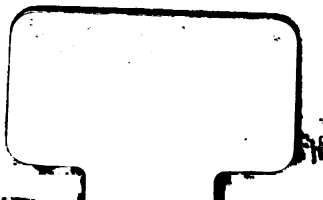

Drawn by W Allan R A. Engd

HUGH LITTLEJOHN

AT HIS GRANDFATHERS GATE.

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER.

BEING STORIES FROM

THE

HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

VOL. I.

PRINTED FOR CADELL & CO.
EDINBURGH.

1828.

TALES

OF

A GRANDFATHER;

BEING

STORIES

TAKEN FROM

SCOTTISH HISTORY.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED

TO

HUGH LITTLEJOHN, Esq.

IN THREE VOLS.

VOL. I.

PRINTED FOR CADELL AND CO. EDINBURGH;
SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, LONDON; AND
JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN.

1828.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO.

PREFACE.

These Tales were written in the interval of other avocations, for the use of the young Relative to whom they are inscribed. They embrace at the same time some attempt at a general view of Scottish History, with a selection of its more picturesque and prominent points. Having been found useful to the young Person for whom the compilation was made, they are now given to the Public, in the hope that they may be a source of instruction for others. The compilation, though professing to be only Tales, or Narratives from the Scottish Chronicles, will, nevertheless, be found to contain a general idea of the history of that Country, from the period when it has general interest.

The Compiler may here mention, that, after commencing his task in a manner obvious to the most limited capacity, of which the Tale of Macbeth is an example, he was led to take a different view of the subject, by finding that a style considerably more elevated was more interesting to his juvenile reader. There is no harm, but on the contrary there is benefit, in presenting a child with ideas somewhat beyond his easy and immediate comprehension. The difficulties thus offered, if not too great or too frequent, stimulate curiosity, and encourage exertion.

ABBOTSFORD,
10*th Oct.* 1827.

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BEING

STORIES

TAKEN FROM

SCOTTISH HISTORY.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED

TO

HUGH LITTLEJOHN, ESQ.

DEDICATION.

TO HUGH LITTLEJOHN, ESQ.

MUCH RESPECTED SIR,

ALTHOUGH I have not yet arrived at the reverend period of life which may put me once more on a level with yours, yet I find myself already better pleased to seek an auditor of your age, who is usually contented to hear the same story repeated twenty times over, than to attempt instructing the more critical hearers among my contemporaries, that are

apt to object to any tale twice told. It is, therefore, probable that had we been to remain near to each other, I should have repeated to you many of the stories contained in this book more than once. But, since that has ceased to be the case, I have nothing remaining save to put them in this shape, in which you may read them over as often as you have a mind.

I have in this little book imitated one with which you are well acquainted,—I mean the collection of Stories taken from the History of England, and which has been so deservedly popular.

As you, however, happen to be a person of quick study, and great penetration, it is my purpose to write a little work, which may not only be useful to you at the age of five or six years, which I think may be about your woship's

present period of life, but which may not be beneath your attention, either for style or matter, at the graver term of eight, or even ten years old. When, therefore, you find anything a little too hard for you to understand at this moment, you must consider that you will be better able to make out the sense a year or two afterwards; or perhaps you may make a great exertion, and get at the meaning, just as you might contrive to reach something placed upon a high shelf, by standing on your tiptoes, instead of waiting till you grow a little taller. Or who knows but papa will give you some assistance, and that will be the same as if he set you upon a stool that you might reach down what you wanted.

And so farewell, my dear Hugh Lit-

tlejohn. If you should grow wiser and better from what you read in this book, it will give great pleasure to your very affectionate

GRANDFATHER.

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER.

CHAP. I.

How Scotland and England came to be separate Kingdoms.

ENGLAND is the southern, and Scotland is the northern part of the celebrated island called Great Britain. England is greatly larger than Scotland, and the ground is much richer, and produces better crops. There are also a great many more men in England, and both the gentlemen and the country people are richer, and have better food and clothing there than in Scotland.

Scotland, on the contrary, is full of hills, and huge moors and wildernesses, which

bear no corn, and afford but little food for flocks of sheep or herds of cattle. But the level ground that lies along the great rivers is more fertile, and produces good crops. The natives of Scotland are accustomed to live more hardily in general than those of England.

Now, as these two nations live in the different ends of the same island, and are separated by large and stormy seas from other parts of the world, it seems natural that they should have been friendly to each other, and that they should have lived under the same government. Accordingly, about two hundred years ago, the King of Scotland becoming King of England, as I will tell you in another part of this book, the two nations have ever since then been joined into one great kingdom, which is called Great Britain.

But, before this happy union of England and Scotland, there were many long, cruel, and bloody wars, between the two nations; and, far from helping or assisting each other, as became good neighbours and friends, they

did each other all the harm and injury that they possibly could, by invading each other's territories, killing their subjects, burning their towns, and taking their wives and children prisoners. This lasted for many many hundred years, and I am about to tell you the reason why the land was so divided.

A long time since, eighteen hundred years ago and more, there was a brave and warlike people, called the Romans, who undertook to conquer the whole world, and subdue all countries, so as to make their own city of Rome the head of all the nations upon the face of the earth. And after conquering far and near, at last they came to Britain, and made a great war upon the inhabitants, called the British, or Britons, whom they found living there. The Romans, who were a very brave people, and well armed, beat the British, and took possession of almost all the flat part of the island, which is now called England, and also of a part of the south of Scotland. But they could not make their way into the high northern mountains of

Scotland, where they could hardly get anything to feed their soldiers, and where they met with much opposition from the inhabitants.

Then the wild people of Scotland, whom the Romans had not been able to subdue, began to come down from their mountains, and make inroads upon that part of the country which had been conquered by the Romans.

These people of Scotland were not one nation, but two, called the Scots and the Picts; they often fought against each other, but they always joined together against the Romans and the Britons, who had been subdued by them. At length, the Romans thought they would prevent these Picts and Scots from coming into the southern part of Britain, and laying it waste. For this purpose, they built a very long wall between the one side of the island and the other, so that none of the Scots or Picts should come into the country on the south side of the wall; and they made towers on the wall, and camps, with soldiers, from place to place;

so that, at the least alarm, the soldiers might hasten to defend any part of the wall which was attacked. This first Roman wall was built between the two great Friths of the Clyde and the Forth, just where the island of Britain is at the narrowest, and some parts of it are to be seen at this day. You can see it on the map.

The wall defended the Britons for a time, and the Scots and Picts were shut out from the fine rich land, and enclosed within their own mountains. But they were very much displeased with this, and assembled themselves in great numbers, and climbed over the wall in spite of all that the Romans could do to oppose them. A man of the name of Grahame is said to have been the first soldier who got over, and the common people still call the remains of the wall Grahame's dike.

Now the Romans, finding that this first wall could not keep out the Barbarians, (for so they called the Picts and the Scots,) thought they would give up a large portion of the country to them, and perhaps it

might make them quiet. So they built a new wall, and a much stronger one than the first, sixty miles farther back from the Picts and Scots. Yet the Barbarians made as many furious attacks to get over this second wall as ever they had done to break through the former. But the Roman soldiers defended the second wall so well, that the Scots and Picts could not break through it, though they often came round the end of the wall by sea, in boats made of ox hides stretched upon hoops, landed on the other side, and did very much mischief. In the meantime, the poor Britons led a very unhappy life; for the Romans, when they subdued their country, had taken away all their arms, and they had lost the habit of using them, or of defending themselves, and trusted entirely to the protection of the Romans.

But at this time great quarrels, and confusion, and wars, took place at Rome. So the Roman Emperor sent to the soldiers whom he had maintained in Britain, and

ordered that they should immediately return to their own country, and leave the Britons to defend their wall as well as they could, against their unruly and warlike neighbours, the Picts and Scots. The Roman soldiers were very sorry for the poor Britons, but they could do no more to help them than by repairing the wall of defence. They therefore built it all up, and made it as strong as if it were quite new. And then they took to their ships, and left the island.

After the departure of the Romans, the Britons were quite unable to protect the wall against the Barbarians; for, since their conquest by the Romans, they had become a weak and cowardly people. So the Picts and the Scots wasted and destroyed their country, and took away their boys and girls to be slaves, and seized upon their sheep, and upon their cattle, and burnt their houses, and did them every sort of mischief. Thus at last the Britons, finding themselves quite unable to resist these barbarous people, invited into Britain to their assistance

a number of men from Germany, who were called Anglo-Saxons. Now, these were a very brave and warlike people, and they came in their ships from Germany, and landed in the south part of Britain, and helped the Britons to fight with the Scots and Picts, and drove them back again into the hills and fastnesses of their own country, to the north of the wall which the Romans built; and they were never afterwards so troublesome to their neighbours.

But the Britons were not much the better for the defeat of their northern enemies; for the Saxons, when they had come into Britain, and saw what a beautiful rich country it was, and how the people were not able to defend it, resolved to take the land to themselves, and to make the Britons their slaves and servants. The Britons were very unwilling to have their country taken from them by the people they had called in to help them, and so strove to oppose them; but the Saxons were stronger and more warlike than they, and defeated them so

often, that they at last got possession of all the level and flat land in the south part of Britain. However, the bravest part of the Britons fled into a very hilly part of Britain, which is called Wales, and there they defended themselves against the Saxons for a great many years; and their descendants still speak the ancient British language, called Welsh. In the meantime, the Anglo-Saxons spread themselves throughout all the south part of Britain, and the name of the country was changed, and it was no longer called Britain, but England; which means the land of the Anglo-Saxons, who had conquered it.

While the Saxons and Britons were thus fighting together, the Scots and the Picts, after they had been driven back behind the Roman wall, also quarrelled and fought between themselves; and at last, after a great many battles, the Scots got completely the better of the Picts. The common people say that the Scots destroyed them entirely; but I think it is not likely that they could kill such great numbers of people. Yet it is

certain they must have slain many, and driven others out of the country, and made the rest their servants and slaves; at least the Picts were never heard of in history after these great defeats, and the Scots gave their own name to the north part of Britain, as the Angles, or Anglo-Saxons, did to the south part: and so came the name of Scotland, the land of the Scots; and England, the land of the English. The two kingdoms were divided from each other, first by the river Tweed, then by a great range of hills and wildernesses, and then by a branch of the sea called the Frith of Solway. The division is not very far from the old Roman wall. The wall itself has been long suffered to go to ruins; but, as I have already said, there are some parts of it still standing, and it is curious to see how it runs as straight as an arrow over high hills, and through great bogs and morasses.

You see, therefore, that Britain was divided between three different nations, who were enemies to each other.—There was England, which was the richest and best part

of the island, and which was inhabited by the English. Then there was Scotland, full of hills and great lakes, and difficult and dangerous precipices, wild heaths, and great morasses. This country was inhabited by the Scots, or Scottish men. And there was Wales, where the remains of the ancient British had fled, to obtain safety from the Saxons.

The Welsh defended their country for a long time, but the English got possession of it at last. But they were not able to become masters of Scotland, though they tried it very often. The two countries were under different kings, who fought together very often and very desperately; and thus you see the reason why England and Scotland, though making parts of the same island, were for a long time great enemies to each other. Papa will show you the two countries on the map, and you must take notice how Scotland is all full of hills, and wild moors covered with heather.—But now I think upon it, Mr Hugh Littlejohn is a traveller, and has seen

Scotland and England too with his own eyes. However, it will do no harm to look at the map.

The English are very fond of their fine country; they call it Old England, and think it the finest land that the sun shines upon. And the Scots are also very proud of their own country, with its great lakes and mountains; and, in the old language of the country, they call it "The land of the lakes and mountains, and the brave men;" and often, also, the Land of Cakes, because the people live a good deal upon cakes made of oatmeal, instead of wheaten bread. But both England and Scotland are now parts of the same kingdom, and there is no use in asking which is the best country, or has the bravest men.

This is but a dull chapter, Mr Littlejohn. But as we are to tell many stories about Scotland and England, it is best to learn what sort of countries we are talking about. The next story shall be more entertaining.

CHAP. II.

The Story of Macbeth.

Soon after the Scots and Picts had become one people, as I told you before, there was a King of Scotland called Duncan, a very good old man. He had two sons; one was called Malcolm, and the other Donald-bane. But King Duncan was too old to lead out his army to battle, and his sons were too young to help him.

At this time Scotland, and indeed France and England, and all the other countries of Europe, were much harassed by the Danes. These were a very fierce, warlike people, who sailed from one place to another and

landed their armies on the coast, burning and destroying everything wherever they came. They were heathens, and did not believe in the Bible, but thought of nothing but battle and slaughter, and making plunder. When they came to countries where the inhabitants were cowardly, they took possession of the land, as I told you the Saxons took possession of Britain. At other times, they landed with their soldiers, took what spoil they could find, burned the houses, and then got on board, hoisted sails, and away again. They did so much mischief, that people put up prayers to God in the churches to deliver them from the rage of the Danes.

Now, it happened in King Duncan's time, that a great fleet of these Danes came to Scotland and landed their men in Fife, and threatened to take possession of that province. So a numerous Scottish army was levied to go to fight with them. The King, as I told you, was too old to command his army, and his sons were too young. So he

sent out one of his near relations, who was called Macbeth; he was son of Finel, who was Thane, as it was called, of Glamis. The governors of provinces were at that time, in Scotland, called Thanes; they were afterwards termed Earls.

This Macbeth, who was a brave soldier, put himself at the head of the Scottish army, and marched against the Danes. And he carried with him a relation of his own, called Banquo, who was Thane of Lochaber, and was also a very brave man. So there was a great battle fought between the Danes and the Scots, and Macbeth and Banquo defeated the Danes, and drove them back to their ships, leaving a great many of their soldiers both killed and wounded. Then Macbeth and his army marched back to a town in the North of Scotland, called Forres, rejoicing on account of their victory.

Now there lived at this time three old women in the town of Forres, whom people thought were witches, and supposed they could tell what was to come to pass. No-

body would believe such folly now-a-days, except low and ignorant creatures, such as those who consult gipsies in order to have their fortunes told; but in those early times the people were much more ignorant, and even great men, like Macbeth, believed that such persons as these witches of Forres could tell what was to come to pass afterwards, and listened to the nonsense they told them, as if the old women had really been prophetesses. The old women saw that they were respected and feared, so that they were tempted to impose upon people, by pretending to tell what was to happen to them, and they got presents for doing so.

So the three old women went and stood by the wayside, in a great moor or heath near Forres, and waited till Macbeth came up. And then, stepping before him as he was marching at the head of his soldiers, the first woman said, "All hail, Macbeth—hail to thee, Thane of Glamis." The second said, "All hail, Macbeth—hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor." Then the third, wishing to pay

him a higher compliment than the other two, said, "All hail, Macbeth, that shall be King of Scotland." Macbeth was very much surprised to hear them give him these titles; and while he was wondering what they could mean, Banquo stepped forward, and asked them whether they had nothing to tell about him as well as about Macbeth. And they said that he should not be so great as Macbeth, but that though he himself should never be a king, yet his children should succeed to the throne of Scotland, and be kings for a great number of years.

Before Macbeth was recovered from his surprise, there came a messenger to tell him that his father was dead, so that he was become Thane of Glamis by inheritance. And there came a second messenger from the King, to thank Macbeth for the great victory over the Danes, and tell him that the Thane of Cawdor had rebelled against the King, and that the King had taken his office from him, and had sent to make Macbeth Thane of Cawdor as well as Glamis. Thus

the two first old women seemed to be right in giving him these two titles. I dare say they knew something of the death of Macbeth's father, and that the government of Cawdor was intended for Macbeth, though he had not heard of it.

However, Macbeth seeing a part of their words come to be true, began to think how he was to bring the rest to pass, and make himself King, as well as Thane of Glamis and Cawdor. And Macbeth had a wife, who was a very ambitious wicked woman, and when she found out that her husband thought of raising himself up to be King of Scotland, she encouraged him by all means in her power, and persuaded him that the only way to get possession of the crown was to kill the good old king, Duncan. Macbeth was very unwilling to commit so great a crime, for he knew what a good king Duncan had been, and he recollected how he was his relation, and had been always very kind to him, and had intrusted him with the command of his army, and had

bestowed on him the government or Thanedom of Cawdor. But his wife continued telling him what a foolish cowardly thing it was in him not to take the opportunity of making himself King, when it was in his power to gain what the witches promised him. So the wicked advice of his wife, and the prophecy of these wretched old women, at last brought Macbeth to think of murdering his King and his friend. The way in which he accomplished his crime, made it still more abominable.

Macbeth invited Duncan to come to visit him, at a great castle near Inverness; and the good King, who had no suspicions of his kinsman, accepted the invitation very willingly. Macbeth and his lady received the King and all his retinue with much appearance of joy, and made a great feast, as a subject would do to make his King welcome. About the middle of the night, the King desired to go to his apartment, and Macbeth conducted him to a fine room, which had been prepared for him. Now,

it was the custom, in those barbarous times, that wherever the King slept, two armed men slept in the same chamber, in order to defend his person, in case he should be attacked by any one during the night. But the wicked Lady Macbeth had made these two watchmen drink a great deal of wine, and had besides put some drugs into the liquor, so that when they went to the King's apartment they both fell asleep, and slept so soundly, that nothing could awaken them.

Then the cruel Macbeth came into King Duncan's bed-room about two in the morning. It was a terrible stormy night; but the noise of the wind and of the thunder could not awaken the King, as he was old and weary with his journey; neither could it awaken the two sentinels. They all slept soundly. So Macbeth having come into the room, and stepped gently over the floor, he took the two dirks which belonged to the sentinels, and stabbed poor old King Duncan to the heart, and that so effectually, that he died without giving even a groan. Then

Macbeth put the bloody daggers into the hands of the sentinels, and he daubed their faces over with blood, that it might appear as if they had committed the murder. Macbeth was frightened at what he had done, but his wife made him wash his hands and go to bed.

Early in the morning, the nobles and gentlemen who attended on the King, assembled in the great hall of the castle, and there they began to talk of what a dreadful storm it had been the night before. But Macbeth could scarcely understand what they said, for he was thinking on something much worse and more frightful than the storm, and was wondering what would be said when they heard of the murder. They waited for some time, but finding the King did not come from his apartment, one of the noblemen went to see whether he was well or not. But when he came into the room, he found poor King Duncan lying stiff, and cold, and bloody, and the two sentinels, with their dirks or daggers covered with

blood, both fast asleep. As soon as the Scottish nobles saw this terrible sight, they were greatly astonished and enraged; and Macbeth made believe as if he were more enraged than any of them, and, drawing his sword, before any one could prevent him, he killed the two attendants of the King, who slept in the bed-chamber, pretending to think they had been guilty of murdering King Duncan.

When Malcolm and Donaldbane, the two sons of the good King, saw their father slain in this strange manner within Macbeth's castle, they became afraid that they might be put to death likewise, and fled away out of Scotland; for notwithstanding all the excuses which he could make, they still believed that Macbeth had killed their father. Donaldbane fled into some distant islands, but Malcolm, the eldest son of Duncan, went to the court of England, where he begged for assistance from the English King, to place him on the throne of Scotland as his father's successor.

In the meantime, Macbeth took possession of the kingdom of Scotland, and thus all his wicked wishes seemed to be fulfilled. But he was not happy. He began to reflect how wicked he had been in killing his friend and benefactor, and how some other person, as ambitious as he was himself, might do the same thing to him. He remembered, too, that the old women had said, that the children of Banquo should succeed to the throne after his death, and therefore he concluded that Banquo might be tempted to conspire against him, as he had himself done against King Duncan. The wicked always think other people are as bad as themselves. In order to prevent this supposed danger, he hired ruffians to watch in a wood, where Banquo and his son Fleance sometimes used to walk in the evening, with instructions to attack them, and kill both father and son. The villains did as they were ordered by Macbeth; but while they were killing Banquo, the boy Fleance made his escape from their wicked hands, and fled from Scotland

into Wales. And it is said, that long afterwards, his children came to possess the Scottish crown.

Macbeth was not the more happy that he had slain his brave friend and cousin Banquo. He knew that men began to suspect the wicked deeds which he had done, and he was constantly afraid that some one would put him to death as he had done his old sovereign, or that Malcolm would obtain assistance from the King of England, and come to make war against him, and take from him the Scottish kingdom. So, in this great perplexity of mind, he thought he would go to the old women, whose words had first put into his mind the desire of becoming a king. It is to be supposed, that he offered them presents, and that they were cunning enough to study how to give him some answer, which should make him continue in the belief that they could prophesy what was to happen in future times. So they answered to him that he should not be conquered or lose the crown of Scotland;

until a great forest, called Birnam Wood, should come to attack him in a strong castle situated on a high hill called Dunsinane. Now, the hill of Dunsinane is upon the one side of a valley, and the forest of Birnam is upon the other. There are twelve miles distance betwixt them, and besides that, Macbeth thought it was impossible that the trees could ever come to the assault of the castle. He therefore resolved to fortify his castle on the hill of Dunsinane very strongly, as being a place in which he would always be sure to be safe. For this purpose he caused all his great nobility and Thanes to send in stones, and wood, and other things wanted in building, and to drag them with oxen up to the top of the steep hill where he was building the castle.

Now, among other nobles who were obliged to send oxen, and horses, and materials, to this laborious work, was one called Macduff, the Thane of Fife. Macbeth was afraid of this Thane, for he was very powerful, and was accounted both brave and wise;

and Macbeth thought he would most probably join with Prince Malcolm, if ever he should come from England with an army. The King, therefore, had a private hatred against the Thane of Fife, which he kept concealed from all men, until he should have some opportunity of putting him to death as he had done Duncan and Banquo. Macduff, on his part, kept upon his guard, and went to the King's court as seldom as he could, thinking himself never safe unless while in his own castle of Kennoway, which is on the coast of Fife, near to the mouth of the Frith of Forth.

