

THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN'S EXPEDITION  
TO THE HIGHLANDS.\*

A.D. 1653, 1654.

AFTER the English Republican army under Cromwell had to all appearance subdued Scotland, and before the arrival of the celebrated General Monk, a new and formidable enemy to the Protectorate arose in William, ninth Earl of Glencairn, who received a commission from Charles II. to command all the forces he could raise in the kingdom for the royal service. An account of the expedition is preserved, written by an eye-witness, Graham of Duchray, and it is chiefly remarkable for a duel between the Earl and Sir George Munro of Foulis, occasioned by a dispute at a dinner party respecting the personal qualities of some of the men who composed the Scottish army.

The Earl left his seat of Finlayston in Renfrewshire, on the banks of the Clyde, in the beginning of August 1653, and proceeded to Lochearn, where he was met by several Highland noblemen and chiefs of clans whose loyalty originated from very different principles. Some were determined Presbyterians, and in arms for the King chiefly to overthrow the domination of the English sectarians, while others were Cavaliers, some in religion attached to Protestant Episcopacy, and others to Popery, who were resolved to take the field from their hereditary attachment to the exiled Royal Family, and not from any wish to defend Presbyterianism. The personages who met Glencairn at Lochearn were the Earl of Athole, the well known

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\* Nicoll's Diary, printed for the Bannatyne Club; Graham of Duchray's Account of the Earl of Glencairn's Expedition, in Appendix to Robertson's Topographical Description of Ayrshire.

Marquis of Argyle, Macdonald of Glengarry, Cameron of Lochiel, Graham of Duchray, Macgregor, tutor of Macgregor, the Lairds of Inverurie and MacNaughton, Robertson of Strowan, and Colonel John Blackadder of Tulliallan on the Forth. It could hardly be expected that such discordant elements—men who hated each other on account of their religious principles, and only agreeing in the sentiment of loyalty, would act harmoniously together, yet their first meeting passed off with some degree of harmony. After consulting some days with Glencairn they separated, and proceeded, according to agreement, to raise their clans and dependants without delay. The Earl in the meantime resided among the mountain fastnesses of Perthshire six weeks, attended only by Graham of Duchray and three domestics.

The first who joined Glencairn were forty foot, raised by the influence of the Laird of Duchray, and a few days afterwards Donald Macgregor, tutor of Macgregor, made his appearance with eighty Highlanders. Having united this small force the Earl proceeded to the house of Duchray, where he was joined by the Viscount of Kenmure, who was also in arms for the King, with forty cavalry from Lanarkshire. Some curious notices are recorded of Kenmure's proceedings in several parts of the Lowland and Western counties by a contemporary diarist. "Great numbers of people," says Nicoll, "resorted unto him from all parts of the country, especially the North and West, yea some out of Edinburgh and the neighbourhood, who came to the south loch of Edinburgh, [now the Meadows, or Hope Park,] and when horses were brought to the water, they took them forcibly from their owners; also in many parts of Lothian they took horses by force, and carried them to their army. Likewise he caused people to pay cess in many parts of the country, and in sundry sheriffdoms and parishes caused to put out the fourth man, espe-

cially within the lordship of Cowal, Argyle, Kintyre, and Lorn. Some of his people were so bold that they came close to the gates of Edinburgh, the English being then in their garrisons, which caused an order to be issued by the latter, that all the ports (or gates) of Edinburgh should be closed and made fast immediately after the setting of the sun, which was put in execution, and began the 21st of November 1653.—Kenmure's party increased daily, and fell on the Lowlands to procure horses, wherein they had good success, many in the country being their friends. They plundered, wherever they came, all those who were English or their favourites. In this month of November it was thought they had five thousand horses, their number daily increased by desperate people, sequestrated, sequestrable, and much in debt. At a late meeting of the Presbytery of Hamilton a question was moved, whether Kenmure or the English were greater enemies. It was resolved that the English were the greater, *for Kenmure had done little hurt, but the English much evil!*"

Colonel Blackadder joined Glencairn with about fifty horsemen whom he had raised in Fife, and the Laird of MacNaughton brought twelve troopers. There was between sixty and eighty Lowlanders without horses, but well provided with arms, under the conduct of Captain James Hamilton, brother of the Laird of Milburn. Those Lowlanders, on account of some peculiarity in their dress, were known by the soubriquet of the *Cravats*.

