

## THE POET-KING OF SCOTLAND.

THE tragic fate of David, Duke of Rothesay, eldest son of Robert III. of Scotland, is known to every reader of Scott, as it forms perhaps the most startling incident in *The Fair Maid of Perth*. The youthful prince, like many other heirs apparent, and the more that he had a feeble and doting father, yielded himself without restraint to the impulses of youthful blood, and rioted in all manner of insolence and debauchery. He and Jack Falstaff's Prince Hal were simultaneously pursuing similar courses. Displeasing as this was to the State at large, it was emphatically so to the haughty Earl of Douglas, whose daughter Marjory was the prince's wife, and who naturally resented the dishonour done to his blood. Here, then, was one powerful and dangerous enemy. But an enemy more powerful and more dangerous still was his uncle, the Duke of Albany, a man cruel, crafty, unscrupulous, and ambitious, who had set his heart on the throne for himself and his family. Rothesay being entrusted by the feeble king to his artful brother, as old Boece says, 'to leir him honest and civill maneris,' was brought to Falkland and thrown into a dungeon without meat or drink. He was subjected to that most tedious, terrible, and revolting of all violent deaths—starvation; and we need not wonder that round such a 'strange eventful history' much circumstantial romance should have gathered. For instance, a woman moved with compassion for the unhappy prince is said to have let meal fall down through the loft of the tower, by which his life was prolonged several days; but her action having been discovered she was put to death. Another supplied him with milk from her own bosom, through a long reed, and as soon

as it was known 'she was slain with great cruelty.' At length the captive was reduced to such straits that he devoured the filth of his dungeon, and gnawed his own fingers. A death so tragic necessarily had miraculous consequences; and his body having been buried at Lindores, miracles were performed there for many years after; until, indeed, his brother, James I., began to punish his slayers, 'and fra that time furth,' says the chronicler, 'the miraculis ceissit.' There can be little doubt in the mind of the competent enquirer that both Albany and Douglas, the prince's brother-in-law, were, as the Scottish law-phrase has it, 'art and part' in this foul murder, though probably not to an equal degree, for in the *Remission* that they afterwards received at the hands of the feeble monarch their condonation was in terms as ample as if they had been the actual murderers.

Robert was advised to provide for the safety of his remaining son James by sending him for education and protection to his ally the King of France. The prince, then only eleven years of age, sailed from the Bass with his tutor, the Earl of Orkney, and a suitable attendance, in March 1405. In direct violation of a truce then existing between the two kingdoms, an English ship of war captured the Scottish vessel off Flamborough Head, on the 12th of April. To argue in such a case would have been unavailing: besides, it was known to the English that Albany would not be displeased that his nephew and his attendants should be treated as prisoners of war; and in fact it is surmised that he gave hints for the capture, that the only remaining obstacle between himself and the throne might be in a fair way of being altogether removed. James's own account of the capture is as follows:

Upon the wevis weltering to and fro,  
So infortunate was we that fremyt day,  
That maugre plainly quethir we wold or no,  
With strong hand by forse schortly to  
say,

Of inmyis taken and led away,  
We weren all, and brought in thaire  
contrée,

Fortune it schupe non othir wayis to be.

For nineteen years he was the  
prisoner first of Henry IV., and  
then of his son Henry V.

In the treatment of 'his captive  
guest,' says John Hill Burton,

Henry V. showed a nature in which jealously and crooked policy had no place. Had he desired to train an able statesman to support his own throne, he could not have better accomplished his end. The King of Scots had everything that England could give to store his naturally active intellect with learning and accomplishments; and he had opportunities of seeing the practice of English politics, and of observing and discoursing with the great statesmen of the day, both in England and in France, where Henry had also a court. He would be sent back all the abler governor of his own people, and more formidable foe to her enemies, for his sojourn at the Court of England.

