

THE BATTLE OF PHILIPHAUGH.

ETTRICK-WATER, immediately after being joined by the Yarrow, makes a gentle curving sweep to the right, steals insinuatingly along the base of a lofty bank on whose summit, at one point, stands the town of Selkirk, and leaves upon its left bank a beautiful haugh, a level plain, which extends north-eastward from a copse-clad hill called the Hareheadwood, to some high ground on the margin of the stream a little below Selkirk. This plain is Philiphaugh; it is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile in length, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile in mean breadth; and being defended on the one side, by the river, with its bulwark-fashioned bank, and over-

hung, on the other by a stretch of bold uplands, which intervene between the Yarrow and the Tweed, it possesses naturally, and on a grand scale, many of the securities and conveniences which were desiderated by the Romans in their camps.

On the 12th of September, 1645, the Marquis of Montrose, after he had won six splendid victories over the Covenanters, was in a state of embarrassment on his march southward to pour his conquering troops upon England, when Philiphaugh invited him to repose, and wooed him to destruction. Observing the advantageousness of the ground, he strengthened it with some trenches, and posted upon it his infantry, amounting to 1,200 or 1,500 men; and, seeing how near and accessibly to it stood the town of Selkirk, with its burghal accommodations, he there quartered his cavalry, and courted a night's freedom from a soldier's care. He did not on this occasion take those extraordinary precautions which he had been accustomed to do. It had always been his practice hitherto, to superintend in person the setting of the night watches, and to give instructions himself to the sentinels, and to the scouts he sent out to watch the motions of the enemy; but having important letters to write to the king, which he was desirous of sending off before the break of day by a trusty messenger, he entrusted these details to his cavalry officers, whom he exhorted to great vigilance, and to take care that the scouts kept a sharp look out for the enemy. Montrose had the utmost confidence in the wisdom and integrity of his officers, whose long experience in military affairs he had many times witnessed; and as there seemed to be no immediate danger, he thought that, for one night at least, he could safely leave the direction of affairs to such men.

While occupied during the night preparing his despatches for the king, Montrose received several loose reports, from time to time, respecting the alleged movements of the enemy, of which he sent due notice to his officers; but he was as

often assured, both by the reports of his officers and of the scouts, that not a vestige of an enemy was to be seen. Thus the night passed without any apparent foundation for the supposition that the enemy was at hand; and to make assurance doubly sure, some of the fleetest of the cavalry were sent out at break of day to reconnoitre. On their return, they stated that they had examined with care all the roads and passes for ten miles round, and solemnly averred that there was not the least appearance of an enemy within the range they had just scoured. Yet singular as the fact may appear, General David Leslie was lying at that very time at Melrose, with four thousand horse, within six miles of Montrose's camp.

It appears that about the time of Montrose's approach to Philiphaugh, Leslie, who had a few days before crossed the Tweed at Berwick, held a council of war on Gladsmuir in East Lothian, at which it was determined that he should proceed towards Stirling to cut off Montrose's retreat to the Highlands, whither it was supposed that he meant instantly to retire, for the purpose of obtaining reinforcements. But the council had scarcely risen, when letters were brought to Leslie, communicating to him the low and impaired state of Montrose's forces, and his design of marching into Dumfriesshire to procure an accession of strength. On receiving this intelligence, Leslie abandoned his plan of marching northward; and, ordering his army to turn to the left, he immediately marched to the south, and, entering the vale of Gala, proceeded to Melrose, where he took up his quarters for the night, intending to attack Montrose's little band next morning, in the hope of annihilating it altogether. Who the person was who made the communication in question to the covenanting general, is a point which has never been ascertained. Both Wishart and Guthrie suspect that he was the earl of Traquair; and they rest their conjecture upon the simple circumstance of his having withdrawn during the night,

(without acquainting Montrose,) the troop of horse under his son, Lord Linton.

