

**THE EARLS OF DUNBAR AND MARCH, AND  
THE TOWN AND CASTLE OF DUNBAR.**

THE magnificent ruin of Dunbar Castle stands on a reef of trap rocks, which project into the sea, and rise in many places like natural bastions for the protection of this stern remnant of feudal grandeur from the power of the waves,—which nevertheless force their way through rugged caverns and fissures, and break thunderingly upon its dark foundations. The chief building measures about 165 feet from east to west; and, in some places, 207 feet from north to south. The south battery—which Grose supposes to have been the citadel or keep—is situated on a detached perpendicular rock, accessible only on one side, 72 feet high, and is connected to the main part of the castle by a passage of masonry measuring 69 feet. The interior of the citadel measures 54 feet by 60, within the walls. Its shape is octagonal. Five of the gun-ports remain, which are called ‘the arrow-holes.’ They measure 4 feet at the mouth, and only 16 inches at the other end. The buildings are arched, and extend 8 feet from the outer walls, and look into an open court, whence they derive their light. About the middle of the fortress, part of a wall remains, through which there is a gateway surmounted with armorial bearings. This gate seems to have led to the principal apartments. In the centre are the arms of George, 11th Earl of Dunbar, who succeeded his father in 1369; and who, besides the earldom of Dunbar and March, inherited the lordship of Annandale and the isle of Man from his heroic mother. The towers had communication with the sea, and dip low in many places. North-east from the front of the castle is a large natural cavern of black stone, supposed to have formed part of the dungeon, which, Pennant observes, “the assistance of a little art had rendered a secure but infernal prison.” But as it has a communication with a rocky inlet from the

sea on the west, it is more likely that it is the dark postern through which Sir Alexander Ramsay and his brave followers entered with a supply of provisions to the besieged in 1338. It was a place also well suited for securing the boats belonging to the garrison. The castle is built with a red stone similar to what is found in the quarries of the neighbourhood. Part of the foundation of a fort, which was begun in 1559, for the purpose of accommodating a French garrison, may be traced, extending 136 feet in front of the castle. This building was, however, interrupted in its progress, and demolished by act of parliament. In the north-west part of the ruins is an apartment about 12 feet square, and nearly inaccessible, which tradition denominates the apartment of Queen Mary.

The time of the erection of Dunbar castle cannot be precisely ascertained; but it was evidently built at a very early period of the Christian era. Cospatrick, the father of the noble family of Dunbar, was the son of Maldred, the son of Crinan by Algatha, daughter and heiress of Uthred, prince of Northumberland. After the conquest of England by William the Norman in 1066, Cospatrick and Merleswain, with other nobles of the north of England, fled to Scotland, carrying with them Edgar Atheling, the heir of the Saxon line, and his mother Algatha, with his sisters Margaret and Christina. Malcolm Canmore, who married the Princess Margaret, bestowed on Cospatrick the manor of Dunbar, and many fair lands in the Merse and Lothian. Cospatrick having signalized himself in an expedition against a formidable banditti which infested the south-east borders of Scotland, was created Earl of the Merse, or March; and the lands of Cockburnspath were bestowed on him by the singular tenure of clearing East Lothian and the Merse of robbers.

Patrick, 5th Earl of Dunbar, received from William I., in 1184, Ada, one of his natural daughters, in marriage. About the end of the 12th century, he held the offices of justiciary of Lothian and keeper of Berwick. In 1214, to retaliate the

inroads made by Alexander into England, Henry III. invaded Scotland with a powerful army, and took the town and castle of Berwick. His next attempt was on the fortress of Dunbar; but finding it impregnable, he laid waste the country to the walls of Haddington, and returned homewards.

Patrick, 6th Earl of Dunbar, succeeded his father at the age of 46. In 1242, at a royal tournament held at Haddington, the young Earl of Athol overthrew Walter, the chief of the family of the Bissets. To revenge this affront, the lodgings of the Earl were set on fire the same night, and Athol, with several of his friends, was either slain or burnt to death. The king endeavoured in vain to bring the perpetrators of this atrocious assault to trial; but the combination of the Cumyns and other nobles against the Bissets was so strong that the latter were obliged to abandon their country. On this occasion, the Earl of Dunbar—whom Lord Hales calls the most powerful baron of the southern districts—put himself at the head of the nobles who demanded retribution.

