

CHAP. III.

ROBERT BRUCE.

 CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

Kings of England.
Edward I.
Edward II.

| *King of France.*
Philip IV.

| *Pope.*
Clement V.

WE now enter upon the history of this great and rapid revolution, and in doing so, it will first be necessary to say a few words upon the early character and conduct of the Earl of Carric, afterwards Robert the First.

This eminent person was the grandson of that Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, who was competitor for the crown with John Baliol. He was lineally descended from Isabella, second daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon, brother of William the Lion. John Baliol, the late King of Scotland, had, as we have already seen, renounced for ever all claim to the throne, and his son Edward was at that time a minor and a captive. Marjory Baliol, the sister of this unfortunate monarch, married John Comyn, Lord of Badenoch. Their son, John Comyn, commonly called the Red Comyn, the opponent of Wallace, and, till the fatal year 1303, the Regent of the kingdom, possess-

ed, as the son of Marjory, Baliol's sister, a right to the throne, after the resignation of Baliol and his son, which, according to the principles on which Edward pronounced his decision, was unquestionable. He was also connected by marriage with the royal family of England,¹ and was undoubtedly one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful subject, in Scotland. Bruce and Comyn were thus the heads of two rival parties in the state, whose animosity was excited by their mutual claims to the same crown, and whose interests were utterly irreconcilable. Accordingly, when Edward gave his famous award in favour of Baliol, Bruce, the competitor, refused to take the oath of homage,² and although he acquiesced in the decision, gave up his lands in the vale of Annandale, which he must have held as a vassal under Baliol, to his son, the Earl of Carric; again, in 1293, the Earl of Carric resigned his lands and earldom of Carric to his son Robert, then a young man in the service of the King of England.³ In the years 1295 and 1296, Edward invaded Scotland, and reduced Baliol, and the party of the Comyns, to an ignominious submission. During this contest, Bruce, the Earl of Carric, and son of the competitor, possessed of large estates in England, continued faithful to Edward. He thus

¹ His wife Johanna, was daughter of William de Valence, Earl of Pembroke. This Earl of Pembroke was son of Hugh de Brienne, who married Isabella, widow of John, King of England, grandfather of Edward the First.

² Leland, Collect. vol. i. p. 540.

³ Ibid.

preserved his estates, and hoped to see the destruction of the only rivals who stood between him and his claim to the throne. Nor was this a vain expectation, for Edward, on hearing of the revolt of Baliol and the Comyns, undoubtedly held out the prospect of the throne to Bruce,¹ and these circumstances afford us a complete explanation of the inactivity of that baron and his son at this period. Meanwhile Baliol and the Comyns issued a hasty order, confiscating the estates of all who preserved their allegiance to Edward. In consequence of this resolution, the rich lordship of Annandale, the paternal inheritance of the Earl of Carric, was declared forfeited, and given by Baliol to John Comyn, Earl of Buchan, who immediately seized and occupied Bruce's castle of Lochmaben, an insult which there is reason to think the proud baron never forgave. Compelled to submit to Edward, the Comyns, and the principal nobles who supported them, were now carried prisoners into England; and, when restored to liberty, it was only on condition that they should join his army in Flanders, and assist him in his foreign wars.²

During the brief but noble stand made by Wallace for the national liberty, Robert Bruce, then a young man of three-and-twenty, was placed in very difficult and critical circumstances. It was in his favour that his rivals, the Comyns, were no longer in the field, but kept in durance by Edward. His father, the Earl of Carric, remained in England, where

¹ See *supra*, p. 107.

² *Rotul. Scotiae*, 30th July. Edward I.

he possessed large estates, and continued faithful in his allegiance to the king. At this time it is important to remark what Walter Hemingford, a contemporary English historian, has said of young Bruce. After mentioning the revolt which was headed by Wallace, he informs us, "that the Bishop of Carlisle, and other barons, to whom the peace of that district was committed, became suspicious of the fidelity of Robert Bruce the younger, Earl of Carric, and sent for him to come and treat upon the affairs of Edward, if he intended to remain faithful to that monarch." Bruce, he continues, did not dare to disobey, but came on the day appointed, with his vassals of Galloway, and took an oath on the sacred host, and upon the sword of St Thomas, that he would assist the king against the Scots, and all his enemies, both by word and deed; and having taken this oath, he returned to his country, and, to give a colour of truth to his fidelity, collected his vassals, and ravaged the lands of William Douglas, carrying the wife and infant children of this knight into Annandale. Soon after this, however, as he returned from a meeting of the Scottish conspirators to his own country, having assembled his father's men of Annandale, (for his father himself then resided in the south of England, and was ignorant of his son's treachery,) he told them, "that it was true he had lately taken a foolish oath at Carlisle, of which they had heard." He assured them that it was extorted by force, and that he not only deeply repented what he had done, but hoped soon to get absolution. Meanwhile he added, "that he

was resolved to go with his own vassals and join the nation from which he sprung, and he earnestly entreated them to do the same, and come along with him as his dear friends and counsellors. The men of Annandale, however, disliking the peril of this undertaking, whilst their master, the elder Bruce, was in England, decamped in the night; and the young Bruce, aspiring to the crown, as was generally reported, joined himself to the rebels, and entered into the conspiracy with the Bishop of Glasgow, and the Steward of Scotland, who were at the bottom of the plot.”¹ Such is an almost literal translation from the words of Walter Hemingford, whose information as to Scottish affairs at this period, seems to have been minute and accurate.

At this time, however, the ambition or the patriotic feelings of Bruce were indeed shortlived; for, not many months after, he made his peace at the capitulation at Irvine, and gave his infant daughter, Marjory, as a hostage for his fidelity.² After the successful battle of Stirling, the Comyns, no longer in the power of the English king, joined Wallace; and young Bruce, once more seeing his rivals for the throne opposed to Edward, kept aloof from public affairs, anxious,

¹ Hemingford, vol. i. p. 120.

² Rymer, *Fœd.* vol. i. new edit. p. 868. Robert Bruce, Earl of Carric, James the Steward of Scotland, John his brother, Alexander de Lindesay, and William de Douglas, submitted themselves to Edward. On 30th July, 1297, John Comyn, son of John, Lord of Badenoch, John, Earl of Athol, and Richard Suard, were liberated from prison, and accompanied Edward to Flanders.

no doubt, that they should destroy themselves by such opposition. He did not, as Lord Hailes has erroneously stated, accede to the Scottish party,¹ but on the contrary, shut himself up in the castle of Ayr, and refused to join the army which fought at Falkirk. As little, however, did he cordially co-operate with Edward, although his father, the elder Bruce, and his brother Bernard Bruce, were both in the service of Edward, and, as there is strong reason to believe, in the English army which fought at Falkirk. Young Bruce's conduct, in short, at this juncture, was that of a cautious neutral; but Edward, who approved of no such lukewarmness in those who had sworn homage to him, immediately after the battle of Falkirk advanced into the west. Bruce, on his approach, fled, and Edward afterwards led his army into Annandale, and seized his strong castle of Lochmaben.²

In a parliament held not long after, the king gave to his nobles some of the estates of the chief men in Scotland; but the great estates of the Bruce family, embracing Annandale and Carric, were not alienated. The fidelity of the elder Bruce to Edward, in all probability preserved them. On the 13th of November, 1299, we find Robert Bruce the younger, Earl of Carric, associated as one of the Regents of the kingdom, with John Comyn, that powerful rival, with whom he had hitherto never acted in concert.³ It seems, how-

¹ Annals, vol. i. 4to, pp. 256—263.

² Hemingford, p. 166.

³ Rymer, new edit. p. 915.

ever, to have been an unnatural coalition, arising more out of Bruce having lost the confidence of Edward, than indicative of any new cordiality between him and Comyn ; and there can be little doubt also, that they were brought to act together, by a mutual desire to humble and destroy the power of Wallace, in which they succeeded. But to punish this union, Edward, in his short campaign of 1300, wasted Annandale, took Lochmaben castle, and marched into Galloway, ravaging Bruce's country. Thus exposed to, and suffering under, the vengeance of the King of England, it might be expected that he should have warmly joined with his brother regents in the war with England. But this seems not to have been the case. He did not take an active share in public affairs, and, previous to the battle of Roslin, he returned, as we have seen, to the English party. During the fatal and victorious progress of Edward through Scotland in 1303, he remained faithful to Edward, while his rivals, the Comyns, continued in arms against England. On the death of his father, which took place in 1304, Bruce was permitted by the King of England to take possession of his whole English and Scottish estates ; and so high does he appear to have risen in the esteem of Edward, that he acted a principal part in the settlement of the kingdom in 1304, whilst his rival, Comyn, was subjected to a heavy fine, and seems to have wholly lost the confidence of the king.¹

¹ Trivet, p. 334.

