

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Edward of Caernarvon.—His early conduct.—Crowned.—Piers Gaveston.—His murder at Blacklow Hill.—Robert Bruce in Scotland.—His successes.—Reconciliation of Edward and the Barons.—Invasion of Scotland.—Bannockburn.—The Scots in Ireland.—The Despensers.—Insurrection of the Barons.—Fall of Lancaster.—Retreat of Edward from Scotland.—Final truce.—The Templars.

EDWARD of Caernarvon was twenty-three years old when his father died. His elder brother, Alphonso, died the year after Edward was born. His mother, Eleanor of Castile, died when this, her only surviving son, was seven years old. That excellent mother would probably have guided his course better than his stern father. The crosses which were erected on the road by which her funeral passed from Grantham to Westminster, preserved her memory for generations amongst the English, and called forth many a prayer for the repose of her soul. Edward probably forgot that memory in the wild excesses of his youth. Under the year 1300, Fabyan, the chronicler, writes—"This year, the king, for complaint that was brought unto him by master Walter Langton, bishop of Chester, of sir Edward, his eldest son, for that he, with Piers of Gaveston and other insolent persons, had broken the park of the said bishop, and riotously destroyed the game within it, he therefore imprisoned the said sir Edward, his son, with his accomplices." On a subsequent occasion, when the prince was in his twenty-first year, he had a quarrel with the same bishop; and the king then forbade him entering his house, and issued an order to the exchequer that sustenance should be denied to him and his followers. There is extant a penitential letter of the prince on this occasion. There are many other letters of the young Edward, which, it is said, "evinced his readiness of disposition to assist those who stood in need of his interference and bounty."* This kindness of nature is not incompatible with his impulsive character—a combination of a weak understanding with a passionate will. He was not wanting in courage; for at seventeen he was leading a battalion against the Scots on the banks of the Irvine. In 1303 he

* Mr. Hartshorne, in "Archæological Journal," No. 27, p. 263.

was again with his father in Scotland. In 1306, as we have related, he preceded his father in the expedition against Bruce; and he then marked his course by such unsparing devastation, that the king, it is asserted, upbraided him with his cruelty. He had not the wisdom of his father to know that leniency is far more effective than terror, under many circumstances. At this crisis, the evil tendencies of the young Edward were manifesting themselves in the most offensive manner; for in February, 1307, at a parliament held at Lanercost, an order was issued that Piers Gaveston should be banished for ever from the kingdom, as a corruptor of the Prince of Wales. In five months he had the power, as king, of revoking the sentence of his sagacious father.

On the 8th of July, the nobles and others assembled at Carlisle recognised Edward as king, and there did homage. The death of Edward I. was unknown in London for more than a fortnight. The young king received homage from some Scottish nobles at Dumfries; and then led his army northward. But he suddenly halted at Cumnock, in Ayrshire. He had recalled Gaveston, who joined him in Scotland. The king departed for London, leaving Aymer de Valence guardian and lieutenant. Before the ensuing Christmas, the ministers of his father were deprived of their employments; Gaveston was loaded with wealth and honour; was married to Margaret, the king's niece; and was appointed regent of the kingdom, on the departure of Edward for France, to marry Isabella, the daughter of Philip le Bel, the French king. The marriage took place at Boulogne; and on the 24th of February, 1308, Edward was crowned at Westminster. All the old claims to precedence at the coronation of the kings of England were disregarded on this occasion; and the place of greatest honour—to carry the crown and walk before the king in procession—was given to Gaveston. In three days the offended nobles petitioned for the banishment of the favourite. The king referred the matter to a parliament to be holden after Easter; and this tribunal would hear of no compromise. Gaveston was sentenced to banishment, and was compelled to swear that he would never return. In another month it was learnt that the infatuated king had appointed him to the government of Ireland. The favourite appears to have conducted himself in this office with courage and ability. There can be no doubt that this Gascon had many chivalric accomplishments. At a tournament he unhorsed the four great English earls who were his bitterest enemies. He was tasteful amidst his prodigal magnificence. The king at length

