

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK

A ROMANCE.

BY

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PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

"If my readers should at any time remark that I am particularly dull, they may be assured there is a design under it."
BRITISH ESSAYIST.

INTRODUCTION—(1831.)

If I had valued my own reputation, as it is said I ought in prudence to have done, I might have now drawn a line, and remained for life, or (who knows?) perhaps for some years after death, the "ingenious author of Waverley." I was not, however, more desirous of this sort of immortality, which might have lasted some twenty or thirty years, than Falstaff of the embowelling which was promised him after the field of Shrewsbury, by his patron the Prince of Wales. "Embowell'd? If you embowel me to-day, you may powder and ~~be~~ me to-morrow!"

If my occupation as a romancer were taken from me, I felt I should have at a late hour in life to find me out another; when I could hardly expect to acquire those new tricks, which are proverbially said not to be learned by those dogs who are getting old. Besides, I had yet to learn from the public that my intrusions were disagreeable; and while I was endured with some patience, I felt I had all the reputation which I greatly coveted. My memory was well stored, both with historical, local, and traditional notices, and I had become almost as licensed a plague to the public as the well-remembered beggar of the ward, whom men distinguish by their favor, perhaps for no better reason than that they had been in the habit of giving him alms, as a part of the business of their daily promenade. The general fact is undeniable,—all men grow old, all men must wear out; but men of ordinary wisdom, however aware of the general fact, are unwilling to admit in their own case, any special instances of failure. Indeed, they can hardly be expected themselves to distinguish the effects of the Archbishop of Granada's apoplexy, and are not unwilling to pass over in their composition, as instances of mere carelessness or bad luck, what others may consider as symptoms of mortal decay. I had no choice save that of absolutely laying aside the pen, the use of which at my time of life was become a habit, or to continue its vagaries, until the public should let me plainly understand they would no more of me; a hint

which I was not unlikely to meet with, and which I was determined to take without waiting for a repetition. This hint, that the reader may plainly understand me, I was determined to take, when the publication of a new Waverley novel should not be the subject of some attention in the literary world.

An accidental circumstance decided my choice of a subject for the present work. It was now several years since my immediate younger brother, Thomas Scott, already mentioned in these notes, had resided for two or three seasons in the Isle of Man, and, having access to the registers of that singular territory, had copied many of them, which he subjected to my perusal. These papers were put into my hands while my brother had thoughts of making some literary use of them, I do not well remember what; but he never came to any decision on that head, and grew tired of the task of transcription. The papers, I suppose, were lost in the course of a military man's life. The tenor of them, that is, of the most remarkable, remained engraved on the memory of the author.

The interesting and romantic story of William Christian especially struck my fancy. I found the same individual, as well as his father, particularly noticed in some memorials of the island, preserved by the Earl of Derby, and published in Dr. Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*. This gentleman was the son of Edward, formerly governor of the island; and William himself was afterwards one of its two Dampsters, or supreme judges. Both father and son embraced the party of the islanders, and contested some feudal rights claimed by the Earl of Derby as King of the Island. When the Earl had suffered death at Bolton-le-Moors, Captain Christian placed himself at the head of the Roundheads, if they might be so called, and found the means of holding communication with a fleet sent by the Parliament. The island was surrendered to the Parliament by the insurgent Manxmen. The high-spirited Countess and her son were arrested, and cast into prison, where

they were long detained, and very indifferently treated. When the Restoration took place, the Countess, or by title the Queen-dowager of the Island, seized upon William Dhône, or Fair-haired William, as William Christian was termed, and caused him to be tried and executed, according to the laws of the island, for having dethroned his liege mistress, and imprisoned her and her family. Romancers, and readers of romance, will generally allow that the fate of Christian, and the contrast of his character with that of the high-minded, but vindictive Countess of Derby, famous during the civil wars for her valiant defence of Latham House, contained the essence of an interesting tale. I have, however, dwelt little either on the death of William Christian, or on the manner in which Charles II. viewed that stretch of feudal power, and the heavy fine which he imposed upon the Derby estates, for that extent of jurisdiction of which the Countess had been guilty. Far less have I given any opinion on the justice or guilt of that action, which is to this day judged of by the people of the island as they happen to be connected with the sufferer, or perhaps as they may look back with the eyes of favor upon the Cavaliers or Roundheads of those contentious days. I do not conceive that I have done injury to the memory of this gentleman, or any of his descendants in his person; at the same time I have most willingly given his representative an opportunity of stating in this edition of the Novel what he thinks necessary for the vindication of his ancestor, and the reader will find the exposition in the Notices, for which Mr. Christian desires admission.* I could do no less, considering the polite and gentlemanlike manner in which he stated feelings concerning his ancestry, to which a Scotsman can hardly be supposed to be indifferent.

In another respect, Mr. Christian with justice complains, that Edward Christian, described in the romance as the brother of the gentleman executed in consequence of the Countess's arbitrary act of authority, is portrayed as a wretch of unbounded depravity, having only ingenuity and courage to rescue him from abhorrence, as well as hatred. Any personal allusion was entirely undesigned on the part of the author. The Edward Christian of the tale is a mere creature of the imagination. Commentators have naturally enough identified him with a brother of William Christian, named Edward, who died in prison after being confined seven or eight years in Peel Castle, in the year 1650. Of him I had no access to know any thing; and as I was not aware that such a person had existed, I could hardly be said to have traduced his character. It is sufficient for my justification, that there lived at the period of my story, a person named Edward Christian, "with whom connected, or by whom begot," I am a perfect stranger, but who we know to have been engaged in such actions as may imply his

having been guilty of any thing bad. The fact is, that upon the 5th June, 1680, Thomas Blood (the famous crown-stealer), *Edward Christian*, Arthur O'Brian, and others, were found guilty of being concerned in a conspiracy for taking away the life and character of the celebrated Duke of Buckingham; but that this Edward was the same with the brother of William Christian, is impossible, since that brother died in 1650; nor would I have used his christened name of Edward, had I supposed there was a chance of its being connected with any existing family. These genealogical matters are fully illustrated in the Notes to the Appendix.

I ought to have mentioned in the former editions of this romance, that Charlotte de la Tremouille, Countess of Derby, represented as a Catholic, was, in fact, a French Protestant. For misrepresenting the noble dame in this manner, I have only Lucio's excuse—"I spoke according to the trick." In a story, where the greater part is avowedly fiction, the author is at liberty to introduce such variations from actual fact as his plot requires, or which are calculated to enhance it; in which predicament the religion of the Countess of Derby, during the Popish Plot, appeared to fall. If I have over-estimated a romancer's privileges and immunities, I am afraid this is not the only, nor most important, case in which I have done so. To speak big words, the heroic Countess has far less grounds for an action of scandal, than the memory of Virgil might be liable to for his posthumous scandal of Dido.

