BATTLE OF THE GRAMPIANS.*

A.D. 84, or A.D. 85.

The proceedings of the Romans in Britain, and particularly in Scotland, the battles they fought, and the many interesting memorials still to be seen, in various parts of the country, of those ancient masters of the world, require a connected and distinct narrative; but the celebrated battle of the Grampians, which was the last of those series of successes, may with propriety be given separate, as the final triumph of Roman discipline over savage clans of roving barbarians, whose dispositions were as untameable as their lives were wild and ferocious.

Cnæus Julius Agricola spent about seven or eight years in Britain, from A.D. 76, to A.D. 84 or 85, but the precise year of his arrival is not ascertained. The campaigns of every year added to the Roman arms, and at the end of the fourth campaign the whole island south of the Forth and Clyde was secured by the well known wall, parts of which still remain, and by a chain of forts. It was in the last year of his government that Agricola defeated Galgacus on the Grampian mountains, and after this victorious conclusion of the campaign, a Roman fleet sailed round the entire island, and marked the boundary of the Empire in the re-

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* Murphy's Tacitus, in Vita Agricolæ; Buchanan s History, Gordon's Itinerarium Septentrionale; Statistical Account of Scotland; Transactions of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland; Pennant's Tour in Scotland.

gion of the Ultima Thule, and the Hebridean islands, lying "far amid the melancholy main."

It appears from Tacitus that in the course of the third campaign, in A.D. 80, the Romans extended their conquests north of the Frith of Tay, and subdued the counties of Fife and Perth. The principal fort built by Agricola was at Ardoch in the latter county, situated so as to command the entrance into the extensive valleys of Strathallan and Strathearn, and the choice of it proves what Tacitus says, that no general showed greater skill in the choice of advantageous situations. The Caledonians, as the Scots are called, retreated before the veteran Romans, and never dared to hazard a battle, although the legions struggled with all the difficulties of a tempestuous season. At every Roman post provisions for twelve months were supplied, to enable the garrison to stand a siege. They were repeatedly assailed during the winter, but they beat the besiegers in repeated sallies, and passed that winter secure from danger. "The consequence," says Tacitus, "of these precautions was, that the enemy, who had been accustomed to retrieve in the winter what they had lost in the preceding summer, saw no difference of seasons, and as they were defeated everywhere, they were reduced to despair."

Yet the country had been overrun, not conquered, and the business of the fourth campaign was to secure it from native aggression. It was then that Agricola constructed his line of forts between the Friths of Forth and of Clyde, the same isthmus or neck of land on which Lollius Urbicus, governor of Britain, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, erected the Roman wall usually called *Graham's Dyke*. By means of these well situated and guarded stations, the Caledonians were confined to the northern part of Scotland, as it were in a peninsula. Agricola's fifth campaign was in A.D. 82, and he penetrated farther into Scotland, but from the obscure style of Tacitus in this part of his Life of

Agricola, it is difficult to ascertain on which side the attempt was made. It appears, however, from the sequel, that the Roman general, having driven the Caledonians beyond the isthmus between the Clyde and the Forth, resolved to march against the tribes and septs north of the Clyde, to spread a general alarm, and make an impression on the western side of the country. He accordingly crossed the river Clyde in the first Roman vessel ever seen in that river, and landed near Dumbarton, while his army advanced by land, and, making a rapid progress through the county of Argyle, marched to the sea coast opposite to Ireland. Tacitus says that Agricola defeated the Caledonians in several engagements before he came to the sea-coast, which he was induced to do not so much from an apprehension of danger, as with a view to future prospects. He saw that Ireland, lying between Britain and *Spain*, and at the same time convenient to the ports of Gaul and France, might prove a valuable acquisition, capable of giving an easy communication, and of course strength and union, to provinces disjoined by nature. An Irish petty king, who had been forced to fly from the fury of a domestic faction, was kindly received by the Roman general, and detained under a show of friendship, to be of use on some future occasion.

