

OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
NORWEGIAN EXPEDITION AGAINST SCOTLAND,  
IN THE YEAR 1263,  
AND ON  
SOME PREVIOUS EVENTS WHICH GAVE OCCASION  
TO THAT WAR.

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ONE of the most important branches of the History of Scotland, is the connection between it and Norway. The transactions of the Norwegians on the coasts of Scotland, and in the adjacent islands, were numerous, and were continued for a long period of time. They must have begun while the operations of the Norwegian adventurers by sea troubled all the coasts of Europe, and continued till the year 1265, when a treaty between the two nations finally placed the Island of Man and the Western Islands under the dominion of Scotland. Previous to that time, and from a period whereof it may be said we have no authentic

history, the Norwegians had made many settlements on the coast of Ireland, the principal sea ports of which seem to have been founded by them. They were also possessed of the Orkney and Shetland Isles, of which they apparently were the first colonists; and of the islands on the west coast of Scotland. Previous to this period also, they appear to have had considerable possessions in the north and north-west parts of the mainland of Scotland, the lords of which seem to have held sometimes of Norway, and sometimes of Scotland; or rather, perhaps, held some lands of the one, and some of the other at the same time, a circumstance not unusual in those times. The Scottish kings after Malcolm III. at least after David I. seem to have pursued the policy of attaching these chiefs to themselves, by grants of land within the territory of Scotland, which had the effect, as the Norwegian power declined in these parts, to bring the Norwegian provinces in Scotland under the homage of the Scottish kings.

It was impossible, under such circumstances, to avoid collision between the two countries; and accordingly we find there were frequent wars between them. But our own historians and chroniclers treat these matters in a very transient manner. This must have proceeded either from ignorance of the facts, or from a false notion of the national honour being interested, to conceal the defeats the Scots must have suffered at different times from the Norwegians, during many incursions and invasions.

Fordun holds that it was Magnus Barefoot who conquered the Western Isles from Scotland; but it certainly appears from the ancient chronicles of Norway, that his conquest (which took place about 1098) was not the first appearance of the Norwegians in those islands. Before his time, they had established several

colonies, (or kingdoms, as they were called) in Ireland: and also the Kingdom of Man, which was feudatory or subject to the Kings of Norway. The Kingdom of Man originally comprehended all the Western Isles of Scotland; and this was the state of things at the time of the conquests of Magnus Barefoot, under whose dominion Man and the Western Islands fell. Therefore, though he conquered the Western Isles, yet it does not appear they were then under the dominion of the King of Scotland, nor did they form any part of that kingdom. The chiefs of them only owed allegiance to the King of Norway, or his vassal, the King of Man. It would appear, however, that before the Norwegians had conquered these islands, they had, from a period antecedent to any certain accounts, been occupied by the Scots from Ireland.

Magnus Barefoot, though he made large conquests in the Western Seas, yet established no permanent government. He was killed in the course of them in Ireland: after which they fell to pieces, and mostly reverted to their ancient lords, who were of Norwegian descent. Among the rest, the Kingdom of Man was re-established under kings dependent on Norway. This kingdom had been subdivided; the northern part of the Western Isles going to another branch, the chief of which was then Sumerled, married to the daughter of a King of Man, and himself a Norwegian chief, as the name proves. By himself, or in right of his wife, he must have had a title of inheritance through relationship with the family of the Kings of Man, otherwise he could not have claimed a division of the kingdom. His posterity retained their half, till they fell under the dominion of the Kings of Scotland, and, indeed, still do retain a great part of the

property, as the Lords of the Isles certainly, and most probably the Argyle family, are descended from this source.

The Chronicle of Man carries on regularly the history and genealogy of the kings who continued to reign in Man, till the island was finally ceded by the King of Norway to Alexander III. in 1265; but does not trace the family of Sumerled farther, which occasions obscurity as to that branch, of which, however, came the lords and several chiefs of the Isles, who are usually called *kings* in the Norwegian chronicles.

The Kings of Scotland had early perceived the importance of being possessed of the Western Isles, and the disadvantage of territories so near, inhabited by a warlike and restless people, being under the dominion of a foreign and frequently hostile power. Accordingly, they appear to have used all means to reconcile and attach to their interest the chiefs of the Isles. The Kings of Man were too closely connected, or too dependent on the Kings of Norway, to be easily brought over; but after the separation of the Northern Hebrides from Man, and the allotment of those Isles to Sumerled and his family, who were also lords of extensive territories on the mainland of Scotland, the Scottish Kings were more successful in detaching the chiefs of that family from the interest of the Kings of Norway. The rule of succession, or custom among these chiefs, of giving their children portions of their lands, assisted in accomplishing these plans, by multiplying chiefs who were independent of each other. Accordingly, in 1263, we find Margad and Angus, Lords of Cantyre and Ilay, submitting to King Haco, who, or their predecessors, had certainly become proprietors of those countries by such subdivisions.

The Kings of Scotland also acquired very nearly the allegiance and influence of the Lords of Galloway, which seems to have been an object from the time of David I. They were powerful at sea, and their power greatly forwarded this object. In like manner, the power and influence of the Stewart family on the opposite coast of Ayrshire was of no small importance in this respect; for it appears that the chiefs of Cantyre, Bute, Ilay, &c. were connected with, or under the influence of, that family, who latterly obtained large grants of land from the Kings of Scotland in these countries.

The consequence of this policy regularly and steadily pursued, and particularly the wise measure of giving to some of the Hebridian chiefs grants of land on the mainland of Scotland, had, before the period of Haco's expedition in 1263, brought several of these chiefs into the Scottish interest.

Accordingly, in the extract from the Flateyan manuscript, published by Johnston, entitled "Anecdotes of Olave the Black," we are told that the Kings of Man were faithful to King Haco; but the Sudureyan Kings of Sumerled's family were untrue to him. It occasions a good deal of confusion in these Norwegian accounts, that every chief of the Isles, whom we would now only distinguish as a *Laird*, is called a *King*. In 1229 and 1230, to which period the *Anecdotes of Olave* relate, several kings are mentioned, viz. Dugald Scrag and Duncan, sons of Dugald, who was son of the Great Sumerled who forced the King of Man to surrender to him all the Northern Hebrides. Duncan again was the father of John, who is mentioned as one of the Sudureyan Kings in 1263. There was at the same time another king of those islands called Sumerled, who was their relation, probably a cousin, and no doubt descended of the first Sumerled, and possessing a part

of his inheritance. Here are four kings of the Western Isles; and several of them, perhaps all, were contemporary. But we get quit of the erroneous impression this title makes, not only by considering the small extent of territory belonging to these kings, but also by observing, that the old Norwegian chroniclers were accustomed to confer the title of king on any petty chief, even though he commanded only a single piratical vessel. It is a great loss to us, that the Norwegian chronicle has not specified the particular islands over which the kings that are mentioned ruled, whereby we might have been enabled to identify their families and present representatives.

The allegiance of these island chiefs to Scotland, however, was not steady. They departed from it when their interest led them to do so, or when the power and influence of the Norwegians seemed to be predominant in those seas. This was frequently the case, owing to the superiority of Norway as a maritime power, and the total want of a fleet or army adapted for foreign operations on the part of Scotland. They frequently also made plundering expeditions to the mainland of Scotland, or against their neighbours who adhered to the Scottish kings; and this also led them to seek protection from Norway.

The chief purpose of the present observations is to illustrate the accounts given by the Scottish historians of the expedition which Haco, King of Norway, fitted out for the purpose of recovering the Western Islands, whose chiefs the Kings of Scotland had induced or forced to abandon their allegiance to Norway. We, therefore, do not enter into any particulars not directly connected with that object; but it is necessary to take shortly into view the transactions in these islands that took place in 1229 and 1230, which are the subject of the anecdotes of Olave

the Black, as helping to shew more clearly the state of affairs in 1263, and the facts which produced the expedition of that year.

Annals, vol. i.  
p. 176.

Lord Hailes gives a very short account of this expedition, which he seems to be sensible is imperfect and unsatisfactory. The only authorities he seems to have made use of are Winton and Fordun of the Scotch Chronicles, and Torfœus of the Norwegian. He observes, that, "as to the cause of the invasion, the force landed, the circumstances of the battle, and the numbers of the slain, they widely differ. The truth might be investigated, but the inquiry would be prolix, and not suited to the nature of this work." He refers to Macpherson's Critical Dissertations, "who seems scarcely to believe there ever was such a battle;" which shews that Macpherson had not taken the necessary means to inform himself. The observations now submitted may be considered as an attempt to supply what Lord Hailes found wanting; and to give a more clear account of this business than has yet appeared.

