LANG ANDREW

THE MYSTERY OF MARY STUART

Andrew Lang
The Mystery of Mary Stuart

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25230548
The Mystery of Mary Stuart:

Содержание

Andrew Lang
The Mystery of Mary Stuart

PREFACE

In revising this book I have corrected a number of misreadings in the Arabic numerals of dates of years. I owe much to Mr. David Bruce-Gardyne and Mr. Hay Fleming. In deference to other criticisms offered privately, I have somewhat modified certain phrases about the hypothetical forged letter, as quoted by Moray and Lennox (pp. 211-236). That such a letter once existed is, of course, an inference on which readers must form their own opinion. The passage as to the site of Darnley's house, Kirk o' Field (pp. 124-131), ought to have been banished to an Appendix. On any theory the existence of the town wall, shown in the contemporary chart opposite p. 130, is a difficulty. The puzzle is caused by the chart of 1567, reduced in the design given at p. 130. In all published forms the drawing is given as it is here. But it reverses the points of the compass, east and west. Mr. A. H. Millar has suggested to me that if reflected in a mirror some errors of the chart disappear, whence one infers that it was drawn in reverse for an engraving. I have, therefore, corrected the text in this sense. But difficulties remain: there is a town wall, running south to north, of which we have no

other knowledge; and Hamilton House (if the chart is reversed) is placed east instead of west of Kirk o' Field, where it actually stood. The original design contains only the name of Hamilton House. In our chart the house is copied from the picture of it as part of the University buildings, in the map of 1647.

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Carlyle not unjustly described the tragedy of Mary Stuart as but a personal incident in the true national History of Scotland. He asked for other and more essential things than these revelations of high life. Yet he himself wrote in great detail the story of the Diamond Necklace of Marie Antoinette. The diamonds of the French, the silver Casket of the Scottish Queen, with all that turned on them, are of real historical interest, for these trifles brought to the surface the characters and principles of men living in an age of religious revolution. Wells were sunk, as it were, deep into human personality, and the inner characteristics of the age leaped upwards into the light.

For this reason the Mystery of Mary Stuart must always fascinate: moreover, curiosity has never ceased to be aroused by this problem of Mary's guilt or innocence. Hume said, a hundred and fifty years ago, that the Scottish Jacobite who believed in the Queen's innocence was beyond the reach of reason or argument. Yet from America, Russia, France, and Germany we receive works in which the guilt of Mary is denied, and the arguments of Hume, Robertson, Laing, Mignet, and Froude are contested. Every inch of the ground has been inspected as if by detectives on the scene of a recent murder; and one might suppose that the Higher Criticism had uttered its last baseless conjecture and that every syllable of the fatal Casket Letters, the only external and

documentary testimony to Mary's guilt, must have been weighed, tested, and analysed. But this, as we shall see, is hardly the fact. There are 'points as yet unseized by Germans.' Mary was never tried by a Court of Justice during her lifetime. Her cause has been in process of trial ever since. Each newly discovered manuscript, like the fragmentary biography by her secretary, Nau, and the Declaration of the Earl of Morton, and the newly translated dispatches of the Spanish ambassadors, edited by Major Martin Hume (1894), has brought fresh light, and has modified the tactics of the attack and defence.

As Herr Cardauns remarks, at the close of his 'Der Sturz der Maria Stuart,' we cannot expect finality, and our verdicts or hypotheses may be changed by the emergence of some hitherto unknown piece of evidence. Already we have seen too many ingenious theories overthrown. From the defence of Mary by Goodall (1754) to the triumphant certainties of Chalmers (1818), to the arguments of MM. Philippson and Sepp, of Mr. Hosack, and of Sir John Skelton (1880-1895), increasing knowledge of facts, new emergence of old MSS. have, on the whole, weakened the position of the defence. Mr. Henderson's book 'The Casket Letters and Mary Stuart' (First Edition 1889) is the last word on the matter in this country. Mr. Henderson was the first to publish in full Morton's sworn Declaration as to the discovery, inspection, and safe keeping of the fatal Casket and its contents. Sir John Skelton's reply[1] told chiefly against minor

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, December, 1889.

points of criticism and palæography.

The present volume is not a Defence of Mary's innocence. My object is to show, how the whole problem is affected by the discovery of the Lennox Papers, which admit us behind the scenes, and enable us to see how Mary's prosecutors, especially the Earl of Lennox, the father of her murdered husband, got up their case. The result of criticism of these papers is certainly to reinforce Mr. Hosack's argument, that there once existed a forged version of the long and monstrous letter to Bothwell from Glasgow, generally known as 'Letter II.' In this book, as originally written, I had myself concluded that Letter II., as it stands, bears evidence of garbling. The same is the opinion of Dr. Bresslau, who accepts the other Casket Papers as genuine. The internal chronology of Letter II. is certainly quite impossible, and in this I detected unskilled dove-tailing of genuine and forged elements. But I thought it advisable to rewrite the first half of the Letter, in modern English, as if it were my own composition, and while doing this I discovered the simple and ordinary kind of accident which may explain the dislocation of the chronology, and remove the evidence to unskilled dove-tailing and garbling. In the same spirit of rather reluctant conscientiousness, I worked out the scheme of dates which makes the Letter capable of being fitted into the actual series of events. Thus I am led, though with diffidence, to infer that, though a forged version of Letter II. probably once existed, the Letter may be, at least in part, a genuine composition by the Queen. The fact, however, does

not absolutely compel belief, and, unless new manuscripts are discovered, may always be doubted by admirers of Mary.

Sir John Skelton, in his 'Maitland of Lethington,' regarded the supposed falsification of Letter II. as an argument against all the Casket Letters ('false in one thing, false in all'). But it is clear that forgery may be employed to strengthen the evidence, even of a valid cause. If Mary's enemies deemed that the genuine evidence which they had collected was inadequate, and therefore added evidence which was not genuine, that proves their iniquity, but does not prove Mary's innocence. Portions of the Letter II., and of some of the other Letters, have all the air of authenticity, and suffice to compromise the Queen.

This inquiry, then, if successfully conducted, does not clear Mary, but solves some of the darkest problems connected with her case. I think that a not inadequate theory of the tortuous and unintelligible policy of Maitland of Lethington, and of his real relations with Mary, is here presented. I also hope that new light is thrown on Mary's own line of defence, and on the actual forgers or contaminators of her Letters, if the existence of such forgery or contamination is held to be possible.

By study of dates it is made clear, I think, that the Lords opposing Mary took action, as regards the Letters, on the very day of their discovery. This destroys the argument which had been based on the tardy appearance of the papers in the dispatches of the period, an argument already shaken by the revelations of the Spanish Calendar.

Mary's cause has, hitherto, been best served by her accusers, most injured by her defenders. For political and personal reasons her enemies, her accomplices, or the conscious allies of her accomplices, perpetually stultified themselves and gave themselves the lie. Their case was otherwise very badly managed. Their dates were so carelessly compiled as to make their case chronologically impossible. Their position, as stated, probably by George Buchanan and Makgill, in 'The Book of Articles,' and the 'Detection,' is marred by exaggerations and inconsistencies. Buchanan was by no means a critical historian, and he was here writing as an advocate, mainly from briefs furnished by Lennox, his feudal chief, the father of the murdered Darnley. These briefs we now possess, and the generosity of Father Pollen, S.J., has allowed me to use these hitherto virgin materials.

The Lennox Papers also enable us to add new and dramatically appropriate anecdotes of Mary and Darnley, while, by giving us some hitherto unknown myths current at the moment, they enable us to explain certain difficulties which have puzzled historians. The whole subject throws a lurid light on the ethics and the persons of the age which followed the Reformation in Scotland. Other novelties may be found to emerge from new combinations of facts and texts which have long been familiar, and particular attention has been paid to the subordinate persons in the play, while a hitherto disregarded theory of the character of Bothwell is offered; a view already, in part, suggested by Mignet.

The arrangement adopted is as follows:

First, in two preliminary chapters, the characters and the scenes of the events are rapidly and broadly sketched. We try to make the men and women live and move in palaces and castles now ruinous or untenanted.

Next the relations of the characters to each other are described, from Mary's arrival in Scotland to her marriage with Darnley; the murder of Riccio, the interval of the eleven predicted months that passed ere beside Riccio lay 'a fatter than he,' Darnley: the slaying of Darnley, the marriage with Bothwell, the discovery of the Casket, the imprisonment at Loch Leven, the escape thence, and the flight into England.

Next the External History of the Casket Letters, the first hints of their existence, their production before Elizabeth's Commission at Westminster, and Mary's attitude towards the Letters, with the obscure intrigues of the Commission at York, and the hasty and scuffling examinations at Westminster and Hampton Court, are described and explained.

Next the Internal Evidence of the Letters themselves is criticised.

Finally, the later history of the Letters, with the disappearance of the original alleged autograph texts, closes the subject.

Very minute examination of details and dates has been deemed necessary. The case is really a police case, and investigation cannot be too anxious, but certain points of complex detail are relegated to Appendices.

In writing the book I have followed, as Socrates advises,

where the *Logos* led me. Several conclusions or theories which at first beguiled me, and seemed convincing, have been ruined by the occurrence of fresher evidence, and have been withdrawn. I have endeavoured to search for, and have stated, as fully as possible, the objections which may be urged to conclusions which are provisional, and at the mercy of criticism, and of fresh or neglected evidence.

The character of Mary, *son naturel*, as she says, or is made to say in the most incriminating Letter, is full of fascination, excellence and charm. Her terrible expiation has won the pity of gentle hearts, and sentiment has too often clouded reason, while reaction against sentiment has been no less mischievous. But History, the search for truth, should be as impersonal as the judge on the bench. I am not unaccustomed to be blamed for 'destroying our illusions,' but to cultivate and protect illusion has never been deemed the duty of the historian. Mary, at worst, and even admitting her guilt (guilt monstrous and horrible to contemplate) seems to have been a nobler nature than any of the persons most closely associated with her fortunes. She fell, if fall she did, like the Clytæmnestra to whom a contemporary poet compares her, under the almost demoniacal possession of passion; a possession so sudden, strange and overpowering that even her enemies attributed it to 'unlawful arts.'

I have again to acknowledge the almost, or quite, unparalleled kindness of Father Pollen in allowing me to use his materials. He found transcripts of what I style the 'Lennox MSS.' among

the papers of the late learned Father Stevenson, S.J. These he collated with the originals in the University Library at Cambridge. It is his intention, I understand, to publish the whole collection, which was probably put together for the use of Dr. Wilson, when writing, or editing, the 'Actio,' published with Buchanan's 'Detection.' Father Pollen has also read most of my proof-sheets, but he is not responsible for any of my provisional conclusions. I have also consulted, on various points, Mr. George Neilson, Dr. Hay Fleming, Mr. A. H. Millar, and others.

Miss Dorothy Alston made reduced drawings, omitting the figures, of the contemporary charts of Edinburgh, and of Kirk o' Field. Mr. F. Compton Price supplied the imitations of Mary's handwriting, and the facsimiles in Plates A B, B A, &c.

For leave to photograph and publish the portrait of Darnley and his brother I have to acknowledge the gracious permission of his Majesty, the King.

The Duke of Hamilton has kindly given permission to publish photographs of the Casket at Hamilton Palace (see Chapter XVIII.).

The Earl of Morton has been good enough to allow his admirable portraits of Mary (perhaps of 1575) and of the Regent Morton to be reproduced.

Mr. Oliphant, of Rossie, has placed at my service his portrait of Mary as a girl, a copy, probably by Sir John Medina, of a contemporary French likeness.

To the kindness of the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour and

Miss Balfour we owe the photographs of the famous tree at Whittingham, Mr. Balfour's seat, where Morton, Lethington, and Bothwell conspired to murder Darnley.

The Lennox Papers are in the Cambridge University Library.

The Suppressed Confessions of Hepburn of Bowton

Too late for notice in the body of this book, the following curious piece of evidence was observed by Father Ryan, S.J., in the Cambridge MS. of the deposition of Hepburn of Bowton. This kinsman and accomplice of Bothwell was examined on December 8, 1567, before Moray, Atholl, Kirkcaldy, Lindsay, and Bellenden, Lord Justice Clerk. The version of his confession put in at the Westminster Conference, December 1568, will be found in Anderson, ii. 183-188, and in Laing, ii. 256-259. The MS. is in Cotton Caligula, C.I. fol. 325. It is attested as a 'true copy' by Bellenden. But if we follow the Cambridge MS. it is *not* a true copy. A long passage, following 'and lay down with him,' at the end, is omitted. That passage I now cite:

'Farther this deponar sayis that he inquirit at my lord quhat securitie he had for it quhilk wes done, because their wes sic ane brute and murmo^{r} in the toun And my lord ansuerit that diuerse noblemen had subscrivit the deid with him And schew the same band[2] to the deponar, quhairat wes the subscriptionis of

[2] Bond.

the erles of huntlie, ergile, boithuile altogether, and the secretares subscriptioun far beneth the rest. And insafar as the deponar remembers this was the effect of it, it contenit sum friuose [frivolous?] and licht caussis aganis the king sic as hys behavio^{r} contrar the quene, quhilk band wes in ane of twa silver cofferis and wes in dunbar, and the deponar saw the same there the tyme that they wer thare after the quenis revissing And understandis that the band wes with the remanent letters, and putt in the castell be george dalgleis. Inquirit quha deuisit that the king suld ludge at the kirk of feild?

'Answeris S^{r} James balfo^{r} can better tell nor he And knew better and befoir the deponer yof. And quhen the Quene wes in glasgow my lord Boithuile send the deponar to S^{r} James balfo^{r} desiring that he wald cum and meit my lord at the kirk of feild To quhome Schir James ansuerit, "will my lord cum thair? gif he cum it wer gude he war quiet." And yit they met not at that place than nor at natyme thairefter to the deponers knawledge.

'Thair wes xiiii keyis quhilkis this deponer efter the murtho^{r} keist in the grevvell hoill [? quarrel-hoill, *i. e.* quarry hole] betuix the abbay and leith. And towardes the makers of the keyis they were maid betuix Leuestoun and S^{r} James balfo^{r} and thai twa can tell. Item deponis that Ilk ane that wer of the band and siclike the erle of Morton and Sy^{r} James balfo^{r} suld haif send twa men to the committing of the murther. And the erle boithuile declarit to the deponar are nyt or twa afore the murtho^{r} falland in talking

of thame that wer in the kingis chalmer My lord said that Sandy Durham wes ane gude fallowe and he wald wische that he weir out of the same.

'This is the trew copy, etc.'

Perhaps few will argue that this passage has been fraudulently inserted in the Cambridge MS. If not, Bellenden lied when he attested the mutilated deposition to be a true copy. His own autograph signature attests the Cambridge copy. Moray, who heard Bowton make his deposition, was a partner to the fraud. The portion of the evidence burked by Moray is corroborated, as regards the signatures of the band for Darnley's murder, by Ormistoun, much later (Dec. 13, 1573) in Laing, ii. 293. Ormistoun, however, probably by an error of memory, says that he saw what Bothwell affirmed to be the signature of Sir James Balfour, in addition to those spoken of by Bowton, namely Argyll, Bothwell, Huntly, and Lethington. This statement as to Balfour Bowton withdrew in his dying confession as published. Bowton's remark that Lethington's signature came 'far beneath the rest' sounds true. Space would be left above for the signatures of men of higher rank than the secretary.

Bowton saw the band at Dunbar (April-May, 1567, during Mary's detention there), 'in one of two silver coffers.' He only 'understands' that the band was 'with the remanent letters, and put in the Castle by George Dalgleish.' If 'the remanent letters' are the Casket Letters, and if Bowton, at Dunbar, had seen them with the band, and read them, his evidence would have been valuable

as to the Letters. But as things are, we have merely his opinion, or 'understanding,' that certain letters were kept with the band, as Drury, we know, asserted that it was in the Casket with the other papers, and was destroyed, while the Letters attributed to Mary 'were kept to be shown.' Of course, if this be true, Morton lied when he said that the contents of the Casket had neither been added to nor diminished.

Next, Bowton denied that, to his knowledge, Bothwell and Balfour met at the Kirk o' Field, while Mary was at Glasgow, or at any other time. If Bowton is right, and he was their go-between, Paris lied in his Deposition where he says that Bothwell and Sir James had passed a whole night in Kirk o' Field, while Mary was at Glasgow.[3]

Bowton's confession that Morton 'should have sent two men to the committing of the murder,' explains the presence of Archibald Douglas, Morton's cousin, with Binning, his man. These two represented Morton. Finally, Bowton's confession in the Cambridge MS. joins the copy of his confession put in at Westminster, on the point of the fourteen false keys of Kirk o' Field, thrown by Bowton into a gravel hole. Unless then the Cambridge MS. is rejected, the Lord Justice Clerk and Moray deliberately suppressed evidence which proved that Moray was allied with two of Darnley's murderers in prosecuting his sister for that crime. Such evidence, though extant, Moray, of course, dared not produce, but must burke at Westminster.

[3] Laing, ii. 284.