In the campaign of the sixth summer, dreading a confederacy of the tribes beyond the Frith of Forth, and also afraid of the danger of being surprised in a country not yet explored, Agricola ordered his ships to cross to Fife, and obtain some knowledge of the districts. He had already in the third year of his expeditions penetrated north of the Forth as far as the Frith of Tay, but that district was merely overrun, and now, suspecting an insurrection beyond the Forth, he manned a fleet to search the coasts on the north-east of Scotland. An antiquarian writer is of opinion, since no notice is taken by Tacitus of the return of

those ships, that after their survey of the coast they remained in some road or harbour on the coast of Fife, or within the Frith of Tay, where there was commodious shelter from tempestuous weather. The war was now carried on in the counties of Fife, Perth, Forfar, and the Mearns. The Roman fleet, we are told by Tacitus, now acting for the first time in concert with the land forces, proceeded in sight of the army, forming a magnificent spectacle, and adding terror to the war. At the sight of the Roman fleet, the natives, according to the statements of the prisoners, were struck with consternation, convinced that every resource was now cut off, since the sea, which had always afforded them shelter, was now laid open to the invaders.

The Caledonians in their distress resolved to try the issue of a battle. Without waiting for the commencement of hostilities they stormed the Roman forts and castles, traces of which still exist in the counties of Fife and Perth, and made such an impression that several of Agricola's officers, under the specious appearance of prudent counsels, advised a retreat, to avoid the disgrace of being driven back to the other side of the Frith of Forth. This recommendation was disregarded by Agricola, who, having received intelligence that the enemy meditated an attack in various quarters at once, and lest superior numbers, in a country where he was a stranger to the defiles and passes, should be able to surround him, he divided his army, and marched forward in three columns.

The Caledonians, when informed of this arrangement, changed their plans, and in the middle of the night fell with their united force upon the ninth legion, which was considered the weakest in the Roman army. They surprised the advanced guard, put the sentinels to the sword, and forced their way through the intrenchments amid the terror and consternation which prevailed. The battle

raged in the very camp, when Agricola, who had been informed that the Caledonians were on the march, instantly pursued, and came opportunely up to the relief of the legion. Ordering the swiftest of the horse and light infantry to advance and charge the assailants in the rear, his whole army raised a loud shout. At break of day the Caledonians beheld the Roman eagles and banners glittering before them, and found themselves hemmed in by two armies. Their vigour relaxed at this unexpected misfortune, while the courage of the ninth legion revived. Acting no longer on the defensive, they rushed on to the attack. In the gates of the camp, of which in every Roman one there were four, having distinct names one on each side of the circumference, a fierce and obstinate engagement followed. The recently besieged legion and the forces which came to their relief fought with a spirit of emulation, the former, observes the historian, to prove that they stood in no need of assistance, the latter contending for the honour of succouring the distressed. The Caledonians were completely routed, and if the woods and marshes had not favoured their escape this action might have finished the war, and completely established the Roman power.

It is contended that this battle was fought at Lochore in Fife, in the neighbourhood of Lochleven, where the appearance of a Roman camp is still to be seen. The form of this camp is described as resembling a square, but it is in many parts levelled and defaced. South of this camp there is a large morass, in which have been often dug up the roots of different trees in such abundance as to indicate that it was in ancient times covered with wood. This, therefore, is supposed to be the camp in which the ninth legion was attacked. There is near this locality the village of *Blair*, a word which signifies, according to some interpreters of the ancient language, the spot where a battle was fought, but this idea is refuted by General Roy.

The Caledonians, notwithstanding their defeat, were not discouraged, and resolved to keep the field. They enlisted their young men, sent their wives and children to places of safety, and with solemn rites and sacrifices in their groves they formed a league in the cause of liberty. The campaign thus ended, and the contending armies retired into winter quarters.

In the opening of the following campaign Agricola dispatched his fleet, with orders to annoy the coast by frequent descents in several places, and to spread a general terror. He placed himself at the head of his army, and taking with him a band of Britons, on whose approved fidelity he could fully rely, he advanced as far as the Grampian mountains, where the Caledonians were posted under their renowned chief Galgach, or Galgacus. This stupendous range, the *Mons Grampius* of Tacitus, extends across the island from the district of Cowal in Argyleshire, on the Atlantic, to Aberdeen on the German Ocean, whence they form another ridge in a north-west direction, extending through Aberdeenshire to Moray and the borders of Inverness-shire. The scene of the battle between the Romans and the Caledonians is noticed in the sequel, but it is still a subject of dispute among antiquarians, few of whom can agree on the precise locality, although the district can be securely ascertained from the route of Agricola's march.

