

"and all others authorized with him in commission."* And the dismissal of Murray and his brethren into Scotland, which in an instant extinguished the conference, in the same instant extinguished the authority of Elizabeth's commissioners too.

Elizabeth knew, that all this would be the consequence of sending away the commissioners of either side. She had therefore refused to let Mary's depart before. These had taken a violent disgust at the gross partiality of Elizabeth, in suffering the bastard Murray to appear at court with his recriminating accusations, while she, the original accuser and a Queen, was kept at a distance and in prison; and at that affected prudery of Elizabeth, which was surely the very quintessence of hypocrisy in her, and made her fearful she should dishonour and disgrace forsooth! the virgin purity of her own character, if she admitted Mary to her presence. They therefore wished to terminate the conference, and to return home. But she would not suffer them to stir. She continued the conference in spite of their protestations. She kept them at London in spite of their petitions. And she would not consent, she said, that "any of them should depart into Scotland BEFORE THE END OF THIS CONFERENCE."† Yet now, now, she

* Goodall, ii. 191.

† Ibid. 269. Mary also thought the conference would be at an end, by her commissioners leaving London. See her address accordingly, not about Jan. 18, 1569, as Goodall, ii. 325, dates it: but about December 18, 1568, as p. 280—281, 314, "laitlie," 327, "sixth of this moneth," and 328 shew.—

found it necessary for the *rebel commissioners* to do, what she would not permit Mary's to do before.

She had foreseen the necessity from the beginning. She had even provided for it. She knew from the beginning, that the letters would not bear an inspection, even by the dim light of a copy. She had therefore determined they should not be seen at all, by Mary or by Mary's commissioners. She had resolved, if Mary should call for them, to "whistle them off, and let them "down the wind" at once. It was accordingly entered in the journal of her privy council, *even so early as the 30th of October before*, that "after "the messengers of Scotland SHALL HAVE SHEW- "ED THAIR PROVES,—it is thought good, the "Erle of Murray *should* BE LICENSED TO RE- "PAYRE HOME."* So early did Elizabeth draw out the great outline of her own conduct in this business! So long was Murray's departure determined, before the day he was particularly ordered to depart! Murray indeed had put in his proofs on the 8th of December, about five weeks before. But a prospect of terminating the whole more happily than had been expected at first, had *then* presented itself to the mind of Elizabeth. The commissioners of Mary had protested, that they would proceed no further in the conference. Elizabeth readily caught at this. She hastened the production of the proofs. She called upon the commissioners, she called upon Mary; she threatened her, she bullied them;

* Goodall, ii. 182.

for an answer. She had now all the game in her own hands. And she meant to play it triumphantly, in a continued refusal from Mary to answer, and in a consequent conviction of her guilt upon the minds of all. Then the plan of October the 30th would have been entirely deserted. Murray and his brethren would have remained in London, waiting for the answer, and rejoicing in the delay. Elizabeth would have still gone on for weeks probably, exhorting Mary, exhorting her commissioners, insinuating to her that she was betrayed by them, insinuating to them that they were deceived by her, and so blazoning more and more the silence and the shame of Mary. At last probably, it would have been recorded in the journal of the commissioners, on the books of the privy council, or on both, that the charge was sufficiently ratified by the silence. Mary would have been put down as a wilful mute. And the *peine forte et dure* of publick infamy would have been pronounced against her. But alas! this hopeful view was soon lost. Mary saw the designs of Elizabeth. She counteracted them. She came forward to answer. She called for a sight of the letters, that she might answer. She called for them repeatedly. She called for them loudly. She was earnest to have them. She was eager to answer them. And Elizabeth was compelled to recur to her original purpose, to send away the letters, to send away the producers, even to superadd to all a formal acquittal of Mary from the charge,* and

* Goodall, ii, 305.

so to sweep away the commissions and the conferences, the charge, the proofs, and the reply, with one indignant stroke of her hand.

§ v.

WHEN this inquisition was first begun, Elizabeth had expressly and solemnly declared to the rebels themselves, her resolution to restore Mary to the royalty from which she had been driven by them, unless she was proved guilty of the murder of her husband. She therefore speaks thus in her commission for the conference at York: "If her Majestie shall find it to be
 "PLAINLY AND MANIFESTLY PROVED, that the
 "said Quene of Scots was the deviser and pro-
 "curer of that murder, or otherwise was guilty
 "thereof, surely her Majestie would *think her*
 "*unworthy of a kingdom*, and wold not stayne her
 "own conscience *by restoring her to a kingdom.*"*
 Her commissioners, also, speak in the very same terms to Murray at York.† And Cecil, in one of his wily projects upon paper dated the 22nd. of December afterwards, says thus in allusion to both: "Her Majestie did resolve, and so *caused to*
 "*be pronounced to the Earl of Murray*, at the
 "*beginning of this conference*, that *if the Queen*
 "*of Scots should* NOT be found APPARENTLY
 "guilty of the murder, SHE SHOULD BE RE-
 "STORED TO HER ESTATE."‡ Accordingly Mary, independently of Elizabeth's unconditional promise to herself, and with only the natural sanguineness of conscious innocence, might well

* Goodall, ii. 99.

† Ibid. 127.

‡ Ibid. 275.
 imagine

imagine she should be immediately restored by the arms of Elizabeth to her crown. She even shewed this imagination, in the formality of her commission for the conference. "Forasameikill
 "as it hath pleasit," says she, "the Quene's
 "Majestie of Ingland,—to take upon her the
 "RESTORING OF US TO OUR REALME AND AUTHO-
 "RITIE," &c.* Such was the expectation of Mary, and such were the good grounds upon which it was built!

But what was the result? *Was* Mary restored to her kingdom? Or was she found *apparently* guilty, and the murder *plainly and manifestly* proved upon her? She was certainly *not* found *apparently* guilty. The murder was certainly *not* proved *plainly and manifestly* upon her. Indeed the process of inquiry had gone no farther, than barely to *put* in the pretended charge, and to *shew* the pretended proofs. The proofs were then withdrawn. All cool and steady examination of them, even by the *judges* themselves, was prevented. They refused indeed to be submitted to the examination of any one. They were properly, therefore, no proofs at all. They would not be examined in person. They would not be examined by representation. In this mode of conducting the business, and from this issue to the whole inquiry, nothing was, nothing could be proved, except the flimsiness of the accusation. If Mary had been never so guilty, she could never have been shewn guilty by such a mode of procedure as this. But, as I have hinted more than once before, such a

* Goodall, ii, 118—119.

mode would never have been adopted, if she had been actually guilty. Murray was glad to escape from his own accusation, with his originals not openly detected to be forgeries. Elizabeth was pleased to terminate the whole conference abruptly, rather than suffer Mary to see, to detect, and to expose, the forged evidences against her. And she was even willing to subscribe to Mary's innocence, *before* Mary had an opportunity to shew it by making a reply.

In the very moments, in which she licensed Murray and his associates to depart into Scotland, she pronounced the sentence of Mary's acquittal. She made her grand organ of business, Cecil, to speak it in the presence of *all her privy council*. To "the Erle of Murray and his adherents" he said, by the command of Elizabeth, and *in the name of her council*, That "thair had bene nathing sufficientlie product nor schawin be thame aganis the Quene thair soverane, QUHAIRBY the Quene of Ingland SOULD CONCEAVE OR TAK ONY EVIL OPINION OF THE QUENE, hir guid sister, for ony thing zit fene."*

Nor can this be considered as equally a flourish of policy, with that justification of Murray, which was pronounced at the same time and by the same lips. The latter runs in the following terms: "Thair has bene nathing deducit aganis thame, as zit, that may impair thair honour or alledgeances."† This is evi-

* Goodall, ii. 305.

† Ibid. *ibid.*

dently in a much fainter tone than the other. The circumstances also are totally different. Elizabeth would naturally be inclined to pay compliments to Murray, at the expence of truth. Her inclination lay just the contrary way towards Mary. She was likewise urged powerfully by the necessity of her affairs, to justify Murray in order to dismiss him. She had no such urgency from the side of Mary. And Mary had yet produced no evidence against Murray, while he had produced her own handwriting, as he pretended, against her. Under all these circumstances, the justification of Murray stands upon ground totally different from the vindication of Mary. The latter indeed was plainly wrung from the hard and savage heart of Elizabeth, by the violence of her convictions, and the pressure of her affairs, uniting together at the time.