I have shown in the text (p. 144) that, even on Bowton's evidence as produced at Westminster, Moray was aware that Bothwell had allies among the nobles, but that, as far as the evidence declares, he asked no questions. But the Cambridge MS. proves his full knowledge, which he deliberately suppressed. The Cambridge MS. must either have been furnished to Lennox, before the sittings at Westminster; or must have been the original, or a copy of the original, later supplied to Dr. Wilson while preparing Buchanan's 'Detection,' the 'Actio,' and other documents for the press in November 1571.[4] It will be observed that when Lethington was accused of Darnley's murder, in September 1569, Moray could not well have prosecuted him to a conviction, as his friends, Atholl and Kirkcaldy, having been present at Bowton's examination, knew that Moray knew of Lethington's guilt, yet continued to be his ally. The Cambridge copy of the deposition of Hay of Tala contains no reference to the guilt of Morton or Lethington; naturally, for Morton was present at Hay's examination. Finally, the evidence of Binning, in 1581, shows that representatives of Lethington and Balfour, as well as of Morton, were present at the murder, as Bowton, in his suppressed testimony, says had been arranged.

It is therefore clear that Moray, in arraigning his sister with the aid of her husband's assassins, could suppress authentic evidence. Mary's apologists will argue that he was also capable of introducing evidence less than authentic.

[4] See Murdin, p. 57.

I
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

History is apt to be, and some think that it should be, a mere series of dry uncoloured statements. Such an event occurred, such a word was uttered, such a deed was done, at this date or the other. We give references to our authorities, to men who heard of the events, or even saw them when they happened. But we, the writer and the readers, *see* nothing: we only offer or accept bald and imperfect information. If we try to write history on another method, we become 'picturesque:' we are composing a novel, not striving painfully to attain the truth. Yet, when we know not the details; – the aspect of dwellings now ruinous; the hue and cut of garments long wasted into dust; the passing frown, or smile, or tone of the actors and the speakers in these dramas of life long ago; the clutch of Bothwell at his dagger's hilt, when men spoke to him in the street; the flush of Darnley's fair face as Mary and he quarrelled at Stirling before his murder – then we know not the real history, the real truth. Now and then such a detail of gesture or of change of countenance is recorded by an eyewitness, and brings us, for a moment, into more vivid contact with the past. But we could only know it, and judge the actors and their conduct, if we could see the personages in their costume as they lived, passing by in some magic mirror from scene to

scene. The stage, as in Schiller's 'Marie Stuart,' comes nearest to reality, if only the facts given by the poet were real; and next in vividness comes the novel, such as Scott's 'Abbot,' with its picture of Mary at Loch Leven, when she falls into an hysterical fit at the mention of Bastian's marriage on the night of Darnley's death. Far less intimate than these imaginary pictures of genius are the statements of History, dull when they are not 'picturesque,' and when they are 'picturesque,' sometimes prejudiced, inaccurate, and misleading.

We are to betake ourselves to the uninviting series of contradictory statements and of contested dates, and of disputable assertions, which are the dry bones of a tragedy like that of the 'Agamemnon' of Æschylus. Let us try first to make mental pictures of the historic people who play their parts on what is now a dimly lighted stage, but once was shone upon by the sun in heaven; by the stars of darkling nights on ways dimly discerned; by the candles of Holyrood, or of that crowded sick-room in Kirk o' Field, where Bothwell and the Lords played dice round the fated Darnley's couch; or by the flare of torches under which Mary rode down the Blackfriars Wynd and on to Holyrood.

The foremost person is the Queen, a tall girl of twenty-four, with brown hair, and sidelong eyes of red brown. Such are her sidelong eyes in the Morton portrait; such she bequeathed to her great-great-grandson, James, 'the King over the Water.' She was half French in temper, one of the proud bold Guises, by

her mother's side; and if not beautiful, she was so beguiling that Elizabeth recognised her magic even in the reports of her enemies.[5]

'This lady and Princess is a notable woman,' said Knollys; 'she showeth a disposition to speak much, to be bold, to be pleasant, and to be very familiar. She showeth a great desire to be avenged of her enemies, she showeth a readiness to expose herself to all perils in hope of victory, she delighteth much to hear of hardiness and valiance, commending by name all approved hardy men of her country, although they be her enemies, and concealeth no cowardice even in her friends.'

There was something 'divine,' Elizabeth said, in the face and manner which won the hearts of her gaolers in Loch Leven and in England. 'Heaven bless that sweet face!' cried the people in the streets as the Queen rode by, or swept along with the long train, the 'targetted tails' and 'stinking pride of women,' that Knox

[5] Among the mysteries which surround Mary, we should not reckon the colour of her hair! Just after her flight into England, her gaoler, at Carlisle, told Cecil that in Mary Seton the Queen had 'the finest busker of a woman's hair to be seen in any country. Yesterday and this day she did set such a curled hair upon the Queen, that was said to be a perewyke, that showed very delicately, and every other day she hath a new device of head dressing that setteth forth a woman gaily well.' Henceforth Mary varied the colour of her 'perewykes.' She had worn them earlier, but she wore them, at least at her first coming into England, for the good reason that, in her flight from Langside, she had her head shaved, probably for purposes of disguise. So we learn from Nau, her secretary. Mary was flying, in fact, as we elsewhere learn, from the fear of the fiery death at the stake, the punishment of husband-murder. Then, and then only, her nerve broke down, like that of James VIII. at Montrose; of Prince Charles after Culloden; of James VII. when he should have ridden with Dundee to the North and headed the clans.

denounced.

She was gay, as when Randolph met her, in no more state than a burgess's wife might use, in the little house of St. Andrews, hard by the desecrated Cathedral. She could be madly mirthful, dancing, or walking the black midnight streets of Edinburgh, masked, in male apparel, or flitting 'in homely attire,' said her enemies, about the Market Cross in Stirling. She loved, at sea, 'to handle the boisterous cables,' as Buchanan tells. Pursuing her brother, Moray, on a day of storm, or hard on the doomed Huntly's track among the hills and morasses of the North; or galloping through the red bracken of the October moors, and the hills of the robbers, to Hermitage; her energy outwore the picked warriors in her company. At other times, in a fascinating languor, she would lie long abed, receiving company in the French fashion, waited on by her Maries, whose four names 'are four sweet symphonies,' Mary Seton and Mary Beaton, Mary Fleming and Mary Livingstone. To the Council Board she would bring her woman's work, embroidery of silk and gold. She was fabled to have carried pistols at her saddle-bow in war, and she excelled in matches of archery and pall-mall.

Her costumes, when she would be queenly, have left their mark on the memory of men: the ruff from which rose the snowy neck; the brocaded bodice, with puffed and jewelled sleeves and stomacher; the diamonds, gifts of Henri II. or of Diane; the rich pearls that became the spoil of Elizabeth; the brooches enamelled with sacred scenes, or scenes from fable. Many of her jewels

– the ruby tortoise given by Riccio; the enamel of the mouse and the ensnared lioness, passed by Lethington as a token into her dungeon of Loch Leven; the diamonds bequeathed by her to one whom she might not name; the red enamelled wedding-ring, the gift of Darnley; the diamond worn in her bosom, the betrothal present of Norfolk – are, to our fancy, like the fabled star-ruby of Helen of Troy, that dripped with blood-gouts which vanished as they fell. Riccio, Darnley, Lethington, Norfolk, the donors of these jewels, they were all to die for her, as Bothwell, too, was to perish, the giver of the diamond carried by Paris, the recipient of the black betrothal ring enamelled with bones and tears. 'Her feet go down to death,' her feet that were so light in the dance, 'her steps take hold on hell… Her lips drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.' The lips that dropped as honeycomb, the laughing mouth, could wildly threaten, and vainly rage or beseech, when she was entrapped at Carberry; or could waken pity in the sternest Puritan when, half-clad, her bosom bare, her loose hair flowing, she wailed from her window to the crowd of hostile Edinburgh.

She was of a high impatient spirit: we seem to recognise her in an anecdote told by the Black Laird of Ormistoun, one of Darnley's murderers, in prison before his execution. He had been warned by his brother, in a letter, that he was suspected of the crime, and should 'get some good way to purge himself.' He showed the letter to Bothwell, who read it, and gave it to Mary.

She glanced at it, handed it to Huntly, 'and thereafter turnit unto me, and turnit her back, and gave *ane thring* with her shoulder, and passit away, and spake nothing to me.' But that 'thring' spoke much of Mary's mood, unrepentant, contemptuous, defiant.

Mary's gratitude was not of the kind proverbial in princes. In September 1571, when the Ridolfi plot collapsed, and Mary's household was reduced, her sorest grief was for Archibald Beaton, her usher, and little Willie Douglas, who rescued her from Loch Leven. They were to be sent to Scotland, which meant death to both, and she pleaded pitifully for them. To her servants she wrote: 'I thank God, who has given me strength to endure, and I pray Him to grant you the like grace. To you will your loyalty bring the greatest honour, and whensoever it pleases God to set me free, I will never fail you, but reward you according to my power… Pray God that you be true men and constant, to such He will never deny his grace, and for you, John Gordon and William Douglas, I pray that He will inspire your hearts. I can no more. Live in friendship and holy charity one with another, bearing each other's imperfections… You, William Douglas, be assured that the life which you hazarded for me shall never be destitute while I have one friend alive.'

In a trifling transaction she writes: 'Rather would I pay twice over, than injure or suspect any man.'

In the long lament of the letters written during her twenty years of captivity, but a few moods return and repeat themselves, like phrases in a fugue. Vain complaints, vain hopes, vain

intrigues with Spain, France, the Pope, the Guises, the English Catholics, succeed each other with futile iteration. But always we hear the note of loyalty even to her humblest servants, of sleepless memory of their sacrifices for her, of unstinting and generous gratitude. Such was the Queen's 'natural,' *mon naturel*: with this character she faced the world: a lady to live and die for: and many died.

This woman, sensitive, proud, tameless, fierce, and kind, was browbeaten by the implacable Knox: her priests were scourged and pilloried, her creed was outraged every day; herself scolded, preached at, insulted; her every plan thwarted by Elizabeth. Mary had reason enough for tears even before her servant was slain almost in her sight by her witless husband and the merciless Lords. She could be gay, later, dancing and hunting, but it may well be that, after this last and worst of cruel insults, her heart had now become hard as the diamond; and that she was possessed by the evil spirits of loathing, and hatred, and longing for revenge. It had not been a hard heart, but a tender; capable of sorrow for slaves at the galley oars. After her child's birth, when she was holiday-making at Alloa, according to Buchanan, with Bothwell and his gang of pirates, she wrote to the Laird of Abercairnie, bidding him be merciful to a poor woman and her 'company of puir bairnis' whom he had evicted from their 'kindly rowme,' or little croft.

Her more than masculine courage her enemies have never denied. Her resolution was incapable of despair; 'her last word

should be that of a Queen.' Her plighted promise she revered, but, in such an age, a woman's weapon was deceit.

She was the centre and pivot of innumerable intrigues. The fierce nobles looked on her as a means for procuring lands, office, and revenge on their feudal enemies. To the fiercer ministers she was an idolatress, who ought to die the death, and, meanwhile, must be thwarted and insulted. To France, Spain, and Austria she was a piece in the game of diplomatic chess. To the Pope she seemed an instrument that might win back both Scotland and England for the Church, while the English Catholics regarded her as either their lawful or their future Queen. To Elizabeth she was, naturally, and inevitably, and, in part, by her own fault, a deadly rival, whatever feline caresses might pass between them: gifts of Mary's heart, in a heart-shaped diamond; Elizabeth's diamond 'like a rock,' a rock in which was no refuge. Yet Mary was of a nature so large and unsuspicious that, on the strength of a ring and a promise, she trusted herself to Elizabeth, contrary to the advice of her staunchest adherents. She was no natural dissembler, and with difficulty came to understand that others could be false. Her sense of honour might become perverted, but she had a strong native sense of honour.

One thing this woman wanted, a master. Even before Darnley and she were wedded, at least publicly, Randolph wrote, 'All honour that may be attributed unto any man by a wife, he hath it wholly and fully.' In her authentic letters to Norfolk, when, a captive in England, she regarded herself as betrothed to him,

we find her adopting an attitude of submissive obedience. The same tone pervades the disputed Casket Letters, to Bothwell, and is certainly in singular consonance with the later, and genuine epistles to Norfolk. But the tone – if the Casket Letters are forged – may have been borrowed from what was known of her early submission to Darnley.

The second *dramatis persona* is Darnley, 'The Young Fool.' Concerning Darnley but little is recorded in comparison with what we know of Mary. He was the son, by the Earl of Lennox, a royal Stewart, of that daughter whom Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII., and widow of James IV., bore to her second husband, the Earl of Angus. Darnley's father regarded himself as next to the Scottish crown, for the real nearest heir, the head of the Hamiltons, the Duke of Chatelherault, Lennox chose to consider as illegitimate. After playing a double and dishonest part in the troubled years following the death of James V., Lennox retired to England with his wife, a victim of the suspicions of Elizabeth.[6] The education of his son, Henry, Lord Darnley, seems to have been excellent, as far as the intellect and the body are concerned. The letter which, as a child of nine, he wrote to Mary Tudor, speaking of a work of his own, 'The New Utopia,' is in the new 'Roman' hand, carried to the perfection of copperplate. The Lennox MSS. say that 'the Queen was stricken with the dart of love by the comliness of his sweet behaviour,

[6] The papers used by Lennox in getting up his indictment against Mary are new materials, which we often have occasion to cite.

personage, wit, and vertuous qualities, as well in languages[7] and lettered sciencies, as also in the art of music, dancing, and playing on instruments.' When his murderers had left his room at midnight, his last midnight, his chamber-child begged him to play, while a psalm was sung, but his hand, he replied, was out for the lute, so say the Lennox Papers. Physically he was 'a comely Prince of a fair and large stature, pleasant in countenance … well exercised in martial pastimes upon horseback as any Prince of that age.' The Spanish Ambassador calls him 'an amiable youth.' But it is plain that 'the long lad,' the *gentil hutaudeau*, with his girlish bloom, and early tendency to fulness of body, was a spoiled child. His mother, a passionate intriguer, kept this before him, that, as great-grandson of Henry VII., and as cousin of Mary Stuart, he should unite the two crowns. There were Catholics enough in England to flatter the pride of a future king, though now in exile. This Prince *in partibus*, like his far-away descendant, Prince Charles Edward, combined a show of charming manners, when he chose to charm, with an arrogant and violent petulance, when he deemed it safe to be insulting. At his first arrival in Scotland he won golden opinions, 'his courteous dealing with all men is well spoken of.' As his favour with Mary waxed he 'dealt blows where he knew that they would be taken;' he is said to have drawn his dagger on an official who brought him a disappointing message, and his foolish freedom of tongue gave Moray the alarm. It was soon prophesied that he

[7] Mr. Henderson doubts if Darnley knew French.

'could not continue long.' 'To all honest men he is intolerable, and almost forgetful of her already, that has adventured so much for his sake. What shall become of her or what life with him she shall lead, that already taketh so much upon him as to control and command her, I leave it to others to think.' So Randolph, the English Ambassador, wrote as early as May, 1565. She was 'blinded, transported, carried I know not whither or which way, to her own confusion and destruction:' words of omen that were fulfilled.

Whether Elizabeth let Darnley go to Scotland merely for Mary's entanglement, whether Mary fell in love with the handsome accomplished lad (as Randolph seems to prove) or not, are questions then, and now, disputed. The Lennox Papers, declaring that she was smitten by the arrow of love; and her own conduct, at first, make it highly probable that she entertained for the *gentil hutaudeau* a passion, or a passionate caprice.

Darnley, at least, acted like a new chemical agent in the development of Mary's character. She had been singularly long-suffering; she had borne the insults and outrages of the extreme Protestants; she had leaned on her brother, Moray, and on Lethington; following or even leading these advisers to the ruin of Huntly, her chief coreligionist. Though constantly professing, openly to Knox, secretly to the Pope, her desire to succour the ancient Church, she was obviously regarded, in Papal circles, as slack in the work. She had been pliant, she had endured the long calculated delays of Elizabeth, as to her marriage, with

patience; but, so soon as Darnley crossed her path, she became resolute, even reckless. Despite the opposition, interested, or religious, or based on the pretext of religion, which Moray and his allies offered, Mary wedded Darnley. She found him a petulant, ambitious boy; sullen, suspicious, resentful, swayed by the ambition to be a king in earnest, but too indolent in affairs for the business of a king.

At tennis, with Riccio, or while exercising his great horses, his favourite amusement, Darnley was pining to use his jewelled dagger. In the feverish days before the deed it is probable that he kept his courage screwed up by the use of stimulants, to which he was addicted. That he devoted himself to loose promiscuous intrigue injurious to his health, is not established, though, when her child was born, Mary warned Darnley that the babe was 'only too much his son,' perhaps with a foreboding of hereditary disease. A satirist called Darnley 'the leper:' leprosy being confounded with 'la grosse vérole.' Mary, who had fainting fits, was said to be epileptic.

