

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

CHAP. I.

ROBERT THE SECOND.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

Kings of England.

Edward III.

Richard II.

France.

Charles V.

Charles VI.

Popes.

Gregory XI.

Urban VI.

DAVID THE SECOND, the only son of Robert the First, dying without children, the succession to the throne opened to Robert, the High Steward of Scotland, in consequence of a solemn act of the Parliament, which had passed during the reign of his grandfather, Robert the First, in the year 1318.¹ The High Steward was the only child of the Lady Marjory Bruce, the eldest daughter of Robert the First, and of Walter, the High Steward of Scotland; and his talents in discharging the difficult duties of the office of Regent, had already shown him to be worthy of the crown, to which his title was unquestionable. Previous, however, to his coronation, opposition arose from an unexpected quarter. William, Earl of Douglas, one of the most powerful of the Scottish nobles,

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 290.

being at Linlithgow at the time of the king's death, publicly proclaimed his intention of questioning the title of the Steward to the throne; but the motives which induced him to adopt so precipitate a resolution are exceedingly obscure. It is certain that Douglas could not himself lay claim to the throne upon any title preferable to that of Robert; but that the common story of his uniting in his person the claims of Comyn and of Baliol is entirely erroneous, seems not so apparent.¹ Some affront, real or imaginary, by which offence was given to the pride of this potent baron, was probably the cause of this hasty resolution, which, in whatever feeling it originated, was abandoned as precipitately as it was adopted. Sir Robert Erskine, a baron, who, in the former reign, had risen into great power, and then commanded the strong castles of Edinburgh, Stirling, and Dumbarton, instantly advanced to Linlithgow, at the head of a large force. He was there joined by the Earls of March and Moray; and a conference having taken place with Douglas, he deemed it prudent to declare himself satisfied with their arguments, and ready to acknowledge a title which he discovered he had not strength to dispute.² It was judged expedient, however, to conciliate so warlike and influential a person as Douglas, and to secure his

¹ The story is to be found in Bower, the Continuator of Fordun, vol. ii. p. 382, and in the MS. work, entitled, *Extracta ex Chronicis Scotiæ*, fol. 225. It was repeated by Buchanan, attempted to be proved to be erroneous by the learned Ruddiman, and again revived by Pinkerton, in his *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 10. See Appendix A.

² Winton, vol. ii. pp. 304 and 514.

services for the support of the new government. For this purpose, the King's daughter, Isabella, was promised in marriage to his eldest son, upon whom an annual pension was settled, and the Earl himself was promoted to the high offices of King's Justiciar on the south of the Forth, and Warden of the East Marches.¹ To the rest of the barons and nobles who supported him, the High Steward was equally generous. The promptitude of Sir Robert Erskine was rewarded by the gift of three hundred and thirty-three pounds, an immense present for that time, whilst the services of March and Moray, and of Sir Thomas Erskine, were proportionably acknowledged and requited.²

This threatened storm having passed, the High Steward, accompanied by a splendid concourse of his nobility, proceeded to the Abbey of Scone, and was there crowned and anointed King, on the 26th of March, 1371, by the Bishop of St Andrews, under the title of Robert the Second.³ To confer the great-

¹ Chamberlain Accounts, vol. ii. p. 26. Ibid. pp. 9, 10.

² Ibid. vol. ii. pp. 26, 27.

“ Et in solucione facta Domino Willelmo Comiti de Douglas, circa contractum matrimoniale inter filium ipsius Comitis, et Isabellam filiam regis, ut patet per literas regis de predicto, et ipsius Comitis de rc. ons^s. super computum, V^c. li :

“ Et in soluc : facto dno. Robto. de Erskine et de dono regis concess : sibi per literam oñs. et cancellat. sr. comptum et ipsius Dni. Roberti de rc. oñs. super computum III^c. xxxiii. li. vi s. viii d.”

³ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1371. It is there stated, that all the barons and prelates took the oaths of homage, except the Bishop of Dumblane and Lord Archibald de Douglas, who only took the oath of fidelity. Yet this seems contradicted by the “ Act of Settlement.”

est possible solemnity on this transaction, which gave a new race of monarchs to the throne, the act of settlement by Robert the First was publicly read, after which, the assembled prelates and nobles, rising in their places, separately took their oaths of homage. The King himself then stood up, and declaring that he judged it right to imitate the example of his illustrious grandfather, pronounced his eldest son, the Earl of Carrick and Steward of Scotland, to be heir to the crown, in the event of his own death. This nomination was immediately and unanimously ratified by consent of the clergy, nobility, and barons, who came forward and took the same oaths of homage to the Earl of Carrick, as their future king, which they had just offered to his father; and upon proclamation of the same being made before the assembled body of the people, who crowded into the abbey to witness the coronation, the resolution of the king was received by continued shouts of loyalty, and the waving of thousands of hands, which ratified the sentence. A solemn deed, reciting these proceedings, was then drawn up, to which the principal nobles and clergy appended their seals, and which is still preserved amongst our national muniments; a venerable record, not seriously impaired by the attrition of four centuries and a half, and constituting the charter by which the house of Stewart long held their title to the crown.¹

¹ Robertson's Index to the Charters, Appendix, p. 11. "Clamore consono ac manu levata in signum fidei dationis." A facsimile of this deed has been engraved, and will be found in the first volume of the Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, sub anno 1371.

Robert, the High Steward, who now succeeded to the throne, had reached his fifty-fifth year, a period of life when the approaches of age produce in most men a love of repose, and a desire to escape from the care and annoyance of public life. This effect was to be seen in the character of the king. The military and ambitious spirit, and the promptitude, resolution, and activity which we observe in the High Steward during his regency, had softened down into a disposition of a far more pacific and quiet nature, in which, although there was strong good sense, and a judgment in state affairs matured by experience, there was also a love of indolence and retirement little suited to the part which the king had to act, as the head of a fierce and lawless feudal nobility, and the guardian of the liberty of the country, against the unremitting attacks of England. Yet, to balance this inactivity of mind, Robert enjoyed some advantages. He was surrounded by a family of sons grown to manhood. The Earl of Carrick, Robert Earl of Fife, afterwards Duke of Albany, and Alexander Lord of Badenoch, were born to him of his first marriage with Elizabeth More, daughter to Sir Adam More of Rowallan;¹ David Earl of Strathern, and Walter Lord of Brechin, blest his second alliance with Euphemia Ross, the widow of Randolph Earl of Moray; whilst seven daughters connected him by marriage with the noble families of the Earl of March, the Lord of the Isles, Hay of Errol, Lindsay

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1371.

of Glenesk, Lyon, and Douglas. To these legitimate supports of the throne must be added, the strength which he derived from a phalanx of eight natural sons, also grown to man's estate, and who, undepressed by a stain then little regarded, held their place among the nobles of the land.¹

Although, after his accession to the throne, the King was little affected with the passion for military renown, and thus lost somewhat of his popularity amongst his subjects, he possessed other qualities which endeared him to the people. He was easy of access to the meanest suitor, affable and pleasant in his address, and while possessing a person of a commanding stature and dignity, his manners were yet so tempered by a graceful and unaffected humility, that what the royal name lost in pomp and terror, it gained in confidence and affection.² In the political situation of the country at this period, there were some difficulties of a formidable nature. A large portion of the ransom of David the Second, amounting to fifty-two thousand marks, was still unpaid,³ and if the nation had been reduced to the very brink of bankruptcy, by its efforts to raise the sum already collected, the attempt to levy additional instalments, or to impose new taxes, could not be contemplated without alarm. The English were in possession of a large portion of Annandale, in which Edward conti-

¹ Duncan Stewart's *History of the Royal Family of Scotland*, pp. 56, 57, 58.

² Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 383.

³ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, sub anno 1371.

nued to exercise all the rights of a feudal sovereign ; they held, besides, the strong castles of Roxburgh and Lochmaben, with the town and castle of Berwick ;¹ so that the seeds of war and commotion, and the materials of national jealousy, were not removed ; and however anxious and willing the English and Scottish wardens might show themselves to preserve the truce, it was scarcely to be expected that the fierce and haughty borderers of both nations would be long controlled from breaking out into their accustomed disorders. In addition to these adverse circumstances, the kingdom, during the years immediately following the accession of Robert the Second, was visited by a grievous scarcity. The whole nobility of Scotland appear to have been supported by grain imported from England and Ireland ; and a famine which fell so severely upon the higher classes, must have been still more intensely experienced by the great body of the people.²

But Scotland, although, as far as her political circumstances are considered, undoubtedly not in a prosperous condition, enjoyed a kind of negative security, from the weakness of England. Edward the Third was no longer the victorious monarch of Cressy and Poitiers. His celebrated son, the Black Prince, a few years before this, had concluded a mad and chivalrous expedition against Spain ; and after having

¹ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. pp. 944, 947, 951, 958, 963, 965.

² *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 963, 965, 966, 967, 968. The evidence of the *Rotuli Scotiæ* contradicts the assertions of Bower, vol. ii. *Fortun a Goodal*, p. 383.

been deceived by the monarch whom his valour had restored to the throne, again returned to France, drowned in debt, and broken in constitution. Prince Lionel, whom Edward had hoped to make King of Scotland, was lately dead in Italy, and still severer calamities were behind.

Charles the Fifth of France, a sovereign of much wisdom and prudence, had committed the conduct of the war against England to the Constable de Guesclin, a captain of the greatest skill and courage; and Edward, embarrassed at the same time with hostilities in Flanders and Spain, saw, with deep mortification, the fairest provinces, which were the fruits of his victories, either wrested from him by force of arms, or silently lost, from inactivity and neglect. In his attempts to defend those which remained, and to regain what was lost, the necessity of fitting out new armies called for immense sums of money, which, though at first willingly granted by parliament, weakened and impoverished the country; and the loss of his greatest captains, his own feeble health, and the mortal illness of the Black Prince, rendered these armies unavailable, from the want of experienced generals.