The character of Fenella, which, from its peculiarity, made a favorable impression on the public, was far from being original. The fine sketch of Mignon, in Wilhelm Meister's *Lehrjahre*, a celebrated work from the pen of Goethe, gave the idea of such a being. But the copy will be found greatly different from my great prototype; nor can I be accused of borrowing anything save the general idea, from an author, the honor of his own country, and an example to the authors of other kingdoms, to whom all must be proud to own an obligation.

Family tradition supplied me with two circumstances, which are somewhat analogous to that in question. The first is an account of a lawsuit, taken from a Scottish report of adjudged cases, quoted in Note to Chap. xx.

The other—of which the editor has no reason to doubt, having often heard it from those who were witnesses of the fact—relates to the power of a female in keeping a secret (sarcastically said to be impossible), even when that secret refers to the exercise of her tongue.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, a female wanderer came to the door of Mr. Robert Scott, grandfather of the present author, an opulent farmer in Roxburghshire, and made signs that she desired shelter for the night, which, according to the custom of the times, was readily granted. The next day the country was covered with snow, and the departure of the wanderer was rendered

impossible. She remained for many days, her maintenance adding little to the expense of a considerable household; and, by the time that the weather grew milder, she had learned to hold intercourse by signs with the household around her, and could intimate to them that she was desirous of staying where she was, and working at the wheel and other employment, to compensate for her food. This was a compact not unfrequent at that time, and the dumb woman entered upon her thrift, and proved a useful member of the patriarchal household. She was a good spinner, knitter, carder, and so forth, but her excellence lay in attending to the feeding and bringing up the domestic poultry. Her mode of whistling to call them together was so peculiarly elfish and shrill, that it was thought, by those who heard it, more like that of a fairy than a human being.

In this manner she lived three or four years, nor was there the slightest idea entertained in the family that she was other than the mute and deprived person she had always appeared. But in a moment of surprise she dropped the mask which she had worn so long.

It chanced upon a Sunday that the whole inhabitants of the household were at church excepting Dumb Lizzie, whose infirmity was supposed to render her incapable of profiting by divine service, and who therefore stayed at home to take charge of the house. It happened that, as she was sitting in the kitchen, a mischievous shepherd boy, instead of looking after his flock on the lea, as was his duty, slunk into the house to see what he could pick up, or perhaps out of mere curiosity. Being tempted by something which was in his eyes a nicety, he put forth his hand, unseen, as he conceived, to appropriate it. The dumb woman came suddenly upon him, and, in the surprise, forgot her part, and exclaimed, in loud Scotch, and

with distinct articulation, "Ah, you little devil's limb!" The boy, terrified more by the character of the person who rebuked him, than by the mere circumstance of having been taken in the insignificant offence, fled in great dismay to the church, to carry the miraculous news that the dumb woman had found her tongue.

The family returned home in great surprise, but found that their inmate had relapsed into her usual mute condition, would communicate with them only by signs, and in that manner denied positively what the boy affirmed.

From this time confidence was broken betwixt the other inmates of the family, and their dumb, or rather silent, guest. Traps were laid for the supposed impostor, all of which she skilfully eluded; fire-arms were often suddenly discharged near her, but never on such occasions was she seen to start. It seems probable, however, that Lizzie grew tired of all this mistrust, for she one morning disappeared as she came, without any ceremony of leave-taking.

She was seen, it is said, upon the other side of the English border, in perfect possession of her speech. Whether this was exactly the case or not, my informers were no way anxious in inquiring, nor am I able to authenticate the fact. The shepherd boy lived to be a man, and always averred that she had spoken distinctly to him. What could be the woman's reason for persevering so long in a disguise as unnecessary as it was severe, could never be guessed, and was perhaps the consequence of a certain aberration of the mind. I can only add, that I have every reason to believe the tale to be perfectly authentic, so far as it is here given, and it may serve to parallel the supposed case of Fenella.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st July, 1831.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

THE following Notices were recommended to my attention, in the politest manner possible, by John Christian, Esq., of Milntown, in the Isle of Man, and Unrigg, in Cumberland, Dempster at present of the Isle of Man. This gentleman is naturally interested in the facts which are stated, as representative of the respectable family of Christian, and lineally descended from William Dhône, put to death by the Countess of Derby. I can be no way interested in refusing Mr. Christian this justice, and willingly lend my aid to extend the exculpation of the family.

HISTORICAL NOTICES OF EDWARD AND WILLIAM CHRISTIAN;

TWO CHARACTERS IN "PEVERIL OF THE PEAK."

THE venerable Dr. Dryasdust, in a preparatory dialogue, apprizes the Eidolon, or apparition of

the author, that he stood "much accused for adulterating the pure sources of historical knowledge;" and is answered by that emanation of genius, "that he has done some service to the public if he can present to them a lively fictitious picture, for which the original anecdote or circumstance which he made free to press into his service, only furnished a slight sketch;" "that by introducing to the busy and the youthful,

'Truths severe in fairy fiction dress'd,'

and by creating an interest in fictitious adventures ascribed to a historical period and characters, the reader begins next to be anxious to learn what the facts really were, and how far the novelist has justly represented them."

The adventures ascribed to "historical characters" would, however, fail in their moral aim, if fiction were placed at variance with truth; if Hampden, or Sydney, for example, were painted

* See Appendix, No. I. p. 5.

as swindlers; or Lady Jane Grey, or Rachael Russel, as abandoned women.

"Odzooks! must one swear to the truth of a song?" although an excellent joke, were a bad palliation in such a case. Fancy may be fairly indulged in the illustration, but not in the perversion of fact; and if the fictitious picture should have no general resemblance to the original, the flourish of

"Truths severe in fairy fiction dress'd,"

were but an aggravation of the wrong.

The family of CHRISTIAN is indebted to this splendid luminary of the North for abundant notoriety.

The William Christian represented on one part as an ungrateful traitor, on the other as the victim of a judicial murder, and his brother (or relative) Edward, one of the suite of a Duke* of Buckingham, were so far real historical persons. Whether the talents and skill of Edward in imposing on Fenella a feigned silence of several years, be among the legitimate or supernatural wonders of this fertile genius, his fair readers do not seem to be agreed. Whether the residue of the canvas, filled up with a masterly picture of the most consummate hypocrite and satanic villain ever presented to the imagination, be consistent with the historical character of this individual, is among the subjects of research to which the novelist has given a direct invitation in his prefatory chapter.

