

THE BATTLE OF LEWES.¹

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Hæc Angli de prælio legite Lewensi
Cujus patrociniò vivitis defensi.
Quia si victoria jam victis cessisset
Anglorum memoria victa viluisset.

—*Political Song (Camden Society).*

Our interest in all the details of the great battle which was fought six hundred and twenty years ago upon the hills above this town will be much deepened if we bear in mind the vast importance of the principles which hung upon the issue of that memorable day. The battle was only one event, although a most critical one, in a long struggle which lasted through the whole reign of Henry III.—the struggle of the English people to maintain their rights, their freedom, and their honour, against the exactions of the Papacy, the greed and arrogance of foreign adventurers, and the follies of a weak, perfidious, and wilful king who was not consistent in anything except in mismanaging the affairs of his kingdom.

During the minority, indeed, of the King, which lasted from 1216 to 1227, the patriotic party in the State kept the upper hand. William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, who was Regent till his death in 1219, re-adjusted the machinery of government which had fallen to pieces during the confusions of John's misrule: Hubert de Burgh, the Justiciar, and Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, strove to place the whole administrative system which William Marshall had repaired in the hands of Englishmen. These able and upright men were more than a match for Peter des Roches, the Poictevin Bishop of Winchester, who was the head of the foreign party. Magna Carta (though with some omissions) and the other Charters were confirmed; the royal castles were one by one wrested from the aliens to whom they had been entrusted by John, and Langton obtained a promise from Rome that during his lifetime no new Legate should be appointed. In January, 1227, in a council held at Oxford, Henry being nearly twenty years of age, announced his intention of governing for himself, and under his mismanagement for thirty years the pile of national wrongs, national discontent, national distress was steadily heaped up. The charters sealed during his minority were declared to be cancelled, and their re-confirmation had to be bought. Stephen Langton died in 1228: Hubert de Burgh was dismissed in 1232: Peter des Roches, who had been absent on a four years' crusade, returned: a new troop of foreigners was invited and put in possession of the royal castles: the great officers of State were

¹ Read on the Castle Hill, at Lewes, at July 31st, 1883.
the annual meeting of the Institute,

appointed by the King without consulting the great council of the nation. As we are in the South Saxon diocese it is fitting to remind you that Ralph Neville, Bishop of Chichester, who had been made Chancellor in 1226, was ordered by the King to surrender the Great Seal, but he bravely refused to give it up except at the bidding of the national assembly by which he had been appointed. Henry wrested the Seal from him in 1238, but he retained the income and title of Chancellor till his death in 1244. The Justiciar Stephen de Segrave, the Treasurer Peter de Rivaulx, and his agent Robert Passilew, were tools of Peter des Roches. The King tried to force Robert Passilew into the See of Chichester on the death of Ralph Neville. The Chapter yielded: but Robert Grosseteste, the great and good Bishop of Lincoln, who had examined Passilew, pronounced him to be incompetent and unfit, and Richard of Wych, afterwards canonized, was appointed in his stead, to the great annoyance of the King, who for a long time withheld the temporalities of the See.

The successors of Archbishop Stephen Langton, Richard Grant, and the saintly Edmund of Abingdon, were able for a time to stem the foreign influence, and Peter des Roches was dismissed from power, but after the marriage of the King with Eleanor of Provence in 1236, the old evils recurred in greater force; fresh swarms of foreigners arrived, the kinsfolk partly of the Queen, partly of the King's mother, who had married the Count de la Marche. Her daughter Alicia, the King's half sister, was married to the Earl of Warren, to whom this castle in which we are now assembled belonged, and the custody of the castles of Pevensey and Hastings were bestowed on Peter of Savoy, an uncle of the Queen, and afterwards on the King's half brother, William of Valence. Thus nearly one half of Sussex was in the hands of those who were attached to the King's side, which no doubt was one chief reason why he drew his forces into these parts to fight the most decisive battle of the war with his subjects.

Archbishop Edmund, who had retired to France, where he died broken-hearted at Soissy in 1240, was succeeded by an uncle of the Queen, Boniface of Savoy, a man of violent temper and little learning. The Papal exactions now became more and more monstrous: First a share was demanded in the property of every Cathedral Church and every Monastic House, then a tenth of all moveables, then all preferment of natives to ecclesiastical benefices was forbidden until 300 Italians had been provided for. Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, was the courageous exponent of these abuses, and in a great measure the guiding mind of the national resistance to mis-government.

The king's mismanagement of domestic and foreign affairs continually plunged him deeper into debt; he was constantly asking for money which the great Council refused, unless the Charters were re-affirmed. Henry repeatedly swore to observe them and repeatedly broke his oath. The Pope and the King were, it was said, to the people as the upper and the nether millstone, and it was difficult to determine which was the harder of the two.

