LOUIS BARBÉ

IN BYWAYS OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

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Barbé L.

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Содержание

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Preface

When the author of the following papers came to Scotland, many years ago, he knew nothing of the country that was to become his home, and was hardly less ignorant of its history. To acquire some acquaintance with both he followed the same plan: he began with the highways, as indicated, in the one case, by the advertisements of the railway and steamboat companies, and, in the other, by the works of Tytler and Hill Burton. Before long, however, he learned that the knowledge thus obtained might be pleasantly supplemented by independent excursions off the beaten track. Topographically the result was the discovery of charming bits of scenery, of which he still recalls the picturesque beauty with delight. Historically, too, he found his way into interesting nooks and corners which his early guides had either ignored entirely or contented themselves with referring to in the briefest words. The outcome of some of his explorations – if it be not presumptuous to apply such a term to them – is set forth in the present volume. In venturing to publish it, he is not without a hope that the interest which he has felt in his rambles through some of the byways of Scottish history may, to some extent, be shared by others. If he should be disappointed in this, he will have to admit that he has done less than justice to subjects that had it in them to be made pleasant and attractive.

Those subjects are varied, but, as regards most of them, not wholly unconnected. Dealing, as they mainly do, with the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, they have, at least, a certain chronological unity, and may, in some slight degree, help to supplement the general knowledge of one of the most picturesque periods in the history of Scotland.

What has so far been said does not, it must be allowed, apply very directly to one of the papers contained in the present collection. It cannot be claimed for the "Longtail" myth, of which the story is here given, that it is essentially Scottish. It may, however, be urged in support of its right to appear here, that it was French at a time when, as regards antipathy against England, the agreement between France and Scotland was a very close one. And, if further justification be needed, it may be found in the fact that some of the Scottish chroniclers are amongst those who supply the most valuable information concerning both the prevalence and the alleged origin of the quaint medieval belief that Englishmen had tails inflicted on them in punishment of the impiety of some of their pagan forefathers.

In connection with this paper the author has the pleasant duty of expressing his thanks to Dr. George Neilson, to whom he is indebted for several illustrative passages; and also to Mr. Barwick, of the British Museum, without whose ready help a number of others would have remained inaccessible.

Some of the papers have appeared, mostly in a condensed form, in the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Evening Times*, and thankful acknowledgment is made of the permission readily granted to make further use of them.

Responsibility is admitted, at the same time that indulgence is craved, for the translations of old French poetry and medieval Latin verse which occur in some of the sketches.

In the case of the latter, more particularly, it has not always proved an easy task to supply English versions of the monkish doggerel. It is hoped, however, that if the letter has been freely dealt with, the spirit has been preserved.

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

A Brilliant Personality

More than three hundred years have elapsed since Mary Stuart was sent to the scaffold by Elizabeth, and met death with that noble fortitude which awed her enemies and which has half redeemed her fame in the eyes even of those who regard the tragedy of Fotheringay as an act no less of justice than of expediency. But even at the present time interest in her memory has not died away; nor can the question of her innocence or of her guilt be yet said to have been definitely settled by all that has been written about her in the interval. It hardly seems probable that it ever will be, for it is still a question of politics with some and of religion with many. And even in the rare instances where judgment is not blinded by the prejudice or the partiality of party or of creed, it is affected by an influence, nobler and more excusable indeed, but not less powerful nor less misleading – by unreasoning sentiment, by the sympathy which the romance of the unfortunate Queen's chequered career, her legendary beauty, her long captivity, and her heroic death awaken.

In the controversy which has now raged for three centuries, and in the course of which every incident of Mary's life has repeatedly been submitted to the closest scrutiny, anxiety to get at facts, to add to the weight of evidence, to discover fresh witnesses, to unearth new documents bearing on the points at issue, has led to a disregard of her personality more complete, perhaps, than in the case of any of her contemporaries, and contrasting strangely with the abundance of intimate details which go to make up our knowledge of her great rival. To most of us Elizabeth is as distinctly, almost tangibly, present as though she had reigned in our day. She moves through the pages of history surrounded by a train of courtiers scarcely less familiar to us than those of our own generation. The Queen of Scots, on the contrary, seems to be but little more than an historical abstraction. It is scarcely too much to say that many for whom it would be an easy task to follow her, step by step, from Linlithgow to Fotheringay, to recall all the events of which she was the central figure, to discuss all the problems which her name suggests, would be at a loss to furnish such details as could bring before us the features of the woman whose beauty doubtless finds frequent mention in their discourses, or bring together such particulars as would justify all that they are ready to admit, and perhaps even to assert, concerning her talents and her accomplishments. It may, therefore, be neither inopportune nor uninteresting if, forgetting for a while the history of the Queen, we give our attention to the individuality of the woman; if, turning to the "treasures of antiquity laid up in old historic rolls", we endeavour, not to clear up the mystery of Darnley's murder, nor to explain the fatal marriage with Bothwell; not to pronounce on the authenticity of the sonnets, nor to solve the enigma of the famous letters; but to present a picture of the first lady of the land as she appeared to the crowds that had hurried to Leith to welcome her return, or that lined the Canongate as she rode to the Parliament House; to show her at her sports with her attendant Marys at Stirling or at St. Andrews; to listen to the conversation with which she entertained the courtiers of Amboise and of Holyrood, and to glance at the pages of the volumes over which she mused in the retirement of her library or the solitude of her prison.

The historians of Mary Stuart all agree in telling us that she was the most beautiful woman of her age; and it must be admitted that this is fully borne out by all that can be gathered from contemporary writers. It is not only such poetic enthusiasts as Michel de l'Hôpital, Du Bellay, and Ronsard, or such courtly flatterers as Brantôme and Castelnau, who pronounce her beauty to have been matchless – far exceeding "all that is, shall be, or has ever been", but the serious and dignified chroniclers whom Jebb has brought together in his valuable folios – Strada, Blackwood, and even de Thou – also grow eloquent in praise of her charms. But perhaps the most convincing testimony that

can be adduced is contained in a poem,[1] composed by an Englishman who was confessedly hostile to Mary, and whose satire was so keenly felt by her that she made it the subject of a formal complaint to Elizabeth. The words attributed to her – for the passage in which they occur is in the form of a confession on her part – are scarcely less forcible than those of her avowed partisans and admirers:

> But I could boast of beauty with the best,
> In skilful points of princely attire
> And of the golden gifts of nature's behest,
> Who filled my face of favor fresh and fair.
> My beauty shines like Phœbus in the air,
> And nature formed my features beside
> In such proport as advanceth my pride.
> Thus fame affatethe (*proclaims*) my state to the stars,
> Enfeoft with the gifts of nature's device
> That sound the retreat to other princes' ears,
> Wholly to resign to me the chiefest prize.

It is most remarkable, however, that no extant portrait justifies the praises so lavishly bestowed on Mary. As to this, the courtesy of the late Mr. Wylie Guild, of Glasgow, afforded us an opportunity of forming an opinion based on the evidence of his remarkable collection of portraits of the Queen of Scots – a collection which comprised, besides reproductions of most of the paintings claiming to be authentic, a series of over four hundred engravings, many of them by Clouet, and dating from the period of Mary's stay in France. We were compelled to agree with the possessor of that unique iconography that none of them showed the dazzling charms which poets and chroniclers have celebrated. And the portraits which various exhibitions have since then enabled us to examine, have only confirmed that earlier judgment. To reconcile this very striking contradiction seems difficult. Possibly the truth may be that the fascination of Mary's face consisted less in the regularity of outline or the striking beauty of any one feature than in the expression by which it was animated.[2] Her complexion, though likened by Ronsard to alabaster and ivory,[3] does not seem to have possessed

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[1] For an account of this poem, *Maister Randolphe's Fantasie*, see pages 91-98.

[2] As bearing on the subject of Mary's personal appearance and the fidelity of her portraits, the following passages from an article contributed to the *Glasgow Herald*, as a review of Mr. J. J. Foster's work, *Concerning the True Portraiture of Mary Queen of Scots*, may here be reproduced: "Mr. Foster points out 'in some cases a slight but perceptible squint'. We have noticed this in one or two instances only, and in portraits which, though they may be authentic, are technically inferior; and we are consequently more inclined to attribute the defect to the artist than to nature. The majority of the most trustworthy portraits agree in making the upper eyelids thick, with an uninterrupted curve, in setting the arched, well-marked eyebrows wide apart, and in giving an exceptionally broad space between the eyes and the ears. The oval face, the high cheek-bones, the round, well-proportioned and capacious forehead, the long but shapely Greek nose, are features with regard to which there is practical unanimity. Even if Sir George Scharf had not pointed it out, it would hardly be possible to overlook the peculiarity of the compressed lips. They are not thin, however, though, on the other hand, they are very far from possessing that fulness which physiognomists look upon as an indication of sensuality. Another feature, so often reproduced as to be almost characteristic and distinctive, is the strongly-marked V depression in the middle of the upper lip. The cheek is full in its lower part, but not unduly so. The chin is well-developed, but is neither cloven nor dimpled… Prince Labanoff declared that, with the exception of one portrait – and that of dubious authenticity – none renders even youth or average beauty. Quite recently Major Martin Hume wrote of Mary that 'a contemplation of her known authentic portraits, even those taken in the best years of her youth and happiness, does not carry conviction that her physical beauty alone can have been the cause of the extraordinary influence she exercised over the men who came within the sphere of her attraction'. And now we have Mr. Foster admitting that 'scarcely any of the so-called portraits of Mary Stuart bear out the reputation of her beauty'; and that 'all her pictures entirely lack that indefinable charm which captivated everyone brought in contact with her'. He seems to attribute this, in some measure, at least, to the imperfections of the artists of the time. He might perhaps have added, to the unfavourable circumstances under which they worked. For, as M. Dimier tells us, 'the oil-painting was never attempted from life. The artist brought away from his model nothing but the crayon and some written notes concerning the complexion, colour of hair, and of the eyes; he handled the colours only in his studio, and finished the work at his leisure'. We know, too, of Mary Stuart, in particular, that she ordered portraits of herself to be painted in France, fourteen years after leaving the country."

[3] *Œuvres*, vol. ii, p. 1172.

the clearness and brilliancy which the comparison implies; for Sir James Melville, though anxious to vindicate his Queen's claim to be considered "very lovely" and "the fairest lady in her country", acknowledged that she was less "white" than Elizabeth.[4] The brightness of her eyes, which Ronsard likened to stars, and Chastelard to beacons,[5] has not been questioned; but their colour is a point about which there is less unanimity, opinions varying between hazel and dark grey. As regards her hair the discrepancy of contemporary authorities is even greater. Brantôme and Ronsard describe a wealth of golden hair, and this is to a certain extent confirmed by Sir James Melville, who, when called upon by Elizabeth to pronounce whether his Queen's hair was fairer than her own, answered that "the fairnes of them baith was not their worst faltes".[6] To this, however, must be opposed the testimony of Nicholas White, who, writing to Cecil in 1563, described the Queen as black-haired. The explanation of this may possibly lie in Mary's compliance with the fashion, introduced about this time, of wearing wigs. Indeed, Knollys informed White that she wore "hair of sundry colours",[7] and, in a letter to Cecil, praised the skill with which Mary Seton – "the finest busker of hair to be seen in any country" – "did set such a curled hair upon the Queen, that was said to be a perewyke, that showed very delicately".[8]

According to one account, the Queen of Scots wore black, according to another, auburn ringlets on the morning of her execution. Both, however, agree in this, that when the false covering fell she "appeared as grey as if she had been sixty and ten years old".

Mary's hand was white, but not small, the long, tapering fingers mentioned by Ronsard[9] being, indeed, a characteristic of some of her portraits. She was of tall stature, taller than Elizabeth, which made the Queen of England pronounce her cousin to be too tall, she herself being, according to her own standard, "neither too high nor too low".[10] Her voice was irresistibly soft and sweet. Not only does Brantôme extol it as "trés douce et trés bonne",[11] and Ronsard poetically celebrate it as capable of moving rocks and woods,[12] but Knox, although ungraciously and unwillingly, also testifies to its charm. He informs us that, at one of her Parliaments, the Queen made a "paynted orisoun", and that, on this occasion, "thair mycht have been hard among hir flatteraris, '*Vox Dianæ!*' The voice of a goddess (for it could not be *Dei*) and not of a woman! God save the sweet face! Was thair ever oratour spack so properlie and so sweitlie!"[13]

When, to this description, we have added that Mary Stuart was of a full figure[14] and became actually stout in later life; that she is described in the report of her execution and represented in several portraits as having a double chin, we shall have given a picture of her which, though wanting in some details, is as complete as it is possible to sketch at this length of time.

Mary Stuart is not infrequently mentioned as one of the precocious children of history. But the legend of her scholarly acquirements originates with Brantôme, an authority not always above suspicion when the glorification of princes is his theme, and it is not unnecessary to look more closely into the matter before we accept his glowing panegyric of the youthful prodigy. He informs us that Mary was "very learned in Latin",[15] and that, when only thirteen or fourteen years of age, she publicly delivered at the Louvre, in the presence of King Henry II, Catherine de' Medici, his Queen, and the

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[4] *Memoirs*, p. 124.

[5] *Brantôme*, t. v, p. 94.

[6] *Memoirs*, p. 123.

[7] T. Wright's *Queen Elizabeth and her Time*, vol. i, p. 311.

[8] G. Chalmers, *Life of Queen Mary*, vol. i, pp. 443-4.

[9] *Œuvres*, vol. ii, pp. 1172-4.

[10] Melville's *Memoirs*, p. 124.

[11] T. v, p. 86.

[12] *Œuvres*, l. c.

[13] *History of the Reformation*, vol. ii, p. 381.

[14] Teulet, *Papiers d'État*, t. ii, p. 883.