It happened, however, that the King had summoned several of his nobles, and Macduff, the Thane of Fife, amongst others, to attend him at his new castle of Dunsinane; and they were all obliged to come, none dared stay behind. Now, the King was to give the nobles a great entertainment, and preparations were made for it. In the meantime, Macbeth rode out with a few attendants, to see the oxen drag the wood and the

stones up the hill, for enlarging and strengthening the Castle. So they saw most of the oxen trudging up the hill with great difficulty, for the ascent is very steep, and the burdens were heavy, and the weather was extremely hot. At length Macbeth saw a pair of oxen so tired that they could go no farther up the hill, but fell down under their load. Then the King was very angry, and demanded to know who it was among his Thanes that had sent oxen so weak and so unfit for labour, when he had so much work for them to do. Some one replied that the oxen belonged to Macduff, the Thane of Fife. "Then," said the King in great anger, "since the Thane of Fife sends such worthless cattle as these to do my labour, I will put his own neck into the yoke, and make him drag the burdens himself."

There was a friend of Macduff who heard these angry expressions of the King, and hastened to communicate them to the Thane of Fife, who was walking in the hall of the King's castle while dinner was preparing.

The instant that Macduff heard what the King had said, he knew he had no time to lose in making his escape; for whenever Macbeth threatened to do mischief to any one, he was sure to keep his word.

So Macduff snatched up from the table a loaf of bread, called for his horses and his servants, and was galloping back to his own province of Fife before Macbeth and the rest of the nobility were returned to the castle. The first question which the King asked was, what had become of Macduff? and being informed that he had fled from Dunsinane, he ordered a body of his guards to attend him, and mounted on horseback himself to pursue the Thane, with the purpose of putting him to death.

Macduff, in the meantime, fled as fast as horses' feet could carry him; but he was so ill provided with money for his expenses, that, when he came to the great ferry over the river Tay, he had nothing to give to the boatmen who took him across, excepting the loaf of bread which he had taken from the

King's table. The place was called, for a long time afterwards, the Ferry of the Loaf.

When Macduff got into his province of Fife, which is on the other side of the Tay, he rode on faster than before, towards his own castle of Kennoway, which, as I told you, stands close by the sea-side; and when he reached it, the King and his guards were not far behind him. Macduff ordered his wife to shut the gates of the castle, draw up the drawbridge, and on no account to permit the King or any of his soldiers to enter. In the meantime, he went to the small harbour belonging to the castle, and caused a ship which was lying there to be fitted out for sea in all haste, and got on board himself, in order to escape from Macbeth.

In the meantime, Macbeth summoned the lady to surrender the castle, and to deliver up her husband. But Lady Macduff, who was a wise and a brave woman, made many excuses and delays, until she knew that her husband was safely on board the ship, and

had sailed from the harbour. Then she spoke boldly from the wall of the castle to the King, who was standing before the gate still demanding entrance, with many threats of what he would do if Macduff was not given up to him.

"Do you see," she said, "yon white sail upon the sea? Yonder goes Macduff to the Court of England. You will never see him again, till he comes back with young Prince Malcolm to pull you down from the throne, and to put you to death. You will never be able to put your yoke, as you threatened, on the Thane of Fife's neck."

Some say that Macbeth was so much incensed at this bold answer, that he and his guards attacked the Castle and took it, killing the brave lady and all whom they found there. But others say, and I believe more truly, that the King, seeing that the Castle of Kennoway was very strong, and that Macduff had escaped from him, and was embarked for England, departed back to Dunsinane without attempting to take Mac-

duff's Castle of Kennoway. The ruins of the Castle are still to be seen.

There reigned at that time in England a very good King, called Edward the Confessor. I told you that Prince Malcolm, the son of Duncan, was at his court soliciting assistance to recover the Scottish throne. The arrival of Macduff greatly aided the success of his petition; for the English King knew that Macduff was a brave and a wise man. As he assured Edward that the Scots were tired of the cruel Macbeth, and would join Prince Malcolm if he were to enter Scotland at the head of an army, the King ordered a great warrior, called Siward, Earl of Northumberland, to enter Scotland with an army, and assist Prince Malcolm in the recovery of his father's crown.

Then it happened as Macduff had said, for the Scottish thanes and nobles would not fight for Macbeth, but joined Prince Malcolm and Macduff against him; so that at length he shut himself up in his castle of Dunsinane, where he thought himself safe,

according to the old women's prophecy, until Birnam Wood should come against him. He boasted of this to his followers, and encouraged them to make a valiant defence, assuring them of certain victory. At this time Malcolm and Macduff were come as far as Birnam Wood, and lay encamped there with their army. The next morning, when they were to march across the broad valley to attack the castle of Dunsinane, Macduff advised that every soldier should cut down a bough of a tree and carry it in his hand, that the enemy might not be able to see how many men were coming against them.

Now, the sentinel who stood on Macbeth's Castle-wall, when he saw all these branches which the soldiers of Prince Malcolm carried, ran to the King, and informed him that the Wood of Birnam was moving towards the castle of Dunsinane. The King at first called him a liar, and threatened to put him to death; but when he looked from the walls himself, and saw the appearance of a forest approaching from Birnam, he

knew the hour of his destruction was come. His followers, too, began to be disheartened, and to fly from the Castle, seeing their master had lost all hopes.

Macbeth, however, recollected his own bravery, and sallied desperately out at the head of the few followers who remained faithful to him. He was killed after a furious resistance, fighting hand to hand with Macduff in the thick of the battle. Prince Malcolm mounted the throne of Scotland, and reigned long and prosperously. He rewarded Macduff by declaring that his descendant should lead the vanguard of the Scottish army in battle, and place the crown on the King's head at the ceremony of Coronation. King Malcolm also created the Thanes of Scotland Earls, after the title adopted in the Court of England.

CHAP. III.

The Feudal System, and the Norman Conquest.

THE conduct of Edward the Confessor, King of England, in the story of Macbeth, was very generous and noble. He sent a large army and his general Siward to assist to dethrone the tyrant Macbeth, and to place Malcolm, the son of the murdered King Duncan, upon the throne; and we have seen how, with assistance of Macduff, they fortunately succeeded. But King Edward never thought of taking any part of Scotland to himself in the confusion occasioned by the invasion; for he was a good man, and was not ambitious or covetous of what did not belong to him. It had been well both for England and Scotland that

there had been more such good and moderate kings, as it would have prevented many great quarrels, long wars, and terrible bloodshed.

But good King Edward the Confessor did not leave any children to succeed him on the throne. He was succeeded by a king called Harold, who was the last monarch of the Saxon race that ever reigned in England. The Saxons, you recollect, had conquered the Britons, and now there came a new enemy to attack the Saxons. These were the Normans, a people who came from France, but were not originally Frenchmen. Their forefathers were a colony of those Northern pirates, whom we mentioned before as plundering all the sea-coasts which promised them any booty. They were frequently called Northmen or Normans. A large body of them landed on the north part of France, and compelled the King of that country to yield up to them the possession of a large territory, or province, called Neustria, the name of which was changed to Norman-

dy, when it became the property of these Northmen, or Normans. This province was governed by the Norman chief, who was called a Duke, from a Latin word signifying a general. He exercised all the powers of a king within his dominions of Normandy, but, in consideration of his being possessed of a part of the territories of France, he acknowledged the king of that country for his sovereign, and became what was called his vassal.

This connexion of a king as sovereign, with his princes and great men as vassals, must be attended to and understood, in order that you may comprehend the history which follows. A great king, or sovereign prince, gave large provinces, or grants of land, to his dukes, earls, and noblemen, and each of them possessed nearly as much power within his own district, as the king did in the rest of his dominions. But then the vassal, whether duke, earl, or lord, or whatsoever he was, was obliged to come with a certain number of men to assist the sovereign, when he was engaged in war;

and in time of peace, he was bound to attend on his court when summoned, and do homage to him—that is, acknowledge that he was his master and liege lord. In like manner, the vassals of the crown, as they were called, divided the lands which the king had given them into estates, which they bestowed on knights and gentlemen, whom they thought fitted to follow them in war, and to attend them in peace; for they, too, held courts, and administered justice, each in his own province. Then the knights and gentlemen, who had these estates from the great nobles, distributed the property among an inferior class of proprietors, some of whom cultivated the land themselves, and others by means of husbandmen and peasants, who were treated as a sort of slaves, being bought and sold like brute beasts, along with the farms which they laboured.

Thus, when a great king, like that of France or England, went to war, he summoned all his crown vassals to attend him, with the number of armed men corresponding to his Fief, as it was called, that is, the

territory which had been granted to each of them. The prince, duke, or earl, in order to obey the summons, called upon all the gentlemen to whom he had given estates, to attend his standard with their followers in arms. The gentlemen, in their turn, called on the Franklins, a lower order of gentry, and upon the peasants, and thus the whole force of the kingdom was assembled in one array. This system of holding lands for military service, that is, for fighting for the sovereign when called upon, was called the FEUDAL SYSTEM. It was general through all Europe for a great many ages.

But as many of these great crown vassals, as, for example, the Dukes of Normandy, became extremely powerful, they were in the custom of making peace and war at their own hand, without the knowledge or consent of the King of France, their sovereign. In the same manner, the vassals of these great dukes and princes frequently made war on each other, for war was the business of every one; while the poor bondsman, who cultivated the ground, was sub-

jected to the greatest hardships, and plundered and ill-treated by whichever side had the better. The nobles and gentlemen fought on horseback, arrayed in armour of steel, richly ornamented with gold and silver, and were called knights or squires. They used long lances, with which they rode fiercely against each other, and swords, and clubs or maces, to fight hand to hand, when the lance was broken. Inferior persons fought on foot, and were armed with bows and arrows, which, according to their form, were called long-bows or cross-bows, and served to kill men at a distance, instead of guns and cannon, which were not then invented. The poor husbandmen were obliged to come to the field of battle with such arms as they had, and it was no uncommon thing to see a few of these knights and squires ride over and put to flight many hundreds of them; for the gentry were armed in complete armour, so that they could receive little hurt, and the poor peasants had scarce clothes sufficient to cover them. You may see coats of the

ancient armour preserved in the Tower of London and elsewhere, as matters of curiosity.

It was not a very happy time this, when there was scarcely any law, but the strong took everything from the weak at their pleasure; for as almost all the inhabitants of the country were obliged to be soldiers, it naturally followed that they were engaged in continual fighting.

The great crown-vassals, in particular, made constant war upon one another, and sometimes upon the sovereign himself, though to do so was to forfeit their fiefs, or the territories which he had bestowed upon them. But they took the opportunity, when they were tolerably certain that he would not have strength sufficient to punish them. In short, no one could maintain his right longer than he had the power of defending it; and this induced the more poor and helpless to throw themselves under the protection of the brave and powerful—acknowledge themselves their vassals and subjects,

and do homage to them, in order that they might obtain their safeguard.

While things were in this state, William, the Duke of Normandy, and the leader of that valiant people, whose ancestors had conquered that province, began, upon the death of good King Edward the Confessor, to consider the season as favourable for an attempt to conquer the wealthy kingdom of England. He pretended King Edward had named him his heir; but his surest reliance was upon a strong army of his brave Normans, to whom were joined many knights and squires from distant countries, who hoped, by assisting this Duke William in his proposed conquest, to obtain from him good English estates, under the regulations which I have described.

The Duke of Normandy landed in Sussex in the year one thousand and sixty-six, after the birth of our blessed Saviour. He had an army of sixty thousand chosen men for accomplishing his bold enterprise. Harold, who had succeeded Edward the Confessor

on the throne of England, had been just engaged in repelling an attack upon England by the Norwegians, and was now called upon to oppose this new and more formidable invasion. The armies of England and Normandy engaged in a desperate battle near Hastings, and the victory was long obstinately contested. The Normans had a great advantage, from having amongst them large bands of archers who used the long-bow, and greatly annoyed the English, who had but few bow-men to oppose them; yet the victory remained doubtful, though the battle had lasted from nine in the morning until the close of the day, when an arrow pierced through King Harold's head, and he fell dead on the spot. The English then retreated from the field, and Duke William used his advantage with so much skill and dexterity, that he made himself master of all England, and reigned there under the title of William the Conqueror. He divided great part of the rich country of England among his Norman followers, who

held lands of him for military service, according to the rules of the feudal system, of which I gave you some account. The Anglo-Saxons, you may well suppose, were angry at this, and attempted several times to rise against King William, and drive him and his soldiers back to Normandy. But they were always defeated; and so King William came to be more severe upon these Anglo-Saxons, and took away their lands, and their high rank and appointments, until he left scarce any of them in possession of great estates, or offices of rank, but put his Normans above them, as masters in every situation.

Thus the Saxons who had conquered the British, as you have before read, were, in their turn, conquered by the Normans, deprived of their property, and reduced to be the servants of those proud foreigners. To this day, though several of the ancient nobility of England claim to be descended from the Normans, there is scarcely a nobleman, and very few of the gentry, who

can show that they are descended of the Saxon blood, William the Conqueror took so much care to deprive the conquered people of all power and importance.

It must have been a sad state of matters in England, when the Normans were turning the Saxons out of their estates and habitations, and degrading them from being freemen into slaves. But good came out of it in the end; for these Normans were not only one of the bravest people that ever lived, but they were possessed of more learning and skill in the arts than the Saxons. They introduced the custom of building large and beautiful castles and churches, whereas the Saxons had only miserable houses made of wood. The Normans introduced the use of the long-bow also, which became so general, that the English were accounted the best archers in the world, and gained many battles by their superiority in that military art. The Normans lived also in a more civilized manner than the Saxons, and observed among each other the rules of civility and good-breeding, of

which the Saxons were ignorant. The Norman barons were also great friends to national liberty, and would not allow their kings to do anything contrary to their privileges, but resisted them whenever they attempted anything beyond the power which was given to them by law. Schools were set up in various places by the Norman princes, and learning was encouraged. Large towns were also founded in different places of the kingdom, and received favour from the kings, who desired to have the assistance of the townsmen, in case of any dispute with their nobility. Thus the Norman Conquest, though a most unhappy and disastrous event at the time it took place, rendered England in the end, a more wise, more civilised, and more powerful country, than it had been before; and you will find many such cases in history, my dear child, in which it has pleased the providence of God to bring great good out of what seems, at first sight, to be unmixed evil.

This chapter may seem to have little to do with Scottish history, yet the Norman

Conquest of England produced a great effect upon their neighbours. In the first place, a very great number of the Saxons who fled from the cruelty of William the Conqueror, retired into Scotland, and this had a considerable effect in civilising the southern parts of that country; for if the Saxons were inferior to the Normans in arts and in learning, they were, on the other hand, superior to the Scots. But afterwards a number of the Normans themselves came to settle in Scotland. King William could not satisfy the whole of them, and some, who were discontented, and thought they could mend their fortunes, repaired to the Scottish Court, and were welcomed by King Malcolm, called Cean-More, that is, Great-Head, the son of King Duncan. He was desirous to retain these brave men in his service, and for that purpose, he gave them great grants of land, to be held for military services. And thus the Feudal System was introduced into Scotland as well as England, and went on gradually gaining strength, till it became

the general law of the country, as indeed it was that of Europe at large.

Now a dispute arose out of this feudal law, which occasioned a most dreadful quarrel between England and Scotland; and though Master Littlejohn be no great lawyer, it is necessary he should try all he can to understand it, for it is a very material point in history.

While the English were fighting among themselves, and afterwards with the Normans, the Scottish Kings had been enlarging their dominions at the expense of their neighbours, and had possessed themselves, in a great measure, of the northern provinces of England, called Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland. After much fighting and disputing, it was agreed that the King of Scotland should keep these English provinces, not as an independent sovereign, however, but as a vassal of the King of England; and that he should do homage for the same to the English King, and attend him to the field of battle when summoned.

But this homage, and this military service, were not paid on account of the kingdom of Scotland, which had never since the beginning of the world been under the dominion of the English King, but was, and had always remained independent, a free state, having sovereigns and monarchs of its own. It may seem strange to Master Littlejohn, how a King of Scotland should be vassal for that part of his dominions which lay in England, and an independent prince when he was considered as King of Scotland; but this might easily happen, according to the regulations of the feudal system. William the Conqueror himself stood in the same situation, for he held his great Dukedom of Normandy, and his other possessions in France, as a vassal of the King of France, by whom it had been granted as a fief to his ancestor Rollo; but he was, at the same time, the independent Sovereign of England, which he had gained possession of by his victory at Hastings.

The English Kings, however, occasion-

ally took opportunities to insinuate, that the homage paid by the Scottish Kings was not only for the provinces which they at this time possessed in England, but also for the kingdom of Scotland. The Scottish Kings, on the contrary, although they rendered the homage and services demanded, as holding large possessions within the boundaries of England, uniformly and positively refused to permit it to be said or supposed, that they were subject to any claim of homage on account of the Kingdom of Scotland. This was one cause of the wars which took place betwixt the countries, in which the Scots maintained their national independence, and, though frequently defeated, were often victorious, and threatened upon more than one occasion, to make extensive acquisitions of territory at the expense of their neighbours. The Scottish King William, called the Lion, because he bore that animal painted on his shield, being taken prisoner at a battle near Newcastle, in the year 1174, was obliged, before he could obtain

his freedom, to surrender his claim of independence, and agree to pay homage for Scotland. But Richard the First of England gave up the claim fifteen years afterwards, as having been unjustly extorted from William during his captivity, and reserved to himself only the homage due for the lands which the King of Scotland held out of the boundaries of his own kingdom, and within those of England.

This generous behaviour of Richard of England was attended with such good effects, that it almost put an end to all wars and quarrels betwixt England and Scotland for more than a hundred years, during which time, with one or two brief interruptions, the nations lived in great harmony together. This was greatly to the happiness of both, and might in time have led to their becoming one people, for which Nature, which placed them both in the same island, seemed to have designed them. Intercourse for the purpose of traffic became more frequent. Some of the Scotch and English families

formed marriages and friendships together, and several powerful lords and barons had lands both in England and Scotland. All seemed to promise peace and tranquillity betwixt the two kingdoms, until a course of melancholy accidents having nearly extinguished the Scottish royal family, tempted the English monarch again to set up his unjust pretensions to be sovereign of Scotland, and gave occasion to a series of wars, fiercer and more bloody than any which had hitherto taken place betwixt the countries.

CHAP. IV.

Death of Alexander of Scotland, and Usurpation of King Edward the First.

SEVEN kings of Scotland had reigned in succession, after Malcolm Canmore, the son of Duncan, who recovered the kingdom from Macbeth. Their reigns occupied a period of nigh two hundred years. Some of them were very able men; all of them were well-disposed, good sovereigns, and inclined to discharge their duty towards their subjects. They made good laws; and considering the barbarous and ignorant times they lived in, they appear to have been men as deserving of praise as any race of kings who reigned in Europe during the period.

Alexander the third of that name, and the last of these seven princes, was an excellent sovereign. He defeated a great invasion of the Norwegians and Danes, as they landed from their ships, in the battle of Largs. He also acquired, and added to the Scottish dominions, the Hebrides, or Islands which lie to the west of Scotland, and which did not till his time belong to that kingdom. He maintained great friendship with England, but would never yield up any part of the rights of Scotland. He was, in short, a brave and excellent prince. Alexander III. married Margaret, daughter of Henry III. of England; but unhappily all the children who were born of that marriage died before their father. After the death of Queen Margaret, Alexander married another wife; but he did not live to have any family. As he was riding in the dusk of the evening, along the sea coast of Fife, betwixt Burntisland and Kinghorn, he approached too near the brink of the precipice, and his horse starting or stumbling, he was thrown over the

rock, and killed on the spot. It is now no less than five hundred and forty-two years since Alexander's death, yet the people of the country still point out the very spot where it happened, and which is called the King's Crag. The very melancholy consequences which followed Alexander's death, made the manner of it long remembered. A sort of elegy is also preserved, in which his virtues, and the misfortunes which followed his death, are mentioned. It is the oldest specimen of the Scottish language which is known to remain in existence; but as you would not understand it otherwise, I am obliged to alter it a little:—

When Alexander our king was dead,
Who Scotland led in love and le',
Away was wenth of ale and breid,
Of wine and wax, of game and gle.
Then pray to God, since only he
Can succour Scotland in her need,
That placed is in perplexity!

Another legend says, that a wise man, who is called Thomas the Rhymer, and about whom many stories are told, had said to a

great Scottish nobleman, called the Earl of March, that the sixteenth day of March should be the stormiest day that ever was witnessed in Scotland. The day came, and was remarkably clear, mild, and temperate. But while they were all laughing at Thomas the Rhymer on account of his false prophecy, an express brought the news of the King's death. "There," said Thomas; "that is the storm which I meant, and there was never tempest which will bring more ill luck to Scotland." This story may very possibly be false; but the general belief in it serves to show, that the death of Alexander the Third was looked upon as an event of the most threatening and calamitous nature.

The full consequences of the evil were not visible at first; for, although all Alexander's children had, as we have already said, died before him, yet one of them, who had been married to Eric, King of Norway, had left a daughter named Margaret, upon whom, as the grand-daughter and nearest heir of the

deceased prince, the crown of Scotland devolved. The young Princess, called by our historians the Maid of Norway, was residing at her father's court.

While the crown of Scotland thus passed to a young girl, the King of England began to consider by what means he could avail himself of circumstances, so as to unite it with his own. This King was Edward, called the First, because he was the first of the Norman line of princes so called. He was a very brave man, and a good soldier,—wise, too, skilful, and prudent, but unhappily very ambitious, and desirous of extending his royal authority, without caring much whether he did so by right means, or by those which are unjust. And although it is a great sin to covet that which does not belong to you, and a still greater to endeavour to possess yourself of it by any unfair practices, yet his desire of adding the kingdom of Scotland to that of England was so great, that Edward the First was unable to resist it.

