chivalrous disdain of consequences into the defence of the weak." All of him that is mortal now rests in "The Abbey," beneath a tomb bearing the inscription, which surely must have been chosen by himself, "I see that all things come to an end, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."— Psalm cxix. 96.

As there seems, both during the life of the Stricklands and even now in these later days, to have been some doubt cast upon their allegiance to the Established Church, it may be well to state that never once did they swerve from the faith of that communion.

The Stricklands of Sizergh have always been Roman Catholics, and one of the cousins of Agnes, a Jesuit missionary, exclaimed on meeting her, "A Strickland and not a Catholic!" But the southern branch of the family, to which she belonged, were staunch Protestants, and the false charge of Romanism brought against them by ignorant bigots was a source of great annoyance to both sisters. They never hesitated, however, in their determination to write as honestly of the Queens belonging to the Roman religion as of those who were Protestants, and this deliberate impartiality was ignobly misunderstood by those in whom party spirit had degenerated into dogmatism. In religious matters it is rare indeed to find a man who can read or write unbiassedly. It takes a man like Bradford

the martyr to say with noble magnanimity, almost within sight of the stake, "This woman" ("Bloody Mary"), "but for her religion, would be an excellent ruler."

As the early life of Mary Queen of Scots was passed in France, it was necessary that they should prosecute their researches with regard to her in Paris, and thither accordingly the sisters repaired. Fragments of Agnes's journal at this time are given in her 'Life,' and are full of vigour and fun. She was fortunate enough to hear the Roman service *for the first time* in the glorious Cathedral of Rouen, where the beauty of the music gave her "more pleasure than any opera or oratorio had ever afforded."

They left that picturesque city with much regret,. and were soon established at the old Jacobite hotel in Paris known as "Le Prince de Galles."

Through the kind courtesy of Guizot, the statesman-historian, they were given every opportunity for inspecting the "Archives de Royaume de France" and the "Archives des Affaires Etrangeres".

These archives were full of interesting and valuable information, in which the sisters revelled with exceeding joy. At the Hotel Soubise they were introduced to Monsieur Michelet, who presented them with a considerable amount of MSS. for their inspection; and in one of these, containing the

will of Mary of Modena, and an account of her escape from England, they were much interested in noticing the name of their own ancestress, Lady Strickland, who had accompanied her royal mistress into exile. In the "Scots College," moreover, to which so many of Mary Stuart's letters were addressed, they saw an original portrait of young James— the son of James II.— in which Roger Strickland of Sizergh also appears, carrying the helmet of his master, whose restoration to the throne of England at that date, 1703, seemed a not unlikely contingency.

In a letter to her mother, Agnes says of Guizot that "he is the most delightful and amiable person in the world, with beautiful eyes beaming with intelligence and kindness. He is about fifty-five, rather below the middle height, with a pale clear complexion, grand forehead, but decidedly handsome. He speaks English beautifully, and has the sweetest voice in the world."

On their return to England the Duke of Devonshire invited them to his villa at Chiswick to see some of his family archives, which he thought might be useful reading. He gave them a very dainty dinner, but it is rather quaint to bear that he abjured all waiting of servants, and only summoned them when required by striking on a tumbler. They found him a most pleasant host, manly and unassuming; and in the following year

Agnes gladly availed herself of his offer of admission to the archives at Chatsworth and Hardwick, of which he said, "In regard to Mary Queen of Scots it may be useful in detail to see two places---one where she certainly did live, and the other long supposed to be her residence." The courtesy which she received from numerous members of the aristocracy, both in England and Scotland, was almost remarkable, until we consider that true aristocrats are accustomed to their position, and never try, by impressing other people with it, to confirm their own consciousness of importance.

In a true patrician the *graciousness* of giving is seldom wanting, and those who have always enjoyed the dignities of a goodly heritage can dispense favours without any of the arrogance which generally mars the gift and the demeanour of those who have risen— albeit praiseworthily— to a position unto which they were not born.

Hospitality waited upon her footsteps throughout her journeyings in Scotland, and she was thus enabled, with much comfort and comparatively little expense, to visit every part where Mary Stuart had been.

Dr Norman Macleod, the Presbyterian minister of London, was invited to meet her during her visit to the Lowlands, and, to the great surprise and pleasure of Agnes, she found him to be a great admirer and friend of Mary Queen of Scots.

After attending a service at his church he took her to see the graves of some Puritan martyrs, and with a frankness unusual in clerical conversation he said, "These, though well-meaning, were troublesome men. Persecutors themselves, but ready to die for conscience' sake, they were barbarously used; but they would have done the same to others— it was the spirit of the times."

Is that spirit dead yet? Is it not scotched, rather than killed?

The Epistles of John, the Apostle of Love, are known and read of all men to-day, but zeal is still intemperate and intolerant, and the persecutions of tongue and pen are often as hard to bear patiently as those of the sword or the stake.

During this visit she was present at a Scotch wedding, which was celebrated in a manner befitting the station of the bride, Miss Constance Crauford of Craufordland Castle, whose father was the hereditary cup-bearer of the kings of Scotland. The ancient custom of washing the bride's feet by the bridesmaids on the night preceding the wedding was duly carried out, and the excitement caused by the finding of a gold ring in the foot-bath occasioned much laughter, as the finder is traditionally supposed to be the first of the bride's attendants who will enter upon the holy estate of matrimony.

