

determined to take the issue of victory or death, as God should send it.

45. Burns has expressed Bruce's sentiments in his fiery poem.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS.

46. Scots who have with Wallace bled,
 Scots whom Bruce has often led,
 Welcome to your gory bed
 Or to victory!
 Now's the day, and now's the hour;
 See the front of battle lower;
 See approach proud Edward's power,
 Chains, and slavery!

47. Who would be a traitor knave,
 Who would fill a coward's grave,
 Who so base as be a slave,
 Let him turn and flee!
 Who for Scotland's king and law,
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
 Let him follow me!

48. By oppressions, woes, and pains,
 By our sons in servile chains,
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be free!
 Lay the proud usurper low!
 Tyrants fall in every foe—
 Liberty at every blow;
 Let us do or die!

49. 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. Mirau's, commanding him to use the utmost diligence to prevent any succorers from being thrown into Stirling Castle. He then dismissed James of Douglas and Sir Robert Keith, the marshal 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 standard banners and pennants made so gallant a show, that the bravest and most numerous host in Christendom might be alarmed to see King Edward moving against them.

50. It was upon the 23d of June, 1314, that 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 hundred horse, had been detached to relieve the castle.

51. "See, Randolph," said the king to his nephew, "there is a rose fallen from your chaplet." By this he meant that Randolph has lost some honor by suffering the enemy to pass where he had been commanded to follow 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 permission.

52. "Let Randolph," he said, "redeem his own fault. I can not 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. "To please you," said Douglas to the king, "my heart will not suffer me to stand idle and see Randolph 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 their empty saddles.

53. "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.

54. 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 armor, 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.

55. 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 nutshell, 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." This is the way Scott describes this incident in the "Lord of the Isles":

56. O gay yet fearful to behold,
Flashing with steel and rough with gold,
And bristled o'er with balls and spears,
With plumes and pennons waving fair,
Was that bright battle front! for there
Rode England's king and peers.

57. And who that saw that monarch ride,
His kingdom battling by his side,
Could then his direful doom foretell;
Fair was his seat in knightly selle,
And in his sprightly eye was set
Some sparks of the Plantagenet.

Though bright and wandering was his glance,
It flashed at sight of shield and lance.

"Knowest thou," he said, "De Argentine,
Yon knight who marshals thus their line?"

58. "The tokens on his helmet tell
The Bruce, my liege; I know him well."
"And shall the audacious traitor brave
The presence where our banners wave?"
"So please my liege," said Argentine,
"Were he but horsed on steed like mine,
To give him fair and knightly chance,
I would adventure forth my lance."
59. "In battle-day," the king replied,-
"Nice tourney rules are set aside;
Still must the rebel dare our wrath!
Set on him—sweep him from our path!"
And, at King Edward's signal, soon
Dashed from the ranks Sir Edward Bohun!
60. Of Hereford's high blood he came,
A race renowned for knightly fame;
He burned before his monarch's eye
To do some deed of chivalry.
He spurred his steed, he couched his lance,
And darted on the Bruce at once.
As motionless as rocks, that bide
The wrath of the advancing tide,
The Bruce stood fast; each breast beat high,
And dazzled was each gazing eye;
The heart had hardly time to think,
The eyelid scarce had time to wink,

While on the king, like flash of flame,
Spurred to full speed, the war-horse came!
The partridge may the falcon mock,
If that slight palfrey stand the shock;
But, swerving from the knight's career,
Just as they met, Bruce shunned the spear;
Onward the baffled warrior bore
His course—but soon his course was o'er!
High in his stirrups stood the king,
And gave his battle-axe the swing.
Right on De Bohun, the whiles he passed,
Fell that stern dint—the first—the last!
Such strength upon the blow was put,
The helmet crushed like hazel-nut,
The axe-shaft, with its brazen clasp,
Was shivered to the gauntlet grasp.
Springs from the blow the startled horse,
Drops on the plain the lifeless corse;
First of that fatal field, how soon,
How sudden fell the fierce De Bohun!

61. One pitying glance the monarch shed
Where on the field his foe lay dead;
Then gently turned his palfrey's head,
And, pacing back his sober way,
Slowly he gained his own array.
There round their king the leaders crowd
And blame his recklessness aloud,
That risked 'gainst each adventurous spear
A life so valued and so dear.
His broken weapon's shaft surveyed
The king, and careless answer made:
"My loss must pay my folly's tax—
I've broke my trusty battle-axe."

