

**THE BRUCE: OR, THE BOOK
OF THE MOST EXCELLENT
AND NOBLE PRINCE, ROBERT
DE BROYSS, KING OF SCOTS**

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The Bruce: or, The book of the most excellent and noble prince, Robert de Broys, King of Scots
by John Barbour & Walter W. Skeat

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JOHN BARBOUR & WALTER W. SKEAT

**THE BRUCE: OR, THE BOOK
OF THE MOST EXCELLENT
AND NOBLE PRINCE, ROBERT
DE BROYSS, KING OF SCOTS**

The Bruce;

or,

The Book of the most excellent and noble prince,
Robert de Bruce, King of Scots:

compiled by

Master John Barbour,

Bishopric of Aberdeen,

A.D. 1375.

EDITED FROM MS. G. 23 IN THE LIBRARY OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE, WRITTEN A.D. 1487; COLLATED WITH THE MS. IN THE
ADVOCATE'S LIBRARY AT EDINBURGH, WRITTEN A.D. 1489,
AND WITH HART'S EDITION, PRINTED A.D. 1610;

WITH A

PREFACE, NOTES, AND GLOSSARIAL INDEX,

BY THE

REV. WALTER W. SKEAT, M.A.,

LATE FELLOW OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; AUTHOR OF "A MÆSO-GOTHIC GLOSSARY,"
EDITOR OF "PIERS THE PLOWMAN," ETC.

BOOKS I—X.

LONDON:

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TEMPORARY NOTICE.

THE Preface will be issued with Part II.

The Second Part will contain the text (Books XI—XX), the Notes, and a Glossarial Index.

The best authority for the true text of "The Bruce" is the MS. in St John's College, Cambridge; this was used to some extent by Professor Cosmo Innes, but has never till now been printed.

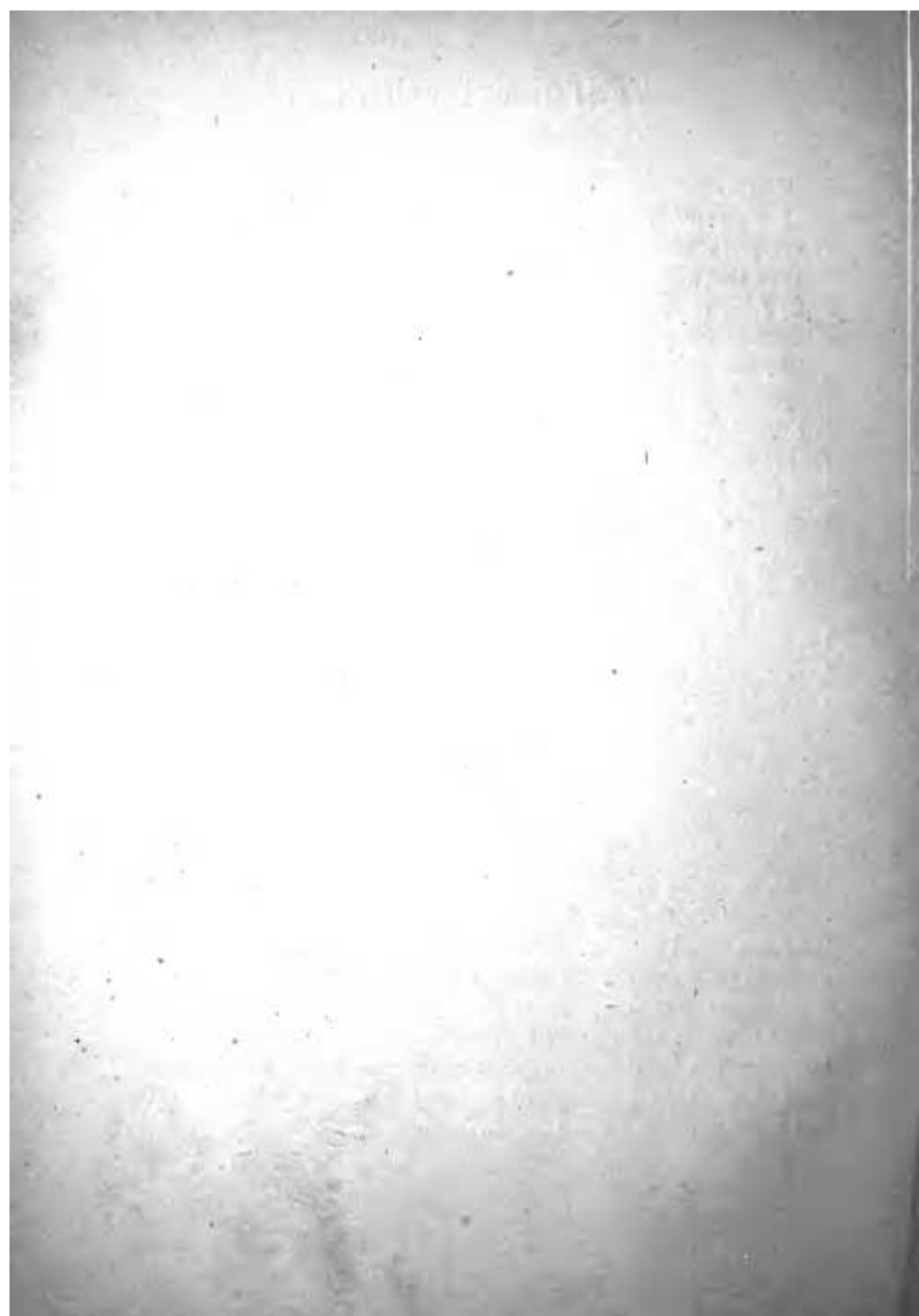
As the first 25 leaves of this MS. are, unfortunately, missing, the portion at the beginning, down to l. 56 of Book IV, on p. 78, is printed from the Edinburgh MS., collated with Hart's edition (1616), and occasionally with Anderson's edition (1670). The readings from Hart are marked with H, and those from Anderson are marked with A.

