

THE SCOTISH INVASION OF ENGLAND UNDER  
CHARLES II., IN 1651.

IN the spring of 1651, immediately after the crowning of Charles II. at Scone, and several months after the overrunning of the country south of the Forth by Cromwell, the Scottish army, in expectation of another visit from the Cromwellian forces, and in order to protect the central and northern parts of Scotland from invasion, raised strong fortifications along the fords of the Forth, and entrenched themselves at the Torwood, between Falkirk and Stirling. Here Cromwell found them when he advanced into Scotland in July. As he considered it dangerous to attempt to carry such a strong position in the face of an army of about twenty thousand men, (for such it is said was the number of the Scots,) he endeavoured, by marches and countermarches, to draw them out; but although they followed his motions, they took care not to commit themselves, by going too far from their lines of defence. Seeing no chance of bringing them to a general engagement, Cromwell adopted the bold plan of crossing the Frith of Forth at Queensferry, and of throwing himself into the rear of the Scottish army. While, therefore, he continued, by his motions along the Scottish lines, to draw off the attention of the Scottish commanders from his plan, he, on the 20th of July, sent over Lambert, with a large division of his army in a number of boats which had been provided for the occasion. He landed without opposition, and proceeded immediately to fortify himself on the hill between the North Ferry and Inverkeithing. General Holburn was immediately despatched with a large force to keep Lambert in check. The parties encountered each other on the 20th of July; and the Scots, though they fought with great bravery, were defeated. A body of Highlanders particularly distinguished themselves. The loss of the Scots was considerable; and

among the slain were the young chief of Maclean and about a hundred of his friends and followers. This victory opened a free passage to Cromwell to the north of Scotland. He immediately, therefore, crossed the Forth with the remainder of his army, and proceeded to Perth, of which he took possession on the 2nd of August.

While the Scottish leaders were puzzled how to extricate themselves from the dilemma into which they had been thrown by the singular change which had taken place in the relative position of the two armies, the King alone seemed free from embarrassment, and at once proposed to his generals, that, instead of following Cromwell, or waiting till he should attack them, they should immediately invade England, where he expected to be joined by numerous royalists, who only required his presence among them at the head of such an army, to declare themselves. Under existing circumstances, the plan, though at once bold and decisive, was certainly judicious; and, therefore, it is not surprising that it should have received the approbation of the chiefs of the army. Having obtained their concurrence, the King immediately issued a proclamation on the 30th of July, to the army, announcing his intention of marching for England the following day, accompanied by such of his subjects as were willing to give proofs of their loyalty by sharing his fortunes. This appeal was not made in vain; and Charles found himself next morning in full march on the road to Carlisle, at the head of 11,000, or, as some accounts state, of 14,000 men.

Although Cromwell was within almost a day's march of the Scottish army, yet, so sudden and unexpected had been its departure, and so secretly had the whole affair been managed, that it was not until the 4th of August that he received the extraordinary intelligence of its departure for England. Cromwell was now as much embarrassed as the Scottish commanders had lately been, for he had not the most distant idea, when he threw himself so abruptly into their

rear, that they would adopt the bold resolution of marching into England. As soon, however, as he had recovered from the surprise into which such an alarming event had thrown him, he despatched letters to the parliament, assuring them of his intention to follow the Scottish army without delay, and exhorting them not to be discouraged, but to rely on his activity. He also sent Lambert with a force of 3,000 cavalry to harass the rear of the Scottish army, and forwarded orders to Harrison, who was then at Newcastle, to press upon their flank with a similar number; and, in a few days, he himself crossed the Forth with an army of 10,000 men, and proceeded along the eastern coast, in the direction of York, leaving Monk behind him with a force of 5,000 horse and foot to complete the reduction of Scotland.

The Scottish army made a rapid march, and arrived in the neighbourhood of Warrington on the 16th of August. Here Lambert and Harrison, who had just met at Warrington, and whose united forces amounted to 9,000 men, resolved to dispute the passage of the Mersey; but the Scottish army had passed the bridge before their arrival. A few charges ensued, and Lambert and Harrison, in expectation of a general engagement drew up their forces on Knutsford-heath; but the King declined battle, and continued his march towards Worcester, which he entered on the 22nd. A number of the country gentlemen who were confined in that city on account of their loyalty, welcomed the King with the warmest congratulations, and he was immediately proclaimed by the Mayor with great solemnity, amidst the rejoicings of the royalists.

The approach of the Scottish army filled the minds of the English parliamentary leaders with dismay, and they at first imagined that a private arrangement had been made between Cromwell and the King; but their apprehensions were soon relieved, by the receipt of Cromwell's despatches, and by a proclamation which the King had issued on entering Eng-

land, promising pardon to all his subjects, with the exception of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Cook. As soon as the alarm had subsided, measures, the most active and strong, were adopted by Cromwell's council, to meet the pressing emergency. They proclaimed the King and his supporters guilty of high treason; and the declaration of the King was burned in London, by the hands of the hangman. All persons suspected of loyalty were either confined or narrowly watched; and death was declared to be the penalty of those who should enter into any correspondence with the King. Bodies of militia were instantly raised in several counties, and marched off to the aid of the regular forces. Had these exertions been met by similar efforts on the part of the English royalists, the cause of the King might have triumphed; but so sudden and unexpected had been the arrival of the King, that they were quite unprepared to receive him, and the measures of the leaders at Westminster were so prompt and energetic, that they had not sufficient time to collect their scattered strength, or to concert any combined plan of operations. Yet notwithstanding these difficulties, a pretty considerable force might have been drawn together, but for the fanaticism of the Scots, who would not, contrary to the order of the King, allow any auxiliaries to join them, who had not taken the covenant.

