

HISTORY
OF
SCOTLAND.

CHAP. I.

DAVID THE SECOND.

CONTEMPORARY PRINCES.

Kings of England.
Edward III.

Kings of France.
Philip of Valois.

Popes.
John XXII.
Benedict XII.
Clement VI.
Innocent VI.
Urban V.

ON the death of Bruce, Scotland, delivered from a long war by a treaty equally honourable and advantageous, was yet placed in very perilous circumstances. The character of Edward the Third had already begun to develop those great qualities, amongst which a talent for war, and a thirst for conquest and military renown, were the most conspicuous. Compelled to observe the letter of the recent treaty of Northampton, this Prince soon showed that he meant to infringe its spirit and disregard its most solemn sanctions, by every method of private intrigue and concealed hostility. With a greater regard for the decencies of public opinion than his grandfather Edward the First, he was yet as thoroughly bent upon

the aggrandisement of his dominions. Unwilling to bring upon himself the odium and unpopularity of an open breach of so recent and sacred a treaty, cemented as it was by a marriage between King David and his sister, Edward's policy was to induce the Scots themselves to infringe the peace by the private encouragement which he gave to their enemies, and then to come down with an overwhelming force and reduce the kingdom.¹ Against these designs there were many circumstances which prevented Scotland from making an effectual resistance. Randolph was indeed nominated Regent, and the talents of this great man in the arts of civil government, appear to have been as conspicuous as in war; but he was now aged, and could not reasonably look to many more years of life. Douglas, whose genius for military affairs was, perhaps, higher than even that of Randolph, was soon to leave the kingdom on his expedition to the Holy Land; and the powerful faction of the Comyns still viewed the line of Bruce with the most persevering hatred, and showed themselves ready to rise upon the first opportunity against the government of his son. Nor was this opportunity long of presenting itself. Edward, the eldest son of John Baliol, had chiefly resided in France since his father's death, but he now came to England, and with the private connivance

¹ It is unfortunate that the *Rotuli Scotiae*, from which the most authentic and valuable materials for Scottish history are to be drawn, are wanting from the first year to the seventh of the reign of Edward the Third. *Rotuli Scot.* p. 224. From 22d January, 1327-8, to 1st April, 1333.

of Edward the Third, began to organize a scheme for the recovery of the Scottish crown. Dornagilla, the mother of Baliol, was sister-in-law to the Red Comyn, whom King Robert Bruce had stabbed at Dumfries, so that the rights of the new claimant were immediately supported by the whole weight of the Comyns; and, no longer awed by the commanding mind of Bruce, disputes and heart-burnings arose amongst the Scottish nobility, at a time when a concentration of the whole strength of the nation was imperiously required.

To return to the course of our narrative, Randolph, upon the death of Bruce, immediately assumed the office of Regent, and discharged its duties with a wise and judicious severity. He was indefatigable in his application to business, and his justice was as bold and speedy as it was impartial. An instance of it has been preserved by Bower.¹ A priest was slain, and the murderer, having gone to Rome and obtained the Papal absolution, had the audacity to return openly to Scotland. He was seized and brought before Randolph, who was then holding his court at Inverness, during a progress through the country. He pleaded the absolution, but at the command of the Regent was tried, condemned, and instantly executed. The Pope, it was remarked by Randolph, might absolve him from the spiritual consequences of the sin, but it was nevertheless right that he should suffer for the crime committed against the law. Aware of

¹ Forduni Scotichron. a Goodal C. 18, book xiii. vol. ii. p. 297.

the important influence of the local magistrates and judges, he made every sheriff responsible for the thefts committed within his jurisdiction ; so that, according to the simple illustrations of the chronicles of those times, the traveller might tie his horse to the inn-door, and the ploughman leave his ploughshare and harness in the field, without fear, for if carried away, the price of the stolen article came out of the pocket of the sheriff. Anxious for the continuance of peace, Randolph sent Roger of Fawside on an amicable mission to the English king, whilst he took care at the same time to strengthen the borders, to repair the fortifications of the important town of Berwick, and commanded John Crab, the experienced Flemish mercenary, whom he retained in the pay of Scotland, to remain in that city, and keep a watch upon the motions of England.¹

In the meantime, as soon as the season of the year permitted, Douglas, having the heart of his beloved master under his charge, set sail from Scotland, accompanied by a splendid retinue, and anchored off Sluys in Flanders, at this time the great seaport of the Netherlands.² His object was to find out companions with whom he might travel to Jerusalem ; but he declined landing, and for twelve days received all visitors on board his ship with a state almost kingly. He had with him seven noble Scottish knights, and was served at table by twenty-eight squires of the

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 297. Winton, vol. ii. p. 139. Chamberlain's Accounts, pp. 171, 227, 228. See Appendix, A.

² Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iv. p. 400.

first families in the country. "He kept court," says Froissart, "in a royal manner, with the sound of trumpets and cymbals; all the vessels for his table were of gold and silver, and whatever persons of good estate went to pay their respects to him, were entertained with the richest kinds of wine and spiced bread.¹ At Shuys he heard that Alonzo, the King of Leon and Castile, was carrying on war with Osmyn, the Moorish governor of Granada. The religious mission which he had embraced, and the vows he had taken before leaving Scotland, induced Douglas to consider Alonzo's cause as a holy warfare; and before proceeding to Jerusalem, he first determined to visit Spain, and to signalize his prowess against the Saracens. But his first field against the infidels proved fatal to him, who, in the long English war, had seen seventy battles.² The circumstances of his death were striking and characteristic. In an action near Theba, on the borders of Andalusia, the Moorish cavalry were defeated; and after their camp had been taken, Douglas with his companions engaged too eagerly in the pursuit, and being separated from the main body of the Spanish army, a strong division of the Moors rallied and surrounded them. The Scottish knight endeavoured to cut his way through the infidels, and in all probability would have succeeded, had he not again turned to rescue Sir William Saint Clair of Roslin, whom he saw in extreme jeopardy. In at-

¹ Froissart, p. 117, vol. i. Ed. de Buchon.

² Fordun a Goodal, p. 302. vol. ii.