In this situation matters stood at the important period, when we concluded the last chapter. Bruce, whose conduct had been consistent only upon selfish principles, found himself, when compared with other Scottish barons, in an enviable situation. He had preserved his great estates, his rivals were overpowered, and, on any new emergency occurring, the way was partly cleared for his own claim to the crown.

The effect of all this upon the mind of Comyn may be easily imagined. He felt that one, whose conduct, in consistency and honour, had been inferior to his own, was rewarded with the confidence and favour of the king, whilst he who had struggled to the last for the liberty of his country, became an object of suspicion and neglect. This seems to have rankled in his heart, and he endeavoured to instil suspicions of the fidelity of Bruce into the mind of Edward;¹ but at the same time he kept up to that proud rival the appearance of friendship and familiarity. Bruce, in the meantime, although he had matured no certain design for the recovery of the crown, never lost sight of his pretensions, and neglected no opportunity of strengthening himself and his cause, by those bonds and alliances with powerful barons or prelates, which were common in that age. He had entered into a secret league of this kind with William de Lambertton, Bishop of St Andrews, in which they engage faithfully to consult together, and to give mutual as-

¹ Hemingford says this expressly. “Cumque mutuo loquerentur ad invicem verbis ut videbatur pacificis, statim convertens faciem et verba pervertens cœpit improperare ei.”

sistance to each other, by themselves and their people, at all times, and against all persons, to the utmost of their power, and without fraud or guile to warn each other against all impending dangers, and to use their utmost endeavour to prevent the same.¹ This league was of course sedulously concealed from Edward, but it seems to have become known to Comyn, and a conference between him and Bruce on the subject of their mutual pretensions actually took place. At this meeting, Bruce described in strong expressions the miserable servitude into which their mutual dissensions, and their respective claims to the crown, had plunged the country; and we are informed by one of the most ancient and accurate of the contemporary historians, that he proposed as an alternative to Comyn, either that this baron should make over his great estate to Bruce, on condition of receiving from him in return his cordial assistance in asserting his claim to the crown, or should agree to accept Bruce's lands, and assist him in the recovery of his hereditary kingdom. "Support my title to the crown," said Bruce, "and I will give you my estate, or give me your estate, and I will support yours."² Comyn agreed to wave his right, and accept the lands, and in the course of these confidential meetings became acquainted with

¹ See Ayloff's Calendar of Ancient Charters, p. 295. The deed is transcribed in Lord Hailes' Annals, vol. i. p. 280.

² Fordun a Hearne, p. 992, vol. iv. Winton, vol. ii. p. 122, says this conference took place when the two barons were "ryding fra Strevylyn." See also Langtoft, vol. ii. p. 330. Barbour's Bruce, Jamieson's edit. vol. i. p. 18.

Bruce's secret associations, and even possessed of papers which contained evidence of his designs upon the crown. These designs, however, were as yet quite immature, and Bruce, who was still unsuspected, and in high confidence with Edward, repaired to the English court. Whilst there, Comyn betrayed him,¹ and dispatched letters to Edward, informing him of the designs of Bruce upon the crown. Edward, anxious to unravel the whole conspiracy, had recourse to dissimulation, and the Earl of Carric continued in apparent favour. But the king had inadvertently dropped some hint of an intention to seize him, and Bruce, having received from his kinsman, the Earl of Gloucester,² an intimation of his danger, took horse, and, accompanied by a few friends, precipitately fled to Scotland. On the borders they encountered a messenger hastening to England. His deportment was suspicious, and Bruce ordered him to be questioned and searched. He proved to be an emissary of Comyn's, whom that baron had sent to communicate with Edward. He was instantly slain, his letters were seized, and Bruce, in possession of documents which disclosed the treachery of Comyn, pressed forward to his castle of Lochmaben,³ which he reached on the fifth day

¹ Winton asserts, vol. ii. p. 123, that Comyn betrayed Bruce when he was yet in Scotland, upon which Edward sent for him to get him into his power; and that Bruce suspecting nothing, repaired to London to attend parliament.

² The Earl of Gloucester is ridiculously enough denominated by Maitland, vol. i. p. 469, Earl Gomer, by Boece called Glomer, which is as absurdly supposed to be a corruption of Montgomery.

³ Winton, vol. ii. p. 127.

after his sudden flight. Here he met his brother, Edward Bruce, and informed him of the perilous circumstances in which he was placed.¹ It was now the month of February, the time when the English justiciars appointed by Edward were accustomed to hold their courts at Dumfries; and Bruce, as a freeholder of Annandale, was bound to be present. Comyn was also a freeholder in Dumfries-shire, and obliged to attend on the justiciars, so that in this way those two proud rivals were brought into contact, under circumstances peculiarly irritating.² They met at Dumfries, and Bruce, burning with ill-dissembled indignation, requested a private and solitary interview with Comyn, in the convent of the Minorite Friars. Comyn agreed, and entering the convent, they had not reached the high altar, before words grew high and warm, and the young baron losing command of temper, openly arraigned Comyn of treachery. "You lie," said Comyn; upon which Bruce instantly stabbed him with his dagger, and hurrying from the sanctuary which he had defiled with blood, rushed into the street, and called "A horse." Lindsay and Kirkpatrick, two of his tried followers, seeing him pale and agitated, demanded the cause. "I doubt," said Bruce, as he threw himself on his horse, "I have slain Comyn." "Do you doubt?" cried Kirkpatrick, fiercely, "I'll make sure!" and instantly entered the convent, where

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 23.

² Hailes' Annals, vol. i. p. 294.

he found Comyn still alive, but bleeding, and lying on the steps of the high altar. By this time the noise of the scuffle had alarmed Comyn's friends, and his uncle, Sir Robert Comyn,¹ rushed into the convent, and attempted to save him. But Kirkpatrick slew this new opponent, and having dispatched his dying victim, who could offer no resistance, rejoined his master. Bruce assembled his followers, and took possession of the castle of Dumfries. The English justiciars, who held their court in a hall in the castle, believing their lives to be in danger, barricaded the doors. Bruce ordered the hall to be set fire to, upon which the judges capitulated, and were permitted to depart from Scotland without further molestation.²

All this had passed in the heat of passion, and there seems the greatest probability that the murder of Comyn was entirely unpremeditated. But its conse-

¹ There seems some little ambiguity about the knight's name. Hailes, vol. i. p. 291, says he is commonly called Sir Richard, but I know not where he is so named. A book of chronicles in Peter College Library, quoted by Leland, Coll. vol. i. p. 473, calls him Sir Roger. The Pope's Bull, vol. iii. Rymer, Fœd. p. 810, puts it beyond doubt that his name is Robert. The murder of Comyn happened on Thursday the 10th of February 1305-6. Aylofffe. Calendar of Ancient Charters, p. 295.

² Hemingford, vol. i. p. 220. This historian tells us, that after Bruce had with his followers seized the castle of Dumfries, and expelled the justiciars, word was brought him that Comyn was still alive, and had been carried by the friars within the high altar, to confess his sins. Upon which Bruce ordered him to be dragged out, and slain on the steps of the altar, so that the altar itself was stained with his blood. This is improbable.

quences were important in the extreme. Bruce's former varying and uncertain line of policy, which had arisen out of the hope of preserving, by fidelity to Edward, his great estates, and of seeing his rival crushed by his opposition to England, was at once changed by the murder of Comyn. His whole schemes upon the crown had been laid open to Edward. This was ruin of itself; but, in addition to this, he had, with his own hand, assassinated the first noble in the realm, and in a place of tremendous sanctity. He had stained the high altar with blood, and had directed against himself, besides the resentment of the powerful friends and vassals of the murdered earl, all the terrors of religion, and the strongest prejudices of the people. The die, however, was cast, and he had no alternative left to him, but either to become a fugitive and an outlaw, or to raise open banner against Edward; and, although the disclosure of his plans was premature, to proclaim his title to the crown. Having determined on this last, he repaired immediately to Lochmaben castle, and dispatched letters to his friends and adherents. It was most fortunate for him at this trying crisis, that he had secured the friendship and assistance of the Archbishop of St Andrews, William de Lamberton, by one of those bands or covenants, which, in this age, it was considered an unheard of outrage to break or disregard. Lamberton's friendship, disarmed of its dreadful consequences that sentence of excommunication which was soon thundered against him, and his powerful influence

necessarily interested in his behalf the whole body of the Scottish clergy.