But the most extraordinary and unaccountable circumstance which preceded the battle of Philiphaugh, was this, that although Leslie was within six miles of Montrose's camp, neither the scouts nor the cavalry, who are stated to have scoured the country four miles beyond the place where Leslie lay, could discover, as they reported, any traces of him. Did the scouts deceive Montrose, or did they not proceed in the direction of Leslie's camp, or did they confine their perambulations within a more limited range? These are questions which it is impossible to answer with any degree of certainty. But what is to be said of the cavalry who having made their observations at daybreak, and confessedly several miles beyond the enemy's camp, returned as luckless as the midnight scouts? The only plausible answer that can be given to this question is, either that they had not visited the neighbourhood of Melrose, or that a thick mist, which prevailed on the morning of the thirteenth of September, had obscured the enemy from their view. However, be this as it may, certain it is that, owing to the thickness of the fog, Leslie was enabled to advance, unobserved, till he came within half a mile of Montrose's head quarters. Or as the old ballad says,—though with an error in the numbers:—

“ Sir David frae the border came,
 Wi' heart an' hand came he;
 Wi' him three thousand bonny Scots,
 To bear him company.

Wi' him three thousand valiant men,
 A noble sight to see!
 A cloud o' mist them well conceal'd,
 As close as e'er might be.”

On the alarm occasioned by Leslie's sudden and unexpected

appearance, Montrose instantly sprang upon the first horse that he met, and galloped off to his camp. On his arrival, he found that all his men, though the hour was very early, had risen, but that considerable disorder prevailed in the camp in consequence of preparations they were making for an immediate march into Dumfries-shire in terms of instructions they had received the previous evening. The cavalry, however, were quite dismounted, some of the officers were absent, and their horses were scattered through the adjoining fields taking their morning repast. Short as the time was for putting his small band in a defensive position, Montrose acted with his accustomed presence of mind; and before Leslie commenced his attack, Montrose had succeeded in drawing up his men in order of battle, in the position which they had occupied the preceding night. Nothing but self-preservation, on which the cause of the king, his master, was chiefly dependant, could have justified Montrose in attempting to resist the powerful force now about to assail him. With about a thousand foot and five hundred horse, the greater part of which was composed of raw and undisciplined levies hastily brought into the field, and lukewarm in the cause, he had to resist the attack of a body of about six thousand veteran troops, chiefly English cavalry, who had distinguished themselves at the battle of Marston-moor, who, though they could make no addition to their laurels by defeating such a handful of men, may be supposed to have been especially desirous of annihilating the remains of an army which had been so long formidable and victorious.

The covenanting general began the battle by charging Montrose's right wing, consisting of horse, with the great body of his cavalry; but so firmly was the charge received by the brave cavaliers with Montrose at their head, that the assailants were forced to retire with loss. A second charge met a similar fate. Thus foiled in their attempts on the right, they next attacked Montrose's left wing, consisting of

foot, which, after a gallant resistance, retired a little up the face of the hill, where it was posted, to avoid the attacks of the cavalry. While this struggle was going on on the left, a body of two thousand of the covenanting foot which had made a circuitous route, appeared in the rear of the right wing, which they attacked. The right wing not being able to resist this force, and apprehensive that a new attack would be made upon them by the enemy's cavalry, and that they would thus be surrounded and perhaps cut to pieces, fled from the field. The foot who had taken up a position on the side of the hill, being thus abandoned to their fate, surrendered themselves as prisoners of war after a slight resistance. The ballad already quoted says respecting the method and success of Leslie's onset:—

“ He halv'd his men in equal parts,
 His purpose to fulfil;
 The one part kept the water side,
 The other gaed round the hill.

The nether party fired brisk,
 Then turn'd and seem'd to rin;
 And then they a' came frae the trench,
 And cry'd, ‘ The day's our ain!’

The rest then ran into the trench,
 And loos'd their cannons a',
 And thus, between his armies twa,
 He made them fast to fa'.

Now, let us a' for Leslie pray,
 And his brave company!
 For they hae vanquish'd great Montrose,
 Our cruel enemy.”

