BOOK VII.

The Age of Secular Interests.

CHAPTER I.

WILLIAM AND MARY, 1689—1694.

WILLIAM, 1689—1702.

I. Re-establishment of Presbyterianism, 1689—1690.

From the Reformation to the Revolution, considerations of religious creed and church government had been the determining factors in the history of the Scottish people. With the Revolution we enter on a period the impelling forces of which mark it clearly off from all preceding stages of the national development. Questions of the divine origin of the various forms of church polity still continue to be favourite subjects of controversy, but they no longer determine public policy; henceforward it is on the simple ground of expediency that successive Governments deal with ecclesiastical questions. More and more the nation becomes preoccupied with interests which involve a transformation of its aims and ideals. By the Revolution Scotland was placed in new relations with the world at large, which at once carried her out of herself and impelled her into energetic rivalry with other nations. Economic interests now over-ride

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questions of theology, and the nation expends its enthusiasm not over any renewal of the Covenants but over a commercial enterprise the object of which is mere material prosperity. From the sharpness of its contrast with the period between the Reformation and the Revolution, the period now before us may be distinctively designated the age of secular interests.

The Revolution gave William no such commanding position in Scotland as the Restoration had given to Charles II. Though with varying degrees of cordiality, all classes of the country had welcomed Charles to the throne of his fathers. Strong in this support, he was enabled at the outset of his reign to impose a government on the country which reduced the Parliament to a "Baron Court," and made the Privy Council the all-powerful instrument of his will. Very different were the conditions under which William undertook the administration of the kingdom. Two or three excepted, there was not a great Scottish noble on whose fidelity he could depend; and the majority of the lesser barons and gentry were his equally dubious subjects. He had likewise to reckon on the persistent opposition of the Episcopalian clergy. In England the great majority of national churchmen had welcomed the Revolution, secure in the popular support which would leave William no choice but to continue the existing Establishment. In Scotland the Episcopal church set up by Charles II had no such popular feeling behind it, and from the very conditions under which William became King of Scotland it might seem that he must be the necessary instrument of its doom. As far as circumstances would permit, William did his best to conciliate the Episcopalian section of his subjects, but no terms he could offer could make up for what they had lost, and to the end they regarded him as an unwelcome usurper who had sacrificed them to the exigencies of his position. It was on the main body of the Presbyterians that the stability of William's throne depended, yet there were special circumstances connected with the Presbyterians that

seriously affected the value of their support. During the recent reigns the higher nobility had as a body been alienated from Presbytery; and, as the past history of the country had shown, it was only when headed by the nobility that Presbytery had been able to display its full strength. Moreover, the old fatal divisions still cleft Presbyterianism in twain. The Cameronians demanded a religious settlement which William could not have granted without alienating every other section of his subjects; and, disappointed in what for them was to have been the chief result of the Revolution, they refused to act in concert with their brother Presbyterians. If opinion was thus divided in the Lowlands, the disposition of the Highlands was still less satisfactory for William. In the Highlands actual rebellion broke out against his government; and during every year of his reign there was the possibility of renewed revolt. To these sources of weakness within his kingdom has to be added the menace of invasion in the interest of the exiled King—a menace which kept permanently alive every element hostile to William. In truth, what Viscount Dundee wrote to a correspondent, while William's first Scottish Parliament was sitting, expressed a general feeling which influenced men's minds in all their relations to the Revolution settlement. "I am sorry your Lordship should be so far abused as to think that there is any shadow of appearance of stability in this new structure of government these men have framed to themselves[1]."

It was under these conditions that William's first Scottish Parliament met on June 5th, 1689. Before it met he had already appointed his Privy Council —the first act that showed that he meant to take a firm stand on his prerogative. By the arrangement now made, there was to be no English section of the Council sitting in London such as had existed since James I had migrated to England. As Secretary, William chose Lord Melville, a moderate Presbyterian, who in the late reign had been driven to seek refuge 1689

[1] *Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse* (Ban. Club), p. 70.

in Holland; and it gave rise to some dissatisfaction that he retained the Secretary in London—an arrangement which in the case of Lauderdale had made Charles II the absolute master of the Council[1]. During the reign of William, however, the Privy Council was to play no such important part as in the reign of his immediate predecessors. It was in open Parliament that every important measure was to be discussed; and, as was speedily to be proved, a Scottish Parliament was not to be the docile instrument it had been in the hands of the later Stewarts.

