

Visit of Lord Lovat to Strathnaver 1669

" My Lord Lovat this June took a progress north to perform his long promised visit to Strathnaver, having appointed a select number of his kindred to wait upon him, such as young Struy, Culbokie, Culduthel and many of his vassals. The convoy was honorable and splendid, and were suitably respected all along the road in their journey. He was treated the first night at Fowles, a true-hearted Fraser; from thenceforward the Laird of Fowles convoyed him through his own country, and was treated to a high degree in every family of the Monroes, to the Brig of Aines, and every gentleman convoying him from his own house to Sir George Monroes at New More, who told him at his own gate, My Lord Lovat, you are now in your own country; the Laird of Fowles is a Fraser, and be sure I am one too; you are welcome to my house, and be sure my wife will welcome you and all your train. we will deliver you tomorrow to the Rosses, and if they fail in any duty to your Lordship we will wait upon you over the Large (Lairg) into Sutherland. I am a soldier, my entertainment will be coarse but very cordial, and you are sure of the hidden dish: a free welcome. The Presbyterian Lady, Christina Hamilton, seconded her husband's invitation, telling Lovat that her house was his own, and to take it so, that he would find every step of his entertainment a confirmation of the real affection which the Monroes had for his person and kindred. and to make use of his own chaplains within her family; this was the greatest complement of all, which myself was witness of. The next morning my Lord went to Ballnigown, and Sir George Monro waited upon him thither; in the afternoon he took leave of Lord Lovat, returning home again with his friends. Ballnigown and a select number of his friends waited upon my Lord Lovat over the Lairg and Mickle-ferry of Portincouter, and so to Dounrobbin; and paying his complement to his cousin, the Earle of Sutherland, went in to Cathnes, and at Scrabster visited Doctor Patrick Forbes, my Lord Bishop, and stayed with him that night, and next morning, who at parting told Lovat, My Lord your person and parts are so charming that I

up/han

in early

wished to have enjoyed you longer, known you sooner of never- ( Latin quote ) Such a high epithet, given by the good Bishop to a young nobleman of so short an acquaintance, was and evidence and indication not onely of his ripe judgement, but also of his true affection and respect to him, for which he signified his deep resentment and hearty thanks to his Lordship and so parted with his blessing; and takeing his next stage was to Thearso East to visit the Earle of Cathnes, where he got a noble resception. My Lady, being Argiles daughter----- few in Scotland have such grandeur, all manner of recreation and divertisment without and within, gameing and play, and one of the finest librarie in the nation. ----- These two young noblemen after a whole weekes converse together, they part with some reluctancy, urbanity and civility being the compass of society, for a mans conversation ought to be with those by whom he may accomplish himselfe best.--- Mt Lord now heastens for Strathnave, as his ne plus ultra, though it did not reach as far as Ultima Thule.-- The modern name is Strathnavern, signifying a vally by Navern., the river giveing it true denomination and title, the Earle of Sutherland was superior of this country, and his eldest sone is designed from it Lord Strathnaver. The chief inhabitant here are the Mackyes, who are designed from their lands in Farr, but Anno 1625, Sir Donald M'kye was designed of Strathnaver, and made a baronet by King James, and in the year 1631 was created Lord Rae by King Charles I from a place belonging to him in the country of Caithness holding of the King. ----- The Lord Ray contrived all manner of sport and recreation to divert his dear Lovat, as hee learned sometimes out at sea in Bergesse afishing, sometimes haukeing and hunting, sometimes arching at butts and bowmarks, jumping, dancing wrestling, dancing---- for my Lord had his trumpeter Hans Adam, and his experc fidler, Hugh Whisholm, with him. At last, the season approaching, they went to the hills. All the gentlemen of the name of M'kye conveend, and so to the deer hunting, for my Lord Ray hath the finest and richest forest in the kingdom for deer and reas. their number and numblenes: and some of them thought their luck was singular, because Lovat was there, and highlanders observe that short lived men have great luck of venison; and alas! so it appeared, for (he) lived short after this.