

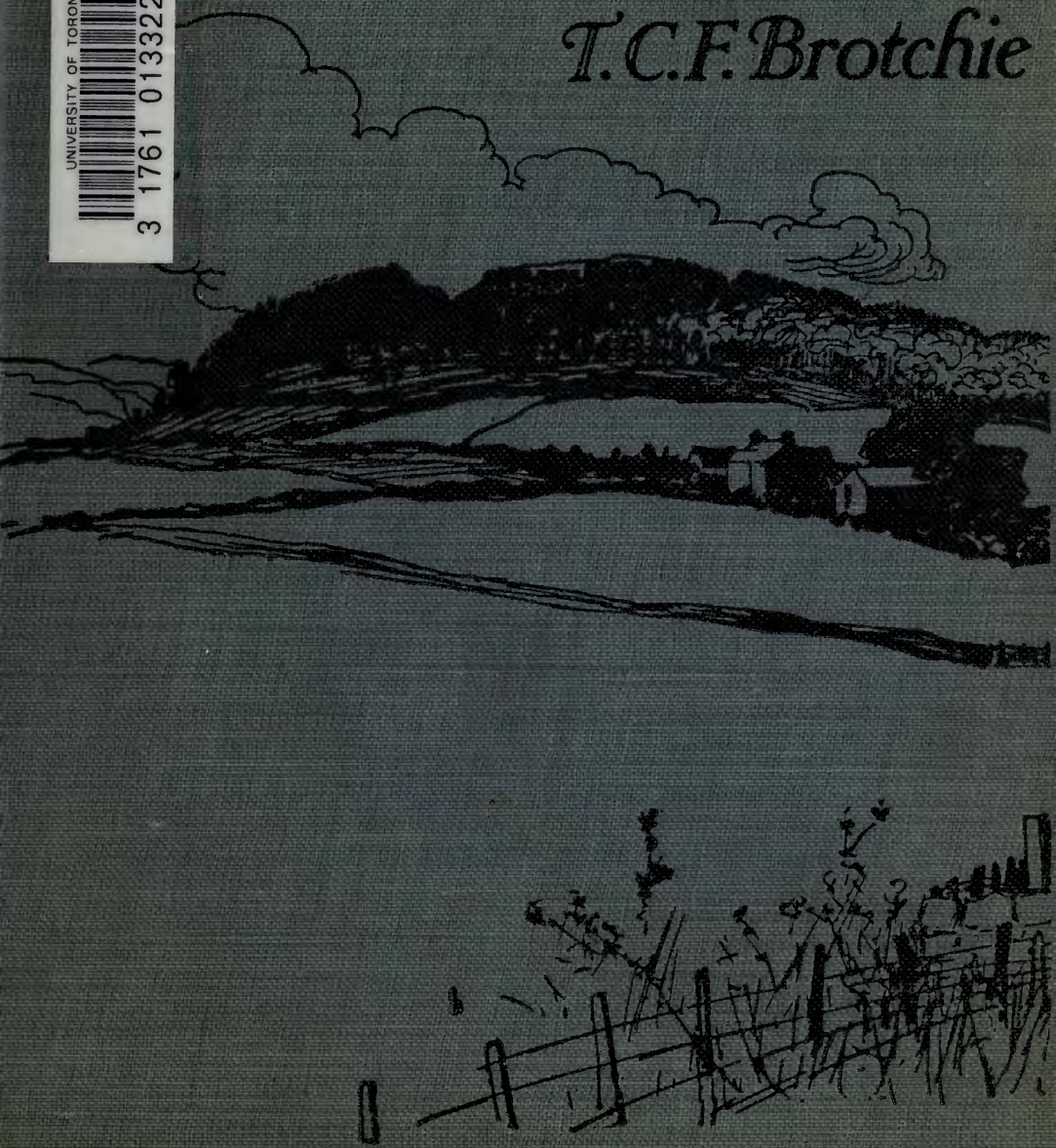
# *The Battlefields of Scotland*

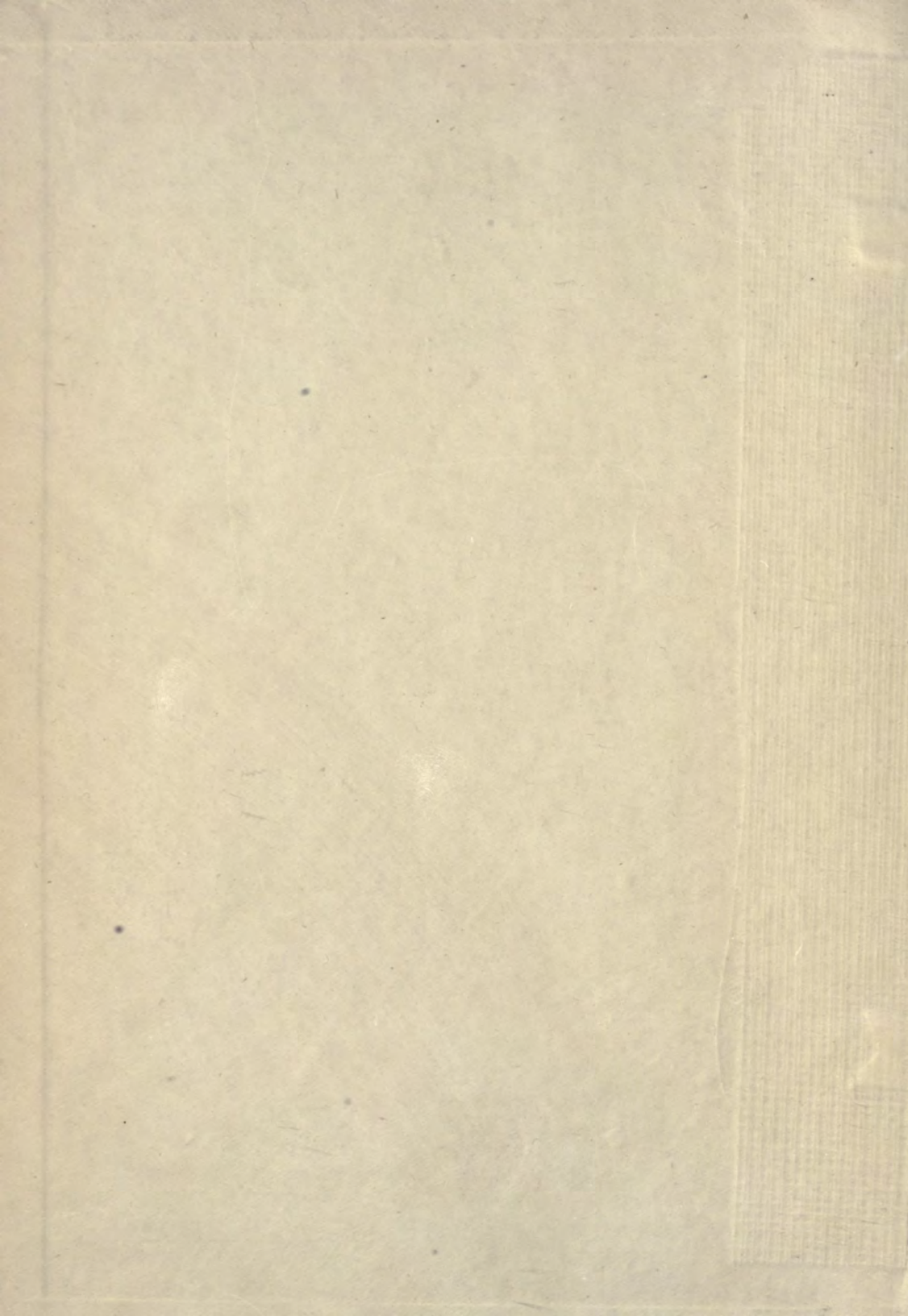
*T.C.F. Brotchie*

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



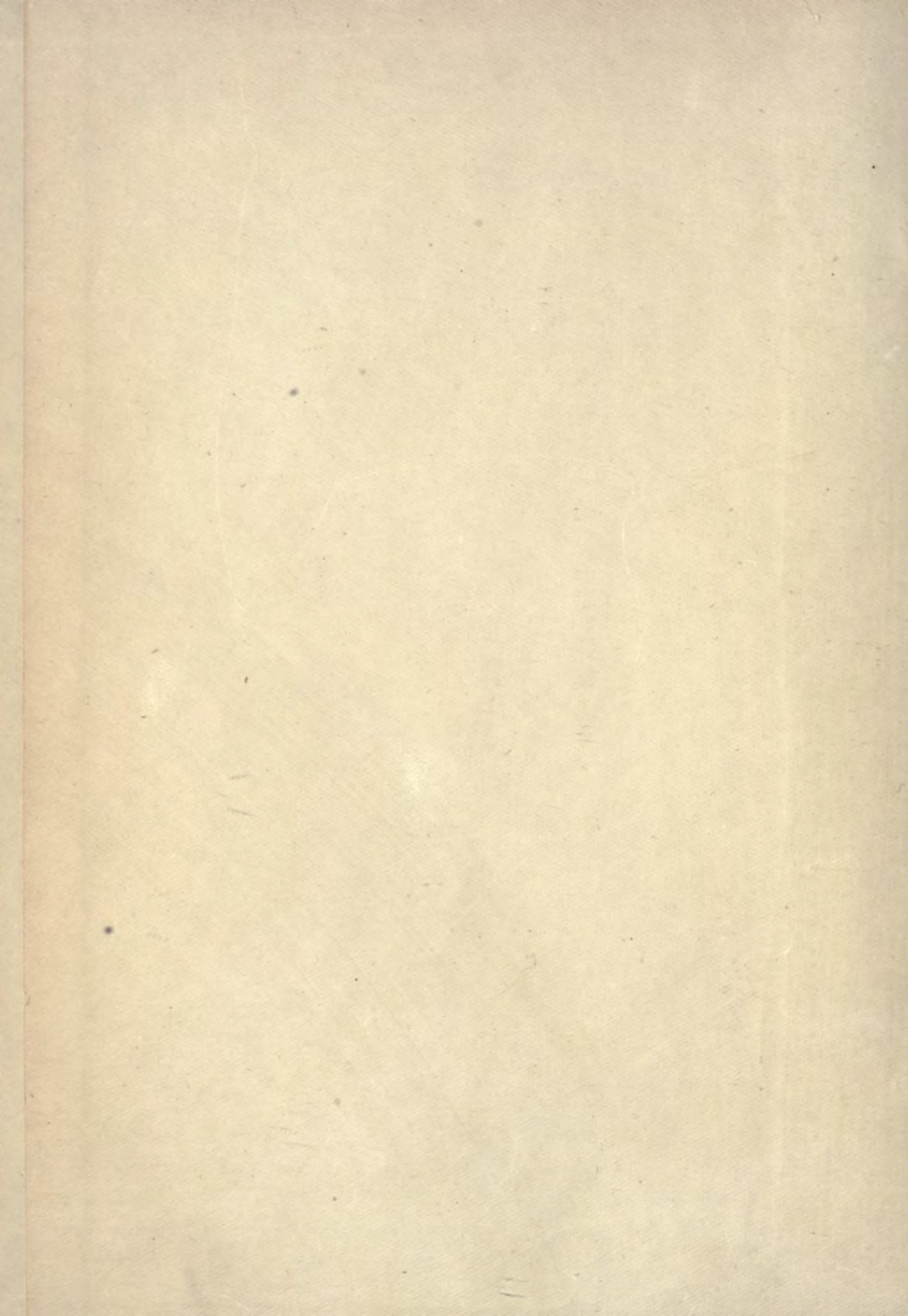
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**THE BATTLEFIELDS OF  
SCOTLAND**

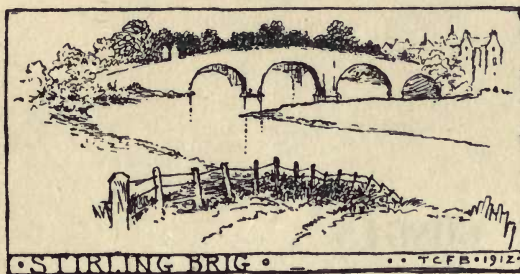
. . . . . "The measure wild  
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,  
Rude though they be, still with the chime  
Return the thoughts of early time;  
And feelings, roused in life's first day,  
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay."

*Marmion.*



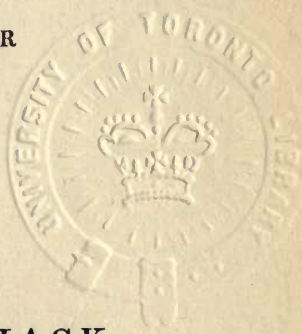
# THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND THEIR LEGEND AND STORY

*heodore  
charles  
erdinand*  
By T. C. F. BROTCHE, F.S.A. (Scot.)  
AUTHOR OF "RAMBLES IN ARRAN," ETC.



WITH SIXTY DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

EDINBURGH: T. C. & E. C. JACK  
AND 67 LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.  
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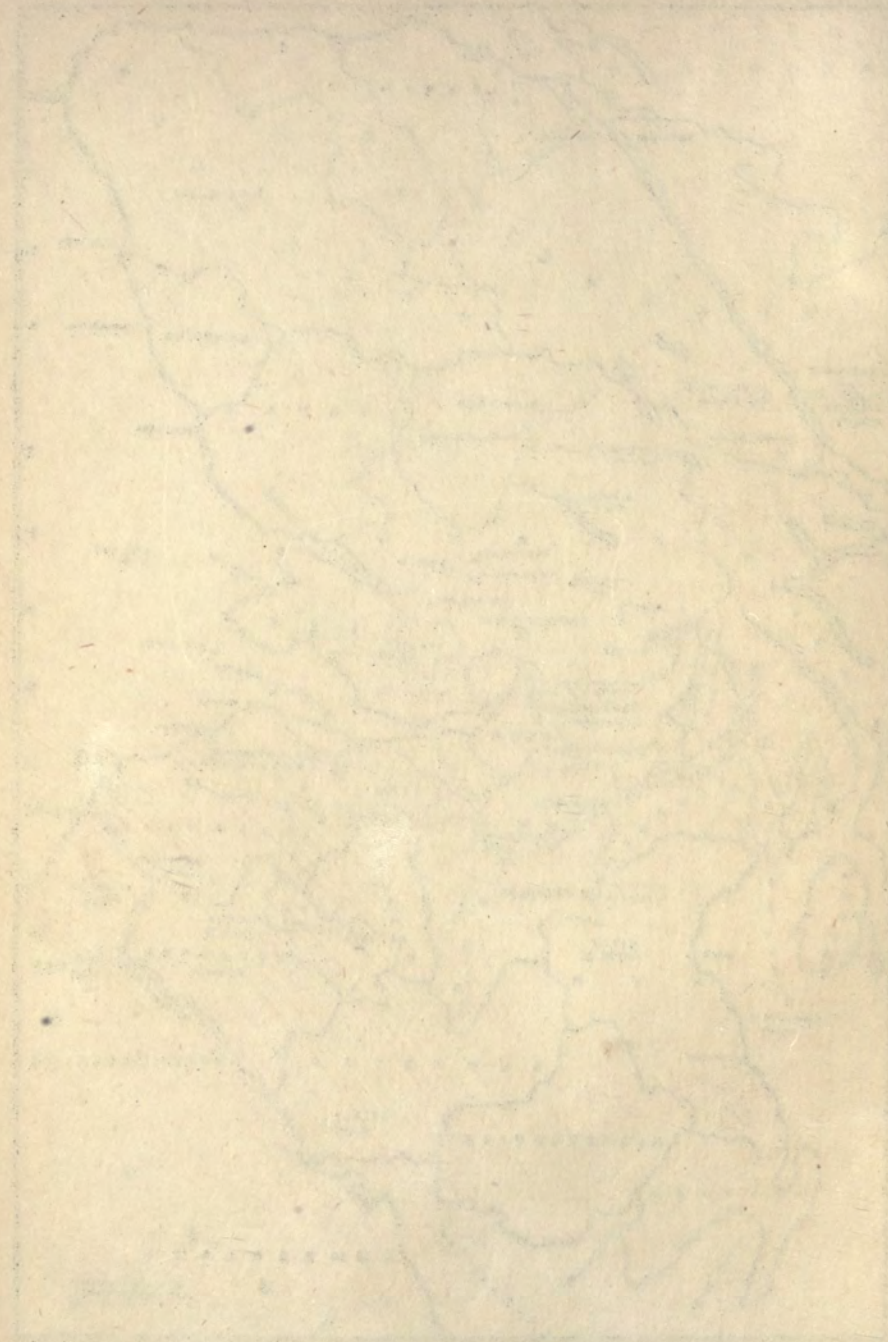
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## PREFACE

LAST summer I had the privilege of visiting and sketching the battlefields of Scotland, from Culloden in the north to Flodden in the south. In the following pages I have endeavoured to tell the story of the national struggles associated for all time with these historic spots. They are charged with memories fascinating to the Scotsman, and to all who love to wander over the storied mountains and moorlands and glens of our country. The broad features of the canvas are, doubtless, tolerably familiar. However, around these scenes of ancient strife there has gathered a wonderful atmosphere of legend, tradition, romance, and song, material not generally accessible, and widely scattered. I have tried to bring this scattered lore together so as to afford a connected and picturesque view of what may be called international warfare from Mons Grampius to Culloden. At the same time, while fulfilling the original purpose of clothing the dry bones of history with the subtly attractive garb of romance, I have aimed at strict accuracy of detail in developing the work, in the hope that the volume will be of interest to the serious student equally with the general reader.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

The material has been drawn from the best and latest authorities, and I have not neglected independent consultation of the original sources available. My indebtedness is fully acknowledged in references and footnotes.

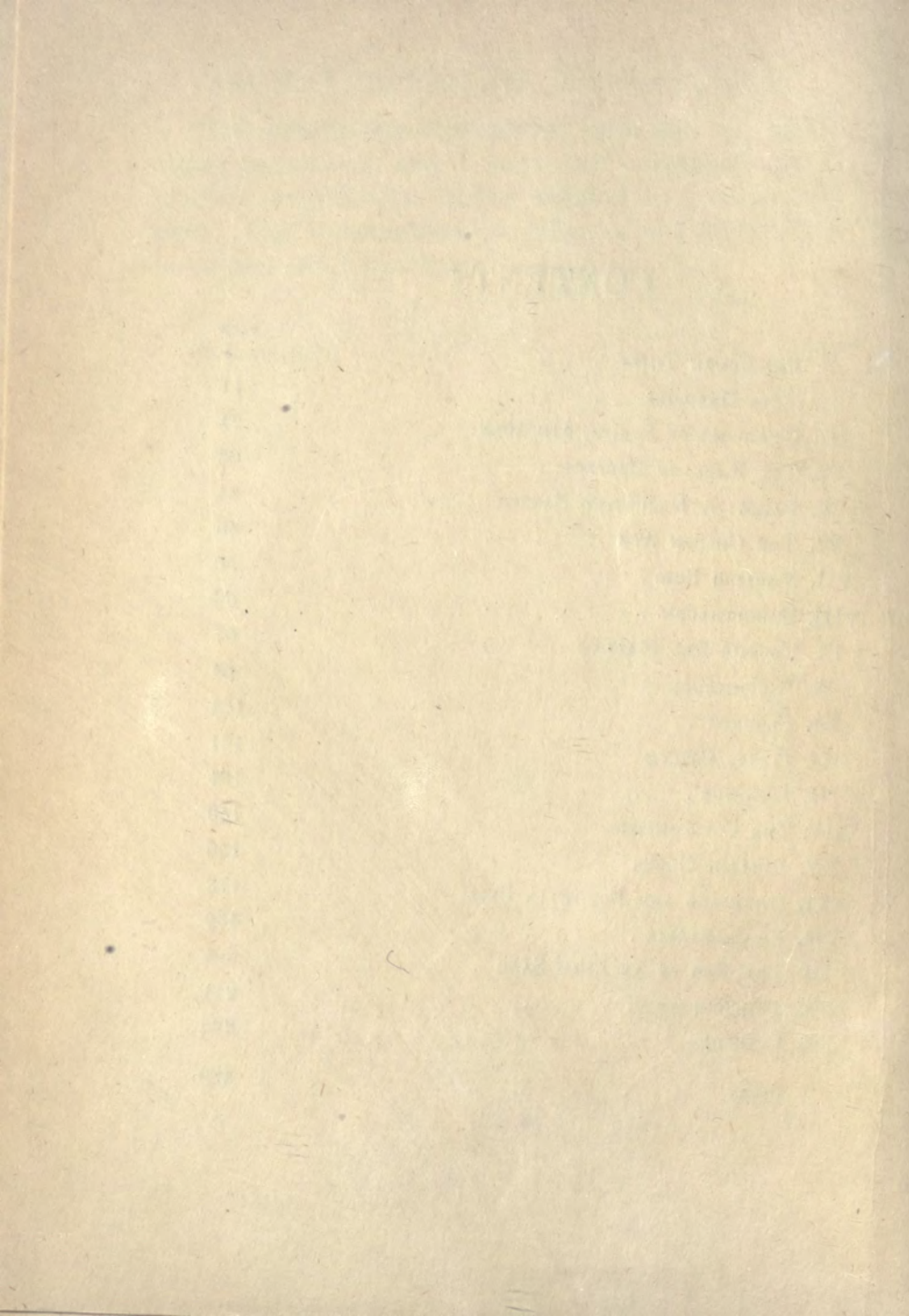
T. C. F. B.

GLASGOW, 1913.

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# THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

## CHAPTER I

### PRE-ROMAN TIMES

ALL certain knowledge of the fierce tribal wars and ruthless struggles of ancient Scotland is lost in the darkness of the gathered ages which precede the period of the Roman invasion. The mists of eld enshroud the long, dim centuries of the dawn of time, when primitive man made his appearance on the northern portion of our island. He was closely akin to nature, "red in tooth and claw," waging ceaseless war on his fellows, and on the beasts of prey which haunted the caverns and swamps of his adopted land. Dread voices came whispering to him from out the lonely forests wherein abode strange monsters and dæmons of terrible shape. His existence was one of fear and the lust of blood. We have no written records of these old times, but we may dimly read their story in the grey cairn of the shaggy moorlands, and the lichen-covered monolith of the venerable hills.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Digging around the memorials of the vanished past we pick up shattered skulls in which the stone axes used by the warriors of forgotten generations still lie embedded. Every Scottish heath and glen possesses those crumbling monuments. They mark for us the battlefields of the primitive past, the red memories of which have long since faded in the mists of time. We possess, however, a rich heritage of this unwritten history. From the ramparts of the far north against which there ever beats the surge of the Pentland seas, to the sandy shores of the Solway Firth, we meet with innumerable hill-fortresses, small and great, mere mounds of earth or stone in some cases : in others lordly lines of well-planned and skilfully-constructed defences. One type of these, the vitrified hill forts, remains a mystery. At all events a satisfactory solution of the problems presented in their construction and purpose has so far defied the learning and acuteness of archæologists. The substance of the forts is, in portions, bright like the scoriæ of a glass house. That their material has passed through fire and assumed a vitreous character is clearly established. Archæologists are not agreed as to the methods employed to produce vitrification, nor as to whether its occurrence is due to accident or design : whether it is merely a secondary condition produced by bale fires kept continually smouldering on the wall ready to be wakened up when occasion arose, or a structural process employed to give solidity to the rubble core



## PRE-ROMAN TIMES

of the breastwork. The varying extent in which vitrification and calcination are found in different forts seems to imply both circumstances. A vitrified mass, probably a beacon, noted near St. Abb's in Berwickshire, shows clearly structural intention, horizontal layers of small broken stone and of vitrification regularly alternating from base to summit.<sup>1</sup> It may be asked, With what purpose had these mysterious erections been subjected to so strange a process? and by what vanished race of men had they been inhabited? It hardly falls within the scope of the present work to attempt to answer that query. At the best we would be merely embarking on the uncharted ocean of speculation. To a certain extent we are on surer ground when investigating that other very characteristic method of ancient defence known as lake-dwellings or crannogs. So valuable does insulation appear to have been to the early men of Scotland that artificial islands were frequently made of stakes and stones. The draining of the Loch of Forfar in 1780 first brought these erections into prominent notice. Since that period numerous remains of ancient island "fortresses" have been discovered; notably the famous group of artificial islands in the Loch of Dowalton, Wigtownshire, examined by Lord Lovaine in 1863, and by Mr. John

<sup>1</sup> *Royal Com. Hist. Mon. Scot. Report*, vol. i., County of Wigtown, pp. 30, 31; "Prehistoric Forts of Bute," King Hewison; *Soc. Ant. Scot. Trans.*, xxvii. p. 281 *et seq.*

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Stuart, Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, in 1864, when four large and six smaller islands of an artificial character were investigated and reported on.<sup>1</sup> When the sheet of water which gave a name to the farm of Lochlea—where Robert Burns served his apprenticeship to the Muses—was drained off, the remains of a crannog were revealed, and the most of the relics which were recovered may be seen in the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock. A more recent example was the late Mr. Donnelly's discovery of the celebrated Clyde crannog.<sup>2</sup> The relics recovered from these "islands" show that they were not mere garrisoned fortresses but were dwelling-places for families. If there were not an enemy in possession of a boat, no position could well be more impregnable than such an island in tolerably deep water. What exigencies drove the people to a method of living that can scarcely have been selected for its own sake are not apparent, but they doubtless sought, and—until the advent of the Romans—found peace in their watery retreats. Articles of Roman manufacture are a feature common to our Scottish lake-dwellings and crannogs, so we may justly suppose that they were inhabited during the Roman occupation of North Britain. Our knowledge of the

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Scot. Antiquaries*, vi. p. 114; *ibid.*, xxiii. pp. 148, 152, 200, illus.; *Scottish Lake Dwellings*, p. 38; *Ayr and Gall. Arch. Coll.*, v. p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Lang, *The Clyde Mystery*; Munro, *Arch. and False Antiquities*; *Glasgow Evening Times*, Sept. 11, 1905 *et seq.*; Bruce, *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, xxxiv. pp. 439, 449.



## PRE-ROMAN TIMES

Caledonian tribes met by the Roman invaders is fragmentary and dim. Xiphilinus, a monk of Constantinople, prepared in the eleventh century an epitome of the writings of Dio Cassius, a contemporary of, and a prætor under, the Roman Emperor Severus—who died at York in February A.D. 211.<sup>1</sup> In this abridgment we read, “The two most important tribes are the Caledonians and the Meataë: the names of the other tribes having been included in these. The Meataë dwell close by the wall that divides the island into two parts, the Caledonians beyond them.” These people, he continues, had no walled towns but lived in tents or booths—wattled structures?—subsisting entirely by hunting and pillage. Mention is made of a special kind of compressed food that they carried on expeditions, a very small piece of which was enough to satisfy both hunger and thirst. The traditional *biadh-nan-treum*, the food of heroes, was said to be prepared by the Picts, of pounded flesh mixed with certain restorative herbs, and a little of this compound sufficed to maintain a man’s strength during prolonged exertions.<sup>2</sup> They had wives in common, it is alleged, and so great was their hardihood that they used to conceal themselves in swamps, submerged all but their heads, and could remain so for many days, living upon roots. This

<sup>1</sup> Sir Herbert Maxwell, *Rhind Lect.*, 1912; *Early Scot. Chron.*, p. 23 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Maxwell, *Scot. Chron.*, p. 24.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

sounds like a traveller's tale: but the description of their mode of fighting is probably trustworthy. They had chariots drawn by small but active horses: they carried dirks and short spears with a bronze knob on the haft, which they rattled against their shields when charging an enemy. They were fleet of foot and very brave in war, wearing hardly any clothes in order that the beasts depicted on their bodies by tattooing might be seen.<sup>1</sup> Such were the people of North Britain whom the Romans had to face. The Roman historians testify to their skill and courage in war. Their remains in the crannogs of Strathclyde and Galloway, the Brochs or Pictish towers north of the Forth, the earth-houses excavated in different parts of Scotland, and the mysterious Catrail, or Picts Work Ditch, of the classic borders all tell the same story, and give ample proof of the progress that these ancient tribesmen had made in the more peaceful and not less useful human pursuits.

According to a once universal belief the Romans gave to them the name of Picts from the Latin word *pictus*, because they painted their bodies; and a Latin poet speaks in eloquent numbers of "the figures fading on the dying Pict."<sup>2</sup>

At the dawn of our national history we get a

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell, pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> Macmillan, *Hist. Scot. People*; W. M. Mackenzie, *Outline Scot. Hist.*; Lynn, *Survey of the Catrail*, *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, xxxii. pp. 62, 90.

## PRE-ROMAN TIMES

faint glimpse of these Picts, or painted men, who shared with the Goidels, or Gaels, or Celts, the country now known as Scotland. Both peoples, the Picts and Goidelic Celts, were perhaps of the same family. It is a moot point, and its discussion lies beyond our province. We know, however, that the colony of Scots, who ultimately gave their name to Scotland, migrated from Ireland about the fifth century. Under their king, Fergus, they formed the Kingdom of Dalriada in Argyllshire, and they chose to make their capital at Dunadd at the head of Loch Crinan. And it was to the Court of Dalriada there came in the sixth century—in the year 563—the great warrior-saint Columba. His first task was to provide for the continuance of Christian teaching among the Scots; his second to convert the Picts. He accomplished both.

These changes took place centuries after the Roman had bidden farewell to the Scottish shores. In the interval another Christian teacher, St. Ninian, appeared in Galloway, and built the first Christian church in North Britain. Ninian is said to have been born on the shores of the Solway Firth in the year A.D. 350, and though a shadowy personality, he is no legendary saint. The discoveries made by the members of the Royal Commission on Ancient Scottish Monuments at the supposed site of Ninian's Candida Casa—church of white stone—at Whithorn, afford excellent proof of the truth of the saintly



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

tradition. Incidentally the Celtic crosses and other relics of Whithorn are accepted by some writers as proof of the existence of Christianity in Scotland during, or shortly after, the Roman occupation.<sup>1</sup>

We fancy the Roman generals and commanders did not trouble themselves either about the religion, or the divisions, of the northern barbarians. Their duty was to subdue the Caledonians, a task that proved beyond their powers. It occupied them well-nigh three centuries. In the first century, between the years 80 and 85, Agricola attempted to hold by a series of forts the line of Forth and Clyde, and he made punitive expeditions beyond the Forth. Agricola's successors maintained an uncertain hold upon his conquest, and about the year 120 the Emperor Hadrian abandoned it—northern and mid-Scotland—and built a *stone* wall—to defend the southern country—between the Tyne and the Solway. Some years later the Romans reverted to the policy of Agricola and Lollius Urbicus, and built the *turf* wall, of Antoninus Pius, between the Forth and Clyde, which was again abandoned about the year 180.<sup>2</sup> The barbarian raids continued throughout the whole

<sup>1</sup> *Royal Com. Report, Wigtown*, pp. 3, 387, 462, 495, 540; Rait, *Making of Scotland*; Macmillan, *Hist. Scot. People*; Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*; Andrew Lang, *Hist. Scot.*

<sup>2</sup> Roy, *Mil. Ant. Brit.*, pp. 148-157; *Trans. Glasgow Arch. Soc.* 1899; Macdonald, *Roman Wall*; Rait, *Making of Scotland*; Christison, *Early Fortifications in Scotland*.



## PRE-ROMAN TIMES

of the Roman occupation, and in A.D. 208 they roused the Emperor Severus to undertake an invasion of Scotland in which he punished the marauders and (probably) reached the shores of the Moray Firth at Burghead. But it was at a terrible cost in human life, over fifty thousand men perishing in the course of that mad scurry. A century and a half elapsed before the Romans again attempted the subjection of the tribes, and the expedition of Theodosius in 368 marked their last expiring effort to suppress the Caledonians. It is during these stirring, though almost forgotten, times that we are introduced to the battlefields of Scotland. Agricola in one of his expeditions fought the Battle of Mons Grampius or Graupius. The scene of this great battle is the subject of debate.

Stuart in his *Caledonia Romana* follows Chalmers, and places the natives on the heights to the north-west of the great camp of Ardoch Moor,<sup>1</sup> and this point of view I have adopted after an exhaustive personal survey of the Roman camp—at Ardoch—and the adjacent country. Several other sites have been suggested. Mr. Skene recognises no mountain at Ardoch which in his opinion answers to Mons Grampius, and according to Mr. Andrew Lang—who in his *History of Scotland* accepts (with reservations) Mr. Skene's theory—makes the fight

<sup>1</sup> Chalmers, *Caledonia*, ed. 1877, vol. i. p. 112 *et seq.*; Roy's *Mil. Ant.*, c. iii. pp. 77, 88; Ward, *Roman Era in Britain*, pp. 38, 45.

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take place beneath the Hill of Blair, the isthmus at the meeting of Isla and Tay. It will be remembered that Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, the immortal Antiquary of Scott, placed the (unknown) site of Mons Grampius on the Kaim of Kinprunes.

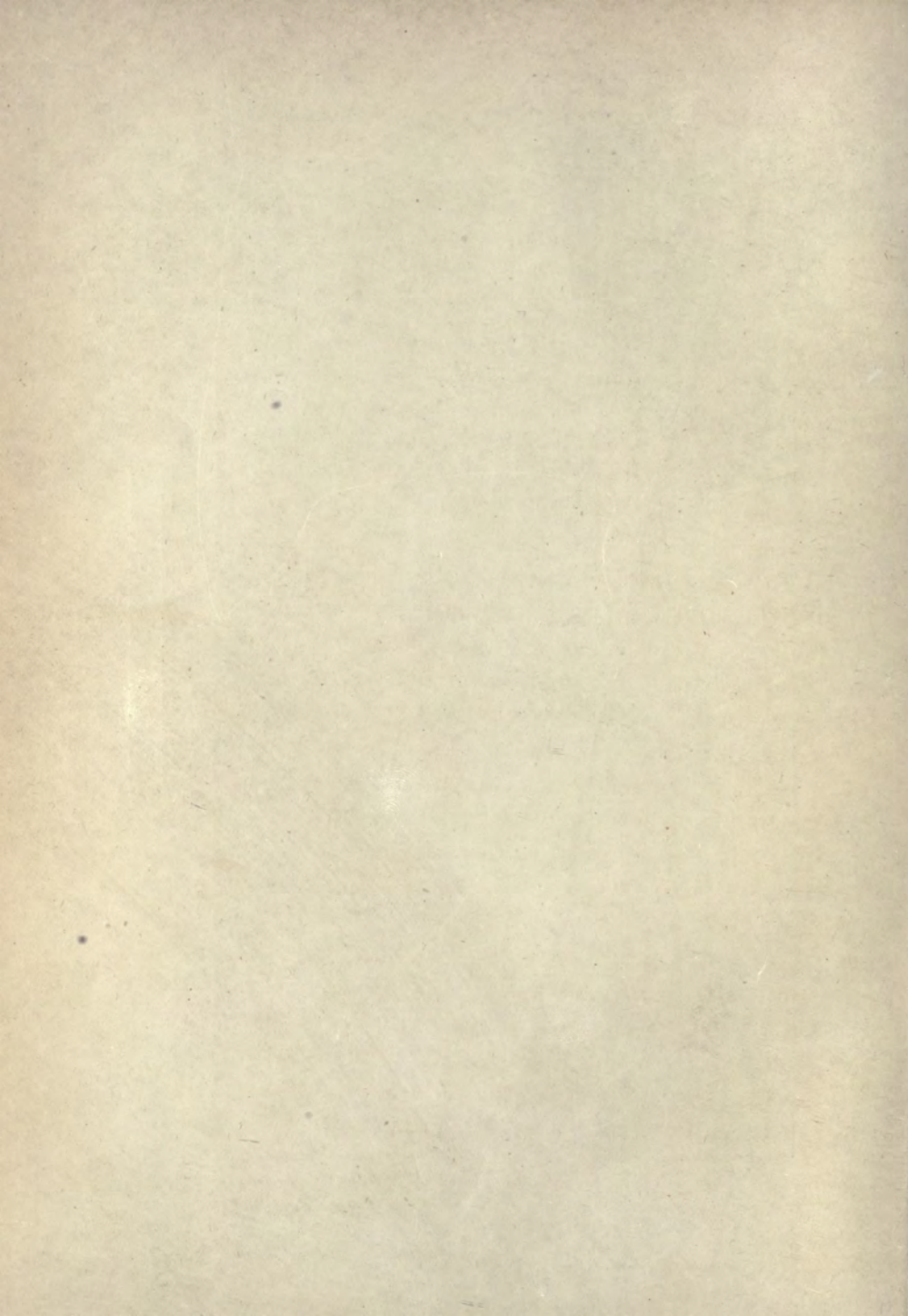




THE MOORLANDS OF ARDOCH

Scene of the first battle on Scottish soil





## CHAPTER II

### MONS GRAUPIUS

IT is to the Roman historian, Cornelius Tacitus, that we are indebted for the earliest authentic chronicle relating to primitive Scotland. This accomplished writer was the son-in-law of Julius Agricola, the Roman general who, in the third year of his governorship of the Isle of Britain, that is, A.D. 80, discovered "New Nations," and subdued the country as far as the Firth of Tay, "the Barbarians, smitten with fear, never daring to give him battle." Agricola advanced slowly into the northern wilds. It was a country of rugged mountains and gloomy wastes, inhabited by warlike peoples accustomed to bloody wars; warriors of ruddy locks and lusty limbs, whose footsteps were "first in the battle," the "red-haired chiefs of Cuthal"; their feet were "swift on the heath." They had never experienced anything like the relentless pressure of a Roman invasion. The legionaries with their silver standards and flashing armour proved terrible foes. The Caledonians, from their hill fastnesses, silently watched the coming of the strangers. With amazement they saw them rearing the great

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

stone fort at Newstead (near Melrose). The following year the brass-clad invaders pushed and carved their way northwards through the forests to the banks of the Clyde. The tribesmen gazed, awe-struck, at the line of forts that sprung into being from Dunclas right across their country to the Firth of Forth, and here, says Tacitus, "had it been possible to set a limit to the spirit of the troops and to the renown of Rome, might have been drawn a permanent frontier within the bounds of Britain."<sup>1</sup>

Insatiable ambition and the lust of territory urged the Roman legions onward. The tide of war surged northwards, from Camelon—where the Roman Way leaves the Antonine Wall (or Graham's Dyke) at Maiden Castle—through a desolate and marshy wilderness into the heart of Perthshire, and finally broke on the rocky rampart of the Grampians. The march of Imperial Rome was checked. Agricola and his cohorts turned, appalled by the black shadows

<sup>1</sup> The Roman Walls and their contiguous remains have been a fertile theme of inquiry. Warburton's *Vallum Romanum*, 1753, was the first important monograph on the subject of the English barrier. Hodgson's *History of Northumberland* is a mine of valuable information. Dr. George Neilson's *Per Lineam Valli*, 1891, is one of the most important of the modern works. Professor Haverfield's *Five Years' Excavations on the Roman Wall*, 1894-99, is also invaluable. On the Scottish or Antonine Wall, there is a wealth of literature—Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, 1726; Roy's magnificent, indeed still unsurpassed, *Military Antiquities of the Romans in North Britain*, 1793; Stuart's *Caledonia Romana*, 1845; *Antonine Wall, Report of the Glasgow Archaeological Society*, 1899; and Dr. Macdonald's *The Roman Wall*, 1911. See also Curle's *Roman Fort at Newstead*.



## MONS GRAUPIUS

of that dreary region. A century and a half was to pass before Severus and his legions succeeded in forcing their way to the wind-swept shores of the Moray Firth. Theirs was a war of extermination. Xiphilinus says that in his address to his troops Severus quoted the lines of Homer, where Agamemnon urged his brother to give no quarter to the Trojans. This was the policy of the soldiers of the conquering Empire, which had doomed the world to slavery. The invaded Caledonians were to be the first to stem the tide of universal conquest. They never bowed the knee to the Roman. The pride of the Mistress of the World was humbled, and Scotland proved the grave of her far-reaching ambitions.

Agricola and his legions held on their relentless advance. The ill-directed efforts of the undisciplined hordes of natives were employed in vain against the strong entrenchments and well-concerted resistance of the Roman detachments. The only obstructions which impeded the progress of the legionaries were the defences which nature "raised to shield, a rude unlettered people all her own." On past the Rock of Stirling—which Boece, in the sixteenth century *réchauffé* of romance and fact, the *Scotorum Historiæ*, gravely informs us was fortified by Agricola—passing the waters of the river Forth by the Fords of Frew, skirting the legend-haunted banks of Allan Water at Greenloaning, and then past the sleepy village of Braco to the Moor of Ardoch—we can follow the

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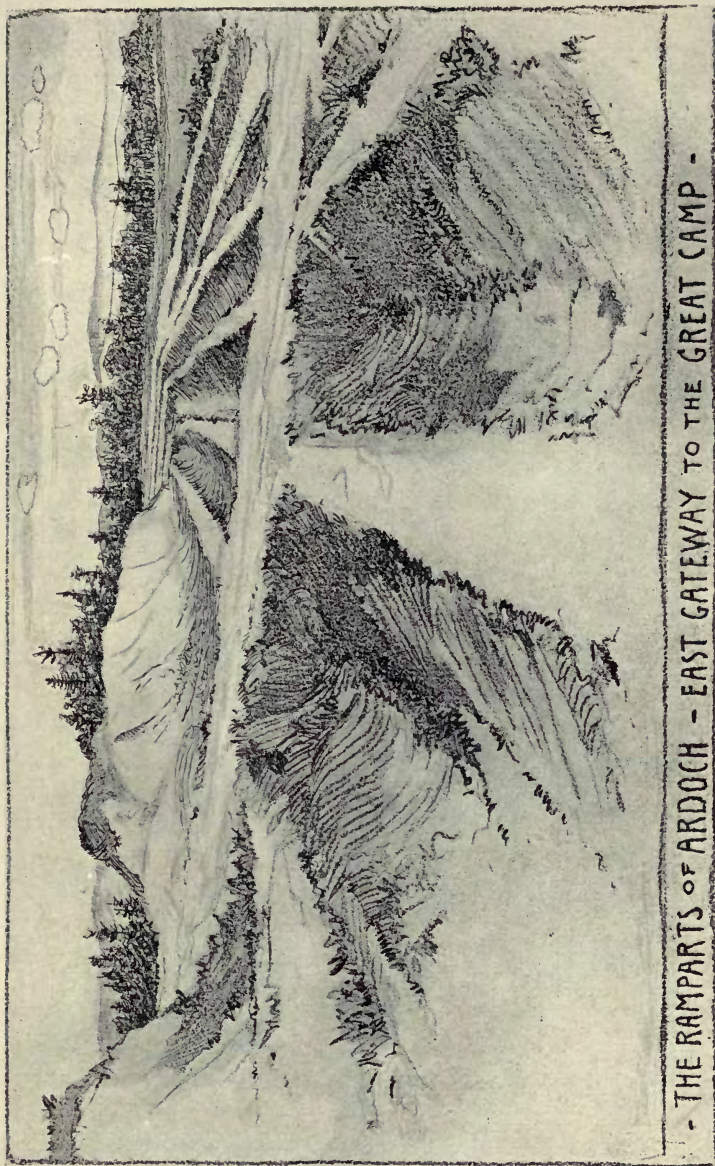
footsteps of the Roman invaders. And at Ardoch to-day we contemplate with feelings of awe :

“ . . . The mouldering lines  
Where Rome, the Empress of the world  
Of yore, her eagle wings unfurled.”

The massive ramparts and multiple trenches shown in our sketch of the east entrance, are nearly in as perfect condition as when Agricola's engineers raised them. This great camp is one of the most remarkable monuments of antiquity in Britain, and a wonderful example of Roman military skill in planning entrenchments and adapting them to the varying requirements of the selected sites. It attracted the notice of British archæologists as early as 1672, when Lord James Drummond referred to it in the *Blair Drummond Papers*. Sibbald made a plan of it which appears in Camden's *Britannia* of 1693, and General Roy's survey of 1793 stands as an almost perfect representation of the surface conditions at the present day. Roy, who brought the experience of a modern military engineer to aid his knowledge as an archæological scholar, estimated that the camp was capable of holding an army of 30,000 men. Eighteen hundred centuries have come and gone since that winter of A.D. 85 spent by Agricola and his troops within the shelter of the lines of Ardoch.<sup>1</sup>

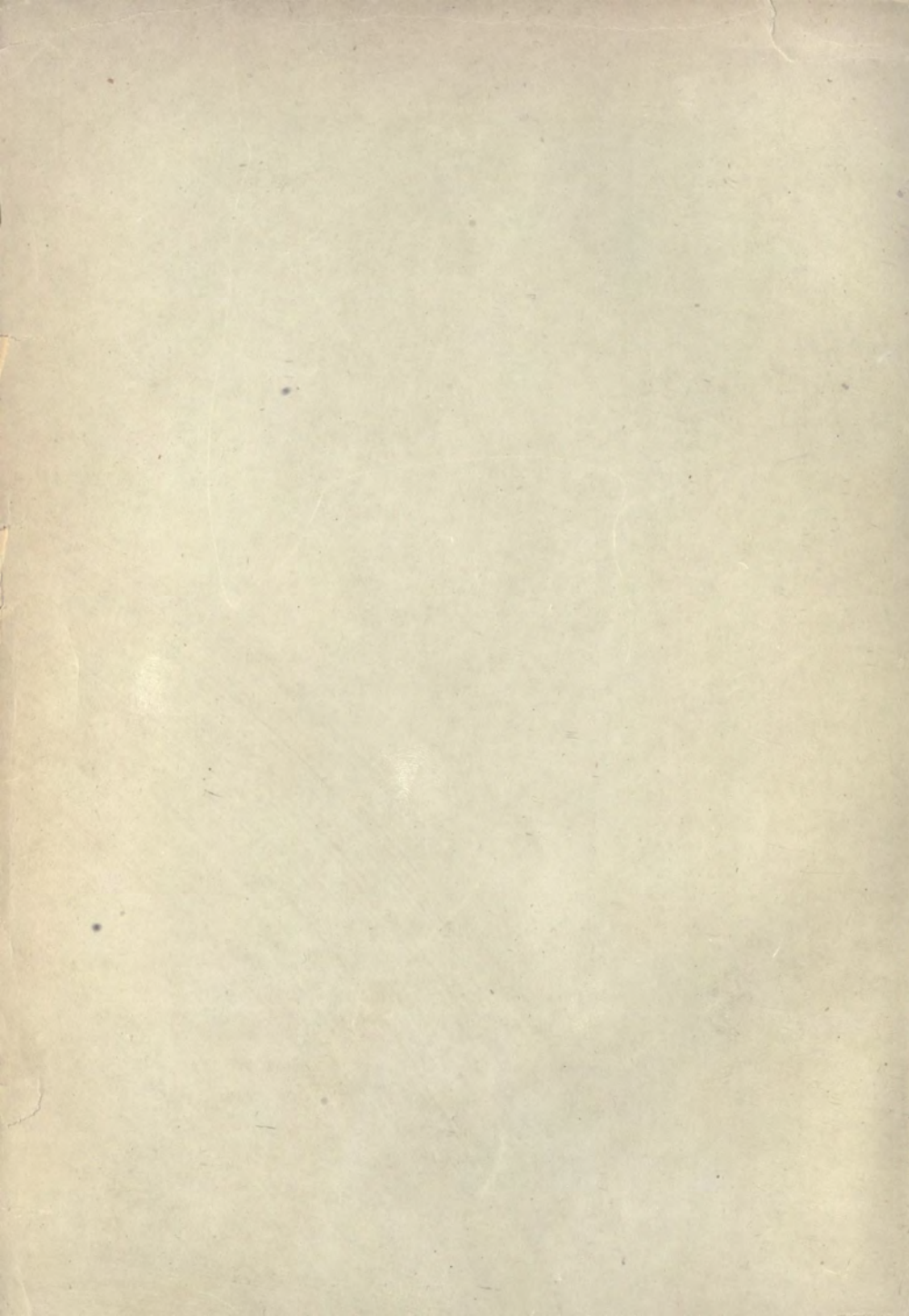
<sup>1</sup> Ardoch Camp is in Perthshire, near the southern border of the county, and close beside the road from Dunblane to Crieff at a point 7 miles distant from the former and 9 miles from the latter town. It is about 1½





- THE RAMPARTS OF ARDOCH - EAST GATEWAY TO THE GREAT CAMP -





## MONS GRAUPIUS

From its ramparts the Roman sentinel gazed across dense forests and bleak moorland and swamp to where the rugged peaks of the Grampians were silhouetted against the northern skies. He shuddered as he looked upon that titanic boundary, for behind it was a region infested with vipers and serpents and strange beasts, where the air was poisonous, the dread abodes where souls of men departed were conducted by the shadowy shapes of the other world—so run the wild legends embodied in the *Histories* of Procopius, an Eastern writer of the sixth century. Tradition has it that vast treasure lies buried in Ardoch Camp. Gordon, in his *Itinerarium Septentrionale* of 1726 quotes a rhyme which was old in his day, and which tells us that :

“From the Roman Camp at Ardoch  
To the Grinnan hill o’ Keir,  
Are nine kings’ rents  
For seven hundred years.”

On a modern computation of these “rents” the treasure must be of respectable value. It still awaits an enterprising seeker.<sup>1</sup>

miles from Greenloaning Station on the Caledonian main line. As the crow flies, its distance north of the Antonine Wall is 18 miles. Carsebreck Curling Pond lies to the south of Ardoch.

<sup>1</sup> There was a hole near the side of the (Ardoch) prætorium that went in a sloping direction for many fathoms (towards the river Knaick?), in which, persistent country tradition said, treasures as well as Roman antiquities might be found. In order to ascertain this fact a poor wretch who had been condemned to death by the baron court of a neighbouring lord about 1650, upon obtaining a pardon agreed to be let down by a rope

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

On the moorlands of Ardoch we venture to place the scene of the famous battle of Mons Grampius, the first battle on Scottish soil of which there exists a definite record. There are conflicting opinions on the question of the site, but for our present purpose it would be futile to discuss these. The topography and physical features of the Moor of Ardoch agree with the descriptive notes of the scene in the narrative of Tacitus. Among its hags and mosses and on the swelling uplands above it we see many such remains of hoary antiquity as speak to us in their silent language of the shadowy past. Entrenchments and field-works and the nature of the ground

into this hole. He at first brought up from a great depth Roman spears, helmets, and other articles: but upon being let down a second time he was killed by the foul air. The articles are said to have lain at the house of Ardoch for many years, but were all carried off by some of the soldiers in the Duke of Argyll's army in 1715 after the battle of Sheriffmuir. The hole was covered up with a millstone in 1720, and though diligent search has been made, its situation cannot now be found. *Old Stat. Acc.*, v. 8, pp. 494, 495. *Hist. MSS. Commission, Tenth Report*, Part I, p. 130. *Blair Drummond Papers*. Letter from James Lord Drummond, afterwards fourth Earl of Perth, to Mr. Patrick Drummond, Stobhall, 15th January 1672: "There was near these (Ardoch trenches?) a round open lyke the mouth of a narrow well, of a great depth, into which my grandfather ordered a malefactor to go, who glad of the opportunity to escape hanging, went and brought up a spear and buckler of brasse, which were lost the time that a garrison of Oliver's dispossessed us of Drummond. There was found a stone ther upon which was cut an inscription to show that a captain of the Spanish Legion died ther. If you please I shall coppie it for you. It is rudely cut" (Christison, "Excavation Roman station at Ardoch," *Trans. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxxii. p. 399 *et seq.*). The stone referred to is now in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow.



## MONS GRAUPIUS

combine in fitting it for the manœuvres of that bloody day in the summer of A.D. 86. From the great camp at Ardoch Agricola drew out his army, as Tacitus informs us, on the neighbouring moor. As the legions defiled from the gateways they could see an immense throng of the enemy posted on the heights, and they would hear the hoarse shouts of challenge which greeted their appearance on the heath. The half-savage tribes had gathered to dare all they could adventure in defence of their freedom. Ghostly advisers thread the ranks, raising their white wands to heaven, thundering maledictions on the head of the coward who would flee, and promising the glories of Valhalla to the souls which depart in battle. There is silence as Galgacus, their chosen leader, steps forth to address his countrymen. The fiery eloquence and concentrated invective with which Tacitus endows the British chief could not be surpassed, and his address remains one of the most brilliant efforts of classic oratory. The peroration is magnificent. The Romans had come "To ravage, to slaughter : to usurp under false titles they call Empire, and where they make a desert they call it Peace. Here is a general; here an army. There tributes, mines, and all the train of punishments inflicted on slaves; which, whether to bear eternally or instantly to revenge, this field must determine. March, then, to battle, my countrymen, and think of your ancestors and your posterity."

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Tacitus was a Master. He painted his barbarous chief with a purpose. The address was a noble rebuke to the Empire and the Roman people, whose profligate ambition, pride, and egotism, false to the high destiny assigned to them by Virgil of protecting the oppressed and striking down the oppressor, had become instead the common scourge of all mankind. "On, then, and down upon them, and let each man fight as if the fate of his country's liberty depended upon his single arm."

The Caledonian charioteers dashed across the slopes and drove fiercely towards the Roman cavalry, routing and putting them to flight, but when they rushed at the infantry the vehicles were embarrassed by the broken ground. They became intermingled in disorder, and a scene of ruin and confusion ensued. Agricola ordered five cohorts, composed of about 3000 men of the Batavian and Tungarian auxiliaries, to charge, sword in hand. Tacitus tells us that to this mode of attack the Caledonians could offer but an ineffectual resistance, their small shields and long, unwieldy weapons being of little service in a close engagement. The Batavians rushed on with fury, striking the bosses of their shields into the faces of the enemy and ripping up their bodies with their short and deadly swords. Fortune declared in favour of the superior discipline and superior arms of the tried soldiery of Agricola. In wild despair the Caledonians fled before their insatiate destroyers.



## MONS GRAUPIUS

The carnage is stated, and, we may suppose with much probability, to have been very great, the moor being described as "covered with mangled bodies" of the unfortunate tribesmen. When the shades of night fell 10,000 Caledonians lay stark and stiff on the stricken field. According to Tacitus only 400 Romans had bitten the dust. Thus ended the first mighty effort of the united Caledonian tribes to relieve their country from a foreign yoke. No gleam of traditionary story records the struggles of these long centuries of Roman occupation which followed the battle of Mons Graupius. That there were many sanguinary battles we must believe, but it was not the kind fate of the generals to have a Tacitus for a son-in-law.<sup>1</sup> From the ancient well of Titus on the breezy slopes where the Caledonians once gathered we look down to-day on a pastoral vale, where the clear air is sweetened by the breath of wide sheets of gorse and heather. Old-world farmhouses peep shyly through their mask of verdant foliage. The grey spire of the Kirk of Braco lends a note of abiding

<sup>1</sup> The narrative of Tacitus is the only distinct contemporary account of the wars of the Romans in Scotland, although they were over three hundred years in occupation of more or less of its soil. Gibbon eulogises the work of Tacitus as "the most early of those historical compositions which will delight and instruct the most distant posterity." At the same time we must exercise caution in our reading of Tacitus. He was unquestionably a great literary artist, but it must not be forgotten that he had powerful inducements to employ his art in glorifying his hero. Maxwell, *Scot. Chron.*, p. 15, is also eulogistic: "The most valuable and trustworthy account of affairs in North Britain during the Roman occupation."



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peace to the landscape. The very memory of strife vanishes from the scene. But the faces of old ghosts look in upon our day-dream. We remember that it was here Galgacus "rushed as a tempest to the battle and raised the shining spear," and to those who may cherish these old, unhappy, far-off things such a memory must ever be "as music to the soul."

## CHAPTER III

### CENTURIES OF STRIFE, 410-1093

OBSCURER indeed are the glimpses we obtain of post-Roman Scotland. Forty years after the expedition of Theodosius, before referred to, the Roman soldiers abandoned our country. In A.D. 410 Britain saw the last of the legions, and the silver eagles never again braved the snell blasts of the north country. The twilight of the ages descends upon Scotland, and for a couple of centuries we know naught of Scottish history. We may assume that it was "an axe age, a spear age, a wolf age, a war age," a period of fierce internal dissension between Pict and Goidelic Celt for the mastery.

It was the age of Columba and Kentigern: the age which witnessed the dawn of Christianity and laid the foundation of the consolidation of the marvellous aggregation of tribes that subsequently gave birth to the Scottish race. Christianity, at all events, linked up once again that connection with the educated Western world which the Romans had introduced and which was broken on their withdrawal.

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We need not here attempt to define the ethnological divisions of early Scotland. Those who wish to study the vague pseudo-historical lore of Scottish, Irish, and Pictish origins, may consult the pages of Rhys and Skene, wherein the complexity of argument and hypothetical etymologies ought to satisfy the most fastidious of inquirers. It will suffice for our purpose to refer briefly to the events which followed what was perhaps the first distinct move towards the political union of Scotland, namely the succession to the kingship of both the Picts and Scots, of Kenneth MacAlpin, King of the Dalriadic Scots. This occurred in 844.<sup>1</sup> It was a step that heralded the ultimate consolidation of Scotland, but before this was achieved a couple of centuries of strife and bloodshed were to pass away. About 962 the King of the Scots obtained possession of Edinburgh and the south coast of the

<sup>1</sup> The Picts and the Angles came into sharp conflict in 685. In that year Ecgfrith, King of Northumbria—a district whose fortunes and early history constitute significant factors in the development of Scotland—led a great army beyond the Forth with the intention of dealing the Picts a final, and, it was hoped, smashing blow. At Nectan's Mere, identified with Dunnichen in Forfarshire, he was met by the Pictish King Brude, and in a great battle defeated and slain with the bulk of his army. The rout of the Angles had far-reaching consequences. From the defeat at Nectan's Mere till the year 844, when Kenneth MacAlpin united the Scottish and Pictish peoples, it is no longer Northumbria that plays the important part in the history of the northern kingdom. Henceforward it is on the relations of the Picts and Scots that the future of these peoples seems to depend till the day of their union, when they were able to present a united front against the Angles of Bernicia and the Britons of Strathclyde.



## CENTURIES OF STRIFE, 410-1093

Firth of Forth, and Kenneth II (971-995) increased Scottish influence in the south-east.<sup>1</sup>

In 1018 Malcolm II, son of Kenneth II, gained a great victory over the Northumbrians at Carham on the Tweed, and thereby acquired the much-coveted district between the Forth and the Tweed for the crown and kingdom of Scotland. Malcolm, probably with an eye to business, married one of his daughters to Sigurd the Stout, overlord of Caithness and Sutherland, and when Sigurd fell at the battle of Clontarf in Ireland, Malcolm secured the succession for his son. He also brought about the union of Strathclyde or Cumbria to his kingdom. Malcolm's grandson Duncan—the "gentle Duncan" of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*—succeeded to the throne of Strathclyde, and in 1034 he became king of the

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth seems to have had considerable trouble with the Danes, and it is to his reign that Hector Boece assigns the battle of Luncarty, a few miles north of Perth. A picturesque tale is told by Boece regarding the defeat of the Danes. The Scots are giving way and in flight when they are met by a peasant named Hay and his two sons, who armed with nothing but their oxen yokes, stem the retreat and lead their countrymen on to victory. Heraldry has embalmed the story in the achievement of the noble family of Errol, held to be the descendants of the stalwart ploughman. Hay got a gift from Kenneth of as much land as a falcon should fly over without perching, and the king also assigned three shields or escutcheons for the arms of the family, to intimate that the father and the two sons had been the three fortunate shields of Scotland: and the Earl of Errol bears for a crest a falcon, and his supporters are two men in country garb holding the yokes of a plough over their shoulders, with the motto "*Serva jugum*," in allusion to their origin. Hill Burton, *Hist. Scot.*, i. p. 339; Chalmers' *Caledonia*, i. p. 395; *Old Stat. Acc.*, vol. xv. pp. 526, 527; Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 33.

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whole of the mainland of Scotland. There emerges after these centuries of bloodshed and strife, a kingdom of Scotland intact from Sutherland to the river Tweed. But serious trouble arose in the Caithness portion of the new monarchy. Sigurd's son, Thorfinn the Ugly, with the help of the Norse rovers, who were ever willing to plunder or fight, drove out Duncan's emissaries, and assumed the lordship of that northern district.

Duncan went north with an army and a fleet, was defeated at Thurso, and again at Burghead, where Duncan himself was slain by one of his own generals, Macbeth, *mormaer* of Moray, whose stepson Lulach had a claim on the throne according to the old Scottish rule of succession. Duncan's sons fled to England. Macbeth, the *mormaer*, or Earl, of Moray proved an able and popular king. According to Wyntoun, the old Scots chronicler, there was "gret plenty, abounding baith on land and sea," during his reign.

Meantime Duncan's sons had grown to manhood, and the eldest, Malcolm, known in history as Canmore—"big head"—gathered enough support to enable him to march north and make a successful bid for his father's kingdom. He met and routed Macbeth's army in Aberdeenshire.<sup>1</sup> Macbeth fell

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell, *Making of Scotland*, gives 15th August 1057 as the date of Macbeth's defeat by Duncan at Lumphannan in Aberdeenshire, and thinks "we may reckon that as the real birthday of the kingdom of Scotland."

## CENTURIES OF STRIFE, 410-1093

in the fight, and Malcolm assumed the crown of Scotland as Malcolm III. With Malcolm at the helm the government of Scotland underwent a radical change. Hitherto it had been Celtic, but during the reign of Malcolm and his sons the form of government gradually became English, or rather Norman-English. Thus arose a division in the country which profoundly affected its history, and of which the battle of Renfrew, described in the following chapter, was the direct result, although a century elapsed before it was fought.