The mode by which the English king at first endeavoured to accomplish his object was a very just one. He proposed a marriage betwixt the Maiden of Norway, the young Queen of Scotland, and his own eldest son, called Edward after himself. A treaty was entered into for this purpose; and had the marriage been effected, and been followed by children, the union of England and Scotland might have taken place more than three hundred years sooner than it did, and an immeasurable quantity of money and bloodshed would probably have been saved. But it was not the will of Heaven that this desirable union should be accomplished till many long years of war and distress had afflicted both these nations. The Maiden of Norway, the young Queen of Scotland, sickened and died, and all the treaty for the marriage was ended with her life.

The kingdom of Scotland was troubled, and its inhabitants sunk into despair at the death of their young Princess. There was not any descendant of Alexander the Third

remaining who could be considered as his direct and undeniable heir; and many of the great nobles, who were more or less distantly related to the royal family, prepared each of them to assert a right to the crown, began to assemble forces and form parties, and threatened the country with a civil war, which is the greatest of all misfortunes. The number of persons who set up claims to the crown was no fewer than ten, all of them forming pretensions on some relationship more or less distant to the royal family. These claimants were most of them powerful, from their rank and the number of their followers; and, if they should dispute the question of right by the sword, it was evident that the whole country would be at war from one sea to the other.

To prevent this great dilemma, it is said the Scottish nobility resolved to submit the question respecting the succession of their kingdom to Edward I. of England, who was one of the wisest princes of his time, and to request of him to settle, as umpire, which of the persons claiming the throne of Scot-

land was to be preferred to the others. The people of Scotland are said to have sent ambassadors to Edward, to request his interference as judge; but he had already determined to regulate the succession of the kingdom of Scotland, not as a mere umpire, having no authority but the desire of the parties, but as himself a person principally concerned; and for this purpose he resolved to revive the old pretext of his having right to the feudal sovereignty of Scotland, which, as we have before seen, had been deliberately renounced by his generous predecessor Richard the First.

With this purpose, Edward of England summoned the nobility and clergy of Scotland to meet him at the Castle of Norham, a large and strong fortress, which stands on the English side of the Tweed, on the line where that river divides England from Scotland. They met there on the 9th June 1291, and the King of England appeared before them, surrounded by the high officers of his court. He was a very handsome man, and so tall,

that he was popularly known by the name of Longshanks, that is, long legs. The Justiciary of England then informed the nobility and clergy of Scotland, in King Edward's name, that before he could proceed to decide who should be the vassal King of Scotland, it was necessary that they should acknowledge the King of England's right as Lord Paramount, or Sovereign of that kingdom.

The nobles and churchmen of Scotland were surprised to hear the King of England propose a claim which had never been admitted, except for a short time, in order to procure the freedom of King William the Lion, and which had been afterwards renounced for ever by Richard the First. They refused to give any answer until they should consult together by themselves. "By St Edward," said the King, "whose crown I wear, I will make good my just rights, or perish in the attempt!" He dismissed the assembly, however, allowing the Scots a delay of three weeks.

The Scottish nobility being thus made

aware of King Edward's selfish and ambitious designs, ought to have assembled their forces together, and declared that they would defend the rights and independence of their country. But they were much divided among themselves, and without any leader; and the competitors who laid claim to the crown, were mean-spirited enough to desire to make favour with King Edward, in expectation that he would raise to the throne him whom he should find most willing to subscribe to his own claims of paramount superiority.

Accordingly, the second assembly of the Scottish nobility and clergy took place without any one having dared to state any objection to that which the King of England proposed, however unreasonable they knew his pretensions to be. They were assembled in a large open place, called Upsettlington, opposite to the Castle of Norham, but on the northern or Scottish side of the river. The Chancellor of England then demanded of such of the candidates as were then

present, whether they acknowledged the King of England as Lord Paramount of Scotland, and whether they were willing to receive and hold the crown of Scotland, as awarded by Edward, in that character. They all answered that they were willing to do so; and thus, rather than hazard their own claims by offending King Edward, these unworthy candidates consented to resign the independence of their country, which had been so long and so bravely defended.

Upon examining the claims of the candidates, the right of succession to the throne of Scotland was found to lie chiefly betwixt Robert Bruce, the Lord of Annandale, and John Baliol, who was the Lord of Galloway. Both were great and powerful barons; both were of Norman descent, and had great estates in England as well as Scotland; lastly, both were descended from the Scottish royal family, by a daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon. Edward, upon due consideration, declared Baliol to be King of Scotland, always

to be held under him as the Lord Paramount or Sovereign thereof. John Baliol closed the disgraceful scene, by doing homage to the King of England, and acknowledging that he was his liege vassal and subject.

Soon after this remarkable, and to Scotland most disgraceful, transaction, King Edward began to show to Baliol that it was not his purpose to be satisfied with a bare acknowledgment of his right of sovereignty, but that he was determined to exercise it with severity on every possible occasion. He did this, no doubt, with the purpose that he might provoke Baliol to some act of resistance, which would give him a pretext for depriving him of the kingdom altogether as a disobedient subject, and taking it under his own government in his usurped character of Lord Paramount. He therefore encouraged the Scottish subjects to appeal from the courts of Baliol to his own; and as Baliol declined making appearance in the English courts of justice, or answering there for what he had done as King of Scot-

land, Edward insisted upon having possession of three principal fortresses of Scotland—Berwick, Roxburgh, and Jedburgh. Baliol surrendered, or at least agreed to surrender, the castles; but he perceived that it was Edward's intention gradually to destroy his power entirely, and stung at once with shame and fear, he entered into a league with France, raised a great army, and invaded England, the dominions of him whom he had so lately acknowledged his Lord Paramount or Sovereign. At the same time, he sent a letter to Edward, formally renouncing his dependance upon him. Edward replied, in Norman French, "Ha! dares this idiot commit such folly? Since he will not attend on us, as is his duty, we will go to him." He accordingly assembled a powerful army, amongst which came Bruce, who had formerly contended for the crown of Scotland with Baliol, and who now hoped to gain it upon his forfeiture. Edward defeated the Scottish army in a great battle near Dunbar, and Baliol, who ap-

pears to have been a mean-spirited man, gave up the contest. He came before Edward in the Castle of Roxburgh, and there made a most humiliating submission. He appeared in a mean dress, without sword, royal robes, or arms of any kind, and bearing in his hand a white wand. He there confessed, that through bad counsel and folly he had rebelled against his liege lord, and, in atonement, he resigned the kingdom of Scotland, with the inhabitants, and all rights to their obedience and duty, to their liege lord King Edward. He was then permitted to retire uninjured.

Baliol being thus removed, Bruce expressed his hopes of being allowed to supply his place, as tributary or dependent King of Scotland. But Edward answered him sternly, "Have we nothing, think you, to do but to conquer kingdoms for you?" By which expression the English King plainly expressed that he intended to keep Scotland to himself, and he proceeded to take such measures as made his purpose still more evident.

Edward marched through Scotland at the head of a powerful army, compelling all ranks of people to submit to him. He removed to London the records of the Kingdom of Scotland, and was at the pains to transport to the Abbey Church at Westminster a great stone, upon which it had been the national custom to place the King of Scotland when he was crowned for the first time. He did this to show that he was absolute master of Scotland, and that the country was in future to have no other King but himself, and his descendants the Kings of England. The stone is still preserved, and to this day the King's throne is placed upon it at the time when he is crowned. Last of all, King Edward placed the government of Scotland in the hands of the Earl of Surry, a brave nobleman; Hugh Cressingham, a clergyman, whom he named Chief Treasurer; and William Ormesby, whom he appointed the chief judge of the kingdom. He placed English soldiers in all the castles and strongholds of Scotland, from the one end of the

kingdom to the other; and not trusting the Scottish men themselves, he placed English governors in most of the provinces of the kingdom.

We may here remark, my dear child, that a little before he thus subdued Scotland, this same Edward the First had made conquest of Wales, that mountainous part of the island of Britain into which the Britons had retreated from the Saxons, and where, until the reign of this artful and ambitious prince, they had been able to maintain their independence. In subduing Wales, Edward had acted as treacherously and more cruelly than he had done in Scotland; since he had hanged the last Prince of Wales, when he became his prisoner, for no other crime than because he defended his country against the English, who had no right to it. Perhaps Edward thought to himself, that, by uniting the whole island of Britain under one king and one government, he would do so much good by preventing future wars, as might be an excuse for the

force and fraud which he made use of to bring about his purpose. But, my dear child, God, who sees into our hearts, will not bless those measures which are wicked in themselves, because they are used under a pretence of bringing about that which is good. We must not do evil even that good may come of it; and the happy prospect that England and Scotland would be united under one government, was so far from being brought nearer by Edward's unprincipled usurpation, that the hatred and violence of national antipathy which arose betwixt the sister countries, removed to a distance almost incalculable the prospect of their becoming one people, for which nature seemed to design them.

CHAP. V.

The Story of Sir William Wallace.

I TOLD you, my dear Hugh, that Edward the First of England had reduced Scotland almost entirely to the condition of a conquered country, although he had obtained possession of the kingdom less by his bravery, than by cunningly taking advantage of the disputes and divisions that followed amongst the Scots themselves after the death of Alexander the Third.

The English, however, had actually obtained possession of the country, and governed it with much rigour. The Lord High Justice Ormesby called all men to account, who would not take the oath of allegiance to King Edward. Many of the Scots refused this, as what the English King had no right

to demand from them. Such persons were called into the courts of justice, fined, deprived of their estates, and otherwise severely punished. Then Hugh Cressingham, the English Treasurer, tormented the Scottish people, by collecting money from them under various pretexts. The Scots were always a poor people, and their own native kings had treated them with much kindness, and seldom required them to pay any taxes. They were, therefore, extremely enraged at finding themselves obliged to pay to the English Treasurer much larger sums of money than their own good kings had ever demanded from them; and they became exceedingly dissatisfied.

Besides these modes of oppression, the English soldiers, who, I told you, had been placed in garrison in the different castles of Scotland, thought themselves masters of the country, treated the Scots with great contempt, took from them by main force whatever they had a fancy to, and if the owners offered to resist, abused them, beat and wounded, and sometimes killed them; for

which acts of violence the English officers did not check or punish their soldiers. Scotland was, therefore, in great distress, and the inhabitants, exceedingly enraged, only wanted some leader to command them to rise up in a body against the English, or *Southern* men, as they called them, and recover the liberty of their country, which had been destroyed by Edward the First.

Such a leader arose in the person of WILLIAM WALLACE, whose name is still so often mentioned in Scotland. It is a great pity we do not know exactly the history of this brave man; for, at the time when he lived, every one was so busy fighting, that there was no person to write down the history of what took place; and afterwards, when there was more leisure for composition, the truths that were collected were greatly mingled with falsehood. What I shall tell you of him, is generally believed to be true.

William Wallace was none of the high nobles of Scotland, but the son of a private gentleman, called Wallace of Ellerslie, in

Renfrewshire, near Paisley. He was very tall and handsome, and one of the strongest and bravest men who ever lived. He had a very fine countenance, with a quantity of fair hair, and was particularly dexterous in the use of all weapons which were then used. Wallace, like all the Scottishmen of high spirit, had looked with great indignation upon the usurpation of the crown by Edward, and upon the insolencies which the English soldiers committed on his countrymen. It is said, that when he was very young, he went a-fishing for sport in the river of Irvine, near Ayr. He had caught a good many trouts, which were carried by a boy, who attended him with a fishing-basket, as is usual with anglers. Two or three English soldiers, who belonged to the garrison of Ayr, came up to Wallace, and insisted, with their usual insolence, on taking the fish from the boy. Wallace was contented to allow them a part of the trouts, but he refused to part with the whole basket-full. The soldiers insisted, and from

words came to blows. Wallace had no better weapon than the butt-end of his fishing-rod; but he struck the foremost of the Englishmen so hard under the ear with it, that he killed him on the spot; and getting possession of his sword, he fought with so much fury that he put the others to flight, and brought home his fish safe and sound. The English governor of Ayr sought for him, to punish him with death for this action; but Wallace lay concealed among the hills and great woods till the matter was forgotten, and then appeared in another part of the country. He is said to have had other adventures of the same kind, in which he gallantly defended himself, sometimes when alone, sometimes with very few companions, against superior numbers of the English, until at last his name became generally known as a terror to them.

But the action which occasioned his finally rising in arms, is believed to have happened in the town of Lanark. Wallace was at this time married to a lady of that place,

and residing there with his wife. It chanced, as he walked in the market-place, dressed in a green garment, with a rich dagger by his side, that an Englishman came up and insulted him on account of his finery, saying, a Scotchman had no business to wear so gay a dress, or carry so handsome a weapon. It soon came to a quarrel, as on many former occasions; and Wallace having killed the Englishman, fled to his own house, which was speedily assaulted by all the English soldiers. While they were endeavouring to force their way in at the front of the house, Wallace escaped at a back-door, and got in safety to a rugged and rocky glen, called the Cartland Crags, all covered with bushes and trees, and full of high precipices, in the vicinity of Lanark, where he knew he should be safe from the pursuit of the English soldiers. In the meantime, the governor of Lanark, whose name was Hazelrigg, burned Wallace's house, and put his wife and servants to death; and by doing this, increased to the highest pitch, as you

may well believe, the hatred which Wallace had always borne against the English. Hazelrigg also proclaimed him an outlaw, and offered a reward to any one who should bring him to an English garrison, alive or dead. . . On the other hand, Wallace soon collected a body of men, outlawed like himself, or willing to become so, rather than any longer to endure the oppression of the English. One of his earliest expeditions was directed against Hazelrigg, whom he killed, and thus avenged the death of his wife. He fought skirmishes with the soldiers who were sent against him, often defeated them, and at length became so well known and so formidable, that multitudes began to resort to his standard, until he was at the head of an army, with which he proposed to restore his country to independence.

About this time is said to have taken place a memorable event, which the Scottish people call the *Barns of Ayr*. It is said, the English governor of Ayr had invited the greater part of the Scottish nobility and gentry in

the western parts, to meet him at some large buildings called the Barns of Ayr, for the purpose of friendly conference upon the affairs of the nation. But the English Earl entertained the treacherous purpose of putting the Scottish gentlemen to death. The English soldiers had halters with running nooses ready prepared, and hung upon the beams which supported the roof, and as the Scottish gentlemen were admitted by two and two at a time, the nooses were thrown over their heads, and they were pulled up by the necks, and thus hanged or strangled to death. Among those who were slain in this base and treacherous manner, was, it is said, Sir Ranald Crawford, Sheriff of the county of Ayr, and uncle to William Wallace.

When Wallace heard of what had befallen, he was dreadfully enraged, and collecting his men in a wood near to the town of Ayr, he resolved to be revenged on the authors of this great crime. The English in the meanwhile made much feasting, and

when they had eaten and drank plentifully, they lay down to sleep in the same large barns in which they had murdered the Scottish gentlemen. But Wallace, learning that they kept no guard or watch, not suspecting there were any enemies so near them, directed a woman who knew the place, to mark with chalk the doors of the lodgings where the Englishmen lay. Then he sent a party of men, who, with strong ropes, made all the doors so fast on the outside, that those within could not open them. On the outside the Scots had prepared heaps of straw, to which they set fire, and the Barns of Ayr, being themselves made of wood, were soon burning in a bright flame. Then the English were awakened, and endeavoured to get out to save their lives. But the doors, as I told you, were secured on the outside, and bound fast with ropes; and, besides, the blazing houses were surrounded by the Scotch, who forced those who got out to run back into the fire, or else put them to death on the spot; and thus, great numbers

perished miserably. Many of the English were lodged in a convent, but they had no better fortune than the others; for the Prior, as he was called, of the convent, caused all the friars to arm themselves, and attacking their English guests, they put most of them to the sword. This was called the Friar of Ayr's Blessing. We cannot tell if this story of the *Barns of Ayr* be exactly true; but it is probable there is some foundation for it, as it is universally believed in that country.

Thus Wallace's party grew daily stronger and stronger, and many of the Scottish nobles joined with him. Amongst those was Sir William Douglas, the Lord of Douglasdale, and the head of a great family often mentioned in Scottish history. There was also Sir John the Grahame, who became Wallace's bosom friend and greatest confidant. Many of these great noblemen, however, deserted the cause of the country on the approach of the Earl of Surrey, the English governor, at the head of a numerous and

well-appointed army. They thought that Wallace would be unable to withstand the attack of so many disciplined soldiers, and hastened to submit themselves to the English, for fear of losing their estates. Wallace, however, remained undismayed, and at the head of a considerable army. He had taken up his camp upon the northern side of the river Forth, near the town of Stirling. The river was there crossed by a long wooden bridge, about a mile above the spot where the present bridge is situated.

The English general approached the banks of the river on the southern side. He sent two clergymen to offer a pardon to Wallace and his followers, on condition that they would lay down their arms. But such was not the purpose of the high-minded champion of Scotland.

"Go back to the Earl of Warren," said Wallace, "and tell him we value not the pardon of the King of England. We are not here for the purpose of treating of peace, but of abiding battle, and restoring freedom

to our country. Let the English come on; —we defy them to their very beards!"

The English, upon hearing this haughty answer, called loudly to be led to the attack. The Earl of Warren hesitated, for he was a skilful soldier, and he saw that to approach the Scottish army, his troops must pass over the long, narrow, wooden bridge; so that those who should get over first, might be attacked by Wallace with all his forces, before those who remained behind could possibly come to their assistance. He therefore inclined to delay the battle. But Cressingham the Treasurer, who was ignorant and presumptuous, insisted that it was their duty to fight, and put an end to the war at once; and Warren gave way to his opinion, although Cressingham, being a churchman, could not be so good a judge of what was fitting as he himself, an experienced officer.

The English army began to cross the bridge, Cressingham leading the van, or foremost division of the army; for, in those military days, even clergymen wore armour

and fought in battle. The danger took place which Warren had foreseen. Wallace suffered a considerable part of the English army to pass the bridge, without offering any opposition; but when about one half were over, and the bridge was crowded with those who were following, he charged them who had crossed with his whole army, slew a very great number, and drove the rest into the river Forth, where the greater part were drowned. The rest of the English, who remained on the southern bank of the river, fled in great confusion, having first set fire to the wooden bridge, that the Scots might not pursue them. Cressingham was killed in the very beginning of the battle, and the Scots detested him so much, that they flayed the skin from his dead body, and kept pieces of it, in memory of the revenge they had taken upon the English Treasurer. Some say they made saddle-girths of this same skin, a purpose for which I do not think it could be very fit. It must be owned to have been a dishonourable thing of the Scots to insult

the dead body of their enemy, and shown that they must have been then a ferocious and barbarous people.

The remains of Warren's great army fled out of Scotland after this defeat; and the Scots taking arms on all sides, attacked the castles in which the English soldiers continued to shelter themselves, and took most of them by force or stratagem. Many wonderful stories are told of Wallace's exploits on these occasions; some of which are no doubt true, while others are either invented, or very much exaggerated. It seems certain, however, that he defeated the English in several combats, chased them almost entirely out of Scotland, regained the towns and castles of which they had possessed themselves, and recovered for a time the complete freedom of the country. He even marched into England, and laid Cumberland and Northumberland waste, where the Scottish soldiers, in revenge for the mischief which the English had done in their country, committed great cruelties. Wallace did not

approve of their killing the people who were not in arms, and he endeavoured to protect the clergymen and others, who were not able to defend themselves. "Remain with me," he said to the priests of Hexham, a large town in Northumberland, "for I cannot protect you from my soldiers when you are out of my presence."—The troops who followed Wallace received no pay, because he had no money to give them; and that was one great reason why he could not keep them under restraint, or prevent their doing much harm to the defenceless country people. He remained in England more than three weeks, and did a great deal of mischief to the country.

Edward I. was in Flanders when all these events took place. You may suppose he was very angry when he learned that Scotland, which he thought completely subdued, had risen into a great insurrection against him, defeated his armies, killed his Treasurer, chased his soldiers out of their country, and invaded England with a great force. He

came back from Flanders in a great rage, and determined not to leave Scotland till he had finally conquered that kingdom; so he assembled a very fine army, and marched into Scotland.

In the meantime the Scots prepared to defend themselves, and chose Wallace to be Governor or Protector of the kingdom, because they had no king at the time. He was now titled Sir William Wallace, Protector or Governor of the Scottish nation. But although Wallace, as we have seen, was the best soldier and bravest man in Scotland, and therefore the most fit to be placed in command at this critical period, when the King of England was coming against them with such great forces, yet the nobles of Scotland envied him this important situation, because he was not a man born in high rank, or enjoying a large estate. So great was their jealousy of Sir William Wallace, that they did not seem very willing to bring forward their forces, or fight against the English, because they would not have him to be

general. This was base and mean conduct, and it was attended with great disasters to Scotland. Yet, notwithstanding this unwillingness of the great nobility to support him, Wallace assembled a large army; for the middling, but especially the lower classes, were very much attached to him. He marched boldly against the King of England, and met him near the town of Falkirk. Most of his army were on foot, because, as I already told you, in those days only the nobility and great men of Scotland fought on horseback. The English King, on the contrary, had a very large body of the finest cavalry in the world, Normans and English, all armed in complete armour. He had also the celebrated archers of England, who were said to carry twelve Scotsmen's lives under their girdles; because they carried each of them twelve arrows stuck into their belt, and they were expected to kill a man with every arrow.

