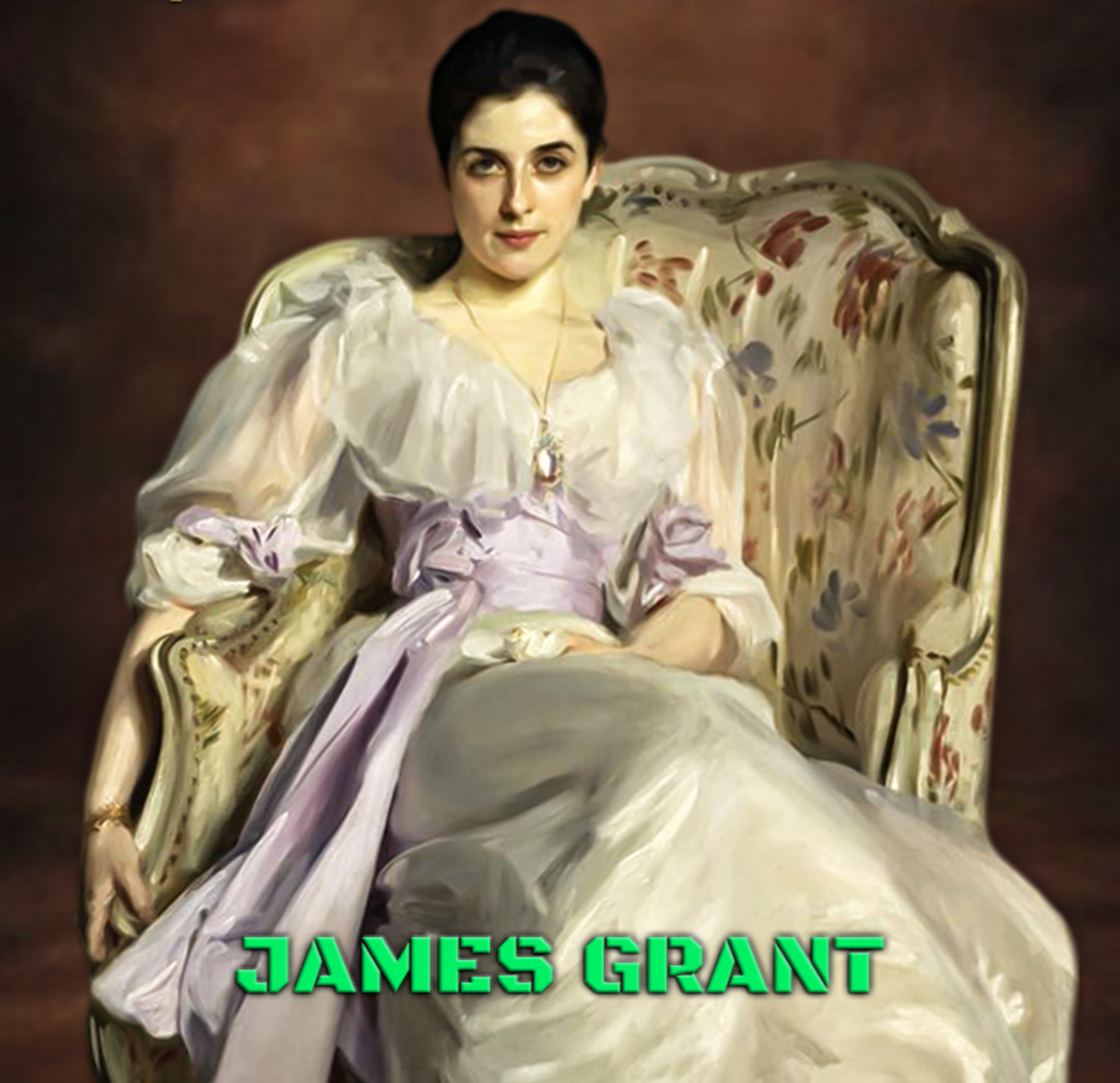
THE WORLD AT WAR

JANE SETON

OR, THE KING'S ADVOCAT



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PREFACE.

The genius of a monarch is said to stamp a character upon his time; but this can scarcely be said to have been the good fortune of the sovereign in whose reign I have laid the following romance.

Like all the princes of his house, James V. was far in advance of the age in which he lived; for to all his forefathers' valour and passionate love of their native Scotland (for whose soil so many of them had shed their blood in battle), to their elegant taste in all the arts, their patronage of science and commerce, he united a love for romantic adventure, which, like James IV., made him the idol of the people. But the Scottish nobles, though affording us many bright and glorious examples of high valour and pure patriotism, have generally been a race of men too ready to sacrifice the dearest interests of their country for lucre or ambition; and were really, in all ages, a curse alike to our kings and the nation.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to portray something of their savage pride and unscrupulous spirit; and to give a picture of those dark days of violence when danger was the pastime and arms the occupation of our people; when it was sadly but truly said, that grey hairs were seldom seen under a Scotsman's bonnet, and that a Scottish mother had seldom a son left to lay her head in the grave, for in civil strife or foreign war they had all gone before her to the land of the leal.

There is much that is veritable history, and much that is old tradition, woven up with my fiction; and though the reader may be able to distinguish these passages, I shall mention, that the king's adventure in the cavern, the three

trees of Dysart, and John of Clatto, are ancient legends of Fife; while the point on which the whole story turns—the strange and frantic love of Otterburn—is taken partly from an incident which is mentioned in the annals of the House of Angus, and bears a conspicuous place in the early criminal records of Scotland. It will be found related at further length in the notes.

