

oxide of zinc with extract of belladonna may be prescribed in the following form:—

℞ Zinci oxidi	2 grs.
Belladon. extract	½ gr.
	<i>F. pil.</i>

Sig.—One or two pills at bedtime when required.

Atropine in $\frac{1}{100}$ to $\frac{1}{80}$ gr., also in the form of a pill, is perhaps superior. Other well-known remedies are arseniate of iron ($\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ gr.), sulphuric acid, pilocarpine, picrotonine, and agaricin. It is well to warn you that the patient should sleep in a thin flannel gown, which should be changed, and the skin thoroughly dried. If there are signs of exhaustion, a drink of hot milk is useful.

Intercurrent pleurisy.—If this occurs in the upper part of the chest, it should be painted with epispastic solution or equal parts of the liniment and tincture of iodine. If the base is affected, the application of a broad piece of strapping to one side of the chest, and extending for one or two inches beyond the middle line anteriorly and posteriorly, often affords relief.

Laryngeal tuberculosis.—The treatment of this condition does not lie within my province, but I would remind you that rest is of the highest value. The patient should not talk when out driving or in a noisy room. It is highly important that a skilled laryngologist should be consulted, in order to see if local treatment is advisable.

POISONING IN SCOTLAND, TO THE YEAR 1625.

By A. FRANCIS STEUART, *Advocate.*

POISONING¹ has never been a common crime in Scotland. The Scot has always been prone to dispose of his enemies in a shorter and surer way. Kirkpatrick was ready to “mak sikkar” that the Red Comyn was slain with his dagger. Riccio was stabbed and thrown downstairs, and deeds of violence figure on every page of Scottish history, but among them poison rarely is mentioned, and recalcitrant wives were accused of getting rid of their husbands, not so often by poison or enchantment, as by having them “smoorit,” or smothered, in feather beds. But though we may, and indeed must, concede the rarity of poisoning as a generality,—for in Scotland we have had no Borgia, no Medici, no Brinvilliers,—yet attempts to use poison were by no means unknown; and it is these I propose to recount, not dwelling, indeed, on the methods themselves used in the process,—for these were, from the want of medical knowledge at the time, little examined into, and, as more

¹ I am indebted to my friends Mr. D. M. Barcroft and Mr. Austin Priestman for their kindness in discussing certain points in this essay with me.

modern historians point out, sudden death alone gave rise to the rumour of poison,—but narrating the cases and circumstances where our ancestors suspected and believed that poison had been used, in as short a manner as is consistent with the subject.

The old ballad of the “Cruel Step Minnie” gives the popular conception of the working of violent poison which had been given by a lady to rid her of an undesired relative:—

“O where hae ye been this leelang day,
My bonnie wee croodlin doo?’
‘I hae been to see my Stepminnie:
Mammy, mak my bed noo.’
‘And what did your Stepminnie gie you to dine,
My bonnie wee croodlin doo?’
‘She gaed tae me a bonnie wee fish a’ streakit wi’
green and blue:
Mammy, mak my bed noo.’
‘And what did you do wi’ the banes o’ the fish,
My bonnie wee croodlin doo?’
‘I gaed them to my wee wee dog:
Mammy, mak my bed noo.’
‘And what did your dog when he eated the banes,
My bonnie wee croodlin doo?’
‘He stretched out his wee wee legs and deed,
Mammy, as I do noo.’”

This legend is found in many other forms,¹ and is akin to the song “Lord Randal,” where the poison is administered in “eels boiled in broo,” and where the dogs “swelled till they deed” on eating the remainder; and this ballad, sometimes styled Lord Ronald or Lord Randolph, has by conjecture been associated with the suspicious death of King Robert (Bruce’s) nephew, Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray.

The Earl of Moray, on Bruce’s death, was made Regent or Governor of Scotland during the minority of his young son, King David II., and when in the zenith of his power and popularity he died suddenly in 1332; by so doing he *ipso facto* gave rise to the belief that he was poisoned. This belief Lord Kames, in a most unnecessary bit of special pleading, tried to combat.

Barbour’s “The Brus” (xx.) sings his death thus—

“The gude Erlr gouernit the land,
And held the pure weill to warrand;
The law sa weill manteinyt he,
And held in pess swa the cuntre,
That it wes neur led or his day
So weill, as I hard ald men say;
Bot syne alas! poysonyt wes he.
To se his ded wes gret pite.”

and Hector Boece, in his “Croniklis of Scotland,”² definitely

¹ I use the traditional form, communicated to me by the Dowager Lady Kinloch of Kinloch.

