

THE HISTORY

OF THE

SCOTTISH PATRIOT,

SIR WM. WALLACE,

KNIGHT OF ELLERSLIE.



“Go,” said Wallace to the two Friars, “tell your officers that the Scots came not here to treat for peace, but prepared for battle, and are determined to avenge our wrongs, and set our country free from the iron yoke of Edward.”—*See page 15.*

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SIR WILLIAM WALLACE.

To few men is Scotland more indebted, and few have been more universally admired, than the renowned Sir WILLIAM WALLACE, whose memory still continues to flourish in the annals of Scotland with unfading glory. His patriotism, generosity, penetration, knowledge of human nature, address, courage, fortitude, perseverance, and prudence, rank him among the first of heroes. To such a degree of military eminence did he arrive, that the task would be difficult, if not impossible, to select one from the list of modern heroes who can equal him in greatness. He was the youngest son of Sir Malcolm Wallace of Ellerslie, near Paisley, in Renfrewshire. The date of his birth is unrecorded, but it must have been previous to the death of Alexander III., King of Scotland, who met with an untimely end by falling from his horse in 1286. Alexander was the last of a succession of princes who had held the sceptre for nearly 800 years, and left it in the hands of his grand-daughter, called the Maid of Norway, who, dying in infancy, gave rise to the famous contest of Baliol and Bruce for the Crown. Both parties having referred to the decision of Edward I. of England, that ambitious and crafty monarch unjustly claimed it for himself, and vainly attempted to deprive Scotland of her glorious independence. To our noble hero it was reserved to be the first to vindicate her wrongs, and restore her to ancient splendour.

Though Wallace's father was possessed of a small property, yet the energy, the grandeur, and the intrepidity of the mind of his son were formed in the school of adversity. Leaving his paternal home, he

who was afterwards his chaplain, and lived to record his daring and unparalleled adventures.—The unfortunate battle of Dunbar having led to the abdication of John Baliol, the reigning monarch, Edward filled every part of Scotland with English officers and soldiers, who insulted the inhabitants, and preyed upon the vitals of the humbled kingdom. Wallace beheld the oppressors of his countrymen with horror and indignation, sympathized with individual sufferers, and mourned the degradation of his native and beloved land. The base injustice, treachery, and cruelty of Edward's governors became the subject of general conversation, and the numerous cruelties and indignities of his officers and men exasperated the nation to the highest pitch. Wallace was of an incredible strength of body, and had arrived at that period of life when the feelings are strong and ardent, and every pulse beats with a generous glow towards the objects of affection. These frequent conversations, and the outrages of the English at Dundee, where he resided at school, appears first to have roused his spirit in defence of his bleeding country. All places of power and wealth in the kingdom were given to Englishmen; and, among others, one Selby had been elevated to the dignity of constable of Dundee. Young Wallace was either insulted, or considered himself so, by his son, and not being of a temper to receive any insult with impunity, far less from an Englishman, he attacked, and, in presence of many of his companions, slew him with his own dagger, and made his escape to his uncle's at Dunipace, in Stirlingshire. After remaining here a short time, he and his mother returned to Ellerslie; but, finding that his father and elder brother had been cruelly murdered by the English at Lochmaben, his great and noble mind was roused with indignation, and, panting with revenge, he meditated retaliations worthy of his country's sufferings, and of the injuries which had bereft him of a father and of an only brother. Con-

sidering himself unsafe beneath his mother's roof, he went and lived secretly with his paternal uncle, Sir Richard Wallace, at Riccarton.

One day, while residing with his uncle, he went to fish in the Irvine, near Ayr; meanwhile, Lord Percy, with his armed suite, rode past on their way to Glasgow. Five of the English turned aside, and tauntingly demanded the fish he had caught. He consented to allow them part, but they insisted for the whole, and seized them from the boy who carried the fishing-basket. Provoked at their rapacity and insolence, he gave one of them a blow on the head with his fishing-staff, that brought him to the ground, and wrested the sword from his hand. The rest attacked, but they, to their experience, soon found that his individual strength, dexterity, and intrepidity were superior to their united force. Three of them, by the powerful arm of Wallace, lay weltering in their blood, and with difficulty the other two escaped, while Wallace rode home in triumph to his uncle upon one of their horses. Persuaded that he could not remain longer here in safety, and being provided with money and other necessaries, he set off on his English horse determined to seize every opportunity to destroy the enemy, and either deliver his country or fall in the praiseworthy attempt. Firm to his resolution, he spared neither great nor small that fell in his way. For these heroic actions he was outlawed by the English, and compelled, during the inclemency of the winter 1297, to live in the fields, the woods, the mountains, and the forests, where he wandered exposed to all the hardships that it is possible for human nature to endure. These rough blasts of adversity, however, only tended to brace his nerves, and prepare him to perform greater achievements.