Montrose was still on the field with about thirty brave

cavaliers, and witnessed the rout of one part of his army and the surrender of another with the most poignant feelings of regret. He might have instantly retreated with safety, but he could not brook the idea of running away, and, therefore, resolved not to abandon the post of honour, but to fight to the last extremity, and to sell his life as dearly as possible. It was not long before he and his little army were nearly surrounded by the enemy, who kept pressing so hard upon him, and in such numbers, as almost to preclude the possibility of escape. Yet they did not venture to attack Montrose and his brave associates in a body, but in detached parties, every one of which was successively repulsed with loss. As they grew tired of attacking him, and seemed to be more intent upon plundering his baggage than capturing his person, Montrose saw that the danger was not so great as he supposed, and, therefore, he began to reflect upon the folly of sacrificing his life so long as a ray of hope remained. He had lost a battle no doubt; but in this there was no dishonour when the disparity of his force with that of Leslie's was considered. Besides he had lost few of his men, and the Highlanders, on whom he chiefly relied, were still entire, and were ready to take the field as soon as he appeared again among them. And as to the effect which such a defeat might be supposed to have upon the adherents of the King, who were still numerous and powerful, it could be easily removed as soon as they saw him again at the head of a fresh force; and he could only expect to retrieve the present state of affairs by escaping from the present danger and raising new troops; but if he rashly sacrificed his life, the King's affairs might be irretrievably ruined. These reflections being seconded by the Marquis of Douglas and a few trusty friends, who implored him not to throw away a life so valuable to the King and to the country, Montrose resolved to consult his safety by an immediate flight. Putting himself, therefore, at the head of his troop, he cut his way through the enemy, without the loss of a single

man. . They were pursued by a party of horse, some of whom they killed, and actually carried off one Bruce, a captain of horse, and two standard-bearers, with their ensigns, as prisoners. Montrose went in the direction of Peebles, which he entered about sunset; and here he was joined by most of his horse and part of his infantry: but some of his officers who had mistaken their way, or fled in a different direction, were seized by the country people, and delivered over to Leslie. Among these were the Earl of Hartfell, the Lords Drummond and Ogilvie, Sir Robert Spottiswood, Sir Alexander Leslie of Auchintoul, Sir William Rollock, Sir Philip Nisbet, the Honourable William Murray, brother to the Earl of Tulliebardine, Alexander Ogilvie of Inverquharity, Colonel Nathaniel Gordon and Mr. Andrew Guthry son of the bishop of Moray. Montrose did not tarry long in Peebles, but departed from it early the following morning; and crossing the Clyde at a ford shown him by Sir John Dalziel, where he was, to his great joy, joined by the Earls of Crawford and Airly, and other noblemen who had effected their escape by a different route, he proceeded rapidly to the north, and entered Athole, after despatching the Marquis of Douglas and the Earl of Airly into Angus, and Lord Erskine into Mar, to raise forces.

Leslie is accused by most historians of having abused his victory and dishonoured his arms by slaughtering in cold blood a large number of his prisoners; and he is said by some to have gone so systematically to work as to order them to be tied up to a stake and shot; and his army are also accused of having savagely murdered a great many Irish fugitives, particularly the wives and children of Montrose's soldiers, both in the vicinity of Philiphaugh immediately after the battle and at the Bridge of Avon, near Linlithgow, when the victorious army was on its march to Glasgow. But though some perfidies and cruelties and murders seem undoubtedly to have been perpetrated, they manifestly were neither so numerous nor so

awfully cold-blooded as at least the Stuart-loving portion of the historians represent; nor can they for a moment be compared to the tremendous atrocities which the conquering royalists perpetrated at Kilsyth and on other occasions of victory over the Covenanters.

A Convention of the estates held at Glasgow soon after the battle of Philiphaugh, voted Leslie fifty thousand merks and a gold chain, and Middleton, the second in command, twenty-five thousand merks, for their services. Montrose lost at Philiphaugh the fruit of all his previous six splendid victories, and was so maimed and crushed as never again to become able to make any effectual head against the Covenanters. Upwards of a mile south-west of the present farm-stead of Philiphaugh, and overhanging the Yarrow immediately above its confluence with the Ettrick, there are still traces of an intrenchment thrown up by Montrose. Two miles further up the Yarrow, close to the ruin of Newark castle, is a field called Slain-man's-lee, which tradition points out as the scene of the alleged slaughter of the prisoners of war by the victorious army. In Selkirk the house is still standing which was occupied by Montrose on the night of his ill-judged security.