[15] T. v, pp. 83-4.

whole French Court, a Latin discourse which she had composed in justification of her own course of studies, and in support of the view that it is befitting in women to devote themselves to letters and to the liberal arts. This speech is also referred to by Antoine Fouquelin in the dedication of a textbook of Rhetoric which he composed for the young Princess.[16] He records the admiration with which Mary had been listened to by the noble company, and the high hopes which the elegant oration had awakened. That she herself set some value on this production may be assumed from the fact that she was at the pains of translating it into French; and the mention of it in the inventory of books delivered by the Earl of Morton to James VI in 1578, where it appears as "ane Oratioun to the King of Franche of the Quenis awin hand write", would seem to imply that she looked back with pride upon her youthful triumph. This interesting manuscript has now disappeared; nevertheless, it is not impossible to obtain from another source a fairly accurate idea of the speech which called forth such high praise from the French courtiers. It happens that the National Library in Paris possesses the Latin themes written by Mary Stuart in 1554, the year before the oratorical performance at the Louvre. Amongst the exercises contained in the morocco-bound volume, fifteen refer to the same subject as the speech, and, it is fair to suppose, were intended as a preparation for the princely pupil's "speech-day".[17] Disappointing as it may be to ardent admirers of the Queen of Scots, it must be admitted that her themes do not bear out the praises bestowed on her Latinity, but contain such solecisms as would probably have been fraught with unpleasant consequences to a less noble and less fair scholar. Neither need the substance of Mary's apology for learned women excite our enthusiasm. To string together, with a few commonplace remarks, lists of names evidently supplied by her tutor and taken by him from Politian's Epistles, was no very remarkable achievement on the part of a child who, if she began her classical studies as early as her fellow pupil and sister-in-law Elizabeth did, had already devoted fully five years to Latin at the date of her famous speech.

But, though the Queen's early proficiency may have been overrated, there can be no doubt that, in later life, she possessed considerable familiarity with the language of Virgil and of Cicero. We know from contemporary letters that, after her return to Scotland, she continued her studies under Buchanan[18] and that, faithful to the habit which she had acquired in France, of devoting two hours a day to her books,[19] she regularly read "somewhat of Livy" with him "after her dinner".

The catalogue of the books[20] contained in the royal library affords further information as to the nature and extent of her acquaintance with Latin literature. In it we find mention, amongst others of lesser note, of Horace, Virgil and Cicero, of Æmilius Probus and Columella, of Vegetius and Boethius. Neither did she neglect the Latinity of the Middle Ages. In prose it is represented by such forgotten names as those of Bertram of Corvey, of Ludolph of Saxony, of Joannes de Sacrobosco, and of Nicolaus de Clamangiis, the authors of ponderous treatises on science and on theology; the latter subject being one which her interest in the great ecclesiastical revolution of the age rendered particularly attractive to her. Amongst contemporary Latin poets her favourites seem to have been Petrus Bargæus, Louis Leroy, Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton, and George Buchanan, whose dedication to her of his translation of the Psalms has not unjustly been pronounced to stand "unsurpassed by all the verses that have been lavished upon her during three hundred years by poets of almost every nation and language of Europe".[21]

Whether the Queen of Scots was acquainted with Greek cannot be determined with certainty. Neither Brantôme nor Con nor Blackwood has given information on this head. If, on the one hand,

[16] *Rhétorique Françoise*, Paris, 1555.

[17] *Latin Themes of Mary Stuart*, published by Anatole de Montaiglon.

[18] Letter from Randolph to Cecil, 7 April, 1562.

[19] *Brantôme*, t. v., p. 84.

[20] *Inventories of Mary Queen of Scots*. Bannatyne Club, p. 179 *et seq.*

[21] *Inventories*, p. cv.

her numerous Latin and French translations of Greek authors do not point to a great familiarity with it, on the other, the knowledge that she used such versions for the purpose of linguistic study, and the presence on her shelves of Homer and Herodotus, of Sophocles and Euripides, of Socrates and Plato, of Demosthenes and Lucian in the original tongue, justify the supposition that, even though she may not have rivalled the fair pupils of Ascham and of Aylmer, the productions of Athenian genius were not sealed books to her.

Amongst modern languages Spanish was that with which Mary had the slightest acquaintance, and so far as may be judged from the works which she possessed, her reading in it was limited to a book of chronicles and a collection of ballads.[22] As might be expected from her early surroundings, she was more familiar with Italian. She could both speak and write it. Indeed, among the verses attributed to her there is an Italian sonnet addressed to Elizabeth. It is scarcely credible that she had not read Dante; nevertheless, it is worthy of notice that his "Divine Comedy" does not appear in the catalogue of her library[23] where, however, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Ariosto figure by the side of the less-known Bembo.

Though born in Scotland, Mary Stuart never possessed great fluency in the language of the country over which she was called to rule. Her knowledge of it was acquired chiefly, if not wholly, after her return from France. Her father, from whom she might have learnt it in childhood, she never knew. For her mother the northern Doric remained through life a foreign tongue. The attendants with whom she was surrounded in her earliest infancy were either French or had been educated in France. It is therefore questionable whether she could express herself in what was nominally her native tongue, even when she sailed from Dumbarton on her journey to the court of the Valois. That she forgot whatever she may then have known of it is beyond doubt. Seven years after she had left France she was still making efforts to learn English, using translations – amongst others an English version of the Psalms – for the purpose, but not meeting with signal success. Conversing with Nicholas White, in 1569, she began with excuses for "her ill English, declaring herself more willing than apt to learn the language".[24] It was on the 1st of September of the preceding year that she wrote what she herself describes as her first letter in English. This circumstance may warrant its reproduction, though as an historical document merely, it possesses no importance. It is addressed to Sir Francis Knollys: "Mester Knollis, y heuu har sum neus from Scotland; y send zou the double off them y vreit to the quin my gud sister, and pres zou to du the lyk, conforme to that y spak zesternicht vnto zou, and sut hesti ansur y refer all to zour discretion, and wil lipne beter in zour gud delin for mi, nor y kan persuad zou, nemli in this langasg; excus my iuel vreitin for y neuuer vsed it afor, and am hestet… Excus my iuel vreitin thes furst tym."[25]

The testimony of Mary's library,[26] to which we have already appealed, and which is the more valuable and the more trustworthy that the books which it contained were undoubtedly collected by herself and for her own use, bears out what has been so often stated with regard to her love of French literature. In history it shows her to have been acquainted not only with the foremost chroniclers; not only with Froissart, in whose picturesque narrative her native Scotland is mentioned with such grateful remembrance of the hospitality shown him; not only with Monstrelet, from whose ungenerous treatment of the heroic Joan of Arc she may have learnt, even before her own experience taught her the hard lesson, how the animosity of party can blunt all better feeling; but also with the lesser writers, with those whose works never reached celebrity even in their own day and whose names have long ceased to interest posterity, with Aubert and Bouchet, Sauvage and Paradin.

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[22] "Concionero de Romances", *Inventories*, p. cxlvi.

[23] Unless it be he that is meant in the entry: "Danies Vgieri in Italian", *Inventories*, p. cxliv.

[24] Haynes's *Collection of State Papers*, p. 509.

[25] Sir H. Ellis's *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, First Series, vol. ii, p. 252.

[26] *Inventories*, p. 179.

It may be regarded as a proof of her good taste that she set but little store on the dreary romances of the time, written either in imitation or in continuation of "Amadis de Gaul", whilst to Rabelais,[27] on the contrary, she accorded the place of honour which he deserved.

As regards the poets of France, all that Brantôme has told us of her partiality for them finds its justification in the almost complete collection of their works which she brought to Scotland with her. Amongst all others, however, Du Bellay, Maison-Fleur, and Ronsard were her special favourites. For the last, in particular, her enthusiasm was unbounded. It was to the verses in which he embodies the love of a whole nation that she turned for solace when the fresh sorrow of her departure from France was her heaviest burthen; it was over his pages that her tears flowed in the bitterness which knew no comfort as she sat a lonely captive in the castles of Elizabeth. As a token of her admiration she sent him from her prison a costly service of plate with the flattering inscription: "A Ronsard, l'Apollon des Français".[28]

It has been asserted by Brantôme, and repeated ever since on his authority, that Mary Stuart herself excelled in French verse. The elegiac stanzas quoted by him have been admired in all good faith by succeeding generations "for the tender pathos of the sentiments and the original beauty of the metaphors". It is painful to throw discredit on the time-honoured tradition, but the late discovery of a manuscript once in Brantôme's possession has proved, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the "Elegy on the Death of Francis II" was not composed by his wife. This was at once established by Dr. Galy of Périgueux, the possessor of the manuscript. Having since then been favoured by him with a copy of other poems contained in it and acknowledged by Brantôme as his own productions, and having compared them carefully with the "pathetic sentiments" and "original metaphors", as well as with the expressions and even the rhymes of the Elegy, we have no hesitation in going a step further, and pronouncing that the latter is from the pen of the unscrupulous Lord Abbot himself.[29] Apart from this, there still remain a few poems attributed to Mary, and authenticated, not indeed by her signature, but by what is almost as authoritative, her anagrams: "Sa vertu m'atire", or "Va, tu meriteras".[30] However interesting these poetical effusions may be as relics, their literary merit is of no high order, and they are assuredly not such as to deserve for the author a place amongst the poets of her century.

Before closing our remarks on Mary Stuart's scholarship and literary acquirements we would dwell for a moment on the subject of her handwriting, for that too has been made the subject of admiring comment by some of her biographers. Con has recorded that "she formed her letters elegantly and, what is rare in a woman, wrote swiftly".[31] Some reason for his admiration may be found in the fact that Mary had adopted what Shakespeare styles "the sweet Roman hand", which at that time was only beginning to take the place of the old Gothic, and, in Scotland particularly, had all the charm of a fashionable novelty. The specimen now before us shows a bold, rather masculine hand, of such size that five short words – "mon linge entre mes fammes" – fill a line six inches long. The letters are seldom joined together, and the words are scattered over the page with untutored irregularity and disregard for straight lines. On the whole we cannot but allow the force of Pepys' exclamation on being shown some of the Queen's letters: "Lord! How poorly methinks they wrote in those days, and on what plain uncut paper!"[32]

Our sketch of Mary Stuart would not be complete if we limited ourselves to the more serious side of her character merely. If she did not deserve the reputation for utter thoughtlessness and

[27] "Pantagruell in Frenche", *Inventories*, p. cxlvi.

[28] *Œuvres de Ronsard*, vol. ii, p. 1171.

[29] For a full account of this literary forgery, see below, pp. 79-90.

[30] The following scheme shows how these anagrams were formed: —

[31] "G. Conaei vita Mariae Stuartae, 1624", in *Jebb*, vol. ii, p. 15.

[32] Diary, 24 Nov., 1665.

frivolity which some of her puritanical contemporaries have given her, she was undoubtedly fond of amusements. The memoirs and correspondence of the time often show her seeking recreation in popular sports and pastimes; indeed, Randolph describes life at the Scottish Court for the first two years after her return from France as one continual round of "feasts, banquetting, masking, and running at the ring, and such like".[33] It was to Mary, as Knox testifies, that the introduction into Scotland of those primitive dramatic performances known as Masques or Triumphs was due. They soon became so popular that they formed the chief entertainment at every festival. The Queen herself and her attendants, particularly the four Marys, often took part in them, either acting in mere dumb show or reciting the verses which the elegant pen of Buchanan supplied, and singing the songs which Rizzio composed, and of which the melodies may very possibly be those which, wedded to more modern verse, are still popular amongst the Scottish peasantry. Not only were these masques performed in the large halls of the feudal castles, but in the open air also, near the little lake at the foot of Arthur's Seat. It may cause some astonishment at the present day to find not only the maids of honour, but even the Queen herself, assuming the dress of the other sex in these masquerades. Yet the *Diurnal of Occurrents*[34] records, without expressing either indignation or even astonishment at the fact, that "the Queen's Grace and all her Maries and ladies were all clad in men's apparel" at the "Maskery or mumschance" given one Sunday evening in honour of the French Ambassador.

Like her cousin of England, Mary was fond of dancing, and, as her Latin biography informs us, showed to great advantage in it.[35] From a passage quaintly noted as "full of diversion" in Sir James Melville's Memoirs, we learn that the knight being pressed by Queen Elizabeth to declare whether she or his own sovereign danced best, answered her with courtly ambiguity that "the Queen dancit not so hich and so disposedly as she did".[36] In reply to the same royal enquirer he also stated that Mary "sometimes recreated herself in playing upon the lute and virginals", and that she played "reasonably for a queen", not so well, however, as Elizabeth herself.[37] We gather from Con[38] and Brantôme that her voice was well trained, and that she sang well.

The indoor amusements in favour at Holyrood were chess, which James VI condemned as "over wise and philosophic a folly",[39] tables, a game probably resembling backgammon, and cards. That these last were not played for "love" merely, is shown by an entry in the Lord Treasurer's accounts of "fyftie pundis" for Her Majesty "to play at the cartis".[40] Puppets or marionettes were also in great vogue. A set of thirty-eight, together with a complete outfit of "vardingaills", "gownis", "kirtillis", "sairkis slevis", and "hois", is mentioned in an inventory of the time, where we see these "pippenis" – an old Scottish corruption of the French "poupine" – dressed in such costly stuffs as damask brocaded with gold, cloth of silver, and white silk.[41]

Quieter employment for the leisure hours of the Queen and her ladies was supplied by various kinds of fancy-work, amongst which knitting and tapestry are particularly mentioned. To the latter she devoted much of her time, both at Lochleven, where she requested to be allowed "an imbroiderer, to draw forth such work as she would be occupied about",[42] and in England. Whilst she was at Tutbury, Nicholas White once asked her how she passed her time within doors when the weather cut off all exercises abroad. She replied "that all that day she wrought with her needle, and that the diversity of

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[33] Letter from Randolph to Cecil, 15 May, 1563.

[34] P. 87.

[35] Con, in *Jebb*, vol. ii, p. 15.

[36] P. 125.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] In *Jebb*, l. c.

[39] *Basilikon Doron*, p. 125, edit. 1603.

[40] *Compotum Thesaurarii Reginæ Scotorum*, 30 Nov., 1565.

[41] Thomson's *Collection of Inventories*, pp. 238-40.

