Memoirs of John Napier of Merchiston

Napier, John

London, MDCCCXXXIV. [1834]

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich

Shelf Mark: Rar 29243

Persistent Link: https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-69825

Chapter III.

CHAPTER III.

It may surprise the reader to find this honour claimed for the Inventor of Logarithms, who has hitherto been regarded only on his throne of science, and that by the limited number capable of appreciating his genius. The celebrated historian and philosopher who pronounced him to be the greatest man his country ever produced,* founded, probably, none of that estimate upon his theological merits; and more recent authors, ranking high among the historians of Christianity and theological learning in Scotland, have omitted to illustrate their subject with the most efficient example they could have found. I propose, therefore, before approaching him in the majesty of his science, to trace him through the progress of his education, and the perils of his times, until he be discovered on the *cathedra* of theology in Scotland.

With the rise of the reformed doctrines that of our learning is intimately connected. On the great field of the continent, human knowledge could expand even while bigotry kept her seat with persecution at her side. But within the narrow limits of Scotland, there was little to induce sages to quit, for her instruction, the richer and wider range of those countries where genius might feel that the danger of the path only enhanced its glory; and when with us the study of the Greek language, for instance, was condemned as heresy, and rendered those who indulged in such intellectual excursions objects of suspicion to a tyrannical priesthood, it was no wonder that learning shunned our shores.† Nothing can be more dreary than the prospect of letters

* David Hume.

† Boece records *George Dundas* as an excellent Greek and Latin scholar in 1522. He was

in a country whose rude legislature had to compel gentlemen to educate their eldest sons. In the year 1494, an act of Parliament passed in Scotland, imposing a fine of twenty pounds upon every baron and substantial freeholder who neglected to put his son and heir to school. The limited application of this statute, which seemed to consider the highest class of nobility entitled to the luxury of ignorance, savours, perhaps, more of barbarity than the enactment itself does of the revival of letters. Until the Reformation had made some progress, learning in Scotland can only be said to have exhibited occasional signs of animation. While the rest of Europe, including England, could point to such men as Petrarch and Erasmus, Regiomontanus, Copernicus, and Roger Bacon; Scotland had not distinguished herself in any department of human knowledge. No lasting achievement had obtained for her a place in the history of letters; and even the art which approaches nearest to instinct, that of medicine, found no Paracelsus there, when in 1543, just seven years before the birth of our philosopher, his grandfather Alexander Napier obtained the royal permission to go abroad, being "vexit with infirmities and seiknessis, of the quhilkis he may nocht be gudelie curit and mendit within oure realme." Poetry to be sure, like springs in the desert, gave freshness to the reign of James V., when Dunbar, Gawin Douglas, and Sir David Lindsay, put forth what

"Unto ears as rugged seemed a song;"

though, after all, not one of them could match the nightingale note, which James I. acquired during his long captivity in another land. But the highest flight of science and art which in Scotland illustrates the period alluded to, was when the Italian alchemist patronized by James IV., attempted to soar from the battlements of Stirling Castle upon wings of his own constructing; the result being, that he fell down and broke his thigh.*

master in Scotland of the knights of St John of Jerusalem. Dr M'Crie inclines to think that he must have acquired his learning on the continent. "The Bishop of Brechin, William Chisholm, hearing that Wishart taught the Greek New Testament in Montrose, summoned him to appear before him on a charge of heresy, upon which he fled the kingdom. This was in 1538."—*See Dr M'Crie's Note on the early state of Grecian Literature in Scotland, Life of Knox*, i. 343.

* He came into Scotland about 1503, and deluded James IV. with promises of the philosopher's stone. He attempted to explain the failure of his aërial expedition in this manner:—The wings, said he, were partly composed of the feathers of dunghill fowls, and so by sympathy tended downwards, which would have been otherwise had eagle's feathers alone been used.

John Napier is the great land-mark of the most important epoch of letters in Scotland. He is the first who, in the early struggles of our church, gave a decided impulse to its biblical lore, by a commentary on the most abstruse books of the sacred Scriptures, which for learning and research has never been equalled by any of his countrymen. At the same time, alone and unaided, he placed his sterile country upon a level in mathematical learning with those more propitious climes, Germany and Italy,—the cradle of astronomy, and the hot-bed of letters. It would be no less interesting than instructive to trace minutely the developement of his extraordinary faculties. But it is chiefly from traits afforded by the individual himself that the progress of so great an intellect can be intimately known, and autobiography was incompatible with the qualities of Napier's mind, and the nature of his achievements. Yet few could have left a more instructive diary of education. He had drank deeply of human knowledge at its most recondite fountains; and the Bishop of Orkney, when he urged immediate attention to his studies, had not cast his advice upon the waters, or falsely predicted the result. His illustrious nephew made himself acquainted with the heights and depths of learning. He read and studied the sacred volume in all its tongues. He could enliven his abstruse lucubrations with the beauties of the ancient classics. He was more than learned in science and philosophy,—he was a high priest in their temples; and the occult sciences were not left by him unexplored. Most probably it was the state of the country that prevented the advice of his uncle given in 1560 from being immediately adopted. In 1558 the University of St Andrews, the most celebrated in Scotland, became nearly deserted in consequence of the tumults of the Reformation; and in the following year, for the same reason, the faculty of arts were obliged to dispense with the public exhibitions of the graduates.* Yet Napier commenced his public education at an earlier period than has been supposed. It was in his fourteenth year, before the marriage of Mary to Darnly, and when the seats of learning were shaken by the storms gathering around the unhappy queen, that he left, for the first time, his paternal roof. His mother died in 1563; and in that same year he became a student in St Salvator's College.

Although this was three years after the Parliamentary establishment of the Reformed doctrines, St Salvator's was still remarkable for the divided state of

* Dr M'Crie's Life of Andrew Melville.

its opinions; and the keenness engendered betwixt the scholastic temper of the age and the magnitude of the question which agitated Europe, must have exercised a corresponding and decisive influence over many a youthful mind. In the mass of learned and minute information respecting St Andrews, afforded by Dr M'Crie in his Life of Andrew Melville, I find it stated that sometime at this period "the students were exercised once a-week in theological disputations, at which one of the masters presided, and the rest were present and took a share in the debate. The disputants were exhorted to avoid the altercation usually practised in the schools, and not to bite and devour one another like dogs; but to behave as men desirous of mutual instruction, and as the servants of Christ, who ought not to strive, but to be gentle to all." Napier, who throughout all his life was characterized by the utmost singleness of heart and the gentlest dispositions, appears, nevertheless, to have been able to keep his own, and even to play a conspicuous part, amid the gladiatorship of intellect affected by his youthful competitors. From the moment his mind began to work he aspired to be a Protestant champion, and applied his whole energies to that sacred cause. The fact is derived from his own words, which are the more interesting as they convey the solitary anecdote of his youth that is known to exist. In his address "to the Godly and Christian reader," prefixed to his Scriptural Commentaries, he says, "In my tender yeares and barneage in Sanct Androis, at the schooles, having, on the one part, contracted a loving familiaritie with a certaine gentleman, a Papist; and, on the other part, being attentive to the sermons of that worthy man of God, Maister Christopher Goodman,* teaching upon the Apocalyps, I was so mooved in admiration against

* "This Goodman or Gudman was an Englishman, formerly a public reader of divinity at Oxford, one of those Protestants that fled away under the reign of Queen Mary, and that fixed their residence at Geneva; in which city, in the year 1558, he published a little tract against his sovereign, under this title, 'How Superior Powers ought to be obeyed of their subjects, and wherein they may lawfully be disobeyed and rejected; wherein also is declared the cause of all this present misery in England, and the only way to remedy the same."—*Keith's History*, p. 145. This work of Goodman's was of the same nature as Knox's Blasts against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. But he had not the spirit of his friend and colleague. He emitted a mean-spirited retractation before the ecclesiastical council of Queen Elizabeth.—*See Stripe's Annals.* Keith adds, "Thus it will be seen that this Christopher Goodman has been one of the same spirit with our Mr Knox. But it seems though Goodman made this recantation, yet Queen Elizabeth and her council have not thought it expedient to give him encouragement at home,

the blindness of Papists, that could not most evidently see their seven-hilled citie Rome painted out there so lively by Saint John as the mother of all spiritual whoredom, that not onely burstit I out in continual reasoning against my said familiar, but also from thenceforth I determined with myselfe (by the assistance of God's spirit) to employ my studie and diligence to search out the remanent mysteries of that holy Book; as to this houre (praised be the Lorde) I have bin doing at al such times as conveniently I might have occasion." Thus from himself we have an explanation of his long retiring habits, and, at the same time, such a picture of the early vigour and independence of his mind as to make us wish for more. A youth, under fourteen years of age, listening so intensely to an exposition of the Apocalypse from the pulpit, and bursting forth in disputation with his Papistical friend and companion, until he conceived the daring project of leaving not a mystery of prophecy unfolded, is a trait seldom surpassed in the history of boyhood. Galileo, when a few years older, was also roused to powerful activity in the house of God. But it was his eye that was attracted,—a characteristic difference betwixt the practical and the speculative philosopher which continued throughout their respective careers. In the cathedral of Pisa, to which city the young Italian had been sent for the benefit of an university education, he fixed his gaze upon the vibrations of a lamp. Amid the pageantry of that worship against which Napier warred, and of which Galileo was destined to be a victim, he watched, with the eye of an eaglet, the isochronal movements of the chain, and measured them by the beatings of his pulse. The result was the pendulum.

The time and the scene of Napier's early studies were the great epoch and arena of letters in Scotland, and deserve to be more closely examined. "Not to name the school or the masters of men illustrious for literature is," said Dr Johnson, "a kind of historical fraud by which honest fame is injuriously diminished." * The University of St Andrews became so celebrated that its

which very probably hath been the occasion of his wandering into our country. It were to be wished our men at the helm had equally discountenanced such firebrands. However, after a great many years he returned into England." He was appointed to the ministry at St Andrews at the same time that Knox was appointed to Edinburgh in 1560.

* Life of Addison.

fame spread over the continent. It was composed of various colleges, among which St Salvator's was highly distinguished. Precisely a century before our philosopher's birth, namely in 1450, it was endowed by that celebrated Bishop Kennedy, who, says Pitscottie, " founded a triumphant college in St Andrews, called St Salvator's College, wherein he made his lair very curiously and costly; and also he bigged a ship called the Bishop's berge, and when all three were complete, he knew not which of the three were costliest; for it was reckoned by honest men of consideration being for the time that the least of them cost ten thousand pounds Sterling."—But the Bishop's munificent patronage of letters did not stop here. He continued to take a fatherly charge of its constitution, and was careful in his selection of the most able officials and professors. The learned and laborious M'Crie has given a minute account of its whole economy, in his biography of Andrew Melville, Napier's contemporary; which account, says he, " is chiefly taken from copies of papers and notes kindly furnished me by Dr Lee, Professor of Church History and Divinity" in the College of St Mary's there. I need offer no apology, therefore, for extracting a little on the subject from such a source. " The University of St Andrews was formed on the model of those of Paris and Bologna. All its members or supports, as they were called, including the students who had attained the degree of bachelor, as well as the masters, were divided into nations, according to the places from which they came. The nations were those of Fife, Angus, Lothian, and Albany; which last included all that did not belong to any of the three former districts. These elected annually, at a congregation or general meeting, four procurators, who had a right to act for them in any cause in which their interests were concerned, and four intrants or electors, by whom the rector was chosen. The rector was chief magistrate, and had authority to judge and pronounce sentence, with the advice and consent of his assessors, in all causes, civil and criminal, relating to members of the university, with the exception of crimes which inferred the highest punishment. He had a right to repledge any member of the university who might be called before any other judge, civil or ecclesiastical. And in certain cases, those who did not belong to the university might be called before the rector's court upon the complaint of a master or student."—" Besides its civil and criminal jurisdiction, the university possessed ecclesiastical powers, in the exercise of which it sometimes proceeded to excommunication. It may be mentioned as an evidence of the respect paid to literature, that, in consequence of a dispute which had arisen, it

was determined that the rector of the university should take precedence of the prior of the abbey in all public processions. For the direction of its literary affairs, the members of the university were divided into Faculties according to the sciences that were taught; at the head of each of these was a dean, who presided at the meetings of the masters of his faculty, for regulating the mode of study, for examinations, and the conferring of degrees." Of the college in which our philosopher was incorporated, the same author gives the following account: "The College of St Salvator consisted of three professors of divinity, called the provost or principal, the licentiate, and the bachelor; four masters of arts, who were also in priests orders; and six poor scholars or clerks, making in all thirteen persons, according to the number of the apostles of our Saviour, in honour of whom the college was named. The provost was bound to read lessons in theology once a-week, the licentiate thrice a-week, and the bachelor every readable day. The first to preach to the people four times, and the second six times a-year. From the four masters of arts two at least were to be annually chosen as regents, the one to teach logic, and the other physics and metaphysics, according to the method of the schools and the statutes of the university. The college was liberally endowed by the founder for the support of the masters and scholars, besides the altarages liberally founded by other individuals. The strictest rules were laid down as to the behaviour of all the members, and as to the religious exercises, as well as the studies of those who were admitted to the benefit of the institution. Young men of rank or opulence who might choose to study in the college, and to pay for their board, were bound to obey the provost, and to submit in all things to the rules of the house equally as the bursars or poor scholars." Without entering into the history of the other colleges, enough has been quoted to show generally the nature of the institution and discipline to which the young philosopher was first committed. It is proper to add, however, in reference to the earliest indications of his mind, that, although the great question was still keenly contested among them, (of which Napier gives an instance in himself and his papistical friend,) "every thing connected with the Roman Catholic faith and worship, which was interwoven with the laws and practice of the university, and of the colleges belonging to it, was removed immediately upon the establishment of the Reformation. Other alterations were at the same time contemplated by the reformers, but various causes prevented them from being carried into effect. Accordingly, the mode of teaching, and

the academical exercises, so far as related to philosophy or the arts, continued nearly on their former footing."

With regard to the classes, " all the scholars who entered at one time into a college formed a class, which was put under the government or tuition of a regent. The regents were different from the professors, who had permanent situations in the college. Originally every master of arts was bound to teach a class, and came under an engagement to this purpose at his laureation. Afterwards it became customary to grant dispensations from this duty."—" The regular time of the course was four years, but it was more usually finished in three years and a-half. The session began on the first of October, and continued through the whole year, except the months of August and September, which were allowed as a vacation."—" In the middle of the third year of their course, such of the students as obtained an attestation of regular attendance and good behaviour from their regent and the principal of their college, were admitted to enter on trials for the degree of bachelor," &c. At the end of the course, the act of laureation passed through a wider field of examination; and " the degree of master of arts was solemnly conferred by the chancellor of the university,—*in nomine patris, filii, et spiritus sancti.*"

The name of our philosopher has never been connected with the University of St Andrews upon an accurate examination of its records. Lord Buchan observes, " the time of Napier's matriculation does not appear from the register of the University of St Andrews, as the books ascend no higher than the beginning of the last century; but as the old Lady of Babylon assumed in the eyes of the people of Scotland her deepest tinge of scarlet about the year 1566, and as that time corresponds to the literary bairnage of John Napier, I suppose he then imbibed the holy fears and commentaries of Maister Christopher Goodman; and, as other great mathematicians have ended, so he began his career with that mysterious book." Thus carelessly, in the only life of him hitherto written, was the fact of the commencement of his studies investigated, and one of their most anxious objects dismissed. I am bound to record, however, that after having travelled to St Andrews to examine the books of its university, I was told the same story of their reaching no higher than a date comparatively modern; but afterwards discovered that the original record was in Edinburgh. It is to be regretted that the able historian of Scottish learning, from whom we have quoted so liberally, had not, in his minute account of St Andrews and its students, cor-

rected the mistake of Lord Buchan. Indeed the fact had nearly been lost, at what seat of learning the greatest man whom Scotland ever produced first received instruction. That Napier himself should have recorded it was the most unlikely mode of its being saved, for no one was less egotistical or more sparing of his words. The accidental notice he has left is not given for the sake of autobiography, further than to account for the progress of that holy spirit which led him to endeavour to make plain the whole revelation of St John. Although the "Life of Andrew Melville" might be entitled a history of the University of St Andrews its students and professors, Napier's name is omitted in this antiquarian research; and when a complimentary mention of him as a mathematician occurs in a subsequent page of the volume, no biographical sketch is attempted, and no suggestion offered as to the place of his education, though his name is more consequential to St Andrews than that of Locke to Oxford, or even Newton's to Cambridge. Fortunately, however, we know the place of his youthful studies from his own account; and of the existence of the books of the college in which the original record of his incorporation stands, I can now assure the reader, having satisfied myself upon that point by ocular inspection.*

Nothing can be more interesting than to trace in the columns of that venerable tome the original entry of his name, whose pre-eminence amid all the learning of St Andrews can be so easily demonstrated. At the usual season of matriculation, he was incorporated in St Salvator's in the year 1563. The record bears that this was the fourteenth rectorship of Master John Douglas, the pro-

* It is a curious fact, that at the University of St Andrews an idea prevails that their records ascend no higher than some time in the 17th century. This must have arisen from that mischievous carelessness about the literary antiquities of the country, of which the tendency is to engender those apocryphal histories which Lord Hailes did so much to eradicate and render disreputable. But a philosophical spirit of antiquities can never pervade the annals of Scotland, if her seats of learning do not catch and cherish the fire.

