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LORD MACAULAY AND THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE.

OUR last number contained some remarks on the freedom of hand with which Lord Macaulay flings the darkest colours on his canvass, in his portrait of England's most famous Whig general. By way of contrast rather than relief, we propose in the following pages to show with how light a touch he can spread a sparkling and transparent glaze over the most repulsive features of the great Whig king.

There is a popular superstition, that the blood of a murdered man impresses an indelible mark on the spot where it falls. The stains on the staircase at Holyrood and the floor of the dressing-room at Staunton Harold, are still pointed out to hundreds of half-believing gazers. There is a moral truth at the foundation of this belief. The place in which a great crime has been committed can never be seen or named without calling up the memory of that crime. The mean purposes to which they have been applied cannot efface the association which binds the names of Smithfield, and of the marketplace of Rouen, up in our minds with the martyrs of religion and patriotism; and no time can disconnect the name of Glencoe from the memory of an outrage so revolting, that, after the

lapse of a century and a half, the blood curdles at it as if it were a deed of yesterday.

The story of the slaughter of M'Ian of Glencoe and his tribe, often as it has been repeated, never palls in interest. It has lately been told by the greatest word-painter of the age, whose steps it would be presumption to follow, and from whom quotation is supererogatory, as every one is familiar with his eloquent narrative. Were that narrative as trustworthy as it is eloquent, we should only have the pleasant duty of joining in the general tribute of applause, instead of asking our readers to follow us through the comparatively dry details which appear to us necessary to place the actors in that tragedy in their true light.

We have read Lord Macaulay's account of the Massacre of Glencoe over and over again, each time with increased admiration of the marvellous variety of his powers. The most skilful advocate never framed an argument so subtle to avert punishment from the guilty; no labyrinth constructed to conceal the evidence of crime, ever was so intricate, as the story which Lord Macaulay has woven to shield William from the obloquy which attaches to his name for his share in

that dark transaction. The mind is insensibly drawn away from the issue; indignation is aroused, to be directed successively at one subordinate agent after another, until the great and principal offender has time to escape, and the full torrent of invective bursts on the guilty and miserable head of one accomplice.

The brilliancy of the narrative reminds us of the startling effects of those scenic representations which have given a distinctive character to the Adelphi Theatre. At the end of the piece the Demon stands confessed in the person of the Master of Stair; a thunderbolt whizzes across the stage, and the Monster falls in a blaze of red fire; Lord Macaulay, in the garb of the Muse of History, leads King William to the foot-lights to receive absolution at the hands of the pit, and we experience a confused sensation mixed up of Bishop Burnet and the Flying Dutchman, Lord Macaulay's brilliant periods, Madame Celeste's more brilliant eyes, her silvery ringing voice, and her graceful figure most bewitchingly arrayed in the Knickerbockers of Vanderdecken.

It is essential to a correct judgment upon the case to understand distinctly the relation in which the Glencoe men stood to the government of William. The terms rebels, marauders, thieves, banditti, murderers, have been so freely and so fraudulently used by historians and political partisans, from the close of the seventeenth century down even to our own day, and such is the effect of positive, reckless, and often-repeated assertion, that some of our readers may be disposed to smile incredulously when we state, as we do most positively, that none of these terms are justly applicable to the Macdonalds of Glencoe at the time of the massacre.

In the summer of 1691, the war which was being vigorously carried on in Ireland was smouldering but not extinguished in Scotland. The clans remained faithful to James, but a year had elapsed since they had made any overt demonstration in his favour. Colonel Hill, who com-

manded William's garrison at Inverlochy, writing on the 12th of May 1691, says, "The people hereabouts have robbed none all this winter, but have been very peaceable and civil."\* On the 3d of June he writes to the Earl of Melville, "We are at present as peaceable hereabouts as ever."† On the 29th of July the Privy Council report that "the Highland rebels have of late been very peaceable, acting no hostilities."‡ On the 22d of August, Colonel Hill writes from Fort-William to Lord Raith, "This acquaints your Lordship that we are here still in the same peaceable condition that we have been for more than a year past."§ The chiefs, indeed, only awaited the arrival of permission from St. Germain to enable them to lay down their arms without blemish to their honour or taint upon their fidelity.

On the 30th of June, a suspension of arms was agreed upon, and a truce was entered into in the following terms, between the commander of the forces of James, and the Earl of Breadalbane on behalf of William:—

"We, Major-General Buchan, Brigadier, and Sir Geo. Borelay, general officers of King James the Seventh his forces within the kingdom of Scotland, to testify our aversion of shedding Christian blood, and y<sup>t</sup> we design to appear good Scotsmen, and to wish y<sup>t</sup> this nation may be restored to its wonted and happy peace, doe agree and consent to a forebearance of all acts of hostilitie and depreda<sup>s</sup> to be committed upon the subjects of this nation or England, until the first day of October next; providing that there be no acts of hostility or depreda<sup>s</sup> committed upon any of the King's subjects, who have been or are engaged in his service, under our command, either by sea or land; we having given all necessary orders to such as are under our command to forbear acts of hostilitie, by sea or land, until the afores<sup>d</sup> tyme.—Subscribed at Achallader y<sup>e</sup> 30th June 1691.

"Whereas the chieftains of clans have given bonds not to commit acts of hostilitie or depreda<sup>s</sup> before the first day of October next, upon the conditions contained in the afores<sup>d</sup> bonds; and in regard that the officers sent by King James to command the a<sup>s</sup> chieftains have by one

\* HILL to TARBAT, *Highland Papers*, Maitland Club.

† *Leven and Melville Papers*, p. 617.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*, p. 648.

unanimous consent in their council of war agreed to the *s<sup>d</sup>* forbearance: Therefore I, as having warrant from King William and Queen Mary to treat with the foresaid Highlanders concerning the peace of the kingdom, doe hereby certify y<sup>t</sup> the *s<sup>d</sup>* officers and chieftains have signed a forbearance of acts of hostilitie and depreda<sup>s</sup> till the first of October next. Wherefore it's most necessary, just, and reasonable, y<sup>t</sup> noe acts of hostility by sea or land or depreda<sup>s</sup> be committed upon the *s<sup>d</sup>* officers, or any of their party whom they doe command, or upon the chieftains, or their kinsmen, friends, tenants, or followers, till the for<sup>d</sup> first day of October.—Subscribed at Achallader the 30th day of June 1691.—BRAIDALBINK.\*

This document is conclusive that those who were in arms for James in Scotland were legitimate belligerents, enemies who might lawfully be shot down in battle, but who might treat and be treated with, and who were entitled to all those rights which the laws of nations award to an enemy.

The treaty of Limerick was signed on the 3d of October in the same year. It will be admitted by every one, that to have shot or hanged Sarsfield as a rebel, would have been an outrage as much on the laws of war as on those of humanity. It served the interests of those who desired to shield the perpetrators of an infamous crime from opprobrium, to call Macdonald of Glencoe a rebel. He was as much a rebel as Sarsfield was, and no more; in both cases the distinction is broad and clear—so broad and clear, that we should have supposed it impossible for any one honestly to be blind to it. Neither Sarsfield nor Glencoe had ever owned the authority of William. As long as James was in arms to defend his crown, as long as subjects who had never owned any other allegiance flocked round his standard, so long were those subjects entitled to all the rights which the laws of war concede to enemies.

Cotemporaneously with the signature of the treaty we have referred to, negotiations for a permanent pacification were going on. Colonel Hill, in one of the letters we have already quoted, says, "The Appin and Glencoe men have desired they may go in to my Lord Argyll, because he is their superior, and I have set them a short day to do it."† The Privy Council in the next month report that the Highlands had of late been very peaceable, that many had accepted the oath from Colonel Hill, "never to rise in arms against their Majesties or the Government,"‡ and that others were living quietly and peaceably.

We have been thus precise in our statement of the position of the Highland adherents of James during the summer and autumn of 1691 for the purpose of showing, by the best possible testimony—that of the civil and military servants of William—that there was nothing to provoke or excuse any measure of severity; that the war, though not extinguished, was suspended, and that the conduct of the Highlanders, considering the unsettled state of the country, was singularly peaceful and orderly.

Immediately after the signature of the treaty, the Earl of Breadalbane invited the heads of the clans to a meeting at Achallader, with the view of arranging a final cessation of hostilities.§ Amongst others, Glencoe was invited, and obeyed the summons. Lord Macaulay attempts with great ingenuity to depreciate the position held by Glencoe amongst his brother chiefs. It is true that the fighting men who owned his command did not exceed one-fourth of the number of those who, at the summons of the fiery cross, flocked together to obey the behests of Lochiel or Glengarry; but he commanded half as many as Keppoch, and a number equal to the haughty chief of Barra, who boasted that he was the fourteenth Roderick M'Neill

\* *Culloden Papers*, p. 18.

† *Leven and Melville Papers*, p. 607, June 1691.

‡ *Ibid.*, July 29, 1691.

§ Achallader was a house of the Earl of Breadalbane, situate near the north-eastern end of Loch Tullich, in the neighbourhood of the shooting-ledge of the present Marquis, and of the famous deer forest of the Black Mount. It was on the opposite side of the lake to the present Inn of Inveroran, a place probably well known to many of our readers.

who had reigned in uninterrupted succession from father to son over his island kingdom, and who handed down that patriarchal sway to our own time.\*

Much of the influence of Glencoe was due to his personal character. "He was a person of great integrity, honour, good nature, and courage. He was strong, active, and of the largest size; much loved by his neighbours, and blameless in his conduct."† Such is the character of Glencoe, drawn by the biographer of Lochiel.

It is by no means improbable, however, that amongst the tribe of which he was the head there were some who felt little scruple in possessing themselves of the flocks and herds of hostile clans, and who, as Lord Macaulay remarks, as little thought themselves thieves for doing so as "the Raleighs and Drakes considered themselves thieves when they divided the cargoes of Spanish galleons."‡

Fends had been of frequent occurrence between the Glencoe men and the neighbouring clansmen of Breadalbane. An ancient antipathy, deepened by political differences, existed between the Macdonalds and that branch of the Campbells. Breadalbane, either forgetful for the moment of the important business he

had in hand, or, which appears more probable, desirous to pick a quarrel and prevent an amicable settlement with one whom he hoped to be able to crush, if he could find a plausible excuse for doing so, reproached Glencoe "about some cows that the Earl alleged were stolen from his men by Glencoe's men."§ Glencoe left Achallader in anger, as Breadalbane probably intended he should, and returned with his two sons to his patriarchal home. He knew the malice of Breadalbane; but the truce was not to expire until October, and till then, at least, he and those for whose safety he was responsible were secure.

