LOUIS BARBÉ

KIRKCALDY OF GRANGE

Louis Barbé
Kirkcaldy of Grange

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24172524
Kirkcaldy of Grange:

Содержание

Louis A. Barbé
Kirkcaldy of Grange

PREFACE

The materials available for a biography of Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange are very unequally distributed over the two portions into which his life naturally divides itself. For the first of them, I have been obliged to content myself with the rather meagre and fragmentary information to be gathered from the old chroniclers. As regards the incidents that occur during those earlier years, I cannot, therefore, claim much novelty for my sketch. By looking closely into dates, however, I have been able to rectify some minor details, and to set forth events in their proper sequence.

On the second part of Sir William's public career, the documents preserved in the Record Office throw considerable light. Some of them have been utilised, to a certain extent, in connection with the general history of the time; but, so far as I know, no attempt has yet been made to base on them a connected narrative of this important period of Grange's life, or to draw from them an explanation of his policy. By using his own correspondence – both the letters which he wrote, and those which were addressed to him – I have endeavoured to represent

the man as he wished to be understood by his contemporaries.

It has not been my special object to justify Kirkcaldy's conduct; but I am not without the hope that the impartial account of it which I have striven to give, may show how unfair it is to form an estimate of him from a consideration of the bare fact that he was, in turn, the champion of two conflicting parties.

L. A. B.
8 Wilton Mansions, Glasgow,
October 1897.

I. THE KIRKCALDYS

In the parish of Kinghorn, on the northern shore of the Firth of Forth, a farm-house known as the Grange still marks the spot where, three centuries ago, the ancestral seat of the Kirkcaldys stood. The greater part of the present structure is comparatively modern; yet it bears a look of antiquity which indicates that its transformation has been gradual and fragmentary, and not wholly uninfluenced by the design of the original builder. The only date to be seen about it figures, accompanied with an illegible monogram, on the lintel of what is now an inner door, and commemorates some addition or alteration made in 1687. Two portions, however, show traces of even greater age, and may, with some plausibility, be looked upon as relics of the old baronial mansion. They are a dovecot, and a flanking tower of solid masonry. A low recess, near the foot of the latter, is traditionally believed to have been the entrance to a subterranean passage leading down to the shore, beneath the village which the cottages of the dependents of the family formed, and on the site of which a few dwellings still cluster together. That, in the days when the prosperity of the Lairds of Grange was at its height, this village was of some size and importance, may be inferred from the fact that it possessed a chapel of its own, dedicated to St Mary, and used as a burial-place for the family.

The Kirkcaldys, who took their territorial appellation from

their estate of Grange, and who probably derived their name from the ancient town near which that baronial seat was situated, were amongst the oldest and most influential families in the county of Fife. As early as the thirteenth century, Sir William de Kirkcaldy is mentioned amongst the nobles on whom the fortune of war imposed temporary submission to Edward I., and who were compelled solemnly to take the oath of allegiance to him, on the Gospels, in presence of his Commissioners. In 1440, the name of Sir George de Kirkcaldy appears in a charter which made over to him one half of the lands of Seafield and of Tyrie.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, the family of Kirkcaldy was represented by Sir James, who, having married Janet, daughter of his neighbour Sir John Melville of Raith, was introduced by his father-in-law to the court and service of King James V. He was first appointed to be a simple Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, but was soon afterwards advanced to the more important and responsible post of Treasurer. The confidence and favour with which he was honoured by his royal master excited the jealousy and the fear of Cardinal Beaton, to whom he was opposed in religion, as an adherent to the doctrines of the Reformation, and in politics, as an ardent advocate of an alliance with England. All the efforts of his rival to bring about his fall proved ineffectual as long as the King lived. Under the regency of the Earl of Arran, however, the influence of the Churchman prevailed; and the Treasurer was set aside to make room for John Hamilton, abbot of Paisley.

Contemporary chronicles testify to the important part played by Sir James Kirkcaldy during the troubled days of his tenure of office. He is described by Melville as 'a stout bold man, who always offered by single combat, and at the point of the sword, to maintain what he spoke.' That, in those turbulent times, the fiery and rather overbearing temper of which these words are only a veiled and too partial description, should have brought trouble upon him, was but a natural consequence; and it is not surprising to learn from the evidence of a remission granted him in 1538, that respect for law and order did not always guide his conduct. A few years later, the energy of his character showed itself in the prompt and decisive action which he took under circumstances as critical for the State as they were dangerous to his liberty, and even to his life. It was he who, with Sir Thomas Erskine and Sir James Learmonth, on the authority of a verbal message brought to him by a youth, and with the King's ring for his sole warrant, ordered the arrest of Sir James Hamilton, the powerful and notorious Bastard of Arran, lodged him in the Castle, brought him to immediate trial on a charge of being in secret intelligence with the banished Earl of Angus, the Douglasses, and other declared enemies of the realm, and of having formed a plot to break into the King's chamber to slay him, and sent him to a traitor's doom before influence could be brought to bear upon the fickle monarch in favour of his former favourite.

It was to the Treasurer that the delicate negotiations between James V. and his uncle Henry VIII. were entrusted; and it was

owing to his influence that, whilst the King of England was at Pomfret, during his northern progress, 'one of the King of Scots' most secret councillors' appeared at the Court, to arrange a meeting between the sovereigns. Unfortunately for Sir James's scheme, his opponents discovered it at the critical moment. For the purpose of bringing him into discredit, they accused him of favouring the new creed, as in truth he did, though he had not yet made public profession of it; and they put his name on a list of noblemen whom they urged the King to burn as heretics. But inconstant though he was, James was not so easily to be turned against his Treasurer, for he believed him to be loyal, trustworthy, and thoroughly devoted to his sovereign's interests. At their next meeting, he showed Sir James the black roll, and jestingly, or perhaps only half jestingly, asked him what objection he could raise to the Churchmen's suggestions. Having thus been invited to plead his cause, Kirkcaldy availed himself to the utmost of the opportunity which the King's good-nature afforded him. Not only did he draw a glowing picture of the advantages which would accrue to both sovereign and people from an alliance with England, and warningly point out the danger of rejecting King Henry's friendly advances, he also denounced the selfish policy of his opponents, represented the gross abuses of the Roman Church, inveighed against the ungodly and scandalous lives of the prelates, and advised the King, not indeed to send the Cardinal and his bishops to the stake, as they wished to do by their enemies, but, if he would be well and rich, to take