In 1254, Henry accepted the offer of the Crown of Sicily from the Pope for his second son Edmund, and bought the Papal support by pledging the credit of the kingdom in the sum of 140,000 marks in addition to which the Pope demanded the tenth of ecclesiastical revenues

and the income of all vacant benefices for five years. From this date the grievances of all kinds, constitutional, political, religious, and of all classes, the commonalty, the Barons, and the clergy, were blended into one mass. The time for combined resistance had come. Only a leader was wanted. There had been a time when the King's brother Richard seemed destined for that office, but a foreign crown and a foreign wife stole away his heart from the national cause. Richard, king of the Romans, and husband of Sanchia of Provence, sister of the Queen, could not play the patriotic part which he might have played as Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and brother-in-law of the good Earl Marshall. And so it came to pass that the champion of the patriots was found in one who, though an alien by birth, was an Englishman by the inheritance of an English Earldom:—Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, a skilful soldier, an astute politician, an accomplished scholar, a loyal Churchman, but above all, an upright man, whom neither foreign birth, nor connexion with the King, whose sister he had married, could turn away from the cause of truth, of justice and of freedom. For these great principles he fought at Lewes and died at Evesham.

Salve Symon Montis fortis,
Totius flos militiæ,
Duras pœnas passus mortis,
Protector gentis Angliæ.

[Miracula Simonis de Monteforti.]

The first definite movement of resistance to the King, under the leadership of Simon, began in the Parliament of 1248 at Oxford. The King was reduced to beggary, and put himself into the hands of the Barons. A provisional government was formed. A committee of 24, chosen half by the royal council, half by the Barons, was appointed to reform grievances. A permanent council of 15 was appointed to advise the King and to control the action of the great dignitaries—the Chancellor, Justiciar, and Treasurer—whose offices had been in abeyance, but were now revived. The council of 15 were to hold three annual Parliaments, in which they were to meet another body of 12 chosen by the Barons, while a second committee of 24 chosen by the whole Parliament was to deal with the financial difficulties. Such were the celebrated "Provisions of Oxford." Both sides swore to obey them. The King, however, began immediately to intrigue for the overthrow of the government, and applied to Rome for a dispensation from his oath. Edward, his eldest son (afterwards Edward I.) tried to keep him faithful to his engagement, but in February 1260, he formally repudiated his oath, and in June he published a papal absolution from it. Nevertheless, in the course of the two following years he repeatedly swore to observe the Provisions of Oxford, and repeatedly broke his pledge. A desultory kind of war was carried on during the greater part of the year 1262. Edward once nearly succeeded in overpowering the forces of Simon by a sudden attack upon their camp at Southwark. He was aided by the treachery of four of the chief citizens of London, who got possession of the keys of the city gates, and shut them against the troops of the Earl which sought shelter within the walls. The Londoners, however, burst open the gates, let in the retreating army, and closed them in the face of their pursuers. The lives of the four traitors were spared at the intercession of Earl Simon, but only to meet—as we shall see—a strange and violent death upon the hill of Lewes. In

December 1263, a final effort to obtain a peaceable settlement of the points at issue was made by referring them to the arbitration of Lewis IX., King of France. Lewis was a good and upright man, but he had a high conception of regal dignity, and charitably credited his royal brother of England with some measure of that respect which he himself entertained for truth and duty. In January 1264 Lewis decided on nearly all points in favour of the King. The Provisions of Oxford were to be cancelled, but the liberties established were not to be tampered with. Simon de Montfort was prevented from going to Amiens by an injury to his leg, caused by a fall from his horse, as he set out from Kenilworth; but he rejected the award (or Mise) of Amiens, and it was formally rejected by the rest of the Barons' party at a conference held in Oxford in the following March.

No other means of arbitrament now remained but war, and no time was lost in resorting to it. In April the King's forces, under the command of his son Edward, his brother Richard, King of the Romans, and his half-brother William of Valence, took Northampton. In this they were aided by the French prior of the Cluniac house, which stood just inside the wall near the North Gate. The monks secretly undermined the wall, concealing the opening by timber, and whilst the attention of the garrison was diverted by a deceitful parley, some of the royal forces entered and overpowered their opponents. This prior's predecessor had lately been appointed prior of the house at Lewes, where, as we shall presently see, the King lodged the night before the battle.