The King's Advocate was so named, to distinguish him from the Crown Prince's Advocate, an office which existed before the abolition of many of those more important public institutions of which Scotland has permitted herself to be deprived.

The King's Advocate, with whose name I have made so free in these volumes, was the son of Thomas Otterburn of Edinburgh, who was slain at the battle of Flodden, and of Katharine Brown. He was Lord Provost of Edinburgh from 1524 to 1535, and was our ambassador to England between the same years. He was knighted in 1534, but was imprisoned in the castle of Dumbarton for being too partial to Englishmen. He was highly esteemed by Buchanan, who has embalmed his memory in beautiful Latin verse.

Vipont, the hero, bears an old Scottish surname, which was famous in the middle ages, though it has now almost disappeared. Andro Wyntown, the Prior of St. Serf, mentions that *Alan ye Vipownt* was keeper of Lochlevin, and defended that fortress valiantly in the wars of the Scottish succession. Another, Sir William Vipont, was one of the two Scottish knights slain on the glorious 24th of June, 1314. They were barons of Aberdour on the northern shore of the Forth, where their ruined castle, a massive pile indicative of great strength and ancient grandeur, is yet to be seen. Roland Vipont is meant to represent the last of

that old race, whose arms are still recorded to have been six annulets *or*, with a swan's head rising from a coronet.

Let it not be thought that I have made James V. or his minister speak too harshly of Henry VIII.'s moral character, when we bear in mind that Dr. Bayley, in his "Life of Bishop Fisher," has plainly asserted and proved, that the English king married Anne Boleyn, knowing her to be his own daughter. So much for the "Bluff King Hal" of romance.

If, on one hand, I have omitted to portray the Cardinal Primate as the monster we have been taught to believe him, I do not, on the other, wish it to be thought that I consider the good Father St. Bernard as a type of the Scottish clergy in 1537. Very far from it; they were the reverse of all I have made that meek old priest. But, doubtless, there must have been exceptions; and it must be remembered, that all our accounts of them and the Cardinal have come down to us from their enemies.

A Scottish novelist labours under a great disadvantage, when endeavouring to introduce effectively for English readers old national characters who speak their own language, which, to a modern Englishman, would be as unintelligible as Choctaw; hence the conventional half-dialect usually adopted. It is a curious fact, that in the days of Alexander I. or Robert I., the dialects of the two nations were more alike than they are to-day. Since then, the language of South Britain has gradually been changing, and becoming what is strictly termed English; while the Gothic dialect of the North has remained pretty much the same; hence the Scot can read with ease, and fully understand, the obsolete phrases and idioms of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, &c., many parts of the old editions of whose works are now almost unintelligible to the mass of their own countrymen.

EDINBURGH,
1st January, 1853.

CHAPTER I.

JANE SETON.

"I prithee mark
His countenance; unlike bold calumny,
Which sometime dare not speak the thing it looks,
He dare not look the thing he speaks, but bends
His gaze on the blind earth."—*The Cenci*.

On the 19th of May, 1537, the bells of Edinburgh rang joyously. It was a day of loyalty and merriment such as never more may gladden Scotland's ancient capital.

After a nine months' absence, James V.—"the good king James, the commons' king, the father of the poor," the patron of the infant arts and sciences, the mirror of chivalry and romance, as he was affectionately named by a people who idolized him—had arrived in the Firth of Forth with his young queen Magdalene of Valois, whom for her dazzling beauty he had chosen from among three princesses, all possessed of unusual charms, and whom he had espoused in the great cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris, in presence of her father, the magnificent and magnanimous Francis I., seven cardinals, and all the noblesse and beauty of France. After spending the honeymoon at the Hôtel de Cluny, a beautiful old gothic house belonging to the family of Lorraine, they had sailed for Scotland.

All the capital was on tiptoe, and its streets were crowded to excess by the retinues of the nobles and lesser barons, who had come thither to gratify their curiosity and evince their loyalty on the auspicious occasion.

The day was one of the most beautiful of all that sunny month; and the summer air was laden with the perfume of flowers, for garlands and bouquets were festooned from window to window across the main street leading to the palace, a thoroughfare six-and-twenty yards in breadth; while the stone columns of the girth-cross of the holy sanctuary, the Jerusalem-cross of St. John, the great market-cross of the city, bearing aloft the unicorn rearing on a tressured shield, and the famous stone statue of Our Lady which then stood at the east end of St. Giles's church, were all wreathed and hidden under the spoil of a hundred blooming gardens.

Scaffolds and balconies hung with tapestry and rare carpets of foreign manufacture, or painted with azure, starred with shining gold, occupied the sides of the streets in many places, and were crowded with the families of the surrounding land-holders, the better classes of citizens, and the baronial dwellers of the Blackfriars' Wynd and the Canongate; a great part of the latter street consisted then of turreted villas and strongly-built but detached mansion-houses surrounded by spacious gardens. Banners innumerable, bearing the heraldic cognizances of the proud, the noble, and the brave of Scotland's ancient days, waved from window, turret, and bartizan; the city fountains poured forth purple wine and nut-brown ale alternately (for the Scots had the former duty-free before the Union), and the stalwart deacon convener of the gallant craftsmen, sheathed in complete armour, with the famous Blue Blanket, or banner of the Holy Ghost, displayed, mustered the Baxters, the Websters, Cordiners, Dagger and Bonnet makers, and other ancient corporations, each under their several standards, to line the High-street, on either side, from the Butter Tron to the Netherbow, keeping clear a lane of some forty feet in breadth. These stout craftsmen, who mustered to the number of several thousands, were all

arrayed in green gaberdines, red hose, and blue bonnets, and were armed as archers, with a steel gorget, a short but strong Scottish bow, a sheaf of arrows, a battle-axe, and long dagger.

