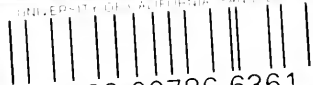


GEORGE BUCHANAN

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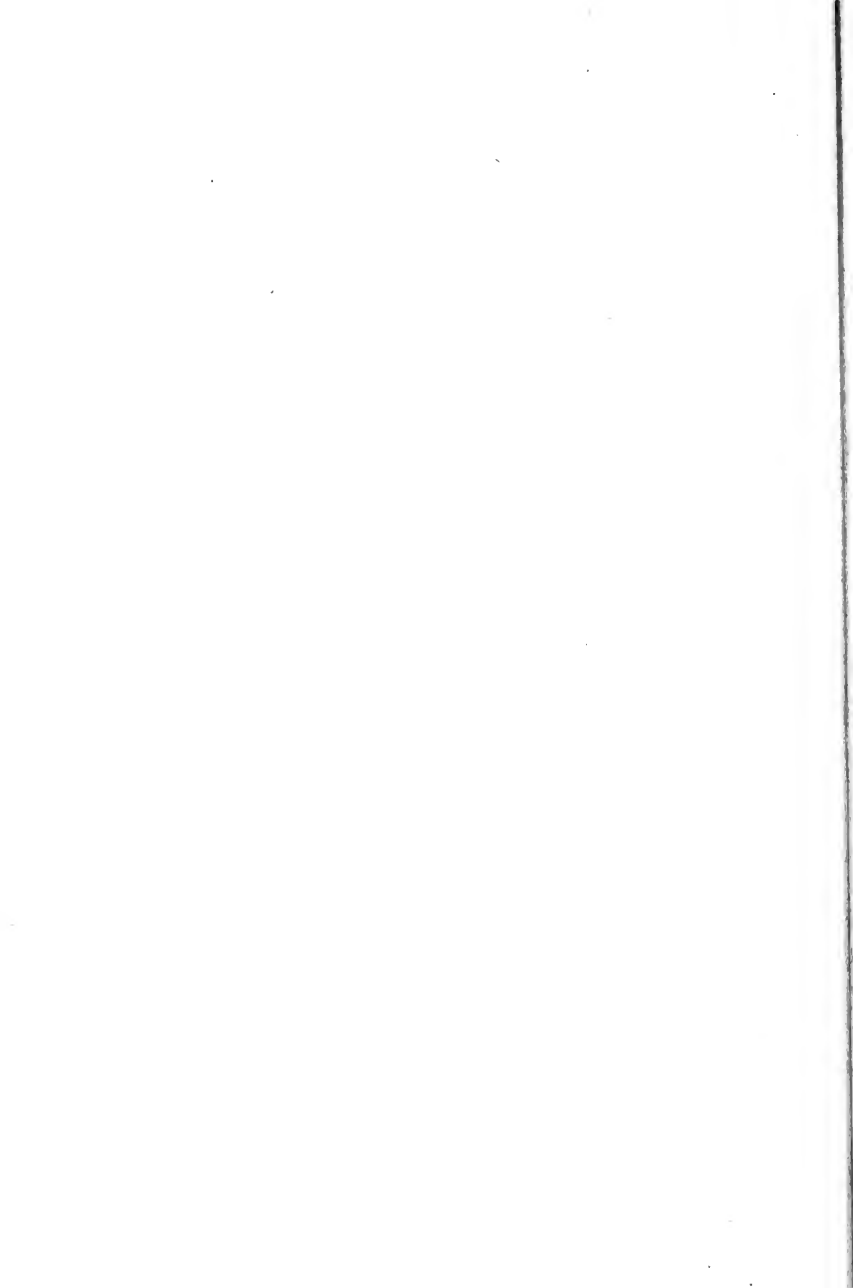
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GEORGE BUCHANAN



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GEORGE BUCHANAN
AND HIS TIMES

BY

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This short life of George Buchanan, expressly written for young people, contains facts which do not appear in the author's larger work, published in 1890. It may be well, therefore, to state that the authority for the new facts is an official document containing the account of Buchanan's trial by the Inquisition in Lisbon, which came into the author's hands subsequent to the appearance of his former work.



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GEORGE BUCHANAN

AND HIS TIMES

LAST year Scotland celebrated the 400th anniversary of the birth of her great reformer, John Knox, and during the present year, 1906, falls the same anniversary of another of her greatest men, George Buchanan. Knox and Buchanan were fellow-Scotsmen and contemporaries; they took the same side at the Reformation, and they knew and greatly respected each other. In his "History of the Reformation in Scotland" Knox has some words about Buchanan, which show what a high opinion he had of him. "That notable man, Mr George Buchanan," he says, "remains to this day, the year of God, 1566 years, to the glory of God, to the great honour of the nation, and to the

comfort of them that delight in letters and virtue." But, though Knox and Buchanan had such a high esteem for each other,



JOHN KNOX

and though they both stood side by side as reformers, they were in many respects very different men. They led very different lives; they were not interested in the same things, and the chief work which

each of them had to do was of a very different kind. At the present day Knox is far better known than Buchanan; for every one person who has heard of Buchanan hundreds have heard of Knox. During their lives, however, this was far from being the case. If any educated Scotsman had then been asked which of the two was the greater honour to his country, he would have certainly said that it was Buchanan. One reason of this was that men did not at that time understand the greatness of the work which Knox did for his country, and the other reason was that all educated Scotsmen knew that Buchanan was considered one of the most learned men and one of the best poets in the whole of Europe. Here, for example, are some of the things that were said of Buchanan in foreign countries. One famous Frenchman said of him that he "was easily the first poet of his age," and another equally famous said that "he was the greatest man of his time." One of the greatest Dutchmen who ever lived,

Hugo Grotius, even went so far as to call Buchanan "that wonder of Scotland." But what the great Dr Johnson said of him is perhaps most interesting. "Ah, Dr Johnson," said a rather foolish Scotsman to him one day, "what would you have said had Buchanan been an Englishman?" "Why, sir," answered the great doctor, "I should not have said, had he been an Englishman, what I will say of him as a Scotsman, that he was the only man of genius his country ever produced."

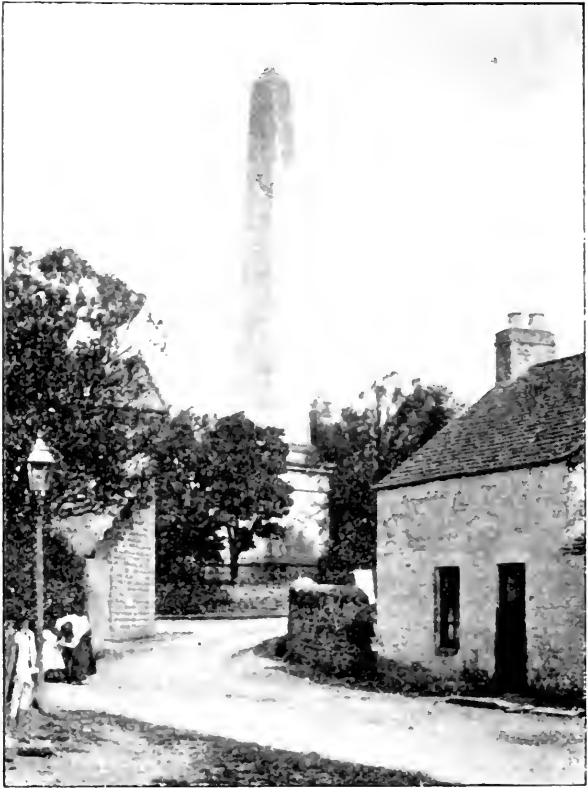
If Buchanan was once so famous both in his own country and abroad, why is he not so well known at the present day? The reason is quite simple. In the time of Buchanan and for long afterwards most learned men wrote their books in Latin, and Buchanan was considered one of the best Latin scholars that ever lived. He wrote Latin both in poetry and prose just as if it was his mother tongue, and people even said that he was as good a poet as Virgil and as good a historian as Livy.

