

BATTLE OF LIFF. •

A.D. 730.

IN the east part of the parish of Liff. in the immediate neighbourhood of Dundee, there is a place called *Pitalpie*, or the *Pit of Alpin*, from its being the scene of a memorable engagement between the Picts and Scots, in which the latter were routed, and Alpin their king slain. On the top of a hill east of Pitalpie there is still to be seen a large stone called the *King's Cross*, in the centre of which is a hole about a foot deep, and as the Scots were encamp'd at no great distance from the Tay, their King probably fixed his standard in this stone. In the neighbourhood there is another eminence on which were discovered eight or ten graves constructed of flag-stones, and the head of each grave was due west.

There is considerable obscurity respecting the precise period when this battle was fought and the principal leader. The date above assigned is that of the learned author of *Caledonia*, who maintains that the Alpin here mentioned

• Chalmers' *Caledonia*; Buchanar's *History*.

is a different person from Alpin the father of Kenneth II. The subject is so obscure that it is almost hopeless to attempt its elucidation, and it is not of sufficient interest to waste time in the inquiry. The fact of a battle having been fought near Dundee between the Scots under Alpin, and the Picts, under a leader who is designated Brudus, in the place of their King, who was slain by a rustic, is unquestionable. The Picts, who had been repeatedly defeated, now resolved to make one grand struggle against the Scots, and having pressed into the service every man among themselves capable of bearing arms, they marched against their enemies, who were encamped not far from Dundee. No sooner had the hostile forces come in sight of each other than the battle commenced, and was characterized by all that ferocity excited by mutual hatred. The struggle continued long doubtful, but at length victory declared for the Picts. Their general ordered a chosen body of cavalry to rise from an ambush, who, in order that they might appear more numerous, placed the camp attendants upon the baggage horses in array on the neighbouring hills, and there moved as if they intended to wheel round to attack the Scots in the rear. The Scots no sooner perceived this unexpected intimation than they fled in all directions, and no exertions of Alpin could restore them to order. The greater part escaped in safety, taking shelter in the woods, but, though few fell in the battle, there was a considerable carnage in the pursuit.

Alpin and several of the leaders of the Scots were taken prisoners. The indignant Picts put the leaders to death on the field of battle, and probably deposited them in the graves already mentioned as having been discovered, in which were found human bones, which crumbled to dust when touched. Alpin was ignominiously bound, and, all ransom being refused for his life, he was beheaded on the spot now called Pitalpie, formerly *Basalpin*, which signifies the

death of Alpin. His body was interred here, but his head was fixed upon a pole, and carried to Abernethy, the capital of the Pictish kingdom, where it was most conspicuously placed in triumph.
