G. A. HENTY

IN FREEDOM'S CAUSE

HISTORICAL NOVEL

G. A. Henty

In Freedom's Cause (Historical Novel)

Enriched edition. Wars of Scottish Independence - A Tale of Wallace and Bruce

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Karl Jennings

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Introduction

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In Freedom’s Cause turns on the relentless tension between private conscience and collective freedom, following the pressures of oath, kinship, and survival as a beleaguered people measure the price of liberty against the demands of law and power, and as courage is tested not only in battle but in the quieter disciplines of loyalty, patience, and restraint, while the rugged landscapes of Scotland—its valleys, strongholds, and coasts—become a theatre where the question of who rightfully governs is argued in deeds, so that the meaning of patriotism is felt as a lived duty rather than a slogan.

G. A. Henty’s In Freedom’s Cause is a historical novel set during the Wars of Scottish Independence in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, first published in the late nineteenth century by a British author renowned for adventure narratives for young readers. Henty frames the uprising against English rule through a detailed historical backdrop, presenting notable figures such as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce alongside a resourceful fictional youth. The book belongs to a Victorian tradition that blends instruction with excitement, using clear prose, swift incident, and moral emphasis to make complex political turmoil intelligible without sacrificing momentum.

The narrative follows a young Scot who comes of age amid occupation, pledges himself to the national cause, and learns the crafts of war, diplomacy, and endurance under the mentorship of celebrated leaders. Readers travel from fortified towns to remote glens, across council chambers

and campfires, encountering raids, rescues, and narrow escapes. Henty’s third-person narration combines concise exposition with brisk action, pausing to explain terrain, tactics, and customs while keeping the story moving. The tone is earnest and elevating, honorable without mawkishness, designed to cultivate admiration for resolve, self-control, and service as much as to deliver adventure.

Central themes emerge with clarity: the legitimacy of rule and the consent of the governed; the obligations of oath and kinship when power changes hands; and the steep cost, in bodies and conscience, of resisting injustice. Leadership is examined in contrasting temperaments and strategies, showing that courage is inseparable from prudence, humility, and fidelity to law. The novel balances the exhilaration of defiance with the burden of stewardship, asking what it means to preserve a nation without losing the virtues that justify it. Friendship, mercy, and forgiveness complicate the starkness of war, giving moral depth to daring feats.

Henty’s craft emphasizes clarity and cause-and-effect, often pausing to map routes, explain armaments, or note the habits of clans and towns, so that actions feel earned by place and preparation. Battles are rendered with energy and restraint, focusing on plans, terrain, and nerve rather than sensational brutality. The prose favors plain diction, occasional archaism, and a steady moral compass, producing an atmosphere of upright resolve. Frequent shifts from quiet study to sudden hazard give the book a rhythmic pulse, while the presence of known historical figures grounds the episodes in a timeline that invites further exploration.

For contemporary readers, the novel resonates in its exploration of civil courage, lawful resistance, and the ethics

of leadership under pressure, themes that recur in debates about sovereignty and human rights. It also offers a revealing window onto Victorian habits of storytelling, with their confidence in progress and their ideal of chivalric character, encouraging a thoughtful, historically informed reading that distinguishes enduring virtues from dated assumptions. Engaging it critically can sharpen judgment about patriotism, propaganda, and the uses of history, while its narrative drive continues to model how complex events can be made intelligible without flattening moral nuance.

Approached as both story and study, In Freedom’s Cause rewards readers who savor brisk adventure joined to sober inquiry, and it serves as an accessible portal to Scotland’s struggle for independence. Without disclosing outcomes, one may say that the book invites reflection on how loyalty is proved, how justice is defended, and how character is formed under strain. Its continuing value lies in uniting action with accountability, heroism with humility, and national aspiration with neighborly duty. Read alongside reliable histories, it becomes a springboard for discussion about freedom’s meaning—then and now—and about the responsibilities that give freedom weight.

Synopsis

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In Freedom’s Cause: A Story of Wallace and Bruce by G. A. Henty is a Victorian-era historical novel that follows Scotland’s struggle against English domination in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Written for young readers, it blends adventure with an instructive survey of the period’s politics, warfare, and social life. Henty frames the nation’s crisis through a courageous Scottish youth who witnesses pivotal moments alongside figures such as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. The narrative emphasizes personal honor, loyalty, and perseverance while tracing a clear chronological arc. Scenes of training, travel, and counsel prepare the ground for successive campaigns and shifting fortunes of war.