The desperate nature of Bruce's undertaking appeared very manifest, from the small number of adherents who joined his banner. The enumeration will not occupy much space. There were the Earls of Lennox and of Athol; Lamberton, the Bishop of St Andrews; Robert Wisheart, Bishop of Glasgow; David, Bishop of Moray; the Abbot of Scone; his four brothers, Edward, Nigel, Thomas, and Alexander; his nephew, Thomas Randolph; his brother-in-law, Christopher Seaton; Gilbert de la Haye of Errol, with his brother, Hugh de la Haye; David Barclay of Cairns; Alexander Fraser, brother of Simon Fraser, of Oliver castle; Walter de Somerville, of Linton and Carnwath; David of Inchmartin; Robert Boyd; and Robert Fleming. Such was the handful of brave men, comprising two earls and only fourteen barons, with whose assistance Bruce determined to take the field against the overwhelming power of England, directed by one of the most experienced statesmen, and certainly by the most successful military commander, of the age. "With these," says the authentic and affectionate Fordun, "he had the courage to raise his hand, not only against the King of England and his allies, but against the whole accumulated power of Scotland, with the exception of an extremely small number who adhered to him, and who seemed like a drop of water when compared to the ocean."¹

¹ "There is no living man," continues the historian, "who is able to narrate the story of those complicated misfortunes which

Bruce's first step was bold and decisive. He determined immediately to be crowned at Scone, and for this purpose repaired from his castle of Lochmaben to Glasgow, where he was joined by many friends who supported his enterprise. On the road from Lochmaben, a young knight, well armed and horsed, encountered his retinue, who, the moment Bruce approached, threw himself from his horse, and with bent knee did homage to him as his rightful sovereign. He immediately recognised him to be Sir James Douglas, the son of William, the fourth Lord Douglas, whose estate had been given by Edward to the Lord Clifford, and affectionately welcomed him ; for his father had fought with Wallace, and the son had already

befell him in the commencement of this war, his frequent perils, his retreats, the care and weariness, the hunger and thirst, the watching and fasting, the cold and nakedness to which he exposed his person, the exile into which he was driven, the snares and ambushes which he escaped, the seizure, imprisonment, the execution, and utter destruction of his dearest friends and relatives. . . . And if in addition to these almost innumerable and untoward events, which he ever bore with a cheerful and unconquered spirit, any man should undertake to describe his individual conflicts and personal successes, those courageous and single-handed combats, in which, by the favour of God, and his own great strength and courage, he would often penetrate into the thickest of the enemy, now becoming the assailant, and cutting down all who opposed him ; at another time acting on the defensive, and evincing equal talents in escaping from what seemed inevitable death ; if any writer shall do this, he will prove, if I am not mistaken, that he had no equal in his own time, either in knightly prowess, or in strength and vigour of body."—*Fordun a Hearne*, vol. v. p. 998.

shown some indications of his future greatness. Douglas immediately joined the little band who rode with Bruce, and thus commenced a friendship, which, after a series of as noble services as ever subject paid to sovereign, was not dissolved even by death ; for it was to this young knight, that in after years his dying master committed his heart to be carried to Jerusalem.¹

From Glasgow, Bruce rode to Scone, and there was solemnly crowned, on Friday, the 27th of March. Edward had carried off the ancient regalia of the kingdom, and the famous stone chair, in which, according to ancient custom, the Scottish kings were inaugurated. But the ready care of Wisheart, Bishop of Glasgow, supplied from his own wardrobe the robes in which Robert appeared at his coronation, and a slight coronet of gold,² probably borrowed by the Abbot of Scone from some of the saints or kings which adorned his abbey, was employed instead of the hereditary crown. A banner, wrought with the arms of Baliol, was delivered by the Bishop of Glasgow to the new king, and Robert received beneath it the homage of the earls and knights who attended the ceremony. On the second day after the

¹ Barbour, by Jamieson, vol. i. p. 27.

² Rymer, *Fœdera*, vol. ii. p. 1048. This coronella aurea came into the hands of Geoffrey de Coigners, who seems to have incurred the resentment of Edward the First, for concealing and preserving it. Langtoft, *Chronicle*, vol. ii. p. 331. Maitland has no authority for asserting, vol. i. p. 474, that the crown was made expressly for Robert's coronation, by Geoffrey de Coigners.

coronation, and before Bruce and his friends had left Scone, they were surprised by the sudden arrival of Isabella, Countess of Buchan, sister of the Earl of Fife, who immediately claimed the privilege of placing the King upon the fated stone, which carried with it the sovereignty. It was a right which had undoubtedly belonged to the earls of Fife from the days of Malcolm Canmore; and as the Earl of Fife was at this time of the English party, the countess, a romantic and high-spirited woman, absconding from her husband, joined Bruce at Scone, bringing with her the war-horses of her lord.¹ The new king was not in a condition to think lightly of any thing of this nature. To have refused Isabella's request, might give to his enemies some colour for alleging, that an essential part of ancient custom and solemnity had been omitted in his coronation. The English historians would have us believe that this enterprising woman was influenced by tenderer feelings than ambition or policy, but this is extremely doubtful. It is certain, that on the 29th of March, the king was a second time installed in the sacred chair by the hands of the countess,² who afterwards suffered severely for her alleged presumption.

Bruce next made a progress through various parts of Scotland, strengthening his party by the accession of new partisans, seizing some of the castles and towns which were in the possession of the English,

¹ Hemingford, vol. i. p. 220. Robertson's Index, p. 17. No. 41.

² Trivet, p. 342. See Notes and Illustrations, letter V.

committing to prison the sheriffs and officers of Edward,¹ and creating so great a panic, that many of the English fled precipitately from the country. His party, nevertheless, was exceeding small; the Comyns possessed the greatest power in Scotland, and they and their followers opposed him, not only from motives of policy, but with the deepest feelings of feudal enmity and revenge; while many earls and barons, who had suffered in the late wars, preferred the quiet of submission, to the repeated hazards of insurrection and revolt.

Edward had returned to Winchester, from a pleasure tour through the counties of Dorset and Hampshire, when he received the intelligence of the murder of Comyn, and the revolt of Bruce. Although not an aged man, he had reached the mature period of sixty-five; and a constant exposure to the fatigues of war, had begun to make an impression upon a constitution of great natural strength. He was become unwieldy, and so infirm that he could not mount on horseback or lead his armies; and after twenty years of ambitious intrigue, and almost uninterrupted war, now that he was in the decline of his strength and years, he found his Scottish conquests about to be wrested from him by a rival, in whom he had placed the greatest confidence. But although broken in body, this great king was in his mind and spirit yet vigorous and unimpaired, as was completely evinced by the rapidity and decision of his immediate orders,

¹ Rymer, Fœd. vol. ii. p. 988.

and the subsequent magnitude of his preparations. He instantly sent to strengthen the frontier garrisons of Berwick and Carlisle, with the intent of securing the English borders on that side from invasion; and he appointed the Earl of Pembroke, along with Lord Robert Clifford and Henry Percy, to march into Scotland with a small army, directing them to proceed against his rebels in that kingdom.¹ This was in an especial degree the age of chivalry, and Edward, who had himself gained his spurs in Palestine, availed himself of that imposing system to give greater spirit to his intended expedition. He published a manifesto, declaring his intention of bestowing knighthood upon his son, the Prince of Wales; and he caused it to be proclaimed all over England, that as many young esquires as had a right to claim knighthood, should appear at Westminster on the Feast of Pentecost, and receive that honour along with the son of their sovereign, after which they should accompany him in his Scottish war. On the day appointed, three hundred young gentlemen, the flower of the English youth, with a brilliant cortege of pages and attendants, crowded before the king's palace, which being too small for so great a concourse, orders were given to cut down the trees