It may be so; but though there  
is an over-ruling Providence

From seeming evil still educing good,

it is a spurious liberality that credits violence and breach of faith with happy results that were certainly not contemplated. It has often been asked why Henry IV. captured and detained the youthful prince, and above all why he was kept in captivity so long. If Albany had been the instigator, why was James detained nearly five years after his uncle's death? and if, as it has been said, James was detained because there was a refugee monk at Stirling believed to be Richard the Second of England, who had escaped from Pontefract, why was he not liberated on the death of that personage, whoever he was, which occurred in 1419, when there was no longer the shadow of a claimant to the English throne? These questions are more easily asked

than answered. A royal captive was too tempting a prize to be lightly parted with: and it was natural that England should not restore the sovereign of her troublesome neighbour till she had taken what precautions she could to secure amity between the two nations. In this case the fetters of love strengthened the bands of policy. A marriage with the blood-royal of England was the most obvious expedient, and James had already lost his heart to the nearest choice, Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, and cousin-german of the English king. Romance and policy went hand in hand, and the aspirations of the royal lover were in unison with the wishes and the plans of politicians. The story of his love is told with singular sweetness and beauty in 'The King's Quair' (i.e. Quire,—Book), to which we now turn without prosecuting the narrative of his subsequent busy, energetic, and useful life.

This beautiful and graceful poem, one of the bright consummate flowers of romance, and therefore singular as the production of one whose whole after life, instead of being a romantic dream, was a sage, practical, far-sighted, stern reality, was inspired by his passion for the 'lady of his love,' the beautiful granddaughter of 'Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster.' The royal captive, an adept in all knightly accomplishments, a musician, a scholar, a philosopher, and a poet, in the heyday of his blood, found himself, contrary to all the dictates of justice and hospitality, 'in strait ward and in strong prison' in a strange land. For nearly eighteen years he had bewailed a 'deadly life,' or a living death, contrasting his own wretched fate with the freedom that each had in his kind,

The bird, the beast, the fish eke in the sea.

He was tempted to question the Divine goodness, seeing that he more than others had had hard measure dealt him, and thus days and nights were spent in unavailing lamentation. As a solace amid his woes, it was his wont to rise early as day and indulge in exercise, by which he found joy out of torment. Looking from his chamber window in a tower of Windsor Castle, out on a small flower-garden, occupying the site of what had once been the moat, he saw walking beneath—

The fairest or the freshest young floure  
That ever I saw, methought, before that  
houre—

a vision of loveliness. The solitary prisoner, with a poet's eye and a poet's heart, looking out on a garden fair and an arbour green, musical in the May morning with the notes of the nightingale, 'now soft now loud among,' was in the mood to invest any comely daughter of Eve with the attributes of a goddess. When night is darkest the light is near; and when the heart of James was at the saddest the light of his life was about to dawn on him. Jane Beaufort, attended by two of her maidens, entered the garden to make her morning orisons, and the captive of the Tower was so overcome with pleasure and delight, that 'suddenly his heart became her thrall.'

Than gan I stude in myself and seyne,  
Ah! suete are ye a warldly creature,  
Or hevngly thing in likenesse of Nature?

Or ar ye god Cupidis owin princesse?  
And cumyn are to loose me out of band,  
Or are ye veray Nature the goddessse?

That have depayntit with your herinly  
hand  
This gardyn full of flouris, as they stand?  
Quhat sall I think, allace! quhat rever-  
ence  
Sall I mester unto your excellence?

He says she has—

Beauty enough to make a world to dote.

'The King's Quair' would have been inevitably lost had it not been

for the preservation of a single manuscript, which once belonged to Selden, and is now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. That James was the author of several poems is a fact noted by all who have written of his life; but as printing was not introduced into Britain for a century after his age, it can scarcely be matter of surprise that most of these should have been lost. As Mair, Dempster, and Tanner, Bishop of St. Asaph, all mentioned particularly James's poem 'upon his future wife,' and as reference was made to its being among the Seldenian manuscripts in the Bodleian, Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, engaged an Oxford student to search for it; and this search having been successful, he further engaged him to make an accurate copy. Mr. Tytler published it in 1783, prefixing a historical and critical Dissertation on the Life of James I., and adding a Dissertation on Scottish Music. The text was illustrated by valuable philological and explanatory notes. 'Christis Kirk of the Grene' was also included by Mr. Tytler in his publication, but we reserve what we have to say of this most humorous poem for the close of our paper. The title of the Seldenian manuscript above referred to is 'The Quair, maid be King James of Scotland the First, callit The King's Quair. Maid qn. his Ma. was in England;' and at the end there is the colophon—'Quod King James I.' The transcript is said to be a very indifferent one, and contains not a few errors. George Chalmers published in 1824 *The Poetic Remains of some of the Scottish Kings*, in which what is defective in Tytler's exemplar of 'The Quair' has not been remedied. As James was taken to England when a mere boy, and wrote his poem there, and as he was a diligent student of Gower and Chaucer, it is more than probable that it was

originally written in Southern or East-Midland English. The existing manuscript is not, however, in that dialect, but in the Northern English used in the Lowlands of Scotland; therefore it is probable that we have not got the *first form*, but that which it took at the hands of native scribes across the Tweed.

