

KING MALCOLM IV

BURIED IN

DUNFERMLINE ABBEY



KING MALCOLM IV (1153 - 1163)



A decorated initial from a charter of 1159 granted to Kelso Abbey.
Showing David I and Malcolm IV

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&

JOHN OF FORDUN'S

CHRONICLE

OF

THE SCOTTISH NATION

VOLUME 2. p. 225 & 249

EDITED BY

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Malcolm IV
The Maiden



[1153-1165] grandson of David, a youth only in his twelfth year. This was the first of the minorities which were of such frequent occurrence in the government of Scotland, and was attended with not a few of the calamities which usually fall upon the nation "whose kings is a child." The old Celtic law of succession was now again in opposition to the Saxon rule. According to the former, the true heir of the throne was William, termed the Boy of Egremont, the son of William Fitz-Duncan, and grandson of Duncan, who was Malcolm Canmore's eldest son.¹ His claims were supported by no less than seven earls - of whom the principal were the earls of Strathern, Ross and Orkney - and by the great body of the Celtic inhabitants of the country. But notwithstanding the powerful support given to the Boy of Egremont, this attempt; like every other, to re-establish the old law of succession, failed of success, and the Celtic race were obliged to submit to the sway of the Saxon kings of the family of Malcolm Canmore, and to the prowess of the Saxon and Norman barons whom their prudent policy attracted to the Scottish court.

A few months after Malcolm's accession, the tranquility of the country was disturbed by the invasion of Somerled, the powerful chief of the Isles, whose daughter or sister, as we have seen, had married the adventurer Wimund, or Malcolm Mac Heth, the alleged son of Angus, Earl of Moray,² The events of this war, which lasted for several years are unknown; but in 1157, the contest was brought to a close by treaty, which was considered, so important, as to form an epoch, from which royal charters were dated.³ About this time, also, occurred Malcolm's first transaction with the English king. Eight years before this, Henry had an interview with David, at Carlisle, and received from him the honour of knighthood. On that occasion he made oath, that if ever he attained the English crown, he would restore Newcastle to the Scottish king, and cede to him and his heirs for ever the whole territory between Tyne and Tweed. Instead of performing this solemn engagement, however, Henry now demanded the restitution of those territories which Malcolm already held in England. An interview between the monarchs took place at Chester, and Malcolm young and inexperienced either overreached by the superior cunning of the English king, or betrayed by the treachery of his counsellors, whom Henry had corrupted,⁴ not only relinquished his claim to the territory to the north of the Tyne, but also abandoned to England his whole possessions in the northern counties and received in return the earldom of Huntingdon, which Henry appears to have taken from Malcolm's younger brother, David, to whom it had been bequeathed by the late king.⁵ Malcolm is stated, at this same time, to have performed homage to Henry in the same manner as his grandfather had done to Henry I, "reserving all his dignities."

¹ The Boy of Egremont died in his nonage; his connexion with this insurrection has not been very clearly established.

² Hailes's Annals, vol. i. p. 118.

³ Sir James Dalrymple's Collections, p. 425.

⁴ Fordun, lib. viii. c. iii.

⁵ R Hovenden, p. 491; Hailes's Annals, vol. i. p. 120.

This stop produced deep and universal discontent among Malcolm's subjects. The following year (1158), he repaired to the English court at Carlisle, with the view of receiving the honour of knighthood from Henry. But this interview ended in a quarrel, and Malcolm returned home in disgust, without having obtained the coveted distinction. He seems, however, to have been bent on procuring the object of his ambition, at whatever cost; and when Henry set out on his expedition for the recovery of Toulouse, in 1159, Malcolm went with him to France, and was knighted by him there.