Patrick, 7th Earl of Dunbar, during the turbulent minority of Alexander III., was one of the chiefs of the English faction. Thomas Lermont of Ersildoun, commonly called the Rhymer, visited Dunbar in 1285, and foretold to the Earl the sudden death of Alexander III., who was killed by a fall from his horse on the sands of Kinghorn. We are circumstantially informed by Bower—who was born at Haddington 100 years after—that, on the night preceding the King's death, Thomas, having arrived at the castle of Dunbar, was interrogated by the Earl, in the jocular manner he was wont to assume with the prophet, if to-morrow should produce any remarkable event; to which the bard replied, in the mystical language of prophecy: "Alas for to-morrow, a day of calamity and misery! Before the 12th hour, shall be heard a blast so vehement that it shall exceed those of every former period,—a blast which shall strike the nations with amazement,—shall humble what is proud, and what is fierce shall

level with the ground! The sorest wind and tempest that ever was heard of in Scotland!" After this prediction, which was left to be fulfilled either by accident or the weather, Thomas retired. Next day, the Earl and his companions having continued in watch till the ninth hour, without discovering any unusual appearance in the elements, began to doubt the present powers of the soothsayer, to whom "the sun-set of life had given mystical lore," and having ordered him into their presence, upbraided him as an impostor, and hastened to enjoy their wonted repast. But his lordship had scarcely placed himself at table, and the shadow of the dial fallen on the hour of noon, when an express, covered with foam, appeared at the castle-gate, demanding an audience. On being interrogated, he exclaimed: "I do indeed bring news, but of a lamentable kind, to be deplored by the whole realm of Scotland! Alas, our renowned King has ended his fair life at Kinghorn!" "This," cried the prophet, gathering himself up in the spirit of conscious veracity, "this is the scaithful wind and dreadful tempest which shall blow such a calamity and trouble to the whole state of the whole realm of Scotland!"

Patrick, 8th Earl of Dunbar and March—surnamed Black Beard—succeeded to the honours and possessions of his father in 1289. He appeared at the parliament at Brigham in 1289, where he is called Comes de Marchia, being the first of the Earls of Dunbar designated by that title. When, in 1296, Edward, with a powerful army, entered Scotland, the Earl of Dunbar, with the Bruces and their adherents, took part against their country; but Dunbar's heroic Countess got possession of the castle of Dunbar, and delivered it to the leaders of the Scottish army. Edward despatched the Earl of Warrenne with 12,000 men to lay siege to Dunbar, which was defended by the flower of the Scottish nobility. The Scots, sensible of the importance of this fortress, which, if taken, laid their country open to the enemy, hastened with their main army of 40,000 men, under the command of the

Earls of Buchan, Lennox, and Mar, to its relief. Warrenne, undaunted by the superior numbers of the Scots, left part of his army to blockade the castle, while he advanced to meet them. The English had to descend into a valley—probably Oswaldean, a glen near Spott—before they could reach the Scots; and as they descended, the Scots observing or imagining they saw some confusion in their ranks, set up a loud shout of exultation, and causing their horns to be sounded, rushed down from their well-chosen position. But when Warrenne emerged from the glen, and advanced undismayed against their formidable front, the undisciplined troops, after a very brief resistance, fled before him, and were pursued with great slaughter as far as Selkirk forest. Next day, Edward, with the main body of the English army, reached Dunbar, and compelled the garrison to surrender.

When the heroic Wallace first undertook to deliver his country from her abject bondage, the Earl of Dunbar refused to attend a meeting of the estates at St. Johnston:

“ Lichtly he leuch, in scorn as it had been,  
 And said he had sic message seldom seen,  
 That Wallace now as governor sall ryng,  
 Here is gret faute of a gude prince or king  
 That king of Kyll I can nocht understand,  
 Of him I held never a fur of land ;  
 That Bachiller Trowis, for fortoun schawis her quhell,  
 Tharwith to lest, it sall nocht lang be weil :  
 Bot to you lords, and ye will understand,  
 I make you wyss, I aw to mak na band,  
 Als fre, I am in this regioun to ryng  
 Lord of mine awne, as ever was prince or king;  
 In England als gret part of land I haif,  
 Ma rent thair of thair will no man me craif,  
 What will you mair, I warn you I am free,  
 For your summounds ye get na mair of me.”

The patriot-hero, with 200 men, went in pursuit of the haughty baron. Wallace was joined by Robert Lauder at Musselburgh, and afterwards by Crystal of Seton. They were met at Linton by Squire Lyle, who informed them that the Earl had made his gathering at Cockburnspath, and was on his march to Dunbar. Lauder upon this would have pressed forward; but Wallace is represented by the old 'Makhar,' as calmly replying to the remonstrances of his comrade,

" We may at laysar ride,  
 With yone power he thinkis bargane to bide:  
 And of a thing ye sall weill understand  
 A hardier lord is nocht into Scotland;  
 Micht he be made trew stedfast till a king,  
 Be wit and force he can do meikill thing;  
 Bot wilfully he likis to tyne himsell."