From this picture of the mutual situation of the two countries, it may be imagined that both were well aware of the benefits of remaining at peace. On the part of Scotland, accordingly, it was determined to respect the truce, which in 1369 had been prolonged for a period of fourteen years, and to fulfil the obligations as to the faithful payment of the ran-

som, whilst England continued to encourage the commercial and friendly intercourse which had subsisted under the former monarch.¹ Yet, notwithstanding all this, two events soon occurred, which must have convinced the most superficial observer that the calm was fallacious, and would be of short duration. The first of these was a new treaty of amity with France, the determined enemy of England, which was concluded by the Scottish Ambassadors, Wardlaw, Bishop of Glasgow, Sir Archibald Douglas, and Tynninghame, Dean of Aberdeen, at the castle of Vincennes, on the 30th June, 1371; in which, after an allusion to the ancient alliances between France and Scotland, it was stipulated that, in consideration of the frequent wrongs and injuries which had been sustained by both these realms from England, they should be mutually bound as faithful allies to assist each other against any aggression made by that country upon either. After some provisions calculated to prevent any subjects of the allied kingdoms from serving in the English armies, it was declared that no truce was henceforth to be concluded, nor any treaty of peace agreed on, by either kingdom, in which the other was not included; and that in the event of a competition at any time taking place for the crown, the King of France should maintain the right of that person who was approved by a majority of the Scottish Estates, and defend his title if attacked by England. Such was the treaty, as it appears ratified by the

¹ Rotuli Scotiæ, sub annis, 1372, 1373, vol. i.

Scottish king at Edinburgh, on the 28th October, 1371;¹ but at the same time certain secret articles were proposed upon the part of France, of a still more decisive and hostile character. By these the French monarch engaged to persuade the Pope to annul the existing truce between England and Scotland, to pay and supply with arms a large body of Scottish knights, and to send to Scotland an auxiliary force of a thousand men-at-arms, to co-operate in a proposed invasion of England. These articles, however, which would again have plunged the kingdoms into all the horrors of war, do not appear to have been ratified by Robert.²

The other event to which I allude, afforded an equally conclusive evidence of the concealed hostility of England. When Biggar, High Chamberlain of Scotland, repaired to Berwick to pay into the hands of the English commissioners a portion of the ransom which was still due, it was found that the English king, in his letters of discharge, had omitted to bestow upon Robert his royal titles as King of Scotland. The chamberlain and the Scottish lords who accompanied him, remonstrated in vain against this unexpected circumstance. They declared that they paid the ransom in the name and by the orders of their master the King of Scotland; and unless the discharge ran in the same style, it was null, and could not be received. Edward, however, continued ob-

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1371.

² Ibid. p. 122.

stinate : he replied, that if David Bruce had been content to accept the discharge without the addition of the kingly title, there was no good reason why his successor should quarrel with it for this omission; and he drew up a deed declaring that the letter complained of was, in every respect, as full and unchallengeable as if Robert had been therein designed the King of Scotland.¹ With this the Scottish commissioners were obliged for the present to be satisfied; and having paid the sum under protest, they returned home, aware from what had passed, that however enfeebled by his continental disasters, Edward still clung to the idea, that in consequence of the resignation of Baliol, he himself possessed the title to the kingdom of Scotland, and might yet live to make that title good.²

Notwithstanding these threatening appearances, Scotland continued for some years to enjoy the blessings of peace; and the interval was wisely occupied by the sovereign in providing for the security of the succession to the crown, in regulating the expenses of the royal household, by the advice of his privy council; in the enactment of wise and useful laws for the administration of justice, and the punishment of oppression. For this purpose, a Parliament was held at Scone, on the 2d of March, 1371, in which many abuses were corrected.³ It seems at this period

¹ Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. p. 953.

² Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1371. Chamberlain Accounts, vol. ii. p. 3.

³ Ibid. The Parliament consisted of the dignified clergy, the earls, barons, and free tenants *in capite*, with certain burgesses summoned from each burgh.

to have been customary for the lords of the king's council, to avail themselves of the advice of private persons, who sat along with them in deliberation, although not elected to that office. This practice was now abolished. Sheriffs and other judges were prohibited from asking or receiving presents from litigants of any part of the sum or matter in dispute; several acts were passed relative to the punishment of murder, in its various degrees of criminality; ketherans, or masterful beggars, were declared outlaws, liable to arrest, and, in case of resistance, to be slain on the spot; and all malversation by judges was pronounced to be cognizable by a jury, and punishable at the king's pleasure. These enactments point to a state of things in which it was evidently far easier to make laws than to carry them into execution.¹

In the meantime, England was visited with two great calamities. Edward Prince of Wales, commonly called the Black Prince, to the universal regret of the nation, and even of his enemies, died at Westminster; and his illustrious father, broken by the severity of the stroke, and worn out with the fatigues of war, survived him scarcely a year. Anxious for the tranquillity of his kingdom, it had been his earnest wish to conclude a peace with France; but even this was denied him, and he died on the

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1371. A Parliament was held by Robert the Second at Scone, on the 3d of April, 1373, of which an important document has been preserved, touching the succession to the Crown. Ibid. sub anno 1373.

1st of June, 1377, leaving the reins of government to fall into the hands of a boy of eleven years of age, the eldest son of the Black Prince, who was crowned at Westminster, on the 11th July, 1377, by the title of Richard the Second. Edward the Third was a monarch deservedly beloved by his people, and distinguished for the wisdom and the happy union of firmness and lenity which marked his domestic administration; but his passion for conquest and military renown, which he gratified at an immense expense of money and of human life, whilst it served to throw that dangerous and fictitious splendour over his reign, which is yet scarcely dissipated, was undoubtedly destructive of the best and highest interests of his kingdom. Nothing, indeed, could afford a more striking lesson on the vanity of foreign conquest, and the emptiness of human grandeur, than the circumstances in which he died—stript of the fairest provinces which had been the fruit of his victories, the survivor of his brave son and his best captains, and at last pillaged and deserted in his last moments by his faithless mistress and ungrateful domestics. His death delivered Scotland for the time from apprehension, and weakened in a great measure those causes of suspicion and distrust which have already been described.

But, although the action of these was suspended, there were other subjects of mutual irritation, which could not be so easily removed. The feudal system, which then existed in full vigour in Scotland, contained within itself materials the very reverse of pacific. The power of the barons had been decidedly

increasing since the days of Robert the First; the right of private war, and avenging their own quarrel, was exercised by them in its full extent; and, on the slightest insult or injury offered to one of their vassals by the English Wardens of the Border, they were ready to take the law into their own hands, and, at the head of a force, which for the time defied all resistance, to invade the country, and inflict a dreadful vengeance. In this manner, the king was frequently drawn in to support, or at least to connive at, the atrocities of a subject too powerful for him to control or resist; and a spark of individual malice or private revenge would kindle those materials, which were ever ready to be inflamed into the wide conflagration of a general war.

The truth of these remarks was soon shown. At the fair of Roxburgh, an esquire, belonging to the bedchamber of the Earl of March, was slain in a brawl by the English, who then held the castle in their hands. March, a grandson of the great Randolph, was one of the most powerful of the Scottish nobles. He instantly demanded redress, adding, that, if it was not given, he would not continue to respect the truce; but his representation was treated with scorn, and, as the earl did not reply, it was imagined he had forgotten the affront. Time passed on, and the feast of St Laurence arrived, which was the season for the next fair to be held, when the town was again filled with English, who, in unsuspecting security, had taken up their residence during its continuance, for the purposes of traffic or pleasure. Early in the morning, March, at the head of an armed force,

surprised and stormed the town, set it on fire, and commenced a pitiless slaughter of the English, sparing neither age nor infancy. Many who barricadoed themselves in the booths and houses, were dragged into the streets and murdered, or met a more dreadful death in the flames ; and the earl, at his leisure, drew off his followers, enriched with plunder, and glutted with revenge.¹

This atrocious attack proved the commencement of a series of hostilities, which, although unauthorized by either government, were carried on with obstinate and systematic cruelty. The English borderers flew to arms, and broke in upon the lands of Sir John Gordon, one of March's principal assistants in the "Raid of Roxburgh." Gordon, in return, having collected his vassals, invaded England, and carried away a large booty in cattle and prisoners ; but, before he could cross the Border, was attacked in a mountain-pass by Sir John Lilburn, at the head of a body of knights double the number of the Scots. The skirmish was one of great obstinacy, and constituted what Froissart delights in describing as a fair point of arms, in which there were many empty saddles, and many torn and trampled banners ; but, although grievously wounded, Gordon made good his retreat, took Lilburn prisoner, and secured his plunder.² This last insult called down the wrath of the English warden, Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who, loudly accusing the Scots of despising the

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 384. Winton, vol. ii. p. 306. Walsingham, p. 198.

² Winton, vol. ii. p. 309.

truce, at the head of an army of seven thousand men broke across the Border, and encamped near Dunse, with the design of laying waste the immense possessions of the Earl of March which were situated in that quarter. But this "Warden Raid," which involved such great preparations, ended in a very ridiculous manner. The great proportion of the English consisted of knights and men-at-arms, whose horses were picketed on the outside of the encampment, under the charge of the sutlers and camp-boys, whilst their masters slept in their arms in the centre. It was one of the injunctions of the good King Robert's testament, to alarm the encampments of the English

" By wiles and wakening in the nycht,
And meikil noise made on hycht ;"¹

and in this instance Percy experienced its success. At the dead of night, his position was surrounded, not by an army, but by a multitude of the common serfs and varlets, who were armed only with the rattles which they used in driving away the wild beasts from their flocks ; and such was the consternation produced amongst the horses and their keepers, by the sounding of the rattles, and the yells and shouting of the assailants, whose numbers were magnified by the darkness, that all was thrown into disorder. Hundreds of horses broke from the stakes to which they were picketed, and fled masterless over the country ; numbers galloped into the encampment, and carried a panic amongst the knights, who stood

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 232.

to their arms, and every moment expected an attack : But no enemy appeared ; and when morning broke, the Earl of Northumberland had the mortification to discover at once the ridiculous cause of the alarm, and to find that a great proportion of his knights were unhorsed, and compelled in their heavy armour to find their way back to England. A retreat was ordered ; and, after pillaging the lands of the Earl of March, the warden recrossed the border.¹

It was unfortunate, that these infractions of the truce, which were decidedly injurious to the best interests of both countries, were not confined to the eastern marches. The baron of Johnston, and his retainers and vassals, harassed the English on the western border ;² while at sea, a Scottish naval adventurer, of great spirit and enterprise, named Mercer, infested the English shipping, and, at the head of a squadron of armed vessels, consisting of Scottish, French, and Spanish privateers, scoured the channel, and took many rich prizes. The father of this bold depredator is said by Walsingham to have been a merchant of great opulence, who resided in France, and was in high favour at the French court. During one of his voyages he had been taken by a Northumbrian cruiser, and carried into Scarborough ;³ in revenge of which insult, the son attacked this sea-port, and plundered its shipping. Such was the inefficiency of the government of Richard, that

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. i. p. 385. Winton, vol. ii. p. 309.