With the city sword and mace, and his own helmet and banner borne before him, the Lord Provost, Sir James Lawson, of the Highrigs, with all the baillies and burgesses clad in gowns of scarlet, furred with miniver, and wearing chains of gold; the heralds and pursuivants in their plumed bonnets and gorgeous tabards, with standards and trumpets, musicians, minstrels, and macers, waited at the western entrance of the city to receive the king and queen with all due loyalty and splendour of pageantry; while the priests of rank, the knights, nobles, and senators of the College of Justice, had all ridden to Leith to conduct the royal pair in procession to Holyrood.

It is said that the beautiful Magdalene, on landing from the high-pooped and gaily-bannered ship of Sir Robert Barton, the king's admiral, knelt gracefully down on the sands of Leith, and lifting a handful to her lips, kissed it ere she threw it away crosswise, and raising her large dark eyes to heaven, prayed with deep pathos "to God, the blessed Virgin, and all the saints, for the happiness of Scotland, the land of her adoption, and its people."

The bright sunshine of the glorious May morning poured aslant its flaky radiance between the breaks and openings in those irregular masses of building, that tower up to such a giddy height on both sides of the central street of the ancient city; the south was sombre and grey, but the north was glowing in warmth, as the sunlight played along its far-stretching vista. Many of these houses were flat-roofed, flagged with large stones, like ancient towers, or covered with thatch; but few that overlooked the pageant about to

be described are standing now, as the city was fired by the English in eight places seven years after, in the war with Henry VIII.

By the skill of a certain cunning craftsman, the High-street, even at that early period, was well paved; and the monks of Holyrood kept the Canongate (which is but a further continuation of the same thoroughfare) well causewayed, for which the reverend Lord Abbot levied a duty upon every cart, laden or unladen, which entered the eastern barrier of the burgh. All the open windows of that great street, the tall edifices of which rise to the height of eight and ten stories, exciting still the astonishment of every traveller, were filled with glad faces; every bartizan, outshot, and projection bore its load of shouting urchins; even the leads and parapets of the great cathedral, with its hideously grotesque stone-gutters, carved into devils and dragons, wyverns and other monsters, bore a freight of spectators, the buzz of whose voices, above and below, imparted a liveliness to the scene, and relieved the tedium of long expectation and waiting for the approach of the royal party.

The utmost good-humour pervaded these expectant crowds, though sometimes a brawl seemed likely to ensue, when a gentleman of pride and pedigree, with velvet cloak, a long rapier, and tall feather, despising the authority of the convener and his bands of mechanical craftsmen, marched down the centre of the street, with a few well-armed serving-men following doggedly at his heels, with brows bent, their swords girt up, and that expression on their faces which seemed so much as to say, "We are Humes, Douglases, or Scotts, or Setons, and who will dare to meddle with us!"

With these, such was the patent of gentle blood, the burgher archers dared not interfere; but their unstrung bows and gauntleted hands pommelled without mercy any luckless countryman or denizen of Leith or St. Ninian's Row who encroached on the causeway, which by order of the knightly provost was to be kept clear by all. Such incidental brawls were generally quelled by the interference of some passing grey friar or Dominican.

Those cavaliers who assumed the right of perambulating the open street were, as I have said, almost invariably attended by bands of followers, armed with swords and round targets, steel caps and corslets. Several of these were invariably greeted by a yell of hostility and epithets of opprobrium from those who occupied the windows, and who found this a more safe experiment than it could have proved to those who stood in the street below.

These obnoxious personages were generally lesser barons and gentlemen of the house of Douglas, a clan which, from its numerical force, pride, power, and turbulence, had long been inimical to the house of Stuart, and more especially to James V., who after many efforts had completely broken its strength, reduced its numerous strongholds, and driven the chief, Archibald sixth Earl of Angus, and Knight of St. Michael, from his high offices of Lord Chancellor and Lieutenant of the East and Middle Marches, with all the noblesse of his surname and faction, to exile in England; where, like all Scottish rebels and malcontents, according to the ancient line of southern policy, they were fostered and protected by Henry VIII.

By the knights and gentlemen of the proscribed name those marks of hostility from the vulgar herd were treated with silent scorn; but their followers scowled about them with clenched weapons and kindling eyes, that showed how

intensely they longed to react the great High-street conflict of 1520, and revenge on the rabble of Edinburgh the insults they now endured. These evidences of hostility and political disgust were soon lost amid the general spirit of rejoicing that pervaded the entire body of the people; for loyalty and devotion to their old hereditary line of princes was then an inborn sentiment in the Scots, who were devout believers in the divine right of kings, and had not yet been taught by their preachers to view their old regal race as tyrants and oppressors.

Among all this mirth and festivity there were two persons whose sobriety and staidness of demeanour were very remarkable.

