

THE MYSTERY OF MARY STUART



ANDREW LANG

The Mystery Of Mary Stuart

Andrew Lang

Contents:

[Andrew Lang \(1844-1912\)](#)

[The Mystery Of Mary Stuart](#)

[Introduction](#)

[I - Dramatis Personae](#)

[Ii - The Minor Characters](#)

[Iii - The Characters Before Riccio's Murder](#)

[V - Between The Baptism And The Murder](#)

[Vi - The Murder Of Darnley](#)

[Vii - The Confessions Of Paris](#)

[Viii - Mary's Conduct After The Murder](#)

[Ix - The Emergence Of The Casket Letters](#)

[X - The Casket Letters](#)

[Xi - The Letters At The Conference Of York](#)

[Xii - The Letters At Westminster And Hampton Court](#)

[Xiii - Mary's Attitude After The Conference](#)

[Xiv - Internal Evidence Of The Letters](#)

[Xv - The Six Minor Casket Letters](#)

[Xvi - The Casket Sonnets](#)

[Xvii - Conclusions As To The Letters And The Possible Forgers](#)

[Xviii - Later History Of Casket And Letters](#)

[Appendix A - The Supposed Body Of Bothwell](#)
[Appendix B - The Burning Of Lyon King Of Arms](#)
[Appendix C - The Date Of Mary's Visit To Glasgow](#)
[Appendix D - The Band For Darnley's Murder](#)
[Appendix E - The Translations Of The Casket Letters](#)

The Mystery Of Mary Stuart, A. Lang
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9
Germany

ISBN: 9783849609467

www.jazzybee-verlag.de
www.facebook.com/jazzybeeverlag
admin@jazzybee-verlag.de

ANDREW LANG (1844-1912)

Biographical Sketch from "Portraits And Sketches" by
Edmund Gosse

INVITED to note down some of my recollections of Andrew Lang, I find myself suspended between the sudden blow of his death and the slow development of memory, now extending in unbroken friendship over thirty-five years. The magnitude and multitude of Lang's performances, public

and private, during that considerable length of time almost paralyse expression; it is difficult to know where to begin or where to stop. Just as his written works are so extremely numerous as to make a pathway through them a formidable task in bibliography, no one book standing out predominant, so his character, intellectual and moral, was full -of so many apparent inconsistencies, so many pitfalls for rash assertion, so many queer caprices of impulse, that in a whole volume of analysis, which would be tedious, one could scarcely do justice to them all. I will venture to put down, almost at haphazard, what I remember that seems to me to have been overlooked, or inexactly stated, by those who wrote, often very sympathetically, at the moment of his death, always premising that I speak rather of a Lang of from 1877 to 1890, when I saw him very frequently, than of a Lang whom younger people met chiefly in Scotland.

When he died, all the newspapers were loud in proclaiming his "versatility." But I am not sure that he was not the very opposite of versatile. I take "versatile" to mean changeable, fickle, constantly ready to alter direction with the weather-cock. The great instance of versatility in literature is Ruskin, who adopted diametrically different views of the same subject at different times of his life, and defended them with equal ardour. To be versatile seems to be unsteady, variable. But Lang was through his long career singularly unaltered; he never changed his point of view; what he liked and admired as a youth he liked and admired as an elderly man. It is true that his interests and knowledge were vividly drawn along a surprisingly large number of channels, but while there was abundance there does not seem to me to have been versatility. If a huge body of water boils up from a crater, it may pour down a dozen paths, but these will always be the same; unless there is an earthquake, new cascades will not form nor old rivulets run dry. In some authors earthquakes do take place as in

Tolstoy, for instance, and in S. T. Coleridge but nothing of this kind was ever manifest in Lang, who was extraordinarily multiform, yet in his varieties strictly consistent from Oxford to the grave. As this is not generally perceived, I will take the liberty of expanding my view of his intellectual development.