¹ Rymer, *Fœd.* new edition, vol. i. part ii. p. 982. Math. Westmin. p. 454. Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, was appointed Guardian of Scotland, with full power to receive those to mercy who would come in and submit themselves, excepting those who had a hand in the murder of the Lord Comyn. This appears by a charter under the great seal, quoted by Tyrrel, vol. iii. p. 171.

in the orchard of the New Temple. In this ample space the novices pitched their pavilions, and the king, with a splendid munificence, distributed to them from his royal wardrobe, the scarlet cloth, fine linen, and embroidered belts, made use of on such occasions. Habited in these, they kept their vigil and watched their arms in the Chapel of the Temple, whilst the young prince performed the same ceremony in the abbey church at Westminster. On the morrow, the king with great pomp knighted his son in the palace; and the prince, after having received the belt and spurs, came to the abbey church to confer the same honour upon the young esquires who were there waiting for him, with an immense concourse of spectators. This crowd was the cause of giving additional solemnity to the spectacle, for the prince was obliged, from the press, to mount the steps of the high altar; and on this sacred spot, amid the assembled chivalry of England, he conferred the rank of knighthood upon his three hundred companions. The prince and his companions then proceeded to the banquet, at which two swans, ornamented with golden net-work, were brought in; and, upon their being placed on the table, the king rose and made a solemn vow to God and to the Swans, that he would set out for Scotland, and there avenge the death of John Comyn, and punish the treachery of the Scots.¹

¹ Lord Hailes, vol. ii. p. 4, subjoins to this vow of Edward's, an addition, which I can find neither in Math. Westminster, Walsingham, Trivet, Hemingford, or Langtoft. He says, that the king vowed that, having performed this duty, viz. the taking vengeance

After this strange and irreverent adjuration, he next addressed his son, and made him promise, that if he died before he took this journey, he should carry his body with the army into Scotland, and not commit it to the earth until he had obtained the victory over his enemies. After this the clergy and laity agreed to contribute a thirtieth, and the merchants a tenth, towards defraying the expenses of the war. The prince and the barons solemnly promised to perform these commands of their sovereign; and having agreed to meet at Carlisle fifteen days after Midsummer, they returned home, to make preparations for war.¹ The Earl of Pembroke, with Clifford and Henry Percy, soon hastened into Scotland, and the Prince of Wales, with his knights companions, followed in the rear of their army, whilst Edward himself, unable for violent fatigue, proceeded towards Carlisle by slow journeys. It was an ill commencement of the young prince's chivalry, that his excessive cruelty in ravaging the country, and sparing neither age nor sex, incurred the censure of his father the king, who was himself little wont to be scrupulous on these occasions.²

Bruce was unfortunate in the early part of his career; and his military talents, which afterwards con-

on Bruce, he would not for the future unsheath his sword against Christians, but would haste to Palestine, and wage war with the Saracens, and never return from that holy enterprise. I am at a loss to discover the authority for this addition.

¹ Math. Westmin. p. 455. Langtoft, p. 333.

² Ypodigma Neastriæ, p. 498.

ducted him through a course of unexampled victory, were nursed amid scenes of incessant hardship and defeat. After having ravaged Galloway¹ he marched towards Perth, at that time a town walled and strongly fortified, where the Earl of Pembroke lay, with a small army composed both of Scottish and English knights. Bruce, on arriving at Perth, and finding the earl shut up within the walls, sent a challenge, requesting him, in the courteous and chivalrous style of the age, to come out and try his fortune in an open field. Pembroke answered, that the day was too far spent, but that he would fight with him on the morrow; upon which the king retired, and encamped about a mile from Perth, in the wood of Methven. Towards evening, whilst the Scottish soldiers were busy cooking their supper,² and many were dispersed in foraging parties, a cry was heard that the enemy were upon them; and Pembroke, with his whole army, which outnumbered Bruce by fifteen hundred men, broke in upon the camp.³ The surprise was so complete, that it can only be accounted for by the belief, that the king had implicitly relied upon the knightly promise of the English Earl. He and his friends had scarcely time to arm themselves and display their banner. They made, however, a stout resistance, and at the first onset Bruce attacked the Earl of Pembroke, and slew his horse; but no efforts

¹ Chron. Lanercost, quoted in Tyrrel, vol. iii. p. 171.

² Chron. Abingdon, quoted in Tyrrel, vol. iii. p. 172.

³ Barbour, by Jamieson, p. 20.

of individual courage could restore order, or long delay defeat, and the battle of Methven was from the first nearly a rout. Bruce himself was thrice unhorsed, and once so nearly taken, that the captor, Sir Philip de Mowbray, called aloud that he had the new-made king, when Sir Christopher Seaton felled Mowbray to the earth, and gallantly rescued his master.¹ The king's brother, Edward Bruce, Bruce himself, the Earl of Athol, Sir James Douglas, Sir Gilbert de la Haye, Sir Nigel Campbell, and Sir William de Barondoun,² with about five hundred men, kept the field, and at last effected their retreat into the fastnesses of Athol; but some of his best and bravest friends fell into the hands of the enemy. Sir David de Berklay, Sir Hugh de la Haye, Sir Alexander Fraser, Sir John de Somerville, Sir David Inchmartin, and Thomas Randolph, then a young esquire, were all taken, along with Hugh, a chaplain.³ On being informed of the victory, Edward gave orders for the instant execution of the prisoners. The Earl of Pembroke, with more humanity, did not carry these orders into immediate execution. Randolph,

¹ Barbour, pp. 35, 36. Math. Westmin. p. 455, asserts that the king was thrice unhorsed, and thrice rescued by Sir Simon Fraser.

² This knight is a witness to a charter of Haig of Bemerside to the Abbey of Melrose, along with Thomas Rymer of Ercildoun and others. Chartulary of Melrose, Bib. Harl. 3960, f. 109, a.

³ Prynne's Edward I. p. 1123. Barbour, by Jamieson, p. 35. The battle, according to Hume's History of the House of Douglas, p. 44, was fought on the 19th June. A ballad in MS, Harleian, No. 2253, f. 60, a, says, that the battle was fought before St Bartholomew's mass, *i. e.* 24th August.

on being pardoned, deserted his uncle ; others were ransomed ; but the chaplain, with other knights who had been taken, were hanged and quartered.¹

Bruce and his friends now began to feel the miseries of outlaws. A high price was set on his head ; he was compelled to harbour in the hills, deprived of the common comforts of life. He and his followers presented a ragged and wretched appearance. Their shoes were worn off their feet by constant toil in a mountainous country ; and hunting, in better days a free and joyous pastime, became a necessitous occupation. Want and distress at length drove him and his little band into the low country ; and at Aberdeen, his brother, Sir Nigel Bruce, met him with his queen and many other ladies, determined to share the pains of war and banishment with their husbands and their fathers.² Here, after enjoying a little solace and respite, a report was brought of the near advance of the English ; and the king and his friends, accompanied by their faithful women, retreated into Breadalbane.³ And now, if already they had experienced privation and distress, it was, we may believe, greatly aggravated by the presence of those whose constitutions were little able to struggle against cold,

¹ Barbour, p. 37. Prynne, Edward I. p. 1123.

² Edward, on being informed of this trait of female heroism, is said by Fordun to have published a proclamation, proscribing all those women who continued to follow their husbands. Ker, in his *History of Bruce*, vol. i. p. 226, seems to have mistaken the meaning of Fordun, misled by his monkish Latin.

³ Barbour, p. 41.

hunger, and weariness ; and whose love, as it was of that sterling kind which was ready to share in every privation, only made the hearts of their husbands and fathers more keenly alive to their sufferings. The roots and berries of the earth, the venison caught in the chase, the fish which abounded in the mountain rivers, supplied them with food—the warm skins of deer and roe with bedding—and all laboured to promote their comfort, but none with such success as the brave and gallant Sir James Douglas. This young soldier, after the imprisonment and death of his father, had been educated in all knightly qualities at the polished court of France ;¹ and whilst his indefatigable perseverance in the chase afforded them innumerable comforts, his sprightly temper and constant gaiety comforted the king and amused his forlorn companions.² They had now reached the head of Tay, and deeper distresses seemed gathering round them, for the season was fast approaching when it was impossible for women to exist in that remote and wild region ; and they were now on the borders of the Lord of Lorn's country, a determined enemy of Bruce, who had married the aunt of the murdered Comyn.³ Lorn immediately collected a thousand men, and, with the Barons of Argyle, besetting the passes, hemmed in the king, and attacked him in a narrow defile, where Bruce and his small band of knights could not manage their horses. The Highlanders were on foot, and, armed with that dreadful weapon, the Lochaber axe, did

¹ Hume's Hist. of House, p. 37.

