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XIX.

## DEATH OF DE MONTFORT.—GARDINER.

[The weakness and incapacity of Henry III., and his reliance upon foreign favorites, led gradually to the development of an opposition baronial party. The nobles were the natural leaders of the people; but they were disorganized, and powerless, without a leader, to withstand the wretched system of government that prevailed.

At length they found a leader in Earl Simon de Montfort, himself a foreigner. He became the head of the national party. Under his direction, the opposition culminated in the Mad Parliament (1258), which forced upon the king the constitution known as the "Provisions of Oxford." It practically substituted a baronial oligarchy for the royal power. De Montfort, however, was not content with this, for he had wider plans of popular government. His attempt to realize these led to a division of the national party itself; recourse was had to arms, and the combatants met on the field of Lewes in 1264. Here the royalist party was overthrown, the king and Prince Edward were taken prisoners, and all the power passed into De Montfort's hands. His triumph led to the famous Parliament of 1265, to which he summoned representatives from the towns as well as from the shires, and a new constitution was drawn up, which put the government into the hands of the commonalty of the realm. A reaction followed against De Montfort. Prince Edward escaped from captivity, gathered an army, destroyed a large force under De Montfort's son, and defeated the earl himself in the battle of Evesham.]

If the great barons were weary of Simon, he had full confidence in himself, and he determined to show that he could do without them. When the Parliament which contained for the first time representatives of the towns met, very few of the great men had been asked to attend. Simon seems to have felt that he could not trust many of them. He attempted to do everything himself, and to rule the kingdom as if all men in it were his subjects. His sons were more arrogant and more unwise than he was. Even while Parliament was sitting news was brought that the young men and their friends had arranged to engage in a tournament against the earl of

Gloucester and his supporters. A tournament was intended to be an imitation of a fight, in which knights rode at one another and attempted to thrust one another off their horses. But it might easily lead to a real fight, and Simon sent orders to stop it. Gloucester was angry with Simon for interfering with his amusement; and he was still more angry with him for keeping the king's castles in his hands. Gloucester was himself one of the three electors, and he may very well have thought himself aggrieved when he was treated as a man of little importance. Before long he was preparing to attack Simon, as soon as he could find a favorable opportunity.

Gloucester was not likely to have any lack of followers. Before the end of May he obtained help in an unexpected way. Prince Edward had been kept as a prisoner ever since the battle of Lewes. One evening he went out with his guards, and invited them to try which of them had the swiftest horse. As soon as they had tired their horses by galloping them one against another, he rode off, and was once more at liberty.

At once Prince Edward summoned to his aid all Simon's enemies. He was soon at the head of a large army. Gloucester and his friends, who had fought by Simon's side at Lewes, now followed the prince. Simon's supporters were but few, and he had little to trust to but his own skill. If Edward behaved as he had behaved at Lewes, a victory might yet be won. Edward, however, had learned much since the day when in hot haste he galloped after the Londoners, and left his father a prey to the enemy. He was one of those who was made wiser and better by adversity, and he was now as skillful a general as Simon himself. In the meanwhile Simon had been gathering forces in Wales, and was still on the western side of the Severn when he summoned one of his sons, a younger Simon, to join him with all the troops he could collect in London and the South. The young man after some delay arrived at his father's strong castle of Kenil-



worth. He and his men took no precautions against surprise, and even slept outside the castle walls. Early in the morning of August 1, Prince Edward and his men were upon them while they were still asleep. Young Simon and a few others escaped into the castle, which was too well fortified to be easily taken, but the greater part of his troops were obliged to surrender. The elder Simon would hardly have had a sufficient force if his son's army had joined him; he was now terribly outnumbered.