English history furnishes few materials to aid the investigation of transactions chiefly confined to the Isle of Man. Circumstances led me, many years ago, to visit this ancient Lilliput; whether as one of those "smart fellows worth talking to," "in consequence of a tumble from my barouche," "as a ruined miner," or as "a disappointed speculator," is of no material import. It may be that temporary embarrassment drove me into seclusion, without any of the irresistible inducements alluded to; and want of employment, added to the acquaintance and aid of a zealous local antiquary, gradually led to an examination of all accessible authorities on this very subject among others. So it happened, that I had not landed many hours before I found the mournful ditty of "William Dhône" (*Brown or fair-haired William*, this very identical William Christian) twanged through the demi-nasal, demi-guttural trumpet of the carman, and warbled by the landlady's pretty daughter; in short, making as great a figure in its little sphere as did once the more important ballad of Chevy Chase in its wider range: the burden of the song purporting that William Dhône was the mirror of virtue and patriotism, and that envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, operate the destruction of the wisest and the best.

Themes of popular feeling naturally attract the earliest notice of a stranger; and I found the

* Not the Duke described in Peveril, but the companion of Charles I. in his Spanish romance.

story of this individual, though abundantly garbled and discolored on the insular records, full of circumstances to excite the deepest interest, but which, to be rendered intelligible, must be approached by a circuitous route, in which neither elfin page, nor maiden fair, can be the companion of our walk.

The loyal and celebrated James, seventh Earl of Derby, was induced, by the circumstances of the times, to fix his chief residence in the Isle of Man from 1643 to 1651.* During this period he composed, in the form of a letter† to his son Charles (Lord Strange), an historical account of that island, with a statement of his own proceedings there; interspersed with much political advice for the guidance of his successor; full of acute observation, and evincing an intimate acquaintance with the works of Machiavelli, which it appears, by a quotation,‡ that he had studied in a Latin edition. The work, although formally divided into chapters and numbered paragraphs, is professedly desultory,§ and furnishes few means of determining the relative dates of his facts, which must accordingly be supplied by internal evidence, and in some cases by conjecture.

He appears to have been drawn thither, in 1643, by letters|| intimating the danger of a revolt; the "people had begun the fashion of England in murmuring;" "assembled in a tumultuous manner; desiring new laws, they would have no bishops, pay no tithes to the clergy, despised authority, rescued people committed by the governor," &c. &c.

The Earl's first care was to apply himself to the consideration of these insurrectionary movements; and as he found some interruption to his proceedings in the conduct of *Edward Christian*,¶ an attempt shall be made, so far as our limits will admit, to extract the Earl's own account of this person. "I was newly** got acquainted with Cap-

* His countess resided at Latham House (her heroic defence of which is well known) until 1644 or 5, when she also retired to the Isle of Man. A contemporary publication, the *Mercurius Aulicus*, by John Birkenhead, says, "the Countesse, it seems, stole the Earl's breeches, when he fled long since into the Isle of Man, and hath in his absence played the man at Latham." This insinuation is certainly unjust; but the Earl seems to consider some explanation necessary, "why he left the land, when every gallant spirit had engaged himself for king and country." Danger of revolt and invasion of the island constitute the substance of this explanation. There is reason, however, to conjecture, that he had been disappointed of the command he had a right to expect, when he brought a considerable levy to join the King at York. Any explanation, in short, might be listened to, except a doubt of his loyalty and ardent military spirit, which were above all impeachment.

† Published in Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, in 1773.

‡ Peck, p. 446,—"fortiter calumniari aliquid adhaerebit."

§ Peck, p. 446. "Loth to dwell too long on one subject," skip over to some other matter.

|| Peck, 444.

¶ For a history of this family, established in the Isle of Man so early as 1429, see Hutchinson's *History of Cumberland*, vol. iii., p. 146. They had previously been established in Wigtownshire.

** This is an example of the difficulty of arranging the relative dates; the word *newly*, thus employed at the earliest in 1643, refers to 1628, the date of the appointment of E. Christian to be

tain Christian, whom I perceived to have abilities enough to do me service. I was told he had made a good fortune in the Indies; that he was a Manxman borne." . . . "He is excellent good company; as rude as a sea captain should be; but refined as one that had civilized himself half a year at Court, where he served the Duke of Buckingham." . . . "While he governed here some few years he pleased me very well," &c., &c. "But such is the condition of man, that most will have some fault or other to blurr all their best virtues; and his was of that condition which is reckoned with drunkenness, viz. *covetousness*, both marked with age to increase and grow in man." . . . "When a Prince has given all, and the favorite can desire no more, they both grow weary of one another."*

An account of the Earl's successive public meetings, short, from the limits of our sketch, is extracted in a note† from the headings of the chapters (apparently composed by Peck). In the last of these meetings it appears that Edward Christian attempted at its close to recapitulate the business of the day: "Asked if we did not agree thus and thus," mentioning some things (says the Earl) "he had instructed the people to aske; which happily they had forgot." The Earl

governor of the Isle of Man, which office he had till 1635 (Sacheverill's Account of the Isle of Man, published in 1709, p. 100), the Earl being then Lord Strange, but apparently taking the lead in public business during his father's lifetime.

* Peck, p. 444. There is apparently some error in Hutchinson's genealogy of the family in his *History of Cumberland*; 1st brother, John, born 1602; 2d, died young; 3d, William, born 1608; 4th, Edward, Lieut.-Governor of the Isle of Man 1629 (according to Sacheverill, p. 100, 1628). This Edward's birth cannot be placed earlier than 1609, and he could not well have made a fortune in the Indies, have frequented the Court of Charles I., and be selected as a fit person to be a governor, at the age of 19 or 20. The person mentioned in the text was obviously of mature age; and Edward the governor appears to have been the younger brother of William Christian, a branch of the same family, possessing the estate of Knockrushen, near Castle Rushen, who, as well as Edward, was imprisoned in Peel Castle in 1643.

† Peck, 335, et seq. "Chap. viii. The Earl appoints a meeting of the natives, every man to give in his grievances; upon which some think to outwit him, which he winks at, being not ready for them, therefore cajoles and divides them; on the appointed day he appears with a good guard; the people give in their complaints quietly and retire. Chap. ix. Another meeting appointed, when he also appears with a good guard. Many busy men speak only Manx, which a more designing person (probably Captain Christian, a late Governor) would hinder, but the Earl forbids it; advice about it appearing in public; the Manxmen great talkers and wranglers; the Earl's spies get in with them and wheedle them. Chap. x. The night before the meeting the Earl consults with his officers what to answer; but tells them nothing of his spies; compares both reports, and keeps back his own opinion; sends some of the officers, who he knew would be troublesome, out of the way, about other matters; the (present) governor afresh commended; what counsellors the properest. Chap. xi. The Earl's carriage to the people at his first going over; his carriage at the meeting to modest petitioners, to impudent, to the most confident, and to the most dangerous, viz. them who stood behind and prompted others. All things being agreed, Captain Christian cunningly begins disturbance; the Earl's reply; and speech to the people; Christian is stroke blank; several people committed to prison, and fined, which quiets them."

accordingly rose in wrath, and, after a short speech, "bade the court to rise, and no man to speak more."—"Some (he adds) were committed to prison, and there abided, until upon submission and assurance of being very good and quiet, they were released, and others were put into their rooms.—I thought fit to make them be deeply fined; since this they all come in most submissive and loving manner."* Pretty efficient means of producing quiet, if the despot be strong enough, and with it such love as suits a despot's fancy! Among the prisoners were *Edward Christian* and his brother William of Knockrushen; the latter was released in 1644, on giving bond, among other conditions, not to depart the island without license.