Such was the nucleus of the royal forces, which were daily increasing in numbers. When Colonel Kidd, Cromwell's governor of Stirling Castle, was informed that the royalists were at no great distance from him, he marched the greater part of his regiment and a troop of horse to Aberfoyle, and advanced within three miles of the Earl of Glencairn's station. His Lordship resolved to give the Colonel battle, and marched with the few forces he had as

yet mustered to the Pass of Aberfoyle, where he drew up his foot with great judgment, the cavalry, commanded by Lord Kenmure, forming the wings. A conflict ensued at this romantic entry to the Highlands which was disastrous to the English republicans. Captain Hamilton's Cravats and the Laird of Duchray's men received the first fire of the enemy with great gallantry, and soon made them retire. Glencairn immediately ordered Kenmure's troopers and the Highlanders to press upon the retreating English, who began to run in earnest. They lost about sixty men on the spot, and nearly eighty in the pursuit. No prisoners were taken on either side.

Glencairn's enforcements daily increased. Shortly after this skirmish he marched to Lochearn, and thence to Loch Rannoch, where he was met by several chieftains. The chief of Glengarry brought three hundred men, Lochiel four hundred, the Tutor of Macgregor mustered two hundred; the Earl of Athole brought one hundred cavalry, and a regiment of foot, consisting of twelve hundred men, commanded by Andrew Drummond, his lieutenant-colonel, a brother of Sir James Drummond of Mahany; Sir Arthur Forbes and several officers came with eighty men on horseback. Several of these gentlemen gave commissions to their private friends to proceed to the Lowlands and levy forces, and also to seize all the horses and arms they could find.

The army of Glencairn now mustered nearly two thousand four hundred men, and was daily expected to be increased by Lieutenant-General Middleton, who was to land in the north with a considerable supply of arms. The Earl marched his forces towards the Marquis of Huntly's country, where he was joined by several gentlemen. Meanwhile the English general Morgan, who then lay at Aberdeen, determined to oppose the royalists at the head of one thousand cavalry and two



thousand foot. Making forced marches by day and night he came up unexpectedly to Glencairn's outer guards, none of the royalist leaders having any intelligence of his movements. He pursued the guards so hotly that it was with the utmost difficulty they could keep their ground, but Graham of Duchray, with forty of his men, gave the English a smart fire, and the officer who commanded their party was killed. This disaster checked their career, and prevented them from entering a mountain pass before the royalists.

It was impossible to avoid a skirmish, and the Viscount of Kenmure hastened to the relief of the foot soldiers. General Morgan ordered his infantry to march up the glen after the Scots, while he charged at the mouth of the Pass. Glencairn still kept the rear, wretchedly mounted on a horse not worth one hundred merks Scots money, which, however, he refused to change. He was attended by several gentlemen, among whom are mentioned the Laird of MacNaughton, Sir Mungo Murray, who killed one of the English officers as they entered the Pass, Major Ogilvy, Captain Campbell, a son of Sir Nathaniel Gordon, Captain Rutherford, *who wanted a leg*, Colonel Blackadder, and the chief of Glengarry. The glen was exceedingly narrow, and the English pressed hotly upon the royalists; but night came on, and the English general deemed it prudent not to proceed farther. He encamped in the glen during the night, and on the next day marched back to Aberdeen.

The only defection from Glencairn's army was the Marquis of Argyle, who had mustered one thousand foot and fifty horse. He joined the royal forces in Badenoch, but he had become dissatisfied in a fortnight, and chose to withdraw with his followers. Glencairn sent the chiefs of Glengarry and Lochiel with as many men as he could spare to pursue Argyle, and compel him to return or fight him. The chieftains overtook the Marquis within half a mile of

the Castle of Ruthven in Badenoch, belonging to the Earl of Huntly, in which there was an English garrison. Argyle was not inclined to hazard an interview with the chieftains, but slipped off with his horsemen, and left his foot soldiers to shift for themselves. Glengarry ordered a party of troopers to pursue the recreant nobleman, who brought back twenty of his horsemen, but the Earl and the others escaped by flight.

The foot soldiers of the Marquis drew up on a hill, and offered to return to the King's service. Glengarry was by no means satisfied with this, and having an old grudge against them since the wars of the great Marquis of Montrose, he was preparing to fall upon them, when he was prevented by the arrival of Glencairn. The Earl, notwithstanding their offer, intimated to them that he would not treat with them till they laid down their arms, which they immediately did. He then went to them, accompanied by several of his officers, and they all declared that they were willing to re-enter the service, and would not again desert. He caused an oath to be taken to this effect, both from the officers and the privates; but such were their convenient notions of it, that within less than a fortnight not one of them were to be seen in the army.