## CHAPTER IV

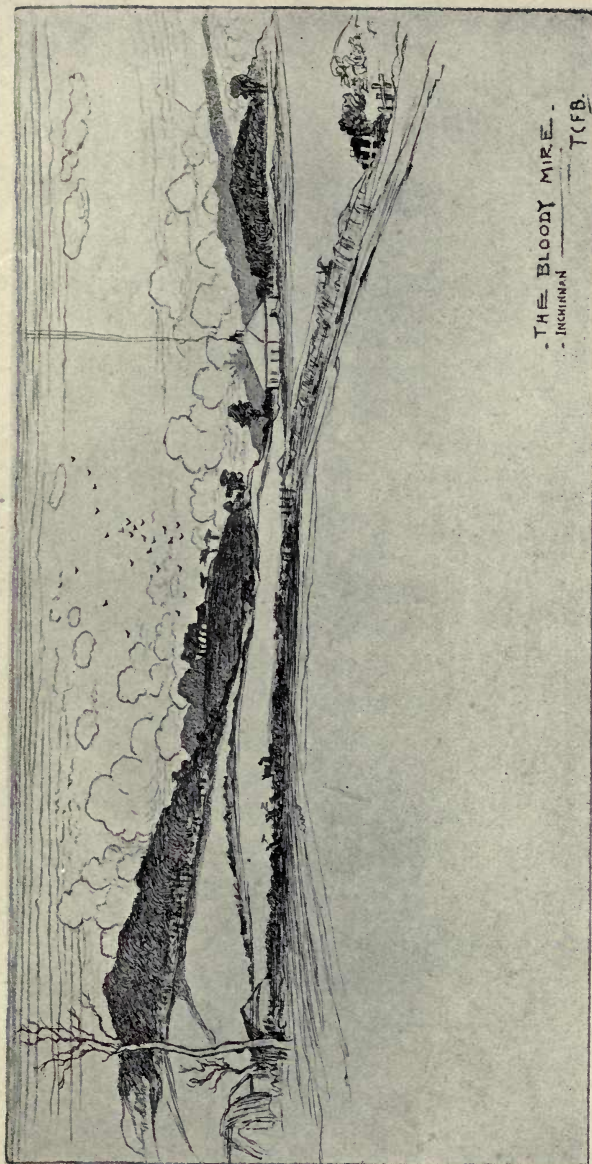
### THE FIELD OF RENFREW

“ ‘Fill me the mighty cup,’ he said,  
‘Erst owned by royal Somerled :  
Fill it, till on the studded brim  
In burning gold the bubbles swim.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

*Lord of the Isles, Canto II.*

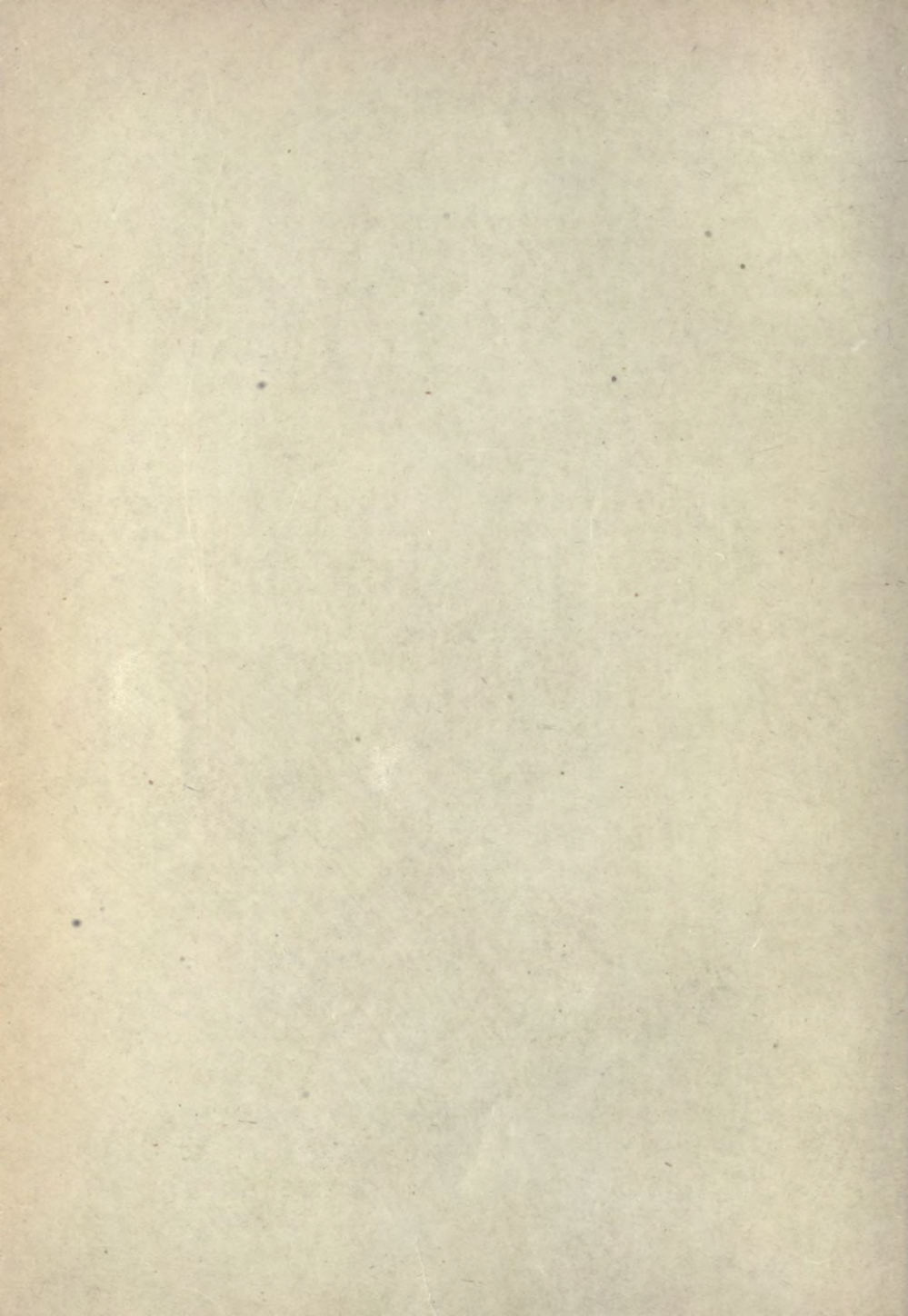
IN these eloquent numbers Scott, with the swift touch of genius, gives us a glimpse of that mysterious twelfth-century personality, Somerled of Argyll, Lord of the Isles. The Somerled flits fitfully across the pages of the ancient Scottish chronicles. Contemporary references are few and brief, but significant. We see looming dimly through the mists of the centuries the figure of a gigantic chief, haughty in bearing, a man of boundless ambition, and feared

<sup>1</sup> Scott is describing a Hebridean drinking-cup of ancient and curious workmanship preserved in the castle of Dunvegan in Skye, the romantic seat of MacLeod of MacLeod. Around the edge of the cup is a legend, perfectly legible, in Saxon black-letter which reads that “Oneil Oimi made this in the year of God nine hundred and ninety-three.” In his *Diary of a Voyage round Scotland with the Lighthouse Commissioners*, Sir Walter writes under August 23, 1814: “Within the castle (Dunvegan) we saw a remarkable drinking-cup with an inscription dated A.D. 993; I saw also a fairy flag, a pennon of silk with something like red rowan berries wrought on it; we also saw the drinking-horn of Rorie More, holding about three pints English measure.”



THE BLOODY MIRE.  
— INCIDENT — T.C.B.

THE FIELD OF RENFREW





## THE FIELD OF RENFREW

by his fellows. As the summer leaf floating on the bosom of the placid stream tells us whither it is faring, so do the fragmentary annals of the monastic historiographers conjure up from the forgotten years a semblance of the great Somerled. Our early historians were the austere monkish writers, and we owe them a deep debt of gratitude for the records they have left us of mediæval Scotland. It is true that the monkish annalists had their own theological and political axes to grind, but even among their reverend successors of our enlightened times such qualities—or defects—are not unknown. Amidst the curious matrix of myth and miracle—the life of St. Kentigern, by Jocelin, the monk of Furness, is a typical example—there lie embedded precious fragments of genuine history. And by piecing these fragments together one may learn something of the passing of Somerled at the great battle fought on the Bloody Mire, near Renfrew, in the year 1164.<sup>1</sup>

We get our first glimpse of Somerled—so far the annals compiled in Scotland are concerned—from the *Chronicon de Mailros*, a chronicle written in the latter half of the twelfth century, and now

<sup>1</sup> There seems reason to believe that Somerled and his son were slain by some act of treachery, the details of which are obscure. An exhaustive account of Somerled will be found in *The Clan Donald*, by the Rev. A. Macdonald, minister of Killearnan, and the Rev. A. Macdonald, minister of Kiltarlity, 1896, vol. i. p. 38 *et seq.* Somerled is described by the reverend authors as “probably the greatest hero that his race has produced.” There can be little doubt that he was a great warrior, and we may well believe he was a born leader of men.

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preserved in Glasgow University library. In its dim pages of Latinity is recorded the last war of Malcolm IV, better known, perhaps, to the general reader as Malcolm the Maiden—a cognomen of which more anon. The monkish scribe tells us that “Somerled, Prince of Argyle, wickedly rebelling for twelve years against Malcolm King of Scots, his rightful lord, bringing with him a numerous army from Ireland and other places (*i.e.* the Western Isles of Scotland), arrived at Renfrew, and was there at length, by Divine vengeance, killed together with his son Gillecolm.” The issues at stake in this battle were of vast importance to Scotland. Briefly, it determined whether Celt or Saxon was to be the ruling power, and it resulted in the utter overthrow of the Celtic forces. The Highland Celts and Galloway Irish were driven back to their mountain fastnesses, a broken and disorganised mob. They never fully recovered the overwhelming defeat of the Field of Renfrew. The events which led up to this debacle are of peculiar interest. On the death in 1153 of David, the “sair saint,” his grandson Malcolm, the fourth of the name, succeeded him. This Malcolm was the first king recorded to have been crowned at Scone, a fact which we learn from the contemporary English annalist, John of Hexham.<sup>1</sup> The Celtic tribes of the Highlands and Galloway refused to acknowledge Malcolm’s right to the throne. They

<sup>1</sup> *Chronicles of Stephen*, vol. i., Rolls Series.



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hankered after the royal succession according to the ancient law of Tanistry, by which the right of succession lay, not with the individual, but with the family in which it was hereditary. A Pretender appeared in the person of William MacEth, who asserted his claim to the Scottish throne as descendant of the Moray branch of the house of Malcolm Canmore. At this period Somerled was the most powerful chieftain in the Highlands. He was uncle to MacEth. The uncle threw in his lot with his relative, presumably to assist him to the throne, but assuredly with an eye to ultimately ousting MacEth and assuming the crown himself. The Fates had decreed otherwise, and the wild ambitions of Somerled found a grave by the banks of the Clyde.

The Raid of Somerled was the last war of Malcolm the Maiden. This youthful monarch—he was only twenty-five at his death—had a stormy reign. He lived during an era of great changes in the social habits of the Scots, changes due largely to the establishment of feudalism. Men and manners were rough, and Malcolm, surnamed the Maiden, was ill-fitted to wear the Scottish crown. So much we gather from the quaint pages of a contemporary English chronicler.<sup>1</sup> Living all his days in the North Riding of Yorkshire, William was peculiarly well placed for observation on Scottish affairs, and Sir Herbert Maxwell states that he displayed “great

<sup>1</sup> *William of Newburgh*, 1136-1201.



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breadth of view and tolerance for Scotsmen." List for a moment to this old voice, as it speaks to us out of the mists of 700 long years. He is telling us of the circumstances which earned for Malcolm the sobriquet of Maiden: "As he grew towards manhood there were not wanting some who, sent by Satan, urged him to make trial of carnal pleasure." But he, desiring to follow the Lamb, "repulsed the poisonous advice. The Enemy set craftier snares for this child of God," and even used the mother "to prepare him for the secret poison." Under the evil spell, his mother coaxed him to be a king, not a monk, and explained how "a girl's caresses were the best thing for his age and health.

"Yielding to his mother's importunity rather than convinced with it, he feigned consent rather than vex her. She, with delight, stood by her son's bed and placed beside him a lovely and noble virgin; nor did he offer any opposition. When he was left alone with the girl, fired by the flame of chastity rather than of lust, he rose at once, and during the whole night left the maiden in the royal bed, sleeping himself under a cloak on the pavement."

This brilliant example of continence in an age not particularly prone to virtue may seem singular, and the profane sceptic will doubtless endeavour to negative it by pointing to a certain charter granted to the monks of Kelso which shows that Malcolm left at least one illegitimate son!

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Such was the ruler whom the fierce and lusty Somerled resolved to displace. In nature this mighty chieftain must have been the very antithesis of the gentle Malcolm sketched for us by the Newburgh chronicler. At least two dynasties, the Lords of the Isles and the Lords of Lorn, carry their geneological tree back to Somerled, while the shadowy traditions of nearly all the clans in the West Highlands and Isles trace the ancestry of their chiefs to the same mysterious source. Having espoused the cause of MacEth as a stepping-stone to the subsequent subjugation of all Scotland, Somerled equipped 160 galleys, and with a large force of Irish and Islesmen on board steered for the Clyde. He landed at Renfrew, where Malcolm's troops lay under the command of the High Steward of Scotland. For Somerled the sands of life were rapidly running to a close. The shadows of the "Divine vengeance" were thickening around the impetuous western sea-king. Walter, the crafty Steward—whose castle is believed to have stood on the spot in modern Renfrew known as the Castlehill—was skilled in the latest arts of warfare, and against these the savage onslaught of the gallant but untrained Celts was of no avail. The tide of battle surged from the banks of the Clyde near Newshot isle, past Tuchein wood over the meadowlands, on past the holy shrine of St. Conval at Inchinnan Kirk, and on till, "when utter darkness closed her wing," it broke in a



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wild welter of blood on the serried phalanx of the Steward's main squadrons. These were posted on the hill of Knock, within sight of Paisley. The mountaineers were routed and countless numbers slain. Somerled fell, and his son also bit the dust. The shattered bands of the invaders melted from the field, and Clyde's echoes heard the ceaseless plash as they dashed through her current to gain their northern land. They left behind them heaps of their dead and wounded clansmen. Where the fiercest struggle had taken place, thousands of dead eyes set in pale slashed faces stared fixedly at the nodding moon, while the blood oozing from their limbs soaked and clotted the earth. For years after the battle there was one spot where the dead men lay buried in hundreds, and where old men remembered that as children the ground was soft and red, and the grass long and awful in its tints of luscious green. To this day it is known as the Bloody Mire, and the cottage children whom you question will tell you that dead men lie there, and that on the eve of the yearly anniversary of the battle—if you can hit upon the exact day—shadowy figures can be seen careering over the Deil's Brae, while strange sounds break the stillness that broods over the sylvan landscape. Folklorists will note in passing the value of these slight, but significant, philological details!

We have a contemporary description of the



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battle at Renfrew. It is a curious rhyming Latin poem composed by one named William, presumably a monk of Glasgow. He claims to have been an eye-witness of the conflict, describes it minutely, and attributes the victory of the loyal Scots to the miraculous intervention of St. Kentigern. Glasgow antiquaries differ somewhat as to the poetical merits of William's muse.<sup>1</sup> At all events it is certainly of especial interest on account of the rarity of any native literature of Scotland in the twelfth century. The poem itself is very long and may be read in the appendix to the first volume of Fordun in the *Historians of Scotland*. The original is preserved in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

From a metrical translation made by Mr. Bremner I quote the lines relative to the miracle achieved by the saintly Kentigern :

"Now hear a wonder, 'mid the thunder of this fight historical,  
The dreadful foe, a dreadful blow, received by Mungo's miracle.

Great Somerled, by edge of blade, lay low upon the bloody heath,  
And now that prone, they see him thrown, that was their King  
ferocious,

They turn and flee, by land and sea, the butchery atrocious.

A priest the head, of Somerled, proceeded to decapitate,  
And bore it swift, a bloody gift, to him that held th' episcopate.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the enthusiastic Norse student, Mr. Robert Bremner, M.A., it is "doggerel Latin rhyme," while Dr. William Gemmell, the curator of Provand's Lordship, holds it is "good Latin verse."

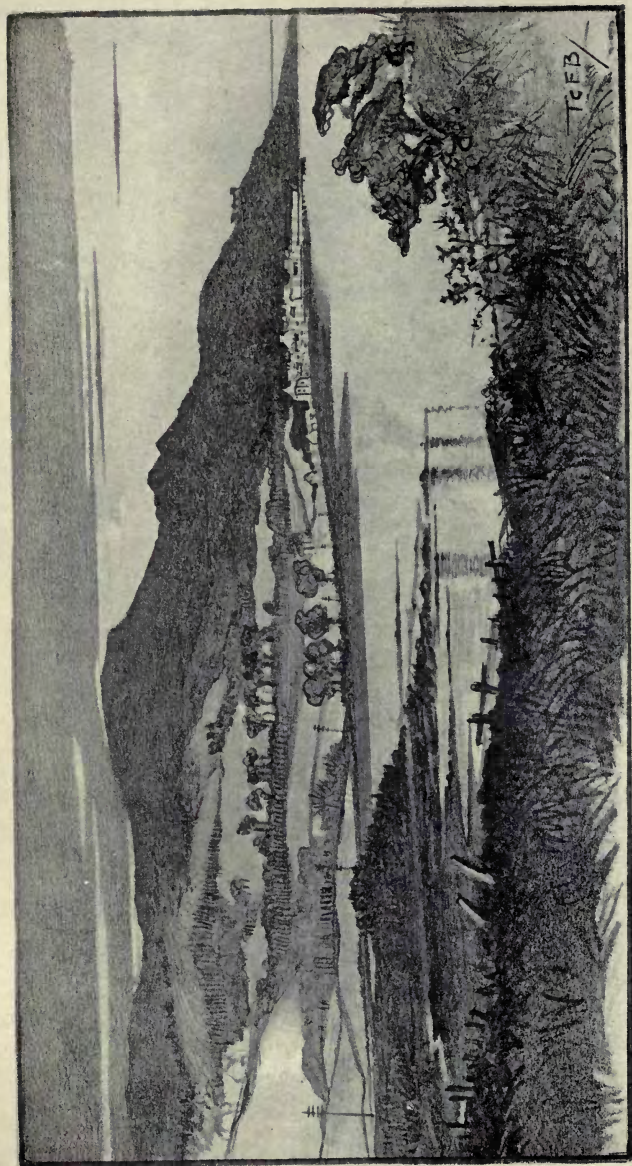
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

The pious man, in grief began, to weep his fallen enemy,  
'But much,' said he, 'should praised be, the saints for their  
great amity.'  
And Kentigern, he made us learn, to laud for this great victory,  
And praise him well, with mass and bell, and service benedictory."

Whatever its literary value this fragment of the olden time that has floated down the stream of the years is of absorbing interest to Scotsmen. It is a strange link with the long vanished past, and his must be a dull soul indeed who, when listening to that old-world voice of the Glasgow monk, cannot see the shadowy hosts and the mighty shape of Somerled, the Celtic hero,

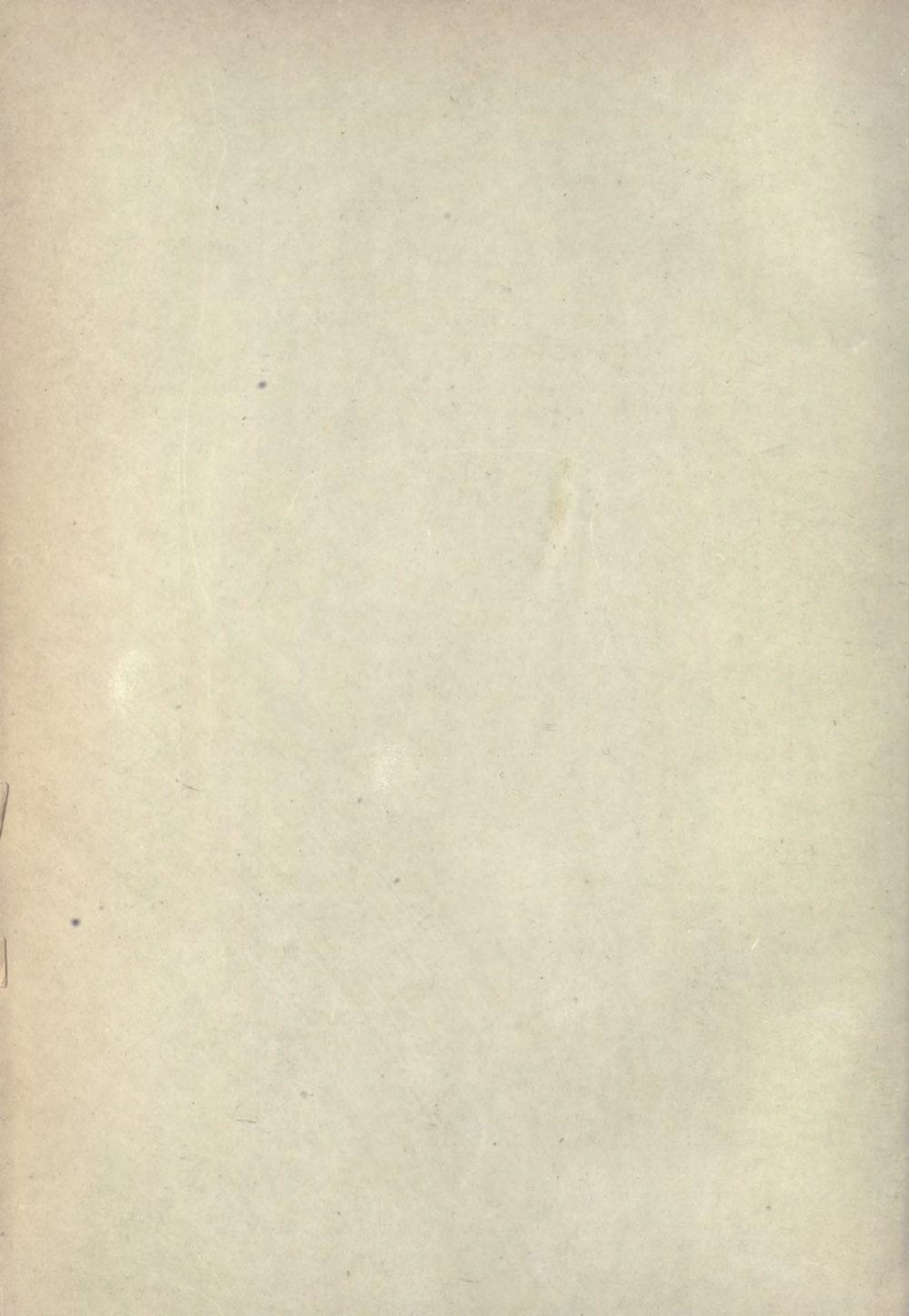
"Magnified by the purple mist,  
The dusk of centuries and of song."

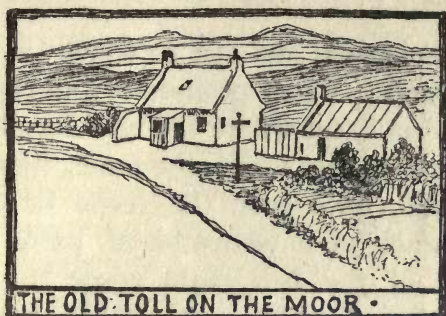




WHERE LARGS WAS FOUGHT  
From the Bowen Craig; Fairlie in distance







## CHAPTER V

### LARGS: A NEGLECTED BATTLE

STANDING on the wind-swept Bowen Craig, a good bow-shot south of Largs town, we are on the threshold of a district as full of romance as any in broad Scotland. Scarred by the gales of the centuries, the ramparts of the Ayrshire hills loom across a gleaming reach of the beautiful western firth to where the "Cumbraes isles, a verdant link, close the fair entrance to the Clyde." Southward lies Farland Head, with the desolate tower of Portencross nestling at its base. Beyond that the eye travels over the wide sweep of the Ayrshire coast, on past the jagged peaks of Arran to where in the far distance Ailsa Craig is set on the deep, the grim and silent warder of the great maritime highway of the west. It is a

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matchless panorama, and one to which the world can offer few equals. Every promontory and every knoll, the shore at our feet where the ceaseless fret of the waves sweeps swiftly across the sands, meadowlands, and mountain, have been the scene of tragedy or romance, much of it remembered, more forgotten. The echoes of the battlefield come to us here, a battlefield that has been somewhat neglected in Scottish history, as the turning-point settling once and for all the possession of the estuary of the Clyde and the lands on its shores. The importance of the issues at stake in that fight on the grey beaches between Largs and Fairlie in the autumn of 1263 cannot be minimised.

The Battle of Largs may be regarded as the climax of the Viking Age, that restless period extending from the ninth to the close of the thirteenth century. "Over the sun's mirror green came the Norse coursers" from the fjords and bays of Scandinavia, fierce and fearless jarls crowding the raven-pennon'd galleys, and laughing to scorn the dangers of the deep. Veritable sea-kings all of them, steering into unknown seas, tempted by the lust of discovery and blood, and never pausing until—if we are to believe their countryman Worsaae—they gazed upon the sunny forest-lands of America—"more than three centuries before Columbus weighed anchor for the West!" Such were the men who came avoyaging to the Clyde and whose settlement was long



## LARGS: A NEGLECTED BATTLE

enough to leave in their language descriptive references to many of the places they occupied. Some of these place-names endure to this day, such as Brodick (Brodvik—the broad vik or bay of the Norsemen), no intangible proof of something more than the mere temporary residence of a naval demonstration. Wildly great were these Norse pirates, in an age of blood and lust, slaying and plundering, danger and death, never awanting from their path,

“As among dry reeds, the red flames  
Sprung into the kingdom  
Of the Scots.”

But on the moorlands and hills of Scotland there had been welded together a nation of men equally daring and desperate, and, even at that far-away period, displaying the dour and “canny” characteristics which were to carry their descendants to victory on many a hard-fought field. For three centuries the Norwegians held possession of the western isles, Bute and Arran. David I, “the sair sanct,” gave the first blow to the invading power when he partially wrested these isles from the Viking’s grip. In 1135 they were conferred on Somerled, and formally annexed to the kingdom of Argyll. And so on to the coming of the Alexanders to the Scottish throne we see the gradual waning of the Viking strength.

Alexander II about 1248 made overtures to Haco of Norway for the purchase of the Western Islands. These were haughtily refused, and the

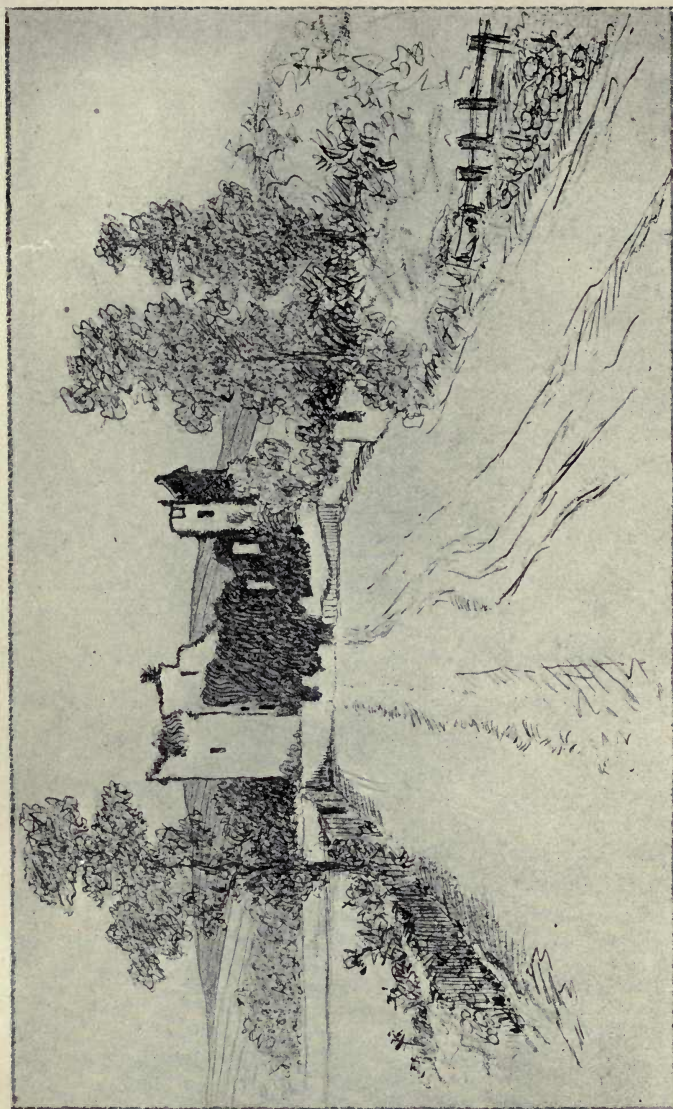
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Scots king resolved to acquire by force what he had failed to obtain by strategy. He raised a powerful fleet, expelled the Norwegians from Arran, Bute, and the Cumbraes; but his victorious career was cut short at Kerrara, off Mull, by King Death, and Alexander passed to his fathers on July 8, 1249. He left behind him a son, not one whit less daring or less strenuous, and Alexander III carried on his father's work of endeavouring to annex the Western Isles. The chiefs who were dispossessed of their lands fled to Norway and told to Haco wild tales of the cruelties and aggressions of the Scots. List for a moment to the voice of the old Norwegian chronicler, as it is preserved in the record that was penned *circa* 1260<sup>1</sup>—a record rich with the most romantic of hues, and amazingly stimulating to the imagination in its reconstruction of the visionary past:

“In summer there came letters from the Kings of the Hebrides (Sudreyiom) in the western seas. They complained much of the hostilities which the Earl of Ross, Kiarnach, the son of Mac Camal, and other Scots committed in the Hebrides when they went to Sky. The Scotch burned villages and churches, and they killed great numbers of men and women. They took the small children, and, raising them on the points of their spears, shook them till they fell down to their hands, when they threw

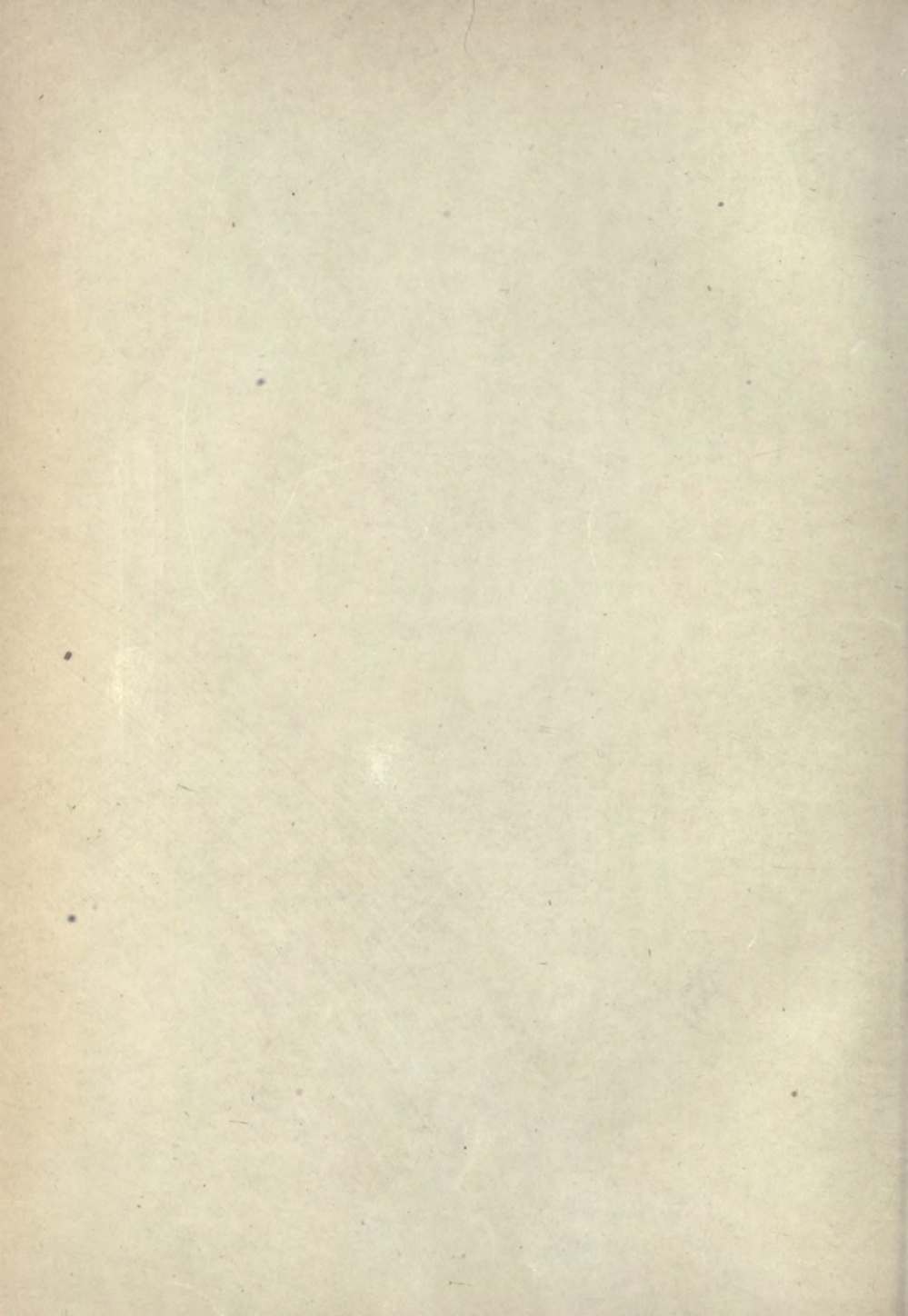
<sup>1</sup> *The Sturlunga Saga and the Flateyan and Frisian MSS.*





THE "AULD PLACE" KILBIRNIE  
Where the Scots mustered for Largs





## LARGS: A NEGLECTED BATTLE

them away lifeless on the ground"—after a close inspection of the dying agonies of the victims. A horrible tale truly, and we can sympathise with the chronicler when he tells us "these tidings gave great uneasiness to King Haco." He determined to put to a great issue the question of keeping as dependencies all the Norse possessions in Scotland, and with that in view "commanded all his forces to meet him at Bergen about the beginning of spring" (1263).

Profoundly conscious of picturesque imagery were these ancient Vikings. Gazing on the fleets of long dark galleys with their gilded-dragon prows, as they swept out of Bergen port on that summer afternoon of long ago, the bard Sturla sang lustily the glories of his race. We hear his song ringing down the pathway of the centuries. The Norwegian Saga-men are masters of phrase. Their ships are "hawks of the sea-gull's track"; their swords "the gleam of the battle" and the "viper of the host"; their shields "the path of the spurs" and the "boards of victory." So with Sturla. His bosom swelled with patriotic pride as Haco's great ship—"builded entirely of oak, and with twenty-seven banks of oars"—flung its shadow on the clear surface of the ocean mirror, and he broke into a torrent of song in his splendid "Raven's Ode":

"The boisterous deep that guards this earth  
bore the ship of the Protector of Thrones  
West from the streams of Gotalfa.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

No terrifier of dragons guardians  
of the hoarded treasures  
ever beheld more numerous hosts.  
A glare of light blazed from the powerful  
far-famed Monarch; coursers of Gestils  
broke to the roaring waters. The swelling sails  
of keels that ride the surge reflected the beams  
of the unsullied sun around the umpire of wars.

Our Sovereign, rich in the spoils of the sea-snakes'  
den, viewed the retiring haven  
from the stern of his snorting steed  
adorned with ruddy gold."

Amidst the picturesque splendour of the poet's fancy let us note one point, "no terrifier of dragons guardians *ever beheld* more numerous hosts."

While Haco and his fleet lay at Ronaldsvoe, in the Orkneys, there came a strange portent. In the words of the chronicle—"a great darkness drew over the sun so that only a little ring was bright round the sun and it continued so for some hours." The ancient chronicle thus unconsciously afforded to modern science the means of exactly ascertaining the date of the Norwegian expedition. The eclipse was calculated by Sir David Brewster,<sup>1</sup> and it was found to have taken place on August 5, 1263, and to have been annular at Ronaldsvoe—surely a notable example of the clear and certain light reflected by the exact sciences upon history.

From their signalling stations, the mouldering

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Scot.*, III.



## LARGS: A NEGLECTED BATTLE

remains of which are still to be descried on the summit of Tarbert, Law, and Kaim Hills above Largs, the Scottish warders watched the great fleet of 160 vessels come sweeping round the Mull of Cantyre and cast anchor between Arran and the bay of Ayr. They saw sixty of the long galleys creep up the Firth and disappear into Loch Long, where, says Sturla, "the shielded warriors of the thrower of the whizzing spear drew their boats across the broad isthmus to a great lake called Loch Lomond." Unvarying tradition has preserved the memory of this strange crossing which took place from Arrochar to Tarbet. Meantime the Scotch army had assembled at Kilbirnie, and from their camp on the camp-hill they looked on the harrying of the coasts of Ayr by Haco's bearserks. Alexander was playing a deep game. He sent negotiators to Haco. A curious sidelight on that fateful time is afforded by the accounts of the Sheriff of Ayr, which record "payment of messengers who thrice went as spies on the King of Norway," and "wages to the watchers of the King's ships" for so many weeks. Unconditional surrender of the whole of the Western Isles was the minimum demand of the Norwegian king, and, confident in the strength of his mighty armament, he sailed up the Firth and cast anchor off the Cumbraes, preparatory to enforcing his claim and invading the Scottish mainland.

From Kilbirnie the Scottish forces marched across

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

the bleak moorlands—the old hill path is shown in our sketch—and encamped on the heights above the bay of Largs. Alexander still parleyed. He was waiting for the coming of the wintry gales. Michaelmas fell on a Saturday, and on the Monday there came a great tempest of hail and rain. The crested waves broke in sheets of foam against the dragon prows till the oaken timbers creaked and the stout hearts of the Norsemen quailed with fear. And as the dark clouds crept in murky folds athwart the heavens, night fell on the scene. The memory of that terrible eve is portrayed to us by one who was aboard the king's ship :

“A transport vessel drove full against our cable. The sailors immediately sprung upon deck, but the rigging of the transport getting entangled in the king's ship carried away its beak.

“Our deep-inquiring sovereign encountered the horrid powers of enchantment.” Such was the superstitious dread that seized the minds of the Norwegians.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are discrepancies between the accounts of the old chroniclers, Scottish and Scandinavian. Brief notices of Largs' battle appear in the *Chronicle of Melrose* (completed 1320), and the *Chronicle of Man* (completed 1376). Wyntoun in his *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* (1420–24) gives a good account of the battle. In Laing's edition, Vol. ii., *Historians of Scotland* series, Book VII. c. x. commences :

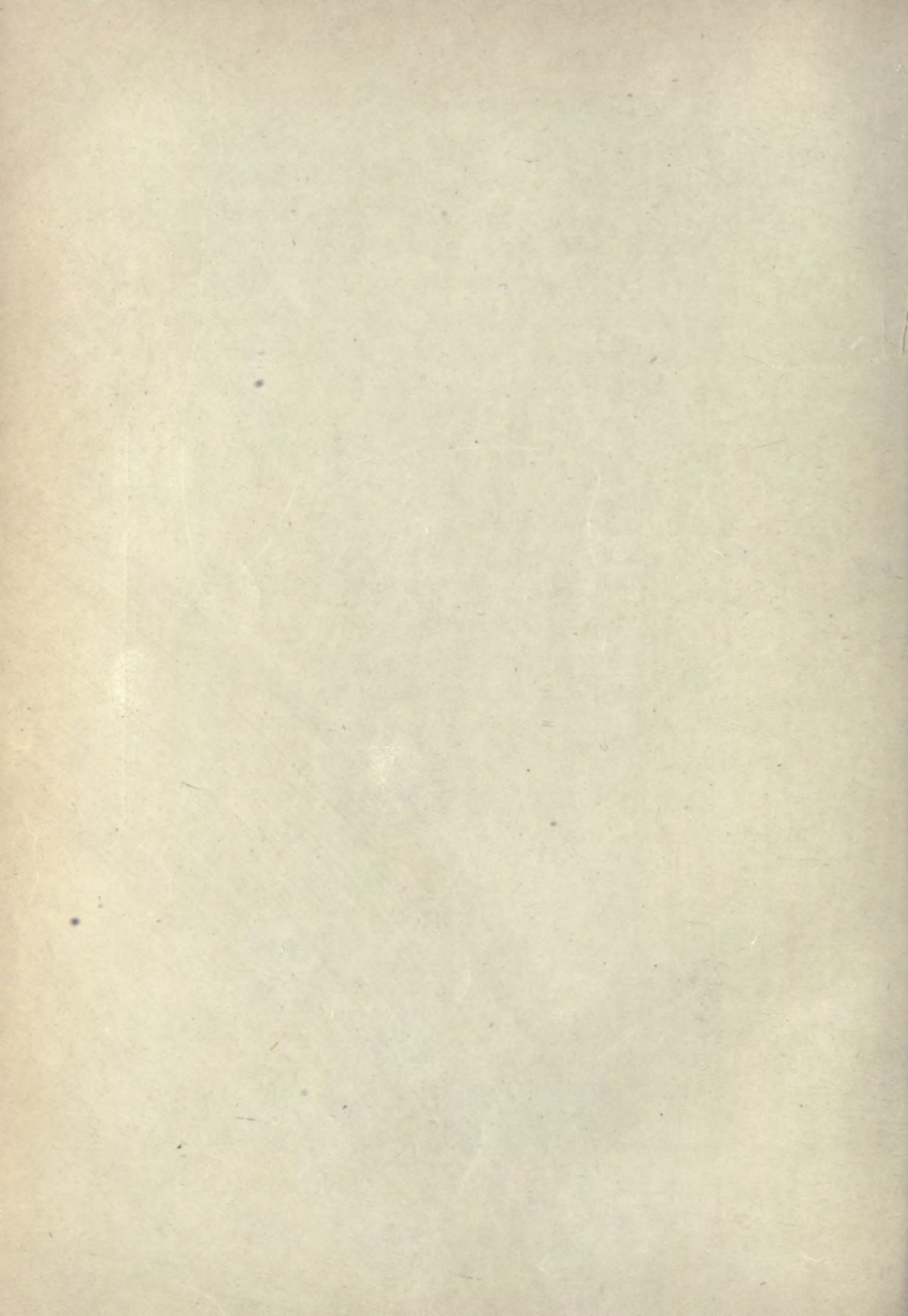
“A thousand two hundyr sixty and thre  
Yheris efftyr the Natyvyte,  
Haco, Kyng than off Norway,  
Come wyth hys ost and gret array





OLD HILL PATH, KILBIRNIE TO LARGS





## LARGS: A NEGLECTED BATTLE

When the wan light of the wintry day dawned, the Scots looked down on a dreary scene of wreckage. Five great galleys lay on the shore, while in the bay were many others shattered and dismasted and labouring at their cables. Drawn up in battle array, and determined evidently to guard their wrecked vessels, were some thousands of the Vikings. An advanced guard of 200 occupied a neighbouring height. The chronicle preserves the names of the commanders—Erling Alfson, Andrew Nicolson, Paul Soor, and Andrew Pott—brave men all, but they were overwhelmed in the charge of the Scottish army from the heights. With vivid touch the ancient chronicler lets us gaze upon the struggle. He tells us of the rout that followed the furious attack of the Scots. Some of the Norwegians “leaped into the boats and perished. Their companions called upon them to return, and some returned, though few. Andrew

---

In Scotland on the West Se.  
In Cwynynhame at the Largis he  
Arryvyd wyth a gret multitud  
Off schyppys wyth oecastellys gud.”

The Norse account, *circa* 1265, is the *Saga of Hakon*, Hakon's son, written in old Norse by Sturla Thord's son, the Law Man, nephew of Suorri Sturlason, historian of the kings of Norway, at the command of Hakon's son and successor, Magnus, King of Norway. Sturla Thordsson was born on July 29, 1214, and died on July 29, 1284. For interesting details of his life, see Vigfusson's *Introduction to the Text of the Hakon Saga* in the Rolls series of Public Records; *The Ancient Accounts of the Battle of Largs*, by Robert L. Bremner—“for the first time fully set forth in the words of the old chroniclers themselves.”—*Trans. Glas. Arch. Soc.*, Vol. vi., Part ii. p. 230 *et seq.*

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Pott leaped over two boats and into a third, and so escaped. Many boats went down and men were lost, and the rest of the Norwegians at last wheeled about towards the sea."

The rout was complete. Never more was the Norwegian power to rear its head on Scottish shore. The storm raged on, shattering the splendid fleet and completing the debacle. Largs was a turning-point in Scottish history!

The old Viking was crushed. He pleaded for and was granted a truce to bury his gallant dead. On the shores of Largs the sepulchral mound was raised, to the mournful chant of the bards and the wailing of the winds in the neighbouring woods. With feelings of grim joy the Scots saw the shattered remains of the once noble armament beating down the Clyde and disappear for ever into the eternal mists of the sea. A great victory had been won and a new chapter opened in the history of Scotland. The Sturlunga Saga and the Flateyan annals tell us that Haco's expedition was "the most formidable that ever left the ports of Norway." It was completely overthrown and defeated at Largs, and so overwhelming was the disaster that it broke the Viking rule of three long centuries. It also broke the heart of the old Norse king. In death he was true to the spirit of his race. The Valhalla to which he was looking forward was essentially the "hall of the slain," and he passed its portals to the sound of



## LARGS: A NEGLECTED BATTLE

his warriors' voices as they read to him the chronicles of the Norwegian kings. We have the picture of that death-bed scene, an unperishable nocturne silhouetted against the mists of eld. And when "the song of the spears" was over, the dim voice of him who gazed upon these happenings of long ago tells us that—"The Masters of the Lights stood with tapers in their hands, and the whole hall was illuminated. All the people came to see the body, and the king's countenance was as fair and ruddy as if he were alive." And with the wailing of the bards there mingled the voices of the sea chanting their eternal dirge to the soul of the dead warrior—a gloriously fitting requiem for the brave old sea-king.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GOLDEN AGE

LARGS was fought in September 1263. Three years later the Hebrides and the Isle of Man were annexed to the Scottish realm, the son of Haco having ceded all the Western Isles to the Scottish king for a payment of 4000 marks and a yearly rental of 100 marks, known as the "Norway annual." Orkney and Shetland, however, still remained with Norway.<sup>1</sup> Scotland was passing through her Golden Age.

William the Lion died in 1214. The reigns of his son and grandson, the Second and Third Alexanders, brings Scottish history up to the terrible War of Independence. Alexander II reigned for thirty-five years and Alexander III for thirty-seven, and during neither reign was there any serious strife with England, a circumstance almost unprecedented in the past and unparalleled in the future till we reach the time of James VI.<sup>2</sup> But events were shaping themselves towards a stormier period, and to grasp the full significance of the great fight at

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell's *Scotland*, p. 32; Mackenzie, *Outline Scot. Hist.*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Rait, *Scot.*, p. 52.

## THE GOLDEN AGE

Stirling Brig we must sketch briefly the course of affairs that led up to the advent of Wallace.

Let us go back to that autumn day in October 1278, when our Scottish king, Alexander III, attended the Parliament of Edward I. These *were* the good old days for Scotland. England was not yet the "auld enemie"; there was no blood feud between the peoples. The contemporary English chroniclers upon whom we have to rely for a description of that day—the "*Scottish Chronicle of Melrose*" ending abruptly in the middle of a sentence in 1270—indicate that Alexander went to do homage for Scotland to his feudal superior; whether he came "willingly or unwillingly, I wit not," says Thomas Wykes, canon of Osney Abbey, who lived through these events. List to the voice of the old monk who framed the Scottish version, preserved in the "*Register of Dunfermline*"—Alexander tendered his homage for the lands he held in England, "saving my own kingdom." The Bishop of Norwich, it is stated, interrupted by exclaiming, "And saving the right of my lord King Edward to homage from your kingdom"; upon which King Alexander answered in a loud voice: "That is due to God alone, for it is from Him alone I hold my crown." Well might the Scots lament the passing of Alexander. The oldest fragment of Scottish poetry extant is the lament on that death, preserved in the *Cronykil* of Wyntoun. Fate was about to



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

turn the gloomiest page in the nation's destinies, and the unknown minstrel sang:<sup>1</sup>

"Quhen Alysandyr owre kyng wes dede  
That Scotland led in Luve and le<sup>2</sup>  
Alway wes sons<sup>3</sup> off ale and brede.  
Off wyne and wax; off gamyn and gle;  
Oure gold was changyd in to lede,  
Cryst, borne in to Virgynte  
Succoure Scotland and remede  
That stad us in perplexyte."<sup>4</sup>

"Woe to the kingdom whose king is a child" says the old curse, and the passing of Alexander in 1286 left Scotland under that malison. Queen Margaret, the accepted heiress of the crown, was an infant in "Noreway ower the faem." Alexander had broken his neck on the rocks at Kinghorn. His two sons, and his daughter Margaret, Queen of Norway, had all died, and the succession to the Scottish throne devolved upon Margaret's daughter, another Margaret—a fleeting, pathetic figure that flits across the page of history as the Maid of Norway. Strong objection was taken to the succession of a female, as being opposed to the ancient custom of

<sup>1</sup> *Cronykil*, Book vii. c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Law.

<sup>3</sup> Plenty.

<sup>4</sup> Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*. Andrew de Wyntoun was a Canon-regular of St. Andrews, and was appointed Prior of the monastery of St. Serf on the island in Loch Leven. As early as 1395 Wyntoun is mentioned in the chartulary of St. Andrews as Prior of this island. There is a copy of the *Cronykil*, transcribed probably about 1440, among the Cottonian MSS.

## THE GOLDEN AGE

Scotland. There was like to be civil war in Scotland, and the Guardians asked the advice of King Edward of England. He proposed to solve the difficulty by marrying the heir of England, Edward Prince of Wales, to the infant Queen Margaret—then eight years of age. The Scottish Guardians appear to have received the proposal with enthusiasm, and a treaty of marriage was concluded at Birgham on July 18, 1290. Margaret left Norway for her bridal but only reached Orkney, where she died in October of the same year.<sup>1</sup>

Nine competitors came forward to claim the Scottish throne, and among them was John de Balliol and Robert de Brus of Annandale, the grandfather of *the Bruce*, the future King of Scots.

<sup>1</sup> One of the finest ballads in our language, "Sir Patrick Spens," belongs to this period, and is believed to describe an incident connected with Queen Margaret. Fordun relates it thus: "A little before this, namely in the year 1281, Margaret, daughter of Alexander III, was married to the King of Norway, who, leaving Scotland on the last day of July, was conveyed thither in noble style in company with many Knights and Nobles. In returning home after the celebration of her nuptials, the Abbot of Balmurinoch and many other persons were drowned." The ballad is a gem of "purest ray serene." The last couple of verses are typical:

"And lang, lang, may the maidens sit,  
Wi' their gowd kaims in their hair,  
All waiting for their ain dear loves,  
For them they'll see nae mair.

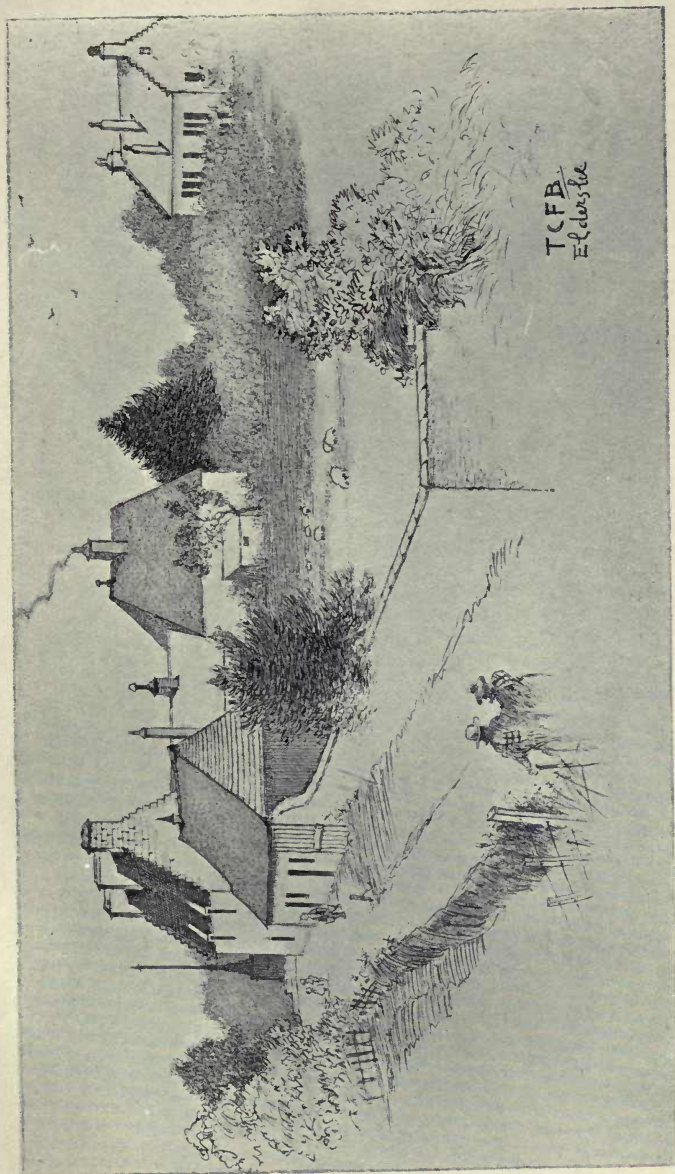
Half ower, half ower, to Aberdour,  
'Tis fifty fathoms deep,  
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens  
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet."

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Again, strangely enough, King Edward was requested to act as arbiter, and on November 17, 1292, he named Sir John de Balliol rightful heir to the crown of Scotland. Balliol proved but a "toom tabard." Indignity after indignity was thrust upon him and the Scots people. Edward was determined to be the lord-paramount. Events during this period are somewhat confused. The Scottish nobles and clergy admitted Edward's pretensions, but the *communitas*—the freeholders and the people generally—sternly disputed the claim. Balliol, a weak-kneed individual, had been negotiating with King Philip of France, and Edward, hearing of this, determined on revenge. He laid siege to Berwick-on-Tweed in March 1296, stormed the walls, and gave the order "no quarter." Men, women, and little children to the number of 7000 to 8000 were slaughtered. This frightful massacre lasted two days, and, says Wyntoun in his *Chronicle*, it came to an end only because Edward himself saw a woman in the very act of childbirth being put to the sword. At this dreadful sight he turned away crying, "Laissiz ! Laissiz !" <sup>1</sup> The story of that Good Friday rang through Scotland, and we may be sure that its echoes reached the dwelling-place of Malcolm le Waleys of Elderslie. Scotland might be led. Edward tried the driving process, and subsequent events showed how far he was out of his

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell, pp. 66-7 ; Macmillan, p. 117.





# THE BIRTHPLACE OF WALLACE

Showing memorial cross, erected 1912, next to the ancient house



## THE GOLDEN AGE

reckoning. Balliol's cause was finally shattered at Dunbar, where, on April 28, 1296, the Earl of Warrenne defeated Balliol's forces and seized the castle, and also the castles of Roxburgh, Edinburgh, and Stirling. The appearance of the Scottish ex-king, dressed only in his shirt and drawers, with a white staff in his hand, surrendering his crown and renouncing all claim to his kingdom, is the penultimate act of the drama. The last, and Scotland was indeed humbled, was the signing of the famous—infamous?—Ragman Roll, by which document nearly two thousand Scottish barons, knights, and ecclesiastics swore fealty on the gospels to Edward.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On his return from this expedition King Edward carried with him the famous Stone of Destiny from Scone; also three coffers containing the Scottish records and the Black Rood of Scotland. Edward's idea, doubtless, in taking the stone was to evade the ancient prophecy which said that a Scot should rule wherever the Stone of Destiny should be. It was the visible sign of the monarchy of Scotland, and when it was removed the monarchy seemed removed with it. The great king was not exempt from the superstition of the age, and he may have indulged in dreams of the future with regard to the Stone of Destiny. The prophecy was fulfilled, not exactly in the sense Edward attached to it, when James VI, a purely Scottish prince, ascended the throne of England. This Stone of Destiny is one of the most interesting relics of the past in existence. Legendary lore associates it with the pillow of the patriarch Jacob at Luz; also with the stone placed on the famous hill of Tara whereon a long succession of Irish kings were crowned; said to have been taken to Scotland by Fergus, first King of Scots in Scotland; and about 834 it was carried from Dunstaffnage—an early residence of the Scottish kings—by Kenneth II to Scone in Perthshire. Mr. Skene in his *Coronation Stone* comes to the conclusion that "The Irish kings were inaugurated on the Lia Fail, which never was anywhere but at Tara, the *sedes principalis* of Ireland, and the kings of Scotland, first of the Pictish monarchy and

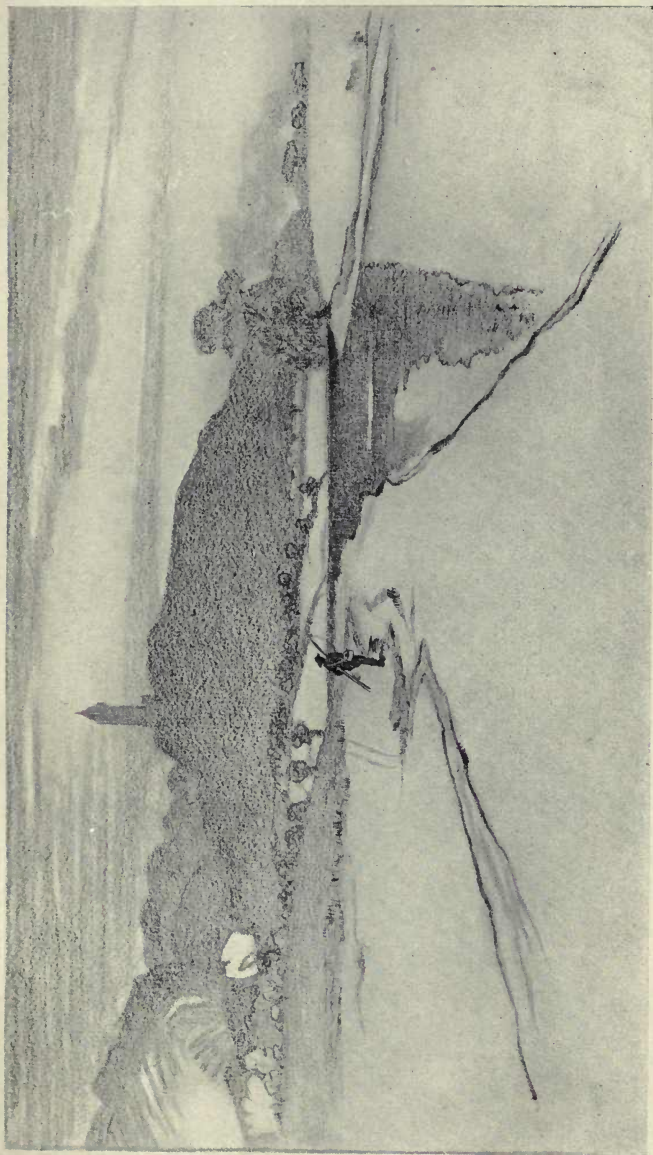


## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Two notable names do not appear—William Wallace and James Douglas.<sup>1</sup> The national stage was ready, and the curtain was rung up for the entry of Wallace.

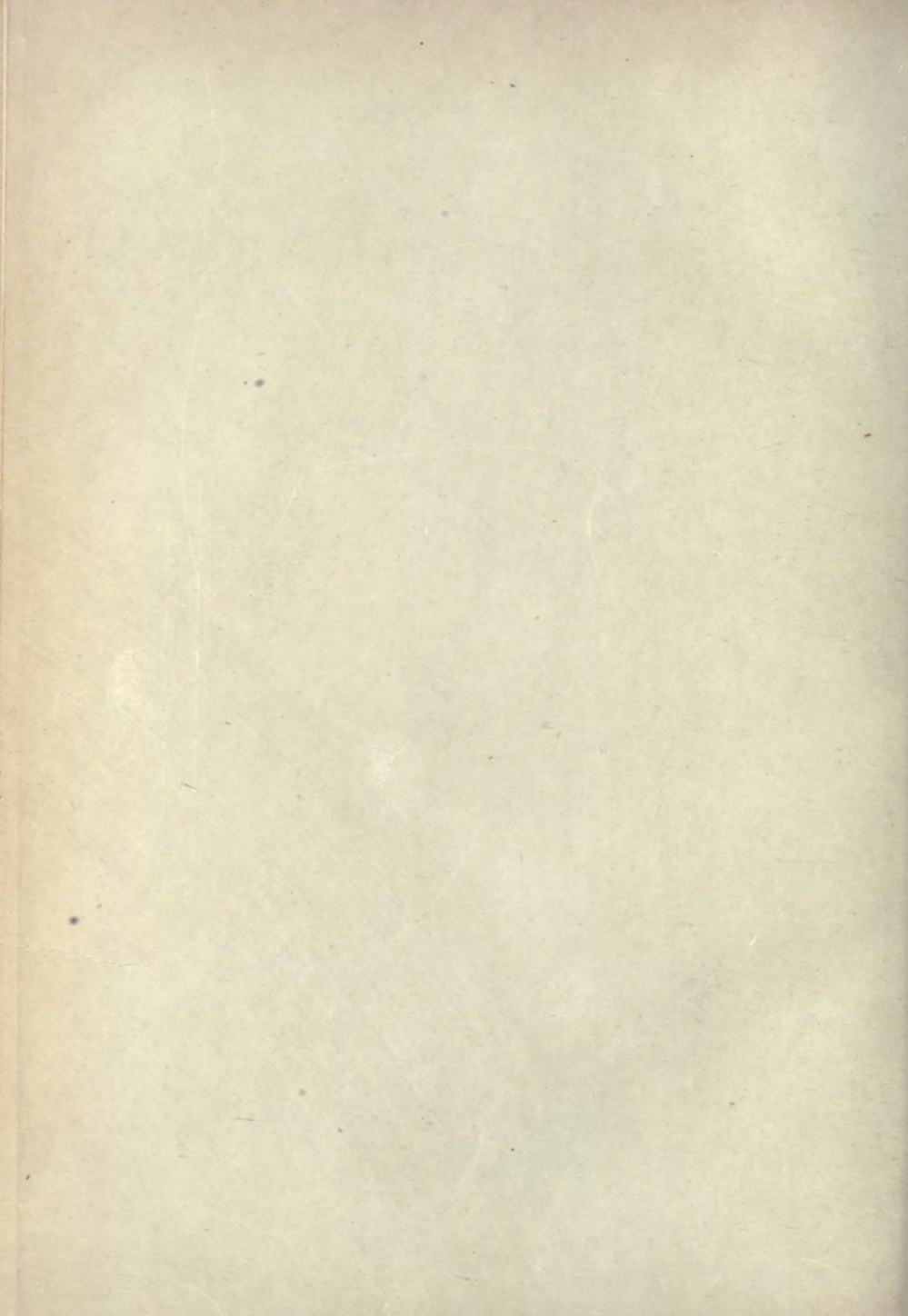
afterwards of the Scottish kingdom, were inaugurated on this stone (the Stone of Destiny), which was never anywhere but at Scone, the *sedes principalis* both of the Pictish and of the Scottish kingdoms."

<sup>1</sup> On the Ragman Roll are four le Waleys's, three from Ayrshire and one from Berwick.



BATTLEFIELD OF STIRLING BRIG

The Abbey Craig and River Forth





## CHAPTER VII

### STIRLING BRIG

“ At Wallace name what Scottish blood  
But boils up in a springtide flood.  
Oft have our fearless fathers strode  
By Wallace side,  
Still pressing onward red-wat shod  
Or glorious died.”

It is the most pleasant of tasks—for a Scot—to linger awhile and weave visions around the memory of the greatest figure in our gallery of national heroes.<sup>1</sup> He will find himself in a right goodly

<sup>1</sup> Blind Harry's description of Wallace is interesting :

“ Wallace statur, off gretness and off hycht  
Was jugyt thus, be discretion off rycht  
That saw him beth dissembill and in weid :  
Nyne quarteris large he was in lenth indeid :  
Thyrd part lenth in schuldrys braid was he,  
Rycht sembly, strong, and lusty fir to se :  
Hys lymmys gret with stalwart paiss and sound,  
Hys muscls hard, hys armes gret and round :  
Hys handis maid rycht lik till a pawmer,  
Of manlik mak with naless gret and cler :  
Proportionyt lang and fair was hys wesage :  
Rycht sad off spech and abill in curage :  
Braid breyst and heyeh, with sturdy crag and gret,  
Hys lypps round, hys noyss was squar and tret :  
Bowand brown hayr on browis and breiss lycht,  
Cler aspre eyn, lik dyamondis brycht.”

*Wallace, Book ix., lines 1914-30.*

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

company of his countrymen. The dim figures of ancient minstrels and makars, soldiers and priests, peers and peasants, Scotsmen all, will crowd around him from out the land of the shadowed dead. Whispering voices will speak to him of the Giant Shade of the Scottish warrior. They will tell once again of the dauntless spirit, and the hatred of wrong and oppression which must have strengthened the arm that on the field of Stirling, by the placid waters of the Forth, struck the first blow in the tragedy and horror and deathless struggle for Scottish independence. Old Blind Harry, Wyntoun, Langtoft, and Fordun kept green the memory of Wallace through the Middle Ages. The lyre of Burns poured an inspiration on the name of Wallace, enshrining it trebly in the sacristy of Scottish affection, ensuring it the homage of undying fame. Robert Burns drank deep at the well of Harry the Minstrel, and he has left it on record that "the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins which will boil along them till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest." The literature of the world can offer few equals to the well-nigh matchless eloquence of these glowing words.

