

## PAGES OF BRITISH HISTORY.

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

(Continued from our last.)

CHAPTER VI.  
Poitiers, 1356.

Philip of France was dead, and John I., his son, was on the throne. The second year's campaign in France began with the battle of Poitiers. The adventurous Black Prince had pierced so far into the heart of France, and King John, justly provoked by invasion, collected an army, of fully 60,000 combatants, and made hasty marches to intercept him while occupied before the castle of Remorantins; and the 19th of September saw them engaged among the vineyards of Maupertois near Poitiers, which is the chief city in the department of Vienne.

The army of the prince was now reduced to little more than 14,000 men. It was on the evening of the 17th that the English vanguard fell suddenly on the French rear, and then the prince became aware for the first time that he was outnumbered by 46,000 men, that they swarmed over all the neighbourhood, and that his retreat was cut off.

He instantly chose an admirable position, on elevated ground, having his flanks protected by vineyard walls and trenches, and to which there was but one approach, a long deep lane between hedgerows, so narrow that only four horsemen could ride through it abreast. In rear of these hedges he placed strong bodies of archers, to gall the enemy as they advanced. Over-night he placed in ambush 300 men-at-arms and 300 archers, at a post from whence they were to make a sudden and unforeseen attack upon the French flank. These men were under Piers, the Captain de Buche, K. G. The English van was commanded by the Earl of Warwick; the rear, or reserve, by the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk; the main body by the Black Prince himself; while the Lords Sir John de Chandos, K. G., and Audley, K. G., with other brave and experienced soldiers, were at the head of different corps of the army.

Before a blow was struck or an arrow shot, the Papal Legate, the Cardinal Tallyrand de Perigord, anxious to prevent the effusion of human blood, offered his services as mediator. He induced the Prince of Wales to promise that he would repair the damages done by his troops; and for seven years he would not bear arms against King John; but the latter scornfully rejected these offers and confident in the overwhelming strength of his forces, he would be satisfied with nothing but the surrender of the Prince and his whole army at discretion, and, according to Froissard, having four of the leading English nobles "at his mercy."

"I will rather die sword in hand," replied the gallant Prince, "than be guilty of deeds so contrary to honor and the glory of the English name!" Then says Walsingham, he made a short speech to his troops, telling them that victory depended not upon numbers, but on bravery; that, for his own part, he was resolved to conquer or die and will not expose his country to the disgrace of paying his ransom."

This was on Sunday, the 18th, and the day was spent in making fresh trenches, and barricades of waggon stones, and earth. With earliest dawn on the morning of the 19th, the English trumpets were heard pealing all over Maupertois, calling every man to his feet; and the archers began to bend their bows. Once more the Cardinal failed to move the proud resolution of the King of France.

"Then said the Prince, 'let him come on; and God defend the right!' And, doubtless, in that hour of danger, every English heart was animated by the recent memories of Cressy, where they fought with an equal disparity of numbers, and resolved to emulate the courage of those who were the victors there.

John marshalled his host in three divisions, each of 20,000 men. The first was commanded by the Duke of Orleans; with him were a body of German cavalry, and a great band of Scots, who, says Lord Hailes, enjoying a momentary tranquillity at home, crowded to the French standard under Lord William Douglas, who was received with distinguished honors. The second division was led by the Dauphin; the third by the king himself, who had by his side Philip, his fourth and favorite son, then only fourteen years of age. So confident were the French of this victory that on this day all the knights wore their richest armour, their most valuable ornaments and orders.

The battle began by a select body of French gendarmes, led by two marshals; these rode furiously along the lane, but ere they could form in any order to charge or break the front of the English infantry, the archers opened their deadly volleys from behind the rows. In a few minutes one marshal was shot down, the other was taken prisoner, and the lane became choked with dead or wounded men and horses—the dying rolling over each other in heaps—while, as De Mezeray has it, "The Englishman's bearded arrows made the horses mad," and in masses they recoiled in terror on the advancing Germans. This circumstance so alarmed the second column, under the dauphin, that it began to waver in its advance, and many men were seen quietly retreating to the rear. This did not escape the eagle eye of the Black Prince, who at that most critical

