SIR DAVID OF BRECHIN, EXECUTED IN 1320.

By JOSEPH BAIN, F.S.A., Scot.

This knight, who was a prominent Scotsman in the War of Independence, where he changed sides more than once, like many others, finally joining his own countrymen, is usually called the nephew of Robert Bruce. Lord Hailes says so in the account he gives of the conspiracy against that King; to which Sir David was privy, but concealed his knowledge in consequence of an oath. The historian also calls him "that brave young man who had served with distinction against the Saracens." Barbour, who always styles Sir David "gud Schyr Davy of Brechyn,"[1] says nothing of this relationship to Bruce, nor of Sir David's having fought against the Saracens; nor does Fordun.

Douglas (Wood's ed., vol. 1, p. 244) gives the following account:—

"After the victory of King Robert Bruce at Inverury on 22nd July, 1308, over the English party, Sir David de Brechin returned to his Castle of Brechin, but being besieged by Robert, he made his peace with the King and ranged himself under his standard. He married a sister of that monarch by whom he had,

1, Sir David.

2, Thomas Brechin, of Lumquhat, forfeited with his brother David." Sir David (the son) whom he calls the Flower of Chivalry, and one of the barons who wrote the letter to the Pope, went to the Holy Land, and was finally executed, &c. (The authorities given are *Nisbet's Heraldry*, I, 77, *Robertson's Index*, No. 33, and *Dalrymple's Collections*, II, 107.)[2]

I propose to shew by undoubted authorities that the evidence points to only one Sir David of Brechin, contemporary with Robert Bruce, who, possibly, might have been Bruce's brother-in-law, but not his nephew. According to Andrew of Wyntoun, William of Brechin married the 4th sister of John Comyn, earl of Buchan. Their son was "Schyr Davy," who is said in a pedigree in the *Registrum de Panmure*[3] to have married . . . Bruce, sister of Robert, King of Scotland, and by her had the Sir David, who was executed in 1320. No proof is given of this second Sir David's existence, nor is it likely there could be. The son of a marriage in 1308, could not be a conspirator in 1320! William of Brechin was dead before 10 Dec., 1292, at which date Edward I., as overlord, issued letters patent granting to John de Calentir the marriage of David, his son and heir; and on 18 June, 1294,

[1] *The Bruce*, Book 13.

[2] I believe Nisbet is the authority for his going to the Holy Land, and his being the nephew of Bruce. But Nisbet's genealogical statements are not to be relied on. Nor are Dalrymple's *Collections*, in any controverted question. Robertson's Index merely proves the forfeiture of *a* Sir David of Brechin.

[3] Edited by John Stuart, LL.D., 1874 (vol. ii, p. 201).

the King rebukes King John de Balliol for not executing the gift, and orders it to be made without delay or its value paid.[1] David was evidently then a minor, but may have been of age, or nearly so, on 28 August, 1296, when he appears on the *Ragman Roll.* *If* he married a sister of King Robert Bruce, she must have died soon, for before 7 July, 1304, he had married Margaret de Bonkill, widow of Sir John the Steward, killed at Falkirk in 1298, and is said to have had children by her. As she is said to have died before September, 1304,[2] they had been married for several years. Sir David was compelled by Edward I. to serve against the King of France on 13 May, 1297, and was permitted to return to Scotland on that condition.[3] He joined the Scottish patriots in August, 1299,[4] and submitted to Edward along with Sir John Comyn in February, 1303-4.[5] He was still in the English interest on 8 July, 1309,[6] but had soon again joined his countrymen; for on 15 June, 1310, Edward II. empowered Sir Alexander of Abernethy to receive Sir David, then with the Scots, to his peace.[7] From that date till at least 1312, he seems to have remained an English partisan, and was Warden of Berwick-on-Tweed for Edward II. On 4th Oct., 1314, Margery, his wife, had a safe-conduct to go to Scotland about his deliverance.[8] So it may be presumed that he had fought on the English side at Bannockburn, and been made prisoner by his victorious countrymen. So far as I recollect at present, the only other notice of him in Scottish records after this last date, is in a charter, printed in the already quoted *Registrum de Panmure* (vol. ii, p. 219), granted by Sir David de Berclay to Margaret, daughter of Sir David de Brechyn, knight, of his lands of Carny-Berclay Carny-Murthach, Uchtirmonsy, &c., for her life, as her dower of the marriage about to be contracted (*contrahendo*) between them. This deed is dated at Kirymore on the morrow of the Annunciation of the Virgin (March 26), 1315. As this deed does not style Sir David de Brechin *the late*, which would have been the case had he been dead, it may therefore be presumed he was living. This Margaret might be his daughter either by the marriage (already noticed) to the widow of Sir John Steward, or by an earlier alliance with the sister of Robert Bruce (if such took place). Before 7 Aug., 1317, he must have again joined the English side. For Edward II. orders a pardon for him,