[42] *Inventories*, p. cxxi.

the colours made the work seem less tedious, and continued so long at it till very pain made her to give over… Upon this occasion she entered into a pretty disputable comparison between carving, painting, and working with the needle, affirming painting, in her own opinion, for the most commendable quality."[43]

At his interview with Elizabeth, Sir James Melville was asked what kind of exercises his Queen used. He answered, that when he received his dispatch, the Queen was lately come from the Highland hunting. Her undaunted behaviour on this occasion is recorded by an eyewitness, Dr. William Barclay of Gartley, who tells us that she herself gave the signal for letting the hounds loose upon a wolf, and that in one day's hunting three hundred and sixty deer, five wolves, and some wild goats were slain.[44]

In common with her father, who took great pains to introduce "ratches" or greyhounds and bloodhounds into Scotland, and with her great-grandson, Charles II, who gave his name to a breed of spaniels, Mary Stuart shared a great fondness for dogs. In her happier days she always possessed several, which she entrusted to the keeping of one Anthone Guedio and a boy. These canine pets were provided with a daily ration of two loaves, and wore blue velvet collars as a distinguishing badge.[45] During her captivity, her dogs were amongst her most faithful companions. Writing from Sheffield to Beton, Archbishop of Glasgow, she said: "If my uncle, the Cardinal of Guise, has gone to Lyons, I am sure he will send me a couple of pretty little dogs, and you will buy me as many more; for, except reading and working, my only pleasure is in all the little animals that I can get. They must be sent in baskets well-packed, so as to keep them warm."[46] The fidelity of one of these dumb friends adds to the pathos of the last scene of her sad history. "One of the executioners," says a contemporary report, "pulling off her clothes, espied her little dog which was crept under her clothes, which would not be gotten forth but by force, and afterwards would not depart from the dead body, but came and lay betwixt her head and shoulders, a thing diligently noted."[47]

In recording one of his interviews with Queen Mary, Knox gives us information concerning another of the sports with which she beguiled her time, for he tells us that it was at the hawking near Kinross that she appointed him to meet her.[48] Archery, too, seems to have been a favourite amusement. She had butts both at Holyrood and St. Andrews. Writing to Cecil in 1562, and again in 1567, Randolph informs him that the Queen and the Master of Lindsay shot against Mary Livingston and the Earl of Murray; and that, in another match, the Queen and Bothwell won a dinner at Tranent from the Earl of Huntley and Lord Seton.[49] Neither did she neglect the "royal game", for one of the charges brought against her and embodied in the articles given in by the Earl of Murray to Queen Elizabeth's commissioners at Westminster, stated that a few days after Darnley's murder "she past to Seytoun, exercing hir one day richt oppinlie at the feildis with the pallmall and goif".

To sketch Mary's character further would be trenching on debatable ground and overstepping the limits which we have imposed upon ourselves. There is one trait, however, which may be recorded on the authority even of her enemies – her personal courage. Randolph represents her as riding at the head of her troops "with a steel bonnet on her head, and a pistol at her saddle-bow; regretting that she was not a man to know what life it was to lie all night in the fields, or to walk upon the causeway with a jack and a knapscull, a Glasgow buckler, and a broadsword". The author of the poem preserved in the Record Office, to which we have already made reference, allows that "no enemy could appal

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[43] Letter to Cecil, in Haynes's *State Papers*, pp. 509-10.

[44] *De Regno et Regali Potestate*, edit. 1612, pp. 279-80.

[45] *Inventories*, pp. xc, 141, 148.

[46] Prince Labanoff, *Lettres de Marie Stuart*, t. iv, pp. 228-9.

[47] Cf. "Le Vray Rapport de l'exécution faicte sur la personne de la Royne d'Escosse", published by Teulet, *Papiers d'Etat*, &c., p. 884.

[48] *History of the Reformation*, vol. ii, p. 373.

[49] *Inventories*, p. lxix.

her, no travail daunt her intent", that she "dreaded no danger of death", that "no stormy blasts could make her retire", and he likens her to Tomiris:

> Tomiris hir selffe
> Who dreaded (*awed*) great hosts with her tyrannye
> Cold not showe hir selffe more valiant.

But never, surely, was her fortitude shown more clearly to the world than when, three hundred years ago, "she laid herself upon the block most quietly, trying her chin over it, stretching out her hands, and crying out: 'In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum'".

THE FOUR MARYS

Reference is seldom made to the Queen's Marys, the four Maids of Honour whose romantic attachment to their royal mistress and namesake, the ill-fated Queen of Scots, has thrown such a halo of popularity and sympathy about their memory, without calling forth the well-known lines:

Yestreen the Queen had four Maries,
The night she'll hae but three;
There was Marie Seton, and Marie Beton,
And Marie Carmichael and me.

To those who are acquainted with the whole of the ballad, which records the sad fate of the guilty Mary Hamilton, it must have occurred that there is a striking incongruity between the traditional loyalty of the Queen's Marys and the alleged execution of one of their number, on the denunciation of the offended Queen herself, for the murder of an illegitimate child, the reputed offspring of a criminal intrigue with Darnley. Yet a closer investigation of the facts assumed in the ballad leads to a discovery more unexpected than even this. It establishes, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that, of the four family-names given in the stanza as those of the four Marys, two only are authentic. Mary Carmichael and Mary Hamilton herself are mere poetical myths. Not only does no mention of them occur in any of the lists still extant of the Queen's personal attendants, but there also exist documents of all kinds, from serious historical narrative and authoritative charter to gossiping correspondence and polished epigram, to prove that the colleagues of Mary Beton and Mary Seton were Mary Fleming and Mary Livingston. How the apocryphal names have found their way into the ballad, or how the ballad itself has come to be connected with the Maids of Honour, cannot be determined. There is, however, in Knox's *History of the Reformation*, a passage which has been looked upon as furnishing a possible foundation of truth to the whole fiction. It is that in which he records the commission and the punishment of a crime similar to that for which Mary Hamilton is represented as about to die on the gallows. "In the very time of the General Assembly there comes to public knowledge a haynous murther, committed in the Court; yea, not far from the queen's lap: for a French woman, that served in the queen's chamber, had played the whore with the queen's own apothecary. The woman conceived and bare a child, whom with common consent, the father and mother murthered; yet were the cries of a new-borne childe hearde, searche was made, the childe and the mother were both apprehended, and so was the man and the woman condemned to be hanged in the publicke street of Edinburgh. The punishment was suitable, because the crime was haynous."[50] Between this historical fact – for the authenticity of which we have also the testimony of Randolph[51] – and the ballad, which substitutes Darnley and one of the Maids of Honour for the queen's apothecary and a nameless waiting-woman, the connection is not very close. Indeed, there is but one point on which both accounts are in agreement, though that, it is true, is an important one. The unnatural mother whose crime, with its condign punishment, is mentioned by the historian, was, he says, a French woman. The Mary Hamilton of the ballad, in spite of a name which certainly does not point to a foreign origin, is also made to come from over the seas:

I charge ye all, ye mariners,
When ye sail ower the faem;

[50] Knox's *History of the Reformation*, pp. 373, 374.

[51] Writing to Cecil on the 31st of December, 1563, Randolph reports: "The frenche potticarie and the woman he gotte with chylde were bothe hanged thys present Fridaye".

Let neither my father nor my mother get wit
But that I'm coming hame.

—

O, little did my mother ken,
The day she cradled me,
The lands I was to travel in,
Or the death I was to dee.

It does not, however, come within the scope of the present paper to examine more closely into the ballad of Mary Hamilton. It suffices to have made it clear that, whatever be their origin, the well-known verses have no historical worth or significance, and no real claim to the title of "The Queen's Marie" prefixed to them in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.[52] Except for the purpose of correcting the erroneous, but general belief, which has been propagated by the singular and altogether unwarranted mention of the "Four Marys", and the introduction of the names of two of them in the oft-quoted stanza, there would, in reality, be no necessity for any allusion to the popular poem in a sketch of the career of the fair Maids of Honour, whose touching fidelity through good and evil fortune has won for them a greater share of interest than is enjoyed by any of the subordinate characters in the great historical drama of which their royal mistress is the central figure.

The first historical and authoritative mention of the four Marys is from the pen of one who was personally and intimately acquainted with them – John Leslie, Bishop of Ross. It occurs in his description of the departure of the infant Mary Stuart from the small harbour at the foot of the beetling, castle-crowned rock of Dumbarton, on that memorable voyage which so nearly resembled a flight. "All things being reddy for the jornay," writes the chronicler, in his quaint northern idiom, "the Quene being as than betuix fyve and sax yearis of aige, wes delivered to the quene dowarier hir moder, and wes embarqued in the Kingis awin gallay, and with her the Lord Erskyn and Lord Levingstoun quha had bene hir keparis, and the Lady Fleming her fadir sister, with sindre gentilwemen and nobill mennis sonnes and dochteres, almoist of hir awin age; of the quhilkes thair wes four in speciall, of whom everie one of thame buir the samin name of Marie, being of four syndre honorable houses, to wyt, Fleming, Levingstoun, Seton and Betoun of Creich; quho remainit all foure with the Quene in France, during her residens thair, and returned agane in Scotland with her Majestie in the yeir of our Lord ImVclxi yeris."[53] Of the education and early training of the four Marys, as companions and playmates of the youthful queen, we have no special record. The deficiency is one which our knowledge of the wild doings of the gayest court of the age makes it easy to supply. For the Scottish maidens, as for their mistress, intercourse with the frivolous company that gathered about Catherine de' Medici was but indifferent preparation for the serious business of life. Looking back on "those French years", doubtless they too, like her, "only seemed to see —

A light of swords and singing, only hear
Laughter of love and lovely stress of lutes,
And in between the passion of them borne
Sound of swords crossing ever, as of feet

[52] In Mr. Andrew Lang's book, *The Valet's Tragedy and other Studies*, pp. 291-311, there is an exhaustive discussion of the various points that arise in connection with the ballad of "The Queen's Marie".

[53] Bishop Lesley's *History of Scotland*, p. 209.

Dancing, and life and death still equally
Blithe and bright-eyed from battle."

Brantôme, to whom we are indebted for so much personal description of Mary Stuart, and so many intimate details concerning her character, tastes, and acquirements, is less communicative with respect to her four fair attendants. He merely mentions them amongst the court beauties as "Mesdamoiselles de Flammin, de Ceton, Beton, Leviston, escoissaises".[54] He makes no allusion to them in the pathetic description of the young queen's departure from her "sweet France" on the fateful 24th of August, a date which subsequent events were destined to mark with a fearful stain of blood, in the family to which she was allied. Yet, doubtless they, too, were gazing with tearful eyes at the receding shore, blessing the calm which retarded their course, trembling with vague fears as their voyage began amidst the cries of drowning men, and half wishing that the English ships of the jealous Elizabeth might prevent them from reaching their dreary destination. That they were with their royal namesake, we know. Leslie, who, with Brantôme and the unfortunate Chastelard, accompanied the idol of France to her unsympathetic northern home, again makes special note of "the four maidis of honour quha passit with hir Hienes in France, of her awin aige, bering the name everie ane of Marie, as is befoir mencioned".

During the first years of Mary Stuart's stay in her capital, the four maids of honour played conspicuous parts in all the amusements and festivities of the court, and were amongst those who incurred the censure of the austere Reformers for introducing into Holyrood the "balling, and dancing, and banquetting"[55] of Amboise and Fontainbleau. Were our information about the masques acted at the Scottish Court less scanty, we should, doubtless, often find the names of the four Marys amongst the performers. Who more fit than they to figure in the first masque represented at Holyrood, in October, 1561, at the Queen's farewell banquet to her uncle, the Grand Prior of the Knights of St. John, and to take their places amongst the Muses who marched in procession before the throne, reciting Buchanan's flattering verses in praise of the lettered court of the Queen of Scots?

Banished by War, to thee we take our flight,
Who still dost worship at the Muses' shrine,
And, solaced by thy presence, day and night,
Nor murmur at our exile, nor repine.

Had Marioreybanks given us the names of those who took part in the festivities which he describes as having taken place on the occasion of Lord Fleming's marriage, can we doubt that the Marys would have been found actively engaged in the open-air performance "in the Parke of Holyroudhous, under Arthur's Seatt, at the end of the loche"?[56] Indeed, it is not matter of mere conjecture, but of authentic historical record, that on more than one occasion Buchanan did actually introduce the Queen's namesakes amongst the dramatis personæ of the masques which, as virtual laureate of the Scottish Court, he was called upon to supply. The *Diurnal of Occurrents* mentions that "upoun the ellevint day of the said moneth (February) the King and Quene in lyik manner bankettit the samin (French) Ambassatour; and at evin our Soveranis maid the maskrie and mumschance, in the quhilk the Queenis Grace and all hir Maries and ladies were all cled in men's apperell; and everie ane of thame presentit ane quhingar, bravelie and maist artificiallie made and embroiderit with gold, to the said Ambassatour and his gentilmen, everie ane of thame according to his estate".[57] That this,

[54] *Brantôme*, t. v, p. 74.

[55] Knox's *History of the Reformation*, book v, vol. ii, p. 495.

[56] *Annals of Scotland*, p. 14.

[57] *Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 87.

moreover, was not the first appearance of the fair performers we also know, for it was they who bore the chief parts in the third masque acted during the festivities which attended the Queen's marriage with Darnley; and it was one of them, perhaps Mary Beton, the scholar of the court, who recited the verses which Buchanan had introduced in allusion to their royal mistress's recovery from some illness otherwise unrecorded in history:

Kind Goddess, Health, four Nymphs their voices raise
To welcome thy return and sing thy praise,
To beg as suppliants that thou wouldst deign
To smile benignly on their Queen again,
And make her royal breast thy hallowed shrine,
Where best and worthiest worship shall be thine.

That the four Nymphs mentioned in this, the only fragment of the masque which has been preserved, were the four Marys, is explained by Buchanan's commentator, Ruddiman: "Nymphas his vocat quatuor Mariæ Scotæ corporis ministras, quæ etiam omnes Mariæ nominabantur". It is more than probable, too, that the Marys were not merely spectators of the masque which formed a part of the first day's amusements, and of which they themselves were the subject-matter. It may still be read under the title of "Pompa Deorum in Nuptiis Mariæ", in Buchanan's Latin poems. Diana opens the masque, which is but a short mythological dialogue, with a complaint to the ruler of Olympus that one of her five Marys – the Queen herself is here included – has been taken from her by the envious arts of Venus and of Juno:

Five Marys erst my boast and glory were,
Each one in youthful beauty passing fair;
Whilst these enhanced the splendour of my state
To all the gods I seemed too fortunate,
Till Venus, urged by Juno in her ire,
Stole one away and marred my comely quire,
Whereof the other four now grieve that they
Must, like the Pleiads, shine with lessened ray.

In the dialogue which follows, and in which five goddesses and five gods take part, Apollo chimes in with a prophecy which was only partially accomplished:

Fear not, Diana, cast away thy care,
And hear the tidings which I prescient bear;
Juno decrees thy Marys shall be wed,
And in all state to Hymen's altar led,
But each to fill its lessened ranks again,
Will add her offspring to thy beauteous train.

In his summing up, which, as may be imagined, is not very favourable to the complainant, the Olympian judge also introduces a prettily turned compliment to the Marys:

Five Marys erst were thine and each one meet
With goddesses in beauty to compete;
Each worthy of a god, if iron fate
Allowed the gods to choose a mortal mate.

