

# Scottish Influences in Russian History

## CHAPTER V.

### GORDON'S HOPES FROM A CATHOLIC KING IN ENGLAND. GIVEN PERMISSION TO RETURN, LEAVING HIS WIFE AND FAMILY AS HOSTAGES. HIS REPORT TO JAMES II. AND VII. HIS RETURN TO RUSSIA, AND HIS SERVICE THERE.

Patrick Gordon heard in 1685 of the death of King Charles II., and, thrilled by the advent of a Catholic King to the throne of England, again petitioned to return there. His petition was addressed to Prince Vassili Vassilievitch Galitzin, the favourite of the Tsarevna Sophia, and at last he was summoned to Moscow. He was given permission to go, but only when his wife and children were left as hostages for his return. On January 26, 1686, he writes, 'was at their Majesties' hands, receiving a Charke (*charka* = cup) of brandy out of the youngest (the Tsar Peter) his hand, with a command from him to returne speedily. January 27, I was at the Princesse her hand. . . . Jany. 28, I went to Czarn Grash and tooke my leave of the Boyar, [Prince Vassili Vassilievitch Galitzin, the married favourite of the Regent, the Tsarevna Sophia.] who desired me to returne speedily and not to drowne him my cautioner.' Truly foreigners in the service of Russia had uneasy heads! He visited England, was received and well received by King James II. and Queen Marie, and then revisited Scotland, his native land. Armed with letters from his King and the Duke of Gordon (head of his family), begging the Tsars and Prince Galitzin to give him his *conge* and let him enjoy his estates in Scotland, to which he had now succeeded, he returned to Russia at the end of the year. He again found himself in slight disgrace, but in January of next year he was told he was to serve against the Tartars of the Crimea, and he received the rank of General in September, 1687. In 1688 he had trouble on account of the Patriarch prophesying that the Muscovites could not thrive while a heretic

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commanded their best soldiers. He began, however, to grow in favour with the Boyars, and especially with the young Tsar Peter.

In May, 1689, after an abortive expedition against the Crimean Tartars, the Tsar Peter accorded him the special privilege of being addressed in the third person, and also as Patrick Ivanovitch, like a genuine Russian. On August 6 he notes there were 'rumours unsafe to be uttered,' and next day the Tsar Peter fled for safety to Troitza. Gordon [Gordon drew up the note of his services in Russia, which ended with his going to the monastery of the Troitza. *Diary*, p. 172.] threw in his lot with him, though not till after he had consulted Prince Galitzin. He joined the Tsar at the Troitskaya Lavra, 60 versts from Moscow, with his troops, and was admitted as a friend. They returned to Moscow triumphantly, the Tsarevna Sophia was sent to a convent, and much blood spilt, and (the Tsar Ivan being passive) the Tsar Peter became sole ruler.

Gordon was now frequently at Court with the young Tsar (we must note that when his mother-in-law died he could not appear before the Tsar for three days, as he had been at a funeral!) and frequently was honoured with gifts, and was, owing to his knowledge of pyrotechnics, director of fireworks (a five-pound rocket went wrong on February 24th at the celebration in honour of the birth of the Tsarevitch Aleksei Petrovitch and 'carried off the head of a Boyar'). He appears at this time to have received as pay about five hundred and forty-two roubles a year. The dinners with the Tsar (especially one at Troitza) were not beneficial to Gordon's health, [In spite of this, Gordon of Auchintoul writes that General Gordon 'was a sober man, in a country where drinking is so much in fashion and though he used to be much in the Czar's company, his Majesty knowing his inclinations, would never allow him to be urged. He was ever mindful of his business, and did great service to the Russian nation.' - *History of Peter the Great*, p. 128.] and he notes the results carefully in his diary! Though he approved of the Revolution in Russia, he was far from approving of that in Britain which had substituted the Protestant William III. for his co-religionist, and he records with glee that a letter sent by the former to the Tsar's Court was by his influence not received at first. On 6th March, 1691, the Tsar made Gordon a gift of silver plate and confiscated property worth in all a thousand roubles.

In 1693, the Tsar showered favours on Gordon after his first visit to Archangel, and after the Tsaritsa-dowager's death, was supported by