To the Rev. Dr Lee my best thanks are due for having furnished me with the following accurate note as to these records:—"The Record of the Faculty of Arts begins in 1413, and has been continued without any material interruption; and the Record of Matriculations has been preserved since 1484. What is called the Faculty Quæstor's Book (containing accounts of the fees paid for graduation) begins in 1456, two years prior to the opening of the oldest of the colleges. Every thing which was ever published relating to the University of St Andrews, till within the last twenty years, abounds with errors; and nothing can be more incorrect than the authorized statements inserted in the Statistical Account of Scotland."

vost of the new College of St Mary.* The names of the *incorporati*, "ex collegio Salvatoriano, hoc anno 1563," are registered in the following order: "Johannes Baxtar, Johannes Kar, Gulielmus Malwill, JOHANNES NEAPER, Thomas Ramsay, Gulielmus Ramsay, Walterus Buchquhannane, Bartholomeus Porterfield, Homerus Blair, Marcus Kar, Thomas Anderson, Johannes M'Kalzenie." The names of those who entered the other colleges at the same time will be found in the note at the end of the volume.† Although some learned men may be discovered among the *incorporati* of 1563, certainly there is not one sufficiently illustrious to render any comparison with Napier interesting. Of those who formed the same class with himself the most peculiar name, Homer Blair, affords the only coincidence worth mentioning. He of that ambitious appellation was born in the same year with Napier,—was incorporated in the same year and class,—and became professor of mathematics at St Andrews, in which capacity he died. These facts are gathered from his epitaph as recorded by "Old Mortality."‡ The "Marcus Kar" of the same class as our philosopher was probably he who was created first Earl of Lothian in 1606,—namely, the eldest son of Mark Ker Abbot of Newbottle, and the Lady Helen Lesly. The earliest notice of him in the peerage is, that he had been provided to the reversion of his father's abbacy by Queen Mary in 1567, and was appointed master of requests in 1577. Of the *incorporati* of the other colleges, the name which chiefly attracts the eye is that of Hercules Rollock,

* James Melville (the minister) in his diary to be afterwards noticed, makes frequent mention of the rector. Speaking of the year 1571, he says, "Our haill collage, (St Leonard's) maisters and schollars, war sound and zelus for the guid cause; the uther twa collages nocht sa; for in the new collage (St Mary's,) whombeit Mr Johne Dowglass their rector was guid aneuche, the thrie uther maisters and sum of the regentes war evill myndit."—"The auld college (St Salvator's) was rewlit be Mr Jhon Rutherfurd, then dean of facultie, *a man lernit in philosophie, bot invyus corrupt.* This I mark for the setting furthe of the benefit I receavit in the collage and companie I was into."—*The Diary of Mr James Melville*, 1556–1601.

† See Note C.

‡ "Hic jacet Magister Homerus Blair, Professor Mathematicus Academicæ Andreanæ.—Vir pius, probus, et doctus. Obiit 21 Martii 1603, ætatis suæ 53."—*Monteith's Theater of Mortality*, p. 119. So he had not the satisfaction of living to enjoy the invention of Logarithms by his classfellow. His name is mentioned by the secretary of Knox in conjunction with that of Rutherfurd in the affairs of 1572. "Also the said Mr Jhone Rutherfurde, at what time one of his colledge called Mr Homere Blair hath made orasone invective against St Leonard's Colledge," &c.—*Bannatyne's Journal*, p. 375.

who became distinguished in the same path of fame as George Buchanan, though of an inferior grade. He was a Latin poet and a pedagogue. His muse figures in the "Delitiæ" of Scotland, and his biography has been sketched by Dr M'Crie.* The dignity to which he rose was that of head master of the High School of Edinburgh. His appointment was under the patronage of Napier's uncle the Bishop of Orkney, and I have ventured to ascribe to Rollock the bishop's poetical epitaph, which yet may be read in ancient Holyrood.†

Looking further than the year of our philosopher's incorporation, we see names which certainly reflect lustre upon Scotland; and to say that he is beyond all comparison the finest genius that can be connected with St Andrews in her brightest era, is tantamount to claiming for him the throne of letters in Scotland. At the commencement of the century in which he was born, and prior to the introduction of grammar-schools in Scotland, men of rank, who took any pains with the education of their sons, sent them to board with monks, where they imbibed the scholastic absurdities of the cloister. But it is obvious, from an item in his mother's will, that our philosopher had been boarded within the college, and under the especial charge of the principal. The statement of debts due at her death, which occurred 20th December 1563, bears "item, to Johnne Rutherfurde for hir sonnis burde, auchtene pundis."‡ Rutherfurd was a philosopher in all but his temper, which was violent to a degree: in the very year when Napier matriculated, the principal had been so outrageous as to receive a solemn rebuke from a court of inquiry on the subject. The following spirited sketch of his history, from the pen of Dr M'Crie, renders any other notice of him superfluous. "The scholastic philosophy still maintained its authority, and formed the chief subject of study in the universities. John Rutherfurd was at this time the most celebrated teacher of it in Scotland. He was a native of Jedburgh in Roxburghshire; and, having gone to France, entered the College of Guienne at Bordeaux. There he prosecuted his studies under Nicolaus Gruchius, equally distinguished for his knowledge of the Roman antiquities and his skill

* Life of Andrew Melville.

† See Note B.

‡ James Melville, who went to St Andrews in 1571, says, "I was burdet in the houss of a man of law, a verie guid honest man, Andro Greme be nam, wha lovit me exceiding well, whase wyff also was an of my mothers; I am sure sche haid nocht sone bern sche loved better."—*Diary*, p. 33.

in the Aristotelian philosophy. He appears to have accompanied his teacher and his countryman Buchanan on their literary expedition to Portugal, from which he came to the University of Paris. His reputation reached Archbishop Hamilton, who invited him home to occupy a chair in the College of St Mary, which he had recently organized at St Andrews; and, after teaching it for some years as Professor of Humanity, Rutherfurd was translated to be principal of St Salvator's College in the same university. In such estimation was he held, that, soon after his admission into the university, he was raised to the honourable situation of Dean of the Faculty of Arts, though not qualified for holding it according to the strict import of the statutes. He had embraced the reformed doctrines before their establishment in Scotland, and was declared qualified for "ministering and teaching" by the first General Assembly. By the authority of a subsequent assembly he was admitted minister of Cults, a parish in the neighbourhood of St Andrews, of which the principals of St Salvator's were, by the foundation of that college, constituted rectors. It was also part of his duty as principal to lecture on theology. But Rutherfurd was more celebrated as a philosopher than a divine. Considered in the former character, his labours were unquestionably of benefit to the university and the nation. The publication of his treatise on the art of reasoning may be considered as marking a stage in the progress of philosophy in Scotland. It is formed, indeed, strictly upon Aristotelian principles, of which he was a great admirer, but still it differs widely from the systems which had long maintained an exclusive place in the schools. Treading on the steps of his master De Gruchi, Rutherfurd rejected the errors into which the ancient commentators upon Aristotle had fallen, and discarded many of the frivolous questions which the modern dialectitians took so much delight in discussing. His work contains a perspicuous view of that branch of the peripatetico philosophy of which it professes to treat. He had caught a portion of the classical spirit of the age; and the simplicity and comparative purity of his Latin style exhibit a striking contrast to the barbarous and unintelligible jargon which had become hereditary in the tribe of schoolmen and sophists. It appears from a curious document, that Rutherfurd, like some other philosophers, did not always display his philosophy in the management of his temper. In consequence of complaints against him by his colleagues, a visitation of the College of St Salvator took place in 1563, when it was found that the principal had shown himself 'too hasty and impatient,' and he was admonished 'not to let the sun go down

upon his wrath, and to study to bridle his tongue, and conduct himself with greater humility and mildness.' " * Thus Napier's mind was awakened to theology by Goodman, and he first caught the spirit of philosophy, but without the alloy of passion, from the ardent soul of the pupil of De Gruchi, from whom also he may have acquired the simplicity and purity of his Latin style, in which our philosopher even excelled his master. There is no question that he as far excelled him in mathematics as he did Goodman in recondite theology.

Several of Napier's contemporaries who had studied at St Andrews in their youth, and who were well known to him in after life, became no less prominent in the public affairs of the country, than they were distinguished in letters. Among these was Sir John Skene of Currie Hill, the clerk-register, to whom we owe the first collection of the Scottish Acts of Parliament, the treatise de Verborum Significatione, the Regiam Majestatem, and the Quoniam Attachiamenta. He studied first at the King's College of Old Aberdeen, but took his degree of master of arts at St Andrews, where he taught as a regent in the years 1564 and 1565, that is, during the short period that Napier was there. He became well known and distinguished as an officer of state and a diplomatist. Lord Hailes notes this critique of him in his catalogue of the Lords of Session. " It were to be wished that his knowledge of Scottish antiquities had been equal to his industry." Upon one occasion, however, he supplied his own defects in a way that, had he always followed it, would have left Lord Hailes nothing to say against him. In the course of preparing the treatise de Verborum Significatione, he came to the word " particata vel perticata terræ," which he defines " from the French word perche; meikle used in the English lawes, ane ruid of land." He then adds, " But it is necessare that the measurers of land called landimers, in Latin agrimensores, observe and keep ane just relation betwixt the length and the breadth of the measures quhilk they use in measuring of lands, quhairanent I find na mention in the lawes and register of this realme, albeit ane ordinance thereanent be maid to King Edward the First, king of England, the 33d yeir of his reigne; and because the knawledge of this matter is very necessare in measuring of lands dayly used in this realme, I thought gud to propone certaine questions to John Naper fear of Merchistoun, ane gentleman of singular judgement and learning, especially in the mathematique sciences; the tenour quhairof, and his

* Life of Andrew Melville.

answeres maide thereto, followis," &c.* As this treatise was published in 1597, (seventeen years before the publication of the Logarithms,) Napier's fame must have been long established with those who knew him; and there can be no doubt that Skene regarded him with a veneration that was founded on his knowledge of him from youth upwards.

Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton, his father's colleague in office, may nevertheless be considered Napier's contemporary. Indeed, if we are to rely upon the account of his biographer Baillie,† who says that he was born in 1548, he was just two years older than the philosopher. But in the more recent life of Craig compiled by Mr Tytler, it is suggested, with great plausibility, that the above date ought to be read 1538, which is consistent with the rest of his career. He certainly was incorporated as a student of St Leonards in 1552, eleven years before Napier became a student of St Salvator's, and probably this was about the difference betwixt their ages. Craig continued at St Andrews long enough to take his place among the *determinantes* or bachelors, but not the degree of master of arts, having set out to complete his education at the far-famed university of Paris, somewhere about the year 1555.‡ He returned a few years afterwards, and brought his natural and acquired capabilities to profitable account at the then rising bar of Scotland. Mr Tytler observes, "in the year 1564, Craig, after having been for a very short time at the bar, was promoted to a situation of importance and responsibility. This was the office of justice-dupute." But it appears from the records of justiciary, which we have elsewhere quoted, that he obtained this office even sooner than is here supposed, and sat for the first time on the 6th July 1563, the year that Napier entered St Salvator's. He acquired the reputation of one of the first classical scholars of his country and times. Baillie says of him, that in elegant literature he surpassed all his contemporaries; and Burnet,§ that he had no rival in Greek and Latin, and spent his life among his books. Biographical eulogies are about as trustworthy as those of an obituary, unless there be some unequivocal fruits of the genius that is lauded. The beautiful treatise De Feudis, the first philo-

* See Note D for Napier's answers.

† "De D. Thomæ Cragii Vita," &c. prefixed to the last edition of the treatise de Feudis.

‡ See Mr Tytler's Life of Craig, 1823.

§ Burneti, Præfatio.

sophical work on law which our country produced, may still be proudly appealed to in the history of letters, and is that which sustains the fame of its author Sir Thomas Craig. That the work is in some respects faulty and calculated to mislead the student of our laws, has been asserted; though it is never pretended that these errors destroy its character as a great national work, worthy of a philosophical subject and of a philosophical country. When we add that Craig was no mean Latin poet in the age of Buchanan, his claims are exhausted; but they are sufficient to place him among the most distinguished in the annals of his country's learning. Yet after all he can only stand such a comparison with the Inventor of Logarithms, as Blackstone with Sir Isaac Newton. Napier, we shall find, acquired the same command of languages, and was not unvisited by the muses; but he demonstrated the far superior grasp of his intellect in a manner that renders all critical comparison useless. Sir Thomas's second son was an intimate friend of Napier, and apparently the first person to whom he revealed the fact that he had conceived the Logarithms. This was Dr John Craig, the physician of James VI., a more particular notice of whom, with the interesting anecdote alluded to, belongs to another chapter of these memoirs. From the circumstance of the fathers being colleagues in office, and the sons confidants in science, it may be assumed that a great intimacy subsisted betwixt the Napiers of Merchiston and the Craigs of Riccarton. It is singular that the parents of one so distinguished as our feudist should only have been ascertained the other day. Baillie, without citing any authority, had said that he was the son of Mr Robert Craig, a merchant in Edinburgh. Tytler, upon very slender presumptive evidence, decides that he was "the eldest son, not of Mr Robert Craig, but of Mr William Craig of Craigfintray." Neither of these biographers attempted a suggestion even, as to the name of his mother. Mr Riddell, an able antiquarian lawyer, settled this question only last year. In a compilation replete with facts, but the title of which holds out little promise of this one,* he discloses the marriage-contract of the feudist himself, dated last day of October 1573, in which he is expressly called the son of Robert Craig, burgess of Edinburgh, and Katharine Ballandine, his spouse. Having thus discovered the father and mother of Sir Thomas Craig, this writer adds, "and there can be little doubt that Katherine Bellen-

* "Remarks upon Scotch Peerage Law, as connected with certain points in the late case of the Earldom of Devon, to which are added desultory observations upon the nature and descent of Scotch Peerages, &c. &c. by John Riddell, Esq. Advocate." 1833.—*Appendix, No. IV.*

den, his mother, was of the distinguished and powerful family of the Bellendens of Auchinoul and Broughtown, who were raised to the peerage at the restoration."* Mr Riddell was scarcely aware of the genealogical surprise involved in this theory. If true, there would be no doubt who the lady was. She must have been that sister of Sir Thomas Bellenden, and aunt of the justice-clerk, in whom we have already detected the mother of the Bishop of Orkney and Janet Bothwell. In other words, the *grandmother* of John Napier of Merchiston was the *mother* of Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton. We would then have to add this to the marvel, that the names of these near relations of two such great contemporaries had been lost till within the last twelvemonth,—had been recovered about the same period, by researches totally separate and independent, but which eventually disclosed the same lady for both. Such a fact would be considered of great value in genealogical researches; and in hopes of being able to establish it we have traced Katherine Bellenden of Auchinoul through all her marriages; but regret to say that Robert Craig is not one who can claim the honour of having been her spouse. That lady had her arms full enough already. She was successively the wife of Francis Bothwell, Adam Hoppar, and Oliver Sinclair; and it was during her marriage to the latter that Sir Thomas Craig must have been born. †

* Mr Riddell founds this upon the plausible fact, that Sir John Bellenden, in his will, styles Mr Thomas Craig, advocate, "*cousing*," and makes him, along with other relatives, one of the tutors to his children. No other Katherine Bellenden of Auchinoul is given by the peerage writers, except the lady whom we have elsewhere proved to have been the maternal grandmother of Napier. If Craig's mother was of Auchinoul, she could have been none other than this same lady. She could not have been *a daughter* of Sir Thomas Bellenden, as that would have made Craig Sir John's nephew. But she may have been a *natural* sister of the other Katherine Bellenden, which would explain the expression in Sir John's will.

† *Note B.*—But we cannot leave the feudist in this doubtful position; and if we fully solve the problem of his parentage, this genealogical digression, it is hoped, will be pardoned. The high treasurer's accounts in the reign of James V. and of date 25th March 1539, bear;—"*item*, send to Linlithgow be Katheryne Bellendene to the quenis grace, twa pound of sewing gold; *item*, ane pound of sewing silver; *item*, ix unce of blak Paryse silk," &c. Many items of the same sort, with their various prices, follow, which prove that, besides the wife of the king's minion, (Napier's grandmother,) there was a female of the same name about court in the quality of an embroideress. In the following year, 10th May 1540, there is;—*item*, deliverit to Katherine Belendene, till complet *ane sark* to the kingis grace, sewit with gold and silver wark, half ane doubill hank of sewing gold." Upon the 11th of January of the very next year we find, "*item*, to *Robert Crag*, for ane collar of gold sett with perle, brocht hame be him to the quenis grace, and for bonettis, swerd-

We have now to name the man whom contemporary eulogists were most apt to select as a *pendant* to Napier; and that is the popular Buchanan, who became principal of St Leonard's College in 1567. "The intellectual endowments of George Buchanan," says Dr Irving, "reflect the highest splendour on the land of his nativity; and every scholar who derives his origin from the same country is bound to cherish and revere his memory."—"The history of Buchanan is the history of an individual unrivalled in modern times." * There is some exaggeration in this estimate. It is what may be said of Napier, but not of Buchanan. He ranks high in the learning of his country; but to render the praise of his biographer not hyperbolical, the heart of Buchanan ought to have been purer, and his head more profound. Blackwood says of him with great truth, that he was "homme ingrat, et desloyal;" and when we examine his conduct and his writings in reference to the history of Queen Mary, with the aid of those proofs which have been collected within these few years to illustrate that unhappy page of our history, no impartial mind can come to any other conclusion, than that Buchanan was a rogue. His admirers have claimed for him an *apotheosis* with the eloquent and elegant Livy; but he may find himself—under the fiat of eternal justice,—nearer the reprobate Sallust. In popular estimation his name is much more identified with the erudition of his country than Napier's. Our philosopher has acquired with the vulgar the equivocal status in letters of a warlock; but there are men in our own times of considerable literary attainments, who will afford him no higher praise than the sneer of Iago "forsooth a great arithmetician."—"Napier," says an author of historical celebrity, "has much merit, but cannot stand in the rank of great inventors. He is only an useful abbreviator of a particular branch of the mathematics." † Sir David Brewster (or the writer he employed) ransack-

beltes, *sewing-silk*, and uther gear," &c. Here (for the first time reunited in modern days) are the parents of Napier's friend and contemporary Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton. The silken bonds that drew them together are manifest. In the same royal accounts there is an *item* 18th July 1537, "to *Thomas* Crag fyve elne Paris blak, to be the kingis grace ane ryding goune with ane hude." This was probably the feudist's *grandfather*, after whom he was called.