The Scottish nobles and people, however, were indignant at the conduct of their king, in forgetting his station as an independent prince, and fighting under the banner of the English monarch; and they sent a deputation into France to remonstrate against this desertion of his duty on the part of their sovereign. "We will not," said the deputies, "have Henry to rule over us." Malcolm was constrained to comply with their wishes and to return with all haste to his own dominions. The supporters of the Boy of Egremont seem to have regarded this as a favourable opportunity for urging his claims; and while Malcolm was holding a great council at Perth,¹ Ferquhard, or Feretach, Earl of Strathern, and five other earls conspired to seize the person of their sovereign and assaulted the tower in which he had taken refuge; but a reconciliation was effected by the intervention of the clergy.

"The intentions of these noblemen," says the continuator of Fordun, "were not traitorous or selfish, but singly directed to the welfare of the state."² At this critical period, also a formidable insurrection broke out in Galloway; partly, it would appear, from the jealousy with which the Celtic inhabitants of the district viewed the introduction of Saxon settlers, and Saxon laws and customs. Malcolm promptly led an army against the insurgents, but was twice repulsed by them. With characteristic intrepidity he attacked them a third time, and obtained a complete victory. Fergus, the Lord of Galloway submitted to the authority of Malcolm, gave his son, Uchtred, as a hostage, and assumed the habit of a canon-regular in the Abbey of Holyrood, where he died in 1161.³

The turbulent inhabitants of the province of Moray "whom says Fordun, "no solicitations or largesses could allure, no treaties or oaths could bind to their duty," like the men of Galloway were indignant at the intrusion of foreign settlers and the introduction of foreign manners. They had often rebelled against the Scottish government, and at this juncture they once more raised the standard of revolt, "in support of their native principles, and in defence of their ancient laws." After a violent struggle, Malcolm finally succeeded in suppressing the rebellion, and completely crushed the powerful family which had hitherto possessed the title of Earl of Moray, and bestowed that dignity

¹ Chron Mel. 1160

² Fordun, lib. viii. c. iv.

³ Ibid.; Chron. 8. S. Crucis; Hailes, vol. i. p. 124.

upon the earls of Mar. It is asserted by some historians, that he had recourse to the strong measure of dispossessing the ancient inhabitants of the province, removing them to other parts of the country and planting new colonies in their room. But such a step, if adopted at all, could have been only very partially carried into effect. There can be no doubt, however, that Malcolm availed himself of the favourable opportunity afforded by the suppression of this revolt, to abrogate many of the ancient customs of the province, and to introduce Saxon laws in their room, and to subject the district completely to his authority.

For some unexplained cause, the ambitious Somerland a second time declared war against Malcolm, and assembling a numerous army from Argyle, Ireland, and the Isles, he sailed up the Clyde (1164) with one hundred and sixty galleys, and landed his forces near Renfrew, threatening, as some of the chroniclers inform us, to make a conquest of the whole of Scotland. Here, according to the Chronicle of Melrose;¹ Somerled was slain, with his son, Gilliecolane, and his great armament dispersed by a very inferior force of the Scots. According to tradition, however, this celebrated chief was assassinated in his tent, by a person in whom he placed confidence; and his troops, thus deprived of their leader, returned in haste to the Isles, suffering severely in their retreat from the attacks of their enemies.²

This was Malcolm's last exploit, for he died soon after at Jedburgh, on the 9th of December, 1165, in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

Some historians affirm, that Malcolm was deprived of the government shortly before his death. Bower relates that Malcolm, having made a vow of perpetual chastity, and being intent on divine things, neglected the administration of his kingdom; that from these causes he became odious to the people, who constrained his brother William to accept the office of Regent.³ The story of Malcolm's vow of chastity appears to have been a fable, in all probability founded upon his surname of Maiden, which is supposed to have been given to him on account of his youthful and effeminate countenance; for it is known from one of his own charters, that he had a natural son.⁴ If such a revolution as has been mentioned did actually take place, it may have been caused by Malcolm's surrender of the northern counties to England, and his impolitic attachment to the English monarch. Malcolm was succeeded by his brother William.

¹ Chron. Mel. p. 169

² Gregory's History of the Western Highlands, p. 16.