Lord Macaulay, with some philological assumption, introduces his description of the glen by telling his readers that "in the Gaelic tongue 'Glencoe' signifies the Glen of Weeping." It signifies no such thing. According to the simplest and most apparent derivation, it signifies the Glen of the Dogs, "con" being the genitive plural of "cù," a dog. Had Lord Macaulay's knowledge of Gaelic been sufficient to tell him this, he would probably have urged it as conclusive proof of the estimation in which the inhabitants were held. But in fact the name signifies no more than the Valley of the Conn or

\* The following document shows the proportionate strength of the clans at this time:—

"We, Lord James Murray, Pat. Stewart of Ballechan, Sir John M'Lean, Sir Donald M'Donald, Sir Ewen Cameron, Glengarrrie, Benbecula, Sir Alexander M'Lean Appin, Eneveray, Keppoch, Glencoe, Strowan, Calochele, Lieut. Col. M'Gregor, Bara, Larg, M'Naughton, do hereby bind and oblige ourselves, for his Majesty's service, and our own safeties to meet at the day of Sept. next, and bring along with us fencible men, that is to say—

|   |     |                                 |     |
|---|-----|---------------------------------|-----|
| Lord James Murray and }<br>Ballechan, . . . . . |     | Eneveray, . . . . .             | 100 |
| Sir John M'Lean, . . . . .                      | 200 | Keppoch, . . . . .              | 100 |
| Sir Donald M'Donald, . . . . .                  | 200 | Lieut. Col. M'Gregor, . . . . . | 100 |
| Sir Ewen Cameron, . . . . .                     | 200 | Calochele, . . . . .            | 50  |
| Glengarrrie, . . . . .                          | 200 | Strowan, . . . . .              | 60  |
| Benbecula, . . . . .                            | 200 | Bara, . . . . .                 | 50  |
| Sir Alex. M'Lean, . . . . .                     | 100 | Glencoe, . . . . .              | 50  |
| Appin, . . . . .                                | 100 | M'Naughton, . . . . .           | 50  |
|   |     | Larg, . . . . .                 | 50  |

But in case any of the rebels shall assault or attack any of the above-named persons betwixt the date hereof, and the first day of rendezvous, we do all solemnly promise to assist one another to the utmost of our power,—as witness these presents signed by us, at the Castle of Blair, the 24th Aug. 1689." (Here follow the signatures.)—*Brown's History of the Clans*, vol. ii. p. 183.

† *Memoirs of Lochiel*, 321.

‡ Vol. iii. p. 307.

§ See the very plain and simple account given in the depositions of John and Alexander M'Inn, 13 *State Trials*, p. 897; and Lord Macaulay's picturesque paraphrase, vol. iv. p. 193.

Cona,\* that being the name which the stream flowing through it bears in common with many other rivers in Scotland, derived either from the Scotch fir, or from the common moss which covers the valley, both of which bear the name of "cona." The word which signifies lamentation or weeping, is the unmanageable compound of letters "caoidh," which probably would be quite as great an enigma to Lord Macaulay as the mystical M.O. A.I. was to Malvolio.

His picture of Glencoe is painted with the historian's usual brilliancy, and his usual fidelity. It bears the same relation to the place itself as Mr. Charles Kean's scenery at the Princess's Theatre does to Harfleur, Agincourt, or Eastcheap. We have seen the glen in the extremes of weather; we have been drenched and scorched in it. We have wrung rivers out of our plaid, and we have knelt down to suck up through parched lips the tiny rivalets that trickled over the rocks. We therefore consider ourselves entitled to criticise Lord Macaulay's description.

Lord Macaulay says: "In truth, that pass is the most dreary and melancholy of all Scottish passes—the very valley of the shadow of death. . . . Mile after mile the traveller looks in vain for the smoke of one hut, for one human form wrapped in a plaid, and listens in vain for the bark of a shepherd's dog or the bleat of a lamb: the only sound that indicates life is the faint cry of a bird of prey from some storm-beaten pinnacle of rock."† The reader must not suppose that this exaggerated description of the desolation of Glencoe is without an object, or that it is due only to the pleasure which Lord Macaulay feels in soaring on the powerful wings of his imagination. We shall presently see that in the most studied and ingenious manner he seeks to diminish the feeling of sympathy for the Macdonalds, by showing that they were "banditti," "thieves," "robbers," "freebooters," "ruffians," "marauders who in any well-governed country would have been hanged thirty years be-

fore,"‡ and by this means gradually to lead to the conclusion that it was the cruelty and treachery which accompanied the execution of the order for their "extirpation" which constitutes the crime, and not the giving of the order itself.

The Macdonalds, he infers, *must* have been thieves—honest men could not have existed in such a wilderness; and accordingly in the next page he says that "the wilderness itself was valued on account of the shelter which it afforded to the plunderer and his plunder." Now, from the entrance to the glen down to its termination at the village of Invercoo is about six miles, and in this distance there is at least one farmhouse—if our memory serves us correctly, there are two, and several cottages; so that if Lord Macaulay looked in vain for the smoke of a hut, it must have been because at that moment the fires were not lighted. As to not hearing the bark of a dog or the bleat of a lamb, at our last visit we were almost deafened by both, for Glencoe is a sheep-walk occupied by that well-known sportsman and agriculturist, Mr. Campbell of Monzie, one of whose deer-forests it immediately adjoins, and who, on the occasion we refer to, was superintending in person the gathering of his flocks from the mountains, preparatory to starting for Falkirk. At the lower end (the scene of the massacre) the glen expands, and forms a considerable plain of arable and pasture land, where the reapers were busy gathering in the harvest in the fields round the village, which still stands surrounded by flourishing trees on the same spot where it stood in 1692, and where it is marked under the name of Innercoan upon Visscher's map of Scotland, published at Amsterdam in 1700,—pretty good proof that it was not then a very inconsiderable place. A mile or two farther on, Loch Leven glittered in the setting sun, round the island burial-place of the M'ians, where the murdered chieftain sleeps with his fathers. The chink of hammers sounded from the busy slate-

\* See Sir JOHN SINCLAIR'S *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 485.

† Vol. iv. p. 191.

‡ Vol. iv. p. 203.

quarries of Mr. Stewart of Ballachulish, and in the distance the wood of Lettermore (the scene of another foul outrage,) stretched forward toward the broad waters of the Linnhe Loch.

If Lord Macaulay had said that the Pass of Glencoe excels all others in Scotland in stern beauty, he would, as far as our knowledge goes, have said what was perfectly correct; but we know many passes far more "desolate and melancholy," none grander, but many "sadder" and "more awful." The pass from Loch Kishorn to Applecross is more awful and more desolate; the head of Loch Torridon is more dreary; and even Glen Rosa in Arran is more destitute of the signs of human habitation. Many others will occur to the mind of any one whose steps have wandered out of the beaten track of cockney tourists. Such is Glencoe at the present day. It was described not long after the massacre by the author of the *Memoirs of Sir Eran Cameron of Lochiel* in the following words:—

"The country of Glencoe is, as it were, the mouth or inlet into Lochaber from the south, and the inhabitants are the first we meet with that appeared unanimously for King James. They are separated from Breadalbane on the south by a large desert, and from Lochaber by an arm of the sea on the north; on the east and west it is covered by high, rugged, and rocky mountains, almost perpendicular, rising like a wall on each side of a beautiful valley, where the inhabitants reside."\*

Just midway between the time of the massacre and the present day, we have the testimony of another perfectly competent witness to its state. Mrs. Grant of Laggan, at that time a girl of nineteen, was residing with her father, who was barrack-master at Fort-Augustus. She was distantly connected with the family of Glencoe, and the granddaughters of the chief himself of that day, who had been carried off to the hills by his nurse on the night of the massacre, when he was an infant of two years old, had been her schoolfellows.

She writes in May 1773, from Fort-William, speaks of an invitation she had received from her schoolfellow to visit her at Glencoe, and then proceeds as follows:—

"Glencoe she has often described to me as very singular in its appearance and situation;—a glen so narrow, so warm, so fertile, so overhung by mountains which seem to meet above you—with sides so shrubby and woody!—the haunt of roes and numberless small birds.

"They told me it was unequalled for the chorus of 'wood-notes wild' that resounded from every side. The sea is so near that its roar is heard and its productions abound; it was always accounted (for its narrow bounds) a place of great plenty and security." †

Lord Macaulay must have seen this description, for he alludes to the letter in a contemptuous note, ‡ in which he says that Mrs. Grant's account of the massacre is "grossly incorrect," § and that she makes a mistake of two years as to the date. Mrs. Grant's account of the massacre is just what we might expect from a girl deeply imbued with the Ossianic furor, writing from tradition without even the pretence of historical accuracy. It is curious, however, that Lord Macaulay imports into his History the most improbable incident that she relates—namely, that "the hereditary bard of the tribe took his seat on a rock which overhung the place of slaughter, and poured forth a long lament over his murdered brethren and his desolate home." Mrs. Grant's bard bears too evident a likeness to the gentleman of the same profession who sat

"On a rock, whose haughty brow  
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming  
flood,"

and committed suicide in its "roaring tide," to be acknowledged as an historical personage. Her mistake as to time, which Lord Macaulay condemns so harshly, is a mistake of six weeks—not, as he asserts, of two years. She says the massacre took place during the festivities of Christmas: it occurred, in fact, on the

\* *Memoirs of Lochiel*, Maitland Club, p. 315.

† *Letters from the Mountains*, vol. i. p. 50.

‡ Vol. iv. p. 213.

§ Vol. iv. p. 213.