The Scotch had some good archers from the Forest of Ettrick, who fought under com-

maid of Sir John Stewart of Bonkill; but they were not nearly equal in number to the English. Far the greater part of the Scottish army were on foot, armed with long spears; they were placed thick and close together, and laid all their spears so close, point over point, that it seemed as difficult to break through them, as through the wall of a strong castle. When the two armies were drawn up facing each other, Wallace said to his soldiers, "I have brought you to the ring, let me see how you can dance;" meaning, I have brought you to the decisive field of battle, let me see how bravely you can fight.

The English made the attack. King Edward, though he saw the close ranks, and undaunted appearance, of the Scottish infantry, resolved nevertheless to try whether he could not ride them down with his fine cavalry. Accordingly, he gave his horsemen orders to advance. They charged accordingly, at the full gallop. It must have been a terrible thing to have seen these fine horses riding as hard as they could against the long

lances, which were held out by the Scots to keep them back; and there was a dreadful cry arose when they came against each other. However, the Scots stood their ground, with their long spears; many of the foremost of the English horses were thrown down, and the riders were killed as they lay rolling, unable to rise, owing to the weight of their heavy armour. But the Scottish horse did not come to the assistance of their infantry, but fled away from the battle. It is supposed that this was owing to the treachery or ill-will of the nobility, who were jealous of Wallace. But it must be considered that the Scots cavalry were very few in number; and that they had much worse arms, and weaker horses, than their enemies. The English cavalry attempted again and again to disperse the deep and solid ranks in which Wallace had stationed his foot soldiers. But they were repeatedly beaten off with loss, nor could they make their way through that wood of spears, as it is called by one of the English historians. King Edward then com-

manded his archers to advance; and these approaching within arrow-shot of the Scottish ranks, poured on them such close and dreadful volleys of arrows, that it was impossible to sustain them. It happened at the same time, that Sir John Stewart was killed by a fall from his horse; and the archers of Ettrick Forest, whom he was bringing forward to oppose those of King Edward, were killed in great numbers around him. Their bodies were afterwards distinguished among the slain, as being the tallest and handsomest men of the army.

The spearmen of the Scottish army being thus thrown into some degree of confusion, by the loss of those who were slain by the arrows of the English, the heavy cavalry of Edward again charged, and broke through the ranks, which were already disordered. Sir John Grahame, Wallace's great friend and companion, was slain, with many other brave soldiers; and the Scots, having lost a very great number of men, were at length obliged to take to flight.

This fatal battle was fought upon 22d July 1298. Sir John the Grahame lies buried in the churchyard of Falkirk. A tombstone was laid over him, which has been three times renewed since his death. The inscription bears, "That Sir John the Grahame, equally remarkable for wisdom and courage, and the faithful friend of Wallace, being slain in battle by the English, lies buried in this place." A large oak tree in the adjoining forest was long shown as the spot where Wallace slept before the battle, or, as others said, in which he hid himself after the defeat. Nearly forty years ago, Grandpapa saw some of its roots; but the body of the tree was even then entirely decayed, and there is not now, and has not been for many years, the least vestige of it to be seen.

After this fatal defeat of Falkirk, Sir William Wallace seems to have resigned his office of Governor of Scotland. Several nobles were named guardians in his place, and continued to make resistance to the

English armies; and they gained some advantages, particularly near Roslin, where a body of Scots, commanded by John Comyn of Badenoch, who was one of the Guardians of the kingdom, and a distinguished commander, called Simon Fraser, defeated three armies, or detachments, of English in one day.

Nevertheless, the King of England possessed so much wealth, and so many means of raising soldiers, that he sent army after army into the poor oppressed country of Scotland, and obliged all its nobles and great men, one after another, to submit themselves once more to his yoke. Sir William Wallace alone, or with a very small band of followers, refused either to acknowledge the usurper Edward, or to lay down his arms. He continued to maintain himself among the woods and mountains of his native country for no less than seven years after his defeat at Falkirk, and for more than one year after all the other defenders of Scottish liberty had laid down their arms.

Many proclamations were sent out against him by the English, and a great reward was set upon his head; for Edward did not think he could have any secure possession of his usurped kingdom of Scotland while Wallace lived. At length he was taken prisoner; and shame it is to say, a Scotchman, called Sir John Menteith, was the person by whom he was seized and delivered to the English. It is generally said that he was made prisoner at Robroyston, near Glasgow; and the tradition of the country bears, that the signal made for rushing upon him and taking him at unawares, was, when one of his pretended friends, who betrayed him, should turn a loaf, which was placed on the table, with its bottom or flat side uppermost. And in after times it was reckoned ill-breeding to turn a loaf in that manner, if there was a person named Menteith in company; since it was as much as to remind him that his namesake had betrayed Sir William Wallace, the Champion of Scotland.

Whether Sir John Menteith was actually the person by whom Wallace was betrayed is not perfectly certain. He was, however, the individual by whom the patriot was made prisoner, and delivered up to the English, for which his name and his memory have been long loaded with disgrace.

Edward having thus obtained possession of the person whom he considered as the greatest obstacle to his complete conquest of Scotland, resolved to make Wallace an example to all Scottish patriots who should in future venture to oppose his ambitious projects. He caused Wallace to be brought to trial in Westminster-hall, before the English judges, and produced him there, crowned, in mockery, with a green garland, because they said he had been king of outlaws and robbers among the Scottish woods. He was accused of having been a traitor to the English crown; to which he answered, "I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject." He was then accused of having killed many men, and done

much evil. He replied, with the same calm resolution, "that it was true, he had killed very many Englishmen, but it was because they had come to subdue and oppress his native country of Scotland; and far from repenting what he had done, he declared he was only sorry that he had not put to death many more of them."

Notwithstanding that Wallace's defence was a good one, both in law and in common sense, (for surely every one has not only a right to fight in defence of his native country, but is bound in duty to do so,) the English Judges condemned him to be executed. So this brave patriot was dragged upon a sledge to the place of execution, where his head was struck off, and his body divided into four quarters, which, according to the cruel custom of the time, were exposed upon pikes of iron upon London Bridge, and were termed the limbs of a traitor.

No doubt King Edward thought that by exercising this great severity towards so distinguished a patriot as Sir William Wal-

lace, he would terrify all the Scots into obedience, and so be able in future to reign over their country without resistance. But though Edward was a powerful, a brave, and a wise king, and though he took the most cautious, as well as the most strict measures, to preserve the obedience of Scotland, yet his claim, being founded in injustice and usurpation, was not permitted by Providence to be established in security or peace. Sir William Wallace, that immortal supporter of the independence of his country, was no sooner deprived of his life in the cruel and unjust manner I have told you, than other patriots arose to assert the cause of Scottish liberty.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Rise of Robert the Bruce.

I HOPE, my dear child, that you have not forgotten that all the cruel wars in Scotland arose out of the debate between the great lords who claimed the throne after King Alexander the Third's death, which induced the Scottish nobility rashly to submit the decision of that matter to King Edward of England, and thus opened the way to his endeavouring to seize the kingdom of Scotland to himself. You recollect, also, that he had dethroned John Baliol, on account of his attempting to restore the independence of Scotland; and that John Baliol had resigned the crown of Scotland into the hands of Edward as Lord Paramount.

This John Baliol, therefore, was very little respected in Scotland; he had renounced the kingdom, and had been absent from it for fifteen years, during the greater part of which time he remained a prisoner in the hands of the King of England.

It was therefore natural that such of the people of Scotland as were still determined to fight for the freedom of their country from the English yoke, should look around for some other king, under whom they might unite themselves, to combat the power of England. The feeling was universal in Scotland, that they would not any longer endure the English government; and therefore such great Scottish nobles as believed they had right to the crown, began to think of standing forward to claim it.

Amongst these, the principal candidates, (supposing John Baliol, by his renunciation and captivity, to have lost all right to the kingdom,) were two powerful noblemen. The first was Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, the grandson of that elder Robert Bruce, who, as you have heard, disputed the throne with

John Baliol. The other was John Comyn, or Cuming, of Badenoch, usually called the Red Comyn, to distinguish him from his kinsman, the Black Comyn, so named from his swarthy complexion. These two great and powerful barons had taken part with Sir William Wallace in the wars against England; but, after the defeat of Falkirk, being fearful of losing their great estates, and considering the freedom of Scotland as beyond the possibility of being recovered, both Bruce and Comyn had not only submitted themselves to Edward, and acknowledged his title as King of Scotland, but even borne arms, along with the English, against such of their countrymen as still continued to resist the usurper. But the feelings of Bruce concerning the baseness of this conduct, are said, by the old tradition of Scotland, to have been awakened by the following accident. In one of the numerous battles, or skirmishes, which took place at the time between the English and their adherents on the one side, and the insurgent or patriotic Scottish upon the other, Robert the Bruce was present,

and assisted the English to gain the victory. After the battle was over, he sat down to his dinner without washing his hands, on which there were spots of blood, which he had shed during the action. The English lords observing this, whispered to each other in mockery, "Look at that Scotsman, who is eating his own blood!" Bruce heard what they said, and began to reflect, that the blood upon his hands might be indeed called his own, since it was that of his brave countrymen, who were fighting for the independence of Scotland, whilst he was assisting its oppressors, who only laughed at and mocked him for his unnatural conduct. He was so much shocked and disgusted, that he arose from table, and going into a neighbouring chapel, shed many tears, and, asking pardon of God for the great crime he had been guilty of, made a solemn vow that he would atone for it, by doing all in his power to deliver Scotland from the foreign yoke. Accordingly, he left, it is said, the English army, and never joined them again,

but remained watching an opportunity for restoring the freedom of his country.

Now, this Robert the Bruce was a remarkably brave and strong man: there was no man in Scotland that was thought a match for him except Sir William Wallace; and now that Wallace was dead, Bruce was held the best warrior in Scotland. He was very wise and prudent, and an excellent general; that is, he knew how to conduct an army, and place them in order for battle, as well or better than any great man of his time. He was generous, too, and courteous by nature; but he had some faults, which perhaps belonged as much to the fierce period in which he lived as to his own character. He was rash and passionate, and in his passion, he was sometimes relentless and cruel.

Robert the Bruce had fixed his purpose, as I told you, to attempt once again to drive the English out of Scotland, and he desired to prevail upon Sir John the Red Comyn, who was his rival in his pretensions to the throne, to join with him in expelling the

foreign enemy by their common efforts. With this purpose, Bruce posted down from London to Dumfries, on the borders of Scotland, and requested an interview with John Comyn. They met in the church of the Minorites in that town, before the high altar. What passed betwixt them is not known with certainty; but they quarrelled, either concerning their mutual pretensions to the crown, or because Comyn refused to join Bruce in the proposed insurrection against the English; or, as many writers say, because Bruce charged Comyn with having betrayed to the English his purpose of rising up against King Edward. It is, however, certain, that they came to high and abusive words, until at length Bruce, who I told you was extremely passionate, forgot the sacred character of the place in which they stood, and struck Comyn a blow with his dagger. Having done this rash deed, he instantly ran out of the church and called for his horse. Two gentlemen of the country, Lindesay and Kirkpatrick, friends of Bruce, were then in at-

tendance on him. Seeing him pale, bloody, and in much agitation, they eagerly inquired what was the matter.

"I doubt," said Bruce, "that I have slain the Red Comyn."

"Do you leave such a matter to doubt?" said Kirkpatrick. "I will make sicker"—that is, I will make certain.

Accordingly, he and his companion Lindesay, rushing into the church, dispatched the wounded Comyn with their daggers. His uncle, Sir Robert Comyn, was slain at the same time.

The slaughter of Comyn was a cruel action; and the historian of Bruce observes, that it was followed by the displeasure of Heaven; for no man ever went through more misfortunes than Robert Bruce, although he at length rose to great honour.

After the slaughter of Comyn, Bruce might be called desperate. He had committed an action which was sure to bring down upon him the vengeance of all Comyn's relations, the resentment of the King of England, and the displeasure of the

Church, on account of having slain his enemy within consecrated ground. He determined, therefore, to bid them all defiance at once, and to assert his pretensions to the throne of Scotland. He drew his own followers together, summoned to meet him such barons as still entertained hopes of the freedom of the country, and was crowned King at the Abbey of Scone, the usual place where the Kings of Scotland assumed their authority.

Everything relating to the ceremony was hastily performed. A small circlet of gold was hurriedly made, to represent the ancient crown of Scotland, which Edward had carried off to England. The Earl of Fife, descendant of the brave Macduff, whose duty it was to have placed the crown on the King's head, would not give his attendance. But the ceremonial was performed by his sister, Isabella, Countess of Buchan, though without the consent either of her brother or husband. A few barons, whose names ought to be dear to their country, joined Bruce in

his attempt to vindicate the independence of Scotland.

Edward was dreadfully incensed when he heard that, after all the pains which he had taken, and all the blood which had been spilled, the Scots were making this new attempt to shake off his authority. Though now old, feeble, and sickly, he made a solemn vow, at a great festival, in presence of all his court, that he would take the most ample vengeance upon Robert the Bruce and his adherents; after which he would never again draw his sword upon a Christian, but would only fight against the unbelieving Saracens for the recovery of the Holy Land. He marched against Bruce accordingly, at the head of a powerful army.

The commencement of Bruce's undertaking was most disastrous. He was crowned on 29th March, 1306. On the 18th May he was excommunicated by the Pope, a sentence which excluded him from all the benefits of religion, and authorised any one to kill him. Finally, on the 19th June, the new

King was completely defeated near Methven by the English Earl of Pembroke. Robert's horse was killed under him in the action, and he was for a moment a prisoner. But he had fallen into the power of a Scottish knight, who, though he served in the English army, did not choose to be the instrument of putting Bruce into their hands, and allowed him to escape. The conquerors executed their prisoners with their usual cruelty. Among these were some gallant young men of the first Scottish families—Hay, ancestor of the Earls of Errol, Somerville, Fraser, and others, who were most mercilessly put to death.

Bruce, with a few brave adherents, among whom was the young Lord of Douglas, who was afterwards called the Good Lord James, retired into the Highland mountains, where they were chased from one place of refuge to another, placed in great danger, and underwent many hardships. The Bruce's wife, now Queen of Scotland, with several other ladies, accompanied her husband and his few followers during their wanderings.

There was no other way of providing for them save by hunting and fishing. It was remarked, that Douglas was the most active and successful in procuring for the unfortunate ladies such supplies as his dexterity in fishing or in killing deer could furnish to them.

Driven from one place in the Highlands to another, Bruce attempted to force his way into Lorn, but he found enemies everywhere. The M'Dougals, a powerful family, then called Lords of Lorn, were friendly to the English, and putting their men in arms, attacked Bruce and his wandering companions as soon as they attempted to enter their country. The chief of these M'Dougals, called John of Lorn, hated Bruce on account of his having slain the Red Comyn in the church at Dumfries, to whom this M'Dougal was nearly related. Bruce was again defeated by this chief, through force of numbers, at a place called Dalry; but he showed, amidst his misfortunes, the greatness of his strength and courage. He directed his men to retreat through a narrow pass, and

placing himself last of the party, he fought with and slew such of the enemy as attempted to press hard on them. Three followers of M'Dougal, a father and two sons, called M'Androsser, all very strong men, when they saw Bruce thus protecting the retreat of his followers, made a vow that they would either kill or make him prisoner. The whole three rushed on the King at once. The King was on horseback, in the strait pass we have described, betwixt a steep hill and a deep lake. He struck the first man who came up and seized his bridle, such a blow with his sword as cut off his hand and freed the bridle. The man bled to death. The other brother had seized him in the meantime by the leg, and was attempting to throw him from horseback. The King, setting spurs to his horse, made the animal suddenly spring forward, so that the Highlander fell under the horse's feet, and, as he was endeavouring to rise again, the King cleft his head in two with his sword. The father, seeing his two sons thus slain, flew at Robert Bruce, and grasped him by

the mantle so close to his body, that he could not have room to wield his long sword. But with the heavy pommel, or, as others say, with an iron hammer which hung at his saddle-bow, the King struck this third assailant so dreadful a blow, that he dashed out his brains. Still, however, the Highlander kept his dying grasp on the King's mantle, so that, to be free of the dead body, Bruce was obliged to undo the brooch, or clasp, by which it was fastened, and leave that and the mantle itself behind him. The brooch, which fell thus into the possession of M'Dougal of Lorn, is still preserved in that ancient family as a memorial that the celebrated Robert Bruce once narrowly escaped falling into the hands of their ancestor. Robert greatly resented this attack upon him; and when he was in happier circumstances, did not fail to take his revenge on M'Dougal, or, as he is usually called, John of Lorn.

The King met with many such encounters amidst his dangerous and dismal wan-

derings; yet, though almost always defeated by the numbers of the English, and of such Scots as sided with them, he still kept up his own spirits and those of his followers. He was a better scholar than was usual in those days, when, except clergymen, few people learned to read and write. But King Robert could do both very well; and we are told, that he sometimes read aloud to his companions to amuse them, when they were crossing the great Highland lakes in such wretched leaky boats as they could find for that purpose.

At last dangers increased so much around the brave King Robert, that he was obliged to separate himself from the ladies and his queen; for the winter was coming on, and it would be impossible for the women to endure this wandering sort of life when the frost and snow should arrive. So he left his queen, with the Countess of Buchan and others, in the only castle which remained to him, which was called Kildrummie, and is situated near the head of the river Don in Aberdeenshire. The King also left his youngest brother,

Nigel Bruce, to defend the castle against the English; and he himself, with his second brother Edward, who was a very brave man, but still more rash and passionate than Robert himself, went over to an island called Rachrin, on the coast of Ireland, where Bruce and the few men that followed his fortunes passed the winter of 1306. In the meantime, ill luck seemed to pursue all his friends in Scotland. The Castle of Kildrummie was taken by the English, and Nigel Bruce, a beautiful and brave youth, was cruelly put to death by the victors. The ladies who had attended on Robert's queen, as well as the queen herself, and the Countess of Buchan, were thrown into strict confinement, and treated with the utmost severity. This news reached Bruce while he was residing in a miserable dwelling at Rachrin, and reduced him to the point of despair.

It was probably about this time that an incident took place, which, although it rests only on tradition in the families of the name of Bruce, is rendered probable by the man-

ners of the times. After receiving the last unpleasing intelligence from Scotland, Bruce was lying one morning on his wretched bed, and deliberating with himself whether he had not better resign all thoughts of again attempting to make good his right to the Scottish crown, and, dismissing his followers, transport himself and his brothers to the Holy Land, and spend the rest of his life in fighting against the Saracens; by which he thought, perhaps, he might deserve the forgiveness of Heaven for the great sin of stabbing Comyn in the church at Dumfries.

But then, on the other hand, he thought it would be both criminal and cowardly to give up his attempts to restore freedom to Scotland, while there yet remained the least chance of his being successful in an undertaking, which, rightly considered, was much more his duty than to drive the infidels out of Palestine, though the superstition of his age might think otherwise.

While he was divided betwixt these reflections, and doubtful of what he should do, Bruce was looking upward to the roof of the

cabin in which he lay, and his eye was attracted by a spider, which, hanging at the end of a long thread of his own spinning, was endeavouring, as is the fashion of that creature, to swing himself from one beam in the roof to another, for the purpose of fixing the line on which he meant to stretch his web. The insect made the attempt again and again without success; and at length Bruce counted that it had tried to carry its point six times, and been as often unable to do so. It came into his head that he had himself fought just six battles against the English and their allies, and that the poor persevering spider was exactly in the same situation with himself, having made as many trials, and been as often disappointed in what it aimed at. "Now," thought Bruce, "as I have no means of knowing what is best to be done, I will be guided by the luck which shall attend this spider. If the insect shall make another effort to fix its thread, and shall be successful, I will venture a seventh time to try my fortune in Scotland; but if the spider shall fail, I will

go to the wars in Palestine, and never return to my native country again."

While Bruce was forming this resolution, the spider made another exertion with all the force it could muster, and fairly succeeded in fastening its thread on the beam which it had so often in vain attempted to reach. Bruce seeing the success of the spider, resolved to try his own fortune; and as he never before gained a victory, so he never afterwards sustained any considerable check or defeat. I have often met with people of the name of Bruce, so completely persuaded of the truth of this story, that they would not on any account kill a spider, because it was such an insect which had shown the example of perseverance, and given a signal of good luck, to their great namesake.

Having determined to renew his efforts to obtain possession of Scotland, notwithstanding the smallness of the means which he had for accomplishing so great a purpose, the Bruce removed himself and his followers from Rachrin to the island of Arran, which lies in the mouth of the Clyde. The

King landed, and inquired at the first woman he met, what armed men were in the island. She returned for answer, that there had arrived there very lately a body of armed strangers, who had defeated an English officer, who was governor of the Castle of Brathwick, had killed him and most of his men, and were now amusing themselves with hunting about the island. The King having caused himself to be guided to the woods which these strangers most frequented, there blew his horn repeatedly. Now, the chief of the strangers who had taken the castle, was James Douglas, whom we have already mentioned as one of the best of Bruce's friends. When he heard Robert Bruce's horn, he knew the sound well, and cried out, that yonder was the King; he knew by his manner of blowing. So he and his companions hastened to meet King Robert, and there was great joy on both sides.

The Bruce was now within sight of Scotland, and not distant from his own family possessions, where the people were most like-

ly to be attached to him. He began immediately to form plans with Douglas, how they might best renew their enterprise against the English. The Douglas resolved to go disguised to his own country, and raise his followers, in order to have revenge on an English nobleman called Lord Clifford, upon whom Edward had conferred his estates, and who had taken up his residence in the castle of Douglas.

Bruce, on his part, opened a communication with the opposite coast of Carrick, by means of one of his followers called Cuthbert. This person had directions, that if he should find the countrymen in Carrick disposed to take up arms against the English, he was to make a fire on a headland, or lofty cape, called Turnberry, opposite to the island of Arran. The appearance of this fire on this place was to be a signal to Bruce to put to sea with such men as he had, who were not more than three hundred in number, for the purpose of landing in Carrick and joining the insurgents.