The story opens amid mounting discontent as English authorities enforce claims over Scotland, provoking local grievances and sparking clandestine resistance. Henty’s protagonist comes of age in this charged climate, learning the discipline and self-restraint expected of a young noble while absorbing the ethical appeal of defending homeland and kin. Early assignments—guard duties, scouting, and discreet messages—draw him into the orbit of insurgent leaders, especially Wallace, whose reputation for resolve and integrity inspires followers. The youth’s first skirmishes reveal both the promise of audacity and the perils of rashness, setting a pattern of trial, correction, and renewed resolve that drives his development.

Under Wallace’s leadership the movement gathers momentum, rallying townsmen and lesser nobles to a cause

framed as both lawful and patriotic. Henty sketches tactics favoring initiative and local knowledge: sudden strikes, the use of difficult ground, and disciplined withdrawals. The narrative evokes fortified crossings, contested strongholds, and the hazards of supply as the Scots seek to offset superior resources with unity and nerve. The protagonist, increasingly trusted, witnesses councils of war and learns to weigh prudence against daring. Rising morale spreads through the countryside, even as news of powerful English musters reminds everyone that early gains will invite a formidable response.

Reprisals follow. Heavier armies, shifting alliances, and the ever-present risk of betrayal test the insurgents' cohesion. Henty depicts the struggle's moral stakes alongside its physical dangers: prisoners to safeguard, wounded comrades to protect, and ordinary households caught between oaths and survival. The young Scot endures reversals that sharpen his judgment, navigating watchful marches, night rides, and wary encounters with rival factions. Rivalries among Scottish magnates complicate strategy, while English pressure intensifies. Though setbacks threaten resolve, the protagonist's loyalty—anchored in gratitude to mentors and fidelity to sworn duty—hardens, preparing him for the next chapter of the national effort.

As circumstances change, leadership passes increasingly to Robert the Bruce, whose claim and character must win adherents across a divided realm. Henty portrays the transition as both political and personal: oaths reconsidered, feuds managed, and trust rebuilt through shared hardship. The protagonist adapts, taking on responsibilities as scout, courier, and small-unit leader, mastering patient tactics suited to forests, moors, and rugged passes. The movement

leans on mobility, secrecy, and the morale of tight-knit companies. Through privation and narrow escapes, the hero learns to balance chivalric ideals with the practical demands of survival and command.

Campaigns broaden from raids and sieges to set-piece confrontations that will decide Scotland’s future. Training stiffens militia into capable formations; leaders enforce discipline and coordinate spearmen, light troops, and archers. Henty interweaves the mechanics of war—pickets, entrenchments, and supply—with the rhetoric of duty, presenting courage as steadiness rather than impulse. The protagonist’s circle expands to include shrewd veterans and steadfast civilians, highlighting a national cause sustained by many kinds of service. The arc builds toward a climactic test on open ground, its outcome carefully foreshadowed but held in suspense, as the stakes extend from personal honor to the fate of a kingdom.

Henty closes by reaffirming themes that give the novel its durable appeal: liberty safeguarded by discipline, leadership tempered by conscience, and patriotism measured in service rather than boast. The book reflects Victorian sensibilities—didactic aims, clear moral signposts, and admiration for resolute character—while introducing readers to the central figures and pressures of the Scottish Wars of Independence. Though simplified in places and shaped by its era, it remains a brisk entry point to the Wallace and Bruce tradition. Its enduring resonance lies less in any single victory than in the questions it poses about duty, sacrifice, and the making of a nation.

Historical Context

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In Freedom's Cause, published in 1885, is set during the First War of Scottish Independence, roughly 1290–1328, across the Lowlands, the border marches, and key strongholds such as Stirling, Edinburgh, and Scone. The political order was feudal: kings claimed overlordship through oaths, magnates governed through castles and sheriffdoms, and the Latin Church mediated disputes. England, under Edward I and later Edward II, exercised expanding legal-administrative power and called parliaments; Scotland’s estates convened irregularly. Cross-border trade and raiding defined frontier life. Against this institutional backdrop, Henty situates campaigns, councils, and sieges that shaped Scotland’s attempt to preserve independent kingship.

