

most brilliant and the most instructive of the four, containing, as it does, several personal sketches of consummate interest, and dealing with the most momentous periods of the political and national history of Scotland. The plan of the work is so thorough, that as the historical narrative progresses, as its larger, bolder outlines take form, and its great events of war, conquest, victory, dynastic changes, and political relations are detailed, the building up of the body politic, the internal conditions of life, the progress of the state, its statistics, its material prosperity, the advance of law and liberty, the growth of its institutions, all its interior interests and characteristics are as carefully narrated. They are kept apart, but the recital of them follows the narrative of the great events which are formally denominated history; and the two streams of information are combined when results have to be told, the rate of progress stated, or epochs measured and defined.

The year 1309 saw Scotland so far consolidated as to be getting into a place in European diplomacy. From that time forth, the distant northern kingdom has a history whose events have extraordinary importance, and whose results react upon the course of affairs in the larger and wider arena of the continent. The internal condition of the country has been elaborately explained, the power and position of the church fully defined, the spread and consolidation of social institutions and political rights made clear, before we reach the stirring narrative of the glorious battle of Bannockburn. The following passage is one of the most eloquent and spirited in the book:

'Besides the inferiority of the victorious army, Bannockburn is exceptional among battles by the utter helplessness of the defeated. There seems to have been no rallying-point anywhere. There was enough of material to have made two or three armies capable, in strong positions, of making a troublesome stand, and at all results, of good terms. But none of the parts of that mighty host could keep together, and the very chaos among the multitudes around seems to have perplexed the orderly army of the Scots. The foot-soldiers of the English army seem simply to have dispersed at all points, and the little band of them is painfully suggestive of the wanderers having to face the alternatives—starvation in the wilds, or death at the hands of the peasantry. The cavalry fled right out towards England. Why men with English manhood should have done so, is a mystery. It was like the Scripture saying, that the wicked flee when no man pursueth; for the little band of Scots mounted men were far too small for pursuit, and could not be let loose by any prudent commander among the vast mass of cavalry breaking away. Perhaps this helplessness in flight may be attributed to the command being taken by the king himself, with his utter incapacity for the task. The only little gathering, out of the dispersal of that huge army, seems to have been a body of five hundred knights who rallied round the king, but it was only to attend him in his headlong flight. To the Lothian peasant, the mighty king of England galloping past like a criminal fleeing from justice, must have been a sight not to be presently forgotten. The king reached Dunbar, a fortress still in his own hands, and took shipping for Berwick. The camp-apparel left behind by the fugitives made a booty so extensive and so costly as to astound its captors. Scotland, as we have seen, was not an abjectly poor country at the commencement of the war, there evidently was a considerable body living in comfort; but the splendour then coming into vogue in such countries as those of France, Burgundy, and England, seems hardly to have been known in the land. The costly stuffs and valuables of many kinds found in the English camp became long a tradition in Scotland; indeed, the very articles themselves turn up centuries afterwards, as remarkable possessions.' There are records of many battles in this book, but none to match with the great victory of Bannockburn, with which, the Scottish dealings with the papal court, the death of King Robert, and that of Douglas, while carrying with him the sovereign's heart, the second volume ends.

From the accession of David Bruce, when a child of eight years old, to the accession of the ill-fated House of Stewart, the history of Scotland is complicated, momentous, and full of romantic vicissitude. Mr. Burton's narrative, though rapid and concise, is full, and eminently lucid and satisfactory. The Balliol drama succeeds that of the Bruce, and we have the story of his claims, his invasion, the battle of Duplin, the English invasion, the battle of Halidon Hill, Balliol's successes and reverses, his homage done for Scotland, the English invasion, and the relief afforded to Scotland by its connection with France, and the opening of a new field to the restless English enterprise in that direction. A portion of this stirring narrative over which the reader feels inclined to linger long, is that which tells of the battle of Neville's Cross, the capture of King David, with its signal political effects, his ransom, and the sacrifices by which it was effected; the swiftly following English invasion, the desecration of the religious houses, and the proceedings of the parliament at this momentous period. King David died in 1370, and was succeeded by his cousin Robert Fitz-Allan, the High Steward, from whose office his dynasty took the famous fatal name. Now Mr. Burton is on better-trodden ground, and one follows him not indeed with diminished interest, but with less sense of strangeness, as he tells of a splendid period in Scottish history: of the famous league with France, and the obstinate gallant strife with England—of the Percies, and the Douglas—of the battle of Otterburn; as he rapidly sketches the history of the Highland clans, and the battle of the North Inch of Perth; as he tells the story of the Duke of Rothesay and Sir John Ramoray, and how the old king's younger son was taken by the English on his way to the protection of the French court, and Albany's ascendancy was complete. In this portion of the work may be found a very interesting and able sketch of the unfortunate Richard II. of England, and the notion popularly entertained that he was alive in Scotland long after his reputed death. 'We must be content,' says Mr. Burton, 'to accept of the affair as one of the unsolved mysteries of history. The populace of London were, we know, invited to behold the body of King Richard, publicly shewn to them in St. Paul's Cathedral. Thus the statecraft of the times leaves us the alternative, either that Henry of Lancaster produced a spurious dead Richard in St. Paul's, or that Albany kept a spurious live Richard in Scotland.'