Bruce and his men watched eagerly for

the signal, but for some time in vain. At length a fire on Turnberry head became visible, and the King and his followers merrily betook themselves to their ships and galleys, concluding their Carrick friends were all in arms, and ready to join with them. They landed on the beach at midnight, where they found their spy Cuthbert alone in waiting for them, with very bad news. Lord Percy, he said, was in the country, with two or three hundred Englishmen, and had terrified the people so much, both by actions and threats, that none of them dared to think of rebelling against King Edward.

"Traitor!" said Bruce, "why, then, did you make the signal?"

"Alas," replied Cuthbert, "the fire was not made by me, but by some other person, for what purpose I know not; but as soon as I saw it burning, I knew that you would come over, thinking it my signal, and therefore I came down to wait for you on the beach, to tell you how the matter stood."

Bruce, after some hesitation, determined that since he had been thus brought to the main land of Scotland, he would remain there, and take such adventure and fortune as Heaven should send him.

Accordingly, he began to skirmish with the English so successfully, as obliged the Lord Percy to quit Carrick. He then dispersed his men upon various adventures against the enemy, in which they were generally successful. But then, on the other hand, the King being left with small attendance, or sometimes almost alone, ran great risk of losing his life by treachery, or by open violence. Several of these incidents are very interesting. I will tell you some of them.

At one time, a near relation of Bruce's, in whom he entirely confided, was induced by the bribes of the English to attempt to put him to death. This villain, with his two sons, watched Bruce one morning, till he saw him separated from all his men, excepting a little boy, who waited on him as a page. The father had a sword in his hand,

one of the sons had a sword and a spear, the other had a sword and a battle-axe. Now, when the King saw them so well armed, when there were no enemies near, he began to call to mind some hints which had been given to him, that these men intended to murder him. He had no weapons excepting his sword; but his page had a bow and arrow. He took them both from the little boy, and bade him stand at a distance; "for," said the King, "if I overcome these traitors, thou shalt have enough of weapons; but if I am slain by them, you may make your escape, and tell Douglas and my brother to revenge my death." The boy was very sorry, for he loved his master; but he was obliged to do as he was bidden.

In the meantime the traitors came forward upon Bruce, that they might assault him at once. The King called out to them, and commanded them to come no nearer, upon peril of their lives; but the father answered with flattering words, pretending great kindness, and still continuing to ap-

proach his person. Then the King again called to them to stand. "Traitors," said he, "ye have sold my life for English gold; but you shall die if you come one foot nearer to me." With that he bent the page's bow; and as the old conspirator continued to advance, he let the arrow fly at him. Bruce was an excellent archer; he aimed his arrow so well, that it hit the father in the eye, and penetrated from that into his brain, so that he fell down dead. Then the two sons rushed on the King. One of them fetched a blow at him with an axe, but missed his stroke, and stumbled, so that the King with his great sword cut him down before he could recover his feet. The remaining traitor ran on Robert Bruce with his spear; but the King, with a sweep of his sword, cut the steel head off the villain's weapon, and then killed him before he had time to draw his sword. Then the little page came running, very joyful of his master's victory; and the King wiped his bloody sword, and looking upon the dead bodies, said, "These

might have been reputed three gallant men, if they had resisted the temptation of covetousness."

In the present day, it is not necessary that generals, or great officers, should fight with their own hand, because they have only to direct their followers; their artillery and their soldiers shoot at the enemy; and men seldom mingle together, and fight hand to hand. But in the ancient times, kings and great lords were obliged to put themselves into the very front of the battle, and fight like ordinary men, with the lance and other weapons. It was, therefore, of great consequence that they should be strong men, and dexterous in the use of their arms. Robert Bruce was so remarkably active and powerful, that he came through a great many personal dangers, in which he must otherwise have been slain. I will tell you another of his adventures, which I think will amuse you.

After the death of these three traitors, Robert the Bruce continued to keep him-

self concealed in his own earldom of Carrick, and in the neighbouring country of Galloway, until he should have matters ready for a general attack upon the English. He was obliged, in the meantime, to keep very few men with him, both for the sake of secrecy, and from the difficulty of finding provisions. Now, many of the people of Galloway were unfriendly to Bruce. They lived under the government of one M'Dougal, related to the Lord of Lorn, who, as I before told you, had defeated Robert Bruce, at Dalry, and very nearly killed or made him prisoner. These Galloway men had heard that Bruce was in their country, with no more than sixty men with him; so they resolved to attack him by surprise, and for this purpose they got two hundred men together, and brought with them two or three bloodhounds. These animals were trained to chase a man by the scent of his footsteps, as foxhounds chase a fox, or beagles or harriers chase a hare. Although the dog does not see the person whose trace he is put upon, he follows him over every step he

has taken. At that time these bloodhounds, or sleuth-hounds, (so called from *slot*, or *sleut*, a word which signifies the scent left by an animal of chase,) were used for the purpose of pursuing great criminals. The men of Galloway thought themselves secure, that if they missed taking Bruce, or killing him at the first onset, and if he should escape into the woods, they would find him out by means of these bloodhounds.

The good King Robert Bruce, who was always watchful and vigilant, had received some information about the intention of this party to come upon him suddenly and by night. Accordingly, he quartered his party of sixty men on the farther side of a deep and swift-running river, that had very steep and rocky banks. There was but one ford by which this river could be crossed in that neighbourhood, and that ford was deep and narrow, so that two men could scarcely get through abreast; the bank on which they were to land on the other side was steep, and the path which led upwards

from the water's edge, extremely narrow and difficult.

Bruce caused his men to lie down to take some sleep, at a place about half a mile distant from the river, while he himself, with two attendants, went down to watch the ford, through which the enemy must needs pass before they could come to the place where King Robert's men were lying. He stood for some time looking at the ford, and thinking how easily the enemy might be kept from passing there, providing it was bravely defended, when he heard at a distance the baying of hounds, which was always coming nearer and nearer. This was the bloodhound which was tracing the King's steps to the ford where he had crossed, and the two hundred Galloway men were along with the animal, and guided by it. Bruce thought of going back to awaken his men; but then he thought that it might be some shepherd's dog. "My men," he said, "are sorely tired; I will not disturb their sleep for the yelping of a cur, till I know

something more of the matter." So he stood and listened; and by and by, as the cry of the hound came nearer, he began to hear a trampling of horses, and the voices of men, and the ringing and clattering of armour, and then he was sure the enemy were coming to the river side. Then the King thought, "If I go back to give my men the alarm, these Galloway men will get through the ford without opposition, and that would be a pity, since it is a place so advantageous to make defence against them." So he looked again at the steep path, and the deep river, and he thought it gave him so much advantage, that he himself could defend the passage with his own hand, until his men came to assist him. His armour was so good and strong, that he had no fear of their arrows, and therefore the combat was not so very unequal as it must have otherwise been. He therefore sent his followers to waken his men, and remained alone by the bank of the river.

In the meanwhile, the noise and trampling of the horses increased, and the moon being

bright, Bruce saw the glancing arms of about two hundred men, who came down to the opposite bank of the river. The men of Galloway, on their part, saw but one solitary figure guarding the ford, and the foremost of them plunged into the river without minding him. But as they could only pass the ford one by one, the Bruce, who stood high above them on the bank where they were to land, killed the foremost man with a thrust of his long spear, and with a second thrust stabbed the horse, which fell down, kicking and plunging in his agonies, on the narrow path, and so prevented the others from getting out of the river. Bruce had thus an opportunity of dealing his blows at pleasure among them, while they could not strike at him again. In the confusion, five or six of the enemy were slain, or, having been borne down the current, were drowned in the river. The rest were terrified, and drew back.

But when they looked again, and saw they were opposed by only one man, they themselves being so many, they cried out,

that their honour would be lost for ever if they did not force their way; and encouraged each other with loud cries to plunge through, and assault him. But by this time the King's soldiers came up to his assistance, and the Galloway men retreated, and gave up their enterprise.

I will tell you another story of this brave Robert Bruce during his wanderings. His adventures are as curious and entertaining as those which men invent for story books, with this advantage, that they are all true. About this time, and when the Bruce was yet at the head of but few men, Sir Aymer de Valence, who was Earl of Pembroke, together with John of Lorn, came into Galloway, each of them being at the head of a large body of men. John of Lorn had a bloodhound with him, which it was said had formerly belonged to Robert Bruce himself; and having been fed by the king with his own hands, it became attached to him, and would follow his footsteps anywhere, as dogs are well known to trace their masters'

steps, whether they be bloodhounds or not. By means of this hound, John of Lorn thought he would certainly find out Robert Bruce, and take revenge on him for the death of his relation Comyn.

When these two armies advanced upon Robert Bruce, he at first thought of fighting with the English Earl, but becoming aware that John of Lorn was moving round with another large body to attack him in the rear, he resolved to avoid fighting at that time, lest he should be oppressed by numbers. For this purpose, the King divided the men he had with him into three bodies, and commanded them to retreat by three different ways, thinking the enemy would not know which to pursue. He also appointed a place at which they were to assemble again. But when John of Lorn came to the place where the army of Bruce had been thus divided, the bloodhound took his course after one of these divisions, neglecting the other two, and then John of Lorn knew that the King must be in that

party; so he also neglected the two other divisions of the Scots, and followed that which the dog pointed out, with all his men.

The King again saw that he was followed by a large body, and being determined to escape from them if possible, he made all the people who were with him disperse themselves different ways, thinking thus that the enemy must lose trace of him. Bruce kept only one man along with him, and that was his own foster-brother, or the son of his nurse. When John of Lorn came to the place where Bruce's companions had dispersed themselves, the bloodhound, after it had snuffed up and down for a little, quitted the footsteps of all the others, and ran barking upon the track of two men out of the number. Then John of Lorn knew that one of these two must needs be King Robert. Accordingly, he commanded five of his men that were speedy of foot to chase after him, and either make him prisoner, or slay him. They started off accordingly, and ran so fast, that they gained sight of Robert and his fos-

ter-brother. The King asked his companion what help he could give him, and his foster-brother answered he was ready to do his best. So these two turned on the five men of John of Lorn, and killed them all. It is to be supposed they were better armed than the others were, as well as more strong and desperate.

But by this time Bruce was very much fatigued, and yet they dared not sit down to take any rest; for whenever they stopt for an instant, they heard the cry of the blood-hound behind them, and knew by that, that their enemies were coming up fast after them. At length, they came to a wood, through which ran a small river. Then Bruce said to his foster-brother, "Let us wade down this stream for a great way, instead of going straight across, and so this unhappy hound shall lose the scent; for if we were once clear of him, I should not be afraid of getting away from the pursuers." Accordingly, the King and his attendant walked a great way down the stream, taking care to keep their feet in the water, which could

not retain any scent where they had stepped. Then they came ashore on the further side from the enemy, and went deep into the wood before they stopped to rest themselves. In the meanwhile, the hound led John of Lorn straight to the place where the King went into the water, but there the dog began to be puzzled, not knowing where to go next; for you are well aware that the running water could not retain the scent of a man's foot like that which remains on turf. So, John of Lorn seeing the dog was at a fault, as it is called, that is, had lost the track of that which he pursued, he gave up the chase, and returned to join with Aymer de Valence.

But King Robert's adventures were not yet ended. His foster-brother and he had rested themselves in the woods, but they had got no food, and were become extremely hungry. They walked on, however, in hopes of coming to some habitation. At length, in the midst of the forest, they met with three men that looked like thieves or ruffians. They were well armed, and one

of them bore a sheep on his back, which it seemed as if they had just stolen. They saluted the King civilly; and he, replying to their salutation, asked them where they were going. The men answered, they were seeking for Robert Bruce, for that they intended to join with him. The King answered, that if they would go with him, he would conduct them where they would find the Scottish King. Then the man who had spoken, changed countenance, and Bruce, who looked sharply at him, began to suspect that the ruffian guessed who he was, and that he and his companions had some design against his person, in order to gain the reward which had been offered for his life.

So he said to them, "My good friends, as we are not well acquainted with each other, you must go before us, and we will follow near to you."—"You have no occasion to suspect any harm from us," answered the man.—"Neither do I suspect any," said Bruce; "but this is the way in which I choose to travel."

The men did as he commanded, and thus

they travelled till they came together to a waste and ruinous cottage, where the men proposed to dress some part of the sheep, which their companion was carrying. The King was glad to hear of food; but he insisted that there should be two fires kindled, one for himself and his foster-brother at one end of the house, the other at the other end for their three companions. The men did as he desired. They broiled a quarter of mutton for themselves, and gave another to the King and his attendant. They were obliged to eat it without bread or salt; but as they were very hungry, they were glad to get food in any shape, and partook of it very heartily.

Then so heavy a drowsiness fell on King Robert, that, for all the danger he was in, he could not help desiring to sleep. But first, he desired his foster-brother to watch while he slept, for he had great suspicion of their new acquaintances. His foster-brother promised to keep awake, and did his best to keep his word. But the King had not

been long asleep ere his foster-brother fell into a deep slumber also, for he had undergone as much fatigue as the King. When the three villains saw the King and his attendant asleep, they made signs to each other, and rising up at once, drew their swords with the purpose to kill them both. But the King slept but lightly, and little noise as the traitors made in rising, he was awakened by it, and starting up, drew his sword, and went to meet them. At the same moment he pushed his foster-brother with his foot, to awaken him, and he started up; but ere he got his eyes cleared to see what was about to happen, one of the ruffians that were advancing to slay the King, killed him with a stroke of his sword. The King was now alone, one man against three, and in the greatest danger of his life; but his amazing strength, and the good armour which he wore, freed him once more from this great danger, and he killed the three men, one after another. He then left the cottage, very sorrowful for the death of his faithful foster-brother, and took his di-

rection towards the place where he had directed his men to assemble after their dispersion. It was now near night, and the place of meeting being a farm-house, he went boldly into it, where he found the mistress, an old true-hearted Scotswoman, sitting alone. Upon seeing a stranger enter, she asked him who and what he was. The King answered that he was a traveller, who was journeying through the country.

"All travellers," answered the good woman, "are welcome here for the sake of one."

"And who is that one," said the King, "for whose sake you make all travellers welcome?"

"It is our lawful King, Robert the Bruce," answered the mistress, "who is the lawful lord of this country; and although he is now pursued and hunted after with hounds and horns, I hope to live to see him King over all Scotland."

"Since you love him so well, dame," said the King, "know that you see him before you. I am Robert the Bruce."

"You!" said the good woman, in great surprise; "and wherefore are you thus alone?—where are all your men?"

"I have none with me at this moment," answered Bruce, "and therefore I must travel alone."

"But that shall not be," said the brave old dame, "for I have two stout sons, gallant and trusty men, who shall be your servants for life and death."

So she brought her two sons, and though she well knew the dangers to which she exposed them, she made them swear fidelity to the King; and they afterwards became high officers in his service.

Now, the loyal old woman was getting everything ready for the King's supper, when suddenly there was a great trampling of horse heard round the house. They thought it must be some of the English, or John of Lorn's men, and the goodwife called upon her sons to fight to the last for King Robert. But shortly after, they heard the voice of the good Lord James of Douglas, and of

Edward Bruce, the King's brother, who had come with a hundred and fifty horsemen to this farm-house, according to the instructions that the King had left with them at parting.

Robert the Bruce was right joyful to meet his brother, and his faithful friend Lord James, and had no sooner found himself once more at the head of such a considerable body of followers, than, forgetting hunger and weariness, he began to inquire where the enemy who had pursued them so long had taken up their quarters; "for," said he, "as they must suppose us totally scattered and fled, it is likely that they will think themselves quite secure, and disperse themselves into distant quarters, and keep careless watch."

"That is very true," answered James of Douglas, "for I passed a village where there are two hundred of them quartered, who had placed no sentinels; and if you have a mind to make haste, we may surprise them this very night, and do them more mischief than

they have been able to do us during all this day's chase."

Then there was nothing but mount and ride; and as the Scots came by surprise on the body of English whom Douglas had mentioned, and rushed suddenly into the village where they were quartered, they easily dispersed and cut them to pieces; thus doing their pursuers more injury than they themselves had received during the long and severe pursuit of the preceding day.

The consequence of those successes of King Robert were, that soldiers came to join him on all sides, and that he obtained several victories both over Sir Aymer de Valence, Lord Clifford, and other English commanders, until at length the English were afraid to venture into the open country as formerly, unless when they could assemble themselves in considerable bodies. They thought it safer to lie still in the towns and castles which they had garrisoned, and wait till the King of England should once more come to their assistance.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Exploits of Douglas and of Randolph.

When King Edward the First heard that Scotland was again in arms against him, he marched down to the Borders, as I have already told you, with many threats of what he would do to avenge himself on Bruce and his party, whom he called rebels. But he was now old and feeble, and while he was making his preparations, he was taken very ill, and after lingering a long time, at length he died on the 6th July 1307, in full sight of Scotland, and not three miles from its frontier. His hatred to that country was so inveterate, that his thoughts of revenge seemed to occupy his mind on his deathbed. He

made his son promise never to make peace with Scotland until the nation was subdued. He gave also very singular directions concerning the disposal of his dead body. He ordered that it should be boiled in a cauldron till the flesh parted from the bones, and that then the bones should be wrapped up in a bull's hide, and carried at the head of the English army, as often as the Scots attempted to recover their freedom. He thought that he had inflicted such distresses on the Scots, and invaded and defeated them so often, that his very dead bones would terrify them. His son, Edward the Second, did not choose to execute this strange injunction, but caused his father to be buried in Westminster Abbey; where his tomb is still to be seen, bearing for an inscription, HERE LIES THE HAMMER OF THE SCOTTISH NATION. And, indeed, it was true, that during his life he did them as much injury as a hammer does to the substances which it dashes to pieces.

Edward the Second was a weak prince, and neither so brave nor so wise as his fa-

ther. He marched a little way into Scotland with the large army which Edward the First had collected, but went back again without fighting, which gave great encouragement to Bruce's party.

Several of the Scottish nobility now took arms, and declared for King Robert, and fought with the English troops and garrisons. The most distinguished of these was the Good Lord James of Douglas, whom we have often mentioned before. Some of his most memorable exploits respected his own castle of Douglas, in which, being a fortress, and strongly situated, the English had placed a large garrison. James of Douglas saw, with great displeasure, his castle filled with English soldiers, and with great quantities of corn, and cattle, and wine, and ale, and other provisions, which they were preparing to enable them to assist the English army with provisions. So he resolved, if possible, to be revenged upon the captain of the garrison and his soldiers.

For this purpose, Douglas went in dis-

guise to the house of one of his old servants, called Thomas Dickson, a strong, faithful, and bold man, and laid a scheme for taking the castle. A holiday was approaching, called Palm Sunday. Upon this day, it was common in the Roman Catholic times, that the people went to church in procession, with green boughs in their hands. Just as the English soldiers, who had marched down from the castle, got into church, one of Lord James's followers raised the cry of *Douglas, Douglas!* which was the shout with which that family always began battle. Thomas Dickson, and some friends whom he had collected, instantly drew their swords, and killed the first Englishman that they met. But as the signal had been given too soon, Dickson was borne down and slain. Douglas and his men presently after forced their way into the church. The English soldiers attempted to defend themselves, but being taken by surprise and unprepared, they were, for the greater part, killed or made prisoners, and that so suddenly, and with so little noise, that their companions in the

castle never heard of it. So that when Douglas and his men approached the castle gate, they found it open, and that part of the garrison which were left at home, busied cooking provisions for those that were at church. So Lord James got possession of his own castle without difficulty, and he and his men eat up all the good dinner which the English had made ready. But Douglas dared not stay there, lest the English should come in great force and besiege him; and therefore he resolved to destroy all the provisions which the English had stored up in the castle, and to render the place unavailing to them.

It must be owned he executed this purpose in a very cruel and shocking manner, for he was much enraged at the death of Thomas Dickson. He caused all the barrels containing flour, meal, wheat, and malt, to be knocked in pieces, and their contents mixed on the floor; then he staved the great hogsheads of wine and ale, and mixed the liquor with the stores; and last of all, he

killed his prisoners, and flung the dead bodies among this disgusting heap, which his men called, in derision of the English, the Douglas Larder. Then he flung dead horses into the well to destroy it—after which he set fire to the castle; and finally marched away, and took refuge with his followers in the hills and forests. "He loved better," he said, "to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak." That is, he loved better to keep in the open field with his men, than to shut himself and them up in castles.

When Clifford, the English General, heard what had happened, he came to Douglas Castle with a great body of men, and rebuilt all the defences which Lord James had destroyed, and cleared out the well, and put a good soldier, named Thirlwall, to command the garrison, and desired him to be on his guard, for he suspected that Lord James would again attack him. And indeed Douglas, who did not like to see the English in his father's castle, was resolved to take the first opportunity of destroying

this garrison, as he had done the former. For this purpose he had recourse to stratagem. He laid a part of his followers in ambush in the wood, and sent fourteen men, disguised like countrymen, driving cattle past the gates of the castle. As soon as Thirlwall saw this, he swore that he would plunder the Scots drovers of their cattle, and came out, with a considerable part of his garrison, for that purpose. He had followed the cattle past the place where Douglas was lying concealed, when all of a sudden the Scotsmen threw off their carriers' cloaks, and appearing in armour, cried the cry of Douglas, and, turning back suddenly, ran to meet the pursuers; and before Thirlwall could make any defence, he heard the same war-cry behind him, and saw Douglas coming up with those Scots who had been lying in ambush. Thirlwall himself was killed, fighting bravely in the middle of his enemies, and only a very few of his men found their way back to the castle.

