





THE OLIPHANTS OF GASK



*The Old House of York.*

THE  
OLIPHANTS  
OF GASK

RECORDS OF A JACOBITE FAMILY

BY

(E. MAXTONE GRAHAM)

(E. BLAIR OLIPHANT)



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## PREFACE

THIS book was undertaken with the object of producing, in simple and picturesque form, an outline of the history of the Oliphants of Gask and their forbears, from early times to the present day. It was intended to form a short sketch, in the interests of the youngest generation of the race, for whom the family traditions, now separated from the ancient lands, would soon, as years passed, become confused and dim. Much was already in print concerning the old documents, and the part played by the Lairds of Gask in Jacobite enterprise, and some of the new information is so purely genealogical in character, that the reader not interested in such research can only be advised to skip the earlier chapters; but as the work went on, and the contents of the Gask charter chest were further examined, letters concerning many other families came to light, and seemed to suggest a possible extension of interest beyond the actual members of the Gask family. These letters, mainly of domestic rather than historical interest, reflect much that belongs to life in its most ordinary aspect; they are alive with the common cares and trivialities of every-day existence,—voices of a dead Past, speaking the living language that links them with the men and women of to-day, in the appeal of our unalterable humanity.

In gathering the material for this book from many sources a great deal of help has been received from various quarters. No attempt is made here to give a

list of those who have rendered service by supplying information, or to single out any one name for special recognition. To all friends who have taken part in bringing together these family records, and who have made the long task pleasant by kindly interest and sympathy, the writer here makes grateful acknowledgment.

The illustrations are reproduced from pictures in the possession of different members of the family; except the miniature of Margaret Robertson of Strowan, which has been lent by her kinsman, Sir George Cooper, to whom sincere thanks are due.

E. MAXTONE GRAHAM.

4 ETON TERRACE,  
EDINBURGH, *October 1910.*



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# THE OLIPHANTS OF GASK

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY RECORDS

PRINCE DAVID of Scotland, one of the finest characters Scotland has produced, one of the finest kings the world has known, went to the Court of England to "get the Scottish rust rubbed off."<sup>1</sup> It is not to be supposed that the rust was very apparent where he himself was concerned, for in the midst of the wildness and roughness of ancient Scotland he had, in his earliest years, been reared in an atmosphere created by the gentlest, most cultivated woman of the day — his mother Margaret, queen and saint, whose simple Court had a dignity of its own. But Norman chivalry had invaded England, while the north was only slowly awaking. It was natural enough that the young Prince should wish to go to the Court of Henry I. While there he married, in 1100, Matilda, the widow of a Norman knight, Simon de Senlis, and in right of this lady he held the Earldoms of Northampton and Huntingdon. No doubt when, as Earl of Huntingdon, he sometimes went to visit these estates, he was received with all honour by the surrounding landowners. Among these was to be found the family of Olifard.<sup>2</sup> Probably sixty years earlier the Olifards had come over with William of Normandy,

<sup>1</sup> William of Malmesbury.

<sup>2</sup> The first record of an Olifard is as a witness to Earl Simon's foundation of the Cluniac Priory of St Andrew, Northampton, between 1093 and 1100. See W. Maitland Thomson's article in the Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 522, for an exhaustive account of all that is known concerning the earliest history of the family.

who gave them the lands of Lilford in Northamptonshire; but nothing is really known beyond the fact that about the year 1124 an Olifard was in possession of Lilford, that he had three young sons, William, David, and Thomas, and that to one of these sons the Scottish King, who had that year succeeded to the Crown, stood godfather. Naturally the infant was called after the King, and this David Olifard is the first of the name to stand out in the history of his time.

There is no record to show if David received from his royal godfather any special notice as the years went on, but it may be that the young boy grew up deeply attached to the King. From his very earliest days his thoughts must have often turned to the wild kingdom of the North, so little known, and having all the charm of mystery. Young David was fated to carry the fortunes of the House of Olifard far from Lilford and the Norman Court to that grey northern kingdom. Nothing could have seemed less likely than that this should happen; all the family property was in England, all the family interests were centred in England, and the Olifard boys, as they grew to manhood, would become knights in the English Court, owning allegiance to King Henry and King Stephen. Maud, the sister of King David, had married Henry I. of England. She had no son, but her daughter was the heiress of the Crown of England, and is known to history as the Empress Matilda. Stephen had seized the throne, and it was natural that David should invade England to redress the wrongs of his niece. This invasion ended in that disaster to Scottish arms, the Battle of the Standard, in 1138. Young David Olifard would be at this time perhaps fourteen, too young to take part with either side, but four years later, in 1142, when King David had renewed the same struggle, and was in desperate straits beleaguered at Winchester, came the chance for Olifard to show that devotion to the Scottish King which was to turn the whole current of his life.

Here is the story, in the words of the chronicle of John of Hexham:—

“The King of Scotland having lost all his men barely escaped, and made a precipitate retreat to his own kingdom; for a certain godson of his, David Holifard, a comrade of those who besieged the city of Winchester, secreted him, so that those who were in eager search of the King did not discover him.”

After this adventure, David Olifard could hardly continue as a fighter on the side of King Stephen. He must at once have thrown in his lot with the defeated Scottish King, and shared in his hurried flight. He was about twenty years old when he thus found himself in the train of King David, turning his face northward, and forsaking his own people and his father's house, but honoured and trusted by the King whose life he had saved. From henceforth his energies were to be devoted to the King and to Scotland.

It must have been a great change for the Norman boy, for England had for long been roused from her old conditions under the Saxon kings. The chivalry and gaiety of France had transformed not only the Court, but social life throughout the country. Besides feeling that he was going a very long journey to Scotland, David Olifard would know that he was going to a very different life, under conditions far removed in civilisation and comfort. The whole aspect of Scotland would be uncivilised to his English ideas.

The wattled dwellings of the poor, when surrounded by a ditch or a bank, or even a wooden palisade, formed what were called the towns; they had been originally only places of refuge, whither the dwellers in the forests or straths could run in times of danger. Now these groups of dwellings were beginning to be not only “places of strength,” but also marts and centres of a humble commerce. David Olifard, as he passed with the King through these towns, would see the miserable little colonies of lepers, congregated outside the gates,

the only place where they were permitted to remain, and where they gained a pitiful livelihood by begging. No protecting castles stood amidst the primitive buildings. "David found Scotland built of wattles, and left her framed in granite, castles, and monasteries studding the land in every direction."<sup>1</sup> But this work was still to be done when David Olifard first came.

An immense forest covered a great part of the land. Every stretch of country that now is moorland was then a thick tangle of tree and undergrowth, and where there are now cultivated straths and valleys were marshy fens—not to be drained away for many a year. The work of clearing the forests was going on; but to the eyes of a stranger it would seem as if little was done. The work was perilous, for the woods were the haunts of bear, wolf, wild boar, and bison. But David would see signs of prosperity too. Here and there he would ride past fields of wheat, oats, and beans, past huge flocks of sheep and goats, and perhaps might see the herds of little horses running wild, which were bred on some of the large estates. Commerce was awaking, for Scotland was about to enter on a period of prosperity. When the royal train rode by the sea-shore, merchant-ships and fishing-vessels would be visible. The old, dark days of Scotland were drawing to a close. Out of the wild tumultuous beginnings of her history some order was to emerge at length. She was leaving the broken dim traditions of her ancient tribes—the remote happenings of which some fragment of song or legend is all the record, and was awaking to progressive influences.

It was a stern Scotland, still a land of men concerned for the primitive needs of life, the hunting for food, the defending of the home. The chief savage joy and scourge was war. All the stir, the enthusiasm, the glory of existence came from the attitude of fighting, men were bound to maintain for life and liberty. They were united by no patriot spirit, for the wars were between tribe

<sup>1</sup> Scotland under Her Early Kings. E. W. Robertson.

and tribe, existing in a perpetual state of hostility. The high patriotism, which afterwards distinguished the Highlanders in particular, had its remote origin in loyalty to the chief, and loyalty among the men of a clan to each other. They knew no wider sympathies, they were trained in no imperial spirit. The sentiment that was to weld the clans together was as yet unborn.

Yet the stirrings of national life in distant countries had touched her people also. It was an alien voice that called, and to which she responded. From France came the impetus that set the blood of Scotland coursing to national issues. To Scotland, as to England, the French Conquest brought a new enlightenment, and new standards. Over the north, as over the south country, poured the Norman knights with their higher ideas of civilisation. Malcolm Canmore had given them land, much to the natural dissatisfaction of the old Celtic nobility, who would not at first realise the great advantages the invasion was to bring. Then, as the years went on, the Norman knights married into the ancient native families, and from the united blood and interest of the two races came better times for Scotland. The Norman knights, who rode northward with King David and David Olifard found this change already working. Many kinsmen and friends, owners of estates both north and south of the Scotswater—as the Firth of Forth was then called—would give them welcome.