Elizabeth thus pronounced Mary's innocence from the charge brought against her. Elizabeth thus declared Mary's honour, to be noways sullied by the imputations thrown out against her. She affirmed, that she had no reason "to conceive or take any evil opinion of her for any thing yet seen." This is the amplest vindication of Mary, that could possibly be given. It comes from her enemy, her political, her personal, enemy. It comes from the confederate, the confidante, and the maintainer, of her usurping rebels. It comes from her, *after* she has been trafficking with them long in mischief, in forgery, in every species of artful villainy. And it comes from
her

her, even *after* she has heard all their charge, and even *after* she has seen all their evidences of adultery and murder against her.

But did Elizabeth *restore* her after all? Mary is not only NOT found apparently guilty. The murder is not only NOT proved plainly and manifestly upon her. But she is even pronounced innocent and unfullied by the mouth of her enemy and her judge, at the close of all that this enemy and this judge would suffer to be transacted. She must therefore be certainly restored. She has a right to it, from the fundamental principles of the whole inquiry. She has a double right to it, from Elizabeth's full declaration of her innocence.

She may have a *right*. But she will not gain the *possession*. Elizabeth might be brought to *confess* a great truth at a particular moment, from the *violence* and *torture* of distress. Yet she is not one *iota* an honest woman, than she has always been before. The grandest criminals have done the same in similar circumstances. And if instantly released from the rack, would *they* have begun to act honestly? Elizabeth had held out the lure of restoration, to draw Mary into the trial. She thought of it no more, when this was over. She not only did NOT restore her. She even sent the usurper of her throne away, with a promise to maintain his authority, and with a *loan of five thousand pounds* to strengthen him in it.* She even kept Mary in prison still.

* Goodall, ii. 306 and 313.

She even kept her under a stricter confinement there. She thus left her rebels, to exult in the success of their confederacy with Elizabeth, and to triumph in the equal congeniality of Elizabeth's and their souls for mischief. And, in a few years afterward, she stepped out decisively from behind the line of artful profligacy, to which she had chiefly confined herself hitherto; became as violent now, as she had been perfidious before; so united the two extremes of human profligacy in her own conduct; and wildly bathed her hands, at last, in the life-blood of Mary.

§ VI.

BUT, to complete the parts of this enormous whole, I must add one thing more. It is this. Not content to mangle the fine person of Mary with the murderous axe, Elizabeth even proceeded to a still greater excess of guilt. She exerted all the arts of Hell, to mangle her reputation also.

She had totally prevented Mary from making any reply to the letters produced against her, by refusing her all sight of them at one time, and by closing abruptly the whole inquisition at another. Yet she herself had been compelled, at a particular moment, to pronounce the eulogium of her innocence. She acquitted her from every shade of dishonour, that had been so violently attempted to be thrown over the lustre of her character by the letters. And, in less than three years afterwards, she *published those very letters*, in order to eclipse her character for ever.

She

She published them as *proofs* of *adultery*, as *proofs* of *murder*, against her. She published them as *proofs substantiated at the time*. And, with the malignant industry of the Arch-fiend himself, she circulated them over the island and over the continent.

This is such a crowning addition to all the flagitiousness of Elizabeth before, and gives her such a horrible pre-eminence in guilt; that justice ought not to believe it even of her, without a large share of evidence for it. This therefore shall be given. And it shall be fully given.

The original letters were now gone back to their native north. But copies of them were still in London. They were only with Elizabeth, however. They had indeed been delivered to her commissioners. Yet in such a government as Elizabeth's, where the genius of the Queen, and the habits of the people, threw a controlling awe over all the departments of the state; they were properly still in the custody of Elizabeth. And in a few days after that delivery, as I have already shewn, the very existence of the commissioners ceased, and all their papers would be then removed into Cecil's office. The letters were even delivered at first into, and ever afterwards continued in, the hands of Cecil himself, as at once a commissioner and the secretary. "The copies of all quhilk letteris," says Murray in some instructions written about nine months afterwards, being "conferrit, red, and considerit, "wer deliverit to Mr. Secretary, in quhais handis
"thay

"*they remane.*"* So completely were they, from their first production before the commissioners, in the possession of Elizabeth and under the care of Cecil. But from that possession and that care they eloped to the press. She therefore ordered, and he executed, the publication of them.

Accordingly, Cecil himself appears particularly active in dispersing them, and in dispersing them even among the French, immediately after their publication here. In a letter of his to Walsingham, our embassadour in France, which is dated the 1st of November, 1571, he says thus to him: "Having this present occasion to send two of my Lord of Oxford's men to Paris, at his Lordship's request; I thought good also therewith to send to you THIS LITTLE TREATISE newly printed in Latin," Buchanan's Detection, in which were inserted *some* of the principal letters, "in commending or discommending the Queen of Scots *actions to further her marriage with Bothwell.* I hear it is to be translated into English, with addition of many other supplements of like condition."† For what purpose a copy of this new publication was sent by Cecil, is obvious enough of itself. But this is opened at large in another paper, which was equally sent in the same year to Elizabeth's representative at Paris, and which contains some special instructions to him from Elizabeth with regard to Mary. To many arguments which he was to

* Goodall, ii. 88.

† Ibid. i. 106.

use to the King of France, in order to dissuade him from taking part with the imprisoned Mary, it is added thus: "and here were it not amiss "to have *divers* of BUCHANAN'S LITTLE LATIN "BOOKS, to present, *if need be*, to the King as "from *yourself*, and likewise to some of the "other *noblemen of his council*; for THEY WILL "SERVE TO GOOD EFFECT TO DISGRACE HER; "which *must be done*, BEFORE *other purposes can be "attained.*"* This letter, which, like a record of the last day, discloses the whole heart and soul of Elizabeth in the business, appears plainly from the tenour of it to have been written *after* the other. The other speaks of the publication as recent. This passes over the circumstance, as not recent and well known. They evidently stand in a very near relation to each other. And this reflects a strong light back upon that. It also receives a light reflected back from the subsequent letter, which shews it to have been written, like the first, in the month of November, and while there was only a *Latin* edition of Buchanan's book yet published.

But says Cecil in his *first* letter, for he was, no doubt, the author of both, though he does not *appear* to be so: "I hear it is to be translated into English, with addition of many "other supplements of like condition." It was accordingly published in English, within *three or four weeks* afterwards. And some of the "supplements of like condition" were the rest of

* Goodall, Introd. 25.

the letters. These therefore must have been, equally with the former letters, all published by Elizabeth and Cecil. He, we see, knew of the intention and plan, before it was executed. It was executed immediately, and in that very month of November. We have a letter written at Leith in Scotland on the 14th of December, in that year; which speaks of the work as having been *then* published in England. "Thay
 "have set out in Ingland," says the author,
 "and newlie set out," he adds in another place,
 "our Quene's lyfe and processe, *baith* in *Latin*
 "and *Inglish*, quhair-in is contenit the discourse
 "of hir tragical doingis, the processe of the Erle
 "of Bothwell's clenging," cleansing or acquittal,
 "hir sonnettis and letteris to him, the depositi-
 "ounis of the persounis execute, and cartellis
 "after the King's murther. In appearance THAY
 "LEIVE NATHING UNSET OUT TENDING TO HIR
 "INFAMIE, and to mak the Duke of Northfolk
 "odious, quha has a grait benevolence of the
 "people."* To the Latin edition of the De-
 tection were subjoined only the three first let-
 ters. To the English were annexed these three
 letters; *before* them, the second contract of
 marriage, the trial and acquittal of Bothwell
 for the murder, and the sonnets in French and
 Scotch; and *after* them the five other letters,
 the tickets stuck up on Bothwell's acquittal,
 the confessions of Hepburn, Hay, Dalgleishe,
 and Powry, and some concluding exclamations

* Goodall, ii. 371 and 373.

against Mary.* But that stroke concerning the Duke of Norfolk shews us still more plainly, whence the English publication was derived. He had been convinced of the scandalous measures, into which he had been trepanned against Mary. He wished to make her some reparation. He wished to deliver her from the cursed bonds, and still more cursed machinations, of that MACHIAVELL IN A RUFF AND FARTHINGALE, Elizabeth. But he was over-reached by men, who, to his honour be it spoken, were more versed than himself in the wiles of policy. And he lay at this moment under sentence of death, for his conduct. To turn away the affection of the people from this popular noble, by loading the name of Mary with various enormities, and by involving him in all the imputed infamy of Mary; appears to have been the design of the publication.