To a superficial observer in late life the genius of Andrew Lang had the characteristics which we are in the habit of identifying with precocity. Yet he had not been, as a writer, precocious in his youth. One slender volume of verses represents all that he published in book-form before his thirty-fifth year. No doubt we shall learn in good time what he was doing before he flashed upon the world of journalism in all his panoply of graces, in 1876, at the close of his Merton fellowship. He was then, at all events, the finest finished product of his age, with the bright armour of Oxford burnished on his body to such a brilliance that humdrum eyes could hardly bear the radiance of it. Of the terms behind, of the fifteen years then dividing him from St. Andrews, we know as yet but little; they were years of insatiable acquirement, incessant reading, and talking, and observing gay preparation for a life to be devoted, as no other life in our time has been, to the stimulation of other people's observation and talk and reading. There was no cloistered virtue about the bright and petulant Merton don. He was already flouting and jesting, laughing with Ariosto in the sunshine, performing with a snap of his fingers tasks which might break the back of a pedant, and concealing under an affectation of carelessness a literary ambition which knew no definite bounds.

In those days, and when he appeared for the first time in London, the poet was paramount in him. Jowett is said to have predicted that he would be greatly famous in this line, but I know not what evidence Jowett had before him.

Unless I am much mistaken, it was not until Lang left Balliol that his peculiar bent became obvious. Up to that time he had been a promiscuous browser upon books, much occupied, moreover, in the struggle with ancient Greek, and immersed in Aristotle and Homer. But in the early days of his settlement at Merton he began to concentrate his powers, and I think there were certain influences which were instant and far-reaching. Among them one was pre-eminent. When Andrew Lang came up from St. Andrews he had found Matthew Arnold occupying the ancient chair of poetry at Oxford. He was a listener at some at least of the famous lectures which, in 1865, were collected as "Essays in Criticism"; while one of his latest experiences as a Balliol undergraduate was hearing Matthew Arnold lecture on the study of Celtic literature. His conscience was profoundly stirred by "Culture and Anarchy" (1869); his sense of prose-form largely determined by "Friendship's Garland" (1871). I have no hesitation in saying that the teaching and example of Matthew Arnold prevailed over all other Oxford influences upon the intellectual nature of Lang, while, although I think that his personal acquaintance with Arnold was very slight, yet in his social manner there was, in early days, not a little imitation of Arnold's aloofness and superfine delicacy of address. It was unconscious, of course, and nothing would have enraged Lang more than to have been accused of "imitating Uncle Matt."

The structure which his own individuality now began to build on the basis supplied by the learning of Oxford, and in particular by the study of the Greeks, and "dressed" by courses of Matthew Arnold, was from the first eclectic. Lang eschewed as completely what was not sympathetic to him as he assimilated what was attractive to him. Those who speak of his "versatility" should recollect what large tracts of the literature of the world, and even of England, existed outside the dimmest apprehension of Andrew Lang.

It is, however, more useful to consider what he did apprehend; and there were two English books, published in his Oxford days, which permanently impressed him: one of these was "The Earthly Paradise," the other D. G. Rossetti's "Poems." In after years he tried to divest himself of the traces of these volumes, but he had fed upon their honey-dew and it had permeated his veins.

Not less important an element in the garnishing of a mind already prepared for it by academic and aesthetic studies was the absorption of the romantic part of French literature. Andrew Lang in this, as in everything else, was selective. He dipped into the wonderful lucky-bag of France wherever he saw the glitter of romance. Hence his approach, in the early seventies, was threefold: towards the mediaeval *lais* and *chansons*, towards the sixteenth-century Pleiade, and towards the school of which Victor Hugo was the leader in the nineteenth century. For a long time Ronsard was Lang's poet of intensest predilection; and I think that his definite ambition was to be the Ronsard of modern England, introducing a new poetical dexterity founded on a revival of pure humanism. He had in those days what he lost, or at least dispersed, in the weariness and growing melancholia of later years a splendid belief in poetry as a part of the renown of England, as a heritage to be received in reverence from our fathers, and to be passed on, if possible, in a brighter flame. This honest and beautiful ambition to shine as one of the permanent benefactors to national verse, in the attitude so nobly sustained four hundred years ago by Du Bellay and Ronsard, was unquestionably felt by Andrew Lang through his bright intellectual April, and supported him from Oxford times until 1882, when he published "Helen of Troy." The cool reception of that epic by the principal judges of poetry caused him acute disappointment, and from that time forth he became less eager and less serious as a poet, more and