Darnley, according to Lennox, represented himself as pure in this regard, nor have we any valid evidence to the contrary. But his word was absolutely worthless.

Outraged and harassed, broken, at last, in health, in constant pain, expressing herself in hysterical outbursts of despair and desire for death, Mary needed no passion for Bothwell to make her long for freedom from the young fool. From his sick-bed in Glasgow, as we shall see, he sent, by a messenger, a cutting verbal

taunt to the Queen; so his own friends declare, they who call Darnley 'that innocent lamb.' It is not wonderful if, in an age of treachery and revenge, the character of Mary now broke down. 'I would not do it to him for my own revenge. My heart bleeds at it,' she says to Bothwell, in the Casket Letter II., if that was written by her. But, whatever her part in it, the deed was done.

Of Bothwell, the third protagonist in the tragedy of Three, we have no portrait, and but discrepant descriptions. They who saw his body, not yet wholly decayed, in Denmark, reported that he must have been 'an ugly Scot,' with red hair, mixed with grey before he died. Much such another was the truculent Morton.[8] Born in 1536 or 1537, Bothwell was in the flower of his age, about thirty, when Darnley perished. He was certainly not old enough to have been Mary's father, as Sir John Skelton declared, for he was not six years her senior. His father died in 1556, and Bothwell came young into the Hepburn inheritance of impoverished estates, high offices, and wild reckless blood. According to Buchanan, Bothwell, in early youth, was brought up at the house of his great-uncle, Patrick Hepburn, Bishop of Moray, who certainly was a man of profligate life. It is highly probable that Bothwell was educated in France.

'Blockish' or not, Bothwell had the taste of a bibliophile. One of two books from his library, well bound, and tooled with his name and arms, is in the collection of the University of Edinburgh. Another was in the Gibson Craig Library. The

[8] M. Jusserand has recently seen the corpse of Bothwell. Appendix A.

works are a tract of Valturin, on Military Discipline (Paris, 1555, folio), and French translations of martial treatises attributed to Vegetius, Sextus Julius, and Ælian, with a collection of anecdotes of warlike affairs (Paris, 1556, folio). The possession of books like these, in such excellent condition, is no proof of doltishness. Moreover, Bothwell appears to have read his 'CXX Histoires concernans le faite guerre.' The evidence comes to us from a source which discredits the virulent rhetoric of Buchanan's ally.

It was the cue of Mary's foes to represent Bothwell as an ungainly, stupid, cowardly, vicious monster: because, he being such a man, what a wretch must the Queen be who could love him! 'Which love, whoever saw not, and yet hath seen him, will perhaps think it incredible… But yet here there want no causes, for there was in them both a likeness, if not of beauty or outward things, nor of virtues, yet of most extream vices.'[9] Buchanan had often celebrated, down to December 1566, Mary's extreme virtues. To be sure his poem, recited shortly before Darnley's death, may have been written almost as early as James's birth, in readiness for the feast at his baptism, and before Mary's intrigue with Bothwell could have begun. In any case, to prove Bothwell's cowardice, some ally of Buchanan's cites his behaviour at Carberry Hill, where he wishes us to believe that Bothwell showed the white feather of Mary's 'pretty venereous pidgeon.' As a witness, he cites du Croc, the French Ambassador, an aged and sagacious man. To du Croc he has appealed, to

[9] *Actio*, probably by Dr. Wilson, appended to Buchanan's *Detection*.

du Croc he shall go. That Ambassador writes: 'He' (Bothwell) 'told me that there must be no more parley, for he saw that the enemy was approaching, and had already crossed the burn. He said that, if I wished to resemble the man who tried to arrange a treaty between the forces of Scipio and Hannibal, their armies being ready to join in battle, like the two now before us, and who failed, and, wishing to remain neutral, took a point of vantage, and beheld the best sport that ever he saw in his life, why then I should act like that man, and would greatly enjoy the spectacle of a good fight.' Bothwell's memory was inaccurate, or du Croc has misreported his anecdote, but he was certainly both cool and classical on an exciting occasion.

Du Croc declined the invitation; he was not present when Bothwell refused to fight a champion of the Lords, but he goes on: 'I am obliged to say that I saw a great leader, speaking with great confidence, and leading his forces boldly, gaily, and skilfully… I admired him, for he saw that his foes were resolute, he could not be sure of the loyalty of half of his own men, and yet he was quite unmoved.'[10] Bothwell, then, was neither dolt, lout, nor coward, as Buchanan's ally wishes us to believe, for the purpose of disparaging the taste of a Queen, Buchanan's pupil, whose praises he had so often sung.

In an age when many gentlemen and ladies could not sign their names, Bothwell wrote, and wrote French, in a firm,

[10] Teulet, ii. p. 176. Edinburgh, June 17, 1567.

yet delicate Italic hand, of singular grace and clearness.[11] His enemies accused him of studying none but books of Art Magic in his youth, and he may have shared the taste of the great contemporary mathematician, Napier of Merchistoun, the inventor of Logarithms. Both Mary's friends and enemies, including the hostile Lords in their proclamations, averred that Bothwell had won her favour by unlawful means, philtres, witchcraft, or what we call Hypnotism. Such beliefs were universal: Ruthven, in his account of Riccio's murder, tells us that he gave Mary a ring, as an antidote to poison (not that *he* believed in it), and that both she and Moray took him for a sorcerer. On a charge of sorcery did Moray later burn the Lyon Herald, Sir William Stewart, probably basing the accusation on a letter in which Sir William confessed to having consulted a prophet, perhaps Napier of Merchistoun, the father, not the inventor of Logarithms.[12] Quite possibly Bothwell may really have studied the Black Art in Cornelius Agrippa and similar authors. In any case it is plain that, as regards culture, the author of *Les Affaires du Conte de Boduel*, the man familiar with the Court of France, where he had held command in the Scots Guards, and had probably known Ronsard and Brantôme, must have been a *rara avis* of culture among the nobles at Holyrood. So far, then, Mary's love for him, if love she entertained, was the reverse of 'incredible.' It did not need to be explained by a common

[11] See a facsimile in Teulet, ii. 256.

[12] Appendix B. 'Burning of the Lyon King at Arms.'

possession of 'extreme vices.' The author, as usual, overstates his case, and proves too much: Lesley admits that Bothwell was handsome, an opinion emphatically contradicted by Brantôme.

Bothwell had the charm of recklessness to an unexampled degree. He was fierce, passionate, unyielding, strong, and, in the darkest of Mary's days, had been loyal. He had won for her what Knollys tells us that she most prized, victory. A greater contrast could not be to the false fleeting Darnley, the bully with 'a heart of wax.' In him Mary had more than enough of bloom and youthful graces: she could master him, and she longed for a master. If then she loved Bothwell, her love, however wicked, was not unnatural or incredible. He had been loved by many women, and had ruined all of them.

Among the other persons of the play, Moray is foremost, Mary's natural brother, the son of her whom James V. loved best, and, it was said, still dreamed of while wooing a bride in France. Moray is an enigma. History sees him, as in Lethington's phrase, 'looking through his fingers,' looking thus at Riccio's and at Darnley's murders. These fingers hide the face. He was undeniably a sound Protestant: only for a brief while, in Mary's early reign, was he sundered from Knox. In war he was, as he aimed at being, 'a Captain in Israel,' cool, courageous, and skilled. That he was extremely acquisitive is certain. Born a royal bastard, and trained for the Church, he clung as 'Commendator' to the Church's property which he held as a layman. His enormous possessions in land, collected partly by means that

sailed close to the wind, partly from the grants of Mary, excited the rash words of Darnley, that they were 'too large.'

An early incident in Moray's life seems characteristic. The battle of Pinkie was fought in 1547, when he was sixteen. Among the slain was the Master of Buchan, the heir-apparent of the Earl of Buchan. He left a child, Christian Stewart, who was now heiress of the earldom. In January 1550, young Lord James Stewart, though Prior of St. Andrews, contracted himself in marriage with the little girl. The old earl was extravagant, perhaps more or less insane, and was deep in debt. His lands were mortgaged. In 1556 the Lord James bought and secured from the Regent, Mary of Guise, the right of redemption. In 1562, being all powerful now with Mary, he secured a grant of the 'ward, non-entries, and reliefs of the whole estates of the earldom of Buchan.' Now, by the proclamation made, as usual, before Pinkie fight, all these were left by the Crown, free, to the heirs of such as might fall in the battle. Therefore they ought to have appertained to Christian Stewart, whom Moray had not married, her grandfather being dead. Moray secured everything to himself, by charters from the Crown. The unlucky Christian went on living at Loch Leven, with Moray's mother, Lady Douglas. In February 1562 Moray wedded Agnes Keith, daughter of the Earl Marischal. His brother, apparently without his knowledge, then married Christian. Moray wrote a letter to his own mother complaining of this marriage as an act of treachery. The Old Man peeps out through the godly and

respectful style of this epistle. Moray speaks of Christian as 'that innocent;' perhaps she was not remarkable for intellect. He adds that whoever tries to take from him the lady's estates will have to pass over 'his belly.' And, indeed, he retained the possessions. The whole transaction does seem to savour of worldliness, to be regretted in so good a man.

Moray continued, after he was pardoned for his rebellion, to add estate to estate. He was a pensioner of England; from France he received valuable presents. His widow endeavoured to retain the diamonds which Mary had owned, and wished to leave attached to the Scottish crown. His ambition was probably more limited than his covetousness, and the suspicion that he aimed at being king, though natural, was baseless. While he must have known, at least as well as Mary, the guilt of Morton, Lethington, Balfour, Bothwell, and Argyll, he associated familiarly with them, before he left Scotland prior to Mary's marriage with Bothwell, and he used Bothwell's accomplices, including the Bishop who married Bothwell to Mary, in his attack on the character of his sister. Whether he betrayed Norfolk, or not, was a question between David Hume and Dr. Robertson. If to report Norfolk's private conversation to Elizabeth is to betray,[13] Moray was a traitor, and did what Lethington scorned to do. But Moray's most remarkable quality was caution. He always had an *alibi*. He knew of Riccio's murder – and came to Edinburgh next day. He left Edinburgh in the morning, some sixteen hours before

[13] The private report is in the Lennox MSS.

the explosion of Kirk o' Field. He left Edinburgh for England and France, twelve days before the nobles signed the document upholding Bothwell's innocence, and urging him to marry the Queen. He allowed Elizabeth to lie, in his presence, and about her encouragement of his rebellion, to the French Ambassador. His own account of his first interview with his sister, in prison at Loch Leven, shows him as an adept in menace cruelly suspended over her helpless head. The account of Mary's secretary, Nau, is much less unfavourable to Moray than his own, for obvious reasons.

As Regent he was bold, energetic, and ruthless: the suspicion of his intention to give up a suppliant and fugitive aroused the tolerant ethics of the Border. A strong, patient, cautious man, capable of deep reserve, in his family relations, financial matters apart, austerely moral, Moray would have made an excellent king, but as a Queen's brother he was most dangerous, when not permitted to be all powerful. He could not have rescued Darnley, or saved Mary from herself, without risks which a Knox or a Craig would certainly have faced, but which no secular leader in Scotland would have dreamed of encountering. Did he wish to save the doomed prince? A precise Puritan, he was by no means like a conscience among the warring members of the body politic. Mary rejoiced at the news of his murder, pensioned the assassin, and, of all people, chose an Archbishop as her confidant.

Reviled by Mary's literary partisans, Moray to Mr. Froude

seemed 'noble' and 'stainless.' He was a man of his time, a time when every traitor or assassin had 'God' and 'honour' for ever on his lips. At the hypocrisies and falsehoods of his party, deeds of treachery and blood, Moray 'looked through his fingers.'

Infinitely the most fascinating character in the plot was William Maitland, the younger, of Lethington. The charm which he exercised over his contemporaries, from Mary herself to diplomatists like Randolph, and men of the sword like Kirkcaldy of Grange, has not yet exhausted itself. Readers of Sir John Skelton's interesting book, 'Maitland of Lethington,' must observe, if they know the facts, that, in presence of Lethington, Sir John is like 'birds whom the charmer serpent draws.' He is an advocate of Mary, but of Mary as a 'charming sinner.' By Lethington he is dominated: he will scarcely admit that there is a stain on his scutcheon, a scutcheon, alas! smirched and defaced. Could a man of to-day hold an hour's converse with a man of that age, he would choose Lethington. He was behind all the scenes: he held the threads of all the plots; he made all the puppets dance at his will. Yet by birth he was merely the son of the good and wise poet and essayist, Sir Richard Lethington, laird of a rugged tower and of lands in Lauderdale, *pastorum loca vasta*. He was born about 1525, had studied in France, and was a man of classical culture, without a touch of pedantry. As early as 1555, we find him arguing after supper with Knox, on the lawfulness of bowing down in the House of Rimmon, attending the Mass. Knox had the last word, for Lethington was

usually tactful; in argument Knox was a babe in the hands of the amateur theologian. Appointed Secretary to Mary of Guise, in the troubled years of the Congregation, Lethington deserted her and joined the Lords. He negotiated for them with Cecil and Elizabeth, and almost to the last he was true to one idea, the union of the crowns of England and Scotland in peace and amity.

Through all the windings of his policy that idea governed him if not thwarted by personal considerations, as at the last. Before Mary's arrival in Scotland he hastened to make his peace with her, and her peace and trust she readily granted. Lethington was the spoiled child of the political world, 'the flower of the wits of Scotland,' as Elizabeth styled him; was reckoned indispensable, was petted, caressed, and forgiven. He not only withstood Knox, in the interests of religious toleration, but he met him with a smile, with the weapons of *persiflage*, which riddled and rankled in the vanity of the Reformer. Lethington was modern to the finger-tips, a man of to-day, moving among the bravos, and using the poisoned tools, of an age of violence and perfidy.

Allied by marriage to the Earl of Atholl, in hours of peril he placed the Tay and the Pass of Killiecrankie between himself and the Law.

From the time of his restoration to Mary's favour after Riccio's murder, his part in the obscure intrigue of Darnley's murder, indeed all his future course, is a mystery. Being now over forty he had long wooed and just before the murder had won the beautiful Mary Fleming, of all the Four Maries the

dearest to the Queen. His letter to Cecil on his love affair is a charming interlude. 'He is no more fit for her than I to be a page,' says the brawny, grizzled, Kirkcaldy of Grange. His devotion is often ridiculed by perhaps envious acquaintances. But, from September 20, 1566, Lethington was deep in every scheme against Darnley. He certainly signed the murder 'band.' He was with Mary at Stirling (April 22-23, 1567) when, if he did not know that Bothwell meant to carry her off (and perhaps he really did not know), he was alone in his ignorance among the inner circle of politicians. Yet he disliked the marriage, and was hated by Bothwell. On the day of Mary's *enlèvement*, Bothwell took Lethington, threatened him, and, but for Mary, would probably have slain him. Passive as to herself, she defended the Secretary with royal courage. Days darkened round the Queen, the nobles rose in arms. Lethington, about June 7, fled first to Livingstone's house of Callendar, then joined Atholl and the enemies of the Queen. We shall later attempt to unfold the secret springs of his tortuous and fatal policy.

Lethington had been the Ahithophel of the age. 'And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God.' But the Lord 'turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.' He wrought against Mary, just after she saved his life from the dagger of Bothwell, some secret inexpiable offence, besides public injuries. Fear of her vengeance, for she knew something fatal to him, drove him into her party when her cause was desperate. He escaped the

gallows by a natural death; he had long been smitten by creeping paralysis. Mary hated him dead, as after his betrayal of her she had loathed him living.

Mary was sorely bested, then, between the Young Fool, the Furious Man, the Puritan brother, and Michael Wylie (Machiavelli) as the Scots nicknamed Lethington. She was absolutely alone. There was no man whom she could trust. On every hand were known rebels, half pardoned, half reconciled. Feuds, above all that of her husband and his clan, the Lennox Stewarts, with the nearest heirs of the crown, the Hamiltons, broke out eternally. The Protestants hated her: the Preachers longed to drag her down: the English Ambassadors were hostile spies. France was far away, the Queen Mother was her enemy: her kindred, the Guises, were cold or powerless. She saw only one strong man who had been loyal, one protector who had served her mother, and saved herself. That man was Bothwell.

Most inscrutable of the persons in the play is Bothwell's wife, Lady Jane Gordon, a daughter of Huntly, the dead and ruined Cock of the North. If we may accept the Casket Sonnets, Lady Jane, a girl of twenty, resisted her brother's scheme to wed her to Bothwell. She preferred some one whom the sonnet calls 'a troublesome fool,' and a note, in the Lennox Papers, informs us that her first love was Ogilvy of Boyne, who consoled himself with Mary Beaton. Still following the sonnets, we learn that the young Lady Bothwell dressed ill, but won her wild husband's heart by literary love letters plagiarised from 'some illustrious

author.' The existing letters of the lady, written after the years of storm, are businesslike, and deal with business. She consented to her divorce for a valuable consideration in lands which she held till her death, in the reign of Charles I. According to general opinion, Bothwell, as we shall see, greatly preferred her to the Queen, and continued to live with her after the divorce. Lady Bothwell kept the dispensation which enabled her to marry Bothwell, though he was divorced from her for the want of it. She married the Earl of Sutherland in 1573, and, after his death, returned *à ses premiers amours*, wedding her old true love who had wooed her in her girlhood, Ogilvy of Boyne. Their conversation must have been rich in curious reminiscences. The loves and hatreds of their youth were extinct; the wild hearts of Bothwell, Mary, Mary Beaton, Lethington, Darnley, and the rest, had long ceased to beat, and these two were left, Darby and Joan, alone in a new world.