² Winton, vol. ii. p. 311.

³ Rotuli Scotiae, 20th June, 2 Rich. II.

no measures were taken against him ; till at last Philpot, a wealthy London merchant, at his own expense fitted out an armament of several large ships of war, and attacking Mercer, entirely defeated him, took him prisoner, and captured his whole squadron, among which were fifteen Spanish vessels, and many rich prizes.¹

It would be tedious and uninteresting to enter into any minute details of the insulated and unimportant hostilities which, without any precise object, continued for some years to agitate the two countries. Committed during the continuance of a truce, which was publicly declared to be respected by both governments, they are to be regarded as the outbreakings of the spirit of national rivalry engendered by a long war, and the effects of that love of chivalrous adventure which was then at its height in Europe. The deep-laid plans of Edward the Third, for the entire subjugation of Scotland, were now at an end; the character of the government of Richard the Second, or rather of his uncles, into whose hands the management of the state had fallen, was, with regard to Scotland, decidedly just and pacific; and the wisest policy for that country would have been, to have devoted her whole attention to the regulation of her internal government, to the recruiting of her finances, and the cultivation of those arts which form the true sources of the prosperity and greatness of a kingdom. Had the king been permitted to follow the bent of his own disposition, there is reason to think

¹ Walsingham, p. 211.

that these principles would have been adopted ; but the nobility were still too powerful and independent for the individual character of the sovereign to have much influence, and the desire of plunder, and the passion for military adventure, rendered it impossible for such men to remain at peace.

Another cause co-operated to increase these hostile feelings. Although the alliance with France was no longer essentially advantageous to Scotland, yet the continuance of the Scottish war was of importance to France in the circumstances in which that country was then placed, and no means were left unemployed to secure it. The consequence of all this was the perpetual infringement of the truce by hostile invasions, and the reiterated appointment of English and Scottish commissioners, who were empowered to hold courts on the borders for the redress of grievances. These repeated border raids, which drew after them no important results, are of little interest. They were of evil consequence, as they tended greatly to increase the exasperation between the two countries, and to render more distant and hopeless the prospect of peace ; and they become tedious when we are obliged to regard them as no longer the simultaneous efforts of a nation in defence of their independence, but the selfish and disjointed expeditions of a lawless aristocracy, whose principal object was plunder, and military adventure. It was in one of these that the castle of Berwick was stormed and taken by a small body of adventurers, led by Alexander Ramsay, who, when summoned by the Scottish and English wardens, proud-

ly replied, " that he would give up his prize neither to the monarch of England nor of Scotland, but would keep it while he lived for the King of France." Some idea may be formed of the ignorance of the mode of attacking fortified towns in those days, from the circumstance that the handful of Scottish borderers, who were led by this intrepid soldier, defended the castle for some time against the Earl of Northumberland, at the head of ten thousand men, assisted by miners, mangonels, and all the machinery for carrying on a siege.¹ It was in this siege that Henry Percy, afterwards so famous under the name of Hotspur, first became acquainted with arms ; and a quarrel, which had begun in a private plundering adventure, ended in a more serious manner. After making himself master of Berwick, the Earl of Northumberland, along with the Earl of Nottingham, and Sir Thomas Musgrave, the governor of Berwick, invaded the southern parts of Scotland ; and Sir Archibald Douglas, having under him a considerable force, had advanced against him ; but finding himself unable to cope with the army of Percy, he retired, and awaited the result. As he had probably expected, Musgrave, who enjoyed a high reputation for military enterprise, pushed on to Melrose, at the head of an advanced division, and suddenly on the march found himself in the presence of Douglas and the Scottish army : A conflict became unavoidable, and it was conducted with much preparatory pomp and formality. Douglas

¹ Walsingham, p. 219. Froissart, par Buchon, vol. vii. pp. 44, 48.

called to him two sons of King Robert, who were then under his command, and knighted them on the field; Musgrave conferred the same honour on his son; and although he was greatly outnumbered by the Scots, trusting to the courage of his little band, who were mostly of high rank, and to the skill of the English archers, began the fight with high hopes. But after a short and desperate conflict, accompanied with a grievous slaughter, the English were completely defeated. It was the custom of Sir Archibald Douglas, as we learn from Froissart, when he found the fight becoming hot, to dismount, and attack the enemy with a large two-handed sword; and on this occasion, such was the fury of his assault, that nothing could resist it.¹ Musgrave and his son, with many other knights and esquires, were taken prisoners; and Douglas, who felt himself unequal to oppose the main army of Percy and the Earl of Nottingham, fell back upon Edinburgh.² The succeeding years were occupied in the same course of border hostilities, whilst in England, to the miseries of invasion and plunder, was added the calamity of a pestilence, which swept away multitudes of her inhabitants, and by weakening the power of resistance, increased the cruelty of her enemy.

At length, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, who at this time directed the counsels of his nephew, Richard the Second, approached Scotland at the head of a powerful army, although he declared his object

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. vii. p. 57.

² Rotuli Scotiæ, June 7, 2 Rich. II. and March 5, 5 Rich. II. vol. ii. pp. 16, 42.

to be solely the renewal of the truce, and the establishment of peace and good order between the two countries. Sir Archibald Douglas, Lord of Galloway, along with the Bishops of Dunkeld and Glasgow, and the Earls of Douglas and March, were immediately appointed commissioners to open a negotiation; and having consented to a cessation of hostilities, Lancaster disbanded his army, and agreed to meet the Scottish envoys in the following summer in a more pacific guise, at the head of his usual suite. The conference accordingly took place, and the Earl of Carrick, the heir of the throne, managed the negotiations on the part of Scotland, which concluded in an agreement to renew the truce for the space of three years, during which time the English monarch consented to delay the exaction of the remaining penalty of the ransom of David the Second, of which twenty-five thousand marks were still due.¹

It was at this time that the famous popular insurrection, which was headed by Wat Tyler, had arrived at its height in England; and Lancaster, who was suspected of having given countenance to the insurgents, and who dreaded the violence of a party which had been formed against him, found himself in a very awkward and perilous dilemma. He begged permission of the Earl of Carrick to be permitted to retreat for a short season into Scotland, and the request was not only granted, but accompanied with circumstances which marked the cour-

¹ Rymer, vol. vii. p. 312.

tesy of the age. The Earl of Douglas, along with Sir Archibald Douglas, Lord of Galloway, accompanied him with a brilliant retinue to Haddington, from which they proceeded to Edinburgh, where the Abbey of Holyrood was fitted up for his reception. Gifts and presents were made to him by the Scottish nobles, and here he remained till the fury of the storm was abated, and he could return in safety, escorted by a convoy of eight hundred Scottish spears, to the court of his nephew.¹ This act of courtesy, and the desire of remaining at peace, which was felt by both monarchs, might have been expected to have averted hostilities for some time; yet such was the influence of a powerful and restless aristocracy, that previous to the expiry of this truce, Scotland, blind to her real interests, again consented to be involved in a negotiation with the French king, which eventually entailed upon the nation the calamities of a war, undertaken with no precise object, and carried on at an immense expense of blood and treasure.

The foundation of this new treaty appears to have been those secret articles regarding a project for an invasion of England, which have been already mentioned. A prospect of the large sum of forty thousand franks of gold, to be distributed amongst the Scottish nobles, and an engagement to send into Scotland a body of a thousand men-at-arms, with a supply of a thousand suits of armour, formed a temptation which

¹ Winton, vol. ii. pp. 315, 316.

could not easily be resisted ; and although no definite or certain agreement was concluded, it became evident to England, that her ancient enemy had abandoned all pacific intentions, if, indeed, the truce had not already been virtually broken.¹

When it expired, the war, as was to be expected, was renewed with increased rancour. Lochmaben, a strong castle, which had been long in the hands of the English, was taken by Sir Archibald Douglas ;² and the Earl of Lancaster invaded Scotland at the head of a very numerous army of knights, men-at-arms, and archers, and accompanied by a fleet of victualling ships, which anchored in the Forth near Queensferry. But the expedition was singularly unfortunate. Although it was now the month of March, the Scottish winter had not concluded, and the cold was intense. Lancaster, after exhausting the English northern counties in the support of his vast host, pushed on to Edinburgh, which his knights and captains were eager to sack and destroy. In this, however, they were disappointed ; for the English commander, mindful of the generous hospitality which he had lately experienced, commanded the army to encamp at a distance from the town, and issued the strictest orders that none should leave the ranks. For three days, parties of the Scots could be seen carrying off every thing that was valuable, and transporting their goods and chattels beyond the Forth. Numbers of the English soldiers, in the meantime, began to be

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, sub anno 1383.

² Winton, vol. ii. p. 317.

seized with mortal sickness, occasioned by exhalations from the marshes; and within a very short time, five hundred horses died of cold. When at length permitted to advance to Edinburgh, the soldiers, as was to be expected, found nothing to supply their urgent wants. The Scots had even carried off the straw roofs of their wooden houses, and having retreated into the woods and strongholds, quietly awaited the retreat of the English; and began their usual mode of warfare, by cutting off the foraging parties which, disregarding the orders of Lancaster, were compelled, by the calls of absolute want, to leave the encampment.¹ In the meantime, Sir Alexander Lindsay had attacked and put to the sword the crew of one of the English ships, which had made good a landing on the ground above Queensferry; and the King of Scotland had issued orders to assemble an army, for the purpose of intercepting Lancaster in his retreat to England.