² Barbour, vol. i. p. 40.

³ Barbour, p. 41.

great execution. Sir James Douglas, with Gilbert de la Haye, were both wounded, and many of the horses severely cut and gashed, so that the king, dreading the total destruction of his little band, managed to get them together, and having placed himself in the rear, between them and the men of Lorn, commenced his retreat, halting at intervals, and driving back the enemy, when they pressed too hard upon them. It was in one of these skirmishes that Bruce, who, in the use of his weapons, was esteemed inferior to no knight of his time, with his own hand killed three soldiers, who all attacked him at the same time, and at a disadvantage,¹—a feat which is said to have extorted even from his enemies the praise of superior chivalry. Having thus again escaped, a council was held, and it was resolved that the queen and the ladies should be conducted to the strong castle of Kildrummie, in Marre, under an escort, commanded by young Sir Nigel Bruce, the king's brother, and John, Earl of Athol. The king, with only two hundred men, and beset upon all sides by his enemies, was left to make his way through Lennox to Kentire, a district which, from the influence of Sir Niel Campbell, who was then with him, he expected would be somewhat more friendly. He now gave up all the horses to those who were to escort the women, and having determined to pursue his way on foot, took a me-

¹ Barbour, p. 44. Lord Hailes, who in other places quotes Barbour as an unquestionable historical authority, says, he dare not venture to place this event in the text. Did it appear impossible to the historian, that a knight of great bodily strength and courage should, with his single hand, dispatch three half-naked ketherans?

lancholy farewell of his queen and her ladies.¹ It was the last time he ever saw his brother, who soon after was taken, and fell a victim to the implacable revenge of Edward. Bruce, meanwhile, pressed on through Perthshire to Loch Lomond. On the banks of this lake his progress was suddenly arrested. To have travelled round it, would have been accomplished at great risk, when every hour, which could convey him beyond the pursuit of his enemies, was of value. After some time, they succeeded in discovering a little boat, which, from its crazy and leaky state, could hold but three persons, and that not without great risk of sinking. In it, the king, Sir James Douglas, and another, who rowed them, first passed over. They then dispatched it in return for the rest, so that the whole band at length succeeded in reaching the other side. Amid these complicated dangers and distresses, the spirit of the king wonderfully supported his followers. His memory was stored with the tales of romance, so popular in that chivalrous age, and in recounting the sufferings of their fabled heroes, he is said to have diverted the minds of his followers from brooding too deeply on their own. They began now to feel the misery of hunger, and in traversing the woods in search of food, they encountered the Earl of Lennox, who, since the unfortunate defeat at Methven, had heard nothing of the fate of his sovereign. Lennox fell on his master's neck, and the king embracing him, they wept together. But even this natural burst of grief proved dangerous, by occupying too much time,

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 51.

for the avengers of blood were in their track, and every thing depended on the king's gaining the coast, where he expected to meet Sir Niel Campbell whom he had sent in advance. This he fortunately accomplished ; and Campbell, with a few boats, which he had collected, conveyed Bruce and his followers to the coast of Kentire, where they were hospitably received by Angus of Isla, Lord of Kentire. From thence, deeming himself still insecure, he passed over with three hundred in his company, to the little island of Racherin, situated on the northern coast of Ireland, amid whose rude but friendly inhabitants he buried himself from the pursuit of his enemies.¹

Edward, on hearing of the escape of Bruce, proceeded with his usual severity against his enemies. He issued, from Lanercost, where he then lay, on his road to Scotland, an ordinance, by which all who were guilty of the death of John Comyn, were sentenced to be drawn and hanged ; and he decreed, that the same extremity of punishment should be inflicted on all those who either advised or assented, or who, after the fact, knowingly received them. It was added, that all who were at any time in arms against the king, either before or since the battle of Methven, as well as all who were willingly of the party of Robert Bruce, or who persuaded, and in any way assisted, the people in rising contrary to law, were, on conviction, to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure ; and it was peremptorily commanded, that the people of the country should levy hue and cry against

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 563.

all who had been in arms against England, and under the penalty of imprisonment, and loss of their estates and castles, apprehend every such offender dead or alive. Finally, as to the common people of Scotland, who, contrary to their inclination, might by their lords have been compelled to rise in arms, the guardian was permitted to fine and ransom them according to their offences.¹

These orders were rigorously carried into execution, and the terror of the king's vengeance induced some of the Scottish barons to act with great meanness. Bruce's queen,² and his daughter Marjory, thinking themselves insecure in the castle of Kildrummie, which was threatened by the English army, had taken refuge in the sanctuary of St Duthac, at Tain, in Ross-shire, and were treacherously given up to the English by the Earl of Ross, who violated the sanctuary, and made them, and the knights who escorted them, prisoners. The knights were immediately put to death, and the queen, with her daughter, committed to close confinement in England,³ where, in different prisons and castles, they endured an eight years' captivity. A more severe fate awaited the Countess of Buchan, who had dared to place the king upon the throne, and who was soon after taken. In one of the outer

¹ Tyrrel, *Hist. of England*, vol. iii. p. 174, and Rymer, *Fœd.* vol. i. part ii. p. 995, new edit.

² A daughter of the Earl of Ulster.

³ *Fœdera*, vol. ii. pp. 1013, 1014. Barbour's *Bruce*, vol. i. p. 66. Major, p. 181, erroneously says the queen was delivered up by William Comyn. In Rymer, *Fœdera*, vol. i. part ii. new edit. p. 767, we find William, Earl of Ross.

turrets of the castle of Berwick, was constructed a cage, latticed and cross-barred with wood, and secured with iron, in which this unfortunate lady was immured. No person was permitted to speak with her except the woman who brought her food, and it was carefully stipulated that these should be of English extraction. Confined in this rigorous manner, and yet subjected to the gaze of every passer by, she remained for four years shut up in her turreted cage upon the top of the walls of Berwick, till she was released from her misery, and subjected to a milder imprisonment¹ in the monastery of Mount Carmel, in Berwick. Mary and Christina, both sisters to the Scottish king, were soon after made prisoners. Mary was confined in a cage similar to that of the Countess of Buchan, built for her in one of the turrets of Roxburgh castle,² and Christina was delivered to Henry Percy, who shut her up in a convent.

Immediately after the battle of Methven, the troops of the Earl of Pembroke, in scouring the country, took prisoners, Lamberton, Bishop of St Andrews, and the Abbot of Scone, who were found clad in armour, and conveyed them in fetters to England.³ Soon after this, Robert Wisheart, Bishop of Glasgow, who had shut himself up in the castle of Cupar in Fife,

¹ Fœder. vol. ii. p. 401. Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. p. 85. Trivet, p. 342. Math. West, p. 455. Rotuli Scotiæ, iii. Ed. II. m. ii. dorso. Notes and Illustrations, letter W.

² Fœdera, vol. ii. p. 1014. She was confined in the cage till 1310, when she was exchanged for nine English prisoners of note in the hands of the Scots. Rot. Scotiæ, 3 Edw. II. m. ii. dorso.

³ Math. Westminster, p. 455.

was there taken prisoner, and sent fettered and in his mail-coat to the Castle of Nottingham.¹ These clerical champions were saved from the gallows solely by their sacred function. They had strenuously supported Bruce by their great influence, as well as by their money and their armed vassals; and Edward, after commanding them to be imprisoned in irons within different castles, wrote to the Pope, requesting that, in consequence of their treason against him, William Comyn, brother to the Earl of Buchan, and Geoffrey de Moubray, should be appointed to the vacant sees of St Andrews and Glasgow,—a proposal with which his holiness does not appear to have complied.²

Edward's next victim excited deeper commiseration. Bruce's youthful brother, Nigel, had shut himself up in the castle of Kildrummie, and there defied the English army, commanded by the Earls of Lancaster and Hereford. After a brave defence, the treachery of one of the garrison, who was in the English interest, in setting fire to the magazine of corn, and destroying their supplies, compelled them to surrender. The beautiful person and engaging manners of Nigel Bruce,³ rendered his untimely fate a subject of horror and indignation to the Scots, and excited sen-

¹ Rymer, Fœd. vol. i. part ii. new edit. p. 996.