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[1] *State Tracts of the Reign of William III* (1707), Vol. III. 473.
[2] *Leven and Melville Papers* (Ban. Club), pp. 21, 78.

in the assertion of the dispensing power—an action from which even Sir George Mackenzie had shrunk. Thus identified with the most flagrant of all the late King's political offences, Dalrymple was an object of detestation to all who had heartily sought the Revolution. Yet the event proved that William did not err in choosing him as his chief Scottish minister. Only a man with the special gifts of Dalrymple—courage, ready speech, and a cold, clear, and large intelligence—could have held the balance between the contending parties that strove each for its own interests in the impending settlement of Church and State.

The Parliament had no sooner sat than Dalrymple became aware that all his powers would be tasked to maintain the degree of authority which William meant to claim as his right. There were three classes of members on whose opposition he had to reckon. There were those of Jacobite sympathies whose sole aim was to make as much mischief as possible for the new Government, and there were ardent Whigs who wished to draw profit from the Revolution by curtailing the prerogative and enlarging the privileges of Parliament. Lastly there was a section of dissatisfied politicians who were ready to identify themselves with Jacobite or Whig, if only they might have their revenge on those whom they considered their successful rivals. Chief among these malcontents was Sir James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, who had been one of the three Commissioners sent to offer the Crown to William, and who had looked for the office of Secretary which had been given to Melville. Under the leadership of Montgomery a systematic Opposition, known as the Club or the Country party, was organised against the Government. Its abettors regularly met in a neighbouring tavern to prepare their bills and to concert their tactics. Their opposition took two forms—a personal attack on the Crown officials, and a protest against what were declared to be infringements of the constitution. The dispute regarding the constitution turned on

the old controversy concerning the Lords of the Articles. Under the last Stewarts the grievance against these Lords had been that, as the nominees of the Crown, and with the powers that were at their disposal, they were virtually the dictators of the Estates. In his instructions to Dalrymple William had proposed a method of election that was meant to remedy this grievance. To make the Committee representative it was to consist of thirty-three members instead of twenty-four, the two Estates (the clergy being now expelled) each to choose eleven as representing the interests of the Crown; and the Officers of State were to be added as supernumeraries without election[1]. The Opposition refused to accept the proposal as an adequate remedy, and demanded the abolition of the system as a derogation from the dignity and the privileges of Parliament[2].

Such being the temper of the Estates, it was in the teeth of persistent opposition that the Government carried the measures with which it had been entrusted. Paramount among the questions that absorbed the public mind was the question of the settlement of the state religion. It was the recommendation of William that Presbytery should be restored if it found the strongest support in the nation[3]. But even among the three persons who represented his authority in Scotland there was division of opinion as to the time and the manner in which the settlement should be made. Crawford was eager that Presbytery should be set up at once; Hamilton, as usual, halted between two opinions; and Dalrymple, though favouring Presbytery, was disposed to wait upon events. The measure that was actually passed revealed the weakness or the uncertainty of the Government. Episcopacy was abolished, but Presbyterianism was not put in its

[1] *Acts of Parl. of Scotland*, IX. App. p. 132.
[2] *Ib.* p. 128.—The Government measure was rejected by a majority of ten. *Leven and Melville Papers*, pp. 80—1.
[3] *Leven and Melville Papers*, p. 2.

place—an impotent conclusion which cut off all the hopes of the Episcopalians, and left the Presbyterians with fears as lively as their hopes.

While the Parliament was in session, events were happening on which the fate of the kingdom depended. 1689
On the 13th of June Edinburgh Castle, the only stronghold then held for the exiled King, had been surrendered by its commander, the Duke of Gordon, but a more formidable champion than Gordon had raised the standard of James. When Claverhouse left the Convention in March, he retired to his place of Dudhope near Dundee; but the seizure of a letter written by James's minister, Melfort, convinced those now in authority that he could not be safely left at large[1]. Cited to appear and answer for his loyalty, he refused to obey the summons, and, on an attempt being made to surprise him, he took refuge in the depths of the Highlands. Fortune had now brought him precisely the occasion he could have wished for the display of his special gifts of mind and character. To the cause of James he was bound alike by instinct and interest, and he could now do that cause more heroic service than by exacting religious tests at the muzzle of the hagbut. He found ready to his hand the same support which his kinsman Montrose had turned to such good account in the service of his master. A numerous group of Highland chiefs were now as eager to draw the sword for James as they had been for his father Charles. During his commissionership in Scotland, James had made a deliberate effort to cultivate their good will; and, as it happened, there were special circumstances which led them to prefer his cause to that of William. In the late reign many of them had profited by the forfeiture of Argyle; but his son had identified himself with the Revolution, and might soon be in a position to claim his own[2]. The fear