* Life of Buchanan, by Dr David Irving.

† *See Pinkerton's "Inquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the reign of Malcolm III."* He there reads a solemn lecture to the Scottish nation upon that "fervidum ingenium," that "impatience of thought and labour," from which, he conceives, Scotland has never been redeemed by a single instance. "In literature and philosophy," says he, "the same impatience prevails, and the consequence is, that we have not only never produced any man of erudition, but we have also had

ed his memory to record the names of those whose literary achievements illustrate Scotland, and forgot, only John Napier. But had he omitted the name of *George Buchanan*, the very printers' devils would have mobbed the disciple of Newton on the streets of Modern Athens. *

The purest pedestal of Buchanan's fame is his Latin poetry. Thus it is not difficult to determine the respective grades in letters, of James' pedagogue and Scotland's philosopher. We shall show that Napier surpassed Archimedes in logistic, and emulated him in mechanics. Does Buchanan rival Horace in rhyme? This test of their comparative literary merits is well illustrated by the commendatory verses attached to Napier's Canon Mirificus, by his friend Andrew Young, professor of philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.

BUCHANANE tibi NEPERUM adscisce sodalem
Floreat et nostris, Scotia nostra viris:
Nam velut ad summum culmen perducta *poesis*
In te stat, nec quò progrediatur habet;
Sic etiam ad summum est culmen, perducta *mathesis*
Inque hoc stat, nec quo progrediatur habet.

The distinction of their moral characters is yet more marked; being that betwixt an unprincipled partisan, and a Christian philosopher. While the learned in our own times labour to give us fanciful portraits of Buchanan, we have one of him drawn from the life by Napier's relative Sir James Melville, upon every line of whose simple portraiture the stamp of truth is impressed. "Bot mester George was a stoik philosopher, and loked not far before the hand; a man of notable qualites for his learnyng and knawledge in Latin poesie, mekle maid accompt of in other contrees, plaisant in company, rehersing at all occa-

no INVENTOR,—no man who opened up a new path in science. We cannot boast, like Denmark, of a Tycho Brahe, nor, like Sweden, of Linnæus, nor, like Poland, of a Copernicus. By the same impatience of thought and labour, our writers of every class, though often ingenious and elegant in a supreme degree, have never yet attained the character of great or sublime. We have no Bacon —no Newton—no Shakespeare—no Milton. These remarks are given not to upbraid, but to admonish and to serve."

* *See Brewster's Edinburgh Encyclopædia, article* SCOTLAND. A chapter on the literature of Scotland is there given, in which every Scotchman of literary fame down to modern days (and particularly mathematicians) are specially enumerated, except Napier. The two striking events in our literary annals particularized are the poems of Ossian and the novels of Sir Walter Scott; but the invention of Logarithms is passed in silence.

sions moralities schort and fecfull, whereof he had aboundance, and invented wher he wanted. He was also of gud religion *for a poet;* bot he was easely abused, and sa facill that he wes led with any company that he hanted for the tym, quhilk maid him factious in his auld dayes; for he spak and wret as they that wer about him for the tym infourmed him. For he was becom sleperie and cairles, and folowed in many thingis the vulgair oppinion; for he was naturally populaire, and extrem vengeable against any man that had offendit him, quhilk was his gretest falt." * Other cousins of our philosopher were in daily converse with Buchanan. The Lady Mar and her brother Tullibardine had the especial charge of King James in his youth, At this time, says Melville, the king "had for principall preceptouris, Mester George of Buchwennen, and Mester Peter Young," &c. † "My Lady Mar was wyse and schairp, and held the king in great awe; and sa did Mester George Buchwhennen." Thus the family of Merchiston must have been well known to James' pedagogue, though probably the contrariety of their habits, moral and intellectual, kept him and the philosopher always separate.

Another *alumnus* of St Andrews, belonging to the era of learning which Napier consummated, was Robert Pont, his intimate friend, and a man of a much superior stamp to Buchanan, though not of such popular celebrity. He was obscurely born at Culross in the year 1529, his name being properly Kynpont. It seems that he was only incorporated as a student in St Leonard's College of St Andrews nine years before Napier came to the University. ‡ He soon became distinguished among the pastors of the reformed church,—was one of the most efficient leaders of the General Assembly during times of the greatest difficulty,—regulated their affairs with the most practical zeal and prudence, and yet was a master in the deepest speculations of theology. "In 1563, he competed with Alexander Bishop of Galloway for the office of superintendent of that diocese; but it does not appear that he obtained it, though he was shortly after appointed commissioner of the diocese of Moray. In 1566, his translation and interpretation of the Helvetian Confession were ordered to be printed by the General Assembly; and, in March 1569, they petitioned the regent that the kirk, without offence to his majesty, might appoint him to a situation of greater usefulness; and he was, in consequence, presented to the

* Memoirs, p. 262. † P. 261. ‡ Tytler's Life of Craig.

provostry of Trinity College, and afterwards to St Cuthbert's Church. In this year, also, he executed the commands of the General Assembly in excommunicating *Adam Bishop of Orkney*, who married Bothwell and Mary." * But he was equally fitted for secular employments. In 1571, at the request of the Regent Mar, the convention at Leith, taking into consideration his super-eminent knowledge of the laws, made a special exception in his favour, allowing him to accept the place of a Senator of the College of Justice; and when, in opposition to the proposal of Morton, the Assembly "vottit throughout, that naine was able nor apt to bear the saides twa charges," Pont was again excepted. He was, moreover, a profound mathematician; and altogether the cast of his mind more nearly approached that of our philosopher than any other scholar whom St Andrews produced. When we add, that for upwards of thirty years they lived close to each other, united in the cause of the church and in their common studies of theology and science, and holding during all that time the reciprocal relation of principal heritor and parish priest, it is not to be wondered at that Pont should quote frequently in his abstruse lucubrations, "that faithful servant of Christ, my honored and *surpassingly learned* friend John Napier." †

If we consider how Napier's life was consumed, it ceases to be a subject of regret that we must derive our knowledge of what was passing around him,—of the scenes in which his youth was trained, and the state of education and society that may be supposed to have in some measure influenced the progress of his mind,—from his contemporaries and not from himself. Fortunately, while his cousin, Sir James Melville, has bequeathed to posterity that original manuscript of political and courtly memoirs already referred to; another James Melville, his contemporary, has left a diary (to which we have already referred) of his own life, and church affairs in Scotland, still more minute in its details, though less varied and interesting. The latter journalist was a Scotch clergyman, and the nephew of that celebrated moderator of the church, Andrew Melville, whose life has been so ably compiled by Dr M'Crie.‡ James

* Messrs Brunton and Haig's History of the Lords of Session.

† "Et apud honoratum et apprimè eruditum amicum nostrum fidelem Christi servum Joannem Naperum, cujus extant in Apocalypsin ὑπομνήματα."—*De Sabbaticorum annorum periodis*, &c. 1619. We shall afterwards have to notice Pont's works more particularly.

‡ The *Memoirs* of Sir James Melville must be distinguished from the *Diary* of James Mel-

Melville, the minister, (with whom we shall find our philosopher associated on a most critical mission of the church to James VI.) entered in 1571 the same university that claims the honour of Napier's earliest public instruction. From his quaint diary we may extract a passage, containing a curious and interesting account of St Andrews and its tuition a few years after Napier left it, and before it had undergone any revolution in habits or system. Speaking of his regent, William Collace, he says, " So I cam to St Andros about the first of November, in the forsaid yeir 1571, and enterit in the course of philosophie, under the regenterie of the said Mr Wilyeam, wha haid the estimation of the maist solide and lernit in Aristotle's philosophie. And first hard under him Cassander his rhetorik; but at the beginning, nather being weill groundet in grammer, nor com to the years of naturall judgement and understanding, I was cast in sic a greiff and dispear becaus I understood nocht the regent's language in teatching, that I did nathing bot bursted and grat at his lessones, and was of mind to haiff gone ham agean, war nocht the luiffiing cear of that man comforted me, and tuik me in his awn chalmer, causit me ly with himselff, and everie night teached me in privat, till I was acquented with the mater. We hard the oration pro rege Deistaro. Then he gaiff us a compend of his awin of philosophi, and the partes thairof, of dialectik, of definition, of division, of enunciation, and of a syllogisme enthymen, and induction, &c. quhilk I thought I understood better. About the quhilk tyme, my father, coming to the town, begonde to examine me, and finding sum beginning, was exceidinglie rejoysit, and uttered sweittar affection to me than ever before. He enterteined my regent verie hartlie in his ludging, and gaiff him grait thanks; he send me to him, efter he haid taken leive, with twa pieces of gold in a neapkine; bot the gentleman was sa honest and loving, that he wald haiff non of his gold, but with austere countenance send me bak with it: Na, never wald receave gold nor silver all the tyme of my course. We enterit in the Organ of Aristotle's Logics that yeir, and lernt till the Demonstrations. He haid a lytle boy that servit him in his chamber, callit David Elistone, wha, amangs threttie and sax schollars in number, (sa manie war we in the class) was the best. This boy he causit weat on me, and confer with me, whase ingyne and judgement past me als far in the wholl course

ville, which is also beautifully printed for the Bannatyne Club. There is some idea that the minister belonged to a family derived from an early cadet of Raith, but the genealogical proofs are not sufficient.

of philosophie, as the aigle the howlet. In the multiplication of propositiones, medalles, coversion of syllogismes, pons asinorum, &c., he was als read as I was in telling an-and-threttie."* It seems thus to have been Melville's fate, both in boyhood and maturer years, to meet an associate who, in philosophy and mathematics, surpassed him as " the aigle the howlet."

The first book of discipline, one of the committee appointed to revise which was Napier's uncle the Bishop of Orkney, had paid particular attention to the subject of education, and contained a chapter for remodelling the schools and universities. This book of discipline fell to the ground; and, in the year 1563, (that of Napier's matriculation,) a petition was presented to Queen Mary and the Lords of the Articles, " In the name of all that within this realm ar desyrous that leirning and letteris floreis;" and praying for a statutory remedy against the decay of funds, and the decline of learning and good tuition at St Andrews. George Buchanan was one of the commissioners appointed by Parliament to visit and report.† The distracted state of the country, however, prevented any effectual reform until the year 1579. It is not surprising, therefore, that John Napier, whose precocious talent and gentle dispositions must have been observed and appreciated, cannot be traced in the college records beyond his matriculation.

The names of those who had the honour of teaching our philosopher in the quality of regents will be found in a note at the end of the volume;‡ from which also it will be seen that he had not remained long enough at St Andrews to become a regent himself. The names, with a few exceptions, of all his class-fellows can be traced as becoming, at the stated periods, bachelors and masters of arts. That of John Napier, however, is not among them; and the necessary inference is, that no more than the ground-work of his education had been laid at that university. Had he remained at St Andrews according to the discipline of his college, and the contemporary instances, his name would appear in the list of *determinantes* for the year 1566, and of masters of arts for 1568.

There were several causes which may have induced his father to shorten the time of the young philosopher's studies in Scotland: The violent temper

* Diary, p. 20.

† Acts of the Scotch Parl. ii. 544.

‡ Note C.

of the principal; the fact that John Napier, according to his own account, had there "contracted a loving familiaritie with a certaine gentleman, a Papist;" the unsettled state of the country and the university; and, finally, because some exceptions had about this time been taken to the internal state of the colleges, which occasioned a Parliamentary inquiry.

Nor can it be doubted that he finished his education at a foreign university. Crawfurd the peerage writer, who lived in the same century in which Napier died, and who tells us that he obtained much of his information through the liberality of the noble families he records, states that Napier, "being a man of great natural parts, took care to improve them by a good education in the schools of learning, first at home, and then by travelling abroad into foreign parts, where he spent some years." * This obviously is just a mode of stating that he obtained the usual advantages of a good education in those days. It was the invariable practice for all who had the slightest pretensions to become learned, to follow out a few years of study at home in a foreign university. Such we know to have been the case with every contemporary of Napier who distinguished himself; and it would be most remarkable if he who was pre-eminent among them, and to whom the wealth of his family rendered the advantage one of easy attainment, had remained at home. His excellence in the science of theology, and his thorough command of languages, no less than his philosophical powers, clearly indicate the most recondite education which the times could afford. It must be remarked, too, that the Bishop of Orkney advised that his nephew should be sent abroad; and about the period when his name disappears from among those of his fellow entrants of St Salvator, the university of Paris enjoyed its highest reputation and greatest security. Andrew Melville, who was Napier's senior by five years, after studying in St Mary's College of St

* Peerage. *Napier.*—"Crawfurd, the peerage writer, although not the most acute or accurate of men, yet far honester than Douglas."—*Remarks upon Scotch Peerage Law, &c. by John Riddell, Esq.*

There is a short account of John Napier and his works by Dr Mackenzie in his Lives and Characters of Eminent Scotchmen. Mackenzie was a contemporary of Crawfurd the peerage writer, whom he calls "my good friend and learned antiquary." He thus speaks of Napier's travels: "Our author had no sooner finished his studies in philosophy at St Andrews, but he was sent to his travels by his parent; and, having stayed for some years in the Low Countries, *France* and *Italy*, he returned to his native country, and applied himself closely to the study of the mathematics, in which he excelled all the mathematicians of his age."

Andrews, set out for France in the autumn of 1564, and became a student at Paris. "The university then had," says his accurate biographer, "long enjoyed a pre-eminent reputation among the great schools of Europe, founded on its antiquity, the number of its colleges, the extent of its revenues, and the venerated names which stood enrolled on its registers, as professors or as students. Attracted by these considerations, a multitude of young men from all the surrounding countries flocked to it annually, and were admitted citizens of one or other of the four nations into which that learned corporation was divided. The four nations were France, Piccardy, Normandy, and Germany, or England, which last included Scotland and Ireland." *

There were other foreign universities in great repute at this period, but chiefly distinguished for their chairs of law; a study which Napier did not pursue. The person whom Sir Archibald was most likely to consult on the subject of his son's education, was his colleague in office Craig; and he may have also consulted that arbiter literarum in Scotland, Buchanan. Now of these, Craig had lately returned from finishing his own studies in Paris; and the other had even taught in that illustrious seminary.

If the theory of his travels be correct, Napier quitted Scotland for the University of Paris very nearly at the same time as Andrew Melville; and from the diary of Andrew's nephew, we learn some interesting particulars as to the state of public instruction at Paris. In the autumn of the year 1564, his uncle, says he, "ending his course of philosophie, left the University of St Andros with the commendation of the best philosopher, poet, and Grecian, of anie young maister in the land; and with all possible diligence maid his preparation, and past to France. Be the way he was extreamlie tormented with sie seiknes and storme of wather, sa that oft tymes, whylls be danger of shipwrak, whylls be infirmitie and seiknes, he luiked for deathe. He arryvit first in England, and again imbarking, came to Burdeaux, wher he taried nocht lang, bot imbarking from that, came to Deipe; from that to Paris, whar he remeanit in the Universitie twa yeirs at his awin studies, heiring the lightes of the maist scyning age in all guid lettres, the king's publict professors, Andreas Tornebus in Greik and Latine humanitie; Petrus Ramus in philosophie and eloquence;

* M'Crie's Life of Melville, i. 18.

Jo. Mercerus in the Hebrew language, whereupon he was speciallie sett. In the last yeir of they twa he grew sa expert in the Greik, that he declamit and teachit lessones, uttering never a word but Greik with sic readiness and plentie as was mervolus to the heirars. From Paris he past to Poicteors, whar he regented in the Collage of St Marceun thrie yeirs. Ther he haid the best lawers, and studeit sa mikle therof as might serve for his purpose, quhilk was Theologie, wherto he was dedicat from his mother's wombe."* It seems most likely that the shining lights enumerated by James Melville were the very men under whose instructions Napier's mind expanded. "Mercerus and Quinquarboreus," says Dr M'Crie, "were conjunct royal professors of Hebrew and Chaldee. By his oral instructions, the elementary treatises which he published, and his translations from Hebrew and Chaldee, the former contributed more than any individual of that age to the advancement of eastern learning. His commentaries on the Old Testament still deserve the attention of the biblical student; and Father Simon, whose judgment was sufficiently fastidious, has pronounced the highest eulogium on him, when he says, that Mercier possessed all the qualifications of an interpreter of Scripture, and that the only thing to be regretted in him is, that he suffered himself to be carried away by the novel opinions of the reformers. Quinquarboreus, though destitute of the critical acumen and extensive knowledge of his colleague, has shown that he was well acquainted with the Hebrew language." †

The doctrines of the Hugonots or Protestants had made a decided progress in the University of Paris when Napier left St Andrews. Many of the professors and heads of colleges were well known to have embraced the heresy, and scarcely one among them was exempt from suspicion; a fact which affords another strong presumption that Napier was sent there, being about the very period when his father was presiding in the criminal tribunal of reformed Scotland against such delinquents as the Archbishop of St Andrews, and others, for "makand alteratioun and innovatioun in the state of religion;" and when his uncle was revising the first Book of Discipline. But, after the year 1567 a storm burst over this great seminary, and spread through the continent with a desolating fury, the remembrance of which may have often

* *Diary*, p. 31.—Melville adds in a note, "Salinacus, Pascasius, Forcatellus, mathematiciens; Balduinus the lawyer; Duretus, medicine; Carpentarius, Quinquarboreus, hebrew."