home again to the profit of the Crown all vacant benefices, by little and little, as they fell by the death of each prelate. The proposal to turn the tables on the Churchmen, besides holding out a promise of much-needed pecuniary help, contained an element of grim humour, which, for the time at least, caught the King's fancy; and his resolve to adopt it was so far sincere, that it led to a characteristic scene at his next conference with the Cardinal and his prelates at Holyrood. Gradually working himself into a passion as he rebuked them for their treacherous and cruel advice, he disconcerted them by his indignant words and impetuous threats of violence. 'Wherefore,' he asked, 'gave my predecessors so many lands and rents to the Kirk? Was it to maintain hawks, dogs, and concubines, to a number of idle priests? Pack, you javells! Get you to your charges, and reform your own lives; and be not instruments of discord betwixt my nobility and me, or else, I vow to God, I shall reform you, not as the King of Denmark doth, by imprisonment, nor yet as the King of England doth, by hanging and heading, but by sharper punishments; if ever I hear such a motion made by you again, I shall stick you with this whingar!' And as he drew his dagger to emphasize his meaning, the terrified priests, more careful of their personal safety than of their dignity, precipitately fled from his presence.

This temporary check did not discourage the Treasurer's opponents. As a proof that they, too, were actuated by disinterested and patriotic motives, they offered to make the

King an annual grant of fifty thousand crowns, out of the rents of the Church, for the maintenance of hired soldiers, in case King Henry should levy war against him because of his refusal to keep his promise with regard to a personal interview at York. Even this bribe might have failed to win James over to their views but for a circumstance which deprived him for a while of the counsel and support of the Treasurer. He had lately sanctioned the betrothal of Helen Leslie, heiress of Kellie, who was a ward of the Crown, to Kirkcaldy's second son; and Sir James found it necessary to go over into Angus on business connected with this advantageous matrimonial alliance. His rivals did not neglect to make the most of the opportunity which his absence from Court afforded. They renewed the charge of heresy against him, basing it on the fact that he always carried an English version of the New Testament about with him in his pocket; they complained of the haughtiness and arrogance which had characterized his conduct ever since he thought himself secure in the King's favour; they denounced his greed, of which his anxiety to marry his son to an heiress with a dowry of twenty thousand pounds was adduced as a proof; and they questioned his fitness, in point of honesty, for the responsible position to which he had been raised.

Seeing that James was wholly unmoved by accusations which he knew to be prompted by malice and envy, and which he met by unhesitatingly declaring his esteem and affection for Kirkcaldy, to whom, if he had not done it already, he would willingly entrust the fortune of his ward, they insidiously changed their tactics,

and directed their attack against what they well knew to be the weakest point in the dissolute monarch's character. 'Sir,' said the Prior of Pittenweem, himself a notorious and unscrupulous libertine, 'the heiress of Kellie is a lusty, fair lass, and I dare pledge my life that, if your Majesty will send for her presently, the Treasurer shall refuse to send her to you.' On this point, too, James asserted his absolute confidence in Kirkcaldy's fidelity and devotedness; nevertheless he so far yielded to the tempters as to consent to their putting him to the test. The plan devised by them was, that a letter should be written and entrusted to the Prior of Pittenweem, who was to deliver it in person, and, if the Treasurer obeyed the order contained in it, to bring Helen Leslie to the King.

The event was precisely such as had been anticipated when choice was made of an agent who, to his evil reputation joined the further qualification of being at deadly enmity with the Laird of Grange. Sir James refused to entrust his son's intended bride to the unprincipled messenger, at whom he did not hesitate to cast the plain and vigorous epithets which his flagrant licentiousness deserved, and which the blunt and unconventional language of the time justified. Rejoicing in the failure of his mission and the success of his scheme, the Prior hastened back to Edinburgh. On hearing his carefully and craftily framed report of what had taken place, the King flew into a violent passion, and in the heat of it, consented to the issue of a warrant for the arrest of Sir James as soon as he returned.

When the Treasurer, who had no difficulty in penetrating the designs of his enemies, and who consequently followed close on the Prior's heels, presented himself at Holyrood, he was refused admittance. Disregarding the prohibition, however, he made his way to the presence of the King, who was just then at supper; but only to be received with ominous silence by the angry monarch. This did not awe him into a passive submission, which would have been interpreted into a confession of guilt. Respectfully, yet firmly, addressing his sovereign, he begged to be told what offence he had committed, and why he had suddenly been deprived of the favour with which he had so lately been honoured. The reply was such as he expected it would be. 'Why,' asked James, 'why did you refuse to send me the maiden whom I wrote for, and give despiteful language to him I sent for her?' Put in this form, the charge was easy to meet. Kirkcaldy dared anyone present to accuse him of disobedience to the King's command. He had, he admitted, declined to give Helen Leslie into the Prior's keeping; but his refusal was justified by the messenger's too well-known character – a character which he did not veil his words to denounce. Moreover, as he had stated at the time, he considered himself the fittest person to accompany the young lady to Court; and, in proof that he had never been unwilling to yield compliance to the King's wishes, he was able to answer in the affirmative when asked whether he had brought the gentlewoman with him.

James understood from his Treasurer's undaunted manner,

no less than from his straightforward explanation, that a faithful servant had been falsely accused and unjustly condemned; but if he could recall the warrant which had been extorted from him, he could not prevent the consequences of a more momentous step which he had also been induced to take. Beaton and his party had prevailed on him to adopt their policy, and decisively to reject the proffered alliance with England – a slight to Henry, which that imperious monarch was not slow to resent, and which was the immediate cause of one of the most disastrous and humiliating defeats ever inflicted on Scotland.

Once again Sir James Kirkcaldy figures in connection with the sovereign whom his advice, had it not been so petulantly neglected, might have saved from the closing disaster of his career. After the ill-fated battle of Solway Moss, when King James wandered aimlessly and hopelessly into Fifeshire, ashamed to look any man in the face, it was to Halyards, one of the Laird of Grange's estates, that he came for rest and shelter. The Treasurer was absent at the time, but the unfortunate and broken-hearted monarch was received with loyal affection by Lady Janet, an 'auncient and godlie matron,' and waited upon during his brief stay by her eldest son, William Kirkcaldy. The youth was destined to behold many a sorrowful scene in after years, yet few so pathetic and so impressive as that of which he was a silent spectator on the memorable evening of the King's stay. At supper, James sat pensive and dejected, unable to realise the full extent of the disaster that had fallen upon him, and

inwardly repeating his 'continuall regrate': 'Oh! Oh! Fled Oliver? Is Oliver taken? Oh! Fled Oliver?' Lady Grange, in a kindly attempt to comfort him, begged him to take the work of God in good part. But his incoherent answer showed how little he had understood her meaning. 'My portion of this world is short,' he said, 'for I will not be with you fifteen days.'

