




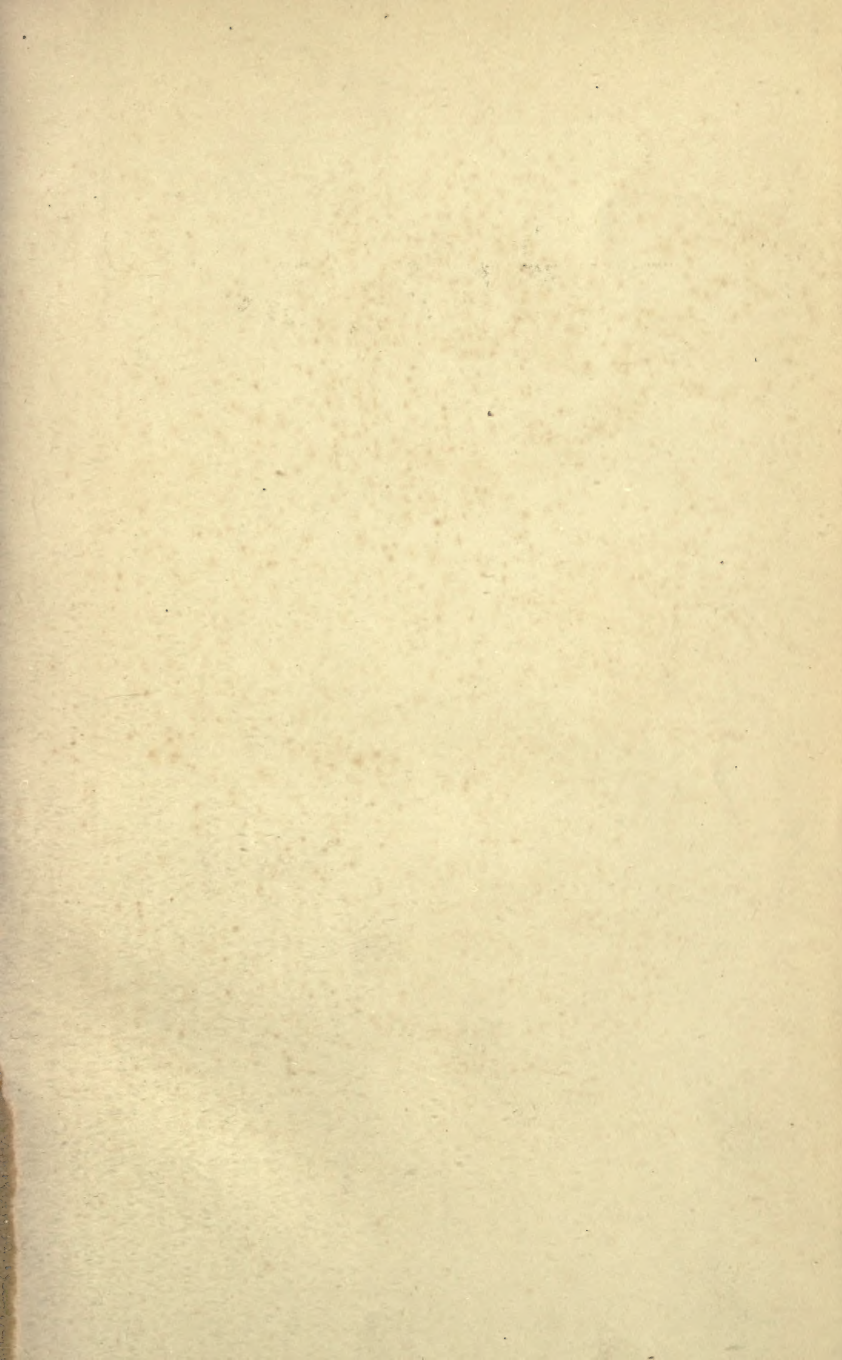
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Thomas Watson.



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After the Inverernan portrait.

IAN ROY OF SKELLATER

A SCOTTISH SOLDIER
OF FORTUNE

BEING THE LIFE OF GENERAL JOHN FORBES,
OF THE PORTUGUESE ARMY

BY
JAMES NEIL, M.D.

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To

General Sir JOHN FORBES
of Inverernan, G.C.B., &c.

DEAR SIR JOHN FORBES,

It gives me much pleasure to dedicate to you an attempt to place on record the romantic career and chivalrous character of one of the Forbeses of Skellater. This dedication to you, who worthily represent the House of Skellater, would, in any case, be appropriate. It is made still more appropriate by the kind encouragement and important aid you have given to the preparation of the biography.

With feelings of esteem and respect,

Believe me to be,

Yours very truly,

JAMES NEIL.

OXFORD,

September, 1902.



NOTE.

Most of the many friends who have given willing and valued aid to this work can only be thanked collectively. But it is impossible to omit thanks, special and express, to Senhór José Basto, Director of the Portuguese National Archives, Lisbon; to the Brazilian Minister of the Interior; to Doctor Teixeira de Mello, Director of the National Library, Rio de Janeiro; and to C. B. Rhind, Esq., British Vice-Consul at that capital.

J. N.

IAN ROY OF SKELLATER.

WHEN the traveller who ascends the valley of the Aberdeenshire Don has got into the heart of the Highland country, and reached a point about 48 miles from Aberdeen, he will notice on his right hand a house of larger size and more conspicuous appearance than the farm houses of the neighbourhood. It looks across the strath into the face of the birch-clad hill of Delhandy, on the south side of the river. In front of the house lies a field, surrounded with a border of trees, in single row, and looking as if it had formerly been a small

“policy” or home park. A hill sweeps in a curve behind, and forms a shelter from the north wind. The house was once the mansion of the lairds of Skellater, and the hill behind it is the hill of Lonach. To the people of Strathdon the spot has memories of a stirring kind, for here was the gathering place of the Strathdon portion of the Clan Forbes, and *Lonach*, the name of the hill, was their slogan or war cry.

The lairds of Skellater were once powerful in the land, and a large part of upper Donside belonged to them. They were a bold and warlike race, and played an active part in the stormy history of the country. They first come clearly to the front during the great civil war, when William Forbes of

Skellater led the men of Strathdon to join Montrose, and fought for the king at the battle of Alford, on the 2nd of July, 1645. This was a great departure from the politics of the other families of the Forbes name, who were all, or nearly all, Covenanters. Between the Forbeses and their neighbours, the Gordons, there existed a bitter enmity, which showed itself in combats like the battle of the Craibstanes, fought in the year 1571; in deeds of ferocity like the massacre of the sons of Gordon of Knock, by Forbes of Strathgirnock, and the burning of Towie Castle (some say it was Corgarff Castle), with all its inmates, by Edom o' Gordon, a tragedy immortalised in one of the finest of our Scottish

ballads. Probably the best reason that the Forbeses could give for supporting the Covenant was that the Gordons stood up for the king. It was on this occasion that the Skellater family assumed the motto, carved on the coat of arms over the door of Skellater House, "Solus inter plurimos"—"Alone among many," and, because they had taken the remarkable step of casting in their lot with the Gordons, they were henceforward known as "Gordon-Forbeses." They stood by their new principles well, and, from the time when they took the field for Charles I., under Montrose, down to the time when the cause of the Stuarts was lost forever, that cause always found devoted champions in the Forbeses of Skellater.

At the period of the '45 the laird of Skellater was George Forbes. He had married Christian Gordon, daughter of Gordon of Glenbucket, whose estate and castle lay a few miles farther east, in the glen of the little river Bucket. As a matter of fact, Gordon had sold his possessions some years previously, to Baron Duff of Braco, but he was still called, in popular speech, by his old and familiar title of "Glenbucket." He was a great Jacobite, and commanded a regiment under the Prince. It was he who inspired King George II. with such terror that he would start from his sleep, exclaiming, in his German English, "De gread Glenbogged is coming!" Gordon was a brave old warrior, but the king had got

an exaggerated notion of his power and importance. The Glenbucket who was such a nightmare to poor George II. was the father-in-law of Forbes of Skellater.

True to his hereditary principles, George Forbes joined the rising, and held a Lieutenant-Colonel's commission in the Prince's army. He was attended by a half-witted man, who acted as his personal servant or henchman. At Culloden, during the early stage of the battle, when the Clans were being torn by the fire of Cumberland's artillery, this follower was holding the laird's pony by the bridle, the laird himself standing close by. A cannon shot dashed the pony's head in pieces. Heedless of his own danger, and thinking only of the loss to his chief,

the faithful henchman exclaimed indignantly, as he pointed to the lifeless carcass, "See, laird, what they've done to your pownie!" After the battle, Forbes made his way homeward, and lay concealed in the birch wood that covers the low hill of Delhandy, on the south side of the Don, in full view of Skellater House. Soon the red coats were at his heels. A party of Government troops, commanded by Lord Ancrum, came over Lonach Hill, and marched down upon Skellater. The laird looked on from his hiding-place, expecting to see his home go up in flames, and his family driven forth as starving wanderers. The lady of Skellater met the soldiers, leading her children, and carrying in her hand the keys of the house,

which she presented to Lord Ancrum, in token of submission. His lordship courteously returned the keys to the lady, and desired her to lead her children back to the house. He then marched up the strath, to lay siege to Corgarff Castle, which was held by a party of the rebels.

No proceedings of any kind were taken by the Government against the family of Skellater, and they retained their possessions unmolested. But probably the laird himself would not have been spared had he been captured just then. After lurking for a time, he escaped to France, where he found himself among comrades in misfortune, whom he had last seen amidst the smoke of battle on Culloden Moor. One of these

comrades was Lord Ogilvie of Airlie, who, a few months afterwards, raised among the Jacobite exiles a regiment for the service of France. In this regiment Forbes obtained a captain's commission.

In France he joined the Prince and his friends in their plots to get up another and a greater rising. In December, 1752, the traitor calling himself "Pickle," whom Mr. Andrew Lang has revealed to the world, informed the English Government that Skellater, Lochgarry, Dr. Cameron, and other Jacobite leaders were about to cross over to Scotland and concert measures with the Highland chiefs at the great cattle fair at Crieff. Nothing is known of his adventures

in this fruitless expedition. If Skellater did really come over, he escaped capture and returned safely to France, and the hand of fate fell on Dr. Cameron alone. After the Act of Indemnity was passed, in 1747, he might have returned home and lived again as Laird of Skellater, as if nothing had happened. But he never did so. He was one of those fervent Jacobites whose devotion to the Stuart cause was a sort of religion, and who lived and died in exile rather than submit to the House of Hanover. So George Forbes stayed in France, and died there many years afterwards. We shall have to mention him again.

