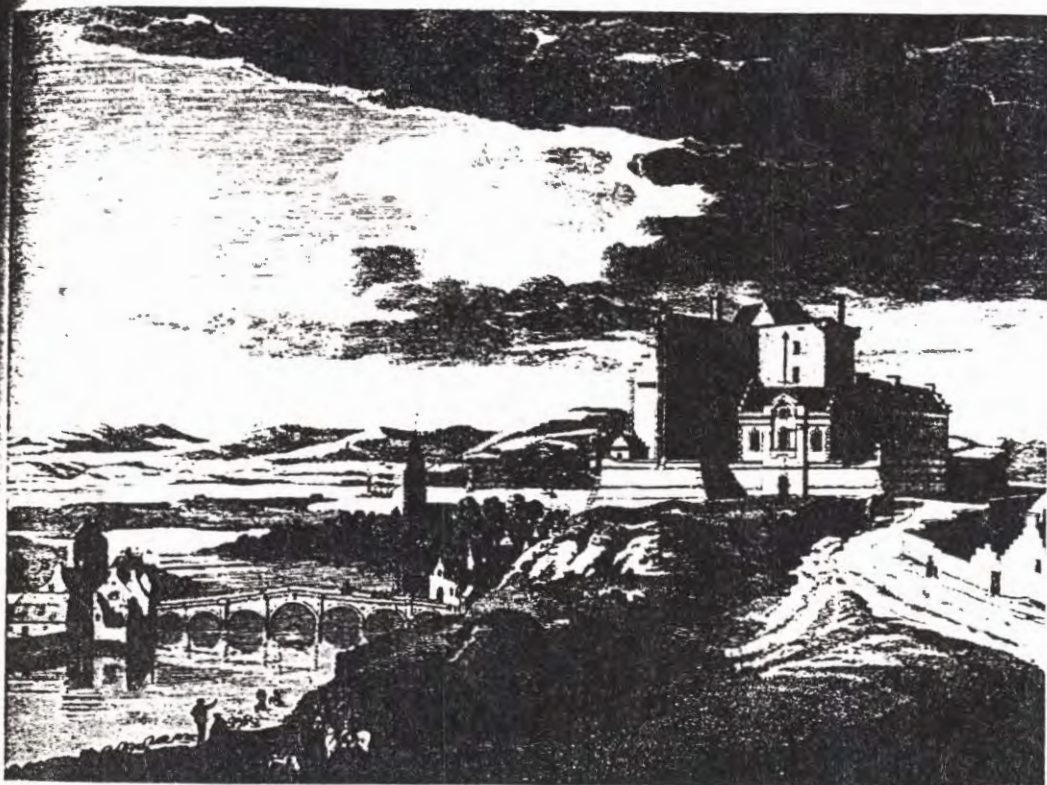


The Northern Campaign of the '45

THE STORY OF A LITTLE WAR



By courtesy of the Witt Librarian, Courtauld Institute

Fort George and Inverness in 1744. Engraving after Paul Sandby

A new study of the Jacobite rising, and of the complex pattern of local interests that helped to determine the conduct of the Scottish clan-leaders.

By R. J. ADAM

THE FORTY FIVE, as is well known, was a Scottish rising. It is not always remembered that it was a rising *in* Scotland rather than a rising *of* Scotland. The basis of Jacobite strength in Great Britain dwindled rapidly during the thirty years after the attempt of 1715. Three heralds might proclaim King James VIII and III at the Mercat Cross of Edinburgh in September 1745—and

have their salaries stopped in consequence; but it would be difficult to point to any single area in Northern England, or in Scotland south of the Forth, that provided more than a handful of men for Prince Charles Edward's army.

The localized nature of Scottish Jacobitism is also very obvious. The lowlands of Perthshire and Angus, the north-eastern counties of Aberdeen and Banff, both produced significant

contingents; but, from first to last, the success of the Forty Five hinged on the ability of these Highland clan chiefs who "came out" to keep their followers together. On the other hand, clan loyalties were not straightforward. Not all Camerons followed the Gentle Lochail—his own brother was among the absentees; and one Campbell laird fought for the Stuarts. Some chiefs and their clans parted company; the most pro-Hanoverian of all, the Laird of Macleod, was deserted by many of his name. The composition of the last Jacobite army cannot be explained in simple terms.