Of Edward, the Earl says, "I will return unto Captain Christian, whose business must be heard next week" (either in 1644, or early in 1645). "He is still in prison, and I believe many wonder thereat, as savouring of injustice, and that his trial should be deferred so long." "Also his business is of that condition that it concerns not himself alone." "If a Jurie of the people do passe upon him (being he had so cajoled them to believe he suffers for their sakes), it is likely they should quit him, and then might he laugh at us, whom I had rather he had betrayed." "I remember one said it was much safer to take men's lives than their estates; for their children will much sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimonie."† Edward died in custody in Peel's Castle in 1650,‡ after an imprisonment of between seven and eight years; and so far, at least, no ground can be discovered for that gratitude which is afterwards said to have been violated by this family, unless indeed we transplant ourselves to those countries where it is the fashion to flog a public officer one day and replace him in authority the next.

The insular records detail with minuteness the complaints of the people relative to the exactions of the church, and their adjustment by a sort of public arbitration in October, 1643. But it is singular, that neither in these records, nor in the Earl's very studied narrative of the modes of discussion, the offences, and the punishments, is one word to be found regarding the more important points actually at issue between himself and the people. The fact, however, is fully developed, as if by accident, in one of the chapters (xvi.) of this very desultory but sagacious performance. "There comes this very instant an occasion to me to acquaint you with a special matter, which, if by reason of these troublesome and dangerous times, I cannot bring to passe my intents therein, you may in your better leisure consider thereof, and make some use hereafter of my present la-

* Peck, 442.

† Peck, 443-9.

‡ Feltham's *Tour*, p. 161, places this event (while a prisoner in Peel Castle), on the authority of a tombstone, in 1660, "John Greenhalgh being governor." Now John Greenhalgh ceased to be governor in 1651; the date is probably an error in the press for 1650.

hours, in the matter of a certain holding in this country, called the tenure of the straw; * whereby men think their dwellings are their own ancient inheritances, and that they may pass the same to any, and dispose thereof without license from the Lord, but paying him a bare small rent like unto a fee-farm in England: wherein they are much deceived."

William the Conqueror, among his plans for the benefit of his English subjects adopted that of inducing or compelling them to surrender their allodial lands, and receive them back to hold by feudal tenure. The Earl of Derby projected the surrender of a similar right, in order to create tenures more profitable to himself—a simple lease for three lives, or twenty-one years. The measure was entirely novel, although the attempt to prevent alienation without license from the Lord, for purposes of a less profitable exaction, may be traced, together with the scenes of violence it produced, through many passages in the ancient records, which would be inexplicable without this clue.

The Earl proceeded certainly with sufficient energy and considerable skill to the accomplishment of his object. In the very year of his arrival, Dec. 1643, he appointed commissioners † to compound for leases, consisting of some of his principal officers (members of council), who had themselves been prevailed on by adequate considerations to surrender their estates, and are by general tradition accused of having conspired to delude their simple countrymen into the persuasion, that having no title-deeds, their estates were insecure; that leases were title-deeds; and although nominally for limited terms, declared the lands to be descendible to their eldest sons. It is remarkable that the names of *Ewan* and *William Christian*, two of the council, are alone excluded from this commission.

We have already seen two of the name committed to prison. The following notices, which abundantly unfold the ground of the Earl's hostility

* In the transfer of real estates both parties came into the common law court, and the grantor, in the face of the court, transferred his title to the purchaser by the delivery of a straw; which being recorded, was his title. The same practice prevailed in the transfer of personal property. Sir Edward Coke, v. 69, when speaking of the Isle of Man, says, "upon the sale of a horse, or any contract for any other thing, they make the stipulation perfect per traditionem stipula" (by the delivery of a straw). Perhaps a more feasible etymology of *stipulation*, than the usual derivation from *stipes* (a stake or landmark), or *stips* (a piece of money or wages).

† Among those instances in which "the commands of the lord proprietor have (in the emphatic words of the commissioners of 1791, p. 67) been *obtruded* on the people as laws," we find, in 1583, the prohibition to dispose of lands without license of the lord, is prefaced by the broad admission, that, "contrary to good and laudable order, and diverse and sundry general restraints made, the inhabitants have, and daily do, notwithstanding the said restraints, buy, sell, give, grant, chop, and exchange their farms, lands, tenements, &c., at their liberties and pleasures." Alienation fines were first exacted in 1643. Report of Commissioners of 1791. App. A., No. 71, Rep. of Law Officers.

‡ The governor-comptroller, receiver; and John Canne, deemster.

ity to the name of Christian, relate to Ewan Christian the father of William Dhône, and one of the Deemsters excluded from the commission. "One presented me a petition against Deemster * Christian, on the behalf of an infant who is conceived to have a right unto his Farme Rainsway (Ronalds-way), one of the principal holdings in this country, who, by reason of his eminence here, and that he holdeth much of the same tenure of the straw in other places, he is soe observed, that certainly as I temper the matter with him in this, soe shall I prevail with others." † . . . "By police ‡ they (the Christians) are crept into the principal places of power, and they be seated round about the country, and in the heart of it; they are matched with the best families," &c.

"The prayer of the petition § formerly mentioned was to this effect, that there might be a fair tryal, and when the right was recovered that I would grant them a lease thereof—this being in the tenure of the straw." . . . "Upon some conference with the petitioner, I find a motion heretofore was made by my commissioners, that the Deemster should give this fellow a summe of money. But he would part with none, nevertheless now it may be he will, and I hope be so wise as to assure unto himself his holding, by compounding with me for the lease of the same, to which, if they two agree, I shall grant it him on easy terms. For if he break the ice, I may haply catch some fish." ¶

The issue of this piscatory project was but too successful. Ewan bent to the reign of terror, and gave up Ronalds-way to his son William, who accepted the lease, and named his own descendants for the lives. Still the objects attained were unsubstantial, as being contrary to all law, written or oral; and the system was incomplete until sanctioned, by the semblance of legislative confirmation.