In the days of Burns there were few Scottish households which did not rejoice in the possession of a copy of *The Actis and Deids of Illusteres and Vailyeand Champion Schir William Wallace, Knight of Elderslie*. It was certainly one of the treasures in



## STIRLING BRIG

the modest library of the poet's father. On the banks of the Ayr, in the Laglyne Woods, where "covert of trees saved him full well," Wallace had often defied his foes. Five hundred years later there came to this same wood a young lad from Mount Oliphant, and as he explored every den and dell where he could imagine his heroic countryman to have hidden, Burns, in the full tide of the poetic vigour of youth, vowed that some day he would "make a song on him." In fulfilment of that promise he left to his country the magnificent war piece, "Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled." We have to thank Blind Harry not only for that inspiration, but for many of the other songs which Burns wrote "for puir auld Scotland's sake," songs that, like the story of his hero, symbolise and typify the spirit of Scottish patriotism. Henry the Minstrel, or Blind Harry, flourished a couple of centuries later than Wallace. Harry was a minstrel, not a dry-as-dust historian. He endows his hero with all the attributes of the romantic chivalry of the period, in much the same fashion as did the earlier bards who chronicled the legends of Arthur and Charlemagne. Major, writing about 1470, speaks of Henry as blind from his birth and committing to poetry, "in which he was well skilled," the life of Wallace and the *things that were commonly related of him*. To Harry we are indebted for the only original memoir of the Knight of Elderslie, coloured doubtless by intense



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

national love, but none the less reliable. His narrative by no means warrants the peevish hostility displayed towards it by writers who cheerfully accept the exaggerated materials found in the pages of the old English chroniclers, Hemingford, Trivet, or Matthew of Westminster. Modern research has demonstrated that Harry does not make any serious deviation from the authentic records, while as contemporary evidence of the national sentiment of Scotland in the Middle Ages, Blind Harry's biography is invaluable. An MS.—the only one—of Harry's *Wallace*, written by John Ramsay in 1490, is preserved in an Edinburgh library<sup>1</sup>—and the earliest printed edition is that of 1570 by “Robert Lekprevik at expenses of Henrie Charteris.”

Andrew de Wyntoun a canon-regular of St. Andrews, in his delightfully discursive *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, circa 1390, excuses himself for the deeds of Wallace, which he had left unrecorded, by telling us :

“Of his ged dedes and manhod  
Great gestis I hard say ar made.”

This couplet doubtless refers to the last memoir of Blair, Wallace's private chaplain, the Maister Blayr to whom Blind Harry expresses acknowledgment as

<sup>1</sup> The Advocates' Library. The transcriber was Ramsay of Lochmalonie in Fife : it is the only known MS. of Blind Harry's poem.

## STIRLING BRIG

the source of much of his hero's life in his own quaint phrase :

“ Eftyr the proff geffyn fra the Latin Buk  
Quhik Maister Blayr in hys time undertuk.”

Say what we may, Henry the Minstrel has left a great national epic. We can imagine a winter's eve of long ago and this blind old Scottish Homer chanting his fiery lines to the warlike men and women of the far-away fifteenth century. The dim, fitful gleam of the rushlight would show us tense, wild faces bending eagerly forward to catch the story of the mighty half-mythical chieftain, allowing it to sink deep down into their inmost souls. A rare and refreshing draught was this marvellous tale, inspiring their rude and untutored minds with its great-hearted unselfishness and resolution and herculean valour. We can yet hear in Scottish ballad and song the angry echoes of the passionate outburst as they listened with lowering brows and heaving breasts to the minstrel's voice telling of the closing chapter in their hero's life—one of the darkest stains on the noble escutcheon of England.

In 1296 Edward made a triumphal progress north to Elgin, seizing whatever he wished, took possession of the Records of Scotland, and sent them to London—where a few of them survive to this day—carried off the famous Black Rood and a portion of the True Cross, once St. Margaret's; and, to complete the humiliation of the Scots, and as a token of the



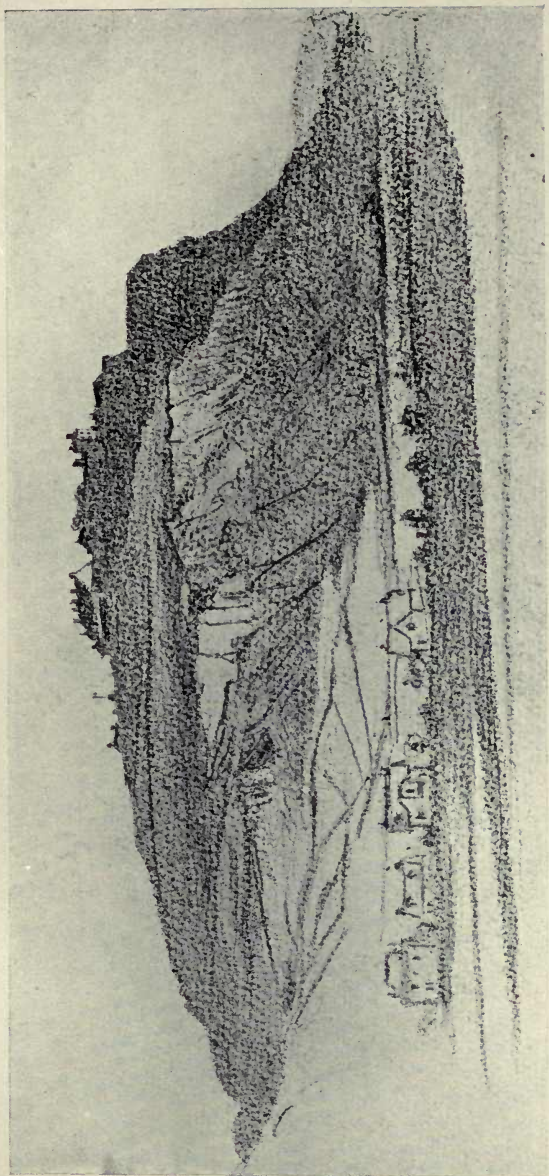
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

absolute subjection of the country, bore off from Scone the revered and immemorial Stone of Destiny.

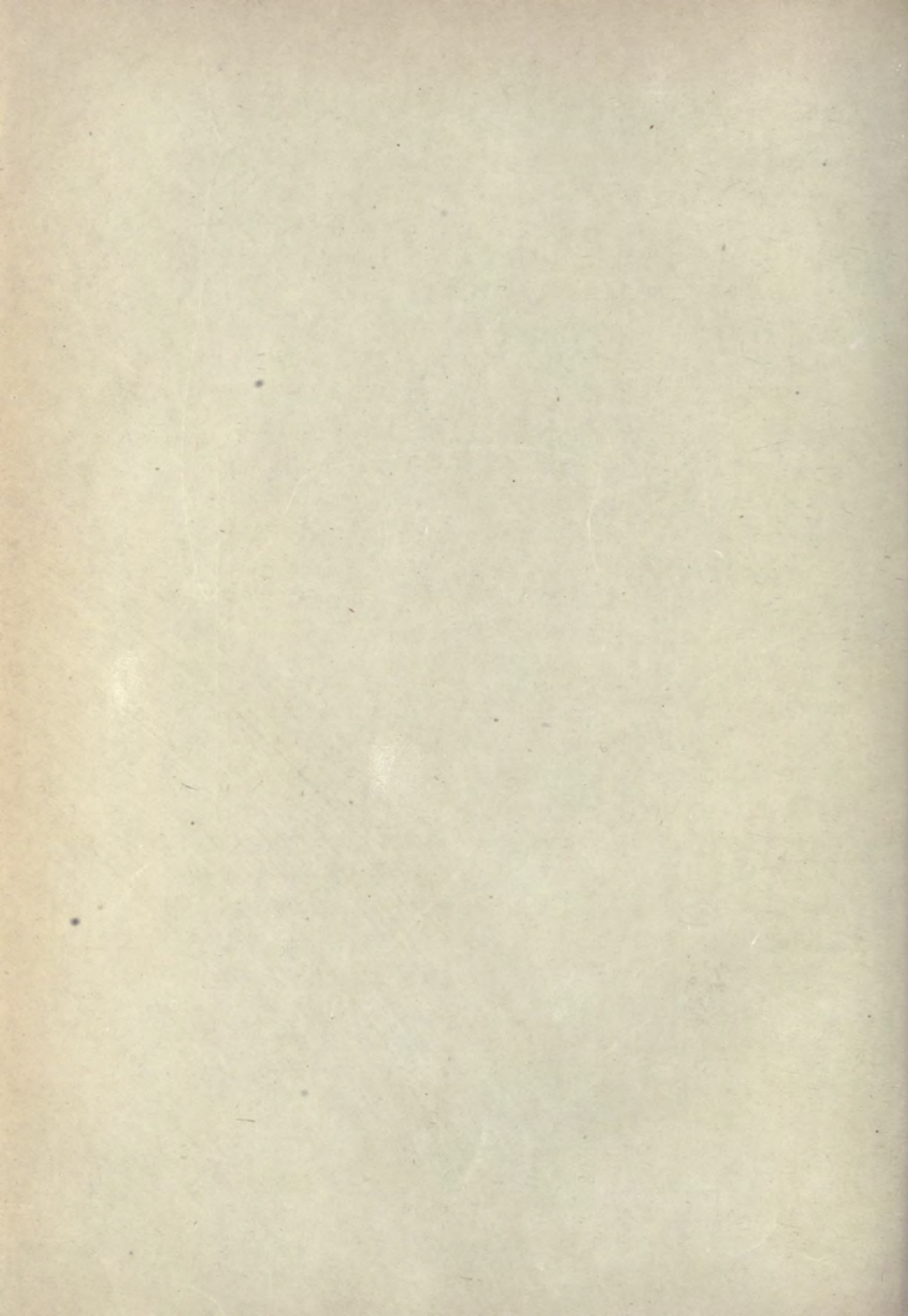
At length a patriot came forth to stem the tide of foreign tyranny and assert the liberties of the country. William Wallace steps on to the stage in the autumn of 1296. Later generations loved to tell a romantic story of a personal injury done to Wallace when a boy at school in Dundee by the English governor Selby. Seeing the lad dressed in a fine suit of green, Selby asked him how he dared to wear "so gay a weed" and tried to take his knife from him, whereupon Wallace "stiket him to the dead." Undoubtedly Wallace was a fugitive from justice in the winter of 1296-7, and it is surely not improbable that in some such way as the above the noblest of Scottish patriots received the call to his great mission. I prefer to believe that version, *pace* Sir Herbert Maxwell, who, strangely enough it must be confessed, "inclines to trace Wallace's outlawry to a less romantic source." When King Edward was at Perth, August 8, 1296, the gaol delivery—still extant—notes that a certain priest, Matthew of York, was accused of entering a woman's house in company with "one William le Waleys, thief," and stealing 3s. worth of beer.<sup>1</sup> Matthew claimed benefit of clergy and Waleys decamped. But the name Waleys, as Dr. Andrew Lang points out, "was not peculiar to Scotland." There were many families of that name

<sup>1</sup> Bain's *Calendar II*, No. 185; note, Maxwell, p. 75.





THE RAMPARTS OF STIRLING KEEP



## STIRLING BRIG

south of the Border, and the thief of beer may have been one of Edward's band of English outlaws. In any case it is impossible to believe that the heroic Wallace bilked a tavern-keeper with an Englishman—of all men—for his accomplice !

We know that by the early summer of 1297 Wallace was the recognised leader of the army of the Commons of Scotland. The spirit of revolt was rampant also in higher quarters. Sir Andrew Moray, Sir William Douglas, James the Stewart, and Bishop Robert Wishart of Glasgow, the fighting bishop who made peace with Edward (only to break it on the first opportunity) when that monarch spent a fortnight in Glasgow in 1301, making oblations at St. Mungo's Shrine in the ancient and beautiful Cathedral—all these men were uneasy in their consciences regarding their country's liberties. A fiery spirit was necessary to strengthen their counsels, and such a spirit was forthcoming in the person of young Wallace. Bower—who finished his continuation of *Fordun's Scotichronicon* in 1447<sup>1</sup>—describes how Wallace prevailed over these great men by sheer force of will and courageous purpose.

At all events it is clear that there was a resolution to strike a blow for the country's liberty, and so hearty was the response to Wallace's summons

<sup>1</sup> Walter Bower was Abbot of Inchcolm. He died in 1449. John of Fordun was a chantry priest of Aberdeen, d. circa 1385.



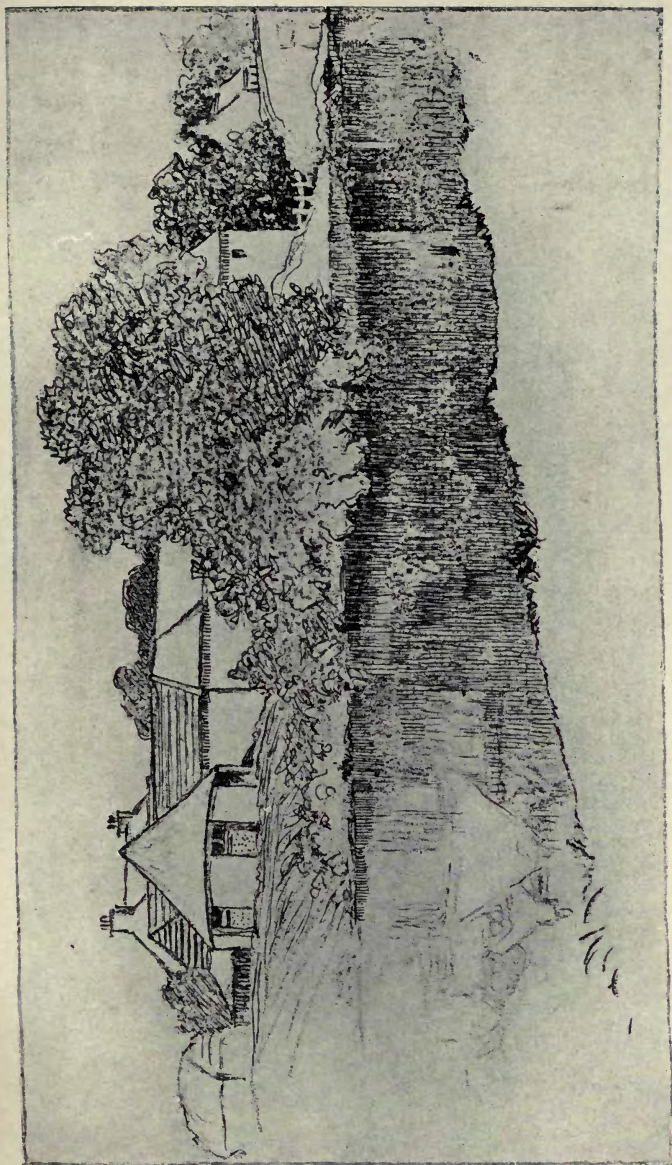
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

to his countrymen to fight for the national freedom that he led his army northwards to attempt to recover the castle of Dundee. Surrey and Cressingham, the two English leaders, respectively Governor and Treasurer of Scotland, followed sharp on his heels. Hearing of the advance from his scouts, Wallace turned back to meet them on the great battle-ground of Scotland. On September 10, 1297, Wallace was posted on the Abbey Craig, the precipitous height on the north bank of the Forth, looking across to the grey and picturesque old town of Stirling and down upon a small bridge<sup>1</sup> with which the monks of Cambuskenneth had spanned the river, the brig that blind Harry tells us

“Of guid playne burd was weill and strongly mad.”

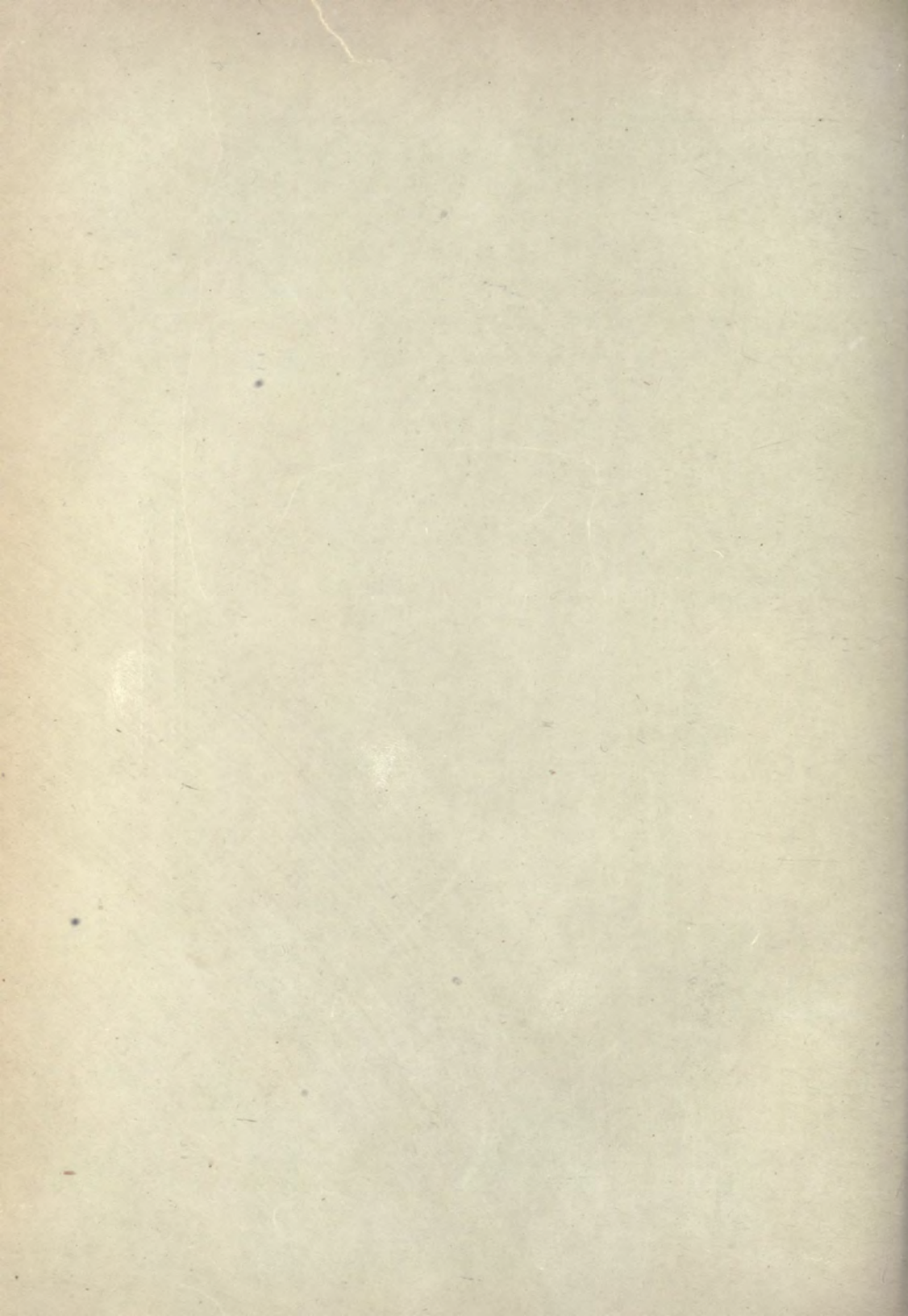
As told by the English chroniclers themselves, the battle that ensued was as signal a proof of the folly of the English commanders as of the skill of Wallace. Two friends were sent to “the brigand Wallace” to treat for peace. “Go back,” he said, “and tell your masters we came not here to ask for peace as a boon but to fight for our freedom. Let them come when they may and they shall find us ready to beard them.” The English clamoured to be led across the bridge. Sir Richard Lundy, a renegade Scot, pointed out that only two men

<sup>1</sup> The fine mediæval bridge of Stirling probably spans the river at or near to the site of the original wooden structure.



PICTURESQUE KILDEAN  
Reputed site of old Stirling Brig







## STIRLING BRIG

abreast could cross, and offered to show them a ford—at Kildean?—where sixty men could ride abreast. Cressingham, “fat and foolish,” cried out that they must not waste time. Warenne yielded. Lundy’s advice was neglected, and the long thin line marched to death. Wallace permitted the English van to cross, and then dashed his spearmen upon them. The advancing horsemen were driven back pell-mell by the spears of Scotland, and a terrible rout followed. Listen to the voice of Blind Harry as he tells the tale:

“Wallace and Grayme, Boid, Ramsay, and Lundy,  
All in the stour fast fechtan face to face.  
The Southern host bak rerit aff that place,  
That thai fyrst tuk, fyve akir breid and mair,  
Wallace on fut a grat shairp spear he bare,  
Amang the thickest of the press he gais.  
The Inglis host quhilk war in battail boun,  
Comfort thai lost, quen their chyftaine was slayne,  
And mony ane to fle began in playne.”

*Wallace, Book vii.*

A great slaughter ensued. Five thousand of the English fell—among them Cressingham, their commander. According to Hemingburgh, the Scots flayed the detested Cressingham, dividing the morsels of his skin as evil relics. The victory was complete. It dealt a shattering blow to English power, and opened the path for the greater fight beneath the shadow of the walls of Stirling Castle, the fight that finally and for all time “laid the proud usurpers

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

low." The fight at Stirling Brig made William Wallace the ruler of Scotland, and for a year he swayed the destinies of the country in the name of Balliol. The sack of Berwick had not been forgotten, and Wallace avenged it by invading and ravaging England as far south as Hexham. These doings aroused Edward, and early in 1298 he summoned an army to meet him at Newcastle, to avenge Surrey's misfortunes. In July of that year the English king advanced into Scotland by way of Berwick, and encamped at Kirkliston, near Linlithgow. On the 22nd of the month he pressed on to Falkirk, where Wallace had assembled his army. The Scots were drawn up on rising ground near the town of Falkirk. Their formation was four circular battles or masses of pikemen, with mounted spearmen in the centre of each mass.<sup>1</sup> This is the formation so often mentioned by Barbour and Sir Thomas Gray as "the Schiltrome." The "front rank knelt with their spear-butts fixed in the earth, the rear ranks levelled their lances over their comrades' heads: the thick-set grove of twelve-foot spears was far too dense for cavalry to pene-

<sup>1</sup> Langtoft graphically describes the appearance of the Scottish schiltron:

" . . . thir bakkis togidere sette  
Thir speres poynt over poynt, so sare and thikke  
And fast togidre joynt to se it was ferlik (fearsome),  
Als a castelle thei stode that wir walled with stone,  
Thei wende no man of blode throug tham suld haf gon."

Vol. ii. pp. 304-5.



## STIRLING BRIG

trate.”<sup>1</sup> Between the schiltrons were stationed Selkirk bowmen, the only decent archers that Scotland ever produced. On the flanks were such cavalry as Wallace possessed. Edward began the battle by sending his horse to attempt to break up the schiltrons. They failed in that, but they destroyed the Scottish archers. The Scottish cavalry fled. Tradition says that the flight was due rather to treachery than to terror. The story is persistent and probable, for the Anglo-Norman nobility were not likely to prove loyal followers of a simple gentleman like Wallace.<sup>2</sup> The English bowmen were then sent forward. There was no reply to their volleys nor any cavalry to scatter them, and the grey goose-shafts fell steadily and remorselessly on the Scots. When their deadly work was done, Edward again sent the mounted cavalry of England upon the broken ranks of the Scottish spearmen, and the day was his.<sup>3</sup> The disaster of Falkirk (July

<sup>1</sup> Oman, *Art of War*, p. 567 ; Maxwell, *Making of Scotland*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Rait, *Scotland*, p. 75 ; Maxwell, *Making of Scotland*, pp. 93-4.

<sup>3</sup> The losses on both sides seem to have been considerable. The Scottish chroniclers put the Scots slain at 10,000, the English chronicler Walsingham says 60,000, and Hemingford makes the Scottish loss 50,000 and 300,000 foot taken prisoners. Both estimates are obviously absurd. So far as the English loss is concerned we have a scrap of authentic evidence in Edward's Exchequer Rolls, in which it is noted that Edward paid compensation for 111 horses killed, the property of certain knights and esquires. Among the prominent Scots slain were Sir John de Graham and Sir John Stewart of Bonkil. They both sleep in the old kirkyard of Falkirk, and their tombstones record "killed at the battle of Falkirk, 22 July 1298."



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

22, 1298) was fatal to Wallace. He resigned the office of Guardian, crossed to France, tried to enlist the sympathies of French Philip, failed, and returned to Scotland, where by Edward's orders he was "hunted to the death," and was finally captured<sup>1</sup>—betrayed (according to a highly probable tradition) by Sir John Menteith. Wallace was taken to London, arriving there on August 22, 1305, tried the same day as a traitor, and the following day was "summarily convicted of treason, sacrilege, homicide, robbery, and arson." On August 23, 1305, Wallace was executed and his mangled body scattered to every air. "Fair was his ending," says Blind Harry; the spirit of the dead hero at once passed to the Valhalla of the gods, to "lasting bliss, we trow, for ever mair." Like some avenging Judge of Israel, ruthless, and strong, and indomitable, he had come amongst his people. The Lord of Battles had given him a sword, with which he had cloven his country's foes. But the fause Menteith

<sup>1</sup> Robroyston, near Glasgow, is believed to have been the scene of Wallace's capture. A beautiful Celtic cross, erected by the Scottish Patriotic Association, marks the spot on which stood (until the early years of last century) the house, a barn-like edifice, in which, tradition asserted, Wallace was residing on the occasion. Blind Harry says:

"Rabreston it was near to the wayside

And had one house where Wallace used to bide."

*Wallace*, Book xi. 990-1000.

Wyntoun says:

"Schyre John of Menteth in tha days

Tuk in Glasgw Willame Waleys."

*Cronykil*, viii. c. 20.

## STIRLING BRIG

had played his treacherous part, and Wallace had fallen. The whole wide world, says Pericles, is a brave man's sepulchre, and the gallant knight of Elderslie has left his name on Scottish mountain and moor

“Like a wild flower,  
All over his dear country.”

Well might the old Scots monk pray, “O God of Liberty, look down in pity and in power upon my bleeding and downtrodden country. Thou beholdest, dear God, the desolated homes, the sorrow-laden souls, the broken hearts that ever sorely sigh within her rock-bound shores, her royal race without a throne, and now the life-blood of her noblest son, Thy best gift to her in her sorest need, thus cruelly poured forth by her fell destroyer.” The great patriot soul had been foully murdered, but the ruin that seemed to shroud his country's future in hopeless night proved the precursor of a brighter dawn. An able and willing arm and a hand courageous enough to wield the mighty sword had arisen. Edward's star was in the ascendant: Nemesis, with hurrying feet, was approaching.

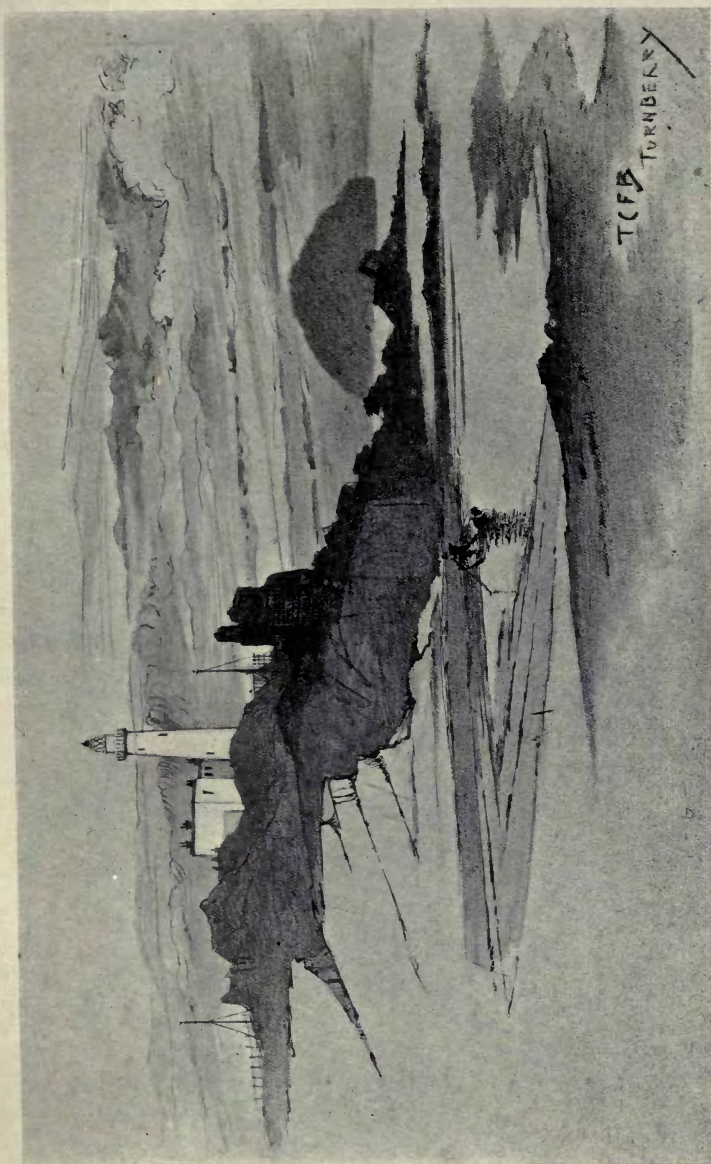
## CHAPTER VIII

### BANNOCKBURN

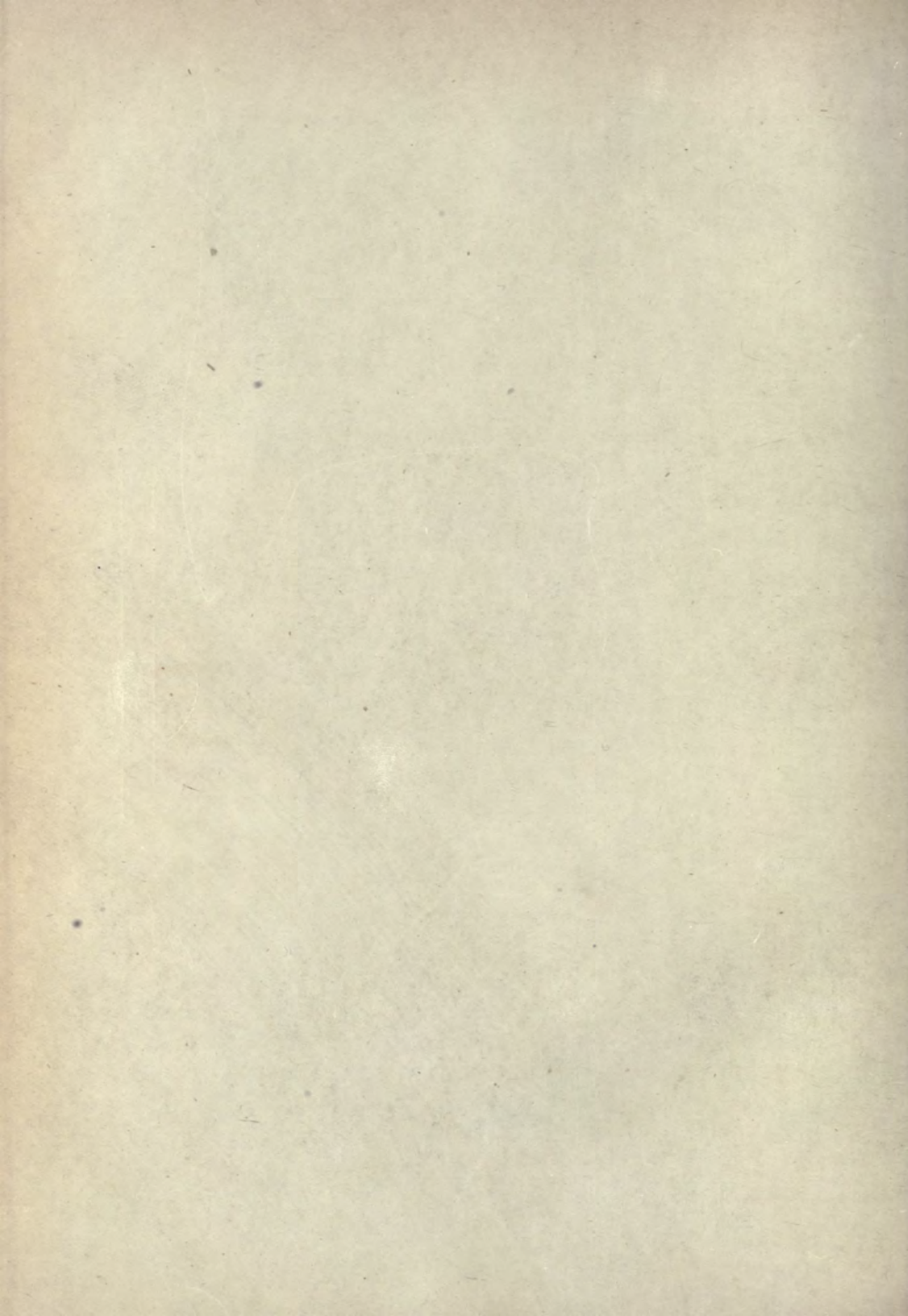
“There, in the centre, proudly raised,  
The Bruce’s royal standard blazed.”

THE disaster at Falkirk put an end to Wallace’s public career. “The evil that men do lives after them,” says the poet: the case of Wallace rather negatives the poetic dictum. He had taught his countrymen to abhor their oppressor, and the lesson sank deep into the hearts of gentle and simple. The deeds of the great Guardian had shown the nobles that Edward was not infallible, and we may suppose the common people shared the belief. At all events we find John Comyn the Younger, John de Soules, Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, and Lamberton, bishop of St. Andrews, chosen Guardians of Scotland. The enemy was held at bay, or apparently it seemed so. But Edward was keeping a sharp, though unseen, eye on Scottish affairs. He had not the slightest intention of desisting from his plans of conquest. However, he was pitted against Robert Bruce, one of the ablest diplomatists and soldiers of that or any other age. It is impossible to study the





BIRTHPLACE OF THE BRUCE  
Turnberry Castle, lighthouse, and Ailsa Craig



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events of the time and remain unimpressed with the far-seeing diplomacy—it might perhaps be termed opportunism—of Bruce.<sup>1</sup> He was playing a deep game, and but for the subsequent glories of his career history might, conceivably, have given a somewhat unflattering estimate of his character. We see him swearing allegiance to Edward and ostensibly abandoning the interests of his country. He deserted Comyn in the Guardianship of Scotland's independence. On March 3, 1304, King Edward writes to his "loyal and faithful Robert de Brus." The following month he receives praise for his diligence in assisting at the siege of Stirling Castle. In June he makes a secret pact with Bishop Lamberton, the latter pledging himself to lend all the power of the Church in forwarding Bruce's designs upon the throne. The significance of the alliance of Bruce and Lamberton becomes clear when we remember that the Archbishop of York claimed jurisdiction over the Scottish bishoprics. The Scottish bishops refused to acknowledge any claim of the kind, and, naturally, their obvious course was to support Bruce's ambitions towards the kingship. That achieved, and the result would be independence for the Scottish clergy. We cannot and we ought not to blame Bruce, under the circumstances, for

<sup>1</sup> Murison, *Bruce* (Famous Scot Series), p. 25; Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 124; Maxwell's *Making of Scotland*, p. 95 *et seq.*, and *Life of Bruce*, p. 121 *et seq.*; Rait, *Scotland*, pp. 80-1.



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judiciously exercising his diplomatic powers. He was not one whit more of an opportunist than was Edward. Edward's motto, "Keep troth," simply served as a cloak to his nefarious designs. The moment self-interest came into play the motto was conveniently overlooked. Lamberton and the other Scottish bishops were playing the same game as Edward and Bruce. Bishop Wishart of Glasgow cheerfully broke his sixth oath of fealty to Edward,<sup>1</sup> and in the old Cathedral of St. Mungo (in the High Street of Glasgow) pronounced the absolution of Bruce for the murder of Comyn. The bold Glasgow bishop and the absolved Bruce left the venerable fane together and rode to Scone, where on March 29, 1306, Robert the Bruce was crowned King of Scotland. Edward had filched the Scottish crown, but Wishart, a man of ready resource, had provided a circlet of gold:<sup>2</sup> but we are anticipating. Edward had a Scottish campaign in 1303, during which his troops were severely handled by the Scots, at Roslin. The following year Stirling Castle capitulated to King Edward, after a desperate siege. The deciding power was starvation. Comyn, who until then had played the part of a patriot, gave up his

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave, clxxx. and 346; Bain's *Cal. of Doc. Scot.*, vol. ii. pp. 323-4, vol. iv. pp. 448-52.

<sup>2</sup> Wishart was captured at the castle of Cupar in May 1306, and the temporalities of the bishopric were ordered by King Edward to be given to Sir John de Menteith during pleasure. Bain's *Cal. of Doc. Scot.*, vol. ii. p. 479.

## BANNOCKBURN

Guardianship and submitted to the English king. Claiming descent from Donald Ban, and being nephew of the ex-king, John Balliol, manifestly the Red Comyn, as he was termed, could advance a powerful claim to the Scottish throne. Gloss their actions as we may, it is almost impossible to suppose that these two great figures were not the keenest of rivals. Both desired to fill the title-rôle. The stage was cleared.

Let us lift the curtain on the drama that took place at the sacred altar within the ancient kirk of the Minorite Friars at Dumfries on the morning of February 10, 1306. The hands of Destiny were moving. The Fates had ordained that the Red Comyn and the Bruce were to meet "and embrace"—so Hemingburgh says—within that holy fane. But old fires were smouldering. Surely "conscience clattered" when these strong men clasped hands? Years before both had been Guardians of Scotland. Bruce—facts must be stated—had deserted that post of honour and danger. Comyn had stood longer by his country. On all counts the Red Comyn was a dangerous rival.<sup>1</sup> Bruce was

<sup>1</sup> The truth regarding the tragic incident will probably never be known. The historians of the period are hopelessly divided. Naturally the Scottish chroniclers exalt the patriotic motives of Bruce. Fordun tells how Bruce charged Comyn with treachery: "You discovered me to the king (Edward) by your letters. Since while you live I cannot fulfil my purpose, you shall have your guerdon," and then stabbed his rival. Barbour looks upon the murder as justifiable homicide, and states that



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

no fool. "Support me (for the Scottish throne) and take my estates" is what Fordun makes Bruce say to Comyn when the couple met at Edward's court in December 1305. Comyn is alleged to have revealed the plot to Edward. Thus matters stood when, in February of the following year, Bruce sent his brothers Nigel and Thomas to Dalswinton to bring Comyn to Dumfries. "He gave us such fair greeting and showed so open countenance that we could do him no injury," and they did not harm him. "Let ME meet him," said Bruce. The issue was personal, and evil passions are easily aroused. Both men were of violent temper. They quarrelled. Bruce stabbed Comyn, and his blood plashed on the holy altar. The horror of the sacrilege on his mind, Bruce rushed from the church. His friends were less sensitive, and the tradition of their intervention is persistent. It is probably well founded. "I doubt I have slain the Red Comyn," whispered the Bruce. "Doubt," said Kirkpatrick; "I'll mak' siccar!"<sup>1</sup> The deed involved the national fortunes.

Comyn actually handed over to King Edward the secret indenture, said to have been entered into by Bruce and himself, pledging one of them to support the other in seizing the throne of Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough neither Fordun nor Barbour mention Kirkpatrick as giving Comyn the *coup de grâce*. The crest of the Kirkpatricks of Closeburn is a hand with a dagger erect in pale dropping blood, and their motto is "I mak sikar." Universal tradition attributes the Comyn's death-blow to Sir Roger Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, although Lord Hailes (*Annals of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 242) expresses doubts as to the identity of the Kirkpatrick who completed the tragedy, with Sir Roger. Charles





TŲE BANNOCKBURN.

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The results were immediate and momentous. The Red Comyn had been Edward's emissary in Scotland, and the English monarch regarded the death as a direct blow against his authority. Bruce had only one course left—to strike for the Scottish throne—a step which his immediate action showed he had long maturely considered. Six weeks after the killing of Comyn, the Bruce had himself crowned at Scone! He had put his hand to the plough, and there was no turning back. But Bruce was cast in the sternest of moulds, as Edward and his men were to learn in the seven years which preceded Bannockburn.

From the hour that the Scottish crown was placed on his brow, Bruce pursued a single purpose with a dauntless courage and steadfast resolution which may well encourage the Scottish student of history to forgive his former (seeming) lapses of patriotism. The difficulties he faced appear almost insurmountable. For years he was hunted like a wild beast through the desolate glens of Galloway, over the hills and dales of Ayrshire, across the wildernesses where some centuries later the Covenanters were to find good hiding, over the mountain fastnesses of Argyll, east and west, north and south,

Kirkpatrick Sharp, the genial Edinburgh antiquary and friend of Scott, supplies a note to the *Lord of the Isles* on "vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk." In this note he supports the tradition, and affirms that the crest and motto were given by the king on that occasion. In any case we may look upon the heraldic authority as good.



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the nets were spread, and hired assassins and blood-hounds ever on his trail.<sup>1</sup> Bruce beat them all. He held his own doing MIRACULA, as Hemingburgh says, in the way of skill and endurance. The arrows of traitors proved pointless and the sleuth-hounds were at fault. The English were alarmed, his own countrymen amazed. A successor to Wallace had arisen at last. Vast bodily strength, courage, genius, generalship, and the power of winning hearts—the Scots women, Barbour tells us, were leal to the seemingly forlorn cause of the very perfect knight—were the qualities which commanded his success.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bruce spent the winter of 1306-7 on Rathlin, an island about fourteen miles south-west of the Mull of Cantyre. Edward knew he was there, for in January 1307 he sent orders to one of his emissaries to join Sir John de Menteith and Sir Simon de Montacute with a fleet "to put down Robert de Brus and destroy his retreat on the isles between Scotland and Ireland." Bain, *Cal. of Doc. Scot.*, vol. ii. p. 502.

In the spring of 1307 Bruce left Rathlin and landed on Arran. The memory of his visit is preserved in many picturesque legends associated with that beautiful island of the Clyde. The King's Cave, near Blackwaterfoot, is supposed to have sheltered Bruce and his men, and it is there that the well-known tale of the spider finds a definite habitation. It is a huge cave 118 feet in length, 44 feet broad, and 50 in height at some parts. In the summer time this erstwhile residence of a Scottish king is occupied by wandering gipsies, and the last occasion on which I visited the cave a delicious odour of roast lamb indicated that the wanderers were living well, a fact to which a neighbouring farmer subsequently bore expressive testimony. Some of the curious traditions of the district will be found in my *Rambles in Arran*, p. 37 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> On Sunday, June 26, 1306, Sir Aymer de Valence, commander of the English forces in Scotland, attacked Bruce's small and badly equipped band of followers at Methven woods near Perth. The Scots were cut up, and the king himself narrowly escaped capture. Bruce had his revenge when in May of the following year (1307) he met de Aymer at Loudon



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Men gradually flocked around him; some joined his outlawed band because of the abominable cruelties of the English laws, which punished the Scots by burning, by being torn to pieces at the heels of horses, and by hanging; others because of the prophecy by Merlin that had been discovered<sup>1</sup> promising success to the Bruce's arms. Carrick rallied round him. Kyle, Cunningham, and the Lothians followed. How matters would have gone had the greatest of the Plantagenets lived one need not discuss. He was a puissant knight: from the English point of view an ideal ruler. But he died at Burgh-on-Sands on July 7, 1307, in full sight of Scotland, cursing the Scots, and, says Froissart, with his dying breath

Hill, near Galston in Ayrshire, and completely routed him. Barbour puts the English strength at 3000: Bruce had about 600 fighting-men and about as many "rangale"-rabble. The battle of Loudon Hill marks the turning-point in the fortunes of Bruce. It was the first time he had tried conclusions with the English on the open field, and his success, added to the losses inflicted on them in the skirmish at Glentool (May 1307), in March 1307 at Turnberry (on the coast a few miles south of Ayr, and the birthplace of Bruce. Some mouldering fragments of the ancient keep still crown the rock-bound shore. The lighthouse of Turnberry is erected practically in what may have been the courtyard of Bruce's ancestral home), and at Douglas (the scene on March 19, 1307, of the terrible Douglas Larder, when Sir James Douglas captured Douglas Castle from the English, stripped it, piled the stores and provisions together, staved in the wine-casks, beheaded the prisoners, tossed the corpses of men and horses on to the ghastly heap which he set on fire), did much to inspire confidence among the Scots, and attracted hundreds of recruits to Bruce's standard. Maxwell, *Bruce*, p. 163 *et seq.*, *Making of Scotland*, pp. 115, 116; Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 125; Murison, *Bruce*, p. 41 *et seq.*; Barbour's *Brus*, lii.

<sup>1</sup> It is mentioned in a curious letter, still existing, of May 15, 1307. Bain, vol. ii. p. 513.

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forcing his son to swear that his body should be boiled till the flesh quitted his bones, while his skeleton was to lead the army.<sup>1</sup> The ghastly pact was never kept. His body was laid in Westminster, and on his tomb was carved the terrible legend: "Here is the first Edward, Hammer of the Scots. Keep Covenant."

Events were shaping towards a crowning disaster for the English power. The proud chivalry of the south was to be humiliated. Edward's attempt to hunt Bruce out of the land "with hund and horn, rycht as he were a wolf, a thief," had not succeeded. Neither had that of his Scots lieutenant, John of Lorn, and his 800 active Highlanders, but they captured the Brooch of Lorn.

"Johne of Lorne and all his micht  
That had of worthy men and wicht  
With him aucht hunder men and mo."

So says Barbour, and the English Exchequer warrant to de Valence is extant to pay John of Lorn for 22 men-at-arms and 800 foot, a tribute, incidentally, to the general accuracy of the Archdeacon-poet's *Brus*. A memorandum of 1309, addressed by the "Commune" of Scotland, makes complaint of the high-handedness of the English castellans who had

<sup>1</sup> Bruce is said to have declared that he was more afraid of the bones of Edward I than of his living son (Edward II), and that it would be greater glory to have won a foot of land from the one than a kingdom from the other. *Annales Paulini, Chron. of Edward I and Edward II*, i. 265 (Rolls Series). Note: Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 125.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

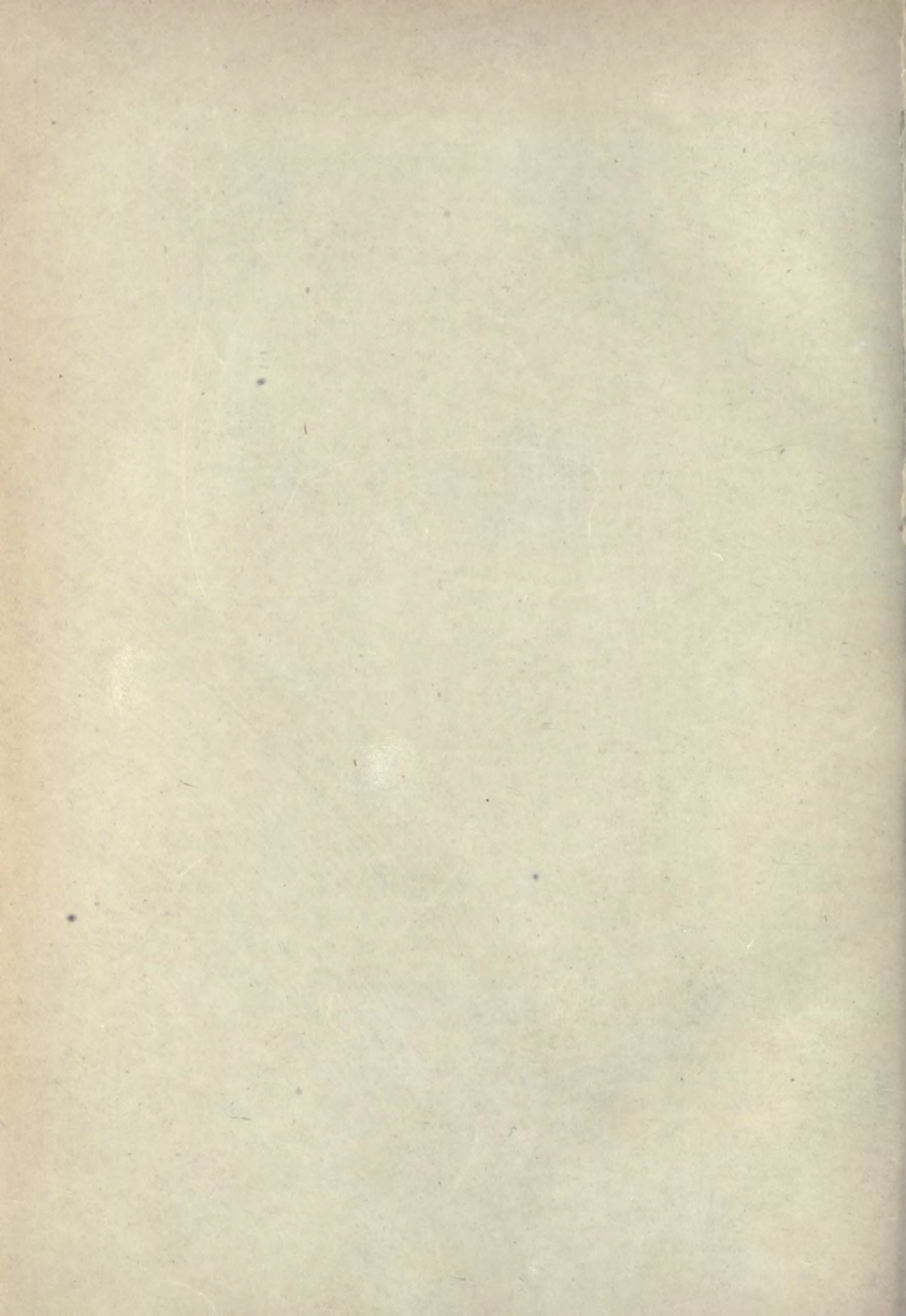
made the country poor and the people homeless and wretched. English garrisons held the great castles of the south. The story of their recovery is the most romantic, certainly the most stirring, tale of Scottish childhood: How the farmer Binning, with his cart-loads of hay, took Linlithgow; how the Black Douglas and his men crept like a herd of cattle to the walls of Roxburgh and surprised the garrison; and how Randolph, penitent and forgiven for a temporary defection, climbed the castle rock at Edinburgh with only thirty followers and seized the castle. Bruce himself took Perth in January 1313. Stirling was being hard pressed by Edward Bruce, and in November 1313 a proposal made by the governor, Sir Philip Mowbray, was rashly accepted in the spirit of a knight-errant rather than of a responsible commander. The castle was to be surrendered if it were not relieved by 24th June of the following year, a condition that involved a pitched battle between the two nations.<sup>1</sup> Bruce of his own accord would never have risked the chances of such an obviously unequal encounter. As it happened, he had to thank the rashness of his brother for making him the hero of the proudest day in Scottish history. Edward was jubilant. To fight the Scots in the open was what he desired, while a guerilla warfare suited the

<sup>1</sup> The English army had to come within three leagues of Stirling Castle within eight days of St. John's Day, 24th June, failing which Mowbray proposed to surrender his charge. *Scalacronica*, *Maitland Club*, p. 141.





WHERE BRUCE HOISTED HIS FLAG



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resources of the Scots. Bruce had no choice. It was the days of chivalry, and men reckless of perjury in civil affairs held sacred their pledged word in war. The crowning stroke of freedom was now to be struck. Singular but curious it is that Bannockburn was fought on a point of chivalry, on a rule in a game. England must "touch bar," relieve Stirling, as in a child's pastime.

There was a year wherein to prepare and muster and arm. Bruce fully realised the gravity of the situation, and he issued his summons :

"Then all that worthy were to fight  
Of Scotland, set all hale their might."

Barbour puts the Scots' strength at 30,000 and the English at 100,000, Edward's

" . . . . . own chivalry  
That was so great it was ferly."

His figures may be exaggerated.<sup>1</sup> The still extant English Patent Rolls of the period account for 21,540 English infantry and some 6000 cavalry. Add to these the contingents from Wales and Ireland and Argyll, the Knights of France and Hainault, Bretagne and Gascony, and the English fighting force may well be put at about 60,000. Against

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Mackenzie, M.A., in his edition of *The Bruce* (1909) deals exhaustively with the disputed question of the number of the troops engaged. See also the same author's ingenious essay on the site of the battle, "The Real Bannockburn." *Trans. Glas. Arch. Soc.* (new series), vol. vi. p. 80*et seq.*



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this we are safe in saying the Scots brought a third—about 20,000. Edward's must have been a mighty host. Its outfit was on a magnificent scale. "The multitude of waggons, if extended one after another in file," says the Monk of Malmesbury, "would have extended over twenty leagues." In truth, he says, it was acknowledged that "such an army did not go out of England in our time." The monk's assertion lends a sober colour to the testimony of Robert Baston, the Carmelite friar whom Edward brought with him to celebrate a victory. He was captured and made—as ransom—to sing a Scottish triumph.<sup>1</sup> "Never," he declared, "was seen a more splendid, noble, or proud English army."

<sup>1</sup> Barbour in his noble epic, *The Bruce*, strikes the full note of the *perseveridum ingenium Scotorum* when he writes :

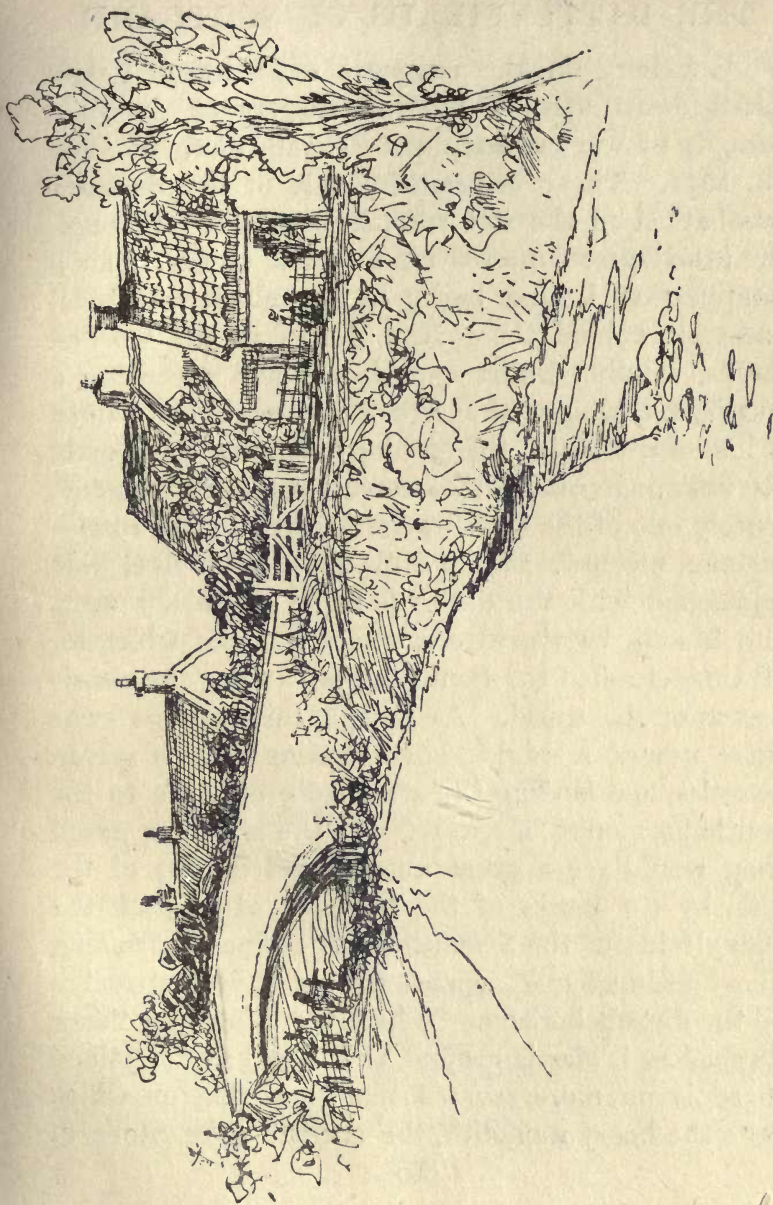
"A ! fredom is ane nobile thing :  
Fredom mais men to have liking :  
Fredom all solas to man gifis,  
He lifis at es that frely lifis."

*The Brus*, iv., ll. 47-50.

As Barbour was born about a couple of years after Bannockburn was fought (in 1357 he was Archdeacon of Aberdeen), he must have known many men who had shared in Bruce's campaigns. In one of his passages describing a Galloway raid of Edward Bruce, he gives the actual name of the knight to whom he was indebted for his information :

"Curtaiss and fayr and off gud fame,  
Schyr Alane off Catkart by name,  
Tauld me this taile as I sall tell."

There are two existing (transcripts) MSS. of Barbour's poem, one in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge, dated 1487 ; another in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, dated 1489.



THE PEACEFUL BANNOCK BURN



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Watchers on the ramparts of Stirling Castle gazed down upon a glorious display of the rude panoply of war on that quiet Sabbath morn of June 23, 1314. The ever-beautiful vale of the Bannock was bathed in the soft summer sunshine. Through the pearly-green mosses ran a thread of silver, anon disappearing behind bosky banks, playing at hide-and-seek behind the sylvan shades of the wooded steeps, winding hither and thither and stretching a fragile, sparkling chain across the emerald carse until it linked itself with the flashing bosom of the Forth. An unknown country stream on that peaceful Sunday, merely one of the back-waters beloved by the rustic ; on the morrow, the fateful 24th, its crystal tide crimsoned with the dark life-blood of men, a stern and bloody baptismal ceremony, but one which for all time enrolled the Bannock burn among the classic waters of the world. And across this pleasant scene there moved a mighty host, blotting out its sylvan beauties, and lending the stern note of strife to the gentle harmonies of nature. As the watchers gazed they would see a great mast reared on one of the hills by the banks of the Bannock, at its peak the ruddy folds of the Scottish Lion rampant gleaming like burnished gold against the opalescent stretches of the distant horizon. Where the Lion flag threw its shadow is classic ground, and in all broad Scotland there is no more revered spot than that on which rests the hoary monolith, the ancient Bore Stone of



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the Bruce—another Stone of Destiny surely, and yielding naught in awful interest to the immemorial Lia Fail itself!<sup>1</sup>

It was the vigil of St. John, and the watchers might hear the good priests chanting the Holy Mass to the army of the Scots; and men shrived them and

“Vowed to die in the mêlée,  
Or else to set their country free.”

As the keen eye of the Bruce swept over the array he saw the gallant Gloucester lead the van of the English down the slopes on the south side of the Bannock. It must have been with anxious eye that he noted the boundless wilderness of spears, a serried mass of lances, bills, and banners, stretching over hill and dale until lost in the blue horizon.

“Three bowshots far,  
Paused the deep front of England’s war,  
And rested on their arms awhile  
To close and rank their warlike file,  
And hold high council, if that night  
Should view the strife, or dawning light.”

*Lord of the Isles, Canto VI., XIII.*

He would see Clifford and Sir Thomas Gray

<sup>1</sup> Bannockburn and its memories are deeply rooted in the Scottish heart. It is extraordinary to think that, in 1814, Scott, on his visit to Bessie Millie, the old hag who subsisted by “selling winds” to the Orcadian seamen, saw outside the cabin in which she lived “the vestiges of a bonfire lighted in memory of Bannockburn.” *Diary of a Voyage in the Lighthouse Yacht, off Stromness, 17 August 1814.*

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checked by the trusty Randolph in their attempt to reach Stirling Castle.

“Sic mirkness  
In the air above them was,”

says Barbour, a significant remark, telling us of the mist of dust that hung over the combatants on that hot June afternoon. With flashing eye he would watch the fierce de Bohun plunge through the Bannock water. Motionless the great king awaited the coming of the rash foe, who, in Barbour's quaint phrase, “raid in gret haste” at the Bruce. Spurring his war-horse to full speed, this thoughtless scion of “Hereford's high blood”—“to the Erle of Hurfurd cusyne”—thundered down upon the Scottish king. It was military mediocrity—brave, doubtless, but mediocrity nevertheless—pitting itself against one of the greatest soldiers Scotland, or the world for that matter, ever produced. The king swung his battle-axe, and in Scott's burning phrase:

“Springs from the blow the startled horse,  
Drops to the plain the lifeless corse.”

“This wes the fyrst strak off the fycht,” says the painstaking Barbour: *Initium malorum hoc*—“This was the beginning of evil,” says the English chronicler.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shearer, *Fact and Fiction in the Story of Bannockburn* (1909), suggests that the story of the de Bohun and Bruce duel is a myth. He is also sceptical as to caltrops having been used by Bruce, and takes up the same attitude with regard to the Gillies' Hill tradition. *Story of Bannockburn*, pp. 105-16.

## BANNOCKBURN

The summer sun on the 24th of June rose on the holy rites of the Mass done by the old Abbot of Inchaffray in front of the Scottish lines.

“The Scottis men comounaly  
Knelyt all doune to God to pray.”

“Thai aske mercy, bot nane at you; for thair trespas to God thai cry,” said the noble de Umfraville to the English monarch.<sup>1</sup> “Let us do or die” are the immortal words of Burns’s great war-pæan. The God of Battles heard the cry of the sorely-harassed people, and He nerved their hearts and arms as down upon them came England’s might :

“Dark rolling like the ocean tide,  
When the rough west hath chafed his pride,  
And his deep roar sounds challenge wide  
To all that bars his way.”

From morn till dewy eve the fell struggle raged, the ground became slippery with blood, the gallant dead were heaped in thousands, vengeful shouts of triumph and groans of mental pain joined in a ghastly chorus,

<sup>1</sup> The result of the battle of Bannockburn was that Edward lost all control over England. “Lancaster (the earl who refused to join Edward in his mission to Scotland on the ground that a parliament must be called before the king could lawfully make war) was practically supreme; he and his fellows put the king on an allowance and removed his personal friends and attendants as they chose” (Stubbs).

The allowance on which Edward was put was £10 a day. This would be equivalent to £100 at the present time. Meiklejohn, *Hist. Eng.*, p. 173.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

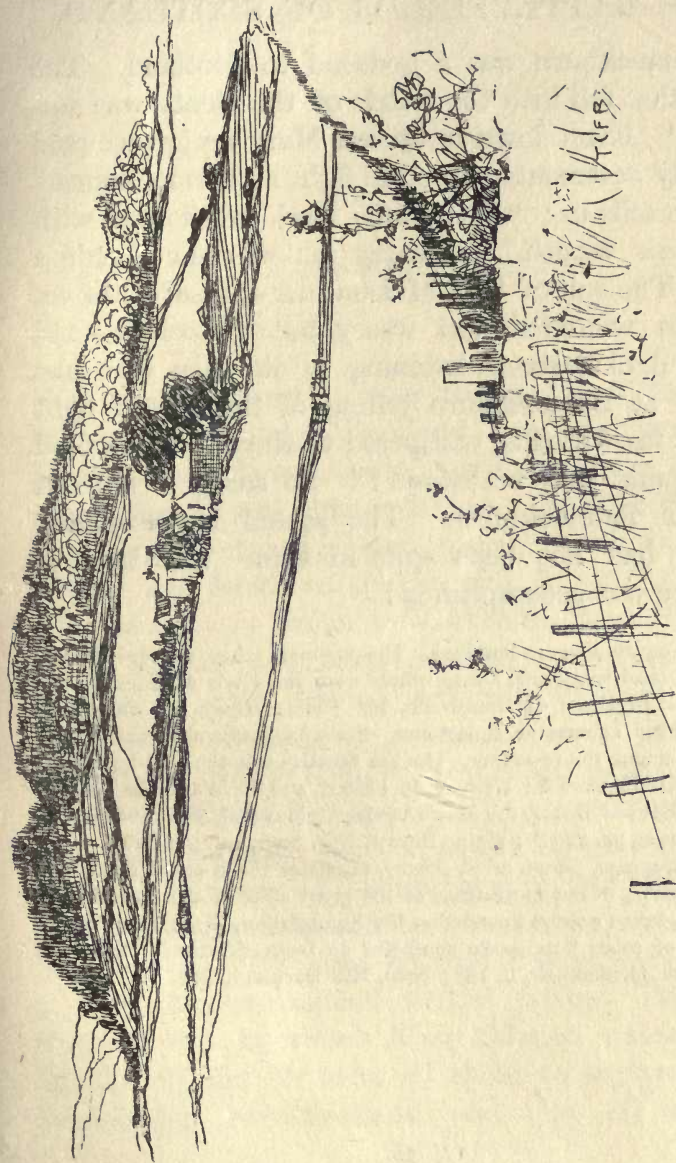
the very steeds shrieked in agony ;<sup>1</sup> hour after hour blades and harness rang, blow was met by blow, and the waste of life went on until, as the shades of night were falling, the Scottish camp-followers appeared on the Gillies' Hill (the place-name—gillies, or serving-men—commemorates the position), and the English, mistaking them for a fresh force, faltered, broke, and fled. The "Bloody Faulds," as the spot is still called, speaks grimly to us to-day of the wild butchery that followed. Well might the Scottish young women sing, as an ancient fragment of a forgotten ballad tells us they did :

" Maydens of Englande, sore may ye morne  
For your lemmens lost at Banokysborne." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> When the original article on Bannockburn appeared in the *Glasgow Evening Times* several correspondents ridiculed the idea of the "steeds shrieking." It is sufficient to state that Scott lends the following evidence : "It was my fortune upon one occasion to hear a horse, in a moment of agony, utter a thrilling scream, which I still consider the most melancholy sound I ever heard." *Lord of the Isles*, Canto VI., Note 4 B.