For the ease of the reader Mr. Tytler divided the poem into six cantos, according to the various episodes contained in it. After the taste of the age, it is allegorical, a style of poetic composition probably derived from the Provençal writers, and continued in Britain to the end of the reign of Elizabeth. To us of the present day it is wearily, and perhaps drearily, prolix; but it accorded well with an age of stately decorum and stilted compliment, and has all the elements of cumbersome magnificence. Congruity was not aimed at by the allegorical poets, and in 'The Quair' there is an unseemly admixture of Christian and Pagan mythology. This cannot be ascribed to a want of knowledge, but it is to be set down to a defect of taste; for, except in the case of the very highest poets, who wrote entirely from inspiration, and had no recourse to models, taste is a quality of culture, and the child of criticism. It may exist in a high degree with a mediocrity of genius, and be sought for in vain in the compositions of rich, original, inventive bards. James did not rise above the taste of his age, nor furnish a purer and more chastened model to his successors. But leaving out of view the structure of his work, in individual passages he soars to an elevation, and revels in a sweet beauty, exceeded by none of his contemporaries, and admired even in this highly critical age, familiar with the chastened grace of Tennyson, by all possessed of catholic sympathies.

Awaking from sleep in his prison, he consoles himself by reading

Boethius, and this suggests to him the instability of human affairs, and the misfortunes and calamities of his own unhappy life. Hearing the bell ring to matins, he rose from his couch, but could not divest himself of the idea that the bell was vocal, and was urging him to write his own chequered history. Our readers will remember how often Charles Dickens avails himself of a similar fancy. James, therefore, 'took conclusion some new thing to write,' and invoked, as was the custom, the Muses to his aid. He recounts the details of his capture and captivity; at last his eye is delighted with the garden and its bowers, and his ear charmed with the song of the nightingale, of whose sweet harmony this was the text:

Worshippe, ye that lovers been, this May,  
For of your bliss the Kalends are begun,  
And sing with us, Away, winter. away!

Come, summer, come, the sweet season  
and sun;

Awake, for shame; that have your  
heavens won,  
And amorously lift up your heades all;  
Thank Love that list you to his mercy call.

He now speculates on the nature of Love, to which he had hitherto been a stranger, and prays that he might enter his service, and evermore be one of those who serve him truly in weal and woe. His prayer is answered sooner than he expected, for in the garden appeared his future queen, as has been mentioned above, and falling under the dominion of love, suddenly —

My wit and countenance,  
My heart, my will, my nature, and my  
mind,  
Was changed clean right in ane other kind.

The personal beauty of the royal maiden was enhanced by all the art of the time:

Off hir array the form gif I sal write,  
Toward hir golden haire and rich atyre,  
In fretwise couchit with perlis quithe,  
And grete balas lemyng as the fyre,  
With mony ane emerant and faire  
saphire,

And on hir hede a chaplet fresch of hewe,  
Of plumys partit rede, and quhite, and  
blewe.

To this tricolour, the chosen emblem of liberty, the royal youth succumbed in a willing bondage. About her neck, fair as the white enamel, was a goodly chain of gold, by which there hung a ruby shaped like a heart; it seemed burning wantonly on her white throat like a spark of love. But better and beyond all these were youth, beauty, humble port, bounty, and womanly feature—all sweet gifts and graces to such extent that Nature could 'no more her child advance.' He is now under the law of Venus, and calls on the nightingale to resume her song.

With that anon right she toke up a sang  
Where come anon mo birdis and alight;  
Bot than to here the mirth was tham amang,  
Ouer that to see the suete sicht  
Of hyr ymage, my spirit was so light,  
Methought I flawe for joy without arest,  
So were my wittis bound in all to fest.

