

## The Battlefield of Loudoun Hill, 1307

A. G. McLEOD, M.A., F.S.A.ScOT.

On the Ordnance Survey Kilmarnock and Ayr one-inch to the mile map the battlefield of Loudoun Hill is placed at the foot of the precipitous southern face of the hill. That impossible situation is not in keeping with Barbour's description of Bruce's choice of the field of battle, which is as follows :—

“ He saw the highway lyant was  
 On a fair field, even and dry ;  
 But upon either side thereby  
 Was a great moss, meikle and braid,  
 That from the way was, where men raid,  
 A bow-draught weel on either side.”

That fair field, even and dry, was the site where King Robert the Bruce decided to take his stand and “ bargain them.” One great moss, meikle and braid, still existed into historic times between the farmyard of the farm house of Allanton Plains and the branch road from the neighbourhood of the eastern end of the Winny Wizen to Drumclog via the farm-steading of Drumboy, Meadowfoot and Stobieside. It was only comparatively recently that the moss was drained and planted with tress. On the other side of the main road from Darvel to Strathaven there is still low-lying marshy ground between the farm-house of Allantonplains and the River Avon, as shown on the one-inch map.

I put forward my case for the site of the battlefield to the Director-General of the Ordnance Survey at Southampton and won recognition of my claim.

“ The fair field, even and dry,” must have been situated beyond and north-west of the stackyard of Allantonplains. To neutralise still further the numerical superiority of Sir Aymer de Valence's English force of cavalry, King Robert ordered his camp-followers to dig trenches on the level ground to prevent the English knights-at-arms from outflanking his chosen field of battle, and so although the English were five to every one Scot, King Robert Bruce and his little army of Scots patriots won a signal victory.