The two eldest of his six children by his marriage with Christian Gordon of Glenbucket were

sons, William and John. The first of these succeeded to the estate of Skellater, and afterwards sold it to his cousin, William Forbes of Balbithan, on whose death it passed by purchase into the possession of the family of Forbes of Newe. After he sold Skellater, William Forbes retired into private life, and died in Aberdeen, in the year 1819, aged 86. The table tombstone, that bears an inscription to the memory of himself, his wife, and Nathaniel Forbes, a younger brother, stands beside the Back Wynd wall of St. Nicholas Churchyard. William Forbes was the last laird of Skellater, and, but for that fact, would not require notice here, for he does not seem to have possessed any of the qualities that

distinguish a man above his fellows.

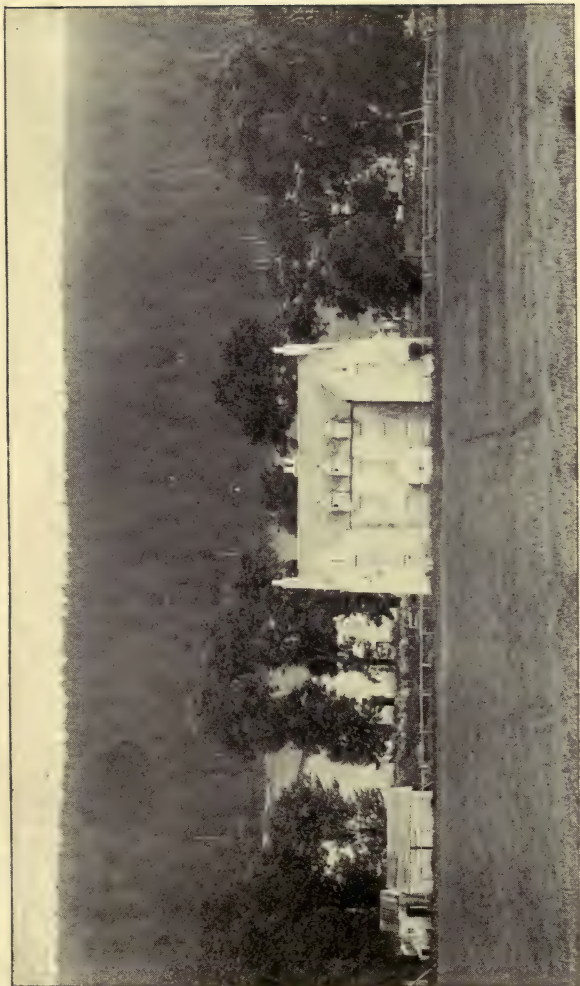
Of a very different temper was the second brother, John. It was upon him that the mantle of the old fighting race of Skellater fell, and it is with him that our story is concerned. During a great part of his life we have only glimpses of him, but they are glimpses that make us long to see more. Whenever we meet him, it is in some dramatic situation, from the time when, as a boy of twelve, he stood behind his mother when she gave up the keys of Skellater House to Lord Ancrum, with his hunted father looking on from his hiding place, to the time when, a white haired veteran, he sailed from the port of Lisbon in the midst of an exiled Court, with the

cries and lamentations of an insane Queen sounding in his ears. He would have delighted the heart of Walter Scott, who would have seen in him the living image of his own Quentin Durward. His clansman and collateral descendant, Mr. Urquhart Forbes, fascinated by the romance of his career, has made him the hero of the tale of "Ian Roy." But his true story stands in no need of embellishment by the romance writer, and it is the true story that we shall endeavour to tell.

John Forbes was born in 1733. This, at least, is the date fixed by indirect evidence, for there appears to be no documentary record. He would thus be twelve at the period of the rebellion. Skellater House has been enlarged and

modernised since then, and when John Forbes played there as a child, it was no doubt what would now be thought a rather primitive sort of dwelling for a laird. When it was time for him to go to school he was sent over to Glengairn to attend a teacher who had a great reputation in that part of the country. Glengairn lies midway between Donside and Deeside. The upper part of the glen now stands in mournful silence, almost deserted, but it was then thickly occupied by a Gaelic-speaking population, mostly Roman Catholic in religion, and intensely Jacobite in politics. In war they followed the Farquharsons of Braemar.

At Rinettan, near the head of Glengairn, lived a family,



SKELLATER HOUSE AND LONACH HILL.
(1902.)



named Macdonald, who belonged to the class of small gentry or duinewassails that formerly abounded in the Highlands, and formed the flower of the clans. Their house still stands, in an improved condition, and tenanted by a gamekeeper. The school was near at hand, a primitive erection of "dry" stones, thatched with heather. The outline of the wall is still to be seen. Young Forbes was sent to live with the Macdonalds and attend the school. He could only have been here a short time, but it was long enough to show what mettle he was of. The young Macdonalds and he ate their porridge out of a pot that stood on the earthen floor of the kitchen, while they squatted around it. It happened that the

corn crop, poor enough at the best of times, was spoiled by frost; meal was scanty, and the daily porridge was reduced almost to a starvation allowance. One morning, when breakfast was about to begin, Forbes deliberately spat in the pot. Hungry as the other young Highlanders were, this was too much for them, and they left Forbes to finish the contents of the pot alone. Probably it was no great feat. The hero of this rather unsavoury little anecdote was clearly a youth of resources, and no one will be surprised to hear that he afterwards made a figure in the world. What farther schooling he may have received is not known. We are informed by Mr. Morland Simpson, Rector of the Aberdeen Grammar School,

that the records of the school contain the name of a John Forbes who was a scholar there at Candlemas (February 2nd), 1748. It is just possible that this was *our* John Forbes. If so, he must have left the Grammar School very soon after Candlemas, for he was far from Aberdeen before the end of the year.

Among his neighbours in his native place he soon began to attract attention. Tall, handsome, and athletic to a striking degree; high-spirited, fearless, and prompt to act, he seemed marked out by nature for a career of adventure and distinction. The people of the Highlands have a quick eye for personal appearance, and it has long been a habit among them to give familiar names, alike

to friends and foes, from some conspicuous bodily feature, often from the colour of the hair, eyes, or complexion. Anyone who has lived in the Highlands will know some "Red Peter" or "Black Donald." Young Forbes had red hair, and probably the blue eyes that commonly go along with it. Accordingly, he was spoken of as *Ian Roy*. The words are Gaelic, and signify Red John. In a ballad composed long afterwards to celebrate his best known exploit, these two lines are put into his mouth :

I left my country when but young,
My mother's Ian Roy.

We can picture his mother giving him the title herself, or adopting it with pride as a pet name for her handsome son. The

Lowland Scotch has, long since then, displaced the Gaelic in Don-side, and the name by which Forbes is now remembered is "Red Jock o' Skellater." He is sometimes confused with a certain "Black Jock o' Skellater," but the swarthy son of Strathdon was quite a different person. He belonged to an earlier generation of the Skellater family, and became the first of the Inverernan line of Forbeses. Black Jock was out in the '15, and it was to him that the Earl of Mar wrote the famous letter scolding him for not bringing more Strathdon men to the muster at Castletown of Braemar :

Jocke, ye was in the right not to come with the hundred men ye sent up to-night, when I expected four times their numbers. It is a pretty thing—

And so on. And it was Black Jock who built the bridge over the Don at Poldoolie.

A characteristic anecdote of our hero at this period is preserved. Probably he was now about fourteen. One of his grandaunts had married a Grant of Rothiemurchus, and her grandsons were on a visit to Skellater. The young Grants and Forbeses would try each others' prowess at putting the stone, and at first the Speyside champions had the best of it. This was more than Ian Roy could stand, and all his pride of clanship rose in arms. "No Grant that ever lived on Spey shall throw over me," cried he, and with a mighty effort he sent the stone beyond them all. So powerful was the contraction of the

muscles of his leg that the garter of his Highland hose burst in two.

But the time had already come when he was to take part in larger contests. In 1748 the war of the Austrian Succession, which had lingered in Europe for several years, was brought to a close by the siege of the town of Maestricht, in the Netherlands. The town was defended by the Dutch and Austrian armies, aided by a British force, under the Duke of Cumberland, of "butcher" memory. It was besieged by the French under Marshal Saxe. It is at this siege of Maestricht that Ian Roy next turns up. It is a surprising appearance for a youth from a place so remote as Strathdon. But his life is a series of surprising appearances.

One of the scattered notices of him to be found in print—the obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1808—simply states that he was a lieutenant at the siege of Maestricht. The meagre and inaccurate scrap in the “Dictionary of National Biography” says that he served there as a volunteer, at the age of fifteen, and was successful in winning a commission. And that is all. We are not even told which of the armies engaged in the siege it was that he entered, though the writer in the “Dictionary” appears to think it was the British. But there is no evidence that Forbes ever served in the British army, while the Dutch and Austrian armies are

practically out of the question. We have seen that his father was already in France, and showed no inclination to return home. It is extremely probable that, knowing what spirit his second son was of, he had sent for the boy to come and join him. There never was much to keep the younger son of a poor Highland laird at home, and the fortunes of the Skellater family seem greatly to have decayed by this time. It was better to seek a career abroad than idle about at home, feasting on porridge of frosted meal in Glengairn, or throwing the putting stone at Skellater. How he gained his first commission is not known. Perhaps he did something that would have won him the Victoria Cross in our day. But it may be

assumed that he went with his father to Maestricht as a volunteer, and held his lieutenant's commission in his father's regiment. This conjecture is greatly strengthened by the fact that we know from Father Forbes Leith's learned and beautiful book, "The Scots Men at Arms and Life Guards in France," that Lord Ogilvie's regiment took part in the siege of Maestricht. And direct proof has lately turned up that, six years after the siege, Forbes was serving as a lieutenant in that regiment.

It is thus practically certain that he began his military career at the age of fifteen as a lieutenant in the French Army of Marshal Saxe, at the siege of Maestricht, in 1748, and that his

regiment was the Scottish regi-
of Lord Ogilvie. He would thus
be among his own countrymen,
and there is a pathetic interest
in recalling the names of some of
those who found an asylum in
France from the death on the
scaffold that waited them at home.
There were the two heroic
Camerons, Donald, "the Gentle
Lochiel," who held a Colonel's
commission in the French army,
and died in the year that Maes-
tricht was besieged, and his ill-
fated brother, Dr. Archibald
Cameron. There was John Roy
Stuart; John of Kincardine-on-
Spey, soldier and poet, who has
been described as the ideal High-
land officer. There was Mac-
donald of Lochgarry, who, before
he died, pronounced a solemn

curse on any of his family who should ever submit to the House of Hanover. There was Neil Mackechan or Macdonald, from South Uist, the father of Napoleon's Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarentum. There was Alan Breck Stewart, who, in our own day has become a personal friend to thousands of readers of "Kidnapped" and "Catriona." And there was many a one besides. Young Forbes and his father were in the midst of a group of men as picturesque in character and career as could be found anywhere. Lochgarry was one of their brother officers in Lord Ogilvie's regiment; Neil Mackechan was a lieutenant, and, after the death of his brother, Dr. Cameron was surgeon.