Lord Hailes had not seen those Norwegian Chronicles whereof Mr Johnston published extracts. Had he seen them, he would have perceived that Torfœus's history of these transactions is no more than a transcript from the Chronicles, to which he adds no particulars, and from which we may conclude he had no farther documents or authorities before him. We therefore lay Torfœus aside, and found our inquiry upon the Norwegian Chronicles themselves, compared with Winton and Fordun, to whose materials later Scotch historians have added nothing. And even they can hardly be said to afford any particulars; nor do they attempt to give us an idea of the state of the islands at this time, which were the object of contention between Scotland and Norway. The latter claimed them as ancient possessions of that crown; and the former alleged that they had been wrested from

Scotland in the confusion that followed the death of Malcom III. when the succession to the kingdom of Scotland was disputed for several years. After the succession was again settled in the family of Malcom (whom the Norwegians had opposed) the Scotch Kings could not but see the disadvantage which arose to them from the Norwegians being in possession of the Western Isles, and accordingly exerted themselves to get those isles into their hands.

The extract from the Flateyan manuscript above alluded to gives an account of transactions arising from these exertions of the Scotch kings, and the measures taken by Haco, then king of Norway, to secure the dominion and allegiance of the isles.

It gives an account of an expedition sent by Haco to the Western Isles in 1230. This was on occasion of Allan Earl of Galloway, a subject of Scotland possessed of a large fleet and numerous armies, distressing Olave the Black, King of Man, and making war in the Western Isles, and in Ireland. Haco had no ground for resenting these hostilities, but that they were carried on against vassals of Norway. The Chronicle of Man shews that, in 1228, Allan had conquered that island, and appointed persons to receive the revenues. The object of the expedition was to re-establish the dominion of Norway in those parts, by restoring Olave to his kingdom, who had been forced to retire to Norway from the power of Allan; and also to establish one Uspak as a king in the Western Isles. Besides Uspak, the manuscript mentions also the above Dugald and Duncan, all three sons of Dugald who was son of Sumerled; and they are all called kings, as well as another Sumerled, their relation.

The fleet intended for the relief of Olave, and establishing Uspak, sailed in the spring of 1230 to Orkney, and from thence to

Skye, where its first achievement was to vanquish and kill Thor-kill Thormodson (Torquill MacDermot), and two of his sons, who, we may conclude, were in the interest of the Scots, and hostile to the pretensions of Uspak, as possessing parts of the islands which he claimed. Thence the fleet sailed to the Sound of Ila, where Dugal, Duncan, Uspak, and Sumerled met, together with the Norwegian commanders. These allies appear to have been jealous and afraid of each other. The Norwegians attacked the Islanders, and killed Sumerled, which must have added to the disaffection of the Sumerledians. Dugald was put in fetters by the Norwegians, but Uspak appears to have obtained his liberty, and he immediately sent away his brother Duncan. It is not said what gave rise to this quarrel among the allies.

The Norwegians now collected all their forces in the islands, (which, joined to the force brought from Norway, amounted to eighty ships), and sailed to the Mull of Cantyre, where they laid siege to a Castle, where, it is said, a Stewart commanded, who was killed at the siege. They took the Castle, before which, however, they lost 300 men, besides three ships, which perished in a storm, with all on board. This Castle was either Castle Kilkerran, where the town of Campbelton now stands, or Dunaver-ty, which is sometimes mentioned afterwards as a seat of the Lords of Cantyre.

Learning now that Earl Allan was at the Ness or Mull of Gal- loway with a fleet of 150 ships, and proposed to attack them, they returned northwards along the coast of Cantyre, which they plundered. Uspak died; and Olave became commander of the whole force. The fleet then went to the Merchant Isles, which are small islands on the north-west of Islay, where it remained part of the winter.

Note 1.

The fleet next sailed to Man, the inhabitants of which submitted to Olave, and delivered up their leader Torquill MacNeil, probably the governor or depute of Earl Allan. A contribution was imposed upon them for the subsistence of the army. Leaving Olave in Man, they returned to Cantyre, and made a landing, but were attacked by the Scots. The tenor of the Flateyan manuscript implies strongly that they were repulsed with loss. After this they returned to Norway. There is nothing stated either in this manuscript, or in the Chronicle of Man, to shew why Allan remained inactive during this expedition, and did nothing to retain his conquest of Man, notwithstanding the great force he had. As to Cantyre, he might think it was not incumbent on him to apply his forces to defend that country, which did not belong to him. It appears from Fordun that he died in 1234.

This expedition did little besides placing Olave upon his tottering throne. In consequence of the death of Uspak, Dugald and Duncan remained in possession of their former territories, perhaps little satisfied with their Norwegian connexion, and so more subject than ever to the Scottish influence, which would seem to have been industriously exerted to detach them from Norway. Earl Allan was left in full possession of his formidable power, with which it is said he even threatened to invade Norway. However, Haco prudently thanked his commanders for their great services, and the renown they had won.

So far as to the transactions of the year 1230, which but imperfectly re-established the Norwegian authority in the Western Isles. That authority became more and more precarious; and the difficulty of maintaining it at such a distance continued to increase, as the kingdom of Scotland prospered under the government of the descendants of Malcolm III. However, the long

possession of power and authority by the Norwegians in those islands, necessarily produced a strong impression of their right; and, accordingly, Alexander II. though he left no means untried to detach the chiefs from their connexion with the Norwegian government, and attach them to his own; yet also employed negotiation, and offered to pay a sum of money, to obtain the dominion of the Isles by treaty. This appears by another extract from the Norwegian chronicles, published by Johnston, which contains an account of the expedition against Scotland in 1263.

This extract commences with mentioning some facts previous to 1249, viz. that Alexander II. sent ambassadors to procure a cession of the islands from Haco, who refused, alleging that, when Magnus Barefoot conquered these islands (about 1100) the King of Scotland had no sovereignty in them; and in this Haco was probably correct, as he spoke of recent times, of which many persons then living had knowledge. The ambassadors then offered to pay a sum of money for a surrender; but Haco rejected this proposal with a degree of indignation at the idea of selling his inheritance. The negotiation failed; and was renewed by Alexander several times after without success.

In 1249 he made a similar proposal, but with the same bad success. He then made, or rather had previously commenced, preparations for conquering the Isles, declaring that he would set his standard on the cliffs of Thurso—a threat implying that Caithness was then a Norwegian province. He accordingly sailed with a fleet and army to the Western Isles, and came to the island of Kerrera.

Alexander then sent for John, son of Duncan, King of the Isles, whom we have already mentioned in noticing the transac-

tions of the year 1230. John, first using the precaution to take pledges for his safety, came to Alexander, who required him to deliver up Kiarnaborgh in Mull, and other castles in the Isles, and also the lands he held of King Haco, promising him greater estates in Scotland, with his favour and confidence. The amount of the proposal seems to have been this, that John should make a resignation of his lands and territory held by him hitherto under the King of Norway, and accept of investiture of them from Alexander, as his superior; and, to induce him to do so, he was promised farther grants of land in Scotland, with a view to secure his allegiance.

John's relations were desirous that he should accept of this offer, probably conceiving the connexion with the Scottish court would be more advantageous than that with Norway; but he declined, no doubt aware that the power of Haco could reach him by means of the powerful fleets he possessed, while Alexander might not be able to protect him. John then departed, and went to Lewis; which implies, that the northern part of the Hebrides Note II. were under his dominion, as well as Mull.

Alexander died soon after at Kerrera, before he had time to accomplish the ulterior objects of this expedition. He was succeeded by his son, Alexander III. then only seven years of age. The fleet and army appear to have returned immediately, without undertaking any farther operations.

However, the object of acquiring the Isles was still kept in view by the young king's councillors; and some effects of their endeavours will be noticed hereafter. Ambassadors were sent to Norway on this errand in 1261, whom Haco detained; because, contrary to etiquette then, it seems understood, as well as now, Note III. they attempted to depart without taking leave.

In 1262, an attempt was made, on the part of Scotland, to conquer the Isles. It is said that the Earl of Ross, and some other Scottish barons, invaded the Isles, and particularly Skye; and the island chiefs sent their complaints to Haco, as their superior, seeking protection. The names of the Scottish commanders, besides the Earl of Ross, are so disguised in the Norwegian manuscript, that we cannot, with any certainty, distinguish who they were. They are called *Kiarnach*, and the son of *M'Camal*; and perhaps signify Mackenzie and Macdonald, which name is constantly pronounced *M'Connal* in the Highlands.