Of this disaster he knew nothing when, on the following morning, he crossed the Severn, and marched toward Kenilworth, where he expected to find his son. On the 4th he arrived at Evesham, bringing King Henry with him under guard. Before long he was told that a body of armed men was coming toward him. He heard the news with joy, as he believed the soldiers to be his son's; and, in order to be sure of the truth, he sent his barber, who was a long-sighted man, to the top of the abbey tower. The barber's intelligence was encouraging. He saw young Simon's banners floating at the head of the advancing troops. As they drew nearer Simon learned that he had been bitterly deceived. The banners were indeed his son's, but they were in the hands of the enemy. That enemy was too strong to be overcome, and even flight was impossible for a whole army. Evesham lies within a loop of the winding river Avon, some miles below the town of Stratford, where the great Shakespeare was afterward born. Edward had men enough to spare, and he had sent a detachment round to block the way of retreat over the bridge at the end of the loop. He himself bore down upon the town across the fields.

No one knew better than the old warrior that he had no hope of escape. "May the Lord have mercy on our souls," he prayed, "for our bodies are undone!" He himself would stand and perish where he was; but a few might fly, and keep themselves for better times. One and all refused to live

when their captain and their leader was dead. "Come, then," said Simon, "and let us die like men; for we have fasted here, and we shall breakfast in heaven." Simon and his faithful band knelt down to ask forgiveness of their sins, and, in God's name, the bishop of Worcester declared them to be absolved. Then Simon rose, and with his whole force dashed forward to meet the foe. "By the arm of St. James!" he said, as he saw the orderly advance of the enemy, "they come on well; they learned that not of themselves, but of me."

The battle, if indeed it deserves the name, could not be of long duration. Prince Edward bore down upon Simon's little army in front, Gloucester charged upon its flank, a third force which had been sent to watch the bridge charged it in the rear. Simon's band of heroes was surrounded and outnumbered. Henry de Montfort, Simon's eldest son, was one of the first to be struck down. "Is it so?" said the father, when the news was brought to him. "Then, indeed, it is time for me to die." He rushed into the thickest ranks of the enemy, slashing, as he went, with his sword. Prince Edward's men pressed round him, and one, coming behind him, lifted his coat of mail, and stabbed him in the back with a mortal wound.

The noblest heart in England had ceased to beat. Edward, barbarous in his triumph, allowed the body of the great leader to be brutally mutilated in scorn, and his comrades to be pitilessly slaughtered. The common people indeed revered him as a martyr and a saint, and believed that miracles were wrought at his tomb. Poets sang how the precious flower of warriors had faded away, and how the land wept for the loss of him who had been victorious even in death.

It seems a strange thing to speak of him whose torn and bleeding corpse had lain upon the field at Evesham as victorious in his death. Yet no words could be more true. In the pages of history, as in our own experience, we sometimes meet with men who accomplish some great work which they



have undertaken, and who die full of years and honors amid the grateful thanks of those who have enjoyed the fruit of their labors. But there are others who specially call for our gratitude, whose whole life seems at the time to have been thrown away, who have aimed at that which they could not win, and who have struggled always against the stream, to be swept away in the end in some dark day of storm. These are, indeed, the heroes of the earth. It is not what a man accomplishes, but what he aims at, which is the measure of his greatness, for it is the noble aim which makes him great and good.

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it;  
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,  
Dies ere he knows it."

Simon had sought to accomplish no less a thing than to make England self-governing, that it might no longer be the prey of a spendthrift king, and of his foreign hangers-on who flocked across the Channel, like vultures to the carcass. When he died he left the country in the hands of that king who had done the wrong, and who seemed likely to return to his evil ways. Yet it was not so. By the side of Henry was now his son Edward, firm of will, and victorious in war. Edward had learned other things from Simon than the military art. He had learned to do justice, and to seek for justice by seeking to know the opinions of every class of the people. During the remainder of Henry's reign, Edward took care that wise laws should be made, and that Englishmen should have the mastery in England. When he himself came to be king, he upheld the principle that what was for the good of all should be consulted on by all. He gathered round him Parliaments even more complete than that which Simon had summoned, and there he strove to do justice to all. The spirit of the slain leader seemed to have passed into his conqueror.

