

Highland Constable

Rob Roy MacGregor – the Whole Story

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Book I . The Coming to Balquhidder

CHAPTER I. 21st August 1689

THERE was a stout sixfoot wall about Dunkeld House and park, designed to shelter my lord Marquis's flowerbeds from the winter winds; but its task was a sterner one today. The rose bushes lay trampled and forlorn beneath banks of new-turned earth, whereon awkward looking soldiers in long red coats crouched in a cloud of smoke, loading and firing, loading and firing.

The Tay slid furtively past Dunkeld town, bustling a little at the ford, glad to leave such a scene of noise and violence. Two buildings thrust their beads above the smoke that billowed about the roofs and gable-ends. Here the square mass of the Marquis of Atholl's new mansion loomed above the fight, its three rows of windows stuffed with sandbags, the little cupola on its roof a nest of sharpshooters; and away by the riverbank the grey tower of the Cathedral caught the early sunshine from behind Birnam Hill. In these two buildings Angus's Regiment of Foot found itself penned, after two hours of most desperate fighting.

Last winter the Glorious Revolution had seemed to carry all before it. Hatched in the stately homes of England, welcomed to Scotland by delirious congregations, it lifted King William upon King James's throne before most of his subjects knew what was afoot. But here was the tardy counterrevolution at its height, with half Scotland and three parts of Ireland in arms for old dynasty. Perhaps no man in Scotland but the gallant Dundee could have moulded the capricious Highland clans into a formidable army, which three weeks since had cut up King William's entire Scottish command in Killiecrankie Pass. There he had fallen in the moment of victory; but the Highlandmen now pouring into Dunkeld town were the same that chased the regular soldiers from that grim battlefield. Things looked black for the new Government, and blacker still for Angus's Regiment of Foot.

These were raw troops, recruited a few months before on the Douglas estates in the west country; but if they were new to the Army List there were few of them had not smelt gunpowder before. The west country was the last refuge of the old-fashioned Covenanters; self righteous folk, oddly convinced that their own harsh way of life was the only one pleasing to God. And if a man would live according to God's Law (they argued) he must first refuse obedience to any earthly authority—a theory that had brought endless tribulation on their beads throughout the last two reigns. It had also made them the best natural soldiers outside the Highlands.

“Cameronians” was the popular name for these pseudobiblical warriors, after one of their numerous martyrs; and it followed them into the Army. They showed no proper respect for their officers, or King William, or anyone else short of Jehovah. But if any corps in the service could stand up to the Highland claymores it was these recruits of Angus's. They fought now in a state of wild exaltation, the Lord's people doing battle with Anaalek and Moab.

Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland, a man-of-the-world as well as a Cameronian, reconciled himself to a martyr's death, but with less enthusiasm. In the regiment's present plight he saw not so much the finger of God as the folly of those armchair strategist on the Privy Council, who had taken to interfering in military matters since Killiecrankie, and ordered them up, alone and unsupported, into this hostile country beyond the Highland Line. Was that another assault coming? Cleland stepped out from a doorway, to see for himself, and fell, shot through the head.

Down by the parkwall young Lieutenant Blackadder peered out across a strip of orchard ground, now dotted with tartan-clad slain, and prayed for strength. Suddenly aware of fresh movement out there, he yelled an order, and the gleaming musket-barrels slid out across the parapet. . . .

The Highland army, too, lacked a leader this morning. While Dundee yet lived the Chiefs had often to complain of his habit of acting first and consulting them afterwards. Nobody could accuse his successor of that particular fault. Brigadier Cannon came over from Ireland without the least notion of succeeding to the command, being a modest man that knew his own limitations, and ignorant of Highland warfare. He was fond of drilling his one squadron of Lowland horse and his train of very unreliable artillery; but this being an infantry battle, he was content to follow the course of events through a spy glass. It was the regimental Officers who planned and executed this assault—such men as Glengarry and Ardshiel, Young Lochiel, Glengyle and Sir John MacLean, commanders of two or three hundred claymores apiece.

Loudest in their demand for an immediate onslaught, of course, had been those unlucky ones that had not shared in the glory of Killiecrankie; and loudest of all, likely enough, was Lieutenant-Colonel Donald MacGregor of Glengyle, with whom this history is more particularly concerned.

Though he was Gaelic to the heart of him, Glengyle was of a generation that liked to affect the garb of the Cavaliers (as we know from their portraits). We may picture him taking his little regiment into action, in tall boots and plumed bonnet, pointed moustachios, and scraps of body-armour; and heading their furious charge too, in spite of the boots and his sixty-two years. Scampering at his heels came his three sons—John, Duncan, and another sturdy lad of eighteen, with hair as red as his plaid, whence he got his bye-name of Rob Roy.

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Along the wall the musket-barrels steadied; then all was blotted out in smoke, through which they must grope their way to close quarters. Here and there, under its cover, the Highlanders mounted and won a hold upon the narrow parapet, which bristled with their claymores. . . . Then, in grim silence, the Cameronians arose and smote the foe, falling upon them with butt and bayonet, where they sprawled half over the wall. Some loosened their hold in time; the rest went thudding down after them soon enough. But still they came on, yelling like fiends. Again and again some champion mounted astride the wall, to spend a perilous half-minute there before either friend or foe dragged him down. Now the word went round that the clans had forced an entry on the other side; and now it was denied. It could not end thus. .

But Brigadier Cannon thought otherwise.

Another commander might have observed how the roofs of cathedral and mansion swarmed with red-coated figures, tearing down the lead in great sheets to be fashioned into shot for their hungry muskets; and he might have drawn the obvious conclusion. Cannon only saw that he was losing more men than this miserable town was worth. He turned away, and bid his trumpets sound the Rally.

Then every clansman went running in search of his own Chief, to know what it might mean; and every man's Chief was acursing and aswearing, and crying out against the faint heart of their General, when the beleaguered garrison took a hand in its own deliverance.

Galled beyond endurance by the Highland musketry, a few volunteers had crept out from the Cameronian lines, with bundles of straw under their arms, to see if they could not reach the opposite houses unobserved and set the thatch alight. Favoured by the confusion there, they were completely successful; and the next thing the Highlanders knew was that the town was afire about them. All else was forgotten as they came tumbling out into the open—very conscious of the gunpowder that they persisted in carrying loose in their coat pockets.

Once out of the town, the rest was easily done.

Grumbling and defiant still, but not altogether sorry to be leaving that accursed town behind, the Jacobite army trickled away into the hills whence it had come. And the sternfaced Cameronians, midway through a decorous psalm of thanksgiving, astonished themselves by breaking out into wild cheering and tossing their hats into the air, very like any ordinary godless soldiers. Another Scottish regiment had begun its history in worthy fashion.

CHAPTER II. August 1689—February 1691

THREE days later, at Blair Atholl, the Jacobite campaign of '89 came quietly to an end.

For two days and nights the clans sulked over their humiliation, while Cannon bustled from one resentful chieftain to another with plausible excuses. (What matter if the enemy did hold Dunkeld? Were they straining their lines of communication to no purpose?) But Celtic enthusiasm, once thoroughly damped, is not easily rekindled. On the third day the Chiefs came to a decision; and coolly announced that they were breaking up camp and going back to the glens—to recruit. Cannon must have shown his horror and bewilderment; but every thing, they were able to assure him, was quite in order. They had their Bond of Association already drawn up and signed—a quaint document whereby they all bound themselves to meet again in the course of the following month, at a place not specified, each with a quota of armed men. (Glengyle promised no more than a hundred, or half his present force.) Now they could disperse with clear consciences to their respective glens till boredom, or another Dundee, summoned them back to the wars. Not one of them all was to take the field again that year.

As for the poor bedraggled Lowland cavaliers and Irishmen, who could not go home if they would, but could not maintain themselves in arms alone, they drifted away in search of any kind of winter quarters. For many it was the beginning of a lifetime of exile.

The campaign was over, but that would bring little peace to the country. Rather was it the signal for the dispersing clans to amuse themselves with that private warfare which was so much more to their taste. “Levyng contributions for King James” was the most popular of all military duties, and under that name almost anything would pass for an act of legitimate war. Moreover, it chanced to be that favourite season of long, bright nights, when through all the Highlands in all ages the cattle have been hustled complaining from the fold and driven off over the bens and glens to feed in strange pastures. Three bold chieftains, at least, must have had their plans ready made for picking up a booty in the Campbell bounds on their way home, or on the Lowland border. They may perhaps have laid a wager on the result, as they parted on the banks of Garry; for who could foresee where it was to lead them—one to ruin and another to a violent death before all was done?

They were MacDonald of Keppoch, byenamed “Coil of the Cows” for his predatory habits; MacIlan of Glencoe, a stately old man in a dappled bull’s-hide waist coat; and their kinsman, Donald MacGregor of Glengyle.

The story of our Highland clans, where it can be unravelled at all, is very like that of the nations of Europe. The great powers of one age are the oppressed minorities of another; and new confederacies are ever rising on the ruins of the old. The MacGregors’ proud traditions of a descent from the royal MacAlpin dynasty, and of vast territories in what is now Perthshire, all may well be true; but they must have taken the wrong side in the Wars of Independence, a mistake that proved fatal to many a great family; and it is clear that the fortunes of the clan were already on the decline by the close of the fourteenth century, when the death of one of their Chiefs is first noticed by the chroniclers. John MacGregor, the One-eyed, at his death in 1390, is simply designated “of Glenorchy”; and he was the last of his line to hold that estate.

From that time the decline and fall of the MacGregors was the particular care of their Campbell neighbours; for the new lords of Glenorchy were Campbells, a younger branch of the land-grabbing House of Argyll (who had backed the Bruce, and flourished accordingly). The next two centuries saw them pushing steadily eastward, with the sword and the parchment, into the four glens of Breadalbane, which had been the home of Clan Alpin before ever a Campbell was seen in Scotland. To the sword the MacGregors knew how to reply, but the parchment was a more subtle foe, which contrived always to set the law on the side of the invaders. How they carried on the long struggle for an independent existence, under the descendants of the one-eyed John, cannot be told here. By the time of this history the conquest of Breadalbane was complete; the Laird of MacGregor was landless and powerless; his cousin Roro in Glen Lyon, and a few more, kept their estates at the price of their independence, as vassals of the conqueror (now raised to the peerage as Earl of Breadalbane).

Only in the south, where some fragments of the broken clan had settled down under landlords less harsh, the ancient race survived in some of its ancient freedom.

There was a certain Dougal Keir, or “Brown Dougal,” a grandson of the last MacGregor of Glenorchy, of whom nothing whatever is known except that he was undoubtedly a great hero. So great a hero was he that when his descendants of about the fourth generation came to form themselves into a little clan-within-a-clan, or offshoot of the old MacGregor stock, the name they chose for themselves was the ClanDougalKeir. And the country they chose for themselves was that which lies between Breadalbane on the north, and the low Lowlands; between Loch Lomond on the west, and the Pass of Leny. In this country are two glens that run down side by side out of the great watershed of Drumalbin. The name of the one is Glen Gyle, and the other is called Balquhidder.

It was in Glen Gyle, at the head of lovely Loch Katrine, that Gregor Dhu MacGregor—fourth in descent from Dougal the brown and heroic—established his home. He held his land as “kindly tenant” of the Laird of Buchanan; and he married Janet Buchanan of the family of Carbeth. This was a time of bitter persecution for the Gregarach

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everywhere. Four of his brothers and two sons perished either in battle or on the gallows in the Grassmarket at Edinburgh. But he was succeeded, early in the seventeenth century, by his eldest son, Malcolm Og.

Of this Malcolm Og we shall have more to say elsewhere. He is said to have married a daughter of MacDonald of Keppoch, and was the father of that gallant cavalier, LieutenantColonel Donald MacGregor of Glengyle.

Meanwhile the Gregarach had taken root in the new soil and multiplied exceedingly. In Glen Gyle, which was the true type of Highland glen, there was hardly a householder who did not bear the name of MacGregor and claim Donald Glas—"Pale Donald"—of Glengyle as cousin, though few perhaps could have traced the relationship with certainty. The glen, the chieftain, and the clan were a self-contained unit in peace as in war.

But over the hill in Balquhiddier you caught a glimpse of what the Highlands might some day become, if ever the power of the native Chiefs were broken or decayed. For Balquhiddier was a home of masterless men, of half a dozen different clans, leading a free and riotous life of their own without the restraint of either law or clan ship. There was no laird in Balquhiddier, and no real allegiance owed to the distant landlord, the Marquis of Atholl. In time of war alone, because they loved a fight, and because they numbered so many of the far-scattered MacGregors among them, the Balquhiddier men would sometimes waive their independence for a season and follow the banner of Glengyle.

In this way Donald Glas could muster fully two hundred pretty men in an emergency. But the pity of it was that he had never been able to lead them to any resounding victory.

He was not yet grown to manhood in '44, when Montrose raised the loyal clans for King Charles, and so had no part in the triumphs of Inverlochy or Kilsyth. . . . His first chance came with Glencairn's Rising in 1653, when the MacGregor contingent laid a pretty little ambush for the Roundheads just above Aberfoyle, on the borders of Glengyle's own country. But that campaign came to nothing, and was quickly forgotten. For the next thirty-six years his reputation as a military man was only kept alive by a persistent use of his lieutenant-colonel's rank. (You might suppose from the list of signatories to the Bond of Association at Blair that "L. Coll McGregor" was the only military officer present.)

Then came this Revolution, and the MacGregors were invited to raise a clan regiment to serve with Dundee. Their Chief at this time was a spiritless young man, who ignored the call to arms; but Glengyle and Roro scraped together a couple of hundred men on their own account, and marched to join Dundee as he came south. They were no farther than Rannoch when Killiecrankie was fought and won without them.

Charging at the head of his clan at Dunkeld fight, Glengyle cared less about this long series of disappointments. But that had been the greatest disappointment of all. Only one thing would appease him now; he must find his lads some brave work to do before they disbanded. A really famous foray was what he and they were needing, to give them a good opinion of themselves.

It was" about the latter end of October " that Keppoch and Glencoe made the foray that is still remembered as the classic example of Highland thoroughness in such matters. It was a daylight raid in force, without haste or concealment. And the place they chose for the harrying was Chesthill in Glen Lyon.

Campbell of Glenlyon had not actually been in arms that summer, for either side. Like his Chief and kinsman, Breadalbane, he stood neutral; but his feud with the MacDonalds was of many years' standing. He had recently had to sell his patrimony, to pay his gambling debts and wine bills; but this one property of Chesthill remained to him, that he held in his wife's right. So the rest of the glen was spared; but Chesthill was swept clean. In one house, we are told, a baby was sleeping, wrapped in a blanket. When the MacDonalds passed on, it still lay sleeping—but the blanket was gone. At the end of the day, when the allied chieftains parted at the head of the glen, there was a vast assorted herd of some fourteen hundred beasts—horses, cows, sheep, and goats—to be divided; to say nothing of the "spits, plates, trenchers, and candlesticks, and other things" from the Chesthill kitchens, that found their way into the pockets of the light-fingered MacDonalds.

Glenlyon was a ruined man; and Breadalbane, his Chief, a furiously angry one.

Of Glengyle's operations on the Highland Line, where his people did most of their cattlelifting, we have no such particular account. He seems to have conducted a series of small forays by the light of that Michaelmas moon, taking one or other of his sons along with him, for the sake of the experience. Their victims were carefully selected for their politics and family connections, as well as for the quality of their cattle and the situation of their lands. As to the first, it was sufficient if a man had acquiesced in the late Revolution, and that was pretty general below the Highland Line. About this time the records of the Privy Council are filled with the complaints of gentlemen of the Lennox district, whose beasts have been "levied for the use of King James." But we have no means of telling how far Glengyle's score still fell short of the MacDonalds', before that night when he and young Duncan set out with a party to lift the cows of William Cochrane of Kilmaronock.

Whether by chance or design, there were soldiers at the Tower of Kilmaronock that night—a company of Lord Kenmure's Regiment, whose memories of Killiecrankie cannot have increased their fondness for Highlandmen. And the meadows lie in an angle between Loch Lomond and the Endrick Water, whence there is no escape to the northward in case of surprise. It is hard to believe that the Gregarach gave in without a fight; but all we know for certain is that Glengyle, and Duncan his son, were taken captive. They were marched away to Stirling, and apparently lodged there for some time in the Castle; for it was not until the 18th January 1690 that word went round Edinburgh of the arrival at the Tolbooth of "the great robber LieutenantColonel MacGregor."

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So ended Glengyle's last attempt to win that martial renown which had all his life eluded him.

Early in the New Year there was a faint revival of Jacobite activity in the north, when a few enthusiasts called a meeting of Chiefs to discuss the future prosecution of the war. Young Glengyle (as John must be called) dutifully made the miserable journey over the hills to Tomintoul; but the attendance was poor, and nothing was accomplished but the signing of yet another Bond of Association—"to strike and bide by one another."

When King James sent over another of his generals from Ireland that spring there was one clan at least could take no part in the rather feeble campaign that followed. Never had the MacGregor country lain so quiet in time of war. But General Buchan had barely been a month in Scotland, and had assembled but a fraction of Cannon's disbanded forces, when he and they were surprised at Cromdale, and routed so speedily that Buchan and Cannon—the new general and the old—were glad to escape in their shirts.

In July came the news of the Battle of the Boyne, and King James's flight from Ireland.

When those two grand old Scottish noblemen, the Marquis of Atholl and the Earl of Breadalbane, made up their minds at last and both declared for King William, then it was generally felt that the issue of the struggle could no longer be in doubt. Both had stood neutral in the recent crisis, with the same excuse—the gout. Atholl had kept out of the way down at Bath, but his people were led astray in his absence, and marched to join Dundee under his son Lord James. Breadalbane was probably wiser when he remained at his post, where he could keep his clan out of mischief and observe with greater accuracy which way the cat was going to jump. Now he had made his choice.

So the year 1690 dragged out its course, while the Jacobite cause sank steadily on either side of the Irish Sea, and the unhappy laird of Glengyle languished in prison.

Those two winters were bitterly hard ones for the Glengyle folk. The war, like any other war, was followed by famine; and now the laird's rents were sequestrated to cover the expense of keeping him in the Tolbooth.

There had always been a simple remedy, in the past, for hardships such as these—a foray into the rich Lowlands to replenish empty larders at home. But the capture of the laird, while engaged upon that very business, put it out of the question. While Glengyle's fate hung in the balance, his clan dared not risk the Government's further displeasure.

Lady Glengyle died in that winter of 1691. She was a sister of the now penniless Campbell of Glenlyon (who had just begged a commission in Argyll's Foot, and was nursing his revenge on Glencoe). Thus she was first cousin to Lord Breadalbane himself, a connection that was of the utmost importance to her husband's family; though they could never quite forget that it was his forefathers had driven theirs south. To one at least of her sons Lady Glengyle bequeathed the red hair of her race, with perhaps a touch of the Campbell's traditional guile.

It was during this unhappy time that Rob Roy came to manhood. Duncan, the second son, had been released from prison, but no more is heard of him. Perhaps he was wounded, and that, or the rough surgery of the times, left him a cripple. The whole responsibility for the clan's welfare would have fallen on John's shoulders, had not these months of hardship and anxiety forced young Rob to put his youth behind him and share the load.

Early in December, Glengyle's friends had warning of the serious peril he was in. A warrant was issued for "a process of treason before the Lords of Justiciary against Lieut. Col. MacGregor, now prisoner in the tolbooth of Edinburgh for being in rebellion against their Majesties and for depredation, theft, and Robbery." It must have been this formidable statement of his crimes that prompted them to seek help from a most unlikely source—from the Laird of Kilmarnock himself.

As it happened, there was one person well qualified to act as gobetween in negotiations of this kind. Archibald MacGregor of Kilmanan had succeeded his father and elder brother in the estate of that name near Strathblane, and there lived the life of a Lowland bonnetlaird. Some ten years ago he had wooed and won pretty Anna Cochrane, daughter of the minister at Strathblane and a kinswoman of Kilmarnock's; but the lady died a year or two afterwards, and then Kilmanan went badly to pieces. His only pleasure now was in roaring round the county from one tavern to the next, with a lot of young wastrels that knew no better; and mostly lie sat at home, drinking heavily, letting his property look after itself. Yet this queer fellow was a man of breeding; he was always a staunch friend to the Glengyle family; and he cannot have been a stranger to Kilmarnock.

It is easy to guess what arguments he would put forward. Of the charges against Glengyle, one was treason; but as one of King James's officers, he could justly claim that what he did was an act of war. His might be made a test case, to decide whether a process of treason could lie against a prisoner of war. But it was complicated at present by an additional charge of lifting the cattle of the Laird of Kilmarnock. Would not the latter give Glengyle this much chance, and drop his charge against him?

The sheer impudence of such a petition, from a set of Highland freebooters to the man they had done their best to rob, is rather astounding. But whoever reads these pages must give up judging this cattlelifting business by modern English standards of honesty. To the seventeenth-century Highlander it was, in the first place, an economic necessity—the only thing that lifted him out of that grinding poverty, the curse of his nation, which quickly overwhelmed his descendants after the practice was put down. Like poaching in England, it had

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public opinion very largely behind it, and was commonly justified on the grounds that there can be no ownership of living beasts. If it was dishonest, then the dishonesty was on a noble scale, the next thing to real war, and the penalty of failure should be no greater than in war.

But there was another argument that must have swayed Cochrane of Kimaronock more than any of these. Without having any great respect for Highland ideas of honesty, he knew something of the worth of Highland gratitude, and saw a way of turning this situation to his advantage.

Glengyle passed one more cheerless Christmas and Hogmanay in captivity, before his case at last came up for hearing. Then it became known that the Laird of Kilmaronock desired to take no proceedings against the prisoner in respect of the “depredation, theft and Robbery,” and Glengyle stood his trial for treason alone.

They learnt the result at Glen Gyle from two Orders of the Privy Council. The first contained splendid news, on the face of it. The Lords of the Council ordered the Keeper of the Tolbooth to set Donald MacGregor at liberty, on his finding caution that “he and Robert and John MacGregor his sons, and Malcolm MacGregor his brother’s son I shall live peaceably and with all submission to the present Government. . . . And shall not intercommune, converse or correspond with any rebels.” None of that need worry Glengyle once he was back over the Forth. He would be asked to swear allegiance to the usurper, no doubt, but what was an oath taken under duress? The Magistrates of Edinburgh had not been too particular about their own oaths of allegiance a couple of years ago.

Only one thing damped the young men’s spirits. Their father was still in the Tolbooth, by all accounts, and until they saw him free they would not altogether believe what was written here.

The second Order of the Council, dated the 12th of February (a week after the first), probably came as a surprise. Upon the petition of William Cochrane of Kilmaronock, and eleven others, “gentlemen heritors in the westend of the Sheriffdom of Stirling, and within the shire of Dumbarton lying on the braes of the Highlands, Shewing that the petitioners and their Ground and tenants are daily harassed and oppressed by the Incursions of thieves and broken men from the Highlands whereby the petitioners’ ground is Laid waste And now are utterly destroyed and disabled either to subsist with themselves and families or to pay Supplies to the government “— upon this melancholy petition, John MacGregor of Glengyle and Archibald MacGregor of Kilmanan were appointed to the joint command of a Highland Watch.

And this brings us at last to what is the real start of Rob Roy’s remarkable career.

CHAPTER III. 1691

THESE Watches were part of a scheme lately put forward by Lord Breadalbin for the quietening of the Highlands. Disgusted to find that his welltimed submission had won him no place in the new Government, he had been looking about him for the best means of drawing fresh attention to himself. His knowledge of Highland affairs seemed to be the best card he could play, more particularly as the clans were still technically in rebellion; and he therefore sat down to write a careful report upon the whole subject, with some practical suggestions for the future government of that unruly part of the kingdom.

Briefly, his Lordship's scheme depended on two things: a payment of £12,000 should be made to the Chiefs, to keep them wellfed and contented; and their restless fightingmen should be formed into Watches, under their own officers, to keep them out of mischief and teach them at the same time to police their own glens. The distribution of the money might conveniently be left to the Earl himself, who would also act as CaptainGeneral of the new force if desired.

The scheme was never adopted in its entirety, but a number of new Watches were authorised as a beginning — including one for the protection of Kilmaronock and his neighbours in the Lennox.

The Captain of a Highland Watch at this time was generally regarded with envy by his fellow Chiefs. He was responsible for the suppression of all robbery and violence within his district—and the evil practice of cattlilifting in particular—for which he was paid little more than his expenses; yet the service was universally popular, for two very good reasons. It enabled him to swagger about the countryside with a band of armed men, whether on his own business or that of his clients, without question or interference; and it provided his clansmen with a splendid semimilitary training. Possibly there was a tendency to overlook the interests of the clients he professed to serve; but the Lowlander depended so absolutely upon the skill of the Highland mercenary, in this specialised business of tracing vanished cattle, that it was useless for him to complain.

There were good geographical reasons, apart from Kilmaronock's recommendation, why the MacGregors should be chosen to form a Watch. The worst of the raids, or those that brought the loudest complaints to the ears of the Privy Council, took place along the eighty miles of Highland Line, between the Clyde and the Esk, that lay nearest to the capital. Of this eighty mile front, one half ran through MacGregor country; and nobody could more effectively close the passes of Balmaha, Aberfoyle, and Leny than the Laird of Glengyle—if he chose. Hitherto he had not been so obliging, but had either used them for his own descents upon the Lowlands, or let through friends of his from farther north on payment of the customary "roadcollop," a percentage of their takings. But if he and his clan could be enrolled on the side of law and order, then all Stirlingshire would sleep more soundly at night.

So the Glengyle Watch was born; and it caused little surprise when Rob Roy, now in his twentyfirst year, took over most of the active duties of the captaincy.

For the present, unfortunately, there was very little money to be made from it; and it was money they wanted if Glengyle was to go free. (His actual release was still put off from week to week; but gold would unlock most doors.) Kilmaronock and his friends had been glad enough to insure their livestock against theft; glad to have provided their Highland neighbours with a legitimate use for their swords; but they had no intention of filling their sporrans for them. Some considerable fortunes had been made at one time, under the old system of blackmail, or protectionmoney. But blackmail, alas, was declared illegal, and for the present the law must be respected. Rob's head was full of the profitable schemes he meant to try out, once he was free to run the Watch as it should be run. Already he thought there might be some pickings to be had, as new business began to come in, and he was able to impose his own terms. Meanwhile they must just give good service, get themselves known for it, and see what luck they had.

All was ready, from secret rendezvous to sheepskin coats; but it was an anxious time when spring came over the hills and they waited for their first summons. Oddly enough, when it came, it was from none of their regular clients at all, nor were any of the regular Watch at hand to answer it.

The story that follows has been told oftener and in more detail than most of Rob's exploits, not because it was his greatest or most astonishing, but because it was the first of many, the first to show the stuff that young Rob had in him. No doubt it has grown in the telling, as all the best stories do; nor is there a scrap of contemporary evidence to back it. But fact or fiction, it has been handed down to us by men that knew Rob Roy in his old age, or the sons of such men, whose storytelling is entitled to some respect on its own account.

On a fine clear night of April a party of the wild MacRaes came over the hills, all the way from Kintail, on the lookout for an illguarded herd. By next morning they were gone, and there were fifteen of Lord Breadalbin's cows missing from the Finlarig pastures. The herdsman lay grinning horribly in a pool of his own blood, to show the way it had come about. The bigger landowners were generally too proud to call in the Watches to their aid; and fifteen cows could matter little to a man like Breadalbin. But perhaps he had promised to put what business he could in the way of his young cousin; because we are told that Rob received a summons from his factor to come and track the marauders down. As time was everything, at the start, he collected the first dozen men he could find in the Balquhiddier taverns, and persuaded them to follow him by promises of good pay, though the factor's terms had been quite otherwise —no cows, no pay.

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Away they went, and lay the first night in Rannoch. They were on the road early next morning, determined to run down their quarry before they put another night's march between them; but the weather changed, they lost the trail somewhere between Strath Spey and Glen Roy, and the men began to talk quite casually of giving up the chase. When night overtook them, they had reached the entrance to a narrow defile, and it was clear that whoever came that way before them could only have followed the one path. But not another step would Rob's rascals go; so he went on alone to reconnoitre while they prepared supper.

Back he ran almost at once, with the news that a campfire was burning down yonder. Now they followed him readily enough, but were sorely disappointed to find only a band of tinkers squatting about the fire. Rob was certain they could help him if they would; and promised them the entire spoils, save only the cattle, if they showed him where these Kintail caterans lay, which the tinkers finally agreed to do. Somewhere ahead was the roar of falling water, as the MacGregors scrambled at the heels of their guides; for they had reached that country where the burns flow northwards. Over the slippery rocks, and into a copse of trees on the other side — and there beneath him Rob saw all that he wished to see. Between the trees and the crags above lay a little hollow, where a second burn trickled away to join the main stream below the falls. This place was now alive with men and beasts.

The wild MacRaes were late in taking the road tonight, but even now were smiting the cattle with the flats of their swords to get them under way. With bloodcurdling howls, to turn back the lumbering animals, Rob and his men leapt down the bank and at them, broadsword in hand. Twelve against twenty is heavy odds, even with the advantage of surprise; but we are told that Rob himself “by a few powerful and dexterous blows disabled six of them,” which must have made things easier. There was much wild swordplay across the broad backs of intervening cows, and the MacRaes, assailed at every point by what they took for overwhelming numbers, were soon put to flight, leaving two of their number dead and many more wounded. Their leader is said to have engaged Rob in a fierce duel, and was on the point of running him through, when Rob ducked under his guard and brought him down with his dirk—himself receiving a minor wound as they fell.

That was the end of all resistance. Besides Rob Roy, four of his band were slightly hurt, and one poor lad lost his life. The wounded MacRaes at first presented a problem, for Rob had no means of carrying them with him. But the tinkers gladly claimed them as part of their reward, intimating that they had methods of their own of restoring the fallen warriors to their families, at only a trifling cost in the way of ransom.

Back at Finlarig the factor took delivery of his fifteen cows, entertained their rescuers handsomely, and sent them home with jingling sporrans. They had made a beginning, nor would their wages always be so hard earned. The time was not far off when men would surrender their spoil without a blow, at the sound of Rob Roy's name. Though the Highlanders had no longer an army in being, they were still technically at war with the usurping Government. There was a conference held that summer, at Breadalbin's castle of Achallader, with the object of concluding an honourable peace; and Breadalbin himself acted as Government spokesman. In King William's name, he offered the Chiefs a three months' armistice, a free pardon for all that came in and took the oath of allegiance before the 31st of December, and pensions for all that behaved as loyal subjects' thereafter.

They were naturally reluctant to have it said that they were bought with Dutch gold; but the Government spokesman was ready with a helpful suggestion. Let them send over to King James in France for his approval of the terms; and if it was not forthcoming, then of course they must fight on.

It was settled accordingly, and the conference was breaking up amid expressions of mutual goodwill, when the suave and sympathetic Government spokesman caught sight of MacIan of Glencoe, who had more than once helped himself from the Breadalbin herds since the day he harried poor Glenlyon into bankruptcy. By all accounts the scene that followed was undignified and distressing.

Meanwhile the truce was on, and the Highlands began to resume their normal way of life, which it would still be a mistake to describe as peace. Not for years had any of the Glengyle people crossed the Highland Line, unless under cover of darkness and for unlawful purposes.

Now friendly intercourse was possible again, and there was no more need to employ Kilmanan or any other intermediary in the endless negotiations for Glengyle's release. Rob Roy may have ridden into Edinburgh himself, for all we know, and visited his father in the gloomy Tolbooth. The old man was seriously ill. Close imprisonment was almost a death sentence to any Highlander used to his ten miles a day in the pure air of the hills. But still they would not let him go. Some say that nobody could be found to stand surety for the good behaviour of such a “great robber” as Glengyle; but in fact it is clear that the only obstacle now was plain lack of cash. Court fees, prison expenses, and other costs in connection with his two years' captivity had been accumulating, all of which he was asked to pay as the price of his freedom, and naturally no money was available.

Despairing at last of all legal remedies, it would not be surprising if Rob began to use his eyes and ears as he travelled the Lowland roads, and kept a closer watch on some people's affairs than could be explained by a professional interest in potential clients. He may have observed, for instance, that Lord Linlithgow preferred to buy his cattle in the westcountry markets.

There is not the least evidence that Rob Roy or his clan had anything to do with the celebrated “Her'ship” of Kippen” in September of 1691; but the exploit has been attributed to him, and is one that he would gladly have attempted, had he dared. There is no reason to think he would feel any compunction, as a member of a Watch, about

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robbing those who were not actually under his protection. Of course the risk was appalling; for if he were only recognised and denounced, it must be fatal to his father's chances. But two hundred head of cattle passing by the Stirling road . . . They could be sold at the Michaelmas Trysts, and Glengyle's ransom paid within the week. . .

The road into Stirling from the west avoids those reedy marshlands where glides the winding Forth, and runs along the higher ground to the south of the river, among little green hillocks, and strips of cultivated ground, and broad meadows—the latter all untamed moorland at the time of this story. According to the bestknown version, Rob decided to plant his ambush where the road ran through the little town of Buchlyvie, whose whole male population had gone forth to work in the fields. There the MacGregors lay hidden all day to no purpose, till it began to seem that Linlithgow's herd had travelled by another road.

It was near sunset when a dark mass was sighted at last, moving slowly over the moor from the southeast. These were no cows, but the men of Buchlyvie and their allies from the next village, armed with pitchforks and scythes, come to drive the invaders from their homes. Unwilling to be forced into a fight so long as any hope remained of intercepting those cows, Rob prudently led his MacGregors out at one end of the street as the triumphant peasants came in at the other, and prepared to spend the night on the open moor. But the heroes of Buchlyvie followed after them, at a safe distance; and before long they were met by another armed party, the Kippen contingent, come rather late in the day to the succour of their neighbours.

With admirable forbearance the MacGregors halted upon a little knoll, where they were soon surrounded by a threatening mob. When stones began to fly, even Rob had to admit that it was time to teach these folk a lesson. . . . But at that moment down the road came the belated herd of cows, marshalled by a handful of men and dogs. Then the MacGregors forgot all else, and would have made a dash for their booty; but the countrymen were not to be so easily dismissed, and stood obstinately in their path. It was not until Rob gave the order to use the cutting edge of the claymore that they finally gave way and scattered in flight.

The cattle were now easily secured, and driven off towards the nearest rivercrossing, at the Fords of Frew. But their road passed so close to Kippen town that the MacGregors could not resist paying that place a flying visit, whence they brought away another fifty assorted beasts, being everything on four legs but the dogs and cats.

The last of the actors in that day's drama arrived as the rearguard was splashing across the ford. These were dragoons from Cardross, who stopped to ask no questions, but attacked sword in hand. Fortunately they were too few to hinder the crossing; but Rob himself was amongst those caught on the near bank, and one bold trooper attacked him at full speed, striking at his head with his heavy sword. Rob had never been nearer to death—only the iron plate that he wore inside his bonnet saved him from being cut down to the teeth. As it was he was borne to his knees by the weight of the blow.

"Damn ye, your mother never wrought your nightcap!" bawled the dragoon, raising his arm for a second blow, this time aimed at the neck.

But Rob had a trusty lieutenant, a giant of a man named Macanleister, who was also a deadly shot with a musket. "Och, Macanleister," he cried in desperation, "is there nothing in her?" There followed a deafening report, and a heavy body crushed the breath out of him. The rest of the dragoons wheeled about in a hurry; and the Gregarach were able to vanish with their booty into the hills whence they came.

There is the story, for what it is worth. If it is true, it must be owned that the captain of the Highland freebooters showed remarkable gifts of leadership throughout a very trying day. It seems that the story was widely known in the Highlands, but allowed to spread no farther till it could do no harm to those that took part. Indeed there was one scrap of a Gaelic song, current at the time, glorifying Macanleister's marksmanship and the hasty retreat of the dragoons, which can never have reached the ears of authority.

At all events, the records of the Privy Council of Scotland, for the 1st October 1691, show the following brief entry "Act of liberation Lieut. Col. MacGregor—takes the oath of allegiance—any little means he had, spent—his wife lately died, he liberated without payment of house or servants dues."

This does not look like the proceeds of sale of two hundred head of cattle; though something may have gone in "presents" to the Magistrates, and the rest would be represented as the last that could be squeezed out of Glengyle's wretched tenantry. But this time, at all events, Glengyle went free. Why should he boggle at an oath which every Chief in the Highlands had to swear before the end of the year? It is said that he had also to promise to do his best to persuade Keppoch and Glengarry to come to terms with Government. If so, he was only half successful, for Glengarry would have nothing to do with King William or his terms. And can it be significant that MacIvan of Glencoe, who was a closer friend of Glengyle's than either of the others, was not mentioned? Can Glencoe have been marked down already for the slaughter?

On the merry night of Hogmanay, as they lifted brimming glasses to toast the new year, the Highland loyalists were readmitted to the King's Peace—or became technically the subjects of the Dutch invader, as some still preferred to put it. Only MacIvan of Glencoe, boasting that he would be the last of all with his oath of allegiance, had finally left it too late. As midnight struck, he was struggling through the snow on his road to Inveraray, at least a day behind time. It was fortunate for him that the Dutchman was said to be a just and reasonable man.

It was not till February that he paid for his mistake.

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Glengyle, when he heard the appalling news of the Glencoe Massacre—the infamy of his wife’s own brother, the murder of his old friend 1—could only thank God it was not on his own glen and people that the blow had fallen. He had thought his two years in the Tolbooth a high enough price to pay for his frolics in September of ‘89; but MacIan had paid more dearly in the long run.

1 It is often said that young Alasdair of Glencoe must have married a sister of Rob Roy, because Glenlyon (who was Rob’s uncle) greeted Alasdair’s wife as niece. But that relationship might have come about in a dozen other ways.

CHAPTER IV. 1693

IT was probably on the occasion of Rob's twenty first birthday, in March of 1692, that his father made him a present of a farm in Balquhiddy, where he set up his own establishment soon afterwards.

Some of the best land in the whole valley (if it were properly drained) belonged to Monachul township, where little Loch Dome spills into Loch Voil, and was shared by the tenants of Monachul More, Monachul Beg, and Monachul Tuarach. The last was Rob's holding, and seems to have been the least valuable of the three, over on the south side of the valley. ("Tuarach" is Perthshire Gaelic for "facing north.") But as his business was grazing rather than agriculture, no doubt he did well enough with his slice of green hillside. Neither his house nor household can have been large, but his herds would be the envy of his neighbours.

Balquhiddy was a bare, treeless valley, with little of the rugged beauty of the neighbouring glens, but it supported more men and beasts than all their woods and crags. The parish records show thirteen families in the Kirkton at this time, where MacLarens, MacGregors, and Stewarts lived side by side, and two alehouses to satisfy their needs. The Stewarts had their main strength in Glen Buckie across the river, and in Stronvar township. Up at the far end of the loch the MacGregor element prevailed, and Inverlochlarig (as the only other place boasting two alehouses) may be assumed to have sheltered as many as the Kirkton. Elsewhere the little grey houses clustered wherever a patch of firm ground was to be had, and the braes were all striped with their narrow fields of barley and oats. Balquhiddy was a crowded, merry place in those days, where now is unbroken solitude.

All men were equal in Balquhiddy. Many a younger son of good family had gone to earn his living there, as Rob Roy did, and found his rank and birth avail him nothing. And many a fugitive from the Lowland law came and lived openly upon the Braes for the rest of his life, and was never troubled further. No single clan or Chief held sway there; and if the MacGregor and Stewart factions lived not always in perfect concord, yet it was in obstinate freedom from any outside interference. If the parish minister, or the Marquis of Atholl's bailie, enjoyed a certain mild authority, it was by the natives' own consent and purely for their own convenience.

As a son of the Laird of Glengyle, Rob must have learnt unconsciously to bold his head a little higher than ordinary men, and to look for their respectful attention when he chose to speak; and such airs would be resented in democratic Balquhiddy. He was shrewd enough to see that he must make his own way in this rather ruffianly society; and when at length Balquhiddy accepted him he would be well repaid. He was only a younger son, after all, and some day Glengyle would pass to John and know him no more. Whatever estates and honours he hoped to win for himself in the outside world were as easily lost as won in these stormy times. But for the man who could call the Balquhiddy folk his friends there would always be something to fall back upon— whatever hard knocks Fate might have in store.

Glengyle House stood close to the waterside, and a little below the present mansion. The following description of the home of a chieftain of similar rank, in the following century, may give some idea of its appearance

"A wide door in the centre, over which were emblazoned the arms in a shield, and as many narrow windows were stuck in rows over the wall as were required to light the rooms within. A kitchen built of black turf was patched on to one end. . . . A green duckpond and such offices as were at the period necessary were popped down anywhere in front and all round, wherever and whenever they were wanted. There was a barn, a smithy, and a carpenter's shop and poultryhouses, all in full view from the principal rooms, as was the duckpond."

The Highland gentry of those days, though immensely proud of their homes, were strangely unwilling to stay in them for long at a time. They might have to walk five miles to share a drink with a neighbour, but never lost an opportunity of doing so. Weddings, baptisms, or burials, each was an excuse for a gathering at some body's house to drink and dance, drink and sing, and drink again. Or they would keep moving from one house to another on their own estates. The Laird of Glengyle liked to spend a month or two down at Portanellan, or on his farm at Brig O' Turk, or his island huntinglodge on Eilean Varnoch. Rob Roy evidently had his share of native restlessness, and about this time is variously described as "in Monachul Tuarach," or "in Portanellan," or "in Corryarklet," according to his residence of the moment. For one whose business was in Balquhiddy he certainly spent a great deal of his time over the hill. There is a useful little pass, from a mile or two above Inverlochlarig to the back of Portanellan, where he might cross over in an hour.

Corryarklet, in Rob Roy's day, was a township of about twenty houses, and the largest centre of population in Glengyle's domains. John MacGregor of Corryarklet was the eldest of three brothers who farmed Glen Arklet between them. His own holding lay on the north slope, and included half the township of Stronachlachar on Loch Katrine. Gregor had the lease of Comar, away up in Glen Dhu, and some rough grazingland on the lower slopes of Ben Lomond, marching with Sir Humphrey Colquhoun's forest of Craigrostan. And Alasdair, the youngest, was left with the farmhouse of Corryheichen and a small patch of good land about the foot of Loch Arklet. All three houses are there to this day, the original stones built into the walls of modern sheep farms.

The brothers were nearly related to Glengyle—only second cousins—and their children must all have been brought up together. The MacGregors seem never to have been afraid of inbreeding; and it was the most natural thing for a younger son (who could not expect to be provided with an heiress of another clan) to choose his bride from among his own cousins. Which brings us to the fact that Rob Roy, whether as his first love or after experience gained elsewhere,

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finally surrendered his heart to black haired Mary, daughter of Gregor of Comar; and she knew her mind well enough to accept him.

She was not living at Comar, which is a wild and lonely place, but with her uncle at Corryheichen under the bill. In Glen Arklet today there is only one thing they can tell you about Rob Roy—how it was from that little house that he “carried off” Helen MacGregor to make her his wife. Her name was not Helen; and it is hard to see why she should put him to the trouble of carrying her off by force, like one of his kyloe cows; but the little house under the hill—that, as it happens, is the right one.

It would be pleasant to reconstruct the courtship and betrothal, if there were anything at all to build upon. But all we know is that they awoke, on the morning after the feast of Hogmanay, resolved to defer their great happiness no longer; and the Buchanan parish register relates that “Robert MacGregor and Marie Mac Gregor in this parish gave in their names to be proclaimed in order of marriage” on the 1st of January 1693. In the margin is written “Married at Coreklet.”

Gregor MacGregor, high Chief of Clan Alpin—or Laird of MacGregor, as most men were content to call him—died on the 9th of February 1693 at the age of thirty-two, as unobtrusively as he had lived, in his farmhouse of Gregoriestoun by the head of Loch Lomond.

Nothing that he ever did in his lifetime so became him as his funeral, on the island of InchCailleach. A quiet and peaceable man, who prudently ignored King James’s call to arms in the ‘89, yet he was carried to the burial place of his fathers like some warrior newly fallen on the field of glory, and buried with all the ancient ceremony due to his rank—an odd mixture of Celtic pageantry and the Presbyterian burial service. Under ivy-draped trees the pipers paced, and their sad notes echoed along the stony shore. The Hereditary Bard chanted the departed Chief’s pedigree—“Gregor vic Callum vic Donnachie vic Evan vic Alasdair”—name after name through thirty generations or so to King Alpin himself. And the plaided chieftains looked upon his successor with a reverence they had certainly never felt before.

The late Chief, ineffectual to the last, had died without heirs of his body. Ahtioist the one thing that anybody knew of the man was his distaste for womenkind—asccribed by the more charitable to some unhappy loveaffair in the past. Be that as it may, no woman had ever shared his home; and he had taken the trouble of leaving instructions behind him that none was ever to share his pave. Now he was dead, unmarried, and his titles and property passed to his next of kin. There is a story told that he “bequeathed his property to an illegitimate brother, who assumed the title of chief unwarrantably.” But the truth of the matter is that he was succeeded by his first cousin—who was Archibald MacGregor of Kilmanan.

A proud man was Kimanan that day. He must have known that he was not one to inspire his clansmen’s reverence, but he certainly meant to do his duty by them. One thing was clear; it was absurd that a Laird of MacGregor should continue to dwell among the Sassenach, when he could well afford to buy a small Highland estate. The policy of any Chief of the farflung Gregarach must be to knit the clan more closely together, about his own person and family. The question was, where should he settle? In the country of Breadalbin, the cradle of the MacGregor race? Or among the Clan Dougal Keir, the one branch of his people that dwelt strong and united upon its own land? No doubt Roro and his party had their say; but Glengyle was in a position to entertain his Chief that night up at Corryarklet, in his own domains. A funeral, in the Highlands, was celebrated with sports, and feasting, and dancing, like a wedding anywhere else; and under the influence of such hospitality Kilmanan soon made up his mind.