At the present time, however, even learned men do not write their books in Latin, and only a few people can read that language as easily as they can read their own. The explanation, then, why Buchanan is not so well known now as he once was, is that only learned men can read his books, as they are almost all written in Latin. Still Buchanan is considered one of the three or four greatest men that Scotland has produced; and even those who do not approve of some of his opinions, as, for instance, Sir Walter Scott, regard him as a great honour to his country. It is surely right, therefore, that his fellow-countrymen should know something of his life, and of what his country owes to him. And it happens that the story of his life is full of strange adventures, and that we know more of it than in the case of most famous Scotsmen of old times. The life of an author at the present day is for the most part only the story of how his books were written and how his readers liked or disliked them, but in the time of Buchanan

it was very different, and we shall see that Buchanan wandered as much and passed through as many dangers as a knight-errant in the days of chivalry.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

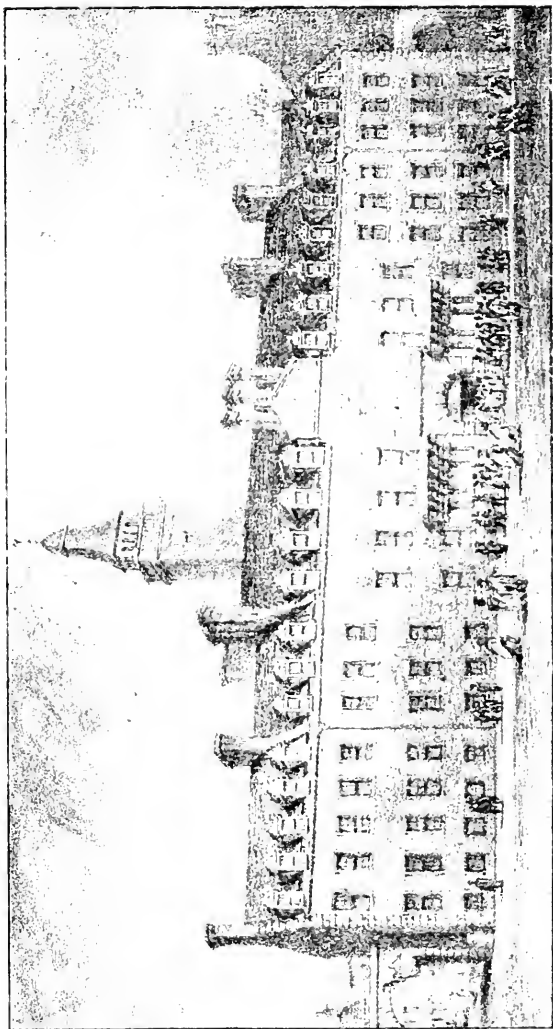
GEORGE BUCHANAN was born in the beginning of February, in the year 1506 or 1507—we are not sure which. His father owned a little property, called The Moss, quite near to the village of Killearn, in Stirlingshire, and it was on this property that Buchanan was born. The house where he first saw the light was still standing in the year 1812, more than three hundred years after his birth, but in that year it was pulled down and a new one built in its place. In memory of Buchanan, however, a chair and a table were made out of the oaken beams of the old house, and are still to be seen in the new one. His father, Thomas Buchanan, belonged to the Highland clan of the Buchanans, and in the district where his home lay it was the Gaelic language that



KILLEARN, WITH BUCHANAN'S MONUMENT

*From a Photograph by
Valentine & Sons, Dundee.*

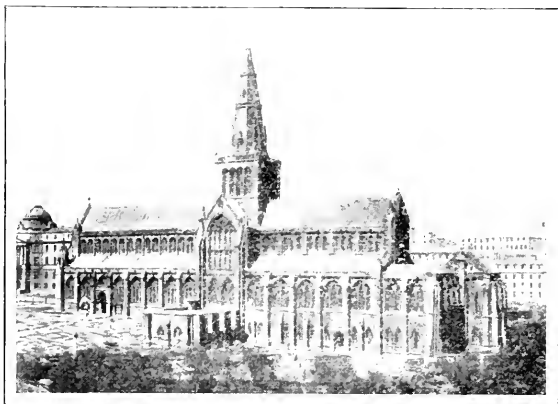
was then spoken. What was unusual for a Highlander, however, his father had married a Lowlander named Agnes Heriot, who came from Haddingtonshire, and belonged to the same family as George Heriot, who is so well known as the founder of Heriot's Hospital in Edinburgh. As she was a Lowlander, she, of course, spoke the Scottish language as her mother tongue, and so it was that her son learned to speak two languages in his childhood, just as in some countries on the Continent children speak both French and German, or French and Italian. The father of George died while he was still a young man, and left his widow to bring up a family of five boys and three girls. Even before the father's death the family had been poor, but after it there were hardly means left to keep a roof above their heads. As her son George tells us, however, Agnes Heriot was the most careful and diligent of mothers. The motto of her family was—"Pray for a brave heart," and in her case the prayer



OLD GLASGOW COLLEGE

was granted, for she brought up all her children to an age when they were able to provide for themselves.

When George was about the age of seven, his mother took the lease of a farm



GLASGOW CATHEDRAL.

on the estate of Cardross, in the district of Monteith, in the south-west of Perthshire, and there he probably spent the rest of his boyhood. In the case of one who became so famous, we should like to know how and where he received his education, but all that he himself tells us is, that he was educated

in the schools of his native country. According to some accounts he went to school at Killearn, near his birthplace, and according to others at Dumbarton, but it is pretty certain that at some time during his boyhood he attended school in Glasgow, then only a village with little more than a thousand inhabitants, but where there was a great cathedral with learned men belonging to it.

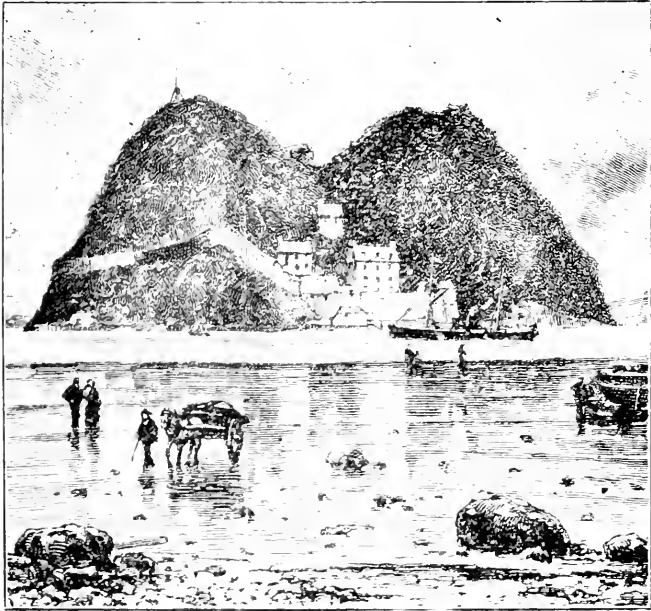
BUCHANAN GOES TO PARIS

WHEREVER Buchanan was educated, he must at least have shown that he was clever at his books, for when he was about fourteen or fifteen years old, his mother's brother, James Heriot, determined to send him to the most famous place of education in the world—the University of Paris. To George this news must have been the most exciting he ever received in his life. Paris, we must remember, was not so easily reached then as it is now ; a journey which now takes only two days then took several weeks. But it was not only the distance that made the journey a serious matter ; there were a good many risks that you would never reach your destination. The longest part of the journey was by sea, and ships in those days were not so safe as now. It was in the autumn,

too, when storms are frequent, that the University opened, so that the voyage was likely to be both long and dangerous. But there was a greater peril than from winds and waves. In those days the seas were swarming with pirates of all countries who were on the outlook for every vessel from which they could get any plunder. A common thing for these pirates to do was to take passengers as prisoners, and only send them home when their friends paid a large sum of money for them. About the same time as Buchanan went to Paris, a Professor from Aberdeen went there to publish a book he had written, and he says that "he met with many dangers both by land and sea, and from desperate sea-robbers."

But how, we ask, did a boy of fourteen accomplish so long and dangerous a journey in those days? In the first place he did not go alone. Every autumn there were numbers of Scotch boys and young men who went to Paris to study, and the custom was for some elderly person,

usually a priest, to go in charge of them. If Buchanan started on his journey from his mother's home, he would probably



DUMBARTON

sail from Dumbarton, which was the usual port on the west coast from which Scotsmen sailed to France. Arrived at the mouth of the Seine, he would be taken in a boat up that river and so reach Paris,

his destination. Whether Buchanan had any adventures by the way we do not know, but at all events he got safely to the end of his journey.

