

Scottish Influence in Russian History

Chapter II.

THE CAPTIVES. COMMENCEMENT OF THE COLONY OF THE SCOTS. THE FOREIGN FAUBOURG. VICISSITUDES OF SCOTTISH SOLDIERS.

The beginning of the Scottish colony in Russia was very different from that of the English merchants. The Scottish colony began as prisoners. To give the words of the Englishman, Sir Jerome Horsey:

'The Emperor's souldiers and army, farr greater in number, ranged farr into the Swethians country, and did much spoill and rapine, [In 1557-58 Livonia was ravaged by the Tsar's troops, composed mostly of savages, Mordvinians and Chermisses, who burned everything, 'not even sparing the child in its mother's womb.' The Livonians invoked Polish aid. After more war - in 1572 he raided Esthonia - the Tsar had to surrender Livonia to Poland, in 1582, by the Treaty of Zapolok. It was evidently about 1581 that the Scots were transported to Moscow.] brought many captives away to remote places in his land, Liefflanders, French, Scotts, Dutchmen and some English. The Emperower seatlinge and seatinge a great many of them in the cittie of Musquo, to inhabitt by themselves without the cittie; and by my mediacion and means, beinge their conversant and famillier in the Court, well knowen and respected of the best favorets and officers of that tyme, I procured libertie to buyld them a Churche, and contrubetted well therunto; gott unto them a learned preachinge minister, and devine service and metinge of the congregacion everie Saboth daye, but after their Lutheren profession, grew in shortt tyme in favour and famillier, and in good like of the Russ people, livinge civillie but in dollfull and mourninge manner for ther eyvill loss of goods, friends and contrye. At which tyme, among other nacions, there wear fower score and five pore Scotts souldiers leaft of 700 sent from Stockhollme, and three Englishmen in their company, brought amonge other captives, in most miserable manner, pittious to behold. I laboured and imploied my best indevors and creditt not only to succor them, but with my purss and paines and means gett them to be well placed at Bulran, near the Musquo; and altho' the Emperowr was much inflamed with fury and wrath against them, torteringe and puttinge many of these Swethian souldiers to deth, most lamentabyllie to behold, I procured the

Emperower to be told of the difference between these Scottsmen, now his captives, and the Swethians, Pollonians and Livonians, his enymies. They wear a nacion strangers, remote, a venturous and warlicke people, readie to serve any Christian prince for maintenance and paye; as they would apear and prove, if it pleased his majestie to imploie and spare them such maintenance now owt of hart and cloths and arms, as they may shew themselves and valure against his mortall enemy the Cryme Tartor. Yt seems some use was made of this advice, [Ivan, in 1552, captured Kazan, and in 1555 sent Ivan Sheremetieff against Perekop with 13,000 men (R. Nisbet Bain's *Slavonic Europe*, p.115). Constant warfare against the Tartars in and out of Crimea was, no doubt, kept up, particularly after the burning of Moscow by the Tartars ('The Crimme') in 1571.] for shortly the best souldiers and men-at-arms of these straingers wear spared and putt apart, and captaines of each nacion apointed to govern the rest; Jeamy Lingett for the Scottish men, a villiant honest man. Mony, cloths, and dayelly allowance for meat and drincke, was geaven them, horss, hey and oatz; swords, peece and pistolls, wear they armed with. Pore snakes afore, loke nowe chearfully. Twelve hundred of them did better service against the Tartor then 12 thowsand Russes, with their shortte bowe and arrowes. The Crim, not knowinge then the use of peece and pistolls, stroken dead of their horses with shott they sawe not, cried: - "Awaye with those new divells that com with their thunderinge puffs;" wherat the Emperor made good sportt. Then had thei pencions and lands allowed them to live upon, marrid and matchd with the Livonian faire weomen, [He calls them elsewhere 'The Livonian ladies, the fairest weomen of the knowen world.'] increased into famillies, and live in favour of the prince and people. O! how glad was I that the Emperowr toke noe noatice of these fewe Englishmen taken captive emonge them! An oportune quarrel, to my liff, that was so well knowen and conversant in their court; but especiallie a fit prey for the Emperor to seize upon the English merchants goods, havinge a stocke in company for at least 100 thowsand marckes sterlinge in his country. For, but a littell before, the Kinge had sold to one Thomas Glover, a chieff agent for that company, a wiff bowren of a noble howse in Polland, Basmanovey, taken captive at Pellotcoe, for tenn thowsand Hengers ducketts in gold; and yet shortly after, fallinge into som displeasur, robbed him of 16 thowsand pounds more in cloth, silke, wax, furrs and other merchandizes and sent him [He was banished from Russia in 1573. His marriage took place before 1567, when Queen Elizabeth complained to the Tsar of his conduct. - See Hamel, pp. 186, 191, 221.] and his deare wife emptie out of his land. [*Travels of Sir Jerome Horsey* (Hakluyt Society), pp. 182-184.]