One day, Wallace, disguising himself, ventured into Ayr, and, sauntering through the town, passed by when the steward of Lord Percy was insulting the servant of the sheriff, and insisting that he should

have for his lord what the servant had bought for his master. Wallace interfered, and said that the sheriff was a very good man, and therefore he should have his dinner. The steward gave Wallace a stroke over the shoulders with his hunting-cane, accompanied with the most opprobrious appellation that an English invention could supply. Wallace drew his dirk, and pierced the steward to the heart, leaving the sheriff's servant to return home with his provision. The English, who were guarding the town, assembled against Wallace; he drew his sword, and dealt destruction with every blow. None daring to approach him, the gates were harrieaded with their spears to prevent his escape. He attempted to jump over the wall at a place adjacent to the sea, but multitudes of the English rushed upon him, and his sword, which had been so much used that day, broke in pieces; he was overpowered with the spears, taken prisoner, and confined in the castle, to wait the most excruciating death. He languished in prison, deprived of every consolation except what resulted from a sincere desire of the welfare of his country, and even of the necessaries of life; so that when they were about to bring him forth, want appeared to have terminated his existence. They threw him over the wall of the prison; but, fortunately for his country, he landed upon a soft draff-lunghill. His nurse, hearing of the melancholy event, hastened, and in the most suppliant manner entreated that she might take away his corpse. He was conveyed to her house in the new town of Ayr, where, by remedies and the most unwearied attention, he revived under her motherly roof.

The minister's servant of Ayr beheld the mournful event, and, returning home, informed his master and family what he had witnessed. Thomas the Rhymer, the famous Scotch prophet, was residing at the minister's at this time, who, hearing the woful tale, declared that he was not ~~shred~~, or his prophecies were all false which he had delivered respecting his

emancipating Scotland. "Before his death," said he "he will slay thousands of the English, and thrice deliver Scotland from their thralldom." Wallace soon recovered his wonted strength, and, longing to appear among his friends and to avenge his country's wrongs, he seized a sword which was standing in his nurse's house, and proceeded to Riccarton, whither his friends and relatives hastened to congratulate him on his miraculous escape, rally round his standard, and bid defiance to the English arms. Wallace, with a brave little band, went to shelter in a wood near Louden-hill, until an opportunity should present itself of attacking the enemy. A friend, having observed them enter the wood, carried provisions to them, and informed Wallace that an English squire's servant had rode past to Ayr, and that his master, with a party escorting some baggage from Carlisle to Ayr, would soon pass that way. Learning that they were ascending the hill, he hastened to lay his men in ambush, and to prepare for their reception. Wallace, perceiving that Fenwick, who had slain his father and brother, was the person commanding this party, resolved to be avenged or fall in the combat. The English having to pass a narrow path, they waited their arrival at that place, and having engaged, a desperate conflict ensued. Of the English there were 180, but Wallace had only 50 men; the former well armed on horseback, the latter on foot. Wallace's soul fired with indignation at the sight of Fenwick, and, rushing upon him, cut his body in sunder. About 100 of the English lay dead on the field, the rest making their escape when they beheld the fate of their leader. Wallace seized the horses, baggage, armour, and money, which proved a very acceptable present.

He now took his route towards the shire of Argyle and the northern border of Lennox. Wandering about in the woods with a few who resorted to his standard, he came near to Gargunnoch, where there was a pass, which was strongly garrisoned by the

English. During the darkness of the night, he sent two of his men to examine the strength and situation of the pass; and, receiving a favourable account of the possibility of attacking it with success, he hastened towards it, took the place, put the men to the sword, but set at liberty all the women and children. He, with his patriotic band, went into the wood of Methven, near Perth, then called St Johnstoun. Among the valiant and faithful few who had marshalled under his banner of freedom, was one Stephen, an Irishman, of uncommon strength and courage, to whom Wallace gave the command of the rest, while he and a few of his men paid a visit to the town of Perth. Informing Stephen that they had provisions for several days, he told him to lurk secretly in the wood until he returned, or to be prepared for action when he should hear the sound of his horn. Matters being thus adjusted, they proceeded to Perth. Before they could gain admittance, the provost was sent for, who, seeing Wallace a tall, strong man, asked if they were all Scotsmen, and from what part of the country they came. "My name is William Malcolm," said Wallace: "we have come from Ettrick forest, in the south, to seek for better employment, and to see the country." "I mean no harm," said the provost, "in asking these questions; but so many reports have been circulated about one William Wallace, born in the west, who was killing every Englishman he could find, and seeing you a tall, strong man, it is necessary to know something about those we admit into the town." Denying that he knew anything of Wallace, and beseeching him not to mention such a hated name, he and his men were admitted, and an inn and plenty of provisions provided until employment was found for them.