At this crisis, ambassadors arrived from France, to notify the truce between that country and England; whilst at the same time, in the true spirit of military adventure, a party of French knights and esquires, tired of being idle at home, took shipping for Scotland, and, having landed at Montrose, pushed on to Edinburgh, where they found the Scottish parliament deliberating on the propriety of prosecuting the war. The king and the nobles were divided in their opinion. Robert, with real wisdom, and a desire to promote the best interests of

¹ Walsingham, p. 308.

his people, desired peace; and whilst he received the French knights with kindness and courtesy, commanded them and his own nobles to lay aside all thoughts of hostilities. Meanwhile Lancaster had profited by the interval allowed him, and made good his retreat, which was accompanied, as usual in these expeditions, with the total devastation of the country through which he passed, and the plunder of the immense estates of the border earls. To them, and to the rest of the nobility, the king's proposal was particularly unsatisfactory; nor are we to wonder, that when their fields and woods, their manors and villages, were still blackened with the fires of the English, and their foot had been in the stirrup to pursue them, the counter order of the king, and the message of the French envoys regarding the truce, came rather unseasonably.

These, however, were not the days when Scottish barons, having resolved upon war, stood upon much ceremony, either as to the existence of a truce, or the commands of a sovereign. It was, accordingly, determined privately by the Earls of Mar and Douglas, along with Sir Archibald, the Lord of Galloway, that the foreign knights who had travelled so far to prove their chivalry, should not be disappointed; and after a short stay at Edinburgh, they were surprised by receiving a secret message from Douglas, requiring them to repair to his castle at Dalkeith, where they were warmly welcomed, and again taking horse, found themselves, in three days' riding, in the presence of an army of fifteen thousand men, mount-

ed on light active hackneys, and lightly armed, according to the manner of their country.¹ With this force they instantly broke into the northern counties of England, wasted the towns and villages with fire and sword, wreaked their vengeance upon the estates of the Earls of Northumberland and Nottingham, and returned with a large booty in cattle, and great multitudes of prisoners. We learn from Froissart, that the King of Scotland was ignorant of this infraction of the truce, and in much concern immediately dispatched a herald to explain the circumstances to the English court.² But it is more probable, that, knowing of the intended expedition, he was unable to prevent it. However this might be, its consequences were calamitous, for, as usual, it brought an instantaneous retaliation upon the part of the Earl of Northumberland; and the French knights, on their return to their own country, spoke so highly in favour of the pleasures of a Scottish "raid," and the facilities offered to an attack upon England in this quarter, that the King of France began to think seriously of carrying the projected treaty, to which we have already alluded, into immediate execution, and of sending an army into Scotland.

¹ Froissart, vol. ix. p. 27. Walsingham, p. 309. About this time, the remaining part of Teviotdale, which, since the battle of Durham, had been in the hands of the English, was recovered from them by the exertions of the Earl of Douglas. Winton, vol. ii. p. 322.

² Froissart, par Buchon, vol. ix. p. 28. Rotuli Scotiae, vol. ii. 1385, p. 63.

An interval, which cannot be said to belong either to peace or to war, succeeded these events, and offers little of general interest, the border inroads being continued with equal and unvaried cruelty; but in a meeting of the parliament, which took place at Edinburgh, a few provisions were passed regarding the state of the country, which are not unworthy of notice.¹ It was determined that those greater and lesser barons to whom the sovereign, in the event of war, has committed certain divisions of the country, delegating to them therein his own royal authority, should be commanded, by the king's letters, to have their array of men-at-arms and archers in such readiness, that so soon as they were required, they should be ready to pass to the borders in full warlike apparel, with horse, arms, and provisions, so that the lands through which the host passed should not be wasted by their exactions."

It appears that grievous injury had been suffered, owing to the total want of all law and justice in the northern districts of the kingdom. Troops of feudal robbers, chiefs who lived by plunder, and owned no allegiance either to king or earl, traversed the Highland districts, and enlisted into their service malefactors and ketherans, who respected the lands neither of prelate, prince, or knight, but burnt, slew, and plundered, wherever their master chose to lead. This dreadful state of things called for immediate at-

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1385.

tention, and to the Earl of Carrick, the heir to the throne, was the arduous affair intrusted. He was commanded to repair instantly in person to the disordered districts, at the head of a force which might ensure obedience, to call a meeting of the most wise and worthy landholders of these northern parts, as well clergy as laity, and having taken their advice, to adopt such speedy and efficacious measures as should strike terror into the guilty, and restore order and good government throughout the land.¹

The large district of Teviotdale, which had long been in the possession of the English, was now entirely cleared of these intruders, and restored to the kingdom of Scotland by the arms of the Earl of Douglas, and it became necessary to adopt measures for the restoration of their lands to those proprietors who had been expelled from them during the occupation of the country by the enemy. It was ordained, that all those persons in Teviotdale who had lately transferred their allegiance from the King of England to the King of Scotland, should, within eight days, exhibit to the Chancellor their charters, containing the names of the lands and possessions which they claimed as their hereditary right, wherever they happened to be situated ; along with the names of those persons who now possessed them, and of the sheriffdoms within whose jurisdiction they were situated. The object of this was to enable all those persons, who, on the part of the claimants in Teviotdale, were about to

¹ Cartulary of Aberdeen, pp. 104, 105.

receive letters of summons from the Chancellor, to present these letters with such diligence, and within such due time to the several sheriffs, as to enable these officers within eight days to expedite the proper citations. It was besides ordained, that the Chancellor should direct the king's royal letters to the various sheriffs, commanding them to summon by name all persons who either then held, or asserted their right to hold, such lands, to appear before the king and council, in the parliament appointed to be held at Edinburgh on the twelfth of June next, bringing along with them the charters by which they proved their right of possession, in order that they might then hear the final decision which the king, with the advice of his council, should pronounce upon their various pleas.¹

The next provision of the parliament introduces us to a case of feudal oppression, strikingly characteristic of the times, and evinces how feeble and impotent was the arm of the law against the power of the aristocracy. William de Fentoun complained that he had been unjustly extruded from his manor of Fentoun, by a judgment pronounced in the court of the baron of Dirlton. He immediately appealed to the sheriff of Edinburgh, and was restored. Again was he violently extruded, upon which he carried his cause before the king's privy council; and by their solemn award his lands were once more restored. In spite of this last decision by the

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1385.

sovereign and his council in person, this unfortunate person continued to be excluded from his property by the baron of Dirlton, who, against all law and justice, violently suppressed and kept him down, so that he was now compelled, in extreme distress, to appeal to the Parliament. This case of reiterated tyranny and oppression having been completely proved by the record of the sheriff, it was resolved that Fentoun, without delay, should be reinstated by the royal power in his lawful property, and that the whole accumulated rents which were due since the period of his expulsion, should be instantly restored to him. Whether this final judgment by the court of last resort was more successful against the power and contumacy of this feudal tyrant, cannot now be discovered ; but it is very possible that Fentoun never recovered his property. The remaining provisions of the parliament are of little moment, and relate chiefly to the amicable arrangement of some disputes which had arisen between the Earls of Buchan and of Strathern, both of them sons of the king.

An event of great interest and importance now claims our attention, in the expedition of John de Vienne, the Admiral of France, into Scotland. It is one of the miserable consequences of war, and the passion for conquest, that they have a direct tendency to perpetuate and increase the evils which they originally produce. A nation which has been unjustly attacked, and for a time treated as a conquered people, is never satisfied with the mere defence of its rights, or the simple expulsion of its invaders. Wounded

pride, hatred, the desire of revenge, the love of plunder, or of glory, all provoke retaliation, and man delights to inflict upon his enemy the extremity of misery from which he has just escaped himself. France accordingly began to ponder upon the best mode of carrying the war into England, and the representations of the knights who had served in the late expedition of Douglas, had a strong effect in recommending an invasion through Scotland. They remarked, that the English did not fight so well in their own country as on the continent;¹ and without adverting to the cause of Douglas's success, which was occasioned by his seizing the moment when Lancaster's army had dispersed in disgust, and by his skilful retreat before the English wardens could assemble their forces, they contrasted the obstinacy with which the English were accustomed to dispute every inch of ground in France, with the facility with which they themselves had been permitted to march and plunder in England.

It was accordingly determined to fulfil the stipulations of the last treaty, and to attack the English king upon his own ground, by sending a large body of auxiliaries into Scotland, and co-operating with that nation in an invasion. For this purpose, they selected John de Vienne, Admiral of France, and one of the most experienced captains of the age, who embarked at Sluys, in Flanders, with a thousand knights, esquires, and men-at-arms, forming the flower of the French army, besides a body of cross-bowmen and common soldiers, composing altogether a force of two

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. ix. p. 162.

thousand men. He carried also along with him fourteen hundred suits of armour for the Scottish knights, and fifty thousand franks of gold,¹ to be paid, on his arrival, to the king and his barons. It was determined to attack England at the same time by sea, and a naval armament for this purpose had been prepared at a great expense by the French; but this part of the project was unsuccessful, and the fleet never sailed. Meanwhile all seemed to favour the expedition of Vienne. The wind was fair, the weather sweet, for it was in the month of May, and the transports, gleaming with their splendid freight of chivalry, and gay with innumerable banners and gonfanons, were soon wafted to the Scottish coast, and cast anchor in the ports of Leith and Dunbar. They were warmly welcomed by the Scottish barons; and the sight of the suits of foreign armour, then highly prized, with the promise of a liberal distribution of the French gold, could not fail to make a favourable impression.² On the arrival of the admiral at Edinburgh, he found that the king was then residing in the district which Froissart denominates the wild of Scotland; meaning perhaps his palace of Stirling, which is on the borders of a mountainous country. His speedy ar-

¹ Winton, vol. ii. p. 324. He says there were eight hundred knights, of which number a hundred and four were knights-baneretts; and besides this, four hundred arblasts, or crossbows.