There were, one way or other, evidently a good many Scots in Russia during the time of Ivan the Terrible. Dr. Collins, the English Physician of Tsar Aleksei Michaelovitch, narrates an incident at the Court of the Terrible Tsar. 'Some foreigners, English and Scots, had laughed at certain things the Tsar had done during a drinking bout. The Tsar when he heard this had them stripped naked and forced them to pick up, one by one, five or six bushels of peas which had been poured into his room. Then he gave them drink and sent them away.' That there were many is shown too by his statement that 'some old residents in Russia have noticed that out of two hundred, English, Scots and Dutch, who have embraced the Russian Faith, hardly one has died a natural death. [From the French Translation of Dr. Collins's *Present State of Russia* (Paris, 1679), pp. 9, 67.]

From his associates the English envoy, Giles Fletcher, also evidently knew something of Scottish customs. He says that in the Russian towns 'Every house hath a paire of staires, that lead up into the chambers out of the yarde or streat, after the Scottish manner.' [*The Russe Common Wealth*, p. 19.] Horsey adds another passage about the Scots later: [Travels of Sir Jerome Horsey (Hakluyt Society), p. 225.]

'And the Pollonians and Swethians combynded and plotted how each of them might invade each others teritoris and anctient bounds; toke good opportunitie to recover all back again which the old Emperor Ivan had gotten from them. . . . Some Swethen souldiers escaped thenc and came to the Musquo to serve the Emperor; among whom was one Gabriell Elphingsten, a valiant Scottish captaine, by the report of the letters he brought to me from Corronell Steward, that served the King of Denmarke, in comendacion of him and six other Scotts, souldiers in his company, but all verie bare of monny and furnitur. Desired me to grac place and suplie their necessities. I disburst to him and them 300 dollers; put them in apperrell, and bought them pistolls and swords; and when they wear marched wear better liked of then they Swedian souldiers that came in ther company. I gott Captaine Elphingstone the charge over them all, begenod (*sic*) of mony, horss, and allowancence for meat and drincke. Behaved themselves well for a tyme, yet could not repaye nor recompence me to this day, as by their letters appeareth.'

But one General Carmichael, a Scot, entered (apparently voluntarily) the

service of the Terrible Tsar. Scottish history is altogether silent about him, though he was uncle to Sir John Carmichael, Warden of the Border, of the Hyndford family. He, in 1570, was made commander of 5000 of the Tsar's men during the Polish War, and saw many scenes of horror (and Russian history is full of them), and later became Governor of Pskoff. It would be interesting to know more about his career.

Other Scots drifted into the Russian service and were continued in that of Ivan Groznie's son, the quiet Feodor. Giles Fletcher, writing in 1591, says 'of mercenarie soldiers that are strangers (whom they call *nemschoy*), they have at this time 4300 of Polonians: of Chircasses (that are under the Polonians) about four thousand, whereof 3500 are abroad in his garisons, of Deutches and Scots about 150, of Greekes, Turks, Danes, and Sweadens, all in one band an 100 or thereabouts. But these they use only upon the Tartar side and against the Siberians.' They used Tartar levies against Poland and the West. These had all set allowances from what he calls the *Prechase shisivoy nemschoy*. [Fletcher's *The Russe Common Wealth*, pp. 52, 73.]

