

PAGES OF BRITISH HISTORY.

Historical Battles—Noteworthy Events in the Story of the Creation of the British Empire.

(Continued from our last.)

CHAPTER III.

Events led to what we are about to narrate, the battle of Dover, another great fight which took place in sight of the shores of England, and which tended still further to assert and to maintain her supremacy on the sea.

No sooner had the barons after Runnymede, at the wringing from John of the Charter of Liberty, dispersed their forces and retired to their castles, than John, at the head of a body of Gascon and Poitevin mercenaries, assailed them in succession with a fury and vindictiveness that showed how lightly he valued an oath, and soon the sky was red at night and darkened by day with the blaze of burning towns and cornfields, while the people fled to the hills and forests in despair; and, unless he exaggerated, Matthew of Paris records that this was the state of matters from Dover to Berwick, over all the land. In this extremity the English barons took the desperate course of offering the crown to Louis of France, who had married John's niece; and then the horrors of a second Conquest seemed to hang over the divided people, for this Louis was the eldest son of Philip Augustus, and many of the great lords, inspired by a national spirit, were averse to the measure.

With real avidity, but with pretended reluctance, the offer of the English crown was accepted; a French army mustered at Calais, and Louis, with a numerous and well-appointed armament, consisting of 600 ships, set sail for England. Notwithstanding that the barons of the Cinque Ports, who remained faithful to John, attacked and cut off some of his ships on the high seas, he landed safely at Sandwich, on the 30th of May, 1216. John was marching to meet him; but on the shores of the Wash the rising tide suddenly swept away all his baggage, jewels and treasures. Agitation fevered him, and he died, unregretted by his friends, some say of poison, but according to others of a surfeit of peaches and ale. Louis with his adherents held London and the southern counties; but the barons, whose feelings had changed since John's death, rallied round young Henry of Winchester, whom, as the royal crown had perished in the Wash, they crowned with a fillet of gold at Gloucester, and all true Englishmen wore a similar fillet of white cloth in honor of the event. But Louis was determined not to quit the island without a struggle, though forced to abandon all hope after the somewhat petty but otherwise important battle known as the "Fair of Lincoln," on the 19th May, 1217. The little King Henry was only ten years old, and the Earl of Pembroke was appointed Regent.

While Louis, who had lost everything north of London, was cooped up there, a powerful fleet and army were prepared in France for his succour. At Calais, the troops destined for this enterprise embarked on board of eighty large ships, besides galleys, and other armed and store vessels, the whole under the command of Eustace le Moine (the Monk), a famous sea-rover of those days, who had quitted his cloister for the more congenial scenes of outrage and battle by sea and land.

On the 24th of August the French armament put to sea intending to sail up the Thames, to make spoil of London, and there land their troops, which were under the command of Robert de Courtenay; but "the silver streak" was not to be crossed so easily as in the days of the fated Harold.

Hubert de Burgh—who had been Seneschal of Poitou; whose fourth wife was Margaret, a princess of Scotland; and who was now the Royal Justiciary and Governor of the Castle of Dover, which Louis was besieging—was fully impressed with the necessity of preventing the landing of this formidable force on English ground, and, more than all, their occupation of the capital, and took immediate measures for that purpose.

Addressing Peter de Rupilius, then Bishop of Winchester, the marshal, and other great personages whom he had called round him, he said emphatically, "If these people land, England is lost. Let us meet them boldly, therefore, for God is with us, and they are excommunicated."

"We are neither sea-soldiers nor pirates," replied his audience, who did not share his ardour, or feared the monk Eustace, "neither are we fishermen. Go thou and die!"

Undiscouraged by this, De Burgh sent for his chaplain, and having hastily

taken the sacrament, he put on his armour, and mustering the soldiers of the garrison of Dover, with an emphatic oath, he enjoined them to defend their post to the last, adding, "Ye shall suffer me to be hanged before ye surrender this castle, for it is the key of England."

Affected even to tears by this exhortation, and still more by the fate that seemed to await him, they pledged themselves to obey his commands. There is one other account of this episode, which though a little different is not the less interesting. It is said that when the French fleet was seen by the people of the Cinque Ports, like white birds at the far horizon, knowing it to be commanded by the dreaded Eustace, they said, "If this tyrant land, he will lay all waste, for the country is unprotected, and the king is far away. Let us, therefore, put our souls into our hands, and meet him while he is at sea, and help will come to us from on High."

"Is there any man among you who is this day ready to die for England?" asked another; and a third said, "Here am I." "Then," said the first who spoke, "take with thee an axe, and when thou seest us engaging the tyrant's ship, climb up the mast and cut down his banner, so that the other vessels may be dispersed for want of a leader."

