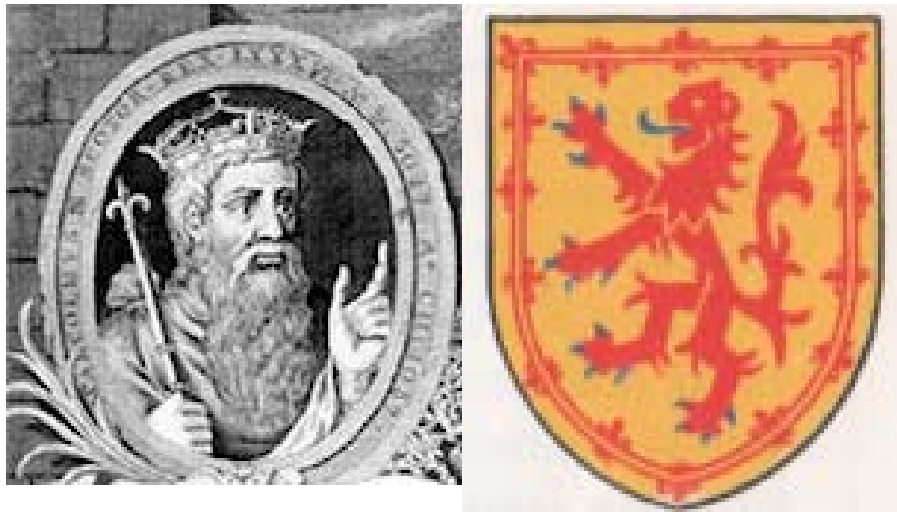


MALCOLM III



King of Scots

Surnamed Canmore (Cean-mohr), or Great-head, ascended the throne Malcolm Canmore, in 1057. He was a prince of great energy and valour, and his reign forms an important era in the early history of Scotland. His dominions included not only the ancient possessions of the Scots and Picts, but the kingdom of Strathclyd, the province of Cumbria, consisting of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and the district of Lothian, forming the south-eastern portion of modern Scotland. The Cumbrians and the people of Strathclyd were of British race, while the inhabitants of Lothian appear to have been chiefly of Saxon and Danish extraction. The south-western angle of Scotland, on the other hand, known by the name of Galloway, was inhabited by a mixed race partly of Scottish and partly of Pictish descent, and their numbers had been increased in the course of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, by various bodies of colonists from Ireland. "They appear," says Mr Allen, "at all times to have owed subjection to the Scottish kings, but they long retained the barbarous habits and the ferocious manners, which the ravages of the Northmen had impressed on the country they had quitted. In the twelfth century they are called Picts or Galwegians, and as late as the fourteenth century, they are distinguished by the appellation of the Wild Scots of Galloway."

The accession of Malcolm Canmore was followed by events which ultimately led to most important changes in the manners and customs of his subjects. He had passed about fifteen years to the court of Edward the Confessor before he became king, and the habits and connexions which he had formed here, induced him to maintain a

more friendly intercourse with England than had been customary with his predecessors; so that, with the exception of the shortly and hasty incursion which he made into Northumberland in 1061, nothing occurred during the reign of the Confessor, to interrupt the harmony between the sister kingdoms. He had contracted a most intimate friendship with Tostig, brother of Harold, and earl or governor of Northumberland, Simeon of Durham says they were so much attached to each other, that they were popularly termed “the sworn brothers.” On the accession of Harold to the English throne, Tostig took up arms against him; but having been repulsed he took refuge with Malcolm, and remained in Scotland during the whole summer. But the Scottish king took no part in the invasion of England made by Tostig and his ally, Hardrada, King of Norway, in the close of the same year, and in which they both lost their lives at the battle of Stamford Bridge near York 25th September 1066.

The death of Harold, at Hastings, a few weeks later, and the conquest of England by the Normans, caused a considerable number of the friends of the Saxon dynasty to seek refuge in Scotland from the oppressions of the victorious Normans. The most distinguished of these was the unfortunate Edgar Atheling, the heir of the Saxon line, who, along with his mother, Agatha, and his two sisters, Margaret and Christian, fled to Scotland in the beginning of 1068, accompanied by Maerleswegen and Gospatric, two powerful Northumbrian chiefs, who were disgusted at the Norman tyranny.

Soon after the arrival of these illustrious fugitives in Scotland – probably about 1070 – Malcolm espoused Margaret, the elder of the two princesses, at Dunfermline. She was beautiful, accomplished and pious; and as Edgar was weak, almost to imbecility, she might be looked upon as inheriting the claims of the Saxon royal line.



The marriage of the Scottish monarch was soon followed by his invasion of England, in conjunction with the Danes and the Northumbrian barons, who were hostile to William Conqueror.