² “History and Chronicles of Scotland, written in Latin by Hector Boece and translated by John Bellenden, Archdean of Moray,” Edinburgh, 1821, vol. ii. pp. 412-413.

throws all the blame on Edward III. of England, who, he says, "tuk purpos to sla him be vennome." He reports that after a long search the king found for this design a monk, "for oftymes men of that ordoure hes na respect to schame nor justice, bot cloke's thair wickit lyfis under fenyeit schaddow of ane coule," and instructed him, "as he had bene ane medicinar havand speciall remeidis agains the gravell; for in that infirmitie Erle Thomas was hevely tormentit." The monk and a colleague came to Scotland with the fame of successful doctors, but having "vennomus potionis among his othir seropis," and eventually was allowed to try his hand on Earl Thomas. "The monk tuke him gladly on hand and as he wes instruckit, he commandit the Erle to observe ane diet: sone efter, he gaif him soft seropis: and quhan he was admittit to mair familiarite, he gaif him ane venomous potioun howbeit the vennome was nocht haiste deid, bot evar to consume ane man with long process." The monk then retired to England, ostensibly to procure another "singular medicine," and the earl found "certane dolouris ilk day mair increasing in his wame" (*tormina quedam ventris*—in the Latin original—lib. xv. pp. 310-1), and though in extreme weakness, had himself dressed in full state to receive an English herald, and convinced him that he could still lead an army against England. He died, however, at Musselburgh on his return home; and, according to Boece, King Edward was so enraged at his monkish emissary's supposed failure, that "he gart birn (burn) him, according weill to his demeritis," before he heard of the earl's death, which was ascribed to his "treatment."

There is a considerable lapse of time before we again hear of poison in the Scottish Records, but it was occasionally suspected; and Boece specially mentions one instance when, after Robert Duke of Albany had induced his granddaughter Euphemia, Countess of Ross, to resign her earldom in favour of his sons, no sooner had the deed been done when "with great slicht Effem deceissit, be industry, as was belevit, of Duke Robert."

In 1450, King James II.—we know not why, unless it was the foreign intercourse following on his marriage the year before to Marie of Gueldres—woke up to the necessity of legislating against the importation of poison, and an Act of Parliament was passed at Perth on May 4, which runs: ¹—

"Item, gif ony strangers ane or ma man or woman of any vther realme cum into this realme of Scotland and inbring be ony moyen or way poysoun throu the quhilk any Christin man or woman may tak bodily harme and that may be kende or that be convict thareof thai sal vnderly the samyn paynis as is before writtyn of thame of this realme and na conduct nor remissionne helpande thame in that case."

We notice little more of poison, however, until the reign of his son, when an attempt to use it was evidently made. James III

¹ Thomson's "Acts," ii. 39.

was unfortunate in his fraternal relations, being completely under the influence of his minion Cochrane, that mysterious "mason," whose sudden rise led to his sudden murder in 1482 by Archibald "Bell the Cat," Earl of Angus. Cochrane, according to Pitscottie, hated the king's brothers, and brought witches to the king to prophesy their nefarious designs. Now witchcraft and poisoning, as we shall see, were almost always connected in Scotland. The Duke of Albany, the king's younger brother, fled and took up arms; and when later, on the fall of the favourite, a regular treaty of peace or "Indenture" was entered into between them, on March 25, 1482,¹ it contained the following significant clause: "Because thar is a selandir and murmour rising in the cuntre that the said noble and mighty prince the Duc of Albany wes posonit in oure Souerane lordis presens and palace, the said Alexander Duc of Albany sal in plane parliament be his letter and sele declare and mak manifest the verite that he was neur posonit nor his deid in na way imaginitt be owre said Souerane lord nor be nane uther persone or personis be Counsaile, command wit or consent of his hienez."

In the reign of King James IV. poison is again said by tradition to have been used at Court. The king took in 1496, as his mistress, a fair cousin, Margaret Drummond, daughter of John, first Lord Drummond, and it is said that he refused to marry any one else while she lived. She was "kept with great state in a castle," and about 1497 bore the king a daughter, Margaret Stewart, afterwards Lady Gordon; but it was believed that she fell a victim to the jealousy of the nobles, who desired the king's marriage, and had her poisoned when breakfasting at Drummond Castle, with her two sisters, Lady Fleming and Sibilla. They all three died "suddenly," in great pain, near the month of April 1502,² and were buried in a vault in the Choir of Dunblane Cathedral, under three fair blue marble stones,³ which remained intact until 1817.