For that reason, Cecil prefixed to it an inflammatory address against her, and added to it an inflammatory comparison betwixt her and Elizabeth. The former says, that in this "booke are BOTH parties to be heard; the one [Mary] "in the former part, both in the *declaration* and "*oration of evidences*;" these names being here from their double nature applied to the two parts of Buchanan's Detection, when in reality

* See the Latin in Jebb, i. 237—277; and the English in Anderson, ii. 1—162. The latter is taken from the first edition in Scotland, but is the same as the English (Goodall, i. 37—38).

they belong only to the second part of it, which is entitled "ane oratioun with declaratioun of evidences;" the other in the latter part, in the parties "own contractes, songes, letteres," &c. "The booke itself," it adds, "with the oration of evidence, is written in Latin by a learned man of Scotland, Mr. George Buchanan.—It was also overseen, and allowed, and exhibited by them," the Lords of the privie council of Scotland, "as mater that thay have offered, and *do continue in offeryng*, TO STAND TO AND JUSTIFIE, before our Sovereigne Ladie, or hir Highnesses commissioners in that behalfe appointed. And what PROVE thay have made of it already, when thay were here for that purpose, and the sayd authour of the sayd booke one among them; when BOTH PARTIES, or their sufficient procurators, were here present INDIFFERENTLIE to be heard, and so WERE HEARD INDEEDE: all *good* subjects may *easely* gather be our said Sovereigne Ladye's *procedyng* sins the said hearyng of the cause, who *no dout would never have so stayed her*," Mary's, request, but rather would have added enforcement, by *ministring of ayde to the Lady Mary of Scotland, for her restitution*."* So shamelesly impudent were Elizabeth and Cecil, in asserting both parties to have been heard in the inquisition, and both to have been heard impartially; and in resting finally the proof of

* Goodall, ii. 377, and i. 39.

convicted

convicted guilt in Mary, on the very perfidiousness of Elizabeth to her.

But both the address and the comparison went on, in a higher unison of malignity, to do that "which was to be done, before other purposes could be attained." The address therefore says, that "of late hath bene published—" a treatise, *detecting the FOULE DOYINGES* of "some," Mary, "THAT HAVE BENE DAUNGEROUS TO OUR NOBLE QUENE, by which *detection* is induced a very excellent comparison for "all Englishmen to judge, whether it be good "to chaunge QUENES or no, and therewith a "necessary enforcement to every honest man, to "pray heartely for the long continuance of our "good mother to rule over us, that our posteritie may not see her place left empty for a "PERILOUS STEPDAME."* But the comparison spoke out in much stronger terms than these. It spoke thus: "Now judge, Englishmen, gif "it be gude to change QUENES, O uniting, confounding! When rude Scotland has VOMITED "A POYSOUNE, must fyne England lick it up "for a restorative? O vyle indignitie! WHILES "YOUR QUENE'S ENEMY LIVETH, *hir* DANGER "CONTINETH. Desperat necessitie will dar "the uttermost. O ambitione! fed with profperitie, nourished with indulgence, *irritate with adversitie*, not to be NEGLECTED, TRUSTED, "nor PARDONIT."† So outrageously abusive were Elizabeth and Cecil against Mary, when they

* Goodall, ii. 376.

† Ibid. 373—374.

could throw out their abuse under the cover of a mask, and when they wanted for their "other purposes" to set the nation against her.*

Elizabeth was thus busy in completing HER OWN infamy, while she was labouring for Mary's. She had plotted to ruin Mary's character. She had tried a thousand frauds for that purpose. Yet she had been compelled, in her own despite, to acknowledge the innocence which she had endeavoured to disprove. And then she returned with a double portion of malignity, to her original purpose; published the papers as genuine, which she had plainly owned to be spurious before; and arraigned, tried, and condemned that Queen in print, whom she had found herself forced to acquit with honour, upon the real trial. She thus became the polluted mother of a long brood of evils. She prepared the way with too fatal a success, for her "other purposes." She became *her own seducer and leader into murder*. She became the wretched cause of worse. With an equally fatal success, she buried the reputation and honour of Mary under the rubbish of her own accusations. And she now stands forward in the eye of reason and religion, as the grand author of all the calum-

* See also a discourse concerning the intended marriage of Mary to the Duke of Norfolk, written in the same strain of impudent abuse, and written, no doubt, equally by Cecil: as it was sent in MS. and before publication to Elizabeth's agent in Scotland, the factious and unprincipled Randolph (Anderson, i. 21—32, and the editor's preface to the Defence of Q. Mary's Honour, p. 111).

nies upon calumnies, that have been heaped by a continual succession of slanderers on the head of Mary, for two centuries past.

She did not indeed foresee the amazing extent of her crimes, at the time. Nor do any criminals foresee the extent of theirs. Like Elizabeth, they look not beyond the present moment. They reflect not, that there is a *venom* in iniquity, which runs farther than the line of human life; which *corrodes* and *festers*, when the heart that dictated and the hand that executed it, are both crumbled into dust; and which continues to *burn* on, to other ages, and to other worlds. And let me in the proper sentiments of Christianity add, that the soul of Elizabeth at this instant, whether it is confined in the mansions of misery, or lodged among the spirits of the blessed, is now, I doubt not, looking back to all her long transactions with Mary, and to their longer consequences, either with a solemn sigh of penitence over them, or with the pangs and the groans of an overwhelming remorse for them.

CHAPTER IV.

§ I.

THIS long and useful dissection of Elizabeth's and of Murray's conduct in the exhibition of the letters, proves in the fullest manner the lively conviction, that they mutually had upon their minds, concerning the forgery of them. They both very plainly knew them to be forged. They were both very plainly apprehensive of a detection. And they very plainly took such extraordinary measures as they did, in order to prevent it. This appears stamped in the strongest characters, upon the forehead of the whole. Not merely one, or two, or three of the facts preceding, carry this striking signature upon them; but all. All bear the records of their own shame with them. And they all concur in one uniform attestation of infamy, against themselves, against the letters, against the doers of those, and against the employers of these.

Well, therefore, might the principal persons in England, at the conclusion of the conference, form that decisive opinion of Mary's innocence, which they plainly appear to have formed. Mr. Tytler was the first who noticed the fact. He inferred it very justly from the large and powerful confederacy among them, for the marriage of Mary to the Duke of Norfolk.* But we need

* P. 62—64. edit. 3.

not rest the point upon an inference. We have a clear and cotemporary authority for it. We have it even with an addition of evidence and energy. And "the nobles of England, that were appointed "to heare and examine al such matters as the "rebels should lay against the Quene," says the Bishop of Ross, only a few months after the hearing and examination were ended, "have "not onely FOUND THE SAID QUEENE INNOCENT "AND GUILTLESS OF THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND, but doe withal FULLY UNDERSTAND, "that her ACCUSERS were the very CONTRIVERS, "DEVISERS, PRACTITIONERS, and WORKERS of "the said murther: and have further also *so much encreased, and in such wise renewed the good "estimation and great hope thay alwaies had of "her,* NOW PERFECTLY KNOWING HER INNOCENCY, and therto moved THROUGH OTHER "PRINCELY QUALITIES RESPLENDENT IN HER, "with many whereof she is much adorned and "singularly endowed, THAT THEY HAVE IN "MOST EARNEST WISE SOLICITED AND ENTREATED, that she might be RESTORED AGAINE, TO "HER HONOUR AND CROUNE. They have MOVED "THE SAID QUEENE OF SCOTLAND also, that it "may please her TO ACCEPT AND LIKE OF THE "MOST NOBLEST MAN OF ALL ENGLAND, between whome and her there might be a marriage concluded, to the quieting and comfort of "both the realmes of England and Scotland. "Finally, the noblemen of this our realme, ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPT HER, FOR THE VERY "TRUE AND RIGHT HEIR APPARENT OF THIS "REALME