moment, brought into action the 600 horse and archers whom he had placed in ambush under Captain de Buche. The archers shot their volleys, and the horses fell on with the sword and mace, throwing into confusion by their unexpected attack, the whole left flank of the Dauphin's line. A sudden alarm seized the Lords Landas, Bodenai, and St. Venant, to whose care that young prince and two of his brothers had been committed. Anxious for the safety of their charge, they carried them out of the field, most unwisely with a formidable escort of 800 lances, which set an example of flight that was followed almost instantly by the whole division for since Cressy the French had cherished a wholesome dread of "the green jackets and white bows" of the archers. The leading division, under the Duke of Orleans, became seized with a similar panic; and imagining at this early stage of the battle that all was lost, thought no longer of fighting, but began a retreat that speedily became a flight; while the exulting English men-at-arms began to shout, "St. George for Guienne!"

Then said Sir John de Chandos, one of the most able and brilliant warriors of the age, and who had never quitted young Edward's side, "Sir, ride forward; the day is yours! Let us assail the King of France, for with him lies all the strength of the enterprise. Well I know his valor will not permit him to flee; therefore, please God and St. George, he shall remain with us!" Seeing, also, that the auspicious moment had arrived, the prince called to the standard-bearers, saying, advance, banners, in the name of God and St. George!"

Led by the prince and Chandos, the English men-at-arms poured at full speed through the corpse encumbered lane, and forming upon a piece of open moor, charged the French with terrible force. Their shock was alike fierce and irresistible. The Constable of France, with many squadrons of horse, vainly endeavored to hold his ground, but was slain with the chief of his knights; the German horse, under the Counts of Sallbruche, Nydo, and Nostro, were next cut to pieces; and a terrible carnage was made of the Scots. Lord Douglas was wounded and escaped; but his half-brother, Sir Archibald, was taken prisoner, together with Sir William Baird, of Evandale. The division under the king, inspired by his fine example fought bravely. He and his principal knights were now on foot, while their assailants were mounted; yet despite this disadvantage, they made a gallant resistance. Battle-axe in hand, King John fought foremost in the fray; the boy, Philip, by his side, calling to him ever anon, "Father, guard yourself on the right—guard yourself on the left!"

Around them were the great Lords of what was then a noble nation and faithful to its kings, all resolute to die in their defence, though there was death in front and flight in the rear. The prince and Sir John Chandos kept their troops steadily in hand, and concentrated all their efforts on this confused multitude who fought around the king, and who, under axe, arrow, and lance, were falling fast in blood and death. A furious throng of mingled English and Gascons now pressed close upon him with cries of "Surrender!" He was wounded and beaten to the ground; but again he rose, axe in hand, and continued the unequal combat with furious courage. English gentlemen prayed (among others, Sir John Treffry, a knight of Cornwall) that he would yield; but, being unwilling to do so to any one of inferior rank, the hopeless monarch repeatedly asked, "Where is my cousin? Where is the Prince of Wales?"

Then said a young knight of St. Omer, in French, "Sir, Surrender; he is not here, but I shall lead you to him." Struck by the pure accent, the king asked, "Who are you?"

"Sir," replied the other "I am Dennis of Morbeque, a knight of Artois; but I serve the King of England, because I have lost my all in France." "Do you surrender?" said John, and presented him with his right-hand gauntlet. As he led him and his son away, the English claimed him with violence from Morbeque; then the Gascons demanded the honour of guarding him and some, more brutal than the rest, proposed that, rather than yield him to others, he should be put to death; but, luckily for the honor of England, the appearance of Thomas Beauchamp, the Earl of Warwick, K. G., and of Sir John de Felham, ancestor of the Earls of Chichester, overawed all parties; and, approaching the royal captive with every demonstration of respect, they conducted him to the Prince of Wales.

The English army at Poitiers behaved with more consideration and humanity than was usual with victors in those days, otherwise the slaughter would have been terrible. As it was, the French lost on the field about 8,000 men, of whom 800 were men of family. Among these were Duc de Bourbon, the Duc d'Athens, Constable of France, the Marshal de Nesle, and others; while the king, Prince Philip, thirteen Counts, one archbishop, seventy barons and baronets, 2,000 splendid-accoutred men-at-arms, and a vast multitude of inferior soldiers, remained prisoners in the hands of the Black Prince. Burke records, as a curious circumstance, that the representatives of four esquires of the Lord Audley at Poitiers were, by a coincidence, the four aids-de-camp of Sir Rowland Hill in the Peninsular War, four hundred and fifty later. The Black Prince ordered the body of Robert de Duras, nephew of the Cardinal de Perigord, to be borne away on his shield, according to the etiquette for a knight slain in battle.

