

about him. Sir Ingram Umfraville suggested a plan which was likely to ensure a cheap and bloodless victory. He counselled the king to make a feint of retreating with the whole army behind the tents; which would tempt the Scots to break their ranks, in order to plunder the camp, when the English might suddenly face about and fall upon them. This advice was rejected; Edward deemed that there was no need of stratagem in order to defeat a force so inferior.

When the two armies were upon the point of engaging, the abbot of Inchcanfray, having posted himself, with a crucifix in his hand, before the Scots, the ranks dropped upon their knees in devotion. The English concluded that by kneeling, when they should have been ready to fight, they meant to surrender at discretion, and begged their lives. The Scots rose again, and resuming their arms with steady countenances, the English began the action by a vigorous charge upon the left wing of the Scots, under Randolph, near the spot where the bridge is now thrown over the river, at the small village of Chartreshall, which was the only place where the river could be crossed in any sort of order. A large body of cavalry advanced to attack in front; meanwhile another compassed about to fall upon the flank and rear, and fell into the snare prepared for them. Many of their horses were disabled by sharp irons rushing into their feet; others tumbled into concealed pits, and could not disentangle themselves. In this situation Randolph vigorously charged upon them.

While this was passing upon the left wing of the Scottish army, the battle was spreading and raging along the front. It was commenced by the impetuous courage of an Englishman. The Scottish King was mounted upon a little palfrey, carrying a battle-ax in his hand, and upon his helmet he wore a purple hat in form of a crown. This dress, with his activity, as he rode in front of the lines, observing their order, and cheering the men, rendered him very conspicuous. Henry Bohun, an English knight, cousin to the earl of Hereford, and ranked amongst the bravest in Edward's army, galloped furiously up to engage with Robert in single combat, and, by so eminent an act of chivalry, ended the contest. Bohun missed his first blow, and Robert immediately struck him dead with his battle-ax, which broke in the handle, from the violence of the stroke. This bold attack upon their king, in the face of the whole army, roused the Scots to instant onset, and they rushed furiously upon their foes. The ardor of one of their divisions carried it too far, and it was sorely galled by a body of English archers, who charged it in the flank; these were soon dispersed by Edward Bruce, who came behind them with a party of spearmen; or, according to other accounts, by Sir Robert Keith, whom the King despatched to its relief, with a company of five hundred horse. Edward Bruce, however, soon needed similar relief himself. A strong body of English cavalry charged the right wing, which he commanded, with such fury that he had been quite overpowered, if Randolph, who appears to have been at that time disengaged, had not marched to his assistance. The battle was now at the hottest, and the fortune of the day uncertain. The English continued to charge with unabated vigor; the Scots received them with inflexible intrepidity, and fought as if victory depended upon each man's single arm. A singular scene suddenly altered the face of affairs, and contributed greatly to decide the contest. All the servants and attendants of the Scottish army, amounting, it is said, to above fifteen thousand, had been ordered, before the battle, to retire with the baggage behind Gillic's-hill. During the engagement they arranged themselves in a martial form, some on foot, and others mounted upon baggage-horses, marching to the top of the hill, they there displayed white sheets upon long poles, in the form of banners, and moved towards the field of battle with frightful shouts. The English, taking them for a fresh reinforcement to the Scots,

were seized with panic, and gave way in great confusion. Buchanan says that the King of England was the first that fled; but in this he contradicts all other historians, who affirm that the English monarch was among the last on the field. According to some accounts he would not be persuaded to retire till Sir Aymer de Vallance, seeing the day lost, seized his horse's bridle and forced him off. The King's other Knight, Sir Giles de Argentine, would not leave the field; throwing himself at the head of a battalion, he animated it to prodigious efforts, but was soon overpowered and slain. Sir Giles was a champion of great renown; he had signalized himself in several battles with the Saracens, and was reckoned the third knight of valor in his day.

The Scots pursued and made deadly havoc among the English, especially at the passage of the river, where order in retreat could not be kept, because of the irregularity of the ground. Within a short mile from the field of battle is a plot of ground called the "Bloody field;" it is said to take its name from a party of the English having there faced about and sustained a dreadful slaughter. This tradition corresponds with a relation in several historians concerning Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, and nephew to Edward II.; seeing the general rout, he made an effort to renew the battle at the head of his military tenants; and after having done much execution with his own hand, was, with most of his party, cut in pieces. With this martial prince perished Robert de Clifford, first lord of the honor of Skipton—they fought side by side. Their heroism had excited the admiration of Bruce; they had been companions in the field, and that they might not be separated after death, he sent their bodies to Edward II. at Berwick, to be interred with the honors due unto their valor.

At the battle of Bannockburn there fell, on the side of the English, one hundred and fifty-four earls, barons, and knights, seven hundred gentlemen, and more than ten thousand common soldiers. A few stanzas from one of the oldest effusions on the subject, will show the fiery and taunting tone of exultation raised by Scottish minstrelsy on the victory.

SONG OF THE SCOTTISH MAIDENS.

Here comes your lordly chivalry,
All charging in a row;
And there your gallant bowmen
Let fly their shafts like snow.
Look how yon old man clasps his hands,
And hearken to his cry—
"Alas, alas, for Scotland,
When England's arrows fly!"

Ye! weep, ye dames of England,
For twenty summers past
Ye danced and sang while Scotland wept—
Such mirth can never last.
And how can I do less than laugh,
When England's lords are nigh?
It is the maids of Scotland
Must learn to wail and sigh;

For here spurs princely Hereford—
Hark to his clashing steel!
And there's Sir Philip Musgrave,
All gore from helm to heel;
And yonder is stout d'Argentine;
And here comes with a sweep,
The fiery speed of Gloucester—
Say wherefore should I weep?

Weep, all ye English maidens,
Lo, Bannockbrook's in flood
Not with its own sweet waters,
But England's noblest blood.