more petulantly expending his wonderful technical gift on fugitive subjects. And here again, when one comes to think of it, the whole history repeated itself, since in "Helen of Troy" Lang simply suffered as Ronsard had done in the "Franciade." But the fact that 1882 was his year of crisis, and the tomb of his brightest ambition, must be recognised by every one who closely followed his fortunes at that time. Lang's habit of picking out of literature and of life the plums of romance, and these alone, comes to be, to the dazzled observer of his extraordinarily vivid intellectual career, the principal guiding line. This determination to dwell, to the exclusion of all other sides of any question, on its romantic side is alone enough to rebut the charge of versatility. Lang was in a sense encyclopaedic; but the vast dictionary of his knowledge had blank pages, or pages pasted down, on which he would not, or could not, read what experience had printed. Absurd as it sounds, there was always something maidenly about his mind, and he glossed over ugly matters, sordid and dull conditions, so that they made no impression whatever upon him. He had a trick, which often exasperated his acquaintances, of declaring that he had "never heard" of things that everybody else was very well aware of. He had "never heard the name" of people he disliked, of books that he thought tiresome, of events that bored him; but, more than this, he used the formula for things and persons whom he did not wish to discuss. I remember meeting in the street a famous professor, who advanced with uplifted hands, and greeted me with "What do you think Lang says now? That he has never heard of Pascal!" This merely signified that Lang, not interested (at all events for the moment) in Pascal nor in the professor, thus closed at once all possibility of discussion.

It must not be forgotten that we have lived to see him, always wonderful indeed, and always passionately devoted

to perfection and purity, but worn, tired, harassed by the unceasing struggle, the lifelong slinging of sentences from that inexhaustible ink-pot. In one of the most perfect of his poems, " Natural Theology," Lang speaks of Cagn, the great hunter, who once was kind and good, but who was spoiled by fighting many things. Lang was never " spoiled," but he was injured; the surface of the radiant coin was rubbed by the vast and interminable handling of journalism. He was jaded by the toil of writing many things. Hence it is not possible but that those who knew him intimately in his later youth and early middle-age should prefer to look back at those years when he was the freshest, the most exhilarating figure in living literature, when a star seemed to dance upon the crest of his already silvering hair. Baudelaire exclaimed of Theophile Gautier: " Homme heureux! homme digne d'envie! il n'a jamais aimé que le Beau!" and of Andrew Lang in those brilliant days the same might have been said. As long as he had confidence in beauty he was safe and strong; and much that, with all affection and all respect, we must admit was rasping and disappointing in his attitude to literature in his later years, seems to have been due to a decreasing sense of confidence in the intellectual sources of beauty. It is dangerous, in the end it must be fatal, to sustain the entire structure of life and thought on the illusions of romance. But that was what Lang did he built his house upon the rainbow.

The charm of Andrew Lang's person and company was founded upon a certain lightness, an essential gentleness and elegance which were relieved by a sharp touch; just as a very dainty fruit may be preserved from mawkishness by something delicately acid in the rind of it. His nature was slightly inhuman; it was unwise to count upon its sympathy beyond a point which was very easily reached in social intercourse. If any simple soul showed an inclination, in

eighteenth-century phrase, to " repose on the bosom " of Lang, that support was immediately withdrawn, and the confiding one fell among thorns. Lang was like an Angora cat, whose gentleness and soft fur, and general aspect of pure amenity, invite to caresses, which are suddenly met by the outspread paw with claws awake. This uncertain and freakish humour was the embarrassment of his friends, who, however, were preserved from despair by the fact that no malice was meant, and that the weapons were instantly sheathed again in velvet. Only, the instinct to give a sudden slap, half in play, half in fretful caprice, was incorrigible. No one among Lang's intimate friends but had suffered from this feline impulse, which did not spare even the serenity of Robert Louis Stevenson. But, tiresome as it sometimes was, this irritable humour seldom cost Lang a friend who was worth preserving. Those who really knew him recognised that he was always shy and usually tired.

