

THE SIEGE OF REDHALL AND SKIRMISH OF GOGAR.

IN the year 1650, while the army of Oliver Cromwell and that of General Leslie confronted and watched each other, in encampments about three miles southwest and west of Edinburgh, the former eagerly waiting for some opportunity of decided action, and the latter resolutely determined not to afford it, two hot little affairs occurred to try the mettle of the belligerents,—the one in the parish of Colinton and the other in the contiguous parish of Corstorphine.

On the barony of Redhall, in the parish of Colinton, not far from the site of the present mansion of Redhall, once stood a castle or baronial fortalice, which made some figure in the frequent warlike commotions of former times. In 1572, in particular, it was, with other strengths in the vicinity of Edinburgh, garrisoned by the Regent Mar against his antagonists; and in 1650, it sustained a regular siege from the army of Cromwell. A short account of this siege is given by Nicol in his Diary, so interesting that we shall transcribe it verbatim, with the simple alteration of modernizing the spelling:—"Cromwell pushed from Berwick to Colinton without opposition, until he came to the house of Redhall within three miles by west of Edinburgh. In the which house of Redhall the Laird of Redhall with threescore soldiers, lay with provisions, and kept and defended the house against the English, and galled his soldiers, and put them back several times, with loss of sundry soldiers. The English general taking this very grievously, that such a weak house should hold out against him and be an impediment in his way, he and his army lying so near unto it, therefore he caused draw his cannon to the house, and there, from four hours in the morning till ten in the forenoon that day, he caused the cannon to play on this house, encamped a great

number of his soldiers about it with pike and musket, but all to little purpose; for the Laird and the people in the house defended it valiantly even till their powder failed; and after it failed, they did not give over, ever looking for help from our own army, which was then lying at Corstorphine, within three quarters of a mile to the house,—of whose help they were disappointed. General Cromwell perceiving their powder to be gone, and that no assistance was given them, he caused petards to be brought to the house, wherewith he blew up the doors, entered the doors and windows, and after slaughter on both sides, (but much more to the English than to the Scots,) took all that were in the house prisoners, turned them naked, seized on all the money and goods that were therein, which was much, by reason that sundry gentlemen about had put their goods there for safety. So this house and people therein were taken in the sight and face of our army, who thought it dangerous to hazard themselves in such an expedition, the enemy having the advantage of the ground and hills about him for his defence.” “After the enemy had taken the Laird of Redhall prisoner, he thereafter put him to liberty, commending much his valour and activity for holding out so stoutly against him that house of Redhall.”

Cromwell's army lay at the base and among the spurs of the Pentlands, and could not without great disadvantage be attacked from the plain; and Leslie's army lay on the expanse of low ground south-east of Corstorphine, now a firm and beautiful series of meadows and corn fields traversed by the Edinburgh and Glasgow railway, but then a wild, intricate, watery wilderness of bogs and swamps and quagmires; and the latter army was therefore as strongly posted and as defiant of an enemy as Cromwell's, though in a different way; so that the two armies could only look at each other, or else practice some stratagem, or forego the advantages of ground. Cromwell at length marched down toward the west side of Leslie's position, with the view of cutting off his communica-

tion with Linlithgow and Stirling, and drawing him out to an engagement on the plain. But Leslie anticipated the movement, and manœuvred his army westward about two miles, and entrenched them in a position at Gogar of similar character to his original one, and quite as strong; and there he stood, amid bogs and quagmires, holding Cromwell at bay. The two armies were now pretty close to each other; yet Cromwell tried in vain to force them into collision, either by wading across the swamps himself or by dislodging Leslie; and he was compelled to rest satisfied with opening a brisk fire of artillery, and provoking a contest at long shot. Leslie returned his cannonade with spirit; and, on this occasion, brought into play for the first time several kinds of field-pieces which had recently been invented by his General of Artillery, Colonel Wemyss. The place of conflict is now occupied by the villas of Hanley and Gogar-Burn; and is still known among the old inhabitants of the district by the name of the Flashes; and is said to have got that name in memory of the superior power and range of these new cannons. The conflict lasted about three hours; and though it does not seem to have caused on both sides more than about 100 deaths, it operated as such a severe check on Cromwell's designs, that he retreated immediately to Musselburgh, and four days after toward England.

The sequel was disastrous. Leslie followed in Cromwell's rear, and harassed his march till he reached Dunbar; and then occurred the smashing battle which was lost to the Scots through their impetuosity and want of discipline, and which enabled Cromwell to return to Edinburgh as a victor. This, with all its most striking incidents, is recorded on pp. 150—168 of the First Volume of these Tales.