Six years pass before we see our hero again, and when he appears it is, as usual, in an unexpected place and manner. On the 24th of September, 1754, there appeared before Bailie Inglis, of Edinburgh, two young French officers. They were brought before the worthy bailie by General Bland, the Governor of Edinburgh Castle. They had just arrived from France, and had at once waited on the General and reported themselves. They proved to be young Macdonald of Lochgarry, a captain in the regiment "commanded by the person commonly called Lord Ogilvie," as the official record puts it, where his father was lieutenant-colonel, and John Forbes of Skellater, a lieutenant

in the same regiment. Forbes and Macdonald appear to have been cousins, the mother of Macdonald being a daughter of Gordon of Glenbucket, and maternal aunt of Forbes. They had got leave of absence for eight months, and had come over on private affairs, and to see their friends. They declared that they were not charged with letters or messages to any person in this country, and were not recruiting for the French service. The following is the passage in the State Papers regarding Forbes:—

Compeared also, the before-mentioned Lieutenant John Forbes, second son to George Forbes of Skellater, who declares as to the time of his service, the intent of his coming to this country, and his having no letters to any person what-

ever, in the same manner as Captain Macdonald's foregoing declaration,

(Signed) JOHN FORBES.
DAVID INGLIS.

General Bland reported the circumstance to the Home Secretary, stating that he had taken bail from the two officers to appear at any time within eight months if called upon, and that he had ordered a close watch to be kept on their movements during that time. Entries of the facts were duly made in the archives of the Record Office in London, where Mr. Murray Rose has discovered them. No doubt Forbes visited his native Strathdon during his leave, and was joyfully received at Skellater. Since he was last there he had become a soldier; he had seen the world, and had

faced the enemy on the field of battle. He had been brightened by mingling in society; he had learned to speak French, and had become a smart and handsome young officer. No doubt his mother, the Lady of Skellater, was proud of Ian Roy.

Then follows an interval of nine years. The only ray of light on this period is the remark in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the short notice already referred to, that Forbes was through the Seven Years' War. That great struggle began in 1756 and ended in 1763. It is so closely associated in the minds of most people with Frederick the Great that it has been assumed that, since Forbes was through the Seven Years' War, it must have been in

the service of Frederick, where many Scotsmen were. And James Grant, the military novelist, in his "Scottish Soldiers of Fortune," says expressly that he learned the tactics of Frederick under Marshal Keith, who was the right-hand man of the great Prussian commander. But it is practically conclusive against this view that, at the close of the Seven Years' War, we find Forbes still in the French army. It must have been with the French that he took part in the great war, and with his old corps, the regiment of Lord Ogilvie. We learn from Father Forbes Leith that the regiment was engaged in the campaigns in Flanders from 1758 to 1762. It is no doubt to this passage in his life that the

ballad alludes when Forbes is made to say—

In Flanders, France, and Germany,
I did their armies dare.

It is very disappointing that no account of the adventures of Forbes during the Seven Years' War has been preserved. But, whatever he may have seen and done, no great measure of promotion had come to him. In August, 1763, he is a captain in the *Royal Écossais*, the Royal Scots, or 103rd regiment of French infantry. This regiment must not be confused with the more famous *Garde Écossaise*, to which Quentin Durward and his redoubted uncle, Ludovick Leslie, Ludovick with the scar, belonged. It was a different and later Scottish corps in the French

army. Just before the above date Forbes had been a captain in the regiment of Ogilvie, but this corps had lately been disbanded, and he was now in the Royal Scots. The Seven Years' War was over, and he was quartered in Paris.

Meanwhile, there was going on in England a strife of parties in the State that roused more bitter passions than many a contest in the field of actual war. There is only one feature of the strife that concerns our story, namely, the intense hatred and jealousy then felt by the English towards the Scots. As Mr. Green, in the "Short History of the English People," forcibly puts it, "All England went mad in its hatred of the Scots." In private circles

this contemptible feeling found a boisterous and loud-voiced apostle in Dr. Samuel Johnson, while in the English press its great mouth-piece was the notorious John Wilkes. In his journal, the *North Briton*, he poured out upon the country and people of Scotland carefully-studied insults of the most venomous description. These insults reached a climax in No. 45 of the journal, published in April, 1763. Towards the end of July Wilkes went over to Paris. According to one account he went to visit his daughter, who was being educated there; according to another, his object was to prosecute some political scheme, while a third account says that Wilkes visited Paris "to enjoy himself." Perhaps he combined

these objects. About the beginning of September, strange rumours found their way to London that something had happened to Wilkes. It was said that he had been publicly caned by an angry Scot, who had taken this way of avenging his insulted country; that he had been killed in a duel; that he had been assassinated, and so on.

What had really occurred was this. Forbes had read No. 45 of the *North Briton*, and his blood boiled with anger. An intimate friend of his, named Macdonald, also an officer in the French service, was equally indignant. This Macdonald may possibly have been his cousin and brother officer, young Lochgarry, who came over to Scotland

with Forbes in 1754. Great was their joy on hearing that the reviler of their native country was in Paris, and they resolved to call him to account. They took their measures in a business-like way, and drew "cutts" for the parts they were respectively to act. It fell to Forbes to fight, and to Macdonald to be his second. Forbes had never seen Wilkes, and did not even know whereabouts in Paris he was staying. But he had not long to wait. The affair is best described in the quaint and graphic letter of Forbes to his father, who had written to him, asking for a precise account of it. The letter has several times appeared in print. The versions are the same essentially, but there are verbal

differences among them which somewhat alter the tone and flavour of the letter. We copy it from the version given in a curious pamphlet, called "An Cluaran Albanach," the Scottish Thistle. It is there said to be taken from the holograph of Captain Forbes, in the Skellater archives, and it bears internal evidence of authenticity. The pamphlet is anonymous, but the editor is believed to have been Alexander Laing, the antiquary, author of the "Donean Tourist," known in the country as "Gley'd Laing," from an affection of one of his eyes. The introductory "Sir," and the opening sentence are wanting in the pamphlet, but we supply them from other sources, to make the letter complete :—

Sir,

I received yours last night, desiring an exact account of what happened betwixt me and that fellow Wilkes, which I shall relate as it happened.

Coming down Comedie Street, on the morning of the 17th August, between the hours of ten and eleven, I met with two English gentlemen, and one of them I took for John Wilkes, and, although I never saw the man in my life, yet I guessed by the pictures I had seen of him that I stood before the original. I then approached him, and asked him if his name was not Wilkes, upon which he told me that it was. I told him that I wanted to speak to him apart. Upon this the other gentleman who was with him walked off. I then told him I was a Scots gentleman, and a captain in the French service, and that, on account of the scurrilous and ignominious things he had wrote against my country, I was determined he should fight with me. Upon which he told me that he could not go along with me then, but if I would take the trouble to write to him,

or to come to his lodgings at the Hotel de Saxe, Rue Colombier, in the afternoon, that he would then go along with me. As I thought it would be more heroic to attend at his lodgings than to write, I therefore went at three of the clock p.m., but found him not at home. I afterwards returned between the hours of four and five, but as yet did not find him. I then left my name upon a card, and returned between the hours of seven and eight in the evening, but as he was not at home all that day, I desired the Suisse to tell him that I would have the honour of waiting upon him early next morning. Having gone to his lodging at six o'clock a.m. on the 18th, I at last found him at home, and his servant showed me into his *salle* until he would get up. In the centre of the *salle* stood a table, covered with papers and books, and near it was a chair, on which were two swords, and two gentlemen's hats. I waited there a full half hour expecting him. At last he appeared, and, seating himself, asked what Mr. Forbes wanted with him. I told him that, as I had

heard that he was a man of courage, and that I could hardly believe it, I wanted to put him absolutely to proof. Upon which he told me that a man of courage he certainly was, and that he had given proof enough of that in fighting Lord Talbot, and that he would fight with no man else until he should fight with Lord Egremont. Upon which I asked him if he came to Paris to fight with Lord Egremont. He told me he was not to be catechised by anyone, and I then told him very plainly that I was not to be made a fool of, and that I had now come six or seven times to his lodgings, and, as I had done so much, he should fight me, otherwise, the first time ever I should meet him, that I should treat him as a villain deserved. He told me he was not afraid to fight all the Scots alive, but that he was too useful a subject of the British state to go and risk his life. I told him that I believed the state would never be a whit the worse for losing such a subject as he, and as to his not being afraid to fight all Scotsmen alive, that I thought it was the least

thing he could do, since he took the liberty of writing so many gross and scandalous things against the Scots, to fight one of them, and that he had never fought a Scotchman in his life. He then told me that he would fight me, and as such things could not be done without witnesses, he would come back, and have a friend with him, and wait me at twelve with his friend. I came, therefore, back at twelve o'clock, when I told the gentleman who was with me not to come into the hotel, that he might not have to say that two came upon him.

When I entered the hotel, he had not yet come down, but I waited a good half hour, talking with his secretary, in his *salle de compagnie* (hall for receiving company). He at last came in, accompanied by two English gentlemen, and when he came into the room I told him that I wanted to speak with him at the door. He insisted that I should sit down for a moment, which I did, and, after their talking a long while together, I at last lost patience, and told him I

wanted to speak one word with him at the door, upon which the two gentlemen who came in with him rose up and went out. My opinion was that he would that I should challenge him before these two gentlemen, that they might stand witnesses against me, but that scheme did not take, if such was his intention. To come back to the story, there was nobody then in the *salle* but he, his secretary, and I. He told, before his secretary, that it was very hard that he should be challenged and attacked in the streets by Captain Forbes, without knowing for what. Upon this I asked him what were his intentions, and he told me his intentions were not to fight anybody until he should fight Charles, Earl Egremont, and asked whether I came to him as an assassin or as a gentleman. Upon which I told him that, as for a gentleman, I was certainly one as good as he, if not better, and that if he was not in his room, I would use him as a scoundrel and a rascal as he deserved. Upon which his secretary, a Frenchman, who spoke very good

English, said to me that if I knew Mr. Wilkes I would not speak so to him; upon which I told him that I perhaps knew him better than he, and, turning to Wilkes, I told him that the first time I met him in the streets or elsewhere, I would give him one hundred strokes with a stick, as he deserved to be used no more as a gentleman, but as an eternal villain, and added that, in case he should take a second thought, which I did not believe, I would leave him my address, which he wrote down. Then I went out, d——g him for a rascal.

I went away after this scene to dinner, then to the Tuilleries, and, on my coming home at night, I had notice that there were orders from the Mareschaux de France to apprehend me, upon which I thought it most prudent to keep out of the way.