To break the distressing silence which followed the gloomy reply, one of the attendants inquired where his Majesty wished preparation to be made for celebrating Christmas, which was near at hand. With a 'disdainful countenance,' as though the matter were one with which he had no concern, 'I cannot tell,' he answered, 'choose you the place. But this I can tell you; before Christmas you will be masterless, and the realm without a king.' And he seemed so convinced of the truth of his prediction that, although there was no sign of approaching death about him, none dared contradict him for fear of his anger.

Next day the wretched King left Halyards, accompanied by young Kirkcaldy. The Treasurer himself joined them a little later; and both father and son were amongst the attendants who stood about the dying monarch in the palace of Falkland, on the 13th of December 1542, and vainly strove to soothe the mighty grief which found expression in the one despairing cry: 'Fie! fie! Is Oliver fled – and taken? Then all is lost – all is lost!'

II. THE TRAGEDY AT ST ANDREWS

William Kirkcaldy, who makes his first appearance in the pages of history as the attendant of James V. during the brief interval between the shameful rout of Solway Moss and the last melancholy scene at Falkland, is usually represented as being but a child at the time. No record indicates the year of his birth; but it is assumed to have taken place about 1530. That, however, does not seem to tally with the known dates of several events in which he and other members of his family bore a part.

In the first place, if it be not impossible, it may be looked upon as at least improbable, that a lad of twelve was given to James as an attendant, under the peculiar circumstances of his visit to Halyards. It is still less likely that, whether the will attributed to James V. be genuine, or fraudulent, as was afterwards maintained, such a mere child should figure amongst the witnesses to it, and should, as the document, under any circumstances, fully establishes, have been allowed to be present at the King's last moments. Nor does it agree with the description of Lady Grange as 'an ancient matron,' that the eldest of her nine children should have been so young at the time.

As we have already seen, it is mentioned by Melville that, as early as 1542, a younger brother, James Kirkcaldy, had

obtained 'the ward and marriage of Kellie in Angus,' and that his father, the Treasurer, had 'gone there to take possession thereof' whilst the negotiations with Henry VIII. were still pending. The difficulty of believing that the betrothal of James Kirkcaldy – if, indeed, the passage do not actually refer, as some have thought, to his marriage – took place when he was at most but eleven years old, naturally suggests doubts as to the accuracy of the date assigned to his elder brother's birth. Such early matrimonial engagements were not, it is true, unknown, or even uncommon, in those days; but that the intended bride, at least, was no longer in her girlhood may fairly be inferred from the details of the discreditable plot against the Treasurer, in which the Prior of Pittenweem made her play a part.

All that can be ascertained with regard to Kirkcaldy's education is supplied by a letter, in which Randolph, the English agent, writing to him, makes allusion to their early acquaintance, as students, in France, at the time that the University of Paris was presided over by the Cardinal of Lorraine. As Randolph was born in 1523, he would have been Kirkcaldy's senior by seven years, a disparity of age which still further diminishes the plausibility of the theory that the latter was born in 1530. Yet another objection to it may be gathered from a passage in *Master Randolph's Fantasy*, a poem recording the events of what is known as the Round About Raid, in 1566. Sir William Kirkcaldy is mentioned in it, amongst the rebellious nobles; and the special reference to his 'horye head' would unquestionably seem to imply

that he was more than thirty-six years old at the time. Finally, it is known that Kirkcaldy's only daughter, Janet, was married to the Laird of St Colme's Inch at the beginning of the year 1561; and it is assuredly not easy to make that fact accord with the assumed date of her father's birth.

Such are the difficulties in the way of accepting Grant's opinion, that Kirkcaldy's birth 'probably took place about the year 1530,' or Froude's later statement that 'the Treasurer's eldest son' was 'a boy of about seventeen,' in the year 1546. None of the arguments adduced may be convincing if considered singly; but, when all are taken together, they assume sufficient weight to justify the supposition that Kirkcaldy was at least as old as his fellow-student, Thomas Randolph; that he was a young man of over twenty when he accompanied his King from Halyards to Falkland; and that he was, not a lad of sixteen or seventeen, but a man approaching his thirtieth year at the time of the important event which has now to be chronicled as the next in his career, and in which he was destined to play important parts that would scarcely have been entrusted to a 'boy.'

It is possibly owing to his absence on the Continent, for the prosecution of his studies, that, after James V.'s death, young Kirkcaldy's name disappears for a time from the chronicles of the age. When mention of him is again made, it is in connection with an event which, even in those troubled days, when men were but too familiar with deeds of violence, sent a thrill of terror through the land, and which still stands out in terrible prominence

amongst the most striking examples of the lawlessness of our forefathers, of the contempt which they displayed for human life in the furtherance of their political schemes, and of the disregard for the fundamental precepts of morality which, by a strange inconsistency, they were able to reconcile with an earnest zeal for religion. It is as one of the assassins of Cardinal Beaton that William Kirkcaldy first takes an active part in the political and religious struggle in which he was destined to figure so conspicuously.

By what means Beaton had risen to power, with what uncompromising fixity of purpose, and in what cause he wielded it, there is no necessity for recalling. Neither would it serve any good purpose to re-open the controversy which has raged about his memory. Even if it were possible to attempt an impartial and unbiased estimate of his work and character without being confronted at the outset by the difficulty of obtaining any evidence, either for impeachment or for defence, but that of witnesses whose avowed partisanship at once marks them as untrustworthy, there would be but little prospect of a definitive settlement of the vexed question so long as one side endorses the sentiments of him who wrote 'merrily' of the 'godly fact' of his murder, whilst another holds him up to veneration as a martyr.

In 1546, the Cardinal had attained a position of almost absolute authority in the kingdom; but he had also incurred the hatred of powerful and determined men, by whom his death was resolved upon, and who were only waiting for a

favourable opportunity to carry out their desperate designs. Foremost amongst them were the Kirkcaldys. Whatever may have been the motives by which the other conspirators were swayed, it seems impossible to doubt that the late Treasurer and his family were actuated by a desire to be revenged, rather upon the Statesman who had thwarted their policy than upon the Churchman who opposed their religion. As early as 1544, long before the execution of Wishart had occurred to lend a semblance of wild justice to the plot against the Cardinal, it had been reported by the Earl of Hertford to Henry VIII., that 'the Larde of Grange, late Thesaurer of Scotland, wolde attempt eyther to apprehend or slee him at some time when he sholde goe through the Fyfeland, and, in case he colde so apprehend him, wolde delyver him unto His Majesty.'

