

The progress of James to the borders, to hold justice courts at the head of an army, sufficiently indicated the wild and unsettled character of the age. It was an age in which all power, judicial or monarchical, existed in its first elements; the authority of the judge, though a king, was nothing apart from the terrors of the military. Nor were the scenes of sudden execution which followed,—scenes the recollection of which still survives in song and ballad,—in any degree less characteristic. Even justice itself, infected by the savageism of the period, seems to have existed as but a stern principle of violence and revenge. The progress of Mary to the north bears a similar impress. It seems pregnant with the character of the age. We see the royal escort dogged in its course by the retainers of a turbulent and ambitious noble; scarce a dell without its ambuscade; scarce a hill-top without its hostile horde of observation and annoyance; royal fortresses shut against royalty, until reduced by siege; chiefs and their septs hastily arming either to assail or to defend the sovereign; and the whole terminating in a hard-contested and bloody conflict, execution, confiscation, and exile. There is scarce a prominent trait in the old character and condition of the country, or scarce an influential event in its history, which some one of the royal progresses does not serve to illustrate.

There were none of them more characteristic, however, than the progress of Charles I., when he visited Scotland in 1633, to “reduce the kirk to conformity.” James IV. brought his shavelings with him to the far north, to patter masses and chant matins. Charles brought with him a much more dangerous man than all the shavelings of James united. He brought with him,—the Pusey, the Newman, the Archdeacon Wilberforce of those days,—he brought with him Archbishop Laud. Rarely in Edinburgh has there been a more profuse or tasteful display of all the various symbols