It was judged by Haco indispensable to assist the islanders against the Scots, and to support the authority of Norway in the Islands. He, therefore, immediately set about preparing such a fleet and army as might effectually accomplish these objects.

This fleet and army were considered as the most powerful that ever sailed from the ports of Norway; and the greatness of the force shews how important the object was considered to be, viz. to recover the Islands, protect the chiefs who owed allegiance to the crown of Norway, and put a final conclusion to the pretensions of the Scottish kings to the sovereignty of those countries.

Haco, with his fleet, made Brassa Sound in Shetland, about  
 4th July. 4th July, where he remained a fortnight. Thence he sailed to  
 18th — Kirkwall, in Orkney (18th July) where he remained some time  
 longer. Here he proposed to divide his forces, and send one part  
 south towards the Murray Frith, keeping the remainder in reserve  
 in Orkney. But his army declared they would go no where with-  
 out the king himself; so that this plan was given up.

29th — After this, sailing from Orkney (29th July) he laid the people  
 of Caithness under contribution. We have observed already,  
 that, at the time of Alexander II.'s expedition in 1249, this

country was subject to the Norwegians. By this time, however, in 1263, it appears to have come under the power of the King of Scotland. This is shewn by the Norwegian chronicle before us, which mentions, that threats were employed to make the people comply with the requisitions made on them for cattle. But the same thing appears more clearly from a fragment of the chamberlain rolls of Alexander III. preserved in Lord Haddington's Collections in the Advocates' Library. The account of Laurence Grant, sheriff of Inverness, 1263, has this article, for which he takes credit: "Item, in expensis viginti et unius obsidum *Catanie*, cuilibet unum denarium per diem; et duobus de *Scy*, cuilibet tres obolos per diem, cum expensis custodum illorum, xxx lib. xiii s. iiii d."—This article shews that after 1249 the Scottish government had not been idle in their endeavours to subdue the people of Caithness and the Isles, and had exacted hostages for their fidelity. The hostages of Skye were probably those of Dugald or John, whose estates lay in the North Isles. We may also conclude that the hostages of Skye were persons of more importance than those of Caithness, since the charge for keeping them is no less than *three half-pence* a-day, while that of the Caithness men was only *a penny*. More instances of this kind will be given hereafter.

At this period, the chronicle bears, "While Haco lay at Ronaldsvo, a great darkness drew over the sea, so that only *a little ring was bright round the sun*; and it continued so for some hours."—Haco left Elidarwic, in Orkney, after St Olave's Wake, (29th July) passed the Mull of Ronaldshaw, and came to Ronaldsvo, and lay there some time. On St Laurence's Wake (9th August) he sailed from Orkney, across the Pentland Frith, and thence to Lewis and the other Islands. The eclipse above men-

tioned is described to have occurred between these two dates. This being pointed out to Dr Brewster, he had the curiosity to calculate the eclipse, when he found that there was an eclipse of the sun on 5th August 1263, and which was *annular* at Ronaldsvo, in Orkney, and the middle of it was 24 minutes past one. This circumstance adds to the credit of the Norwegian chronicle, which we are considering; and fixes, with certainty, the date of the expedition, which some of our Scotch historians place in 1262.

August 9.

King Haco sailed on 9th August with all his forces to Lewis, thence to Raasa, and from that to the place called Callachstane, in the Sound of Skye, where he was joined by *Magnus King of Man*. Thence he proceeded to the Sound of Mull, and then to Kerrera, where King Dugald and the other chiefs of the Hebrides were assembled with their forces. His fleet now amounted to more than a hundred vessels, most of them of large size, and well provided with men and arms.

From Kerrera, Haco detached fifty ships to the Mull of Cantyre to plunder. These were under the command of King Dugald, the King of Man, and some Norwegian captains. He also sent five ships against Bute; and Guthorm the Hebridean, with four Norwegians, commanded these ships. From these circumstances, we may conclude that both Cantyre and Bute were then under the dominion of the King of Scotland; and we have some reason to think they were also under the control of the Stewart family.

Haco himself, with the remainder of the fleet, sailed to the island of Gigha, which is near Islay; and here King John came to him, who, we were told, in 1249, declined becoming a subject of Alexander II. even though promised the King's favour, and lands in Scotland. It is probable that Mull was under the domi-

nion of John, and that he ought to have attended Haco at Kerrera as his vassal. It would appear from this chronicle that he had in the interval submitted to the Scottish King, and obtained lands from him, and perhaps given hostages. Haco required him as his vassal to join his banner as he ought to do. But John excused himself; and he gave reasons, which, if not quite satisfactory to Haco, appear to have been such that he could not well dispute their legality. John said he had sworn an oath to the King of Scotland, that is, had done homage and sworn allegiance, and held of him more lands than he held of the Norwegian monarch. He was therefore willing to surrender whatever Haco had given him. He was detained for some time by Haco, in hopes he would alter his resolution; but was at last dismissed uninjured. His territories in the Isles were bestowed on other two chiefs. It is perhaps from the grants of Alexander to John, that in after times we find the Lords of the Isles in possession of large territories on the mainland of Scotland.

This instance shews that a Baron who held lands of two different sovereigns did not incur the penalties of treason, if he served either of them, though at war with the other. He was bound to serve each perhaps within his own territory; but could not properly serve against any of them in war carried on within that king's own territories. Haco on this occasion seems to have admitted that, if John surrendered what was held of him, he was freed of any obligation of allegiance.

Angus and Margad (or Murchard) were at this time Lords of Cantyre, and Angus was also Lord of Ilay. There is little doubt that, before this period, both of them had submitted to the King of Scotland, and given him hostages; of which last circumstance we find some evidence in the aforesaid rolls of King Alexander's chamberlain. Haco was now on the coast of their territories,

and they had nothing to look for but to be treated as enemies. They appear to have applied to King Dugald, who was, no doubt, their relation, to avert the consequences; and they were told that, if they did not submit before noon of the next day, their country would be wasted. They accordingly made their submission. The King promised that, if they would enter into articles with him, he would make it a point to reconcile them to the King of Scotland; in other words, that he would include them in any treaty he should make—thus considering them subjects of Scotland. Then they took an oath to Haco, and delivered hostages; but there was a fine or contribution of a thousand head of cattle laid upon their estates, which even at this day might be reckoned a heavy contribution. Ilay was resigned to Haco, who granted it back to Angus, to be held on the same terms as the other barons in the Hebrides held their lands of him.

It appears that Angus and Margad, unlike King Dugald, did not come forward to make their submission till matters were come to the last extremity. The reason partly appears from what has been said, that they had submitted to the Scottish king, who held hostages of theirs in his power; and they were under his influence: And we have some reason to conclude, from Dugald joining the King of Norway so readily, and serving him with so much activity, that none of his lands lay on the mainland of Scotland, and that he had given no hostages; consequently that the more distant isles were his, such as Lewis, Harris, Uist, &c. The King of Scotland had hostages of Skye in his possession; and perhaps this island, or part of it, belonged to John, who was averse to commit them to the mercy of the Scottish King, by voluntarily abandoning his allegiance.

The reluctance of Angus and Margad to submit to Haco is illustrated by the chamberlain roll already alluded to, where the following articles appear.

In the account of William Earl of Menteth, sheriff of Ayr, anno 1263 to 1266:—"In expensis filii Anegi filii Dovenaldi ob-  
"sidis, per xxvi septimanas, cum nutrice et alia ancilla, lxxix s.  
"x d."

In the account of E. de Montealto, sheriff of Forfar, for the year 1264:—"Item, in expensis filii Murchardi, per xxiiii sep-  
"tinmas, xxi s." These two are plainly the hostages of Angus and Margad at this time in the King of Scotland's hands.

And in the account already quoted of Laurence le Grant, sheriff of Inverness, of the year 1263, there are charged, as already noticed, the expences of two hostages of Skye, at three *oboli* a day, with the expences of their keepers. These must have been the hostages of John, and help to account for his reluctance to submit to Haco.

These last hostages must have been obtained before the time of Haco's expedition, and probably upon the occasion of the recent attacks upon the Isles, which induced Haco to undertake it.

There is further mention of the same Angus of Ilay, or *Angus filius Dovenaldi*, in other records of this period, which it may be useful to mention here.