Background tensions intensified after the accidental death of Scotland’s King Alexander III in 1286 and the death of his heir, the Maid of Norway, in 1290, which left no uncontested successor. Rival claimants appealed to Edward I to arbitrate the “Great Cause.” He recognized John Balliol as king in 1292 but demanded acknowledgment of English overlordship, summoning Balliol to English courts. Scottish resistance led to the Auld Alliance with France in 1295, linking northern politics to wider Anglo-French rivalry. These events, all pivotal to the narrative’s stakes, explain why English armies, legal claims, and diplomatic pressure converged on Scotland.

Edward I invaded in 1296, storming Berwick-upon-Tweed with heavy casualties, defeating Scottish forces at Dunbar,

and removing the Stone of Scone from Scone Abbey to Westminster. English garrisons and sheriffs administered captured castles and burghs, and many nobles were compelled to swear fealty in the “Ragman Roll.” Yet taxation, requisitions, and the presence of foreign officials provoked resentment among lesser landholders and townspeople. The border marches saw intensified forays by both sides. This occupation framework underlies the insurgent environment in which local leaders and bands could emerge, contesting control of key crossings like Stirling Bridge and disrupting royal logistics.

In 1297 William Wallace and Andrew Moray coordinated uprisings that culminated in the Scottish victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, where terrain and disciplined infantry formations overwhelmed an English crossing. The next year, at Falkirk (1298), Edward I’s longbowmen and cavalry broke Scottish schiltrons, forcing a shift toward guerrilla warfare. Wallace’s later capture and execution in London in 1305, on charges of treason against a king he had never sworn to, became central to his posthumous reputation. Contemporary chronicles and later poems helped frame Wallace as a model of resistance, a legacy nineteenth-century writers often emphasized.

Robert Bruce, a competitor in the earlier succession dispute, was crowned at Scone in 1306 after the killing of his rival John Comyn in a church at Dumfries, an act that drew excommunication and civil strife. Initially defeated and driven into hardship, Bruce rebuilt support through mobile warfare, surprise assaults on garrisons, and castle slighting to deny English reoccupation. By 1314 his forces achieved a decisive victory at Bannockburn near Stirling, where combined infantry, pits, and terrain blunted English cavalry under Edward II. That turning point consolidated Bruce’s

kingship and shifted the struggle from survival toward international recognition of sovereignty.

Scottish leaders pursued legitimacy through diplomatic channels as well as arms. The Declaration of Arbroath (1320), a letter from leading nobles to Pope John XXII, asserted that kingship derived from the community of the realm and appealed for recognition against English claims. Persistent warfare, the Auld Alliance, and unrest in England culminated in the Treaty of Edinburgh–Northampton (1328), by which Edward III's government recognized Scotland's independence and Bruce's title. Border administration evolved through wardens and truces, but raiding and reprisals continued. These documents and institutions, widely cited by historians, inform the novel's recurring emphasis on lawful authority alongside military valor.

The social landscape combined Gaelic traditions, Anglo-Norman lordship, and burgh commerce. Magnate lineages held lands by feudal tenure; castellans controlled justice and defense. Parish churches, monastic houses like abbeys at Arbroath and Melrose, and episcopal courts shaped education, record-keeping, and diplomacy. Burghs such as Perth and Aberdeen traded wool and hides to the Low Countries, financing armies and fortifications. Warfare featured mailed cavalry, infantry schiltrons with spears, archery, and siege engines; success often turned on supply lines and river crossings. Linguistic diversity—Gaelic, Scots, French, and Latin—reflected layered identities that the conflict, and the story, brings into negotiation.

G. A. Henty, a late Victorian writer of juvenile historical fiction, published the novel amid Britain's expanding empire and a popular market for patriotic adventure. His narratives typically valorize duty, courage, and discipline, drawing on chronicles and modern histories that elevated Wallace and

Bruce as national exemplars. In Freedom’s Cause reflects its era by presenting constitutional liberty, lawful kingship, and civic steadiness as virtues transcending region, aligning Scottish independence with broader British ideals of character. At the same time, the perspective simplifies factional complexities and romanticizes leadership, offering an instructive, accessible celebration of resistance to overbearing rule for contemporary readers.