We have seen that the Earl had in the island a considerable military force, and we know from other sources ¶ that they lived in a great measure at free quarters. We have his own testimony for stating, that he achieved his objects by imprisoning, until his prisoners "promised to be good;" and successively filling their places with others, until they also conformed to his theory of public virtue. And the reader will be prepared to hear,

* Deemster, evidently Anglicized, the person who deems the law, a designation anciently unknown among the natives, who continue to call this officer *Breton*, identical with the name of those judges and laws so often mentioned in the Histories of Ireland.

† Peck, 447.

‡ Ib. 448.

§ I have ascertained the date of this petition to be 1643.

¶ *Covetousness* is not attributed to the head of this family; but the Earl makes himself merry with his gallantry. Natural children, it seems, took the name of their father, and not of their mother, as elsewhere, and "the deemster did not get soe many for lust's sake, as to make the name of Christian flourish." Of him, or a successor of the same name, it is related, that he "won £500 at play from the Bishop of Sodor and Man, with which he purchased the manor of *Ewanrigg* in Cumberland, still possessed by that family."

¶ Evidence on the mock trial of William Dhône.

without surprise, that the same means enabled him, in 1645, to arrange a legislature * capable of yielding a forced assent to this notable system of submission and loving-kindness.

This is perhaps the most convenient place for stating, that in the subsequent surrender of the Island to the troops of the Parliament, the only stipulation made by the Islanders was, "that they might enjoy their lands and liberties as they formerly had." In what manner this stipulation was performed, my notes do not enable me to state. The restoration of Charles II., propitious in other respects, inflicted on the Isle of Man the revival of its feudal government; and the affair of the tenures continued to be a theme of perpetual contest, and unavailing complaint, until finally adjusted in 1703, through the mediation of the excellent Bishop Wilson, in a legislative compromise, known by the name of the Act of Settlement, whereby the people obtained a full recognition of their ancient rights, on condition of doubling the actual quitrents, and consenting to alienation fines, first exacted by the Earl James in 1643. †

In 1648, William Dhône was appointed Receiver-General; and in the same year we find his elder brother, John (assistant Deemster to his father Ewan), committed to Peel Castle on one of these occasions, which strongly marks the character of the person and the times, and affords also a glimpse at the feeling of the people, and at the condition of the devoted family of Christian. The inquisitive will find it in a note; ‡ other readers will pass on.

The circumstances are familiarly known, to the reader of English history, of the march of the Earl of Derby, in 1651, with a corps from the Isle of Man for the service of the King; his joining the royal army on the eve of the battle of Worcester; his flight and imprisonment at Chester, after that signal defeat; and his trial and execution at Bolton in Lancashire, by the officers of the Parliament, on the 15th October of that year.

Immediately afterwards, Colonel Duckenfield, who commanded at Chester on behalf of the Par-

* We shall see, by and by, a very simple method of packing a judicial and legislative body, by removing and replacing seven individuals by one and the same mandate.

† Report of 1791, App. A., No. 71.

‡ A person named Charles Vaughan is brought to lodge an information, that being in England, he fell into company with a young man named Christian, who said he had lately left the Isle of Man, and was in search of a brother, who was clerk to a Parliament Officer; that in answer to some questions, he said, "The Earl did use the inhabitants of that Isle very hardly; had estate great fines from the inhabitants, had changed the ancient tenures, and forced them to take leases. That he had taken away one hundred pounds a-year from his father, and had kept his uncle in prison four or five years. But if ever the Earl came to England (he had used the inhabitants so hardly), that he was sure they would never suffer him to land in that Island again." An order is given to imprison John Christian (probably the reputed head of the family, his father being advanced in years) in Peel Castle, until he entered into bonds to be of good behavior, and not to depart the Isle without license.—(Insular Records.) The young man in question is said to have been the son of William Christian of Knockrushen.

liament, proceeded with an armament of ten ships, and a considerable military force, for the reduction of the Isle of Man.

William Christian was condemned and executed in 1662-3, for acts connected with its surrender, twelve years before, which are still involved in obscurity; and it will be most acceptable to the general reader that we should pass over the intermediate period,* and leave the facts regarding this individual, all of them extraordinary, and some of peculiar interest, to be developed by the record of the trial, and documents derived from other sources.

A mandate by Charles, 8th Earl of Derby, dated at Latham in September, 1662, after descending on the heinous sin of rebellion, aggravated by its being instrumental † in the death of the Lord; and stating that he is himself concerned to revenge a father's blood, orders William Christian to be proceeded against forthwith, for all his illegal actions at, before, or after, the year 1651 (a pretty sweeping range). The indictment charges him with "being the head of an insurrection against the Countess of Derby in 1651, assuming the power unto himself, and depriving her Ladyship, his Lordship, and heirs thereof."

A series of depositions appear on record from the 3d to the 13th of October, and a reference by the precious depositaries of justice of that day, to the twenty-four Keys, ‡ "Whether upon the examination taken and read before, you find Mr. W. Christian, of Ronalds-way, within compass of the statute of the year 1422,—that is, to receive a sentence without quest, or to be tried in the ordinary course of law." This body, designated on the record "so many of the Keys as were then present," were in number seventeen; but not being yet sufficiently select to approve of sentence

* Some readers may desire an outline of this period. The lordship of the Island was given to Lord Fairfax, who deputed commissioners to regulate its affairs; one of them (Chaloner) published an account of the island in 1656. He puts down William Christian as Receiver-General in 1653. We find his name, as Governor, from 1656 to 1658 (Sacheverell, p. 101), in which year he was succeeded by Chaloner himself. Among the anomalies of those times, it would seem that he had retained the office of receiver while officiating as Governor; and Episcopacy having been abolished, and the receipts of the see added to those of the exchequer, he had large accounts to settle, for which Chaloner sequestered his estates in his absence, and imprisoned and held to bail his brother John, for aiding what he calls his escape; his son George returned from England, by permission of Lord Fairfax, to settle his father's accounts. Chaloner informs us, that the revenues of the Isle of Man and the Isle of Guernsey, for the private use of Lord Fairfax, who, "for the better encouragement and support of the ministers of the Gospel and for the promoting of learning, hath conferred all this revenue upon the ministers, and also for maintaining free schools, &c., at Castle-town, Peel Douglass, and Ramsey." Chaloner pays a liberal tribute to the talents of the clergy, and the learning and piety of the late bishops.

† See the remark in Christian's dying speech, that the late Earl had been executed eight days before the insurrection.