Rob and his bride, enjoying themselves a little more sedately than usual as behaved a married couple, cannot have cared greatly how it turned out. But Kilmanan’s choice was to affect their lives more closely than they would have thought possible. He decided to call upon the Laird of Luss, with the object of negotiating the purchase of one of that gentleman’s properties on Loch Lomondside.

The Craigrostan estate, that famous “domain of rock and forest,” extended for nearly twelve miles down Loch Lomond’s eastern shore; and Kilmanan bought the whole of it. Perhaps its commercial value was not peat. The farms were poor and scattered, there was but the one landingplace in all that waterfrontage, and no house of any size for a residence. But he meant to enlarge the farmhouse of Inversnaid, which stood in a little valley of its own, joining the glen about a mile above the landingplace. This valley of the Snaid burn lies broad, and green, and secluded, in the heart of rugged Craigrostan, which is elsewhere nothing but mile upon mile of swaying treetops and hillsides tumbling sheer to the water’s edge. And in all other respects it was a splendid investment. The tenants were all Gregarach; it marched with other MacGregor holdings everywhere; opened up the road to Balmaha and the south; and rounded off the clan’s properties in those parts very neatly. Here Kilmanan might live in a style befitting his new rank, and Glengyle’s people enjoy the prestige his presence gave them.

But there were those, notably my Lords Atholl and Breadalbin, who watched these symptoms of a MacGregor revival on their borders without enthusiasm.

On the 27th of May the purchase of Craigrostan was completed; and on the 15th of June there was passed an “Act for the Justiciary in the Highlands,” which put the clock back by thirty years and more for the unlucky MacGregors. Smuggled in at the tail of that otherwise inoffensive statute, a few technical words had the effect of re-enacting the obsolete penal laws against the clan.

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It was long ago, in the time of Rob Roy's greatgrandfather, that the Earl of Argyll being troubled by the forays of his MacGregor neighbours—as Breadalbin suffered later from the Glen Coe men—took advantage, like Breadalbin, of his position in the Government to wipe out his private feud in blood. The King's troops were sent against the clan with fire and sword, a horrid traffic in MacGregors' heads was encouraged, and blood hounds were brought into the Highlands for the rounding-up of fugitives from this onesided justice. When the spirit of the survivors was thought to have been utterly broken, they were allowed to go on living if they would renounce Chief and clan; and statutes were passed accordingly, forbidding all use of the names Gregor or MacGregor on pain of death. But the Gregarach were not so easily broken, and as the Nameless Clan they somehow lived on.

All this belonged to the bad old days, and at the Restoration the barbarous laws were swept away, in recognition of the clan's good services to King and Country. There followed thirty years of sympathetic government for the Highlands, during which the Gregarach burst into vigorous life again, and the house of Glengyle rose to its foremost position in the clan. But King William's government did not believe in the recovery of the Highlands. Last year Glen Coe was soaked in blood; now an old statute was revived, and the Nameless Clan came once more into being.

It may seem a small thing to lose one's surname; but it was all that these men had to bind them together. There were MacGregors everywhere owing a double allegiance—one to Atholl, or Breadalbin, their feudal landlord, and the other to a Laird of MacGregor whose claims upon them were founded on nothing stronger than sentiment. An Act of 1587 forbade landlords to give any aid to tenants of theirs who acknowledged another as Chief; and such men must be removed from their bounds. The Act was passed, the news of it reached the Highlands, and within a few weeks Donald Glas of Glengyle lay dying. Whatever modern medical science may say, it was plain enough to his contemporaries that he died of a broken heart. But at least he could boast that he died a MacGregor. They buried him in the little walled graveyard at Portanellan,² and for the second time that year the gentry of the clan assembled for the funeral of one of their number. They would also take this opportunity of deciding on their clan's future policy.

In the old cruel times at the beginning of the century, open defiance was still a possible choice, as Malcolm Og of Glengyle had proved. There was an ancient long-barrelled gun preserved at Glengyle, associated with two of his exploits. With this weapon he was said to have slain the last of that evil breed of great black hounds. And on another occasion, when he and some of his clan were besieged by Argyll and his allies on Eilean Varnoch, he took a shot at a soldier on the opposite shore and put the bullet through his head—deadly shooting for those days, which so discouraged the enemy that they forthwith raised the siege. . . . But times had changed, and the only real choice left to the Gregarach was the choice of nomenclature.

Perhaps, as a half defiant gesture, the entire clan might have adopted another name such as MacAlpin. But evidently they thought it wiser to play no tricks that might provoke the legislature to further spitefulness. And so the old method was used again, and every MacGregor householder took the surname of the proprietor on whose land he lived. Roro and his kindred became Campbells, the Balquhiddier men would be Murrays; in Glen Gyle and Glen Arklet they learnt to call themselves Graliaxns, while others farther afield turned into Drummonds or Stewarts overnight. Only before they parted they all swore a most solemn oath, on their naked dirks, to stand by one another, and the Name, through everything.

I With the law so strongly on the side of feudalism, it was hard enough for any landless Chief to keep his clan intact. With no clan surname, the sentiment of clanship must surely die—and the sons or grandsons of loyal MacGregors become Murrays or Campbells at heart as they would be in name.

CHAPTER V. September 1694—June 1695

ROB Roy was now a tenant of Atholl's, and would be expected to take Murray for his name. Instead he chose Campbell, as his mother's maiden name, hoping to keep himself free of feudal entanglements. It was a vain hope, and by the latter part of 1694 we find him in serious trouble with his landlord.

The management of the Atholl estates at this time was in the capable hands of Lord Murray, the Marquis's eldest son—who was also Secretary of State for Scotland, and one of the most influential men in the kingdom. Like most of the really big landowners he refused to accept the protection of a Highland Watch, feeling it beneath the dignity of a Marquis to depend on lesser men for the safety of his beasts. When a flock of three hundred and fifty wethers was lifted from the Atholl estates in Glen Almond, and the thieves got clear away with their booty, there was nothing he could do but endure the loss.

It is said that he was talking next market day, under the Cross of Crieff, with John Menzies of Shian, who was one of his father's principal tenants up in Glen Quaich; and Shian, whose own cattle were safe in the fold, was not as sympathetic as he might have been. "Ye have but yourself to blame," said he. "Our friend Sheep Robbie would likely ken o' your wethers—if indeed he had not his own hand at them!"

Menzies of Shian was to pay dearly for that remark uttered at the top of his voice under the Cross of Crieff. "Sheep Robbie, am I?" cried Rob Roy, when he was told of it. "Royal's my race, it will be Cattle Robbie when next he speaks of me!" And that night Shian's whole herd vanished from their pasture in Glen Quaich. Once again it was impossible to trace the thieves; and the two raids were generally supposed to be the work of one man.

This is only one more of the stories that have gathered about Rob's name, and his quarrel with Lord Murray may have had some entirely different cause. We know, for instance, that Kilmanan was in Crieff that year for the Michaelmas Trysts, more drunk and disorderly than usual. (Among the Atholl Papers is a report, containing the evidence of several eyewitnesses, of his drunken meanderings on the afternoon of the 1st of October, in the course of which he deliberately shot his own servant, one Malcolm MacCurich, in Buchantie township. No proceedings were ever brought against him for this senseless murder. "It would do no good," said the dying man, "and he would only do more hurt before he was taken.") But there is no suggestion that Rob Roy had anything to do with Kilmanan and his misdeeds; and it is not until the following spring that we find mention of him in the Atholl Papers.

On the 21st of May 1695 Lord Murray writes that he has information "about one Rob: Cample, a son of that Lieut. Coil. MacGregor who cheated my father, and he and his family have continued to do all they could against me." What that information was, does not appear; but the letter goes on "I have sent a party to apprehend that Rob: Campbell, I have not yet heard what they have done. I believe Breadalbin indeed is his friend because he has taken that name, and his lordship has espoused his interest when he was pursued before the justiciary court, wherefor I wish none of his lordship's friends at Dunkeld may get notice I employed about him."

It seems that the party was commanded by one Duncan MacEown,¹ and had no success at first. Indeed we have to fall back on verbal tradition again for an account of Rob's capture, by a mounted troop, who appeared in Balquhidder without warning and surprised him at his own door.

The day was to come when Rob Roy would be famous above all else for his cunning escapes from captivity; but at this time they saw no need for putting any bonds upon him. He sat astride a horse, quite dumbfounded apparently by the disaster that had overtaken him. The troopers hemmed him in on every side, with instructions to shoot him dead if he made any attempt to escape; and in this manner he was hustled out of Balquhidder and down through Bonnie Strathyre. But he was reviewing in his mind every inch of the path they would have to follow, while he carefully maintained his appearance of hopeless dejection.

Several times he was tempted to make a bid for freedom, but forced himself to wait for what he judged to be the most favourable spot of all, on the side of Loch Lubnaig. The road kept to the higher ground (in those days) till well past the head of the loch; where it narrowed and plunged down a thickly wooded hillside, with a steep bank above it on the left hand, and on the right a drop of twenty feet or more to the water's edge. At several points, he knew, there was only room for horsemen to pass in single file. Already he could see the water gleaming through the trees below.

One by one the troopers rode into the defile, till Rob's turn came and he slowly followed. Only the men immediately next to him tried to keep their stations, and when that became impossible pulled out their pistols to cover him. Soon men and horses had eyes only for the path in front, where a loose stone might easily bring disaster. Now Rob had this advantage over his captors they seem to have been unaware that he was a good horseman. And so well did he act the part of the awkward novice that they were glad to give him a wide berth at the worst places. He waited his chance and then acted swiftly. Swinging himself out of the saddle he sprang straight for the top of the bank that overhung the path, and got a grip of a sturdy heather clump, while the trooper behind was still tugging at his reins. The troopers ahead, threatened from the rear by a runaway horse could do nothing. Of those behind, only the first two were in a position to use their firearms, which they were most unwilling to do until their own mounts were on a firm footing. Their target, in any event, was now reduced to a pair of furiously kicking legs.

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It was several minutes before the Atholl men could dismount and hurry to the spot. In their heavy horse man's boots they took twice as long to scale the bank, and by then there was not a sign of life in all that vast hillside of waving heath and bracken. One attempt they made to throw a cordon round the place where their prisoner had vanished. But even as they floundered waist-deep in the heather, slashing about them with their swords, Rob Roy had doubled back and gained the riverbank, waded across under cover of the trees, and set his course for home again.

Independence is a fine thing, and no doubt Rob might have turned outlaw then and there, and successfully defied the Marquis of Atholl and his son for many a long day—had he felt it was worth it. But as a married man, and a business man of some standing, he thought otherwise. The time had arrived for him to sacrifice his vaunted independence and come to terms.

Lord Murray was fortunately of the same mind, and indeed seems to have been the first to open negotiations, choosing as intermediary a mutual acquaintance, the tenant of Coynachan in Glen Almond (a MacGregor by birth, though a Murray by Act of Parliament), who was to be a good friend to Rob Roy in after years. It was settled that Rob would make his formal submission at Dunkeld House, in return for a safe conduct and a free pardon.

The Bond was drawn up, whereby “Robert Roy Campbell, sometime Mc’Grigor, son to Lieut. Col. M’Grigor” undertook that “for as much as an noble Lord, John Lord Murray, is pleased to receive me into his Lordship’s favour, notwithstanding of my many ungrateful deportments and undecent carriages for some years by past... the said Robert Roy Campbell shall hereafter, and in all time coming, not only behave himself as a loyal and dutiful subject under this present government but also as an honest, faithful and obedient servant to the noble Lord and shall present himself to his Lordship when ever required.” Now all that was needed was a little tact on both sides when the parties met. Surely that was not too much to ask, even of a pompous young Secretary of State and a Highland swashbuckler?

It is a pity that nobody has left an account of what took place, on the 22nd of June; but whatever was said or signed, the actual terms of Rob’s readmission to the King’s Peace are clear enough. While it is too much

Simon Fraser of Beaufort, then a Lieutenant of Grenadiers in Lord Murray’s new regiment (afterwards the notorious Lord Lovat) was one of the witnesses. Rob’s sureties were Alexander MacDonnell of Glengarry and Alexander, brother of John MacDonald of Glencoe to suppose that he undertook the protection of the vast Atholl estates, he could answer for the good behaviour of his own people on their western borders at least. And it would be a strange thing if the Secretary of State for Scotland could not relax the law a little, to allow Rob Roy more scope for running and financing his Watch in his own way—for the ultimate good of the country.

Such was their bargain, and well it was observed on both sides for many years to come

Book II. Within The Law

CHAPTER I. 1696—1700

ROB now enjoyed five years of comparative peace, five years of which there is little to tell. No wars or insurrections called him out in arms. So far as we know he never lifted another booty, until his outlawry long afterwards—except in the way of business. But that is a large exception; for business was increasing fast in those years, and did sometimes bear a certain resemblance to the cateran's own trade.

He had evidently earned a wide reputation for his policework, but found it woefully underpaid. He was prepared to give better service than most, and saw no reason why he should not charge a fee to match. His methods, unfortunately, were not strictly honest by the standards prevailing south of the Highland Line, but he considered them better suited to the problems he had to face. He had not worked out the system for himself from the beginning; they had something very like it in the Highlands and on the English Border before he was born. It was said that Kilmanan's father had made his money that way. The great difference was that you worked for none but regular clients of your Watch—or such as were willing to become so, in the face of misfortune. But within those limits you did promise security; and security was a thing unknown in those parts ten years earlier. How was Rob Roy thus able to answer for a man's Cows? In four cases out of five he tracked them down and brought them back to the owner. Failing that, he must make good the loss from some other source; and he was seldom without a few hundred head of kyloes he could put a hand upon, in his trade. Then, in return for all this, the client paid a fixed sum every quarter—whether he had to employ the services of the Watch or not. That was far better than a few miserable shillings now and again for expenses. It is easy to understand why the law frowned upon such a system. When it came to making good losses “from other sources” Rob's predecessors had a way of paying their clients' compensation out of other men's herds. (Rob would no doubt have done the same, in the last resort, rather than fail a client.) The trade fell into disrepute, and “blackmail” was the ugly name the lawyers gave to the money payments. All Rob did was to revive the old system, with one or two minor improvements of his own, hoping the lawyers would haste the good sense, this time, to let him smash the cattle-lifting in his own way. It was only reasonable that they should, when the Government itself had nothing at all to offer in the way of protection. Probably Rob ran little risk of a prosecution, for his clients were as much offenders as himself, and most of them well satisfied with the arrangement. And then he had Lord Murray's promise that there should be no official interference while he remained in office. It was a beautiful system, and capable of great expansion; for Rob had barely tapped half the potential sources of income up to the present. We can get some idea of the extent of his influence, from a list of the clients known to have been on his books, and the situation of their estates. Among the twelve “founder-members” there are Cochrane of Kilmaronock on Loch Lomondside, Buchanan of Arnprior midway along the Stirling road, and others of his name in the country between. Lord Aberuchill, who as Lord Justice Clerk was also concerned with the founding of the Watch, seems to have sought its protection soon afterwards for his estate of Kilbryde (near Doune) at the other end of the county. There was Rob's own sister Margaret, married to Leckie of Croyleckie, a laird of ancient family but small estate (in Killearn parish), who was certainly another client. And Stirling of Craighernard (east of Strathblane), whose two hundred sheep were lifted by the MacRaes, and restored to him three weeks later, all but one that had to die to keep Rob and his band from starving in the wilds of Kintail. (If that story be true, it was possibly the greatest exploit of all Rob's career, in terms of the difficulties and dangers overcome; but he preferred to have his work judged by results, for the cheaper his successes the more credit he usually got for them.) Another client has a well known story attached to him, through trying to evade payment of what Rob Roy considered his just dues. Stirling of Garden was a prominent Jacobite laird; and Garden Castle was one of those little stone towers that lined the whole borderland in those days, but have since vanished without a trace. It stood not far from Buchlyvie, in the midst of an artificial lake, and boasted one small culverin mounted to command the drawbridge. The owner of such a place might well feel it beneath him to pay a Highland captain to protect his cows for him. It was a mistake many Highlanders made, to refer to these blackmail dues as “tribute “from the decadent Lowlands. It tickled their vanity, but almost certainly lost them good clients. The more high spirited lairds would have nothing to do with anything so named—though their factors were not always so proud, and commonly passed it off as “cessmoney” in the estate accounts, without their masters' knowledge.

Stirling of Garden was under contract, and his trouble was not so much pride as ingratitude. It seems that the caterans were already learning to leave this particular piece of the border alone. Garden and his kind, instead of being grateful, began to ask themselves why they should go on paying for protection after the need for it had apparently passed. Rob of course had no more intention of seeing all his work undone, than he had of giving up any part of his income. Hence his visit to Garden Castle.

It was always his way to avoid force, or even a show of force, till it was needed. Halting his party under cover, he strolled up to the gate attended only by his piper—to find the drawbridge down and the doors beyond standing mysteriously open. Without more ado the two of them marched in and searched the first floor without meeting

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anybody but one small girl, who followed them about with evident admiration, but would give no answer to their puzzled questions. When at last they came upon a couple of menservants, idling in the best chamber on the floor above, the presence of the child, walking serenely at Rob's side with one hand in his, secured for the intruders a respectful greeting and a draught of ale apiece on behalf of the absent laird. Garden was a Jacobite, and no doubt his household were accustomed to entertaining mysterious visitors from the glens.

The unbidden guests had scarcely drained their glasses when they heard the thud of hooves outside. A lady and a gentleman were riding up to the drawbridge; and from the laird's face it seemed likely that he was already in the worst of tempers..

Rob Roy was in no mood for bargaining with irascible old gentlemen, and he coolly stepped down the stair, calling to his piper to follow. Just as Garden and his lady reached the end of the causeway, the old moss grown bridge quivered violently, groaned, and rose protesting into midair, there it stuck obstinately, but not before the laird had been effectually cut off from his home. Rob allowed him half a minute to cool down, before he made his appearance at an upper window and blandly requested payment of his last quarter's blackmail.

"You shall get your money all in good time," the bewildered laird called back, keeping down his rage very creditably. "I'll have my factor look into it, you may be certain. But money or no money, what the devil are you doing up there, as if you owned the place? Come down, d'ye hear, and I'll do business with you face to face!

"I'm in no hurry at all this morning, Garden, and I'll open your door to you when I get the protection money, if that suits you."

"So you've broken into my house? You're a pretty villain, sir I But think you how easily I can have you smoked out."

This transparent piece of bluff produced shrill cries of alarm from the upper floors of the tower, where certain elderly female relatives of the laird's bad now made their appearance.

"Along with all these bonnie ladies—and my small friend here?" quoth Rob, lifting Garden's little daughter up to the windowledge beside him.

Now it was Lady Garden whose voice was raised in shrill protests, which she very unjustly directed against her wretched spouse, and all the laird's objections were drowned in wild reproaches. Caught between two fires, he was forced to unconditional surrender.

"Och, come down and open the door, man, and stop your frightening of poor silly womenfolk," he roared, half frightened himself. "Come and take your miserable suer and get you home to your own house and balms I"

And so Rob Roy was paid in full for that turn.

Not all Rob's clients can have given him so much trouble, and there is little doubt that he was now earning a very good income. The younger son has always been the glory of the Scottish nation. Resigned from childhood to the prospect of making his own way in the world, he has a knack of winning in the end a loftier position than his elder brother has inherited. Rob Roy was fortunate enough to have it both ways. Determined never to become a mere hangeron at Glengyle, he had thrown himself heart and soul into his cattledealing and allied business, and may have been as rich a man as his brother the laird, when the latter died unexpectedly in the winter of 1700, leaving him virtual head of the Clan Dougal Keir. "Tutor of Glengyle" he was called, during the minority of John's eldest son, born in the year of Killiecrankie; but the post entailed far more than the guardianship of the boy and of his estate. It raised him, for a few years, to the rank of chieftain, with powers of life or death over his people, peace or war with his neighbours

CHAPTER II. 1703—1706

In the political world Rob Roy had not yet attracted much notice, for there were others of his clan deeper than he in the Jacobite counsels. But when it came to counting broadswords and choosing officers for the next armed rising, men spoke of “the whole MacGregors, headed by one Rob Roy, commonly called by that name,” as a corps to be relied upon.¹

No doubt he was involved in the mysterious “Scotch Conspiracy,” unearthed by the Government spies in 1703, and followed by a number of attempts by the private enemies of prominent men to implicate them by forged evidence. Among the latter was Atholl—Rob’s friend Lord Murray, who had lately succeeded his father and been elevated to a Dukedom. In February 1704 his Duchess wrote from Edinburgh that she had seen Rob Roy, and was “convinced he could tell enough if he liked” about the plot; which says much for Rob’s discretion at a time when SO many Jacobites were giving one another away. But when it was a question of helping Atholl to clear his name, Rob seems to have been more communicative, for later in the same month his Grace’s agent in Edinburgh writes: “I am sorry Rob Roy’s declaration was so ill writ. I did it in haste thinking it would be sent away. He is not now in town so cannot make it up. . . . Kilmanan is still in town and I have been several times calling for him and either missed him or found him so drunk as I could not understand what he said.”

Nothing could be proved against Atholl, but he felt obliged to resign his post in the Government—to Rob’s disgust. There were Atholl and Breadalbin, his two patrons, both out of office, and powerless to help him outside their own territories. But he lost little time in getting him a new one.

There was a time when the Dukes of Lennox and Earls of Menteith still owned the greater part of the districts, on the Highland border, from which they took their titles; and after them the biggest landowners were the Lairds of Buchanan. The Grahams of Montrose, in those days, were essentially an eastcoast family. But the present Marquis and his father had changed all that.

First the Laird of Buchanan died in bankruptcy in 1682, and Montrose bought up his estates, before any of the numerous cadets of that family could come forward. Buchanans remained plentiful in the district, but as a chiefless clan, and a Graham sat in state at Buchanan House.

As for the Earls of Menteith, they were Grahams themselves of a different branch; and when it was seen that the last Earl had no children to succeed him, there was a rather unseemly scramble for the hand of his cousin and heiress between Montrose and his kinsman of Claverhouse. Neither married the lady in the end, but Montrose contrived to get the estates settled on himself and his heirs. On the Earl’s death in 1694 they duly passed to the present Marquis.

Finally the young Duke of Lennox, son of the Merry Monarch by the fascinating Louise de Keroualle, came of age in 1703. Surfeited with titles and estates, he had no use for this faraway Scottish property, and instructed his agents to sell it, lock, stock, and barrel—feudal jurisdictions, governorship of Dumbarton Castle, and all. Montrose’s chamberlain, one Mungo Graham of Gorthie, successfully negotiated the purchase of the whole; and the Graham lands stretched from the Grampians to the Clyde.

Thus James, fourth Marquis of Montrose, came to be one of the great territorial magnates of Scotland. He had only to dabble a little in politics to gather more honours by that means; and he was already a Knight of the Garter and High Admiral of Scotland when Rob Roy decided to hitch his wagon to this rising star.

This time Rob had something substantial to offer in exchange for the great man’s patronage. Montrose could never see another making money without itching to have his own fingers in it; and Rob was always in need of more capital. So it came about that the two of them, the Marquis and the MacGregor, formed a kind of partnership in the honourable trade of buying and selling kyloe cows. There seemed to be every chance that the new venture would make fortunes for both of them.

Hardly was Rob accustomed to his new status as Tutor of Glengyle when another death brought him further advancement.

Of Kilmanan’s two sons the second, whose name has never been recorded, must have died young. Hugh, the elder, having found little favour with the fair sex, was still a bachelor when he died likewise—about the year 1705—and left Archibald Graham or MacGregor, Laird of MacGregor, Kilmanan, and Craighrostan, the last of his ancient line.

After this Kilmanan was a done man. He may have dreamed fine dreams at one time, when he settled at Inversnaid in the midst of an enthusiastic clan. Then came the penal laws, and he had not the stuff in him to fight their insidious effects. The madness began to show itself, when he was in drink, and there was the ghost of poor Malcolm MacCurich gibbering behind the wraith of his young wife. When his two sons went before him down the same dark road there was no more fight left in Kilmanan.

Now Rob had acted for some years as Kilmanan’s man of business, and knew well how fast his fortune had dwindled away. He advanced him money once or twice, but Kilmanan quickly squandered all he got; and when no more was forthcoming shut up Inversnaid and retired to his Lowland property. The place was useless to him; he would never go near it again. But it was a mighty asset to the clan and must not be allowed to pass into other hands—it was his plain duty to prevent that. And so at length he made up his mind, and offered the estate to his friend Rob Roy, to purchase for no more than the sum of his outstanding debt.

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That was a mere trifle to be the price of all Craighrostan; and as a matter of business Rob would naturally accept. But it has sometimes been argued on Rob's behalf (and as furiously denied by others) that with this sale of the Chief's estate there passed to him the title and office of Chief. The popular "memoirs" of Rob Roy relate a weird story—how he twice interfered to prevent young Hugh of Kilmanan from marrying girls of his own rank, till in despair he wed "a woman of mean extraction," estranged all his friends, and left the country in disgust, giving up his estate to Rob Roy, "who now claimed to be the hereditary Chief of the Clan Gregor, and was enthusiastically received as such." This of course is great nonsense; nor did Rob himself ever lay claim to the title, which could only have passed to him by inheritance or by formal election. It is not as if Craighrostan were an ancestral estate at all. What Kilmanan bought of the Laird of Luss, he could sell to Rob Roy or any other at will.

It is not at all clear from the title deeds when Rob would actually have taken possession of Craighrostan. He already had a mortgage of Inversnaid (which was the best part of the property) during Hugh's lifetime; and under a Scots mortgage it was not unusual for the mortgagee to take possession of the land and be known by its name like any laird. But finally on the 3rd of June 1705 Kilmanan resigned the whole property in favour of "Robert Campbell of Inversnaid," to whom the Laird of Luss granted a confirmatory charter in the following year. The grant comprised "various Lands in the parish of Inchcailleach—viz., Roskenneth, Knockeald, Stukna roy, Clackbuie, Inversnaid, Pollichroe, Miln of Craighrostan . . . the whole woods upon the Islands and any pad thereof, fishings and other privileges . . . with the office of Bailiary and the power and privilege of holding Courts, unlawing and punishing delinquents, and uplifting the arnerciaments of Court." Rob Roy was a laird now in his own right.

Of Rob's personal appearance in his younger days we can get an idea from a contemporary portrait, now in the Glasgow Art Gallery, which is sometimes said to represent him. With the voluminous belted plaid (kilt and mantle in one) he wears a coat of old-fashioned cut, slashed at the shoulders, and a plain linen stock. Cleanshaven .but for a fiercely upturned moustache, he wears his hair loose upon his shoulders, under a fiat bonnet ornamented with a tuft of feathers at the side and a metal brooch in front.

According to Sir Walter Scott, Rob was most remarkable for having arms so long that he could tie the garters of his hose without stooping. They had other uses, notably in hand to hand fighting, where they must have given him a tremendous advantage. He is supposed to have fought twentytwo duels in the course of his life; and it may be assumed that he generally came off victorious, or he would not have survived so many. He wanted but an ordinary allowance of speed and sureness of eye, and the reach of those mighty arms would do the rest.

The news of his prowess with the broadsword spread at last to the Western Isles, and is said to have brought Roderick Dhu MacNeil, thirty eighth Laird of Barra, on his first visit to the mainland since the year '89, with a haughty challenge. (This was the Chief whose trumpeter used to mount daily to the tower of Kishimul Castle, to cry aloud, after a prolonged fanfare: "The MacNeil of Barra has dined; the Kings, Princes, and others of the earth may now dine!") And the Duke of Argyll, having occasion to correspond with him about this time, complained that "his style of his letter runs as if he were of another kingdom.") To such an antique Gaelic warrior it never occurred, of course, that a duel should be preceded by a quarrel. He stepped off the ferry at Balmaha, learnt that Rob Roy was that day at Killearn market, accosted him on the public highway, and demanded to be allowed to prove himself the better swordsman.

"I have no doubt of your being the best swordsman in all Albin," quoth Rob, "but have no wish to have you prove it. I never fought any man without cause.

But Barra was not to be cheated of his triumph.

"Are you a gentleman, sir, or a base merchant? Are you afraid to fight?"

"Since you are a stranger, you shall not go without your errand," said Rob; and made ready for battle.

The victories of small men over braggart Goliaths have been applauded, in song and story, since the world began—as they deserve. But for each of these bantamweight heroes there have been scores of stalwarts who won their battles simply by making good use of the physical advantages they had. Rob Roy was one of these latter. Against his untiring guard and terrific reach all Barra's skill strove in vain, till his own guard faltered—and Rob's blade bit into his swordarm near the elbow. In Killearn village the wounded Chief lay for many weeks in shame and suffering, before he smelt again the tangle of the isles.

Another of Rob's duels had a rather different ending. Though afterwards good friends, he and Harry Cunningham of Boquhan first met one night at the Arnprior tavern, and seem to have taken a dislike to each other on sight. Harry was a great dandy—all gold lace and scented curls—and Rob was puffed up with the certainty that he could give him a drubbing. They had both of them drunk more than they could well hold when the talk turned to politics; and Harry was a rank Whig. Probably Rob said something doubly offensive about King William's well known weakness for pretty youths with soft cheeks—and Harry boxed his ears for him!

They fought then and there, by the light of the fire on the hearth. Harry had not even a sword; but they found him an old rusty rapier that was used for poking the fire, and armed him with that. And when they started, all Harry's foppishness changed to bloody fury, and he was .a different man! Rob was three parts drunk, or he might have done better; but Harry drove him back to the door in his first rush, pricked him once in the belly with his villainous weapon, and out went Rob on his back in the mire, and the door under him!

He had the grace to go back into the inn and shake hands with his conqueror; they stayed there drinking till morning, and were the best of friends ever after. But that was a story Rob could never live down.

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The future Laird of Glengyle—Gregor Ghlun Dhu was called, from a black birthmark on his knee’— was now seventeen, and his education proper at an end. His uncle was justly proud of the result, certainly the first of the line of Dougal Keir to be a classical scholar. (Probably young Gregor could. express himself rather better in Latin than his greatgrandfather could in English.) Now it was time for him to be learning the warlike arts, which no Highland gentleman could be without. The use of his weapons he had practised daily ever since he could remember. But he must know something too of the management of men, on the march or in bivouac; of the strategic passes, fords, and drove roads of his own bit of country; and of scouting and reconnaissance. In all these subjects he could once have gained the necessary experience on a foray or two into the Lowlands—strictly educational in object—that his teachers would gladly have organised for him. But times had changed; and today his best way of coming by such a semi-military training was to serve for a season in his uncle’s celebrated Watch.

There is an account, in the notes to Scott’s ‘Lady of the Lake,’ of how he fared on his first trip.

At Lammas (the August quarter day) Rob found himself short of ready money, and decided that he must be rather more drastic than usual about collecting his dues. He had all his clients in the Lennox warned, a few days in advance, that he would attend for that purpose outside the kirk at Drymen at a certain time; and when the day arrived he set off with thirty or forty stout fellows to bold his little court.

All that afternoon there was coming and going of men and beasts in Drymen town. Rob Roy sat in state before the kirk, with occasional visits to the tavern across the street when business was slack; and slowly his quarter’s blackmail dues trickled in. There were some that paid in gold, a commodity that Rob handled more often than most of his neighbours; others sent cattle or sheep, the ordinary currency of that countryside; and a goodsized herd was penned up in a corner of the main street by the time that Rob rose to declare the day’s business closed. All had paid up, save one.

There seem to be more stories told of Rob’s ways of extracting payment of his dues from closefisted clients than of his recovering their cows for them. But these are the exceptions that tested the strength of a system which—like any other system of government—was, no doubt working best when least was heard of it.

On this occasion young Gregor, who thought it grand sport to be tyrannising over his neighbours, insisted on being given command of the party that visited the solitary defaulter. Robert Graham of Gallingad was one of those highborn and highspirited gentlemen whose little stone towers studded all the Highland border in those days—as poor as he was proud. When Gregor came clamouring at his gate for “tribute,” on the morning after the collection in Drymen, he got only an evasive reply through the agency of a groom, and the gate remained obstinately closed. But Gregor was taking no refusal on this his first independent command; and not a beast was left in Gallingad’s byres for that evening’s milking.

There are three droveroads into the MacGregor country, made famous by generations of clansmen homeward bound at the tail of a lifted herd. One runs by Loch Vennachar and the Pass of Achray (outflanking the picturesque barrier of the Trossachs) and so down to LochKatrineside; whence the beasts could either be ferried across to Eilean Varnoch for slaughter, or driven on over the crown of Beal nam bo—the “Pass of the Cattle”—high on the shoulder of Ben Venue, and thence by easy stages to Glen Arklet. Another runs by Aberfoyle and Loch Ard, where the modern road has followed by and the third scrambles along the eastern shore of Loch Lomond, by the Pass of Balmaha, to within a mile of Inversnaid House. This was Gregor’s shortest route home, and looks well enough on the map. But those that have passed that way, stumbling along what is no better than a treeclad mountainside, will wonder how a single beast could ever have been manhandled through.

Nevertheless, Gregor is known to have covered the distance in excellent time that day. For among the booty from Gallingad was a fierce old bull, more inclined to drive than be driven, who kept the whole party on the run till past Balmaha. Then the rough going began to tell on him, and by the time they passed Rowardennan “a child might have scratched his ears,”so they said.

CHAPTER III. March 1707—March 1708

IN one of Edinburgh's dark, uncharted cellars, like a gang of thieves aplotting, the Scottish Cabinet settled the Articles of Union with England—and prayed that they might not be recognised and mishandled by the mob when they crept forth again into the street. In distant London the Queen gave her royal assent to the Treaty, amid the warm congratulations of her Ministers. On the first day of May the ancient kingdom of Scotland would cease to exist—unless some very drastic action were taken in the meantime.

A few perhaps of the more farsighted in Scotland would have admitted that a union, even on England's terms, was the least of the evils that faced the nation. But to the prejudiced and the ignorant—who make up the greater part of any nation, when all is said—it was simply a base surrender of all that their forefathers had fought and died to preserve. When eloquence in the Parliamenthouse failed to halt the loathsome Treaty, there were patriots 'everywhere ready to undo it by force of arms. To Highland freebooter and Cameronian fieldpreacher alike, the prospect of English interference with their peculiarly Scottish activities was repugnant. The gentry of all parties, from Kilmaronock the Whig to the Tory laird of Garden—to name two we have already met—flooded the capital with their hostile petitions. And the city mobs went gleefully to work, smashing windows and slinging mud.

As for the Jacobites, the fiercest opponents of the Union, they were soon blessing Queen Anne and her Ministers for a unique opportunity of attracting the support of the whole nation to their cause. "King James and no Union!" they taught the people to cry, and looked for great events before the summer.

In all Jacobite affairs the MacGregors were represented by one Alasdair Drummond (or MacGregor) of Balhaldies. He was a kinsman of Roro's, whose father had left the Highlands many years ago, bought an estate near Dunblane, and engaged his son in trade in Stirling town. The business prospered, and after his father's death Alasdair retained a profitable share in it. He was able to move in the best Perthshire society; kept a town house in Dunblane; became a favourite 'with the old Earl of Perth; and in 1686 married a daughter of the great Lochiel. He was as much a Drummond as a MacGregor, and as much a Cameron as either; above all else he was a Jacobite.

Dundee, on his way from Edinburgh to the north in '89, spent a night at Balhaldies House, where he was "confirmed in his design" of raising the clans. Alasdair is believed to have fought at Killiecrankie in the ranks of Lochiel's regiment; and since then he had taken a new interest in his MacGregor kin. He would flit from one of their houses to another, or to Edinburgh and back, keeping them informed of how things progressed in the great world outside their glens.

At this time the Jacobite clans were looking to Atholl to lead them, apparently believing that his political downfall and family tradition would combine to force him into their camp. If family tradition counted for anything, they might have had Montrose; but he was said to be sold to the English, and the next for a dukedom. Breadalbin surprised everyone by declaring for the Jacobites. Only the Duke of Argyll remained what he always was—the champion of the English party. Perhaps he was the only honest man of them all.

But however the Earls and the Dukes behaved, there was never any doubt upon which side the nameless MacGregors would fight; and Rob Roy deemed it his plain duty as Tutor to bring his nephew to Breadalbin's notice, with an eye to his future advancement. We find him writing a friendly letter to his powerful kinsman about this time, 1 with the latest news of Gregor's domestic problems (and never a comma to mar the flow of the language)

"My Nephew is to see your Lordship whom I hope will be capable to serve your Lordship and will do it though I were in my grave he is a young man so my Lord give him your advice he is Bigging his house and I hope your Lordship will give him a precept for the four trees your Lordship promised him the last time I was there...

It was a new wing they were adding to Glengyle House, in honour of the young laird's approaching marriage. Robert Buchanan of Arnprior, son of an old friend of Rob's father and one of the founders of the original Watch, had a daughter married to Hamilton of Bardowie, who would sometimes come over on a visit with his wife and sister. It must have been under Arnprior's hospitable roof that these young people encountered Rob Roy and his nephew. Bardowie gazed with awe upon the famous "Protector of the Lennox," and enrolled himself at once as a new client; but his sister Mary rolled her eyes at the handsome Gregor Gblun Dhu, and to some purpose. . . . She was Lowland bred, and would have up to date ideas about comfort and ventilation. The masons were over from Stronachlachar, and meanwhile the old house was barely habitable. Rob's letter is written from Portanellan, where he had obviously sought shelter till peace should be restored.

Gregor's private feelings about the proposed Rising must have been mixed. Sometimes he saw himself leading the clan to victory over corpse strewn battlefields, and accepting an earldom from his grateful Sovereign. Such dreams might have filled his head at another time; but when he held Mary of Bardowie in his arms, and thought of that supreme happiness so soon to be his—then he wavered sadly. Watching the walls of his new home abuilding, he lost some of his enthusiasm for putting torches to other men's thatch. And he had still another excellent reason for hoping that this war might at least hold off for another year or two. If it came now his uncle was likely to steal the military glory that he craved for himself. That earldom might somehow go astray unless he was of full age to claim it.

Rob Roy, on the other hand, was evidently looking forward to the outbreak of war, and felt certain of getting the command of the clan regiment for himself. For the Gregarach were once more without a Chief. Nobody knew whether

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Kilmanan yet lived. He had gone to Ireland and was last heard of at a horsefair in Antr m. It was almost a case for presuming death, and his clan seemed ready enough to do so. There would be no grand funeral for him on Inchcailleach. . . . With Kilnarian ended the house of Glenstrae, and who was to succeed him?

Roro was senior cadet, and if the clan woke up to its Chiefless condition might be pushed into proclaiming himself Chief. But with the prospect of war came other possibilities that Rob Roy found most intriguing. It was an ancient custom in the Highlands, when a Chief was old, or sick, or otherwise unfit to lead his clan into battle, that a “Captain” should be appointed to fill his place, for the duration of the emergency—or until the true line produced another capable soldier. If the Gregarach were to choose a Captain, to see them through the coming war, Rob Roy knew himself to be their man; and this title of Captain had a way of sticking. Often it became hereditary, sometimes superseding that of Chief in the course of time. And Roro was not yet Chief. . . . This may well have been the direction of Rob’s secret ambitions.

For the Union itself he had no particular abhorrence. As a Highlander, his regard for his Sovereign was strictly personal, and certainly did not extend to Parliament or Ministers. A hundred years had passed since the King deserted Edinburgh for London; and what could it matter now if Parliament took the same road? For the rest, the Union offered opportunities for the expansion of Scottish trade, and Rob looked forward to driving his herds as far afield as Carlisle or Hexham when the Treaty took effect. Now that he had Montrose’s capital to draw upon, the cattle dealer in him was coming to the fore again, and he meant to be among the first of his countrymen in the new markets across the Border.

In April, when the Scottish kingdom had still a few weeks of independence to enjoy, there came to the Highlands a cattledealer out of England, also on the lookout for new markets. Rob must have been quite disappointed to learn from Balhaldies that the supposed drover was Colonel Hooke, an old officer of Dundee’s, sent over from the Chevalier’s court at St Germain’s to negotiate with the Scots for a Restoration. He had been wasting a great deal of his time very pleasantly among the hospitable lairds of Angus and Fife, but was now come at last to seek out Atholl, Breadalbin, and Lord Drummond, all of whom he supposed to be ardent Jacobites. Atholl’s Jacobitism was dubious. from the first, and he chose the course that was becoming traditional in his family—took to his bed with an unspecified malady, and remained there till Hooke had passed on. But the others were not so shy, and organised a meeting of the Chiefs of neighbouring clans, at which they were to settle how much in the way of men, money, arms, and supplies they were expected to furnish for themselves, and how much the Chevalier would bring with him from France. Invitations were quietly circulated for a huntingmatch to be held at Kinloch Rannoch.

There was no game killed at that huntingmatch, but talk in plenty. It seemed that a French fleet was to put the Chevalier ashore, with a force sufficient to protect his person, somewhere on the east coast. All Scotland would be his within the month, it was reasonably estimated, if the French could be relied on for the artillery and engineers necessary for the reduction of the great fortresses. But at this point the strategy of the assembled Chiefs stuck fast, few of them being able to visualise any Operations farther south than Tweed.

With our knowledge of the future, most of us would agree that their best chance lay in a small force of determined men, able to outmarch the English regular troops and brush aside any militia that might be opposed to them. Let them only reach London, and King James take his seat in St James’s, and present the country with the accomplished fact. The regular army would obey whoever sat in St James’s for the moment and sent them their pay. As for the English people, they had taken a Dutch invasion very calmly twenty years ago; why should they boggle at a Scottish one? But we are apt to forget that the Highlanders, in 1707, had no particular confidence in their own military prowess. Killiecrankie might have been a lucky accident, and Prestonpans lay in the future. To them, in their general, a strong French expeditionary force appeared quite essential for the invasion of England.

At the end of that day’s conference two formal documents were drawn up and signed. One was a Memorial addressed to the King of France, assuring him that the time was ripe for the proposed attempt; all they asked of His Most Christian Majesty was a plentiful supply of munitions and a body of perhaps eight thousand troops as a nucleus for their native levies. This paper was handed to Hooke, who declared that a fleet could be ready to sail by the following August.

The second document was the customary Bond of Association, the precise contents of which will never be known, for reasons that will appear later. All that we are told is that it contained the signatures of “some of the noblest of the Highland Chiefs,” Rob Roy’s among the rest. As he added his “Ro: MacGregor” he must have wondered how long it would be now before he could drop his assumed name of Campbell altogether.

It was a beautiful idea of somebody’s that Hooke should carry back to France a Highland broadsword as a symbolic gift for the Marquis de Torcy, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The promised French expedition did not sail that year after all; and Gregor of Glengyle celebrated his wedding in peace. Not until March of the following year did rumours of war come to disturb his wedded bliss. Then the wondrous news reached Scotland that the Chevalier and his French troops were actually on board their transports at Dunkirk and on the point of sailing. They were in fact already at sea—and the Chevalier had chosen that moment to succumb to the measles.

Otherwise the expedition could not have been better timed; for the inevitable petty injustices that followed the Union had brought the whole Scottish nation to verge of open revolt. Final preparations were hurried through, and the

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Highland Chiefs warned to stand by; but till the landing was safely effected they must not take the fatal step of calling their clans to arms.

It must have been at this time that Rob Roy and his nephew mortgaged their estates for ready money, presumably to buy powder and ball and other equipment for their regiment. It was not a bad thing to do, since the estates were likely to be forfeited outright if things should by any chance go wrong. A good deal of speculation was going on, during those anxious weeks, in the property of intending rebels; and one Buchanan was found ready to advance a useful sum upon Glengyle. (Who the man was we will not inquire, as he afterwards played a part unworthy of his honourable surname.) A further sum was borrowed from Montrose, on the security of Rob's Craigrostan estate.

And now the French fleet was somewhere off Flamborough Head—thirty vessels, with four hundred very seasick soldiers on board, and the Chevalier attended by the Duke of Perth. It was not an imposing force; but then it was only necessary for one of the thirty vessels to reach the Scottish coast and put King James ashore, and Scotland would do the rests. They had better be quick about it, either way, for their topsails had been observed, as they put out from Dunkirk, by British soldiers perched on the steepletops of Ostend on the other side of the frontier, and already Sir George Byng's squadron was on their track.

Rob Roy's place would surely be with his clan, at such a time. Yet he is said to have been off on an adventure of his own, on the coasts of Loin, where two French officers had been put ashore with private despatches for Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat and the Laird of MacLeod, both waverers from the Jacobite cause. It was a serious mistake to have landed them in the heart of Argyll's territories; and Rob Roy was hastily summoned—as the nearest representative of Jacobitism—to escort them on the next stage of their journey to Skye. Even so, it is difficult to see why he should have thought it necessary to go in person. According to the story he successfully smuggled the Frenchmen out of the Campbell country, by way of Rannoch Muir, and handed them over to his friends in Glen Coe, whence they could take boat for Lochiel's country.

Meanwhile the French expedition had been and gone, without attempting a landing; and the Rising was again indefinitely postponed.

Their fleet had arrived off the Firth of Forth, and anchored behind the Isle of May on the 23rd. They fired a pre-arranged signal to the Chevalier's friends along the coast; and Leven, Commander in Chief of the scanty troops in Edinburgh, was preparing to abandon the town, for "the Jacobites were so uppish he durst hardly look them in the face as they walked in the streets." At this moment the British fleet of twentyeight sail made its appearance, standing in for the Firth; the French admiral took advantage of the favourable wind to slip out to sea again while yet he could; and Byng's squadron dropped anchor in the Frenchmen's place, as some protection for the capital.

