

very large amount was soon raised; the project, which had been coolly received when proposed to different eminent characters individually, was now eagerly entered into when it came supported by the recommendations of many, and under the sanction of an act of Parliament, and a charter from the Crown. A writer on this subject says, "The frenzy of the Scots nation to sign the solemn league and covenant, never exceeded the rapidity with which they ran to subscribe to the Darien Company." The nobility, the gentry, the merchants, the royal burghs, without the exception of one, and the most of the other public bodies subscribed." £400,000 was soon subscribed in Scotland, £300,000 in England, and £200,000 by the Dutch and Hamburgers. One circumstance deserves here to be mentioned, much to the credit of Patterson, and as marking a mind of no small degree of generosity. According to the original articles of the company, he was to be allowed two per cent. on the stock, and three per cent. on the profits; but with a liberality seldom equalled and perhaps never surpassed, he came forward, when he saw the great amount of the subscriptions, and relinquished his claims in favour of the company, for which he gives the following reasons, in his own words. "It was not suspicion of the justice or gratitude of the company, nor a consciousness that my services could ever become useless to them, but the ingratitude of some individuals experienced in life, which made it a matter of common prudence in me to ask a retribution for six years of my time, and £10,000 spent in promoting the establishment of the company. But, now that I see it standing upon the authority of Parliament, and supported by so many great and good men, I release all claim to that retribution, happy in the noble concession made to me, but happier in the return which I now make for it."

It was when matters were progressing in this favourable train that the company received a check from a quarter where they ought to have met with encouragement and support; but although it diminished their means, it did not crush the enterprize, as will be afterwards seen. The mean jealousy of trade, which has been the bane of England on so many occasions, arose against this company: on the 13th December, 1695, memorials from both the House of Lords and the Commons were presented to His Majesty against the Darien Company, and the latter went so far as to impeach some of their members for being concerned in it. His Majesty answered, that "he had been ill advised in Scotland." He soon after ordered his resident to present a memorial against the company, to the Senate at Hamburgh, disowning it, and warning them against all connection with it. The merchants at first exclaimed against this interference, but soon after became intimidated, and those of Hamburgh, Holland, and in London, withdrew their subscriptions.

The Scots, instead of being discouraged by this conduct, became more ardent than ever for the project, justly attributing the whole opposition to the jealousy of the English, proceeded to build six ships, carrying from 36 to 60 guns each, in Holland, and engaged 1200 men, among whom were many of the younger sons of the most ancient and noble families in the kingdom. "And neighbouring nations, with a mixture of surprise and respect, saw the poorest kingdom of