Owing to various circumstances, amongst which, however, cannot be included any special precautions taken by the intended victim, who, according to his enemies, had reached that point of infatuated security which fatally precedes destruction, the 'manie purposes devysed how to cutt off' Beaton, all failed till Friday the 28th of May 1546. On the evening of that day, Norman Lesley, Master of Rothes, with five companions, came to St Andrews, which William Kirkcaldy had entered before him. John Lesley, who was better known, and whose very presence would have caused alarm, did not venture to join them until darkness had set in. Early on the Saturday morning, the conspirators proceeded, in small parties, to the

abbey churchyard, in close proximity to Beaton's castle. As soon as the gates of the stronghold were opened and the drawbridge let down, for the purpose of admitting workmen with the materials necessary for carrying on the new works undertaken by the prelate, William Kirkcaldy, with six accomplices, made his appearance, and entered into conversation with the unsuspecting porter, inquiring of him whether the Cardinal were yet awake, whilst the others pretended to be engrossed in watching the masons at their work. During the short dialogue which followed, the Master of Rothes and three other conspirators came forward. As it was important that no alarm should yet be raised, they passed on without appearing to notice Kirkcaldy or his party, and, with assumed carelessness, took up their position in the middle of the courtyard. Immediately after this, a third band of conspirators, amongst whom was the impetuous Lesley, hastily made for the gate. Startled at their appearance – for, more careless or more eager than those who had preceded them, they pressed forward 'somewhat rudelie' – and recognizing a man who was known to have sworn the death of the Cardinal, the porter ran to the chain, and endeavoured to raise the drawbridge. In another moment he would have succeeded in keeping out the fiercest of the conspirators, but, as the bridge was slowly rising, Lesley cleared the gap with one bold spring, and leaped into the courtyard. As a prelude to the bloody work, the porter was felled to the ground, the keys were snatched from him, and the senseless body was cast into the moat.

This first deed of violence and murder is, by Froude, attributed to William Kirkcaldy. His assertion, however, is only deduced from the description given by the chroniclers of the respective positions taken up by the conspirators, and not actually based on their actual words. That Kirkcaldy, who, but a few moments earlier, was in conversation with the porter, had a better opportunity for attacking the man than any of the accomplices within the gates, scarcely admits of denial. It may even be granted that, being a willing party to the desperate enterprise of killing the Cardinal, he would have felt but little hesitation in preventing the gate-keeper from marring the whole plot. On the other hand, however, it is quite as natural to suppose, with Grant, that Lesley, in his fierce rush, made directly for the warder, and that it was by him that the unfortunate man's 'heid was brokin' as he 'maid him for defence.' The point, it may be thought, is but a trifling one. Yet, considering the bloodless part taken by Kirkcaldy in the subsequent proceedings, his biographer may be allowed to dwell on it for a moment, not, indeed, with the intention of showing him to have been less guilty, morally, than any of his associates, but rather for the purpose of clearing him from the charge of having, with his own hand, shed a fellow-creature's blood on that terrible day.

Though numbering but sixteen, the conspirators were resolute and armed; and, it was an easy task for them to overawe the peaceful workmen who, though they had run forward to ascertain the cause of the tumult, manifested no inclination to interfere

on either side, but quietly allowed themselves to be 'put forth at the wicket gate.' As soon as this was accomplished, William Kirkcaldy made for the postern, where he took up his position in order to prevent the 'fox' from escaping. His confederates, in the meantime, entered the Castle, and proceeding to the apartments of the gentlemen of the household, of whom there were no less than fifty, obliged them, by threats of immediate death if they offered any resistance, to depart as peacefully as the workmen had done.

By this time, the conspirators, feeling themselves secure, had thrown away all restraint; and their shouts of exultation, as they ran from room to room, awakened the Cardinal who, as it was only 'betwixt four and fyve hours,' was still in bed when his castle was invaded. Opening his window to inquire the cause of the unwonted noise, he was informed that Norman Lesley had taken possession of the place. His first endeavour was to seek safety in flight. He ran towards the postern at which Kirkcaldy was stationed; but perceiving the way to be barred, he at once returned to his apartments, seized his two-handed sword, and ordered his page to barricade the door with 'kists and other impediments.' Scarcely had the furniture been piled up when John Lesley, with James Melville of Carnbee and Peter Carmichael, arrived and demanded to be let in. 'Who calls?' asked Beaton. – 'My name is Lesley,' was the reply. – 'Is that Norman?' again inquired the Cardinal. – 'Nay,' he was told, 'my name is John.' – 'I will have Norman,' he continued, 'for he is

my friend.' – 'Content yourself with such as are here,' said the implacable Lesley, 'for other shall ye get none.'

There was a pause, during which Beaton hastily thrust a box of gold under a heap of coals that was kept in a hidden recess of the room, whilst the assailants were fruitlessly endeavouring to burst the massive door. Resuming the interrupted parley, the Cardinal called out, 'Will ye save my life?' – It was John Lesley that replied: 'It may be that we will.' – 'Nay,' returned Beaton, hesitating to trust so ambiguous a promise, 'swear unto me, by God's wounds, and I will open unto you.' – 'Then,' cried Lesley, 'that which was said is unsaid,' and he ordered live coals to be brought for the purpose of burning down the wooden barricade. Such, at least, is the account given by Knox; but Lindsay of Pitscottie only says that the question from within was, 'Will ye slay me?' and the answer from without an unconditional 'No.' Both agree that, at this moment, the door was thrown open – a circumstance which seems to point to the accuracy of the latter's narrative.