There are, however, some fixed points to help elucidate the story. Sir James Fergusson has recently drawn attention to the part played by the family of Argyll and the Clan Campbell. Over 2,000 followers of the Duke of Argyll served in arms on the Hanoverian side. They garrisoned the western approaches to Fort William; some of them fought at Culloden; and they shared in the police action that followed the end of the rising.

There was also another Highland area where the Jacobites received little support—the Far North, beyond the line of the River Ness. Unlike Argyll, it was no homogeneous clan territory, dominated by a single great family. In its diversity it was perhaps more typical of contemporary Scotland; for it illustrated clearly the real nature of Scottish loyalties, and the tremendous importance of the influence and "connections" of individual chiefs and great men. The Far North had always tended to take a line of its own. Munroes, Rosses, Sutherlands and Mackays had never been prominent in risings against established government. This has sometimes been ascribed to a "Protestant" sympathy, for which there is certainly some evidence. Munroes and Mackays had been prominent among the Scots who fought for Gustavus Adolphus; and Earl John of Sutherland was the first to sign the National Covenant in 1638. But there is evidence to suggest that personal opinions mattered a good deal. Thus, the Earl of Sutherland's men were out in 1685 to oppose Argyll's attempted rising on behalf of Monmouth; three years later, the same men were holding Inverness against Graham of Claverhouse, in opposition to the house of Stuart which a short time before they had

been defending. A reluctance to follow the lead of the more turbulent Central Highlands may have been as important as any abstract zeal for religion.

The events of the Fifteen reinforce this view, and suggest that the all-important element in the Northern situation was the attitude of the local notables. One important chief, the Marquess of Seaforth, rose in 1715 with his Mackenzies, and seized Inverness. Earl John Roy (the "Red Earl") of Sutherland was sent against him as Lord-Lieutenant of the northern counties. He rallied the Munroes, Mackays and Frasers—under the somewhat doubtful leadership of the celebrated Simon Lord Lovat; many of the Frasers actually fought on the Jacobite side. There was some fighting; but, in the end, Seaforth was cut off from his confederates to the south, and surrendered on terms which were in sharp contrast to those offered by Cumberland after Culloden. The campaign had been simply one more episode in the rivalries of a small group of great men, who could call on armed strength as well as on money and "influence." It was to do away with the disturbing implications of such a situation that the Forty Five was followed by the proscription of the Highland dress, the abolition of the hereditary jurisdictions, and a really effective disarmament. The days when an Earl of Sutherland could lead 1,600 men across the Beaulieu river on the ice, as Earl John did in his pursuit of Seaforth, were numbered after Culloden. It mattered little in 1746 that a great many Highlanders had fought for the House of Hanover: those who had fought for the House of Stuart had done enough to show what might have happened if the French had supported the venture effectively, and all Highlanders suffered in consequence.

But the old order still obtained on August 29th, 1745, when General John Cope marched his column into Inverness. Behind him the central Highlands were stirring, and the new military road through Atholl lay open to an army coming in from the west. On the very day Cope reached Inverness, Prince Charles was at Dalwhinnie, with an open road ahead of him to Edinburgh. Cope had failed to stamp out the rebellion at its outset; he had had, in



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*An incident of the campaign; Highlander troops at bay, probably after the Battle of Culloden
Picture by David Morier at Windsor Castle*

fact, little chance of doing so, for his army was small, raw, and unprepared for mountain warfare. Now he had run for the safety of a seaport, and the help and advice of the greatest single Hanoverian asset in the Highlands—Lord President of the Court of Session Duncan Forbes of Culloden.

Much has been written of Duncan Forbes, a man with some of the qualities of a statesman and the courage to stand up to Cumberland. More important from our point of view, he was a man who knew the lairds and chiefs of the North intimately, who had a gift for the careful handling that they required, and who was unequivocally anti-Jacobite. The history of the Forty Five in the North is the story of his struggle to raise a Highland coalition as large as that of Prince Charles. This he was at length able to do; it was hardly his fault that the military skill and resolution of his forces were not equal to his own political competence.