The Danes, however, after storming York, and putting the Norman garrison to the sword, were repulsed, and returned to their ships; and the discontented Northumbrians were gained over by William before Malcolm took the field. Entering England with a numerous army, the Scottish king routed the English, who opposed him at Hunderskeldc, and mercilessly ravaged Durham, and the northern and western parts of Yorkshire. Gospatric, who had made his peace with William, in the meantime laid waste the district of Cumberland, and Malcolm, exasperated by this retaliation on his own frontiers, continued his ravages with increased severity. Even the churches were destroyed and burnt, while the miserable inhabitants, who had fled to them for refuge, were consumed in the flames. Malcolm returned home, leading captive, says an English historian, such a multitude of young men and maidens, “that for many years they were to be found in every Scottish village, nay, even in every Scottish hovel.”



King of England

William the Conqueror

William was incensed to the highest degree by the repeated insurrections of the Northumbrians, and both to punish their recent revolt, and to oppose an obstacle, in the desolation of the country, to the future invasions of the Danes, he laid utterly waste fertile district between the Humber and the Tees. “At this time,” says William of Malmesbury, “there were destroyed such splendid towns, such lofty castles, such beautiful pastures, that had a stranger viewed the scene, he might have been moved to compassion, and had one inhabitant been left alive, he would not have recollected the country.” The

inhabitants of this once populous and fertile district seem to have been almost wholly exterminated. Many who escaped the sword, died of famine; many sold themselves into slavery, to escape starvation, and many thousands of the lower orders, together with a considerable number of both Anglo-Saxons and Normans of condition, who had incurred the displeasure of the Conqueror, fled for refuge into Scotland, and found a cordial reception at the court of Malcolm, who, sensible of the value of such auxiliaries, conferred honours and estates upon them with no sparing hand.

William, having secured peace at home, prepared to chastise Malcolm for his inroads into England, and, in 1072, he invaded the Scottish territories both by sea and land. He overran and wasted the country as far as the Tay; but as the inhabitants according to the policy which they seem to have followed from earliest times, destroyed or removed everything of value as the enemy advanced, William as the Saxon Chronicle expressed it, “nothing found of that which to him the better was.” In the end, Malcolm met him at Abernethy,*(The place where Malcolm met the Conqueror is called “Abernithi” by Ingulphus, and “Abernithici” by Florence of Worcester. Lord Hailes, Pinkerton, and other writers, have contended tht it was probably some place on the river Nith. But in a speech ascribed by Ealred, Abbot of Rievall, a contemporary of David, Malcolm’s son, to Walter Espec, before the battle of the Standard, it is said that William penetrated through Lodonia, Calatria, and Scotia, as far as Abernith (evidently Abernethy,) where the warlike Malcolm surrendered himself to William as his vassal. Ridpath’s Border History p. 63 and note.) when a peace was concluded between the two kings, on the conditions that Malcolm should give hostages and pay homage to William. The question has been raised, and keenly disputed, - For what was this homage performed? The advocates of the English supremacy contended that it was for the Scottish crown. No satisfactory evidence, however, can be produced in support of this assertion. It is true that certain of the Anglo-Saxon kings assumed the title of Monarch, or emperor, of all Britain. But this vain-glorious assumption of a vaunting title proves nothing; and it would be easy to produce a parallel case of similar pretensions having been put forth without any foundation. The notion that the Scottish kings were the acknowledged vassals of the Anglo-Saxon princes of England, is directly opposed to the whole course of the history of the two countries. Scotland was never conquered by any of these monarchs; nor is there any evidence that they ever made an attempt to wrest it from its ancient possessors. There is a little trustworthy evidence that any acknowledgment of the dependence of the kingdom of Scotland

upon the English was ever made by any of Malcolm's predecessors. The only homage which was paid by the Scottish kings, prior to the Norman Conquest, was not for the kingdom of Scotland, but for the territories which they held in England, such as Cumbria and Lothian, and which were ceded to them by the English kings on the express condition. For these possessions they of course did homage to the English crown, exactly in the same manner as the Norman kings of England did homage to the French crown, for the possessions which they held in France.

When Malcolm espoused the cause of Edgar Atheling, he necessarily at the same time denied the right of William to the English throne, and refused to acknowledge him as his liege lord. But when William took measures to assert his authority, and invaded Scotland, Malcolm submitted to his claims, and acknowledged his title to the same homage as had been paid to his Saxon predecessors. To employ the words of Lord Hailes, one of the ablest inquirers into this subject, "According to the general and most probable opinion, this homage was done by Malcolm for the lands which he held in England."

William, on his return, from this expedition, deprived Gospatric of his earldom of Northumberland, under the pretext that he had secretly instigated the murder of Comyn, the former governor. Gospatric a second time took refuge in Scotland, where, notwithstanding of his former defection, he was again cordially welcomed by Malcolm, who bestowed upon him extensive estates on the eastern marches, together with the castles of Dunbar and Cockburnspath. The possessor of these strong fortresses was popularly said to have the keys of Scotland at his girdle. "And the circumstance is worthy of remembrance," says Mr Tytler, "not only as marking the origin of a potent family, destined to act a leading part in the future history of the country, but as indicating the policy of Malcolm, who conscious of the inferiority of his own Celtic race, manifested a wise anxiety to prevail on strangers, whether Normans, Danes or Saxons, to settle in his dominions."