[1] Balcarras, *Somers Tracts*, XI. 511—2.
[2] Mackay, *Memoirs of the War carried on in Scotland and Ireland* (Ban. Club), pp. 6, 18.

of losing their estates in the case of some, therefore, and hereditary feud with Argyle in the case of others, determined a formidable number of chieftains to respond to the call of Dundee when he presented himself as the Lieutenant-General of the exiled King. Among those who joined him were the Captain of Clanranald, Macdonald of Sleat, McLean of Dowart, Stewart of Appin, Cameron of Lochiel, Glengarry, Macdonald of Keppoch, Macneil of Barra, and (name of unhappy associations) Macdonald of Glencoe[1].

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[1] *Letters of Claverhouse*, pp. 40—2.

[2] Archibald, Marquis of Argyle, had raided Atholl in the interest of the Covenant.

crankie about ten in the forenoon. After a halt of two hours he entered the pass, and on emerging from its head took up his position on the slope of a hill with the river Garry in his rear. Before these arrangements were complete, Dundee had appeared and occupied the higher slopes of the same steep ascent. For strategy there was little scope on either side, but from the nature of Dundee's troops the advantage of the ground was all in his favour. Mackay had at his disposal some 3000 foot and four troops of horse—the latter of little avail against such an enemy on a rough and steep mountain-side; Dundee had between 2000 and 3000 foot and one troop of cavalry[1]. For two hours the armies faced each other, and about half-an-hour from sunset the Highlanders rapidly descended the hill. Against their headlong onset the troops of Mackay were at hopeless disadvantage. Many of them were untrained levies, and their weapons had never been proved against such agile foes. Before they could fix their bayonets after discharging their fire[2], their line was broken and three-fourths of their ranks were in hopeless confusion. Two circumstances, however, saved Mackay from utter ruin. True to their inveterate habit the Highlanders no sooner saw themselves masters of the field than they fell upon the spoils; and under cover of night Mackay was able to cross the Garry with the feeble remnant of his host. Still more fortunately for the defeated commander, his victorious antagonist fell in the first onset of the battle; and his death turned a brilliant advantage into a fatal disaster[3].

[1] Dundee had expected several thousand men from Ireland; those who actually joined him consisted of a ragged band of 300, led by an officer named Cannon. The numbers on both sides are variously stated.

[2] The bayonets then in use were *bayonets-à-manche*, the handles of which were stuck into the muzzle of the gun. Mackay subsequently introduced the modern method of fixing the bayonet (*Memoirs*, p. 52).

[3] Mackay says that the enemy lost six to his one in the field (p. 59). The clans lost about 600 men.

The first rumours of Killiecrankie bore only the news of Dundee's decisive victory; and the alarm of William's supporters proved how seriously they regarded the mischance. It was equally a tribute to the victor that the announcement of his death removed all apprehensions of immediate danger. The events of the next few weeks proved that with Dundee had perished every chance of James in Scotland. Four days after the fight at Killiecrankie a body of Highlanders in Perth were surprised by Mackay; and three weeks later there occurred an action in which another hero fell, and in which higher military qualities were displayed than at Killiecrankie. In the first zeal of the Cameronians for the Revolution, with the result of which they were afterwards so miserably disappointed, they were eager to bear a hand in the overthrow of the detested Stewart, and made overtures to the Government for officers and weapons that they might form a regiment of such of their followers as were willing to take military service. To form a regiment from such materials, however, was no easy matter. Their officers must be men of their own way of thinking, and the terms of their service must be such as left them free to fight wherever and whenever they pleased.

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After negotiations, the most singular that ever attended the enlistment of any company of armed men, a regiment of Cameronians was at length embodied[1]. Its nominal head was the Earl of Angus, but its effective commander was his lieutenant, William Cleland. Cleland, it was said, was the only one among his enemies of whom Dundee was afraid, and he had at least reason to respect him as an equal foe. Cleland, though then only in his twentieth year, had fought with the insurgents at Drumclog, and it was mainly due to his precocious talent that Claverhouse and his dragoons had been

[1] M. Shields, *Faithful Contendings Displayed* (Edit. 1780), pp. 394 et seq.