Wallace often invited the English to drink with him, in order to ascertain their number and strength in the place, and to obtain what other intelligence he could gather. He lamented that he could devise

no means to take the town, which was in possession of the English, as his men were too few in number; and to set it on fire was only placing himself and followers in imminent danger. But it was not long ere an opportunity was afforded him for this daring enterprise. There was then one Sir James Butler in the town, an aged, cruel knight, who kept the strong castle of Kinklevin, residing with his son, Sir John, an under-captain of Gerald Heron, and a report was spread that Sir James, with his party, were to return to Kinklevin Castle. Wallace, with his followers, hastened to Methven-wood, blew his horn, and all his intrepid band were quickly by his side. Being well armed, they marched to Kinklevin, and lay in ambush among a few bushes in the valley on the banks of the Tay, meanwhile dispatching spies in different directions, some of whom soon returned, informing them that four men had passed, who appeared to be forerunners of the company. Wallace at length beheld 90 well-armed men on horseback, and prepared to attack them. The English perceived the hostile intention of Wallace, and, brandishing their spears, rushed upon them, thinking to trample them under; but they were boldly repulsed, and several, both men and horses, were slain. Butler alighted from his horse, and marshalled his men in order to defend themselves. In the fierce contest which ensued, a few of the Scots fell by the captain's strong arm, and 60 of the English, with their captain, were numbered with the slain; the rest escaping to Kinklevin, the gate was opened to receive them, but Wallace, with his men, followed so close that they entered along with them, seized the castle, shut the gate, and drew the bridge. The women and children he allowed to depart with such effects as they chose to take with them. Having removed all the provisions and necessaries, during five nights, from the castle to Shortwood-shaws, he set it in flames.

The captain's wife hastened to Perth, and in-

formed her son, Sir John Butler, of what had happened, who instantly commanded all the men of Perth and neighbourhood to arm; and, though they were 1000 strong, with trembling hearts they approached the wood, the fame of Wallace being so great. Sir John arranged his men in six divisions, and having encircled the wood with five of them to prevent escape, he, with 200 faithful followers, entered in search of Wallace. He had only 20 archers opposed to 140 of the English archers, supported by 60 spearmen. He girded on his buckler, seized his bow, which was so strong and large that no man but himself could bend it, and, discharging it, slew one of the English archers. The Scotch were sore galled by a terrible shower of arrows which the English discharged, one of which slightly wounded the immortal Wallace; but, perceiving the danger in which his men were placed, he changed their position, and, dashing through the opposing ranks, rushed with tiger fury in quest of the English leaders. The English ranks were thinned by the patriotic band, and Wallace, encountering Sir John, slew him and William Lorn, who had arrived during the contest with 300 men. The news that both commanders were slain, the remaining leaders assembled their troops at the south end of the wood, and held a conference to see what should be done in the present emergency, while Wallace and his men rushed out at the north side. Entering the wood, they found the bodies of Butler and Lorn, but their horses and gold were in possession of the victorious Scotch. The English, under Sir Gerald Heron, returned to Perth with the news of their dishonourable and sad defeat. The terror of Wallace now daunted the stoutest of the enemy. Five of the faithful few had fallen on that memorable day. Two days after, Wallace, with his men, returned and conveyed their concealed property from Shortwood to Methven-wood, and then removed to Elcho-park, near Perth. While they remained in this place, Wallace, dis-

guised in a Friar's gown, paid frequent visits to Perth, in order to receive what intelligence he could procure; but some individuals, observing his repeated visits and robust and warlike appearance, communicated their suspicions to the governor, Sir Gerald Heron. The house which he frequented was beset with the enemy; and being informed of their design, he quickly dressed himself in female apparel, went and informed the English that Wallace was locked in a certain room,—they flew to seize their supposed prey, while he effected his escape with all possible speed. Two soldiers, suspecting him as being rather a strong and fierce-like female, followed; but Wallace, suddenly turning upon them, drew his concealed sword, levelled them with the ground, and hastened to acquaint his comrades of his escape. The English, provoked at such a disappointment, marched 600 men by the South Inch road, and had not proceeded far till they beheld the slain bodies of their companions, which confirmed them in their suspicions of Wallace having taken this route. Surrounding the wood, they entered in search of Wallace, accompanied with a staunch bloodhound to trace the slayer's steps. Hemmed in on every side, the hardy few resolved to conquer or to die; the noble chieftain unsheathed his conquering sword, offered up a prayer, and led his warriors to the fierce attack. Fifteen of the Scots were slain before they retreated to the banks of the Tay, where they sought a place to cross: many of them could not swim, and rather than lose one drop of Scottish blood unrevenged, Wallace again resolved to face the foe. This little band, which was only 40 at the commencement of the battle, was now reduced to 16, while the English had been strongly reinforced. They now closed with redoubled fury, Wallace seeking everywhere for the English chief. The Scots had to flee before the wearied English to a place of safety, and were out of sight before the enemy was able to pursue them.