13th of February. Notwithstanding these inaccuracies, Mrs. Grant is a perfectly good witness as to what the state of the glen was in her time; and any one who visits it now, unless he is a cockney boxed up inside the "Rob Roy," somnolent from the effect of the coach dinner at Tyn-drum, or unaccustomed potations of toddy at King's House, will see much to confirm the correctness of her description. Two mistakes we must guard him against. The site of the house of Achtriaten, about half-way down the glen, is pointed out by some as the scene of the massacre. Achtriaten himself was murdered—not, however, in his own house, but in that of his brother at Auchnaion.\* Others, better informed as to the localities, state that a ruined gable, still standing, formed part of Glencoe's house: it very possibly occupies the same site as the house of the chief, which was burned on the night of the massacre; but the date and monogram, upon a stone inserted under one of the windows, show that it was probably the house of John Macdonald, the eldest son and successor of the chief, rebuilt on his return to the glen after his father's murder.



We copied the inscription faithfully, as it appeared in 1857.

We must now leave Glencoe for the present in his mountain home, and Breadalbane proceeding with his negotiations with the other chiefs. Another actor comes upon the stage—the Master of Stair—according to Lord Macaulay, "the most politic, the most eloquent, the most powerful of Scottish statesmen," "the original author of the massacre," the

"single mind" from whom all the "numerous instruments employed in the work of death," "directly or indirectly, received their impulse," the "one offender who towered high above the crowd of offenders, pre-eminent in parts, knowledge, rank, and power;" the "one victim demanded by justice in return for many victims immolated by treachery."† Such is Lord Macaulay's judgment. We are not about to dispute the justice of the sentence which consigns the Master of Stair to eternal execration; but it is the duty of the historian to mete out with an unsparing hand the judgment of posterity to all; and it is not by heaping upon one head the punishment due to many that the claims of justice are satisfied.

It is difficult, in dealing with the memory of a man whose crimes excite such just indignation as do those committed by the Master of Stair, to gird one's-self up to the duty of saying, that of part of that which he has been charged with he was not guilty. Black as he was, he was not so black as he has been painted. Lord Macaulay dooms him from the first to be the Demon of the piece. He is the Iago of the tragedy, "more deep damned than Prince Lucifer," no "fiend in hell so ugly;" and accordingly Lord Macaulay suppresses every particle of evidence which tends in the slightest degree to lighten the load of guilt. It is not pleasant to discharge the duty of devil's advocate, but we shall lay this evidence before the reader: when all is done, the Master of Stair will remain quite black enough to satisfy any moderate amateur of villains.

Lord Macaulay introduces him to the reader in the following passage:—

"The Master of Stair was one of the first men of his time, a jurist, a statesman, a fine scholar, an eloquent orator. His polished manners and lively conversation were the delight of aristocratic societies; and none who met him in such societies would have thought it possible that he could bear the chief part in any atrocious crime. His political principles were lax, yet not more lax than those of most Scotch politicians of that age. Cruelty had never been imputed

\* *Report*, p. 21.

† MACAULAY, vol. iv. p. 198, 578, 580.

to him. Those who most disliked him did him the justice to own that, where his schemes of policy were not concerned, he was a very good-natured man. There is not the slightest reason to believe that he gained a single pound Scots by the act which has covered his name with infamy. He had no personal reason to wish the Glencoe men ill. There had been no feud between them and his family. His property lay in a district where their tartan was never seen. Yet he hated them with a hatred as fierce and implacable as if they had laid waste his fields, burned his mansion, murdered his child in the cradle." . . . —(Vol. iv. p. 198.)

"He was well read in history, and doubtless knew how great rulers had, in his own and other countries, dealt with such banditti. He doubtless knew with what energy and what severity James the Fifth had put down the moss-troopers of the Border; how the chief of Henderland had been hung over the gate of the castle in which he had prepared a banquet for the king; how John Armstrong and his thirty-six horsemen, when they came forth to welcome their sovereign, had scarcely been allowed time to say a single prayer before they were all tied up and turned off. Nor probably was the Secretary ignorant of the means by which Sixtus the Fifth had cleared the ecclesiastical state of outlaws. The eulogists of that great pontiff tell us that there was one formidable gang which could not be dislodged from a stronghold among the Apennines. Beasts of burden were therefore loaded with poisoned food and wine, and sent by a road which ran close to the fastness. The robbers sallied forth, seized the prey, feasted and died; and the pious old pope exulted greatly when he heard that the corpses of thirty ruffians, who had been the terror of many peaceful villages, had been found lying among the mules and packages. The plans of the Master of Stair were conceived in the spirit of James and of Sixtus; and the rebellion of the mountaineers furnished what seemed to be an excellent opportunity for carrying those plans into effect. Mere rebellion, indeed, he could have easily pardoned. On Jacobites, as Jacobites, he never showed any inclination

to bear hard. He hated the Highlanders, not as enemies of this or that dynasty, but as enemies of law, of industry, and of trade. In his private correspondence he applied to them the short and terrible form of words in which the implacable Roman pronounced the doom of Carthage. His project was no less than this, that the whole hill-country from sea to sea, and the neighbouring islands, should be wasted with fire and sword; that the Camerons, the Macleans, and all the branches of the race of Macdonalds, should be rooted out. He therefore looked with no friendly eye on schemes of reconciliation, and, while others were hoping that a little money would set everything right, hinted very intelligibly his opinion that whatever money was to be laid out on the clans would be best laid out in the form of bullets and bayonets. To the last moment he continued to flatter himself that the rebels would be obstinate, and would thus furnish him with a plea for accomplishing that great social revolution on which his heart was set. The letter is still extant in which he directed the commander of the forces in Scotland how to act, if the Jacobite chiefs should not come in before the end of December. There is something strangely terrible in the calmness and conciseness with which the instructions were given. 'Your troops will destroy entirely the country of Lochaber, Lochell's lands, Keppoch's, Glengarry's, and Glencoe's. Your power shall be large enough. I hope the soldiers will not trouble the Government with prisoners.'"—(Vol. iv. p. 202.)

"His design was to butcher the whole race of thieves—the whole damnable race. Such was the language in which his hatred vented itself. He studied the geography of the wild country which surrounded Glencoe, and made his arrangements with infernal skill. If possible, the blow must be quick, and crushing, and altogether unexpected. But if Maclean should apprehend danger, and should attempt to take refuge in the territories of his neighbours, he must find every road barred. The pass of Rannoch must be secured. The Laird of Weems, who was powerful in Strath Tay, must be told that, if he

\* That the plan originally framed by the Master of Stair was such as I have represented it, is clear from parts of his letters which are quoted in the report of 1695; and from his letters to Breadalbane of October 27, December 2, and December 3, 1691. Of these letters to Breadalbane, the last two are in Dalrymple's Appendix. The first is in the appendix to the first volume of Mr. Burton's valuable *History of Scotland*. "It appeared," says Burnett (ii. 157), "that a black design was laid, not only to cut off the men of Glencoe, but a great many more clans, reckoned to be in all above six thousand persons."—*Note by Lord Macaulay.*

harbours the outlaws, he does so at his peril. Breadalbane promised to cut off the retreat of the fugitives on one side, MacCallum More on another. It was fortunate, the Secretary wrote, that it was winter. This was the time to maul the wretches. The nights were so long, the mountain-tops so cold and stormy, that even the hardiest men could not long bear exposure to the open air without a roof or a spark of fire. That the women and the children could find shelter in the desert was quite impossible. While he wrote thus, no thought that he was committing a great wickedness crossed his mind. He was happy in the approbation of his own conscience. Duty, justice, nay, charity and mercy, were the names under which he disguised his cruelty; nor is it by any means improbable that the disguise imposed upon himself.\*

Much of this brilliant passage is true. But we distinctly deny that the Master of Stair "looked with no friendly eye on schemes of reconciliation." On the contrary, the correspondence which Lord Macaulay suppresses shows distinctly that for months the Master of Stair was most active and urgent in promoting schemes of reconciliation, by negotiation, by threats, by money; and it was not until all these means had failed that he gave in to Breadalbane's "scheme for mauling them,"—a scheme, which Lord Macaulay most unjustifiably attributes not to the Earl, to whom it belongs of right, but to the Master of Stair,† who has quite enough to answer for without bearing any share of other men's crimes.

It was upon the failure of the negotiation that all the tiger broke out in the disposition of the Master of Stair; it was then, and not till then, that he joined in the determination to "extirpate" (for such was the terrible word selected for the order which William signed and counter-signed with his own hand) the whole clan of M'Ian of Glencoe.

In June 1691 the Master of Stair was with William in the Netherlands; from thence he sent the following letter to the Earl of Breadalbane:—

STAIR TO LORD BREADALBANE.  
"From the Camp at Apperhoiz,  
June 25 [15], 1691.

"MY LORD,—I can say nothing to you, All things are as you wish, but I do long to hear from you. By the King's letter to the Council you will see he has stopped all hostilities against the Highlanders till he may hear from you, and that your time be elapsed without coming to some issue, which I do not apprehend, for there will come nothing to them. . . . But if they will be mad, before Lammas, they will repent it; for the army will be allowed to go into the Highlands, which some thirst so much for, and the frigates will attack them; but I have so much confidence in your conduct and capacity to let them see the ground they stand on, that I think these suppositions are vain. I have sent your instructions.—My dear Lord, adieu.†

On the 24th of August he writes again:—

"NENCOUR, Aug. 24. O. S. 1691.

"The more I do consider our affairs, I think it the more necessary that your lordship do with all diligence post from thence,§ and that you write to the clans to meet you at Edinburg, to save your trouble of going further. They have been for some time excluded from that place, so they are feir, and will be fond to come there.¶

STAIR TO BREADALBANE.

"DREKIN, Sept. 30 [30], 1691.

"MY LORD,—I had yours from London signifying that you had not been then despatched, for which I am very uneasy. I spoke immediately to the King, that without money the Highlanders would never do; and there have been so many difficulties in the matter, that a resolution to do, especially in money matters, would not satisfy. The King said they were not presently to receive it, which is true, but that he had ordered it to be delivered out of his treasury, so they need not fear in the least performance; besides, the paper being signed by his majesty's hand for such sums so to be employed, or their equivalent. . . . There wants no endeavours to render you suspicious to the King, but he asked what proof there was for the information† and bid him tell you to go on in your business; the best evidence of sincerity was the bringing that matter quickly to a conclusion. . . . I hope your lord-

\* Vol. iv. p. 206.

§ i. e. from London.

† Ibid.

‡ Dal. Ap., Pt. ii. p. 210.