² Prynne, Edw. I. p. 1156. The Bishop of St Andrews was confined in the Castle of Winchester, the Bishop of Glasgow in the Castle of Porchester. Rymer, Fœd. p. 996, *ut supra*.

³ Math. Westminster designates him, "miles pulcherrimæ juventutis."

timents of remorse and pity in every bosom but that of Edward. He was sent in irons to Berwick, there condemned by a special commission, hanged, and afterwards beheaded.¹ Along with him divers other knights and soldiers suffered the same fate.²

Christopher de Seton, who had married a sister of Bruce, and had rendered essential service to the king, took refuge in his own castle of Loch Don, in Ayrshire, which is said to have been pusillanimously given up to the English by Sir Gilbert de Carric.³ Seton, who was a great favourite with the people, was especially obnoxious to Edward, as he had been personally present at the death of Comyn. He was immediately hurried in fetters to Dumfries, and condemned and hanged as a traitor. So dear to King Robert was the memory of this faithful friend and fellow warrior, that he afterwards erected on the spot where he was executed a little chapel, where mass was said for his soul.⁴ Sir Christopher's brother, John de Seton, was taken about the same time, and put to death at Newcastle.

The Earl of Athol, who was allied to the King of England, had been present at the coronation of Bruce, and had fought for him at the battle of Methven. In attempting to escape beyond seas, he was

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 70. Math. Westminster, p. 455.

² Leland, Coll. vol. i. part ii. p. 542.

³ Robertson's Index, p. 135, 8. Notes and Illustrations, letter X.

⁴ Stat. Account, vol. v. pp. 141, 142. Leland, Coll. vol. i. part ii. p. 543, is in an error in describing Seton as taken prisoner in Kildrummie Castle.

driven back by a tempest, and fell into the hands of the enemy. Edward, on hearing of his being taken, although he lay grievously sick, expressed great exultation, and, while some interceded for Athol, on account of the royal blood which flowed in his veins, swore, that his only distinction should be a higher gallows than his fellow traitors. Nor was this an empty threat. He was carried to London, tried and condemned in Westminster Hall, and hanged upon a gallows fifty feet high. He was cut down half dead, his bowels were taken out and burnt before his face, and at last he was beheaded, his head being afterwards placed, amongst those of other Scottish patriots, upon London bridge.¹

Sir Simon Fraser was still free ; and the other Scottish knights and nobles who had fallen into the hands of Edward, are said to have boasted, that it would require all the efforts of the king to apprehend him. Fraser was a veteran soldier ; his life had been spent in war both at home and on the continent, and he enjoyed a very high reputation. With a small force which he had collected, he made a last effort for the national liberty at Kirkencliff, near Stirling, but was entirely routed, and forced to surrender himself prisoner to Sir Thomas de Multon. Many knights and squires were taken along with him, whilst others fell on the field, or were drowned in the river.² This

¹ Math. Westminster, p. 456.

² The old contemporary ballad, printed from the Harleian MS. by Pinkerton, in his Maitland Poems, vol. ii. p. 488, says, that Fraser, at the battle of Kirkencliff, beside Stirling, surrendered to Sir Thomas de Multon and to Sir John Jose.

renowned warrior was especially obnoxious to Edward, on account of the great popularity he enjoyed in Scotland, as the last friend and follower of Wallace, and the severity, and studied indignity, with which he was treated, remind us of the trial and execution of that heroic person. He was carried to London heavily ironed, with his legs tied under his horse's belly, and, as he passed through the city, a garland of periwinkle was in mockery placed upon his head. He was then lodged in the Tower, along with his squire, Thomas de Boys, and Sir Herbert de Morham, a Scottish knight of French extraction, whose courage and manly deportment are commemorated in a contemporary English ballad. Fraser was tried and condemned, after which he suffered the death of a traitor, with all its circumstances of refined cruelty. He was hanged, cut down when still living, and beheaded; his bowels were then torn out and burnt, and his head fixed beside that of Wallace upon London bridge.¹ The trunk was hung in chains, and strictly guarded, lest his friends should remove it. Herbert de Morham, who had been imprisoned and forfeited in 1297, and liberated under the promise of serving Edward in his Flemish war,² next suffered death,

¹ Math. Westminster, p. 456.

² Lord Hailes, p. 15, following Math. Westminster, calls him Herebert de Norham, but the contemporary poem above quoted gives his name Herbert de Morham, which is corroborated by Rymmer, *Fœdera*, vol. i. part ii. p. 869. Norham, moreover, is not in Scotland, but Morham is in Haddingtonshire. Math. Westminster says he was "*Vir cunctis Scotie formosior et statura eminentior.*" Morham parish is the smallest in Haddingtonshire, and belonged,

and with him his squire Thomas Boys. To these victims of Edward's resentment we may add the names of Sir David Inchmartin, Sir John de Somerville, Sir Walter Logan, and many others of inferior note. After the disgusting details of these executions, the reader will be disposed to smile at the remark of a late acute historian, that the execution of the Scottish prisoners is insufficient to load Edward's memory with the charge of cruelty.¹ To complete the ruin of Bruce, it only remained to dispose of his great estates, and to excommunicate him, as guilty of murder and sacrilege. His lordship of Annandale was bestowed on the Earl of Hereford, his maternal estate of Carric given to Henry Percy, and the Lord Robert Clifford, with others of Edward's nobles, shared the rich English estates, which had long been hereditary in this powerful family.²

In the end of February, the Cardinal St Sabinus, the legate of the Pope in England, with great pomp repaired to Carlisle, in which city Edward then kept his head-quarters, and with all those circumstances of terror which such a sentence involved, Robert Bruce and his adherents were excommunicated by book, bell, and candle.³

under William the Lyon, to a family named Malherbe, who afterwards assumed the name of Morham. *Caledonia*, vol. ii. p. 537. The ancient fortalice of Morham stood on an eminence near the church, but no vestiges remain. *Stat. Account*, vol. ii. p. 334.

¹ See Notes and Illustrations, letter Y. Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 236.

² Hemingford, p. 224.

³ *Ibid.* p. 236.

Meanwhile, out of the reach of the papal thunder, and ignorant of the miserable fate of his friends; Bruce, during the winter, remained in the little isle of Rachrin. On the approach of spring, having received some assistance from Christina of the Isles, he began to meditate a descent upon Scotland, and first dispatched Sir James Douglas and Sir Robert Boid on an adventure to the island of Arran. Douglas found the island occupied by Sir John Hastings, an English knight, who held the castle of Brodick with a strong garrison; and having laid an ambuscade, he had the good fortune to surprise the under-warden of the castle, and, after killing forty of his soldiers, to make himself master of a valuable cargo of provisions, arms, and clothing. This proved a very seasonable supply to the king, who soon after arrived from Rachrin with a small fleet of thirty-three galleys, and in his company about three hundred men.

Ignorant of the situation of the enemy, Bruce first dispatched a trusty messenger from Arran into his own country of Carric, with instructions, if he found the people well affected, to light a fire, at a day appointed, upon an eminence near Turnberry castle. When the day arrived, Bruce, who watched in extreme anxiety for the signal, about noon perceived a light in the expected direction, and instantly embarked, steering, as night came on, by the light of the friendly beacon.¹ Meanwhile, his messenger had also seen the fire, and dreading that Bruce might embark, has-

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 83.

tened to the beach, where, on meeting his friends, he informed them that Lord Percy, with a strong garrison, held the castle of Turnberry, that parties of the enemy were quartered in the town, and there was no hope of success. "Traitor," said Bruce, "why did you light the fire?"—"I lighted no fire," he replied; "but observing it at nightfall, I dreaded you might embark, and hastened to meet you." Placed in this dilemma, Bruce questioned his friends what were best to be done; and his brother, Sir Edward, declared loudly, that he would follow up his adventure, and that no power or peril should induce him to reembark. This Edward said in the true spirit of a knight-errant; but Bruce, who was playing a game of which the stake was a kingdom, might be allowed to hesitate. His naturally fearless and sanguine temper, however, got the better, and, dismissing caution, he determined to remain, and, as it was still night, to attack the English quarters. The plan succeeded. The enemy, cantoned in careless security, in the houses and hamlets round the Castle of Turnberry, were easily surprised and put to the sword; while Percy, hearing the tumult, but ignorant of the small number of the Scotch, did not dare to attempt a rescue, but shutting himself up in the Castle, left a rich booty to the assailants, amongst which were his war-horses and his household plate.¹