It would now seem that the French had the North Sea to themselves, and the choice of all the seaports in Scotland from Dundee round to the Clyde for their landing. Or as a last escort the Chevalier might have been set ashore alone with his valet and his measles, as he himself most earnestly desired. But a French Admiral never knew when he was not beaten; the fleet started north for Inverness, encountered some heavy weather, and—returned ignominiously to Dunkirk! As for the unhappy Chevalier, he was too valuable a pawn in the hands of France to be left to the mercies of his own subjects. Back he went to his weary exile, whether he would or no.

And there was public Thanksgiving throughout the land of France for the safe return of her miserable troops, "not fifty men having died, though so long on board."

CHAPTER IV. Summer 1708

A FULLYORGANISED Jacobite Rising, averted only by the merest chance, and nobody to be hanged? It was unthinkable. Edinburgh was soon crowded with prisoners —nobility in the Castle, commoners in the Tolbooth; and nothing was lacking but the evidence of their treason.

The impetuous Lord Drummond had gone further than most, having actually assembled two hundred men under arms. To the fury of the whole Scottish nation, he and a number of other suspected noblemen were removed to England, and lodged for a time in the Tower of London, till the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Acts expired and they had to be released.

Atholl had been summoned to the capital to account for himself and failed to appear. But they might have known what his answer would be, when they sent the dragoons to Blair to fetch him. He was ill in bed, and his doctor's certificate perfectly in order.

Only a handful of the hotheaded gentry of Stirlingshire (including Rob Roy's irascible client Stirling of Garden) were brought to trial for high treason, they having mustered with their servants and ridden in a body towards Edinburgh to support the Chevalier's supposed landing. But swords and pistols formed a part of every gentleman's travelling equipment in those days; and all were acquitted for lack of evidence of treasonable intent.

Rob Roy seemed to have come through unscathed; but he suffered one serious loss that spring.

Business had naturally been neglected during the excitement of the French expedition, but he had received large sinus of money as usual from Montrose during the past winter, to be invested in black cattle up in the Highlands. About the middle of May, when the beasts had been fattened up a little, he was to bring them down to the Lowland markets for sale, and share the resulting profit with his ducal partner. This year he had been forced to leave that part of the business to one of his principal drovers, a man, named MacDonald, whose arrival he awaited rather anxiously, in view of the unsettled state of the country.

He never set eyes again on MacDonald, who evidently disposed of the cattle in the north and absconded with the proceeds. He must be the same person as "Duncan M'nas alias M'Donald in Monachyle tuarach" who transacted a great deal of business with Rob Roy in 1707, and appears to have managed his Balquhidder farm for him. His responsibility for Rob's loss has sometimes been doubted; but there is no doubt about his existence.

To make matters worse, Montrose saw fit to demand repayment of his advances in full, with interest. He had an odd notion of partnership; for he had no objection to sharing profits, but did not mean to stand any part of the losses. Rob was able to settle with him only by renewing the Craigrostan mortgage; and he was to suffer indirectly from MacDonald's bad faith for the rest of his life.

It will have been observed that all Rob's most remarkable adventures are cautiously introduced by such words as "it is said" or "he is supposed." These are the Rob Roy legends, which may be believed or not, according to fancy, but cannot be substantiated. Two of them tell of the aftermath of the abortive Rising of 1708, and both are concerned with attempts by disgruntled Jacobites to betray their comrades. The first, though it is often narrated as history, has no better authority than Hogg's 'Jacobite Relics of Scotland,' and in some of its details is almost certainly untrue. It began to be whispered among the Jacobites (we are told) that the Earl of Breadalbin was corresponding with the Government; and they asked themselves frantically, how much could he tell if he chose? There was a certain Bond of Association that had been left in his hands the year before.

Hoping to get a good price for this incriminating document, the Earl chose for his agent John Campbell of Glenlyon, son of the Glenlyon who had done his dirty work for him on that other occasion sixteen years before in Glen Coe. As an officer in one of the Independent Companies of Highlanders, I attached to the regular garrison at Fort William, Glenlyon had the advantage of being able to communicate with the Privy Council through the military channels. But fortunately he could never keep a secret, and some of those whose names appeared in the Bond got wind of the plot. It was suggested that Rob, as a relative of Glenlyon's and a man of well known resource and skill in such matters, should see what he could do to recover the Bond. Rob made no promises; but he had no more wish than the rest of them to attract the attentions of the Privy Council, and resolved to make the attempt.

Meanwhile Glenlyon must have come to a satisfactory arrangement with the Council—money or a marquissate, we can only guess at Breadalbin's price—and had already placed the fatal Bond in the hands of the commanding officer at the Fort, for despatch to Edinburgh.

Rob Roy paid his cousin a friendly visit soon afterwards, drank with him glass for glass all night till he was incapable of refusing anything to anybody, and congratulated himself that his task was to be so easy. But as soon as he touched on the subject of the Bond, Glenlyon acquainted him with the true position.

"You can see it's entirely out of my hands," he said. "Had you come to me sooner—"

"Sure, there's none could bear you malice for it," Rob assured him, "and all done in the execution of your duty."

And they parted in most friendly fashion—after some trilling talk about the strength of military parties entrusted with despatches, and their times of departure.

A platoon of English soldiers moved off in a downpour of rain from Tyndrum, where they had lain for the night, down the so called military road, which was little more than a string of puddles between banks of deep heather. There is one

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especially wild and solitary place, at the upper end of Strath Fillan, that might have been designed by nature for the laying of ambushes. It is called Dalree; and here the men of Loin once overwhelmed the army of Bruce, all but capturing the hero himself. The redcoats of course knew nothing of this; and when the eddying mist revealed, for a few seconds, the shadowy forms of men on the braes above, they might have been the wraiths of Bruce's slain warriors for all the notice they received.

Then, when the whole platoon was strung out in a quite indefensible position, silently a company of fifty armed Highlanders rose out of the earth.

"Halt, in the King's name I" cried their leader, a stalwart fellow in sodden tartans who yet contrived to shield his levelled pistol from the weather with a corner of his plaid.

"Make way for the Queen's messenger!" squealed the young ensign who commanded the soldiers. "Stand back, and you will come to no harm I"

"Sir," said the other courteously, "those words were better applied to your own party. But hand over the despatches you carry and you may proceed in peace, and under arms. Those are generous terms—let us have no delay!"

"We do not surrender despatches, save with our lives!" the lad answered boldly; for it was a fact that he dare not report to Edinburgh without them.

"With or without your lives, it's every bit the same to me," replied the Highlander grimly; "but have them we will. Perhaps it may cheer you to know it's a single sheet of parchment concerns me. The rest I shall return to you."

The unfortunate ensign was a smart lad, eager for military glory in the large sense, but with no wish to die a hero's death in an obscure glen far from the world, over a small point of military honour. Of course, he must have run into the beginning of a new Rising, or the natives would never have dared meddle with the Queen's troops. The loss of a single despatch would never be noticed among all the alarms of war. He gave in, and banded over the package that he carried so proudly in his bosom. The other slit it open, and searched among the contents.

"Here is what I'm seeking," said he, "and here are the rest back again. A thousand apologies for the trouble we have caused you, and I wish you a good journey from here on!"

It is said that this holding up of a military party, in time of peace and in broad daylight, made a great stir. The young ensign was cashiered, but the authors of the outrage could never be discovered. It must be confessed, however, that no single reference to it has yet been traced, in the War Office files or elsewhere. If the story is true in the main, it still seems likely that the Bond may have been recovered in some less spectacular way.

But recovered it was, and Lord Drummond, Lochiel, Rob Roy, and the rest were safe—until the next time.

The second story, though it reads like a piece of juvenile fiction, does appear to be based on fact.

When all danger of arrest seemed to be past, Rob Roy received a mysterious summons from The Earl of Leven, Military Commander in Chief in Scotland, requesting him to attend at Edinburgh in a week's time, to give certain information relating to the recent French expedition to Scottish waters.

It was easy to declare it was a trap; but how would it serve the authorities to catch him? They could no more prove treason against him than against any other honest laird in Scotland. And one thing was plain—there would be more danger in refusing than in going. So Robert Campbell of Inversnaid donned Lowland dress, and rode away to meet his fate, attended by a single henchman, one Alasdair Roy.

They reached the capital, presented themselves at the Castle, and were passed rapidly inside. Here Rob had to part from the faithful Alasdair, and was escorted to the General's quarters by an armed guard.

"Robert Campbell of Inversnaid, you are accused of giving aid and comfort to divers of Her Majesty's enemies, to wit certain officers in the service of the French King—names unknown—within this realm, on or about the 26th day of March last. What have you to say to this?"

Since they knew so much, it was likely that they knew all; but Rob hedged, and quibbled, and would admit nothing.

"Very well," said Leven, "it will be a pleasure to accommodate you here in the Castle until the morning, when you shall have an opportunity of renewing your acquaintance with—MacDonald of Dalness."

Rob knew Dalness for a clansman of Glencoe's, who had doubtless seen him and the Frenchmen together, perhaps even spoken to them. It was hard to believe that he had turned informer; but if so, his evidence would be damning. So he consented to surrender his sword, and was marched away. His request to be allowed to speak to his servant was granted, and he gave Alasdair Roy some long and careful instructions (in the Gaelic) together with a little money and a scribbled note.

It is a pity that "the Dougal creature" of Sir Walter Scott's novel, so usefully employed as turnkey in the Glasgow Tolbooth, was a fictitious character. Nevertheless Rob did possess a very valuable acquaintance in Edinburgh, in the person of an officer in the Town Guard, a fellow Highlander like many of his kind (then and since). Alasdair Roy's first visit was to this gentleman, to whom he handed Rob's letter.

This contained the rather irregular request that he should do Rob a service by despatching a sergeant and twelve men of the Guard to a certain address in the neighbourhood at nine o'clock that night. At the same time Rob gave his word of honour that this purpose was no more than to frighten a man who had done him an injury; he was not asking the Guard to enter the house, or become involved in any violence. As the officer had no knowledge of Rob's detention in the Castle, he saw no harm in the request, and agreed to send the men. A little later that evening MacDonald

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of Dalness left his lodgings in the Cowgate, and stepped round to the nearest tavern for a dram. Soon afterwards a burly figure glided up the stair to the door he had left and knocked upon it.

“Goodwife,” said Alasdair Roy in a husky whisper, when the landlady had opened to him. “I’m from the Highlands, a near friend of your lodger, Dalness. Is he not in the house? Then you’ll give him this word from me, the moment he’s back? The Town Guard’s on the track of him! As he values his life, let him keep out of their way this night.”

His third call that night was less successful than the other two. Rob had paid for two beds in advance; but nothing would induce his landlady to refund the price of the one that was not to be slept in.

When he laid his plans, Rob staked everything on the probability that Dalness had been no more loyal to the Government he served than to his own people, in the course of his unsavoury employment. At any rate, his landlady’s message threw Dalness into a panic. He made a bundle of his belongings in preparation for instant flight, and stationed himself at a window overlooking the length of the street. When a party of the Guard came in sight, at nine o’clock precisely, and halted by the stairfoot, he doubted no longer, but made a hasty retreat by a back way he had in mind. As for the Guard, they satisfied themselves with beating a noisy tattoo on his door, and made off without waiting for the timorous landlady to open. There was a rebearded fellow in the next street, who had seemed very anxious to buy them all a drink.

For another twentyfour hours Rob was kept languishing in the Castle, without hearing any more from the CommanderinChief. Then he sent up a bold message, demanding to be confronted with the evidence against him or given his release. Thereupon his sword was returned to him, and he walked out of the Castle gate a free man. But he and Alasdair lost no time in getting to horse and away out by the West Port.

That was the last time Rob Roy ever cared to set foot inside Edinburgh town

CHAPTER V. March 1711—November 1712

GREGOR MACGREGOR of Glengyle had now come of age, and taken over his ancestral estate in a very flourishing condition. Indeed he was the first of all his line to own the land that his house stood upon. His ancestors had been content to hold Glengyle as “kindly tenants” of the lairds of Buchanan; but Rob evidently had not the same confidence in the house of Montrose, and thought it well to get a more permanent title to the estate while they were still on good terms with the Marquis. This was one of the first things he did, after assuming the Tutorship, the charter being granted to him “as attorne for, and in name of James Graham his pupil” on the 1st of July 1703. (“James Graham” was Gregor’s official name; even Rob could do nothing about that.) Gregor succeeded at the same time to the leaders of the Clan Dougal Keir, which had miraculously during those difficult years when the Gregarach, with their name prescribed and their Chief a cypher, might have been expected to disappear from history. It the force of Rob’s personality more than anything e that held the men together, and even brought b some of the independent Balquhiddier families to fold. But now, of course, all was Gregor’s. Rob only Laird of Inversnaid, one of the halfdozen ca owing Glengyle allegiance. Gregor would do well enough in his new position. He had just the virtues most admired in a High chieftain—a handsome presence, physical courage, agreeable manners, and a strong head. Possibly no humbler station would have fitted him quite so well. There was a certain vulgar commonsense about his uncle, for instance—it may have been the Campbell strain—that Gregor would always lack. The new Lady Glengyle likewise would do well enough. Already she had borne her husband two sons, which was very satisfactory. Gregor’s younger brother, Donald, had gone to take over Rob’s old farm at Monachul Tuarach; and his sister Kattie would soon be married off. Over at Inversnaid the exTutor had two wellgrown lads of his own, and Mary was preparing to bring forth a third. Now was Rob’s chance to settle down at last to the joys of a normal family life. . . . But he must have been lavishing more care on Gregor’s affairs than on his own, which all at once began to cause him some very serious worry. He lived well enough on his income; but his savings were gone, and those two mortgages were hanging over him yet, as a reminder of MacDonald’s bad faith in the year of the French expedition. Scraping together every penny he owned, he did manage to pay off the mortgages at last, and set the estates free. (According to a typical story, Buchanan tried to claim his money twice over from Glengyle; but Rob Roy had him kidnapped, and took back the mortgage deed by force.) That left him with nothing but the money entrusted to him by Montrose at Candlemas, on which he must either make a profit for his partner or bear the loss himself, according to the Duke’s peculiar ideas of business. Montrose was essentially a fairweather friend. He affected the greatest admiration for Rob and his bold speculations so long as they prospered, but had shown himself the most unsympathetic of creditors. He was Lord Privy Seal now, and much at court, with his high in the air and his mind on weightier things than fatstock prices. He had Scotland well under his thumb with Argyll away in Spain, Atholl and Breadalbin discredited, and only wanted money to maintain himself in power. He looked to his wide estates, and his trading ventures, to keep him supplied. Gorthie, his chamberlain, saw to it that the rents never failed to flow in. But his income from the cattle sales seemed to vary enormously from year to year. He sometimes wondered if Rob Roy was trustworthy. As it happened, this was one of the bad years. Rob cheated the English drovers at Falkirk outrageously, and bullied the Lennox lairds for their blackmail, but still could not square his accounts. How easy to have turned to the Highlandman’s old remedy for a bad season, and lifted a booty on his own account! A single exploit like the Her’ship of Kippen in ‘93 might have set him on his feet again. But he stuck to his lawful business, and it broke him. For Montrose decided that it was time to sever their connection—and to ruin Rob Roy. We shall never know the ins and outs of it, what grounds he had for taking such a drastic step, or what he hoped to gain by it. We cannot even tell which party made the first move. It is said that Rob Roy “finding his affairs backward” suddenly absconded to the Western Isles, with the intention of leaving the country. “I shall not make it my principle to pay interest,” he is supposed to have punned, “nor my interest to pay the principal; so if your Grace do not stand your share of the loss, you shall have no money from me.” But there is also the wellknown story of an attempt to have him arrested; and of the reception he gave the messenger at arms who came to Inversnaid with the warrant. It is an improbable story, but worth repeating as a curiosity. With six stalwart constables at his back the messenger came to Stronachlachar, and stopped at the tavern to ask his way; but as he made no secret of his mission, the landlord was able to send Rob a warning. In due course the messenger advanced alone to the house, announced himself as a stranger who had lost his way, and was invited to enter. The door closed after him, and the first thing that caught his eye was the lifeless figure of a man hanging behind it, with his neck in a noose—a stuffed figure, but realistic enough.

“That?” Rob Roy explained casually. “Och, that’s a rascal of a messenger who came here yesterday to serve a summons on me. My people have been too busy to cut him down.”

On hearing this (we are asked to believe) the bold messenger fell down in a faint. He was carried outside and restored to consciousness by a ducking in the Snaid Burn, after which he was glad to be allowed to go free. But he and his men were set upon more than once on their way back down the waterside, and it was bitter weather for freshwater bathing. When last seen they were going at a good smart trot, which should have kept their blood circulating nicely; and Craigrostan saw them no more.

A quite ridiculous story in its details; but it does suggest that some attempt was made to serve a citation on Rob in person. Then on the 27th of November 1711 the Court granted “edictal citation” against him, in respect of large sums claimed by the Duke of Montrose and others.

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If Rob Roy left home for a time, to avoid the attentions of his creditors, he went no farther than the little house of Corrycharmeg in Glen Dochart, which was put at his disposal by the Earl of Breadalbin. As Montrose himself relates, “having contracted a great many debts, he left his usual residence and went some twelve or sixteen miles farther into the Highlands, and put himself under the protection of the Earl of Breadalbin.” I Though he cannot have lived there long, Corrycharmeg has this advantage over Rob’s other dwellings, that a part of the original building still stands, on the north side of Ben More (about a mile west of Luib station), where it appears rather oddly on the map as “Rob Roy’s Castle.” Rob had a lease expiring in November 1712, by which time he hoped to be able to come to terms with Montrose.

The Duke seemed ready enough to negotiate. He was up at Buchanan House for a few days, and wrote Rob such a friendly letter that he could almost believe the whole thing had been a misunderstanding. Perhaps Gorthie had not been the perfect intermediary in the past; but the Duke himself was anxious to be reasonable. His proposal was that they two should meet and discuss any outstanding differences, on the neutral ground of a Glasgow lawyer’s office. Half in jest, as it seemed, he added a promise of safe conduct.

Rob may have meant to accept the Duke’s offer, and put himself in the lawyer’s bands. Graham of Killearn, the Duke’s factor, who was now in charge of the case, had the reputation of being a hard man, but was after all an old business acquaintance. We find that Rob paid him fifty pounds at Whitsun, “which was all he had at the time, but promises the rest in a fortnight or twenty days.” According to Rob’s own account, he offered the whole principal sum with a year’s rent, but Killearn would not take it. At all events they were no nearer a settlement at the beginning of June, when the case came up for trial.

Few were prepared for Rob Roy’s downfall when it came, for he kept his insolvency well hidden from the world; and even “notorious bankruptcy”—as it is called after proof in court—need not spell ruin for a man of Rob’s resource and industry. There are scores of transactions in money and cattle recorded for the years 1711 and 1712, when he was making frantic efforts to right his affairs, and might have done so with any luck. The chief obstacle to a friendly settlement was almost certainly his ownership of the Craigrostan property. Montrose had a wellknown passion for collecting real estate, and would not stop to consider the folly of driving Rob too far; ‘while Rob’s pride as a landowner forbade him to come meekly to terms for its surrender. Though he escaped a debtor’s prison, Craigrostan would surely be lost to him and his clan for ever, once Montrose laid hands on it.

So Rob did what almost any other Highlander would have done in his place stayed away. His debts were adjudged in his absence at £1000 sterling, of which a large part was secured to Montrose by mortgage; and the court declared that he “did most fraudulently withdraw and fled, without performing anything on his part, and therefore became unquestionably a notour and fraudulent bankrupt.” In fraudulent bankruptcy—as his was rather unfairly made to appear—the Court of Session had a criminal jurisdiction. By the 18th of June, Rob is “insert by My Lord Montrose his order, in the gazette as a vagabond”

‘Edinburgh Evening Courant.’

That Robert Campbell, commonly known by the name of Rob Roy MacGregor, being lately intrusted by several noblemen and gentlemen with considerable sums for buying cows for them in the Highlands, has treacherously gone off with the money, to the value of £1000 sterling, which he carries along with him. All Magistrates and officers of his Majesty’s forces are entreated to seize upon the said Rob Roy, and the money which he carries.

Atholl’s factor wrote to his master next day, in something of a panic, that “the common Report goes that he has gone off with £1000 sterling, and made the best of his way over to the Pretender. . . . It is reported by those who are none of your Grace’s friends that you should have conversed with him after he was publicly in the gazette and known to be a declared fugitive, which I am confident is altogether false. . . . But in case your Grace has at any time seen him, I am hopeful it was only by accident, and before anything of this has been discovered anent him. . . .

Rob found that the power of the central government had much increased since he was last on the run, nearly twenty years before. Messengersatarms might be ducked and defied, but he soon had the military on his track. With Graham of Killearn was associated Colonel Alexander Campbell of Finnab, a gallant old veteran of the Darien expedition, now commanding one of the Independent Companies stationed in the Highlands. Yet Rob found ways of sending Finnab and his Black Watch on wildgoose chases elsewhere, while he slipped down to Inversnaid to see his wife and family. His third boy was born at this uneasy time, and baptised James—possibly as a last desperate compliment to the Duke of Montrose.

The machinery of justice was regarded by the average Highlander of those days as an up to date (if rather unsporting weapon of private feud. Perhaps Rob ought to have known better. But Montrose had certainly loomed rather large in the case against him; and he concluded that his proper course was to enrol some other feudal magnate on his own side. To Breadalbin he owed the roof over his head, and the old Earl could probably be trusted not to give him up; but it was useless to expect active aid from that quarter. So it was to Atholl that he addressed his last appeal, complaining of his unjust treatment—how Montrose had sent him a safe conduct, “and in the meantime that I had the protection, his Grace thought it fit to procure an order from the Queen’s Advocate to Finnab, to secure me, and had a party of men to put this order in execution against me. This was a most ridiculous way to any nobleman to treat any man after this manner. . . . God knows but there is a vast differs between Dukes. Blessed be God for that it’s not the Atholl men that is

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after me.” (He had given them the slip too, in his time.) “If your Grace would speak to the Advocate to countermand his order, since it’s contrary to Law, it would ease me very much off my troubles. . .

Atholl must have been flattered to find himself credited with the power of setting aside decisions of the Queen’s Advocate; but he preferred not to put it to the test. Nor could he afford to quarrel with the Lord Privy Seal just now. It should have been the end of the whole sorry business when Rob was solemnly proclaimed outlaw, on the 3rd October 1712, as one that “by open fraud and violence hath embezzled considerable sums of money,” and kept himself “with a Guard or Company of armed men in defiance of the law.” In fact it was only the beginning, for whether or not Rob ever planned to declare open war upon his enemies, they soon forced him to it.

Graham of Killearn was a SheriffDepute for the County of Stirling; and it was in that capacity that he came to take possession of Inversnaid—not as Montrose’s factor. But whether Killearn represented the Duke or the Court of Session that day, nobody troubled to ask at the time; and the Duke and he have always had to share the blame for what followed.

It was about the middle of November, and wintry weather, when the boats came up Loch Lomond and put Killearn ashore with his bailiffs and constables at the west end of Glen Arklet. Though a busy place when Rob was in residence, Inversnaid had not developed into a large township. It was a couple of miles from the twenty friendly roofs of Corryarklet, and out of sight of their smoke. Only a few small cabins clustered where now is the Inversnaid Hotel; and Rob’s house stood solitary and very much at the mercy of the invaders. The pity of it was that Mary MacGregor had no thought of flight while there was yet time.

Fancying perhaps that they were only come to search the house for her absent lord (and knowing how likely they were to wreak their disappointment on her household goods), poor, foolish, faithful Mary chose to stay at her post and save what she could. Then, when she learnt the true purpose of their coming, which was no less than the stripping of the whole estate, and that these were her last hours under her own roof, there was so much to be done. And after all Killearn had been born a gentleman. . .

She was too busy to think about the gathering darkness, or the evil passions that creep into the hearts of men as night falls. As the mother of three sons, with grey hairs aplenty, she may have forgotten that hers was still a woman’s tantalising body. When Killearn finally requested her to leave she was not as meek as she might have been; and he set his men to put her out. Once their paws were upon her, it was too late. Tugging her this way and that, fumbling for the bosom of her dress, they made no pretence of turning her out of doors—not till they had their will of her.

What was done to Mary MacGregor that night has never been precisely told, for reasons that are obvious. One account declares (in the merciful obscurity of the Latin language) that after making sport with her naked body, they used hot irons upon her. This is almost certainly exaggeration, and we do know that she suffered no lasting physical injury. Years later she was to bear another child without mishap. But all are agreed that she was made to suffer “the extreme indignities which woman can endure,” which is the nearest most of us will want to get to the unsavoury facts. Sir Walter Scott has put terrible words into her mouth. “My mother’s bones will shrink aside in their grave,” she cries, “when mine are laid beside them!”

Did Killearn never see that here was a deed would not be forgiven or forgotten in a hundred years? When all was done, and Mary stood clutching the wreck of her gown, there was nothing forlorn or pitiful about her—only black hatred, the brooding hatred of generations of Celts for the ruthless Saxon despoiler. But he only exulted to see so much fierce pride humbled, and surely for ever.

She fled that night to her cousins at Corryarklet; and not a word would she say of what had happened, though there was no hiding her distress. Had she gone straight to Glengyle with her story, and demanded redress, there must have been bloody work on LochLomondside; and Rob Roy might have had his nephew’s company in his outlawry. But nothing would induce her to speak. Next morning she borrowed ponies for herself and the children, and set forth in a tempest of wind and rain for the only refuge she knew—her husband’s lodging in Glen Dochart.

Book III. Outside the Law

CHAPTER I. 1713—1714

THE French wars were over at last. No more could the petty criminals and ablebodied vagabonds of Britain be shipped away across the narrow seas, to serve their offended country in scarlet coats and Flanders mud. As the warweary veterans came ashore at Hull, or Harwich, or Gravesend, they were speedily disbanded and left to drift back to their old employment, as vagabonds (less ablebodied, some of them) or petty criminals. And British dragoons, lately acclaimed the finest in Europe, were quickly making a name for themselves as the boldest highwaymen in the world. The Whigs, in their scurrilous newssheets, liked to assert that the Government was selling the country to the Pretender—deliberately reducing the army till it should be power less to oppose a Jacobite revolt. Others were asking unkind questions in Parliament about those publicspirited gentlemen (in Scotland especially) who had taken ex soldiers into their service in batches of five or six together, sometimes encouraging the honest fellows to keep up their drill and musketry in their spare time.

The Highlands had produced one first rate military hero—the gallant Argyll, “Red John of the Battles,” a BrigadierGeneral before he was thirty, and now come home to take up his appointment as Commander in Chief in Scotland. He at least was a staunch Whig, though not on the best of terms with his colleague, the Lord Privy Seal. (The Dukes of Argyll and Montrose were bound by family tradition to be bitter rivals.) And we actually find these two in complete agreement, towards the end of the year 1713, on the question of a new garrison for the turbulent Highlands.

The scheme was apparently Argyll’s own in the first place. At his request the commanders of the Independent Companies submitted their suggestions for the site of another fortified barracks, on the pattern of the great garrison at Fort William. Amongst the rest, Campbell of Finnab recommended a site on LochLomondside which would command the MacGregor country and yet be easily kept provisioned by water from Dumbarton. His suggestion was warmly supported by the Duke of Montrose, and finally preferred to all the rest. The owner of the ground, near the western end of Glen Arklet, was found to be a fugitive outlaw, so that its acquisition by the Crown was easily managed; and plans were soon prepared for the building. There were no Royal Engineers yet on the Army List, and the construction of the little fortress was entrusted to a wellknown firm of builders in Edinburgh.

The site was well chosen—a grassy knoll at the junction of Glen Arklet and the little Snaid glen, about a mile above the landingplace, with an allround field of fire. The work went steadily forward, but not fast enough to please the Lord Privy Seal, who was showing the most lively concern for what was a purely military matter. It transpired that he had long been interested in this particular land; it was he that procured the outlawry of the late owner, and was taking steps to secure the property for himself. But his enjoyment of this new domain was constantly menaced by the incursions of the wild Gregarach, which he was quite powerless to prevent unaided. Now he had contrived to get this garrison established on the northern bounds of his estate, to protect his private property from his private enemies, all at the taxpayer’s expense.

So the raw stone barracks and the derelict house of Inversnaid scowled at one another, at only about five hundred yards’ distance. Glen Arklet was surely too small a place to hold them both.

It was Martinmas, the November quarterday, and the lighted windows of the inn at Chapellaroch glowed cheerily in the dusk. From within came the steady hum of voices, slow masculine voices, kept respectfully lowered as in the presence of a superior; for this lonely hostelry was one of the places appointed for the collection of the Duke of Montrose’s rents.

These were the more substantial tenants, accustomed to pay their rent in money instead of in kind, who sat round the inn’s single apartment with tankards of ale in their fists and waistcoats half unbuttoned. The day’s business was almost at an end, and the company could turn its attention to the food and drink which every landlord was expected to provide on these occasions—an old, gracious custom that served to soften the blow for the now penniless farmers. At the tablehead sat the Duke’s factor—no, not Killearn; for Chapellaroch lies only a few miles south of the Pass of Aberfoyle, and Killearn was not courting a violent death. Yet there was no hiding the look of expectation on every face in the room whenever a gust of wind rattled the door.

Since his outlawing a year ago, that villain Rob Roy had made it sufficiently clear that he considered the vast Montrose estates as his own, and it would not be like him to let a quarterday pass without some assertion of his claim. Last Whitsun, for instance, when the lesser tenants assembled with their sacks of meal at the Duke’s gurnal by Port o’ Menteith, they had found Rob waiting for them in the factor’s stead, supported by a band his ruffianly MacGregors. He had made them a little speech, expressing himself well satisfied with the rents they brought him, but regretting that he must ask for the loan of their ponies, as he proposed to lodge the meal bags in another and more convenient granary for that turn. The food and ale had been forthcoming as usual, and everybody agreed that the bold outlaw made a better host than Montrose’s factor. He wrote out careful receipts for each man; the ponies were returned promptly to their owners; and nobody was a penny the worse—except Montrose himself.

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At Lammas, naturally, every possible precaution was taken against any repetition of Rob's prank; but Rob acted a week before he was expected. He conducted a mighty raid into Menteith, in broad daylight, such as no man living could remember, and swept away all the flocks and herds in his path. At quarterday the factor was confronted by a room full of loudly protesting farmers, demanding to be excused their rent since it was for the Duke to protect them from such depredations. But the stolen beasts were put up for sale at Kuhn Fair soon afterwards, the original owners all having word of what was going on through the mysterious channels that Rob Roy commanded.

Now the November term was come round, and nobody knew what to expect. The time and place of the present assembly had been kept a secret till the last minute, and it began to look as if Rob was not going to pay them a visit this time.

The factor, with the bags of coin at his elbow, was giving an admirable exhibition of nonchalance.

"Rob Roy?" he said, overhearing one of them utter the dreaded name. "I only hope he's not left the country, as some declare. I'd cheerfully give all that these bags hold to see that rogue strung up!"

There came a soft, scurrying sound from outside in the night, and a hush fell upon the company. A pale blur, that might have been a face, appeared for a fleeting second at one of the small windows. Then the stillness was broken by a well remembered voice, calling orders outside.

"Two men at each window—two at each corner—four at each door!"

Several of the farmers jumped to their feet, and then sat down again. The factor made as if to blow out the candles nearest him, but thought better of it. The door opened quietly; and in walked a pair of Highland gentlemen, their broadswords and pistols out.

One of them closed the door and put his back against it, sweeping his pistol round in a halfcircle to give everyone a chance of looking down its steel barrel. He was Alasdair Stewart, bynamed "the Baile," that some knew for a trusted lieutenant of Rob Roy's.

The other visitor there was no mistaking.

Rob was mightily changed in the last twelve months, but the grim, bearded figure that now advanced into the room was already becoming traditional. Gone were the lovelocks and lace of former days. His plain brown bonnet, short jacket, and red and black chequered plaid, bore the marks of long days and nights in the open in all weathers; and the rusty steel cuirass he wore under his coat told of dangerous living and lurking foes. Yet he smiled very pleasantly as he levelled a pistol at the factor's middle, and desired the company to keep their seats.

"The business is all completed, I see," he remarked with his eye on the moneybags. "Then perhaps one of you gentlemen would oblige me by counting out the money? No defaulters, I hope, sir? Yes? You'll need to be firmer with them, if you're to keep your present post. . ."

"Wheesht, wheesht! He does verra well as he is!" cried a piteous voice from the back of the room; and the factor thought it best to join in the general laughter.

"Has every man had a proper receipt for what's paid?" was Rob's next question.

"Ay, all that wanted them."

"But others have not troubled? That'll not do at all. I must ask you to draw receipts for the rest before I go"—he raised his voice so that all might hear—"to show his Grace that it is from him I receive the money, not from these honest men that have paid him.

And two or three more receipts were written out and handed round.

"Faith, I must stand treat once before I go," said Rob, emptying the contents of his sporran on the table with a lordly gesture, which in the circumstances he could easily afford. He drank off a pint himself with evident pleasure; then carefully cocked and levelled his pistol again, to give Alasdair Stewart a chance to do the same.

"Your dirk, Alasdair!" he called, when both tankards were empty; and the weapon was laid on the table.

"And now your oath, sir, upon the steel," Rob demanded, "not to stir from this place for an hour after we leave. If you do, then you know what to expect."

"I think my word should satisfy you, MacGregor."

"It's the oath I'm wanting."

Sulkily the factor muttered the oath, kissed the cold steel, and handed it back. And, before anybody realised it, the outlaw and his companion had slipped quietly out into the night—and with them Montrose's Martinmas rents.

Some say that Rob would still have bluffed them all, had he been quite alone; for of course there were no twenty men of his outside in the darkness.

There was something ironical in the immense popularity that Rob Roy enjoyed, now that he had lost everything else. Men who had feared or envied him in the days of his prosperity, now watched his exploits with amusement and delight. Those who once complained the most bitterly over paying him his blackmail, roared with laughter to hear of his regular lifting of Montrose's rents.

The new life suited him so much better than the old (he was often heard to swear) that he found it hard to bear the Duke any malice. The Watch had been disbanded, of necessity—and what a relief it was, to be rid of that responsibility, and enjoy the free life of a Highland outlaw! That at least was what Rob would have you believe, and few could tell a story better than he.

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Most welcome of all was the goodwill of the peasantry, who saw in the private war Rob waged against all the might of the Duke of Montrose the triumph of the plain man over embattled feudalism. To such as lived upon the vast Montrose estates Rob was indeed a benefactor in a hundred ways, ready and willing to right their wrongs and protect them surreptitiously from the exactions of their Landlord. There is more than one story of his lending money to tenants who were threatened with eviction. It was a Mrs MacGregor, a widow woman, who owed the Duke twenty pounds rent of her farm near Balfron, and came to Rob to borrow that sum; nor did he long remain outofpocket over the transaction. When the bailiffs came to her door, she laughed in their faces and tossed the money at their feet. But stopping at their favourite tavern on the road home, the bailiffs found a party of armed Highlanders awaiting them, who relieved them of twenty pounds precisely—"for the use of Rob Roy."

Scarcely a month passed without the tale going round of some new prank of Rob's, at the expense of the Lord Privy Seal. Some of Montrose's outlying stores and granaries might have been Rob's own, he was such a regular customer; and he always took the opportunity of supplying any poor persons in the neighbourhood with a sack or two of meal at the same time. He would send round word for them to meet him at the mealstore at a certain hour, bringing horses with them. Then he would approach the storekeeper politely, order as many sacks as the horses could carry, and give the usual receipt: "received for the use of Rob Roy."

There are other stories told, which may or may not belong to this period, of Rob's helping tenants on other estates against their rapacious landlords; but in these cases the victim of oppression is generally a MacGregor.

One of the worst offenders was a certain "knighted élevé of the house of Argyll," also described as a Baronet, who seems to have acted as Chamberlain to his Chief. This gentleman was once so rash as to evict from his holding in Glen Dochart a poor MacGregor, who appealed at once to Rob Roy to have him reinstated. Rob sent three of his best men into the heart of the Campbell country, who waylaid the villain on the banks of Loch Awe and carried him off to Tyndrum—a very efficient piece of work, but no more than Rob expected of all who followed him. At Tyndrum Rob was waiting with pen and ink, and a renewal of the MacGregor tenant's old lease, which Campbell was, without much difficulty, persuaded to sign.

That might have been the end of the matter, had it not occurred to Rob that the Pool of Saint Fillan was not far distant, where they could have some good sport with their prisoner. The water of this pool was believed to be a cure for every disease, and in particular for lunacy. Rob decided that the peculiar treatment laid down for lunatics would do Campbell no harm, and a merry party set off to the sacred spot to watch the fun. They stripped their man to the buff, tied a rope about his middle, and tossed him into the pool to absorb what he could of the healing water. Thence he was dragged to St Fillan's Chapel, where stood a large stone trough in the open churchyard, with a wooden framework to which the poor lunatic must be fastened. The traditional rites were carefully performed, and the wretched man left to the compassion of the local saint, who was supposed to appear and loosen the bonds of those whom he judged to be cured. Whether it was the phantom St Fillan or some casual wayfarer who released the too astute Baronet next morning, is not recorded.

The Rob Roy legends fall into three main classes. There are stories of the Watch and its often unwilling clients, which deserve some respect as illustrations of the business which Rob built up and for which he is famous. There are stories of his private war with Montrose, for which he is equally famous; and they may be accepted as near history for similar reasons. But when Rob is pursued by regiments of soldiers, whom he outwits or puts to flight, it is time to remember that the War Office, even in those early days, kept some kind of record of such things; yet no word of these outrages finds its way into the military archives.

At first, we are told, Montrose offered to hunt down this brigand with his own tenantry, if the Army would lend him muskets and ammunition. The Commander-in-Chief agreed, the arms were issued from the magazine at Dumbarton, and distributed amongst the Duke's feudal retainers, with orders to muster at his house in a week's time—that being the February quarterday, when Rob had a way of turning up to fill his pockets at the Duke's expense. But Rob sent round parties of his own men a couple of days before the muster, to visit the Duke's tenants one at a time and disarm them. They say he took the rent money off them at the same time; but the serious thing was that all those fine new muskets, with ammunition and bandoliers to match, were now in the hands of the outlaws.

Next a body of Glasgow Volunteers was marched up to Drymen, to act in concert with parties of Horse that were patrolling the crossings of the River Forth. By now there was a price of a thousand pounds on Rob Roy's head, and commissions of Fire and Sword, and so forth; and they meant to catch him on his way home from some frolic of his. But the Glasgow men failed to do their part. When everyone supposed they had seized the Pass of Balmaha, they were spending a sleepless night where they were, grumbling at the shortage of ale and ready to run at the first scare. In the morning they did run; and there was a rude ballad composed in their honour that is sung to this day.

Now the Regular Army was put on the job, and launched a fullscale punitive expedition. Their orders were to seek out Rob's habitation, and burn it to the ground; but as he was living just then in a nice dry cave on the side of Loch Lomond, there were obvious difficulties. Through Glen Arklet they marched, and over the hill to Balquhiddy, and back again, and round in a circle, and in again from the other side . . . but wherever they came they were told they had just missed Rob, who would certainly be found in the next glen—that way; yes, a little steep at first. .

After weeks of marching to and fro, they halted one night at Lochearnhead, and took possession of a pair of deserted houses by the water's edge. But the men of Balquhiddy mustered in the small hours of the morning, and crept

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out along the margin of the loch, till they were able to rush the camp and set fire to the roofs. The soldiers came tumbling out, some with clothes alight, for they had piled dry heather to sleep upon and all was burning fiercely. One man was killed, by the discharge of his own musket in the flames, and few dared bring away their ammunition pouches. Reduced to an unarmed, badly scorched company, they were glad to get clear of the MacGregor country at their best speed.

Next Rob turned his attention to the Fort at Inversnaid. Mr Nasmyth of Edinburgh, the contractor in charge of the building, had undertaken to hand the place over, finished and ready for immediate occupation, by the end of the year 1713. Transport difficulties delayed the work, but at last it was reported ready, with about half a week to spare. Over roads that swam with mud and halfmelted snow, Nasmyth rode out from Stirling for a final inspection of the work, thankful to be so nearly relieved of all responsibility. If anything should go wrong, before the keys were in the hands of the military authorities, he knew that he would not be paid a penny under his contract. So he pushed on eagerly into the wilderness, in the last days of December, careless of snowdrifts and robbers and all the other perils of the road.

He found everything in order, so far as he could judge in the fading light, the workmen eager to be gone, and it only remained to pass one last dreary night there. Now it is not one of the recognised duties of a masterbuilder to post sentries on the walls he has raised. The gates were barred for the night, the fire banked up, and the little party of Lowlanders prepared for sleep. But when a solitary wayfarer came knocking at the gate at about ten o'clock, asking for shelter, they did take the precaution of scrutinising him through a loophole before letting him in. And the honest Nasmyth can hardly be blamed for what happened next. The trick was a simple one—and was to be used with equal success at the gates of Edinburgh some thirty years later. Instead of a solitary wayfarer a band of thirty armed Highlanders burst in by the gate as soon as it was unbarred. Nasmyth had the fortress taken off his hands earlier than he expected, but by a rather different kind of garrison.

Ten minutes later he and his handful of workmen stumbled out into the snow and darkness to make the best of their way back to civilisation with their story.

Fortresses and fixed headquarters had no place in Rob's type of guerrilla warfare, and he never had any intention of occupying the Fort himself. Instead, he used all the powder he could spare in blowing a great breach in the curtainwall; and the new bunks were broken up to make a bonfire that lit Glen Arklet from end to end. The derelict house up the glen had won the first round.

All these are excellent stories, some of them likely enough; but nobody has yet discovered the files of correspondence that must surely have ensued between the Commander-in-Chief and the Lord Privy Seal.

Now comes one story whose truth it is useless to doubt, though unsupported by a scrap of real evidence; for it has been introduced by Sir Walter Scott into his celebrated novel. That is an odd reason to urge, for there is not a single other incident in the novel that has even the authority of tradition behind it. But for one reason or another this tale is generally accepted as historical. True or not, it is probably the best-known of all Rob's adventures.

It seems that Montrose, hearing of Argyll's repeated failures, resolved to try a lightning raid by a few well-mounted men, which he would lead in person. It was a bold plan and deserved success. Gorthie mustered a little troop at only a few hours' notice; and away they went by moonlight up the military road, dashed unchallenged through Strathyre, and dismounted within a mile of the Kirkton of Balquhiddar.

Rob would have been the first to admit that his luck 109 was due to turn against him, and that is what happened now. He was sleeping in a small house on the outskirts of the township, a house where Gorthie happened to know he had sometimes stayed in the old days. Day was breaking as they reconnoitred the place, and saw the two gillies come forth to collect firewood and draw water. Then Mungo Graham of Gorthie did the bravest thing of his life—led a dozen men across the open and hurled himself through the door of the house where he believed Rob Roy lay.

There before the hearth was the answer to all his prayers—Rob asleep, alone, and without a weapon in reach! His great basket-hilted sword lay at the far side of the room, and Gorthie lost no time in snatching it up, as though it might leap from the scabbard by itself. The troopers crowded about the sleeping figure, yet none dared be the first to touch him, till his eyes suddenly opened and he started up with a look on his face of something closely related to fear. That broke the spell, and they fell on him like terriers, while Gorthie laughed in huge triumph.

Like fugitives from some stricken field, the cavalcade swept back down Strathyre with their prisoner, though pursuit there was none. Rob was mounted behind one of the troopers, with a horsebelt buckled round the two of them, and the others hemmed him in on every side. A very fitting end, he was thinking, to his short but glorious career as a bold outlaw; and it was only when they reached the spot, on the hillside above Loch Lubnaig, where long ago he had given Atholl's men the slip in similar circumstances, that he could bring his mind to bear on his chances of escape.

That particular ruse would not serve him again, but he might try something rather like it—perhaps at a river crossing. That was it! He must wait till they came to ford the Teith, or the Forth, and there make his great attempt. Whether the trooper in front of him was to be drowned or cajoled could be considered when the time came.

They passed through Callander, and Rob's heart sank, for it was clear they were making for Doune bridge, or else Stirling. They changed his horse, and set him behind a different man, still firmly secured with the horsebelt round his arms and body. Here was Doune, and—yes, the Duke and the leading horsemen were turning off to the right, over the high arched bridge. There was still the Forth to be passed, and now the Fords of Frew were his one hope. There was yet some distance to go, but Rob's confidence was oozing rapidly away, when something happened that convinced him

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once and for all that he was not meant to die on the gallows. They changed horses again; and this time he recognised the trooper in front of him as James Stewart, one of the tenants whom he had lately befriended and helped with his rent.

If any man in Scotland was familiar with the depths and shallows, eddies and sandspits of the Fords of Frew, it was Rob Roy MacGregor, who had driven his first booty of cattle this way from Kippen in 1691, and used it for the like business ever since. The river flows through broad meadows at this point, with willows lining the bank. Swollen by the spring rains, the stream was pouring over the shallows and flooding its way between the tree trunks. The ford was at its very best for Rob's purpose. Assuredly he was not meant to be hanged.

For the first time that day, as the party drew rein on the near bank, Montrose came face to face with his captive, but it seemed as if he did not care to meet his eye; or he realised it was too soon to exult over him, while they were still this side of Forth. Spurring his charger into the stream before all the rest he boldly led the way to the far shore. There he rode up and down, urging the first batch of horsemen to keep together and make haste, and formed them up in the roadway as they arrived. Finally he called across to Gorthie to bring over the prisoner.

Rob looked round the circle of faces, where the centre and rear of the cavalcade bunched together at the water's edge waiting their turn to cross, and not one of them relaxed its wooden stare. He inclined his head and whispered a few words into the ear of the man in the saddle before him, and looked about him again. Still the same wooden faces, though they must have seen what he did. If they were not with him, at least they were not against him.