"REALME OF ENGLAND, being fully minded
 "and alwaies ready (when God shall so dispose)
 "TO RECEIVE AND SERVE HER AS THAIR UN-
 "DOUBTED QUEENE, MAISTRESSE, AND SOVERAIGNE;
 "whereby it may easely appeare HOWE WEL THAY
 "LIKE OF HER CAUSE, THAT HAD THE HEARING
 "AND TRIAL OF THE SAME, although thay never
 "as yet came in her presence."* Nor is this
 merely the language of Mary's friends. An
 enemy, even a Throgmorton, says as much. In
 a letter to Lethington, of July 20, 1569, speak-
 ing to him of his "Queen's restoration and
 "marriage to the Duke of Norfolk," he says
 thus: "Sure I am, you do not judge so slen-
 "derly of the managing of this matter, as to
 "think we have not cast the worst, or to enter
 "therein so far without the assistance of the
 "nobility, the ABLEST, the WISEST, and the
 "MIGHTIEST of this realm."† The discernment
 of a nation, that seems in all ages to have had
 a strong principle of good-sense alive and active
 within it, could not but mark the wriggling move-
 ments of guilt in Elizabeth and in Murray, dur-
 ing the whole of this memorable inquiry; could
 not but despise the Sovereign, whom they were
 obliged to obey; and could not but revere
 the Queen, whom they had been compelled
 to persecute. And they appear to have seen and
 felt all this so very strongly, that they very
 earnestly solicited Elizabeth to restore the in-
 jured Queen to her crown; that they even

* P. 80—81. Anderson, i. † Robertson, ii. 395.

solicited

solicited Mary to marry Norfolk, for the eventual union of the two kingdoms; and that they professed themselves ready and resolute, on the demise of Elizabeth, to acknowledge Mary, as they actually acknowledged her son, for the rightful Sovereign of both.*

Nor does the evidence of the forgery, arising from the apprehensiveness of detection, end here. The same principle of cautious policy equally shews itself, in another part of the history of these letters. Murray, who acted with so much of the timorousness of guilt about him, while he was co-operating with Elizabeth, acted just in the same manner, when he was left entirely to his own operations. He was equally then a knave, fearful of detection, and guarding against it. And he equally betrayed his knavery, by that very fearfulness and those very guards.

The letters were not constantly in the public eye, from the period of their first appearance before it. They were seen. They disappeared. They appeared again. But, in almost every one of these absences, the comet, though asserted to be the same, still presented a different face

* So Mary, in a letter written at the moment, and dated Jan. 5, 1568-9, says thus: "The said Quene, our guid sister, and hir counsaill, knaw thair fals inventiounis and offences practisit aganis us, to cullour thair traifoun and wickit usurpation; swa that it fall be manifest to all the world quhat men thay ar, to our honour, and contentment of our saythful subjectis. For, prayis be God, our friendis increffis, and thairis decreffis, daylie." Goodall, ii. 315. And see also Lesley's Negotiations, 51—52, 55, 58, and 62. Anderson, ii.

to the world. And there was a real alteration at almost every return, in the form or in the substance of these redoubted writings. This could not have been the case, if the writings had been authentick. They could never have varied in their form. They could never have changed in their substance. They must have appeared, and they must have been, exactly the same; from the first moment of their exhibition, to the last. The principle of identity within them, must have given them an uniformity of look and aspect, in all the different stages of their existence. This indeed they *might* equally have had, if they had been merely forgeries. But they would be sure to have had it, if they had been really genuine. And, only as forgeries, could they have been capable of any variation at all.

It is a very singular circumstance in the genius of guilt, that it is ever apprehensive of discovery, that it is ever endeavouring to secure itself against it, and that it is ever discovering itself by the act. This is as striking in itself, as it is happy in its consequences for man. Honesty stands firm upon its own unfailing basis. It dreads not exposure. It shews not solicitude. It uses not any preventive arts. But villainy is continually shifting its ground. It is always haunted with suspicions. It is always on the watch for dangers. It is always strengthening itself against them. And thus is it continually disclosing its dangers, its suspicions, and its villainy, to an attentive eye. The coward provokes the attack, by preparing so timorously for it. The serpent points

points out the most vulnerable part of his body, by covering it so cautiously with the rest. The villain never thinks himself secure, while he has time for securing himself still more. He will "make surety doubly sure." He will "take a "bond of fate" itself, for his own preservation. And he will betray himself completely by all. So Murray acted. He forged the letters. He then revised them. He revised and corrected. He again revised, and he again corrected. He was continually at work, with all the assiduity of a painter over a favourite piece, in giving them

The patient touches of unwearied art.

One alteration was succeeded by another. The letters progressively put on a variety of faces, under his reforming hand. And thus did he as loudly proclaim the forgery of them to the ear of reason, as if he had told it by the mouth of a herald and the sound of a trumpet.

Many of the changes, which the letters underwent in this manner, are undoubtedly lost to our knowledge, from the want of minute exactness in the original records concerning them. But there are several, that are very distinguishable at present. These I shall bring forth into view. And for that purpose I shall trace these "children of the mind," from the first and earliest notice which we have of them, from the first speck of life which we can discover in them, the very *punctum saliens* of their existence, to their full maturity of manhood, at the final exhibition in London.

§ II.

THE first point to be ascertained in the history of these remarkable writings, is the grand æra of their original appearance to the world. This the rebels have fixed to be the period of their own discovery of them. But the one is very different from the other. On either footing, however, the *production* of such a monster must form a very remarkable epocha, in the annals of its existence. And the rebels give us this collective account of both.

In 1567, and on *June*, 20, says a journal of their fabrication, which I shall particularly dwell upon hereafter, "DALGLEISHE, chalmer-child
" [chamberlain] to my Lord Bothwell, wes takin,
" and THE BOX AND LETTERIS quhilk he brought
" out of the CASTELL. About this tyme my Lord
" Buthwell fled be sea to the north."* This article in the journal is of considerable importance to us. It settles the precise day of the discovery. It therefore presents a fair mark for the shafts of criticism. But it wants in circumstantiality, what it gains in precision. It was plainly drawn up, some time after the fact specified. It therefore refers in such a tone of familiarity, to the antecedent ideas of the reader; speaking only of "*the* box and letteris," and thinking it unnecessary to particularize, what box and what letters were meant by the words. And accordingly, as I shall shew in the sequel, it did not

* Appendix, No. x.

make its appearance in publick, till EIGHTEEN OR NINETEEN MONTHS afterward, even till the time of the second conference in England. But, from the *oral traditions* of the rebels at these two conferences, the Bishop of Ross has informed us of one important circumstance, additional to the account in the journal. "It is forsooth," he cries out with a manly disdain at the alledged discovery, "A BOX OF LETTERS, taken from one DOUG-
 "LEYSH, who was executed for the Lord Darleys
 "death, the Earles man forsooth; which letters he
 "RECEIVED at Edenborough, of one SIR JAMES
 "BALFOURE, TO CONVEY TO HIS MASTER."*
 And Buchanan has dilated both these accounts into this full and circumstantial history. "Me-
 "morandum," he says at the end of his Detec-
 "tion, "that in the CASTELL of Edinburgh
 "thair WAS LEFT BE THE ERLE BOTHWELL,
 "befoir his fleing away," about June the 20th,
 as in the journal above, "and WAS SEND [sent]
 "FOR be one GEORGE DAGLISCHE his servand,
 "quha WAS TAKIN BE THE ERLE OF MORTOUN,
 "ane small gylt coffer, not fully ane foot long, be-
 "ing garnischit in findrie places with the Roman
 "letter F. under ane Kingis crowne," as hav-
 ing belonged to the Queen's late husband,
 Francis, "quhairin wer certane letteris and
 "wrytingis weill knawin, and be aithis [oaths]
 "to be affirmit to have bene written with the
 "Quene of Scottis awin hand to the Erle

* Lesley's Defence, 6. Anderson, i.

"Bothwell."* But this history, like the account before, was not given till long after the event. It was not given in the original MS. of the Detection. It was not given in the Latin publication of it.† It was not given before the English publication in the end of November, 1571, nearly TWO YEARS AND A HALF after the date of the asserted fact.

We have however another account of this pretended discovery. It is earlier in its date. Yet it is not nearly cotemporary with the fact. It is not within any moderate distance of time from it. It is not earlier than the 16th of September, 1568. And it is therefore, though the earliest that the rebels have formally chosen to give us, not less than FIFTEEN MONTHS posterior to the event itself. It is contained in Murray's receipt to the privy council, for "ane silver box owergilt with gold, with all missive letteris," &c. "quhill box, and haill [whole] pecis within the samyn, were takin and fund with umquhill [uncle] GEORGE DALGLEISCHE, servand to the said Erle Bothvile, upon THE XX. DAY OF JUNII, ye zeir of God, 1567 zeiris."‡ This presents us with the earliest notice that we have from the rebels, of Dalgleishe's concern in the carriage of the letters. But, even *then*, Dalgleishe had been *dead* nearly

* Detection, 92, Anderson, ii. In Hist. xix. 374, this coffer is expressly said to have been, "quam, à Francisco priore marito acceptam, Regina Bothuelio dederat."