One was a young man about six-and-twenty, who had, apparently, just entered the city, for his boots and leathern gambadoes were covered with dust. He wore a plain gaberdine, or frock, of white Galloway frieze, with horn buttons; but beneath it appeared a doublet of escaupil to protect him from sword thrusts, an unusual garment for one of his class, for his grey maud, or plaid, blue bonnet, backsword, and hunting-knife announced him a yeomen or agriculturist. He carried a great knotty walking-staff, recently cut from some wayside thicket; but to a close observer it would have seemed perfectly evident that the profusion of his beard and moustache was worn rather for disguise than adornment. He was reading a paper affixed to the cross of St. John of Jerusalem which stood in the centre of the Canongate, immediately opposite the arch which now gives admittance to St. John's-street, the ground of which was then closely built upon.

It was a proclamation, issued by the nobles who governed in the king's absence, offering a thousand merks of Scottish money for "ye heid of Archibald Seton, umquhile

Earle of Ashkirk," accused of leaguing with that false traitor, Archibald Douglas, sometime Earl of Angus, who had recently been on the borders, at the head of some English moss-troopers, infesting the bounds of the knight, Sir Mark Kerr, of Cessford.

With a brow that loured, and fierce eye that kindled, the young man read, from beginning to end, this proclamation (which was obnoxious to so many), and his hand gradually tightened on the handle of his poniard as he proceeded. Suddenly remembering that he might be observed, a smile of scorn, such a lordly smile as never clown could have given, spread over his dark features; he gave a glance of peculiar import at a group of ladies who occupied a balcony immediately opposite St. John's Cross, and, drawing his bonnet well over his brows, looked round for some obscure nook from whence to see, in security, the progress of the royal pageant.

"How little can they imagine that I am so near them," said the Earl of Ashkirk (for the stranger was no other than he), as he dived among the crowd and disappeared.

The other personage to whom reference has been made, was a tall and finely-formed man, of a noble presence and commanding stature, possessing a remarkably handsome face, with a loftiness of bearing that never failed to strike the beholder with interest. His complexion was dark, his nose slightly aquiline, his eyes black, and sparkling beneath two brows that were almost joined together. At times, a fierce and restless expression lit up these fiery and penetrating eyes, and knit his smooth expansive forehead, while his moustached lip curled with pride and severity; and then a languor and sadness stole over them, as other and softer emotions subdued the bitter thoughts some passing incidents had roused. He was dressed in a doublet

and trunk hose of black velvet, laced and buttoned with silver, and trimmed with miniver: a black velvet bonnet, adorned by a single diamond and one tail white ostrich feather, shaded his dark, short, curly hair. He wore a short poniard and long rapier in an embroidered belt, and had spurs, heavily gilded and embossed, on the heels of his maroquin boots.

This man was Sir Adam Otterburn, of Redhall, the King's Advocate in the recently-instituted College of Justice, a great favourite with his royal master, and one who, for his learning, probity, courage, and office, was loved by some, respected by many, and feared by all. His features were pale and hollow, for he was recovering from a late illness, brought on by a wound received in a conflict with the Douglases, a circumstance which alone, on this auspicious day, confined him to a cushioned chair at the window of his house, which overlooked the High-street, where all the beauty and bravery of Edinburgh had thronged to welcome home King James.

Oblivious of the bustle pervading that long and stately thoroughfare, the streaming pennons, the waving banners, the gaudy tapestries and garlands that festooned every balcony and decorated every window, the Knight of Redhall continued to gaze upon the fair occupants of the temporary gallery which we have before mentioned as standing near St. John's Cross.

It was hung and canopied with scarlet cloth and festoons of flowers; the front was painted with gold and azure, and thereon lay a banner, bearing under an earl's coronet, and within a widow's lozenge, the three crescents of Seton, within a double tressure, flowered and counter-flowered with golden fleurs-de-lis, quartered with "the bloody heart," the dreaded cognizance of the obnoxious Douglases—a

badge which, though it seldom gained love, never failed to inspire fear. An old lady and several fair young belles, whose beauty alone saved them from the insults which popular hatred levelled at all in alliance with the exiled Earl of Angus, occupied this balcony, and reclined beneath its shady canopy, chatting gaily, and expectant of the royal approach.

The elder lady was Margaret Douglas, of the house of Kilspindie, dowager of John Earl of Ashkirk, and mother of Archibald, the present earl, who was then under doom of exile with Lord Angus, his kinsman and ally. The younger ladies were Jane Seton, her daughter, Marion Logan of Restalrig, Alison Hume of Fastcastle, and Sybil Douglas of Kilspindie, all noble damsels, who had come to Edinburgh to witness the splendid entrée of Queen Magdalene.

Tall in stature and dark in complexion, with deep black eyes, and a hauteur of brow which the sweet expression of her mouth alone relieved, the Countess Dowager of Ashkirk, though all but unable to read or write (for letters were then held in low repute), was a woman of a shrewd and masculine turn of mind; for the inborn dignity of noble birth, the martial spirit of her race, the stormy life she had led since childhood among feudal brawls and intestine battles, had imparted an emphatic decision, if not a fierceness, at times, to her manner and modes of expression. A stiff suit of the richest Genoese brocade lent additional stateliness to her figure, while the diamond-shaped head-dress, then in fashion for noble matrons, added greatly to her stature, which was far above the middle height. The inner folds of this angular coif were of white linen, the outer of purple silk edged with yellow fringe, and it formed a corner at each ear with an apex at the top, while the folds lay close to her cheeks, scarcely

permitting her hair to be visible, and where it was so its raven hue seemed turning fast to silver-grey.