persuaded a party of the nobles to consent to Gaveston's recall; and the pope gave the favourite a dispensation from his oath to remain abroad. Then the court became a scene of perpetual banqueting. Gaveston was supreme; but the great barons looked on in sullen and suppressed hatred. The day of vengeance would come, when Thomas of Lancaster would exact a terrible penalty for the nick-name which the upstart had bestowed upon him of "the old hog;" when the earl of Pembroke would remember that he had been called "Joseph the Jew;" and when the earl of Warwick, "the black dog of the wood," would make the sarcastic favourite "feel his teeth." On the 16th of March, the barons came in arms to a parliament at Westminster; and they enforced the appointment of a committee, under the name of ordainers, to provide for the better regulation of the king's household, and to remedy the grievances of the nation. The moving principle of this strong measure was a hatred of Gaveston. The ordainers sate in the capital. Edward went to Scotland, but met no enemy, for Bruce had retired beyond the Forth. The English king wintered at Berwick; and the next spring confided the conduct of the Scottish war to his favourite, who conducted himself with courage and prudence. Edward returned to London, to meet the ordainers, leaving Gaveston at the castle of Bamborough. In the articles of reform which were presented to the king, it was proposed that all grants which had been made by Edward, since he had issued the commission, should be revoked; that all future grants made without the consent of the baronage should be invalid; that purveyance, except what was ancient and lawful, should be punished as robbery; that new taxes should be abolished; that the great officers of the crown should be chosen by the advice and assent of parliament; and that parliaments should be held once in each year, and oftener, if needful. Then came a clause decreeing the banishment of Gaveston, for having given bad advice to the king, embezzled the public money, obtained blank charters with the royal seal affixed to them, formed a confederacy of men sworn to live and die with him, and estranged the affections of the king from his subjects. In vain the king struggled with the inexorable ordainers. In vain he protested that he would not consent to what was injurious to the just rights of the crown. Gaveston was exiled, and went to Flanders. In 1312, he was again in England; and the king published a proclamation, stating that the exiled man was a true and loyal subject, and returned in obedience to the royal command. Thomas of Lancaster,

the grandson of Henry III., was appointed leader of an association of barons who were ready to resort to force. They assembled a large body of knights at a tournament; and then marched to York, where the king had been joined by Gaveston. Onward they followed the flight of their sovereign to Newcastle; and thence to Scarborough, where Gaveston remained in the castle, whilst the king returned to York. The earls of Surrey and Pembroke besieged the castle; and Gaveston surrendered to the earl of Pembroke, under a pledge of safety for himself, which had been given to the king. From Scarborough, he was conducted by Pembroke to Dedington in Oxfordshire, the earl leaving him in the custody of his servants. Before the morning dawned the unfortunate favourite was awakened, and commanded to dress himself. At the gate of Dedington, he found himself in the presence of "the black dog of the wood"—the terrible earl of Warwick. He was placed on a mule, and, surrounded by a numerous force, was carried prisoner to Warwick. As he entered the walls of Guy's lofty tower he found himself in the presence of those haughty barons whom he had despised and insulted. His skill in the tournament, his courage in battle, his magnificent apparel, his jewelled rings, his high-sounding titles, his reliance upon the kingly power—all were worthless in this terrible moment. He stood before his enemies, and they sentenced him to die. Out of that grim fortress—now the most beautiful of castles, combining feudal strength with a more refined grandeur—was Gaveston led to execution. There was a march of a short distance before the cavalcade reached Blacklow-hill, a little knoll on the road near Guy's Cliff, where the judicial murder was to be accomplished. The spot is indicated by a monument not remarkable for elegance. The Avon glides beneath the hill. The towers of Warwick rise above the surrounding woods. The historical interest of the scene associates in striking contrast with its natural beauty. The age of law succeeded to the age of violence; and the change is well evidenced by the peacefulness and fertility which now surround this Blacklow-hill.