† Life of Andrew Melville, p. 31.

crossed the lucubrations of our philosopher in the quiet and studious decline of his life at Merchiston. In that year the second civil war betwixt the Protestants and Catholics broke out; and very soon afterwards, all those professors who refused to subscribe the Catholic faith were forced to fly from Paris. Of these the most celebrated was Petrus Ramus. During the interval of repose and security which had previously visited the University of Paris, that celebrated philosopher there enjoyed himself in his successful hostility to the tottering throne of Aristotle, and in his ardent devotion to philosophy and the sciences, as royal professor of Roman eloquence, and principal of the College of Presle. But what he chiefly laboured to advance, during this oasis of a life of persecutions, was the study of mathematics. The royal library of Fountainbleau had nursed his ardour for geometry and astronomy to a most enthusiastic height, and he made himself a mortal enemy in his great rival Carpentarius, by slighting the mathematical attainments of that eminent philosopher, who was elected royal professor of mathematics at Paris in 1565. Ramus opposed his admission upon the ground of incapacity to teach, and for this contemptuous rivalry is said to have afterwards paid the forfeit of his life. From one or both of these illustrious men, Napier in all probability had imbibed some of that ardent desire for the progress of the mathematical sciences, which induced him in his latter days to toil for those whom he affectionately addresses as " charissimi mathematum cultores." The fate of Petrus Ramus could not fail to affect him. That martyr to science and Catholic fury returned to Paris in the year 1571, and fell a victim at the memorable massacre of St Bartholomew, which occurred in the following year.* De Thou has recorded his fate, and says that the murder was perpetrated by the scholars of his rival Carpentarius.

If Napier encountered perils abroad, he certainly escaped one of a deadly nature at home. In the year 1568, (exactly a century before Newton was driven from Cambridge by the plague which then ravaged England,) a most fearful infliction of pestilence broke out in Edinburgh. The courts of justice were closed, the General Assembly of the Church postponed, and the very literature of the country threatened with annihilation.† Sir Archibald Napier

* Bayle, Art. Ramus. See also *Bulæus, Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, Tom. vi.

† " Nota.—Fra the hinderend of August 1568, to the secund day of March in the samin year, na

and his family were much exposed to the contagion, by the vicinity of his mansion to the "Borough Muir" of the city, upon which waste the poorer class of those infected were driven out to grovel and die under the very walls of Merchiston. At this very time Sir Archibald was not suffered to quit the Lothians. Mary's defeat at Langside had just occurred, and the regency of her brother was securing the fruits of victory by a rigorous surveillance of the baronial strongholds, and the conduct and affections of their proprietors, throughout the whole country. All Protestant as he was, and although even his cousins Tullibardine and Grange had been in arms upon this occasion against the fugitive queen, it is not surprising that Merchiston, whose immediate predecessors had fallen successively under her father's standard and her own, should have evinced some affection for the persecuted, and only legitimate child of James V. That this was the case is proved by the bond quoted below,*

dyettes of justiciarie halden be ressoun of the pest and Regentis being in England."—*Justiciary Records, MS. Advocates' Library.*

It was in the midst of this fearful devastation that the celebrated George Bannatyne collected the poetry of Scotland. His patriotic industry has obtained a grateful commemoration, and an illustrious monument, from the institution of the "Bannatyne Club," and the compilation of his memoirs by its first president, Sir Walter Scott. I have seen a curious pamphlet entitled, "Ane breve descriptioun of the Pest, quairin the causis, signis, and sum speciall preservatioun and cure thairof ar contenit, set furth be Maister Gilbert Skeyne, Doctoure in Medicine, imprentit at Edinburgh be Robert Lekpreok, 1568." The Doctor strongly advises to take "conseill" of "weil lernit phisicians, for" says he, "in this pestilenciall diseis, everie ane is mair blind nor the moudeuart in sic thingis as concernis thair awin helth, and besyde that, everie ane is becum sa detestable to uther, (quhilk is to be lamentit,) and speciallie the pure in sicht of the riche, as gif they var not equall with thame twichand thair creatioun, but rather without saule or spirite, as beistis degenerat fra mankynd."

* "Apud Edinburgh, 12 Augusti anno 1568. The quhilk day Johnne Cunynghame of Drumquhassill become sourtie for Archibald Naper of Marchamstoun, that he sall remane in ward within the burgh of Edinburgh, and twa mylis about the samyn, and als sall compeir befoir my Lord Regent and Lordis of Secreit Counsale, to answer to sic thingis as sal be inquirit of him at his cuming, as he sal be requirit on sex houris warning, owther personalie, or at his hous of Marchamstoun, under the pane of twa thowsand pundis, and the said Archibald obleist him to releif the said Johnne of the samyn."—*Original Privy-Council Record, Register House.*

Many other barons occur in the same record as becoming bound in the same manner, but the usual security is only one thousand pounds. It also appears that both the brother and cousin-german of Merchiston's Lady (the philosopher's mother) were members of this privy-council. The sederunt marked on the occasion of issuing a charge against the Bishop of St Andrews, in June previous to the above, are "Jacobus Doms. Regens. Jacobus Comes de Morton. Patricius Doms.

the terms of which compelled Merchiston to remain a prisoner in Edinburgh, or within two miles of it, under heavy securities. When the plague broke out, he appears to have petitioned the privy-council of the regent for some relaxation, which had been refused in the most peremptory manner, although his brother-in-law, the Bishop of Orkney, was one of that council, and apparently anxious to befriend him. The following letter, than which a more curious and interesting remnant of the kind could scarcely be produced, was written in consequence by the prelate to our philosopher's father:—

" To the Richt Honorabill and our weilbelovit Bruther the Laird off Merchanstoun.

" Richt Honorabill Schir and Bruther,—I haird the day the rigorous answer and refuis that ye gat, quhairof I wes not wele apayit;* bot alwayis I pray you, as ye ar sett amiddis betwix twa grete inconvenientis, travell to eschew thame baith; the ane is maist evident, to wit, the remaining in your awin place quhair ye ar; for, be the nummer of seik folk that gais out of the toun, the muir is abill to be ovirspred, and it can not be bot throw the nearness of your place, and the indigence of thame that ar put out,† thai sall continewallie repair aboutte your roume, and throu thair conversatioun, infect sum of your servandis, quhairby thai sall precipitat yourself and your children‡ in maist extreme danger; and, as I se, ye hef foirsene the same for the young folk, quhais bluid is in maist perrell to be infectit first, and therefoir purposis to send thame away to Menteith, quhair I wald wiss at God that ye war yourself, without offence of authoritie, or of your band, sua that your houss gat na skaith. Bot yit, Schir, thair is ane midway quhilk ye suld not omit, quhilk is to withdraw you fra that syid of the toun to sum houss upon the north syid of the samin, quairof ye may hef in borrowing§ quhen ye sall hef to do, to wit, the

Lindesay. *Epis. Orchaden.* Commend. Dumfermling," &c. " *Clericus Justiciarie.*" These composed the cabal against Queen Mary.

* This word is not to be found in Jamieson.

† " That with all diligence possible, sa sone as ony hous sall be infectit, the haill houshold, with thair gudds, be despescit towert the mure, the deid buriet, and, with like diligence, the hous clenzit."—" That na maner of persoun pass to the mure for vesiting of thair friends thair, quhill eleven hours before none, in companie with the officar appoyntit for that day, under the pane of deid."—*Town-Council Register*, 1568. This is a different record from the Protocol Books.

‡ Francis and Jane, who were both very young.

§ Sic.

Gray-Cruik, Innerlethis self, Weirdie, or sic uther placis as ye culd chose within ane myle; quhairinto I wald suppois ye wald be in les danger than in Merchanstoun: and close up your houssis, your grangis, your barnis and all, and suffer na man cum therin, quhill it plesit God to put ane stay to this grete plage, and in the mein tyme, maid you to leve upon your penny, or on sic thing as comis to you out of the Lennos or Menteith; quhilk, gif ye do not, I se ye will ruine yourself; and howbeit I escape in this wayage,* I will nevir luik for to se you again, quhilk war some mair regrate to me than I will expreme be writing. Alwayis besekis you, as ye luif your awin wele, the wele of your houss, and us your freindis that wald your wele, to tak sum order in this behalf, that howbeit your evill favoraris wald cast you away, yit ye tak better keip upon yourself, and mak not thame to rejoce, and us your freindis to murne baith at anis; † quhilk God forbid, and for his guidnes preserve you and your posteritie from sic skaith, and manteine you in holie keping for evir. Of Ed^{r} this xxi day of September, be

"Your Bruther at power, the
"Bischop off Orknay." ‡

Notwithstanding the forebodings contained in this letter, Sir Archibald Napier managed to escape the contagion of the plague as well as the bishop; and the contagion of the times a great deal better. Having laid so much of that prelate's private correspondence before the reader, we must glance at his career in connection with the stormy period of history during the few years that John Napier spent on the continent. These embrace the time when Queen Mary

* With the Regent Murray to England. I find among the many curious notices contained in the Protocol Books of the city already referred to, that on the 5th October 1568, the Regent, on the eve of his departure, sent a letter to the town-council desiring them to continue their magistrates, least through the refusal or inexperience of persons newly chosen, the rigorous measures adopted against "the pest" should be obstructed. This the council obeyed under protest. Upon the 19th December 1568, a deputation is sent "to vesie the lands [*i. e.* houses] laitlie biggit on the Burrow Muir be Mr Archd. Grahame and Alexander Naper." Upon the 8th of April following, Will. Smyth and his "spous, Black Meg," are capitually condemned for "concealing the pest in their house."

† There seems more couched in this sentence than is plainly expressed. The expressions are hardly consistent with the mere risk of the plague. Perhaps the wily bishop here inculcates a lesson in politics to his upright brother-in-law?

‡ Original in Lord Napier's charter-chest.

was hurried, through some fearful steps, from her throne to exile and captivity; and it is curious to observe that the *dramatis personæ* of her unhappy story, at least in all its striking incidents, were chiefly composed of the near relatives and connections of Merchiston. The Bishop of Orkney and his cousin the justice-clerk, than whom two greater hypocrites never breathed,* were deeply implicated in the rebellion of the times, and parties to that diabolical plan to ruin the queen, which owed its success to treason, murder, rape, and forgery. Some time before the slaughter of Rizzio, they were in high favour with the assembly of the church. Upon the 29th December 1563, they were both named upon the select committee to whom was entrusted the sacred charge of revising and reporting upon the First Book of Discipline; and the bishop was still further honoured with the confidence of the church, by being appointed superintendant of Orkney under its special commission. But his career presented opposite phases. At the same time that he was favoured and consulted by the General Assembly, he was a successful courtier of his Catholic Queen. He had joined Mary in France for the express purpose of establishing himself in her good graces, and was not unsuccessful. Upon the 6th January 1563, about a week after he had been appointed to revise the discipline of the church, he was admitted, upon a letter from her majesty, to the place of an extraordinary Lord of Session, vacant by the promotion of Mr James Balfour, whose brother Gilbert was married to the bishop's sister. By its original constitution the Court of Session was to consist of an equal proportion of churchmen and laymen. But, like other reformations, that of the church professed at least a violent opposition to pluralities; and in the General Assembly held at Edinburgh in December 1564, "some brethren motioned that it might be demanded of the commissioners of Galloway and Orkney, if they thought that they might with a safe conscience discharge both the office of a superintendant and of a Lord in the Session. The answer to it and other questions was referred to another diet. The question was renewed at another assembly." †

* The bishop says in one of his letters, "with godly Job, gif we haif ressavit guid out of the hand of the Lord, quhai suld we not alsua ressaive evill," &c.; and the justice-clerk, in his testament, wherein he solemnly bequeaths to his eldest son his own worldly and nefarious policy, speaks of "this my saule quha baith sall meit my Maister with joy and comfort to heir that comfortabill voce, that he has promeist to resotat, saying, cum unto me thou as ane of my elect," &c.

† Calderwood.—*MS. Advocates' Library.*

Bothwell, notwithstanding these threatening interrogatories, not only retained his appointment of an extraordinary lord, but so little had his venerable coadjutors of the reformed church alarmed his conscience, that before another twelvemonth elapsed he accepted the place of an ordinary Judge of the Session; —thus pledging himself to duties which necessarily withdrew him from his ecclesiastical superintendancy. By the letter of his appointment, signed by Mary and Darnly, it appears that the queen had promised Orkney the first vacant seat as an ordinary lord; and that a vacancy having occurred by the death of Abraham Crichton, provost of Dunglass, she expressed her royal will that the bishop should be received into his place upon condition of being found duly qualified after examination.* We must now reckon him among those who obtained the appellation of the "adversaries of discipline," and he immediately became entangled in the most equivocal proceedings of the aristocratic party of the Protestants. He succeeded to his wish in acquiring power and influence in the state. To his bishoprick and seat among the Lords of Session was added the weight of a privy-councillor, his name appearing as such in the ordination for a tax of L. 12,000 to defray the expences of the baptism of James VI.

He was probably well aware of the desperate plot to murder Rizzio, those with whom he was most intimate being infamously conspicuous in that and other scenes of blood which rapidly followed. Patrick Bellenden was the greatest ruffian of that desperate band. He was the brother of the justice-clerk, who was also implicated and obliged to abscond until the privy-council cleared him. M'Gill of Rankeillor-Nether, Sir Archibald Napier's tutor, was another of the murderers, and lost his office of clerk-register in consequence. But Tullibardine and Sir James Melville, who were both within the palace at the time, narrowly escaped with their lives when Rizzio was slain, being marked in consequence of their well known affection to the queen. It is curious to observe the contrast betwixt the parts enacted upon this occasion by Patrick Bellenden and James Melville, who stood precisely in the same degree of relationship

* "13*th November* 1565.—The quhlk day the wryting underwritten wes produced. Rex et Regina. To our Chancellor, President, and Lords of our Council and Session: we promittit to our lovite Adam Bishop of Orkney the first ordinary place vacant in the session, and now there being one by the death of Mr A. Crightoun," &c. "it is our will ye receive him therin, &c. Subscribed with our hands at Edinburgh the 12th November 1565. "MARIE R.
—*Pitmedden MS. Advocates' Library.* "HENRY R."

to our philosopher, the one being the cousin-german of his mother, and the other of his father. The Earl of Bedford and Randolph, in their letter to the council of England narrating the particulars, say, " There were in this companie two that came in with the king,—the one, Andrewe Car of Fawdenside, whom the queen sayth would have stroken her with a dagger; and one Patrick Balentine, brother to the justice-clerk, who also, her grace sayth, offered a dag against her belly with the cock down." * It is a relief to turn from this to the conduct of Melville. " The nyxt mornyng," says he in his Memoirs, " quhilk was Sonday, I was lettin fourth at the yet, for I lay therein. Passing throw the utter close, the queenis majeste was loking fourth of a window, and cryed unto me to help hir. Then I drew neir unto the window, and askit what help lay in my power I suld mak. Sche said, go to the provest of Edenbrough, and bid him, in my name, convene the toun with speid, and com and releave me out of thir traitouris handis. ' Bot run fast,' said sche, ' for they will stay you.' " Melville executed her commands with his usual fidelity.

The crisis of the murder of Darnly also involves the names of the philosopher's near relations. James Murray, the brother of Tullibardine, actuated by motives which cannot now be fathomed, affixed to the door of the tolbooth of Edinburgh a placard in reply to the proclamation for the discovery of the murderers. Of this placard, Cecil, the English secretary, gives in the Cabala the following as the substance:—" I, according to the proclamation, have made inquisition for the slaughter of the king and do find, the Earl of Bothwell, Mr James Balfour parson of Flisk, Mr David Chambers, and black Mr John Spence, the principal devisers thereof; and if this be not true, spier at Gilbert

* That is to say, a *cocked pistol*. In a letter to Secretary Cecil upon this occasion, dated 4th April 1566, Randolph writes, " The justice-clerk in hard terms, more for his brother's cause than any desert," &c. There is no doubt, however, that Sir John Bellenden was devoted to Morton, and ruled both his brother Patrick and the Bishop of Orkney. I find a charter of confirmation under the great seal (dated three weeks before the murder) to Patrick Bellenden of Stenhouse, Sheriff of Orkney, and Katherine Kennedy, his spouse, in conjunct fee, and to the heirs-male betwixt them; whom failing, the heirs-male of Patrick's body; whom failing, to John Bellendene of of Auchinoule, Knight, justice-clerk, brother of the said Patrick, and the heirs-male of his body; whom failing, to Patrick Bellendene, the natural son of the Sheriff, &c. proceeding upon a charter from Adam Bishop of Orkney and Zetland, with consent of his chapter, of all the lands belonging to the said bishoprick lying within the parish of Ewie, with part of the lands of Bustane, &c.; and also all the lands belonging to the bishoprick lying within the parish of Stenhouse, &c. to be held of the bishop and his successors. The charter of confirmation is dated at Edinburgh, 18th February 1565–6.—*Diplomata Regia, v. x.* p. 90, *MS. Advocates' Lib.*

Beafour." Cecil adds, that there were also words which touched the Queen of Scots. This inflammatory and mysterious placard was unsigned; but is well known to have been put up by James Murray, the same who afterwards challenged Bothwell to single combat. Sir James Balfour, who became President of the Court of Session, is said to have been the original deviser of the murder of Darnly; and the house blown up belonged to the family. Gilbert Balfour mentioned in the placard, was his brother, and undoubtedly the same person alluded to in the Bishop of Orkney's correspondence. By his marriage to Margaret Bothwell he was the uncle of John Napier.

