of Angus, and at the same time imprisoned the Countess of Ross, his mother, a proud matron who was believed to have encouraged her son in his rebellious courses. Both, however, were released not long after, and the example of mingled severity and mercy had a happy effect in securing for a while the peace of these remote districts.

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* Fordun a Hearne, vol. iv., p. 1485.

The state of insubordination indeed to which they had arrived during the long usurpation of Albany can scarcely be conceived, and some anecdotes have been preserved by our ancient historians which paint it more forcibly than the most laboured description. The highland districts, to use the language of the Chronicle of Moray, were little else at this moment than a den of robbers *, where might made right; and it happened that under this state of misrule a poor Highland widow had been plundered by one of the Ketheran chiefs, who had stripped her of her substance, and left her utterly destitute. Yet the spoiler walked abroad, and none dared to seize him. In the agony of her heart, however, she confronted the robber chief, upbraided him with his cowardice, and declared she would never wear shoes again till she had herself carried her complaint before the King. 'It shall be a broken vow,' said the monster, 'you shall be shod before you stir from this spot;' and instantly seizing the defenceless creature, he had two horse-shoes nailed to her naked feet, and thus bleeding and in agony she was thrust upon the highway. But superior to the sense of pain, and wrought up by her wrongs to a pitch of supernatural endurance, she maintained her purpose, and falling into the hands of some humane persons, who removed the iron shoes, she travelled to Court, told her story to the King, and held up her feet, still torn and bleeding by the

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* MS. Chron. of Moray, Cast. Moray, p. 220.

inhuman treatment which she had received. The character of James has been already described. In a tumult of commiseration for the victim who stood before him, and of uncontrollable wrath against her oppressor, he directed his instant orders to the Sheriff of the county where the outrage had been committed, commanding him, on the peril of his head, to have the robber-chief apprehended, and sent to Perth, where the Court was then held. The energy of the King communicated itself to his officers, and in a short time the miscreant was hurried into his presence, and instantly ordered to execution. A shirt, on which was painted a rude representation of his crime, was thrown over him; and after having been dragged at a horse's heels, he was hanged, a memorable example of the speedy vengeance of the laws *.

It is in circumstances like these that we applaud the stern severity of a character peculiarly fitted to rule over the cruel and iron-hearted hordes which then peopled his northern dominions, but there were other occasions when the heart revolted at the royal severity. A nobleman, nearly related to the King, having quarrelled with another baron, so far forgot himself as to strike his antagonist in presence of the Monarch: the crime, by the law, was capital; but the King unsheathed the short cutlass which hung at his side, and with a look which forbade all further question, ordered the delinquent to stretch upon the table the hand which had offended. A thrill of horror ran through the Court, as he next turned to the baron who had

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* Fordun, vol. ii., p. 510.

received the blow, and giving him the cutlass, commanded him to chop off the worthless member, which had dared to lift itself against the law. In vain his councillors and prelates implored forgiveness for the culprit; James was inexorable, and the sentence would have been carried into execution, had not the Queen, in an agony of distress, thrown herself at the feet of her husband, who, moved by her tears, consented to change the sentence into banishment *.

It is remarkable, however, what dissimilar qualities were found united in this Prince. Prudence, political sagacity, generosity to his friends, courtesy, and even gentleness to those who submitted themselves to his authority, were conspicuous features in his character, and if distinguished for the inexorable severity with which he pursued the proudest offender, he was no less remarkable for his anxiety to consult the interests of the lowest classes of his subjects, and to give redress to the poorest sufferer. His first endeavours had been directed to the redress of abuses in the administration of justice, but nothing escaped his attention. By the frequency with which he assembled his Parliaments, the barons and prelates were accustomed to the operation of an established and regular government; they were compelled to respect the character of the sovereign, of whose wisdom and vigour they were constant witnesses, and no longer able to remain for an indefinite period at their castles, where they had been accustomed to live in an independence which owned no superior,

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* Fordun a Hearne, vol. iv., pp. 1334, 1335.

they dared no longer to disobey the laws, for the execution of which they were sure, within a short period, to be made personally responsible.

These observations are, however, principally applicable to the highest ranks of the feudal nobility, for the lesser barons appear soon to have complained against the grievance of a too frequent attendance upon Parliament, and this remonstrance led to a change which is well worthy of notice. It was declared in a General Council held at Perth, on the 1st of March, 1427, that the smaller barons and free-tenants who had hitherto been summoned to Parliament, should be excused their attendance, provided from their number there were chosen for each sheriffdom two or more in proportion to its extent, who should be returned to Parliament as the representatives of the sheriffdom from which they came. The Commissaries or representatives were next directed to elect from their body an expert or able person, to be called the Common Speaker of the Parliament, whose duty it should be to bring forward all cases of importance involving the rights and privileges of the Commons; and it was declared that they should enjoy a delegated power from their constituents to discuss and determine all such causes involving the rights of the lesser barons, which it might be expedient to bring before the Great Council or Parliament. The expenses of these commissaries were directed to be paid by the electors who owed suit and presence in the Parliament, but were thus excused their attendance, whilst it was added, that this should in no way interfere with the bishops, abbots, earls, and other lords, who were to be summoned as usual by the King's special precept *. This remarkable law contains the first introduction of the principles of a representative government in Scotland, and although expressed in brief and simple terms, we can discern in them the rude draught of a Lower House, under the form of a Committee or Assembly of the Commissaries of the Shires, who deliberated by themselves on the various subjects which they thought proper to be brought by their Speaker before the higher court of Parliament. It is thus evident that an institution, which was afterwards to be claimed as the most valuable privilege of every free subject, the right of having a voice, by means of his representative, in the great council of the nation, arose, by a singular contradiction out of an attempt to avoid it; the lesser barons considered the necessity of attending Parliament an expensive grievance, and the King permitted them to be absent on condition of their electing a substitute and defraying his expenses.

There were few subjects, in any way connected with the prosperity of the kingdom, which escaped the attention of this monarch; the agriculture, the manufactures, the foreign commerce, the fisheries, the state of the labouring classes, the provision regarding the increase of pauperism, the prices of manufactured commodities, and of labour, all were included in his inquiries, and became the subject of parliamentary enactment, if not always of parliamentary wisdom. It was

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* Acts of Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii., p. 16, c. 2.

made incumbent upon the farmers and husbandmen, and the greater barons, that they should annually sow a stated proportion of grain, pease and beans, under a fixed penalty; a provision was introduced for the repair of the castles, fortalices, and manor places, which had been allowed to fall into decay in the remoter mountainous districts of the kingdom; the transportation of bullion out of the realm was strictly prohibited; four times in the year regular days were appointed in each barony for hunting the wolves, and a reward fixed for every wolf's-whelp which should be brought in, whilst the tenantry were enjoined, under a heavy penalty, to assist their masters in the extirpation of such noxious animals.

In these homely but not unenlightened cares for the prosperity of his kingdom, James was interrupted by a second embassy from France, to arrange more definitely the preliminaries for the marriage of the Princess Margaret with the Dauphin. At this moment the Scottish King was little able to advance a dowry suitable to the rank of the royal bride; for his revenues were still impoverished by the dilapidations of Albany and the payment of the heavy debt incurred during his detention in England. But the circumstances of France rendered men more acceptable than money; James agreed to send to that country a force of six thousand soldiers in transports to be furnished by Charles the Seventh. In return, the Scottish Princess was to be provided in an income as ample as any hitherto settled upon the Queens of France, and the county of Xaintonge and lordship of Rochfort were made over in property to her royal father. It is by no means improbable, that a jealousy on the part of England of this intimate connexion with their enemy led to a proposal of Cardinal Beaufort, at this time the leading person in the English government, for a personal interview with James, but it was declined. The Monarch deemed it beneath his dignity to confer in person with a subject, although he declared his anxiety that the amicable relations of the two kingdoms should be inviolably preserved.

His attention to the interests of the poorer classes has been already noticed; and in a Parliament held at Perth in April, 1429, a new proof of this was given, which, as leading to one of the most important rights of the subject, deserves attention. It had not escaped the notice of the king, that a fertile source of distress to the poorer tenantry and the labourers of the soil arose from the right possessed by their landlords of expelling them from their farms, whenever they chose to grant a lease of the estate to a new proprietor. This hardship James was anxious to remove; but he was compelled also to respect the customary law of the land, and by it such was then the miserable condition of a great proportion of the lower classes in Scotland, that their over-lord had a right to remove and dispose of them as if they were little better than the cattle upon his property. It was beyond the power of the prince at once to raise them from this degraded state, but he remonstrated with his prelates and barons upon the evil consequences of its continuance, and he at least paved the way for its removal by making it a request to them, (which, coming from such a quarter, no one, probably, would be disposed to refuse,) that where their lands had been leased out to a new tenant, they would not suddenly remove the poorer labourers, but would permit them to continue in possession for a year after the transaction. There can be little doubt that this benevolent enactment is to be considered as the first step towards that invaluable privilege which was, twenty years after, under the reign of James's successor, conferred on the body of the Scottish tenantry and labourers, which secured to them an undisturbed possession of their lands till the expiration of their lease, and which is familiarly known by the name of the real right of tack.

Yet whilst the King showed himself thus solicitous for the real interests of the great body of his people, he kept a strict eye upon the growth of idleness, or unnecessary luxuries and refinements. Their occupation as artizans or tradesmen, their mode of travelling from place to place, their amusements, and even their dress—all were superintended and provided for with a minute vigilance, and some of the sumptuary laws passed at this time convey a curious picture of the costume of the times. For example, we find it provided, that no person under the rank of a knight is to wear clothes of silk, adorned with furs, or embroidered with gold or pearls. An exception was made in favour of aldermen, baillies, and councillors in the magistracy, who were permitted to wear furred gowns, whilst others were enjoined to equip themselves in such plain and honest apparel as became their station. It was the natural effect of the increase of wealth amongst the commercial classes, that the wives of the opulent burghers imitated, and probably exaggerated the dress of their superiors. Against this the law directed its anathema. 'Long trains, rich hoods and ruffs, purfled sleeves, and costly curches of lawn, were henceforth banished from the wardrobe of a commoner's wife, and permitted only as part of the bravery of a gentlewoman*.'

In the same Parliament something like an attempt is discernible for the establishment of a navy;—one of the sources of national strength wherein the country was greatly deficient, and the want of which had been lately severely felt during the rebellion of the Lord of the Isles. All barons possessing lands within six miles of the sea were commanded to contribute towards the building of galleys for the public service at the rate of one oar for every four marks of land—a proportion whose exact value it is now impossible to discover.

It is probable this enactment had some reference to the condition of the Highlands and Isles, where symptoms of disturbance again began to exhibit themselves, and whose fierce chieftains, in defiance of the recent examples, renewed their attempts to set the laws at defiance. Alan Stewart, Earl of Caithness, and Alexander Earl of Mar had been stationed by James in Lochaber for the purpose of keeping this important district in subjection. Caithness was a brave, Mar a distinguished, soldier, and they commanded a force which was judged sufficient to keep its ground against any enemy likely to attack them. But Donald Balloch, a fierce Ketheran leader, nearly related to the Lord of the Isles, assembled a formidable fleet and army, ran his galleys into the narrow sea which divides Morven from Lismore, disembarked his troops, and breaking down suddenly upon Lochaber, attacked the royal forces at Inverlochy. Such was the irresistible fury of the assault, that the disciplined squares of the Lowland warriors were broken by the wild hordes which threw themselves upon them. Caithness, with sixteen of his personal retinue and many other knights, were left dead on the field. Mar was more fortunate, yet it was with difficulty that he effected his retreat with the remains of the army, which narrowly escaped being entirely cut to pieces. Lochaber now lay at the mercy of the victor, and had Donald Balloch made an immediate advance, the consequences might have been serious; but this wild chief partook of the character of the northern pirates, who were commonly afraid of trusting themselves too far from their ships. He contented himself accordingly with the plunder of Lochaber, and reimbarking in his galleys retired at first to the Isles, and soon afterwards to Ireland *.

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* Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii., pp. 17, 18.

Some time previous to this the Queen was delivered of twin sons, a joyful event which, in the prospect it gave of a successor to the throne, alleviated James's disappointment at the continued disturbances which arose in the north. The defeat of his army, however, and a desperate feud or private war which had broke out in Caithness between Angus Dow Mackay and Angus Murray called for his immediate presence, and, with his wonted activity, he determined to lead an army against his

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* Fordun a Hearne, vol. iv., p. 1289.

rebels in person. Before he could reach the remoter Highlands the rival armies of the two Catheran chiefs had met in Strathnaver, a remote valley in Caithness which is watered by the river Naver, and the conflict was maintained with so fierce and exterminating a spirit, that out of twelve hundred only nine men returned from the field. Amid such a butchery it cannot be ascertained, and the information is scarce worth seeking, to whom the victory belonged; but to the peaceable inhabitants of the country the consequences of the conflict were peculiarly grievous, by throwing it into a state of insecurity and terror. Every man who had lost a friend or a relative in the battle considered it a sacred duty to allow himself no rest till he had inflicted a bloody retaliation on those by whom he had fallen; and this feudal privilege, or rather duty, drew after it a series of spoliations, slaughters, and atrocities which interrupted for the time all regular industry and improvement.

Determined that these things should have an end, James, notwithstanding the advanced season of the year, summoned his nobles with their feudal services to meet him at Perth: whence, having first held a Parliament, and raised supplies to defray the expenses of the expedition, he proceeded at the head of a force sufficient to overawe all opposition to Dunstaffinch Castle. From this it was his determination to pass into the Western Isles and inflict an exemplary punishment upon the piratic chiefs who had been lately concerned in the rebellion of Donald Balloch, but any further progress was found unnecessary. The royal standard had scarcely waved from the towers of Dunstaffinch, when the monarch found himself surrounded by crowds of suppliant chieftains, who brought their men and their ships to his assistance; and, imploring pardon for a co-operation with a tyrant whose power it would have been death to resist, renewed their homage with every expression of devoted loyalty. James, however, as the price of his mercy, insisted that they should deliver over to him the principal offenders in the late disgraceful scenes of outrage and rebellion; and although many of these were their friends and vassals, disobedience to the demand was impossible. Three hundred robbers, men hardened in crime and trained from their early years to blood and rapine, were brought bound hand and foot and delivered to the monarch. The spectacle of this ferocious troop, marching along, and guarded by the officers of the King, had a salutary effect in impressing upon the people of this district an idea of the certainty and severity of the law, which was not lessened when, with that inexorable justice which distinguished, and almost blemished, his character, James ordered them all to immediate execution*.

Having by such methods, perhaps, the only course which could have succeeded in this iron age, re-established the order and security of his northern dominions, the King found time to devote himself to more pacific cares. His twin sons were baptized with great splendour and solemnity, the Earl of Douglas standing godfather. Of these boys the eldest was named Alexander, and died very young; but the second took the name of his father, and succeeded him in the throne. Both the infants were created knights at the font; and in honour of the occasion the Monarch bestowed the same dignity upon fifty other youths selected from the noblest families in the country. Feasting, games, tournaments, and every species of feudal revelry accompanied the ceremony; and the people, who had perhaps been somewhat alarmed at the excessive sternness with which the laws had been executed against the guilty, were pleased to discover that to the peaceable and orderly-disposed classes of his subjects no prince could be more courteous, accessible, and even affectionate.

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* Acts of Parliament, vol. ii., p. 20; Buchanan, b. x., c. 33—36.

In the midst of these rejoicings a terrible guest revisited Scotland. So far back as 1348 the pestilence had carried off almost a third of the whole population. It had returned in 1361,—again in 1378 had committed very fatal ravages; and now, after an interval of more than half a century, it once more broke out, to the dismay of the people, who had scarcely begun to enjoy the sweets of security under a regular government, when they were attacked by this new calamity. Nearly about the same time there occurred a total eclipse of the sun, which for a short time involved the whole country in darkness as deep as midnight; and whilst the pestilence stalked abroad, and the blessed and healthy light of heaven was withheld, mens' minds became agitated with superstitious terror of the pestilence; the ravages were very great*. There can be little doubt that the poverty of the lower classes, the cessation of the labours of agriculture by the prevalence of private war, the plunder of the industrious peasantry, and the consequent relapse of large districts, once fertile and cultivated, into a state of nature, aggravated, to the greatest degree, if they did not actually occasion this dreadful national scourge.

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* Fordun a Hearne. vol. iv., p. 1307.

It is melancholy to find that amid this general distress the fires of religious persecution were again kindled in the heart of the country. The reader is already familiar with the fate of Resby, the undaunted disciple of Wickliff, who, twenty-eight years before this, was condemned by Laurence of Lindores, and fearlessly refusing to retract his opinions, suffered at the stake in 1405. The Church were not then, probably, aware of the extent to which his doctrines had spread amongst the people; but it is certain that they had been adopted by a very considerable sect of disciples who met in secret, freely and boldly attacked the fundamental errors of the Romish faith, and appealing to the written word of God as the single test of truth, rejected its splendid and imposing ceremonial, as founded on the fallible traditions of man. It was natural that these supporters of the truth, whilst they concealed their opinions from the world, should be anxious to open a communication with their brethren on the Continent who had adopted the doctrines of Wickliff, and for this purpose Paul Crawar, a Bohemian physician, arrived in Scotland, soon after James's return from his second expedition to the north. His ostensible object seemed to be the practice of his art, regarding his eminence in which he brought letters which spoke in the highest terms, but it was soon discovered that, in the exercise of a profession which admitted him into the confidence and privacy of domestic life, he seized every opportunity of disseminating principles subversive of the ancient doctrines of the Church, and of exposing the ignorance, cunning, and rapacity of the priesthood.

It was not to be expected that such conduct should long escape the jealous vigilance of the clergy, and that same Laurence of Lindores, who had signalized himself by his zeal against Resby, determined that his successor should also feel the strength of his inquisitorial powers. Crawar was accordingly summoned before him, and although he defended his tenets with remarkable courage and acuteness, his piety and learning were little convincing to the tribunal before which he pleaded. It appeared indeed at his examination, that, under the garb of a physician, he was a zealous minister of the word of God, and had been deputed by the citizens of Prague, a city which had adopted the tenets of Wickliff, to keep alive in Scotland the flame of reformation originally kindled by Resby. An ancient historian of these times has left us a summary of the articles of his creed. He taught that the Bible ought to be freely communicated to the people; that the civil magistrate had a right to arraign and punish delinquent ecclesiastics; that the efficacy of pilgrimages, the existence of purgatory, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the system of penance and absolution, and the power of the keys claimed by the Roman pontiff, were all inventions and delusions of men. In the administration of the Lord's Supper, he and his disciples, renouncing as too complicated and artificial the splendid ceremonial of the Romish church, adhered as much as possible to the primitive simplicity of apostolic times. They commenced the service by repeating the Lord's Prayer; the chapters of the New Testament were then read which contained the history of the institution of the Supper, and they then proceeded to distribute the elements, using common bread and a common chalice *.

It is very evident that, in such tenets and practices, we discover not merely the twilight, but a near approximation to the full blaze of the Reformation; and when they once detected the powerful, consistent, and systematic attack which had thus been made against the whole fabric of their Church, we are not to wonder that the Romanists became seriously alarmed. Unfortunately, James the First had imbibed under Henry the Fourth and Fifth an early disposition towards religious persecution. These monarchs were ever ready to purchase the friendship of the influential body of the Clergy, at the price of religious persecution, and the Scottish monarch, in the prosecution of his schemes for humbling the power of the greater barons, was ready to pay in the same coin for the same commodity: Crawar, therefore, had nothing to hope for from the clemency of the sovereign, and refusing to retract his belief in the great truths which he had so ably defended, he was condemned, and led to the stake. The sight of the

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* Fordun, vol. ii., p. 495.

flames did not shake his resolution even for a moment, and he suffered not only with constancy, but with triumph.

On his return to his dominions after his long detention in England, James, as it might have been anticipated, found the royal lands and revenues in a dilapidated condition, and his power as an independent monarch proportionably weakened. It arose from the same causes, that, during this interval, the strength, pride, and independence of the greater barons had increased to an alarming degree. The Duke of Albany, anxious to secure their support, had not dared to restrain their excesses; and there can be little doubt that many grants out of the royal customs, many portions silently cut off from the estates belonging to the crown, were presented by this crafty and sagacious usurper to those barons whose good offices he was anxious to secure, or whose enmity he was desirous to neutralize. That all this had taken place could not long be concealed from the King, but on his first assuming the government he was neither fully informed of the extent of the abuse, nor prepared to administer a remedy. When, however, he became more firmly seated on the throne, when he felt his own strength, and had exhibited to his nobles and his people that remarkable mixture of wisdom, vigour and severity, which formed his character, the purposes of the prince and the feelings of the people experienced a change. It became evident to the monarch, that, unless he succeeded in curtailing the overgrown power of his nobles, and recovering for the crown the wealth and the influence which it had lost, he must be contented to be little more than a nominal sovereign; and, on the other hand, it was not long before the aristocracy were convinced that the time had arrived when they must consent quietly to part with no small portion of that license to do wrong which they had arrogated to themselves under the unprincipled administration of Albany. Some sacrifice they were probably ready to make rather than come into collision with a monarch of whose indomitable energy of character they had witnessed some appalling specimens; but James had determined to abridge their authority still more effectually than they imagined, and he began with the most powerful baron in the country—the Earl of March.

The extent, and, still more, the situation of his estates, rendered this feudal potentate a person of high consequence, and entrusted him with a power which was too great for a subject. He possessed the strong castle of Dunbar, and his lands, which stretched out into a little principality along the borders, gave him a command of the principal passes by which an enemy could enter. It was thus a common saying that March held at his girdle the keys of the kingdom; and the frequent attempts on the part of England, during the whole course of our history, to seduce the Earls of March from their allegiance, sufficiently proved that the kings of that country were well aware of the importance of the accession. Nor had James to go far back for a proof that this exorbitant power was a thorn in the side of the country. The Earl who then wielded it was indeed more pacific and unoffending than his fore-fathers; but his father, a man of powerful talents and restless ambition, had been the cause of great misery to Scotland. We have seen that when the Duke of Rothsay, James's elder brother, broke his plighted faith to Elizabeth of Dunbar, March's daughter, this haughty baron fled in disgust to England; and, renouncing his allegiance, invaded his native country in company with Hotspur*. The calamitous defeat at Homildon had been chiefly ascribed to his military skill, and for eight years he had remained in England an able renegade, attached to the interests of Henry the Fourth. These were circumstances which it was natural should impart to James an early antipathy against this baron; and his return to Scotland, on the accession of Albany, where he continued to enjoy the favour and protection of the usurper, was not calculated to diminish the impression. The elder March, whose career we have just described, continued to reside in Scotland from 1408 to 1420, the period of his death, in the full possession of his hereditary power and estates, and his son succeeded quietly to the immense property of his father.

Certainly, in strict justice, nothing could be more irregular than all this. The elder March had been guilty not of an act but of a life of treason; and there can be no doubt that, under Robert the Third, his whole estates were forfeited to the Crown. Albany's government, on the other hand, was one long act of usurpation, that of his son Murdoch stood exactly in the same predicament; and although by their authority the father and the son had been permitted for sixteen years to possess their estates, yet it will not admit of a doubt that, according to the strict principles of the feudal law, this could not remove the sentence of forfeiture; James rightly reasoned that nothing short of an act of pardon and indemnity by his father or himself could have restored the Earl to the legitimate possession of the lands which he had forfeited. Till then, in the eye of the law, his blood was tainted, his title extinct, his possessions the sole property of the Crown, and he himself a nameless and landless traitor: but although such were the strict principles by which we must consider the situation of this powerful baron, the King appears, for ten years after his return to his dominions, to have permitted him to enjoy his hereditary estate and title. It may be observed, however, that the Earl of March was one of those barons who were arrested by James immediately previous to the execution of Duke Murdoch and his sons; and it is quite possible that some transaction may have then taken place, of which no record now remains, but which, if known, would have placed the conduct of the king in a less harsh light than we view it through the meagre records which have been left. Yet, it must be allowed that all that we know of the character of this monarch renders it probable that he dissembled his designs against March till he found himself strong enough to carry them into execution, permitting him to enjoy his title and his lands, but abstaining from every act which might be pleaded on as having removed the forfeiture.

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* Vol. ii., Lives of Scottish Worthies, p. 240.

The period, however, had now arrived when the long-protracted sentence was to be enforced against him. In the Parliament which assembled at Perth, in January, 1434, the question regarding the property of the late Earl of March, and its reversion to the crown, was discussed with great solemnity. The advocates of the king, and the counsel for the person then in possession, were first heard, after which the judges declared it to be their unanimous opinion, that, in consequence of the treason of Lord George of Dunbar, formerly Earl of March, the lands held by that baron, and the feudal dignities attached to them, had reverted to the King, to whom as the fountain of all honour and property, they now belonged. The strict justice of this sentence could not be questioned, and it met with no opposition either from the Earl or his adherents; but it becomes not a sovereign to inflict, on all occasions, the extremest sentence of the law, and neither the nobility nor the people could see without emotion a baron of ancient and noble lineage reduced at once to the condition of a nameless outcast, and estates, which for many centuries had been possessed without challenge, torn from his hands to enrich the coffers of the Crown. The King himself appears to have been solicitous to soften the blow to March: he created him Earl of Buchan, and out of the revenues of this northern principality bestowed on him an annual pension of four hundred marks; but he disdained to accept a title which he considered as a badge of his degradation, and, forsaking his country with mingled feelings of grief and indignation, retired to England*.

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* Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii., p. 23.

In a former Parliament, a statute had been passed by which all alienations of lands made by the governor of the realm, in consequence of the demise of a bastard, were declared to be revocable by the Crown, although the transaction had been completed by feudal investiture. It is by no means unlikely that this was connected with other acts, by which all transactions of Albany and Murdoch, in relation to the landed property of the kingdom, might become subject to challenge. These statutes, when viewed in connexion with the fate of March, were enough to alarm the nobility, and by degrees, as the stern character of the King developed itself, and the patient but unbending vigour with which he pursued his designs became apparent, a dark suspicion began to arise in their minds that should he live to complete them, the power and independence of the Scottish aristocracy would be at an end. They could not conceal from themselves that, if rigidly scrutinised, the titles by which they held their estates were, in some cases, as questionable as that of March, and their conscience probably brought to their recollection many transactions during James's captivity in England, which if strictly investigated, approached indefinitely near to treason. These circumstances did not fail to create feelings of distrust and insecurity on the part of his nobles towards their sovereign, which, although concealed at present under an affected acquiescence in the royal will, could not long exist in a feudal government, without leading to some open rupture. An unusual transaction took place before the Parliament was dissolved; the King required the whole lords temporal and spiritual, as well as the commissaries of the burghs, to give their bonds of adherence and fealty to the Queen before returning to their homes *. It may, perhaps, be inferred from this that James had already causes for distrust and suspicion, but this is conjectural.

The truce with England still continued, and the government of Henry the Sixth, alarmed by the successes of the Maid of Orleans, who had wrested from the English a great portion of their French conquests, became anxious for the conclusion of a lasting peace between the two countries. To purchase this, the English Regency declared themselves ready to deliver Berwick and Roxburgh into the hands of the Scots, and the King having assembled a Parliament, the proposal appeared to the temporal barons and the majority of the prelates far too advantageous to be declined. There appears, however, to have been a strong party, headed by the Abbots of Scone and Inchcolm, which, from their attachment to the interests of France, contended that it was impossible to go into these proposals without breaking the late treaties of alliance and marriage between that country and Scotland; and such was the force of the arguments they employed, that the Parliament at first delayed their answer, and finally rejected the overtures of peace †. This appears to have led to a renewal of hostilities upon the borders, and a wanton infraction of the truce by Sir Robert Ogle, one of those stirring feudal knights who

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* Acts of Parliament, vol. ii., p 292.

† Fordun a Hearne, vol. iv., pp. 1309, 1310

languished under any long continuance of peace. Breaking across the marches at the head of a strong body of men at arms, and without any object but plunder and defiance, he was met by the Earl of Angus, Hepburn of Hailes, and Ramsay of Dalhousie, near Piperden, and completely defeated, himself taken prisoner, and almost the whole of his party cut to pieces.

It was now time to send the Princess Margaret, who had reached her tenth year, to her consort the Dauphin. A small squadron of three ships and six barges was fitted out, and placed under the command of the Earl of Orkney, High Admiral of Scotland. A guard of a hundred and forty youthful squires, selected from the noblest families in the land, and a thousand men at arms, attended the bride; and the Bishop of Brechin, Ogilvy the High Treasurer, Sir John Maxwell, Sir John Wischart, and many other barons and knights, accompanied her to France. Anxious by every method to prevent an alliance in which they saw an increase of the hostility of Scotland, and a dangerous accession of strength to France, the English Regents fitted out a large fleet, which was anchored off Brest, with the object of intercepting and seizing the Princess on her passage to her husband. It was impossible that the Scottish monarch should be unmoved at an insult like this, committed in a time of truce, and which reminded him of the parallel treachery of which he had himself been the victim. The scheme, however, fortunately failed, the little fleet of the Princess, having escaped the vigilance of the English, entered the port of Rochelle, where she was received by the Archbishop of Rheims, and a brilliant train of French nobility, and the marriage was afterwards celebrated with great magnificence at Tours. The character of the French Prince, to whom she was united, and who became afterwards known as Lewis the Eleventh, is familiar to most readers, and her lot as his wife was singularly wretched.

The late infraction of the truce, and this unworthy attempt to intercept the Princess, effectually roused the King, and he determined to renew the war. It is not improbable that there were other motives: James may have deemed a renewal of hostilities the best method of giving employment to many discontented spirits, who in peace were likely to be more mischievously engaged. But the army which he assembled, although numerous, was weakened by disaffection; and after having for fifteen days laid siege to Roxburgh, the campaign concluded in an abrupt and mysterious manner. The Queen suddenly arrived in the camp, and although the place was not expected to hold out many days longer, the King, with a haste which inferred some secret cause of danger and alarm, disbanded his army and precipitately returned to his capital*. This was in August. Two months after a Parliament assembled at Edinburgh, in which nothing transpired or was enacted which throws light upon these suspicions. The probability is that discontentment, perhaps conspiracy, continued to exist; but we have no clue to unravel it, and events for a short space seemed to reassume their ordinary tenor.

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* Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii., p. 502.

We are now arrived at that gloomy period when a reign, hitherto more than commonly prosperous, and in which the Monarch carried through his schemes with an energy and ability which seemed to promise a long career, was destined to close with an appalling suddenness. It is to be regretted that, at this interesting moment, the accounts of our contemporary historians, and the evidence of our national records, are both extremely indistinct and unsatisfactory, so that the causes of the conspiracy against James the First are involved [illegible] much obscurity. In the feelings indeed [illegible] a great proportion of persons in the country, any daring individuals desirous of effecting a revolution, might have discovered ample ground for hope and encouragement. The rigour with which the King carried on the administration, whilst it gave a happy interval of comfort and security to the people, was displeasing to a large portion of the nobility; and the contrast between the feudal license and privileged disorder of the government of Albany, with the rigid justice and severity of James, was deplored by many fierce spirits to whom rapine had become a trade and a delight. To these, any prospect of a change could not fail to be acceptable; and it must be remembered, that, according to the miserable principles of the feudal system then in full force in Scotland, the disaffection of any baron was sure to draw along with it the enmity of the whole body of his followers.

But in accounting for the designs against this Monarch, it is also to be remembered, that there must have been many, and these of the highest rank, who were animated by a still deeper enmity.

The impression made upon the numerous connexions of the unfortunate Albany and Lennox, by the unmeasured severity of their punishment, was not to be easily eradicated. Revenge was a feudal duty, and such were the dark principles of this iron time, that the longer it was delayed the more fully and the more unsparingly was the debt of blood exacted. These circumstances, however, are to be considered not as the causes, but the encouragements, of a conspiracy, the actual history of which is involved in obscurity. The great actors in the plot were Sir Robert Graham, Walter, Earl of Athole, a son of Robert the Second, and his grandson, Sir Robert Stewart, Chamberlain to the King. In Graham, the motives which led to his mortal enmity against the King have been clearly ascertained. At the time of the execution of Albany this baron had been imprisoned, in common with other adherents of that powerful family, but, in addition to this cause of quarrel, the conduct of James in seizing, or resuming the Earldom of Strathern, had created a determined purpose of revenge. David, Earl of Strathern, was the eldest son of Robert the Second, by his second marriage with Euphemia Ross. This David left an only child, a daughter, who married Patrick Graham, son of Sir Patrick Graham of Kincardine, and, in right of his wife, by the acknowledged law of Scotland, which allowed the transmission of feudal dignities through females, Earl of Strathern. To her eldest son, by the same law, the estates and the dignity of this earldom unquestionably belonged; but the King contended that it was a male fief, and that, upon the death of David, Earl of Strathern, it ought to have reverted to the crown. He accordingly dispossessed Malise Graham, and seized the estates of Strathern; but, to reconcile his nobility in some degree to the severity of such a proceeding, he conferred the life-rent of the earldom upon Athole, and erected the new earldom of Menteith in favour of Graham.

At the time that he was thus deprived of his paternal inheritance, Malise was in England, detained as one of the hostages for the payment of the money due by James; but Robert Graham, his uncle, indignantly remonstrated against the wrong done to his nephew: and finding his representations ineffectual, determined on revenge. The character of this baron was of that dark and powerful kind which made him a dangerous enemy. He was cruel, crafty, and eloquent; he could conceal his private ambition under the specious veil of zeal for the public good; he pursued his purposes with a courage superior to the sense of danger, and followed the instinct of his revenge with a delight unchecked either by mercy or remorse. Of all these qualities he gave ample proof in the events which followed.

It may be doubted whether he at first ventured to explain to the nobles, whom he had attached to his party, any more serious design than that of abridging the power of the King under which they had lately suffered so severely, and resuming into their own hands not only the lands of which they had been deprived, but the feudal prerogatives which had been, by the late acts of the legislature, so materially curtailed.

Animated by this desire it was determined that they should draw up a list of their grievances, for the purpose of presenting it to the monarch. The first was an easy task to discontented men; but all shrunk from laying it before the Parliament, till Graham, having first made them promise that they would support him against the royal displeasure, undertook the dangerous commission. His daring character, however, hurried him into an excess for which his associates were not prepared. He described, in glowing colours, the tyranny of the government; adverted to the ruin which had fallen on the noblest houses; to the destruction which might be meditated against them at that moment by a Prince who wrested the ancient laws and customs of the kingdom to suit the purposes of his own ambition; and, appealing to the barons who surrounded him, implored them to save themselves and the country, were it even at the expense of subjecting to restraint the person of the sovereign. This audacious speech was pronounced in the royal presence; and the barons, habituated to respect, or rather to fear their prince, gazed silently on each other. It was a moment of fearful suspense; and all hung upon the resolution of the Monarch. But this was a quality in which James was never deficient. A glance of his eye convinced him that his enemies were hesitating; he started from his throne, and in a stern voice commanding them to arrest the traitor who had dared to insult him to his face, was promptly obeyed. The result, for the time, appeared to strengthen the party of the King; and Graham, uttering imprecations against the weakness of his associates, was hurried to prison; soon after banished from court, and his estates confiscated to the crown.

It is evident, I think, that this first plot which concluded in the banishment of Graham, and the temporary triumph of the King, must be distinguished from the second conspiracy whose termination was so fatally different. The first was an association of the barons entered into for the purpose of imposing some restraint upon that unscrupulous severity with which they were treated. That a large proportion of his nobility were disaffected to the government of James cannot be doubted, and the sudden arrival of the Queen in the camp before Roxburgh, the immediate disbanding of the army, and the return of the monarch to his dominions, demonstrate very clearly that he had received information of the association against him, and that he suspected his enemies were amongst the leaders of his army. But whilst such was the case, it is equally clear that the conspiracy was against the authority, not against the life of the monarch, and that the farthest point to which Graham had brought his associates was to make a bold and simultaneous effort to abridge the power of which they had lately experienced such mortifying effects. In this first association also it is manifest that Athole and Stewart took not a more prominent part than others of the nobility. We may be assured that a Sovereign possessed of the vigour and acuteness of James, having received so appalling a warning, would not rest till he had thoroughly investigated the whole matter, and the single banishment of the principal traitor appears to prove that although aware of the disafection which had united his nobility against him, he deemed the disease too general to render it prudent in him to make it the subject of punishment.

In the mean time, Graham, a proscribed and landless fugitive, buried himself in the recesses of the Highlands, where he brooded over his wrongs and meditated a desperate revenge. But it is impossible to deny that there was something great in the mode in which he proceeded. He sent a letter to the King, in which he renounced his allegiance, defied him as a cruel tyrant, who had ruined his house, and warned him that, wherever they met, he would slay him as his mortal enemy. The circumstance was well known at Court, and men aware of the dark character of its author, and the fierce spirits whom a man of his family and connexions might muster for the accomplishment of his purposes, wondered at the indifference with which it was received; but, although James despised his threats as proceeding from a vagabond traitor, a proclamation was made for his apprehension, and a large sum fixed on his head. It is from this moment we may date the connexion between Graham and the Earl of Athole, and now the conspiracy appears to have been concerted which aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the monarch and the settlement of the Crown upon the children of Euphemia Ross. In unravelling this dark plot it must be recollected that Athole was the son of Robert the Second by Euphemia Ross, the second queen of that monarch. It is said to have been early predicted to him by a Highland seer, that he should not die before his brows were encircled by a crown, and a singular and unexpected combination of events had undoubtedly brought him not very far from the accomplishment of the prediction. By the murder of the Duke of Rothsay, the death of Albany, and the execution of Murdoch and his sons, the whole descendants of the first marriage of Robert the Second were removed, with the exception of James the First and his son, an infant. Although nothing could be more legitimate or unquestionable than the right of the King then reigning to the throne, still we are not to wonder that Athole, whose reasonings were coloured by his ambition, easily persuaded himself there was a flaw in his title. Robert the Third, he contended, had been born out of lawful wedlock, and that no subsequent marriage could confer legitimacy upon a child so situated: the extinction of the line of Albany and Buchan therefore opened up the succession to the children of the second marriage of Robert with Euphemia Ross, and these children were himself, and David, Earl of Strathern. Shallow as were these pretences,—for Athole could not be ignorant of the papal deed which destroyed all his reasonings—they appeared sufficient to his ambition, and the example of Henry the Fourth, who had expelled from the throne his hereditary sovereign, upon a claim still more unsound, held out encouragement to the Scottish conspirators. With the exception of Graham, Athole, and Stewart, the other persons engaged in the plot were few in number, and of low rank. Christopher and Thomas Chambers, who appear to have been dependants on the House of Albany, and a knight named Hall, with his brother, are the only individuals whose names have been preserved; but the influence of the leaders had raised a body of three hundred Highlanders, without whose assistance it would have been difficult to have effected their designs.

Whilst Graham thus matured his sanguinary purpose in the Highlands, the Earl of Athole and his grandson, Stewart, who was chamberlain to the King, and a great favourite with James, continued at court eagerly watching the most favourable moment to carry it into execution. Christmas approached, and the monarch determined to keep the festival at Perth, a resolution which the conspirators heard with satisfaction, as it facilitated their designs by bringing their victim to the confines of the Highlands. They accordingly resolved that the murder should be perpetrated at this sacred season, and having completed their preparations, awaited the arrival of the King, who soon after set out on his progress to the North. As he was about to pass the Forth surrounded by his nobles, a Highland Spae Wife, or prophetess, suddenly started from the crowd, and addressing the monarch, implored him to desist from his journey, adding, 'that if he crossed that water, he would never return alive.' James was struck by the boldness and solemnity in the manner of the ancient sybil, and reining up his horse for a moment, commanded a knight who rode beside him to inquire into her meaning. But, whether from carelessness or treachery, the commission was hurriedly executed, the courtier pronounced her either mad or intoxicated, and the King, giving orders to proceed, crossed the fatal river, and rode on to Perth. On his arrival there he took up his residence in the Monastery of the Dominicans, which was situated at some little distance from the town, but, from its ample dimensions, was fitted to contain the whole royal retinue. The court is said to have been unusually splendid: the days were spent in hunting, in tournaments, and martial games; the masque, the dance, the harp, and the song occupied the night: and Athole and Stewart, communicating with Graham, had matured their plans, and fixed the hour for the murder, whilst their unconscious victim believed that every discontent had been forgotten, and gave himself up to unrestrained enjoyment. It was on the night between the 20th and 21st of February that they resolved to consummate their atrocious purpose. On that evening the King had been unusually gay, and the revels were kept up to a late hour. James even jested about a prophecy which had foretold that a king should be slain that year; and being engaged in a game of chess with a young knight whom, from his singular beauty, he was accustomed to call the King of Love, warned him playfully to look well to himself, as they two were the only kings in the land.

During these pastimes, Stewart, whose office of chamberlain facilitated his treachery by giving him immediate access to the royal apartments, had removed the bolts and destroyed the locks of the King's bedchamber, and also of the outer apartment beyond it which communicated with the passage. He had likewise placed wooden boards across the moat which surrounded the monastery over which the conspirators might pass without alarming the warder, and he anxiously awaited the moment when the King should retire to rest. At this moment, when James was still engaged at chess, Christopher Chambers, one of the conspirators, seized with a sudden fit of remorse, approached the monarch, intending to warn him of his danger; but, unable to press through the crowd which filled the presence-chamber, he was compelled to desist. It was now past midnight, and the monarch expressed his wish that the revels should break up, a resolution which Athole heard with secret satisfaction, for he knew that Graham was now near, and only waited for the signal that the palace was at rest. But at this moment, when James had called for the parting cup, and the company were dispersing, a last effort was made to save him. The faithful Highland Sybil, who interrupted his progress at the Forth, had followed the court to Perth, and, in an agony of grief and emotion, presented herself once more at the door of the presence-chamber, loudly demanding to see the King. James was informed of her wishes; and on the decision of the moment his fate seemed to hang. Had he admitted her, it was not yet too late to have defeated the purposes of his enemies; but, after hesitating for a moment, he bade her return and tell her errand in the morning, and she was forced to leave the monastery, observing, mournfully, that they would never meet again.

The King by this time had undressed himself, Athole and Stewart, the chamberlain, who were the last to leave the apartment, had retired, and James stood in his night gown gaily talking with the Queen and her ladies of the bedchamber, when the noise of a clang of weapons and a sudden glare of torches in the outer court threw them into alarm. It was then, for the first time, that a suspicion of treason, and a dread that it might be the traitor Graham, darted into his mind; and whilst the Queen and her women flew to secure the door of the apartment, James anxiously examined the windows, which, to his dismay, he found were secured by iron bolts of such strength as to make escape impossible. It was discovered at the same moment that the locks of the door were removed, and, convinced beyond a doubt that his destruction was intended, the King, as a last resource, seized the tongs which stood in the fireplace, and forcibly wrenching up one of the boards of the floor, let himself down into a small vault situated beneath the bedchamber; dropping the plank again, which fitted into its original place, and thus completely concealed him. During this, a feeble attempt to barricade the door was made by the Queen, and one of the ladies, a daughter of the house of Douglas, with heroic resolution, thrust her arm into the iron staple from which the bolt had been removed. But the fragile impediment was soon snapped by the brutal violence opposed to it, and the next moment the conspirators, having slain one of the royal pages whom they met in the passage, burst into the apartment, brandishing their naked weapons, and calling loudly for the King. They had even the brutality to wound the Princess, who, paralysed with horror, stood rooted to the floor, clad only in her kirtle, with her hair loosely streaming over her shoulders*. A son of Graham, however, upbraiding them with their cowardice, and perceiving that the King had escaped, commanded them to leave the women and search the chamber. So effectually, however, had James concealed himself, that their labour was vain, and, suspecting that the victim whom they sought was concealed elsewhere, they extended their scrutiny to the outer chambers, and afterwards dispersed themselves over the remoter parts of the monastery.

There appeared, therefore, a probability that James would still escape; and, in the agony of the moment, he joyfully recollected that the vault where he was now hid had a communication with the outer court by means of a drain large enough to admit his body: but, on examining it, the aperture had been built up, because the tennis balls had frequently been lost in it, and this last hope was cut off.

The alarm, however, had now spread from the monastery to the town; the nobles who were quartered there, having risen in arms, were hastening to the spot; and, although Graham had secured the outer court by his Highlanders, they could not long have withstood the numbers which would have mustered against them. The concealment where the King lay had as yet completely eluded the utmost search of the conspirators, and, as rescue was near, it seemed likely that, had he remained quiet for a very short interval, he must have escaped. But he was ruined by his impatience. Hearing no stir, and imagining that his enemies had left the apartment not to return, James called to those above to take the sheets from the bed, and draw him out of the narrow chamber where he stood. The strength of the Queen and her ladies was insufficient to the task; and Elizabeth Douglas, in attempting it, fell down into the vault, whilst the noise occasioned by the accident recalled Thomas Chambers, one of the conspirators, who immediately recollected the small closet beneath the bed-chamber, and traced the sound to that quarter. A moment's inspection showed him the broken plank, and, holding his torch to the place, he saw clearly the King and the unfortunate lady who had fallen beside him. A savage shout made his companions aware of the discovery, and calling out that they had found the bride for whom they had sought and carolled all night long, Sir John Hall leapt down with his drawn sword, followed by his brother. James, however, who was an athletic and very powerful man, made a desperate resistance, although unarmed and almost naked. Seizing first Hall, and afterwards his brother, by the throat, he grappled with them in a mortal struggle, and succeeded in throwing both below his feet. Such was the convulsive strength with which they had been handled, that at their execution a month after, the marks of the King's grasp were discernible upon their persons. But in these efforts his hands were dreadfully cut, and his strength exhausted. Sir Robert Graham, at this juncture, rushed into the apartment, and instantly threw himself, with his drawn sword, upon his victim, who earnestly implored his life, though it were at the expense of half his kingdom. But his mortal enemy was deaf to his entreaties. 'Thou cruel tyrant,' said he, 'thou never hadst compassion on thine own noble kindred: wherefore expect none now.' 'At least,' said James, 'let me have a confessor, for the good of my soul.' 'None,' cried Graham, 'none shalt thou have, but this sword.' Saying this he wounded him mortally in the body, and his unhappy victim, exhausted by his former struggles, fell down covered with blood, yet still faintly imploring his life. It is said that, at this moment, even the iron heart of the murderer revolted from the piteous scene, and he was about to come up, leaving the King still breathing, when his companions, who stood above, threatened him with instant death, unless he completed the work. This he at length did, assisted by the two Halls; but so tenacious was the miserable sufferer of life, that he was almost cut to pieces by repeated wounds before he expired. The whole scene was most shocking, and rather a butchery than a murder. The ruffians now sought anxiously for the Queen, but the lengthened resistance of her husband had given her time to escape; and, as the tumult increased in the town, and some of the nobles were seen hastening to the monastery, the conspirators deemed it prudent to retire. They were seen crossing the outer moat, and flying in the direction of the Highlands. One of them only, and he a person of inferior note, was overtaken and slain, but the rest succeeded in burying themselves in the remote fastnesses of Athole.

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* Contemporary account published by Pinkerton, Hist., vol. i., p. 466.

Here, however, they were not long suffered to remain; and such was the horror and execration with which the accounts of James's death were received throughout the country, and the activity of the pursuit, that in less than a month all the murderers were taken and executed. Graham. the arch-traitor, who had been the principal contriver and executioner of the whole, maintained his firm and vindictive character to the last,—enduring without a murmur the complicated tortures inflicted on him, and not only justifying his conduct but glorying in his success. He audaciously pleaded before his judges, that, having renounced his allegiance, he could not be accused of treason to a monarch of whom he was no longer a subject; that he had defied the King as his mortal enemy, and had a right to slay him wherever they met, as his feudal equal, without being amenable to any human tribunal. As for the rest, he said, although they might now exhaust their ingenuity in his tortures, the time would soon arrive when they would gratefully acknowledge that his sword had delivered them from a merciless tyrant. These sentiments were no vain or empty boasts. They were uttered in the midst of tortures, at the recital of which humanity shudders,—when the flesh of the victim was torn off by burning pincers, and his son, who had been the companion of his crime, was exposed, mangled and dying, before the eyes of his father. The rest of the conspirators, Sir Robert Stewart, Chambers, the two Halls, and Athole, were all executed at the same time. This aged conspirator, who was now on the borders of seventy, although he admitted his knowledge of the plot, denied his being, in any degree, concerned in it.

We have traced the history of James as a captive and as a monarch. It remains to speak of him as a man of varied and remarkable accomplishments, and, without entering too deeply into antiquarian discussion, to give the general reader some idea of his excellence as a poet and his endowments as a scholar. In both these respects, the circumstances of his checquered life conferred on him great advantages. His education in Scotland under Wardlaw, his lengthened nurture in England, his repeated residence in France, and the leisure for study and mental cultivation which was given by his tedious imprisonment, were much in his favour; yet, giving full weight to all this, James the First was unquestionably endowed by nature with original genius;—that rare quality of mind, which, had he been a subject instead of a sovereign, would still have marked him for an extraordinary man. As a boy, it is probable he had read and delighted in the works of Barbour [*], and we may conjecture that the exploits of the renowned Bruce, the chivalry of the good Sir James, and the counsels, sage and calm, of the great Randolph, cheered many a lonely hour in his confinement at Windsor. From the 'Chronicle,' too, of the venerable Prior of Lochleven[†], with which it is impossible that a mind so eager and inquisitive as his should not have been acquainted, he must have derived, not a bare chronology of the history of his kingdom, but many fresh and romantic pictures, descriptive of the scenery of the period and the manners of a feudal age. But whilst the literature of his own country could furnish him with two such authors, he has himself informed us that his poetical ambition was chiefly kindled by the study of Chaucer and Gower. 'His maisters dere'—

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[*] Life of Barbour, vol. ii., p. 158.

[†] Ibid., p. 173.

> ———'that on steppes sate
> Of rhetoric, while they were lyvand[1] here.'

Of Chaucer, a man whose genius, in many of its distinguishing peculiarities, has been yet unrivalled in the history of English literature, it was the highest praise that he created a new style, and clothed it in a new language; that out of the rude and unformed materials of his native tongue, which lay scattered around him, disdained and deserted by the pedantry of the age, he erected a noble and original edifice, full of delightful chambers of imagery, furnished with the living manners and crowded with the breathing figures of his own age, clothed in their native dresses, and speaking their native language.

The same praise, though certainly in an inferior degree, is due to James the First. Although preceded by Barbour and Winton, he is the father of the tender and romantic poetry of Scotland,—the purifier and the reformer of the language of his country. His greatest work, the 'King's Quhair,' or 'King's Book,' is in no part unworthy of Chaucer, and, not unfrequently, in the delicacy and tenderness of its sentiment, superior even to that master of the shell. 'The design, or theme, of this work,' says that excellent author, to whose taste and research the literary world is indebted for its first publication, 'is the royal poet's love for his beautiful mistress, Jane Beaufort, of whom he became enamoured whilst a prisoner at the castle of Windsor. The recollection of the misfortunes of his youth, his early and long captivity, the incident which gave rise to his love, its purity, constancy, and happy issue, are all set forth by way of allegorical vision, according to the reigning taste of the age, as we find in the poems of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, his contemporaries*.'

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[1] living.

This interesting and beautiful poem opens by a description of the captive prince and poet stretched upon his couch at midnight. He awakes suddenly from sleep at that silent season when the moon, like a yellow crescent, was seen in the heavens surrounded by the stars 'twinkling as the fire:'—

'High in the hevynis figure circulare
The ruddy sterris[1] twinkling as the fire,
And in Aquary Cynthia the clear
Rinsed her tresses, like the golden wire,
That late tofore, in fair and fresh attire,
Through capricorn heaved hir hornis bright,
North northiward approached the midnight.'

It is easy, with a slight difference, to present this fine stanza in a modern dress, yet not without diluting its strength, and marring its venerable aspect:—

'High in the heavenly circle of the sky,
Twinkled the ruddy stars like sparks of fire,
And in Aquarius Cynthia shook on high
Her tresses like the threads of golden wire;
She that of late in fair and fresh attire
Had heaved through Capricorn her crescent bright,
Now rose, whilst from the north came deep midnight.'

Unable to compose himself to rest, from the crowd of divers fancies which flit through his mind, he takes up a book, the treatise of Boethius—'De Consolatione Philosophiæ,' a work—

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* Tytler's Poetical Remains of James the First, p. 47.

[1] stars.

'Schewing the counsel of philosophy
Compylit by that noble senatoure
Of Rome, whilom that was the worldis floure.'

And after reading till his eyes began to smart, and his head to be confused with study, he again seeks his couch, and falls naturally into a reverie upon the variety and fickleness of human fortune, and his own early calamities:—

'Among thir thoughtis rolling to and fro,
Fell me to mind of my fortune and ure[1]:
In tender youth how she was first my foe,
And eft my friend; and how I got recure[2]
Of my distress and all my aventure,—
I gan o'erhale that longer sleep ne rest,
Ne might I not, so were my wittis wrest[3].

In the midst of these perplexing thoughts the mind of the royal captive subsides into the dreamy state between sleeping and waking, in which outward sounds are often invested by the power of fancy with strange meaning. He hears the bell for matins, and imagines that its silver tones bid him compose the story of his life:—

——'I listened sodaynlye,
And sone I herd the bell to matins ring,
And up I rase, no longer wald I lye;
But now how trow ye[4] such a fantasy
Fell to my mind?—that aye methought the bell
Said to me—Tell on, man, what thee befel.'

In whatever way it arose, the poet determines to obey the suggestion of the matin bell; and, after an apology for the feebleness of his powers, he compares his difficulties in 'inditing this lytill treatise' to the perplexities of a mariner covered with a starless sky, and steering his fragile bark through an unknown and wintry sea. He then invokes Calliope, Polyhymnia, and their fair sisters, to pilot him with their bright lanterns through the darkness which surrounds his unripe intellect, that his pen may be enabled to describe his torment and his joy.