His own swift spirit never brooded upon an offence, and could not conceive that any one else should mind what he himself minded so little and forgot so soon. Impressions swept over him very rapidly, and injuries passed completely out of his memory. Indeed, all his emotions were too fleeting, and in this there was something fairy-like; quick and keen and blithe as he was, he did not seem altogether like an ordinary mortal, nor could the appeal to gross human experience be made to him with much chance of success. This, doubtless, is why almost all imaginative literature which is founded upon the darker parts of life, all squalid and painful tragedy, all stories that " don't end well " all religious experiences, all that is not superficial and romantic, was irksome to him. He tried sometimes to reconcile his mind to the consideration of real life; he concentrated his matchless powers on it; but he always disliked it. He could persuade himself to be partly just to Ibsen or Hardy or Dostoieffsky, but what he really enjoyed

was Dumas père, because that fertile romance-writer rose serene above the phenomena of actual human experience. We have seen more of this type in English literature than the Continental nations have in theirs, but even we have seen no instance of its strength and weakness so eminent as Andrew Lang. He was the fairy in our midst, the wonder-working, incorporeal, and tricky fay of letters, who paid for all his wonderful gifts and charms by being not quite a man of like passions with the rest of us. In some verses which he scribbled to R.L.S. and threw away, twenty years ago, he acknowledged this unearthly character, and, speaking of the depredations of his kin, he said:

Faith, they might steal me, w? ma will,
And, ken'd I ony fairy hill
I#d lay me down there, snod and still,
Their land to win;
For, man, I maistly had my fill
O' this world's din

His wit had something disconcerting in its impishness. Its rapidity and sparkle were dazzling, but it was not quite human; that is to say, it conceded too little to the exigencies of flesh and blood. If we can conceive a seraph being fanny, it would be in the manner of Andrew Lang. Moreover, his wit usually danced over the surface of things, and rarely penetrated them. In verbal parry, in ironic misunderstanding, in breathless agility of topsy-turvy movement, Lang was like one of Milton's "yellow-skirted fays," sporting with the helpless, moon-bewildered traveller. His wit often had a depressing, a humiliating effect, against which one's mind presently revolted. I recollect an instance which may be thought to be apposite: I was passing through a phase of enthusiasm for Emerson, whom Lang very characteristically detested, and I was so ill-advised as to show him the famous epigram called "

Brahma." Lang read it with a snort of derision (it appeared to be new to him), and immediately he improvised this parody:

If the wild bowler thinks he bowls,
Or if the batsman thinks he's bowled,
They know not, poor misguided souls,
They, too, shall perish unconsolated.
I am the batsman and the bat,
I am the bowler and the ball,
The umpire, the pavilion cat,
The roller, pitch and stumps, and all

This would make a pavilion cat laugh, and I felt that Emerson was done for. But when Lang had left me, and I was once more master of my mind, I reflected that the parody was but a parody, wonderful for its neatness and quickness, and for its seizure of what was awkward in the roll of Emerson's diction, but essentially superficial. However, what would wit be if it were profound? I must leave it there, feeling that I have not explained why Lang's extraordinary drollery in conversation so often left on the memory a certain sensation of distress.

But this was not the characteristic of his humour at its best, as it was displayed throughout the happiest period of his work. If, as seems possible, it is as an essayist that he will ultimately take his place in English literature, this element will continue to delight fresh generations of enchanted readers. I cannot imagine that the preface to his translation of "Theocritus," "Letters to Dead Authors," "In the Wrong Paradise," "Old Friends," and "Essays in Little" will ever lose their charm; but future admirers will have to pick their way to them through a tangle of history and anthropology and mythology, where there may be left no perfume and no sweetness. I am impatient to see this vast mass of writing

reduced to the limits of its author's delicate, true, but somewhat evasive and ephemeral. genius. However, as far as the circumstances of his temperament permitted, Andrew Lang has left with us the memory of one of our most surprising contemporaries, a man of letters who laboured without cessation from boyhood to the grave, who pursued his ideal with indomitable activity and perseverance, and who was never betrayed except by the loftiness of his own endeavour. Lang's only misfortune was not to be completely in contact with life, and his work will survive exactly where he was most faithful to his innermost illusions.