The circumstances of Bothwell's trial and acquittal are well known. To the suspicious verdict of his jury, he deemed it necessary to add the bravado of a personal challenge to any one that dared impugn him. This he affixed to the most public quarter of the town, and it was immediately replied to by James Murray in an anonymous placard, declaring that he accepted the combat, provided the lists were so arranged that the acceptor would be certain of fair play when he disclosed his name. Upon the 14th of April 1567, two days after Bothwell's acquittal, a Parliament was held at Edinburgh, wherein commissioners were appointed, of whom the Bishop of Orkney was one. "After the rising of the Parliament," says Keith, "in which the Earl of Bothwell is marked every day to have been present, a very infamous and remarkable scene did quickly open. This was the subscribing a bond by a great many of the nobility in favour of the Earl of Bothwell, bearing testimony of his acquittal of the late king's murder,—recommending him as a proper person upon several accounts for partaking the honour of the queen's bed,—and pledging their mutual assistance in defence of the Earl's marriage with her majesty." To this disgraceful bond the Bishop of Orkney's name is attached. Immediately followed the seizure and abduction of the queen by the Earl of Bothwell, with all its diabolical concomitants. "She yielded to that," says Bishop Leslie, "to the which these crafty colluding seditious heads, and the necessity of the time, as then to her seemed, did in a manner enforce her."* On the 12th of May thereafter, the queen, no longer a free agent, and with a broken spirit and disordered mind, was led by the infamous Bothwell to the Court of Session, and in presence of the Lord Chancellor, President, and other Lords, among whom sat the Bishop of Orkney, pronounced the celebrated speech, in which

* For the proofs of Mary's innocence, consult Goodall, Tytler, and Whittaker, and compare with Hume and Robertson.

she declared that she had forgiven the violence committed on her person, and that she was no longer under restraint.

Having obtained the collusive divorce from his own spouse, the Earl of Bothwell, now Duke of Orkney, found considerable difficulty in prevailing upon any of the reformed clergy to publish the banns with Mary. Sir John Bellenden was particularly active in removing this obstacle. He managed to obtain, and carried a letter from the queen herself to the minister John Craig, in which she declared that she was under no restraint. " His answer was, that he could ask no banns, especially such as these were, without the knowledge and consent of the church. The matter being motioned in the session of the church, after much reasoning kept with the justice-clerk, it was concluded that the three next preaching days the queen's mind should be intimated to the people."* The banns being published, the next difficulty was to find a bishop who would bless them. One bishop was found, says Buchanan with the severest point of his elegant Latinity, one, the Bishop of Orkney, who preferred the smiles of a court to the light of truth, while others declined the task, and pointed out the unhallowed nature of nuptials with him who had already two spouses alive, and had lately obtained himself to be repudiated by a third on the ground of his own adultery.† Sir James Melville gives the following view of the bridegroom immediately before the marriage :—" I taried not at court, but now and then, yet I chancit to be ther at the mariage. When I cam that tym to the court, I fand my Lord Duc of Orkney sitting at his supper. He said I had bene a gret stranger, desyring me to sit down and soup with him. The Erle of Huntly, the *justice-clark*, and dyvers uthers, wer sitten at the table with him. I said that I had already souped. Then he callit for a coup of wyn, and drank to me, that I mycht pledge him lyke a Dutcheman. He bad me drink it out, till grow fatter ; for, said he, the zeall of the commoun weall has eaten you up, and maid you sa lean," &c. ‡ — " The marriage was

* See Craig's defence printed in the Appendix to Dr Cook's History of the Reformation.

† " Unus, *Orcadum Episcopus*, est inventus, qui gratiam aulicam veritati præferret, cæteris reclamantibus, caussasque proferentibus, cur legitimæ non essent nuptiæ cum eo, qui duas uxores adhuc vivas haberet, tertiam, ipse nuper suum fassus adulterium, dimisisset," &c.—Lib. 18, § 30.

‡ Melville then adds, that the Duke of Orkney began a conversation about " gentilwomen," so unpleasant " that I left him, and passed up to the queen, wha was very glaid of my cummyng." Dr M'Crie, who only knew of the spurious edition of Melville's Memoirs, has endeavoured to detract from his character and credit. Among other objections, the biographer of Knox says, " We find him exposing himself to danger, by *dissuading his mistress from marrying Bothwell*, and yet counte-

maid in the Palice of Halyrudhouse, at a preaching be Adam Bodowell, Bischop of Orkeney, in the gret hall for the consaill uses to sit, according to the ordour of the reformed religion, and not in the chapell at the mess, as was the kingis mariage."* The queen had now reached the dregs of her bitter cup, and shamefully were they pressed upon her. "Not a spear," says a beautiful writer, "was lifted, not a sword drawn to rescue Mary from the power of that atrocious ruffian. She was suffered, without either warning or opposition, to unite herself with this worthless man, and it was not until her honour became inseparable from his, that the same advisers changed their note, sounded an alarm to the nation, and called on all true subjects to rescue the queen from the control of Bothwell."† This reproof falls justly upon the men whose influence and admonitions, had they been united with those of Lord Heries and James Melville, might have extricated Mary from her toils; but the hour of redemption was passed when they meet her on Carberry-Hill.

To that spot where the Duke of Orkney's short and nefarious reign concluded, and where, for the last time but one, the unhappy queen seemed to command an army, we must now turn; for here, too, among the most conspicuous *dramatis personæ* were the relatives of Merchiston, Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, and the Murrays of Tullibardine. While the armies stood viewing each other, Grange, at the head of 200 horse, rode round the hill to obtain a favourable position for charging Bothwell. The manœuvre attracted the queen's attention; and when she heard that this threatening body of chivalry was led on by him whom Europe acknowledged as the bravest and most distinguished knight of his times, she sent the Laird of Ormeston to desire him to come and speak to her under a flag of truce. Grange, like his uncle Melville, was in his heart devoted to Mary, and scorned the false slander that identified her misguided and faltering steps with the gory stride of Bothwell. Against the latter he was now in arms, with that spirit which, but for the indelible stain of murder on his own shield, would have made him the

nancing the marriage by his presence." Had Melville's power equalled his inclinations, Mary would have been saved. He "chancit to be ther at the mariage," as he tells us himself. What of that? To admit that he dissuaded Mary from that fatal step, is, considering the state of the times, the highest compliment that could be paid to his courage and integrity.

* Birrel in his Diary says, "the 15 of Maii 1567 the Queine was maried to the Duck of Orkney, in the chappel royall of Holyrudhous, by Adam Bothuel, Abbote of Holyrudhous; and hes text wes the 2d of Genesis."

† Sir Walter Scott.

Bayard of his times. He lost not a moment in being at the side of his sovereign. "All in this field, madam," said the gallant Grange, "will love, honour, and serve you, if you will only abandon the murderer of your husband." While he was uttering these words, a soldier, ordered to the deed by Bothwell, had raised his harquebuss, and was in the act of taking deliberate aim at his life; but the queen shrieked out to save him, and exclaimed, "Shame me not with so foul a murder." Bothwell covered his confusion by a vaunting offer of the combat to any man who would decide the day singly with himself. "You shall have an answer speedily," said Grange, as he spurred his horse down Carberry-hill, to join his own comrades in the distance. There was one in that host especially bound to accept this challenge. James Murray had, upon a former occasion, accepted the same offer, though anonymously. Now he stood forward in the face of the two armies to avow his challenge. Bothwell rejected his gauntlet as that of one not equal in rank to lift his own. "I at least," then exclaimed Tullibardine himself, "am your peer. My estate is better than yours, and my blood is more noble."* This offer, however, and a challenge of a similar nature from Grange, were all scornfully rejected by the Duke. Lord Lindesay, a ruffian like himself, gave him the option of an opponent who was technically his peer. "But," says Melville, "his hart cauldit ay the langer the mair;" so he prepared himself for flight. Mary, who had been crushed by his treason and tyranny, now learnt to despise him for his cowardice. She again sent for Grange, and told him, that if she were certain of the reception he promised her, she would abandon Bothwell. Grange asked the leaders of his own party if he might assure the queen of their loyalty on those terms. Upon the most solemn declaration that he might, he rode back to the queen, who looked upon him as her friend, and a true knight among a host of insidious enemies. She met him half-way, and said, "Lard of Grange, I render me unto you, upon the conditions ye rehearsit unto me in the names of the Lordis;" and gaif him her hand, quhilk he kessit, and led hir majeste be the brydell doun the bra unto the Lordis, wha cam fordwart and met hir; the noblemen using all dewtyfull reverence; but some of the rascallis cryed out dispytfully, till the Lard of Grange drew his sword, and sa did some uthers that knew ther dewtie better, and straik at such as spak unreverent langage, quhilk the nobilitie allowed weill of."† The queen and

* Knox's History.

† Melville's Memoirs.

Grange were both deceived. The traitor nobles kept no faith with them, and their system of forgery commenced. After suffering the most inhuman indignities, which brought disgrace on Scotland and its capital rather than on her, Mary was lodged in the castle of Lochleven.

In this memorable scene of her story, wherein she is compelled to abdicate in favour of her son, the reader must be introduced to another cousin-german of Merchiston who acted a conspicuous, but kind and honourable part. This was the second son of Helen Napier, Sir Robert Melville of Murdocarny. Like his brother James, he had become highly distinguished as a statesman and diplomatist, without, however, following so brilliant a career in foreign courts. He had been resident ambassador at the court of Elizabeth, where he was held in the highest estimation, but was in Scotland about the close of the year 1566, when he obtained a grant of the office of hereditary keeper of the palace of Linlithgow. In the following year he was engaged in the negociations with the queen at Lochleven. Being full of experience, and his reputation of the highest, his assistance was eagerly sought; but, like all his race, he was devoted to the queen, and among the steel clad barbarians that persecuted her there, Sir Robert Melville appeared like her guardian angel. The object of the rebels was to obtain her signature to three deeds carefully prepared for the purpose. The first was that of her abdication in favour of James. The second was the appointment of her bastard brother to the regency; and the third named a council to regulate the affairs of the state until Murray accepted the office. These deeds were dated 24th July 1567. In that of the abdication, one of the commissioners named in the body of the instrument, as if empowered by Mary to receive her renunciation of the throne, is Adam, Bishop of Orkney.* When these were first laid before her by the very hands that had committed murder in her presence, the spirit of her fathers rose once more to the regal brow of Mary of Scotland, who declared,

* Dr Barry, in his history of the Orkney Islands, says of Adam Bothwell, "Notwithstanding his having joined the enemies of the queen, Mary seems still to have retained for him some degree of her former favour; for when her unfortunate circumstances compelled her to resign the crown, she granted a procuration to him to inaugurate her son, the young prince, which was accordingly done at Stirling."—P. 244. This is a great mistake. Mary never even read the deed which named the bishop. It was her enemies who devolved the office on him, not as *her* friend, but as *their* creature.

that sooner would she renounce her life than her crown. It was not the brutal grasp of Lindesay that made her quail. " She was induced," says Spotiswood, " to put her hand to the renunciation they presented, by the persuasion chiefly of Robert Melvil, who was sent from the Earl of Athol, and Lethington, to advise her, as she loved her life, not to refuse anything they did require. He likewise brought a letter from Sir Nicholace Throgmorton, the ambassador of England, (who was come a few days before to visit her but was denied access,) to the same effect, declaring, that no resignation made in the time of her captivity would be of force, and in law was null, because done out of a just fear; which having considered with herself a while, without reading any of the writs presented, she set her hand to the same, the tears running down in abundance from her eyes." *

The next important occurrence was the coronation of James VI. From the records of the privy-council we learn, that, upon the 29th July 1567, Adam Bishop of Orkney anointed the baby king. The rebel Lords and their adherents assembled for that purpose in the parish church of Stirling. Among the cortege were conspicuous the bishop and his cousin, " Sir Johne Bellenden of Auchinoull, knycht, clerk of justicarie; and Sir William Murray of Tullebardine, knycht, comptrollar." The extorted deeds were produced. For the young king, " James Earl of Mortoun inclynand his bodie, and layand his hand on the buik of God, in name and upoun the behalf of his grace, solempnlie maid the ayth and promeiss," &c. after which " the said Lordis of the nobilitie," &c. " be the ministration of the said reverend fader, Adame Bischope of Orknay, anointed the said maist excellent prince, in king of this realme and dominiounis thairof, investit and inaugurat his grace thairin, deliverit in his hands the sword and sceptour, and put the crown royall upoun his heid with all

* Sir Walter Scott, in his romantic description of their progress to Lochleven upon this mission, draws the following portrait of Sir Robert Melville: " The personage who rode with Lord Lindesay at the head of the party was an absolute contrast to him in manner, form, and features. His thin and silky hair was already white, though he seemed not above forty-five or fifty years old. His tone of voice was soft and insinuating; his form thin, spare, and bent by an habitual stoop; his pale cheek was expressive of shrewdness and intelligence; his eye was quick, though placid, and his whole demeanour mild and conciliatory. He rode an ambling nag, such as were used by ladies, clergymen, or others of peaceful professions; wore a riding habit of black velvet, with a cap and feather of the same hue, fastened up by a golden medal; and for show, and as a mark of rank rather than for use, carried a walking sword, as the short light rapiers were called, without any other arms, offensive or defensive."

due reverence," &c. "quhairupon the said Sir Johne Bellenden justice-clerk, in name of the said estaitis, and also John Knox minister, and Robert Campbell of Kinzeancleugh, asked actis, instrumentis and documentis."*

The Duke of Orkney in his flight from Carberry-Hill, being well aware of his desperate situation, stood at gaze for a moment in the castle of Dunbar, and then started northward to seek refuge among the stormy intricacies of those islands from which he derived his infamous title. Being Lord High Admiral of Scotland, he contrived to fit out and arm some light piratical vessels, fleet as falcons, and well adapted to the dangers of those narrow seas. His first attempt was to fortify himself in the castle of Kirkwall. But he was frustrated in this object by John Napier's uncle, who commanded there. Probably the constable had received his instructions from the Bishop of Orkney. That prelate was eager for the apprehension of the fugitive;† and the persons to whom the party of the Earl of Murray immediately looked as the fittest to command the expedition that was to accomplish the destruction of this dangerous outlaw, were the philosopher's other relatives so often mentioned, Sir William Murray of Tullibardine, and Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange. Their daring characters marked them for such an enterprise; and the rejection of their gauntlet at Carberry-Hill left them a personal insult to avenge. They were accordingly associated in this undertaking, which, notwithstanding the government force placed under their command, promised sufficient difficulty and danger to add another zest to their object.‡

Upon the 19th of August 1567 their armament was complete, and set sail for the Orkneys. But the Duke of Orkney was reserved for a fate less honour-

* Keith. Privy-Council Records.

† Spotswood says, that Bothwell's purpose "was to have remained in the castle of Kirkwall, and if any did pursue him, to take himself to the ships; but the keeper, Gilbert Balfour, would not receive him, so as he was forced to return to sea."

‡ There is a charge in the register of privy-council, dated 10th August 1567, to some particular masters of ships belonging to the town of Dundee, and in general to all masters of ships and other mariners, indwellers within the burgh, to prepare themselves and their ships to pass with Sir William Murray of Tullibardine, the comptroller, in quest of the Earl of Bothwell, within six hours after they be charged; and on the 11th day of the same month, there is a commission to Sir William Murray, comptroller, and Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, to convey the king's lieges in warlike manner, and provide ships to pursue the Earl of Bothwell, his assistars, or colleagues, by sea or land, with fire, sword, and all kind of hostility, and fence and hold courts of justice wheresoever they shall think good.

able than to die on his deck. His pursuers, with five ships heavily armed and carrying four hundred soldiers, soon reached the Orkneys, from whence they were directed, probably by Gilbert Balfour, to Shetland as the covert of their quarry. It was not long before two vessels were descried cruising off the east coast of Shetland, where currents, tides, and whirlpools threatened destruction to the most skilful navigator. These vessels were the Duke of Orkney's on the look out, and manned by desperate seamen. Grange, who commanded the swiftest of the government ships, shot a-head, and approached Bressa Sound through which the pirates steered. Onward pressed their pursuers, and every nerve was strained on board the Unicorn, Grange's ship, to gain their object. The manœuvre of the fugitives would have done credit to the more practised days of the Red Rover. So close was the chase, that, when the pirate escaped by the north passage of the sound, Grange came in by the south, and continued the chase northward. But the fugitives were familiar with those narrow and dangerous seas. They knew how lightly their own vessels could dash through the boiling eddy that betrayed a sunken rock, and discerned at a glance what would be the fate of their bulky pursuers if they dared to follow in their desperate track. They steered accordingly upon breakers; and though the keel grazed the rocks, their vessel glided through the cresting foam, and shot into a safer sea. Grange ordered every sail to be set to impel the Unicorn in the very same path. In vain his more experienced mariners remonstrated. The warlike baron, as if leading a charge of horse in the plains of Flanders, rushed on the breakers, and instantly his gallant ship was a wreck,—there being just time to hoist out a boat and save the ship's company and soldiers. As it was, one warrior heavily armed still clung to the wreck, and the boat being already on its way deeply laden, it seemed impossible to save this being from destruction. His cries reached them, but were disregarded;—another instant of delay and he had perished, when, collecting all his energies, he sprung with a desperate effort into the midst of the crowded boat, causing it to reel with his additional weight, encumbered as he was with a corslet of proof: "which," says Godscroft, who records the incident, "was thought a strange leap, especially not to have overturned the boat." Who would have surmised that this athletic man-at-arms, the last to quit the wreck, was a bishop!—the bishop, who had so lately joined the hand of him he pursued, with that of Queen Mary!—the very bishop, who a month before had poured the holy oil on the infant head of James VI. and stood proxy for the extorted abdication of that mo-

narch's mother. It was Adam Bothwell, Bishop of Orkney. The rock from which he leapt can be seen at low water, and is called the Unicorn to this day.*

It is remarkable, that, at the very time when the bishop was so conspicuous in his enmity to the Duke of Orkney, the General Assembly of the Church entertained their highest indignation against him for having married that nobleman to the queen. In the Assembly held at Edinburgh on the 25th December 1567, just five months after the exploit above recorded, "Adam, called Bishop of Orkney, commissioner of Orkney, being absent, was delated for not visiting the kirks of his country, but from Lambmess to Hallowmess: *Item*, That he occupied the room of a Judge of the Session, the sheep wandering without a pastor: *Item*, Because he retained in his own company Sir Francis Bothwell, a Papist, to whom he had given benefices, and placed a minister: *Item*, Because he solemnized the mariage of the queen and the Earl of Bothwell, which was altogither wicked, and contrair to God's law and the statutes of the Kirk."† Again, "Anent the mariage of the queen with the Earl of Bothwell, be Adam callit Bischop of Orkney; the haill kirk finds that he transgrest the act of the kirk in marieing the devorcit adulterer; and therefore deprives him fra all function of the ministrie, conform to the tenor of the act made thereupon, ay and quhyll the kirk be satisfyit of the

* Hume of Godscroft's History of the House of Douglas,—Edmonstone's Zetland Islands,—Sir James Melville's Memoirs.—Speaking of this pursuit, Melville says, "Now the lard of Grange twa schippis being in redines, he maid saill towardis Orkenay; and na man was sa frak to accompany hym as the Lard of Tullibardin and Adam Bodowell, Bishop of Orkenay." Tullibardine's keenness is easily accounted for; and, from the records of the privy-council, it appears that he held the government commission as leader in the expedition. But why *the bishop* was there is a question. So dangerous an enterprise, undertaken by one of his timid and luxurious habits, must have had a powerful stimulus, and may be thus accounted for: Tullibardine and Grange were armed not only with authority to apprehend the Duke of Orkney, but to hold courts of justice wherever they might take him, obviously for the purpose of his *immediate* condemnation. But these barons, who were both above the duplicity of the times, would have cut an awkward figure in their judicial capacity had it been left entirely to them, and probably their impulse would have been to bring the Duke back, to be again tried by his peers in the face of his country. But it was desirable to the Morton faction that he should be instantly put out of the way, and in a manner least likely to elicit disclosures; so, to aid the warlike barons when the hour of fight was over, and to countenance them in their judicial functions, Adam Bothwell, a privy-councillor and a Lord of Session, accompanied the expedition, and no doubt had his instructions.

