

Scottish Influences in Russian History

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL PATRICK GORDON OF AUCHLEUCHRIES.

A Scottish soldier of fortune (one gets tired of hearing him described as 'a regular Dugald Dalgetty') made, somewhat unwillingly in his latter years, a considerable name in the Russian service from 1661 to his death. This was General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, known among the Russians as Patrick Ivanovitch. He was the second son of 'a younger brother of a younger house,' the Gordons of Haddo, by his wife, Mary Ogilvie, heiress of Auchleuchries in Buchan, and was born in 1635. As a younger son of a Catholic family he was forced early to seek his fortune abroad, but not until he had received a competent education (he took interest later from far Russia in the doings of the Royal Society), especially in Latin. As he himself wrote in his seventeenth year, 'I resolved, I say, to go to some foreigne country, not careing much on what pretence, or to which country I should go, seing I had no knowne friend in any foreigne place.' Once, 'on his own,' he sailed to Danzig, was entertained by Scots (of whom there were many), thought of becoming a Jesuit at Bromberg, 'yet could not my humer endure such a still and strict way of liveing.' After real hardships from poverty and adventures which poverty always sends, he was befriended by Scottish merchants at Danzig and franked on to 'a countryman and namesake' living (where did the Scots not go?) at Culm, and was sent on by more Scots to Poland, where 'Duke Ian Radzewill had a lyfe company all or most Scottismen,' but at Posen (always entertained by kindly Scottish merchants) he eventually entered into the suite of a Polish noble, Opalinski, who was travelling westwards. With him he went to Antwerp.

There he was enticed by a 'ruitmaster' of his own nation (with the help of some wine) to enter the Swedish army in 1655, and the same year was in Prussia and Poland, the war with the latter country having begun again. Here he received his baptism of fire, having a horse killed under him and being shot in the leg. Then he was, in 1656, captured by the Poles. He was liberated only on the condition that he would join the Polish army, and as a Catholic he probably preferred it to that of the Swedes, into which he had been enticed, so he became a dragoon under Constantine Lubomirski,

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Starost of Sandets. Captured by the Swedes, he again served under them, and helped to plunder the unhappy country of East Prussia. His life was passed in being captured and re-captured, at one time by the Poles and in 1657 by the Imperial Forces. After much plundering and fighting and changes of masters, he was, in 1661, thinking of joining the Imperial Service, when at Warsaw he received an offer to join that of Russia from the 'Russe ambassador, Zamiaty Feodorovitz Leontieff and Colonell Crawfurd' (Daniel Crawfurd, son of Hew Crawfurd of Jordanhill [He was Governor of Smolensk, and 'died Governor of Moscow *anno* 1674.' His elder brother, Thomas Crawfurd, was a Colonel in the 'Muscovite service, and married a daughter of Colonel Alexander Crawfurd, but died *anno* 1685, without surviving issue.' - Douglas's *Baronage of Scotland*, p. 430.]), who had been taken prisoner from the Russian service. He set out with Colonel Crawfurd, Captain Paul Menzies and five servants for the Russia in which he ended his days, not without much misgiving. At Riga he began engaging good officers for the Tsar's service. He got two old Scottish friends, Alexander Landells and Walter Airth to join. This was not so difficult as it seemed, as the soldiers of the Swedes, miserably paid, lived by plunder, and they 'heard that the Moskovites' pay, though not great, was duly payed, and that officers were soone advanced to high charges; that many of our countrey men of great quality were there, and some gone thither lately.' At Plesko, or Opsko, and there 'one William Hay, who was lately come from Scotland, came to us and made one of our company to Mosco,' a John Hamilton also joined them. On September 2 he enters in his journal: 'Wee came to Mosko and hired a lodging in the Slabod or village where the strangers live,' and three days later they 'were admitted to kiss his Tzaarsky Majestie's hand at Columinske, [Kolomenskye; about ten versts from Moscow, on the River Moskva.] a countrey house of the Tzaars, seven wersts from Mosko. . . . The Tzaar was pleased to thank me for haveing been kind to his subjects who were prisoners in Polland; and it was told me that I should have his Majestie's Grace or favour, wherein I might rely.' The father of the Tsar's first wife 'Elia (Ilia) Danillovitz Miloslavsky,' had 'the command of the Stranger Office,' saw the strangers drill, and Gordon 'handled the pike and musket, with all their postures, to his great satisfaction.' Having once got into Russia, Gordon and his Scottish friends found that they had to make the best of a bad bargain, as they began to fear it was. The copper coin was adulterated. Nor was Gordon pleased with the attitude of the Russians towards their foreign legion. 'Strangers' he