In the *Catalogus Munimentorum*, printed in Robertson's Index, (Introduction, page xi.) being an inventory of Scottish writings and records previous to the death of Alexander III. and which were no doubt carried to England by Edward I. and lost there the following articles occur, which certainly relate to the same Angus: "Scriptum obligatorium *Anegi Dovenaldi*, quod exhere-  
"detur si forisfecerit contra regem Scotiae." And in another

catalogue of writings, which plainly relate to the period previous to the death of Alexander III. page xxii, there occurs, " Litera " Baronum de Ergadia, quod fideliter servient regi sub poena ex- " heredationis, contra *Anegum filium Dovenaldi*; quod omnes in- " surgent contra ipsum, si non fecerit voluntatem regis." We have no materials to shew the dates of these writings, farther than that they must have been prior to the death of Alexander III. But they evidently relate to the subduing and to the submission of Angus of Ilay, and were probably the consequence of Alexander's operations against the vassals of Norway in the Isles, previous to the expedition under consideration.

Farther, with regard to the family of this Angus of Ilay, son of Donald, we have other memorials. In the *rotuli Scotiae*, anno August 30. 1295. 1295, we find *Malcom, son of Angus*, claiming Cantyre from John Baliol as his inheritance, who is summoned to appear before Edward at Westminster, to answer for not doing him justice as to that matter. Afterwards orders are given by Edward to *Alexander de Insulis*, as bailiff of Cantyre, to put *Malcom* into possession of these lands. This was at the time of John Baliol's being deposed by Edward. We may reasonably conclude that, when Bruce gained the power, he would not allow a vassal of Edward to remain in possession of Cantyre, and that he would of course expel Malcom, or his successor, and put an adherent of his own into possession.

In Barbour's Bruce mention is made of *Angus of Isle and Bute*, who was present at the battle of Bannockburn on the part of Bruce in the year 1314. He is called by the genealogical writers, *Lord of the Isles*; but I consider him to be most probably a son or nephew of Angus Macdonald of Cantyre, of whom we have been just speaking. The whole branches of this family

were at this time, and long after, distinguished by the surname or title of *Isles* or *De Insulis*. I am told, besides, that the island of Ilay is called *Isles* by the Highlanders, which accounts for Barbour's designing him Angus of *Isles and Bute*, without implying his being *Lord of the Isles*. It is a certain fact, that the Chief and several other members of the family of the Isles adhered to the English interest, long after Bruce had made good his title to the Crown.

Accordingly, we find that Robert Bruce granted to his own adherents the lands and territories of the Lords of the Isles: Particularly, in the index of the lost rolls published by Mr Robertson, there occur, in the first roll of Robert Bruce, the following entries relating to this Angus of Ilay, who was at Bannockburn:—

" No. 51. Carta Angusii de Lyle, the lands of Kinbaldein and " Ardnamurchin, Inverness.

" No. 52. Angusii de Lyle, of the lands of Lochaber.

" No. 54. Angusii de Lyle, of Unroweris and Glengowers."

Other extensive parts of the territory of the Lord of the Isles are granted to Hugh de Ross and others. In short, this Angus had attached himself to Bruce, while Malcom, son and heir of the former Angus, as well as the Lord of the Isles, took the English side; in consequence of which their lands were given by Robert to his own adherents.

But, it not being the object of these remarks to discuss the genealogy of these chiefs, we return to the detachment of fifty ships which had been sent to the Mull of Cantyre. A castle in the south part of Cantyre surrendered to the Norwegians, which was afterwards conferred on King Dugald. It was probably Donaverty, or Castle Kilkerran. The detachment plundered and wasted the country, till orders from Haco, in consequence of the

submission of Angus, put an end to these operations, and the ships rejoined Haco at the island of Gigha.

The account next mentions, that Haco sent Andrew Pott south to Bute with some small vessels to join the five he had formerly sent there. Now, Haco was still at Gigha, on the west side of Cantyre, and Bute lies within and on the east side of Cowal, and to the north of Cantyre; so that the ships going from Gigha to Bute had to sail first south to the extremity of Cantyre, then round the Mull, and so *north* to Bute. To be sure they must have sailed *south* first of all; and if that is supposed to be the meaning of the passage, it is in some degree correct; but the expression *sailing south*, applied to a voyage from Gigha to Bute, wherein the Mull of Cantyre must be doubled, is inaccurate, since more of the voyage is in a north than in a south direction.

See Note 1.

In Bute they took a castle, which can be only the Castle of Rothsay, situated towards the north-east end of the island; and this capture is mentioned by Fordun.

Here one Roderick came to Haco, claiming Bute as his inheritance. He is called a *skipstiornar* (or shipmaster)—no doubt implying one who practised piracy. The King of Scotland, or the Stewart, had refused to give him investiture of the island, and perhaps he was a descendant of a former proprietor dispossessed by the Stewart. On this account, it is said, he committed many ravages, and killed many people—that is, was in a state of hostility against the King of Scotland, who had forfeited him. Haco received him and two brothers as his vassals; and Roderick's first act was to murder nine of the Scotch garrison of Rothsay, as soon as they were out of the protection of the Norwegians; because (says the Norwegian Chronicle) he thought he owed them no good will. This Roderick was probably a member of the family

of the Isles. Bute was before this time in the possession of the Stewart; but the ground of Roderick's claim is not stated.

Roderick and the Norwegians passed from Bute into Scotland (probably into Cowal, which is the nearest part of the mainland) and burned many houses and several towns. But if we may judge from the present state of Cowal, and indeed of the country near it, the houses and towns he burnt could not be of great value. A few weeks would be sufficient to rebuild them; and the only effects of value, the cattle, would for the most part be quickly driven off to a distance.

Haco, upon his departure, gave Roderick the island of Bute, which certainly he did not keep long, since the whole islands were re-conquered in the course of next summer.

Haco now sailed round the Mull of Cantyre; and this is the first time he came within the frith of Clyde. The Scottish historians say his fleet consisted of 160 ships; and when we consider that he had with him all the forces of the King of Man, and of Dugald and the other Island chiefs, it would appear the number is not much exaggerated. He anchored in the Sound of Arran, (Kilbrandan Sound, betwixt that island and Cantyre) where some negotiation took place in order to a peace, by means of friars, but without effect. At this place Haco dismissed John with presents, who promised to endeavour to accomplish a peace between the two kings.

It is worth noticing, as to the negotiations, that in the proposals made Haco's demand as a preliminary was, that he should have all the islands to the west of Scotland. The King of Scotland declared, on his part, that he would not relinquish Bute, Arran, and the two Cumbrays—all which are within the frith of Clyde, overlooking the coast of Ayrshire, and, in some parts,

within two miles of it. Consequently, we conclude that Alexander was the party most moderate in his pretensions, being willing to give up all the Out-isles. So that the failure of the treaty seems rather unjustly attributed by the Norwegians to the Scots declining accommodation, because the summer was drawing to a close, when the fleet of Haco must retire from the coast; for it is not said that Haco was disposed to give up the islands within the frith, the possession of which afforded him the power of troubling Scotland at his pleasure, and invading the country with every advantage, while Man and all the Western Isles were to continue in his power.

The treaty being broken off, Haco sailed in with all his forces past the Cumbrays—that is, he brought his fleet into the Sound lying between the Cumbrays and the coast of Ayrshire, part of which is called Fairlie Road. He most probably came in through the passage between the Larger and the Lesser Cumbrays. This movement indicated an intention to land in Ayrshire.

At this time, too, there was an attempt at negotiation, and Haco sent envoys to the mainland of Scotland for that purpose, but still without effect. Upon this Haco sent a message to put an end to the truce, also challenging the Scots to fight him.

He then made a considerable detachment from the fleet, with a view to a diversion, and to distract the attention of the Scots, and divide their forces. For this purpose he sent sixty ships up Clyde into Lochlong, under the command of the King of Man, Dugald and his brother Allan, Angus, Margad, and some Norwegians; so that it is probable the most of this detachment consisted of the forces of Man and the Hebrides, Haco keeping the Norwegians with himself. There must, one would think, have

been at least as many ships, or rather a greater number, left with Haco at the Cumbrays.

This detachment sailed up to the head of Lochlong, where there is a narrow isthmus between it and Lochlomond. Over this they drew their boats, and plundered and burnt the country of Lennox or Dumbartonshire, which lies round Lochlomond.—Allan is said to have marched *far over into Scotland*, (his course must have been into Dumbarton and Stirling shires,) killed a number of the inhabitants, and taken many hundred head of cattle. The Norwegians then returned to their ships; but a storm destroyed ten of them in Lochlong. Of this detachment up Lochlong, and incursion into Dumbarton and Stirlingshire, there is no mention in the Scotch historians.