The rest is from the Cambridge MS., occasionally improved by help of the other authorities. The readings from this MS. are marked with C, and the readings from the Edinburgh MS. with E; but to save the frequent repetition of the letter E, many readings have *no* letter appended, as explained in the note to l. 57 of Book IV, p. 78. Thus, in this line, the word *to* of the Cambridge MS. is written *till* in the Edinburgh MS. The latter has been carefully printed (with but very few mistakes) by Jamieson, whose edition is well known.

The division into 20 Books, and the numbering of the lines, is exactly copied from Pinkerton's edition, (extra lines being marked by an asterisk), *because it is to this edition that the references in Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary are made.* Jamieson's division of the poem into 14 Books only creates confusion, as he never refers to *his own*, but only to *Pinkerton's* numbering. Hence Jamieson's Dictionary serves at once for the present edition.

To compare any passage in the present edition with the corresponding one in Jamieson, observe the numbering of the folios marked E. Thus the first line on p. 81 is marked "Fol. 12. E," and answers to the "Fol. 12a" in Jamieson, p. 68.

W. W. S.



The Bruce.

[BOOK I.]

Incipit liber compositus per magistrum Ihoannem Barber, Archidiaconum Abyrdonensem: de gestis, bellis, et virtutibus domini Roberti de Brwyss, regis Scocie illustrissimi, et de conquestu regni Scocie per eundem, et de domino Iacobo de douglas.

Storys to rede ar delitabil,
Suppos that thai be nocht bot fabill;
Than suld storys that suthfast wer,
And thai war said on gud maner,
Hawe doubill plesance in heryng.
The fyrst plesance is the carpyng.
And the tothir the suthfastnes,
That schawys the thing rycht as it wes;
And suth thyngis that ar likand

[Fol. 1 a.]
Fabulous stories
please,

but true ones
please doubly.

4

8

The various readings marked H are from Hart's edition of 1616. The Edinburgh MS. is denoted by E; the Cambridge MS. (beginning at Bk. iv, l. 57), by C; after which line the unmarked readings are from E. A denotes Anderson's edition (1670); P Pinkerton's edition (1790); J Jamieson's edition (1820); I Innes's edition (1856).

1. *delitabil*] delectable H.
2. *that—nocht*] they nocht contain H.
4. *And—on*] If they be spoken in H.
5. *plesance*] pleasure H.
6. *plesance—the*] is their pleasant H.
7. *And—tothir*] The other is H.
9. *suth*] soothfast H. Printed such PJ.