Once more had the English recourse to their blood-hound to trace their steps, and soon again were they in sight of each other. Two miles of rising ground had the Scots to climb before they reached a place of defence; and the night, which was fast approaching, filled them with the hope of reaching a place of safety. One Fawdon, who was wearied with fatigue, declared his inability to proceed; and as he was formerly suspected of treason, Wallace put an end to his existence, his followers concurring in the justice of the act. The English gaining upon the retreating handful, they dispersed, the mantle of night protecting them against the foe, and the blood of Fawdon stopping their hound. As the English approached the body of the traitor, Kierly and Stephen mingled with the throng, and when Sir Gerald bowed to examine the body, Kierly pierced him to the heart with his dagger. The cry of treason was resounded, but, in the general confusion, aided by the darkness of the night, the intrepid Scotsmen escaped. On the following morning, as Wallace was lamenting over the fate of his country, an English leader rode up to him, and demanded what he was doing there; but his only answer was the unsheathing of his sword, and the Englishman fell to rise no more. Wallace mounted his victim's horse, rode across the plain, and the road being everywhere beset with the English, who had witnessed the deed, Wallace fearlessly dashed through their ranks, slew 20 of them, and made his escape. Arriving on the banks of the Forth, though wearied and bleeding, he dauntlessly plunged into the river, and arrived at the house of a widow, an old acquaintance. Next day he sent to some of his friends at Dunipae for money and other necessaries which he required, and instantly his uncle delivered them in person. The meeting of Kierly and Stephen with their conquering hero can be more easily conceived than described. The patriotic band now consisted of Kierly, Stephen, the widow's two sons,

and Wallace, who bent their way to Sir John Graham's at Dundaffheath, whose son, a brave and hardy youth, volunteered to follow the gallant Wallace. Our hero declined his services for the present, but promised to inform him when he had gathered sufficient force to face the foe.

Arriving at his nephew's at Kilbank, he sent information to his numerous friends throughout the country, who speedily flocked around their chieftain's standard. While he remained here he frequently went in disguise to Lochmaben, where one Clifford, with insolence and cruelty, bore the chief command. During one of his visits he was enraged at seeing the commander using his authority with a malicious intent to disgrace his countrymen; he drew his well-tryed sword, and slew the usurping tyrant. The enemy assembling to the pursuit, he flew to inform his valiant followers of their approach. They hastened to the nearest thickets to preserve themselves as much as possible from the enemy's fury. The armies met, and the Scots dealt destruction around, reducing the English to such a degree, that they were about giving way, when the gallant Moreland arrived with reinforcements to their aid. The Scots, being closely hemmed in, resolved to conquer or to die. The English, encouraged by the presence of their warlike leader, renewed the combat with equal fury. Wallace burst through the tumultuous crowd, and laid the gallant Moreland prostrate on the field, which caused the enemy to give way on every side, and flee before the victorious Scots. Scarcely had they enjoyed a moment of congratulation, when the enemy again appeared under the haughty Graystock. The Scots, though wearied with the long contest, remained unshaken, and prepared again for the attack. At this eventful moment the young Graham appeared with an armed retinue to support his friends; the English were repulsed with dreadful slaughter, and retreated before the thrice victorious band. The Scots, in the dead

of night, attacked and took the town; and, after refreshing themselves, reduced the fort, and took their route towards the castle of Crawford, which, after slaying a great number of the enemy, they reduced to ashes. After several inconsiderable skirmishes, the little army dispersed for the winter, and agreed to repair to Lanark and its neighbourhood, and to assemble at their chieftain's signal. Wallace repaired to Lanark, and was soon married to his lovely bride, who told him of the brutal and deceitful arts of Hazelrigg, the English leader, to win her. During the winter Wallace remained disguised, and would often have delivered his wife from such an unwelcome visitor as Hazelrigg, but prudence caused him to delay the fatal blow.