¶ Dal. Ap., Pt. ii. p. 210.

ship will not only keep them from giving any offence, but bring them to take the allegiance, which they ought to do very cheerfully; for their lives and fortunes they have from their majesties.\*

## STAIR TO BREADALBANE.

LONDON, Nov. 24, 1691.

"MY LORD,—. . . I must say your cousin Locheil hath not been so wise as I thought him, not to mention gratitude; for truly, to gratify your relative, I did comply to let his share be more than was reasonable. There were no pleas betwixt him and Argyle to be bought in, and I well know he, nor Kerpock, nor Appin, cannot lie one night safe in winter from the garrison of Fort-William. I doubt not Glengarry's house will be a better mid-garrison betwixt Inverness and Inverlochy, than ever he will be a good subject to this government. . .

"P.S.—Though Locheil were as he should have been, yet he must to the bargain dispose that moss that lies nearest to Fort-William for a place constantly to provide fuel to that garrison."†

It is impossible to read these letters without perceiving the strong desire, on the part of the Master of Stair, that the Highlands should be pacified, if possible, by means of negotiation. This desire comes out even more strongly in the next letter, mingled with feelings of bitter vexation at the approaching failure of the plans, and threatenings of the storm which was about to burst in consequence of his disappointment.

## STAIR TO BREADALBANE.

LONDON, Dec. 2, 1691.

"MY LORD,—I shall not repeat my thoughts of your doited cousin.‡ I perceive half-sense will play a double game, but it requires solidity to embrace an opportunity, which to him will be lost for ever; and the garrison of Inverlochy is little worth, if he can either sleep in his own bounds, or if he ever be master there. I repent nothing of the plan. . . . Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, Deputy Governor of Inverlochy, is a discreet man; you may make use of him. I should be glad to find, before you get any positive order, that your business is done, for shortly we will conclude a resolution for the winter campaign. . . . I think the clan Donell must be rooted out, and Locheil. Leave the M'Lean's to Argyle. But [for] this,

Leven and Argyle's regiments, with two more, would have been gone to Flanders. Now, all stops, and no more money from England to entertain them. God knows whether the £12,000 sterling had been better employed to settle the Highlands, or to ravage them; but since we will make them desperate, I think we should root them out before they can get that help they depend upon."§

Even then the Master of Stair did not give up all hope. The following letter, written the very next day, contains so curious and valuable a picture of his state of mind that we give it entire:—

## STAIR TO BREADALBANE.

LONDON, December 3, 1691.

"MY LORD,—The last post brought dotal letters from Glengarry, or from his lady and Rosry, upon a message Glengarry had sent to him to Edinburg. This hath furnished him opportunity to discourse the King on all these matters. He tells me he hath vindicated you; only the share that the Macdonalds get is too little, and unequal to your good cousin's] (really that's true); and he would have the money given to Glengarry, and leave Argyle and him to deal for the plea. He thought his share had been only £1000 sterling. I have satisfied the King in these points, that his share is £1500 sterling, and that he nor none of them can get the money if Argyle consent not; for that destroys all that is good in the settlement, which is to take away grounds of hereditary feuds. To be brief, I'll assure you that I shall never consent anybody's meddling shall be so much regarded as to get any of your terms altered. By the next I expect to hear either that these people are come to your hand, or else your scheme for mauling them; for it will not delay. On the next week the officers will be despatched from this, with instructions to garrison Invergarry, and Buchan's regiment will join Leven, which will be force enough; they will have petards and some cannon. I am not changed as to the expediency of doing things by the easiest means and at leisure, but the madness of these people, and their ungratefulness to you, makes me plainly see there is no reckoning on them; but *delenda est Carthago*. Yet who have accepted, and do take the oaths, will be safe, but deserve no kindness;

\* Dal. Ap., Pt. ii. p. 212.

† Dal. Ap., Pt. ii. p. 214.

‡ Locheil.

§ Dal. Ap., Pt. ii. p. 214.

| Locheil.

and even in that case there must be hostages of their nearest relations, for there is no regarding men's words when their interest cannot oblige. Menzies, Glengarry, and all of them have written letters and taken pains to make it believed that all you did was for the interest of King James. Therefore lock on, and you shall be satisfied of your revenge.—Adieu.\*

Two things are clear from this correspondence,—

1st, That up to December the Master of Stair did everything in his power to promote a peaceable and bloodless settlement with the Highland chieftains.

2d, That every step was communicated to William, and that so far from having been, as Burnett and Lord Macaulay represent him,† indifferent and ignorant, he attended to all the minutie of the affair, down even to the distribution of a small sum of money.

Strangely enough, the only two passages in these letters to which Lord Macaulay refers, are the scheme for "mauling," which he attributes to Stair instead of to Breadalbane,‡ and the "words in which the implacable Roman pronounced the doom of Carthage,"§ which he refers to without quoting the sentence in which they occur, and exactly reversing the meaning of the passage. The Master of Stair expresses regret that this must occur, because other means had failed; and on account of the madness and ingratitude of the Highlanders. Lord Macaulay cites it as a proof of his implacable determination to destroy them. A reference to the letter shows at once the sense in which it is used. We know nothing even in Lord Macaulay's History more unfair than the suppression of these letters, Lord Macaulay's knowledge of which is proved by the two instances in which he misquotes them.

We left M'Ian at Glencoe protected from the vindictiveness of Breadalbane by the treaty of the 30th of June.

In August a proclamation was issued by the Government, offering a free indemnity and pardon to all Highlanders who had been in arms, upon their coming in and taking the oath of allegiance before the 1st of January following.¶ Breadalbane's negotiation failed, and he returned to court "to give an account of his diligence and to bring back the money."‡ Such is Burnett's account, and this is a point upon which, from his connection with William, he was likely to be well informed, and (which is of quite equal importance) it is one as to which he does not appear to have had any interest in mistating the facts.

About the end of December, such are the words of the Report, M'Ian\*\* presented himself before Colonel Hill at Inverlochy, and desired that the oath of allegiance should be administered to him. Hill appears to have considered that, as a military officer, he had no power to administer the oath. He, however, urged his going without delay to Sir Colin Campbell of Ardkinlas, the sheriff-depute of Argyle, at Inverary, to whom he gave him a letter urging Ardkinlas to receive him "as a lost sheep."†† M'Ian hastened to Inverary with all the speed that a country rough and destitute of roads and a tempestuous season would permit; he crossed Loch Leven within half a mile of his own house, but did not even turn aside to visit it. As he passed Barcaldine, which appears then to have been in the possession of Breadalbane, he †† was seized upon by Captain Drummond (of whom we shall hear more presently), and detained twenty-four hours. He arrived at Inverary on the 2d or 3d of January; but here again luck was against him, for Ardkinlas (detained by the bad weather) did not arrive until three days afterwards. On the 6th of January, Ardkinlas, after some scruple, and upon the earnest solicitation of M'Ian, administered the oath.§§

M'Ian returned to Glencoe, "called

\* Dal. App., Pt. ii. p. 217.

† BURNETT, 4, 154. MAC, vol. iv. p. 204.

‡ The passage in the letter leaves no doubt that the "scheme for mauling them" was Breadalbane's; whether the brutal expression was his or Stair's is of little consequence.

§ Vol. iv. p. 201.

¶ Report, p. 14.

‡ BURNETT, vol. iv. p. 153.

\*\* Report, p. 14.

†† Report.

‡‡ Report, p. 26.

§§ Report, p. 16.

his people together, told them that he had taken the oath of allegiance and made his peace, and therefore desired and engaged them to live peaceably under King William's government.\* He considered that he and his people were now safe. Ardkinlas forwarded a certificate that Glencoe had taken the oath to Edinburgh, written on the same paper with some certificates relating to other persons. When the paper was afterwards produced by the clerk of the Council, Sir Gilbert Elliot, upon the occasion of the inquiry which took place some years afterwards, the part relating to Glencoe was found scored through and obliterated, but so nevertheless that it was still legible. Lord Macaulay attributes this, as he attributes everything foul, to the Master of Stair. "By a dark intrigue," he says, "of which the history is but imperfectly known, but which was in all probability directed by the Master of Stair; the evidence of M'Ian's tardy submission was suppressed.† The circumstances are set forth in the Report, and do not appear to us to be shrouded in much mystery. Ardkinlas forwarded to his namesake, Colin Campbell, the sheriff-clerk of Argyle, who was in Edinburgh at the time, along with the certificates, Hill's letter to himself, urging that he should receive "the lost sheep," and at the same time wrote how earnest Glencoe was to take the oath of allegiance—that he had taken it on the 6th of January, but that he (Ardkinlas) was doubtful if the Council would receive it.‡ The sheriff-clerk took the certificate to the clerks of the Council, Sir Gilbert Elliot and Mr. David Moncrieff, who refused to receive it because the oath was taken after the time had expired. The sheriff-clerk and a writer to the Signet, another Campbell, then applied to Lord Aberuchill, also a Campbell, who was a member of

the Privy Council, who, after advising with some other privy councillors, of whom, according to one account, Lord Stair,§ the father of the Master, was one, gave it as their opinion that the certificate could not be received with safety to Ardkinlas or advantage to Glencoe, without a warrant from the King. It was therefore obliterated, and in that condition given in to the clerk of the Council. But it did not appear that the matter was brought before the Council, "that their pleasure might be known upon it, though it seemed to have been intended by Ardkinlas, who both wrote himself and sent Colonel Hill's letter for to make Glencoe's excuse, and desired expressly to know the Council's pleasure.¶ There appears to be nothing to connect the master of Stair, who was in London at the time, with this transaction; indeed, his letter of the 9th of January, in which he says "that they have had an account that Glencoe had taken the oaths at Inveraray,"‡ and regrets his being safe; and that of the 11th, in which he says "that Argyle told him Glencoe had not taken the oaths,"\*\* seem conclusively to negative his having had any correct knowledge of what had taken place.

In the mean time, Breadalbane, eager to satisfy old grudges, and the Master of Stair, in whose mind disappointment for the failure of his scheme seems to have awakened a feeling of ferocity, the intenseness of which appears hardly compatible with sanity, had determined upon the destruction of the Glencoe men.

Burnett states that the proposal for a military execution upon the Glencoe men emanated from Breadalbane; that he had the double view of gratifying his own revenge, and rendering the King hateful.†† If this were so, he certainly attained both objects. Here, however, we find no

\* Report, p. 18.

† Vol. iv. p. 203.