During the five years that the peace of England was disturbed by the wretched contest between the king and his barons, which ended in the first signal tragedy of this tragic reign, Robert Bruce was establishing his power in Scotland with a firmness and wisdom that was scarcely to be looked for after the rash murder in the church at Dumfries. But he had endured great adversity. Danger and suffering had taught him prudence and moderation. He had

wandered in the Highlands with a few followers, subsisting upon the chance products of the chase. He had traversed the great lakes in leaky boats, sheltering from the storm in the fisher's hovel, and deriving lessons of patience and perseverance from noting the efforts of a spider to fix the first thread on which its web was to be wove. He had been hunted by blood-hounds; he had waded in rapid streams, to elude their scent; he had defied his enemies single-handed in the mountain-pass, and in the river-ford. The fugitive was now an acknowledged sovereign. In 1309 he was recognised as king by the most influential body of Scotland—the clergy,—at a general ecclesiastical council held at Dundee. In that year a truce was concluded between England and Scotland, which endured till August, 1310. The renewed war was for some time a succession of contests on the borders, in which exemption from plunder was purchased by the English lords-warden by money payment. In 1312 Bruce besieged Perth, which was in the hands of king Edward's officers. The town was strongly fortified, and was surrounded by a moat. Bruce, in a dark night of October, led his men across the moat, in a manner which is graphically described, according to Barbour, by "a wight and hardy knight of France" who was in Bruce's service. This knight, "seeing the king first try the depth with his spear, and then pass with his ladder in his hand into the water, crossed himself in wonder, and exclaimed, 'Good Lord, what shall we now say of our carpet-companions in France, whose time is devoted to the stuffing their paunches with rich viands, to the dance, and the wine-cup, when so valiant and worthy a knight thus exposes himself to such imminent peril, to win a poor collection of huts.'" One after another, the strong places of Scotland were taken by Bruce. He then, encouraged no doubt by the fearful dissensions of England, crossed the Tweed, in 1312, with a large force; burnt the towns of Hexham and Corbrigg and part of the city of Durham, and penetrated as far as Chester. The terrible calamities of war were brought home to the wretched people of both countries. Whilst Bruce was ravaging Northumberland, some English leader or other was wasting Scotland. Famine always followed these devastations. The corn was trodden down in the fields, or burnt in the barns. The cottage and the grange in flames marked the progress of a fierce soldiery; and when a town was taken, plunder and massacre went hand in hand. To the Scots these invasions were easier than to the English, from the habits of the people. The forces of Edward came on in shining armour; the

knights mounted on their heavy war-horses, and the archers and spearmen marching slowly under their cumbrous panoply. Froissart has graphically described the mode in which the countrymen of Bruce carried on their warfare. "These Scottish men are right hardy, and sore travelling in harness and in wars; for when they will enter into England, within a day and a night, they will drive their whole host twenty-four miles, for they are all a-horseback, without it be the traundells and ladders of the host, who follow after a-foot. The knights and squires are well horsed, and the common people and others, on little hacks and geldings; and they carry with them no carts, nor chariots, for the diversities of the mountains they must pass through in the country of Northumberland. They take with them no purveyance of bread nor wine; for their usage and soberness is such in time of war, that they will pass in the journey a great long time, with flesh half-sodden, without bread, and drink of the river water, without wine: and they neither care for pots nor pans, for they seethe beasts in their own skins. They are ever sure to find plenty of beasts in the country that they will pass through. Therefore they carry with them none other purveyance, but on their horse: between the saddle and the panel, they truss a broad plate of metal, and behind the saddle they will have a little sack full of oatmeal, to the intent that when they have eaten of the sodden flesh, then they lay this plate on the fire, and temper a little of the oatmeal; and when the plate is hot, they cast off the thin paste thereon, and so make a little cake in manner of a cracknel or biscuit, and that they eat to comfort withal their stomachs. Wherefore it is no great marvel, though they make greater journeys than other people do."*

The details of the sieges of the Scotch castles which the English had garrisoned have much of the interest of romance. "Subtlety and stratagem," to use the expression of Barbour the chronicler, often preceded the onslaught and the capture. So Roxburgh Castle was taken, and so Edinburgh. Linlithgow was won through the "subtlety and stratagem" of a peasant named Bennock, "a stout earle and a stour," who had been accustomed to supply the garrison with forage. He concealed soldiers under the hay with which his waggon appeared to be loaded; passed the drawbridge, and the gates being opened, placed his waggon so that they could not be closed. The concealed men attacked the garrison, and another band who had been in ambush rushed in and

* Froissart's Chronicles, Lord Berners' translation, chap. xvii.

completed the work. But these successes were only preliminary to the great blow which was struck for the independence of Scotland.