The accession of the captive child-king, James I., did but establish the power of Robert of Albany more firmly. He really ruled Scotland until his death, a period marked by the first beginnings of the cruel religious persecution which so long disgraced Christendom and belied Christianity. The history of the strife between the Highland and Lowland populations is very interesting, and Mr. Burton puts the famous battle of Harlaw, largely celebrated in northern minstrelsy and tradition, in a very new and striking light. 'It will be difficult,' he says, 'to make those not familiar with the tone of feeling in Lowland Scotland at that time believe that the defeat of Donald of the Isles was felt as a more memorable deliverance even than that of Bannockburn. What it was to be subject to England, the country knew, and disliked, to be subdued by their savage enemies of the mountains, opened to them sources of terror of unknown character and extent.' One of the most touching of historical romances is the story of the young king's captivity in England, of the training of him there, to be the chivalrous, poetic, and yet practical man he was, of his marriage with Jane Beaufort, the fair White Rose of Somerset. Of this marriage, in which policy and inclination alike concurred, Mr. Burton says: 'It was a destiny uncommon among kings to fall in love with a fair unknown damsel casually seen, to wed her as the one whose descent marked her to the politicians as the proper queen to bring with him to his kingdom; and finally, to tell the story of his love in sweet verse worthy of a true poet.' So the young king, concluding a seven years' truce with England, and paying that sharp practising nation £40,000 for

his maintenance, of which they remitted a fourth part as Jane Beaufort's modest portion, took his wife home, and was crowned at Scoon with great pomp in 1424. Very great internal progress, in laws, in social usages, in military organisation, and in the treatment of the poor, marked the reign of James I. The Highlander were again troublesome, and this time they defeated Mar, the conqueror at Harlaw; but the king made a great progress amongst his 'rebellers,' and they submitted, and did him homage. The Scottish alliance with France was cemented by the marriage of the baby princess, first-born to King James, with the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI. The peaceful and prosperous portion of this reign contrasts strangely with its disastrous and cruel end. With the murder of the king, and the horrible fate of his slayers, the sad destiny of their House, which so often placed a sceptre in baby fingers, and struck it by violence from a strong man's grasp, was thenceforth upon the Stewarts, and the history of Scotland, like that of France in the days of the Valois, is but a succession of scenes in a long tragedy, sometimes brilliant, sometimes pitiful, but always melancholy. The history of the little king is for some years rather that of others than his own, but as it includes the story of the rise of Crichton, the treacherous murder of the Douglas, and the grand story of the elevation to power of that superb House, told in a tone of unusual warmth for Mr. Burton, it does not lack individual interest. The renewed strife with England is doubly memorable at this time, from the king's accidental death at the siege of Roxburgh. He was killed by the explosion of one of the monster guns, bought in Flanders by James I., but seldom used. Thus he 'dreed the weird,' dying young, by a violent death, and being succeeded by a child.

His noble widowed mother brought James III. to the spot, and urged on the siege, which was successful, and so Berwick was the last of the English possessions on the north side of the border. It is strange to think how, as the years were going over, and the blows of fate were falling heavily upon the Stewarts, as Scotland was driving away English encroachments, or reluctantly admitting English alliances, events were steadily marching to the solution of it all, to the time when the crown of England was to fall by right to a Scottish prince, and the destiny of the Stewarts was to cross the border in his train. Only a short chapter is devoted to James III.; but a glance at its contents reveals its importance. The fate of the king's brothers, Mar's murder, and Albany's flight to France, the English intrigues, the tragedy of the Bridge of Lander, and the fight at Sauchieburn between the king and the barons, which ended in the ignominious murder of the king, fill up a story which does not differ in strain or hue from those which had preceded, or were destined to follow it. Telling of the murder of the king, Mr. Burton says: 'This wretched business came to pass in a place crowded with heroic memories. The king fled over the field of Bannockburn, and through his flight could look upon that in which Wallace had conquered Warenne.'

The first years of the reign of James IV. beheld the Scottish monarchy in a position of much security. The king was married to an English princess, Margaret Tudor (a lady in every way worthy of being sister to Henry VIII.), the league with France was maintained unbroken, Spain sought the alliance of Scotland, and as Mr. Burton justly remarks: 'Henry VII. was a pretty safe neighbour. Though he reigned till the natural end of his days, and founded a dynasty, few reigns were more precarious and uneasy than his. He had been glad, when the powerful Scottish king took up Perkin Warbeck's cause, to secure his friendship by giving him that dubious present, his daughter; and he had enough to do to mind his own affairs afterwards. During this period, the ecclesiastical history of Scotland is of the deepest interest and importance. With the accession of Henry VIII., the face of affairs changed; Henry went to war with France, and Scotland must back her ancient ally. Besides, Albany was there, a brilliant intriguer, full of the spirit of his adopt-