A wonderful sight it must have been for the country boy to see such a place as Paris for the first time. The grandeur of the buildings, the numbers of the people, the strange dresses of all classes and of all nations must have made his brain dizzy with wonder. It would be, of course, the students at whom Buchanan would look with the greatest curiosity, and, indeed, they were the most wonderful sight of all. There were so many of them that they would have made a considerable town by themselves. They were of all ages, from fourteen to thirty-five. Some were learning to be clergymen, some to be doctors, lawyers, or teachers, and many had come there merely to waste their time. They came from all countries, and wore the dress of the lands from which they came, and in the case of most of them their clothes were so torn and tattered that they

looked more like beggars than future clergymen and doctors. The greater number of them lived in colleges on the left bank of the river Seine, and apart from the city itself. In the colleges they were compelled to behave tolerably well, as the oldest of them were soundly flogged if they disobeyed the rules of the college. There was one way of chastising them which the students enjoyed, though not the unfortunate victim. Two lines of students and teachers, each armed with a stout stick, were formed, and between these lines the culprit had to rush, receiving a blow from every hand that could reach him. But if the students were kept in some order within the colleges, they took their full swing when they were out of doors. Their favourite time for working mischief was at night; then they roved through the streets of the city with all kinds of weapons in their hands, and considered it good fun to beat and wound every harmless person they met. Among so many thousands of students there were

not a few who were really bad characters, and who committed crimes, such as stealing and even assassination, which were not discovered in the darkness of the night. This was the kind of world in which Buchanan now found himself, and in which at different times he was to spend many years of his life.

A question we naturally ask is, How did a Scottish boy of fourteen make himself understood in a foreign University? The answer is, that almost all the teachers and students spoke in Latin, not only during class hours but even when they were at play. But in the best schools in Scotland boys were taught to speak in Latin, so that Buchanan would have little difficulty in understanding his teachers and making himself understood. Without Latin in those days, it is to be remembered, nothing could be learned, and for the simple reason that the best books on all subjects were written in Latin. We are not surprised, therefore, that during the two years he now spent at the Univer-

sity of Paris he was taught little else but Latin. Almost all his time, he says himself, was spent in writing verses in Latin, whether he liked it or not. We know, however, that he must have liked it, as it was by his skill in composing Latin poetry that he afterwards became so famous both in his own and other countries. We do not know where he lived in Paris during these two years—whether in a college or in lodgings, as some students did, but we know that he was neither comfortable nor happy. He was often ill, and often had so little money that he could hardly buy food to keep himself alive. At length, at the end of two years, his uncle who had sent him to Paris died, and his money was stopped altogether. As at this time, also, his health was worse than ever, there was nothing for it but for him to return home, though if he had stayed another year he would have become a Bachelor of Arts, which must have been the intention of his uncle when he sent him to Paris.

BUCHANAN SERVES AS A SOLDIER

BUCHANAN was so ill on his return home that it took him nearly a year to recover. As soon as he was well, he was called upon to do what most Scotch boys in those days had to do at one time or other. The King of Scotland at this time was James V., but, as he was too young to rule, the country was governed by the Regent Albany, who was more a Frenchman than a Scotsman, as he had lived most of his life in France. At this time England was the enemy of France, and Albany, more in the interests of France than of Scotland, determined to invade England with a great army. There was then no regular army of soldiers as there is now, and when the king went to war, what he did was to command every man between the ages of sixteen and

sixty to meet him at a certain place on an appointed day, and bring with him such weapons as he possessed, and also provisions enough to last him for thirty days. As Buchanan was now more than sixteen years old, he had to obey the Regent's command, and so on the appointed day he went to the Boroughmuir at Edinburgh, where Morningside now stands, which was the place fixed for the army to meet. So we have now to imagine Buchanan not dressed in a student's gown, but with a steel cap on his head and with a long leathern jacket covered with iron plates, and armed with a sword, a buckler, a knife, and a spear or axe. In his "History of Scotland," which he wrote in his old age, he has told us the story of the expedition, and a pitiful story it is. When the army, in which there were many Frenchmen, had crossed the river Tweed at Melrose, the nobles refused to march into England as the Regent wished. The reason why they refused was that if the Scots invaded England, the English would

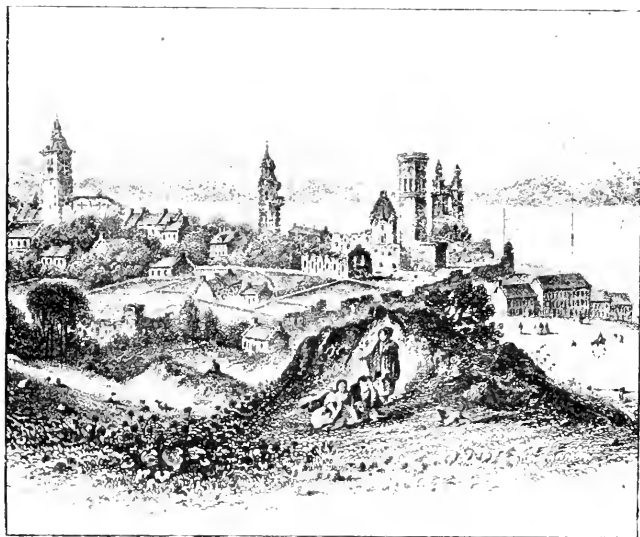
pay them back by invading Scotland ; and they also said that the Regent was thinking more of the interests of France than of Scotland. It would have been ridiculous, however, for the Regent to have sent home his great army without doing something with it, so he marched along the north bank of the Tweed till he came to Wark Castle, to which he laid siege. To prevent the English from coming to its assistance, he sent a number of horse-soldiers across the river into Northumberland, who burnt and destroyed everything on which they could lay their hands. But the garrison who defended the castle fought so bravely that Albany soon saw that he would not be able to take it—more especially as a great English army was coming to its assistance. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to march his army home, though he had done so little with it. But it was now the month of November, and one night, while the army was on the march, there was a great snowstorm, and a number of horses and men perished from the cold.

Buchanan, who was never very healthy and robust, had good reason to remember that night, as on his return home he was confined to bed for the rest of the winter.

HE STUDIES AT ST ANDREWS

By the spring of the next year (1525) Buchanan was sufficiently recovered to leave home, and to resume the studies which he had not been able to finish in Paris. This time, however, he did not go to Paris, but to the University of St Andrews, which was the oldest and most famous in Scotland. The subjects he had now to study were not Latin and Greek, but logic and philosophy, and there was now at St Andrews a professor who was considered one of the most learned philosophers in all Europe. This was John Mair, or Major, as he was called in Latin. Major, like Buchanan, was the son of a small farmer, and like Buchanan he had also gone to the University of Paris, where he had made himself a great name for his cleverness and learning. But though

Major was such a famous professor, Buchanan did not find his teaching at all interesting, and when we read Major's books we can hardly wonder at this. Here,



ST ANDREWS

for example, are some of the things we find in them. Roman Catholics are not allowed to eat meat in Lent, but they may eat vegetables and fish. But in peas and beans, says Major, there are little animals,

so that in eating peas and beans you must eat the flesh of live animals. Is it right, then, asks Major, for a good Catholic to eat peas and beans? Yes, he answers, because, in the first place, the creatures are dead, and, secondly, because you do not know you are eating them. Then, Major goes on, what is a good Catholic to do in the case of the beaver? It lives half on land and half in the water; is it, then, a fish or a land animal? Why, says Major, the thing is quite simple; eat the beaver's tail and the part of its body that goes under water, and don't eat the rest. In other parts of his books Major asks even stranger questions than these. For instance, he asks whether God, if He chose, could become an ox or an ass, and whether John the Baptist's head, when it was cut off, could be in more places than one. We can hardly wonder, then, that Buchanan did not find Major's lectures very interesting, and thought that he wasted his time on trifles. But the truth is, as we shall see, that Major and his ways

of teaching were now out of date, and that there were new things to be learned which he could not teach. However, Buchanan had not to endure Major very long. He had only come to St Andrews to take the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and this he did the same year he had come. We can still read Buchanan's name in the list of the students at St Andrews, and what is interesting is that opposite his name stands the Latin word *pauper*, which means that he was so poor that he could not pay the fee which was required from students when they became Bachelors of Arts.