And to the nottis of the philomene,  
Quhilkis she sang the dittee there I maid  
Direct to hir that was my hertis quene,  
Withoutin quhom no songis may me  
glade,  
*And to that sanct walking in the shade,*  
My bedis thus with humble hert entere  
Devotly I said on this manere.

There is an infinite delicacy in James's expression of his love and hopes, which his seclusion may have fostered but could not have created, proving how pure and noble and knightly, in the highest sense—how 'tender and true' was this expatriated flower of Scottish chivalry. His 'hertis quene' became his lovely, loving, and beloved wife: and when the daggers of the assassins drank his heart's blood in the Dominican Monastery at Perth, she was twice stabbed in her frantic efforts to defend and save him.

The chief interest of the poem gathers round James himself and his future queen. His pure heart, his ingenuousness, his sincerity, his brilliant fancy, his scholarly accom-

plishments, his deep and devoted love, win irresistibly our admiration, and make us forget the king and the captive in the loyal-hearted and warm-blooded man.

His transportation to the Sphere of Love, and then to the Palace of Minerva, and his subsequent journey in quest of fortune, are very fanciful, and in the purest contemporary style of allegory. But to us, save in individual passages, they are of no great interest. Evidently these portions of his work were composed to conform to a conventional but objectionable ideal. His discussion of the vexed questions of Fate and Free-will might seem to moderns to be dragged in neck and heels to exhibit his proficiency in scholastic philosophy, but it is simply a compliance with the vicious practice of the age. Gower and Chaucer were his 'masters dear;' and, though it would be heresy to place him on a level with Chaucer, one of those world-poets who mark an era, he exhibits a reverential delicacy in his description of the Lady of the Garden which is wanting to Chaucer in his enumeration of the charms of Rosal in his 'Court of Love.' Mr. Ellis, however, one of the acutest of our critics, is more daring than we incline to be, for in his *Specimens of the Early English Poets* he says without qualification that "'The King's Quair" is full of simplicity and feeling, and not inferior in poetical merit to any similar production of Chaucer.'

Before proceeding to describe and criticise 'Christis Kirk of the Grene,' 'a remarkable specimen of genuine humour and pleasantry,' we will first attempt to establish the claim of the First James to its authorship, as this has been challenged in favour of his descendant James the Fifth. Mr. Paterson, in his *Gude-man of Ballangeich*, is the latest propounder and defender of this latter opinion, and as he has stated his case intelligently and fully, we



will examine his arguments in detail. Meanwhile we will indicate, by way of preface, what we believe gave origin to the prevalent notion that the Fifth James alone could have produced such a graphic and humorous picture of peasant life, and we will do so in the words of Mr. Burton, than whom there is no higher authority on everything pertaining to ancient Scotland :

James V. was affectionately remembered by his people as 'the King of the Commons.' History told that he had been no friend to the nobles, and tradition mixed him up with many tales of adventure among the peasantry, who not less enjoyed their memory that they were not always creditable to him. It was, perhaps, from these specialties of his popularity, that he long held a place in literary renown as the People's Poet. 'Christ's Kirk of the Green' and 'The Gaberlunzie Man' are rhymed pictures of Scottish peasant-life; so full of lively description, and broad, vigorous, national humour, that in popular esteem they could only be the works of 'the King of the Commons;' but this traditional belief lacks solid support.

The first who may be regarded as attributing this poem to James V. is Dempster; for in his *Ecclesiastical History of the Nation of the Scots*, published in 1627, two years after his death, he says that of the poems left by James V. testifying to his most delightful genius, he had *seen* only the vernacular *epos* 'On the Rustic Dances at Falkirk.' Here there are two gross blunders—the poem is described as an *epos*, an heroic poem, such as the Greek and Latin poets rendered in hexameters, and English and Scottish poets in pentameters; and he had *seen* it. No metric system is more opposed to what is known as the *epic* than that of the poem in question. Again, the dances are referred to Falkirk instead of to Christ's Kirk. These are damaging particulars, and the more so when we consider that Dempster is the most untrustworthy of historians: Archbishop Ussher asserted that he would believe nothing on his evidence, unless he had himself

seen it. Though he could have had no critical or partisan object in assigning it to the one James more than to the other, yet when a legitimate question of criticism and authorship arises, Dempster's testimony either way must simply be eliminated. If this finding be correct it nearly settles the dispute, for Gibson, Tanner, and Ruddiman are merely Dempster's echoes.