A little negro boy, black as Lucifer, but dressed entirely in a rich suit of white satin, puffed and slashed at the trunks and shoulders, held up her train. Ugly as a fiend, with a broad nose, capacious mouth, and long pendent ears adorned with massive silver rings, Master Sabrino, being the first or the second person of his colour ever seen in Scotland, was an object of fear to some, disgust to others, and wonder to all. The vulgar viewed him as an imp or devil incarnate, and studiously avoided the glance of his shining black eyeballs; but *the creature*, as they termed him, was affectionately devoted to his mistress, and to all who used him kindly. Though the fashion of being attended by a black page or dwarf was not uncommon at continental courts, and had been first introduced into Scotland by Anne de la Tour of Vendôme, Duchess of Albany, it did not tend to increase the popularity of the proud and distant Dowager of Ashkirk, whom, as a Douglas, the people were generally disposed to view with hostility and mistrust.

Lady Jane Seton was, in many respects, the reverse of her mother; for she had neither her lofty stature, her keenness of eye, nor her haughty decision of manner; for her figure, though full and round, was, by turns, light, graceful, and yielding. Neither her youth, for she was barely twenty, nor her beauty, though it was of the first class, were her chief characteristics. There was a depth of expression in her dark blue eye, which, by turns, was dreamy and thoughtful, or bright and laughing, a charm in her radiant complexion and a fascination in her manner, which drew all instinctively towards her. When silent, she seemed full of intense thought; when speaking, all vivacity and animation. Her hair was of the darkest and glossiest brown, and her neck arched and slender. Simple and

pleasing, sinless in soul and pure in heart, her goodness and gentleness were her greatest charms; and though she appeared *petite* beside her towering mother, there was a grace in all her movements, and a bewitching piquancy in every expression, that made Jane Seton adorable to her lovers, and she had many.

Her companions were worthy the association, all fair and handsome girls.

Alison of Fastcastle was a beautiful blonde; she carried a falcon on her wrist, and from time to time pressed its smooth pinions against her dimpled cheek. Marion of Restalrig was a tall, flaxen-haired, and blue-eyed beauty, ever laughing and ever gay; while Sybil Douglas of Kilspindie was a brunette, like all the beauties of her house. Her deep black eyes and sable tresses would have lost nothing by comparison with those of Andaluçia; and though generally quiet, and, as some deemed her, insipid, her silence concealed a world of sentiment and thoughts that were exquisitely feminine: but, though silent and retiring, there were times when this fair daughter of the house of Douglas could manifest a fire and spirit becoming Black Liddlesdale himself.

They were all dressed nearly alike, in white satin, slashed at the breast and shoulders with variously coloured silk, and all had coifs of velvet squared above their temples, and falling in lappets on their cheeks. They were all talking at once, laughing at everything, like Sabrino the page, whose wide mouth was expanded in an endless grin; but the old countess was buried in thought, and with her forehead resting on her hand, and her elbow on the edge of the balcony, continued to gaze abstractedly on the long and bustling vista of the sunlit Canongate.

CHAPTER II.

MAGDALENE OF FRANCE.

"Saw'st thou not the great preparatives
  Of Edinburgh, that famous noble town;
Thou saw'st the people labouring for their lives,
  To make triumph with trump and clarion:
Thou saw'st full well many a fresh galland,
  Well ordered for receiving of their queen,
Each craftsman with his bent bow in his hand,
  Right gallantlie in clothing short of green."

LlNDESAY OF THE MOUNT.

"Their graces tarry long," said the countess, glancing impatiently up the street; "it is almost midday by the sun. Jane, child, hast got thy pocket-dial about thee?"

Lady Jane took from her embroidered girdle a little silver dial, and placing it duly east and west, found the hour to be twelve by the shadow of the gnomon, for the sun shone brightly.

"I warrant me," said the countess, "that his eminence the cardinal will be relieving himself of some prosy oration at the foot of the Broad Wynd, for the benefit of the king's grace."

"Of the queen's, you mean, Lady Ashkirk," said Alison Home, "for his lordship is a great admirer of beauty. Thou knowest, cousin Jane, how often he hath admired thee."

Jane coloured with something of displeasure at this remark, for, by the rumour of his gallantries, to be admired by this great prelate was no high honour.

"I would the king were come, for my patience is wearing fast away," said she, raising her bright eyes from the silver index to her mother's thoughtful face.

"Is it for the king alone thou art so impatient, child?" said the old lady, with a keen but smiling glance.

"Nay, for one who accompanies him for the queen," said Jane, growing pale, for she always turned pale where others grew red. "Is not James the avowed enemy of our house?"

"But is there no other for whom ye long, silly lassie?" asked Marion Logan, throwing an arm round Jane.

"My sweet friend—yes; for one who is dearer to me almost than thee; he who sent me this dial from Paris. Oh, Marion! to think that he hath been there for nine weary months!"

"Marry come up, bairn, what matters it?" said the countess, who overheard them, though the two fair friends spoke in low tones; "he will be so changed, and improved in gallantry and grace, that you will scarcely recognise him."

"I cry you mercy, mother," said Jane, pouting; "I knew not that he required improvement in either."

"By my troth, lady countess," said Alison Home, "if you mean Sir Rowland Vipont, the Master of the King's Ordnance, I think him so finished a cavalier that no court in Europe could improve him more."

"Save the court of King Cupid," said Marion.

"And where does he reign?" asked Jane.

"In thine own heart, cousin," said little Sybil, quietly; and then all the girls laughed aloud.