It is given to no man, not even to Simon or to Edward, to make a free country. England is free, because for centuries before Simon was born Englishmen had been in the habit of discussing their own concerns, at least in their local assemblies, in meetings in town and country. But Simon is none the less worthy to be held in remembrance because he found followers ready to support him. His immediate failure may, in part indeed, be attributed to his own faults, his quick temper, and his contempt of men who were less in earnest than himself; but it was far more to be attributed to the jealousies of the great men, and to the unpreparedness of the middle class to combine permanently in his support. He needs no monument of marble to be remembered by. Wherever a free Parliament meets and gives laws in the English tongue, there is Earl Simon's monument.

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 XX.

## WALLACE, THE SCOTCH PATRIOT.—PEARSON.

[Edward I., son of Henry III., had profited by the troubles of his father's reign. He realized the needs of his people, and sought to meet them by enacting wise and just laws. His maxim was, "What concerns all should be approved by all." He was brave and prudent, and, above all, faithful to his word. He completed the parliamentary system, re-organized the courts of law, improved the system of police, and developed the resources of the country. In many ways he was really a great king.

His kingly pride and love of order led him to wish to extend the supremacy of England over the entire island. He, no doubt, honestly believed that the action of the Scottish nobles, in inviting him to decide between the different claimants to the Scottish crown, gave him the right to exercise a paramount authority over Scotland. This explains his policy toward that country; it also explains, though it does not justify, his savage treatment of the patriot leader, William Wallace.]

In the spring of 1303 Edward at last saw all difficulties removed. The treaty with France only awaited signature;



the pope was occupied with troubles in Italy; the English estates were thoroughly reconciled to the crown. Edward summoned an overpowering army to Roxburgh, and, disregarding the Scotch borderers, who ravaged Cumberland behind him, he carried fire and sword through the whole country, penetrating even to Caithness. Debarred of all hope of foreign assistance, the Scotch nobles lost heart, and were only anxious to make terms. Two years before they had demanded that their lands in England should be restored, and the king had indignantly refused the request. They now stipulated only for the recovery of their Scotch estates, on the payment of reasonable fines, and Edward admitted them, by a general amnesty, to his peace. Probably the English earls, who had received grants of Scotch forfeitures, were bought off, or easily consented to renounce dangerous titles of doubtful value. John de Soulis, with a noble constancy, refused these terms, and retired to die, beggared and free, in France; but there was only one exception to the king's clemency. William Wallace, who had taken part in the earlier negotiations, applied, like others, for the king's grace and for permission to hold the lands he had acquired. The expression points to transactions, now unknown, by which his services had been rewarded with manors, so that he was, nominally at least, an estated gentleman. But Edward would not recognize the titles derived from war against himself, or could not bring himself to pardon the adventurer who had held all the force of England at bay. He would only agree that Wallace should come in and make his peace, that is to say, should make unconditional submission, with the understanding that he should be tenderly handled. Wallace refused these terms, and was proclaimed an outlaw, with a price set upon his head.

Unhappily for Edward and England, the measures taken to apprehend Wallace were crowned with a fatal success. By the late peace Wallace was debarred his old refuge in France.