II
THE MINOR CHARACTERS

Having sketched the chief actors in this tragedy, we may glance at the players of subordinate parts. They were such men as are apt to be bred when a religious and social Revolution has shaken the bases of morality, when acquiescence in theological party cries confers the title of 'godly:' when the wealth of a Church is to be won by cunning or force, and when feudal or clan loyalty to a chief is infinitely more potent than fidelity to king, country, and the fundamental laws of morality. The Protestants, the 'godly,' accused the Idolaters (the Catholics) of throwing their sins off their shoulders in the confessional, and beginning anew. But the godly, if naturally ruffians, consoled and cleared themselves by repentances on the scaffold, and one felt assured, after a life of crime, that he 'should sup with God that night.'

The Earl of Morton is no minor character in the history of Scotland, but his part is relatively subordinate in that of Mary Stuart. The son of the most accomplished and perfidious scoundrel of the past generation, Sir George Douglas, brother of Angus the brother-in-law of Henry VIII., Morton had treachery in his blood. His father had alternately betrayed England of which he was a pensioner, and Scotland of which he was a subject. By a perverse ingenuity of shame, he had used the sacred

Douglas Heart, the cognisance of the House, the achievement granted to the descendants of the Good Lord James, as a mark to indicate what passages in his treasonable letters might be relied on by his English employers. In Morton's father and uncle had lived on the ancient inappeasable feud between Douglases and Stewarts, between the Nobles and the Crown. It was a feud stained by murder under trust, by betrayal in the field, and perfidy in the closet. Morton was heir to the feud of his family, and to the falseness. When the Reformation broke out, and the Wars of the Congregation against Idolatry, Morton wavered long, but at length joined the Protestants when they were certain of English assistance. Henceforth he was one of Mr. Froude's 'small gallant band' of Reformers, and, as such, was hostile to Mary. His sanctimonious snuffle is audible still, in his remark to Throckmorton at the time when the Englishman probably saved the life of the Queen from the Lords. Throckmorton asked to be allowed to visit Mary in prison: 'The Earl Morton answered me that shortly I should hear from them, but the day being destined, as I did see, to the Communion, continual preaching, and common prayer, they could not be absent, nor attend matters of the world, but first they must seek the matters of God, and take counsel of Him who could best direct them.'

A red-handed murderer, living in open adultery with the widow of Captain Cullen, whom he had hanged, and daily consorting with murderers like his kinsman, Archibald Douglas, the Parson of Glasgow, Morton approached the Divine

Mysteries. His private life was notoriously profligate; he added avarice to his other and more genial peccadilloes. He intruded on the Kirk the Tulchan Bishops, who were mere filters, or conduits, through which ecclesiastical wealth flowed to the State. Yet he was godly: he was the foe of Idolaters, and the Kirk, while deploring his excesses, cast on him no unfavourable eye. He held the office of Chancellor, and, during the raids and risings which were protests against Darnley's marriage with Mary, he was in touch with both parties, but did not commit himself. About February, 1566, there seems to have been a purpose to deprive him of the Seals. He seized the moment to join hands with Darnley in antagonism to Riccio: he and his Douglases, George and Archibald, helped to organise the murder of the favourite: Morton was then driven into England. At Christmas, 1566, after signing a band, not involving murder, against Darnley, he was pardoned, returned, was made acquainted with the scheme for killing Darnley, but, he declared, declined to join without Mary's written warrant. His friend and retainer, Archibald Douglas, was present at the laying of gunpowder in Kirk o' Field. Morton presently signed a band promising to aid and abet Bothwell, but instantly joined the nobles who overthrew him. His retainers discovered the fatal Casket full of Mary's alleged letters to Bothwell, and he was one of the most ardent of her prosecutors. Vengeance came upon him, fourteen years later, from Stewart, the brother-in-law of John Knox.

In person, Morton was indeed one of the Red Douglases. A

good portrait at Dalmahoy represents him with a common but grim set of features, and reddish tawny hair, under a tall black Puritanic hat.

A jackal constantly attendant on Morton was his kinsman, Archibald Douglas, a son of Douglas of Whittingham. In Archibald we see the 'strugforlifeur' (as M. Daudet renders Darwin) of the period. A younger son, he was apparently educated for the priesthood, before the Reformation. In 1565, he was made 'Parson of Douglas,' drawing the revenues, and also was an Extraordinary Lord of Session. Involved in Riccio's murder, he fled to France (where he may have been educated), but returned to negotiate Morton's pardon. He was go-between to Morton, Bothwell, and Lethington, in the affair of Darnley's murder, and was present at, or just before, the explosion, losing one of his embroidered velvet dress shoes, in which he had perhaps been dancing at Bastian's marriage masque. He was also a spectator of the opening of the Casket (June 21, 1567), and so zealous and useful against Mary, that, after her defeat at Langside, he received the forfeited lands of the Laird of Corstorphine, near Edinburgh. In 1568 he became an Ordinary, or regular Judge of the Court of Session, and, later obtained the parish of Glasgow. The messenger of the Kirk, who came to bid him prepare his first sermon, found him playing cards with the Laird of Bargany. He had previously been plucked in the examination for the ministry: this was his second chance. Being examined he declined to attempt the Greek Testament;

and requested another minister to pray for him, 'for I am not used to pray.' His sermon was not thought savoury. After Morton became Regent, Archibald, for money, took the Queen's side, and is accused of an ungrateful and unclerical scheme to murder his cousin, Morton. Just for the devilry of it, and a little money, he was intriguing, a traitor to Morton, his benefactor, with Mary's party, and also acting as a spy for Drury and the English. He was, later, restored to his place on the Bench of Scottish Themis, crowded as it was with assassins, but he fled to England when Morton was accused and dragged down by Stewart of Ochiltree (1581). Morton, in his dying declaration, remembered his grudge against Archibald or for some other reason freely confessed *his* iniquities. Archibald had distinguished himself as a forger of letters intended to aid Morton, but was denounced by his own brother, also a judge, Douglas of Whittingham. The later career of this accomplished gentleman was a series of treacherous betrayals of Mary. In England his charm and accomplishments recommended him to the friendship of Fulke Greville, who did not penetrate his character. His letters reveal a polished irony. He was for some time ambassador of James VI. to Elizabeth, was again accused of forgery, and, probably, ended his active career in rural retirement. History sees Archibald in the pulpit, a Stickit Minister: on the Bench administering justice: hobbling hurriedly from Kirk o' Field in one shoe; watching the bursting open of the silver Casket; playing cards, spying, dancing, and winning hearts, and forging letters: a versatile man of considerable charm

and knowledge of the world. His life, after 1581, is a varied but always sordid chapter of romance.

A grimmer and a godlier man is Mr. John Wood, secretary of Moray, with whom he had been in France, an austere person, a rebuker of Mary's dances and frivolity. He, too, was a Lord of Session, and was wont to spur Moray on against Idolaters. We shall find him very busy in managing the Casket Letters. He was slain by young Forbes of Reres, the son of the corpulent Lady Reres, rumoured to have been the complacent confidant of Mary's amour with Bothwell. Reres had certainly no reason to love Mr. John Wood. George Buchanan, too, is on the scene, the Latin poet, the Latin historian, who sang of and libelled his Queen, his pupil. Old now, and a devoted partisan of the Lennoxes, no man contributed more to the cause of Mary's innocence than Buchanan, so grossly inaccurate and amusingly inconsistent are his various indictments of her behaviour. 'He spak and wret as they that wer about him for the tym infourmed him,' says Sir James Melville, 'for he was becom sleprie and cairles.' Melville speaks of a later date, but George's invectives against Mary are 'careless' in all conscience.

Besides these there is a pell-mell of men and women; crafty courteous diplomatists like the two Melvilles; burly Kirkcaldy of Grange, a murderer of the Cardinal, a spy of England when he was in French service, a secret agent of Cecil, a brave man and good captain, but accused of forgery, and by no means 'the second Wallace of Scotland,' the frank, manly, open-hearted

Greysteil of historical tradition. Huntly and Argyll make little mark on the imagination: both astute, both full of promise, both barren of accomplishment. The Hamiltons have a lofty position, but are destitute of brains as of scruples; even the Archbishop, most unscrupulous of all, is no substitute for Cardinal Beaton.

There is a crowd of squires; loyal, gallant Arthur Erskine, Willie Douglas, who drew Mary forth of prison, the two Standens, English equerries of Darnley, whose lives are unwritten romances (what one of them did write is picturesque but untrustworthy), Lennox Lairds, busy Minto, Provost of Glasgow, and Houstoun, and valiant dubious Thomas Crawford, called 'Gauntlets,' and shifty Drumquhassel; spies like Rokeby, assassins if need or opportunity arise; copper captains like Captain Cullen; and most truculent of all, Bothwell's Lambs, young Tala, who ceased reading the Bible when he came to Court; and the Black Laird of Ormistoun, he who, on the day of his hanging, said 'With God I hope this night to sup.' Said he, 'Of all men on the earth I have been one of the proudest and (*sic*) high-minded, and most filthy of my body. But specially I have shed innocent blood of one Michael Hunter with my own hands. Alas therefore, because the said Michael, having me lying on my back, having a pitchfork in his hand, might have slain me if he pleased, but did it not, which of all things grieves me most in conscience… Within these seven years I never saw two good men, nor one good deed, but all kind of wickedness; and yet my God would not suffer me to be lost, and has drawn me from them

as out of Hell … for the which I thank him, and I am assured that I am one of his Elect.' This devotee used to hang about Mary in Carlisle, when she had fled into England. 'Not two good men, nor one good deed,' saw Ormistoun, in seven long years of riding the Border, and following Bothwell to Court or Warden's Raid. Few are the good men, rare are the good deeds, that meet us in this tragic History. 'There is none that doeth good, no, not one.'

But behind the men and the time are the Preachers of Righteousness, grim, indeed, as their Geneva gowns, not gentle and easily entreated, crying out on the Murderess, Adulteress, Idolatress, to be led to block or stake, but yet bold to rebuke Bothwell when he had cowed all the nobles of the land. The future was with these men, with the smaller barons or lairds, and with sober burgesses, like the discreet author of the 'Diurnal of Occurrents,' and with honest hinds, like Michael Hunter, whom Ormistoun slew in cold blood. The social and religious cataclysm withdrew its waves: a new Creed grew into the hearts of the people: intercourse with England slowly abated the ruffianism of the Lords: slowly the Law extended to the Border: swiftly the bonds of feudal duty were broken: but not in Mary's time.

One strange feature of the age we must not forget: the universal belief in sorcery. Mary and Moray (she declares) both believed that Ruthven had given her a ring of baneful magical properties. Foes and friends alike alleged that Bothwell had bewitched Mary 'by unleasom means,' philtres, 'sweet waters,' magic. The preachers, when Mary fled, urged Moray to burn

witches, and the cliffs of St. Andrews flared with the flames wherein they perished. The Lyon King at Arms, as has been said, died by fire, apparently for confessed dealings with a wizard, who foretold the events of the year, and for treasure hunting with the divining rod. A Napier of Merchistoun did foretell Mary's escape (according to Nau); this man, *ayant réputation de grand magicien*, may have been the soothsayer: his son sought for hidden treasure by divination. Buchanan tells how a dying gentleman beheld Darnley's fate in a clairvoyant vision: and how a dim shapeless thing smote and awoke, successively, four Atholl men in Edinburgh, on the night of the crime of Kirk o' Field. Old rhyming prophecies were circulated and believed. Knox himself was credited with winning his sixteen-year-old bride by witchcraft, as Bothwell won Mary. Men listened to his reports of his own 'premonitions.'

When Huntly, one of the band for Darnley's murder, died, his death was strange. He had hunted, and taken three hares and a fox, after dinner he played football, fell into a fit, and expired, crying 'never a word save one, looking up broad with his eyes, and that word was this, "Look, Look, Look!"' Unlike the dying murderer of Riccio, Ruthven, he perhaps did not behold the Angel Choir. His coffers were locked up in a chamber, with candles burning. Next day a rough fellow, banished by Lochinvar, and received by Huntly, fell into unconsciousness for twenty-four hours, and on waking, cried '*Cauld, cauld, cauld!*' John Hamilton, opening one of the dead Earl's coffers, fell down with

the same exclamation. Men carried him away, and, returning, found a third man fallen senseless on the coffer. 'All wrought as the Earl of Huntly wrought in the death thraw.' The chamber was haunted by strange sounds: the word went about that the Earl was rising again. Says Knox's secretary, Bannatyne, who tells this tale, 'I maun praise the Lord my God, and bless his holy name for ever, when I behold the five that was in the conspiracy, not only of the King's [Darnley's] and the second Regent's murder, but also of the first Regent's murder. Four is past with small provision, to wit, Lethington, Argyll, Bothwell, and last of all Huntly. I hope in God the fifth [Morton] shall die more perfectly, and declare his life's deeds with his own mouth, making his repentance at the gallows foot.' Part of his life's deeds Morton did declare on his dying day.

In such a mist of dark beliefs and dreads was the world living, beliefs shared by Queen, preacher, and Earl, scholar, poet, historian, and the simple secretary of Knox: while the sun shone fair on St. Leonard's gardens, and boys like little James Melville were playing tennis and golf. The scenes in which the wild deeds were done are scarcely recognisable in modern Scotland. Holyrood is altered by buildings of the Restoration; the lovely chapel is a ruin, where Mary prayed, and the priests at the altar were buffeted. The Queen's chamber is empty, swept and garnished, as is the little cabinet whereinto came the livid face of Ruthven, clad in armour, and Darnley, half afraid, and Standen, later to boast, with different circumstances, that he

saved the Queen from the dirk of Patrick Ballantyne. The blood of Riccio, outside the door of the state chamber, is washed away: there are only a tourist or two in the long hall where Mary leaned on Chastelard's breast in the dance called 'The Purpose' or 'talking dance.' The tombs of the kings through which Mary stole, stopping, says Lennox, to threaten Darnley above the new mould of Riccio's grave, have long been desecrated.

At Jedburgh we may still see the tall old house, with crow-stepped gables, and winding stairs, and the little chambers where Mary tried to make so good an end, and where the wounded Bothwell was tended. In the long gallery above, Lethington, and Moray, and du Croc must have held anxious converse, while physicians came and went, proposing uncouth remedies, and the Confessor flitted through, and the ladies in waiting wept. But least changed are the hills of the robbers, sweeping slopes of rough pasturage, broken by marshes, and the foaming burns of October, through which Mary rode to the wounded Bothwell in Hermitage Castle, now a huge shell of grey stone, in the pastoral wastes.

Most changed of all is Glasgow, then a pretty village, among trees, between the burn and the clear water of Clyde. The houses clustered about the Cathedral, the ruined abodes of the religious, and the Castle where Lennox and Darnley both lay sick, while Mary abode, it would seem, in the palace then empty of its Archbishop. We see the little town full of armed Hamiltons, and their feudal foes, the Stewarts of Lennox, who anxiously attend

her with suspicious glances, as she goes to comfort their young chief.

In thinking of old Edinburgh, as Mary knew it, our fancy naturally but erroneously dwells on the narrow wynds of the old town, cabined between grimy slate-roofed houses of some twelve or fifteen stories in height, 'piled black and massy steep and high,' and darkened with centuries of smoke, squalid, sunless, without a green tree in the near view, so we are apt to conceive the Edinburgh of Queen Mary. But we do the good town injustice: we are conceiving the Edinburgh of Queen Mary under the colours and in the forms of the Edinburgh of Prince Charles and of Robert Burns.

There exists a bird's-eye view of the city, probably done by an English hand, in 1544. It looks a bright, red-roofed, sparkling little town, in contour much resembling St. Andrews. At St. Andrews the cathedral forms, as it were, the handle of a fan, from which radiate, like the ribs of the fan, North Street, Market Street, and South Street, with the houses and lanes between them. At Edinburgh the Castle Rock was the handle of the fan. Thence diverged two spokes or ribs of streets, High Street and Cowgate, lined with houses with red-tiled roofs. Quaint wooden galleries were suspended outside the first floor, in which, not in the ground floor, the front door usually was, approached by an outer staircase. Quaintness, irregularity, broken outlines, nooks, odd stone staircases, were everywhere. The inner stairs or turnpikes were within semicircular towers, and these, with the tall crow-

stepped gables, high-pitched roofs, and dormer windows, made up picturesque clumps of buildings, perforated by wynds. St. Giles's Church occupied, of course, its present site, and the 'ports,' or gates which closed the High Street towards Holyrood, had turrets for supporters. Through the gate, the Nether Bow, the Court suburb of the Canongate ran down to Holyrood, with gardens, and groves, and green fields behind the houses. The towers of the beautiful Abbey of Holyrood, partly burned by the English in 1544, ended the line of buildings from the Castle eastward.