HE RETURNS TO PARIS

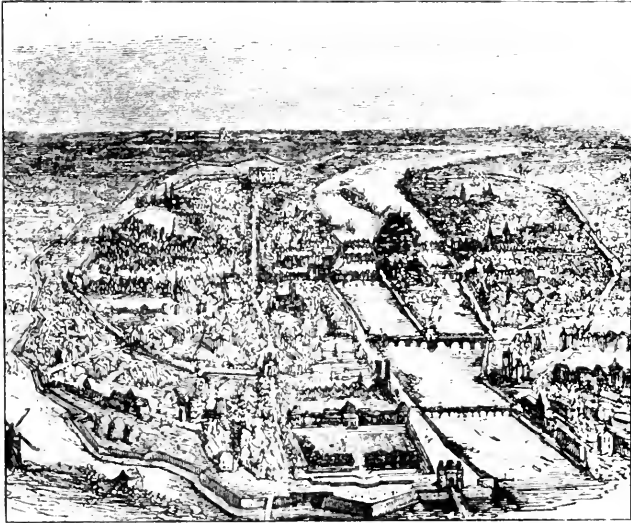
BUT Buchanan had not yet completed his studies. Before he could become a professor himself, he must be a Master as well as a Bachelor of Arts, and he had to attend some university for three more years. As the University of Paris was the most famous in the world, he chose to go there again though he could not have very pleasant memories of it after his first visit. So in the year 1525, when he was about the age of twenty-one, he returned to Paris where he was to stay for the next ten years. This time we know exactly where he lived during the whole of his stay. For the first two or three years he lived in a college for Scottish students which had been set up two hundred years before by a certain bishop in Scotland. The students only

boarded in this college, however, and had to go to other larger colleges to be taught. But we are not to think that the Scotch students were either very comfortable or well fed in this college of their own. On the contrary, their food was much plainer, and they had less of it than people in poor-houses at the present day. They usually had little money to buy clothes, and those they had they had to wear till they were threadbare and tattered. But it was during the cold winters of Paris that they suffered most of all. Houses in those days did not keep out the cold as ours do now, and it was only very rich people who could afford to buy enough of fuel to keep up a sufficient number of fires. During the daytime in winter the only way the students could keep themselves warm was to play games in the open air. But it was in the night-time that the cold was hardest to bear, and we hear of them lying awake shivering in their beds—that is to say, some straw or rushes strewn on the floor with but scanty covering to keep

them warm. We wonder, indeed, not only how they kept up their spirits but how they kept themselves alive, and the truth is that many of them died from the hardships they had to go through. Long afterwards, when he was an old man, Buchanan remembered these hard years which he spent in the Scots College, and he tells us himself how unhappy they were.

At length, when he was twenty-four years old, he became a Master of Arts, and so could become a Professor and earn his own living. As he was one of the cleverest students at the University, he was not long in finding employment, and he was lucky in getting into one of the best colleges of Paris, called Ste. Barbe. In this college, then, for the next few years Buchanan was one of a number of professors who taught students of all ages from fourteen up to thirty. Let us see what kind of life the students and professors lived in these colleges four hundred years ago, as Buchanan himself describes

it in one of his poems. At four o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, every one in the college had to get out of bed and to be in his class-room by five. And



PARIS IN THE 16TH CENTURY

what places the school-class-rooms were even in the famous University of Paris! There was only one seat in the room on which the teacher sat while he was giving his lesson. As for the scholars, they sat or lay on the floor which was strewn with

straw, which was only changed when it became as dirty as if it had been trampled in the street. The walls of the room were bare, the windows let in hardly any light, and, when it was dark, one or two little lamps, which were constantly going out, dimly lit up the dismal apartment. The scholars being all in their places, some sitting up and others lying at full length, in came the master wearing his cap and gown, and carrying in his hand his instrument of chastisement which was seldom idle during the course of the day. Were scholars more attentive in those days than now? Let us hear what Buchanan says of *his* class. "Some of the scholars," he says, "are sound asleep, and others are thinking of everything but the book they are reading. One is absent, but has bribed his neighbour to answer to his name when the roll is called. Another has lost his stockings, and another cannot keep his eyes off a big hole in his shoe. One pretends to be ill and another is writing a letter to his parents. And so



JAMES V.

the rod is never idle, sobs never cease, and cheeks are never dry from tears."

This, then, was the kind of life that Buchanan led in the College of Ste. Barbe, teaching from early morning till late at night, and then working hard at his own studies. But it was during this time that he began to make himself famous as a clever writer and one of the most learned men in the University. At this time there was a great fight going on in the University, in which some took one side, and some another. What the one side wanted was to go on reading the same books and teaching in the same way as men had been doing for several hundred years. The other side, on the contrary, wished to bring in new books, especially those by Latin and Greek authors, and to teach in quite a different way from men like John Major, who had taught Buchanan at St Andrews. Now Buchanan was all for the new way of teaching, and as he was one of those men who are very keen about everything in which they are inter-

ested, he did all he could for his own side. He taught his own scholars in the new way, and became known as one of the best teachers in France. But he did more than this. He wrote poems in Latin in which he made fun of the old-fashioned teachers and set all the University laughing at them. So important a person did he become, indeed, that he was chosen to be chief of all the students from the British Islands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

BUCHANAN PUT IN PRISON AND ESCAPES

At the end of four or five years Buchanan seems to have become tired of living in a college, and he looked about him for some new employment. At this time there was living in Paris a young Scottish nobleman, the Earl of Cassillis, who like other Scottish nobles had come there to study. As the Earl wished to return to Scotland, and yet not to give up his studies, he asked Buchanan to go home with him as his private tutor. It was about ten years since Buchanan had left his native country, and no doubt he was anxious by this time to see it again, so he gladly accepted the Earl's offer, and the two set off together for Scotland. Buchanan did not remain long with Cassillis, however, for another offer was made to him, which shows that he was already considered one

of the most learned Scotsmen then living. The new offer came to him from King James V. himself, who wanted a tutor for his son, whose name was James Stewart, but who must not be confused with another James Stewart, also a son of King James, and afterwards the famous Regent Moray. Buchanan, of course, could not refuse such an offer as this, and for nearly four years he lived at the Court, teaching his pupil and leading what must have been a very different life from what he had seen in the Paris college. But wherever Buchanan went, he was sure before long to get into some scrape or other. The reason of this was that whenever he saw anything that he did not think was right, he could never hold his tongue, and must speak out his mind about it. But when he did speak his mind, he did it so cleverly and wittily as to make those he spoke against exceedingly angry. And this was exactly what happened now ; though, as we shall see, it was as much the King's fault as Buchanan's.

It was about this time that men here and there in Scotland began to become Protestants and to take the side of Luther against the Church of Rome. Just a few years before Buchanan had returned from France, Patrick Hamilton, who is usually called the first martyr of the Reformation in Scotland, had been put to death for teaching doctrines contrary to those of the Roman Church. In the year 1539, the year to which we have come in Buchanan's life, there was a great search made for heretics, as the Protestants were called, and five of them were burned and many were banished from the country. At this time, therefore, it was very necessary that men should be careful as to what they said and did, or they ran the risk of being taken for heretics, and meeting the same fate as Patrick Hamilton. But Buchanan was never a very cautious person, and was always in the habit of speaking right out what he thought. One day he was talking with a Franciscan friar, and he said to him that it was not fair to condemn a man as

a heretic when the persons who accused him were not known and might even be his enemies. The Franciscan was horrified at this remark, and went about saying that Buchanan was himself a heretic. Buchanan, who was really a Catholic at this time, just as John Knox himself was, was indignant at this, and he now did what he usually did when he was angry. He wrote a poem about the Franciscan friars, in which he said things of them which could not have been pleasant for them to read. It so happened that the King himself did not like the Franciscans, and he asked Buchanan to write another poem about them and to say still more unpleasant things in it. Rather against his will, because he knew what dangerous enemies the Franciscans could be, he wrote the poem as the King wished, and, as we shall see, he had good reason afterwards to be sorry that he did so. Only the King got a copy of his poem, but the Franciscans heard of it and they never forgave him, and during the rest of his life they

did all they could to have him put to death. Unfortunately for Buchanan, also, a noblewoman at the Court took a dislike to him and told Cardinal Beaton, who was a great enemy of Protestants, that Buchanan was certainly a heretic. Another thing that Buchanan did made the Catholics still more angry with him. One of his friends was lying very ill, but would not eat meat on Fridays and Sundays because he said it was forbidden by his religion. Buchanan told him how foolish this was and that it was quite right that he should eat meat on these days for the good of his health, and to encourage him he ate meat himself on the Fridays and Sundays, though he had not the excuse of being ill. Strange stories now began to be told about Buchanan by those who disliked him. It was said, for example, that he had eaten the Pascal Lamb, and that he was really a Jew in disguise. He was now in great danger of his life, and had to ask the King to protect him. It was the King who had



