

The young chief of Castle Clatchart by this time had in some degree acquired a name. Disclaiming the protection of the capital or his own impregnable fortress, his home was in dark glen or woodland, watching the movements of the enemy and avenging his country's wrongs when opportunity offered. His fame had reached the capital, and rumour every day added to his daring exploits, but his successes came blended with fresh horror perpetrated by the ruthless Scot. On him, however, the eyes of all became fixed, but with no settled purpose; popular tumults still distracted the state and threatened its speedy destruction, and to allay discord, Varno, by the private advice of Brudus, visited Abernethy.

Clamour was now paramount. Shouts and yells and the crash of bursting gates and falling walls reached the royal mansions; and the streets below presented one confused mass of aimless, maddened beings, hurrying to and fro in laughing despair. Soldiers and citizens were mingled together, the strong trampling down the weak, and the fallen making mirth of their own agonies. Now unity seemed to move the multitude, and down came the pillared mansion of the noble; now backward and forward, irresolute and without an object, the dense crowd swung in silence. Anon a citizen of powerful frame wielding a battle axe, exclaimed in a moment of fury, "The palace! the palace! down with Brudus." Ten thousand took up the cry: on, on rushed the mass, like ocean waves in the storms of winter, and with a voice as terrible—the palisades fell with a crash. Unmoved above them towered the regal battlements. A momentary conviction of weakness pervaded all; they recoiled a few paces and were silent. Seizing this sudden instinctive reversion of feeling in the multitude, the great gate was swung back, the drawbridge let down, and a young soldier with nodding plume and glittering spear, and mounted on a black charger, sprung forward and stood before them. For a moment vacant amazement was pictured on every countenance, the next, and "Varno!" "Varno!" blended with shout and cheer, rung through the air till the very clouds seemed to tremble. "Down with Brudus! Varno shall be king!" was on every tongue; and, suiting the action to the word, they pushed for the drawbridge. But Varno, brandishing his spear, sternly demanded peace and silence. The mass, as moved by one spirit, shrunk back; their only hope, their last hero, had charged them with wrong. In an instant all saw the madness that goaded them; the frenzy which weeks had fostered was dispelled in a moment; each felt the horror of his situation, and involuntarily shrunk beneath the eye of his chief, who, curbing his restless war-steed, addressed them as follows, in a tone of reproach and kindness, but firm as soldier's speech should be:

"Fellow countrymen, Pictavians, what means this madness? Is it because the barbarous Scot wishes the throne and the head of Brudus that you would imbue your hands in the blood of your sovereign? And why your commotions and tumults? Is it that the Scot

desolates the land that you would destroy the capital? Can the sword of the victorious foe not work havoc enough? You cry for protection, and in the same breath stab the breast for whose aid you pray. Pictavians, be men, be wise! Popular outrage, when the foe is at the gate, shows a strength which weakens as it strengthens, and is a surety of certain defeat. You cry on Brudus to drive back the enemy to their cold mountains. What is the arm of Brudus against a host, if you deny your aid? Your own hand should be your defence. Face the foe with the same courage you would have faced your king; but beware of tumult. Order and art are the sinews of war: I have proved them such. Let cowards seek their homes in silence, and the heroes of Pictavia follow Varno."

So saying, he passed through the crowd, which closed behind him in martial order and filed down the winding descent, silent, but burning for patriotic strife, and peace again found a shelter in Abernethy.

CHAPTER II.

Success having attended the patriotic speech of Varno to his fellow Pictavians, preparation for stern resistance went on with an activity that brooked no leisure, that admitted no thought but of the enemy, no feeling save revenge. On every side nothing was seen but the martialing of warriors, and gleaming spears and battle axes; nothing heard save the clanking of anvils, the trampling of steeds, and the crackling of armour. Every man capable of wielding a weapon was summoned to the field, and none but the feeble and infirm shunned the coming strife. Abernethy opened her gates; the standard of Pictavia, which had floated proudly from the tower of Nethan,* now waved its folds beyond its ramparts, where the stoutest hearts of the kingdom, and her noblest and best in arms gleaming in the radiant light of June, showed, far stretching along the plain, like countless living lines of dark clouds ridged with sunbeams. When a soldier fights for his country's honor he fights nobly; but when hope tells him that the salvation of his fatherland is on his sword, his arm is irresistible. Doubtful of defeat was the Pictish host, for the banner of Varno was there. A grave or a triumph was the resolute burning prayer of all. Need it be told that the barbarous Scot was driven to his mountains, and Pictavia again enjoyed the blessings of peace.

(To be continued.)

*The ancient hollow circular tower at Abernethy is said to have been built by Nethan III, about 720. It is 75 feet high and 48 in circumference at the base.

FORMAL OPENING OF THE COLLEGE.

THE PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS.

ON the 16th inst. the forty-fifth session of Queen's was formally opened. In the evening the customary public meeting was held in the Convocation Hall. Chancellor Fleming, C.M.G. was in the chair. Rev.