"I thank you, sweet Alison," said Jane, in a low voice, kissing her friend, for her heart danced lightly to hear her lover praised; "but dost thou know that, though I am full of joy, I would give the world to shed a shower of quiet tears just now."

"Heaven give thee happiness to-day, dear Jane," replied her friend, in the same soft, earnest voice, "and may it send thy lover back to thee in love and truth, and health and comeliness, as when he left thee these nine long months ago."

"Sabrino," said the countess, suddenly; "prick up those long ears of thine! dost thou not hear the sound of trumpets?"

"Ees, madame—me tink so," grinned the sable page, whose efforts at articulation cost him a fearful grimace.

"Then, James must be ascending the West Bow," replied the countess, as a commotion and murmur became apparent among the mighty masses that crowded the whole street.

At that moment the roar of the castle artillery pealed over the city, and announced the entrance of the king by its western barrier, along the Highrigs, past the tilting-ground and the chapel of the Virgin Mary. Deeply and hoarsely carthoun and culverin thundered from the towers of St. Margaret and King David, and a deafening shout of welcome and acclamation resounded from the crowded streets.

"Though the enemy and oppressor of the Douglases and the Homes," continued the countess, standing up in front of the balcony, "I cannot forget that he is our anointed king—that he has long been absent, and has endured great perils by sea and land; and so this day I bid him hail and welcome home in the name of Heaven."

"'Tis said the queen will ride behind him on a pillion," said Alison Home.

"Nay, child," replied the countess; "the Master of the Horse passed up street with a beautiful palfrey of spotless white, having a golden footcloth that swept the ground, for her grace's especial behoof. Ha! bairns, the mention of pillions remindeth me of the days of our good King James IV. I was but a lassie then, in my teens, like yourselves; and when James espoused the younger sister of Henry Tudor, though liking not the English match, I was appointed a lady of honour to Queen Margaret, for then—(and the countess spoke bitterly)—*then* to be a Douglas was different from what it is to-day! Like his son, James IV. was then a winsome youth, and fair to look upon. Few matched him for courage and hardiment in the field, and none surpassed him in grace and courtly devoir. Amid a gallant band of spears, with ladies, lords and knights, all clad in silk and taffety, laced and furred with miniver, with many a waving plume, and many a golden chain, they issued forth from Saint Mary of Newbattle, beneath the old oak trees, and James had his fair young English bride behind him on a pillion, riding just like any douce farmer and his gudewife, and, certes! a bonnie young pair they were as ever had holy water sprinkled on their bended heads! James was bravely attired—a doublet of velvet bordered with cloth-of-gold, and his bride was blazing with diamonds. As we rode townward, by the wayside, near Our Lady's Well at Kirk Liberton, we saw a fair pavilion pitched on the green brae side, and at

the door thereof stood a lance fixed in the earth, with a shield hung upon it. A lady, holding a siller bugle horn, came forth to greet the royal pair, when suddenly, a savage knight, mounted, and clad in a lion's skin, dashed out of a neighbouring coppice and bore her away. Then, lo! another knight, armed at all points, spurred his fleet horse from the gay pavilion, and assailed him with uplifted sword. Bravely they fell on, with the captive dame between them, and the keen-edged blades made ilka tempered casque and corselet ring like kirk bells on a festival. The rescuer struck the sword from the hand of his enemy, the king cried, 'Redd ye, sirs!' and so the combat was closed, and the lady released."

"And who was this fair dame?" asked Alison, with assumed curiosity, for she had heard the same story, in the same words, a hundred times before.

"Whom think ye, but *I*; and my leal Lord Archibald was the errant knight who saved me from the savage warrior, and *he* was no other than thy father, dear Alison, Sir Cuthbert Home of Fastcastle, who died by King James's side at Flodden; for you must know, maidens, that it was all a fair masque prepared to suit the warlike taste of the king, who loved well to see his knights under harness, and proving their hardiment on each other's coats of mail. All that and mickle mair I remember as if 'twere yesterday, and now 'tis three and thirty years ago. Three and thirty!" continued the garrulous old lady, "how the false traitors Death and Time have changed my cheer since then."

"True, madam," said little Sybil, thoughtfully; "the best part of our life is made up of the anticipations of hope, and the pleasures, the sad pleasures, of memory."

"Thy thoughts are running on my son, Lord Archibald," said the countess, with a fond smile, as she smoothed the

thick tresses of Sybil. "The first is for the young like you, and the last to solace the auld like me. St. Mary keep us! how year runs after year. My fair bairns, I hope a time may come when ye will all look back to *this* day as I do to that; but not with a sigh, to think such things have been, but can never be again!"

The countess sighed, and a tear stole into her eye; but a cry from the girls of—

"Oh! here they come—the king and queen!" followed by a clapping of hands, and a burst of acclamation from the populace, amid which the old cry, which the Scots had lately borrowed from their allies, the French—"Vive la Royne! Vive la Royne!" was conspicuous. It was a shout that rang from the crowded streets below, the windows and bartizans above, loud enough to rend the summer welkin, and heralded the approach of James and his French bride.

The occasional flourish of trumpets, mingled with the sound of the drum, the shalm, the cymbal, the clarion, and the clang of hoofs, rang in the lofty street. Spears glittered, banners waved, and silken pennons streamed in the sunlight at a distance, above the sea of heads; while armour flashed, and embroidery sparkled, as the superb procession, conveying the royal pair to Holyrood, approached.