Far to the left of the town, on a wooded height, the highest and central point of the landscape, we mark a tall rectangular church tower, crowned with a crow-stepped high-pitched roof. It is the church of Kirk o' Field, soon to be so famous as the scene of Darnley's death.

The blocks of buildings are intersected, we said, by narrow wynds, not yet black, though, from Dunbar's poem, we know that Edinburgh was conspicuously dirty and insanitary. But the narrow, compact, bright little town running down the spine of rock from the Castle to Holyrood, was on every side surrounded by green fields, and there were still trout in the Norloch beneath the base of the Castle cliff, where now the railway runs. New town, of course, there was none. Most of the town of Mary's age was embraced by the ruinous wall, hastily constructed after the defeat and death of James IV. Such was the city: of the houses we may gain an idea from the fine old building traditionally

called John Knox's house: if we suppose it neat, clean, its roof scarlet, its walls not grimy with centuries of reek. The houses stood among green gardens, hedges, and trees, and on the grassy hills between the city and the sea, and to the east and west, were *châteaux* and peel-towers of lords and lairds.

Such was Queen Mary's Edinburgh: long, narrow, and mightily unlike the picturesque but stony, and begrimed, and smoke-hidden capital of to-day.[14]

'There were fertile soil, pleasant meadows, woods, lakes, and burns, all around,' where now is nothing but stone, noisy pavement, and slate. The monasteries of the Franciscans and Dominicans lay on either side of St. Mary in the Fields, or Kirk of Field, with its college quadrangle and wide gardens.[15] But, in Mary's day, the monastic buildings and several churches lay in ruins, owing to the recent reform of the Christian religion, and to English invaders.

The palaces of the Cowgate and of the Canongate were the homes of the nobles; the wynds were crowded with burgesses, tradesmen, prentices, and the throng of artisans. These were less godly than the burgesses, were a fickle and fiery mob, ready to run for spears, or use their tools to defend their May-day sport of Robin Hood against the preachers and the Bible-loving middle classes. Brawls were common, the artisans besieging the magistrates in the Tolbooth, or the rival followings of two

[14] See the sketch, coloured, in Bannatyne *Miscellany*, vol. i. p. 184.

[15] See description by Alesius, about 1550, in Bannatyne *Miscellany*, i. 185-188.

lairds or lords coming to pistol-shots and sword-strokes on the causeway, while burgesses handed spears to their friends from the windows. Among popular pleasures were the stake, at which witches and murderesses of masters or husbands were burned; and the pillory, where every one might throw what came handy at a Catholic priest, and the pits in the Norloch where fornicators were ducked. The town gates were adorned with spikes, on which were impaled the heads of sinners against the Law.

Mary rode through a land of new-made ruins, black with fire, not yet green with ivy. On every side, wherever monks had lived, and laboured, and dealt alms, and written manuscripts, desolation met Mary's eyes. The altars were desecrated, the illumined manuscripts were burned, the religious skulked in lay dress, or had fled to France, or stood under the showers of missiles on the pillory. It was a land of fallen fanes, and of stubborn blind keeps with scarce a window, that she passed through, with horse and litter, lace, and gold, and velvet, and troops of gallants and girls. In the black tall Tolbooth lurked the engines of torture, that were to strain or crush the limbs of Bothwell's Lambs. Often must Mary have seen, on the skyline, the gallows tree, and the fruits which that tree bore, and the flocking ravens; one of that company followed Darnley and her from Glasgow, and perched ominous on the roof of Kirk o' Field, croaking loudly on the day of the murder. So writes Nau, Mary's secretary, informed, probably, by one of her attendants.

III
THE CHARACTERS BEFORE RICCIO'S MURDER

After sketching the characters and scenes of the tragedy, we must show how destiny interwove the life-threads of Bothwell and Mary. They were fated to come together. She was a woman looking for a master, he was a masterful and, in the old sense of the word, a 'masterless' man, seeking what he might devour. In the phrase of Aristotle, 'Nature *wishes*' to produce this or that result. It almost seems as if Nature had long 'wished' to throw a Scottish Queen into the hands of a Hepburn. The Hepburns were not of ancient *noblesse*. From their first appearance in Scottish history they are seen to be prone to piratical adventure, and to courting widowed queens. The unhappy Jane Beaufort, widow of James I., and of the Black Knight of Lome, died in the stronghold of a Hepburn freebooter. A Hepburn was reputed to be the lover of Mary of Gueldres, the beautiful and not inconsolable widow of James II. This Hepburn, had he succeeded in securing the person of Mary's son, the boy James III., might have played Bothwell's part. The name rose to power and rank on the ruin of the murdered James III., and of Ramsay, his favourite, who had worn, but forfeited to the Hepburn of the day, the title of Bothwell. The name was strong in the most lawless dales of

the Border, chiefly in Liddesdale, where the clans alternately wore the cross of St. Andrew and of St. George, and impartially plundered both countries. The more profitable Hepburn estates, however, were in the richer bounds of Lothian.

The attitude and position of James Hepburn, our Bothwell, were, from the first, unique. He was at once a Protestant, 'the stoutest and the worst thought of,' and also an inveterate enemy of England, a resolute partisan of Mary's mother, Mary of Guise, the Regent, in her wars against the Protestant rebels, 'the Lords of the Congregation.' From this curious and illogical position, adopted in his early youth, Bothwell never wandered. He was to end by making Mary wed him with Protestant rites, while she assured her confessor that she only did so in the hope of restoring the Catholic Church! We must briefly trace the early career of Bothwell.

While Darnley was being educated in England, with occasional visits to France, and while Mary was residing there as the bride of the Dauphin: while Moray was becoming the leader of the Protestant opposition to Mary of Guise ('the Lords of the Congregation'), while Maitland was entering on his career of diplomacy, Bothwell was active in the field. In 1558, after Mary of Guise had been deserted by her nobles at Kelso, as her husband had been at Fala, young Bothwell, being now Lieutenant-General on the Border, made a raid into England. In the war between Mary of Guise, as Regent, and the Protestant Lords of the Congregation, Bothwell fought on

her side. A Diary of the Siege of Leith (among the Lennox MSS.) describes his activity in intercepting and robbing poor peaceful tradesmen. From another unpublished source we learn that he, among others, condemned the Earl of Arran (in absence) as the cause of the Protestant rebellion.[16] On October 5, 1559, Bothwell seized, near Haddington, Cockburn of Ormiston, who was carrying English gold to the Lords.[17] They, in reprisal, sacked his castle of Crichton, and nearly caught him. He later in vain challenged the Earl of Arran (the son of the chief of the Hamiltons, the Duke of Châtelherault) to single combat. A feud of far-reaching results now began between Arran and Cockburn on one side, and Bothwell on the other. When Leith, held for Mary of Guise, in 1560, was besieged by the Scots and English, Bothwell (whose estates had been sold) was sent to ask aid from France. He went thither by way of Denmark, and now, probably, he was more or less legally betrothed to a Norwegian lady, Anne Throndssön, whom he carried from her home, and presently deserted. Already, in 1559, he was said to be 'quietly married or handfasted' to Janet Beaton, niece of Cardinal Beaton, and widow of Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh, the wizard Lady of Branxholme in Scott's 'Lay of the Last Minstrel.'[18] She was sister

[16] Information from Father Pollen, S.J.

[17] This gentleman must not be confused with Ormistoun of Ormistoun, in Teviotdale, 'The Black Laird,' a retainer of Bothwell.

[18] Riddell, *Inquiry into the Law and Practice of the Scottish Peerage*, i. 427. Joseph Robertson, *Inventories*, xcii., xciii. Schiern, *Life of Bothwell*, p. 53.

of Lady Reres, wife of Forbes of Reres, the lady said to have aided Bothwell in his amour with Mary. In 1567 one of the libels issued after Darnley's murder charged the Lady of Branksome with helping Bothwell to win Mary's heart by magic.

Anne Throndssön, later, accused Bothwell of breach of promise of marriage, given to her and her family 'by hand and mouth and letters.' In 1560 the Lady of Branksome circulated a report that Bothwell had wedded a rich wife in Denmark: she does not seem to have been jealous.[19] An anonymous writer represents Bothwell as having three simultaneous wives, probably Anne, the Branxholme lady, and his actual spouse, Lady Jane Gordon, sister of Huntly. But the arrangements in the first two cases were probably not legally valid. There is no doubt that Bothwell, ugly or not, was a great conqueror of hearts. He may have been *un beau laid*, and he possessed, as we have said, the qualities, so attractive to many women, of utter recklessness, of a bullying manner, of great physical strength, and of a reputation for *bonnes fortunes*. That Bothwell was extravagant and a gambler is probably true: and, in short, he was, to many women, a most attractive character. To the virtuous, like Lady Jane Gordon, he would appear as an agreeable brand to be snatched from the burning.

Dropping poor Anne Throndssön in the Netherlands, on his way from Denmark, Bothwell, in 1560, went to the French Court, where he was made Gentilhomme de la Chambre, but

[19] Randolph to Cecil, Edinburgh, Sept. 23, 1560. Foreign Calendar, 1560-61, p. 311.

could not procure aid for Mary of Guise. He acquired more French polish, and (so his enemies and his valet, Paris, said) he learned certain infamous vices. Mary Stuart became a widow, and Dowager of France, in December 1560: it is not certain whether or not Bothwell was in her train at Joinville in April 1561.[20] After Mary's return to Scotland the old feud between Arran and Bothwell broke out afresh. Bothwell and d'Elbœuf paid a noisy visit to the handsome daughter of a burgess, said to be Arran's mistress. There were brawls, and presently Bothwell attacked Cockburn of Ormiston, the man he had robbed, Arran's ally, and carried off his son to Crichton Castle. This occurred in March, 1562, and, as early as February 21, Randolph, the English minister at Holyrood, had 'marked something strange' in Arran.[21] His feeble ambitious mind was already tottering, which casts doubt on what followed. On March 25, Bothwell visited Knox (whose ancestors had been retainers of the House of Hepburn), and invited the Reformer to reconcile him with Arran. The feud, Bothwell said, was expensive: he dared not move without a company of armed men. Knox contrived a meeting at the Hamilton house near the fatal Kirk o' Field. The enemies were reconciled, and next day went together to 'the Sermon,' a spiritual privilege of which Bothwell was only too neglectful. Knox had done a good stroke for the Anti-Marian Protestant

[20] Hay Fleming, *Mary Queen of Scots*, p. 236, note 32.

[21] Cal. For. Eliz. 1561-62, iv. 531-539.

party, of whose left wing Arran was the leader.[22]

But alas for Knox's hopes! Only three days after the sermon, on March 29, Arran (who had been wont to confide his love-sorrows to Knox) came to the Reformer with a strange tale. Bothwell had opened to him, in the effusions of their new friendship, his design to seize Mary, and put her in Arran's keeping, in Dumbarton Castle. He would slay Mar (that is Lord James Stuart, later Moray) and Lethington, whom he detested, 'and he and I would rule all,' said Arran, who knew very well what sort of share he would be permitted to enjoy in the dual control. I have very little doubt that the impoverished, more or less disgraced Bothwell did make this proposal. He was safe in doing so. If Arran accused him, Arran would, first, be incarcerated, till he proved his charge (which he could not do), or, secondly, Bothwell would appeal to Trial by Combat, for which he knew that Arran had no taste. In his opinion, Bothwell merely meant to entrap him, and his idea was to write to Mary and her brother. Whether Knox already perceived that Arran was insane, or not, he gave him what was perhaps the best advice – to be silent. Arran's position was perilous. If the plot came to be known, if Bothwell confessed all, then he would be guilty of concealing his foreknowledge of it; like Morton in the case of Darnley's murder.

Arran did not listen to Knox's counsel. He wrote to Mary and Mar, partly implicating his own father; he then fled from his father's castle of Keneil, hurried to Fife, and was brought by

[22] Knox, Laing's edition, ii. 322-327. Randolph to Cecil *ut supra*.

Mar (Moray) to Mary at Falkland, whither Bothwell also came, perhaps warned by Knox, who had a family feudal attachment to the Hepburns. Arran now was, or affected to be, distraught. He persisted, however, in his charge against Bothwell, who was warded in Edinburgh Castle, while Arran's father was deprived of Dumbarton Castle.

The truth of Arran's charge is uncertain. In any case, 'the Queen both honestly and stoutly behaves herself,' Randolph wrote. While Bothwell lay, a prisoner on suspicion, in Edinburgh Castle, Mary was come to a crisis in her reign. Her political position, hitherto, may be stated in broad outline. The strains of European tendencies, political and theological, were dragging Scotland in opposite directions. Was the country to remain Protestant, and in alliance with England, or was it to return to the ancient league with France, and to the Church of Rome?

During Mary's first years in Scotland, she and the governing politicians, her brother Moray and Maitland of Lethington, were fairly well agreed as to general policy. With all her affection for her Church and her French kinsmen, Mary could not hope, at present, for much more than a certain measure of toleration for Catholics. As to the choice of the French or English alliance, her ambitions appeared to see their best hope in an understanding with Elizabeth, under which Mary and her issue should be recognised as heirs of the English throne. So far the ruling politicians, Moray, Lethington, and Morton, were sufficiently in accord with their Queen. A restoration of the Church they

would not endure. Not only their theological tenets (sincerely held by Moray) opposed any such restoration, but their hold of Church property was what they would not abandon save with life. The Queen and her chief advisers, therefore, for years enjoyed a *modus vivendi*: a pacific kind of compromise. Mary was so far from being ardently Catholic in politics, that, while Bothwell was confined in Edinburgh Castle, she accompanied Moray to the North, and overthrew her chief Catholic supporter, Huntly, 'the Cock of the North,' and all but the king of the Northern Catholics. Before she set foot in Scotland, he had offered to restore her by force, and with her, the Church. She preferred the alliance of her brother, of Lethington, and of *les politiques*, the moderate Protestants. Huntly died in battle against his Queen; his family, for the hour, was ruined; but Huntly's son and successor in the title represented the discontents and ambitions of the warlike North, as Bothwell represented those of the warlike Borderers. Similarity of fortunes and of desires soon united these two ruined and reckless men, Huntly and Bothwell, in a league equally dangerous to Moray, to amity with England, and, finally, to Mary herself.

To restore his family to land and power, Huntly was ready to sacrifice not only faith and honour, but natural affection. Twice he was to sell his sister, Lady Jane, once when he married her to Bothwell against her will: once when, Bothwell having won her love, Huntly compelled or induced her to divorce him. But these things lay in the future. For the moment, the autumn of 1562,

the Huntlys were ruined, and Bothwell (August 28, 1562), in the confusion, escaped from prison in Edinburgh Castle. 'Some whispered that he got easy passage by the gates,' says Knox. 'One thing,' he adds, 'is certain, to wit, the Queen was little offended at his escaping.'[23] He was, at least, her mother's faithful servant.

We begin to see that the Protestant party henceforward suspected the Queen of regarding Bothwell as, to Mary, a useful man in case of trouble. Bothwell first fled to Hermitage Castle in Liddesdale. As Lieutenant-General on the Border he commanded the reckless broken clans, the 'Lambs,' his own Hepburns, Hays, Ormistouns of Ormistoun, and others who aided him in his most desperate enterprises; while, as Admiral, he had the dare-devils of the sea to back him.

Lord James now became Earl of Moray, and all-powerful; and Bothwell, flying to France, was storm-stayed at Holy Island, and held prisoner by Elizabeth. His kinsfolk made interest for him with Mary, and, on February 5, 1564, she begged Elizabeth to allow him to go abroad. In England, Bothwell is said to have behaved with unlooked-for propriety. 'He is very wise, and not the man he was reported to be,' that is, not 'rash, glorious, and hazardous,' Sir Harry Percy wrote to Cecil. 'His behaviour has been courteous and honourable, keeping his promise.' Sir John Forster corroborated this evidence. Bothwell, then, was not loutish, but, when he pleased, could act like a gentleman. He sailed to France, and says himself that he became Captain of the

[23] Knox, ii. 347.

Scottish Guards, a post which Arran had once held. In France he is said to have accused Mary of incestuous relations with her uncle, the Cardinal.

During Bothwell's residence in England, and in France, the equipoise of Mary's political position had been disturbed. She had held her ground, against the extreme Protestants, who clamoured for the death of all idolaters, by her alliance with *les politiques*, led by Moray and Lethington. Their ambition, like hers, was to see the crowns of England and Scotland united in her, or in her issue. Therefore they maintained a perilous amity with England, and with Elizabeth, while plans for a meeting of the Queens, and for the recognition of Mary as Elizabeth's heir, were being negotiated. But this caused ceaseless fretfulness to Elizabeth, who believed, perhaps correctly, that to name her successor was to seal her death-warrant. The Catholics of England would have hurried her to the grave, she feared, that they might welcome Mary. In the same way, no conceivable marriage for Mary could be welcome to Elizabeth, who hated the very name of wedlock. Yet, while Bothwell was abroad, and while negotiations lasted, there was a kind of repose, despite the anxieties of the godly and their outrages on Catholics. Mary endured much and endured with some patience. One chronic trouble was at rest. The feud between the Hamiltons, the nearest heirs of the crown, and the rival claimants, the Lennox Stewarts, was quiescent.