The king and the nobles of England were at last roused from their intestine quarrels to look at the danger which was gathering around them. It was no longer a war for the conquest of the country which had almost universally acknowledged Bruce as king; it was not a contest for mere feudal superiority. England was in danger. Her towns were burned; her fertile lands were devastated; her people were reduced to the most abject misery, wherever the Scot came with his little hackney, and his bag of oatmeal. At a parliament held on the 15th of October, 1313, king Edward and his barons were in some degree reconciled; and it was "with one accord assented and agreed, that no one, of what state or condition soever he be, in time to come, be appealed or challenged by reason of the taking, detaining, or death of Piers de Gaveston."* At the same time an amnesty was granted to the adherents of Gaveston; and the property which was found in his possession was given up to the king. Nothing can more distinctly exhibit the infatuation of Edward than the inventory of this vast collection of plate and jewels, of which the treasury of the crown had been chiefly despoiled. Some of these golden and enamelled chains, buckles, crosses, cups, chaplets, coffers, girdles—set with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds—bore the arms of England. Others are recited as gifts to the king from his sister and his friends. There is a ring which Saint Dunstan forged with his own hands; and not even the more sacred relic of an enamelled cup of gold, bequeathed to Edward by his mother Eleanor, was exempted from the rapacity of the favourite. There are a hundred and ninety-six items of such costly property, to some of which a value is affixed. One great ruby, "which was found on Sir Peter de Gaveston when he was taken," is estimated at the worth of a thousand pounds. This extraordinary document is an acquittance to Thomas of Lancaster, Guy of Warwick, Henry Percy, and Robert Clifford, for the valuables of which they had taken possession when Gaveston's head fell under their axe.†

Edward Bruce, the brother of king Robert, had been besieging Stirling; and the English governor, Philip de Mowbray, agreed to surrender the castle if not relieved by the 24th of June, the feast of St. John the Baptist. King Edward summoned the military

* Statutes of the Realm, vol. i. p. 169.

† See *Fœdera*, vol. ii. part i. p. 203.

tenants of the English crown to meet him at Berwick on the 11th of June; and levies of foot soldiers were made in the northern counties and in Wales. Those from Wales and the Welsh marches were required by the king because he wanted men able to drive an enemy from forest and mountain, and from marshy places, of difficult access to horsemen. On the 16th of June, only a week before the day fixed for the surrender of Stirling, Edward marched from Berwick, at the head of a great army. The numbers of that army were greatly exaggerated by the old chroniclers, Fordun estimating it at three hundred and forty thousand horse, and as many foot. Later historians are more reasonable, and are contented with a hundred thousand, of which forty thousand were cavalry. This vast force arrived in the neighbourhood of Stirling on the eve of St. John. The country through which they marched would afford insufficient support and accommodation for such a multitude; and they were accompanied with a vast train of provision-waggons, and of carriages and horses laden with tents and pavilions. Bruce was encamped in an extensive forest lying between Falkirk and Stirling, known as the Torwood; and here, on the 22nd of June, it was learnt that the English force had reached Edinburgh on the 21st. The Scottish army, therefore, moved into the neighbourhood of Stirling. Bruce knew that the first object being the relief of that castle, according to the treaty, he might therefore take up a position without uncertainty as to the movements of his enemy. Mr. Tytler has described the position of Bruce from a personal survey of the field of battle, in 1830.* The extreme left of his army rested upon elevated ground above St. Ninians, and extended through an undulating tract of country called the New Park, the right resting on a stream called the Bannock. The centre was partially defended by a morass, part of which still remains. On the left, on a line which the English would have to cross, Bruce caused pits to be dug, in which were inserted pointed stakes, covered slightly over with turf and rushes. He had need of every precaution for strengthening his position, for his force was greatly inferior to that of the English. It chiefly consisted of infantry. His determination was to fight on foot, and to meet the charges of the cavalry with his battle-axes and spears. A few horsemen were with him. On the night of St. John the advanced guard of the English cavalry approached Stirling, with the intention of attacking the Scots in the rear. Bruce's army had fasted from a religious prin-

