



CHAPTER IV.

THE QUEEN'S PREPARATION FOR HER DEPARTURE,
HER SICKNESS AND HAPPY DEATH.

§ 34.

WHILST Almighty God was preparing everlasting rewards for her works of devotion, the queen was preparing herself with more than her usual assiduity for entering another life. Her own words made this more obvious shortly afterwards. It would seem that her own departure from this world, as well as certain other events which were impending, were known by her long beforehand. Therefore, summoning me to come to her privately, she began to recount to me in order the history of her life, and as she proceeded with it she shed floods of tears. In short, so deep was her compunction, and out of this compunction sprang such abundant tears, that—as it seemed to me—

there was nothing whatever which at that time she might not have obtained from Christ. When she wept, I wept likewise; and thus we wept and at times were silent altogether, since by reason of our sobs we could not give utterance to words. For the flame of that compunction which consumed her heart reached my soul also, borne in thither by the spiritual fervour of her words. And when I heard the language of the Holy Ghost speaking by her tongue, and could thoroughly read the tenderness of her conscience by what she said, I judged myself unworthy of the grace of so exalted a familiarity.¹

§ 35. When she had ended what she had to say about matters which were pressing, she then addressed herself to me, saying: "I now bid you farewell. I shall not continue much longer in this world, but you will live after me for a consider-

¹ Instead of the above paragraph, Capgrave's abridgment of this biography, printed also by Surius, has as follows: "Habet confessarium Turgotum, secundum Priorem Dunelmia. Illi ergo ad se accersito, vitam suam replicare cæpit, et ad singula verba lachrymarum flumina profundere; tantaque erat sub ejus sermonibus compunctio, tantus lachrymarum imber, ut nihil proculdubio esse videretur, quod tunc a Christo impetrare non posset." This is copied by Pinkerton, p. 381.

able time. There are two things which I beg of you. One is, that as long as you survive you will remember me in your prayers; the other is, that you will take some care about my sons and daughters. Lavish your affection upon them; teach them before all things to love and fear God; never cease instructing them. When you see any one of them exalted to the height of an earthly dignity, then, as at once his father and his master in the truest sense, go to him, warn him lest through means of a passing honour he become puffed up with pride, or offend God by avarice, or through prosperity in this world neglect the blessedness of the life which is eternal. These are the things, said she, which I ask you—as in the sight of God, who now is present along with us two—to promise me that you will carefully perform. At these words, I once more burst into tears, and promised her that I would carefully perform her wishes; for I did not dare to oppose one whom I heard thus unhesitatingly predict what was to come to pass. And the truth of her prediction is verified by present facts; since I survive her death, and I see

her offspring elevated to dignity and honour. Thus, having ended the conference, and being about to return home, I bade the queen my last farewell; for after that day I never saw her face in the flesh.

§ 36. Shortly afterwards she was attacked by an infirmity of unusual severity, and was purified by the fire of a tedious sickness before the day on which God called her to Himself. I will describe her death as I heard it narrated by a priest of hers, whom she loved more intimately than the others on account of his simplicity, his innocence, and his purity. After the queen's death he made an oblation in perpetual service for her soul, and having put on the monk's habit offered himself up as a sacrifice for her at the tomb of the uncorrupt body of the most holy Father Cuthbert. He was continually with the queen during the last days of her life, and with his prayers recommended her soul to Christ when it was leaving the body. He gave me more than once a connected history of her decease as he saw it, for I frequently asked him to do so; and he did this with tears.

§ 37. "For a little more than half a year," said he, "she was never able to ride on horseback, seldom to rise from her bed. On the fourth day preceding her death, while the king was absent on an expedition, and at such a great distance that it was impossible for any messenger, however swift he might be, to bring her tidings of what was happening to him, she became sadder than usual. Then she said to me, for I was seated near her, 'Perhaps on this very day such a heavy calamity may befall the realm of Scotland as has not been for many ages past.' When I heard these words I paid no great attention to them, but a few days afterwards a messenger arrived who told us that the king was slain on the very day on which the queen had spoken the words narrated. As if foreseeing the future, she had been most urgent with him not to go with the army, but it came to pass—how I know not—that he did not follow her advice.¹

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¹ We have no very clear account of the immediate cause which led to the open breach between William and Malcolm. But it is plain from the Peterborough Chronicle that William was in the wrong; he refused to do something for Malcolm which he had promised to do. Malcolm entered the earldom

§ 38. "On the approach of the fourth day after the king's death, her weakness having somewhat of Northumberland, and ravaged after his usual fashion as far as some point which, there is no reason to doubt, was in the near neighbourhood of Alnwick. We may fairly accept the tradition which carries him to the spot known as Malcolm's Cross, where a commemorative rood was erected, and where the ruins of a Romanesque chapel may still be seen. The spot is on high ground overlooking the river Alne, while on the opposite side of the stream a lower height is crowned by the town of Alnwick, and by such remains of its famous castle as modern innovation has spared. By ambush or some other stratagem Earl Robert of Mowbray led his forces against the Scottish king unawares, under circumstances which are not detailed, but which have led even English writers to speak of the attack as treacherous. Malcolm was killed; and with him died his son and expected heir, Edward. The actual slayer of Malcolm was his gossip Morel, Earl Robert's nephew and steward, guardian of the rock and fortress of Bambrough.* Simeon of Durham says that he was cut off near the river Alne, and that "part of his army fell by the sword, and part escaping the sword were carried away by the inundation of the rivers, then more than usually swollen by the winter rains. Two of the natives placed the body of the king in a cart, as none of his men were left to commit it to the ground, and buried it at Tynemouth. † Thus terminated his long reign of thirty-five years." ‡

* E. Freeman, "The Reign of William Rufus," vol. ii, p. 15.