Forbes was in Edinburgh on August 8th, 1745, when the first word of the Prince's rising reached the capital. The next day he was on his way north to his own home outside



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DUNCAN FORBES (1685-1747), "a man with . . . the courage to stand up to Cumberland." Portrait after J. Davison (detail)

Inverness. By the 15th he was installed in Culloden House, entertaining the slippery Lovat to dinner, and listening to his extravagant protestations of loyalty. All through the months ahead, the attitude of the Frasers was to be the most worrying factor in Forbes' calculations. Kenneth Lord Fortrose, the heir to the attained title of Seaforth, was no great enthusiast for the government, but, like many another chief, was unwilling to run the risk of a second disaster to his family. The Munroes could be relied upon; and William Earl of Sutherland and George Lord Reay (the chief of the Mackays), though not on the best of terms with each other, were never Jacobite in sympathy. Only from Lovat, and from the cadet Mackenzie house of Cromartie, was danger likely. It was the Lord President's task to keep these various great families in play, if possible to induce them to bring their "names and countries" out on the Hanoverian side, and, at the very least, to prevent them rising for the Stuarts. Isolated from support except by sea, he represented in his own person organized government north of the Grampians—a government for the moment without the force to make itself obeyed.

Circumspection was necessary in the opening stages. The Jacobites had their eyes fixed further south; but they had many sympathizers all over Scotland, and their agents moved freely everywhere. The dangerous Coll Macdonald of Barrisdale, one of the first to join the Prince, was active in the north-west during September and October. It was reported to the Earl of Sutherland, on October 7th, that Barrisdale was on his way to Assynt "on private business." The writer guessed that he was looking for recruits; but was sure that he would not "cause disturbance in your lordship's country because his amity is assured." Ten days later, the same informant was reporting to Forbes that Barrisdale had, in fact, been recruiting in Assynt, that he had had many promises, but that all but 30 of his men had deserted when the supplies of whisky ran out. The uncertainty of the times was well shown when a prominent Jacobite could move so openly and be at such pains to avoid offending a known pro-Hanoverian nobleman. In the same way, Forbes found it politic to accept Lovat's disclaimers

after an affair on the night of October 15th, when a party of Frasers raided Culloden House and attempted to capture his own person. The position clearly demanded a good deal of patience.

Meanwhile, the organization of an army went ahead. Forbes had little, after Cope went south again, but blank commissions for the officers of 20 independent companies of 100 men each. He had few arms and little money. Some were brought in by sea in mid-August as a precaution; but no more followed until October 31st, when 1,500 stands of arms and £4,000 appeared. Nor was it easy to find troops. The Disarming Acts which had followed the Fifteen had borne hardly on the pro-Hanoverian clans; and both officers and men were reluctant to hazard their own weapons again. Pay was generally in arrears, food and essential supplies often being secured only by the personal expenditure of the loyalist great men. When the whole business was over, the Earl of Sutherland was some £8,000 out of pocket; and there is nothing to suggest that he was ever repaid; Forbes and others were in no better position.

The rising gathered way in October and November; and Forbes' efforts had to keep pace with it. On October 10th, the not over-competent John Earl of Loudoun came by sea to take command of a detachment of his own regiment and the independent companies, with instructions to take Forbes' "advice and consent" in all matters. The raid on Culloden on October 15th was a danger signal; and the companies were ordered to assemble at Inverness as quickly as possible. In all, 18 of the 20 companies provided for were eventually enrolled; the most important contingents were provided by the Munroes, Sutherlands, Mackays and by the Macleods from Skye. Two leaders only were unwilling to come forward. Lovat continued to hedge until the last possible minute, alleging difficulty in restraining his son from going over to the other side. Lord Cromartie refused the offer of a company for his son to command. Family jealousies may have had a hand in this, for the appointment of the subaltern officers had been assigned to Lord Fortrose of the older Mackenzie branch. Whatever the reason, Cromartie marched south

EDMON FRASER, LORD LOVAT (1667-1747), drawn, on his way to execution, by William Hogarth, August 14th, 1746. On his fingers he is enumerating the various chiefs who had served the Jacobite cause



By courtesy of the Curator of the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston

in early November, with a contingent from the west coast of Ross; the young Master of Lovat followed him a month later with the Frasers.