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[1] trouble. [2] relief. [3] tortured. [4] how think ye?

It would far exceed our limits to pursue this analysis throughout the whole course of the poem. The royal minstrel describes his days of happy boyhood, his embarkation for France, his unforeseen seizure by the English, and imprisonment at Windsor. It was his custom, he tells us, in the summer mornings to rise by daybreak, and enjoy, as much as a captive might, the sweet hour of prime, devoting it to exercise and study:—

> 'For which, against distress, comfort to seke,
> My custom was, on mornis, for to rise
> Early as day. Oh! happy exercise!'

He informs us that the tower wherein he was confined overlooked a beautiful garden, in which there was a green arbour, and trellised walk, so thickly overshadowed with foliage, that they who stood below were concealed completely by the umbrageous screen. Upon the branches sat the little sweet nightingales pouring from their loving hearts so full a flood of song that all the garden rung with joy and harmony. The poet listens and imagines that the hymn of these feathered choristers is a welcome to May. The verses are tender and beautiful:—

> 'Worship ye all that lovers bene this May,
> For of your bliss the Kalends are begun,

And sing with us,—Away, Winter! away!
Come, Summer! come! the sweet season, and sun;
Awake! for shame! that have your heavenis won,
And amorously lift up your hedes[1] all;
Thank Love, that list you to his mercy call.

'When they this song had sung a little thrawe[2],
They stent awhile, and therewith unafraid,
As I beheld, and cast mine eyes alawe,
From bough to bough they hoppit and they played,
And freshly in their birdis kind arrayed
Their feathers new, and fret them in the sun,
And thanked Love they had their makis[3] won.'

A witness to the transports of these free and happy birds, trimming their coats in their leafy chambers, and singing the praises of their mates, the youthful prince, a captive, and cut off from the pleasures of his kind, is led to ruminate on that mysterious passion, which seems to confer, even on the irrational creation, such perfect enjoyment. 'What may this love be,' he asks himself, 'which seems to exercise such a mastery over the heart? Is it not, after all, a fantasy—a counterfeited bliss—a mere creature of the imagination?'—

'Is it of hym as we in bukis find?
May he our hertis[4] settin and unbynd!
Hath he upon our hertis such maistery,
Or is this all bot feynit fantasye.

'Is Love the power that we in books him find?
May he our wills thus fetter and unbind?
Hath he upon our hearts such mastery,
Or is this all but feigned fantasy?'

It is at this moment of pensive scepticism on the reality of the passion that the poet, with much taste, introduces that charming object, who was destined in a moment to put an end to all his doubts, and to enlist him a happy captive in her service. He accidentally casts his eyes from the latticed window of his tower upon the garden below, and there beholds a youthful lady of such exquisite loveliness, that never till that instant had he seen or imagined any human thing so beautiful. It was the Lady Jane Beaufort coming forth to her morning orisons:—

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[1] heads.
[2] a short space.
[3] mates.
[4] hearts.

'And therewith kest I down mine eye ageyne,
Quhare, as I sawe walking under the toure,
Full secretly, new comyn her to pleyne[1],
The fairest or the freschest zounge flower,
That e'er I sawe, methought, before that hour;
For which sudden abate[2], anon astert[3]
The blood of all my body to my heart.

'And tho' I stood abaysit there a lite[4],
No wonder was; for why?—my wittis all
Were so o'ercome with plesance and delyte,
Only thro' lettin of mine eyen fall,
That sodenly my heart became her thrall
For ever, of free will; for of menace[5]
There was no token seen in her sweet face.'

Thus slightly modernised:

'Then as it hapt, mine eyes I cast below,
And there I spied, beneath my prison tower,
Telling her beads, in walking to and fro,
The fairest and the freshest youthful flower,
That ever I beheld, before that hour;
Entranced I gazed, and, with the sudden start,
Rushed instant all my blood into my heart.

Awhile I stood abased, and speechless quite;
Nor wonder was; for why?—my senses all
Were so o'ercome with pleasure and delight,
Only with letting thus my eyes to fall,

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[1] to petition; to make her morning orisons.
[2] abate; sinking down. [3] started. [4] a little. [5] pride.

That instantly mine heart became her thrall
For ever, of free will; for nought was seen
But gentleness in her soft looks serene.

In the Prince's situation, says an excellent critic, viewing from his prison window the beautiful Jane walking below in the palace garden, he could not with propriety or verisimilitude have given a minute description of her features; but he describes the sweetness of her countenance, untinctured by the slightest expression of pride or haughtiness; her beauty, health, and blooming youth, and the sudden and irresistible passion with which these had inspired him *. He paints also her rich attire; and the picture is not only a charming piece of highly-finished poetry, but interesting as bringing before us the female costume of the time:—

Of her array the form gif I shall wryte,
Toward her golden hair and rich attire,
In fretwise couchet with the perles white,[1]
And great balas,[2] lemyng like to the fire,
With many an emerant and fair saphire;
And on her head a chaplet fresch of hue
Of plumys parted, red and white and blue.

Full of the quakyng spangis bright as gold,
Forged of shape like to the amorettys[3],
So new, so fresh, so pleasant to behold;
The plumys eke like to the flower jonettes,[4]
And other of shape like to the flower jonquettes;[5]
And above all this there was, well I wot,
Beauty enow to make a world to dote.

* Tytler's Poetical Remains of James I. p. 80.

[1] covered with a net, or fretwork of pearls.

[2] balas, a precious stone of the ruby kind, from Balassia in India.

[3] love knots. [4] unknown. [5] jonquils.

About her neck, white as the fine amaille[1],
A goodly chain of small orfeverye[2],
Quhareby there hung a ruby without faille[3],
Like to ane herte schapen, verily,
That as a spark of lowe[4] so wantonly
Semyt byrning upon her quhite throte;
Now gif there was gude pertye, God it wote:

And for to walk that fresche Mayis morrowe,
Ane huke[5] she had upon her tissue white,
That goodlier had not bene seen to forowe,
As I suppose—and girte she was alyte
Thus halflyng loose for haste, to suich delyte
It was to see her youth in gudelihed,
That for rudeness to speak thereof I drede.

In her was zouth, beauty, with humble port,
Bountee, richesse, and womanly feature,
God better wote than can my pen report;
Wisdom, largesse, estate and cunning sure,
In every poynt so guided her mesure
In word, in deed, in shape, in countenance,
That Nature might no more her child advance.

Throw which anon I knew and understood
Wele that she was a wardly[6] creature,
On whom to rest myne eyen, so mich gude
It did my woful hert; I zow assure
That it was to me joy without mesure;
And at the last my look unto the Hevin
I threw forthwith, and said thir verses seven.

It is not difficult, giving almost line for line, to present the English reader with a transcript of these sweet verses—

Write I of her array and rich attire,—
A net of pearl enclosed her tresses round,
Wherein a Balas flamed as bright as fire,
And midst the golden curls, an emerant bound,
Painted with greeny light the flowery ground.
Upon her head a chaplet, fresh of hue,
Of plumes divided, red and white and blue.

---

[1] enamel. [2] goldsmith's work. [3] without flaw.
[4] fire. [5] clasp. [6] worldly.

Which, waving, showed their spangles carved in gold,
Formed by nice art like amorous love-knots all;
Glancing most bright, and pleasant to behold,
And shaped like that sweet flower, that on the wall
Grows fragrant, which young lovers jonquil call;
Yet still above all this, she had, I wote,
Beauty enough to make a world to dote.

About her neck, that whiter was than snow,
She wore a chain of rich orfeverye;
Where pendant hung a ruby, formed I trow
Like to a heart—so seemed its shape to me;
Which bright as spark of fire danced wantonly
Whene'er she moved, upon her throat so white,
That I did wish myself that jewel bright.

Early astir to taste the morn of May,
Her robe was loosely o'er her shoulders thrown,
Half open as in haste, yet maidenly,
And clasped, but slightly, with a beauteous zone,
Through which a world of such sweet youthhead shone,
That it did move in me intense delight,
Most beauteous—yet whereof I may not write.

In her did beauty, youth, and bounty dwell,
A virgin port and features feminine;
Far better than my feeble pen can tell,
Did meek-eyed wisdom in her gestures shine;
She seemed perfay—a thing almost divine
In word, in deed, in shape, in countenance,
That Nature could no more her child advance.

We pass over the address to Venus, but the lines which succeed are too beautiful to be omitted:

Quhen I with gude intent this orison
Thus endit had, I stynt a lytil stound[1],
And eft mine eye full pitously adoun
I kest, behalding there hir lyttill hound,
That with his bellis playit on the ground;
Then wold I say, and sigh therewith a lyte[2],
Ah wele were him that now were in thy plyte[3].

---

[1] staid a little while. [2] little. [3] collar or chain.

An other quhyle the lytill nightingale
That sat upon the twiggis wold I chide,
And say richt thus,—Quhare are thy notis small
That thou of love hast sung this morowe tyde?
Sees thou not her that sittis thee besyde,
For Venus' sake the blissful goddesse clere,
Sing on agane and make my ladye chere.

The feelings of the lover, who envies the little dog that wears the chains of his mistress and plays around her with his bells, and his expostulation with the nightingale, who is silent when she to whom she should pour her sweetest melody was sitting near her, are conceived in the sweetest vein of poetry. But to the delight of seeing his mistress succeeds a train of melancholy reflection on his miserable fate as a prisoner, cut off from all hope of intercourse or acquaintance. The thought overwhelms him with distress; he sits in his solitary chamber, till the golden sun had sunk in the west,

Bidding farewell to every leaf and flower.

Then 'Hesperus gan light his lamp on high;' and as sorrow and darkness deepen around him, he leans his head on the cold stone, and, overcome with weariness and languor, falls into a dreamy sleep. Suddenly a bright ray of light pierces his lattice, illuminating the whole apartment; a gentle voice addresses him in words of comfort and encouragement, and he finds himself lifted into the air, and conveyed in a cloud of crystal to the sphere of Venus:—

Methought that thus all sodeynly a lycht
In at the window came quhareat I leut,
Of which the chamber window schone full brycht,
And all my bodye so it hath o'erwent,

That of my sicht the verteu hale I blent,
And that withal a voice unto me said,
I bring comfort and hele—be not afraid.

And furth anon it passit sodeynly
Where it come in by, the rycht way ageyne,
And sone methocht furth at the door in hye,
I went my way, was nething me ageyne,
And hastily, by bothe the armes tweyne,
I was araisit up into the aire,
Clipt in a cloud of crystal cleare and faire.

In this resplendent chariot the royal lover is conveyed from sphere to sphere, till he reaches

the glad empire
Of blissful Venus,

which he finds crowded, as was to be expected, with all descriptions of lovers—

Of every age and nation, class and tongue—

the successful, the unfortunate, the faithful, the selfish, the hypocritical, accompanied by those allegorical personages—Prudence, Courage, Benevolence, Fair Calling—which abound in the poetry of this period, and whose introduction is rather the fault of the age than of the author. Through the various chambers peopled by his amorous devotees we cannot follow him; and we fear the reader, should he make the attempt for himself, would find it rather a tedious pilgrimage, although the way would be lightened by many touches of genuine poetry. Cupid, in his chair of state, his yellow locks bound with a verdant chaplet, his fatal quiver glittering at his side, and his body

With wingis bright all plumed, but[1] his face,

is a fine personification; and the discourse of

---

[1] Except.

Venus, somewhat platonic and metaphysical for the queen of 'becks and wreathed smiles,' contains some beautiful poetry. Nor is it unworthy of notice, that although a pagan divinity is introduced, her counsels do not breathe the licentious spirit of the Cyprian queen of classical antiquity, but are founded on better and holier principles: the Venus of the royal bard is the goddess of lawful disport and pure and virtuous love. She first ascertains that her votary is none of those

> That feynis truth in love but for a while,
> The silly innocent woman to beguile:

comparing them to the fowler, imitating the various notes of the birds that he may decoy them into his net; and after having satisfied herself that he is consumed by the flame of a virtuous attachment, he is addressed in the language of encouragement, assured of her benign assistance, and despatched, under proper guidance, to seek counsel of Minerva. The precepts of this sage goddess present rather a monotonous parallel to the advice of Venus; after which, the votary of love is dismissed from her court, and, like Milton's Uriel, descends upon a sunbeam to the earth:—

> ——right anon
> I took my leave, as straight as any line,
> Within a beam that from the clime divine
> She piercing thro the firmament extended,
> And thus to earth my sprite again descended.

We cannot follow the poet in his quest of Fortune, which occupies the fifth canto, but its opening verses are singularly beautiful:—

> Quhare in a lusty[1] plane I took my way
> Endlang[2] a ryver, plesand to behold,

[1] delightful.

[2] along the brink of a river.

Embrondin all with fresche flouris gay,
Quhare thro' the gravel, bright as ony gold,
The cristal water ran so clere and cold,
That in mine ear it made continually
A maner soun mellit with harmony[1].

That full of lytill fischis by the brym,
Now here now there with bakkis blewe as lede,
Lap and playit, and in a rout gan swym
So prettily, and dressit thame to sprede
Their crural fynnis, as the ruby red,
That in the sonne upon their scalis brycht,
As gesserant[2] ay glitterit in my sight.

Beside this pleasant river he finds an avenue of trees covered with delicious fruits, and in the branches and under their umbrageous covert are seen the beasts of the forest:—

The lyon king and his fere lyonesse;
The pantere like unto the smaragdyne;
The lytill squerell full of besynesse;
The slawe asse, the druggare beste of pyne[3];
The nyce ape, and the werely[4] porpapyne;
The percying lynx, the lufare unicorn
That voidis venym with his evoure[5] horne.

Thare sawe I dress hym new out of his haunt
The fere tigere, full of felony;
The dromydare, the stander elephant;
The wyly fox, the wedowis enemy;
The clymbare gayte, the elk for arblastrye[6];
The herkner boar[7], the holsom grey for sportis,
The haire also that oft gooth to the hortis.

---

[1] a pleasant sound mingled with harmony.

[2] jacinth.

[3] the sluggish ass, beast of painful drudgery.

[4] warlike.

[5] ivory.

[6] the strings of the arblast or cross-bow, were probably formed out of the tough sinews of the elk.

[7] herknere boar—probably *hearkening* boar. It is the habit of the buffalo to listen for the breath of any person extended on the ground before attacking him, so as to ascertain whether he be a living being. The same propensity, in all

Thus slightly modernised:

The lion king and his fierce lioness;
  The panther spotted like the smaragdine;
The tiny squirrel, full of business;
  The patient ass that drudgeth still in pine;
  The cunning ape; the warlike porcupine;
The fire-eyed lynx; the stately unicorn,
That voideth venom from his ivory horn.

There saw I rouse, fresh-wakening from his haunt,
  The brindled tiger, full of felony;
The dromedare and giant elephant;
  The wily fox, the widow's enemy;
  The elk, with sinews fit for arblastrye;
The climbing goat, and eke the tusked boar,
And timid hare that flies the hounds before.

These stanzas are, as it will be seen, scarcely altered from the original; and it would be difficult, in any part of Chaucer or Spenser, to discover comprised in so small a compass so picturesque and characteristic a description of the tenants of the forest.

Being guided by Good Hope to the goddess Fortune, he finds her sitting beside her wheel, clothed in a parti-coloured petticoat and ermine tippet, and alternately smiling and frowning, as it became so capricious a lady. The meeting and the parting with her are described in such a manner as rather to excite ludicrous ideas than any feelings befitting the solemnity of the vision. She inquires into his story, rallies him on his pale and

probability, belongs to the wild boar. I remember hearing that the late Dr. R. saved himself from the attack of a wild boar, when botanising in a German forest, by resolutely keeping himself quite motionless till the creature, tired of snuffing and walking round him, went off. I have extracted the above ingenious conjecture from the letter of a literary friend.

wretched looks; and when he pleads his love and despair, places him upon the wheel, warning him to hold fast there for half an hour. She then bids him farewell, assures him that he will be fortunate in his love, and in departing gives him a shake, not by the hand, but by the ear; the prince now suddenly awakes, and pours out this beautiful address to his soul:—

Oh besy ghoste! ay flickering to and fro,
  That never art in quiet nor in rest
Till thou come to that place that thou come fro,
  Which is thy first and very proper nest;
  From day to day so sore here art thou drest,
That with thy flesch ay waking art in trouble,
And sleeping eke, of pyne so hast thou double.

Walking to his prison window in much perplexity and discomfort, he finds himself unable to ascertain to what strange and dreamy region his spirit had wandered, and anxiously wishes he might have some token whether the vision was of that heavenly kind to whose anticipations he might give credit—

Is it some dream, by wandering fancy given,
Or may I deem it, sooth, a vision sent from heaven.

At this moment he hears the fluttering of wings, and a milk-white dove flies into his window. She alights upon his hand, bearing in her bill a stalk of gilliflowers, on the leaves of which, in golden letters, is written the glad news, that it is decreed he is to be happy and successful in his love:—

This fair bird rycht into her bill 'gan hold,
  Of red jerrofleris, with stalkis grene,
A fair branche, quhairin written was with gold,
  On every lefe with letters brycht and shene,
  In compas fair, full plesaundly to sene,

A plane sentence, which, as I can devise,
And have in mind, said rycht upon this wise:

Awake, awake, I bring, lufar, I bring
  The newis glad that blissful bene and sure
Of thy comfort; now laugh, and play, and sing,
  That art beside so glad an aventure,
  For in the heav'n decretit is thy cure,
And unto me the flowers did present;
With wyngis spread, her ways furth then she went.

How easy do these sweet verses, with scarce any alteration, throw themselves into a modern dress!

This lovely bird within her bill did hold,
  Of ruddy gilliflowers, with stalkis green,
A branch, whereon was writ, in words of gold,
  Pourtray'd most plain, with letters bright and sheen,
  A scroll, that to my heart sweet comfort told;
For wheresoe'er on it I cast mine eyes,
This hopeful sentence did before me rise:

Awake, awake, I, lover, to thee bring
  Most gladsome news, that blissful are and sure;
Awake to joy—now laugh and play and sing,
  Full soon shalt thou achieve thine adventure,
  For heav'n thee favours, and decrees thy cure!
So with meek gesture did she drop the flowers,
Then spread her milk-white wings, and sought her airy
    bowers.

From these extracts the reader may have some idea of the 'King's Quhair,' the principal work of James I. That it is faultless, nothing but a blinded enthusiasm would affirm; but whatever may be its defects, it is certainly not inferior in fancy, elegance of diction, and tender delicacy of feeling to any similar work of the same period, produced either in England or in his own country. It has been already remarked that its blemishes are those rather of the age than of the poet. The rage for allegorical poetry, at best a most insipid invention, was then at its height. It began with the great models of Greece and Rome, although their taste taught them to use it sparingly; it was adopted by the monks of the middle age, was fostered by Chaucer, revelled in the luxuriant fancy of Spenser, and even lingered in the polished elegance of Pope. Strange that these great geniuses should not have felt, what is now acknowledged by almost every reader, that even in those parts where they have produced the highest effect, it is the poetry, not the allegory, that pleases. Another defect in the poem results from the singular, and almost profane mixture of classical mythology and Christian agency; but for this, too, James has to plead the prevailing taste of the times, and we can even find an approximation to it in Milton.

The poem of which we have been speaking is of that serious and plaintive character which necessarily excluded one characteristic feature of the author's genius, his humour. For this we must look to his lesser productions, 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' and 'Peebles at the Play.' With regard to the first of these excellent pieces of satirical and humorous poetry, some controversy has been raised by antiquarian research, whether it be the genuine production of the first James; Gibson, Tanner, and the Editor of Douglas's Virgil ascribing it to James V. The absurdity of this hypothesis, however, was very clearly exposed by the excellent author of a 'Dissertation on the Life of James the First;' and from this time the learned world have invariably adopted his opinion, that both poems are the composition of this monarch.

In 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' the king appears to have had two objects in view: not only to give a popular, faithful, and humorous picture of those scenes of revelry and rustic enjoyment which took place at this annual fair or wake, but in his descriptions of the awkwardness of the Scottish archers, to employ his wit and ridicule as the means of encouraging amongst his subjects a disposition to emulate the skill of the English in the use of the long-bow. He had, as we have seen, made archery the subject of repeated statutory provisions, insisting that from twelve years of age every person should busk or equip himself as an archer, and practise shooting at the bow-marks erected beside the parish churches; and his poem of Christ's Kirk is almost one continued satire upon the awkward management of the bow, and the neglect into which archery had then fallen in Scotland. To make his subjects sensible of the disgrace they incurred by their ignorance of the use of their arms, and to re-establish the discipline of the bow amongst them, were objects worthy the care of this wise and warlike monarch.* The poem opens with great spirit, painting, in a gay and lively measure, the flocking of country lads and lasses, wowers and Kitties, to the play or weaponschawing at Christ's Kirk on the Green, a village of this name traditionally reported to have been situated in the parish of Kennethmont in Aberdeenshire:—

Tytler's Dissertation on the Life of James I., p. 40.

Wes never in Scotland hard nor sene
Sic dansing nor deray[1],
Nouthir at Falkland on the Grene[2],
Nor Peblis at the Play[3],
As was of wowers[4] as I wene
At Christ's Kirk on a day;
There came our Kitties[5], weshen clene,
In their new kirtles gray,
Full gay
At Christ Kirk of the Grene that day.

To dans thir damysells thame dicht[6],
Thir lasses licht of laitis[7];
Thair gluvis war of the raffel richt[8],
Thair shune wer of the straits,
Thair kirtillis wer of the lincome licht[9],
Weill prest with mony plaits;
They were so nyss when men thaim nicht[10],
They squeilt like ony gaitis,
Sa loud
At Christ's Kirk of the Grene that day.

From the colloquial antiquity of the language, and the breadth and occasional coarseness of the native humour which runs through this production, it is impossible to present the English reader, as we have attempted in the 'King's Quhair,' with anything like a translation. The picture of the scorn of a rural beauty, the red-cheeked, jimp, or narrow-waisted Gillie, is admirably given:

---

[1] merriment.
[2] palace of Falkland, in Fifeshire.
[3] an ancient town in Tweedale, where annual games were held.
[4] wowers—suitors. [5] country lasses or girls.
[6] dressed. [7] frolicksome in their manners.
[8] gloves of the roe-deer skin.
[9] gowns of Lincoln manufacture.
[10] thaim nicht—came near them.

Scho' scornit Jok, and scrapit at him[1],
And murgeonit[2] him with mokkis;
He wald haif luvit, scho wald not lat him,
For all his zellow locks;
He cherish'd hir, scho bad gae chat him[3],
Scho compt him not twa clokkis[4],
Sae schamefully his schort goun set him,
His lymmis were like twa rokkis,
Scho said,
At Christ's Kirk on the Grene that day.

The attempts of the different archers, and the ludicrous failure with which they are invariably accompanied, are next described with great force and happiness of humour. Lourie's essay with the long-bow is perhaps the best:—

Than Lourie as ane lyon lap,
And sone ane flane gan fedder[5];
He hecht[6] to perss him at the pap,
Thereon to wed a wedder[7].
He hit him on the wame a wap,
It buft like ony bledder[8].
But sa his fortune was and hap,
His doublet was of ledder[9],
And saifit him
At Christ's Kirk on the Grene that day.

The buff sa boisterously abaift[10] him,
He to the eard dusht down[11];
The uther man for deid then left him,
And fled out o' the toune,

---

[1] mocked him.
[2] made mouths at him.
[3] go to the gallows.
[4] she valued him not the worth of two beetles.
[5] soon feathered an arrow.
[6] meant.
[7] to wager or pledge a sheep.
[8] a wap on the wame—a blow on the belly—making a sound like a bladder.
[9] leather.
[10] stunned him.
[11] fell suddenly down.

The wyves cam furth, and up they heft him,
And fand lyfe in the loun [1],
Then with three routtis [2] up thai reft him,
And curd him of his soune,
Fra hand that day [3],
At Christ's Kirk of the Grene, &c.

'Peebles at the Play' partakes much of the same character as 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' presenting a highly humorous picture of the incidents occurring at a Scottish fair and weaponschawing held near that ancient town. 'The anniversary games or plays at Peebles,' says the same able critic whose "Dissertation" we have already quoted, 'are of so high antiquity, that at this day it is only from tradition, joined to a few remains of antiquity, we can form any conjecture of the age of their institution, or even trace the vestiges what these games were . . . .That this town, situated on the banks of the Tweed, in a pastoral country, abounding with game, was much resorted to by our ancient Scottish princes is certain: King Alexander III. is said to have had a hunting-seat here: the place where it stood is still pointed out. We are told by Boetius that the monastery of Cross Church, now in ruins, was built by that prince, and anciently our monarchs occasionally took up their residence in religious houses. Contiguous to it is a piece of ground, of old surrounded by walls, and still called the King's Orchard; and on the opposite side of the river is the King's Green. The plays were probably the golf, a game peculiar to the Scots, football, and shooting for prizes with bow and arrow. The shooting butts still remain; and an ancient silver prize-arrow, with several old medallions appended to it, is, as I am informed, still preserved in the town-house of Peebles.' * Our limits will only permit us to give some of the opening stanzas:—

---

[1] found life in the rogue. [2] loud bellowings.
[3] instantly.

At Beltane[1] when each body bownis
   To Peblis at the Play,
To hear the singing and the sownis,
   The solace, sooth to say,
By firth and forest, furth they found,
   They grathit[2] them full gay;
God wot 'that would they do that stound,'
   For it was their feast-day,
         They said,
      Of Peblis to the Play.

* * * *

All the wenches of the West
   Were up ere the cock crew,
For reeling there might no man rest
   For garay[3] and for glew[4].
One said my curches are not prest,
   Then answered Meg, full blue,
To get a hood I hold it best,
   I wow bot that is true,
         Quoth she,
      Of Peblis to the Play.

Hope, Cayley, and Cardronow[5],
   Gatherd out thick fold,
With heigh-how-rumbelow,
   The young fools were full bold;
The bag-pipe blew, and they outthrew
   Out of the towns untold;
Lord such a shout was them among,
   When they were o'er the wold,
         There west,
      To Peblis at the Play.

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* Dissertation on the Life of James I.

[1] Beltane, an ancient festival on the 1st of May.

[2] clothed themselves. [3] preparation. [4] glee.

[5] the names of villages on the Tweed.

The late Mr. George Chalmers, in his little work entitled the 'Poetic Remains of the Scottish Kings,' has, without assigning any sufficient reasons, reverted to the exploded theory of Tanner and Gibson, and printed 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' amongst the productions of James V. He has also hazarded an assertion, which is completely contradicted by the intrinsic evidence of the work itself. 'He wrote his "Quhair," (says he,) when he was yet a prisoner, and while he was young. Had he read the 6th stanza of the second canto, or the epilogue, he would have found that in the one, he speaks of his captivity or detention in England having endured for eighteen years; and in the other, commemorates in strains of high enthusiasm, his happiness subsequent to his marriage; a certain proof that the poem was not completed till after his union with Johanna Beaufort, and his return to his own dominions.

This monarch, however, in addition to his poetical powers, was a person of almost universal accomplishment. He sang beautifully, and not only accompanied himself upon the harp and the organ, but composed various airs and pieces of sacred music, in which there was to be recognized the same original and inventive genius which distinguished him in everything to which he applied his mind. It cannot be doubted, says Mr. Tytler, in his 'Dissertation on Scottish Music,' that under such a genius in poetry and music as James I., the national music must have greatly improved. One great step towards this was, the introduction of organs by this prince, into the cathedrals and abbeys in Scotland; and, of course, the establishment of a choral service of church music. The testimony of Tassoni is still more remarkable: 'We may reckon among us moderns,' says he, in his 'Pensiera Diversi,' lib. 10, 'James, King of Scotland, who not only composed many sacred pieces of vocal music, but also of himself invented a new kind of music, plaintive and melancholy, different from all other; in which he has been imitated by Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, who, in our age, has improved music with new and admirable inventions.'

ROBERT HENRYSOUN.

It says little for the gratitude of Scotland, that of some of her sweetest poets, whose works have been admired and sought after by future times, little is known but the name. Their life is a mere blank; they have spent it in some remote province, unacknowledged and almost unseen by the world; struggling, perhaps, against the attack of poverty and the iniquity of fortune; yet, nursing amidst this neglect, a mind of superior powers—finding a solace in the cultivation of their intellect and the exercise of their genius which has more than repaid them; and from a full, and sometimes a weeping heart, pouring out strains which were destined to be as imperishable as the language and literature of the country. Such has been the fate of Robert Henryson, of whom the following passage in Urry, the editor of 'Chaucer,' contains almost the sum of our knowledge:—'The author of the "Testament of Creseide," which might pass for the sixth book of this story, I have been informed by Sir James Erskine, late Earl of Kelly, and divers aged scholars of the Scottish nation, was one Mr. Robert Henryson, chief schoolmaster of Dumfermline, a little time before Chaucer was first printed, and dedicated to Henry VIII., by Mr. Thynne, which was near the end of his reign. Mr. Henryson wittily observing, that Chaucer, in his fifth book, had related the death of Troilus, but made no mention what became of Creseide,—learnedly takes upon him, in a fine poetical way, to express the punishment and end due to a false inconstant woman, which commonly terminates in extreme misery *.'

It has been supposed by Lord Hailes, that Henryson officiated as preceptor in the Benedictine Convent at Dumfermline; but as the idea is solely founded on the lines of Dunbar, in his 'Complaint on the Death of the Makars,' which simply state that gude Mr. Robert Henrysoun died in that ancient burgh, nothing can be more vague and inconclusive. We know not the exact period of his birth, (which must have been under the reign of James II.,) the time of his death is involved in equal obscurity; and the intermediate period must be abandoned to those whose ingenuity is delighted with wandering in the labyrinths of conjectural biography.

But of the works of this remarkable man it is difficult, when we consider the period in which they were written, to speak in terms of too warm encomium. In strength, and sometimes even in sublimity of painting, in pathos and sweetness, in the variety and beauty of his pictures of natural scenery, in the vein of quiet and playful humour which runs through many of his pieces, and in that fine natural taste, which, rejecting the faults

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* Urry's Chaucer.

of his age, has dared to think for itself,—he is altogether excellent; and did the limits of these sketches permit, it would be easy to justify this high praise by examples. Where, for instance, could we meet, even in the works of Chaucer or Spenser, with a finer personification than this early poet has given us of Saturn, sitting shivering in his cold and distant sphere, his matted locks falling down his shoulders, glittering and fretted with hoar frosts; the wind whistling through his grey and weather-beaten garments, and a sheaf of arrows, feathered with ice and headed with hailstones, stuck under his girdle?

His face frouned, his lere[1] was like the lede,
His teeth chattered and shivered with the chin,
His eyin droupid,[2] whole soukin in his hede;
Out at his nose the mildrop fast gan rin,
With lippis blew, and chekis lene and thin;
The icicles that fro his heer doune honge,
Were wonder grete, and as a speer was longe.

Attour his belte his lyart lokkis[3] laie
Feltrid[4] unfair or fret with frostis hore,
His garment and his gite[5] full gay of graie,
His withered wede fro him the winde out wore;
A bousteaus bow within his hande he bore;
Under his girdle a fasche of felon flains
Fedrid[6] with ice, and headed with holstains.

Let us turn now for a moment from this wintry picture, and observe with what a fresh and glowing pencil, with what an ease and gracefulness of execution, the same hand can bring before us a summer landscape:—

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[1] flesh or skin. [2] droped. [3] hoary. [4] matted. [5] fashion of his clothing. [6] feathered.

In middis of June, that joly swete sessoun,
Quhen that fair Phœbus with his beamis brycht
Had dryit up the dew fra daill and down,
And all the land maid with his lemyss [1] lycht,
In a morning, between midday and nycht,
I rais and put all sloth and sleep aside,
Untill a wod I went alone, but gyd [2].

Sweet was the smell of flouris quhyt and reid,
The nois of birdis rycht delitious,
The bewis brod blumyt abone my heid,
The grund growand with grasses gratious,
Of all plesans that place was plenteous
With sweit odours and birdis armonie,
The morning myld, my mirth was mair forthy.

The roses-red arrayit, the rone and ryss [3],
The primrose and the purpure viola;
To heir, it was a point of paradyss,
Sic mirth, the mavis and the merle couth ma [4];
The blossomyss blyth brak up on bank and bra [5],
The smell of herbis, and of foulis the cry,
Contending quha suld have the victory.

Henryson's greatest work is that to which we have already alluded, the completion of Chaucer's beautiful poem of Troilus and Cressida, in a strain of poetry not unworthy of the original. 'Henryson,' says Mr. Godwin, in his "Life of Chaucer," perceived what was defective in the close of the story of Troilus and Creseide, as Chaucer had left it. The inconstant and unfeeling Creseide, as she appears in the last book, is the just object of aversion, and no reader can be satisfied that Troilus, the loyal and heroic lover, should suffer .all the consequences of her crime, whilst she escapes with impunity. The poem of Henryson,' he continues, 'has a degree of merit calculated to make us regret that it is not a performance standing by itself, instead of thus serving merely as an appendage to the work of another. The author has conceived, in a very poetical manner, his description of the season in which he supposes himself to have written this dolorous tragedy. The sun was in Aries—his setting was ushered in with furious storms of hail, the cold was biting and intense, and the poet sat in a little solitary building, which he calls his oratoure. The evening star had just risen.'

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[1] beams. [2] without guide.
[3] the brambles and bushes. [4] make. [5] a hill side.

A doly season for a careful dite[1]
  Suld correspond and be equivalent;
Richt so it was when I began to write
  This tragedy; the weather right fervent,
  Whan Aries in middis of the Lent,
Shouris of haile gan fro the north descende,
That scantly from the cold I mighten me defende.

Yet neerthelesse within mine oratoure
  I stode, whan Titan had his bemis bricht
Withdrawin doun, and seylid under cure[2],
  And faire Venus the beaute of the night
  Upraise, and sette unto the weste full right,
Her golden face, in oppositioun
Of God Phœbus, directe discending down.

Throughout the glasse her bemis braste[3] so faire,
  That I might see on every side me by;
The northern winde had purified the aire,
  And shedde his misty cloudis fro the skie;
  The froste fresid, the blasts bitterly
From Pole Arctike came whisking loud and shrill,
And caused me remove agenst my will.

---

[1] a sad season for a melancholy story.
[2] unknown. [3] pierced.

For I trusted, that Venus, lovers Quene,
To whom sometime I hight obedience,
My faded heart of love she wad make grene;
And thereupon, with humble reverence,
I thought to praie her hie magnificence,
But for grete cold as then I lettid was,
I in my chambre to the fire gan pass.

Though love be hote, yet in a man of age
It kindlith not so sone as in youthheid,
Of whom the blode is flowing in a rage,
And in the old the corage dull and dede,
Of which the fire outward is best remeid,
To helpe by phisiche where that nature faild
I am experte, for both I have assailed.

I made the fire and bekid me aboute[1],
Then toke I drinke my spirits to comforte,
And armed me wele fro the cold thereoute;
To cutt the winter night, and mak it schort,
I took a queiè[2], and lefte all othir sporte,
Writtin by worthy Chaucer glorious,
Of fair Creseide and lusty Troilus.

The picture presented in these striking lines possesses the distinctness of outline and conception, and the rich poetic colouring, which marks the hand of genius. We see the aged bard sitting in a winter's evening in his oratory; we hear the bitter northern blast shaking the casement; the hail-stones are pattering on the glass; the sun has sunk; but as the storm subsides, the air clears up to an intense frost, and the beautiful evening star, the planet of love, shows her golden face in the west. For awhile, with the enthusiasm of a lover of nature, the poet contemplates the scene; but, warned by the increasing cold, he closes his shutters, stirs his fire, wheels in his oaken chair,—and, after warming his sluggard blood with a cup of generous wine, takes up a volume of Chaucer, and happens to light upon the story of Cresid fair and lusty Troilus.

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[1] warmed myself on every side.

[2] a book.

In the poem, to use the words of an excellent critic, 'Creseide is represented as deserted by Diomed, filled with discontent, and venting her rage in bitter revilings against Venus and Cupid. Her ingratitude is resented by these deities, who call a council of the seven planets, in which it is decreed that Creseide shall be punished with leprosy. Cynthia is deputed in a vision to inform her of her fate: she wakes, and finds that the dream is true. She then entreats her father to conduct her to a hospital for lepers, by the governors of which she is compelled to go as a beggar on the highway. Among the passers by comes Troilus, who, in spite of the dreadful disfigurement of her person, finds something in her that he had seen before, and even draws, from a glance of her horrible countenance, a confused recollection of the sweet visage and amorous glances of his beloved Creseide. His instinct leads him no farther; he does not suspect that his mistress is actually before him; yet

> For knightly pitie, and memorial
> Of faire Creseide,

he takes a girdle, a purse of gold, and many a gaie jewell, and shakes them doun in the skirt of the miserable beggar,

> Then rode awaye, and not a worde he spake.

No sooner is he gone, than Creseid becomes aware that her benefactor is no other than Troilus himself. Affected by this unexpected occurrence, she falls into a frenzy; betrays her real name and condition; bequeaths to Troilus a ring which he had given her in dowry—and dies. Troilus laments her fate, and builds her a monument *.

There is a fine moral strain, a tone of solemn and impressive thought, which runs through many of the pieces of Henryson: of this we have a striking example in his poem entitled 'Praise of Age:'—

Within ane garth, under a red roseir,
  Ane auld man, and decrepit, hard I sing;
Gay wes the note, sweet was the voice and cleir,
  It wes grit joy to heir of sic a thing.
  And as methocht he said in his dyting,—
For to be young I wad nocht, for my wyss
  Of all this warld to mak me lord and kyng:
The more of aige the nerrer hevynnys bliss.

Fals is this warld and full of variance,
  Besoucht with sin and uther sytis mo;
Trewth is all tynt, gyle hes the governance,
  Wretchitnes hes wrocht all welthis weill to wo.
  Freedome is tynt, and flemit the Lordis fro;
And cuvettice is all the cause of this;
  I am content that youth-heid is ago:
The moir of aige the nerrer hevynnys bliss.

* * * *

Suld no man traist this wretchit warld; for quhy?
  Of erdly joy ay sorrow is the end:
The stait of it can no man certify;
  This day a king—to morne na gude to spend.
  Quhat haif we here bot grace us to defend?
The quhilk, God grant us till amend our miss;
  That to his gloir he may our saulis send:
The moir of aige the nerrer hevynnys bliss.

With little alteration these verses throw themselves into a modern garb, which does not spoil the striking picture of the aged moralist singing under the rose-tree—

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* Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. i., p. 493.

In garden green, beneath a sweet rose-tree,
  I heard an aged man serenely sing;
Gay was the note, his voice was full and free,
  It gave me joy to see so strange a thing.
  And thus he sung:—I would not, to be king
Of all this world, live o'er a life like this.
  Oh Youth! thy sweetest flowers have sharpest sting:
The more of age the nearer heavenly bliss.

False is the world, and full of changes vile;
  O'errun with sin, and penury, and pain:
Truth is all fled—the helm is held by guile—
  Fell coward treason hath high honour slain,
  And freedom languisheth in iron chain.
'Tis the low love of power hath brought all this.
  Ah! weep not then that youth is on the wane:
The more of age the nearer heavenly bliss.

Trust then no more this wretched world—for why?
  All earthly joy doth still in sorrow end;
His mortal state can no man certify:
  To-day a king—to-morrow none will lend
  Thy regal head a shelter:—may God mend,
With his sweet grace, so sad a wreck as this;
  And to his glory soon our spirits send:
The more of age the nearer heavenly bliss.

Again, what can be sweeter than these lines on the blessings of simple life?

Blessit be symple life withouten dreid[1],
  Blessit be sober feast in quietie,
Quha hes aneuch[2] of nae mair[3] hes he neid,
  Thocht it be lytil into quantitie.
  Abondance great and blind prosperitie
Mak aftentimes a very ill conclusioun;
  The sweetest lyfe therefore in this countrie,
Is sickerness[4] and peace with small possessioun.

---

[1] dread. [2] enough. [3] more. [4] security.

Friend, thy awin[1] fire thocht it be but ane gleid[2],
Will warm thee weil, and is worth gold to thee;
And Solomon, the sage, says, (gif ze reid[3],)
Under the hevin, I can nocht better see,
Then ay be blyth, and live in honestie:
Quhairfore I may conclude me with this reason,—
Of early bliss it bears the best degree,
Blythness of heart, in peace, with small possession.

The well-known apologue, of which this is the 'moralitie'—that of the Town and Country Mouse—has been delightfully translated, or rather paraphrased, both by Pope and La Fontaine; yet our ancient Scottish bard need not dread a comparison with either. There is not, indeed, in his production (what it would be unreasonable to look for) the polished elegance, the graceful court-like expressions, and the pointed allusions to modern manners which mark the versification of these great masters; but there is a quiet vein of humour, a succession of natural pictures, both burgh and landwart, city and rural; and a felicity in adapting the sentiments to the little four-footed actors in the drama, which is peculiarly its own. Henryson's mice speak and reason exactly as one of these long-whiskered, tiny individuals might be expected to do, were they suddenly to be permitted to express their feelings. There is, if we may be allowed the expression, a more mouse-like verisimilitude about his story, than either of his gifted successors. The tale is introduced with great spirit:—

Easop relates a tale, weil worth renown,
Of twa wee mice[4], and they war sisters dear;

---

[1] own. [2] unknown. [3] if you read.
[4] two small mice.

Of quhom the elder dwelt in Borrowstoun,
The zunger[1] scho wond upon land weil neir,
Richt solitair beneath the buss and breir;
Quhyle on the corns and wraith[2] of labouring men,
As outlaws do, scho maid an easy fen[3].

The rural mous, unto the winter tyde
Thold[4] cauld and hunger oft, and great distress;
The uther mous, that in the brugh gan hide,
Was gilt-brother, and made a free burgess,
Toll-free, and without custom mair or less,
And freedom had to gae[5] whereer she list.

The burgh or city mouse is seized with a sudden desire to pay her country sister a visit, and with staff in hand,

As pilgrim pure[6] scho past out of the toun,
To seek her sister baith[7] in dale and down.

The meeting of the two relatives is described with much naïveté:—

Thro mony toilsom ways then couth she walk,
Thro muir and moss, throughout bank, busk, and breir,
Fra fur to fur[8], cryand, frae balk to balk,
Come forth to me my ain sweet sister dear,
Cry 'Peep' anes. With that the mous couth hear,
And knew her voice, as kindly kinsmen will,
Scho[9] heard with joy, and furth scho cam her till.

The entertainment given by the rural mouse, the poverty of the beild and board, the affectation and nice stomach of the city dame her sister, are admirably given:—

Quhen thus were lugit[10] thir twa sillie mice,
The youngest sister to her buttry hied,
And brocht furth nuts and pease, instead of spice,
And sic plain cheer, as she had her beside.
The burgess mouse sae dynk[11] and full of pride,
Said, Sister mine, is this your daily food?
Why not, quoth she, think ye this mess not good?

---

[1] younger. [2] waste. [3] life. [4] bore. [5] go. [6] poor. [7] both. [8] furrow to furrow. [9] she. [10] lodged. [11] nice.

My sister fair, quoth she, have me excused,
This diet rude and I can neer accord;
With tender meat my stomach still is us'd—
For why, I fare as well as any lord:
Thir withir'd nuts and pease, or they be bored,
Will break my chaffs, and mak my teeth full slender,
Which have been us'd before to meat more tender.

The rest of the story and the catastrophe are well known; the invitation of the city mouse, its acceptance, their perilous journey to town, their delicious meal, and its fearful interruption by Hunter Gib, (the jolly cat,) the pangs of the rural mouse, whose heart is almost frightened out of its little velvet tenement, her marvellous escape, and the delight with which she again finds herself in her warm nest in the country, are described with great felicity of humour. No one who has witnessed the ingenuity of the torment inflicted by a cat on its victim, will fail to recognize the perfect nature of 'Hunter Gib's' conduct, when the unfortunate rural citizen is under his clutches:—

From foot to foot he cast her to and frae,
Whiles up, whiles down, as tait[1] as ony kid,
Wiles would he let her run beneath the strae[2],
Whiles would he wink and play with her bubhid[3]:
Thus to the silly mous great harm he did,
Till at the last, thro fortune fair and hap,
Betwixt the dresser and the wall she crap[4].

Syne up in haste beside the panaling
Sae high she clam[5], that Gibby might not get her,
And by the cleeks[6] sae craftily gan hing
Till he was gane[7]; her cheer was all the better;
Syne doun she lap when there was nane to let her.
Then on the burgess mouse aloud did cry,
Sister, farewell, thy feast I here defy.

[1] tenderly. [2] straw. [3] hide and seek. [4] crep
[5] climbed. [6] hooks or pins. [7] gone.

Pinkerton has declared that this is the only fable of Henryson's worthy of preservation; a clear proof that he had little feeling for true poetry. The 'Lion and the Mous' completely refutes his tasteless criticism. It commences with that sweet picture of the rural delights of the leafy-month June, which we have already quoted; and, besides the truth and spirit with which the story is given, is curious, from its evident allusion to that treasonable combination of the nobles, which cost James III. his crown and his life:—

Thir cruel men that stentit has the net [1],
  In which the lion suddenly was tane,
Waited allway that they amends might get
  For hurt men write with steel in marble stane.
  Mair till expone as now I let alane;
But king and lord may well wote what I mean,
The figure hereof aftymes has been seen.

When this was said, quoth Easop, My fair child,
  Persuade the Kirkmen eyedentlie[2] to pray
That treason fra this cuntrie be exil'd;
  That justice ring and nobles keep their fay
  Unto their sovereign lord baith night and day:
And with that word he vanish'd, and I woke,
Sine thro the schaw hameward my journey toke.

[1] Stretched have the net.
[2] constantly and with earnestness.

WILLIAM DUNBAR.

Of this great genius, who has enriched the poetry of his country with a strain of versification superior in power, originality, and sweetness to any of his predecessors, we have to repeat, alas! the same story of unavailing regret, that little is known; and that little, founded on very imperfect evidence. Pinkerton, relying upon a stanza in 'Kennedy's Flyting (or Railing) against Dunbar,' conjectures that he was born at Salton, a village on the delightful coast of the Forth, in East Lothian; but, unfortunately, the acuteness of a future antiquary discovered that the true reading of the passage was Mount Falcon; a circumstance which gave rise to a new hypothesis, equally vague and unsatisfactory. It seems not improbable, however, that he first saw the light somewhere in Lothian, about the year 1465; and from his own works, a few circumstances may be gleaned, which illustrate his individual history.

He was educated for the church; and, undoubtedly, travelled over England and a part of the Continent, as a noviciate of the order of St. Francis. This is evident from his satirical poem, entitled 'The Visitation of St. Francis.' The saint appears to the poet in a vision, shortly before the dawn, and holding in his hand the habit of his order, commands him to renounce the world and become his servant. Dunbar excuses himself, observing, that he has read of many bishops, but exceeding few friars, who had been admitted to the honour of canonization; but he allows that, in his early years, he had worn the habit:—

> Gif ever my fortoun[1] wes to be a frier[2],
> The date thereof is past full mony a year;
> For into every lusty town and place
> Of all Ingland, fro Berwick to Cales,
> I haif into thy habit maid gude cheir[3].
>
> In freiris weid full sairly[4] haif I fleichit[5];
> In it haif I in pulpit gone and prechit;
> In Derneton Kirk and eke in Canterbury;
> In it I past at Dover oure the ferry,
> Thro Picardy, and there the pepil teichet.
>
> As lang as I did bear the freiris style,
> In me, God wit, wes mony wink and wile;
> In me wes falset with ilk wight to flatter,
> Whilk might be flemit[6] with na haly water;
> I wes ay reddy all men to beguile *.

Where he received his education it is impossible to discover; but from the colophon of one of his poems, it is presumable that he had studied at Oxford; and we may conclude from his address 'To the Lordes of the King's Chekkar,' that he was in the receipt of an annual pension which was scarcely sufficient to supply his ordinary wants. 'Ye need not,' says he to these grave personages,

[1] fortune. [2] friar. [3] cheer. [4] earnestly.
[5] entreated. [6] washed away.
* Poems, vol. i. p. 28.

'spend your time or tire your thumbs, or consume your ink and paper in the reckoning up my rents or annuities. It is a short story: I got a sum of money from my lord-treasurer, which is all gone. Is not that a sad enough tale without more labour?'

My Lordis of Chacker, pleis yow to heir
My compt, I sall it mak yow cleir
  But ony circumstance or sonyie[1];
  For left is neither cors nor cunyie[2]
Of all that I tuik in the yeir.

For rekkyning of my rentis and roumes
Ye need not for to tyre your thowmes[3];
  Na for to gar your countaris clink,
  Nor paper for to spend nor ink
In the ressaving of my soumes[4].

I tuik fra my Lord Thesaurair
Ane soume of money for to wair;
  I can nocht tell yow how it is spendit,
  But weill I wat that it is endit:
And that methink ane compt our sair[5].

I trowit in time whain that I tuik it
That lang in burgh I suld haif bruikit,
  Now the remaines are eith[6] to turss:
  I haiff no preif heir but my purss,
Quhilk wald noch lie an it war lukit.

Even when thrown into a modern dress, the spirit does not wholly evaporate:—

My Lords of Chequer, please you hear
My compt—the which I'll make full clear
  Sans circumstance or theft;
  Nor cross nor copper is there left
Of all I had within the year.

---

[1] pretence. [2] cross nor coin. [3] thumbs.
[4] sums. [5] too sore. [6] easy.

Spend not grave looks, with haws and hums,
Nor paper waste, nor tire your thumbs
And bid your counters clink ;
Or drain your reservoirs of ink
In reckoning up my sums.

My Lord the Treasurer gave me,
Some certain monies for my fee ;
I cannot tell how far they went,
But well I know, the gear is spent,
Whilst I myself am sorely shent.
And this without more words, I trow,
Is a summation sad enow.

Why should I entries more rehearse ?
My Lords, inquire ye of my purse,
And look into its empty maw,
It will you tell the selfsame saw.

In the privy seal we find, under the date of August 15, 1500, a grant by King James IV. to Master William Dunbar, of an annual pension of ten pounds, until he be provided with a benefice of forty pounds or more yearly; and from this period the poet became an attendant upon the court of this gay and gallant monarch. James was devoted to his pleasures ; and if we may judge from the account books of the lord high treasurer, which present, in their various items, a curious picture of the manners of the times, large sums of money were lavished, with indiscriminate prodigality, upon idle amusements and unworthy objects. The character of the king, indeed, was inconsistent and almost contradictory. He had many great points about him, which made him deservedly beloved. His anxiety for the due administration of justice, and the indefatigable activity with which he visited the most remote portions of his kingdom ; his attention to the navy and the artillery, as those sources of national strength which had been neglected or unknown before his time; his anxiety for the preservation of an amicable intercourse with foreign states; his fondness for the clergy, undoubtedly the wisest and most learned amongst his subjects; his familiar friendship and intercourse with his nobles, and his accessibility and kindness to the lowest classes of his people: all these qualities were highly to be commended, and rendered the monarch deservedly popular. But, on the other hand, James had weaknesses and vices which, but for the excuse of youth and a mismanaged education, must have rendered him contemptible. His love of amusement was wild and reckless: plays, dances, dice, occupied every leisure moment; hawkes, apes, jugglers, jesters, and every sort of itinerant buffoon, received a ready welcome at court, and partook largely of the royal bounty, whilst his indiscriminate gallantry and admiration of the fair sex destroyed his health and grievously impoverished his exchequer. The universal patronage of the monarch, and the picture of the court, are admirably pourtrayed by Dunbar in his poem entitled a 'Remonstrance to the King'—

> Sir, ye have mony servitours
> And officers of divers cures—
> Kirkmen, courtmen, craftsmen fine,
> Doctors in jure and medicine,
> Philosophers, diviners, rhetors,
> Artists, astrologs, orators,
> Men of arms and valiant knights,
> And mony other gudly wights;
> Musicians, minstrels, merry singers,
> Chevalours, callanders, French flingers,

Coiners, carvers, carpentaris,
Builders of barks and ballingaris,
Masons building on the land,
And shipwrights hewing on the strand;
Glasswrights, goldsmiths, lapidaries,
Printers, painters, poticaries,—
Labouring all, baith fore and aft,
And wondrous cunning in their craft,
Which pleasant is and honorable,
And to your highness profitable,
And right convenient to be
With your high regal majesty,
Deserving of your grace most ding[1]
Both thanks, reward, and cherishing.
And though that I among the heap
Unworthy be a place to keep,
Or in their number to be told,
Yet long as their's my work shall hold,
Complete in every circumstance,
In matter, form, and eke substance,
But wearing or corruption,
Rust, canker, or corruption,
As perfect as their workes all,
Altho' my guerdon be but small.

The poet proceeds to observe, that he can neither blame nor envy any expenditure upon such worthy though multifarious artists, but then, says he, with much boldness, addressing his royal master, 'Your highness is so gentle and accessible that your court is crowded with a different and far less respectable sort.' The enumeration must be given in his own words, and a translation would be almost impossible:—

Fenyeouris, fleichouris, flatteraris,
Cryaris, crackaris, and clatteraris,
Sonkaris, gronkaris, gleddaris, gunnaris,
Monsouris of France, gud clarat cunnaris;

---

[1] worthy.

Inopportoun askaris of Yrland kynd,
And meit reivaris, lyk out o mind
Scaffaris, and scamlaris in the nuke
And hall huntaris of draik and duke,
Thrinlaris and thriftaris, as they war wod;
Kokenis, that kens na man of gude,
Schoulderaris and schowaris that hes no schame,
And to no cunning that can clame
And ken none uther craft nor curis
Bot to mak thrang schir in your duris,
And rush in whar they counsel hear,
And will at na man nurture leir
In quintessence, eke ingynouris joly
That far can multiply in foly;
Fantastic fulis, bayth fals and greedy,
Of tongue untrue and hand unsteady.
Few dar of all this last additioun
Come in Tolbuith without remission

When the first are provided for, says he, I may not complain; but when the king's purse opens to these last, and I am passed over, my very heart is ready to burst for despite:—

My mind so fer[1] is set to flyt
That of nochtels I can indyt,
For owther man my hert to breik,
Or with my pen I man me wreik;
And syne the tane most nedis be,
Into malancolie to dee,
Or lat the venym ische all out—
Bewar, anone for it will spout,
Gif that the treacle com not tyt[2]
To swage the swalme of my despyt.