CARDINAL BEATON

been partly the cause of Buchanan's getting into trouble, and he would have liked to save him from his enemies, but Cardinal Beaton and others said it was the law of the land that heretics like Buchanan should be put to death. At last King James thought of a clever way of getting Buchanan safely out of Scotland and out of the reach of his enemies. He put him in prison as if he meant to have him tried and punished, but arranged secretly that he should escape before the trial came on. So one night, when his guards were asleep, Buchanan slipped out of his prison and travelled as fast as he could to England, where he thought he would be safe. The next day the King sent people in pursuit of him, but this was only a pretence as he knew very well that Buchanan was out of reach.

But Buchanan's adventures were not yet ended. In those days there were many gangs of robbers on the borders of England and Scotland who made a living by stealing horses and cattle, and robbing

travellers of their money, and Buchanan fell into the hands of one of these gangs. He had very little money in his pocket, but they thought he had been sent as a spy to find out who they were, and it was not till he made it plain that he was not a spy that they would let him go. Having escaped from the hands of the robbers, he went on his way and had got some distance into England when he was again brought to a standstill. This time, however, it was not from robbers, but from a terrible plague that was raging in the north of England. In the times when Buchanan lived there were plagues every few years, and hundreds of people died from them as the doctors then did not know how to treat those who took ill. What was done to stop the plague from spreading was this: no one was allowed to leave the place where he lived, and if a stranger came to a place where the plague was raging he was compelled to stay there till it was over. This was what now happened to Buchanan, and greatly

against his will and in danger of his life all the time, he had to remain in the north of England till the plague was past.

At length, after a journey that had taken him several months, he arrived in



HENRY VIII.

London where he thought he would be out of all danger. He soon found that he was greatly mistaken. The King of England at this time was Henry VIII., who was a Protestant of a kind, and forced all his subjects to be Protestants like himself. The very year that Buchanan arrived in London Henry had passed a law called the Statute of the Six Articles

for punishing every person who was not of the same religion as himself. The consequence was, so Buchanan says himself, that Protestants and Catholics were both being burned together on the same day and in the same fire. But, as Buchanan at this time was not a Protestant, he had good reason to fear that his turn to be burnt would come soon. This was, indeed, one of the most unhappy times in his life. In a poem which he now wrote he describes himself as "a wanderer, an exile, poor, and tossed about by land and sea." As he could not make a living in London and was in danger of his life besides, he determined to go once more to France, which he always regarded as his second home. But England was at this time at war with France, and if it had been known that he wished to go there he would have been taken for a French spy and been put in prison and kept there till the war was over. What he did, then, was to pretend that he was going to Germany, but really got aboard a vessel that took him to France.

RETURNS TO FRANCE

BUCHANAN had no sooner arrived in Paris than he found that he had gone into the lion's den. Cardinal Beaton, his greatest enemy, was now staying there, and would be sure if he heard of him to have him arrested as a heretic. The King now reigning in France was Francis I. who had once been a friend of the Protestants but now was one of their greatest enemies. All the Cardinal had to do, therefore, was to tell Francis that there was a Scotch heretic in Paris, and Buchanan would soon have heard of it. Luckily for Buchanan, however, he now received an invitation to become a professor at Bordeaux where he would be out of reach of all his enemies. At Bordeaux there had been set up a new college in which only the most famous professors were to be teachers, and the fact that Buchanan was

chosen to be one of them shows how well he was known to the learned men in France.

The way of living in the College at Bordeaux was much the same as at Ste. Barbe, only both the professors and scholars had better food to eat and more comfortable rooms to live in. The professors stayed in the college and kept boarders, from whom they received fees in addition to their salaries. Among Buchanan's boarders there was a boy who afterwards became one of the most famous writers of France — Michel de Montaigne. Montaigne, when he grew up, was proud to have had Buchanan as one of his teachers, and in his writings he calls him "that great Scottish poet." But Buchanan, it is to be remembered, was always an author as well as a teacher, and everybody in the college knew that he was one of the best writers of Latin then living. Whenever the head of the college wanted anything written, therefore, it was Buchanan whom he asked to do it. For

example, he wished to have plays in Latin which the scholars might act, and Buchanan wrote no fewer than four which we can still read in the two large volumes which contain his writings. So everything went on smoothly for about three years, and then as usual Buchanan got into trouble. Just as before, his trouble came from his speaking out his mind about something which he thought was wrong and unjust. This is the story as he tells it himself. The wife of a great man in Bordeaux died, and left a large sum of money. By the law of the country this money should have gone to her two daughters, but the father tried to put the girls in a nunnery in order to get the money for himself. The girls, however, refused to go into a nunnery, and the case was brought before the magistrates of the city. While everybody was talking about the affair, Buchanan wrote a poem in which he made two persons speak, and say how unjust it was for parents to put their daughters into nunneries

against their will. The poem was thought so clever that it was acted both in private houses and in public, and the result was, of course, that all the Catholic clergy were indignant at the man who had written it. Just about this time, also, the clergy began to be alarmed about another matter. In Bordeaux and near it, it was found that many persons were giving up the Roman Catholic religion and becoming Protestants, and for the first time one person was burned in the town as a heretic. It will be seen, therefore, that Bordeaux was no longer a safe place for Buchanan, so once more he had to set out on his travels, not knowing very well where to go or where to find employment.

BUCHANAN IN THE PRISON OF THE INQUISITION

AT first when Buchanan left Bordeaux, he thought of returning to Scotland, but on learning that his enemy, Cardinal Beaton, was as powerful as ever, he had to give up all thoughts of this, and for the next few years he remained in France, now in one place and now in another, wherever he could find employment. For nearly a whole year he was so ill that he did not expect to recover, but it shows how much he was liked and honoured that some of the most famous men in France used to sit by his bedside day after day and try to cheer him in his illness. At length, in the year 1547, when he was a little over forty years old, he received an invitation which was to lead him into the greatest danger he ever was in. The invitation came from the King of Portugal who

wished him to become a Professor in a new University which he had started in the town of Coimbra. This was the farthest journey that Buchanan had ever taken, and he was quite aware that his life might not be safe in Portugal where the Jesuits, who were great enemies of heretics, had much influence with the King. To make sure that no harm should befall him, therefore, he got the King to promise that he would protect him as long as he was in Portugal. About this time, also, the Pope offered a pardon to all who had said or done things of which the Church did not approve, and Buchanan took care to get this pardon, which shows that he was still a Catholic at this time.

In the spring of the year 1547 the chosen band of Professors set out for their destination. Most of them went by sea, but Buchanan and two others, who were perhaps not good sailors, preferred to go by land. We do not know how they travelled, but probably they rode on horseback, as this was the usual way of going to places

that were far off. At last they came to Salamanca in Spain, where there was one of the most famous universities in the world. They stayed for a few days at an inn, and now a thing happened which Buchanan was made to repent of afterwards. It was the time of Lent when the three friends were in the town, and during that time Catholics are not allowed to eat meat. Unluckily the bread made in the place was very very bad, and the only fish to be got were conger eels which neither Buchanan nor his friends could eat. What then were they to do? In the circumstances they thought that it would not be very wrong to eat meat, more especially as most people in Spain were in the habit of eating meat in Lent. So all three ate the forbidden food, and went on their way, little thinking what misfortunes were before them.

