

acquit the queen, and by them unanimously declared to be genuine. They are confirmed by every circumstance that, in the remotest manner relates to them. To the end Mary was most anxious to have them destroyed. That others were implicated is not at all unlikely. That the letters were consequently mutilated in order to conceal this fact is also in the highest degree probable. But that they should have been wholly fabricated, and that the story of the silver casket is a myth, is utterly incredible. The contents of some of the letters were known to Murray, while the lords were endeavoring to screen Mary's reputation and procure her separation from Bothwell. They would not have been forged by men who wished to save the queen's honor in the face of Europe. "Buchanan is the real author," is the last explanation of blind sentiment or partizanship. Can we believe that a man whose life for sixty years was unstained by the shadow of deceit, should now lend himself to baseness so unspeakable? That one, on whose epitaph Joseph Scaliger could write

Contemptisopibus, spretis popularibus auris,
Ventosaeque fugax ambitionis, obis.

could sell his sovereign for money or position? If such a charge, unsupported by a tittle of evidence, and in the face of the unanimous belief of the time, is to be considered worthy of a moment's attention, then there is no defense, in previous good conduct, for one accused of any crime. Buchanan's "*Detectio Mariae Reginae*" was written by one whose calm judgment ratified the sentence which popular instinct had pronounced on the morning after the tragedy of Kirk of Field. Whatever we may think of the legitimacy of the court's assumed jurisdiction, the impartial historian must sorrowfully acquiesce in the justice of Mary's execution. There is not the least doubt that had she fallen into the hands of her subjects after the battle of Langside, the fate which she so narrowly escaped when sent to Loch Leven would have finally overtaken her; the principles which, we shall see, Buchanan asserted to lie at the foundation of the constitution of Scotland would have been acted upon; and a precedent would have been furnished for the tragedy at Whitehall in which her grandson was the chief actor.

As early as 1564 Secretary Maitland, of Lethington, had declared himself in opposition to the political views of the