The whole pageant closes with an epilogue spoken by the herald Talthybius, who also foretells further defections from Diana's maidens:

Another marriage! Hear the joyful cry:
Another Mary joined in nuptial tie!

As was but natural, the Queen's favourite attendants possessed considerable influence with their royal lady, and the sequel will show, in the case of each of them, how eagerly their good offices were sought after by courtiers and ambassadors anxious for the success of their several suits and missions. In a letter which Randolph wrote to Cecil on the 24th of October, 1564, and which, as applying to the Marys collectively, may be quoted here, we are shown the haughty Lennox himself condescending to make pretty presents to the maids with a view to ingratiating himself with the mistress. "He presented also each of the Marys with such pretty things as he thought fittest for them, such good means he hath to win their hearts, and to make his way to further effect."[58]

[58] *Calendar of State Papers, Eliz.*, vol. ix.

MARY FLEMING

It is scarcely the result of mere chance that, in the chronicles which make mention of the four Marys, Mary Fleming's name usually takes precedence of those of her three colleagues. She seems to have been tacitly recognized as "prima inter pares". This was, doubtless, less in consequence of her belonging to one of the first houses in Scotland, for the Livingstons, the Betons, and the Setons might well claim equality with the Flemings, than of her being closely related to Mary Stuart herself, though the relationship, it is true, was only on the side of the distaff, and though there was, moreover, a bar sinister on the royal quarterings which it added to the escutcheon of the Flemings. Mary Fleming – Marie Flemyng, as she signed herself, or Flamy, as she was called in the Queen's broken English – was the fourth daughter of Malcolm, third Lord Fleming. Her mother, Janet Stuart, was a natural daughter of King James IV. Mary Fleming and her royal mistress were consequently first cousins. This may sufficiently account for the greater intimacy which existed between them. Thus, after Chastelard's outrage, it was Mary Fleming whom the Queen, dreading the loneliness which had rendered the wild attempt possible, called in to sleep with her, for protection.

Amongst the various festivities and celebrations which were revived in Holyrood by Mary and the suite which she had brought with her from the gay court of France, that of Twelfth Night seems to have been in high favour, as, indeed, it still is in some provinces of France at the present day. In the "gâteau des Rois", or Twelfth Night Cake, it was customary to hide a bean, and when the cake was cut up and distributed, the person to whom chance – or not infrequently design – brought the piece containing the bean, was recognized sole monarch of the revels until the stroke of midnight. On the 6th of January, 1563, Mary Fleming was elected queen by favour of the bean. Her mistress, entering into the spirit of the festivities, with her characteristic considerateness for even the amusement of those about her, abdicated her state in favour of the mimic monarch of the night. A letter written by Randolph to Lord Dudley, and bearing the date of the 15th of January, gives an interesting and vivid picture of the fair maid of honour decked out in her royal mistress's jewels: "You should have seen here upon Tuesday the great solemnity and royall estate of the Queen of the Beene. Fortune was so favourable to faire Flemyng, that, if shee could have seen to have judged of her vertue and beauty, as blindly she went to work and chose her at adventure, shee would sooner have made her Queen for ever, then for one night only, to exalt her so high and the nixt to leave her in the state she found her… That day yt was to be seen, by her princely pomp, how fite a match she would be, wer she to contend ether with Venus in beauty, Minerva in witt, or Juno in worldly wealth, haveing the two former by nature, and of the third so much as is contained in this realme at her command and free disposition. The treasure of Solomon, I trowe, was not to be compared unto that which hanged upon her back… The Queen of the Beene was in a gowne of cloath of silver; her head, her neck, her shoulders, the rest of her whole body, so besett with stones, that more in our whole jewell house wer not to be found. The Queen herself was apparelled in collours whyt and black, no other jewell or gold about her bot the ring that I brought her from the Queen's Majestie hanging at her breast, with a lace of whyt and black about her neck." In another part of the same letter the writer becomes even more enthusiastic: "Happy was it unto this realm," he says, "that her reign endured no longer. Two such nights in one state, in so good accord, I believe was never seen, as to behold two worthy queens possess, without envy, one kingdom, both upon a day. I leave the rest to your lordship to be judged of. My pen staggereth, my hand faileth, further to write… The cheer was great. I never found myself so happy, nor so well treated, until that it came to the point that the old queen herself, to show her mighty power, contrary unto the assurance granted me by the younger queen, drew me into the dance, which part of the play I could with good will have spared to your lordship, as much fitter for the purpose."[59]

[59] *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, vol. ii, pp. 390-3.

The queen of this Twelfth-Tide pageant was also celebrated by the court poet Buchanan. Amongst his epigrams there is one bearing the title: "Ad Mariam Flaminiam sorte Reginam":

Could worth or high descent a crown bestow,
Thou hadst been Queen, fair Fleming, long ago;
Were grace and beauty titles to the throne,
No grace or beauty had outshone thine own;
Did vows of mortal men avail with Fate,
Our vows had raised thee to the royal state.
The fickle Deity that rules mankind,
Though blind and deaf and foolish in her mind,
Seemed neither foolish, deaf, nor blind to be
When regal honours she accorded thee;
Or, if she were, then 'twas by Virtue led
She placed the diadem upon thy head.[60]

The "Faire Flemyng" found an admirer amongst the English gentlemen whom political business had brought to the Scotch Court. This was Sir Henry Sidney, of whom Naunton reports that he was a statesman "of great parts". As Sir Henry was born in 1519, and consequently over twenty years older than the youthful maid of honour, his choice cannot be considered to have been a very judicious one, nor can the ill-success of his suit appear greatly astonishing. And yet, as the sequel was to show, Mary Fleming had no insuperable objection to an advantageous match on the score of disparity of age. In the year following that in which she figured as Queen of the Bean at Holyrood, the gossiping correspondence of the time expatiates irreverently enough on Secretary Maitland's wooing of the maid of honour. He was about forty at the time, and it was not very long since his first wife, Janet Monteith, had died. Mary Fleming was about two-and-twenty. There was, consequently, some show of reason for the remark made by Kirkcaldy of Grange, in communicating to Randolph the new matrimonial project in which Maitland was embarked: "The Secretary's wife is dead, and he is a suitor to Mary Fleming, who is as meet for him as I am to be a page".[61] Cecil appears to have been taken into the Laird of Lethington's confidence, and doubtless found amusement in the enamoured statesman's extravagance. "The common affairs do never so much trouble me but that at least I have one merry hour of the four-and-twenty… Those that be in love are ever set upon a merry pin; yet I take this to be a most singular remedy for all diseases in all persons."[62] Two of the keenest politicians of their age laying aside their diplomatic gravity and forgetting the jealousies and the rivalry of their respective courts to discuss the charms of the Queen's youthful maid of honour: it is a charming historical vignette not without interest and humour even at this length of time. We may judge to what extent the Secretary was "set on a merry pin", from Randolph's description of the courtship. In a letter dated 31 March, 1565, and addressed to Sir Henry Sidney, Mary Fleming's old admirer, he writes: "She neither remembereth you, nor scarcely acknowledgeth that you are her man. Your lordship, therefore, need not to pride you of any such mistress in this court; she hath found another whom she doth love better. Lethington now serveth her alone, and is like, for her sake, to run beside himself. Both night and day he attendeth, he watcheth, he wooeth – his folly never more apparent than in loving her, where he may be assured that, how much soever he make of her, she will always love another better. This much I have written for the worthy praise of your noble mistress, who, now being neither much worth in beauty, nor greatly to be praised in virtue, is content, in place of lords

[60] *Epigrammatum*, lib. iii.

[61] *Calendar of State Papers, Eliz.*, vol. ix, No. 47 B.

[62] *Calendar of State Papers, Eliz.*, vol. x, Feb. 28, 1565.

and earls, to accept to her service a poor pen clerk."[63] We have not to reconcile the ill-natured and slanderous remarks of Randolph's letter with the glowing panegyric penned by him some two years previously. That he intended to comfort the rejected suitor, and to tone down the disappointment and the jealousy which he might feel at the success of a rival not greatly younger than himself, would be too charitable a supposition. It is not improbable that he may have had more personal reasons for his spite, and that when, in the same letter, he describes "Fleming that once was so fair", wishing "with many a sigh that Randolph had served her", he is giving a distorted and unscrupulous version of an episode not unlike that between Mary Fleming and Sir Henry himself. To give even the not very high-minded Randolph his due, however, it is but fair to add that his later letters, whilst fully bearing out what he had previously stated with regard to Maitland's lovemaking, throw no doubt on Mary's sincerity: "Lethington hath now leave and time to court his mistress, Mary Fleming";[64] and, again, "My old friend, Lethington, hath leisure to make love; and, in the end, I believe, as wise as he is, will show himself a very fool, or stark, staring mad".[65] This "leisure to make love" is attributed to Rizzio, then in high favour with the Queen. This was about the end of 1565. Early in 1566, however, the unfortunate Italian was murdered under circumstances too familiar to need repetition, and for his share in the unwarrantable transaction, Secretary Maitland was banished from the royal presence. The lovers were, in consequence, parted for some six months, from March to September. It was about this time that Queen Mary, dreading the hour of her approaching travail, and haunted by a presentiment that it would prove fatal to her, caused inventories of her private effects to be drawn up, and made legacies to her personal friends and attendants. The four Marys were not forgotten. They were each to receive a diamond; "Aux quatre Maries, quatre autres petis diamants de diverse façon",[66] besides a portion of the Queen's needlework and linen: "tous mes ouurasges, manches et collets aux quatre Maries".[67] In addition to this, there was set down for "Flamy", two pieces of gold lace with ornaments of white and red enamel, a dress, a necklace, and a chain to be used as a girdle. We may infer that red and white were the maid of honour's favourite colours, for "blancq et rouge" appear in some form or another in all the items of the intended legacy.[68]

As we have said, the Secretary's disgrace was not of long duration. About September he was reinstated in the Queen's favour, and in December received from her a dress of cloth of gold trimmed with silver lace: "Une vasquyne de toille d'or plaine auecq le corps de mesme fait a bourletz borde dung passement dargent".[69]

On the 6th of January, 1567, William Maitland of Lethington and Mary Fleming were married at Stirling, where the Queen was keeping her court, and where she spent the last Twelfth-Tide she was to see outside the walls of a prison. The Secretary's wife, as Mary was frequently styled after her marriage, did not cease to be in attendance upon her royal cousin, and we get occasional glimpses of her in the troubled times which were to follow. Thus, on the eventful morning on which Bothwell's trial began, Mary Fleming stood with the Queen at the window from which the latter, after having imprudently refused an audience to the Provost-Marshal of Berwick, Elizabeth's messenger, still more imprudently watched the bold Earl's departure and, it was reported, smiled and nodded encouragement. Again, in the enquiry which followed the Queen's escape from Lochleven, it appeared

[63] *Calendar of State Papers, Eliz.*, vol. x, 31 March, 1565.

[64] *Calendar of State Papers, Eliz.*, vol. x, 3 June, 1565.

[65] *Calendar of State Papers, Eliz.*, vol. xi, 31 Oct., 1565.

[66] *Inventories*, p. 113.

[67] *Inventories*, p. 124.

[68] "A Flamy. Vne brodure dor esmaille de blancq et rouge contenante xxxvij pieces.Vne brodure dorelette de mesme façon garnye de lj piece esmaille de blancq et rouge.Vne cottouere de mesme façon contenante soixante piece esmaille de blanc et rouge.Vng quarquan esmaille aussy de blancq et rouge garny de vingt une piece.Vne chesne a saindre en semblable façon contenante lij pieces esmaillez de blanc et ouge et vng vaze pandant au bout." —*Inventories*, p. 116.

[69] *Inventories*, p. 69.

that her cousin had been privy to the plot for her release, and had found the means of conveying to the royal captive the assurance that her friends were working for her deliverance: "The Queen", so ran the evidence of one of the attendants examined after the flight, "said scho gat ane ring and three wordis in Italianis in it. I iudget it cam fra the Secretar, because of the language. Scho said, 'Na, … it was ane woman. All the place saw hir weyr it. Cursall show me the Secretaris wiff send it, and the vreting of it was ane fable of Isop betuix the Mouss and the Lioune, hou the Mouss for ane plesour done to hir be the Lioune, efter that, the Lioune being bound with ane corde, the Mouss schuyr the corde and let the Lioune louss.'"[70]

During her long captivity in England, the unfortunate Queen was not unmindful of the love and devotion of her faithful attendant. Long years after she had been separated from her, whilst in prison at Sheffield, she gives expression to her longing for the presence of Mary Fleming, and in a letter written "du manoir de Sheffield", on the 1st of May, 1581, to Monsieur de Mauvissiére, the French ambassador, she begs him to renew her request to Elizabeth that the Lady of Lethington should be allowed to tend her in "the valetudinary state into which she has fallen, of late years, owing to the bad treatment to which she has been subjected".[71]

But the Secretary's wife had had her own trials and her own sorrows. On the 9th of June, 1573, her husband died at Leith, "not without suspicion of poison", according to Killigrew. Whether he died by his own hand, or by the act of his enemies, is a question which we are not called upon to discuss. The evidence of contemporaries is conflicting, "some supponyng he tak a drink and died as the auld Romans wer wont to do", as Sir James Melville reports;[72] others, and amongst these Queen Mary herself, that he had been foully dealt with. Writing to Elizabeth, she openly gives expression to this belief: "the principal (of the rebel lords) were besieged by your forces in the Castle of Edinburgh, and one of the first among them poisoned".

Maitland was to have been tried "for art and part of the treason, conspiracy, consultation, and treating of the King's murder". According to the law of Scotland, a traitor's guilt was not cancelled by death. The corpse might be arraigned and submitted to all the indignities which the barbarous code of the age recognized as the punishment of treason. It was intended to inflict the fullest penalty upon Maitland's corpse, and it remained unburied "till the vermin came from his corpse, creeping out under the door of the room in which he was lying".[73] In her distress the widow applied to Burleigh, in a touching letter which is still preserved. It bears the date of the 21st of June, 1573.

> My very good Lord, – After my humble commendations, it may please your Lordship that the causes of the sorrowful widow, and orphants, by Almighty God recommended to the superior powers, together with the firm confidence my late husband, the Laird of Ledington, put in your Lordship's only help is the occasion, that I his desolat wife (though unknown to your Lordship), takes the boldness by these few lines, to humblie request your Lordship, that as my said husband being alive expected no small benefit at your hands, so now I may find such comfort, that the Queen's Majestie, your Sovereign, may by your travell and means be moved to write to my Lord Regent of Scotland, that the body of my husband, which when alive has not been spared in her hieness' service, may now, after his death, receive no shame, or ignominy, and that his heritage taken from him during his lifetime, now belonging to me and his children, that have not offended, by a disposition made a long time ago, may be restored, which is aggreeable both to equity and the laws of this realme; and also your Lordship will not forget my husband's brother, the Lord

[70] MS. Fragment in the Register House; cf. *Inventories*, p. 1.