"Away you go, Stewart," Gorthie cried, "and you two on either side of him!"

There was more whispering from Rob, as they moved down to the crossing-place. Then Stewart dashed forward rather abruptly into the river, and the rest spurred in after him with a prodigious splashing. They crossed a shallow stretch and came to the place Rob had in mind; the leather strap shifted, and went suddenly slack about his elbows; he gave a sharp tug to free himself, and was over the horse's tail and in deep water before he knew it. . . . Still blinded by the water, he felt the ground under his feet and dived wildly downstream, actually passing under the belly of the next horse on that side. And none joined more loudly in the outcry, as he disappeared, than James Stewart.

From his post on the far bank Montrose saw the splash, and knew at once what must have caused it. His smooth and handsome face contorted with rage, he screamed out orders to disperse and give chase. Within a very few minutes the scene at the ford resembled a glorified otter hunt. Not a man of the Duke's party had ever seen such an exhibition of swimming and diving as Rob gave them, and the water was soon so dark with churned-up sand that none could tell where he would next come up for breath. At each appearance there would be a rush for the spot, with much brandishing of swords, reckless of the deeper pools. Others made for the shore, and rode up and down among the willows, yelling and whooping.

Rob Roy, still far out in midstream with his lungs bursting for want of air, "had a trick beyond the otter," as Sir Walter Scott puts it. His plaid was hindering his movements and constantly betraying his position by spreading itself on the surface; but he contrived to slip off the belt that held it, tore brooch and all from his shoulder, and then dived again, deeper than ever, leaving the tartan to float on alone, soon to be riddled with pistolballs intended for its wearer.

The Duke's followers were by now completely out of hand. For every one man that joined conscientiously in the pursuit, there were two that either welcomed Rob's escape and aimed only at increasing the confusion by raising false alarms, or welcomed any excuse to break ranks and play the fool. And once away from the ford the river banks rose more steeply, and bushes growing thickly along the edge offered the swimmer plenty of chances to climb ashore unseen. After the trick with the plaid was discovered it seemed hopeless to go further, and reluctantly the Duke ordered his trumpet to sound the rally.

The dismounted troopers were dragged ashore, and the stragglers rounded up, and finally a very unwilling James Stewart waded to the bank, dripping with water, and still grasping his naked sword as witness to the forward part he had played in the hunt. The Duke sat motionless on his horse, where the man could not avoid passing close by him, and there was the sweetest of smiles on his lips.

"Come here to me, James Stewart," he called softly, and the farmer meekly obeyed.

"Where's your prisoner, Stewart?"

"Away down the water, sir"

"How did he loosen the belt, do you suppose?" Stewart stammered, and stopped, for no words would come; then ducked his head a second too late. Montrose's smile had vanished as he plucked a steel pistol from his holster, and struck him a murderous blow with the butt-end across the temples. He dropped in the pathway, and the Duke turned and rode to the head of the column. The trumpet sounded again, and the cavalcade moved forward.

CHAPTER II. July 1714—February 1715

FROM these time-honoured legends we return to the murky politics of the year 1714.

There was then a so called Tory Government in power, which could not bring itself to declare either for Hanover or for the exiled James, but was known to be paying pensions of £360 a year to the Chiefs of the Highland clans. Argyll, who had no need of one for himself, rose in the House of Lords to protest against this squandering of public money, which (he declared) all went towards fomenting rebellion. But the Lord Treasurer was able to cite the example of King William himself, who had bought off the clans in his day by allowing them similar pensions.

Reading the report of these proceedings, in one of Edinburgh's fashionable Jacobite clubs, Alasdair of Balhaldies thought longingly of the £360 a year that his clan might not claim (being no clan in the eyes of the law and having no Chief of their own), and began to wonder if they could not get over that difficulty. His own brother-in-law, Alan Cameron, who managed Highland affairs at Court, was in charge of the register. All that was needed was a recognised Chief, to take the money and give a receipt. . .

It was almost certainly at Balhaldies' suggestion that a meeting was held that summer, of the principal gentry of the Nameless Clan, to elect a Chief. With the complete failure of the old line it was not a bad thing to choose a new Laird of MacGregor on his merits, rather than bestow the title on the next senior cadet, in this case the rather insignificant Roro. Had Glengyle been senior it might have been otherwise, for though young he had a considerable military following. But if it was to go by election, and the Gregarach sought a man of real ability for their Chief, the choice would seem to lie between Balhaldies and Rob Roy. The latter was surely the one to lead them in war; but Balhaldies was a man of great talents in his own line, and stood high among the friends of the exiled King.

The meeting took place on the 20th of July at Rob Roy's latest residence, the house of Auchinchisallan in Glen Orchy, where Mary and her three sons dwelt in comfort on the proceeds of his lawless enterprises and under Breadalbin's covert protection. (There is reason to think that Rob himself spent little time under that roof and got little joy when he came there.)

The Deed of Election is still preserved among the Balhaldies family papers, and is of great interest as an expression of what clanship meant to the men of Rob Roy's time. It also tells us who were the leading men of his clan, who took upon themselves to speak for the lesser clansmen; for there was nothing democratic about this election; the voters and the candidates alike were limited to the heads of the principal families.¹

There were present Gregor MacGregor of Roro, "head of the family of Roro," and Duncan MacGregor of Dunan, each with his eldest son. The house of Glengyle was represented by five of its landed gentry—viz., Gregor MacGregor, "head of the family of Clandoulkeir," Robert MacGregor of Craigrostan (so described in spite of his

If some were absent, it does not follow that they refused, or were not invited to attend. No doubt they were content to leave the choice to the head of whichever branch of the clan they belonged to. outlawry), and Gregor MacGregor in Ardmacmoine, Malcolm MacGregor of Marchfield, and Donald MacGregor of Coiletter (all nephews of old Donald Gins). Gregor MacGregor, "head of the family of Bracklie," the only other cadet with any kind of hereditary claim, attended with his sons.

It seems likely that Balhaldies himself was not present at Auchinchisallan when these twelve gentlemen signed the deed; for it is dated "at Auchinshcallan the 20th day of July and at Dunblain the 27th day of July 1714," and the signature of Balhaldies and his son appear separately at the foot. But he must have been working very hard behind the scenes, and come to an understanding with the rest before they actually met. Roro and Bracklie both resigned their claims in his favour; and he let it be known that, in case he should be elected, he would accept no part of the Government pension for his own use; it must be divided between the three senior cadets as their due. Whether the Glengyle faction actually opposed his election and were voted down is not clear. Possibly they made the mistake of splitting their vote between Ghlun Dhu and Rob Roy. The former had never yet had a chance to prove himself in arms, while none could question Balhaldies' proficiency in the arts of peace. As for Rob, his chance came two years too late. As an outlaw, whose election must do the clan more harm than good, he was not to be seriously considered. The result, in any case, was as Balhaldies had planned. He was ejected "rightful, lawful and undoubted Governor, Head, Chief and Chieftain of our 'clan of M'Gregor," the office to "hereditarily continue in the said Alexander M'Gregor his family and posterity in all time coming so long as sun and moon endures."

This took place in the last weeks of July 1714, and Balhaldies rode into Edinburgh to attend to the matter of the pension.

On the 1st of August Queen Anne died, and the pensions ceased to be payable. But that would not worry Alasdair, Laird of MacGregor and Balhaldies.

Queen Anne was dead; yet neither of the rival Pretenders to her vacant throne seemed in any hurry to come over and claim his rights. Whichever was first to present himself in London might expect to have the support of the great English nation, that only wanted to see the succession arranged one way or the other, and get on with its proper business of making money. Yet the two Princes lingered still overseas.¹

George, Elector of Hanover, was not at all sure that he wanted to rule a nation that habitually kept its Kings short of money, and cut off their heads when they objected. James, Prince of Wales, had the advantages of being English-born,

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English-speaking, and many miles nearer to England at his chateau in Lorraine; but first he liked to put everything on a proper footing. He published a solemn Declaration of his indefeasible right to the three crowns of his fathers; he hurried to Paris to beg once again for French recognition; and at Jacobite headquarters “care and hope sat on every busy Irish face.” But all that crossed the sea was a sum of £4000 in specie, carried by that trusty servant Alan Cameron.

So passed six weeks, at the end of which time the lethargic George set out at last for London. And once he stepped ashore at Greenwich, with his grotesque mistresses, the ponderous wheels of the Constitution began to turn again, and James’s only hope lay in an armed Rising. For that, of course, he must look to Scotland.

“The Jacobites are very uppish,” wrote a correspondent £ to Montrose, “and great things adoining among them in the Highlands.” So uppish was Lord Drummond that he very soon had the dragoons out after him, and only escaped arrest by a lastminute flight to the hills. But all the careful preparations of Scottish loyalists at this time were nothing compared with the wonderful stories that went round the country—and sooner or later reached the gratified ears of the King across the water—of gallant blows being struck for the Cause every day by men in every class of society. Whenever a gauger was beaten up by a smuggler gang, the Chevalier heard of it within the week as one more spontaneous outbreak on his behalf; and gaugers were the besthated men in Scotland since the Union.

Then during the great annual fair at Falkirk, three patriotic noblemen, with a party of their servants, established themselves on a lonely stretch of road outside the town, and waylaid whoever passed, forcing them to kneel and pray for King James the Eighth, and to curse King George and all traitors. This and a score of similar exploits proved beyond doubt that Scotland was ready to rise.

The material for one particularly sanguine report to the Chevalier was furnished by Rob Roy and some of his friends, one merry night in Crieff town.

How long Rob Roy would have been able, in normal circumstances, to maintain himself at Montrose’s expense and in solitary defiance of the Government, it is impossible to say. Sooner or later the gallows would surely have claimed him, and his name would be no more remembered than that of any other outlaw, or pirate, or highwayman of those times. From such a sorry end the stirring events of the next few years were to save him. He was already finding some advantage in his outlawry, which allowed him to plunge boldly into every enterprise of the Jacobites, I when other men, with estates to lose, were inclined to hold back and count the cost.

We get a glimpse of him in this rôle, from a private letter dated at Edinburgh, the 20th February 1714

“Campbell of Lochnell having died about this day, Jan. ioth 1714, his son, a Jacobite, kept the corpse unburied till the 26th, in order that the burial might be turned to account, or made use of for political purposes. It was customary for the obsequies of a highland chief or gentleman to be attended by a vast multitude of people, who usually received some entertainment on the occasion. It seems to have been understood that those who came to Lochnell’s funeral were making a masked demonstration in favour of the Stuarts. More of the opposite inclination deemed it necessary to attend also in order to be a check upon the Jacobites. Hence it came to pass that the inhumation of Lochnell was attended by two thousand five hundred men, well armed and appointed, five hundred being of Lochnell’s own lands, commanded by the famous Rob Roy, carrying with them a pair of colours belonging to the Earl of Breadalbin, and accompanied by the screams of thirteen bagpipes.

If there were arms to be purchased and smuggled into the Highlands, or an escort to be found for messengers from France, Rob Roy and his MacGregors would be entrusted with the job. It was Rob who brought that £4000 to Taymouth Castle across half Scotland, to be divided between the clans as soon as the Chevalier landed. Rob and Ballialdies between them saw to it that the name of MacGregor should not go unnoticed amongst those that served King James loyally in Scotland.

Rob was in Crieff at the end of October, when he distinguished himself by drinking Jacobite toasts on the steps of the Town Cross, in open defiance of the town guard.

But the more famous occasion was at Candlemas (the 2nd of February), when Rob had business in the town with his old friend Gregor of Coynachan, who was acting for him in the purchase of “seven Targets for his use.” The place was full of Highlandnien, and the authorities had arranged for the presence of a small force of soldiers to prevent rioting.

There had been serious trouble a few weeks before. A party of Glengarry MacDonalds, having sold some cows at a good price, obtained an introduction to the local smugglers, who were able to supply them with a keg of brandy dutyfree. In Highland fashion they got in behind a dyke to enjoy their liquor; but an inquisitive gauger had the bad manners to interrupt their little carousal, and confiscated the brandy as contraband. It nearly came to a fight, but the MacDonalds gave in, with very black looks. Later that night the gauger woke to find his chamber full of armed men, with faces hidden but dirks out, who dragged him brutally from his bed, and forced him to his knees. In the centre of that grim company he drank the health of King James from the keg he had lately confiscated; and when the Highlanders slipped from his house, as quietly as they had entered, they left their victim moaning on the bed with a bloody cloth clapped to the place where his right ear had been.

1 Robertson, the Hanoverian agent, considered that “the crown would belong to him who was first there to seize it.”
2 So much for the popular belief that Rob was a dependant of Argyll’s at the time of the ‘15. An adopted Campbell he might be but of the Breadalbin branch, as was to be expected.

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Rob Roy and his friends spent a jolly evening, undisturbed by gaugers or redcoats, till one by one the alehouses closed down for the night. As the last of them spilled out its customers into the street, a bagpipe wheezed and groaned, and burst into a stirring march. Some thirty Highlandmen, well primed with ale and armed to the teeth, fell in behind the swaggering piper and moved solemnly towards the centre of the town.

The Baronbailie and his guest, Haldane of Gleneagles, were roused by the approaching clamour, and looked out from an upper window, as the MacGregor band reached the Town Cross, and ranged themselves about it.

The moonlight gleamed on naked swords, but it was his wooden quaich that each man held aloft, for one of them was opening a keg. The noise increased as the spirits had time to circulate.

Then, when every cup was full, a great redbearded fellow, wearing a rusty cuirass under his coat, bellowed for silence, and called on the company for a loyal toast.

“His Majesty King James the Eighth!” thirty voices roared in chorus, before thirty beards pointed skywards and the fiery liquor disappeared down thirty throats.

More cheering followed, and Rob was proposing another toast. The exact words were repeated by the Laird of Gleneagles in a letter he wrote afterwards to Montrose.

“The health of those honest and brave fellows cut out the gauger’s ear!” cried Rob. And the heroic feat of the MacDonalds at Christmastime was duly honoured.

Two or three more toasts were drunk, all of the same treasonable kind, before the soldiers could be mustered under arms and hurried to the spot. And they found the marketplace deserted, with nothing but an empty brandykeg at the foot of the Cross to mark the scene of the celebrations.

This story, too, after careful editing, found its way across the Channel to the exiled court; and the Chevalier read with the greatest satisfaction how the townspeople of Crieff had declared for him openly, and the troops declined to fire upon them.

CHAPTER III. 1st August—15th September 1715

THE most remarkable thing about this chapter will be the date at the head of it. A year has gone by since the Queen's death that was to have been the signal for a Restoration; and nothing whatever has been done.

In April, Rob Roy is reported to have held a secret conference with the Laird of MacKinnon and others "on the north of Loch Katrine." According to a letter from Atholl to the Lord Justice Clerk, Rob "knows much of the transactions in the Highlands"; but the latter believes that he "imposes upon both parties." His unlucky accomplice, Murray (or MacGregor) of Coynachan, got into trouble over those seven targets; but as he swore that he disposed of them elsewhere, after hearing the shocking news of Rob's drinking the Pretender's health in public, he was let off with a reprimand.

A second year, or another ten years, might have slipped by in the same way for all we can tell, giving King George ample time to become an institution, had it not been for John Erskine, eleventh Earl of Mar. He alone among the Jacobites recognised the supreme importance of the time factor, for which he deserves more credit than he has ever been allowed.

Mar was a man of forty, who had succeeded to his ancestral estates on Deeside, loaded with debt, twentyfive years before, and had been struggling ever since to retrieve the family fortunes. His chief assets were a real capacity for the business of government, and great eloquence. He could not afford to be a party man, and cared little for the reproaches of former colleagues so long as successive Ministers, Whig or Tory, continued to accept his services. And he was very comfortably placed as Secretary of State in the Tory administration, with a salary of five thousand a year, at the time of the Queen's death.

King George came over, the Whigs returned to office, and two of his colleagues fled overseas; but Mar refused to be discouraged. Relying on his strictly non-party attitude in the past, he coolly attended at Greenwich to welcome his new Sovereign ashore. Alas, the very commonplace German Elector turned his back on the Scottish Earl; and within a week the Secretary of State had been relieved of his seals of office. For the first time in his career Mar was left without any prospect of advancement to influence him. Guided for the first time by his own inclinations, as an aristocrat and a Scotsman, he threw in his lot with the Jacobites.

At the start he was only a very quiet, inconspicuous Jacobite, for he could not claim to be a soldier. But it did not require a soldier to see how fatal this interminable waiting must be to the Cause he had espoused. He knew besides that he had considerable influence among his Highland neighbours, and in Scotland generally. On the 1st of August, he attended his last levee in London, and set out next day in disguise on the great adventure of his life.

The Earl has been much blamed for upsetting the official Jacobite plans by his premature launching of the Rising—but is "premature" the right word? Deliberately he forced the hands of those hesitant Jacobites across the Channel, and not a moment too soon.

The Duke of Atholl received a surprise visit that August from two of his sons. Both were on furlough, Lord Tullibardine being in the Navy while Lord George had an ensign's commission in the 1st Royals. Atholl welcomed them affectionately, though he knew very well what had brought them north. Over their wine that night young Tullibardine hinted at the Jacobite activity in the Highlands, and came as close as he dared to asking his father which side he proposed to take. But the Duke stopped him, and delivered such a lecture on the folly of upholding lost causes, that the young man saw that further words were useless. A few days later both lads were packed off on a visit to some Lowland relatives to keep them out of mischief. But on the road they stopped at a friend's house, made proper arrangements for their commissions to be returned to King George, and slipped away to Braemar. . . . For the Earl of Mar had made his dramatic appearance in Scotland—after working his passage to Fife on a coal-sloop, some said—reaching his castle of Kildrummy on the 8th, whence he issued his famous invitation to a huntingmatch, to be held in a week's time.

This is not the place for a list of all the noblemen and gentlemen who gathered at Braemar on the 27th of August. There were twenty-six Highland Chiefs present, "including Rob Roy"; and it is hard to believe that Babaldies was not another of them. With Invercauld House so full that visitors were glad to find room to sleep on the kitchen floor, it might be wondered why so small a clan found it necessary to send two deputies; but Mar had some special employment to offer both of them, as it happened.

It seems to have been unanimously agreed that the Highlands were to rise for King James without more delay—indeed, Mar swore that he meant to raise the 1 'Records of Invercauld.' standard in another week's time, whether they were ready or not. It only remained to choose a Commander-in-Chief, in the absence of a royal commission or of anybody combining military experience with ducal rank (as etiquette required). It seemed best, on the whole, to leave the preliminary stages of the enterprise in the hands of the man who had set it going, and who was at least a belted Earl. Naturally the King would be here in a couple of weeks, and with him the Duke of Berwick, who was a Marshal of France and the ideal man for the command.

1 The Duke of Berwick thought the same. He advised King James to go at once "with what you can get or scrape . . . Providence will do the rest."

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On the 6th of September, Mar raised his standard at Braemar, and King James the Eighth was formally proclaimed upon Scottish soil, in the presence of a little force of mounted cavaliers and some of the local Highlandmen.

What was to be the backbone of the Jacobite army was meanwhile assembling in the Western Highlands, each clan upon its own piece of territory—the post of honour, next to the enemy, belonging to the Glengyle MacGregors, who held the passes at Balmaha and Aberfoyle for King James before ever a white cockade was seen anywhere else in the south. And a proud man I was Gregor Ghlun Dhu when he reviewed nearly two hundred men of his own and Roro's, in the meadows below his house. For a few weeks at least he was allowed to enjoy the undisputed command of his clan in arms.

Meanwhile, in far off Aberdeen, Rob Roy was dining with Dr James Gregory, Professor of Medicine at the King's College.

It was a hundred years since Rob's grandfather, Malcolm Og of Glengyle, led a corps of MacGregors into the north to serve against some rebels of Clan Chattan. Their task accomplished, a number of them settled on Deeside, where their descendants still had the impudence to call themselves MacGregors, and would not turn out in arms for any Earl of Mar. It was worth humouring them; and so Rob had been sent with full authority to recruit them for King James's service, and to command as many as he could raise. They seem to have been a very rough lot, these mongrel Gregarach, but with the makings of fighting men in them; and Rob was eager to march them south, and mix them with some of the real article. But no doubt he had business in Aberdeen—supplying his new company with shoes, for instance—and Aberdeen, though intensely loyal, had unhappy memories of its sack by Colkitto's Irish and Highlanders in the old wars. So it was good policy on the part of the Professor of Medicine to claim kinship with the commander of the Highlanders quartered on the town.

If Rob made any inquiries about his learned host, he was probably told how his father had been struck blind while studying the stars through a great spyglass; which suggested that the family dabbled in necromancy. The Gregories, we may imagine, had prepared themselves to endure the arrogance of an illiterate robbercaptain. But Rob, with a good coat on his back as befitted an officer in King James's army, was a different man from the outcast he had been only a month ago; and nothing could have made him more pleasantly aware of his restored respectability than the atmosphere of culture in which he now found himself. It is evident that the dinnerparty was a complete success.

The question of kinship was soon settled. The Professor was Highlander enough to know his ancestry for four generations back, when first his family came to Aberdeen and took the more convenient name of Gregory. During the rest of his stay in Aberdeen, Rob called almost daily at his house in the Old Town, and they parted firm friends, for all the difference in their ways of life. It was the greatest compliment he could pay his host when Rob, on a last visit, offered to take his halfgrown son back with him into the Highlands for a year or so and bring him up in his own household as a warrior and a MacGregor.

"It's ruining him you'll be," said he, "cramming such a highspirited lad with nought but booklearning. If only to repay your kindness, Professor, I'd like to take him off and make a man of him for you."

Dr Gregory almost made the mistake of laughing, before he realised that Rob was in earnest. Then he hastened to decline the offer for the present, on the grounds of young James's tender years and the disturbed state of the kingdom. But some day, he realised, he would have to think of another excuse, or run the risk of gravely offending his new friend.

As for Balhaldies, his mission took him back to Edinburgh town—in disguise, of course, though it seemed that he need not have taken the trouble. The list of Jacobite lairds, lately summoned under the Clan Act to surrender themselves, included Rob Roy, who would be duly outlawed all over again for his non-appearance; yet he, Laird of MacGregor and Balhaldies, was denied that dubious honour. Well, it should not take long to alter that. He and Lord Drummond were here to mobilise the Jacobite elements in the capital for no less a task than the capture of the Castle!

Amongst the conspirators was a certain Mr Arthur, lately an ensign in the Edinburgh Regiment now in garrison there. In league with him were a Sergeant Ainslie and two soldiers, who would be on duty on the west wall, near the Sallyport, from ten till midnight on the 9th of September. On an agreed signal they were to cast down a stout cord, draw up certain ladders, and make them fast. . . . The actual assault force, who would be waiting below about a hundred strong, were half of them picked men from Lord Drummond's estates, newly smuggled into the capital; the rest, lawyers, apprentices, or disbanded officers—mostly lads of good family. There was a commission in the Army, and a hundred pounds bounty, promised to each man.

At this critical time the civil administration of Scotland was in the hands of a triumvirate, consisting of Montrose, as Secretary of State, and two eminent lawyers—the Lord JusticeGeneral, who was Argyll's younger brother and Earl of Islay in his own right; and Sir Adam Cockburn of Ormiston, the Lord JusticeClerk. All three were in Edinburgh, but too busy watching the coasts and events in the north to see what was going on under their noses.

It is said that one of the conspirators was so rash as to tell his wife of the enterprise; and that she sent an anonymous letter to the Lord JusticeClerk, who passed it to the Lord Provost, who passed it on to the Military Governor in the Castle. The ways of the Army being much as they are today, that officer returned it to the Lord JusticeClerk "for information and necessary action." Be that as it may, Lord Drummond and most of his party were able to assemble according to plan under the loom of the Castle Rock, flushed with wine but none the worse for that. Their specially designed ladder was in two sections, of which only one had yet arrived; but they proceeded to make contact with their

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accomplices above, who lowered their rope and drew this up. It was too short of course, but they left it dangling, and sat down to wait for those that carried the other half.

The clocks in the city chimed the halfhour, and now the silence was broken by the sound of marching feet I on the ramparts above. Even an easygoing Military Governor, on the point of retiring to bed, had not been able to disregard entirely the Lord JusticeClerk's warning, and the rounds were being made with particular care that night. Here was the relieving patrol, come before its proper time. "God damn you all! You have ruined both yourselves and me!" the sentinel called. "Here come the rounds I have been telling you of this hour. I can serve you no longer!" And down came ladders, grapplingiron and rope, on the heads of the exasperated party under the wall. Yet they might have dispersed quietly, and perhaps made their attempt at another time, had not the sentinel been eager to cover up his own part in the plot. "Enemy!" he was now bawling, and fired off his musket. In a few moments the whole garrison was turning out to man the walls.

A detachment of the Town Guard, sent to patrol the Castle Rock from the outside as a result of the Lord JusticeClerk's warning, was picking its way along the edge of the Nor' Loch when the shots were heard. The first to reach the scene became entangled in a strange contrivance of ropes and poles—a beautifully made rope ladder, wide enough for several men to mount abreast, but apparently incomplete. A number of muskets lay abandoned among the rocks, and four men, too bruised and battered to do more than protest they had been passing that way by the merest chance. But Drummond and Balhaldies, with the bulk of their force, got clear away, to reappear before long at Jacobite headquarters.

The Duke of Argyll reached Edinburgh a few days later, and with his appearance in the camp at Stirling on the 15th September the spirits of the Whigs began to rise again. "Red John of the Battles" understood, as few other officers in the Hanoverian service, exactly what he had to face in Scotland; and he made ready to give a good account of himself when the clans should pour down from the passes.

Four regiments of foot, and four of dragoons, were all he had—little more than fifteen hundred men, with the battalions at their peace establishments—but what regiments they were! The Buffs, the Devonshires, the Scots Fusiliers, and the Edinburgh Regiment (the K.O.S.B. of later days)—these were the pick of the Army. The cavalry too had fine records: the "Royal Regiment of Scots GreyHorses," with the tall grenadier caps they had lately earned in Flanders; the 6th Inniskihings; Carpenter's Dragoons, the future heroes of Dettingen, afterwards the 3rd Hussars; and Kerr's, afterwards the 7th Hussars, then a purely Scottish corps. The Duke would have led these fifteen hundred men with the utmost confidence against any troops in Europe—or any but their present foes. But the best soldiers in the world cannot be trusted to fire on the flag of their own true King, and the behaviour of Sergeant Ainslie and his friends of the Castle garrison had shown that King James had his adherents everywhere.

The Castle of Edinburgh, so nearly lost to a handful of rebels, was now entrusted to a very different Highland garrison—Brigadier Grant and his newly raised battalion. At Dumbarton and Stirling, too, the castles were garrisoned and provisioned; Graham lairds and Westland Whigs received orders to fortify themselves in their ancient keeps along the line of the upper Forth and Clyde; but from all the northern towns the troops were called in, till only one garrison remained in that fierce country over the river to uphold the Hanoverian succession. The Bedfords still stood to their arms night and morning on the ramparts of Fort William, though all communications with the south were cut.

There was no garrison installed at Inversnaid Fort, in Glen Arklet, from which we may infer one of two things. Either Rob Roy and his MacGregors had made progress so difficult that the building was not finished in time to be of service; or there may be some truth in the story that he captured and demolished the place before war broke out. (In September 1745, at the start of another Rising, Inversnaid Fort was in fact captured, with its garrison, by a son of Rob Roy.)

There was some very free criticism in the camp at Stirling of the Government's policy of keeping back every available man to hold down England. Before the end of the month there came two more regiments of foot and two squadrons of horse from Ireland, but even so Argyll's force did not amount to a third of Mar's. They could only wait the bursting of the storm, and think wishfully that perhaps time was on their side.

"I would not indeed advise," wrote the Earl of Stair, "to run one's head against them [the Jacobites] when they have their bellies' fill of beef and their heads' fill of strong beer. By the time they have lain a week under a hedge in the end of October or the beginning of November, it will be easy dealing with them."

But it was hardly the end of September when the Jacobite forces surged forward on three fronts at once— three fronts, and Argyll had only men enough to meet them on one.

CHAPTER IV. 22nd September—6th October 1715

IN the centre, the Jacobite advanceguard entered Perth on the 22nd, where Mar pitched his headquarters on the 28th; and the outpost line moved up to within an easy day's march of Stirling Bridge, whose cobblestones held more strategic value than all the rest of Scottish soil. Some fifteen miles of Noman's land remained between the armies; and midway across lay an expanse of bog and heather known as the Sheriff Muir.

Based on Perth was Hamilton's Division, comprising Mar's own corps and Lord Panmure's from the straths of Dee and Don; Drummond's Highlanders and Strathmore's Lowlanders; and the famous Atholl Brigade—for that unhappy house was once more divided against itself, and the Duke besieged by his own sons in his own castle. Major-General George Hamilton was a Guards officer that Mar brought with him to Scotland to attend to those military matters that he did not himself understand. In the third week of its existence his Division was beginning, to know the meaning of discipline, if its uniform was no more than a white cockade in the bonnet.

More spectacular was the advance on the Fifeshire front, beginning with a raid by the Master of Sinclair and his cavaliers upon the seaport of Burntisland, where a Government supplyship was sheltering from a north easterly gale. Dashing into the town, on the night of the 2nd of October, they exchanged horses for rowing boats, boarded the vessel, and were back in Perth next day with three hundred stand of arms and other booty, loaded on packhorses.

The whole army was jealous of the airs assumed by the Fifeshire cavaliers, so Mar promoted Lord Drummond to Lieutenant-General, placed under his command every horseman he could find, and launched the entire Division on the kingdom of Fife. Before such a flood of Scottish chivalry all resistance vanished, and the merry galloping gentlemen found themselves masters from the Tay to the Forth. Ports and shipping were seized, all along the coast, in defiance of the English ships of war patrolling the narrow strip of salt water that yet lay between the Jacobites and the capital.

But it was on the western front that the greatest opportunities lay. There were fords in plenty between Stirling Bridge and the heads of Forth, and passes in the hills to westward, whenever the clans should be ready to march on Glasgow. This was certainly the way Argyll was expecting them to come, and "what to do in that case I believe would puzzle the greatest officer in Europe," he wrote to Lord Townshend on the 24th September. Rob Roy knew every one of those fords as he knew his own dirk; and those passes ran through the heart of his own country. He would not bide long in the north.

The Highland Division, raised from the flower of the western clans, was commanded by Alexander Gordon of Auchintoul, another of Mar's military subordinates. He had been fighting the Swedes, and the Turks, and the /

Tartars, in the service of Peter the Great, ever since the Revolution, and understood the ways of irregular troops as Hamilton did not. He was half Highland himself, and spoke the Gaelic. To him rallied the MacLeans out of Mull, Glengarry with two battalions of MacDonalds, and Clanranald with the men of Moidart, Arisaig, and the Isles. On the 17th September, relying on surprise and sheer audacity in the absence of any kind of artillery, they attacked Fort William. Beaten off, after their first wild rush had won the outworks, they turned their backs on the place without more ado, and marched away to the southward.

A pity that Lochiel still hung back; but with Fort William untaken he dared not leave his glens at the mercy of the English garrison. The Appin Stewarts and Breadalbin men had promised to join the Division as it moved south. As for the MacGregors, they were already engaged with the enemy—for their own private gain, it must be admitted, as much as King James's, yet striking good blows daily for the Cause.

How soon, and by what route, Rob Roy and his northern recruits were able to join them, we do not precisely know. Perhaps he was at the taking of Perth, and still detained there on duty when, on the night of the 27th September, a party of MacGregors under Glengyle and Marchfield attacked the Duke of Montrose's tenants "a little above Aberfoyle" and seized twenty or thirty guns.

Balhaldies too had made his way into the Highlands, was writing despatches and proudly signing himself "MacGregor." But when next we hear of him, he is up in Lochiel's country, helping his brother-in-law to raise his clan. Like Mar at headquarters, he evidently believed that the higher commands were best filled by politicians, who could delegate to a few experienced officers any operations of a purely military nature. At least he never attempted to take personal command of his own clan, which was already in very capable hands.

Marchfield was a first cousin of Rob's, with a small estate in Balquhidder.

It was Argyll's policy to send arms and equipment to such of the Lennox gentry as could be trusted to defend their houses against the insurgents, and so establish a chain of strongpoints on his exposed left flank. It became a favourite game of Rob Roy's to intercept the supplywagons, or to raid the houses just as the unloading was taking place. By such means his MacGregors were soon so well armed that they could do a brisk trade in surplus muskets with their Breadalbin neighbours. At the same time they were getting more real experience of active service than any other corps in the army.

But their most famous exploit was a piratical excursion down Loch Lomond on the 29th/30th September. Rob assembled at Inversnaid a party of seventy brisk lads, collected all the available boats from the upper part of the loch, and slipped quietly down as far as Inchmurrin. Thence the boats crept out at midnight for such a raid as the Lennox had not known since the Vikings dragged their ships overland from Loch Long centuries before. They came ashore a

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little above Bonhill; and soon the church bells were ringing the alarm, as they had once rung for the Vikings, and guns boomed from Dumbarton Rock three miles away. It is not likely that Rob seriously planned to surprise the castle, as is sometimes suggested. Nor was he after booty, in the usual sense, on this occasion. His crews pulled away along the shore, landing parties here and there; and from the Leven, and the Endrick, and from all the little bays between Balmaha and Rossdhu, every variety of boat was dragged forth—fishingboats, ferryboats, pleasure craft, and all—and floated on the moonlit water. There was some clumsy rowing, to be sure, by men more used to a fourfooted booty that could be driven from the rear; but all were got away before morning. Rob Roy knew from experience how Glen Arklet lay at the mercy of an enemy who came by water, and he meant to reverse the position.

On InchMurrin, lovely InchMuffln, the pirate crews again disembarked, and set Montrose's dappled deer racing through the glades of their invaded sanctuary. Like heroes of old they feasted on fresh venison about great fires, and sang the old songs of their race, till the lapping of the wavelets on the shore lulled them to sleep where they lay. All that day they rested in their island paradise. Then, to the relief of all the countryside, the little fleet was seen to move off up the loch, under the shadows of the great hills. Triumphantly the MacGregors beached their vessels "upon the land at Inversnaat . . . and, in a little time after, went off in a body with their fellows towards Mar's camp." ¹

The house of Auchinchisallan stands on a green peninsula where a newborn river has carved out its shallow, stony bed in a wide halfcircle. At its back a frowning hillside, seamed with watercourses; in front, three giant peaks guard the backdoor into Glen Lyon. Southward the military road climbs to the summit of the pass, where the winds are forever whistling back and forth between Breadalbin and Argyll. Northward the road drops gently to the Brig of Orchy. It is a weird place today, the first habitation beyond the great watershed; and later occupants have added to its mystery by surrounding the house with a thick belt of trees.² In 1715 it stood exposed to wind and weather, a very ordinary little farmhouse of two rooms, a loft, and a byre. But the lady who dwelt there with her three sons was Mrs MacGregor of Inversnaid.

Three years had gone since that black day when Mary had come flying to her husband with her tale of horror, all her pride dragged in the mire. He had sworn a terrible vengeance then upon Killlearn, whose blood alone could ever wipe out the injury; but since that day nothing would induce the factor to venture across the Highland Line. No doubt Rob's chance would come in the end, of killing the villain in gentlemanly fashion—and he hoped it would give him as much satisfaction as it ought. Meanwhile he had waged ceaseless and crippling war upon Montrose, and what more could any man do?

But Mary MacGregor, haunted by her memories, would not see it so. A Celt to her fingertips, nothing else in life seemed to matter to her, or could ever delight her again, while her cruel wrongs went unavenged. From that day she had withdrawn into a dark, unhappy world of her own, where Rob—the unnatural husband who knew not how to defend his own wife from shame—might not follow her. And so, when winter put an end to his outofdoor life in the caves and woods, and his comrades slipped away to beg a seat in some friendly chimneycorner, Rob knew not where to look for a home. Though he must not get his nephew into trouble by staying openly at Glengyle, he seems to have been as often there as at Auchinchisallan.

His connection with the latter place is best remembered in the story that he once "put" a great boulder from the top of Ben Dorain, which is still to be seen lying between the railway and the river. If that is how he spent his brief visits, it is little wonder that he and his wife were not on better terms.

On the 6th of October—one month since the raising of the Standard at Braemar when the bagpipes' stirring notes drifted to Mary's ears from down the glen. Pipers on the way up from Brig of Orchy; the sun glinting on polished steel; and soon it was clear, from the length of the column, that this was Gordon's Division on the march south.

Coil, Mary's eldest boy, was fifteen, almost old enough to be allowed to follow his father to the wars. Young Ranald and fouryearold James knew their father for a great warrior, and that wild music roused something in them. It would be strange if these three did not drag their mother to the roadside, to see the men who were going to overturn a throne. And strange if she did not feel a fierce joy, and gaze with a radiant face upon the marching ranks. There was Glengarry, and Clanranald on his tall horse; MacIan, grandson of him that was murdered in '92; and Sir John MacLean, a merry little man who swept her a Frenchified bow as he went past. But she missed the red MacGregor tartan, and the wellknown faces. .

They climbed the pass, marched down through Tyndruin, and came that night to the place chosen for their camp, at the upper end of Strath Fillan, just below Dalree. Here are broad meadows, and a winding river, and the little chapel of St Fillan where they must have held their first Church Parade. Here they could watch Argyll and Breadalbin, and move east, west, or due north whenever they had the word. And here they were joined next day by two more fine regiments.

Four hundred Breadalbin men were sent by the old Earl, now at last committed to Jacobitism beyond all hope of drawing back. They were a mixed lot, hardy and reckless fighters, but with little of the personal loyalty to their officers that took the place of discipline in other regiments. Their commanders were Colin Campbell of Glendaruel, "a pretty tail, thin, black gentleman," who was chiefly responsible for the Earl's conversion; and John Campbell of Glenlyon, a Jacobite too for the present, but not at all sorry, as his father's son, to have the whole width of the camp between his quarters and those of the Glencoe men.

¹ *The Loch Lomond Expedition*

² *They have also reduced its rather exuberant full name to that of "Auch."*

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Two hundred MacGregors, the bestarmed corps in the Division, completed the muster. Up to this time they and their cousins of Breadalbin are constantly mentioned together, and seem to have shared the same quarters; but from now on they are more often found in company with their old comrades the Glencoe Mac Donalds. And though under the nominal command of Gregor of Glengyle (to whom despatches were addressed throughout the campaign) they were more generally known, by friend and foe alike, as Rob Roy's men.

I "I have ordered, as you desired, Glengyll, Rob Roy, Balllmlidie, and the MacGriggars with them, to join you," writes Mar to Gordon on the 4th October. Observe the order of the three names

CHAPTER V. 11th 18th October 1715

IN one month Mar had brought into being an army which could overrun Scotland, properly handled.

In another month he might hope to double that army, have Berwick to take over the command, and the King's presence to overawe the enemy. But that month would also give peaceable folk up and down the country time—and perhaps cause—to associate the Rising with ruin and bloodshed, and the Elector's rule with stability and peace. Public opinion just now was worth more to Mar than twenty regiments. And Argyll too was known to be expecting reinforcements, by sea from Ireland.

So the decision was made, and orders issued for the great offensive that should overwhelm Argyll and carry the Jacobite armies to the Border. (Beyond that was no concern of theirs.)

Much would depend on the state of the various rivercrossings, for the Forth and Teith both barred the direct way into the Lowlands. It is known that Mar, on a later occasion, called in Rob Roy to give expert advice on this his special subject; and it is very probable that he was now summoned from the camp at Strath Fillan to attend a conference of senior officers in Perth, and place his unique knowledge of the meandering course of the Forth, from its beginnings under Ben Lomond down to the Queen's Ferry, at the disposal of the army.

There was the Abbey Ford, a little below Stirling Bridge in tidal waters, that might serve for a feint attack, by cavalry. Another feint could be made on the Long Causeway in front of Stirling Bridge, but must on no account be pressed home, lest the enemy blow up the bridge. That bridge would be needed later on, for the bringing over of the wagons and guns. Rob's experience of the fords was limited to crossing with men and cattle; he would not answer for wheeled transport. Next above the bridge was the Drip Coble, a little used crossing that might serve for a surprise attack, once the enemy was fully engaged elsewhere. But everything seemed to point to the Fords of Frew for the main thrust; and Rob knew all there was to know about them.

There Gordon would cross, and come down to envelop Argyll's left flank. Others would make a landing in the Lothians on the east—that was a surprise item—and little more required in the centre than a steady pressure, on a good wide front, developing into a breakthrough on the first signs of weakening. It is probable that Rob Roy was retained on the headquarters' staff till these amphibious operations should be over.

On the night of the 12th October the campaign was opened in earnest.

Recruiting had been so successful in the last few weeks that it had been possible to form a third infantry Division, under the command of Brigadier Mackintosh of Borlum, another experienced officer from the French service, lately arrived in Perth with five hundred of his clan. To Borlum's Division—comprising, besides his own corps, the Earl of Mar's regiment, two regiments of the Atholl Brigade, Lord Drummond's regiment, and the Earl of Strathmore's—was entrusted the first and most difficult operation. They were to cross over from Fife, and make a landing on the opposite coast within a few miles of Edinburgh.

The crossing was almost entirely successful, in spite of the English warships stationed in Leith Roads. Borlum's troops were quietly embarked in a fleet of boats assembled at various points along the coast. Half his force got safely over during the night, and the rest were midway across next morning, before they were sighted.

Wind and tide being against the English ships they lowered their boats, and a most exciting chase ensued. The bluejackets succeeded in overhauling one boat, with about forty of the Atholl men crowded together on board, whom they made prisoners. Eight more boats they headed back towards the Fifeshire coast. But the Brigadier had been able to assemble fifteen hundred Highlanders from their various points of arrival, and the united force rested that night in Haddington, to the terror of the townspeople. Thence, on the 14th, he marched on Edinburgh. It only remained for Hamilton's and Gordon's Divisions to advance simultaneously in the centre and west, and Argyll was doomed.

It was the vast difference between the intelligence services of the two armies that decided the issue.

The Duke of Argyll received an accurate report of all that had happened, and of the strength of Borlum's force, early that morning, and acted promptly. Stirling must be held, yet Edinburgh must not be lost; so he placed himself at the head of a mere three hundred dragoons, with a couple of hundred infantry mounted on carthorses, handed over the command of the rest to General Witham, and made a dash for the capital.

Borluin's Highlanders covered their sixteen miles with less than their usual speed; but the mounted soldiers had twice that distance to come from Stirling. In the end Red John of the Battles came spurring into the city by the West Port just as the anxious sentinels on the Calton Hill sighted Borlum's regiments coming up from the east. The mere presence of the Duke put heart into the Volunteer defenders of the city, already equal in numbers to the Highland invaders. Borlum drew off his men and fortified himself in Leith for the night, and the immediate peril was over.

Meanwhile the Earl of Mar, receiving no intelligence of any kind, probably concluded that the whole expedition was a failure; and Hamilton's and Gordon's Divisions remained in camp.

On the 14th, the day of Borluin's march on Edinburgh, we know for a fact that Rob Roy did have an interview with the Commander-in-Chief. Since their plans for a threefold advance must be scrapped, or at least postponed, he was to rejoin his regiment; and there were one or two despatches that he could carry with him to the west.

One was addressed to Glengyle, who had evidently strayed again from the camp at Strath Fillan: "Sir, I am very well pleased with the account of your securing the Boats on Loch Lomond and the other good services you have done since

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you was with me. General Gordon, Glengarry, and Glendaruel are desirous of having you, your uncle the bearer and the men with you with them on the Expedition they are going about, therefore you must lose no time in going to them and follow such orders as you shall receive, since your uncle is the bearer I need say no more.

The reason for Glengyle's desertion was not far to seek. There was news of two English men-of-war come to anchor in the Clyde, and the Whigs of those parts planning to bring the ships' boats up the Leven, and so up the loch to recapture the MacGregors' fleet. Perhaps Rob himself brought the news to Perth, for Mar's second despatch (to the Earl of Breadalbin) repeats it, adding rather dolefully, "I wish with all my heart this could be prevented." Yet Glengyle, who would have prevented it, was sternly ordered back to camp.

On the 15th, Borlum, still blockaded in the citadel of Leith, smuggled a message across the water reporting the true state of affairs; and added that, since he could do no good where he was, he proposed to slip away and join the Jacobites of the Border. With his whole force—or such as had not been too free with the liquor found in the customhouse—he duly escaped along the beach at low tide.

On the 16th, Mar, with Borlum's message in his hands, was one ahead of his rival in the matter of intelligence. While the Duke spent an infuriating day, scouring the country for Borlum and his vanished men, the drums in Perth were beating, fresh orders were on their way to Gordon, and Mar prepared to march on Stirling at last with the whole of Hamilton's and the Cavalry Division. They were at Dunblane on the 17th, within a few miles of Stirling Bridge, and Mar had his detachments allotted to the various crossings, all ready for an attack on the morrow. But somehow Argyll had early notice of this new peril, performed another of his lightning marches, and was back in the midst of his army at Stirling the same night, leaving the merest handful of infantry to follow up the elusive Borlum.

Finally, on the 18th, there came an end to all this feverish marching and countermarching. Argyll was in Stirling—a weary man, but still very much Red John of the Battles—and Mar, with his three infantry Divisions scattered across Scotland, was inclined to call the whole thing off till another day. At this critical moment Argyll's long-delayed reinforcements arrived in the Clyde, and Mar's mind was made up for him. Back he went to his quarters in Perth, and the old stalemate was resumed.

The gallant Borlum and his fifteen hundred men marched away to the Border, and on into England, whither we need not follow them. All that concerns us is that they were lost to the Highland Army, and lost to no purpose. And the Earl of Mar, cured once and for all of any ambition to win immortality as a General, went back to his parastates, and all the routine work that he did so well, and prayed that Berwick might come over and relieve him before anything worse could happen.