The time had now arrived when he was to meet his followers; and, after taking a farewell of his young wife, whom he informed that he had a chosen band to conduct her to a place of safety, he proceeded through the plain, and choosing an elevated situation, he raised his horn, and blew a shrill blast that rent the air. He was soon surrounded by his followers; and after a short but very impressive address from their leader, they alarmed the enemy with their shouts, and swore to follow the immortal Wallace. Alarmed at these sudden preparations, Hazelrigg, with 1000 well-clad warriors, marched to seek the daring foe; but, being disappointed in the pursuit, he returned to the town, where he was informed that the lady to whom he was paying his addresses was the lawful wife of Wallace, and that he had been concealed in disguise several months, he repaired to her house, and stained his hands in her innocent blood. The doleful news were soon communicated to Wallace, which overwhelmed him and his followers for a moment with sorrow; but as the night was approaching, they resolved to march into the town, and surprise their enemies while drowned in sleep. They arrived without being observed, and, having separated into two divisions,

attacked the town in various parts. Wallace having broken open the gate, the Scots rushed in, and made dreadful havoc among the terror-stricken enemy. Sir John Graham, having the command of the second division, entered another part, and committed the dwellings of the English to the flames. Wallace bathed his sword in Hazelrigg's blood, while Graham dispatched Horn, the second in command. The conquerors, having reduced the town, encamped on a neighbouring plain.

Edward, alarmed at the success of the patriots, collected a numerous army, and repaired to Biggar, in order to give them battle. The Scottish army, greatly augmented, with confidence proceeded to meet the English. They were encamped on a wide extended plain, and Wallace took an advantageous position on a neighbouring height, whose men only appeared as a handful when compared with the English. Wallace addressed his trusty friends, and, painting the injuries of their ill-fated country in lively colours, exhorted them to seek redress upon the author of all their calamities, who now stood before them surrounded by his haughty troops. The battle commenced, and both armies fought with great bravery, but the result was the defeat of the English army, the shattered remains of which returned with Edward to England. Worn out with defeats, and driven from almost every strong post in the kingdom, the English sued for peace, which was concluded at Rutherglen Church in February 1297; but it was of short duration, the English being so strongly bent upon the conquest of Scotland.

In June 1297 took place that memorable event known by the Barns of Ayr. The English had invited the Scottish nobility and gentry in the western parts to meet them for the purpose of friendly conference upon the affairs of the nation, in some large buildings, called the Barns of Ayr. Many of the Scotch gentlemen in the neighbourhood attended, several of whom were accused of felony, condemned,

and executed. Among those who were executed was Sir Roland Crawford, sheriff of Ayr, and uncle to Wallace. Those who escaped informed Wallace of the dreadful catastrophe, who immediately assembled 50 of his followers, entered Ayr in the night, and set fire to the place when many of the English were asleep; the garrison issuing forth fell into an ambush, and were put to the sword. Wallace and his men instantly seized the fort, and then marched to Glasgow, attacked Lord Percy, and completely routed his forces. Being now placed at the head of a considerable army, he marched to Stirling, and took the castle. Argyle and Lorn, with the adjacent country, were soon in his possession; Perth, with the neighbouring places, were soon recovered. Penetrating into Angus and Mearns, he took and demolished the castles of Forfar, Brechin, and Montrose. By an unexpected assault, he carried Dunnottar, which he garrisoned. When he approached Aberdeen it was all in flames, the English having set it on fire, being afraid of his coming.

Learning that the English, with an army of 40,000, among whom were many disaffected Scotchmen, were approaching Stirling, Wallace stationed his troops on an advantageous place upon a hill above the monastery of Cambuskenneth, on the north side of the Forth. This river has no passable fords at this place, and the only passage was by a wooden bridge, nearly a mile above where the present bridge is situated. The English sent two Dominican Friars to Wallace, to offer a pardon to him and his men if they would lay down their arms. Their terms were, however, degrading and insulting both to the honour and independence of the Scottish nation, and therefore rejected with becoming disdain. "Go, tell your officers," said the unflinching Wallace, "that the Scots came not here to treat for peace, but prepared for battle, and are determined to avenge our wrongs, and set our country free from the iron yoke of Edward. Let them but advance, and to