In 1691, Edmund Gibson, afterwards the Bishop of London, published at Oxford a very inaccurate edition, and introduced the poem as one 'composed, as is supposed, by King James the Fifth.' He gives no authority for his *supposition*, it being almost certain that he is relying on the testimony of Dempster. The learned Ruddiman, in the preface to his edition of Gavin Douglas's translation of Virgil's *Æneis*, published in 1710 (Mr. Paterson says 1720), ascribes 'Christ's Kirk' to James V., avowedly on the authority of the Oxford editor, and so does Tanner, Bishop of St. Asaph, in his *Bibliotheca Britannico Hibernica*, published in 1748. Thus four authorities that have been much relied on dwindle on examination to one, and that one no authority at all on any matter that admits of dispute. Bishops Gibson and Tanner are in this case foreigners, and their 'opinions,' if their testimony deserves even this title, are those of persons whose 'opinions' carry no weight. The only piece of disingenuousness we have observed in Mr. Paterson's advocacy, and it is surely a mere inadvertence, occurs in reference to Watson's *Choice Collection of Scots Poems*. In the first edition, published in 1706, Watson attributed the poem to James V.; but Mr. Paterson does not add that in the second edition, published seven years later, he ascribed it to James I. For ourselves we hold this change of opinion on the part of Watson as

of almost infinitesimal value in the settlement of the question. Neither do we attach much importance to the adhesion of the Earl of Orford, Percy, Warton, Ritson, and others to the vague recollection of Dempster, and to the unauthoritative supposition of Bishop Gibson. Absolutely there is *no external* evidence in favour of the claims of the later James, 'the King of the Commons;' the whole external evidence—and it is not great—is in favour of his illustrious ancestor, as we shall now attempt to prove.

In the latter part of 1568, George Bannatyne, a man of intelligence and some poetic power, made that invaluable transcript of Scottish poetry known as the Bannatyne manuscript, now in the Advocates' Library. At the close of his copy of 'Christ's Kirk' he adds the affidavit, *q.*, i.e. quoth, *King James the First*. This is not perfectly conclusive, but at any rate it counts for evidence, and far outweighs the presumption of Bishop Gibson and his followers. It is, in fact, the only external evidence we have to guide us in forming a conclusion. An attempt has been made to invalidate Bannatyne's authority, because in the next poem but one he has written King James V. instead of King James IV. But that was a poem of no great mark—'The Dregy of Dunbar maid to King James, being in Strivilling,' of which Bannatyne could not but know that James IV., and not his son, was the object, and consequently the inference that his blunder was a mere *lapsus penne* is not only probable, but necessary and inevitable. The presumption of a similar lapse in the case of 'Christ's Kirk' is untenable. Had James V. been the author of a poem of so much humour and mark, it is incredible that in a MS. written only twenty-six years after his death by one who was almost a contemporary, it should have been ascribed to a king who had died a

hundred and thirty-two years earlier. James V. had been too popular and too unfortunate to be lightly robbed of any credit to which he was justly entitled; on the contrary, it was long the custom to give him credit for much that was not his own.

It is the internal evidence that is weak, and on it alone we could scarcely be justified in building any conclusion. If James I. wrote it, the language has undergone a modernisation. It is less antique than Henryson's, and it ought not to be. But on the other hand, as a popular poem in every sense of the word, it was just the sort of piece to undergo a soft succession of living changes. This has been the case with the ancient ballads of Scotland especially. Had it been a closet poem, so to speak, it might have remained untouched. But how could it *live* on from age to age, except by a process of unconscious transformation? 'If there is not sufficient evidence,' says Dr. Irving, 'for referring it to James I., there is no evidence whatsoever for referring it to James V.' Irving, no doubt, was a dogmatic man, of strong prejudices; but he was specially well-informed, and meant to do justice to all. If the intimate knowledge of the peasantry displayed in the poem is held as pointing to the royal 'Gaberlunzie Man,' we must remember that his more illustrious ancestor occasionally mingled with the lower orders too, and that in a fashion after the Beggar-man's own heart; so that the Second Charles owed as much of his roving disposition to the blood of the Stuarts in his veins, as to the modicum he held of that of Margaret Tudor, and of that of Henri Quatre. We think Mr. Paterson stultifies himself when, after attempting to discredit the authority of the Bannatyne MS., because the transcriber had written Fifth for Fourth, he adds, 'Now,