It was easier for Forbes and Loudoun to raise troops than to make them an efficient force; and the correspondence of the leaders is full of references to the problems of desertion, uncertain food and pay, and the lack of adequate arms. The few operations attempted do not

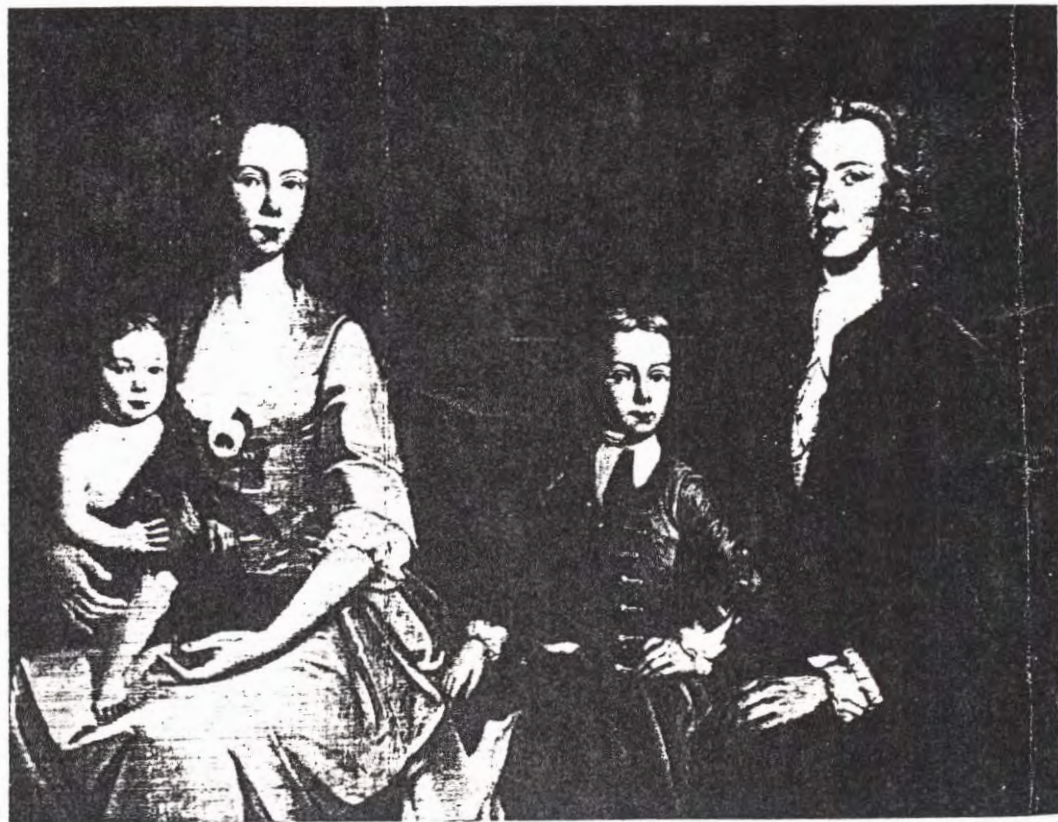
show the pro-Hanoverian Highlanders in a very favourable light. It was comparatively simple to bring Lovat into Inverness under open arrest, as security for the good behaviour of his clan; but a plan to clear the north-east and garrison Aberdeen failed ignominiously at Inverurie on December 23rd, when the young Lord Lewis Gordon routed Macleod in a night action and captured the great Donald Ban

Maccrimmon, the king of all pipers. The ease with which the aged Lovat slipped out of captivity, and the fiasco of the "Rout of Moy," when more than 1,000 men were held off by a dozen, point to the fact that the temper of the Hanoverian clans was uncertain. 200 men deserted in a night after the Moy episode; and Jacobite claims that their opponents had no great wish to stand in open battle seem to have been justified.