[71] Prince Labanoff, *Lettres de Marie Stuart*, t. v, p. 222.

[72] *Memoirs*, p. 256.

[73] Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, vol. iii, p. 285.

> of Coldingham, ane innocent gentleman, who was never engaged in these quarrels, but for his love to his brother, accompanied him, and is now a prisoner with the rest, that by your good means, and procurement, he may be restored to his own, by doing whereof, beside the blessing of God, your lordship will also win the goodwill of many noblemen and gentlemen.[74]

Burleigh lost no time in laying the widow's petition before Elizabeth, and on the 19th of July a letter written at Croydon was dispatched to the Regent Morton: "For the bodie of Liddington, who died before he was convict in judgment, and before any answer by him made to the crymes objected to him, it is not our maner in this contrey to show crueltey upon the dead bodies so unconvicted, but to suffer them streight to be buried, and put in the earth. And so suerly we think it mete to be done in this case, for (as we take it) it was God's pleasure he should be taken away from the execucion of judgment, so we think consequently that it was His divine pleasure that the bodie now dead should not be lacerated, nor pullid in pieces, but be buried like to one who died in his bed, and by sicknes, as he did."[75]

Such a petitioner as the Queen of England was not to be denied, and Maitland's body was allowed the rites of burial. The other penalties which he had incurred by his treason – real or supposed – were not remitted. An Act of Parliament was passed "for rendering the children, both lawful and natural, of Sir William Maitland of Lethington, the younger, and of several others, who had been convicted of the murder of the King's father, incapable of enjoying, or claiming, any heritages, lands, or possessions in Scotland".

The widow herself was also subjected to petty annoyances at the instigation of Morton. She was called upon to restore the jewels which her royal mistress had given her as a free gift, and in particular, "one chayn of rubeis with twelf markes of dyamontis and rubeis, and ane mark with twa rubeis".[76] Even her own relatives seemed to have turned against her in her distress. In a letter written in French to her sister-in-law, Isabel, wife of James Heriot of Trabroun, she refers to some accusation brought against her by her husband's brother, Coldingham – the same for whom she had interceded in her letter to Burleigh – and begs to be informed as to the nature of the charge made to the Regent, "car ace que jantans il me charge de quelque chose, je ne say que cest".[77] The letter bears no date, but seems to have been penned when the writer's misery was at its sorest, for it concludes with an earnest prayer that patience may be given her to bear the weight of her misfortunes.

Better days, however, were yet in store for the much-tried Mary Fleming, for in February, 1584, the "relict of umquhill William Maitland, younger of Lethington, Secretare to our Soverane Lord", succeeded in obtaining a reversion of her husband's forfeiture. In May of the same year,[78] the Parliament allowed "Marie Flemyng and hir bairns to have bruik and inioy the same and like fauour, grace and priuilege and conditioun as is contenit in the pacificatioun maid and accordit at Perthe, the xxiii day of Februar, the yeir of God Im Vc lxxxij yeiris".

With this document one of the four Marys disappears from the scene. Of her later life we have no record. That it was thoroughly happy we can scarcely assume, for we know that her only son James died in poverty and exile.

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[74] G. Chalmers, *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. iii, p. 615.

[75] *Calendar of State Papers*, vol. iv, p. 599.

[76] Thomson's *Collection of Inventories*, p. 193; cf. *Calendar of State Papers*, vol. iv, Oct. 19, 1573; and *Inventories of Mary*, p. clvii.

[77] Printed in *Letters from Lady Margaret Burnet to John, Duke of Lauderdale*, p. 83. Bannatyne Club.

[78] *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, vol. iii, p. 313.

MARY LIVINGSTON

Mary Livingston, or, as she signed herself, Marie Leuiston, was the daughter of Alexander, fifth Lord Livingston. She was a cousin of Mary Fleming's, and, like her, related, though more distantly, to the sovereign. When she sailed from Scotland in 1548, as one of the playmates of the infant Mary Stuart, she was accompanied by both her father and her mother. Within a few years, however, she was left to the sole care of the latter, Lord Livingston having died in France in 1553. Of her life at the French Court we have no record. Her first appearance in the pages of contemporary chroniclers is on the 22nd of April, 1562, the year after her return to Scotland. On that date, the young Queen, who delighted in the sport of archery, shot off a match in her private gardens at St. Andrews. Her own partner was the Master of Lindsay.[79] Their opponents were the Earl of Moray, then only Earl of Mar, and Mary Livingston, whose skill is reported to have been – when courtesy allowed it – quite equal to that of her royal mistress.

The next item of information is to be found in the matter-of-fact columns of an account book, in which we find it entered that the Queen gave Mary Livingston some grey damask for a gown, in September, 1563,[80] and some black velvet for the same purpose in the following February.[81] Shortly after this, however, there occurred an event of greater importance, which supplied the letter-writers of the day with material for their correspondence. On the 5th of March, 1564, Mary Livingston was married to James Sempill, of Beltreis. It was the first marriage amongst the Marys, and consequently attracted considerable attention for months before the celebration. As early as January, Paul de Foix, the French Ambassador, makes allusion to the approaching event: "Elle a commencé à marier ses quatre Maries", he writes to Catharine de' Medici, "et dict qu'elle veult estre de la bande".[82] In a letter, dated the 9th of the same month, Randolph, faithful to his habit of communicating all the gossip of the Court in his reports to England, informs Bedford of the intended marriage: "I learned yesterday that there is a conspiracy here framed against you. The matter is this: the Lord Sempill's son, being an Englishman born, shall be married between this and Shrovetide to the Lord Livingston's sister. The Queen, willing him well, both maketh the marriage and indoweth the parties with land. To do them honour she will have them marry in the Court. The thing intended against your lordship is this, that Sempill himself shall come to Berwicke within these fourteen days, and desire you to be at the bridal."[83] Writing to Leicester, he repeats his information: "It will not be above 6 or 7 days before the Queen (returning from her progress into Fifeshire) will be in this town. Immediately after that ensueth the great marriage of this happy Englishman that shall marry lovely Livingston."[84] Finally, on the 4th of March, he again writes: "Divers of the noblemen have come to this great marriage, which to-morrow shall be celebrated".[85] Randolph's epistolary garrulity has, in this instance, served one good purpose, of which he probably little dreamt when he filled his correspondence with the small talk of the Court circle. It enables us to refute a calumnious assertion made by John Knox with reference to the marriage of the Queen's maid of honour. "It was weill knawin that schame haistit mariage betwix John Sempill, callit the Danser, and Marie Levingstoune, surnameit the Lustie."[86] Randolph's first letter, showing, as it does, that preparations for the wedding were in progress as early

[79] G. Chalmers' *Life of Queen Mary*, vol. i, p. 109.

[80] *Inventories*, p. 139.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[82] Teulet, *Papiers d'Etat relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Ecoss*, t. ii, p. 32.

[83] Miss Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of Scotland*, vol. iv, p. 95.

[84] *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland*, vol. i, p. 204.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

[86] *History of the Reformation*, vol. ii, p. 415.

as the beginning of January, summarily dismisses the charge of "haste" in its celebration, whilst, for those who are familiar with the style of the English envoy's correspondence, his very silence will appear the strongest proof that Mary's fair fame was tarnished by no breath of scandal. The birth of her first child in 1566, a fact to which the family records of the house of Sempill bear witness, establishes more irrefutably than any argument the utter falsity of Knox's unscrupulous assertion.

John Sempill, whose grace in dancing had acquired for him the surname which seems to have lain so heavily on Knox's conscience, and whose good fortune in finding favour with lovely Mary Livingston called forth Randolph's congratulations, was the eldest son of the third lord, by his second wife Elizabeth Carlyle of Torthorwold. At Court, as may have been gathered from Randolph's letters, he was known as the "Englishman", owing to the fact of his having been born in Newcastle. Although of good family himself, and in high favour at Court, being but a younger son he does not seem to have been considered on all hands as a fitting match for Mary Livingston. This the Queen, of whose making the marriage was, herself confesses in a letter to the Archbishop of Glasgow, reminding him that, "in a country where these formalities were looked to", exception had been taken to the marriage both of Mary and Magdalene Livingston on the score that they had taken as husbands "the younger sons of their peers —*les puînés de leurs semblables*".[87] Mary Stuart seems to have been above such prejudices, and showed how heartily she approved of the alliance between the two families by her liberality to the bride. Shortly before the marriage she gave her a band covered with pearls, a basquina of grey satin, a mantle of black taffety made in the Spanish fashion with silver buttons, and also a gown of black taffety. It was she, too, who furnished the bridal dress, which cost £30, as entered in the accounts under date of the 10th of March: —

> Item: Ane pund xiii unce of silver to ane gown of Marie Levingstoune's to her mariage, the unce xxv s. Summa xxx li.

The "Inuentair of the Quenis movables quhilkis ar in the handes of Seruais de Condy vallett of chalmer to hir Grace", records, further, that there was "deliueret in Merche 1564, to Johnne Semples wiff, ane bed of scarlett veluot bordit with broderie of black veluot, furnisit with ruif heidpece, thre pandis, twa vnderpandis, thre curtenis of taffetie of the same cullour without freingis. The bed is furnisit with freingis of the same cullour." To make her gift complete, the Queen, as another household document, her wardrobe book, testifies, added the following items: —

> Item: Be the said precept to Marie Levingstoun xxxi elnis ii quarters of quhite fustiane to be ane marterass, the eln viii s. Summa xii li xii s.
> Item: xvi elnis of cammes to be palzeass, the eln vi s. Summa iiij li xvj s.
> Item: For nappes and fedders; v li.
> Item: Ane elne of lane; xxx s.
> Item: ij unce of silk; xx s.

The wedding for which such elaborate preparation had been made, and for which the Queen herself named the day, took place, in the presence of the whole Court and all the foreign ambassadors, on Shrove Tuesday, which, as has already been mentioned, was on the 5th of March. In the evening the wedding guests were entertained at a masque, which was supplied by the Queen, but of which we know nothing further than may be gathered from the following entry: —

> Item: To the painter for the mask on Fastionis evin to Marie Levingstoun's marriage; xij li.[88]

The marriage contract, which was signed at Edinburgh on the Sunday preceding the wedding, bears the names of the Queen, of John Lord Erskine, Patrick Lord Ruthven, and of Secretary

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[87] Prince Labanoff, *Lettres de Marie Stuart*, t. iv, p. 341.

[88] *Inventories*, pp. xlvii, 31, 65, 68, 70.

Maitland of Lethington. The bride's dowry consisted of £500 a year in land, the gift of the Queen, to which Lord Livingston added 100 merks a year in land, or 1000 merks in money. As a jointure she received the Barony of Beltreis near Castle Semple, in Renfrewshire, the lands of Auchimanes and Calderhaugh, with the rights of fisheries in the Calder, taxed to the Crown at £18, 16*s.* 8*d.* a year.[89]

A few days after the marriage, on the 9th of March, a grant from the Queen to Mary Livingston and John Sempill passed the great seal. In this official document she styles the bride "her familiar servatrice", and the bridegroom "her daily and familiar serviter, during all the youthheid and minority of the said serviters". In recognition of their services both to herself and the Queen Regent, she infeofs them in her town and lands of Auchtermuchty, part of her royal demesne in Fifeshire, the lands and lordships of Stewarton in Ayr, and the isle of Little Cumbrae in the Firth of Clyde.

After her marriage "Madamoiselle de Semple" was appointed lady of the bedchamber, an office for which she received £200 a year. Her husband also seems to have retained some office which required his personal attendance on the Queen, for we know that both husband and wife were in waiting at Holyrood on the memorable evening of David Rizzio's murder. The shock which this tragic event produced on Mary was very great, and filled her with the darkest forebodings. She more than once expressed her fear that she would not survive her approaching confinement. About the end of May or the beginning of June, shortly before the solemn ceremony of "taking her chamber", she caused an inventory of her personal effects to be drawn up by Mary Livingston and Margaret Carwod, the bedchamber woman in charge of her cabinet, and with her own hand wrote, on the margin opposite to each of the several articles, the name of the person for whom it was intended, in the event of her death and of that of her infant. Mary Livingston's name appears by the side of the following objects in the original document, which was discovered among some unassorted law papers in the Register House, in August, 1854: —

> Quatre vingtz deux esguillettes xliiij petittes de mesme facon esmaillez de blancq.
>
> Une brodure du toure contenante xxv pieces esmaille de blanc et noir facon de godrons.
>
> Vne brodeure doreillette de pareille facon contenante xxvij pieces esmaillees de blanc et noir.
>
> Vne cottouere de semblable facon contenante lx pieces de pareille facon esmaillee de blanc et noir.
>
> Vng carcan esmaille de blanc et noir contenant dixsept pieces et a chacune piece y a vng petit pandant.
>
> Vne chesne a saindre de semblable facon contenante liiij pieces esmaillees de blanc et noir et vng vaze au bout.
>
> Vne corde de coural contenante lxiij pieces faictes en vaze.
>
> Vne aultre corde de coural contenante treize grosses pieces aussy en vaze.
>
> Vne aultre corde de coural contenante xxxviij pieches plus petittes aussy en vaze.
>
> Vng reste de patenostres ou il a neuf meures de perles et des grains dargent entredeux.
>
> Vne saincture et cottouere de perles garnie bleu et grains noir faict a roisteau.
>
> Item: haill acoustrement of gold of couter carcan and chesne of 66 pyecis.