In 1850 the negotiations for the publication of

the 'Queens of Scotland' were completed, Messrs Blackwood at once agreeing to the terms proposed by the authors, which Mr Colburn had refused. This change of publishers was very beneficial to the Misses Strickland in every way.

The first volume sold rapidly, to the great satisfaction of all concerned; and, as one followed another in quick succession, the celebrity of the authors increased. Agnes herself thought this work to be better written than the previous one, and though, as a rule, authors are not to be trusted in their estimate of their own works, it is generally acknowledged that the Scottish queens have been described with even more elegance and brightness than their English sisters.

Some one says that "Tradition is the memory of the people," and Agnes Strickland fully believed that in most cases it had a distinct foundation, slight perhaps but reliable, which time and trouble were capable of finding out, verifying and establishing. It has been so in innumerable cases, and much of our best literature is due to the influence of those memories which have crystallised themselves into forms of fairest beauty during the course of years.

The history of Scotland specially abounds in interesting traditions involving much research as to their origin, and it is certain that to Elizabeth much credit belongs for the careful labour be-

stowed upon obscure records and far-away facts thus orally transmitted. Special pains were taken by Agnes to prove the innocence of Mary Stuart as to the murder of her husband, and this she appears to have done at any rate to her own satisfaction, though it still remains possible that the fair *intrigante* may have been an accessory after the fact.

Froude's estimate was very different, and his flippancy with respect to the last tragic scene at Fotheringay excited in her an excusable indignation, mingled perhaps with the feeling that he was unjust to Mary, not only as a queen but as a woman.

In a letter to Elizabeth on the subject she says: "Have you seen my letter in 'The Times' of December the 2nd? I could not allow Froude's monstrous untruth to pass uncontradicted, or it would have been considered an established fact. Who does not admire those who die with dignity? They all play a part— a debt due to themselves and to public decorum. All women from the earliest period of their recollection do endeavour to set themselves off to the best advantage; it is a natural propensity and no crime. Mary came forth to die, arrayed like a queen, not in her shroud, and acted according to her high birth and station, with fortitude and resignation."

Mr Froude, however, forgave her public vituper-

ations so frankly that she in her turn forgave him for denouncing her heroine, and the two subsequently met, or at any rate parted, on terms of mutual friendliness.

It is to be regretted, in general terms, that the "extenuating circumstances" which he so freely granted to Henry VIII. were not more evenly distributed among those of whose lives he has written.

On returning to London, to work up the facts collected during her travels, Agnes once more found herself surrounded by friends both fashionable and literary; and, her tastes being very gregarious, she found much pleasure and recreation in the social functions which her position and talents secured for her.

On one occasion she met Thomas Babington, afterwards Lord, Macaulay, who, curiously enough, struck her as being "ugly, vulgar, and pompous." This impression may have been accentuated by the presence of the aristocratic company who were gathered together at Lord Somerset's dinner-table, for other authorities unite in saying that "his face was so constantly lit up by every joyful and ennobling emotion that it mattered little if, when absolutely quiescent, it was rather homely than handsome" — "a man of rare intelligence, deep research, and untiring energy: also a kind, courteous, and unaffected gentleman."

'The Bachelor Kings of England' was her next big undertaking; and in 1861 a volume bearing that title appeared in elegant binding from the press of Mr Burton of Ipswich, who had published 'Old Friends and New Acquaintances' in the previous year. It is probable that had it been published in London it would be as well known as it deserves to be, for the subject is an interesting one; but a provincial publisher is always at a disadvantage, and the book has certainly not had as large a sale as 'The Queens.' The presentation of a copy to the Prince of Wales resulted in a most gracious acknowledgment from the royal bachelor; and in the autumn of that year Agnes received an invitation from the Mayor of Dublin to meet H.R.H. at a ball to be given there in honour of his visit.

Such an exceptional opportunity of visiting Ireland was not to be refused, and her impressions of that "beautiful and glorious country" were altogether pleasant. The ball itself was a great success, and Agnes writes as follows to her mother: "I was presented last night to the Prince of Wales by General Bruce, though it seems this was not according to etiquette, only his Royal Highness wished for the introduction. He was very gracious, thanked me for having sent him my books, 'which,' he said, 'had afforded him much pleasure,' though, speaking of the 'Bachelor

Kings,' he assured me 'he did not mean to be one.' In person he is really a very pretty fellow, small in stature, but very well-shaped and dignified in appearance, though timid in manner. His eyes, eyebrows, and hair are really beautiful; he has a handsome, well-cut, aquiline nose, full lips, beautiful teeth, and an agreeable smile. He blushed, and was a little agitated while speaking with me. He danced unweariedly and very elegantly, though the height and fulness of some of his partners nearly eclipsed him." This naive description of H.RH. in 1861 is very interesting reading in 1906. Forty-five years have passed since then, his eyes have lost their youthful lustre, and his hair is grey and scanty, but the smile is still there that has won him friends over all the world. Our "godly prince," Edward VII., King of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of India, has now come into his inheritance, and "the sea-king's daughter" is now the beautiful Queen whom the nation delighteth to honour.

Not since the time of George III. and Charlotte of Mecklenburg, in 1760, had a dual Coronation taken place in full State, and the ceremonial pageantry with which our present King was installed to his high office probably exceeded in historic gorgeousness anything that had ever before been witnessed.

The circumstances ante-dating the original