In a changing strategic situation this fact was of considerable importance. The march into England had ended neither in success nor in disaster; at Falkirk, on January 17th, the Jacobites had defeated a regular force; and, although their retreat into the Highlands was continuing, the fact held little comfort for Forbes and Loudoun. For the only remaining Jacobite hope was to keep an army in existence,

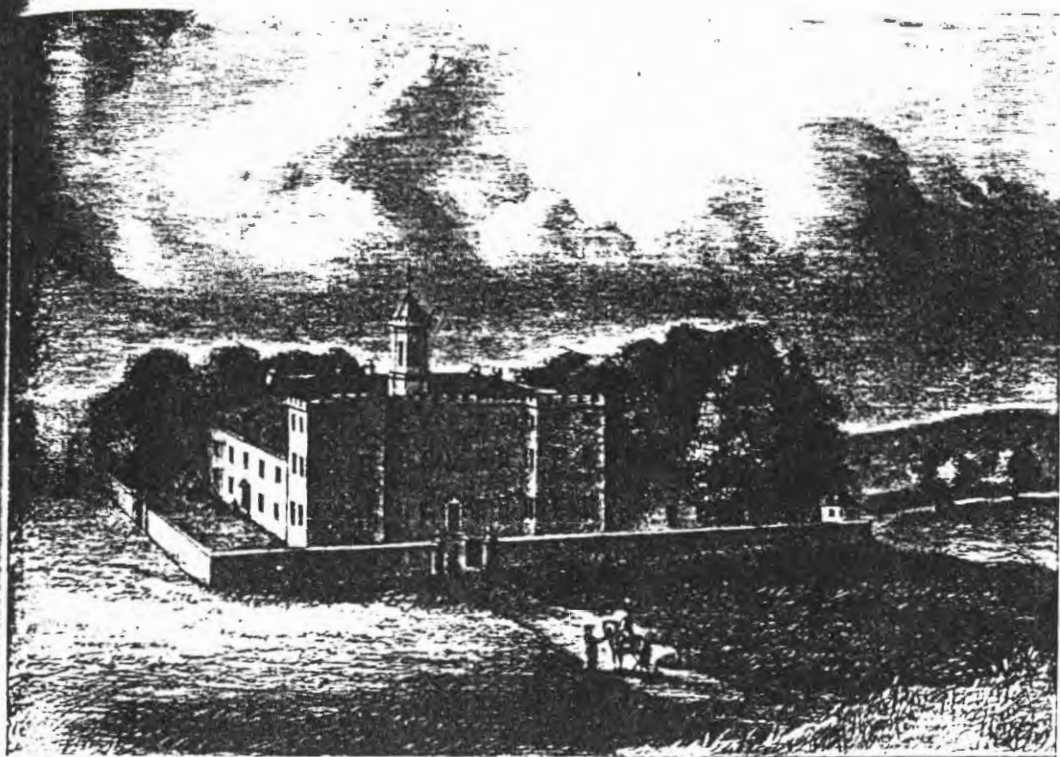
to hold some possible seaport in expectation of the long-awaited French help, and to use to their own advantage the country that best suited their mode of fighting. All of this pointed to danger for Inverness and its garrison. Forbes and Loudoun cannot have had much optimism about the likely consequences. They must have expected final victory to go their way when Cumberland brought his regular army round the east coast; but, before that could happen, they had a difficult interval to survive, with only their own resources to sustain them.

Loudoun was obviously far from confident. A fresh convoy of arms and money which reached Inverness by sea on February 9th was never unloaded, so uncertain was the situation; and by February 18th Loudoun was withdrawing his remaining 1,500 men in some haste



By courtesy of His Grace the Duke of Sutherland

"Never Jacobite in sympathy;" WILLIAM, Earl of Sutherland (1708-1750), with his wife and children



By courtesy of Mrs. J. MacLeod

Culoden House in 1745, engraving after a contemporary sketch

into the Black Isle, under cover of the guns of the sloop *Speedwell*. He was only just in time; for the Highland clansmen, who had marched across the Grampians with Prince Charles, were hard on his heels, and their vanguard appeared in time to fire on his boats. A small garrison left in Inverness castle surrendered rather tamely two days later.