Whether this remonstrance and threatening, on the part of Dunbar, had any effect in procuring him a more generous treatment at court cannot be ascertained; but the perfect truth of his de

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* Poems, vol. i. p. 145—147.
[1] fierce. [2] quick.

scription, and his picture of the multifarious vermin which infested the court, may be verified by those interesting manuscript records which reflect so strongly the manners of the times—the accounts of the lord high treasurer. We shall open them almost at random. On the 11th of February, 1488, we find the king bestowing nine pounds on gentil John, the English fule; on the 10th of June, we have an item to English pypers, who played to the king at the castle gate, of eight pounds eight shillings; on the 31st of August, Patrick Johnson and his fallows, that playit a play to the king, in Lithgow, receive three pounds; Jacob, the lutar, the king of bene, Swanky that brought balls to the king, twa wemen that sang to his highness, Witherspoon, the foular, that told tales and brought fowls, Tom Pringill the trumpeter, twa fithelaris, that sang Grey Steill to the king, the brokenbakkit fiddler of St. Andrews, Quhissilgybbourie, a female dancer, Wat Sangster, young Rudman the lutar, the wife that kept the hawks' nest in Craigforth, Willie Mercer, who lap in the stank by the king's command—and innumerable others who come in for a high share of the regal bounty,

> And ken none other craft nor curis
> But to mak thrang within the duris—

confirm the assertions of the indignant poet, and evince the extravagance and levity of the monarch.

The same records not only corroborate Dunbar's description, but bring before us, in fresh and lively colours, the court itself, with its gay and laughter-loving monarch. Let not history deride the labours of the patient antiquary; for never, in her moments of happiest composition, could she summon up a more natural and striking picture than we can derive from these ancient and often neglected records. We are enabled, by the clear and authentic lights which they furnish, to trace the motions of the court and of its royal master, not only from year to year, but to mark the annals of every day. We see his Majesty before he rises on the new-year's morning; we stand beside his chamberlain, and see the nobles, with their gifts and offerings, crowd into the apartment; nor is his favourite, gentle John, the English fool, forgotten, who brings his present of cross-bows; then enters the King of Bene, enacted by Tom Pringle; Jok Goldsmith chaunts his ballat below the window; the gysars dance; and in the evening the Bishop of Glasgow, the Earl of Bothwell, the Lord Chancellor, and the Treasurer, play at cards with his Highness.

Such are but a few of the characteristic touches of these remarkable records. They would furnish us with a thousand more, had we time or limits to detail them. They enable us to accompany the prince to his chapel royal at Stirling; we see the boys of the choir bending down to remove his spurs, and receive their accustomed largesse; we follow him in his progresses through his royal burghs, and listen to the thanks of the gudewife of the king's lodging, as the generous prince bestows his gratuity; we climb the romantic crag on which St. Anthony's chapel is situated, and almost hear his confession; we can follow him into his study, and find him adding to the scanty library which was all the times permitted even to a king—the works of Quintillian and Virgil, and the sang-buiks in which he took so much delight; his shooting at the butts with his nobles; his bandying jokes with his artillerymen; his issuing to the chase or the tournament, from his royal castles of Stirling or Falkland, surrounded by a cavalcade of noble knights and beautiful damsels; his presence at the christening of the Earl of Buchan's son, and the gold piece which he drops into the caudle,—all are brought before us as graphically as at the moment of their occurrence. And whilst our interest is heightened and our imagination gratified by the variety and brilliancy of the scenery which is thus called up, we have the satisfaction to know that all is true to nature, and infinitely more authentic than the pages even of a contemporary historian *.

We need scarcely offer any apology for this digression regarding the character of that monarch who was the patron of Dunbar, and the manners of the court in which it was his fortune to pass the greater part of his life. In the extreme paucity of materials for the history of his life, the only sources of information are to be found in his own works, and in the history of the age. He appears to have lived in great familiarity with the king and

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* If this be true, how much gratitude do we owe to the learned Mr. Pitcairn, for his admirable Collection of Criminal Trials; and to that able and amiable antiquary, the Rev. Mr. M'Gregor Stirling, whose Manuscript Collections, although less known, have thrown so much useful light on the early history of his country. It is from these last that the above picture of the court and amusements of James IV. has been taken.

his nobles; but at the same time it is easy to see that his poverty was often extreme, subjecting him to the most mortifying repulses from the lowest officers about the court. The pangs of deferred hope, the pride of insulted genius, the bitter repentance that he had devoted himself to so thankless and ill-requited a service, and the biting satire against kings and favourites, by which many of his productions are distinguished, all form a painful but instructive commentary on the history of a man of letters, who has relinquished the more humble walk in which, with a little labour, he might have provided for his own wants, and finds, when it is perhaps too late, that distinction is not synonymous with independence. It seems to have been in one of these moods that he indited his complaint addressed to the king:—

> Of wrangis and of great injures
> That nobles in their days indures,
> And men of virtue and cunning,
> Of wit and wisdom in guiding;
> That nocht can in this court conquess[1],
> For lawte, love, or long service *.

But it is time we should leave these ebullitions of wounded pride, or disappointed ambition, to consider some of the higher efforts of his genius. On the 8th of August, 1503, James IV. was espoused to the Princess Margaret of England, an event which it was earnestly hoped would have the most beneficial effects in removing, or at least diluting, the feelings of mutual hostility which had so long and so frequently arrayed the two kingdoms in mortal warfare against each other. The ceremony was accompanied with every species of feudal triumph and solemnity; and the event was commemorated by Dunbar, in a poem entitled the 'Thistle and the Rose,' which, had he never written another line, is of itself amply sufficient to place him in a high rank of genius. It commences with the following beautiful stanzas:—

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[1] acquire

* Poems, vol. ii. p. 142.

Quhen Marche wes with variand windis past,
And April hadde, with her silver showris,
Tane leif of Nature[1] with ane orient blast;
And lusty May, that mudder is of flowris,
Had maid the birdes to begin their houris,
Amang the tender colours, red and quhyt,
Quhois[2] harmony to heir it wes delyt.

In bed ae morrow, sleeping as I lay,
Methocht Aurora, with her cristall ene,
In at the window lukit by the day,
And halsit me[3] with visage pale and grene,
Upon whose hand a lark sang fra the splene,
Awalk, luvaris, out of your slomering,
See how the lusty morrow does up spring.

Methocht fresh May befoir my bed up stude,
In weid depaynt of mony divers hew,
Sober, benign, and full of mansuetude,
In brycht atteir[4] of flouris forgit new;
Hevinly of colour, quhyt, reid, broun, and blew,
Balmet in dew and gilt with Phœbus' bemys[5],
Quhill all the house illumynit of hir lemyss[6].

Slugird, she said, awalk anone for schame,
And in my honour somthing thou go write;
The lark his done the mirry day proclame,
To raise up luvaris with comfort and delyt;
Yet noch incressis thy courage to indyte,
Quhois hart sum tyme hes glaid and blissful bene,
Sangis to mak under the levis grene*.

bade adieu to Nature. [2] whose. [3] saluted me.
[4] bright attire. [5] beams. [6] glitters.
* Poems, vol. i. pp. 3, 4.

With scarce the difference of a word, the whole of this fine description may be read as English poetry, not inferior in the brilliancy of its fancy or the polish of its versification to Spenser:—

When March with varying winds had onward past,
  And gentle April, with her silver showers,
Bade Nature farewell in an orient blast,
  And lusty May, that mother is of flowers,
  Had waked the birds in their melodious bowers,
Amongst the tender borders, red and white;
Whose harmony to hear was great delight.

In bed at dawning, as I sleeping lay,
  Aurora, with her eyne as crystal clear,
In at my window look'd, while broke the day,
  And me saluted with benignant cheer,
  Upon whose hand a lark sang loud and clear,
Lovers, awake out of your slumbering,
See how the lovely morning doth upspring.

Methought fresh May beside my bed upstood,
  In weeds depaynt of many divers hue,
Sober, serene, and full of mansuetude,
  In bright attire of flowers all budding new,
  Heavenly of colour, white, red, brown, and blue,
All bathed in dew, and gilt with Phœbus' beams,
While all the room with golden radiance gleams.

Sluggard, she said, awake, arise for shame,
  And in mine honour something new go write;
Hear'st not the lark the merry day proclaim,
  Lovers to raise with solace and delight,
  And slumbers yet thy courage to indite
Whose heart hath whilome glad and blissful been,
Weaving thy songs beneath the leaves so green?

The poet having excused his slumbers on the ground of the inclemency of the season and the boisterous blasts of Lord Æolus, which had silenced himself and many other tuneful birds, is reminded by May that he had promised, when her sweet season began, to describe the rose. Now rise, therefore, says she, and do thine observance—

> Go see the birdis how they sing and dance,
> Illumyt oure with orient skyis brycht,
> Annamylet[1] richly with new azure lycht.

He arises, casts his 'serk and mantill' over him, and follows the goddess into a lovely garden, redolent with flowers, which are glittering in the morning dew. The sun rises, and as his first level rays gild the face of nature, a blissful song of welcome bursts from every bush and grove. The whole description is exquisite;—

> The purpour sone, with tendyr bemys reid,
> In orient bricht as angell did appeir,
> Throw golden skyis putting up his heid,
> Quhois gilt tressis schone so wondir cleir,
> That all the world tuke confort, fer and near,
> To luke upone his fresche and blissful face,
> Doing all sable from the hevynnis chace.
>
> And as the blessful soune of cherachy,
> The fowlis song throw confort of the licht;
> The birdis did with oppen voices cry,
> O luvaris fo, away thou dully Nycht,
> And welcum Day that comfortis every wicht,
> Hail May, hail Flora, haill Aurora schene,
> Hail princis Nature, haill Venus, luvis quene *.
>
> The glorious sun, with beams as ruby red,
> In orient bright as angel did appear,
> Through the glad sky advancing up his head;
> Whose gilded tresses shone so wondrous clear,
> That all the world took comfort, far and near,
> To look upon his fresh and blissful face,
> Which soon all sable from the heavens did chase.

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[1] enamelled.

* Poems, vol. i. p. 5.

And as the glorious orb drove up the sky,
  Sang every bird through comfort of the light,
And with their sweet melodious throats 'gan cry,
  Lovers awake, away thou dully Night;
  Welcome, sweet Day, that comforts every wight;
Hail May, hail Flora, hail Aurora, sheen,
Hail princess Nature, hail Love's loveliest Queen.

Dame Nature, having first commanded fierce Neptune and Eolus the bald not to perturb the water nor the air—

And that na schouris snell[1], nor blastes cauld,
Effray should flouris, nor fowlis on the fold,—

issues next her mandate to the beasts, the birds, and the flowers, to attend her court, as they are wont on the first of May:—

Scho ordaind eik that every bird and beist,
  Befoir her hienes suld annone compeir,
And every flour of verteu, most and leist,
  And every herb be field, fer and neir,
  As they had wont in May, fro yeir to yeir,
To her their makar to mak obediens,
Full law inclynand, with all dew reverens *.

She then ordain'd that every bird and beast,
  Before her highness should anon appear,
And every flower of virtue, most and least,
  And every herb, by field or forest near,
  As they were wont in May, from year to year,
To her, their Queen, to make obedience,
Inclining low, with all due reverence.

The swift-footed roe is despatched as the herald to warn the beasts of the forest, the restless swallow to bear her commands to the denizens of the air, and, obedient to the summons, all instantly appear before the queen—

[1] Piercing.

* Poems, vol. i. p. 6.

All present were in twinkling of an ee,
Baith beast, and bird, and flower, before the Queen.
And first the lion, greatest of degree,
Was called there, and he most fair to sene,
With a full hardy countenance and keen,
Before dame Nature came, and did incline,
With visage bold, and courage leonine.

This awful beast was terrible of cheir,
Piercing of look, and stout of countenance;
Right strong of corps, in fashion fair, but fier,
Lusty of shape, light of deliverance,
Red of his colour as the ruby glance;
On field of gold he stood full mightily,
With flower de luces circled pleasantly *.

This description is not only noble, containing as fine a picture of the monarch of the beasts as is to be found in the whole range of poetry, but is peculiarly appropriate, being a blazon of the Scottish arms,—a red lion rampant upon a field of gold, encircled with a border of fleurs-de-luces; Nature permits him to lean his paws upon her knee, and placing the royal crown upon his head, commands him as king, and protector of the smallest as well as the greatest of his subjects, to rule over them with benignity, and to temper justice with mercy. A fine moral lesson to the prince, of whom the lion is meant to be the personification:—

The lady lifted up his clawis clear,
And let him lightly lean upon her knee,
And crowned him with diadem full dear
Of radiant stones, most royal there to see,
Saying, The king of all beasts make I thee,
And the protector cheif in woods and shaws,
Go forth—and to thy lieges keep the laws.

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* There is scarce a word changed, except from the old to the more modern spelling.

Justice exerce with mercy and conscience.
And let na small beast suffer scaith nor scorn
Of greater beasts that bene of more puissance:
Do law alike to apes and unicorns,
And let no bowgle with his boistrous horn
Oppress the meek plough ox, for all his pride,
But in the yoke go quietly him beside.

Then crowned she the eagle king of fowls,
And sharp as darts of steel she made his pens,
And bad him be as just to whaups and owls,
As unto peacocks, papingoes, or cranes;
And make one law for strong fowls and for wrens;
And let no fowl of rapine do affray,
Nor birds devour but their own proper prey *.

The queen next addresses herself to the flowers, and, with great beauty and propriety, selecting the thistle, whose warlike thorns peculiarly fitted him to protect the softer plants from scaith or scorn:—

Then called she all the flowers that grew in field,
Describing both their fashion and effeirs [1];
Upon the awfull thistle she beheld,
And saw him guarded with a bush of spears;
Considering him so able for the weirs [2],
A radiant crown of rubies she him gave,
And said, in field go forth and fend the lave [3].

Nature then proceeds to the coronation of the rose, as queen of flowers; and the praises, bestowed on the beauty and rare qualities of this gem of the garden, are gracefully applied to the illustrious English princess, who was about to bestow her hand and her heart upon his royal master:—

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* Poems, vol. i. pp. 7, 8.

[1] properties. [2] wars. [3] defend the rest.

Then to the rose sche turned her visage,
And said, O lovely daughter, most bening,
Above the lily,—lustrous in lynage[1],
From the stock royal, rising fresh and ying[2],
But any spot or macall doing spring[3];
Come bloom of joy, with richest gems be crown'd,
For o'er them all thy beauty is renown'd.

A costly crown, with stones all flaming bright,
This comely queen did on her head enclose,
While all the land illumined was with light;
Wherefore, methought, the flowers did all rejoise[4]—
Crying at once—Hail to the fragrant rose!
Hail empress of all plants! fresh queen of flowers!
To thee be praise and honour at all hours*.

The crown is no sooner placed on the head of the queen of flowers, than the birds, led by the mavis and the nightingale, strain their little throats in one loud, but melodious song of triumph and loyalty; with the noise of which the poet awakes, and starting from his couch, half afraid, anxiously looks round for the brilliant and fragrant court, in which he had beheld these wonders; but the garden, the birds, the flowers, and Dame Nature, have all faded into empty air; and he consoles himself by describing the vision.

This sweet poem was written, as we already know, in commemoration of the union of James IV. with the lady Margaret Tudor. It was finished, as he intimates in the concluding verses, on the ninth of May. The marriage did not take place for some months after; but the preparations for it had commenced as early as the fourth of May, when a commission was given by

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[1] lineage.
[2] young.
[3] springing without spot or taint.
[4] rejoice.
* Poems, vol. i. p. 9.

Henry VII. to several of his nobles, to treat with the King of Scots regarding the dowry. Some of the minute particulars attending the journey of the princess to Scotland, and her first meeting with the king, as recorded by Leland in his Collectanea, are characteristic of the times. On the 1st of August she left Berwick, and was conducted to Lambertoun Kirk, where she was delivered, free of all expense, to the messengers of the King of Scots; who conducted her from thence to Fast Castle, and thence through Dunbar, where they 'schott ordnance for the luve of her.' On the 3d she reached the Earl of Morton's house at Dalkeith, where she was immediately visited by the king,—'his lure behind his back, and his berde something long,' attended by his brother the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, the Bishop of Caithness, the Earls of Huntley, Argyle, and Lennox, the Lord Hamilton, and many other lords and gentlemen, to the number of sixty horse. The king was then conveyed to the queen's chamber, and she met him at the chamber-door, honourably accompanied; and at the meeting, he and she, after making great reverences the one to the other, kissed together; and in like manner, kissed the ladies and others also. And he, in especial, welcomed the Earl of Surrey very heartily. After which, the queen and he went aside, and communed together for long space. On the 7th, the princess left Dalkeith, nobly accompanied and in fair array, seated in her litter, which was very richly adorned. Half way between that and Edinburgh, the king met her, mounted on a bay horse, running at full speed as he would run after the hare, and surrounded by a troop of his nobles. On reaching his capital, he mounted a palfrey, having placed the princess on a pillion behind him; in which honest and antique fashion, the gallant monarch rode through the good town to his palace, amid the acclamations of his subjects. On the 8th of August the marriage took place in the chapel of Holyrood. James was then in his thirty-third year, his youthful queen just fourteen; and some characteristic touches of manners may be gleaned from the 'Treasurer's Accounts.' In his description of the king's first interview with his bride at Dalkeith, Young, the English herald, seems to have been struck with the length of James's beard; and his young bride was probably a little annoyed at it, for on the day after the marriage we find, that the gallant monarch employed the Countess of Surrey, and her daughter Lady Gray, to clip his beard; for which service, these noble tonsors received—the first, thirty-five ells of cloth of gold; and the last, fifteen ells of damask gold *.

If we may judge from the expensive preparations, and the costly dresses of the nobles, as they appear in the same ancient records, the marriage must have been celebrated with uncommon pomp and magnificence: and amidst the various presents and hymeneal offerings, which on that joyous occasion were laid at the feet of the princess, few

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* Item, the 9 day of August, after the marriage, for 25 eln cloth of gold to the Comitass of Surry of Ingland, quhen sche and her dochter, Lady Gray, clippit the King's berde, iii^{c} xxx lb. Item, for xv eln of damas gold, by the King's commande to the said Lady Gray of Ingland, j^{c} xxx lb.—MS. Collections by the Rev. Wm. M'Gregor Stirling.

could be more beautiful or appropriate than Dunbar's fine allegorical vision, the 'Thistle and the Rose.' We have no reason to believe, however, that its author experienced any substantial instance of royal gratitude. He continued to reside at court, to share in the amusements, and bear a part in the revels of his gay and thoughtless master; but he saw others preferred, whilst he was thrust back or neglected; and his poetry is, in many places, little else than a severe and biting commentary on the arrogance of court minions, the insolence of wardrobe keepers, deputy treasurers, and other minor officials. One of these indignant castigations is, from its humour, worthy of notice. The queen's keeper of the robe was Jamie Doig, or as it was then probably pronounced in Scotland—Dog; who, on some occasion, had been ordered by the queen to present the poet with a velvet doublet, a command which he obeyed with so ill a grace, that Dunbar addressed this poetical complaint to the princess—

ON JAMES DOIG, KEEPAR OF THE QUEEN'S WARDROP.

TO THE QUEEN.

The Wardroper of Venus bowre,
To give a doublet is as doure[1],
As it were for ane fute side frog:
Madame, ye have a dangerous Dog.

When that I show to him your marks,
He turns to me again and barks,
As he were worrying ane hog:
Madame, ye have a dangerous Dog.

[1] obstinate or difficult.

When that I show to him your writing,
He girns[1] that I am red for flyting,
I would he had a heavy clog:
Madame, ye have a dangerous Dog.

When that I speak to him friend-like,
He growls like ony *midden tike*[2],
War-chasing cattle thro a bog:
Madame, ye have a dangerous Dog.

He is ane mastiff, strong of might,
To keep your wardrobe over night
From the great Soldan, Gog-magog:
Madame, ye have a dangerous Dog.

Oure large he is to be your messan[3],
I you advise to get a less ane[4],
His tread gars all your chambers schog:
Madame, ye have a dangerous Dog.

Jamie Doig, however, appears soon after to have relented, the promised suit is delivered from the wardrobe, and the poet changes his verses as easily and readily as he does his doublet. The dangerous Dog is tranformed into a Lamb; and in the lines 'on the said James when he had pleased him,' we learn some particulars which say little for the matrimonial felicity of the worthy wardraipair:—

The wife that he had in his inns,
That with the tangs[5] wad break his shins,
I wad sho drownd were in a dam,
He is na Dog—he is ane Lamb *.

Jamie Doig himself, whose strength and make were so great that his step shook the chambers of his royal mistress, is one of those whom the treasurer is ordered to furnish with a dress of state for the marriage*.

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[1] complaining bitterly. [2] dunghill cur.
[3] lap-dog. [4] a smaller one. [5] tongs.
* Poems, vol. ii. pp. 110, 111.

On another occasion the poet addresses the King in the character of the 'Grey Horse, auld Dunbar,' complaining that, when idler steeds are tenderly cared for, and clothed in gorgeous trappings, he who had done his Majesty good service is neglected in his old age:

Thocht in the stall I be nocht clappit,
As coursours that in silk beine trappit,
With ane new hous I wald be happit,
Against this Christmas for the cauld[1];
Sir, let it nevir in town be tald[2]
That I suld be a Yuillis yald[3].

I am ane auld horse, as ye knaw[4],
That evir in dule[5] dois dring and draw;
Great court-horse puttis me fra the staw[6],
To fang the fog[7] be firth and fald;
Sir, let it nevir in town be tald
That I suld be a Yuillis yald.

I haif lang run forth in the field,
On pastouris that ar plane and peil'd[8],
I micht be now tane in for eild[9],
My banes are showing he and bald.
Sir, let it nevir in town be tald,
That I suld be a Yuillis yald.

My mane is turned into quhyte[10],
And thereof ye haif all the wyte[11],
Quhan uther horse had bran to bite,
I had but gress[12], knip gif I wald;
Sir, let it nevir in town be tald
That I suld be a Yuillis yald.

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* Treasurer's Books, August 3, 1503.

[1] cold. [2] told.

[3] a useless old horse, turned into a straw-yard at Yule, or Christmas.

[4] know. [5] sorrow. [6] stall. [7] bear the fog.

[8] bare and worn out. [9] age. [10] white.

[11] blame. [12] grass, if I would pick a little.

The court has done my curage cuill[1],
And maid me ane forriddin muil[2],
Yet to weir trappourris[3] at this Yule,
I wad be spurr'd at everie spald[4].
Sir, let it nevir in town be tald
That I suld be a Yuillis yald.

Whether this remonstrance was attended by any substantial or permanent benefit to the 'Auld Grey Horse' is doubtful; but it is certain the King replied in the following fashion, which, as the only poetical effort of this gallant prince, is worth preservation:

RESPONSIO REGIS.

Efter our writtingis treasurer,
Tak in this Grey Horse, auld Dunbar,
Quhilk in my aucht with service trew[5]
To lyart changeit is his hew[6].
Gar howse him now aganis this Yuill,
And busk[7] him like ane bischoppis muill[8];
For with my hand I have indost[9]
To pay quhat evir his trappouris[10] cost.

A curious feature in the poetical literature of this age is to be found in that species of rhythmical invective termed Flyting or Scolding, for which Dunbar appears to have made himself especially illustrious. It is difficult to determine whether the enmity and rivalry of two poets, who gave themselves up to this coarse sort of buffoonery, was real or pretended. The probability seems to be, that it was considered both by the authors and their audience, as a mere pastime of the imagination—a licence to indulge in every kind of poetical vituperation—a kind of literary

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[1] cool. [2] over-worked mule. [3] trappings
[4] spurred at every bone.
[5] true. [6] hue. [7] adorn. [8] mule.
[9] indorsed. [10] trappings.

Saturnalia or licentious badinage, which, in its commencement, and in the received principles by which it was regulated, did not imply any real hostility of feeling, but was very likely to lead to it. Lord Hailes has well remarked, that Luigi Pulci and Matteo Franco, although dear and intimate friends, for their own amusement, and the gratification of their readers, have indulged in a similar species of abuse; and it seems impossible to believe that the affectionate regret with which Dunbar mentions Kennedy, in his 'Lament for the Death of the Makars,' could have proceeded from an enemy. With regard to the poetry itself, if we may use so high a name, it consists of a succession of stanzas of coarse and vulgar invective, of such strange antiquarian Billingsgate, that they are happily almost wholly unintelligible. A single stanza from Kennedy's attack, and the reply of his antagonist, is amply sufficient:—

Dreid, dirtfast dearch, that thou hes dissobey it,
  My cousing Quintene and my commissar.
Fantastick fule—traist well thou sall be fleyit.
  Ignorant elf, ape, owl, irregular
  Skaldit skaitbird, and common skamelar,
Wan thriven funling, that Nature made ane yrle,
Baith Johne the Ross and thou sall squeill and skirle.

To this trash Dunbar, with equal perspicuity and elegance, replies:—

Revin ragged ruke, and full of rebaldrie,
  Scarth fra scorpione, skaldit in scurrilitie;
I see thee haltane in thy venomie,
  And into uther science nathing slie,
Of every verteu void as men may see;
  Quytelame clergie, and clerk to the' ane club;
Ane baird blasphemar, in brybrie ay to be,
  For wit and wisdom ane wisp fra thee may rub.

To follow these flyters farther into the depths of their scurrility, would be both unprofitable and disgusting.

In his verses, entitled a 'Dance in the Queen's Chamber,' Dunbar presents us with a picture of himself, and adds the circumstance of his being in love with Mistress Musgrave, probably one of the court ladies who had arrived with the youthful queen:—

> Then came in Dunbar the makkar[1],
> On all the floor there was none frakkar[2],
>   And there he danced the dirrie dantoun,
>   He hoppit like a pilly-wantoun,
> For love of Musgrave, men tells me;
>   He tript until he tint his pantoun[3];
> A merrier dance might no man see.
>
> Then came in Mistress Musgrave,
> She might have learned all the lave[4],
>   When I saw her so trimly dance,
>   Her good convoy and countenance,
> Then for her sake I wished to be
>   The greatest Earl or Duke in France:
> A merrier dance might no man see*.

The lighter and shorter pieces of Dunbar present us with great variety in subject, in humour, and in beauty. Some of the stanzas in his address to the merchants of Edinburgh, and the hints he submits to them for the reformation of the 'gude town,' are excellent; nor has the march of modern improvement, on which the citizens of that ancient city are so fond of descanting, entirely removed the nuisances therein described:—

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[1] maker or poet. [2] nimbler. [3] pantaloons.
[4] the rest.
* Poems, vol. i. p. 128.

Why will ye, merchants of renown,
Let Edinbruch, your noble town,
For lak of reformation,
The common profit, tyne and fame?
Think ye no shame,
That any other regioun,
Should with dishonour hurt your name?

Nane may pass thro your cheifest gates,
For stench of haddocks and of scates;
Loud cries of carlings, and debates,
And fensum flytings of defame:
Think ye not shame,
Before strangers of all estates,
That such dishonour hurt your name?

* * * *

At your high cross, where gold and silk
Should be, there is but cruds and milk;
And at your Tron, cokill and whilk,
Paunches, and puddings of Jok and Jame,
Think ye not shame,
Syne that the hail warld says that ilk[1]
In hurt and slander of your name?

Since for the court, and eke the sessioun,
The great repair of this regioun
Is to your burgh, therefore be boun
To mend all faults that are to blame,
And eschew shame;
Gif they pass to another toun,
Ye will decay, and your great name.

It is to be regretted that, in some of his sweetest pieces, he has permitted himself to be run away with by the unfortunate passion of the age for the introduction of those allegorical personages with whom it is impossible for us to have much sympathy or patience. Thus his Dream commences beautifully, and we anticipate from its continuation a harvest of the richest fancy and the most graceful diction, when the dreary damsel Distress, her sorry sister Heaviness, two other very tedious relatives, entitled Comfort and Pleasure, a doleful gentleman yclept Languor, and a whole crowd of other airy personifications—Nobleness, Discretion, Wit, Considerance, Blind Affection, Reason, who tells he has been a lord of session, Opportunity, Temperance, and Sir John Kirkepakker, a pluralist, are all introduced to bestow their tediousness upon us, and to banish truth and nature from the delightful little production into which they have thrust themselves. The commencement is beautiful:—

---

[1] this same thing.

The hinder nicht, half-sleeping as I lay,
Methought my chamber in a new array
  Was all depaynt with many divers hue,
  Of all the noble stories, old and new,
Since our first father formed was of clay.

Methought the lift[1] all gleam'd with radiance bright,
And therein entred many a lusty wight;
  Some young, some old, in sundry wise arrayd;
  Some sung, some danc'd, on instruments some play'd;
Some made disport with hearts most glad and light.

Their pleasing song, their sweet melodious trade,
And joyous look, my heart no confort made,
  For why? the dreary damsel, hight Distress,
  And eke her sorry sister, Heaviness,
Heavy as lead, in bed above me laid

Their doleful length—and, at my couch's head
Sat Languor, with shut eye, most like the dead
  And she did play a strain, so sad to hear,
  Methought one little hour did seem a year:
Wan was her hue, and bluey cold like lead*.

---

[1] sky.

* Poems, vol. i. pp. 31, 32.

Of these verses, the two last stanzas are slightly altered from the original.

The description of Sir John Kirkpakker, the pluralist, and the contrast drawn by the poet between himself, who had waited long and patiently for some preferment, and this mighty 'undertakker,' already possessed of seven, and trusting soon to have eleven churches, is humorous :—

Then came anone one call'd Sir John Kirkpakker,
Of many cures a mighty undertakker,
  Quoth he, I am possest of churches seven,
  And soon I think they grow shall to eleven,
Before he come to one, yond groaning ballad-maker.

Then Patience to me said, Friend, make good cheer,
And on thy Prince depend with duteous fear;
  For I full well do know his fixed intent,
  He would not, for a bishop's princely rent,
Let thee go unrewarded half-an-year.

At what precise date this remonstrance was written is not certain; but the hint and compliment probably had its effect, for on the 26th of August, 1510, the king bestowed a yearly pension of eighty pounds upon the poet, to be continued till he was provided in a benefice of a hundred or more yearly*.

One of Dunbar's most characteristic poems, and which exhibits in a strong light his powers as a satirist, is that entitled 'The Twa Married Women and the Widow.' Its object is to expose the licentiousness of the female manners of the times; and although deformed by coarseness, and full of passages which cannot be read without disgust, there are some pictures in it, given with a freshness, truth, and humour, which strongly reminds us of the muse of Chaucer. The metre is the only specimen of blank verse to be met with in the Scottish language. The poet, in a sweet midsummer's night, walks forth to enjoy the season in a garden, where he has scarcely solaced himself for a few moments, when he is startled by the sounds of mirth and revelry proceeding from a shady arbour hard by. He approaches unperceived, and sees three fair ladies sitting at a table, on which is a rich banquet, with wine, of which they have evidently partaken. These are of course the dramatis personæ of the tale, the two married women and the widow. Their apparel is of the most costly description, their talk loud, and the subjects which they discuss the miseries of matrimony, and the delights of widowed freedom. I shall endeavour to give the verses with no very material change, except from the ancient to the modern spelling:—

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* The Privy Seal, IV. 80.

On a midsummer's even, that merriest is of nights,
I moved forth alone, when midnight near was past,
Beside a lovely garden, all full of gayest flowers,
And highly hedged around with trees of hawthorn sweet,
On which a joyous bird her notes gan sing so loud,
That ne'er methought a blyther bird on bough was ever
heard.
Pleased with the fragrance sanative of these sweet midnight
flowers,
And with the winged minstrels song, so full of gladsomeness,
I drew in secret to the hedge, intent on mirthful cheer,
Whilst nightingales the dew drops sipt to make their notes
more clear.
Sudden I heard beneath a holly, cloth'd in heavenly green,
Beside my hand, a strife of words, with haughty argument,
And drawing nearer to the hedge, I thrust my body thro',
Ensconced in the hawthorn white, and hid with leafy screen,

And thus thro' crannies of the thorn that thickly plaited were
I prest to see if any wight were in that garden there.
Then straight I saw three ladies gay sitting in arbour green,
Their heads all garlanded with flowers of fairest, freshest hues,
Their braided tresses shone like gold, and such their beauties were,
That all the ground seemed light around, gleaming with gladsome beams;
Comb'd were those waving locks so bright, and curiously did part
Straight down their shoulders, fair and round, in folds of wavy length;
Their curches cast were them above, of muslin thin and clear,
And green their mantles were as grass that grows in May season,
Bordered with feathers curious wrought, around their graceful sides;
With wondrous favour meek and gent their goodly faces shone,
All blooming in their beauty bright, like flowers in middle June:
Soft, seemly, white, their skin did show, like lilies newly blown,
Tinted with damask, as the rose whose little bud just opes.

* * *

A marble table covered stood before these ladies three,
With glittering, goodly cups in rows, replenished all with wine;
And of these lightsome dames were two wedded to lords I ween,
The third in widowhood did live, a wanton she and gay.
Full loud they talked, and struck the board, and many a tale they knew,
And deep and oft they drain'd the cup, and loud and louder grew
Their mirth and words, and faster still from tale to tale they flew[*].

[*] Poems, vol. i. pp. 61, 62.

Such is a moderately close translation of the opening of this satirical tale; but it is impossible to follow the widow or the married ladies farther. We are not, however, to form our ideas of the female manners of the age from the conversation and loose principles of Dunbar's 'Cummeris.' It is not to be forgotten that it is a satirical poem, and probably did not profess to give an exact picture of the times.

The 'Friars of Berwick,' which Pinkerton, on very probable grounds, has ascribed to this poet, affords a still finer example of his vigour as a satirist. Its object is to expose the licentious lives of some of the monkish orders, and nothing can be more rich than the humour with which the story is told. Friar Robert and Friar Allan, two of the order of White Jacobin Friars, set off from Berwick to visit their brethren in the country. On their return they are benighted:—

Whiles on a time they purposed to pass hame[1],
But very tired and wet was friar Allane,
For he was old and might not well travel,
And he had too a little spice of gravel;
Young was friar Robert, strong and hot of blood,
And by the way he bore both cloths and hood,
And all their gear, for he was wise and wight.
By this it drew near hand towards the night;
As they were comming toward the town full near,
Thus spoke friar Allan, 'My good brother dear,
It is so late, I dread the gates be closed;
And tired are we, and very ill disposed
To lodge out of the toun, perchance the[illegible] we
In some good house this night may lodged be *.'

This is scarcely spoken when they find themselves at the door of the hostelrie of Simon Lauder, an honest innkeeper, whose wife, Dame Alison, is somewhat similar in her disposition to the two married women and the widow, with whom we are already acquainted—fond of good cheer and good company, and not very correct in her morals. The friars knock at the gate, inquire for the 'gudeman,' and find that he has gone to the country to buy corn and hay. They then complain of being wondrous thirsty, and the dame, with ready hospitality, fills a stoup of ale, and invites them to sit down and refresh themselves, to which they at once assent:

---

[1] home.

* Poems, vol. ii. p. 4.

> The friars were blyth, and merry tales could tell,
> And ev'n with that they heard the vesper bell
> Of their own abbey; then they were aghast,
> Because they knew the gates were closed fast*.

The friars in dismay entreat Dame Alison, seeing they are shut out from their own abbey, to give them a night's lodging; but this she steadily refuses, alleging the scandal which would be likely to arise should she in the absence of her husband be known to have harboured two friars. She points, however, to a barn or outhouse, where they are welcome to take up their quarters, and to which she sends her maiden to prepare their bed, and there they lie down accordingly; friar Allan, who was old and fatigued with travel, to sleep, but friar Robert is wakeful, and at last rises to see if he may spy or meet with any merriment. The story then turns to the goodwife, Dame Alison, who, in the absence of her husband, had invited friar John, a neighbouring monk, of great riches and dignity, to sup with her that evening. Her preparations for the feast, and her rich toilet are admirably described:—

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* Poems, vol. ii. p. 5.

> She thristit on fat capons to the spit,
> And rabbits eke to fire she straight did lay,
> Syne bad the maidin in all haste she may
> To flam, and turn and roast them tenderly,
> And to her chamber then she went in hy[1].

* * * *

> She cloth'd her in a gown of finest red,
> A fair white curch she placed upon her head,
> Her kirtle was of silk and silver fine,
> Her other garments like red gold did shine,
> On every finger she wore ringis two,
> And trod as proud as any papingo.
> Then spread the board with cloth of costly green,
> And napery plac'd above right well be sene.*

The expected guest at last tirls at the gate, and the meeting, which is seen through a cranny in the chamber by friar Robert, is described with great spirit and humour. Nor does the friar come empty handed: he brings a pair of 'bossis' or bottles

> 'good and fine,
> That hold a gallon full of Gascogne wine;'

two plump partridges, and some rich cakes in a basket. They now sit down to their feast, but in the middle of supper, their merriment is interrupted by a loud knocking at the door, and to their dismay it turns out to be honest Simon himself, who, having completed his business, arrives suddenly. All is in confusion in a moment: friar John runs from corner to corner, not knowing where to escape, but at last, finding it impossible to effect his retreat, he ensconces himself in a large meal-trough or girnel, which lay in a nook of the chamber, the rich feast is then whirled off the board, the rabbits, capons, partridges, wine, and dainties, shut up in the aumry or closet, the fire slackened or put out, the house swept, and the dame herself, stripping off her gay apparel, creeps to bed. Meanwhile, as might be expected, Simon gets impatient—

---

[1] haste.

* Poems, vol. ii. p. 8.

And on his Alison began to cry,
Whilst at the last she answered crabbedly—
Ah who is this that knows so well my name?
Go hence, she says, for Simon is fra hame,
And I will harbour here no guests perfay;
Therefore I pray you that ye wend your way,
For at this time ye may not lodged be.
Then Simon said, Fair dame, ken ye not me*?

The goodman is at length admitted, and, being cold and hungry, asks hastily for his supper; Alison remonstrates, and ridicules the idea of getting meat at this unseasonable hour:—

The goodwife shortly said, ye may me trow,
Here is no meat that can be drest for you.
How so, fair dame? go get me cheese and bread,
Then fill the stoup, hold me no more in plead,
For I am very weary, wet, and cold.
Then up she rose, and durst no more be bold,
Cover'd the board, thereon set meat in hy,
And soused nolt's foot, and sheep's head cunningly,
And some cold meat she to him serv'd meanwhile,
Syne filled the stoup; the gudeman then gan smile,
And sat him down to taste the hearty cheer,
Said, nought want I but a companion here†.

This hospitable wish of the honest innkeeper, is overheard by the friars, who are in the adjoining

* Poems, vol. ii. p. 11. † Ibid, p. 12.

loft, and brother Robert, indignant that the lord of the manor should be put off with sheep's head, when he had just witnessed such dainty viands hid in the pantry, determines to bring to light the cunning of dame Alison. He coughs loud; Simon, starting up, asks what sound was this? and his wife informs him of the arrival of the two friars during his absence:

Yond is friar Robert and aged friar Allane,
That all this day has travelled with great pain;
That when they here arriv'd it was so late,
Curfew was rung, and closed was the gate;
So in our loft I gave them harberye.
The gudeman said—Wife, prudently did ye;
These friars two are hartly welcome hither;
Go call them down that we may drink together.

The two friars are not slow to obey the hospitable invitation; and after a kindly meeting honest Simon laments that he has not a more dainty supper to set before them—

Yet would I give a crown of gold for me,
For some good meat and drink among us three*.

'My excellent friend,' said friar Robert, 'let me know only what kind of meat or drink you most long for. I was educated in Paris, and acquired in that university some little skill in the occult sciences, which I would gladly use for your profit, and the comfort of this kind landlady, to whom we are indebted for a lodging:—

I take on hand, an ye will counsel keep,
That I shall make you taste, before you sleep,
Of the best meat that is in this countrie,
With Gascoign wine if any in it be,—
Nay should it be within a hundred mile,
It shall be here before a little while†.

---

* Poems, vol. ii. p. 14. † Ibid, p. 14.

Simon is delighted with the proposal, and friar Robert, at his entreaty, commences his pretended conjurations. He starts upon the floor, opens a little volume which he has in his hand, turns first to the east, next to the west, then to the aumry or pantry, and lastly strikes with his wand the trough or girnel in which friar John lay trembling. After many complicated gestures and incantations, the hooded magician starts up 'full stoure,' and declares that his work is completed:—

Now it is done, and ye shall have plenty
Of bread and wine the best in this countrie;
Therefore, good dame, get up thou speedily,
And march ye strait unto yon aumery,
Then open it, and see ye bring us syne
A pair of bottles filled with Gascoign wine,
They hold a gallon and more, that wot I weil,
Thence also bring the main bread in a creill,
A pair of rabbits, fat and piping hot,
The capons also, rostet well, I wot
Two pair of bonny partridges are there,
And eke of plewers a most dainty pair *.

Dame Alison at once perceives that her practices have been discovered; but, proceeding to the cupboard, and disclosing each savoury dish as it is named by the necromancer, she assumes a well-acted astonishment, whilst honest Simon cannot contain either his wonder or his appetite:—

He had great wonder, and swore by the mone[1],
That friar Robert well his debt had done;
He may be called a man of great science,
That hath so quickly made this purviance,
And brought it here through his great subtilty,
And through his knowledge in philosophy.

---

* Poems, vol. ii. p. 16.

[1] moon.

The innkeeper, however, is hungry, and has no inclination to waste time in empty compliments; so sitting down without question or debate, he does excellent justice to the capons, plovers, partridges, and washes all down with many a lusty draught of the good Gascoign wine, little careful by what strange and unlawful practices it seemed to be procured; but, on the contrary, wonderfully pleased with that substantial philosophy which had provided him so excellent a repast. Having assuaged his appetite, however, he becomes inquisitive as to the mode by which so extraordinary a feat of necromancy has been performed, and earnestly begs friar Robert to show him his familiar; but he is answered, that were the spirit to appear in its own dreadful shape, it is as much as his senses or his life were worth: he adds, however, that it is possible to make him change himself into some less questionable form, and bids the innkeeper say what that shall be:—

> Then Simon said in likeness of a frier,
> In colour white right as your self it wear,
> For white colour to hurt no man will dare.

'It may not be so,' says friar Robert, 'for it were a despite to our order that so lubbard a fiend should be honoured by bearing our livery; yet since you desire it, he shall assume the likeness of a friar, but it shall be a black one.'

> But since it pleases you that now are here,
> Ye shall him see in likeness of a frier,
> In habit black it was his kind to wear*.

Simon then receives directions to take his stand at the door with a stout oak cudgel in his hand,

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* Poems, vol. ii. p. 19.

and to hold himself ready to strike with all his might the moment he received his orders, but to be careful not to speak a word. The catastrophe may be readily anticipated. Friar Robert, advancing to the trough, beneath which friar John has lain ensconced during the whole of this adventure, evokes him to make his instant appearance, by the name of Hurlybass.

Ha! how, Sir Hurlybass—I conjure thee—
That thou uprise, and soon to me appear
In habit black, in likeness of a frier,
Out of this trough—wherein thou now dost ly.
Thou raise thee soon, and make no din or cry,
But tumble up the trough that we may see,
And unto us now show thee openly.
But in this place take care thou no man grieve,
And draw thy lubbard hands within thy sleeve,
And pull the cowl quite o'er thine ugsome face;
Thou mayest thank heav'n thou gettest so much grace.

* * * * *

With that the friar beneath the trough that lay,
Raxit him sone, but he was in a fray [1];
And up he rose, and wist na better wayn [2],
But from the trough he tumbled oer the stane[3].
Syne fra the samyn [4] where he thought it lang
Unto the door he pressed him to gang.
With heavy cheer and dreary countenance,
For neer before him happened such a chance:
And when friar Robert saw him gangand by [5],
Full loudly to the gudeman did he cry—
Strike, strike, man, hardily—'tis time for thee:
With that Simon a fellon flap let flie,
And with his cudgel hit him on the neck:
He was so fierce he fell out o'er the sack,
And broke his head upon a mustard stane,—
Be this friar John out o'er the stair is gane [6].

---

[1] fright. [2] way. [3] stone.
[4] Then from the same. [5] going past. [6] gone.

But in sic haste, that mist he has the trap,
And in the mire he fell, such was his hap,
Well forty foot in breadth beneath the stair;
Yet got he up—with clothing nothing fair,
All drearily upon his feet he stude,
And thro' the mire full smartly than he yude[1];
And o'er the wall he clambered hastily,
Which round about was laid with cope stones dry.
Of his escape in heart he was full fain,
I trow he shall be loath to come again*.

There are few of Chaucer's tales which are equal, and certainly none of them superior to this excellent piece of satire. I have dwelt upon it the rather, because without the coarseness and licentiousness which infects the poetry of the age, it gives us a fine specimen of its strength and natural painting. The whole management of the story, its quiet comic humour, its variety and natural delineation of human character, the freshness and brilliancy of its colouring, the excellence and playfulness of its satire upon the hypocritical and dissolute lives of many of the monastic orders, and the easy and vigorous versification into which it is thrown, are entitled to the highest praise.

Another beautiful poem of this author is, the 'Golden Targe,' but our limits will hardly permit us to touch upon it. Its subject is, the Power of Love; and nothing, certainly, can breathe a sweeter or truer spirit of poetry than its opening stanzas.

Brycht as the sterne of day begonth to schyne,
Quhen gon to bed war Vesper and Lucyne,

[1] past.

* Poems, vol. i. pp. 21, 22.

I raiss, and by a rosere did me rest:
Up sprang the golden candle matutyne,
With clere depurit bemes crystalline,
Glading the merry foulis in their nest:
Or Phœbus was in purpour cape revest;
Upraise the lark, the hevyn's menstrale fyne,
In May in till a morrow myrthfullest.

Full angellike thir birdis sang their houris
Within thair curtyns grene, into their bouris,
Apparalit quhite and red, wyth blomes swete;
Anamalit wes the felde wyth all colouris;
The perly droppis schuke in silvir schouris;
Quhile all in balme did branch and levis flete;
To part fra Phœbus did Aurora grete:
Hir crystall teris I saw hyng on the flouris
Quhilk he for luve all drank up with his hete *.

Changing only the old spelling, scarce a word requires alteration or transposition:—

Bright as the star of day began to shine,
When gone to bed were Vesper and Lucyne,
I rose, and by a rose-tree did me rest;
Up sprung the golden candle matutyne,
With clear and purest radiance crystalline,
To glad the merry birds within their nest,
For Phœbus was in purple garment drest;
Up rose the lark, the heaven's minstrel fine,
In May—whose mornings are the mirthfullest.

* * * * *

Most angel-like the sweet birds sang their hours,
Enclosed in curtains green within their bowers,
Thro' blossoms white and red they gan to peep;
Enamelled was the field with all colours.
Down fell the pearly drops in silver showers,
And all in balm did leaves and branches steep.
To part from Phœbus did Aurora weep;
Her crystal tears hung heavy on the flowers,
Which he anon drank up, so warm his love and deep.

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* Poems, vol. i. p. 11.

The poet, as is rather too usual with him, falls asleep, and sees a vision.

Lull'd by the birds delightful harmony,
And with the rivers sound that ran me by;
On Flora's cloak sleep seiz'd me as I lay,
Where soon into my dreams came fantasy.
I saw approach against the orient sky,
A sail as white as hawthorn bud on spray,
With ropes of gold, bright as the star of day,
And still she near'd the land full lustily,
Swift as the falcon pouncing on her prey.

The ship anchors, and a hundred beautiful nymphs leap smilingly from its deck; amongst whom he recognises love's mirthful queen, attended by

Cupid, the king, with bow in hand ybent,
And dreadful arrows grundin[1] sharp and keen.

Secretly drawing near to behold this wondrous sight and creeping through the leaves, he is discovered by Venus, who commands Beauty and others of her archers who attend on her, to seize the culprit; but when they are drawing their bows to pierce him to the heart, Reason, with his golden targe or shield, throws himself between these assailants and their victim:

Then Reason came with shield of gold so clear,
In plate of mail, like Mars, armipotint,
Defended me this noble chevalier.

Presence, however, throws a powder in the eyes of this noble knight; and when his defender has thus been blinded, the unhappy poet is abandoned to all the tyranny of Beauty, who wounds him nearly to death. Lord Æolus now gives a flourish on his bugle, and the whole scene, but a few moments before so fresh and brilliant, fades away into empty air—

---

[1] ground.

Leaving no more but birds, and bank, and brook.

This fine piece, which well deserves the high encomium bestowed on it by Warton, concludes with a spirited address to Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, whom Dunbar compliments as the great improvers of the language and poetry of England.

Oh, reverend Chaucer, rose of rhetors all,
And of our tongue the flower imperial;
Sweetest that ever rose to give delight.
Thou beaist of makers the triumph riall;
Thy fresh enamelled works most cœlical,
This matter could illumined have full bright—
Wast thou not of our English all the light;
Surmounting every tongue terrestrial,
As far as May's fresh morning doth midnight.

Oh, moral Gower, and Lydgate laureate,
Your sugard lips and tongues most aureate
Have to our ears been cause of great delight;
Your angel voices most mellifluate
Our language rude has clear illuminate,
And gilded oer our speech, that imperfyte [1]
Stood, till your golden pens began to urite;
This isle till then was bare and desolate
Of rhetorick or lusty fresch endyte.

Thou little book be still obedient,
Hubmle and meek, and simple in intent;
Before the face of every cunning wight,
I know that thou of rhetorick art schent [2];
Of all her lovely roses redolent,
Is none into thy garland set on hight;
Ashamed be then—and draw thee out of sight.
Rude is thy weed, distained, bare, and rent,
Well may'st thou be afraid to face the light *.

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[1] imperfect. [2] shorn, deprived.

* Poems, vol. i. pp. 20, 21. The spelling is altered.

The power and variety of Dunbar's genius must be evident, from the extracts already given. It is difficult to say whether his humorous, or his moral and didactic vein, is the richest and most original. He has attempted also, and frequently with great felicity, a style of poetry which appears to have been extremely popular in those days; although it is somewhat difficult to find a name for it. It commences or concludes with some Latin quotation taken from the 'Psalms' or the 'Gospels'; or, sometimes only from the words of an ancient Christian prayer or mass; and upon this, as a text, the poet builds a sacred ode or religious hymn, making his concluding English lines to rhyme in rather an uncouth manner with the Latin final syllables. Thus in his lines on 'The Resurrection':—

Done is the battle on the dragon black;
  Our champion, Christ, confounded hath his force.
The gates of hell are broken with a crack;
  The sign triumphal raised is of the cross.
The devils tremble with a hideous voice;
  The souls are purchased, and to bliss may go.
Christ, with his blood. our ransom doth indorse;
  Surrexit Dominus de Sepulchro.

* * * * *

The victor great again is ris'n on hight;
  That for our quarrel to the death was wounded.
The sun, that wax'd all pale, again shines bright,
  And darkness clears; our faith is now refounded.
The knell of mercy from the heavens is sounded!
  The Christians are delivered from their woe;
The Jews, and their gross errors are confounded.
  Surrexit Dominus de Sepulchro*.

It is deeply to be regretted, that of a poet whose genius is so unquestionable, and who shines with a dazzling brightness amongst the inferior luminaries by whom he is surrounded, nothing almost is known. From his own verses it appears that he followed the court. He lived a companion of the great and opulent, yet poor and often in want; he died in such extreme obscurity, that the place where he closed his eyes, and the time where he was gathered to his fathers, are both alike unknown. In his curious poem entitled a 'Lament for the Makars,' composed, in all probability, during his last sickness, he pathetically laments his having survived all his tuneful brethren.

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* Poems, vol. i. p. 247.

> Syne he hes all my brethren tane,
> He will not lat me live alane.
> Perforce I man his next prey be,
> Timor Mortis Conturbat Me.

My learned friend Mr. Laing, of Edinburgh, the secretary of the Bannatyne Club, has kindly communicated to me an edition of the whole works of Dunbar, containing many pieces hitherto unpublished, which he means shortly to present to the world. From this edition the quotations in the above life of the poet are taken; and I only regret that his biographical collections regarding Dunbar, with the notes illustrative of his poetry and the times in which he lived, were not in such a state as to allow of my consulting them. The whole work however, will, I trust, soon be before the public.

GAVIN DOUGLAS.

1474—1522.

GAVIN DOUGLAS

1474—1522.

The life of Bishop Douglas, the admirable translator of 'Virgil,' has already been written by Mackenzie, Sage, and Dr. Irving; and little can be added to the particulars which have been collected by the industry and erudition of these authors. He appears to have been born about the year 1474, and, unlike his celebrated compatriot, Dunbar, enjoyed the advantage of illustrious descent, a circumstance of no small importance in those feudal days. His father was Archibald, sixth Earl of Angus; his mother, the lady Elizabeth Boyd, daughter of Robert Lord Boyd, high-chamberlain; and of this marriage, Gavin was the third son. If we are to believe the 'Eulogy' of the historian of the House of Angus, the father of the future poet was a remarkable person. 'He was a man," says this quaint writer, 'every way accomplished, both for mind and body. He was of stature tall, and strong made; his countenance full of majesty, and such as bred reverence in the beholders; wise and eloquent of speech, upright and square in his actions, sober and moderate in his desires, valiant and courageous, liberal, loving, and kind to his friends, which made him to be reverenced and respected of all men.'*

The same author has preserved an anecdote of this ancient baron, which, whilst it undoubtedly reflects credit on his personal valour, says little for his sobriety and moderation. 'The king,' says he, (it was James IV. of Scotland,) 'on a time was discoursing at table on the personages of men, and by all men's confession, the prerogative was adjudged to the Earl of Angus; but a courtier that was by, one Spens, of Kilspindy, whether out of envy to hear him so praised, or of his idle humour only, cast in a word of doubt and disparaging. It is true, said he, if all be good that is upcome; meaning, if his actions and valour were answerable to his personage and body. This spoken openly, and coming to the earl's ears, offended him highly; and it fell out soon after, as Angus was riding from Douglas to Tantallon, that he sent all his company the nearest way, whilst he himself, with one only of his servants, having each of them a hawk on his fist, in hope of better sport, took the way by Borthwick towards Fala; where, alighting at the brook at the west end of the town, they bathed their hawks.