The assassins rushed in, whilst the doomed Cardinal, sinking into a chair, exclaimed, 'I am a priest! I am a priest! Ye will not slay me!' But he appealed to men who knew no mercy. 'According to his former vows,' John Lesley struck him repeatedly with his whingar, and was seconded by Carmichael in the work of death. But Melville, 'a man of nature most gentle and most modest' – such is Knox's account of him – seeing that they were both under the influence of strong passion, thrust them

aside rebukingly. 'This work and judgment of God, although it be secret,' he said, 'ought to be done with greater gravity.' Then, drawing his sword, and turning the point of it towards the terror-stricken Cardinal, he spoke the stern words: 'Repent thee of thy former wicked life, but especially of the shedding of the blood of that notable servant of God, Mr George Wishart, which, albeit the flame of fire hath consumed it before men, yet crieth it for vengeance upon thee, and we from God are sent to revenge it. For here, before my God I protest, that neither the hatred of thy person, the love of thy riches, nor the fear of any trouble thou couldst have wrought to me in particular, moved or moveth me to strike at thee, but only because thou hast been, and remainest, an obstinate enemy against Christ Jesus and his Holy Gospel.' Then, with his hunting-knife, he ran the shrinking victim again and again through the body. Mangled and bathed in his life-blood, the Cardinal sank from his chair to the floor, his dying lips repeating the protest which had only excited his murderers to greater ferocity: 'I am a priest! I am a priest! Fie, fie! All is gone!'

III. THE CONSPIRATORS AT BAY

The men who had so deliberately planned and so boldly perpetrated the murder of Cardinal Beaton, were fully conscious of the gravity of the situation in which they now found themselves. They knew that the crime which they had committed in slaying the Chancellor of the Realm bore with it the guilt of high treason, and that, if they refused to give themselves up, they would be declared rebels, and dealt with as such. But they had gone too far to retreat. If safety were to be secured, it could only be by union amongst themselves; and instead of separating, to wander as outlaws through the country or to shut themselves up singly in their fortalices, they determined to maintain themselves in the stronghold which they had captured. Its very position seemed to suggest and to justify such a course. Situated on a rock-bound headland a little to the north of the city of St Andrews, the imposing castle which Bishop Roger, son of the Earl of Leicester, 'founded and gart bigged be,' in the year 1200, was guarded on two sides by the sea, and, whilst practically inaccessible to a hostile fleet, might, with comparative ease, keep up communication with a friendly force, and receive supplies from it. A deep moat and strongly fortified walls protected it from the attack of a land army, and had more than once before enabled it to hold out against superior numbers. Food and ammunition had been abundantly provided by Beaton

himself, as a precaution against a possible attempt on the part of the English; and, within the walls which had been known to give accommodation to guests whose mounted attendants alone numbered four hundred and twenty, there was ample room for quartering the partisans by whom they expected to be joined.

To the advantages which the natural position and elaborate defences of the fortress afforded, chance added another, which, though of a very different kind, might be depended upon to operate strongly in favour of the conspirators, and which may, very probably, have exercised a not unappreciable influence upon their decision. It happened that, at the time when Cardinal Beaton's castle was seized upon, James Hamilton, the Earl of Arran's eldest son, was residing with him. Instead of being sent away, as were the other gentlemen of the household, he was retained by the captors as a hostage. It was thought that consideration for his son's safety would hamper the Regent's action; and not only prevent him from having recourse to measures of extreme severity in the course of the unavoidable siege, but also affect the conditions to be granted, if the garrison were eventually forced to surrender.

Nor was that all. A scheme of Arran's own, for the marriage of his heir with the young Queen of Scots, was thought to be at the bottom of his opposition to the alliance by which the King of England hoped to unite the two Crowns. In the eyes of Henry, James Hamilton was a rival to his own son Edward; and they who had it in their power to hand over the youth to his safe keeping,

possessed a further claim upon the protection and assistance which his share in the plot for Beaton's destruction led them to expect from him. Under the special circumstances of the case, there was, therefore, as much wisdom as daring in what might, at first sight, appear the desperate determination of holding the Castle.

The first to throw in his lot with the sixteen, was one who had not, it is true, figured so prominently and actively as they in the slaughter of the Cardinal, but who was too much implicated in their action, and could too easily be proved to be in actual fact their accomplice, to expect anything but the severest treatment at the hands of the avengers. Before the day was out, Sir James Kirkcaldy, with his sons and brothers, arrived in St Andrews, and was admitted into the Castle. Some more of the Melvilles followed soon after; and by gradual accessions to its strength, as the news of what had been done at St Andrews spread through the country, the rebel garrison increased to about one hundred and fifty fighting men. The names of those connected with the murder either as 'first interprisers,' or as 'part takers, maintainers, defenders, victuallers, assisters, and counsel givers,' numbered thirty-five. They were set forth in the proclamation, issued thirteen days after the death of Beaton, which was publicly read, at the Market Cross of Cupar, by John Paterson, Carrick Pursuivant, and which summoned the persons mentioned in it to appear within six days at the bar of Parliament, under pain of being declared rebels. Amongst them were eight Kirkcaldys

and four Melvilles. That the majority of those who had taken refuge at St Andrews, because they 'suspected themselves to be borne at evil will,' were not mistaken as to the sentiments entertained towards them by the party of which the Cardinal had been the head, was proved by 'letters and memorials' which were discovered amongst Beaton's papers, and which disclosed a project, formed by him, and sanctioned by the Council, for their treacherous and summary removal, by death or imprisonment, on the Monday following.

Amongst others, whom sympathy with its garrison drew to St Andrews, mention is made by the chroniclers of John Knox and his three pupils – George and Francis Douglas, and Alexander Cockburn – of John Rough, a Reformed Preacher, whom Bonner subsequently sent to the stake, as a heretic; of Henry Balneaves of Halhill, who had occupied the position of Clerk-Treasurer under Sir James Kirkcaldy; and of Sir David Lindsay, who found the subject of a poem in the tragedy that had been enacted in the Castle, and gave expression to the sentiments of the less fanatical section of his party in the well-known lines: —

'As for the Cardinal, I grant
He was the man we well might want;
God will forgive it soon.
But of a truth, the sooth to say,
Although the loon be well away,
The deed was foully done.'

The measures taken by the Regent with a view to the punishment of the rebels did not bear evidence of much zeal or energy on his part. Nearly three months had elapsed since the murder of Beaton when, on the 21st of August, a proclamation was issued, calling upon the vassals of the Crown to assemble within a week for the purpose of forcing the garrison of St Andrews into submission. But, even that does not appear to have been followed by any very strenuous exertions. A body of troops was, it is true, sent against the rebels; but the military operations must have been conducted in a very inadequate manner, for, at Martinmas, according to Pitscottie, 'all men cryed out and desired the Governour to punisch sick injuries done within the realme; and also the Queine perswadit the Governour to put remeid heirto.'