THE MYSTERY OF MARY STUART

INTRODUCTION

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

For this reason the Mystery of Mary Stuart must always fascinate: moreover, curiosity has never ceased to be

aroused by this problem of Mary's guilt or innocence. Hume said, a hundred and fifty years ago, that the Scottish Jacobite who believed in the Queen's innocence was beyond the reach of reason or argument. Yet from America, Russia, France, and Germany we receive works in which the guilt of Mary is denied, and the arguments of Hume, Robertson, Laing, Mignet, and Froude are contested. Every inch of the ground has been inspected as if by detectives on the scene of a recent murder; and one might suppose that the Higher Criticism had uttered its last baseless conjecture and that every syllable of the fatal Casket Letters, the only external and documentary testimony to Mary's guilt, must have been weighed, tested, and analysed. But this, as we shall see, is hardly the fact. There are 'points as yet unseized by Germans' Mary was never tried by a Court of Justice during her lifetime. Her cause has been in process of trial ever since. Each newly discovered manuscript, like the fragmentary biography by her secretary, Nau, and the Declaration of the Earl of Morton, and the newly translated dispatches of the Spanish ambassadors, edited by Major Martin Hume (1894), has brought fresh light, and has modified the tactics of the attack and defence.

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

first to publish in full Morton's sworn Declaration as to the discovery, inspection, and safe keeping of the fatal Casket and its contents. Sir John Skelton's reply told chiefly against minor points of criticism and palaeography.

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

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

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

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

Mary's cause has, hitherto, been best served by her accusers, most injured by her defenders. For political and personal reasons her enemies, her accomplices, or the conscious allies of her accomplices, perpetually stultified themselves and gave themselves the lie. Their case was otherwise very badly managed. Their dates were so carelessly compiled as to make their case chronologically

impossible. Their position, as stated, probably by George Buchanan and Makgill, in 'The Book of Articles,' and the 'Detection,' is marred by exaggerations and inconsistencies. Buchanan was by no means a critical historian, and he was here writing as an advocate, mainly from briefs furnished by Lennox, his feudal chief, the father of the murdered Darnley. These briefs we now possess, and the generosity of Father Pollen, S.J., has allowed me to use these hitherto virgin materials.

The Lennox Papers also enable us to add new and dramatically appropriate anecdotes of Mary and Darnley, while, by giving us some hitherto unknown myths current at the moment, they enable us to explain certain difficulties which have puzzled historians. The whole subject throws a lurid light on the ethics and the persons of the age which followed the Reformation in Scotland. Other novelties may be found to emerge from new combinations of facts and texts which have long been familiar, and particular attention has been paid to the subordinate persons in the play, while a hitherto disregarded theory of the character of Bothwell is offered; a view already, in part, suggested by Mignet. The arrangement adopted is as follows: First, in two preliminary chapters, the characters and the scenes of the events are rapidly and broadly sketched. We try to make the men and women live and move in palaces and castles now ruinous or untenanted.

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

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

Next the Internal Evidence of the Letters themselves is criticised.

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

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

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

The character of Mary, *son naturel*, as she says, or is made to say in the most incriminating Letter, is full of fascination, excellence and charm. Her terrible expiation has won the pity of gentle hearts, and sentiment has too often clouded reason, while reaction against sentiment has been no less mischievous. But History, the search for truth, should be as

impersonal as the judge on the bench. I am not unaccustomed to be blamed for destroying our illusions,' but to cultivate and protect illusion has never been deemed the duty of the historian. Mary, at worst, and even admitting her guilt (guilt monstrous and horrible to contemplate) seems to have been a nobler nature than any of the persons most closely associated with her fortunes. She fell, if fall she did, like the Clytaemnestra to whom a contemporary poet compares her, under the almost demoniacal possession of passion; a possession so sudden, strange and overpowering that even her enemies attributed it to ' unlawful arts.'

I have again to acknowledge the almost, or quite, unparalleled kindness of Father Pollen in allowing me to use his materials. He found transcripts of what I style the ' Lennox MSS.' among the papers of the late learned Father Stevenson, S.J. These he collated with the originals in the University Library at Cambridge. It is his intention, I understand, to publish the whole collection, which was probably put together for the use of Dr. Wilson, when writing, or editing, the ' Actio,' published with Buchanan's ' Detection.' Father Pollen has also read most of my proof-sheets, but he is not responsible for any of my provisional conclusions. I have also consulted, on various points, Mr. George Neilson and Dr. Hay Fleming.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Lennox Papers are in the Cambridge University Library.