'In the mean time, this Spens happened to come that way; whom the earl espying, said to his man, "Is not this he that made question of my manhood? I will go to him and give him a trial of it, that we may know which of us is the better man." "No, my lord," said his servant, "it is a disparagement for your lordship to meddle with him;

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* Home's Hist. of the House of Douglas and Angus, vol. ii. p. 57.

I will do that sufficiently, if it please your honour to give me leave." "I see," said the earl, "he hath one with him; grapple you with him, but leave me to deal with his master." So, fastening their hawks, that they might not fly away in the mean time, they rode after him, and having come up, "What reason had you," said the earl, "to speak so contemptuously of me, doubting whether my valour were answerable to my personage." Spens would fain have excused the matter, but Angus plainly told him this would not serve his turn. "Thou art a big fellow," said he, "and so am I; one of us must and shall pay for it." "If it may be no better," said the other, "there is never an earl in Scotland, but I will defend myself from him as well as I can; and rather kill him than suffer him to kill me." So, alighting from their horses, they fought, till at last the Earl of Angus, with a stroke, cut Spens's thigh-bone asunder, so that he fell to the ground, and died soon after. "Go now," said Angus to the servant of the slain knight, "and tell my gossip, the king, there was nothing here but fair play,—I know he will chafe,—but Hermitage is a strong castle, and there will I abide till his anger be over *."

Such was the stalwart father of the poet,—a sire more fitted to teach his children how to couch a lance than polish a sonnet; and Gavin's elder brethren, George, master of Angus, and Sir William Douglas, of Glenbervie, were bred up in this warlike school. They fell, with their sovereign, in the fatal battle of Flodden; and two

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* Hume's History of the House of Douglas and Angus, vol. ii. p. 59.

hundred knights and gentlemen of the same name—

> 'The flowers of the forest,
> That aye were the foremost,'

lay stretched around them. Their father, the old earl, who had in vain dissuaded the monarch from a ruinous war, bending under the weight of public and individual sorrow, retired into Galloway, where he soon after died.

Meanwhile a gentler fortune awaited his third son, Gavin, who had been educated as an ecclesiastic; and having entered into holy orders, was early promoted to the rectory of Hawick, a town in Roxburghshire, situated in a beautiful pastoral country, at the confluence of the rivers Teviot and Slitterick. Here, living in the midst of romantic natural scenery, endowed with a fine imagination, and having a mind imbued with no common stores of learning and knowledge, (considering the darkness of the times,) he appears to have early devoted himself to poetry. 'The intimacy of his acquaintance with ancient literature,' says Dr. Irving, 'was, in that age, rarely paralleled. His favourites amongst the ancient poets were, apparently, Virgil and Ovid; and among the Christian fathers, St. Augustin, whom he denominates the Chief of Clerks. His knowledge of the Latin language was, undoubtedly, extensive; and as he has informed us that Lord Sinclair requested him to translate Homer, we may conclude that he possessed also an acquaintance with Greek, an accomplishment rarely to be met with at that time in Scotland. We learn also from his ancient biographer, Mylne, that he was profoundly read in theology and in the canon law *.'

His first work of any extent was 'King Hart,' an allegorical poem, upon human life, of which it is impossible to give an analysis in more striking language than his own. 'The hart of man,' says he, 'beand his maist noble part, and the fountain of his life,' is here put for man in general, and holds the chief place in the poem, under the title of 'King Hart.' This mystical king is first represented in the bloom of youtheid, with his lusty attendants, the attributes or qualities of youth. Next is pictured forth the Palace of Pleasure, near by the castle of King Hart, with its lovely inhabitants. Queen Pleasance, with the help of her ladies, assails King Hart's castle, and takes him and most of his servitors prisoners. Pity at last releases them, and they assail the Queen Pleasance, and vanquish her and her ladies in their turn. King Hart then weds Queen Pleasance, and solaces himself long in her delicious castle. So far is man's dealing with pleasure; but now when King Hart is past mid-eild, comes another scene. For Age, arriving at the castle of Queen Pleasance, with whom King Hart dwelt ever since his marriage with her, insists for admittance, which he gains. So King Hart takes leave of Youthheid with much sorrow. Age is no sooner admitted, than Conscience comes also to the castle and forces entrance, beginning to chide the King, whilst Wit and Reason take part in the conference. After this and

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* Irving's Lives, vol. ii. p. 27.

other adventures, Queen Pleasance suddenly leaves the King, and Reason and Wisdom persuade King Hart to return to his own palace: that is, when pleasure and the passions leave man, reason and wisdom render him his own masters. After some other matters, Decrepitude attacks and mortally wounds the King, who dies after making his testament.

Such is Douglas's nervous and condensed description of his own poem. The allegory, although insipid and tedious to our modern taste, was probably delightful, in all its intricate and endless personifications, to his feudal readers. There is a curious contrast, in these iron times, between the fierce activity of the barons in the lists or in the field, and the patience and resignation with which they seem to have sat down to wade through the interminable pages of their romances, and listened to the long drawn-out legends of their minstrels, or their jongleurs. To them the business of life was full of passion, violence, and bloodshed; whilst their amusements and their literature, were solemn, grave, and tedious. In our days, life stagnates in repose and indolence; whilst the productions of our literature must be striking, abrupt, highly wrought—above all, brief; and we keep our violence and impatience for the unhappy authors who dare to draw upon us for anything which requires serious thought, sustained attention, or a prolonged perusal.

But although uninteresting and somewhat heavy, as a lengthened allegory, 'King Hart' abounds with much noble poetry; and we often forget, in the vivid descriptions and stirring incidents, the moral aim of the author. The King is a real feudal monarch, holding his state nobly amongst his living subjects and vassals; whilst Queen Pleasance, in her enchanted castle, charms us, not only by her beauty, but is invested with so much nature and verisimilitude, that we believe her a real enchantress, surrounded by her beautiful and captivating syrens. The first canto opens with great spirit:—

King Hart into his comely castel strang[1],
Closed about with craft and meikle ure[2],
So seemly was he set his folk amang,
That he no doubt had of misaventure.
So proudly was he polished, plain, and pure,
With Youthheid and his lusty levis grene,
So fair, so fresh, so likely to endure,
And also blyth as bird in summer schene.

For, was he never yet with shouris schot,
Nor yet o'er run with rouk[3] or ony raine,
In all his lusty lecam[4] not ane spot,
Na never had experience into paine.
But alway into lyking mocht to layne[5],
Only to love and very gentleness;
He was inclynit cleanlie to remain,
And wonn[6] under the wing of Wantonness.

Thus slightly modernised—

King Hart sat in his comely castle strong,
All closed about with craft and cunning sure,
So proudly was he placed his folks among,
That he no doubt had of misadventure;
His state did promise it should long endure;
His youth was fresh, his lusty leaves were green,
His cheek show'd mantling blood, as ruby pure,
His voice was blyth as bird in summer sheen.

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[1] strong. [2] toil. [3] moisture. [4] body.
[5] might incline to pleasure. [6] live.

Like goodly tree whom tempest ne'er had torn,
Or fresh-blown rose, whose beauty ne'er could wane,
King Hart stood firm; his curling locks, unshorn,
Play'd round his brows; he never dreamt of pain:
But always thought in liking soft to layne[1]
Love's servant, nurst in lap of gentleness,—
He fondly dreamt that he should aye remain,
And won beneath the wing of Wantonness.

The poet proceeds to tell us that, however bold he looked, this king did not enjoy freedom. Since Nature had commissioned various "ythand servitouris," or diligent servants, to guide and govern him: under which description he includes the many evil passions and wicked propensities to which the heart of man is a prey:—

First was their Strength and Rage and Wantonness;
Green Lust, Disport, Jelosy, and Invy,
Freschness, new gate, Waist-gude and Wilfulness;
Deliverness, Full-hardiness thairby,
Gentrice, Freedom, Pitie, Privy, espy,
Want-wit, Vain-gloir, and Prodigalitie,
Unrest, Night-walk, and felon Gluttony,
Unricht, Dym-sicht, with Slycht and Subtiltie.

While King Hart is surrounded by these subjects, Honor arrives at the gate, but is denied admittance:—

Honor persewit to the Kingis yet[2],
Thir folk said all thai wald not let him in,
Becaus thai said the laird to feast was set,
With all his lusty servants more and myn[3];
But he ane port had entered with a gyn:
And up he came in haist to the great toure;
And said he suld it perall[4] all with fine
And fresh delight, with many a richest flower.

The castle of dame Pleasure is next described

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[1] lie. [2] gate. [3] more and less. [4] decorate it.

The quhilk was paralld all about with pride,

and from this fortress, into which no care or sorrow can force its entrance, this beauteous queen issues on a day to take her sport in the forest:—

Happend this worthy queen upon a day,
With her fresh court arrayet weill at rycht,
Hunting to ride her, to disport and play,
With mony a lustre ladie fair and brycht,
Hir banner schene displayit and on hycht
Was seen above ther heedis; here they raid
The green ground was illuminyt of the lycht,—
Fresh Beauty had the vanguard and was guide.

Thus slightly changed—

It hapt this lovely queen upon a day,
With her gay court in glittering weeds bedight,
Rode to the chace, intent on sport and play,
Circled with many a lady fair and bright.
Their radiant banner was display'd on height,
And from its sun-lit wavy folds was shed
Upon the verdant turf a flood of light;
Whilst Beauty, huntress sweet, the joyous vanguard led.

When the lovely queen and her troop of bright and captivating ladies approach the castle of King Hart, with their banner waving, and the sounds of joyousness and melody, the warders alarmed, inform the monarch, and advise that he should send some messenger to discover their intentions; upon this, Youthheid and Delight instantly offer their services:—

Youtheid upstert and cleckit[1] on his cloke,
Was broudin all with lustre levis grene—
Rise Fresche Delyt, lat not this mater soke[2],
We will go se quhat may this muster mene;
So weill we sall us it copi betwene,
That thair sall nothing pass away unspyit,

[1] buckled. [2] slacken.

Syne sall we tell the King as we have sene,
And thair sall nothing trewlie be denyit.

The catastrophe of Youthheid and Fresh Delight, who are dazzled and disarmed by Beauty, and carried prisoners to her castle, is sweetly told. With scarce any change except the substitution of the ancient for the modern spelling, the stanzas throw themselves into beautiful poetry:—

Youthheid forth far'd—he rode on Innocence,
A milk-white steed that ambled as the wind;
Whilst Fresh Delight bestrode Benevolence,
A palfrey fair, that would not bide behind:
The glorious beams had almost made them blind
That forth from Beauty burst, beneath the cloud
With which the goddess had herself enshrined,
Sitting, like Eastern queen in her pavilion proud.

But these young wights abased at the sight,
Full soon were staid in their courageous mood;
Instant within them died all power and might:
And gazing, rooted to the earth they stood;
At which Fair Calling, seeing them subdued,
Seized on their slackened rein with rosy hands:
Then to her castle swift away she yude[1],
And fastened soon the twain in Venus' silken bands.

The consequences of this capture may be easily anticipated. King Hart, discomposed at the disappearance of his espials, sends others of his subjects to inquire the cause: these, with equal ease, are made prisoners, and the monarch, beholding from the battlements the total discomfiture of this second party, calls to arms, and at the head of his host, his broad banner waving over a wood of spears, issues forth to attack his fair antagonists. As we already know, he is grievously wounded

[1] went.

and taken prisoner. The story now gets ingeniously intricate, but tedious withal, and we cannot follow the subjects of the king into their several dungeons: he himself is closely confined within a grated chamber, near the 'donjon' tower, where, as he lies sick with love, and hopeless of escape, his only comfort is to listen to the melody which issues from the palace of dame Pleasance. The prisoners, however, by means of Pity, one of her ladies who deserts her service, subtilely effect their escape. The lovely queen, when asleep in her pavilion, is surprised, and in her turn becomes a captive. Conscious of her power, she requests an interview with King Hart, and he, as may be expected, is too happy to become her liberator;—the canto concluding, in all due propriety, with their espousals and marriage-feast. The opening of the second Canto, and the arrival of Age is given with great spirit:—

Quha is at eis quhen baith ar now in bliss,
  But fresche King Hart that cleirlie is above,
And wantis nocht in warld that he culd wis[1],
  And traistis nocht that eer he sall remove
  Scoir years and more, Schir Lyking and Schyr Luif
Of him thai haif the cure and governance;
  Quhile at the last befell, and sa behuif[2],
Ane changeing new, that grevit Dame Plesance.

Ane morning tide quhen that the sun so schene,
  Out-raschet had his bemys from the sky,
Ane auld gude man before the yett[3] was sene
  Upon ane steid that raid full easilie.
  He rappit at the yett—but curtaslie,
Yet at the straik the grit dungeon gan din;
  Then at the last he schouted fellonly,
And bade thaim rise, and said he man[4] come in.

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[1] wish. [2] behoved. [3] gate. [4] must.

The arrival of Age is the signal for a change in the pleasant life of poor King Hart. His gay and merry subjects desert him: Youthheid, amongst the first, demands his wages, and is soon followed by Disport and Fresh Delight; whilst Conscience arrives before the gate, and, impatient of delay, breaks in without question or resistance. Dame Pleasance now remonstrates with the king for the loss of some of her pleasantest servants, and the intrusion of very old and disagreeable persons in their stead. To appease her, he somewhat quaintly and abruptly orders supper, and all appears to be made up, when, on retiring to their chamber, Sadness, an uncomely damsel, intrudes herself, and approaching the couch, whispers something in the king's ear, who had fallen asleep. Disgusted with this new arrival, the queen loses all patience, and rising suddenly, collects her train and deserts the castle, whilst her royal consort is still asleep. The scene of confusion and misery which ensues may be easily imagined: Jealousy and Disease attack and distract the unhappy monarch, whilst at the last Wisdom raises his voice and solemnly counsels him to return home—

Go to thy place, and there thyself present,
  The castel yet is strong enough to hold;
Then Sadness said, Sir King, ye man assent;
  What have ye now ado in this waste fald[1]?

The king takes the advice in good part, and leaving the desolate palace of Queen Pleasance, rides to his own castle, where he meets with but poor comfort, for Languor welcomes him at the yett, and 'Strength, who although faded of his flowers' had still abided with him, 'couris upon his hochis,' and creeps out at the postern :—

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[1] deserted fold.

Though Strength was now much faded in his flowers,
  Still with the aged king he did abide;
But at the last upon his houghs he cowers,
  And privily out at the yett did slide:
  Then stole away, and went on wayis wide.
Full soon he Youthheid and his fellows found
  (Nor miss'd the road, albeit he had no guide)—
Behind a hill they lay, upon a grassy mound.

The departure of Strength makes way for the arrival of Decrepitude, whose hideous host is descried coming over the 'muir,' by Wisdom and the King, as they sit conversing together. The description is excellent :—

Right as they two in talk the hours beguil'd,
  A hideous host they saw come o'er the muir:
Decrepitude (his banner torn and soil'd)
  Was near at hand, with many a chieftain sture[1];
A bony steed, full thin, that caitiff bore,
  And crooked were his loathly limbs with eld;
No smile e'er grac'd his countenance demure;
  No fere[2] dar'd joke with him—with rigour all he
    quell'd *.

It is at first determined to defend the castle; but all efforts are in vain against such a host as Decrepitude brings along with him: the great tower is cast down, the barmekin battered to pieces, and King Hart, mortally wounded, decently prepares himself for death. He remembers, however, that he has not disposed of his treasures, and the poem concludes with his quaint and fanciful testament. He bequeaths his proud palfrey, Unstedfastness, to his fair but faithless consort,

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[1] stern. [2] companion.

* The above is very slightly altered from the original.

Dame Pleasance; to Chastity, the task of scouring his conscience; to Freedom, his thread-bare cloak; to

> Business that ne'er was wont to tire,
> Bear thou this stool, and bid him now sit down;
> For he has left his master in the mire,
> And scorn'd to draw him out, tho' he should drown.

Some of King Hart's items are a little coarse; but there is much of the peculiar satirical humour of the age in his codicil to Reve Supper:—

> To Reve[1] Supper, be he amang the route,
> Ye me commend—he is ane fallow fine:
> This ugsome stomach that I bear about,
> Rug ye it out, then bear it to him syne;
> For he has hindered me of mony dime,
> And often e'en at kirk has gart me sleep;
> My wits he too has weakened sore with wine,
> And made my breast with lustis hot to leap.

The legacy of his wounded brow to Foolhardiness, and his broken spear to Dame Danger, conclude King Hart's testament and history: a singular poem, deformed by the faults of the age, but full of the out-breakings of a rich fancy and no common powers of language and versification. It was Douglas's first work, and in many places betrays marks of haste and youth.

Of the 'Palace of Honour,' his next great work, it is impossible, within our limits, and if possible, it would be tedious, to give anything like a full analysis. Nor is this to be regretted, as the task has been performed by the author of the Lives of the Scottish Poets, with much care and erudition. 'The poet's excellent design,' says

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[1] reve—a steward or butler.

Bishop Sage, in his Life of Douglas, 'is to represent, under the similitude of a vision, the vanity and inconstancy of all worldly pomp and glory; and to show that a constant inflexible course of virtue and goodness is the only true way to honour and felicity, which he allegorically describes as a magnificent palace, situated on a very high mountain, of most difficult access. He illustrates the whole with a variety of examples, not only of those noble and heroic souls whose eminent virtues procured them admittance into that blessed place, but also of those wretched creatures whose vicious lives have fatally excluded them from it for ever, notwithstanding all their worldly state and grandeur. The work is addressed to James IV., on purpose to inspire that brave prince with just sentiments of true honour and greatness, and incite him to tread in the paths of virtue, which alone could conduct him to it. To make it more agreeable and entertaining, the poet has adorned it with several incident adventures, discovering throughout the whole a vast and comprehensive genius, an exuberant fancy, and extraordinary learning for the time he lived in. He seems to have taken the plan of it from the "Palace of Happiness," described in the picture of Cebes; and it is not improbable that his countryman, Florentius Volusenus, had it in view, and improved his design in his admirable but too little known book, "De Tranquillitate Animi."'*

This praise is somewhat too encomiastic and indiscriminate; for the 'Palace of Honour' cannot lay claim either to a high moral tendency or to much unity of composition and effect. It is, on the contrary, confused in its arrangement, often obscure in its transitions, and crowded with persons and scenery of all ages and countries, heaped together ' in most admired disorder;' —palaces and princes, landscapes and ladies, groups of Pagan sages and Christian heroes, populous cities and silent solitudes, succeed so rapidly, that we lose ourselves in the profusion of its actors and the unconnected but brilliant variety of its scenery. Yet it is justly characterised as exhibiting, in many places, an exuberant fancy and an extraordinary extent of learning for the age in which it was written. The learning, indeed, is rather ambitiously intruded in many parts, communicating a coldness and tedium to the narrative, and betraying an anxiety in the author to display at once the whole extent of his stores; whilst making every allowance for the obscurities, which are occasioned by a purer Scottish dialect, it is impossible not to feel that the poetry is inferior in genius to Dunb[illegible] There is not that masterly clearness of outline and brilliancy of colouring in his grand groups,—that power of keeping under all minor details—the perspective of descriptive poetry, which is necessary for the production of a strong and uniform effect. All is too much of equal size, crowded into the foreground; and the author loses his purpose in the indiscriminate prominence of his details. Yet there are many charming passages. In the month of May, the poet, as is usual with his tuneful brethren of these olden times, rises early, before dawn, and wanders into a garden of pleasance and delight. Aurora, with her countenance sweet yet pale, and her mantle bordered with sable, had not yet unclosed the curtains of the couch within which lay Flora, the goddess of flowers, but a delicious fragrance was breathed from its flowery carpet, and a rich melodious song burst from the groves around it :—

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* Sage's Life of Douglas, prefixed to his Virgil, p. 15.

The fragrant flouris blomand in their seis [1],
Ourspreid the levis of Nature's tapestries ;
Abone the quhilk, with heavenly harmonies,
The birdes sat on twistes and on greis [2],
Melodiously makand their kindlie gleis,
Quhais schill [3] notis fordinned [4] all the skyis
Of repercussit air the echo cryis,
Amang the branches of the bloméid treis,
And on the laurers silver droppis lyis.

Quhile that I roumed [5] in that paradyce,
Replenished and full of all delice [6],
Out of the sea Eous lift his heid [7],
I mene [8] the hors quhilk drawis at device
The assiltrie and golden chair of price
Of Tytan, quhilk at morrow semis reid ;
The new colour that all the nicht lay deid
Is restorit, baith foulis, flouris, and rice [9]
Recomfort was, throw Phœbus gudlyheid.

The daisy and the mariguld unlappit,
Quhilks [10] all the nycht lay with their levis happit,
Thame to preserve fra reumes [11] pungitive,
The umbrate treis, that Titan about wappit,
War portrait and out fra erth yschappit,
Be golden bemis vivificative,
Quhair amenė heit is maist restorative ;
The gresshopperis amangst the vergeris [12] guappit,
And beis wrocht material for their hive.

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[1] season. [2] twigs and grass. [3] shrill. [4] resounded through.
[5] roamed. [6] delight. [7] head. [8] I mean.
[9] bushes. [10] which. [11] rime or frost. [12] small brushwood.

Richt hailsum[1] wes the sessoun[2] of the yeir
Phœbus furth yet depured bemis cleir,
  Maist nutritive till all things vegetant;
God Eolus of wind durst nocht appeir;
Nor auld Saturne, with his mortal speir
  And bad aspect—contrair till every plant,
  Neptunus n'old[3] within that palice hant;
The bereall stremis[4] rynnand men mich heir;
  By bonkes[5] grene with glancis variant.

It will be instantly perceived by the reader that the language in these verses is more obscure and latinized, and the rhythm less melodious than in the earlier poetry of Dunbar; yet if we attend to the rules given by Mr. Tyrwhitt for the proper reading of Chaucer, and make allowance for a little learned affectation in the idiom, the description will be found both harmonious and poetical. To cast it into a modern dress is not so easy, however, as in the case of Dunbar. Let us attempt it:—

In broider'd beds unnumber'd flowers were seen,
Of Nature's couch the living tapestry;
And, hid within their leafy curtains green,
The little birds pour'd forth such harmony,
As fill'd my very heart with joy and glee;
A flood of music followed, wave on wave,
Which Echo answered from her airy cave;
And sprinkled o'er the laurels blooming near,
The silver dew-drops shone, like diamonds bright and clear.

Whilst in this paradise my senses fed,
And filled my heart with every rich delight,
Up from the sea Eous raised his head,
I mean the horse to whose ætherial might
Is given to draw the golden chariot bright

---

[1] wholesome. [2] season. [3] dar'd not. [4] streams. [5] green banks.

Of Titan—which by night looks dark and dead,
But changeth in the morn to ruby red;
Whilst birds, and fields, and flowers, on holm and hight,
New life assume in glittering vests bedight.

The daisy sweet, the marigold and rose,
That all the night their silken buds did close,
Lest icy rimes their tender twigs should sear,
Expanded fragrant; and, as Titan rose,
Each ancient tree his greeny glories shows.
Emerging joyous from the darkness drear,
All living things the kindly warmth did cheer;
The idle grasshoppers both chirpt and play'd,
The sweet laborious bees melodious music made.

Delightful was the season, May's first hour,
The glorious sun uprising in his power,
Bathed with a kindly heat all growing things,
Nor boisterous Eolus, with blast and shower,
Nor Saturn, with his aspect sad and sour,
Dar'd in that place unfurl his icy wings,
But sweet Favonius thither fragrance brings,
And little streams, half-hid in moss, do run,
Making a pleasant chime, and glancing in the sun.

Encircled with these varied delights, the poet desires anxiously to pour forth a strain worthy of the occasion, to

Nature queen, and eke to lusty May;

when, for what reason he fails to inform us, his faculties become weak, and he is seized with a trembling which incapacitates him—

With spreit arraisit, and every wit away,
Quaking for fear both pulse and vein and nervis.

Upon this he very sensibly determines to go home, but is suddenly arrested on his road by an extraordinary incident, which he thus describes:—

Out of the air cam ane impressioun,
Throu quhais licht in extacie or soun

Amid the virgultis, all intill a fary[1],
As feminine so feblet fell I down;
And with that gleme sa desyit was my micht,
Quhell thair remanet nouther voice nor sicht,
Breith, motion, nor heiring naturall;
Saw never man so faint a levand[2] wicht;
And na ferly[3], for ouer excelland licht
Corruptes the wit, and garris[4] the blude availl,
Until the hart thocht[5] it na danger aill.
Quhen it is smorit, memberis wirkis[6] nocht richt,
The dreidful terrour swa did me assaill.

Yet at the last, I n't how long a space,
A lytte heit[7] appeirit in my face,
Quhilk[8] had tofoir bene paill and voide of blude:
Tho in my sueven[9] I met a ferly[10] cace;—
I thocht me set within a desert place,
Amidst a forest by a hideous flude,
With grysly fische; and schortly till conclude,
I sall descryve as God will give me grace,
My visioun in rural termis rude.

The language here is so antique and remote from English, that a translation must be attempted:—

Forth from the skies a sudden light did glance,
That threw me into extacy or swoon;
Instant I fell in an enchanted trance,
And feeble as a woman sunk I down:

With that strange gleam, all faded was my might,
Silent my voice, and dizzied grew my sight;
Sans motion, breath, or hearing, tranc'd I stood,—
Was never seen so weak a living wight.
Nor was it strange, for such celestial light
Confounds the brain, and chases back the blood
Unto the sinking heart in ruby flood:
And the faint members of the body, all
Refuse to work—when terror doth appal.

---

[1] a faery—an enchanted trance.
[2] living.
[3] no wonder.
[4] makes.
[5] although.
[6] work not right.
[7] heat.
[8] which.
[9] swoon.
[10] wonderful.

'Twere hard to tell how long the fit did last:
At length my colour came, though sore aghast,
And a wild wondrous vision met mine ee[1]:
Thro a huge forest I did seem to roam,
In lonely gloom far far from mortal home,
Fast by the margin of a sullen sea,
In whose dead waters griesly fishes be:
'Twas hideous all—yet here I shall essay
To tell mine aventure, though rude may be the lay.

Finding himself in this doleful region,—(I follow Dr. Irving's analysis of the Palace of Honour,)—he begins to complain of the iniquity of Fortune; but his attention is soon attracted by the arrival of a magnificent cavalcade 'of ladies fair and guidlie men,' who pass before him in bright and glorious procession. Having gone by, two caitiffs approach, one mounted on an ass, the other, on a hideous horse, who are discovered to be the arch-traitors Sinon and Achitophel. From Sinon the poet learns that the brilliant assembly whom he has just beheld is the court of Minerva, who are journeying through this wild solitude to the palace of Honor. He not unnaturally asks how such villains were permitted to attend upon the goddess, and receives for answer, that they appear there on the same principle that we sometimes find thunder and tornadoes intruding themselves into the lovely and placid month of May. The merry horns of hunters are now heard in the wood, and a lovely goddess is seen surrounded by buskined nymphs, mounted upon an elephant, cheering on her hounds after an unhappy stag, who proves to be Actæon, pursued by Diana and his own dogs. Melodious music succeeds to this stirring scene,

[1] eye.

and through an opening in the forest the court of Venus approaches, shedding a transcendent brightness over the groves, and composed of every hero and heroine of classical and romantic story. The description of Mars upon his barded courser 'stout and bald' is noble.—

Everie invasabill wapon [1] on him he bair;
His luik [2] wes grym, his bodie large and squair,
His lymmis weill entailyiet [3] to be strang,
His neck was grit a span breadth weill or mair,
His visage bald [4] with crisp broun curland hair;
Of stature not ouir grit nor yet ouir lang,
Behaldand [5] Venus Oh ye, my lufe, he sang:
And scho again with dalliance sa fair,
Her knycht hym cleipis [6] quhair sa he ride or gang.

Thus modernized:

The mighty Mars a barded courser bore,
Grim was his look, his body large and square,
His sinewy neck in breadth a span or more,
Round which did shortly curl his crisp brown hair;
His limbs well-knit, and of proportion fair,
Were clothed in panoply of radiant steel.
On Venus still he gaz'd with amorous air,
And she her knight him call'd in woe or weal,
Whilst o'er his noble form her love-lit glances steal.

This brave apparition is scarcely past, when it is succeeded by the court of Minerva, composed of 'wise, eloquent fathers, and pleasant ladies of fresh beauty,' all of them directing their course to the Palace of Honour, and cheering the tedium of the journey by rehearsing Greek and Latin histories, and chaunting to their lyre Sapphic and Elegiac Odes. We regret it is impossible to follow them in their progress; but some of the insulated pictures are beautiful. The poet mounts a gallant steed, caparisoned with woodbine; and, under the guidance of a sweet nymph to whom he had been introduced by Calliope, he takes his joyous way with the Muses, and at length arrives at the Castalian fount:—

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[1] invulnerable weapon. [2] look. [3] well knit. [4] bold. [5] beholding. [6] calls.

Beside that cristall weill[1] sweet and digist[2],
Thame to repois, their hors refresch and rest;
  Alichtit[3] doun thir Musis cleir of hue.
The companie all haillelie lest and best,
Thrang to the well to drink, quhilk[4] ran south-west,
  Throut ane meid whair alkin[5] flouris grew
  Amang the laif[6] full fast I did persew
To drink; bot sa the great press me opprest,
  That of the water I micht not taste een a drew[7].

Our horsis pasturit[8] in ane plesand plane,
Law at the fute of ane fair greene montaine,
  Amid ane meid schaddowit with cedar trees;
Saif fra all heit, thair micht we weill remain.
All kind of herbis, flouris, frute, and greine,
  With everie growand tree thair men micht cheis[9].
  The boenall streams, rinnand ouir stanerie greis,
Made sober noyis; the schaw dinnit[10] agane,
  For birdis sang, and sounding of the beis.

The ladies fair on divers instrumentes
Went playand, singand, dansand ouir the bentis[11];
  Full angellik and hevenlie was thair soun.
Quhat creature amid his hart imprintis
The fresche beautie, the gudelie representis,
  The merrie speeche, fair haveing, hie renoun,
  Of thame, wad sit a wise man half in swoun;
Their womanlines, uryithit the elementis[12],
  Stoneist the hevin, and all the eirth adoun.

---

[1] well. [2] wholesome. [3] alighted. [4] which.
[5] all kind. [6] crowd. [7] drop. [8] pastured. [9] choose.
[10] resounded. [11] fields. [12] charmed the elements.

The warld may not consider nor descrive[1]
The hevinlie joy, the bliss I saw belive ;
Sa ineffable above my wit, sa hie,
I will na mair thairon my forehead rive
Bot briefly forth my febill process drive ;—
Law in the meid ane palyeon picht[2] I see,
Maist gudeliest, and richest that micht be :
My governour aftner than tymis five
Unto that hald to pass commandit me.

I attempt a free translation of these fine stanzas, as the language is so obscure :—

Beside that fount, with clearest crystal blest,
Alighted down the Muses bright of hue,
Themselves to solace and their steeds to rest ;
And all their followers on the instant drew
To taste the stream, which sparkling leapt to view,
Thro' freshest meads with laurel canopied.
Then trembling to the well renown'd I flew,
But the rude crowd all passage there defied,
Nor might I snatch a drop of that celestial tide.

Our horses pastured in a pleasant field,
Verdant and rich, beneath a mountain green,
Where, from the mid-day heat a shade to yield,
Some ancient cedars wove a leafy screen ;
On the smooth turf unnumbered flowers were seen
Weaving a carpet 'neath umbrageous trees,
And o'er their channels, pav'd with jewels sheen,
The waters gliding did the senses please,
Mingling their quiet tunes with hum of honied bees.

On many an instrument of breath or string
These gentle ladies play'd or playing sung ;
Some sat beneath the trees in lovely ring,
Some solitary stray'd the flowers among ;
Ev'n the rude elements in silence hung,
And wooed their music with intense delight ;
Whilst from their charms such dazzling rays were flung,
As utterly amaz'd all mortal sight,
And might have thaw'd the heart of sternest anchorite.

[1] describe.

[2] a pavilion pitched.

Far doth it pass all powers of living speech
  To tell the joy that from these sights I took;
And if so high the wondrous theme doth reach,
  How should my vein the great endeavour brook!
  We may not soar so high, my little book.
But pass we on:—Upon the field I spied,
  Woven of silk, with golden post and hook,
A goodly tent unfold its wings of pride,
To whose delightsome porch me drew my lovely guide.

Obeying his sweet conductress, Master Gavin enters this rich pavilion, and there sees the Muses sitting on 'deissis,' or elevated seats of distinction, served by familiars with ippocras and mead, and partaking, much in the same fashion as mortal ladies, of delicate meats and varied dainties. After the feast, Calliope commands Ovid, whom she quaintly calls her "Clerk Register," to recreate them with a song; and this favoured minstrel chaunts the deeds of the heroes of ancient days, not forgetting a digression upon transfigurations and the art and remedy of love. He is followed by other eminent bards; but the enumeration forms rather a ludicrous catalogue than a characteristic or animated picture. It is wound up by

Poggius, who stood, a groaning, giruing fallow,
Spitting, and cryand Fy, on great Laurentius Valla.

The trumpet now sounds to horse, and the Muses, with their whole attendants and followers, throwing themselves on their steeds, gallop on at a goodly pace till they reach a charming valley, wherein a mighty rock is seen, which we immediately discover to be some sacred and glorious place, for the moment it is descried the whole assembly bow their heads and give thanks that they are permitted to behold the end of their journey.

It is here that the allegory, in its profane admixture of the Pagan mythology with the Christian system, becomes unnatural and painful. We find that the palace built upon this rock is intended to shadow forth the bliss of heaven; and that under the word Honour, which, to our modern ears, conveys a very different idea, we are to understand that heavenly honour and distinction to which the Christian aspires. This being the case, why does the explanation of such mysteries proceed from the lips of a Pagan goddess?—and what has Venus, the most meretricious, though sometimes the most elegant, of classical personifications, to do with that sacred and blessed system, that "state of grace," as the poet himself denominates it, which ought ever to be kept pure and undefiled, as the heavenly source from which it has proceeded? With how much finer taste and holier feeling has a later poet, but he, indeed, "the mightiest master of the Christian lyre," described the desertion of the Pagan shrines, the silence of the oracles, the terror of the priests and flamens, and the passing away of the dark and unholy mysteries which constituted the system of heathen worship, at the birth of our Redeemer:

> The oracles are dumb,
> No voice or hideous hum
> Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
> Apollo from his shrine
> Can no more divine,
> With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
> No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
> Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent:
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine;
And mooned Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine;
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.*

The Bishop of Dunkeld would, probably, have rested his defence, as his encomiasts may still be inclined to do, upon the plea, that the Palace of Honour is a vision or dream; that dreams are remarkable for their wild transitions, confined within no rules of waking realities, and becoming only the more natural as they assume more mixed, multiform, and extravagant phases. All this is true; but there is little in the defence which can excuse the no doubt unintentional insult offered to the feelings of a pious reader. Whilst our souls are pent in mortal clay, we may, and too often are, visited by dreams, which ought not to be written: but we can have no excuse if, when awake, we communicate these extravagant and sinful fancies to others, and insist on writing what cannot, without injury, be read.

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* Milton's Ode on the Nativity.

On entering the Palace of Honour, the poet beholds Venus seated on a splendid throne, having before her a magic mirror, supported by three golden trees:

> Bot straicht before Venus' visage, but let
> Stude emerant stages twelve, grene precious greis[1],
> Quhairon thair grew three curious golden treis.
> Sustendand weill, the goddes face beforne
> Ane fair Mirrour, be them quaintly upborne.
>
> In terrac'd pomp before the Cyprian Queen,
> Rose twelve bright stages as the emerald green;
> Above them wav'd, most glorious to behold,
> Three wondrous trees with leaves of rustling gold;
> And on their stems supported, clear and bright,
> A magic Mirror stood, and shed unearthly light.

This mirror reflects the shadowy train of past ages, the most remarkable events recorded in History float over its surface,—and the poet, of course, beholds an infinite variety of incongruous personages; amongst the ancient warlike worthies, the supporters of the authenticity of Ossian will be pleased to discover the mighty Fingal, and Gaul the son of Morni; Great Gowmakmore, and Fyn Mac Cowl; and how

> Thai suld[2] be goddis [illegible] Ireland, as thai say.

It reflects, also, the necromantic tricks of the famous Roger Bacon and other astrologers, who are seen diverting themselves by many subtle points of juggling, changing a nutmeg into a monk, and a penny pie into a parish church:—

---

[1] grass.

[2] should.

The necromancy there saw I eke anone,
Of Benytas, Bungo, and Frier Becone,
  With many subtel point of jugglery;
Of Flanders pyes made mony precious stone,
Ane great laid saddle of a chicken bone;
  Of a nutmeg they made a monk in hy[1];
  A parish kirk out of ane penny pie:
And Benytas of ane mussil made an ape,
With many other subtle mow and jaip[2].

What connexion these amusements of the astrologers are supposed to have with the Palace of Honour, it would be hopeless to inquire. The poet now presses on to an eminence, from which he beholds the attempts of the multitude to scale its walls, and the disasters with which they are accompanied. Equity stands as warder on the battlements, denouncing vengeance against Envy, Falsehood, and Covetousness; Patience officiates as porter, and instantly admits him and his conductress. We shall give the description of the palace, and the monarch, King Honour, who inhabits it, in his own words:—

The durris and the windors all were breddit[3]
With massie gold, quhairof the fynes scheddlit,
  With burnist evir[4], baith pallice and touris,
War theikit[5] weill maist craftilie that cled it;
For so the quhitely blanchit bone ourspred it;
  Midlit with gold[6], an[illegible]lit all colouris,
  Importurait[7] with bir[illegible]nd sweet flouris;
Curious knottis and mony a hie device,
Quhilkis[8] to behald war perfite[9] paradyce.

---

[1] haste. [2] cheat. [3] broidered. [4] ivory. [5] roofed.
[6] inlaid. [7] decorated. [8] which. [9] perfect.

And to proceed, my nymphe and I furth went
Straight to the hall, throwout the palice gent,
And ten stages of topaz did ascend;
Schute was the door, in at a boir I blent[1],
Quhair I beheld the gladdest represent
That ever on earth a wretched caitiff kend.
Brieffly this process to conclud and end;
Methocht the flure was all of amethyst,
Bot quhairof war the wallis I not wist.

The multitud of precious stainis seir[2],
Thairon sa schone, my febell sicht but weir[3]
Micht not behald their verteous gudeliness.
For all the ruif[4] as did to me appear
Hung full of plesand, lowped sapphires cleir:
Of diamontis and rubeis as I ges,
War all the burdis[5] maid of maist riches:
Of sardanis, of jasp, and smaragd ane,
Traists, formes, and benkes, war polist plane.

Baith to and fro amid the hall thai went:
Royal princes in plait and armouris quent,
Of bernist[6] gold couchit with precious stanis;
Enthronit I sawe ane king gret and potent,
Upon quhais maist bricht visage, as I blent[7]
In wonderment, be his brichtnes at anis,
He smote me doune, and brissit[8] all my banis[9]
Thair lay I still in swoun with colour blaucht,
Quhile at the last my nymphe up hes me caught.

Sine with grit paine with womenting[10] and cair,
In her armis scho bare me doun the stair,
And in the clois full softlie laid me down;
Upheld my heid to tak the hailsome[11] air;
For of my lyfe scho stude in greit dispair,
Me till awak wes still that lady boun[12],
Quhilk finallie out of that deidlie[13] soun.
Iswyith overcome, and up mine ene did cast,
Be merry, man, quoth scho, the worst is past.

---

[1] looked in at a window. [2] various. [3] without injury. [4] roof. [5] boards. [6] burnished. [7] looked. [8] bruised. [9] bones. [10] fomenting. [11] wholesome. [12] that lady was busied—or intent to wake me. [13] deadly.

It will be perceived that the description, although beautiful, is, to the general reader, more thickly sown with obscure words than the poetry of Dunbar or Henrysoun. This must plead our excuse for attempting to present it in a modern garb.

In high relief of rich and massive gold,
The borders round the doors and windows shone;
Each tower and turret, beauteous to behold,
Of polish'd ivory form'd—ne was there one
That did not show inlaid its walls upon
Bright shapes of birds, midst sweet enamell'd flowers,
And curious knots, carv'd in the snow-white bone,
With matchless cunning by the artist's powers.—
So perfect and so pure were Honor's lordly bowers.

But pass we on—the nymph and I did wend
Straight to the hall—and climb'd a radiant stair,
Form'd all of topaz clear—from end to end.—
The gate was shut—but through a lattice there
Of beryl, gazing, a transcendant glare
Broke dazzlingly on mine astonished sight.—
A room I saw—but oh, what tongue shall dare
To paint that chamber, so surpassing bright!
Sure never such a view was given to mortal wight.

From every part combin'd, roof, wall, and floor,
A flood of light most gloriously was cast;
And as the stream upon mine eyes gan pour,
Blinded I stood awhile: that sight surpast
Aught that in Eastern story read thou hast
Of richest palace, or of gorgeous stall;
On diamond pillars, tall as any mast,
Clustering, and bound with ropes of rubies all,
The sapphire arches leant of that celestial hall.

The very benches, forms, and footstools mean,
Were shap'd of smaragdine and precious stone,
And on the carpet brilliant groups were seen
Of heroes old, whose steely corslets shone
Embost with jewels;—near them, on a throne
Sat Honor, mighty prince, with look severe,

And deep-set awful eye, whose glance alone
So full of might and glorious did appear,
That all my senses reel'd, and down I dropt with fear.

Within her snowy arms that Lady sweet
Me caught, and swiftly to the portal hied,
For wing'd with love and pity were her feet,
And soft she bore me to inhale the tide
Of the fresh air—she deem'd I would have died,
So sudden and so deadly pale I grew;
But fondly each reviving art she tried,
And bath'd my brow with Heliconian dew,
Till, faint and slow, mine eyes unclos'd to meet her view.

The vision now hastens to a conclusion. On his recovery, the Poet, under the protection of her who has so faithfully conducted him, proposes to visit a delightful garden, where the Muses are employed in gathering the choicest flowers of poesy, which spring beneath trees bearing precious stones instead of fruit. In the description of this retreat there is a strange admixture of the beautiful and the ridiculous. The scenery is sweetly painted; but what shall we say of the trees on which geese or chickens are seen growing; to the transplanting of the extraordinary fables of Boece into the gardens of the Palace of Honour? Into this garden, however, in whatever fashion it may be furnished, the bard himself is not destined to enter. The only access to it lies beyond a moat, across which a tree is thrown. Over this slender and precarious rural bridge, the Nymph passes with ease; but the Poet, whose head has not yet recovered the effects of his swoon, in making the attempt, slips a foot, and is immersed in the stream. This effectually awakens him from the trance into which he had fallen, and restores his senses to the sober realities of a lower sphere. He then, according to poetic use and wont, describes his wondrous vision, and lays it at the feet of his sovereign, James IV.

In his interview with Venus in the Palace of Honour, Douglas informs us, that the goddess presented him, as the richest gift she could bestow, with a copy of Virgil's Æneid, commanding him to translate it into his native language—a task, says Dr. Irving, which he has performed with much felicity. ‘To pronounce it,’ continues this learned critic, ‘the best version of this wonderful poem, which ever was or ever will be executed, would be ridiculous; but it is certainly the production of a bold and energetic writer, whose knowledge of the language of his original, and command of a rich and variegated phraseology, peculiarly qualified him for the performance of so arduous a task. Indeed, whether we consider the state of British literature at that era, or the rapidity with which he completed the work, (it was the labour of but sixteen months,) he will be found entitled to a high degree of admiration. In either of the sister languages, few translations of sacred authors had been attempted; and the rules of the art were consequently little understood. Even in English, no metrical version of a classic had yet appeared, except of Boethius; who scarcely merits that appellation. On the destruction of Troy, Caxton had published a species of prose romance, which he professes to have translated from the French; and the English reader was taught to consider this motley and ludicrous composition as a version of the Æneid. Douglas, however, bestows severe castigation on Caxton, for his presumptuous deviation from classical story; and affirms, that his work no more resembles Virgil than the Devil resembles St. Austin; and yet he has fallen into an error, which he exposes in his predecessor,—proper names being often so disfigured in his translation, as only to be recognized with the greatest difficulty. In many instances too, he has been guilty of the bad taste of modernizing the notions of his original; converting the Sibyl into a nun, and admonishing Æneas, the Trojan baron, to be fearful of any neglect in counting his beads. Of the general principle of translation, however, he appears to have formed no inaccurate notion. His version is neither rashly licentious, nor too tamely literal. In affirming that he has invariably rendered one verse by another, Dempster and Lesly betray their ignorance of the work of which they speak; and Douglas well knew that such a project would have been wild and nugatory. The verses of Virgil and his translator must commonly differ in length by at least three syllables, and they may even differ by no fewer than seven. Dr. Irving concludes his judicious remarks upon this translation by selecting, as a specimen, the celebrated passage on the descent of Æneas into the infernal regions:—

"Facilis descensus Averni,
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis.
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras—
Hoc opus, hic labor est: pauci, quos æquus amavit
Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,
Dîs geniti potuere; tenent media omnia silvæ,
Cocytusque sinu labens circumfluit atro.".

It is richt facill and eith[1] gate, I thee tell
For to descend, and pass on doun to hell.
The black zettis of Pluto, and that dirk[2] way,
Stand evir open and patent nicht and day.
But therefra to return againe on hicht,
And heire above recovir this airis licht,
That is difficil werk, thair labour lyis.
Full few thair bene quhom hiech above the skyis,
Thare ardent vertue has rasit and upheit[3],
Or zit quhame equale Jupiter deifyit,
Thay quhilkis bene gendrit of goddes may thydder attane,
All the mydway is wildernes unplane,
Or wilsum forest; and the laithlie[4] flude,
Cocytus, with his drery bosom unrude,
Flows environ round about that place.

Perhaps a happier specimen of this remarkable work of Douglas is to be found in the translation of that exquisite passage in the sixth book, in which Æneas and the Sibyl arrive at the Elysian Fields:

'His demum exactis, perfecto munere divæ,
Devenere locos lætos et amœna vireta,
Fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.
Largior hic campos æther, et lumine vestit
Purpureo, solemque suum sua sidera norunt.
Pars in gramineis exercent membra palæstris,
Contendunt ludo, et fulva luctantur arena;
Pars pedibus plaudunt choreas, et carmina dicunt,
Nec non Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos
Oblectat numeris septem discrimina vocum,
Jamque eadem digitis, jam pectine pulsat eburno.'

The golden branche he sticks up fair and wele,
This beand done at last; and every dele
Prefurnist[5], langing[6] the goddyss gift gay,
Unto ane plesand grund[7] cumin ar thay

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[1] easy. [2] dark. [3] upheld. [4] loathsome.
[5] all things or rites fulfilled. [6] belonging. [7] ground.

With battel[1] gers, fresche herbis, and grene swardis,
The lusty orcharlis, and the halesome[2] yardis
Of happy saulis[3] and wele fortunate
To blissit wichtis the places preparate,
Thir fieldis bene largeare[4], and hevinis brycht
Revestis thaim with purpour schyning lycht;
The sternes[5] for this place convenient
Knawis wele their sun, and observis his went[6].
Sum thare amid the gersy[7] planis grene,
In to palestral playis thame betwene:
Thare membris[8] gan exerce, and hand for hand
They fall to wersling[9] on the golden sand,
Assayand honest gammis[10] thaym to schorte[11],
Sum uthir hanting[12] gane, ane uther sporte
Als for to dansing, and to hede the ring
To sing ballettis[13] and go in karolling.
Thare wes also the priest and menstrale sle[14],
Orpheus of Thrace, in syde robe harpand[15] he,
Playing proporcions and springs[16] divine
Apoun his harp, sevin divers soundis fyne,
Now with gymp[17] fyngeris doing stringis smyte,
And now with subtell evorie poyntals lyte[18].

Douglas commences each book with a prologue or original introduction, generally descriptive of the season and circumstances under which it was written. Thus, in the prologue to the seventh book, we have as noble a description of winter as is to be found in the whole range of ancient Scottish poetry. The poet tells us that the sun had just entered the cloudy sign of Capricorn, and approached so near his winter stage that his heat perceptibly declined—

[1] thick. [2] wholesome. [3] souls. [4] larger.
[5] stars. [6] path. [7] grassy. [8] members.
[9] wrestling. [10] games. [11] divert. [12] hunting.
[13] ballads. [14] skilful. [15] harping. [16] tunes.
[17] beautiful and slender. [18] little.

Altho he be the lamp and heart of hevin[1]
Forfeblit wox his lemand gilded levin[2],
Thro the declining of his large round sphere,
The frosty regioun ringis of the zere[3].

Everything is melancholy and dreary; the trees leafless and bare; the rivers running red in spate *; the burns or smaller streams, so sweet and quiet in summer tide, tearing down their banks; the surges dashing on the shore with a noise louder than the roar of a chafed lion; the heavens dark and louring, or, if the sky clears for a moment, only opening to show the wintry constellations, rainy Orion, and the chill, pestilential Saturn,

'Shedding infection from his tresses hoar.'

The earth, says the poet, pursuing his fine winter picture, is now barren, hard, and unlovely; the meadows have put on their brown and withered coats; Hebe, the beautiful daughter of Juno, hath not even a single flower with which she may adorn herself; and through a cold and leaden atmosphere, the mountain tops are seen capt with snow. As these melancholy images present themselves, shadowy dreams of age and death steal into the mind—

Gousty schadowis of eild and grisly dede.

All living creatures seem to sympathise with the decay of the year. The deer are seen retreating from their high summer pastures, into the more sheltered valley; the small birds, congregating in flocks, change their pleasant songs into a melancholy chirm, or low complaining murmur; the wind, either carrying all before it, tears the forest in its strength, or sinks into a subdued or ominous moaning. The poor husbandmen and labourers, with their shoes covered with clay, and their garments drenched in rain, are seen toiling about the doors; the little herd-boy, with his silly sheep, creeps under the lee of some sheltered hill-side, whilst the oxen, horses, and 'greater bestial, the tuskit boars, and fat swyne,' comfortably stabled and housed, have the well-stored provender of the harvest thrown down before them. As the night approaches, the sky clears up; the air, becoming more pure and penetrating, at length settles into an intense frost; and the poet, after having bekit, or warmed himself at the fire, and armed his body against the piercing air by 'claithis thrynfald,' threefold happings, retires to rest:—

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[1] heaven. [2] flashes of light. [3] year.

* A stream overflowing its banks from heavy rains, is said in Scotland to be *in spate*.

Recreate wele[1] and by the chimney bekit[2],
At evin betime doun in ane bed me strekit[3],
Warpit my hede, kest on claithis thrynfald,
For to expell the perellous persand cauld[4],
I crossit me, syne bownid for to slepe[5].

For some time he is unable to sleep: he watches the moon shedding her rays through his casement; he hears the owl hooting in her midnight cave, and when she ceases, a strange sound breaks the stillness of the night,—he listens, and recognizes the measured creaking strokes proceeding from the wings of a flock of wild geese, as they glide high in air over the city—an inimitable picture, true to nature, and eminently poetical:—

[1] well. [2] warmed. [3] stretched. [4] cold. [5] sleep.

The horned bird, quhilk[1] we clepe[2] the nych owle,
Within her caverne heard I shout and zoule[3],
Laithely[4] of forme with crukit camscho[5] beik,
Ugsome[6] to hear was her wild elrische skreik[7],
The wild geis eke claking by nychtes tide,
Attour[8] the city fleand[9], heard I glide.

He is at last surprised by sleep, nor does he waken till the cock—Phœbus' crowned bird, the clock of the night—had thrice clapped his wings, and proclaimed the approach of day. The same truth and excellence which marks the preceding part of the picture, distinguishes this portion: the jackdaws are heard chattering on the roof, the moon is declining near the horizon, the gled or kite, taking her station on the high leafless trees beside the poet's window, whistles with that singular and characteristic note which proclaims the dawning of a winter day; and having had his fire stirred, and his candle lighted, he rises, dresses himself, and for a moment opens the casement to look out upon the scene: but it is only for a moment; the hail-stones hopping on the leads, and the gust of cold and rimy air which sweeps in, admonish him that this is no time for such observation, and quickly closing the lattice, he hurries, shivering with cold, to the fire-side. As he warms himself, the faggots crackle on the hearth, the cheerful blaze lights up his chamber, and glancing from the precious and richly gilded volumes which are ranged in their oaken presses, his eye lights upon 'Virgil' lying open upon a reading-desk. He is thus reminded of how much of his task yet

[1] which. [2] call. [3] yell. [4] ugly. [5] stern looking.
[6] frightful. [7] shriek. [8] above. [9] flying.

remains, and addresses himself diligently to his translation. It is difficult to conceive a more pleasing or picturesque description than what is here given. It is distinguished by a minute observation of nature, a power of selection and grouping, rich colouring and clearness of outline, which we invariably trace in the works of a true poet.

It has been already remarked, that in his phraseology, Douglas is more obscure than Dunbar or Henryson. 'The Friars of Berwick,' or, the tale of the 'Landwart Mouse,' may be understood by a purely English reader, with comparative facility; whilst in the 'Palace of Honour,' and still more in the 'Translation of the Æneid,' passages are perpetually recurring which require some study to make out their meaning. We find the explanation of this given by the poet himself. Dunbar represents himself as writing in the English tongue; but the translator of 'Virgil,' as "kepand na Soudron bot ouir awin langage."