The interval of peace soon ended. Lennox, the head of

the House hateful to the Hamiltons, was, at the end of 1564, allowed to return to Scotland, and was reinstated in the lands which his treason had forfeited long ago. In the early spring of 1565, Lennox's son, Darnley, followed his father to the North, was seen and admired by Mary, and the peace of Scotland was shattered. As a Catholic by education, though really of no creed in particular, Darnley excited the terrors of the godly. His marriage with Mary meant, to Moray, loss of power; to Lethington, a fresh policy; to the Hamiltons, the ruin of their hopes of royalty, while, by most men, Darnley soon came to be personally detested.

Before it was certain that Mary would marry Darnley, but while the friends and foes of the match were banding into parties, early in March 1565, Bothwell returned unbidden to Scotland, and lurked in his Border fastness. Knox's continuator says that Moray told Mary that either he or Bothwell must leave the country. Mary replied that, considering Bothwell's past services, 'she could not hate him,' neither could she do anything prejudicial to Moray.[24] 'A day of law' was set for Bothwell, for May 2, but, as Moray gathered an overpowering armed force, he sent in a protest, by his comparatively respectable friend, Hepburn of Riccartoun, and went abroad. Mary, according to Randolph, had said that she 'altogether misliked his home-coming without a licence,' but Bedford feared that she secretly abetted him. He was condemned in absence, but Mary was thought to have

[24] Knox, ii. 473.

prevented the process of outlawry. Dr. Hay Fleming, however, cites Pitcairn's 'Criminal Trials,' i. 462,[25] as proof that Bothwell actually was outlawed, or put to the horn. Knox's continuator, however, says that Bothwell 'was not put to the horn, for the Queen continually bore a great favour to him, and kept him to be a soldier.'[26] The Protestants ever feared that Mary would 'shake Bothwell out of her pocket,' against them.[27]

Presently, her temper outworn by the perpetual thwartings which checked her every movement, and regardless of the opposition of Moray, of the Hamiltons, of Argyll, and of the whole Protestant community, Mary wedded Darnley (July 29, 1565). Her adversaries assembled in arms, secretly encouraged by Elizabeth, and what Kirkcaldy of Grange had prophesied occurred: Mary 'shook Bothwell out of her pocket' at her opponents. In July, she sent Hepburn of Riccartoun to summon him back from France. Riccartoun was captured by the English, but Bothwell, after a narrow escape, presented himself before Mary on September 20. By October, Moray, the Hamiltons, and Argyll were driven into England or rendered harmless. Randolph now reported that Bothwell and Atholl were all-powerful. The result was ill feeling between Darnley and Bothwell. Darnley wished his father, Lennox, to govern on the Border, but Mary

[25] Hay Fleming, p. 359, note 29.

[26] Knox, ii. 479.

[27] See Cal. For. Eliz. 1565, 306, 312, 314, 319, 320, 327, 340, 341, 347, 351.

gave the post to Bothwell.[28] Her estrangement from Darnley had already begun. Jealousy of Mary's new secretary, Riccio, was added.

The relations between Darnley, Bothwell, Mary, and Riccio, between the crushing of Moray's revolt, in October 1565, and the murder of the Italian Secretary, in March 1566, are still obscure. Was Riccio Mary's lover? What were the exact causes of the estrangement from Darnley, which was later used as the spring to discharge on Riccio, and on Mary, the wrath of the discontented nobles and Puritans? The Lennox Papers inform us, as to Mary and Darnley, that 'their love never decayed till their return from Dumfries,' whence they had pursued Moray into England.

Mary had come back to Edinburgh from Dumfries by October 18, 1565. Riccio was already, indeed by September 22, complained of as a foreign upstart, but not as a lover of Mary, by the rebel Lords.[29] The Lennox Papers attribute the estrangement of Mary and Darnley to her pardoning without the consent of the King, her husband, 'sundry rebels,' namely the Hamiltons. The pardon implied humiliation and five years of exile. It was granted about December 3.[30] The measure was deeply distasteful to Darnley and Lennox, who had long been at mortal feud, over the heirship to the crown, with the Lennox Stewarts. The pardon is attributed to the influence of 'Wicked David,' Riccio. But to

[28] Calendar, Bain, ii. 223.

[29] Bain, ii. 213.

[30] *Ibid.* ii. 242, 243.

pardon perpetually was the function of a Scottish prince. Soon we find Darnley intriguing for the pardon of Moray, Ruthven, and others, who were not Hamiltons. Next, Lennox complains of Mary for 'using the said David more like a lover than a husband, forsaking her husband's bed and board very often.' But this was not before November. The 'Book of Articles' put in against Mary by her accusers is often based on Lennox's papers. It says 'she suddenly altered the same' (her 'vehement love' of Darnley) 'about November, for she removed and secluded him from the counsel and knowledge of all Council affairs.'[31] The 'Book of Articles,' like Lennox's own papers, omits every reference to Riccio that can be avoided. The 'Book of Articles,' indeed, never hints at his existence. The reason is obvious: Darnley had not shone in the Riccio affair. Moreover the Lennox party could not accuse Mary of a guilty amour before mid November, 1565, for James VI. was born on June 19, 1566. It would not do to discredit his legitimacy. But, as early as September 1565, Bedford had written to Cecil that 'of the countenance which Mary gave to David he would not write, for the honour due to the person of a Queen.'[32] Thus, a bride of six weeks, Mary was reported to be already a wanton! Moreover, on October 13, 1565, Randolph wrote from Edinburgh that Mary's anger against Moray (who had really enraged her by rising to prevent her from marrying Darnley) came from some dishonourable secret in

[31] Hosack, i. 524.

[32] Cal. For. Eliz. 1564-5, 464.

Moray's keeping, 'not to be named for reverence sake.' He 'has a thing more strange' even than the fact that Mary 'places Bothwell in honour above every subject that she hath.' As the 'thing' is *not* a nascent passion for Bothwell, it may be an amour with Riccio.[33] Indeed, on October 18, 1565, he will not speak of the cause of mischief, but hints at 'a stranger and a varlet,' Riccio.[34] Randolph and the English diplomatists were then infuriated against Mary, who had expelled their allies, Moray and the rest, discredited Elizabeth, their paymistress, and won over her a diplomatic victory. Consequently this talk of her early amour with Riccio, an ugly Milanese musician, need not be credited. For their own reasons, the Lennox faction dared not assert so early a scandal.

They, however, insisted that Mary, in November, 'removed and secluded' Darnley from her Council. To prevent his knowing what letters were written, when he signed them with her, she had his name printed on an iron stamp, 'and used the same *in all things*,' in place of his subscription. This stamp was employed in affixing his signature to the 'remission' to the Hamiltons.[35]

In fact, Darnley's ambitions were royal, but he had an objection to the business which kings are well paid for transacting. Knox's continuator makes him pass 'his time in

---

[33] Bain, ii. 222-223.

[34] Bain, ii. 225. Cal. For. Eliz. 1564-5, 464, 495. Hay Fleming, pp. 380, 381.

[35] Miss Strickland avers that 'existing documents afford abundant proof, that whenever Darnley and the Queen were together, his name was written by his own hand.'

hunting and hawking, and such other pleasures as were agreeable to his appetite, having in his company gentlemen willing to satisfy his will and affections.' He had the two Anthony Standens, wild young English Catholics. While Darnley hunted and hawked, Lennox 'lies at Glasgow' (where he had a castle near the Cathedral), and 'takes, I hear, what he likes from all men,' says Randolph.[36] He writes (November 6) that Mary 'above all things desires her husband to be called King.'[37] Yet it is hinted that she is in love with Riccio! On the same date 'oaths and bands are taken of all that … acknowledge Darnley king, and liberty to live as they list in religion.' On November 19, Mary was suffering from 'her old disease that commonly takes her this time of year in her side.' It was a chronic malady: we read of it in the Casket Letters. From November 14 to December 1, she was ill, but Darnley hunted and hawked in Fife, from Falkland probably, and was not expected to return till December 4.[38] Lennox was being accused of 'extortions' at Glasgow, complained of 'to the Council.' Châtelherault was 'like to speed well enough in his suit to be restored,' after his share in Moray's rebellion.

Darnley was better engaged, perhaps, in Fife, than in advocating his needy and extortionate father before the Council, or in opposing the limited pardon to old Châtelherault. In such circumstances, Darnley was often absent, either for pleasure, or

---

[36] October 31, 1565. Bain, ii. 232.

[37] Bain, ii. 234.

[38] Randolph to Cecil, Nov. 19, Dec. 1, 1565. Bain, ii. 241, 242.

because his father was not allowed to despoil the West; while the Hamilton chief, the heir presumptive of the throne, was treated as a repentant rebel, rather than as a feudal enemy. He was an exile, and lost his 'moveables' and all his castles, so he told Elizabeth.[39] During, or after, these absences of Darnley, that 'iron stamp,' of which Buchanan complains, was made and used.

The Young Fool had brought this on himself. Mary already, according to Randolph, had been heard to say that she wished Lennox had never entered Scotland 'in her days.' Lennox, the father-in-law of the Queen, was really a competitor for the crown. If Mary had no issue, he and Darnley desired the crown to be entailed on them, passing over the rightful heirs, the House of Hamilton. A father and son, with such preoccupations, could not safely be allowed to exercise power. The father would have lived on robbery, the son would have shielded him. Yet, so occupied was Darnley with distant field sports, that, says Buchanan, he took the affair of the iron stamp easily.[40] Next comes a terrible grievance. Darnley was driven out, in the depth of winter, to Peebles. There was so much snow, the roads were so choked, the country so bare, that Darnley might conceivably have been reduced to 'halesome parritch.' Luckily the Bishop of Orkney, the jovial scoundrel, 'Bishop Turpy,' who married Mary to Bothwell, and then denounced her to Elizabeth, had brought wine and delicacies. This is Buchanan's tale. A letter from Lennox to

[39] Bain, ii. 242.

[40] Buchanan, *Historia*, 1582, fol. 210.

Darnley, of December 20, 1565, represents the father as anxious to wait on 'Your Majesty' at Peebles, but scarcely expecting him in such stormy weather. Darnley, doubtless, really went for the sake of the deer: which, in Scotland, were pursued at that season. He had been making exaggerated show of Catholicism, at matins on Christmas Eve, while Mary sat up playing cards.[41] Presently he was to be the ally of the extreme Protestants, the expelled rebels. Moray was said not to have two hundred crowns in the world, and was ready for anything, in his English retreat. Randolph (Dec. 25) reported 'private disorders' between Darnley and Mary, 'but these may be but *amantium iræ*,' lovers' quarrels.[42] Yet, two months before he had hinted broadly that Riccio was the object of Mary's passion.

On this important point of Mary's guilt with Riccio, we have no affirmative evidence, save Darnley's word, when he was most anxious to destroy the Italian for political reasons. Randolph, who, as we have seen, had apparently turned his back on his old slanders, now accepted, or feigned to accept, Darnley's anecdotes of his discoveries.

It is strange that Mary at the end of 1565, and the beginning of 1566, seems to have had no idea of the perils of her position. On January 31, 1566, she wrote 'to the most holy lord, the Lord

---

[41] Bain, ii. 247.

[42] The Foreign Calendar cites Randolph up to the place where *amantium iræ* is quoted, but omits that. The point is important, if it indicates that Randolph had ceased to believe in Mary's amour with Riccio. Cf. Bain, ii. 248.

Pope Pius V.,' saying: 'Already some of our enemies are in exile, and some of them are in our hands, but their fury, and the great necessity in which they are placed, urge them on to attempt extreme measures.'[43] But, ungallant as the criticism may seem, I fear that this was only a begging letter *in excelsis*, and that Mary wanted the papal ducats, without entertaining any great hope or intention of aiding the papal cause, or any real apprehension of 'extreme measures' on the side of her rebels. Her intention was to forfeit and ruin Moray and his allies, in the Parliament of the coming March. She also wished to do something 'tending to' the restoration of the Church, by reintroducing the spiritual lords. But that she actually joined the Catholic League, as she was certainly requested to do, seems most improbable.[44] Having arranged a marriage between Bothwell and Huntly's sister, Lady Jane Gordon, she probably relied on the united strength of the two nobles in the North and the South. But this was a frail reed to lean upon. Mary's position, though she does not seem to have realised it, was desperate. She had incurred the feud of the Lennox Stewarts, Lennox and Darnley, by her neglect of both, and by Darnley's jealousy of Riccio. The chiefs of the Hamiltons, who could always be trusted to counterbalance the Lennox faction, were in exile. Moray was desperate. Lethington was secretly estranged. The Protestants were at once angry and

[43] Nau, p. 192.

[44] The subject is discussed, with all the evidence, in Hay Fleming, pp. 379, 380, note 33.

terrified: ready for extremes. Finally, Morton was threatened with loss of the seals, and almost all the nobles loathed the power of the low-born foreign favourite, Riccio.

Even now the exact nature of the intrigues which culminated in Riccio's murder are obscure. We cannot entirely trust the well-known 'Relation' which, after the murder, on April 2, Morton and Ruthven sent to Cecil. He was given leave to amend it, and it is, at best, a partisan report. Its object was to throw the blame on Darnley, who had deserted the conspirators, and betrayed them. According to Ruthven, it was on February 10 that Darnley sent to him George Douglas, a notorious assassin, akin both to Darnley and Morton. Darnley, it is averred, had proof of Mary's guilt with Riccio, and desired to disgrace Mary by slaying Riccio in her presence. The negotiation, then, began with Darnley, on February 10.[45] But on February 5 Randolph had written to Cecil that Mary 'hath said openly that she will have mass free for all men that will hear it,' and that Darnley, Lennox, and Atholl daily resort to it. 'The Protestants are in great fear and doubt what shall become of them. The wisest so much dislike this state and government, that they design nothing more than the return of the Lords, either to be put into their own rooms, or once again to put all in hazard.'[46] 'The wisest' is a phrase apt to mean Lethington. Now, on February 9, before Darnley's motion to

[45] *Ruthven's Narrative.* Keith, iii. 260. There are various forms of this Narrative; one is in the Lennox MSS.

[46] Goodall, i. 274.

Ruthven, Lethington wrote to Cecil: 'Mary! I see no certain way unless we chop at the very root; you know where it lieth.'[47] When Mary, later, was a prisoner in England, Knox, writing to Cecil, used this very phrase, 'If ye strike not at the root, the branches that appear to be broken will bud again' (Jan. 2, 1570). When Lethington meant to 'chop at the very root,' on February 9, 1566, he undoubtedly intended the death of Riccio, if not of Mary.

In four days (February 13) Randolph informed Leicester of Darnley's jealousy, and adds, 'I know that there are practices in hand, contrived between the father and son' (Lennox and Darnley), 'to come by the crown against her will.' 'The crown' may only mean 'the Crown Matrimonial,' which would, apparently, give Darnley regal power for his lifetime. 'I know that, if that take effect which is intended, David, with the consent of the King, shall have his throat cut within these ten days. Many things grievouser and worse than these are brought to my ears: yea, of things intended against her own person…'[48]

The conspiracy seems to have been political and theological in its beginnings. Mary was certainly making more open show of Catholicism: very possibly to impress the French envoys who had come to congratulate her on her marriage, and to strengthen her claim on the Pope for money. But Lennox and Darnley were also parading Catholic devoutness: they had no quarrel with Mary on this head. The Protestants, however, took alarm. Darnley was,

---

[47] Bain, ii. 255.

[48] Printed in a scarce volume, *Maitland's Narrative*, and in Tytler, iii. 215. 1864.

perhaps, induced to believe in Mary's misconduct with Riccio after 'the wisest,' and Lethington, had decided 'to chop at the very root.' Ruthven and Morton then won Darnley's aid: he consented to secure Protestantism, and, by a formal band, to restore Moray and the exiles: who, in turn, recognised him as their sovereign. Randolph, banished by Mary for aiding her rebels, conspired with Bedford at Berwick, and sent copies to Cecil of the 'bands' between Darnley and the nobles (March 6).[49]

Darnley himself, said Randolph, was determined to be present at Riccio's slaying. Moray was to arrive in Edinburgh immediately after the deed. Lethington, Argyll, Morton, Boyd, and Ruthven were privy to the murder, also Moray, Rothes, Kirkcaldy, in England, with Randolph and Bedford. It is probable that others besides Riccio were threatened. There is a 'Band of Assurance for the Murder.'[50] Darnley says that he has enlisted 'lords, barons, freeholders, gentlemen, merchants, and craftsmen to assist us in this enterprise, which cannot be finished without great hazard. And because it may chance that there be certain great personages present, who may make them to withstand our enterprise, wherethrough certain of them may be slain,' Darnley guarantees his allies against the blood feud of the 'great persons.' These, doubtless, are Bothwell, Atholl, and Huntly. The deed 'may chance to be done in presence of the Queen's Majesty, or within her palace of Holyrood House.' The band is dated March

[49] Bain, ii. 259-261.