Only on one occasion after this do we find mention of Mary Livingston in connection with her royal mistress. It is on the day following the Queen's surrender at Carberry, when she was brought back a prisoner to Edinburgh. The scene is described by Du Croc, the French Ambassador. "On the

[89] *Ibid.*, p. xlvii.

evening of the next day," he writes in the official report forwarded to his court, "at eight o'clock, the Queen was brought back to the castle of Holyrood, escorted by three hundred arquebusiers, the Earl of Morton on the one side, and the Earl of Athole on the other; she was on foot, though two hacks were led in front of her; she was accompanied at the time by Mademoiselle de Sempel and Seton, with others of her chamber, and was dressed in a night-gown of various colours."[90]

After the Queen's removal from Edinburgh the Sempills also left it to reside sometimes at Beltreis, and sometimes at Auchtermuchty, but chiefly in Paisley, where they built a house which was still to be seen but a few years ago, near what is now the Cross. Their retirement from the capital did not, however, secure for them the quietness which they expected to enjoy. They had stood too high in favour with the captive Queen to be overlooked by her enemies. The Regent Lennox, remembering that Mary Livingston had been entrusted with the care of the royal jewels and wardrobe, accused her of having some of the Queen's effects in her possession. Notwithstanding her denial, her husband was arrested and cast into prison, and she herself brought before the Lords of the Privy Council. Their cross-questioning and brow-beating failed to elicit any information from her, and it was only when Lennox threatened to "put her to the horn", and to inflict the torture of the "boot" on her husband, that she confessed to the possession of "three lang-tailit gowns garnished with fur of martrix and fur of sables". She protested, however, that, as was indeed highly probable, these had been given to her, and were but cast-off garments, of little value or use to anyone. In spite of this, she was not allowed to depart until she had given surety "that she would compear in the council-chamber on the morrow and surrender the gear".

Lennox's death, which occurred shortly after this, did not put an end to the persecution to which the Sempills were subjected. Morton was as little friendly to them as his predecessor had been. He soon gave proof of this by calling upon John Sempill to leave his family and to proceed to England, as one of the hostages demanded as security for the return of the army and implements of war, sent, under Sir William Drury, to lay siege to Edinburgh Castle.

On his return home, Sempill found new and worse troubles awaiting him. It happened that of the lands conferred upon Mary Livingston on her marriage some portion lay near one of Morton's estates. Not only had the Queen's gift been made by a special grant under the Great and Privy Seals, but the charter of infeofment had also been ratified by a further Act of Parliament in 1567, when it was found that the proposal to annul the forfeiture of George Earl of Huntly would affect it. It seemed difficult, therefore, to find even a legal flaw that would avail to deprive the Sempills of their lands and afford the Regent an opportunity of appropriating them to himself. He was probably too powerful, however, to care greatly for the justice of his plea. He brought the matter before the Court of Session, urging that the gift made by the Queen to Mary Livingston and her husband was null and void, on the ground that it was illegal to alienate the lands of the Crown. It was in vain that Sempill brought forward the deed of gift under the Great and Privy Seals, the judges would not allow his plea. Thereupon Sempill burst into a violent passion, declaring that if he lost his suit, it would cost him his life as well. Whiteford of Milntoune, a near relative of Sempill's, who was with him at the time, likewise allowed his temper to get the better of his discretion, and exclaimed "that Nero was but a dwarf compared to Morton". This remark, all the more stinging that it was looked upon as a sneer at the Regent's low stature, was never forgiven. Not long after the conclusion of the lawsuit, both Sempill and Whiteford were thrown into prison on a charge "of having conspired against the Regent's life, and of having laid in wait by the Kirk, within the Kirkland of Paisley, to have shot him, in the month of January, 1575, at the instigation of the Lords Claud and John Hamilton". After having been detained in prison till 1577, John Sempill was brought up for trial on this capital charge. His alleged crime being of such a nature that it was probably found impossible to prove it by the testimony of witnesses, he was put to the torture of the boot, with which he had been threatened

[90] Teulet, op. cit., p. 167.

on a former occasion. By this means sufficient was extorted from him to give at least a semblance of justice to the sentence of death which was passed on him. In consideration of this confession, however, the sentence was not carried out. Ultimately he was set at liberty and restored to his family. His health had completely broken down under the terrible ordeal through which he had gone, and he only lingered on till the 25th of April, 1579.

Of Mary Livingston's life after the death of her husband but little is known. From an Act of Parliament passed in November, 1581, it appears that tardy justice was done her by James VI, who caused the grants formerly made to "umquhile John Semple, of Butress, and his spouse, to be ratified". Her eldest son, James, was brought up with James VI, and in later life was sent as ambassador to England. He was knighted in 1601. There were three other children – two boys, Arthur and John, and one girl, Dorothie.

The exact date of Mary Livingston's death is not known, but she appears to have been living in 1592.

MARY BETON

The family to which Mary Beton, or, as she herself signed her name, Marie Bethune, belonged, seems to have been peculiarly devoted to the service of the house of Stuart. Her father, Robert Beton, of Creich, is mentioned amongst the noblemen and gentlemen who sailed from Dumbarton with the infant Queen, in 1548, and who accompanied her in 1561, when she returned to take possession of the Scottish throne. His office was that of one of the Masters of the Household, and, as such, he was in attendance at Holyrood when the murderers of Rizzio burst into the Queen's chamber and stabbed him before her eyes. He also appears under the style of Keeper of the Royal Palace of Falkland, and Steward of the Queen's Rents in Fife. At his death, which occurred in 1567, he recommends his wife and children to the care of the Queen, "that scho be haill mantenare of my hous as my houpe is in hir Maiestie under God". His grandfather, the founder of the house, was comptroller and treasurer to King James IV. His aunt was one of the ladies of the court of King James V, by whom she was the mother of the Countess of Argyll. One of his sisters, the wife of Arthur Forbes of Reres, stood high in favour with Queen Mary, and was wet-nurse to James VI. His French wife, Jehanne de la Runuelle, and two of his daughters, were ladies of honour.

Of the four Marys, Mary Beton has left least trace in the history of the time. It seems to have been her good fortune to be wholly unconnected with the political events which, in one way or another, dragged her fair colleagues into their vortex, and it may be looked upon as a proof of the happiness of her life, as compared with their eventful careers, that she has but little history.

Though but few materials remain to enable us to reconstruct the story of Mary Beton's life, a fortunate chance gives us the means of judging of the truth of the high-flown compliments paid to her beauty by both Randolph and Buchanan. A portrait of her is still shown at Balfour House, in Fife. It represents, we are told, "a very fair beauty, with dark eyes and yellow hair", and is said to justify all that has been written in praise of her personal charms.[91] The first to fall a victim to these was the English envoy, Randolph. A letter of his to the Earl of Bedford, written in April, 1565, mentions, as an important fact, that Mistress Beton and he had lately played a game at biles against the Queen and Darnley, that they had been successful against their royal opponents, and that Darnley had paid the stakes.[92] In another letter, written to Leicester, he thinks it worthy of special record that for four days he had sat next her at the Queen's table, at St. Andrews. "I was willed to be at my ordinary table, and being placed the next person, saving worthy Beton, to the Queen herself." Writing to the same nobleman he makes a comparison between her and Mary Fleming, of whom, as we have seen, he had drawn so glowing a description, and declares that, "if Beton had lyked so short a time, so worthie a rowme, Flemyng to her by good right should have given place".[93] Knowing, as we do, from the testimony of other letters, how prone Randolph was to overrate his personal influence, and with what amusing self-conceit he claimed for himself the special favours of the ladies of the Scottish Court, there is every reason to suspect the veracity of the statement contained in the following extract from a letter to Sir Henry Sidney: "I doubt myself whether I be the self-same man that now will be content with the name of your countryman, that have the whole guiding, the giving, and bestowing, not only of the Queen, and her kingdom, but of the most worthy Beton, to be ordered and ruled at mine own will".

Like her colleague, Mary Fleming, "the most worthy Beton" had her hour of mock royalty, as we learn from three sets of verses in which Buchanan extols her beauty, worth, and accomplishments, and which are inscribed: "Ad Mariam Betonam pridie Regalium Reginam sorte ductam". In the first

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[91] *Inventories*, xlviii.

[92] *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland*, vol. i, p. 208.

[93] *Inventories*, p. xlviii.

of these, which bears some resemblance to that addressed to Mary Fleming on a similar occasion, he asserts, with poetical enthusiasm, the mimic sovereign's real claims to the high dignity which Fortune has tardily conferred upon her: —

Princely in mind and virtue, and so fair,
You've long seemed fit a diadem to wear;
And Fortune, blushing to have stood aloof,
Now lavishes her gifts to your behoof;
Deeming atonement for her tardiness
Demands in justice she should do no less,
She brings the Queen whom all the rest obey
A willing subject to your sovereign sway.

In his next effusion the poet rises to a more passionate height in his admiration. It is such as we might imagine Randolph to have penned in his enthusiasm, could we, by any flight of fancy, suppose him capable of such scholarly verses as those of Buchanan: —

Should I rejoice, or should my heart despair,
That Beton's yoke the Fates have made me bear?
O, Comeliness, what need have I of thee,
When hope of mutual love is dead for me?
For favours such as these, in life's young day,
E'en life had seemed no heavy price to pay;
And though my earthly bliss had been but brief,
Its fulness would have soothed my dying grief;
Now, ling'ring fires consume; I lack life's joy,
And death would bring me comfort, not annoy;
In life, in death, be this my comfort still,
That life and death are at my Lady's will.

The third epigram is more particularly interesting, as bearing reference, we think, to Mary Beton's literary tastes: —

Beneath cold Winter's blast the fields are bare,
Nor yield a posy for my Lady fair;
E'en so my Muse, luxuriant in her prime,
Has felt the chill and numbing grip of time;
Could lovely Beton's spirit but inspire,
'Twere Spring again, with all its life and fire.

The will drawn up by Mary Stuart, in 1556, which, it is true, never took effect, seems to point to Mary Beton as the most scholarly amongst the maids of honour. It is to her that the French, English, and Italian books in the royal collection are bequeathed; the classical authors being reserved for the University of St. Andrews, where they were intended to form the nucleus of a library: "Je laysse mes liuures qui y sont en Grec ou Latin à l'université de Sintandre, pour y commencer une bible. Les aultres ie les laysse à Beton."[94]

[94] *Inventories*, p. 124.

This is further borne out by the fact that, many years later, William Fowler, secretary to Queen Anne of Denmark, wife of James VI, dedicated his "Lamentatioun of the desolat Olympia, furth of the tenth cantt of Ariosto" "to the right honourable ladye Marye Betoun, Ladye Boine". Of the literary accomplishments which may fairly be inferred from these circumstances, we have, however, no further proof. Nothing of Mary Beton's has come down to us, except a letter, addressed by her in June, 1563, to the wife of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, whose acquaintance she may have made either in France or in Scotland, Sir Nicholas having been English Ambassador in both countries. In this short document the writer acknowledges the receipt of a ring, assures the giver that she will endeavour to return her love by making her commendations to the Queen, and begs her acceptance in return, and as a token of their good love and amity, of a little ring which she has been accustomed to wear daily.[95]

In the month of May, 1566, Mary Beton married Alexander Ogilvie, of Boyne. But little is known of this marriage beyond the fact that the Queen named the day, and beyond such circumstances of a purely legal and technical nature as may be gathered from the marriage contract, which is still extant, and has been published in the Miscellany of the Maitland Club. It sets forth that the bride was to have a dowry from her father of 3000 merks, and a jointure from her husband of lands yielding 150 merks and 30 chalders of grain yearly. This legal document derives its chief interest from bringing together in a friendly transaction persons who played important and hostile parts in the most interesting period of Scottish history. It bears the signatures of the Queen and Henry Darnley, together with those of the Earls of Huntly, Argyll, Bothwell, Murray, and Atholl, as cautioners for the bridegroom, that of Alexander Ogilvie himself, who subscribes his territorial style of "Boyne" and that of "Marie Bethune". The signature of the bride's father, and that of Michael Balfour, of Burleigh, his cautioner for payment of his daughter's tocher, are wanting.

It would appear that Mary Beton, or, as she was usually called after her marriage, "the Lady Boyn", or "Madame de Boyn", did not immediately retire from the Court. In what capacity, however, she kept up her connection with it, cannot be ascertained. All that we have been able to discover is that after her marriage she received several gifts of ornaments and robes from the Queen. Amongst the latter we notice a dress which was scarcely calculated to suit the fair beauty: "Une robbe de satin jeaulne dore toute goffree faicte a manches longues toute chamaree de bisette d'argent bordee dung passement geaulne goffre d'argent!"[96]

Both Mary Beton and Alexander Ogilvie are said to have been living as late as 1606. All that is known as to the date of her death is that it occurred before that of her husband, who, in his old age, married the divorced wife of Bothwell, the Countess Dowager of Sutherland.

It is interesting to note the contrast between the comparatively uneventful reality of Mary Beton's life and the romantic career assigned to her in one of the best-known works of fiction that introduces her in connection with her royal and ill-fated mistress. In Mr. Swinburne's *Mary Stuart*, the catastrophe is brought about by Mary Beton. For some score of years, from that day forth when she beheld the execution of him on whom she is supposed to have bestowed her unrequited love, of the chivalrous, impetuous Chastelard, when her eyes "beheld fall the most faithful head in all the world", Mary Beton, "dumb as death", has been waiting for the expiation, waiting

> Even with long suffering eagerness of heart
> And a most hungry patience.

It is by her action in forwarding to Elizabeth the letter in which Mary Stuart summed up all the charges brought against her rival, that the royal captive's doom is hastened, that Chastelard's death is avenged. It would be the height of hypercritical absurdity to find fault with the poet for the use

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[95] *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland*, vol. ii, p. 825.

[96] *Inventories*, p. 63.

which he has made of a character which can scarcely be called historical. Nevertheless, as it is often from fiction alone that we gather our knowledge of the minor characters of history – of those upon which more serious records, engrossed with the jealousies of crowned heads, with the intrigues of diplomatists and the wrangles of theologians, have no attention to bestow – it does not seem altogether useless at least to point out how little resemblance there is between the Mary Beton of real life and the Nemesis of the drama.