This letter is a gem. The artless and truly Celtic way in which Forbes reveals his hot temper, his touchiness, his little bit of

vanity, and his deep knowingness, as he thinks it, make us love him. He calls on Wilkes in person, "because it would look more heroic than to write." This is a delightful touch. And though he is writing to his own father, he does not tell him that he hid from the police in the house of his friend, Alexander Murray. To speak thus plainly would have shown a pitiful simplicity and ignorance of the game of life as it should be played by a cavalier of fortune. So he concludes with the mysterious remark that he "thought it most prudent to keep out of the way." Robert Louis Stevenson would have been charmed with the letter, and Allan Breck Stuart would have acted and written just as Forbes

did. The latter gives the 17th and 18th of August as the days of the encounter. This is a mistake—the 15th and 16th were the days. The picture of Wilkes, by which Forbes recognised him, seems to have been the portrait sketch by Hogarth. The artist depicts Wilkes seated and dressed in the height of the fashion of the day. A long staff leans against his shoulder, bearing on the end of it a cap marked with the word "Liberty" in capital letters. He wears a wig, carefully curled and powdered. The clean-shaved face is turned a little to the left, and the squint, the leer, and the grin give the apostle of liberty the look of a veritable Mephistopheles. After seeing this portrait, it would be easy to recognise the original.

The gentleman who went with Forbes to the door of the Hotel de Saxe was, no doubt, his friend Macdonald. It has hitherto been assumed that it was the Hon. Alexander Murray, whom we shall have to mention presently, but the researches of Rev. Mr. Michie, of Dinnet, have brought to light the previous arrangement between Forbes and Macdonald. The address that Forbes gave Wilkes was the Café de Baptiste, Rue de Comédie. That he acted prudently in not giving his private address will soon appear. He called at the café in the afternoon to inquire if there was any message from Wilkes, and again on his way home in the evening. On the latter occasion Baptiste, the keeper of the café, took him aside

and told him that Mr. Wilkes was in the care of the police, and that one of that body had called only a quarter of an hour before to inquire after one Mr. Forbes, an officer in the Royal Scots. This was a startling piece of news. Forbes was a French officer. Wilkes was on friendly terms with King Louis, and challenging to a duel was a capital offence under the laws of France. He might be sent to the scaffold, or condemned to rot alive in the dungeons of the Bastille. What had happened was clear enough. Wilkes had put himself under the protection of the police, and had given them the address of Forbes that he had written down. Upon hearing what Baptiste told him, Forbes slipped out by a back door

of the café, and, not thinking it wise to go to his lodgings, slept at the house of a friend. On the 17th he was obliged to move to another part of the town, to escape the police, who were after him.

Next day, the 19th, Wilkes was brought before Marshal Noailles, the head of the French police, and along with him the Hon. Alexander Murray, in whose house Forbes had slept on the night of the 16th. Murray was a son of the fourth Lord Elibank, and was a remarkable man, and a red-hot Jacobite. He was the author of the famous "Elibank plot" to surprise St. James' Palace, and seize the King and the Royal Family at the same time that another rising was planned to take place in the Highlands. He

had been charged with stirring up an election riot at Westminster, and was ordered to kneel on his knees to be admonished by the House of Commons. "Sir," said Murray to the Speaker, "I never kneel but to God." For this he was committed to Newgate, and on his release he paraded the streets of London, escorted by an admiring crowd, with a banner before him bearing the motto, "Murray and Liberty." He had been outlawed from England, and was now living in Paris, where he was known as "Count Murray." His portrait, by Allan Ramsay, the son of the poet, is to be seen in the Scottish National ^{Portrait} Gallery in Edinburgh. Forbes and he appear to have been great friends. Wilkes, in his own name, and

Murray on behalf of Forbes, undertook that there should be no further encounter, direct or indirect, between them. They were then both released. As soon as Marshal Noailles had withdrawn, Wilkes begged Macdonald, who seems to have been present, to inform Captain Forbes that as soon as the affair with Lord Egremont was settled he would meet him anywhere in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, except on French territory. Two days afterwards Lord Egremont died suddenly of apoplexy. Then Wilkes, according to his own account, called repeatedly at the house of Count Murray to inquire for Captain Forbes, but was not admitted, then he wrote to Murray appointing a meeting at Menin,

in Flanders, on the 21st. He went to Menin, but finding no letter from Forbes at the post-office, he went on to Dunkirk on the same fruitless quest. From Dunkirk he returned to London, and arrived there on the 26th.

It was said by the friends of Forbes that all this eagerness on the part of Wilkes for a meeting with his formidable antagonist was mere pretence and bluster, and that he ostentatiously searched for Forbes in places where he well knew that Forbes was not to be found. Horace Walpole hints that this opinion was not confined to the friends of Forbes. We saw that the latter took a hasty departure from Paris on the 18th of August. He appeared in London about the 14th of September. Where

he had been in the interval is not known. Mr. Urquhart Forbes, in his romance of "Ian Roy," makes him run down to Strathdon and tell his admiring friends how he had challenged and frightened Jack Wilkes. This is possible, but not very probable, for travelling was a slow process in these days. In London he was seen on 'Change, and at coffee houses near the Royal Exchange. The news of his late adventure had arrived before him, and he became the lion of the hour. Crowds gathered round him wherever he went. But a rumour got abroad that he had come to London to hunt John Wilkes, and Lord Sandwich, then Secretary of State, wrote him an imperative order to quit London at once that there

might be no breach of the peace. So, on the 27th of September, 1763, Forbes sailed from Bristol in the sloop "Bastinado," bound for the Island of Grenada, in the West Indies. The evening before he sailed he wrote a sarcastic invitation to Wilkes to meet him in Grenada or in the Island of Juan Fernandez, adding that he felt assured that a person of the high courage of Mr. Wilkes, which all Europe knew about, would not refuse so small a request. With this contemptuous farewell to the English demagogue, Forbes again disappears from our view for a while.

The affair, of which we have given an outline, made a great noise in Paris, in England, and in Scotland. For some time after-

wards the newspapers teemed with letters, attacking and defending Forbes, Wilkes, and Murray. It excited great sympathy with Forbes among the Jacobite exiles on the Continent. Sir Robert Strange wrote from Cento to his brother-in-law, Andrew Lumisden, the Prince's secretary, on the 22nd of September, 1763:—

My dear Andrew,

I shall be sorry if Forbes has brought himself into a scrape on account of Wilkes. From what I have heard of the *North Briton*, I have often been surprised that the spirit of our country lay so long asleep.

The news travelled to Strathdon, and excited great enthusiasm there. It must have been some years after the event that an unknown local poet composed a

ballad, celebrating, in a strain of triumphant doggerel, the victory of Ian Roy over the vilifier of Scotland. The ballad was, until lately, well remembered in Don-side, and was sung to the tune of "Carl an' the King Come." Whoever the author was, he had a good knowledge of the politics of the period. He adopts the view that the object of Wilkes's eventful visit to Paris was a political one.

Wilkie is away to France,
 What means he to do there?
 To see what Louis could advance,
 Because he wrote so fair.
 What has Wilkie done?
 What has Wilkie done?
 He caused the English hate the Scots,
 Made French and Spaniards fond.
 And what does Wilkie crave?
 What does Wilkie crave?

He craves that England may be free,
 And Scots and Irish slaves.
 But will he get that done?
 But will he get that done?
 He'll swallow first a Cheshire cheese,
 And then a cider tun.

Then the encounter is described, with some degree of poetical licence. We have already spoken of the "picture" of Wilkes, by which Forbes recognised him.

As Wilkie walkèd up the street,
 Bold Forbes did him stare;
 He saw his picture, kenned him by't,
 Cried, "Wilkie, are ye there?"
 "Wilkie, are ye there?"
 "Liberty and down the Scot,
 "Liberty and down the Scot,
 "Is all your cry and care."

Then Forbes is made to recount his previous history and exploits, in the high-flown manner of Homer's heroes before they fight.

The ballad here violates the facts of both time and place. Forbes speaks as if he were at Skellater, and not in Paris, and he alludes to his doings in Portugal, where he had not yet been. The ballad seems to have been composed as a welcome to Forbes when he was on a visit to Strathdon, long after the Wilkes affair, and when he was in the service of Portugal.

“ Know ye not, Wilkie, I’m a Scot,
 “ Whose valour ne’er was blot,
 “ True Celtic blood runs in my veins,
 “ Take care while it is hot.
 “ I left my native land a boy,
 “ And fought on distant shore ;
 “ Now, safe returned, I’ll stay with joy,
 “ And face their lines no more.”

The next verse contains the allusion to his familiar name that we have already quoted. The last line implies (what we have

reason to believe from other sources) that his family had become Protestant, although they stood by the old line of kings. It was the *parson*, not the priest, that named him John.

“ I left my country when but young,

“ My mother’s Ian Roy.

“ I drew my sword on many a field,

“ And now return with joy.

“ Scotland is my native isle,

“ The pleasant banks of Don,

“ The ancient seat of Lonach hill,

“ The parson named me John.

“ In Flanders, France, and Germany,

“ I did their armies dare ;

“ I faced the foe in Portugal—

“ My soul delights in war.

“ Wilkie, are ye there ?

“ Wilkie, are ye there ?

“ You coward sot, to brag a Scot,

“ Come, fight me if you dare.

“ Your boasted feats are all blown by,

“ And deeds on fields of war ;

“ My tempered steel your proof shall try,
 “ And end your childish jar.”

Then Wilkie grinned, and scratched his
 sconce,

And chirped like a mouse ;
 Said, “ I must fight Lord Egremont,”
 And that was his excuse.

But Forbes boldly did advance,
 And said, “ It shan’t be so ;
 “ I’ll put your courage to the proof
 “ Before I let you go.”

Then Wilkie showed his coward nous,
 And, in a trembling fit,
 Said, “ To-morrow, sir, come to my
 house,

“ And there I’ll on you wait.”

But Wilkie shirked for fear his pauuch
 Was ripped up by a Scot.

Then Forbes challenged him to stand,
 But Wilkie answered, “ No ;

“ I’m too good a tool for old England,

“ I’m too good a tool for old England ;

“ It shall not lose me so,

“ It shall not lose me so.”

Then Forbes bursts forth in the

following fashion. Wilkes, in his account of the affair, asserts that the language of Forbes was perfectly courteous, and called for no resentment on his part. The friends of Forbes held that Wilkes gave this account as an excuse for his own cowardice. It certainly does not agree with the ballad, nor with the story of Forbes as told in the letter to his father, and it is most improbable. The current tradition in Strathdon says that Forbes actually chastised Wilkes. This is implied in the last line of the next verse, but, as we have seen, it was not the fact :—

“ You gourmand wretch, you cider sot !

“ Are ye made England’s tool ?

“ To brag and scandalise the Scot,

“ My cane shall comb your wool !”

But Forbes never judged the same,
 Wilkie was Louis' friend,
 Or he had never challenged him,
 Nor struck him with his cane.
 Thus Wilkie proved himself a coward
 Who did the Scotsman brag,
 But dared not face a Scottish sword
 For fear his cider bag.