The king, as the nobles are said to have foreseen, married next year the Lady Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII. of England, a popular match, which was eventually the means of uniting the two kingdoms under one crown; but he had Masses for Margaret Drummond's soul sung during all the years of his life.

We come to surer fact in 1537, when there was an alleged conspiracy to kill King James V., which has become famous in Scottish story.

Jean Douglas, Lady Glamis, was the granddaughter of "Bell the Cat," Earl of Angus, and sister of the attainted Archibald, Earl of Angus,⁴ who, with all the Douglas family, were put under the ban of the king, who had at last revolted from the thralldom in which

¹ *Ibid.*, Supp. 32, a.

² "Exch. Rolls," xii., xlix.

³ Malcolm's "House of Drummond," pp. 72-73.

⁴ By her mother, Elizabeth Drummond, she was niece of Margaret Drummond who died in 1502, as we have seen.

they had kept him when a youth. Lady Glammiss continued to assist her brothers and family any way she could, and so fell under the king's displeasure as well. She was accused of "inter-communing with our Souerane Lordis' rebellis or for any other crymes," and escheated in 1531, and, along with her son and second husband, Archibald Campbell of Keipnech, was arrested in Forfar, and eventually brought to Edinburgh, on the serious charge of having been art and part of taking the life of her first husband, Lord Glammiss (four years before), *per intoxicationem*, or by enchanted potions; and later, on trial, she was, on July 17, "*conuicta de arte et parte proditorie conspirationis et imaginationis interfectionis, siue destructionis, nobilissime persone serenissimi domini nostri Regis per pessimum venenum lie poysone*," as well as for inter-communing with her brothers, the Earl of Angus and George Douglas; and by the mouth of William Carwod, "sectator" of the Court, her doom was "That scho sall be had to Castell hill of Edinburghe and thair BRYNT in ane fyre to the deid, as ane Traytour." This savage sentence made a great impression at the time. Sir Thomas Clifford wrote to King Henry VIII.¹ that the verdict of guilty was given "without any substanciall ground or proyf of mattir," and it was generally attributed to the king's hatred of the Douglas family. She suffered, nevertheless, and her husband was killed in attempting to escape from the castle by means of too short a rope. Her son, condemned for the same conspiracy to be hanged and drawn, was, however, spared on account of his youth, and lay many years in prison during the king's lifetime. Historians have shown much sympathy for Lady Glammiss, and have implicated her lover, William Lyon, as her betrayer, and a barber and a priest as accomplices. One historian puts into her lips, indeed, the speech: "I am here accus'd for purposing to kill the king; and, to make my pretended crime more frightful, it is given out that the way was to be by poison. With what strange impudence can any accuse me of such wickedness, who never saw any poison, nor know I anything about the preparation of it. . . . Or, though I had it, how could I use it, since I never come near the king's person, his table, nor palace." It is not impossible, however, that there was a real plot against the king's life at this time. Lady Glammiss' brother-in-law, John, Master of Forbes, was implicated also, and "thairfore wes heided and quarterit at Edinburgh," his familiar, John Strathachin, younger of Lethinturk, condemned to death, though pardoned and banished, and the lady herself, whose "noble blood and singular beautie" impressed the people, had, as we have seen, been reputed to have made away with her first husband by potions also.

The next notices of poison² are of a fragmentary nature: in

¹ Brit. Mus. MS., cit. by Pitcairn in his account of the trial, vol. i. pt. 1, p. 189.

² Bishop Robert Reid of Orkney, one of the commissioners sent from Scotland to

1554, on the 12th March, Henry Congleton,¹ Patrick, his brother, and William Lille were accused of the slaughter, in June 1553, of Oliver Congleton, eldest son and heir of Robert Congleton of that ilk, "in the Place of Kynneir," by drugs—*per intoxicationem*. In 1562, on the 16th March,² Mr. Allan Colquhoun was convicted of poisoning his step-father's servant, and of attempting to poison his mother and step-father, and was hanged and burned.

In 1578-79, another of his clan, Helen Colquhoun, was accused of the "treasonable³ administering of poyson" to her spouse, William Cunninghame of Aiket; but the fragmentary records give us little information about these trials, and we next come to the important case of the Treasurer, John Stewart, Earl of Atholl. This is the most notorious "suspect" case in our annals, and it is one of the few Scottish poisonings which was taken notice of furth of Scotland, the Earl of Atholl's sudden death being everywhere attributed to the Regent, James Douglas, Earl of Morton, or by some creature instigated by him.

