

they chose to the royal presence, would not stop at forgery, which they could conceal, if they had made up their minds to murder, which has seldom or ever been successfully concealed. But it matters not in so far as regards the fate of the Prince, whether the writ was genuine or not. It was acted upon and the unfortunate son of a King was seized by his enemies, Douglas and Ramorny, lashed in his royal robes to the back of a sorry pony, and hurried through Fife, to a prison adjoining to the palace of Falkland.

The unhappy Prince now saw that his death was determined—but he little suspected what was to be its cruel nature. The work of his enemies was done; but they had delegated what even their hard hearts could not accomplish to ruffians from whose bosoms every humane feeling had been long eradicated. He was put under the charge of two men, brought it is supposed from Aberdeen—a locality as far from the scene of the tragedy they were to perform as possible—called John Wright and John Selkirk, names that remained infamous in Scotland for many a day—the faces of these men, filled with the expression of a determination to resist every feeling of humanity, contrasted strangely with the countenance of the royal youth—formed by nature, and moulded by his sympathies, to speak eloquently the language of affection, and reflect the fair lineaments of the most beautiful of the graces. It required only one glance of the Prince's inquiring eye to see that, if his fate depended upon the feelings of these men, he had no chance of salvation in this world.

The ruffians having thrown the unfortunate youth into one of the low dungeons of the prison, without speaking a word, were preparing to leave him, when urged by feelings of despair, he fell on his knees and beseeched them to tell him what commission they had got from his enemies for the fulfilment of his fate.

"Tell me, good friends," he cried, "in what shape death is to come to the son of a king, that he may prepare his mind to meet his end as becometh a man. Grant me, at least, the privilege of dying by my own hand that the descendant of Bruce may escape the fate of malefactors, or the mangled termination of the devoted victim of revenge.—You are not, you cannot be so bad as the sternness of office makes you appear. Shall

the Prince of Scotland sue in vain to the subjects of his father for the boon of a dagger Merciful Heaven! am I refused this request? Then is cruelty to be added to injustice; and perhaps starvation—dreadful thought! await me with her attendant agonies."

As the unfortunate Prince uttered these words, he fell on the damp floor of the dungeon. His appeal produced nothing but a hollow growl, more like the sound of a mastiff's anger than the voice of a human being. Turning abruptly from him, they left him extended on the ground, and in an instant seemed to be entirely occupied about the manner in which they should secure, with double certainty, the door of the dungeon. On lifting his head, the victim heard nothing but the harsh expostulations of the two men, as they differed about the expediency of riveting the iron bars by which the door was fastened.

The wretched youth had truly anticipated his fate. Starvation was the mode of death fixed upon by his cowardly murderers—which might have been accomplished in an instant, was prolonged for many days. Cruelty was indeed, as he had said, added to injustice; and the merciful death of the malefactor on the gallows, was denied to the heart-rending entreaties of a prince. For fifteen days, according to a historian, he was suffered to remain without food, under the charge of Wright and Selkirk, whose task it was to watch the agony of their victim till it ended in death. It is said, that, for a while, the wretched prisoner was preserved in a remarkable manner, by the kindness of a poor woman, who in passing through the garden of Falkland, was attracted, by his groans, to the grated window of his dungeon, which was level with the ground, and became acquainted with his story. It was her custom to steal thither at night, and bring him food by dropping small cakes through the grating whilst milk, conducted through a pipe to his mouth, was the only way he could be supplied with drink. But Wright and Selkirk, suspecting, from his appearance, that he had some secret supply, watched, and detected the charitable visitant, and the Prince was abandoned to his fate.

Such was the death assigned to the son of a king, the most beautiful, the most engaging, the most generous—what pity should add, the most volatile and irregular that was born to a kingdom, amidst the acclamations of a loving people!