The King of France was brought to London a prisoner as the King of Scots was after the bloody victory over the Scotch army by the English on Oct. 17th, 1346.

(To be continued.)

## NEW ZEALAND'S GOVERNORS.

SIR GEORGE GREY'S MOTION DEFEATED 28 TO 27.

The 8-Hour Day in New Zealand—Queensland's Finances—Protection in Victoria—Hindoo and Sea Voyages.

## New Zealand.

A motion brought forward in the New Zealand House of Representatives by Sir George Grey in favor of the future Governors of the colony being appointed by popular election, in place of the present system of Crown nomination, was rejected by 28 votes to 27.

The Legislative Council of New Zealand have rejected the measure for legalizing an eight hours day, which was sent up to them from the House of Representatives. A good deal of indignation is expressed in labor circles. The bill provided that wherever it is decided that work shall be continued for more than eight hours a day a special rate of payment must be fixed for all overtime, either by the rules of the workmen's trade or by mutual agreement. This clause, however, contained the important addition "that not more than eight hours shall be worked when other competent operatives are procurable." The bill was not to apply to seamen employed on a ship under way or on a voyage, nor to domestic servants. For the latter, however, a weekly half-holiday was provided.

## Queensland.

The Treasurer of Queensland, Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, in his Budget speech in the Legislative Assembly, stated that the expenditure had reached £3,625,000, whereas the revenue had only amounted to £3,473,000. For the coming financial year he estimated a revenue of £3,518,000, and expenditure of £3,625,000, thus leaving a deficit of £107,000. The Government proposed to reduce the salaries of members of Parliament to £150 per annum, to double the succession duties, to tax the receipts from the betting machine known as the totalizer, and to increase the customs duties. The Treasurer said he expected to receive an additional £134,000 Custom duties, with £26,000 from other sources of increase. Increased duties would be placed on beef, boots, hops, cheese, dried fruit, pickles, flour, wheat, tobacco, and malt.

The Governor has accepted the amendment recently carried on the motion of Mr. Barlow in favor of subdividing the colony into two instead of three provinces, as proposed by the Government Bill.

## Victoria.

In the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, Mr. Wrixon moved the rejection of the Budget proposals of the Shiel's Ministry. Mr. Shiel had promised a resort to direct taxation, but Sir Graham Berry had completely revolutionized the original policy of the Government. Mr. Shiel utterly denied that he had proved false to his programme. The present movement of the Opposition was the first overt attempt of late years to set aside protection, which both parties had tacitly agreed not to impugn. Mr. Wrixon's motion was defeated by 53 votes against 32.

## India.

For some time past the question has been much discussed among the more enlightened section of orthodox Hindoos whether their scriptures really sanction the common belief that a sea voyage involves the penalty of loss of caste. The subject was fully discussed at a large representative meeting held lately under the presidency of one of the most respected leaders of the orthodox party, the Maharajah Sir Narendra Krishna. The opinion was all but unanimously expressed that some practical steps should be taken. Pandit Mohesh Chunder Nyaratna, a great authority on Vedic literature, stated that he had thoroughly studied the question and had come to the conclusion that nothing in the Shastras was opposed to sea voyages or the residence in foreign countries provided that Hindoo usages were observed. This meeting marks a distinctly forward step on the part of the Hindoo community.

## The Straits Settlements.

In consequence of a notification from the Governor, requiring him to take up his residence at Pekan, the Sultan of Pahang, accompanied by the members of his household and suite, has arrived at that place, which is the principal village of his dominions. It lies about seven miles from the mouth of the river of that name. Tunkuali, the Sultan's favorite son, has arrived at Singapore.

The trial of the men charged with being concerned in the murder last spring of George Harris and L. C. C. Stewart, employees of the Pahang Exploration and Development Company, near Raub, has terminated. Five were found guilty of murder, six of aiding and abetting, and three of waging war against the Sultan.

The rebels in Pahang have been put to flight, and Lieutenant-Colonel Walker is pursuing them with a force of Perak Sikhs.

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