Atholl and the Regent were rivals. Atholl, the king's near kinsman, was a Catholic; Morton, a licentious man, but a fervent Protestant. In April 1578, during the minority of King James VI., Atholl was made Chancellor at a time when Morton's star was clouded. They held aloof, though formally "reconciled," until March 1578-79, when Atholl appeared at the Council. Morton gave a great "reconciliation" feast at Stirling on 20th April, and following on it Atholl, the chief guest, died suddenly on the 25th April, "to the great displeasure of all the gude subjects of Scotland." His loss was much felt, and King James wrote to the dead man's son that his body, as "our his nearest kinsman," should be conveyed to Edinburgh to the Church of St. Giles, and "thair placed ewest our dearest Uncle and Regent (Moray) of good memorie."

No one for a moment dreamed that he had died a natural death, although a year before he had obtained a licence to leave the realm for the purpose of preserving his health. Spottiswoode writes,⁴ "as report always speaketh the worst of great men's deaths, so the rumour at this time went, that Morton had made him away by poison"; and adds that, although a post-mortem examination (of a kind) was held, yet the earl and countess "took open protestation that the trial of the Council should not prejudice the criminal pursuit of which they intended before the justice." A fatal result followed. "The scandal was fostered a long time by a sort of rhyming libels, which were afterwards tried to be composed by one Turnbull, a schoolmaster at Edinburgh, and another called William Scott, who were executed for the same at Stirling in the end of the summer."

France to witness the marriage of Queen Mary to the Dauphin, died at Dieppe on his homeward journey, on 14th September 1558, it was said by poison.

¹ Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials," i. 368-69.

² *Ibid.*, i. 420.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 80.

⁴ "History of the Church of Scotland," ii. 263.

That the belief was widespread is undoubted. We see in the "Spanish State Papers" that Bernardino de Mendoza writes, 14th May 1579, to the King of Spain: "The Queen [Mary Queen of Scots] has received news from Scotland of the death of the Earl of Atholl, which happened so suddenly that they think it must be from poison," and describes (as we shall recount later) the subsequent inquests. He writes again (6th July): "The son of the Earl of Atholl professes to be much offended at the death of his father, but has not armed to avenge him, nor have any members of his party." Queen Mary had no doubt of the murder, and wrote to the widowed countess: "My good Anti," referring to the "dealings off our fals traitours that (are) not content off yowr good Lord's death by poisoni(n)g him so vickedli."

But whatever Mendoza thought, the dead man's son did make some show of indignation. He delayed the funeral (until 4th July), and he and his mother, Margaret, Countess of Atholl, his kinsmen and friends, petitioned the king for justice, "In trying of the unhonest, tressonable and maist vyle murthour of my lait father." It was a general charge, however, accusing no particular person of the murder (the Earl of Mar, son of the Regent, and "the auld Countess of Mar" were also hinted at¹), and "six earls and sundry lords and barons"² were ready to uphold him.

Upon this the Council called the surgeons together, and an inquest was held, in the presence of the King's Majesty and the Lords of the Privy Council, in Stirling Castle on 16th June 1579. The proceedings are not uninteresting,³ and they show the absolute ignorance of the old-time physicians in regard to the evidences of poison.

James Owhegarty, "Irelandman borne, leiche that ministratis medicine in the mouth and curis outward be herbis," deponed to death being caused by "rank venom" received by the mouth.

Alexander Prestoun, "Doctour in Medicine," declared that the Earl died of poison. So did George Boswell, "Mediciner and Chirurgiane in Perth." Mr. Gilbert Monerief was doubtful. His evidence was cryptic: he found the humour in the stomach to be venomous, but could not say whether it was exterior or interior grown within the body. David Rattray, "Chirurgiane in Coupare," deponed to death being caused by "ane extraordinare poyson, and that ane spune put in the humour changeit the cullour in the cullour of brass." R. Craig, "Burgess of Edinburgh, Chirurgiane," temporised, saying the earl, "to all appearance," died of poyson. John Erskine of Dun, a non-medical witness, thought that a red matter which Dr. Prestoun showed him was "a cauld poyson." Mr. John Duncanson, chaplain to the king, alleged that the earl had got "a wrang causes," as well as (how, does not appear) black

¹ "Historie of King James the Sext," p. 174.

² "Hist. MSS. Com. Rep.," "Marquis of Salisbury's MSS.," p. 256.