When Lord James had thus slain two

English commanders or governors of his castle, and was known to have made a vow that he would be revenged on any one who should dare to take possession of his father's house, men became afraid; and it was called, both in England and Scotland, the Perilous Castle of Douglas, because it was so dangerous to any Englishman who was stationed there. Now, in those warlike times, Master Littlejohn, you must know, that the ladies would not marry any man who was not very brave and valiant, so that a coward, let him be ever so rich or high-born, was held in universal contempt. And thus it was the fashion for the ladies to demand proofs of the courage of their lovers, and for those knights who desired to please the ladies, to try some extraordinary deed of arms, to show their bravery and deserve their favour.

At the time we speak of, there was a young lady in England, whom many knights and noblemen asked in marriage, because she was extremely wealthy and very beau-

tiful. Once upon a holiday she made a great feast, to which she asked all her lovers, and numerous other gallant knights; and after the feast she arose, and told them that she was much obliged to them for their good opinion of her, but as she desired to have for her husband a man of the most incontestable courage, she had formed her resolution not to marry any one, save him who should defend the Castle of Douglas against the Scots for a year and a day. Now this made some silence among the gentlemen present; for although the lady was rich and beautiful, yet there was great danger in placing themselves within the reach of the Good Lord James of Douglas. At last a brave young knight started up and said, that for the love of that lady he was willing to keep the Perilous Castle for a year and day, if the King pleased to give him leave. The King of England was satisfied, and well pleased to get a brave man to hold a place so dangerous. Sir John Wilton was the name of

this gallant knight. He kept the castle very safely for some time; but Douglas at last, by a stratagem, induced him to venture out with a part of the garrison, and then set upon them and slew them. Sir John Wilton himself was killed, and a letter from the lady was found in his pocket. Douglas was sorry for his unhappy end, and did not put to death any of the prisoners as he had formerly done, but dismissed them in safety to the next English garrison.

Other great lords besides Douglas were now exerting themselves to attack and destroy the English. Amongst those was Sir Thomas Randolph, whose mother was a sister of King Robert. He had joined with the Bruce when he first took up arms. Afterwards being made prisoner by the English, when the King was defeated at Methven, as I told you, Sir Thomas Randolph was obliged to join the English to save his life. He remained so constant to them, that he was with Aymer de Valence and John of Lorn, when they forced the Bruce to dis-

perse his little band; and he followed the pursuit so close that he made his uncle's standard-bearer prisoner, and took his banner. Afterwards, however, he was himself made prisoner at a solitary house on Linewater by the Good Lord James Douglas, who brought him captive to the King. Robert reproached his nephew for having deserted his cause; and Randolph, who was very hot-tempered, answered insolently, and was sent by King Robert to prison. Shortly after the uncle and nephew were reconciled, and Sir Thomas Randolph, created Earl of Murray by the King, was ever afterwards one of Bruce's best supporters. There was a sort of rivalry between Douglas and him, which should do the boldest and most hazardous actions. I will just mention one or two circumstances, which will show you what awful dangers were to be encountered by these brave men, in order to free Scotland from the enemies and invaders.

While Robert Bruce was gradually getting possession of the country, and driving

out the English, Edinburgh, the principal town of Scotland, remained with its strong castle in possession of the invaders. Sir Thomas Randolph was extremely desirous to gain this important place, but, as you well know, the castle is situated on a very steep and lofty rock, so that it is difficult or almost impossible even to get up to the foot of the walls, much more to climb over them.

So while Randolph was considering what was to be done, there came to him a Scottish gentleman, named Francis, who had joined Bruce's standard, and asked to speak with him in private. He then told Randolph that in his youth he had lived in the Castle of Edinburgh, and that his father had then been keeper of the fortress. It happened at that time that Francis was much in love with a lady, who lived in a part of the town beneath the castle, which is called the Grass-market. Now as he could not get out of the castle by day to see his mistress, he had practised a way of clambering by night down the castle crag on the south side,

and returning up at his pleasure; when he came to the foot of the wall he made use of a ladder to get over it, as it was not very high on that point, those who built it having trusted to the steepness of the crag. Francis had gone and come so frequently in this dangerous manner, that though it was now long ago, he told Randolph he knew the road so well, that he would undertake to guide a small party of men by night to the bottom of the wall, and as they might bring ladders with them, there would be no difficulty in scaling it. The great risk was, that of their being discovered by the watchmen while in the act of ascending the cliff, in which case every man of them must have perished.

Nevertheless Randolph did not hesitate to attempt the adventure. He took with him only thirty men, (you may be sure they were chosen for activity and courage,) and came one dark night to the foot of the crag, which they began to ascend under the guidance of Francis, who went before them, upon his hands and feet, up one cliff, down

another, and round another, where there was scarce room to support themselves. All the while these thirty men were obliged to follow in a line, one after the other, by a path that was fitter for a cat than a man. The noise of a stone falling, or a word spoken from one to another, would have alarmed the watchmen. They were obliged, therefore, to move with the greatest precaution. When they were far up the crag, and near the foundation of the wall, they heard the guards going their rounds, to see that all was safe in and about the castle. Randolph and his party had nothing for it but to lie close and quiet each man under the crag, as he happened to be placed, and trust that the guards would pass by without noticing them. And while they were waiting in breathless alarm, they got a new cause of fright. One of the soldiers of the castle, willing to startle his comrades, suddenly threw a stone from the wall, and cried out, "Aha, I see you well!" The stone came thundering down over the heads of Randolph and his men, who naturally thought themselves discover-

ed. If they had stirred, or made the slightest noise, they would have been entirely destroyed, for the soldiers above might have killed every man of them, merely by rolling down stones. But being courageous and chosen men, they remained quiet, and the English soldiers, who thought their comrade was merely playing them a trick, (as, indeed, he was,) passed on, without farther examination.

Then Randolph and his men got up, and came in haste to the foot of the wall, which was not above twice a man's height in that place. They planted the ladders they had brought, and Francis mounted first to show them the way; Sir Andrew Grey, a brave knight, followed him, and Randolph himself was the third man who got over. Then the rest followed. When once they were within the walls, there was not so much to do, for the garrison were asleep and unarmed, excepting the watch, who were speedily destroyed. Thus was Edinburgh Castle taken in the year 1312-13.

It was not, however, only by the exertions of great and powerful barons, like Randolph and Douglas, that the freedom of Scotland was to be accomplished. The stout yeomanry, and the bold peasantry of the land, who were as desirous to enjoy their cottages in honourable independence, as the nobles were to reclaim their castles and estates from the English, contributed their full share in the efforts which were made to deliver the country from the invaders. I will give you one instance among many.

There was a strong castle near Linlithgow, or Lithgow, as the word is more generally pronounced, where an English governor, with a powerful garrison, lay in readiness to support the English cause, and used to exercise much severity upon the Scottish in the neighbourhood. There lived at no great distance from this stronghold, a farmer, a bold and stout man, whose name was Binnock, or, as it is now pronounced, Binning. This man saw with great joy,

the progress which the Scottish were making in recovering their country from the English, and resolved to do something to help his countrymen, by getting possession, if it were possible, of the Castle of Lithgow. But the place was very strong, situated by the side of a lake, defended not only by gates, which were usually kept shut against strangers, but also by a portcullis. A portcullis is a sort of door formed of cross-bars of iron, like a grate. It has not hinges like a door, but is drawn up by pulleys, and let down when any danger approaches. It may be let go in a moment, and then falls down into the door-way; and as it has great iron spikes at the bottom, it crushes all that it lights upon; and in case of a sudden alarm, a portcullis may be let suddenly fall to defend the entrance when it is not possible to shut the gates. Binnock knew this very well, but he resolved to be provided against this risk also when he attempted to surprise the castle.

So he spoke with some bold courageous

countrymen, and engaged them in his enterprise, which he accomplished thus.

Binnock had been accustomed to supply the garrison of Linlithgow with hay, and he had been ordered by the English governor to furnish some cart loads, of which they were in want. He promised to bring it accordingly, but in the night before he drove the hay to the castle, he stationed a party of his friends, as well armed as possible, near the entrance, where they could not be seen by the garrison, and gave them directions that they should come to his assistance as soon as they should hear him cry a signal, which was to be,—"Call all, call all." Then he loaded a great waggon with hay. But in the waggon he placed eight strong men, well armed, lying flat on their breasts, and covered over with hay, so that they could not be seen. He himself walked carelessly beside the waggon; and he chose the stoutest and bravest of his servants to be the driver, who carried at his belt a strong axe or hatchet. In this way Binnock approached the castle early in the morning; and the watch-

man, who only saw two men, Binnock being one of them, with a cart of hay, which they expected, opened the gates, and raised up the portcullis to permit them to enter the castle. But as soon as the cart had gotten under the gateway, Binnock made a sign to his servant, who with his axe suddenly cut asunder the *soam*, that is, the yoke which fastens the horses to the cart, and the horses finding themselves free, naturally started forward, the cart remaining behind. At the same moment, Binnock cried, as loud as he could, "Call all, call all;" and drawing his sword, which he had under his country habit, he killed the porter. The armed men then jumped up from under the hay where they lay concealed, and rushed on the English guard. The Englishmen tried to shut the gates, but they could not, because the cart of hay remained in the gateway, and prevented the folding-doors from being closed. The portcullis was also let fall, but the grating was caught on the cart, and so could not drop to the

ground. The men who were in ambush near the gate, hearing the cry, "Call all, call all," ran to assist those who had leaped out from amongst the hay; the castle was taken, and all the Englishmen killed or made prisoners. King Robert rewarded Binnock by bestowing on him an estate, which his posterity long afterwards enjoyed.

Perhaps you may be tired, my dear child, of such stories; yet I will tell you how the great and important Castle of Roxburgh was taken from the English, and then we will pass to other subjects.

You must know, Roxburgh was then a very large castle, situated near where two fine rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, join to each other. Being within five or six miles of England, the English were extremely desirous of retaining it, and the Scots equally so of obtaining possession of it. I will tell you how it was taken.

It was upon the night of what is called Shrovetide, a holiday which Roman Catholics paid great respect to, and solemni-

zed with much gaiety and feasting. Most of the garrison of Roxburgh Castle were feasting and drinking, but still they had set watches on the battlements of the castle, in case of any sudden attack; for as the Scots had succeeded in so many enterprises of the kind, and as Douglas was known to be in the neighbourhood, they conceived themselves obliged to keep a very strict guard.

There was also an Englishwoman, the wife of one of the officers, who was sitting on the battlements with her child in her arms; and looking out on the fields below, she saw some black objects, like a herd of cattle, straggling near the foot of the wall, and approaching the ditch or moat of the castle. She pointed them out to the sentinel, and asked him what they were.—"Pooh, pooh," said the soldier, "it is farmer such a man's cattle," (naming a man whose farm lay near to the castle;) "the goodman is keeping a jolly Shrovetide, and has forgot to shut up his bullocks in their yard; but if the Douglas come across them before morning, he is like-

ly to rue his negligence." Now these creeping objects which they saw from the castle-wall were no real cattle, but Douglas himself and his soldiers, who had put black cloaks above their armour, and were creeping about on hands and feet, in order, wi hout being observed, to get so near to the foot of the castle wall as to be able to set ladders to it. The poor woman, who knew nothing of this, sat quietly on the wall, and began to sing to her child. You must know that the name of Douglas was become so terrible to the English, that the women used to frighten their children with it, and say to them when they behaved ill, that they "would make the Black Douglas take them." And this soldier's wife was singing to her child,

"Hush ye, hush ye, little pet ye,
Hush ye, hush ye, do not fret ye,
The Black Douglas shall not get ye."

"You are not so sure of that," said a voice close beside her. She felt at the same time a heavy hand, with an iron glove, laid on her shoulder, and when she looked round, she saw the very Black Douglas she had

been singing about standing close beside her, a tall, swarthy, strong man. At the same time, another Scotsman was seen ascending up the walls, near to the sentinel. The soldier gave the alarm, and rushed at the Scotsman, whose name was Simon Ledehouse, with his lance; but Simon parried the blow, and closing with the sentinel, struck him a deadly blow with his dagger. The rest of the Scots followed up to assist Douglas and Ledehouse, and the castle was taken. Many of the soldiers were put to death, but Douglas protected the woman and the child. I dare say she made no more songs about the Black Douglas.

While Douglas, Randolph, and other true-hearted patriots, were thus taking castles and strongholds from the English, King Robert, who had now a considerable army under his command, marched through the country, beating and dispersing such bodies of English as he met on his way. He went to the north country, where he conquered the great and powerful family of Comyn,

who retained great ill will against him for having slain their relation, the Red Comyn, in the church at Dumfries. They had joined the English with all their forces; but now, as the Scots began to get uppermost, they were very much distressed. Bruce caused more than thirty of them to be beheaded on one day, and the place where they are buried is called "the Grave of the headless Comyns."

Neither did Robert Bruce forget John M'Dougal of Lorn, who had defeated him at Dalry, and very near made him prisoner, or slain him, by the hands of his vassals, the M'Androssers, and had afterwards pursued him with a bloodhound. When John of Lorn heard that Robert was marching against him, he hoped to defend himself by taking possession of a very strong pass on the side of one of the largest mountains in Scotland, Cruachan Ben. The ground was very strait, having great rocks on the one hand, and on the other deep precipices, sinking down on a great lake called Lochawe; so

that John of Lorn thought himself perfectly secure, as he could not be attacked except in front, and by a very difficult path. But Robert Bruce, when he saw how his enemies were posted, sent a party of light-armed archers, under command of Douglas, with directions to go, by a distant and difficult road, around the northern side of the hill, and thus to attack the men of Lorn in the rear as well as in front; behind, that is, as well as before. He had signals made when Douglas arrived at the place appointed. The King then advanced upon the Lorn men in front, when they raised a shout of defiance, and began to shoot arrows and roll stones down the path, with great confidence in their own security. But when they were attacked by the Douglas and his archers in the rear, they lost conrage and fled. Many were slain among the rocks and precipices, and many were drowned in the lake, and the great river which runs out of it. John of Lorn only escaped by means of his boat, which he had in readiness upon the lake.

Thus King Robert had full revenge upon him, and deprived him of a great part of his territory.

The English had now scarcely any place of importance left in Scotland, excepting Stirling, which was besieged, or rather blockaded, by Edward Bruce, the king's brother. To blockade a town or castle, is to quarter an army around it, so as to prevent those within from getting provisions. This was done at Stirling, till Sir Philip Mowbray, who commanded the castle, finding that he was like to be reduced to extremity, for want of provisions, made an agreement with Edward Bruce, that he would surrender the castle, providing he were not relieved by the King of England before Midsummer. Sir Edward agreed to these terms, and allowed Mowbray to go to London, to tell King Edward of the conditions he had made. But when King Robert heard what his brother had done, he thought it was too great a risk, since it obliged him to venture a battle with the full strength of Edward II., who

had under him England, Ireland, Wales, and great part of France, and could within the time allowed assemble a much more powerful army than the Scots could, even if all Scotland were fully under the King's authority. Sir Edward answered his brother with his natural audacious spirit, "Let Edward bring every man he has, we will fight them, were they more." The King admired his courage, though it was mingled with rashness.—"Since it is so, brother," he said, "we will manfully abide battle, and assemble all who love us, and value the freedom of Scotland, to come with all the men they have, and help us to oppose King Edward, should he come with his army to rescue Stirling."

CHAP. VIII.

The Battle of Bannockburn.

KING EDWARD II., as we have already said, was not a wise and brave man like his father, but a foolish prince, who was governed by unworthy favourites, and thought more of pleasure than of governing his kingdom. His father Edward I. would have entered Scotland at the head of a large army, before he had left Bruce time to conquer back so much of the country. But we have seen, that, very fortunately for the Scots, that wise and skilful, though ambitious king, died when he was on the point of marching into Scotland. His son Edward had afterwards neglected the Scottish war, and thus lost the opportunity of defeating Bruce, when his force was but small. But

now, when Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor of Stirling, came to London to tell the King, that Stirling, the last Scottish town of importance which remained in possession of the English, was to be surrendered if it were not relieved by force of arms before Midsummer; then all the English nobles called out, it would be a sin and shame to permit the fair conquest which Edward I. had made, to be forfeited to the Scots, for want of fighting. It was, therefore, resolved, that the King should go himself to Scotland, with as great forces as he could possibly muster.

King Edward the Second, therefore, assembled one of the greatest armies which a King of England ever commanded. There were troops brought from all his dominions. Many brave soldiers from the French provinces which the King of England enjoyed in France,—many Irish, many Welsh,—and all the great English nobles and barons, with their followers, were assembled in one great army. The number was not less than one hundred thousand men.

King Robert the Bruce summoned all his nobles and barons to join him, when he heard of the great preparation which the King of England was making. They were not so numerous as the English by many thousand men. In fact, his whole army did not very much exceed thirty thousand men, and they were much worse armed than the wealthy Englishmen; but then, Robert, who was at their head, was one of the most expert generals of the time; and the officers he had under him, were his brother Edward, his nephew Randolph, his faithful follower the Douglas; and other brave and experienced leaders, who commanded the same men that had been accustomed to fight and gain victories under every disadvantage of situation and numbers.

The King, on his part, studied how he might supply, by address and stratagem, what he wanted in numbers and strength. He knew the superiority of the English, both in their heavy-armed cavalry, which were much better mounted and armed than those of the Scots, and in the archery, in

which art the English were better trained than any people in the world. Both these advantages he resolved to provide against. With this purpose, Bruce led his army down into a plain near Stirling, called the Park, near which, and beneath it, the English army must needs pass through a boggy country, broken with water-courses, while the Scots occupied hard dry ground. He then caused all the ground upon the front of his line of battle, where cavalry were likely to act, to be dug full of holes, about as deep as a man's knee. They were filled with light brushwood, and the turf was laid on the top, so that it appeared a plain field, while in reality it was all full of these pits as a honeycomb is of holes. He also, it is said, caused steel spikes, called calthrops, to be scattered up and down in the plain, where the English cavalry were most likely to advance, trusting to lame and destroy their horses. When his army was drawn up, the line stretched north and south. On the south, it was terminated by the banks of

the brook called Bannockburn, which are so rocky, that no troops could come on them there. On the left, the Scottish line extended near to the town of Stirling. Bruce reviewed his troops very carefully; all the useless servants, and drivers of carts, and such like, of whom there were very many, he ordered to go behind a height called the Gillies' hill, that is, the Servants' hill. He then spoke to the soldiers, and expressed his determination to gain the victory, or to lose his life on the field of battle. He desired that all those who did not propose to fight to the last, would leave the field before the battle began, and that none would remain except those who were determined to take the issue of victory or death, as God should send it.

When the main body of his army was thus placed in order, the King posted Randolph, with a body of horse, near to the Church of St Ninian's, commanding him to use the utmost diligence to prevent any succours from being thrown into Stirling Castle. He then dismissed James of Dou-

glas, and Sir Robert Keith, the Mareschal of the Scottish army, in order that they might survey as nearly as they could, the English force, which was now approaching from Falkirk. They returned with information, that the approach of that vast host was one of the most beautiful and terrible sights which could be seen,—that the whole country seemed covered with men-at-arms on horse and foot,—that the number of standards, banners, and pennons, (all flags of different kinds,) made so gallant a show, that the bravest and most numerous host in Christendom might be alarmed to see King Edward moving against them.

It was upon the 23d of June (1314,) the King of Scotland heard the news, that the English army were approaching Stirling. He drew out his army, therefore, in the order which he had before resolved upon. After a short time, Bruce, who was looking out anxiously for the enemy, saw a body of English cavalry trying to get into Stirling from the eastward. This was the Lord Clifford, who, with a chosen body of eight hun-

dred horse, had been detached to relieve the castle.

"See, Randolph," said the King to his nephew, "there is a rose fallen from your chaplet." By this he meant, that Randolph had lost some honour, by suffering the enemy to pass where he had been commanded to hinder them. Randolph made no reply, but rushed against Clifford with little more than half his number. The Scots were on foot. The English turned to charge them with their lances, and Randolph drew up his men in close order to receive them. He seemed to be in so much danger, that Douglas asked leave of the King to go and assist him. The King refused him permission.

"Let Randolph," he said, "redeem his own fault; I cannot break the order of battle for his sake." Still the danger appeared greater, and the English horse seemed entirely to encompass the small handful of Scottish infantry. "So please you," said Douglas to the King, "my heart will not suffer me to stand idle and see Ran-

dolph perish—I must go to his assistance." He rode off accordingly; but long before they had reached the place of combat, they saw the English horses galloping off, many with empty saddles.

"Halt!" said Douglas to his men, "Randolph has gained the day; since we were not soon enough to help him in the battle, do not let us lessen his glory by approaching the field." Now, that was nobly done; especially as Douglas and Randolph were always contending which should rise highest in the good opinion of the King and the nation.

The van of the English army now came in sight, and a number of their bravest knights drew near to see what the Scottish were doing. They saw King Robert dressed in his armour, and distinguished by a gold crown, which he wore over his helmet. He was not mounted on his great war-horse, because he did not expect to fight that evening. But he rode on a little pony up and down the ranks of his army, putting his men in order, and carried in his hand a short

battle-axe made of steel. When the King saw the English horsemen draw near, he advanced a little before his own men, that he might look at them more nearly.