Under the high sheriff of Lothian and Sir Andrew Preston of Gourtoun, a strong body of mounted spearmen, sheathed in dark armour, cleared and lined the streets, while the provost, Sir James Lawson of the Highrigs, chequered them with several thousands of the burgher archers and craftsmen, for each armed corporation was arrayed under its own pennon; and the great consecrated standard of the city, bearing the image of Saint Giles, floated near the

battlements of the Cross—as tradition avers it floated over Salem. A volume would be required to describe the magnificence of the romantic pageant that now approached; for James, as I have said, was the idol of his people, and a nine months' absence had endeared him to them more; and all their loyalty and enthusiasm now blazed forth at his return. First came three hundred of his royal guard, clad in blue bonnets and scarlet doublets, armed with long partizans and poniards. These were all men of Edinburgh, given by the city to attend James "on all occasions, especially against his auld and auncient enemies of England." Then came a long train of that fierce and proud nobility whose turbulence and intrigues ultimately broke the good king's heart. They wore robes of state over their rich armour; their jewelled coronets were borne before, and their gallant banners behind them; each was attended by a knight, a page, an esquire, or other gentleman, in accordance with his rank. Then came the lesser barons, each riding with his pennon displayed; and then the honourable commissioners of burghs, clad in gowns of scarlet, with gold chains; the twelve heralds and pursuivants, with six bannered trumpets, sounding before them a triumphal march, to which the kettle-drums and cymbals of the horsemen lent additional animation.

But the shouts which greeted this part of the procession became subdued; for now came a single horseman, riding alone, with a page on each side supporting his footcloth, which was composed entirely of cloth-of-gold. He was a man of a singularly noble presence and commanding stature; his deep dark eyes were full of fire and expression, yet his face was calm and placid, and his gaze was fixed on the flowing mane of his beautiful roan horse; and though every head bowed at his approach, he seemed abstracted and oblivious of all; his cope and stockings were scarlet,

and a very broad hat of the same sanguine hue cast a pleasant shadow over his sombre features.

"Rise, my bairns," said the Countess of Ashkirk; "it is his eminence the cardinal!"

And chancing to raise his head at that moment, he waved a benediction towards the balcony. He was David Beaton, cardinal of St. Stephen, the lord high chancellor of Scotland, legate of Paul III., and the terror of those who, in their secret hearts, had begun to nourish the doctrines of the reformed church. A young cavalier, in a half suit of magnificently gilded armour, attended him, and spent his time between caressing a falcon which sat upon his dexter wrist, and bowing to the ladies on either side of the street. He was Sir Norman Leslie of Rothes, who, a few years after, slew the cardinal in his archiepiscopal palace. Immediately behind him came a crowd of ecclesiastics, and the eight bishops—Stewart of Aberdeen, Hepburn of Brechin, Chisholm, the worthless holder of the see of Dunblane, Dunkeld, Moray, Ross, Orkney, and Ferquhard of the Isles, all riding on led horses, with their mitres, crosiers, and magnificent vestments, glittering in the sunlight.

Then came the black abbot of Cambus Kenneth (the lord president of the New College of Justice), attended by his fourteen senators, the *ten* sworn advocates, the clerks to the signet, notaries and macers of court, all of whom were greeted with lowering brows and murmurs of ill-repressed hatred and dislike; for the introduction of the courts of session and justiciary had been a very unpalateable measure to the factious and turbulent Scots.

Surrounded by the chief ladies of the kingdom, and by the damsels of honour all richly attired in hoods of velvet

tied with strings of pearl, with kirtles of brocade and cloth-of-gold, Magdalene of France approached on a palfrey white as the new fallen snow, with six young knights (each the son of an earl) supporting on their lances a silken canopy above her head. The splendour of her dress, which was shining with costly jewels, enhanced the greatness of her beauty, which outshone the charms of all around her, even the fair girls to whom the reader has been so lately introduced. Sprung from a royal line long famous for the charms of its princesses, Magdalene was only in her sixteenth year; but over her girlish loveliness the pallor of consumption was then spreading a veil more tender and enchanting. The novelty and excitement of the scene around lent additional animation to her lively French features, and heightened the brilliancy of her complexion, which was exquisitely fair; her eyes were light blue, and her braided hair was of the most beautiful blonde. She was rather small in stature, but beautifully formed; and the sweetness of her happy smile, and the grace with which she bowed and kissed both her hands alternately to the subjects of her husband, filled them with a storm of enthusiasm; and the respectful silence which had greeted her at first, expanded into a burst of rapture and congratulation. The ambassadors of England, Spain, France, and Savoy, wearing the collars of various knightly orders, rode near her.