The abuse which is here showered on the devoted head of "Wilkie" has a certain point and appropriateness in it. Wilkes was notoriously fond of good living, therefore, he is addressed, with huge contempt, as "gourmand wretch." The expressions "cider tun," "cider sot," "cider bag" appear to refer to a proposed tax on cider, which Wilkes resisted, partly on the ground that, as no cider was made in Scotland, the Scots would be free from a tax that the English would have to

pay. The allusion to a Cheshire cheese in the second verse may possibly also have a special or personal meaning. The Aberdeenshire balladist carefully writes "Wilkie" as a diminutive of Wilkes, intending thereby to express a contemptuous familiarity.

We have now followed John Forbes from Strathdon to Maestricht, and from Maestricht through the Seven Years' War. We have seen how he started into sudden notoriety in Paris and London, and after he had made both of these great capitals too hot to hold him, we took leave of him at Bristol, when he sailed for the West Indies on the 27th of September, 1763.

To make clear what is to follow, it will be necessary to say a

word about certain events of European history. In 1761 the Bourbon dynasties of France and Spain formed the mutual alliance known as the "Family Compact." The object of this compact was to oppose Great Britain and her allies on the Continent. One of these allies was Portugal. That country had been in relations of the closest kind with Great Britain ever since the formation of the famous Methuen Treaty, early in the 18th century. The result of that treaty most familiar to us was the introduction of port wine to this country. Portugal had fallen from her former high place among the nations, and was sunk in stagnation. The army was in such a state of decay that the Guards at the Royal Palace

begged alms from strangers. Officers had to work at trades to support themselves and their families, while their wives took in washing. A captain might be seen working as a tailor, or carrying on his head a basket of linen from the laundry. Matters were in this condition when Spain, acting under the Family Compact with France, declared war and invaded Portugal. In their extremity the Portuguese appealed for help to their powerful ally, Great Britain. The appeal was listened to, and an auxiliary force was despatched to the aid of Portugal. This force was commanded by a remarkable man, the Count of Lippe-Buckeburg. He was the Sovereign of a small German State, but had been

educated in England, and held a commission in the British army. His military ability was high, his personal habits eccentric, and his character that of a knight errant of romance. One of his fancies was to dress like Charles XII. of Sweden. When he went to Portugal those who saw his old-world aspect and manners asked if Don Quixote had come to life again.

Under this valiant leader, the British and Portuguese armies successfully resisted the Spanish invasion, and, after a short campaign, peace was concluded in February, 1763. During the war, the Count la Lippe had done wonders in bringing the disorganised army of Portugal into a state of efficiency. But much remained

to be done, and when the auxiliary British force returned home, the Portuguese Government begged La Lippe to stay and finish the work he had so well begun. The Count consented, and remained behind to teach the Portuguese soldiers the art of war. Efficient officers were greatly wanted, and anyone who knew the business of soldiering, and came from a friendly country, might look for employment and promotion. The service of Portugal under the Count of Lippe-Buckeburg was a good field for military adventurers.

The King at this time was Joseph, and his Prime Minister, who ruled both King and country, was the famous Marquis of Pombal. With a soldier like La Lippe drilling the army, and a statesman

like Pombal at the head of affairs, a Portuguese patriot might have hoped that the bright days of his country were about to return.

One day the daughter of the King sat at a window of the Royal Palace looking out at the soldiers on parade. One of the officers, a captain, attracted her notice. He was the sort of man at whom one looks a second time, and the Princess did look a second time. He was tall and handsome, and his colour and features showed at once that he was not a son of Portugal. Who could he be? The more he was looked at the nobler did he seem, and before the parade was dismissed the daughter of the King of Portugal was in love with Ian Roy of Skellater. For he, and

no other, was the handsome captain with the red hair. But for the King's daughter to bestow her affections on a simple captain of unknown origin, was against all rule and precedent. What would the King and his counsellors say? So she kept her secret. But concealment, "like a worm i' the bud," did its work, and the poor Princess fell ill. The best doctors in Portugal were summoned, but they could make nothing of the case. At length, one wise old physician, who knew the world and human nature, undertook the office of Father Confessor, and persuaded his Royal patient to disclose the true state of matters.

"I fear," said he, "that the King, your father, will not smile when

he hears of this, but we will see what can be done."

Great was the wrath and scorn of His Majesty when he heard what ailed his daughter. The wise old physician pleaded his patient's cause, and assured the King that there was only one way to restore the health, perhaps save the life of the Princess. At length the King consented that Captain Forbes should be summoned to his presence and interrogated regarding his antecedents.

"If your Majesty," said Forbes, "will write to my Lord of Aboyne, at Aboyne Castle, in Scotland, he will tell your Majesty who I am."

The King did so, and Lord Aboyne replied that the family of Captain Forbes was as good as any in Scotland, but very poor.

The King had to be content with this, since better might not be, and Captain Forbes was informed of the honour in store for him.

“You’ll do, my lassie,” said he, when he was presented to the Royal lady whose choice he was, and whom he had not even seen till then. The remark was not quite a courtly one, but it was to the point, and served its purpose. So Ian Roy and the King’s daughter of Portugal were wedded, and lived happy ever after.

Such is the romantic tale preserved by tradition in Strathdon and believed there. And, except in one particular, there is no reason to doubt the substantial truth of the story. The circumstances are related minutely, and always in the same way. The

remark made by Forbes on his introduction to the Princess is characteristic, and the reference given by him to the Earl of Aboyne, and not to Lord Forbes, the chief of his own name, is just the reference that a Gordon Forbes of Skellater would be likely to give. But on one point the tradition is certainly in error. The lady was not of Royal race. Her name was Anna Joaquina d'Almeida, and though the surname is one of the best in Portugal, it is not princely. The account given by her granddaughter, the Countess de Bombelles, who was likely to be well informed, is that she belonged to the family of the Counts of Almeida, that she was of great beauty, and that Forbes was required

to prove his descent by an appeal to the College of Heralds before the marriage was allowed. This last statement is not inconsistent with the Strathdon tradition, that it was the Earl of Aboyne who was appealed to. It is quite likely that the Heralds and Lord Aboyne were both consulted. At all events, the tradition that Forbes had to prove his descent has been verified. The following extract from the Register of the Lyon Office in Edinburgh bears witness, in heraldic jargon, to the descent and coat of arms of the family of Skellater :

John Forbes, second son of George Forbes, of Skellater, Esqre., an ancient family descended of Forbes of Brux (whose predecessor was a fourth son of the predecessor of Lord Forbes), and Lieutenant-Colonel in the service of his

most faithful Majesty the King of Portugal, Bears quarterly first and fourth Azure, a Martlet, betwixt three bears' heads coup'd Argent mused Gules within a border of the last second and third Azure, a chevron betwixt three Boars' heads Or armed and langued Gules within a border counter compone of the Second and First Crest a hand holding a dagger erect, on its point a Bear's head coup'ed, all proper. Motto Solus inter Plurimos. Matriculated 11th November, 1767.

The occasion of the "matriculation" is not mentioned, but in all probability it was his marriage. In the History of Portugal, written by Mr. Morse Stephens, it is stated that the Marquis of Pombal was, by his mother, related to the family of the Almeidas. It is thus probable that Donna Anna d'Almeida was a relative of the great

Portuguese statesman. Hence would naturally arise the interest that the king is said to have taken in her, and the close personal relations established between Forbes and the royal family of Portugal, whom he served with unswerving fidelity, through good report and evil report, during the greater part of a long life. In the minor point also of the rank of Forbes at the time of his marriage the Strathdon tradition seems to be mistaken. The entry in the Register of the Lyon Office makes it probable that he was a lieutenant-colonel, not a captain.

The date of this romantic marriage is not known, but all the circumstances point to a tolerably early period in the

Portuguese career of Forbes. In relating in this place the story of his marriage we have slightly anticipated events, and we must now retrace our steps and take up Forbes where we left him, on board the "Bastinado," bound for the Island of Grenada in the West Indies.

Why should Forbes, an adventurous young soldier with all the world before him, think of going to the remote and obscure Island of Grenada? An answer to this question will be found in the following fragment of local history. We learn from Mr. Watt's volume on the history of Aberdeen and Banff that there existed, during the latter third of the eighteenth century, an intimate trading connection between Aber-

deen and the West Indies, where many sons of Aberdeenshire found successful careers. Indeed, two younger brothers of Forbes himself went to Jamaica and died there. But, besides peaceful trading intercourse, there were transactions of a warlike nature. The Island of Grenada had been captured from the French by Admiral Rodney in 1762. The white population of the island were French. They were, naturally enough, unfriendly to Great Britain, they were in an excited state, and it seemed not improbable that British power in the island would have to be established by force of arms. Forbes may have thought that here was a likely field for his military talents, and in the light

of the above facts, his departure for Grenada becomes intelligible.

One account says that Lord Sandwich, when he wrote a mandate to Forbes to quit London, ordered him to proceed to Portugal and join the Count La Lippe in the work of organising the army. But Lord Sandwich had no power to give such an order to Forbes, who was not a British officer. No doubt he went to Portugal of his own accord, knowing that there were chances in that country for such as he. The world was his oyster, and, like Ancient Pistol, he would open it with his sword. If he really went to Grenada he did not stay long. Or his ship may have called at Lisbon or Oporto and left him there. No doubt he

offered himself to La Lippe, who, seeing in Forbes the sort of man he wanted, at once appointed him to a captaincy in the foot regiment of Praça de Peniche. From information most courteously furnished by the Director of the Portuguese National Archives, we gather that this was in the end of 1763, and it is expressly recorded in the Archives that he had previously been in the service of His Most Christian Majesty, the King of France. This disposes of the opinion held by some, that Forbes entered the Prussian army when he left the French, in August, 1763. And we have seen that it was hardly possible for him to have been with the Prussians during the Seven Years'

War. The Prussian service of Forbes may, therefore, be dismissed as a myth. The two countries that he served were France and Portugal.

The captain's commission, given him by La Lippe in the regiment of Praça de Peniche, had not been ratified by the king, and was, therefore, in a manner informal. The regiment was one of the worst then in Portugal, which meant that it was very bad indeed. Forbes proved himself so valuable in helping to bring a mere military mob into a state of order and efficiency that in seven months he was made major. The entry, in the National Archives, of this, his first regular commission in the Portuguese army, runs as follows :—

I, Dom Joseph, by grace of God king of Portugal, make known to all who shall see this my Letter Patent, that having regard to the merits and great parts which meet in the person of John Forbes, Captain of Grenadiers in the infantry regiment of Praça de Peniche, of which John M'Donell is colonel, and to the services he has rendered me with much skill and satisfaction, and the hope that in every trust he may receive he will serve me much to my content. For all these considerations I hold it good, and it pleases me to name him, as I name him by this letter, major of the same regiment, a post vacant by the promotion of Jose Carlos da Costa to be lieutenant-colonel of infantry in the regiment of Praça da Campo Maior.

Given at Lisbon, 27th August, 1764.