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Preface

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MY DEAR LADS,

There are few figures in history who have individually exercised so great an influence upon events as William Wallace and Robert Bruce. It was to the extraordinary personal courage, indomitable perseverance, and immense energy of these two men that Scotland owed her freedom from English domination. So surprising were the traditions of these feats performed by these heroes that it was at one time the fashion to treat them as belonging as purely to legend as the feats of St. George or King Arthur. Careful investigation, however, has shown that so far from this being the case, almost every deed reported to have been performed by them is verified by contemporary historians. Sir William Wallace had the especial bad fortune of having come down to us principally by the writings of his bitter enemies, and even modern historians, who should have taken a fairer view of his life, repeated the cry of the old English writers that he was a bloodthirsty robber. Mr. W. Burns, however, in his masterly and exhaustive work, The Scottish War of Independence, has torn these calumnies to shreds, and has displayed Wallace as he was, a high minded and noble patriot. While consulting other writers, especially those who wrote at the time of or but shortly after the events they record, I have for the most part followed Burns in all the historical portions of the narrative. Throughout the story, therefore, wherein it at all relates to Wallace, Bruce, and the other historical characters, the circumstances and events can be relied upon as strictly accurate, save only in

the earlier events of the career of Wallace, of which the details that have come down to us are somewhat conflicting, although the main features are now settled past question.

Yours sincerely,
G.A. HENTY.

Chapter I
Glen Cairn

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The village of Glen Cairn was situated in a valley in the broken country lying to the west of the Pentland Hills, some fifteen miles north of the town of Lanark, and the country around it was wild and picturesque. The villagers for the most part knew little of the world beyond their own valley, although a few had occasionally paid visits to Glasgow, which lay as far to the west as Lanark was distant to the south. On a spur jutting out from the side of the hill stood Glen Cairn Castle, whose master the villagers had for generations regarded as their lord.

The glory of the little fortalice had now departed. Sir William Forbes had been killed on his own hearthstone, and the castle had been sacked in a raid by the Kerrs, whose hold lay to the southwest, and who had long been at feud with the Forbeses. The royal power was feeble, and the Kerrs had many friends, and were accordingly granted the lands they had seized; only it was specified that Dame Forbes, the widow of Sir William, should be allowed to reside in the fortalice free from all let or hindrance, so long as she meddled not, nor sought to stir up enmity among the late vassals of her lord against their new masters.

The castle, although a small one, was strongly situated. The spur of the hill ran some 200 yards into the valley, rising sharply some 30 or 40 feet above it. The little river which meandered down the valley swept completely round the foot of the spur, forming a natural moat to it, and had in some time past been dammed back, so that, whereas in

other parts it ran brightly over a pebbly bottom, here it was deep and still. The fortalice itself stood at the extremity of the spur, and a strong wall with a fortified gateway extended across the other end of the neck, touching the water on both sides. From the gateway extended two walls inclosing a road straight to the gateway of the hold itself, and between these walls and the water every level foot of ground was cultivated; this garden was now the sole remains of the lands of the Forbeses.

It was a narrow patrimony for Archie, the only son of Dame Forbes, and his lady mother had hard work to keep up a respectable state, and to make ends meet. Sandy Grahame, who had fought under her husband's banner and was now her sole retainer, made the most of the garden patches. Here he grew vegetables on the best bits of ground and oats on the remainder; these, crushed between flat stones, furnished a coarse bread. From the stream an abundance of fish could always be obtained, and the traps and nets therefore furnished a meal when all else failed. In the stream, too, swam a score and more of ducks, while as many chickens walked about the castle yard, or scratched for insects among the vegetables. A dozen goats browsed on the hillside, for this was common ground to the village, and Dame Forbes had not therefore to ask for leave from her enemies, the Kerrs. The goats furnished milk and cheese, which was deftly made by Elspie, Sandy's wife, who did all the work indoors, as her husband did without. Meat they seldom touched. Occasionally the resources of the hold were eked out by the present of a little hill sheep, or a joint of prime meat, from one or other of her old vassals, for these, in spite of the mastership of the Kerrs, still at heart regarded Dame Mary Forbes as their lawful mistress, and her son Archie as their future chief. Dame Mary Forbes was

careful in no way to encourage this feeling, for she feared above all things to draw the attention of the Kerrs to her son. She was sure that did Sir John Kerr entertain but a suspicion that trouble might ever come from the rivalry of this boy, he would not hesitate a moment in encompassing his death; for Sir John was a rough and violent man who was known to hesitate at nothing which might lead to his aggrandizement. Therefore she seldom moved beyond the outer wall of the hold, except to go down to visit the sick in the village. She herself had been a Seaton, and had been educated at the nunnery of Dunfermline, and she now taught Archie to read and write, accomplishments by no means common even among the better class in those days. Archie loved not books; but as it pleased his mother, and time often hung heavy on his hands, he did not mind devoting two or three hours a day to the tasks she set him. At other times he fished in the stream, wandered over the hills, and brought in the herbs from which Dame Forbes distilled the potions which she distributed to the villagers when sick.