Once in possession of Inverness, there was little reason why the Jacobites should pay much attention to the weak and almost demoralized Northern levies. Cumberland's advance was a much more serious threat. The persistence with which they pursued Loudoun suggests that they held strong views about the conduct of those who had opposed them in the North; in particular, they probably wanted to lay their hands on the Lord President and on the Laird of Macleod. The collection of supplies from a hitherto peaceful district was, in the difficult spring period, an additional inducement.

Loudoun and his associates could do little by way of opposition. On February 20th he was at Dunskeathness, writing to the Earl of Sutherland that "I would have remained there (Inverness) but that I found I could be of more use to the common cause here than there, and do not propose to retire any further except necessity oblige me." For all these brave words, he was across the Meikle Ferry into Sutherland two days later, barely avoiding being cut off by the Jacobites. It would be unwise to see any deep strategic plan in this. Cumberland was not yet in Aberdeen; and the idea of a planned decoy action is very unlikely to have been in Loudoun's mind. Indeed, Cumberland was so far from considering it that, on March 7th, he ordered the Northern levies to cross the Moray Firth and join the main army at Banff. Loudoun had to reply that he had no transport for such a voyage. Cumberland was angry, but stated at the same time that he had only sum-

moned Loudoun so that "they should not have to say that we refused making use of their assistance." He wanted, as he made clear, to finish the affair "without any further use of the Highlanders."

Isolated and short of supplies, the only hope for Forbes and Loudoun lay in holding the line of the Kyle of Sutherland and in denying the opposition the use of boats for a crossing. This was effective enough for a few weeks; but eventually the Jacobites managed to collect some craft on the Moray coast and slip them past the naval patrols in the Moray Firth. When the Jacobite commander, the Duke of Perth, crossed the Meikle Ferry in these boats on March 20th he met virtually no armed resistance. The Sutherland men melted away, and the leaders ran for safety. The Earl of Sutherland got away in an old fishing boat a bare half-hour before the Jacobites took his castle of Dunrobin. Forbes, Loudoun and Macleod, caught further inland, had to make a hurried and dangerous march to the west coast, by way of Strath Oykeil to Lochbroom, and thence to Lochalsh and the safety of Skye. The Lord President was not able to return to Inverness until April 26th, ten days after Culloden.

The northern campaign was virtually over. When Dunrobin was taken, the battle of Culloden was only three weeks off, and the need to concentrate all available forces was becoming evident. But, though most of the Jacobites went back to Inverness, Lord Cromartie was left with a small command in Sutherland. There was at least one good reason for this. On March 25th a Jacobite

sloop, the *Prince Charles*, which had been captured from the Navy at Montrose in November, was caught in the Pentland Firth and forced to run ashore. Her crew and a number of officers from France and Spain were captured, as was £12,000 in gold. The loss was serious enough for Cromartie to be sent out in an attempt to recover the money. On his return, empty-handed, his force was caught split up on the coast near Dunrobin by the Sutherland levies. Most of his own regiment were captured, and he himself and his officers were seized in Dunrobin, where they had taken refuge. It was the only piece of credit that the independent companies took from the whole campaign.

The next day saw the battle of Culloden, and the end of the organized rising. There was still police work for the independent companies to do, in hunting down fugitives and searching for the elusive Prince. Duncan Forbes had more to suffer, this time from the obtuseness of Cumberland and the inability of Englishmen to make any distinction between loyal and rebellious Scots. He was to see many of his acquaintances proscribed, the Highland dress abolished, and the Highlanders disarmed. From the point of view of ordered government, we may guess that he saw the force of it all. The Forty Five had shown, once and for all, that no peace could be lasting as long as the Highlands lacked firm control. The little campaign in the Far North had shown that even in the hands of those faithful to the government of the day the old Highland loyalties and institutions were no longer adequate foundations for an orderly society.



FOR FURTHER READING

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