³ "Chronicles of the Families of Athol and Tullibardine," i. p. 33.

lumps on his side and shoulders. Mr. Row, minister, of Perth, cannot say "of his conscience"; while the last witness, the minister of Aberuthven, Mr. John Hammill, stated that he saw "strange and unnatural tokens in the stomach, black and red, as it were the dregs of bread and wine mixed," and, what was more important, had heard the dead earl say "that he had got offence, and God forgive them that had done it."¹ Mendoza adds a quaint description of this inquest: "They had opened the body in the presence of five doctors, three of whom said he had been poisoned and two that he had not. One of the latter, to assure them that he was right, by proof, took some of the contents of the stomach on his finger and put it into his mouth. The effect was that in a few hours he was thought to be dying. It is not known whether the order to poison him came from Morton or some private person." No wonder, after this exhibition of Scottish medical science at the time, that, as Spottiswoode says, the end was that "the physicians did upon their oaths declare that his death was not caused by any extraordinary mean"; and that (to exculpate her son) on 16th June 1579, the day of the inquest, Margaret, Countess of Atholl, protested "solempnitlie" that whatever the Council may determine "tuiching the caus of the death" should not be prejudicial to her son, "for that scho did wes bot for hir self and hir awin deutie not having any commissioun of hir son nor nane of his friends."²

Yet in spite of all this, as we have seen, the public was not satisfied, and the chroniclers still suspected. An Act of Parliament was passed on 11th November 1579,³ providing that no one was to calumniate the Earl of Morton and the Earl and Countess of Mar of the "allegit poysoning," unless by direct accusation. Nevertheless the Regent Morton thought that he was obliged to make a formal deathbed declaration in public that neither had a certain "Mr. Johne Provand brought home anie Poysoun," nor had he ever instigated the murder of the Earl of Atholl. He declared, before he himself died on the scaffold on 2nd June 1581, "I would not for the Earldom of Atholl have either ministered poison unto him or caused it to be ministered unto him; yea, if I had been a hundred and he himself alone, I would not have stirred a hair of his head";⁴ and with the meagre evidence before us, who would now ever dream of giving any opinion whatever one way or the other?

This great case was in its turn followed by some of lesser magnitude. In 1579-80,⁵ Andrew Glencorse in Penistoune was convicted of having poisoned his wife from love of her mother, and

¹ This appears also in the Countess of Atholl's "Bill," "Thomson's Acts," iii. 175.

² "Reg. of the Privy Council," iii. 184-85.

³ "Thomson's Acts," iii. p. 176.

⁴ "Calderwood," iii. 563.

⁵ Pitcairn, "Criminal Trials," i. pt. 2, p. 84.

for this doubly heinous crime he was "brint"; and that poisoning was in the air is shown by another statement that in 1580 Alexander Stewart of Schuttinglees¹ met his death on 1st November by being "schot with ane poysonit bullet"—the only charge of the kind in our annals—and of this murder Laurence, Lord Oliphant, and Arthur Forbes, younger of Reres, had the good fortune to be acquitted.

On 22nd July 1590, there was a notable trial for witchcraft, in which poison played a conspicuous part.² Katherine Ross, Lady Fowlis, had a brother George Ross, younger, of Balnagowan. This brother, though married to Marjory Campbell, desired to marry the young Lady Fowlis, the wife of his sister's stepson, and Katherine, Lady Fowlis, agreed to forward this by removing the unnecessary living obstacles who were in the way, as well as her stepson, Mr. Hector Munro. They conspired, therefore, with witches, known as Christane Ross Malcolmesone and Marjorie Neyne M'Allester *alias* Laskie (or Lockie) Lonkart, "for the destruction of the saidis young laird and lady," which they attempted first by the old device of making two pictures and shooting at them with elf-arrow heads. For this Christane Ross was burnt at the stake at the end of 1577. Not expecting the failure of this plot, Lady Fowlis and her familiars had it stated in November 1577, "of set purpois for distructioun" of the young Laird of Fowlis, the lady and a batch of neighbours in her barn at Drumnyne prepared "a stoup full of poysonit new aill," for her fell purposes. This was spilled, except a small quantity, which "the said Katherine causit Donald M'Kay your awin boy to tak," who, on tasting it, "incontinent thairefter tuik seiknes, and lay continewallie thaireftir poysonit with the liquor." Lokie Loncart was then commanded to "mak ane pigfull of ranker poyssoun," which she did. This "pyg" of poyssoun was sent with Lady Fowlis' own "nourrice," or nurse, to Angus Leiths' house, where the young Laird of Fowlis was living; but this attempt was hardly successful either, for "thy said nourrice bringand the said pyg fra their fell the way, under silence of nyght and brak the pyg, and sche tastaned of the samin, immediatlie thaireftir departit be the said poyssoun." The remainder falling on the grass, burnt it so that neither ox, cow, nor sheep would eat it. The poison was apparently "rattoun poyssoun" got by Lady Fowlis, who gave eight shillings in money to William M'Gillenorie-dam to go to Elgin, who brought it back in "ane pece ledder," and gave it to Lady Fowlis, in June 1577. She also sent him to consult with the "Egyptians" concerning poisons, to buy poison from Thomas Ross, merchant in Aberdeen, then in Elgin, and also at Tain, and he got the information for her that the poison could be administered anyway, "in eggis browis or keill," and that he sent some to the young Laird of Balnagowan, for his use, in "ane stoip

¹ Pitcairn, "Criminal Trials," i. 90.