There was a knight among the English, called Sir Henry de Bohun, who thought this would be a good opportunity to gain great fame to himself, and put an end to the war, by killing King Robert. The King being poorly mounted, and having no lance, Bohun galloped on him suddenly and furiously, thinking, with his long spear and his big strong horse, easily to bear him down to the ground. King Robert saw him, and permitted him to come very near, then suddenly turned his pony a little to one side, so that Sir Henry missed him with the lance-point, and was in the act of being carried past him by the career of his horse. But as he passed, King Robert rose up in his stirrups, and struck Sir Henry on the head with his battle-axe so terrible a blow, that it broke to pieces his iron helmet as if it had been a nut-shell, and hurled him from his saddle. He was

dead before he reached the ground. This gallant action was blamed by the Scottish leaders, who thought Bruce ought not to have exposed himself to so much danger, when the safety of the whole army depended on him. The King only kept looking at his weapon which was injured by the force of the blow, and said, "I have broken my good battle-axe."

The next morning, being the 24th June, at break of day the battle began in terrible earnest. The English as they advanced saw the Scots getting into line. The Abbot of Inchaffray walked through their ranks barefooted, and exhorted them to fight for their freedom. They kneeled down as he passed, and prayed to Heaven for victory. King Edward, who saw this, called out, "They kneel down—they are asking forgiveness." "Yes," said a celebrated English baron, called Ingelram de Umphraville, "but they ask it from God, not from us—these men will conquer, or die upon the field."

The English King ordered his men to begin the battle. The archers then bent their

bows, and began to shoot so closely together, that the arrows fell like flakes of snow on a Christmas day. They killed many of the Scots, and might, as at Falkirk and other places, have decided the victory; but Bruce, as I told you before, was prepared for them. He had in readiness a body of men-at-arms well mounted, who rode at full gallop among the archers, and as they had no weapons save their bows and arrows, which they could not use when they were attacked hand to hand, they were cut down in great numbers by the Scottish horsemen, and thrown into total confusion.

The fine English cavalry then advanced to support their archers, and to attack the Scottish line. But coming over the ground which was dug full of pits, the horses fell into these holes, and the riders lay tumbling about, without any means of defence, and unable to rise from the weight of their armour. The Englishmen began to fall into general disorder; and the Scottish King, bringing up more of his forces, attacked and pressed them still more closely.

On a sudden, an event happened which decided the victory. The servants and attendants on the Scottish camp had, as I told you, been sent behind the army to a place called the Gillies'-hill. But now when they saw that their masters were like to gain the day, they rushed from their place of concealment with such weapons as they could get, that they might have their share in the victory and in the spoil. The English, seeing them come suddenly over the hill, mistook this disorderly rabble for a new army coming up to sustain the Scots, and losing all heart, began to shift every man for himself. Edward himself left the field as fast as he could ride, and was closely pursued by Douglas with a party of horse, who followed him as far as Dunbar, where the English had still a friend in the Governor, Patrick Earl of March. The Earl received Edward in his forlorn condition, and furnished him with a fishing skiff, or small ship, in which he escaped to England, having entirely lost his

fine army, and a great number of his bravest nobles.

The English never before or afterwards lost so dreadful a battle as that of Bannockburn, nor did the Scots ever gain one of the same importance. Many of the best and bravest of the English nobility and gentry, as I have said, lay dead on the field; a great many more were made prisoners; and the whole of King Edward's immense army was dispersed or destroyed.

The English, after this great defeat, were no longer in a condition to support their pretensions to be masters of Scotland, or to continue, as they had done for nearly twenty years, to send armies into that country to overcome it. On the contrary, they became scarce able to defend their own frontiers against Robert Bruce and his soldiers.

There were several battles fought within England itself, in which the English had greatly the worst. One of these took place near Mitton, in Yorkshire. So many priests took part in the fight, that the Scottish call-

ed it the Chapter of Mitton. A meeting of the clergymen belonging to a cathedral is called a Chapter. There was great slaughter in and after the action. The Scots laid waste the country of England as far as the gates of York, and enjoyed for the time a considerable superiority over their ancient enemies, who had so lately threatened to make them subjects of England.

Thus did Robert Bruce arise from the condition of an exile, hunted with bloodhounds like a stag or beast of prey, to the rank of an independent sovereign, universally acknowledged to be one of the wisest and bravest kings who then lived. The nation of Scotland was also raised once more from the state of a distressed and conquered province to that of a free and independent state, governed by its own laws, and subject to its own princes; and although the country was, after the Bruce's death, often subjected to great loss and distress, both by the hostility of the English, and by the unhappy civil wars among the Scots themselves, yet they never after-

wards lost the freedom for which Wallace had laid down his life, and which King Robert had recovered, no less by his wisdom than by his weapons. And therefore most just it is, that while the country of Scotland retains any recollection of its history, the memory of these brave warriors and faithful patriots ought to be remembered with honour and gratitude.

CHAP. IX.

Concerning the Exploits of Edward Bruce, the Douglas, Randolph Earl of Murray, and the Death of Robert Bruce.

You will be naturally curious to hear what became of Edward, the brother of Robert Bruce, who was so courageous and at the same time so rash. You must know that the Irish, at that time, had been almost fully conquered by the English; but becoming weary of them, the Irish chiefs, or at least a great many of them, invited Edward Bruce to come over, drive out the English, and become their king. He was willing enough to go, for he had always a high courageous spirit, and desired to obtain fame and dominion by fighting. Edward Bruce was as good a soldier as his brother, but not so prudent and

cautious; for, except in the affair of killing the Red Comyn, which was a wicked and violent action, Robert Bruce showed himself as wise as he was courageous. However, he was well contented that his brother Edward, who had always fought so bravely for him, should be raised up to be King of Ireland. Therefore King Robert not only gave him an army to assist in making the conquest, but passed over the sea to Ireland himself in person, with a considerable body of troops to assist him. The Bruces gained several battles, and penetrated far into Ireland; but the English forces were too numerous, and so many of the Irish joined with them rather than with Edward Bruce, that King Robert and his brother were obliged to retreat before them.

The chief commander of the English was a great soldier, called Sir Edmond Butler, and he had assembled a much greater army than Edward Bruce and his brother King Robert had to oppose to him. The Scots were obliged to retreat every morning, that

they might not be forced to battle by an army more numerous than their own.

I have often told you, that King Robert the Bruce was a wise and a good prince. But a circumstance happened during this retreat, which showed he was also a kind and humane man. It was one morning, when the English, and their Irish auxiliaries, were pressing hard upon Bruce, who had given his army orders to continue a hasty retreat; for a battle with a much more numerous army, and in the midst of a country which favoured his enemies, would have been extremely imprudent. On a sudden, just as King Robert was about to mount his horse, he heard a woman shrieking in despair. "What is the matter?" said the King; and he was informed by his attendants, that a poor woman, a laundress, or washerwoman, mother of an infant who had been just born, was about to be left behind the army, as being too weak to travel. The mother was shrieking for fear of falling into the hands of the Irish, who were accounted

very cruel, and there were no carriages or means of sending the woman and her infant on in safety. They must needs be abandoned if the army retreated.

King Robert was silent for a moment when he heard this story, being divided betwixt the feelings of humanity, occasioned by the poor woman's distress, and the danger to which a halt would expose his army. At last he looked round on his officers, with eyes which kindled like fire. "Ah, gentlemen," he said, "never let it be said that a man who was born of a woman, and nursed by a woman's tenderness, should leave a mother and an infant to the mercy of barbarians. In the name of God, let the odds and the risk be what they will, I will fight Edmond Butler rather than leave these poor creatures behind me. Let the army, therefore, draw up in line of battle, instead of retreating."

The story had a singular conclusion; for the English general, seeing that Robert the Bruce halted and offered him battle, and

knowing that the Scottish king was one of the best generals then living, conceived that he must have received some large supply of forces, and was afraid to attack him. And thus Bruce had an opportunity to send off the poor woman and her child, and then to retreat at his leisure, without suffering any inconvenience from the halt.

But Robert was obliged to leave the conquest of Ireland to his brother Edward, being recalled by pressing affairs to his own country. Edward, who was rash as he was brave, engaged, against the advice of his best officers, in battle with an English general, called Sir Piers de Birmingham. The Scots were surrounded on all sides, but continued to fight valiantly, and Edward Bruce showed the example, by fighting in the very front of the battle. At length, a strong English champion, called John Maupas, engaged Edward Bruce hand to hand; and they fought till they killed each other. Maupas was found lying after the battle upon the body of Edward Bruce; both were dead

men. After Edward Bruce's death, the Scots gave up further attempts to conquer Ireland.

Robert Bruce continued to reign gloriously for several years, and was so constantly victorious over the English, that the Scots seemed for the time to have acquired a complete superiority over their neighbours. But then we must remember, that Edward II., who then reigned in England, was a foolish prince, and listened to bad councils; so it is no wonder that he was beaten by so wise and experienced a general as Robert Bruce, who had fought his way to the crown through so many disasters.

In the last year of Robert the Bruce's reign, he became extremely sickly and infirm, chiefly owing to a disorder called the leprosy, which he had caught during the hardships and misfortunes of his youth, when he was so frequently obliged to hide himself in woods and morasses, without a roof to shelter him. He lived at a castle on the beautiful banks of the river Clyde, near to where it joined the sea; and his chief

amusement was to go upon the river, and down to the sea in a ship, which he kept for his pleasure. He was no longer able to sit upon his war-horse, or to lead his army to the field.

While Bruce was in this feeble state, Edward II. King of England died, and was succeeded by his son Edward III. He turned out afterwards to be one of the wisest and bravest kings whom England ever had; but at this time he was very young, and under the entire management of his mother, who governed by means of a wicked favourite called Mortimer.

The war between the English and the Scotch still lasting at that time, Bruce sent his two great commanders, the Good Lord James Douglas, and Thomas Randolph Earl of Murray, to lay waste the counties of Northumberland and Durham, and distress the English as much as they could.

Their soldiers were about twenty thousand men in number, all lightly armed, and mounted on horses that were but small in

height, but excessively active. The men themselves carried no provision, except a bag of oatmeal; and each had at his saddle a small plate of iron called a girdle, on which, when they pleased, they could bake the oatmeal into cakes. They killed the cattle of the English, as they travelled through the country, roasted the flesh on wooden spits, or boiled it in the skins of the animals themselves, putting in a little water with the beef, to prevent the fire from burning the hide to pieces. This was rough cookery. They made their shoes, or rather sandals, in as coarse a way, cutting them out of the raw hides of the cattle, and fitting them to their ancles, like what are now called short gaiters. As this sort of buskin had the hairy side of the hide outermost, the English called those who wore them *rough-footed* Scots, and sometimes, from the colour of the hide, *red-shanks*.

As the army needed to carry nothing with them, either for provisions or ammunition, the Scots moved with amazing speed, from

mountain to mountain, and from glen to glen, pillaging and destroying the country wheresoever they came. In the meanwhile, the young King of England pursued them with a much larger army; but, as it was encumbered by the necessity of carrying provisions in great quantities, and by the slow motions of men in heavy armour, they could not come up with the Scots, although they saw every day the smoke of the houses and villages which they were burning. The King of England was extremely angry; for, though only a boy of sixteen years old, he longed to fight the Scots, and to chastise them for the mischief they were doing to his country; and he grew so impatient, that he offered a large reward to any one who would show him where the Scottish army were.

At length, after the English host had suffered severe hardships by want of provisions, and fatiguing journeys through fords, and swamps, and morasses, a gentleman named Rokeby came into the camp,

and claimed the reward which the King had offered. He told the King that he had been made prisoner by the Scots, and that they had said they should be as glad to meet the English King as he to see them. Accordingly, Rokeby guided the English army to the place where the Scots lay encamped.

But the English King was no nearer to the battle which he desired, for Douglas and Randolph, knowing the force and numbers of the English army, had taken up their camp on a steep hill, at the bottom of which ran a deep river, having a channel filled with large stones, so that there was no possibility for the English to attack the Scots without crossing the water, and then climbing up the hill in the very face of their enemy, a risk which was too great to be attempted.

Then the King sent a message of defiance to the Scottish generals, inviting them either to draw back their forces, and allow him freedom to cross the river, and time to place his army in order of battle, on the other side, that they might fight fairly, or

offering, if they liked it better, to permit them to cross over to his side without opposition, that they might join battle on a fair field. Randolph and Douglas did nothing but laugh at this message. They said, when they fought, it should be at their own pleasure, and not because the King of England chose to ask for a battle. They reminded him, insultingly, how they had been in his country for many days, burning, taking spoil, and doing what they thought fit. If the King was displeased with this, they said, he must find his way across the river to fight them, the best way he could.

The English King, determined not to quit sight of the Scots, encamped on the opposite side of the river to watch their motions, thinking that want of provisions would oblige them to quit their strong position on the mountains. But the Scots once more showed Edward their dexterity in marching, by leaving their encampment, and taking up another post, even stronger and more difficult to approach than the first which they

had occupied. King Edward followed, and again encamped opposite to his dexterous and troublesome enemies, in hopes to bring them to a battle, when he might easily hope to gain a victory, having more than double the number of the Scottish army, all troops of the very best quality.

While the armies lay thus opposed to each other, Douglas resolved to give the young King of England a lesson in the art of war. At the dead of night, he left the Scottish camp with a small body of chosen horse, not above two hundred, well armed. He crossed the river in deep silence, and came to the English camp, which was but carelessly guarded. Seeing this, Douglas rode past the English sentinels as if he had been an officer of the English army, saying,—"Ha, Saint George! you keep bad watch here."—In these days, you must know, the English used to swear by Saint George, as the Scottish did by Saint Andrew. Presently after, Douglas heard an English soldier, who lay stretched by the fire, say to his comrade,—"I cannot tell

what is to happen us in this place; but, for my part, I have a great fear of the Black Douglas playing us some trick."—"You shall have cause to say so," thought Douglas to himself.

When he had thus got into the midst of the English camp without being discovered, he drew his sword, and cut asunder the ropes of a tent, calling out his usual war-cry,—"Douglas, Douglas! English thieves, you are all dead men." His followers immediately began to cut down and overturn the tents, cutting and stabbing the English soldiers as they endeavoured to get to arms.

Douglas forced his way to the pavilion of the King himself, and very nearly carried that young prince prisoner out of the middle of his great army. Edward's chaplain, however, and many of his household, stood to arms bravely in his defence, while the young King escaped by creeping away beneath the canvass of his tent. The chaplain and several of the King's officers were slain; but the whole camp was now alarm-

ed and in arms, so that Douglas was obliged to retreat, which he did by bursting through the English at the side of the camp opposite to that by which he had entered. Being separated from his men in the confusion, he was in great danger of being slain by an Englishman, who encountered him with a great club. He killed him, but with considerable difficulty; and then blowing his horn to collect his men, who soon gathered around him, he returned to the Scottish camp, having sustained very little loss.

Edward, much mortified at the insult which he had received, became still more desirous of chastising these audacious adversaries, and one of them at least was not unwilling to afford him an opportunity of revenge. This was Thomas Randolph, Earl of Murray. He asked Douglas when he returned to the Scottish camp, "What he had done?"—"We have drawn some blood."—"Ah," said the Earl, "had we gone all together to the night attack, we would have discomfited them."—"It might well have been so," said Douglas, "but the risk would

have been too great."—"Then will we fight them in open battle," said Randolph, "for if we remain here, we shall in time be famished for want of provisions."—"Not so," replied Douglas; "we will deal with this great army of the English as the fox did with the fisherman in the fable."—"And how was that?" said the Earl of Murray.—Here the Douglas told him this story:—

"A fisherman," he said, "had made a hut by a river side, that he might follow his occupation of fishing. Now, one night he had gone out to look after his nets, leaving a small fire in his hut; and when he came back, behold there was a fox in the cabin, taking the liberty to eat one of the finest salmon he had taken. 'Ho, Mr Robber!' said the fisherman, drawing his sword, and standing in the door-way to prevent the fox's escape; 'you shall presently die the death.' The poor fox looked for some hole to get out at, but saw none, whereupon he pulled down with his teeth a mantle, which was lying on the bed, and dragged it across the fire.

The fisherman ran to snatch his mantle from the fire—the fox flew out at the door with the salmon;—and so will we escape the great English army by subtlety, and without risking battle with so large an army."

Randolph agreed to act by Douglas's counsel, and the Scots army kindled great fires through their encampment, and made a noise and shouting, and blowing of horns, as if they meant to remain all night there, as before. But in the mean time, Douglas had caused a road to be cut through two miles of a great morass which lay in their rear, and which it would otherwise have been impossible that the army could have crossed; and through this passage, which the English never suspected, Douglas and Randolph, and all their men, moved at the dead of night. They did not leave so much as an errand-boy behind, and so bent their march towards Scotland, leaving the English disappointed and affronted. Great was their wonder in the morning, when they

saw the Scottish camp empty, and found no living men in it, but two or three English prisoners tied to trees, whom they had left with an insulting message to the King of England, saying, "If he were displeased with what they had done, he might come and revenge himself in Scotland."

The place where the Scots fixed this famous encampment, was in the forest of Weardale, in the bishoprick of Durham; and the road which they cut for the purpose of their retreat, is still called the *Shorn Moss*.

After this a peace was concluded with Robert Bruce, on terms highly honourable to Scotland, for the English King renounced all pretensions to the sovereignty of the country; and, moreover, gave his sister, a princess called Joanna, to be wife to Robert Bruce's son, called David. This treaty was very advantageous for the Scots. It was called the treaty of Northampton, because it was concluded at that town, in the year 1328.

Good King Robert did not long survive this joyful event. He was not aged more than four-and-fifty years, but, as I said before, his illness was caused by the hardships which he sustained during his youth, and at length he became very ill. Finding that he could not recover, he assembled around his bedside the nobles and counsellors in whom he most trusted. He told them, that now, being on his deathbed, he sorely repented all his misdeeds, and particularly that he had in his passion killed Comyn with his own hand, in the church and before the altar. He said that if he had lived, he had intended to go to Jerusalem, to make war upon the Saracens, who held the Holy Land. But since he was about to die, he requested of his dearest friend and bravest warrior, and that was the Good Lord James Douglas, that he should carry his heart to the Holy Land.

To make you understand the meaning of this request, I must tell you, that at this time a people called Saracens, who believed

in the false prophet Mahomet, had obtained by conquest possession of Jerusalem, and the other cities and places which are mentioned in the Holy Scripture; and the Christians of Europe, who went thither as pilgrims to worship at these places, where so many miracles had been wrought, were insulted by these heathen Saracens. Hence many armies of Christians went from their own countries out of every kingdom of Europe, to fight against these Saracens; and believed that they were doing a great service to religion, and that what sins they had committed would be pardoned by God Almighty, because they had taken a part in this which they called a holy warfare. You may remember that Bruce thought of going upon this expedition when he was in despair of recovering the crown of Scotland, and now he desired his heart to be carried to Jerusalem after his death, and requested Lord James of Douglas to take the charge of it. Douglas wept bitterly as he accepted

this office,—the last mark of the Bruce's confidence and friendship.

The King soon afterwards expired, and his heart was taken out from his body and embalmed, that is, prepared with spices and perfumes, that it might remain a long time fresh and uncorrupted. Then the Douglas caused a case of silver to be made, into which he put the Bruce's heart, and wore it around his neck, by a string of silk and gold. And he set forward for the Holy Land, as it was called, with a gallant train of the bravest men in Scotland, who, to show their value and sorrow for their brave King Robert Bruce, resolved to attend his heart to the city of Jerusalem. It had been much better for Scotland if the Douglas and they had staid at home to defend their own country, which was shortly afterwards in great want of their assistance.

Neither did Douglas ever get to the end of his journey. In going to Palestine, he landed in Spain, where the Saracen King or Sultan of Grenada, called Osmyn, was invading

the realms of Alphonso, the Spanish King of Castile. King Alphonso received Douglas with great honour and distinction, and people came from all parts to see the great soldier, whose fame was well known through every part of the Christian world. King Alphonso easily persuaded him, that he would do good service to the Christian cause, by assisting him to drive back the Saracens of Grenada, before proceeding on his voyage to Jerusalem. Lord Douglas and his followers went accordingly to a great battle against Osmyn, and had little difficulty in defeating the Saracens who were opposed to them. But being ignorant of the mode of fighting among the cavalry of the east, the Scots pursued the chase too far, and the Moors, when they saw them scattered and separated from each other, turned suddenly back, with a loud cry of *Allah illah Allah*, which is their shout of battle, and surrounded such of the Scottish knights and squires as had advanced too hastily.

In this new skirmish, Douglas saw Sir

William St Clair of Roslyn fighting desperately, surrounded by many Moors, who were hewing at him with their sabres. "Yonder worthy knight will be slain," Douglas said, "unless he have present help." With that he galloped to his rescue, but was himself also surrounded by many Moors. When he found the enemy press so thick round him, as to leave him no chance of escaping, he took from his neck the Bruce's heart, and speaking to it, as he would have done to the King had he been alive,—"Pass first in fight," he said, "as thou wert wont to do, and Douglas will follow thee, or die." He then threw the King's heart among the enemy, and rushing forward to the place where it fell, was there slain. His body was found lying above the silver case, as if it had been his last object to defend the Bruce's heart.

This Good Lord James of Douglas was one of the best and wisest soldiers that ever drew a sword. He was said to have fought in seventy battles, being beaten in thirteen,

and victorious in fifty-seven. The English accused him of being cruel; and it is said that he had such a hatred at the English archers, that when he made one of them prisoner, he would not dismiss him until he was either blinded of his right eye, or had the first finger of his right hand struck off. The Douglas's Larder also seems a very cruel story; but the hatred at that time betwixt the two countries was at a high pitch, and Lord James was much irritated at the death of his faithful servant Thomas Dickson; on ordinary occasions, he was mild and gentle to his prisoners. The Scottish historians describe the Good Lord James as one who was never dejected by bad fortune, or unduly elated by that which was good. They say he was modest and gentle in time of peace, but had a very different countenance upon a day of battle. He was tall, strong, and well made, of a swarthy complexion, with dark hair, from which he was called the Black Douglas. Notwithstanding the many battles in which he had fought, his

face had escaped without a wound. A brave Spanish knight at the court of King Alphonso, whose face was scarred by the marks of Moorish sabres, expressed wonder that Douglas's countenance should be unmarked with wounds. Douglas replied modestly, he thanked God, who had always enabled his hands to guard and protect his face.