How far north Olifard may have ridden with the King into the forests and glens is not known. Perhaps he did not at first cross the Scotswater, for we find the King granting him lands in Roxburghshire. We can realise that the King, always interested in his godson, would be glad, now that he owed him life and liberty, to attach him permanently to his person and his service, and he knew that nothing could bind him so effectually as a gift of land. The stretch of country which now became Olifard's included the districts of Crailing and Smailholm.<sup>1</sup> King David was to reign for ten years

<sup>1</sup> He held lands also in East Lothian, "having quit claimed Herteshaved and Spot to Melrose Abbey." Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 525.

longer, and there is every evidence that young David Olifard was always in close attendance at his Court. So much is known through charters. He witnessed so many, that it is plain he was with the Court wherever the King went. But for these charters<sup>1</sup> we should know very little about him; as it is, he is but a dim figure, emerging here and there out of the mists of antiquity. We know neither the name of his mother in England, nor of his wife. It is nearly certain, however, that he married young, and had certainly one son, Walter. The names of David, William, Walter, Philip, and Fulco Olifard<sup>2</sup> appear in various charters of the day, but it is not possible to say positively if they were brothers. There is no doubt, however, that Walter was David's eldest son and heir, and that the chief home of the family must have lain in the fertile lands of the Lothians between the Firth of Forth and the Tweed, for it was this land that King David chose to establish as the centre of the great feudal system, and here he settled as far as possible a great group of Norman knights, fresh from the feudal traditions of France.

Scotland had already its feudal institutions. The native system had deep hold of all the warring tribes, but it had been restrained by no central authority such as David now resolved to institute. In England and France feudalism had supported the power of royalty, while in ancient Scotland it had tended to separate the country into a collection of small kingdoms. There were no written laws and no charters. All tenure of land, all freedom, all rights, depended on custom, hereditary possession, or tradition, without reference to any supreme over-lord. These unwritten laws proved to be so deeply rooted among the northern tribes that they lasted for centuries after the rest of the kingdom had accepted the formal methods of French feudalism. That the Crown

<sup>1</sup> He witnessed at least twenty-five charters of Malcolm IV., and forty-three of William the Lion.

<sup>2</sup> Osbert Olifard, who may have been a son or a brother of David, had a grant of the lands of Arbuthnott in the Mearns. He was a Crusader, and went out to the East about 1178, where he died leaving no issue.



could not fully establish the new system was to be the reason, in years to come, of the weakening and harassing of the Kings of Scotland. It was the care of every knight to build himself a strong fortress of defence, and over all the country rose the massive stone keeps that were soon to be so many threats to the Crown. Robert Bruce overthrew one hundred and thirty-seven of these castles,<sup>1</sup> for each threatened to be the centre of a kingdom, instead of a support to the throne. But at the time they were built King David could count upon loyalty. He liked to see the grey walls rising on every side, and here and there rose also at his command the beautiful monasteries and churches that he knew would become centres of civilisation and learning. It will be remembered that his immense gifts to the Church caused his descendant, King James I., to call him "*a sair sanct to the Crown*"; but David had an insight of his own—he realised that the great work of progress would, during the next centuries, be carried on by the churches and religious houses. He must have taught David Olifard the lesson, for we find the young knight enriching the Church by his gifts. The following are some of the presents he gave:—

"To the monks of Jedburgh a tenth of the multures of the mill of Crailing," "a thrane of corn in autumn from each ploughland of the lands of Crailing and Smailham to the House of Soltre, and the brethren there serving God."

The document which tells this continues:—

"And that this my donation may be ratified and secured to all posterity, I have affixed my seal to this Charter."

The seal of David Olifard is said to be appended to a royal grant to the Priory of Coldingham—the seal displaying the three crescents—still the arms of the Oliphants after seven hundred years.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> An early example of the Oliphant arms is on Sir William Oliphant's seal attached to the Baron's letter of 1320. Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 529.

Strangely out of the far past appears the figure of this earliest Olifard whose deeds have found record. The dust of seven centuries covers his memory. We know whence he came, and see his figure standing forth heroically on one page of history. We see him following his great master to a strange country, and then in later life there is the glory of his rising power and influence, when he was a central figure of that mighty feudal Scotland, which had its beginnings in the Lothians. He is an example of how one man, in those days, could found a family and raise it to dignities and honours only second to those of the Crown itself. Olifard must have been steadfastly loyal. He held the confidence of kings through three generations, and through all changes he kept his own place in the councils of the kingdom.

Of the place of his dwelling, the manner of his life, no echo remains. But the passion of the day was sport in all its forms, especially hunting and hawking, and sport was also the engrossing pursuit of the King. There can be no doubt that, putting aside the actual claims of war or justice, hunting was the serious business of existence, and that in Scotland, where the killing of wild animals was a pressing necessity, it would be the occupation of every knight. The royal packs, stag-hounds, wolf-hounds and fox-hounds, went where the Court went, with a following of falconers, horses and their attendants, and also fishermen and nets. It is hardly to be supposed that David Olifard did not share in the royal pursuits. We picture him riding forth in the train of his master to the chase as to the battle, or hunting with his followers about the woods surrounding his own castles.

David I. was destined to outlive all those nearest and dearest to him. David Olifard must have stood by him in many a sorrow. The King's two sons, Malcolm and Henry, and his two daughters, Claricia and Hodierna, every one died before their father. He was fated to leave his kingdom to the frail hold of his young grandson Malcolm, the son of Henry. His hope for the nation

lay in the loyalty of his knights—the great nobles who owed their greatness to his gifts of land. Among these was David Olifard, still a young man of about thirty years old when the reign of David I. came to an end. David had been thirty years on the throne, and he had done for Scotland the mighty work of a king. He reigned during a time of stupendous change, when Scotland changed from a collection of Celtic tribes to a feudal nation. It was his life's work to accomplish this. Only supreme wisdom and courage could have stood by the task in such an age—but he was a man among men. To David Olifard, his servant, the King's death brought change indeed. It had been his privilege to live with a master mind, now he owed allegiance to a boy of eleven — Malcolm the Maiden, grandson to King David, who only lived till 1165.

All through the early reigns “the King was the fountain of Justice, and the supreme judge of his people.” The King sat at the gate of his palace, and judged the causes brought before him. His people brought to him their wrongs for redress, their criminals for justice, their quarrels for arbitration. It may therefore be imagined that the King must have spent a good deal of his time travelling from place to place; every year he made progresses about the country holding these courts of justice. But life had already in its increasing civilisation begun to lose a great deal of the primitive simplicity which made such arrangements possible, and when on the death of the boy Malcolm, his youngest brother, William the Lion, ascended the throne, the population and requirements of Scotland had so increased that a change was necessary. King William solved the problem by creating two great offices—he appointed two Justiciars whose authority held good for all purposes of justice. One Justiciar ruled over the whole of Scotland north of the Scotswater; the other controlled the whole country from the Scotswater to the Tweed. The first was called *Justiciarius Scotiae*, the other *Justiciarius Laudoniae*. Like most innovations of the time, the office was of

Norman origin, and it was natural that Norman knights should be appointed to fill the post. The family of Comyn held the Justiciary of the northern district, while David Olifard was appointed Justiciar of the Lothians. The title gives little idea of the immense power conferred by the appointment. It placed David in the position of dictator, with powers of life and death and almost supreme authority over half a kingdom. He ranked next to the Crown, taking precedence of every one but the King's brother. Taken in conjunction with his feudal powers as owner of very large estates, the office made of him the greatest dignity in Scotland.

William the Lion was twenty-two when his brother Malcolm died, and it is easy to see how he may have leaned on the help of his father's friend—then a man of forty—to guide him a little in the difficult times. If so, he was fated to have only five years of his help, for David Olifard died about 1170, and never lived to see King William ride away on his unfortunate raid into England, to be taken prisoner at Alnwick by Henry II. of England. Happy for David Olifard, and for King David his master, that neither lived to see the day when a King of Scotland made a base bargain with the English. William had been sent as a prisoner to Falaise—a strong castle on the Norman coast—and here, in 1174, was exacted from him the disgraceful agreement in which he acknowledged himself to hold his ancient kingdom as a fief from the English Crown. It was a base betrayal of Scotland; but probably the twenty-one Scots knights, who were with the King in his imprisonment, were powerless to prevent it. Among the twenty-one was Walter Olifard, the son and heir of David. All the knights were held as hostages until the chief Scottish castles should be surrendered to the English King, and all were forced to acknowledge themselves liegemen to King Henry, and to forswear allegiance to King William, should he prove false to England. The date of Walter Olifard's birth has not come to light; but at the time of this imprisonment he

was married. His wife was Christian, daughter of Ferteth, Earl of Strathearn. Like many other knights of Norman descent, he chose a wife from the old Celtic nobility. As her dowry she brought him the lands of Strageath in Perthshire, and this is the first record of Olifards owning lands there.