At last the whole band of the professors reached Coimbra, and the new University was set agoing. For a year everything went smoothly, but the head of the Uni-

versity died and then there came a change. As was already said, the Jesuits had great influence with the King of Portugal, and what the Jesuits wished above everything was to have the charge of educating boys and young men so that they might bring them up as good Roman Catholics. They now told the King that most of the new professors were heretics, and that it was not safe for them to be trusted with the teaching of students. The King believed them, and so one morning the head of the Jesuits appeared at the gate of the college with an order from the King in which he gave command that from that time onwards the University was to be in the hands of the Jesuits. Of course, the first thing the Jesuits then did was to have all the professors brought to trial whom they suspected of being heretics, and Buchanan, who was one of those suspected, was at once carried off to Lisbon and put in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

The very name of the Inquisition in those days was a terror both to Catholics

and Protestants, and with very good reason. What the Inquisition did was to try to find out every person who was suspected of not being a good Catholic, and to put him in a dungeon and afterwards bring him to trial. If it was thought that he did not speak the truth during his trial, he was put to terrible tortures to compel him to do so, and then, if he was found guilty, he was burned in some public place where multitudes of people came to see the sight. It is difficult for us to understand how men could treat their fellow-creatures in this way, but what the Inquisitors said was that a heretic was the worst of all criminals, and that it was right that he should be prevented from making other persons heretics like himself.

Buchanan was not kept long waiting for his trial. Two days after he had been put in the dungeon he was brought before the judges, who asked him a great many questions to try and find out if he was a heretic or not. What he was accused of was, his writing against the Franciscans,

his eating meat in Lent, and his saying that the bread and wine in the Sacraments were not changed into the body and blood of Christ. For a year and a half Buchanan was kept in his dungeon, and was several times brought before his judges, though they never put him to torture as they did in some cases. What they especially wanted to find out was if Buchanan knew of any heretics among his acquaintances, but we are glad to know that he refused to say a word that would put any of them in danger. At length, after the year and a half, his judges came to the conclusion that, though he had not been a good Catholic, he was not really a heretic, and that they might safely let him go free. Before he was let out of his dungeon, however, he had to confess that he had not been a good Catholic if the things he had said and done were wrong; and to make sure that he would not make such mistakes in future he was sent to a monastery for several months to be instructed by the monks. The monks, he

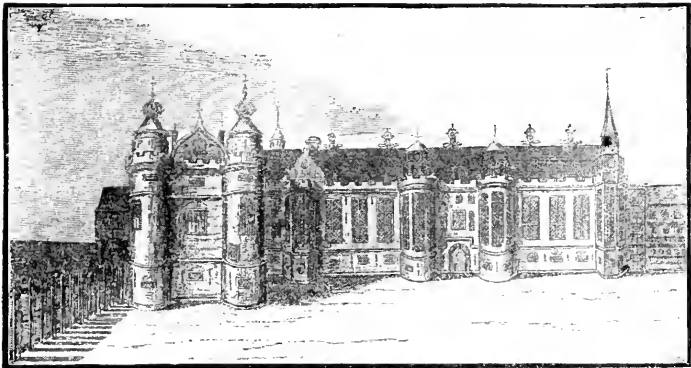
tells us, though very ignorant, were very kind to him, and he spent his time in writing the most famous of all his works—his translation of the Psalms into Latin verses. When his time in the monastery was at an end, the King wished him to remain in Portugal, but Buchanan had had quite enough of Portugal, and took the first ship he could get for England. As Buchanan was still a Catholic, however, he could not remain in England, and, as soon as possible, he returned to France, the country which he says he loved almost as much as his own. This was the fourth time that he had stayed in France, and at this time he remained there nearly eight years so that he spent nearly thirty years altogether in that country. We cannot wonder, therefore, that his French friends considered him more a Frenchman than a Scotsman. We know very little of his life at this time, except that he taught for some time at a college in Paris, and that he afterwards became tutor to a son of one of the great men of France, and lived

among the highest people in the land. Often, however, he was in great danger of being burned as a heretic, as Henry II., the King of France at this time, was a great enemy of the Protestants, and would have liked to destroy them all or drive them out of his kingdom. Up till this time Buchanan could hardly be called either a Protestant or a Catholic, but he now made up his mind to become either the one or the other. As the only way to settle the question, he began to read the Bible to find out whether the religion of the Protestants or the Catholics was the true one, and after studying for several years he came to the conclusion that the religion of the Protestants was the religion of the Bible.

BUCHANAN AND QUEEN MARY

BUCHANAN being now a Protestant, he could not remain in France, which was a Catholic country, where his life would no longer be safe. But just about this time Scotland, his native country, had become Protestant through the labours of John Knox and other reformers. It was twenty-two years since he had to flee for his life from Scotland, but Cardinal Beaton and his other enemies had long been dead, and he could now return without fear of any danger. So in the year 1561, when he was nearly sixty years old, we find him back in his native country, which he did not leave again except on a short visit to England, and on a still shorter one to France. As Buchanan was the most learned man in Scotland and very famous besides, he had no difficulty in finding employment, and the first to employ him

was Queen Mary herself. In those days queens and the ladies about their Courts were fond of reading Latin and even Greek with learned men, and so Mary had Buchanan to read Latin with her



HOLYROOD PALACE

whenever she had any spare time, which was not often. There was one subject in which both Mary and Buchanan were interested, and about which, no doubt, they would often talk, and that was France, where both of them had lived so long and which they both loved as much as if they had been born there. Buchanan must,

indeed, have been one of the most interesting persons to talk with in all Scotland. He certainly was not like a courtier in appearance. He was very careless in his dress, and we are told by one who knew



QUEEN MARY

him that the belt round his tunic was never in its right place. On the other hand, his manners and his way of speaking were like those of a man who had lived all his life in Courts. He was also a very amusing talker, as he was in the habit of telling humorous stories of

what he had seen in the course of his many travels and adventures. We may be sure, therefore, that Mary and he would



LORD DARNLEY

often forget their Latin book and talk about the persons and things they had seen in their beloved France. But a day came when they ceased to be friends and were ever afterwards the bitterest enemies.

Mary's husband, Darnley, was murdered in the Kirk of Field at Edinburgh, and Buchanan, like most people in Scotland and England and on the Continent, believed that Mary was not innocent of the murder. Now there was a reason why Buchanan should be angrier than most other Scotsmen at the death of Darnley. Darnley was the chief of the clan to which Buchanan himself belonged, and it was a law among the Highland clans that if the chief were killed, every clansman was bound to try to find the man who killed him and put him to death. Buchanan could not put Mary to death, but what he did was to write against her in such a way as to make people believe that she was one of the worst women that ever lived.

BUCHANAN MADE TUTOR TO JAMES VI

AT this time the great question in Scotland was whether it was to be a Protestant or a Catholic country. Queen Mary, being a Catholic herself, of course wished it to be Catholic, but men like John Knox and the Earl of Moray, afterwards the Regent Moray, were determined that it should be Protestant. From the time that Buchanan had returned to Scotland he had shown that he had quite made up his mind to be on the Protestant side. He was several times a member of the General Assembly, and one year he was chosen to be Moderator, even though he was not a minister. The Protestants were no doubt proud to have a man so famous as Buchanan on their side, and they took care to put him in places where he could be of use to them.

Even before his quarrel with Mary they had made him Principal of St Leonard's College in the University of St Andrews, so that the students might be under one who was both a Protestant and a famous teacher. Afterwards, however, he was appointed to a post which was considered still more important for the good of the country. By this time Queen Mary had been driven out of Scotland, and her son had been made king under the title of James VI. But James was now only four years of age and the Protestants were, of course, anxious that he should be educated in such a way as to make him a good king and friendly to their religion. As the best teacher they could get for him, therefore, they chose Buchanan, though he was now an old man past sixty.