Wallace encountered Patrick in a field near Innerwick, where the latter had assembled 900 of his vassals, and with half that number compelled the Earl, after a terrible conflict, to retreat to Cockburnspath, while he fell back on Dunbar; but finding the castle without provisions, and the garrison wede away with their lord, he gave it in charge to Crystal of Seton. In the meantime the Earl of Dunbar had gone to Northumberland to solicit the aid of the bishop of Durham; but his ostensible reason, says 'The Minstrel,' was "to bring the Bruce free till his land." Vessels were immediately sent from the Northumbrian Tyne to blockade Dunbar, and cut off supplies, while the Earl, with 20,000 men, hastened to retake his fortress. In the interim the champion of Scotland had repaired to the west in quest of succour, and returning by Yester, was joined by Hay and a chosen body of cavalry. With 5,000 men he marched to the support of Seton, while the Bishop of Durham, who had remained at Norham with

Bruce, came to the assistance of Dunbar, and riding through Lammermoor, threw himself into an ambush near Spottmoor. By this unexpected movement, Wallace was completely hemmed in, when Seton fortunately came to his relief. The two armies closed in mortal strife. The Scots pushed on so furiously against the Southern, that they were just about to fly, but Patrick was

“ Sa cruell of intent,  
That all his host tuk of him hardiment;  
Through his awne hand he put mony to pain.”

The desperate valour of the Wallaces, the Ramsays, and the Grahams, was of little avail against the superior force of the English; so that when the ambuscade of Bishop Beck appeared, they were on the point of retiring. Dunbar singled out Wallace amidst the throng, and

“ Hereat the plait with his sharp groundyn claiff  
Through all the stuff, and woundit him sum deill.”

The hero returning the blow with sevenfold vengeance, clove down Maitland, who had thrown himself betwixt the two adversaries. Wallace's horse was killed beneath him, and he was now on foot dealing destruction to his enemies, when

“ Erle Patrick than, that had gret craft in war,  
With spears ordand guid Wallace down to bear;”

but 500 resolute warriors rescued their champion, and the war-worn armies were glad to retire. The same night Wallace traversed Lammermoor in quest of the retreating host, while Bishop Beck, Earl Patrick, and Bruce, fled to Norham. On his return, the champion, still mindful of the odium attached to his name by the Earl of Dunbar,—

"Passit, with mony awfull men,  
 On Patrickis land, and waistit wonder fast,  
 Tuk out guids, and places doun thai cast;  
 His steeds, sevin, that Mete Hamys was call'd,  
 Wallace gert break the burly biggings bauld,  
 Baith in the Merse, and als in Lothiane,  
 Except Dunbar, standand he leavit nane."

Edward II. of England, after seeing his army annihilated at Bannockburn, fled with a body of horse towards Berwick; but Sir James Douglas, with 80 chosen horsemen, so pressed on the royal fugitive, that he was glad to shelter himself in the castle of Dunbar. Here he was received by Patrick, 9th Earl, 'full gently;' after which, by means of a fishing-boat, he coasted along the shore till he reached the towers of Bam-brough. "This was honourable," observes a distinguished writer, "because Patrick must have had in his thoughts at that time the making his peace with his native monarch, and could not be ignorant how easily and advantageously he might have done so, by detaining in custody the person of the King of England." After this, the Earl of Dunbar made peace with his cousin, Robert I., and was present at Ayr on the 26th April, 1315, when the succession to the Crown of Scotland was settled on Bruce. After the defeat at Halidon-hill, however, and before Edward left Berwick, he received the fealty of the Earl of Dunbar with several others of the nobility; and the castle of Dunbar, which had been dismantled and razed to the ground on the approach of the English, was now rebuilt at the Earl's own expense, for the purpose of maintaining an English garrison.

In 1337, the Castle of Dunbar was again in the entire possession of its own master, and at the service of the Crown of Scotland; and early in that year, the Earls of Salisbury and Arundel advanced at the head of a large English army to take it. The siege which it stood on this occasion was one of uncom-



mon military interest ; and although it has already been described in pages 88—92 of the first volume of these Tales, the following rhyming account of it from the “ Cronykill ” of old “ Wynton,” will probably be acceptable to our readers.—

*Of the assiege of Dunbare,  
Where the Countess was wise and ware,*

Schyre William Montague, that sua  
Had taen the siege, in hy gret ma  
A mekil and richt stalwart engine,  
And up smertly gert dress it; syne  
They warpit at the wall great stanes  
Baith hard and heavy for the nanys,  
But that nane merrying to them made,  
And alsua when they castyne had,  
With a towel, a damiselle  
Arrayed jollily and well,  
Wippit the wall, that they nicht see,  
To gere them mare annoyed be;  
There at the siege well lang they lay,  
But there little vantage got they;  
For when they bykkyne wald, or assail,  
They tint the maist of their travaile.