The Suppressed Confessions of Hepburn of Bowton

Too late for notice in the body of this book, the following curious piece of evidence was observed by Father Eyan, S.J., in the Cambridge MS. of the deposition of Hepburn of Bowton. This kinsman and accomplice of Bothwell was examined on December 8, 1567, before Moray, Atholl, Kirkcaldy, Lindsay, and Bellenden, Lord Justice Clerk. The version of his confession put in at the Westminster Conference, December 1568, will be found in Anderson, ii. 387 et seq., and in Laing, ii. 256-259. The MS. is in Cotton Caligula, C.I. fol. 325. It is attested as a 'true copy' by Bellenden. But if we follow the Cambridge MS. it is not a true copy. A long passage, following 'and lay down with him,' at the end, is omitted. That passage I now cite:

'Farther this deponar sayis that he inquirit at my lord quhat securitie he had for it quhilk wes done, because their wes sic ane brute and murmo r in the toun And my lord ansuerit that diuerse noblemen had subscrivit the deid with him And schew the same band to the deponar, quhairat wes the subscriptionis of the erles of huntlie, ergile, boithuile altogether, and the secretares subscription far beneth the rest. And insafar as the deponar remembers this was the effect of it, it contenit sum friuose [frivolous?] and licht caussis aganis the king sic as hys behavior contrar the quene, quhilk band wes in ane of twa silver cofferis and wes in dunbar, and the deponar saw the same there the tyme that they wer thare after the quenis revissing And understandis that the band wes with the remanenb letters, and putt in the castell be george dalgles. Inquirit quha deuisit that the king suld ludge at the kirk of feild?

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

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

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

' This is the trew copy, etc.'

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

Bowton saw the band at Dunbar (April-May, 1567, during Mary's detention there), ' in one of two silver coffers.' He only ' understands ' that the band was ' with the remanent letters, and put in the Castle by George Dalglish.' If ' the remanent letters ' are the Casket Letters, and if Bowton, at Dunbar, had seen them with the band, and read them, his evidence would have been valuable as to the Letters. But as things are, we have merely his opinion, or ' understanding,' that certain letters were kept with the band, as Drury, we know, asserted that it was in the Casket with the other papers, and was destroyed, while the Letters attributed to

Mary ' were kept to be shown.' Of course, if this be true, Morton lied when he said that the contents of the Casket had neither been added to nor diminished.

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

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

I have shown in the text (p. 144) that, even on Bowton's evidence as produced at Westminster, Moray was aware that Bothwell had allies among the nobles, but that, as far as the evidence declares, he asked no questions. But the Cambridge MS. proves his full knowledge, which he deliberately suppressed. The Cambridge MS. must either have been furnished to Lennox, before the sittings at Westminster; or must have been the original, or a copy of the original, later supplied to Dr. Wilson while preparing Buchanan's ' Detection,' the ' Actio,' and other documents for the press in November 1571. It will be observed that

when Lethington was accused of Darnley's murder, in September 1569, Moray could not well have prosecuted him to a conviction, as his friends, Atholl and Kirkcaldy, having been present at Bowton's examination, knew that Moray knew of Lethington's guilt, yet continued to be his ally. The Cambridge copy of the deposition of Hay of Tala contains no reference to the guilt of Morton or Lethington; naturally, for Morton was present at Hay's examination. Finally, the evidence of Binning, in 1581, shows that representatives of Lethington and Balfour, as well as of Morton, were present at the murder, as Bowton, in his suppressed testimony, says had been arranged.

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

I - DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HISTORY is apt to be, and some think that it should be, a mere series of dry uncoloured statements. Such an event occurred, such a word was uttered, such a deed was done, at this date or the other. We give references to our authorities, to men who heard of the events, or even saw them when they happened. But we, the writer and the readers, see nothing: we only offer or accept bald and imperfect information. If we try to write history on another method, we become ' picturesque: ' we are composing a novel, not striving painfully to attain the truth. Yet, when we know not the details; the aspect of dwellings now ruinous; the hue and cut of garments long wasted into dust; the passing frown, or smile, or tone of the actors and the

speakers in these dramas of life long ago; the clutch of Bothwell at his dagger's hilt, when men spoke to him in the street; the flush of Darnley's fair face as Mary and he quarrelled at Stirling before his murder then we know not the real history, the real truth. Now and then such a detail of gesture or of change of countenance is recorded by an eyewitness, and brings us, for a moment, into more vivid contact with the past. But we could only know it, and judge the actors and their conduct, if we could see the personages in their costume as they lived, passing by in some magic mirror from scene to scene. The stage, as in Schiller's ' Marie Stuart,' comes nearest to reality, if only the facts given by the poet were real; and next in vividness comes the novel, such as Scott's ' Abbot,' with its picture of Mary at Loch Leven, when she falls into an hysterical fit at the mention of Bastian's marriage on the night of Darnley's death. Far less intimate than these imaginary pictures of genius are the statements of History, dull when they are not 'picturesque,' and when they are ' picturesque,' sometimes prejudiced, inaccurate, and misleading.