Rob Roy's warning about ships in the Clyde was naturally forgotten during all this activity on the central front; and it came too late in any case, for it was on the 13th, while Rob was still at Perth, that the celebrated Loch Lomond Expedition sailed.

Probably no other incident in the whole war has been so frequently described in print, thanks to a Government pamphlet that was published soon afterwards. As the first definite success to be won against the insurgents, it was only good propaganda to make as much of it as possible.

The Navy supplied eight boats, which were successfully towed up the River Leven by a team of horses, along with three more boats from Dumbarton. There were screwguns mounted in the bows, with naval gunners to work them, in case these MacGregors should attempt a naval battle. And a hundred or so of the Whig Volunteers from Paisley and Glasgow crowded aboard, while the Dumbarton contingent marched up the west side of the loch, followed by a troop of the local gentry on horseback.

The rendezvous for the first night was at Luss, where further reinforcements awaited them, besides plentiful refreshment. Old Sir Ludovic Grant's second son was married to the heiress of Luss, and joined the expedition here with his "forty or fifty stately fellows" come all the way from Strathspey to serve against their Highland cousins. Next morning the whole force embarked, and sailed away into the unknown upper waters of the loch—rather like Rogers' Rangers, half a century later, setting out for a punitive raid up Lake Champlain.

They came about noon "to Inversnaid, the Place of Danger," and as a precaution "drove a ball through the roof of a house on the face of the mountain whereupon an old wife or two came crawling out." The landing was a masterly operation, according to the Government publication already quoted. The Lowland volunteers "with the greatest Intrepidity leap'd on shore, got up to the Top of the Mountains, and drew up in order, and stood about an hour, their drums beating all the while." But still they remained unmolested, for in Rob's absence his followers had thought it sufficient to drag the boats ashore and hide them under the bushes and deep heather, while they marched back to the camp. The Lowlanders had only to find the boats, and beat a dignified retreat. A short-lived panic occurred when a company of Dumbarton men, marching kneedeep through the heather above the shore, dropped suddenly to earth with piteous cries. But when the cause of their downfall was found to be a tangle of ropes and oars and anchors, everybody's spirits rose. Sure enough, the boats were discovered close by and "hurled" down to the water again.

Some floated, others filled and sank, for they had had a rough passage up the stony shore and down again. But enough remained to make a very pretty display, when they dropped down to Luss that same evening. The screwguns, and the muskets of the gallant Volunteers, not having been called on to fire a single shot in anger, were now gleefully discharged skywards, and "made so very dreadful a Noise, through the multiplied Echoes of the vast mountains on both sides of the Loch, that . . . the MacGregors were cowed and frightened away."

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On the next day, the 14th, the recaptured vessels were brought back to Dumbarton, and moored under the cannon of the castle; and Rob Roy returned home soon afterwards to find all his work undone in his absence. But in Glasgow town the war correspondents were getting joyously to work on the best piece of material the campaign had yet produced.

For three days the wildest rumours were flying about the camp at Strath Fillan, of events on the other fronts; but no orders arrived for the general advance into the Lowlands. Over the hill, at Auchinchisallan, Mary kept open house for Rob and his fellow officers (who now included Balhaldies, lately arrived in camp along with the tardy Camerons. On the fourth day she missed her guests. They had their orders at last, and the Division was on the move—westward, into Argyll's country— Glengarry and Clanranald, MacLean and Lochiel, Breadalbin and Glengyle, in column of threes with their pipers playing before them. Perhaps an echo of their wild music reached Mary's ears as they took the road for Loch Awe .

CHAPTER VI. 19th October—10th November 1715

FOR the second time within living memory the western clans had forced their way into the heart of Argyll. Inveraray town was crammed with the blacktartaned county militia, and ringed about with entrenchments; beyond that the country lay at the mercy of the invaders. The Duke himself could not be there to lead his people, but his brother commanded in the little square castle; f Lord JusticeGeneral of Scotland though he was, his clan had first claim on Islay now. His position was a strong one (at least at high tide), and his forces numbered nearly as many as the enemy, but their quality was very different. In these days the white knees of peaceable tradesmen trembled under many a militiaman's kilt.

It chanced to be low tide in Loch Fyne, on the evening of General Gordon's arrival at the foot of Glen Shira, where he established his camp. The night was also a dark one. The whole garrison was in a state of extreme nervousness, ready to take every bush for a prowling MacDonald. And down by the shore, where the river was most easily fordable, there came at length the unmistakable sound of footsteps approaching along the shingle. A score of voices yelled the challenge together, the slight noise changed to a wild trampling, louder every minute, and the garrison turned out in furious haste to start blazing away at the invisible foe.

Five minutes later the Earl himself, hurrying down to the scene of the first alarm, found all strangely quiet. The sentinels stood silently, almost sheepishly, at their posts, as if nothing had happened. Up from the foreshore Came a group of officers, with a lantern bobbing amongst them.

"Well, Finnab!" said the Earl, "have you beat them off so soon? Got you a look at them?" "That I did, Islay," his Second in Command replied. "It was but the horses of our Kintyre troop, put out to grass beyond the river, and them seeking better pasture!

The same element of farce prevailed throughout the operations that followed. The blockade of Inveraray was never allowed to develop into anything like a siege, much less an assault. Gordon posted his forces comfortably astride all the three roads to the north, levied contributions in the name of King James, and lived on the country. Glengarry and Islay amused themselves with an exchange of burlesque armistice terms. All that could be said for this little sideshow was that it gave Gordon's Division something to do, wherein they were more fortunate than their comrades at Perth.

Rob Roy and his MacGregors soon had another opportunity of trying their hands at piracy, this time on salt water. There were one or two large vessels at the quays of Inveraray, employed in more peaceful times in the new trade with the western isles. Now they were plying very briskly up and down Loch Fyne, bringing supplies and news and letters to the semi beleaguered town. One day a sloop was sighted, beating up from the sea, and the wind failing fast. Rob took a party round by the head of the loch, to seize her if a chance presented itself.

He must have caught her close to shore, with her boats out pulling her head round. Under the threat of the Highland muskets her skipper had no choice but to surrender, and take aboard a very landlubberly prize crew; but to persuade the hands to take their ship up past the town was another matter. Such were the opportunities for passive resistance, that when darkness came the sloop still lay becalmed opposite the lights of Inveraray.

The quiet was shattered, soon after midnight, by such a roar of musketry from the town that it seemed certain an attack had been launched and overrun the defences; but daylight showed the enemy's colours still flying over castle and town, and all as quiet as usual on shore. Being still utterly becalmed, Gregor sent a boat across to the camp to let Gordon know of their success, and of their present difficulties.

It had been another black night, with the tide low and the Inveraray garrison in a state of extreme nervousness. One of the patrols across the river, being challenged on his return to the lines by a Lowland militiaman, gave the password in his own tongue the Gaelic. With a bellow the sentinel discharged his piece, and the line was quickly in an uproar.

Lord Islay wasted no time in asking questions, but had the drums beating to arms at once, and his whole reserve assembled on the castle green. Each battalion formed up in its appointed place by the light of spluttering pine torches, and the Earl sat on horseback, peering under his hand into the gloom. Nothing was lacking but an enemy to open fire upon. In this intolerable situation Islay gave the order to fire by platoons in the direction of the expected attack; and it is said that certain senior officers were heard directing the fire very efficiently from the safety of the castle's upper windows.

Since the only persons able to explain how the alarm originated were still flat on their faces by the riverbank, with bullets whining all about them, there seemed no reason why the demonstration of platoon firing should not last till daylight, if the supply of ammunition permitted. But questions began to be asked, and little by little the fusillade was allowed to die down, though the men stood to arms all that night. With the dawn the truth became known, and the weary garrison melted away to its quarters for breakfast.

Similar mistakes have happened before and since, but seldom with such happy results. For General Gordon, listening to the wild musketry and watching the flicker of torches in the streets, mistook them for signs of rejoicing, and concluded that the enemy had been joined by some of their expected reinforcements from Ireland. If that were so, his own communications were in danger. He ought to disengage his forces and be ready to march. And so Glengyle's messenger, coming ashore to report the capture of a sloop, was received without proper enthusiasm, and returned with a curt note ordering the whole party back to camp.

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Gregor, in disgust, sent off a second message. “‘us evident that the Boat and the Freight seized will fall in the Enemies Hands,” he wrote, “if I instantly march the men that are here, since there is no security for a small party to guard the same, neither is there any Possibility to carry what was seized this night to the Camp. . .

But Gordon’s reply gave no encouragement.

“Sir, Upon sight hereof, return with your own and Uncle’s men to the Camp.”

So once again the MacGregors had to see their prize abandoned to the enemy, after all their pains. And from this incident grew up the story of a rich cargo of silks, and wines, and treasure, the Duke of Argyll’s own property, that Rob Roy treacherously allowed to pass into Inveraray after it had fallen into his hands,, out of an understanding he had with the Duke. It was one of those stories that were thought little of at the time, but remembered and exaggerated later on.

It was clear to everyone, by the end of October, that the Jacobites could afford to wait no longer for the Chevalier and Berwick to come and lead them to victory. They must take the first steps by themselves, even if it meant relying again upon Mar’s amateur generalship, which was not highly rated since his failure earlier in the month.

In fact there was no man in Scotland more conscious of the shortcomings of the Commander-in-Chief than that nobleman himself. No more did he plan seaborne invasions, feints, flanking movements, or such military subtleties; the coordination of simultaneous offensives on three fronts he confessed was beyond him. From now on he would put his trust in nothing but numbers, overwhelmingly superior numbers, concentrated in a single striking force. Then there could surely be no room for making mistakes.

On paper—and he preferred to work on paper—he was now at the head of a greater alliance of clans than Montrose or Dundee had ever been able to bring together; and the weeks flew by while he laboured to bring this mighty host actually into the field. A good paradestate had come to mean everything to him.

It was another source of pride to Mar that he had put the finances of the army on a regular footing. What with the taxes and customs duties that he received from a large part of Scotland, and the contributions levied from Whigs and Tories alike in lieu of military service, he could boast that his men at Perth were receiving “threepence a day, with three loaves, which was more than Argyll’s soldiers got at Stirling.”

Next he turned to propaganda — at Breadalbin’s suggestion, it is said—and his printingpress, obtained in Aberdeen, was soon turning out bulletins of suitably distorted news for the comfort of all good Jacobites. From the promptness with which accounts of the great victories won by their friends in England appeared in print, it seemed that the army’s intelligence service must have vastly improved since the middle of the month.

Altogether the internal organisation of the forces was in a very satisfactory state, when the arrival of Seaforth and the rest of the northern clans in Perth removed the last excuse for postponing the offensive a day longer.

The young Earl of Seaforth rode to the wars surrounded by a mounted bodyguard of gentlemen of his name, and followed by seven hundred of his clan, amongst them those mighty caterans the “wild MacRaes.” With him marched four hundred of the Frasers and Chisholms, under the Laird of Fraserdale; and Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat sent his two brothers with his blessing and his clan, which included the Mackinnons and other islesmen in its tail.

Gordon’s Division was recalled from Argyllshire, and reached Auchterarder on the 4th of November. There, on the 9th, the Divisions of Hamilton and Gordon, the Cavalry Division, and the new arrivals from the north, joined forces for the first time; and at the grand review held on the following day Mar expected to number between eight and nine thousand men on parade.

There had been one very annoying loss a week before, of the whole second battalion of Breadalbin’s regiment, which Glenlyon had led on some daft raid into Lorn, and had to surrender on terms to Finnab’s Campbells. And now, on the very morning of the review, there other unfortunate absences to report. About two hundred of Huntly’s men from the braes of Glenlivet were found to have deserted, as a protest against the fatigueduties imposed on them by his lieutenantcolonel, Gordon of Glenbucket. More serious was the absence from parade of the entire Fraser regiment—all, that is, but the very crestfallen Laird of Fraserdale. The rival claimant to his estates, Simon Fraser of Beaufort, had returned suddenly to Scotland; and at one whistle from that fascinating and unscrupulous gentleman the four hundred Frasers had changed sides overnight and marched back to Inverness. It was disheartening work, assembling an army of these wayward Highlandmen!

One other regiment there was, which had been detached from the main army for special duties. Rob Roy had been summoned to Perth a few days before—“Pray send him there immediately,” Mar wrote to Gordon on the 4th November, “for I want very much to speak to him”—for yet another conference about the river crossings. Now he was off on a lastminute reconnaissance, to see for himself the effect of the recent rains. In case of a brush with the enemy, his whole regiment was sent along with him, reinforced by a company of MacPhersons. And for this occasion, at least, it is likely that he was given seniority over his nephew.

CHAPTER VII. 12th13th November 1715

THE road to Stirling from the north lay through the wide valley of Strath Allan. On one hand the Allan Water, sunk between steep grassy banks, wound its way down to the Forth. On the other rose bare moorland, the foothills of the Ochil range, known as the Sheriff Muir. Between the two ran the old Roman road, straight as an arrow.

Two fine houses looked down upon the road, where it approached the town of Dunblane. Both were closely shuttered and silent, for Stirling of Kippendavie and Drummond of Balhaldies were known to be out with Mar. From her turret window Lady Kippendavie barely glanced at the hogbacked ridge of moor that loomed above her on the east, before she turned eager eyes again to the north, wondering if she heard trumpets up the valley. Below, where the road curved out of sight, she had a servant posted to bring her early news of the army's approach. And her husband would surely be riding in the van. . . . To southward, where Dunblane's chimneys smudged the sky, another boy of hers was posted, who would bring her warning of any advance by the enemy. And he was the first, as it happened, to come scurrying back to the house the redcoats were in the town.

It was the same boy (a poor limping stablelad that the Laird had not judged fit to ride out with him) who halted the Jacobite advance guard half a mile south of Balhaldies township, with the startling news that the enemy was over the Forth before them.

When Argyll marched out across Stirling Bridge that morning, and abandoned all the advantages of his defensive position behind the river, he knew what he was about. The river barrier had served its purpose; but it would be a strange thing if the Jacobites had not hit upon some plan for turning his flank. He preferred to face them in a pitched battle, now that the time was come, and in reasonably open country about Dunblane. More over he knew his adversary for an amateur General, who would have worked out his plans carefully, but made no allowance for the unexpected. Any sudden change in the situation would be apt to throw such a man as Mar off his balance.

Darkness was already falling by the time that Argyll had his regiments deployed in the open ground beyond Dunblane; and a cruel frost was beginning to chill the men's bones. There was only time to form a provisional line of battle, facing north and east, before night was upon them and a night of misery for all. With the fields lying black on every side, full of their own strange noises, the whole army lay down in its ranks, each soldier with his musket beside him.

But no attack was made that night, for Mar knew as little of Argyll's movements as Argyll knew of his. By nine o'clock the last regiment of Hamilton's Division had come up with the rest, and the Jacobite army encamped in the fields between Balhaldies and Kinbuck. There the Highlanders slept soundly under the open sky, as few other troops in Europe could have done that night. Rolled in their plaids, they dreamed of glorious deeds tomorrow and let the world freeze about them if it would.

Next day's battle was surely intended to be one of the simplest in military history. Both armies breakfasted at their leisure, and at leisure they formed their squadrons and battalions. In their own good time they should have advanced upon one another; and somewhere in the valley, where the road curved round the base of the high moorland, they would have come face to face. On that narrow front, where neither Mar's superior numbers nor Argyll's superior generalship could be properly exploited, they would decide the fate of a kingdom.

In Mar's first line were the clans of Gordon's Division, the flower of the army, ranged from right to left in the order in which they had come to join him. Glengarry's two battalions, Clanranald's, and MacLean's formed on the right of the road, and Breadalbin's, Lochiel's, Appin's, and Sleat's on the left—rather more than three thousand of the best natural soldiers in the kingdom. Somewhere about the centre of the line the MacGregors might have taken their place, had they returned in time from their reconnaissance; but there was still no sign of them across the Allan Water. That was another gap in Mar's impressive musterroll.

In the second line Seaforth's two battalions of MacKenzies, for whom the army had waited so long, took the right flank. Old Gordon of Glenbucket commanded Huntly's two regiments; and on their left Panmure's men from the braes of Aboyne. Next came Tullibardine's, the only regiment of the Atholl Brigade still with the main army. (Tullibardine being attached to the staff, his regiment was that day led by his cousin, the Earl of Strathmore, whose own corps had been left to garrison Perth.) Drummond's and Struan's regiments completed the second line; and these eight battalions brought the total of the Jacobite foot up to six thousand five hundred men.

The seven squadrons of cavalry formed on the wings, Huntly's two squadrons and the Stirlingshire Horse on the right, Marischal's and the Perthshire, Fifeshire, and Angus squadrons on the left—about a thousand men in all.

"Fight! fight! fight!" was the only advice Mar's council of war would give him that day; and all was ready for the march, when somebody happened to glance up at the ridge of Sheriff Muir—and thereby changed the whole course of events.

It is not until you pass the hamlet of Balhaldies, on the road south, that you come under observation from a point on the crest of that long ridge, now distinguished by a solitary group of pinetrees planted round the so called "Gathering Stone." On that spot, just as Mar was completing his dispositions, a little bunch of horse men came into view; and even at that distance it was easy to recognise King George's uniform. So be it. If Argyll chose to meet them up yonder, there was no reason to avoid him, and it would be a strange thing if the fleet Highlandmen could not gain the top of the ridge

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before his foot. By eleven o'clock the necessary change of front was made, under Hamilton's directions, in a manner that the spectators on the ridge had to admit would have done credit to regular troops. Then the whole long line surged forward, and made straight for the spot where the red coated horsemen had appeared.

It was Argyll's turn to be surprised. With a small escort of horse he had ridden up to the top of the ridge after breakfast, to watch the movements of the Jacobites and make some estimate of their strength. He watched their change of front without any idea that he was himself responsible for it. But as a Highlander he knew the immense advantage it would give the clans if they could launch their attack from higher ground. The attempt must be made to seize the ridge, at whatever risk. His eight battalions of foot, and five regiments of dragoons, moved off to their right out of the town by the Dykedale Lane, and began the long ascent.

From her turrettop Lady Kippendavie watched them filing up the narrow lane, only a couple of fields away—a long procession of red coats, black gaiters, and gleaming bayonetpoints. No drum rolled, not a fife squealed, lest the enemy take warning and increase their pace. This was the fact that most impressed the intelligent lady, and inspired her to make a second attempt to further the Cause her husband served. Summoning the last of her domestic staff, an elderly housekeeper, she sent her over the hill with a warning message; and it was actually delivered to some of Huntly's riders in the nick of time. Mar detached a couple of regiments at once to go ahead and seize the top of the ridge for him; and all the clans of the centre broke into a run, which soon reduced any lead the enemy had won.

The crest of the ridge was not far off, dark against a clear, cold sky, and the view was widening with every upward step. . . . On and over the crest the clansmen poured, and all at once they were in face of the enemy.

"Yonder stands MacCailein More for King George," cried Sir John MacLean, summing up the military position for his clan's benefit. "Here stands MacLean for King James!"

"God bless MacLean and King James!" was the response; for that was how they looked at things in Mull.

Mar slid from his horse's back, drew his sword with a flourish, lifted his hat, and waved it once round his head. Nothing more was wanted. The Highland avalanche rolled forward. One tremendous volley, and then the cold steel—that was the traditional way of it; and thus had Killiecrankie been won.

What followed is nothing that the British regiments concerned need be ashamed to own. Four battalions of foot, caught in the act of reforming their front after their long climb, never flinched from the broadswords till their ranks were broken by the sheer fury of the onslaught. Then with the claymores at their deadly work in their midst, there was little more that any men could have done.

The King's Royals were broken and scattered by the MacLeans; and with colours taken and officers cut down, were no more heard of that day. The Devons fared little better, losing a third of their numbers killed or wounded, and leaving their colonel a prisoner in the MacDonalds' hands. The West Yorks., on the extreme left, came off rather more lightly, for Glengarry's charge quickly drove them back upon the cavalry in their rear, the 7th and 3rd Dragoons, who now became entangled in the general rout. That sealed the fate of Argyll's left wing; but it saved the Yorkshiresmen heavy casualties.

On the heels of the first wave of Highlanders came Clanranald's men,¹ and Seaforth and Glenbucket with the whole of the second line. Almost alone, the Scots Fusiliers faced the torrent, and were shattered like the rest. Even the Worcesters on their right were involved in the melee. Five battalions of foot and four squadrons of dragoons, heroes of the late wars in Flanders, were simply driven off the field, leaving guns, drums, and four regimental colours in the hands of Mar's triumphant Highlanders.

"It is impossible to express the Horror," declares the official despatch, "which some of the Gentlemen of the English Regiments say their Men were possess'd with at that unusual and Savage Way of Fighting." Jacobite frightfulness must account for their defeat of professional soldiers.

At about three o'clock Colonel Blackadder, late of the Cameronians, now commanding a body of Glasgow Fencibles on guard before Stirling Bridge, was horrified to see General Witham come galloping up the Causeway, with a handful of dragoons, and a tale of defeat. But, mindful of Dunkeld and the '9, he just put up a prayer and held his ground.

Argyll was with the right wing of his army, riding midway between the first and second lines, when the Highlandmen came over the hill. He knew the banners of Lochiel and Appin; and knew that these men, properly handled, could break his infantry in a couple of minutes. Much would depend on the use he could make of his five hundred dragoons. He had barely time to take shelter among the ranks of the Greys, before the clans charged.

Why that charge failed cannot be debated here. Several of the Jacobite officers have left accounts of their personal experiences, blaming this or that unlucky circumstance; but the fact is that a headlong charge is an unpredictable thing. The slightest loss of impetus, for any of a hundred causes—or a little extra steadiness among the troops opposite—can make all the difference between success and utter failure. In this case the Jacobites were certainly in some confusion. Sleat's battalion had been detached, and not returned—Breadalbin's was too far to the right—the second line lagged too far behind. But why attempt to apportion the blame?

1 Clanranald, the only officer to charge on horseback, had been mortally wounded. His whole regiment stood halted in midcareer, till rallied by Glengarry with the famous words: "Today for revenge, tomorrow for mournüig 3"

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They must have got to close quarters once ; for the young Earl of Forfar, Colonel of the Buffs, unconscious and bleeding from seventeen wounds, was temporarily made prisoner. But the Buffs rallied, the Leicesters and Borderers stood firm; and so completely were communications between the two wings severed, in both armies, that Argyll fancied he was holding his own. Reluctantly the Highlanders drew off; and when Colonel Hawley of the 4th Light Dragoons would have sped their going, he was met with a steady fire, and himself carried to the rear, shot through the body.

But it was the cavalry that decided it in the end. Over on the opposite wing, where certain of Mar's squadrons had strayed from their proper place, arose the cry of "Horse to the right ! " This message, travelling farther than was ever intended, eventually reached the three squadrons posted on the left flank, which trotted obediently away—just as the Scots Greys, after a long detour round some boggy ground, came down upon the Highlanders' exposed flank. The sorriest regular troops in Europe could probably have made a better show of standing up to a charge of dragoons than the four battalions of Hamilton's second line. The Robertsons were scattered, their colours taken, and Struan made prisoner. The Drummonds suffered the same fate, though Logiealmond slew sixteen of the dragoons with his own good blade before he surrendered himself. Lord Strathmore, with fourteen others, formed a desperate ring about the Atholl colours, till one by one they dropped, the flag was torn from the Earl's own grasp, and he himself cut down. Panmure's corps was broken, the Earl wounded and taken, and Lyon of Auchterhouse slain defending the colours of that regiment. A sad day for the house of Glamis. . . . And the Greys, having broken four battalions and loaded themselves with captured flags, returned in triumph to their own lines.

Hamilton's battered command drew together, and found its losses not as heavy as it supposed. Here were six Jacobite battalions, abandoned by their horse, badly cut up, and in course of being driven off the ridge, but certainly not beaten yet. And help was surely on the way?

Mar was doing all that oneman could do. On a borrowed horse he scoured the whole field as far as the outskirts of Dunblane, bringing back the scattered bands of MacDonalds, MacLeans, and the wild MacRaes, to finish what they had so well begun. His cavalry seem to have been very little use to him; and a single squadron of Inniskillings, rallying by the Stoney Hill of Kippendavie, routed four of theirs in succession and captured two standards. So two hours slipped by, which Argyll and his men over the hill were employing to far better purpose.

Alasdair of Balhaldies, serving as a volunteer in Lochiel's regiment, lifted his eyes from the trampled heather underfoot to the familiar roof of his own house, now less than a mile distant. . . . The Jacobite left, or so much of it as still held together, was in full retreat across the moor, by the way they had come that morning, with Argyll's dragoons pressing relentlessly on flank and rear. Unless they could make a final stand at the baggage wagons, or in Kinbuck village, they must eventually be driven into the river. . . . Now the road was below them, and again they turned to face the enemy, with the last of their courage, the last of their powder and shot. Again they reeled back, and the line of the road was forced. . . . In Kinbuck they faced about for the last time, and beat off the dragoons, till the enemy's infantry came up and were thrown into the struggle. Forced to the riverbank, leaping in to save themselves, the Highlandmen were in desperate plight, for the water ran deep above and below the ford.

"Oh, spare the poor bluebonnets!" cried Argyll, weary of seeing good Gaelic men go down under the horses' feet; and he rode out himself to offer quarter to any that would take it. Then, when least expected, his trumpet sounded, and the dragoons turned back from the pursuit.

And in Balhaldies House the frightened servants were putting their master to bed—unwounded, but half dead with exhaustion, as they had found him in a corner of his own kailyard.

Where was Rob Roy all this time?

Two of the Chiefs, who had the misfortune to be on the defeated left wing that day, afterwards wrote accounts of the battle as they saw it. Young Lochiel, who could never make his terrible old father understand how Clan Cameron came to be beaten, published his 'Vindication' in June 1716. Miller describing how they and the Appin Stewarts were finally driven across the Allan, he continues

"I rallied there all I could meet with, and caused such of them as had fired to charge their pieces. At the same time I perceived Rob Roy MacGregor on his march towards me, coming from the Town of Doune, he not being at the engagement, with about two hundred and fifty, betwixt MacGregors and MacPhersons."

Evidently Rob Roy's fellow officers knew all about the special mission he had been sent upon; but what discoveries he made, or how he had spent the last fortyeight hours, has never been told. He may have marched his men as far south as the Fords of Frew, which had been systematically "spoilt" by Argyll's orders. He would certainly have inspected the Teith bridges at Callander and Doune, which were only partly demolished by the enemy. But however thoroughly he performed his mission Argyll's advance had rendered it worthless; and Rob could only hasten back to rejoin the army. There was an old road from Callander by the Braes of Doune, emerging at Cromlix nearly opposite Kinbuck, which was evidently the first place above Dunblane where the river could be crossed.

Struan Robertson (the selfstiled "Elector" of Struan) had made his escape "in the hurry of the pursuit"; and his whimsical account of the battle confirms Lochiel's statement. "As soon as they passed the water of Allan," he says,

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“having met with a party of MacGregors going to join our army, they drew up, and the enemy thought it proper to leave them.”

But Lochiel, in his anxiety to vindicate himself, has more to say about his meeting with Rob.

“I marched towards him with the few I had got together; perceiving Argyll opposite to us, I entreated, he being come fresh with these men, that we would join and cross the River to attack Argyll; which he absolutely refused; so that there was such a very small number left when Rob Roy went off, and not knowing well then what became of our right, could not attempt anything with that number.” It is doubtful if Lochiel was really as keen to renew the fight as he would have us believe. Struan and the rest were evidently well satisfied that the MacGregors’ timely arrival had put an end to the pursuit. (For there is reason to think it may have been their resolute appearance on the opposite bank, rather than Argyll’s clemency, that halted the dragoons just as they reached the river.) We know at least that it was Lochiel who actually “went off”—back to Auchterarder and so to Perth—leaving the MacGregors drawn up by the ford, where they served to cover his retreat.

But however sound Rob’s reasons for declining to hurl his men across the river in Argyll’s teeth, they would not appeal to every young hothead in his command. According to Sir Walter Scott, “one of the MacPhersons, named Alexander, one of Rob’s original profession—viz., a drover—but a man of great strength and spirit, was so incensed at the inactivity of his temporary leader that he threw off his plaid, drew his sword, and called out to his clansmen: ‘Let us endure this no longer! if he will not lead you, I will!’ Rob Roy replied, with great coolness, ‘Were the question about driving Highland stots or kyLoes, Sandie, I would yield to your superior skill; but as it respects the leading of men, I must be allowed to be the better judge.’

‘Did the matter respect driving GlenAngus stots,’ answered the MacPherson, ‘the question with Rob would not be, which was to be last, but which was to be foremost.’ Incensed at this sarcasm, MacGregor drew his sword, and they would have fought upon the spot if their friends on both sides had not interfered.” There can be little doubt that if Rob had gone off with Lochiel and the rest, or even deserted altogether, his name would hardly be remembered now in connection with a battle he never fought in. But because he stayed where he was, involving himself in heated arguments with two of his fellow officers; and because he eventually changed his mind (as we find that he did, too late for Lochiel to know of it) and crossed the river, to hang upon the rear of Argyll’s troops, where his few men could best make their presence felt—for this, his reputation has since been most foully blackened. Map for Battle of Sheriffmuir

It was after four o’clock, and the chill of frost again in the air, when the effective part of the Jacobite army climbed a second time to the top of the Sheriff Muir— some three thousand Highlanders, weary but in good spirits, which Mar had been able to assemble, and most of the cavalry. All this side of the ridge was cleared of the enemy, but it seemed possible that some of them had penetrated to the far side. In that case the bread wagons over at Kinbuck were in danger.

Crossing the battlefield, this time facing north; and the two squadrons of Scots Greys who made an appearance on the top of the ridge, representing the advanceguard of Argyll’s force, were facing south. So once again there was a race to get first upon the high ground, and once again the Highlanders won, forcing the Greys to retire before them.

There lay the wide moor at their feet—more deeply trampled since the morning, and dotted now with dead men in scarlet and in tartan. The next thing Mar noticed was that his precious breadwagons had been moved. Then his eye caught the gleam of bayonets halfway down the slope, and discovered there Argyll’s regiments toiling up towards him. How they got there, and what they had been doing, was a mystery; but it began to look as if the battle had to be fought over again. . What a discovery to make at this time of day!

The only other troops in sight were away to the northeast, about a mile in Argyll’s rear; and they were apparently Highlanders, but very difficult to identify. In his despatch, written immediately after the battle, Mar relates that he saw Argyll to the north of him “upon the field, where we were in the Morning; and East of that, a Body; as we thought of our own Foot, and I still believe it was so.” Whoever they were, Argyll cannot have been at all happy to have them hanging on his rear, at a time when he was so fully occupied in meeting the peril in front.

The Duke had to oppose Mar’s coming attack with less than half his numbers. But he halted his men behind some turfwalls, where they so stretched their front that they seemed twice as many, displaying the captured battleflags as if they were the colours of other regiments. So Mar’s face, as he counted them, grew longer and longer; and while he hesitated the fatal minutes slipped away.

It is said that he would have given the word for his Highlanders to charge; but that Glengarry “returned for answer, that the Clans had done enough, and that he would not hazard them to do other People’s Work”¹ — meaning either the Jacobite horse, or the mysterious corps in the enemy’s rear. (Neither could have been expected to make a charge on their own account; but somebody must always be found to bear the blame for a failure.)

“Oh, for an hour of Dundee!” cried Gordon of Glenbucket, as darkness began to gather and still there came no signal for the attack. For it was in that last halfhour of daylight that Mar was finally tried and found wanting.

The heavy gloom of a November night settled over the Sheriff Muir, and hushed the clamour of the assembled armies. In a while there came another and more dreadful sound out of the darkness, as the wounded men began to realise what their fate was to be. For a time they made the night hideous with their reproachful wailing; but as the hours passed and the grip of the frost tightened, a kind of peace descended on the moor.

1 Related in • Life of John, Duke of Argyll and Greenwich, published 1745.

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Up on the crest of that bleak ridge the Earl of Mar slept among his officers, dreaming of tomorrow and of that second chance which a general is so rarely allowed. Already it was eluding him. The remnants of Argyll's army were stumbling off through the darkness, groping for the valley road that lay somewhere to their right, till they felt its hard surface under their feet, and so came back into Dunblane without further adventure. Nor would the Duke linger there, but urged them on over the bridge till the Allan Water flowed between them and the foe they had so miraculously escaped.

There they bivouacked in the open for what remained of the night; and few of them had any idea that they had saved a kingdom for the German princeling they served.

CHAPTER VIII. November—December 1715

OF course Mar never got his second chance. Waking on the morning of the 14th November, he found his army left in sole possession of the field of battle, and of the enemy's abandoned cannon—victorious, that is to say, by all the rules of war. But the men were hungry; and instead of advancing on Stirling and helping himself from Argyll's stores, he marched them back to their old camp at Kinbuck. There they found the wagons rifled and burnt, which meant a further retreat to Ardoch, where the reserve supplies lay, to rest and refit. The shortest of retreats was traditionally fatal to a Highland army. The men deserted by hundreds; and back the rest of them had to go, in the end, to their old quarters in Perth, where the remnants of Hamilton's command were found to be waiting.

Sorrowfully Mar looked down the list of his shrunken regiments. Seaforth and Huntly had some excuse for their hurried departure for the north, where Inverness had been retaken by the Grants and the turncoat Frasers. Others were taking the same road every day with less reason—Lochiel's regiment, most of Breadalbin's, Drummond's, and Tullibardine's. Whoever had won the recent battle, the effect on Mar's army was that of a shattering defeat, while Argyll in Stirling rested on his rather spurious laurels. And perhaps it mattered little who claimed the victory; for the news from other fronts was all of Jacobite disasters. Inverness was lost; and the English Jacobites, with the Scots of the Border and Borlugh's Division of Highlanders, had capitulated at Preston in Lancashire on the day Sheriffmuir was fought. It was simpler, on the whole, to accept Sheriffmuir as another defeat.

For some that remained at Perth life was soon made intolerable by the scurrilous tales that went daily round the town. Beaten troops must always look for a scapegoat, and the lucky ones mock the unlucky. Mar himself was still more or less immune; but Hamilton, having had the misfortune to command the left wing, came in for his full share of hatred and contempt. In spite of his comment on the battle—"If we have not gained a victory, we ought to fight Argyll once a week till we make it so"—easily the most sensible that has been recorded of any Jacobite officer, he remained the principal villain, and did not care to leave his lodgings in daylight.

For the rest, there was one ballad, with a rollicking chorus and innumerable verses to it, that a man had only to whistle in the street to be furiously challenged by soldiers of halfadozen corps, each certain the insult was intended for himself "For Huntly and Sinclair, they both played the tinkler, With consciences black as a crow, man; Some Angus and Fife men, they ran for their life, man, And ne'er a Lot's wife there at a', man. We ran, and they ran, And they ran and we ran. But Florence ran fastest of a', man."

Florence was the name of Huntly's charger. When he and Seaforth marched away, the Master of Sinclair accompanied them. Nobody could stand up to that villainous bit of a ballad.

The author was evidently a Lowlander, and directed most of his spite against his fellow Lowlanders of the cavalry squadrons. The only Highlander to be pilloried was the one these Lowland lairds knew best, and some of them had little reason to love—Rob Roy MacGregor. He was now known to have been in command of that mysterious corps that appeared in Argyll's rear; and so got a verse to himself Rob Roy he stood watch on a hill for to catch The booty, for aught that I saw, man; For he ne'er advanced from the place he was stanced Till nae mair was to do there at a', man."

For some reason, this is the only one of all the calumnies that ballad contains which has not been long ago forgotten. Nobody remembers now who ran, and who did not run, from the field of Sheriffmuir; but all the world seems to have heard that Rob Roy behaved badly. There are only two ways of treating such a charge; it may be ignored, or else fully investigated. If only as a firstclass example of the birth and growth of a legend, this one deserves investigation. The following is believed to be all the existing evidence (other than the ballad already quoted)

(1) The official Jacobite account of the battle does not mention the MacGregors, until it comes to explain why the army eventually returned to Ardoch—partly for lack of provisions, partly because they expected to be joined there by "the Battalions of the lord George Murray, Inverentie, MacPherson, and MacGregor." Lord George Murray's battalion, and Stewart of Inverentie's, had been stationed at Burntisland in Fife; the MacPhersons and MacGregors were with Rob Roy. There is no question of blaming any of these corps, which "did not join us till the next Day Afternoon, before which the Enemy was return'd to Stirling." And they did at least rejoin, at a time when many were deserting.

(2) Besides the ballad already quoted, there is another in the form of a "Dialogue between two Shepherds," which may be rather nearer to the truth. After the "M'Gregors they far off did stand, usual spiteful references to Huntly, Seaforth, the Camerons and the Stewarts, it continues Bad'noch and Atholl too, man; I hear they wantit the command. For I believe them true, man. Perth. Fife, and Angus, WI' their horse, Stood motionless, and some did worse."

Badenoch must be the MacPhersons and Atholl is Lord George Murray's corps. This agrees wonderfully with the official account.

(3) The only other contemporary evidence seems to be Patten's 'History of the Late Rebellion,' published in 1717, which relates that "one Robert Roy MacGrigor, alias Campbell, a noted Gentleman in former times for Bravery, Resolution, and Courage, was with his men and followers within a very little distance from the Earl of Mar's army, and when he was desired by a Gentleman of his own to go and assist his Friends, he answered, 'If they could not do it without me, they should not do it with me I

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It may be that Rob's reply to Lochiel, or to Sandie MacPherson, was in these words; but they do also bear an uncanny resemblance to Glengarry's answer, on being ordered by Mar himself to attack, "that the clans had done enough, and that he would not hazard them to do other People's Work."

(4.) Nearly a hundred years later, James Hogg and Walter Scott started collecting Jacobite songs and traditions. Hogg's 'Jacobite Relics of Scotland' gives both the Sheriffmuir ballads in full, with notes partly by himself and partly from the MSS. of a Mr George Moir of Aberdeen, collected "from various sources." The latter refers to the Rob Roy incident as follows

"One of the causes of the repulse of part of Mar's forces was the part which Rob Roy acted; . . . on the day of battle he kept his men together at some distance, without allowing them to engage, though they showed all the willingness imaginable; and waited only an opportunity to plunder, which was it seems the chief design of his coming there."

Hogg's note on the battle, which is hopelessly inaccurate throughout, says of Rob Roy "He marched with the clans to Ardoch, and was present at the battle of Sheriffmuir, but kept a shy distance, thereby weakening that wing of the army to which the MacGregors were placed as a corps-de-reserve, on what principle it is not easy to determine, if it was not, as the bard suggests, to watch who gained the day, and then assist them in disposing of the booty."

Neither has heard of Rob's late arrival from Doune, and both assume that he went into battle with the main army, but purposely separated himself from them. If that were true, it would indeed be hard to excuse. Knowing the case to have been precisely the opposite, no comment is needed. The motive suggested—plunder—is curious. Argyll's baggage was not to be come at by hanging back. Mar's had already been rifled by the enemy. And as all Highlanders habitually plundered their own as well as the enemy's dead, it is hard to see what was to be gained by a change of sides.

(5) Scott repeats this nonsense, with some improvements of his own, in 'Tales of a Grandfather'

"It is also stated, that some of the Highlanders showed an unwillingness to fight. This is alleged to have been—I particularly the case with the celebrated Rob Roy, a dependant, it will be observed, of the Duke of Argyll's, and in the habit, during the whole insurrection, of furnishing him with intelligence from the enemy's camp. A strong party of MacGregors and MacPhersons were under the command of this outlaw, who, when ordered to charge, answered coolly, 'If they cannot do it without me, they cannot do it with me.'"

So now the motive is treachery—the charge being based, of course, on Rob's subsequent alliance with Argyll; for Scott never paused to inquire whether it existed in November 1715. Actually Rob was Breadalbin's man till the latter's death in 1716, and Breadalbin died a Jacobite. Soon afterwards Rob did accept Argyll's protection, but by then the war was over, and the Duke had been disgraced and deprived of his command.

(6) The only account of the affair that anybody reads today, and the most wildly inaccurate of them all, appears in Scott's Introduction to his novel 'Rob Roy'

"During this medley of flight and pursuit, Rob Roy retained his station on a hill in the centre of the Highland position; and though it is said his attack might have decided the day, he could not be prevailed upon to charge. This was the more unfortunate for the insurgents, as the leading of a party of the MacPhersons had been committed to MacGregor. . . . While the favourable moment for action was gliding away unemploy'd, Mar's positive orders reached Rob Roy that he should presently attack, to which he coolly replied, 'No, no! If they cannot do it without me, they cannot do it with me.' (Here follows the story of Sandie MacPherson the drover.) Rob did not, however, neglect his own private interest on the occasion. In the confusion of an undecided field of battle, he enriched his followers by plundering the baggage and the dead on both sides."

This account at any rate is complete nonsense. Scott has never heard of the MacGregors' late arrival from Doune. Entirely on his own authority, he places them "on a hill in the centre of the Highland position—which, by the way, is exactly where Glengarry was when he refused to attack. And Rob is guilty now of dis-obedience to "Mar's positive orders"—which of course could never have reached him, with Argyll's army lying between.

From these conflicting reports we can form a very good idea of what actually happened. When the rank and file of the army learnt of Rob Roy's arrival, with fresh troops in Argyll's rear, at the crisis of the battle, it was natural for them to ask why he did nothing. So prodigious was his reputation for deeds of daring, off the battlefield, that nobody could understand that his inactivity might be dictated by plain commonsense. As he also had a reputation for a certain acquisitiveness, that was made to supply the answer; and the rollicking ballad did the rest.

Sir Walter Scott's theory of treachery does not represent the view of Rob Roy's contemporaries at all. Scott thinks that he has discovered the real motive, hitherto I overlooked; but displays his ignorance of the contemporary evidence in all that he says. At least Rob never had to face that particular charge in his lifetime.

Rob was too good a swordsman to be taunted openly with that scurrilous ballad, but it could not be long in coming to his ears. He stood it for a time; then asked that his regiment be sent on service elsewhere. Since his next appearance is in his home district, it is at least possible that he took French leave, as so many others were doing. But there is no question of desertion. The enemy was very active now in the west, and Finnab had already put a garrison into Finlarig. Some display of force was badly needed in those parts, before the Whigs became too uppish.

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Graham of Killearn still commanded at Buchanan House and the three or four little garrisons in that neighbourhood. The events of last month had relieved him of much anxiety; but his men had still to be fed and paid, and discipline was getting very bad. These militiamen had it fixed in their beads that the rebellion was crushed, and were clamouring for their discharge. Well, it was the second week of December, and fighting was surely over for the year. But there came a day when he was rudely disturbed at his officework by the news he most dreaded to hear—Rob Roy was back!

Once more the MacGregors ranged through the Lennox, proclaiming King James everywhere, as a preliminary to collecting something towards the long arrears of taxes due to him. “On Wednesday morning (7th December) between one and two o’clock,” a correspondent informed the Duke of Montrose, “Rob Roy arrived with 100 men at Drymen, marching through Buchanan to Craigrostan without attempting anything upon the garrison of Drummakill, and having done little at Drymen but proclaimed the Pretender and tore the gauger’s books.” On the 16th he was in Drymen again with eighty men, seized boats, and crossed the loch to avenge himself upon the Laird of Luss. It is reported that he rifled the houses of the minister and another, and took hostages for four of his men who were then in Dumbarton prison. And Killearn’s militiamen, penned up closely in those dark, insanitary keeps, and cut off from news of their families, grew daily more openly mutinous.

There was nothing heroic about this type of warfare, but it served its purpose. (We hear no more of the four prisoners, but may be very sure that no harm came to the hostages, or we should hear of that.) Both before and after Sheriff muir, though Rob strayed sometimes from the main army he always strayed well in advance. If he contrived to spend Christmas at home, who shall blame him? And he was certainly back in Perth only a few days after, ready for service on whatever front had most need of him.

CHAPTER IX. Christmas 1715—21st January 1716

A FEW days before Christmas, Professor Gregory may have noticed a party of seacaptains riding through his native city, with a pair of laden baggagehorses; but he would not recognise amongst them the rightful King of all this land.

His Majesty was late in coming, but had chosen the one sure way of reaching Scottish soil—broken off all negotiations and come as he was, without men or ships of war. His coming at all, to join what he must have known was a beaten and demoralised army, shows a fine courage. But he brought no Duke of Berwick, no general officer to succeed to Mar's command, only his own royal person to overawe rebellious subjects. In this last he was more successful than his enemies cared to admit. From the moment of his landing the Government was strangely unwilling to employ any more British troops against the insurgents. And there is the case of Captain Elphinstone (Lord Balmerino of the '45), who had fought bravely for Argyll at Sheriffmuir, but chose this moment to surrender his commission in the Borderers and go over to the Jacobites.

The King came at a time when snow blocked all the roads in the north, putting a stop to military operations on either side; and his coming completed the illusion of peace. He spent Christmas at the Earl Marischal's house of Fetteresso, where he was joined on the 7th by Mar and a company of ecstatic noblemen, and held his first royal levee in his own country.

In the week that followed, King and Court moved in a happy world of makebelieve. James asked one or two awkward questions at first. The official bulletin on the recent victory at Sheriffmuir, he complained, was not very lucid. But such topics were discussed less and less often, as the King busied himself with all the functions of royalty—all that is, that did not actually call for the possession of a kingdom. He dubbed knights, created Mar a Duke, and touched for the King's Evil with the most remarkable success. The snow still came down, and on the 2nd of January the Court set out on a series of countryhouse visits, arriving at last in the royal palace of Scone, a few miles outside Perth, where the King was to reside until his Coronation.