Nevertheless, the royalist army continued to increase by the new levies which were daily joining them, and Glencairn resolved to march into the lowland districts of Aberdeenshire. We are told that *they ate up the whole country wherever they lived in the Highlands*. General Morgan offered no molestation, and the Earl proceeded to Elgin in Morayshire, which he made his head-quarters. While there he received official information of the landing of General Middleton in the county of Sutherland—a circumstance which, when known to Cromwell's government, brought General Monk to Scotland as commander-in-chief of all the English forces. Glencairn, who was su-

perseded in the chief command by Middleton, now pushed forward to the county of Sutherland, followed by General Morgan, with whom he had several skirmishes in the march. He was, however, able to pass the Ness some miles above Inverness, and as the English had no garrisons north of that river, General Morgan gave up the pursuit.

Glencairn sent to General Middleton, who was at Dornoch, to receive his commands. A general rendezvous of the whole army was ordered, and after a minute calculation and inspection the army was found to consist of 3500 foot and 1600 horse, but of the latter three hundred were neither well mounted nor properly armed. The whole force being drawn out, Glencairn went through every regiment, and informed them that he had now no other command except as a colonel, and hoped that they would be all happy to serve under such a brave commander as General Middleton. It is said that the men were very dissatisfied with the change, and indeed the Earl, during the whole of the expedition, had exhibited considerable prudence and military skill. After this inspection Middleton entertained the officers at Dornoch, the head-quarters.

The Earl invited the new commander-in-chief and the general officers to dine with him at the house he occupied a few miles from Dornoch, when the following scene occurred—his Lordship, it is carefully stated, having given them “as good cheer as the country could afford, and made them all *very hearty*.” Calling for a bumper in wine, the Earl addressed Middleton—“You see, my Lord, what a gallant army I and these noble gentlemen have raised out of nothing. They have hazarded life and fortune to serve his Majesty. Your Excellency ought, therefore, to give them all the encouragement you can.” Sir George Monro immediately started from his seat, and interrupting the Earl exclaimed—“By God, the men you speak of are no other than a pack of thieves and robbers. In a short time I will

show you other sort of men." The chief of Glengarry instantly rose, thinking the insult was levelled at his Highlanders, and was about to speak, when Glencairn stopped him, saying, "Forbear, Glengarry; I am the person insulted." Then directing himself to Sir George Monro, he said—"You are a base liar, for they are neither thieves nor rogues, but much better men than you could raise."

This courteous retort on the part of the Earl was not likely to be passed unnoticed, and a personal encounter would have at the moment taken place if Middleton had not commanded them to keep the peace, and addressing them individually, he said—"My Lord, and you, Sir George, this is not the way to do the King service by falling out among yourselves; I will have you both to be friends." Calling for a glass of wine, he continued—"My Lord Glencairn, you did the greatest wrong in calling Sir George a liar. You shall drink to him, and he shall pledge you." The Earl readily complied, but Sir George uttered some words not distinctly heard, and would not pledge him in return.

Nothing farther is stated of what passed on the occasion, and Middleton returned to his head-quarters. Glencairn accompanied him a mile on the way, having with him Graham of Duchray and Colonel Blackadder. They parted, and Glencairn with his friends went back to his residence, where he spent the evening in music and dancing with the family and domestics. But when about to sit down to supper, Alexander Monro, brother of Sir George, called at the mansion with a message, the nature of which may be easily inferred. The Earl received him very courteously, placing him near the head of the table, next the lady of the house. After supper dancing was resumed, and during the amusement his Lordship stepped aside to a window followed by Monro. They scarcely spoke a dozen of words together. The Earl called for a glass of wine,



and drank to him, observing, to allay any suspicion, that it would be too late to go to head-quarters, and he immediately asked for candles, as if intending to retire.

It was agreed, as the nights were short at that season of the year, that the Earl and Sir George should meet half way between Dornoch and his Lordship's residence at the morning dawn. No one was acquainted with the affair except the Earl's trumpeter. He went to bed, but he had scarcely slept two hours when he rose, dressed himself, and set out for the place of meeting, without awakening Graham of Duchray and Colonel Blackadder, both of whom slept in the same room, and unperceived by any of the family, accompanied only by the trumpeter.