this occurred in the reign of Queen Mary, daughter of James V. It is strange, therefore, that his memory should have been so treacherous in reference to the queen's father or grandfather. *We must conclude that the inaccuracies described were not the result of ignorance, but merely slips of the pen.* We must conclude so too, and therefore the only external authority for the authorship, *authority* in the proper sense of the term, that can be discovered is fully vindicated. We have not noticed 'Pebles to the Play,' for about the authorship of this we think there is small room for dispute. Mair or Major quotes the first two words of it as belonging to a poem of the First James, and Lord Hailes's objection to it in connection with the 70th statute of James II. has, we think, been satisfactorily disposed of.

'Christis Kirk of the Grene,' to the subject and treatment of which we now turn, is, says Lord Kames, 'a ludicrous poem, representing low manners with no less propriety than sprightliness.' Its popularity had crossed the Border, and Pope notices, sportively, that 'a Scot will fight for it.' We question if an Englishman would fight for any national poem. Being a native of a richer and more cosmopolitan country, he has greater self-complacency, and would scarcely stickle for what he might deem a trifle. The 'Kirk' is said to have been a village in the parish of Lesly, in Aberdeenshire. The best introduction to the poem is to quote the first two stanzas, and we beg our readers to note the frequent and systematic use of alliteration, a poetic characteristic of the humorous poetry of the age :

Wes nevir in Scotland hard nor sene  
 Sec dancing nor deray,  
 Nouthir at Falkland on the Grene,  
 Ner Pebillis at the Play ;  
 As wes of wowaris, as I wene,  
 At Christis Kirk on ane day :

Thair came our Kitties, weshen elene,  
 In thair new kirtillis of gray,  
 Full gay,  
 At Christis Kirk of the Grene that day.  
 To dans thir damysellis thame dicht,  
 Thair lasses licht of laitis,  
 Thair gluvis war of the raffel rycht,  
 Thair shune wer of the straitis,  
 Thair kirtillis were of Lynkome licht,  
 Weil prest with monny plaitis,  
 Thay wer sa nyss quhen men thame nicht,  
 Thay squelit lyke ony gaitis,  
 Sa loud,  
 At Christis Kirk of the Grene that day.

There are in all twenty-three stanzas, filled 'with a succession of highly ludicrous objects, and containing many characteristic lines.' 'Whoever reads the poem,' says Mr. Tytler, 'simply as a piece of wit and humour, comes very far short, I imagine, of the patriotic design and intention of its author.' And this he endeavours to illustrate. We confess we read it simply for its wit and humour, though on the supposition that it is James the First's, the patriotic intention is highly intelligible, and affords strong internal evidence of his being the author.

From the description of the rustic coquette *Gillie*, and *Jock* whom 'scho scornit,' we find the same reference to, and preference for, yellow hair that the ancient poems testify—

Fow zellow zellow wes hir heid.

*Tam Lutar* was the village minstrel; *Steven* was a famous dancer who 'lap quhill he lay on his lendis;' and the quarrel was at last commenced by *Robin Roy* and *Downy*, but the laws of the ring were unknown, for—

God wait gif hair was ruggit  
 Bethix thame,  
 At Christis Kirk of the Grene that day.

The patriotic purpose referred to by Tytler now appears, viz. to force the Scots to practise archery, by ridiculing their ineptitude. Their defeats by the English were invariably due to their deficiency in