And as they bykeryd there a' day,  
Of a great shot I shall you say,  
For that they had of it ferly,  
It here to you rehearse will I.  
William of Spens percit a Blasowne,  
And thro' three faulds of Awbyrchowne,  
And the Actowne through the third ply  
And the arrow in the bodie,  
While of that dynt there dead he lay;  
And then the Montagu gan say;

" This is ane of my Lady's pinnis,  
 Her amouris thus, till my heart rinnis."  
 While that the siege was there on this wise  
 Men sayis there fell sair juperdyis.  
 For Lawrence of Prestoun, that then  
 Haldin ane of the wichtest men,  
 That was in all Scotland that tide,  
 A rout of Inglismen saw ride,  
 That seemed gude men and worthy,  
 And were arrayed right richly;  
 He, with als few folk, as they were,  
 On them assembled he there;  
 But at the assembling, he was there  
 Intil the mouth stricken with a spear,  
 While it up in the harnys ran;  
 Till a dike he withdrew him than,  
 And died; for nae mair live he might.  
 His men his death perceived noucht;  
 And with their faes faucht stoutly,  
 While they them vanquish'd utterly.  
 Thus was this guid man brought till end,  
 That was richt greatly to commend.  
 Of gret wirschipe and gret bownte  
 His saul be aye in saftie.

Sir William als of Galstown  
 Of Keith, that was of gude renown,  
 Met Richard Talbot by the way  
 And set him to sa hard assay,  
 That to a kirk he gert him gae,  
 And close there defence to ma;  
 But he assailed there sa fast,  
 That him be-hov'd treat at the last,  
 And twa thousand pound to pay,  
 And left hostage and went his way.

The Montagu was yet lyand,  
Sieging Dunbare with stalwart hand;  
And twa gallies of Genoa had he,  
For till assiege it by the sea.  
And as he thus assiegend lay,  
He was set intil hard assay;  
For he had purchased him covyn  
Of ane of them, that were therein,  
That he should leave open the yete,  
And certain term till him then set  
To come; but they therein halily  
Were warnit of it privily.  
He came, and the yete open fand,  
And wald have gane in foot steppand;  
But John of Cowpland, that was then  
But a right poor simple man,  
Shut him off back, and in is gane,  
The portcullis came down on ane;  
And spared Montagu, thereout  
They cryed with a sturdy shout,  
“ A Montagu for ever mair!”  
Then with the folk that he had there,  
He turned to his Herbery,  
And let him japyt fullyly.

Syne Alexander, the Ramsay,  
That trowed and thought, that they  
That were assieged in Dunbar,  
At great distress or mischief were;  
That in an evening frae the Bass,  
With a few folk, that with him was,  
Toward Dunbar, intil a boat,  
He held all privily his gate;  
And by the gallies all slyly  
He gat with his company;

The lady, and all, that were there,  
 Of his coming well comfort were,  
 He issued in the morning in hy,  
 And with the wachis sturdily,  
 Made ane apart and stout melle,  
 And but tynsel entered he.

While Montagu was there lyand,  
 The King Edward of England  
 Purchased him help and alyawns,  
 For he wald amowe were in France;  
 And for the Montagu he sends;  
 For he cowth nae thing till end  
 For owtyn him, for that time he  
 Was maist of his counsel privie  
 When he had heard the king's bidding  
 He removed, but mair dwelling,  
 When he, I trow, had lying there  
 A quarter of a year and mair.

Of this assiege in their hethyng  
 The English oysid to make karping  
 "I vow to God, she makes gret stere  
 The Scottish wench ploddere,  
 Come I aire, come I late,  
 I fand Annot at the yate."

Amongst the nobles who fell in the field of Durham in 1346, was Thomas, Earl of Moray, brother to the heroic Countess of Dunbar. As he had no male issue, Agnes became sole possessor of his vast estates; and her husband assumed the additional title of Earl of Moray. Besides the earldom of Moray, the Earl of Dunbar and his Countess obtained the isle of Man, the lordship of Annandale, the baronies of Morton and Tibbers in Nithsdale, of Morthingtoun and Longformacus, and the manor of Dunse, in Ber-

wickshire; with Mochrum in Galloway, Cumnock in Ayrshire, and Blantyre in Clydesdale.