In the time of James V., we know from a curious passage quoted in 'Hailes' Life of John Hamilton,' that to "knapp Sudrone," was considered the mark of a traitor; and even so late as James VI., Winzet speaks of his being ignorant of "Southeron," and knowing only his proper language, the 'auld brade Scottis *.'' The passage in Douglas above referred to, is interesting in this point of view:—

> And yet forsoith I set my besy pane,
> As that I couth to mak it brade and plane,
> Kepand no Soudroun, bot our awin langage,

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* Irving's Lives of the Scottish Poets, vol. i., p. 59.

And speke as I lerned quhen I wos ane page;
Na yet[1] sa clene all Sudroun I refuse,
Bot some worde I pronunce as nychboure dois;
Like as in Latine bene, grewe termes sum,
So me behuffit[2] quhilum or be dum,
Sum bastard Latyne, Frensche or Ynglis, ois;
Quhaire scant wes Scottis; I had nane uther chois:
Not that oure toung is in the selvin skant[3],
Bot for that I the fouth[4] of langage want*.

It was at the request of Henry, Lord Sinclair, cousin of the poet, and a liberal and learned patron of literature, that this remarkable translation was undertaken; and Douglas has informed us, that he completed it on the 22d of July, 1513, about twelve years after he had composed his 'Palace of Honour,' and not two months before the death of his sovereign, James IV., in the battle of Flodden; fatal not only to the monarch and the country, but especially disastrous to the family and lineage of the poet. Deeply affected by this calamity, and deprived of his father, who died soon after, he bade farewell to the Muses, and in the conclusion of his translation of the Æneid, intimates his resolution of devoting his remaining days to the glory of God and the good of his country.

The passage in which he bids adieu to his poetical studies is striking and characteristic, intimating a strong consciousness of the perpetuity of his fame:—

Now is my werk[5] all finist and complete,
Quhom Jovis ire nor fyris birnand[6] hete,

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[1] nor yet. [2] behoved. [3] scanty. [4] plenty.
[5] work. [6] burning.

* Irving's Lives of the Scottish Poets, vol. i. p. 60.

Nor trenscheand swerd, sall defays[1], nor doun thring,
Nor lang proces of age, consumes all thing:
Quhen that unknawin[2] day sall him address,
Quhilk not but on this body power hes,
And ends the date of mine uncertain eild[3],
The better part of me shall be upheild[4]
Above the sternis perpetuallie to ring[5],
And here my name remane but[6] emparing;
Throwout the isle, yclipt in Albione,
Read shall I bee, and sung by many a one.
Thus up my pen and instruments full zore[7]
On Virgil's post I fix for evermore,
Nevir from thens sic matters to descrive[8]:
My muse shall now be clene contemplative[9]
And solitair; as doth the bird in caige
Sen fer by worne, all is my childis aige[10];
And of my days near passit the half date,
That Nature suld me granting, wele I wate;
Thus sen I feile[11] down sweyand[12] the ballance,
Here I resign my youngkeris[13] observance,
And will direct my labours evermoir[14],
Unto the Common-welth and goddis gloir[15].
Adiew, gude redaris[16], God gif you all gude nycht[17],
And, after death, grant us his hevinly lycht[18].

The life of Douglas now became troubled and eventful. It had before glided on serenely in happy literary enjoyment, undisturbed by pomp or terror. Its after-course was destined to partake largely of both.

The widowed queen of James IV., who had been deprived of her husband when she was yet in the prime of youth and beauty, fixed her affections on the Earl of Angus, one of the handsomest noblemen at the court, and nephew to Douglas; but, from his extreme youth, little calculated to act with prudence under circumstances so flattering to his vanity and ambition. 'To the surprise and regret of all ranks,' says Pinkerton, 'Margaret, hardly recovered from the languor of childbirth, suddenly wedded the Earl of Angus—a precipitate step, which was fatal to her ambition, as, by the laws of the country, it terminated her regency. A birth, distinguished by an ancestry of heroes, opulent possessions, a potent vassalry, above all, a person blooming with youth and elegance, transported the woman, whilst they ruined the queen *.'

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[1] defeat. [2] unknown.
[3] old age. [4] upheld. [5] reign. [6] without.
[7] expert. [8] describe. [9] altogether contemplative.
[10] age. [11] feel. [12] down inclining.
[13] observance of my youth. [14] evermore. [15] glory.
[16] good readers. [17] good night. [18] light.

By this imprudent union, Douglas became nearly connected with the royal family; and, as the archbishopric of St. Andrew's was now vacant by the death of Alexander Stewart in the battle of Flodden, the queen nominated him to the primacy, recommending him, in a letter addressed to Leo X., as 'second to none in learning and virtues.' He accordingly took possession of the archiepiscopal palace, and prepared to enter upon his ecclesiastical functions; but these were the iron times, in which the bishop often found it as difficult to preach peacefully in his cathedral as the baron to live quietly in his castle. His right was contested by Hepburn, prior of St. Andrew's, who had been elected by the canons, and Forman, bishop of Moray, a crafty and grasping pluralist, whose wealth and address had procured the presentation from the Pope. Hepburn, at the head

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* Pinkerton's History, vol. ii. p. 121.

of a large body of troops, expelled the servants of Douglas, and took possession of the castle; whilst Forman, acquiring the assistance of Lord Hume, one of the most powerful of the Scottish nobles, first published the papal bull at Edinburgh at the head of an army of ten thousand men, and then marched to St. Andrew's. It says much for Douglas's moderation and love of peace, that he immediately retired from the contest, and left his furious rivals to pursue the stormy courses of their ambition, which concluded by Forman obtaining possession of the primacy.

Not long after this the see of Dunkeld, considered at that time as the third in the realm in point of emolument, became vacant, and the queen once more nominated Douglas, who, by the interest of Henry VIII., obtained a papal bull in his favour. The chapter at the same moment, however, had elected Stewart, a brother of the Earl of Athole; and the postulate bishop, at the head of his clansmen and ketherans, lost no time in taking possession of his new dignity, fortifying the palace and cathedral, stationing parties of armed retainers in the passes where he might be attacked, and declaring his resolution to be expelled only at the point of the sword. Nay, the persecution of Douglas was carried still further: being arraigned under some acts of parliament, which had seldom been carried into effect, of the crime of procuring bulls from Rome, he was found guilty, subjected to a temporary imprisonment, and committed to the custody of Hepburn, his former rival for the primacy. A compromise between the two parties at length took place, and Douglas was consecrated at Glasgow by Archbishop Beaton. 'Having first visited on his journey the metropolitan city of St. Andrew's, he proceeded from thence to Dunkeld, where all ranks exhibited the utmost delight at his arrival, extolling to the clouds his learning and virtues, and uttering their thanks to heaven for the gift of so noble and eminent a prelate.' The pope's bull was then proclaimed with the usual solemnities at the high altar, and the bishop retired to the house of the dean, where he was splendidly entertained. There was a very sufficient reason for this, as the servants and soldiers of Stewart still held the episcopal palace and cathedral, declaring their determination not to surrender it till they received their master's orders. Their steel coats were seen glancing on the walls, the cannon pointed from the battlements, and even the steeple had been transformed into a garrison of troops, so that the new bishop was constrained to perform divine service in the house in which he lodged. Here too he administered the oaths to his canons; and having afterwards held a solemn consultation with the powerful nobles and gentry by whom he was accompanied, their deliberations were interrupted by a sudden discharge of cannon, whilst news arrived at the same moment that Stewart was on his march to take possession of the benefice. Force had now to be opposed to force; the feudal friends who surrounded Douglas marshalled their retainers; messengers were sent off to Fife and Angus, and next morning so powerful a reinforcement arrived, that Stewart retired to the neighbouring woods. The cathedral was then carried by one of Douglas's supporters, and his opponents, being summoned to capitulate, at last thought it prudent to obey. 'A circumstance,' says Sage, 'very acceptable to the good bishop, who, in all the actions of his life discovered a gentle and merciful disposition, regulating the warlike and heroic spirit that was natural to his family, by the excellent laws of the Christian religion*.'

His near relationship to the powerful and turbulent Earl of Angus was an unfortunate circumstance for the prelate, and often involved him in scenes deeply repugnant to his feelings. One of these is worthy of record, as it presents an extraordinary picture of the times, and brings out the Christian meekness of Douglas in fine relief to the dark and ferocious characters by whom he was surrounded. In 1520 a faction of the nobles, headed by Arran, Argyle, and Huntley, and secretly supported by Archbishop Beaton, determined to humble the power of Angus. In April they assembled at Edinburgh in great strength, and holding their rendezvous at the house of the Archbishop, resolved to seize Angus, whose power, they alleged, was too exorbitant for a subject. Apprised of this, the earl commissioned his uncle, the Bishop of Dunkeld, to confer with his opponents, and if possible to bring matters to an amicable agreement. It was in vain, however, that he addressed himself to barons of turbulent and warlike habits, who deemed it an indignity to forgive an injury. Turning, therefore, to Beaton, he implored him by his sacred character to become the advocate of peace, and to promote a reconciliation between the hostile factions. 'It may not be,' said the prelate; 'Angus is too insolent and powerful; and of Arran's designs, upon my conscience! I know nothing.' As he said this, the churchman incautiously struck his hand upon his heart, and a steel hauberk, which he wore concealed under his cassack, rung with the blow. 'I perceive, my lord,' said Douglas, 'that your conscience is not sound, for I hear it clatter.' Turning next to Sir James Hamilton, he besought him to appease his brother the Earl of Arran; and Hamilton appeared inclined to be a peacemaker, when Arran's natural son, a man of brutal and turbulent manners, upbraided him with cowardice. 'Bastard smaik, said Sir James, 'thou liest falsely; I shall fight this day where thou darest not be seen!' and rushing into the street with his drawn sword, at the head of his vassals, Hamilton threw himself upon the party of Angus, and was almost instantly slain. A fierce contest ensued, during which the Bishop of Dunkeld retired to his chamber, where he piously offered up his prayers to God for the staunching of these unchristian feuds. Meanwhile the conflict raged, and Angus was at last victorious, seventy of his antagonists being slain, and the rest put to flight; whilst Beaton, the archbishop, who seems to have been personally engaged, fled for refuge behind the altar of the Black Friars' Church. Trembling for the safety of the prelate, Douglas flew from his retreat, and arrived at the moment when the enraged followers of his nephew had torn their victim from the sanctuary to which he had retreated. A few minutes longer, and the tragedy of Becket might have been repeated in Scotland: the rochet had been already torn from his shoulders, and their swords were at his throat, when Douglas effectually interposed, and by his remonstrances averted the meditated destruction.

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* Irving's Lives, vol. ii. p. 11.

Not long after, one of those sudden revolutions, which were of so frequent occurrence in a feudal government, overwhelmed the party of Angus, and compelled that nobleman and Bishop Douglas to take refuge at the court of Henry VIII., at that time described by Erasmus as a 'truly regal abode, where learning and the best studies had found a favoured seat.' He here not only found an asylum, but was rewarded by a pension, and enjoyed the society and literary converse of various eminent scholars. One of these was the noted Polydore Virgil, then employed in composing his history of England. To him Douglas communicated the only prose production which he appears to have written, a Commentary on the early history of his country. 'The publication of Mairs' History of Scotland,' says Dr. Irving, 'in which that author ventured to expose the Egyptian fables of his predecessors, had excited the indignation of such of his countrymen as delighted to trace their origin to the daughter of Pharaoh. Douglas was studious to warn his new friend against adopting the opinions of this writer, and presented him with a brief commentary in which he pursued the fabulous line of our ancestry from Athens to Scotland. This tractate, which was probably written in Latin, seems to have shared the common fate of the writings entrusted to Polydore, who, to secure the faults of his work from the danger of detection, is said to have destroyed many invaluable monuments of antiquity *.' From this quotation the historical talents of the prelate appear to have been of a far inferior description to his poetical abilities; and the conduct of his Italian friend, if it only led to the destruction of a Latin commentary on the descent of the Scots from the daughter of Pharaoh, however unjustifiable in point of principle, was not very calamitous in its effects. It was the misfortune of Douglas to live in an age when national vanity, a love of traditionary fable, and a warm imagination, formed the chief sources from whence Scottish history was derived.

The party of Albany and the enemies of the bishop were now all-powerful; and in his absence a sentence of proscription was passed against him as a fugitive traitor, who had devoted himself to the service of the King of England. The revenues of his cathedral were sequestrated, and all persons interdicted from holding communication with him under high penalties; at the same time the governor individually, and the three estates of the realm in their collective capacity, addressed letters to the pope, requesting his holiness to beware of nominating the traitor, Gavin Douglas, to the archbishoprick of St. Andrews and the abbacy of Dumfermline,—a caution which rather betrays their high opinion of his abilities and virtues than militates against his integrity. In the midst of these scenes of proscription and exile, Douglas, whose

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* Irving's Lives, vol. i. p. 17.

life since the period that he had forsaken his tranquil literary labours had been the sport of persecution and calamity, was seized with the plague and died at London, in the year 1522. The character of this man, as it is drawn by the classical pen of Buchanan, is highly to his honour, but may be perhaps suspected of partiality. 'He died at London, having proceeded so far on his journey to Rome, to the great regret of all those good men who admired his virtues. To splendour of birth, and a handsome and dignified person, he united a mind richly stored with the learning of the age, such as it then existed. His temperance and moderation were very remarkable; and living in turbulent times, and surrounded by factions at bitter enmity with each other, such was the general opinion of his honesty and uprightness of mind, that he possessed a high influence with all parties. He left behind him various monuments of his genius and learning of no common merit, written in his native tongue *.' A still higher strain of panegyric is indulged in by Dr. Irving: 'Connected,' says he, 'as Douglas was with a powerful and factious family, which had often shaken the unstable throne of the Stuarts, instead of co-operating in their unwarrantable designs, he invariably comported himself with that meekness which ought always to distinguish the character of the man who devotes himself to the service of the altar . . . With the fortitude incident to a great mind, he submitted to the numerous disappointments and mortifications which thwarted him in the career of

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* Buchanan's History, b. 14, c. 13.

preferment; and when at length he obtained an accession of power, he never sought to avenge the wrongs to which he had formerly been exposed. His character as a politician appears to have commanded the reverence of his countrymen; and in the discharge of his duty as a Christian pastor, he exhibited a model of primeval purity. By his exemplary piety and learning, by his public and private acts of charity and munificence, he reflected distinguished honour on the illustrious family from which he descended, and on the sacred profession to which he had devoted his honourable life.'

This is the language of generous but somewhat exaggerated and indiscriminate panegyric. In his political conduct Douglas supported a party which had been called into existence by the precipitate and imprudent marriage of the queen, and was animated by the selfish and often treacherous policy of the Earl of Angus. In his individual conduct he was pacific, temperate, and forgiving; but his secret correspondence with Henry VIII. and his ministers, instead of commanding the reverence, was probably the great cause of the animosity with which he was treated by his countrymen; nor can he be very consistently held up as a model of primeval purity, whom we find in the next sentence to have been the father of a natural daughter, from whom the house of Foulewood is descended. His genius and learning are unquestionable; his temper was mild and affectionate; and we may hope that his munificence rests on a more certain evidence than his patriotic feelings or political integrity.

SIR DAVID LINDSAY.

1490—1557.

SIR DAVID LINDSAY.

1490—1557.

THE fine feudal portrait given of him in 'Marmion,' and the laborious edition of his works presented to the world by Chalmers, have rendered the name of Sir David Lindsay familiar to the general reader, and to the patient antiquary. Inferior in high poetical genius to Dunbar or Douglas, he yet pleases by the truth and natural colouring of his descriptions, his vein of native humour, his strong good sense, and the easy flow of his versification. For the age in which he lived, and considering the court-like occupations in which his time was spent, his learning was various and respectable; and were he only known as a man whose writings contributed essentially to the introduction of the Reformation, this circumstance alone were sufficient to make him an object of no common interest.

The exact period of his birth is unknown, but it was in the reign of James IV. His family was ancient, and the paternal estate, the Mount, near Cupar, Fife, is still pointed out as the probable birth-place of Lindsay. Mackenzie asserts, but without giving any authority, that he received his education at the University of St. Andrew's; and afterwards travelled into France, Italy, and Germany. It is certain that he mentions the appearance of the Italian ladies, as if he had been an eye-witness; but his remaining travels, and their having been performed in the period of youth, although not improbable, are conjectural. The truth is, that of the youth of Lindsay nothing is known. We first meet with him in the manuscript accounts of the Lord Treasurer, when, on the 12th October, 1511, he was presented with a quantity of 'blew and yellow taffety to be a play coat for the play performed in the king and queen's presence in the Abbey of Holyrood.' In 1512 he was appointed servitor or gentleman-usher to the prince, afterwards James V.; and in the succeeding year, he makes his appearance on a very strange and solemn occasion. He was standing beside the king in the church at Linlithgow, when that extraordinary apparition took place (immediately before the battle of Flodden) which warned the monarch of his approaching danger, and solemnly entreated him to delay his journey. The scene is thus strikingly described by Pitscottie:—'The king,' says this author, 'came to Linlithgow, where he happened to be for the time at the council, very sad and dolorous, making his devotion to God to send him good chance and fortune in his voyage. In the mean time, there came a man, clad in a blue gown, in at the kirk door, and belted about him with a roll of linen cloth, a pair of bootikins on his feet, to the grit of his legs, with all other hose and clothes conform thereto; but he had nothing on his head, but syde red-yellow hair behind, and on his haffits, which wan down to his shoulders, but his forehead was bald and bare. He seemed to be a man of two-and-fifty years, with a great pyke-staff in his hand, and came first forward among the lords, crying and speiring for the king, saying, "he desired to speak to him." While at the last, he came where the king was sitting in the desk at his prayers; but when he saw the king he made him little reverence or salutation, but leaned down familiarly on the desk before him, and said to him on this manner, as after follows:—"Sir king, my mother has sent me to you, desiring you not to pass at this time where thou art purposed; for if thou doest, thou wilt not fare well in thy journey, nor none that passeth with thee. Further, she bade thee converse with no woman, nor use their counsel; for if thou do it, thou wilt be confounded and brought to shame." By the time this man had spoken thir words unto the king's grace, the evening song was near done, and the king paused on thir words, studying to give him an answer; but, in the mean time, before the king's eyes, and in presence of all the lords who were about him for the time, this man vanished away, and could no ways be seen or comprehended, but vanished away as he had been a blink of the sun, or a whiss of the whirlwind, and could no more be seen. I heard say, Sir David Lindsay, (Lion Herald,) and John Inglis, (the Marshall,) who were at that time young men and special servants to the king's grace, were standing presently beside the king, who thought to have laid hands on this man, that they might have spiered further tidings at him; but all for nought; they could not touch him, for he vanished away betwixt them, and was no more seen*.' There can be little doubt that the mysterious and unearthly-looking personage, who appeared in the royal chapel and vanished like a whiss of the whirlwind, was a more substantial spectre than was at that time generally believed. James, with the recklessness which belonged to his character, was hurrying into a war, which proved disastrous in its consequences, and was highly unpopular with a great proportion of his nobles; and the vision at Linlithgow may have been intended to work upon the well-known superstitious feelings of the monarch. It is even by no means impossible, that Sir David Lindsay knew more of this strange old man than he was willing to confess; and, whilst he asserted to Buchanan the reality of the story †, concealed the key which he could have given to the supernatural appearance of the unknown monitor.

Our next information regarding Lindsay is derived from his own works. After the fatal battle of Flodden, and the death of the king, he continued his attendance on the infant monarch who succeeded him; and he presents us with a natural and beautiful picture of himself and his royal charge. 'When thou wert young, and had not begun to walk, how tenderly did I bear thee in mine arms,—how warmly wrap thee in thy little bed,—how sweetly sing, with lute in hand, to give thee pleasure,—or dance riotously, or play farces before thee on the floor:'—

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* Lindsay of Pitscottie, Hist. of Scotland, p. 172.

† Buchanani Hist., b. 13, c. 31.

Quhen thow was zoung, I bure thee in my arme
  Full tenderlie, til thow begowth[1] to gang[2],
And in thy bed oft happit thee full warm;
  With lute in hand syne sweitly to thee sang;
  Sum tyme in dansing fiercely I flang,
And sum tyme playand farsis on the flure;
And sum tyme of my office takand cure.

Again in his 'Complaint,' directed to the king's grace, we have the same subject touched upon in a more playful vein, but with a minuteness and delicacy, which reminds us in a sister art of the family pieces of Netscher or Gerard Dow:—

How, as ane chapman[3] beirs his pack,
I bare thy grace upon my back,
And sum tymes strydlings on my neck,
Dansing with mony bend and beck.
The first sillabis that thou did mute
Was Pa, Da. Lyn[4]; upon the lute
Then playd I twenty springs perqueir[5],
Quhilk was great plesure for to heir.

Fra play thou let me nevir rest;
Bot gynkerton thou lov'd ay best;
And ay whan thow cam fra the scule,
Than I behov'd to play the fule;
As I at length into my Dreme
My sindre service did expreme.

Thoct[6] it bene better, as says the wise,
Hap to the court nor gude service,
I wot thou lov'd me better than
Nor now some wyf does her gudeman.
Then men til others did record,
Said Lyndsay wad be maid ane lord.
Thow has maid lords, sir, by Sanct Geill!
Of some that hes nocht servd sa weill[7].

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[1] begun. [2] go. [3] pedlar.
[4] Pa. Da. Lyn—Papa, David Lindsay.
[5] by heart, off-hand. [6] although. [7] well.

The unhappy scenes of feudal turbulence and disorder which occupied the minority of James V. must have frequently involved Lindsay, not only in distress and difficulties, but in absolute proscription. Torn between contending factions, who each aimed at possessing themselves of the person of the monarch and ruling in his name, the country languished in vain for something like a regular and established government. Men ranged themselves respectively according to their interests or their prejudices: their fears of English influence, or their confidence in French integrity, compelled them into the ranks of the English or French parties; the first led by the queen-mother and the Earl of Angus her husband, the second by the Governor Albany. We are not to wonder that many of the nobles, disgusted by the imprudent marriage of the Queen, and the violent and domineering temper of her brother Henry VIII., resolutely opposed the interference of this prince in the affairs of the country; nor, on the other hand, are we to be surprised that some good men, whilst they deprecated the idea of their country being wholly governed by English interest, believed that, with due caution, the mediation of Henry might be serviceable in reducing the kingdom of his infant nephew into a state of order and good government.

It happened here, however, as in all cases of political commotion, that the proportion of those who were actuated by a sincere desire of peace and a love of order was small, when compared with the ambitious and selfish spirits who found their interest and their consequence increased by anarchy and confusion; and the consequence was what might have been anticipated,—till the king arrived at an age, when he developed the strength and the vigour of his character, and grasped with his own energetic hand the reins which had been wrested from him by private ambition, everything was one wild scene of misrule, oppression, and disorder. The picture given by Lord Dacre, the English Warden of the Marches, in his letter to the Council, although coming from an enemy, was not overcharged:—'My lords, there is so great brutilnesse, mutability, and instableness in the counsaill of Scotland, that truly no man can or may trust them or their sayings or devices, without it be of things concluded or determined at a Parliament season, or General Council of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal; of which determined mind and purposes, from time to time, as often as they have sitten, and as far as I could get knowledge by mine espies, I certified the king's grace or you*.'

As to the nature of Henry's interference, and the conscientiousness of that anxiety which he professed for the prosperity of Scotland, there is a passage in the conclusion of Lord Dacre's letter which is very characteristic:—'Upon the West Marches of Scotland I have burnt and destroyed the townships of Annan, Dronoch, Dronochwood, Tordoff, Fishgrenche, Stokes, Estridge, Ryeland, Blawetwood, Foulsyke, Westhill, Berghe, Rigge, Stapilton,' et cetera, adding twenty other townships, 'with the water of Esk, from Stabil Gorton down to Canonby, which is six miles in length; where, as there was in all times past four hundred pleughs and above, they are now clearly wasted, and no man dwelling in any of them at this day, save only in the towers of Annand, Steple, and Walghopp.' And so he adds, with extreme complacency, 'I shall continue my service with diligence.' Whilst such was the miserable condition of the borders, the interior of the country exhibited an equally melancholy picture:—'I assure you,' says Gavin Douglas, in a letter to a friend in England, written in 1515, 'the people of this realm are so oppressed for lack of justice, by thieves, robbery, and other extortions, that they would be glad to live under the Great Turk, to have justice *.'

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* Pinkerton's Hist. App., vol. ii. p. 459.

In the midst of this unhappy state of things, Lindsay had the satisfaction of seeing the youthful monarch, to whose household he was attached, exhibiting daily indications of a generous temper and a powerful capacity. 'There is not,' says the queen-mother in a letter to the Earl of Surrey, written in 1522, 'a wiser child, or a better hearted, or a more able.' And Surrey himself, in writing to Wolsey, declares of James, 'that he speaks sure for so young a thing †.' When this was written he was only eleven years old; but as he advanced from boyhood towards youth, the features of his character became still more promising and decided. 'In person, countenance, and manner,' says Pinkerton, 'if we believe the English ambassadors, James V. very much resembled his uncle Henry: he displayed a spirit and firmness

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* Pinkerton's History, Append., vol. ii. p. 464.

† Ibid., p. 216.

above his age; he rode well, tilted at the glove with a spear not unskilfully, sung with force and precision, danced with elegance, and his conversation did honour to his preceptor Gavin Dunbar, a man of science, being replete with masculine sense and information. In nothing would he permit himself to be regarded as a boy. Dr. Magnus, in requesting Wolsey to send an ornamented buckler to James, who desired to have one on hearing that his uncle sometimes used that piece of defensive armour, informs the Cardinal that it must be of manly size, for the young king had no puerile weapon nor decoration; even his sword being a yard long before the hilt, and yet he could draw it as well as any man. In hawks and hounds he delighted; nor was he a stranger to any noble exercise or amusement*.'

In 1524, by the intrigues of the queen-mother, now at enmity with her husband the Earl of Angus, the principal lords and councillors, to whom the administration of affairs had been entrusted, were removed. The personal household of the young king, amongst whom were Sir David Lindsay, and Bellenden, a brother poet, and the well-known translator of Boece and Livy, were dismissed at the same time. Of this state revolution, the last-mentioned author, Bellenden, thus speaks in his proem to his Cosmographie:—

And fyrst occurrit to my remembering,
How that I was in service with the king;
  Put to his grace in zeris[1] tenderest,
Clerk of his Comptis,—tho' I was inding[2],
With hart and hand, and every other thing

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[1] years. [2] unworthy.

* Pinkerton's Hist., vol. ii. p. 240.

That mycht him pleis in ony manner best,
Till hie invy me from his service kest[1],
By them that had the court in governing,
As bird but plumes[2] herryit out o' the nest*.

Ejected from his office of usher to the young king, Lindsay retired with a small pension; and in the interval between 1524 and 1528, beheld, without the possibility of giving assistance or counsel, the confusions and misrule which accompanied the domination of the Douglases over the monarch and his people. Wherever Angus went, he took care to carry along with him the young king; and James, who daily felt his ambition growing stronger within him, regarded with resentment and disgust the durance to which he was subjected. At last, in 1528, when he had reached the age of sixteen, he succeeded, chiefly by his own vigour and address, in breaking his chains and procuring his liberty. 'It was from the palace of Falkland that he escaped; where, although strictly watched by the Douglases, he was permitted to hunt in the park, and indulge in the sports befitting his youthful years. With a sagacity superior to his age, he contrived to carry on a correspondence with Beaton, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's; and having seized an opportunity when, Angus being absent, his adherents were less vigilant than usual, he ordered preparations for a solemn hunting; and, to lull suspicion, retired early to rest, that he might commence the chace with the dawn. Scarce, however, had the captain of the guard gone to his chamber, after walking the rounds and placing the usual watches, when James, disguised as a groom, with two trusty attendants, passed to the stables, threw themselves on fleet horses, and riding hard all night, reached Stirling Castle before sunrise. The gates were instantly opened to him; and, having snatched a few hours of repose, the monarch, rejoicing in his freedom, hastily assembled a council, and issued a royal proclamation, interdicting any one of the house or name of Douglas, on pain of treason, from approaching within six miles of the court. Meanwhile the alarm spread through the palace of Falkland, that the king had fled; and Sir George Douglas, brother of Angus, shouting 'treason,' assembled his followers and set off in pursuit. On their journey, however, they met the royal herald, who boldly read the proclamation for their banishment; and such was the terror of the royal authority, although exercised by a boy of sixteen, that after a short deliberation, they deemed it prudent to disperse. Thus, by one of those rapid, and sometimes unaccountable, transitions, which astonish us in the history of feudal Scotland, the overgrown power of the house of Douglas, which had shot up into almost resistless strength, sunk in the course of a single day into feebleness and impotence.

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[1] cast. [2] without plumes.

* Irving's Lives, vol. ii. p 122.

The change, however, was favourable to Sir David Lindsay, whose gentleness and talents had already recommended him to the king, and with whom the recollections of his childhood were pleasingly associated. His pension, although inconsiderable, was faithfully paid him, notwithstanding the many claims which his master had to satisfy out of an impoverished exchequer; and aware of James's early love of literature and especial predilection for poetry, he produced his 'Dream,' which has been highly, but not undeservedly, commended by Warton. It undoubtedly contains some fine passages; but the subject is too similar to various poems of Dunbar. There is, indeed, an unpleasant and somewhat monotonous sameness in the subjects of the ancient Scottish poets; nor can we exclude from the same censure their great contemporaries of the English school. It is their fashion to be too constantly composing dreams or visions; some of their finest pieces, although they do not assume the title, resolve into the same thing, and we almost invariably find the poet dropping asleep. It is better, indeed, that these soporific propensities should be exhibited by the poet than his readers, but their perpetual recurrence is tedious: Chaucer, Gower, James I., Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, and Sir David Lindsay, may be all arraigned as guilty of this fault; and it is to be found running through the works of many of their contemporaries whose names are unknown. It seems almost to have grown, by frequent use, into an established and accredited mode of getting rid of one of the greatest difficulties with which a writer has to struggle—the natural and easy introduction of his main subject. The 'King's Quhair,' the 'Thistle and the Rose,' the 'Golden Terge,' the 'Palace of Honour,' the 'General Satire,' the 'Praise of Age,' the 'Vision of Dame Vertue,'—all, in a greater or less degree, commence after the same monotonous manner;—the poet either walks into a delicious garden, where he falls asleep, and of course is visited by a dream, or he awakes from sleep, rises from his couch, walks into a garden, and reclining in some flowery arbour, again falls asleep, and sees a vision. In the present case, the Dream of Sir David partakes of a very slight variety. After having spent a long winter night without sleep, he rises from his bed, and bends his course towards the sea-shore. His description of the faded winter landscape is beautiful—

I met dame Flora, in dule[1] weid disagysit[2],
Quhilk[3] into May was dulce and delectabill:
With stalwart[4] stormis her sweetness was surprisit;
Her hevinly hewis[5] war turned into sabill,
Quhilkis umquhill[6] war to luffaris amiabill.
Fled from the froist[7], the tender flouris I saw
Undir dame Nature's mantill lurking law[8].

The small fowlis in flokkis sawe I fle,
To Nature makand lamentacion;
Thay lichtit[9] doun beside me on ane tre,
Of thair complaint I had compassioun;
And with ane piteous exclamatioun
Thay said, ' Blissit be somer with his flouris!
And waryit be thou winter with thy schouris!'

Allace, Aurora! the sillie lark gan cry,
Quhair his thow left thy balmy liquour sweit
That us rejosit[10], we mounting in the sky?
Thy silver droppis ar turnit into sleit;
Oh, fair Phœbus! quhair[11] is thy holsom heit?
Quhy tholis[12] thow thy hevinly, plesand face
With mistie vapours to be obscurit, allace?

Thus, slightly modernised—

I met sweet Flora, in dark weed arrayed,
She that in May was erst so lovely drest:
Fell storms of all her sweets a wreck had made,

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[1] sad. [2] disguised. [3] the same, that, or which. [4] fierce. [5] hues. [6] formerly. [7] frost. [8] low. [9] alighted. [10] rejoiced. [11] where. [12] permittest.

And chang'd to sable was her verdant vest,
Which youthful lovers beauteous deem and best.
Shunning the frost, I saw each tender flower
Beneath dame Nature's mantle lowly cower.

The birds, in flocks, of late so blithe and free,
Flew, drench'd and shivering, through the sleety sky;
They perch'd beside me on a leafless tree,—
They were, I ween, a dismal company.
And all with piteous note began to cry,
Away, thou wicked Winter! fierce and cold;
Come, blessed Summer! come, thy thousand flowers unfold!

Oh, sweet Aurora! the poor lark would sing,
Where be thy balmy dews, thou goddess dear,
Which, when we sipt, made our small throats so clear,
And washed with silver drops our quiv'ring wing,
As high we flew to heav'n's gate carolling?
Ah why, oh Phœbus! doth the wintry storm
Thy glorious golden tresses all deform?

'The poet,' says Dr. Irving, 'now enters a cave, and purposes to register in rhyme some merry matter of antiquity; but finding himself oppressed and languid, he wraps himself in his cloak, and is overpowered by sleep. He fancies himself accosted by a beautiful female, named Remembrance, who conducts him to many unknown regions. They first direct their steps to the infernal regions, where they behold innumerable crowds of popes, emperors, kings, cardinals, bishops, and barons; and after having surveyed this dreary region, they travel onwards to heaven, visiting the sun and planets on their journey.' It is impossible to follow him into his abstruse astronomical speculations, and still less inclination will be felt by any general reader to dive into those mysterious theological disquisitions with which this portion of Sir David's Dream abounds. He obtains a view of the terrestrial paradise, and is next gratified with a distant prospect of his native land. Expressing his astonishment that a country possessed of so many natural advantages, and inhabited by so ingenious a race of men, should still continue in a hopeless state of poverty, his conductress replies that wealth can never increase where policy (meaning good government) is not found; and that equity can only reside with peace. A nation must of necessity be unprosperous when those who ought to administer justice are guilty of slumbering on the tribunal. These observations are enforced by the sudden apparition of a remarkable figure—

And thus, as we were speiking to and fro,
 We saw ane busteous beirne [1] come o'er the bent,
But hors, on fute [2], as fast as he micht go,
 Quhais [3] raiment was all ragit, revin, and rent,
 With visage lene, as he had fastit Lent:
And forward on his wayes he did avance
With ane richt melancholious countenance—

With scrip on hip, and pyke-staff in his hand,
 As he had bene purposit to pas fra hame.
Quod I, 'Gudeman, I wald fane understand,
 Gif that ze plesit, to wit, what were your name?'
 Quod he, 'My sone, of that I think great schame;
Bot sen thou wald of my name have ane feil [4],
Forsuith they call me Johne the Commonweill.'

'Schir Commonweill declares his resolution of abandoning a country where he has only experienced neglect or insult from people of every denomination. "My friends," says he, "are all fled; Policy is returned to France. My sister,

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[1] a boisterous person. [2] without horse, and on foot.
[3] whose. [4] information.

Justice, is no longer able to hold the balance—Wrong is now appointed captain of the ordinance. No Scottishman shall again find favour with me until the realm be governed by a king who shall delight in equity, and bring strong traitors to condign punishment. Woe to the country that has our zoung ane king." Having closed this pathetic oration he departs. Remembrance conducts the poet back to the cave on the sea-shore, and he is speedily roused by a discharge of artillery from a vessel, which, rather too opportunely, appears under sail*.'

That Schir Johne Commonweill has not given an exaggerated picture of the miseries of the country during the minority of James V., is apparent from the repetition of the same plaintive remonstrances in various passages written by Lindsay's contemporaries. Thus, in the 'Vision of Dame Veritie,' by Stewart, we have a striking passage descriptive of the universal public disorders. Stewart, like all his tuneful brethren, falls asleep, and sees a vision of 'Lady Veritie,' with cristal corps, translucent as the glass.

On hearing her name, he humbly entreats her to inform him when the kingdom of Scotland is likely to be at peace. Her answer conveys a fearful picture of civil dissension:—

> Then said this burd of beauty maist benigne,
> Sone thou sall haif solution sufficient,
> Quhen thir bairnis ar banished[1] fra zour King
> Fro counsale, sessioun, and parliament,

---

[1] banished.

* Irving's Lives, vol. ii. p. 109.

Off quhome the nam is schortly subsequent,
I sall declair dewly, with diligence,
Or I depairt furth [1] of this place presint,
An thou thairto sall give thy audience.

First Willfull Wrang in ane widdy [2] maun waif,[3]
And hid Hatrit be hangit be the heid[4],
And Young Counsale that dois you all dissaif[5],
And Singular Profeit[6] stolling of the steid[7];
Dissimulance that docs your lawis leid,
Flattery and Falsheid that your fame hes fylit[8],
And Ignorance be put to beg thair breid,
And all thair kin out of the court exilit.

Than Treason man be tyrvit[9] to ane tre,
And Murther merkit [10] for his grit mischeif,
And the foul fiend that ye call Simonē
Maun [11] plainly be deprived without repreif[12].
Quhill this be done ye sall haif no relief,
But schameful slawchter, dirth, and indigens;
And tak this for thy answer into brief,
Quhilk I the pray present unto thy prince.

For all this sort with schame mon be exilit,
Or than demanit [14] as I haif devysit,
And uther persones in thair placis stylit;
The quhilk sen Flowdoun Field has bene despysit
In this cuntrie, and in all uthers prysit;
Quhois namis I sall cause the for to knaw,
That thou may sleip thairwyth, and be awysit[15],
Syne baith the sortis to thy soverane schaw.

First Justice, Prudens, Forss, and Temperans,
With Commonweill and auld Experiens,
Concord, Correction, Cunning, and Constans,
Lufe, Lawty, Sciens, and Obediens,
Gude Consciens, Treuth, and als[16] Intelligens,
Mercy, Mesour, Fayth, Houp, and Cherite,—
Thir in his court maun mak thair residens,
Or ye get plenty and prosperite.

---

[1] before I depart forth. [2] gallows. [3] wave. [4] head.
[5] deceive. [6] selfish profit. [7] stealing the horse.
[8] stained. [9] tied up. [10] fined. [11] must. [12] reprieve.
[13] exiled. [14] condemned. [15] advised. [16] also.

This being said, this Lady luminuss
Fra my presens her persoun did depairt;
And I awaikit, and suddanly uprois,
Syne tuk my pen and put all in report,
As ye haif hard.—Thairfor I you exhort,
My soverane lord, unto this taile attend,
And you to serve seik suddanly this sort;
Sen[1] veritie this counsale to you send.

These nervous lines, with scarce any further alteration than the occasional substitution of the modern for the ancient spelling, will become perfectly intelligible to the English reader:—

Then spoke this bird of beauty most bening,
And fled all doubts before her argument:—
When all those fiends are banished by your King
From council, session, peers and parliament,
Whose names and crimes in manner subsequent
I shall declare, in sentence brief and clear,
Before from this sad realm my steps are bent;
Then list—and to this fearful scroll give ear.

First Wilful Wrong must in a halter dangle,
Then hidden Hatred have his death decreed,
And Young Advise be gagg'd no more to wrangle,
Next vile Self-Seeking, that doth richly feed;
And rank Dissembling, who the Law doth lead;
Flattery and Falsehood, that your fame have fyled,
And Ignorance, that sows his rankest seed
Within your schools, must be quick from this court exiled.

Then Treason must be tuck'd up to a tree,
And Murder have a tippet made of tow;
And that foul fiend, whom men call Simony,
Be straight condemn'd, spite all his flattering show.
Till this be done no respite shall ye know,
But shameful slaughter, waste, and indigence,
Shall overtake thy lieges high and low:
Then spare not exhortation—tell the prince

---

[1] since.

That all these caitiffs from the realm be chas'd,
Or put to silence, as I have devised,
And folks more honest in their seats be placed,
Whom since dark Flodden have been all despised
In this poor country, though in others prized.
Then list—their names I'll recapitulate;
Question me not—but having well advised,
Sleep thou thereon, then rise, and to the King them state.

First Justice, Prudence, Force, and Temperance,
With Common-weal and old Experience;
Concord, Correction, Cunning, and Constance,
Love, Fealty, Science, and Obedience,
Conscience upright, Truth, and Intelligence,
Mercy, and Justice, Faith, Hope, Charity—
These in his court must make their residence,
And then this much wrong'd land shall have prosperity.

Thus having sweetly spoke, that lady bright,
In radiant clouds her glorious shape withdrew;
And I awoke, all dazzled with the light,
And penned the vision, in a parchment true,
As ye have heard. Then let me counsel you,
My sovereign lord, unto this tale attend;
Search out with pious zeal this blessed crew,
So to thy throne shall Truth strength adamantine lend.

Oh! let that hideous rout she branded hath,
From thy fair borders instant banish'd be;
Lest Heaven their poisoned counsels use in wrath
To bring thy little flock to penury.
Thy God that on earth's circle sits must see
How the foul weed doth choke the useful corn;
Then list, oh list the bruised poor man's plea,
Lest thou should'st one day be the mark of scorn
Before that awful Judge who wore the crown of thorn.

The reader will forgive a somewhat long extract, when he learns that this vigorous picture of the anarchy of Scotland, during the minority of James V., is unpublished, and the effusion of a poet, William Stewart, whose talent cannot be questioned, but whose life and works are little else than a blank in our national literature.

It was soon after the king's recovery of his personal freedom, and the termination of the power of the Douglases, that Lindsay addressed to the monarch his 'Complaint,' in which he states his own services, remonstrates in a manly tone against the neglect with which he had been treated, and compliments his master upon the efforts which were already made for the establishment of order and good government throughout the realm. It is written throughout, to use the words of Warton, no mean judge of poetry, with vigour, and occasionally with much tenderness and elegance; whilst its pictures of the government and manners of the times, and its digressions upon the author's individual history and feelings, render it interesting and valuable. It is singularly bold in its remonstrances against the injury inflicted both upon the monarch and the kingdom by the reins of government being entrusted too early to his hands. 'They who flattered and indulged thee,' says he, 'for their own selfish ends, took thee, when still a boy, from the schools, and haistely entrusted to thine inexperience the governance of all Scotland:'—

Imprudently, like witless fools,
They took the young prince from the schools,
Quhare he, under obedience,
Was learning virtue and science,
And hastily put in his hand
The government of all Scotland.
As who, when roars the stormy blast,
And mariners are all aghast,
Through dangers of the ocean's rage,
Would take a child of tender age,

That never had been on the sea,
And to his bidding all obey,
Putting the rudder in his hand,
For dread of rocks and the foreland?

* * * * * *

'I may not call it treason,' he continues, 'but was it not folly and madness? May God defend us from again seeing in this realm so young a king! It were long to tell,' he continues, 'in what a strange manner the court was then guided by those who petulantly assumed the whole power, how basely they flattered the young monarch.' The passage is not only spirited and elegant, but valuable in an historical point of view. I shall give it, only altering the ancient language or spelling, and nearly word for word:—

Sir, some would say, your Majesty
Shall now know what is liberty:
Ye shall by no man be restrained,
Nor to the weary school-bench chained.
For us, we think them very fools
That still are drudging at the schools:
'Tis time ye learn to couch a spear,
And bear ye like a man of weir;
And we shall put such men about you,
That all the world shant dare to flout you.
'Twas done; they raised a royal guard,
And royally each soldier fared;
Whilst every one with flattering speech
His Majesty did something teach.
Some gart him ravel at the racket[1],
Some harl'd him to the hurly-hacket,
And some, to show their courtly courses,
Would ride to Leith and run their horses,
And wightly gallop o'er the sand,
They neither spared the spur nor wand.

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[1] made him play at the racket. [2] a school-boy game.

Casting galmonds, with bends and becks,
For wantonness some broke their necks;
There was no game but cards and dice,
And still Sir Flattery bore the price.

Lindsay, with much spirit and humour, represents the interested and avaricious motives with which all this was done. the courtiers and governors of the young monarch engrossing and dividing amongst themselves the richest offices:—

Roundand and whispering to each other,
Tak thou my part, quoth he, my brother;
Be there between us stedfast bands,
When aught shall vaik [1] into our hands,
That each man stand to help his fallow;
I shall thereto man be all hallow—
And if the Treasurer be our friend,
Then shall we get baith tack and teind [2];
Tak he our part, then who dare wrong us?
But we shall part [3] the pelf amang us.

* * * * * *

So hastily they made a band,
Some gather'd gold, some conquest land:
Sir, some would say, by St. Denis,
Give me some lusty benefice,
And ye shall all the profit have;
Give me the name, take thou the lave [4];
But e'er the bulls were weill come hame
His conscience told him 'twas a shame;
An action awful and prodigious,
To make such pactions with the lieges,—
So to avoid the sin and scandal,
'Twas right both name and rent to handle.

Methocht it was a piteous thing
To see that fair, young, tender king,

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[1] any office shall become vacant. [2] both lease and tithe. [3] divide. [4] remainder.

Of whom these gallants had none awe,
But played with him 'pluck-at-the-craw[1].' *

From this sad scene of selfishness and misgovernment, occasioned by the Queen's marriage with the Earl of Angus, and the seizure of the government and person of the young king by the Douglases, Lindsay naturally passes to his own extrusion from office. 'They deprived me of my place,' says he, 'yet, through the kindness of my master, the young king, my pension was punctually paid. Not daring to show my face at court openly, I yet could hide myself in a corner, from which I watched their vanities:'—

When I durst neither peep nor look,
I yet could hide me in a nook;
To see these wondrous vanities,
And how, like any busy bees,
They occupied their golden hours,
With help of their new governours.†

It is impossible within our limits to pursue the analysis of this interesting poem with any minuteness. It proceeds to describe, in vigorous numbers, the torn and distracted state of the country; the rapid revolutions which took place upon the expulsion of the Douglases by Archbishop Beaton and the Regent Albany,—

And others took the governing,
Far worse than they in ilka[2] thing;

the return of Angus to power; the tumult, misery, and bloodshed by which it was accompanied; and finally the escape of the king, with the sudden flight of those who had kept him in such ignominious durance,—

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[1] To play at pluck and crow, to pigeon or cheat one.

[2] every.

* Poems, vol. i. p. 264. † ib. vol. i. p. 267.

> When of their lives they had sic dreed,
> That they were fain to trot o'er Tweed*.

Soon after James's assumption of the supreme power, the state of the borders arrested his attention. Murder, robbery, and excess of every description had for many years held their favourite haunts in these unhappy districts.—Nor were the crimes which disgraced the country confined to broken men and common thieves,—they were openly perpetrated by lords and barons; amongst whom, Cockburn of Henderland, and Adam Scott of Tuschielaw, who was called the 'King of Thieves,' particularly distinguished themselves. The husbandmen and labourers were grievously oppressed; property and human life recklessly invaded and destroyed; 'black maill' levied openly, and all regular industry suspended. Under such circumstances, the king exhibited the energy of his character by levying an army and marching in person against the border thieves. Henderland and Tuschielaw were seized and executed; and the famous Johnny Armstrong, who, by his depredations, had raised himself to power and opulence, met that fate, which, with some justice, has been stigmatised as needlessly severe. The account of this expedition, and of the execution of this noted freebooter, given by Pitscottie, is excellent:—

'To this effect charge was given to all earls, barons, lords, freeholders, and gentlemen, to pass

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[*] Poems, vol. i. p. 272.

with the king to daunton the thieves of Thividaill and Anandaill. Also, the king desired all gentlemen that had doggis that were gud, to bring them with them to hunt in the said bounds, quhilk the most part of the noblemen of the highlands did; such as the Earls of Huntly, Argyle, and Athole, who brought their deer-hounds with them, and hunted with his Majesty. These lords, with many other barons and gentlemen, to the number of twelve thousand men, assembled at Edinburgh, and therefra went with the King's grace to Meggetland, in the quhilk bounds were slain at that time eighteen score of deer.

'Efter this hunting, the king hanged Johne Armstrong, Laird of Gilnockie, whom mony Scottismen heavily lamented; for he was ane redoubted man, and as gude a chieftane as ever was upon the borders either of Scotland or of England; and albeit he was ane loose living man, and sustained the number of twenty-four well-horsed able gentlemen with him, yet he never molested nae Scottis man; but it is said, from the Scottis border to Newcastle in England, there was not ane, of whatsoever estate, but paid to this Johnnie Armstrong a tribute to be free of his cumber,—he was so doubted in England. So when he entered in before the king he came very reverentlie, with the foresaid number of twenty-four gentlemen, very richly apparelled, trusting that in respect he had come to the king's grace wittingly and voluntarily, not being apprehended by the king, he should obtain the more favour. But when the king saw him and his men so gorgeous in their apparel, and so mony braw men under a tirant's command-ment, throwwardlie he turned about his face, and bad tak that tirant out of his sight, saying "What wants yon knave that a king should have?" But when Johne Armstrong perceived that the king kindled in a furie against him, and had no hope of his life, notwithstanding of many great and fair offers which he proposed to the king; that is, that he should sustain himself, with forty gentlemen, ever ready to await upon his Majesty's service, and never to tak a penny fra Scotland, or Scottisman; and that, secondly, there was not a subject in England, duke, earl, lord, or baron, but within a certain day he would bring any of them to his Majesty, quick or dead: he, seeing no hope of the king's favour to him, said, very proudly, "I am but a fool to seek grace at a graceless face; but had I known, Sir, that ye would have taken my life this day, I should have lived upon the borders in despite of King Harrie and you both; for I know King Harrie would weigh down my best horse with gold to know that I were condemned this day." So he was led to the scaffold, and he and all his men hanged *.'

It is still a tradition in the country that the trees, on which this brave freebooter and his gallant company suffered, not long after withered away:—

The treis on which the Armstrongs died
Wi' summir's leaves were gay,
But lang before the harvist tide
They withered all away.

Every reader of the 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border' is familiar with the spirited ballad of

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* Pitscottie's Hist. of Scotland, pp. 249, 257.

Johnny Armstrong. In one material respect the traditionary account of the death of this prince of freebooters is apocryphal. There was no letter of safe-conduct granted by James; no direct communication of any kind between the sovereign and the outlaw previous to his being taken. From the account, quoted by Mr. Pitcairn in that valuable collection of criminal trials which throws so much clear and useful light on the history of the country, it appears, 'that Johne, enticed by the king's servants, forgetting to seek a letter of protection, accompanied with fifty horsemen unarmed, coming to the king, lighted upon some outwatches, who, alleging they had taken him, brought him to the king, who presently caused hang him, with a great number of his accomplices*. Anderson, from whose manuscript history this narrative is taken, observes, that the Lord Maxwell himself, who was then Warden of the West Marches, feared his power, and sought all possible means for his destruction. It is not impossible that some of Maxwell's servants may have deceived Armstrong with assurances of safety, having no authority from the king, and concealing such promises from their master. Johnny was brother to the laird of Mangertown, chief of the clan Armstrong, nor is there any reason to think that the ballad exaggerates either his power or his magnificence:—

They ran their horse on the Langholm-hows,
  They brak their spears wi' mickle main;
The leddies look'd frae their loft windows—
  'God send our men weel hame again.'

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* Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, vol. i. pp. 152, 153.

When Johnny cam before the king
  With all his men sa gallantlie,
The king he mov'd his bonnet to him,
  He trow'd him a king as well as he.

To this day the tradition of the country has preserved many recollections of this regal expedition against the border thieves. The wild and romantic pass through which James penetrated into Ettrick is still known by the appellation of the King's Road; the ruins of the castle of Henderland are pointed out in the vale of Megget; and near it the Dow's Linn, a romantic waterfall, at the side of which is a wild natural cavern. To this spot, it is said, the unhappy wife of the border freebooter retreated whilst her husband was manacled before his own gate. In the valley of the Ettrick, opposite to Rankleburn, is seen the dark tower of Tuschielaw, where Adam Scott, the King of the Border, so long kept the neighbourhood in terror, and levied his black mail from the trembling inhabitants. It is to this famous expedition of James that Lindsay alludes in these encomiastic verses:—

Now Justice holds her sword on high,
With her balance of Equity;
And in this realm has made sic ordour,
Baith thro' the hieland and the bordour,
That Oppression and all his fallows
Are hanged high upon the gallows.
Dame Prudence has thee be the heed,
And Temperance doth thy bridle lead;
I see dame Force mak assistance,
Bearing thy targe of assurance;
And lusty Lady Chastity
Has banished Sensualitie.

* * * * * *

Policy and Peace begin to plant,
That virtuous men can nathing want;
And masterful and idle lowns[1]
Shall banished be in the Galzeownis;
Johne Upland ben full blyth, I trow,
Because the rash-bush keeps the cow*.

Lindsay concludes this piece by some admirable advice to the young king on the subject of his duties and his responsibility, not neglecting a prudent hint that if his Majesty made provision for his old servant, or, at least, lent him

Of gold ane thousand pound or tway,

it would be for the credit and advantage of both: ‘If not,’ says he, in a tone of calm Christian philosophy, ‘My God

Shall cause me stand content
With quiet life and sober rent,
And take me in my latter age
Unto my simple hermitage,
To spend the gear my elders won,
As did Diogenes in his tun†.

It is pleasing to find, that soon after the presentation of this poem to his sovereign, the same affection which prompted the punctual payment of Lindsay's pension induced James to promote the servant of his early years to the honourable office of Lion King at Arms,—a situation the duties of which were probably of as high antiquity as the bearing of coats armorial, but which under this name does not appear earlier than the reign of Robert the Second. At the coronation of this monarch, as it is described in a manuscript quoted by Chalmers, the Lion King at Arms was called in by the Lord Marshal, attended by the heralds, who came in their coats or tabards, 'those awful vestments' of which Sir David speaks in his 'Lament for Queen Magdalen;' the Lion then sat down at the king's feet, and the heralds went to the stage prepared for them; after which, the Marshal, by the mouth of the Bishop of St. Andrew's, did swear the Lion, who, being sworn, put on his crown ordained him to wear for the solemnity*. The coronation of the Lion himself, when he was appointed to this dignity, was a matter of great state and solemnity. The ancient crown of Scotland was placed on his head by the hand of the king himself, and it was his privilege, on the day of his enthronization, to dine at the royal table, wearing the crown during the continuance of the feast†.