After a long vagrancy in the moors and fens, where he supported himself by plunder, he incautiously ventured to Glasgow, and was taken in the house of his mistress, through the treachery of his servant, Jack Short, who bore a grudge against him for the death of a brother. The earl of Monteith, then governor of Dunbarton, and one of the few Scotch nobles who had served Edward with fidelity, shares with his brother, Sir John Monteith, the discredit of a service to his country's enemy against his country's defender. The large rewards showered upon the captors, and the strong escort under which Wallace was hurried through the lowlands, attest the importance which Edward attached to his capture. Faithful to his maxim, that he would not see any one to whom he would not show grace, the king sent his great antagonist to London (August 22, 1305), where he was taken through the streets in a mock procession, with a crown of laurel on his head, and tried by a special commission, consisting of three judges, the lord mayor, and John de Segrave, the beaten general of Roslyn. By strict law, as soon as the fact of Wallace's outlawry was proved against him by record of the coroner's roll, he was to be hanged, and his property forfeited to the crown; but this summary process would not have suited the English policy, which desired, before it slew its victim, to brand him as a felon. Accordingly the forms of trial were observed, and Wallace was indicted for treason, for murders and robberies, for sacrilege in churches, and for not having come to the king's peace. It is said that Wallace answered to the first count, denying that he was a traitor, as he had never sworn allegiance to the king of England. By the ideas of that time the defense was valid, for allegiance was a personal tie rendered in return for certain advantages, and which gentlemen at least might withhold at pleasure, so that Wallace was not necessarily bound by the acts of his countrymen. His refusal exposed him to forfeiture of his land, and might put him out of the king's peace, but did not



make him a traitor. If, however, this plea was overruled Wallace had no answer, as he seems, in fact, to have made none, to the other counts of the indictment. He had undoubtedly headed a war in which men and women had been slain under circumstances of great ferocity, and churches burned or plundered by his followers. He had certainly not been worse, and probably had been more merciful, than other Scotch leaders; but he was not justified by ancestral rank in putting himself at the head of a national movement, and English pride could not forgive the mere squire who had defeated nobles and knights with burghers and Highland kerns. To Edward and his people—as even to Philip of France, and perhaps to some Scotchmen of the day—Wallace was no better than a brigand leading an armed rabble against their natural lords, and subverting the foundations of a political order more valuable to every statesman than a mere principle of nationality. Accordingly the sentence pronounced, though it struck men who remembered better times as horrible, did not seem to them unjust. By a new refinement of cruelty, Wallace was not only to be dragged to the gallows and hanged, but to be cut down while yet living, and disemboweled. This atrocious sentence was actually carried out.

Those who remember how Henry II. had spared the promoters of a wanton rebellion; how King Richard had acted by his brother John and his followers; how John himself had been compelled to plead at the bar of public opinion for the murder of the younger De Braose, and never dared to bring a rebel to formal trial; how Fawkes de Breauté was suffered to leave the country, and William de Marsh only hanged for complicity in rebellion and assassination, will understand what the clemency of our old judicial practice to all offenders in the rank of gentlemen had been, and how completely it was transformed, under Edward, into an impartial barbarity. The early lenity was, perhaps, excessive, but it did not

demoralize, like the executions which are henceforth crowded thickly into the king's bitter old age.

It is possible that Wallace's fame has been better served by his death than it could have been by his life. Though a man of rare capacity, who called the first army of independence, as it were, out of the earth, and who gave body and enthusiasm to the war, he was unfitted by position to command the allegiance of the great nobles, who could alone insure success. He would probably have weakened Bruce by dividing the patriotic interest, or else have degenerated into a mere partisan leader. From the little we know of him, he was no faultless hero of romance, or absolutely without reproach among bloody and faithless men. It is probable that he permitted a savage license before he was sobered by success and a high position; and he seems to have lost heart in the last campaign, and to have wished to renounce a struggle which he was left to maintain alone. But these frailties, dearly expiated, cannot detract from the great facts of his life: that he was the first man who fought, not to support a dynasty, but to free Scotland; and the first general who showed that citizens could be an overmatch for trained soldiers; that no reproach of cruelty or self-seeking attaches to his term of government; and that the enemy of his country selected him as its first martyr.



## XXI.

## BRUCE AND BANNOCKBURN.—LONGMAN.

[Edward II. was as weak and cowardly as his father was brave and noble. He fell at once under the influence of favorites and parasites, and the greater part of his reign was occupied with struggles between him and his barons, whose object was to secure good government, and save the king from the consequences of his own folly. He undertook to carry out his father's policy in Scotland, but his overwhelming and disgraceful defeat at Bannockburn robbed him of the little influence he possessed. He was at length deposed, and the crown was given to his son. Though his fate is somewhat doubtful, it is generally supposed that he was secretly murdered in Berkeley Castle in 1327.]