The Norwegian account, returning to Haco, says, he still lay in the *Hebrides*, which is an evident error of a transcriber; for it is just before said that he had sailed in past the Cumbrays, and, of course, he lay then between those Islands and the coast of Ayrshire, whence he had sent the detachment. We ought, therefore, to read *Cumbrays* instead of *Hebrides*.

It was now Michaelmas, or 29th September, which this year fell on a Saturday. On the following Monday night (1st October) a violent storm came on, attributed by the Norwegians to the incantations of the Scotch witches, though naturally to be looked for at this season. It is most probable that this storm blew from the south or south-west; and, by those who are acquainted with the coast, this is considered as indisputable. Such a wind made the coast of Ayrshire a lee-shore with respect to the fleet lying in the Sound.

Some of the ships began to drag their anchors; and one of them, a transport, ran foul of the King's ship. The transport's

Saturday, 29th  
September.  
Monday, 1st  
October.

Tuesday, 2d  
October.

cable was cut, and next morning she ran ashore on the Ayrshire coast, along with a galley. Torfæus says, they went ashore *on the Island*, which would imply Cumbray; but the wind would not drive the vessel in that direction. The Norwegian chronicle, to which we all along refer, says *upon Scotland*, which, in the circumstances, is what must have necessarily happened. For, with the wind in the direction we have supposed, the vessels would necessarily drive northward, towards the bay of Largs, and come ashore not far south of that village.

The storm continued, and the King's ship was secured by more anchors being put out. Haco himself went out to the Cumbrays in his boat, and ordered mass to be sung, perhaps with a view to counteract the operations of the witches. In the meantime, the fleet was, by the storm, driven up the channel towards Largs. Some of the ships were forced to cut away their masts, and five of them ran aground. The King's ship also drove; and it was with difficulty that she at last was brought up, after eight anchors had been put out.

The Scots on shore, who were no doubt observing every motion of the Norwegian fleet, did not omit to take advantage of its distress, while parting from its anchors, and driving upon a lee-shore during a violent storm. The main army was not in sight; but such as were at hand, perhaps the advance, or parties posted to observe the motions of the fleet, attacked the ships that were driven ashore with missile weapons; while Haco sent in boats with reinforcements, which, in such circumstances, was a service of difficulty and danger. Haco himself at last came ashore, when the Scots retired. The Norwegians remained on shore during the night, for the protection of their ships; but the

Scots plundered the transport that was aground—implying that it was stranded at some distance from the other ships.

In the morning of next day, when we may suppose the weather had moderated, the king himself again landed with a numerous reinforcement. They lightened the transport, and towed it out into the road. Soon after, the Scottish army appeared; and it was so numerous, that it was supposed the King of Scotland was present, though it is doubtful whether this was the fact. At any rate, it is agreed among the Scotch historians that Alexander, then Stewart of Scotland, commanded on this occasion. King Alexander was then only twenty years of age. Probably the army consisted chiefly of the Stewart's vassals and retainers, as his territory was more immediately threatened by the Norwegian invasion, and the enemy's fleet was now upon his coast.

When the ground near the village of Largs is examined and compared with the Norwegian account of the expedition, it does not seem difficult to ascertain pretty accurately the precise spot where these transactions took place; and which will appear more clearly from a sketch that accompanies this paper, drawn upon the spot. It has been already observed, that the wind in all probability blew up the Fairlie Road, towards the bay and village of Largs, so as to force the vessels that drove from their anchors ashore to the south of the village, most likely southward of the rows of houses called Brisbane Place and the Crescent, that is, in the space betwixt G and M, which last marks the house of Kelburn. But the cairns, &c. to be afterwards noticed, shew that the contest principally took place near G, between the sea shore and the houses of Haily, on the high ground marked J. Here, also, we find some level ground next the shore, and high ground at a moderate distance from the shore, and beyond it high hills

Wednesday  
Oct. 3.

immediately to the east. It is also most probable that the Scottish army approached by the Kilbirnie road, leading down the hill towards the shore and the village; and this agrees with the tradition of the country, which says that the Scotch army lay the night before the battle at a place called Camphill on this road. Those who had previously attacked the Norwegians were, no doubt, light troops in advance of the main body. Having communicated my suppositions as to these matters to persons resident on the spot, I am assured they may be depended upon as certain facts. In the direction supposed, *tumuli* with human bones, stones set up, and other marks of a battle are found.

Having thus endeavoured to ascertain the place where the principal engagement happened, we may follow out the rest of the transactions narrated by the Norwegian Chronologer.

Haco, on coming ashore with his reinforcement, appears to have stationed a party on the high ground at a small distance from the shore, no doubt with a view to cover as far as possible his main position taken up close to the shore, so as to protect his stranded ships. This advanced body must have occupied ground near the site of, or rather nearer the shore than, the houses of Haily marked J on the sketch; and the place bears to this day marks of a considerable struggle, in the cairns and stones, though some of them have been very lately removed. The Scots skirmished with the Norwegians at this post, while the Norwegian chiefs persuaded Haco to return to his ships in the road.

It is said that 800 or 900 men remained on shore, whereof 200 were posted at the rising ground before mentioned, and the rest down on the beach, with the purpose of defending the stranded ships.

The appearance of the Scotch army is represented as highly respectable. It was conjectured to consist of 1500 horsemen, (some manuscripts read 500.) All the horses had breast plates, and there were many Spanish steeds in complete armour. Besides, there was a numerous army of foot soldiers well accoutred with bows and spears. When we reflect that in all probability this army consisted mostly, if not entirely, of the Stewart's own vassals and retainers, and their attendants, collected out of the neighbouring country, and that they provided and maintained themselves, we must wonder that the Stewart could collect even 500 cavalry, so well appointed as these are described to be. It gives an idea of prosperity in the country, and wealth of individuals, which otherwise we would not be apt to entertain.

The Norwegians on the hill were attacked and driven in confusion from their post towards the shore, though the author is inclined to palliate the matter as much as possible. They began, he says, to fall back slowly and in good order, so as not to exhibit the appearance of flight. But, being pressed by superior numbers, and assailed with showers of missiles, they were hastily forced down upon their friends on the beach, whom they threw into confusion, so that they rushed to their boats, some of which sunk, and a number of men were drowned. Others pushed the boats off from the land; and the author adds that, though called on by their companions to return, few of them did so. Such of the Norwegians as kept their post at first wheeled about towards the sea. Here Haco of Steini, a relation of King Haco, fell, who is mentioned by Fordun, though his name is not given. However, the mention of the circumstance by him implies that he had before him some authentic materials, since he agrees in this and some other particulars with the Norwegian chronicle.

The Norwegians who remained on the shore were now severely pressed by the Scots. They were driven southward along the shore, towards or beyond Kelburn, away from their vessels; but they continued to resist, forming themselves in a circle. The tradition of the country points out the *Kepping burn* at U as the place to which the Norwegians were driven, a little below Kelburn.

At the attack upon the Norwegians on the shore, there fell a Scottish knight called by the Norwegians *Perus* and *Ferash*, which are corruptions of his real name. For we find, both from Fordun and Winton, that he was called *Piers*, or Peter de Currie. He is described as being distinguished both by birth and fortune; and that he was armed and accoutred in the most magnificent manner, having a helmet plated with gold, and adorned with precious stones; and the rest of his armour was of a piece with this. This knight distinguished himself in the rash way then common, by galloping up to, and along the Norwegian line, and then returning to his own friends; but at last Andrew Nicolson, one of the Norwegian commanders, cut him down, by severing his thigh with his sword, and stript him of his beautiful belt. The chronicle of Winton says that Peter Currie "amang the rapis was all to rent,"—implying that he was killed in attacking the ships, when the Norwegians on the shore were thrown into confusion, and afterwards pushed southward from their station. Hence we learn that the fight was maintained by the Norwegians from their stranded ships, as well as by their detachment on the shore; and that the Scots were exerting themselves to get possession of the ships.

The fall of Peter de Currie, and his beautiful belt, are commemorated by the Norwegian poets as matter of exultation: But

it is remarkable that no other Scotchman's name is mentioned by our historians as concerned in this affair, which shews how imperfect their materials and information were.