<sup>2</sup> Barbour gives 30,000 as the number of the English slain, which if correct would mean that half of the army perished. That the slaughter must have been great is unquestionable. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of the poor men-at-arms would be slaughtered by the Scottish peasantry after the battle ; many must have perished miserably among the wilds, on their flight to England. We are on surer ground with regard to the nobles and knights. Twenty-one English barons and bannerets were slain, including the Earl of Gloucester, nephew of King Edward ; Sir Giles de Argentine, and Sir Edmund de Mauley, the Marshal of England, John Comyn, and Sir Pagan de Typtoft. Forty-two knights perished and sixty were taken, among the slain being Sir Henry de Bohun, Sir John de Harcourt, and Sir Philip de Courtenay. The number of other gentlemen who lost their lives is put by the English chroniclers at the



THE FIELD WHERE BRUCE KILLED DE BOHUN

Gillies' Hill in distance

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Bannockburn was a godsend to Scotland. The booty that fell into the hands of the Scots was immense.<sup>1</sup> Even down to Queen Mary's reign we read of costly vestments "frae the fight at Bannockburn." Fordun tells us: "The whole land overflowed with boundless wealth." Greater far was the freedom won. The sun of that Midsummer Day of 1314 set on men wounded and weary but victorious—and free! And Barbour, listening to old men who had fought at Bannockburn telling of that dread fight against fearful odds, whispered to them, "Quha God helps quhat may withstand?" So surely it fell out thus at Bannockburn. The sacred blood of the martyr had not been spilt in vain. The task of Wallace was accomplished!

enormous figure of seven hundred. The prisoners taken included twenty-two barons and bannerets, among whom were the Earls of Hereford and Angus, Sir Ingelram de Umfraville, Sir Thomas Gray, Sir Antony de Lucy, and Sir Thomas de Bottetourt. Sixty knights and several clerics were also among the prisoners. On the Scottish side the only knights of renown who fell were Sir William de Vipont, and Sir Walter de Ros, the friend of Edward Bruce, the king's brother. Maxwell, *Mak. of Scot.*, pp. 151-2; Bruce, pp. 220-1; Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 130.

<sup>1</sup> Walsingham, *Chron. of St. Albans*, estimates the booty at £200,000; in an inventory of the decorations of the great altar of the Cathedral of Aberdeen, taken a short time before the Reformation, there is mention of a bundle of robes "ex spolio conflictus de Bannockburne." *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis*, ii. 139; Note, Hill Burton, ii. 269.



## CHAPTER IX

### TO THE RED HARLAW

WE must pass rapidly over the events of the next few years. Though Scotland had won her independence at Bannockburn, fourteen years had to pass before it was acknowledged. In 1322 Edward found himself strong enough to again invade Scotland, but he was forced to retreat, and Bruce, following, inflicted a severe defeat in Yorkshire, Edward losing all his baggage and being pursued to the very gates of York. King Edward was not reduced to the humiliation of suing for a truce; but he addressed himself, not to the King of Scots, but to the men of Scotland. Bruce declined to negotiate on such terms, and King Edward was compelled to give him the royal title he had won, whereupon on May 30, 1323, a truce was proclaimed to last for thirteen years. On May 4, 1328, the English Parliament sitting at Northampton agreed to the famous Treaty of Northampton, by which King Edward "abandoned for himself and his heirs all claim to supremacy or overlordship over Scotland, and that all writings

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

which might have a contrary purport should be void and of no effect.”<sup>1</sup>

Bruce's great work was finished. He had retired to Cardross on the Clyde, and on June 7, 1329, there passed away

“He that all our comfort was,  
Our wit and all our governing.”

Bruce's body was scarcely cold, in its “costly marble canopy made in Paris” and erected in the choir of Dunfermline Abbey, when Edward III found some pretext for denouncing the “shameful treaty” of Northampton. Espousing the cause of the “disinherited” who had lost their Scottish lands for their allegiance to the English, he recognised Edward Balliol as king of Scotland, and lent him an army with which to regain his father's vassal crown.

The Scots had begun to despise their enemy, and boasted over their ale-cups of dragging the Englishmen by the tails which every mediæval hater of England knew them to possess.<sup>2</sup> They met the English under Balliol at Dupplin (August 1332) near Perth. Skill and archery won the day, and on September 24, 1332, Edward Balliol was crowned

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish duplicate of the epoch-making indenture and King Edward's Charter, both of them in French, may be seen in the General Register Office, Edinburgh.

<sup>2</sup> “He that dang Sanct Augustine with an rumple. Thy foull front had” (Dunbar's *Flying with Kennedy*, ii. p. 15; Barbé, *Byways of Scottish History*, p. 291 *et seq.*; Rait, *Mak. of Scot.*, p. 97).

## TO THE RED HARLAW

King of Scots at Scone. Obviously there could not be two kings upon the Scottish throne. David II, the boy of five who succeeded Bruce, had neither abdicated nor been dethroned. Scotland, however, was not yet rid of the Balliols. Edward III had thrown off all disguise and was openly at war. Dupplin Moor was repeated at Halidon Hill, where on July 19, 1333, a Scottish army was destroyed again by the bowmen of England. Scotland seemed undone once more—independence a dream of the past, and Bruce's work reduced to ruins. We see Balliol ceding to Edward the Lothians and the counties of Roxburgh, Peebles, Dumfries, and Kirkcudbright, and the Lord of the Isles making terms with Balliol and helping Edward III to ravage the north as far as Elgin. So matters went on as long as it suited the English king to tolerate Balliol. On January 25, 1356, Edward resolved to be done with Balliol, and pensioned him off at £2000 a year. Thus he disappears for ever, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

Half a century after this event James I ascended the throne of Scotland, and it was during his reign that the next outstanding battle took place on Scottish soil. In the interval that elapsed since Balliol disappeared, the Scots had again asserted their independence. There were invasions and counter invasions: the battle of Otterburn 1338, fought in England, and won by Douglas; England



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

turned the tables in 1402 at Homildon Hill, and so on goes the story. The Lord of the Isles was at this period regarded by the Highlanders and Islesmen of the west as their protector and king. The clans or tribes had fought for Scotland in the War of Independence, but they had also intrigued with the English against the meek government of Bruce's successors. Donald was looked upon as the "assertor of Celtic nationality." He was courted by England as an ally, and was even recognised by Henry IV as having a diplomatic standing. When the earldom of Ross—to which appertained large possessions north of the Moray Firth—fell in 1411 to an heiress who took the veil, Donald, Lord of the Isles, claimed the vacant earldom in virtue of the rights of his wife, a daughter of Robert II. To make good his claim he marshalled his host in Morven, and led them across Scotland to Inverness. From there he came down through the mountains of the north to Benachie, and thence to the Moor of Harlaw some eighteen miles from Aberdeen. There he was met in July 1411 by a small but well-equipped force of nobles and gentlemen and burghers from Aberdeen, led by the Earl of Mar. The combat was bloody. Donald was completely routed. He lost over 1000 men, while about 500 fell on the side of Mar. So terrible was the carnage that the field was ever afterwards known as the Red Harlaw. The Highlanders and Islesmen at that period were regarded with a

## TO THE RED HARLAW

species of terror by their Lowland compatriots, and the "defeat of Donald of the Isles was felt as a more memorable deliverance even than that of Ban-nockburn." At all events the battle seems to have made a deep impression on the national mind. It fixed itself upon the music and the poetry of Scotland. A march called the "Battle of Harlaw" continued to be a popular air down to the time of Drummond of Hawthornden, and a spirited ballad on the same event is still repeated in our own age. In Dow's *Collection of Ancient Scots Music* (about 1776) there occurs "The Battle of Hara Law," and in Stenhouse's notes to Johnson's *Musical Museum* appears "The Battle of Hardlaw, a Pibroch," taken from a folio MS. of Scottish tunes of considerable antiquity. Probably it is the ballad itself which is referred to among the "sweet melodijs sangis" in the *Complaynt of Scotland*, 1549, as "The Battel of Hayrlaw." The first printed version of the ballad occurs in Ramsay's *Evergreen*, 1724, and another traditionary version was contributed to Aytoun's *Ballads of Scotland*<sup>1</sup> by Lady John<sup>2</sup> Scott; while one almost identical with

<sup>1</sup> See note, Aytoun's *Ballads*, 1870 ed.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Scott took her husband's name, but there are many cases where masculine Christian names have been adopted for girls. On the "wee Cumbrae" island, Firth of Clyde, there is a lonely grave, and the inscription which I copied off the weather-beaten stone tells us that "This stone is erected to perpetuate the memory of John Wodrow, daughter of Mr. Robert Wodrow and Anne his wife. She died on the 17 of April 1774, and was interred heir at her own desire." This lonely tomb and that of a little child, "A. W. Archibald, born 28 June, died the 4 of July 1790,"



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

it but containing three additional stanzas was printed in *Notes and Queries*, May 20, 1865.<sup>1</sup> The traditional ballad is still sung in Aberdeenshire. It is an ancient production, charged with the spirit of the old Makars, and quaintly picturesque. Aytoun hazarded the opinion that it was probably the original. It shoots a long-bow however by giving the number of the Highlandmen as 50,000, perhaps a natural exaggeration.

“ Of fifty thousand Hielandmen  
Scarce fifty them went hame;  
And out of a’ the Lowlandmen  
But fifty marched wi’ Graeme.

And sic a weary buryin’  
I’m suir ye never saw,  
As was the Sunday after that  
On the muirs aneath Harlaw.

Gin onybody speer at ye  
For them we took awa,  
Ye may tell them plain, and very plain,  
They’re sleepin’ at Harlaw.”

The battle and its legends powerfully affected the mind of Scott, as every reader of *The Antiquary* will

are in an enclosure, twelve feet square, situated on the edge of a cliff on the southern shore of the island. Robert Wodrow was a brother of the celebrated Church historian.

<sup>1</sup> Eyre Todd, *Scottish Ballad Poetry*, pp. 235, 236; Gunnyon, *Scot. Song and Ballad*, p. 50 *et seq.*; Rait, *Making of Scotland*, p. 111; Mackenzie, *Outline Scot. History*, p. 128; Macmillan, *Scot. People*, p. 172; Hill Burton, *Hist. Scot.*, ii. p. 387 *et seq.*



## TO THE RED HARLAW

remember. We can see Oldbuck listening to the tremulous voice of the old crone chanting the fiery lines, "An' I will sing o' Glenallan's earl that fought on the Red Harlaw." "It's an historical ballad," said Oldbuck eagerly, "a genuine and undoubted fragment of minstrelsy: Percy would admire its simplicity—Ritson could not impugn its authenticity." Elspeth Mucklebucket's croon, under the title of "Glenallan's Earl," will be found in the later editions of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

## CHAPTER X

### SAUCHIEBURN

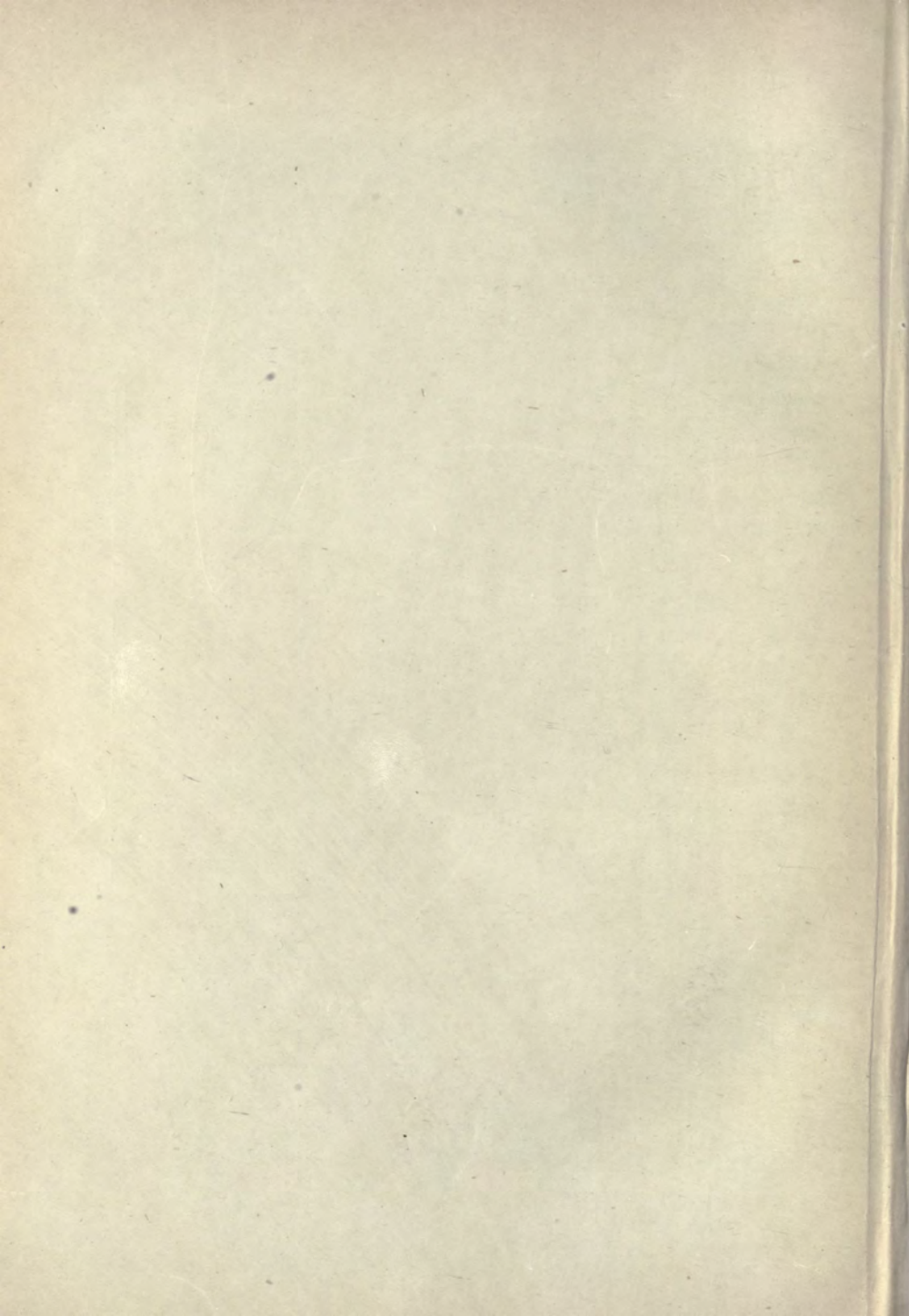
It may be well and truly said that the country district immediately surrounding Stirling is the cockpit of Scotland. From the time when the shadowy Kenneth II fought the Picts on the green spit of land on which Cambuskenneth (the field of Kenneth) Abbey stands, right on through the centuries to the '45, red, ruthless war was waged time and again on the pleasant haughs and dales of the Forth. The wayfarer rambling around this beautiful vale to-day treads on classic ground. Stirling Brig, Bannockburn, Sauchieburn, all lie within the shadow of Stirling's majestic rock. The memory of these and other battles clings to every crag and stream which meet the eye when gazing on the scene from the battlements of the ancient castle. The prospect is one of surpassing beauty. Green and sloping uplands, gardens and orchards, finely-wooded parks where stately trees, "pine or monumental oak," shed their leafy glory around—all combine in lending a singular charm to the landscape, while gladdening and enriching the vista is the labour of the husbandman. It is difficult to associate these verdant and peaceful meadows





COTTAGE IN WHICH JAMES III WAS MURDERED





## SAUCHIEBURN

with the strident notes of strife. Yet every foot of ground in that far-flung panorama has been drenched in gore. Gentle and semple lie cheek by jowl in their thousands beneath the green surface of the Vale of Bannock. Children laugh and gambol to-day in the shallow crystal streamlet which once upon a time was crimsoned with the blood of gallant men, and they plash merrily across the old ford which leads to the grey thatched cot whose crumbling walls were silent witnesses to the murder of a Scottish king. Let us recall briefly the events which led up to Sauchieburn fight and the passing of James III.

It is a story that opens in tragedy with the bursting of "ane misframed gun" on August 3, 1460, and the killing of James II beneath the walls of Roxburgh Castle.<sup>1</sup> As it opened, so it was to the day that the curtain was rung down on the last act. The little boy of nine years who fell heir to the Scottish crown became the shuttlecock of the age. It is a sad story of a minority, a kidnapped

<sup>1</sup> James II in 1460 "wone the toune of Roxburght" and then "beseigitt the castell thairof." The king was keenly interested in artillery. "Bot quhill this prince mair curieous nor becam him or the maiestie of ane king did stand neir hand by the gunneris quhen the artaillyerie was discharged, his thic bane was doung in tua witht ane peace of ane misframit gune that brak in the schutting be the quhilk he was strikin to the ground and dieit haistelie thairof." Pitscottie tells of "maney marvelles about that tyme quhilk pronosticat the kingis deid. The night befor his deceis thair appeirit ane cleir comitt ewin as it war ane taikin of the immatour and haistie deid of sa greit ane prince." Lindsay of Pitscottie, *Historie and Cronicles of Scotland*, Scot. Text Soc., vol. i. chap. xxx. pp. 143, 145.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

prince, ambitious and scheming men and women. It is a story of a king who ought to have been an artist, a poet, a dreamer, a mystic; the story of a royal personality ill-fitted to combat the passions and practical interests of a gross and unscrupulous nobility; in some senses the story of a "weakling." We see it to-day in perspective. It seems as if the sinister doom of the ill-fated Stuarts brooded darkly over the young life of the fastidious princely amateur who was unfortunately born too early into too young a world—a trembling note of the early Renaissance.

James is described in a contemporary account as "ane who loved solitariness, and desired never to hear of wars nor the fame thereof, but delighted mair in music." Possibly he never had much taste for his royal duties. His two brothers, Alexander, Duke of Albany, and John, Earl of Mar, were of a different type—large, strong, and lusty. And in the varying characters of this family triumvirate we may find an explanation of the misunderstandings which ended in the arrest and death of Mar. The tale runs that the mason Cochrane<sup>1</sup>—one of James's prime

<sup>1</sup> According to Pitscottie this "printis to ane maisonne (or architect Cochrane) begit mony stain houses unto the realme of Scotland knawand the kingis natur that he was covatus upoun money and loved him better that gaif him nor they that tuik fre him for the quhilk cause the said Couchren gaif the king lairge sowmes of money quhair throw he obtinit the Earledome of Mar (after Mar's mysterious death) frome the king and clame heigher and heigher to the court, till that he had no feir nor compariesone of no lord of Scotland spirituall nor temporall into the kingis faivour." *Cron. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 169.



## SAUCHIEBURN

favourites — persuaded the wayward monarch that his brother was working against him by aid of the magical arts, melting a waxen image in the likeness of the king. James is accused of the murder of his brother. Drummond of Hawthornden negatives this idea by quoting from papers of the contemporary Bishop Elphinstone, who states that Mar died of a fever.<sup>1</sup> An old fragment of a chronicle printed in Pinkerton adds that many witches and warlocks were burned as John's accomplices, and that he himself was "slain." Albany fled to England. Edward IV, still hankering after the old claims of the lord-paramount, promised his aid to Albany to conquer Scotland, and the latter to rule as a vassal-king! There were other complications. At all events an invasion of Scotland actually did take place with that as the objective.

To this period belongs one of the best-known

<sup>1</sup> At Craigmillar Castle near Edinburgh, 1479. Mar and Albany had been imprisoned, the latter in Edinburgh Castle. By an unfortunate coincidence Mar died during his confinement at Craigmillar, and there were suspicions of foul play. Beyond the course of events we have no evidence of James's guilt, but that men deemed him capable of the crime may be regarded as a proof that he was not well thought of among his subjects (Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. i. pp. 218, 219).

Pitscottie says the "Earle of Mar came obedientlie (to Edinburgh) into his brother the kingis grace not dreadand nor suspecand na malice in the kingis heart to him: quho was haistlie thairefter muredrest and slaine in the Cannogait in ane baith fatt, be quhose persuatioun or quhat cause I can not tell" (*Cron. Scot.*, vol. i., chap. iii. pp. 167, 168).

Tytler supports Drummond, "Mar deid of fever": Hill Burton is doubtful—"The king dealt with his brother Mar as a man deals with an enemy." The actual circumstances are shrouded in mystery.

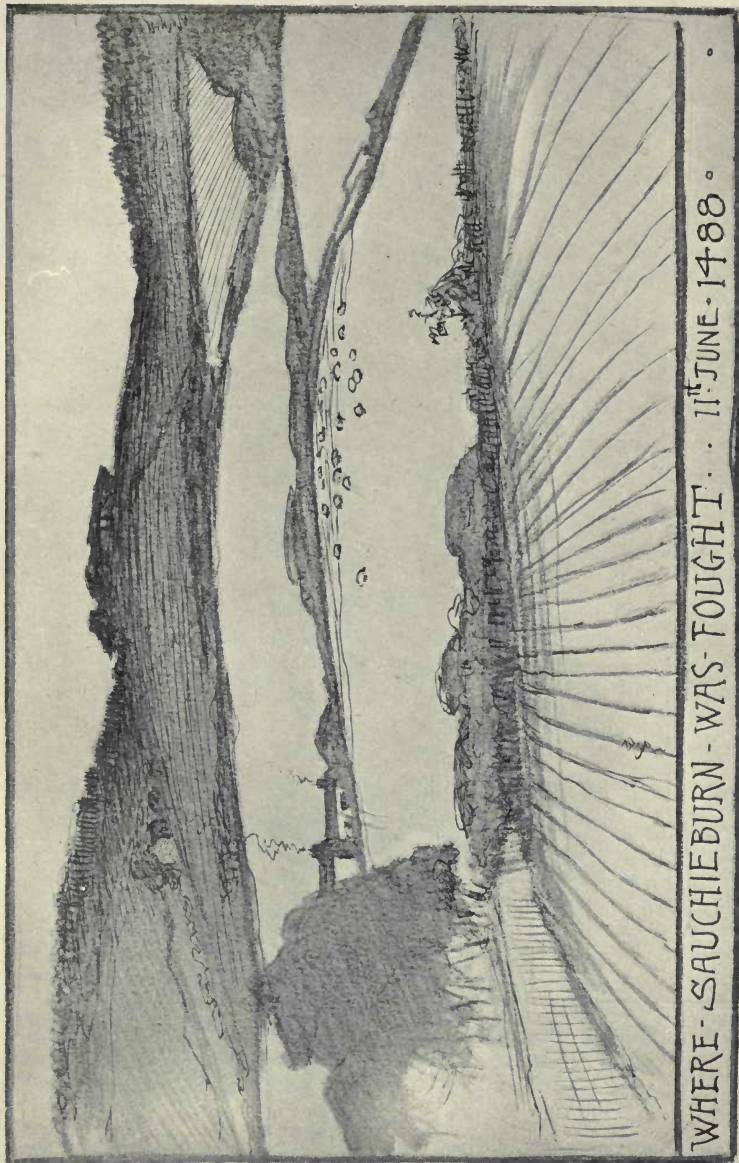
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

stories of Scottish history. James was at Lauder, at the head of an army prepared to resist the invaders. He was accompanied by his unpopular favourites, and certain of the nobles, meeting in wrathful conclave, resolved to clear them all out. Tradition has it that Lord Gray, in reference to the dealing with the king, cited a fable of the mice who proposed to hang a bell from the neck of the cat, that her whereabouts might always be known, but were much perplexed when they came to the practical question of who should tie on the said bell. At this point Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, broke in with the exclamation, "I'll bell the cat!"—hence the piquant nickname by which he is remembered by the historians, Archibald Bell-the-Cat. Pitscottie tells us that Archibald and the other nobles then laid hands on Cochrane and the "other servandis and tuik them and hanget them ower the Brig of Lothar befor the king's eyes."<sup>1</sup>

Events were trending now to the grand climax. The nobles came to terms with the English, and

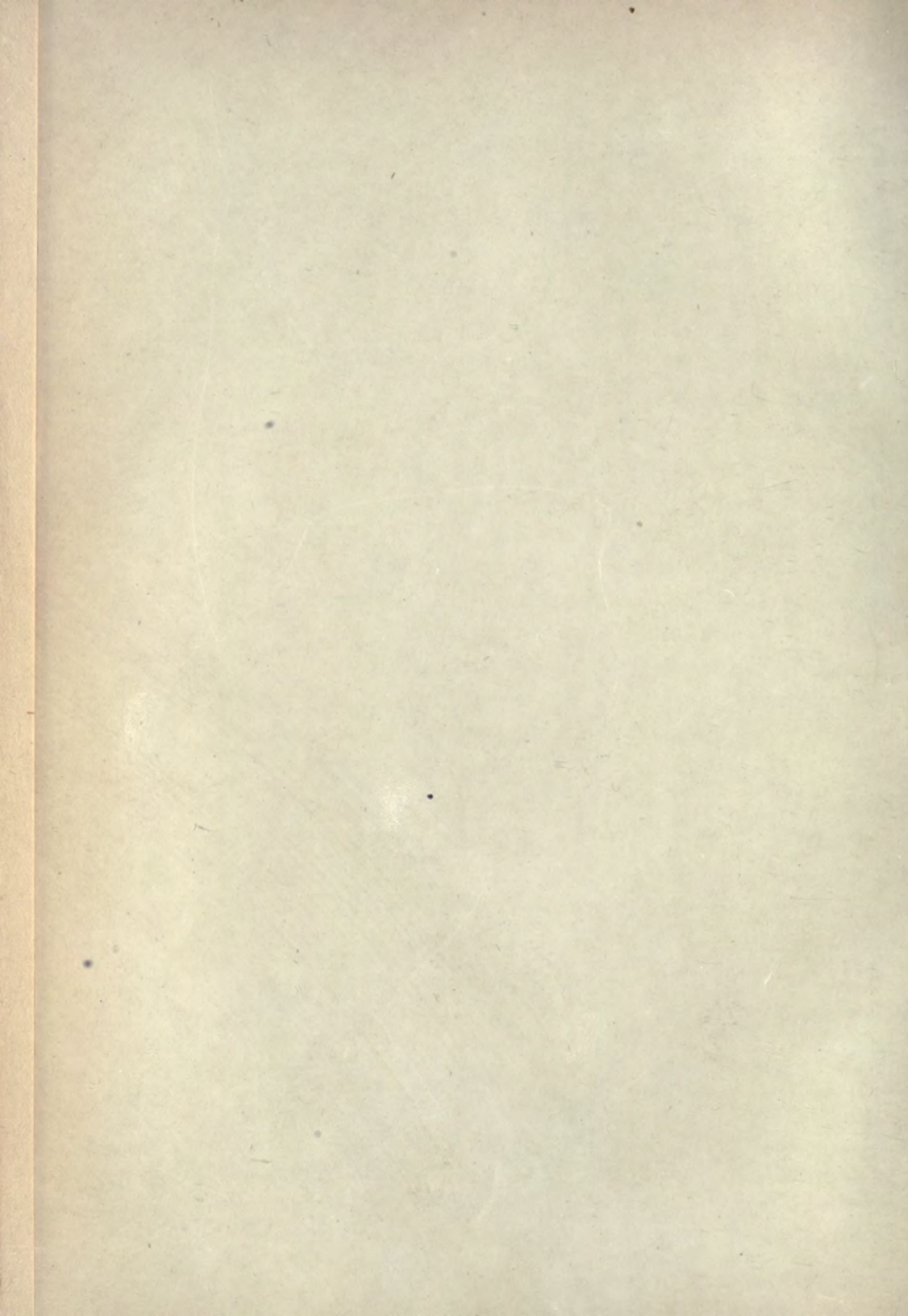
<sup>1</sup> Along with Cochrane there were hung William Rogers, a musician; William Torphichen, a skilled swordsman; Leonard, a shoemaker; and James Hommyle, the king's tailor. We may suppose these men, though of humble origin, were endowed with considerable talents, and of Rogers it is recorded that musicians were wont to boast of having had him as a master. Hume Brown quotes the Exchequer Rolls, IX, p. xlv., and shows that the early historians were mistaken when they included the tailor among the victims. He remarks "this has been shown not to be the case" (Pitscottie, vol. i. p. 175; Ferrerius, Appendix to Boece's *Hist. Scot.*, p. 395; Hume Brown, *Scot.*, vol. i. pp. 223, 224; Hill Burton, *Scot.*, vol. iii. p. 27).





WHERE - SAUCHIEBURN - WAS FOUGHT. · 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE · 1488 ·





## SAUCHIEBURN

Albany joined the revolvers. James was imprisoned for a time, released through Albany's influence, and the two brothers lived amicably together for some months. But the kingdom of Scotland proved too small to hold them both. Albany again crossed the Border, and later on was defeated in a further attempt to gain the throne. He fled to France, and passes for ever off the stage of Scottish history. Doom of forfeiture was passed by James on the earls who had supported the revolt. The accounts are very confused about this period, *circa* 1485-8. James's relations with women,<sup>1</sup> especially with "ane howir callit the Daesie," came into prominence. But he was no worse than his compeers. Then complaints arose as to the favourites abetting the king "in the inbringing of Inglishmen to the perpetual subjection of the relm." Some of the earls foresaw in the forfeitures of those who had supported Albany what would be their own fate if James had the power to inflict it. What is clear is that the first half of 1488 saw a full-blown conspiracy in working order against the king. In May of that year the rebel lords, Angus, Argyll, and Hume, induced Prince James to join them in arms. The unfortunate prince

<sup>1</sup> James's relations with women were nothing unusual for the period. Buchanan heaps up charges of adultery against James; Lesley refers bluntly to the Daisie; Ferrerius is doubtful; and Andrew Lang's shrewd comment, I think, sums up the values of the situation: "In the case of a popular monarch, a Daisy more or less would not have excited moral indignation—in the fifteenth century."

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

was only in his fifteenth year, and it is charitable to suppose that he was seduced against his better nature to join the insurgents. In any case his presence was a source of strength to the rebel army.

The king appealed to his country for support at this crisis, and Montrose, Lindsay, Atholl, and Huntly rallied to his side. With that force he marched on Stirling, only to find its gates shut in his face. His loyal Highlanders called to be led against the rebels, and on St. Barnabas's Day, June 11, 1488, the two armies met at Sauchieburn,<sup>1</sup> almost on the field of Bannockburn. Among James's weaknesses, superstition was not the least prominent, and it was doubtless by way of happy omen that on this his last enterprise he armed himself with the sword that had belonged to the great King Robert the Bruce.<sup>2</sup> The accounts of the battle are conflicting. There certainly was some desperate fighting, and the loyalists were driven back and defeated by the Border freebooters and the spearmen of the Merse. The Highland targe was unable to withstand the onslaught, and James's force broke and fled. But before this debacle took place James

<sup>1</sup> On a tract of ground called Little Canglar (Canglour, O.S., Sheet 39), on the east side of a small brook called Sauchie burn, about two miles south of Stirling, and about one mile from the field of Bannockburn (*Old Stat. Ac.*, 18, 410; Nimmo, *Stirlingshire*, p. 210).

<sup>2</sup> In his hurry to escape, the king dropped the sword, and it was afterwards found on the battlefield. Exchequer Rolls, X, p. xxxix.



## SAUCHIEBURN

himself seems to have sped from the field, leaving the sword of the Bruce behind him, to be picked up the next day. Whether James was carried off by his horse—an unruly brute, it is said—or whether cowardice dictated his conduct, is a debatable point. James was by no means a saint, but I fancy he was not a coward. The certain fact is that he left the field of battle.

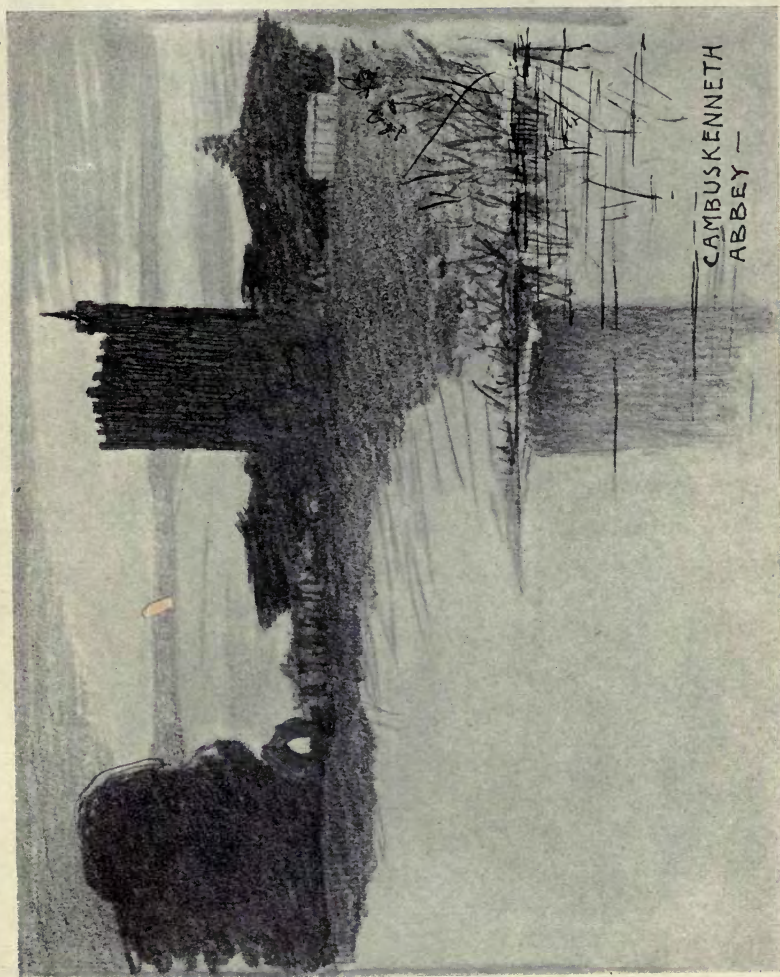
Mounted on a spirited horse which had been given him by the Lord Lyndsay, the king left the scene of his defeat. According to tradition he was unable to manage the horse—"evil sitter," as a chronicler calls it. He made for the Bannock burn, and when fording it (the little bridge in the middle distance of the sketch shows the exact spot where James crossed) a woman filling a pitcher at a well—the well is still there, and is known as King Jamie's—was startled by the sudden apparition of a rider splendidly attired and armed galloping up the slope from the Bannock ford towards the well. She dropped her pitcher, and the horse shied and threw the king.<sup>1</sup> The woman was the wife of the miller of Beaton's Mill, and the

<sup>1</sup> Pitscottie's picturesque account says : " Ane woman seand ane manne runnand fast upoun ane horse, scho standand in ane slake bringand watter (out of a little well at which the wayfarer may still quaff a cup of cool, sparkling liquid), scho ran fast away and left the king behind hir. The kingis hors seand this lap and fred the slake of fre will, bot the king was evil sittin and fell of the hors befor the myle dore of Bannaburne and was sa brucklit in his harnis with the fall that he fell in deidlie swone and the millar and his wyff harlitt him into the myle." *Cron. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 208.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

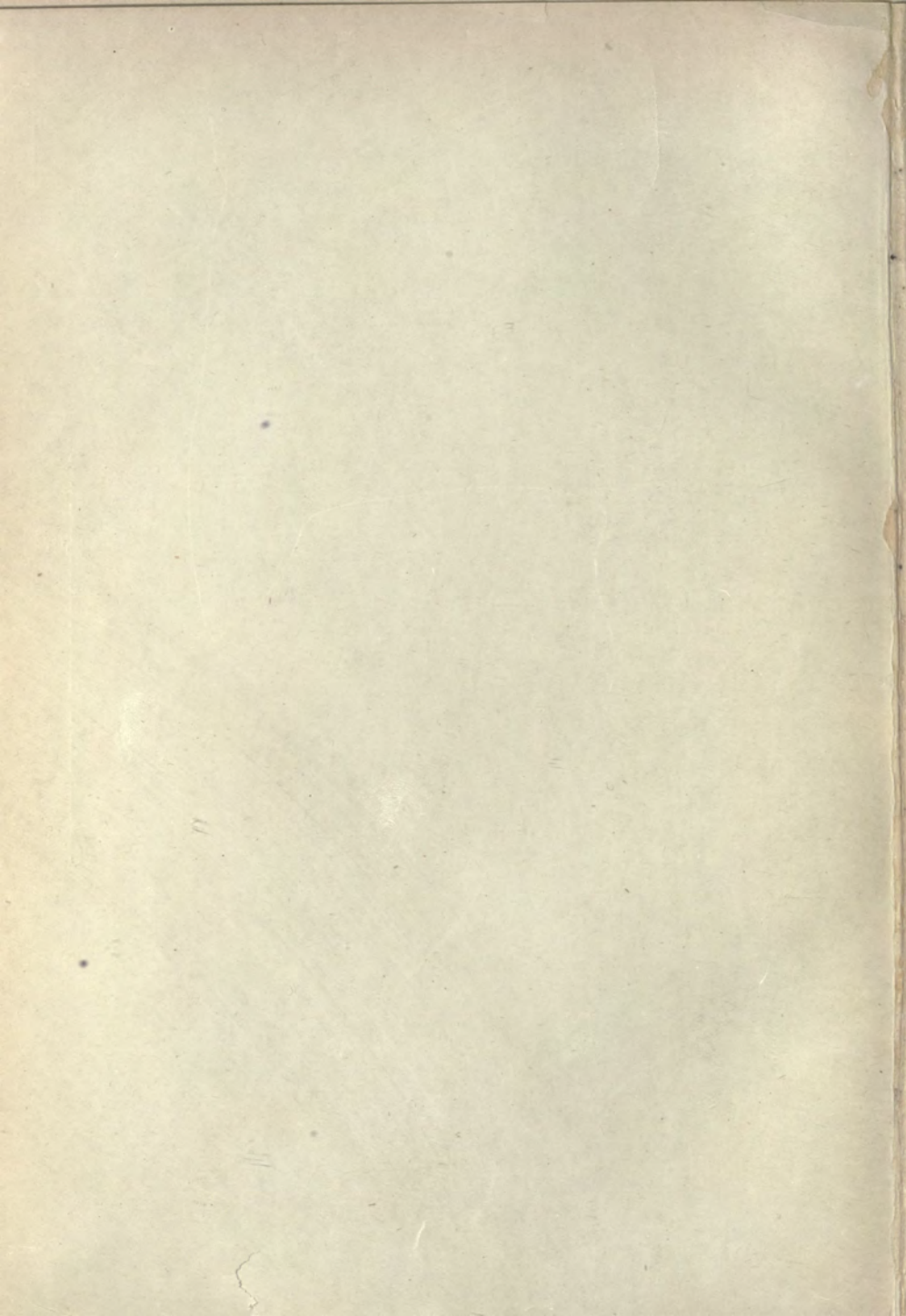
fallen man was carried into their house and laid on the humble bed. He told the couple his rank, in answer to the miller's query: "I was your king this day at morn." In her excitement at events so strange the miller's wife rushed out, frantically calling upon a priest to shrive the king. A man who professed to be a priest answered the cry. When the stranger was brought into the presence of the monarch he kneeled with apparent humility and said, "Are you mortally wounded?" James thought he "might recover," but asked for the sacraments. The stranger answered, "That shall I do heartily," and pulling out a dagger stabbed the king to the heart. We have no real evidence, but it is certain that James "happened to be slain." One story says the stranger took the body on his back and departed, no man knowing what he did with it. The true version appears to be that the body was carried by the king's followers to Cambuskenneth Abbey, where it repositeth to this day within the sadly ruined cloisters. Thus by the peaceful banks of the Bannock, in a small old, crow-stepped, gabled house, passed away this unhappy scion of the royal Stuart race. The house still stands, and the curious pilgrim may enter and meditate for a moment, if he cares, upon the dark tragedy once enacted within its mouldering hoary walls. The upper part of the fabric has been renewed, as a date stone tells us, in 1667. It helps to preserve the memory of the end of a reign whereof





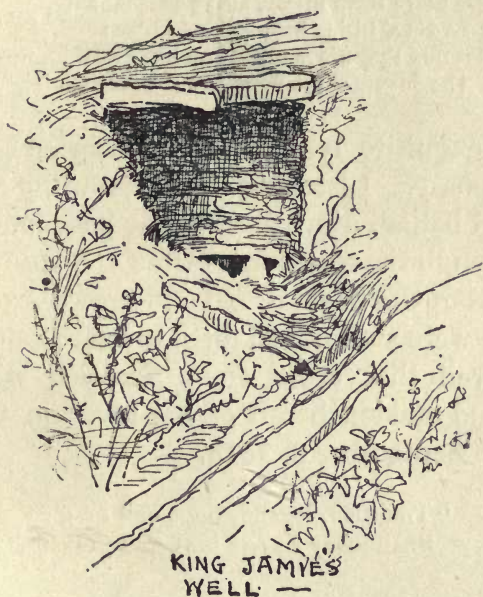
The white tomb of James III is on right of tower





## SAUCHIEBURN

the chief interest lies in secret history. Whose was the mysterious cowed figure that flits so fitfully across this page of Scottish history? No one can tell. It is one of the dread secrets that the past holds for ever in its keeping.



KING JAMES  
WELL —

## CHAPTER XI

### FLODDEN

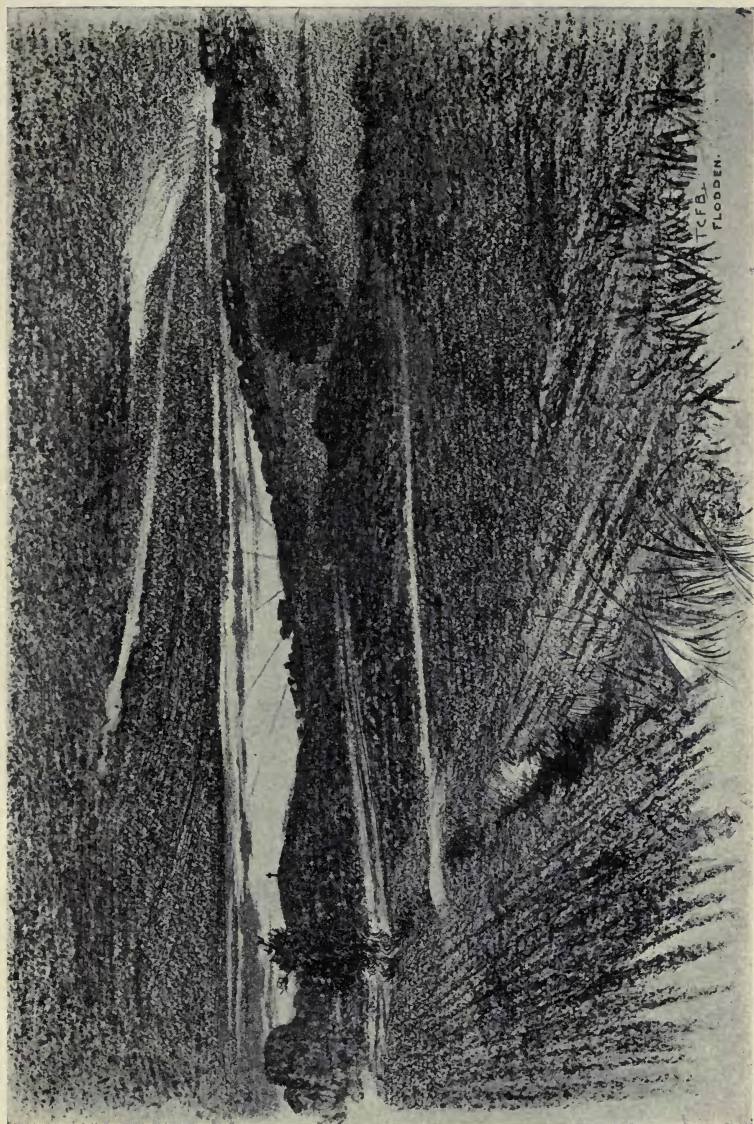
“I’ve heard them lilting, at the ewes milking,  
Lasses a’ lilting before dawn of day :  
But now they are moaning, on ilka green loaning,  
The flowers o’ the forest are a’ wede awae.”

IN that exquisite lyric there is enshrined the very spirit of poesy. Listening to the haunting harmonies of the old ballad, dim voices of the past come surging to us through the corridors of time. Shadowy shapes emerge from the mists of eld and crowd around, as if they also were summoned forth to hear again the echo of the wail that arose from Scottish widow and orphan and maiden bereft of her lover on the Black Friday of September 9, 1513.

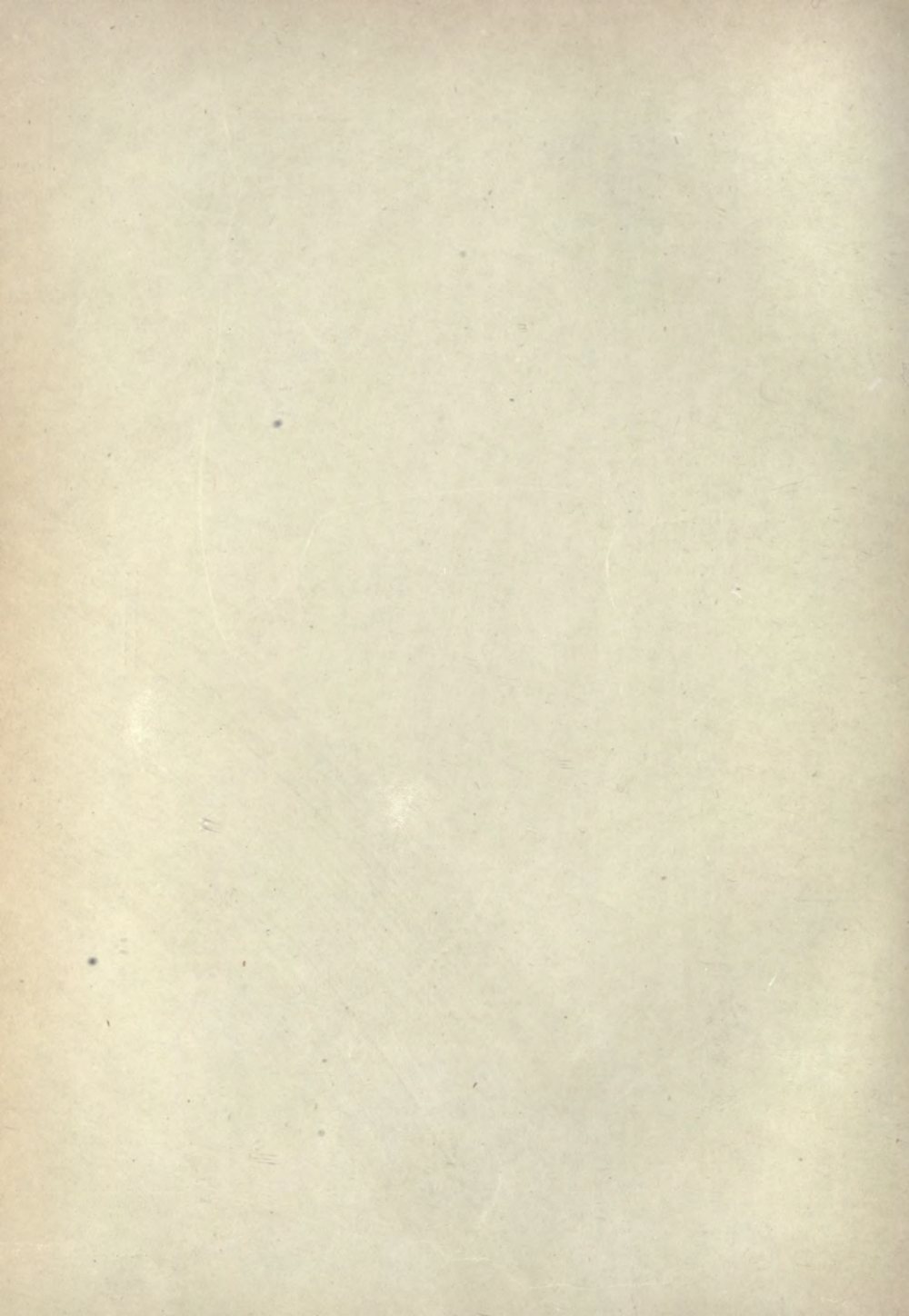
“Tradition, legend, tune, and song  
Shall many an age that wail prolong.”

Flodden stands alone. It was the most grievous blow that Scotland ever received, and its story has been graven deep on the great heart of our nation. The memories of that day live on in remembrance as a source of the most pathetic refrains that ever





FLODDEN





## FLODDEN

blended in a people's songs.<sup>1</sup> There has gathered about it more ballad-lore perhaps than any battle since the days of Homer; and hence it permeates the national memory in a manner impossible of attainment by the dull historical data of the plodding

<sup>1</sup> Of the Scottish ballads commemorating the melancholy catastrophe a broken stanza or two are all that remain, but the ancient air is preserved in the Skene manuscript under the title "The Flowers of the Forest." The following lines alone are preserved :

"I've heard them liting at the ewes' milking,

. . . . .  
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away,"

and this other imperfect line with the refrain,

"I ride single on my saddle,

For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away,"

picked up by Scott, who observes that it "presents a simple and affecting image to the mind." The two lines first quoted are respectively the first and the fourth lines of the first verse—see chapter heading—of the exquisite stanzas to the air already named, written by Miss Jean Elliot of Minto, and published anonymously about 1750. By many it was considered old, but its modern composition was detected by the keen eye of Burns, who wrote, "This fine ballad is even a more palpable imitation than Hardykanute." Miss Elliot's beautiful measure is in many respects the legitimate offspring of the muse of the older minstrel. There are other two ballads both written by females—that commencing with "I've seen the smiling of fortune beguiling," written by Miss Alison Rutherford (afterwards Mrs. Cockburn. She was born in 1713, and died at Edinburgh in 1794. While in the Scottish capital she drew around her the distinguished literati of the period, among her most intimate friends being David Hume and Lord Monboddo of Fairnilee) circa 1731; and the third by Miss Anne Home, who was married in 1771 to the celebrated anatomist John Hunter. There are many English ballads commemorative of the great triumph. Ritson prints in his *Ancient Songs*, under the title "Branistonegreen," the "Battle of Flodden Field," a poem of the sixteenth century, edited by Henry Weber, Edinburgh, 1808; in the *Mirour of Magistrates* (London 1587) there is a poem



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

historian. So long as the nation cares to listen to the plaintive melody of the "Flowers of the Forest," or to read the flashing numbers of Aytoun and Selkirk and the Homeric epic of Scott, the memory of Flodden will retain the primary place in the martial annals of the race. It touched and fired the imagination of the great Makars, until in *Marmion* it reached a climax that gave to us the most powerful battle-scene in modern literature. Old Homer himself never penned anything more absolutely lofty and soul-inspiring than Scott's burning description of

"The war, that for a space did fail,  
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale."

Around Flodden there is also woven a web of strange and weird superstition. When King James in a spirit of bravado and knight-errantry—did not the Queen of France write him a love-letter calling him "her love," and asking him to "come three

entitled the "Lament of King James IV slayne at Brampton"; and there is in the *Flower of Fame* another "Lament of King James of Scotland slayne at Scotfield." In his "Complaint of the Papingo" Sir David Lindsay refers to the slaughter at Flodden in the lines—

"I never read in tragedy nor story  
At ane tournay so many nobillis slane  
For the defence and luv of their sovaine";

and, finally, the "Soutars o' Selkirk" is supposed to preserve the Flodden tradition. Skelton, Henry VIII's poet laureate, also refers in scurrilous phrase to "Branxton Moore" and the "proud Scotte's clattering, that never will leave their trattlying." *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, p. 317 *et seq.*; Gunnyon, *Hist. Songs and Ballads*; Hill Burton, iii. p. 79.

## FLODDEN

foot of ground on English ground for her sake?"—  
summoned his soldiers to the Borough Muir of Edinburgh, the muir on which Marmion gazed from Blackford Hill and saw a

"Thousand pavilions, white as snow,  
Spread all the Borough-moor below,"

there was heard at midnight from the Market Cross a voice calling the names of the earls and lords, barons and gentlemen, who within forty days should appear in the land of shadows. "It was shown to me," says Pitscottie, "that an indweller of the town (Edinburgh), Mr. Richard Lawson, ganging in his gallery stair, being evil-disposed, foreanent the Cross, hearing this Voice proclaiming the Summons thought Marvel, and cried to his servant to bring him his purse; and when he had brought him it he took out a crown and cast over the stair saying, I appeal from that Summons, Judgment, and Sentence thereof, and takes me all whole in the Mercy of God, Christ Jesus His Son." And, adds the old chronicler, "no man escaped (from Flodden) that was called in this Summons but that one man alone which made his Protestation." The "Lave were perished with the King." Then there is that strange incident that befell at Linlithgow when the king went thither to "make his devotion to God to send him good chance." There came slowly up the aisle of the church an ancient man, "with a great Pykestaff in



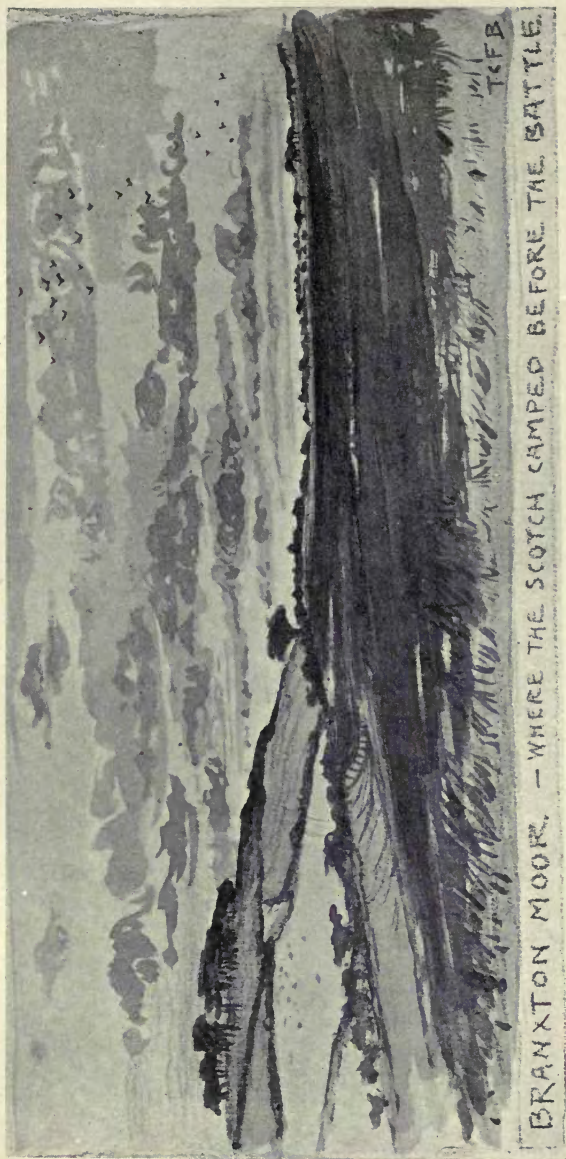
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

his Hand, crying and speiring for the King," whom he warned against the enterprise of invading England; then, "before the King's Eyes and in presence of the Lords that were about," the weird figure "vanished away as he had been a Blink of the Sun or a whif of the whirlwind and could no more be seen." Through the gloom of the national disaster that followed, these incidents assumed a mysterious and exaggerated hue, and in that light it is possible for the discerning reader to grasp their significance.

In August, 1513, James led his army "the ill road" across the Border against his brother-in-law Henry VIII, then at war with France. Obedient to his summons, the whole nation, Lowlanders, Highlanders, and Islesmen, had rallied to his standard—100,000 men in all left the capital against the "auld enemy."<sup>1</sup> On Sunday, 21st August, they had reached Coldstream, and encamped on the Lees

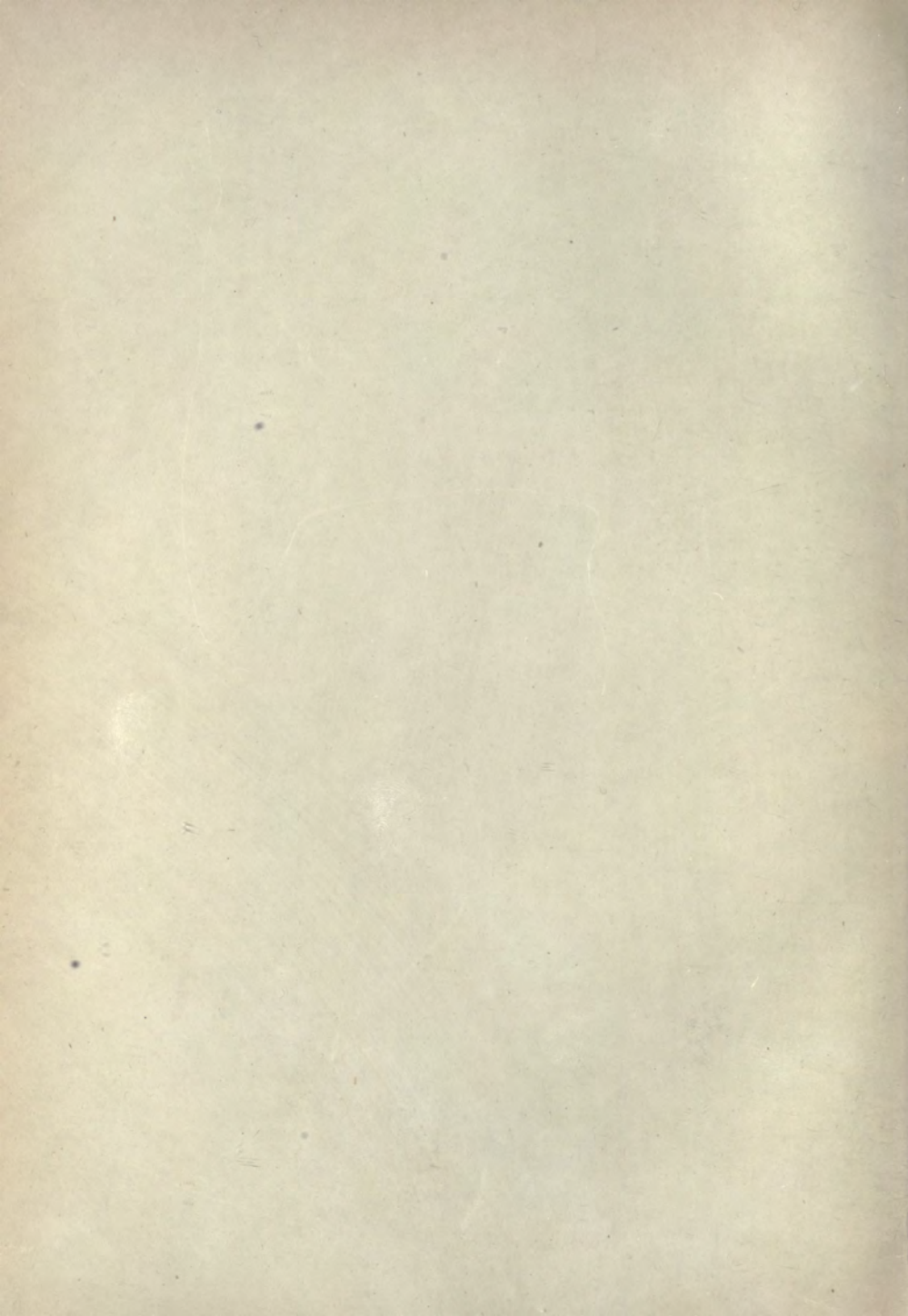
<sup>1</sup> In his exhaustive treatise on the Battle of Flodden and the Raids of 1513 (1911), Lieut.-Col. the Hon. F. Elliot tabulates the different authorities' statements as to the relative strength of the English and Scottish armies. These vary greatly, the extremes being Balfour's *Annales of Scotland*, which states that out of forty-eight thousand men, of which the Scottish army at first consisted, not above twelve thousand were with James on the day of battle: on the other hand, "MS. Batayle" (a curious contemporary tract entitled "the trewe Encounter or Batayle lately don between Englande and Scotlande," and reproduced by John Ashton in "A Ballade of the Scottyshe Kynge," pub. 1832) asserts that the Scots numbered one hundred thousand men at the least. After weighing all the statements it will be admitted that Colonel Elliot's estimate is reasonable, that thirty-five thousand English and thirty-four thousand Scots engaged at Flodden. *Flodden Campaign*, Appendix II.





BRANXTON MOOR. - WHERE THE SCOTCH CAMPED BEFORE THE BATTLE.

T.C.F.B.



## FLODDEN

Haugh over night. On 22nd August "King James was o'er the Border": with his army, the finest that ever left Scotland, he passed over the Tweed at Coldstream—to his fate. The next ten days or so were spent harrying Northumberland and laying siege to and capturing the grim old stronghold of Norham. From there he marched southwards to Twisel Brig—the same old bridge still spans the Till—where his army divided into two parts, one under the command of the king going south to Etal, the other crossing Twisel Brig and sweeping north-west up the Tweed to Wark. It was a great fortress in these days. Wars had ebbed and flowed around its walls, and chivalrous knights and fair dames made merry in its tapestried halls. The Scots army razed it to the ground, and all that remains of it to-day is a huge green mound silently silhouetted against the summer skies. But the memory of Wark will never fade, for it was within its great hall that five hundred years ago—1349—the fair Countess of Salisbury dropped her garter in the presence of King Edward III and his nobles. And as the monarch stooped to pick it up there went a titter around the brilliant assembly. Tradition tells us that Edward, with flashing eye, faced his courtiers, and with the fiery exclamation, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," tied the garter on his royal knee, hence the ancient and noble Order of the Garter. Then we have pawky auld Allan Ramsay



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

immortalising the stimulating scene in his "Morning Interview":

"A lady's garters, earth! their very name,  
Though yet unseen, sets all the soul in flame.  
The royal Ned knew well their mighty charms,  
Else he'd ne'er hooped one round the English arms.  
Let barb'rous honours crowd the sword and lance,  
Thou next their king does British knights advance,  
O Garter! 'Honi soit qui mal y pense.'"

From Norham keep and the quaint old English village with its ancient kirk and mercat cross, we tramped in the footsteps of our countrymen across the beautiful English landscape to Twisel Brig. It is a land charged with deep historic memories to the Scots. The fine Gothic arch of Twisel spans the sluggish Till where that stream flows through a deep bosky ravine faced with shelves of picturesque broken rock. It is the same to-day as when in the autumn of 1513 the Scottish army marched across it, and as when a few days later Lord Howard's vanguard of Englishmen swept over it

"With all their banners bravely spread.  
And all their armour flashing high."