their faces we will tell so much." Incensed at this bold and determined reply, the English exclaimed, seeing such a handful of men, "They are all our own; let us instantly charge them." Cressingham, with the greater part of his army, had crossed the bridge, which, as some writers affirm, either by the contrivance of workmen, who, a little before, had loosened the joints of the beams that they could not sustain a great weight, or, by the pressure of so many horse, foot, and carriages, without any stratagem at all, gave way, and interrupted the march of the English army. Before their ranks were formed, the Scots instantly attacked those who had passed, and having slain their leader, drove the rest back into the river with such havoc, that the whole were put to the sword or perished in the river. After this battle, Wallace immediately returned to the besieging of castles, and in a short time so changed the fortune of war, that there remained no Englishmen in Scotland, except as prisoners. This victory was so complete, and so important in its consequences, that the Scots who had deserted to the English submitted to Wallace, and hailed him as the deliverer of his country. Berwick and Roxburgh alone resisted, but being deserted by their garrison, they soon threw open their gates to our victorious hero. In this manner, in the short space of fourteen months after King John had been deposed, his kingdom subdued, and constrained to acknowledge a foreign prince, did Wallace, with a few brave men, restore the nation to her ancient liberty and independence.

The fields lying uncultivated, a famine followed this devastation, and a plague followed the famine, whence a greater number of deaths, it was feared, would arise than from the war. Wallace, to alleviate these calamities as much as possible, ordered all the young men capable of bearing arms to meet him on a certain day, when he led them into England, thinking they would acquire health and strength by

the exercise; and that by living in the enemy's country during the winter, provisions at home would be spared. No one dared to oppose him when he entered England; and having remained there from the 1st of November to the 1st of February, refreshing his men with the forage of the enemy, and enriching them with their spoils, he returned home surrounded with glory. This expedition, as it increased the renown and authority of Wallace among the people, so it excited against him the envy of the nobles; for his praises appeared to reproach the high and powerful chieftains either with cowardice for not daring, or with treachery for being unwilling, to attempt what a gentleman in low circumstances, and destitute of every advantage of fortune, had not only bravely undertaken but successfully accomplished.

With an army of 1500 cavalry and 20,000 infantry, Edward marched against Wallace, who in the mean time was collecting his chosen troops, rallied, and near Stanmore came in view of the mighty monarch. Edward's army appeared incredibly numerous; the soldiers' armour glittering, the officers' equipage rich and elegant, and the noise of their drums pompous and terrible. Wallace commanded all, upon pain of death, to keep their ranks, to march with gravity, and to attempt nothing without his orders. The veteran and experienced soldiers of Edward had not arrived from France, and perceiving the order, discipline, and formidable appearance of the enemy, every officer and man acting the part of a hero, Edward durst not hazard his own glory with an undisciplined militia, and therefore wisely retreated. The fame of this bloodless victory obtained over so powerful a king incensed his enemies much more bitterly, who now widely reported that he was beginning openly to aspire to the Crown. The nobles, on hearing this report, became indignant, particularly Bruce and Comyn, who, belonging to the blood-royal, determined to undermine the authority of Wallace. Edward, aware of

their dispositions, raised a large army, and next summer came to Falkirk, about 11 miles from Stirling. The Scottish army was not far distant, and sufficiently powerful, being 30,000 strong, if their leaders had been united among themselves. But there were three commanders,—John Comyn, John Stewart, and William Wallace; and when the army was drawn out in three lines in order of battle, a contention arose who should lead the first line against the enemy. While no one would yield to the other, the English, with their banners unfurled, advanced rapidly towards them. Comyn and his men retreated without attempting to fight. Sir John Stewart and his vassals fought bravely, and died honourably. Unable to rescue Stewart or to withstand the enemy, and the Earl of Carrick having nearly surrounded him, Wallace retreated, and passed the small river Carron, which the enemy durst not pass in his presence. By this dexterous manœuvre, he not only saved his own men, but also those of Stewart who fled to him, and by keeping himself in the rear, with his eye fixed on those who pursued, he cut several of them off, particularly one Frere Brian Jay, a Knight Templar, upon whom he turned, and slew in sight of the victorious army. This intrepid and bold action taught others to keep at a respectable distance. During the pursuit, while Wallace and Bruce stood on different sides of the water of Carron, Bruce addressed him, saying, “I am greatly surprised, Sir William, that you should ever entertain the idea of attaining the Scottish Crown.” “No,” interrupted Wallace, “my thoughts never soared so high: I only mean to deliver my country from oppression and slavery, and support a cause which you have abandoned. But pause in time; if you have but the heart, you may win a crown with glory, and wear it with justice. I can do neither; but this I will do, I will live and die a free-born subject.” This speech made a deep impression upon the mind of Bruce. The conference was sud-

denly interrupted by the approach of a hostile body of horse.