this arm. When the one of the combatants referred to had bent a bow, he thought to have pierced his antagonist's buttocks, but 'by an acre-braid it cam' not near him!' The weapons were also defective, for a friend's bow flew in flinders when he had drawn it furiously to aid him. *Harry* and *Louvy* fared no better, for the arrow of the latter aimed at the breast hit the belly; but so far from piercing burnished mail, like the cloth-yard shafts of England, the arrow rebounded like a bladder from the leathern doublet. The stricken man was, however, so stunned that he 'dusht down to the eard,' and his adversary, thinking him dead, fled from the town. The wives, coming forth, found life in the loun, and 'with three rowts up they reft him,' and cured him of his swoon. A young man aiming at the breast sent his arrow over the byre, and being told that he had slain a priest a mile off, also fled from the town. The fight becomes general, and the women cry and clap, as usual on such occasions. The exploits of Hutchen, the Town Soutar, the Miller, and the Herdsmen, are described with inimitable humour; and the action of Dick, who, *when all was done*, came forth with an axe 'to fell a fuddir,' or heap, gave both his wife and Meg, his mother, their paiks, is described with genuine Scotch pawkiness—keen observation and gift of satire hid under a seeming simplicity. In a word, whoever may be the author of 'Christ's Kirk,' he stands in the foremost rank of Scottish humorous poets. If our hypothesis is correct, the captive of the Tower and the chronicler of the sports of Christ's Kirk was a man of no common versatility, and could touch many strings of the harp, ranging at will from the deepest tenderness to the highest humour, from Allegory to Farce.

Our sketch would be imperfect were we not to notice, however

briefly, the singularly tragic end of this royal and most gifted child of song. Several causes led to it, for to no one in particular can it be clearly traced. His wise and stringent laws protected property, fostered industry, and emancipated the humbler classes from the tyranny of the great feudal lords. With the former, therefore, he was popular, while his searching enquiry into the titles of the latter to their estates had greatly frightened them. Several forfeitures that had been made, though in strict accord with the laws, intensified their fears, and Sir Robert Graham, the prime motive power in the tragedy that had been planned, is said to have openly denounced James in Parliament as a tyrant, and to have made no secret of his conviction that he deserved death at the hand of the first who met him. The portents of superstition were likewise brought into play, and a Highland witch warned James of his coming doom. But threats and warnings he despised alike, and his jests on the last were long remembered. He had spent the Christmas of 1436 in the Black Friars' Monastery in Perth, and was still there on the twentieth of the following February. On the evening of that day he was conversing gaily with the queen and her ladies before retiring to rest, when three hundred of Graham's Highlanders broke into the monastery. Escape by door or window was impossible, but the king raising a board of the flooring leapt into a vault below. A lady of the Douglas family thrust her arm through the staples to serve as a bolt, but it was soon crushed by the violence of the assassins. He might have escaped by an opening to the sewer, but three days before he had himself caused it to be built up, because the tennis balls entered it when he was playing in the garden. Though at fault at first, the conspirators at last found his hiding-place, and after a heroic and most

desperate resistance he was despatched with sixteen dagger stabs. The conspirators were pursued and captured, and expiated their bloody crime by almost unimaginable tortures.

Since the time of *Œdipus* no royal line has equalled that of the Stuarts in its calamities. The First James, adorned with the graces of poetry and chivalry, a wise legislator, a sagacious and resolute king, perished, as we have seen, in his forty-fourth year. His son, the Second James, was killed in his thirtieth year at the siege of Roxburgh Castle, by the bursting of a cannon. The Third James, after the battle of Sauchieburn, in which his rebellious subjects were countenanced and aided by his own son, was stabbed, in his thirty-sixth year, beneath a humble roof by a pretended priest. That son, the chivalrous madman of Flodden, compassed his own death and that of the flower of his kingdom, while only forty years of age, by a piece of foolish knight-errantry. At an age ten years younger his only son, James the Fifth, died of a broken heart. Over the sufferings and follies, if we may not say crimes,

and over the mournful and unwarrantable doom of the beautiful Mary, the world will never cease to debate. Her grandson expiated at Whitehall, by a bloody death, the errors induced by his self-will and his pernicious education. The Second Charles, the Merry Monarch, had a fate as sad as any of his ancestors; for though he died in his bed, his life was that of a heartless voluptuary, who had found in his years of seeming prosperity neither truth in man nor fidelity in woman. His brother, the bigot James, lost three kingdoms, and disinherited his dynasty, for his blind adherence to a faith that failed to regulate his life. The Old Pretender was a cipher, and the Young Pretender, after a youthful flash of promise, passed a useless life, and ended it as a drunken dotard. The last of the race, Henry, Cardinal York, died in 1804, a spiritless old man, and a pensioner of that House of Hanover against which his father and brother had waged war with no advantage to themselves, and with the forfeiture of life and lands, of liberty and country, to many of the noblest and most chivalrous inhabitants of our island.

W. G.

