

early Scottish history. The important part which Dumfries has played in the history of Scotland is sufficient of itself to add interest to any survey of its past and its present features. Added to this is the fact that the Patriot Bard of Scotland lived there and died there—this fact has overshadowed all others, so that the district has become known as “the Land of Burns.”

Dumfries is picturesquely situated on the River Nith, whose peaceful waters flow through the counties of Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire, both consecrated by the genius of Burns. The “Sweet Afton” of his song joins it before crossing the Ayrshire boundary, and afterwards it flows along the western division of Dumfriesshire into the Solway Firth some nine miles from Dumfries. The surrounding country is hilly and abounds in historical associations and places once the haunts of genius. The town stands in a sheltered position on the left side of the Nith, while on the opposite bank is the small but modern city of Maxwelltown. Although having separate councils, they are practically united for municipal purposes.

Almost every town in Scotland has its traditions and institutions which can be traced back to very early times. The burghers take a peculiar pride in these, and it is always a source of great satisfaction if they are able to refer to any particular date, as the time when some royal personage or great man visited or resided in their town. The good citizens of Dumfries possess these traits like wise, and they recall with pleasure that Dumfries was once a royal burgh. It was in Dumfries that Robert the Bruce slew the false Sir John of Badenoch, otherwise known as the “Red Comyn,” and struck the first blow for freedom. The

hopes of the Baliol party were crushed by this act; all Scotland rallied to the support of Bruce, and the result, after eight years' hard fighting, was the great victory of Bannockburn.

There are many other interesting persons connected with the early history of Dumfries. Among those whose names are held in grateful memory is the Lady Devorgilla.

“A better ladye than she was none,
In all the Isle of Mare Bretane.”

This noble lady erected several religious houses in the neighborhood, and about the year 1275 constructed a bridge across the Nith, which is still in use. When this was built, bridges were scarce, and it was then considered a noble structure. With the advance of modern civilization this old bridge has become useless for heavy traffic, and is only used by foot passengers now. Still later, this same benefactress founded “Sweetheart Abbey,” near Dumfries, and in 1289 she founded Baliol College, Oxford, in memory of her husband, John Baliol.

About a mile from Dumfries, near a bend in the River Nith, stand the roofless ruins of Lincluden Abbey,

“Yonder Cluden's silent towers,
When at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dawy bending flowers
Fairies dance sae cheerie.”

It was erected in 1164 by the munificence of one of the Lords of Galloway, and in its day has served as a monastery, church and royal retreat. Margaret of Anjou, the wife of Henry III. of England, found a refuge there after the defeat of the Lancastrian party at Northampton in 1461. In the north wall is the tomb of the Princess Margaret, daughter of Robert II. of Scotland. This tomb was once a very beautiful one, and it still retains traces of its former excellence. Within an