Walter and Christian had two sons. Before he could be released from Falaise, Walter had to give his eldest son, Walter, as hostage. The wrong was undone before many years were passed, for, when Richard the Lion Heart became King of England in 1189, one of his first acts was to abolish the Treaty of Falaise, and to restore all the liberties of Scotland. At the time Olifard had long been at home in Scotland. Among a great many others he witnessed a charter about the year 1176, which is now in the Gask charter chest. Walter held the great office of Justiciar of the Lothians as his father had done, and appears as such in a charter signed in 1178. The office, however, was not a hereditary one. It seems to be certain that though David Olifard, his father, was not an eldest son, he must have inherited some of the Olifard estates in England, for his son, Walter, was in possession of the lands of Lilford in Northamptonshire. King John took them away in 1216 — probably in revenge for Olifard's stout resistance when John made his inroad on the Borders. But in Scotland the Olifards increased in power and influence. The death of King William in 1214 made no difference in the royal favour, and Olifard served the young son, Alexander II., as he had served his father.<sup>1</sup> Walter Olifard died soon after 1223. His son, Walter, succeeded him in the family estates, and also was granted the office of Justiciar of the Lothians. Both he and his father would by this time have considerable interests in Perthshire through the wife and mother, and the lands of Strageath.

<sup>1</sup> In June 1220 Alexander, King of Scotland, swore on his soul to marry Johanna, the eldest sister of Henry III., at Michaelmas next, if not then, her sister, Isabella. Walter Olifard signs this contract at York.

In 1221 he witnesses the grant by Alexander II. to his Queen of her dowry. He witnessed at least seventy Royal Charters. (Bain's Documents, vol. i.)

The two great families next to the throne were the Comyns and the Olifards. Linked by marriages with the Celtic families they were powerful, apart from their positions as Justiciars. The Comyns seem to have been great landowners before the Olifards took root in Perthshire. The mistake of the Celtic kings had from the first lain in the granting of huge tracts of land to nobles—for territory was to be the one foundation of power, and to yield territory was to yield also control of men and arms, and all the necessaries of war. The feudal power of the landowners became the source of endless unrest. At the word of the Chief the lands were laid waste; it needed only his word to start the foray, the raid for cattle, or the burnings of revenge. He could effect with a word more than the kings could attain in years of effort. The struggle went on from the first early glimmerings of history to the time of Queen Mary; not one of the kings of Scots could call himself King of Scotland. All land was held nominally under the King; but he had not the strength, nor the command of men, to resume his own property if his vassals proved rebellious. It is wonderful that under this system Scotland ever emerged into an individual nation, yet, during the reigns of Alexander II. and his son, the kingdom advanced steadily in well-being.

Walter Olifard, the third Justiciar of the family, died in 1242. He lies in the Chapter-house of Melrose, having held the high office for twenty years. The task had its difficulties. A contemporary chronicler tells us that "Scotland and Galloway are a wilderness and grisly waste; the men are wild, and have neither grithe nor sibbe; they eat unsodden flesh like wolves; they go clad in rough skins as if they 'came out of hell.'"

This picture is, doubtless, somewhat overdrawn; still, there is no room for doubt that in the mixed population of French, English, Scots, and Gallwegians, south of the Forth, over which Olifard held sway, there were all the elements of many quarrels and crimes, and that the position

of judge was a difficult one. David, who succeeded Walter, was presumably his son, and possibly the same David who witnessed Royal Charters in 1233-1234. He gave grants to the Church, and died before 1253. His wife was Dervorgilla of the Munfichet family, who was alive in 1300. David's property passed to Walter de Moravia, first of the Murrays of Bothwell.<sup>1</sup>

William Olifard was, perhaps, a younger son of David. He had two sons, Adam and William; one of these brothers may have been the father of Sir William and Sir Philip, who each had a son William. Both these cousins became knights, and played distinguished parts in the history of the times.

All these happenings were before the days when the Olifards held the lands of Gask, and they only concern this history because of this stock came those who have made it a name to be remembered. No record of Gask could be written without the stories of David Olifard and his descendants. All record is silent as to the ownership of Gask in those far-off days, while the Olifards were still French knights, and Anglo-Saxon, and men of the Lothians.

<sup>1</sup> Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 530.

## CHAPTER II

SIR WILLIAM OLIFARD

THE lands of Gask lie between the Ochil and the Grampian Hills, and east and west are the towns of Crieff and Perth. Upon the southern slopes descending to the Earn are spread the peaceful glories of Strathearn, and to the north rise the wild outline of the Highland hills. The beautiful woods, the fertile fields, the country with all its variety of rising and falling ground—these are the characteristics of Gask as we know it to-day; but in the old times who can say if forest was there—if the fields were rich with crops, or a tangle of undergrowth? Then, as now, along the summit of the ridge east and west, flanked by fortified outposts, of which the traces still remain, ran the Roman road, and it is probable that, from the situation of the land, it was under cultivation at a very early date; but nothing can be known. It is only certain that the everlasting hills were there, and the noble rise of the crest above the winding river Earn. It was Gask even then, and its main aspect was, as it now is, and as it will be, till the day when the features of the world are re-cast or destroyed.

Voices and footsteps sounded in Gascon Hall, and in that still older stronghold of which now no trace remains, long before the days of the Olifards, long before the unrecorded hour of the building of the grey walls of the Old House.

Gask at one time may have been a single possession—one large estate under a Celtic owner; but since the beginning of record there have been two Gasks side by



side, Findo Gask and Trinity Gask, and these two have never been in the possession of one man.

Looking first at the history of Findo Gask, the earliest mention is found in a Papal Bull of 1203,<sup>1</sup> confirming a gift by Orable, mother of Sir Saher de Quincey, to the monastery of Inchaffray of eight acres of Gask.<sup>2</sup> It is known that Orable was the daughter and heiress of Nes, son of William. Among the twenty-one knights who went from Scotland to Falaise to share the imprisonment of William the Lion was one knight named Nes, son of William. He was a man of considerable power and distinction, and may have been of the native race which had held the lands of Gask from time immemorial. His ownership is traceable in the old records which spell the name *Gasknes* or *Nesgask*. The Celtic Orable followed the fashion of the day and married into one of the great Norman families. Her son, Saher de Quincey, Earl of Winchester, gave the church of *Nesgask* to the hospital of Brackley in Northamptonshire,<sup>3</sup> and added more land to his mother's gift of land to Inchaffray. Roger, the son and heir of Saher, gave the demesne of Gask to Brackley Hospital for the endowment of three chaplaincies about the year 1220. Roger de Quincey died in 1263 and, leaving no son, his properties were divided among his daughters. Of these, Elizabeth married Alexander Comyn, Earl of Buchan, and so brought *Gasknes* into the Comyn family. The lands were transferred to another branch—the Comyns of Badenoch, who had possession in 1278. Comyn forfeited *Gasknes* to Robert Bruce, and the King granted it to Sir William Oliphant, whose son, Walter, also held the properties of *Gasknes* and *Dupplin* from the Crown. An Inchaffray deed, dated 1358, mentions the name *Nesgask*—the last time it appears in records.

Of Trinity Gask, the lands lying up the river to the west of Nes or Findo Gask, it is known that about the

<sup>1</sup> Inchaffray Charters, *Scot. Hist. Soc.*, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> This piece of land is now the farm of Clathybeg.

<sup>3</sup> Inchaffray Charters, p. 78.

year 1221 the church of Holy Trinity of Gask (sometimes called Gask-Cristi) was given to Inchaffray by Gilbert, Earl of Strathearn. This earl's second wife was Ysenda of Gask. She had two brothers, Richard and Geoffrey of Gask, perhaps descendants of the native family. The Inchaffray charters afford one interesting glimpse of Ysenda.

In 1221-1223 Ysenda gives a grant of land<sup>1</sup> in these terms:—

“Ysenda, Spouse of Earl Gilbert of Strathearn, makes known to all the sons of Holy Mother Church that she has, with the consent of her lord, the Earl, given to the Abbott and Canons of Inchaffray 5 acres of her vill of Abercairny, which she had perambulated to the Abbott and Canons in the presence of Richard Knight and Geoffrey of Gask, her brothers . . . and many others. To be held in perpetual alms, free of all secular service, with common pasture for 12 kine and 2 horses. . . . Inasmuch as at the time this Charter was made she had no seal of her own, she has sealed it with the seal of Abraham, Bishop of Dunblane (who was witness of this gift) which seal he lent for the occasion.”

It is said<sup>2</sup> that the lands of Trinity Gask went through an heiress to the Murrays of Tullibardine, but this could only refer to part of the estate, for in 1266 Malise, Earl of Strathearn, gave the convent of Inchaffray leave to quarry stones at Nethergask with two acres of ground for the monks' workshops, showing that the Strathearn family were in possession, though it seems that Murrays held Nethergask<sup>3</sup> from the Earls of Strathearn, till the Earldom was merged in the Crown in the year 1455.

Gascon Hall, the ruins of which are still to be seen by the river Earn, was the Manor House of Trinity Gask.