† Calderwood.

slander committed by him."* Calderwood adds, " Adam called Bishop of Orkney pretended he might not remain in Orkney by reason of the evil air and weakness of his body. He denied that he understood Francis Bothwell to be a Papist, or that he placed him in the ministry. He was deprived of all functions in the ministry, for solemnizing the mariage betwixt the queen and the Earle of Bothwell, contrair to ane act made against the mariage of the devorced adulterer, till the Assembly were satisfied for the slanders committed be him." There appears, however, an act of the General Assembly restoring the bishop on the 10th of July 1568, in these terms :—" Toutching the Bischop of Orkney's suspensione from the ministrie the last Assemblie, and his obedience and submission ; the kirk restoris him again to the ministrie of the word, and als ordains him on some Sunday, quhen he best may for waiknes of his body, to mak an sermoun in the kirk of Halieruidhouse, and in the end thereof to confess his offence in marieing the queene with the Erle of Bothwell ; and desire the Kirk thair present for the time, to forgive him his offence and sclander given be him in doing the fornamit act : the quhilk he promisit to do." Shortly before the date of this act, namely, on Sunday the 2d of May 1568, the queen escaped from Lochleven ; and on the 13th of the same month the battle of Langside was fought, which decided her fate, when she fled to England. This brings us down to the period of the Bishop of Orkney's letter to Merchiston on the subject of the plague ; and it remains to notice the result of the voyage to which he therein alludes.

A scene, the most disgraceful to both countries, now occurred at the conferences held at York and Westminster, where a rebel faction familiar with the darkest crimes, and a rival queen, destitute of every feminine virtue, combined to consummate the ruin of the Queen of Scots. It was upon this occasion that Mary was deliberately accused of having been an accessory before the fact to the murder of her husband. But happily the very mode in which the accusation was preferred, and the shameless forgeries with which it was attempted to be supported, no less than the total absence of every principle of law and justice which characterized the whole proceedings, afford the strongest refutation of the charge. These disgusting proceedings I shall only notice, in order to follow out the train of historical connections which subsist betwixt the domestic annals of Merchiston and those of his country and the times.

* Acts of Assembly.

James and Robert Melville were both present at that memorable mockery of judicial procedure. James Melville, and his nephew Grange, whose eyes were now completely opened to the duplicity of Murray's faction, had endeavoured to prevent a step so degrading to the nation. But the honest party in Scotland were too weak to protect either the honour of Scotland or the queen; and some, says Melville, including himself, "that culd not get the regent disswadit fra this extream folly at hame, past with him in England, to se gene be any assistance of sic as wer frendis ther to the union of this yll, and to the title of Scotland, mycht, perchance, mak them some help to get the accusation stayed." Conspicuous in the commission against the Queen of Scots, chiefly composed of the murderers of Rizzio, was our philosopher's worthy uncle, the Bishop of Orkney, as representing the spiritual estate. On the other side were marshalled some of the few nobles left to unhappy Scotland, who possessed the feelings of humanity and the honour of gentlemen. With these was the good Bishop of Ross, and, says Melville, "my brother, Sir Robert Melvill, an onwaiter to do the gud he culd." A complete history of that commission (for which Sir James Melville has furnished materials that have not been taken advantage of by our partial, though classic, historians) I leave to those who have yet to redeem the annals of our country, in some essential points, from ignorance and error. There is one scene, however, in which the Bishop of Orkney became so ludicrously conspicuous as to require notice here.

When the commissioners first met at York, the Duke of Norfolk cast various obstacles in the way of the accusation; and after sounding Lethington, opened a secret conference with him and the Regent Murray, the object of which was to frustrate the designs of Elizabeth. No one was privy to this counter-plot except Norfolk, Murray, Lethington and James Melville; and the plan proposed is minutely recorded by the latter. The Duke, after expressing his private horror and astonishment at the step the commissioners were about to take, said, "I am send to heir your accusation, bot nother will the quen, my mestress, nor I, dicern nor geve out any sentence upon your accusation; and that ye may understand the veritie in this point mair clearly, ye sall do weall, the nyxt tym that I requyre you before the consail to geve in your accusation in wret, to demand again the quen, my mestres, seale and handwret, before ye schaw your foly; that incaice ye accuse, that sche sall immediately convict and geve out hir sentence; otherwayes that ye will not open your pak; quhilk geve hir Majeste sall refuse to grant unto you, quhilk undoubtedly sche will

do, then assure your self that my information is rycht, and tak occasion therupon to stay fra fader accusation."

The accusation here alluded to was that held in petto by Murray and his crew, wherein Mary was denounced as a murderess; her marriage to Bothwell being urged as one of the principal proofs, and the very bishop who had pronounced his blessing over that marriage being the keenest of the accusers, Elizabeth vehemently desired that this accusation should be unconditionally presented; and when the counter-claim suggested by Norfolk was made, the delay occasioned by communicating with her majesty at such a distance caused the commission to be moved from York to the court. The Regent Murray, whose conduct bewildered such of his colleagues as were not in the secret, was incessantly importuned by the Bishop of Orkney, and the most violent of the faction, to give in the accusation unconditionally. At length Morton discovered the substance of what had passed betwixt the Duke and the Regent; and, being highly offended at the exclusion of himself from their conference, laid a plan with his colleagues to defeat the object of it. Murray's secretary, John Wood, a thorough paced traitor, was made to disclose the whole matter to Cecil, who at their suggestion became more and more urgent. They pretended, however, to stand by the condition to which Murray had pledged himself. The rest of this extraordinary scene is best pourtrayed in Melville's own words: "Master Jhon Wod said, that it was meit to cary in all the wretis to the consail house, and he suld keip the accusation in his bosome, and suld not delyver it without all conditions wer also kepit to him. The rest of the Regentis lordis and consellours had concludit amang them, that sa schone as the Duc of Norfolk, as cheif of the consaill, wald inquyre for the accusation, that they suld all with a voice cry and persuad the Regent to ga fordwart with it. The secretary Liddingtoun and a few uthers remembrit the Regent, how far he had obligit himself to the Duc of Norfolk. He said he suld do weal anough, and that it wald not com that far agaitwart. Sa schone as he with his consaill wer within the consaill house, the Duc of Norfolk askit for the accusation. The Regent desyred again the assurance of the conviction, be wret and seale, as said is. It was answerit again, that the quenis majesteis word, being a trew Princes, wald be sufficient anough. Then all the consaill cryed out, wald he mistrust the quen, wha had geven sic proif of hir frendschip to Scotland? The regentis consaill cryed out also in that same maner. Then the Secretary Cicile askit, gene they had the accusation ther. 'Yes,' said Mester Jhon

Wod, (with that he pluckis it out of his bosome) ‘ bot I will not delyver it untill her majesteis handwret and seale be delyverit to my Lord.’ Then the *Bischop of Orkeney* cleakis the wret out of Mester Jhon Wodis handis. ‘ Let me have it, I sall present it,’ said he; Mr Jhon ran efter him as gene he wald have had it again, or riven his clais. Fordwart past the bischop to the consaile table, and gave in the accusation. Then said to him my Lord Willyem Hauvert, chamberlan, ‘ Weill done Bischop Turpy; thou art the frackest felow amang them; none of them all will mak thy loup gud;’ scornen him for his lowping out of the lard of Grange schip. Mester Hendre Belnaves only had maid resistance, and callet for the Secretary Liddingtoun, wha taried without the consaill house; bot sa schone as Mester Hendre Belnaves had callet for him he cam in, and roundit in the Regentis ear that he had schamed himself, and pat his lyf in parell by the loss of sa gud a frend, and his reputation for ever. The Regent, wha had bene brocht be his facilite to brek with the Duc of Norfolk, repented him again sa schone as Liddingtoun had schawen him the danger, and desyrit the accusation to be renderit to him again; alleging that he had some mair to add unto it. Bot they said, that they wald hald that quhilk they had, and wer ready to receave any uther addition when he pleased to geve it in. The Duc of Norfolk had anough ado to keip his contenance; Mr Jhon Wod winket upon the Secretary Cecill, wha smyled again upon him; the rest of the Regentis company were lauchen upon other; the Secretary Liddingtoun had a sair hart; the Regent cam fourth of the consaill house with the tear in his eye, and past to his loging at Kingistoun, a myll from court, where his factious frendis had anough ado to comfort him.”*

The church was not appeased by the bishop’s harlequin activity upon this disreputable service. The commissioners returned in the month of February 1568-9; † and in the General Assembly held in July following, “ Adam

* Melville’s Memoirs, p. 211, 212.

† It was in 1569 that the Regent Murray was assassinated; and it is curious to observe, that the person who is said to have been the indirect cause of his fate was the bishop’s cousin, Sir John Bellenden. In some of the interested transactions to which the struggle for life and place and property after the battle of Langside gave rise, the justice-clerk obtained a gift of the lands and mansion-house of Woodhouselee. These had belonged to Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, a man, like all of his name, devoted in the cause of Queen Mary. Under the auspices of the Regent, Bellenden obtained a transference in his own favour, and took possession with such inhuman violence, as to drive Hamilton’s lady out of the house in a stormy night, which impaired her reason. It is well known that Bothwellhaugh took his revenge upon the Regent himself.

Bishop of Orknay was accused for not fulfilling of the injunction appointed by the Assembly in the month of July 1568." No further notice of him appears in the acts of Assembly until the 25th of February 1569-70, of which date the following detailed accusation stands recorded against him:—" Adam of Orknay being called to the office of a bishoprick, and promoted to the profits thereof, and suffered by the kirk, receives charge to preach the Evangell, to be also commissioner of the country of Orknay, which he received and exercised for a certain space; while now of late he made a simoniacall change with the abbacie of Halirudhous, although yet brooking the name, and stiled Bishop of the same; contrary to all lawes, both of God and man, made against simony. Secondly, he dimitted his cure in the hands of an unqualified person without the consent of the kirk, leaving the flock destitute without a shepheard, whereby not onely ignorance is increased, but also most aboundantly all vice and horrible crimes there are committed, as the number of 600 persons convict of incest, adultery, and fornication, beares witnes. Thirdly, he hath given himselfe daily to the execution of the function of a temporall judge, as to be a Lord of Session, which requires the whole man, and so rightly in naither can he exercise both: And stiles himselfe with Romane titles, as Reverent Father in God, which pertaines to no minister of Christ Jesus, nor is given to any of them in Scripture. Fourthly, in great hurt and defraud of the kirk, he hath bought all the thirds of the abbacie of Halirudhous; at least, he hath made simoniacall change thereof with the rents of Orknay. Fifthly, he hath left the kirks partly unplanted and partly planted, but destitute of provision. Sixtly, some of the kirkes are sheepfolds, and some of them ruinous. Seventhly, he hath traduced, both publikly and privatly, the ministers of Edinburgh, absented himselfe from preaching in that kirk, and from receiving the sacraments."*

The simoniacal exchange of which the bishop is here accused, seems to have been forced upon him rather to his disadvantage in the year 1569, in favour

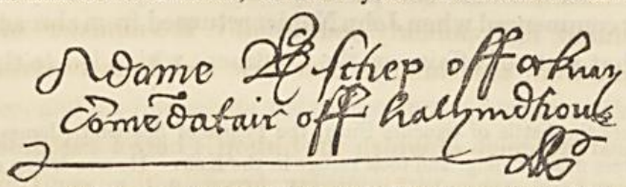
* " Acts of the Generall Assemblies concerning the Adversaries of Discipline." See also Calderwood's MS. *Adv. Lib.*—Calderwood says, " the bishop presented his answers to the tenth session. Mr Knox, Mr John Craig, and Mr David Lindsay, were appointed to try the sufficiency of these answers, and to report to the next Assembly; but I find them not. Yet ye may see what thingis they judge offensive in bishops or ministers." Bothwell's diocese comprehended the Isles, Orkney, Zetland, Caithness, and Stranaver; and his fixed residence ought to have been Kirkwall.—*Book of Discipline.*

of a natural son of James V., Robert Stewart, afterwards Earl of Orkney.* Be this as it may, our prelate continued to retain both the abbacy of Holyrudhouse, and the style of Bishop for the remainder of his life; and ever after this exchange, indulged in the imposing signature, "Adam, Bishop of Orkney, Commendator of Holyrudhouse." †

While the fact of John Napier's foreign education seems unquestionable, it is a mistake, though a prevalent one, ‡ to suppose that he spent the best years of his manhood abroad, and that upon no occasion after his return did he interfere with or interest himself in public affairs. He was certainly at home in 1571 (being just of age) when the preliminaries of his marriage were arranged at Merchiston; and for many years after that event, he took an earnest and even a leading interest in the affairs of the church, which composed the most engrossing politics of the day.

* See act of Parliament 1592, entitled, "Exceptioun in favour of Adam Bischope of Orknay."

† The following deed among the Merchiston papers affords a good specimen of the Bishop's autograph. "We, Adame be the permissioun of God, commendater of the Abbay of Halycroce besyd the bruch of Edinbruch, and convent of the samin cheptourlie gadderit, the utilitie, weill, and proffeit of us and our said place being alwayis forsene and considerit, lang and mature deliberatioun and avyss had theirintil; and als for certan gret soumes of money payit and delyverit to us and our said convent for performing and setting forwarts of certan gret effairis and besynes concerning us and our said place, and sustentatioun of the said convent, be our lovit, Sir Archibald Neper of Edinbelly, knycht," &c. therefore setts to Sir Archibald, and to "Jhon Neper, his sone and apperand air, and Francis Neper, als sone to the said Archibald," &c. "all and syndrie our teindschaiffis of the lands of Merchinstoun," &c. for 19 years. At Leitcht the xxiiii October 1571."



‡ Lord Buchan says, "I have not been able to trace Merchiston from the university (St Andrews) till the publication of his plain discovery at Edinburgh, in the year 1593." In the recent account of the baron, published in London by the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, it is said, that, "on leaving College, Napier is understood to have set out on his travels, in the course of which he visited France, Italy, and Germany. It is not known when he returned home; but he was probably a considerable time abroad, since we hear nothing farther of him till he was above forty years of age. On arriving again in his own country, although he had already acquired considerable reputation for abilities and learning, and might probably have entered upon a political career with many advantages, he declined interfering in public affairs, and retired to Merchiston with the intention of devoting himself exclusively to study."—*Library of Entertaining Knowledge.*

The important subject of his marriage is first met with among the archives of his family, in a contract dated 23d February 1571-2, wherein are these words: " Till all and sundry," &c. " Archibald Naper of Edinbillie, Knycht, that albeit the Rycht Honorabill Sir James Striveling of Keir, Knycht, with consent and assent of Jane Cheisholime, his spouse, for fulfilling of ane contract of mairage maid betwix thame and Elizabeth Striveling, thair dochter, on the ane part, and ane reverend fader in God, Adam, Bischop of Orknay, commendator of Halyrudehouse, me the said Archibald, and Johne Naper my sone and apperand air, on the uther part, for mairage to be maid and solemnized betwix the saidis Elizabeth and Johne Naper." The marriage did not take place till towards the close of the following year. Sir James Stirling of Keir, already noticed as the colleague of Sir Archibald Napier in the office of justice-depute, and who was knighted at the same time, represented one of the oldest and most respectable baronial families in Scotland. His place of "the Keir," celebrated both in history and song, joined the Napier estates in the Menteith, and was finely situated for astronomical purposes. *

Almost immediately before his son's marriage, Sir Archibald had take a second spouse to himself in Elizabeth Mowbray, a cousin of his own, and a daughter of John Mowbray of Barnbougall, who represented a distinguished and well-known family of Norman extraction. † It is curious to observe that these double *noces* in the family of the philosopher occurred at a time when their residence in the Lothians was literally invested with fire and sword. Their old fortalice became from its situation the very centre of " the Douglas wars," which ravaged the metropolis for a few years after the death of the Regent Murray. These had just commenced when John Napier returned from abroad, driven home probably by that state of affairs on the Continent which led to the massacre of

* Shortly before the battle of Sauchie Burn, the Prince of Scotland (James IV.) was routed by his father's forces near Stirling, and took refuge in the Keir. He was driven out, and the place burnt to the ground by his pursuers. When he gained the throne, he granted new charters of all the lands to Sir William Keir, whose writs had been destroyed, and also L. 100 to " Schir Wilzeam of Stirling, to the bigging of his place."—*Treasurer's Accounts*, 1488. *Mag. Sig.* xii. 64.—Sir Walter Scott thus celebrates the Keir in the Lady of the Lake:

> Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
> They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
> They mark just glance and disappear,
> *The lofty brow of ancient Keir.*

† See Note E.