‡ Report, p. 17.

§ Mr. Burton, in his *History of Scotland*, falls into a not unnatural but rather important mistake, which he will no doubt be glad to correct, between the father and son, and states that the *Master of Stair* was consulted, &c.

¶ Report, p. 18.

‡ Gal. Red., pp. 101, 104.

\*\* *Ibid.*

†† BURNETT, vol. iv. p. 158.

guide whom we can safely follow, for Burnett's narrative, written long after, and with the manifest design of excusing William, is full of inaccuracies and false statements. We have, however, the fact as to which there can be no doubt whatever, that the following order was signed by William on the 16th of January 1692:—

"INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE KING TO  
COLONEL HILL.

16th January, 1692.

"WILLIAM R.—I. The copy of that paper given by Macdonald of Aughtera to you hath been shown us. We did formerly grant passes to Buchan and Cannon, and we do authorise and allow you to grant passes to them, and ten servants to each of them, to come freely and safely to Leith; and from that to be transported to the Netherlands before the 15th of March next; to go from thence when they please, without any stop or trouble.

"2. We do allow you to receive the submissions of Glengarry and those with him, upon their taking the oath of allegiance and delivering up the house of Invergarry; to be safe as to their lives, but as to their estates to depend upon our mercy.

"In case you find the house of Invergarry cannot probably be taken in this season of the year, with the artillery and provisions you can bring there; in that case we leave it to your discretion to give Glengarry the assurance of entire indemnity for life and fortune, upon delivering of the house and arms, and taking the oath of allegiance. In this you are to act as you find the circumstances of the affair to require; but it were much better that those who have not taken the benefit of our indemnity, in the terms within the diet prefix by our proclamation, should be obliged to render upon mercy. The taking the oath of allegiance is indispensable, others having already taken it.

"4. If M'Ean of Glencoe and that trybe can be well separated from the rest, it will be a proper vindication of the public justice to extirpate that sect of thieves. The double of these instructions is only communicated to Sir Thomas Livingston.—W. REX."\*

The advocates of William have framed various defences for this act. Burnett says he signed the order without inquiry.† Lord Macaulay

sees, as every one must, that it is impossible to support this in the face of the facts; he therefore takes the bolder course, and justifies the order. He says that, "even on the supposition that he read the order to which he affixed his name, there seems to be *no reason for blaming him*," that the words of the order—

"Naturally bear a sense perfectly innocent, and would, but for the horrible event which followed, have been universally understood in that sense. It is undoubtedly one of the first duties of every government to extirpate gangs of thieves. This does not mean that every thief ought to be treacherously assassinated in his sleep, or even that every thief ought to be publicly executed after a fair trial, but that every gang, as a gang, ought to be completely broken up, and that whatever severity is indispensably necessary for that end ought to be used.

"If William had read and weighed the words which were submitted to him by his secretary, he would probably have understood them to mean that Glencoe was to be occupied by troops; that resistance, if resistance were attempted, was to be put down with a strong hand; that severe punishment was to be inflicted on those leading members of the clan who could be proved to have been guilty of great crimes; that some active young freebooters, who were more used to handle the broadsword than the plough, and who did not seem likely to settle down into quiet labourers, were to be sent to the army in the Low Countries; that others were to be transported to the American plantations; and that those Macdonalds who were suffered to remain in their native valley were to be disarmed, and required to give hostages for good behaviour."‡

We can hardly suppose that Lord Macaulay intended his readers to accept these transparent sophisms as his deliberate opinion. We suspect he is laughing in his sleeve at the credulity of the public. The only charge against the Macdonalds was that they had been in arms against the Government, and had omitted to take the oaths of allegiance before a specified day. There was no question before William of any suppression of a "gang of freebooters." There was no accusation even of offences committed against life or

\* *Culloden Papers*, p. 19. † BURNETT, vol. iv. p. 154. ‡ Vol. iv. p. 205.

property. But supposing there had been such a charge—supposing that Breadalbane had accused certain individuals of the tribe of stealing his cows, or even of firing his house, does Lord Macaulay mean gravely to assert that such an accusation would have justified William, without inquiry or trial, in issuing an order for the “extirpation” of three hundred men, women, and children, simply for bearing the name and owning the blood of the offenders.

Hardly a month passes without worse offences than any the Glencoe men had ever been accused of, being committed at the present time in Ireland. What would Lord Macaulay think of a government that proceeded to “extirpate” by military execution, without trial and without warning, all the inhabitants of the parish where a murder had been committed, with particular instructions that the squire of the parish and his sons should by no means be allowed to escape?

If the order is to be justified, as Lord Macaulay here attempts to justify it, as an act of the civil power done in execution of “one of the first duties of every government,” it should have been preceded by the trial and conviction of the offenders. It should have been addressed not to the military governor of Inverlochry, but to the Lord Advocate or the sheriff-depute of the county. The attempt to justify the order on the ground of its being a civil act is therefore clearly untenable; and Lord Macaulay himself subsequently abandons it when he attempts to justify William for not inflicting punishment on the perpetrators of the act, on the ground that they were compelled to do it by the military duty of obedience to their superior officers. If the subject was less horrible, if the duties of an historian were less solemn, Lord Macaulay’s attempt to introduce a new meaning for the word “extirpate” would be simply amusing. We are quite satisfied to abide by the authority of Johnson and of old Bailey the *φασαλλογος*, who agree that it means to “root out,” “to destroy;”

and we have no doubt William knew enough of English to attach the same meaning to the word.

This order, it will be observed, is dated on the 16th of January. Few facts in history are proved by better evidence than the fact (denied both by Burnett and Lord Macaulay\*) that William, at the time he signed it, knew that M’Ian had taken the oath.

A reference to the Master of Stair’s letters of the 25th of June, 20th of September, and 3d of December, will show how minute an attention was paid by the King to all that was going on in Scotland with relation to the clans. On the 9th of January, the Master of Stair wrote from London, where he was in constant communication with William,—“We have an account that Lockart and Macnaughten, Appin and Glencoe, took the benefit of the indemnity at Inveraray;” and, he adds, “I have been with the King; he says your instructions shall be despatched on Monday.”† When we couple these facts with the subsequent impunity which William granted to all, and the rewards he bestowed upon some of those who executed the order, we think no reasonable doubt can be entertained that he knew both the fact that Glencoe had taken the oath and the nature of the warrant he gave, though we do not think that he contemplated (indeed it was hardly possible he should) the peculiar circumstances of treachery and barbarity which attended the execution of the order.

Most of the accounts of these transactions give only the concluding paragraph of the order. The whole of the document is material. It contains internal evidence which places it beyond doubt that William had considered and approved of its contents. The particular directions as to the passes to be granted to Buchan and Cannon, the instructions as to the line to be pursued with regard to Glengarry, bear the marks of having been under his consideration; and it is particularly deserving of observation that it is assumed that Glengarry and the

\* BURNETT, vol. iv. p. 154; MAC, vol. iv. p. 204.

† *Gal. Red.*, p. 101-104.



Macdonalds had not taken the oath, yet they were to be safe as to their lives, and in certain circumstances as to their property also, whilst Glencoe and the M'ians were to be "extirpated." The only circumstance to distinguish Macdonald of Glegarry from Macdonald of Glencoe was, that the former was at this moment holding his castle in open and avowed defiance to the Government, whilst the latter had taken the oath of allegiance, and had brought his people into a state of peaceful submission to the Government.\* Yet Lord Macaulay thinks that there is "no reason for blaming" the King for signing an order to spare Glegarry and to "extirpate" Glencoe, and that the order itself was "perfectly innocent."

The Master of Stair lost no time in putting William's commands into execution. He forwarded the order forthwith in duplicate to Livingstone, the commander of the forces, and to Hill, the governor of the garrison of Inverlochy; and he wrote on the 16th January, the very day on which the order was signed, the following letter to the former:—

STAIR TO LIVINGSTONE.

"LONDON, Jan. 16, 1692.

SIR,—By this flying packet I send you further instructions concerning the propositions by Glegarry; none know what they are but only Col. Hill, &c. . . . *The King does not at all incline to receive any after the diet but on mercy, &c. . . .* But for a just example of vengeance, I intreat that the thieving tribe of Glencoe may be rooted out in earnest. . . . Let me know whether you would have me expedite your commission as a brigadier of the army in general, or if you would rather want it *till the end of this expedition; that I hope your success may be such as to incline the King to give you a further advancement,*" &c.

He wrote on the same day to Hill:—

"I shall entreat you, that for a just vengeance and public example the thieving tribe of Glencoe may be rooted out to purpose. The Earls of Argyle and Breadalbane have promised they shall have no retreat in their bounds.

The passes to Rannoch would be secured, &c. A party that may be posted in Island Stalker must cut them off," &c.\*

Again on the 30th of January he wrote:—" . . . Let it be secret and sudden. . . . It must be quietly done, otherwise they will make shift both for the men and their cattle. Argyle's detachment lies in Keppoch well† to assist the garrison to do all on a sudden."‡

Other letters from the Master of Stair contain expressions even more savage. In one of them he informs Livingstone with exultation that a report had reached him, through Argyle, that Glencoe had not taken the oath; but these which we have quoted refer immediately and expressly to William's order for "extirpation" of the 16th of January.

Hill was a time-serving but not an inhuman man. He had kept in with every government since the Commonwealth, but he had no taste for unnecessary bloodshed, though he had not manliness or courage to oppose the slaughter. Ready agents were, however, found in Sir Thomas Livingstone, Lieut.-Col. Hamilton, Major Duncanson, Captain Campbell of Glenlyon, Captain Drummond, and the two Lindsays. These names have been handed down to an immortality of infamy, as the willing and remorseless tools of the King, of Breadalbane, and the Master of Stair, in the work of murder. On the 23d of January, immediately after the receipt of the Master's letter of the 16th, Sir Thomas Livingstone wrote to Lieut.-Col. Hamilton as follows:—

"EDINBURGH, Jan. 22, 1692.

SIR,—Since my last I understand that the Laird of Glencoe, coming after the prefix time, was not admitted to take the oath, *which is very good news to us here, being that at Court it is wished that he had not taken it—so that the very nest might be entirely ronted out; for the Secretary, in three of his last letters, has made mention of him, and it is known at Court that he has not taken it. So, sir, here is a fair occasion to show you that your garrison serves for some use; and being that the order is so positive from Court to me not to spare*

\* *Highland Papers*, Maitland Club, p. 66.