Nesgask must have had its own stronghold—probably a castle near the church, on the site of the present Old

<sup>1</sup> Inchaffray Charters, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Nesbit.

<sup>3</sup> At this time Gask is sometimes called in the records “Gask Murray.”

House. A chapel, St Findocas, close to the river south of Neskask, gave the lands their final name of Findogask.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1214 and 1249, the Olifards became firmly established in Perthshire. The Ruthvens, Grahams, Murrays, and Drummonds, whose fortunes were to be again and again interlaced in the times to come with those of the Olifards, all came to Strathearn, too, at this period. But the Olifards kept their interest in the Lothians. William Olifard appears on record in 1230, and later, witnessing various charters, and in 1247 is still styled Justiciar of the Lothians.<sup>2</sup> After this we come to the record of the greatest Olifard of all—William—whose name first appears in a charter dated 1294. The name of Olifard had many variants. For the sake of convenience in these pages, the original Olifard is retained till after 1306, when Oliphant is substituted. But it will be understood that the change was gradual. The spelling of names was, to a large extent, capricious in early days, and depended more in the taste of the chronicler than on any accepted form. According to the charters the name of Olifard became Holifarh, Olifarh, Olifart, Olifat, Olyfart, Olyfant, Olyfaunt, before it reached its definite and lasting version of Oliphant.

The Olifards had now been settled in Scotland for a hundred and fifty years. They had yielded service during the reigns of seven sovereigns, had seen the native line of Malcolm Canmore come to an end, and the end of the Celtic dynasty. They had endured the storms of an interregnum. They had witnessed the birth of a people, as Scotland rose out of the darkness of her warring tribes into the dignity of a nation. They had seen the great

<sup>1</sup> For all the foregoing details as to the ownership of Findo and Trinity Gask, the writer is indebted to the researches of W. Maitland Thomson.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Olifard, a brother, witnesses in 1278 "two grants of John Comyn at Gasknes, near Perth." One of these grants throws a curious light on the times.

"John Comyne, son of the late John Comyne, quits claim for ever, in pure and perpetual alms, to the Abbot and Canons of Inchaffray of Gillecrist Rothe, son of Gylletheny, with his issue born or to be born, with all right which Comyn had in him or his issue. Given at Gasknes Monday next, before the feast of St Mary Magdalene, 1278." Inchaffray Charters, p. 219.

enemy of Scotland, "*the hammer of the Scots*," called upon to settle the quarrel for the Crown. Now they were to take part in the great contest with Edward of England. The name of Olifard was to be identified with the struggle for Scottish independence, and was to achieve memorable glory.

The triumph of Edward of England had swept over Scotland like a flood. Castle after castle was stormed and taken. The outposts of Scottish independence were down, when the Scots saw Edward carry away three of their most sacred symbols, the Coronation Stone, the Holy Rood, and the deposed King, John Balliol. Among the nobles was no organised resistance. There were plenty of powerful nobles in Scotland who did not resent the idea of vassalage to England, men of Norman blood, to whom an oath of fealty seemed natural and easy—no wonder the English King reckoned on their submission; but he had also to reckon with William Wallace, and the passionate resistance of a section of Scottish people, with the rousing of the Celtic blood against vassalage to a foreign power, and the final awakening of a patriot spirit in a nation that suddenly knew itself to be a nation. Yet for a while the conquests of England went on, and there was a dark time when Scotland was a subjugated country, when the English troops swept through the towns and villages with fire and sword, and it seemed as if every stronghold must yield.

Edward I. started for his fifth campaign in Scotland in June 1303. His French Queen, whom he had married three years before, went with him, or joined him there.

The first mention of any dwelling-house at Gask is in the record of a visit the English King and Queen paid there in August 1304. They were at Gask twice—the first time in 24th October 1303.<sup>1</sup> Of this visit nothing is recorded except that the King wrote or sent a letter from there. Of the second visit we have the following record:<sup>2</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Privy Seal.

<sup>2</sup> Bain's Documents, vol. iv. p. 475.

## "THE HOST OF THE KING AT GASK

"To the Owner of West Gask, the kind host of the King and Queen at Gask (this is sent) as the King's own gift in return for the loss which his host sustained in the ransacking and plundering of his house crops and other property by various people as a result of the hospitality which he showed to the King and Queen and other persons of importance in their suite, while on their way from Stirling to the town of St John of Perth, and on their return thence in the direction of England, at the beginning of August in the present year. Given under the King's own hand at Gask on the 5th of August."

The house must have been one of the strongholds on the Trinity Gask estate, perhaps Gascon Hall—then in the possession of the Earl of Strathearn or William Murray of Tullibardine, who were both on the English side; but according to the wording of the letter, the King's host was a tenant, and not a proprietor. Putting aside the honour of the visit, which was doubtless great, the party do not seem to have been desirable guests, the after-consequences of their stay being violence and destruction. King Edward was in the full glow of triumph. It was twenty days after his final reduction of Stirling, the last of the great fortresses, and it seemed as if Scotland was indeed to be his own.

The same record gives a human and interesting touch to the circumstances of King Edward's visit to Gask.

"To the seven women who met the King on the road between Gask and Uggelville,<sup>1</sup> and who sang in his presence as they were accustomed to do in the time of Lord Alexander, late King of Scotland (this is sent), as the King's own gift."

There is so much told in the simple statement. Alexander III. had been dead for eighteen years—the tragic ending to his desperate ride along the coast of the Forth had been the end of the peace and prosperity of

<sup>1</sup> Ogilvy Castle, some miles from Gask, in the parish of Blackford, then probably in the possession of the Earl of Strathearn.

Scotland. The seven women remembered him ; not only the stories of his wisdom, his gentleness, his courage, but they kept the actual memory of his face and his bearing as they met him on the road, and sang to him. They had been young women then, and Scotland had been at peace. Loyalty had seemed natural and easy towards the man who had been indisputably King. Since the fateful ending of Alexander's family, during the endless struggles of Balliols and Comyns, the bewildered peasantry never clearly knew to whom allegiance was due. Now it seemed as if a man had been found strong enough to make himself King. So the seven women met Edward on the road and sang, offering to the Conqueror the incense he most valued.

A good deal is known about Sir William Olifard before the day of his defence of Stirling Castle. He appears first as witness to a charter by the Earl of Athole, dated before 1296.

His next recorded appearance is at the siege of Dunbar, also in 1296, one of the most important castles in the land. The Scottish leaders had taken possession, and prepared a desperate resistance. Seven Scottish nobles, thirty-one knights, and a small band of followers had in desperation turned out the English garrison and held the castle. Edward sent ten thousand men and a thousand horse to dislodge them. The ensuing battle was a disaster to the Scots, whose mad courage was the cause of their defeat. The garrison in the castle had no choice but to surrender to King Edward in person. A great multitude of prisoners, gentle and simple, were at the mercy of the victorious Edward. All the prisoners of rank were sent over the Border and imprisoned in scattered castles in Wales and England.

William Olifard was among those knights who were taken prisoner, ignominiously tied two and two on horses, and carried in irons in carts across the Border. There were two William Olifards<sup>1</sup> in English prisons at this

<sup>1</sup> The two Sir Williams who took part in the War of Independence were first cousins. The course of their separate careers is traced in the Scots Peerage, vol. ii. p. 531.

time—a knight at Devizes, and a squire at Rochester. Both were liberated in 1297 with other Scots, on the surety of Athole and others. Sir William was free on the 8th September, and on the 12th there is an order that his lands be restored to him. With other Scottish leaders, Olifard received his liberty on two conditions, that he should give his son as hostage, and that he should serve in King Edward's army oversea. Edward was at the time fighting ingloriously in Flanders, and no doubt would feel satisfaction in compelling such distinguished men as Comyn, Simon Fraser, Strathearn, and Olifard to follow his banner. What actual part they took in the fighting is not known, nor is there record of Olifard's return to Scotland; but he is next found at Stirling, where he was appointed Governor in 1299.

Through all the history of Scottish wars the position of the impregnable rock of Stirling Castle overlooking wide valleys, commanding the Scotswater and both the Lothians and the Highlands, has made of it the centre of contest, a sure refuge, and the key of many a perilous enterprise. The Scots knew its value when they besieged and turned out the English garrison and its commandant, John Sampson, in 1299, and Stirling was their chief hope when Edward had turned northwards again in 1303, and marched triumphantly from one conquered fortress to another all through the land. Practically there was no resistance, no need for burning and devastating; the humiliation of Scotland was too abject, the subjection too complete. Twice had Edward passed by Stirling, once as the army swept northwards, and once on his return when he took up headquarters at Dunfermline. But the question of the reduction of this great stronghold could not be indefinitely postponed, and in April 1304 Edward set himself in earnest to bring it under his flag. His first step towards success was to go himself to superintend the siege. Probably when he set forth with his army to surround it, he had little idea that he was to spend three months before the rock, using all means in his power to reduce the garrison—bringing

all his resources of war, all his clever generalship, to bear on the grim defiance and endurance of the defenders. The end was from the first inevitable. It was a fore-gone conclusion that it must fall, yet it is a story of unequalled courage, and endurance.