[1] *Rot. Scocie*, vol. i, pp. 13, 21.
[2] *Calendar of Documents* (*Scotland*), vol. ii, pref. p. lviii, and authorities cited.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. ii, No. 883.
[4] *Ibid.* No. 1978.
[5] *Ibid.* No. 1455.
[6] Exch. Account.
[7] *Rot. Scocie.*
[8] *Rot. Scocie.* Unless she was a 2nd wife, this is irreconcilable with her asserted death in 1301 *ut supra*. This fact solely rests on a document cited in *Hist. MSS. Commission Report, vol. ix., App. p.* 181.

as he has been received to his peace by the means of Sir Andrew de Harcla (Privy Seal of that date, in the Public Records). So he can only have re-joined Bruce shortly before his execution. I have found no other notice of him in the English records. But it is evident that he and not a son of the same name must have been the victim in 1320. Being a minor in 1294, he was in 1320 still a man in the prime of his age;[1] and it must have been he who had served against the Saracens—not a son for whose existence there is not room between these two dates, or who, at any rate, must have been far too young to have distinguished himself by foreign service. Indeed, it is not conceivable that any Scotsman could have gone to the Holy Wars between 1314 and 1320. Every man was wanted in the struggle at home.

Barbour relates the story of Sir David's fate with much picturesque detail—some of the incidents being such as he could only have got from eye-witnesses. He tells how Sir "Ingrahame the Umfraweill" upbraided the people who pressed to see his friend Sir David executed, reminding them how they had once come in greater crowds to partake of his bounty. That Sir Ingram also buried Sir David honourably with the King's leave. And for sorrow at his friend's loss, he told King Robert that he could no longer be his liegeman, but must leave Scotland; and asked his permission to dispose of his lands, which the King granted "curtasly," as Barbour describes it. Sir Ingram then took leave of Scotland for ever, and went to the English Court, where his reception by Edward II. and the advice given by him to the King how to deal with the Scots, are extremely curious, and well worth reading in the racy language of "the Bruce."

There is little doubt that this Sir Ingram Umfraville was that Anglo-Scottish baron whose lands lay in Ayrshire, and who was a renowned leader in the Scottish wars during the reign of Edward I.—now on one side and now on another. Barbour speaks of him as in the English army at Bannockburn and giving Edward advice, which, if taken, might have changed the fortunes of the day. His affection for Sir David was clearly that of a tried comrade in many a field, and is another proof that the latter was not the young man described by Lord Hailes. I can give some interesting facts partly in support of Barbour's story. On 20 April, 1320, Edward II. gave Sir Ingram Umfraville, a Scotch knight passing through England on his affairs beyond seas with are tinue of 40 persons, safe-conduct till Michaelmas. (Pat. Roll, 13 Edw. II.) On 26 January, 1320-21, his English vassals in Northumberland, &c., are ordered to account for their dues, as *Sir Ingram, who was a prisoner in Scotland, has shewn the King that he has escaped and never left his allegiance* (Close Roll 14, Edwd. II.) This does not quite tally with Barbour's account of his being at Bruce's allegiance. On 29 January,

[1] He was very nearly the same age as Bruce himself, who was born in 1274.

1320-21, Edward II. gave Sir Ingram, styled a "banneret of Scotland," who had just come from those parts and was going beyond seas (very likely to make a pilgrimage for his late friend's soul), a silver gilt cup, cover and flagon of considerable value, besides £10 in money towards his expenses.[1] From Sir David's daughter, Margaret, his lordship of Brechin descended through her daughter, Jean Barclay, to the latter's daughter, Marion Fleming, who brought this inheritance to the Maules of Panmure, now represented by the Earl of Dalhousie, also inheriting through the female line.

I presume to think these facts in Sir David's career are not uninteresting. They shew how much there is to learn about Scottish history, divested of the accretions of tradition, by an examination of the English records.