With respect to the family of Peter de Currie, we may here <sup>Note IV.</sup> notice, that there is a document extant in the Chartulary of Melros, about the year 1205, wherein Petrus de Currie testifies, that he has become a brother of the House of Melros, and promises that he will never for the future oppose them;—that he has given up the dispute that arose between them in the year 1205 as to the lands of Dalshangan and Bargouer, and these he gives over to the convent, by presenting his charter on the high altar; and he assigns them the third part of his substance; and that he shall, dead or alive, come to the house of Melros. We may safely presume that Peter de Currie, who fell at Largs, was descended of the person who made this grant. The lands of Bargouer and Dalshangan lie in the division of Ayrshire called Kyle.

The badness of the weather made it difficult to afford assistance to the Norwegians, who were thus distressed by the superior numbers of the Scots. However, two reinforcements gained the shore under the command of Ronald and Eilif of Naustadale. Ronald was driven back to the ships, but Eilif is said to have behaved heroically, so that the Norwegians began again to get into order. However, the Scots took possession of the rising ground from which the advanced guard of the Norwegians had been driven. From this point there was a continual skirmishing with stones and other missile weapons. At last, towards evening, the Norwegians made a desperate charge against the Scots on the high ground, and drove them from it, when they retired to the mountain behind it.

From what is stated, we may presume that the reinforcements attacked at two points, and in two divisions, one of which near the ships was repulsed; but the other, probably farther south, and on the flank of the Scots, so far succeeded as to cause the Scots to leave the shore, and betake themselves to the higher ground, from which also they were afterwards driven.

There is a place called the Killingcraig, marked S on the sketch, where tradition reports that part of the battle took place, and where it is probable the Scots, making a stand in their retreat from the rising ground, occasioned the fall of some of both sides. It is a little farther from the shore, towards the mountains, than the rising ground.

After having thus driven back the Scots, the Norwegians immediately took to their boats (as they had reason to expect the Scots would turn back upon them with increased numbers) and returned to their ships; and thus an end was put to the battle with the close of the day.

The author of the Chronicle shews here and there a partiality to his countrymen, who appear upon the whole to have behaved with courage and firmness, under very unfavourable circumstances. It is very probable that the immediate reembarkation of the Norwegians was occasioned by the appearance, or reasonable apprehension of a new attack upon them by a more formidable body of the Scots, whose main army was at hand; as they appear neither to have proposed to maintain the advanced post after carrying it, nor to have any guard on shore to protect the vessels that were stranded, about which the whole day's battle had been maintained. It appears also quite unaccountable how the Scots forbore to destroy those ships immediately, which, after the Norwegians were embarked, there were no means of pre-

venting: Or, are we to suppose that the stranded ships were still in a condition to defend themselves by means of men put on board? These doubts must remain uncleared up, since nothing is said about them. But it is evident that the Norwegian narrative passes rather rapidly over the latter circumstances of the conflict. It appears pretty plain that the two last reinforcements, headed by Ronald and Eilif, were the means of saving the whole Norwegians on shore from destruction, overpowered and surrounded by a superior force, although only the advanced parties of the Scottish army seem to have been engaged. From looking at the ground, there does not appear to be space for considerable bodies of men to act in a combined manner. The Norwegians had also a great disadvantage, in the want of cavalry to oppose to a formidable force of that kind which the Scots possessed. All these were reasons and considerations for the reembarkation of the Norwegians, who could only expect destruction or capture, if they remained on shore all night; therefore, we find they took to their boats, and gained their ships, notwithstanding the bad weather which then prevailed.

There appears to have been nothing like a pitched battle, which our historians suppose; but only an irregular skirmishing between the shore and the high grounds. The reinforcements enabled the Norwegians to make head again; and, with the object in view of getting off to their ships, they seem to have made the charge upon the Scots at the rising ground, which succeeded so as to allow them to embark.

It is likely, however, that the Norwegians entirely abandoned the shore, the stranded ships, and the dead bodies of their countrymen that had fallen. What prevented the Scots from destroying the ships immediately does not appear; only this account

bears, that the Norwegians themselves burnt them some days after.

Thursday,  
4th October.

The author proceeds to tell us that next morning the Norwegians returned in search of the bodies of the slain; and the names are given of a number of Norwegians of consequence who had been killed. It is also said that Haco ordered his dead to be carried to a church.

Although nothing is said on the subject, yet it is more than probable that this could only have happened in consequence of a truce granted for that purpose, as the Scots, since the preceding evening, were undoubtedly in full possession of the shore; and they had a numerous army both of horse and foot upon the spot, ready to prevent a landing by force. Besides, the collecting and burying so many dead must have taken considerable time. We may therefore conclude, with good appearance of reason, that the burial of the dead was done under a truce granted for that purpose, which it would have been held improper, and even cruel to refuse.

We have no account in this chronicle of the number of slain on either side, though the names of several Norwegians of rank are given. The slain and wounded must have been numerous in proportion to those engaged, because the fighting was sometimes close: It continued from morning till night, and the Norwegians were repeatedly reinforced. The number of cairns we are now to mention, implies that the number of slain was considerable; and the places where they are found shew that they fell in all the space from the sea side up to the Killingcraig, above the house of Haily.

We shall now attend to the monuments of the dead, some of which have but recently been removed.

In the *first* place, with regard to the dead that are said to have been carried to a church, the only church near was that of Largs, which appears from the chartularies of Glasgow and Paisley to have existed before 1263. Just without the church-yard wall there is a considerable cairn, where we may suppose a number of the Norwegian dead were buried. That the bodies buried here were not of the Scots, may be inferred from this, that these would have been buried within the church or church-yard, and in graves, according to the usual custom of the country. But the chronicle makes it pretty clear that this and the other cairns were raised over the Norwegians; because it says that no account could be given of the slain of the Scots; for, as any one fell, he was taken and removed to the woods. Consequently, we are not to look for cairns wherein the Scots were buried.

The owner of the ground had occasion to dig into this cairn, when building an outhouse, and found human bones. Thus, the cairn affords testimony, agreeable to that of the chronicle, that Haco did bury some of his dead at least at the church of Largs. The old church was lately demolished, and a new church built in another place; but the church-yard is still the burial place of the parish.

Other five *tumuli* or cairns are marked on the sketch;—three behind Brisbane Place, and the houses called the Crescent; one farther up; and one behind the House of Haily. In these have been found bones, pieces of silver, &c.

The last mentioned cairn may be considered as the most remarkable. It has been uncovered by Mr Wilson, the owner of the land, and it was found to cover a circular building of stones, having an opening on one side, with a kind of passage between two straight walls. In the centre were found the remains of a

body, and around it of a number of others, to the amount, as supposed, of thirty. The centre circle was covered by a large round flat stone. The stone building still remains; but the earth that formed the mound upon it has been carried away.

The situations of other two cairns are shewn, that were very lately removed for the sake of employing the stones in them for making roads. They were on the side of the road leading from Largs towards Haily, and in the tract where, we have assumed, the chief part of the battle took place.

There are two cairns on the north side of the water of Gogo behind the village, upon which Sir Thomas Brisbane has erected pillars for meridian points, to be seen from his observatory at Brisbane House. I have not learned that these cairns were ever opened; and, as the Norwegian narrative does not imply that any part of the battle took place in this quarter, we are not warranted in supposing that they had their origin in Haco's operations.

There were several erect stones also on the space we have assigned for the field of battle; and one still remains behind Mr Cairnie's house in the Crescent.

To erect the cairns, and particularly the stone building in that behind Haily House, must have taken some time, and could only be done under the sanction of a truce. For it is not likely that the Scots, after the departure of Haco, would put themselves to the trouble of making such monuments for their enemies. Their own dead would be buried by their friends in graves and in church-yards, in the usual manner of the country. The cairns in the open fields, and on the outside of the church-yard, imply that strangers are buried there.

After five days, probably employed by the Norwegians in burying their dead, and erecting cairns, Haco weighed anchor, and brought his ships close under the Cumbrays, thereby avoiding the risk of being driven ashore on the Ayrshire coast, being taught by experience to avoid that danger. Here he was joined by the ships which had been sent up Lochlong, whose transactions we have noticed, where ten of them had been wrecked, probably by the same storm which distressed the fleet at Largs. Tuesday, Oct. 9.

On the fast day following, which we presume to be Friday, Friday, Oct. 12. Haco is said to have sent people ashore to burn the stranded ships—a piece of trouble which the Scots might have saved him, unless we suppose they wished to get them off, and apply them to their own use; and it is somewhat unaccountable how the Scots, with an army on the shore, should not have opposed those who were sent on this service. That day Haco sailed back past Cumbray to Melansay, where he remained some nights. Melansay must be the island situated in the bay of Lamlash, on the east side of Arran. It is called Holy Island by the Highlanders; and in it is a cave called St Mollans, from which the Norwegians have named the island and bay. Here Haco was again opposed by his army, in a proposal he made to go to Ireland, to assist the Ostmen, or Norwegian Colonists of Ireland, who had sought his assistance against the English. He was obliged to give up this design, and sail for the Hebrides, being short of provisions.