† In other copies these words are "in Lettrickwheel."

‡ *Gal. Red.*, 102. *Report*, 30, 31.

any of them that were not timeously come in, as you may see by the orders I sent to your colonel, I desire you would begin with Glencoe, and spare nothing of what belongs to them; but do not trouble the Government with prisoners. I shall expect with the first occasion to hear the progress you have made in this, and remain, sir, your obedient servant,  
T. LIVINGSTONE.\*

Hamilton lost no time.† Campbell of Glenlyon was selected for the service. On the 1st of February 1692 he entered the glen with his two subalterns, Lieutenant and Ensign Lindsay, and one hundred and twenty men. The story of the massacre has been told in eloquent prose and in impassioned verse, but never, in our opinion, so vividly, so impressively, as in the words of the Report of 1695:—

"The slaughter of the Glencoe men was in this manner; viz. John and Alexander Macdonald, sons to the deceased Glencoe, deponed that, Glengarry's house being reduced, the forces were called back to the south, and Glenlyon, a captain of the Earl of Argyll's regiment, with Lieutenant Lindsay and Ensign Lindsay, and six-score soldiers, returned to Glencoe about the 1st of February 1692, where at their entry the elder brother John met them, with about twenty men, and demanded the reason of their coming; and Lieutenant Lindsay showed him his orders for quartering there, under Colonel Hill's band, and gave assurance that they were only come to quarter; whereupon they were billeted in the country, and had free quarters and kind entertainment, living familiarly with the people until the 13th day of February. And Alexander further depones, that Glenlyon, being his wife's uncle, came almost every day and took his morning drink at his house; and that the very night before the slaughter, Glenlyon did play at cards in his own quarters with both the brothers. And John depones, that old Glencoe, his father, had invited Glenlyon, Lieutenant Lindsay, and Ensign Lindsay, to dine with him upon the very day the slaughter happened."

Here we must break in upon the narrative, and show how this 12th of

February, which was passed by Glenlyon in playing cards with the young Macdonalds in his quarters, and receiving invitations from their father, was employed by Hill, Hamilton, and Duncanson. This will appear from the following letters, all of which are dated on that day:—

COL. HILL TO LIEUT.-COL. HAMILTON.

FORT-WILLIAM, 12th Feb., 1692.

"SIR,—You are, with four hundred of my regiment, and the four hundred of my Lord Argyll's regiment under the command of Major Duncanson, to march straight to Glencoe, and there put in execution the orders you have received from the Commander-in-Chief. Given under my hand at Fort-William the 12th [Feb.] 1692. J. HILL."

LIEUT.-COL. HAMILTON TO MAJOR ROBT. DUNCANSON.

(F) ‡ "BALLOCHVILLA, 12th Feb., 1692.

"SIR,—Pursuant to the Commander-in-Chief and my colonel's order to me, for putting in execution the King's command against these rebels of Glencoe, wherein you, with the party of the Earl of Argyll's regiment under your command, are to be concerned; you are, therefore, forthwith to order your affairs so as that the several posts already assigned you be by you and your several detachments full in activeness precisely by five of the clock to-morrow morning, being Saturday; at which time I will endeavour the same with those appointed from this regiment for the other places. It will be most necessary you secure well those avenues on the south side, that the old fox, nor none of his cubs, get away. The orders are, that none be spared of the sword, nor the Government troubled with prisoners; which is all until I see you, from, sir, your most humble servant,

JAMES HAMILTON.

"Please to order a guard to secure the ferry and boats there; and the boats must be all on this side the ferry after your men are over."

Major ROBERT DUNCANSON to Captain ROBERT CAMPBELL of Glenlyone.

12th Feb., 1692.

"SIR,—You are hereby ordered to fall upon the rebels, the Macdonalds of

\* *Culloden Papers*, 19.

† Just one hundred years after these events, in 1791, the opening of the roads and the establishment of posts are mentioned as having had so great an effect that "a letter might come from Edinburgh to Appin in three days, or even two days and a-half."—*SINCLAIR'S Statistical Account of the Highlands*, vol. i. p. 497.

‡ "Fort William" in other copies, and apparently correct. See the order in the P.S. to have the boats on *this* side to prevent the escape of the victims.

Glenco, and put all to the sword under seventy. You are to have an especial care that the old fox and his sons do not escape your hands; you are to secure all the avenues, that no man escape. This you are to put in execution at five of the clock precisely; and by that time, or very shortly after it, I will strive to be at you with a stronger party. If I do not come to you at five, you are not to tarry for me, but to fall on. This is by the king's special command, for the good and safety of the country, that these miscreants be cut off, root and branch. See that this be put in execution without fear or favour, or you may expect to be dealt with as one not true to King or Government, nor a man fit to carry commission in the King's service. Expecting you will not fail in the fulfilling hereof, as you love yourself—I subscribe this with my hand at Ballyshylls the 12th Feb. 1692.

“ROBERT DUNCANSON.”

We now return to the narrative of events in Glencoe, and the mode in which Glenlyon executed these orders.

“But on the 13th day of February, being Saturday, about four or five in the morning, Lieutenant Lindsay, with a party of the foresaid soldiers, came to old Glenco's house, where, having called in a friendly manner, and got in, they shot his father dead, with several shots, as he was rising out of his bed; and their mother having got up and put on her clothes, the soldiers stripped her naked, and drew the rings off her fingers with their teeth; as likewise they killed one man more, and wounded another grievously at the same place. And this relation they say they had from their mother, and is confirmed by the deposition of Archibald Macdonald, indweller in Glenco, who further deposes that Glenco was shot behind his back with two shots—one through the head, and another through the body; and two more were killed with him in that place, and a third wounded and left for dead: and this he knows, because he came that same day to Glenco house, and saw his dead body lying before the door, with the other two that were killed, and spoke with the third that was wounded, whose name was Duncan Don, who came there occasionally with letters from the Brae of Mar.

“The said John Macdonald, eldest son to the deceased Glenco, deposes: The same morning that his father was killed there came soldiers to his house before day, and called at his window, which gave him the alarm, and made him go to

Innerriggen, where Glenlyon was quartered; and that he found Glenlyon and his men preparing their arms, which made the deponent ask the cause; but Glenlyon gave him only good words, and said they were to march against some of Glengarrie's men; and if they were ill intended, would he not have told Sandy and his niece?—meaning the deponent's brother and his wife—which made the deponent go home and go again to his bed, until his servant, who hindered him to sleep, roused him; and when he rose and went out, he perceived about twenty men coming towards his house, with their bayonets fixed to their muskets; whereupon he fled to the hill, and having Auchnaion, a little village in Glenco, in view, he heard the shots wherewith Auchinriaten and four more were killed; and that he heard also the shots at Innerriggen, where Glenlyon had caused to kill nine more, as shall be hereafter declared; and this is confirmed by the concurring deposition of Alexander Macdonald, his brother, whom a servant waked out of sleep, saying, It is no time for you to be sleeping when they are killing your brother at the door; which made Alexander to see with his brother to the hill, where both of them heard the foresaid shots at Auchnaion and Innerriggen. And the said John, Alexander, and Archibald Macdonald, do all depone, that the same morning there was one Serjeant Barber with a party at Auchnaion, and that Auchinriaten being there in his brother's house, with eight more sitting about the fire, the soldiers discharged upon them about eighteen shots, which killed Auchinriaten and four more; but the other four, whereof some were wounded, falling down as dead, Serjeant Barber laid hold of Auchinriaten's brother, one of the four, and asked him if he were alive! He answered that he was, and that he desired to die without rather than within. Barber said, that for his meat that he had eaten, he would do him the favour to kill him without; but when the man was brought out, and soldiers brought up to shoot him, he having his plaid loose, flung it over their faces, and so escaped; and the other three broke through the back of the house and escaped. And at Innerriggen, where Glenlyon was quartered, the soldiers took other nine men, and did bind them hand and foot, and killed them one by one with shot; and when Glenlyon inclined to save a young man of about twenty years of age, one Captain Drummond came and asked how he came to be saved, in respect of the orders that were

given, and shot him dead. And another young boy, of about thirteen years, ran to Glenlyon to be saved; he was likewise shot dead. And in the same town there was a woman, and a boy about four or five years of age, killed. And at Auchnaion there was also a child missed, and nothing found of him but the hand. There were likewise several killed at other places, whereof one was an old man about eighty years of age. And all this, the deponents say, they affirm, because they heard the shot, saw the dead bodies, and had an account from the women that were left. And Ronald Macdonald, indweller in Glencoe, farther deposes,—That he being living with his father in a little town in Glencoe, some of Glenlyon's soldiers came to his father's house, the said 13th day of February, in the morning, and dragged his father out of his bed, and knocked him down for dead at the door; which the deponent seeing, made his escape; and his father recovering after the soldiers were gone, got into another house; but this house was shortly burnt, and his father burnt in it; and the deponent came there after and gathered his father's bones and buried them. He also declares, that at Auchnaion, where Auchinriaten was killed, he saw the body of Auchinriaten and three more cast out and covered with dung. And another witness of the same declares, that upon the same 13th day of February, Glenlyon and Lieutenant Lindsay, and their soldiers, did, in the morning before day, fall upon the people of Glencoe, when they were secure in their beds, and killed them; and he being at Innerriggen, fled with the first, but heard shots, and had two brothers killed there, with three men more and a woman, who were all buried before he came back. And all these five witnesses concur, that the aforesaid slaughter was made by Glenlyon and his soldiers, after they had been quartered, and lived peaceably and friendly with the Glencoe men about thirteen days, and that the number of those whom they knew to be slain were about twenty-five, and that the soldiers, after the slaughter, did burn the houses, barns, and goods, and carried away a great spoil of horse, milt, and sheep, above 1000. And James Campbell, soldier in the castle of Stirling, deposes, that in January 1692, he then being a soldier in Glenlyon's company, marched with the company from Inverlochic to Glencoe, where the company was quartered, and very kindly entertained for the space of fourteen days; that he knew nothing of the design of killing the

Glencoe men till the morning that the slaughter was committed, at which time Glenlyon and Captain Drummond's companies were drawn out in several parties, and got orders from Glenlyon and their other officers to shoot and kill all the countrymen they met with; and that the deponent, being one of the party which was at the town where Glenlyon had his quarters, did see several men drawn out of their beds, and particularly he did see Glenlyon's own landlord shot by his order, and a young boy about twelve years of age, who endeavoured to save himself by taking hold of Glenlyon, offering to go anywhere with him if he would spare his life; and was shot dead by Captain Drummond's order. And the deponent did see about eight persons killed, and several houses burnt, and women flying to the hills to save their lives. And lastly, Sir Colin Campbell of Aberuchil deposes, that after the slaughter, Glenlyon told him that Macdonald of Innerriggen was killed with the rest of the Glencoe men, with Colonel Hill's pass or protection in his pocket, which a soldier brought and showed to Glenlyon."