Earl Simon had advanced from London as far as St. Alban's, when he heard of the capture of Northampton. Raging, it is said, like a lion robbed of its whelps, he turned back, marched upon Rochester, and laid vigorous siege to the castle there, which was defended by the Earl of Warren. Meanwhile the Lord Edward took Leicester and Nottingham, and then turned southwards in the direction of London. The Mayor of London, in great alarm, entreated Simon de Montfort to come to the defence of the city. The Earl abandoned the siege of Rochester, and planted his forces between Edward and London. Edward avoided a battle, swept down upon Rochester, cut the remnants of the besieging force to pieces, and then turning upon Tunbridge took the castle there, which belonged to the Earl of Gloucester. These rapid movements were executed in five days after quitting Nottingham. Posting a strong guard at Tunbridge, the King and his son then retired towards the south coast. On their way they wrung a contribution of 500 marks out of the monastery at Robertsbridge (the only Cistercian house in Sussex), and committed great depredation on the property of the abbey of Battle. They halted for three days at Winchelsea, where the King vainly tried to persuade the Wardens of the Cinque Ports to send a naval force up the Thames to attack London. Then the army moved westwards along the coast through the friendly territory of William of Valence, who had succeeded Peter of Savoy in the possession of Hastings and Pevensey castles, notwithstanding which the royal forces suffered great distress from scarcity of provisions. They arrived at Lewes on the 11th of May. The King was lodged in the priory: the Lord Edward took up his quarters at the castle. The 11th of May was the eve of St. Pancras, to whom the priory was dedicated. Henry was a strange guest to be received within his walls, for St. Pancras was reckoned the special

avenger of perjury, and false swearers who dared to draw nigh to his tomb at Rome were said to go mad or fall dead upon the spot. The perfidious Henry, however, spent two tranquil days and nights within the priory: the Saint we must suppose reserved his vengeance for the hill of battle.

Meanwhile Simon de Montfort had held a conference in London with the Bishop of London, Richard of Sandwich; the Bishop of Worcester, Walter of Cantilupe; the Bishop of Chichester, Stephen of Burghsted; and other leaders of the national party, and it was resolved that peace and the observance of the Provisions of Oxford should be purchased if possible by a grant of money, but that if the terms offered were rejected recourse should be had to arms. The Barons then marched south from London, and pitched their camp near Fletching, a village about nine miles north of Lewes, in the heart of the weald, which they probably reached a few days before the King entered the priory in Lewes. On the 13th the Bishops of London and Worcester proceeded to Lewes from the Barons' camp. They were charged with an offer of 50,000 marks on condition that the Provisions of Oxford were re-affirmed and executed, and they were also the bearers of a letter to the King in which the Barons declared that their motives in taking arms had been slandered by their enemies; that they were loyal to the King, and wished all health and safety to his person, but were determined to resist with all their might those persons who were not only his enemies and theirs, but the enemies of the whole kingdom. The exact words of the letter may be read in the chronicle of Rishanger and others, but the substance of it is given with touching simplicity in the rhyme of Robert of Gloucester. He tells us how the Barons besought the King—

“That he solde for God's love him bet understand,
And grante them the gode laws, and hadde pite of is lond,
And they him wolde serve wel to vote and to hand.”

The offer, however, and the letter were received with the utmost scorn and contempt: the only reply was a letter of haughty defiance from the King, and another in similar tone from the King of the Romans and the Lord Edward. With these ungracious answers the Bishops returned to the camp at Fletching. In the the words of Robert of Gloucester—

“The Barons ne couthe other red, tho hii hurde this,
Bote bidde Godes grace, and bataile abide iwis.”

And Simon de Montfort lost no time in getting ready to strike a blow. It was suggested by some of the Barons that an immediate march should be made upon Lewes, to attack the royal army in the dead of night, but this was rejected by Simon as an ignoble and treacherous design. It was therefore determined to seize the heights above the town early on the following day and challenge the enemy to meet in fair fight upon the open down. The Earl's preparations were prompt and complete. The devout son of the Church, the friend of Robert Grosseteste, he did not forget to exhort his followers to make confession of their sins and seek absolution on the eve of battle, while he himself spent an almost sleepless night, partly in prayer, partly in girding the sword of knighthood upon young soldiers who had not yet been admitted into that rank. The Bishop of Worcester spent the night in hearing confession and encouraging all who should fight manfully in the cause of justice to hope for remission of sins and an entrance into the heavenly kingdom if they fell in battle. All

the combatants also were instructed to fasten a white cross upon their back and breast, not only as a help to distinguish each other in battle, but also as a token of the purity and sanctity of the cause in which they were engaged.