Sixteen ships belonging to the Cinque Ports, and about twenty smaller vessels, formed the English squadron. With the bravest of his knights, Sir Philip d'Albany (Governor of Jersey), Sir Henry de Tuberville, Sir Richard Stuard, Richard, a natural son of King John, and others, De Burgh, committing the defence of Dover to his second in command, led them on board, and they put to sea; and from the white cliffs that overlooked it they were watched by thousands of anxious eyes.

The enemy's fleet of eighty sail—a terrible disparity in strength and number—was already some miles off Calais when the English ships bore towards them, with all their gay banners flying; their square lug-sails, some brown, some gaudily dyed and painted; their high poops and forecastles having doors pointed like those of chapels, and studded with nails like those of prisons; their hulls built in that quaint form still adhered to by the Dutch; and each bristling from stem to stern with arms and armour. "But all the accounts of this engagement," says Sir Harris Nicholas, "are defective in nautical details, while the few that do occur are very obscurely expressed."

It appears that the wind was southerly, blowing fresh, and the French were going large i. e., with the breeze abaft the beam, steering to round the North Foreland, and not expecting much if any opposition. So the English squadron, instead of directly approaching them, kept their wind as if bound for Calais harbor; then Eustace, the commander, exclaimed, "I know what these wretches think—they will invade Calais like thieves; but that is useless, as it is well defended."

So each bore on, but as soon as the little fleet of old England—it was "old England" then as now—got the weather-gage of the French, they suddenly bore down in the most gallant manner upon their rear; and the moment they came athwart the sterns of the French ships, they threw their grapnels into them, and thus preventing the enemy from escaping, held them fast—an early instance of that wild love of close fighting for which English sailors have ever been distinguished.

The battle began by the crossbow-men and archers, under Sir Philip d'Albany, pouring volleys of bolts and arrows into the enemy's ships fore and aft with deadly effect; and, to increase their dismay, as cannons were still unknown, the English threw sackful of unslacked lime, reduced to fine powder, on board their antagonists, which being blown by the wind into their eyes, completely blinded them. With pike, dagger, and axe, the English now poured on board in a torrent, and cutting away the rigging and halyards, the sails with all their top-hamper fell over the French, to use the expression of an old historian, "like a net upon ensnared small birds," and thus trammelled they could make but a feeble resistance. After an immense slaughter they were completely defeated; for though the French were unquestionably brave, they were less accustomed to naval tactics and to fighting upon the water than their assailants, beneath whose lances, axes, and swords they fell rapidly.

Disdaining to be taken alive, or more probably dreading to fall into the hands of the English, whose custom it was to treat prisoners with great severity, that they might be induced to pay exorbitant sums as ransom, many noble French knights leaped into the sea in their heavy armor, and were never seen again. Matthew Paris records that Eustace the Monk was seized by Rich-

ard, the son of King John, who by one slash of his sword hewed off his head. Of his whole fleet only fifteen vessels escaped; and with the remaining sixty-five in tow, or under prize crews, De Burgh and his Englishmen returned to Dover; and we are told that, "while victoriously ploughing the waves," they devoutly returned thanks to God for their success, an example of simple religious gratitude after battle which has been followed by our tars often in more modern times.

There was no cannon-smoke to obscure the air then, and there were no telescopes to peer through; but the battle was witnessed, under a bright August sun, with exultation by the people and garrison of Dover, and the victors were welcomed by the bishops and clergy in full sacerdotal vestments, bearing banners and crosses in procession, chanting praises to God for the rescue of England. Gold, silver, silken garments, rich armour, and weapons, the spoil of the foe, having been collected, and the prisoners disposed of, Sir Philip d'Albany was dispatched to the boy king and the Regent Pembroke, with tidings of "this glorious naval victory, which secured the independence of England."

One of the most immediate and important results of this battle was that Louis relinquished his claim to the throne of England, and quitted its shores, but not without reluctance, and certain stipulations for the safety of his friends; thus ending a civil war which seemed to be founded on the most incurable hatred and jealousy, and which had threatened England with the most fatal consequences.

To be Continued.

Australasia.

In the course of a public address delivered last week the Premier of Queensland, Sir Samuel Griffith, said that the people of that colony must look forward to a still more rigid regime of public economy. The colony possessed sufficient resources to find work for the whole population provided that the latter recognized that the workers were only entitled to a fair share of the joint product of labor and capital. As a matter of fact, there was a gigantic strike throughout the country, and men would not work at all if they had to work at reduced wages. The attitude of some of the Labor party was very nearly analogous to that of the Nihilists, whose mission was not to amend, but to destroy. As regarded himself personally, he did not in the slightest degree despair of the future of the colony. On the contrary, he believed that she would come through the depression all the better for the temporary suffering she had endured.