THE almost inaccessible castle of Stirling was nearly the last fortress of importance which still held out against the Scots, and Bruce's brother, Sir Edward Bruce, now laid siege to it. Its governor, Philip de Mowbray, was hard pressed, and feared his garrison would be starved out before it was possible to get help from England. He therefore concluded a truce with Sir Edward Bruce, on the condition of surrendering the castle by the 24th of June, the feast of St. John the Baptist, in the following year, if it were not previously relieved by an English army. Bruce justly blamed his brother for making so disadvantageous an agreement, but he did not attempt to break it.

King Edward, having made a kind of peace with his barons, was now able to turn his mind seriously to the war with Scotland. Had he not now roused himself from his supineness, he would, in fact, have left Scotland to its fate. But, on learning De Mowbray's agreement about Stirling Castle, he made immense preparations for its relief. He summoned the whole military force of the kingdom to meet him at Berwick on the 11th of June, 1314. To this general muster ninety-three barons were commanded to repair, with horse and arms, while the different counties of England and Wales were or-

dered to raise a body of twenty-seven thousand foot-soldiers. The whole army is said to have exceeded one hundred thousand men, of whom forty thousand were cavalry, three thousand of these being, man and horse, in complete armor, and fifty thousand were archers. A fleet of about fifty ships was appointed to co-operate with the army; ample stores of provisions for the troops, and forage for the horses, were collected from all quarters; smiths, carpenters, masons, and armorers joined the grand array; and numerous wagons and carts, for the conveyance of the tents, pavilions, and baggage, formed a necessary part of the well-appointed army.

Bruce on his side was not idle. But he found he could not muster above forty thousand fighting men, and his horses were not equal to those of the English. He therefore determined to fight principally on foot, and to choose ground where the English cavalry could not act with advantage. His soldiers were armed with battle-axes, long spears, knives or daggers, and bows and arrows. The formidable weapons, called Lochaber-axes, spiked flails, and claymores, are, however, said to have been also used at the time.

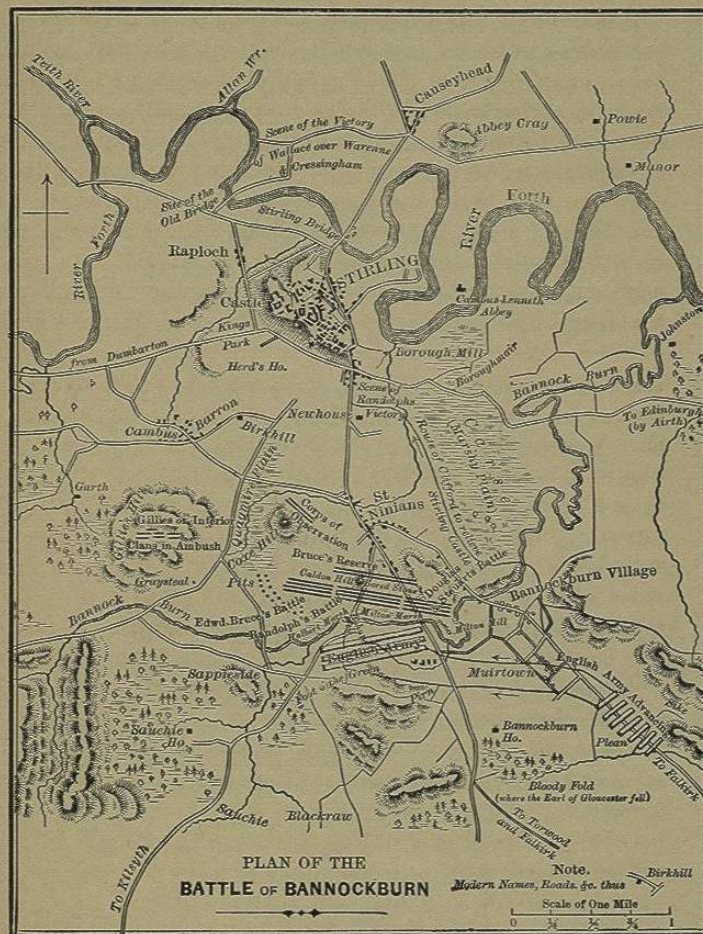
Stirling is situated on the south side of the river Forth, which winds round it, in a very devious course, on all sides but the south. On the north and east this river formed in those days a strong natural defense of the town; but on the west it was not near enough to protect it. The castle, however, stands on a precipitous rock, which is, for all military purposes, inaccessible on the western and southern sides. The only side, therefore, from which a successful attack could be made was the south-east. It was from that side that the English were approaching, but they could reach the castle only by crossing the little river Bannock. The Bannock, from Milton Marsh as far as the village of Bannockburn, runs through a deep ravine, which the English could not pass in the face of the Scotch army; below the village it turns to the north, and flows into the Forth. The ground in this