Alasdair of Balhaldies, back in Perth after a lengthy convalescence, went about at this time in a beautiful Jacobite dream. All the talk was of privileges and precedence, and who should carry standards, or helmets, or bowls of water and towels, in the Coronation procession. No doubt Balhaldies had some shadowy claim of his own to put forward; that his clan should furnish a guard for the regalia, perhaps (as they did a century later for George IV.). But Rob Roy was more concerned to know when His Majesty would come to visit the camp. For it was remarkable that the proverbially hardheaded Lowlanders seemed to ask nothing of their King in return for a blind loyalty; while it was the romantic Highlanders who insisted that he had a King's duty to perform.

The snow put an end to campaigning on land, but there was still the British Navy to be reckoned with. And if Argyll's troops were not to be trusted any longer, there were always foreigners to be hired. Early in January, while nobody in Perth talked of anything but the approaching Review and the Coronation, transports appeared suddenly off Burntisland, supported by ships of war, and landed a force of six thousand of these mercenaries—Dutchmen, according to the terminology of the day, but Switzers, Danes, Prussians, Frisians, and Brunswickers by origin—commanded by Cadogan, one of Marlborough's favourite officers. Coming ashore east and west of the town, they occupied it without difficulty, and there established a bridgehead for use whenever the weather permitted the reconquest of Fife. Meanwhile they made themselves snug as only old soldiers know how; and the Jacobites had to evacuate the coast towns from Dysart to Queensferry.

The only Jacobite troops in the whole of Fife at this time were some five hundred Athollmen, under young Lord George Murray, who had been quartered there, collecting the cess and the customs duties for King James, since the beginning of the war. In reply to his urgent appeal for aid, another few hundred Highlanders reached Falkland on the 4th of the month. At their head came Rob Roy MacGregor, with a company of his own clan, honoured a second time by being sent to the post of most imminent danger. (Or perhaps they had not shown proficiency at ceremonial drill.) No more could be spared, Lord George was told, till after the grand Review on the 8th.

These Gregarach were remarkably wellshod, and had a story to tell of how they came by their shoes. It had been Sunday morning when they passed through Arngask, on their march from Perth, and the local Whigs were coming out from kirk, stepping daintily between the puddles to save wetting their shoes. This sight so exasperated the Highlanders, many of whom were barefoot, that they halted and proceeded to confiscate the footwear of all who would not kneel and pray for King James. Rob Roy, coming up at that moment, was appealed to by the Whigs; but though admittedly he was "the fairest and most discreet among them," he would not reverse his men's decision. So down sat the Whigs on the dyke, and off came their fine Sabbath shoes.

This little matter settled, some of the MacGregors discovered a lucrative sideline. They snatched from their victims the large Bibles that they carried so ostentatiously; then offered them for resale. They got good prices too, for the owners seemed to have an idea that the Lord would reckon their piety by the value they put upon His Book. So whoever paid most was the best pleased, at the end of it.

It would be interesting to know how Rob and Lord George got on together. As the younger son of a Duke, the latter presumably counted as the senior officer. He received the newcomers in surroundings of more dignity than comfort; for the old palace of Falkland belonged to Atholl's family, and was naturally chosen by his son for headquarters. It

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could hold a couple of hundred men at a pinch, but in midwinter the absence of any roof to most of the chambers must have had its disadvantages. If the inmates were disturbed by mysterious footsteps, it might as well be the rats as Rothesay's ghost.

With the enemy in command of the sea, the defence of Fife was not a simple problem. But their main task was to contain the enemy where he was. Better to do that effectively than attempt everything and fail all round; so the rest of the county must look after itself. It was surely a good omen for the Gregarach on this new front that the name of the hills to the south of them was the Lomonds; and the river beyond that was called the Leven.

Another story indicates how Rob Roy fed his troops. On one occasion they visited a house of mourning at Freuchie, not far from Falkland, where all the tables were set for the refreshment of those bidden to the funeral. They cleared it of whatever they fancied, and borrowed horses to carry their spoil away; but the latter were returned promptly, as was Rob's way.

At their battle stations in wintry Fife they listened to reports of the Royal Review away back in Perth. Mar's gazettes arrived at Falkland full of glowing accounts of everything, from the precision of the Highlanders' drill to the godlike splendour of King James's person—"the handsomest man in the world, and the most mettled; does business to a wonder, and understands everything without being told." What were they missing, out here on picket duty along the Leven!

But in Perth it was a different story. King and Army coming to their first meeting with such high hopes of one another, left the parade ground sadly disappointed. James saw a few thousand illequipped Highlanders, resolved never again to believe anything that the Earl of Mar told him, and rode about for the rest of the day with despair written on his face. The loyal army "saw nothing in him that looked like spirit," and asked one another afterwards if the King were unable to speak. A few brave words about throwing away the scabbard would have made so much difference.

The Whig journalists made much of what they saw and heard. "A tall, lean, black man," was the Chevalier to their critical eyes, "looks halfdead already, very thin, longfaced, very coloured, and melancholy." Had he sat up drinking till midnight with his officers, it is easy to guess what they would have reported of him; as it was, he rose early from the banquet arranged in his honour, and must be ridiculed on that account. Those stationed by the door of the banqueting hall were rewarded with the best story of all, when one of the Chiefs presented to his Sovereign's notice a handsome pair of Highland girls for his solace during the night. It was a kind thought; the ladies were "nicely washed, but venal." But James was not that kind of a King. Coldly he turned his back on the hussies, and coldly took his leave of the disappointed Chiefs. If he was still cold between the sheets of his blameless royal bed at Scone that night, he had only himself to blame.

The thaw was come with a vengeance, and the whole of Fife oozed water like a sponge. The Leven, which yesterday moved black and sluggish between banks highpiled with snow, now raced down to the sea with a mighty roar. Noon was like dusk, and dusk as black as the pit. And in defiance of the dismal weather, and of all the accepted rules of war, General Cadogan was taking the field with his German mercenaries.

Rob was now joined by his nephew, and seems to have been at the head of two hundred men, notwithstanding the desertion of his Strathdee MacGregors. No doubt he had men of other clans under his command, as at Sheriffmuir, for he had come to be something more than a regimental officer. Perhaps he still had his contingent of MacPhersons; and men of other regiments, whose own commanders had gone home, would be glad to serve under the only Jacobite officer who still displayed a little energy.

But it was difficult to score any advantage off these mercenaries of Cadogan's. Recruited from all the Protestant States of Europe, dressed in Dutch uniforms, and hired out to maintain the Elector of Hanover on his tottering throne, they had no intention of risking their lives in that service. Moving only in strong detachments, they seized upon the biggest houses wherever they came, and turned them into little fortresses. Terrific and systematic plunderers, trained in the continental wars to live upon the country, they seldom moved on till larder and cellar were exhausted. All the country up to the Leven was quickly in their hands, and Cadogan set them to clearing the roads and bringing up his wheeled transport, in preparation for an advance on Perth itself.

The Tower of Balgonie, an ancient stronghold of the Leslies, stood on the south bank of the Leven, a little above Cameron Bridge, commanding a long reach of the river. Deserted by its lairds, it was still a formidable place; and there Cadogan had decided to plant a garrison. On the 21st of January a party of about a hundred officers and men, with their baggage and light guns, moved up to occupy the tower. They were in sight of the place, and bewailing the comfortless aspect of their new quarters, when a stalwart, bearded figure rose out of the lowlying mist, and coolly swung a bonnet about his head. Up jumped another figure on the other side of the road, repeating the signal; and the Germans found themselves neatly trapped between two companies of very resolute-looking Highlandmen, armed to the teeth. They recovered swiftly from their surprise, stood massed about their wagons, and held their fire. But their commander had no appetite for a bellyful of lead, and after a brief parley surrendered unconditionally to a pair of breekless barbarians calling themselves Glengyle and Inversnaid.

Back over Cameron Bridge passed the triumphant MacGregors, festooned with captured belts and bandoliers; the prisoners in their outlandish uniforms; and the wellladen wagons. As for the Tower of Balgonie, a barrel of powder exploded under the posterngate brought down as much of the wall as left the place useless for defence. That was the Highlander's way with a captured fortress.

CHAPTER X. 27th January—10th February 1716

CRIEFF was in flames, and Auchterarder, and all the little Perthshire towns in the thirty miles between the armies. Nor was this the work of King George's foreign soldiery, but of companies of Highlanders coming out of Perth with the Commander-in-Chief's written authority in their pockets. There was a new and vigorous policy at Jacobite headquarters, it seemed—a policy of "scorched earth" and never surrender, that suited the remnant of the army better than the daydreaming of the past month. [In the fields about the city the ground was pegged out for a huge system of ramparts and ditches, and the Lowland troops set to digging as if in preparation for one of the great sieges of history.

But Mar himself knew better. Since the landing of Cadogan's fresh troops, he must have realised that the game was up. It does not appear that either he or the King had any serious intention of trying to hold Perth, though the work on the ramparts served its purpose of keeping the men busy. Both had their berths already booked, unknown to the army, on board one of those French ships lying at Dundee. It only remained to do what could be done for the loyal remnants of their forces. So long as they bluffed it out in Perth, Mar had hopes of securing terms for the Lowland cavaliers, who would be ruined men else. With the Highlanders, the problem was rather how to persuade them to disperse quietly. In their own interests, and that of the cause, the clans must be left to fight with better fortune on another day.

Well, he could do no more now for his Lowland friends. According to his most reliable spies, Argyll's advance was fixed for the twenty-ninth—the day after tomorrow. One of Mar's last despatches went off that night, by special messenger, addressed to the Laird of Glengyle, commanding the garrison of Falkland

"These are ordering you and requiring you with the Battalion of the name of MacGregor . . . upon sight hereof forthwith to call in all the parties you have out as in Garrisons or elsewhere, or order them immediately to join you on your march, and to march with them and the whole garrison under your command, to Naughton and in conjunction with that Garrison to march to the water side of Dundee, where boats will be ordered to be in readiness to transport you to Dundee, and there you are to observe and obey such other orders as shall be transmitted to you. This you are to do with all possible care and expedition as you shall answer to his Majesty's E at your highest peril.

Given at the court of Scone this 27 January 1715/16."

Not a word about the evacuation of Perth or retreat to the north. But that regiment of Glengyle's must not be left in Fife to be cut off by the enemy's advance, for lack of a timely warning.

It took Argyll and his army three entire days to cross those thirty miles of snow and mud to Perth.

Finnab's Campbells led the advance, skipping along at a fair speed on the braesides. Behind them the country people, conscripted for the occasion, laboured to clear the roads for horse, foot, and guns. It was a fearful march from the first. The horses fell and broke the knees; uphill was bad, and downhill worse. One nig in this wilderness they had foreseen, and endured as well as they might. It was on the second day that they reached the manmade desolation of charred and lifeless villages, and began to see what was in store for them. It was not altogether a disappointment to the rank and file when word came back from the head of the column that the rebels had run from Perth without waiting to fire a shot.

The Duke took the news rather differently, thinking of all this might mean—a campaign in the Highlands, the horrors of guerrilla warfare, as cruel an ordeal for the men he commanded as for those others who were after all his countrymen. But Cadogan, the big, bland Irishman sent to Scotland to spy on him, cared nothing for this so long as his own career was advanced. There was much in his next report to Marlborough in London of Argyll's visible concern on hearing of the rebel's retreat. It was all in keeping, he suggested, with that officer's earlier unwillingness to march against them. Argyll was a Jacobite at heart, he could swear, and should never have been entrusted with the command.

A Highland army does not march its best in retreat, and it took Mar two anxious days to drag his half-mutinuous regiments back from Perth to Dundee. He was soon praying for the sight of a few redcoats on the road behind, as the only thing that would bring the men to their senses. Some got drunk and stayed behind; hundreds deserted on the way; and those that did reach Dundee broke out into open mutiny, and ran about the streets insulting the officers who had so betrayed them.

With the troops in their present temper, the sight of those French ships in the Tay might arouse all kinds of suspicions. Mar thought it safer to postpone that part of his programme for a few days more, and had the vessels taken farther up the coast to await fresh orders at Montrose. He also saw to it that the headquarters guard was furnished by a Lowland corps, in case of some wild plot to kidnap the King and carry him off to the Highlands.

It must have been very pleasant, therefore, when MacGregor of Balhaldies, that Highland Chief turned courtier, reported that his regiment was newly arrived from Fife, uncontaminated by the prevailing spirit of disaffection, and begged to be allowed to set eyes on His Majesty. If His Majesty had dined, would it be too much to ask him to show himself at a window?

On the 6th of February the remnant of the Jacobite army, still unbeaten in the field, marched into Aberdeen and there dispersed. On the same day Campbell of Glenlyon, commanding the last Jacobite garrison at the House of Weems in Rannoch, surrendered the places to Islay's Campbells, and marched out "with the honours of war." And that was the end of the Rising of "1715.

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Professor Gregory can hardly have dared offer his kinsmen the hospitality of his home on this visit. He was already in some danger of losing his place; but made light of it, lest his friend Rob should insist on offering him asylum in the savage Highlands. All Aberdeen was thankful at least that there was to be no last stand, however heroic, at the Bridge of Dee, and no excuse for the Government to indulge in reprisals. Since the King and Mar had given everybody the slip at Montrose, and sailed away for France, there was nothing left but the melancholy business of breaking up a gallant army. At ten o'clock on the following morning the Gregarach marched out, with the rest of the Highland troops, on the road for Inverurie.

There "all the Atholl and Breadalbin men" except the MacGregors, who preferred to go on with the main body to Strathbogie; and thence to Keith, where "upon Thursday night the 9th of this week, the rebel army consisting of about 4000, quartered in this parish and did a world of mischief by robbing and plundering." They were now in enemy country, the Grants having been in arms for the Government. Here was their last chance to collect "spoil of war"; and Rob Roy, like his father before him, scorned to come back emptyhanded from the wars. Alexander Sutherland of Tormore wrote piteously to his Chief on the 10th

"The clans have ruined this place, particularly my small interest, for Rob Roy MacGregor, and all his crew, Keppoch and most of Sir Donald's men lay on me last night, have carried away 20 of my people's horses, loaden with their effects, killed my sheep and in a manner left nothing would carry."

Rob was far from being the indiscriminate plunderer that is often alleged; but when war gave him an excuse to exercise his talents in that direction, he was certainly thorough.

On the 11th they crossed the hills again, into Strath Don; then back to Strath Spey, where they lay until the 16th at Ruthven. Here was the parting of the ways, and "the clans who till now kept in a body together, from hence went by different routes to their respective countries."

A journal of their march is found in a letter of April, from Clanranald to Mar.

CHAPTER XI. April 1716

IN the castle of Blair Atholl, Cadogan pulled on his jackboots and prepared to stamp out the last sparks of rebellion in Scotland.

Argyll had gone south at the end of February, and got a tremendous welcome from the Edinburgh magistrates as the saviour of their city; but Cadogan believed that he would find a different reception awaiting him in London. His own despatches and Marlborough's influence at Court would have seen to that. Meanwhile he had the situation in Scotland well in hand, and felt reasonably certain of getting most of the credit for the suppression of the Rising—which ought to mean a peerage. War was a career to Cadogan, and Scotland just one more country where it could be waged.

Even the prospect of being soon rid of Cadogan could do little to cheer his unwilling host. Of Atholl's four surviving sons, two were either exiles in France at this moment or still skulking in the heather. The soldiers might bring in Tullibardine in bonds this morning, for all he knew, or shoot young George on the hill this evening. And Charles was a prisoner in England, due to be executed with the first batch—having held King George's commission up to the eve of the Rising. . . . That was why Blair Atholl was the headquarters of the Elector's forces, and the Duke feverishly engaged in disarming his own clan. At the expense of the last ties of friendship with his Highland neighbours he must ride up and down the country at Cadogan's elbow, the harshest Whig of them all. Islay or Montrose had only to nod, and Atholl must run to see how he might serve them—so that his prayers might be favourably received at White. hail, when one or other of his rebellious sons came up for trial.

Of the long list of noblemen and gentlemen declared attainted of High Treason, unless they submitted to Government by the last day of June, nearly all were now accounted for. The submissions had come pouring in; and one by one the rest could be traced to France, or Sweden, or wherever else they found refuge. Breadalbin was dying; and none liked to disturb him, lest he change his mind. Now Glengarry had asked for terms; and because he was the last of them all (for he brought in Glencoe and a number of lesser Chiefs with him) he was given leave to make formal submission at Inverness. Cadogan was marching north to receive him, with three regiments of German infantry in front and two companies of Finlab's Campbells (whom he heartily distrusted) trailing along in rear.

But it was left to Colonel Russell, commanding the garrison at Finlarig, to stamp out the last spark of rebellion, in his absence.

The name of Rob Roy was familiar, of course, to the Finlarig garrison; but they had never associated the chief military problem of their district with a domestic establishment. When they received orders to adopt the usual punitive measures against "Robert Campbell alias MacGregor commonly called Rob Roy"—in other words, to burn down his house—they were in a quandary; the Campbell auxiliaries knew of so many houses where the great outlaw had lived at one time or another. But only one thing bothered the Swiss captain who was to command the expedition—where did this Rob Roy keep his wife and children? That was the place they had to seek out and set afire, over the heads of the inmates if necessary.

And somebody remembered having seen the lady, with her three sons, at the house of Auchinchisalan in Glen Orchy.

The house of Auchinchisallan stood empty and silent, awaiting its fate. No cows dotted the pasture, no movement was anywhere to be seen in the broad valleybottom. Only the heather stirred faintly now and again, up on the hill where Rob Roy lay in hiding with a dozen men.

Rob would have been as glad as any man to make his submission months ago, but knew that a score of submissions to the military authorities would not remove his civil outlawry. Indeed, if the Duke of Montrose came to hear of it, he was likely to be arrested as he came out of the barrack gate. There were other reasons too, over a hundred of them—all the more restless spirits of the old MacGregor Regiment, and those who had lost everything when Cadogan's soldiery passed that way, and hoped to restock their plundered farms before they settled down to the ways of peace. While these men stood by him there were so many things that could be done. Once scattered, Rob knew that he might never have such another force at his command.

Which of their recent activities had brought down Cadogan's wrath upon him, Rob could not tell. But his scouts had counted the pointed grenadier caps coming up from Strath Fillan, and there could be no doubt about their destination. Twelve men could do no good against such numbers, but Alasdair Roy was bringing up more from Craigostran, and might be expected within the hour. Mary and the boys, of course, had been packed off to seek shelter at Glengyle till the trouble blew over. There was nothing more Rob could do, but sit still and watch events.

These foreign soldiers were expert at the business, as Rob was well qualified to judge. They could know nothing of Alasdair Roy's coming, yet there was not a minute wasted from start to finish. The cows were quickly discovered down by the river, and the hens chased out from the corn and their necks wrung. Then the officer rode once round the house to see that all was ready—and before Rob knew it the deed was done, and smoke was curling up from the eaves.

"But Robert was not able to bear all this without attempting some revenge. Therefore with a few of these he could get readiest, his Craigostran folks not having time to come up, he fired from some rocks and passes upon the party and killed two or three, and has wounded ten or twelve; there's likewise one of his killed and several wounded, but all the booty was carried off... except a few wild beasts that ran away with the fifing."

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So Graham of Killearn reported the affair in a letter to Mungo Graham of Gorthie. And this little skirmish at Auchinchisallan, on the 5th of April 1716, seven months after the raising of Mar's standard, proved to be the last of the whole war.

Rob led a foray into the Lowlands next week, and brought away enough sheep from above Duntreat to compensate him twice over for all that he lost at Auchinchisallan. But he could not keep this up for ever. Glengarry had duly made his submission at Inverness. Balhaldies and Glengyle were both urging their unruly kinsman to do likewise, for the clan's good if not for their own. By some curious oversight their own names had not appeared in the list of persons summoned to submit themselves—an omission that they must have resented, in spite of its obvious advantages. Rob had been so honoured in their stead; and this was not to be tolerated.

So beside the ruins of Inversnaid Fort the Gregarach divided what spoil remained to them, gave a last cheer for King James, another for their captain, and dispersed to their homes. And Rob Roy, with only a piper and a few dozen men at his back, set out for Glen Croe and the road to Inveraray, where he could rely on his old acquaintance, Campbell of Finnab, to treat him fairly.

They say that when General Cadogan heard of it he shut up his headquarters, called his officers together, thanked them all for their loyal assistance, and declared the campaign at an end. Be that as it may, he was on his way to London by the 28th of April, to report to his grateful Sovereign that Scotland was pacified. His hated foreign troops followed him across the Border soon afterwards, on their way back to Holland.

And Rob Roy dosed yet another chapter of his life with a humble submission to Government .

Book IV. Beyond the Law.

CHAPTER I. May—October 1716

ROB Roy was made so welcome at Inveraray that what should have been a humiliating experience finished as a glorious carousal. With “about 45 of his followers” (those presumably who sought permanent employment in his band) he muttered an oath of allegiance to King George, made a “sham surrender” of some rusty swords and broken matchlocks, and received Finnab’s promise of his “particular protection” in writing. Then, rebels no more, they all enjoyed “two or three days very kind entertainment” by the Colonel and his friends. The Campbells evidently were eager to dissociate themselves from Cadogan’s harsh treatment of their fellow Highlanders, and to see what generosity would do. Nevertheless, when Rob awoke on the fourth morning, his throat dry, his mouth foul, and the gulls wailing outside on the quay like lost souls, his outlook cannot have been bright. He was a man that had failed in everything. The Jacobite cause was in the mire, and the last hopes for the future of the Gregarach with it. Even his personal honour had come badly out of the war. All his friends were broken men like himself, or fled overseas. Inversnaid

1 This in spite of the fact that he was “actually attainted by the Parliament a good while before,” as Montrose complains in his letter to Lord Townshend (of 21st November 1716) from which this account is taken. was lost to him, once a garrison was established there. Last week the soldiers had burnt Glengyle House to the ground, a loss that affected him as much as that of Auchinchisallan. The war had ruined what remained of his business, along with most of his old clients. His Sons were almost strangers to him, his wife hardly less so, since it was impossible to take her up and down the country with him, impossible to get her to live peaceably with any of his kin.

And yet cold water, liberally applied, can do wonders for a man.

It was rumoured that the Independent Companies, in which Finnab had so long held a command, were shortly to be disbanded (at Cadogan’s suggestion). The Campbells, who liked to think that they stood for the selfgovernment of the Highlands (by which they meant government by Campbells), had always furnished the Companies with most of their officers. If the Companies must go, there was likely to be a revival of the private Watches, which should also be as far as possible under Campbell control. So it is not unreasonable to suppose that Finnab urged Rob Roy, before he left Inveraray, to take up his old employment as Protector of the Lennox, rather than go back to the life of lawlessness which he led immediately before the war.

Was Montrose’s illwill the only obstacle? Then Rob must get himself a friend at Court—one great enough to stand up to Montrose, and owning lands as wide as he. What of Argyll? . . . It was a curious proposal to make to one who had only yesterday been a Jacobite in arms. It was altogether too soon after the black day of Sheriffmuir—it would be said that he turned his coat. But some day, when party strife had died down a little, he might be very glad to accept.

Things had been going excellently well of late with His Grace the Duke of Montrose, K.G., Secretary of State for Scotland, to whom every loyal Whig looked for honours, every attainted Jacobite for pardon. And this summer brought him the greatest triumph of all, when the proud Argyll was successfully dragged down—disgraced at Court, and deprived of all his offices—as the result of a particularly shameful piece of string pulling in London. This happy event left Montrose all but supreme in Scotland, and as nearly satisfied as he would ever be.

Argyll’s downfall was itself a warning to other loyal servants of King George, that it was not safe to stay too long away from Whitehall, where the strings were pulled; and Scotland saw little of its Secretary of State at this time. But he came at last to Buchanan House, to rush through a mass of accumulated estate business; and one of the first names he heard from Gorthie’s lips was that of Rob Roy, who was back at Inversnaid at the head of about two hundred men. According to Gorthie, he was pillaging and plundering all along the border; and had actually attacked a party of the King’s troops, and rescued a prisoner from them.

Whatever the truth of this, it is not surprising that the Duke resolved to make an end of Rob forthwith, clear the MacGregors out of Craigrostan, and hurry on the completion (or rebuilding, we cannot say which) of the Fort. Since Argyll’s removal from the command there was never any difficulty about securing the full cooperation of the military with the civil authorities. General Carpenter, the new CommanderinChief, was completely at Montrose’s disposal, and the expedition was organised with the utmost secrecy. Three separate parties, each of about eighty regular soldiers—well accustomed by now to this type of warfare—would march under cover of night, and converge upon Inversnaid at daybreak.

In spite of violent rainstorms, which turned all the paths to muddy rivulets and drenched the troops to the skin, two of these parties kept faithfully to their timetable—the grenadiers from Stirling, under the guidance of Graham of Killearn in his capacity of SheriffDepute; and the dragoons from Glasgow, who were joined at Buchanan House by Graham of Gorthie. But the third column, marching down from Finlarig, to close the trap, never arrived on the scene till all was over. Rob Roy was naturally not found at home; nor had he left a single fourfooted beast to fall into the invaders’ hands.

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When a few Highlanders showed themselves among the rocks up the hill, and opened fire at long range, the officer commanding the expedition, Major Green of the Royal Dragoons, felt that he had “sufficient provocation to burn Rob Roy’s house, which accordingly was done.” He lost one grenadier killed, and several wounded; but he believed he had impressed the natives with the might of British arms. That night, across the glen, the empty shell of Inversnaid Fort grinned at the smoking ruins of Inversnaid House.

From the Major’s reluctance to burn the house without provocation, it may be doubted whether Gorthie’s account of Rob’s lawless doings that summer was true. But if Rob did intend to live peaceably after his submission to Finlab, this put an end to it. “The station where Rob Roy keeps is at a great distance,” Carpenter wrote a few days later to Lord Townshend; and there were even rumours that he had left Scotland. But it is likely that he was no farther off than his little cave down by the shore. And he had remembered that two weeks hence was Martinmas. . .

‘The Flying Post’ of 28th October 1716 gives a brief notice of the expedition; the details are from Montrose’s letter of 21st November.

CHAPTER II. 19th November—December 1716

THE November term was come again, and it was just such another gusty night as three years ago. At the Inn of Chapellaroch the Duke's tenants sat once more with tankards of ale in their fists, and waistcoats half unbuttoned, and the lighted windows glowed cheerily in the dusk. But now it was John Graham of Killearn who sat at the head of the board, with moneybags and books of account before him.

Killearn had seen more than enough of arms and alarums during the late rebellion, for a man whose heart was in his master's ledgers. It was good to feel that normal times were back again, when he might perform his old familiar duties about the estate without fear of violence. Last month's raid on Inversnaid seemed to have had the desired effect; for they had all heard with relief, a couple of weeks ago, of Rob Roy's departure for Ireland with a few of his closest friends to seek a living in that distressful land. A countryside freed from the menace of Rob Roy—that was almost too good to believe! And there came to Killearn's ears a sound as of a bagpipe playing faintly in the distance.

Every man in the room was suddenly quiet, as the mysterious music came nearer, out there in the lonely night—a ranting march, which none of them could put a name to, but full of menace at such a time and place.... The silence within was violently broken as Killearn sprang to his feet, swept his moneybags together into his arms, and ran for the stairway at the end of the room. Swiftly he mounted, butted open the trapdoor, and flung his treasure into the loft above.

He was down again in a moment, dusting his hands and setting his wig straight, and looked almost triumphant as he took his place again at table. Whoever called Graham of Killearn coward was making a mistake.

Now the piper was close to the inn, where he stopped his playing. Footsteps approached the door. It opened, and a familiar figure stepped into the room, ruddy of beard and tartan—Rob Roy MacGregor, no more fled to Ireland than to Jericho!

There were some who said afterwards that Rob's face lit up with savage glee when he saw who sat at the tablehead; yet he acted from the first as if he had known he would find Killearn there.

"Never mind me, gentlemen!" he begged, as if his arrival were the most natural thing in the world. "I'm only wanting a word with the factor yonder, and it can wait a bit yet."

About a dozen of his MacGregors filed into the room as he spoke, and took up their stations round the walls; there was no question this time of two men masquerading as twenty. Rob sat down, and began to make himself agreeable to the tongue-tied farmers nearest him. So the meal progressed uneasily for some, but not unpleasantly for those that knew Rob Roy and his ways, and had their rent receipts safe in their pockets. Killearn sat apart, like a doomed man.

There was a shifting of benches, and he realised that the tenants were preparing to leave. Powerless though they were to help him, he had yet found something reassuring in their presence. Rob Roy stood by the door, joking with an old acquaintance here and there, and wishing all a pleasant journey to their homes. Then his bodyguard took their places at the board, and fell hungrily upon the remains of the feast. Not until he had seen them settled at table, and given some directions to his sentinels outside, did Rob at last give his attention to his prisoner—if such he was—the Laird of Killearn.

"First of all," said Rob, turning the leaves of Montrose's rent accounts as if they were his own, "for my business with the Duke. How have you come on with your collection?"

"I have made no collection," Killearn lied boldly. "I had not begun when you came in, and now you have sent the tenants away."

Rob Roy permitted himself a grim smile. "No, no," he answered, "that story will not serve you. Montrose never feasted his tenants till he had their money, that I'll swear. But if you'll not say, I'm ready to account fairly with you by the book."

He ran his finger down the columns of figures, adding them as expertly as any clerk; then called on some of his men to search the premises for the money. He would not even watch them at work, but busied himself with checking the rest of the factor's papers. And soon enough the bags were discovered in the loft, and flung down with a great clashing of silver pieces. Rob cocked an eyebrow at Killearn, bid Alasdair Roy count the money for him, and returned to the figures he was scribbling on a loose sheet. Killearn began to hope that the worst was over. Rob Roy never harmed a man in cold blood, and he was certainly cool enough now.

"All correct? Killearn deals honestly with his own master at least." Rob twisted round to face the factor, his scribbled notes before him. "I'll speak in terms of accountancy," he went on, "since that's the language you'll best understand. There's an account been running overlong between your Duke and myself, that can now be closed, with your help. First let us take His Grace's indebtedness to me—a number of injuries done to me and mine these last four years, closing with my very moderate claims for compensation for the burning of two houses of mine this year. . . . On the opposite side are such payments as I have been able to extort from him, from time to time, on account of this debt. Wait now, while I enter today's takings 1—that goes some way towards balancing the account."

Killearn smiled sourly, but refused to look at Rob's unconventional arithmetic. "The balance is trifling—say 3400 merks.² When that's paid and I have the Duke's written discharge for all moneys I ever had of him, then there should be an end of the senseless feud between us. And to induce him to give these matters his best attention, I shall

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detain the person of His Grace's factor until the balance is paid me, by way of— "Hostage?" cried Kilearn, with a sinking heart. "Sir, you forget you are in Scotland, not the backwoods of America."

"By way of security, I was about to say; and that's not considered barbarous in Edinburgh itself. . . . Here are pen and ink. Let us set this down in a letter to the Duke, that one of the inn servants can carry for you... "

At Rob's dictation the letter was soon written,³ referring the Duke to the bearer for the story of all that had happened; but setting forth Rob's demands, and the conditions of Kilearn's release. The innkeeper's son, full of self-importance at being the bearer of a message to the Duke in person, was given his instructions.

' It was £3227. 2S. 5d. in Scots money, or £286, 28s. 6d. sterling.

' About £188 sterling.

' It is dated the 19th November, and can still be seen at Buchanan House.

"And now we have some little way to travel before morning," Rob announced. "My private business with yourself, Kilearn, must wait a while longer. You have a horse in the stable? You've no objection, I hope, to this lad borrowing it for his journey? For I assure you, a horse will be little use to any of us where we are now going."

A bitter wind roared down the length of Loch Katrine, slapping great black waves upon the beaches; and little Eilean Dhu seemed to rock like a boat in the midst of the waters. Here Graham of Kilearn sat crouched over a peatfire in a small turf cabin, a twodaysold beard sprouting on his chin, and got what comfort he could from the fact that he was alive, and sound in body and limb. His captors, to give them their due, had asked him to endure no more than they shared with him; but he was middleaged and used to soft living. Thank God, they could hardly leave the island while this gale lasted, and he might be allowed to rest his aching bones in one spot for a few hours.

So far as his kidnapping was designed to squeeze money out of the Duke, there was nothing to fear; Montrose would pay no ransom. Nor would Rob Roy do his prisoner any hurt of his own accord, he was sure of it. But Rob's wife was coming to Eilean Dhu; and even so levelheaded a man as he might be ready to throw his good name to the winds, and stoop to sheer villainy, for a woman's sake. Mary MacGregor had been half deranged, it was said, by that rough handling she received. He would give much to avoid this meeting.

Rob was probably meaning to fight him—before this woman's eyes, no doubt; either to maim or humiliate him (since he was no swordsman) and let him go. In that case Kilearn would simply refuse to hold a sword; and for any man, that claimed to be a gentleman, to shed the blood of one who made no attempt to defend himself, was out of the question. Kilearn was not a very courageous man, but he had no intention of falling in with Rob's plans for him. He must be butchered, or set free; there should be no middle course.

Eilean Dhu lies opposite Portanellan, where the Glengyle family were living in cramped quarters till their house should rise again from the ashes. Mary was there too—the soldiers had left her little choice of residence—and had only to cross the water to enjoy her belated revenge upon Kilearn. What actually happened?

At the last moment, perhaps, she discovered that she had no wish to have this man, in terror for his life, grovelling to her for mercy. She had dreamed so long of revenge; and yet, if there was one thing likely to drive her stark, raving mad, it was the sight of his face. Let her never see him again, and all might be well.

This we do know; that Kilearn was whisked away to a new hidingplace, under a cliff on LochLomondside, which is called "Rob Roy's Prison" to this day. When Mary crossed over to Eilean Dhu, it was her husband she sought; and there the two of them tarried, and found something they had thought lost for ever, and so ended four years' estrangement.

Four days later, since there came no word from Montrose, the wretched Kilearn was turned loose, with his account books, papers, and bonds—all, that is, but the money.

Montrose, exerting all his influence to have the kidnapping of his factor construed as a menace to King George's Government, sent a very full report of the incident to Lord Townshend in London, with an outline of Rob's whole career 'to date,¹ and a particular account

¹ From which come the extracts already quoted. Rob is stated to have "putt himself under the protection of the Earl of Breadalbin" three or four years ago, but there is no word of the Duke of Argyll, of his more recent crimes. In this way the name of Rob Roy came first to the personal notice of the future George II. (then guardian of the realm in his father's absence), who expressed "the utmost resentment of that insolent attempt of Rob Roy's," ¹ though his actual words were naturally in German. General Carpenter was bombarded with orders for immediate reprisals, but had no very promising suggestions to make.

"I think some method should be contrived, if possible, to take or clear the country of such a notorious robber and his gang," he wrote naively to the Duke on the 26th of November. "Twill be difficult to get him any way but by bribing one of his followers to betray him to a Party, otherwise he will always be too cunning and nimble for soldiers under arms." So little did the Commander of the Forces understand the nature of the Highlandmen.

Kilearn's return to civilisation, unransomed yet unharmed, did nothing to avert the storm. Montrose demanded soldiers, and he got them. The rebuilding of Inversnaid Fort was hurried on; and Carpenter, still a firm believer in the power of gold, offered a reward of fifty pounds for the capture of Rob Roy—the villain whose answer to the burning of his paltry houses was this piece of sheer terrorism. How effective an answer it had been, Rob realised when he learnt that Montrose had removed himself, his chamberlain, and his private papers from Buchanan House to the safety

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of lodgings in Glasgow. And Ormiston, the Lord JusticeClerk, having occasion to pay his colleague a visit there, wrote that he was “frightened to come by the Stirling Road on account of Rob Roy’s kidnapping way.”

Rob knew better than to keep his band together in the face of such a determined effort to suppress him. Dismissing them to their homes, he prepared to go into hiding for the rest of the winter, and let the storm blow over. Carpenter could not be expected to lend his troops for ever. It only remained to find a home for Mary and the boys; and he felt that the time had come to follow Finnab’s advice. Six months ago, out of Jacobite sentiment, he had refused to seek Argyll’s protection for himself. Now there was Mary to consider, and the child that was coming—the fruit of their strange reunion on Eilean Dhu—and Jacobite sentiment must look after itself. Complete security would mean so much to her now; and Argyll could give it, if he would.

Unfortunately when Finnab’s answer came it was not just what they had hoped.

He had been summoned by General Carpenter to Edinburi, reprimanded for his friendly dealings with Rob last May, and made to promise to “exert either to take him or drive him out of the country.”¹ His messenger came stealthily to Rob’s door after dark, warning him that the Independent Companies were again on his track, announcing the withdrawal of the colonel’s previous protection, and offering his apologies. The colonel was a conscientious officer; and having done all he could as a friend, was likely to drive Rob as hard as anybody. He was not his own master in this.

But there was one other message, that made up for all the rest. If any of Rob’s family liked to take sanctuary in Argyll’s domains, there was the farm of Benbhui in Glen Shira that his Grace would put at their disposal, for as long as they chose to stay.

I “Finab went hence. seeming very earnest to take him; so I am of opinion he is, or will soon be. catch’t or oblig’d to go off. I promis’d to pay if he could be taken.” (Carpenter to Montrose, 15th December 1716.)

CHAPTER III. April—June 1717

ONCE let party politics (early eighteenthcentury style) stray into a story, and you will hear no more of such high themes as Loyalty and Valour. The one goes cringing to the best paymaster; the other roams the streets with the Mohocks, beating up whoever cannot be bought. Be thankful that we are here concerned with Highland affairs, where the intrigues of the metropolis are of no account.

But not even the unsophisticated Highlands could ignore the political downfall of their own MacCailein More, and the rise of Montrose to all but supreme power in Scotland. So for a time, while the Jacobite cause lay in the dust, men forgot their old party labels and transferred their support to one or other of the Dukes in their great quarrel. At present the advantage certainly lay with Montrose, now almost at the summit of his earthly ambitions, and arrogant with power.

His treatment of the Independent Companies was widely resented. In the middle of an unusually severe winter that admirable force, officered mainly by gentlemen of Argyll's clan and known to be of his party, was ordered out on an unpopular duty—to scour the hills for one Rob Roy MacGregor, a private enemy of Montrose's. Two months they spent on this arduous service, but could report no success. Thereupon the Duke laid a complaint before the CommanderinChief, accusing the Companies of inefficiency, disloyalty, and corruption. There was a mighty scandal, but never any proper inquiry into the facts; and forthwith the Companies were disbanded. Lest the Duke's own estates should suffer by the removal of these native police, the new fort at Inversnaid was now completed and garrisoned by English troops, under whose guns the surrounding glens passed quietly into the Duke's ready hands.¹

Whoever was aggrieved by this or other measures of the Government, drifted naturally into Argyll's camp. And because Montrose had come to stand for Sassenach interference in Highland affairs, there was a tendency for good Jacobites to take the part of the very man who had lately beaten them in the field. Rob Roy, though much relieved by the disbandment of the Companies, had probably better reasons than most for throwing himself into the quarrel on Argyll's side. He owed the Duke his gratitude for his family's safe refuge in Glen Shira throughout that weary winter; and the Duke's protection would be of immense advantage to him in his own perennial feud with Montrose. It is more usual to seek a man's patronage when his fortunes are soaring, which nobody could say of Argyll at this time; yet Rob seems to have felt that he made a good bargain when Finnab took him up to Inveraray Castle to be presented to his new patron.

Within a very few weeks of that visit to Inveraray, Rob began to discover what it meant to become involved, even to so small an extent, in national politics. There was a powerful subparty among the Scottish Whigs, known as the "Squadron," which began to take an extraordinary interest in him. One type of historian,¹ according to a contemporary War Office map, the site of the old house of Inversnaid was now occupied by Army huts, making it impossible to rebuild. which attaches more importance to these backstairs intrigues than to the clash of claymores, will say that here is Rob Roy's place in history.

Their first emissary seems to have been Graham of Killearn, who brought proposals which Rob tells us he "could not entertain but with the utmost horror." Then came a second message, from no less a person than Cockburn of Ormiston, the Lord JusticeClerk, seeking an interview; though he would not consent to come any farther than the changehouse at Cramond Bridge, which is a few miles out of Edinburgh.

Rob's curiosity drove him to accept. On the appointed day, both parties having taken their own precautions against kidnapping, a coach rolled up to the door of the changehouse, and out stepped a little old man in black. A solitary horseman rode up from the opposite direction, swathed in a long cloak. In a private room that desperate pair sat down to business—the eminent lawyer and the no less celebrated outlaw.

Of their conversation we know the gist; and it may be helpful to set down in direct speech what could have passed between them

ORMISTON: I'm told, sir, you have come to an understanding with His Grace of Argyll? You'll forgive me if I find that interesting.

ROB ROY: An understanding? I'd not put it so high. I enjoy "wood and water" on his lands, it's true— O.: And live under His Grace's protection? R. R.: In common with every other living creature on his estates.

O.: But is not this a strange alliance, sir, between a well-affected nobleman on the one side and an attainted Jacobite captain on the other? Any suspicion of such a thing, during the period of the rebellion, would have been extremely damaging to your honour, I suppose. among your Jacobite friends?

R.

R.: Naturally. But the case is rather different today.

O.: Is that so? Since when, would you say, have circumstances been so different, that a Jacobite gentle man can be well disposed towards one of King George's principal officers, without hurt to his honour?

R. R.: Since the Duke was deprived of his command. O.: Can we not date it a little earlier, from when the Pretender's army dispersed at Aberdeen?

R. R.: Personally I was not prepared to give in so soon.

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0.: But the Duke was very eager that you should do so. . . . And so you did, I understand, in the following April, while he still held his command?

R. R.: A purely military surrender, without other significance.

0.: Quite so. I'm entirely satisfied that you, sir, have acted honourably throughout (according to your unfortunate political views). The question is, has Argyll? Are you not aware of his intention of going over to the Pretender? That he would have done so, but for General Cadogan's timely arrival? That he continued to put every obstacle in the way of the crushing of the rebellion? That these were the grounds for his dismissal? That since his dismissal he's plotted with the northcountry Chiefs—the officers of Independent Companies—with yourself, I've no doubt—for a fresh Rising?

R. R.: I only wish it were true.

0.: You saw service in the west, before Inveraray? Then you know of the secret understanding that his town should suffer no harm? Were you not yourself employed to provision the garrison by water?

R. R.: That's a lie!

0.: Since we are being so outspoken, permit me to tell you what is commonly said of your friendship with the Duke of Argyll—that either he's false to King George, or you to the Pretender. You may choose whichever version pleases you best.

R. R.: Let them say what they will! The war's over, and there's no hint of politics about our relations.

0.: Unfortunately nobody believes that. You may be able to persuade yourself, but I must confess I incline to the popular view. . . . And I do you the honour, sir, of believing it's Argyll is the traitor. It may be that you can think of further evidence? R.

R.: I cannot! And if I could—0.: Remember this, sir; there are plenty that hold the opposite view—that it's you are the traitor. And not altogether without excuse. You are said to have disclosed to the Duke the secret of the fords of Forth, known only to yourself. . . . At Sheriff muir I understand that your regiment stood neutral, at the crisis of the battle. . . . And then Campbell of Finnab arranged a sham surrender for you.

R. R.: God! Are those old tales still going about?

0.: Undoubtedly they are. So there you have the alternatives. Which do you think the more probable? At present; rather illogically, both are widely believed.

R. R.: Both are false as Hell!

0.: Almost certainly one of them is. If we can prove Argyll the traitor, the stories against you will soon be forgotten. Similarly, if the treachery is on your side, then Argyll is a good patriot after all. We are inclined, as I have said, to believe you honest, and have no wish to see you under the suspicion of your own friends. The best service that we can do you, in these circumstances, is to bring Argyll's Jacobite plottings to light. . . . Will you not help us?

R. R.: And ruin the Duke utterly?

0.: Certainly.

R. R.: I'll have nothing to do with it.

0.: Need I say that you have much to gain besides, if you come in with us? Your life and pardon—

R. R.: Not on such terms.

0.: You speak, sir, as if this were some attempt to buy your services. Believe me, Argyll is obnoxious now to Whig and Jacobite alike. Both will be grateful for his removal.

So it went on, till Ormiston despaired of shaking Rob's resolution, and climbed back into his coach. Looking after him, and at the looming shadow of Edinburgh Castle beyond, Rob must have been reminded of Dalness the informer, and shuddered at the muddy politics of that proud city.

Rob and Mary were now living at Benhui farm in Glen Shira, where they meant to stay till after the child was born. They seem to have been very comfortable, and Rob's reputation as "a fine neighbourly man" was still remembered in the parish at the end of last century.' But they could not live all their lives in exile; and exile it was in Glen Shira, far from all their own folk. Rob's business too, which he was slowly building up on improved lines, must suffer by his removal from his old haunts. So they were looking forward to the time when they could settle down, in the place they had first known as home—the Braes of Balquhider.

Rob had his eye on the farm of Inverlochlarig Beg, at the upper end of the valley that was MacGregor land by ancient custom; and made prompt application to Atholl's balie as soon as it fell vacant. The lease could have been granted in a friend's name, as it was quite

' Speech by the 8th Duke of Argyll, at the Jubilee celebrations in 1897. irregular, of course, to grant it to an outlawed man; but the bailie may have felt bound to consult the Duke his master. Rob would have preferred not to bother his old patron with the matter, or put himself under any further obligation to him. But, whether on this or other business, it is clear that he did enter into correspondence at this time with the Duke of Atholl, which eventually called for his presence at Dunkeld House.

According to Rob Roy's own account, he was invited there as if to discuss private business—it may be this very business of the lease. But as the road to Dunkeld would take him out of his own district, it was the most natural thing in the world that he should ask for a safeconduct from the Duke, to avoid interference by the military or by the Duke's

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own people. He must have noticed, when it reached him, that it was signed by Lord Edward Murray, the Duke's brother; but he thought nothing of that. And he fixed his appointment for the 3rd of June.