Leaving Lamlash, he proceeded to Sanday, thence to the Mull of Cantyre, and from that north to Gigha. He then sailed to the Sound of Ilay. Upon this island he imposed a contribution of three hundred head of cattle, though it belonged to the aforesaid Angus who had submitted to him. He sailed again the first

Sunday in winter (which we may presume to be in the beginning of November), and met a storm, which obliged him to make for Kerrera.

Here messages passed between him and King John, who probably was at this time in Mull; but no agreement or submission followed. The Norwegians committed depredations in Mull; and some of them, as well as of the inhabitants, were killed. Seeing all the chiefs of the island had submitted to Haco except John, it would seem that Mull was part of his territory, and considered as an enemy's country. Haco then came to the Calf of Mull, where Dugald and his brother Allan took leave of him, after getting grants of the estates of King John in the Isles. Dugald also got the castle in Kintyre which had been taken by Guthorm, supposed to be Kilkerran or Donaverty. Roderick got Bute, which he had claimed, and Margad got Arran. All these grants were certainly rendered null next year, when Alexander reconquered the Isles. Previous to this, the King of Man had left the fleet; of course he had remained but a short time after his arrival from Lochlong with Dugald and Allan.

From the Calf of Mull, Haco sailed to Rona, and from thence to Westerford in Skye, where he ordered the Islanders to supply him with provisions. Then, passing Cape Wrath, he arrived at Dyrness, and ordered the fleet to anchor in Giaford. No accident is mentioned in all this course, except that at Giaford a boat's crew, that had been sent ashore, was cut off by the inhabitants. It would have been unnecessary to have taken any notice of this, had it not been that, in a very popular work, mention is made of a tradition that King Haco was killed by a Colin Mackenzie, ancestor of the Earls of Seaforth, in the Sound between Skye and the mainland. This must be a mistake, because Haco

Minstrelsy of the  
Border, vol. iii.  
page 370.

certainly was not killed there. But as tradition, though always incorrect, has generally some foundation in fact, perhaps the story of the loss of the boat's crew at Dyrness may, notwithstanding the distance of place, have given rise to the tradition alluded to.

From Giaford, which must be near Dyrness, Haco reached Orkney; and, having sent home most of his forces, he resolved to remain there all winter. But the fatigues and anxiety attending the expedition had materially injured his health. He was taken ill at Kirkwall; and, after some days illness, died on Saturday after the feast of St Lucia, which this year happened on a Thursday. That festival is held on 13th December; so that the date of Haco's death is fixed to the 15th of that month, in the year 1263. His body was deposited in the Cathedral church of St Magnus at Kirkwall, and, in the following spring, was carried to Norway, and interred there.

Some of our historians (particularly Buchanan) say, that Haco came to Ayr, and there landed an army of 20,000 men; that he took and plundered Bute and Arran; then came to Largs, where he was defeated.

According to the Norwegian account, he did not land at Ayr. His ulterior object seems to have been to make an impression on the mainland and interior of Scotland, and therefore he went up the Frith as far as Largs; and if he could have established himself in that country, he might have supported his army during winter. Having forced the island chiefs to submit to him, and conquered Kintyre and the islands within the Frith, he could have no object in view by sailing so far up the Frith, but that of landing in Scotland, and forcing the Scottish king to submit to his terms, viz. an unlimited surrender of all pretensions to the Isles. But

for the misfortunes that overtook his fleet at Largs and Lochlong, and the unfortunate encounter with the Scots at the former place, he must have certainly attempted a landing at Largs, which is well adapted for that purpose. Probably he only waited for the return of the detachment from Lochlong to make the attempt, when the storm put his fleet into confusion, and forced him into an unexpected and disadvantageous engagement.

Fordun mentions that Haco came to Ayr, but says nothing of any landing or other operations there. There is some reason to suspect that the word *Are* in Fordun, is an erroneous reading for *Aran*, of which Haco certainly took possession. The other Scotch historians give similar accounts with Buchanan, with variations not worth noticing, since it is plain they are all erroneous and defective. Fordun and Winton, the two oldest, are short and imperfect upon this subject, though they come nearest to the Norwegian account, which is the subject of our present consideration.

Perhaps it was fortunate for the Scots that Haco passed by Ayr, where he might have landed, and, in all probability, have made himself master of the town and castle, and established his army (which was then entire) in the country. That castle had been built by William the Lyon, as a barrier against the Galloway men, with whom he was repeatedly at war; and he erected and endowed the burgh of Ayr at the same time, as a frontier garrison, giving the burgesses a grant of land for maintaining it. It appears, however, that on this occasion, though under the apprehension of a formidable invasion by a foreign fleet and army, they declined doing their duty, and refused to garrison the castle.

It will no doubt be said, that so serious an imputation against the loyalty and public spirit of the burgesses of Ayr of that pe-

riod ought to be supported by good evidence. Accordingly, the fact appears from the foresaid account of Walter Earl of Mentheth, sheriff of Ayr, which contains the following article or claim of credit: "Et similiter petit sibi locari expensas vi<sup>xx</sup> (120) servientium, quos tenuit in castro de Air, per iii septimanas, *pro defectu burgensium*, qui debuerunt intrasse castrum ad tuicionem ejusdem, secundum mandatum Domini regis: Et dictus comes dicit *quod noluerunt*. Et, si hoc probari poterit, dicti burgenses solvent predicto comiti expensas dictorum servientium; alioquin dictus Comes solvet easdem expensas." It is unlucky that Lord Haddington, in taking notes from this roll, which is now irretrievably lost, has not mentioned what sum was claimed as the wages of 120 hired soldiers for three weeks, in the year 1263.

In these extracts, however, there are several articles respecting arms and provisions laid in for the defence of the castle of Ayr. The sheriff takes credit for the following articles:—

"Item, In tribus duodenis baculorum de taxo emptis ad officium balistarum, xiiii s. iii d.

"Item, Comes petit sibi allocari custumas de xi<sup>xx</sup> (220) petris ferri ad fabricam mille septingentis et septuaginta querellis, et fabricam de ix<sup>xx</sup> (180) [petris] ferri."

The iron must have been imported from abroad, and the sheriff must have paid the customs due upon it, for which he here claims allowance in his public accounts.

In none of the accounts of this expedition is there any mention of ships belonging to the Scots. A total want of shipping is a strange circumstance; though we can readily grant that it is not likely the Scots could then fit out a fleet that could possibly contend with the overwhelming naval force brought by

Haco. But that the Scottish king had *some* ships, appears from the before mentioned account of the sheriff of Ayr, who makes the following charge: "Et quatuor hominibus vigilantibus naves Domini regis, per xxiii septimanas, xvi s. ix d. ob."

And again, "Item, Petit sibi locari lx li. xv s. viii d. quos posuit in *factura navium* Domini regis apud Ayr: Et vii marce quas exposuit in scissione x<sup>xx</sup>. (200) remorum, et in *factura eorundem*, et in *carriagio eorundem*."

Besides, a considerable quantity of provisions were laid in for the Castle of Ayr, as appears from the same accounts, in which there are the following articles:—

"Et in sale empto ad warnisturam castri, xx s."

"Item, in decem celdris farine avenatice ad dictam warnisturam, x li."

"Item, in sex celdris frumenti emptis ad dictam warnisturam, ix li. iii s."

"Et de xviii li. xvi s. v d. pro vaccis captis de hominibus de Kyle et de Carrik: Et qui homines detinuerunt tantundem firme sue de termino Sancti Martini predicto."

"Item, pro quadraginta sex vaccis captis ad servicium Domini regis apud Brewevill (forte Barnweill), ix li. iiii s."

The safety of other Castles was not neglected. In the account of Alexander Cumyn, Earl of Buchan, bailie of Invery (perhaps Inverury or Inverness), there is this article: "Item, in cibo octo *servicium commorantium in castro, de precepto Domini regis, per sex menses, tempore adventus regis Norwagie, scilicet, ciiii s.*" It thus appears that each man was furnished with provisions for thirteen shillings during the space of six months.