Some circumstances still remain strangely obscure. We have been unable to discover whether the clan gave up their arms when they made their submission to the Government. It is difficult to suppose that a fact which would add so greatly to the atrocity of the deed should have been passed over unnoticed; yet it is equally difficult to suppose that a body of from fifty to a hundred men, trained to arms, should have permitted themselves, their wives, and children, to be butchered without striking a single blow in their defence; and unequal as the numbers were, and sudden as was the attack, it can hardly be supposed that such defence would have been wholly without effect.

Another point which has never been cleared up, relates to the plunder of the glen by the troops. The soldiers of William, who, according to Lord Macaulay, were executing justice upon thieves and marauders, did not content themselves with murder, but added the crimes of robbery and arson. The flocks and herds, the only movables of value, were swept away, and all that could not be removed was ruthlessly burned. The plunder was considerable—above a

thousand head of cattle, horses, and sheep rewarded the murderers. Of this they appear to have retained quiet possession; at least we can nowhere trace any act of restitution. The Parliament of Scotland addressed the King, recommending that some reparation might be made to the survivors of the massacre for their losses, and "such orders given for supplying their necessities as his majesty should think fit." William was deaf to their prayer. The only effect was the remission of a cess which had been imposed upon the valley, and which they appear to have been utterly unable to pay.\*

Such is the story of the massacre of Glencoe. Lord Macaulay observes—"It may be thought strange that these events should not have been followed by a burst of execration from every part of the civilised world."† It would have been strange indeed had they passed unnoticed. Official publication in England was of course suppressed. The London Gazette, the monthly Mercuries, and the licensed pamphlets were silent. But the *Paris Gazette* of the 12th April 1692, under date of the 23d March (less than six weeks after the event), has the following announcement:—

"D'EDIMBOURG, 23 Mars, 1692.

"Le Laird de Glencow a esté massacré depuis quelques jours, de la manière la plus barbare, *quoy qu'il se fust soumis au Gouvernement présent.* Le Laird de Glenlion, capitaine dans le régiment d'Argyle, suivant l'ordre exprés du Colonel Hill, gouverneur d'Inverlochic, se transporta la nuit à Glencow, avec un corps de troupes; et les soldats estant entrez dans les maisons, tuèrent le Laird de Glencow, deux de ses fils, trente six hommes ou enfans et quatre femmes.

"Ils avoient résolu d'exterminer ainsi le reste des habitans, *nonobstant l'amnestie qui leur avoit esté accordée;* mais environ deux cents se sauvèrent. On fait courir le bruit qu'il a esté tué dans une embuscade les armes à la main, pour diminuer d'horreur d'une action si barbare, capable de faire connoître à toute la nation, le peu de sureté qu'il y

a dans les paroles de ceux qui gouvernent."‡

This account, it is true, contains few particulars. It is silent as to the peculiar treachery of Glenlyon; but it states the slaughter of peaceful men, women, and children, in violation of an amnesty. How Lord Macaulay, who refers to this passage, can state that "in this there was nothing very strange or shocking,"§ we confess ourselves wholly unable to understand. If murder committed in violation of pledged faith is not shocking, we should be glad to know what is. A detailed and very accurate account, entitled "A letter from a Gentleman in Scotland to his Friend in London, &c.," dated April 20th, 1692, next appeared. Lord Macaulay intimates his opinion that this letter was not published until the following year, and reminds his readers that the date of 1692 was at that time used down to the 25th March 1693. But Lord Macaulay has failed to observe that the date of the letter is April, and April 1692 was always April 1692.

It is no doubt difficult to fix the precise date—great obstacles were thrown in the way of publication. But the contents of the letter were certainly known in London before June 1692, for in that month Charles Leslie, the writer of the *Gallienus Redivivus*, went in consequence of this letter to Brentford, where Glenlyon and Drummond, with the rest of Lord Argyle's regiment, were quartered, and there heard the account of the massacre from the soldiers who had been actors in it, one of whom said, "Glencoe hangs about Glenlyon night and day; you may see him in his face."¶

It is strange that Lord Macaulay, who is not scrupulous as to the sacrifices he makes for the sake of the picturesque, should have lost the poetry of this passage by using a doubtful term, substituting a place for a person, and a prosaic paraphrase for the simple words and poetical imagination of the Highlander who

\* *Highland Papers*. Mat. Cl. † Vol. iv. p. 213. ‡ *Paris Gazette*, 12 Avril 1692. § Vol. iv. p. 214. ¶ *Gal. Red.*, p. 92.

saw the image of the murdered man reflected in the face of his murderer.\*

The *Gallienus Redivivus*, which, Lord Macaulay says, "speedily followed," did not appear until after the execution of the commission in 1695. Lord Macaulay bestows a note † upon the singular name of this pamphlet, which deserves a passing notice, as it betrays the care with which he has availed himself of every opportunity to divert indignation from William to the Master of Stair. He says, ‡ "An unlearned or even a learned reader may be at a loss to guess why the Jacobites should have selected so strange a title for a pamphlet on the massacre of Glencoe." The reader, learned or unlearned, who found himself at any loss in the matter, must be singularly stupid, inasmuch as the reason is fully stated at page 107 of the pamphlet, where a parallel is drawn between William and the Emperor Gallienus, and a comparison instituted between the "Extirpation" order of the former, and a letter of the Emperor to Venianus. This letter, which the writer of the pamphlet quotes, and which Gibbon describes as "a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum," § concludes with the following words—"language to which" (says Lord Macaulay) "that of the Master of Stair bore but too much resemblance:"—"Perimendus est omnis sexus virilis. Occidendus est quicumque maledixit. Occidendus est quicumque male voluit. Lacra, Occide, Concide: *animus meum intelligere potes, mea mente irascere qui hæc manu mea scripsi.*" Lord Macaulay, quoting the passage which is given entire in the *Gallienus Redivivus*, omits the words which we have put in italics, which contain the sting, from their similarity to the facts of William having signed the "extir-

pation" order with his own hand. Another point of similarity consisted in the filial impiety of William and Mary. "Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign (says Gibbon), the *savage coldness* of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic.]" Lord Macaulay substitutes the Master of Stair for William, and his letters for the "extirpation" order, and garbles the quotation to make it fit. In dealing with a book which is in the hands of so few as the *Gallienus Redivivus*, this is hardly fair.

We owe the knowledge we derive of the massacre from the evidence taken before the Commission to a fortunate combination of circumstances.

The excitement of public feeling rendered it impossible for William to resist the demand for inquiry, and the jealousy of Johnston made that inquiry searching and complete, with the view of destroying his colleague, the Master of Stair. We agree with Lord Macaulay, that the report of the commission is an "excellent digest of evidence."¶ The character of "austere justice," which he claims for it, we wholly deny. "The conclusion," says Lord Macaulay, "to which the commission came, and in which every intelligent and candid inquirer will concur, was that the slaughter of Glencoe was a barbarous murder, and that of this barbarous murder the letters of the Master of Stair were the sole warrant and cause."\*\* At the risk of having our intelligence or our candour denied by Lord Macaulay, we are compelled to dissent from the latter portion of this judgment. Admitting in its full extent the atrocity of these letters, they formed, in our opinion, but a small and secondary part of the cause of the slaughter. There was another greater than Stair, or than Bredalbane, who must, according to the

\* Lord Macaulay's words are as follows: "Some of his soldiers, however, who observed him closely, whispered that all this bravery was put on. He was not the man that he had been before that night. The form of his countenance was changed. In all places, at all hours, whether he waked or slept, Glencoe was for ever before him."—Vol. iv. p. 216.

† See note, p. 213. ‡ Vol. iv. p. 213. § *Gibbon, Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 412.

¶ *Gibbon*, vol. i. p. 407.

¶ Vol. iv. p. 574.

\*\* Vol. iv. p. 574.

"austere justice" of history, share the responsibility of this great crime with them. Lord Macaulay misleads his readers, and obscures the question, by treating the slaughter, when it suits his purpose, as the exercise of a wild and irregular justice against a band of murderers and freebooters. To prepare the mind of the reader, he evokes from past centuries horrible tales of outrages committed by the tenth cousins of the great-grandfathers of the Macdonalds of Glencoe on the people of Culloden, by the inhabitants of Eig on the Macleods, and by the Macleods again on the people of Eig. He narrates a story, unsupported by a single tittle of evidence, of M'Ian having at some former period executed with his own hand the wild justice of the tribe on a member of his own clan.\* He likens the Macdonalds to the moostroopers of the Border and the banditti of the Apennines, and describes them as "marauders who, in any well-governed country, would have been hanged thirty years before."† Lord Macaulay is an accomplished advocate, and is well aware of the effect that declamation of this kind will produce on the minds of nine out of ten of his readers. The tenth man knows that he has the testimony of Colonel Hill to the quiet, peaceable, and honest demeanour of the Macdonalds, and the conclusive fact, that during the whole of the inquiry, though abundance of hard language was used, there was no attempt to bring even a single charge of any offence whatever against the Macdonalds. This puts an end at once to any defence of William's "extirpation" order, grounded on the supposition of its being directed against civil offenders. We may therefore confine our attention to the inquiry into how far it was justified, and who was responsible for it as a military act.

