

**THE BURNING OF THE BARNES OF
AYR. BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
A LECTURE GIVEN AT AYR,
FEBRUARY 7, 1878**

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The Burning of the Barns of Ayr. Being the Substance of a Lecture Given at Ayr, February 7, 1878 by John Patrick Crichton- Stuart

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JOHN PATRICK CRICHTON- STUART

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Burning of the Barns of Ayr.

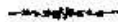
ITINERARY OF KING EDWARD I.

1298.

- July 1-2. Chillingham.
 3-6. Roxburgh.
 7. Redcpath.
 9. Lowedar (Lauder) and Fanelawe.
 10. Lowedar and Dalwalsy (Dalhousie).
 11. Brade.
 15-20. Templiston.
 21. Linlithgow.
 22. Falkirk (Battle).
 26. Stirling.
 to Aug. 8.
 Aug. 9-10. Torphichen.
 11. Abercorn.
 19. Brade.
 20. Brade and Glencourse.
 21. Linton Rotherwyk.
 26-29. Ayr.
 Sept. 3. Tibbers and Dalgarno (Horse Roll).
 4. Lochmaben do.
 5. Do., the King going to Dumfries,
 and was at Caerlaverock.
 8. Carlisle.



The Burning of the Barns of Ayr.



IN the 7th February, 1878, the writer gave a lecture in Ayr, of which the present tract embodies the substance. It differs mainly from the lecture as delivered, in two points. In the first place, it contains some matter which he had not before him at the time, and a good deal which he had written, but which he omitted in order not to be even more burdensome to a patient audience than the extreme dryness and intricacy of the subject in any case necessitated his being. Secondly, it is entirely

pulled to pieces, and arranged under the following six heads :—

- I.—The Capitulation of Irvine, with a sketch of the events leading to it, being the epoch to which Lord Hailes believed that the Burning was to be assigned.
- II.—A sketch of the Invasion of 1298, which the writer believes to be the time when the Burning really took place.
- III.—A discussion of who the Burners were.
- IV.—A notice of Edward I.'s residence at Ayr, and retirement from Scotland after the Burning.
- V.—The account of the Burning in Blind Harry.
- VI.—The executions connected by Blind Harry with the Burning.

The authorities quoted throughout are, as far as possible, contemporary. Some of them have not yet been published, and of those that have been, the bulk have not been translated.

The writer has made the subject one of close investigation, on and off, for about two years. He is conscious that, as applied to the myth which finds its wildest development in the *Wallace*, his treatment may be styled a destructive criticism. He would rather himself claim for his work the title of constructive. His aim has been, even, if need be, upon the ruins of false beliefs, to place, or rather, perhaps, to suggest the way of placing, upon an irrefragible historical basis, an event in national and local history, the obscurity of which has hitherto made it the victim alternately of credulity and scepticism.

(I.) The Capitulation of Irvine.

In the winter of 1296-7, the English Government appeared to be firmly and, on the whole, peaceably established in Scotland. Early in May, 1297—indeed, most probably, as the writer thinks, upon May Day itself—a riot took place at Lanark. The same day

William Wallace's wife was hung there, by order of the English Sheriff, William Hazlerigg; and that night the insurrection broke out in the burning of the English quarters at Lanark.*

The next thing we hear is that "these two Lord Williams," (William Wallace and William Douglas,) "with the perverse multitude, came to Scone, in the belief that they should there find the Justiciary of our King, who had been holding a Court there. Thither they hastened to destroy him. But he got warning, and just succeeded in narrowly escaping, leaving great spoils in the hands of the enemy." Who the Justiciary was, and what he had been doing, we learn also:—"The Justiciary of the King, William Ormesby, in obedience to the King's commands, banished without distinction of person all who would not take fealty to the King

* Wytoun, VIII. 13. Wallace Papers, 191.

"of England."* This is a point to which attention should be particularly directed, viz., that immediately after the burning of Lanark, William Wallace and his friends successfully attacked the English Judge sitting at Scone, where he had been acting with great severity. After the Scone affair, the insurrection spread, and the insurgents captured Perth.† While they were there, they received the adhesion of many of the highest personages in the kingdom, and the English Government seems to have been practically upset. The news was now reaching King Edward in London. "When our King," says Hemingford, "heard such things, he did not believe them, but sent the Bishop of Durham"—Antony Bek—"with orders to find out the truth. The Bishop flew to the spot, but found the Scotch assembled in such a mass that he dared not withstand

* Hemingford, W. P., 42-3. Rishanger, 170-1.

† Hemingford, 43.