Little is known of Galgacus the Caledonian chief. He is called Galdus in the Chronicle of the Kings of Scotland, and a learned writer gives us an account of the etymology of the name. He maintains that *Galgacus* was Latinized by the Romans from two Gaelic appellations—*Gald* and *Cachach;* the first, *Gald,* being the proper name, and the second a soubriquet, on account of the number of battles he fought—a custom common among the Celtic septs. Thus, Graham of Claverhouse, the well known Viscount

of Dundee, was called *Evan Du-nan-cach*, or *Black-haired John who fights the battles*, and in like manner the celebrated John Duke of Argyle was known among the Highlanders by the title of *Evan Roy-nan-cach*, or *Red-haired John who fights battles*. Tacitus says that upwards of thirty thousand men appeared under the Caledonian chief, and their numbers were continually increasing. The youth of the country, and even the men in years whose vigour was still unbroken, poured in from all quarters on this occasion, proud of their past exploits, and the memorials of bravery which they had earned by their martial spirit.

Before the battle commenced Galgacus convened his soldiers around him, eager for action, and excited by ardour. The speech which Tacitus ascribes to him is a splendid piece of eloquence, and is valuable as exhibiting a striking picture of Roman oppression. It may be doubted whether Galgacus spoke what the historian has put into his mouth, but it is more than probable that he harangued his men, for in those times no battle was fought without a speech from the general to rouse and animate the valour of his army. "We see the same custom," says a translator of Tacitus, "among the savages of America. In our times few or no speeches are made at the head of the line. The modern general has no occasion to be an orator; his artillery speaks for him. But since it is likely that Galgacus addressed his men, that probability is ground sufficient for the historian; and Galgacus, then upon the point of a decisive action, when all that was dear to him depended on the event, may be fairly allowed to have addressed his men in substance at least, if not in the manner represented. The ferocity of a savage, whose bosom glowed with the love of liberty, gives warmth and spirit to the whole speech. Neither the Greek nor Roman page has any thing to compare with it. The critics have admired the speech of Porus to Alexander the Great, but excellent as it is, it

shrinks and fades away before the Caledonian orator. Even the speech of Agricola, which follows immediately after it, is tame and feeble, when opposed to the ardour, the impetuosity, and the vehemence, of the British chief. We see Tacitus exerting all his art to decorate the character of his father-in-law, but he had neither the same vein of sentiment, nor the same generous love of liberty, to support the cause of an ambitious conqueror. In the harangue of Galgacus, the pleasure of the reader springs from two principles. He admires the enthusiasm of the brave Caledonian, and at the same time applauds the noble historian, who draws up a charge against the tyranny of his own countrymen, and generously enlists on the side of liberty."

Although the speech of Galgacus is well known, the present narrative would be incomplete without this splendid burst of alleged Caledonian eloquence, which many a schoolboy has been made to recite as an elementary exercise. "When I consider," says Galgacus, "the motives which have roused us to this war, when I reflect on the necessity which now demands our firmest vigour, I expect every thing great and noble from that union of sentiment pervading us all. From this day I date the freedom of Britain. We are the men who never crouched in bondage. Beyond this spot there is no land where liberty can find a refuge. Even the sea is shut against us, while the Roman fleet is hovering on the coast. To draw the sword in the cause of freedom is the true glory of the brave, and in our condition cowardice itself would throw away the scabbard. In the battles, which have been hitherto fought with alternate vicissitudes of fortune, our countrymen might well repose some hopes in us; they might consider us as their last resource; they knew us to be the noblest sons of Britain, placed in the last recesses of the land, in the very sanctuary of liberty. We have not so much as seen the melancholy regions where slavery has debased mankind. We

have lived in freedom, and our eyes have been unpolluted by the sight of ignoble bondage.

"The extremity of the earth is ours. Defended by our situation, we have to this day preserved our honour and the rights of men. But we are no longer safe in our obscurity; our retreat is laid open; the enemy rushes on; and, as things unknown are ever magnified, he thinks a mighty conquest lies before him. But this is the end of the habitable world, and rocks and boisterous waves fill all the space behind. The Romans are in the heart of our country; no submission can satisfy their pride; no concessions can appease their fury. While the land has any thing left, it is the theatre of war: when it can yield no more, they explore the seas for hidden treasure. Are the nations rich? Roman avarice is their enemy. Are they poor? Roman ambition lords it over them. The East and the West have been rifled, and the spoiler is still insatiate. The Romans, by a strange singularity of nature, are the only people who invade with equal ardour the wealth and the poverty of nations. To rob, to ravage, and to murder, in their imposing language are the arts of civil society. When they have made the world a solitude they call it peace."