² *Ibid.*, i. pt. 2, pp. 191 *et seq.*

of guid aill with breid and cheis," for all of which traffickings he was convicted and burned, "as the hail countrie knawis." The poison was conveyed to Ardmuir and delivered to the cook, who mixed it with a "kiddis near" of a deer just killed, and young Lady Balnagowan partaking of it, "contractit deadlie seiknes, quairin scho remanis ye incurable."

In spite of all these dealings with witches, sorcerers, and poisoners, this extraordinary trial ended in Lady Fowlis being acquitted, though several of her accomplices had already been put to death; and her stepson, Mr. Hector Munro, whom she was alleged to have conspired against, was, on July 22, 1590, brought to trial, in his turn, for "sorcery incantation and witchcraft," directed against his younger brother, George, Lady Fowlis' own son. With this intention he had consulted Marioune M'Ingaruch, one of the most "notorious and rank wichis in all this realme," who, after many incantations, gave some water from a stone, "the quhilk was the deith of the said George." Oddly enough, Mr. Hector was acquitted also.

In 1591¹ there was a great witch trial in Scotland, in which poison again figures in a notable way. The accused was no witch of humble origin, but the daughter of a Senator of the College of Justice, Eufame M'Calzean, heiress of Cliftonhall. She was well born and rich, and evidently believed in her incantations. She was brought to the bar charged with witchcraft of every kind, and one of the incidental accusations was that she was art and part in poisoning Patrick Moscrop, her husband, "upon deidlie malice contractid agains him, the first yeir of your mariage." She was reputed to have shown this openly, as she gave him poison, "and cuist the rest thair of in the closett, quhair by his face, nek, handis, and hail body, brak out in reid spottis: Quhilk poysoon wes espellit be his youth." She tried again, however, undismayed by his unwelcome vigour, with the result that her husband "wes compellit for saulftie of his lyffe, to expose himself to the seais and to pas to France in youre default," and his wife, saying "the ffeind ga with him," continued to attempt his removal by the less dangerous but much more treasonable practice of witchcraft. She evidently dealt in poisons, as she, with the witch Catherine Carruthers, "Erisch Jonett," as helper, was accused of laying in the way of an enemy, Jenet Cokburne, "sic enchantit mwildis (moulds) and powder that in a short time thairefter thair came ane swarff (faintness) owre hir hairt and sic ane slassing (palpitation) in hir breist, as itt had bene sum quick thing, peching and panting, heaving up hir body; quhairwith sche is diseasit half ane houre ewerie tyme sche takis itt, oft in the nigcht and oft in the day; continewing sumtymes half ane day; haifing mair strength nor hir accustummit maner in time of hir health." More important for our purpose, however, than "inchantit

¹ Pitcairn, "Criminal Trials," i. pt. 2, p. 247 *et seq.*

mwildis" is another charge against the unfortunate accused. "Item. Indytit for the consulting with Jonett Cwninghame in the Cannongait als callit *Lady Bothwell*,¹ ane auld indytit Wich of the fynest champ 18 yeiris or thairby, for to haif poysonit Joseph Dowglas of Punfrastoune, and that be ane potioune of composit watter, quhilk ye send Johnne Tweddal youre servand for to be brocht up to Barbara Toureis hous in ane chopene stoup." This was caused by jealousy. The accused was in love with the Laird of Pumpherstone, "under culloure and cloik" of marriage to her daughter; and so infatuated was she that she gave him many jewels, including "ane Craig chainzie, twa belt cheinzeis, ane ring," and "ane emirent," which she afterwards attempted to recover by necromancy. She tried to break off his marriage with Marie Sandilands, "ane madin," first by telling her that he was ill with a loathsome disease, and then by directing her own nourrice, or nurse—a useful go-between—with some of her "charmes and inchantmentis to offend the persoun of the said Marie quhairby the said mariage mycht haif bene stayit." Her trafficking with the wise wife of Keith, Agnes Sampson, for more "inchantit mwildis," to ease her own birth-pangs, may come under the head of either witchcraft or poisoning, but another charge, that of bewitching the eldest son and daughter of the Laird of Pumpherstone "to the deid," probably partook of the latter. One thing is striking in the whole trial, namely, that witchcraft, and either killing or curing by it, was a much more serious charge than that of the administration of poison, and that if Eufame Macalzean had not been accused of being one of the celebrated Witch Convention which met at North Berwick "for the tressonabill staying of the Queinis hame-cuming be storme and wind," we should have most likely heard nothing of her dabbling in poisons so many years previously. As it was, on June 12, 1591, she was, after due deliberation, found guilty of witchcraft, and of the poisoning of the Laird of Pumpherstone, and on June 15 was condemned, by the most savage sentence in the Scottish records, to be bound to a stake and burned to ashes—not strangled beforehand, as was usual with witches, but "quick," or living—to the death, at the Castlehill of Edinburgh.