It was mainly by the Catholic clergy that pressure was brought to bear upon Arran. By voluntarily undertaking to contribute £2000 monthly towards the support of the royal troops, as long as the siege of the Castle should last, the prelates gave practical proof of their determination not to allow the assassins of their religious and political leader, the Cardinal, to escape with impunity. Then, at length, 'an army' marched into Fifeshire, to invest the stronghold in real earnest; and 'tua gritt cannones, to wit Cruik Mow and the Deafe Meg,' were brought to bear upon it. The massive defences, it is true, suffered but slight injury from the lead-cased stone shot which the primitive artillery of the time discharged against them; but the mere fact of its

being cut off from all communication on the land-side gradually began to tell on the garrison; and the leaders found themselves obliged to make urgent appeal for assistance to their friend and protector, Henry VIII. As early as the beginning of September, in consequence of the proclamation which the Regent had issued shortly before, and which indicated the commencement of hostilities, they had sent letters to the English Council; and on the seventeenth of that month the King was advised to send 'at least some small force, which should not onely appeare a comfort to them, but be a defence against the Scottis on the sees.' The immediate effect of this recommendation was the dispatch of eight ships, with the 'Maister of Wark of Ingland,' whose object, according to the Diurnal of Occurrents, was 'to spy' the Castle. It may be doubted whether this first squadron brought any material assistance to the besieged; for, when it returned, about the end of October, 'William Kirkcaldy of Grange, younger, past to Ingland, for supplie,' with it, accompanied by Henry Balneaves of Halhill and John Lesley.

On their arrival in London, the envoys lost no time in informing Henry of the object of their mission. Nor does the King, on his side, appear to have acted less expeditiously. Before the end of the month, he wrote to Admiral Tyrrell, informing him that he had 'been moved to send forth presently to the sees the number of six ships furnished for the wars, that is to say, the *Pauncey*, the *Mynyon*, the *Hart*, the *Jennet*, the *Dragon*, and the *Lyon*,' and had appointed him to the command. According

to further instructions, Tyrrell, on reaching the Firth, was to land parties at unprotected points on either shore, 'to spoil and burn small villages and houses,' and thus, not only strike terror into the population, but also create a diversion in favour of the Castle, from the siege of which forces would probably be withdrawn, and sent to check the progress of the English raiders. The Master of Rothes and the Laird of Grange were to be told that his Majesty was 'sorry to understand their care and trouble for their defence,' and that 'conforme to the request of Mr Kirkcaldy to helpe them with some vitail and munition,' one of the six ships was laden with supplies, which were to be handed over in such quantity as the Admiral might judge necessary.

Another paragraph in the same letter explains one of the reasons of the King's liberality, and shows on what condition Kirkcaldy had been able to secure help from England. 'And, because the sayd Mr Kirkcaldy, who is sone and heire to the Lard of Grange aforesaid, at his late beeing with us, signifyed by his letters, on the behalf of the Master of Rothes and his father, that for a token of their service and goode wille to us, they wold delyver in hostage the sonne of the Erle of Arran, ye shal cause request to be made, in our name, for him, setting forth that besides the performance therby of the promesse of the sayd Kirkcaldy, and the confirmation of our credit and estimation of them, they shal doo a thing so much to our contentation, as shal give us occasion the nerer to stykk unto them, and temploye our force to the repulse of their enemyes the more willingly.'

Whilst Henry Balneaves and John Lesley remained in England 'for forming and perfyting all contracts betwixt the defenders and King Henrie,' Kirkcaldy returned to St Andrews. The besieged had not yet been able to make that 'plaine passage by an yron gate, through the east wall to the sea, which greetly releeved them' at a later stage of the blockade; and, when the English ships arrived, there was consequently some difficulty in effecting communication with them. Ultimately, however, Kirkcaldy succeeded in landing with the supplies; but it was 'not without some losse of men.'

On the side of the besiegers, Kirkcaldy's departure which, according to the Diurnal of Occurrents, took place on the 26th of October, had filliped the leaders into a display of energy. On the Tuesday following it, the Governor and the Lords with him, anxious to put an end to the siege before the arrival of supplies from England, sent to offer the rebels the restitution of their lands, heritages, tacks, benefices and moveables, on condition that they should surrender the Castle and give up young Hamilton. The proposal was met with a curt refusal. Three days later preparation was made for a vigorous attack; and four cannons, a battering culverin, two smaller culverins, and some double falcons were sent to the west trenches for the purpose of battering the sea-tower that stood at the north-west, and also the west wall. Then, when all this artillery had been brought into position, the cannonade began from two sides at once. On the first day it lasted without cessation from seven in the morning

till four in the afternoon. The fire was unusually effective. That from the new battery brought down all the battlements and the top-storey of the sea-tower, and the whole roof of the apartments overlooking the shore. On the land-side the feathered bolts shot from the balistæ at the hall and chapel, broke in the roof, and drove those of the garrison who were stationed at that point to the safer shelter of the inner walls. Nor were the besieged inactive. Pointing their own cannon at the attacking artillery they retaliated by killing 'John Borthwick, principal gunner, and sundry of the soldiers and men of war,' and by wounding the Earl of Argyle's master-gunner so seriously that he was reported to be still bedfast nearly two months later. On the morrow the Governor's artillery again opened its fire, and kept it up as vigorously, though not more murderously, than the day before. Further damage was done to the high parts and roof, but the garrison once more escaped serious injury. The assailants were less fortunate, for they again lost a gunner, James Law, and three other men with him. Such 'great slaughter made upon their gunners' disheartened the leaders of the royal troops; and tacitly recognising their inability to take the Castle by open force, 'they gave up further shooting with great artillery, and continued the siege with blockading and small fire arms.'

The provisions which Kirkcaldy had obtained and brought from England afforded but brief relief to the beleaguered garrison. From the 22nd of November to the 10th of December there was no flesh-meat within the Castle; and the other supplies

gradually dwindled down to ten boles of meal and five puncheons of wine. But the desperate defenders showed no sign of wavering. As a result of their great watching and waking, of the want of flesh, and of the bad quality of the fish which had become their chief diet, Walter Melville – one of the leaders – and twenty men were stricken with a deadly sickness; but this only moved their comrades to use greater exertions and, in the words of one of them, daily to make slaughter of their enemies. Nor were their efforts limited to that. Whilst some were fighting others were working at the construction of a postern door, and of a trench leading from it to a rock lying off the kitchen tower. When this was at length completed two men were able to set out nightly in a small boat, and, landing at Tentsmuir, to obtain a scant supply of flesh and flour from a secret friend, the Laird of Montquhanny.