Buchanan did his very best to make James a king such as John Knox and others would have liked, but, as we shall see, he did not succeed. Several stories are told of the way in which



JAMES VI. AS A BOY

Buchanan tried to teach James that, though he was a king, he was no better than other people and required to be trained just like other boys. In those days it was thought that a young king should not be punished like other children because kings were set apart by God from other men. Sometimes, indeed, there was a lad called the "whipping-boy," who was educated along with the King, and who was whipped for all the faults which the King committed. Buchanan, however, did not think that kings were different from other people, and he did not spare the rod when James deserved it. Here is one story which shows that Buchanan did not believe in a whipping-boy getting all the punishment when the King was the culprit. The young Earl of Mar, who was one of a number of boys educated along with James, had a sparrow which James was very anxious to possess. One day James tried to take the sparrow out of the earl's hands, and in the struggle

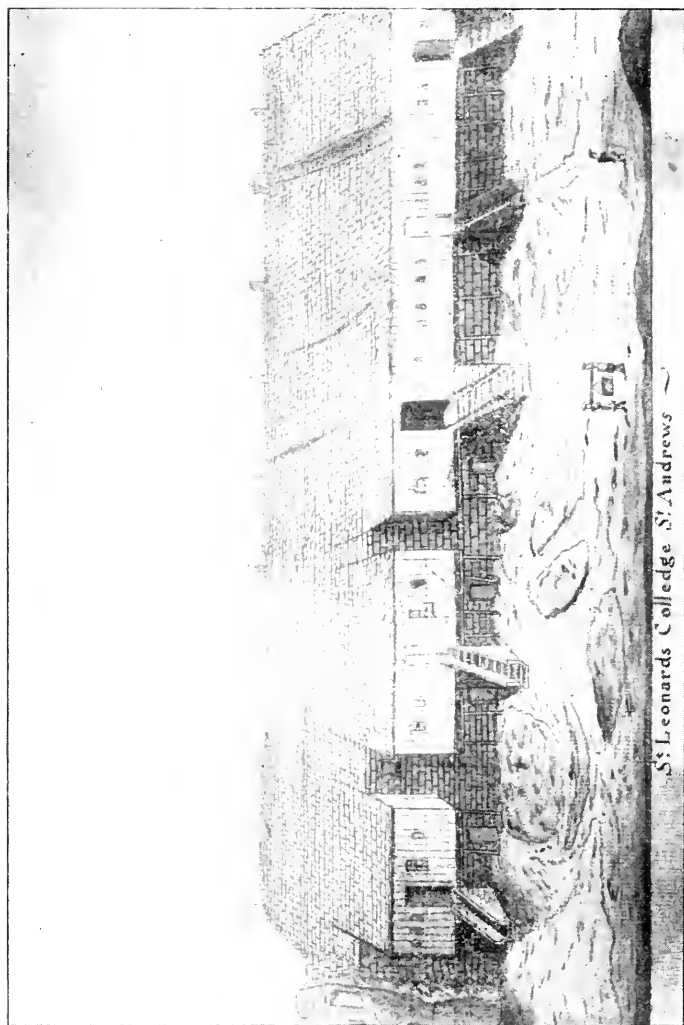
between them the bird was killed. When Buchanan was told of this, he was very angry, and gave James a box on the ear and a good scolding besides.

Another time Buchanan was sitting reading in his room, when James and the Earl of Mar made so much noise as to disturb him at his studies. He called to them to be quiet, telling them that, if they did not attend to his words, they would repent it. It so happened that the two boys had just been asked to write an essay on the story of Archibald, Bell-the-Cat, so James, rather cleverly, though rather impudently, answered back to his master, "But who will bell the cat?" meaning that Buchanan would not dare to touch his King. He found he was mistaken, for Buchanan at once gave him such a sound whipping that the Countess of Mar heard his crying in another room and came to ask what was the matter. When she saw the King sobbing, she scolded Buchanan for laying his hands on the "Lord's anointed," but

Buchanan as good as told her to mind her own business, and said that he was only doing his duty.

Still another story is told of the way in which Buchanan tried to train James to be a good king when he was grown up. Buchanan had found that James had a bad habit of making promises to people without thinking, so one day he put two papers into his hands and asked him to sign his name to them. Without taking the trouble to read the papers James wrote his name as he was asked. Now in one of the papers it was said that Buchanan was to be King of Scotland for fourteen days, so on receiving back the papers Buchanan began to speak and act as if he were king. James, of course, thought that his master had gone mad, but Buchanan showed him the paper he had signed, and then told him how foolish it was to say and do things without thinking what they meant.

In spite of all Buchanan's care, however, James did not turn out the kind



St. Leonard's College St. Andrews

ST. LEONARD'S COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS, OF WHICH BUCHANAN WAS PRINCIPAL

of king his master wished. Buchanan's idea of a good king was one who would try to understand what his people wished and would rule them according to the laws of the land. But when James came to rule for himself, he thought that he knew better than his subjects what was good for them, and that it was their duty to obey his commands in everything. This was a great mistake on his part, and in the end it was the cause of the House of Stewart losing the throne. When James grew up, he had no very pleasant memory of his old teacher, and for two reasons. Buchanan had chastised him whenever he deserved it, and James never forgot this. Long afterwards, when he was a full-grown man, he used to say that he was always frightened when a certain person came near him, because he reminded him of his old master. The other reason why James disliked Buchanan was that Buchanan in his writings always spoke against kings who did not rule according to the wishes

of their subjects, and this was exactly what James did not do.

Besides being tutor to the young king, Buchanan held other important offices



RUINS OF CROSSRAGUEL ABBEY, OF WHICH
BUCHANAN WAS COMMENDATOR

at the same time. He was appointed Keeper of the Privy Seal, a very high position, as it made him one of the chief advisers of the Government and gave him a right to sit in Parliament. Buchanan, however, was now an old man, and was often in ill-health, so that he was unable

to perform his duties. In the last years of his life he stayed in Kennedy's Close, in Edinburgh, a little above the Tron Church. Stories are told of him when he was near his end which help us to understand what kind of man he was. One day the famous Andrew Melville and two other friends went to call upon him, and found him sitting in his chair teaching the alphabet to a young man, his servant. "I see you are not idle," said Melville. "Better this," answered Buchanan, "than stealing sheep or sitting idle." At this time Buchanan's "History of Scotland" was being printed, and Melville and his two friends went to the printer's to see it. On looking into it, they read some words which they thought would greatly displease the king, so they went back to Buchanan and told him this. "But are the words true?" he asked, and Melville said that they were true. "Then," answered Buchanan, "let them stand, and let the King do what he likes."

The last story told of him seems very



ANDREW MELVILLE

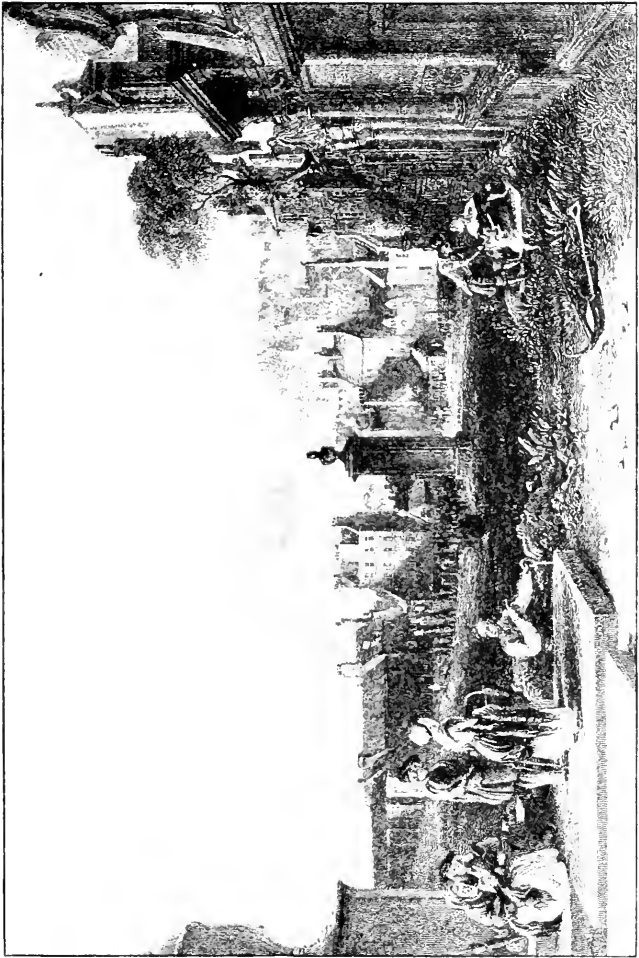
strange in the case of a man who had been tutor to the King and a Privy Councillor besides, and therefore a great man in the country. But at that time there was very little money in Scotland, and persons in high offices as often as not did not receive the salaries that were owing to them, so that even great nobles often had not money enough to pay all their expenses; and this was the case with Buchanan, who had been in poverty ever since he had returned to Scotland. One day when he was lying in bed a short time before his death, he asked his servant to tell him how much money there was in the house. When the sum was told him, Buchanan found that it was not enough to pay the expenses of his funeral, and so he ordered his servant to give the money to the poor. "But who is to pay for your funeral?" asked his servant. "That does not matter," answered the dying man; "they can either let my body lie here, or do with it what they please." And, indeed, it was at the ex-

pense of the town that Buchanan, who in his own country and in England and on the Continent was considered the most illustrious of all Scotsmen, was buried in the new graveyard of Greyfriars, where he was the first famous person to be laid to rest.