The number of English present at the engagement is stated at 90,000 men, while the Scottish army did not amount to 30,000. The loss on both sides was very great. Amongst the slain on the Scottish side none was more sincerely mourned than Sir John Graham, the bosom-friend of Wallace, who, giving way to his usual gallantry, had advanced too far, was surrounded, and slain. Wallace, having withdrawn his troops to a place of safety, returned to the battle-field in search of his beloved friend, whom he passionately loved; and when he found him, he lifted him in his arms, and gave vent to his feelings. On July 22, 1298, was this fatal battle fought; and in the churchyard of Falkirk was Sir John Graham buried, a tombstone still marking the place.

Wallace, reflecting upon the conversation which he had with Bruce, in which he unjustly charged him with an attempt upon the Crown, and in order, if possible to unite the jarring nobles, to convince them and all future ages that he had no sinister designs upon the Crown, which belonged to another, he called an assembly of the barons and other noblemen in the kingdom at Perth, and there resigned both his important trust as guardian of the kingdom and his chief command of the army. No part of Wallace's history is more difficult to trace than after he relinquished his public command. Some suppose that he retired to France after the memorable battle of Roslin. There was at that period a strong alliance between France and Scotland; and it is reported that Philip the Fair of France, allured by the fame of our hero, invited Wallace to the French Court. He sailed, according to report, from Kirkcudbright with 50 of his faithful followers, and, in the course of the voyage, fell in with Red River the pirate, whom he captured by a combination of valour and stratagem. Wallace obtained Longueville's, which was the pirate's true name, pardon from the French

King, and soon returned to his native land. Having landed at Montrose with his brave companions, accompanied by Longueville, who would never depart from him, they were joined by Sir John Ramsay, Ruthven, Bisset, and others, all of whom determined under his banner to deliver their country or fall in the vigorous attempt. While lying in ambush in the vicinity of Perth, it fortunately happened that six English servants came forth from the town with empty carts to convey hay into the town. Instantly slaying the servants, six of them were arrayed in their upper garments, the carts were loaded, and as many as possible lodged themselves among the hay, and the rest were placed in ambush. As soon as they entered the town, Wallace slew the porter, and secured an entrance for his men, who spread destruction among the English, and so terrified the remainder, that the governor, Sir John Stewart, fled by the opposite gate to the wood of Methven. One hundred took refuge in the church, but were slain. By this successful adventure, Wallace acquired much booty and a military station of vast importance to future conquests. They now proceeded towards Fife, and reduced the several towns and castles in that populous country. A party of the English, however, took shelter in Lochleven Castle, and Wallace, determining to dislodge them, selected eighteen of his bravest men, and marched towards it during the darkness of the night. He stripped, tied his sword about his neck, and swam over to the isle, cut the rope of their boat, brought it over, and conveyed his men in safety to the castle, which he took, and spared none but the women and children. Returning to Perth he was informed that his uncle was imprisoned by one Thomas Weir, a cruel English captain, who commanded 100 men at Perth. Wallace sent a trusty messenger to explore the Tay to discover some mode of crossing, and fortunately met with a fisherman, who readily embarked in the cause when he knew he belonged

to Wallace, and resolved to liberate his uncle. He not only conveyed them over in his boat, but conducted them to Airthill, a place of strength, and then over a small bridge to Weir's house, whom Wallace immediately dispatched at a blow, while his men slew all the rest. They hastened to the cave, where Wallace's uncle was confined and bound in fetters, whom they instantly released.

Wallace next marched to Dumbarton in the night, and called upon a widow whom he knew, who received him and his men with great kindness, and concealed them in a barn with the greatest secrecy. She presented her nine sons, who were young and strong, to Wallace to increase his men; and, at Wallace's request, she marked all the doors where the English were lodged, and commencing with an English captain, who, with his mates, were carousing in a public-house, he set on fire all the houses where the English were quartered, and fled to Dumbarton cave before day. They next bent their way to Roseneath Castle, and having slain more than 80 of the English, who were returning from a wedding, they entered the castle with those who escaped, slew every Englishman found in it, and set fire to the castle. The dawn of returning prosperity brought friends around the illustrious hero. Sir William Douglas, who had been constrained to marry an English lady and to submit to Edward, hearing that Wallace was again in the field and likely to rescue Scotland, he, by the means of a trusty man of the name of Dickson, took Sanquhar by stratagem, and put every man to the sword. Being inclosed in the castle, he dispatched Dickson to Wallace, to entreat his speedy relief. Wallace now began his march south, and cut off Revindale, an English captain, who, with 200 men, were in the vicinity of Kilsyth. In the same route he burnt the towns of Linlithgow, Dalkeith, and Newcastle, expelling the English wherever he came. The friends of Wallace now began daily to increase; among whom were the re-