³ Fordun, lib. viii. c. vi. ⁴ Chart. Kelso, fol. 16; Hailes's Annals, vol. i. p. 129.

JOHN OF FORDUN'S CRONICLE - CHAPTER XXXIV. P. 225 & 249

King David bids his grandson Malcolm, Henry's son, be taken about through the kingdom, and proclaimed as the future King - David's death to be bewailed not on his own account, but for the Scots.

KING DAVID, disguising his sorrow at the death of his only son, straightway took Malcolm, his aforesaid son's firstborn, and giving him Duncan Earl of Fife, as governor, bade him be taken about with a large army, through the country, in Scotland, and proclaimed heir to the throne. Taking likewise the younger brother William, the king came to Newcastle; and having there taken hostages from the Northumbrian chiefs, he made them all subjects to the dominion of that boy. What was done then with the third grandson David, or where he was, I have not found in any writings. But the king came back and left nothing in disorder, nothing unsettled, in all the ends of the kingdom....

ANNALS. 1. P. 249.

Coronation of King Malcolm the younger Prince Henry's son, called "the Maiden."

NOW all the people took Malcolm a boy of thirteen - a son of Henry, earl of Northumberland and Huntingdon, who was the son of King David himself - and made him king at Scone, in the room of his grandfather David; of whom it may truly be said: "Prosperity abideth with their seed; their grandchildren are an holy heritage." His brother William had the earldom of Northumberland in possession, while the earldom of Huntingdon was subject unto his youngest brother David as will be seen below. No unworthy successor of David, king of Scots, was Malcolm, the eldest of his grandsons. For treading in that king's steps in many good points, and even gloriously outdoing him in some, he shone like a heavenly star in the midst of his people. In the first year of his reign, Sumerled, knight of Argyll, and his nephews - the sons of Malcolm Macbeth to wit - being joined by a great many, rose against their king, Malcolm, and disturbed and troubled great part of Scotland. Now that Malcolm was the son of Macbeth; but he lied and said he was the son of Angus, earl of Moray, who, in the time of King David of happy memory was, with all his men slain by the Scots at Strucathroch (Strickathrow in Forfar), while he was plundering the country. Upon his death, this Malcolm Macbeth rose against King David as it were a son who would avenge his father's death; and while plundering and spoiling the surrounding districts of Scotland, he was at length taken, and thrust, by that same King David, into close confinement in the keep of Marchmont Castle. So Sumerled kept up the civil war; but his nephew, Donald, one of Malcolm Macbeth's sons, was taken prisoner, at Withterne (Whithorn), by some King Malcolm's friends and imprisoned in that same keep of Marchmont, with his father. The year after this Donald was taken, his father Malcolm made peace with the king, while Sumerled still wickedly wrought his wickedness among the people.

II.

On the death of the English king, Stephen Henry, duke of Normandy, and son of the empress, was anointed king, in the second year of Malcolm, king of Scotland. As soon as he was raised to the throne, unmindful of his promise and oath, which he had formerly sealed with a vow to King David his mothers uncle, he laid claim to Northumberland and Cumberland, which had now many years yielded obedience to the king of Scots, and was making great ado about invading them; and he also declared that the earldom of Huntingdon was his own property. A peace, though a hollow one, was, however, made a time, between those kings; and, in the meantime, King Malcolm came to King Henry at Chester - at whose instigation I know not - and did homage to him, without prejudice, however, to all his dignities, in the same way as his grandfather, King David, had been the old King Henry's man; hoping some suppose, by so doing, to be left in peaceful possession of his property. At that place, however, accursed covetousness gained over some of his councillors, who were bribed, it is said, by English money; and the king was soon so far misled by their clever trickery as, in that same year, to surrender Northumberland and Cumberland to the king of England, after having consulted with only a few of his lords. The king of England, however restored to him the earldom of Huntingdon. Now, on account of this the estates (*communitas*) of all Scotland were, with one accord, roused to stifled murmuring, and hatred against their lord the king, and his councillors. Meanwhile, these same kings met together, the following year at Carlisle, on some business; but they took leave of each other without having come to a good understanding, as most men could see. Afterwards, however, when a few years had slipped by - that is, in the seventh year of the reign of the king of Scots - King Henry led a strong army against Toulouse; but as Louis, king of France, defended the town, Henry was baffled the chief aim he was striving after, and retraced his steps; and thus, out of the most profound peace sprang up the most deep rooted feud. King Malcolm, though against the will of many of his great men, was with Henry in this expedition; and, on their way back thence, was by him girded with the sword of knighthood, in the city of Tours.