After the story of Buchanan's life something has to be said of the books which he wrote, as it was by his books he became so famous, and is remembered to the present day. As we have seen, Buchanan's whole life since he had become a Master of Arts had been devoted to teaching either boys or young men in schools or universities. But besides teaching he had also been constantly writing, and what he wrote fills two large volumes, one of which is in poetry and the other in prose. Very few people nowadays read his writings, and for two good reasons: they are, as has already been said, almost all written in Latin, and they are about subjects in which few people are now interested. But it was very different at

the time that Buchanan wrote. If a writer wished to have his books read in other countries besides his own, he had to write them in Latin, because educated persons in these countries all understood it. In the time of Buchanan, also, it was believed that one day Latin would be the only language that would be written and spoken, and that only the uneducated would use their native language. When Buchanan wrote his books in Latin, therefore, he thought he was making sure that they would continue to be read by people of all countries hundreds of years after his death. We now know that he was mistaken, and that his books would have been far more read at the present day if they had been written in English or Scotch.

There was one of his poems which Buchanan thought would be interesting to everybody to the end of time. It was called "De Sphæra," and it tells how the earth was made, and how the sun and stars go round it. It is very strange to read this poem now, as almost everything



GREYFRIARS' CHURCHYARD

that Buchanan says about the earth and the heavenly bodies has been found to be wrong. Nearly fifty years before Buchanan wrote his poem the famous astronomer, Copernicus, had shown that people had all been mistaken in thinking that the sun and all the stars went round the earth, and that the real truth was that it is the earth that whirls round its own axis every twenty-four hours, and circles round the sun every year. But very few people in Buchanan's day, and, indeed, for a long time after, believed that this was the case, and Buchanan in his poem tries to show how absurd it is to think of the earth turning round itself. Here are some of the curious things he says to show that it was impossible that the earth could go round as Copernicus said it did. Suppose a bird flew into the air, where would its nest be when it returned to the ground? Why, it would be hundreds of miles off, and the bird would be unable to find it. Again, when a boy whirls a rattle round his head, it makes a whizzing noise, but

imagine what a din the earth would make if it really went round with all its mountains, forests, rivers, and cities! Then how would the sea keep its place? Would it not rush all over the earth and sweep everything before it? Suppose, also, that two armies were fighting against each other, what would happen? Why, the arrows and shot that did not go in the direction the earth was moving would fall at the feet of those who discharged them. Of course, every school-boy and school-girl could now explain to Buchanan how he was mistaken, but it is to be remembered that in Buchanan's time there was hardly a learned man in Europe who did not think that he was right, and that he had written a most beautiful poem which would be read for ages to come.

There is one book of Buchanan, however, which is still read and greatly admired by people who know Latin, both in Scotland and other countries. This is his translation of the Psalms into Latin verse which he wrote when he was in the

monastery in Portugal. Many stories are told of this book of Buchanan's, which show how much it was liked and admired. For example, this story is told of the famous Protestant King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, who was called the "Lion of the North." Once in his wars against the Roman Catholics in Germany he had taken a town, and, while the arrangements were being made for its surrender, he walked through the gates, and as he was not dressed like a king, he mixed with the crowd in the streets, and the first thing he did was to go into a bookseller's shop and buy a copy of Buchanan's poems. Another story is one told of Sir Patrick Home, who, in the time of the persecution of the Covenanters, had to hide himself in a vault in the churchyard of Polwarth where his ancestors were buried. While he lay concealed there, his daughter used to bring him food at midnight, and, to pass the time during the day, as well as to cheer and console himself in his danger, he used to read and recite the Psalms of

Buchanan. It is told, also, of a certain pope that he was sorry that Buchanan was a heretic, as otherwise he would have had his Latin Psalms sung in all the Catholic churches. In Germany, indeed, which was a Protestant country, they were set to music, and were sung in the schools and universities; and in Scotland, till not so long ago, they were read in all the schools where Latin was taught, and the boys had to learn many of them by heart.

The biggest book which Buchanan wrote was his "History of Scotland," which takes up nearly the whole of one of the large volumes which contain his works. Though very few people nowadays have read it, it was once thought to have been the best book that had ever been written in Scotland. For nearly two hundred years after Buchanan died, it was almost the only book from which Scotsmen learned the history of their native country. And it was not only Scotsmen who read it, but foreigners, who admired the way it was written, and tried to write the histories

of their own countries as well as Buchanan had done. What is wonderful is that he wrote it when he was a very old man, and was so often ill that he could hardly hold the pen in his hand. But why did he undertake such a heavy task when he was so old and feeble? He himself tells us why he did so, and the reasons which he gives show how true a Scot he was, and how anxious he was for the good and honour of his country. First of all, he says that his friends wished him to write the history of his native country; and no doubt because he was the only man who could write it in such a way that people would read it both at home and abroad. Another reason he gives is that he wished his pupil, King James, to have such a history of his ancestors as would teach him who had been the good and the bad kings of Scotland, so that he might learn to be a good king himself when he grew up. But Buchanan was greatly mistaken when he thought that James

would learn lessons from his "History." James and Buchanan, we have seen, had



JAMES VI.

very different notions of what a good king should be, and so it was that two years after Buchanan's death James ordered everybody who had a copy of the "His-

tory" to give it up under a penalty of £200, so that everything might be taken out of it that was displeasing to James. Of course, it was impossible for James to execute this command, and people went on reading Buchanan's "History" in spite of him.

Buchanan wrote another book of which something should be said, because it was famous for such a long time, and had a great deal of influence both in Scotland and other countries. In many countries, at the time that Buchanan lived, kings and their subjects did not agree on some important subjects, and they often quarrelled and went to war with each other. The chief cause of their quarrelling was that, while most of the kings wished to remain Catholics, many of their people wished to be Protestants. The question then came to be: Had a king the right to compel his subjects to be of his religion and to give up their own? Some people said that, as kings were appointed by God, their subjects should obey them in everything, even

when they knew that the king was acting unjustly. Other people, on the contrary, said that it was their subjects who had chosen their own kings, and that if any king ruled contrary to the laws, then his subjects had the right to dethrone him. This was the view that Buchanan took, and in the book of which we are speaking, called "The Rights of the Crown in Scotland," he said that the kings of Scots had not been appointed by God, but that they had originally been chosen by their subjects; and that, if they broke the laws or did not govern according to the will of the people, then their Crowns should be taken from them. As may be imagined, this book gave great offence to James and all the kings of the House of Stewart who succeeded him. James forbade his people to read it, and so did Charles II. and James VII.; and a hundred years after it was written the University of Oxford ordered it to be burnt, along with works by the poet Milton and others who held the same opinions as Buchanan. But the



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interesting thing is that almost all that Buchanan said in his book was carried out at the Revolution, which took place in the year 1689, when the Stewarts were driven from the throne ; and there can be no doubt that Buchanan helped to bring this about.

This story of Buchanan's life may show how it was he came to be thought so great a man, and how, four hundred years after his birth, many people in Scotland, as well as in other countries, think it right to celebrate his memory. Beginning life as a poor farmer's son, with no great friends to push him on, often in ill-health and always poor, he overcame all the difficulties in his way, and made himself one of the most learned men in Europe, and by his own fame made his native country famous also. Men can do good to their country in very different ways. They can defend it against its enemies, they can make good laws, they can be great preachers and great reformers. It was in none of these ways that Buchanan

served his native country. The good he did was that he spent his life in trying to make men better and wiser both by teaching and by what he said in his books. And long after his death the work which he did continued to do good. Boys at school and students at the universities, whenever the name of Buchanan was mentioned, thought they would like to become as famous as he had been, and both at home and abroad they tried to follow in his steps and be an honour to their country.

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