“Ane nobill Knicht hecht Williame Olifeir  
 Ane man all tyme of greit auctoritie  
 Of Striruling castell capitane than wes he  
 That starke castell stude on ane roche so strang  
 This ilk Williame had keipit than full lang  
 Again King Edward as I schew you heir  
 Quhilk seigit it ane quarter of ane year.”<sup>1</sup>

Edward had at his disposal thirteen engines, large and cumbrous weapons, then in use to batter down walls, and afterwards he caused two others to be made, capable of hurling stones and lead weighing three hundred pounds. These were called the ram and the war wolf. Greek fire was sent also from England. The rock was surrounded; all communication with the outside world was cut off. Edward held Stirling in the hollow of his hand; he had but to pound long enough with his engines, and await the results of starvation and misery within the walls.

Within there were but two hundred men. Among them were several Olifards, the Governor, Sir William, the Knight of Dupplin, and Hugh and Walter Olifard. Besides the fighters there were unfortunately other inmates of the Castle, thirteen women, wives and sisters of the knights, who were destined to share the frightful privations of a three months' siege. It was on their account that the surrender was finally made. From the first, both men and women must have known that the situation was desperate, and that nothing remained but a desperate resistance.

The first act in the tragedy was the King's summons to Olifard to surrender. Olifard replied that he had received the guardianship of the castle from Sir John

<sup>1</sup> Boece, The Buik of the Chronicles of Scotland.



de Soulis as Governor of Scotland, and that it would be to lose his honour as a knight to surrender without communicating with De Soulis, who was then in France. King Edward refused to grant any time of delay. He sent an imperious message: "*Defend the castle at your peril.*"

As long as resistance was possible, Olifard, with his heroic garrison, did defend it. Imagination pictures them in the struggle, day after day, with sad but still valorous hearts, as the spring turned to summer, watching from the ramparts the majestic figure of the old King, as he moved hither and thither among his hosts, dealing death and destruction with his archers and engines of war. In spite of death, disease, and despair within the walls, defiance was flung forth hour after hour, day after day. Huge stones were discharged from the fortifications, and one of these once knocked over the horse on which the King rode. The old chronicles record another escape of the King from death which they call *miraculous*.

"On one occasion Satan had instigated one of the Scots to draw an arblast and aim an arrow against the Lord's anointed, who was riding exposed in the front. A devil's angel sped the shaft in so far that it pierced a chink of the mail, but then one of heaven's angels came to the rescue and stopped it from penetrating the sacred body of the conquering King."

The King, however, must have been unaware of the divine intervention. He was very angry, and himself pulling out the arrow, turned towards the castle with a fierce threat that he would yet hang the traitor who sped that bolt.

The unexpectedly prolonged resistance of the garrison caused the English to run short of munitions of war. By the 20th of May the besieged had inflicted considerable loss on the besiegers, who had made no progress towards victory. It was then that Edward sent to England for the extra engines, and also for all the

*ballistae*, quarrels, bows and arrows that could be collected. He also stripped the lead from the roofs of churches, and from the monasteries of St Andrews and Brechin,<sup>1</sup> so as to continue the assault. Edward said the defenders acted like mad dogs. They were brave and desperate men. We know the names of some who were there besides William Olifard, who is called by the English chroniclers of the day "a doughty knight, one among a thousand."<sup>2</sup> Other names among the heroic defenders are Polwarth, Haliburton, Ramsay and Napier, John de Coulgask, Thomas de Clemel, and two ecclesiastics, William de Keith and Peter de Edereston. What held them to their post is indeed matter for conjecture; they knew from the first what the end must be, that no rescue from outside was possible—no end to suspense, no relieving force, for such a force did not exist. There was no object for their tenacious loyalty. The King, never more than the shadow of a King, was oversea. The liberties of Scotland were underfoot. When the sun rose on yet another day of struggle, when the darkness fell on their increasing misery, they could hope for no sound of marching feet in the plains below, no approaching flag of relief, no sound of battle on their behalf. There was no royal name to pass from lip to lip to keep alive and strengthen the passion of the day's endurance. Only one name could have risen in their thoughts as a watchword—and it seemed as if even the star of Wallace had waned. But the work of Wallace was done in Scotland—the patriot spirit he awakened in his countrymen inspired the defence of Stirling, and nerved the last men to defend the last stronghold of the unconquered Scotland of old.

The unequal contest came to an end at last; but not till their walls were cast down, the scaling ladders fixed, the breach in the inner walls already filled with English soldiers. Starvation, disease, and the countless miseries endured by a handful of beings, utterly cut off

<sup>1</sup> He afterwards paid for this.

<sup>2</sup> Mat. de Westminster.

from relief of every kind, won the victory for England. Reduced to despair by the death of comrades, weakened by suffering and privation, maddened witnesses of the distresses of their thirteen women, the defenders of Stirling capitulated at last. They had fought for three months, and now numbered only one hundred and forty souls. On the 13th July, Olifard at length consented to meet with Edward's envoys in the valley below. Sir Eustace le Poer and Sir John de Mowbray were sent by the King to the gates to summon the Governor, Sir William Olifard. Before making an unconditional surrender, Olifard made one stipulation—that he and his knights should be brought into the King's presence. His request was granted, and Olifard returned to the castle—having made surrender. The keys of the castle were then flung over the wall and received by the English Vice-Constable. Then emerged from the gates the sad procession of the knights who had fought so long and so hopelessly, the victims of those three long months of rigorous siege. Barefooted, bareheaded, stripped to their shirts, "like thieves," they filed singly through the castle gates, through the ranks of the victorious army, on to the tent of the King of England, where he grimly awaited them—surrounded by those nobles who were to witness the last act of the tragedy. Olifard came first, and behind him his twenty-five knights, sad and noble figures, in spite of all indignity and defeat. They rendered themselves to the King's mercy.

"Speak not of my mercy," he said; "speak only of my will."

"We render us to thy will."

"My will is to tear you limb from limb and hang you; if ye like not that get you back into the castle."

Olifard, on his knee before him, presented a further petition on behalf of himself and his comrades. The King turned to the little band of knights. "And what do you ask?"

"We are worthy of death, but take us to thy will."

The old records say that the King was moved, and turned away for a little space; then giving the rein to better feelings than had prompted his first fury, he ordered that all the knights should be imprisoned, but without chains, in different castles in England. To Olifard and his companions all the bitterness of defeat must have lain in the belief that, as the last stronghold of Scotland had yielded, all the strenuous endeavours against fate had been in vain. The pageant of their submission was the usual custom when any beleaguered garrison capitulated. It probably meant no more to the victims than the fierce vexation of an undignified feudal observance; but it must have seemed to them as if Scotland "lay at the proud foot of a conqueror." Theirs was no prophetic insight to look forward along the ten stormy years that were to bring the star of Bruce into the ascendant, and see the whole policy of Edward rendered void, and Stirling at last avenged on the field of Bannockburn.

On the long journey from the ruined fort of Stirling, all through England till the Tower of London was reached, the thoughts of Sir William Olifard must have dwelt on a fruitless effort and a conquered country. Seven years before he had travelled northwards from his prison at Devizes, hastening homewards to bear his part in the struggles of his country; he had held and lost his post in an acute crisis of national history, and now again the long south road stretched before him, again an English prison awaited him.

Olifard was destined to spend four years in the Tower of London. From accounts in the Tower records he seems to have reached his prison on 29th September, two months after the fall of Stirling.

We find a record on 3rd February, 1304-1305:—

"Compotus of the Sheriffs of Essex and Hertford on the morrow of Purification, 79 shillings and a penny expenses of bringing Hugh Olifard, Walter Olifard and others captured at Stirling from there to Colchester."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bain, vol. ii., doc., 1644.

There were now four Olifards in English prisons—Sir William in the Tower of London, William Olifard of *Dumplin* at Walingford Castle, Hugh Olifard at Colchester, Walter Olifard at Winchester. Yet another prisoner was Elizabeth Olifard, the sister of Sir William. She may have been one of the thirteen women who stood the siege of Stirling.

“The King commands the Abbess and convent of Barking to deliver Elizabeth, sister of Sir William Olifard, Knight, at present in their custody, to Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, to whom he has committed her.”<sup>1</sup>

The King writes again to the Abbess of Barking, 3rd November 1306:—

“Learning that Hugh Olifard a Scottish rebel has escaped from Colchester Castle . . . and taken refuge in her Church of Barking, he commands that they be safely watched there and prevented escaping on pain of forfeiture of her lands and goods.”<sup>2</sup>

Then on 22nd January, the King pardons John de Bassingburn, late Sheriff of Essex, for letting Hugh Olifard, a Scottish prisoner, escape from the Castle of Colchester while in his custody, as he pursued Hugh so manfully that he “retook and lodged him again in the castle where he now is.”<sup>3</sup>

The prisoners seem to have moved from castle to castle. Walter was at Wynton Castle from April 1305 to Michaelmas 1306, and again in the year following. In 1307 the King commands the Sheriffs of Norfolk, Southampton, Devon, and Cornwall to pay the expenses of William Olyfart and other Scottish prisoners in the Castles of Norwich, Winchester, Exeter, and Launceston. The expenses allowed were generally fourpence a day.