Thus was Forbes fairly launched on his Portugese career.

Portugal was one of the few countries of Europe where the Scottish soldier of fortune, a char-

acter equally redoubted in romance and in true history, was as yet almost unknown. But the war against Spain in 1762, the bad state of the Portuguese army, and its improvement under the Count of Lippe-Bückeburg, created tempting openings which Scottish adventurers were not slow to take advantage of. James Grant, in his "Scottish Soldiers of Fortune," says that Forbes was the first Scotsman who can be traced in the Portuguese service, and that his influence drew other Scotsmen to its ranks. He gives the names of six Scottish officers, who all attained high rank, as examples. But the statements of Grant are inaccurate. Forbes was not the first Scotsman to take service under

the Portuguese crown, and the officers named by Grant joined at dates too early to have been attracted by his influence. One of them, General Maclean, was governor of Lisbon in 1763; another, William Sharp, was governor of Olivenza; and a third, James Anderson, was colonel of the battalion of Lagos in that year. But in after years, when Forbes had risen high, there was at least one Scotsman drawn to Portugal by his influence, namely, his own son-in-law, General Fraser, of Fraserfield, and probably there were others. It will have been noticed that, in the letter patent of King Joseph, promoting Forbes to be major of the regiment of Praça de Peniche, the colonel of that regi-

ment is called John M'Donell. The regiment appears to have been almost officered by Scotsmen, and Forbes found himself surrounded by his countrymen almost as much as in the Royal Scots in the army of the king of France. Colonel M'Donell had among his officers several relations of his own, and how he and they and Major John Forbes performed their duty may be learned from the accounts of the regiment that have been preserved. From being a mere undisciplined rabble, it soon became one of the best regiments in Portugal, and was considered to surpass in steadiness even the famous Prussian infantry. In 1765 it was reviewed by King Joseph, who publicly expressed

his satisfaction, and thanked Colonel M'Donell at the head of the regiment. The share of Major Forbes in this excellent service was not long in being rewarded, and in June 1766 he was made lieutenant-colonel of the regiment.

In the following year he was made colonel of the Second Regiment of Infantry of Elvas. He thus severed his connection with the regiment of Praça de Peniche, in which he had served for five years, and which he had done so much to improve. After five years more, came promotion to a higher branch of military service, and he was made colonel of the cavalry regiment of Almeida. Two years later, he was made brigadier of cavalry. The com-

mission, bearing the signature of King Joseph, is given at Lisbon on the 8th of June, 1775.

This was rapid promotion. In twelve years, from being a simple captain in a line regiment of foot, he had become a brigadier of cavalry. The chief reason for this rapid rise was, no doubt, the character of Forbes as a soldier and as a man, and the valuable aid he had given in bringing the army of Portugal into a state of efficiency. There is, however, another fact that may have had some effect, namely, his marriage. It may have been to this that he owed the friendly interest taken in him by the king and the Marquis of Pombal, to whom Donna Anna d'Almeida was probably related. The Counts

of Almeida seem to have taken their title from the town of that name, on the north-east frontier of Portugal. Was it by chance that the first cavalry commission held by Forbes was the colonelcy of the regiment of Almeida?

Soon after his promotion to the rank of brigadier a curious passage is recorded in the Portuguese national archives. Forbes petitioned the Government for a special reward for his services in the shape of a "commend"—that is, the income derived from an ecclesiastical office by one who does not perform its duties. This seems an odd kind of reward to give to a soldier, but it was common enough in some countries and at certain times. In Scotland, just after the Reforma-

tion, the offices of the old Church—bishoprics, abbacies, etc.—were frequently bestowed on laymen, on warlike barons in many cases, who, of course, did not perform the duties, but were very particular about drawing the revenues. Such incumbents were called “commendators.” A well-known example is found in the Regent Murray, who was commendator of St. Andrews. In Portugal the powerful and wealthy order of Knights Templars had long been suppressed, and the Marquis of Pombal had lately abolished the Jesuits, who had become not less wealthy and powerful. The spoils of these bodies went partly to enrich the crown, and partly as rewards to deserving servants of the crown, whether civil or mili-

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tary. This, at least, seems to be the meaning of the "commend" that Brigadier Forbes believed that his services entitled him to.

The petition of Forbes was rejected, on the ground, chiefly, that he was a foreigner, the kind of reward he claimed not being given to foreigners. He pleaded that he was married in Portugal, but was told that a foreigner did not become naturalised by marriage.

In 1787, Queen Maria, who had succeeded King Joseph on the throne of Portugal, appointed "Brigadier John Forbes de Skellater to be field-marshal of my armies." He was now Marshal Forbes, and that is the title he is best known by in this country when he is not mentioned with

affectionate familiarity as "Ian Roy" or "Red Jock." In the Portuguese army, however, the rank of field-marshal appears to have been intermediate between brigadier and lieutenant-general, and, as Forbes afterwards attained the higher office, he is spoken of in this biography as General, not Marshal, Forbes. In the Royal Order appointing him field-marshal, he is for the first time called "Forbes de Skellater." Afterwards the *de* was dropped, and he became known by the name of "Forbes Skellater," as if the name of his birthplace was part of his surname. This circumstance throws a curious and touching light on the intense love for his native land that characterised Forbes

during his whole life. He never allowed either his Portuguese friends or himself to forget that he was Forbes of Skellater, and so constant was his insistence on the fact, that he at last came to be called "Forbes Skellater."

In the same year Forbes seems to have obtained the kind of reward he had formerly applied for without success, namely, a commend. At least, this appears to be the meaning of a Royal decree bestowing on him a pension "from the sale of pious work," which pension was to descend to his widow and daughters and the survivor of them.

Honours and decorations now came thick upon him, and his advance in the army was steady. In 1790, Queen Maria issued the

following order from the palace of Our Lady of Ajuda :—“ For just reasons known to me, and worthy of my Royal attention, I hold it good and generous to give a grant to John Forbes Skellater, field-marshal of my armies of the Habit of the Order of Christ.” The Order of Christ was one of the greatest Portuguese decorations, something like that of the Bath or the Garter or the Thistle in this country. It was soon followed by another high honour, the Order of San Benito de Aviz. In 1791, the Queen, by an order dated from Lisbon, appointed “ Field-Marshal John Forbes Skellater to be adjutant-general of my armies.” The commission was accompanied by an allowance for four horses for his per-

sonal use. In September, 1793, he was made lieutenant-general by brevet, the commission to be effective at the first vacancy. These honours and rewards are a striking testimony to the fidelity and success with which Forbes performed his high military duties. As a foreigner, he had prejudices and jealousies to contend against, and his career was not always smooth, nor were his exalted offices always beds of roses.

These years witnessed the fall and death of the great Marquis of Pombal, and saw Portugal become a fashionable resort for English tourists and invalids. Forbes may have shaken hands with Henry Fielding, the novelist, who went to Portugal for his health and died in Lisbon, and

he may have made the acquaintance of his own countryman, William Julius Mickle, the translator of the Portuguese national poem, the "Lusiads" of Camoens, when he arrived in Lisbon as secretary to Commodore Johnson, and was received with enthusiasm by the Portuguese people. But great events were at hand, in which Forbes had to play a larger part than he had yet played anywhere, and to these events we must now turn.

The French Revolution had its effect on Portugal, as on other European countries. Democratic ideas began to be discussed, and the Prince Regent, Dom John, like other autocratic rulers, greatly dreaded the advance of these ideas. Spain was already

engaged in war with France, and the prince and his ministers decided to make an alliance with Spain and join in the war. The Spanish Government gladly agreed to the proposal. A Portuguese army, consisting of six regiments of infantry and a brigade of artillery, and numbering in all about 5,500 men, was fitted out. The command was given to the Marquis Las Minas, but the Marquis fell into bad health, and was unable to act. The command was, therefore, given to "Lieutenant-General John Forbes Skellater, an officer who had been many years in the service of Portugal. He was Scottish by birth, of illustrious blood, and great merit." That is how he is described by the Portuguese

author, Claudio de Chaby, in his history of the war. A squadron of ships, carrying the troops, sailed from the Tagus on the 20th of September, 1793. The squadron was commanded by Admiral Sarmiento, and among the captains of the ships were John Dilkes, William Galway, and Sampson Mitchell, names that suggest Scottish or Irish adventurers. Several foreign officers accompanied the expedition as volunteers, and one of these calls for some notice. There was a tradition among Aberdeenshire antiquaries that the Duke of Northumberland joined the Portuguese army as aide-de-camp to General Forbes. It was not easy to see why the Duke of Northumberland should be there at all, and there

seems to be no record of such an event in the archives of the ducal family of Northumberland. De Chaby, however, expressly states that the Duke of Northumberland went as a volunteer along with the Marquis of Nice and other foreign officers. He calls the Duke "commander-in-chief to His Britannic Majesty," but that must be a mistake.

The squadron sailed down the coast of Portugal, through the Straits of Gibraltar, up the east coast of Spain, and cast anchor in the Bay of Rosas, at the foot of the Pyrenees, in the province of Catalonia, in the north-east corner of Spain. The Spaniards had invaded the French province of Roussillon, just across the Pyrenees, and the war was going

on there. The Spanish general had his headquarters at Boulou, on the river Tech, in Roussillon. As soon as the Portuguese army was encamped at Rosas, General Forbes crossed the Pyrenees to visit the Spanish commander and learn his plans. The Spanish army being much the larger, and first in the field, the Spanish general was the supreme director of the campaign. He was Antonio Ricardos, count of that name, the son of an Irish colonel in the Spanish service, who had married a Spanish duchess. He had already seen a number of adventures, including a narrow escape from being burned alive for heresy by the Inquisition. The Irish Spaniard gave a hearty welcome to the Portuguese Scot, and

they concerted their measures together. Then General Forbes re-crossed the mountains and returned to Rosas to bring up his troops to the scene of war.