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

The foremost person is the Queen, a tall girl of twenty-four, with brown hair, and sidelong eyes of red brown. Such are

her sidelong eyes in the Morton portrait; such she bequeathed to her great-great-grandson, James, ' the King over the Water. ' She was half French in temper, one of the proud bold Guises, by her mother's side; and if not beautiful, she was so beguiling that Elizabeth recognised her magic even in the reports of her enemies.

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

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

She was gay, as when Randolph met her, in no more state than a burgess's wife might use, in the little house of St. Andrews, hard by the desecrated Cathedral. She could be madly mirthful, dancing, or walking the black midnight streets of Edinburgh, masked, in male apparel, or flitting ' in homely attire,' said her enemies, about the Market Cross in Stirling. She loved, at sea, ' to handle the boisterous cables,' as Buchanan tells. Pursuing her brother, Moray, on a day of storm, or hard on the doomed Huntly's track among the hills and morasses of the North; or galloping through the red bracken of the October moors, and the hills of the robbers, to Hermitage; her energy outwore the

picked warriors in her company. At other times, in a fascinating languor, she would lie long abed, receiving company in the French fashion, waited on by her Maries, whose four names 'are four sweet symphonies,' Mary Seton and Mary Beaton, Mary Fleming and Mary Livingstone. To the Council Board she would bring her woman's work, embroidery of silk and gold. She was fabled to have carried pistols at her saddle-bow in war, and she excelled in matches of archery and pall-mall.



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

the brooches enamelled with sacred scenes, or scenes from fable. Many of her jewels the ruby tortoise given by Riccio; the enamel of the mouse and the ensnared lioness, passed by Lethington as a token into her dungeon of Loch Leven; the diamonds bequeathed by her to one whom she might not name; the red enamelled wedding-ring, the gift of Darnley; the diamond worn in her bosom, the betrothal present of Norfolk are, to our fancy, like the fabled star-ruby of Helen of Troy, that dripped with blood-gouts which vanished as they fell. Riccio, Darnley, Lethington, Norfolk, the donors of these jewels, they were all to die for her, as Bothwell, too, was to perish, the giver of the diamond carried by Paris, the recipient of the black betrothal ring enamelled with bones and tears. ' Her feet go down to death,' her feet that were so light in the dance, ' her steps take hold on hell. . . . Her lips drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.'

The lips that dropped as honeycomb, the laughing mouth, could wildly threaten, and vainly rage or beseech, when she was entrapped at Carberry; or could waken pity in the sternest Puritan when, half-clad, her bosom bare, her loose hair flowing, she wailed from her window to the crowd of hostile Edinburgh.

She was of a high impatient spirit: we seem to recognise her in an anecdote told by the Black Laird of Ormistoun, one of Darnley's murderers, in prison before his execution. He had been warned by his brother, in a letter, that he was suspected of the crime, and should ' get some good way to purge himself.' He showed the letter to Bothwell, who read it, and gave it to Mary. She glanced at it, handed it to Huntly, ' and thereafter turnit unto me, and turnit her back, and gave am Hiring with her shoulder, and passit away, and

spake nothing to me.' But that ' thring ' spoke much of Mary's, mood, unrepentant, contemptuous, defiant.

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

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

In the long lament of the letters written during her twenty years of captivity, but a few moods return and repeat themselves, like phrases in a fugue. Vain complaints, vain hopes, vain intrigues with Spain, France, the Pope, the Guises, the English Catholics, succeed each other with futile iteration. But always we hear the note of loyalty even to her humblest servants, of sleepless memory of their sacrifices for her, of unstinting and generous gratitude. Such was the Queen's ' natural,' *mon naturel*: with this