[50] Goodall, i. 266-268.

1, in other texts, March 5. The indications point to a design of killing Mary's nobles, while she, in her condition, might die of the shock. She was to be morally disgraced. So unscrupulous were Mary's foes that Cecil told de Foix, the French Ambassador in London, how Riccio had been slain in Mary's arms, *reginam nefario stupro polluens*.[51] Cecil well knew that this was a lie: and it is natural to disbelieve every statement of a convicted liar and traitor like Darnley.

Just before the explosion of the anti-Riccio conspiracy, Bothwell *se rangea*. Mary herself made a match for him (the contract is of February 9, 1566) with Lady Jane Gordon, a Catholic, a sister of Huntly, and a daughter of that Huntly who fell at Corrichie burn. The lady was only in her twentieth year. The parties being akin, a dispensation was necessary, and was granted by the Pope, and issued by the Archbishop of St. Andrews.[52] The marriage took place in the Protestant Kirk of the Canongate, though the bride was a Catholic, and Mary gave the wedding dress (February 24). The honeymoon was interrupted, on March 9, by the murder of Riccio.

The conspirators made the fatal error of not securing Bothwell and Huntly before they broke into Mary's room and slew Riccio. While Bothwell, Huntly, and Atholl were at large, the forces of the Queen's party had powerful friends in the North and on the Border. When the tumult of the murderers was heard,

---

[51] Hosack, ii. 78, note 3.

[52] See Dr. Stewart, *A Lost Chapter in the History of Mary Queen of Scots*, pp. 93, 94.

these nobles tried to fight their way to Mary's assistance, but were overpowered by numbers, and compelled to seek their apartments. An attempt was made to reconcile them to the situation, but they escaped under cloud of night. In her letter to the French Court (May 1567) excusing her marriage with Bothwell, Mary speaks of his 'dexterity' in escaping, 'and how suddenly by his prudence not only were we delivered out of prison,' after Riccio's death, 'but also that whole company of conspirators dissolved…' 'We could never forget it,' Mary adds, and Bothwell's favour had a natural and legitimate basis in the gratitude of the Queen. Very soon after the outrage she had secretly communicated with Bothwell and Huntly, 'who, taking no regard to hazard their lives,' arranged a plan for her flight by means of ropes let down from the windows.[53] Mary preferred the passage through the basement into the royal tombs, and, by aid of Arthur Erskine and Stewart of Traquair, she made her way to Dunbar. Here Huntly, Atholl, and Bothwell rallied to her standard: Knox fled from Edinburgh, Morton and Ruthven with their allies found refuge in England: the lately exiled Lords were allowed to remain in Scotland: Darnley betrayed his accomplices, they communicated to Mary their treaties with him, and the Queen was left to reconcile Moray and Argyll to Huntly, Bothwell, and Atholl.

[53] This is alleged by Mary, and by Claude Nau, her secretary.

IV
BEFORE THE BAPTISM OF THE PRINCE

Mary's task was 'to quieten the country,' a task perhaps impossible. Her defenders might probably make a better case for her conduct and prudence, at this time, than they have usually presented. Her policy was, if possible, to return to the state of balance which existed before her marriage. She must allay the Protestants' anxieties, and lean on their trusted Moray and on the wisdom of Lethington. But gratitude for the highest services compelled her to employ Huntly and Bothwell, who equally detested Lethington and Moray. Darnley was an impossible and disturbing factor in the problem. He had, publicly, on March 20, and privately, declared his innocence, which we find him still protesting in the Casket Letters. He had informed against his associates, and insisted on dragging into the tale of conspirators, Lethington, who had retired to Atholl. Moreover Mary must have despised and hated the wretch. Perhaps her hatred had already found expression.

The Lennox MSS. aver that Darnley secured Mary's escape to Dunbar 'with great hazard and danger of his life.' Claude Nau reports, on the other hand, that he fled at full speed, brutally taunting Mary, who, in her condition, could not keep the pace

with him. Nau tells us that, as the pair escaped out of Holyrood, Darnley uttered remorseful words over Riccio's new-made grave. The Lennox MSS. aver that Mary, seeing the grave, said 'it should go very hard with her but a fatter than Riccio should lie anear him ere one twelvemonth was at an end.' In Edinburgh, on the return from Dunbar, Lennox accuses Mary of threatening to take revenge with her own hands. 'That innocent lamb' (Darnley) 'had but an unquiet life' (Lennox MSS.).

Once more, Mary had to meet, on many sides, the demand for the pardon of the Lords who had just insulted and injured her by the murder of her servant. On April 2, from Berwick, Morton and Ruthven told Throckmorton that they were in trouble 'for the relief of our brethren and the religion,' and expected 'to be relieved by the help of our brethren, which we hope in God shall be shortly.'[54] Moray was eager for their restoration, which must be fatal to their betrayer, Darnley. On the other side, Bothwell and Darnley, we shall see, were presently intriguing for the ruin of Moray, and of Lethington, who, still unpardoned, dared not take to the seas lest Bothwell should intercept him.[55] Bothwell and Darnley had been on ill terms in April, according to Drury.[56] But common hatreds soon drew them together, as is to be shown.

Randolph's desire was 'to have my Lord of Moray again in Court' (April 4), and to Court Moray came.

---

[54] Goodall, i. 264, 265.

[55] Bain, ii. 289.

[56] Cal. For. Eliz. viii. 51.

Out of policy or affection, Mary certainly did protect and befriend Moray, despite her alleged nascent passion for his enemy, Bothwell. By April 25, Moray with Argyll and Glencairn had been received by Mary, who had forbidden Darnley to meet them on their progress.[57] With a prudence which cannot be called unreasonable, Mary tried to keep the nobles apart from her husband. She suspected an intrigue whenever he conversed with them, and she had abundant cause of suspicion. She herself had taken refuge in the Castle, awaiting the birth of her child.

Mary and Moray now wished to pardon Lord Boyd, with whom Darnley had a private quarrel, and whom he accused of being a party to Riccio's murder.[58] On May 13, Randolph tells Cecil that 'Moray and Argyll have such misliking of their King (Darnley) as never was more of man.'[59] Moray, at this date, was most anxious for the recall of Morton, who (May 24) reports, as news from Scotland, that Darnley 'is minded to depart to Flanders,' or some other place, to complain of Mary's unkindness.[60] Darnley was an obstacle to Mary's efforts at general conciliation, apart from the horror of the man which she probably entertained. In England Morton and his gang had orders, never obeyed, to leave the country: Ruthven had died, beholding a Choir of Angels, on May 16.

---

[57] Bain, ii. 276. Cal. For. Eliz. viii. 52.

[58] Cal. For. Eliz. viii. 62.

[59] Bain ii. 278.

[60] *Ibid.* ii. 281.

At this time, when Mary was within three weeks of her confinement, the Lennox Papers tell a curious tale, adopted, with a bewildering confusion of dates, by Buchanan in his 'Detection.' Lennox represents Mary as trying to induce Darnley to make love to the wife of Moray, while 'Bothwell alone was all in all.' This anecdote is told by Lennox himself, on Darnley's own authority. The MS. is headed, 'Some part of the talk between the late King of Scotland and me, the Earl of Lennox, riding between Dundas and Lythkoo (Linlithgow) in a dark night, taking upon him to be the guide that night, the rest of his company being in doubt of the highway.' Darnley said he had often ridden that road, and Lennox replied that it was no wonder, he riding to meet his wife, 'a paragon and a Queen.' Darnley answered that they were not happy. As an instance of Mary's ways, he reported that, just before their child's birth, Mary had advised him to take a mistress, and if possible 'to make my Lord – ' (Moray) 'wear horns, and I assure you I shall never love you the worse.' Lennox liked not the saying, but merely advised Darnley never to be unfaithful to the Queen. Darnley replied, 'I never offended the Queen, my wife, in meddling with any woman in thought, let be in deed.' Darnley also told the story of 'horning' Moray to a servant of his, which Moray 'is privy unto.'

The tale of Darnley's then keeping a mistress arose, says Lennox, from the fact that one of two Englishmen in his service, brothers, each called Anthony Standen, brought a girl into the Castle. The sinner was, when Lennox wrote, in France. Nearly

forty years after James VI. imprisoned him in the Tower, and he wrote a romantic memoir of which there is a manuscript copy at Hatfield.

Whatever Mary's feelings towards Darnley, when making an inventory of her jewels for bequests, in case she and her child both died, she left her husband a number of beautiful objects, including the red enamel ring with which he wedded her.[61] Whatever her feelings towards Moray, she lodged him and Argyll in the Castle during her labour: 'Huntly and Bothwell would also have lodged there, but were refused.'[62] Sir James Melville (writing in old age) declares that Huntly and Lesley, Bishop of Ross, 'envied the favour that the Queen showed unto the Earl of Moray,' and wished her to 'put him in ward,' as dangerous. Melville dissuaded Mary from this course, and she admitted Moray to the Castle, while rejecting Huntly and Bothwell.[63]

James VI. and I. was born on June 19. Killigrew carried Elizabeth's congratulations, and found that Argyll, Moray, Mar, and Atholl were 'linked together' at Court. Bothwell had tried to prejudice Mary against Moray, as likely to 'bring in Morton during her child-bed,' but Bothwell had failed, and gone to the Border. 'He would not gladly be in the danger of the four that lie in the Castle.' Yet he was thought to be 'more in credit' with Mary than all the rest. If so, Mary certainly 'dissembled her love,' to the

---

[61] See Joseph Robertson's *Inventories*, 112.

[62] Bain, ii. 283.

[63] Melville, pp. 154, 155.

proverbial extent. Darnley was in the Castle, but little regarded.[64] Moray complained that his own 'credit was yet but small:' he was with the Privy Council, Bothwell was not.[65] By July 11, Moray told Cecil that his favour 'stands now in good case.'[66]

He had good reason to thank God, as he did. According to Nau, Huntly and Bothwell had long been urging Darnley to ruin Moray and Lethington, and Darnley had a high regard for George Douglas, now in exile, his agent with Ruthven for Riccio's murder.[67] This is confirmed by a letter from Morton in exile to Sir John Forster in July. Morton had heard from Scotland that Bothwell and Darnley were urging Mary to recall the said George Douglas, whom they expected to denounce Moray and Lethington as 'the devisers of the slaughter of Davy.' 'I now find,' says Morton, 'that the King and Bothwell are not likely to speed, as was written, for the Queen likes nothing of their desire.'[68]

Thus Mary was protecting Moray from the grotesque combination of Bothwell and Darnley. This is at a time when 'Bothwell was all in all,' according to Lennox, and when she had just tried to embroil Moray and her husband by bidding Darnley seduce Lady Moray. By Moray's and Morton's own showing, Moray's favour was 'in good case,' and he was guarded from

---

[64] Bain, ii. 288, 289.

[65] Bain, ii. 290.

[66] Bain, ii. 294.

[67] Nau, 20, 22.

[68] Bain, ii. 296.

Darnley's intrigues.

However, Buchanan makes Mary try to drive Darnley and Moray to dagger strokes after her 'deliverance.'[69] We need not credit his tale of Mary's informing Darnley that the nobles meant to kill him, and then calling Moray out of bed, half-naked, to hear that he was to be killed by Darnley. All that is known of this affair of the hurried Moray speeding through the corridors in his dressing-gown, comes from certain notes of news sent by Bedford to Cecil on August 15. 'The Queen declared to Moray that the King had told her he was determined to kill him, finding fault that she bears him so much company. The King confessed that reports were made to him that Moray was not his friend, which made him speak that of which he repented. The Queen said that she could not be content that either he or any else should be unfriend to Moray.' 'Any else' included Bothwell. 'Moray and Bothwell have been at evil words for Lethington. The King has departed; he cannot bear that the Queen should use familiarity with man or woman.'[70] This may be the basis of Buchanan's legend. Moray and Darnley hated each other. On the historical evidence of documents as against the partisan legends of Lennox and Buchanan, Mary, before and after her delivery, was leaning on Moray, whatever may have been her private affection for Bothwell. She even confided to him 'that money had been sent from the Pope.' Moray was thus deep in her confidence. That

[69] *Detection*, 1689, pp. 2, 3.

[70] Cal. For. Eliz. viii. 118.

she should distrust Darnley, ever weaving new intrigues, was no more than just. His wicked folly was the chief obstacle to peace.

Peace, while Darnley lived, there could not be. Morton was certain to be pardoned, and of all feuds the deadliest was that between Morton and Darnley, who had betrayed him. Meanwhile Mary's dislike of Darnley must have increased, after her fear of dying in child-birth had disappeared. When once the nobles' were knitted into a combination, with Lethington restored to the Secretaryship (for which Moray laboured successfully against Bothwell), with Morton and the Douglases brought home, Darnley was certain to perish. Lennox was disgraced, and his Stewarts were powerless, and Darnley's own Douglas kinsmen were, of all men, most likely to put their hands in his blood: as they did. Mary was his only possible shelter. Nothing was more to be dreaded by the Lords than the reconciliation of the royal pair; whom Darnley threatened with the vengeance he would take if once his foot was on their necks. But of a sincere reconciliation there was no danger.

A difficult problem is to account for the rise of Mary's passion for Bothwell. In February, she had given him into the arms of a beautiful bride. In March, he had won her sincerest gratitude and confidence. She had, Lennox says, bestowed on him the command of her new Guard of harquebus men, a wild crew of mercenaries under dare-devil captains. But though, according to her accusers, her gratitude and confidence turned to love, and though that love, they say, was shameless and notorious, there

are no contemporary hints of it in all the gossip of scandalous diplomatists. We have to fall back on what Buchanan, inspired by Lennox, wrote after Darnley's murder, and on what Lennox wrote himself in language more becoming a gentleman than that of Buchanan. If Lennox speaks truth, improper relations between Mary and Bothwell began as soon as she recovered from the birth of her child. He avers that Mary wrote a letter to Bothwell shortly after her recovery from child-bed, and just when she was resisting Bothwell's and Darnley's plot against Moray and Lethington. Bothwell, reading the letter among his friends, exclaimed, 'Gyf any faith might be given to a princess, they' (Darnley and Mary) 'should never be togidder in bed agane.' A version in English (the other paper is in Scots) makes Mary promise this to Bothwell when he entered her room, and found her washing her hands. Buchanan's tales of Mary's secret flight to Alloa, shortly after James's birth, and her revels there in company with Bothwell and his crew of pirates, are well known. Lennox, however, represents her as departing to Stirling, 'before her month,' when even women of low degree keep the house, and as 'taking her pleasure in most uncomely manner, arraied in homely sort, dancing about the market cross of the town.'

According to Nau, Mary and her ladies really resided at Alloa as guests of Lord Mar, one of the least treacherous and abandoned of her nobles. Bedford, in a letter of August 3, 1566, mentions Mary's secret departure from Edinburgh, her intended meeting with Lethington (who had been exiled from Court since

Riccio's death), at Alloa, on August 2, and her disdainful words about Darnley. He adds that Bothwell is the most hated man in Scotland: 'his insolence is such that David [Riccio] was never more abhorred than he is now,' but Bedford says nothing of a love intrigue between Bothwell and Mary.[71] The visit to Alloa, with occasional returns to Edinburgh, is of July-August.

In August, Mary, Bothwell, Moray, and Darnley hunted in Meggatdale, the moorland region between the stripling Yarrow and the Tweed. They had poor sport: poachers had been busy among the deer. Charles IX., in France, now learned that the royal pair were on the best terms;[72] and Mary's Inventories prove that, in August, she had presented Darnley with a magnificent bed; by no means 'the second-best bed.' In September she also gave him a quantity of cloth of gold, to make a caparison for his horse.[73] Claude Nau reports, however, various brutal remarks of Darnley to his wife while they were in Meggatdale. By September 20, Mary, according to Lethington, reconciled Bothwell and himself. This was a very important event. The reconciliation, Lethington says, was quietly managed at the house of a friend of his own, Argyll, Moray, and Bothwell alone being present. Moray says: 'Lethington is restored to favour, wherein I trust he shall increase.'[74] This step was hostile to Darnley's

---

[71] Stevenson, *Selections*, pp. 163-165.

[72] Cheruel, *Marie Stuart et Catherine de Médicis*, p. 47.

[73] Robertson, *Inventories*, p. 167.

[74] Bain, ii. 300.

interests, for he had attempted to ruin Lethington. It is certain, as we shall see, that all parties were now united in a band to resist Darnley's authority, and maintain that of the Queen, though, probably, nothing was said about violence.