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[1] fellows.

* Poems, vol. i., pp. 273, 274.

† Ibid. p. 279.

Shortly after his promotion, Lindsay appears to have written the 'Complaint of the King's Papingo,' a satirical poem, which may be regarded as his first open declaration of war against the abuses of the Romanist religion in Scotland. In the concluding verses of his 'Complaint,' he had congratulated the king upon the happy circumstance that all things throughout the realm had been reduced into good order except 'the spirituality,' and he now introduces the 'Papingo,' to expose the ignorance, avarice, and licentiousness which, as he alleges, then disgraced the church. The fiction of throwing his observations into the mouth of this feathered satirist, so well known for its petulance, garrulity, and licentiousness of remark, was ingenious and prudent: ingenious, because it enabled him to be severe under the disguise of being natural; and prudent, as in case of any threatened ecclesiastical persecution, it permitted him to substitute the papingo for the poet. To give anything like a complete analysis of the poem is impossible within our limits; but some passages may be quoted, which are remarkable for their light and graceful spirit. After lamenting, in his initiatory stanzas, that his genius does not permit him to soar so high as his elder and more illustrious brethren of the lyre, he warns the reader that since in the garden of eloquence and poetry every rich and resplendent flower hath been already plucked by these master-spirits, he must be contented with a lower theme, 'The Complaint of a wounded Parrot:—'

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* Chalmers' Life, prefixed to his edition of Lindsay's Poems, vol. i. p. 13.

† Ibid. p. 51.

> And syne I find nane other new sentence,
> I sall declare, or I depart you fro,
> The complaint of ane wounded papingo.

'As for the rudeness of my composition,' he adds, 'I can only say, it was addressed to rural folk, and must hide itself far from the eyes of men of learning. Should they, however, search it out, and run it down as idle and foolish, my defence is, that it was made in sport for country lasses:—'

> Then shall I swear, I made it but in mows[1]
> To landwart lassis quhilkis keep ky and yowis[2].

Although thus deprecating the severity of learned criticism, and addressing himself to less fastidious readers, nothing can be more graceful or pleasing than our first introduction to the papingo:—

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[1] sport. [2] cows and sheep.

Ane papingo, right plesand and perfyte[1],
Presentit wes till our maist nobill King,
Of quhome his Grace ane lang tyme had delyte,—
Mair fair of forme I wot flew ne'er on wing:
This proper[2] bird he gave in governing
To me, quhilk[3] was his simpill servitoure,
On quhome I did my diligence and cure,

To learn her language artificial,
To play 'platfute' and quhissill 'futebefore'[4];
Bot of her inclinatioun naturall,
Sche counterfeit all fowlis less or more
Of hir curage[5]. She wald, without my lore,
Syng like the merle, and craw like to the cock,
Pew like the gled[6], and chaunt like the laverock[7],

Bark like a dog, and kekill like ane kae[8],
Blait like ane hog[9], and buller like ane bull,
Wail like ane gouk[10], and greit quhen she wes wae[11],
Climb on ane cord, syne lauch and play the fule[12];
Sche micht have bene ane minstrel agains Yule[13]:
This blyssit bird was to me so plesand,
Where'er I fure[14] I bure hir on my hand.

With scarce any alteration these graceful lines may be made easy to an English reader:—

A parrot once most pleasant and perfyte,
Presented was unto our noble king,
In whom his Majesty took great delight,
For never flew a wittier bird on wing:
It hap't to me was giv'n the governing

---

[1] accomplished. [2] elegant. [3] who.
[4] popular games and tunes. [5] of her own self.
[6] hawk. [7] lark. [8] jackdaw. [9] sheep.
[10] cuckoo. [11] sorry. [12] fool.
[13] Christmas. [14] went.

Of this accomplished creature; for my place
Was, in my youth, at court, an usher to his grace.

And soon my pleasing labour I began,
  And soon far wiser than my lore she grew,
For she would talk like any Christian man,
  And other wond'rous things full well she knew;
  She counterfeited every bird that flew,—
Like thrushes chaunted, trilled like sky-lark clear,
Pew'd as a hawk, or crowed, as loud as chanticleer;

Like bull she groaned, then chattered as a jay,
  Bark'd as a hound, or bleated like a sheep;
The cuckoo-note full well she knew, perfay;
  Next, like a tight-rope dancer would she leap,
  And swing, and fall, and slyly seem to weep,
Whilst to her face her cunning claw she prest;
Then would she start, and laugh, and swear 'twas all
  in jest.

With her conversing not an hour was sad,
  So happily she knew to play the fool—
So many a song, so many a trick she had—
  She might have been a minstrel sweet at Yule.
  I bore to her a love that ne'er could cool,
And she to me; where'er I turned my feet
This dear papingo had, upon my wrist, her seat.

With his pleasant companion sitting on his hand, Lindsay, one sweet summer's morning, strolls into a garden to enjoy himself

Amang the fragrant flowers
Walking alane, nane but my bird and I.

He wishes to 'say his hours,'—to repeat his morning orisons—and, in the interval, places his little green friend on a branch beside him; and she, delighted with her liberty, instantly begins to climb from twig to twig, till she reaches the dizzy height of the topmost bough—

Sweet bird, said I, bewair! mount not ouir hie[1],
  Returne in tyme, perchance thy feet may failzie;
Thou art richt fat, and nocht weill us'd to flie—
  The greedie gled I dreid she thee assailzie
  I will, said she, ascend, vailzie quod vailzie;
It is my kyne[2] to climb aye to the hicht,
Of feather and bone I wat weill I am wicht[3].

So on the heichest lytill tendir twist[4],
  With wing displayit, scho sat full wantonlye;
But Boreas blew ane blast, or e'er sho wist,
  Quhilk brak[5] the branch, and blew her suddanlye
  Down to the ground, with mony careful crye

Trow ye, gif that my hart was wo-begone
  To see that fowl flychter[6] amang the flowirs,—
Quhilk, with greit murnyng, gan to make her mone.
  Now cummin are, she said, the fatal houris
  Of bitter death, now mon I thole[7] the schouris
Oh, dame Nature! I pray thee, of thy grace,
Lend me laiser to speik ane lytill space,

For to complene my fate infortunate,
  And to dispone my geir[8], or I departe,—
Sen of all comfort I am desolate,
  Allane, except the deith, heir with his dart,
  With awful cheir, reddy to peirse my hart.
And with that word she tuke ane passioun,
Syne flatlyngis fell and swappit into swoun[9].

With sorry hart, persit[10] with compassioun,
  And salt teris distilling from myne ene,
To hear that birdis lamentatioun,
  I did approche undir ane hawthorne grene,
  Quhan I micht hear and see, and be unseen;
And quhen this bird had swooned twice or thryse,
Scho gan to speik[11], saying upon this wyse.

Thus modernised—

[1] high.
[2] nature.
[3] strong.
[4] twig.
[5] broke.
[6] flutter.
[7] bear.
[8] wealth.
[9] sunk over in a swoon.
[10] pierced.
[11] speak.

Sweet bird, said I, beware! mount not too high,
Hawks may be near—perchance thou'lt slip thy foot;
Besides thou'rt very fat, nor used to fly
Tush, I will mount, she answered, *coûte qui coûte;*
Am I a bird? a popinjay to boot?
And shall I not climb up a sorry tree?
Have I my nature lost? talk not such stuff to me.

So climbing to the highest twig she past,
And her green wings most wantonly outspread;
But e'er she wist full Boreas sent a blast,
Broke the slim perch—then down she dropt like lead
Upon a stake—a fearful wound it made
In her fair breast—out rushed the sanguine rill,
Whilst in faint tones she cried, I wish to make my will.

Thou canst not doubt my heart was woe-begone,
To see my favourite weltering mid the flowers,
Fluttering in death, and pouring forth her moan.
Adieu, she cried; adieu, my happy hours!
Now cruel death thy shadow o'er me lours.
Thus spoke my sweet and most poetic bird,
Ah spare me but a while, my last request regard!

Though I have much mismanaged mine estate,
I have some wealth to leave ere I depart;
Friends may be blest, though I be desolate.
Thus kindly and considerate was the heart
Of poor papingo; but a sudden smart
Now coming o'er her, from the mortal wound,
Shook every inmost nerve, and falling flat she swoon'd.

Pierced with compassion at her wretched plight,
Down my warm cheek there dropt full many a tear;
Yet I was anxious to be out of sight,
That her last words I might more truly hear.
So by the hawthorns screen'd I drew me near—
Thrice did she swoon, by poignant pain opprest,
Then oped her languid eyes, and thus her woes exprest.

In her last moments, the unfortunate papingo addresses an epistle, first to the king, her royal master, as in duty bound, next to her brethren at court, and, lastly, she enters into a long expostulation with her executors, a pye, a raven, and a hawk, who personate the characters of a canon regular, a black monk, and a holy friar. In this manner, somewhat inartificial, if we consider that the poem is long, and the papingo in the agonies of death, Lindsay contrives to introduce his advice to the king, his counsel to the courtiers and nobles, and his satire upon the corruptions of the clergy. Much in each of these divisions is excellent, the observations are shrewd, the political advice sound and honest, the poetry always elegant, often brilliant, and the wit of that light and graceful kind, which, unlike some of his other pieces, is not deformed by coarseness or vulgarity. It may indeed be generally remarked of Lindsay's poetry, that there is in it far greater variety, both in subject and invention, than in any of his predecessors, not excepting even Dunbar or Douglas. I regret that I may not delay long upon any of these epistles. A stanza or two from each will be sufficient to prove the truth of my criticism. In the epistle to the king, after alluding to his fine natural genius and accomplishments, he introduces these nervous lines :—

> Quharefore sen thou hes sic capacitie
>   To lerne to play sae pleasandly, and sing,
> Ride hors, rin speiris, with grit audacitie ;
>   Schute with handbow, crossbow, and culvering ;
>   Amang the rest, sir, learn to be ane king.
> Kyith[1] on that craft, thy pregnant fresh ingyne[2],
> Grantit to thee by influence divine.

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[1] practice.

[2] genius.

Pray thou to Him that rent wes on the rude,
  The to defend from deidis[1] of defame,
That na poeit report of the bot gude[2],
  For princis days induris bot ane drame;
  Sen fyrst king Fergus bure ane dyadame
Thou art the last king of five scoir and fyve,
And all are deid, and nane bot thou on lyve.

Treit ilk trew baron as he wes thy brother,
  Quhilk mon[3] at neid thee and thy realm defend.
Quhen suddanlie ane doth oppress ane other,
  Let justice, mixed with mercy, thame amend,
  Have thou their hartis, thou hes yneuch[4] to spend.
And be the contrair thou art bot king of bone,
From tyme thy lordis' harts bene fro the gone*.

The epistle to his dear brother at court contains an excellent commentary on the disasters to which kings and nobles have been generally exposed in all countries, with a more particular allusion to the history of Scotland, from the period of Robert the Third to the fatal field of Flodden, and the troubled minority of his own sovereign. In the rapid sketches which he gives of the characters and misfortunes of the various monarchs who pass before us, the poet shows great discrimination, as well as a remarkable command of powerful and condensed versification. The miserable assassination of the Duke of Rothsay, the broken heart of his royal father, the captivity and cruel murder of James the First, the sudden death of his successor, the rebellion of the nobles, and of his own son against James the Third, the hanging of Cochrane and his 'Cative Companie' over Lander Brig, the brilliant and gallant court, and the popular government of the fourth James, and its sudden and sanguinary close at Flodden, are all brought before us with great vigour and clearness of detail, and at the same time with a brevity which marks the hand of a master. I select the character of James the Fourth :—

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[1] deeds. [2] nothing but good [3] must. [4] enough.
* Poems, vol. i., pp. 300, 302, 303.

Allace ! quhare bene that richt redouted Roy,
  That potent prince, gentle King James the Feird[1].
I pray to Christ his saul for to convoye ;
  Ane greater nobill rang not in the eird[2].
  Oh, Atropos ! warye[3] we may thy weird[4],
For he was mirrour of humilitie,
Lodesterre and lamp of liberalitie.

During his tyme did justice sa prevail,
  The savage Ilis then tremblit for terrour ;
Eskdale, Euesdale, Lidsdale, and Annandale,
  Durst nocht rebel, douting his dintis dour[5];
  And of his lordis had sic perfyte favour.
So, for to shaw[6] that he afeird not ane,
On thro his realm he wald ryde him alane.

And of his court thro Europe sprang the fame
  Of lusty lordis and lufesome ladies ying[7],
Triumphant tournays, justings, knichtly game,
  With all pastyme according for a king.
  He was the glore[8] of princely governing ;
Quhilk[9] through the ardent love he had to France,
Against England did move his ordinance*.

The poet describes with still greater power the 'reif mischief and misgovernment' during the 'tender youth and innocence' of his master James the Fifth. 'It was then,' says he, with a mixture of that high and homely imagery which we constantly meet with in Lindsay's poems, 'that Oppression blew his bugle, and Jok Upland (John the Countryman) lost his mare, alluding to the constant horse-stealing on the borders. The successive changes which were exhibited at that time in the troubled government of the state, the domination and subsequent banishment of the Douglases, the power of Archbishop Beaton, and his sudden fall, when he was compelled to skulk through the country in the disguise of a freebooter, are next described, and parallel examples of the misery, deceit, and insecurity of courts, drawn from the history of other countries; after which the poet directs the mind of his youthful sovereign, with great solemnity, to the celestial court above the skies, where sorrow and mutability can never enter; thinking in his own person, although the papingo is the speaker, and overlooking for a moment the absurdity and profanity of introducing so sacred an exhortation in the circumstances under which it occurs. With more verisimilitude the epistle of the dying favourite to his brother at court, concludes with a sweet address to Stirling, Lithgow, and Falkland, the royal palaces in whose gardens of pleasure and delight he had passed so many happy hours.

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[1] Fourth. [2] earth. [3] curse. [4] destiny.
[5] dreading his sore strokes. [6] show. [7] young.
[8] glory. [9] which.
* Poems, vol. i., pp. 313, 314, 315.

> Adieu, fair Snowdoun, with thy towris hie,
> Thy chapel-royal, park, and table round;
> May, June, and July, would I dwell in thee,
> Were I a man, to hear the birdis sound,
> Which doth against thy royal rock redound.
> Adieu, Lithgow, whose palace of plesance
> Meets not its peer in Portingale or France.

Farewell, Falkland, the forteress of Fife,
Thy velvet park under the Lomond law;
Sometime in thee I led a lusty life,
The fallow-deer to see them raik on raw[1].
Count men to come to thee they have great awe,
Saying thy burgh bene to all burrows baill[2],
Because in thee they never got good ale*.

It will be seen from these extracts, that the poet often forgets the papingo, fluttering and bleeding amidst the flowers, to indulge in a strain of moral and philosophic reflection, which proceeds rather ludicrously from a bird so situated; and if the remark applies to this portion of the poem, it may be directed still more strongly against that third division in which she addresses an expostulation of great length, severity, and vigor against the abuses of the spiritual estate. There is much truth, much learning, and abundance of playful satire in this 'expostulation of the papingo with her executors the jay, the hawk, and the raven, whilst, at the same time, it cannot be denied that Lindsay's ideas are founded on some of the very questionable theories of Wickliff, who, not considering religion as reduced to a civil establishment, and because our Saviour and his apostles were poor, imagined that secular possessions were inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel†.' It is asserted, that in the primitive and purer ages of Christianity, the church was wedded to Poverty, whose children were Chastity and Devotion. The Emperor Constantine unfortunately took upon him to divorce this holy couple, and without leave asked, or dispensation granted, espoused the church to Dame Property, upon which Devotion withdrew herself to a hermitage, and, in due time, Dame Property produced two daughters, so beautiful, that all persons, especially the spirituality, pronounced them peerless. These were named Riches and Sensualitie, and so universal was the admiration and regard which they attracted, that very soon all spiritual matters fell under their direction. The rich dresses of the clergy, under this new state of things, are well described :—

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[1] walk in a row.

[2] thy burgh is the most wretched of all.

* Poems, vol. i., pp. 323, 324.

† Warton, Hist. English Poetry, vol. iii., p. 149.

Cleikand to them skarlet and cramosye[1],
With miniver[2], martnell[3], gryss[4], and rich armyne
Their ance low hearts exalted are so high.
To see their papal pomp it is a pyne;
More rich array is now, with fringes fine,
Upon the trappings of a bishop's mule,
Nor e'er had Paul or Peter agains yule[5].

The scene which takes place at the death of poor papingo is described with great felicity and humour. The gled or hawk, who pretends to be a friar, holding up her head, whilst the raven stands on one side, and the magpie on the other, enquires tenderly to which of the three she chooses to leave her fortune and goods :—

Chuse you, she said, which of us brethren here
Shall have of all your natural geir[6] the curis,
Ye know none bene more holy creaturis.

[1] crimson. [2] white fur. [2] fur of the martin.
[4] a rich foreign fur. [5] Christmas. [6] wealth.

I am content, quoth the poor papingo,
That ye, Friar Gled, and Corbie[1] Monk, your brother,
Have cure of all my gudis, and no mo[2],
Since at this time friendship I find none other.
We shall be to you true as to our mother,
Quoth they, and swore to fulfill her intent;
Of that, said she, I take ane instrument.

She then leaves her green mantle to the quiet and unobtrusive owl, her golden and brilliant eyes to the bat, her sharp polished beak to the affectionate pelican—

To help to pierce her tender heart in twain;

her angelical voice to the single-songed cuckoo, her eloquence and 'tongue rhetorical' to the goose; her bones, which she directs to be enclosed in a case of ivory, to the Arabian phœnix, her heart to the king her master, and her intestines, liver, and lungs, to her three executors. With scarce the alteration of a word, these last stanzas throw themselves into graceful poetry:—

To the lone owl so indigent and poor,
Which, by the day, for shame dare not be seen,
I leave my glossy, glittering coat of green.

Mine eyes, of liquid gold and cristal clear,
Unto the bat ye shall them twain present
In Phœbus' presence, who dares not appear,
So dim her natural sight, and impotent.
My burnished beak I leave with good intent
Unto the gentle, piteous pelicane,
To help to pierce her tender heart in twain.

I leave the gouk[3], who hath no song but one,
My musick, with my voice angelical;
And give ye to the goose, when I am gone,

---

[1] crow. [2] no more. [3] cuckoo.

My eloquence, and tongue rhetorical;
Then take and dry my bones, both great and small,
Next close them in a case of ivory fair,
And them present unto the phœnix rare,

To burn with her when she her life renews;
In Arabie the blest she makes her beir;
Soon will ye know her, by her heavenly hues,
Gold, azure, purple, ruby, synopeir [1];
Her date it is to live five hundred year—
So haste ye need not, but when her you see
Bear her my tender love. Now, farewell, brethren three!

Having finished her last injunctions, Polly disposes herself to die, and falling into her mortal passion, after a severe struggle, in which the blood pitifully gushes from her wounds, she at last breathes out her life.

Extinguish'd were her natural wittis five.

Her executors then proceed to divide her body in a very summary manner. 'My heart was sad,' says Lindsay, 'to see this doleful partition of my favorite; her angel feathers scattered by these greedy cormorants in the air.' Nothing at last is left except the heart, which the magpye, with a sudden fit of loyalty, vindicates as belonging to the king. The portion, however, is too tempting to the raven. "Now, may I be hanged," says he, "if this piece shall be given either to king or duke;" a tussle ensues, the greedy hawk, seizing the heart in her talons, soars away, whilst the rest pursue her with a terrible din, and disappear in the air.' So ends the tragedy of the papingo; the poet dismissing his little quhair or book with the usual acknowledgment of its rudeness and imperfection, a very unnecessary apology, for, as the extracts we have given abundantly demonstrate, it is in point of elegance, learning, variety of description, and easy playful humour, worthy to hold its place with any poem of the period, either English or Scottish.

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[1] synopeir green

Soon after writing this work, Lindsay, in 1531, was dispatched by the government on a political mission to Brussels. Its object was the renewal of the commercial treaty concluded by James the First between Scotland and the Netherlands; his fellow ambassadors were David Panter, Secretary to the King, and Sir James Campbell, of Lundie. Margaret, the Governess of the Netherlands, was lately dead, upon which the Queen of Hungary had been raised to that splendid prefecture, and the Scottish ambassadors were received by this princess and the Emperor Charles the Fifth, then at Brussels, with great state and solemnity. They were soon after dismissed, having succeeded in every point of their negociation. In a letter from Antwerp to his friend the Scottish Secretary of State, Lindsay thus expresses himself:—'It war too langsome to write to your L. the triumphs that I have seen, since my cumin to the court imperial, that is to say, the triumphs and justings, the terrible tournaments, the fighting on foot in barras, the names of lords and knights that were hurt that day of the great tournament, whose circumstances I have written at length in articles to show the King's Grace at my home coming*.' It is a pity that these 'articles,' containing an account of such splendid entertainments, and, it is to be presumed, some description also of Antwerp, the great commercial emporium of Europe, cannot now be discovered.

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* Chalmers' Life, p. 14.

On his return from this mission, Lindsay's mind was occupied with two great subjects, his marriage, and his celebrated 'Satire of the three Estates.' His marriage was unhappy, originating probably in ambition, (for he united himself to a daughter of the house of Douglas,) and ending in disappointment. He had no children, and from the terms in which he commonly talks of the sex, it may be plausibly conjectured that the Lady Lioness was not possessed of a very amiable disposition.

His 'Satire of the three Estates' was a more successful experiment, and is well deserving of notice, as the first approach to the regular drama which had yet been made in Scotland. In this country, as in the other European kingdoms, we may believe there was the same progress in the history of the stage from the ancient exhibitions entitled mysteries, to the more complicated pageants known by the name of moralities, and from thence the transition must have been easy to the mixed species of drama of which Lindsay's satire presented probably a perfect specimen. Jugglers, minstrels, buffoons, and masqued characters, appear at the Scottish court, anterior to, and during the reign of James the First. 'At the celebration of the nuptials of James the Fourth and the Lady Margaret, a company of English comedians, under the management of John English, regaled the court with a dramatic representation.' It may be suspected that John English is the 'Gentle Johne the English Fule,' whom we have already noticed as making so prominent a figure in the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer. Of this exhibition it is to be regretted that we have only a very brief account by a contemporary author:—'After dinnar,' says Johne Younge, 'a moralitie was played by the said Master Inglishe and his companions, in the presence of the kyng and quene; and then daunces were daunced*.' In 1515, when John, Duke of Albany, arrived from France to assume the regency, we learn from Lesly, that he was received by many lords and barons, on the 26th of May, and sundrie farces and good playes were made by the burgesses to his honor and praise†. Lindsay, as we have already seen, played farces on the floor, 'for the amusement of his youthful and royal master; and now, in 1535, when his genius was more vigorous, and his acquaintance with human nature more extensive, he produced a moralitie, which, in the regularitie of its form, the breadth and boldness of its satire, and the variety of its delineations of character, was superior to the productions of any of the early English dramatists.' 'Whether,' says Chalmers, 'the matter or the manner of this drama be considered, it must be allowed to be a very singular performance, and to have carried away the palm of dramatic composition from the contemporary moralities of England, till the epoch of the first tragedy in Gorboduc, and of the first comedy in Gammer Gurton's Needle.'

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* Leland Collect., vol. iv., p. 258.

† Lesly's History, Bannat. Ed., p. 102.

Some things are remarkable in this early dramatic composition. It was acted before as refined an audience as could then be assembled. The king and queen, the ladies and nobles of the court, with the spiritual estate, were present, and yet its coarseness and licentiousness is extreme, and on many subjects its wit of such a kind as to preclude all quotation. Yet Lindsay wrote in the character of a professed reformer of manners; but, if its grossness and vulgarity give us a low picture of the morality or delicacy of the age, the boldness of the author, and the liberality or folly of the audience, are equally conspicuous. The representation took place before the king, with his favorite ministers and advisers, yet it lashes his youthful excesses, and their profligate and selfish devices, with unsparing severity. It was performed in presence of the bishops and clergy, and before an immense multitude of the people, the burgesses, the yeomen, the poor labourers, and tacksmen, and yet it exposes with a poignancy of satire, and a breadth of humour which must have made the deepest impression, the abuses of the Catholic religion, the evils of pluralities and non-residence, the ignorance of the priests, the grievances of tithes, the profligacy of the prelates, and the happy effects which would result from a thorough and speedy reformation. Hitherto what had been written against these excesses had never reached the people; it was generally shut up in a learned language, which they did not understand; if composed in English, there were few printing-presses to multiply books, or if printed, the great body of the people could not read them. But Lindsay, when he wrote a play in the language of the people, and procured permission to have it acted before them, at once acquired a moral influence over the times, and gave a strength and edge to his satire, which probably neither the king, the clergy, nor the author himself contemplated. Had it been otherwise, it is difficult to believe that the prince or prelates would have suffered, or any author have dared the trial of such an experiment.

Another singular feature in this dramatic curiosity is its extravagant length and tediousness. These are certainly such as to impress us with a high admiration of the patience of a feudal audience. 'We may learn,' says Chalmers, 'from the length of the perusal of this production, that its exhibition must have consumed the live long day; and we are informed by Charteris, the bookseller, who was himself present, that its representation, in 1554, before the Queen-Regent, lasted "fra nine hours afore-noon till six hours at even." And yet this is nothing to the extended representation of the English mysteries during the persevering curiosity of feudal times.' 'In 1391,' honest Stow tells us, 'that a play was acted by the parish-clerks of London, which continued three days together, the king, queen, and nobles of the realm being present; and another was performed in 1409, which lasted eight dayes, containing matter from the creation of the world, whereat was present most of the nobility and gentry of England.'

The satire of the 'Three Estates' is divided into three parts. Of these great divisions, the first appears to have been directed against the evil councillors, who, under the minority of James the Fifth, neglected the virtuous and prudent education of the young monarch, and permitted his youth to be polluted by idleness and vice. The *dramatis personæ* are numerous: we have King Humanity, Rex Humanitas, Diligence, Good Counsel, Hameliness, Verity, Chastity, and Divine Correction. In addition to these, such low and disreputable interlocutors as Flattery, Falsehood, Sensuality, intrude themselves, with occasional appearances of abbots, prioresses, parsons, placebo, Deceit, Danger, Solace, and Soutar's wife. The proceedings open with a sort of prologue by Diligence, who requests the audience to remember that no satire is intended against any person in particular; that all is general, offered in pastime, and to be heard in silence. 'Therefore,' says he, 'let every man keep his one tongue, without permitting it to wag against us, and every woman her two.'

> Prudent people, I pray you all,
> Take na man grief in special,
> For we shall speik in general,
> For pastime and for play.
> Therefore, till all our rhymes be rung,
> Let every man keep weill ane tongue,
> And every woman tway[1].

The plot of the first part, if it deserves such a name, is extremely simple. King Humanity, with a disposition naturally easy and amiable, is seduced into evil and wicked courses by Flattery and Sensuality, from which he is at last reclaimed by Divine Correction and Good Counsel. He then declares himself ready to redress all grievances and correct all abuses, for which end Diligence is ordered to summon the Three Estates of the Realm. 'Here,' says the stage direction, 'shall the messenger Diligence return, and crying, oyez, oyez, oyez, say thus'—

---

[1] two.

At the command of King Humanitie,
  I warne and charge all members of Parliament,
Baith spiritual estate and temporalitie,
  That till his Grace they be obedient,
  And speid them to the court incontinent
In gude ordour [1], arrayit royallie
  Wha beis absent, or inobedient
The king's displeasure they shall underlye
  Also I mak you exhortatioun,
Since ye have heard the first part of our play
  Go tak ane drink and mak collatioun,
Ilk man drink till his marrow, I you pray

The second part opens with an attack upon the extreme severity with which the churchmen exacted their tithes, a poor mendicant appearing on the stage, and asking charity, with a miserable story of the oppression under which he had sunk. During the dialogue which takes place between the Pauper, Diligence, and a Pardoner, or retailer of the papal indulgences, the Three Estates of the Realm issue from the 'palzeoun,' or tent, in procession, but, to the horror and astonishment of the audience, they approach the king's presence, not in the usual fashion, with their faces turned towards the sovereign, but going backwards. Correction enquires the cause of this strange procedure—

---

[1] order.

Correctioun.

My tender friends, I pray you, with my hart,
Declair to me the thing that I wad speir[1].
What is the cause that ye gang[2] all backwart?
The veritie thereof fain wald I hear.

Spiritualitie.

Soverane, we have gain so this mony[3] a year,
Howbeit ye think we gang indecently,
We think we gang richt wondrous pleasantlie.

Diligence.

Sit down, my lords, into your proper places,
Syne let the King consider all sic cases;
Sit down, Sir Scribe, and Dempster sit down, too,
And fence the court as ye were wont to do.

The sovereign now announces his readiness to redress all abuses, but is reproved for his hasty resolution by the Spirituality, upon which, Correction, declaring his astonishment that such abominable counsel should proceed from these grave sages, orders Diligence to make open proclamation that every man who feels himself aggrieved should give in his bill, or come forward and tell his story:—

Haste, Diligence, proclaim it is our will
That every man opprest give in his bill.

No sooner is this invitation made public, than John the Commonweill comes dancing in upon the stage in the highest possible spirits, although rather sorrily clad; upon which, this homely dialogue ensues between him and Rex Humanitas:—

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[1] enquire. [2] go. [3] many.

Rex Humanitas.
Show me thy name, gudeman, I thee command.
Johne.
Marry, Johne Commonweill of fair Scotland.
Rex.
The Commonweill has been amang his faes [1].
Johne.
Yes, sir, that gars the Commonweill want claes [2].
Rex.
What is the cause the Commonweill is crukit [3]?
Johne.
Because the Commonweill has been o'erlukit [4].
Rex.
What gars [5] thee look so with ane dreary heart?
Johne.
Because the three estates gang [6] all backwart.

A long catalogue of abuses is now presented by John, which it is impossible to analyse particularly, although, in some instances, they present a singular picture of the times. The pauper's description of the law's delay, in the Consistory Court, is excellent. He had brought an action for the recovery of damages against a neighbour, to whom he had lent his good grey mare:—

'Marry, I lent my mear to fetch hame coals,
And he hir drownit in the quarry holes;
And I ran to the Consistore to pleinzie [7],
And there I happt amangane greedy meinzie [8];
They gave me first ane thing they call *citandum*,
Within aucht [9] dayis I got but *debellandum*,
Within ane moneth [10] I gat *ad opponendum*,
In half ane yeir I got *inter loquendum*,
And syne [11], how call ye it? *ad replicandum*;
But I could ne'er ane word yet understand him;

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[1] foes. [2] clothes. [3] crooked. [4] overlooked, neglected.
[5] causes. [6] go. [7] complain. [8] multitude.
eight. [10] a month. [11] then.

And then they gart[1] me cast out mony plakkis[2],
And gart me pay for four-and-twentie actis;
Bot or they cam half gate[3] to *concludendum*,
The feind ane plack was left for to defend him.
Thus they postpon'd me twa yeir with their traine,
Syne, *hodie ad octo*, bade me come againe.
And then thir rukis they rowpit[4] wonder fast,
For sentence silver they cry'd at the last;
Of *pronunciandum* they made wonder fain,
But I gat never my gude grey mear again.

Many interesting sketches of national manners are to be found in this satire; yet we must be on our guard against the error of considering Lindsay's descriptions as exactly faithful to truth and nature. The probability is, that they were strong caricatures, the trick of all political satirists, who, getting hold of an idea originally true, pare it down, or dress it up, to suit their own purposes, till it loses its identity, although it gains in the power of exciting ridicule.

All abuses having been duly investigated, and a remedy provided, Correction proposes that John Commonweill should be stripped of his ragged habiliments, clothed in a new suit 'of satin damas, or of velvet fine,' and placed amongst the lords in the parliament. He is accordingly arrayed gorgeously, and, having taken his place, Correction congratulates the audience—

All vertuous pepill[5] now may be rejosit[6],
  Sen Commonweill has gottin ane gay garmount[7],
And ignorants out of the kirk deposit;
  Devout doctouris, and clarkis of renoun,
  Now in the kirk shall have dominioun;

---

[1] made. [2] pennies. [3] halfway.
[4] those rooks croaked fast.
[5] people. [6] rejoiced. [7] garment.

And gude Counsall, with ladie Veritie,
Are ministeris to our King's Majesty.
  Blist is that realm that hes ane prudent king,
Quhilk dois delyte to heir the veritie,
  Punisching thame that plainly dois maling,
Contrair the Commonweill and equitie.

Proclamation is then made of the acts of the parliament, Theft, Deceit, and Falsehood are hanged, after having severally addressed the people; Folly is indulged with a reprieve, and the piece concludes with an epilogue by Diligence, entreating the audience to take 'their lytil sport' (such is the term he uses for a play lasting nine hours) in patience, making allowances for the rudeness of the matter, and the poverty of the style.

As to the manner in which this piece was performed, it seems to have been acted in the open air, the king, lords and ladies occupying raised seats, or covered galleries, and the *dramatis personæ*, according to the progress of the entertainment, coming out or going into a pavilion pitched on the green field, where the stage was erected. This is evident from some of the marginal directions, such as, 'Here shall Gude Counsall show himself in the fields; here they depart and pass to the pailzion; here shall the carle loup off the scaffold.' Of scenery there can be traced no vestige; but as a hill and a running stream appear in the play, the ground where it was acted was so chosen that nature supplied them; and, in other respects, the machinery required seems to have been extremely simple. A throne or royal seat for the mimic king, benches for his parliament, a pulpit from which Folly preaches his sermon, the stocks, which are frequently used as a punishment throughout the piece, and a gallows on which malefactors are hanged, constitute the whole. Some of the stage-directions are quaint and amusing. 'Here shall the wyvis ding their gudemen with silence.' 'Here shall Flattery spy Veritie with ane dumb countenance.' 'Here sall Johne Commonweill loup the stank, or else fall in it;' a singular alternative to be left to honest Johne, who, at this time, is represented as clothed in tattered garments and almost naked.

There is a letter published by Pinkerton, in the appendix to his History, from Sir Ralph Evre to the Lord Privy Seal of England, in which a marked allusion is made to this play of Lindsay's having been acted before the king. It appears that Sir Ralph had been commissioned by Henry the Eighth to sound the Scottish monarch as to his disposition to reform the spiritual estate in his dominions after the same system that his uncle had pursued in England. 'I had divers communings,' says Evre, 'with Sir Thomas Bellenden, one of the said councillors for Scotland, a man by estimation, appearing to be the age of fifty years or above, and of gentle and sage conversation, touching the staye of the spiritualitie in Scotland. And gathering him to be a man inclined to the sort used in our sovereign's realm of England, I did so largely break with him in those behalves, as to move to know of him what minde the king and council of Scotland was inclined unto, concerning the Bishop of Rome, and for the reformation of the misusing of the spiritualitie in Scotland. Whereunto he gently and lovingly answered, shewing himself well contented of that communing, and did say that the King of Scotland himself, with all his temporal council, was greatly given to the reformation of bishops, religious persons, and priests within the realme ; and so much, that by the king's pleasure, he being privy thereunto, they have had ane interlude played in the feast of the Epiphanie of our Lorde last paste, before the king and queen, at Lithgow, and the whole counsil spiritual and temporal. The whole matter thereof concluded upon the declaration of the naughtiness in religion, the presumption of bishops, the collusion of the spiritual courts, called the consistory courts, in Scotland, and misusing of priests. I have obtained a note from a Scotsman of our sorte being present at the playing of said enterlude ; of the effect thereof, which I send unto your lordship, by this bearer. My lord, the same Mr. Bellenden shewed me that after the said interlude finished, the King of Scots did call upon the Bishop of Glasgow, being Chancellor, and divers other bishops, exhorting them to reform their factions and manner of living, saying, that unless they so did, he would send sax of the proudest of them unto his uncle of Englonde ; and as those were ordered, so he would order all the rest who would not amend.' The note of the play here alluded to, and transmitted along with this letter, clearly proves that the interlude enacted at Linlithgow, in 1540, was materially different from the play as published by Lindsay.

Lindsay had already been employed in a successful negociation with the Estates of the Netherlands, and in 1536 he was dispatched by his royal master on a matrimonial mission to the court of France, along with Sir John Campbell, of London. James's object was to demand a daughter of the house of Vendosme, and the ambassadors, who soon after followed Lindsay's mission, selected Marie de Bourbon. The king sent her his picture, and a treaty of marriage was actually in the course of negociation, when some unforeseen difficulties occurred to interrupt it. Angry at the delay, and intent upon effecting an alliance with France, the youthful monarch determined to proceed thither in person, and set sail in 1536, though the expedition was much against the opinion of many of his nobles. Sir James Hamilton had the courage, when he slept, to steer again to Scotland, but no excuses could mollify the king, who embarked again, and at Dieppe paid a visit at the palace of Vendosme, where, notwithstanding his strict incognito, the Princess Mary, from his resemblance to the picture he had sent her, soon discovered her royal lover. Upon this, James ardently embraced the duke and duchess, and saluted them, with their daughter, not passing over the grandees and ladies of the court who were present. On the part of his host no respect was omitted which befitted such an occasion. Music, with galliard dancing in masques, farces and plays, with justing and running at the ring, and every species of gallant amusement, occupied the time. A costly palace was prepared for the Scottish monarch, the apartments of which were splendidly decorated, hung with tapestry of cloth of gold and silk, the floor was spread with green frieze, a rarity in those times, when the apartments were generally strewed with rushes; the beds glittered with curtains of cloth of gold; and when the king sat at meat, a circlet of gold, studded with precious stones, was suspended from the ceiling immediately above his head; the halls and chambers were perfumed with sweet odours; and, in short, the noble Vendosme exhausted his exchequer and his imagination in providing every species of pleasure for the youthful monarch. James was now in his twenty-fourth year, and, from Ronsard's description, who was intimately acquainted with him, must have been a very handsome prince:—

> Ce Roi d'Escosse estoit en la fleur de ses ans
> Ses cheveux non tondus comme fin or linsans,
> Cordonnez et crespez, flottans dessus sa face,
> Et sur son col de lait lui donnoit bon grace.
> Son port estoit royal, son regard vigoureux,
> De vertu, et d'honneur, et de guerre amoureux.
> La douceur, et la force illustroient son visage,
> Si que Venus et Mars en avoient fait partage.

A prince in the flower of his years, his long golden ringlets floating, in the style of the times, down his shoulders, or gracefully curling on his white neck; a countenance in which manliness, energy, and beauty, were blended; a kingly manner, and a mind devoted to virtue, honour, and war; such a suitor was well calculated to engage the affections of the daughter of Vendosme, but from some reason not now discoverable, the king seems to have been disappointed in the choice of his ambassadors. He left the palace abruptly, and hearing that Francis the First was about to set out for Provence, with the design of attacking the imperial forces, he resolved to join him. On the road between Tarray and St. Saphorin, the Scottish monarch was met by the French dauphin, with a message from the king, informing him, that the emperor having been obliged to quit the kingdom, he had delayed his military preparations, and had sent the dauphin to conduct him to Paris. In Francis, James, on his arrival at the capital, found the affectionate tenderness of a parent, who omitted no endearment that could shew the satisfaction he received in the attachment he had manifested to France. It was in vain, however, that he urged him to marry Marie de Bourbon. The young sovereign was now bent on uniting himself to the Princess Magdalen, the daughter of the French king. When he first saw her, she was in a chariot, on account of her ill health, but the delicacy of her constitution did not discourage him; the tender passion seemed to have mutually seized them, and they declared they would never consent to any other marriage. The danger of exposing so tender a frame to an inhospitable climate was strongly urged, and the royal lover was even warned that he must not look for an heir to his throne from such a union; but all was unavailing, and Francis at last reluctantly consented.

James instantly sent the news to Scotland, ordering an addition to his attendants of six earls, six lords, six bishops, and twenty great barons, who were directed not to leave their best garments behind them. They complied with their sovereign's desire, and the marriage was performed January 1, 1537, in the church of Notre Dame, in the presence of the Kings of France and Navarre, the queen, dauphin, and other members of the royal family, seven cardinals, and a numerous and splendid assemblage of French and Scottish nobility, with many illustrious strangers. Ronsard, in a kind of epithalamium, not inelegantly, and very minutely describes the persons of the royal bride and bridegroom. The poet was then a page in the suite of the Duke of Orleans, who presented him to the Queen, and she afterwards carried him into Scotland. To honour the wedding France displayed all her riches and gallantry, so that it was said nothing had ever before equalled its splendour. Nor was the bridegroom behindhand in magnificence: amongst other noble presents he ordered a number of covered cups or macers, filled with coined gold, and standing on frames of the same metal, to be presented to the guests as the produce of the mines of Scotland. He was the most brilliant and conspicuous figure in all the martial games; and as he had won the Princess, so did he every prize that was contended for at the ring *. All this must have been a gratifying sight to what Chalmers calls 'the heraldic eyes of Lindsay.' 'For,' says the garrulous and pleasant Pitscottie, 'there was such jousting and tournament, both on horse and foot, in burgh and land, and also upon the sea with ships, and so much artillerye shot in all parts of France, that no man might hear for the reard thereof, and also the riotous banquetings, delicate

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* Mitchell's Scotsman's Library, pp. 518, 519.

and costly clothings, triumphant plays and feasts, pleasant sounds of instruments of all kinds, and cunning carvers having the art of necromancy, to cause things appear that were not, as flying dragons in the air, shots of fire at other's heads, great rivers of water running through the town, and ships fighting thereupon, as it had been in bullering streams of the sea, shooting of guns like cracks of thunder; and these wonders were seen by the nobility and common people. All this was made by men of ingyne, for outsetting of the triumph, to do the King of Scotland and the Queen of France their master's pleasure *.'

It formed part of Lindsay's duties, as Lord Lion, to marshal processions on occasions of state and rejoicing, to invent and superintend the execution of pageants, plays, moralities, or interludes; and for all this his genius appears to have been cast in a happy mould. He possessed ingenuity, wit, and that playful satirical turn which, under the license permitted by the manners of the age to such performances, could lash the vices and laugh at the follies of the times with far greater effect than if the lesson had been conveyed through a graver medium. Of his pageants one of the most brilliant appears to have been intended for exhibition on the coronation of Magdalen, the youthful queen of James the Fifth. This beautiful princess after her marriage, attended by her royal husband, and accompanied by the Bishop of Limoges, had sailed from France, and landed in Scotland in May, 1537. On stepping from the ships upon

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* Pitscottie's History of Scotland, pp. 249, 251.

the strand, she lifted a handful of sand to her mouth, and thanking God for her safety, prayed with emphatic sensibility for prosperity to the land and its people. Her countenance and manners were impressed with the most winning sweetness, but her charms were already touched by the paleness of disease, and only forty days after she had entered her capital, amid shouts of joy and applause, the voice of universal gratulation was changed into lamentation for her death.

It was on this occasion that Lindsay composed his pathetic 'Deploratioun for the Death of Quene Magdalen:'—

Oh, traitor death, whom none may countermand,
Thou might have sene the preparatioun
Maid be the thre estaittis[1] of Scotland
With great comfort and consolatioun
In every city, castell, toure, and town,
And how each noble set his whole intent
To be excelling in habiliment.

Theif! saw thou not the great preparatives
Of Edinburgh, the noble, famous town?
Thou saw the people labouring for their lives
To mak triumph, with trump and clarioun;
Sic pleasure never was in this regioun,
As should have been the day of her entrace,
With richest presents given to her Grace.

It has been well observed by Warton, that the verses which immediately follow, exclusive of this artificial and very poetical mode of introducing a description of those splendid spectacles, instead of saying plainly and prosaically that the Queen's death interrupted the superb ceremonies which would have attended her coronation, possess the merit of transmitting the ideas of the times in the exhibition of a royal entertainment*. We have the erection of the costly and gilded scaffolding; fountains spouting wine, troops of actors on each stage, disguised like divine creatures; rows of lusty fresh gallants, in splendid apparel; the honest yeomen and craftsmen, with their long bows in their hands, lightly habited in green; and the richer burgesses in their coats of scarlet. Next come—

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[1] estates.

> Provest and baillies, lordis of the town,
>   The senators, in order consequent,
> Clad into silk of purple, black, and brown;
>   Then the great lords that form the parliament,
>   With many knightly baron and banrent,
> In silk and gold in colouris [1] comfortable:
> By thee, alas! all turned into sable.

He next describes the procession of the Lords of Religion, the venerable dignitaries of the Church, surrounded by the inferior clergy; then the din of the trumpets and clarions, the heralds in their "awful vestments," and the macers marshalling the procession with their silver wands.

> Then last of all, in order triumphal,
>   That most illuster Princess honorabill,
> With her the lovely ladies of Scotland,
>   Which should have been a sight most delectabill:
>   Her raiment to reherse I am nocht habill,
> Of gold and pearl and precious stonis bright,
> Twinkling like stars in a clear frosty night.

The Princess was to have walked under a canopy of gold borne by burgesses in robes of silk, marshalled by the great master of the household, and followed by the King's train. She was to have been received by a troop of beautiful virgins, crying 'Vive la Reine,'

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[1] colours.

* Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. iii., p. 142.

With a harmonious sound angelical.

Thou should have heard the ornate oratouris,
Making her highness salutation,
Both of the clergy, town, and councillors,
With many a notable narration.
Thou should have seen her coronatioun,
In the fair Abbey of the Holyrood,
In presence of a mirthful multitude.

Sic[1] banquetting, sic awful tornaments
On horse and foot, that time which should have been,
Sic chapel royal, with sic instruments
And crafty music singing from the splene[2],
In this country was never heard nor seen.
But all this great solemnitie and gam[3],
Turned thou hast in requiem æternam.

The poem concludes with a patriotic wish very gracefully exprest. Although the heavenly flower of France, the flower de luce, be rooted up by death, yet its fragrance will remain; and, dispersing itself through both realms, preserve them in peace and amity:—

Tho' death has slain the heavenly flower of France,
Which wedded was unto the thistle keen,
Wherein all Scotland saw their whole plesance,
And made the lion joyful from the splene[4];
Tho' root be pull'd, and shed its leaves so green,
The fragrance ne'er shall die—despite of thee
'Twill keep these sister realms in peace and amitie.

Of Lindsay's private life and character we know so little, that it is difficult to ascertain whether it was exclusively from deep convictions on the subject of religion, or from more interested motives, that with such earnest and early zeal he threw the whole weight of his abilities into the scale of the reformers; attacking the Catholic clergy and the ancient ceremonies of the Catholic church with a coarseness and bitterness of satire, of which the gross indelicacy renders quotation impossible. That the lives of many of the prelates, the licentiousness of the monastic orders, the gross ignorance in which they retained the minds of the people, the shutting up the Bible in an unknown language, and the mischievous assumption of temporal power by the Papacy, all called loudly for that reformation, which, under the blessing of God, was introduced into the country, no one who tries the subject by the test of Scripture will deny. But, whilst this is admitted, nothing can be more erroneous than the very common idea that, in those dark and troubled times, the name of a reformer was synonymous with truth and religious sincerity, whilst that of a Romanist was only another word for all that was licentious, bigoted, and hypocritical. It is the prerogative of an infinitely wise, good, and powerful God to overrule even the most corrupted instruments, so that unknowingly they shall accomplish his predestined purposes; and never was this divine attribute more signally displayed than in the history of the Scottish reformation. At first, regarding this great event with a hasty and somewhat superficial eye, we see two great parties, two living phalanxes of human opinion, ranged in mortal opposition to each other; the one proclaiming themselves to be the congregation of the Lord, and not unfrequently branding their antagonists with the epithet of the Congregation of Satan: and the other, whilst they repel this odious charge, arrogating to themselves the exclusive character of being the sole supporters of the Church of Christ. A second and more attentive consideration will probably be shocked at the discovery of the selfishness, the hypocrisy, and the sin which often lurked under the professions of both. A third, a more profound, a more heavenly-guided examination, will see the working of that Almighty arm, which, in the moral as well as in the physical world, can guide the whirlwind and direct the storm; which educes good out of evil, and compels the wrath of man to praise him. These observations are peculiarly applicable to the satirical effusions of Lindsay; for, whilst it cannot be denied that his writings had a powerful effect in preparing the way for the reformation, none will be so hardy as to attempt a defence, and it will even be difficult to discover an extenuation for their occasional grossness and profanity.

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[1] such. [2] from the heart. [3] game. [4] heart.

Cast down as he must have been by the sudden death of his scarcely wedded Queen, James V. was not prevented from looking to France for her successor; and a matrimonial embassy, consisting of the Cardinal Beaton, Lord Maxwell, and the Master of Glencairn, having proceeded to that kingdom, the Scottish King selected Mary of Guise, widow of the Duke of Longueville, who proceeded to Scotland in June, 1538. She was conducted by D'Annabault, an Admiral of France, and having landed at Balcomie, in Fife, was met by the King, who carried her to St. Andrew's, where the marriage was celebrated with much rejoicing.

Here the talents of Sir David Lindsay were again brought into request in the construction and composition of the court festivals and pageants. 'James,' says Pitscottie, 'entertained his bride with great honors and playes made for her; and first she was received at the New Abbey, upon the east side whereof there was made a triumphant arch by Sir David Lindsay, lyon herauld, which caused a great cloud to come out of the heavens, above the gate, and open instantly, and there appeared a fair lady most like an angel, having the keys of Scotland in her hand, and delivered them to the Queen, in sign that all the hearts of Scotland were open to receive her Grace, with certain orations and exhortations made by the said Sir David Lindsay to the Queen, instructing her to serve God, and obey her husband according to God's commandments. Here the King and Queen remained forty days, with great merriness, such as justing, running at the lists, archery, hunting, hawking, with singing and dancing in masquery, and playing, and all other princely games, according to a King and Queen*.' It was during these festivities that the Lion King oomposed his satirical poem entitled 'The Justing between James Watson and John Barbour,' in which his object was to ridicule the splendid solemnities and unnecessary bloodshed often caused by the tournaments. It is the least happy of his productions,—ponderous, laboured, and far inferior to a contemporary piece written with the same design by an English author, 'The Tournament of Tottenham.' It will be seen at once by a short quotation that Lindsay's measure cramps the easy flow of his humour :—

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* Lindsay of Pitscottie, pp. 248, 249.

In St. Andrew's, on Whitsun-Monoday,
Two campions thair manhood did assay
Past to the barres, enarmed, head and hands,
Was never seen sic justing in na[1] lands.
In presence of the kingis grace and queen,
Where mony[2] lustre ladie micht be seen.

* * * * *

The ane of them was gentle James Watsoun,
And Johne Barbour the other campioun[3];
Unto the king they were familiars,
And of his chalmer both cubiculars.

* * * * *

Fra time they entered were into the field
Full womanlie they weilded spear and schield;
And wightly waiffit[4] in the wind their heels,
Hobbling like cadgers[5], ryding on their creels.

The poet of 'The Tournament of Tottenham has wisely selected a merrier species of rhythm.

He that beareth him best in the tournament
Shall be granted the gree[6] by the common assent,
For to win my daughter with doughty dent,
And copple my brood hen that was brought out of Kent,
And my dun cow;
For no spenee will I spare,
For no cattle will I care,
He shall have my grey mare and my spotted sow.

Neither of these parodies, however, possess any high merit.

It was, perhaps, a little previous to this that Lindsay composed his answer to the King's Flyting. It appears that James had attacked his Lord Lion in some verses, whose 'ornate metre Sir David highly commends, although their object was to make him ' abominable in the sight of the ladies, and to banish him, on account of his age and infirmities, from the Court of Venus. In these abusive poetical contests, entitled ' Flytings,' it is no disparagement to Lindsay when we say he does not equal the multifarious and recondite scurrility of Dunbar or Kennedy ; whilst, if we are to judge of the ' dittay ' of the king by the coarseness and vulgarity of the reply, it is not much to be regretted that the royal Flyting has perished. In his concluding stanza, the monarch is highly complimented on his poetical talents ; he is styled ' of flowing rhetorick the flower ;' nor,—making all due allowance for the strain in which a poet may be supposed to indulge himself when addressing a prince,—was the praise of the Lion King overstrained. We have seen the vicious and neglected education under which the youth of James V. had been blighted ; yet there emerged out of this ungenial nurture a character of that strength and vigour which soon enabled him to make up for the time which he had lost. Amongst other qualities, he possessed that genius for the fine arts, and more especially for poetry and architecture, which had distinguished the first and third James ; and it is easy to see that a congeniality of taste had recommended the Lion Herald to his royal master. We learn from Drummond that the king ' was naturally given to poesie, as many of his verses yet exstant testify ;' and few readers of Scottish poetry are unacquainted with the admirable ballad of the ' Gaberlunzieman,' which we owe to this monarch.

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[1] no. [2] many. [3] champion. [4] waved.
[5] a pedlar who rides with panniers. [6] victory.

The pauky auld carle cam o'er the lea,
Wi' mony gude eens and days to me,
Saying, gude wife, for your courtesy,
Will ye lodge a silly auld man.

The night was cauld[1], the carle was wat[2],
And down ayont[3] the ingle[4] he sat;
My daughter's shoulders he gan to clap,
And cadgily[5] ranted and sang.

O wow, quoth he, were I as free
As first when I saw this countrie,
How blythe and merry wad I be,
And I would ne'er think lang.

He grew canty[6] and she grew fain[7];
But little did her auld minny[8] ken
What these slee[9] twa thegither were saying,
Whan wooing they were sae thrang[10].