† See Jebb, i. 169—170.

‡ Appendix, No. iv.

NINE months. He was hanged by the rebels themselves on the 3d of January preceding.* *Then* the rebels could speak out, of his coming for the letters, of his receiving them, and of his being intercepted with them. But they could not *before*. They had two very particular calls to speak out, the very month immediately preceding his death. They then dwelt with a most extraordinary energy upon the letters. Yet they were completely silent concerning the mode, by which these important documents were derived to their hands. They said not a word of Dalgleshe. They uttered not a syllable of his or any one's coming to the castle for them, of his or any one's receiving them there, and of his or any one's being taken with them on his return. Upon this point, absolutely necessary as it was to authenticate them, they are studiously and affectedly silent.† However necessary in itself, it was not to be spoken then. THE MAN WAS STILL ALIVE. But, after his death, they could be as talkative and as circumstantial as we here see them to be. And these two incidents in their publick conduct, thus fairly opposed to each other, and shewn the more lively by the contrast, form an evidence of forgery in the asserted fact of the discovery, that must strike upon every mind.

But, as I have hinted already, we have another box of Mary's in this confession. It is entirely different from the former. Yet it is equally

* Detection, 159.

† Goodall, ii. 64—67.

Mary's, and equally sent by her to Bothwell. We have the account of it, immediately after the account of the other. The Queen, it is said, "qu' elle alloit a Seton," told Paris to carry "une cassette" to Bothwell's chamber in the palace; and just afterwards, "puis apres, lui "commande de prendre SON COFFRE DES BAGUES, "et les faire porter AU CHATEAU, et le de-
 "livrer entre les mains de Sieur de Skirling, "pour lors Capitaine soubz Monsieur de Bod-
 "wel."* Here the mention of the coffer, as the box in which the Queen kept her rings, and consequently all her jewels; the order for conveying it to the castle; and the command to deliver it into the hands of Bothwell's deputy there; all fix it to be the very casket for the letters. Thus are we distracted betwixt the two Dromios and the two Antipholuses, sometimes believing the one to be genuine, and sometimes denying the other to be spurious; till we are involved in a Comedy of Errors about them. But in the present case we come to see plainly at last, that, however such a mistake might very easily arise when there were two Dromios and two Antipholuses, yet it could not possibly have happened when there was only ONE of each. In nature it could not. It could only in that poor representation of nature, which the counterfeits of her operations frequently make, and in which they "imitate humanity so abominably," that

* Goodall, ii. 82.

every judicious observer cries out at the view, Thou art "a piece of art." And art was here imposed upon by its passions. With an eager officiousness of spirit coming forward to the support of forgery, it adds falsehood to falsehood with such a ready tongue, that it entangles itself in the snares of its own tale, and destroys the cause which it was meaning to defend. Resolved to obviate the very natural objection, of Mary's letters to Bothwell being found in a box of Mary's, and not in a box of Bothwell's; it instantly creates an order from Mary, for the transmission of one of her boxes to Bothwell. Nor is it content with this. It will do more. The work of creation is easy to it. This therefore leads it on. The keen desire of securing the point beyond all possibility of objection hereafter, stimulates it strongly. From the united impulses of both, it provides two boxes for the emergency. And thus it so far "out-steps the" "modesty of nature," as to enter upon the confines of madness itself; and, like the mad hero in Statius, has two Thebes and two suns appearing before it.

This however is the whole of the notices, which the rebels have thought proper to give us latterly and in form, concerning the pretended discovery of the letters. We have already found some of the more detached parts, burdened with their own falsehood, and weighed down with their own contradictoriness. But let us now proceed to examine the more important parts. And we

shall then behold the contradictoriness and the falsehood, pressing with a still heavier weight upon the whole.

Bothwell, say the rebels, before his flight to the north about June the 20th, and even, as they must mean, before his departure from Edinburgh on June the 7th,* left in the castle of Edinburgh a strong box, which had once been presented by Francis, King of France, to Mary his Queen, which had been since sent by Mary to Bothwell, and in which Bothwell had repositied Mary's letters to him. But why did Mary send this box to Bothwell? On this point the confession, the journal, and the Detection are equally silent. Their respective authors could not invent any reason, that would appear satisfactory even to their own imaginations. They had already shewn the box in England, with the signatures of Francis upon it. They were therefore compelled to adhere to the box for ever afterwards, in spite of the absurdity which attended the selection of such a repository. They had overlooked the absurdity themselves. It was first suggested to them, no doubt, at the first production of the repository in Westminster. And this made them attempt to preclude the objection with such unfortunate zeal, in the second confession of Paris. It was *afterwards* observed probably, that this confession had defeated itself in its zeal. It had created a couple of boxes.

* Appendix, No. x.

It had thus accumulated absurdity upon absurdity. The rebels, for that reason, shrunk back again from their story of Mary's donation of the box to Bothwell. They left the reader to guess at the manner, in which the box came into Bothwell's possession. And so they delivered us the account, which Buchanan has presented to us in his *English* Detection. But still what could be the reason, for Mary's making such a donation to Bothwell? There could only be one. It is this. When Francis first gave it to Mary, he gave it with its proper accompaniment of jewels within. When Mary remitted it afterwards to Bothwell, she must equally have remitted it with its contents of jewels to him. An empty casket would be a mere mockery of a donation in itself. It would be peculiarly a mockery from a King or a Queen. It would be a high indignity put upon his love. It would be a gross insult offered to her Majesty. The rebels therefore must mean to intimate, that the jewels were sent with the casket to Bothwell. And they actually intimate as much, in the very terms of the confession; Mary ordering Paris to take her box of jewels, "son coffre des bagues, et "*les faire porter au chateau.*" The Queen is thus made to strip herself of her jewels, in a mad love-fit of generosity. She strips herself of them too, at the very time when (according to the letters) she wanted them most; when she was deeply in love with Bothwell; when Bothwell treated her with a great indifference;

and when she needed every attraction of personal ornament, to set off her fine person, and to fire his cold heart. She strips herself of them likewise, though she was a woman peculiarly studious of personal decoration upon every occasion, in order to confer them upon a man, who, as such, could not wear them. And, at the conclusion of the whole, we are historically informed by the rebels themselves, that she had *not* given away her jewels; that they *saw* she had not, when they entered Edinborough, and took possession of her palace; and that they then found her jewels repositied there. They took an inventory, says the rebel Calderwood in his MS. history of the times, of "all the plate, JEWELS, and other moveables" in the palace.* "This was done," says Blackwood, "the night before the Queen's commitment to Lochleven," and consequently on the 15th of June.† This was done "shortly after the Queen's commitment," says Calderwood with more probability, and consequently about the very day, that they pretended to intercept the casket, with letters instead of jewels within it, as it was coming from the castle. They *now*, no doubt, got possession of it for the first time. They discharged it of its jewels. These they applied to their own uses by sale, as they did the Queen's side-board of plate by fusion.‡ They

* Keith, 407.

† Jebb, ii. 219.

‡ Keith, 407, and Preface, ix. and Crawford, 44.

employed Nicholas Elphinston in the office of selling them, who was one of Rizzio's murderers, who was pardoned at the solicitation of Murray, and who continued an active implement of his to the last.* Murray sent him with them into England; made presents of some of them to Elizabeth and to her ministry, both having the infinite meanness to accept them; and sold the rest in Flanders and in France.† And a long while afterwards, in a most unlucky moment, and when all their stars shone very inauspiciously upon them, they appropriated the casket to the receipt of their forged letters.

Mary however is said by the rebels, to have sent one casket *up to the castle*. This therefore was certainly stored with jewels. The jewels were too valuable to be left exposed to the coming danger. And for that reason they were deposited in the hands of a man, who was lieutenant-governor of the castle under Bothwell. This was done, we are told, some little time after the murder, when the Queen went away to Seton, about the 21st of February, 1567. But *then* there was no danger coming. *Then* there was even no alarm of danger. She therefore could not send her jewels to the castle *then*. And when the danger actually came, in the beginning of June, she did *not* send her jewels to

* Anderson, iv. pt. i. 63, 111. Lesley's Negotiations, 83, Keith, App. 169, Hist. 300, 423, &c. and Mc. 'l, 93.