On the morning of Wednesday, May the 14th, before the rising of the sun, the whole host was in motion. They had camped in the woods which surrounded the village of Fletching, and through the dense forest shade they began their march southwards in the twilight of the early dawn. They followed most probably the course of the present road from Fletching to Lewes for about six miles, until they reached Cooksbridge, where the road is crossed by a little stream, a small tributary of the river Ouse. By this time it must have been broad daylight, and the steep sides of the Downs must have been distinctly visible where the chain abruptly breaks off, and the high bluff projection, called Black Cap, thrusts itself boldly forward, overlooking the weald and the valley of the Ouse. Just at this point in their march, according to local tradition, the forces halted and broke their fast, and rested for a brief space on the rising ground called Restnoak Hill before they began their toilsome ascent of the Downs. Then, as now, there must have been two tracks by which it was possible to climb the hills from this point, either up the steep and rugged hollow which separates Black Cap from the lower eminence called Mount Harry, or up the broader, longer, and more winding combe which sweeps round the south eastern side of Mount Harry, and divides it from the heavy shoulder of the hill which overhangs the church of Offham. The main body of the army probably marched up this gentler ascent, but some of the lighter armed levies may have taken the shorter and steeper course, the two divisions uniting upon the broad down, a little below the height called Mount Harry, and not far from the head of the combe. The surface of Mount Harry itself is neither wide nor level enough for the disposition of a large body of troops, while the broad smooth slopes a little farther down would be well adapted for such a purpose. Anyhow it would have been more fitting if the height had been called Mount Simon, for King Henry certainly did not get so far up the hill nor anywhere near it, the battle being fought much lower down; whereas it is very probable that Earl Simon may have surveyed the whole ground from this point and settled the lines of his advance upon the town. Here too he may have pitched his standard hard by which he placed a certain car, or wagon, or litter, concerning which the chroniclers have a great deal to say, although they do not very clearly explain what it was like. They inform us that it was very strongly made and lined with iron outside, that the Earl himself had ridden in it during the march from London, in order to lead the enemy to suppose that he was ill or still suffering from the effects of the fall from his horse, and it was placed conspicuously near the standard that they might imagine he was still inside it. But this was all a stratagem.

“The Erle did make him a chare at London through gylery
Himself therein suld fare, and sick be weened to ly.”¹

The real occupants of the car were the four citizens of London who had so nearly delivered Simon and his army into the hands of the enemy, when the attack was made upon his camp at Southwark. Whether the

¹ Robert of Bruce's Chronicle.

car was dragged on wheels, or whether it was slung, as was sometimes done, on poles between two horses, the travellers inside must have been most uncommonly jolted in ascending the hill.

Meanwhile, some foragers of the royalists had seen the barons' army approaching, and hurried back into Lewes to alarm the still slumbering host. The chroniclers¹ tell the most marvellous and incredible stories of the wild revelry and riot which had been going on at the priory the night before. Tales of this kind must be received with great reservation, for such abuses of the eve of battle have almost always been laid to the charge of the defeated side. The like tales are told of the English before the battle of Senlac, and of the French before the battle of Agincourt. It is to be noted that they are confined, in this instance, to the king's troops at the priory. No imputations of disorderly conduct are cast upon the followers of Edward, who were lodged in the castle. But whatever may have been its condition, the whole host, both from priory and castle, set forth without delay. From the low ground south of the town, in which the priory was situated, the king and his forces probably marched up towards the Downs by a road, now effaced by buildings, formerly called Antioch Street, which ran due north of the priory and joined the road from the castle to the hills just outside the west gate. Here probably they were met by the Lord Edward and his division of troops, and settled the order in which the Barons' army should be confronted.

Meanwhile Earl Simon had made the final disposition of his forces and was steadily advancing towards the town. From the plateau of the eminence, called Mount Harry, a broad backed ridge slopes gradually eastward towards Lewes, a hollow dividing it from another parallel ridge on the right, while on the left a winding combe sweeps down to Offham. Below the head of this combe the down widens on the left and forms yet another ridge, with steep, and in some places almost precipitous sides, overhanging the valley of the Ouse. This ridge ends nearly opposite the castle from which it is separated by a deep ravine, while the other, the central one of the three, descends straight to St. Ann's church (formerly called St. Mary Westout), at the north western extremity of the town, and continues along the line of the High Street right through the town down to the Ouse, which, in the thirteenth century, as now, was here crossed by a bridge. It was upon these two broad ridges, and partly also in the depressions between them, that the battle was fought. Earl Simon made four divisions of his forces. On the left he placed the Londoners under the command of Nicholas de Segrave, Hervey de Borham and Henry of Hastings. The centre and right divisions contained the flower of the army. The former was led by the young Earl of Gloucester (on whom Simon had conferred the sword of knighthood the evening before), assisted by Baron Fitz John and William of Monchesny, whose tried ability as veteran soldiers might balance the inexperience of the youthful Earl. The right wing was commanded by Henry the eldest, and Guy the third son of Simon de Montfort, supported by Humphrey de Bohun the younger, and John de Burgh, son of Hubert de Burgh the late justiciar. Simon himself took up his station with a reserve force on high ground, in the rear, whence he could easily bring support to any point where it might be needed.