St Bartholemew. Upon the 2d of April 1572, he and Elizabeth Stirling sign a deed *at Merchiston* preliminary to their marriage. * Upon the 5th of the following month, before the marriage was completed, " the company of Edinburgh," says a contemporary journalist " past furth and seigit Merchistone, quha wan all the partis thairof except the dungeon," &c. †

A glance at the state of the times, as affecting in particular our philosopher's domestic comfort during the period when he was commencing his labours to immortalize his country, will afford an interesting idea of that intellectual power which no dangers could deter, or difficulties turn aside from its victorious path.

" A new civil war," says Spotswood, " did then break out [1571] which kept the realm in trouble the space of two years very nigh, and was exerced with great enmity on all sides. You should have seen fathers against their sons, sons against their fathers; brother fighting against brother; nigh kinsmen and others allied together as enemies seeking one the destruction of another. Every man, as his affection led him, joined to the one or other party; one professing to be the *king's men*, another *the queen's*. The very young ones scarce taught to speak had these words in their mouths, and were sometimes observed to divide, and have their childish conflicts in that quarrel. But the condition of Edinburgh was of all parts of the country the most distressed. They that were of quiet disposition and greatest substance being forced to forsake their houses; which were, partly by the soldiers partly by other necessitous people who made their profit of the present calamities, rifled and abused." ‡

Two notable examples of " quiet men," whose high characters and substance would have made them very acceptable to either faction, was Sir Archibald Napier, and his immediate neighbour in the Lothians, Fairley of Braid. Like Merchiston, the laird of Braid was a staunch friend to the Reformation, but not one of those of the church militant who were leagued with factious and grasping violence. John Knox, when the infirmities and disappointments of his latter days had subdued the rude spirit of his prime, and indeed on his deathbed, turned to Fairley with this affecting speech; " ilk ane biddis me gude nyght, but when will ye doe it; I have bene greatlie behaudin and indebted unto you, quhilk I can never be able to recompence you, but I comit you to one

* See a fac simile of those autographs attached to the etching of the portrait of Elizabeth Stirling; and the Preface for a notice of the deed.

† The Pollock MS.

‡ History of the Church.

who is able to doe it, that is, to the eternal God." * The faithful servant and secretary of Knox, Richard Bannatyne, has left a journal of the transactions in Scotland during the contest betwixt Queen Mary and her son. From his original descriptions we may cull a picture of the scenes enacted at the very gates of Merchiston and Braid, during the period of the philosopher's courtship. I am not certain, however, whether it be himself or his father who is mentioned in what follows. "Fryday the 25 May (1571) a doosane of suddartis come to Braid at supper tyme, and spoyled the myllaris house, the miller beand at supper with the lard; and when they saw the miller cuming in and staying them fra spoyling his house, tuik him and brought him to the yeat of Braid, and gave the lard injurious wordis, bidding him come out to Captane Melving, or elis they suld burn the hous about his luggis. The lard *being a quyet man*, bad thame depart, saying that he had nothing to doe with thame, and gif Captane Melving wald have had him, he had not sent sic messengeris as they were. They still continewing in thair injurious wordis, and misusing the lairdis miller before his eyes, the lard went foorth with a two-handit sword, (the rest of his be occasione hinderet followeth as they myght,) the suddartis, I say, for the most part of thame discharges thair hagbutteris at the laird, but be Godis providence he escaped their furie, and straik ane of them breadlinigis with his sword to the eird, wha cryed that he wald be tane. Uther two of thame having their pieces undischarged, in ane of the which there was thrie bulletis, and seing ane of thair marrowes dung to the grund, they discharge bayth at the laird; yit be Godis eternall providence he was so preservit that he gat no hurt, nor nane of his, albeit they were all but † armour; bot the skeath fell upon themeselvis, for they slew their awin man that had renderit himself to the laird; uther thrie also was tane, before whom this man confessit that his awin marrowes slew him, for the lardis company never schot a schot, and so the suddartis when they had discharged thair pieces fled to the toun, and made report that the Laird of Braid had a cumpany of men of weir waiting thame. So the alarume struk, and all come furth to the querrel holes, bot hearing the treuth, *were stayed be the Lard of Merchinstone*, wha schaw Captane Melving that there were uther men cuming from Dalkeyth for the lardis releif, as that they did with speid." ‡

* Bannatyne.

† *i. e.* without. The immediate sequence of the word *bot* affords a good instance of the distinction as the language then stood.

‡ Bannatyne's Journal, pp. 172, 173, 174. Printed from the original MS. at Edinburgh 1806; and edited by J. G. Dalzell, Esq. The Laird of Merchiston mentioned above is not unlikely to have

MERCHISTON CASTLE

But it was impossible for Sir Archibald himself to remain long unmolested. The most important place in the neighbourhood was his own dwelling, as yet may be seen from the strength and simplicity of its structure no less than its commanding position. It formed the key of the south approach to Edinburgh which the king's party were endeavouring to reduce to famine; nor was it to be expected, that, amid such brawls, even the gently disposed inhabitants of this fortalice would be suffered long to enjoy scientific pursuits within its walls. Sir Archibald's name occurs in none of the reciprocal decrees of forfeiture which both parties fulminated against each other from their respective Parliaments, and in which the Bishop of Orkney is so conspicuous; yet he seems to have fallen under the displeasure of the queen's party at this time, probably because he took no active share in the civil war. The Pollock MS. bears, that, "upoun the 18 day of the said moneth," (July 1571,) "Naper of Merchingstoune, Knycht, wes tane, and brocht to Edinburgh Castell be the Laird of Mynto and his cumpany." Another old historian, after narrating the death of Lennox and the appointment of Mar in 1571, adds, that Sir William Kirkcaldy, who commanded the castle, bombarded the house of Merchiston with iron balls from his great guns, because certain soldiers, hirelings of the king's party, occupied it, and intercepted the provisions coming to the castle and town.* Thus it would appear

been the philosopher, who was frequently styled Laird of Merchiston, (of which barony he was in fee) before his father's death. Sir Archibald was generally called of "Edinbellie" and "Knycht." This "Captane Melving" was clearly one of the eight sons of Helen Napier and Sir John Melville of Raith, who were all devoted to Queen Mary. He was consequently the cousin-german of Sir Archibald. Very shortly after the incident in the text, Melville was blown into the air by the igniting of a barrel of gun-powder which he was in the act of dealing out to his soldiers on Craigmillar hill. There was great lamentation by the queen's party for his death. All the nobility followed him to his grave, over which his nephew Grange pronounced a funeral oration to his soldiers. His brother David Melville was placed in his command. He is not mentioned in the peerage (Leven and Melville,) but these facts may be gathered from a comparison of the contemporary journals of Bannatyne, Sir James Melville, and the Pollock MS.

* "*Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ Historia per Archibaldum Symsonum*," *&c.—MS. Advoc. Lib.*

The words are, "Gulielmus Kirkaldy arcis præfectus, tormento majori ferreis globulis domum Merchistoniam oppugnat propterea quod conductitii milites a Regis partibus ibi residentes viatica, unde arx et oppidani alantur, intercludant."

Nor had the paternal house of John Napier's spouse escaped the consequences of the times. After the battle of Langside, the privy-council of the Regent issue letters charging certain barons

that Grange entertained his cousin Sir Archibald, when under his custody, with the agreeable pastime of battering the family fortalice. Barnbougall, the paternal house of Sir Archibald's spouse, was about the same time suffering under the tyranny of the worst civil war that ever ravaged Scotland. At the commencement of the year 1572, the Laird of Dundas was entertaining at his castle in the neighbourhood of Barnbougall, Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington and his lady. Notwithstanding the presence within its walls of so staunch a queen's man as "auld Maitland," that faction had determined to become masters of the castle of Dundas; an attempt which seems to have emanated from Grange, ever fertile in such enterprises. Robert Mowbray, the eldest brother of Merchiston's lady, undertook to execute the dangerous project in the following manner: He obtained from Edinburgh thirty mounted soldiers, who were placed in concealment under a bank near the iron gate of Dundas. Two men disguised in ragged garments, with pistols under them, lurked close to the gate, while Mowbray and a comrade, also disguised and armed, took up their stations in a house in the village of Dundas, close to the place. It happened, however, that one David Ramsay, the Laird of Dundas's servant, went down to the village "to get a morning drink," and entered the very house where Mowbray and his comrade were on watch. The result of Davie Ramsay's early potation was, upon this occasion at least, fortunate for his master. He detected the adventurers under their disguise, and instantly started off to give the alarm, pursued by Mowbray and his comrade, who fired their pistols at him without effect. The enterprise failed; and Sir John Mowbray, in consequence of his son's participation, was summoned before the Regent and privy-council, confined in prison for two or three days, and only released upon finding security that he would not suffer "the rebelis" (*i. e.* the queen's party) to occupy his castle of Barnbougall as a garrison. Not satisfied with this, however, the Regent occupied the place with soldiers of his own, and again committed the laird to confinement in the town of Ayr.*

to yield up their strongholds to the bearers of the letters "to be kepit be thame, and to devoid and red thamesellis, thair servandis and gudis, furth of the samyn, within sex houris, under pains of treason;" and this for holding them for the queen: "That is to say, Andro Hamiltoun of Cochno, the tour and fortalice of Cochno," and after many others, "James Striueling of Keir, the house and fortalice of Keir. The said James Striueling of Keir, the tour and fortalice of Cadder," &c. Merchiston is not mentioned.—*Original Privy-Council Record.*

* Bannatyne's Journal.

About this time the English ambassador, Sir William Drury, went a progress through Scotland to visit the strongholds of the king's party, and in pursuance of his advice, the Regent Mar, whose humane and gentle dispositions soon sunk under the policy he was constrained to pursue, endeavoured to reduce the town of Edinburgh to absolute famine. With this view, "the regent and the kingis favouraris stuffit," (*i. e.* garrisoned,) "the houssis of Craigmillar, *Merchingstoun*, Sclatfurd, Reidhall, Corstorphine, and the college thairof, and the abbay, with all places about the town of Edinburgh."—"And also all inhabitouris within twa myles to Edinburgh wer constranit to leave thair houssis and landis, to that effect Edinburgh sould have na furneissing, and damnit poore men and women to the deid, for inbringing of victuallis to Edinburgh."* Sir Archibald Napier seems to have been released from his durance in the castle of Edinburgh, and to have escaped forfeiture. He had retired probably to his estates in the Lennox or Menteith, for in the same contemporary journal I find it recorded, that "upoun the 3d day of July (1572) Archibald Naper of Imbillie (Edinbellie), knycht, wes summoned to have compeirit befoir the quenis lieutennentis and hir counsall, the 6th of this instant, under the pain of rebellioun and putting of him to the horne." Thus was he, —as his brother-in-law wrote to him a few years before,—"sett amiddis betwix twa grete inconvenientis;" for the king's faction in 1568 kept him prisoner in his own house under heavy securities; in 1571 the queen's faction sent him to Edinburgh Castle for not remaining in the vicinity of the town; and having been in 1572 again compelled to seek refuge or peace elsewhere, he was summoned by the queen's lords to compear before them at the very time the king's lords had filled his mansion with soldiers, and surrounded it with fire and sword. These factions had indeed made his house too hot to hold him; and Merchiston was at this time no retreat for the lovers of mathematics and alchemy, or for those who only sought its battlements to consult the stars.

Upon the 5th of May 1572 the queen's troops issued from the town to besiege Merchiston. After a desperate struggle they made themselves masters of the outworks, and finally of the entire castle, with the exception of its "donjon keep," to which the regent's garrison had retreated as a place impregnable. The besiegers followed up their advantage with the most determined ferocity. Finding it impossible otherwise to dislodge their enemies, they set fire to the

* The Pollock Manuscript.

out-houses, " thinking to have smokit the men of the dungeon out;" but the king's party in Leith, well aware of the importance of this fortalice, marched in great force to raise the siege. The guns of Edinburgh Castle commenced to play upon these new assailants, and fired more than forty shots to cover the besiegers, who were commanded by one Captain Scugall. But nothing could resist the charge of the Laird of Blairwhain, who drove the queen's cavalry back into the town,—his own horse being shot under him. Captain Scugall was mortally wounded. Among the incidents of this skirmish, " ane canone bullet dingis the revell, the spurre, and the heill of the sock and hois of ane of the horsemenis leggis without stirring the hyde."

Upon the 10th of June following, most of the horsemen and soldiers in Leith (the king's faction) laid siege to the castle of Nydrie Seytoun; and upon the same day the entire disposable force in Edinburgh, with as many of the townsmen as were for the queen, and a small train of artillery, all led on by George Earl of Huntly, made another desperate attempt to win the castle of Merchiston. This had nearly succeeded. The assailants battered its gray walls with their cannon; while their cavalry, scouring the fields to the south betwixt the fortalice and the hills of Braid, brought in forty head of cattle and sheep. The siege commenced at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the cannon played upon the tower until four o'clock; and, says the old chronicle, " maid greit slappis in the wall; quhairat the keiparis of the said place being bot * men, and the principal commander absent, unbethocht thameselffis that they wer nocht of possibilitie to detene it fra thair said adversaris. Ane of them, nameit Alexander Felde, souldiour, be advyce of the remanend, seing ane of his broder slane, past to the wall heid benevolentlie to have randerit the said place," &c. provided the Earl of Huntlie would allow the garrison to march out with the honours of war. In the midst of this parley, however, a large body of the country people, attracted towards the scene of action by the noise of the guns, but more from curiosity than any intention of siding with either party, impressed the besiegers with the idea that they were menaced by the forces of the regent. They instantly sent back their battering train into the town, which arrived in safety; but the regent's party, issuing from Leith, overtook the queen's forces, and the result is thus given by the journalist, who seems to have been one of the besiegers. " *We* ruchit on thame, and incontinent thairefter gaif bakis and fled, castand thair wappinis fra thame for haist to win the town of Edinburgh, all because thair wes sum of the horsemen wes come with my

* This blank occurs in the Bannatyne print of the Pollock MS.

Lord Mortoun fra Nydrie to the said effect. Thair wes sum slauchter on baith syddis; four of Leith and five of Edinburgh, with fifteen burgessis and craftismen of Edinburgh tane to Leith, and twa of Merchinstonis suddartis tane. The leiving of the hous of Merchingstoun wes Capitane Hew Lauder, callit serjand majour; because the capitane thairof mariit the said Hew his sistar; and als wes suspectit of the skaith the town gott at this chaiss, becaus he promittit in hechting to caus the town men doe or die; bot he wes hurt at this chaiss; and als George Erle of Huntlies horss wes slaine under him be ane schote that come out of the palice of Halyrudhous." A conflict yet more bloody occurred at Merchiston on the last day of the same month. A party of twenty-four mounted soldiers had been sent to forage for the town, which was nearly reduced to famine. The well-stocked fields in the neighbourhood of that fortalice were the constant scene of enterprise; and upon this occasion the foragers collected many oxen, besides other spoil, which they were driving triumphantly into the town. They were pursued, however, by Patrick Home of the Heucht, who commanded the regent's light horsemen. The foraging party, whom hunger rendered desperate, contrived to keep their pursuers, amounting to four score, at bay, until they were passing the gate of Merchiston, when the regent's garrison issued forth and drove back the cattle. The Edinburgh horsemen instantly alighted from their horses, which they suffered to go loose, and "faucht creuallie." A strong body of infantry quitted the town to support this brave little band, and turned the fight in their favour. All the loss fell upon the party of the regent; Home of the Heucht their leader, Patrick Home of Polwarth, besides four other gentlemen, were killed. Of the queen's party a few were wounded, and only one foot soldier lost his life, who was killed by a shot from the battlements of Merchiston.*

Very shortly afterwards a truce was effected betwixt the contending factions. The French and English ambassadors used some exertions to put an end to the savage and unnatural warfare which desolated the heart of Scotland, and threatened Edinburgh with absolute destruction, from the number of houses that were daily pulled to pieces for fire-wood. Their influence, cordially aided by the good Earl of Mar, brought about a cessation of hostilities for two months from the 1st of August, which was agreed to, and signed by each party, at Leith and Edinburgh, on the last day of July 1572.

* The Pollock MS. pp. 264, 299, 300, 303. For these sieges see also Historie of K. James Sext, and Bannatyne's Journal.

