

James the First and his fair wife Joan, surrounded by a small band of faithful followers, bound for the monastery of the Black Friars of Perth to hold Christmas Carnival.

The weather and the day were wild enough, and these but only too truly reflected the surging passions of human hearts. The brave young king's desire to put down the marauding practices of his Highland subjects and bring about a condition of things under which a "key" should be sufficient keep for a "castle," and a "bracken bush" enough protection for a "cow," together with, perhaps, a not altogether wise way of working so good a cause, had provoked the hostility of some of the Highland chiefs who lived by stealing their neighbours' property. This disaffection became formidable under the leadership of Sir Richard Graeme, brother of the Earl of Stratherne, whose earldom had been confiscated by the king, who feared its power, with perhaps less justice than became his high purpose, and James and his retainers had need to watch and ward against open enemies and secret foes.

Silently, if not mournfully, the little band moved on, picking its way along the uneven shore, and peering anxiously through the deepening shadows for signs of the distant ferry. Like a cavalcade of ghosts, but dimly seen as dimly seeing, they pressed on, all eyes for what light might give them guidance, all ears for what sound might give them warning.

As they were descending to the beach, at the point