MARY SETON

"The secund wyf of the said Lord George (Marie Pieris, ane Frenche woman, quha come in Scotland with Quene Marie, dochter to the Duik of Gweis) bair to him tua sonnis and ane dochter … the dochter Marie." This extract from Sir Richard Maitland's *History of the House of Seton* gives us the parentage of the fourth of the Maries.[97] She was the daughter of a house in which loyalty and devotion to the Stuarts was traditional. In the darkest pages of their history the name of the Setons is always found amongst those of the few faithful friends whom danger could not frighten nor promises tempt from their allegiance. In this respect Mary Seton's French mother was worthy of the family into which she was received. At the death of Marie de Guise, Dame Pieris transferred not only her services, but her love also, to the infant Queen, and stood by her with blind devotion under some of the most trying circumstances of her short career as reigning sovereign. The deposition of French Paris gives us a glimpse of her, attending on Mary and conferring secretly with Bothwell on the morning after the King's murder. At a later date we find her conspiring with the Queen's friends at what was known as the council "of the witches of Atholl", and subsequently imprisoned, with her son, for having too freely expressed her loyalty to her mistress.[98] We may, therefore, almost look upon it as the natural result of Mary Seton's training, and of her family associations, that she is pre-eminently the Queen's companion in adversity. It seems characteristic of this that no individual mention occurs of her as bearing any part in the festivities of the Court, or sharing her mistress's amusements. Her first appearance coincides with the last appearance of Mary Livingston in connection with Mary Stuart. When the Queen, after her surrender at Carberry, was ignominiously dragged in her nightdress through the streets of her capital, her faltering steps were supported by Mary Livingston and Mary Seton. At Lochleven, Mary Seton, still in attendance on her mistress, bore an important part in her memorable flight, a part more dangerous, perhaps, than Jane Kennedy's traditional leap from the window, for it consisted in personating the Queen within the castle, whilst the flight was taking place, and left her at the mercy of the disappointed jailers when faithful Willie Douglas had brought it to a successful issue.[99] How she fared at this critical moment, or how she herself contrived to regain her liberty, is not recorded; but it is certain that before long she had resumed her honourable but perilous place by the side of her royal mistress. It is scarcely open to doubt that the one maid of honour who stood with the Queen on the eminence whence she beheld the fatal battle of Langside was the faithful Mary Seton.

Although, so far as we have been able to ascertain, Mary Seton's name does not occur amongst those of the faithful few who fled with the Queen from the field of Langside to Sanquhar and Dundrennan, and although the latter actually states in the letter which she wrote to the Cardinal de Lorraine, on the 21st of June, that for three nights after the battle she had fled across country, without being accompanied by any female attendant, we need have no hesitation in stating that Mary Seton must have been amongst the eighteen who, when the infatuated Mary resolved on trusting herself to the protection of Elizabeth, embarked with her in a fishing smack at Dundrennan, and landed at Workington. A letter written by Sir Francis Knollys to Cecil, on the 28th of June, makes particular mention of Mary Seton as one of the waiting-women in attendance on the Queen, adding further particulars which clearly point to the fact that she had been so for at least several days: —

> Now here are six waiting-women, although none of reputation, but Mistress Mary Seton, who is praised by this Queen to be the finest busker, that is to say, the

[97] P. 42.

[98] *Inventories*, p. lii.

[99] Miss Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of Scotland*, vol. vii, pp. 266, 271, 441.

> finest dresser of a woman's head of hair, that is to be seen in any country whereof we have seen divers experiences, since her coming hither. And, among other pretty devices, 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, without any cost, and yet setteth forth a woman gaylie well.[100]

For the next nine years Mary Seton disappears almost entirely in the monotony of her self-imposed exile and captivity. A casual reference to her, from time to time, in the Queen's correspondence, is the only sign we have of her existence. Thus, in a letter written from Chatsworth, in 1570, to the Archbishop of Glasgow, to inform him of the death of his brother, John Beton, laird of Creich, and to request him to send over Andrew Beton to act as Master of the Household, Mary Stuart incidentally mentions her maid of honour in terms which, however, convey but little information concerning her, beyond that of her continued devotion to her mistress and her affection for her mistress's friends. "Vous avez une amye en Seton," so the Queen writes, "qui sera aussi satisfayte, en votre absence, de vous servir de bonne amye que parente ou aultre que puissiez avoir aupres de moy, pour l'affection qu'elle porte à tous ceulx qu'elle connait m'avoyr esté fidéles serviteurs."

The royal prisoner's correspondence for the year 1574 gives us another glimpse of her faithful attendant, "qui tous les jours me fayct service tres agreable," and for whom the Archbishop is requested to send over from Paris a watch and alarum. "La monstre que je demande est pour Seton. Si n'en pouvez trouver une faite, faites la faire, simple et juste, suyvant mon premier mémoyre, avec le reveil-matin à part."[101]

Three years must again elapse before Mary Seton's next appearance. On this occasion, however, in 1577, she assumes special importance, and figures as the chief character in a romantic little drama which Mary Stuart herself has sketched for us in two letters written from her prison in Sheffield to Archbishop Beton.

It will be remembered that when, in 1570, death deprived Queen Mary of the services of John Beton, her Master of the Household, she requested that his younger brother should be sent over from Paris to supply his place. In due time Andrew Beton appeared at Sheffield and entered upon his honourable but profitless duties. He was necessarily brought into daily contact with Mary Seton, for whom he soon formed a strong affection, and whom he sought in marriage. The maid of honour, a daughter of the proud house of Winton, does not appear to have felt flattered by the attentions of Beton, who, though, "de fort bonne maison", according to Brantôme,[102] was but the younger son of a younger son. Despairing of success on his own merits, Andrew Beton at last wrote to his brother, the Archbishop, requesting him to engage their royal mistress's influence in furtherance of his suit. The Queen, with whom, as we know, match-making was an amiable weakness, accepted the part offered her, and the result of her negotiations is best explained by her own letter to the Archbishop: —

> According to the promise conveyed to you in my last letter, I have, on three several occasions, spoken to my maid. After raising several objections based on the respect due to the honour of her house – according to the custom of my country – but more particularly on the vow which she alleges, and which she maintains, can neither licitly nor honourably be broken, she has at last yielded to my remonstrances and earnest persuasions, and dutifully submitted to my commands, as being those of a good mistress and of one who stands to her in the place of a mother, trusting that I shall have due consideration both for her reputation and for the confidence which she has placed in me. Therefore, being anxious to gratify you in so good an

[100] G. Chalmers' *Life of Queen Mary*, vol. i, pp. 443-4.

[101] Labanoff, op. cit., t. vii, p. 123; t. iii, p. 116; t. iv, p. 215.

[102] T. v, p. 98.

> object, I have taken it upon myself to obtain for her a dispensation from her alleged vow, which I hold to be null. If the opinion of theologians should prove to coincide with mine in this matter, it shall be my care to see to the rest. In doing so, however, I shall change characters, for, as she has confidently placed herself in my hands, I shall have to represent not your interests, but hers. Now, as regards the first point, our man, whom I called into our presence, volunteered a little rashly, considering the difficulties which will arise, to undertake the journey himself, to bring back the dispensation, after having consulted with you as to the proper steps to be taken, and to be with us again within three months, bringing you with him. I shall request a passport for him; do you, on your part, use your best endeavours for him; they will be needed, considering the circumstances under which I am placed. Furthermore, it will be necessary to write to the damsel's brother, to know how far he thinks I may go without appearing to give too little weight to the difference of degree and title.[103]

After having penned this interesting and well-meaning epistle, the Queen communicated it to Mary Seton, to whom, however, it did not appear a fair statement of the case, and for whose satisfaction a postscript was added: —

> I have shown the above to the maiden, and she accuses me of over-partiality in this, that for shortness' sake, I have omitted some of the circumstances of her dutiful submission to me, in making which she still entertained a hope that some regard should be had for her vow, even though it prove to be null, and that her inclination should also be consulted, which has long been, and more especially since our captivity, rather in favour of remaining in her present state than of entering that of marriage. I have promised her to set this before you, and to give it, myself, that consideration which is due to her confidence in me. Furthermore, I have assured her that, should I be led to persuade her to enter into that state which is least agreeable to her, it would only be because my conscience told me that it was the better for her, and that there was no danger of the least blame being attached to her. She makes a great point of the disparity of rank and titles, and mentions in support of this that she heard fault found with the marriage of the sisters Livingston, merely for having wedded the younger sons of their peers, and she fears that, in a country where such formalities are observed, her own friends may have a similar opinion of her. But, as the Queen of both of them, I have undertaken to assume the whole responsibility, and to do all that my present circumstances will allow, to make matters smooth. You need, therefore, take no further trouble about this, beyond getting her brother to let us know his candid opinion.

With his mistress's good wishes, and with innumerable commissions from her ladies, Andrew Beton set out on his mission. Whether the dispensation was less easy to obtain than he at first fancied, or whether other circumstances, perhaps of a political nature, arose to delay him, twice the three months within which he had undertaken to return to Sheffield had elapsed before information of his homeward journey was received. He had been successful in obtaining a theological opinion favourable to his suit, but it appeared that Mary Seton's objections to matrimony were not to be removed with her vow. This seems to be the meaning of a letter written to Beton by Mary Stuart, in which, after telling him that she will postpone the discussion of his affairs till his return, she pointedly adds that Mary Seton's letters to him must have sufficiently informed him as to her decision, and that she herself, though willing to help him by showing her hearty approval of the match, could give no actual commands in the matter. A similar letter to the Archbishop seems to point to a belief on Mary's part

[103] The original is written in French.

that, in spite of the dispensation, the match would never be concluded, and that Beton would meet with a bitter disappointment on his return to Sheffield. It was destined, however, that he should never again behold either his royal lady or her for whom he had undertaken the journey. He died on his way homewards; but we have no knowledge where or under what circumstances. The first intimation of the event is contained, as are, indeed, most of the details belonging to this period, in the Queen's correspondence. In a letter bearing the date of the 5th of November she expresses to the Archbishop her regret at the failure of her project to unite the Betons and the Setons, as well as at the personal loss she had sustained by the death of a faithful subject and servant.[104]

With this episode our knowledge of Mary Seton's history is nearly exhausted. There is no further reference to her in the correspondence of the next six years, during which she continued to share her Queen's captivity. About the year 1583, when her own health had broken down under the hardships to which she was subjected in the various prisons to which she followed Mary Stuart, she begged and obtained permission to retire to France. The remainder of her life was spent in the seclusion of the abbey of St. Peter's, at Rheims, over which Renée de Lorraine, the Queen's maternal aunt, presided.

The last memorial which we have of Mary Seton is a touching proof of the affection which she still bore her hapless Queen, and of the interest with which, from her convent cell, she still followed the course of events. It is a letter, written in October, 1586, to Courcelles, the new French Ambassador at Holyrood; it refers to her long absence from Scotland, and concludes with an expression of regret at the fresh troubles which had befallen the captive Queen.

> I cannot conclude without telling you the extreme pain and anxiety I feel at the distressing news which has been reported here, that some new trouble has befallen the Queen, my mistress. Time will not permit me to tell you more.[105]

It may be supposed that what the faithful maid of honour had heard was connected with Babington's conspiracy and its fateful failure.

[104] Labanoff, op. cit., t. iv, pp. 341-4, 377-81, 389, 390, 401, 402.

[105] *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland*, vol. ii, p. 1014.

THE SONG OF MARY STUART

An Undetected Forgery

Those who are acquainted with Brantôme's delightful collection of biographical sketches of Illustrious Ladies, will remember that one of the most noteworthy of them is devoted to Marie Stuart. In it, amongst many other interesting details, he states that the Queen used to compose verses, and that he had seen some "that were fine and well done, and in no wise similar to those which have been laid to her account, on the subject of her love for the Earl of Bothwell, and which are too coarse and ill-polished to have been of her making". In another passage he says that Mary "made a song herself upon her sorrows"; and he quotes it.[106] For close on two centuries and a half the "*Chanson de Marie Stuart*", as given by him, has been reproduced in biographies of the Queen of Scots, and has found its way into numberless albums and anthologies. That it should have been accepted without hesitation on Brantôme's authority is hardly surprising. Of those who have written from personal acquaintance with Mary, few were in a better position than was the French chronicler to know the truth about her. He remembered her from her very childhood. He was familiar with all the circumstances of her training and education at Saint-Germain. He had witnessed the precocious development of the talents which excited the admiration of the courtiers that gathered about Henry II and Catharine de' Medici. He did not lose sight of her when, at a later date, her marriage with the heir to the crown of France gave her a household of her own in the stately residence of Villers-Côterets. He witnessed the enthusiasm which greeted her as Queen-Consort, as well as the deep and universal sympathy which her early bereavement called forth; and when the "White Queen", the dowager of seventeen, left the country of her affection to undertake the heavy task of governing her northern kingdom, he was amongst those who accompanied her on her fateful journey. In the circumstances, it did not occur, even to those who, knowing Brantôme's character, might feel that much allowance was to be made for the conventional enthusiasm of the courtier, to suspect that any of his statements concerning Mary Stuart was to be rejected as wholly devoid of foundation. And yet, we are in a position to prove that, in one instance, he asserted what he knew to be false; and we shall follow that up by producing the strongest evidence in support of the further charge that he was guilty of a literary forgery.

In his sketch of Mary Stuart, Brantôme does not place her "Song" where it would most naturally be looked for, that is, immediately after the passage in which he refers to her poetical talent. He introduces it clumsily, and in a way which, though perhaps not sufficient of itself to justify suspicion, is, at least, calculated to strengthen it when once it has been aroused. He begins by giving a description of the Queen, as she appeared in her white widow's weeds. "It was", he says, "a beautiful sight to see her, for the whiteness of her face vied for pre-eminence with the whiteness of her veil. But, in the end, it was the artificial whiteness of her veil that had to yield, and the snow of her fair complexion effaced the other. And so there was written at Court a song about her in her mourning garments. It was thus: " and here the anonymous poem is quoted. It consists of two stanzas, each containing six short lines. They depict the Goddess of Beauty, attired in white, wandering about, with the shaft of her inhuman son in her hand, whilst Cupid himself is fluttering over her, with the bandage, which he has removed from his eyes, doing duty as a funereal veil on which are inscribed the words: "Mourir ou estre pris". These verses, in which it is difficult to discover any special application to the widowed Queen, are followed, though not immediately, by a reference to her bereavement: "Hers was a happiness of short duration, and one which evil fortune might well have respected on this occasion; but, spiteful as she is,

[106] T. v, pp. 84, 85, 88-90, 123.

she would not be deterred from thus cruelly treating the Princess, who herself composed the following song on her loss and affliction". The poem thus attributed to Mary is then brought in. It consists of the eleven well-known stanzas, and begins with the line "En mon triste et doux chant" – "In my sad and sweet strains". Nobody ever thought of questioning its genuineness. The obviously fragmentary nature of the first poem, and the similarity of rhythm and metre in both did not suggest the possibility of a connection between them. Nor did it appear to be incongruous and in bad taste that, if the Queen undertook to write her own elegy, she should begin by praising its sweetness. A comparatively recent discovery, however, has placed it beyond doubt that Brantôme wittingly foisted on his readers verses which he very well knew had not been written by Mary Stuart.