The result of the adventure is well known, in the elopement of the old woman's daughter with the Gaberlunzie. Nothing can be more felicitously described than the consequences of the discovery. The picture of the auld wife's despair, when she finds that the beggar had decamped, the anticipation that some of their gear must have walked away with him, and the complacent awakening of her charitable feelings on finding all safe, are finely true to nature.

Upon the morn the auld wife raise,
And at her leisure put on her claes[11];
Syne to the servant's bed she gaes,
To speer[12] for the silly puir man.

She gaed to the bed where the beggar lay:
The strae[13] was cauld, he was away.
She clapp'd her hands, cryed dulefa day!
For some of our gear[14] will be gane.

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[1] cold. [2] wet. [3] beyond. [4] fire. [5] merrily. [6] cheerful.
[7] fond. [8] mother. [9] sly. [10] busy.
[11] clothes. [12] inquire. [13] straw. [14] goods.

Some ran to coffers, and some to kists[1];
But nought was stown[2] that could be mist.
Sche danc'd her lane,[3] cryed praise be blest!
I've lodg'd a leil[4] puir man.

Since naething's awa[5], as we can learn,
The kirns[6] to churn and milk to earn[7];
Gae but[8] the house, lass, and wauken the bairn,
And bid her come quickly ben[9].

It is not too much to say that this picture, and the rest of the ballad, are, in point of humour, superior to anything of Dunbar's or of Lindsay's. From his zeal for the administration of strict justice to the lowest classes of his subjects, and his anxiety personally to inspect the conduct of his officers and judges, it was James's frequent practice to disguise himself and mingle much with the common people. 'The dangers of the wilderness,' says Pinkerton, in one of his Gibbonian flights, 'the gloom of night, the tempests of winter, could not prevent his patient exertions to protect the helpless, to punish the guilty, to enforce the observance of the laws. From horseback he often pronounced decrees worthy of the sagest seat of justice; and, if overtaken by night, in the progresses which he made through his kingdom, or separated by design or by accident from his company, he would share the meal of the lowest peasant with as hearty a relish as the feast of his highest noble.' It was on one of these occasions that the following pleasing anecdote is related of him:—'Being benighted when hunting, he entered a cottage, situated in the midst of a moor, at the foot of the Ochil hills, near Alloa, where, known only as a stranger who had lost his way, he was kindly received. To regale their unexpected guest, the gudeman desired the gudewife to fetch the hen that roosted nearest the cock, which is always the plumpest, for the stranger's supper. The king, highly pleased with his night's lodging and hospitable entertainment, told mine host at parting that he should be glad to return his civility, and requested that the first time he came to Stirling he would call at the Castle, and inquire for the gudeman of Ballangeich, when his astonishment at finding the royal rank of his guest afforded no small amusement to the merry monarch and his courtiers; whilst, to carry on the pleasantry, he was thenceforth designated by James with the title of King of the Moors, 'which name,' says Mr. Campbell, the intelligent minister, from whose account of the parish of Alloa this passage is taken, 'has descended from father to son ever since, the family having remained undisturbed proprietors of the identical spot where the unknown monarch was so hospitably treated.'

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[1] chests. [2] stolen. [3] danced alone. [4] honest.
[5] away. [6] churn. [7] curdle.
[8] but, the outer apartment of the house. [9] the inner.

From this short digression on the character and genius of his royal master and patron we return to the Lion King, whom we find 'aggravating his roar' against the extravagance of 'female ornament,' by his supplication to the King's Grace against the length of the trains worn by the ladies, and then known by the name of 'syde-tails.' 'Female attire has been the marked object of the poet's ridicule in every age. The English antiquaries trace the origin of high head-dresses and long trains to the luxurious reign of Richard II.

Camden tells us that Anne, the wife of this monarch, brought in the fashion of high caps and long gowns. We learn from Hemingford that a zealous ecclesiastic of that age wrote a treatise, 'Contra Caudas Dominarum.' Chaucer's parson protests against the 'costlie claithing' both of men and women, especially reprehending the superfluity in ladies' gowns. Lydgate raises his voice against the high attire of women's heads; Hoccleve against 'waist claithing.' Dunbar lashes the splendour of the 'farthingaillis;' and, finally, Lindsay presents his supplication against 'sydetaillis.*' 'Your Majesty,' says he, 'has now introduced order and good government both into the highlands and border; there is yet ane small fault which requires reformation.'

Sir, tho your Grace has put great order
Baith in the highland and the border,
Yet make I supplicatioun
To have some reformatioun
Of ane small fault which is not treason,
Tho it be contrair unto reason,
Because the matter is so vile,
It may not have an ornate stile;
Therefore I pray your Excellence
To hear me with great patience.
Sovereign, I mean of these *syde-tails*,
That thro the dust and puddle trails,
Three-quarters long, behind their heels,
Express against all commonweills;
Tho bishops in pontificals
Have men to bear well up their tails,
For dignity of their office.
Right so a king or an empress;
Howbeit they use such dignity,
Conforming to their majesty.

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* Chalmers' Works of Lindsay, vol. ii. p. 196.

Tho their robe-royals be upborne,
I think it is a very scorn
That every lady of the land
Should have her side-tail sa trailland;
How high soe'er be their estate,
The queen they should not counterfeit.
Where'er they go, it may be seen
How kirk and causeway they sweep clean.
To see I think a pleasant sight,
Of Italie the ladies bright;
In their clothing most triumphant
Above all other Christian land;
Yet when they travel thro the towns,
Men sees their feet beneath their gowns,
Four inch above their proper heels,
Circular about as round as wheels.

In the same poem Lindsay complains violently of a fashion introduced by the Scottish ladies, in covering up their faces, so that nothing is seen but their eyes.

Another fault, sir, may be seen,
They hide their face all but their een.
When gentlemen bids them gude day,
Without reverence they slide away:
Unless their naked face I see,
They get no more gude days fra me.

These veiled faces of the women excited the indignation of the Parliament of James II., which published an ordinance, "that na woman come to the kirk or market with her face mussal'd, that she may not be kend, under the pain of escheit of the curch." Lindsay's concluding admonition to the king upon the long trains is brief and emphatic.

Wad your Grace my counsel tak[1],
Ane proclamation ye should mak[2],
Baith thro the land and burrowstouns[3],
To shaw their face and cut their gowns.

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[1] take. [2] make. [3] burghs.

The only other work of our author's written during the lifetime of his royal master was his attack upon auricular confession, known by the title of 'Kitty's Confession;' of which the coarseness is not redeemed either by its wit or its poetry.

The death of the king in 1542 left Lindsay at full liberty to join the party of the reformers. However disposed James might have been in 1540 to favour the schemes which were then agitated for the reformation of the church, it is well known that he soon after determined upon a war with England, chose for his principal adviser the Cardinal Beaton, and adopted principles entirely opposed to all alliance with Henry VIII., or any changes in the ecclesiastical establishment of the kingdom. Lindsay, to a certain degree, must have been influenced by the opinions of a monarch by whose patronage he had been cherished, and in whose service he filled an honourable and ancient office. Now he was at liberty to act uninfluenced by self-interest, without any outrage offered to the decencies of gratitude or affection, and he hesitated not a moment to unite himself to the party of the reformers; one of the results of this was his publication of the tragedy of the 'Cardinal.'

The murder of Beaton, one of the most flagrant acts which has been perpetrated in any age or country, took place, as is well known, at St. Andrew's on the 29th May, 1546. Into its secret history we will not now enter, remarking only that the plot can be traced upon evidence of the most unquestionable authenticity to Henry VIII., that the assassins have been detected in intimate correspondence with that monarch, proposing the cutting off this able enemy, receiving his approval of the design, supported by his money, and encouraged by the promise of a shelter in his dominions *. To Lindsay, and many of the reformers, the atrocity of the deed was forgotten in the feelings of triumph and gratulation with which they regarded the removal of their ablest and most determined enemy. The tone of the Lord Lion, however, is more quiet and decorous than that adopted by Knox. Sitting in his oratory, and pondering in a thoughtful and melancholy mood over Boccaccio's work on the ' Downfall of Princes,' a grisly ghost glides into the chamber with a pale countenance, and the blood flowing from many wounds over its rich ecclesiastical vestments :—

> I sitting so upon my book reading,
> Richt suddenly afore me did appear
> Ane woundit man abundantlie bleiding,
> With visage pale, and with a deidly cheer,
> Seeming a man of twa-and-fifty year,
> In raiment red, clothed full courteously
> Of velvet and of satin cramosye.

This, as may be easily anticipated, is the apparition of the once proud Cardinal, who is made to rehearse his own story, to expose his ambition, prodigality, and oppression ; from which he takes occasion to admonish his brethren the prelates upon the criminal courses in which they indulged, and to enter a solemn caveat to all earthly princes against their indiscriminate presentation of ecclesiastical benefices to ignorant and unworthy pastors.

> Mak him bishop that prudentlie can preich
> As doth pertain till his vocation ;

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* Appendix to the Life of Sir Thomas Craig, No. I.

Ane persoun quhilk his parochoun can teiche,
Gar vicars mak dew ministratioun,
And als, I mak you supplicatioun,
Mak your abbottis of richt religious men,
Quilk Christis law can to their convent ken.

Any further quotation from this piece is unnecessary.

In the pages of our contemporary historians during this period, we see so little of the private life and manners of the times, that everything must be welcome which can supply this defect; and in such a light 'Lindsay's History of Squire Meldrum' is particularly valuable and interesting. It was composed about the year 1550, and contains a biography of a gallant feudal squire of those days, drawn up from his own recital by the affectionate hand of his friend and contemporary.

With help of Clio I intend,
Sa Minerve would me sapience lend,
Ane noble Squyer to descrive,
Whose douchtiness during his lyfe
I knew myself, thereof I write.
And all his deeds I dare indite,
And secrets that I did not know
That noble Squire to me did show.
So I intend the best I can
Describe the deeds, and eke the man*.

We have accordingly the birth, parentage, education, adventures, death, and testament of 'Ane noble and vailiant Squire, William Meldrum, umquhyle (lately) Laird of Cleish and Binns.' We first learn that he was of noble birth.

Of noblesse lineally descendit
Quhilk their gude fame has aye defendit.
Gude Williame Meldrum he was named,
Whose honour bricht was ne'er defamed.

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* Poems, vol. ii., p. 245.

After having been educated in all the exercises of chivalry, this noble squire began his 'vassalage' at twenty years of age. His portrait at this time is prepossessing. His countenance was handsome, his expression cheerful and joyous, his stature of middle height, his figure admirably proportioned, yet strong and athletic; his manners were amiable, and his love of honor and knightly deeds so ardent that he determined to win his spurs both in England and in France.

> Because he was so courageous,
> Ladies of him was amorous.
> He was ane lover for a dame,
> Meek in chalmer like a lame;
> But in the field ane campioun,
> Rampand lyke ane wild lyoun*.

At this moment James IV. had despatched a fleet to assist his ally the King of France against the attack of Henry VIII. It conveyed an army of three thousand men, commanded by the Earl of Arran, whilst the office of Admiral was entrusted to Gordon of Letterfury. Under Arran young Squire Meldrum determined to commence his warlike education, and an adventure soon occurred which is strongly characteristic of the times. In passing the coast of Ireland a descent was made upon Carrickfergus, which was taken and sacked with great barbarity. In the midst of those dreadful scenes which occur under such circumstances, a young and beautiful lady had been seized by some of the brutal soldiery, and was discovered by Meldrum imploring them to spare her life, and what was dearer to her than life, her honour. They had stript her of her rich garments, and she stood helpless and almost naked when this brave youth flew to her assistance, and upbraided them for their cruelty and meanness. He was instantly attacked by the ruffians, but the struggle ended in his slaying them both, and saving the lady from the dreadful fate which seemed impending over her. The description of her dress is graceful and curious:—

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* Poems, vol. ii., p. 253.

Her kirtle was of scarlet red,
Of gold ane garland on her head
Decorit with enamelyne[1],
Belt and brochis of silver fyne;

Scarce had Squire Meldrum rescued this beautiful and unknown lady than the trumpet sounded, and it became his duty to hurry on board. But his noble and generous conduct had made an impression on her which can be easily imagined. To be saved from death and dishonour, to see her deliverer only for a moment, but to see enough of him in that brief interval to be convinced that he was the very mirror of youthful beauty and valor, all this was what few gentle hearts could resist, and we do not wonder when she throws herself in a transport of gratitude and admiration at his feet, informs him of the high rank of her father, and in very unequivocal terms offers him her hand and her heart. But it might not be; Squire Meldrum dared not desert the banner of his lord the high admiral; he must pass on to take his fortune in France. 'Ah!' said the lady, 'if it must be thus, let me dress myself as thy page, and follow thee but for love?' 'Nay; thou art too young to be thus exposed to danger,' said Meldrum; 'but let this warlike expedition be brought to an end, and when the peace is made, I will be right glad to marry you.'

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[1] enamel.

> Ladie, I say you in certane,
> Ye shall have lufe for lufe agane.
> Trewlie unto my lifis end.
> Farewell, I you to God commend.

Meldrum now embarks, after having received a love-token from his mistress, a rich ruby set in a ring, and the fleet reaches the shores of Brittany, where the army is disembarked, and the Squire entrusted with the command of five hundred men. 'Harry the Eighth of England,' pursues the history, 'was at that time lying with his army at Calais, making war on the realm of France; and although there was no pitched battle, yet daily skirmishing took place between the hosts, for the King of France with his great army was encamped near hand in Picardy. Squire Meldrum hearing of this, immediately chose a hundred spears, the best men in his company, and riding to the French quarters, was courteously received by the King.' It chanced that at this moment there was amongst the English a hardy and excellent soldier, named in the story Maister Talbart, probably Talbot, who used to stalk about with 'silver tokens of war' in his bonnet, speaking somewhat lightly of the French, and proclaiming that, for his lady's sake, he was ready to break his spear with any man who would accept his challenge. His defiance had not been answered previous to Meldrum's arrival in the camp. Talbart next addresses the Scots, and the young squire, without a moment's hesitation, takes up his gage:—

And when the Squyer Meldrum
Hard tell this campioun was come,
Richt hastily he past him till
Demanding him what was his will?
Forsooth, I can find none, quoth he,
On horse or foot dare fecht[1] me.
Then, said he, it wer great schame
Without battle ye should pass hame[2],
Therefore to God I make a vow
The morne myself shall fight with yow.

Talbot, an experienced champion, with an iron frame and great skill in his weapons, dissuades the young adventurer from a contest in which he represents him as certain to lose his life. Meldrum, however, derides his assurance, and assures him that, with the assistance of God, he trusts to tame his pride :—

I trust that God shall be my guide,
And give me grace to stanche thy pride,
Tho thou wert great as Gow Mak Morne.

The Englishman now returns to his brethren in the camp, and informs them of the combat which he is to have on the morrow with a young Scot, whose pride he means to take down.

He showed his brethren of his land
How ane young Scot had taen on hand
To fecht with him beside Montreuil,
Bot I trust he shall pruife the fuil.
Quoth they, the morn that sall we ken,
The Scots are haldin[3] hardie men*.

'When,' continues Lindsay, 'it was reported to Monsieur D'Aubigny that the squire had taken on hand to fight with Talbart, he greatly commended his courage, and requesting his presence in his tent, interrogated him upon the subject. Meldrum then modestly acknowledged that he had for the honour of Scotland undertaken that battle; adding, that were he as well horsed as he was armed, he had little doubt of the victory. Upon this D'Aubigny sent through the host, and collecting a hundred horse, bade the squire select the steed which pleased him best. He did so accordingly, and lightly leaping on his back, pushed him to his speed and checking him in his career, declared that no horse in the world could run more pleasantly. The picture of the youthful warrior setting out for the combat all armed except the head, with his helmet borne before him by his squire, is charmingly given:—

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[1] fight. [2] home. [3] esteemed.

* Poems, vol. ii., p. 257.

He took his leave, and went to rest.
Then early in the morn him drest
Wantonly in his warlike weed,
All bravely armed, except the head.
He leapt upon his courser good,
And proudly in his stirrups stood.
His spear and shield and helm was borne
By squyers that rode him beforne;
A velvet cap on head he bare,
A coif of gold confined his hair.

* * * * *

The Squyer bore into his shield
An otter in a silver field.
His horse was barded full richlie,
Covered with satin cramosie.
Then forward rode this campioun
With sound of trumpet and clarioun,
And speedilie spurrit o'er the bent,
Like Mars, the God armipotent.

Talbart, in the mean time, is greatly disturbed by a dream, in which he sees a great black otter rise from the sea, and fiercely attack him, pulling him down from his horse. He relates the vision to his friends, who ridicule his consternation; and, ashamed of his weakness, he arms himself at all points, and mounting his horse, proceeds to the lists. The arrangement of the lists, and the meeting of the combatants, is extremely spirited.

Than clariouns and trumpettis blew,
And weiriouris[1] mony hither drew;
On everie side come monie[2] man,
To behald wha the battel wan[3].
The field was in a medow grene,
Quhare everie man micht weill be sene.
The heraldis put thame sa in ordour,
That no man past within the bordour,
Nor preissit to come within the grene,
Bot heraldis and the campiounis kene.
The ordour and the circumstance
Wer lang to put in remembrance.
Quhen ther twa nobill men of weir
Wer weill accouterit in thair geir[4],
And in their handis strang bourdounes[5],
Than trumpets blew, and clariounis;
And heraldis cryit, hie on hicht[6],
Now let them go—God schaw the richt[7].
Than speedilie thay spurrit their hors,
And ran to uther[8] with sic fors,
That baith thair speiris in sindrie flaw.

Thus slightly modernised.

Then clarions bray'd and trumpets blew,
And many a warrior hither drew,
Princes and peers, a glorious sight,
To crowd the lists and view the fight.
The field was fenc'd in meadow green,
Where every man might well be seen,

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[1] warriors. [2] many a man. [3] won.
[4] warlike habiliments. [5] strong spears. [6] height.
[7] the right. [8] against each other.

All duly marshall'd row on row,—
An awful and resplendent show.
To pass the barrier none might dare,
The champions twain alone were there,
In burnish'd weed, from head to heel,
Enclos'd in panoply of steel.
Sudden the trumpets sounded clear;
In rest was plac'd the ready spear;
The solemn heralds cried on height,
Pass on, and God defend the right!
Then flying forward, fleet as wind,
With slacken'd rein and head inclin'd,
Unswerving, and with giant force,
The warriors met in middle course*.

After an obstinate contest Talbart's dream is realised: he is vanquished, and thrown to the earth with such force, that his companions believe him dead. 'Then it was,' says the legend, 'that the squire leaped lightly from his horse, and taking the wounded knight in his arms, courteously supported and comforted him; but when he looked up and saw his shield, with the device of an otter upon a silver field, " Ah," said he, " now hath my dream proved true: your's is the otter that hath caused me to bleed; but never shall I just again. Here, therefore, according to our agreement, I yield to thee both horse and harness." '

Then said the squire most courteously,
I thank you, brother, heartily;
But nothing from thee must I take,—
I fight for love and honour's sake;
Who covets more is but a churl,
Be he a belted knight or earl.

Delighted with these noble sentiments, the captain of the English takes Meldrum by the hand, and leads him into the pavilion, where he is served with a sumptuous collation, and highly commended by all for his valour and generosity. Meanwhile, Talbard's wounds are dressed; and the squire, before taking his leave, embraces him with tenderness, and bids him be of good cheer, for this was but the chance of arms. He then mounts his horse, and returns to his own camp, where he is received with much honour.

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* Poems, vol. ii., p. 261. The verses are slightly altered and modernised.

From Picardy the squire proceeded to Normandy, as the navy of Scotland was still lying on that coast; and finding little opportunity of gaining distinction, he put himself at the head of a company of a hundred and sixty men-at-arms,—

> Enarmed well, like men of weir,
> With hakbut, culvering, pike, and spear;

and returned to Amiens, where Lewis of France was then encamped. As the war had terminated, however, he found no military employment; and although much courted in France, and 'asked in marriage by a lady of great possessions,' youth, made him so 'light-headed,' that he did not choose to wed; and having fitted out a ship for himself and his soldiers, well furnished with 'artillery, bow, and speir,' besides the best wine that he could select, he set sail from Dieppe for Scotland. On the voyage, he was borne down upon by an English privateer, of far greater size and strength than his own vessel; yet he disdained to attempt an escape; and, after a desperate engagement, captured the hostile galzeon, by boarding her. He then continued his voyage; and, on his arrival in Scotland, was welcomed home with much delight, and feasted by all his friends.

> Out thro the land then sprang the fame
> That Squyer Meldrum was come hame.
> Quhen they heard tell how he debaitit,
> With every man he was so traitit,
> That when he travelled thro the land
> They feasted him fra hand to hand,
> With great solace, till, at the last,
> Out thro Strathern the squyer past;
> And as it did approach the night,
> Of ane castell he got a sight,
> Beside a mountain in a vale;
> And there, after his long travail,
> He purposit him to repois[1],
> Whereat his men did much rejois[2].
> Of this triumphant pleasant place
> A lovely ladie mistress was,
> Whose lord was dead short time before,
> Wherethrow her dolour was the more;
> But yet she took some comforting
> To hear the pleasant dulce talking
> Of this young squyer, of his chance,
> And how it fortuned him in France.

The manners of the times are strongly marked in the passage describing the squire's bedchamber.

> He found his chalmer weill arrayit
> With dornik[3] work, on board displayit.
> Of venisoun he had his waill[4],
> Gude aquavitæ, wine, and aill,
> With noble comfits, bran, and geill[5];
> And so the squyer fared right weill.

This adventure concluded, as might be expected, in the gallant Meldrum gaining the heart of this young widow; but discovering that he is related

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[illegible] [2] rejoice. [3] napery.
[illegible] choice. [5] brawn and jelly.

to her late husband, they delay the marriage till a dispensation can be procured from Rome. Meanwhile, as they have plighted their troth to each other, he remains at the castle.

And sa he levit pleasantlie
Ane certain time with his ladie:
Sometime with hawking and hunting,
Sometime with wanton horse rinning;
And sometime like ane man of weir,
Full galzeardlie wald rin ane speir.
He wan the prize above them all,
Baith at the butts and the futeball;
Till every solace he was abill,
At cartis and dyce, at chess and tabill;
And gif ye list, I shall yow tell
How he beseigit ane castell.

Into the particulars of this siege we may not enter; but messengers having arrived in Strathern to inform his beautiful mistress that a baron, named Macpharlane, had violently occupied one of her castles in the Lennox, the squire declares his determination to proceed instantly against him.

Intill his hart there grew sic ire,
That all his body brint like fire,
And swore it suld full dear be sald,
Gif he should find him in that hald[1].

The squire now arms himself, assembles his men, and with his lady's right-hand glove in his helmet, rides day and night till he reaches the castle, which, after an obstinate defence, he carries by escalade, exhibiting as much clemency in sparing

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[1] Swore if he found him in that hold it should be a dear purchase.

Macpharlane when he lay in his power, as he had shown courage and martial skill in the siege.

> And so this squyer amorous
> Seigit and won the ladies house,
> And left therein a capitane,
> Then to Strathern returned agane,
> Quhare that he by his fair ladie
> Receivit was full pleasantlie *.

In the midst of this solace there occurs a sudden and melancholy change, which is thus sweetly introduced by Lindsay—

> Of warldlic joy it is weill kenn'd
> That sorrow bene the fatal end;
> For jealousy and false envy
> Did him persew richt cruellie.
> I marvel not tho it be so,
> For they were ever lovers' foe.

Stirling of Keir, a cruel knight, who possessed an estate near this lady's castle, in Strathern, had, it seems, determined that a gentleman of his acquaintance should marry her, and disappointed in his hopes, by the arrival of Squire Meldrum, he lays a cowardly plot for his destruction. Accordingly, when about to cross the ferry between Leith and Fife, on his return from Edinburgh, where he had been called by business, he finds himself beset by his mortal enemy, with a party of sixty men. Yet, although only eight servants were in his company, such is his indomitable valour, that he disdains to fly; and, after a desperate contest, is left for dead on the field, bathed in his blood, and

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* Poems, vol. ii. p. 289.

almost cut to pieces by unnumbered wounds. Anthony D'Arcy, Seigneur de la Bastie, a French knight of great valour and accomplishment, was, at this moment, lieutenant or sub-governor of Scotland, appointed by the Duke of Albany, then regent. He happened to be passing with his suite near the spot where the unfortunate Meldrum had been left by his cruel assailants, and instantly ordering a pursuit, and personally engaging in it, he apprehended the assassin, and had him lodged in ward before a few hours had elapsed. Before, however, the trial came on, he was himself most cruelly waylaid and murdered, by Hume of Wedderburn; and Meldrum, who now slowly recovered from his wounds, had the mortification to see his mortal enemy liberated from confinement, and to hear that his lovely mistress had been compelled to marry, in spite of the strongest resistance on her side. When the squire lay so grievously wounded in his lodging, the wisest physicians in the country are described as flocking unsought to give him their advice; and so ably did he profit by their attendance and instructions, that, in the course of his recovery, he himself became an expert 'leech,' and greatly benefited the poor by prescribing for them.

The greatest leeches of the land
Came to him all without command,
And all practikis on him provit,
Because he was sa weill belovit;
They took on hand his life to save,
And he them gave what they would have;
But he sa lang lay into pane,
He turned to be ane chirurgiane;

And als by his natural ingyne[1],
He learnd the art of medicine.
He saw them on his bodye wrocht,
Quarefor the science was dearlie bought.
But afterward when he was haill
He sparit na cost, nor yet travail,
To prove his prackticks on the pure,
And on them workit many a cure *.

Greatly weakened in his constitution by his wounds, but bearing a high reputation, not only for warlike experience, but civil wisdom, Meldrum was courted by an "aged lord, who delighted in his company, and prevailed on to become his chief marshall, and auditor of his accounts." He was also made sheriff-depute of Fife, and proved not only an equal judge and generous friend to the poor, but, from his wonderful knowledge of medicine, he delighted in visiting those who were sick or wounded, and distributing to all his advice and his medicines without recompense. The conclusion shows in a very pleasing manner his faithfulness to those vows which he had so solemnly made to his betrothed mistress in Strathern—

Then each year, for his lady's sake,
A banquet royal he would make,
With wild fowl, venison, and wine,
With tart, and flam, and frutage fine;
Of bran or geill there was no scant,
And Ippocras he wald not want.
I have seen sitting at his tabill
Lords and lairdis honorabill,
With knightis and mony a gay squyar,
Which were too lang for to declair;

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[1] genius.

* Poems, vol. ii. p. 300.

With mirth, musick, and minstrelsy.
All this he did for his ladie,
And for her sake, during his life,
Wad never be weddid til ane wife.
And when he did decline to age
He faillit neer of his courage.
Of ancient stories for to tell,
Above all uther he did precell;
So that everilk creature
To hear him speak took great pleasure.

After some years this illustrious squire was seized with a mortal illness, and expired at the Struther in Fife, the castle of his noble friend and patron, the Earl of Crawfurd. During his sickness, however, he had leisure to write his testament, which has been thrown into verse by Sir David Lindsay with much spirit and beauty. It is a remarkable production, and, independent of its poetical merit, which is of a high kind, may be studied with advantage as an authentic picture of a dying warrior of those times. It breathes from beginning to end the soul of chivalry. First, we have the squire's acknowledgment of the instability and brevity of all human existence;—my body, says he, is now weak, I plainly feel I am about to pay my debt to Nature; but I here resign to God my spirit which he hath made immortal.

My spreit hartlie I recommend,
  In manus tuas, Domine;
My hope to thee is to ascend,
  Rex quia redimisti me.
From sin resurrexisti me,
  Or else my saul had been forlorn!
With sapience docuisti me—
  Blest be the hour that thou wast born.

Having declared his faith and trust in God, he proceeds to nominate three noble lords, all of the name of Lindsay, to be his executors;—David, Earl of Crawfurd, John, Lord Lindsay, his 'master special,' and Sir Walter Lindsay, Lord St. John, a noble travelled knight. 'I do so,' says he, 'because the surname of Lindsay never failed to the crown, and will never fail to me.' His injunctions now become minute. 'Dispose,' says he, 'of my wealth to my next of kin, according to your pleasure. It is well known I was never addicted to heaping or hoarding. I cared no more for gold than for glass. And ye, my dear friends, who are my relatives by blood, fail not, I beseech you, to be present at my funeral feast. Ye know how magnanimously I have defended that family fame which is dear to us all. As to the disposal of my body, it is my command that ye first disembowell it, and, having washed it well with wine, enclose it in a costly carved shrine of cedar or cyprus, anointing it with delicious balm, cinnamon, and the most precious spices.'

In cases twain, of gold and precious stones,
  Enshrine my heart and tongue right craftily,
Then raise a monument above my bones
  In holy abbaye, plac'd triumphantly;
  Of marble blocks insculptur'd curiously;
Therein my coffin and my dust enclose,
Within these solemn precincts to repose.

There succeeds a curious specimen of the general belief in judicial astrology in these times. 'It is certain,' says the squire, 'that the constellations of Mars, Venus, and Mercury presided over my nativity. To their influence I owe my fame in foreign lands. Wherefore,' says he, 'I leave my body to Mars, my ornate tongue to Mercury, and my faithful heart to Venus.' This conduct is eulogised by Lindsay as devout, pious, and charitable, so there evidently appeared nothing improper in this Pagan style of testament, which to our ears sounds so profane and unchristian. The same strange mixture of warlike triumph, and joyous devotion, of Christian and classical imagery runs through the whole. 'Let me be buried,' says he, 'in every way like a warrior; let there be no monks or friars, or anything in a black livery about my beir.'

Duill[1] weeds I think hypocrisie, and scorne
  With heudis heklit[2] doun athwart their ene[3],
By men of arms my body shall be borne;
  Into that band see that no black be seen,
  But let the liveries be red, blue, and green.

The funeral procession, or rather the martial triumph, is directed to be under the heraldic care of his friend, Sir David Lindsay.

My friend, Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount,
  Shall put in order my processioun.
I will that there pass foremost in the front,
  To bear my pensil, a stout champion,
  With him a band of Mars religion—
That is to say, instead of monks and friers,
In gude ordour ane thousand hagbutteirs.

Next them a thousand footmen in a rout,
  With spear and shield, with buckler, bow, and brand,
In liveries rich, young stalwart men and stout;
  Thirdly, in ordir there shall come a band
  Of warriors, that know well to wraik their harmes[4]—
Their captain with my standard in his hand:
On barbed steeds a hundred men-at-arms.

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[1] mourning. [2] pulled. [3] eyes.
[4] avenge their wrongs.

It would be tedious to marshal the whole procession. The silver banner with the three sable otters, the helmet carried by a knight, the sword, gloves of plate, shield, and the coat armour, are all dwelt on by the dying squire with affectionate earnestness; and their places fixed for them in the procession. Then follow his barbed horse, and his spear carried by some brave man of his own kindred. After which the procession is to be closed by a multitude of earls, lords, and knights, clothed in the livery of the deceased, and bearing each a laurel branch in their hands—as a proof that the warrior, whom they are carrying to the grave, never fled from any field, or yielded himself prisoner to an enemy.

Each baron bearing in his hand on high
  A laurel bough, ensign of victory,
Because I never fled out of the field,
  Nor yet as prisoner to my foes did yield.

Having arrived at the cathedral, after the gospel and the offertory, the squire directs an orator to ascend the pulpit, where, with ornate eloquence and at great leisure he is to read the book of the legend of his life from end to end. 'Then,' says he, 'enclose my body in its sepulture, but let no knell be rung.'

Let not be rung for me that day soul knells,
But great caunounis gar them crack for bells.

I have given a full, but, I trust, not a tedious analysis of this remarkable poem, from a conviction that in all essential particulars the history is real, and that it presents an accurate picture of the manners and principles of the age, although richly coloured, and given with that freshness and spirit which most matters of fact receive when they pass through the mind of a man of genius. The reader will perhaps be amused at the high praises which the squire bestows upon himself. But we must recollect that Lindsay somewhat inartificially places his own sentiments in the mouth of his hero. Thus, in the conclusion of his 'Testament,' where he introduces an adieu to the noble lords and ladies of his acquaintance, the dying Meldrum, with complacent vanity, and a strongly expressed conviction of his own delightful and amiable qualities, which runs through the whole story of his life, considers it certain that all will be inconsolable for his departure. The fairest eyes of France will be dimmed by weeping; the beauteous stars of London eclipsed by sorrow, and the lamps of loveliness, which illuminate the night of the north, shrouded in the darkness of grief. But most heartily does he bid farewell to the fairest of them all—the star of Strathern:—

> Ten thousand times adieu, above them all,
>   Star of Stratherne, my Lady Sovereign,
>   For whom I shed my blood with mickle pain.
>
> Brethren in arms, adieu—in general
>   For me I wist your hearts will be full sore;
> All true companions, into special,
>   I say to you, adieu for evermore
> Till that we meet again with God in gloir.
>   Sir Curate—now give me incontinent
>   My crisme, with the holy sacrament.

Although the writings of Lindsay may be considered no mean instrument in preparing the way for the reformation in Scotland, it is remarkable that we lose sight of their author when the revolution began in earnest; this was, perhaps, to his honor, as it affords a strong presumption of the purity of his motives, and the disinterestedness of his convictions. He died indeed before the final and happy triumph of Protestantism over the Romanist religion, but much progress had been made previous to his death, and we might have expected that the fervour of his zeal, the vigour of his talents, his experience and knowledge of human nature, and the considerable station which he already occupied, would have pushed him into the foreground as one of the most active partisans in promoting those mighty changes which convulsed the country. But it was not so, and we are left to conjecture the causes which made him a spectator rather than an actor. It is not improbable that they are to be found in that penetration, which, at an early period, detected the selfish motives which prompted many of those persons who became the lords of the congregation; and that whilst he fervently prayed for the success of the work, he shrunk, with the feelings of a man of probity and virtue, from an over-promiscuous association with some of its agents. Age, too, had by this time checked the power of action, and cooled the fiery intensity of ambition, whilst heavenly wisdom had purified and irradiated his mind. The world appeared to him in its true colours, a scene of sorrow and vicissitude, the theatre of successful guilt and neglected virtue; the cradle, for a few short hours, of youthful happiness; the grave, for many a long year, of withered and disappointed hope; a once beautiful and blessed scene, on which man was the friend of God, and reflected, in his life and character, the image of his Maker, changed by sin into a gloomy wilderness, covered by the awful shadow of the divine vengeance; instructed by such lessons of Christian philosophy, and full of heavenly musings, Lindsay, to use his own sweet language, appears to have

> 'stood content
> With quiet life and sober rent;
> And ta'en him, in his latter age,
> Unto his simple hermitage.'

It was, however, no idle or unprofitable retreat, for in it he produced his longest, and, in many respects, his most useful work, 'The Monarchie.' It embraces the history of the most famous monarchies that have existed in the world; but, with a similar love of tracing the stream of time to its fountain head, which is so remarkable a characteristic in the Gothic chronicles upon the same subject, it commences with the creation, and only concludes with the general judgment. To enter into any laboured critique, or analysis of so interminable and multifarious a work, would exhaust even the most gentle reader. The author throws his narrative into the form of a dialogue between Experience and a Courtier, opening the poem with a sweet, rural landscape. Disturbed by his morning ponderings on the complicated distresses of this mortal scene, he rises early from his couch, and walks forth, on a May morning, into a delightful park—

> Somewhat before fresh Phœbus uprising,
> Where he might hear the free birds sweetly sing;
> Into a park he past for his pleasure,
> Decorit weill by craft of dame Nature.

The whole scene was beautiful. The dews hung like orient pearls upon the branches, the tender flowers, beginning to open, exhaled their richest fragrance. The lord of day, springing up from the gorgeous east, ascended his throne, in his glorious golden robes, whilst Cynthia waxed paler, and, at last, her silver crescent faded away into empty air; the birds, awakening, sang their morning welcome to the day, and all nature seemed to rejoice: but the charming scene failed to inspire with mirth the pensive bosom of the aged poet. He refuses to address any invocation to the fabled muses of Greece or Rome. 'Such a strain,' says he, 'befits not a man mourning over the miseries of this world, and shut up in a vale of sorrow. I call no fabled muses, Minerva, Melpomene, Euterpe, or even Apollo'—

> For I did never sleep on Parnaso,
> As did the poetys of lang tyme ago;
> And speciallie the ornate Ennius.
> Nor ever drank I with Hesiodus,
> Of Greece, the perfect poet soverane—
> Of Helicon, the source of eloquence—
> Of that mellifluous famous fresh fountane;
> Quharefore to them I owe no reverence,
> I purpose not to make obedience
> To such mischeant muses, nor malimutrie
> Afore time usit intill poetrie.

'Were I,' he continues, 'to invoke any, it would be reverend Rhamnusia, the goddess of despite, but I scorn,' continues he, 'all such heathenish inventions, and only implore the great God, who created heaven and earth, to impart to me somewhat of that spirit which gave wisdom to Solomon, grace to David, and strength to the mighty Sampson. Let me repair, then, not to Mount Parnassus, but to Mount Calvary; let me be refreshed, not by the fabled Heliconian rill, but by the blessed and real fountain which flowed from the pierced side of my Redeemer. Walking onward, with his mind filled with these holy aspirations, he sees an aged man, sitting under a holly:—

Into that park I saw appear
An aged man, that drew me near;
Quhais berd was near three-quarter lang,
His hair down o'er his shoulders hang,
The quhilk as ony snaw was white,
Whom to behold I thought delight.
His habyte angelyke of hue,
Of colour like the sapphire blue.
Under a holly he reposit,
Of whose presence I was rejosit.
I did salute him reverentlie,
Sa did he me richt courteouslie;
To sit down he requested me,
Under the shadow of that tre,
To save me from the sonnis heat,
Among the flowers soft and sweet,
For I was weary for walking;
Then we began to fall talking;
I sperit his name, with reverence,
I am, said he, *Experience.*

The picture of the aged man, reclining under the shade of the holly, his beard descending down his breast, his white locks scattered over his shoulders, his flowing robe of sapphire blue, contrasted with the green of the soft, natural couch on which he lies, the grave and placid deportment which inspired reverence, and the courtesy which won affection, is finely conceived and executed. The poem henceforth assumes the form of a dialogue between the author and this venerable sage, who, with great shrewdness and learning, and often with much eloquence and poetic fervour, delivers a kind of chronicle of human error and sin, from its earliest appearance in Eden, till its final doom in the day of judgment. The tedium of this narrative is occasionally relieved by little episodes, in which the author speaks in his own person. Thus, in imitation of Chaucer and Lydgate, in England, and of his Scottish brethren, Douglas and Wedderburn, Lindsay introduces 'an Exclamation to the Reader, touching the Writing of his Poem in the vulgar and maternal Language.' His argument or apology is sound and unanswerable. 'I write,' says he, 'for Jok and Thom, coilzears, carters, and cooks; and I, therefore, make use of their language.' 'Aristotle and Plato,' says he, 'did not communicate their philosophy in Dutch or Italian; Virgil and Cicero did not write in Chaldee or Hebrew. Saint Jerome, it is true, translated the Bible into Latin, but if Saint Jerome had been born in Argyleshire, he would have translated it into Gaelic *.'

One of the most interesting portions of Lindsay's 'Monarchy' is that in the second book, where he considers the subject of the Catholic worship of images, and draws a vigorous parallel between the idolatries of the Gentiles and that of the Romish church. Unlike the more violent reformers who succeeded him, he is far from uttering an uncompromising anathema against the use of images; on the contrary, if properly employed, he considers them useful helps to devotion, means which may be instrumental to the instruc-

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* Warton's Hist. Eng. Poet., vol. iii. p. 137.

tion and the fortifying the faith of the unlearned. It is only when we kneel and pray to them that they become sinful and unscriptural.

But we, by counsel of clergy,
Have license to make imagery;
Which of unlearned are the books,
For when the people on them looks,
It bringeth to remembrance
Of Saintis lives the circumstance,
How the faith to fortify
They suffered pain richt patiently.
Seeing the image of the Rude,
Men should remember on the blude
Which Christ, intil his passion,
Did shed for our salvation;
Or when thou seest ane portraiture
Of blessed Mary Virgin pure,
Ane lovely babe upon her knee,
Then in thy mind remember thee
The wordis which the prophet said,
How she should be both mother and maid.
But who sittis down upon their knees,
Praying to any images,
With orison or offerand,
Kneeling with cap into their hand,
Ne difference bene, I say to thee,
From the Gentile's idolatry *.

In the following stanza, Lindsay alludes to an image of St. Giles, the patron saint of Edinburgh, which was afterwards connected with a noted event in the history of the reformation—

Of Edinborough the great idolatrie,
  And manifest abominatioun;
On their feast-day, all creatures may see—
  They bear an auld stock image thro' the town,
With talbrone, trumpet, schalme, and clarion,
  Whilk has usit mony a year begone,

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* Poems, vol. iii. p. 5.

With priestes and freiris into processioun,
Sic lyke as Bel was borne thro' Babylon.

The fate of this image Lindsay did not live to see. It was destroyed by the populace, on the 1st of September, 1558, during one of the annual processions in which the priests and friars paraded it through the city, on which occasion, to use the words of Knox, 'One took the idol by the heels, and dadding his head to the street, left Dagon without head or hands. The Grey Friars gaped, the Black Friars blew, the priests panted and fled, and happy was he that first gat the house*.'

The use and abuse of the temporal power of the Popedom, the unholy lives of many of the clergy, the injurious effects of pilgrimages, the disastrous consequences which spring from the ignorance of the people, the happy results to be anticipated from the publication of the Scriptures and missals in the vernacular language of the country, are all enlarged upon by Lindsay, in a strain of vigorous and convincing, though sometimes homely argument; at last, Experience, having concluded his heavenly lessons, takes leave of his pupil in these sweet stanzas—

Of our talking now let us make an end,
Behald[1] how Phœbus downwart dois descend
Towart his palice in the occident;
Dame Cynthia, I see, she does pretend
Intill her watry regioun till ascend
With visage paill[2] up from the orient.
The dew now doukis[3] the rosis redolent,
The marigoldis, that all day wer rejosit[4]
Of Phœbus heit, now craftilie ar closit[5].

[1] behold. [2] pale. [3] steeps. [4] rejoiced. [5] closed.

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* Knox's Hist., p. 104.

The blissful birdis bownis[1] to the treis,
And ceasis of their heavenlie harmoneis;
The corn-crak[2], in the croft[3], I hear her cry,
The bat, the howlat, febill of their eis[4],
For their pastyme now in the evening fleis[5];
The nightingale, with mirthful melody,
Her natural notis pierceth thro' the sky—
Till Cynthia makand[6] her observance,
Quhilk on the nicht dois tak her dalliance.

I see Pole Artick in the north appear,
And Venus rising with hir bemis cleir;
Quharefore[7], my sone, I hald it time to go.
Wald God, said I, ye did remain all yeir[8],
That I micht of your hevinly lessons leir[9];
Of your departing I am wonder wo[10].
Tak pacience, said he, it mon be so;
Perchance I sall return with diligence.
Thus I departed from Experience.

Thus imitated—

But see descending to the glorious west,
'Midst spiry clouds of ruby, fring'd with gold,
Bright Phœbus seeks the palace of his rest—
And earth's sweet roses, bath'd in dew-drops cold,
Breathe richer incense, as their leaves they fold
To gentle Cynthia, lady chaste and bright,
Whose silver orb, behind yon mountain old
Slow rising, through the dark blue vault of night,
Sheds o'er each tower and tree a flood of hazy light.

Amid the woods the birds are sound asleep,
The dim-ey'd bat flits darkling through the sky;
No note is heard to break the silence deep,
Save, in the sward, the land-rail's shrilly cry:
'Tis time, my son, we cease these reasonings high,
And leave the reverend owl a peaceful reign.
See, where she glares, with her large lustrous eye,
From that old oak that time hath rent in twain,
Wond'ring what busy tongue invades her still domain.

[1] hie. [2] land-rail. [3] field. [4] eyes.
[5] flies. [6] making. [7] wherefore. [8] year.
[9] learn. [10] wondrous sad.

Hush! the sweet nightingale salutes the moon,
  And Venus' star unveils her love-lit glance;
I deem'd not the soft goddess rose so soon—
  And yonder, high in the profound expanse,
Arcturus doth his brilliant spark advance,
  That fix'dly burns—Once more, my son, Farewell—
Nay, grieve not that we part;—I may, perchance,
  Return, and to thine ear more wonders tell;—
Meanwhile, 'tis meet I seek my hoary, time-worn cell.

The 'Monarchy' appears to have been Lindsay's last, and it is, in many respects, his best work. It is nervous, original, learned, and pious—full indeed of many poignant, satirical attacks upon the corruptions and licentiousness of the Romanist clergy, yet less bitter, coarse, and scurrilous than most of his earlier productions. It is pleasing, as he advances in years, to find the author receding from the indecency which was the poetical vice of the age,—to mark the improved tendency and higher moral tone of his writings; and while we sympathise with the pensive melancholy which tinges his last poetical legacy to his countrymen, to know that when he entered his quiet oratory, he met there that stedfast faith, and rested on those blessed hopes which furnished him with a key to all the sorrow, darkness, and vicissitude of this fluctuating existence.

Be not to much solyst in temporall thingis,
Sen thow persaves Pape, emperor, and kingis
Into the erth hath na place permanent.
Thou sees the deth them schamefullie down thringis,
And rives thame from their rent, riches and ringis;
Tharefor on Christ confirme thine haill intent,
And of thy calling be richt weill content;
Then God, that feedes the fowlis of the air,
All needful thingis for thee he sall prepair.

Of the exact time and circumstances of Sir David Lindsay's death nothing is known. It happened, probably, a short time before the disgraceful immolation of the venerable martyr, old Walter Mill, who was burnt at St. Andrew's, in April, 1558. It seems, at first, extraordinary that a man whose writings evidently enjoyed a high degree of popularity, should have expired without any record or memorial, so that we in vain search the family burying-place for a stone to mark the spot where the Lord Lion sleeps with his ancestors; but the fact is explained by the virtuous retirement in which he passed the latter years of his life, and the distracted condition of the country.

The family estate of Lindsay, called the Mount, from which he took his title, continued in the possession of his descendants when Sibbald published his 'History of Fife,' in 1710. It is now the property of General Sir Alexander Hope, of Rankeilour. In 1806, a farmer, of patriarchal age, who had lived for seventy years on the spot, pointed out to the literary curiosity of Mr. George Chalmers the site of the baronial family mansion; adding, that, within his memory, the walls of the castle remained. All traces of them are now obliterated, but a pleasing tradition still points out a shaded walk, on the top of the mount, where Lindsay is said to have composed some of his poems. It was called, in the youth of this aged man, Sir David's walk; and, in 1801, when the woods of the Mount were cutting, the same venerable enthusiast interceded with General Sir Alexander Hope for three ancient trees, which stood near the castle, and were known by the name of Sir David's trees. The liberal spirit of that gentleman probably needed no such monitor; but the trees were spared. It is likely they still remain, and the literary pilgrim may yet stand beneath their shade, indulging in the pleasing dream that he is sheltered by the same branches under which the Lord Lion was wont to ruminate, when he poured forth the lays which gave dignity to the lessons of Experience, and accelerated the progress of the Reformation.

A CHAPTER

OF

ANTIQUARIAN ILLUSTRATIONS.

I. Henry the Minstrel.
II. Bruce and St. Fillan.
III. Battle of Bannockburn.
IV. Death of good Sir James Douglas in Spain.
V. Randolph, Earl of Moray.
VI. Early Feudal Governments.
VII. Tournaments for the Black Lady, by James the Fourth.
VIII. James IV. and the Flying Abbot of Tungland.
IX. Arrival of the Gypsies in Scotland.
X. Ancient Scottish Games and Amusements.

I. HENRY THE MINSTREL.

In the course of the researches connected with these lives, I have sometimes come upon points and illustrations, the discussion of which would have interrupted the continuity of the main subject. I have, therefore, preferred the method of throwing them together, into the form of a chapter of antiquarian adversaria, making no attempt at laborious arrangement; and, without further preface, I begin by saying a few words upon that person so well known to all enthusiasts in ancient Scottish poetry, Henry the Minstrel, or, to give him his more familiar soubriquet, 'Blind Harry.'

Of this ancient bard, whose poetical genius has been honoured by the praise of Warton and Ellis, no life has been given in these volumes, because no materials for such existed; but, with regard to his work, the well-known 'Book of Wallace,' I must express a doubt whether, as a biography, it deserves the unmeasured neglect or contempt with which it has been treated. Of this neglect I plead guilty, amongst the rest of my brethren, for I have scrupulously avoided consulting him as an historical authority; but some late researches, and an attentive perusal of his poem, comparing it as I went along with contemporary documents, have placed the 'Life of Wallace' in a different light. I am persuaded that it is the work of an ignorant man, who was yet in possession of valuable and authentic materials. On what other supposition can we account for the fact, that, whilst in one page we meet with errors which show a deplorable perversion of history, in the next we find circumstances unknown to other Scottish historians, yet corroborated by authentic documents, by contemporary English annalists, by national muniments and records, only published in modern times, and to which the minstrel cannot be supposed to have had access. The work, therefore, cannot be treated as an entire romance—still less is it to be regarded as a uniformly veracious chronicle: but it exhibits the anomalous and contradictory appearance of a poem full of much confusion, error, and absurdity, yet through which there occasionally runs a valuable vein of historic truth. I am quite aware that to the orthodox investigators of Scottish history this must be a startling proposition, but it is uttered with no love of paradox, and I proceed to prove it by some examples.

The famous siege and sack of Berwick, by Edward the First, in the year 1296, has been variously represented by the English and Scottish historians. Carte's account is as follows:—'Edward, well enough pleased that the Scots had been the aggressors, advanced upon this disaster with all his forces to *Werk*, and there encamped, not proposing to enter Scotland till after the Easter holidays. In the mean time, the Scots had got together an army of 500 horse, and 40,000 foot, under the Earls of Buchan, Menteith, Strathern, Lenox, Ross, Athole, and Mar: and on Easter Monday, March 26, marched out of Annandale, through the forest of Nicholay, to Carlisle, killing all they found in their way, and sparing neither age nor sex in their fury. Their attempt upon that city miscarrying, they retired back into their own country, to make head against the King of England, who, passing the Tweed at Coldstream, on March 28, lay still all the next day, expecting the inhabitants of Berwick to make their submission. The gentlemen of Fife, with a considerable body of troops, had undertaken the defence of the town, which was ill fortified, and secured on the Scottish side by wooden barricades, rather than entrenchments. Edward, seeing them resolved on war, advanced early, on March 30, before the place, fixing his head-quarters in a nunnery, half a league distant, and drawing up his forces on a plain before the town, knighted Henry de Percy and several other gentlemen. This being a solemnity ordinarily used before an engagement, the seamen of the Cinque Ports, who lay with twenty-four ships off the port, imagined that an assault was to be given immediately, and in their eagerness to have a share, either in the attack or in the plunder of the town, entered the harbour with so little caution that three of the vessels ran aground, and, after an obstinate combat, were burnt by the enemy. Edward, hearing of that disorderly action, and seeing the smoke mounting from the ships, ordered an assault to be given, perhaps not so much in hopes of taking the place, as to favour the retreat of the seamen; but the English attacked the barricades with so much vigour, that they broke through them in a moment and entered the town, before the Scots thought of standing on their defence. They were so surprised at this unexpected event that they made no resistance, and about

7500 of them were put to the sword, the castle surrendering the same evening *.'

Such is the narrative of Carte, who quotes, as his authorities, Hemingford, Walsingham, and Mathews of Westminster. Let us turn from this to the very different account of the Scottish historians as it is thus abridged by Buchanan. 'Edward, soon after finding that he made no progress against the town, on account of the strength of the garrison, pretended to raise the siege, as if despairing of taking it, and caused reports to be spread, by *some Scots of the Bruce faction*, that Baliol was in the neighbourhood with a large army. When the principal persons of the garrison heard of the approach of their king, they, in order to give him the most honourable reception, hastened out promiscuously both horse and foot to meet him; on which a body of cavalry sent forward by Edward advanced, and having partly trode down those who were in front, and partly separated the others from their friends, seized on the nearest gate, and entered the city. The English king followed with the infantry, and made a miserable slaughter of all ranks: there were killed of the Scots upwards of 7000, and among them the flower of the nobility of Lothian and Fife †.'

Leaving for a moment these conflicting stories, let us turn to Henry the Minstrel's more particular detail of the matter. He asserts that Edward made himself master of Berwick by means of a stratagem of Patrick, Earl of Dunbar. His words are—'He (that is, Edward) raised his host, and came to Werk on Tweed: to Corspatrick of Dunbar he sent to ask his counsel, for he knew the country well, and he was brought to the king's presence, and by a subtil band (covenant) they cordyt (agreed) upon this thing.' He proceeds to explain that the thing they cordyt, or determined on, was, that Dunbar should proceed to Berwick, and at midnight deliver the town to the English. 'Earl Patrick,' he continues, 'then went to Berwick. He was received and truly trusted; the king followed with his renowned army, when the town after midnight was at rest. Then Corspatrick arose, and let the bridge and the portcullis down, and drew up the gates, so that his banner could be seen; and the army was aware of it, and drew towards him, and Edward entered, and hastily "gar'd slay" 7050 men*.' So that by this false conduct no true Scotsman escaped.

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* Carte, vol. ii., p. 263.

† Buchanan, by Aikman, vol. i., book viii., c. xv., p. 405.

Now we know from Hemingford, an English contemporary historian, of excellent authority, that one principal part of Blind Harry's assertion is perfectly accurate, although the fact does not appear in our common historians. Patrick, Earl of March, whom the Minstrel denominates Corspatrick, and some of the English chronicles Earl Patrick with the black beard, did resort to Edward when he was encamped at Werk; and Hemingford (vol. i. p. 102) gives us the original bond or agreement which they *cordyt between them*, dated 25th March, 1295, the last day of the year 1295. Berwick, we know, was taken by the English on the 30th of the same month, which brings it into the year 1296. So far, therefore, we find the

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* Wallace, by Jamieson, p. 4.