From Twisel it is a long and weary stretch of some nine miles to Etal, one of the most picturesque of villages, where one may sit in the grateful shade of the most picturesque of English inns (the two-storied thatched house of our sketch) and put "life and mettle" in our somewhat tired limbs by quaffing

## FLODDEN

cool frothy draughts of genuine English home-brewed ale! Doubtless when Jamie and his men were finished wrecking and burning the castle of Etal, whose ruined pile stands just outwith the village, they also quaffed ale and cracked grim Scotch jokes within the self-same hostel. Its grey walls look ancient enough to have witnessed such a scene. So to Ford, a couple of miles farther up the Till, wherein the anxious Jamie—that “champion of the dames,” as Scott dubs him—according to popular tradition, wasted his days flirting with Lady Heron—her husband was absent—what time his soldiers made ribald use of their royal leader’s name, while thousands of them turned their footsteps homewards to bonnie Scotland. The glancing dark eyes and artful blushes of Dame Heron are blamed by many writers as the real source of the Flodden disaster. But, alas for the spirit of romance, Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, delving among the prosaic records of the time (see “*Archæologia Æliani*” in *Trans. Soc. Ant., Newcastle*), gives the *congé* to the romantic episode, his verdict being “not proven.” Ford village, like Etal, is a “thing of beauty and a joy,” and the frowning battlements of its ancient keep the very embodiment of the age of chivalry, and fit setting for a Scottish king’s wooing. By leafy English lanes we follow the route of the Scots across country to the fir-crowned heights of Flodden edge. We look down on Branxton Moor, where our country-

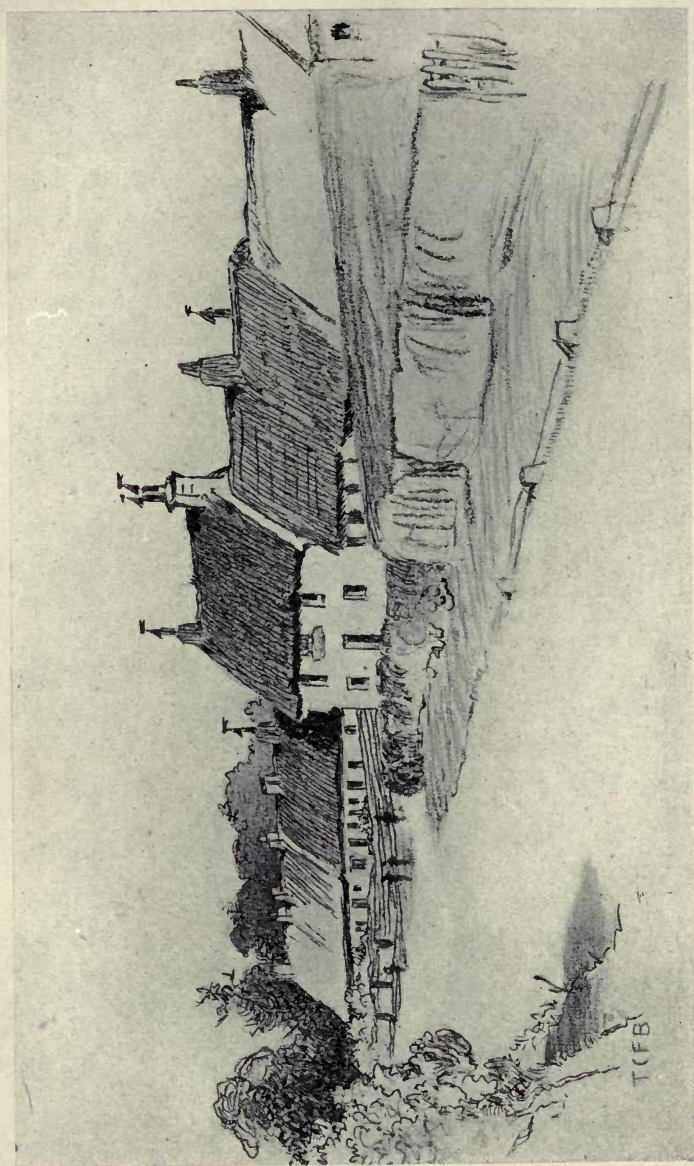
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

men pitched their camp prior to Flodden fight. It is a wild, wind-swept district, and even to-day the toil and moil of the husbandman have failed to disturb the lonesome atmosphere that hangs over its far-stretching wastes. And it was

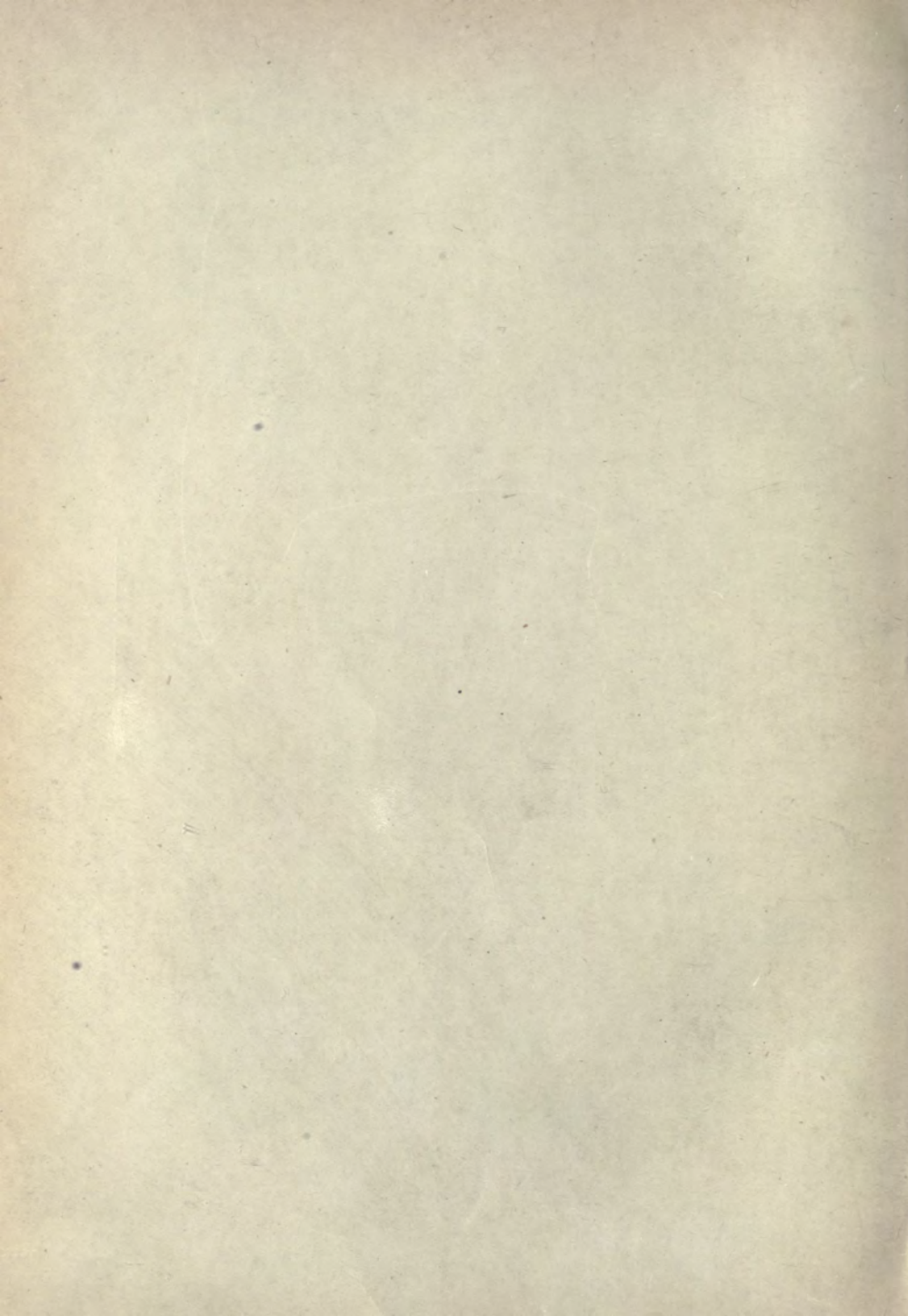
“ From Flodden ridge  
The Scots beheld the English host  
Leave Barmoor wood, their evening post,  
And heedful watched them as they crossed  
The Till by Twisel Bridge.”

This is a poetical licence on the part of Scott. It is impossible, standing on Flodden edge—where the Scots were—to see Twisel Bridge. But we come here to a crucial consideration. It is incredible to suppose that James’s “watchers” had not informed him that the Earl of Surrey and his troops—about 30,000—were not preparing to cross this narrow bridge. If we think on what took place a few days previous to this, we might modify our opinion as to the alleged “incapability” of James as a commander. Surrey, a wily old man—“an auld cruiked carle in a chariott,” says Pitscottie—knew the chivalrous character of the Scottish king. Working on this, he despatched a pursuivant with a challenge, taunting James with a breach of honour in attacking a kingdom with which he had sworn perpetual peace, and defying him to try on the following Friday “the righteousness of the matter” between them. Instead of treating the bravadoes of Surrey with the disdain





ETAL VILLAGE



## FLODDEN

they deserved, James, irresponsible as a mediæval knight-errant, accepted a challenge which involved the very fate of his kingdom. We cannot overlook this point. Chivalry has long vanished from the conduct of business—war is essentially a business—but in the constitution of the ill-fated Stuart king this quality played a large part. We are told, by Commander Norman, R.N., in his *Battle of Flodden*, that Howard, with the thousands of the English vanguard, crossed the Twisel Brig “absolutely unsuspected by the Scots.” To anyone who has studied the ground the statement is obviously absurd. The Scots who took the “impregnable Norham,” and burned Etal and Wark, were no fools. Neither were their English opponents, as Surrey’s diplomacy demonstrated. The fact of the matter is—and we are prone to forget it in these iconoclastic days—chivalry, foolishness if you will, played a much larger rôle in these events than the prosaic historian appreciates. James was a Don Quixote. His permitting the English to defile four abreast across Twisel Brig was unquestionably a terrible blunder. His generals were alive to this. Angus, Huntly, and Lord Lindsay urged him to attack: did not the Master-Gunner Borthwick fall on his knees and beseech James to permit him to bring his guns to bear upon the English column? James was essentially a knight-errant, a dreamer, hence his declaration that he would “meet his antagonist on equal terms



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

on a plain field." The Scottish king had accepted the gage of battle and they met. We can imagine Surrey laughing in his beard.

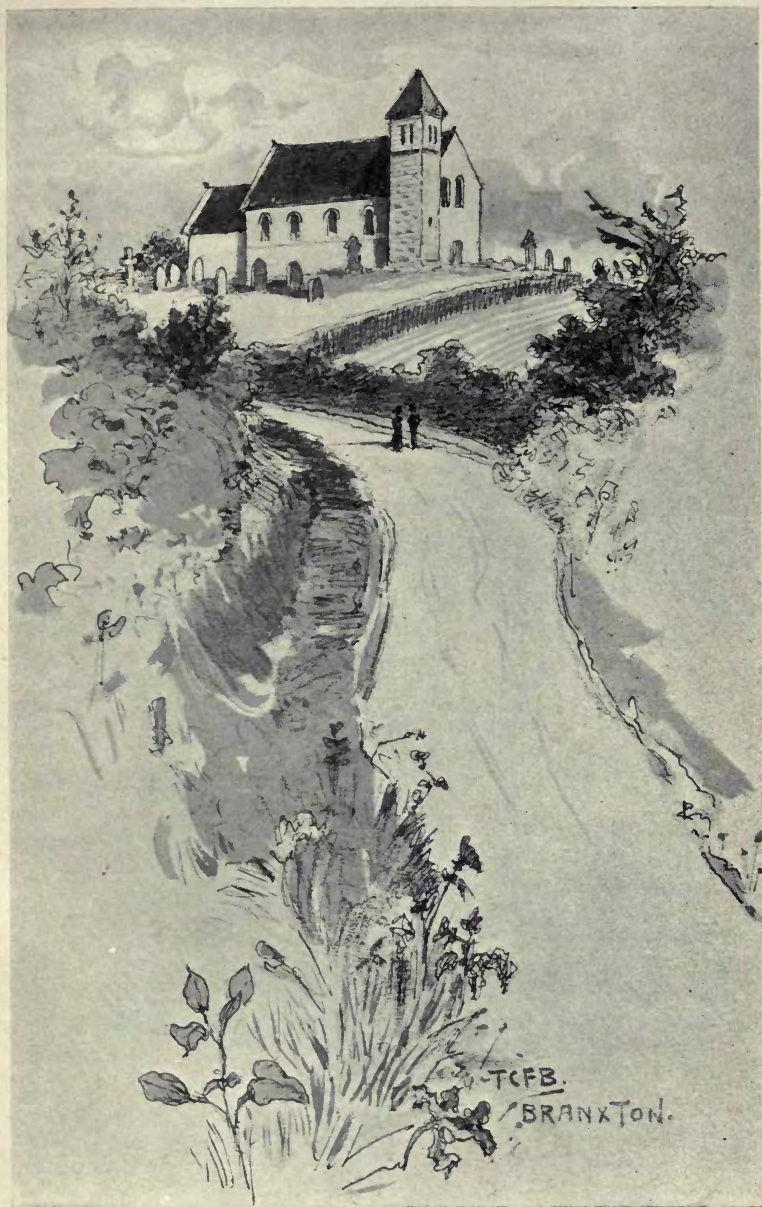
As that fateful September day of long ago was drawing to a close, and just as the soft tinkle of the four o'clock bells of Branxton Kirk was heard, the Scottish army was observed by the English leaders to be on the move. We can imagine the serried masses of the English and their tense, grim features gazing upwards:

"But see, look up! on Flodden bent  
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."

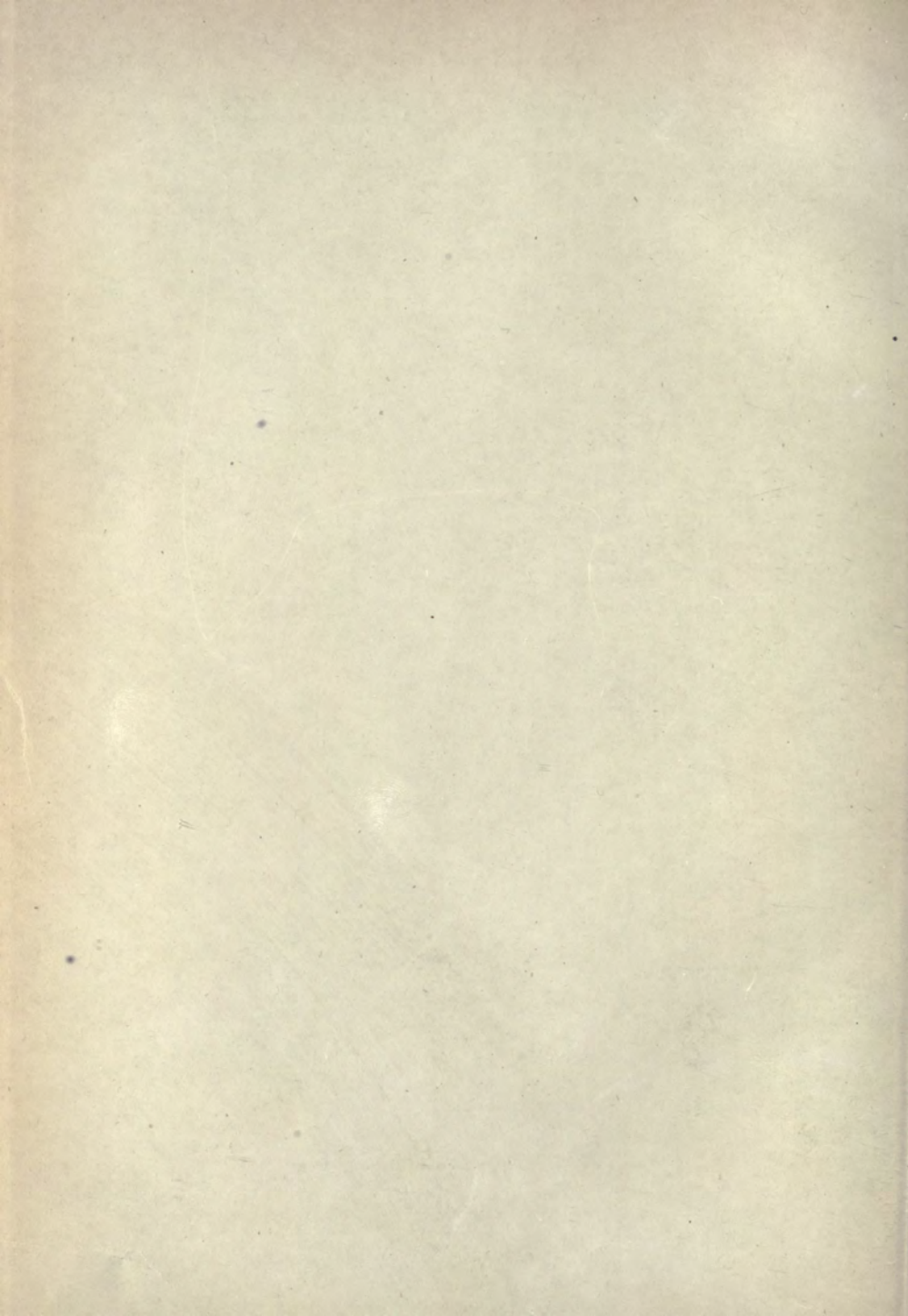
And how deadly grim would their looks be as they listened to the dull thunder of the oncoming rush, and how deadly earnest would be their muttered prayer, "Christ Jesus, save my soul." But the English yeomen were men worthy of the bravests' steel,<sup>1</sup> and they waited until the long grey mass

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Ruthal writing to Cardinal Wolsey, Sept. 20, 1513, a few days after Flodden: "There were that day many good and toward captains who did their parts well: howbeit the Lord Howard was the first setter on, and took most pain in conducting the vaward of the English army, to whom joined St. Cuthbert's banner with the whole retinue of the Bishoprick: and albeit the Scots had most disrespect to the said banner and set most fiercely upon it, yet what by the grace of God, the assistance of St. Cuthbert to his banner, there they got no advantage."—*Nat. MSS. England*, vol. ii.: *Note*—Lawrie, *Early Scottish Charters*, pp. 251, 252.

The banner of St. Cuthbert was carried before the English army at Flodden. This precious relic was preserved in Durham Cathedral.



BRANXTON KIRK





## FLODDEN

was upon them and the Scottish spears at their throats.

“And such a yell was there,  
Of sudden and portentous birth,  
As if men fought upon the earth  
And fiends in upper air.  
O life and death were in that shout.  
Recoil and rally, charge and rout.”

For four long, terrible hours the mad lust for blood and slaughter swept on until the gloaming and the mirk cast their shroud over the blood-soaked heath. And in the deepening gloom there was enacted the great drama of Scottish history, when our fathers died around their soldier-king, and, dying, left an imperishable memory.<sup>1</sup> Scott has enshrined

It could not be removed from the shrine without the express consent of the Prior. Raine, *N. Durham*, p. 264; Jean Lang, *A Land of Romance*, p. 309.

<sup>1</sup> The loss of the Scots amounted to about ten thousand men, and of them a great proportion were of high rank. Amongst the slain were the king; thirteen earls—Crawford, Montrose, Huntly, Lennox, Argyle, Errol, Athole, Morton, Cassillis, Bothwell, Rothes, Caithness, and Glencairn; the king's natural son, the Archbishop of St. Andrews; the Bishops of Caithness and the Isles; the Abbots of Kilwinning and Inchafray, and the Dean of Glasgow; fifteen lords and chiefs of clans, amongst whom were Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenurcha, Lauchlan Maclean of Dewart, Campbell of Lawers; five peers' eldest sons; La Motte, the French Ambassador; the Provost and Magistrates of Edinburgh; and the head or some member of almost every distinguished family in the kingdom. Riddell, in his *Peerage and Consistorial Law*, remarks: “The more I look into any Scottish charter-chest the more I am sensibly struck: almost every distinguished Scottish family having then been prematurely deprived of an ancestor or member.” The losses of the

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

it in transcendent phrase before which all prose must pale :

                                  “ the squadrons sweep,  
To break the Scottish circle deep,  
          That fought around their king.  
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,  
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,  
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,  
          Unbroken was the ring.  
The stubborn spearmen still made good  
Their dark impenetrable wood,  
Each stepping where his comrade stood  
          The instant that he fell.  
No thought was there of dastard flight;  
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,  
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,  
          As fearlessly and well,  
Till utter darkness closed her wing  
O'er their thin host and wounded king.”<sup>1</sup>

---

English were also very great, between five and eight thousand ; but only five Englishmen of rank fell.

*Archæologia Eliana*, xvi. 11 ; Hall's *Chronicles* (1809), 562. Despatch preserved in the Heralds' College and printed, Pinkerton, ii. 456 ; Hill Burton, iii. 77 *et seq.* ; Norman, *Flodden*, p. 18.

<sup>1</sup> King James was slain. Godwin in his *Annals*, p. 22, mentions “ that when James's body was found his neck was opened in the middle with a wide wound, his left hand almost cut off in two places did scarce hang to his arm, and the archers had shot him in many places of the body.” Norman, in his brochure, states that the body of the ill-fated king was found next day “ stripped naked by plunderers amid a heap of slain.” It was taken to Berwick, embalmed, and enclosed in a leaden coffin ; deposited in the religious house of Skene in Surrey, after the dissolution of which it was entirely lost sight of, and another old annalist tells the following curious tale : “ After the battle the bodie of the same King (James) being found was closed in lead and conveyed from thence to London, and to the monasterie of Skene in Surrey, where it remained



## FLODDEN

The centuries in their course, though they pass as lightly as the summer clouds, have obliterated all traces of the old conflict. Flodden Field is to-day the centre of beautiful English pastural-lands. But the memories of the fight have never

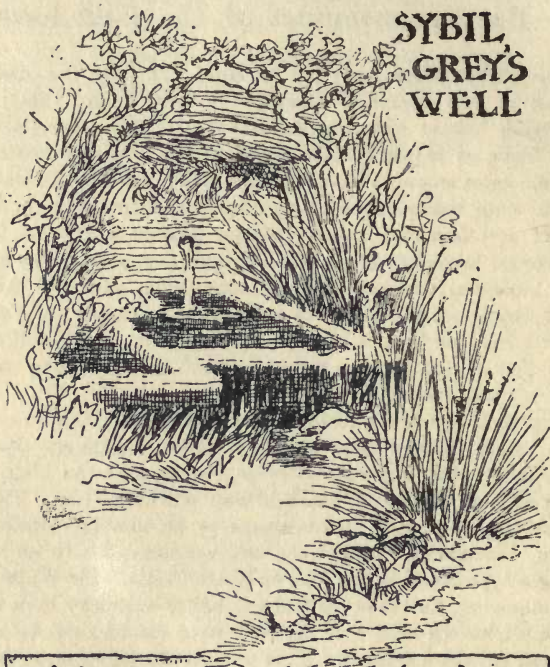
for a time in what order I am not certain ; but since the dissolution of that house in the reygne of Edward the Sixt, Henry Gray, Duke of Suffoke being lodged and keeping house there, I have been showed the same bodie so lapped in lead, close to the head and bodie, throwne into a waste room amongst the old timber, lead and other rubbish. Since the which time workmen there, for their foolish pleasure, hewed off the head : and Lancelot Young, Master glazier to Queen Elizabeth, feeling a sweet savour to come from thence, and seeing this same dried from all moisture, and yet the form remaining, with the haire of the head and beard red, brought it to London, to his house in Wood Street, where for a time he kept it for its sweetness, but in the end caused the sexton of that church to bury it amongst other bones taken out of their charnell."—Stow, *Survey of London*, p. 459.

The Scottish historians record many odd reports which were current after the battle. Home—who commanded the Borderers—was accused by the popular voice, not only of failing to support the king, but even of having carried him out of the field and murdered him. This strange tale was revived in Scott's remembrance by an unauthenticated story of a skeleton, wrapped in a bull's hide, and surrounded with an iron chain, said to have been found in the well of Home Castle. Sir Walter remarks that, on inquiring, he did never find any better authority than the sexton of the parish having said, "If the well were cleaned out he would not be surprised at such a discovery." It was always objected to the English account of the embalming of the body that they did never show the famous iron belt that James wore as a penance for having fought against his father at Sauchieburn. However the monarch's sword and dagger are still preserved in the Heralds' College, London. Pitscottie (i. 273) says, James "caussit" ten men to be clad in his livery and armour, "thairfor quhene they wer deid gottin in the feild the Inglischemen beleffit that ane (of the ten) was the king : and caist him in ane cairt and had him away to Ingland. But we knaw surlie they gat not the king because they had nocht the token of his irone belt to schaw to no Scottisman."



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

waned, and the passing shepherd whose sun-burned face glowed against the green background of Branxton Ridge could tell us the spots where gashed



Drink weary pilgrim drink and pray  
For the kind soul of Sybil Grey

and ghastly soldiers lie hundreds deep, and show us the green lane down which the sorely wounded were carried into Branxton Kirk. The little quaint kirk—

## FLODDEN

it is seated for 56 people—listens to-day to the soft murmur of the countryside as it listened four hundred years ago to the wild shriek of battle. The passing pilgrim may still quench his thirst at the crystal waters of the sweet moss-clad well of Sybil Grey, where helmeted men drank on the morning of



BRANXTON-  
-VILLAGE-

Flodden.<sup>1</sup> All around sleep the brave of either host. The very atmosphere is charged with deep and abid-

<sup>1</sup> I sketched the real well of Sybil Grey, a beautiful clear spring flowing out of a mossy bank by the road leading to, and a matter of forty yards from, Branxton Kirk. There is another Sybil's Well on Flodden Ridge, over a mile from the battlefield and at the side of an ancient grass-grown woodland track. The latter well has a picturesque canopy with an inscription, placed there, or rather misplaced with regrettable disregard of topographical and historical accuracy, by the late Marchioness of Waterford.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

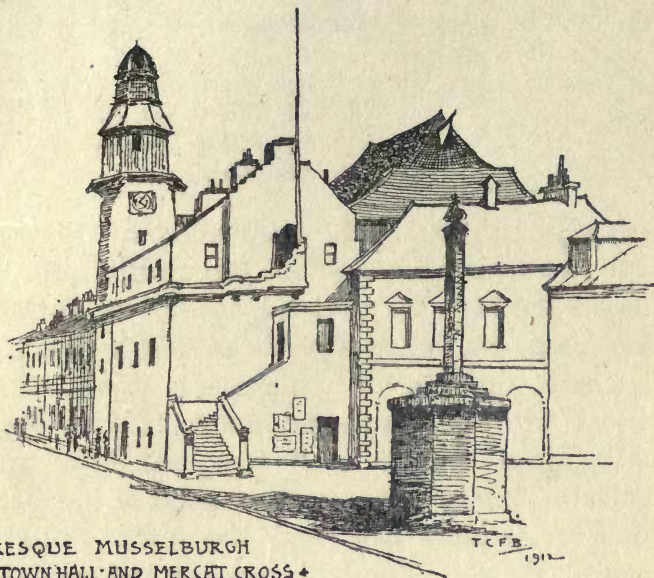
ing memories. And the beautiful memorial cross<sup>1</sup> on Pipers' Hill—"an altar of the awful God of Battles, a token of remembrance wet with tears," whispers dimly of the ancient agony long since passed away and of ancient feud for ever reconciled.

<sup>1</sup> The Flodden memorial was erected by voluntary subscriptions from Englishmen and Scotsmen, upon the eminence known as Pipers' Hill, Branxton, Northumberland. It consists of a Celtic cross—in the sketch of the battlefield the cross is seen on the left of the picture—of grey Aberdeen granite, standing upon a cairn of rough blocks of the same material, the total height of the structure being eighteen feet six inches. The inscription on the monument is terse but splendidly expressive :

FLODDEN 1513. TO THE BRAVE OF BOTH NATIONS.  
ERECTED 1910.

The unveiling ceremony was performed by Sir George Douglas, Bart., of Springwood Park, Kelso, on Tuesday, September 27, 1910.





PICTURESQUE MUSSELBURGH  
ANCIENT TOWN HALL AND MARKET CROSS +

## CHAPTER XII

### PINKIE CLEUCH

ON the fine swelling sweep of fat Lothian soil which lies between the grey waters of the Firth of Forth and the base of the green Lammermoors was fought the last great battle between the Scots and their "auld enemy" England. Looking on the

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

battlefield to-day from the rising ground above the ancient townlet of Musselburgh—

“Musselburgh was a burgh  
When Edinbro’ was nane;  
Musselburgh will be a burgh  
When Edinbro’s gane”

(so says the cheerfully optimistic local rhyme)—the eye wanders over one of the fairest prospects in broad Scotland. The rich crops for which the fertile Lothians are famed stretch around us blooming to an early fruition, the umbrageous woods of Pinkie, vocal with the flute-like notes of the blackbird, “the moan of doves in immemorial elms,” speak of sylvan peace, while in the far distance the bold outline of Arthur’s Seat and the softer form of the Pentlands are silhouetted against the western skyline. On our right a chilling note is introduced by the cold gleam of the haar-ridden Forth. But its flat shores are redeemed by the memories which haunt their creeks and bays. Largo Bay recalls to us the name of the gallant old Scots admiral, Sir Andrew Wood,<sup>1</sup> who scoured the seas in the *Flower*

<sup>1</sup> As a reward for his victory over an English squadron in the Forth, James III in 1482 bestowed the barony of Largo on Sir Andrew Wood. The ruins of Wood’s castle are still to be seen within the grounds of Largo House—near the old-world fishing village of Largo. Wood was a bold and skilful mariner. In his two ships the *Yellow Curvel* and the *Flower* he defeated and captured Stephen Bull, whom Henry VII had equipped with three “schipis werie great and strong and weill furnissit with great artaillye,” with instructions to rid the high seas of the re-

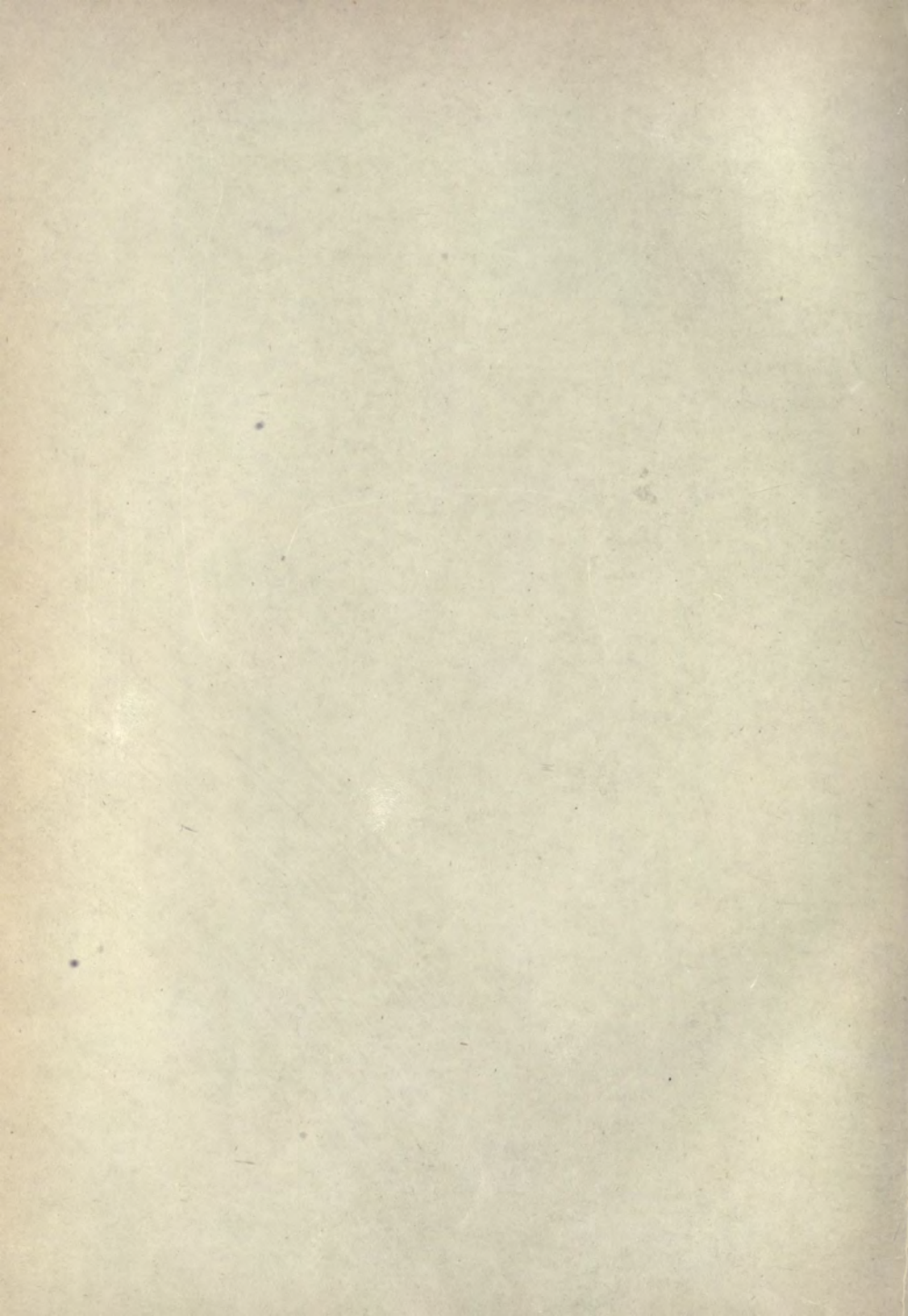




PINKIE CLEUCH

Arthur's Seat and Edinburgh in distance, on right





## PINKIE CLEUCH

and *Yellow Carvel*, and the heart of youth the world over warms to the same bay, for it was there that the immortal hero of boyhood, Robinson Crusoe, first saw the light.<sup>1</sup> And was it not in Dunfermline toun that a Scottish king once sat—as kings have often sat—a-drinking the blood-red wine and asking

“O where will I get a skeely skipper  
To sail this ship of mine?”

Adown these same waters “to Noroway ower the

doubtable Scot. They met at the mouth of the Firth of Forth. The passage describing this old sea-fight is quaintly splendid, and merits bodily transcription from the pages of Pitscottie: “The Scottis cust thame to wundwart of the Inglismen, quha seand that schott ane gret cannone or twa at the Scottis, thinkand that they sould have struckin sailes at this boast. Bot the Scottismen no thing affeared thairwith come swiftly avindwart (to windward) upoun Captane Stevin Bull and clipit together fre hand and fought frome the sone ryssing quhill the sone zet to, in ane lang sommer day, quhill that all the men and wemen that dwalt neir the cost came and behald the fighting quhillk was verie terrabilt to sie. Yet nochtwithstanding the night sunderit thame they war faine to depairt frae uther, quhill on the morne that the day began to break fair, thair trumpets blew on everie syde, and maid quiklie to battell, quha clappit to and faught so cruellie that nether the skippers nor marineris tuik heid of thair schipis but fightand until the ebb tide. And findind that the wind bure thame (from the Forth), to Inchcap fornent the mouth of Tay the Scottismen seein this, tuik sic curage that they doublit thair straits upoun the Inglishmen and thair tuik Stevin Bull and his thrie schipis and had thame upe to Tay to the toun of Dundie and thair remainit quhill thair hurt men was curit and the deid buriet” (*Cron. Scot.*, vol. i. pp. 229, 230).

<sup>1</sup> Defoe, as is well known, conceived the classic of adventurous boyhood, *Robinson Crusoe*, from the account he heard of Alexander Selkirk “mariner and native of Largo in the county of Fife.” A tablet and statue mark the birthplace of Selkirk at Largo; and his sea-chest is to be seen in the Antiquarian Museum, Edinburgh.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

faem" sailed Sir Patrick Spens, but he never returned, and in Dunfermline toun

"Lang, lang may the maidens sit  
Wi' their gowd kaims in their hair,  
A' waiting for their ain dear loves,  
For them they'll see nae mair."

And centuries after the awful night that witnessed the drowning of "good Sir Patrick Spens, wi' the Scots lords at his feet," there came washing up the Forth the English Admiral Clinton and his fleet, to cast anchor off Musselburgh on a bright autumn morning in September 1547. Somerset on land and Clinton on sea were jointly engaged in carrying England's love-whispers to the Scots child-queen. As the old chroniclers say, "it was a strange manner of wooing." Certainly it was one of the strangest among the many strange love-passages of the unfortunate Mary Stuart.

Between Flodden and the epoch of "the strange wooing" some thirty years had sped.<sup>1</sup> But they had

<sup>1</sup> Solway Moss was fought in 1542, and in 1545 there took place a couple of severe skirmishes at Melrose, where an English force defeated Arran and afterwards desecrated the graves of the Douglasses in the abbey. The insult roused the Earl of Angus, head of the house of Douglas. As the English retired from Melrose, he with Arran met them on Ancrum Moor, where he was joined by Norman Leslie and Buccleuch. As the English advanced the Scots fired the heather, and the wind blew the smoke into the faces of the enemy, and, to further disconcert them, some 600 Borderers who had been pressed into the English service threw away their white doublets with the red cross emblem and joined the Scots. The English ranks were broken, and they fled. The usual slaughter ensued, and among the 800 English slain were Sir Ralph



## PINKIE CLEUCH

not banished the shadow that the great disaster left brooding over the land. Its gloom and greyness still coloured the national life. Indeed, so curiously permanent were its effects that it is told of the descendant of one of the Scottish heroes who fell on Branxton Ridge (the late Lord Napier and Ettrick) how, when his father took him to view Flodden about 1830, there were tears in the elder man's eyes as he gazed on the old field of battle! Scotland's problem from the days of Edward I had been to keep her independence at any cost. Henry VIII, in the brief

Evers and Sir Brian Latoun. These men had committed dreadful ravages upon the Scottish Border. The sum total of their depredations stood thus in the bloody ledger of Lord Evers (Lang has "Eure"):

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| "Towns, towers, barnekynes, paryshe churches, |        |
| bastil houses, burned and destroyed . . .     | 192    |
| Scots slain . . . . .                         | 403    |
| Prisoners taken . . . . .                     | 816    |
| Nolt (cattle) . . . . .                       | 10,386 |
| Shepe . . . . .                               | 12,492 |
| Nags and geldings . . . . .                   | 1,296  |
| Gayt . . . . .                                | 200    |
| Bolls of corn . . . . .                       | 850    |
| Household gear (an incalculable quantity)."   |        |

(Murdin's *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 51.)

The English king is stated to have promised that precious couple a grant of the country which they had reduced to a desert. Upon hearing this Angus swore to write the deed of investiture upon their skins, with steel pen and bloody ink, in revenge for their having defaced the tomb of his ancestors at Melrose Abbey (Godscroft). The fight on Ancrum Moor occupies an honoured niche in the rich store of Border song and tradition. It is said that in this battle there fought Maiden Lilliard, a gallant young Scots lass from Maxton. She fell in the fight and was buried where she lay. The spot is known as Lilliard's

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

intervals of his own "strange wooings," found time to devote his reserve energy to fostering trouble for Scotland. From Flodden Field to Pinkie, ay, to the very day when the fair locks of Queen Mary rested on the block at Fotheringay, English policy had one steady purpose, to engender factions in Scotland by every form of deliberate perfidy. England's mighty power, baffled a hundred times in her old pretensions of supremacy, defeated in open field, and faced with a tireless resolution, sank to the cowardly dagger or the base intrigues of such weak causes as are worked by priests and women. Scotland wal-

Edge. Her grave is dear to the heart of the Borderer. He has enclosed it with solidly-built square stone walls. On a slab of stone there is inscribed the following verse :

" Fair Maiden Lilliard  
Lies under this stane :  
Little was her stature,  
But muckle was her fame :  
Upon the English loons (lads, O.S.A.)  
She laid mony thumps,  
An' when her legs were cuttit aff  
She fought upon her stumps."

The monument has been frequently restored Lady John Scott was responsible for the last repairs, and she has added the advice :

To A' TRUE SCOTSMEN.  
" By me it's been mendit  
To your care I commend it."

*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. i. p. 123 *et seq.* ; Scott's Works, Appendix, "Eve of St. John" ; Crockett, *Scot Country*, pp. 96-8 ; Eyre Todd, *Byways of the Scottish Border*, p. 146 ; Jean Lang, *A Land of Romance*, p. 319 *et seq.* ; *Old Stat. Acc.*, iii. pp. 278, 279.



## PINKIE CLEUCH

lowed in a veritable bog of disunion. Bluff King Hal—save the mark—saw to it that she was kept wallowing. The bluff personage was as unscrupulous a brigand in war as in love! Events favoured him. There was the inexplicable disaster of Solway Moss,<sup>1</sup> where, according to Knox, some few dozens of English farmers routed a Scots army. Knox (excellent reformer though he was) believed that Providence was Protestant, hence the tale of the casual levies defeating the Scots.<sup>2</sup> But the happening at Solway broke King Jamie's (the Fifth) heart. As he lay on his death-bed at Falkland Palace word was brought him of his daughter's birth (the future Queen Mary), and with the prophetic utterance on his lips, "It cam wi' a lass, and it will go wi' a lass," he passed to the Valhalla of his fathers. The problem of the four eventful years which followed the death of King James (December 14, 1543) resolved itself into the old, old question of independence. There are many—and most important—side-issues; but the primary stood thus: Was Henry, with or without the aid of an infant marriage between his son Edward, the Prince of Wales, and Mary Stuart to succeed in the project of Edward I and in the

<sup>1</sup> Lang, *Scot.*, vol. i. p. 455; Hill Burton, vol. iii. p. 183.

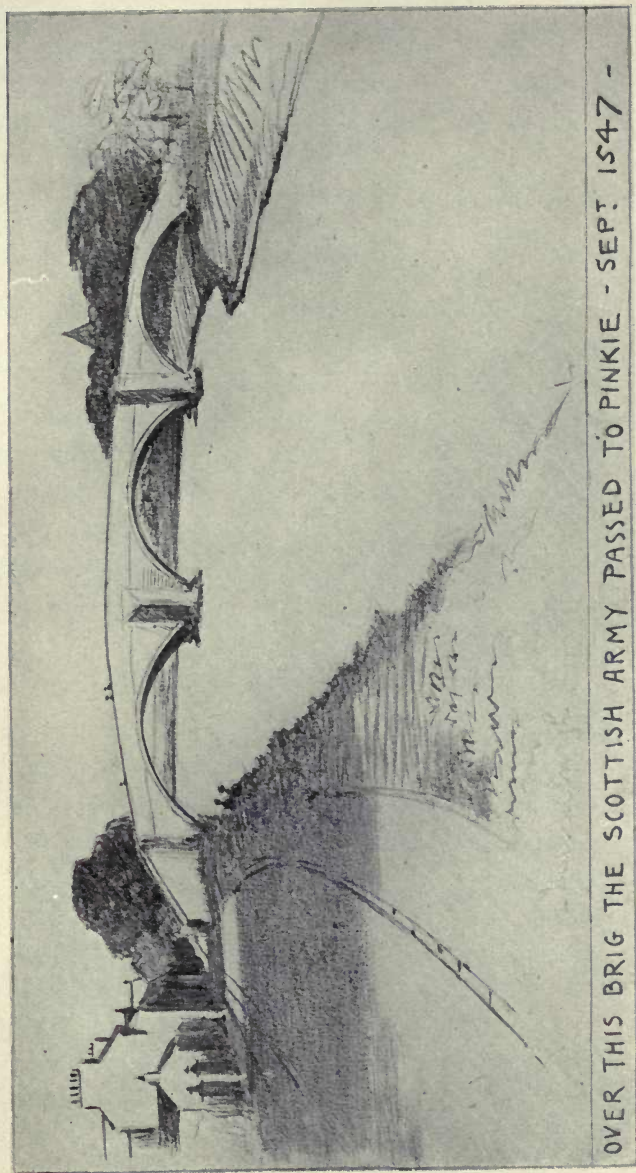
<sup>2</sup> The English were some 3000 strong, the Scots about 10,000. The disaster is inexplicable. Twenty Scots were slain, many drowned, and twelve hundred taken prisoners (Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 316). Meiklejohn says the Scots were defeated "by a few hundred Englishmen" (*Hist. Eng.*, p. 309).



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

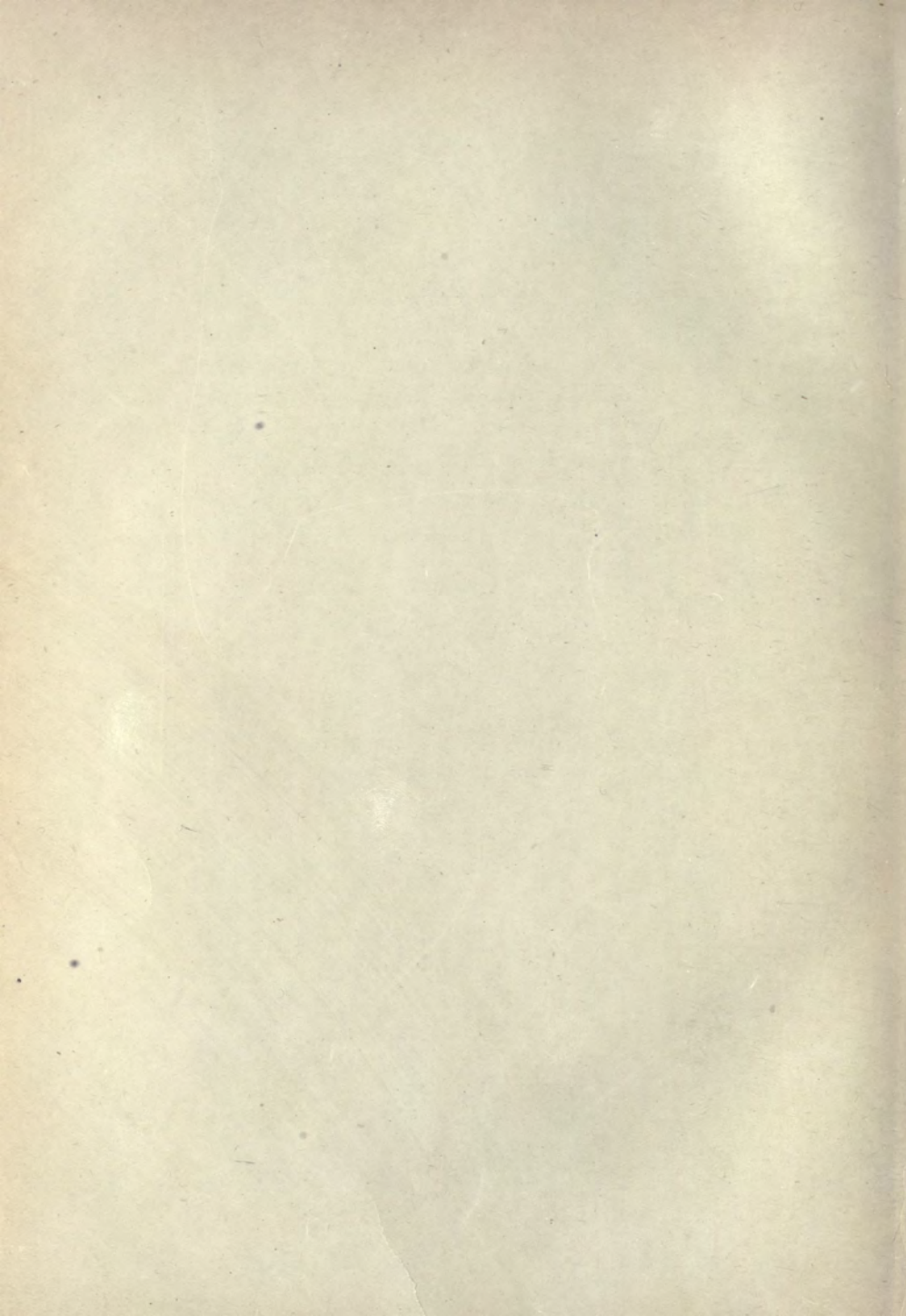
scheme of union which was baffled by the death of the Maid of Norway? The shadows were deepening over Scotland, and when they seemed at their darkest Henry VIII passed to his great account. The aggressive policy did not die with him. The continual pounding by a stronger neighbour "down against them," as Wharton says, "to their great beggary," had left Scotland small apparent power of resistance, and Somerset, the English governor, thought to finish matters at one good blow. So we find the English fleet lying off Musselburgh on September 8, 1547, while on the ridges of Fawside, above the township, lay the English army under the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Warwick.

How were the Scots, fatigued with perpetual hostilities and beggared in pocket as the result of the continual raids, to resist Somerset and protect their infant queen? Arran, the regent—the man to whom Henry made the promise that when "the child" was obtained the English would help him to become king of Scotland (but the wily Arran had other fish to fry)—had no great fancy for English dominion, so to rouse his countrymen he adopted a singular expedient for assembling an army. He sent the Fiery Cross throughout the country—a warlike symbol of Celtic origin, constructed of two slender rods of hazel formed into the shape of a cross, the extremities seared in the fire and extinguished when



OVER THIS BRIG THE SCOTTISH ARMY PASSED TO PINKIE - SEPT 1547 -

MUSSELBURGH BRIDGE





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red and blazing, in the blood of a goat slain for the occasion—a Pagan survival surely! In the Highlands such a summons was regarded with awe and obeyed without hesitation. Previous to Pinkie the Fiery Cross had never been used to raise the Lowlands, but such was its effect that in a wonderfully short time an army of about 30,000 men assembled at Musselburgh. There was an unwonted element in that force—due probably to the influence of the Fiery Cross—a large body of Highlanders. At that period they were regarded by the Lowlanders as more dangerous to their comrades than to the enemy. Their mode of fighting was not in harmony with that of the Scottish spearmen, whose schiltrons had proved unconquerable on many a stricken field. According to Patten—who witnessed the fight, and whose curious *Account of Somerset's Expedition* is well worth perusal—the Highlanders were the first to break rank and take to flight at Pinkie Cleuch. In any case, to the unfortunate plundering propensities of the Highlanders, rifling and stripping the slain, was due the terrible slaughter which followed the fight, the English horsemen being “doubly exasperated by seeing the bodies of their brave companions stript by the Highlanders, lying all naked and mangled before their eyes.”

In his *Account* Patten gives us a peculiarly clear description of the manner in which the Scots were armed, and also of their mode of fighting, known to

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fame as the schiltron. He says they fight "most commonly alwais a-foot":

"They cum to the felde well furnished all with jak, and skull, dagger, buckler, and swoordes, of exceedinge good temper and universally good to slice. Hereto everie man his pyke and a great kercher wrapped twise or thrice round his neck, not for cold but for cutting. In their aray towards joining with the enemy they cling and thrust so nere in the front rank shoulder to shoulder together, wyth their pykes in bothe hands strayght afore them and their followers so hard at their backs, layinge their pykes over their foregoers' shoulders, that no force can well withstand them. Standing at defence they thrust shoulders nie together, the fore ranks kneeling stoop lowe before, their fellows behynde holdinge their pykes, the one ende against their right foote the other against the enemye breist high, the thirde ranke crossing their pyke points with them forward, and thus each with other so nye as place and space will suffer through the whole warde so thicke, that as easily shall a bare finger perce through the skyn of an angrie hedgehog as ony encounter the frunt of their pykes."

Contemporary accounts of the battle tell us that the Scots were entrenched in a place "so chosen for strength as in all their country some (of the English) thought not a better." On the south was a great marsh, on the north the Firth, Edinburgh on the



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west at their backs, and "eastward between us and them, strongly defended by the course of a river called Esk, over which is a strong stone bridge which they did keep well warded with ordnance." Had our countrymen "sat tight," the debacle of Pinkie would never have occurred. We can imagine the astonishment and pleasure with which the English saw the Scots abandon their position, and we can



understand Somerset's fervent exclamation of "Thank God!" as he perceived the fatuous movement across the old brig of Musselburgh. The old bridge still spans the Esk, as strong to-day, apparently, as when the Scots defiled over it in September 1547. And as they crossed the brig the English galleys in the bay opened fire, and "slew the Master of Grahame with five and twenty near by him." As it was, our countrymen had the best of the first exchanges. The spearmen of the Lothians, Lanark, Ayr, Renfrew, and Stirling threw themselves into the prickly mass



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of a schiltron, and, says Patten, "as our men were well-nigh them they stood very brave and bragging shaking their pyke points, crying, 'Come on, loons; come here, heretics,' as hardly as they are fair-mouthed men."

What followed seems incredible. The English—under Lord Grey—were broken. Warwick rallied them again to the attack, and brought up the dreaded bowmen. The Scots front battle under this attack fell back in steady order on the main division, and the Highlanders, mistaking this movement for a retreat, left their plundering, at which they were already busy, and fled. The panic spread to the burghal troops. They undulated to and fro "like a sea agitated by the wind," wavered, and then dispersed into a thousand fragments. The chase began at noon, and finished when the short September day was drawing to a close, about six. A terrible slaughter ensued. The naked and slashed bodies of their comrades roused the English to insensate fury. Some 12,000 Scots were slain. In Edinburgh alone over 400 widows mourned the day of Pinkie. The Esk ran red with blood, and, says an eye-witness who wandered over the battle-field the next day, "the ground was covered as thick with dead bodies as cattle in a well-stocked pasture-field." Such was the battle of Pinkie. It teaches the lesson that the best chance for the soldier in battle is steadiness!

## PINKIE CLEUCH

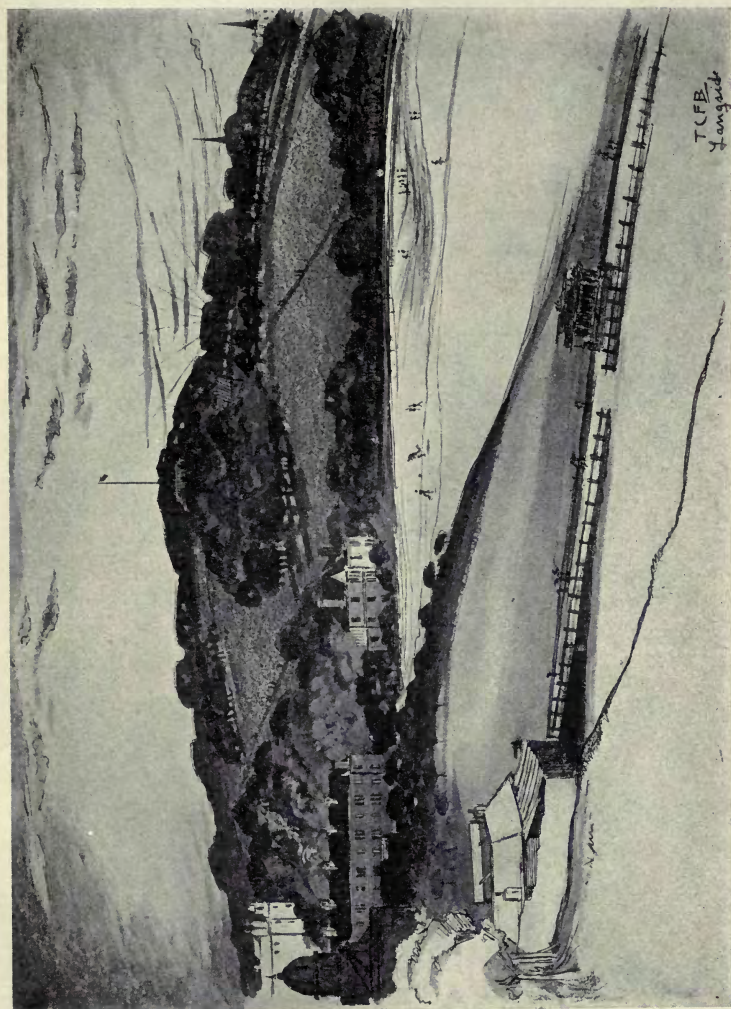
Pinkie Cleuch is one of the memorable epochs in our country's history. It was the last great disaster in the long struggle for national existence. Had Somerset followed up his victory, the result might have been fatal to Scotland. There was little to prevent him pursuing his course to Stirling and capturing the infant queen. Fortunately, Somerset, after burning Holyrood Abbey, received information of secret plots against him in England, and he hurried south to protect his own interests. Meantime the Scots had taken steps to protect their future ruler. She was the scion of their old royal line, a line sacred in their eyes from the way in which it had been preserved through attenuated threads of existence. It now ran in the life of an infant. For her English armies raided and burned and slaughtered, and for her Scotsmen fought the "auld enemy" relentlessly and dourly. They removed the little queen to the island of Inchmahome, on the Lake of Menteith, the ancient "isle of peace" of the Gaelic bards. And there, in the cloistered shades of its monastery, the peaceful life of the child queen and her three Marys—"Mary Seaton, and Mary Beaton, and Mary Carmichael, and me"—was passed gently and quietly, as is the wont of innocent childhood. A dark chapter had closed on the field of Pinkie Cleuch, and the shadows of the tragic career that was to be the future of the child had not yet fallen.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LANGSIDE

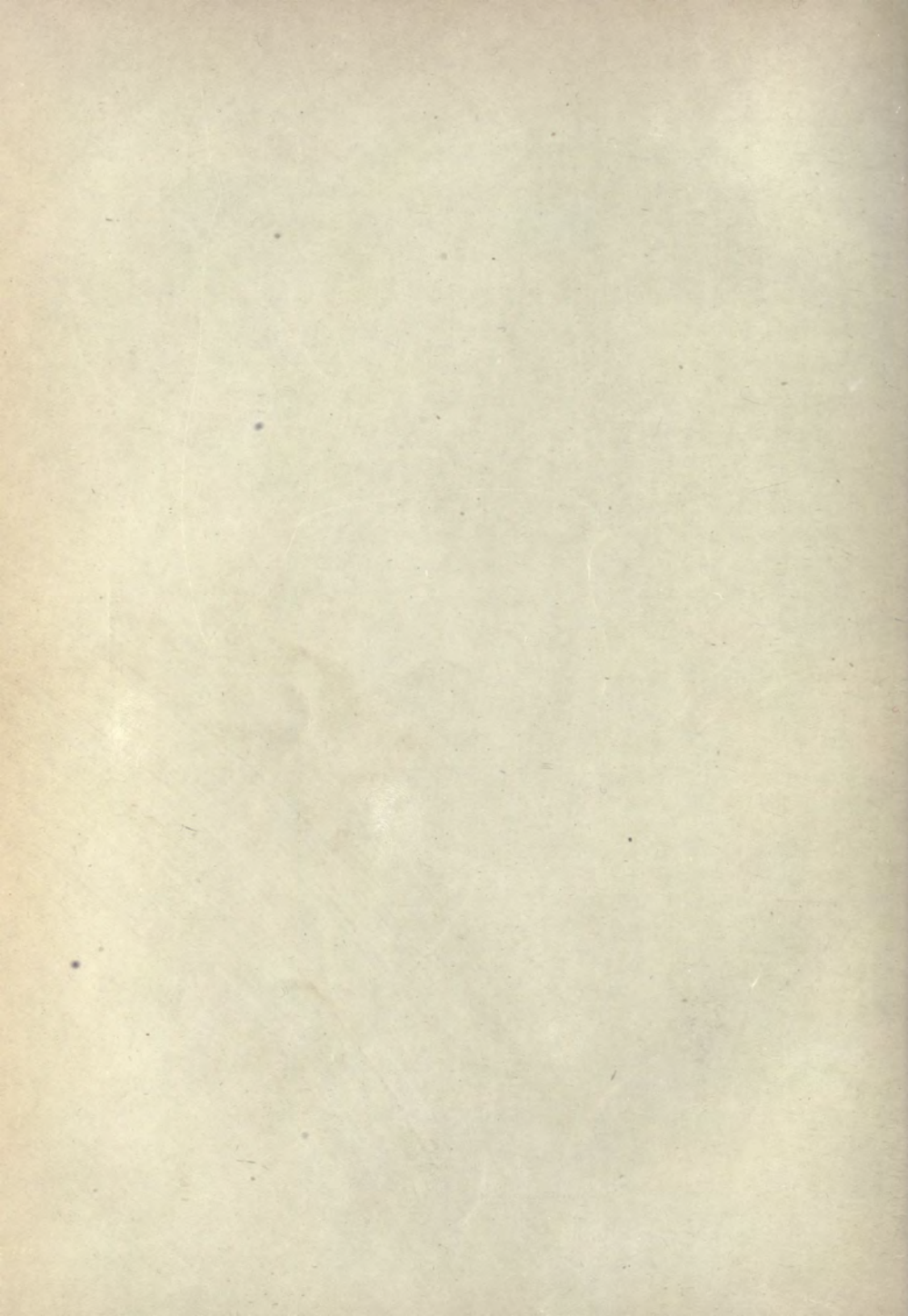
STANDING on the ramparts of the ancient British camp that crowns the heights of Glasgow's beautiful Queen's Park, the eye wanders over a splendid expanse of Western Scotland. Few cities can boast of a finer vista. We are 209 feet above sea-level, and from few other situations can the great city and Strathclyde be seen to better advantage. In the immediate foreground we have Pollokshaws, Langside, Cathcart with its steepled kirk and ancient keep, quaint but smoky Rutherglen and its haunting memories of the Wallace wight, and Castlemilk, where tradition (wrongly) says that Queen Mary rested before the debacle on the braes of Langside. Interesting also, and wildly picturesque, is the distant landscape bounded on the north by the Kilpatrick and Campsie ranges, while the Clyde, a thread of silver, leads the eye away up the green and fertile vale of Clyde as far as Lanark. Included in the panorama are the Cathkin and Gleniffer Braes, the blue mass of the curious Pad of Neilston, Ballygeich, and the storied moorlands of the Mearns. An





T.C.F.B.  
Langside

LANGSIDE



## LANGSIDE

added charm is lent to the magnificent landscape by the historic associations which cling to the rugged hills and gloomy moors. All around lies the theatre in which were enacted some of the most stirring scenes of Scottish story. Above all and dearest to the romantic mind is the tragic memory of the beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stuart that haunts the spot, for on the ground now covered by the elegant suburbs of Mount Florida and Langside there took place a battle which settled the fate of Scotland, profoundly affected the future of England, and had its influence over all Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Let us glance briefly at the events which led to the disastrous drama of Langside. We go back to a stormy winter's eve in January 1567. The curtain rings up on a sick-bed in a dimly lit apartment within an old thatched cottage in the High Street of Glasgow.<sup>2</sup> On the couch there lies a

<sup>1</sup> Hill Burton, vol. iv. p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> The house in which Darnley lay in Glasgow during his illness has been the subject of dispute. He may have resided in the "Stable greyn beyond the city gates," or the castle which at the period was in the hands of the Lennox family, or the Manse of Irskyn (Erskine), by tradition the place to which he went from Stirling. The Erskine Manse was in June 1563 the property of a Glasgow citizen, Thomas Forrest. It seems to have been pulled down and a cottage, single storey and thatched, built on its site. This cottage was known to Glasgow people as Darnley's Cottage. The stable green above mentioned was where the Lennox family acquired their first residence in Glasgow, and was so called because of its proximity to the castle stables. I assume that in this case tradition is correct, and that the Darnley's Cottage of the old citizens of Glasgow—with whom I have spoken—was the genuine successor of



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young man sick to death. Bending tenderly over him is a lady of rare and wondrous beauty, a veritable vision of feminine grace and loveliness. Within call, and scarce seen in the shadows which throw a deepening gloom over the swarthy countenance, stands a well-knit soldierly figure. The two chief actors in this scene are the young Darnley—a mere stripling of twenty-one—and his royal consort, Mary Queen of Scots. Darnley was down with smallpox.<sup>1</sup> In the words of the old chronicler, “his haill bodie had brak out in evill-favourt pustullis.” The unhappy queen, her nerves still unstrung by the brutality of the Rizzio murder—enacted before her when she was far advanced in pregnancy—had hurried through

the house in which the royal consort was confined of his smallpox. Liber Protocollorum, No. 434; Renwick's *Glasgow Protocols*, v. p. 1467; Macgeorge, *Old Glasgow*, pp. 116, 117; Gemmell, *Oldest House in Glasgow*, pp. 67, 68, and 135.

<sup>1</sup> Like many of these strange occurrences which mark the progress of events in the “good old days,” the illness of Darnley is veiled in an atmosphere of mystery. Buchanan (p. 318) states definitely that Darnley was seized with illness soon after he left Stirling, where he had been visiting. “Befoir he was gone a Mile from Stirlin he had such a greivous Pain all over his Body,” and before he arrived in Glasgow “his haill bodie brak out in evill-favourt pustullis, be the force of yong eage that potentlie expellit the poyson whilk was supposit to have bene gevin him.” The symptoms seem to have been those of severe smallpox. Hill Burton, vol. iv. pp. 181, 182; Keith, vol. ii. p. 497, note; and Laing, *Scot.*, 1804, vol. i. p. 24, have surmised that Darnley suffered from a different disease. Sir Daniel Wilson supports their theories. Dr. William Gemmell, in his history (1910) of *The Oldest House in Glasgow*, i.e. Provand's lordship—built in 1471—opposite Glasgow Cathedral, remarks that “none of these writers were members of the medical profession.” His verdict is “confluent smallpox.”

## LANGSIDE

to Glasgow to nurse her husband. As her attendant came the third figure of the trio, Captain Thomas Crawforde (the laird of Jordanhill), who performed one of the most brilliant exploits of the day in the capture of Dumbarton Castle.<sup>1</sup> Crawford's curious "statement," submitted to the English court that subsequently tried and condemned Queen Mary, is still preserved in the Records Office at London. It is entitled, "The words between the Q. and me, Thomas Crawforde, bye the waye as she cam to Glasco to fetch the Kinge, whom mye master sent me to shewe her the cause whye he cam not to meit her him sellfe." Doubtless some such scene as we have sketched took place when the queen reached Glasgow. In any case she nursed Darnley and brought him back to Edinburgh—"Tooke him awaye more like a prisoner thanne her husband," says Crawford—not to Holyrood Palace, but to Kirk-of-Field, a house on the outskirts of the capital. And there on the night of February 10, 1567, the miserable boy was foully strangled, his murderers, by blowing up the house, making sure that the world should be deceived by no story told to explain his death.<sup>2</sup> It is inconceivable that Mary knew aught of these affairs. Was she not a creature in the toils of an unscrupulous gang?