† Sim, Dun, de Gest, Reg, ad an. 1093. By some of the Scotch chronicles Malcolm is said to have been slain at Inneraldan, by others at Alnwick.

‡ Malcolm Ceanmor reigned from the 17th March 1057-8 to the 13th Nov. 1093, the day on which he was slain.

abated, the queen went into her oratory to hear Mass ; and there she took care to provide herself beforehand for her departure, which was now so near, with the holy Viaticum of the Body and Blood of our Lord. Having partaken of this health-giving food, she returned to her bed, for her former pains assailed her with redoubled

The character of Malcolm was variously regarded by the English and by his own subjects. The English historians, who had mainly to record his frequent invasions of Northumberland, regarded him as a man of barbarous disposition, delighting, at the instigation of his avarice, to ravage and devastate the northern districts of England ; while they attributed any better traits in his character to the humanising influence of his consort Queen Margaret. By his Celtic subjects he was known as Malcolm Ceanmor, or great head, and was regarded, according to the testimony of St Berchan, as

“ A king, the best who possessed Alban ;
He was a king of kings fortunate.
He was the vigilant crusher of enemies.
No woman bore or will bring forth in the East
A king whose rule will be greater over Alban ;
And there shall not be born for ever
One who had more fortune and greatness.”

On his death he left the kingdom in possession for the first time of the same southern frontier which it ever after retained.*

* F. Skene, “Celtic Scotland,” vol. i. pp. 431, 432.

severity. The disease gained ground, and death was imminent. . . . Her face had already grown pallid in death when she directed that I, and the other ministers of the sacred Altar along with me, should stand near her and commend her soul to Christ by our psalms. Moreover, she asked that there should be brought to her a cross, called the Black Cross,¹ which she always held in the greatest veneration. There was some delay in opening the chest in which it was kept, during which the queen, sighing deeply, exclaimed, 'O unhappy that we are! O guilty that we are! Shall we not be permitted once more to look upon the Holy Cross!' When at last it was got out of the chest and brought to her, she received it with reverence, and did her best to embrace it and kiss it, and several times she signed herself with it. Although every part of her body was now growing cold, still as long as the warmth of life throbbed at her heart she continued steadfast in prayer. She repeated the whole of the Fiftieth Psalm, and placing the cross

¹ "Crucem Scotiæ nigram," Brit. Mus. MS. Tiberius, E. i., 186a.

before her eyes, she held it there with both her hands.¹

§ 39. "It was at this point that her son,² who now, after his father, holds in this realm the reins of government, having returned from the army, entered the queen's bedroom. Conceive his distress at this moment ! Imagine to yourself how his heart was racked ! He stood there in a strait ; everything was against him, and whither

¹ The Black Cross was enclosed in a black case, from whence it was called *the Black Cross*. The cross itself was of gold, and set with large diamonds. "It is about an ell long," says Aelred, "manufactured of pure gold, of most wonderful workmanship, and is shut and opened like a chest. Inside may be seen a portion of our Lord's Cross (as has often been proved by convincing miracles), having a figure of our Saviour sculptured of massive ivory, and marvellously adorned with gold. Queen Margaret had brought this with her to Scotland, and handed it down as an heirloom to her sons ; and the youngest of them, David, when he became king, built a magnificent church for it near the city, called Holy-Rood." (Bollandists, vol. xxi. p. 335.)

When Edward the First invaded Scotland, he seized on this cross as one of the English crown jewels, and carried it into England. Robert Bruce so vehemently insisted on its restoration that Queen Isabella yielded it up on the pacification during her regency in 1327 ; but its surrender exasperated the English more than the most flagrant of her misdeeds.

² Filius suus Edgarus. MS. Tiberius, E. i., 186.

to turn himself he knew not. He had come to announce to his mother that his father and brother were slain, and he found his mother, whom he loved most dearly, at the point of death. He knew not whom first to lament. Yet the loss of his dearest mother, whom he saw lying nearly dead before his eyes, stung him to the heart with the keenest pang. Besides all this, the condition of the realm occasioned him the deepest anxiety, for he was fully aware that there would be an insurrection upon the death of his father. Sadness and trouble beset him on every side.