After various allusions to the conduct of the Romans, and the peculiar circumstances in which the Caledonians were placed, Galgacus continues—"We know the manners of the Romans, and are we to imagine that their valour in the field is equal to their arrogance in time of peace? By our dissensions their glory rises; the vices of their enemies are the negative virtues of the Roman army, if that may be called an army which is no better than a motley crew of various nations, held together by success, and ready to crumble away in the first reverse of fortune. That this will be their fate no one can doubt, unless we suppose that the Gauls, the Germans, and, with shame I add, the Britons, a mer-

cenary band, who hire their blood in a foreign service, will adhere from principle to a new master whom they have lately served and long detested. They are now enlisted by awe and terror; break their fetters, and the man who forgets to fear will seek revenge.

" All that can inspire the human heart, every motive that can excite us to deeds of valour, is on our side. The Romans have no wives in the field to animate their drooping spirit; no parents to reproach the want of courage. They are not enlisted in the cause of their country; their country, if they have any, lies at a distance. They are a band of mercenaries, a wretched handful of devoted men, who tremble and look aghast as they roll their eyes around, and see on every side unknown objects. The sky over their heads, the sea, the woods, all things conspire to fill them with doubt and terror. They come like victims, delivered into our hands by the gods, to fall this day a sacrifice to freedom.

" In the ensuing battle be not deceived by false appearances. The glitter of gold and silver may dazzle the eye, but to us it is harmless, to the Romans no protection. In their own ranks we shall find a number of generous warriors ready to assist our cause. The Britons know that for our common liberties we draw the avenging sword. The Gauls will remember that they once were a free people, and the Germans, as the Usipians lately did, will desert their colours. The Romans have left nothing in their rear to oppose us in the pursuit; their forts are ungarrisoned; the veterans in their colonies droop with age; in their municipal towns nothing but anarchy, despotic government, and disaffected subjects. In me behold your general; behold an army of freeborn men. Your enemy is before you, and in his train heavy tributes, drudgery in the mines, and all the horrors of slavery. Are those calamities to be entailed upon us? Or shall this day relieve us by a brave

revenge? Before you is the field of battle, and let that determine. Let us seek the enemy, and as we rush upon him, remember the glory delivered down to us by our ancestors; and let each man think that upon his sword depends the fate of posterity."

There are various allusions in this speech ascribed to the Caledonian chief which require explanation. When he says that the Romans have "no wives in the field to animate their drooping spirits," he refers to the state of celibacy to which the military system of the Romans condemned the soldiers, for before the reign of Severus, who owed his advancement to the imperial purple to the legions, a Roman camp had no accommodation for women. To mark his gratitude, Severus permitted the soldiers to marry, and by that and other indulgences he relaxed and almost ruined the discipline of the army. The state of celibacy which the Roman soldiers were compelled to observe would doubtless often tempt them to commit licentious violence in the countries they conquered; and Tacitus makes Galgacus accuse them of these excesses. "Are our wives, our sisters, and our daughters, safe from brutal lust and open violation? The insidious conqueror, under the mask of hospitality and friendship, brands them with dishonour." When Galgacus declares that "their country, if they have any, lies at a distance," and designates them a "band of mercenaries," he intimates that the conquered provinces furnished auxiliaries, and the legions were often recruited by levies raised in different parts of the empire. Those soldiers were not interested in the cause or welfare of Rome, because they were born in different and remote places. An example of this is given by the allusions of Galgacus to the Usipians. They were auxiliaries from Germany, but feeling no interest in the cause, they resolved to return to their own country, and with that design committed themselves to the mercy of the winds and waves. It can scarcely be supposed, how-

ever, that the Caledonian chief could be familiar with these and other facts which he is made to utter.