There was a romantic interest about Bruce's fate and fortunes, which had a powerful effect upon the female mind, and the hero himself seems to have been

¹ Hemingford, vol. i. p. 225.

willing to avail himself of this influence.¹ He had already received assistance from the Countess of Buchan and Christina of the Isles, and now, on hearing of his success in Carric, he was joined by a lady, nearly related to him, but whose name has been lost. She brought him, however, a seasonable supply of money and provisions, and a reinforcement of forty men. From her, too, he first learnt the miserable fate of Seton, Athol, and the garrison of Kildrummie; and, during the recital, is said to have vowed deeply that their deaths should not go unrevenged. Bruce's success seems to have spread a panic among the English; for although Ayr castle was in the hands of Edward, neither its garrison, nor that of Turnberry, under Percy, dared to make head against him. At length, Sir Roger St John marched from Northumberland with a body of a thousand men; covered by this force, Henry Percy, with the remains of his garrison, evacuated Turnberry, and hurried into England;² whilst Bruce, unable to oppose St John, retired into the mountainous parts of Carric. Here the adventurous spirit of James Douglas could not long remain inactive. He knew that Lord Clifford, on whom Edward had bestowed his ancient hereditary domain, held his own castle of Douglas with a strong garrison; and having obtained the king's permission, he travelled in disguise into Douglasdale, and, after carefully observing the strength and position of the enemy, cautiously discovered himself to Dickson, a faithful servant, in whose house he lay

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 105, line 541. ² Ibid. vol. i. p. 95. Trivet, p. 344.

concealed. Here, night after night, did his principal vassals assemble, rejoiced to find the son of their old lord amongst them, and thus, unknown to the English, a little band of determined foes was nursed amongst them, who watched every step they took, and were ready to attack them the very first moment of careless security. This soon presented itself. The garrison, on Palm Sunday, marched out to the neighbouring church of St Bride, leaving the castle undefended. Some of Douglas's followers, with concealed arms, entered the church along with them, and in a moment when they least suspected, the English heard the cry of "Douglas!" and found themselves attacked both from without and within. After a stout resistance, and much bloodshed, the church was won and many prisoners taken. Having thus cut off the garrison, Douglas first plundered the castle of the arms and valuables which could be carried off. This done, he raised a huge pile of the malt and corn which he found in the stores, staved the casks of wine and other liquors, and threw them on the heap, after which he slew his prisoners, and cast their dead bodies on the pile. He then set fire to this savage hecatomb, and consumed it and the halls of his fathers in the blaze.¹ This cruel transaction, which is said to have

¹ Hume's *House of Douglas and Angus*, vol. i. pp. 50, 51. Barbour, vol. i. p. 96. Lord Hailes, vol. ii. p. 20, makes Barbour say, that "about ten persons were made prisoners in the chapel, whom Douglas put to death." This is an error. Barbour does not specify the number of the prisoners. I fear many more than ten persons were slain in the Douglas' Larder.

been intended as a sacrifice to the manes of his faithful vassal, Dickson, who was slain in the church, is still remembered in the tradition of the country by the name of the Douglas' Larder.

This success, however, was more than balanced by a grievous disaster which about this time befell Bruce. He had dispatched his brothers, Thomas and Alexander, into Ireland, where they had the good fortune to collect a force of seven hundred men, with which they crossed over to Loch Ryan in Galloway. But their approach to the coast had been watched by Macdowall, a powerful chieftain of that country, who was in the English interest, and as they attempted to make good a landing, he attacked, and completely routed their little army. Many perished in the sea, and the rest were either slain or taken prisoners. Of the prisoners, those of note were Bruce's brothers, Thomas and Alexander, with Sir Reginald Crawford, who were all grievously wounded. Malcolm Mackail, Lord of Kentire, along with two Irish reguli or chiefs, were found amongst the slain. Macdowall with savage exultation cut off their heads, and presented them, and his illustrious prisoners, bleeding and almost dead, to the king at Carlisle.¹ Edward commanded the two Bruces and Crawford to be instantly executed. Thus, within

¹ Math. Westminster, p. 457. Hemingford, p. 225. Langtoft, with less probability, asserts, that Macdowall surprised the two Bruces and their soldiers, on Ash Wednesday, when returning from church, vol. ii. p. 337. The Macdowalls were anciently the most powerful family in Galloway. In Dugdale's Monasticon, vol. ii. p. 1057, we find Roland Macdowall, in 1190, styled "Princeps Gallovidiæ."

a few short months, had Bruce to lament the cruel death of three brothers, that of his dear friends, Seton, Athol, and Fraser ; besides the imprisonment of his queen and his daughter.

Deprived of this reinforcement, the king began to be in great difficulties. The English hotly pursued him, and even had the meanness to lay plots for his assassination, whilst the men of Galloway endeavoured to hunt him down with bloodhounds.¹ On one of these occasions, when only sixty men were in his company, he made a narrow escape. It was near nightfall, when his scouts informed him that two hundred men were on the way to attack them. The king instantly crossed a mountain river hard by, of which the banks were steep and wooded, and drew up his little army in a swampy level about two bowshots off. He then commanded them to lie still, while he and Sir Gilbert de la Haye went forward to reconnoitre. The ground was well fitted for defence. A steep path led up from the brink of the river to the summit of the bank, and Bruce took his stand at the gorge, where it was so narrow that the superior numbers of the enemy gave them little advantage. Here he listened for some time, till at length the baying of a hound told him of the approach of the Galwegians, and by the light of the moon he could see their band crossing the river, and pressing up the path. Bruce instantly dispatched De la Haye to rouse and bring up his men, whilst he remained alone to defend the pass. The fierce mountaineers were soon upon him,

¹ Barbour, vol. i. pp. 108, 111, 122.

but, although mounted and armed after their own fashion, they stood little chance against the king, clothed in steel, and having the advantage of the ground. One only could attack him at a time; and as he pressed boldly, but blindly forward, he was transfix'd in a moment by Bruce's spear, and his horse borne down to the earth. The animal was instantly stabbed by Bruce, and blocked up the path in such a way that the next soldier must charge over his body. He, too, with many of his companions, successively, but vainly, endeavoured to carry the pass. They were met by the dreadful sword of the king, which swept round on every side. Numbers now fell, and formed a ghastly barrier around him; so that, on the approach of his men, the Galwegians drew off, and gave up the pursuit. When the soldiers came up, they found the king wearied, but unwounded, and sitting on a bank, where he had cast off his helmet to wipe his brow, and cool himself in the night air. In this manner, partly by his own valour, and partly from the private information which he received from those kindly disposed to him, he escaped the various toils with which he was beset; and as he still counted amongst his party some of the bravest and most adventurous soldiers in Scotland, it often happened, that when his fortunes seem'd sinking to the lowest ebb, some auspicious adventure occurred, which re-animat'd the hopes of the party, and encouraged them to persevere. The castle of Douglas had been rebuilt by the English. It was again attacked by its terrible master, the "Good Sir James;"

and although he failed in getting it into his hands, its captain was slain, and a great part of its garrison put to the sword ;¹ after which, having heard that the Earl of Pembroke, with a large force, was marching against the king, who still lay in the mountainous parts of Carric, Douglas joined his sovereign, and awaited their advance. Bruce had now been well trained, and his soldiers familiarly acquainted with this partisan kind of warfare ; and it was his custom, when keenly pursued, to make his soldiers disperse in small companies, first appointing a place of rendezvous, where they should re-assemble when the danger was over. Trusting to this plan, and to his own personal courage and skill, he did not hesitate with only four hundred men to await the attack of Pembroke's army, which had been reinforced by John of Lorn with eight hundred Highlanders, familiar with war in a mountainous country, and well calculated to pursue Bruce into the moors and morasses which had so often protected him from his enemies. Lorn is, moreover, reported to have taken along with him a large bloodhound, which had once belonged to the king, and whose instinctive attachment was thus meanly employed against its old master.² The Highland chief contrived so successfully to conceal his men, that Bruce, whose attention was fixed chiefly on Pembroke's force, found his position unexpectedly attacked by Lorn in the rear, and by the English, with whom was his own nephew Randolph, in the front. His brother Edward Bruce, and Sir James Douglas, were

¹ Barbour, p. 122.