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Gordon, who acted as Rear-Admiral of the Fleet, on his second visit to Archangel next year. In 1695 there was an attack planned on Azof, one fort of which was stormed by Colonel James Gordon, but it was not till 1696 that it was finally taken by the Russians. The only officer of distinction the Russians lost was Colonel Stevenson, 'a Scots gentleman' who was 'shot in the mouth being a little too curious, and raising himself too high on the top of the loose earth to observe the enemy,' whom the Tsar buried 'with all the honours of war.' On the return of the triumphant troops to Moscow in October, Gordon received a medal worth six ducats, a gold cup, a sable robe and an estate with ninety souls. When the reforming Tsar set out on his travels he continued to correspond with Gordon from London, and Gordon replied telling him of the unrest among the Streltzi; and when the storm of mutiny broke out among the regiments Gordon surrounded them and fired on the mutineers. 'During this affair, which lasted about an hour, a few of our men were wounded. The rebels had twenty-two killed on the spot, and about forty wounded, mostly mortally.' The guilty Streltzi were captured, some beheaded at once and the rest kept for the punishment by the Tsar when he should return. This was bloody in the extreme, but Gordon mentions the executions without comment, and immediately after enters on July 6, 1698: 'This day, after devotion, I, with many more, were confirmed by the Archbishop of Anura (Ancyra), called Petrus Paulus de St. Joseph, of the Carmelite Order; I taking the name of Leopoldus and my son Theodorus that of Joseph.' On September 2 the Tsar, who had returned, received him 'very graciously, and thanked him in the heartiest way for his faithful services, and the great things he had done' in the intervals of the executions. On September 28th he wrote: 'In the afternoon I went to Preobraschensk, but in vain: everybody about the Court was engaged in arresting more of the adherents of the Princess Sophia, and putting the Zarina in the Convent.' But Gordon was not long to enjoy the Imperial favour. He was able to see 'the crocodile, swordfish, and other curiosities, which his Majesty had brought from England and Holland' on September 30th, but in December of 1698 he entered: 'This year I have felt a sensible decrease of health and strength. Yet Thy will be done, Gracious God!' He lingered for another year, visited by the Tsar, who stood weeping by his bedside, at his deathbed. The Tsar ordered his funeral procession, which was military. Two Generals supported the widow, and twenty Boyarinas

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walked in her train. He was buried before the high altar in the first stone church the Roman Catholics were allowed to build in Moscow, which he had assisted in building, and the inscription on his tomb read:

**SACRAE TZAREAE MAJESTATIS MILITIAE GENERALIS  
PATRICIUS LEOPOLDUS GORDON  
NATUS ANNO DOMINI 1635 DIE 31 MARTII  
DENATUS ANNO DOMINI 1699 DIE 29 NOVEMBRIS  
REQUIESCAT IN PACE.**

General Gordon was twice married: first, as we have seen, to Katherine von Bockhoven, who died before 1682; and, secondly, before 1686, to Elizabeth Barnoe, daughter of Colonel Roonaer, whose sister married another 'Scot in Russia,' Captain Harry Gordon. He came to Moscow in 1691, and is last heard of at Archangel in 1698. General Patrick Gordon had three sons and two daughters. The eldest son succeeded to Auchleuchries in Scotland and settled there, though he visited his father in Moscow in 1698. James, the second, rose to be a Lieutenant-Colonel under the Tsar. He was taken prisoner by the Swedes in 1700, and only escaped two years later by flight. The third son, Theodore Ignatius (by his second wife), entered his father's Butirski Regiment as an ensign. He and James disposed of the estates 'Ivanowska' and 'Krasna,' [Ivanovskoye and Krasnoye.] which had been bestowed on their father by the Tsar Peter from the escheated lands of Prince Galitzin. The two daughters were Katherine, born in 1665, married first Colonel Strasburg, [Her daughter by this marriage, Elizabeth, married Patrick, son of Patrick Smith of Braco.] a German who served in the Russian Army, and fell a victim in 1692 (by an explosion) to Peter the Great's love for fireworks. In 1700 she remarried Alexander Gordon of Auchintoul (of whom we shall hear later), and left Russia with him in 1711. She died in Scotland in 1739. The second daughter, Marie, married a Scot, Major Daniel Crawford (who also died in 1692, in the Tsar's service), and the Tsar was present at the wedding. She remarried Colonel Carl Snivius, probably a German of the Sloboda.

The mantle of Gordon fell, in a measure, on his (future) son-in-law, Alexander Gordon of Auchintoul, [For a full account of his services, see J. M. Bullough's excellent *House of Gordon*, pp. 412-5 (New Spalding Club).] called in Russia Aleksei

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Alexandrovitch. Originally in the French Army, he came to Moscow in 1696, and was made Major in Gordon's regiment. He was at the capture of Azof, and became a Major-General of the Russian service. Returning to Scotland, he was 'out' in the '15, but escaped attainder as a Jacobite by a mistake in the Act. He lived until 1751; having remarried in 1740 Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Moncrieffe of that ilk, and wrote an excellent *History of Peter the Great*, which must be read by all who want to know the Russia of his time. We shall read of his escape from Russia in another chapter.

Another Gordon, a kinsman of the General, Thomas Gordon, became Governor of Kronstadt, and will be mentioned later.

General Gordon's diary gives notices of many other Scots in the Russian services. 'Major Generall Paull Menezes, Collonell Alexander Leviston and Major Hary Gordon' (whom we have mentioned), witnessed a deed of his in 1692.