Events moved quickly. The hapless queen must

<sup>1</sup> State Papers, Scotland, vol. xviii. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Melville, *Memoirs*, p. 174; *Diurnal of Occurrents*, pp. 105, 106.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

have led but a sorry existence at this period. The Earl of Bothwell—a thorough-paced scoundrel—was generally believed to be guilty of the crime. He was tried and acquitted, and the Earl of Morton and others of the nobility recommended his marriage with Mary. Darnley's body was scarce cold<sup>1</sup> when—on 24th April—Bothwell seized the person of the queen as she was travelling from Linlithgow (her birthplace) to Edinburgh, and married her on 15th May.<sup>2</sup> Rebellion followed, and on 15th June poor Mary separated from Bothwell and surrendered to her foes at Carberry Hill on the field of Pinkie Cleuch. Kirkcaldy of Grange, writing to the Earl of Bedford in 1567, tells how he and Tullibardine pursued Bothwell to the Orkneys to revenge “the horrible deed whilk was committed by the traitor Bothwell.”

<sup>1</sup> Darnley is buried in the Chapel Royal at Holyrood, and Arnot in his *History of Edinburgh* (p. 255), 1776, says that the skull of Darnley was stolen; “what had escaped the fury of the mob at the Revolution became a prey to the rapacity of the mob, who ransacked the Church after its fall.” What was understood to be the skull of Darnley was taken away by James Cummyng, clerk in the Lyon Herald's Office, Edinburgh, and the first secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. At his death, in 1793, the skull and one femur passed into the hands of an Edinburgh sculptor, from whom they were purchased by one of the Frasers of Lovat. On March 2, 1865, Messrs. Sotheby, London, sold as lot No. 5957B, from the collection of the Hon. Archibald Fraser of Lovat, “the skull and thigh-bone of Lord Darnley.” These were acquired by Mr. G. T. Belt, who presented them to the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1869, and there they remain to this day.

<sup>2</sup> Labanoff's *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 22 *et seq.*; Melville's *Memoirs* (Mait. Club), p. 174; Hill Burton, vol. iv. p. 226 *et seq.*; Hume Brown, vol. ii. pp. 87, 88.



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There is evidence<sup>1</sup> that when Bothwell married Queen Mary he had other three wives living! The famous "Casket Letters"<sup>2</sup> notwithstanding, it is impossible to believe that the gentle girl-queen allied herself with such a sensually-debased character as Bothwell so as to compass the death of Darnley.<sup>3</sup> We cannot discuss that here. Suffice it to know that when Mary was suffering her long-drawn-out agony in England, the nobles quarrelled among themselves,

<sup>1</sup> In the "Liber Bergensis," quoted by Marryat in his *Residence in Jutland*.

<sup>2</sup> The problem of the letters is elaborately discussed in Andrew Lang's *Mystery of Mary Stuart* and T. F. Henderson's *The Casket Letters and Mary Queen of Scots*. Cf. Hay Fleming's *Critical Reviews relating to Scotland* (1913), p. 87 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> The vulgar clamour of the period was no doubt very unfavourable to Mary. Her reception in Edinburgh (*Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 113 *et seq.*) after the Carberry Hill affair showed that the good burghers and their ladies were woefully shocked at the indecent haste of the Bothwell marriage. Three months' interval between the death of one husband and union with another spouse was sufficient to alarm even the rather elastic moral codes of the sixteenth century. Can we really blame Mary Stuart? We can if we accept the intemperate indelicacy of the curious individual whom Maurice Hewlett would have us believe was Mary Stuart, in his pseudo-novel *The Queen's Quair*. That extreme point of view is impossible, however, unless to the decadent dilettante! There is a wealth of literature on the subject of Mary Stuart. With the possible exception of Burns, more books have been evoked by the tragic story of the Scottish queen than by any other personality, ancient or modern. Among the outstanding biographies of recent years the student who wishes to specialise may usefully consult Andrew Lang's *Mystery of Mary Stuart*; Hay Fleming's *Mary Stuart*; Rait's *Mary Queen of Scots*; T. F. Henderson's *Mary Queen of Scots*; Florence Maccunn's *Mary Stuart*, which might be read as a stimulating supplementary course to Miss Strickland's *Life of the Queen*; A. H. Millar's *Mary Queen of Scots*; and the general histories, particularly Hill Burton, Andrew Lang, and Hume Brown.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

hurling at each other accusations of participation in Darnley's murder. From the heights of Carberry Mary was carried to Lochleven Castle, whose Douglas owners might have been expected to prove trusty gaolers of a Stuart queen. And it was at Lochleven that she was compelled to sign a deed of abdication<sup>1</sup> and to nominate Murray as regent for her little son—a scene that has afforded the Glasgow sheriff (Glassford Bell) opportunity for some eloquent word-painting :

“ ‘My lords, my lords,’ the captive said, ‘were I but once more free,

With ten good knights on yonder shore, to aid my cause and me,  
That parchment would I scatter wide to every breeze that blows,  
And once more reign a Stuart queen o’er my remorseless foes.’

A red spot burned upon her cheek—streamed her rich tresses  
down ;

She wrote the words—she stood erect—a queen without a crown ! ”

Romance sheds its glamour over the escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven Castle. We read of a page called “the little Douglas,” sometimes “Willy Douglas,” a boy of eighteen, who, carried away by a youthful enthusiasm to assist the cause of his distressed queen, achieved the feat of escorting her from her prison. Nau in his memoirs—he was the queen’s secretary—relates how George Douglas,

<sup>1</sup> The deed was signed July 24, 1567. Five days later the prince was crowned at Stirling, John Knox preaching the coronation sermon. From that date Mary Stuart ceases to appear as sovereign in the public proceedings of the realm, and the reign of King James VI begins.



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another of the clan who had yielded to the witchery of Mary's personality, and whom Sir William Drury, writing to Cecil in April 1568, credits with matrimonial intentions towards the queen, sent by a maid "a pearl in the shape of a pear, which Her Majesty was in the habit of wearing in one of her ears. This was understood as a signal that all was ready. An hour before supper the queen retired into her own chamber. She put on a red kirtle belonging to one of her women." After supper the queen again retired on the plea that she wished to say her prayers, and, says Nau, "indeed she did pray very devoutly, recommending herself to God, who then showed His pity and care for her." Then we have the stealing of the castle keys by "the little Douglas," and the casting of the keys (when the queen was in the boat) into the loch to the "kelpies' keeping"—the keys were found some years ago when the loch was lowered by draining—the wild midnight ride to Niddry; thence, adds Nau, "she took the road to Hamilton, where she remained until the thirteenth of May 1568, collecting all the forces she could muster." In the *Diurnal of Occurrents* it is stated that the romantic escape took place "Vpoun the secund day of Maii, 1568, quhilk wes Sunday, betuix sevin and auch hours at evin." When at Hamilton<sup>1</sup> Mary resided in the old square tower situated in the centre of the earlier town of Hamilton, and the site of which

<sup>1</sup> Nau's *Memoirs*, pp. 167, 170.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

is covered by a portion of the present palace.<sup>1</sup> At Hamilton Mary informed the friends who rallied around her—among whom were Hamilton, Herries, Somerville, Argyll, Cassilis, Fleming, Ross, Eglinton, Rothes, and Maxwell,<sup>2</sup> ancestor of the lairds of Pollok—that she “was not minded to feicht nor hazard battaile, bot to pass vnto the castell of Dombertan and draw hame again to hir obedience, be litle and litle, the haill subjectis,” so says Sir James Melville’s *Memoirs*.

When the summer sun was glinting over the braes of Cathkin on the early morning of May 13, 1568, Mary’s troops moved out of Hamilton, her council of war having thought it expedient that “our sovereign lady’s most noble person be surely transported to Dumbarton.” The citizens of Glasgow<sup>3</sup> were early aroused on that far-away morning by the beating of drums and the trumpet-calls which sounded in the castle at the top of the High Street. The Regent Murray was in command, and his spies kept him informed of the doings at Hamilton. When word arrived that the queen’s forces were on the move, Murray marched his men down the High Street and along the Gallowgate, through the Gallowgate Port on to

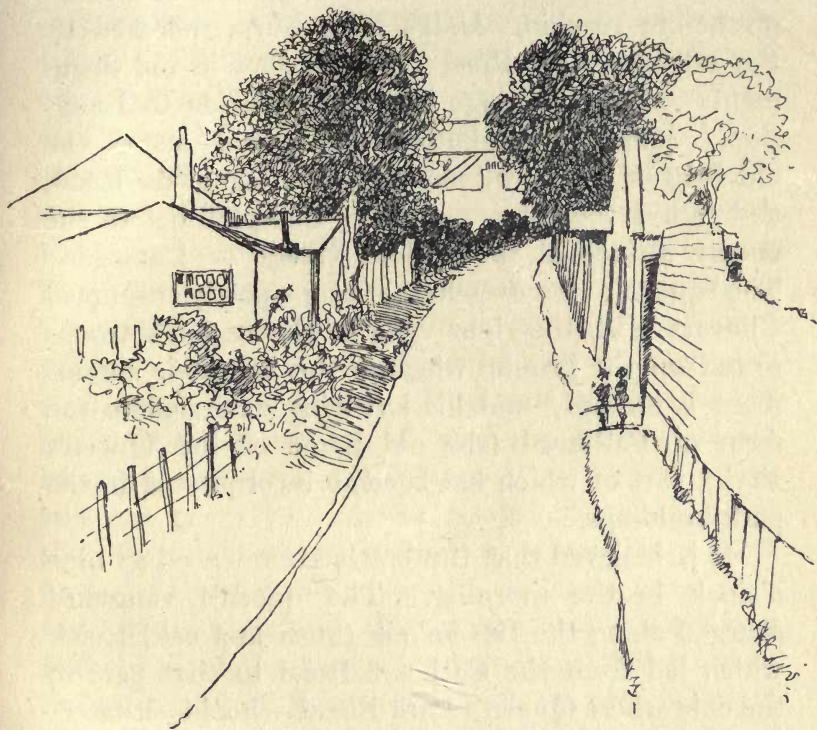
<sup>1</sup> *Old Stat. Ac.*, vol. ii. p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Nau’s *Memoirs*, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Glasgow was little more than a village in those days, its population being only 7000. Chapman, *Hist. Glas.*, pref.; Macgeorge, *Old Glas.*, p. 145.

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what was then Glasgow Moor. But the queen's generals chose to take the south bank of the Clyde<sup>1</sup>



Hangingshaw Road.

Mary's troops marched up this road to Langside

and, according to Mr. A. M. Scott's monograph on Langside fight, passing through Rutherglen by the

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Scott, *Battle of Langside*, pp. 36, 37.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

old public road to Paisley from Rutherglen (as it leaves Strathbungo, and as modernised the road now bears the name of Allison Street), and branching off before reaching Mall's Mire Burn, marched by the Hangingshaw Road—Hagganshaw in old documents—along the ridge of Mount Florida to Langside. Murray's hagbutters thundered across the old Brig of Glasgow,<sup>1</sup> along the old Langside Road, and gained the rising ground of Camphill before the enemy arrived at the ancient village of Langside.<sup>2</sup> The queen's force—6000 strong—partly occupied Clincart Hill, the right wing of the regent's troops rested on the ground whereon the Langside monument is erected,<sup>3</sup> and his left wing extended to the farm of Pathhead (the old name of the Queen's Park), part of which has become incorporated in the park buildings.

It is believed that the battle commenced at nine o'clock in the morning. The queen's vanguard charged along the Bus-an'-aik (bush and oak) Road, which led from the Cathcart Road to that part of the field where Queen's Park Board-school is situated, and up the existing Lang Loan to the village. There they encountered the regent's spearmen,

<sup>1</sup> Built by Bishop Rae in 1345. It was removed in 1850.

<sup>2</sup> Now an important suburb of Glasgow. The old village has gone.  
*Sic transit!*

<sup>3</sup> The queen's army is put at 5000, and that of the regent at 3000. *Diurnal of Occurrents*, p. 130; cf. Tytler, vol. vi. p. 36; Hill Burton, vol. iv. p. 367.



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while his hagbutters poured a steady fire on the advancing enemy. The fight which ensued is characteristic of the period. "The long pikes," says a contemporary writer,<sup>1</sup> "were so thick fixed in the other's jacks that the pistols and great staves that were thrown by them which were behind could be seen lying on the crossed weapons." The head of each of the opposing lines pressed against each other, striving "like contending bulls which should bear the other down." Meantime the regent's left wing was brought up, and by a flank movement charged the queen's vanguard, striking the men in their "flanks and faces," and forcing them to turn back after long fighting and pushing and swaying to and fro as they were locked together in the deadly struggle. "God and the Queen" resounded from one party; "God and the King" thundered from the other, while they shed each other's blood and, in the name of the Creator, defaced His image. The fresh attack confused the column of the assailants, and the dark, dense, and united line of helmets was broken and hurled in disorder back upon Clincart Hill. In vain did the leaders call upon their followers. They were slain, felled to the earth, and hurried backwards by the mingled tide of flight and pursuit. A debacle ensued as the now demoralised queen's troops were swept down the slopes. From first to

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Melville's *Memoirs*, p. 201 *et seq.*

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

last the battle had only lasted three-quarters of an hour. Yet in that brief time three hundred men were slaughtered!

The queen—where was the queen during these events?<sup>1</sup> Buchanan states that she “stood a spectator of the action, about a mile distant from the field,” and the spot which tradition points out, the

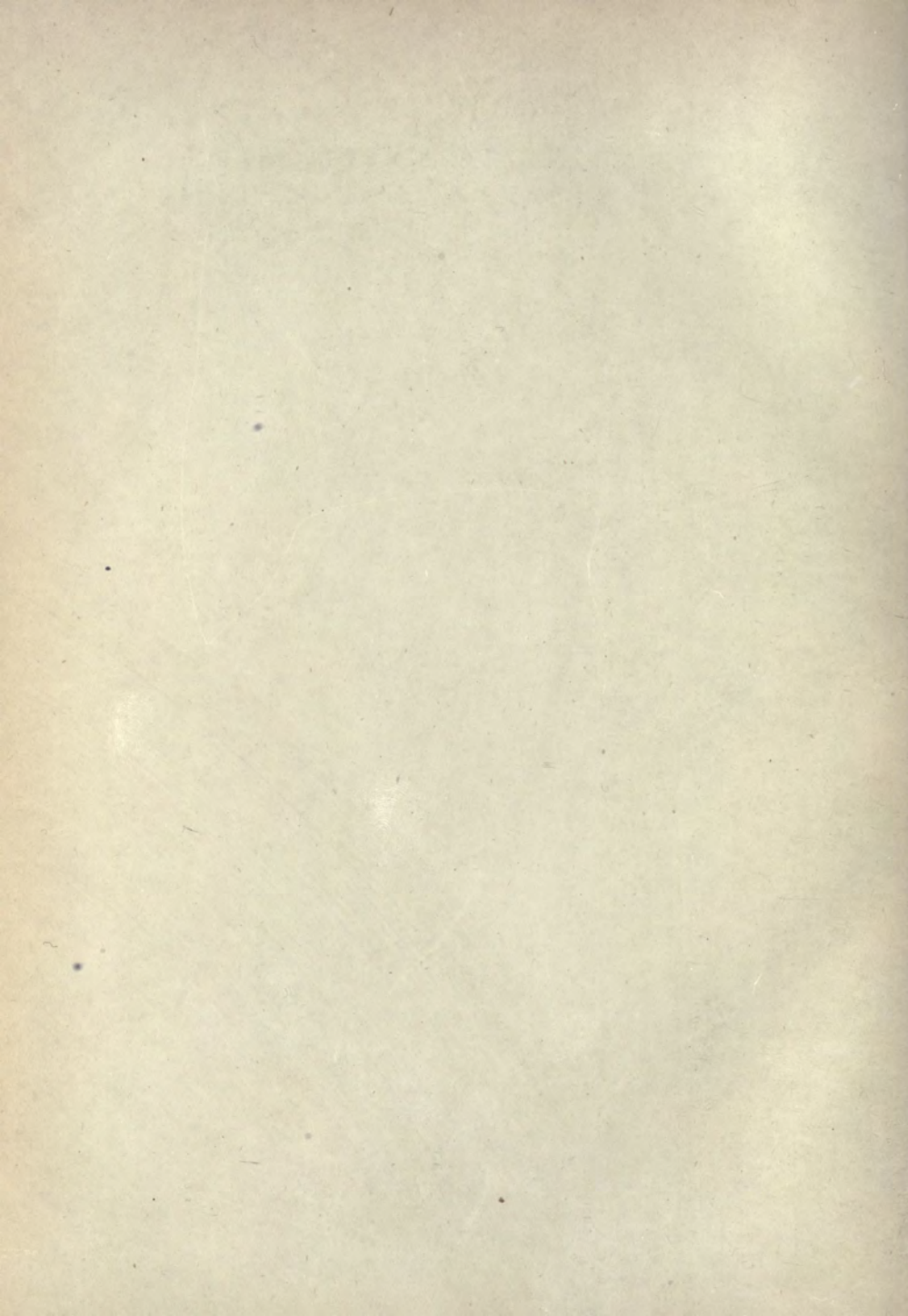
<sup>1</sup> On this, as on many other events in Mary Stuart's life, there is sharp diversity of statement. Tytler says, “Previous to the conflict Mary had taken her station upon an eminence, half a mile distant, which commanded a view of the field”—that is quite probable; Hill Burton carefully avoids the point, contenting himself by telling us “the queen, when she saw the fate of the day, galloped off frantically”; Hume Brown states that “the two forces met at Langside—Mary looking on from a neighbouring hill”; the Rev. Mr. David Dow, the writer of “Cathcart Parish” in the *Old Stat. Ac.*, vol. v. pp. 349 and 350, says, “A place is yet pointed out upon an opposite eminence fully in the view of the field now described, and near the old Castle of Cathcart, where Mary stood until the affair was decided.” Miss Strickland in her *Life of the Queen* has it that “it was from the battlements of Castlemilk that Mary is supposed to have first beheld the rebel troops advancing”—this is one of several myths for which the authoress is responsible. Castlemilk stands fully a mile from the battlefield, and the configuration of the high intervening land completely shuts out any view of the field. Scott in *The Abbot* perpetrates a similar myth by placing the queen and her attendants at the yew tree of Crookston Castle, about three miles from Langside, “of which they had a full and commanding view”—a physical impossibility. The mistake was pointed out to Sir Walter, and in a note to the novel he says: “I was led astray in the present case by the authority of my deceased friend, James Graham, in his drama on the subject of Queen Mary, and by a traditionary report of Mary having seen the battle from the Castle of Crookstone.” A. M. Scott in his *Battle of Langside* (also notes, *Trans. Glas. Arch. Soc.*, 1884, vol. i. pp. 281, 300) accepts the local tradition of Mary having witnessed the battle from the Court Knowe, Cathcart. My sketch shows the stone that marks the traditional site.





THE COURT KNOWE, CATHCART





## LANGSIDE

“Court Knowe,” opposite Cathcart Castle, is just that distance :

“She stayed her steed upon a hill—she saw them marching by,

She heard their shouts—she read success in every flashing eye.

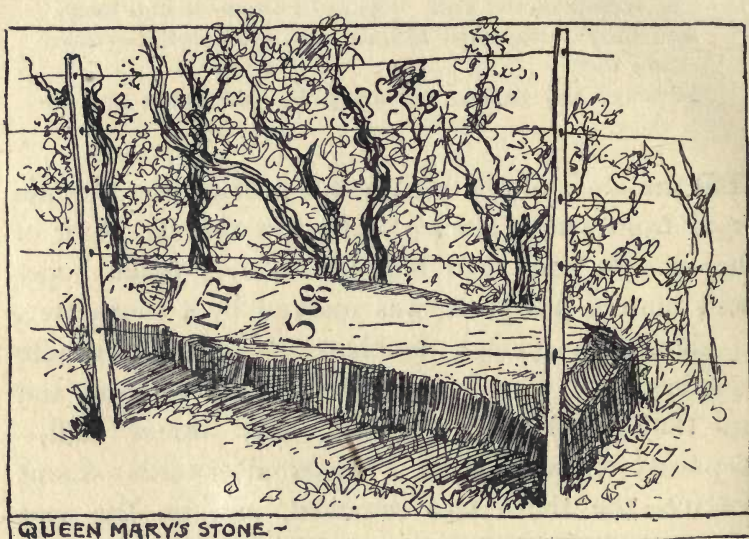
The tumult of the strife begins—it roars—it dies away,  
And Mary’s troops and banners now, and courtiers—where are they?

Scattered and strewn, and flying far, defenceless and undone.”

Till the close of the eighteenth century the historic spot from which Mary gazed upon the slaughter of her friends, and shed bitter tears over fallen hopes and blasted prospects, was marked by a thorn tree, a significant enough emblem of the unfortunate queen’s life. It decayed in the course of time, and in 1790 a Glasgow solicitor—Mr. James Hill—replaced it by another. Years afterwards—about 1810?—the thorn was removed, and on the spot General Sir George Cathcart (who fell at Inkerman) erected a rough block of freestone brought from Giffnock Quarry. With his own hand he carved upon the stone a crown, the letters M.R., and the year 1568. This stone now lies “dishonoured and undone.” Its resting-place, as my sketch shows, is behind an old thorn hedge some fifty yards south of the present memorial, the ornamental granite

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slab erected by General Cathcart's descendant, the late Earl Cathcart. A pleasant place on a summer afternoon is this bosky knove above Cathcart, with its bordering of green hedge and the weather-stained walls of the ruinous keep showing among the cluster-



ing trees. A pleasant place to dream away a summer's day, and as the shadows of sunset's golden ladders steal down the grassy slope, memories of the storm-tossed fugitive crowd around :

“Even now I see her far away in that calm convent aisle,  
I hear her chant her vesper hymn, I mark her holy  
smile.”



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The tender mercies of the English queen and the black tragedy of Fotheringay<sup>1</sup> were the fruits of Langside. They are familiar history.

<sup>1</sup> A couple of quaint and deeply interesting contemporary drawings of Queen Mary's trial and execution are reproduced from the Calthorpe MSS. by the Hon. Mrs. Maxwell Scott of Abbotsford in her volume on the tragedy at Fotheringay.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE COVENANTERS

“DAREST thou say Mass in my lug?” shouted a woman<sup>1</sup> in the old cathedral of St. Giles, in the

<sup>1</sup> Tradition asserts that a certain Jenny Geddes accompanied these words by flinging a stool at the clergyman’s head. In Johnson’s *Musical Miscellany*, No. 450, there is a passing reference to Jenny in the following fragments of a sarcastic song :

“Put the gown upon the bishop,  
That’s his miller’s due o’ knaveship :  
Jenny Geddes was the gossip  
Put the gown upon the bishop.”

Hill Burton remarks that Burns was the most important contributor to this work, so that the authority for this lyrical gem is no older than his day. The annotator on Johnson’s collection gives it an origin far wide of the Covenant : “This is a mere fragment of one of those satirical and frequently obscure old songs composed in ridicule of the Scottish bishops about the period of the Reformation” (*Illustrations of the Lyrical Poetry and Music of Scotland*, No. 390). Wodrow, on the authority of Robert Stuart—a son of the Lord Advocate of the Revolution—utterly dethrones the worthy Jenny : “He tells me that it’s the constantly-believed tradition that it was Mrs. Mean, wife to John Mean, merchant in Edinburgh, that cast the first stool when the service was read in the New Kirk, Edinburgh, 1637, and that many of the lasses that carried on the fray were prentices in disguise, for they threw stools to a great length” (*Analecta*, vol. i. p. 64, quot. Hill Burton, note vi. pp. 150, 152). The curious may see Jenny’s three-legged cutty-stool in the Edinburgh Museum of Antiquities. Unfortunately there is no evidence to justify any connection with the redoubtable old lady.

## THE COVENANTERS

High Street of Edinburgh, on Sunday the 23rd of July 1637. The occasion was the reading of the new liturgy, "the Popish - English - Scottish - Masse-Service-Booke" which Charles I, with sadly misplaced zeal, sought to impose upon his Scottish subjects. It was generally supposed to be the work of Laud, and as such was received as the work of the great enemy of the people. The echoes of that period we may still hear. They are all associated with the Pope and the Mass. The cry in old St. Giles fanned the smouldering fires into fierce flames. The Scarlet Woman had to be consumed. The king's herald, reading a proclamation from the Cross of Edinburgh, "That King Charles had himself ordained a Book of Common Prayer in order to maintain the true religion and beat down superstition," was defied and ordered to remain on the battlements until a popular counterblast had been read. The Earl of Cassillis took the instrument, and he was supported by Montrose, Rothes, Home, and other nobles, barons and clergymen.<sup>1</sup> On the 22nd of February 1638 an advertisement was sent through all the kingdom that "all who loved the cause of God would repair to Edinburgh for prosecuting the course of intended Reformation which now they had taken in hand." Five days later the National

<sup>1</sup> The original of this Protest is preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities, OA 34. It is a vellum, and is printed in full on Rothes's *Relation concerning the Affairs of the Kirk* (Bann. Club), pp. 86-89.



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Covenant was ready for signature, and on Wednesday, the twenty-eighth day of February, the "fair parchment above an elne in squair" was carried to the monastery of the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, which stood, as its successor stands, on the grassy slope above the historic Grassmarket, and looking across to where the dark-browed rock of Dunedin is silhouetted against the northern sky-line. The public signing of the Covenant by the stern and weeping multitude provides a picture unique in Scottish history.<sup>1</sup> The Covenanters were ready for war. Alexander Leslie, a veteran who had served under Gustavus Adolphus, was appointed to the command of the covenanting army. Montrose with a force was sent to convert the north. His royalist rival, the Earl of Huntly, came to terms, and Montrose returned south. On the 14th of May 1638 some northern barons surprised a body of Covenanters under the Earl of Errol and put them to flight. This engagement is known in history as the Trot of Turriff. It was the first skirmish of the Great

<sup>1</sup> Baillie's *Letters and Journals*, vol. i. p. 36; Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh*, pp. 342, 410; Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh*, pp. 310, 312; Stevenson's *Edinburgh*, p. 135 *et seq.*; King-Hewison, *The Covenanters*, vol. i. p. 250 *et seq.*; Hume Brown, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. ii. p. 238; Rait, *Scotland*, p. 201; Lang, *Hist. Scot.*, vol. iii. p. 32; Hill Burton, vol. vi. p. 186 *et seq.* After having examined many copies of the Covenant, Dr. King-Hewison arrived at the conclusion that the copy in the custody of the Town Council of Edinburgh was the original document signed in Greyfriars.

## THE COVENANTERS

Civil War.<sup>1</sup> In 1640 Charles, faced with a Scots army living "at ease and peace" in Newcastle, and, incidentally, controlling the London coal supply, acceded to the various Scottish demands and repudiated any sinister intention against the religion and laws of Scotland. Events moved rapidly. The following year Charles was in Edinburgh showing "incomparable goodness" and compliance. Mean-time Montrose, who "saw in the political predominance of the Presbyterian clergy all that he had detested in the political predominance of the bishops," had gone over to the king's side. He is said to have been "anticipating the freer life of modern Scotland."<sup>2</sup> He received from the king a commission as his Lieut.-General in Scotland. With a force of some 3000 men he, on September 1, 1644, gained his first victory at Tippermuir. Six weeks afterwards he defeated Argyll at Inverlochy, after which he despatched a letter to the king promising that "by the end of the summer of 1645 he would leave a subdued Scotland to make the rebels in England feel the just reward of rebellion." A victory in a skirmish at Auldearn, another at Alford, and a third at Kilsyth on August 14, 1645, brought the conqueror to Glasgow, the town surrendering at his summons. But he had reached the zenith of his victorious career. On the 12th of September, *en route* to

<sup>1</sup> Spalding, *Hist. of Troubles (Memorials)*, vol. i. p. 134 (Bann. Club).

<sup>2</sup> S. R. Gardiner, "Montrose," *Dict. Nat. Biog.*



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

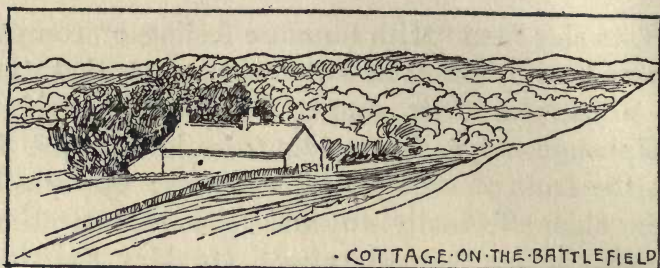
England, Montrose had encamped at Philiphaugh, on the left bank of the Ettrick, nearly opposite the town of Selkirk. His left flank was defended by a steep declivity and his right by the Ettrick. In the beginning of September, David Leslie left the siege of Hereford and hastened to Scotland on the express mission of dealing with the unconquered enemy. He came up with their forces at Philiphaugh. According to one account Montrose was totally unaware of Leslie's proximity. If we are to believe another story, both armies lay under arms on the night of the 12th, in readiness for the battle of the 13th. A very probable tradition says that the night was foggy, and that Leslie under cover of the fog managed to get within a few hundred yards of the foe before he was discovered. The wily old Leslie had divided his troops, and Montrose's army was attacked in front and rear.<sup>1</sup> Montrose's army was thrown into hopeless confusion and a horrible butchery followed. If Leslie gained a victory he lost his laurels, his troops slaughtering not only the prisoners they captured, but the female camp-followers and their children—to the number of 300, says one account—were butchered. The only defence for this brutality is the somewhat weak one of revenge, Montrose's Irish followers having been

<sup>1</sup> The old "Ballad of Philiphaugh" records this movement of Leslie's. Gardiner, *Great Civil War*, vol. ii. p. 356; Gunnyon, *Scot. Life and Hist.*, pp. 100, 101, 102; Hume Brown, *Scot.*, vol. ii. p. 263; Scott, *Min. Scot. Bor.*, vol. ii. pp. 166-72.



## THE COVENANTERS

wont to slay men "with no more feeling or compassion and with the same careless neglect that they kill a hen for their supper." Upon the field of Philiphaugh, says Scott, Montrose lost in one defeat the fruit of six splendid victories: nor was he again able effectually to make head in Scotland against the covenanted cause. On May 25, 1650, the great Marquis of Montrose was hanged in Edinburgh as "an excommunicated traitor," and on 3rd September of the same year Leslie himself was defeated at Dunbar—losing about 3000 men—by Cromwell, who was appealing (by force of arms) to the Scots to have nothing to do with Charles II. To the high hopes entertained of him Charles proved false, and after his Restoration his life and actions combined to support his expressed view that Presbytery was "not a religion for a gentleman." The terrible "killing times" with their ruthless persecution, the battles of Rullion Green, Drumclog, and Bothwell Brig were the direct, perhaps the logical, sequence to that ill-considered remark made by Charles.

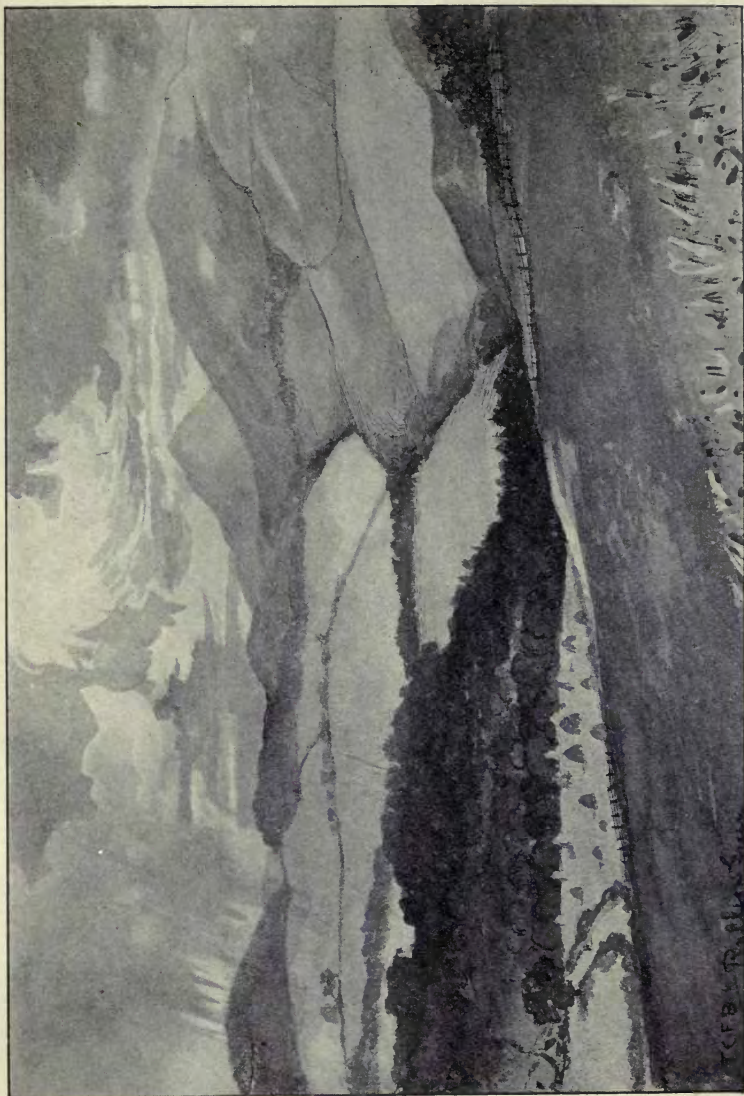


COTTAGE ON THE BATTLEFIELD

## CHAPTER XV

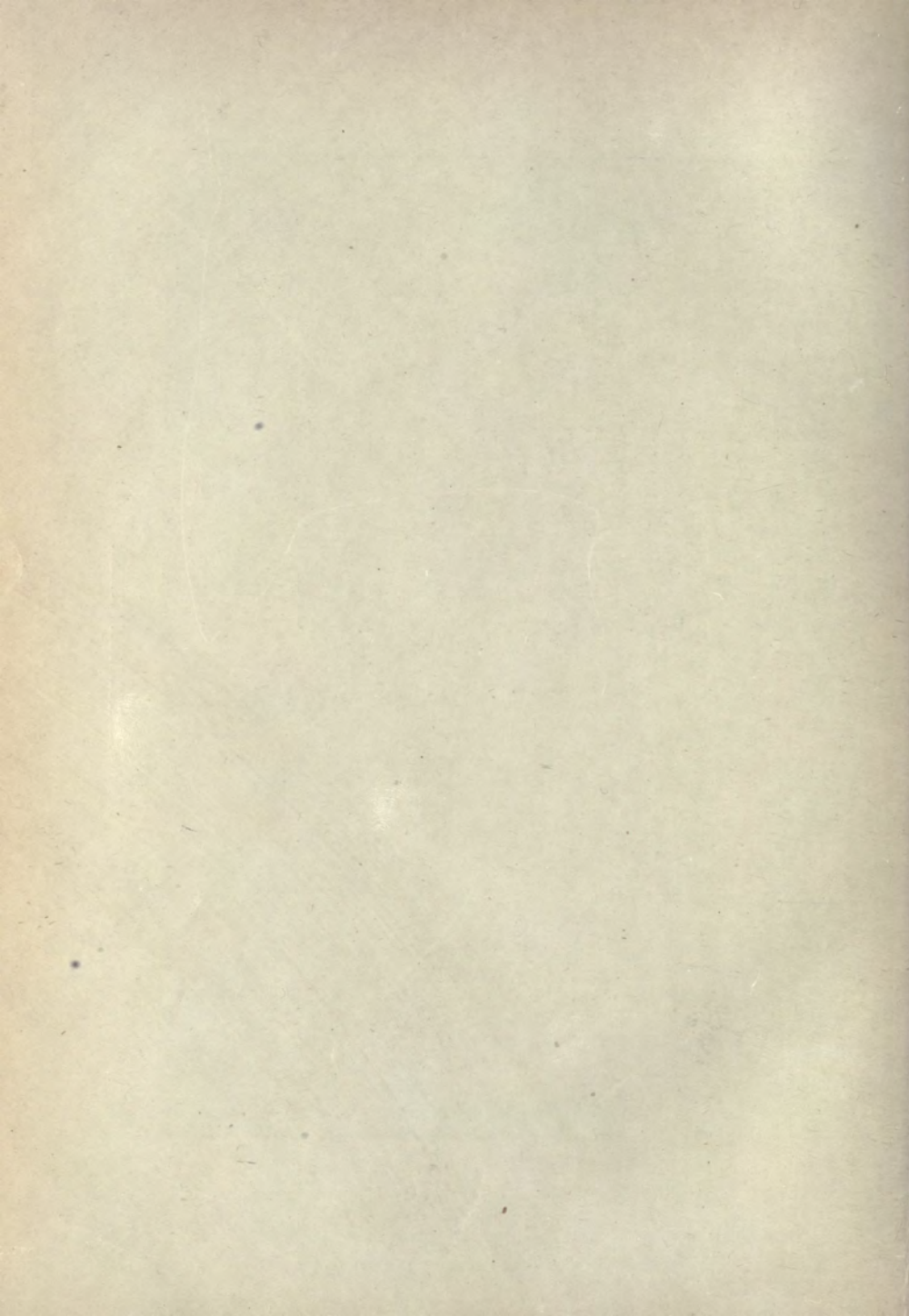
### RULLION GREEN :

ON a green ridge lying athwart the shoulders of the billowy Pentlands there was fought the first battle of the grim "killing times." It would be difficult to choose a more picturesque setting of mountain and moor than that of Rullion Green. The configuration of the surrounding country lends to the Pentlands a curiously majestic aspect. Not one of the peaks of that range reaches two thousand feet, yet by some magic of nature the battlefield seems overshadowed by veritable mountain masses, dark and frowning, and full of stern ruggedness. Lonely glens and deep hollows, amidst which the soft blue shadows come and go, the bleating of sheep and the eerie cry of the curlew, and the wimple of hidden burns, lend an infinitely solitary atmosphere to Stevenson's "old



RULLION GREEN





## RULLION GREEN

huddle of grey hills," as he termed his beloved Pentlands. Standing by the ancient moss-grown martyrs' stone,<sup>1</sup> which marks the last resting-place of "fifty true covenanted Presbyterians," we look southwards from the hills across a richly-wooded stretch of the Lothians. Sunshine and shadow weave a chequered pattern on the pleasantest of landscapes. Bein farms nestle in the corners of woods, and flakes of green and gold show where the fruits of the earth are hastening to a goodly harvest. In the far distance the Lammermoors and Moorfoots are traced, a gleaming line of purple against the blue ether of the sky. At our feet lies Scott's "haunted Woodhouselee,"<sup>2</sup> where gentle

<sup>1</sup> The stone stood in former times more to the north-east. It was placed where we now see it by a late proprietor.

<sup>2</sup> Popular and persistent tradition says that old and also new Woodhouselee—stones of the ancient edifice having been employed in building its successor (in name) some three miles away—are haunted by the ghost of Lady Bothwellhaugh. The story is a weird one and reminiscent of ruder days than those to which the present generation is accustomed. About 1570 the estate of Woodhouselee passed to Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh on his marriage to Lady Anne Sinclair of the Rosslyn family. As the result of fighting for Queen Mary at Langside, Hamilton forfeited the estate, and the new-comer—Sir James Bellenden, Lord Justice Clerk and a great favourite of Regent Moray—on whom it was bestowed by the regent, seized the house and turned out Lady Bothwellhaugh and her infant child. It was a wintry November's eve, and the mother and child were forced to spend the night wandering over the bleak hillsides. Before morning dawned the mother was insane. Maddened by the inhumanity of the act, Bothwellhaugh swore to be revenged on Moray. The *dénouement* came on the 23rd of February 1570, when Bothwellhaugh shot the regent as the latter was riding in state through Linlithgow. Mere party prejudice can scarcely be held to account for the deed;

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Allan Ramsay was wont at times to stray, and where in the '45 Prince Charlie's Highlanders extracted five shillings and sixpence from a terrified

something deeper was surely necessary? At all events the murder is applauded or stigmatised by contemporary historians according to their religious or party prejudices. The ghosts of the unfortunate lady and child still flit around Woodhouselee. Scott in his ballad of "Cadyow Castle"—the ancient baronial residence of the Hamiltons; its picturesque ruins stand on the precipitous banks of the Evan, some distance above that stream's junction with the Clyde—describes the tragedy and asks, verse 25 :

"What sheeted phantom wanders wild,  
Where mountain Eske through woodland flows;  
Her arms unfold a shadowy child—  
Oh! is it she, the pallid rose?"

When Scott lived at Lasswade Cottage—a few miles from Edinburgh—shortly after his marriage, he was a frequent visitor at (new) Woodhouselee, where Miss Ann Frazer-Tytler of the eminent literary and legal family could entertain him with stories of the ghostly visitants which on several occasions had been seen by accredited domestics. Hill Burton quotes Maidment—*Scottish Songs and Ballads*—who thinks popular tradition is wrong regarding the original of the "sheeted phantom." He identifies her as the heroine of the sad sweet ballad "Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament." This lady was the daughter of the Bishop of Orkney. Maidment supposes she lived at Glencorse, near Woodhouselee. She had a *liaison* with Sir Alexander Sinclair, who deserted her. The refrain of the ballad as given by Percy is inexpressibly sad :

"Balow, my babe, ly stil and sleipe,  
It grieves me sair to see thee weepe."

In her misery she probably became insane, and died the mother of an illegitimate child. The similarity of Bothwell to Bothwellhaugh and the proximity of Glencorse and Woodhouselee account, according to Maidment, for the "popular error" anent the personality of the ghost. The whole affair is one of the most curious incidents in Scottish legendary lore. Appendix and notes to Scott's ballads "Cadyow Castle" and the "Gray Brother"; Hill Burton, vol. v. pp. 12-14; Percy's *Reliques*, Sec. Ser., Book ii. p. 279.



## RULLION GREEN

butler, the home of the great Scottish historian, and where poor Leyden,<sup>1</sup> bound for his Indian grave, wrote on the window-pane of his bedroom :

“How oft the whirling gale shall strew  
O'er thy bright stream the leaves of fallow hue  
Ere next this classic haunt my wanderings find.”

And by the old Biggar coach road which winds along the hillside we could, if we wished to follow “the Gentle Shepherd,”

“Gae farer up the burn to Habbie's Howe,  
Where a' that's sweet in spring and summer grow.”

Among the woodlands in the distance is Penicuik Kirk, where the bellman of 1666 was paid 3*s.* 4*d.* for making “westland men's graves,” after the battle on the Pentlands.

To the westland men the famous Pentland Rising was due.<sup>2</sup> Two prime men-hunters before the gory era of Claverhouse and Grierson of Lag were Ballantine and Sir James Turner. King-Hewison in his *Covenanters* tells us that “Burnet's” true

<sup>1</sup> John Leyden, the notable scholar and poet. He was the eldest son of a Teviotdale shepherd. His bright and brief career began its busy round at Denholm, a pretty little village on the Teviot five miles equidistant between Jedburgh and Hawick. The date of his birth was September 8, 1775; he died at Batavia on August 28, 1811 (W. S. Crockett, *Scott Country*, 2nd ed. pp. 100-17).

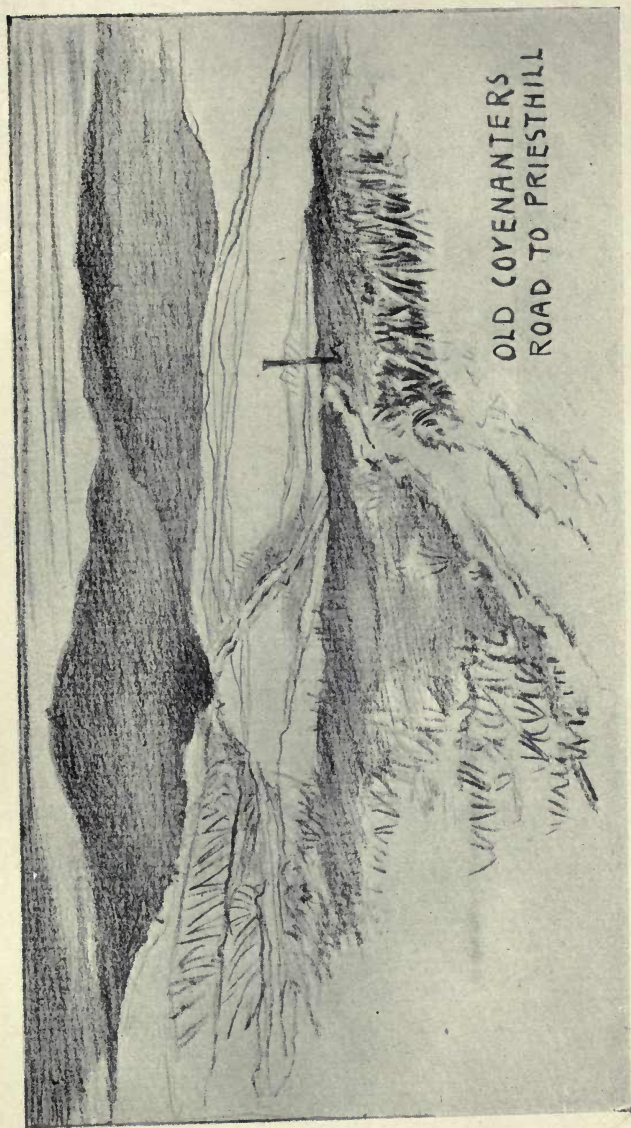
<sup>2</sup> King-Hewison, II. xxiii. p. 168 *et seq.*; Sanford Terry, *The Pentland Rising*, p. 3, note. Rothes, writing to Lauderdale, December 17, 1666, describes the rising as the work of “damd fulls uho hes anticipat ther taym of raysing.”

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

portrait of the mercenary Turner, punctilious only in obeying orders and happy in his cups, is not pleasing, and explains the hatred of the peasantry, who nicknamed him "Bloody Bite-the-Sheep."<sup>1</sup> Turner was the central figure in the opening act of the Pentland drama. Sharp—afterwards murdered on Magus Moor—reported to the Government in 1665 that the Scots were "aloft and discomposed." In the early months of 1666 the same Sharp was staggered by the receipt of a booklet written by John Brown, of Wamphray. The author powerfully supported covenanting principle, and in forwarding the volume to the authorities Sharp unclerically terms it "a damned book." Matters were looking serious. In March Sir James Turner was sent south to Galloway with one hundred and twenty foot-guards to begin business "at the old rate." The atrocities of Turner's ruffians were more than human flesh and blood could stand.<sup>2</sup>

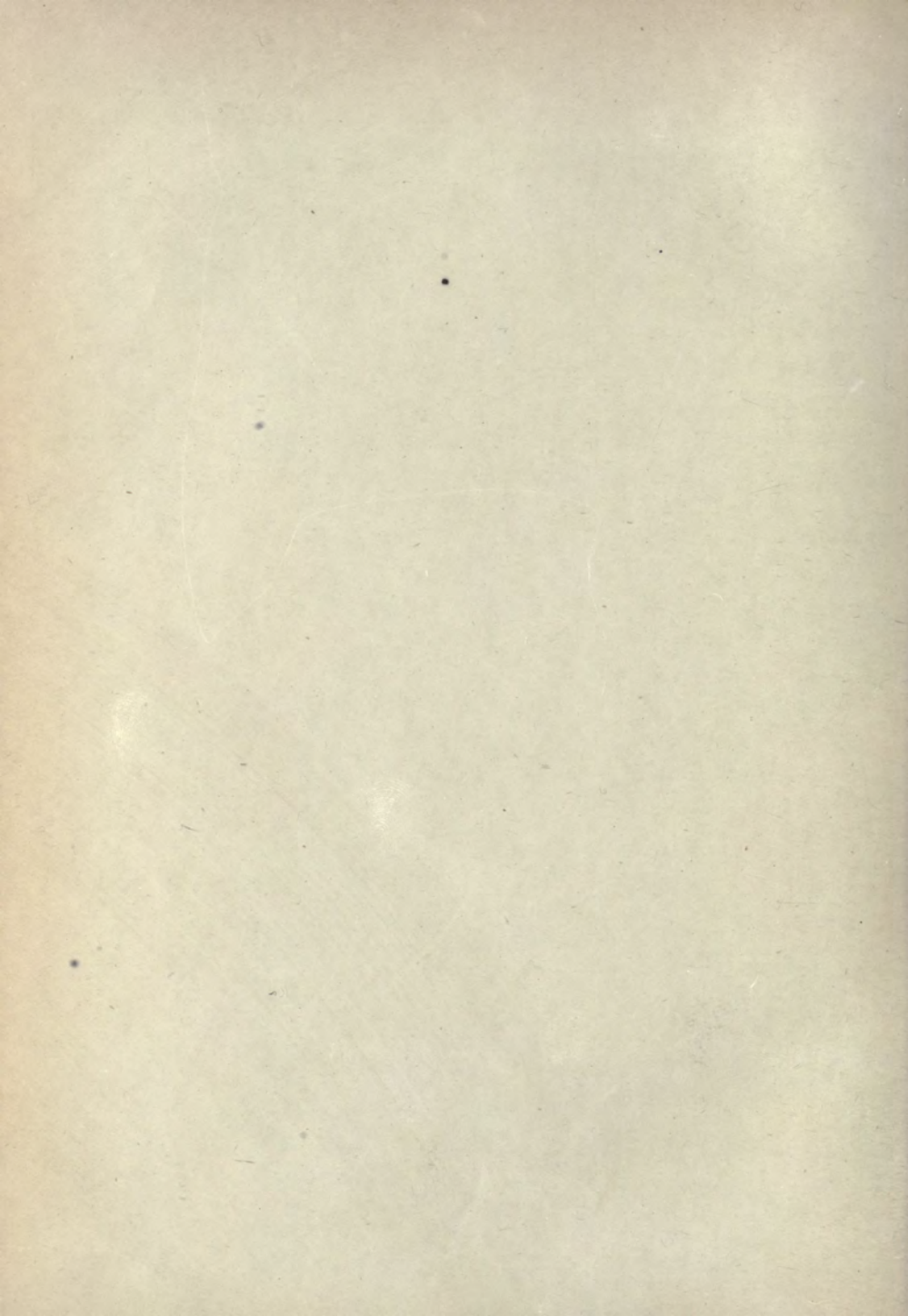
<sup>1</sup> King-Hewison, II. p. 121 and note; cf. Burnet, vol. i. pp. 378, 440; Laud, *Tap.*, vol. ii. pp. 65, 82, 83; Defoe's *Memoirs*, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> After Rullion Green, Dalziel, or Dalzell, threatened to kill, spit, roast, or burn his prisoners. The authors of *Naphtali* speak of what the persecuted people suffered by stabbing, stripping, rape, torture by match, imprisoning men and women together like beasts, spoiling the innocent. Wodrow gives a concrete example of unthinkable villainy. Sir William Ballantine, a notorious ruffian, in the alehouse at Balmaghie suggested immorality to the landlady in her husband's presence, and on the poor man endeavouring to protect his wife from the assault, Ballantine turned and struck him dead. The cold-blooded murder of John Brown of Priesthill is another of these touching and tragic incidents. John was the Ayrshire carrier. He lived at Priesthill, a small and lonely farm



OLD COVENANTERS  
ROAD TO PRIESTHILL





## RULLION GREEN

The "irreconcilables," as they were termed, who refused to help Government-appointed curates in their discipline, were driven to the hills and mosses for safety. On Tuesday, November 13, 1666, the laird of Barscob and three companions, hungry and half-frozen by the bitter winds and rains, ventured to forsake their hiding-place to seek food and shelter

situated on the bleak moorlands which lie between the battlefield of Drumclog and the town of Muirkirk. His only crime was non-attendance on the curate of the parish. Claverhouse "smelled him out," and on a summer morning in early May, 1685, he and his troopers tracked down John at his farm. They led him to the door of his house. His wife, a brave, heroic woman, came out to meet the party, a little boy in her arms and a wee girl clinging to her skirts. The children gazed in amazement at the dragoons and at their father kneeling on the ground, and as they gazed they saw Claverhouse ride up to him whom they called father and shoot him dead. The awful deed done, Claverhouse brutally asked the wife, "What do you think of your husband now?" To which she gave the noble answer, "I aye thocht muckle o' him, but never sae muckle as I do this day." Priesthill is a lonely spot to-day. It can be best reached from Muirkirk, from which it lies about five or six miles across the moors. An old Covenanters' track leads to the spot, but a guide is advisable, indeed almost necessary. The farm-steading of Priesthill has long since vanished, but one may still trace the mouldering lines of the foundations. On the spot where John Brown was shot there is a flat weather-worn slab, on which we read :

" Here lies the body of JOHN BROWN  
martyr who was murdered in this place  
by Graham of Claverhouse for his testimony  
to the Covenanted work of Reformation

Because he durst not own the authority  
of the then Tyrant destroying the Same,  
who died the first day of May A.D. 1685  
and of his age 58," &c.

There is also a square pillar alongside the flat stone, and a low wall encloses the two memorials.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

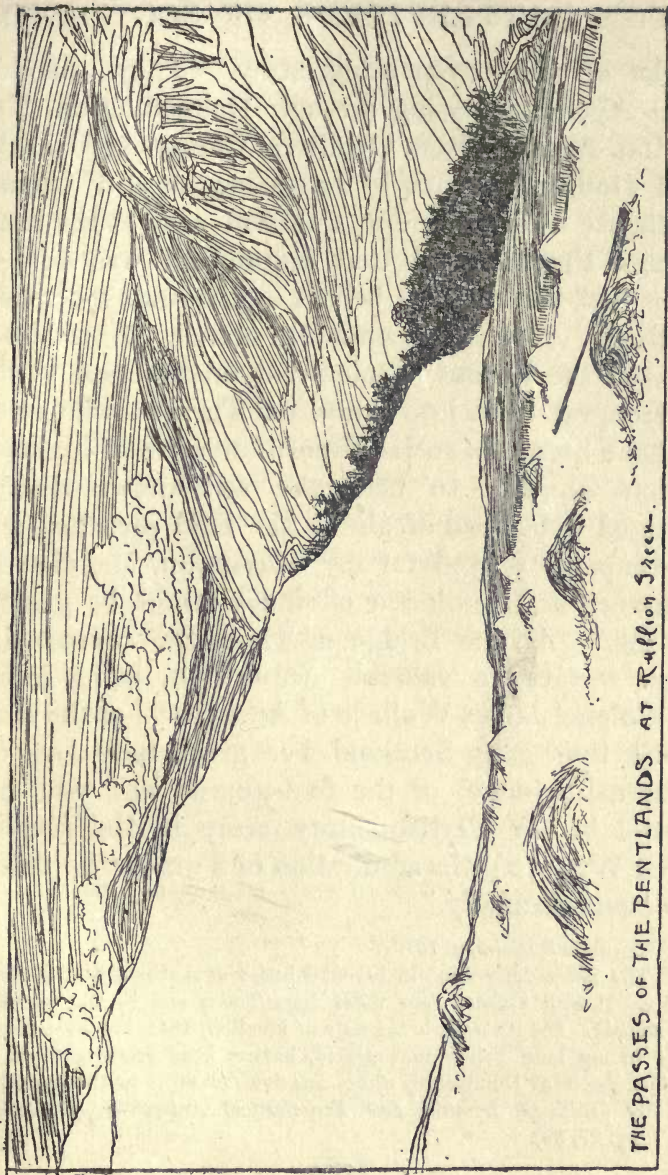
in the clachan alehouse of Dalry.<sup>1</sup> On their way they met Corporal George Deans and three troopers driving along some miserable countrymen. They passed by, but while at breakfast there came the news to them that the soldiers had captured another farmer and were threatening "to strip him naked and set him on a hot gridiron" unless he paid the church fines. Barscob and his companions ran and caught the fiends red-handed. Corporal Deans was wounded and the soldiers surrendered. The laird of Barscob did not pause there. He knew Turner was at Dumfries. Accompanied by fifty-four riders on Galloway nags, Barscob rode into Dumfries and hurried to Turner's lodgings. Clothed only in "nightcap, nightgown, drawers, and socks," Turner appeared at the window.<sup>2</sup> They demanded his surrender. On his own statement Turner offered a bold front; on the other side he is represented as shouting, "Quarter, gentlemen; for Christ's sake, quarter; there shall be no resistance." Perhaps Bloody Bite-the-Sheep had visions of a hot gridiron? In any case he was taken prisoner, his life spared, arms were seized and distributed, and the enthusiasts resolved to strike at higher game.

The exploit at Dumfries aroused the hopes of the westland men, and hundreds flocked to swell the

<sup>1</sup> The ruins of the old tavern, I believe, are still to be seen.

<sup>2</sup> Sanford Terry, pp. 11-14; King-Hewison, vol. ii. pp. 192-3; Turner's *Memoirs*, pp. 148, 149.





THE PASSES OF THE PENTLANDS AT RALLION JACOB.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

ranks of the covenanting army. They marched into Ayrshire, passing through Dalmellington, Tarbolton, Ayr, Coylton, Ochiltree, Cumnock, Muirkirk and Douglas, thence to Lesmahagow and Lanark, Bathgate and Newbridge, Colinton—and at the latter village they learned that Edinburgh was not—as they had been led to believe—favourably disposed to them. It was a memorable march. At Dalmellington the famous if somewhat intemperate Welsh of Irongray came into camp, and Turner—who seems to have been of a social disposition 'spite of his reputation—anxious to hear the well-known divine,<sup>1</sup> pledged a tankard of ale to the field preacher, who thereupon “prayed for my conversion, and that repentance and remission of sinnes might be granted to me.” At the Bridge of Doon the covenanting force received a valuable acquisition, being joined by Colonel James Wallace of Auchans<sup>2</sup>—of the stout stock that gave Scotland her great hero—an old lieutenant-colonel of the foot-guards, and who had served in the Parliamentary army in the English Civil War. To the admiration of Turner “he drilled his men splendidly.”

<sup>1</sup> Turner's *Memoirs*, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> The remarkably fine old baronial house of Auchans is still almost entire. It stands about four miles from Troon and in the parish of Dundonald. On its walls is the date of erection, 1644, but its materials were in use long before that period, having been removed from the ancient castle of Dundonald, whose massive donjon is in the immediate vicinity (Billings, *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland*, vol. i. pp. 27, 28).



## RULLION GREEN

The story of the march to Rullion Green makes but sorry reading. "Violent, rainy nights" and bleak, blustering November days did their best to damp the ardour of the devoted band. Turner—a close observer<sup>1</sup>—remarks in his *Memoirs*: "The way to Muirkirke was exceeding bad, a very hie wind with a greivous raine in our faces. The nighte fell darke before we c'd reach the place where the foot were quartered with no meate or drinke and with very little fire. I doe confesse I never sawe lustier fellows than these foote were or better marchers." They had need be lusty fellows. As they pushed on their weary way "it rained pitefullie and the wind was loud."<sup>2</sup> Watching them and waiting his chance was Sir Thomas Dalziel—the "Muscovite Beast," a veteran of Buckingham's expedition to Rochelle, who had served in the Russian army against the Poles and Turks.<sup>3</sup> According to Wodrow, "a man

<sup>1</sup> Turner was an educated man. He graduated at Glasgow University in 1631.

<sup>2</sup> Turner's *Memoirs*, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> Kirkpatrick-Sharpe quotes Captain John Creighton in his notes to *Kirkton's History*, pp. 226, 227, and states that "the Czar of Muscovy, Alexis Michaelovitch, under whose banner he (Dalziel) fought courageously against the Turks and Tartars, for his great bravery and military conduct promoted him to the rank of general." Dalziel never shaved after the murder of Charles I, and his beard grew to enormous dimensions. He went to London once a year to kiss the king's hand, and his unusual dress and figure never failed to draw after him a great crowd of London boys and other young people. As he was a man of humour he would always thank them for their civilities when he left them at the door to go in to the king." Notes: Hill Burton, vol. vii. p. 174; Sanford Terry, p. 22.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

naturally fierce and rude," and to Kirkton, "a man who lived and died so strangely it was commonly believed he was in covenant with the Devil." He was never married and left his property to his illegitimate children, and was banned by Cargill in the Torwood excommunication<sup>1</sup> for his "lewd and impious life, led in adultery and uncleanness from his youth with a contempt of marriage." Wallace knew his implacable foe, and marched on briskly. Dalziel followed, but thought he "c'd not ingage them bot by advancing with his horses." And so to Colinton, above Edinburgh, where, says Turner, they numbered a "few above one thousand." At Lanark they had been 3000 strong. Cold, want of provisions, the marked antipathy of the peasantry of the Lothians, and, last but not least, the arming of the city of Edinburgh against them had reduced their numbers to about 900. From Colinton kirkyard, where they had bivouacked on "frosted snow," they swept round the Pentlands—past Swanston, where Stevenson was born, and on to the Biggar road—and on to the slopes of Rullion Green. "It was a frosty cold day," and the hills were covered with snow. Between Turnhouse and Lawhead the Covenanters stood. The trysting-place has on the north a declivity of three hundred feet till it reaches the red-breasted braes of the Castlelaw, beneath which the Glencorse burn "drums and pours in cunning wimples" through the glen.

<sup>1</sup> *Cloud of Witnesses*, Appendix.



• RUINS OF TURNHOUSE FARM ON RULLION GREEN.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

The Covenanters had dim thoughts of winning back to Clydeside, there to recruit or disperse. Dalziel spent the night of the 27th at Calder House, Mid-Calder,<sup>1</sup> and on the morning of the 28th—he had good spies—led his men across the Pentlands and down the passes by Bell's Hill to Rullion Green, where at noon he came in sight of the hill-folk bivouacking. They were in a sorry condition. Cold and hunger and the miserable weather had reduced the spirits of the 900 Covenanters to zero, and it must have been with great contempt that Dalziel, with his 3000 trained and disciplined troops,<sup>2</sup> regarded the 900 ill-armed and undisciplined irregulars. A contemporary writer tells us :

“ Some had halbards, some had durks,  
Some had crooked swords like Turks ;  
Some had slings and some had flails  
Knit with eels and oxen tails.

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<sup>1</sup> The patrimony of the ancient Sandilands family, whose direct descendant, Lord Torphichen, occupies the fine mansion of his ancestors. In Calder House John Knox dispensed the first sacrament given in Scotland after the Reformation, and a remarkably fine portrait of the great reformer is preserved there.

<sup>2</sup> Sanford Terry, *Pentland Rising*, p. 76, note ; *Lauderdale Papers*, vol. i. p. 250. The military establishment at the time consisted of two regiments of foot, six troops of horse, and two troops of the guards. The two infantry regiments are said by Wodrow (vol. ii. p. 13) to have been commanded by Dalziel and the Earl of Newburgh, Sir James Livingstone. Of the six troops of horse he mentions the Duke of Hamilton and the Earls of Annandale, Airlie, and Kincardine among their commanders. He estimates the full strength of the establishment at about 3000 foot, besides horse. Law (*Memorials*, p. 16) gives Dalziel's strength as 600 horse and 2000 foot.



## RULLION GREEN

Some had spears and some had pikes,  
Some had spades which delvyt dykes ;  
Some had guns with rusty ratches,  
Some had fiery peats for matches,  
Some had bows but wanted arrows,  
Some had pistols without marrows ;  
Some the coulter of a plough,  
Some had syths such for to hough ;  
And some with a Lochaber exe  
Resolved to gi'e Dalziel his paiks."

Another rude contemporary ballad, clearly a royalist production, represents the covenanting force as principally composed of "souters and taylors," and makes merry over their robbing the pedlars of their packs :

"The cleverest men stood in the van,  
The Whigs they took their heels and ran ;  
But such a raking was never seen  
As the raking o' the Rullion Green."