In like manner, as to the Castle of Stirling, there is this article in the account of John Lamberton, sheriff of Stirling: "Item, in *expensis hominum vigilantium in castro, tempore quo rex Nor-*

*vegie fuit in partibus istis, xxxv s. vi d.*" The detachment up Lochlong, across Lochlomond, and *far over into Scotland*, by Allan and Dugald, helps to account for this article: for Stirling Castle might then be considered in some hazard from them.

"Item, in *mundatione armorum Domini regis, xiv s. viii d.*"

Likewise, with respect to the Castle of Wigton, which might be supposed particularly exposed to the Norwegian fleet, there are the following entries in the account of Alexander Cumyn, Earl of Buchan, sheriff of Wigton: "Expens. &c. de quibus attornantur quadraginta marce Magistro Petro Cementario, ita ut non excedat xl marcas sine speciali mandato Domini regis, ad reparandum domos infra castrum de Wigtun, per visum proborum hominum, &c. Et de centum solidis residuis perficiet defectus dicti operis de Wigtun, prout in principio dicti operis per concilium Domini regis fuit ordinatum. Et de dictis decem marcis, remisit eidem Patricio Dominus rex quinque marcas ex gratia sua, propter maturacionem operis facti, *propter adventum Norwagiensium.*"

That a look-out was kept for the Norwegian fleet before its arrival, is shewn by the foresaid account of the sheriff of Ayr, anno 1263. "Et in *expensis nunciorum explorantium regem Norwagie, per tres vices, xxiv s. viii d. ob.*"

Corresponding to what we are told by the Norwegian account, that friars passed with messages between the Kings, we find an article in the account of Lawrence le Grant, sheriff of Inverness: "Item, in *expensis Fratrum predicatorum euncium in nuncium Domini regis versus Norvegiam, xlvii s. vii d.*" And, in the account of John de Cambrun, sheriff of Perth, anno 1264: "Item, in *expensis Fratrum Malysii et Alexandri de Berwyk, euncium in nuncium regis ultra mare, xxxvii s. i d.*"

That Government, even in those days, found it necessary to borrow money for the public service, may be gathered from the following article in the sheriff of Perth's account: "Item, vi libræ solutæ Cristino de Insula, de l. libris quas burgus de Perth ac commodavit Domino regi." This Cristin was, no doubt, of the family of the Kings or Lords of the Isles, (probably of the Argyle branch, descended of Somerled), whom it was thought eligible to attach by favours to the Scottish interest and service.

The death of Haco, and the disappointment of the objects of his expectation, left the Isles, and even the King of Man, entirely in Alexander's power. Accordingly, next summer, he reconquered the Isles, and forced them to submit to his authority. That the Earl of Mar, and the men of Galloway among others, were employed in this service, appears from the account of that Earl as chamberlain, for the year 1264, where these articles occur: "Item, Super-expendit xxx li. xiii s. vi d. in cibo ducentorum serviencium, quos dictus Comes de Mar deduxit secum in *Insulas*, per preceptum Domini regis, in æstate, anno mclxiiii.—" Memorandum, quod dictus Comes de Mar recepit de firmis de Kintyre, de termino Pentecostes, anno mclxiiii. viginti vacas pro tribus libris, et eas tradidit hominibus Galwathiæ pro defectu victualium."

It may be thought that these quotations are too numerous; but it will perhaps serve for an excuse, that the roll from whence they are taken is lost; and the extracts made by Lord Haddington from it are the only relics we have left of all the records of this kind before the death of Alexander III. which were lost by the absurd measure of Cromwell, who caused them to be transported to England.

It is usual for our genealogical writers to set forth that the

chiefs at this period, of the various families of which they treat, did good service in the battle of Largs. But we see that none of the old accounts mention any names of Scotchmen concerned, besides the Stewart and Peter de Curry. Therefore, what our genealogists say as to others is merely *gratis dictum*, resting upon no authority, but that they supposed it probable; but it is so only with respect to families in the west of Scotland, for it is most likely that the force which opposed Haco at Largs was raised exclusively in that quarter.

One reflection on the conduct of the expedition may be risked, which is, that Haco seems to have lost time unnecessarily by remaining so long in the out-isles, taking the submission of the chiefs there, whereby the summer was spent before he entered the Firth of Clyde, which, of course, was to be the scene of his most important operations; and for which, one would think, he ought to have kept his fleet and army entire, and not harassed his people by keeping them so long afloat. By reason of this delay, he encountered the storms which were naturally to be looked for in the fall of the year, and left himself no resource in case of any untoward occurrence. There is no doubt the Scots perceived the advantage this conduct gave them, and concluded that it was unnecessary to risk any thing in offensive measures, while Haco was in the out-isles; because, as the summer and autumn passed on without his establishing himself in force on the mainland of Scotland, he would probably be forced to leave the coast on the approach of winter. This seems to be the best way of accounting for no appearance of active opposition till the Norwegian fleet appeared in the Fairlie Road, where the Scots were ready to oppose a landing, and obtained an advantage by means of the bad weather, equally effectual as a complete victory. Had

Haco been allowed to take measures for a disembarkation, with the precautions that would doubtless have been employed, the event might have been doubtful, and much more so, had he accomplished a landing without any misfortune occurring. But though he arrived in Shetland in the beginning of July, it was the end of September before he came into Clyde; whereas, had he run for Clyde without delay, he would have met with no greater opposition there in July, perhaps less, than he actually met with in October. As to the submission of the Islanders, it would have necessarily followed any advantage gained over the Scots, and without such an advantage it was of no value.

The Norwegian author is disposed to consider the storms as supernatural, though they were no more than what was to be expected, and might be certainly looked for at that season of the year; so that there was very little reason indeed for setting forth the very common phenomenon of an equinoxial blast on the west coast of Scotland to be the effect of magic, and the exertion of infernal power against the glory of the King of Norway. As little reason is there for attributing the storm, with Fordun, to the merits of Saint Margaret. However, one may see here the popular superstition in full historical credit, upon which is built the machinery of Shakspeare's *Macbeth*, which is usually represented upon the stage in so unsuitable and absurd a manner.

Winton says, that some Scottish barons had invited Haco to invade Scotland, and that he on his death-bed, (as if aware he had done wrong), sent their letters to Alexander. But there is no foundation for such a story. Haco was claiming, and went with a view to conquer, what he considered belonged to him, and had belonged to his predecessors for ages, and what he thought was attempted to be unjustly wrested from him. He had no

idea that he was encouraging rebellious subjects of another Sovereign, but endeavouring to protect his own from aggression, or prevent them from being alienated from their allegiance. The idea of Winton is more distinctly expressed in Fordun, who says, "Certe fuerunt quidam, de *fnitimis* regni, qui Aconi regi scripserunt, animantes eum contra naturalem suum dominum." But this applies only to the chiefs of the Isles, who asked assistance from Norway when invaded by Alexander's barons, but has no reference to the barons of Scotland, under which description the chiefs of the Isles did not then so properly fall. The matter is sufficiently explained by Fordun himself a little after, when mentioning the re-conquest of the Isles in 1264, where he tells us of Alexander's commanders: "Hos proditores, quorum hortatu, anno precedente, rex Norvegie in Scotiam applicuit, occiderunt, et quosdam in fugam compulerunt, atque quibusdam majoribus suspensis, maximam ex ipsis insulis prædam reportarunt." The ground for punishing those chiefs must have been, that they had previously sworn allegiance to the Scottish King. Among those who were either punished or exiled, were probably King Dugald, Allan his brother, and Roderick of Bute, who appear to have been active partizans of the Norwegians. It is also probable that, after the re-conquest, John, as the reward of his fidelity, would receive back his former possessions in the Isles, to be added to what he had acquired on the mainland of Scotland. Angus and Margad, who appear to have submitted to Haco reluctantly, were probably restored to favour.

The Lord of Argyle at this time was Eugene or Ewen, son of Duncan, a descendant of the great Somerled. He is nowhere mentioned in the Norwegian account, nor in the Scotch histories, although there are charters of his on record to the bishops of

Argyle : and he was doubtless one of the chiefs whose allegiance Haco claimed, for he had considerable possessions in the Isles, as his gifts to the church shew.

It is no part of the present subject to enter into any narrative as to the conquest of Man, and submission of its king to Alexander, which followed in the subsequent years. In 1266, Man and the Western Isles were ceded to Alexander by Magnus, son of Haco, who considered they were a possession difficult to retain and defend, and therefore accepted a sum of money, and an annual payment in lieu of them. The treaty is one of the few Scottish documents saved from the destruction brought upon them by Edward I. and Cromwell, being inserted in a book of record still preserved in the Register Office, from which it has been printed by the late Mr William Robertson.