‡ The court for criminal trials was composed of the Governor and council (including the deemsters) and the keys, who also, with the Lord, composed the three branches of the legislative body; and it was the practice in cases of doubt to refer points of customary law to the deemsters and keys.

without trial, made their return, To be tried by course of law.

On the 26th November, it is recorded, that the Governor and Attorney-General having proceeded to the jail "with a guard of soldiers, to require him (Christian) to the bar to receive his trial, he refused, and denied to come, and abide the same" — (admirable courtesy to invite, instead of bringing him to the bar!) Whereupon the Governor demanded the law of Deemster Norris, who then sat in judication. Deemster John Christian having not appeared, and Mr. Edward Christian,* his son, and assistant, having also *forborne to sit* in this Court, he the said Deemster Norris craved the advice and assistance of the twenty-four Keys, and the said Deemster and Keys deemed the law therein, to wit, that he is at the mercy of the Lord for life and goods.

It will be observed, that seven of the Keys were formerly absent, on what account we shall presently see. All this was very cleverly arranged by the following recorded order, 29th December— "*These of the twenty-four Keys are removed of that Company, in reference to my Honorable Lord's order in that behalf;*" enumerating seven names, not of the seventeen before mentioned, and naming seven others who are "sworn † in their places." The judicature is farther improved by transferring an eighth individual of the first seventeen to the council, and filling his place with another proper person. These facts have been related with some minuteness of detail for two reasons: 1st, Although nearly equalled by some of the subsequent proceedings, they would not be credited on common authority; and 2d, They render all comment unnecessary, and prepare the reader for any judgment, however extraordinary, to be expected from such a tribunal.

Then come the proceedings of the 29th December—The Proposals, as they are named, to the Deemsters,‡ and twenty-four Keys now assembled. "to be answered in point of law." 1st, Any malefactor, &c., being indicted, &c., and denying to abide the law of his country in that course (notwithstanding any argument or plea he may offer for himself), and thereupon deemed to forfeit body and goods, &c., whether he may afterwards obtain the same benefit, &c., &c.; to which, on the same day, they answered in the negative. It was found practicable, on the 31st, to bring the prisoner to the bar, to hear his sentence of being "*shot to death, that thereupon his life may depart from his body;*" which sentence was executed on the 2d of January, 1663.

* The grandson of Ewan. It appears by the proceedings of the King in council, 1663, that "*he did, when the court refused to admit of the deceased William Christian's plea of the Act of Indemnity, make his protestation against their illegal proceedings, and did withdraw himself, and came to England to solicit his Majesty, and implore his justice.*"

† The Commissioners of 1791 are in doubt regarding the time when, and the manner in which, the keys were first elected; his notable precedent had, perhaps, not fallen under their observation.

‡ Hugh Cannel was now added as a second Deemster.

That he made "an excellent speech" at the place of execution, is recorded, where we should little expect to find it, in the Parochial Register; the accuracy of that which has been preserved as such in the family of a clergyman (and appears to have been printed on or before 1776),* rests chiefly on internal evidence; and on its accordance, in some material points, with facts suppressed or distorted in the Records, but established in the proceedings of the Privy Council. It is therefore given without abbreviation, and the material points of evidence in the voluminous depositions on both trials† are extracted for reference in a note.‡

* One of the copies in my possession is stated to be transcribed in that year from the printed speech, the other as stated in the text.

† Both trials: the first is for the same purposes as the English grand jury, with this most especial difference, that evidence is admitted for the prisoner, and it thus becomes what it is frequently called, the first trial; the second, if the indictment be found, is in all respects like that by petty jury in England.

‡ This testimony will of course be received with due suspicion, and confronted with the only defence known, that of his dying speech. It goes to establish, that Christian had placed himself at the head of an association, bound by a secret oath, to "withstand the Lady of Derby in her designs until she had yielded or condescended to their aggressions:" among which grievances, during the Earl's residence, we find incidentally noticed, "the troop that was in the Isle and their free quarterage;" that he had represented her ladyship to have deceived him, by entering into negotiations with the Parliament, contrary to her promise to communicate with him in such a case; that Christian and his associates declared that she was about to sell them for twopenny or threepenny a-piece; that he told his associates, that he had entered into correspondence with Major Fox and the Parliament, and received their authority to raise the country; that in consequence of this insurrection her ladyship appointed commissioners to treat with others "on the part of the country;" and articles of agreement were concluded (see the speech) which nowhere now appear; that on the appearance of Duckenfield's ships, standing for Ramsay Bay, one of the insurgents boarded them off Douglas, "to give intelligence of the condition of the country;" the disposable troops marched under the governor, Sir Philip Musgrave, for Ramsay; that when the shipping had anchored; a deputation of three persons, viz., John Christian, Ewan Curphey, and William Standish, proceeded on board, to negotiate for the surrender of the Island (where William was does not appear). The destruction of the articles of agreement, and the silence of the records regarding the relative strength of the forces, leave us without the means of determining the degree of merit or demerit to be ascribed to these negotiators, or the precise authority under which they acted; but the grievances to be redressed, are cleared from every obscurity by the all-sufficient testimony of the terms demanded from the victors, "*that they might enjoy their lands and liberties as formerly they had;*" and that it was demanded whether they asked any more, but nothing else was demanded that this ex-aminant heard of." The taking of Loyal Fort near Ramsay (commanded by a Major Duckenfield, who was made prisoner, and of Peel Castle, appear on record: but nothing could be found regarding the surrender of Castle Rushen, or of the Countess of Derby's subsequent imprisonment. Had the often repeated tale, of William Christian having "treacherously seized upon the lady and her children, with the governors of both castles, in the middle of the night"—(Roll's History of the Isle of Man, published in 1773, p. 89)—rested on the slightest semblance of truth, we should inevitably have found an attempt to prove it in the proceedings of this mock trial. In the absence of authentic details, the tradition may be adverted to, that her ladyship, on learning the proceedings at Ramsay, hastened to embark in a vessel she had prepared, but was intercepted before she could

The last speech of William Christian, Esq., who was executed 2d January, 1663-3:—

"Gentlemen, and the rest of you who have accompanied me this day to the gate of death, I know you expect I should say something at my departure; and indeed I am in some measure willing to satisfy you, having not had the least liberty, since my imprisonment, to acquaint any with the sadness of my sufferings, which flesh and blood could not have endured, without the power and assistance of my most gracious and good God, into whose hands I do now commit my poor soul, not doubting but that I shall very quickly be in the arms of his mercy.

"I am, as you now see, hurried hither by the power of a pretended court of justice, the members whereof, or at least the greatest part of them, are by no means qualified, but very ill befitting their new places. The reasons you may give yourselves.