The Parliament of Scotland found the slaughter to be murder, and demanded that Glenlyon, Drummond, the Lyndsays, and Sergeant

Barber should be sent home to be prosecuted for the crime of murder under trust. Lord Macaulay says that the Parliament was here severe in the wrong place;‡ that the crimes of these men, horrible as they were, were nevertheless not the fitting subject of punishment, inasmuch as each was compelled to act as he had done by the subordination necessary in an army. Lord Macaulay runs up the ladder of responsibility from the sergeant to the ensign, and so on up to Glenlyon, and from him to his colonel, Hamilton; but he appears not to be aware to what this argument necessarily leads. If Glenlyon was justified by the order of Hamilton, Hamilton was in like manner justified by the order of Livingstone. Thus we reach the commander-in-chief. Does the responsibility rest there? If it did, loud would have been the cry of vengeance for innocent blood; yet the Scottish Parliament acquitted Livingstone, and Lord Macaulay passes him over unnoticed. That the slaughter in Glencoe was a barbarous murder, murder under trust, the foulest and highest degree of crime, all are agreed. We have traced the responsibility up to the commander-in-chief; who was *his* superior? Not the Master of Stair. The Secretary of State for Scotland has no authority in military matters over the commander-in-chief, except so far as he is the mouthpiece of the King. Livingstone derived his orders direct from William. If he exceeded those orders, the blood-guiltiness rests on his head. It is of no avail for him to say, "I obeyed the Master of Stair," unless the Master of Stair spoke and wrote as the agent of the King; and if he did his orders were William's orders. The Parliament of Scotland voted that the order signed by William did not authorise the slaughter of Glencoe. If *Johnson's Dictionary* had been in existence, and if they had consulted it to discover the meaning of the King's words they would have found that his design

\* This story was first told by Dalrymple in 1771. There is no trace whatever of it to be discovered in the cotemporary proceedings, where, no doubt, it would have been found, had there been even the slightest foundation for it.

† Vol. iv. p. 203.

‡ Vol. iv. p. 576.

was to "root out, to eradicate, to excise, to destroy," and the following example given: "We in vain endeavour to drive the wolf from our own to another's door; *the breed ought to be extirpated out of the island.*"\* It would be difficult to point out any passage in the Master of Stair's letters which exceeds this. Inhuman as they are, they add nothing to the plain and simple words of the order. The execution certainly fell far short. Instead of "extirpation," not more than about one tenth part of the clan was destroyed. Here, then, following out Lord Macaulay's own principle—the principle known to the law as "respondeat superior"—the responsibility rests with William. The only escape is the one suggested by Burnett, namely, that William affixed his signature to a paper, presented to him by Stair and Breadalbane, in ignorance of its contents. We have already shown how entirely this hypothesis is unsupported by evidence, how strong the presumptions are against it. But there remains one piece of evidence, which to our minds is conclusive. Had William been thus entrapped, how terrible would have been his wrath when he discovered the crime to which he had been unwittingly made a party! How signal his vengeance on the traitors Stair and Breadalbane! Instead of this, we find that, when he was obliged to dismiss Stair from office in compliance with public opinion and the intrigues of his colleagues, instead of handing him over to justice, consigning him to the trial, the conviction, and the death of shame, which he most unquestionably would have deserved, he grants him full pardon, immunity, and protection for all his acts, and especially for his share in the slaughter of the men of Glencoe.

We are not aware that the following document has been cited in any history of the massacre: to us it appears conclusive of the original participation of William in that great crime:—

"SCROLL OF DISCHARGE TO JOHN  
VISCOUNT STAIR.

"His majesty, considering that John Viscount of Stair hath been employed in his majesty's service for many years, and in several capacities, first as his majesty's Advocate, and thereafter as Secretary of State, in which eminent employments persons are in danger, either by exceeding or coming short of their duty, to fall under the severities of law, and become obnoxious to prosecutions or trouble therefor; and his majesty being well satisfied that the said Viscount of Stair hath rendered him many faithful services, and being well assured of his affection and good intentions, and being graciously pleased to pardon, cover, and secure him now after the demission of his office, and that he is divested of public employment, from all questions, prosecutions, and trouble whatsoever; and particularly his majesty, considering that *the manner of execution of the men of Glencoe was contrary to the laws of humanity and hospitality, being done by those soldiers who for some days before had been quartered amongst them and entertained by them, which was a fault in the actors, or those who gave the immediate orders on the place.* But that the said Viscount of Stair, then Secretary of State, being at London, many hundred miles distant, he could have no knowledge of nor accession to the method of that execution; and his majesty being willing to pardon, forgive, and remit any excess of zeal or going beyond his instructions by the said John Viscount of Stair, and that *he had no hand in the barbarous manner of execution; therefore his majesty ordains a letter of remission to be made, and passed his great seal of his majesty's antient kingdom, &c., and particularly any excess, crime, or fault done or committed by the said John Viscount of Stair in that matter of Glencoe, and doth exoner, discharge, pardon, indemnify, and remit the said John Viscount of Stair, &c.*"†

It is to be observed that the very gentle censure contained in this document is confined entirely to "*the manner of execution.*" The King shows no disapproval whatever either of the order—his signature to which, Burnett says, was obtained by the fraud of Stair—or of those letters

\* LOCKE. † *Papers Illustrative of the Highlands of Scotland*, Maitland Club.



which Lord Macaulay asserts to have been the "sole warrant and cause of this barbarous murder." If anything were wanting to prove without a possibility of doubt the King's participation in the crime, it would be supplied by the fact that this "Scroll of Discharge" is immediately followed by a grant from William of the teind duties and others of the regality of Glencoe, as a "mark of his favour to John Viscount Stair."

None of the actors in the transaction, so far as we are aware, incurred any marks of the displeasure of the King. They appear to have had prosperous lives: Colonel Hill becomes Sir John; Glenlyon, when he reappears on the page of history, is a colonel; Livingstone becomes Lord Teviot.\* The Master of Stair, though withdrawn for a time from active employment, in obedience to the voice of the Parliament and public opinion, was, as we have seen, rewarded by William, and not many years afterwards reappears an earl instead of a viscount.

We do not think that it is a task of any great difficulty to measure out the degree of responsibility which fairly attaches to each of the actors in this horrible tragedy.

First to our minds comes the King. He had not the excuse, poor as it may be, that he was urged on by personal wrong and animosity, like Breadalbane; or by chagrin and disappointment at the failure of a favourite scheme, like the Master of Stair. We cannot doubt that William's signature was affixed to the order with full knowledge of the facts, and that his intention was to strike terror into the Highlanders by the "extirpation" of a clan too weak to offer any formida-

ble resistance, but important enough to serve as a formidable example.

Next come Breadalbane and the Master of Stair, between whom the scales balance so nicely that it is hard to say to which the larger share of execration is due.

Livingstone, Hamilton, Duncanson, Drummond, Glenlyon and his subalterns, must share amongst themselves the responsibility for the peculiar circumstances of treachery and breach of hospitality attendant upon the execution. For this we think neither William, Breadalbane, nor the Master of Stair can justly be held answerable.

The blundering partisans of the day attempted to make light of the atrocity of the slaughter. Lord Macaulay is too skilful to be betrayed even by his partisanship into supporting so false an issue. He denounces the crime with unsparing severity. But by suppression, by sophism, by all the arts which may be tolerated in an advocate, but which are intolerable in a judge, he seeks to obtain a verdict of acquittal for William—to limit his culpability to his remissness in failing to bring the Master of Stair to justice, and, by dwelling in strong terms on that offence, to keep out of view his participation in the original crime. The readers of the *Decameron* know by what means San Ciappelletto obtained canonisation; the readers of Lord Macaulay's History see how the meed of justice and humanity may be awarded to the murderer of Glencoe. They may compare the portrait of Marlborough with the portrait of William, and judge what fidelity is likely to be found in the rest of Lord Macaulay's picture-gallery.

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\* *Life of William III.*, p. 357.

## THE LIFTED VEIL.

## CHAPTER I.

THE time of my end approaches. I have lately been subject to attacks of *angina pectoris*; and in the ordinary course of things, my physician tells me, I may fairly hope that my life will not be protracted many months. Unless, then, I am cursed with an exceptional physical constitution, as I am cursed with an exceptional mental character, I shall not much longer groan under the wearisome burthen of this earthly existence. If it were to be otherwise—if I were to live on to the age most men desire and provide for—I should for once have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true prevision. For I foresee when I shall die, and everything that will happen in my last moments.

Just a month from this day, on the 20th of September 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o'clock at night, longing to die, weary of incessant insight and foresight, without delusions and without hope. Just as I am watching a tongue of blue flame rising in the fire, and my lamp is burning low, the horrible contraction will begin at my chest. I shall only have time to reach the bell, and pull it violently, before the sense of suffocation will come. No one answers my bell. I know why. My two servants are lovers, and will have quarrelled. My housekeeper will have rushed out of the house in a fury, two hours before, hoping that Perry will believe she has gone to drown herself. Perry is alarmed at last, and is gone out after her. The little scullery-maid is asleep on a bench: she never answers the bell; it does not wake her. The sense of suffocation increases: my lamp goes out with a horrible stench: I make a great effort, and snatch at the bell again. I long for life, and there is no help. I thirsted for the unknown: the thirst is gone. O God, let me stay with the known, and be

weary of it: I am content. Agony of pain and suffocation—and all the while the earth, the fields, the pebbly brook at the bottom of the rookery, the fresh scent after the rain, the light of the morning through my chamber window, the warmth of the hearth after the frosty air—will darkness close over them for ever?

Darkness—darkness—no pain—nothing but darkness: but I am passing on and on through the darkness: my thought stays in the darkness, but always with a sense of moving onward. . . .

Before that time comes, I wish to use my last hours of ease and strength in telling the strange story of my experience. I have never fully unbosomed myself to any human being; I have never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of my fellow-men. But we have all a chance of meeting with some pity, some tenderness, some charity, when we are dead: it is the living only who cannot be forgiven—the living only from whom men's indulgence and reverence are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind. While the heart beats, bruise it—it is your only opportunity; while the eye can still turn towards you with moist timid entreaty, freeze it with an icy unanswering gaze; while the ear, that delicate messenger to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, can still take in the tones of kindness, put it off with hard civility, or sneering compliment, or envious affectation of indifference; while the creative brain can still throb with the sense of injustice, with the yearning for brotherly recognition—make haste—oppress it with your ill-considered judgments, your trivial comparisons, your careless misrepresentations. The heart will by-and-by be still—*ubi aeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit*;\* the eye will cease to entreat; the ear will be deaf; the brain will have ceased from all wants as well as

\* Inscription on Swift's tombstone.