The Earl found Sir George waiting for him attended by his brother. Both the combatants were on horseback, and it was arranged that each was to discharge one pistol, and then fight with broadswords. The pistols were fired without injuring either of them, and they then drew their swords. After a few thrusts and passes Sir George got a sore stroke on the bridle-hand, which induced him to call out that he was not able to guide his horse—"And I hope," he added, "you will fight me on foot." "You carle," replied Glencairn, "I will let you know that I am a match for you either on foot or on horseback." At the first onset Sir George received a severe cut on the brow, which bled so profusely that he could not see. He was now completely at the mercy of the Earl, who was on the point of thrusting him through the body, when his trumpeter, who also acted as his valet, pushed his sword aside, saying—"You have enough of him, my Lord." His master gave him a slap on the shoulders, and rode back to his lodgings, leaving Sir George to reach his quarters in whatever way he pleased, which he did with great difficulty, and in a very weak state.

When General Middleton was informed of this encounter, he ordered the Earl of Glencairn to be placed under arrest, from which he was in a few days released on giving his parole not to disobey. Not long afterwards two officers, the one named Lindsay and the other named Livingstone, the former a partisan of Glencairn and the other of Sir George Monro, quarrelled respecting their several leaders, and came to blows in imitation of their superiors, but this affair ended fatally. Lindsay killed his antagonist on the spot, for which he was tried by a court-martial, and, notwithstanding the exertions of the Earl of Glencairn to save him, he was found guilty, and ordered to be shot. This rendered the breach wider between Glencairn and Sir George Monro, and the former at length came to the resolution of retiring from Middleton altogether. On the day fortnight after the duel was fought, his Lordship left the royal army and proceeded homewards, taking with him only his own troop of horsemen, accompanied by some gentlemen who acted as volunteers, and were attached to no particular corps, in all about one hundred horse. Middleton sent a strong party after the Earl to bring him back or to fight him, but the Laird of Assynt secured the passes in such a manner that no one could approach him. He next day proceeded to Kintail, where he was hospitably received by the gentlemen of Lord Seaforth's name and family, and he remained with them a few days to refresh his men and horses. From Kintail the Earl journeyed successively to Loch Bruin, Lochaber, Loch Rannoch, and to Killin at the head of Loch Tay, where he rested eight days, till he was joined by Sir George Maxwell, his own lieutenant-colonel, who brought one hundred mounted troopers. Several noblemen and gentlemen also joined him with new levies, but his Lordship sent them all to General Middleton, and proceeded homewards by easy

journeys, as his health was very indifferent, till he came to Lochleven in Dumbartonshire, where he resided some days at Rosedoe with Colquhoun of Luss.

In the meanwhile General Monk, who had arrived in Scotland, commenced the most active measures to put down the enterprise. Calling out all the troops he could spare from the garrisons, he gave the command of part of his army to General Morgan, and both marched by different roads, though still near each other, in search of General Middleton. The royalist leader had marched to Lochgarry, where he meant to encamp at a village, but General Morgan, who had the same intention, arrived there before him, the one having no information of the other's movements. The vanguards of the opposing forces got immediately into action, and Middleton commenced a retreat, on account of the impossibility of drawing up his men on unfavourable ground. Morgan closely pursued, and succeeded in obtaining possession of Middleton's sumptuary, in which were his commission and all his papers. The royal army was at length compelled to flee as fast as possible, and in great confusion, though with trifling loss, as night came on shortly after they were engaged. We are told that every man shifted for himself, wherever he could find a place of safety. A few remained with Middleton, but he no more appeared in arms after this skirmish, and soon after retired to the Continent.

Many soldiers attached to the royal cause waited on the Earl of Glencairn at Rosedoe, and offered their services, but he told them that the King's interest was for the time ruined in Scotland by the flight at Lochgarry, and that he now intended to obtain terms for himself and those who were with him, offering also to include them. After some deliberation they agreed to this proposal, and though Glencairn was one of those persons who were not included in Cromwell's Act of Grace, one of the most notable memo-

rials of democratical arbitrary power which relates to the history of these times, yet his Lordship made a successful negotiation with General Monk, which was signed on the last day of August, or, according to the Laird of Duchray, on the 4th September 1654. "It was concluded," says a contemporary diarist, "that the Earl of Glencairn and all the Scots party following him should go to Dumbarton, and lay down their arms, and live peaceably under the Commonwealth of England; the Earl to have his lands restored to him and his son." Glencairn returned to his family seat of Finlaystone, where he resided peaceably till the Restoration. The Earl of Athole and several other noblemen and gentlemen were also forced to submit.

Several officers were executed for being concerned in this attempt, among whom is mentioned Captain Gordon, "ane pretty gentleman, and weill apparelled," who was hanged at the Cross of Edinburgh. It appears that having been taken prisoner by the English, he served with them, but took the first opportunity to return to his former friends. He was again apprehended and condemned, and executed on the 26th of February 1655—"a pretty gentleman," adds the diarist, "of much worth."