The Scottish settlers, excluded like all heretics from the Kitai Gorod (China City) and the Byelo Gorod (White City) of Moscow, were placed in the Nemetskaya Sloboda, [Situating 'beyond the gates of the old Capital, towards the north-western corner of the modern city, in the quarter lying between Basmannaia Street and Pokrovskaia Street, where at the present day most of the Protestant and Catholic churches stand.' - K. Waliszewski's *Peter the Great*, p. 15.] 'the dumb suburb.'

The Russian word *nemetz* - originally meaning 'dumb' - was gradually applied to the 'dumb' inhabitants who knew little of Russian. In process of time it got to mean 'German,' but it included all the Protestant foreigners. [R. Nisbet Bain's *The First Romanovs*, p. 122.]

The Scots married, as we have seen, with their fellow exiles, usually Livonians and Germans. One, a Hamilton, [The *Annuaire de la Noblesse de Russie*, 1889, tells us that the name became in Russia *Rehbinder*, 'singuliere corruption du mot d'*Hamilton*, ancienne famille Anglaise (*sic*) arrivee en Russie deja au commencement du XVIIe Siecle.' Helene Karlova de Rehbinder, died 1869, married Raphael Alexievitch Ostafieff. The name also became corrupted to Khomutoff.] almost certainly one of the Swedish prisoners, had in course of time, two descendants, sisters, both married to Russians, one to Artamon Sergievitch

Matveeff and the other Feodor Poleukhtovitch Narishkin, [*Story of Moscow*, by Wirt Gerrare, p. 121.] names we shall hear again, as these marriages had a real bearing on Russian civilisation.

The gentle Tsar Feodor left but a slight mark on Russian history, save as the last of the Dynasty of Rurik, and when his wife's brother, Boris Feodorovitch Godounoff entered on the scene we find him much interested in foreigners. The English merchants believed in him thoroughly, but his rule was not long enough for them, and the end of his dynasty too swift. His successor, the False Dmitri (who claimed to be, and indeed perhaps was, the son of Ivan the Terrible by his seventh wife) had a Scot in his train whose history is instructive of the vicissitudes of Russia.

Captain David Gilbert, a Scot, had, with the Frenchman, Captain Margaret, and other international scoundrels, entered the service of the elected Tsar, Boris Godounoff. On his death he served in the bodyguard of the 'False' Dmitri, which (significant fact enough) was composed of foreigners. The bodyguard consisted of 300 English, French and Scots, divided into three squadrons, and commanded by officers of each nation. [Dr. Collins's *Present State of Russia* (French edition), p. 283.] He was one of the fifty-two strangers whom the second 'False Dmitri' wished to drown in the Oka on a sudden suspicion. These foreigners had already been driven from Koselsk towards Kaluga on the Oka, when Martin Beer, the chaplain, and Captain Gilbert, together with three others, Ensign Thomas Moritzen, and Reinhold von Engelhard and Johann von Reenen, two Livonian nobles, ventured to cross the river to implore and secure their pardon from Maryna Mniszek, through the medium of the ladies who were with her, to intercede for them. This Polish lady, the wife of the two successive pseudo-Dmitris, for she recognised both as husbands rather than give up her position of crowned Tsaritsa, therefore became the preserver of these 'innocent and calumniated persons.' Gilbert subsequently served in the Polish ranks, but was soon taken prisoner and brought to Moscow. Sir John Merrick, who returned to England in 1617, then induced King James to intercede for him with the Tsar Michael Feodorovitch. Dr. Hamel writes: 'In the Tradescant (Ashmolean) Museum at Oxford I discovered the original dispatch from Michael Feodorovitch, which contains a reply to James, wherein Gilbert's great crime is circumstantially represented. By this it appears that on account of his desertion to the Poles, and the share he had taken in the