direction, lying between the Forth and the Bannockburn, was a level marsh, unfit for the passage of a large army, but practicable for a small body of troops.

Bruce, therefore, seeing that the English must advance by the Falkirk road, expected that they would cross the Bannock at a ford on the Kilsyth road, and consequently posted his army across it, on sloping ground to the north of the Halbert and Milton Marshes. The right of his army rested on a deep marshy hollow, lying on the west and north sides of the Coxe Hill, and through which ran a little stream. The left rested on the Bannock, at Milton Mill, where the river runs through the deep ravine already mentioned. In order, however, to strengthen his position further, he caused a number of pits to be dug in the ground from the Halbert Marsh to the marshy hollow under Coxe Hill. In these pits sharp stakes were placed, and they were then covered over with turf. On the Coxe Hill Bruce placed a body of men to observe the movements of the enemy, and to resist any treacherous attack from Stirling Castle, the garrison of which was bound by the truce to take no part in the battle. Lastly, he placed a body of wild, undisciplined Highlanders, with the sutlers and camp followers, concealed in a valley which divides a hill, called the Gillies' Hill, from east to west. These men might be very useful in an irregular fight, or in case of any reverse to Bruce's army, but would have done more harm than good in a well-arranged plan of battle. His reserved forces were placed in the rear.

Bruce, having thus made all his plans with great skill, reviewed his troops, and declared himself satisfied with their appearance and equipment. The leaders of his army were, his brother, Sir Edward Bruce; Sir James Douglas; Randolph, earl of Moray; and Walter, the high steward of Scotland. To them he fully explained his intended order of battle, and then quietly awaited the approach of the enemy. He soon received intelligence that the English had lain all night at





Edinburgh. This was on Saturday, the 22d of June. On the following day, Sunday, the soldiers heard mass and confessed themselves with great solemnity. They were fully impressed with the importance of the coming fight, and of the superior numbers likely to be opposed to them, but they were determined to overcome the English or die in the attempt.

Bruce now, expecting the approach of the English, arranged his army in order of battle. He divided his soldiers into three masses and a reserve. Sir Edward Bruce commanded the right division; Sir James Douglas and Walter, the steward, the left; Randolph the center; and Bruce himself took charge of the reserve, placing himself on a hill called the Caldou Hill. He fixed the staff of his standard into a massive stone in front of the reserve. This stone still remains in its original position.