Many of Douglas's followers were slain in the battle in which he himself fell. The rest resolved not to proceed on their journey to Palestine, but to return to Scotland. After the time of the Good Lord James, the Douglases have carried upon their shields a bloody heart, with a crown upon it, in memory of this expedition of Lord James to Spain with the Bruce's heart. In those times men painted such emblems on their shields that they might be known by them in battle, for their helmet hid their face; and now, as men no longer wear armour in battle, the devices, as they are called, belonging to particular families, are

engraved upon their seals, or upon their silver plate, or painted upon their carriages.

Thus, for example, there was one of the brave knights who was in the company of Douglas, and was appointed to take charge of the Bruce's heart homewards again, who was called Sir Simon Lockhard of Lee. He took afterwards for his device, and painted on his shield, a man's heart, with a padlock upon it, in memory of Bruce's heart, which was padlocked in the silver case. For this reason, men changed Sir Simon's name from Lockhard to Lockheart, and all who are descended from Sir Simon are called Lockhart to this day. Did you ever hear of such a name, Mr Hugh Littlejohn?

Well, the Scottish knights who remained alive returned to their own country. They brought back the heart of the Bruce, and the bones of the Good Lord James. These last were buried in the church of Saint Bride, where Thomas Dickson and Douglas held so terrible a Palm-Sunday. The Bruce's heart was buried below the high altar in Mel-

rose Abbey. As for his body, it was interred in the midst of the church of Dunfermline, under a marble stone. But the church becoming afterwards ruinous, and the roof falling down with age, the monument was broken to pieces, and nobody could tell where it stood. But a little while before Master Hugh Littlejohn was born, which I take to be six or seven years ago, when they were repairing the church at Dunfermline, and removing the rubbish, lo! they found fragments of the marble tomb of Robert Bruce. Then they began to dig farther, thinking to find the body of this celebrated monarch; and at length they came to the skeleton of a tall man, and they knew it must be that of King Robert, both because he is known to have been buried in a winding sheet of cloth of gold, of which many fragments were found about this skeleton, and also because the breastbone appeared to have been sawed through, in order to take out the heart. So orders were sent from the King's Court of Exchequer to guard the bones carefully,

until a new tomb should be prepared, into which they were laid with great respect. A great many gentlemen and ladies attended, and almost all the common people in the neighbourhood. And as the church would not hold the numbers, they were allowed to pass through it, one after another, that each one, the poorest as well as the richest, might see all that remained of the great King Robert Bruce, who restored the Scottish monarchy. Many people shed tears; for there was the wasted skull, which once was the head that thought so wisely and boldly for his country's deliverance; and there was the dry bone, which had once been the sturdy arm that killed Sir Henry de Bohun, between the two armies, at a single blow, on the evening before the battle of Bannockburn.

It is more than five hundred years since the body of Bruce was first laid into the tomb; and how many many millions of men have died since that time, whose bones could not be recognised, or their names known, any more than those of inferior animals!

It was a great thing to see that the wisdom, courage, and patriotism of a King, could preserve him for such a long time in the memory of the people over whom he once reigned. But then, my dear child, you must remember, that it is only desirable to be remembered for praiseworthy and patriotic actions, such as those of Robert Bruce. It would be better for a prince to be forgotten like the meanest peasant, than to be recollected for actions of tyranny or oppression.

CHAP. X.

Of the Government of Scotland.

I FEAR, my dear Hugh, that this will be rather a dull Chapter, and somewhat difficult to be understood; but if you do not quite comprehend it at the first reading, you may perhaps do so upon a second trial, and I will strive to be as plain and distinct as I can.

As Scotland was never so great or so powerful as during the reign of Robert Bruce, it is a fit time to tell you the sort of laws by which the people were governed and lived in society together.

And first, you must observe, that the are two kinds of government, one calle

despotic, or *absolute*, in which the King can do whatever he pleases with his subjects—seize upon their property, or deprive them of their lives at pleasure. This is the case of almost all the kingdoms of the East, where the Kings, Emperors, Sultans, or whatever other name they bear, may do whatever they like to their subjects, without being controlled by any one. It is very unfortunate for the people who live under such a government, and the subjects can be considered as no better than slaves, having no life nor property safe as soon as the King chooses to take it. Some Kings, it is true, are good men, and use the power which is put into their hands only to do good to the people. But then others are thoughtless, and cunning and wicked persons contrive to get their confidence, by flattery and other base means, and lead them to do injustice, even when perhaps they themselves do not think of it. And, besides, there are bad Kings, who, if they have the uncontrolled power of taking the money and the goods of

their subjects, of throwing them into prison, or putting them to death at their pleasure, are apt to indulge their cruelty and their greediness at the expense of the people, and are called by the hateful name of Tyrants.

Those states are therefore a thousand times more happy which have what is called a free government; that is, where the King himself is subject to the laws, and cannot rule otherwise than by means of them. In such governments, the King is controlled and directed by the laws, and can neither put a man to death, unless he has been found guilty of some crime for which the law condemns him to die, nor force him to pay any money beyond what the laws give the Sovereign a right to collect for the general expenses of the state. Almost all the nations of modern Europe have been originally free governments, but in several of them the Kings have acquired a great deal too much power, although not to such an unbounded degree as we find in the East-

ern countries. But other countries, like that of Great Britain, have had the good fortune to retain a free constitution, which protects and preserves those who live under it from all oppression, or arbitrary power. We owe this blessing to our brave ancestors, who were at all times ready to defend these privileges with their lives; and we are, on our part, bound to hand them down, in as ample form as we received them, to the posterity who shall come after us.

In Scotland, and through most countries of Europe, the principles of freedom were protected by the feudal system, which was now universally introduced. You recollect that the King, according to that system, bestowed large estates upon the nobles and great barons, who were called vassals, for the fiefs, or possessions which they thus received from the King, and were obliged to follow him when he summoned them to battle, and to attend upon his great council, in which all matters concerning the affairs of the kingdom were con-

sidered, and resolved upon. It was in this Great Council, now called a Parliament, that the laws of the kingdom were resolved upon, or altered, at the pleasure, not of the King alone, nor of the Council alone, but as both the King and Council should agree together. I must now tell you particularly how this Great Council was composed, and who had the privilege of sitting there.

At first, there is no doubt that every vassal who held lands directly of the crown, had this privilege; and a baron, or royal vassal, not only had the right, but was obliged to attend the Great Council of the kingdom. Accordingly, all the great nobility usually came on the King's summons; but then it was very inconvenient and expensive for men of smaller estates to be making long journeys to the Parliament, and remaining, perhaps, for many days, or weeks, absent from their own families, and their own business. Besides, if all the royal vassals, or freeholders, as they began to be

called, had chosen to attend, the number would have been far too great for any purpose of deliberation—it would not have been possible to find a room large enough to hold such a meeting, nor could any one have spoken so as to have made himself understood by such an immense multitude. From this it happened, that instead of attending all of them in their own persons, the lesser barons, (as the smaller freeholders were called, to distinguish them from the great nobles,) assembled in their different districts, or shires, as the divisions of the country are termed, and there made choice of one or two of the wisest and most experienced of their number to attend the Parliament, or Great Council, in the name, and to take care of the interest, of the whole body. Thus, the crown vassals who attended upon and composed the Parliament, or the National Council of Scotland, came to consist of two different bodies, namely, the Peers, or Great Nobility, whom the King especially summoned, and such of the lesser

Barons who were sent to represent the crown vassals in the different shires or counties of Scotland. But besides these two different classes, the Great Council also contained the representatives of the clergy, and of the boroughs, or considerable towns.

In the times of the Roman Catholic religion, the churchmen exercised very great power and authority in every kingdom of Europe, and omitted no opportunity by which their importance could be magnified. It is therefore not wonderful, that the chief men of the clergy, such as the bishops, and those abbots of the great abbeys who were called Mitred Abbots, from their being entitled to wear mitres, like bishops, should have obtained seats in Parliament. They were admitted there for the purpose of looking after the affairs of the church, and ranked along with the Peers, or Nobles having titles.

It remains to mention the boroughs. You must know, that in order to increase the

commerce and industry of the country, and also to establish some balance against the immense power of the great Lords, the Kings of Scotland, from an early period, had been in the use of granting considerable privileges to many of the towns in their dominions, which, in consequence of the charters which they obtained from the crown, were termed royal boroughs. The citizens of these boroughs had the privilege of electing their own magistrates, and had considerable revenues, some from lands conferred on them by the King, others from tolls and taxes upon commodities brought into the town. These revenues were laid out by the magistrates (usually called the Provost and Bailies) for the use of the town. The same magistrates, in those warlike days, led out the burghers, or townsmen, to battle, either in defence of the town's lands and privileges, which were often attacked by the great lords and barons in their neighbourhood, or for the purpose of fighting against the English. The burgh-

ers were all well trained to arms, and were obliged to attend the king's army, or host, whenever they were summoned to do so. Besides other privileges, the boroughs had the very important right to send representatives, or commissioners, who sat in Parliament to look after the interest of the towns which they represented, as well as to assist in the general affairs of the nation.

You may here remark, that so far the Scottish Parliament entirely resembled the English in the nature of its constitution. But there was this very material difference in the mode of transacting business, that in England, the peers, or great nobility, with the bishops, and great abbots, sat, deliberated, and voted in a body by themselves, which was called the House of Lords, or of Peers, and the representatives of the counties, or shires, together with those of the boroughs, occupied a different place of meeting, and were called the Lower House, or House of Commons. In Scotland, on the contrary, the nobles, prelates, representa-

tives for the shires, and delegates for the boroughs, all sat in the same apartment, and debated and voted as members of the same assembly. Since the union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland, the Parliament, which represents both countries, sits and votes in two distinct bodies, called the two Houses of Parliament, and there are many advantages attending that form of conducting the national business.

You now have some idea of the nature of the Parliament, or Grand Council of the nation, and of the various classes of persons who had a right to sit there. I am next to tell you, that they were summoned together and dismissed by the King's orders; and that all business belonging to the nation was transacted by their advice and opinion. Whatever measures they proposed passed into laws, on receiving the consent of the King, which was intimated by touching with the sceptre the laws that were passed by the Parliament. Thus you see that the laws by which the country was governed, were,

in a great measure, of the people's own making, being agreed to by their representatives in Parliament. When, in particular, it was necessary to raise money for any public purpose, there was a necessity for obtaining the consent of Parliament, both as to the amount of the sum, and the manner in which it was to be collected; so that the King could not raise any money from the subjects, without the approbation of his Grand Council.

It may be said, in general, of the Scottish laws, that they were as wisely adapted for the purpose of government as those of any state in Europe at that early period; nay, more, that they exhibit the strongest marks of foresight and sagacity. But it was the great misfortune of Scotland, that the good laws which the Kings and Parliaments agreed upon were not carried steadily into execution; but, on the contrary, were broken through and neglected, just as if they did not exist at all. I will endeavour to explain some of the causes of this negligence.

The principal evil was the great power of the nobility, which was such as to place them almost beyond the control of the King's authority. The chief noblemen had obtained the power of administering justice each upon his own estate; and therefore the whole power of detecting, trying, and punishing crimes, rested in the first place with these great men. Now, most of those great lords were much more interested in maintaining their own authority, and extending their own power, within the provinces which they occupied, than in promoting general good order and tranquillity through the country at large. They were almost constantly engaged in quarrels with each other, and often with the King himself. Sometimes they fought amongst themselves, sometimes they united together against the King. On all occasions they were disposed for war, rather than peace, and therefore took little care to punish the criminals who offended against public order. Instead of bringing to trial the persons who committed murder, rob-

bery, and other violent actions, they often protected them, and enlisted them in their own immediate service, and frequently, from revenge or ambition, were actually the private encouragers of the mischief which these men perpetrated.

The judges named by the King, and acting under his authority, had a right indeed to apprehend and to punish such offenders against the public peace, when they could get hold of them. But then it was very difficult to seize upon the persons accused of such acts of violence, when the powerful lords in whose territory they lived were disposed to assist them in concealing themselves, or making their escape. And even when the king's courts were able to seize such culprits, there was a law which permitted the lord on whose territory the crime had been committed, to demand that the accused persons should be delivered up to him, to be tried in his own court. A nobleman or baron making such a demand, was, indeed, obliged to give security that he

would execute justice on the persons within a certain reasonable time. But such was the weakness of the royal government, and such the great power of the nobility, and the barons of high rank, that if they once got the person accused into their own hand, they might easily contrive either to let him escape, or to have him acquitted after a mock trial. Thus, it was always difficult, and often impossible, to put in execution the good laws which were made in the Scottish Parliament, on account of the great power possessed by the nobles, who, in order to preserve and extend their own authority, threw all manner of interruption in the way of public justice.

Each of these nobles within the country which was subject to him, more resembled a king himself than a subject of the Monarch of Scotland; and in one or two instances, we shall see that some of them became so powerful as to threaten to dispossess the kings of their throne and dominions. The very smallest of them often made war

on each other without the king's consent, and thus there was a universal scene of disorder and bloodshed through the whole country. These disorders seemed to be rendered perpetual by a custom which was called by the name of *deadly feud*. When two men of different families quarrelled, and the one injured or slew the other, the relatives of the deceased or wronged person, knowing that the laws could afford them no redress, set about obtaining revenge, by putting to death some relation of the individual who had done the injury, without regarding how innocent the subject of their vengeance might have been of the original cause of offence. Then the others, in their turn, endeavoured to execute a similar revenge upon some one of the family who had first received the injury; and thus the quarrel was carried on from father to son, and often lasted betwixt families that were neighbours and ought to have been good friends, for several generations, during which time they

were said to be at *deadly feud* with each other.

From the want of due exercise of the laws, and from the revengeful disposition which led to such long and fatal quarrels, the greatest distresses followed to the country. When, for example, the Kings of Scotland assembled their armies, in order to fight against the English, who were then the public enemy, they could bring together indeed a number of brave nobles, with their followers, but there always was great difficulty, and sometimes an absolute impossibility, of making them act together, each being jealous of his own authority; and many of them engaged in personal quarrels either of their own making, or such as existed in consequence of this fatal and cruel custom of *deadly feud*, which, having been originally perhaps some quarrel of little importance, had become inveterate by the cruelties and crimes which had been committed on both sides, and was handed down from father to son. It is true, that under a wise

and vigorous prince, like Robert the Bruce, those powerful barons were overawed by his wisdom and authority. But we shall see too often, that when kings and generals of inferior capacity were at their head, their quarrels amongst themselves often subjected them to defeat and to disgrace. And this accounts for a fact which we shall often have occasion to notice, that when the Scots engaged in great battles with large armies, in which, of course, many of those proud independent nobles were assembled, they were frequently defeated by the English; whereas, when they fought in smaller bodies with the same enemy, they were very often victorious over them, because at such times the Scots were agreed among themselves, and obeyed the commands of one leader, without pretending to dispute his authority.

These causes of private crimes and public defeat, subsisted even in the midland counties of Scotland, such as the three Lo-

thians, Fifeshire, and other provinces, where the King generally resided, and where he necessarily possessed most power to maintain his own authority, and enforce the execution of the laws. But there were two great divisions of the country, the Highlands namely, and the Borders, which were so much wilder and more barbarous than the others, that they might be said to be altogether without law; and although they were subjected in name to the King of Scotland, yet when he desired to execute any justice in either of these great districts, he could not do so otherwise than by marching there in person, at the head of a strong body of forces, and seizing upon the offenders, and putting them to death with little or no form of trial. Such a rough course of justice, perhaps, made these disorderly countries quiet for a short time, but it rendered them still more averse to the royal government in their hearts, and disposed on the slightest occasion to break out, either

into disorders amongst themselves, or into open rebellion. I must give you some more particular account of these wild and uncivilised districts of Scotland, and of the particular sort of people who were their inhabitants, that you may know what I mean when I speak of Highlanders and Borderers.

The Highlands of Scotland, so called from the rocky and mountainous character of the country, consist of a very large proportion of the northern parts of that kingdom. It was into these pathless wildernesses that the Romans drove the ancient inhabitants of Great Britain; and it was from these that they afterwards sallied to invade and distress that part of Britain which the Romans had conquered, and in some degree civilised. The inhabitants of the Highlands spoke, and still speak, a language totally different from the Lowland Scotch. That last language does not greatly differ from English, and the inhabitants of both coun-

tries easily understand each other, though neither of them comprehend the Gaelic, which is the language of the Highlanders. The dress of these mountaineers was also different from that of the Lowlanders. They wore a plaid, or mantle of frieze, or of a striped stuff called tartan, one end of which being wrapt round the waist, formed a short petticoat, which descended to the knee, while the rest was wrapt around them like a sort of cloak. They had buskins made of raw hide; and those who could get a bonnet, had that covering for their heads, though many never wore one during their whole lives, but had only their own shaggy hair tied back by a leathern strap. They went always armed, carrying bows and arrows, large swords, which they wielded with both hands, called claymores, poleaxes, and daggers for close fight. For defence, they had a round wooden shield, or target, stuck full of nails; and their great men had shirts of mail, not unlike to the flannel shirts now

worn, only composed of links of iron instead of threads of worsted; but the common men were so far from desiring armour, that they sometimes threw their plaids away, and fought in their shirts, which they had very long and large, after the Irish fashion.

This part of the Scottish nation was divided into clans, that is, tribes. The persons composing each of these clans believed themselves all to be descended, at some distant period, from the same common ancestor, whose name they usually bore. Thus, one tribe was called MacDonald, which signifies the sons of Donald; another MacGregor, or the sons of Gregor; MacNiel, the sons of Niel, and so on. Every one of these tribes had its own separate Chief, or commander, whom they supposed to be the immediate descendant of the great father of the tribe from whom they were all descended. To this Chief they paid the most unlimited obedience, and willingly followed his commands in peace or war, not caring though, in

doing so, they transgressed the laws of the King, or went into rebellion against the King himself. Each tribe lived in a valley, or district of the mountains, separated from the others; and they often made war upon, and fought desperately with each other. But with Lowlanders they were always at war. They differed from them in language, in dress, and in manners; and they believed that the richer grounds of the low country had formerly belonged to their ancestors, and therefore they made incursions upon it, and plundered it without mercy. The Lowlanders, on the other hand, equal in courage and superior in discipline, gave many severe checks to the Highlanders, and thus there was almost constant war or discord between them, though natives of the same country.

Some of the most powerful of the Highland Chiefs set themselves up as independent sovereigns. Such were the famous Lords of the Isles, called MacDonald, to whom the islands called the Hebrides, lying on the north-west of Scotland, might be said to be-

long in property. These petty sovereigns made alliances with the English in their own name. They took the part of Robert the Bruce in the wars, and joined him with their forces. We shall find, that after his time, they gave great disturbance to Scotland. The Lords of Lorn, MacDougals by name, were also extremely powerful; and you have seen that they were able to give battle to Bruce, and to defeat him, and place him in the greatest jeopardy. He revenged himself afterwards by driving John of Lorn out of the country, and by giving great part of his possessions to his own nephew Sir Colin Campbell, who became the first of the great family of Argyle, which afterwards enjoyed such power in the Highlands.

Upon the whole, you can easily understand, that these Highland clans, living among such high and inaccessible mountains, and paying obedience to no one save their own chiefs, should have been very in-

strumental in disturbing the tranquillity of the kingdom of Scotland. They had many virtues, being a kind, brave, and hospitable people, and remarkable for their fidelity to their chiefs. But they were restless, revengeful, fond of plunder, and delighting rather in war than in peace, in disorder than in repose.

The Border countries were in a state little more favourable to a quiet or peaceful government. In some respects the inhabitants of the counties of Scotland lying opposite to England, greatly resembled the Highlanders, and particularly in their being, like them, divided into clans, and having chiefs, whom they obeyed in preference to the King, or the officers whom he placed among them. How clanship came to prevail in the Highlands and Borders, and not in the provinces which separated them from each other, it is not easy to conjecture, but the fact was so. The Borders are not, indeed, so mountainous and inaccessible a

country as the Highlands, but they also are full of hills, especially on the more western part of the frontier, and were in early times covered with forests, and divided by small rivers and morasses into dales and valleys, where the different clans lived, making war sometimes on the English, sometimes on each other, and sometimes on the more civilized country which lay behind them.

But though the Borderers resembled the Highlanders in their mode of government and habits of plundering, and as it may be truly added, in their disobedience to the general government of Scotland, yet they differed in many particulars. The Highlanders fought always on foot, the Borderers were all horsemen. The Borderers spoke the same language with the Lowlanders, wore the same sort of dress, and carried the same arms. Being accustomed to fight against the English, they were also much better disciplined. But in point of obedience to the Scottish government, they

were not much different from the clans of the north.

Military officers, called Wardens, were appointed along the Borders, to keep these unruly people in order, but as these Wardens were generally themselves chiefs of clans, they did not do much to mend the evil. Robert the Bruce committed great part of the charge of the Borders to the Good Lord James of Douglas, who discharged his trust with great fidelity. But the power which the family of Douglas thus acquired, proved afterwards, in the hands of his successors, very dangerous to the Crown of Scotland.

Thus you see how much the poor country of Scotland was torn to pieces by the quarrels of the nobles, the weakness of the laws, the disorders of the Highlands, and the restless incursions of the Borderers. If Robert the Bruce had lived, and preserved his health, he would have done much to bring the country to a more orderly state. But

Providence had decreed, that in the time of his son and successor, Scotland was to fall back into a state almost as miserable as that from which that great Prince rescued it.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE & CO.