Atholl himself told a different tale. He always declared that Rob Roy surrendered to him of his own accord—it is not explained why, except that he had “not lain three nights together in a house these twelve months,” and so must presumably be grateful for any kind of lodging. But Rob's subsequent behaviour is quite inconsistent with a voluntary surrender. And we have the independent testimony of the Reverend William Murray, in a letter to the Minister of Ardochattan, that there were “several embassies between His Grace and Rob, who at length upon promise of protection came to wait upon the Duke.”

The traditional story, which follows, may not be true in all its details; but it is certainly no more absurd than that put forward by the Duke.

Everything was very quiet when Rob and his man rode to Atholl's gate. But hardly had they seen their horses led away, when the Duke appeared in person to welcome his visitor, whom he greeted like an old friend, and invited to take a turn in the garden, which was probably the finest that the Highlands could boast. Yet Rob would much have preferred to be asked indoors, to remove the dust and sweat of his journey. His thirst too was prodigious, and craved good ale rather than the scent of flowers. This was not the usual Highland hospitality.

“If you'll forgive me,” said the Duke, “I'll ask you to leave off your sword. The Duchess will have none of us bear arms at home — you see I'm in the same condition—”

Rob cheerfully complied, handing sword and scabbard to the chamberlain as directed.

“Now,” said Atholl, “for my business with you. I understand that you are lately come into high favour with the Duke of Argyll. Probably you are therefore in a position to tell us. . . .” And as Rob listened, at first with polite interest, then bewilderment, finally with disgust, he proceeded to unfold to him the identical plot for the ruin of Argyll in which Killearn and Ormiston had been so eager to engage him before.

“I know nothing in the world that could incriminate Argyll,” Rob protested, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise. “If he ever has toyed with Jacobitism, which I'll take the liberty of doubting.”

Atholl waved all objections aside, and went on to speak of the great advantages Rob might gain by lending his support to the cause of justice—the restoration of his estates, the renewed friendship of himself and Montrose, the lifting of his outlawry. . . . But at this moment they turned a corner, and found themselves in

In the story it is Blair Atholl, but in fact it must have been Dunkeld House. the presence of the Duchess—Atholl's second wife, a merry, laughter-loving girl—to whom Rob must of course be presented.

She seemed quite as flattered as he. “But I am a little surprised,” she told him, “to find the celebrated Rob Roy going unarmed!”

“I laid my sword aside,” said Rob, “out of respect for your Grace's excellent rule.”

“What rule? I made no rule—” The poor lady saw that she had said something wrong, and retreated to the house, while the two men eyed each other warily. Rob began to suspect it was by no oversight that he had not been asked over the threshold, or offered the refreshment that would have made him technically a guest. Nor were the Duke's next words reassuring.

“Were you to fall into Montrose's hands, I believe it would go badly with you? But if it became known that you had surrendered yourself to me, of your own accord and for the peace of the country, then we could see that you got easy terms. Would not that be the best way?”

“Sir, we speak at crosspurposes,” said Rob. “I do not contemplate surrender, voluntary or otherwise, to yourself or any other.”

“It makes little difference, I fear.” At a sign from the Duke, his officers came hurrying to his side.

“Sir I” cried Rob, “remember I hold your safeconduct!”

Atholl wavered; then remembered his son lying in prison, and hardened his heart. “What my brother may have promised is no concern of mine,” he muttered.

Rob whirled about, as a couple of pistols were thrust into his ribs; his arms were seized and twisted behind him.

The news of Rob Roy's capture spread fast, for Atholl was immensely proud of having succeeded where Montrose and the rest had failed so often. To his friends he wrote letters full of unrestrained glee, and the congratulations came pouring in—some of them tempered with wellmeant warnings that his prisoner had friends very likely to attempt a rescue. King George himself was told of it, and expressed himself (through an interpreter, no doubt) “mighty well pleased with his Grace's care and diligence on this occasion.”

So three days passed, and still the prisoner was no nearer the dungeon that waited for him in Edinburgh Castle. Indeed he was some five miles farther away, for there was no convenient prison at Dunkeld, and the Duke had him carried off to Logierait and lodged there in the jail. It was whispered that he was anxious to keep him as long as possible in his own hands, jealous lest the Government should forget whom they had to thank for his taking.

On the morning of the 6th of June, Atholl set out from Dunkeld for Perth, to see how the preparations were going forward for Rob's reception, and to visit his Duchess at Huntingtower. At daybreak on the same summer's morning a party of soldiers marched out from Perth, under orders from the Commander-in-Chief, to receive the person of one “Robert Campbell alias Roy” out of the Duke's custody. They met at the ferry below Dunkeld at a little after noon, and there debated the rival claims of feudal and military law to the custody of such as had offended against both.

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Captain Lloyd, in command of the military escort, produced General Carpenter's authority to take over the prisoner, but unfortunately carried no letter for his Grace, who was vastly offended by the procedure. And finally (so important were Dukes in those days, compared to "He shall be put in the castle," wrote the Lord Justiceclerk, "which is the best prison the King has." with mere captains in His Majesty's forces) the soldiers turned back again to Perth without the prisoner, who must remain where he was, for the greater glory of the House of Atholl, until some more fitting arrangement was made for his transfer to the capital.

At Logierait, meanwhile, everything possible was being done to render Rob's captivity pleasant. His bonds were removed, and he shared the single room of the jail with the members of his guard, with whom he was on excellent terms, especially after it became apparent that his sole remaining earthly ambition was to make as merry an end as possible. This was not unusual among Highland malefactors, and nothing was ever set in their way so long as they had money to pay for their liquor. Brandy was what this one loved most in the world, and they saw that he got it—even shared it with him. On this particular morning everyone was drowsy, for they had been "taking the other dram heartily." It was ten o'clock, and the sentry at the door was the only really sober man in the place, when Rob Roy's gillie presented himself to receive any messages his master might have for his sorrowing family.

This was by the Duke's permission, and the man was allowed to come as far as the door, where he waited with the horse's reins over his arm, and the sentry's eye upon him. The rest of the guard sat where they were and laughed as their shock-headed prisoner stood blinking in the sunlight and trying to collect his fuddled wits. His messages, when he gave them, were of a private and domestic character; so that everyone was nodding again when, "taking some few steps carelessly from the door about the house till he comes close by his horse," Rob went suddenly into violent action. The sleepy sentry staggered back from a threatened blow, the glue dropped the reins and leapt clear, and there was Rob half in and half out of the saddle, disappearing in a cloud of dust. Any but a good horseman would have been tossed off in the first few yards; but he was astride, and already turning the corner of the street when the muskets roared behind him.

"I cannot express how vexed I am for this unlucky affair, but I assure you I shall leave no method untried that can be done to catch him." Thus Atholl wrote next day to General Carpenter, in a forlorn attempt to pass off Rob's escape as merely a temporary setback. "I have already given orders to 60 of my Highlanders to follow him wherever he can be found, and those that command them have undertaken to me to bring him in if he keeps to Scotland." And he begged the loan of "50 fusils and as many swords or bagonets."

He got the arms, but little sympathy from anybody. In particular he found it awkward to explain why a prisoner who voluntarily surrendered himself—as Rob Roy was supposed to have done—should break prison three days later. If only he had been warned of the coming of the soldiers, he declared, in time "to have kept the knowledge of it from Rob Roy, all had done well enough; but the surprise of it so soon made him go off." Carpenter assured him that Captain Lloyd's party had marched "with secrecy and all the dispatch possible," and refused to take any blame for what had happened.

Be that as it may, the chase that followed was as hot as any that Rob had known. One of those musketballs had scraped his thigh, and the wound was so troublesome that he had to give up all idea of making straight for his own country, and go to ground instead among his friends in Glen Almond. Poor Coynachan must have been horrified when his troublesome kinsman staggered up to his door, with all Atholl's horses and men on his trail; yet it was impossible to refuse to take him in. And a day of skulking in the bogs had done Rob's fleshwound no good. The place "swelled so big that he was unable to walk"; and there he was stranded, at the mercy of the first ill-natured person who should come to know of his presence.

But there were some of Atholl's people—as there were of Montrose's—with little heart for this hunting down of a former friend and neighbour. When Donald Stewart, the chamberlain, sent a party to search Coynachan's house, two of his own men contrived to give warning of their coming, and so nothing was found there. Other loyal friends received the fugitive, and passed him on from house to house as often as the searchparties came uncomfortably close.

For a time Rob seemed to have vanished completely; and when he did reappear it was many miles nearer home. A force of sixty mounted troopers had been stationed in the Kirkton of Balquhidder, under the chamberlain's own command, to patrol the country thereabouts—and perhaps to give protection to the new tenant that the Duke had put into Inverlochlarig Beg, to keep it out of Rob's hands. One day seven men of this detachment (so the story tells) met three Highlanders on the side of Loch Earn, coming from the eastward. Although Rob Roy was not known to them, they noticed that one man walked with a limp. On being halted and questioned, the three made a concerted dash for liberty, the two whole men gallantly covering the retreat of the third. These two were cut down by the troopers before they could reach the high ground, which so enraged their comrade (who was of course Rob Roy himself) that he turned back to avenge them. With his musket he accounted for three out of the seven, as they tried to close with him; and the rest were glad to ride away with whole skins.

Another story, for which there is no more authority than for the last, seems to follow Rob's journey to the westward.

1 So the Duke's factor reported on the 19th June. They seem to have been relying chiefly on a man in Glen Tilt, probably some former friend of Rob's, to recapture him by a "stratagem"—i.e., treachery.

2 The quotations are from the letter already mentioned, from Reverend William Murray to the Minister of Ardchattan, dated 2nd July 1717.

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At the mouth of a little cave, above Loch Katrine's silver strand, Donald Stewart and Graham of Killearn sat, smoking their pipes, and surveyed one of the loveliest scenes in the Highlands without the least enthusiasm. This was the supreme effort of the allied Dukes—an immense combined operation, with all the forces at their disposal, that should drive Rob Roy into the open and make an end of him at last. Stewart's main force was over in Balquhiddier, and early tomorrow would cross the hills and descend upon Portanellan, which was known as a favourite haunt of Rob's. A party of the soldiers from Inversnaid was to picket the head of Glen Arklet. Killearn's own detachment was mustered at the Trossachs, ready to close the trap at this end. And there was great improvement upon all previous attempts of this kind. Each party carried warrants from both Dukes, and could operate freely on either side of the boundary line.

In a corner of the cave a servant was preparing their supper. When all was ready the two gentlemen sat down to eat, and nothing was heard but the scraping of their spoons . . . till suddenly both paused, and felt the hair rising on their scalps. Somewhere in the darkness behind them had been a stealthy movement. Now all was quiet again . . . but something was there, at the back of the cave, and watching them!

"You have laid your plans well, gentlemen," a deep voice spoke out of the gloom. "A pity that you'll need to revise them," And Rob Roy moved into the circle of firelight, a pistol in each hairy fist. So savage and menacing was his appearance in that place, with only the flickering peatflame playing on his grim features, that no thought of his crippled state entered their minds. Helplessly they realised how their own swords and pistols lay together at the back of the cave, and Rob Roy stood between.

"I hope, Stewart, you'll leave the good people at Portanellan in peace," he said. "You can see for your self I'm lodging elsewhere. . . . And now be gone, the pair of you, if you hope to see your homes again! Be gone!"

Sullenly, but without the least hesitation, the two men stooped and scuttled from the cave, leaving supper, brandyflasks, pistols and all, in Rob's hands. And long before they could bring their followers to the spot, the cave was empty.

The real object of all these attempts at Rob's capture seems to have been common knowledge. The Reverend William Murray writes, in his letter describing Rob's escape

"This is no small mortification to the squad [Squadrone] because of the delay it gave to their hopes of a considerable charge against John Roy [Argyll]."

Evidently there was no hope of obtaining the required evidence from Rob, unless under duress. And Rob had the wit to see that it was in his power to extinguish that hope. If there was one thing fatal to these dirty intrigues it was full and prompt publicity.

Sitting in the sun by the door of Benbui farm, his wounded leg properly dressed and thrust out before him, his wife at his side, and all the gentle beauty of Glen Shira spread before him, Rob took pen and paper, and drafted out a little pamphlet, which he might persuade Balhaldies to get printed for him To all Lovers of honour and honesty," it began. Rob wrote well, when he set his mind to it. This was a fine direct piece of prose, designed to cut the ground from under the feet of Montrose's faction by its damning disclosures.

"Honour and conscience urges me to detect the assassins of our Country and Countrymen . . . endeavouring to make me a false evidence against a person of distinction, whose greatest crime known to me was that he broke the party I was unfortunately of."

(That could refer only to the Duke of Argyll.)

"This proposal was handed to me first by Graham of Killearn, from his Master. . . . Lord Ormiston, who trusted me to the Bridge of Cramond, was no less solicitous.... To make up the triumvirate in this bloody Conspiracy, His Grace the Duke of At/toll resolved to outstrip the other two, if possible, who; having coyduked ' me into his conversation, immediately committed me to prison, which was contrary to the parole of honour given to me by my Lord Edward in the Duke's name and his own, who was privy to all that passed betwixt us. The reason why the promise was broke to me was, because I boldly refused to bear false witness against the Duke of Argyll. . . . But since I cannot purchase the sweet offers of life, liberty, and treasure at their high price, I advise the triumvirate to find out one of their own kidney.

This was signed defiantly "Rob Roy M'Grigor" and headed "Balquhiddier, June 25 1717." A few weeks later his fourth and youngest son was born, and named Robert after himself.

I Rob Roy seems to have coined this expressive word (unless it can be derived from "decoy—duck "). It would be interesting to know whether one can be coyduked by a mere Marquis, Earl, or Baron

CHAPTER IV. 1718

IT is time to make a final estimate of Rob Roy's achievements, and of his claims to the fame that is undoubtedly his. He was nearing fifty, and it cannot be denied that in many things he had utterly failed. As a cattledealer, after early successes, he had been made bankrupt and lost a fine estate. He had a good chance, at one time, of being elected Chief of his clan; but his luck was out, and it went to another. The Rising of '15 gave him a rare opportunity of distinguishing himself in war; yet he won little glory there. It seems that if Rob Roy deserves a place in history, it must be for the work of his Watch. While his wife and family probably stayed on at Benbui for a time, Rob had established himself at Inverlochlarig Beg, in frank defiance of the Duke of Atholl, who wisely turned a blind eye to what he was powerless to prevent. The Duke's own tenant was not violently ejected, so far as we know. No doubt the transaction could be passed off as a subletting. And there Rob pitched the headquarters of his Watch, which began to rule the Highland border as firmly as ever it had done from Inversnaid in the old days. It cannot have been easy to set the whole machinery in motion again, after a lapse of five years; and Rob had to be ruthless at the start. Many estates had changed hands after the troubles, and the newcomers must be taught where their true interests lay. The case of Abercromby of Tullibody (related by Sir Walter Scott) illustrates the drastic means he sometimes used to persuade those who would not readily avail themselves of his offers of protection. Mr Alexander Abercromby had been a successful advocate and a Member of the last Scottish Parliament. When he inherited a little estate a few miles out of Dunblane, and settled down to the life of a country laird, it had not occurred to him that he was any too close to the Highland Line, till one bright moonlit night he lost fifteen head of cattle—vanished from the fold without trace. He was not the man to submit quietly to this kind of outrage, and he let the whole county hear of it; but the county only shook its head, and blamed the Highlandmen. So he kept good watch at next full moon; and then, when he grew careless again, came a devastating raid that swept his homefarm clean of everything on four legs. The loss was crippling to a man who had just sunk his capital in improvements to his property; nor could he doubt any longer that he, for some reason, was being singled out for punishment. Again he went to his neighbours, and found little sympathy. Yes, they had suffered these losses themselves until quite recently. It was certainly hard that Tullibody should be so victimised. ... At this point there was certain to be a mention of a mysterious "Rob Roy," who was at the bottom of it all, or (alternatively) was the only man who could help—or (some hinted) was both by turns. As to the nature of their own dealings with this person, there were some that swore Rob would get no more from them; they meant to stand up to him and break him, by God! Others had less to say, but admitted there was an understanding; and Tullibody envied them their look of peace and security, as well as the cows grazing undisturbed in their meadows.

The ridiculous halfsecrecy of the whole business infuriated him; and more he must know of this Rob Roy, if he was to choose between fighting him or making terms. So he sought out a drover, who admitted that he knew a way of getting a letter to Rob Roy; and he wrote asking for the favour of an interview, under safe conduct.

It was in a murky cavern, as tradition required, that the robberchieftain received his guest. In appearance he was decidedly primitive, shaggy as to beard and cowhide waistcoat, bare legs and chest bristling with thick, red hairs. The cave, with the red firelight flickering across its roof, the armed guard at the entrance, all was barbaric, but certainly picturesque. Perhaps the savagery was more apparent than real—it might even be assumed, for the benefit of an impressionable visitor.

Rob's conversation was in keeping with this. He was boisterous and selfassertive; yet he displayed a good working knowledge of any subject the lawyer liked to introduce, and expressed himself clearly and well. He was either assuming his savage aspect for effect, his guest decided, or else the rough way of life was slowly getting the better of his original good breeding.

There were two awkward moments during that meal—the first when Tullibody complimented his host on the excellence of the fare. Rob laughed merrily, and "Sure, it's your own good grazing in Strath Allan fattened this beast for the killing!" he declared. It seemed better to say nothing to that, for the present. And when the last dish was removed, Rob lifted his cup to call a solemn toast.

"There's no water handy," said he, "but what need of such tricks when honest gentlemen are met? The King—across the water, God bless him, and bring him home again!"

Again Tullibody thought of asserting himself, and damning the Pretender like the good Whig he was but again he let it pass. There was nothing actual] insulting, after all, in being taken for a Jacobite. TI toast was treasonable, but not offensive.

"And now for your business, sir," said Rob, when they were comfortably settled with their feet to the fire. "In what can I serve you?"

Tullibody told briefly of the losses he had suffered giving careful particulars of numbers and dates. Their looking his host boldly in the eye, he demanded a explanation.

"I am told that all lost cows find their way sooner or later into your hands," said he; "but I'll do you the honour of supposing that you rob none but the robbers. Since you get no title to the beasts that way am I free to take them off your hands?"

Rob sighed, and paused to pour out another drink fo each of them, before he answered.

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“I see that you are not acquainted with the mon modern practice in these affairs,” he began. “Let m explain. My Watch guarantees the return of life cattlor of beasts to the same value.”

“This,” said Tullibody, “is indeed a splendid service you are doing your country—”

“Unfortunately,” Rob drawled, “this splendid service is confined to regular clients of my Watch, amongst whom I think most of your neighbours in Strath Allan are already numbered. For a nonclient, such as yourself we can do little, I fear. . .

Tullibody smiled ruefully, and pondered on this information. He felt reasonably certain that Rob would not have gone to the trouble of arranging this meeting, or entertained him so well, unless he had some more favourable terms to offer. “In that case,” he said, “the cows are as good as yours. I’ve not the money for their redemption. . . . As for your Watch, it’s a pity I am so late in hearing of it, or I’d have considered being enrolled.”

“I make it a general rule,” said Rob, “not to allow a new client’s enrolment to act retrospectively. But I see you’re of the Honest Party, sir, and I have sometimes given preferential treatment to the King’s friends. You shall have your cows again (all but the one we’ve dined off) on these terms—that you sign on as a regular client for the future; and as the contract will date back to your first loss, four months ago, I reckon the first quarter’s instalment is now overdue. What do you say to that?”

“I’ll sign,” said Tullibody.

“Then that’s an end of business. We’ll drink once more to His Majesty, and so seal the bargain: King James, God bless him, and to Hell with the Elector!”

Could he not be satisfied with having got a new client, thought Tullibody, without trying to make a Jacobite convert into the bargain? But there was nobody to hear him—and the toast could do no harm to him or to King George.

“King James, God bless him! “ he cried obediently.

He departed next morning, after breakfasting off the same joint of beef, well satisfied with his errand. And, by some mysterious agency such as Rob Roy loved to employ, his cattle were back at Tullibody before him.

If he was hard upon newcomers, Rob was merciless to the backsliders among his old clients. There was Sir James Campbell of Aberuchill, whose father, the Lord of Justiciary, had been one of the earliest clients of the Glengyle Watch on its foundation, and paid his dues regularly till his death. But the son cared nothing for this. In the last five years, to his knowledge, the estate had paid no mail—and had certainly had no protection. He was not going to start now paying for the doubtful benefit of the future services of a brokendown Jacobite captain like this Rob Roy. Or so he declared to the guests who sat with him at dinner, in the lofty hail of Kilbryde Castle, when that same Rob Roy had the impudence to come knocking at his gate.

“I tellt him ye was at meat, your honour, and had company,” said the porter.

“Then what for are you here bothering me?”

“He’s at the gate yet, your honour, and must see you—so he bid me say—though the King himself were dining here.

“He’ll get nought by such language,” said Sir James, “and so you may tell the fellow.”

But the company was not allowed to finish its meal in peace. Hardly had the porter retired, when there came the wild note of a horn from outside the gate, and the man came running back in a flurry.

“It’s a trick, your honour,” he panted. “Rob’s not alone, not by any manner o’ means. There was half a regiment hid under the dyke, and them rounding up the cows as we speak.”

The meat was left to spoil, as laird and guests crowded to the narrow windows to see for themselves. There was Rob Roy, easily recognisable, standing coolly before the gate, still waiting for his money. But out in the fields beyond was a host of wild Highlandmen, hallooing and running, as they assembled the whole livestock of Aberuchull’s homefarm into a compact herd, ready to take the road for the hulls.

Pray resume your seats, gentlemen, and take no heed of this interruption,” said the laird magnificently. “I’ll deal with this fellow myself.” And he stalked from the room, with his steward at his heels. But if his guests could not actually hear the clink of the coins, they could have little doubt that Rob was receiving his money in full, down there by the gate.

Another story is told of Henderson of Westerton, whose estate was near Bridge of Allan. (Perhaps these three stories, all concerned with gentlemen of the Dunblane district, are some indication of the spread of Rob’s influence eastward.) Westerton’s blackmail dues were three quarters in arrears, and still he refused to pay—even when Rob appeared to him in person, with a party of armed Highlanders at his back, as the laird strolled one evening in his own grounds. So they flung a plaid over his head, and hustled him out by the gate before his people could raise the alarm.

They came to Kilmahog with their prisoner soon after midnight. The moon being now hidden, they halted there, and lay down to rest and carouse in a large barn. According to Westerton’s own tale, he was placed between two gigantic Highlanders, who slept with naked dirks in their hands; but succeeded in crawling out, and so made his escape. Coming safely home, his first act was to count out the sum that Rob had required of him, and send it off by special messenger.

So the Watch grew in power and reputation, and Rob Roy slowly made himself indispensable to the peace of the countryside, from one end to the other of the Highland Line. Even the Laird of Luss forgot the centuries old quarrel

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between his house and the Clan Gregor, and readily enrolled himself under Rob's protection. On Inch Lonaig, in Loch Lomond, the two of them met to sign their compact, and so was a bitter feud healed.

And in spite of all he was doing to drive them out of business, Rob contrived to maintain not altogether unfriendly relations with the caterans themselves. They and his own followers were all Highlandmen, after all, making their livings out of the decadent Lowlander in their own way. Should a raiding party be caught on the road home with a booty, and satisfy Rob that the beasts were never under his protection, they would be allowed to pass with his blessing—after surrendering the “roadcollop,” a small share of the booty, as the customary fee for passage through MacGregor territory. Again, if there was fighting, blood might flow freely in the heat of battle; but no prisoner had ever anything to fear, for Rob Roy would not have dreamt of giving up a fellow countryman of his to the Government to be hanged. He might be held to ransom, nevertheless yet another source of income to the Watch.

Of course Rob must be able to back his demands by force of arms, in the last resort. He seldom had any difficulty in hiring as many auxiliaries as he needed, from the Glengyle clansmen or the idlers of the Kirkton, to supplement his regular band. Many a young gallant of the Clan Dougal Keir, pining for a chance to prove his manhood in these unwarlike times, was proud to follow Rob Roy as a private volunteer when he was off to the north on a hot scent. But there was rarely any occasion for more than a show of strength.

If little is recorded of the Watch's exploits in these latter years, that is some indication of how uniformly successful they were. And if Rob was indeed the originator of the “protection racket,” as some affirm, his differed from the modern American variety in certain essentials

The demand for his protection was very real, existing quite independently of the would be protector.

There was no police force, ready to do for nothing what he did for money.

In the last resort, nobody had anything worse to fear from Rob Roy than the loss of livestock which he might have stolen anyway without offending against the peculiar code of the Highlands.

It was probably at this time that Rob made some valuable business contacts, and at least one firm friend, in northern parts.

We hear of him in Aberdeen, where the Gregories made him as welcome as ever. Once a party of soldiers marched down from the barracks, as he was strolling with the Professor in the Castlegate; whereupon he vanished into a sidestreet, with hasty excuses to his learned host. He appeared also in Strath Spey, where it is likely that he was less kindly remembered after the Jacobite retreat of February 1716; but there he fell in with that eccentric character Patrick Grant (or MacAlpin) of Rothiemurchus, a man after his own heart.

We know something of this person from the ‘Memoirs of a Highland Lady,’ by Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus, his descendant

“MacAlpin ruled not only his own small patrimony, but mostly all the country round. . . . Any offences committed anywhere his band took cognisance of. MacAlpin himself was judge and jury, and the sentence quickly pronounced was as quickly executed, even when the verdict doomed to death. . . . I never heard the justice of a sentence questioned.”

It may be that Rob Roy, crossing over from Strathdee by the grim defile of the Lang Ghru, encountered the terrible MacAlpin, with Ian Bane his lieutenant, and his band of twentyfour men, in the woods of Rothiemurchus. If so, it would be amusing to know how he endured the laird's highhanded ways, and how near he came to a hanging before he disclosed his identity. But MacAlpin (as his adopted name suggests) was a strong believer in the common ancestry that tradition ascribed to MacGregors and Grants; and welcomed the famous Rob Roy to his home like a long-lost brother.

Hospitality was lavish at MacAlpin's house of the Doune, where they lived in oldfashioned style with alternate feasting and huntingparties day after day. But more astonishing than the abundance of food was the excellence of the cooking. The laird was only a minor chieftain, and not wealthy, but most fastidious about what he ate. Rob was amazed to find tasty foreign dishes, properly served and seasoned, in these wilds of upper Strath Spey. Another of the man's eccentricities was his dress, which was fantastic to the point of effeminacy. He always wore trews, which clung close to legs and thighs, were ornamented with gold lace down the seams, and gartered below the knees with scarlet ribbons. His bonnet was of velvet, and his shoes were lined with feathers, like a lady's slippers. His followers all went gaudily dressed, in imitation of his elegance.

For all the obvious differences between them, Rob Roy and MacAlpin became fast friends; and many a long talk they had, on the old times they so regretted and the future that seemed to both of them to hold so little promise. Then there was the laird's brother, Colonel William Grant of Ballindalloch, who may not have shared his patriarchal outlook, but as an excommander of an Independent Company held strong views upon the government of the Highlands by Highlanders. He had lost his Company, but Rob still had his Watch. Could not they be very useful to one another, working in concert to break up the marauding gangs that still infested the country? Rob admitted that he knew glens in Breadalbin where every cow bore a northcountry brand. Could the colonel show him their opposite numbers in Strath Spey?

I Told to Sir Walter Scott by members of the Professor's family

CHAPTER V. January—June 1719

THERE was one laird on the Highland border could purchase no protection for his cows at any price. Rob Roy's private war with the Duke of Montrose still went on. Indeed it might be said that the Duke unwillingly financed a Watch from which he got no benefit.

On the 28th January, in what must have been cruel weather in the Highlands, we hear of a party of Montrose's people "following a parcel of cattle stolen from one Drunkie, a tenant to the said Duke of Montrose." An officer and twenty regular soldiers were sent to their assistance, but had to halt for the night at a house in Glen Falloch, where they learnt that "Robert Campbell alias MacGregor commonly called Rob Roy was that moment gone from thence with a strong party consisting of nearly fifty men well armed." Soon afterwards their sentinels were fired upon out of the darkness, and one killed. "Rob Roy's party fired several times into the house, but finding that to no purpose they followed the party that belonged to the Duke of Montrose, and disarmed them all." 1

Rob escaped any serious consequences of this encounter with the military, possibly because the Duke of Argyll was now restored to all his offices in the Army and at Court as suddenly as he had lost them. What back stairs revolution brought it about matters nothing. But he came back stronger than ever, his name cleared of all suspicion of Jacobitism, his enemies confounded.

They say that on his first reappearance at the Privy Council his old rival Montrose made a last attempt to discredit him with the complaint that he harboured on his land a most notorious outlaw, whom he encouraged to prey upon his neighbours, even employing for his own purposes the ruffian that more publicspirited men were doing their utmost to extirpate. . . . He referred, of course, to the person known as Rob Roy MacGregor, alias Campbell.

"I am well acquainted with the man," Argyll admitted, "and it's true I have allowed him wood and water, that he enjoys in common with the meanest of my clan. But I'd be sorry to think that there was any harm in this; for it's common knowledge that His Grace of Montrose has been yet more generous, keeping Rob Roy in beef and grain for many years past. . . .

Montrose was laughed out of court, and the subject never raised again. But Rob Roy, secure under Argyll's patronage, resolved to make some use of this deadly weapon Ridicule on his own account. When next Mary found him in the throes of composition, it was addressed not "To All Lovers of Honour," but "To an high and Mighty Prince, James, Duke of Montrose

In charity to your Grace's courage and conduct, please know, the only way to retrieve both is to treat Rob Roy like himself in appointing your place and choice of arms.

The mock challenge extended also to Gorthie and Killlearn

That impertinent critics or flatterers may not brand me for challenging a man that's reputed of a poor dastardly soul, let such know that I admit of the two great supporters of his character and the captain of his bands to join with him in the combat.

Copies of this "open letter" were widely distributed, slid no doubt found their way into Buchanan House.

On the 13th of April three strange vessels coming from the Outer Isles sailed into the Kyle of Loch Alsh, between Skye and the mainland of Kintail, and quietly dropped anchor there in the sealoch. On that lonely shore they landed a few hundred men, the vanguard, by their own account, of a great army of invasion—a mysterious army that never reached the coasts of Britain. There was mystery enough about their own coming to this remote haven; and much that they did, or hoped to do, has been wrapped in mystery ever since.

The two larger vessels were frigates, flying the redandyellow ensign of His Most Catholic Majesty of Spain, with whom England was now waging a naval war in the interests of her American trade. Their decks were crowded with soldiers in skyblue coats—that Spanish infantry that had once been the best in Europe.

The other was a small French merchantman, the *Fidèle*, of some twentyfive tons, and flaunted no ensign, for Great Britain and France were at peace. She carried four passengers, men who wore their cloaks tossed about their shoulders after the manner of Highland plaids, and gazed with affection at the forbidding landscape of Kintail. These were the Disinherited of the '15, come back to claim their own—Seaforth, high Chief of all these hills and glens; Tullibardine, come back (not for the last time) to call out his father's clan for the true King; Campbell of Glendaruel, one of Breadalbin's captains; and young James Keith, whose sword had not yet found him any high employment in Europe. And Marischal himself paced the quarterdeck of one of the Spanish shipsofwar, a skyblue coat on his back and His Most Catholic Majesty's commission in his pocket.

Out of sight or sound of the open sea, now eight miles astern, the three vessels dropped anchor where the long inlet of Loch Alsh forks into two—Loch Long to the north and Loch Duich to the south. It was a sheltered place for men who did not wish to attract too much attention to themselves for the present. Here, on a small island close to the shore, a little stone tower, perched above the waves. It lacked a roof, since Cadogan passed that way; but a party of Spaniards was put ashore next day to form a garrison and magazine in Eilean Donan, where they quickly made themselves at home. Any kind of ground beneath their feet would have been welcome after the long voyage from San Sebastian and the twelve days of wild weather off Biscay.

1 Royal Proclamation of 10th March 1719, offering £200 reward.

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The rest of the troops and their stores were landed in due course at the head of Loch Duich, and a basecamp established there at a place called the Crow of Kintail. Southeast from here lay the road up Glen Shiel and down Glen Moriston to Inverness. Here they must wait a few weeks till the clans could rally to them. There were two thousand muskets and five thousand pistols, with ammunition to match, waiting in the new magazines for the first of the Highland volunteers, and Tullibardine sitting with his blank musterrolls before him.

But the clans were incredibly slow in coming in.

A full week before Tullibardine and his friends left Havre for their rendezvous with the Spaniards, another shipload of the Disinherited had sailed out of Bordeaux, making straight for the West Highlands to prepare the ground for the coming invasion. Brigadier Mackintosh, who so nearly captured Edinburgh in the '15, and fought his way out of Newgate with his fists; John Cameron of Lochiel, whose son had been ruling the clan four years in his place; Clanranald, successor to him that fell in the charge at Sherifmuir; and Lord George Murray with his old head on young shoulders; they were all somewhere in the Highlands rekindling the fires of rebellion. One by one they made their appearance at the little camp, and were joyfully greeted by old friends. They brought promises and messages of loyalty from all sides; the Laird of MacKinnon and The Chisholm both came in person to pay their respects; but not a clan felt inclined to take the field, it seemed, until others showed the way. And Tullibardine naturally refused to march his little force of Spaniards into the interior till he had the more active support of the natives.

The deadlock was solved in a remarkable manner. Marischal had been in command of the expedition during the voyage, and unwillingly surrendered it to Tullibardine when they disembarked, on condition that he should continue to command the naval forces. His responsibility was nearly at an end; but now he recalled the heroic example of Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, who burnt his ships when his followers showed unwillingness to advance from the coast. He saw a way of forcing Tullibardine's hand, and enjoying a final display of his own authority over the fleet. On the 30th of April he sent the two frigates back to Spain. Now there could be no retreat.

It was only five days after this magnificent gesture that news reached the camp in Glen Shiel that the main Spanish fleet, bound for the west coast of England under the Duke of Ormond, had been scattered by a great storm off Finisterre, and half the transports dismasted or driven ashore. For the present the invasion must be abandoned, and Marischal and Tullibardine were advised to reembark their men with all speed.

Gregor Ghlun Dhu was most unwilling to be drawn into this latest Jacobite venture. The first definite news they had of it, in the south, was that three English ships had sailed into Loch Alsh and bombarded Tullibardine's bases there. The Spaniards in Eilean Donan surrendered, and were brought prisoners to Dumbarton—forty of our men and an officer. The whole thing seemed to be over before it was begun.

Now Rob Roy came to his nephew with a different story. Yes, Eilean Donan was surrendered, but what did that signify? The rest would have shifted their quarters a mile or two inland, out of reach of any ships' guns. Now Ormond's armada was ready for sea again, and Tullibardine had orders to go ahead with his recruiting as if nothing had happened. This was only the beginning!

But Gregor was not to be rushed into this. He owed it to the clan, he explained, to watch their interests rather than his personal inclinations. It was easy for Rob, who had nothing to lose.

In fact it seems that Rob had now a great deal to lose—far more than he had in the '15. His prospects had seldom been brighter, and it is hard to see what more the Jacobites had to offer him. But perhaps he saw in this wild venture a Heavensent opportunity to clear his name. For there were Jacobites in plenty, who came out of the '15 with untarnished reputations, yet were holding back now.

He conducted his recruiting with the utmost discretion. The forty men he took were all accustomed to a sudden summons to march to the north on the heels of the Kintail caterans. The most strenuous partisan of the Elector (had there been any such in Balquhiddy) could not have objected to their departure on such a likely errand, or found a shred of evidence to connect it with the rumoured Jacobite landing. Rob's own household was not allowed to know that he was called away by anything but his lawful business.

The forty Gregarach trysted in Rannoch with Lord George Murray and a handful of gentlemen of his father's clan. This brought the numbers up to sixty of all ranks, and with that Lord George had to be content. The memory of the '15 was too fresh in men's minds, here in the south Highlands. They travelled north together by ways long familiar to Rob, and so came to Seaforth's country without hindrance by the beginning of June. Theirs was the first and only reinforcement to join Tullibardine from anywhere south of the Great Glen.

At the camp in Glen Shiel they found an army of about twelve hundred men assembled. Seaforth had come in with six hundred of his MacKenzies and MacRaes; Lochiel had a mere hundred and fifty Camerons; and a mixed force of Glengarry MacDonalDs, MacLeans, and MacDougals made up as many again. MacKinnon was there with the whole fighting force of his clan—fifty stout lads out of Skye. And there were still two hundred of the Spanish infantry.

The weather was fine and warm, the army too small for their feeding to be a serious problem yet, and there certainly seemed nothing for it but to stay here till they had a force large enough to march on Inverness. Clanranald was not back yet, and the Chisholms were known to be on their way to join. But on the 7th of June there came news of the enemy. General Wightman, in command at Inverness, had scraped together a force of about the same strength as their own, and resolved to seek out this mysterious rebellion and crush it forthwith.

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On the 8th, Tullibardine marched his men up to the narrowest part of the glen, where they might hold it against twice their numbers. His was probably the best armed force that the Highlands had ever sent into battle. Every man carried a Spanish musket and bayonet, and at least two pistols in his belt, besides his personal weapons, and still there were more arms than Tullibardine could find men.

It was late in the afternoon to begin an assault on the rebels' positions, but General Wightman had sound reasons for wishing to lose no time. Several of the other clans were believed to be on the march to join them, while he could not hope for another man or musket, if he waited a week.

Wightman was lucky in having fought on the victorious right wing at Sheriffmuir, and he had come out of that battle with reputation unsullied and confidence unshaken. Of his four battalions of foot, two had been at Sheriffmuir—and both of them swept away in the rout of the left wing. Yet it was possible that the Devons and West Yorks would fight all the better today for the memory of that disaster. The East Yorks were new to Scotland; those Dutchmen of Hussel's had served with Cadogan in Fife. That gave him nearly nine hundred regular infantry; and there were a hundred Highland auxiliaries—Munroes and Sutherlands, come to join his colours out of some old spite they bore their Jacobite neighbours.

It was a pity he would not be able to use his cavalry, for they were the same Grey Dragoons that had driven the Highland left off the field of Sheriffmuir. Today he was likely to depend rather on his artillery—handy little mortars that could be carried by four men, and used for lobbing grenades into the enemy's lines.

He peered down the long valley to where river and road vanished among the trees in the jaws of the pass. Here the rebels had raised some kind of a barricade of tree-trunks; and perched on the mountain slopes, on either hand, were companies of Highlanders in battle array. Those on the left seemed to be strongly posted behind a ravine. He squinted up at the grey mass of Sgurr Ouran on the right, and observed their line thrown forward along the shoulders of the mountain, nearly at right angles to the centre. . . . He called for Clayton, his senior colonel.

It was five o'clock before the redcoats were seen at last to be moving up to the attack; and still they wasted much time in preliminaries. First a battery of mortars was brought up the road, escorted by mitre-capped dragoons, and began shelling the Spanish troops behind their breastworks. Then a battalion of infantry, with a small party of Munro clansmen, came struggling along the steep left bank of the river, and the mortars were moved up to support their attack. For the Highlanders hovering impatiently on the opposite heights it was disappointing, but there was nothing they could do to help.

For the next hour Lord George Murray, commanding the couple of hundred MacKenzies on the left bank, had to bear the whole brunt of the fighting. His position behind the ravine was a strong one, but offered no cover from the fire of the mortars, which were soon making things very unpleasant for him. Still he held on, and drove the redcoats back in gallant style when they tried to follow up their barrage with the bayonet. At last the bursting shells set fire to the heather, which was tinder-dry at this season, and the disputed ground was abandoned by both parties to the flames. Lord George was carried to the rear with a shellsplinter in his leg; and so this first phase of the battle came to a doubtful end.

It had served its purpose, nevertheless. Tullibardine and his staff, waiting by the stockade to see Wightman launch his main attack, were still watching events across the river when the rattle of musketry, drifting faintly down from the heights of Sgurr Ouran, gave them their first warning of where that attack was actually coming. High on the shoulder of the mountain, Seaforth and his MacKenzies on the extreme left of the line had been assailed by the combined grenadier companies of Clayton's three battalions, while the Sutherland Highlanders appeared swarming round their rear.

Seaforth stood firm; but up came Clayton's whole force on the heels of their grenadiers, and a little battle raged about the swaying banner of Kintail. The Earl himself, his arm broken by a musketball, was in danger of being taken; and perhaps his followers were more concerned at that moment with the safety of their Chief than with the outcome of the battle. Slowly they drew off towards the mountaintop, leaving English and Dutch infantry established on the high ground. Unless they were speedily dislodged, they could crumple up the rest of the Highlanders' straggling line.

Every available man had to be rushed to the threatened point. Marischal, serving as a volunteer with the second of Seaforth's battalions, flung them in the path of the advancing redcoats, halted but could not shift them.... Now the MacKinnons reeled back from the Dutchmen's steady platoon-firing. . . . And then it was Rob Roy's turn. There is a story that he found himself thrust into the line next to some of the wild MacRaes, who recognised an old enemy and refused to fight beside him. Be that as it may, nobody has ever suggested that the MacGregors shrank from meeting the enemy this time.

It was nearly eight o'clock, and events must move fast if either side was to force a decision before dark.

Don Nicolas Bolano, commanding the detachment of the Regiment of Galicia behind the breastworks in the pass, watched the wicked little mortars being trained on his position, while a storming-party of dismounted dragoons formed up just out of musket-shot. Up the mountain to his left the sound of musketry grew fainter and fainter, as tartan plaids and red coats vanished into the evening mists. If he was to defend this post to the last round, he would have preferred to have some assurance that his left flank remained covered.

Up on the side of Sgurr Omran, Clayton's three battalions still kept their precarious foothold, too exhausted to struggle higher, but impossible to dislodge. MacKenzies, MacGregors, MacDonalds, and Camerons in succession had

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made the attempt, and drawn off angrily to the higher ground where they hovered yet.' At last, when it was almost too dark to distinguish friend from foe, there came orders from Clayton to break off the action and rejoin Wightman in the pass below.

The appearance of some of Clayton's redcoats above and in rear of his fortified lines, finally persuaded Don Nicolas to abandon the position; and the Grey Dragoons, swarming over his barricade in their clumsy jackboots, found the trenches empty. There General Wightman elected to halt for the night. The baggage was brought up from the rear, and the troops bivouacked around the abandoned works.

Whether the rebels were beaten, or merely forced out of their first line of defence, Wightman had no means of telling. He only knew that he had over a hundred wounded men in his hospital tent, with a solitary surgeon to attend them. Twentyone were missing, believed killed. No prisoners or booty of any kind had been taken. He must gain some more solid advantage in the morning if he was to claim a victory.

Early next morning Wightman set his whole force to scale the heights of SgurrOuran, to seek out the enemy, and engage them. To the intense relief of the sweating soldiery, they were met halfway by an officer and drummer in the skyblue coats of the Spanish regulars, bearing a

'One thing seems certain about this battle, the Highlanders were never given the chance to mass for a charge; and a charge was the only form of attack they understood. white flag. Terms of surrender were agreed for Do Nicolas and his two hundred resentful Spaniards, who thereupon laid down their arms and were marched do the hill and away to Inverness and captivity. That was the end of the Spanish invasion.

As for the Highland insurgents, they seemed to hay melted away like their own mountain mists. No more was seen of Tullibardine, or Seaforth, or any of the thousand clansmen they had raised, on that or an other day. The exiled Chiefs reappeared, in due course at their shabby lodgings in France or Spain. The followers were mostly back on their farms next day, if nothing had happened to disturb the peace of Scotland. Reprisals there could be none; for Wightman's troops knew only that they had grappled with armed Highlandmen for three hours, and then lost them, on the heights of SgurrOuran.

One party did stay to do a small service to King James's cause which the rest had overlooked. All the spare firearms and ammunition landed from the Spanish frigates still lay in the magazine at the Crow of Kintail, and must have fallen into Wightman's hands had not Rob Roy got there before the soldiers and blown the place skyhigh.' Some of the Munro auxiliaries, coming over the hill while the cloud of black smoke yet hung in the air, were in time to see the backs of the saboteurs, before they vanished southwards into the wilds of Glenelg.

It is about eighty miles, by the most direct ways, from Kintail to Balquhidder. Campbell of Finnab, dutifully reporting to the authorities upon the conduct of his neighbours at this critical time, no doubt had this in mind. "I do not hear," he wrote, "that Rob Roy who went north some days ago is returned yet." But only Balquhidder ever knew the truth of it, and Balquhidder knew how to hold its tongue.

On a night of midJune certain lonely wives in Balquhidder awoke to find the husbands they had not seen for two anxious weeks slipping into bed beside them. Once the first surprise or misunderstanding was over, there was discreet rejoicing in forty MacGregor homes, and forty extra breakfasts to be cooked in the morning. The men were at work in the fields again next day, and drinking in the taverns, and neither Finnab nor any other could know where they had been.

General Wightman's report to the Commander in Chief, of those believed to have been engaged against him at Glen Shiel, made no mention of anybody so far distant from the scene of hostilities as Rob Roy MacGregor. But in Balquhidder men knew better, and embroidered what they knew, till the legend grew up that Rob and his men had plundered a huge Spanish galleon in Loch Alsh, with gold and silver bars in her hold. And as Rob grew rich on his blackmail dues, men would always believe that the Spanish gold was the foundation of his prosperity.

1 Mar's 'Distinct Abridgment of Some Material Points relating to Scotch Affairs.'

CHAPTER VI. 16th February—July 1720

SERGEANT MACKAY, of the Royal Scots Fusiliers,¹ on his way from Fort William to Edinburgh with a prisoner and escort of twelve men, was midway down Strath Fillan on the third day out, when some stealthy movement on the hill attracted his eye. Several men in Highland plaids, supposing their lurking place discovered, leapt to their feet and made off at full speed up a little glen. Two at least carried long muskets. But Sergeant Mackay knew better than to go in pursuit, while he had a prisoner on his hands. Andrew Greig, who walked between the files with chains upon his wrists, had been concerned in the killing of a soldier in a tavern. His friends must know that the gallows awaited him in Edinburgh.