62. The next morning, being the 24th of 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 bare-footed, 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.

63. Upon the right, behind the wood,
 Each by his steed, dismounted, stood
 The Scottish chivalry;
 With foot in stirrup, hand on mane,
 Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
 His own keen heart, his eager train,
 Until the archers gain the plain;
 Then "Mount ye gallants free!"
 He cried; and, vaulting from the ground,
 His saddle every horseman found.
 On high their glittering crests they toss,
 As springs the wild-fire from the moss;
 The shield hangs down on every breast,
 Each ready lance is in the rest,
 And loud shouts Edward Bruce:
 "Forth, marshal! on the peasant foe!
 We'll tame the terrors of their bow,
 And cut the bow-string loose!"

64. Then spurs were dashed in chargers' flanks,
 They rushed among the archer ranks.
 No spears were there the shock to let,
 No stakes to turn the charge were set,
 And how shall yeoman's armor slight,
 Stand the long lance and mace of might?
 Or what may their short swords avail,
 'Gainst barbèd horse and shirt of mail?
 Amid their ranks the chargers spring,
 High o'er their heads the weapons swing,
 And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
 Give note of triumph and of rout!
 Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
 Their English hearts the strife made good;
 Borne down at length on every side,
 Compelled to flight, they scatter wide.
 Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
 And bound the deer of Dallorn-Lee!
 The broken bows of Bannock's shore
 Shall in the greenwood ring no more!
 Round Wakefield's merry May-pole now,
 The maids may twine the summer bough,
 May northward look with longing glance
 For those that went to lead the dance,
 For the blithe archers look in vain!
 Broken, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
 Pierced through, trod down, by thousands slain,
 Their cumber Bannock's bloody plain!

65. 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 defense, and unable to rise, from

the weight of their armor. 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.

66. On a sudden an event happened which decided the victory. The servants and attendants on the Scottish camp had been sent behind the army to a place called 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 the 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 Mans. 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.

67. The English never before or afterward 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 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.

68. Thus did Robert Bruce arise from the condition of an exile, hunted with blood-hounds 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 afterward 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 honor and gratitude.

69. In 1328, fourteen years after the battle of Bannockburn, peace was concluded between England and Scotland, in which the English surrendered all pretension to the Scottish crown. King Robert was now fifty-four years old, and he prepared to enter upon a crusade in accordance with his vow, and in expiation of his offense of slaying the Red Comyn. But, being smitten with a fatal disease, he directed Lord James, of Douglas, upon his death, to take his heart and carry it to Palestine, in fulfillment of his vow. Douglas accepted the sacred trust, and encased the heart in silver, and hung it about his neck. On his way to the Holy Land he turned aside to help the Spaniard in a campaign against the Moors. In one battle, being sorely beset, he flung the heart of Bruce into the midst of the enemy, and followed it up with the war-cry of the Douglas, which had so often cheered to victory among his native hills. At every step a Moslem bit the dust until he reached the spot where his master's heart had fallen. Here he was slain by the numbers which pressed

in on every side, and he was found with his body still in the attitude of guarding the heart. The body of Lord James, together with the heart, were returned to Scotland. The precious relic—the last that remained of the Bruce, the greatest of Scottish kings—was deposited in Melrose Abbey, where it remains to-day a sacred shrine for every Scotchman, and for every lover of liberty. Rarely in the history of man has the prediction of the old abbot been so literally fulfilled:

“I bless thee, and thou shalt be blest!”

CHAPTER V.

COLUMBUS AND THE NEW WORLD.

THE TIME.

1. COLUMBUS lived in a stirring age. Everywhere light was breaking in after centuries of darkness, and all Europe was restless with suggestions and beginnings of new life. Great men were plenty; rulers, like the Medici of Florence; artists, like Raphael and Angelo; preachers, like Savonarola, whose fiery prophecies brought him to fiery death; reformers, chief among them Luther, just beginning to think the thoughts that later set the world agog. Great inventions were spreading; gunpowder, invented before, now becoming terribly effective through the improvement in guns; printing, suddenly opening knowledge to every class; the little compass, with which mariners were just beginning to trust themselves boldly on the seas, in spite of the popular impression that it was a sort of infernal machine presided over by the devil himself.

2. And to this age had been bequeathed the fascinating stories of Sir John Mandeville and Marco Polo, stories to make every boy crazy to be off to seek his fortune. From their travels in Asia these men had brought back the most remarkable accounts of the eastern lands. A country was there, they said, called