¹ More especially the chronicler of Lanercost. See also *Polit. Songs*, Ed. Wright.

Supposing these arrangements to have been made on the slopes immediately below what is called Mount Harry, the whole army must have descended the central ridge until it had passed the head of the combe, when the left wing, consisting of the Londoners, struck off further to the left and advanced down the northern or outer ridge which overhangs the valley of the Ouse. It is expressly stated that the men of London, although full of zeal and eagerness for the fight, were raw and ill armed levies, and the event proved that their separation from the main body was a wise arrangement, as it drew off the attention of one of the best flanks of the Royal army, and enabled Simon to concentrate all the flower of his army in an attack upon the other two divisions. The royal right which was opposed to the Londoners was led by the Lord Edward, the Earl of Warren and William of Valence, the centre was led by the King in person, and the left by his brother, Richard, King of the Romans. The King and his brother were supported by Humphrey de Bohun, father of the Humphrey who fought in the ranks of Simon's army, by William Bardolph, a connexion of the Warrens, by Henry of Percy, son-in-law of Earl Warren and Lord of Petworth, Philip Basset, and some others, connected for the most part with the King or the Earl of Warren by marriage, or with Sussex by territorial interest. Amongst them, however, appear three northern Barons specially summoned to the aid of the King, whose names may sound strange to many in connexion with South Saxon soil—Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, John Comyn of Badenagh, and John Balliol of Galloway.

In the course of their descent the Barons' army reached a point at which the bell tower of the priory became visible.¹ When Simon de Montfort beheld it he alighted from his horse and made an address to the host. "Behold comrades and followers," he said, "we are about to fight this day for the better government of the kingdom, for the honour of God, and of the blessed Virgin, and of all the Saints, for our holy mother the Church, and for the due observance of our faith. Let us pray to the King of all that if our undertaking pleases Him, He will grant us strength and aid to overpower the malice of all enemies. If we be His, to Him we commend body and soul." Having heard these words the warriors prostrated themselves on the turf, and stretching out their arms so as to form the sign of the cross—"Grant us O Lord," they cried, "our desire and give us a mighty victory to the honour of Thy name." After this solemn invocation of the divine blessing, the host continued to advance down the hill, and soon the opposing forces looked one another in the face. The royal banner of the dragon marked the position of the King. For it was indeed a brilliant and conspicuous object. The King's goldsmith, Edward Fitz Odo, had been instructed to make it (in the year 1244) "of red samite, embroidered with gold, and his tongue to appear as though continually moving, and his eyes of sapphire or other stones

¹This bell tower, according to some rough measurements made by Portinari the commissioner for the demolition of the priory, in 1538, was 105 feet high; seemingly to the vault. The total height, therefore, must have been considerably more. In this uncertainty it is not possible to determine the precise spot at which the tower would have become

visible from the Down. By means of careful excavations, combined with the study of documentary evidence, Mr. W. H. St. John Hope has brought to light nearly the whole construction of the priory buildings. He holds that there were only two towers to the church, a central one which was the bell tower, and another at the west end.

agreeable to him." It had been unfurled only twice before, and the chroniclers all affirm that it was regarded as a sign of the King's resolution to grant no quarter.

"The Kyng shewed forth his scheld, his dragon full austere :
The Kyng said on hie, 'Symon je vous defie.'"