The following entry is of interest:—

“1st December 1304-1305. Delivered to Ralph de

<sup>1</sup> Bain, vol. ii., doc., 1885.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* doc., 1668.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* doc., 1885.

Sandwich, constable of the Tower, for the daily sustenance of Sir William Olyfar, Knight, a prisoner there, for a year since 29th September 1304, £6, 16s. and 15 shillings delivered to John de Segrave in August last for carriage of the body of William de Waleys to Scotland.”<sup>1</sup>

These four years of Olifard's imprisonment brought great changes to Scotland—of which some echo may have reached him. The death of the champion Wallace—the awakener of his people—the universal submission of Scotland, the rise of Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, who quitted suddenly the English Court and made his stand against the absorption of Scotland. The Red Comyn was slain. The Scottish people, perhaps realising where lay safety and hope, rose in a tumult of enthusiasm to follow where Bruce might lead. Within two years of the surrender of Stirling the Crown of Scotland was on the head of Robert Bruce. The great aim of Edward I.—the fusion of two nations into one—was at an end. It was the signal for Edward's final mighty effort against his lifelong foe, when starting on his last enterprise, he passionately exacted the last vow—never to be fulfilled—that in death he should be carried to Scotland, and never buried whilst it remained unsubdued.

The adventures and successes of Bruce make the history of Scotland during the years that followed. Olifard was liberated in May 1308. When Edward II. had been for a year on the throne, he sent his Royal order for the release of “our beloved and faithful William Olifard.” Sir Hugh de Despenser brought the warrant, and four English knights<sup>2</sup> stood surety for Olifard's loyalty. So he set forth, but not homewards at once, for he went first to Lincoln, there, by Edward's order, to set free four of his fellow fighters at Stirling—John de Coulgask, Patrick de Polwarth, Thomas de Lillay, and Thomas de Clemel; and the five proceeded northwards together, in the service of King Edward.

<sup>1</sup> Bain, vol. iv., doc., 1812.

<sup>2</sup> Walter de Burghdon, Odard Heron of Northumberland, Thomas de Rychemunde, and Ivo de Aldeburgh.

It must have seemed a strange world to Olifard as he rode back into Scotland—a Scotland again full of hope, again capable of a tenacious struggle for liberty, again ready to follow the lead of a great man and a great King. But one remembrance would rise above all others—the death of the Red Comyn, and it is certain that fierce resentment at his fate must have filled the mind of Comyn's kinsman and friend. Through generations the Comyns had been linked with the Olifards. Whilst he had been shut up in the Tower, the deed had been done, and the murderer sat on the ancient throne of Scotland. To Olifard it would seem as if the Red Comyn had a better right to the throne than Bruce. He would feel as if the sympathies of his country had better lie with English Edward than with the fierce adventurer who had grasped the Crown.

Yet, in spite of all these considerations, it seems surprising to find William Olifard Warden of Perth, in 1311, holding that position in the name of Edward II. of England. The records of the times are full of such inexplicable changes, such shifting interests. There is no record, except in the lives of William Wallace and of Edward I., of a consistent and unbending devotion either to a man or a cause. Bruce had helped England to take Stirling from Olifard. Now Olifard helped the English to keep Bruce out of Perth. Years afterwards he received grants of land from the Bruce, supported him staunchly, and married one of his sons to the King's daughter. In times so unsettled, so insecure, the minds of men seemed plastic, easily made to sway towards new convictions, and certainly a change of masters was considered no disgrace. Edward II. was in London when he entrusted the care of the fortress of Perth to Sir William Olifard. Several letters are extant from the King promising support and supplies, and praising his loyalty. Perth was an extremely important post. Stirling was again held for England, not to be wrested away till two years later. Bruce knew that Perth with its fine fortifications was second only in importance to Stirling, and that it must be in his hands

before he could call the Highlands his. The great stone towers, the high walls, and the protection of a broad and deep moat, made it a place of strength. Bruce beleaguered it for six weeks. There was no sign of yielding on the part of Olifard and his garrison, and it fell at last by a ruse. Bruce drew off his men as if he had abandoned the siege, having first ascertained the depth of the moat and its most fordable point. Then he and his forces lay in hiding for eight days in the woods of Methven, where the time was spent in fashioning ladders to scale the walls. At the end of a week Olifard, having seen no sign of the enemy, naturally allowed a relaxed vigilance. The besiegers returned in the night.

“No cry of sentinels was heard from the walls, and Bruce himself, like Jeanne d’Arc at Paris, fathomed the moat with his lance-shaft. He discovered a place where the water was throat-high, he seized a ladder, and led the advance. A French knight in his company crossed himself, for the marvel that the King

“‘In such peril has him set  
To win a wretched hamlet.’

Then he ran forward, leaped into the ditch, and followed the King. The town was lightly won, with no massacre, and Bruce, according to his regular policy, levelled the walls.”<sup>1</sup>

The whole garrison, Scots and English, fell into the hands of Bruce. It is true there was no general massacre, but all the Scots leaders were put to death, with the exception of Sir William Olifard, who, according to the old chronicler, Lanercost, “was bound and sent to the Isles.” Later research has, however, sought to prove this an error. William Olifard was in England on the 10th of March following,<sup>2</sup> and had a safe conduct to go to Scotland and return on the 21st October of the same year.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Lang’s *Hist. of Scot.*, vol. i. p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Exchequer D. R. *Miscellanea*, folio 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* folio 339. But again there may be confusion here between the two



During the years between the fall of Perth and the time of Bannockburn there appears to be no further record of the doings of Sir William Olifard. When he re-appears in history it is as a supporter of Robert the Bruce. When the fate of Scotland hung in the balance he had perhaps realised that in the power of Bruce lay the hopes of the nation's independence. At all events, the year after Bannockburn, Sir William Olifaunt (so the name was now spelt) witnessed a charter of King Robert to Sir Andrew Gray. In December 1317 he received large grants of land from Bruce. One charter gives the lands of Newtyle and Kinpurnie in Forfarshire,

“to be held in free Barony with all the liege and native men of the said lands, for the performing of the fourth part of a knight's service in the King's army.”<sup>1</sup>

About this time also, Bruce gave by charter to William Olifaunt,

“our beloved and faithful Knight, our whole lands of Muirhouse, in the Shire of Edinburgh with their pertinents”

in exchange for a certain piece of land rightfully belonging to Olifard lying near one of the royal palaces, Kincardine Castle, which King Balliol had taken, and Bruce desired to retain. In 1326, Bruce gave Ochertyre<sup>2</sup> to Olifaunt,

“for the service of three archers in the King's army and Scottish service, use and wont.”

And now also the lands of Gask were conferred upon him.

Bannockburn, though it had been a decisive victory for Scottish independence by no means gave Robert

Sir Williams. In the Scots Peerage, vol. vi, p. 531-534, there will be found the theory of the death of the first Sir William in his exile, and the subsequent exploits of his cousin, Sir William.

<sup>1</sup> This charter is now in the possession of Lord Wharncliffe.

<sup>2</sup> In the Parish of Newtyle, Forfarshire.

Bruce an undisputed place among the kings of the earth—and this place he was determined to win. Fourteen years were to pass before the King of England acknowledged him to be King of Scotland; and Bruce filled the years with fighting, with deeds of daring, with exploits and adventures, not only for his own honour, but for the unity and freedom of his country. Olifard must often have been at his side—his “beloved and faithful Knight.” In the protracted dealings with the Papal Court he also bore a part, and the Olifard seal is attached to the Remonstrance framed at the great Parliament held at Aberbrothok in April 1320, addressed to the Pope—“the noblest state paper ever framed.”<sup>1</sup>

“As long as an hundred of us remain alive, we shall spurn the English yoke. It is not for fame, riches, or honour that we fight, but for liberty which no honest man will lose but with his life. Wherefore, we beseech your Holiness to remember that with God there is no respect of persons—Jew or Greek, Scottish man or English man. Deign, therefore, to bid the English King be content with England, which was once enough for seven kings or more, and bid him leave us quiet in our little Scotland, for should your Holiness, by your favour, encourage the English, the loss of bodies and souls that must follow will be laid to your charge by the Most High.”

This powerful appeal had its due effect. The Pope acknowledged Bruce as the King of Scotland, and in 1328, fourteen years after Bannockburn, the King of England followed suit.