About the middle of December the besieged were reduced to such extremities that a well-conducted and vigorous attack could scarcely have failed to give Arran possession of the Castle. Fortunately for them, however, he was not fully aware of their desperate condition, whilst, on the other hand, the circumstances in which he was himself placed made him long for the termination of the protracted siege. A violent pestilence that broke out in St Andrews and threatened to spread through the beleaguering army, gave him a plausible excuse for opening negotiations without appearing to be driven to it either by the obstinacy of the rebels or by the repeated protests addressed to him and his Council by Henry VIII. on their behalf.

On the 17th of December, Lyon Herald approached the walls and sounded a parley. That no undue haste on their part should reveal how anxious they themselves were for a cessation of hostilities, the leaders did not condescend to notice him, and he was obliged to return to the Governor and the Council with the report that he could not obtain speech of them. Later on in the day a second attempt was more successful; and consent was obtained to an interview between the rebel leaders and two envoys from the camp – the Justice-Clerk and the Provost of Aberdeen. The assumed indifference of those within the Castle caused the negotiations to drag on slowly through several days; and, at the very last moment, the demand that William Kirkcaldy should be handed over as a hostage, was on the point of making them fall through altogether. Finally, however, on the 22nd of December, a truce was agreed upon. The conditions were that the garrison should retain the Castle until the Regent obtained from the Pope absolution for all who had been concerned in the murder of Cardinal Beaton; that they, their friends, families, servants, and others pertaining to them, should never be pursued by law, but should enjoy all the privileges, spiritual and temporal, of which they had been in possession before the murder, 'even as if it had never beene committed;' and that, whilst James Hamilton was still kept as a hostage on the one side, David and James Kirkcaldy should be delivered to the Regent on the other, as pledges to insure the surrender of the Castle when the papal absolution arrived.

As soon as the royal army had been withdrawn, those who had held the Castle so valiantly came forth in great exultation. The lawless conduct of some of them was wholly unworthy of the brave men they had shown themselves to be. 'They became so proud,' says Pitscottie, 'that no man might live besyd thame, for they would isch out and ryd throche the countrie quhen they pleased, and sumtymes raise fyre and burne, and vtherwhylles ravisch vomen, and vse thair bodie as they pleased. And some godlie men in the castell, that thought not thair lyffe nor conversatioun honest, reproved them sharplie, thairfoir, saying, if they left not aff, it could not be bot God would punisch thame for the same quhen they luiket least for it. Notwithstanding of thir admonitiounes, they continwed still in thair former doeingis the space of thrie quarteris of are yeir thaireftir.'

As might almost be inferred from the conditions of the armistice, neither besiegers nor besieged really looked upon it as a decisive step towards the termination of the struggle. The object on either side was merely to gain time and to make preparation for greater efforts. Scarcely was the truce signed when the rebel leaders wrote to their agent, Balneaves, instructing him 'to solicit the King's Majesty to write to the Emperor, to write to the Pope for the stopping and hindering' of their absolution. He was further to impress on Henry the absolute need in which they stood of 'support and aid of money.' This money was to be sent by sea; and the greatest precautions were to be taken to avoid exciting suspicion. A ship was to come to St Andrews and to put

out a boat, for the ostensible purpose of opening negotiations with the Castle, but, in reality, to hand over the money. After its departure the Governor was to be informed that its object had been to offer victuals, but that they had been refused. Nor was that all. The subsidy was not to be in English currency, of which a sudden influx would necessarily be noticed, but was to consist of the coins of France and other countries. This money, which would be accounted for as proceeding from the Cardinal's coffers, was to be used partly for the revictualing of the Castle, and partly for distribution amongst friends, so that they might be ready, when his Majesty's force came, to do such things as his Majesty might command them. In answer to this appeal Henry sent at least two remittances of money – one of £1180, and another of £1300. This was for pay to the garrison, which consisted of eighty foot and forty horse, and of which each man received eight pence a day. The Council Books show that further sums were transmitted for the leading men; that Norman Lesley's share was £280; and that Sir James Kirkcaldy got £200 as his.

Whilst Balneaves was soliciting help from England, Panter, on behalf of the Regent, was appealing to France. On the strength of the old alliance between the two countries, Francis was requested to send supplies, not only of money, but also of arms, and to place some of his own experienced military leaders at the disposal of Scotland.

About the middle of June 1547, the papal bull upon which so much had been made to depend, reached Scotland, and was

communicated to the rebel leaders, together with a summons that they should surrender the Castle, in accordance with the promise given by them the previous December. On making themselves acquainted with the document, they found it contained a remarkable clause, in which Paul III. professed to remit the crime that could not be remitted, '*Remittimus irremissibile*.' It was, in all probability, nothing more than a theological conceit, in the Italian taste. But those whom it most nearly concerned read it otherwise. It was not, they declared, the sure and sufficient absolution which the Governor and his Council had undertaken to procure for them, but merely a trap set for their destruction. They consequently refused to give up the Castle, alleging that the condition upon which they had agreed to do so had not been fulfilled.

When the little garrison thus resolved once more to defy the Regent's power, the armament upon which he depended to force them into subjection, was ready to set sail, if it had not already left the French port. On the 29th of June, a fleet consisting, according to some chroniclers of twenty-one galleys, according to others, of six galleys and two great ships, appeared in sight of St Andrews. Leo Strozzi, who was in command, at once disposed his vessels in such fashion that their artillery should command all the outworks of the Castle, and early next day sent another summons to the garrison to surrender. The bold defenders replied that he had no lawful authority over them, and that they consequently declined to obey his orders. That was the

signal for the commencement of active operations on the part of the French squadron. Two days' firing, however, produced no further effect on the fortress than the demolition of portions of the roof; whilst the defenders inflicted serious injuries on the assailants, and besides killing several rowers and soldiers, completely crippled one galley.

Strozzi, by this time, had recognized the futility of continuing the siege from the sea alone, and at once began to make preparation to attack it from the land side as well. The measures which he took showed that he meant more serious work, and that he understood his business better than the Scottish engineers who had conducted operations the summer before. Indeed, he did not hesitate to express his contempt for them as 'unexpert men of war,' to whom it had not occurred to mount batteries on the steeples and all the high places that overlooked the Castle. Nor did he think much better of the besieged for not bringing down the steeples to prevent such advantage being taken of them.