"The cause for which I am brought hither, as the prompted and threatened jury has delivered, is high treason against the Countess Dowager of Derby, for that I did, as they say, in the year fifty-one, raise a force against her for the suppressing and rooting out that family. How unjust the accusation is, very few of you that hear me this day but can witness; and that the then rising of the people, in which afterwards I came to be engaged, did not at all, or in the least degree, intend the prejudice or ruin of that family, the chief whereof being, as you well remember, dead eight days, or thereabout, before that action happened. But the true cause of that rising, as the jury did twice bring in, was to present grievances to our Honorable Lady; which was done by me, and afterwards approved by her Ladyship, under the hand of her then secretary, M. Trevach, who is yet living, which agreement hath since, to my own ruin and my poor family's endless sorrow, been forced from me. The Lord God forgive them the injustice of their dealings with me, and I wish from my heart it may not be laid to their charge another day!

"You now see me here a sacrifice ready to be offered up for that which was the preservation of your lives and fortunes, which were then in hazard, but that I stood between you and your (then in all appearance) utter ruin. I wish you still may, as hitherto, enjoy the sweet benefit and blessing of peace, though from that minute until now I have

reach it. The same uncertainty exists with regard to any negotiations on her part, with the officers of the Parliament, as affirmed by the insurgents; the Earl's first letter, after his capture and before his trial, says, "Truly, as matters go, it will be best for you to make conditions for yourself, children, and friends, in the manner as we have proposed, or as you can farther agree with Col. Duckenfield; who, being so much a gentleman born, will doubtless, for his own honor, deal fairly with you." He seems also to have hoped at that time that it might influence his own fate; and the eloquent and affecting letter written immediately before his execution, repeats the same admonitions to treat. Roll, pp. 74 and 84.

* This fact, as might be expected, is not to be traced on the record of the trial.

still been prosecuted and persecuted, nor have I ever since found a place to rest myself in. But my God be for ever blessed and praised, who hath given me so large a measure of patience!

"What services I have done for that Noble Family, by whose power I am now to take my latest breath, I dare appeal to themselves, whether I have not deserved better things from some of them, than the sentence of my bodily destruction, and seizure of the poor estate my son ought to enjoy, being purchased and left him by his grandfather. It might have been much better had I not spent it in the service of my Honorable Lord of Derby and his family; these things I need not mention to you, for that most of you are witnesses to it. I shall now beg your patience while I tell you here, in the presence of God, that I never in all my life acted any thing with intention to prejudice my Sovereign Lord the King, nor the late Earl of Derby, nor the now Earl; yet notwithstanding, being in England at the time of his sacred Majesty's happy restoration, I went to London, with many others, to have a sight of my gracious King, whom God preserve, and whom until then I never had seen. But I was not long there when I was arrested upon an action of twenty thousand pounds, and clapped up in the Fleet; unto which action, I being a stranger, could give no bail, but was there kept nearly a whole year. How I suffered God he knows; but at last having gained my liberty, I thought good to advise with several gentlemen concerning his Majesty's gracious Act of Indemnity, that was then set forth, in which I thought myself concerned; unto which they told me, there was no doubt to be made but that all actions committed in the Isle of Man, relating in any kind to the war, were pardoned by the Act of Indemnity, and all other places within his Majesty's dominions and countries. Whereupon, and having been forced to absent myself from my poor wife and children near three years, being all that time under persecution, I did with great content and satisfaction return into this Island, hoping then to receive the comfort and sweet enjoyment of my friends and poor family. But, alas! I have fallen into the snare of the fowler; but my God shall ever be praised,—though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.

"I may justly say no man in this Island knows better than myself the power the Lord Derby hath in this Island, subordinate to his sacred Majesty, of which I have given a full account in my declaration presented to my judges, which I much fear will never see light,* which is no small trouble to me.

"It was his Majesty's most gracious Act of Indemnity gave me the confidence and assurance of my safety; on which, and an appeal I made to his sacred Majesty and Privy Council, from the unjustness of the proceedings had against me, I did much rely, being his Majesty's subject here, and a denizen of England both by birth and for

* The apprehension was but too correct.

tune. And in regard I have disobeyed the power of my Lord of Derby's Act of Indemnity, which you now look upon, and his Majesty's Act cast out as being of no force, I have with greater violence been persecuted; yet nevertheless I do declare, that no subject whatever can or ought to take upon them acts of Indemnity but his sacred Majesty only, with the confirmation of Parliament.

"It is very fit I should say something as to my education and religion. I think I need not inform you, for you all know, I was brought up a son of the Church of England, which was at that time in her splendor and glory; and to my endless comfort I have ever since continued a faithful member, witness several of my actions in the late times of liberty. And as for government, I never was against monarchy, which now, to my soul's great satisfaction, I have lived to see is settled and established. I am well assured that men of upright life and conversation may have the favorable countenance of our gracious King, under whose happy government, God of his infinite mercy long continue these his kingdoms and dominions. And now I do most heartily thank my good God that I have had so much liberty and time to disburden myself of several things that have laid heavy upon me all the time of my imprisonment, in which I have not had time, or liberty, to speak or write any of my thoughts; and from my soul I wish all animosity may after my death be quite laid aside, and my death by none be called in question, for I do freely forgive all that have had any hand in my persecution; and may our good God preserve you all in peace and quiet the remainder of your days.

"Be ye all of you his Majesty's liege people, loyal and faithful to his sacred Majesty; and, according to your oath of faith and fealty to my Honorable Lord of Derby, do you likewise in all just and lawful ways, observe his commands; and know that you must one day give an account of all your deeds. And now the blessing of Almighty God be with you all, and preserve you from violent death, and keep you in peace of conscience all your days!

"I will now hasten, for my flesh is willing to be dissolved, and my spirit to be with God, who hath given me full assurance of his mercy and pardon for all my sins, of which his unspeakable goodness and loving-kindness my poor soul is exceedingly satisfied."

Note.*—Here he fell upon his knees, and passed some time in prayer; then rising exceedingly cheerful, he addressed the soldiers appointed for his execution, saying—"Now for you, who are appointed by lot my executioners, I do freely forgive you." He requested them and all present to pray for him; adding, "There is but a thin veil betwixt me and death; once more I request your prayers, for now I take my last farewell."

The soldiers wished to bind him to the spot on which he stood. He said, "Trouble not your-

selves or me; for I that dare face death in whatever form he comes, will not start at your fire and bullets; nor can the power you have deprive me of my courage." At his desire a piece of white paper was given him, which with the utmost composure he pinned to his breast, to direct them where to aim, and after a short prayer addressed the soldiers thus—"Hit this, and you do your own and my work." And presently after, stretching forth his arms, which was the signal he gave them, he was shot through the heart and fell.