Shortly after the death of Robert Stewart, Earl of Orkney, the bastard brother of Queen Mary, there was a quarrel between his elder son and successor, Patrick, and his younger brothers, John, James, and William Stewart, which led to frequent accusations of poisoning against the latter. When John, Master of Orkney, was brought to trial in 1596,² he was, with his brothers, accused of having "conspyrit and dewysit how to murthour the said Patrick Erl of Orknay his brother be poysoning or utherwayes be craft and quyet dealing," in November 1593, at Mr. William Mudie's house

¹ Francis, Earl of Bothwell, was a known trafficker with witches.

² Pitcairn, "Criminal Trials," i. pt. ii. 373 *et seq.*

in Walls. The Earl of Orkney captured his brother's servant, Thomas Palplay, hired, it was supposed, to do the deed, who "being accusit thair of confest the samyn and was execute to the deid"; but as his confession was given after the incredible torture of having been kept eleven days and nights in the "cashie-lawis," put in the "buitis" twice a day, "skargeit with towis," and as he withdrew his confession before his execution, we gain little real evidence from his examination. It is only necessary to say that on this charge—on the charge of plotting to murder the Earl "att ane Bankyuet in David Moncriefis in Kirkwall in Orknay"—and on the charge of having consulted for the same purpose with a witch, Alison Balfour,—who was also frightfully tortured, but withdrew her extorted confession before she was burned,—John, Master of Orkney, was acquitted, however guilty he may have been; and while his brother was executed some years later, in 1614, he himself retained the royal favour, and died as Earl of Carrick.

That poisoning was beginning to be looked upon with more horror is shown by the trial, on November 5 to 7, 1601,¹ of Thomas Bellie, burgess of Brechin, and James Bellie, his son, on the extraordinary charge of "contravening of our Sovereine Lordis Actis of Parliament for bying, haifing and keeping of Poysoune," and of having mixed the poison with dough and scattered it in the yard of his neighbour, Jonet Clerk, "for the destructioun of fowlis." Though the victims were only two hens, which swallowed the poison and died, the first of the accused was nevertheless for the "said cryme" banished *for life*, which perhaps shows that a graver crime had been intended.

In 1607 a trial with a most extraordinary result took place.² Bartie Paterson, tasker in Newbottill, was "Delaitit of the cryme of sorcerie and witchcraft, in abuseing of the peopill with charmes and dyuerse soirtes of inchantmentis, and ministering under forme of medecine, of poysonable drinkis: And of airt and pairt of the murthour of Johnne Myller in Ffurdmyne, about Martinmas last, and of umqle Elizabeth Robiesonne be the saidis poysonable drinkis, viz.: For cureing of James Broun in Turnydikis of ane unknawin disease, be ministrating to him of drinkis, rubbing him with sawis (salves) maid of dyuerse greene herbis, and causing him pas hame to his awin house, and at his bed syde to sitt down on his kneis, thre severall nychtis, and everie nycht, thryse nyne tymes, to ask his helth at all leiving wichtis above and under the earth in the name of Jesus. And thaireftir ordanit the said James to tak nyne pickillis of quheit, nyne pickillis of salt and nyne pieces of rowan trie, and to were thame upone him for his helth, committing thairby manifest sorcerie and witchcraft." He had also been unwise enough to cure people from water from

¹ Pitcairn, "Criminal Trials," ii. 336.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 535.

the Dow Loche "besyde Drumlanrig," besides "caryeing of the said Loche watter to sindrie of the countrie, that war viseeit with seiknes, or quhais beistis war seik or fairspoken," besides having used verbal charms. For all of which crimes, which he confessed, he was sentenced "to be tane to the Castell-hill of Edinburge and thair to be wirreit at ane staik quhill he be deid; and thair-efftir his body to be brunt in asches." In this case it will be seen that the unfortunate man suffered not for his success in killing by poison, but for his success as a healer by witchcraft.