nowned Lauder and Seaton, who, during the days of usurpation had fortified themselves in the Bass, upon the intelligence of Wallace's success issued forth from their retreat, burned North Berwick, and joined Wallace, who proceeded to Peebles, where he was reinforced by the brave Hugh Hay with 50 and Rutherford with 60 men. Just at this time Dickson, who was dispatched by Sir William Douglas from Sanquhar to request the speedy assistance of Wallace, arrived, and informed him of the imminent danger of his master. Wallace, without a moment's delay, marched to his aid; the English, who besieged Sanquhar Castle, when they heard of his coming, fled with all possible speed. Being informed of their route, he, with 300 horsemen, leaving Earl Malcolm, who had joined him, to come up with the remaining part of the army, came up with the enemy at Closeburn, and routed them. Upon the appearance of Malcolm, the flight of the English became universal, while the Scots pursued and slew all who came in their way. During the long pursuit, the horses failed through fatigue; the men pursued like lions on foot. While Wallace was thus yielding his sword in defence of his native country, and rapidly effecting her deliverance, Edward, convinced of the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of conquering Wallace by the sword, had recourse to other measures. In this attempt he employed every man in his power, and every person in his influence; nor did he doubt but those measures, and bribes, and promises, and honours, which gained the services and submission of others, would also, in time, prove successful with Wallace. He accordingly courted Wallace with large and magnificent promises of honour and wealth, places and pension, but all in vain. His constant reply to his friends and the emissaries of Edward, who dared to address him on the subject, was, "That he owed his life to, and would willingly lay it down for, his country; that should all Scotchmen but him, if he submitted to the King of England, he never

would; nor would he give obedience, or yield allegiance to any power, except to the King of Scotland, his rightful sovereign." The noble virtue of an individual is severely matched with the base intrigue of a powerful monarch. Sir John Monteith, whose name deserves only a place among the basest of the human race, proved the traitor. Wallace having placed the most unbounded confidence in this man, he, the perfidious villain, conducted a party of Englishmen to the place of his lonely retreat at Robroyston, about three miles north-west of Glasgow, while our hero was accompanied by only his faithful friend Karle and a young man related to Monteith.

At the dead hour of midnight, while the two undaunted heroes lay fast asleep, this young traitor, whose turn it was to watch, cautiously removed the bugle from the neck of Wallace, and conveyed it, along with his arms, through an aperture of the wall; then slowly opening the door, two men-at-arms silently entered, and, seizing upon Karle, hurried him from the apartment. Wallace awoke with the noise, but finding himself armless and surrounded by a great number of the enemy, he was induced, through a stratagem on Monteith's part, to accompany him as a prisoner to Dumbarton, where, he said, he would undertake for the safety of his person on the morrow. Next day, however, no Monteith appeared to exert his *influence* to prevent the hero being carried from the fortress.

Thus the brave, the generous, the disinterested deliverer of his country was seized, and afterwards conveyed to London. As he passed through England, great multitudes of men, women, and children assembled from all quarters to gaze on the illustrious prisoner. Arriving in London, he was conducted to the house of William Delect, in Fenchurch Street. The day following, August 23, 1305, he was brought on horseback to Westminster, accompanied by several knights, the mayor, sheriffs,

nence and rank, in presence of all of whom he was placed on the south bench of the great hall; and either because they wished the people to believe that he had aspired to the Crown of Scotland, or that it was reported that he said he deserved to wear a crown there, they crowned him in derision with laurel, while Sir Peter Malorie, the chief-justice, impeached him with high treason. Wallace boldly replied, "That a traitor he never was, nor could be to the King of England." The burning of towns, storming of castles, killing the English, and others of a similar nature, he frankly acknowledged. These heroic virtues were declared capital crimes; and though the prisoner had never acknowledged nor submitted to the laws of England, yet he was tried by them, and unjustly condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and while alive, to have his bowels cut out, which was accordingly done with the utmost cruelty and barbarity. His head was fixed on London Bridge, and the four quarters of his body were placed on the gates of as many of the principal cities of his native country. Such was the end of a man by far the most pre-eminent in the times in which he lived; who, for greatness of soul in undertaking, and wisdom and fortitude in conducting perilous enterprises, may be compared with the most illustrious leaders of antiquity. In love to his country, inferior to none of the most eminent ancient patriots; amid the general slavery, he stood alone unsubdued and free; and neither could rewards induce nor terrors force him to desert the public cause which he had once undertaken; and his death was the more grievous, because, unconquered by his enemies, he fell, betrayed by those whom he least suspected. But, although Edward procured the death of the valorous Wallace, Scotland was not deserted: Bruce assumed the reins of government, and restored her to her former independence.—(See *Brydone's History of King Robert Bruce*, No. 15.)