§ 40. "The queen, who, as it seemed to the bystanders, was rapt in an agony, suddenly rallied her strength and spoke to her son. She asked him about his father and his brother. He was unwilling to tell the truth, and fearing that if she heard of their death she herself would immediately die, he replied that they were well. But with a deep sigh she said, 'I know it, my boy, I know it. By this holy cross, by the bond of our blood, I adjure you to tell me the truth.' Thus pressed, he told her exactly all that had happened. What could she do, think you? To murmur against

God with such a one was impossible. At the same moment she had lost her husband and her son, and disease was putting her to a cruel death, but in all these things she sinned not with her lips, nor spoke foolishly against God. Raising her eyes and her hands towards heaven, she glorified God, saying, 'I give praise and thanks to Thee, Almighty God, for that Thou hast been pleased that I should endure such deep sorrow at my departing, and I trust that by means of this suffering it is Thy pleasure that I should be cleansed from some of the stains of my sins.'

§ 41. "Feeling now that death was close at hand, she at once began the prayer which is usually said by the priest before he receives the Body and Blood of our Lord, saying, 'Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the will of the Father, through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me. As she was saying the words, 'Deliver me,' her soul was freed from the chains of the body, and departed to Christ, the author of true liberty, to Christ whom she had always loved, and by whom she was made a partaker of the happiness of the

saints, the example of whose virtues she had followed. Her departure was so calm, so tranquil, that we conclude her soul passed to the land of eternal rest and peace. It was remarkable that her face, which, when she was dying had exhibited the usual pallor of death, became afterwards suffused with red and white tints, so that it seemed as if she were not dead but sleeping.¹ Her corpse was shrouded as became a queen, and we carried her to the Church of the

¹ The place of her death is not mentioned by Turgot in the *Life*. According to Fordun (v. 21), Margaret died in Edinburgh "in castro puellarum;" on the 16th of November in the year 1093, according to the *Chronicle of Mailros*. See also the *Surtees "Simeon,"* p. 262. Wynton relates the occurrence as follows:—

"As thys dede all thys ware doune
Come wything til Saynt Margret soun
The Revelatyoun that west maist,
That scho had of the Haly Gast.
Than wyth devot and gud intent
Scho tuk the Haly Sacrament
Of Goddis Body blyst wërray
Wyth the last unctyoun; and that dai
Of al charges scho yhald hyr gwyte
And til the Creatoure hyr Spyryte
In-til the Castelle of Edynburgh," etc.

(Wynton's "*Orygynale Cronikil*," vol. ii. pp. 271, 272.)

Holy Trinity,¹ which she had built. There, as she herself had directed, we committed it to the grave, opposite the altar and the venerable sign of the Holy Cross which she had erected. And thus her body at length rests in that place in which, when alive, she used to humble herself with vigils, prayers, and tears."

END OF TURGOT'S LIFE.

The public opinion of Margaret's sanctity had already prevailed all over Britain for the space of more than one hundred and fifty years, when it received the sanction of Pope Innocent IV. in the year 1250. On that occasion, and on the 19th of June of that year, the body of the saint was taken up from the grave, where it had hitherto lain, and was put into a silver shrine, adorned with precious stones, which was placed under the high altar of the church.²

¹ Dunfermline Abbey.

² Brev. Abd., 19 Jun.

“According to Papebroch’s appendix to the life of the saint and queen, her head was brought to the Castle of Edinburgh at the desire of Queen Mary, who was in it at the time, and on her flight into England in 1567 it was removed to the house of the Laird of Dury, where it was preserved for many years by a Benedictine monk, but in the year 1597 was by him given up to the missionary Jesuits. One of these, John Robie, conveyed it to Antwerp. There John Malder, Bishop of Antwerp, after proper examination, issued his letters, on 15th September 1620, authenticating the head as that of St Margaret, and granting leave for its being exposed to public veneration. After seven years the relic was translated to the Scots College at Douay, where, by permission of Herman, Bishop of Arras, and his successor, Paul Boudot, it was again exposed as a genuine relic to public veneration. Pope Innocent X., by a brief dated March 4th, 1645, granted a plenary indulgence to those who should visit the church of the college on the festival of St Margaret, and this grant was confirmed by his successors at various times afterwards. It is

believed that this relic disappeared amid the commotions of the French Revolution.¹

“With regard to the other remains of Queen Margaret and her husband, if we may believe the accounts given by Papebroch, which he seems to have partly, if not wholly, derived from a statement by George Con, in his treatise, ‘*De Duplice Statu Religionis apud Scotos*,’ they were, after much labour, acquired by Philip II., King of Spain, and by him placed in the Church of St Lawrence at the Escorial, with the inscriptions, ‘St Malcolm, King; St Margaret, Queen,’ on the urns containing them. Bishop Gillis, in the hope of having the relics of St Margaret again restored to a Scottish shrine, invoked the aid of Pius the Ninth in an application to the Spanish Government for their restoration, but they could not be found, or at all events identified.”²

¹ In 1785 it was still at Douay, where the historian Caruthers saw it at the Scotch College. It was in extraordinary preservation, with a quantity of fine hair, fair in colour, still upon it.

² “Transactions of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland,” ii. 89. Cf. Bishop Challoner, “*Britannia Sancta*”; Alban Butler, “*Lives of the Saints*,” vol. vi., June 10, Edinburgh edition, 1709, p. 154.