Bruce then sent out messengers to reconnoiter, and they soon returned saying that the English army was advancing in great strength, and making a very warlike appearance. Edward was evidently well informed of the position of Bruce's army, and saw that, if a body of cavalry could cross the Bannockburn, to the left of the Scotch, he might get to their rear, enter Sterling, relieve the garrison, and thus enable them to take part in the battle. Bruce had seemingly relied on the marshy nature of the ground beyond the ravine through which the little river flowed, as a sufficient protection to his army, and had made no preparation to resist this flank movement. In order, therefore, to gain the rear of the Scotch army, Edward, early in the morning, had sent forward a body of eight hundred horse, led by Sir Robert Clifford, to cross the Bannock and relieve the castle. Clifford succeeded in crossing the stream, his forces being concealed by a bank which lies on the west side of the carse, or marshy plain, and was making his way to the castle, when Bruce discovered the movement of his troops, and dispatched Randolph, with a select body of foot-soldiers, to intercept them. So soon as Clifford saw the



approach of the Scotch he ordered his soldiers to wheel round and charge. Randolph formed his men into a square, and received the shock of the English horse without wavering, and at length, after desperate attempts on the part of the English, and determined resistance on the part of the Scots, the English were compelled to retreat.

In the meantime the English army had steadily advanced, till Edward ordered a halt to consult with his leaders, whether they should give battle at once, or wait till the following day, in order to let the soldiers have a night's rest. By some mistake, the English center continued to advance, and Bruce, therefore, rode forward to make some fresh arrangements. An English knight, Sir Henry De Bohun, or Boune, well mounted, seeing that Bruce was alone, rode forward to attack him. Bruce was mounted only on a weak horse, but was too brave to shun the conflict. The English knight galloped forward at great speed, charging with his lance, but Bruce parried the attack, and, as the knight passed him, he raised his battle-ax, and, with one blow, laid him dead at his feet.

"High in his stirrups stood the king,  
And gave his battle-ax the swing.  
Right on De Boune, the whiles he passed,  
Fell that stern dint—the first—the last!  
Such strength upon the blow was put,  
The helmet crashed like hazel-nut;  
The ax-shaft, with its brazen clasp,  
Was shivered to the gauntlet's grasp.  
Springs from the blow the startled horse,  
Drops to the plain the lifeless corse;  
First of that fatal field, how soon,  
How sudden, fell the fierce De Boune."

—Scott's "Lord of the Isles," *Canto vi*, 15.

The Scotch now rushed forward with great fury, and drove back the English in confusion; but Bruce, fearing to disarrange his order of battle, called his soldiers back, and both

sides tacitly determined to delay the battle till the next day.

On the following morning, Monday, June 24th, the Scottish king confessed, and, along with his army, heard mass; and the soldiers then arranged themselves in battle-array. The English advanced, led on by the king in person, who had with him a chosen body-guard of five hundred horse. As they approached, the Scotch all knelt down, in reverence to a crucifix carried through their ranks by the Abbot of Inchaf-ray. "See," cried Edward, "they are kneeling; they ask mercy." "They do, my liege," answered Sir Ingram Umfraville, "but it is from God, and not from us. Trust me, you men will win the day, or die upon the field." "Be it so, then," replied the king, and ordered the charge to be sounded. The English, owing to a dispute among their leaders, charged irregularly, but with great fury. The Scotch received their attack with steady courage, and the English fell in great numbers. But the Scotch were terribly galled by the showers of arrows poured upon them by the English bowmen. Bruce, therefore, ordered Sir Robert Keith to take a body of five hundred horse, the only cavalry in the Scotch army, around Milton Marsh, and charge the English archers. The archers had no weapons but their bows and arrows, and their quivers being emptied, they were unable to resist the attack of the Scotch cavalry and fled. Bruce now saw signs of wavering among the English, and, bringing up his whole reserve, charged the English with his entire army in one line. At this critical moment, by Bruce's orders, the Highlanders made their appearance on the top of Gillies' Hill, and the English, supposing them to be a fresh army advancing to the attack, fled in confusion. This last charge of Bruce decided the fate of the day, and the Scots now obtained a complete victory over their opponents. Thirty thousand of the English are said to have been left dead on the field, but Edward escaped in safety, and took refuge in Berwick.