Minstrel corroborated; and if the curious reader will look into the second volume of the 'Chronicle of Langtoft,' also a contemporary English authority, he will find a further confirmation of this account.

In what manner Dunbar got possession of the gates, and on the advance of Edward opened them to the English, does not appear in the poem of the Minstrel, who informs us that his narrative is merely introductory to the 'Life of Wallace,' and therefore that he does not delay upon it.

> I may not put all thai dedis in rhyme
> Of Cornykle—why suld I tarry lang?
> To Wallace now briefly will I gang,
> Scotland was lost when he was but a child.

But we see in Buchanan that a report was spread, by Edward, of the approach of Baliol at the head of an army; and we learn from Fordun, (vol. ii. p. 160,) that 'it was by means of the standard of a certain earl (who, says he, shall be nameless, lest his fraud should be repeated) that the citizens of Berwick were circumvented.' The sentence is taken by Fordun from a monkish poem, written in Leonine verse, and probably coeval with the taking of the town.

> Hic villæ turmas caute statuit perimendas,
> *Cujusdam fraude*, qui semper erit sine laude,
> *Vexillum cujus* cives decipit—et hujus
> Nomen siletur, *Comitis* ne fraus iteretur.

Through all this it is not difficult to discover the truth, if we put together these various circumstances derived from different sources. We see, from the account of Carte, that Edward had not given orders for the attack of the town by his ships, or the assault of the barricades by his army. The ships sailed in, mistaking the muster of the army for the preparations of an assault; and the army attacked the town, not with the idea of storming it, but merely for the purpose of covering the retreat of the ships. We next gather from Hemingford and Henry the Minstrel, that, in a secret council held between Edward, and Patrick, Earl of March, the Scottish noble proposed a scheme by which he trusted to deliver Berwick into the hands of the English king, which piece of treachery he accomplished. We learn from Buchanan, that Edward caused reports to be spread by some Scots of *the Bruce faction* * that Baliol was in the neighbourhood with a large army, and that seeing an army or body of cavalry advance, the principal persons in the town, imagining it was the King, hastened out to meet them; and lastly, we are informed by Fordun, that the mode in which the citizens were deceived was by the 'standard or banner of a certain earl,' whose name he passes over in silence, lest his fraudulent stratagem should be again repeated. The reason assigned is absurd; the true motive for the author of the monkish lines concealing the name of the delinquent was, that the treason had prospered, and its author was in power. Now, another ancient historian, quoted by Hutchinson in his History of Durham, informs us that the manner in which Berwick fell into the hands of Edward was this:—The English king, after in vain attempting to carry the town, pretended to raise the siege, having spread a report, which soon reached the citizens, that Baliol was advancing at the head of an army. He then marched away, but returned suddenly and secretly, *during the night*, and concealing the greater part of his force by the nature of the ground, sent forward a detachment upon whose standard the royal arms of Scotland were emblazoned, whereupon the citizens, imagining it to be Baliol himself, precipitately and tumultuously opened their gates, and found, when it was too late, that they were enemies instead of friends. Edward then pushed on with the main body of his army, and the town was carried and sacked. Who does not in this account at once detect the 'standard of the earl which deceived the citizens?'

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* This is a remarkable expression, and it serves to corroborate Henry the Minstrel; for we learn from Hemingford, vol. i. p. 102, that at this time 'Bruce, the son of the Competitor, and his son Robert Bruce, afterwards king, *along with Dunbar, Earl of March*, and the Earl of Angus, had repaired to Edward, and renewed their oaths of homage.' Dunbar, therefore, was a lord of the Bruce faction.

> Vexillum cujus cives decipit, et hujus
> Nomen siletur: Comitis ne fraus iteretur.

The whole story, then, runs thus.—Corspatrick, or Patrick, Earl of Dunbar, came to Werk and had a secret consultation with Edward, who found Berwick too strong to be taken by open assault; and this minute particular, which is a key to the whole truth, which does not appear in any other Scottish historian, and which is corroborated by Hemingford, we learn solely from Henry the Minstrel. They agreed to employ stratagem; a report was spread that Baliol was at hand with his army; Edward struck his tents and raised the siege, but secretly, under cover of night, returned. Dunbar, at the head of an advanced party, and having the royal arms of Scotland on his standard, proceeded to the gates, and the reader already knows the result—the town was betrayed, and mercilessly sacked and plundered. Now, what is the inference which I draw from this, and from which I do not see how any one, who will candidly weigh the evidence, can escape?—simply this: that the account of the taking of Berwick, by Henry the Minstrel, although garbled, is corroborated by the most authentic contemporary documents, both English and Scottish, and that when he composed it, he must have had access to some accurate chronicle of the times.

Let me take another example. Henry's account of the taking of Dunbar, by Edward, might be shown to be minutely confirmed by the 'Rotuli Scotiæ,' vol. i. p. 22; and by the valuable English Chronicle of Langtoft. He affirms that four Scottish earls, namely Mar, Menteith, Athole, and Ross threw themselves into the Castle of Dunbar.

> Thir four erlis enterit in that place,
> Of Mar, Menteith, Athol—Ross upon cace.

Now, in turning to Langtoft, we at first find something like a contradiction, or at least an omission, on the part of Henry, for this English author gives us only three earls—

> Rosse, Menteith, Assetelle, thir Erlis thrie.

But, looking to Trivet, p. 288, another contemporary chronicler, we find the missing nobleman, Mar: again, after the defeat of the Scots, at Dunbar, and the termination of the campaign, the Minstrel informs us of the precaution he took to ensure the tranquillity of Scotland, by carrying the principal of the Scottish nobles with him into England:—

Seven score thai led of the greatest that they fand,
Of heirs with them, and Bruce out of Scotland.
Edward gave him his father's heritage,
But he thought aye to hold him in thirlage[1],
Baith Blalock Moor was his, and Huntingdon.

Now, I request the reader to turn to Hemingford, pp. 101, 102, 103, where he will find a striking corroboration of the first two lines:—'Statuit Rex (Edwardus) et præcepit ut Joannes quondam Rex Scotiæ et uterque Joannes Comyn, et *cæteri magnates* terræ illius, vel in suo itinere vel faciem ejus præcederent ad partes australes, morarenturque in partibus iisdem, ultra aquam quæ Trenta dicitur, non revertentes sub pœna capitis quousque inter ipsum et Regem Franciæ omnino guerra finiretur.' If he will next turn to 'Langtoft's Chronicle,' p. 278, and to the 'Rotuli Scotiæ,' vol. i. p. 44, he will find an additional confirmation of the Minstrel's statement, and a list of the names of the Scottish prisoners of rank who were carried out of Scotland.

Once more, the Minstrel describes the injuries committed at this time in Scotland by the English, in some strong lines. 'They did much wrong,' says he, 'in the land; they took the richest ecclesiastical livings, the bishoprics that were of greatest value, and gave them to their archbishops and their own clergy; they seized the kirks, and would not forbear, even from fear of the Pope, but violently grasped at all:—

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[1] Thirlage, bound to his service.

The English did much wrong then in Scotland—
The bishopricks that were of greatest waile[1]
They tak in hand of their archbishops haile;
No for the Pope they wald[2] na kirks forbear,
But grippit[3] all by violence of war.

Now, this is strikingly supported by the 'Rotuli Scotiæ,' vol. i. pp. 6, 7, 9, 10, 20. The reader will there find an instrument, annexing the towns of Berwick and Hadington to the see of Durham; and, p. 24, a deed by which the church lands in Scotland were restored to the abbots, priors, and other English clergy who had been expelled by Baliol.

It would be ridiculous to expect that we should bring from the public records, or the English or Scottish historians, a confirmation of all the biographical particulars of Wallace's early life, as they are given by the Minstrel, with a freshness of natural character which has made his book so deservedly popular amongst the lower classes of Scotland; but it is certainly remarkable, that when, in the course of his narrative, he alludes to general circumstances, these are found to be correct, and that even in some of the more minute biographical particulars he is confirmed by Fordun, a high authority. Thus, we are told by the Minstrel, that when the father of Wallace fled to the Lennox with his eldest son Malcolm, William, the future champion, and his mother, retreated from Ellerslie, passed into Goury, and dwelt at Kilspindie. His uncle, Sir Ronald Crawford, then, as we are informed, sent him to his (Wallace's) uncle, an aged man, who put William Wallace to school at Dundee. Now, it is worthy of note, that almost the only anecdote preserved by Fordun regarding Wallace's boyhood, relates to a monkish Latin rhyme, which, he asserts, when he was a boy he learnt *from his uncle.* The reader is already acquainted with the circumstance, which is stated in vol. i. p. 166; but, to save trouble, we may again quote the lines—

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[1] value. [2] would. [3] grasped violently.

> Dico tibi verum Libertas optima rerum.
> Nunquam servili sub nexu vivito fili.

Again, let us take an example of a general confirmation of minute particulars. After having slain young Selby, Wallace was saved by the good wife of his eyme or uncle, who disguised him in woman's apparel, and when the house was searched, set him down to spin; after which, he escaped to his mother, who fled with him to Elderslie, and from thence sent a message to her brother, who had made his peace with Edward, and was Sheriff of Ayr, her object being to entreat him to use his influence with the Lord Percy to have Wallace, her son, admitted to the peace of the king. Now, the biographical details here rest solely on the authority of the Minstrel; but we know that Wallace's mother was a daughter of Sir Reginald Crawford, and we find, by an instrument in the 'Rotuli Scotiæ,' vol. i. p. 23, that in the year 1296, when the event is stated to have happened, this knight, who was Wallace's uncle, was Sheriff of Ayr. The deed is thus entitled:—'Reginaldo de Crawford committitur Vicecomitatus Aeræ.' Again, we find in the same valuable collection of ancient muniments, vol. i. p. 31, that Lord Henry Percy was the English governor in those parts for Edward, by whom any of the Scots who had appeared in arms against Edward were received, and sworn, on making proper submission, into the peace of the king. The instrument, establishing this, is thus inscribed: 'Custodia Galwediæ et Aeræ committitur Henrico de Percy.' Do not these corroborations, in the only particulars where Henry can be checked by undoubted documents, entitle us to suspect, at least, that the whole story cannot be fabulous, but that he had before him some authentic records which have unfortunately perished? Again, we find it stated by the Minstrel, that after the defeat of Fenwick and his convoy by Wallace, at Loudon-hill *, Lord Henry Percy held a consultation at Glasgow, to which he summoned Sir Reginald Crawford, and where it was agreed that a short truce should be concluded with the Scottish insurgents under Wallace, and an attempt made by Crawford to induce his nephew to give up his desperate courses. This event is said to have happened in the month of August, 1296; and, in turning up the 'Rotuli Scotiæ,' we find that a temporary pacification did actually take place about this time. Again, when Wallace takes Kinclevin Castle, the Minstrel asserts, that out of a garrison of ninety men, sixty, with *Butler*, their captain, were slain; and we find, by the 'Rotuli Scotiæ,' vol. i. p. 38, that Sir James Butler was then keeper of Kinclevin.

Previous to the month of May, 1297, the 'Book of Wallace' represents its hero as engaging only in insulated and unconnected efforts against the English, in which he had been chiefly supported by his own friends and relatives; Sir John the Grahame being the only man of note and lineage who had joined him; but, in this year, 1497, a great change took place; men of ancient family and powerful connexions, 'the worthy Scots,' from many quarters, come trooping to his banner, and choose him as their leader. This account is corroborated by 'Winton's Chronicle,' an unsuspected authority, and by the English historians, Hemingford, pp. 119, 121, and Trivet, p. 299. These writers now, for the first time, take notice of him as a popular and daring leader, whose successes began to alarm the captain of Edward in Scotland. It were easy to point out many additional particulars, which appear to prove the same fact, that there is, in the 'Book of Wallace,' by Henry the Minstrel, an extraordinary admixture of glaring error and absurdity, with minute historical truth; and that he must have had access to some valuable materials; and I may now mention, that, in more than one place, he refers to original authorities which have perished, and represents himself as little else than the transcriber from another author. In his account of the seizure of Percy's baggage by Wallace, he adds, 'As my autor me tald.' In speaking of the hero's marriage, he observes, 'Mine autor says she was his richteous wyf.' In his spirited account of the romantic skirmish in Elcho Park, he again tells us, 'I but rehearse, as my autor will say;' and lastly, in his fifth book, v. 533, we have this curious passage, from which a conjecture may be formed who this author was—

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* Scottish Worthies, vol. i. pp. 176, 177.

> Maister Johne Blair was oft in that message,
> A worthy clerk, baith wise and rych sawage,
> Levyt before he was in Paris town.

* * * * *

He was the man that principal undirtuk,
That first compylit in dyte the LATYNE BUK
Of WALLACE'S LYF: richt famous of renoune,
And Thomas Gray, persoun of Libertoun;
With him thai war, and put in story all
Of ane or baith; meikle of his travaill.

It was, therefore, in all probability, the 'Latyne Buk of Wallace's Life,' compiled by this worthy ecclesiastic Master John Blair, who, as we are elsewhere informed, officiated as his chaplain, from which Henry the Minstrel derived those authentic particulars which may be detected, cropping out, as geologists say, from beneath the more fabulous superficies of his history. There is a curious passage in 'Major's History of Scotland,' which gives us some insight into the mode in which Blind Harry pursued his vocation. 'The book of William Wallace,' says this author, 'was composed during my infancy, by Henry, a man blind from his birth. He wrote in popular rhymes, a species of composition in which he was no mean proficient, such stories as were then current among the common people. From these compilations I must not be blamed if I withhold an implicit belief, as the author was one, who, by reciting them to the great, earned his food and raiment, of which indeed he was worthy *.' It is thus easy to conceive, that whilst the main groundwork of his narrative was authentic, his recitation of his verses in the halls or at the tables of the great might lead him to omit some fact, to introduce another, to alter, or perhaps add to a third, according to the feelings or prejudices of his audience, and thus gradually bring confusion and contradiction

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* Major, Historia Britt. p. 169.

into his history; nor is it to be forgotten, that many errors may be traced to the ignorance of those who transcribed the poem, and that other blunders may have crept in from the carelessness of succeeding copyists. But my object in these few remarks on the noted poem of the blind Minstrel 'is attained if I have established grounds for the doubt or question with which they commenced, namely, whether the 'Book of Wallace' is to be considered as wholly, or even principally, a work of fiction; whether, amidst all its palpable contradictions which are so easily detected, there does not run through it, in many places, a vein of historic truth.

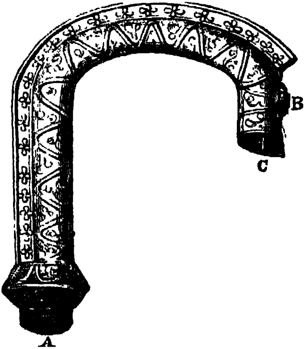
II. BRUCE AND ST. FILLAN.

There is a curious piece of traditionary superstition connected with Bruce and Bannockburn, which, as it was not to be found in Fordun or Winton, I omitted in the text. Perhaps I was wrong in doing so, as the circumstance is characteristic of the times. It relates to an alleged miracle regarding the luminous arm of St. Fillan; and it may first be necessary to inform the reader that this saint has given his name to many chapels and holy fountains in Scotland. Camerarius informs us he was Abbot of Pittenweem, in Fife, and afterwards died a hermit, in the wild and romantic district of Glenurquhay, A. D. 649. The legend asserts, that when engaged in transcribing the Scriptures, his left hand or arm emitted a supernatural effulgence, by which he was enabled, without resorting to the more natural expedient of using torches or candles, to carry on his labours at midnight as easily as at mid-day. This luminous arm was ever after preserved as a relic, and Bruce, who neglected nothing which might give confidence to his soldiers, and whose own mind was probably not insensible to the influence of such ideas, carried it along with him, inclosed in its silver shrine, to Bannockburn. The chaplain of the king, however, dreading lest the precious relic should, in the subsequent battle, perhaps fall into the hands of the English, secretly abstracted it, and left nothing but the silver shrine in the royal tent. At night, Robert, with his mind agitated by his various affairs, scarce allowed himself any sleep, but consumed the night in watching, and directed his prayers to St. Fillan, whose arm he believed to be shut up in the silver shrine which was carried with the army; when to his surprise the casket was observed to open and shut suddenly, and on inspection it was found that the saint had deposited his arm in the shrine as an assurance of victory.

There yet lingers in the northern parts of the kingdom a strong superstitious belief in the powers of the same saint to cure lunacy, and the magical operations by which his aid is invoked are still performed at his chapel and pool of Strathfillan, in Breadalbane. A curious relic of St. Fillan existed not very long ago at Killin, where it was seen in July, 1782, by Mr. William Thomson. The following letter from that gentleman, to the late Earl of Buchan, gives a minute description of it:—

'At Killin, July 5, 1782, in the house of Malise Doire, a day I was shown what he called the

Quigrich. It is the head of a Croisier, formerly belonging to St. Fillan, who gave his name to a neighbouring strath. * * With it is shown a copy of the king's letters of appropriation and security, which I have carefully transcribed. The neighbours conducted me to the envied possessor of this relic, who exhibited it, according to the intent of the royal investment. A youth of nineteen, the representative of his father's name, and presumptive heir to this treasure, lay drooping in an outer apartment, under the last gasp of a consumption. The relic weighs about seven or eight pounds, is of silver gilt, and hollow at one end, A. On the other end, C, which is flat, is engraved a crucifix, having a star on each side. An oval crystal is set in the front of the staff, and is here seen in profile B.



'The document shown with this curious piece of antiquity is in the following terms:—

' "At Edinburgh, the 1st day of November, 1734, in presence of the lords of council and session, compeared Mr. John Lookup, advocat, as procurator for Malise Doire after designed, and gave in the letters of gift underwritten, desiring the same to be registrat in their lordships' books, as a probative writ; which desire the said lords found reasonable, and therefore they ordain the same to be done accordingly, conform to act of Parliament, made anent the registration of probative writs, in all points, whereof the tenor follows:—

' "James, be the grace of God, king of Scottis, to all and sindrie oure leigis and subditis spirituale and temporale, to whais knawledge thir oure letters sall come greeting: for as meikle as we haif understud that oure servitor, Malise Doire, and his forbears, hes had ane relic of Saint Filane, callit the Quigrich, in keping of us and of oure progenitouris of maist noble mynde, quham God assoilzie, sen the tyme of King Robert the Bruce, and of before, and made nane obedience nor answer to na persoun spirituale nor temporale, in ony thing concerning the said haly relic, uthirwayis than what is contenit in the auld infeftment thereof maid and grantit be oure said progenitouris. We charge you thairfore straitly, and commandis that in tyme to cum ye, and ilk ane of you, redily answer, intend, and obey to the said Malise Doire, in the peceable bruiking and joising of the said relick. And that ye, or nane of you, tak upon hand to compel nor distrenzie him to mak obedience nor answer to you, nor til ony uther bot allenarly to us and oure successouris, according to the said infeftment and fundatun of the said relick, and siclike as wes use and wont in the tyme of oure said progenitouris of maist noble mynde of before. And that ye make him nane impediment, letting nor distroublance in the passing with the said relick thro the cuntrie, as he and his forbears was wont to do. And that ye, and ilk ane of you, in oure name and autorite, kepe him unthrallit, bot to remane in siclike freedom and liberty of the said relick, like as is contenit in the said infeftment, under all the hiest pain and charge, that ye, and ilk ane of you, may amit and inrin anent us in that pairt. Givin under oure privie seale at Edinburgh, the xi day of July, the yeir of God, i^{m}.$\mathrm{iiii}^{\mathrm{c}}$.lxxxvii yeiris, and of oure regn the xxvii yere. Sic subscribitur,

JAMES R.

' " Litera pro Malisio Doire,
in Strathfinane."

' The privy seal is appended to the principal.'

It thus appears that from a period anterior to the reign of Robert Bruce this remarkable relic had been handed down from father to son, in the family of Malise Doire, for nearly five centuries ; an extraordinary instance of uninterrupted possession and traditionary superstition.

I am informed by my much-respected and intelligent friend Mrs. Douglass Maclean Clephane, an enthusiastic antiquary in everything connected with Scottish history, that when in Strathfinane, in the year 1800, she saw the Quigrich. It was then in the possession of a very old Highland woman, who exhibited also the copy of the Royal Charter : by a pencil note on the letter to the Earl of Buchan, it appears that the owner of the relic afterwards emigrated to America, carrying the quigrich along with him.

III. BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN.

To the enthusiast in Scottish history and antiquarian research, who wishes to spend a pleasant day in his favourite pursuits, I would recommend a walk over the field of Bannockburn, taking in his hand the admirable poem of 'Barbour,' and the English historian Hemingford. It is necessary, however, to warn him, that on reaching the toll at the Torwood, about a mile beyond the village of Larbert, he ought to turn to the left hand, leaving the main road, which would lead him to the modern village of Bannockburn, and ascend the hill through the Torwood, along the ancient road, which was undoubtedly the line of march pursued by Edward on his advance to the battle. He will thus traverse the Plean muir, by the back of the Plean hill, and passing a small line of houses, still called the camp, discern an elevated field on his left, situated on the property of Major Lowes. There tradition still points out the spot where Edward halted and encamped the night before the battle; and her voice, too often imaginative and uncertain, is here confirmed by the more solemn evidence of history; whilst it is pleasing to find that every countryman round can show where the royal tent was pitched, and the royal standard of England unfurled. The spot enjoys a commanding prospect. It is about two miles and a half or three miles from the New Park, where Bruce was encamped. On the right is the beautiful line of the Ochil hills; Stirling Castle, with a noble background of Highland hills, being seen to the north. A small red-tiled cottage, which overtops Bannockburn Wood, marks a spot still distinguished in the neighbourhood by the name of the Bloody Faulds, where such was the slaughter of the English in their flight, that the little burn or stream which is hard by, is said to have been choked by the dead bodies, and to have run red with blood for twenty-four hours. Beyond the Bloody Faulds, and to the north, is a spot denominated the Cat's Crag, where a stone still stands which is said to mark the position of another standard—probably that of the advance or vanguard of the English, under the command of the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford. Bruce's position was completely defended from any attack in the direct line, by the rugged ravine in which the Bannock runs; but at Milton, or Beaton's Mill, is a narrow pass, where the enemy might cross, avoiding the ravine of the Bannock, and extending themselves on some firm ground which stretches to the left. I am persuaded they adopted this line of attack, as the nature of the ground left them no other alternative. In accomplishing it, however, their columns must have been crowded into a very small space, which probably occasioned the appearance mentioned in the text, vol. ii., pp. 39, 40. It is still reported in the traditions of the neighbourhood that the English came down by the old Torwood road, from their encampment on the Plean Muir; and this road runs down past Coalheugh farm to Pirnhall, and thence to Milton. Taking this line of walk, therefore, the reader will traverse very nearly the line of advance of the army of Edward against the strong position occupied by Bruce.

IV. DEATH OF THE GOOD SIR JAMES DOUGLAS.*

It is to be wished that some Spanish antiquary would amuse himself by investigating the circumstances and locality of the death of this renowned warrior. The common Spanish historians, Mariana, Rodericus Santius, and Francis Tarapha, give us little information on the subject; but I have met with some passages in the Ancient Chronicle of Alfonso XI., ('Cronica del Rey Alfonso El Onceno,') published at Madrid in 1787, which throw a little light on the subject. We find from this source that Alfonso concluded a temporary truce with the Sultan of Granada, in 1330, and that soon after, in the course of the same year, this Mahometan prince passed over to Africa, and entered into a league with Alboacen, King of Marocco, who promised to assist him in his wars with Alfonso, and to send over his son with 6000 cavalry to Spain. The title of Alboacen, as we learn by a passage in the same chronicle, was El Rey Albohacen de Benamarin, and his son was named Abomelique. Now turning to p. 184 of the same chronicle, we find that when the two Saracen princes were making these arrangements in Africa, there arrived at the camp of Alfonso, in 1330, a body of French, German, Gascon, and English knights, who partook in the tournaments and festivities, and received from the king presents of horses and arms with which they justed. 'E el Rey,' says the Chronicle, 'mandaban les dar caballos et armas con que justasen.' We know from Barbour, p. 415, that the king Alfonso received Douglas with great distinction, and presented him with 'gold and tresour, hors and arming.' These, as is already mentioned in the text (vol. ii. p. 206), Douglas with all due courtesy declined; but he offered to the king his services, and those of the knights, his companions, against the infidels; and 'many foreign captains, who had heard of the fame of Douglas, crowded round him.' From these passages I conjecture that Sir James Douglas, having landed at Seville, took his journey with the knights and squires who were in his suite, to the court and camp of King Alfonso, which was then at Burgos; and that the Chronicle, when it notices the arrival of a distinguished body of knights from foreign countries, meant to include amongst the English Sir James Douglas and his companions. Now once more turning to the Chronicle, it appears (p. 196) that not long after this, Abomelique, son of Albohacen of Benamarin, according to his agreement, landed in Spain at the head of 6000 cavalry, and passed to Algeziras: upon which the Sultan of Granada again declared war against Alfonso. I entreat the reader to remark how completely this corresponds to the passage in Barbour, where Douglas and his company are described as being inactive, until news came that the 'high King of Balmeryne had entered the land of Spain.'

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* Vol. ii. pp. 206, 207.

> Upon this maner still they lay.
> Quhil thro the countrie they hard say
> That the high *King of Balmeryne*,
> With many a moody Sarazine,
> Was entrit intill the land of Spayne.

In the high King of Balmeryne of Barbour, it is easy to recognise the Sultan Abomelique of Benamarin (thus called from his father Albohacen); and, indeed, if we look to the Latin historians of Spain, Rodericus Santius, (vol. ii. Wechelii Rer. Hisp. Script., p. 386,) and Marineus Siculus, (vol. ii. p. 820,) we find the kings of Benamarin designated Reges Bellamarini, from which the transition to Balmeryne is still easier. It next appears from the Chronicle, that Abomelique, after concerting measures with the Sultan of Granada, laid siege to Gibraltar; and that Alfonso, having collected a great army, resolved to raise the siege, by attacking the infidels; for which purpose he collected his best captains, and amongst others sent for Don Vasco Rodriguez, Master of Santiago. It is shown by the Chronicle that Abomelique laid siege to Gibraltar in the last week of February, 1330, and it was not till the 8th of June, 1331, (the siege having then lasted above three months,) that Alfonso arrived in Seville with the design of concentrating his forces, and attacking the Saracens. It was here that Douglas's ships were laid up, and there can be little doubt that at this time he and his companions were in the Spanish camp. A slight circumstance seems to corroborate this:—On coming to Seville, Alfonso found there the Grand Master of Santiago. Now, it is stated by Barbour, who probably had his information from some of the survivors, that, in the battle which ensued, the King gave the leading of the first battle or vaward to Douglas; that he entrusted the conduct of the second to the Grand Master of Santiago;

> And the great *Master of Saint Jak*
> The tothyr battail gert he tak.

It is necessary to consider for a moment the circumstances under which the battle was fought in which Douglas met his death, as they have not hitherto been explained by any of our historians. After a long and gallant defence, Gibraltar was treacherously betrayed by its governor, Vasco Perez, and delivered to the Sultan Abomelique, (Chronica del Rey Alonso, p. 224,) who placed in it a strong garrison. Alfonso, in his turn, laid siege to it; and the King of Granada, with his African ally, Abomelique, or, as Barbour styles him, the 'high King of Balmeryne,' advanced with their combined forces to its rescue. The Spanish monarch met and defeated these two soldans; and if the reader will consult Fordun, vol. ii. p. 302, he will find a detailed account of the manner in which the good Sir James was slain. It has been abridged in the text, vol. ii. p. 207, and may be compared with the description of the battle in the 'Chronicle of Alonso XI., pp. 227, 228, 229. Douglas is generally believed to have been slain on the 25th of August, 1330, according to the tenor of an ancient epitaph, preserved by Fordun, where he is said to have fallen 'apud Castrum Tibris.' It seems to me almost certain that he was slain in August, 1331, a year later; for in 1330 there was a truce between the Moors and the Spaniards; and the war does not appear to have recommenced till Abomelique landed in Spain with his reinforcement, which happened in 1331. As for the expression, 'apud Castrum Tibris,' I have in vain attempted to discover its locality, and suspect some false reading of the manuscript.

V. RANDOLPH, EARL OF MORAY.*

In the manuscript Cartulary of Dumfermling, preserved in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, (p. 243 of Macfarlane transcript, and fol. 21 in the original,) there is to be found a charter of the great Randolph. In it he declares his desire that his body shall be buried 'in capella sua infra Ecclesiam Conventualem de Dumfermlyn,'—in his chapel situated beneath the Conventual Church of Dumfermline,—and devotes forty shillings sterling for the support of a priest, who is to say mass for his soul, and the souls of his ancestors, every day in the year—'tam in vita nostra quam post mortem, corpore nostro ibidem sepulto vel non sepulto,'—as well during his life as after his death, and whether his body be then buried there or not. During the continuance of the mass, he gives minute directions that 'duo cerei solennes ardeant a principio missæ usque ad finem, quorum unus stet apud caput et alter ad pedes,'—two great wax tapers should burn from the beginning of the mass till its conclusion, the one at his head, the other at his feet. Unfortunately, this deed has neither date nor witnesses.

VI. FEUDAL GOVERNMENTS.—POWER OF THE PEOPLE TO BE TRACED TO THE MEASURES OF THE CROWN.

The encroachments made by the power of the feudal nobles on the authority of the crown seem to have taken place in England, France, and Scotland under nearly similar circumstances, although not precisely at the same time; and in the three countries, the different monarchs, anxious to defend their own prerogative, and to diminish the power of the great feudal aristocracy, appear to have adopted for this purpose very nearly the same methods. The nobles became jealous of the increase of the royal authority, because it was a check and counterpoise to their own; and although with little success, it endeavoured at least to reduce them under the obedience of the laws. It is thus in Scotland that, during the long minorities, when the royal power was necessarily feeble; or during periods of foreign war, when the king required soldiers and money,—we see the nobles ever on the watch to increase their own power, and the king frequently compelled to give way, till a more favourable crisis for asserting his prerogative arrived. The reign of Edward I., one of the firmest and wisest of the English kings, affords many instances of this. We find the same struggle taking place in France; and out of the measures adopted by the crown during this struggle arose much of the power of the people. It became the object of the feudal monarch, in order to put down, or at least, to check the encroachments of his nobles, to increase the power of the burgesses and middle classes of the citizens; to raise them in rank and esteem; to give charters of freedom to towns and communities; to admit the burgesses into the great Council, or Parliament; to enact laws in favour of commerce and manufactures; to put an end to the right of private war; to abolish servitude and bondage; and in everything to increase that third power in the state upon which the barons looked with contempt, but the sovereign with complacency. It would not be difficult to adduce many historical proofs of these assertions, and to point out the great struggle against the exorbitant tyranny of the feudal aristocracy, of which we discern the workings in France, England, and Scotland.

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* Vol. ii. p. 209.

In France, the kings, at a very early period, so soon as the middle of the twelfth century, saw the necessity of making a stand against the gigantic strength of the nobles. In that country, Louis le Gros was contemporary with David I. in Scotland, and Henry I. in England; and it was to this Louis that the body of the feudal vassals owed so much. He established free communities, by granting chartered privileges; he adopted every means of enfranchising the numerous and unfortunate class of serfs, or slaves; he abridged the odious seignorial jurisdictions, and appointed royal deputies, or commissaries (missi dominici), whose business it was to make circuits through the kingdom; to inquire into and remedy all the abuses of the baronial courts; and either to sit in judgment and redress them, or send the appeal to the courts of the king. These wise and excellent measures originated with Garland and the Abbé Suger, his ministers *.

In Scotland, it is evident that David I. raised up the power of the clergy as a check upon the fierce despotism of his feudal barons, and of the wealthy burghers. By his encouragement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; by his charters to towns and burghs; by his judicial progresses

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* Hénault, Abrégé Chronologique, vol. i. p. 179.

through the kingdom, and the frequent instances in his reign, and in those of his successors, where we see the serfs and bondsmen recovering their liberty, either by grant or purchase, we can discern the same object of humbling and reducing the excessive powers of the nobles, giving security to the rights and property of the middle classes of the people, and additional strength to the royal authority. Under the reign of Malcolm IV., the struggle between the king and the encroachments of the barons becomes again discernible *. They assaulted, we know, and attempted to make themselves masters of his person. It is even asserted by the same historian, that, dissatisfied with the administration of the king, they compelled his brother William to assume the regency. On the death of Malcolm, during the reign of William the Lion, a monarch of great energy and determination, the barons appear to have kept within due bounds; and the increasing consequence of the commercial classes is seen by a remarkable grant of six thousand merks paid down by the boroughs, as their portion of a sum due to England†. Under his successor, Alexander II., Roger de Quincy, one of the most powerful of the feudal barons, who had married the heiress of Alan, Lord of Galloway, carried his oppressions and extortion to such a height, that his vassals grew infuriated, and, besieging him in his castle, would have torn him to pieces; but, clothing himself in complete armour, he cut his way, sword in hand, through the midst of them. This happened in 1247. We are not to suppose, however, that a regular and

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* Fordun à Goodal, book viii. c. 4.

† Ibid., book viii. c. 73.

continuous system can be discerned in progress, which wrought an increase of power to the crown, and of consequence to the lower orders, along with a proportionate loss of authority by the nobles, under each successive reign. On the contrary, when the sceptre chanced to fall into a hand naturally weak, or infirm with age, under the frequent minorities which occur in the history of Scotland, and during the captivity of some of its sovereigns, the nobles were ever on the alert to regain their ancient strength, or to acquire new privileges.

In this manner it happened that the personal character of the king, his courage, firmness, and wisdom, exercised a very evident influence upon the public happiness,—an observation which is strikingly confirmed by the history of Scotland during the reigns of David I. and Alexander II. Alexander III., as we have seen, vol. i. p. 4, succeeded when yet a boy; and we instantly see the violent commotions between the different parties of the nobles which occurred during his minority, the various plots for the purpose of seizing the person of the king, and thus possessing themselves of a royal warrant to oppress and domineer over all classes of the country, —a history which, in a greater or lesser degree, applies to every feudal government when it has experienced the misfortune of a minority. We have seen, however, that the character of Alexander, by its early energy and sagacity, put an end to these abuses, and established the government, as his reign proceeded, upon the foundation of just laws, administered with a wholesome severity. Against these laws, indeed, and their due execution, the spirit of the feudal system offered the utmost opposition. The enormous estates of the barons, their right of private war, and of holding their own courts, and their almost unlimited authority over their vassals and retainers; the custom of deadly feud, or of transmitting their fierce and implacable quarrels along with their inheritance to their children; and that indomitable pride, which broke out in contentions for precedence in the field, or in the councils of their sovereign, too often at times of the utmost emergency and danger;—all these marked and predominating circumstances were just so many barriers in the progress of the country to security, liberty, and the blessings of good government. It is impossible, indeed, to study the history of Scotland during this remote period without being forcibly struck with the correctness of this observation; and it applies with particular force to the annals of the long war of liberty, to the struggles of Wallace, and the early difficulties encountered by Bruce. To the immense body of the lower feudal vassals and retainers the service of their lord was the only road to distinction; their neglect of it was sure to be visited with punishment, if not with ruin. In reading the history of these dark times, it is easy to see that personal security and comfort being involved in the issue, this great body, which composed, in truth, the whole strength of the country, regarded the desertion of the king, or their loss of national independence, as an affair of less moment than a single act of disobedience to their liege lord. It was by the iron laws of this cruel system that Wallace at last found himself compelled to abandon the attempt to lead the Scottish barons and their vassals against England, and yet without it Bruce, perhaps, could not have succeeded.

VII. TOURNAMENT FOR THE BLACK LADY, BY JAMES IV.

It appears from the unpublished extracts from the accounts of the High Treasurer of Scotland, collected by the Rev. Mr. M'Gregor Stirling, a gentleman of rare but unobtrusive talent in the investigation of the sources of Scottish history, that, amongst the various curiosities, animate and inanimate, which James IV. was fond of amassing, were a party of blackamoors. These sable ornaments of his court he treated with great kindness and distinction; and the expenses upon their clothing and entertainment occupy a prominent place in the books of the Treasurer. They were captured in a Portuguese ship, which brought other curiosities; amongst the rest, a musk cat, and 'Portingale horse, with a red tail[*].' James ordered one of the Moor lasses to be christened; upon which occasion, such is the minuteness of the accounts, that we are informed his Majesty put nine shillings in the caudle[†]. A tournament appears afterwards to have been held in honour of the 'black ladye,' in which this sable beauty was introduced in a triumphal chariot, and gallant knights contended for the prize which she was to adjudge; nay, such was the solemnity and grave importance with which these feudal amusements were prepared, that articles of defiance were sent to France, in which a Scottish champion, under the name of a wild or savage knight, (probably the king himself,) challenged the chivalry of that court to break a spear in honour of the black lady*. On this occasion, Sir Anthony D'Arsy, a French cavalier of great skill in all warlike exercises, who was afterwards cruelly murdered in Scotland, appears to have gained much distinction. He arrived at the Court of Scotland, accompanied by a numerous suite, and was received by James with high honour. His mission, probably, was not solely of a chivalrous nature, but involved subjects of political importance, which could be readily concealed from common observation under the gorgeous disguise of the tournament. Whatever was its nature, the consideration in which he was held may be inferred from the generosity of his reception and the splendid presents with which he was dismissed. I copy some of the items as a specimen of those valuable documents from which we may derive so much information upon the manners of the country. When Sir Anthony arrived, his horse's feet seem to have been swelled and beat by the journey, and Robert Galloway was ordered to bathe them with wine:— 'Item, to Robt. Galloway, for wyne to baiss the

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[*] Nov. 8, 1504. To Mossman Polingaire, to red (settle) the More's expenses, the Portingail horse and beasts, and folk with them, 30sh.—MS. Accounts of the High Treasurer.

[†] Item, when the More lasse wes cristinit, given to put in the caudill, 9 shillings.

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* Item, to two quires of gold to illumyne the articles sent to France for the justying of the Wild Knight for the black lady.

French knychtis hors feit, 4sh. Item, for the French knychtis collaciounes, belcheir, servandis, wages, fra the 11th day of December instant to this day, £4. 4sh. 5d. Item, for his folkis expensis in Edinburgh quhilk remanit behind him, £7. 13sh. Item, to the French knight himself, £112. * * Item, ane ducat of wecht, to gild the knop of the goblets that was the Bishop of Murray's, and given to Anthony Darsey, 15sh. 6d. Item, to the said Anthony, the French knight, 400 French crowns in English money, summa £280. Item, for a twelbe-piece silver vessel, new made in Flanders, weighing 12 pound, 8 ounces, £280. Item, ane salt fat of the lady of gold, given by the queen on New Year's Day, the year of God 1504, and given to the said knycht. Item, ane stoup and ane flaggat of silver, brought hame be Master James Merchanstoun, with their cases given to him. Item, the ten goblets of silver, given by the Bishop of Murray on New Year's Day by past, given to him. Item, for burnishing and grathing of the same, 13sh. Item, that day after the French knight departed sent to Hadington to his servants fifty French crowns, summa £36. Item, to the French knycht's expenses in Hadington, and on the morrow to his dinner, horse's meat, and belcher, £5. 15sh. 8d. Item, to seven French saddles to him, £9. 15sh. Item, to James Ackman, for the French knight's lodging from Michaelmas to Candlemas, which is 18 weeks, each week 24sh., summa £21. 13sh.'

These entries occur towards the end of the year 1506; but, in the succeeding summer of 1507, the king appears to have instituted another gorgeous tournament in honour of the black lady. She again appeared in a triumphal chariot, and was arrayed in a robe of damask silk, powdered with gold spangles; whilst her two damsels were clothed in gowns of green Flanders taffeta. On this occasion there were introduced a troop of wild men. The books of the High Treasurer conduct us behind the scenes, and let us know that the 'goat-skins and harts' horns in which these civilized savages enacted their parts, were sent by Sir William Murray from Tullibardine, at the expense of six shillings.' It was probably on this occasion that Dunbar indited his lines on 'Ane Black Moir.'

Lang have I sung of ladies white,
Now of ane black I will indite
That landed forth from the last ships;
Whom fain I would describe perfyte[1],
My ladye with the meikle[2] lippis.

How she is tute mow'd like an ape,
And like a gangaral unto graip;
And how her short cat-nose up skips;
And how she shines like ony saip[3],—
My ladye with the meikle lips.

When she is clad in rich apparel,
She blinks as bright as ane tar-barrel;
When she was born, the sun thol'd clipse,
The nycht be fain fought in her quarrel,—
My ladye with the meikle lips.

It appears from the books of the High Treasurer, under December 2, 1512, that the queen had a black maiden who waited on her. 'Item, for three ells ¼ French russet to the queen's black maiden, *3l. 16s. 6d.*'

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[1] perfectly. [2] large. [3] soap.

VIII. JAMES IV. AND THE FLYING ABBOT OF TUNGLAND.

This monarch had a singular passion for collecting all sorts of quacks about him. Of these, one of the most extraordinary was a French adept, who pretended to possess not only great skill in medicine, but other still more attractive and mysterious secrets. He was an alchymist, and persuaded the credulous monarch that he had either discovered, or was on the point of discovering, the philosopher's stone. He represented himself as eminently skilful in detecting gold and silver mines; and, on the occasion of an embassy setting out from Stirling to the Court of France, had the assurance to declare that he had constructed a pair of artificial wings, by which he undertook to fly to Paris, and arrive long before the ambassadors. 'This time,' says Bishop Lesly, 'there was an Italiane with the king, wha wes made Abbot of Tungland. He causit the king believe that, by multiplying, and uthers his inventions, he would make fine gold of other metal, quhilk science he called the Quintessence: whereupon the king made great cost; but all in vain. This abbot tuke in hand to flie with wings, and to be in France before the said ambassadors; and to that effect he caused make ane pair of wings of feathers, quhilk being festinitt uponn him, he flew off the castle-wall of Stirling; but shortly he fell to the ground, and broke his thie-bane; but the wyte (blame) thereof he ascribed to their beand some hen feathers in the wings, quhilk yarnit and coveted the myddin, and not the skies*.'

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* Lesly's Historie of Scotland, p. 76.

It was on this famous occasion that Dunbar composed his humorous satirical stanzas, entitled “ Of the Fenyeit Frier of Tungland.’ The real name of this bold empiric was John Damidne, and he first appeared at the Court of James in the capacity of a French leech, or physician *. He soon recommended himself to the king's good graces by his chemical knowledge and his extravagant pretensions ; so that he and his servants appear to have lived wholly at the royal expense ; and we find him comfortably established in his laboratory at the palace, receiving, from time to time, various sums of gold, which he undertook to multiply. Thus, under the 3d of March, 1501, ‘ the king sent to Striveline four Hary nobles in gold,’—a sum equal, as it is stated, to nine pounds Scots money,—‘ for the leech to multiply.’ These, however, were not his sole occupations : for after the mysterious labours of the day were concluded, Master John was wont to play at cards with the sovereign,—a mode by which he probably transferred the contents of the royal exchequer into his own purse as efficaciously as by his distillations†. Saltpetre, bellows, two great stillatours, brass mortars, coals, and numerous vessels, of various shape, uses, and denominations, form the items in the Treasurer's accounts connected with the studies of this foreign adept ; and so beloved was he by his

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* It is thus noticed in the books of the High Treasurer, under the 12th of January, 1501 :—‘ Item, to ane man of Maister Johne Leiches, to fee him a horse fra Edinburgh to Striveline, and to his expenses 13 shillings.’

† Item, to the king and the French leich to play at the cartis, £9. 5sh., March 4, 1501.—MS. Accounts of the High Treasurer.

royal pupil, that, on a temporary visit, which he found it necessary to pay to France, James made him a present of his own horse and two hundred pounds *.

On his return to the Scottish court, he entertained the king by a new kind of morris-dance, which he had imported from the Continent. It is thus quaintly mentioned in the books of the High Treasurer:—'Item, payit to Johne Francis, for twenty-one elne of red taffeta and blue, quhilk was sax dansing cotes in Maister Johne's dans, £13. 13sh. Item, for five elne blue taffeta to the woman's goune in the said dans, £3. 10sh.' Soon after this, the Abbot of Tungland, in Galloway, died; and the king, with that reckless levity and which was so strangely blended with superstition in his character, appointed this adventurer,—half doctor, half alchymist, half morris-dancer,—to the vacant dignity †.

According to Lesly, it was in September, 1507-8, that the abbot exhibited himself in the form of a bird on the battlements of Stirling Castle, and, by the low-minded propensities of the 'hen-feathers,' which he had inadvertently admitted into the construction of his wings, was dragged to the earth, and broke his thigh-bone. Having recovered from this accident, he afterwards obtained, on the 8th

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* MS. Acc. of High Trea. sub. May 29 and June 3, 1501. Item, to Gareoch Pursuivant to pass to Tungland for the Abbacie to French Maister Johne, 13sh. Item, payit to Bardus Altorite, Lumbard, for Maister Johne, the French medicinar, new-made Abbot of Tungland, he aucht the said Bardus, £35.—MS. Accounts of High Treasurer of Scotland, sub. March 11 and 12, 1503.

† Privy Seal, III. 187.

of September, 1508, the royal permission to pursue his studies abroad, but soon again returned to Scotland. The last glimpse which we have of this impostor is quite in character. He is found, on the 29th March, 1513, receiving twenty pounds from the king for his journey to the mine in Crawford Moor, where his Majesty expected to find gold.

The Abbot of Tungland, however, was only one of a multitude of empirics who resorted to James's court, and seem to have been received with equal generosity and credulity. 'The leech with the curland hair,' 'the lang Dutch doctor,' one Fullertone, who possessed the secret of making precious stones, Dr. Ogilvy, who laboured hard at 'quinta essencia,' and many others, were kept in pay by this monarch, who not only supported them in their experiments, but himself assisted in their laboratory, and delighted to show his attainments in medicine and surgery. On one occasion, the monarch gave Kinnard, his barber, thirteen shillings for two teeth which he was pleased to draw out of his head with his own royal hand. On another, we find the following characteristic entry in the books of the High Treasurer:—'Item, to Jamie Dog, for claith to be bandages to John Balfour's leg, *quhilk the king helit*[1], twa shillings and aucht pennies.'

IX. ARRIVAL OF THE GIPSIES IN SCOTLAND.

The date of this remarkable event is fixed by the books of the High Treasurer. On the 22d of April, 1505, we find this entry:—' Item, to the

[1] which the king cured.

Egyptianis, be the king's command, seven pounds.' Their leader was Anthony Gavino, Lord of Little Egypt, as he styled himself; and after he and his company had sojourned for some months in Scotland, they determined to pass over to Denmark. It was on this occasion that the king addressed to his uncle, the King of Denmark, the following curious letter, which was found by Pinkerton in the manuscripts of the King's Library, and published by him in his Appendix, vol. ii., No. 4:—'Most Illustrious Prince,—Anthony Gavino, Earl of Little Egypt, along with his company, an afflicted and miserable race of men, in the progress of his peregrination round the Christian world, undertaken, as he affirms, by order of the Pope, hath at length reached the borders of our kingdom, and entreated that, out of our royal humanity, he might be permitted, with his goods, chattels, and company, to travel through our territories, where he may find some refuge for his helpless fortunes and miserable subjects. You may believe that a request of this kind, proceeding from the unfortunate, could not be refused; and, accordingly, after having lived here for several months, comporting himself, as I am informed, after a conscientious and Catholic fashion, he is now preparing, my excellent king and uncle, to pass over to Denmark. Before crossing the sea, however, he hath requested our letters, by which your highness might not only be informed of the truth of these particulars, but might also be moved to extend your kindness and munificence towards relieving the calamities of this people. Yet, as the kingdom of your Highness is nearer to Egypt than our dominions, and as there must consequently be a greater resort of these people within your territories than to these our realms, it follows that the fate, manners, and extraction of these Egyptian wanderers must be more familiar to your Highness than to ourselves.—Farewell, most Illustrious Prince*.'

X. ANCIENT SCOTTISH GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS.

A valuable and curious additional chapter might be added to Strutt's 'Sports and Pastimes,' from the pages of the manuscript accounts of the Lord High Treasurer, during the reign of the Fourth James. The king's fondness for games, glee, and merriment of every kind is ludicrous; and, when we consider the many grave and valuable qualities which James undoubtedly possessed, presents a singular picture of human nature. The multitude of persons whom he kept in pay, for the sole purposes of amusement, was very great. Take one item for example, which belongs to his expenses in 1506. 'Payments to divers menstrales, schawmourers, trumpeters, tambrownars, fithelaris, lutars, clarscharis, and pyparis, extending to eighty-nine persons, forty-one pounds eleven shillings.' He appears to have been passionately fond of music, both vocal and instrumental. When he took his progresses through his kingdom he was generally met at the gates of the town by maidens, who welcomed him with songs; and wherever he went the royal taste appears to have found out those who could please him in his favourite art*. Thus, in the treasurer's accounts, as regularly as the king comes to Dumfries, 'a little crukit backit vicar' makes his appearance, who sings to the king; and this deformed vocalist figures from year to year as a recipient of the royal bounty. On his journeys he took his organs, organists, harpers, lutars, and Italiane minstrels along with him; and when the noted papal embassy arrived at his court, which brought him from his Holiness a splendid sword of justice, still to be seen amongst the Scottish regalia, the first attitude in which we discover the king, is 'listhening' not to the ambassador, but to the Paip's ambassador's servant, who was a celebrated singer. Many other examples might be given, but let us pass to the games in vogue at court. Chess-tables, dice, and cards we find common; and the king seems almost invariably to have played for money. Thus, in 1488, we have 'Item, on Yule-day, for the king himself to play at the dice and cards, 28*l.* Item, on St. John's day at even sent with Archie Dickson to the king to play at the dice at Lithgow, 42*l.*' The Bishop of Murray and the queen seem to have been James's most frequent partners at the card-table; but there are other games of which the names only remain, whilst the meaning and mode of playing have passed away. What, for instance, are we to understand by the king playing at the *prop* in Strathbogy, and losing four shillings and fourpence?

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* The original epistle is in Latin.

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* He himself played on the lute; thus, in the high treasurer's accounts, under 6th December, 1496, we have, 'Item to Johne Jamesone for a lute to the king, 6sh. 8d.' He performed also on the monocordis, April 10, 1497.

and what is the difference between the 'lang bowlis' with which his Majesty amused himself at St. Andrew's, on the 28th of April, 1487, and the 'row bowlis' which contributed to his royal diversion on the 20th June, 1501 *?* on which occasion Sir John Sinclair, and the prothonotary, Andrew Forman, were his partners in the game. What, again, are we to understand by 'the kiles' which the king played at in Glenluce, on the 29th March, 1506 *?* and what is the distinction between the game of 'Irish gamyne' (March 17, 1507), and the 'tables' which occur so constantly? Archery, and shooting at the butts, shooting with the cross bow, and culveryng; playing at the golf and football, not only occur continually, but in all of them the king himself appears to have been no mean proficient. Another favourite sport of James was the exhibition of his skill and strength in striking with the great sledge hammer used by smiths in their forge. Thus, when Sir Anthony D'Arsy came into Scotland from the French court, and distinguished himself at the tournaments held at Stirling, in 1506, we find, on the 25th June, this entry in the books of the high treasurer—'Item to the smith quhen the king and the French knycht strak at the steddye, 13 shillings.'

Other examples might be given of such exercises of power and dexterity; but we must look for a moment to the king's more sedentary amusements,—amongst these, listening to story-tellers or tale-tellers seems to have been one of the most frequent. Thus, on the 9th November, 1496, the accounts introduce us to 'Wedderspoon the Foular, that tald tales, and brocht foulis to the king:' on the

12th of the same month we meet with Watschod the tale-teller; on the 19th of April, 1497, we discover the king 'listhening to twa filhilaris, who sung to him the ballad of "Grey Steel"'—(pity that the lord-treasurer had not given us the ballad itself). And on the 13th March, 1506, 'a poor man, wha tald tales to the Majesty of Scotland,' received for the issue of his brain the reward of six shillings and eight pence. It would be easy to increase the catalogue of the royal amusements from the same authentic records. Hunting, hawking, racing, plays, and tournaments, are constantly recurring, whilst the King of Bene, the Abbot of Unreason, the Queen of May, the daft Queen of the Canongate, all contribute their stated and periodic portions of mirth, license, and absurdity. One singular instance of James's love of practical jokes and vulgar merriment is to be met with under the 14th August, 1491—'Item to a wife at Bathgate bog that the king revit a rung fra[1], 18 shillings.'

In the midst of all this reckless dissipation of the royal mind, it is curious to remark the outbreakings of superstitious feelings, the strange mixture of levity and austerity which distinguishes his character. Pilgrimages and pantomimes succeed each other with startling rapidity. In the midst of his career of gaiety the monarch seems to be awakened suddenly by a sting of remorse, and a messenger is despatched for St. Duthoc's relic, or a profuse donation is made to the grey friars for additional prayers and masses; or, in a still more homely frame of superstition, the monarch borrows an angel, or gold noble, from his high treasurer, and after cruking, or bending it, fixes the talisman to his beads. I may here be permitted to add a word on the common story of James's iron girdle, which, it is said, the king ever wore as a penance for his having appeared in arms against his father. No evidence of the instrument is to be traced in the treasurer's accounts, and yet such is the minuteness of their information, that we might have expected it to be noticed. It appears, however, that on the 3d of March, 1496 the king employed a goldsmith to make a case of gold, which was to be worn about his halse, or neck, and that three days after this the same case was made larger or heavier than it had been originally. It has been conjectured that the wearing this case of gold may have been a penance, and the origin of the story of the iron girdle, but I am inclined to think that it partook rather of ornament than of mortification. It was probably nothing more than a golden collar or gorget.

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[1] wrested a stick from.

THE END.

[illegible]: W. [illegible], [illegible]-street.