In getting his own batteries into position, Strozzi's ingenuity was put to the test. His guns had to be taken through streets completely exposed to the fire of the enemy; and if men were employed to transport them, there would necessarily be very heavy losses amongst them. To avoid this, he set up powerful windlasses at the extremity of each street, and by their means was able to draw his cumbrous guns along without sacrificing the life of a single soldier. When this was noticed from the Castle by the Italian engineer, who had been sent from England to

assist the garrison, he was not slow in realising the danger of the situation. 'Defend yourselves, Masters,' he exclaimed, 'for now you have to deal with men of war who are very skilful and subtle, for they work their cannons without any men near them.' But the confederates had dared too much to be intimidated by this new device, and they answered resolutely that they should hold the Castle to the last against the united forces of Scotland and France.

The laborious task of raising heavy guns on to the tower of the Abbey Church and the steeple of Saint Salvator's College must have taken a considerable time, for the 24th of July is given as the date of the beginning of the siege from the land side. It had now become evident that the end could not be far off. From their high position the besiegers commanded even the courtyard of the Castle; and it was only with the greatest danger that the besieged could make their way from one point to another. The persistent cannonade drove them first from the block-house, then from the sea-tower, and finally effected a breach in the wall, of which a large portion came crushing down, with a mighty noise. A tremendous storm that broke out checked the progress of the assailants for a few hours, and probably saved the garrison from the slaughter which must inevitably have taken place if the breach had been stormed and the Castle captured by force. Even at this last extremity, there were some within the walls who counselled a last effort, and urged that the whole available force should join in a sortie. But the desperate proposal though discussed was not

adopted; and when the storm abated and preparation was again being made for a final assault, a flag of truce announced that, for the first time, the rebel leaders demanded a parley with a view to the surrender of the fortress. But, not even yet was their spirit so utterly crushed that they were ready to consent without demur to any terms. Neither with the Governor nor with any of their own countrymen would they condescend to negotiate, for these had deserted them, 'Which, I am assured,' said the Laird of Grange, 'God shall revenge ere it be long.' It was to Strozzi himself that they surrendered. According to Knox the terms of the capitulation were: That the lives of all that were within the Castle, as well of the English as of the Scots, should be saved; that they should be safely transported to France; that, at the King of France's expense they should be safely conveyed to any country they might desire, other than Scotland, in case that, upon conditions which should be offered by the King of France unto them, they could not be content to remain in service and freedom there.

Thus, on the 30th of July, 1547, ended the siege of the famous Castle. Entering it at once, the French 'spoylled verrie rigorouslie.' According to Pitscottie, 'they gott both gold, silver, cloathing, bedding, meitt and drink, with all veapones, artaillie, and victuallis, and all vther plenisching, and left nothing behind thame that they might gett carried away in thair gallies.' The 'Diurnal of Occurrents' estimates the value of the spoil at one hundred thousand pounds. By command of the Governor and

Council, the Castle itself was razed to the ground. ‘Whether this was to fulfil their law, which commandeth places where cardinals are slain so to be used, or for fear that England should have taken it, as they did Broughty rock, we are uncertain,’ says Calderwood, who reports the fact.

IV. IN FRANCE

To Arran and his Council, the terms obtained from Strozzi by the rebel garrison seemed to be far too lenient; and they accordingly sent John Hamilton of Milburne to the King of France, who was now Henry II., and to the powerful Cardinal of Lorraine, urging them to repudiate the Captain-General's action, and, in spite of the promises by which they had finally been induced to surrender, to handle the prisoners sharply.

Owing to circumstances which the chroniclers do not explain, the journey to France appears to have been unusually protracted; for, although Strozzi is said to have sailed from St Andrews about the middle of August, it was not till November that the galleys are reported to have reached Rouen. On his arrival, the six score Scotsmen whom he brought with him, learned that they were not to be given the option of entering into the service of France, or of passing, at the King's expense, into any other country they might choose; and that the murder of Cardinal Beaton, and the subsequent rebellious defiance of the royal authority were not to be allowed to go unpunished. John Knox and Balfour, together with the prisoners of lower degree, were kept on the galleys as slaves, and sent to work on the Loire. Their fate was commemorated in the doggerel couplet given by Calderwood as the 'song of triumph' of the Papists: —

'Preests, content you now; preests, content you now,
For Norman and his companie hath filled the galeyes fow.'

In reality, however, Norman Lesley, with the Laird of Pitmillie, and the Laird of Grange for his companions, was conveyed to Cherbourg. Henry Balneaves was imprisoned in Rouen itself, where he spent his enforced leisure in writing a 'comfortable treatise' on Justification by Faith without Works. James Melville was relegated to the Castle of Brest, but very shortly after 'departed from the miseries of this life.'

To William Kirkcaldy, Peter Carmichael, Robert and William Lesley, what was then one of the most formidable fortresses in the kingdom, was assigned as a place of confinement.

Built on a huge rock of granite, in the blue, savage Norman Bay, there stood the imposing structure upon which the admiration of the Middle-Ages bestowed the name of the Wonder of the West. Situated some four miles from the nearest point of the mainland, it was guarded by the sea at high water, but became more inaccessible still when, for a couple of hours each day, the ebbing tide left nothing but a wide expanse of treacherous quicksands between it and the coast. This was the abbey-fortress of Mont Saint-Michel, that 'wonderfully strong place upon the sea-shore,' which had proved the bulwark of Normandy during the long struggle between England and France, and in which insignificant garrisons of determined men had, time and again, successfully held out

against the assaults of beleaguering thousands. Here it was that the four Scottish prisoners were destined to spend many months of captivity. But the very fastness of their isolated prison was not without advantage for them. It inspired the Governor with such confidence that he deemed it unnecessary to deprive them of the restricted liberty that the rock afforded. The only annoyance to which they were submitted, was one which affected them through their religious opinions, and which they shared in common with the Scottish prisoners in other parts of the country. Knox relates that those who were in the galleys were threatened with torments if they would not give reverence to the Mass, and that they would have been compelled to kiss a statue of the Virgin, if one of them had not seized it and cast it into the Loire. At Cherbourg, too, the governor of the castle did his utmost to induce Sir James Kirkcaldy and his companions to attend Mass with him. When they refused to do so, he threatened to compel them; but they warned him that, if he chose to adopt such a course, they would, by their irreverent behaviour, let all present know their contempt for the ceremony. William Kirkcaldy, with his three fellow-captives, was subjected to the same importunities by the captain to whose keeping he had been entrusted at Mont Saint-Michel. With equal firmness, though in a more bantering tone, he replied for himself and for them, that 'they would not only hear Mass every day but also help to say it, providing they might stick the priests; otherwise not.'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.