² The proportion in which the French money was distributed amongst the Scottish nobles, gives us a pretty correct idea of the comparative consequence and power of the various members of the Scottish aristocracy. See Rymer, vol. vii. p. 484.

rival, however, was looked for, and, in the meantime, the Earls of Moray and Douglas took charge of the strangers. To provide lodgings for them all in Edinburgh was impossible; and, in the efforts made to house their fastidious allies, who had been accustomed to the hotels of Paris, we are presented with a striking picture of the poverty of this city, when contrasted with the wealth and magnitude of the French towns. It became necessary to furnish quarters for the knights in the adjacent villages; and the necessity of billeting such splendid guests upon the burgesses, farmers, and yeomen, occasioned loud and grievous murmurs. Dunfermline, Queensferry, Kelso, Dunbar, Dalkeith, and many other towns and villages not mentioned by Froissart, were filled with strangers, speaking a foreign language, appropriating to themselves, without ceremony, the best of every thing they saw, and assuming an air of superiority which the Scots could not easily tolerate. Mutual dissatisfaction and hatred naturally arose; and although the Earls of Douglas and Moray, who were well contented with an expedition which promised them the money of France as well as the plunder of England, continued to treat the French with kindness and courtesy, the people and the lesser barons began to quarrel with the intruders, and to adopt every method for their distress and annoyance. All this is feelingly described by the delightful and garrulous historian of the period. "What evil spirit hath brought you here? was the common expression employed by the Scots to their allies. Who sent for you? Can-

not we maintain our war with England well enough without your help? Pack up your goods and be-gone, for no good will be done as long as ye are here! We neither understand you, nor you us. We cannot communicate together; and in a short time we shall be completely rifled and eaten up by such troops of locusts. What signifies a war with Eng-land? the English never occasioned such mischief as ye do. They burned our houses, it is true; but that was all, and with four or five stakes, and plenty green boughs to cover them, they were rebuilt almost as soon as they were destroyed." It was not, how-ever, in words only that the French were thus ill-treated. The Scottish peasants rose against the fo-raging parties, and cut them off. In a month, more than a hundred men were slain in this manner; and, at last, none ventured to leave their quarters.¹

At length the king arrived at Edinburgh, and a council was held by the knights and barons of both nations on the subject of an immediate invasion of England. And here new disputes and heartburn-ings arose. It was soon discovered that Robert was averse to war. "He was," says Froissart, whose in-formation regarding this expedition is in a high de-gree minute and curious, "a comely tall man, but with eyes so bloodshot, that they looked as if they were lined with scarlet; and it soon became evident that he himself preferred a quiet life to war; yet he had nine sons who loved arms." The arguments of his barons, joined to the remonstrances of Vienne, and

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. ix. p. 130.

the distribution of the French gold, had the effect of overcoming the repugnance of the King; and the admiral had soon the satisfaction of seeing an army of thirty thousand horse assembled in the fields near Edinburgh.

Unaccustomed, however, to the Scottish mode of carrying on war, and already disposed to quarrel on account of the injuries they had met with, the French were far from cordially co-operating with their allies; and it was found necessary to hold a council of officers, and to draw up certain regulations, or articles of war, for the maintenance of order during the expedition, which were to be equally binding upon the soldiers of both nations. Some of these articles are curious and characteristic. No pillage was permitted in Scotland under pain of death; the merchants and victuallers who followed or might resort to the camp, were to be protected, and have prompt payment; any soldier who killed another was to be hanged; if any varlet defied a gentleman, he was to lose his ears; and if any gentleman challenged another, he was to be put under arrest, and justice done according to the advice of the officers. In the case of any riot arising between the French and the Scots, no appeal to arms was to be permitted, but care was to be taken to arrest the ringleaders, who were to be punished by the council of the officers. When riding against the enemy, if a French or a Scottish man-at-arms should bear an Englishman to the earth, he was to have half his ransom; no burning of churches, ravishing or slaughter of women or infants, was to be suffer-

ed; and every French and Scottish soldier was to wear a white St Andrew's cross on his back and breast; which, if his surcoat or jacket was white, was to be broidered on a division of black cloth.¹

It was now time to commence the campaign, and the army broke at once across the marches, and after a destructive progress, appeared before the castle of Roxburgh. The king's sons, along with De Vienne the admiral, and the Earls of Douglas, Mar, Moray, and Sutherland, were the Scottish leaders; but Robert himself, unwieldy from his age, remained at Edinburgh. Roxburgh castle, strong in its fortifications, and excellently situated for defence, offered little temptation to a siege. For many months it might have been able to defy the most obstinate attacks of the united powers of France and Scotland; and all idea of making themselves masters of it being abandoned, the army pushed on towards Berwick, and with difficulty carried by assault the two smaller fortalices of Ford and Cornal, which were bravely defended by an English knight and his son.² Wark, one of the strongest border castles, which was commanded by Sir John Lusborn, was next assaulted, and, after a severe loss, stormed and taken, chiefly, if we may believe Froissart, by the bravery of the French; whilst the country was miserably wasted by fire and sword, and the plunder and the prisoners slowly driven after the host, which advanced by Alnwick, and carried their ravages to the gates of New-

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1385.

² Winton, vol. ii. p. 324

castle. Word was now brought that the Duke of Lancaster, and the barons of the bishoprics of York and Durham, with the Earls of Northumberland and Nottingham, had collected a powerful force, and were advancing by forced marches to meet the enemy ; and here it became necessary for the captains of the different divisions to deliberate whether they should await them where they were, and hazard a battle, or fall back upon their own country. This last measure the Scots naturally preferred. It was their usual mode of proceeding to avoid all great battles ; and the result of the war of liberty had shown the wisdom of the practice. Indeed, outnumbered as they always were by the English, and very far inferior to them in cavalry, in archers, in the strength of their horses, and the temper of their arms, it would have been extreme folly to have attempted it. But Vienne, one of the best and proudest soldiers in Europe, could not enter into this reasoning. He and his splendid column of knights, esquires, and archers, were anxious for battle ; and it was with infinite reluctance that he suffered himself to be overpersuaded by the veteran experience of Douglas and Moray, and consented to fall back upon Berwick.

In the meantime, the King of England assembled an army more potent in numbers and equipment than any which had visited Scotland for a long period. It was the first field of the young monarch ; and his barons, eager to demonstrate their loyalty, attended with so full a muster, that, according to a contemporary English historian, three

hundred thousand horses were employed.¹ The unequal terms upon which a richer and a poorer country make war on each other, were never more strikingly evinced than in the result of these English and Scottish expeditions. The Scots, breaking in upon the rich fields of England, mounted on that hardy breed of small horses, which were wont to live on very little, carrying nothing with them but their arms, with a strong constitution, and a fearless familiarity with danger, found war a pastime, rather than an inconvenience, enriched themselves with plunder, which they transported with wonderful expedition from place to place, and at last safely landed it in their own homes. Intimately acquainted with the country, on the approach of the English, they could accept or decline battle, as they thought best. If greatly outnumbered, as was generally the case, they retired, and contented themselves with cutting off the convoys or foraging parties, and securing their booty; if the English, from want of provisions, or discontent and disunion amongst the leaders, commenced their retreat, it was infested by their unwearied enemy, who instantly pushed forward, and, hovering round their line of march, never failed to do them serious mischief. On the other hand, the very strength, and warlike and complicated equipment of the English army proved its ruin, or at least totally defeated its object; and this was soon seen in the result of Richard's invasion. The immense mass of his host slowly proceeded through the border coun-

¹ Walsingham, pp. 316, 537. Otterburn, p. 161.

ties by Liddisdale and Teviotdale,¹ devouring the country as they passed on, and leaving behind them a black desert. In no place did they meet an enemy; the Scots had carried away every thing but the green crops on the ground; and empty villages, which were given to the flames, and churches and monasteries, which were razed and plundered, formed the only incidents of the campaign.

One event, however, is too characteristic to be omitted. When the news of this great expedition reached the camp of Douglas and Vienne, who had fallen back towards Berwick, the Scots, although aware of the folly of attempting to give battle, yet deemed it prudent to approach nearer, and watch the progress of their enemy. And here, again, the impatient temper of Vienne broke out, and insisted that their united strength was equal to meet the English; on which the Earl of Douglas requested him to ride with him to a neighbouring eminence, and reason the matter as they went. The admiral consented, and was surprised when they arrived there to hear the tramp of horse, and the sound of martial music. Douglas had, in truth, brought him to a height which hung over a winding mountain-pass, through which the English army were at that moment defiling, and from whence, without the fear of discovery, they could count the banners, and perceive its strength.

¹ In the *Archæologia*, vol. xxii. Part i. p. 16, will be found an original paper, describing the army of Richard and its leaders, printed from a MS. in the British Museum, and communicated by Nicholas Harris Nicholas, Esq.

The argument thus presented was not to be questioned; and Vienne, with his knights, permitted themselves to be directed by the superior knowledge and military skill of the Scottish leaders.¹

Meanwhile, King Richard pushed on to the capital. The beautiful abbeys of Melrose and Dryburgh were given to the flames; Edinburgh burnt and plundered, and nothing spared but the monastery of Holyrood. It had lately, as we have seen, afforded a retreat to John of Gaunt, the king's uncle, who now accompanied him, and, at his earnest entreaty, was excepted from the general ruin. But the formidable expedition of the king was now concluded, and that unwise and selfish spirit of revenge and destruction, which had vented itself in wasting the whole country, began to recoil upon the heads of its authors.² Multitudes perished from want, and provisions became daily more scarce in the camp. In such circumstances, the Duke of Lancaster gave it as his advice, that they should pass the Forth, and, imitating the example of Edward the First, reduce the country by overwhelming the northern counties. But Richard, who scrupled not to accuse his uncle of treasonable motives, in proposing so desperate a project, which was, in truth, likely to increase the difficulties of their situation, declared it to be his resolu-

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. ix. p. 144.

² Froissart, vol. ix. p. 147, asserts, that the English burnt St Johnston, Dundee, and pushed on as far as Aberdeen; but I have followed Walsingham and Fordun, who give the account of their ravages as it is found in the text.

tion to retreat instantly by the same route which he had already travelled.

Before this, however, could be effected, the Scottish army, with their French auxiliaries, broke into England by the western marches, and, uniting their forces with those of Sir Archibald Douglas, Lord of Galloway, ravaged Cumberland with a cruelty, which was increased by the accounts of the havoc committed by the English. Towns, villages, manors, and hamlets, were indiscriminately plundered and razed to the ground; crowds of prisoners, herds of cattle, waggons and sumpter-horses, laden with the wealth of burghers and yeomen, were driven along, and the parks and pleasure grounds of the Earls of Nottingham and Stafford, of the Mowbrays, the Musgraves, and other border barons, swept of their wealth, and plundered with a merciless cruelty, which increased to the highest pitch the animosity between the two nations, and rendered the prospect of peace exceedingly remote and hopeless. After this destruction, the united armies of the French and the Scots made an unsuccessful assault upon the city of Carlisle,¹ the fortifications of which withstood their utmost efforts; and upon this repulse, which seems to have had the effect of increasing the animosity between the soldiers of the two nations, they returned to Scotland; the French boasting that they had burnt, destroyed, and plundered more in the bishoprics of

¹ Winton, vol. ii. p. 325, affirms they would not assault Carlisle, for "thai dred tynsale of men."