The Latin historian informs us that the speech of Galgacus was received, according to the custom of barbarians, with war-songs, savage howlings, and a wild uproar of military applause. They began to form their line of battle, the brave and warlike rushing forward to the front. The Romans, on the other hand, were equally ardent, and in imitation of Galgacus, were addressed by Agricola with the following speech :—

" It is now, my fellow soldiers. the *eighth* year of our service in Britain. During that time the genius and good auspices of the Roman Empire, with your assistance and unwearied labour, have made the island our own. In all our expeditions, in every battle, the enemy has felt our valour, and by your toil and perseverance the very nature of the country has been conquered. I have been proud of my soldiers, and you have had no reason to blush for your general. We have carried the terror of our arms beyond the limits of any other soldiers, or any former general; we have penetrated to the extremity of the land. This was formerly the boast of vain glory, the mere report of fame; it is now historical truth. We have gained possession sword in hand; we are encamped in the utmost limits of the island. Britain is discovered, and by the discovery conquered.

" In our long and laborious marches, when you were obliged to traverse moors, and fens, and rivers, and to climb steep and craggy mountains, it was still the cry of the bravest among you, When shall we be led to battle? When shall we see the enemy? Behold them now before you. They are hunted out of their dens and caverns; your wish is granted, and the field of glory lies open to your swords. One victory more makes this new world our own, but remember that defeat involves us all in distress.

If we consider the progress of our arms, to look back is glorious; the tract of country which lies behind us, the forests which you have explored, and the estuaries which you have passed, are monuments of eternal fame. But our fame can only last while we press forward on the enemy. If we give way, or if we think of a retreat, we have again the same difficulties to surmount. The success, which is now our pride, will in such a case prove the worst misfortune which can befall us. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the course of the country; the enemy knows the defiles and marshes, and will be supplied with provisions in abundance. We have not these advantages, but we have hands that can grasp the sword, and we have valour that gives us every thing. With me it has long been a settled principle that the back of a general or his army is never safe. Who of you would not rather die honourably than live in infamy? But life and honour are this day inseparable; they are fixed to one spot. Should fortune declare against us, we die on the utmost limits of the world, and to die where nature ends cannot be deemed inglorious.

"If our present struggle were with nations unknown, or if we had to do with an enemy new to our swords, I should call to mind the example of other armies. At present what can I propose so bright and animating as your own exploits? I appeal to your own eyes. Behold the men drawn up against you. Are they not the same who last year, under the covert of the night, assaulted the ninth legion, and upon the first shout of our army fled before you? A band of dastards! who have subsisted hitherto, because of all Britons they are the most expeditious in running away! In woods and forests the fierce and noble animals attack the huntsmen, and rush on certain destruction, but the timorous herd is soon dispersed, scared by the sound and clamour of the chase. In like manner, the brave and warlike Britons have long since perished by the sword

The refuse of the nation alone exists. They have not remained to make head against you; they are hunted down; they are caught in the toils. Enervated with fear, they stand motionless on yonder spot, which you will render for ever memorable by a glorious victory. Here you may end your labours, and close a scene of fifty years by one great, one glorious day. Let your country see, and let the commonwealth bear witness, if the conquest of Britain has been a lingering work—if the seeds of rebellion have not been crushed, that we at least have done our duty."

When Agricola concluded his address, which was heard with the utmost enthusiasm, shouts of applause rent the air, and the soldiers grasped their arms, impatient for the onset. The general restrained their ardour till he formed the line of battle. The auxiliary infantry, about eight thousand in number, occupied the centre; the wings consisted of three thousand cavalry. The legions were stationed in the rear at the head of the intrenchments to support the ranks if necessary, but otherwise to remain inactive. To prevent the Caledonians making any impression on the flank, the front lines of the army were extended to a considerable length. The Roman camp was in two divisions, one for the auxiliaries, and the other for the cavalry. There were two camps in the adjacent country, from which Agricola drew together the main strength of his army.

It appears that the main body of the Caledonians took post on an acclivity of that part of the Grampian range where the battle was fought, their advanced lines stood at the foot of the hill, and the ranks rose in regular order one above another to the summit. Their charioteers and horsemen occupied the open plain, and rushed to and fro with wild velocity. The Caledonians, who, according to Tacitus, were in number thirty thousand, could not act with effect in close and narrow defiles, and it would seem that the field of battle was chosen by Galgacus to draw the Romans

into a contracted plain, and then pour down upon them from the high grounds of the Grampians. Yet Agricola, who was justly celebrated for his skill in choosing his ground, of which incontestible proofs remain at the present day, might also prefer a place where thirty thousand men could not at once attack an army greatly inferior in numbers; and in this he was successful, for we are told that the enormous swords of the Caledonians were of little use in an engagement in a confined space. We also find that though the plain was wide enough for their charioteers and cavalry, they were drawn into narrow passes, in the heart of the battle, and thus entangled among the inequalities of the ground, they could no longer act with vigour.