Scot of Scottistarvet¹ tells of the death of a Scottish noble in England by poison, which is worthy of notice here on account of the manner of the post-mortem. He says that George Home, Earl of Dunbar, in 1611 was poisoned by "tablets of sugar given him for expelling the cold by Secretary Cecil." He continues, that Martin Souqir, a doctor, tried the poison "by laying his finger on his heart and touching it with his tongue"—in the same way which we saw was used at the inquest on the Earl of Atholl—with the result that he "died within a few days thereafter." This was told "by relation of his Servant of his Chamber, Sir James Bailie, who saw him get the tablets from the said Secretary, and who, having eaten a small parcel of them himself, struck all out in blisters, but by strength of body he escaped death."

The last trial for poison which we will deal with is in 1613. It is the latest on our books before 1625, the year of the accession of King Charles I., whose turbulent reign altogether changed the position of the Scottish nation, thus making this date a convenient halting-place for this essay. It was the trial of four well-born persons for the crimes of witchcraft, poison, and treasonable murder. It is again noticeable that in the order of the charges that of consulting with "usearis of Poysone or Poysoneable herbis, quhairthrow ony Cristiane man, woman, or bairne may take harme," is again postponed to the more important one of "consultation with witches."

Robert Erskine, son of John Erskine, appearant of Dun, "blinded with the godles and insatiable desyre of the landis and leving of Dun, and knowing perfytlie that he could nevir attene to be full Laird thair of so long as John and [Alexander] Erskynes [his elder brother's sons] was on Lyfe," therefore, "in his devillisch dispositioun," with the advice and consent of his three sisters, Isobel, Hellen, and Annas, met in the place of Logy, about mid-summer 1610, and resolved upon their destruction by witchcraft, "be sum sinisterous meanis."² Jonet Irwing, "ane notorious witche and abuser of the people," was found, and the sinister means she suggested was "ane grit quantitie of herbis, quhilkis war brocht with thame (with injunccion how to vse the saidis herbis) hame to Logy." These herbs the sisters took and steeped in ale for

¹ "Staggering State of Scots Statesmen," p. 34.

² Pitcairn, "Criminal Trials," iii. 260-1, 266-9.

“ane lang space.” Robert then solemnly asked his sisters whether the poison should be cast away or used, and they, with Lady MacBeth-like vigour, decreed that it should not be cast away, and so wasted. The sisters, a horse boy, and the elder of the young nephew-victims, rode to Montrose, where the other young nephew resided, and there the poison was administered to the two boys. “Quhilk drink eftir thair ressaving thair of, wrocht so violentlie upon thame, that immediatlie thairafter they tuik sic ane extraordiner preise (attack) of vomeiting, that na persone expected for thair lyfe. . . . The said Johnne Erskine, the eldest of the two, contracted sik a deidlie diseas and seiknes, that his skyn turning all blak, and his hail nobill partis inwardlie consumeing, he daylie and contineuallie thairefter dwynet in grit dollour and pane to the tyme of his death.” He expired uttering words—“thir or the lyk”—“Wo is me, that I evir had richt of successioun to any landis or leving! for gif I had bene sum pure coitteris sone, I had not bene sa demanet, nor sic wicket practizes had been plottit againis me for my Landis.” The other boy at the date of the trial (30th November apparently), 1613, was also in sad straits, as he remained “as zit in intolerable payne and seiknes universall thro his hail body . . . of quhais lyfe thair is na hoip.” This, of all the cases I have cited, seems an indisputable case of poisoning, as Robert Erskine confessed his crime, and was duly beheaded on December 1. The sisters confessed also, and were executed upon June 24, 1614; except the youngest, who, as “mair penitent thogh les giltie,” was banished out of the kingdom on March 22, 1615.

CLINICAL RECORDS.

CHRONIC CYANOSIS, WITH POLYCYTHÆMIA AND ENLARGED SPLEEN.

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WE are led to report this case, not alone because, in its symptomatology, it accords with the few cases already reported under this head, but also because, as far as we know, no treatment has been published in the cases hitherto recorded.

Before Dr. Begg was satisfied as to the condition, and although there was no evidence of malaria, vigorous treatment was adopted, on the assumption that it might be of malarial origin. Thus, following the methods adopted in the East, inunctions of the biniodide of mercury ointment were applied over the spleen, and the part exposed to artificial heat; while quinine was given in