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perceived 'to be looked upon as a company of hirelings, and, at the best (as they say of woman) but *necessaria mala*; no honours or degrees of preferment to be expected here but military, and that with a limited command, . . . no marrying with natives, strangers being looked upon by the best sort as scarcely Christians, and by the plebeyans as meer pagans, . . . and the worst of all' (here speaks the Scot) 'the pay small.' He tried to get leave, but exile to Siberia was hinted at, so rather reluctantly he remained and was given a regiment which he officered with his countrymen; those already named, besides William Guild, George Keith, Andrew Burnet, Andrew Calderwood, Robert Stuart, 'and others,' about thirty in all, mostly collected in Riga. Disgusted at the suspicion of the Russians, Gordon tried to join the embassy of Feodor Michaelovitch Milotawski to Persia, but this was not permitted, though his friend, Captain Paul Menzies, obtained the post by a gift of a hundred ducats to the Boyar and a saddle and bridle worth twenty ducats to his steward, and Gordon was given the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1662, and resolved to marry.

In 1661 he had been at two weddings in the Sloboda of the Strangers, both mixed Scottish and German, one when Ruitmaster Ryter married the widow of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Menzies, the other when 'Captaine Lidert Lome married to Bannerman'; at both of these he 'was merry and gott my first acquaintance of the females' of this colony of exiles. He decided to marry a Catholic (marriage with a Russian was forbidden unless both were of the Orthodox Church), and his choice fell on the daughter of Colonel Philip Albrecht von Bockhoven (then a prisoner of the Poles), aged thirteen, whose mother was from Wales, of the family of Vaughan. They got engaged, were present at the marriage of two Scots, Lieutenant-Colonel Winram and Juliana Keith; and were themselves wedded early in 1665.

The Earl of Carlisle as British ambassador from the restored King Charles II. visited Russia in 1664. Gordon next year (hearing of the death of his eldest brother) petitioned again to go to Scotland. The Tsar refused, but the following summer resolved to dispatch him on a mission to the King of England, as no Russian boyar at the time, 'fearing such cold entertainment as Diascow (Vassili Jakolevitch Dashkoff) had got,' was willing to go. On his way to England another Scot, one Captain Peter Rae, was of his suite, and

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at Pskoff he met another 'M'Naughton.' Once in England he had much communication with his *confreres*, Generals Dalyell and Drummond, who had also been in the Muscovite service, and had the satisfaction of an interview with King Charles II., for - utilitarian in allegiance as he was abroad - Gordon was a devoted adherent of the Stuarts at home. The King had a servant, one Gaspar Kalthoff; or Calthoffe, detained in Russia with the 'hospitality' of the Russians of those times, whose release he wished and which he asked Gordon to obtain. He bore a letter from the King to the Tsar (wishing for the restoration of the 'Privilydges' of the English merchants) when he returned to Russia in 1667. We notice incidentally that amongst his correspondents 'Captain Gordon and Mr. Clayhills in Riga.' [This Scottish family has become Russified. Originally cadets of Clayhills of Invergowrie, near Dundee, they have produced many distinguished Russian officials, including General Nicholas Kleigels, Governor-General of Volhynia and Podolia in 1904, afterwards Prefect of Police of St. Petersburg.] When he returned he found himself in disgrace with the Tsar, perhaps on account of the King's letter, and was ordered to confine himself to the Sloboda; but he did not lose his regiment, and in 1670 was sent into the Ukraine to subdue it, and he remained there seven long years, conquering the province. In 1677 he was summoned, to 'vindicate' his conduct, to Moscow, and then triumphantly returned to the Ukraine; and his defence of Tschigirin from the Turks, which ended in the Moslems being driven out of the province, gave him a high military reputation. He still wished to quit Russia, but the Tsar Feodor (who had succeeded Aleksei Michaelovitch in 1676) was quite as resolute as his father not to 'let the children of Israel go,' and in spite of a letter from Charles II. he was retained.

He returned to Tschigirin, and had again to defend it against an attack of the Grand Vizier Kara Mustapha. He took the command, when the Governor was killed by a bomb, and the campaign ended in the slaughter of four thousand Turks, a complete victory, and the position of Major-General.

In 1679 he was appointed to the Chief Command at Kiev, and in 1683 was made Lieutenant-General, and in that year (the Tsar Feodor had died in 1683, succeeded by his two brothers Ivan and Peter, with the Tsarevna Sophia as Regent), hungering after Moscow, he travelled thither. Well received by Sophia, he was again sent back to Kiev, and fortified it against

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a Turkish invasion. He there met the Genevan adventurer, Francis Lefort, the friend of Peter the Great, who became connected with him by marriage, and their friendship endured for life.

At the end of the year he lost a son, George Stephen Gordon, and wrote a Latin epitaph on him; he also commemorated another Scot (how many were there in Russia?), one Andrew Arbuthnot, who died aged seventy-eight, thus:

*'Scotia me genuit, tenuitque Polonia quondam,
Russia nunc requiem praebet. Amice vale.'*