At this very point Buchanan, supported and probably inspired by Lennox, makes the guilty intimacy of Mary and Bothwell begin in earnest. In September, 1566, Mary certainly was in Edinburgh, reconciling Lethington to Bothwell, and also working at the budget and finance in the Exchequer House. It 'was large and had pleasant gardens to it, and next to the gardens, all along, a solitary vacant room,' says Buchanan. But the real charm, he declares, was in the neighbourhood of the house of David Chalmers, a man of learning, and a friend of Bothwell. The back door of Chalmers's house opened on the garden of the Exchequer House, and according to Buchanan, Bothwell thence passed, through the garden, to Mary's chamber, where he overcame her virtue by force. She was betrayed into his hands by Lady Reres.[75]

This lady, who has been mentioned already, was the wife of Arthur Forbes of Reres. His castle, on a hill above the north shore of the Firth of Forth, is now but a grassy mound, near Lord Crawford's house of Balcarres. The lady was a niece of Cardinal Beaton, a sister of the magic lady of Branksome, and aunt of one of the Four Maries, Mary Beaton. Buchanan describes her as an old love of Bothwell, 'a woman very heavy, both by unwieldy age and massy substance;' her gay days, then, must

[75] *Detection* (1689), p. 4.

long have been over. She was also the mother of a fairly large family. Cecil absurdly avers that Bothwell obtained his divorce by accusing himself of an amour with this fat old lady.[76] Knox's silly secretary, Bannatyne, tells us that the Reformer, dining at Falsyde, was regaled with a witch story by a Mr. Lundie. He said that when Lady Atholl and Mary were both in labour, in Edinburgh Castle, he came there on business, and found Lady Reres lying abed. 'He asking her of her disease, she answered that she was never so troubled with no bairn that ever she bare, for the Lady Atholl had cast all the pain of her child-birth upon her.'[77] It was a case of Telepathy. Lady Reres had been married long enough to have a grown-up son, the young Laird of Reres, who was in Mary's service at Carberry Hill (June, 1567). According to Dr. Joseph Robertson, Lady Reres was wet-nurse to Mary's baby. But, if we trust Buchanan, she was always wandering about with Mary, while the nurseling was elsewhere. The name of Lady Reres does not occur among those of Mary's household in her *Etat* of February 1567. We only hear of her, then, from Buchanan, as a veteran procuress of vast bulk who, at some remote period, had herself been the mistress of Bothwell.

A few days after the treasonable and infamous action of Bothwell in violating his Queen, we are to believe that Mary, still in the Exchequer House, sent Lady Reres for that hero.

---

[76] Bain, ii. 440.

[77] Bannatyne, *Journal*, p. 238. This transference of disease, as from Archbishop Adamson to a pony, was believed in by the preachers.

Though it would have been simple and easy to send a girl like Margaret Carwood, Mary and Margaret must needs let old Lady Reres 'down by a string, over an old wall, into the next garden.' Still easier would it have been for Lady Reres to use the key of the back door, as when she first admitted Bothwell. But these methods were not romantic enough: 'Behold, the string suddenly broke, and down with a great noise fell Lady Reres.' However, she returned with Bothwell, and so began these tragic loves.

This legend is backed, according to Buchanan, by the confession of Bothwell's valet, George Dalgleish, 'which still remaineth upon record,' but is nowhere to be found. In Dalgleish's confession, printed in the 'Detection,' nothing of the kind occurs. But a passage in the Casket Sonnet IX. is taken as referring to the condoned rape:

> Pour luy aussi j'ai jeté mainte larme,
> Premier, quand il se fist de ce corps possesseur,
> Duquel alors il n'avoit pas le cœur.

In the Lennox MSS. Lennox himself dates the beginning of the intrigue with Bothwell about September, 1566. But he and Buchanan are practically but one witness. There is no other.

As regards this critical period, we have abundant contemporary information. The Privy Council, writing to Catherine de' Medici, from Edinburgh, on October 8, make Mary, ten or twelve days before (say September 26), leave Stirling for Edinburgh, on affairs of the Exchequer. She offered

to bring Darnley, but he insisted on remaining at Stirling, where Lennox visited him for two or three days, returning to Glasgow. Thence he wrote to Mary, warning her that Darnley had a vessel in readiness, to fly the country. The letter reached Mary on September 29, and Darnley arrived on the same day. He rode to Mary, but refused to enter the palace, because three or four of the Lords were in attendance. Mary actually went out to see her husband, apparently dismissed the Lords, and brought him to her chamber, where he passed the night. On the following day, the Council, with du Croc, met Darnley. He was invited, by Mary and the rest, to declare his grievances: his attention was directed to the 'wise and virtuous' conduct of his wife. Nothing could be extracted from Darnley, who sulkily withdrew, warning Mary, by a letter, that he still thought of leaving the country. His letter hinted that he was deprived of regal authority, and was abandoned by the nobles. To this they reply that he must be *aimable* before he can be *aimé*, and that they will never consent to his having the disposal of affairs.[78]

A similar account was given by du Croc to Archbishop Beaton, and, on October 17, to Catherine de' Medici, no friend of Mary, also by Mary to Lennox.[79]

We have not Darnley's version of what occurred. He knew that all the powerful Lords were now united against him. Du Croc, however, had frequent interviews with Darnley, who stated

[78] Teulet, *Papiers d'État*, ii. 139-146, 147, 151. See also Keith, ii. 448-459.

[79] Frazer, *The Lennox*, ii. 350, 351.

his grievance. It was not that Bothwell injured his honour. Darnley kept spies on Mary, and had such a noisy and burlesque set of incidents occurred in the garden of Exchequer House as Buchanan reports, Darnley should have had the news. But he merely complained to du Croc that he did not enjoy the same share of power and trust as was his in the early weeks of his wedding. Du Croc replied that this fortune could never again be his. The 'Book of Articles' entirely omits Darnley's offence in the slaying of Riccio. Du Croc was more explicit. He told Darnley that the Queen had been personally offended, and would never restore him to his authority. 'He ought to be well content with the honour and good cheer which she gave him, honouring and treating him as the King her husband, and supplying his household with all manner of good things.' This goes ill with Buchanan's story about Mary's stinginess to Darnley. It is admitted by the Lennox MSS. that she did not keep her alleged promise to Bothwell, that she and Darnley should never meet in the marriage bed.

When Mary had gone to Jedburgh, to hold a court (about October 8), du Croc was asked to meet Darnley at some place, apparently Dundas, 'three leagues from Edinburgh.' Du Croc thought that Darnley wished Mary to ask him to return. But Darnley, du Croc believed, intended to hang off till after the baptism of James, and did not mean to be present on that occasion (*pour ne s'y trouver point*). He had, in du Croc's opinion, but two causes of unhappiness: one, the reconciliation of the

Lords with the Queen, and their favour; the other, a fear lest Elizabeth's envoy to the baptism might decline to recognise him (*ne fera compte de luy*). The night-ride from Dundas to Linlithgow, in which (according to Lennox) Darnley told the tale of Mary's advice to him to seduce Lady Moray, must have occurred at this very time, perhaps after the meeting with du Croc, three leagues from Edinburgh. In his paper about the night-ride, Lennox avers that Mary yielded to Bothwell's love, before this ride and conversation. But he does not say that he himself was already aware of the amour, and his whole narrative leaves the impression that he was not. We are to suppose that, if Buchanan's account is true, the adventures of the Exchequer House and of Lady Reres were only known to the world later. Certainly no suspicion of Mary had crossed the mind of du Croc, who says that he never saw her so much loved and respected; and, in short, there is no known contemporary hint of the beginning of the guilty amour, flagrant as were its alleged circumstances. This point has, naturally, been much insisted upon by the defenders of Mary.

It must not escape us that, about this time, almost every Lord, from Moray downwards, was probably united in a signed 'band' against Darnley. The precise nature of its stipulations is uncertain, but that a hostile band existed, I think can be demonstrated. The Lords, in their letter of October 8 to Catherine, declare that they will never consent to let Darnley manage affairs. The evidence as to a band comes from four

sources: Randolph, Archibald Douglas, a cousin and ally of Morton, Claude Nau, Mary's secretary, and Moray himself.

First, on October 15, 1570, Randolph, being in Edinburgh after the death of the Regent Moray, writes: 'Divers, since the Regent's death, either to cover their own doings or to advance their cause, have sought to make him odious to the world. The universal bruit runs upon three or four persons' (Bothwell, Lethington, Balfour(?), Huntly, and Argyll) 'who subscribed upon a bond promising to concur and assist one another in the late King's death. This bond was kept in the Castle, in a little coffer covered with green, and, after the apprehension of the Scottish Queen at Carberry Hill, was taken out of the place where it lay by the Laird of Lethington, in presence of Mr. James Balfour… This being a thing so notoriously known, as well by Mr. James Balfour's own report, as testimony of other who have seen the thing, is utterly denied to be true, *and another bond produced which they allege to be it, containing no such matter, at the which, with divers other noblemen's hands, the Regent's was also made, a long time before the bond of the King's murder was made*, and now they say that if it can be proved by any bond that they consented to the King's death, the late Regent is as guilty as they, and for testimony thereof (as Randolph is credibly informed) have sent a bond to be seen in England, which is either some new bond made among themselves, and the late Regent's hand counterfeited at the same (which in some cases he knows has been done), or the old bond at which his hand is, containing no

such matter.' Randolph adds, as an example of forgery of Moray's hand, the order for Lethington's release by Kirkcaldy to whom Robert Melville attributed the forgery.[80] Thus both sides could deal in charges of forging hands.

But what is 'the old band,' *signed by Moray* 'a long time before the bond of the King's murder was made'? To this question we probably find a reply in the long letter written by Archibald Douglas to Mary, in April, 1583, when he (one of Darnley's murderers) was an exile, and was seeking, and winning, Mary's favour. Douglas had fled to France after Riccio's murder, but was allowed to return to Scotland, 'to deal with Earls Murray, Athol, Bodvel, Arguile, and Secretary Ledington,' in the interests of a pardon for Morton, Ruthven, and Lindsay. This must have been just after September 20, when the return of Lethington to favour occurred. But Murray, Atholl, Bothwell, Argyll, and Lethington told Douglas that they had made a band, with other noblemen, to this effect: that they 'were resolved to obey your Majesty as their natural sovereign, *and have nothing to do with your husband's command whatsoever*.' So the Lords also told Catherine de' Medici. They wished to know, before interfering in Morton's favour, whether he would also sign this anti-Darnley band, which Morton and his accomplices did. Archibald Douglas then returned, with their signatures, to Stirling, at the time of James's baptism, in mid December, 1566. Morton and his friends

[80] Cal. For. Eliz. ix. 354, 355.

were then pardoned on December 24.[81] This anti-Darnley band, which does not allude to *murder*, must be that produced in 1570, according to Randolph, by 'divers, since Moray's death, either to cover their own doings, or to advance their own cause, seeking to make him odious to the world.' We thus find Moray, and all the most powerful nobles, banded against Darnley, some time between September and December 1566.

Now, Claude Nau, inspired by Mary, attributes Darnley's murder to a band 'written by Alexander Hay, at that time one of the clerks of the Council, and signed by the Earls of Moray, Huntly, Bothwell, and Morton, by Lethington, James Balfour, and others.' Moray certainly did not sign the murderous band kept in the green-covered coffer, nor, as he alleged at his death, did Morton. But Nau seems to be confusing *that* band with the band of older date, to which, as Randolph admits, and as Archibald Douglas insists, Moray, Morton, and others put their hands, Morton signing as late as December 1566.

Nau says: 'They protested that they were acting for the public good of the realm, pretending that they were freeing the Queen from the bondage and misery into which she had been reduced by the King's behaviour. They promised to support each other, and to avouch that the act was done justly, licitly, and lawfully by the leading men of the Council. They had done it in defence of their lives, which would be in danger, they said, if the King should get the upper hand and secure the government of the

[81] Laing, ii. 331, 334.

realm, at which he was aiming.'[82] Randolph denies that there was any hint of murder in the band signed by Moray. Archibald Douglas makes the gist of it 'that they would have nothing to do with your husband's command whatsoever.' Nau speaks of 'the act,' but does not name murder explicitly as part of the band. Almost certainly, then, there did exist, in autumn 1566, a band hostile to Darnley, and signed by Moray and Morton. It seems highly probable that the old band, made long before the King's murder, and of a character hostile to Darnley's influence, and menacing to him, is that which Moray himself declares that he did sign, 'at the beginning of October,' 1566. When Moray, in London, on January 19, 1569, was replying to an account (the so-called 'Protestation of Argyll and Huntly') of the conference at Craigmillar, in November 1566, he denied (what was not alleged) that he signed any band *there*: at Craigmillar. 'This far the subscriptioun of bandes be me is trew, that indeed I subscrivit ane band with the Erlis of Huntlie, Ergile, and Boithvile in Edinburgh, at the begynning of October the same yeir, 1566: quhilk was devisit in signe of our reconciliatioun, in respect of the former grudgis and displesouris that had been amang us. Whereunto I wes constreinit to mak promis, before I culd be admittit to the Quenis presence or haif ony shew of hir faveur…'[83]

Now Moray had been admitted to Mary's presence two days

[82] Nau, p. 35.

[83] Bain, ii. 599, 600.

after the death of Riccio, before her flight to Dunbar. On April 25, 1566, Randolph writes from Berwick to Cecil: 'Murray, Argyll, and Glencairn are come to Court. I hear his (Moray's) credit shall be good. The Queen wills that all controversies shall be taken up, in especial that between Murray and Bothwell.'[84] On April 21, 1566, Moray, Argyll, Glencairn, and others were received by Mary in the Castle, and a Proclamation was made to soothe 'the enmity that was betwixt the Earls of Huntly, Bothwell, and Murray.'[85] Thenceforward, as we have proved in detail, Moray was ostensibly in Mary's favour. Moray would have us believe that he only obtained this grace by virtue of his promise to sign a band with Huntly, Bothwell, and Argyll: the last had been on his own side in his rebellion. But the band, he alleges, was not signed till October, 1566, though the promise must have been given, at least his 'favour' with Mary was obtained, in April. And Moray signed the band precisely at the moment when Darnley was giving most notorious trouble, and had just been approached and implored by Mary, the Council, and the French ambassador. That was the moment when the Privy Council assured Catherine that they 'would never consent' to Darnley's sovereignty. Why was that moment selected by Moray to fulfil a promise more than four months old? Was the band not that mentioned by Randolph, Archibald Douglas, and Nau, and therefore, in some sense, an anti-Darnley band, not a

[84] Bain, ii. 276.

[85] *Diurnal*, p. 99.

mere 'sign of reconciliation'? The inference appears legitimate, and this old band signed by Moray seems to have been confused, by his enemies, with a later band for Darnley's murder, which we may be sure that he never signed. He only 'looked through his fingers.'

On October 7, or 8, or 9, Mary left Edinburgh to hold a Border session at Jedburgh. She appears to have been in Jedburgh by the 9th.[86] On October 7, Bothwell was severely wounded, in Liddesdale, by a Border thief. On October 15, Mary rode to visit him at Hermitage.[87] Moray, says Sir John Forster to Cecil (October 15), was with her, and other nobles. Yet Buchanan says that she rode 'with such a company as no man of any honest degree would have adventured his life and his goods among them.' Life, indeed, was not safe with the nobles, but how Buchanan errs! Du Croc, writing from Jedburgh on October 17, reports that Bothwell is out of danger: 'the Queen is well pleased, his loss to her would have been great.'[88] Buchanan's account of this affair is, that Mary heard at Borthwick of Bothwell's wound, whereon 'she flingeth away like a mad woman, by great journeys in post, in the sharp time of winter' (early October!), 'first to Melrose, then to Jedburgh. There, though she heard sure news of his life, yet her affection, impatient of delay, could not temper itself; but needs she must bewray her outrageous lust, and in

[86] See the evidence in Hay Fleming, 414, note 61.

[87] Cal. For. Eliz. viii. 139. *Diurnal*, 101.

[88] Teulet, ii. 150.

an inconvenient time of the year, despising all incommodities of the way and weather, and all dangers of thieves, she betook herself headlong to her journey.' The 'Book of Articles' merely says that, after hearing of Bothwell's wound, she 'took na kindly rest' till she saw him – a prolonged *insomnia*. On returning to Jedburgh, she prepared for Bothwell's arrival, and, when he was once brought thither, then perhaps by their excessive indulgence in their passion, Buchanan avers, Mary nearly died.

All this is false. Mary stayed at least five days in Jedburgh before she rode to Hermitage, whither, says Nau, corroborated by Forster, Moray accompanied her. She fell ill on October 17, a week before Bothwell's arrival at Jedburgh. On October 25, she was despaired of, and some thought she had passed away. Bothwell arrived, in a litter, about October 25. Forster says October 15, wrongly. These were no fit circumstances for 'their old pastime,' which they took 'so openly, as they seemed to fear nothing more than lest their wickedness should be unknown.' 'I never saw her Majesty so much beloved, esteemed, and honoured,' du Croc had written on October 17.

Buchanan's tale is here so manifestly false, that it throws doubt on his scandal about the Exchequer House. That Mary abhorred Darnley, and was wretched, is certain. 'How to be free of him she sees no outgait,' writes Lethington on October 24. He saw no chance of reconciliation.[89]

[89] Laing, ii. 72.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.