



NATIONAL WALLACE MONUMENT, STIRLING.

THE WALLACE MONUMENT.

BY JOHN MACFARLANE.

THE Wallace Monument and its site are so well described in a small volume published in 1861, when the foundation stone was laid by His Grace the Duke of Athole, Most Worshipful Grand Master Mason of Scotland, that we cannot do better than quote from it :—

“In our estimation,” writes the Rev. Dr. Rogers, who was one of the leading spirits in the movement, “it would be impossible to find a situation in all respects more suited for a national monument, or better adapted for a memorial cairn to the national hero. Abbey Craig is geographically in the centre of Scotland; it is likewise the centre of the Scottish battle-ground for civil and religious liberty. It overlooks the field of Stirling Bridge, where Wallace obtained his greatest victory; and the monument will surmount the spot where he is believed to have stood while surveying the legions of England crossing the bridge, in their path to destruction. This spot, the highest point of the Craig, is 360 feet above the level of the river Forth. Around is a scene of picturesque and ennobling character. A plain of the richest variety of landscape, and teeming with fertility, is guarded on the north and south by undulating hill ridges and pastoral heights, and bounded on the distant east and west by magnificent mountain ranges. Westward the stupendous Grampians, crested by the lofty Ben Lomond, raise their majestic forms against the horizon. Eastward, the view terminates on the sloping hills of Cleish and Saline. The scene beneath is singularly enchanting. It has certainly never been contemplated by the poet or painter without emotion. Every point is replete with interest. The most fastidious scenery-hunter would be gratified with such a combination of hill and dale, wood and water, ancient ruin and modern villa, landward culture and heathy sterility. On the west is Craigforth, foliage-clad, and standing forth in isolated majesty. There, a little to the north-west, is ‘the lofty brow of ancient Keir,’ celebrated by a poet, the seat of a poet, and the most poetical in its decorations of all Scottish country seats. Bridge of Allan, just two miles distant, ensconced under the umbrageous shelter of the wooded Ochils, is a picture of cleanliness and comfort. The undulating Ochil heights, ‘ever beauteous, ever new,’ extend their picturesque masses far to the north-east. Immediately beneath the Craig, and on the sloping

base of the Ochils, is Airthrey Castle, with its fine park and lake, once the seat of the noble Robert Haldane, now of the ennobled family of Abercromby. Villages fringe the base of the Ochils, far as the eye can reach, and the silvery Forth reposes, serpent-like, in the centre of the plain, having on both its banks a succession of elegant country seats. On a peninsula formed by the river, stands the hoary tower of Cambuskenneth, rejoicing in its seven centuries of age. Southward a few miles are seen the Gillies' Hill and the district of Bannockburn. The associations of the place," adds Dr. Rogers, "surpass even the glories of the prospect. Around is the conflict ground of Caledonian freedom, while the Craig seems a high altar, reared by Nature's hand, and consecrated a memorial of the nation's victories. In Airthrey Park was fought the engagement which gave the Scots supremacy over the ancient Picts.

"On the Craig's summit might have been heard the shout of victory raised by the army of Bruce after the glorious achievement at Bannockburn. At Sheriffmuir, on the north, one bloody day terminated the first attempt of the House of Stuart to regain possession of a throne forfeited by crime. Stirling and its Castle are fraught with reminiscences of stirring deeds. Every spot on the plain has been the scene of contention, and the present beauty of the prospect has doubtless been enhanced by carnage, which once imparted to the district an aspect of desolation."





WALLACE STATUE, NATIONAL WALLACE MONUMENT.

THE WALLACE MONUMENT.

(CONTINUED).

“THE design of the Monument is from the pencil of Mr. J. T. Rothead of Glasgow, a gentleman well and favourably known in his profession. It consists of what may be termed a Scottish baronial tower, two hundred feet high, and thirty-six feet square. The walls are massive, being fifteen feet thick at the base, and graduating from five to six feet at the top. At the east side of the Tower is a house for the person in charge of the Monument. An open court-yard, entered by a massive circular-arched gateway, having bold mouldings, separates the main building from the keeper's dwelling. Above the gateway are the heraldic arms of Sir William Wallace. Passing through the gateway into a stone-arched passage, a series of steps lead to an open octagonal winding staircase, projecting from the south-west angle of the Tower, and running up nearly its entire height. Arrowlet slits or lights pierce the walls of the staircase at intervals, almost to the summit of the square tower, and imitation ropework, with moulded angles, bind the walls externally. The staircase forms the approach to several spacious and lofty halls, designed for the reception of visitors, and the display of armour and other antiquarian relics illustrative of early national history. An imperial open crown of stone forms the apex of the Monument. This coronal top is upwards of fifty feet high, and is built of pure white sandstone. It comprises eight arms, from the angles and sides, all converging and abutting on the centre upon an open newel staircase, and forming a series of flying buttresses, broadly ribbed, having the spandrils filled in with open tracery. Crocketed pinnacles surmount the outer flanks of the buttresses, and some very effective sky lines are obtained by the openings of the crown.”

All patriotic Scotsmen should make it a point to visit Abbey Craig. Since the Tower was erected, a colossal statue, in bronze, of Wallace in the act of wielding his sword, has been placed in the niche in the south corner. In the third hall there are now handsome busts of King Robert the Bruce, Hugh Miller, George Buchanan, Thomas Chalmers, D.D., D.C.L., Adam Smith, Robert Burns, Robert Tannahill, David Livingstone, John Knox, James Watt, William Murdoch, Sir Walter Scott, and Thomas Carlyle. The chief attraction, however, is the sword of Sir William Wallace—

“That sword which seemed fit for archangel to wield,
But was light in his terrible hand.”

On the top landing of the Tower the visitor will find on each side a map of the country, describing the various points of interest which may be seen from this eminence. The court-yard contains a bust of the Rev. Dr. Rogers.