	Tyll mannys heryng, ar plesand.	
Therefore I essay to write a true story.	Tharfor I wald fayne set my will, Giff my wyt mycht suffice thartill, To put in wryt A suthfast story, That it lest ay furth in memory, Swa that na [lenth of tyme] It let, Na ger it haly be forjet.	12 16
Old stories shew men the very netors, just as they were.	For aulde storys that men redys, Representis to thaim the dedys Of stalwart folk that lywyt ar, Rycht as thai than in presence war. And, certis, thai suld weill have pryff That in thar tyme war wycht and wyff, And led thair lyff in gret trawail, And oft in hard stour off bataill	20 24
King Robert was hardy of heart and hand, and Sir James of Douglas far renowned,	Wan [richt] gret price off chawalry, And war woodyt off cowardly. As wes king Robert off Scotland, That hardy wes off hart and hand; And gud Schyr James off douglas, That in his tyme sa worthy was, That off hys price & hys bounte In fer landis renownyt wes he.	28 32
It is of them that I write.	Off thaim I thynk this buk to ma; Now god gyff grace that I may swa Tret It, and bryng It till endyng, That I say nocht bot suthfast thing!	36

14. *lest—furth*] may last H.15. [*lenth of tyme*] tyme of lenth
K (*an obvious error*); length of time
H. *It*] may H.17. *aulde storys*] *The MS. has aul.*
... . *rys*; also the beginnings of
lines 1 to 17 are obliterated or torn
away; but there is no doubt about the
readings. H has *ald Stories*.19. *lywyt ar*] *liued air* H.20. *in presence*] present H.24. *in*] *intill* H; in A.25. [*richt* H] right A; E *omits.*
price] praise H.26. *war—off*] was voyde of all H.31. *price*] praise H.32. *fer—wes*] *sindrie lands honour*
wan H.34. *gyff*] of H.35. *till*] to gude H.

Quhow the lordis of scotland tuk the King of Ingland
to be arbitar at the last.

<p>Q when Alexander the king wes doid, That Scotland haid to steyr and leid, The land vj 3er, and mayr perfay, Lay desolat eftyr hys day ; Till <i>that the barnage at the last</i> Assemblyt thaim, and fayndyt fast To cheyft a king <i>thar land to ster,</i> <i>That off awncestry cummyn wer</i> Off kingis, <i>that aucht that reawte,</i> And mayst had rycht <i>thair king to be.</i> Bot enwy, <i>that is sa feloune,</i> [Amang thaim maid] discenciouñ. For sun wald haiff <i>the balleoll king ;</i> For he wes cummyn off <i>the offspryg</i> Off hyr <i>that eldest Systir was.</i> And <i>othir sun nyt all that caft ;</i> And said, <i>that he thair king suld be</i> <i>That [wes] in alsner degre,</i> And cummyn [wes] of <i>the neist male,</i> And in branch collaterale. <i>Thai said, successioun of kyngrik</i> Was nocht to lawer feys lik ;</p>	<p>At the death of Alexander III., the land lay desolate six years.</p> <p>40</p> <p>Dispute as to the succession.</p> <p>44</p> <p>48</p> <p>Some would choose Balliol.</p> <p>52</p> <p>56</p> <p>Others said that no one could succeed through a female.</p>
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RUBRIC. *Loosely written in margin of E; the last ten words are uncertain, and scarcely legible.*

37—132. *Quoted by Wyntown, bk. viii. ch. ii. ll. 1—54, and 57—98.*

37. *the] oure in Wyntown.*

39. *vj] sex H; six A.*

41. *that—barnage] all the Barouns H.*

42. *fayndyt] that full H.*

44. *awncestry] the ancestree H.*

45. *aucht—reawte] had that Roy-
altie H.*

46. *mayst had] had maist H.*

48. [*Amang—maid]* Amang þame mad in Wyntown; Maid amang thaim gret E; but H and A omit gret, and so does Wyntown.

50. *the] þat in Wyntown.*

51. *Off—that] þat of þe in Wyntown.*

52. *And—all]* Uther sum contrary-
it that H.

54, 55. [*wes] so in Wyntown; was HA; war E. in alsner] of als neir HA. neist] first H.*

56. *in branch] of Branches H.*

58. *feys lik] state alike H.*