Some years ago, whilst hunting through the dusty shelves of an old bookshop at Périgueux, Dr. E. Galy chanced upon a manuscript collection of poems of the sixteenth century. The gilt-edged and leather-bound folio was found to consist of two distinct parts. The first contained, together with a few anonymous poems, extracts from the works of Clément Marot, Pierre de Ronsard, and other writers of the period. The second, and, from the literary point of view, more interesting section was made up of a number of poems, chiefly sonnets, composed by Brantôme, and bearing the general title: *Recueil d'aulcunes rymes de mes Jeunes Amours que j'ay d'aultres fois composées telles quelles*, that is, "Collection of Certain Rhymes of my early loves, which I formerly composed, such as they are". This portion of the manuscript was published for private circulation, by the fortunate finder, to whose kindness we were indebted for a copy of the first edition of the hitherto unsuspected poetical works of Pierre de Bourdeille, Lord Abbot of Brantôme, Baron of Richemont.[107]

In the first division of the collection a very interesting discovery was made. It was found to contain both the anonymous "Song" composed "at Court", in honour of Mary Stuart, and the "Song" attributed to the Queen herself. The two poems, it was now seen, were not originally distinct, the anonymous verses being merely an introduction to the longer "Song", and joined to it by three stanzas, which are neither quoted nor alluded to in Brantôme's sketch of Mary. In its new form, and as it was published in a very limited edition of one hundred copies by Dr. Galy, the *Chanson pour la Royne d'Ecosse portant le dueil*,[108] is by no means a masterpiece. It has, however, the merit of composing an harmonious whole. The "Complaint" is preceded by an introduction which, both as regards its length and the train of thought running through it, is not out of keeping with the subject. It is followed by a concluding stanza, which, though not absolutely necessary, gives fullness and completeness to the picture called up by the elegy. One advantage which the new version of the longer song possesses over the old is the modification of the first jarring line. "En mon triste et doux chant," becomes "J'oy son triste et doux chant," that is, "I hear her sad and sweet strains". This reading adapts itself to the context, and connects the descriptive stanzas with those of the lament in a simple and natural manner.

As Dr. Galy pointed out, the new version of the "Song", to which, it should be stated, no author's name is attached, established, on the authority of Brantôme himself, that he had attributed to Mary Stuart verses which he knew were not hers. It did not, however, afford any clue to the real authorship, and the possibility that the whole poem was of Brantôme's own composition does not seem to have occurred to Dr. Galy. That such is the case is our firm belief. A careful comparison of the anonymous "Chanson" with the various poems avowedly by Brantôme has revealed such similarity, not only of thought and imagery, but even of expression, as convinces us that nobody but himself can be the author of *The Song of Mary Stuart.*

The 102nd sonnet in Brantôme's collection is one which he addressed to Mlle de Limeuil. Not only is the whole tone of it strikingly similar to that of the "Song", but it contains passages which cannot be explained away on the assumption of mere chance resemblance. Thus, in the thirteenth stanza of the "Song", Mary is represented as seeing her husband if she happens to look into the

[107] Périgueux, Cassard fréres.

[108] *Ibid.*

water: "Soudain le voy en l'eau". In the sonnet, Brantôme says; "*Soudain* il m'advise qu'*en l'eau je voy* Limeuil". In the first part of the same stanza, the mourning Queen is supposed to behold in the clouds the features of her lost husband. The same idea, expressed in similar language, and with precisely the same rhymes, occurs in some stanzas which Brantôme addressed to a lady "Sur un ennuy qui luy survint". The main idea of the "Song" – that of the sorrowing lady followed by the image of her lost love, wherever she may wander – recurs repeatedly in the sonnets, of which, indeed, several may, without exaggeration, be described as mere expansions of some of the lines in the "Song". Altogether, we have noted distinct parallelisms to five of the stanzas in the alleged "Chanson". When it is remembered that, as Brantôme gives it, it consists of no more than eleven stanzas, the proportion must appear striking. In addition to this, it must also be noted that, in the eleven stanzas of the lament itself, there are a number of variants – we have counted nine altogether – which, not being attributable to inaccurate copying, or necessary for mere adaptation, testify to a deliberate revision, hardly likely to have been the work of anyone but the original author. In the face of such evidence it seems to us that no alternative is left, and that we must place Brantôme on the same level as Meunier de Querlon, who published the once popular song, "Adieu, plaisant pays de France," and attributed it to Mary Stuart, though he was himself the author of it. Indeed, of the two, Brantôme is the less excusable; for, in his case, it cannot be pleaded as an extenuating circumstance, as it can in that of de Querlon, that he subsequently acknowledged his "mystification". In any case, there seems to be no reasonable doubt that we must diminish by one the number of poems hitherto believed to have been written by Mary Stuart.

Though the "Song" can no longer claim the authorship of Mary Stuart, it still retains some interest by reason of its strange story. To the best of our knowledge, the original and complete poem, of which, as we have stated, only 100 copies were published in France, for private circulation, has never been reproduced in this country. We therefore append it.

CHANSON POUR LA ROYNE D'ECOSSE PORTANT LE DUEIL

Je voy, sous blanc atour,
En grand dueil et tristesse,
Se pourmener maint tour
De beauté la Déesse;
Tenant le traict en main
De son filz inhumain.

II

Et Amour, sans fronteau.
Vollette à l'entour d'elle,
Desguisant son bandeau
En un funébre voelle
Où sont ces mots escrits:
"Mourir ou estre pris".

III

Deux arcs victorieux
Je voy sous blanche toyle,
Et sous chacun d'iceux
Une plus claire estoille
Qu'au plus net et pur aër
Du ciel l'astre plus clair.

IV

Et du haut d'un rocher,
Je voy singlant maint voile
D'un fanal s'approcher,
Dont la clarté est telle
Que sans elle tous lieux
Me semblent ténébreux.

V

Je voy, d'ordre marchant,
Une troupe dolente
Peu à peu s'approchant
D'une Dame excellente,
Qui de piteuse voix
Fait retentir un bois.

VI

J'oy son triste et doux chant,
Qui, d'un ton lamentable,
Jette un regret trenchant
De perte incomparable,
Et, en souspirs cuisants
Passe ses meilleurs ans.

VII

"Fut-il de tel malheur
De dure destinée,
Ne si juste douleur
De Dame fortunée,
Qui mon cœur et mon œil
Voy en biére et cercueil!

VIII

"Qui, en mon doux printemps
Et fleur de ma jeunesse,
Toutes les peines sens
D'une extrême tristesse,
Et en rien n'ay plaisir
Qu'en regret et désir.

IX

"Ce qui m'estoit plaisant
Ores m'est peine dure,
Le jour le plus luisant
M'est nuit noire et obscure,
Et n'est rien si exquis.
Qui de moi soit requis.

X

"J'ay au cœur et en l'œil
Un portraict et image
Qui figure mon dueil
En mon pasle visage
De violettes teint,
Qui est l'amoureux teint.

XI

"Pour mon mal estranger
Je ne m'arreste en place,
Mais j'ai beau lieu changer
Si ma douleur j'efface,

Car mon pis et mon mieux
Sont les plus déserts lieux.

XII

"Si en quelque séjour
Suis, en bois ou en prée
Soit sur l'aube du jour
Ou soit sur la vesprée,
Sans cesse mon cœur sent
Le regret d'un absent.

XIII

"Si parfois vers les cieux
Viens à dresser ma veüe,
Le doux traict de ses yeux
Je voy en une nue;
Soudain le voy en l'eau
Comme dans une tombeau.

XIV

"Si je suis en repos,
Sommeillant sur ma couche,
J'oy qu'il me tient propos,
Je le sens qui me touche;
En labeur ou requoy
Toujours est prés de moi.

XV

"Je ne voy autre object
Pour beau qu'il se présente;
A qui que soit subject
Oncques mon cœur consente,
Exempt de perfection
A ceste affection.

XVI

"Mets, chanson, icy frain
A si triste complainte,
Dont sera le refrain:
'Amour vraye et non faincte
Pour séparation
N'a diminution'."

XVII

Tel estoit le doux chant
De Dame souveraine,
Qui, mon cœur arrachant
D'une fuite soudaine,
Me donna en ce lieu
Coup mortel d'un Adieu.

We recall that the stanzas which we have numbered I and II constitute the Song which, according to Brantôme, was composed "at Court"; and that those from VI to XVI, inclusively, are, with an alteration of the first line, and some slight variations elsewhere, what he called the Song of Mary Stuart herself. The title, the three connecting stanzas III-V, and also the last, XVII, were discovered in the Périgueux manuscript

MAISTER RANDOLPHE'S FANTASIE[109]

A Suppressed Satire

About the middle of May, 1566, Robert Melvill was dispatched by Mary, Queen of Scots, as a special envoy to the English Court. The ostensible purpose of his mission was to request Queen Elizabeth to stand godmother to the royal infant whose birth was shortly expected.[110] And it was, indeed, with this object that his journey had, in the first instance, been resolved upon. But, three or four days before the time originally fixed for his departure,[111] he had been hastily summoned to Holyrood and ordered to set out at once, and with all speed, on an errand of a very different kind. According to the tenor of his later instructions, he was the bearer not of a friendly message from Mary Stuart to her loving cousin, but of a bitter complaint from the Queen of Scotland to the English sovereign. Mary had been informed by one of her agents at Berwick that "there was a booke wrytten agaynst her, of her lyf and govermente".[112] Though possessing no actual knowledge of the contents of the obnoxious libel and acquainted with its general tone and purport only, she had "taken it so grevouslye as nothy¯ge of longe time had come so near her hearte".[113] Not only did she resent the insult as a sovereign, but she also felt the outrage as a woman, and expressed her fear lest, having come to her so suddenly and at so critical a time, the unwelcome intelligence "sholde breed daynger to her byrthe or hurte to her selfe".[114] And Melvill had been hurried off to London to inform Elizabeth of the crime committed by one of her subjects, "that in tyme this worke mighte be suppressed and",[115] more important still, "condign punishment taken upon the wryter"; for by this means alone, the indignant Queen declared, could it be made apparent that he was not "mayntayned against her, not only by advise and counsell to move her subiects agaynste her, but also by defamations and falce reports mayke her odious to the werlde".[116]

The work at which such grievous offence had been taken was entitled *Maister Randolphe's Fantasie*, and the informant who had given Mary notice of its publication had also assured her that it was in reality what it purported to be, the production of the agent who, till within a short time previously, had represented England at the Scottish Court. She accepted the charge without question and without doubt. In her mind Thomas Randolph was associated with all the intrigues which had culminated in the open defection and organized opposition of the most powerful of her nobles, and she felt conscious of having treated him with a harshness calculated to add an ardent desire for revenge to the malevolent intentions by which she believed him to be actuated. During the last six months of his residence in Edinburgh he had been subjected to a series of petty vexations, of personal attacks and of open accusations, which even his avowed partisanship could not justify, and which were not less discreditable to the instigators of them than insulting to the sovereign whom he represented. On the formation of the league to which Mary's marriage with Darnley had given rise he had been threatened with punishment "for practising with the Queen's rebels".[117] Mary herself had shown her displeasure in

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[109] – letters with macrons over them are shown as "y¯" – the letters vr with a tilde over them are shown as "vr~"

[110] Earl of Morton to the Earl of Bedford, 24 May, 1566.

[111] Thomas Randolph to Sir William Cecil, 26 May, 1566.

[112] *Ibid.*

[113] Thomas Randolph to Sir William Cecil, 26 May, 1566.

[114] *Ibid.*

[115] *Ibid.*

[116] *Ibid.*

[117] Thomas Randolph to Sir William Cecil, 20 Aug., 1565.

so marked a manner that Randolph had sent to England a formal complaint of the difficulties thrown into his way by her refusal to give him access to her presence, even on official business.[118] When at last she did grant him an audience, it was not for purposes of political negotiation, but solely to upbraid him "for his many evil offices" towards her.[119] The dread of immediate imprisonment,[120] and the personal violence to which he was actually subjected,[121] had rendered his position so intolerable that he petitioned for permission to retire to Berwick.[122] His request was denied him; but the consequences of the refusal soon showed how ill-advised had been the action of those who had insisted upon his continuance in functions for which he now lacked the essential conditions of favour and security. In the beginning of the following year he was summoned before the Queen in Council, and publicly accused of abetting the Earl of Murray in his treasonable designs, and supplying him with funds to carry them out.[123] In spite of his direct and explicit denial of a charge which was in reality without foundation, he was ignominiously ordered to leave the country.[124] Anxious as he had been to be relieved from duties which had become as dangerous as they were difficult, Randolph nevertheless refused to obey. He appealed from Mary and her Lords to Elizabeth, to the sovereign to whom he owed his allegiance, and was answerable for his conduct, by whose favour he had been appointed to a position of confidence and honour, and at whose command alone he would consent to surrender his trust. On hearing the slight which had been put upon her accredited representative, the Queen of England took up his cause with characteristic promptitude and energy. She at once dispatched a letter to the Queen of Scots complaining "of her strange and uncourteous treatment of Mr. Randolph",[125] and informing her that his departure from Edinburgh would be the signal for the dismissal of the Scottish agent from the English Court. In spite of Elizabeth's remonstrances, and in the face of a threat which was so far from being idly meant that it was peremptorily carried out less than a fortnight later,[126] Randolph's expulsion was insisted upon. After having twice again received orders from the Lords,[127] he at length yielded to necessity and retired across the Border to Berwick.

That Randolph, smarting under such treatment, should have made use of his enforced leisure and of the knowledge which he had had special opportunities for acquiring to write a book by which he hoped to injure her cause and tarnish her reputation, doubtless seemed to Mary to be so natural that she deemed it unnecessary to institute further enquiries into the truth of the charge brought against him. His guilt was assumed as soon as the accusation was made, and, by a singular coincidence, if, indeed, it was not of set purpose, the same Minister whose dismissal had followed his own disgrace was sent back to Elizabeth to demand his punishment.

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[118] *Ibid.* 9 Sept., 1565.

[119] *Ibid.* 15 Dec., 1565.

[120] Thomas Randolph to the Earl of Bedford, 30 Sept., 1565.

[121] "Instructions for certain persons to be sent into Scotland to commune respecting … assaults upon Thomas Randolph." —*State Papers.*

[122] Thomas Randolph to the Earl of Leicester, 18 Oct., 1565.

[123] Thomas Randolph to Sir W. Cecil, 19 Feb., 1566; the Queen of Scots to Queen Elizabeth, 20 Feb., 1566.

[124] *Ibid.*

[125] Queen Elizabeth to the Queen of Scots, 3 March, 1566.

[126] Queen Elizabeth to the Queen of Scots, 15 March, 1566.

[127] Thomas Randolph to Sir W. Cecil, 6 March, 1566.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.