

## BATTLE ON THE BOROUGHMUIR OF EDINBURGH.●

A D. 1335.

THE Boroughmuir of Edinburgh is a well-known locality in the south-western vicinity of the city. This extensive tract, now in fine cultivation, and adorned with many elegant villas, stretches from the upper part of the common called Burntsfield Links, towards Braid Hill and the base of the Pentlands, and is repeatedly mentioned in history as one of the chief places for mustering the Scottish armies. It was one time so thickly covered with wood, that in order to clear it free permission was given by the Magistrates to the citizens to cut down and carry away as much timber as they pleased, and many of the curious old wooden tenements in the Lawnmarket, Castle Hill, and High Street of Edinburgh, are constructed of the timber which once luxuriantly covered the Boroughmuir.

In 1335, Edward III. invaded Scotland by the West Marches, crossing the Solway, while his fleet, with provisions and military stores, entered the Frith of Forth on the other side of the island. Soon after the march of the King of England into Scotland, and while he was encamped at Perth, expecting the assistance of the Earl of Athole, Guy Count of Namur landed on the 30th of July at Berwick

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\* Hailes' Annals of Scotland; Fordun's Scotichronicon; Rymer's Fœdera; Arnot's History of Edinburgh.

with a considerable body of foreign troops, chiefly from Flanders, in the service of the English. The Count intended to join Edward at Perth, and imagining that the English king had left no enemies in his rear, he marched towards Edinburgh, at that time without defences, and its castle dismantled. He had scarcely arrived at the city in his way to Perth, when the Earls of Moray and March, the latter the husband of the celebrated Countess of March and Dunbar, called *Black Agnes*, whom he left in charge of his castle of Dunbar, and Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, encountered him with a chosen body of resolute followers, on the Boroughmuir. The Count and his followers fought with such bravery, that the Scots would have been defeated, if a reinforcement collected by William Douglas had not come opportunely to their assistance. A Scottish gentleman, named Richard Shaw, was singled out by a combatant in the troops of the Count of Namur. They both fell transfixed with each other's spears, and when the body of the Flemish soldier was stripped of the armour, the gallant stranger was discovered to be a *woman*! The Scots were about to yield when Douglas rushed from the direction of the Pentland Hills with his reinforcement, and revived by his timely aid the drooping courage of his countrymen.

The victory was no longer doubtful, and the Count of Namur was compelled to retire from the Boroughmuir, leaving the Scots in possession of the scene of battle, and of the adjacent heights of Blackford, Braid, and Craig-Lockhart. The Flemish auxiliaries retreated to the neighbouring city, fighting gallantly, and hotly pressed by the Earl of Moray. Part of them were driven over the ground now known as Bristo Port, and rushing down the street called the Candlemaker Row, with the Count of Namur at their head, succeeded in gaining the Castle, amid the ruins of which they took refuge. The rest fled over the fields now covered by streets and squares in the southern districts of the city,

and entered it by St Mary's Wynd, but in that narrow lane they were encountered by Sir David Annand, a gallant Scottish knight, and suffered great slaughter, Those of them who escaped joined their companions intrenched amid the ruins of the castle.

The position which the Count and his followers now occupied was secure, and could have been easily maintained by a small party of soldiers, but he had no accommodation for his men, and he was destitute of provisions. He ordered all his horses to be killed, and formed a sort of rampart with their carcasses to defend his men from the Scots, who were closely besieging him; but hunger and thirst compelled him to capitulate on the following day, requiring no other stipulation than that they should not be put to the sword. To this the Earl of Moray readily assented, and allowed the Count and his followers to depart, after exacting from all of them a promise that they would never again bear arms against David II. in Scotland.

The Earl of Moray not only paid due respect to the valour of the strangers, but escorted Count Guy of Namur to the Borders, accompanied by William Douglas and his brother James Douglas. According to Fordun, this courtesy was displayed by Moray, because he imagined it would be agreeable to Philip, King of France, to whom the Count was nearly related. Be that as it may, the Earl was by no means rewarded for his complaisance, for on his return from escorting the Count out of the Scottish territories, he was attacked by William de Pressen, Warden of the castle and forest of Jedburgh, routed, and taken prisoner, and his friend James Douglas was slain. The Earl of Moray was carried into England, and committed to the custody of the sheriff of York, from whom he was transferred to the castle of Nottingham, and then successively removed to Windsor, Winchester, and the Tower of London, and he did not recover his liberty till 1341, when he was exchanged for the

Earl of Salisbury, then a prisoner in France. Edward III. soon afterwards rebuilt the Castle of Edinburgh, and strongly garrisoned it. He rewarded the good services of William de Pressen by a grant of the estate of Edrington near Berwick, until he should be provided with twenty pounds of land yearly at some other place.

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