And then with a terrible clang of trumpets (*terribili clangore tubarum*) the conflict began. Edward, with the Earl of Warren, William of Valence and their following, charged furiously up the northern slope against the men of London, the left wing of the Barons' army, thirsting, it is said, to avenge the insults which the Londoners had once heaped upon his mother when she was going up the Thames from the Tower to Westminster. The London levies, being for the most part unmounted, lightly armed and little experienced, although they had in their zeal for the cause desired to occupy a foremost place, were utterly unable to resist the onset of a body of heavy armed mounted knights, wielding lances, maces or battle axes. They turned and fled in wild confusion, rushing down the steep sides of the ridge into the combe, or into the valley of the Ouse, where many perished in attempting to cross the river. Edward pressed on in hot pursuit for several miles, making great slaughter of the fugitives. Earl Simon made no attempt to check him, being, doubtless, well content to see one powerful wing of the enemy drawn so far away from the main body. It was the same fatal error which had been made by the right wing of Harold's army at the battle of Senlac, the same which was repeated by the right wing of Charles the First's army, under the impetuous Prince Rupert, at the battle of Edge Hill. Meanwhile Earl Simon vigorously pressed forward the centre and right of his army against the Royal centre and left, adding the impulse of his own reserve. The chroniclers supply but few details of this part of the battle. We are only told that after a long and severe struggle, Simon's right wing succeeded, chiefly by the aid of their slingers and darters, in breaking the ranks of the Royalists on the left, and at last forcing them to fly. The centre held out a little longer; the King himself fought bravely; his choicest war horse was killed under him, but he mounted another, and it was not until that too had been cut down, not until he himself had received several wounds from swords and maces, and his ranks were thoroughly broken, that he and his immediate following sought safety in retreat. They seem to have succeeded in reaching the priory without further injury or hindrance. The King's brother, Richard, did not fare so well. Being hard pressed by the enemy he fled for refuge into a windmill and made the door as fast as he could, hoping to make his escape quietly when the flood of pursuers and pursued should have passed by. But his manœuvre did not elude detection; and he was in fact caught in a trap. Some of the enemy stood jesting and jeering round the mill—"Come down, come down thou wretched miller," they cried, "come out thou luckless master of the mill, and so thou must turn miller in thy ill fortune, who didst lately defy us poor Barons, and wouldst be called by no meaner name than King of the Romans and always Augustus." Poor Richard, after having been well bantered, was forced to come out of his ignominious hiding place and surrendered himself (according to one account) with his son Edmund, and Gilbert de Clare the young Earl of Gloucester. Richard was an unpopular man owing to his desertion of

the national party, and the patriotic chroniclers make very merry, with a kind of childlike glee, over his humiliating capture in the windmill.

“The King of Almaine wende to do full well ;
 He saisede the mulne for a castel,
 With hare sharpe swerdes he ground the stel,
 He wende that the sayles were mangonel¹
 To helpe Windesore,
 Richard tho thou be ever trichard²
 Trichen shalt thou never more.”

The site of Richard's windmill may be fixed with tolerable certainty. The chronicler of Lewes priory, in his brief account of the king's defeat, says, “Now all these things were done ‘ad molendinum suelligi.’” According to Spelman suelligus, suellingus, or suellinga signifies hide. So the passage may be rendered, “Now all these things took place at the mill of the hide.” The question then is where was the hide. Now a plot of thirty-two acres, just west of St. Ann's, used to be known by the name of “the hide ;” and in a survey of the year 1618 there is a windmill marked in this plot, as nearly as possible where the Black Horse Inn now stands, which is in the exact line which would most naturally be taken by the retreating Royalists.

Whilst the King of the Romans was blockaded in his windmill, an equally curious, and but for its tragical conclusion, an equally ludicrous incident took place at the other end of the battle field. We left the Lord Edward and his following in hot pursuit of the Londoners. Miss Strickland, drawing upon a lively imagination, informs us that he chased them as far as Croydon. To Croydon and back to Lewes would have been a ride of eighty miles, an exploit which could be accomplished only by the heroes of romance. The chroniclers have more regard for sober truth : some of them only say that Edward pursued the Londoners a considerable distance, others two or three miles, others four ; and when the rout was complete, and the victorious party were returning over the hill, they descried the car upon Mount Harry, surrounded by baggage, with the standard of Earl Simon pitched beside it, and defended by a small guard. They fell upon the guard and cut them to pieces, and then deeming the Earl to be inside the car, they jeeringly shouted to him, as the barons had shouted to the King of the Romans, “Come forth, come forth, thou devil Simon ! Come out of the car, thou vilest of traitors.” The poor caged-up prisoners cried out that no Earl Simon was there, but only some innocent citizens of London devoted to the royal cause. Their story, however, was either not heard or not believed : the car was hacked to pieces—some of the chroniclers say burned—and the occupants perished either by sword or fire.

Edward and his party then proceeded down the hill, hoping to receive a triumphant welcome from their friends.

“With grete joy he turned agen and lute³ joy be found.”—*Robert of Glouc.*

As he approached the town he found the slopes deserted by the combatants, but strewn with dead and dying. It was clear that his fathers' army had been driven back into Lewes ; but the banner of Earl Warren, still floating over one of the castle towers, showed that that mighty stronghold had not been captured. Some of the Baron's forces came out

¹ A military engine for hurling stones.

² A trickster.