many pillagings and blood sheddings at Moscow, and in the Empire generally, he had forfeited his life; but that at the King's request, he should be pardoned, and might return to his native country with Volunsky, the ambassador, who was dispatched to England in 1617. The above-named Russian dispatch (Gramota), discovered by me at Oxford, is much damaged. It is therein said, that in the letter from King James, delivered by Sir John Merrick, it was asserted that Gilbert was taken prisoner by Sholkevski's people, and obliged to enter the Polish service, but that he was again taken prisoner by the Russians without having anywhere lent his assistance in injuring them, and that he had now been in fetters three years. The King requested that he might be set at liberty, and permission given him either to return to his native country or to enter in Russian service.' Gilbert had engaged to serve the Tsar Boris Feodorovitch, and under Vassili Shuiski. Then he had gone over to the second False Dmitri, and subsequently to the Poles, He came to Moscow with Zolkiewski (in the Polish army of Invasion), and was afterwards taken prisoner by the Russians while fighting against them. Dr. Hamel found, in 1836, among the MSS. of the Orusheinaya [Dr. J. Hamel, *England and Russia*, 1854, pp. 402-407.] Palace at Moscow that Gilbert, Captain Jacob Margaret, Robert Dunbar (another Scot), and Andrew Let (who had been recently baptised) were taken into the military service by Afanassi Ivanovitch Vlasseff in 1600-1601. Gilbert went to England, but returned to Russia with his son Thomas in one of the Tradescant ships in 1618. 'During his stay in England,' says Dr. Hamel, 'Captain Gilbert gave some account of the first Pretender Demetrius. According to him, Demetrius, a few days before his end, and consequently very soon after his nuptials [To Maryna, daughter of George Mniszek, Palatin of Sandomir. The False Demetrius married her at Moscow on May 9, 1606, and she was then crowned Tsaritz. Demetrius was killed on May 17th by being thrown from the window of his palace in the Kremlin by the conspirators. The way another was able to claim his pretensions was that his mangled body was shown to the crowd of rioters masked.] (for between both events but nine days intervened), saw two apparitions in the night, which so much disturbed him that he first came to Gilbert in the ante-room, where his life-guards were, and then sent for Butschinski, his private secretary.

'Gilbert likewise related in England that he received from the second Pretender Demetrius a written invitation, in which the writing of the first usurper was imitated. When Gilbert approached him with his guards he displayed so accurate a knowledge of all the affairs of the first Pretender

that . . . he should have believed the identity of the one with the other . . . if he had not been personally so well acquainted with the first.' The first Dmitri was, he said, a man of 'very prepossessing exterior,' while the second (who *bien entendu* wished to drown Gilbert in the Oka) was 'a very deformed wretch,' quite different. He said, too, he had spoken to the Polish Hetman Ruskinski of this difference, but received the answer, 'It is no matter, Capitaine, this Demetrius shall serve our turne to be revenged of the ----- Russe.'

In 1610 [Hamel says 1618 - no doubt a misprint.] another Scot, Captain Robert Carr, accompanied Gilbert and his son to Russia. He commanded one of the six companies of British cavalry which on June 24, 1610, remained for the longest time on the battlefield in the defeat of the new Tsar Vassili Shuiski's army by the Poles at Kluchino under the Grand Hetman Zolkiewski. He there lost his whole company, but remained unwounded. The names of the other captains were Benson, Crale, Creyton (Crichton), Kendrick and York. Young Thomas Gilbert and Captain Carr [He may have returned to Russia. At least a noble Russian family Kar (among the many noble families, like the family of the Bestucheffs - from Best, an Englishman - of foreign origin), originally like the Bruces 'from North Britain,' is mentioned by William Tooke in his *View of the Russian Empire during the Reign of Catherine the Second* (London, 1799).] returned to England in 1619, but Captain David Gilbert remained in Russia and most likely died there.