* *Lives of Scottish Worthies*, vol. ii. p. 25.

ciple. "Thar dynit none of them that day," says the rhyming chronicler. A partial engagement took place, in which king Robert exposed himself as became the daring knight rather than the cautious general. His leaders, however they were rejoiced to see him cleave the skull of Henry de Bohun in single combat, remonstrated with him on his temerity. He only held up the broken shaft of his battle-axe, and expressed his regret for the loss of his good weapon. At day-break of the 24th of June, the great host of the English was in view, with bright shields and burnished helmets, embroidered banners and gaudy surcoats, glittering in the morning sun. The Scotch host heard mass, and the abbot of Inchaffray preceded them with a crucifix as they formed on the field of battle. When they knelt again in prayer, some of the English said, "they beg for mercy." "Deceive not yourselves," said one who knew the people, "it is God only they supplicate, and not you." On came the English archers and infantry, and the conflict was long and desperate. Bruce had a reserve which attacked his enemy in flank. The English knights came on, with the earl of Gloucester, the nephew of the king at their head. He fell covered with wounds. The horses stumbled in the pits which Bruce had dug. There was confusion in the ranks; and the few Scottish horse which were in the field were led by Sir Robert Keith to a victorious struggle. All the camp-followers of Bruce's army had been stationed apart, behind a small hill, still known by the name of Gillieshill (the servants' hill). There were soldiers, no doubt, mixed with them, for they suddenly abandoned the baggage, and came down the hill in a body of fifteen thousand men, armed with pikes and oxen-goads, with rude pieces of cloth fixed on tent-poles in the place of heraldic banners. The English squadrons, at the appearance of this new and strange army, began to waver. Bruce charged the main body. Then ensued a general route. King Edward refused to fly, till the earl of Pembroke seized his bridle-rein, and hurried him from the field. The king rode to Stirling, with the intention of throwing himself into the castle; but the governor, as the battle was lost, knew that he was bound in all honour to deliver up the castle according to his obligation, and Edward sought other refuge. The band of horsemen fled on, and never stopped till they reached Dunbar. The spoil which remained to the victors was enormous. Fordun describes the herds of cattle, the droves of sheep and hogs, the loads of corn with portable mills, the casks of wine, the military engines—trebuchets and mangonels. The slaughter of the

English exceeded ten thousand. The Scots lost about four thousand.* Numbers of English and Welsh fugitives were scattered over the country—the knights detained for ransom; the humble footmen put to death by the Scottish peasantry. Stirling was surrendered the day after the battle. In exchange for some of his English prisoners, Bruce obtained the release of his wife, sister, and daughter,—of the bishop of Glasgow and the earl of Marr. Thus complete was the great victory that made Scotland a nation; which enabled her, gradually approaching to an amalgamation with England in laws and institutions, in customs and literature, long to preserve a distinctive character; and which, when she names the "Bruce of Bannockburn," wakes up many other sacred memories of struggles for freedom, civil and religious, without which memories, long cherished and never wholly relinquished, no people, however prosperous, ever escaped the yoke of foreign or domestic tyranny.

Fabyan records that, after many days, there was a song sung by the minstrels of Scotland which said:—

"Maidens of England, sore may ye mourn,
For your lemans ye have lost at Bannockbourn."

The maidens, and all the people of England, had many other losses to deplore through these Scotch wars. In 1314, there was a deficient harvest. The price of corn became enormous, and the parliament, with the ignorance of economical laws which was not in any degree confined to those times, fixed a maximum on the price of provisions. The next season was more disastrous. There was a murrain amongst the cattle, and a general pestilence amongst the starving people. The brewing of beer from grain was suspended. The nobles expelled from their castles the hungry retainers for whom they could find no food; and the country, necessarily, swarmed with plunderers. The "ordinances" which had been agreed to before the fall of Gaveston, were resisted by the king, whilst their enforcement was demanded by the barons. In this horrible condition of famine, pestilence, and anarchy was the unhappy kingdom, when the Scots came, again and again, to plunder and destroy. There was no public spirit in the people or their leaders to resist. A war was going on in Ireland between the English and the Scots. Edward Bruce had landed at Carrick-