During his absence the hardships of the campaign had already begun. Heavy rains had flooded a river beside which the camp was situated, the tents were under water, and a serious amount of sickness was the consequence. The object now was to cross the Pyrenees, join the Spanish army, and give battle to the French at the town of Ceret, on the river Tech. The French were commanded by General Dagobert. The infantry crossed the mountains in three bodies by as many different routes, and the artillery by a fourth route, easier than the

others. The town of Ceret was one of the most important positions in the Spanish line, and the French commander greatly desired to capture it. The aim of the allied armies was to effect such a repulse of the French that Ceret would be safe. The march of General Forbes and his troops through the passes of the Pyrenees was made under great hardships from stormy winter weather. The Spanish commander-in-chief entrusted to his second in command, General La Union, the direction of the Spanish forces in the operations at Ceret. An important battle was fought on the 26th of November. The fighting lasted six hours, and in the end the French position was captured, and General Dagobert retreated,

leaving a number of prisoners and a large quantity of stores and supplies in the hands of the allies. Among the captured stores was one curious item, a large quantity of wax which the mountaineers of the Pyrenees had offered as a religious oblation to St. Ferreol in gratitude for the miracles which he had wrought in their favour. The wax was, no doubt, intended for candles to burn before the shrine of the saint. General Forbes commanded a reserve of Portuguese troops, and contributed greatly to the success of the day. In his official despatches General La Union twice referred to Forbes. In his second despatch he says, "I repeat to your excellency the praise I gave in my former despatch to the skill and

courage of the Portuguese commander-in-chief, which was proved on that day, to the great advantage of the enterprise." The Spanish commander-in-chief rode over from his headquarters at Boulou to congratulate General Forbes, and expressed his high satisfaction to him. Forbes in his own despatches speaks in terms of warm praise of the Portuguese troops. He commends their officers, and specially mentions the Duke of Northumberland, who had taken part in the battle, and had shown skill and courage. This is the second time in the history that the Duke of Northumberland is expressly mentioned, and either the duke himself or some representative of the family must have

been there to give rise to the report. The battle of Ceret was the first action that Forbes and his Portuguese soldiers were engaged in, and their conduct attracted general attention, and received praise on every hand.

Forbes was thus fighting against his old friends the French. To be in arms to-day against the friends of yesterday was a situation in which a soldier of fortune not unfrequently found himself. Sometimes, when he was not hampered by too fine a conscience, as in the immortal example of Dugald Dalgetty, it was a situation deliberately selected for reasons of personal policy. In the case of Forbes, who was one of the high-minded adventurers, it was the result of circum-

stances over which he had no control. Any regret that he may have felt must have been lessened by the thought that the France of 1793 was not the France that had sheltered his father, his father's friends, and himself. The old order, with its august monarch, its brilliant court and proud nobles, had been swept away by the Revolution, and along with it had been swept away the last vestiges of the old friendship between Scotland and France. Forbes would have been no true Scot if he did not "wag a moraleesin' head" and philosophise on the uncertainty of human affairs.

After the battle Forbes established his headquarters at Ceret. The different divisions in which

the Portuguese army had crossed the Pyrenees had not yet combined. This was much against the advice of Forbes, and he exerted himself to bring about their combination. He addressed several representations to General Ricardos, and such was the high opinion that the latter entertained of the Portuguese army and its commander that he entrusted the important position of the left of his line to them. On the 19th of December there were operations against the French, and the duty of acting against the right side of the enemy was entrusted to General Forbes. Some tactical movements were performed by him with skill and success, and with slight loss to his troops, but, as a whole, the opera-

tions of that day do not appear to have been of a decisive character. After this the French general decided to abandon the campaign for the time, and the Spanish commander ordered part of his army to go into winter quarters. The headquarters of the Portuguese army were fixed at the town of Arles, a little farther up the River Tech than Ceret. Here Forbes and his soldiers spent the winter. His army was much reduced by losses in battle, and still more by sickness. The hardships of a winter campaign in the Pyrenees were dreadful. Forbes was unwearied in his exertions for the good of his men. He was ably seconded by his medical officers, and with their aid he established a good hospital at Arles.

In January, 1794, General Ricardos returned to Madrid to lay plans for a fresh campaign before the Spanish Government. On his way back to the seat of war he had a cup of chocolate with his friend Godoy, Duke of Alaudia. He was taken ill just afterwards and died. His death was said to be due to poison in the chocolate, which had been put there for the benefit of the duke, and the general had taken the wrong cup. The Marquis las Amarillas succeeded him in the supreme direction of the campaign. During the winter the army had been much annoyed by the attacks of guerillas, and Forbes had effectively used his artillery against these irregular enemies. An undue share

of the hardships and dangers of the war were being borne by the Portuguese army, and the loss by death and sickness among them was very great. Forbes sent a strong representation to Portugal that mediation should be used with the Spanish Government, whereby the Portuguese should be relieved, to some extent, of the excessive strain, and their places taken by the Spanish forces, and that opportunity should be allowed to the Portuguese to recover their health and condition. Negotiations took place between the two Governments, but the services of Forbes and his Portuguese soldiers were considered so valuable that they could not be dispensed with, and they were accordingly left unre-

lieved. The compliment was a high one, but it was dearly bought. The following despatch from Forbes to the Portuguese Foreign Minister gives a vivid picture of the situation at this time :—

Excellency,

It is with much regret that I must point out to your Excellency how the gloomy winter and this rainy weather which has set in is adding to the sick in the hospitals. To-day forty men fell ill. How much the hard service in the mountains overwhelms and weakens the troops is to be seen in all of them, by their lean faces and the feebleness they show. With so many of their officers ill, and without having now even the numbers necessary for relieving so many posts, the impossibility of the regiments entering into the campaign is plainly seen, unless they are first sent to some place in the interior of Spain, where they may

rest and recover their strength, that they may not be entirely lost, as will undoubtedly happen if they are not allowed to rest for some time. May God preserve your Excellency many years.

Quarters at Arles,

29th March, 1794.

To His Excellency,

Senor Louis Pinto de Sousa Continho.

(Signed) JOHN FORBES.

In the end of April, 1794, the situation of the allied forces became very critical. The French attacked them and destroyed their right wing, and the centre of their position was in the greatest danger. This was through no fault of the Portuguese, who are said to have "done wonders," and the King of Spain expressed his approval of their conduct to General Forbes in despatches addressed to him. General Forbes ordered his sick

soldiers to be conveyed to the interior of the country, and the military stores to be transported across the Pyrenees to the Spanish towns of Figueras and La Junquera. It was owing to his timely foresight that the stores and ammunition were saved. A council of war was held, and the advisability of a retreat into Spain was discussed. Forbes spoke strongly against the retreat, and proposed a scheme of manœuvres which he believed would save the army and retrieve the situation. But he was supported by only one officer, and it was decided to retreat. The important and difficult duty of evacuating a strong post held by the allies was entrusted to Forbes. He carried out the operations with complete success, and, after

a toilsome march through the passes of the Pyrenees, he arrived with his troops at the factory of S. Sebastian de la Muga, not far from Figueras in Catalonia.

In the hospital at Arles he left behind a number of sick soldiers in the charge of an assistant surgeon, to whom he gave a letter commending them to the generosity of the conquerors. It showed the excellent discipline of the Portuguese soldiers that, though they were half-starved when they arrived at La Muga, and found the town unprotected, not one of them laid hands on anything belonging to the inhabitants. The headquarters of the allied forces were fixed at Figueras, and the shattered remains of the army were gathered there.

In less than six months the Portuguese had lost through battle and sickness and hardship more than one thousand six hundred men. The suffering from sickness was still great, and General Forbes was untiring in his efforts to give relief to his men. On the 19th and 21st of September there was a conflict with the French, who had pursued the allies across the Pyrenees, and the hill position of Mintroig was captured from them. On this occasion fifty Spanish soldiers threw down their arms and fled. They were tried by court-martial for cowardice, and two were shot. Three others were sentenced to death, but General Forbes interceded for them, and at his intercession they were reprieved. To-

wards the end of November an unfortunate engagement with the French took place, and the Castle in Figueras was surrendered to them. This disaster ended the campaign of 1794, an unfortunate one for the Spaniards and Portuguese. In December, Don José Urrutia assumed the chief command of the army in Catalonia. The Portuguese division was established as a reserve corps at Oliva, along with some Spanish troops.

On an early day of April, 1795, the birth of a prince in the Royal Family of Portugal was announced to the army by General Forbes. In honour of the occasion, he ordered a special grand review of the whole army on Easter Sunday. After the review, he enter-

tained the officers at a splendid banquet, which, we are told, was made brilliant by the grace of the Spanish ladies, the wives of the generals.

In the month of May, General Urrutia made an important tactical movement in which the division commanded by Forbes acted a conspicuous part, and some success was obtained against the French. Soon after, the Spanish commander expressed his acknowledgements to the Portuguese.

In July the Spanish Government made peace with France on its own account, and a treaty was signed at Basle. This was a deliberate desertion of their Portuguese allies, who were no longer able to continue the war alone. It was therefore decided by the

Portuguese Government to withdraw their forces. On the 28th of October, the Portuguese army embarked at Barcelona, the transport ships being escorted by the Spanish frigate *Diana* and two brigantines. After calling at several ports on the way, the squadron containing General Forbes and his men cast anchor in the Tagus on the 11th of December, 1795.

So ended the war in Roussillon and Catalonia. The advantage lay completely with the French. The only creditable feature in the management of the war by the allies was the conduct of General Forbes and his Portuguese troops. Their valour and their good discipline and steadiness were universally acknowledged. On the side

of the allies, Forbes was undoubtedly the hero of the war. His generalship, his energy, and his undaunted courage were conspicuous; and not less conspicuous was his kindly and humane nature. He was unwearied in his efforts to secure the health and comfort of his men, and in his solicitude for the sick and wounded. The name of John Forbes-Skellater became known throughout Europe. It is curious to see the name of his birthplace among the far-away hills of Strathdon tacked on to his surname. As a rule, he signs himself in his despatches John Forbes, but once or twice he accepts the new compound name, and signs John Forbes-Skellater. An Aberdeenshire tradition says that the Duke of Northumberland, who has

already been twice mentioned, sent General Forbes from England a gold chain worth £1,500. The King of Spain created Forbes a General by brevet in the Spanish army, and bestowed on him the decoration of the Order of Charles III. One version of the Aberdeenshire tradition states that the gold chain sent to Forbes from England by the Duke of Northumberland was the Spanish decoration, but this is inexplicable. The whole story about the presence of the Duke of Northumberland at the war, and the part he played, is obscure, but there must be some truth in it. Either the Duke himself or some representative of his family must have taken part in the campaign in order to give rise to the distinct and specific

statements of Claudio de Chaby and the independent tradition in Aberdeenshire.

General Forbes paid at least one visit to Strathdon after he had become a great man in Portugal. The familiar English sneer that Scotchmen, though they profess to be great patriots, are always willing to leave Scotland, and take good care never to go back, did not apply to him. He brought his eldest daughter with him, and intended to stay for some time ; but Skellater did not at all suit the lady from the South. The sun does not shine in Scotland as he does in Portugal, and the vine does not grow on Lonach Hill. Oh, no ! this country would break her heart ; she could never live here. So the General once more

left Strathdon, apparently this time for ever.

But short as his visit was it left memories of him that are yet living. People in Strathdon tell with pride that at the funeral of a lady of the name of Forbes, a member of the Inverernan family, when all the country turned out, he stood "head and shouthers abeen them a'." Any one who has attended the Lonach Gathering will have some idea of what that means, for the men of Strathdon are not pigmies. And he was so erect that every drop of rain that fell off the brim of his hat reached the ground. On Sunday morning he walked to the parish church with an old tenant of the Skellater family, who lived close at hand. At the church door he stopped.

“I must not go in with you,” he said, “for if I did, the news would be in Portugal before me.”