III.

At length the Scottish lords, seeing their king's too great intimacy and friendship with Henry , king of England, were sore troubled, and all Scotland with them. For they feared this intimacy had shame and disgrace in store for them; and they strove in all earnestness to guard against this. So they sent an embassy after him, saying (or, rather, they thought and said within themselves):-- "We will not have this man reign over us." Thereupon, he returned from the army at Toulouse, and came to Scotland, on account of divers pressing matters; and by his authority as king, he bade the prelates and nobles meet together at his borough of Perth. Meanwhile the chief men of the country were

roused. Six earls - Ferchard, earl of Stratherne, to wit, and five other earls - being stirred up against the king, not to compass any selfish end, or through treason, but rather to guard the common weal, sought to take him, and laid siege to the keep of tht town. God so ordering it, however, their understanding was brought to naught for the nonce; and after not many days had rolled by, he was, by the advice of the clergy, brought back to a good understanding with his nobles. He then, thrice in the same year, mustered an army, and marched into Galloway against the rebels. At last, when he had vanquished these, made them his allies and subdued them, he hied him back in peace, without loss to his men; and afterwards, when he had thus subdued hem he pressed them so sore, that their chieftain, who was called Fergus, gave up the calling of arms, and sending off his son and heir Vithred, to the king, as a hostage, donned the canonical garb at the monestry of Holyrood, in Edinburgh. Meanwhile the king, by the help and advice of his friends, gave his sister Margaret in marriage to Conan, duke of Brittany, and his sister Ada to Florence, count of Holland. Peace, also was restored between the kings of France and England; and the English king Henry's son Henry not yet six years old, took to wife the French king Louis's daughter not yet two.

IV.

At this time, the rebel nation of the Moravienses, whose former lord, namely, the Earl Angus, had been killed by the Scots would, for neither prayers nor bribes, either treaties nor oaths, leave off their disloyal ways, or their ravages among their fellow-countrymen. So having gathered together a large army, the king removed them all from the land of their birth, as of old Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had dealt with the Jews, and scattered them throughout the other districts of Scotland, both beyond the hills and this side thereof, so that not even one native of that land abode there; and he installed therein his own peaceful people. Sumerled, likewise, king of Argyll, of whom we have spoken above, impiously fought, for twelve years, against King Malcolm, his lord. At length, bent on plunder, he brought up at Renfrew with a strong army and very large fleet, which he had levied out of Ireland and sundry other places, but, through God's vengeance, he was, with his son Gellicolan, and a countless multitude of traitors, slain there by a few countrymen. Now, when this King Malcolm grew up, and reached the years of youth, he refused to marry, although besought to do so by the earls and all the people of his kingdom, with all manner of entreaties, and, as far as respect for the king's rank would allow, urged to do so; and, before God, he vowed chastity, abiding his whole time in the spotless purity of maidenhood. For tough, on the strength of his kingly rank, he could often have transgressed, yet he never did transgress. He harmed none, but wished men well; was pleasant to all, and displeased none; and was very devout towards God: for with the whole straining of his mind, and all the longing of his inmost heart, did he yearn to reign with Christ for ever. Nevertheless, he had many trials and reproaches to bear at the hands of the dwellers

in his kingdom, according to that saying of Solomon's: "Son, when thou undertakest God's service, stand, in righteousness and fear, and make read thy soul to the trial." He, indeed, having conceived the warmth of the love of God, had set his heart upon heavenly things; so that, looking down upon all earthly things, he quite neglected the care, as well as governance, of his kingdom. Wherefore he was so hated by all the common, people that William, the elder of his brothers - who had always been on bad terms with the English, and their lasting foe, forasmuch as they had taken away his patrimony, the earldom of Northumberland, to wit - was by them appointed warden of the whole kingdom, against the king's will; while his younger brother, Earl David of Huntingdon, abode in England.