* It is the fashion of Scotch historians greatly to exaggerate these numbers, as if the importance of the victory depended upon the amount of bloodshed.

fergus, in 1315, to drive the English settlers from the island, in concert with the native chiefs. After various conflicts he was crowned king of Ireland, in 1316; and he reigned some time in Ulster. The Welsh were again in insurrection, and formed an alliance with Edward Bruce. Robert, the king of Scotland, had gone over to Ireland to aid his brother. During his absence the war in Scotland had been renewed by the English. But Robert Bruce returned to the land of his triumphs, in 1318; and he succeeded in capturing Berwick. The Scots, marching into Yorkshire, burned many towns, and had nearly taken Edward prisoner on one occasion, and his queen on another. An attempt was made to retake Berwick; but it was unsuccessful. At length, in 1320, a truce for two years was concluded "between Edward, king of England, and Sir Robert de Brus, for himself and his adherents." The Irish invasion had been previously terminated in 1318, by the death of Edward Bruce; who was defeated in a battle near Dundalk, and fell on the field with two thousand of his countrymen. But no success and no truce could put an end to the intestine troubles of England. Another favourite had arisen; and another war with the barons was impending.

Many of the important facts in the history of our country are written in its statutes. In three acts of parliament of the 15th of Edward II., we find the distinct traces of a revolution, and of a counter-revolution. In the first of these statutes, that decreeing "The exile of Hugh le Despenser, father and son," we learn that at a parliament held at York in the twelfth year of Edward, Sir Hugh, the son, was named and assented to be in the office of chamberlain of the king. This young man was of high family, His grandfather was killed on the side of the barons at Evesham. His father had served in the wars of Edward I., both in France and Scotland. Edward II., was lavish in his bounties to his chamberlain. He united him in marriage with a daughter of that earl of Gloucester who was killed at Bannockburn, by which marriage he became possessed of the greater portion of Glamorganshire. His material wealth, according to a parliamentary document, was enormous. He had flocks of ten thousand sheep; herds of a thousand oxen and cows; hundreds of pigs; arms and armour for two hundred men. The possessions of the father were more than double those of his son. The young Despenser soon became embroiled with his neighbours, the lords of the marches; who, assembling in arms, attacked his castles, and destroyed or carried

off his property. The earl of Hereford, the king's brother-in-law, one of the peers appointed to enforce the "ordinances," encouraged this violence; and the earl of Lancaster, the cousin of the king, joined with him and the lords of the marches and other barons and knights, in an indenture binding them in a common cause against the power and influence of the Despensers. They marched to London, and on their way plundered the manors of the elder Spencer, as they had those of his son. From St. Alban's they sent a message to the king, demanding the banishment of these objects of their hatred; which demand Edward refused with indignation. The confederates advanced to London, where the parliament was sitting; and then was passed the statute of exile of Hugh le Despenser, father and son, "to the honour of God and holy Church, and of our lord the king, and for the profit of him and his realm, and for maintaining peace and quiet among his people." The offences with which the Despensers were charged are then minutely set forth. They had accroached to themselves royal power over the king and his ministers; they desired to lead the king to act with violence against his will; they kept the king from showing himself to his people, or giving audience to his great men, except at their will and humour; they removed good and sufficient ministers, and appointed false and evil ministers, and unlearned justices; they excited to civil war; they caused the king to impose unreasonable fines; they permitted no bishop or abbot, newly created, to approach the king, till they had paid fines to Sir Hugh, the son. Upon these various grounds, the peers of the realm award that Hugh, the father, and Hugh, the son, shall be disherited for ever, and utterly exiled out of the realm, as enemies of the king and his people.