Of the closing years of the life of Olifard a little is known. He was present at the Parliament held at Holyrood in 1326. He witnessed a charter by Malise, Earl of Strathearn, with his neighbours, Walter de Rothewan, Malcolm de Dromonde, and John de Moravia. He was present when Abercairny was granted to Malise’s son-in-law.

“In 1328 he makes a payment to the Sheriff of Perth

<sup>1</sup> The Oliphants in Scotland, p. xviii.

for lands which he held in Glenlyon of which the tenth penny had been granted to the Crown. He rendered an account of his receipts at Newbotle on 16th January 1329.”<sup>1</sup>

William Olifard was not fated to outlive his King. The great work of his life accomplished, Bruce died in June 1329. The last mention of Sir William Olifard was in January of that year, and it is known that he died on 5th February. He had lived to see with Bruce the complete independence of Scotland. It now seemed as if the great chivalrous times were over, as if the days of exploit and defiance had died with Bruce. Perhaps Olifard already saw the change to a less heroic period before he lay down for the last time at his home of Aberdalgie, looking his last down the splendid vale of Strathearn, across his noble acres of Dupplin, to the lands of Gask by the winding Earn. The great struggle for liberty was over. The impetuous soldier who had fought on both sides could look back now and see how out of all the disastrous defeats, the dear-bought victories, the warring interests, emerged at length a free nation, a kingly inheritance for Scotland and her kings to hold and cherish.

The tomb of Sir William Olifard can be seen to-day in the church of Aberdalgie, a recumbent figure in stone, still showing the exquisite tracery of fifteenth century work. The armour is of a date a hundred years later than the hero, and the monument must have been raised to his memory by a descendant. The beautiful stone<sup>2</sup> lay unprotected for centuries over the vault of the Lords

<sup>1</sup> Oliphants in Scotland, p. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> One corner has been broken away, and the stone is split in two across the neck and near the feet. These injuries were undoubtedly done by the troops of Cromwell. Perth surrendered to his troops 2nd August 1651. In the Kirk Session Record of Aberdalgie there is the following entry for 3rd August :—“No meeting nor preaching, because the enemy Cromwell’s forces were ranging through all this Parish, and the people fugitive.” The troops also burnt Aberdalgie Castle. The Rev. John Ferguson of Aberdalgie, who communicated this to the writer, once saw an old woman who spoke with one of the masons employed in opening the vault of the Lords Oliphant at the instance of some one claiming to be the heir to the title. This mason reported that there was beautiful work in the vault.

Oliphant. Laurence Oliphant of Gask in 1780 raised a stone canopy to protect it in some measure from the weather. In 1904 it was finally decided to save what remained of the carving, by carrying the stone slab inside the church where it can now be seen. The large stone canopy is left to mark the spot, on the edge of a tiny glen, which for so many centuries has been his resting-place.

“DOMINUS WILLIELMUS OLIFAUNT

“Dominus de Aberdalgie qui  
Obiit quinto die mensis Februarii  
Anno Domini Mill CCC Vicesimi nono.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “The Oliphant estates, as Sir William left them to his successors, consisted of (1) The lands of Dupplin, Hedderwick, and Cranshaws, inherited from his Olifard forbears; (2) The lands of Aberdalgie adjoining Dupplin, Turin near Forfar, Glensaugh in the Mearns, Pitkerie in Fife, and perhaps Gallery on the Northesk, which appear to have come into the family through a Wishart heiress; (3) Gaskness (now Findogask) in Strathearn, Newtyle, Kinpurnie, Auchtertyre, and Balcraig in Forfarshire, Muirhouse in Midlothian, and Hazelhead in Ayrshire, which he acquired mostly by new gift from the King.” Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 534.

### CHAPTER III

“ A HOUSE VERY LOYALL TO THE STATE OF SCOTLAND ”

SIR WILLIAM OLIFAUNT left a son and heir, Sir Walter, who makes no appearance in records till he appends his seals to a charter in the year 1352. David II. was on the throne. In 1360 his name is found in a resignation by Elena de Maxwell, Lady of Kelly, of the lands of Kelly into the King's hands, that he might give the lands to Walter Olifaunt, her cousin. In 1364 he received confirmation of the lands and barony of Gask from the King, his brother-in-law.

“ To our beloved and faithful Walter Olifaunt and his Spouse, Elizabeth, our beloved sister, the whole of the lands of Gask and their pertinents for the *reddendum* of a chaplet of white roses at the feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist, yearly at the Manor place of Gask, and three suits at the King's Court at Perth.”

The charter is dated at Edinburgh, the last day of February 1364.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time and place King David II. gave

<sup>1</sup> This charter, now in the Gask charter chest at Ardblair, has had an interesting history. When Crauford was writing the “Scottish Peerage” published in 1716, James Oliphant of Gask showed him this charter as proving the existence of Elizabeth, daughter of Robert I., and her marriage to Sir Walter Oliphant. In 1746, when the Jacobites were crushed, and the laird of Gask a fugitive, the Duke of Cumberland sent Sir Joseph York to ransack the House of Gask, which he did, and carried away from the charter-room “a small Japan'd brown box, with coat of arms on the lid” containing this charter. It was not recovered for forty years. Lawrence Oliphant, after seventeen years of exile, set himself, on his return, to recover the precious document, and in 1786 succeeded in tracing it, when it was restored to the family. George Graeme, ninth laird of Inchbrakie, in a document dated 1814, makes a declaration about the charter.

“The above charter of the family of Gask was saved from destruction by Sir Joseph York, 1746, who afterwards, when Ambassador at London from the Hague, returned it to Struan Robertson's brother, Lieutenant-Colonel Robertson, who, upon my return from Flanders in the year 1778, gave same charter to me, in order to deliver it to my uncle, Lawrence Oliphant of Gask. The foregoing circumstances, in as far as regards the recovery of the original charter of the family of Gask, I attest. GEORGE GRAEME. (Or and Sable, L. GRAEME).”

confirmation of other lands to Walter Olifaunt—who was to hold them in return for a pair of silver spurs on the feast of All Saints at Halton of Newtyle with three suits at the King's Court at Forfar. Yet another charter granted the lands of Ochertyre and Balcraig—for a gift of three broad arrows on the feast of St Martin, at Ochertyre and three suits at the King's Court at Forfar. Another conveyed the lands of Turynys and Dromy in Forfarshire, for the *reddendum* of a silver penny at Dromy at Christmas. Of the same date was also the charter of the lands of Aberdalgie and Dupplin, of which the *reddendum* was *unam merulam sive speculum* at the feast of St Peter ad Vincula. With Aberdalgie went the privilege of fishing in the water of Earn three days a week in forbidden time, and the same privilege was also attached to the lands of Gask.

If Walter Olifaunt still held the great tracts of country in Roxburghshire which had once belonged to the family, he must, with so much property in Perthshire, Forfarshire, and Fife, have been one of the largest land-owners in Scotland. Of his wife, a daughter of King Robert Bruce, nothing is known except through the mention of her name in these charters. The conferring of the hand of the King's daughter upon a knight would in those days be looked upon as a great honour, even though it is possible that the Queen was not her mother.<sup>1</sup> It raised Olifaunt to a power and dignity equal to his highest desires. Of the man himself we know nothing; the time of his birth and death, the events of his life, are hidden in an obscurity which is unlikely ever to be penetrated, and which seems strange when the conspicuous part played by his father in all national events is remembered.

Walter Olifaunt and Elizabeth, daughter of Bruce, had three sons:—

1. Sir John who succeeded to the bulk of the estates.

<sup>1</sup> There is no proof of this, and the doubt rests only on the fact that the old chroniclers do not mention this daughter Elizabeth among the King's children. On the other hand, the mention of her name by King David II. as "Elizabeth, our beloved sister" seems to indicate the legitimacy of her birth.

2. Sir Walter, who lived till after 1411. From him are descended the Oliphants of Pittotter, Kellie, Murdocairnie, and Prinlaws.
3. Malcolm, who possessed Hazelhead, and was the ancestor of the Ayrshire branch of the Oliphant family.

Between the year of the great Sir William's death, and the granting of the charters in 1364, history is silent as to the doings of the Olifards. The death of Bruce brought to Scotland a renewal of trouble and disorder. The new King, already married to Joanna of England, was five years old. Edward II. had his hereditary ambitions regarding Scotland. Edward Balliol, the son of John, bore the nominal title of King for seven years. The great master mind, the dauntless master hand of Bruce, were no longer there to inspire and protect his country. The young King was away in France; he returned to an inglorious reign in Scotland, which lasted for forty-two years. Whether Olifaunt fought at Halidon Hill under Archibald Douglas, whether he was at Neville's Cross, where the King was taken prisoner there is no record to show. His name does not appear among the knights at the battle of Dupplin in 1332, when Balliol crossed the river at midnight, and marched by Gask and Dupplin to break with slaughter upon the Scottish outposts, defeating the young King's forces under Mar; nor is the name mentioned when Balliol seized Perth.