Some of Agricola's officers supposed that the length of the lines would weaken them, and advised that the legions should be brought forward, but the Roman general adhered steadily to his own arrangements. He dismounted, dismissed his horse, and took his stand at the head of the imperial colours. The battle began, and at first was maintained at a distance. The Caledonians evinced skill and resolution. With their long swords, and their small targets made of wood and covered with leather, they contrived to elude the missive weapons of the Romans, while they discharged a thick volley of their own. Agricola ordered three Batavian and two Tungrian cohorts to charge the Caledonians sword in hand—a mode of attack familiar to those troops, but most disadvantageous to their opponents, for the Caledonians fought with the edge of the sword, cutting and hewing the enemy, while the Romans made use of the point, which enabled them in close engagement completely to obtain the advantage. The small targets of the Caledonians afforded them no protection, and their broad unwieldy swords, not sharpened to a point, could do little damage in a close contest. It is worthy of remark that the Caledonians who fought on this occasion left the

fashion of their armour, as well as the example of their courage, to far distant posterity—the broadsword and the target having been long the peculiar and well known arms of the Scotish Highlanders. But these weapons were of no avail, for the impetuous Batavians, rushing with fury to the conflict, redoubled their blows, bruising the Caledonians on the face with the bosses of their shields. They soon overpowered all resistance on the plain, and began to force an ascent of the hills in regular order of battle. The other cohorts emulated their example, and cut their way with terrible slaughter. Eager in pursuit of victory, observes the historian, they pressed forward with determined fury, leaving behind them numbers wounded, but not slain, while others were not even hurt.

The Roman cavalry in the meantime was forced to give way. Their enemies rushed with their armed chariots into the thickest of the battle, where the infantry were engaged, and at first they excited a general terror. But this career was soon checked by the inequalities of the ground, and the close ranks of the Romans. Enclosed in narrow places, from which they could not extricate themselves, the Caledonians crowded upon each other, and were driven or dragged along by their own horses. A scene of irretrievable disorder ensued. Horses without riders, and chariots without guides, broke from the ranks, and flying whereever urged by fear and consternation, they overwhelmed their own files, and trampled down all who came in their way. Those of them who had hitherto kept their position on the hills began slowly to quit their station, with the intention of wheeling round the field of battle, and attacking the victors in the rear. Agricola ordered four squadrons of cavalry, which he had kept as a body of reserve, to counteract this movement. The Caledonians now poured down with impetuosity, and retired with the same precipitation. At the same time the cavalry,

by Agricola's direction, wheeled round from the wings, and falling with great slaughter on the rear of the Caledonians, completed the victory. The latter now fled, closely pursued by the Romans, who wounded, gashed, and mangled the fugitives, massacring their prisoners on the spot, to be ready for others.

The field presented a dreadful spectacle of carnage and destruction. In one part the Caledonians fled in crowds from handfuls of Romans, in other parts despair induced others to face every danger, and rush on certain death. Dead and mangled bodies, swords and bucklers, covered the plain, and the field was red with blood. Nevertheless the defeated Caledonians gave occasional proofs of heroism and brave despair. Some of them fled to the woods, and rallying their scattered numbers, surrounded such of the Romans as pursued with too much eagerness. Agricola, however, took precautions against this overweening confidence in success, by ordering the light armed cohorts to invest the woods, which caused the fugitives to retire in all directions. Night came on, and the Romans, weary of slaughter, desisted from the pursuit. No fewer than 10,000 of the Caledonians, including Galgacus and other chiefs, fell in this battle, while of the Romans only three hundred and forty were slain, among whom was Aulus Atheus, the prefect of a cohort. His ardour, and the spirit of a high-mettled horse, carried him with too much boldness into the thickest of the Caledonian ranks, where he was cut to pieces.

The Romans passed the night in exultation, while the unfortunate Caledonians wandered about helpless and in despair. The cries of women and children rent the air with lamentations. Some, says the historian, assisted to carry off the dead, others called those who had escaped unhurt to their assistance: numbers abandoned their habitations, or in their madness set them on fire. They fled to

obscure retreats, and which they in a moment capriciously deserted. They held consultations, and having inflamed their hopes, they changed their minds in despair; they beheld the pledges of tender affection, and burst into tears; they viewed them again, and grew fierce with resentment. It is a well authenticated fact, that some laid violent hands upon their wives and children, as if determined to end their misery.