Often he joined the lads of the village in their games. They all regarded him as their leader; but his mother had pressed upon him over and over again that on no account was he to assume any superiority over the others, but to treat them strictly as equals. Doubtless the Kerrs would from time to time have news of what was doing in Glen Cairn; and while they would be content to see him joining in the sports of the village lads, with seemingly no wish beyond that station, they would at once resent it did they see any sign on his part of his regarding himself as a chief among the others.

No inconsiderable portion of Archie's time was occupied in acquiring the use of arms from Sandy Grahame. His

mother, quiet and seemingly resigned as she was, yet burned with the ambition that he should some day avenge his father's death, and win back his father's lands. She said little to him of her hopes; but she roused his spirit by telling him stories of the brave deeds of the Forbeses and Seatons, and she encouraged him from his childhood to practise in arms with Sandy Grahame.

In this respect, indeed, Archie needed no stimulant. From Sandy even more than from his mother he had heard of his brave father's deeds in arms; and although, from the way in which she repressed any such utterances, he said but little to his mother, he was resolved as much as she could wish him to be, that he would some day win back his patrimony, and avenge his father upon his slayers.

Consequently, upon every opportunity when Sandy Grahame could spare time from his multifarious work, Archie practised with him, with sword and pike. At first he had but a wooden sword. Then, as his limbs grew stronger, he practised with a blunted sword; and now at the age of fifteen Sandy Grahame had as much as he could do to hold his own with his pupil.

At the time the story opens, in the springtime of the year 1293, he was playing at ball with some of the village lads on the green, when a party of horsemen was seen approaching.

At their head rode two men perhaps forty years old, while a lad of some eighteen years of age rode beside them. In one of the elder men Archie recognized Sir John Kerr. The lad beside him was his son Allan. The other leader was Sir John Hazelrig, governor of Lanark; behind them rode a troop of armed men, twenty in number. Some of the lads would have ceased from their play; but Archie exclaimed:

"Heed them not; make as if you did not notice them. You need not be in such a hurry to vail your bonnets to the Kerr."

"Look at the young dogs," Sir John Kerr said to his companion. "They know that their chief is passing, and yet they pretend that they see us not."

"It would do them good," his son exclaimed, "did you give your troopers orders to tie them all up and give them a taste of their stirrup leathers."

"It would not be worth while, Allan," his father said. "They will all make stout men-at-arms some day, and will have to fight under my banner. I care as little as any man what my vassals think of me, seeing that whatsoever they think they have to do mine orders. But it needs not to set them against one needlessly; so let the varlets go on with their play undisturbed."

That evening Archie said to his mother, "How is it, mother, that the English knight whom I today saw ride past with the Kerr is governor of our Scottish town of Lanark?"

"You may well wonder, Archie, for there are many in Scotland of older years than you who marvel that Scotsmen, who have always been free, should tolerate so strange a thing. It is a long story, and a tangled one; but tomorrow morning I will draw out for you a genealogy of the various claimants to the Scottish throne, and you will see how the thing has come about, and under what pretence Edward of England has planted his garrisons in this free Scotland of ours."

The next morning Archie did not forget to remind his mother of her promise.

"You must know," she began, "that our good King Alexander had three children—David, who died when a boy; Alexander, who married a daughter of the Count of Flanders, and died childless; and a daughter, Margaret, who married Eric, the young King of Norway. Three years ago the Queen of Norway died, leaving an only daughter, also

named Margaret, who was called among us the 'Maid of Norway[1],' and who, at her mother's death, became heir presumptive to the throne, and as such was recognized by an assembly of the estates at Scone. But we all hoped that the king would have male heirs, for early last year, while still in the prime of life, he married Joleta, daughter of the Count of Drew. Unhappily, on the 19th of March, he attended a council in the castle of Edinburgh, and on his way back to his wife at Kinghorn, on a stormy night, he fell over a precipice and was killed.

"The hopes of the country now rested on the 'Maid of Norway,' who alone stood between the throne and a number of claimants, most of whom would be prepared to support their claims by arms, and thus bring unnumbered woes upon Scotland. Most unhappily for the country, the maid died on her voyage to Scotland, and the succession therefore became open.