† Jebb, ii. 219.

the castle. She left them at Holyrood-house, even when she was obliged to abandon it herself.

So absurd and false appears the story of the casket, in any light in which it can be held up to the eye of the understanding ! Yet, in this casket, the rebels say that Bothwell repositied his letters from Mary. Bothwell, we are to suppose, took out the jewels, fold them privately, and supplied their place with the letters. These letters he must have received at his own apartments in Holyrood-house, even at those very apartments, to which Mary sent the first box of the confession, the box that her comptroller had brought her out of France. In those lodgings, therefore, this box and the letters now met for the first time. The letters from Glasgow, as I shall shew hereafter, must have been there before the box. And the letters from Stirling must have come thither to it successively afterwards. So far the train is in regular order. There is no embarrassment yet in the line of the procession. But one arises immediately. This is a great one. The letters and the box are united together at Holyrood-house ! But how come they together into the castle ? Of this we have no account at all. And the most material link in the chain of conveyance, has here been forgotten to be formed by the rebels. Let us therefore turn to the *second* box of the confession, and see if the transmission is more carefully noticed there. This box indeed is transmitted to the castle at once. We
thus

thus overleap the grand chasm in the narrative of the other, at the very outset. We have the box deposited safely in the castle. But *are the letters in it?* No! The Glasgow letters are still at Holyrood-house. And the Stirling letters *are not yet written*. So much more defective is even this account than that! Both together indeed, with some alterations, would make one fair and regular narrative. They would unite to tell us, that Mary sent her casket of jewels by Paris to Bothwell about February the 21st, that *Bothwell sent this casket* by Paris to the castle *about June the 7th*, and that *he, Paris, remarked it felt much lighter at the second conveyance than at the first*. This would be false in fact; but it would be regular in the narration of incidents, and conformable to the history of the times. This indeed should so naturally have been the very line, in which the train of the story ought to have moved; that I cannot but express my wonder, it was not the actual line. I can only attribute the deviation to those overpowering fears and suspicions, which must ever attend a fabrication of villainy like this, and which stifle and smother the natural exertions of understanding in the work. In this state of guilty distraction, the mind formed an account, which bears all the symptoms of her own distraction upon it. It has divided the only narration into two. It has thrown in some circumstances to the one. It has presented some circumstances to the other. It has superadded some to both,

both, that are still more embarrassing; while it has never subjoined some to either, that are absolutely necessary to the consistency of the whole. And it has thus framed two accounts, which, if taken separately, are contradictory to each other; which, if united together, must be united by the sacrifice of parts in each; which, whether taken separately or in union, require equally an addition of parts to each; which, even at last, would be still absurd in their manner, and false in their matter; and which therefore betray that imposture in the clearest manner, which they were originally contrived to cover.

But let us lend a friendly hand to the limping genius of forgery, and then observe how it will be able to walk. Let us suppose the casket to have been sent to Bothwell in the end of February, 1567, to have been kept by him till the beginning of June, and at that time to have been transmitted by him, with its freight of letters, to the castle. He must then have lodged them in the castle, to keep them in safety from the seizure of his enemies. And he must have locked them up in the casket, to preserve them in security from the curiosity of his friends. But why, in the name of common sense, should he lock them up in *THIS* box above any other? It was certainly the most improper repository for them, that could have been selected in the whole compass of nature. It was silver gilt, and “garnischit in *fundrie* places with the Roman letter “F. under ane Kingis crowne.” It told therefore

to

to every eye, whose property the box had originally been, and from whose hands it came immediately into Bothwell's. It consequently proclaimed the adultery aloud. And it even insinuated the murder in more than a whisper to the world. It therefore told all, that the letters could have told themselves. They do only insinuate the murder. They can only proclaim the adultery. They might as well therefore have lain open to inspection, as have been locked up in such a tell-tale and bewraying coffer. Bothwell must have seen this. Every body must have seen it. And yet, such is the swelling absurdity of all this rebel history, he locked them up in the tell-tale and bewraying coffer, when he had actually "a green velvet desk" in the castle itself, and when he actually lodged some important papers within it.*

Important papers he might well lodge there. But why should he attempt to lodge the letters? They could not be of the slightest use to him, *if* he preserved them. They would be of infinite detriment both to himself and to the Queen, *if* their enemies should get possession of them. In this state of circumstances, why, why should he attempt to preserve them at all? If he wished, as he must certainly wish, and wish very earnestly too, to secure them from the grasp of his and her enemies; the natural and obvious mode of acting, was to destroy them.

* Robertson, ii. 463.

This would be a short and compendious means of saving them. This would be an effectual and decisive stroke, for the prevention of all mischief from them. And he could certainly have thought of no other method of disposing of them, than by throwing them into the fire at once.

But perhaps, as I am equally willing with the most resolute advocates for the rebels, to make any supposition which may soften the absurdities, and reconcile the contradictions, of their accounts; Bothwell may be supposed to be so deeply in love with Mary at the time, that he loved her letters for her sake, that he was therefore unwilling to burn those precious tokens of her love to him, and that he finally resolved to preserve them at any rate,

Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm.

We thus venture to the very verge of phrenzy, in order to vindicate the radical absurdity of the rebel narrative. Yet we cannot do it. Even the phrenzy of love itself would not excuse him. When such strong and powerful reasons concurred to urge him on to the immediate destruction of the letters, when only such slight and petty reasons withheld his hand from the deed, even a love-phrenzy itself would have consigned them to the flames. The sensibilities of danger, and the dread of destruction, to Mary as well as to himself, would have acted with an irresistible force upon his spirit, would have swept the re-
veries

veries of fantastical love in a whirlwind before them, and have lodged the letters at once in the fire. And, after all, the supposition itself is founded on a falsehood. Even according to the letters themselves, Bothwell was *not* mad in love, whatever Mary may be there. He is indeed described as just the contrary. *He is not in love at all.* Her affection flames out. But *his* never burns. She steps very boldly forward, to catch him in her arms. He steps as modestly backward, and declines the intended embrace. She appears all glowing with love, while he is wholly iced over with indifference. And such a man as this would be so far from determining to preserve the letters, at the risque of his fortune and his life; that he would not have kept them with any risque at all, that he would have taken particular care *not* to keep them, and that he would have chosen, with a cautious and steady solicitude, to have burned every letter successively at the very moment.

Yet, in this necessary state of solicitude for the successive destruction of the letters, Bothwell is made to preserve them, to preserve them carefully, and to preserve them at the hazard of all that was dear to him.

Flow back, ye streams, and to your source ascend.

The rebels are determined to put the credulity of their friends to the severest test.

In this test then, let us even suppose with the
ever-

ever-flanderingous Buchanan,* That Bothwell kept the letters as a guard against the mutability of Mary's mind, and as an evidence of her participation with him in the murder. We thus shift from love to policy. But we equally reverse the characters of both the agents. We give to her a mutability that never existed. The firm and steady spirit of Mary, which shewed itself so signally in all the great occasions of her eventful life, and which bore her up with such a magnanimity of heroism under all her unparalleled sufferings, is made to dissolve away in the weakness of a wanton giddiness. And the sun is exhibited with all the changing phases of the moon. Bothwell also is represented by this *camera obscura* of Buchanan's, in an equally inverted position. He, who scarcely looked forward to the very next moment that was advancing upon him, is supposed to be darting a keen and piercing glance into futurity, to be "bending "his eyes" firmly on mere "vacancy" itself, and to be catching eagerly at the void of air before him. And, what is more, he is supposed to be acting under this prophetick view of hereafter, with all that lively energy of unmeaning terrour, which constitutes the very essence of madness. In the violence of his impressions from an apprehended, a contingent, and an imaginary danger, he is made to overlook a real one, to encounter a formidable one, and even to force down one that came charged with certain

* Hist. xviii. 364.

destruction to him. He is made to keep the letters, for fear Mary should lay her share of the murder upon his head, and so to preserve them for those assassins, who would be sure to lay the whole upon the heads of both; to preserve them, when he saw them coming to assassinate both; to preserve them, when he felt them striking boldly with their poniards at both; and to preserve them, as so many *stiletos* poisoned ready to their hands, sure to be instantly turned against both, and capable of inflicting wounds infinitely more malignant in their nature, than any from their own weapons. This is the very consummation of insanity. And the poor Bedlamite, that fancied himself all formed of glass, and was therefore afraid of almost every touch, could only have been a proper companion for the Bothwell of Buchanan; if, in the strong pressure of this fear upon his mind, he had refused to perform all the ordinary functions of life, and so had killed himself by his wildness, lest he should be hurt in his brittleness.

