



**Extract from the Ballarat Star**  
**25<sup>th</sup> May 1889**

Mr Nimmo then addressed the assemblage as follows:

“Mr Mayor, Mr Wilson, ladies and gentlemen, - I feel very grateful for the people of Ballarat for having invited me to be present at the interesting ceremony of unveiling a splendid statue erected for them in honour of Scotland’s noblest son and greatest benefactor. (Applause). I feel, however, at the same time that it would be impossible for me to find language that would adequately express the magnitude and value of the disinterested services rendered by Sir William Wallace, to his native country when he ‘dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride or nobly die’, in the sacred cause of Scottish freedom. (Cheers). The grandeur of his moral nature, his disinterested and spotless character as a man, his intrepid valour as a soldier, his wisdom in the councils of his nation, his skill and dauntless courage as a general (applause) on the battlefield, all conspired to make him beloved and trusted by the people, and enable him to dispel the darkest and most dangerous cloud that ever overshadowed the grand old ‘land of the mountain and the flood’. (Hear, Hear). At this distant period of time we can form a very imperfect estimate of the dangers Sir William Wallace had to encounter, and the obstacles he had to overcome, in obtaining the liberties of his country. (Hear, Hear). You are well aware that he had to contend with one of the most powerful monarchs in Europe, Edward the First of England, who though he was a brave soldier and an astute politician, he was at the same time a most aggressive and unscrupulous king. In the next place Wallace had to contend with a majority of the scions of the ancient nobility of Scotland, who were envious and jealous of the fame which his ardour as a patriot and prowess on the battlefield had evoked from the breast of the nation. The disastrous consequences of that jealousy were made apparent at the Battle of Falkirk. On that occasion, but for the treachery of those scions of nobility, Scotland would have won the day, Falkirk would have been a glorious repetition of the Battle of Stirling Bridge. (Cheers). But although Edward was successful on that field, his eye as an experienced and skilful general was not blind to the spirit evidenced by the Scottish troops and the able manner in which Wallace arranged them to receive the enemy. (Hear, Hear). Edward saw enough at Falkirk to convince him that he never would be able to establish his authority permanently in Scotland as long as Sir William Wallace was alive; but he saw more, he saw the divisions in the Scottish ranks occasioned by the jealousy of her nobles, as he resolves to utilise that jealousy in furthering his own unjust and ambitious designs; he resolved to bribe those nobles to aid him in accruing the capture and death of the hero of Stirling Bridge. Sir John Montith, a Scottish noble, was the betrayer of Sir William Wallace, and by that base he left a blot on the escutcheon of Scotland that will never be erased, and the refined cruelty of King Edward when through treachery and villainy he had Wallace secure in his power has left a foul blot on that monarch’s character that time will never obliterate. Edward fondly imagined that the cause of Scottish freedom would die with the death of Scotland’s noblest hero. Edward did not know human nature – at any rate he was evidently ignorant of one grant characteristic of that nature which is truthfully described by one of England’s greatest poets where he says:-

They never fall who die  
In a great cause; the lock may soak their gore  
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs  
Be strung from city gates and castle walls –  
But still their spirit walks abroad, though years  
Elapse, and others share as dark and doom,  
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts  
Which overpower all others and conduct  
The world at last to freedom.

(Cheers). The freedom enjoyed by Scotland at the present hour is directly traceable to the patriotic efforts of Sir William Wallace 600 years ago; and his name, shrouded in a halo of honour and glory, has come down through that long vista of years, until here this day in the noble City of Ballarat I see before me thousands of her public-spirited and high minded citizens met to do honour to the memory of that brave man who struggled, fought, staggered and died as a patriot martyr in the cause of national liberty. (Cheers). I am proud to see amongst the audience Englishmen and Irishmen mingling with Scotchmen. I have long been of opinion that Edward the First was not a true Englishman, and I am sure he did not represent the English character truly. (Cheers). I have always found in my dealings with the English that they are as a body, high souled and honourable men. (Cheers). I am sure they were misled by Edward, and many of the bravest men and women in London, when Wallace was dragged at the heels of horses to the scaffold, shed honest tears of tears and indignation, and implored the king to have mercy even at the last moment and spare a brave man whose only fault was that he had fought for the liberty of the nation he honoured. I have found the English one of the first nations in the world as regards fair and honourable dealings between man and man, and for bravery and generosity. I thank God that England and Scotland have shaken hands, and for many years have united in fighting for the tight little island side by side. (Cheers). I pray that this state of things may long continue, and that the noble and glorious Queen who now reigns over us may long continue to do so. (Renewed Cheers). The Irish, too, I am pleased to see here. They are a brave and noble race – a little impulsive perhaps, but amongst them I have found as much genuine manliness and real good feeling as I have amongst the Scotch. (Cheers). It is a cold day and I do not intend to keep you here for long. But I cannot deny myself the pleasure of repeating a stanza from the Bard of Scotland. (Laughter). I cannot conclude my remarks better on this occasion than by repeating a portion of prayer that was offered up by that bard, in which honourable mention is made of Sir William Wallace.