The revenue of Victoria for the year just ended amounted to £7,728,000, being a decrease of £614,000 as compared with the previous year. There was a falling-off in the Customs receipts of £136,000, in the land tax of £93,000, in public works of £407,000, including railways £205,000 and in fees of £68,000. The Excise receipts alone showed an increase, of £78,000.

The revenue of South Australia for the past year amounted to £2,740,000, being an increase of £10,000 as compared with the previous year.

The members of the Presbyterian mission to the New Hebrides, consisting of 17 missionaries, have decided to forward a protest to Lord Knutsford against the proposed renewal of the importation of Kanaka labor into Queensland. They affirm that the traffic cannot be carried on with justice to the natives or with honor to the British nation, despite the pledges given by Sir Samuel Griffith to see to its strict regulation.

New Zealand.

Mr. Ballance has delivered his Budget statement for New Zealand. The revenue for the past year shows a total of £4,448,000, which exceeds the Treasurer's estimate by £87,000. On the other hand, the expenditure for the twelve months is £26,000 below the estimates. The returns for last year altogether leave a surplus of £165,000, after paying £100,000 off the floating debt and providing for various miscellaneous disbursements.

For the future, foreign life assurance companies doing business in New Zealand will be required to make a deposit of £25,000 each by way of guarantee for colonial policies, on which they will receive interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum. In the same way foreign fire insurance companies will have to deposit £10,000 a piece. The Treasurer also announced that it was intended to establish two State farms for the relief of the unemployed, on the co-operative system, which has been applied with so much success to the execution of ordinary public works.

Her Majesty's ship Curacoa has visited the Gardner, Danger, and Nassau Islands in the Western Pacific, and has proclaimed a British protectorate over each group.

OFF FOR THE LABRADOR.

Acadian Recorder, Halifax, N. S.

Prof. W. M. Reid, J. D. Scomborger, Lyly Vincent and W. D. Vincent, arrived by the Halifax last night. They are some of the party who go to Labrador in the schooner Evelina in the interests of the World's Fair to secure an Esquimaux village with some fifty inhabitants and all appurtenances thereto belonging. The schooner left Cunningham & Curren's wharf to-day on her mission.

A Recorder reporter was talking to-day to Capt. Wm. McConnell, of Port Hilford, Guysboro, who is in charge of the vessel. An interesting incident was mentioned (and although it sounds like a "puff" of a patent medicine it is worth noting.) "Do you see that man over there," said a friend, "that is Capt. McConnell, who is going after Esquimaux. I have known him for years, and he was that bad with asthma that he had sometimes to be held up on board his vessel. You see him"—(he was pilling wood in a cord measure to take on board)—"he is a well man; and he attributes it to some of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills that he took, two after each meal."

Out of curiosity, the reporter secured an introduction to the captain, and after some talk about the expedition, remarked: "Is that correct, Captain, about your recovery from asthma, and that you attribute it to those pills?"

"Well, I don't know anything else. I recovered after taking them."

"And haven't been troubled since?"

"No. Of course we will see what this winter may bring forth; I haven't said anything about it."

"But last winter?"

"I began taking them in December, and found the change brought about in my condition, which Dr. Parker, of Halifax, said was about as bad as it could be."

It isn't often that a patent medicine gets such a big boom in the incidence of news-gathering, as is furnished in the above; but it is all set down just as it transpired, incidentally.

The whole Labrador party consists of Messrs. Tabor and Vincent, Prof. Reid, of Harvard College; Mr. Lyle Vincent, St. Louis; Dr. Baur, Philadelphia, a distinguished naturalist; Prof. Gillette, New Haven, Conn., and Hon. W. F. Ryder, Quebec. They expect to return with about 50 Esquimaux, with dogs, komatiks, kayacks, and a general collection of curiosities from Esquimaux land. The schooner is a handsome model, 35 tons, and is a fast sailer. John Silver & Co. furnished the supplies.

"German Syrup"

Hemorrhage Five Years

"I have been ill for about five years, have had the best Medical advice, and I took the first dose in some doubt. This resulted in a few hours easy sleep. There was no further hemorrhage till next day, when I had a slight attack which stopped almost immediately. By the third day all trace of blood had disappeared and I had recovered much strength. The fourth day I sat up in bed and ate my dinner, the first solid food for two months. Since that time I have gradually gotten better and am now able to move about the house. My death was daily expected and my recovery has been a great surprise to my friends and the doctor. There can be no doubt about the effect of German Syrup, as I had an attack just previous to its use. The only relief was after the first dose." J. R. LOUGHEAD, Adelaide, Australia.

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