To the propositions in this armistice, " What persons were meetest to convene on either side, during the time of the abstinence, to treat upon the pacification, and in what place and order, it was answered, that the meeting should be on the Gallowley, the Earl of Morton with the Earl of Huntlie, the Lord Home with the Lord Ruthven, the Abbot of Dumfermling with the Prior of Coldinghame, the *Bishop of Orknay* with the Bishop of Athenis," &c. *

Sir James Melville narrates, that, shortly before the death of the Earl of Mar, a strenuous endeavour was made to accommodate matters with the noble and disinterested Grange, so as to reconcile the interests of the queen and her son. Grange demanded only that every man should be allowed to retain his own, and that Mar should cause certain debts to be paid, which had been contracted for repairing the castle and its great guns; " Quhilk conditions," says Melville, " the regent promysed to fulfill, and to be ane assured frend to Grange, and them of the castell in particulaire; and without any further cerimonies, callit the Lard of Tullibarden his gud brother before, and efter that he had declaired unto hym how far we had proceadit, he choppit his hand in myn, and swore the paice in presence of the said lard; who had also been a good instrument to the said agrement, togither with his man of law, Maister Clement Litle, a very honest man, brother to Willyem Litle, efterwart provest of Edinbrough. Na ma were made prevy thereto, bot my Lady Mar and Capten James Kuningame." The regent went afterwards to Dalkeith, where he was banqueted by the Earl of Morton. " Schortly efter, he tok a vehement seaknes, quhil caused him ryd to Stirling sodanly, wher he departed this life, and was regreted of many. Some of his frendis, and the vulgair people, spak and suspected that he had gottin wrang, and others, that it wes for displeasour." He died on the 29th October 1572.

Morton, the mortal enemy of his queen and of all who espoused her cause, or had compassion on her state, succeeded Mar in the regency. The castle of Edinburgh was the only remaining stronghold of the queen's party. There the few friends that continued devoted to her, and who looked forward with sanguine hopes to the adjustment of an amicable policy betwixt her and the young king, still maintained that honest and determined bearing which opposed a formidable barrier to the schemes of Morton. It was chiefly with the cousins of Merchiston that the new regent had now to deal. Grange commanded the castle, and with him were his brother James, and his ne-

* Bannatyne's Journal, p. 347.

phews Sir Robert and Sir Andrew Melville. These, with the Lord Hume and the Secretary Lethington, were the leaders of that small but illustrious band of patriots, who, in the castle of Edinburgh, vainly struggled to break the toils which the dark Morton was drawing around them. Nor did Sir James Melville, at this fearful crisis, forsake his relatives. Ever active in the cause of justice, peace, and humanity, he laboured, though fruitlessly, to negociate betwixt the regent and the queen's party in the castle, to which place Morton, backed by an English army under the conduct of the marshal of Berwick, and assisted by all Scotland, now laid siege. Grange declared he would keep it against the world, with the aid of eight persons, "of the quhilk nomber," says Melville, "the Lord Hum wes ane, my twa brether, Sir Robert and Androw, the Lard of Pittadrow, and his brother, Patrick Echlin." But the usual fate of a devoted garrison awaited them. Their provisions failed, and their draw-well became dry. That without the walls, to which men were let down over the rocks by cords from the ramparts, was poisoned by the enemy; and at length Grange was forced to capitulate. The marshal of Berwick, Sir William Drury, being his warm friend and great admirer, no fears were, in the first instance, entertained for his personal safety. The leaders of the garrison, allowed to go forth with all their arms, were for three days at large. Grange and Lethington took up their abode with Drury, who had earnestly stipulated for the safety of the former. Sir Robert Melville went to his own residence, where he was joined by his brothers. But Morton's revenge was unsatiated. He prevailed with the Queen of England to send her commands to her marshal to deliver up Grange and the secretary, "quhilk he durst not disobey, bot delyverit them, with gret regret, be raisoun of his promyse, and returnit malcontent to Barwik." * The secretary, crippled with gout and other bodily infirmities, died almost immediately at Leith, "some supponyng he tok a drink, and died as the auld Romanes wer wont to do." † But Grange was reserved for a fate yet more cruel. In vain had Drury pledged his own honour for his life; in vain did a hundred of his kin offer suit and service to Morton, and a yearly pension of three thousand merks, if he would spare Grange. He was executed, with his brother James, like a common felon on the Castlehill. Having escaped the gibbet for a deed of his youth which richly merited such a fate, he was doomed to that ignominious death, after a career of arms that rivalled the chivalry of Europe, for fidelity

* Melville's Memoirs. † Ibid.

to his trust and devotion to his queen. With this relative of our philosopher fell the last hopes which enlivened the captivity of Mary. *

Sir Archibald Napier and his illustrious son were too earnest in the Protestant cause to be devoted to a Catholic queen. But the relics and reminiscences of poor Mary, which are preserved in the family of Merchiston,—the little quaint panelled closet there with its vast depth of window, still called Queen Mary's bed-room,—and above all, the long-cherished portrait, taken before sorrow had reached her,—are all touching indications that the house of Merchiston contained none of those factious rebels who dared to tell their sovereign that her " life was the death of the church, as her death would be its life." While Sir Archibald and John Napier were both studiously removed from either faction, their attention must have been constantly attracted by the connections we have traced, to the treatment which the queen experienced ; and even after her exile, those connections continued to subsist to the last hour of her captivity, and under circumstances that must have called forth their deepest sympathy. Of the *eight* sons of Helen Napier, who were all queen's-men, the three most distinguished were Mary's confidential and affectionate advisers at three distinct periods of her career. Sir James Melville, though he never forsook her, is more particularly identified with her story while she was yet a queen. Sir Robert was the friend upon whom she leant at the fearful crisis of her abdication ; and now, in her captivity, she reposed with equal confidence upon Sir Andrew Melville, who, after the fall of his nephew Grange, had joined her in England, and became master of her household. But in that melancholy household other near relatives of Merchiston were domesticated. It has entirely escaped our genealogical writers, that Sir John Mowbray of Barnbougall and his lady, the sister of Grange, had two daughters named Barbara and Giles, who were younger than their sister Elizabeth, the stepmother of our philosopher. Barbara, the eldest of these two, was only eight years old when the queen fled to England ; consequently, neither of them could have accompanied her at that

* Sir James Melville says, that King Henry II. of France commonly chose Grange on his side at their sports, " and because he schot faire with a gret schaft at the buttis, the king wald have him to schut twa arrowes, ane for his pleasour; and the Gret Constable of France wald not speak with him oncoverit."—" He (Grange) wes humble, gentill and meak lyk a lamb in the house, but lyk a lyon in the feildis; a lusty, stark and weill-proportionate personage, hardy and of a magnanyme curage," &c. p. 257.

From the Original Portrait in possession of the Lord Napier.

Vostre tres humble et tres obeissante fille

Marie

time; but they both joined her afterwards, and never left her in her captivity till death parted them. Perhaps they had accompanied Sir Archibald Napier, who went into England upon some royal mission in the year 1580, as appears from the following item in the high treasurer's accounts:— "May 1580. *Item*, be the kingis grace precept to the Laird of Merchainstoun, for defraying of his chargeis maid in his preparatioun for his jorney in England, as the said precept and his acquittance apoun compt beiris, L. 400." This was a large sum, and indicates the mission to have been one of dignity; but I cannot find Merchiston on any of the embassies of that period noticed in history, or by contemporary chroniclers. It is not impossible, however, considering his relationship to Lady Mar and the Melvilles, that he may have been sent on some errand from the young king to Mary in England, and have taken along with him his two sisters-in-law. Certainly, James owed his mother at this time a message of kindness. It was upon the 17th June 1579, that she had sent her French secretary Nau with letters and presents to her son, particularly a vest richly embroidered by her own hand. But this messenger was not allowed to obtain an audience; and was harshly and unceremoniously dismissed, because his credentials were only directed to the Prince of Scotland. Be this as it may, the Misses Mowbray were still attendant on the person of Queen Mary, and Sir Andrew Melville still her master of household, when the Babington conspiracy was made the pretext for putting her to death. Connected with their history, we must also mention William Curle, Mary's favourite secretary, and Jane Kennedy, her favourite maid of honour. During their long and affectionate service, attachments had sprung up among them, which were evinced by the marriage of Sir Andrew Melville to Jane Kennedy, and of Barbara Mowbray to William Curle. Before these unions, however, their mistress was no more; and we must notice the termination of her life, to mark the interesting parts which Merchiston's relatives enacted in that closing scene.

When the Queen of Scotland was condemned to die, her son James felt, or affected the utmost extremity of grief and indignation. After some negociations, in which the sincerity of his feelings are not very apparent, he despatched two ambassadors, who were understood to be intrusted with the most peremptory demands for the life of Mary. They were totally opposed, however, in their characters and conduct. The one was that old friend and faith-

ful adviser of the queen, Sir Robert Melville; the other was the Master of Gray, her insidious enemy, and the friend of her son. This degenerate young nobleman either betrayed his public trust, or fulfilled his secret instructions too faithfully. "The dead cannot bite" was the diabolical phrase with which he qualified his remonstrance. Not so Melville. At the risk of his own life, he followed the dictates of honour, courage, and humanity. "My brother," says James Melville, "spak brave and stout langage to the consaill of England, sa that the quen hirself boisted him of his lyf; and efterwart had bene retenit captyve, wer not the credit that his collig had, and the promyses that he had maid, wherby they wer baith sufferit to com hame togither." Crushed by her rival, and betrayed by her son, Mary, with the most serene dignity, prepared to meet a fate which the same writer has characterized in three words, "that unkouth, unkyndly mourther."* On the morning of the execution, while the queen was on her knees at the altar, Barbara Mowbray, and a young French lady of the name of Beauregard, complained to her physician Burgoin, that their names had been omitted in her will, (which the queen had hastily drawn up with her own hand,) and with tears entreated him to tell her so. No sooner was Mary informed of their affectionate complaint, than she rose

* Melville would never have used these strong expressions of sympathy for Mary, and execration against Elizabeth, had he believed the former guilty of the murder of Darnly. Throughout the whole of his Memoirs he speaks of her in the most affectionate terms, totally inconsistent with a belief in her entire abandonment of character. He expressly says, that Tullibardine, Grange, and others, *bore great love* towards the queen, and were only in arms for the safety of the prince, and the punishment of the king's murder; and that they sent him, Melville, to the Regent Murray, to entreat him in their name, "to bear him gently and humbly unto the quen."—P. 193. He also says, that Bothwell treated Mary so inhumanly after he had her in his power, "that Arthour Askin and I being present, hard her ask a knyf to stik hirself, or else, said sche, 'I sall drown myself.'" This he narrated to Sir James Balfour, and told him to keep the castle of Edinburgh, "and to be that gud instrument to saif baith quen and prince, and *to persew the Erle Bodowell for the kingis mourther*."—P. 180. While he speaks of that "*foull mourther of the king*," he calls Mary "*that gud princess*." Is it possible, then, that Sir James M'Intosh could have read these Memoirs, when, in his History of England published 1832, he says, "Of Mary's friends, the most experienced and sagacious was Sir James Melville,—true to his queen, but not a slave to state,—who, of all the writers of that age, has made the nearest approach to impartiality? Though he was too *honest* to deny the queen's share in the death of her husband, his conviction, which was proved sufficiently by his silence, did not extinguish his loyal attachment."—P. 88.

from her kneeling posture, and remedied the omission by writing a remembrance of them upon the blank leaf of her book of devotions. *

But one of the most affecting scenes was what past betwixt Mary and Sir Andrew Melville. On her progress to the scaffold he was permitted to accost her once more, and it was to him that Mary's last solemn and sustained speech was addressed. Melville, in an agony of grief, lamented the sad tidings he would have to return with to Scotland. "Rejoice rather than mourn," said she, "that the woes of Mary Stuart are about to cease. Know you not, Melville, that all this world is vanity,—full of trouble and misery. Return with these tidings, that I die a Catholic, true to my religion,—a Scotchwoman, but true to France. God forgive those who have thirsted for my blood. He who knows our secret thoughts, knows that mine ever sought peace, and the union of the realms. Remember me to my son, and tell him that no act was ever done by me derogatory to my kingdom and the crown." She then reclined over Melville, and kissed him, while tears fell from her eyes. "And so," said she, "good Melville, farewell. Once again, farewell, good Melville, and grant me your prayers." † Her next request was that her own attendants might see her die; and having with difficulty obtained leave to select a few, she chose Melville to support her train to the scaffold, her physician Burgoin, and from among her maidens, Jane Kennedy, afterwards the wife of Melville, and Elizabeth Curle, the sister of her secretary. These ladies attended her on the scaffold; and when the fatal moment approached, Jane Kennedy bound an embroidered handkerchief about the eyes of her beloved mistress, and received her last kiss. ‡

After her death, the household of the Queen of Scots were treated with great harshness and cruelty. These forlorn domestics humbly prayed to be allowed to depart to their respective abodes. They were detained, however, as prisoners, and kept in constant dread of death or torture, with food barely sufficient to sustain them. None of them were suffered to take exercise, or move without a guard. During these tyrannical proceedings, Barbara and Giles Mowbray, the affectionate companions of a queen, and the daughters of one of the oldest baronial houses in Scotland, young and irreproachable in their conduct, were cast into prison. This inhuman step brought matters to a crisis. Sir Archibald Napier's father-in-law complained to his own sovereign of this cruelty, and obtained the royal commission to proceed to London for the re-

* *La Mort de la Royne D'Escosse.* 1589.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

lease of his two daughters, and of all her late majesty's domestics.* About the period of this mission, information had been sent to Elizabeth by those who were weary of guarding the body of Queen Mary and tyrannizing over her servants, that the embalming had been insufficient, and that part of the leaden coffin had given way. Her own dissimulation, added to the opportune arrival and strong remonstrance of the Laird of Barnbougall, at length determined Elizabeth to order the remains of her rival to be interred at St Peterborough with the pomp suitable to royalty. In the same curious contemporary tract from which these details are obtained, it is recorded, that in the heraldic pageantry, " Les femmes de la Royne d'Escosse" walked in the following order. " *Madamoyselle Barbe Maubray.* Christine Sog. *Gilles Maubray.* Elspeth Curle. Rence de Realay. Marie Pagets. Janne Kennedy. Susanne Korkady."† Very shortly afterwards Jane Kennedy was united to Sir Andrew Melville, and Barbara Mowbray to William Curle. This faithful secretary had acted in that capacity to Queen Mary for more twenty years; that is before her captivity commenced. His extorted evidence had partly been made an excuse for her condemnation, which greatly afflicted him; and many a time his sister Elizabeth used to fall on her knees before the queen, and in an agony of tears implore forgiveness for her brother.‡ One of Mary's latest requests to the Earl of Kent, rendered more earnest, perhaps, by her knowledge of the affection which subsisted betwixt her secretary and Barbara Mowbray, was that William Curle should be suffered to depart in peace. The Earl pledged himself for his safety; and, accordingly, not long after the solemn interment at St Peterborough, Curle with his spouse and his sister Elizabeth,

* See Note E.

† " *La Mort de la Royne D'Escosse,*" printed 1589; reprinted by Jebb in his Collections, v. ii. p. 611. This account, which is extremely minute and curious, appears to have been written by one of her household,—probably her physician Burgoin. " Prenez," says the writer, " en bonne part je vous supplie, la grande affection et juste regret d'un serviteur fidele, et de bonne volonté, qui ne peut endurer que l'honneur de sa maistresse soit foulé on offencé," &c. He also narrates, that when the royal procession had reached the chapel, and the service had begun in English, Burgoin and the other domestics of her late majesty rushed out of the chapel, with the exception of Sir Andrew Melville and Barbara Mowbray.

‡ Mary always exonerated William Curle, whom she loved; and accused Nau, the French secretary, of misleading him, and being instrumental in her death. Gilbert Curle, the brother of William, was also of her household in her captivity, and a married man, as Queen Mary in her will mentions Gilbert Curle's wife.

turned their backs for ever on the shores of Britain, and sought security and consolation in a Catholic country.

I know not what became of Giles Mowbray, who probably returned to Scotland with her father. As for Barbara, it is a curious fact that some time in last century, a Flemish gentleman of talent and consideration in the Low Countries possessed an ancient Flemish manuscript, which narrated that William Curle, accompanied by two ladies of the same name, came over to Antwerp after the execution of the Queen of Scots, carrying with them a picture of that unhappy princess, and *her head* which they had contrived to abstract; that in the little church of St Andrew there, they buried this fearful relic at the foot of one of the pillars where their own tombs were to be, upon which pillar they hung the picture of their queen, and placed a marble slab to her memory. Thus far the Flemish manuscript. Whoever visits that little church may still see upon the pillar that self-same picture of Mary Queen of Scots, and read the inscription which records her martyrdom. He will also find beneath it the tombs of Barbara Mowbray and Elizabeth Curle, and may peruse their story engraved upon the slabs that cover their dust. *

The fate of Jane Kennedy was yet more melancholy. After her union to Melville, they were both in the highest favour with James VI., and when that monarch in 1589 was arranging the preliminaries of his marriage, Sir Andrew was his master of the household, and the lady whom he selected to be about the person of his queen was Sir Andrew's spouse. But she who had so affectionately shrouded the eyes of Mary at the block, was not destined to wait upon the mother of Charles I. When she received this high mark of her sovereign's confidence, she was residing in Fife, and nothing could deter her from instantly crossing the water, though the storms were so great as to be considered the effect of a combination of witches against the royal alliance. The result we shall give in the words of Sir James Melville. "The stormes wer also sa gret heir, that ane boit perissit between Brunteland and Leith, wherin was a gentilwoman callit Jane Kenete, wha had been lang in England with the queen, his majestei's mother, and was sen-syn maried upon my brother, the maister houshald to his majestie, Sir Andro Melville of Garvok. Quhilk gentilwoman being discret and grave, was sent for be his majestie to be about the quen his bed-fallow. Sche being willing to mak deligence, wald not stay, for the storm, to saill the ferry; when the vehement storm drave a schip

* See Note E.

forceably upon the said boit, and drownit the gentilwoman, and all the personnes except twa. This the Scotis witches confessit unto his majestie to have done."

Having recorded the various coincidences which form such interesting links between the annals of our philosopher's house and kindred, and the eventful history of his times; and especially the circumstances, which must have called his attention, and, all-protestant though he was, attracted his sympathies to every step in the fate of Mary of Scotland; we must now follow more exclusively his own personal history.