² Ibid. p. 125.

now with him; and after making head for a short time, they divided their little force into three companies, and dispersed amongst the mountains. He trusted that he might thus have a fairer chance of escape; but the bloodhound instantly fell upon the track of the king, and the treacherous Lorn with his mountaineers had almost run him down, when the animal was transfixed by an arrow from one of the fugitives, and Bruce with great difficulty escaped.¹ In this pursuit, it is said, that with his own hand he slew five of the enemy; which, as the men of Lorn were probably half-naked and ill-armed mountaineers, who had to measure weapons with a knight in complete steel and of uncommon personal strength, is in no respect unlikely to be true. Bruce, however, had the misfortune to lose his banner, which was taken by Randolph, then fighting in the ranks of the English.² It was an age of chivalrous adventure; the circumstances in which the king was placed, when related even in the simplest manner, partake strongly of a deep and romantic interest; and, renouncing every thing in the narrative of his almost contemporary biographer, which looks like poetical embellishment, the historian must be careful to omit no event which is consistent with the testimony of authentic writers, with the acknowledged personal prowess of the king, and the character of the times in which he lived.

Not long after this adventure, Bruce attacked and put to the sword a party of two hundred English soldiers, carelessly cantoned at a small distance from the

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 131.

² Ibid. pp. 129, 132.

main army; and the Earl of Pembroke, after an unsuccessful skirmish in Glentruel, where the wooded and marshy nature of the country incapacitated his cavalry from acting with effect, became disgusted with his ill success, and retreated to Carlisle.¹ The king instantly came down upon the plains of Ayrshire,—made himself master of the strengths of the country,—and reduced the whole of Kyle, Carric, and Cunningham, to his obedience; while Sir James Douglas, ever on the alert, attacked and discomfited Sir Philip Mowbray, who, with a thousand men, was marching from Bothwell into Kyle, and with difficulty escaped to the castle of Innerkip, then held by an English garrison. By these fortunate events, the followers of Bruce were inspired with that happy confidence in his skill and courage, which, even in the very different warfare of our own days, is one principal cause of success; and he soon found his little army reinforced by such numbers, that he determined, on the first opportunity, to try his strength against the English in an open field.

Nor was this opportunity long of presenting itself. The Earl of Pembroke, in the beginning of May, and soon after the defeat of Mowbray, advanced, with a body of heavy-armed horse, into Ayrshire, and came up with Bruce at Loudon Hill. It is said, that, in the spirit of the times, Pembroke challenged the Scottish king to give him battle; and that, having sent word that he intended to march by Loudon Hill, Bruce, who was then with his little army at Galston,

¹ Barbour, p. 148.

conceiving the ground to be as favourable as could be chosen, agreed to meet him at Loudon Hill, on the 10th of May.¹ The road, at that part of Loudon Hill where the king determined to wait the advance of the English, led through a piece of dry level ground about five hundred yards in breadth, and which was bounded on both sides by extensive and deep morasses; but, deeming that this open space would give the English cavalry too much room to act, he took the precaution to secure his flanks by three parallel lines of deep trenches, which he drew on either hand from the morasses to the road, leaving an interval sufficient for the movements of a deep battalion of six hundred spearmen, the whole available force which Bruce could then bring into the field. A rabble of ill-armed countrymen and camp-followers were stationed, with his baggage, in the rear.² Early in the morning, the king, who was on the watch, descried the advance of Pembroke, whose force he knew amounted to three thousand cavalry. Their appearance, with the sun gleaming upon the coat armour of the knights, the steel harness of the horses, and the pennons and banners, of various colours, waving above the wood of spears, was splendid and imposing,

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 153. Major, with more probability, I think, calls him John Moubray. In Rymer, we meet with a John, but not with a Philip Moubray, amongst Edward's barons.—Rymer, vol. i. p. 2, new edition, p. 966.

² The account of this battle is taken entirely from Barbour, vol. i. p. 155. The English historians all allow that Pembroke was beaten, but give no particulars.

contrasted with Bruce's small battalion.¹ Yet, confident in the strength of his position, he calmly awaited their attack. The result entirely justified his expectations, and proved how dreadful a weapon the long Scottish spear might be made, when skilfully directed and used against cavalry. Pembroke had divided his force into two lines ; and, by his orders, the first line put their spears in rest, and charged the battalion of the Scots at full gallop. But they made no impression. The Scottish soldiers stood perfectly firm—many of the English were unhorsed and slain—and, in a very short time, the first division, thrown into disorder, fell back upon the second, which in its turn, as the Scots steadily advanced with their extended spears, began to waver, to break, and at last to fly. Bruce was not slow to follow up his advantage, and completely dispersed the enemy, but without much slaughter or many prisoners, the Scots having no force in cavalry. The victory, however, had the best effect. Pembroke retired to the castle of Ayr. Bruce's army acquired additional confidence ; its ranks were every day recruited ; and, awaking from their foolish dreams of confidence and superiority, the English began to feel and to dread the great military talents which the king had acquired during the constant perils to which he had been exposed. Only three days after the dispersion of Pembroke's army, he attacked, and with great slaughter defeated, Ralph Monthermer, Earl of Gloucester, another of Edward's captains, whom he so hotly pursued, that

¹ Barbour, vol. i. p. 157.

he compelled him to shut himself up, along with Pembroke, in the castle of Ayr, to which he immediately laid siege.¹ These repeated successes of Bruce greatly incensed Edward ; and, although debilitated by illness, he summoned his whole military vassals to meet him at Carlisle, three weeks after the Feast of John the Baptist, and determined to march in person against his enemies. Persuading himself, that the virulence of the disease, under which he laboured, was abated, he offered up the litter, in which hitherto he had been carried, in the Cathedral at Carlisle, and mounting on horseback, proceeded with his army towards Scotland. But his strength soon failed him ; in four days he proceeded only six miles ; and, after reaching the small village of Burgh-upon-Sands, he expired on the 7th of July, 1307,² leaving the mighty projects of his ambition, and the uneasy task of opposing Bruce, to a successor whose character was in every way the opposite of his father's. The last request of the dying monarch was, that his heart should be conveyed to Jerusalem, and that his body, after having been reduced to a skeleton, by a process, which, if we may credit Froissart, the king himself described,³

¹ Leland, Collect., vol. ii. p. 543. Math. Westminster, p. 458. Trivet, p. 346. Hemingford, vol. i. p. 237.

² Rymer, Fœdera, p. 1018, vol. i. part ii. new edit. Prynne's Edward I., p. 1202.

³ Froissart, vol. i. c. 27. When dying, he made his eldest son be called, and caused him, in the presence of his barons, and invoking all the saints, to swear that, as soon as he was dead, he would boil his body in a cauldron, till the flesh was separated from the bones, after which, he should bury the flesh, but keep the bones, and as often

should be carried along with the army into Scotland, and remain unburied till that devoted country was entirely subdued.

Edward the Second, who succeeded to the crown of England in his twenty-fourth year, was little calculated to carry into effect the mighty designs of his predecessor. His character was weak, irresolute, and headstrong; and the first steps which he took, as king, evinced a total want of respect for the dying injunctions of his father. He committed his body to the royal sepulchre at Westminster,—he recalled from banishment Piers Gaveston, his profligate favourite; and, after receiving at Roxburgh the homage of some of the Scottish barons in the interest of England, he pushed forward as far as Cumnock, on the borders of Ayrshire—appointed the Earl of Pembroke guardian of Scotland—and, without striking a blow, speedily retreated into his own dominions.¹

Upon the retreat of the English, the king, and his army, as the Scots rose in rebellion against him, he should assemble his army, and carry with him the bones of his father.

¹ Hemingford, p. 238, vol. i. Tyrrel, vol. iii. p. 224. On Edward's coming to Carlisle, he was met by Patrick, Earl of Dunbar, who swore homage to him. Tyrrel is in a mistake, in saying he quitted King Robert's interest. He had never joined it. Hemingford erroneously states that Edward only advanced to Roxburgh, and then returned. After the death of Edward the First, we unfortunately lose the valuable and often characteristic historian, Peter Langtoft, as translated by Robert de Brunne, one of Hearne's valuable publications. Edward the Second was, on 6th August, at Dumfries; on 28th August, at Cumnock; on 30th, same month, at Tinwald and Dalgarnock. On his return south, on 4th September, at Carlisle; on 6th, at Bowes in Yorkshire.