The following day disclosed the nature and importance of the victory. A melancholy silence prevailed, the hills were deserted, houses at a distance were burning, not a human being was to be seen; and the whole district, which so lately teemed with the Caledonian warriors, was a vast and dreary solitude. Agricola was informed by those whom he had sent to explore the country, that no trace of the enemy was any where apparent, and that no attempt was made in any quarter to muster their forces. As the summer was far advanced, and the continuance of the war, or the extension of his operations, in consequence impracticable, he closed the campaign by marching into the country of the Horestians, most probably the county of Fife. The people submitted to the conqueror, and gave hostages for their fidelity. Agricola now led his army into winter-quarters, while his fleet sailed round the island of Great Britain, and returned in safety to its station in the Frith of Forth.

When the account of this victory was transmitted to Rome, the Emperor Domitian received it in the true spirit of his character, with a smile upon his countenance and malignity of heart. He began to dread that the name of a private citizen would overshadow his imperial title. He brooded in private over his discontent, and resolved to humiliate the man whom he thought had robbed him of renown in arms Circumstances had occurred which inflamed his resentment. While Agricola was employed in extending

the limits of the empire in Britain, Domitian went on his mock expedition into Germany, and returned without seeing the enemy. In imitation of the conduct of Caligula, he purchased a number of slaves, whom he ordered to let their hair grow and colour it, that they might pass for German prisoners of war. He felt the reproach and ridicule which that contemptible expedition occasioned, and it offered a sad contrast to a real victory, attended with the total overthrow of the enemy, and the applause of all ranks of men. Domitian in the meantime caused a decree to pass in the senate, awarding the usual marks of distinction to Agricola, but the imperial tyrant contrived to make this gallant commander resign the government of Britain in A.D. 85. The officer who succeeded is supposed to be Sallustius Lucullus, of whom nothing is known except that he invented lances of a new form, and gave them the name of *Lucullean*, which gave mortal offence to Domitian, who ordered him to be put to death.

Agricola proceeded to Rome, and lest his arrival in that city might draw together a concourse of people, he concealed his approach from his friends, and entered privately at midnight. With the same secrecy, and during the night, he went, as he was commanded, to present himself to the Emperor. Domitian received him with a cold salute, and without uttering a single word left the conqueror of Britain to mingle with the servile creatures of his court.

Such is the account of the Battle of the Grampians given by Tacitus, who was the son-in-law of Agricola, when the Roman eagles triumphed over the Caledonians. It is supposed that Galgacus fell in the battle, but if he be identified with Corbredus Galdus, the twenty-first King of the Scots, he died a natural death. In the parish of Kirkmabreck, in Kirkcudbrightshire, there is a heap of stones called the *Holy Cairn*, which tradition affirms is raised over the grave of Caldus. When many of the stones were carried off for

the purpose of building houses and dikes, there were discovered large stones placed together in the form of a chest or coffin, but on account of the roof stone being of prodigious magnitude it has never been removed. This stone stands in the centre, between two different places, about a hundred yards distant from it, where quantities of human bones have been buried.

The scene of the battle of the Grampians has been a subject of much antiquarian contention, which it would be out of place to introduce into the present narrative. Our only information is from Tacitus, who leaves us completely in the dark as to the locality. We are told that it was fought at the foot of the *Mons Grampius*, but every one knows that the Grampian Mountains traverse the whole extent of Scotland, from the vicinity of Aberdeen to the district of Cowal in Argyleshire. In this extensive range several places, considerably distant from each other, have been supposed to be the field of battle. It has been conjectured that when Agricola encountered Galgacus, the Roman legions were stationed at Meiklour. At the east end of the hill of Gourdie, in the parish of Clunie in Perthshire, there is a curious memorial of antiquity called the *Steeds stalls*. It consists of eight mounds, with eight corresponding trenches, and there may have been others now obliterated by the plough. These mounds and trenches are of equal length. It is said that an advanced guard of the Caledonian army was posted here, to watch the motions of the Romans, when they lay encamped at Inchtnthill, about two miles west of the plain below. The place called the *Steeds-stalls*, which is well adapted for such a purpose, lies on the summit of a rising ground looking directly northward on the declivities which the Caledonians are supposed to have occupied. This locality is nearly three miles south of the *Heer-cairns*, or the *Cairns of the Battle*—a number of cairns which have long attracted the notice of the curious,

on account of the remote and important transactions intimated by them.