When Charles, therefore, arrived at Worcester, he found that he had obtained no accession of force on his march, and he even found that his little army had been reduced by desertion. To increase the army he issued a proclamation, calling upon all his male subjects, between the ages of sixteen and sixty, to join his standard at a general muster to be held on the 26th of August; but little attention was paid to the order, and when the day of muster arrived, he found that his army amounted to about 12,000 men only, including about 2,000 Englishmen. To attack this force, large bodies of troops were concentrating near Worcester; and on the

28th of August, when Cromwell arrived to take the command, the army of the republic amounted to upwards of 30,000 men, who hailed the presence of their commander with rapture.

The Lord General now perceived that the time had arrived for striking a decisive blow; but as the anniversary of the battle of Dunbar was near at hand, he resolved to defer his grand attack till that day, so fortunate for his arms, and, in the meantime, employed himself in a series of operations for hemming in the royal army, in the course of which several brilliant affairs took place with alternate success. At last, on the morning of the 3rd of September, 1651, just twelve months after the defeat of the Scots at Dunbar, Cromwell, after reminding his troops of the victory they had achieved on that auspicious day, put his army in motion. The first movement was made by Fleetwood, who having advanced from Upton to Powick, proceeded towards the Team, the passage of which he was ordered to force; and to keep up a communication with him, Cromwell threw a bridge of boats across the Severn at Buns hill, near the confluence of the two rivers. A discharge of musketry in the direction of Powick about one in the afternoon, when the King and his staff were observing the position of the enemy from the tower of the cathedral, was the first intimation they received of Cromwell's attack. The party immediately descended, and the King at the head of a party of horse and foot under the command of Montgomery, flew forward to oppose the advance of Fleetwood's brigade across the Team. A furious contest took place, but the steadiness and perseverance of Fleetwood's men overcame all opposition; yet although they effected the passage of the river, and were afterwards aided by four regiments which Cromwell sent to their assistance, the Scots disputed every inch of ground, and repeatedly charged the enemy with the pike.

While this sanguinary struggle was going on, Cromwell,

after securing the communication across the Severn by the bridge of boats which he threw over it, advanced to Perrywood and Red-hill, and directed a fire to be opened from a battery of heavy guns upon a fortification named Fort Royal, which had been recently raised to cover the Sidbury gate of the city. This movement, which isolated the divisions of Fleetwood and Cromwell from each other by the interposition of the Severn, seemed to the King a favourable opportunity for attacking that of Cromwell with success, whilst the other was kept in check on the opposite bank. He, therefore, immediately drew together the remainder of his infantry, with which and the Duke of Hamilton's troop of horse, and the English volunteers, he attacked the division under Cromwell. The King himself at the head of the Highlanders, whom he commanded in person, fought with great bravery: his example animated his troops, who drove back the enemy's vanguard, consisting of some regiments of militia, and captured their cannon. Had Leslie come up with his cavalry as was expected, the defeat of Cromwell would have been inevitable; but that officer from some cause or other, never explained, unfortunately remained in the city and did not make his appearance till Cromwell, who brought up a large body of veteran troops which he had placed in reserve, had repulsed the royalists, who, unable to rally, were fleeing in confusion towards Fort Royal, to seek for protection under its guns. The fugitives entered the city in great disorder, and the King succeeded in rallying them in Friar Street; but although he tried every means which circumstances could admit of, to raise their drooping spirits, he could not prevail upon them to stand firm, and many threw away their arms and fled. In a fit of despair he exclaimed, "Then shoot me dead rather than let me live to see the sad consequences of this day."

In the meantime Fleetwood, after dispersing the division opposed to him, took St Johns; and Cromwell afterwards carried Fort Royal by storm, and put its defenders to the

sword. The utmost confusion now prevailed in the city, which was still farther increased by the entrance of Cromwell's troops, who poured into it by the quay, the castle hill, and the Sidbury gate. The situation of the King became critical in the extreme, and his friends advised him to provide immediately for his own safety, as no time was to be lost; he, therefore, instantly threw himself among the Scottish cavalry, and whilst thus surrounded, he was effecting his escape by the gate of St Martin's to the north, the Earl of Cleveland, Sir James Hamilton, Colonel Careless, and a few other devoted adherents at the head of some determined troopers, charged the enemy in their advance in the contrary direction up Sidbury Street, and checked them effectually till the King was out of danger.

This battle, which Cromwell admits "was as stiff a contest for four or five hours as ever he had seen," was very disastrous to the royalists, three thousand of whom were killed on the spot, and a considerably larger number taken prisoners, and even the greater part of the cavalry, who escaped from the city, were afterwards taken by detachments of the enemy. The Duke of Hamilton was mortally wounded in the field of battle, and the Earls of Derby, Lauderdale, Rothes, Cleveland, and Kelly, the Lords Sinclair, Kenmure and Grandison, and the Generals Leslie, Middleton, Massey and Montgomery, were successively made prisoners after the battle. When the King considered himself free from immediate danger, he separated, during the darkness of the night, from the body of cavalry which surrounded him, and with a party of sixty horse proceeded to Whiteladies, a house belonging to one Giffard a recusant and royalist, at which he arrived at an early hour in the morning, after a ride of 25 miles. Here commenced, on the same day, the first of those extraordinary adventures which befel the King, accompanied by a series of the most singular hairbreadth escapes, as related by the historians of the period, between the 3rd of September and the 17th of

October, the day on which he landed in safety at Fecamp in Normandy.

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