He had lived in Catholic countries ever since he left home in boyhood, and had embraced the Catholic faith. But his conduct on the occasion, and the remark he made showed, that the Portuguese general looked wistfully back to the days when he was Ian Roy of Skellater, went to Strathdon Church on Sunday, and beat the young Grants from Speyside at throwing the putting stone.

It was probably at this time that the portrait in possession of Sir John Forbes of Inverernan was painted. It is a half-length figure. The dress is a brilliant military uniform, with sash, star,

and medal. He is no longer Ian Roy, for the thick and well-kept hair is snow white. The face is clean shaved, the features are strikingly handsome, and the expression is open, cheerful, and bold. It is the picture of a splendid man, and after seeing it one can understand the story of the Portuguese princess. Two other portraits of General Forbes are known. One of these, a painted portrait, is preserved at Castle Forbes; the other, a small print, appears in the Portuguese history of the war in Roussillon and Catalonia by Claudio de Chaby. In the Inverernan and Castle Forbes portraits the general's uniform is scarlet. He looks youngest in the Inverernan portrait and oldest in the Portu-

guese. In all three the physiognomy is strongly Scottish, and in the Portuguese portrait there is a distinct trace of "pawkiness" in the expression.

Perhaps this is the best place to say a word about his family. A Portuguese journal, the *Gazeta de Lisboa*, of 1st April, 1797, thus records the death of his wife: "Donna Anna d'Almeida Forbes, wife of his Excellency Lieutenant General John Forbes of Skellater, died in this city, on the 29th of of last month, aged 51 years." His family consisted of three daughters, Donna Maria Christina Forbes d'Almeida, Donna Joanna Victoria Forbes d'Almeida, and Donna Anna Benedicta Forbes d'Almeida. It was the eldest of these who accompanied

her father to Skellater, and shortened his visit by her impatient contempt of Donside. But the proud Donna Maria Christina did not disdain a Donside husband. In 1800 she married Brigadier-General Henry David Fraser, of Fraserfield, now Balgownie, on the Don, near Old Aberdeen. General Fraser entered the Portuguese army, no doubt through the influence and example of his father-in-law. He is said to have received the same high distinctions from Portugal and Spain that his father-in-law enjoyed, and to have been, at his death, Governor of Rio de Janeiro, as his father-in-law was. We are not aware upon what authority these statements rest. In the cathedral of Old Aberdeen there

is a mural tablet to the memory of General Fraser, placed there by his widow. The inscription on the tablet states that he is interred near the spot, but no mention is made of special honours and distinctions, nor of his having been Governor of Rio de Janeiro. The eldest daughter of General Fraser and his wife, Donna Maria Christina Forbes d'Almeida, married the Austrian Count de Bombelles, and their descendants are still among the Austrian nobility. The eldest son of General Fraser became a colonel in the Russian service. The second son was a Secretary of Legation in the service of Great Britain. In that capacity he went to Rio de Janeiro, and brought home a French translation of the

inscription on his grandfather's tomb. The second daughter married the Marquis de Gargallo. The third daughter appears to have died unmarried.

The second daughter of General Forbes married the Portuguese Duc d'Albuquerque, and the third Don Joas de Mello, a member of an old and illustrious family of Portugal. We have no information regarding the children of these two marriages, if there were any.

But events of a momentous kind were thickening in Europe. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte became ruler of France, a fact of evil omen for Portugal. Napoleon regarded that country as an appendage of Great Britain. He saw what a convenient base it

offered for the operation of British armies, and he determined that Portugal should be crushed. Accordingly he sent his brother Lucien to Madrid, with instructions to co-operate with Spain, and offer to Portugal terms which he knew could not be accepted. Driven thus into a corner, the Prince Regent of Portugal rejected the terms, and declared war on Spain, in February, 1801.

General Forbes was made Commander-in-Chief of the forces entrusted with the defence of the territory south of the river Douro—that is, of the greater part of Portugal. The war was short and unfortunate. The active operations took place on the south-eastern frontier, where the Spaniards captured several towns

and defeated the Portuguese in two actions. Whether Forbes was present at these disasters does not appear, but they took place within the territory defended by his troops. The campaign lasted four months, and in June peace was made between Spain and Portugal.

In October, 1803, Forbes was made a Councillor of the Council of War, and soon after he was appointed General of Cavalry, retaining the post of Inspector-General of Infantry, to which he had previously been appointed. This completes the long list of offices and honours which four successive sovereigns of Portugal had bestowed on John Forbes. He was well provided for in the way of the world, for several of

his honours carried with them substantial pensions which descended to his family after him. He might now have reasonably hoped to rest from the dangers and toils of a soldier's life, and spend a happy and honoured old age in his adopted country, with troops of friends around him. But this was not to be.

After defeating the armies of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, Napoleon again turned his attention to Portugal. That country was to be conquered by the united armies of France and Spain, and then partitioned out in a manner that had been agreed upon. Action was taken at once, and before the Portuguese had realised that war was near, Marshal Junot, with a French army, was at the gates of

Lisbon. The Prince Regent, Dom John, was completely unnerved by the tidings, and could do nothing. A squadron of British ships lay in the Tagus, and the commander, Sir Sidney Smith, urgently advised the Prince to depart at once for Brazil, and leave the defence of Portugal to the British power. The Regent saw no other course open to him, and hastily named a Council of Regency to conduct affairs during his absence. Then he embarked in one of the British ships with his wife, his large family, and the Court. In the midst of this forlorn band of exiled royalties, two figures were conspicuous. One was the unhappy mother of the Regent, the insane Queen Maria Francisca. Her darkened

mind only imperfectly understood what was passing, and she resisted the embarkation with cries and entreaties. The other was General Forbes, whose erect form, with the fine face and snow-white hair, towered among them like Saul among the people. He was going to seek another home in the company of the Royal Family who trusted him. He had served them for forty-four years, through good fortune and evil fortune, and he would not forsake them now in their distress. His heart must have been sad, for the occasion was a sad one for his best friends, for his adopted country, and for himself. He was old, and he was alone in the world, for his wife was dead, and his daughters were married. Neither in his native

Scotland, nor in France, nor in Portugal was there a resting-place for him, and he was going to seek one across the Atlantic. Hardly had the ship set sail when Marshal Junot entered Lisbon at the head of the French army. This was on the 30th of November, 1807.

In due course the exiles arrived at Rio de Janeiro. The Prince Regent appointed General Forbes military governor of the city and of the province of Brazil, of which Rio de Janeiro is the capital. Nothing is known of the events, if there were any in particular, that marked his short tenure of this high office. He was seized with an illness which soon proved fatal, and died on the 8th of April, 1808, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. A few days

previously, when he felt his end approaching, the general had made his will, and it was opened on the day of his death. It begins with these words :—

In the first place I commit my soul to God our Lord, who created it and redeemed it with His precious blood, also to His Holy Mother, our Lady, and to my Guardian Angel and to the Saint of my name, that they may intercede with the Almighty for my eternal salvation.

He goes on to declare who he is, the country of his birth, and the names of his wife and children. Then comes this remarkable clause :—

It is my desire that this, my Will, be wholly regulated by the municipal right and laws of England and Scotland, my countries, of which I am a subject and a native.

He had left his native land

sixty years before ; he had lived for fifteen years in France and forty-five in Portugal, where he had married and prospered and risen high. And he had adopted the religion of these countries. But he still considered himself a British subject, and his heart was still in the Highlands.

He names for his sole heiress his eldest daughter, because she was burdened with a numerous family, and did not possess much property by her marriage, as did her two sisters.

And I hope that they will be willing not to oppose this, my Will, but will cede any right they may have for the benefit of their said sister, my daughter, Donna Maria, and I have full confidence in their generosity, such as is to be expected from the good education I have given them, and from the paternal love with which I have always treated them.

He bequeaths legacies to servants, names executors, and gives directions about his place of burial.

The body of the general was embalmed, and on the 10th day of the month it was conveyed to the convent of St. Anthony, belonging to the Franciscan Friars. He was interred in a tomb in the wall of the Chapter House, and there the epitaph in the Portuguese language is to be seen, having in the centre the coat of arms of the Forbeses of Skellater with their motto, *Solus inter plurimos*. And there the Strathdon man rests, far from Skellater, in a land of strangers, alone among many. The following is a translation of the Portuguese epitaph :—



Here lie the ashes of the Most Illustrious and Excellent John Forbes Skellater, a native of Scotland and a descendant of the ancient and famous family of Forbes, who, entering the military service of the August Monarchs of Portugal, was, by his moral virtues, valour, fidelity, and high military talents, found worthy to occupy the posts of General of Cavalry, Inspector-General of Infantry, Adjutant-General of the Army, and Councillor of War.

And His Royal Highness, the Prince our Master, having conferred upon him the command of the Portuguese Auxiliary Army which passed into Catalonia, and triumphed at Ceret, Collioure, &c., he obtained the Grand Cross of the Order of Avis, and the decoration of the Spanish Order of Charles III. He crowned his fidelity by accompanying His Royal Highness to Rio de Janeiro, where he was promoted Military Governor, the duties of which office he was unable to perform, as he died in his seventy-sixth year, on the VIII. day of April, MDCCCVIII.

He was buried with full military honours, and the funeral was attended by a large concourse of the people of Rio de Janeiro, whose regard he had already won. The Prince Regent wept over him. When we read of this we are reminded of another notable son of Aberdeenshire, Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, over whose remains Peter the Great of Russia shed tears.

To the Portuguese epitaph in the Convent of St. Anthony at Rio de Janeiro may be added the eloquent tribute to the memory of General Forbes contained in the short obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1808.

During a period of nearly fifty years he distinguished himself in Portugal by

his activity, his zeal, and his incorruptible fidelity, to which last circumstance it was perhaps owing that he enjoyed uninterruptedly the favour of four successive sovereigns. The tears and unfeigned sorrow of the present reigning prince were the most affecting testimonials of his attachment to the General, as the public and sincere regrets of the people were, of his real worth. Indeed, he was a virtuous and honourable man, and as a soldier possessed undaunted courage, indefatigable activity, promptitude, and decision. He will hereafter be classed among those who have added to the respectability of the British character among foreigners.

To say of a soldier of fortune that he has raised the character of his countrymen among the people whom he served is the finest praise that could be given to him, and it has been given to the soldier of fortune whose career

we have followed. He had been sixty years away from his native land, yet the first fact recorded of him by the grateful sovereign and people who raised his tomb was that he was Scottish by birth. It is a far cry from Strathdon to Maestricht, and a farther to Rio de Janeiro. From the porridge pot on the kitchen floor of Rinettan to the leadership of European armies and the Governor's chair of Rio de Janeiro is a great rise. It is a good record, and, among the many Quentin Durwards whom Scotland has sent forth, a worthy place is due to Ian Roy of Skellater.



TOMB OF GENERAL FORBES
at Rio de Janeiro.