It was growing dark, and the sergeant resolved to take no chances, but to lodge his party in the next house they came to. Mrs MacGregor, their hostess, was used to entertaining wayfarers, and made no difficulty about taking in fourteen hungry men. But they noticed during supper that she seemed to be whispering longer than necessary into the ear of the young prisoner; and Mackay thought it best to send the lad to finish his meal in a corner, with two soldiers standing guard over him. Nothing unusual happened that night, unless Mrs MacGregor was plotting mischief when she begged leave to send out her two manservants on some plausible errand at a little after midnight. Quite possibly they were off to alarm the countryside; but it was impossible to refuse the request.

The Fusiliers were on the march early next morning, and came before nightfall to the Kirkton of Balquhidder, where they were lodged rather more comfortably at Stewart's alehouse. Again all was quiet—until three o'clock in the morning, when one of the guard, looking out from the doorway, was violently assailed by an armed party. He was badly wounded before he could hurl himself back within doors and give the alarm. The door was secured in the nick of time by the rest of the guard; but those in the back room were unlucky; for their assailants had crept up to the window and poured in a volley that wounded four of them, two seriously.

For the rest of the night the Fusiliers crouched under the windows, and only rarely got a shot at anything that might be a man. And when morning came, nothing could have been more innocent than the appearance of the Kirkton. The gallant Fusiliers might have been letting off their muskets for sport, and wounded one another by accident.

The Duke of Atholl's bailie, and Mr Robertson, the minister of Balquhidder, arrived in due course to protest their horror at what had happened, and arranged transport for the wounded. Reinforced by a corporal and seven men from the post at Lochearnhead, the Fusiliers marched out on the next day's stage to Kilmahog, and thence to Stirling, their prisoner still safely in their hands. But two of their wounded died in hospital.

And who were the authors of this villainy? Sergeant Mackay spread the story that "there were forty men of the name of MacGregor, about Stewart's house at the Kirkton of Balquhidder, the night that he and his party were attacked, and that Robert Roy's piper had been there the night before." But the Duke of Atholl, after making exhaustive inquiries, declared that "there were not about five or six of them," and believed them to have been "some loose men that used to frequent that country, but have no fixed residence." He recommended the Kirkton as "a very proper place for building a Barrack to contain a company."

All that actually happened was that six tavern keepers—namely, Patrick Stewart in Kirkton of Balquhidder, Malcolm MacCallum there, Robert Stewart in Stronvar, and John Drummond at the Mill of Caller, Duncan Murray in Inverlochlarig and Donald Murray there, were examined by the Fiscal, admitted to having sold aquavit to "loose and broken men," and were bound over to admit no such persons to their houses in future.

In spite of the sergeant's insinuations, it seems most unlikely that Rob Roy had anything to do with this bungled affair if only because it was so bungled. Had he undertaken it, we may be sure he would have employed an adequate force and made a clean job of it. There is one other possibility. Rob Roy's son Coil was now twenty years old, and eager no doubt to emulate his father's daring exploits. Perhaps the unfortunate Andrew Greig and the "loose and broken men" were booncompanions of his, and foolishly planned a rescue without consulting the acknowledged expert in such matters. If so, they were likely to fail, and young Coil would be severely lectured by his outraged parent—not for having killed two soldiers, but for doing it to no purpose. When an unsuccessful attack on a sergeant's guard is so fully noticed, it would be odd if the surrender of a subaltern's command went unreported; which is one reason for doubting the two following stories. All Rob's encounters with the military seem to take place in Strath Fillan, and these two have other details in common.

A party of soldiers arrived at Tyndrum, at the top of Strath Fillan, searching for Rob Roy. A beggar man, having a grudge against Rob, offered to lead them to his hidingplace; and they promised him five pounds if he would put Rob into their hands. The beggarman led them down Strath Fillan, and at the ford of Dalree they made him carry them across on his back, for a penny each (the smaller men at half rate, two at a time). At Crianlarich he said that Rob and his men would be found asleep in one house, and their arms stacked in another.

At his suggestion the soldiers remained in hiding round the house, while he and their officer with a sergeant and two men entered at the front. But first he must have his five pounds for if he were seen taking it afterwards he would live in dread of Rob's vengeance. With the money in his sporran, he led the way inside.

1 One of them, Mackay was afterwards told, had been "14 or 15 weeks in the tolbooth of Edinburgh as suspected one of Rob Roy's followers."

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“Well, sir, I have my five pounds,” said he, “and I’ve kept my promise.”

He thrust a hand into the officer’s own, and was still shaking it warmly when the room filled with armed MacGregors from the back premises, who seized the redcoats and bound them fast. Then Rob Roy (who had of course been masquerading as the beggar) went to the door and called in the rest of the soldiers, two at a time. Meekly they obeyed, and suffered the same fate. After a good breakfast they were all allowed to go free, Rob keeping only their arms and ammunition.

In the second story, Rob and his band were genuinely surprised by the soldiers, at Crianlarich, where he was sleeping in the inn and all his men in a barn adjoining. The soldiers were content to fasten tie door of the barn on the outside, while they entered the inn. But Rob was awake, and standing just within the doorway cut down the first five men and blocked the entrance with their bleeding corpses. Meanwhile his twenty men in the barn wakened and burst open the door. Driving off the soldiers, they rescued Rob and retired with him to the open hill.

Here they were attacked again, but charged so fiercely that they put the redcoats to flight. Some found their line of retreat barred by a madam; and the Gregarach, having no use for prisoners, drove them in at the sword’s point to sink or swim.

A pity that Sergeant Mackay was present at neither of these little engagements; and nobody else thought them worthy of a written report.

Whether or not Rob Roy fought the King’s soldiers as often as tradition alleges, he very seldom had to resort to force of arms in his dealings with fellow Highlanders. But once he is said to have been involved in an old-fashioned clan feud,¹ when the Laird of Rothiemurchus called on him urgently for aid.

At this time MacAlpin was on no very good terms with his Chief. He had always gone his own way, without regard for clan policy or clan unity; nor could any laird of Grant approve of one of his vassals forsaking his clan surname—whatever the genealogical justification for the change. But if Rothiemurchus was a difficult man to govern, he was easy to quarrel with—touchy and arrogant, quick to take offence, but slow to count the cost. So it was not surprising that he should fall out with his powerful neighbour, Mackintosh of Dunauchtane, over the matter of a mill. It was a mill that Mackintosh had built last winter on the burn that divided their respective estates. When summer came, and the flow of water diminished, Mackintosh looked about him for ‘Memoirs of a Highland Lady. more, and decided to divert a second burn to join the first and so double his waterpower. That the second burn was already being used to turn MacAlpin’s own mill was no concern of his. . . . Perhaps it was foolish of MacAlpin to have lodged his protest in quite such violent language; but it was no use giving in meekly to so shameless a piece of aggression, or where would it stop?

Probably the Mackintoshes meant to provoke a fight. Certainly they came prepared for one. MacAlpin and his twentyfive swordsmen were chased back to the Doune, and there penned up in desperate garrison, expecting to see the place fired over their heads before all was done. There remained one faint hope of succour, for MacAlpin had sent a messenger over the Lang Ghru, at the beginnings of things, to seek out Rob Roy and ask his aid. How Rob was to lead an expeditionary force through Atholl’s country, and come to his help in time, he could not imagine. It was a desperate hope, but all that he had. The Laird of Grant would not lift a finger to save him.

Evening was come, and still there was no sign of the MacGregors, while out there in the woods a hundred angry Mackintoshes were gathered, cutting brushwood for the firing of the house. MacAlpin’s reckless mood deserted him, and he sat in his room with his head down on his arms on the table, when he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder.

“What though the purse be empty the night?” said a deep voice. “Who knows how full it may be in the morn?”

He spun round to see his loyal friend Rob Roy standing there, carrying sword and target, dirk and pistols—but he was quite alone! After a hearty greeting, MacAlpin asked where were his men? Rob would answer not a word, but only nodded towards the corner of the house, where his piper stepped into view, the bag half-filled under his oxtail. The pipes roared into “The Rout of Glen Fruin,” the piper went striding jauntily up and down in front of the Doune; and down in the woods the Mackintoshes, not recognising the tune but thirsting for a fight, raised a defiant cheer. A full minute passed in this way, and MacAlpin was quivering with impatience at so ill timed a display of pipe music, before there came the glint of steel through the trees across the Spey. Two stalwart MacGregors broke through the foliage, and quietly posted themselves on the opposite bank. Rob laughed at the laird’s puzzled face. He would never outgrow his fondness for these theatrical tricks. . . . Again there was movement among the trees, the glow of red tartans, and three more Highlanders canie swinging down the brae, armed to the teeth. And still the piper went on playing.

And so they came down out of the deep woods, by twos and by threes, hardy warriors in their battlegear, Glengyle men and Balquhiddier men, gillies and duinewasals, till MacAlpin’s face lost its grim look, and the frightened women at the windows began to applaud hysterically. Still they came—in their threes and their twos—and after each arrival the laird would watch the strutting piper to see if he showed signs of stopping; but he never paused for a moment, though his lungs were surely ready to burst.

The sun was sliding down behind the trees, and there must have been fully a hundred and fifty armed MacGregors assembled across the river, and Rob’s piper had put up his pipes at last, before anybody thought of looking to see how this demonstration of allied might had impressed the enemy. Not a man of them remained at the edge of the wood! As

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the Gregarach came up in their twos and threes, the Mackintoshes had been slipping away by fours and fives, and were already in full retreat to their own borders.

Next day Grants and Gregarach went forth together, and set fire to Mackintosh's mill, the cause of all this trouble. The piper had his pipes tuned again, and up and down he marched playing a lively reel, till he had them all dancing by that cheerful bonfire. On the way back they made a song to fit the tune, and called it "The Burning of the Black Mill." It has been a favourite reel in the country of Strathspey from that day to this.

Rob sent a letter to Mackintosh, threatening fearful things if any further injury were offered to his friend; and he bade MacAlpin send for him again, if ever the feud broke out again. "But it's a far cry to Balquhider," he said, "and no one here who knows the way." So he left two young clansmen of his, great runners, to be despatched to fetch him if need were, "for they would do a hundred miles in twentyfour hours." One of them married a natural daughter of MacAlpin's, and was given the little farmhouse of Altdhru, up in the mouth of the Larig Ghru—that being the way he must go, if Rob's intelligence system were ever put to the test. His descendants were still living there, according to a stone in Rothiemurchus churchyard, at the beginning of the present century.

The capture of Rob Roy was no longer a political expedient; but to the Duke 'of Atholl it seemed none the less desirable, and the old sentence of outlawry still furnished a pretext. The story of his last attempt must not be omitted.

It is said that Rob was attending the funeral of his mother—which is certainly untrue, since she died in 1661. It was one of his Campbell kinswomen, at all events probably Christian, widow of his brother John, and daughter of Campbell of Duneaves—whose body awaited burial in ancient Fortingall kirkyard. All her own kin, from the Lairds of Glenfalloch and Glenlyon downwards, would be at the graveside; and the MacGregors mustered in force, with Ghlu Dhu as chief mourner.

As it happened, Campbell of Glenfalloch and his Lady were amongst the early arrivals; and the first of the MacGregor guests to come on the scene was Rob Roy, with his wife and family. Then, with a great clatter of hooves, a troop of blue bonneted horsemen drew up beside them, and Rob recognised Atholl's chamberlain, shouting orders and flourishing a pistol. Too angry to think of flight, he strode to meet him.

"Here I am!" he called. "I'll not avoid you! But get you back to your master, while yet you may; and tell him, if he sends any more of his pygmy race against me, I'll hang them up to feed the crows!"

But as he spoke, a second troop of horse came riding up the riverside; and here was Atholl himself, astride a splendid charger, spurring forward to accept Rob's surrender in person. So bitter had their quarrel grown that he ceased to care by what dubious means he gained his purpose. And because this breach of the peace was so utterly wanton, something still forbade Rob to think of flight. Atholl was plainly in a hurry to get the unseemly business over; for this intrusion was an insult to the memory of the dead woman—and to her son, who might be here at any moment with a score or two of claymores at his back.

"I thank your Grace for the honour you do my brother's wife and all the company," Rob solemnly declared, "by coming unbidden to her funeral with so large a following. It's a proof of your condescension, that I value all the more because I'd not foreseen it. Will your Grace be pleased to dismount, and partake of such hospitality as this house affords?"

"Come, sir, I think we understand each other!" the Duke broke in. He had just seen Glenfalloch and his Lady behind Rob, and disliked the prospect of a full explanation in the presence of persons of their standing in the county. "You are under arrest, and must make ready to ride with me to Perth; to answer for more misdeeds than I have time to enumerate here."

Now there was an outcry indeed. This was no Atholl domain, and who was the Duke to come dragooning his way into Glen Lyon? It was an outrage against the dead and against common decency. Some of the womenfolk formed themselves into a bodyguard between Rob and the horsemen, reviling the Duke and his chamberlain to their faces. Atholl would stand no more, but could not ask his men to ride them down. Calmly he dismounted, took a pistol from the holster, and strode forward alone; and so came face to face with Rob, who stood where he had stood from the beginning, his arms folded across his chest, and smiled into the barrel of the levelled pistol.

Somewhere up the glen a bagpipe wailed, and the crowd's angry growl swelled into a roar of open hostility. Here were more guests on their way to the feast, and the Atholl invaders might soon find themselves outnumbered in their turn.

"I believe you've lost your chance," Rob remarked pleasantly to the Duke.

"So be it!" cried Atholl, steadied the pistol, and fired. Whether Rob intended to fling himself at his enemy's throat, or merely to dodge the bullet, it was impossible to tell. What happened was that he lurched forward, slipped, and fell heavily to the ground at the moment of the report. A howl of rage went up from the assembled guests, as the Duke stepped cautiously back from the prostrate body, the smoking pistol in his hand, and his servant hurried forward with his horse. There was a prospect of more bloodshed, when help came from an unexpected quarter.

I Not Balquhider, for neither Christian nor Rob's mother had any connection with that place, and Balquhider was in Atholl's own domains, where none would dare to oppose him openly.

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Lady Glenfalloch was as warmhearted as she was solidly built, but never before had she known such simple fury as now. Running out before all the rest she launched herself like an avalanche upon the retreating Duke. Down he went, and lay pinned helpless between her vast thighs, breathless under the weight of her, while she set herself to choke the life out of him!

Neither Duke nor Lady can be said to have had all their senses about them when, a few seconds later, they were forcibly separated by a pair of brawny arms and heard a hearty voice cursing them for a murderous pair of devils: The Duke, nursing his badlymauled throat, and the Lady, pulling down her ivory fair flesh she had so recklessly displayed, were nevertheless a little puzzled to find Rob Roy standing over them, with the Duke's sword under his arm, very much alive and shaking with laughter.

Bruised and breathless, the Duke was helped to his feet by his horrified chamberlain, and the great wig set again on his head. But the Atholl troopers, who had surged forward gallantly enough to his rescue, were now hanging back in an unaccountable manner. Not twenty yards away a long line of Highlandmen had just come to a halt, resting on their drawn swords, and waiting to learn what all the fuss was about. They wore the Glengyle tartan; and here was Ghlun Dhu pushing his way briskly to his uncle's side.

"is it fight?" he whispered, unwilling.

"Laugh, will you? Laugh!" was the answer.

Gregor, bewildered but eager to help, flung back his head and laughed; and all the Gregarach guffawed in concert. The Duke had sought to do a great wrong, and mercifully none had suffered but himself. Now let him go, with the laughter of the whole glen in his ears. Rob was right. Atholl was no coward, but he would not stay to be ridiculed. Furiously he turned his back and stamped away.

The nearer man comes to complete security the more it attracts him. Rob Roy had enjoyed peace at home now for several years; the old ever-present fear of ambush and sudden death was lulled; and so Atholl's savage attempt on his life (assuming the story to have some foundation in fact) came as a sad reminder of the daily risk he ran, and must still run, so long as that old sentence of outlawry stood against him. He began toying with the idea of peace negotiations—not with Atholl himself, but with that far older adversary the Duke of Montrose. For once reconciled with Montrose, and his outlawry revoked, there would be no more to fear from Atholl or any other man—no more, that is, than every mortal has to fear in this imperfect world. It was surely worth the swallowing of a little pride?

Arrived at this conclusion, Rob wrote to his friend Finnab, now living quietly on his halfpay at Inveraray; and the colonel was obliging enough to step up to the castle and lay the matter before MacCailein More; and thereafter Rob's future was the subject of not unfriendly correspondence between that nobleman and his brotherduke of Montrose.

For Rob, of course, had early information of the improved relations between his old and new patrons. It seemed as if Argyll's return to royal favour, a deathblow to Montrose's ambitions, had brought the old rivals to some sort of understanding. Montrose's pride was humbled, and Argyll a little chastened by his period of disgrace. At any rate, the two had agreed to shelve their private vendetta, for the good of their country, and see if they could not work together. . . . As one of their principal bones of contention in the old days, Rob felt it was only fitting that the reconciliation should now extend to him.

Nothing seemed to stand in the way. That old feud had long languished for lack of provocation on either side; now was the time to make an end of it. So thought Montrose, and Rob received a courteous invitation to attend upon him, and discuss any outstanding differences, with a view to a final and peaceful settlement. As for any risk he would run in making the journey, he was assured of the joint protection of the Dukes of Montrose and Argyll for the period of his visit.

There is a pleasing, but improbable, story told of this meeting, which is supposed to have taken place in London itself. King George, it seems, had often expressed a wish to see the terrible Rob Roy; but although Argyll was willing to gratify his curiosity, he had too little faith in a German King's notion of fair play to let Rob walk into a trap. He therefore "took care that the King should see him without knowing who he was, and for this purpose made Rob Roy walk for some time in front of St James's. His majesty observed, and remarked that he had never seen a finer looking man in Highland dress." But Argyll kept his secret till Rob was safely home again, to the King's disgust. . . . It is difficult to believe that a Highlander could walk about London, in his very distinctive national dress, twenty years before the first Highland regiment was seen south of the Border, and be subjected to nothing worse than polite scrutiny. So it seems more probable, on the whole, that Rob's meeting with the two Dukes was in Glasgow—and that he wore breeches.

Montrose House, in the Drygate of Glasgow, had been planned a year or two before, at the time of the Duke's earlier and more fortunate speculations in the South Sea Bubble companies. Foreseeing a day when Glasgow would surpass Edinburgh in wealth and consequence, and the aristocracy rush to build their townhouses here, he was resolved to be well in the forefront of fashion. Rob Roy, of course, used to boast that it was terror of his vengeance that drove Montrose to leave Buchanan House for a refuge in the city. But today's business would put an end to all that.

The first thing to be decided was the future of Rob's old estate of Craigrostan; for Montrose had never succeeded in making title to it before the outbreak of the Rebellion, and so it passed to the Commissioners for Confiscated Estates. It was bought up by the illfated York Building Company for £820, but a number of people were found to have claims upon it. Montrose put in two claims—one on a longoverdue bill, and the other for money invested by Rob in cattle.

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And it seemed that Rob, when on the verge of bankruptcy, had disposed of a half interest in the property to Hamilton of Bardowie, who had not been a rebel. Montrose was now ready to pay a fair price for a clear title, if Rob would help to make it so.'

There was no real difficulty in coming to terms, for Craighrostan had been useless to Rob since the garrison was planted there, and his house of Inversnaid was never rebuilt. So he cheerfully waived any right he still had in the property in favour of the Duke.

As for the outlawry, it all arose out of money owing to the Duke ten years ago. Since then neither of them had kept books, but each helped himself when he could. If once they started on their rights and wrongs, over those ten years, they would never make an end of it. 'Full particulars will be found in 'The York Building Company,' by David Murray, 1883. When all claims were ranked and Montrose received a debenture certificate for £4,145.7d. sterling in October 1723. there was only one way out, and that was to charge Rob with some nominal sum, and hand him the Duke's receipt in full discharge—ten years' feud written off on half a sheet of paper!

It was hard to realise that he was no more an outlaw; but harder still, and very humbling, when he reached the street again, to realise that nobody in busy eighteenth-century Glasgow knew or cared who he was. His old-fashioned clothes and curly beard proclaimed him to all as a simple Highlandman on a visit to civilisation.

CHAPTER VII. 1725—1727

ALTHOUGH he is supposed to have retired from active business about this time, and handed over the Watch as a going concern to his nephew, it is clear that Rob still kept an eye upon everything that went on in the glens.

A letter of his has been preserved, written from Inverlochlarig on the 26th March 1726 to Colonel Grant of Ballindalloch, about two Breadalbin men who had been receiving stolen cattle marked with Strathspey bands. Rob got permission to examine the pair, who said they had the cows from one Donald Bane Beg; and he urged the colonel to have this man arrested. There is much more about stolen horses, which Rob was recovering for other people in Strathspey.

On at least one occasion, being either sick or called away on other business, he left Mary to ride through Stirlingshire collecting his blackmail dues for him. On the 8th of May 1725 Captain Crossley, engaged in the disarming of the clans under the new Act, wrote to his friend Charles De La Foy ¹ “ELGIN OP MORAY.

• . . Not long before I left Stirling the famous Rob Roy’s wife went through the whole town and country thereabouts to those that held any land, acquainted ¹ State Paper Office, Scotland. Bundle i6, No. 17. them who she was and that she wanted such sums which they were obliged to comply with; but this Rob Roy is a man of so much honour that, where he steals himself, those he protects from the insults of others, so that he is one of the most genteel rogues amongst them.

Lennox of Woodhead is said to have been one of the defaulters; but when Mary rode up to his gate, with twelve of Rob’s best men at her back, the laird paid the arrears on the spot, declaring that he could not refuse a lady.

From national politics at least Rob had thankfully retired. In 1725 he and most of his Jacobite neighbours sent in their Letters of Submission to Major-General Wade, the new Commander-in-Chief, begging to be allowed to spend the rest of their lives in the service of King George, “whose goodness, justice, and humanity, are so conspicuous to all mankind.” ¹ They do not make pleasant reading; and we know from contemporary correspondence how hollow were their professions of penitence and loyalty to the new dynasty. In their object of hoodwinking the English general they seem to have been entirely successful; but certainly the writers cannot have intended that they should ever be published. Rob Roy went further than the rest. Not content with pleading that he was forced into that “unnatural Rebellion,” he went on to assert that he had “sent his Grace the Duke of Argyle all the intelligence he could from time to time, of the strength and situation of the Rebels”—that being a story often told of him among the Whigs. Not all men would care to seek favour by admissions of past treachery, true or otherwise, and naturally Rob’s reputation has suffered. We need only remember that the rest of his letter, like those of his friends, is known to be deliberate falsehood. Why suppose this one sentence to be different?

Two years later we have the mysterious report, in the ‘Weekly Journal’ of 24th January 1727, that Rob Roy and James, Lord Ogilvy, having been confined in Newgate for a time, were handcuffed and taken to Gravesend to be transported to Barbadoes; but were both pardoned before the ship sailed. Almost certainly this is a mistake. There were no treason trials held at this time; and Lord Ogilvy had actually been pardoned, and come home from France, in 1725. There is no reason to suppose that Rob Roy was ever again involved with the Government or its servants, after his submission to Wade in the same year.

Rob’s retirement from public affairs left him all the more energy, his neighbours complained, to devote to local politics in Balquhidder. There was never a dispute over tenant right, or the renewal of a lease, or arrears of rent, upon any of the properties clustered about Loch Doine—within the MacGregors’ recognised sphere of influence—but Rob would get himself embroiled, and see that his own brand of justice prevailed. It was remarkable how many of the best holdings were always in the hands of his own relatives or friends.

When he settled at Inverlochlarig Beg, Rob’s principal neighbours were his cousin, Malcolm of Marchfield, and one John Murray (or MacGregor) of Glencarnaig. The latter came to Balquhidder soon after the ‘15, as a favourite of Atholl’s, and bought an estate. ¹ On his land stood the twin hamlets of Inverlochlarig and Invercarraig; and it fell to him, at the time of Rob’s temporary retreat into Argyllshire, to take possession of his holding, which he relet to a family of MacLarens. Within a few months the tables were turned, Rob was back in Inverlochlarig Beg stronger than ever, and the MacLarens were homeless. . . . Between Rob and such a landlord true friendship had little chance of flourishing.

Five years later it came to open war, when Glencarnaig called in the might of the law to help him distrain for rent due from the MacIntyres of Invercarraig. On the 8th of August 1722 he marched out with four messengers-at-arms and thirty armed men besides, to assert his much flouted authority. ¹ But “Rob Roy MacGregor having a kindness and favour for the MacIntyres,” and his usual early information of what was afoot, lay overnight “in ambush with his lads,” and fell upon the party as it crossed the bill. The messengers-at-arms and three others he made prisoner, and kept under guard for twenty-four hours, “and at last kept their arms and did let them go, taking a promissory oath of them that they would never come again upon that occasion.”

¹ Rob’s letter, and those of Appin, Glencoe and others, were published in the Appendix to Jamieson’s edition of Burt’s Letters from the North of Scotland, in xSz8.

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Malcolm of Marchfield had a fine estate from his father, and a mob of children by his pretty young wife. By the time he was fifty he had squandered the former away; and died at Oban, on the point of emigrating to North America, leaving his thriftless brood on the hands of the Laird of Glengyle, as their natural protector. Every effort was made, no doubt, to keep the lands in the family; but they had to be split up into smaller holdings, and one of these, the farm of Inverenty, that Rob Roy had promised to his own nominee, was snapped up by a certain John MacLaren.

The story of what followed is one of the best known, and best established, of the Rob Roy legends.

1 Letter to the Duke of Atholl from his bailie in Balquhidder, dated 11th August 1722. Rob had a piper named Hugh MacIntyre, probably of this family.

His world had shrunk lately to the limits of Balquhidder parish, but within that smaller sphere Rob still intended to have his own way. He mustered a hundred of his MacGregors, and took possession of the disputed farm without any trouble; but if he hoped to overawe the opposition he was disappointed. John MacLaren was a resolute man, and did not lack friends. He called first on his kinsmen in the Kirkton, and they appealed in their turn to Stewart of Glenbuckie; who, when he heard of Rob's hundred men in arms, began to look abroad for allies. Ardshiel came to his aid, with the Appin Stewarts; and Rob got warning that a combined force of over two hundred men was preparing to march up the valley and see justice done.

He knew better than to await their coming. Outnumbered or no, he preferred that any fighting there had to be should take place among other men's homes. The Gregarach marched out before daylight, and reached the outskirts of the Kirkton before they found the enemy drawn up to receive them, on a piece of open pasture land that has scarcely altered in two hundred years. The Stewarts formed with their backs to the Kirkton Burn. To their front the ground dipped, and rose again to where the MacGregors on the opposite slope stretched their thinner line as far as it would go, with a great display of naked steel along their front. General Wade would not have recognised the docile clans that lately surrendered their arms to him.

One look at the enemy's array was enough for Rob. Win or lose, no good could ever come of a pitched battle, here in Balquhidder, that would sow the seeds of hatred for a generation. Out he stepped with a white flag on a pike, to meet Ardshiel midway between the embattled hosts, and see what a parley would do. . . . And back he came to his own lines at last, with the best terms he could get—all hostilities to cease, and John MacLaren to have quiet possession of Inverenty.

There were glum looks in the MacGregor ranks, as the men realised how complete was their surrender of all they came here to maintain. On the other side of the field there were cheers, and a little unmannerly laughter. On either side, in fact, there was mingled with the genuine relief that sane counsels had prevailed, a feeling that Rob Roy had made a fool of himself.

Then all tongues ceased to wag as Rob advanced again into the space between the lines: "Gentlemen," he called, "there's none more thankful than myself that this affair is peaceably settled. But it would be a great pity where so many gallant men are met in arms, that they should be deprived of their diversion. Rather than leave any disappointed, I invite a champion of the Stewarts to come forward, that he and I may exchange a few blows for the honour of our respective clans before we part."

Now the hills echoed with the applause. Something had been wanting even the Stewarts had felt it. Stewart of Invernahyle sprang forward to claim the honour of representing his clan; the two champions doffed plaids, saluted, and engaged.

The visitors from Appin had heard of Rob as the cunningest hand with the broadsword in all the High lands, and were fully prepared to see him win the day, though Invernahyle must be twentyfive years his junior. Yet he seemed to have no defence, to be throwing everything into a whirlwind attack, which was odd for an old and cunning fighter. To his friends it was plain that Rob was throwing away his strength while his younger opponent conserved his own. And then a rumour began to go about, none could tell who started it, but "His eyes are failing! He cannot trust his eyes!"

But whatever came of this perilous combat no word must reach the Stewarts of the handicap under which Rob fought. Failing sight and failing strength might be every man's lot, but still were looked on by the Highlander as a kind of disgrace. Rob would not thank them (if he lived through the next few minutes) for publishing his weakness abroad. Rather let his full gallantry go unrecognised than do him so ill a turn.

A shout, the clang of swordblades stopped abruptly—and there was Rob standing with left hand clutching right arm above the elbow, where the blood welled out and dribbled down his sleeve.

"And devil a scratch is on you!" he panted, as they bound up his wound.

"Sure, I'm young and fast on my feet," said Invernahyle. "But for that you had overmatched me."

But at this reference to his age Rob seemed to take offence, and turned away to his own people. And when they took up his broadsword and brought it to him, he looked at it with disgust.

"Into the scabbard with her," he growled, "and may I be damned if ever I use her again!"

There can be few men whose biographies have been published anonymously, and in quite mythical form, during their own lifetimes; but Rob Roy has this distinction. Perhaps the nearest parallel is the case of "Buffalo Bill," who became an accepted hero of popular fiction during the life of Colonel William Cody—and with his full approval.

1 According to other accounts, it was Stewart of Ardshiel himself. the word went round, and then all understood. Rob could only attack; he could not trust his sword to guard him!

Highland Constable

Rob Roy MacGregor – the Whole Story

In the year 1723 there was published in London a kind of “wild western,” entitled ‘The Highland Rogue, or the Memorable Actions of the Celebrated Robert MacGregor commonly called Rob Roy, digested from the Memorandum of an Authentick Scotch Manuscript.’ It contains a number of stories of Rob’s alleged adventures, of which some have been related in this book, though none have any certain foundation in fact. It is the custom to accept such stories, which cannot be proved either true or false, as “traditions,” and to respect them as such. Certainly no biography of Rob Roy would be complete without some reference to them. If worthless as history, they may give some idea of the kind of man Rob was, from the kind of story that was circulated about him. They fit easily into the framework of his actual history, very few having to be rejected as inconsistent with known facts,

But the connection between tradition and history, once believed to be close, is now beginning to be doubted altogether. According to Lord Raglan,¹ “tradition, far from being supplementary to history, is totally unconnected with it”; and he goes on to state the conditions under which traditions, or myths, become associated with historical characters

“First, the person with whom the myths are to be associated must not be too recent, or the true facts of his career will be remembered, nor too remote, or he will have been superseded and forgotten. About fifty years after his death is a probable time for myths to be first associated with an historical character.”

Rob is a notable exception to this rule; but in 1723 London and the Braes of Balquhiddy might almost have been in different worlds; nor were the author of ‘The Highland Rogue’ and his readers familiar with Rob’s actual career. They knew he was still living; for the book ends: “There now wants nothing to complete the History but the Account of his Death; which we have not yet received any certain Advice of.” “Secondly, he must have been famous or notorious in certain definite connections, and his exploits or misfortunes must be such as to afford pegs upon which the myths can be hung “—as Dick Turpin has appropriated all the highwayman stories to himself. Oddly enough, the Highlands have produced very few heroes whose names are remembered today. No doubt Rob has quietly appropriated the exploits of any that came before him. He can hardly have jumped all the rivers, or slept in all the caves, up and down Scotland, that are now associated with him.

It is a generally accepted rule that when a traditional story contains pieces of dramatic dialogue, it should be treated with suspicion; and when the same words are found attributed to another character in another story, the suspicion approaches certainty. Rob Roy seems to have been particularly vocal on the field of Sheriffmuir; and we have seen that his famous words, “If they cannot do it without me, they shall not do it with me,” are very like a remark attributed to Glengarry at another stage of the battle. Here are two more examples, from a collection of ‘Dunblane Traditions’ first printed in 1835

When urged to join one or other of the armies, Rob told his men: “I will fight for neither King George nor King James. Let us strike in at the close for King Spulzie [Spoil].” Later he received a message from Mar, begging him at least to remain neutral, and “leave it between the red—coats and

On the very next page the author tells of an old woman living near the battlefield, who remembered some Highlanders plundering her house declaring they fought neither for “King Shordy nor King Hamish, but for King Spulke.”

And the author was no doubt familiar with “The Highlander’s Prayer,” recorded, by Burns

“O Lord, be wi’ us—but it thou be not wi’ us, be not against us but leave it betwixt the redcoats and us.”

So far as the case against Rob Roy depends on such tales as these, it rebuts itself.

In 1818, when Scott’s novel had roused the public’s interest in Rob Roy’s actual history, Dr Kenneth Macleay published a little book of his alleged adventures, most of which have been already mentioned. Though said to be “drawn up from the oral declarations of some old men,”¹ there can be little doubt that the bulk of them are pure fiction. Let us wind up this discussion by comparing one of them (which might equally well be told of Dick Turpin, Robin Hood, or Hereward the Wake), with another story that may be regarded as genuine

One evening Rob was travelling alone through Glen Etive, and being struck with the beauty of the scene he “sat down on the point of an elevated rock, that his soul might enjoy the perfect magnificence he beheld.” He was aroused by the sound of voices at a distance, and the shrieks of a female. Plunging into the woods in the direction of the voices, he at first missed the way in the darkness, but eventually saw two men approaching, and by lying quiet in the long grass was able to overhear their conversation.

“You do not mean to treat her ill?” said one. “She is too amiable to be harshly used.”

“Enough, Percy!” said the other; “though you have assisted, you are not to dictate to me.”

“My right to insist on honourable means, Sir James, is not inferior to yours, and I will maintain it.”

They passed by, and Rob set out to follow, but lost them; until a renewal of the female shrieks led him at a decayed mansion . . . unroofed and in ruin occupied by owls and ravens, who croaked around the falling battlements.” Entering through a vaulted passageway, with his dirk drawn, he heard the same voices as before, and found his way to an apartment where he beheld a female figure lying in a corner.

“Alas!” said the lady, turning to look at him; “what am I now doomed to suffer? Do you come, ruffian, to finish my life with your dagger?”

Rob introduced himself, and offered his aid.

Highland Constable

Rob Roy MacGregor – the Whole Story

“I am,” said she, “the daughter of the Chief of I have been decoyed, and forcibly carried away from my friends, by a base and cruel knight of England.”

“Well,” said Rob Roy, “trust in me; but stir not from this till I return. I go to wait upon the knight.”

Proceeding to the door of another apartment, he overheard the two Englishmen in violent discourse, one still urging the other not to treat their fair captive indecorously. Though both were armed, as were their three servants, Rob strode boldly in upon them, and demanded their surrender.

Sir James drew his sword, but a moment later lay wounded on the floor. Two of the others with great fury rushed upon Rob Roy, who speedily killed them both. Percy begged that Sir James’s life might not be taken.

“No, generous young man, it shall not,” said Rob Roy. “I disdain a cowardly action; but, if he survives, he shall expiate his guilt in a more humiliating manner than to die by my sword. As for you, I have heard your sentiments, and they shall not be unrequited.”

While Sir James’s wounds were bound up, Rob went to comfort the young lady, whose “lovely countenance beamed with joy, and a flood of tears gushed from her eyes, while she expressed her fervent thanks to her deliverer.” He then procured a boat, in which the S2 whole party embarked. A tempest arose, but they were saved by Rob’s expert seamanship, and so came at last to — Castle.

The joy of the Chief of — cannot be described, when he embraced his daughter, who nearly fainted in his arms. “There, —,” said Rob, “I restore your child at the peril of my own life. Let not your clan again say that Rob Roy MacGregor is incapable of generosity to them, though they have often wronged him.”

(We are left in little doubt that the person so oddly addressed as — is a gentleman of Clan Campbell.)

“Noble, brave MacGregor!” replied the Chief. “You have done me a service never to be forgotten. Ere long you shall be a free man. My interest is great, and it shall be exerted to recall the decree that hangs over you.

The Chief kept his promise, and procured a remission of Rob’s outlawry, enabling him to return at last to his own country. Percy was soon afterwards married to the lady, whom it seemed he had loved honourably from the start. And the wicked Sir James, after a few weeks confinement in —’s dungeon, was allowed to go free.

It is a pretty story, with a stirring plot, dramatic dialogue, and a happy ending. But if this sort of thing is tradition, better keep to sober fact. Or perhaps the following tale, taken down by Sir Walter Scott from the lips of an actual eyewitness, is near enough to fact for our purpose.. It is told in his own words in the Introduction to ‘Rob Roy’

“My informant stated himself to have been a lad of fifteen, living with his father on the estate of a gentleman in the Lennox, whose name I have forgotten, in the capacity of herd. On a fine morning in the end of October, the period when such calamities were almost always to be apprehended, they found the Highland thieves had been down upon them, and swept away ten or twelve head of cattle. Rob Roy was sent for, and came with a party of seven or eight armed men. He heard with great gravity all that could be told him of the circumstances of the raid, and expressed his confidence that the herdswiddiefows could not have carried their booty far, and that he should be able to recover them.

“He desired that two Lowlanders should be sent on the party, as it was not to be expected that any of his gentlemen would take the trouble of driving the cattle when he should recover possession of them. My informant and his father were dispatched on the expedition. They had no goodwill to the journey; nevertheless, provided with a little food, and with a dog to help them to manage the cattle, they set off with MacGregor. They travelled a long day’s journey in the direction of the mountain Ben Vorlich, and slept for the night in a ruinous hut or bothy. The next morning they resumed their journey among the hills, Rob Roy directing their course by signs and marks on the heath, which my informant did not understand.

“About noons Rob commanded the armed party to halt, and to lie couched in the heather where it was thickest. ‘Do you and your son,’ he said to the oldest Lowlander, ‘go boldly over the hill. You will see beneath you, in a glen on the other side, your master’s cattle feeding, it may be with others; gather your own together, taking care to disturb no one else, and drive them to this place. If any one speak to, or threaten you, tell them that I am here, with twenty men.’

“But what if they abuse us, or kill us?’ said the Lowland peasant, by no means delighted at finding the embassy imposed on him and his son. ‘If they do you any wrong,’ said Rob, ‘I will never forgive them as long as I live.’ The Lowlander was by no means content with this security, but did not think it safe to dispute Rob’s injunctions.

“He and his son climbed the hill, therefore, found a deep valley where there grazed, as Rob had predicted, a large herd of cattle. They cautiously selected those which their master had lost, and took measures to drive them over the hill. As soon as they began to remove them, they were surprised by hearing cries and screams; and looking around in fear and trembling, they saw a woman, seeming to have started out of the earth, who fisted at them, that is, scolded them, in Gaelic. When they contrived, however, in the best Gaelic they could muster, to deliver the message Rob Roy told them, she became silent, and disappeared without offering them any further annoyance. The Chief heard their story on their return, and spoke with great complacency of the art which he possessed of putting such things to rights without any unpleasant bustle.”

As a story, this may seem to lack point. But as an account of a typical day’s work by Rob Roy’s Watch, it rings remarkably true, and is instructive besides. We see how Rob made bluff do all the work of brute force. What a saving of “unpleasant bustle,” when an invisible Rob Roy, always just over the hill with twenty imaginary men, was as effective as the real thing!

CHAPTER VIII. December 1734

WE know little about Rob Roy's last years; but it does appear that he changed his religion, and also (for the fourth time) changed his protector.

At the time of the Revolution the Glengyle family would probably have called themselves Episcopalians, but since then had found it convenient to be married or buried according to the rites of the established Kirk. As for Rob Roy, he had his own way with ministers. When the Reverend Finlay Ferguson first came to Balquhider parish, it is said that he found the stipend too small for a family man, and took steps to have it increased, contrary to the terms on which the people had admitted him. There was an outcry at once, and Rob Roy went to him in the name of the parishioners to persuade him to renounce it. The poor minister was lifted bodily into Stewart's tavern, and filled systematically with whisky till he would promise anything. They got him to sign the necessary paper; but Rob Roy afterwards presented him each year with a cow and a fat sheep, by way of compensation.

Another story tells how the minister at Logierait once preached a sermon on the subject of "fraud and roguery, and recognising Rob among his congregation, began to throw out hints evidently meant for him. Rob waited upon him afterwards, and challenged him to justify his words, or else to recant them in his own pulpit next Sunday.

"Did you not buy a cow from a widow in this parish," the minister demanded, "at little more than half its value? She is a poor woman, and cannot afford this."

"But she appeared glad to get the price," said Rob.

"True, for her family are starving."

"If that be the case," Rob answered, "she is welcome to keep the money I paid, and she shall also get back her cow."

And on the following Sunday the minister related the whole story from the pulpit, as an example to the more hardhearted gentry of his parish.

Now, in his old age, Rob joined the Roman Catholic Church. He also put himself under the protection of the Duke of Perth (son of Lord Drummond of the '15), and it is as likely that the change of creed was a compliment to his new patron, as that he deserted Argyll for reasons of religion. At all events, it was to Mr Alexander Drummond, an old priest living at Drummond Castle, that he made his first confession; and we are told that the good man "frequently groaned, crossed himself, and exacted a heavy remuneration"; also that Rob "did not pretend, when pressed closely on the subject, to justify all the tenets of Catholicism, and acknowledged that extreme unction always appeared to him a great waste of oil."

Of Rob's four sons, Coil, the eldest, had married and settled down in the Kirkton. The others seem to have lived at home, and often complained because they were born a generation too late for the kind of adventures their father enjoyed. At last they sallied out to see if life could not still be lived in the old heroic style, and with some of their friends went to join the band of Buchanan of Machar, a kind of amateur robberchief on Lochearnside. The family had ever since been trying to entice them back to a more reputable way of life. Rob, whose own exploits the lads were only trying to emulate, was quick enough to assert the fine but fundamental difference between fair reprisal and plain thieving. Ranald, the second son, was persuaded to return to the old dull round—he was courting his cousin Jean, Glengyle's daughter, who may have had something to do with it. But James and Robin Og were still at Cromely, the freebooters' stronghold, and still unrepentant.

It is generally said of Rob Roy that he died "worn out by the vicissitudes of a restless life," which may be taken to mean that he paid the penalty in the end for days and nights of skulking in the heather in middle age. But all we know is that he lay dying, in his house of Inverlochlarig Beg, in the last days of 1734.

Would he not rather have met his end in some wild affray on the heather, as he must have come so near to doing many a time? For Rob Roy MacGregor, of all men in Scotland, to die in his bed at last at the age of sixtyfour, was unbelievable. Plenty of his race had lived as he had lived, by the sword, had flourished for a time, and come to a bloody end. Two at least of his sons showed a strong inclination to do likewise. It was the greatest of his achievements that he came through to die in peace.

James and Robin Og were summoned home, profusely bearded and bristling with weapons. People came from up and down the glen, to hang about the house and hear the latest news. A priest was brought, who is said to have found the dying hero a little slow to understand

' Nothing seems to be known of their activities, except that two years previously they nearly succeeded in rescuing the unhappy Lady Grange from her captors—for the sake of the reward. the universal nature of Christian forgiveness. "I forgive my enemies," said Rob, "but" (catching the eye of Robin Og) "look you to them!"

The other deathbed story is even better known, and more typical of the man. A visitor was seen approaching the house, and recognised as one with whom Rob had a quarrel—possibly John Murray of Glencarnaig, who was a great upholder of Sassenach law and the Disarming Act. Rob seemed no worse, and they thought he would be glad to see anybody, even so disagreeable a neighbour. Mary was propping him up in his bed to receive the unexpected visitor, when his old independent spirit asserted itself—for the last time.

Highland Constable

Rob Roy MacGregor – the Whole Story

“Yon fellow coming to gloat over me?” he complained. “Here, raise me up, dress me in my plaid— bring me sword and pistols. . . .” Rob was propped up in his chair, dressed and armed as if for immediate battle, though barely able to move hand or foot, when the visitor was ushered in. He hid his surprise well, but the invalid’s astonishing recovery made his visit of condolence appear illtimed. He could only stammer out a few commonplace civilities, withdraw after a very few minutes, cock an eye at the two young desperadoes from Cromely, and hasten on his way.

Noisily they crowded back into the sickroom, congratulating Rob on the outfacing of his rival. Only Mary, caring nothing for these things, saw that his face had turned a ghastly hue and he was gasping for breath. With a clatter the great broadsword dropped from his hand. . . .

When they were allowed to file into that room again, it was a chamber of death indeed. Rob lay still, hardly able to speak, though his wife knelt by his side trying to distinguish what were evidently his last words. She rose at last, and turned to them a tragic face.

“It is only this,” she said. “He would have the piper play ‘I return no more,’ for he feels that his time is come.”

Rob died on New Year’s Eve, and none would be sorrier than he if the night was robbed of its traditional merriment.

“On Saturday was se’night,” the ‘Caledonian Mercury’ reported, “died at Balquhiddar in Perthshire the famed Highland partisan Rob Roy.

He was not buried with his ancestors at Portanellan, but in the Kirkton of Balquhiddar, where his grave may be seen near the east end of the church. His memory lives on, in every quarter of the globe, where Atholl and Breadalbin, Mar and Montrose, Argyll, and the rest of them are all forgotten.

THE HIGHLAND CONSTABLE