Edward Christian, the nephew, and George, the son, of the deceased, lost no time in appealing to his Majesty in Council against this judicial murder; and George was furnished with an order "to pass and repass," &c., and bring with him such records and persons as he should desire, to make out the truth of his complaint." Edward returned with him to the Island for that purpose; for we find him, in April, 1663, compelled, in the true spirit of the day, to give bond "that he would at all times appear and answer to such charges as might be preferred against him, and not depart the Isle without license." George was prevented, by various contrivances, from serving the King's order; but on presenting a second petition, the Governor, Deemster, and Members of Council, were brought up to London by a Sergeant-at-Arms; and these six persons, together with the Earl of Derby, being compelled to appear, a full hearing took place before the King in person, the Chancellor, the Lord Chief-Justice, Lord Chief-Baron, and other Members of Council; judgment was extended on the 5th August, and that judgment was on the 14th of the same month ordered "to be printed in folio, in such manner as Acts of Parliament are usually printed, and his Majesty's Arms prefixed."

This authentic document designates the persons brought up as "Members of the pretended Court of Justice;" declares "that the general Act of Pardon and Amnesty did extend to the Isle of Man, and ought to have been taken notice of by the Judges in that Island, although it had not been pleaded; that the Court refused to admit the deceased William Christian's plea of the Act of Indemnity," &c. "Full restitution is ordered to be made to his heirs of all his estates, real and personal." Three other persons "who were by the same Court of Justice imprisoned and their estates seized and confiscated without any legal trial," are ordered, together with the Christians, "to be restored to all their estates, real and personal, and to be fully repaired in all the charges and expenses which they have been at since their first imprisonment, as well in the prosecution of this business as in their journey hither, or in any other way thereunto relating." The mode of raising funds for the purposes of this restitution is equally peculiar and instructive: those "sums of money are ordered to be furnished by the Deemsters, Members, and Assistants of the said

* Ewan Culphey, Samuel Ratcliffe, and John Caesar, men of considerable landed property.

Court of Justice," who are directed "to raise and make due payment thereof to the parties."

"And to the end that the blood that has been unjustly spilt may in some sort be expiated," &c., the Deemsters are ordered to be committed to the King's Bench to be proceeded against, &c., &c., and receive condign punishment. [It is believed that this part of the order was afterwards relaxed or rendered nugatory.] The three Members of Council were released on giving security to appear, if required, and to make the restitution ordered. "And in regard that Edward Christian, being one of the Deemsters or Judges in the Isle of Man, did, when the Court refused to admit of the deceased W. Christian's plea of the Act of Indemnity, make his protestation against their illegal proceedings, and did withdraw himself, and come to England to solicit his Majesty, and implore his justice, it is ordered that the Earl of Derby do forthwith, by commission, &c., restore and appoint him as Deemster, so to remain and continue, &c. [which order was disobeyed]. And lastly, that Henry Nowell, Deputy-Governor, whose fault hath been the not complying with, and yielding due obedience to, the order* of his Majesty and this Board sent unto the Island [O most lame and impotent conclusion!], be permitted to return to the Isle, and enforce the present Order of the King in Council."

Of the Earl of Derby no farther mention occurs in this document. The sacrifices made by this noble family in support of the royal cause, drew a large share of indulgence over the exceptionable parts of their conduct; but the mortification necessarily consequent on this appeal, the incessant complaints of the people, and the difficulty subsequently experienced by them in obtaining access to a superior tribunal, receive a curious illustration in an order of the king in council, dated 20th August, 1670, on a petition of the Earl of Derby, "that the clerk of the council in waiting receive no petition, appeal, or complaint, against the lord or government of the Isle of Man, without having first good security from the complainant to answer costs, damages, and charges."

The historical notices of this kingdom† of Lilliput are curious and instructive with reference to other times and different circumstances, and they have seemed to require little comment or antiquarian remark; but to condense what may be collected with regard to Edward Christian, the accomplished villain of Peveril, the insinuations of his accuser‡ constitute in themselves an abundant defence. When so little can be imputed by such an adversary, the character must

* Tradition, in accordance with the dirge of William Dhône, says, that the order to stop proceedings and suspend the sentence arrived on the day preceding that of his execution.

† Earl James, although studious of kingcraft, assigns good reasons for having never pretended to assume that title, and among others, "Nor doth it please a king that any of his subjects should too much love that name, were it but to act in a play."—Peck, 426.

‡ Peck, passim.

indeed be invulnerable. Tradition ascribes to him nothing but what is amiable, patriotic, honorable, and good, in all the relations of public and private life. He died, after an imprisonment of seven or eight years, the victim of incorrigible obstinacy, according to one, of ruthless tyranny, according to another vocabulary; but resembling the character of the Novel in nothing but unquarable courage.

Treachery and ingratitude have been heaped on the memory of William Christian with sufficient profusion. Regarding the first of these crimes: if all that has been affirmed or insinuated in the mock trial, rested on a less questionable basis, posterity would scarcely pronounce an unanimous verdict of moral and political guilt, against an association to subvert such a government as is described by its own author. The peculiar favors for which he or his family were ungrateful, are not to be discovered in these proceedings; except, indeed, in the form of "chastisements of the Almighty—blessings in disguise." But if credit be given to the dying words of William Christian, his efforts were strictly limited to a redress of grievances,—a purpose always criminal in the eye of the oppressor. If he had lived and died on a larger scene, his memory would probably have survived among the patriots and the heroes. In some of the manuscript narratives he is designated as a martyr for the rights and liberties of his countrymen; who add, in their homely manner, that he was condemned without trial, and murdered without remorse.

We have purposely abstained from all attempt to enlist the passions in favor of the sufferings of a people, or in detestation of oppressions, which ought, perhaps, to be ascribed as much to the character of the times as to that of individuals. The naked facts of the case (unaided by the wild and plaintive notes in which the maidens of the isle were wont to bewail "the heart-rending death of fair-haired William") are sufficient of themselves to awaken the sympathy of every generous mind; and it were a more worthy exercise of that despotic power over the imagination, so eminently possessed by the Great Unknown, to embalm the remembrance of two such men in his immortal pages, than to load their memories with crimes, such as no human being ever committed.

I am enabled to add the translation of the lament over the fair-haired William Christian. It is originally composed in the Manx language, and consists of a series of imprecations of evil upon the enemies of Christian, and prophecies to the same purpose:—

ON THE DEATH AND MURDER OF RECEIVER-GENERAL WILLIAM CHRISTIAN, OF RONALDSWAY, WHO WAS SHOT NEAR HANGO HILL, JANUARY 2. 1662.

1.

In so shifting a scene, who would confidence place
In family power, youth, or in personal grace?

* The literal translation given to me by a young lady.

* This note is annexed to all the copies of the speech.