The last two lines are significant. They make the blood run cold. It was at Rullion Green that the Covenanters first discovered that Dalziel had sold himself to the Devil, for they imagined they saw the leaden bullets rebounding harmless from his buff coat. Paton<sup>1</sup> distinctly "saw his pistoll ball

<sup>1</sup> Captain John Paton of Meadowhead was a gallant man, in the quaint phraseology of his day "a pretty man," burly and keen-eyed, and a veteran of the German wars, a campaigner of Kilsyth, Philiphaugh, and Worcester. He was a native of the old-world village of Fenwick, where in

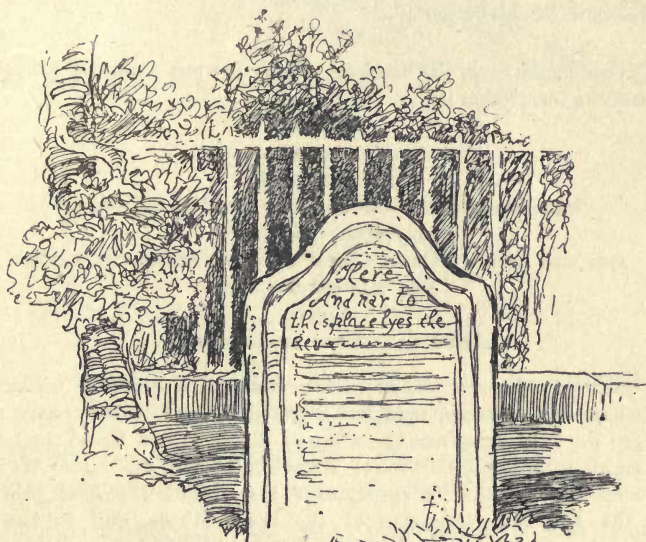
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

to hop down upon Dalziel's boots." He immediately "smelled the devil." Wallace had posted his worn-out poor countrymen on a ridge of the hill, and they fought gallantly. They had the advantage of the ground, and they routed the first charge of Dalziel's horse. Fresh troops, who had dined and wine well, were brought up, and the advance steadily pushed forward. There was some fierce hand-to-hand work. An Edinburgh news-writer—quoted in Professor Terry's interesting monograph—writing on November 30, 1666, reported: "The army (Dalziel's) say they never saw men fight more gallantly than the rebels, nor endure more; the General was forced to stratagem to defeat them." But 900 men, wet, cold, and with empty bellies, cannot, however

the venerable kirkyard there is a monument, "Sacred to the memory of Captain John Paton, late of Meadowhead, of this parish, who suffered Martyrdom in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh, May 9, 1684." His mortal remains rest amid the dust of kindred martyrs in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh. Paton's powder-horn and his swords, one an Andrea Ferrara which bears evidence of frequent use, and his Bible, which he handed to his wife from the scaffold, are preserved by the Howies of Lochgoin. The lonely farm of Lochgoin, situated in the very heart of the moors of Fenwick, is a place of extraordinary interest. There were Howies at Lochgoin when Wallace unsheathed the sword of freedom and when Bruce won the fight at Bannockburn. The tradition of the family is that the first of the race, who settled at Lochgoin in the twelfth century, was a refugee from the persecution of the Waldenses. Thirty-three generations of John Howies—one of whom was the author of the *Scots Worthies*—have occupied the farm. It was a favourite hiding-place of the Covenanters. The Howie stock is still lusty and stark. The family possess many priceless Scottish relics. See my *Sylvan Scenes near Glasgow* for sketches of the relics and of the moorlands of Lochgoin, with descriptive notes.

## RULLION GREEN

stout their spirit, be expected to menace a system entrenched with authority and plenty of meat and drink. As the dreary November day was drawing to a close the westland heroes broke rank. Fifty,



COVENANTERS STONE  
RULLION GREEN +

perhaps more, of them had bitten the dust. In the gathering darkness the others fled to the wild passes of the Pentlands. Many were lost in the Pentland bogs,<sup>1</sup> bodies being discovered long afterwards in

<sup>1</sup> One at least of these poor hunted fugitives never reached his westland home. On the dreary moorlands which skirt the Pentlands west



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

perfect preservation. The peasantry of the Lothians were blamed (by Wallace) for murdering some of the fugitives. But the poor fellows had lighted a lowe which was to rage all over Scotland, and the echoes of their struggle on Rullion Green “rings through Scotland to this hour.”

of the Cauldstane Slap, the wayfarer will come upon a ghostly tombstone. It bears the inscription :

SACRED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
A COVENANTER  
WHO FOUGHT AND WAS WOUNDED AT RULLION GREEN  
NOVEMBER 28, 1666,  
AND WHO DIED AT OAKEN BUSH THE DAY AFTER THE BATTLE  
AND WAS BURIED HERE  
BY  
ADAM SANDERSON OF BLACKHILL.

This pathetic memorial stands in the midst of a heathery wilderness. “The nameless wounded man had dragged himself twelve weary miles through the Pentlands from the scene of the fight, and found shelter for the night with the guidman of Blackhill.” On the alarm that the dragoons were out, “he crept with the aid of his host painfully over the hill into the glen of the West Water, and in the dim early winter morning light laid him down to die under an oak bush by the burnside ; but not until he had made his companion promise to lay him at rest high up the slope of the Black Law behind, close to the Cairn Knowe, where through a gap in the range opposite a glimpse may be caught of the hills of his native Ayrshire.” How long and weary would be the wait of wife and bairns in the little Ayrshire cot, listening for the footsteps that never came? (John Geddie, *Valley of the Water o, Leith*, pp. 10, 11).



## CHAPTER XVI

### DRUMCLOG AND BOTHWELL BRIG

ON a peaceful Sabbath morning, in the summer of far-away 1679, Claverhouse and his officers were at breakfast in the Slateland Inn,<sup>1</sup> Strathaven—it is still standing—when they got word of a great conventicle mustering on the moors some half-dozen miles away. Hairlawhill, or Drumclog, the scene of the gathering, lies beneath the shadow of the verdant Dun of Loudon—that curious mass of erup-

<sup>1</sup> Alternatively the Sclate Laun, from the fact that it was the first building with a slate roof to be erected in this quaint and beautiful Lanarkshire village. The inn is now a "model" lodging-house! Strathaven is seven miles from Hamilton, and Drumclog lies some five miles farther south. Bryson, *Strathaven and Vicinity*, p. 26; Dr. Carslaw, *Covenanting Memorials in Glasgow and Neighbourhood*, p. 48; cf. King-Hewison, *Covenanters*, vol. ii. p. 300; *O.S.A.*, pp. 9, 397; *N.S.A.*, "Lanarkshire," p. 304.

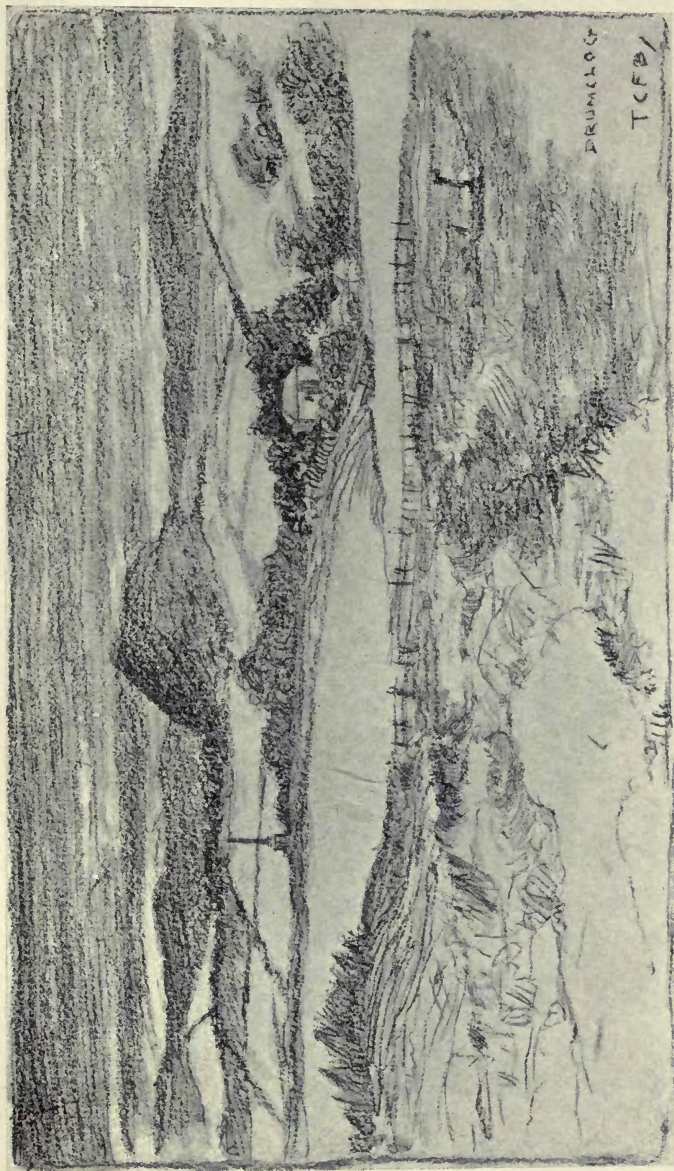
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

tive rock which stands on the borders of the shires of Lanark and Ayr, and whose 1034 feet of height makes it one of the best-known landmarks of the south-west of Scotland. From the ridge of Loudon Dun we look upon a landscape of wild and dreary heathlands rolling to the far horizon and merging into the purply hills. It is a wind-swept district, where masses of cloud come driving up from the Atlantic, throwing gigantic shadows over the dreary wastes. But the grey gloom, which seems ever to haunt these broad uplands, accords well with the spirit of the scene. They lend a touch of weird desolation to the wan and silent moorlands. At times mists, white and cold, come creeping over the landscape, and the sigh of the western wind reveals voices in the shadowy heart of a solitary plantation on the battlefield, as if the ghosts of long dead and gone dragoons and Covenanters were whispering together of the vanished days.

Drumclog is the one gleam of success that gilds the cause of the Covenanters. It was fought on Sunday, June 1, 1679, shortly after the assassination of Archbishop Sharpe on Magus Moor,<sup>1</sup> and in some measure it sprang from that tragical event. Sharpe was detested as a Judas who had betrayed the Presbyterian cause, and the Covenanters' hatred of the man was intensified by their dread of his ruthless nature and their horror of him as one who

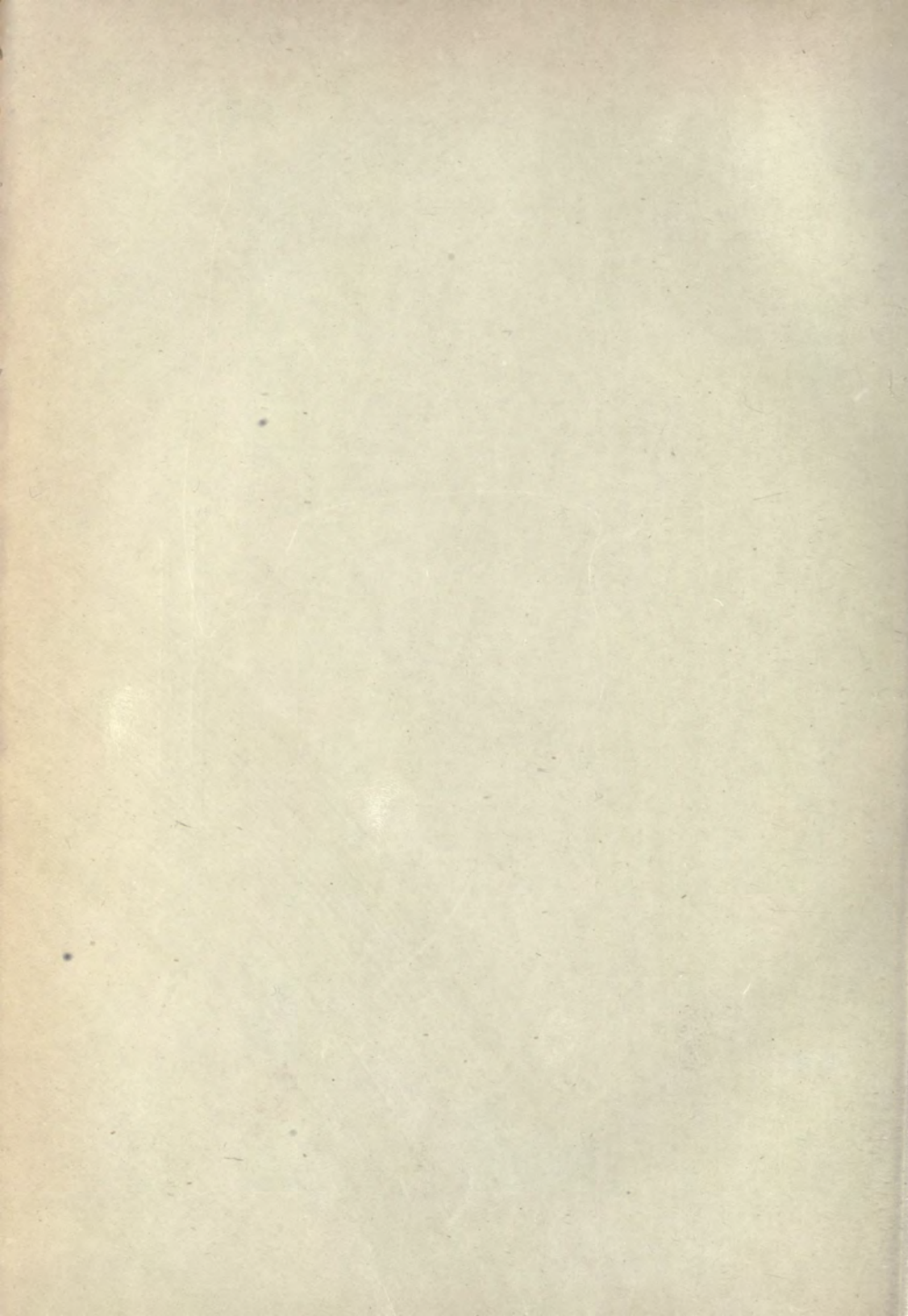
<sup>1</sup> May 3, 1679. The moor is three miles and a half from St. Andrews.





BATTLEFIELD OF DRUMCLOG

Loudon Hill in the distance





## DRUMCLOG AND BOTHWELL BRIG

had made a compact with Satan.<sup>1</sup> Of course there were many other causes, as the current of events from Rullion Green to Bothwell Brig show. From the point of view in the old cavalier ballad, "Whurry, Whigs, Awa'," it is clear that the Covenanter was looked upon as made to be hunted down, much like a fox or a badger, or any other beast of the earth. The cruel ferocity in this ballad could only have been engendered by deep political and religious animosity :

"The restless Whigs, with their intrigues,  
Themselves they did convene, man,  
At Pentland Hills and Bothwell Brigs,  
To fight against the King, man ;  
Till brave Dalzell came forth himsel'  
With royal troops in raws, man,  
To try a match with powther and ball,  
The saints turned windlestraws, man.

The brave Dalzell stood i' the field,  
And fought for King and Crown, man ;  
Made rebel Whigs perforce to yield,  
And dang the traitors doon, man.  
Then some ran here, and some ran there,  
And some in field did fa', man ;  
And some to hang he didna spare,  
Condemned by their ain law, man."

There is also a covenanting ballad of the period descriptive of Bothwell Brig which wishes for pros-

<sup>1</sup> Wodrow, vol. iii. pp. 40-52 ; *The Scots Worthies*, pp. 606-23 ; and for detailed and somewhat brutal description of the murder of the archbishop, see James Russell's account (Appendix to *Kirkton's History*).



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

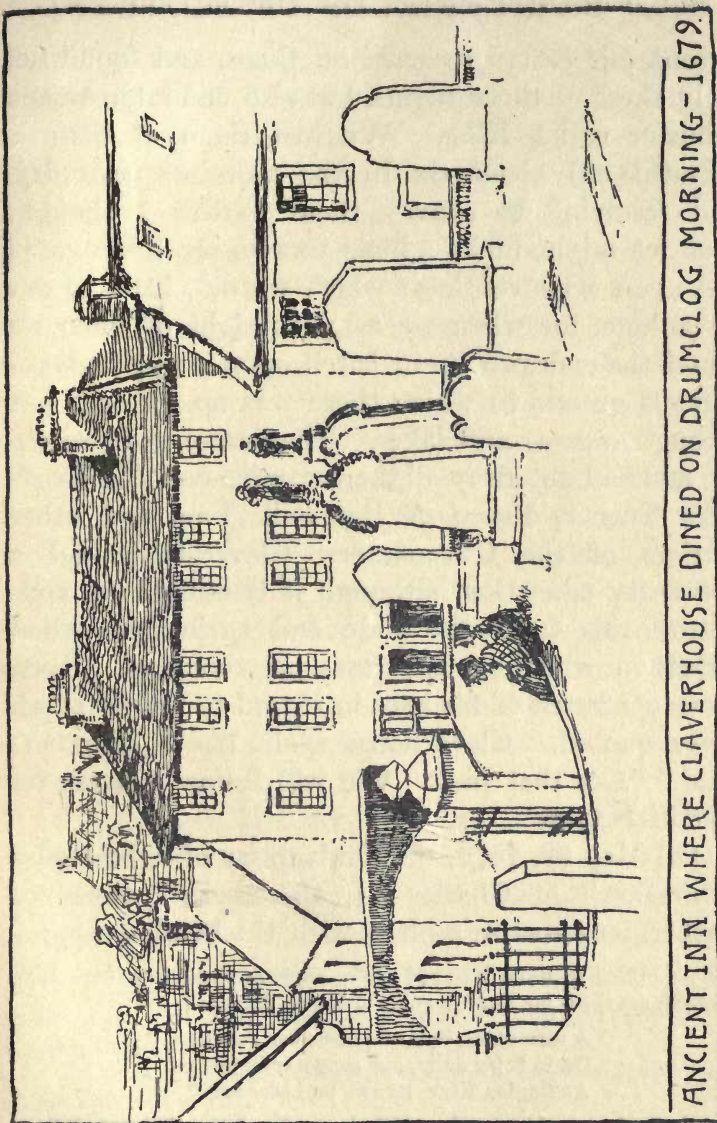
perity to the Gospel lads of the West country, hurls malisons at wicked Claver'se, and describes the engagement. It is singularly free from the least suspicion of poetry, as the subjoined extract will demonstrate :

“ But up spak cruel Claver'se then,  
Wi' hastie wit an' wicked skill :  
Gae pri on yonder Westlan' men,  
I think it is my sovereign's will.”

In the historic despatch,<sup>1</sup> “For the Earle of Linlithgow, Commander-in-Chief of King Charles II's Forces in Scotland,” written from “Glaskow,<sup>2</sup> Jun. the 1, 1679,” Claverhouse tells the earl that “upon Saturday's night, when my Lord Rosse came into this place (Glasgow), I marched out, and because of the insolency that had been done the nights before at Ruglen (Rutherglen) I went thither and inquyred for the names. So soon as I got them

<sup>1</sup> This gazette has been frequently printed. It will be found in full in Scott's *Old Mortality*, notes; cf. Napier, *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 220; *Martyr Graves of Scotland*, p. 34; Macgeorge, *Old Glasgow*, p. 161; Glasgow Burgh Records, S.B.R.S., 1663-90, pp. 269, 270.

<sup>2</sup> On August 6, 1679, the Glasgow Council, “ordaines John Goveane (treasurer) to have ane warrand for the sowme of three thousand twa hundreth and alevine pundis Scotis payit for the charges and expenssis bestowed be the toune on the souldiers at the barracadis, provisione to their horssis, and spent on intelligence and for provisione sent be the toune to the King's camp at Hammiltoun and Bothwell, and for interteaning the lord generall (Claverhouse) quhen he come to this burgh and the rest of the noblemen and gentlemen with him, and for furnishing of baggadage horssis to Loudon Hill (Drumclog), Stirling, and to the camp at Bothwell” (Glasgow Burgh Records, S.B.R.S., 1663-90; Ed. Marwick and Robert Renwick, p. 269).



ANCIENT INN WHERE CLAVERHOUSE DINED ON DRUMCLOG MORNING-1679.

Strathaven

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

I sent our partys to sease on them, and found not only three of those rogues but also ane intercomend minister callet King. We had them at Strevan (Strathaven) about six in the morning yesterday, and resolving to convey them to this I thought that we might make a little tour to see if we could fall upon a conventicle: which we did, little to our advantage, for when we came in sight of them we found them drawn up in batell upon a most advantageous ground to which there was no coming, but through mosses and lakes. They were not preaching and had got away all there women and shildring." Like Turner, Bruce of Earlshall, Lag, and other harriers of the Covenanters, Claverhouse had a university education, although it is difficult to conjecture this from the rude and curiously spelled dialect in which he expresses his thoughts. Even Scott confessed of his hero in regard to the despatch above quoted, "Claverhouse spells like a chambermaid." Let that pass. We will follow Clavers on his "little tour."

On May 29, 1679, the anniversary of "the happy restoration" of Charles II, the ancient town of Rutherglen<sup>1</sup> was in a blaze with the bonfires appro-

<sup>1</sup> According to Blind Harry it was in Rutherglen Kirk that Sir John Menteith engaged, for English gold, to betray Wallace:

"A messenger, Schir Aylmer, has gart pass  
On to Schir John, and sone a tryst has set  
At Ruglen Kirk, yir twa togydder met."

A quaint and venerable steeple, said to be a relic of the original building,



## DRUMCLOG AND BOTHWELL BRIG

pritate to the occasion. In the midst of the rejoicing the douce and diplomatic loyalists of Rutherglen were rudely disturbed. A band of bearded and lanky Covenanters, under the command of Robert Hamilton, brother of the laird of Preston,<sup>1</sup> rode into the burgh, scattered the loyal blazes, and chased the loyalists without the bounds. The enthusiasts then raised a small fire of their own, in which they burned several Acts of Parliament, proclamations, and other papers offensive to their cause, finishing their work by affixing to the Town Cross "The Declaration and Testimony of the True Presbyterian Party<sup>2</sup> in Scotland." It must be admitted that, tested by others, the Rutherglen Declaration was brief and moderate in language, but there was something curiously provoking in choosing such an occasion as a loyal anniversary for its display. Hence the "insolence" which had roused Claverhouse to activity and his subsequent little tour with its disastrous ending.

Claverhouse lost no time in his pursuit of the Rutherglen protesters. With his dragoons he thundered past Cambuslang and into Hamilton, and so to Strathaven, which he reached on Sabbath, June 1, 1679, at six o'clock in the morning. At breakfast stands in the old kirkyard and lends a singularly picturesque note to Rutherglen town.

<sup>1</sup> Old Preston Tower still stands in the fishing village of Prestonpans, on the Firth of Forth.

<sup>2</sup> Kirkton, p. 439.

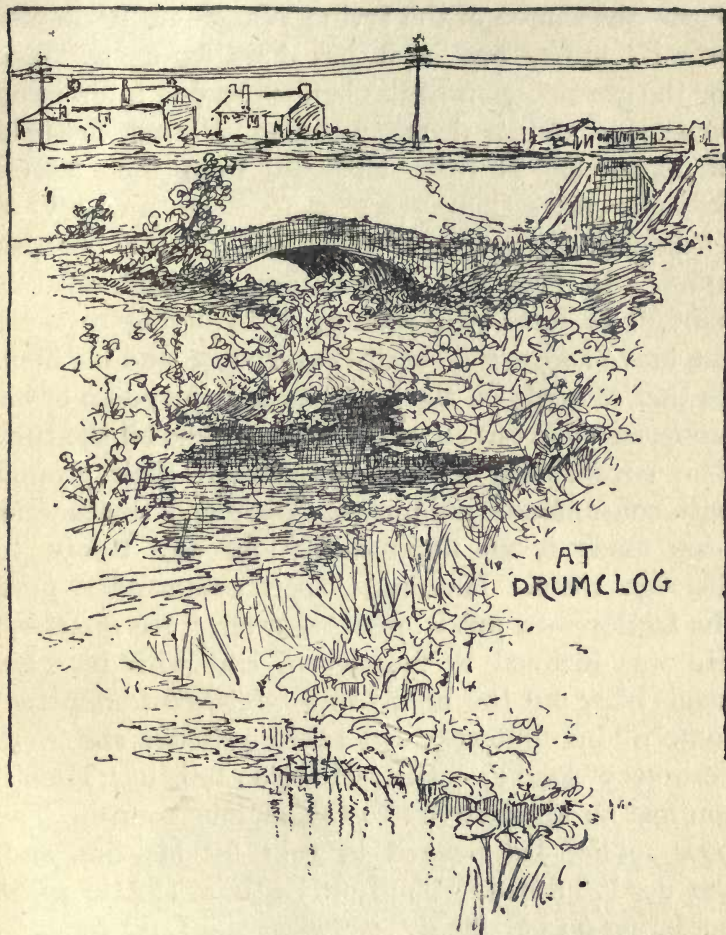
## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

he heard of the Drumclog conventicle. Blustering and boasting, Claverhouse led his men out of Strath-aven. The Darvel road follows the line of the track of the dragoons. They swept past Crewburn—the farm that lies on our right as we make our way along the modern highway—and, eager for the fray, they wheeled to the right and thundered up the old road that leads us past Hallburn and Hallfield, the curiously-named Coldwakening, and the farms of East and High Drumclog. And from the wind-swept ridges of High Drumclog they looked down on a motley array of sturdy farmers, shepherds, and ploughmen, men of the wild moors and breezy uplands of Ayr and Lanark, marshalled in battle order and ready for the shock of conflict.<sup>1</sup>

Unvarying tradition has preserved the memory of the rivulet which ran through the mead in front of the covenanting force, rendering the ground

<sup>1</sup> The command of Claverhouse consisted of not more than 150 men. The covenanting force under Hamilton probably numbered 50 men on horse and 200 infantry, some of whom carried swords and firearms, the rest being armed with home-made pikes, cleeks, pitchforks, or other rustic weapons. The strength on either side has never been precisely ascertained. The officers acting under Hamilton were: Hackston, John Balfour, Henry Hall of Haughhead, Robert Fleming, John Loudoun, John Brown, and William Cleland, the last named then a student of St. Salvator's College, St. Andrews (King-Hewison, vol. ii. p. 301, and note, p. 293); the *Scots Worthies*, by John Howie of Lochgoin, contains the lives of the most of the prominent figures of the covenanting cause. See also the *Martyr Graves of Scotland*, by the Rev. J. H. Thomson, edited by the Rev. Matthew Hutchison, with an illuminating introduction on the story of the Covenants from the pen of Dr. Hay Fleming.



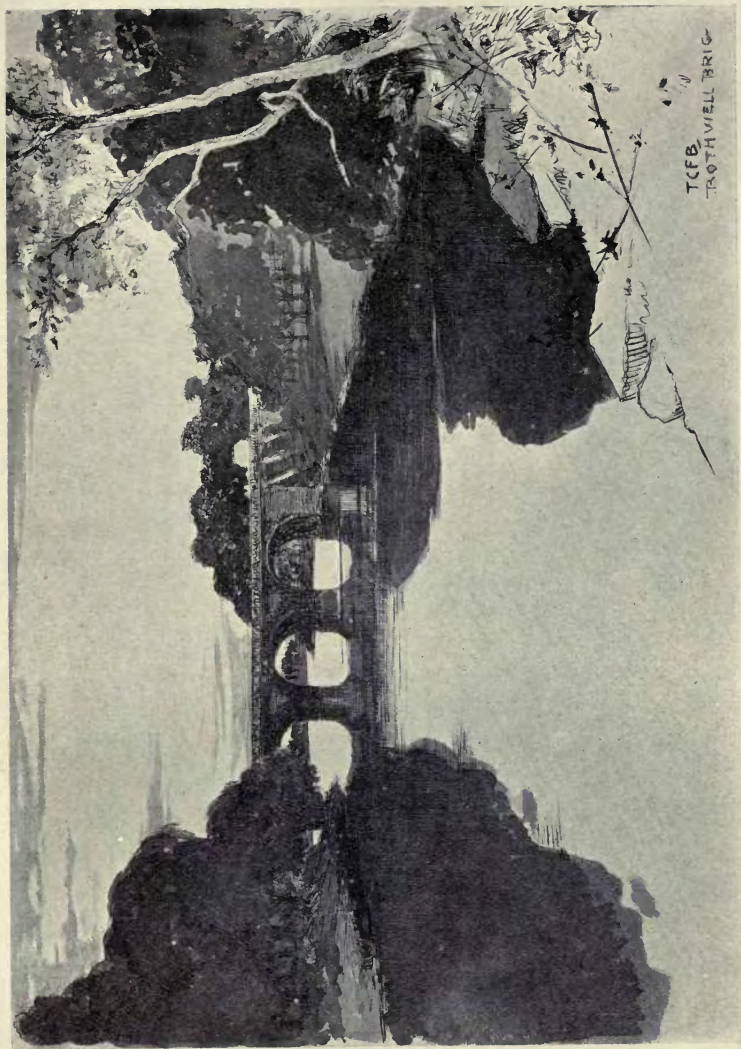




## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

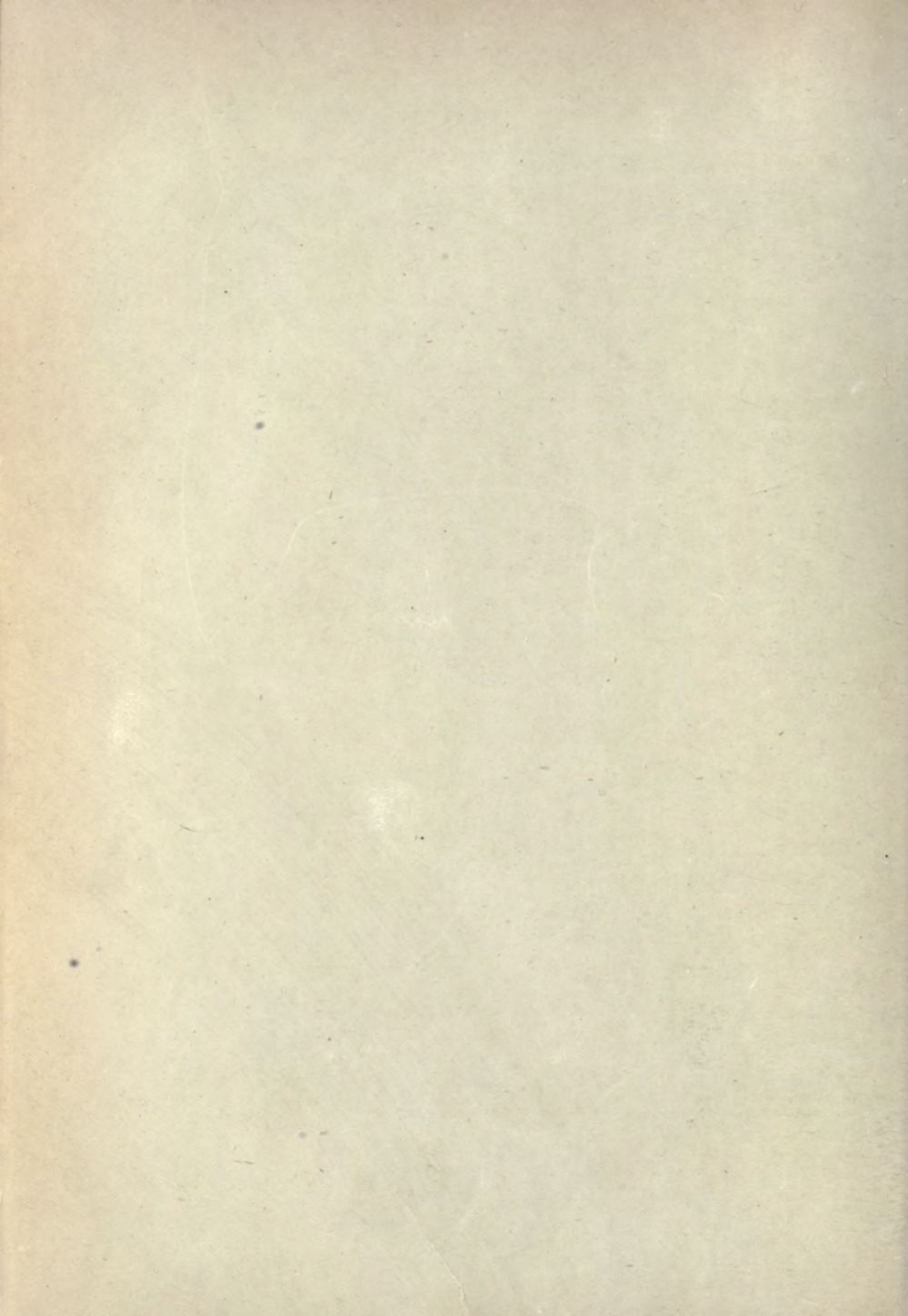
spongy as a bog and impassable to troopers. This burn—the source of the Irvine Water—still wimples over its mossy bed as it has done for ages. Save for the greener glow of the landscape, due to draining operations, and its deeper woodland tinting, the field of Drumclog is little changed from that fateful Sabbath morn 200 years ago. The memory of Drumclog has taken a large hold on the Scottish mind. It fires the imagination to think of this handful of untrained country folks daring to meet the brave and experienced Claverhouse and his men. In that struggle on the heath he lost forty-two of his troopers, while but six of the Covenanters bit the turf. The covenanting leaders had chosen their ground with consummate judgment. Deep and treacherous bogs made it an impossibility for any troops to dislodge them. Hamilton, their commander, gave the tactless—to put it mildly—order, “No quarter.” He was inclined to fanaticism, and with his own hands blew out the brains of a wretched trumpeter<sup>1</sup> some of his followers had taken prisoner and were desirous of sparing. King-Hewison tells us “Hamilton had no alternative” to this callous course. The poor soldier lad begged in vain for his life, and, the deed finished, Hamilton, with a fanatic spirit bordering on blasphemy, “blessed the Lord for it”: “I desire to bless His holy name, that since ever He helped me to set my face to His work I never

<sup>1</sup> The Trumpeter's Well preserves the memory of this tragedy.



TCB  
BOTHWELL BRIG

BOTHWELL BRIG





## DRUMCLOG AND BOTHWELL BRIG

had, nor would take, a favour from enemies, either on right or left hand, and desired to give as few."

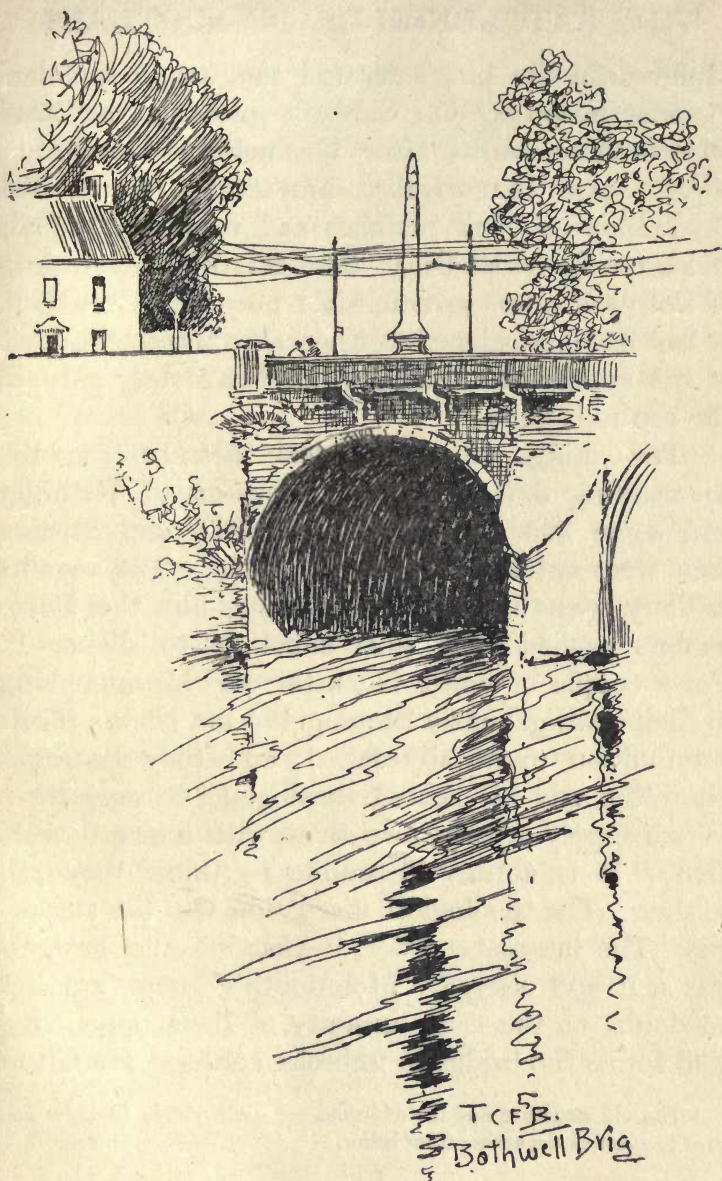
This was the first occasion upon which Claverhouse had crossed swords with the Covenanters, and it was the first and last battle he ever lost. He took his defeat lightly, so lightly indeed that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion that the Government desired an insurrection, so as to open up an opportunity of making short work of the conventiclers. The closing words of his despatch are significant and curious: "This may be counted the beginning of the rebellion, in my opinion"—as if the rebellion were a thing expected and not undesirable. He was correct in his opinion. Drumclog was the beginning of the rebellion. It gathered like a storm. The western men were frantic in their exultation. The appointed hour had arrived. "The Lord had again acknowledged His own, and His right arm was bared to smite the persecutors"—hopes which were doomed to disappointment on the banks of the Clyde at Bothwell Brig.

### BOTHWELL BRIG

For three weeks the Covenanters were in undisturbed possession of the country around Hamilton, and, says Burnet, if there had been any designs for a rebellion now was the time, but there were none, for no one came into camp but "those desperate

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

outlawed men, who were, as it were, hunted from their houses into all those extravagances that men fall in, who wander about inflaming one another and are heated in it with false notions of religion." In a word it was a rebellion of fanatics, of fanatics who had been outlawed—thanks to Clavers and his crew—and cut off from human society, not because they were fanatics, but because they had worshipped God on the hillsides of Scotland. Their ranks were torn with bitter ministerial wranglings upon obscure points of doctrine. There were four classes or sections in the army of, say, 5000 men. The Drumclog victors, uncompromising opponents of the existing politico - ecclesiastical system; the moderate Presbyterians, willing to assist in restoring freedom, spiritual and civil; a more peaceable section still, who held that "the Lord called for a testimony by suffering rather than outward deliverance"; and a fourth, the worst class, who joined expecting loot and a chance to fight where there was no danger. Hamilton, the leader, was not a Napoleon, and was powerless among this mob of wrangling theologians. The spirit of discord and the incapacity of common action were rampant in the covenanting camp. In the midst of their wrangling they crossed the Clyde on a night-march, by Bothwell Brig, and encamped on Hamilton Moss. The Government took steps to put down the rebellion, and a powerful army—some 15,000 men—under the Duke of



Battle Monument on bridge



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Monmouth, the king's natural son, was despatched for that purpose. On Sabbath morning, the 22nd June—three weeks after Drumclog—Hamilton's pickets saw the royalist musketeers across the Clyde blowing their matches and ready for the advance on Bothwell Brig. The fine old narrow brig of Bothwell is not so defensible now as it was then. It has been broadened considerably<sup>1</sup> and the level of the approaches raised, while the strong gate in the centre is gone.

The bridge was an ideal defence for the covenanting defenders, and Hackston of Rathillet and some 300 Galloway, Clydesdale, and Stirling men were entrusted with that duty. The royalist artillery was turned on the bridge, but the Covenanters replied with such effect as to silence it. For a couple of hours Hackston and his men clung to their post, gallantly keeping the foe back. Their ammunition eventually failed, and they besought Hamilton and his heated theologians to send them a fresh supply or to relieve them with a new detachment. It is almost incredible to think they got neither. The theological discussion was too absorbing. The insensate order "Abandon the bridge" was sent and obeyed. Monmouth's forces, amazed no doubt at the sheer insanity of their opponents, filed across the bridge in unbroken order. Hamilton

<sup>1</sup> The old structure and the additions are quite visible to-day if one cares to examine the arches from below.

## DRUMCLOG AND BOTHWELL BRIG

and his theologians were the first to flee! Monmouth loosed his cavalry<sup>1</sup> among the now leaderless and defenceless throng of countrymen. Claverhouse, Maine, and Oglethorpe and their thirsty swords completed the debacle. The first named and his dragoons, says Blackadder's *Memoirs*, were among the last to quit the scene of slaughter; he and his troop, "mad for blood, did the most cruel execution." Some fugitives who sought shelter in Hamilton Parish Kirk were butchered in the sacred edifice.<sup>2</sup> About 400 Covenanters were slain and 1200 taken.<sup>3</sup> "Never," says Wodrow, "was a good cause and a gallant army, generally speaking, hearty and bold,<sup>4</sup> worse managed." A systematic and cruelly severe oppression on the part of the Government was the direct result of Bothwell Brig. It is calculated that nearly twenty thousand men and women perished by fire, sword, or water, or on the scaffold during the terrible years which are indelibly graved on Scottish memory as "The Killing Times." The deep and bitter desolation of that time will never be forgotten. Burns realised its significance, and every Scotsman,

<sup>1</sup> Monmouth was not a bad fellow. To his credit he refused the advice attributed to Claverhouse and Major White, to put the prisoners to death, a humane action that, incredible to relate, earned for him the strictures of the Court of London (Wodrow, vol. iii. p. 112; Burnet, vol. ii. p. 240).

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, *Dunning, its Parochial History*, p. 26 (citing *Secession Magazine*); note, King-Hewison, vol. ii. p. 311.

<sup>3</sup> Blackadder's *Memoirs*, pp. 227, 228.

<sup>4</sup> Wodrow, vol. iii. pp. 91, 92.

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at home in the old country and in the lands across the sea, will heartily subscribe to his countryman's eloquent lines :

“ The solemn League and Covenant  
Cost Scotland blood, cost Scotland tears :  
But it seal'd Freedom's sacred cause—  
If thou'rt a slave, indulge thy sneers.”



## CHAPTER XVII

### KILLIECRANKIE

PICTURESQUE to a degree approaching the sublime is the setting of the stage on which the sword was first unsheathed in the long and romantic Jacobite struggle. Mountains like giants girdle the battlefield of Killiecrankie. Scarred and seamed by the gales of centuries, their hoary crests look grimly down upon the lovely haughs of Urrard and the most magnificent of gorges,<sup>1</sup> the Pass of Killiecrankie. Wildering forests feather the steeps well-nigh from summit to base. A mighty chasm, relic of a primeval world, has burst asunder the mountain-ribs. Adown this rock-bound cauldron the Garry roars and tumbles, its unceasing murmur ever creeping up the distant wooded slopes, moaning in unison with the wintry blasts, stealing softly among the birch

<sup>1</sup> This is not overdrawn. Of course in these days the north-bound tourist is whirled through the Pass at express speed, and he gets but a fleeting glimpse of its savagely-sublime character as the train swings across the viaduct overlooking the Garry and the Soldier's Leap. I tramped through the Pass on my way to the battlefield, and I venture to assert that only the wayfarer can fully realise the splendour of this historic glen: "so wondrous wild the whole might seem, the scenery of a fairy dream."

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

and alder on the summer days, its soft voice a very swan-song for the brave who fell at Killiecrankie. It is a romantic scene, a veritable glimpse of enchanted land. Beautiful at all times. But when the ruddy brush of autumn has touched it with its golden glories, Killiecrankie is unsurpassed—in the simple but pregnant words of the dear old Highland woman who kindly pointed out to us “the Queen’s view,” it is then “chust like Heaven”!

Fitting stage, indeed, upon which to ring up the curtain on the most romantic era in Scottish history is Killiecrankie. It has altered but little in the couple of centuries that have flown since the day of battle. In places the woods may be richer and the fields greener, but the unchanging hills are ever the same, and the moorlands on their shoulders are to-day as they were in July 1689, when Claverhouse swung his lithe Highlanders on to the ramparts of Craig Caillaiche, and looked down upon Mackay’s host struggling wearily along the rocky sides of Killiecrankie Pass.

“To the Lords of Convention ’twas Claverhouse spoke,  
Ere the King’s crown go down there are crowns to be broke.”

The Jacobite poet in these lines gives us the keynote to the Killiecrankie fight. With a fatuity bordering on insanity the Stuart monarchs had inaugurated a period of terrorism and tyranny against the Scottish Covenanters. Persecution and injustice

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aroused to madness the fanatical spirit of the supporters of the Solemn League and Covenant. When James VII (of Scotland, II of England) succeeded his brother in 1685, death became the penalty for mere attendance at a conventicle.<sup>1</sup> The frightful barbarities of the Bass Rock and Dunnottar Castle<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wodrow, vol. iv. pp. 208, 209.

<sup>2</sup> On Sabbath, May 24, 1685, about 170 Covenanters, men and women, roped together like cattle, footsore and miserable after their tramp from Burntisland—they were ferried in small boats from Leith to the Fife port—arrived at Dunnottar Castle, the ruins of which crown a gigantic mass of rock on the east coast opposite Stonehaven, some fifteen miles south of Aberdeen. These unfortunate beings were put into a couple of vaults known to this day as the Whigs' Vaults. Dr. King-Hewison personally measured them: "The upper vault is 54 feet 9 inches long by 15 feet 6 inches broad, and 12 feet high. It communicates by a shoot with a small, wet, vaulted chamber beneath it, measuring 15 feet long, 8 broad, and 9 high, lighted and ventilated through the orifice of a small drain on the floor-level, where the prisoners in turn lay down to suck in air" from the German Ocean that roars and tumbles against the rock-bound coast. List for a moment to the petition of Grissell Cairnes and Alison Johnston on behalf of their husbands and other prisoners, as recorded in the Minutes of the Privy Council (*Reg. Sec. Conc., Acta*, p. 86, 18th June; Wodrow, vol. iv. p. 385, quoted by King-Hewison, vol. ii. p. 466). They refer to their "most lamentable condition" and to "one hundred and ten of them in one vault, where there is little or no daylight at all, and contrarie to all modestie men and women promiscuouslie together: and fourtie and two more in another rounge in the same condition." The horror of that experience is unthinkable. Take the case cited by Wodrow (vol. iv. p. 232) of the wife of James Forsyth. She was *enceinte*, but was refused permission to leave the vault, where she was confined of her child and where she died of neglect! Savagery or savages never plumbed such depths of unspeakable cruelty. Dunnottar, however, has other and pleasanter memories. In the parish kirkyard Sir Walter Scott saw for the first and last time Peter Paterson (Lockhart has apparently erred in giving the Christian name Peter; the Introduction to *Old Mortality* gives Robert), the living Old Mortality. Sir Walter and



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imprisonments of the captured Covenanters of Bothwell Brig and Rullion Green seared the very heart of the people. James was either purblind or grossly ignorant. Protestants were expelled from the Privy Council; Holyrood was given to the Roman Catholics as a place of worship and education.<sup>1</sup> The shadows were gathering thickly over the Stuart race. The Indulgence—against which Renwick protested and was hanged at Edinburgh in 1688, the last martyr for the Covenant—the dissolution of the Scots Parliament, and other intolerable doings incensed the people, and incited the courage of compatriots, who invited William of Orange to come and protect the liberties of Britain. William addressed a proclamation to Scotland outlining the reasons which induced him to appear in arms in defence of Protestantism and the liberty of Scotland. On the 5th November 1688, William and 14,000 men landed at Brixham, Torbay; on the 18th December the invading army reached St.

Mr. Walker, the parish minister, found Peter (?) refreshing the epitaphs of Covenanters who had "died prisoners" in Dunnottar and "two who perished coming down the Rock." Being invited into the manse to take a glass of whisky, Peter accepted. "He was in bad humour," says Scott; "his spirit had been sorely vexed by hearing in a certain Aberdonian kirk the psalmody directed by a pitch-pipe or some similar instrument, which was to Old Mortality the abomination of abominations." It is singularly interesting to recall that in Dunnottar Castle the Regalia of Scotland—now at Edinburgh Castle—were lodged for safety in 1652 (Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, pp. 59 and 360).

<sup>1</sup> In November 1687, following upon the "Indulgence" proclaimed in February of that year.

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James's Palace; five days later James had left England for ever, and the reign of the one-time gallant but singularly unfortunate Stuarts had closed. The Scottish Estates had found and declared that "King James the Seventh being a profest Papist" and so on, "hath forfeaulted the right to the crown, and the throne is become vacant." Before he left London one of James's last acts was to raise the loyal Claverhouse to the peerage, with the titles of Viscount of Dundee and Lord Graham of Claverhouse,<sup>1</sup> in recognition of that soldier's "many good and eminent services" and his constant loyalty and

<sup>1</sup> Claverhouse was a scion of a great Scottish family. William de Graham was one of the witnesses to the foundation charter of Holyrood Abbey; Sir John de Graham, the friend and brother-in-arms of Wallace, died fighting at Falkirk; another ancestor, Sir William de Graham, married Lady Mary Stuart, the sister of James I of unhappy memory: thus Clavers had royal blood in his veins. The first Graham of Claverhouse was John Graham, son of Sir Robert Graham of Strathcarron and Fintry. On March 9, 1481, he obtained a charter of Ballargus in the regality of Kirriemuir. About twenty years later—between 1503 and 1511—he acquired the Claverhouse estate also, but his principal residence was at Ballargus. There was a RESIDENCE upon the Claverhouse lands. Professor Terry gives sound reasons for disbelieving the popular story of a Claverhouse CASTLE upon the Dichty near Dundee. That there was a residence, however, is clear, the widow of the fourth laird dating her will from The Barns of Claverhouse in 1594, and the name survives in a farmhouse upon the property, hard by the reputed castle. In 1640 Sir William Graham purchased Glenogilvie near Glamis, and Glenogilvie became the home of the family; and it was Glenogilvie that Claverhouse settled in jointure upon his wife—the Hon. Jean Cochrane, granddaughter of the Earl of Dundonald—on his marriage in June 1684 (Sanford Terry, "The Homes of the Claverhouse Grams," *S.H.R.*, vol. ii., No. 5; Barrington, *Grahame of Claverhouse*, p. 4 *et seq.*).



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firm adherence to the true interests of the Crown.”<sup>1</sup> The persecuted Covenanters had another description for the “bloody Clavers.” The advent of William gave the Glasgow students an opportunity for burning an effigy of the Pope in the old High Street of the city.<sup>2</sup>

With the flight to France of James, and the introduction of William of Orange, the scenes are changed. The Jacobite party assumes the primary rôle in the political drama, and the Covenanters step back to second place. The Jacobites, of course, were the adherents of Jacobus, or James II of England and VII of Scotland, as opposed to the Williamites—a term that never became popular—or adherents of William, Prince of Orange, James’s son-in-law and successful rival. But William was not to be permitted to take the Coronation Oath and reign without challenge. The Stuarts, with all their faults, and they had many, were the ancient kings of Scotland, and the shuffling of the cards at London, while it brought a Protestant monarch as ruler, gave birth to a sentiment which, rightly or wrongly, clung to the old Stuarts. The Roman Catholics to a man supported the Stuart dynasty. They could also rely on the Highlanders, a combination that made the Jacobites a force not to be lightly reckoned. Further, Claverhouse, now Viscount Dundee, lent all the

<sup>1</sup> King-Hewison, vol. ii. p. 517.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



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weight of his military genius<sup>1</sup> to the cause of the king across the water. In the early summer of 1689 Edinburgh Castle was being held for King James. Claverhouse had sent round the fiery cross, and some two thousand men, lithe sons of many clans and septs loyal to pope and king, rallied to his standard. To the Jacobites, Clavers was an asset of immense potential value. A Graham, chivalrously devoted to the House of Stuart, and a stern fighter, he had the necessary qualities for attracting the leaders of the clansmen to his flag, and Macdonalds, Camerons, Stewarts, Macleans and so on joined. Matters looked alarming, and on the 18th of July the Government offered £18,000 (Scots ?) for Claverhouse, dead or alive.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whatever one's opinion may be regarding the appalling cruelties of his early career, Claverhouse was unquestionably a military genius and an accomplished man of the world. It is said that on Sheriffmuir in 1715, when the ranks of the Jacobites were breaking through lack of leadership, a Highlander who had fought at Killiecrankie exclaimed in agony of grief and rage, "O for an hour of Dundee," an example, doubtless of the devotion he inspired in his soldiers. Scott, with his usual keenness for making use of all sorts and conditions of legends, had probably heard the above, and I suppose shaped it to the purpose of his genius when in *Marmion* (Canto VI, xx.), he exclaims "O for one hour of Wallace wight, or well-skilled Bruce to rule the fight"—and Flodden had been Bannockburn?

<sup>2</sup> In March, Claverhouse had been branded as a traitor: "And he, being thrice called in the House and at the great door, and not appearing, the Meeting of Estates do declare the said Viscount of Dundee fugitive and rebel. And ordained the heralds with sound of trumpet to denounce him at the Mercat Cross of Edinburgh and at the Mercat Cross of the head burgh of the shire of Forfar where he lives," March 30, 1689 (*Acts Parl. Scot.*, vol. ix. p. 24).

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Meantime the authorities were not idle. General Hugh Mackay, a Sutherland man,<sup>1</sup> an ex-soldier of fortune who, like Clavers, had made a sound military reputation in the Dutch wars, was hurrying north with a Government force, under orders to crush the revolt and root out its supporters before it had time to spread. His force of 5000 was composed of a mixture of Dutch regiments and raw recruits of the Scots Fusiliers (the 21st) and Leven's regiment (now the 25th), Scots Greys, and Colchester's horse. Mackay did the best he could with it, but the material in the bulk was too raw. He determined to seize Blair Castle—near Blair-Atholl—which was occupied by Clavers' troops, and for that purpose he advanced north, by Perth, Dunkeld, and Pitlochry, towards Blair. On Saturday, the 27th of July, he—according to his *Memoirs*—approached the fatal Pass of Killiecrankie—a sublime gorge to the peaceful wayfarer, but a terrible and impassable chasm to hostile invaders when defenders are at hand. Doubtless Mackay heaved a sigh of relief when he watched his rearguard file safely out of those jaws of death.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough Claverhouse and Hugh Mackay (of Scourie) in 1674 joined the Dutch army, and were comrades-in-arms under the Prince of Orange in the wars against the French.

<sup>2</sup> In 1689 a mere path led through the Pass. So narrow was the track that only three soldiers could walk abreast. As Mackay's force numbered considerably over 4000, the progress must have been painfully slow. Mackay was a cautious old campaigner. He threw out some 200 Fusilier—now the Royal Scots Fusiliers—scouts, halted the main body at the Dunkeld, or lower end of the Pass, then despatched another 200 of



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No enemy was in sight. Silence reigned, and the summer sun gilded the fields of ripening corn to complete the picture of peace. But it was the calm that precedes the storm. Claverhouse had bided his time. He had allowed Mackay to come through the Pass, and now that he and his army of recruits and Dutchmen lay on the bonnie haugh of Urrard, they were in a trap.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Leven's regiment—now the King's Own Scottish Borderers—to strengthen the Fusiliers, and waited events. After two hours had passed, and on being informed that the way was clear, he gave the order to march. Balfour's, Ramsay's, and Kenmuir's foot-regiments led the way; Lord Belhaven's horse, about 100 strong, and Mackay's foot followed; then the baggage and supplies, a convoy of 1200 horses, the second troop of horse; and Colonel Ferdinando Hastings' foot brought up the rear. One might suppose that Claverhouse could easily have annihilated the long and straggling, and under the circumstances practically defenceless, line of troops as it struggled through the rocky defile. With his keen knowledge of manners and men he probably avoided doing so, and waited for the moral effect of a sweeping victory in the open. Barrington, *Grahame of Claverhouse*, pp. 346, 347; Lady Tullibardine, *Military Hist. of Perthshire*, p. 258.

<sup>1</sup> The exact site of the battle has given rise to dispute. Lady Tullibardine, in her ingenious *Military History of Perthshire*, argues with convincing clarity that Urrard plateau is the scene of the struggle. Michael Barrington, in his important work *Grahame of Claverhouse*, agrees with Lady Tullibardine. Professor Sanford Terry takes another view in *John Graham of Claverhouse*, and mentions that the long slope between Lettoch and Aldclune was the battlefield. After climbing to the summit of Craig Caillaiche and carefully examining the two reputed sites, I adopted that of Urrard for my sketch of the battlefield, the situation, in my opinion, answering to the description of the ground left by Mackay himself. Further, local tradition, as detailed to me on the spot by the widow of an old Highlander whose forbears had unsheathed the sword at Killiecrankie and been out in the '45, lends its weight to the Urrard plateau being the actual site of the battle.



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Clavers (or Dundee, as he is familiarly named in connection with Killiecrankie) had marched his men from Blair, along the moorlands behind Craig Cail-laiche and Cnoc an Ghuithais, on to the shoulder of the hill overlooking Urrard House—a fine modern mansion occupies the site of the original house—and the haugh where Mackay lay. It was a piece of masterly strategy. One realises that when standing on the battlefield. All the enormous advantage of position was with Dundee, especially so when we consider the terrible effects of the old Highland method of assault, the musketry discharge, and then the wild charge with sword and targe. Mackay, looking upward from the baggage field—a hoary monolith marks this field to the wayfarer tramping along the king's highway between the clachan of Killiecrankie and Blair-Atholl—saw the Highlanders appear on the bend of the sky-line above Urrard House, some six to eight hundred feet above his position. Behind him was the precipitous gulf of the Garry. He was trapped, and we can well believe the old campaigner knew it when too late. Steadiness was his only chance of retrieving the mistake. For a couple of hours the armies faced each other on that hot July day of 1689. Dundee was waiting until the midsummer sun sunk behind the western heights and its glare did not confuse his men. When it did so the order to charge was given. Local tradition has well preserved the events of that

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day. You can talk with people whose ancestors fought at Killiecrankie, crofters who still till the same soil as their forefathers of that far-away period. Like wild-cats ready to spring, the armies faced each other. The clansmen, stripped to their shirts—grey-headed Lochiel cast off his shoes—impatiently waited for the onslaught, and when the fiery rays of the western sun sunk below Strathgarry the mountaineers were unleashed. Discharging their rifles they cast them aside, and, commencing with a slow trot, which gradually became a wild rush, they broke on their opponents. Only seasoned veterans could have stood against that torrent of half-naked men yelling like fiends incarnate.<sup>1</sup> Recruits and Dutchmen were useless. Camerons, Macdonalds, Clan Ronald and Macleans rolled the Dutch regiments, Leven's battalions, and the Fusiliers down over the

<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that Mackay's men were ill fitted to cope with the Highlanders' claymores and Lochaber axes. The period of the battle witnessed a transition in the arms of the British regulars from the flintlock to the matchlock, while in place of the formidable pike or spear there had been issued a short knife-shaped weapon called the bayonet. Unfortunately the handle had to be inserted into the muzzle of the musket. Time was required for this process, and when complete the gun, of course, could not be fired. Mackay's men had this clumsy plug-bayonet. Need was felt for some weapon so designed as to enable the soldier to continue his fire with the bayonet fixed, and the contrivance known as the ring-bayonet was subsequently invented. Mackay claims to have invented this after his unfortunate experience at Killiecrankie. Barrington remarks that Mackay may have introduced it into the British army, but it was known in France as early as 1678, though its general use in the French army may be of later date (*Hist. of the British Standing Army*, pp. 344-55).



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

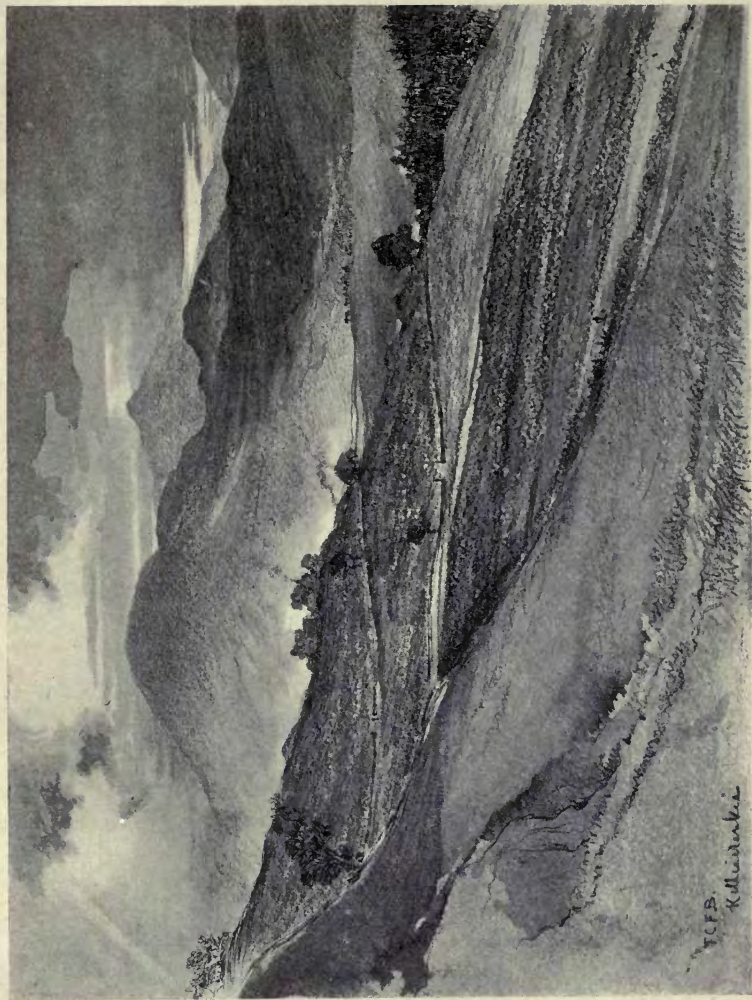
bank to the river, "in the twinkling of an eye," says Mackay in his *Memoirs*.<sup>1</sup> Sir Alexander Maclean took the royal standard. But in the very hour of victory Claverhouse fell, mortally wounded by a musket-shot which passed through an opening in his armour.<sup>2</sup> Persistent local tradition declares that the fatal shot came from the House of Urrard as Dundee was riding past, that he fell at the little well and was borne to a mound—both still pointed out in the garden.<sup>3</sup> The wild onslaught, the hand-to-hand encounter, the slash of the broadsword, the stab of the dirk, and the stroke of the Lochaber axe played their hideous part at Killiecrankie. Mackay's loss by death and capture amounted to 2000. It would have been more, but the clansmen instinctively turned to looting the baggage after their somewhat easily won triumph. Mackay collected his men, and with the regiments which were unbroken marched

<sup>1</sup> Appendix, Mackay's *Memoirs*, pp. 255-6.