With the sword, sceptre, and crown, borne, each by an earl, before him, James appeared, attended by the leading nobles of the realm. A cuirass of steel, polished like a mirror and inlaid with gold, showed to advantage his bold breast and taper waist. His doublet and trunk breeches were of white satin slashed with yellow and buttoned with diamonds, and his short mantle of azure velvet was tied over his breast with golden tassels. The collars of the Thistle, the Garter, the Golden Fleece, and the escallops of

St. Michael, were hanging on his breast, and flashed in one broad blaze to the noon-day sun. His dark eyes were full of animation, and the ringlets of his rich brown hair fluttered in the breeze as he waved his plumed cap to the people who loved him well, for he was better pleased to be thought the king of the poor than king of the peers of Scotland. He was surrounded by all the great officers of state and household; Robert, abbot of Holyrood, bearing his high treasurer's mace with its beryl ball, rode beside Colville of Culross, the great chamberlain of Scotland. Then came the lord high constable and the great marischal, the former with a naked sword, and the latter with an axe, borne before him; Colville of Ochiltrie, the comptroller; the dean of Glasgow, the secretary of state; Argyle, the lord justice-general, and Colinton, the lord clerk registrar; Lord Evandale, director of the chancery, the preceptor of the Knights of St. John, the high admiral, the royal standard-bearer, the grand carver, the great cup-bearer, the masters of the horse, the hounds, and the falcons, the marshal of the household, and though last, not least, Jock Macilree, the king's jester, who has been immortalized by the Knight of the Mount; and though ignobly bestriding a sleek donkey, his parti-coloured garb, his longeared cap, jingling bells, hanging bladder, and resounding laugh, attracted more attention than the mailed chivalry and sumptuously-attired noblesse who encircled the king.

James, who bowed affably to the people on every side, was scrupulous in recognising all ladies, especially if handsome, and consequently the bright group clustered round the Countess of Ashkirk could not escape his observation. Waving his bonnet, he was about to bow to his horse's mane, when his eye caught the quarterings of Douglas, and an ominous flash of undisguised anger immediately crimsoned his fine features; he was turning

away, when a rose was thrown upon his breast, and a pleasant voice cried,

"Heaven save your grace, and bless our fair lady the queen!"

It was Jane Seton's voice, and the richness of its tone with the sweetness of her smile subdued James at once; and placing the rose in the diamond George that hung from the splendid collar of the garter, this gallant young king bowed low, and kissed his hand.

"Hark you, Vipont," said he, to a handsome young man about his own age, who rode by his side; "what dame and damoiselles are these? You vailed your bonnet with more than usual reverence to them."

The cavalier hesitated.

"Faith," continued James, "there was a most undeniable scowl in the dark eyes of the elder lady in that outrageous English coif. Who is she, and why, i' the devil's name, does she wear *that*?"

"I trust your majesty is mistaken," replied the young man, hurriedly, and with confusion; "she is the countess dowager of Ashkirk, with her daughter the Lady Jane."

"Ashkirk!" reiterated James, knitting his brows; "is she not a daughter of old Greysteel, and hath more than a spark of old Bell-the-cat in her spirit? By St. Anne, this accounts for her English coif, when, out of compliment to our royal consort, the French fashions are all in vogue!"

"Please your majesty," urged Vipont——

"I remember the dame of old, in the days of the Douglases' tyranny, when they kept me a close captive in the old tower of Falkland. God's malison on the whole tribe; I would it had but one neck, and that it lay under my heel!"

"Amen, say I;" "and I," "and I," added several courtiers, who enjoyed gifts from the forfeited estates of the banished barons.

The young man sighed and bit his lips as he checked his horse a little, and permitted Sir David Lindesay of the Mount, another favourite, to assume his place by the side of the king.

Tall, and finely formed, with an erect bearing and athletic figure, Sir Roland Vipont was the very model of a graceful cavalier. His features, though not strictly handsome, were pleasing, manly, and expressive of health, good humour, and the utmost frankness. His heavy moustaches were pointed sharply upwards, and his hair was shorn close (*à la* Philip II.), to permit his wearing a helmet with ease, for, as master of the royal ordnance, a week seldom passed in those turbulent times without his being engaged on the king's service. A smart bonnet of blue velvet, adorned by a single feather, by its elegant slouch gave a grace to the contour of his head; while a short mantle of the same material, lined with white satin, and furred, as usual, with miniver, waved from his left shoulder. His trunk breeches were also of white satin, and slashed with red; his doublet was cloth-of-gold, and, blazing in the sunlight, rivalled his magnificent baldrick, which, like his bugle-horn, sword, and dagger, was studded with precious stones. No knight present, not even the king himself, surpassed the master of the ordnance in the splendour of attire, the caparisons of his horse, or the grace with which he managed it; and yet poor Sir Roland, though the last

representative of the Viponts of Fifeshire (the Scoto-Norman barons of Aberdour), possessed not one acre of land, and, soldier-like, carried all his riches about him.

His whole features beamed with joy and ardour, as he raised his eyes to the Ashkirk balcony; his sunburned cheek grew crimson, and his heart bounded with delight. Jane trembled as she smiled, and grew pale (for, as I have said elsewhere, she grew pale when other girls would have blushed). Many months had elapsed since they had looked on each other's beaming faces, and a volume of happiness and recognition was exchanged in their mutual glances.

"Brave Vipont!" exclaimed the old countess, with something of a mother's ardour, as she looked after him, "of a verity, there are few more noble among our Scottish knights. How unfortunate that he is such a minion to the will of a pampered king!"

"Minion, good mother!" said Jane, faintly.

"I said minion, child; and I now say slave! Didst thou not see how covertly he bowed to us, and then only when the king looked another way? A proper squire, by our Lady! and didst thou not mark how James frowned when first he saw us, nor bowed——"

"Until I smiled on him," said Jane, playfully.

"Naughty little varlet, methought 'twas when *I* smiled," said Alison Home, gaily, as she kissed her beautiful friend.

"Poor Vipont!" continued the countess, "he dreads the loss of thy love, Jane, on one hand, and of the king's favour on the other. But for this paltry manoeuvring, child, thou hadst been the lady of his heart a year ago."