But, even allowing either the insanity of policy or the phrenzy of love in Bothwell, to have determined on preserving the letters; why should Bothwell send them for their preservation *to the castle*? He did it, as we are told, "befoir" "his sleing away" from Edinborough, in June, 1567. A rebellion was then rising in the nation, which gave a very great alarm to the Queen and him on the 1st of June.* He was forced to

* Keith, 396—398.

flee before it with her, upon the 7th.* Yet he and she could make their escape that day to Borthwick castle. Why then should they not have taken their letters with them, if they would preserve them? They must have taken articles of much greater bulk, and of infinitely less consequence, with them. And the very anxiety that would have lodged the letters in the castle of Edinborough, would much rather have taken care to secure the letters under their own protection, and to carry the casket along with them. But indeed there seems to have been so little time given them at the moments of their flight, that they could take no care for the letters or for any thing else. They appear to have actually fled away from Edinborough, with so much precipitation; that they left even the Queen's private jewels behind them. They might therefore have possibly *forgotten* in the hurry, to take the letters with them; though they were a thousand times more important to them, than the jewels. But they could certainly have had no time then, to form a plan for preserving the letters, and to send them up to the castle for safety. And, even if they could, the castle of Edinborough was the last place in the world, to which they would have ordered the letters at the time. So mountainous and overgrown does the absurdity of the rebel narrative appear, as we proceed! The very man, to whom the

* Keith, 398; Lesley's Defence, 17; and Appendix, No. x.

Queen and Bothwell had entrusted the command of the castle, was actually turning a traitor to them. He had actually banded with their rebels against them. It was even he, that forced Bothwell and the Queen to relinquish Edinburgh so precipitately, on the 7th of June.* And to send the letters up to the castle therefore, for fear lest they should fall into the hands of their enemies, would be to act the part of the charmed bird in America; and, out of pure terror from the rattle-snake, to run directly into its mouth. Borthwick castle, to which the Queen and he fled from Edinburgh; and Dunbar castle, to which they progressively retired from Borthwick; must necessarily have been the place of security, to which even madness would have conveyed the letters; even if it had been wound up to such a pitch of extravagance, as to resolve upon preserving them at all. Nor could the highest pitch of possible madness, that could keep a man from actual confinement in a dark cell and straw, have ever thought of choosing Edinburgh castle for its place of security then.

But who was the wretch, that had then the command of the castle? Bothwell was the real commandant, and had a deputy under him. This deputy, says the confession, was "Sieur de Skirling, pour lors Capitaine *soubz* Monsieur de Bodwel." It says so indeed, at the time the Queen sent her box of jewels, "son coffre des bagues," up to the castle. This it fixes to the

* Lesley's Defence, 17, and Melvill, 81—82.

period of the Queen's going from Holyrood-house to Seton, February the 21st. But *then*, and for nearly four weeks afterwards, Bothwell was *not* commandant of the castle himself, and could therefore have no deputy. He was not made governor, till March the 19th following.* And we thus disprove the asserted fact, by a positive appeal to chronology. Indeed the very fact itself, as I have hinted before, implies it to have happened at a later period than either. The Queen must have committed her jewels to the charge of the deputy-governor, upon some apprehensions for their safety. She could have no such apprehensions before the marriage. Till this had taken place, even regicide did not rouse the rebels. Till this had taken place, Bothwell appeared supported by all their nobles. Till this had taken place, they might indeed have crushed Bothwell, but they could not have crushed the Queen with him. Till this had taken place therefore, neither she nor he entertained any apprehensions of danger. And then the "Sieur de Skirling" was not captain of the castle under him. By this French appellation is meant Sir James Cockburn of Skirling, Knight, who was afterwards a commissioner for Mary at the conferences in England,† and had previously been comptroller to her.‡ But he does not appear to have ever been captain of the castle. He appears *not* to have been, at the only period

* Keith, 379, Robertson, i. 404, and Anderson, i. Pref. lxiv.

† Goodall, ii. 109.

‡ Keith, 410.

in which Mary could have apprehensions for either her jewels or her letters, at the period of rising danger immediately after the marriage. She was married on the 15th of May.* But, previously and subsequently to the 15th Sir James Balfour, not Sir James Cockburn, was captain of the castle under Bothwell. He had been appointed, no doubt, upon the 19th of March before, and on Bothwell's receipt of the supreme command from the Queen. "For the Earl and he," says Melvill, "had been great companions, and he was also very great with the Queen;† so that the custody of the castle of Edinburgh was committed to him."‡ Bothwell, says Spotwood still more explicitly, "got the castle of Edinburgh in his custody, upon the Earl of Marre his resignation; placing therein Sir James Balfour, whom he especially trusted."§ He appears accordingly in possession of it, at the beginning of May. Crawford's MS. tells us concerning Bothwell, that he brought the Queen from Dunbar castle to Edinburgh, which appears to have been upon the *third* of May, and "conveyed her Majestie—into the castle, where a subject of his was, called Sir James Balfour."|| And Sir James Balfour is the person, who is said before to have delivered up the letters to the servant, whom Bothwell had sent to him for them. If therefore we fix the fact of Mary's sending her casket into

* Appendix, No. x.

† See also Paris's second confession in Goodall, ii. 83.

‡ P. 81. § P. 201, edit. 3d. || Keith, 384.

the castle, and depositing it in the hands of the lieutenant-governor, to the time mentioned in the only narrative of the fact, the end of February; the "Sieur de Skirling" was certainly not then lieutenant-governor under Bothwell, because Bothwell was not governor himself then. Or if we push forward with the fact to the only period in which it could have happened, the alarms and apprehensions at the beginning of June; though Bothwell was then governor, the "Sieur de Skirling" was not governor under him. And, at either period, the mention of his name adds one more to the many notes of forgery, which we have in this pretended discovery of the letters.

But we have others. One particularly appears in the *keeping* and *disposition* of the main object here. The rebels forced the un-defended gates of Edinborough, upon the 10th and 12th of June.* They marched out of Edinborough again, upon the 15th. They met the Queen and Bothwell in the field, that day. She came over to them. Deserted by his Queen and his wife, he hastened back to Dunbar, from which he had come with her. And the royal army dispersed. Yet, even then, Bothwell is represented as making an effort to recover his letters. He had previously lodged them in the castle of Edinborough, when he could not have had one particle of affiance upon his deputy there. But

* Keith, 399, records of the town-council. They forced the suburb-gates on the 10th, drew up a proclamation there on the 11th, and forced the city-gates on the 12th.

this wildness is exceeded by his extravagance now. He now attempts to draw them out of the castle again, when he must have known his deputy to be a most perfidious traitor. He had made no attempt, before he had been forced out of Edinborough by this very deputy. He must have suspected him, before he fled from him. Yet he tried no experiment then, for recovering the letters. He returned with an army towards Edinborough, in order to fight the rebels. The balance of empire might then seem to hang suspended, between the rebels and him. Then, therefore, a wretch of such commodious principles as Balfour appears to have been, *might* be inclined to do his old friend and patron a beneficial service in secret, so to efface his own perfidy and villainy before, and to create himself an interest with him again, in case he should be successful. In those critical moments, he *might* be induced clandestinely to return him the letters, which he knew to be fraught with such ruin to him. Yet, in those moments, Bothwell neglected to make any application for them. On the 15th of June, all his towering imaginations were dashed to the ground at once. He had come to Carberrie-Hill, followed by an army, and accompanied by a Queen. He now fled, attended only by a single servant.* He was glad to shelter himself in the castle of Dunbar, from the vengeance due to his crimes. And

* See a painting of the time, now preserved in Kensington Palace, and engraved by Vertue in 1742.

even there he found himself obliged in a very few days, according to the rebel accounts, to "flee be sea to the north." Yet at this very time he makes an effort from Dunbar, which he had never made while he was in Edinburgh itself. In this very extremity of distress he tries a bold experiment, which he had not courage to try, when he was fortified with the authority of the Queen, and when he was facing the rebels openly in the field. And in the very hour, when almost every friend has at last deserted him, he expects a return of friendship from a man, who had deserted him at first, only because he *suspected* him to be in danger. He is thus described by the paradoxical extravagance of forgery, as successively neglecting every moment of probability for the work, and as finally choosing a moment of impossibility for it; a moment when it was absolutely impossible to do it, a moment when it was absolutely impossible to hope he should do it. And thus the forgery stands forward again, upon the face of the asserted fact.