One site supposed to be the scene of the battle is at Fortingall at the foot of Glenlyon, in the very centre of the Grampians, where the vestiges of a camp, apparently Roman, are still visible. A second site, which has the most numerous supporters, is Comrie, at the head of Strathearn, where there is a Roman camp. Fettercairn, or Stonehaven, in the county of Kincardine, is also selected as the locality of the field of battle. But to all these localities there are objections. It is not likely that such an experienced general as Agricola would advance so far from his fleet with his legions through defiles of mountains, and in a region of which he was utterly ignorant, and where he was liable to be surprised and cut off by a bold and resolute enemy; but the chief objection to Fortingall is, that it is too much hemmed in by high mountains, and in all respects too limited, to be the scene of such an extensive engagement as that described by Tacitus. The localities of Comrie are less circumscribed than those of Fortingall, but still the strath is narrow below and above, the mountains rise boldly from the vale, and the face of the country does not accord with the statements of the historian, as it would have been difficult to have brought into action the horse and the hook-armed chariots or cars of the Caledonians. At Comrie, moreover, the Roman army would have been too far distant from their fleet, which is supposed to have been riding at anchor in the mouth of the Tay. The Romans would have been at a convenient distance from their fleet in the neighbourhood of Fettercairn, supposing that it had passed the Red Head, and was hovering off the adjacent coast; but the bold, rocky, and dangerous coast of Angus and Mearns, from the Red Head to Stonehaven, would in all probability be shunned by the Roman fleet. The last locality maintained is the Heer-cairns already mentioned. "This,"

says the able author of the Statistical Account of the parish of Clunie, "appears to be at least as probable a scene as any of the other four. Agricola could not, perhaps, in all Strathmore have pitched upon a more favourable station for his legions than the large elevated plain comprehended between the Cleven Dyke and the confluence of the Tay and the Isla. It is at no great distance from the mouth of the Tay, where the Roman army, in case of a defeat, might have had easy access to their ships. It commands a distant view of the higher grounds of the Stormont to the north and north-west, and it looks directly westward on the entrance into the Highlands by Dunkeld, then the capital of the Caledonians, and in the vicinity of which we may suppose it would be natural for them to hold their general rendezvous on this occasion. In several parts of this neighbourhood, the surface of the ground exhibits a singular appearance of long hilly ridges, or *drums*, answering well to the *colles* of Tacitus, running parallel from west to east, and rising above one another like the seats of a theatre. These *colles*, or long extended eminences, rising gradually one above another, were well fitted for displaying the Caledonian army to the best advantage."

It is farther stated in favour of this locality, that there is a hill which still retains the name of *Crag-Roman*, to which Agricola's right wing might have extended, and where several Roman urns and spurs have been found. "The circumstance," continues the ingenious writer, "of *Roman spurs* being found there gives the more probability to the conjecture, because the wings of the Roman army consisted of the three thousand cavalry, who, as Tacitus expresses it, were widely extended on the wings to prevent the Romans from being attacked in flank. After the Batavian and Tungrian cohorts had begun to gain the heights, the Caledonians would fall back on their intrenchments above the *Heer-cairns*. It is possible, therefore, that

these cairns may be the very spot, where Agricola by a masterly manœuvre turned the stratagem of the Caledonians against themselves, and brought on the general rout. Then commenced that dreadful carnage, of which the *Heer-cairns* may be at this day an affecting memorial." It likewise appears from the disposition of the tumuli along the neighbouring hills, that the flight of the Caledonians previous to their general dispersion was principally by two different routes; the one north-west towards the woods of Strathardheil, and the other north-east towards those of Maur, where there is also a number of cairns, seemingly coeval with the others. In several of these have been dug up cinders and little pieces of human bones; and here it has been thought probable that Aulus Atticus, and some of the thirty-three Romans who fell with him in the battle, were burnt together in one funeral pile at the great cairn, which is about eighty or ninety yards in circumference, and in the centre of which cinders were turned up in 1792.