After this agreement with William, Malcolm seems to have remained quiet for some years; but, in 1079, hostilities were renewed with England, on what grounds historians have omitted to state. Availing himself of the favourable opportunity afforded by the absence of the English king, who was on the Continent, carrying on a war with his son Robert, Malcolm again invaded Northumberland, and wasted the country as far as the river Tyne, returning home laden with plunder. The following year, as Robert was reconciled to his father, he was intrusted with the command of an army against Scotland. But the expedition proved unsuccessful, and Robert soon returned without effecting anything worthy of notice. It was at this

period that the fortress of Newcastle on the Tyne was erected as a protection against the inroads of the Scots. It necessarily and professedly tended to render insecure the authority of the Scottish king over the district of Northumbria.

After the death of William the Conqueror (A.D. 1087) and the accession of his son, William Rufus, various causes of dispute took place betwixt England and Scotland.



King of England

William Rufus

This prince appears to have withheld from Malcolm part of the English possessions to which he claimed a right; and probably with the view of vindicating his claim, the Scottish king invaded England in May, 1091, and penetrated as far as Chester-le-Street, between Newcastle and Durham, where receiving intelligence that Rufus was advancing to meet him with a superior force, he prudently retreated without risking a battle. In the autumn of the same year, William made preparations to invade Scotland, both by sea and land. His fleet was destroyed by a tempest, and many of his cavalry perished by want and cold; but in spite of these disasters he advanced with his army to the shores of the Forth. Meanwhile the Scots, in accordance with their usual policy, had driven away their cattle, and laid waste the country; so that their enemies were reduced to great extremities by the want of provisions. Malcolm crossed the Forth with his forces, and advanced into Lothian to meet the invaders. The hostile armies met, and were ready to engage; but through the mediation of Robert, the brother of Rufus, and Edgar Atheling, who was at that time with Malcolm, a peace was concluded between the two monarchs. "King Malcolm," says the Saxon chronicler, "came to our king, and became his man, promising all such obedience as he formerly rendered to his father,

and that he confirmed with an oath. And the king William promised him in land and in all tings whatever he formerly had under his father.” William on his part agreed to restore twelve manors which Malcolm had held under the Conqueror, and to make an annual payment to him of twelve marks of gold. At the same time Edgar Atheling was reconciled to William, and permitted to return to England.

The peace thus made was not of long continuance. In the following year (1092) William erected a castle at Carlise, a step which Malcolm appears to have resented, as an encroachment on the freedom of the territories which he held in Cumberland. A personal interview between the kings was proposed as the best mode of settling their differences. Malcolm accordingly repaired to Gloucester (24th August, 1093); but on his arrival, William demanded that he should do homage there, in the presence of the English barons. With this demand the Scottish monarch refused to comply, but offered to perform his homage according to the ancient usage, on the frontiers, and in the presence of the chief men of both kingdoms. This proposal was contumeliously rejected by William and Malcolm returning home in great displeasure, assembled an army, and burst into Northumberland, which he wasted with fire and sword. But while he was besieging Alnwick Castle, he was suddenly attacked and slain by Robert de Mowbray, a Northumbrian earl. His eldest son, Edward, shared his fate. The manner of Malcolm’s death has been variously related. According to Fordun, the castle of Alnwick was sore pressed, and the garrison despaired of relief, when one of the besieged undertook either to deliver them or to perish in the attempts. Issuing, therefore, from the castle, and carrying the keys of it on the point of his spear, he advanced to the Scottish camp, where he inquired for the king, in order that he might deliver the keys into his hand. Malcolm informed of his approach, came hastily out of his tent, without his armour, when the traitor pierced him with his spear, and in the confusion succeeded in making his escape. In the odd chronicle of Alnwick Abbey, the soldier who slew King Malcolm is called Hammond, and it is stated that he escaped through the river Aln, at a place which was long after called Hammond’s Ford. Fordun relates that the English, availing themselves of the confusion caused by the death of the king, made a fierce attack upon the Scots, and put them to the rout, and that Prince Edward was severely wounded in the encounter, and died three days after.

The death of Malcolm was followed, in a few days, by that of his excellent queen, who had exercised a great and most beneficial influence over the fierce and impetuous character of her husband.



Arms of Malcolm III and Queen and Saint Margaret

Malcolm had a family of six sons and two daughters: Edward, who died of his wounds at Alnwick a few days after his father; Etheldred, who entered the church; Edmund; Edgar; Alexander; David; Maud, the wife of Henry I, king of England; and Mary, the wife of Eustace, Count of Boulogne. They all, as it has been remarked, received English names, apparently after their mother's relations. All the children of Malcolm were under age at the time of their father's death. [The Pictorial History of Scotland Chap. IV p.38-42 & 44]