V.

In the year 1165, the thirteenth of King Malcolm's reign, at the end of the month of August, two comets appeared - one to the south, and the other to the north - which, according to some, foreboded the king's death. A comet is a star which appears, not at all times, but chiefly against a king's death, or a country's downfall. When it appears with a shining diadem of hair, it heralds a king's death; but if with scattered tresses glowing red, it forebodes a county's downfall. And sometimes it betokens storms or wars, as in these lines: -

"There is a star bodes storm or war.
On high when it has crept;
And if thou seek its name to speak,
Boëtes 'tis yclept."

Now Malcolm, being guided by God in the blessings of sweetness, so that his heart was kindled with the love of the Most High, wherewith he was upheld, all his life excelled in brightness of chastity, in the glory of lowliness and innocence, in purity of conscience, and holiness, as well as staidness of character; so that, among laymen, with whom he had nothing in common but his dress, he was as a monk; and among men, whom he ruled, he seemed, indeed, an angel upon earth. He founded the monastery of Cupar, to the praise of God. But when he had completed twelve years, seven months, and three days on the throne Christ called him away on Thursday the 9th of December; so he put off manhood for the fellowship of angels, and lost not, but exchanged his kingdom. And thus this man of angelic holiness among men, and like some angel upon earth, of whom the world was not worthy, was snatched away from the world by the heavenly angels, in the bloom of his lily-youth, - the twenty-sixth year of his age.

VI.

This most godly King Malcolm fell asleep in the Lord at Jedworth (Jedburgh); and his body was brought, by nearly all the prominent persons of the kingdom, in great state, to Dunfermline, a famous burial-place of the Scottish kings; - where are entombed Malcolm the Great and his consort the blessed Margaret (his great-grandfather and great-grandmother), and their holy offspring. It rests interred in the middle of the floor in front of the high altar, on the right of his grandfather David.

This is the vision of a certain cleric, devout towards God, and formerly a familiar friend of the king's about the glory of this same King Malcolm, of holy memory. While this cleric was devoutly watching at the king's grave, sleep stole upon him amid his psalm-singing; and the king seemed to him to be standing by, clad in snow-white robes, with a glad but speechless countenance, and not sorrowful; and ever as he asked him, in verse, with one half of each couplet, somewhat of his plight, the king would answer each question in verse, with the other half of every couplet, to the following effect: -

- Clerk. A king thou wast; what art thou now?
King. A servant once, lo! now I reign.
C. Why lingers still thy flesh below?
K. My spirit seeks the heavenly plain.
C. Art thou in torment, or content?
K. Nay, not in pain. I rest in peace.
C. Then what hath been thy punishment?
K. A bitter lot ere my decease.
C. Where are thou, friend? Where dwells thy spirit?
K. In paradise that knows not woe.
C. Why does thy raiment gleam so white?
K. A maid I to my grave did go.
C. Why answerest so shortly, friend?
K. My life is eloquent for me.
C. Thy days thou didst in sickness spend,
K. But now from sickness am I free!
C. Why lost we thee? Why did we part?
K. That I might find the saints on high.
C. What was it grieved thy gentle heart?
K. This wicked world is all a lie.
C. Tell me, when shalt thou come again?
K. When the great Judge shall judge at last.
C. Will Scotia for thy loss complain?
K. Not now, but when this time is past.
C. Wilt leave me now? What doest thou fear?
K. The burden of the life I bore.
C. Hast thou no word thy friends to cheer?
K. Bid them farewell for evermore.

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