³ Little.

and attacked Edward's troops. Both men and horses were exhausted with their long ride, and ill able to make a stand. Edward did his best to cheer them on, but a large number, including the Earl of Warren, William of Valence, Guy of Lusignan, Hugh Bigot, and many hundreds of their followers basely deserted him. They probably fled into the low ground eastward of the town and castle, under the church of St. John sub Castro, and so worked their way round to the bridge. Here there was a terrific crush of fugitives and pursuers mingled together, pouring down the line of the High Street. Many leaped or fell into the river and were drowned; others were suffocated in the quagmires of the marshes, then undrained, through which the Ouse wound its way to the sea. The Earl of Warren, however, and the other principal deserters from Edward's party got safely across and made their way to Pevensey, whence they embarked for France, and carried the tidings of the king's overthrow to the queen, who was sojourning at the French Court.

"They who fight and run away
May live to fight another day."

And the escape of such powerful adversaries caused great vexation to Earl Simon and the patriotic party, which is quaintly expressed in the old ballad :—

"By God that is aboven us, he dude muche synne
That lette passen over see the Erl of Warynne :
He hath robbed Englonde, the mores ant the fenne,
The goldt ant the selver, ant y boren henne ¹
For love of Wyndesore.

"Sir Simond de Mountfort hath swore by ys chin
Havede he nou here the Erl of Waryn,
Shulde he never more come to his yn ²
Ne with sheld, ne with spere, ne with other gyn
To help of Wyndesore.

"Sir Simond de Mountfort hath swore by ys cop ³
Havede he nou here Sire Hue le Bigot
Al he shulde quite ⁴ here a twelf-moneth scot ⁵
Shulde he never more his fot pot ⁶
To help Wyndesore."

How Edward himself escaped being taken we are not informed. The chroniclers say that he went round the town until he reached the castle, which must mean that he skirted the ravine which separates the east slope of the downs from the castle, until he reached the western slope, along which the main body of the royal army had retreated, and so entered the town by the west gate and made his way to the castle. Not finding his father there the chroniclers say that he went to the priory. Robert of Gloucester, however, and one other writer tell us that he went first to the house of the Franciscans. Now this house stood close to the bridge at the bottom of High Street, on the site of the present town library, and it is very possible that Edward, on coming into the main street from the castle, was swept along in the torrent of fugitives which was pouring down to the bridge, and may then have sought shelter for a while in the Franciscan house. Thence he may have got round by back ways outside the town walls to the priory, which lay in the low meadows south west of the bridge. Anyhow he did reach the priory at last in safety.

¹ Carried them off. ² House. ³ Head. ⁴ Pay. ⁵ Reckoning. ⁶ Trudge.

And now the long summer's day was drawing to a close. The town was a scene of wild confusion; riderless horses wandered through the streets in which the dead and dying lay in heaps; some desultory fighting still went on, but as the shades of evening fell, the combatants could scarcely distinguish friend from foe. The Barons made an assault upon the castle to try and rescue some prisoners who had been taken there, but they were repulsed by the garrison who increased the general horror of the scene by shooting missiles dipped in Greek fire, which set several of the houses in a blaze, shedding a lurid glare upon the whole town. Foiled in this attempt the Barons collected their forces round the priory, which was only defended by a boundary wall. Edward, however, was mustering some of his men for a sally, when Earl Simon proposed a truce preparatory to negotiation on the morrow. And so the long day of strife and carnage came to an end, and the exhausted combatants took their rest.

The numbers of the forces engaged on both sides, and of the slain, are so very variously stated by different chroniclers, that it is really impossible to form anything like a positive conclusion on the subject. The only point on which there does seem to be agreement, is that the King's army was larger than that of the Barons'.

It does not fall within the scope of this paper to enlarge at any length upon the results of this memorable battle. It must suffice to say that by the Capitulation or Mise of Lewes, as it was called, a new body of arbitrators was chosen, and the provisions of Oxford were confirmed. The arbitrators swore to choose only English counsellors; the King was bound to act by the advice of his counsellors in administering justice and in choosing his ministers; to observe the charters, and to live at moderate expense. The Lord Edward was given as a hostage for the King, and his cousin Henry as a hostage for his father the King of the Romans. Peace was declared on May 25, and proclaimed at London on June 11. Writs were issued directing the election of four knights for each shire, to meet the King in Parliament on the 22nd of the same month. This Parliament drew up the new constitution which was to be in force throughout the remainder of the reign. The King was to be guided by a permanent council of nine, which was to be nominated by three electors who were to be chosen by the Barons. The three electors were Earl Simon himself, the Earl of Gloucester, and Stephen of Burghsted the Bishop of Chichester. In the following December the Parliament was summoned, which marks one of the most important stages in the progress of popular representation; for to it were called not only two knights from each shire, but two citizens from each city, and two burgesses from each borough.