Durham and Carlisle, than was to be found in all the towns of Scotland put together.¹

When the army reached their former quarters, and proceeded to encamp in Edinburgh and the adjacent country, an extraordinary scene presented itself. From the woods and the mountain-passes, multitudes of the Scots appeared driving their herds and their cattle before them, accompanied by their wives and children, and returning with their chattels and furniture to the burnt and blackened houses and cottages which they had abandoned to the enemy. The cheerfulness with which they bore these calamities, and set themselves to repair the havoc which had been committed, appears to have astonished their refined allies; but the presence of two thousand Frenchmen, and the difficulty of finding them provisions, was an additional evil which they were not prepared to bear so easily; and when the Admiral of France, to lighten the burden, abandoned his design of a second invasion of England, and permitted as many as chose to embark for France, the Scots peremptorily refused to furnish transports, or to allow a single vessel to leave their ports, until the French knights had paid them for the injuries they had inflicted by riding through their country, trampling and destroying their crops, cutting down their woods to build lodgings, and plundering their markets. To these conditions Vienne was compelled to

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 401. Froissart, par Buchon, vol. ix. p. 154.

listen ; indeed, such was the miserable condition in which the campaign had left his knights and men-at-arms, who were now for the most part unhorsed, and dispirited by sickness and privation, that, to have provoked the Scots, might have led to very serious consequences. He agreed, therefore, to discharge the claims of damage and reparation which were made against his soldiers, and for himself came under an obligation not to leave the country till they were fully satisfied, his knights being permitted to return home.

These stipulations were strictly fulfilled. Ships were furnished by the Scots, and, to use the expressive language of Froissart, “ divers knights and squires had passage, and returned into Flanders, as wind and weather drove them, with neither horse nor harness, right poor and feeble, cursing the day that ever they came upon such an adventure, and fervently desiring that the Kings of France and England would conclude a peace for a year or two, were it only to have the satisfaction of uniting their armies, and utterly destroying the realm of Scotland.” Some knights who were fond of adventure, and little anxious to return to France in so miserable a condition, passed on to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden ; others took shipping for Ireland, desirous of visiting the famous cavern known by the name of the purgatory of St Patrick ;¹ and Vienne himself, after having corresponded with his government, and discharged the claims which were

¹ See Rymer, *Fœdera*, vol. viii. p. 14.

brought against him, took leave of the king and nobles of Scotland, and returned to Paris.

Such was the issue of an expedition, fitted out by France at an immense expense, and which, from being hastily undertaken, and only partially executed, concluded in vexation and disappointment. Had the naval armament which was to have attacked England on the south been able to effect a descent, and had the Constable of France, according to the original intention, co-operated with Vienne, at the head of a large body of Genoese cross-bowmen and men-at-arms,¹ the result might perhaps have been different; but the great causes of failure are to be traced to the impossibility of reconciling two systems of military operations so perfectly distinct as those of the Scots and the French, and of supporting, for any length of time, in so poor a country as Scotland, such a force as was able to offer battle to the English with any fair prospect of success. One good effect resulted from the experience gained in this campaign. It convinced the Scots of the superior excellence of their own tactics, which consisted in employing their light cavalry solely in plunder, or in attacks upon the archers when they were forced to fight, and in opposing to the heavy-armed cavalry of the English their infantry alone, with their firm squares and long spears. It also taught them, that any foreign auxiliary force of the heavy-armed cavalry of the continent was of

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. ix. p. 162.

infinitely greater encumbrance than assistance in their wars with England, as they must either be too small to produce any effect against the overwhelming armies of that country, or too numerous to be supported, without occasioning severe distress to their allies.

Upon the departure of the French, the war continued with great spirit; and the imbecility of the government of Richard the Second is very apparent in the reiterated successes of the Scots, and the feeble opposition which was made against them. The systematic manner in which the Scottish invasions were conducted, is apparent from the plan and details of that which immediately succeeded the expedition of Vienne. It was remembered by the Scottish leaders, that in the general devastation which had been lately inflicted upon the English Border counties, that portion of Westmoreland, including the rich and fertile district of Cockermouth and the adjacent country, had not been visited since the days of Robert Bruce, and it was judged proper to put an end to this exemption. Robert Earl of Fife, the king's second son, James Earl of Douglas, and Sir Archibald Douglas, Lord of Galloway, at the head of thirty thousand light troops, passed the Solway, and for three days¹ plundered and laid waste the whole of this beautiful district; so that, to use the expression of Fordun, the

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 403. "Exercitum caute et quasi imperceptibiliter ducebat usque ad Cokirmouth, * * per terram à diebus Domini Roberti de Bruce regis a Scotis non invasam."

feeblest in the Scottish host had his hands full, nor do they appear to have met with the slightest opposition. A singular and characteristic anecdote of this expedition is preserved by Fordun. Amid the plunder, an ancient Saxon charter of King Athelstane, with a waxen seal appended to it, was picked up by some of the soldiers, and carried to the Earl of Fife, afterwards the celebrated Regent Albany. Its lucid brevity astonished the feudal baron. "I, King Adelstane, giffys here to Paulan, Oddam and Roddam, als gude and als fair, as ever thai myn war; and thairto witnes Mald my wyf." Often, says the historian, after the earl became Duke of Albany and governor of Scotland, when the tedious and wordy charters of our modern days were recited in the causes which came before him, he would recall to memory this little letter of King Athelstane, and declare there was more truth and good faith in those old times than now, when the new race of lawyers had brought in such frivolous exceptions and studied prolixity of forms.¹ It is singular to meet with a protestation against the unnecessary multiplication of words and clauses in legal deeds at so remote a period.

At the time of this invasion, another enterprise took place, of greater difficulty, and which had likely to have proved fatal to its authors. It was a descent upon Ireland by Sir William Douglas, the natural son of Sir Archibald of Galloway, commonly called the Black Douglas. This young knight appears to have

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 403.

been the Scottish Paladin of those days of chivalry. His form and strength were almost gigantic, and what gave a peculiar charm to his warlike prowess, was the extreme courtesy and gentleness of his manners; he was as sweet as brave, as faithful to his friends as he was terrible to his enemies. These qualities had gained him the hand of the king's daughter, Egidia, a lady of such perfect beauty, that the King of France is said to have fallen in love with her from the description of some of his courtiers, and to have privately dispatched a painter into Scotland to bring him her picture, when he found, to his disappointment, that the princess had given her heart to a knight of her own country.¹

At this time the piracies of the Irish on the coast of Galloway provoked the resentment of Douglas, who, at the head of five hundred lances, made a descent upon the Irish coast at Carlingford, and immediately assaulted the town with only a part of his force, finding it difficult to procure small boats to land the whole. Before, however, he had made himself master of the outworks, the citizens sent a deputation, and, by the promise of a large sum of money, procured an armistice; after which, under cover of night, they dispatched a messenger to Dundalk, who implored immediate assistance, representing the small number of the Scots, and the facility of overpowering them. Douglas, in the meantime, of an honest and unsuspecting temper, had re-

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 403.

tired to the shore, and was busied in superintending the lading of his vessels with provisions, when he discerned the approach of a body of eight hundred men-at-arms, and had scarce time to form his little phalanx before he found himself attacked, whilst a sally from the town co-operated with the charge of the Irish horse. Yet this treacherous conduct was entirely unsuccessful; and, although greatly outnumbered, such was the superior discipline and skill of the Scots, that every effort to pierce their columns entirely failed, and they at length succeeded in totally breaking and dispersing the enemy, after which the town was stormed and burnt to the ground, the castle and its works demolished, and fifteen merchant ships, which lay at anchor, laden with goods, seized by the victors.¹ They then set sail for Scotland, ravaged the Isle of Man as they returned, and landed safely at Lochryan in Galloway, from which Douglas took horse and joined his father, who, with the Earl of Fife, had broken across the border, and was then engaged in an expedition against the western districts of England.

The origin of this invasion requires particular notice, as it led to important results, and terminated in the celebrated battle of Otterburn. The Scots had not forgotten the miserable havoc which was inflicted upon the country by the late expedition of the King of England, and as this country was now torn by disputes between the weak monarch and his no-

¹ Fordun a Hearne, pp. 1073, 1074. Winton, vol. ii. p. 335.

bility, it was deemed a proper juncture to retaliate. To decide upon this a council was held at Edinburgh, in July, 1385.¹ The king was now infirm from age, and wisely anxious for peace; but his wishes were overruled, and the management of the campaign intrusted by the nobles to his second son, the Earl of Fife, upon whom the hopes of the warlike part of the nation chiefly rested, his elder brother, the Earl of Carrick, who was next heir to the crown, being of a feeble constitution, and little able to endure the fatigues of the field. It was resolved that there should be a general rendezvous of the whole military force of the kingdom at Jedburgh, preparatory to an invasion of England, upon a scale likely to ensure an ample retribution for their losses.²

The rumour of this great summons of the vassals of the crown soon reached England, and the barons, to whom the care of the borders was committed, began to muster their feudal services, and to prepare for resistance. On the day appointed, the Scots accordingly assembled in force at Yetholm, a small town not far from Jedburgh, and situated at the foot of the Cheviot Hills. A more powerful army had not been seen for a long period. There were twelve hundred men-at-arms and forty thousand infantry, including a small body of archers, a species of military force in which the Scots were still little skilled, when compared with the formidable power of the English bowmen. It was now necessary to deter-

¹ Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, vol. i. sub anno 1385.

² Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 363.

mine in what manner the war should be begun, and upon what part of the country its fury should first be let loose; and, when the leaders were deliberating upon this, a prisoner was taken and carried to headquarters, who proved to be an English esquire, dispatched by the border lords for the purpose of collecting information. From him they understood that the wardens of the marches did not deem themselves strong enough at that time to offer battle, but that, having collected their greatest power, they had determined to remain quiet till it was seen in what direction the Scottish invasion was to take place, and then to make a counter-raid into Scotland at the same time; thus avoiding all chance of being attacked, and retaliating upon the Scots by a system of simultaneous havoc and plunder.

Upon receiving this information, which proved to be correct, the Earl of Fife determined to separate the army into two great divisions, and for the purpose of frustrating the designs of the English, to invade the country both by the western and eastern marches. He himself, accordingly, with Archibald Lord of Galloway, and the Earls of Sutherland, Menteith, Mar, and Strathern, at the head of a large force, constituting nearly the third part of the whole army, began their march through Liddesdale, and passing the borders of Galloway, advanced towards Carlisle. The second division was chiefly intended to divert the attention of the English from opposing the main body of the Scots; it consisted of seven thousand soldiers, of whom two thousand three

hundred were knights and men-at-arms, the rest being light-armed prickers and camp followers,¹ and was placed under the command of the Earl of Douglas, a young soldier, who, from his boyhood, had been trained to war by his father, and who possessed the hereditary valour and high military talents of the family. Along with him went the Earls of March and Moray; Sir James Lyndsay, Sir Alexander Ramsay, and Sir John St Clair, three soldiers of great experience; Sir Patrick Hepburn with his two sons, Sir John Haliburton, Sir John Maxwell, Sir Alexander Fraser, Sir Adam Glendinning, Sir David Fleming, Sir Thomas Erskine, and many other noble knights and squires, forming a brave and chosen body of soldiers.

With this small army, the Earl of Douglas pushed rapidly on through Northumberland, having given strict orders that not a house should be burnt or plundered till they reached the Bishoprick of Durham. Such was the silence and celerity of the march, that he crossed the Tyne near Branspeth, and was not discovered by the English garrisons to be in the heart of this rich and populous district, until the smoke of the flaming villages, and the terror of the people, carried the first news of his arrival to the city of Durham. Nor did the English dare at present to oppose him, imagining his force to be the advanced guard of the

¹ Winton, vol. ii. p. 337, affirms that the Earl of Douglas had along with him seven thousand "men of weire." Froissart, on the contrary, affirms that he had no more than "three hundred men-at-arms and two thousand infantry."

main army of the Scots ; a natural supposition, for the capture of their spy had left them in ignorance of the real designs of the enemy. Douglas, therefore, plundered without meeting an enemy ; whilst Sir Henry Percy, better known by his name of Hotspur, and his brother Ralph, the two sons of the Earl of Northumberland, along with the Seneschal of York, the Captain of Berwick, Sir Mathew Redman, Sir Ralph Moubray, Sir John Felton, Sir Thomas Grey, and numerous other border barons, kept themselves, with their whole power, within the barriers of Newcastle,¹ and the Earl of Northumberland collected his strength at Alnwick.

Meanwhile, having wasted the country as far as the gates of Durham, the Scottish leaders returned to Newcastle with a rapidity equal to their advance, and in the chivalrous spirit of the times, determined to tarry there two days, and try the courage of the English knights. The names of Percy and of Douglas were at this time very famous, Hotspur having the reputation of being one of the bravest soldiers in England, and the Earl of Douglas, although his younger in years, being little inferior in the high estimation in which his military prowess was held amongst his countrymen. In the skirmishes which took place at the barriers of the town, it happened that these celebrated soldiers came to be personally opposed to each other, and after an obstinate contest, Douglas won the pennon of the English leader, and boasted aloud, before the knights who were present,

¹ Winton, vol. ii. p. 338. Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 377.

that he would carry it to Scotland, and set it high, as a proof of his prowess, on his castle of Dalkeith. "That, so help me God!" cried Hotspur, "no Douglas shall ever do; and ere you leave Northumberland you shall have small cause to boast."—"Well, Henry," answered Douglas, "your pennon shall this night be placed before my tent; come and win it if you can."¹

Such was the nature of this knightly defiance; and Douglas knew enough of Percy to be assured that, if possible, he would keep his word. He commanded, therefore, a strict watch to be maintained, struck the pennon into the ground in front of his tent, and expected to be assaulted by the English. There were occasions, however, in which the bravadoes of chivalry were forced to give way to the graver and stricter rules of war, and as the English leaders still entertained the erroneous idea that Douglas only led the van of the main army, and that his object was to draw them from their intrenchments, they insisted that Percy should not hazard an attack which might bring them into extreme jeopardy. The Scots, accordingly, were suffered to leave their encampment and proceed on their way. Passing by the tower of Ponteland, they carried it by storm, razed it to the ground, and still continuing their retreat, came, on the second day, to the village and castle of Otterburn, situated in Riddesdale,² and about twelve miles from Newcastle. This castle was strongly fortified, and the first day resisted every attack of the Scots;

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 377.

² Winton, vol. ii. pp. 339, 340.

upon which most of their leaders, anxious not to lose time, but to carry their booty across the borders, gave it as their advice to break up the encampment and proceed into Scotland. Douglas alone opposed this, and entreated them to remain a few days and make themselves masters of the castle, so that in the interval they might give Henry Percy full time, if he thought fit, to reach their encampment, and fulfil his promise. This they at length agreed to; and having skilfully chosen their encampment, they fortified it in such a way as should give them great advantage in the event of an attack. In its front, and a little to one side, was a marshy level, at the narrow entrance of which were placed their carriages and waggons laden with plunder, and behind them the horses, sheep, and cattle which they had driven away with them. These were committed to the charge of the sutlers and camp followers, who, although poorly armed, were able to make some resistance with their staves and knives. Behind these again, on firm ground, which was on one side defended by the marsh, and on the other flanked by a small wooded hill, were placed the tents and temporary huts of the leaders and the men-at-arms; and having thus taken every precaution against a surprise, they occupied themselves during the day in assaulting the castle, and at night retired within their encampment.¹ But this did not long continue. By this time it became generally known that Douglas and his little army were wholly unsupported, and the moment that Percy ascertained the fact, and discovered that the Scottish earl lay

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 385.

encamped at Otterburn, he put himself at the head of six hundred lances, and eight thousand foot, knights and squires, and, without waiting for the Bishop of Durham, who was advancing with all his power to Newcastle, marched straight to Otterburn, at as rapid a rate as his infantry could bear.¹

Hotspur had left Newcastle after dinner, and the sun was set before he came in sight of the Scots encampment. It was a delightful evening in the month of August, which had succeeded to a day of extreme heat, and the greater part of the Scots, worn out with an unsuccessful attack upon the castle, had taken their supper and fallen asleep. In a moment they were awakened by a cry of "Percy, Percy!" and the English, trusting that they could soon carry the encampment from their superiority of numbers, attacked it with the greatest fury. They were checked, however, not a little by the barrier of waggons, and the brave defence made by the servants and camp-followers, which gave the knights time to arm, and enabled Douglas and the leaders to form the men-at-arms in array, before Hotspur could reach their tents. The excellence of the position chosen by the Scottish earl was now apparent; for, taking advantage of the ground, he silently and rapidly defiled round the wooded eminence already mentioned, which completely concealed his march, and when the greater part of the English were engaged in the marsh, suddenly raised his banner and set upon them in flank. It was now night; but the moon shone brightly, and the air was so clear and calm, that the light was almost

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 384.

equal to the day. Her quiet rays, however, fell on a very dreadful scene, for Percy became soon convinced that he had mistaken the lodgings of the servants for those of their masters, and, chafed and angry at the disappointment, drew back his men on firm ground, and encountered the Scots with the utmost fury. He was not, indeed, so well supported as he might have been, as a large division of the English under Sir Mathew Redman and Sir Robert Ogle,¹ having made themselves masters of the encampment, had begun to plunder, and his own men were fatigued with their march, whilst the Scots, under Douglas, Moray, and March, were fresh and well-breathed. Yet, with all these disadvantages, the English greatly outnumbered the enemy, and in the temper of their armour and their weapons, were far their superior.²

For many hours the battle raged with undiminished fury; banners rose and fell; the voices of the knights shouting their war-cries, were mingled with the shrieks and groans of the dying, whilst the ground, covered with dead bodies and shreds of armour, and slippery with blood, scarce afforded room for the combatants, so closely were they engaged, and so obstinately was every foot of earth contested. It was at this time that Douglas, wielding a battle-axe in both hands, and followed only by a few of his household, cut his way into the press of English knights, and throwing himself too rashly upon the spears, was borne to the earth and soon mortally wounded in the

¹ Winton, vol. ii. p. 340.

² Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 389.

head and neck. Yet at this time none knew who had fallen, for the English pressed on, and a considerable interval elapsed, before the Earls of March and Moray again forced them to give back, and cleared the spot where Douglas lay bleeding to death. Sir James Lindsay was the first to discover his kinsman, and running up hastily, eagerly enquired how it fared with him. "But poorly," said Douglas. "I am dying in my armour, as my fathers have done, thanks be to God, and not in my bed; but if you love me, raise my banner and press forward, for he who should bear it lies slain beside me." Lindsay instantly obeyed, and the banner of the crowned heart again rose amid the cries of "Douglas!" so that the Scots firmly believed their leader was still in the field, and pressed on the English ranks with a courage which at last compelled them wholly to give way.¹ Hotspur and his brother, Sir Ralph Percy, surrendered after a stout resistance, and along with them nearly the whole chivalry of Northumberland and Durham were either slain or taken. Amongst the prisoners were the Seneschal of York, the Captain of Berwick, Sir Mathew Redman, Sir Ralph Langley, Sir Robert Ogle, Sir John Lilburn, Sir Thomas Walsingham, Sir John Felton, Sir John Copland, Sir Thomas Abingdon, and many other noble knights and gentlemen,² whose ransom was a source of great and immediate wealth to the Scots. There were slain on the Eng-

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. pp. 393, 394, 395. Winton, vol. ii. pp. 340, 341, 342.

² Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 395.

lish side about eighteen hundred and sixty men-at-arms, besides a thousand who were grievously wounded.¹ We are informed by the delightful historian of chivalry, that he received his account of this expedition from English and Scottish knights who were engaged in it; and “of all the battles,” says he, “which I have made mention of heretofore in this history, this of Otterburn was the bravest and the best contested, for there was neither knight nor squire but acquitted himself nobly, doing well his duty, and fighting hand to hand, without either stay or faint-heartedness.” And as the English greatly outnumbered the Scots, so signal a victory was much talked of, not only in both countries, but on the continent.² The joy, however, which was naturally felt upon such an occasion, was greatly overclouded by the death of Douglas, whose conduct became the theme of universal praise, and who had fallen in this heroic manner in the prime of manhood; so that the march to Scotland resembled more a funeral procession than a triumphant progress, for in the midst of it moved the car in which was placed the body of this brave man; and in this manner was it conveyed by the army to the abbey of Melrose, where they buried him in the sepulchre of his fathers, and hung his banner, all torn and soiled with blood, over his grave.³

The causes of this defeat of the famous Hotspur, by a force greatly his inferior, are not difficult to be

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 420.

² Ibid. vol. xi. p. 401.

³ Ibid. vol. xi. p. 422.

discovered. They are to be found in the excellent natural position chosen by Douglas for his encampment, in the judicious manner in which it had been fortified, and in the circumstance of Percy attempting to carry it at first by a coup-de-main, thus rendering his archers, that portion of the English force which had ever been most decisive and destructive in its effects, totally useless.¹ The difficulties thrown in the way of the English by the intrenchment of waggons, and the defence of the camp followers, were of the utmost consequence in gaining time; and the subsequent victory forms a striking contrast to the dreadful defeat sustained by the Scots at Dupplin, in consequence of the want of any such precaution.² Even at Otterburn, the leaders, who were sitting in their gowns and doublets at supper when the first alarm reached them, had to arm in extreme haste; so that Douglas's harness was in many places unclasped, and the Earl of March actually fought all night without his helmet;³ but minutes, in such circumstances, were infinitely valuable, and these were gained by the strength of the camp. One circumstance connected with the death of Douglas is too characteristic of the times to be omitted. His chaplain, a priest of the name of Lundie, had followed him to the war, and fought during the whole battle at his side. When his body was discovered, this

¹ Froissart, par Buchon. vol. xi. p. 389. "Et estoient si joints l'un à l'autre et si attachés, que trait d'archers de nul coté n'y avoit point de lieu."

² History, vol. ii. p. 14.

³ Winton, vol. ii. p. 339.

warrior clerk was found bestriding his dying master, wielding his battle-axe, and defending him from injury. He became afterwards Archdeacon of North Berwick.¹

On hearing of the defeat at Otterburn, the Bishop of Durham, who, soon after Percy's departure, had entered Newcastle with ten thousand men, attempted, at the head of this force, to cut off the retreat of the Scots; but, on coming up with their little army, he found they had again intrenched themselves in the same strong position, in which they could not be attacked without manifest risk, and he judged it prudent to retreat,² so that they reached their own country without further molestation. So many noble prisoners had not been carried into Scotland since the days of Bruce;³ for although Hotspur's force did not amount to nine thousand men, it included the flower of the English border baronage. The remaining division of the Scots, under the Earl of Fife, amounting, as we have seen, to more than a third part of the whole army, broke into England by the west marches, according to the plan already agreed on; and after an inroad, attended by the usual circumstances of merciless devastation and plunder, being informed of the successful conclusion of the operations on the eastern border, returned without a check to Scotland.

It is impossible not to agree with Froissart, that there never was a more chivalrous battle than this

¹ Froissart, par Buchon, vol. xi. p. 393.

² Ibid. vol. xi. p. 419.

³ Winton, vol. ii. p. 343.

of Otterburn ; the singular circumstances under which it was fought, in a sweet moonlight night,¹ the heroic death of Douglas, the very name of Hotspur, all contribute to invest it with that delightful character of romance, so seldom coincident with the cold realities of which history is composed ; and we experience, in its recital, something of the sentiment of the famous Sir Philip Sidney, “ who never could hear the song of the Douglas and Percy, without having his heart stirred as with the sound of a trumpet.” But it ought not to be forgotten, that it was solely a chivalrous battle : it had nothing great in its motive, and nothing great in its results. It is as different, in this respect, from the battles of Stirling and Bannockburn, and from the many contests which distinguish the war of liberty, as the holy spirit of freedom from the petty ebullitions of national rivalry, or the desire of plunder and revenge. It was fought at a time when England had abandoned all serious designs against the independence of the neighbouring country, when the king, and the great body of the Scottish people, earnestly desired peace, and when the accomplishment of this desire would have been a real blessing to the nation ; but this blessing the Scottish aristocracy, who, like the feudal nobles of England and France, could not exist without public or private war, did not appreciate, and had no ambition to see realized. The war originated in the character of this class, and the prin-

¹ It was fought on Wednesday, 5th August. M'Pherson's Notes on Winton, vol. ii. p. 516.

ciples which they adopted; and the power of the crown, and the influence of the commons, were yet infinitely too feeble to check their authority: On the contrary, this domineering power of the great feudal families was evidently on the increase in Scotland, and led, as we shall see in the sequel, to very dreadful results.

But to return from this digression. The age and indolence of the king, and his aversion to business, appear to have now increased to a height which rendered it necessary for the parliament to interfere, and the extreme bodily weakness of the Earl of Carrick, the heir apparent, who had been grievously injured by the kick of a horse, made it impossible that much active management should be intrusted to him. From necessity, more than choice or affection, the nation next looked to Robert's second son, the Earl of Fife; and in a meeting of the three estates, held at Edinburgh in 1389, the king willingly retired from all interference with public affairs, and committed the office of governor of the kingdom to this ambitious and intriguing man, who, at the mature age of fifty, succeeded to the complete management of the kingdom.¹ A deep selfishness, which, if it secured its own aggrandisement, little regarded the means employed, seems to have been an inherent taint in the character of the new regent; and it was redeemed by few great qualities, for he certainly possessed little military talent, and although his genius

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 414. He died in 1419, aged eighty.

for civil government has been extolled by our ancient historians, yet his first public act was one of great weakness.

Since the defeat at Otterburn, and the capture of Hotspur, the Earl Marshal, to whom the English king had committed the custody of the marches, had been accustomed to taunt and provoke the Scottish borderers to renew the quarrel, and had boasted, that he would be ready to give them battle if they would meet him in a fair field, though their numbers should double his. These were the natural and foolish bravadoes that will ever accompany any great defeat, and ought to have been overlooked by the governor; but instead of this, he affected to consider his knightly character involved, and prepared to sacrifice the interests of the country, which imperiously called for peace, to his own fantastic notions of honour. An army was assembled, which Fife conducted in person, having along with him Archibald Douglas and the rest of the Scottish nobles. With this force they passed the marches, and sent word to the Earl Marshal that they had accepted his challenge, and would expect his arrival; but, with superior wisdom, he declined the defiance, and, having intrenched himself in a strong position, refused to abandon his advantage, and proposed to wait their attack. This, however, formed no part of the project of the Scots, and they returned into their own country.¹ In such absurd bravadoes, resembling more

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 414. Winton, vol. ii. p. 346.

the capricious quarrels of children, than any grave or serious contest, did two great nations employ themselves, misled by those ridiculous notions and refined errors which had arisen out of the system of chivalry, whose influence was now paramount, not only in Scotland, but throughout Europe.

Not long after this, a three years' truce having been concluded at Boulogne between England and France, a mutual embassy of French and English knights arrived in Scotland, and, having repaired to the court, which was then held at Dunfermline, prevailed upon the Scots to become parties to this cessation of hostilities; so that the king, who, since his accession to the throne, had not ceased to desire peace, enjoyed the comfort of at last seeing it, if not permanently settled, at least in the course of being established.¹ He retired soon after to one of his northern castles at Dundonald, in Ayrshire, where, in the course of the year 1389, he died at the age of seventy-four, in the nineteenth year of his reign.² The most prominent features in the character of this monarch have been already described: That he was indolent, and fond of enjoying himself in the seclusion of his northern manors, whilst he injudiciously conferred too independent a power upon his turbulent and ambitious sons, cannot be denied; but it ought not to be forgotten, that, at a time when the liberties of the country were threatened with a total

¹ Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. ii. pp. 89, 99.

² Winton, vol. ii. pp. 350, 351. Some fine remains of this ancient castle still exist. Stat. Account, vol. vii. p. 619.

overthrow, the Steward stood forward in their defence, with a zeal and an energy which were eminently successful, and that he was the main instrument in defeating the designs of David the Second and Edward the Third, when an English prince was attempted to be imposed upon the nation. The principles of his government, after his accession, so far as the character of the king was then allowed to influence the government, were essentially pacific; but the circumstances in which the nation was placed were totally changed, and to maintain peace between the two countries, became then as much the object of a wise and liberal policy, as it formerly had been his duty to continue the war. Unfortunately, the judgment of the king was not permitted to have that influence to which it was entitled, and many years were yet to run before the two nations had their eyes opened, to discern the line of policy which was best calculated to promote their mutual prosperity.

During the whole course of this reign, the agriculture of Scotland appears to have been in a very lamentable condition; a circumstance arising, no doubt, out of the constant interruption of the regular seasons of rural labour, the ravages committed by foreign invasion, and the havoc which necessarily attended the passage even of a Scottish army, from one part of the country to another. The proof of this is to be found in the frequent licenses which are granted by the English king, allowing the nobles and the merchants of Scotland to import grain into that country, and in the circumstance that the grain for

the victualling of the Scottish castles, then in the hands of the English, was not unfrequently brought from Ireland.¹ The commercial spirit of the country during this reign was undoubtedly on the increase; and the trade which it carried on with Flanders, appears to have been conducted with much enterprise and activity. Mercer, a Scottish merchant, during his residence in France, was, from his great wealth, admitted to the favour and confidence of Charles the Sixth; and on one occasion, the cargo of a Scottish merchantman, which had been captured by the English, was valued as high as seven thousand merks, an immense sum for those remote times.² The staple source of export wealth continued to consist in wool, hides, skins, and wool-fells; and we have the evidence of Froissart, who had himself travelled in the country, that its home manufactures were in a very low condition.

¹ *Rotuli Scotiæ*, vol. i. pp. 963, 965, 966, 968, 975.

² Walsingham, p. 239.