"You will see on this chart, which I have drawn out, the lines by which the principal competitors—for there were nigh upon a score of them—claimed the throne.

"Before the death of the maid, King Edward had proposed a marriage between her and his young son, and his ambassadors met the Scottish commissioners at Brigham, near Kelso, and on the 18th of July, 1290, the treaty was concluded. It contained, besides the provisions of the marriage, clauses for the personal freedom of Margaret should she survive her husband; for the reversion of the crown failing her issue; for protection of the rights, laws, and liberties of Scotland; the freedom of the church; the privileges of crown vassals; the independence of the courts; the preservation of all charters and natural muniments; and the holding of parliaments only within Scotland; and specially provided that no vassal should be compelled to go

forth of Scotland for the purpose of performing homage or fealty; and that no native of Scotland should for any cause whatever be compelled to answer, for any breach of covenant or from crime committed, out of the kingdom.

"Thus you see, my boy, that King Edward at this time fully recognized the perfect independence of Scotland, and raised no claim to any suzerainty over it. Indeed, by Article I it was stipulated that the rights, laws, liberties, and customs of Scotland should remain for ever entire and inviolable throughout the whole realm and its marches; and by Article V that the Kingdom of Scotland shall remain separate and divided from England, free in itself, and without subjection, according to its right boundaries and marches, as heretofore.

"King Edward, however, artfully inserted a salvo, 'saving the rights of the King of England and of all others which before the date of this treaty belong to him or any of them in the marches or elsewhere.' The Scottish lords raised no objection to the insertion of this salvo, seeing that it was of general purport, and that Edward possessed no rights in Scotland, nor had any ever been asserted by his predecessors—Scotland being a kingdom in itself equal to its neighbour—and that neither William the Norman nor any of his successors attempted to set forward any claims to authority beyond the Border.

"No sooner was the treaty signed than Edward, without warrant or excuse, appointed Anthony Beck, the warlike Bishop of Durham, Lieutenant of Scotland, in the name of the yet unmarried pair; and finding that this was not resented, he demanded that all the places of strength in the kingdom should be delivered to him. This demand was not, however, complied with, and the matter was still pending when the Maid of Norway died. The three principal

competitors—Bruce, Baliol, and Comyn—and their friends, at once began to arm; but William Fraser, Bishop of St. Andrews, a friend of Baliol, wrote to King Edward suggesting that he should act as arbitrator, and more than hinting that if he chose Baliol he would find him submissive in all things to his wishes. Edward jumped at the proposal, and thereupon issued summonses to the barons of the northern counties to meet him at Norham on the 3d of June; and a mandate was issued to the sheriffs of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, York, and Lancaster, to assemble the feudal array at the same rendezvous.

"Now, you know, my son, that, owing to the marriages between royal families of England and Scotland, there has been a close connection between the countries. Many Scotch barons have married English heiresses, and hold lands in both countries, while Scottish maidens have married English knights. Thus it happens that a great number of the Scotch nobility are as much Englishmen as Scotchmen, and are vassals to England for lands held there. Four of the competitors, John Baliol, Robert Bruce, John Comyn, and William Ross, are all barons of England as well as of Scotland, and their lands lying in the north they were, of course, included in the invitation. In May, Edward issued an invitation to the Bishops of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and other Scotch nobles to come to Norham, remain there, and return, specially saying that their presence there was not to be regarded as a custom through which the laws of Scotland might in any future time be prejudiced. Hither then came the whole power of the north of England, and many of the Scotch nobles.

"When the court opened, Roger Brabazon, the king's justiciary, delivered an address, in which he stated that Edward, as lord paramount[2] of Scotland, had come there

roughly 50–60 million years ago and long the subject of local legends.

38 Donegal is a county in the northwest of Ireland, a rugged and largely Gaelic-speaking region which in the medieval and early modern periods was dominated by native chieftains rather than full English control.

39 In the novel, Fergus of Killeen is presented as the local Irish chieftain; the name pairs a common Gaelic personal name (Fergus) with the place-name Killeen, and the text does not identify him as a specific, verifiable historical individual.

40 The Pale refers to the area around Dublin that remained under direct English administration from the later Middle Ages; territories 'outside the Pale' were those governed by native Irish lords or beyond English authority.