The battle of Lewes was the greatest pitched battle which had been fought in this country since that mighty conflict, the scene of which we hope to visit in the course of this week. And in the victory won by the patriots under Simon de Montfort on the hill of Lewes, we may see the cancelling and reversal of the defeat suffered by the patriots under King Harold upon the hill of Senlac. There Englishmen fought under a noble hearted King for the defence of their fatherland against a foreign invader. Two centuries have passed away, and on the hill of Lewes we see the descendants of the men who met as foes at Senlac, fighting side by side as one people to deliver their common country from the rule of a King whose heart was given to strangers, who sacrificed to his love of

aliens the best interests of his subjects, and bestowed upon aliens the highest honours in his kingdom.

We see also in the battle of Lewes one of the most decisive blows ever struck in this country on behalf of those principles of wise, just and righteous government which ever have been, and we trust ever will be, dear to the hearts of Englishmen; principles embodied in the charters and laws which they won after long and painful struggles, principles for which they strove when they rose in rebellion against the misrule of Charles I, and of James II—the principle that the people have a right to be consulted on all matters which vitally touch their interests—the principle that the supreme authority and sanctity of law and truth must be upheld against a sovereign who defies the law and violates his plighted word.

These principles were set forth in a clear and lofty strain of eloquence in a Latin poem, written by a nameless author soon after the battle of Lewes, for the purpose of describing and justifying the ends for which it was fought.

The poem is a long one of nearly one thousand lines in Saturnian measure. A few may be translated here as representing the main arguments and ruling spirit of the whole composition. "The Barons," it is said, "have no designs against the royal honour. Nay, on the contrary they seek to reform and magnify the royal state; just as if the realm were ravaged by enemies. The real foes of the King are the counsellors who flatter him, who seduce him with deceitful words, and lead him into error by their double tongues . . . If such by their arts upset the kingdom, supplanting justice by injustice, if they trample the native under foot and summon strangers to their aid, do they not devastate the kingdom? And if the king not perceiving their craft approve such measures destructive of his kingdom, or if he do mischief out of his own evil will, setting his own authority above the laws, and abusing his power to please himself; if in any of these ways the kingdom be injured, then it is the duty of the great men of the kingdom to purge the land of all these evils."

"Let him who reads know that he cannot reign who does not keep the law, nor ought they to whom the choice belongs to elect such an one for their king."

"If the prince loves he ought to be loved in return, if he rules righteously he ought to be honoured, if he goes astray he ought to be called back by those whom he has oppressed, if he will be corrected he ought by them to be uplifted and supported."

"As a king depending on his own judgment may readily err it is very fitting that the Commons of the realm should be consulted to whom the laws and customs are best known, and who can best express public opinion.

"We say that law rules the dignity of the king: for we believe that the law is light without which he who rules will wander from the right path."

The two noble lines which lay down the fundamental principle of constitutional government must not be spoiled by translation.

*"Igitur communitas regni consulatur,
Et quod universitas sentiat sciatur."*

Such then were the principles for which the patriots jeopardied their

lives unto the death upon the high places of the battle field of Lewes. And not in vain ; for though the victory at Lewes was followed by the overthrow at Evesham and the death of the great leader, Simon de Montfort ; yet the cause for which he and his fellow patriots fought was not lost. Edward himself, the conqueror at Evesham, learned to rule in conformity with the principles for which Earl Simon bled and died, for upholding which he was honoured as a hero in his lifetime, and after his death, in spite of the ban of Rome, was revered as a martyr and a saint. Edward's defeat at Lewes was one of the chastisements in that school of adversity wherein he learned the lesson which his father was never able to learn—that the King's throne must be established in righteousness, by doing strict justice to all men, by giving to every class some voice in the great council of the nation, above all by scrupulous fidelity to his engagements, according to the motto inscribed on Edward's own tomb in Westminster Abbey—"Pactum serva." "Keep your word."

[I have not encumbered the preceding pages with references to my authorities for every statement. The principal original authorities for all that relates to the battle of Lewes, on which I have mainly depended are : (1) The chronicle of William Rishanger. (2) Another chronicle by the same author, *de bellis Lewes et Evesham*. (3) Chronicle of Walter Hemingford. (4) Chronicle of Thomas Wyke. (5) Robert of Gloucester. (6) Chronicle of Lanercost. (7) Chronicle of Mailros. (8) Political Songs, edited by Mr. Wright for the Camden Society. (9) "The Barons' War," by the late Mr. Blaauw, is a standard work upon the subject which it would be superfluous for me to praise. A new edition of it has recently been issued. A German life of Simon de Montfort, by Reinhold Pauli, is worth reading.]