At this period, however, Bothwell is represented as sending his servant George Dalgleishe from Dunbar, to make his way through the country to Edinburgh, to make his way through the city to the castle, to wait upon Balfour, the acting governor, with a requisition for the box of letters, and to bring back the important charge through ten thousand dangers to Dunbar. He did not order him, as common sense required he should have done in such circumstances, when he had once got the letters into

his own possession, not to risque the very probable seizure of them by the hands of hostility, but to destroy them instantly and effectually. No! He sent to fetch them from the castle, as if there was no danger in going thither, as if there was no doubt of receiving them there, and as if there was no difficulty in carrying them back. To a traveller in an easy chair, all roads are smooth, and all days are fine. And the writer of an eastern tale, can make rocks open at the sound of a charm, and palaces rise by virtue of a magic lamp. Dalgleshe thus makes good his course through the country, though he was a well-known servant of Bothwell's. He makes good his entrance at the gates of the city, though this was guarded by 450 harque-busiers.* He makes good his passage from the city into the castle. And he delivers his message. If this was *written*, it must then have been an implement of equal danger to Bothwell and to him, in case he had been searched on the way. If it was *unwritten*, then it must have been ascertained to the governor of the castle by some well-known token, which would perhaps have been equally dangerous. But, what is more astonishing than all, he actually receives the box of letters from Sir James Balfour. This indeed is "o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod." Balfour was the ductile slave of selfishness. He had already turned with infinite perfidiousness against his friend, his patron, and

* Robertson, ii. 372.

his Queen, merely because he found a party rising in the state, which he thought would be too strong for them. He had particularly united to assault Bothwell in the height of his power and greatness, because he saw him tottering to his fall. He now knew him to be fallen. He beheld him, as it were, struck to the ground by a thunder-bolt. Bothwell was now an almost solitary refugee at Dunbar, condemned as a regicide by the ruling powers, and execrated as a regicide by all the nation. The Queen herself was in a still lower situation of distress. She was treated with a thousand indignities, by those who had invited her to come over to them. She was carried away by violence in the night, and imprisoned in one of her own castles, by those who had promised to shew her every respect, and who had engaged to pay her every obedience. Such was the infamous presumption of triumphant rebellion, at this moment! The whole kingdom, indeed, bowed beneath the power of these profligates. And yet this is the very season selected by the infatuation of forgery, for selfishness to become generous in its spirit, for meanness to become exalted in its sentiments, and for a Balfour to do an heroical act of kindness. "He had," says a cotemporary writer, "before assisted the faction against the Queen with the force and strength of Edenborough castle, and driven from thence the very Earle himself."* The faction, says the same writer in

* Lesley's Defence, 16—17.

another place, afterwards “ got into the town and
 “ fortresse of Edenborough, by the treason of Bal-
 “ foure the captaine thereof, and of Cragmiller the
 “ provost of the citie.”* In these circumstances,
 asks the very same writer, “ is it to be thought,
 “ that either the Earle would send to the said Sir
 “ James, or that the said Sir James would send
 “ any thing to the Earle? Is it likely? Is it
 “ credible?”† These acts indeed were too im-
 portant in their nature, too enormous in their
 villainy, and too recent in their dates, to be
 forgiven at present by Bothwell, or to admit any
 hope of forgiveness in Balfour. They must
 therefore have operated upon the latter, with the
 usual influence of committed enormities upon
 the minds and spirits of the committers. They
 must have made him wish, to heap new enor-
 mities upon the heads of the old, to crush Both-
 well completely under all, and so to preclude
 all possibility of punishment from him hereafter.
 And, for this reason, the grand historian and
 advocate for rebellion, when he came to model
 his account of this transaction in the calmer
 hour of revisal, and to free it from the objec-
 tions lying too strongly against it, did then
 for the *first* time represent Balfour, as acting in
 this very manner; as giving up the letters to
 Dalgleishe, and as *then sending notice to Morton
 for his interception.*‡

Thus acting, Balfour is regularly and uni-
 formly a knave. But then his knavery is equalled

* Lesley's Defence, 35. † P. 16—17.

‡ Buchanan, Hist. xviii. 364.

by his folly. When he dismissed the letters, in expectation of recovering them again by Morton; he knew not but Dalgleshe might have orders and abilities, to baffle his expectation and to secure the letters. Dalgleshe might elude the guards set for him. Dalgleshe might destroy the papers, before he was taken by them. Dalgleshe might secrete the papers for the present, and come privately for them afterwards. Any one of these practices, would have barred the recovery of the letters for ever. And the man, who had suffered the bird to fly out of his hand, because he was confident he could catch it again, would have been considered by Morton and his rebel brethren, as a fool and an idiot for the act. None but a fool, none but an idiot, they would have justly cried, could ever have given up the letters at all to Dalgleshe. He had no reserves of delicacy to keep with Bothwell. These he had long laid aside, even when he drove him from the city. These he had doubly laid aside, when he combined with the provost to put the rebels in possession of the town and castle. Or, even if he had not, was the great cause itself to be sacrificed to his personal views of policy? Morton himself must also have shared with him, in the censure of folly. He had agreed with Balfour, for the dismissal and the interception. He had known of the former being designed, that he might prepare himself and his guards for the execution of the latter. He had not diverted the design. He had actually made himself a party in it. He would therefore have been considered

sidered by the rebels, as equally a fool and an idiot with Balfour. Indeed almost all the actors in this whole drama, and particularly in this first part of it, are to be considered as fools and idiots in fact; or else the wretched plot cannot be carried on. And, when we sit down to read the Arabian Nights Entertainments, we must first allow ourselves to be cheated into the belief of genii, talismans, and flying horses of wood; and then we are borne smoothly down the stream of the story to the end.

But indeed we have not the slightest authority for supposing, that Morton and Balfour did act with this idiot folly. Let us therefore vindicate them from the charge. In their lifetime, whatever they may think now, they would rather have been considered as knaves than fools. All knaves think the same. They would rather have been esteemed as the greatest of knaves, than have been justly reprobated for idiots. All great knaves think the same. Nor were they either fools or idiots in reality. Nor do the preceding accounts of the rebels even *hint* that they were. "June 20," says the journal, "*Dalglesche* wes takin, and the box and letteris *qubilk* he brought out of the castell." "This box," says Buchanan, "*in the castell* of Edinburgh—was left be the Erle Bothwell,—and was send for be ane George Daglische his servand, *quba* was takin be ye Erle of Mortoun." These do not hint in the slightest degree, at any agreement betwixt Morton and Balfour, to let the letters go out of the castle, and to stop them at a little way from

from it. They only say, that Dalgleishe came out of the castle with the letters, and consequently had received them from the hands of Balfour; and that Morton seized him and them, after they were come out. But another account, which is equally derived from the rebels themselves, goes on farther, and by its *manner* entirely precludes all this wild story of an agreement betwixt Morton and Balfour. The box, says the Bishop of Ross from them, was "taken from one Doughleysh, the Earles man forsooth, which letters he *received* at Edenborough of one *Sir James Balfoure* TO CONVEY TO HIS MASTER." The whole story, therefore, is equally unfounded and false. It is merely the surmise of posterour refinement. To the just eye of criticism the original accounts appeared fraught with absurdity, in Balfour's surrendering up the letters to Dalgleishe, for him "to convey" them "to his master." All consistency of character was grossly violated. Every principle of common sense was given up to the clamours of forgery. An attempt was therefore made, by a supposition of what is not said, and by an interpolation of what is actually precluded, to reconcile all the jarring parts of the story to each other, and to lend that historical smoothness to the whole, of which it is dreadfully devoid at present. And the airy surmise serves like the slight wall, which an Irish engineer is said to have raised before the powder-magazine of an Irish castle, not to be any guard to the magazine from its slightness, yet to indicate the place of peculiar