41 St. Duthoc (often spelled Duthac) refers to a medieval shrine and church in Ross-shire, north-east Scotland, that was a pilgrimage site where people could claim sanctuary; the reference here means the ladies took refuge at that religious sanctuary.

42 This title here refers to the noblewoman (historically Isabella MacDuff) who crowned Robert the Bruce at Scone; contemporary chronicles record that she was captured and publicly imprisoned in a cage at Berwick by King Edward as a punishment.

43 Berwick Castle was a major medieval fortress and royal stronghold at Berwick-upon-Tweed on the England–Scotland border, repeatedly contested in Anglo-Scottish wars and used by English kings as a prison and garrison.

44 Refers to the Earl of Pembroke, an English noble and military commander; in the early 14th century this title was held by Aymer de Valence, who led English forces in Scotland and opposed Robert the Bruce (the identification here is the likely historical reference rather than an absolute attribution).

45 John of Lorne is John MacDougall (Lord of Lorn), a Scottish magnate from Argyll who opposed Robert the Bruce and whose followers (the MacDougalls) fought against Bruce's supporters in the early 14th century.

46 The site of a celebrated Scottish victory by Robert the Bruce against English forces often dated to May 1307 (commonly given as 10 May 1307); Bruce used prepared ground and spearmen to repel a larger mounted force under the English Earl of Pembroke.

47 An earlier engagement in which Robert the Bruce was surprised and defeated by English forces in June 1306 (usually dated 19 June 1306), a significant setback during his campaign to secure the Scottish throne.

48 The Grampians (Grampian Mountains) are a major mountain range in central and northeastern Scotland that historically formed a natural barrier between Highland and Lowland regions and contain passes such as Killiecrankie used for travel and military movements.

49 'Bruce' refers to Robert the Bruce (c.1274–1329), King of Scots from 1306 who led Scotland's fight for independence against England and won a decisive victory at Bannockburn (1314).

50 Refers to the site and famous battle (Battle of Stirling Bridge, 1297) in the Wars of Scottish Independence, where Scottish forces used the narrow bridge crossing to defeat a larger English force.

51 A medieval English knightly name borne by several contemporaries of the Wars of Scottish Independence; here it denotes an English commander opposing the Scots, likely one of the St John family active in the late 13th–early 14th centuries.

52 Bothwell refers to Bothwell Castle and its surrounding lordship in South Lanarkshire, Scotland, a strategically important stronghold whose garrison and governor feature in medieval accounts of the Scottish wars.

53 Movable protective screens—often hurdles or wooden frames covered with hides—used in medieval sieges to shield soldiers and sappers from arrows and missiles while they worked.

54 An archaic oath invoking Saint James (Spanish Santiago); used in medieval and early modern English as an exclamation of surprise or emphasis and reflecting popular veneration of that saint.

55 A defensive ditch or trench surrounding a castle or fortification (often called a moat when filled with water), used in the medieval period to impede attackers and protect the walls.

56 Berwick here denotes Berwick-upon-Tweed, a town on the England–Scotland border that was long contested in medieval and early modern wars and frequently changed hands between the two crowns.

57 ‘the Douglas’ refers to the Douglas family or clan, a powerful Scottish noble lineage prominent in the 13th–14th centuries, noted for leading cross-border raids and military actions during the Wars of Scottish Independence.

58 Two branches of the powerful Comyn (also Cumming) noble family who held earldoms in northern Scotland and were leading political opponents of Robert the Bruce during the Wars of Scottish Independence; members of these houses often allied with England and resisted Bruce's claim to the throne.

59 A narrow mountain pass at the head of Loch Awe in western Scotland; it is the historic site where Robert the Bruce's forces routed the MacDougalls (the Lornes) during his campaign to secure the Highlands in 1308–09.

60 Piers Gaveston (c.1284–1312) was a Gascon knight and the favorite of King Edward II, created Earl of Cornwall; his influence provoked baronial hostility and he was eventually captured and executed by rebellious nobles.

61 The battle of Falkirk (1298) was a major engagement in which King Edward I of England defeated the Scottish forces led by William Wallace, significantly weakening organized Scottish resistance at that time.

62 A heavy vertically sliding gate of wood or metal used at the entrance of a medieval castle to block access; it could be dropped quickly from grooves in the gateway for defence.

63 The day before Ash Wednesday in the Christian calendar, traditionally a time for confession and eating rich foods