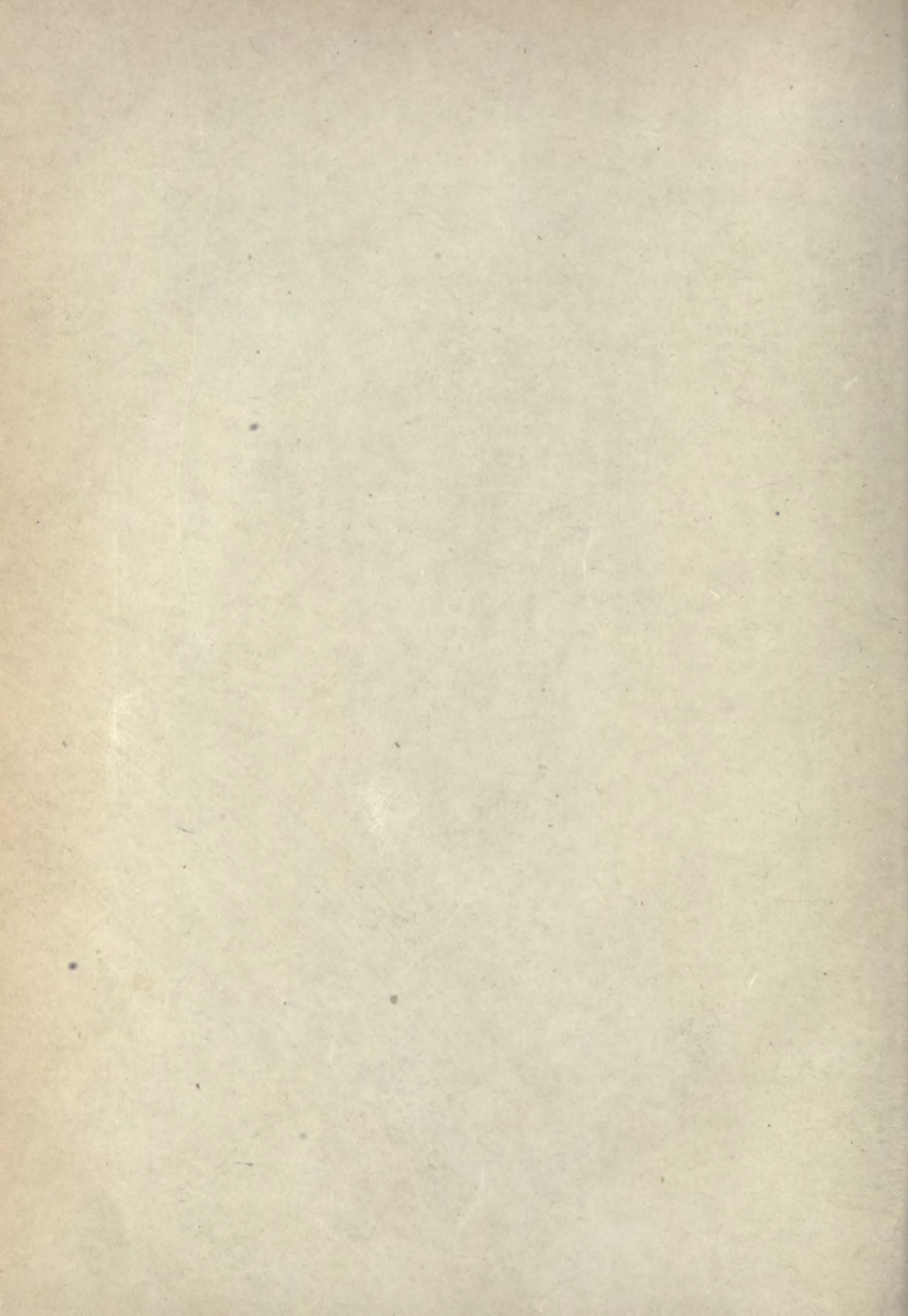
<sup>2</sup> Opinions sharply differ as to whether Claverhouse died on the field of battle or lived sufficiently long to write a brief account of the struggle to King James. Professor Sanford Terry lends the weight of his scholarly pen to the former view, and maintains that the Killiecrankie letter to the king is a forgery. The late Rev. John Anderson supported this view. Michael Barrington argues that the whole weight of evidence is in favour of Claverhouse having lingered long enough to write the royal letter. Those desirous of pursuing the matter will find copious details in: Terry, Appendix, *Claverhouse*; Barrington, Appendix, *Claverhouse*; *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, vol. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Pointed out to me, and the tradition repeated by the gardener at Urrard House.





BATTLEFIELD OF KILLIECRANKIE



## KILLIECRANKIE

down the Pass in the darkness and escaped. He had, says Burns :

“Met the Deevil and Dundee  
On the braes of Killiecrankie, O.”

A characteristic verse, descriptive of the Highland mode of fighting, is the following :

“Hur skept about, her leapt about,  
And flang among them a', man,  
The English blades got broken heads,  
Their crowns were cleaved in twa then.”

Around Killiecrankie there gathers the first of the flood of Jacobite song and ballad.<sup>1</sup> In Johnson's

<sup>1</sup> Mr. A. H. Millar has given us translations from the Gaelic of two poems by Iain Lom MacDonald, the renowned bard of Lochaber, who was with the Jacobite force on the braes of Killiecrankie, and he composed his poems about the battle while the scene was fresh in his memory. Mr. Millar justly remarks that both poems “are accepted as the productions of an eye-witness,” although Mr. Andrew Lang, in his *History of Scotland*, vol. iv. p. 17, seems inclined to give the credit to some other Makar. The poems deal with “King James's Army marching to the Battle of Killiecrankie” and the battle of “Killiecrankie.” The bard tells us :

“On Killiecrankie of thickets  
Are many graves and stiff corpses.  
A thousand shovels and spades  
Were requisitioned for covering them.

Gallant Claverhouse of the steeds,  
True leader of hosts,  
Wae's me thou shouldst fall  
At the opening of the fray.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

*Museum* is another old song which Burns touched up:

“An’ ye had been where I hae been,  
Ye wadna be sae cantie, O :  
An’ ye had seen what I hae seen,  
I’ the braes o’ Killiecrankie, O.”<sup>1</sup>

On the braes of Killiecrankie the hopes of James II were irretrievably shattered. The victory of his supporters was complete, but the death of Dundee more than counterbalanced the success of the day. Indeed it rendered abortive in its effects one of the most signal victories in Highland history. The loss of the leader proved the death-blow to the cause, and military resistance came to an abrupt end.<sup>2</sup> The Stuarts were doomed. Romance, thanks to Scott, has thrown a glamour around the victor of Killiecrankie. History, on the contrary, reveals a ruthless reveller in the blood of his countrymen.

---

Like flaming fire to them thy wrath,  
Till fate crossed thy path :  
’Neath the folds of thy clothing  
The bullet pierced thee.”

And so on for thirty verses. A most interesting poem “historically and philologically” (Millar, *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, vol. iii. No. 9, pp. 63-70).

<sup>1</sup> The chorus, which I quote, is old, the rest of the song is by Burns. “Whare hae ye been?” is the title.

<sup>2</sup> The Jacobite cause was lost, not at Sheriffmuir, not even at Culloden, but at Killiecrankie, when in the moment of supremest victory a chance shot from a flying and defeated enemy changed—as King James himself declared—the fate of the three kingdoms (*James II’s Memoirs*, ed. Clarke, vol. ii. pp. 352-3; note, Barrington, *Claverhouse*, p. 375).

## KILLIECRANKIE

What niche is he to fill in the Scottish pantheon? He sleeps within the walls of the ancient ivy-clad ruin of the kirk of Blair.<sup>1</sup> Rarely has vaulted roof or marbled tomb covered the silent abode of a more restless and ambitious heart than that which for two long centuries has slept in this peaceful spot amidst the peasant dust of a secluded Highland countryside.

<sup>1</sup> It is a tramp of over five miles from the battlefield to the old kirk where Clavers sleeps "encased in his armour."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE END OF AN AULD SANG

THE hopes of James the Seventh of once more attaining to the throne of the Stuarts were shattered on the heights of Killiecrankie when Claverhouse fell. The dawn of the Jacobite cause did not promise well, and the note of coming tragedy could be faintly heard by acute observers. Eighteen years afterwards the famous Treaty of Union between England and Scotland was passed, and on January 16, 1707, was touched with the royal sceptre. Here was "the end of an auld sang." The doom of the unfortunate Stuarts was sealed. The nature of things had prevailed. The alternative was hopeless, because the opponents of the union were even more hostile to each other on the points of religion and dynasty than hostile to the union. In 1745 the union was as unpopular as ever, but hatred of the union did not bring one Whig and scarcely more than one Presbyterian, a Cameron, to the standard of Prince Charlie. The hatred of popery and prelacy alike was strong enough to ensure the accession of King George. The "Wee, wee German lairdie" and his two fat



## THE END OF AN AULD SANG

German mistresses (created Duchess of Kendal and Countess of Platen) had come to stay. September 1714 witnessed at Aberdeen the proclamation of James VIII, the old Pretender—so named because when his mother, Mary of Este, was reported to be pregnant, most persons received the news with derision as a fraud of the Jesuits, who were naturally anxious to exclude the Princess of Orange from the succession. A year later—on November 13, 1715—Mar and his Jacobites countered the royalists at Sheriffmuir. Rob Roy, always a diplomatist, was an “onlooker” at this skirmish, where, says Marshal Keith who fought for James, “neither side gained much honour, but which was the entire ruin of our party.”

There are many stories told of this battle or skirmish. Contemporary writers vary considerably in their accounts. Mr. Francis Steuart, in his edition (1910) of the *News Letters of 1715-16*, states that “We still need to know so much more than we do about the Jacobite rising of 1715,” while Professor Sanford Terry, in his *Chevalier de St. George*, remarks that “It is not easy to find a single contemporary narrative which satisfactorily and completely describes the details of a battle. I have therefore pieced together the best accounts of Sheriffmuir, and have annotated them fully whenever additional facts were available.” John, Earl of Mar, commanded the Jacobites. He raised his standard at Braemar on

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

6th September, and James VIII was proclaimed at Aberdeen, Brechin, and Dundee. On the 28th he entered Perth. His force consisted of Macdonalds, Macleans, Camerons, Stewarts, and Gordons, possibly about six to eight thousand strong. The Royalists, some four thousand men commanded by the Marquis of Argyle, lay at Stirling. Spies from Perth informed Argyle that on the 10th of November Mar had broken up his camp and was marching south, and Argyle to prevent them reaching the banks of the Forth moved his forces up to Dunblane.<sup>1</sup> Mar's army marched down Strathallan by Greenloaning and Kinbuck, very probably on or near the present north road, and not far from the river Allan. After leaving Kinbuck they turned to the left and advanced against the small army of the royal troops, which had taken up a strong position commanding the road over which the enemy were advancing. The heights to the north of Dunblane near Kippendavie House are mentioned in despatches, and there is not the slightest doubt, from the particulars and names in contemporary writings, that the fight took place near this point.<sup>2</sup> On the morning of Sunday the 13th the two armies were aware of each other's presence. Mar's leaders appear to have entertained doubts on the expediency of risking a battle, but the fierce cries

<sup>1</sup> The Glasgow Volunteers, under Colonel Blackadder, were left to guard the old brig of Stirling (*Life of Colonel Blackadder*, chap. xix.).

<sup>2</sup> Shearer, *Battle of Dunblane* (1911); *Sheriffmuir, 1715*, p. 7 *et seq.*



## THE END OF AN AULD SANG

of "Fight! Fight!" from the Highlanders decided the point. The Highland charge on the right wing broke the royalist left wing, and forced both horse and foot down towards Dunblane with much slaughter. On the left, however, Argyle's troops received the foe steadily, and in face of a withering fire the Highlanders swayed and faltered, and ultimately broke. The left wing of each army was routed and fled, so that there was presented to the spectators on the neighbouring heights the singular spectacle of a chase going both north and south. Both sides claimed the victory, but as Mar was prevented from moving to the west and had to retire upon Perth, and as Argyle retained a position by which he was enabled to defend the Lowlands, the triumph was substantially on the royalist side.<sup>1</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> In the first number of the quaint *Glasgow Courant* "containing the Occurrences Both at Home and Abroad from Friday, November 11, to Monday, November 14, 1715" there are "repeated advices from Stirling." We read that "The Duke (of Argyle) thought fit to leave the Castle, the Town, and the Bridge (of Stirling) to be guarded by the Volunteers from Glasgow." There is also in this number "A copy of a letter from (ex) Provost Aird (of Glasgow) to the Provost of Glasgow," dated from "Stirling Bridge, November 13, at 9 at night." Mr. Aird says: "We are still confirmed that the Duke of Argyle is master of the field, and for a proof of it he hath sent in sixty prisoners," &c. In the second issue of the *Courant*, "November 15 to November 17," there are definite details of the battle: "By advice from Stirling 13 Instant.—We hear that on Sabbath last about noon His Grace the Duke of Argyle obtain'd an Intire Victory over the Rebels in Sheriff Moor, a mile north of Dumblain." The *Courant* was Glasgow's "first printed newspaper." There is a set of sixty-seven numbers preserved in Glasgow University library. Michael Graham, "The Early Glasgow Press," *Trans. O.G.C.*, vol. i. pp. 93-7.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

this sharp and very brief struggle some 1200 men fell—800 in the Jacobite ranks and 600 government troops.<sup>1</sup> Mar spent three weeks in Perth, and cruelly devastated the country so as to hamper Argyle's northward march. During these weeks the Highlanders, as was their wont, rapidly melted away, going off by hundreds to their various glens and valleys. The remainder, on Argyle's advance, retreated north and finally dispersed on the shores of the Moray Firth. The rebellion of 1715 was over. In 1717 an Act of Pardon was passed for all Jacobites except the unfortunate Macgregors, whose wrongs were subsequently successfully avenged by Rob Roy. A Jacobite movement on a more formidable scale, including an invasion of England by an army from Sweden—a large number of Jacobites fled to the Swedish court after Sheriffmuir—and Spain, alarmed the government in 1718, but the death of Charles XII of Sweden prevented the invasion, and a small Spanish force with a few Scots, in all about 1500 men, was

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Mar's official despatch to Colonel Balfour, Governor of Perth, states: "We attacked the enemy on the end of the Sheriff Muir, carried the day entirely, pursued them down to a little hill on the south of Dunblane." Take the royalist view, as revealed in a letter dated from Stirling, November 16, 1715: "By a Royalist to Colonel Blackater: On the field near Dunblane our right wing beat their left and their right beat our left. Their army was reckoned 9 or 10,000 men. Ours was not above 3400. Fifteen hundred of our right wing chased 5000 of their left two or three miles. We have the marks of victory. We have taken 14 colours and standards, 4 of their cannons and about 100 prisoners" (Steuart, *News Letters of 1715-16*, p. 69).

## THE END OF AN AULD SANG

defeated at Glenshiel<sup>1</sup> by General Wightman with 1600 men. Lords Seaforth and Tullibardine were in this fight but escaped. General Wightman lost twenty-one men, but he had the triumph of bringing into Edinburgh 274 Spanish prisoners.<sup>2</sup> The insurrection proved a wretched fiasco. It marked the setting of the sun on the Jacobite cause for another generation. Sheriffmuir is honoured by quite a little spate of ballad-lore. The double flight is alluded to in the contemporary ballads by the following lines :

“ There’s some say that we wan, and some say that they wan,  
And some say that nane wan at a’, man,  
But one thing I’m sure, that at Sherramuir  
A battle there was that I saw, man.  
And we ran and they ran, and they ran and we ran ;  
And we ran, and they ran awa’, man.”

The Rob Roy incident is also touched off by the balladist. There is no doubt that Rob was at least very near the battlefield. Cameron of Lochiel, in a letter of June 16, 1716, speaks of having “perceived Rob Roy Macgregor on his march below me coming from Doune, he not being at the engagement, with about 250 betwixt Macgregors and Macphersons.” Perhaps Rob really meant to lend his aid in the fight. On the other hand, he may have held his men back from a desire not to offend his patron Argyle,

<sup>1</sup> Terry, “Battle of Glenshiel,” *Scot. Hist. Rev.*, vol. ii. p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> Keith’s *Autobiography* ; *Scots Courant*, May and June 1719 ; Hill Burton, vol. viii. pp. 341, 342 ; Rait, *Making of Scotland*, p. 265.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

or it may have been, as the ballad hints, from motives of plunder. In any case we cannot now tell. The ballad says :

“Rob Roy there stood watch on a hill, for to catch  
The booty for aught that I saw, man ;  
For he ne’er advanced from the place he was stanced  
Till no more was to do there at a’, man.”

There is also a poetical “Dialogue between Will Lickladle and Tam Cleancogue, twa shepherds wha were feeding their flocks on the Ochil Hills on the day the battle of Sheriffmuir was fought.” It is sung to the tune of the “Cameronians’ March,” and in somewhat crude verse narrates the incidents of the battle.





GARDINER'S MEMORIAL

## CHAPTER XIX

### PRESTONPANS

ROMANCE sheds a brilliant lustre over the stirring events of The '45. Seen through the gathering mists of the passing years, its outlines are softened and rendered strangely picturesque. Gallant figures,

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

plaided and plumed, come and go in the dim twilight. The war-cry of the pipes mingles with the haunting refrain of "Wae's me for Prince Charlie," sung by generations of long vanished voices. Beautiful women tread a stately measure before their young prince in the halls of ancient Holyrood, the home of his fathers. True, we see those scenes in a glorified perspective, but we will search history in vain for their equal. Limned in the richest hues is the series of pictures of that stimulating epoch. The "Rising" of the clans was bold in conception, foolish if you will, but it strikes a pure note, and one to which the best in all men must respond. They staked and lost all in a desperate game. But it was a game where self was sacrificed to loyalty, a game such as to stir to a semblance of life even the torpid imagination of the dullest scion of our depressing respectability.

In 1745, as in 1715, the throne of Hanover was saved by much the same considerations. Trade was booming. Glasgow had laid the foundation of its future commercial greatness.<sup>1</sup> The years of peace which had intervened had convinced the Scottish Lowlands and satisfied even the English squire and parson that a revolution was opposed to the real interests of the country. The very fates seemed to conspire against the ancient dynasty. Prince Charlie's arrival (on July 23, 1745) at the dreary

<sup>1</sup> Macgeorge, *Old Glasgow*, p. 225 *et seq.*; *N.S.A.*, art. "Glasgow."



FIELD OF PRESTONPANS

Firth of Forth on left, Berwick Law in distance





## PRESTONPANS

island of Eriskay—between Barra and South Uist—was depressing.<sup>1</sup> Drenching rain and cold blasts from the western sea damped the spirits of the little party of enthusiasts as they sheltered in a grimy hovel. In that relying fatalism that led him on one must seek the sources which made the prince “contented, good-humoured, and hopeful” in that Eriskay hut. As the time passed matters looked even more bleak.<sup>2</sup> The Highland chiefs did not respond to the prince’s summons. Macdonald of Boisdale, brother of Clanranald, was the first to obey, and he condemned the project of invasion as impracticable, and advised immediate return to France. Then we trace the tragic “canvas” of the prince crossing to the mainland, and his meeting with other chieftains.<sup>3</sup> Even they urged

<sup>1</sup> *Jacobite Memoirs*, p. ii.

<sup>2</sup> On the 2nd of July the prince embarked at Nantes on board the *Dutillet* or, as she is commonly called, the *Doutelle*, a brig of 18 guns which had been fitted out to cruise against the British trade. Accompanying the *Doutelle* was the *Elizabeth*, of 68 guns and 700 men, which was to cruise on the Scottish coasts. From Eriskay the *Doutelle* sailed to Loch-na-Nuagh, a small arm of the sea which divides Moidart and Arisaig. And it was there, on July 25, 1745, that Charles Edward first set foot upon Scottish ground. He landed at Borrodale, a farm belonging to Clanranald close by the south shore of Loch-na-Nuagh. The spot chosen for disembarkation is probably as wild and desolate as any in broad Scotland.

<sup>3</sup> A Highland officer, author of a journal and memoirs of the expedition, has left a description of this meeting and an interesting sketch of the prince. The writer, accompanied by Clanranald, Alex. M'Donald of Glenaladale, Æneas M'Donald of Dalily, came to Forsay, a small village opposite the *Doutelle's* anchorage. They went aboard and were conducted into a large tent erected on the ship's deck. Clanranald was called into

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

the hopelessness of the cause, until Charles in despair turned to a young Highlander and asked, "Will not you help me?" It was an appeal to sentiment, and youth won the day. Sharp came the answer: "I will, by God. Though not another Highlander should draw sword for you, I will." He who spoke was Ranald Macdonald of Kinlochmoidart, one of the heroic figures of the romantic '45. The chords of chivalry in his bosom had been touched. His example fired the slumbering embers of his fellow-chieftains, and the "rising" was an accomplished fact. At Glenfinnan,<sup>1</sup> on August 19, 1745, Prince Charlie raised his standard,<sup>2</sup> and on September 17th

the prince's cabin, and the writer of the memoir proceeds: "After being three hours with the P., Clanranald returned to us, and in about half an hour afterwards there entered the tent a tall youth of a most agreeable aspect in a plain black coat, with a plain shirt not very clean, and a cambrick stock fixed with a plain silver buckle, a fair round wig out of the buckle, a plain hatt with a canvas string having one end fixed to one of his coat buttons: he had black stockings and brass buckles in his shoes: at his first appearance I found my heart swell to my very throat" (*Lockhart Papers*, vol. ii. p. 479).

<sup>1</sup> This glen forms the inlet from Moidart into Lochaber, and lies about fifteen miles west from Fort William.

<sup>2</sup> The Marquis of Tullibardine had the honour of unfurling the flag. A monument near the banks of Loch Shiel, in Glenfinnan, marks the scene of the historic gathering. It bears the following inscription in Gaelic, English, and Latin: "On this spot where Prince Charles Edward first raised his standard on the 19th day of August 1745, when he made the daring and romantic attempt to recover a throne lost by the imprudence of his ancestors, this column is erected by Alexander M'Donald, Esq., of Glenaladale, to commemorate the generous zeal, the undaunted bravery, and the inviolable fidelity of his forefathers, and the rest of those who fought and bled in that arduous and unfortunate enterprise."



## PRESTONPANS

he made his triumphal entry into Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> "When they came into the suburbs," says Lord Elcho, who accompanied Charles to Holyrood, "the crowd was prodigious and all wishing the Prince prosperity." The canny burghers of Auld Reekie had no aversion to the Stuarts. Indeed could their religion have been secured, they would have welcomed them back to the throne again. But this attitude of hypothetical acquiescence was of little assistance, and the prince had to rely on his 3000 Highlanders.<sup>2</sup> For three days the handsome prince

<sup>1</sup> The route taken by Charles, from Perth, was by Dunblane and Doune to the Ford of Frew, where his army crossed the river Forth; thence by Stirling, passing over the field of Bannockburn and encamping on that of Sauchieburn; Falkirk, Linlithgow, Corstorphine; and from there, to avoid the guns of Edinburgh Castle, striking off into a by-road leading past the little village of Slateford (now a suburb of Edinburgh), where the army encamped; then, after the capitulation of the city, the Jacobite forces, marching round its southern boundary, reached Arthur's Seat and pitched their tents at the village of Duddingston.

<sup>2</sup> At Glenfinnan Charles was joined by 800 of the Clan Cameron under Lochiel, Macdonald of Keppoch with 300 of his men, some of the Macleods and other clans, and he found himself at the head of about 1200 brave and resolute men. On his march south he was joined at Low Bridge, near Glengarry, by 260 of the Stewarts of Appin under Stewart of Ardshiel; at Aberchalder, near the foot of Corricarriek by 600 of the Macdowells of Glengarry, and by a party of the Grants of Glenmoriston. From there Charles and his force, now numbering over 2000, passed through the Grampians, by Dalwhinnie and adown the road which runs alongside the Highland Railway line, through these gloomy ravines to Blair-Atholl; Macpherson of Cluny joined Charles at Dalwhinnie, and at Blair Castle, where the Marquis of Tullibardine entertained the prince, there was a further accession, Lord Nairne and several Perthshire gentlemen coming forward. At Perth there joined the Duke of Perth, Lord Ogilvie and Strathallan, Robertson of Strowan, Oliphant of Gask, and

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

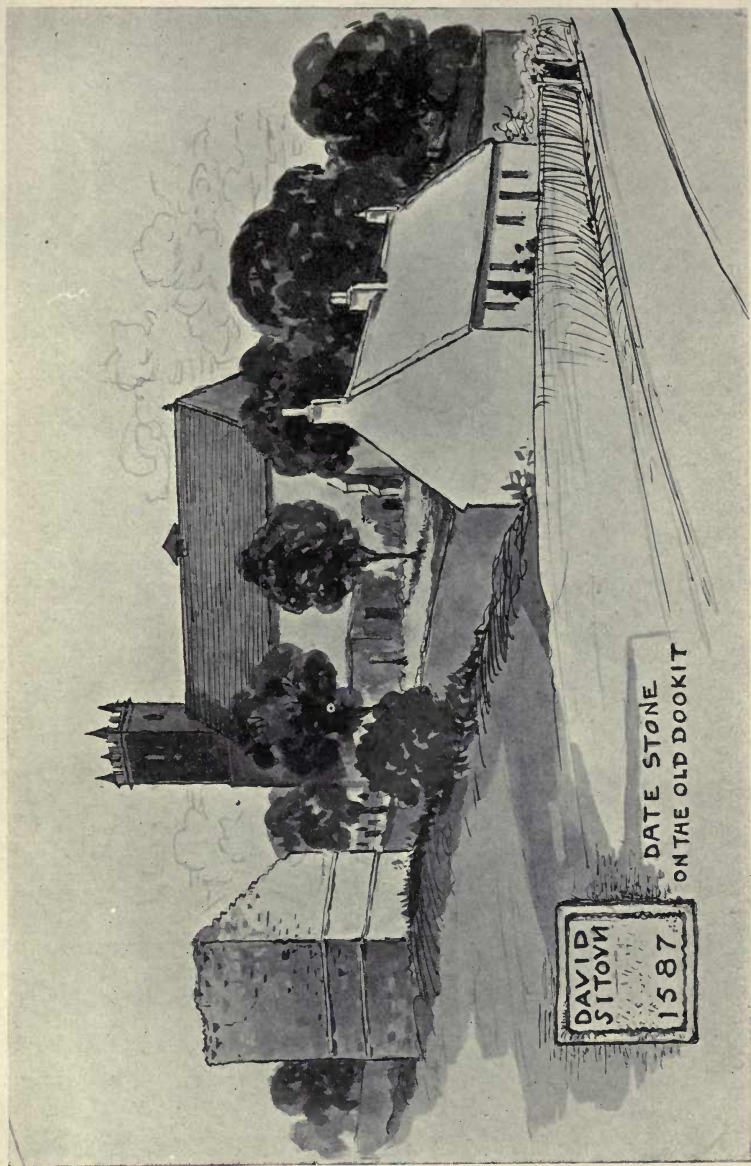
occupied the ancient palace of his race. Holyrood for the nonce assumed some of her old glory. Laughter and music resounded through the grey walls, and well might believers in the divine continuation of royal genealogies imagine that they were witnessing their subtle creed confirmed by an almost miraculous interposition. Rumours that Sir John Cope and an army had landed at Dunbar became stern fact, and Charles and his men were called to the memorable field of Prestonpans.

With drums beating and colours flying the Highland host marched out of the capital to meet Johnnie Cope.<sup>1</sup> The assumption of kingship was

Lord George Murray. The latter's conduct in visiting Cope and then pooh-poohing the rising in a letter to the Lord-Advocate is questionable. Still, he is one of the great figures of the '45. Charles, aware of Lord George's and the Duke of Perth's soldierly qualities, made them lieutenant-generals, a post for which they were well qualified; and it is interesting to note that Lord George appointed the Chevalier Johnstone, who had joined the prince at Perth, his aide-de-camp. Johnstone was a talented man and keen observer, as is demonstrated by his *Memoirs of the Rebellion*, 1745-6. He was a scion of the ancient and powerful family the Johnstones of Wamphray.

<sup>1</sup> The army proceeded from Duddingston Park by the road which passes Easter Duddingston. A lady who in early youth had seen them pass the last-mentioned village was able, in 1827, says Chambers, to describe the memorable pageant. "The Highlanders strode on, with their strange clothes and various arms, their rough limbs and uncombed hair, looking around them with an air of fierce resolution. The prince rode amidst his officers at a little distance from the flank of the column, preferring to amble over the dry stubble fields beside the road." The old lady remembered clearly the prince's "graceful carriage and comely looks, his long light hair straggling below his neck, and the flap of his tartan coat thrown back by the wind, so as to make the jewelled St.

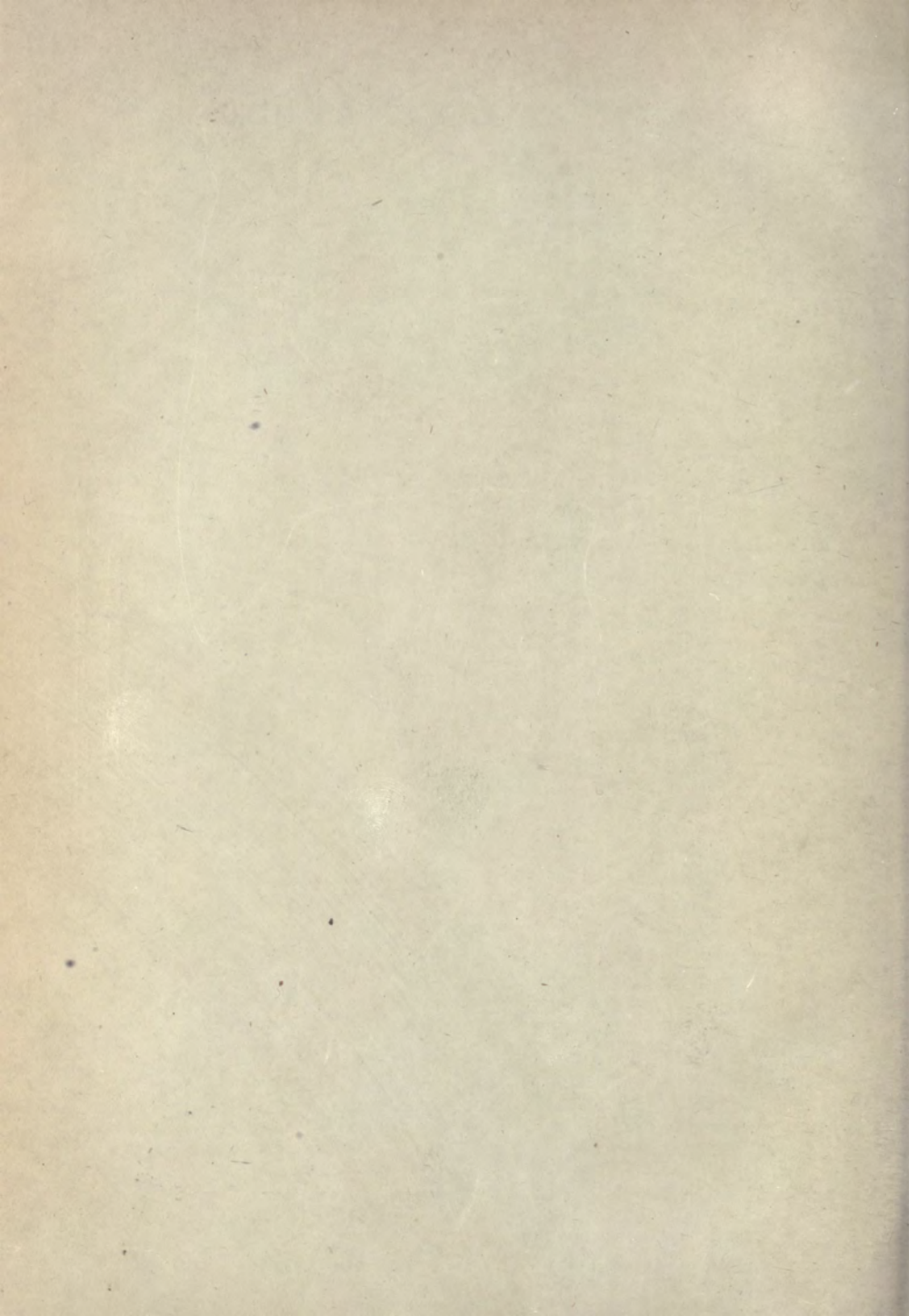




TRANENT KIRK

The Highlanders occupied the kirkyard





## PRESTONPANS

to be made good by the sword. It was a dread arbitrament, but Charles had the men, the money, and the equipment, and, further, was confident of the issue. From Dunbar Cope led his troops westward, hugging the coast-line by North Berwick, through old-world Dirleton, and past Seton Castle—the erstwhile home of Queen Mary—to the fishing village of Prestonpans. The prince's scouts kept him informed of the enemy's movements. Charles led his army over historic ground. They breasted Carberry Hill—the scene of Mary's surrender to the lords—and along the brow of the ridge overlooking Pinkie Cleuch and Musselburgh, to Birsley and the quaint and ancient mining village of Tranent.<sup>1</sup> From there they looked down upon

Andrew cross dangle for a moment in the air by its silken ribbon." The lady who related this interesting reminiscence to Robert Chambers was a Mrs. Handasyde of Fisherrow, near Musselburgh. Chambers, *Hist. Rebellion*, pp. 97-8, and note.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the Highlanders' tents were pitched within 200 yards to the west of Tranent village, and a party of them boldly pushed down a little heuch, or glen, to the kirkyard, where they were within 500 yards of the royal army. Local tradition, quoted by M'Neill, *History of Tranent*, p. 107; cf. Lord George Murray's Journal: "Mr. O'Sullivan (quarter-master-general of the prince's troop) then came up, and after taking a look of the enemy he took fifty of Lochiel's people who had the van and placed them in a churchyard at the foot of the town of Tranent, for what reason I could not understand." An eye-witness who has left a record of the battle speaks of a detachment taking "possession of the church of Tranent and a little bush of trees adjoining to it," from whence they were dislodged by Lieut.-Colonel Whitford, who commanded Cope's artillery. *Jacobite Memoirs*, p. 36; *Hist. Papers, Jacobite Period* (Spalding Club), ed. by Colonel Allardyce, vol. i. pp. 279-82.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

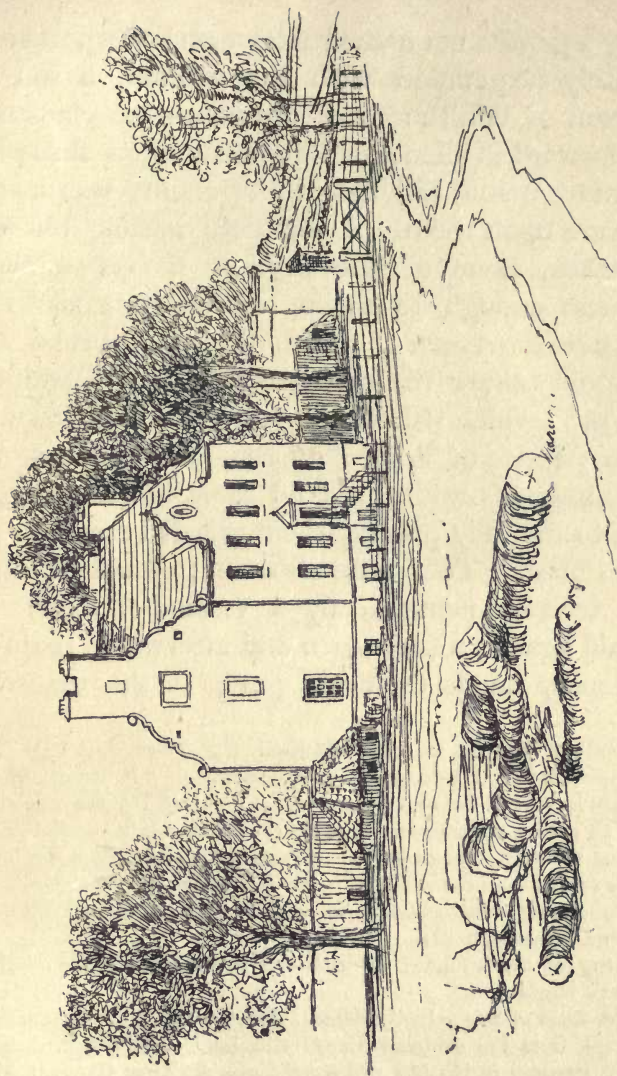
Cope's lines. His front battle stretched alongside a ditch, practically on the site of the North British Railway; his left wing rested on the shores of the Forth at Cockenzie. Thus the armies rested for the night. Early on the morning of Saturday, the 21st September, Charles marshalled his forces. The Macdonalds were on the right wing<sup>1</sup>—they deemed the position theirs by heritage, alleging that Bruce assigned them that station at Bannockburn—the Stewarts and Camerons were on the left, the Macgregors and the Duke of Perth's men formed the centre. The Atholl men, the Robertsons, the Macdonalds of Glencoe, and the Maclaughlans were the rearguard.<sup>2</sup> Gardiner's Dragoons on the right and Hamilton's on the left, with the foot regiments between, was Cope's formation.<sup>3</sup> Long before the east haar had lifted from the low-lying morass that divided the armies, the Highlanders were in motion.

<sup>1</sup> The official account, published in the *Caledonian Mercury*, by Charles, places the Macdonalds (of Glencoe) in that honoured position.

<sup>2</sup> "Our right wing was led on by the Duke of Perth as Lieutenant-General, and consisted of the regiments of Clanranald, Keppoch, Glengarie, and Glencoe under their several chiefs: the left by Lord George Murray consisting of batalions of Camerons commanded by Lochiel, the Stewarts by Ardsheel, their chieftain Appin not being with us in this affair: one body of Macgregors with Glencairney (Glencairnaig) and the rest of the Macgregors under Major James Drummond" (*Lockhart Papers*, vol. ii. p. 490). The last-named officer—among the first killed—was a son of Rob Roy. His character and career are sketched in Stevenson's *Catriona*. Cf. Murray Rose, *Historical Notes*, p. 161; Lang, *Pickle the Spy*, p. 230; note, Terry, *Rising of 1745*, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Cope's strength was 2100 men, the Highlanders about 2400, but a third of the latter never came into action.





COLONEL GARDINER'S MANSION

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Led by a gentleman named Anderson<sup>1</sup>—a sportsman intimately acquainted with the ground, a son of Anderson of Whitburgh of Humbie—the clansmen crept forward in silence. The dense mists shrouded their movements, and before the enemy was aware they were upon them. A complete debacle followed the attack, none of the royalist troops showing steadiness enough to make the battle a series of successive movements.<sup>2</sup> The dragoons broke and fled, some taking the road past Colonel Gardiner's mansion<sup>3</sup>—which still stands—others riding furiously by the old kirk of Tranent to Birsley. Gardiner and a few dragoons rallied around some old thorn-trees, which to this day present their grizzled stems to the eastern blasts. They were all slain, Colonel Gardiner being terribly mangled by a Lochaber axe.<sup>4</sup> He was laid against a thorn-tree and afterwards removed by friendly hands to die in peace in the manse of

<sup>1</sup> *Home's Works*, vol. iii. p. 88 ; M'Neill, *Hist. Tranent*, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> The battle lasted little more than five minutes. "It was gained with such rapidity that in the second line, where I was still by the side of the Prince, we saw no other enemy than those who were lying on the ground killed and wounded, though we were not more than fifty paces behind our first line (which bore the shock of battle and swept the royal soldiers off the field) running always as fast as we could to overtake them" (Chevalier Johnstone, *Memoirs*, p. 37).

<sup>3</sup> Many of the wounded of both armies were taken into Colonel Gardiner's house.

<sup>4</sup> The death of this gallant soldier is described by his biographer, Dr. Doddridge, from the evidence of eye-witnesses. Doddridge, *Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of Colonel James Gardiner* (London, 1747), p. 187 ; Scott, *Waverley*, note, Death of Colonel Gardiner.



## PRESTONPANS

Tranent. He sleeps in the fine old kirkyard beneath the shadow of the tower of Tranent's old kirk.<sup>1</sup>



THE OLD THORN-TREES

Cavalry, artillery, and infantry fled, panic-stricken, before the Highlanders. Slaughter of a frightful

<sup>1</sup> He was buried at the west end of Tranent Church, where a monumental inscription—now lost—was placed over his remains by his wife, Lady Frances Erskine, daughter of David, fourth Lord Cardross. Colonel Gardiner's tomb was enclosed by the modern church, built in 1797, and which I show in my sketch. A part of the ancient fabric still exists. When digging the foundations of the present church the workmen discovered Gardiner's remains. The hair on the head was quite fresh, and the gash of the Lochaber axe was visible on the skull.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

kind was enacted, the murderous broadswords and pole-scythes of the clansmen converting the battlefield into a shambles.<sup>1</sup> Cope himself acted the part of a poltroon, riding furiously from off the field,<sup>2</sup> up an old road to Birsley planting, and so to Berwick, where the old governor, Lord Mark Kerr, saluted him with the words, "Good God! I have seen many battles, heard of many, but never of the first news

<sup>1</sup> According to the Chevalier Johnstone 1300 of Cope's men were killed. Between 30 and 40 Highlanders fell. Other accounts give the royalist losses as about 500, and the latter estimate is probably the more correct of the two (Chevalier Johnstone, *Memoirs*, p. 38).

<sup>2</sup> In justice to Cope's memory it is only fair to give another version, that of an "Eye-Witness" who gave his services "as a volunteer to Sir John Cope which he was pleased to accept and join'd the army under his command near Inverness on the fifth day of last September: from thence the army marched to Aberdeen," where they embarked and landed at Dunbar on "Tuesday the seventeenth." The writer describes the formation adopted by Cope: "When we first Drew up the Front of the Army pointed South-west, the village of Prestonpans and the Defiles leading to it and Colonel Gardner's House on our Front: the Town of Tranent with a great many Coal Pits, Hedges, and Ditches on our left Flank: Seaton House and a narrow Defile leading from Haddington in our rear, and the Sea with the village of Cockenny (Cockenzie) on our Right Flank." He goes on to show that Cope did his best to rally his men, riding "from the Right to the Left in the front encouraging the men, begging them to keep their Fire and keep their ranks and they would easily beat the Rebels." Cope tried in vain to rally his dragoons, "but it would not Do, away they Run." He returned a "second time to the Foot but they were Intirely broke and most of them he met had thrown away their Arms." Finally, along with Lords Home and Loudon, he made a desperate effort to get some 400 dragoons to stop and attack the enemy, "but as soon as a small body of Rebels appeared" the dragoons could not be brought "to move towards them." And, says our eye-witness, "the Retreat was made with Decency. We halted at Lawder and Lay at Coldstream and Cornwall (Cornhill?) that night and next day being Sunday the 22 of September we march'd to Berwick upon Tweed." The writer,

## PRESTONPANS

of defeat being brought by the general officer before.”<sup>1</sup> The victory was complete. Charles returned in triumph to the capital, and all the ladies who had the slightest tinge of Jacobitism in their opinions showered on him their sympathy and prayers! But Prestonpans, while it was a signal triumph,<sup>2</sup> proved of little material value. It gave him the practical mastery over Scotland, but to attain his ideal London had first to be reached, and London was a long way off.

The pusillanimity or defective judgment of Cope has been mercilessly satirised by the Jacobite balladists. There are—or were—few songs more popular in Scotland than “Johnnie Cope,”<sup>3</sup> with its refrain :

“Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wauking yet?  
Or are your drums a-beating yet?  
If ye are wauking I would wait,  
To gang to the coals in the morning.”

---

I think, unintentionally gives his case away, for it is obvious that if Cope “lay at Coldstream,” on the English Border, the night of the day on which the battle was fought, he must have ridden furiously to cover the long distance between Prestonpans and Coldstream. At all events it does not suggest a particularly “decent” retreat! (“Cope’s Battle, 1745, by an Eye-Witness, supposed one of the Lord Forbes Family” (*Hist. Papers, Jacobite Period* (Spalding Club), vol. i. pp. 279–82).

<sup>1</sup> Letters from Dr. Waugh, October 2, 1745 ; cf. Hill Burton, vol. viii. p. 457.

<sup>2</sup> The cannon and all the baggage of the royal army, together with the military chest containing £4000, fell into the hands of the victors.

<sup>3</sup> “Johnnie Cope” was sung to a fine tune known some time before the Forty-Five by the name of “Hie to the Hills in the Morning,” and Dr.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

Another metrical effusion, "The Battle of Prestonpans," was the production of Mr. Skirving, a Lothian farmer, whose son became a painter of some note, one of his productions being Skirving's now famous chalk portrait of Burns. The old farmer had a cynical pen, and wrote thus upon

"Lieutenant Smith, of Irish birth,  
Frae whom he called for aid, man,  
Being full of dread, lap o'er his head,  
And wadna be gainsaid, man."

The same caustic wit is displayed throughout the song. Smith, offended at the lampoon, sent Skirving a challenge. "Gang awa back," said Skirving to the messenger, "and tell Mr. Smith that I havena time to come to Haddington, but tell him to come here and I'll tak a look at him, an' if I think I can fecht him I'll fecht him; and if no I'll do as he did—I'll rin awa!"

Charles Mackay remarks that the phrase "gang to the coals in the morning" has been asserted by some to be a senseless corruption of the old chorus "gang to the hills in the morning," and by others to be a local (Tranent) phrase for early rising. I was told by old residents in Tranent that "gang to the coals in the morning" has always been a common phrase in the district. Judging by the number of coal-pits round about Tranent, and actually upon the very battlefield itself, no one need be surprised at the phrase being familiar to the natives. The Forty-Five inspired a rich collection of ballad-lore. The chief repositories are Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*, Dr. Charles Mackay's *Jacobite Songs and Ballads of Scotland*, Dr. Charles Rogers' *Modern Scottish Minstrel: Life and Songs of the Baroness Nairne*, and G. S. Macquoid's *Jacobite Songs and Ballads*.





FERCE FIGHTING TOOK PLACE  
AROUND THIS OLD COTTAGE.

## CHAPTER XX

### CULLODEN

A SOMBRE vista of wide-spreading moorland, over which grey clouds seem ever to mass themselves. Great wan shadows creep silently along the bleached wastes and brood among the peat-hags, whose black recesses whisper mournfully of death. Withered heath and bent weave a chequered pattern of saffron and pale green in the distance, where mighty hills huddle together, black and leaden against a lowering sky. A fitting stage indeed on which to drop the

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

curtain on the drama of the blasted hopes. Silence and solitude sit hand in hand for ever on the moorland of Culloden, silence that is only broken by the autumn winds which come from far-distant and lonely places and sweep across the heath. Then from among the dim recesses of the ghostly firs that fringe the moor, moaning voices emerge to float around the grey boulder on which a brutal Hanoverian duke once stood and watched a royal prince beaten in his last throw against the grim Fates. Looking on this dreary waste, where the only green patches are those marking the long graves under which the clansmen sleep in heaps, it is impossible not to feel compassion for the helplessness of a Highland army in such a place. A wide, flat muir with nothing to aid the mountaineers in their peculiar warfare: an excellent field for disciplined troops.<sup>1</sup> Better could not exist. Cumberland knew it.

For six weeks after the victory at Prestonpans Prince Charlie held royal court in ancient Holyrood.<sup>2</sup> On that disastrous field the Highlanders had obtained a glorious booty in arms, clothes, watches, and other products of civilisation which surprised and puzzled them. Cope's military chest containing £4000 afforded a welcome supply of ready cash to the Prince. But he wanted men, and especially

<sup>1</sup> *Jacobite Memoirs*, p. 121; Tulloch, *Culloden*, pp. 37, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Blaikie, *Itinerary of Prince Charles*.





CULLODEN MOOR





## CULLODEN

Lowland men. True, the Highlanders increased in numbers during the Edinburgh stay to about 4500 foot and 400 horse, but the Lowlands remained apathetic.<sup>1</sup> The Jacobite movement in the north of England was equally abortive. French reinforcements also failed to arrive. Then came the dash to Derby.<sup>2</sup> With the Highlanders one hundred and thirty miles from London a state of panic prevailed in the metropolis. Hogarth's

<sup>1</sup> Among the clansmen who joined Charles at Edinburgh were 600 men under Ogilvy; Lord Pitsligo with 100 mounted troopers and 250 foot; 120 Gordons and Mackinnons; the Master of Strathallan with 300 men; 100 Macgregors; and Tullibardine with 600 Atholl men (Blaikie, *Itinerary of Prince Charles*, pp. 18, 23).

<sup>2</sup> According to a contemporary list, quoted by Keltie in his *History of the Highlands*, the Prince's army was composed of the following regiments. The numbers are however much overrated :

| REGIMENTS                   | COMMANDERS  | MEN        |
|-----------------------------|---|------------|
| Lochiel . . . .             | Cameron, younger, of Lochiel . . . .              | 740        |
| Appin . . . .               | Stewart of Ardsziel . . . .                       | 360        |
| Atholl . . . .              | Lord George Murray . . . .                        | 1000       |
| Clanranald . . . .          | Macdonald, younger, of Clanranald . . . .         | 200        |
| Keppoch . . . .             | Macdonald of Keppoch . . . .                      | 400        |
| Glencoe . . . .             | Macdonald of Glencoe . . . .                      | 200        |
| Ogilvy . . . .              | Lord Ogilvy . . . .                               | 500        |
| Glenbucket . . . .          | Gordon of Glenbucket . . . .                      | 427        |
| Perth . . . .               | Duke of Perth (including Pitsligo's foot) . . . . | 750        |
| Robertson . . . .           | Robertson of Strowan . . . .                      | 200        |
| Maclauchlan . . . .         | Maclauchlan of Maclauchlan . . . .                | 260        |
| Glencairnock . . . .        | Macgregor of Glencairnock . . . .                 | 300        |
| Nairne . . . .              | Lord Nairne . . . .                               | 200        |
| Edinburgh . . . .           | John Roy Stewart . . . .                          | 450        |
| Several small corps . . . . | . . . .   | 1000       |
| Horse . . . .               | Lord Elcho, Lord Kilmarnock . . . .               | 160        |
| Horse . . . .               | Lord Pitsligo's . . . .                           | 140        |
|                             |   | <hr/> 7287 |

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

satirical brush has immortalised the march of the defenders to Finchley Common. Fortunately for them the Highland force turned at Derby<sup>1</sup> and sullenly retreated back to Scotland. Experience had taught its leaders that the English towns and villages were hostile.<sup>2</sup> On Christmas Day, 1745,<sup>3</sup> Prince Charlie and his men entered Glasgow, where they remained a week and mulcted the city in £5000.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The route of the Highland army south was from Edinburgh, past Dalkeith, Lauder, Kelso, Jedburgh, up Rule Water into Liddesdale, Haggiehaugh upon the Liddel, and then across the Border into England; Reddings in Cumberland; Carlisle, where Charles was joined by his horsemen who had come south by Hawick and Langholm. Carlisle was captured by Charles and the march (London was the objective) south resumed: Penrith, Kendal, Lancaster, Preston, Wigan, Manchester, Macclesfield, Derby; and it was at Derby, 127 miles from London, that Charles, acting on the advice of his leaders, decided to retreat. It was the best, indeed the only course under the circumstances. The Highland army had dwindled to about 4000; the English Jacobites had proved very lukewarm, only some 300 having joined, and not a single family of note. Cumberland with 8000 troops and Wade with 10,000 were rapidly closing in. The members of Charles's council were of the opinion that the retreat was absolutely necessary, and he reluctantly gave the order on which the fate of the empire and his own destiny depended. Chevalier Johnstone, *Memoirs*, p. 71; Lord George Murray's statement, *Jacobite Memoirs*, p. 55; cf. Hill Burton, vol. viii. p. 475; Lang, vol. iv. pp. 479-80; Blaikie, *Itinerary of Prince Charles*.

<sup>2</sup> The Chevalier Johnstone relates some curious instances of the terror into which the English country people were thrown by the Highlanders' invasion. We need not wonder at this when we consider the extravagant and ridiculous stories circulated by the London news sheets regarding the Highlanders' ferocity. They were credited with cannibalistic tendencies, and it was popularly believed that they ate children, and had claws instead of hands! (Johnstone's *Memoirs*, p. 101).

<sup>3</sup> Macgeorge, *Old Glasgow*, pp. 162-3.

<sup>4</sup> Writing from the "Palace of Holyroodhouse, 25th Sept. 1745," after the victory of Prestonpans, which "it pleased God to grant us,"





THE CULLODEN CAIRN



## CULLODEN

January 3rd saw the Highland force marching out of Glasgow *en route* to the siege of Stirling Castle. In the meantime General Hawley had been deputed by Government to put Prince Charlie down. He had 8000 men under his command, and on his road to relieve Stirling he was joined by 1000 Argyll Highlanders under Colonel Campbell. The two forces met at Falkirk on January 17, 1746, and what followed was rather a scuffle than a battle. Prince Charlie's troops succeeded in seizing the bleak uplands of the Muir—near Falkirk—and when Hawley's dragoons charged, the Highlanders met them with a volley at close range that demoralised the cavalry.<sup>1</sup> They fell back, and Charlie's men, rushing down after them, broke through the infantry and overpowered them at once. The fight only occupied twenty minutes, yet in that brief period Hawley lost close upon

Charles intimated to the "Town Council and University" of Glasgow that the "exigency of the times do not permit us to leave (levy) the publick money as should be done in time of peace, we are obliged to have recourse to you for a loan of £15,000 sterling which we hereby oblige ourselves to pay back as soon as the nation shall be in a state of tranquility" (Cochrane, *Correspondence*, p. 133). Charles was prevailed upon to modify his demand, and on 30th September the Council borrowed "upon the touns credit the £5500 sterling mentioned," and paid the same to Charles's emissary, "John Hay, esquire, who has granted his receipt" (Renwick, "Records and Charters, Burgh of Glasgow, 1739-57," *S.B.R.S.*, pp. 216-8).

<sup>1</sup> The battle was fought under a fierce storm of wind and sleet, which greatly hampered the movements of the combatants, particularly Hawley's troops.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

six hundred men.<sup>1</sup> On the news of the Falkirk affair the Government became seriously alarmed, and committed the suppression of what they termed "the insurrection" to the supreme management of the Duke of Cumberland.

Cumberland earned for himself an unenviable notoriety during the '45. He was a young man, and only twenty-four years of age when he was entrusted with the mission mentioned. He was essentially a German princelet who deemed a knowledge of war a good speculation. In a comprehensive survey of the wars of the age he had studied the Highlanders and their peculiar charge. His conclusion was that could he once bring his men into receiving that charge with steadiness, the impetuous enemy would be at his mercy. The Duke was no common man, and it might be supposed that, had he been less brutal in nature, his character would have gained accordingly throughout the Highlands.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime the clans had reached Inverness, and Cumberland was at Nairn.

<sup>1</sup> Lord George Murray's narrative, *Jacobite Memoirs*, p. 85; Johnstone's *Memoirs*, p. 122 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> The fiendish cruelties which followed the battle of Culloden earned for Cumberland the name of The Butcher. Even the massacre of Glencoe pales before the enormities which he sanctioned, and which to this day make his memory loathed by the Highlanders. My great-great-grandfather was out in the '45 and fought at Culloden, and my grandfather when a boy heard many of the stories of Cumberland's barbarities from the lips of those whose fathers had suffered. He also told me of speaking, when a young boy, to a very old woman who when a girl gazed from a

## CULLODEN

An attempt to surprise the latter ended in failure. The Highlanders had perforce to retreat, and they returned to the neighbourhood of Culloden House. They were exhausted through want of food, shelter, and sleep, and the food collected was never destined to refresh and strengthen the Prince's troops. The approach of Cumberland called them



to form on the open ground beyond the enclosures round Culloden House, known as Drum Mossie Muir, but more commonly the field of Culloden. It lies six miles from Inverness. On this waste some 5000 devoted followers resolved to strike a blow for their Prince, and the prospect of again measuring swords

distance on the fight at Culloden. It is surely strange to think how closely such an experience links the present generation with the men and manners of the vastly different and long vanished age which witnessed that historic event.

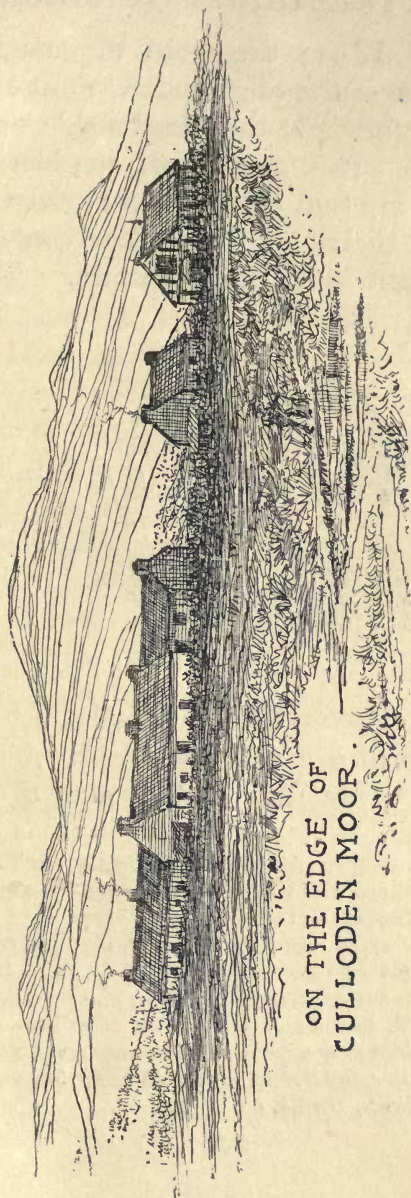


## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

with the English quickly made the Highlanders forget starvation and all other troubles. They waited the coming of Cumberland and his seasoned and well-fed veterans. On approaching the Highland forces the Duke's columns deployed into two lines and a reserve, so that if the first line were driven in by the Highland charges, the second line—which allowed for a free passage between the two lines—would be fresh to meet the enemy with a well-directed fire.<sup>1</sup> Matters happened as the astute Duke

<sup>1</sup> The Highlanders were disposed in two lines: the front consisting of the Atholl men, Camerons, Stewarts of Appin, Frasers, Macintoshes, Maclauchlans, Macleans, John Roy Steuart's regiment, and Farquharsons; the Macleods, Chisholms, Macdonalds of Clanranald, Keppoch, and Glengarry, the Macdonald regiments being on the left flank. Lord George Murray commanded on the right, Lord John Drummond in the centre, and the Duke of Perth on the left of the front line. The second Highland line consisted of the Gordons under Lord Lewis Gordon on the right, the French Royal Scots, the Irish Brigade, Lord Kilmarnock's foot-guards, and Glenbucket's regiment on the left; flanked on the right by Fitz-James's dragoons and Lord Elcho's horse-guards, and on the left by the Perth squadron under Lords Strathallan and Pitsligo and the Prince's body-guards under Lord Balmerino. The reserve consisted of the Duke of Perth's and Lord Ogilvy's regiments, under Lord Ogilvy. Prince Charlie occupied a position on a slight eminence behind the centre of the front line, from which he had a view of the whole field of battle. Cumberland's front line consisted of six regiments, viz. the Royals (the 1st), Cholmondeley's (the 34th), Price's (the 14th), the Scots Fusiliers (the 21st), Monro's (the 37th), and Barrel's (the 4th). The Earl of Albemarle commanded this line. The second line had five regiments: Pulteney's (the 13th), Bligh (the 20th), Sempil (the 25th), Ligonier (the 48th), and Wolfe's (the 8th); General Huske was in command. Wolfe later on in life became the hero of Quebec. The reserve under Brigadier Mordaunt had four regiments: Battereau's (the 62nd), Howard's (the 3rd), Fleming's (the 36th), and Blackeney's (the 27th), flanked by Kingston's dragoons

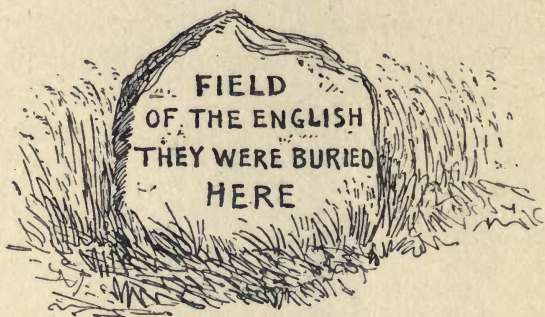




ON THE EDGE OF  
CULLODEN MOOR.

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

had foreseen. When the word of command was given the whole of the Highlanders' right and centre rushed madly forward; the Macdonalds on the left did not move. This great clan considered themselves deeply insulted by not being given the post of honour on the right, theirs, they contended, by inalienable right since Bannockburn.<sup>1</sup> They sub-



mitted to be decimated by the English artillerymen rather than overlook the slight.

It is said by tradition that a couple of regiments

(the 3rd). The flanks of the front line were protected by Kerr's dragoons (the 11th) and Cobham's dragoons (the 10th), while the Argyll-Campbells had charge of the baggage and stores.

<sup>1</sup> Some dubiety exists regarding the exact part played by this clan at Culloden, but the well-known story tells how, when the Macdonald regiment refused to charge, Keppoch, their chief, exclaiming "My God! has it come to this, that the children of my tribe have forsaken me," rushed forward, followed by a few devoted clansmen, and was slain (Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather*, 3rd Series, chap. xxiii.; Macdonald, *Clan Donald*, vol. ii. p. 663; Tulloch, *The '45*, pp. 42, 43).

## CULLODEN

on the left wing of the English were almost entirely destroyed by the desperate charge of the clansmen. But those Highlanders who had broken through never reached the second line.<sup>1</sup> A perfect storm of musketry and grape belched out upon them.<sup>2</sup> They fell in ghastly, writhing heaps, the foremost within reach of the bayonets. Upwards of 1000 strong men were killed in that wild blast of death.<sup>3</sup> Poor fellows! God help them, they met the fell destroyer face to face, as brave men should, as their fathers had done, and as—let us thank God for it—their children's children have not yet forgotten how to do. Theirs was the losing game. The star of living day had waned and gone out for ever on

<sup>1</sup> The official accounts published by the Government, of the casualties in Cumberland's army, give only 50 men killed and 259 wounded, including 18 officers, of whom 4 were killed. Lord Robert Kerr, second son of the Marquis of Lothian and captain of grenadiers in Barrel's regiment, was the only outstanding personality killed. He fell, fighting bravely at the head of his regiment, when the Highlanders charged.

<sup>2</sup> Dougal Graham, the Skellat Bellman of Glasgow who followed Prince Charlie, and left a curiously interesting rhyming history of the events of the '45, describes the execution done by Cumberland's artillery :

“ ‘Grape them! Grape them!’ did he cry :  
When bags of balls were fired at once.  
Where they did spread, hard was the chance :  
It hewed them down, aye, score by score,  
As grass does fall before the mower.”

(John A. Fairley, *Dougal Graham and his Chapbooks.*)

<sup>3</sup> The Highlanders lost about 1200 men. They sleep on the field where they fought. There are few more revered spots in broad Scotland than the long graves by the Well of the Dead on Culloden Moor.



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

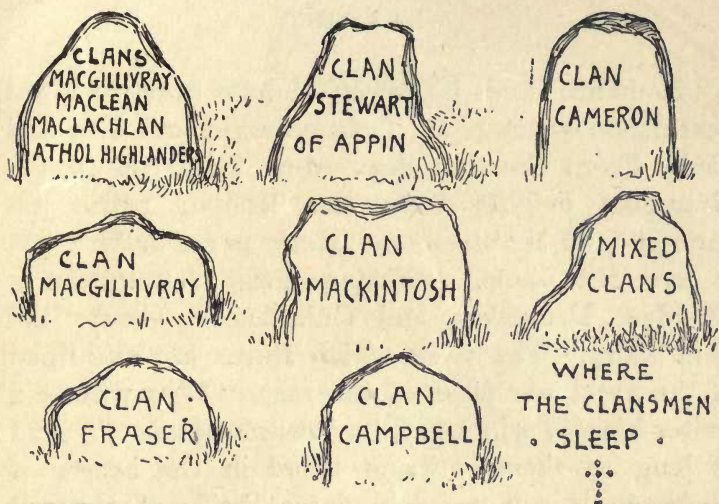
the destinies of the Stuart race. The odds, the very Fates, were all against them :

“ But how can men die better  
Than facing fearful odds,  
For the ashes of their fathers  
And the temples of their gods ? ”

And the blood-soaked heath told that the clansmen had sacrificed their all, generously, perhaps foolishly, but certainly unselfishly. The battle of Culloden commenced about one o'clock on the afternoon of April 16, 1746.<sup>1</sup> Before two boomed out from the town clock of Inverness everything was lost, and Prince Charlie, the last of the gallant Stuarts, the ancient kings of Scotland, was homeless and a fugitive.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> April 27th, N.S.

<sup>2</sup> The story of his wanderings, one of the most perfect romances of real life ever told, and of the moral degradation of his later years, may be studied in the fourth volume of Drummond Norie's magnificent work, *The Life and Adventures of Prince Charles Edward Stuart* (1903-4), in which the author tells how he followed Prince Charlie's footsteps throughout the Highlands, gleaning many rare traditions and securing photographs of most of the places associated with the Prince. Also consult the monographs by Professor Terry, *The Young Pretender* (1903), and William Power, *Prince Charlie* (1912); and Blaikie's invaluable *Itinerary of Prince Charles*.



By the Well of the Dead

## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF SCOTLAND

### L'ENVOI

Romance sheds its beautiful halo over these old heathlands whereon our fathers fought and bled and died. From the dim days when Galgacus on the Grampian heights bade the Roman pause, on through the centuries, the story never falters. It is aye the same. Stirling Brig, Bannockburn, Flodden, Drumclog, and Culloden! Always the same story. The story which Burns has enshrined in the great war pæan of the race, "Wha will be a traitor knave? wha can fill a coward's grave?" And as long as there is warm blood in the hearts of Scotsmen it will move in fierce thrills at the call of this great ode. It is always good to wander over the battlefields of a nation. It is splendid if that nation be one's own!



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