In this parliament, which was held at Westminster in three weeks after Midsummer, in 1321, indemnity was granted against all men, of whatsoever state or condition, who had done what might be noted for trespasses and against the king's peace "in pursuing and destroying Hugh le Despenser, the son, and Hugh le Despenser, the father." In a parliament held at York, in three weeks after Easter, in 1322, this statute of indemnity was repealed, it being shown that "it was sinfully and wrongfully made and granted," and that the assent "of the prelates, earls, barons, knights of shires, and commonalty," assembled in 1321, "was given for dread of the great force which the earl of Hereford and the other great confederates suddenly brought to the parliament of Westminster, with horse and arms, in affray and abasement of all

the people." In the same parliament of York, the exile of the Despensers was annulled. This was a mighty change to be wrought in eight months. During that short period there had been a counter-revolution. In the October of 1321, king Edward took up arms, ostensibly to revenge an affront offered to his queen; and after capturing Leeds castle, in Kent,—to which his queen had been denied admission,—led his forces northward. It was alleged that before the truce of 1319, the earl of Lancaster had been in traitorous correspondence with the Scots; and that through his complicity with Robert Bruce, Berwick had not been recovered by the English. The truce of two years was now about to expire. The Despensers had returned to England; and Lancaster now kept no terms in his opposition to the government of Edward. There can be no doubt that at this period he and the earl of Hereford were in alliance with Bruce. The Scots army was to enter England, to aid the earls and their confederates in their quarrel, but on no account to lay claim to any conquest; and the earls were to use their endeavours that Bruce should enjoy his kingdom in peace. As Edward advanced, Lancaster retired into Yorkshire. At Boroughbridge he was encountered by a strong force, under the governors of York and Carlisle, and here Hereford was killed. Lancaster expected the arrival of his allies from Scotland, but no army came. He was taken prisoner, and was conducted to his own castle of Pontefract, at whose gates he had stood when Edward passed by in returning from the siege of Berwick, and jeered his king with bitter scorn. To that castle Edward now came a triumphant lord; and in his own hall was Lancaster, who at Warwick had adjudged Gaveston to die, arraigned as a traitor. On a gray pony, without a bridle, he was led to execution; and kneeling down on an eminence outside the town his head was struck off. Eighteen others of the confederates were executed in London and other places. Thus it was, that the parliament of York, in 1322, passed the statute which we have mentioned. But they did more than this. They revoked all the "ordinances" which had been made ten years before, it being found "that by the matters so ordained the royal power of our lord the king was restrained on divers things, contrary to what it ought to be." But not only these "ordinances" were repealed, but all provisions "made by subjects against the royal power of the ancestors of our lord the king" were to cease and lose their effect for ever. Edward II. was now in the plenary possession of sovereign power

He had an obsequious parliament. The great barons who interfered with his will were removed. Hugh Despenser, the son, might reign supreme in the palace, as he had reigned before. Edward would himself wipe out the disgrace of Bannockburn, and win back Scotland to his crown. He addressed a letter to the pope, stating that having put down the earl of Lancaster, he was engaged in preparing to invade Scotland, desiring no peace between the two kingdoms.

The Scots, anticipating the coming war, entered England, and penetrated to Lancashire. They then returned without molestation, laden with immense booty, and driving their waggons bearing the spoil of gold and plate, of furniture and church ornaments, as securely as if they were on a peaceful journey. The king of England was collecting a great army—a machine too cumbersome for effective use. He marched into Scotland, with an ill-supply of bread for his men and of provender for his horses; for England was still suffering the miseries of scarcity. As the great host of Edward marched on to the Forth, he found a desert. The stores of corn, the herds of the Lothians, had all been removed northward. The houses were deserted. The English fleet, which had been prepared to co-operate with the invading army, was detained by contrary winds. Famine and sickness were doing the work which Bruce waited to complete. King Edward hastily marched back to the border; and king Robert came forth from his encampment at Culross, in Fifeshire. Douglas began to harass the English in their rear; and Edward, appointing guardians of the marches, retreated to a strong position near Byland abbey, in Yorkshire. The greater part of his army was disbanded. Edward felt himself secure. But a body of Scottish knights suddenly appeared before the abbey, and obtaining a victory, the king of England fled precipitately to York. The war of twenty-three years with Scotland was at an end. On the 30th of May, 1322, a truce between the two kingdoms was concluded for thirteen years.

It was during the revolutionary period of which we have been treating that the great military order of the Templars was dissolved, after having attained the highest authority and influence in Europe during nearly two hundred years. One of the charges against the Despensers was, that they prevented justice being done, touching the lands of the Templars. When Philip le Bel, king of France, in 1307, suddenly took possession of the palace of the Temple in Paris, and threw the Grand Master and all his