George, 10th Earl of Dunbar and March, succeeded his father in 1369. From the vast possessions he inherited, he became one of the most powerful nobles of Southern Scotland, and the rival of the Douglasses. His daughter Elizabeth was betrothed to David, son and heir to Robert III., and on the faith of the Prince, who had given a bond to perform the espousals, the Earl had advanced a considerable portion of his daughter's matrimonial settlement; but Archibald, Earl of Douglas—surnamed the Grim—jealous of the advantages which this marriage promised to bestow on a family whose pre-eminence in the state already rivalled his own, protested against the alliance, and by his intrigues at court, through the influence of the Duke of Albany, had the contract between the Duke of Rothesay and Lady Elizabeth Dunbar cancelled, and his own daughter substituted in her place. Stung by this gross insult, Earl George retired into England, where Henry IV. granted him a pension of £400 during the continuance of the war with Scotland, on condition that he provided 12 men-at-arms, and 20 archers with horses, to serve against Robert. In 1398, in conjunction with Hotspur, and Lord Talbot March entered Scotland and fearfully devastated the lands, which he could no longer call his own, as far as Hailes castle on the Tyne.

In the reign of James I., the fortresses and estates of the family of Dunbar and March were seized and appropriated by the Crown; and at various subsequent dates, the chief of them formed stakes, and repeatedly changed masters, in the great games of craft and policy between the royal families of Scotland and England. Three other great subsequent events also affected the town and castle of Dunbar,—the invasions of Scotland under Lords Hertford and Somerset, the flight of Queen Mary with the Earl of Bothwell, and the victory of Cromwell over the Covenanters; and as the second and

third of these events are detailed in other parts of these Tales, we shall finish our present article with a brief notice of the first.

In 1544, the English invaders under the Earl of Hertford, after their return from the siege of Leith, and after burning Haddington, encamped the second night—26th May—near Dunbar. “The same day,” says Patten, “we burnt a fine town of the Earl Bothwell’s, called Haddington, with a great nunnery and a house of friars. The next night after, we encamped beside Dunbar; and there the Scots gave a small alarm to our camp. But our watches were in such readiness that they had no vantage there, but were fain to recoil without doing of any harm. That night they looked for us to have burnt the town of Dunbar, which we deferred till the morning at the dislodging of our camp, which we executed by V. C. of our hakbutters, being backed with V. C. horsemen. And by reason we took them in the morning, who having watched all night for our coming, and perceiving our army to dislodge and depart, thought themselves safe of us, were newly gone to their beds; and in their first sleeps closed in with fire, men, women, and children, were suffocated and burnt. That morning being very misty and foggy, we had perfect knowledge by our espials, that the Scots had assembled a great power at a strait called the Pease.”

In 1547, the Duke of Somerset invaded Scotland with an army of 14,000 men: and, having crossed the pass of Pease, with “puffing and payne,” as Patten says, demolished the castles of Dunglass, Innerwick, and Thornton. “This done, about noon, we marched on, passing soon after within the gunshot of Dunbar, a town standing longwise upon the sea-side, whereat is a castle—which the Scots count very strong—that sent us divers shots as we passed, but all in vain: their horsemen shewed themselves in their fields beside us, towards whom Bartevel with his viii. [c.] men, all hakbutters on horseback—whom he had right well appointed—and John de

Rybaud, with divers others, did make; but no hurt on either side, saving that a man of Barteville's slew one of them with his piece, the skirmish was soon ended. We went a iiii. mile farther, and having travelled that day a x. mile, we camped nigh Tentallon, and had at night a blind alarm. Here had we first advertisement certain, that the Scots were assembled in camp at the place where we found them. Marching this morning a ii. mile, we came to a fair river called Lyn (Tyne); running all strait eastward toward the sea; over this river is there a stone bridge that they name Lintou bridge, of a town thereby on our right hand, and eastward as we went, that stands upon the same river. Our horsemen and carriages passed through the water—for it was not very deep—our footmen over the bridge. The passage was very straight for an army, and therefore the longer in setting over. Beyond this bridge about a mile westward—for so methought as then we turned—upon the same river on the southside, stands a proper house, and of some strength, belike, they call it Hayles castle, and pertaineth to the Earl of Bothwell, but kept as then by the governor's appointment, who held the Earl in prison."—After the defeat at Pinkey in 1548, Dunbar was burnt by the German mercenaries under the Earl of Shrewsbury, on his return to England from the attack on Haddington.