It is difficult to believe that Olifaunt was living at the family home of Aberdalgie in the midst of such wars and distresses—especially as his help would seem natural on account of his near relationship to the boy King. It is only possible to conjecture that he either had his part in the great adventures of the day, or that he was abroad during the stormy years of David's unlucky reign. The King died in Edinburgh Castle in 1370. He had made only trouble and distress for the country his father had won. Olifaunt could scarcely have regretted the brother-in-law who had brought poverty and distress upon the kingdom. Luckily he

left no heir. It was a nephew of Lady Olifaunt who now came to the throne—Robert II., son of Marjory Bruce and the Steward of Scotland. The date of Sir Walter Olifaunt's death is not known; but he was alive in 1378. His second son, Walter, younger of Aberdalgie, was receiving charters confirming lands to him from Robert II. in 1378. The King's young son, afterwards Robert III., was a witness to the charters confirming the lands of Kellie and Pitkery in Fife. Sir Walter's descendants held Kellie till late in the sixteenth century.

Sir John, the heir of the first Sir Walter, had two children—Sir William who succeeded him, and a daughter Marion.

For three generations the Oliphants had been living in obscurity as far as history is concerned. The stormy years of English aggression, the tumultuous days of Bruce, were already lapsing into great memories. Under a line of kings not likely to fail for heirs, and relying confidently on the sturdy support of the nation, there came a period of greater security, more firmness of law, more protection of life and property. Between the great Parliament at Aberbrothok in 1320, when William Olifard appended his seal to the historic Remonstrance to the Pope, and the year 1424—more than a hundred years after—when the name of a great-great-grandson of Sir William appears on the page of history, no Oliphant seems to have taken conspicuous part in national affairs.

The times were filled with Border raids, the feuds of Douglas and Percy, and possibly the Perthshire lairds might not have felt themselves called upon to fight in these distant quarrels. They may have listened in inaction to the stories of the coming of the band of French knights, the flower of French chivalry, to the aid of the Border men, and heard of the splendid deeds of Douglas, without being inspired to join in the adventure. But when the war was carried to the Highlands, then surely must Oliphants have left their broad acres and the home at Aberdalgie to bear a part. They must have struck a blow for the Crown against the Wolf of Badenoch, and



taken the field at the battle of Harlaw against the Celts, who had called England to their aid, to strike for Celtic supremacy in the north.

The hundred years of the Oliphants' obscurity had seen the reigns of four kings, and found a fifth in English captivity. James, Earl of Carrick, the heir to the Scottish throne, was taken prisoner by Henry IV. only a few days before, at fourteen years old, he became King by the death of his father, Robert III. The story of that twenty years' captivity of the Poet King needs no re-telling. He emerged from his English prison at thirty-four. His life can be briefly told. First the inaction of his twenty years' captivity, then twelve years of passionate determination to break the feudal tyranny that was checking all progress in the land. He did not always choose honourable means, and his early death by murder was prompted by a sense of intolerable injustice in a subject he had wronged. The tragic destiny of his race overshadowed his youth and his manhood. It was as much the tragedy of temperament as of outward circumstances.

He had been treated in England with all honour, given a liberal education, and was set free at last upon terms which may not have seemed very hard to his idea. The marriage of the Poet King and Lady Jane Beaufort, the lady of his heart and his song, was followed by his release, and in 1421 he set forth on his way to his kingdom—a free man. At Durham he was met by a group of three hundred of the nobles and gentry of Scotland. England was not parting with her royal captive without exacting terms, nor was his freedom won without a great sacrifice on the part of Scotland. The English demand was for £40,000, not nominally as ransom, but for the King's maintenance in England. It was to be paid in instalments of £10,000 a year. Scotland, then in the depths of poverty, could not promise prompt payment of so huge a sum. The alternative was to offer hostages, and these were chosen from the flower of the Scottish knights.

When all the negotiations were over, and the King on his way to his kingdom, out of the group of three hundred

loyal Scotsmen who welcomed him at Durham, were chosen twenty-eight to go into English prisons till the great ransom was paid. Among the twenty-eight we find the name of Sir William Oliphant of Aberdalgie, the son of Sir John. The King passed on in a joyful progress to his kingdom. The hostages were handed over to the English. Imagination sees them watching the young King and his bride, in the midst of the gallant escort of Scottish chivalry, riding away into new life and liberty, to be crowned and honoured, before they turned away to their own captivity. All touched the Gospels, and vowed that they would remain in the hands of the English King till the ransom was paid, and would attempt nothing against him. No doubt they hoped and believed that their sacrifice was but for a short time, and that King James, in all the joy of his new liberty, would hold them in remembrance and soon find the money for their ransom. Oliphant was sent to Pontefract Castle, and afterwards, with seven of his companions, to the Tower of London. Two years afterwards he was still in the Tower. A mention of him there in 1425 is the last that is known of him. A great many of the hostages died in English prisons; Oliphant may have been among them. The ransom was never paid. Taxes were levied for the purpose, but the money was always wanted for something else.

The wife of Sir William Oliphant was said to be Isabel Stewart, daughter of John Stewart of Innermeath, Lord of Lorn. They had a son, John, who succeeded to the family estates, and who appears as a witness to a deed in 1441. There was also a daughter, Isabel, who married Sir John Scrimgeour, Constable of Dundee. Sir John married Isabel, daughter of Sir Walter Ogilvy of Auchterhouse, the hereditary Sheriff of Angus. The Lindsays were at feud with the Ogilvys. The two families fought out a quarrel about the Abbey of Aberbrothok, at the Abbey gates, on a Sunday morning in 1445. The affair is described as follows in the *Auchinleck Chronicle* :—

“The Erll of Huntlie and the Ogilbeis with him on the ta part, and the Erll of Crauford on the tother part, met at the gettis of Arbroth on ane Sunday laite and faucht. And the Erll of Huntlie and Wat Ogilbei fled. And ther was slane on their part Schir Jhon Oliphant, Lord of Aberdalgy—with uther syndry. And on the tother part the Erll of Crauford himself was hurt in the field and diet within VII dayis. Bot he and his son wan the field and held it, and efter that, a gret tyme held the Ogilbeis at gret subjeccion, and tuke thair gudis and destroyit thair placis.”

It can hardly be that Sir John Oliphant of Aberdalgie, the son of the knight whom the King abandoned to the miseries of an English prison, would feel an undeviating loyalty to his kinsmen of the royal house. We know no more about him than the facts of his marriage and his unlucky death in this broil of his wife's family. The list of his children is as follows:—

1. Laurence, afterwards first Lord Oliphant.
2. James, who was killed in a feud between his brother, Lord Oliphant, and the Earl of Buchan in 1491. He was the ancestor of the Oliphants of Archellie and Bachilton.
3. John, who was alive in 1479.
4. Margaret,<sup>1</sup> married Wardlaw of Torry. She had a son William, and a daughter who married Lyon de Logie of Logiealmond.
5. Christian,<sup>2</sup> married Alexander Blair of Balthayock. She was dead in 1516.
6. Another daughter, wife of James Drummond of Balloch.

The eldest son Laurence was afterwards made Lord Oliphant by James II. He was the first of a succession of ten lords of the name, covering a period of two hundred years.

<sup>1</sup> “A Protectionn to William Wardlaw, son to Margrete Oliphant Lady Torry and al and sundri his landis rentis possessions, takkis, malingis, to endure for al the days of his life. July 27th, 1503.” Privy Seal Register, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> “At Perth, 26th January 1516. Lands of Baldovy and Ardlare being in our soverane lordis handis be the deceis of Cristane Oliphant relict of umquhile Alexander Blare of Balthiock.” Privy Seal Register.

In 1450 the King made Sir David Hay, of Yester, guardian of young Laurence Oliphant, and in the same year the boy was sent with the Earl of Douglas on his pilgrimage to Rome. No doubt he felt it a lucky chance to see the world in the train of the gallant and distinguished figure of the eighth Earl of Douglas. The struggle between the Crown and the feudal aristocracy was fought to the death between James II. and William Douglas. He was born about 1425. As a little boy he was knighted at the christening of the twin sons<sup>1</sup> of James I. in 1430; he succeeded to the earldom in 1443. The royal descent of his family made other great landowners look upon him with suspicion—as a recognised danger to the throne. The head of the House of Douglas died soon after the murder of James I., leaving two young sons; the eldest, who succeeded to the honours of the house, only fourteen years old. This boy and his brother were murdered by the Regents on the Castle Hill at Edinburgh in 1440. The oft-told tragedy and treachery have left a lasting stain on the reign; but the little King, James II., who was present when the deed was done, was only ten years old, and wept bitterly at the sight. His guardians took no notice of his pitiful entreaties that the boys' lives might be spared. Eleven years afterwards the King killed with his own hand the head of the Douglas family.

The House of Douglas, instead of being crushed by the death of the boys, continued to increase in strength. William Douglas, who became the head of the family, kept an army of five thousand men, some of them knights and noblemen, as if he were a sovereign. Alliances were made with the chiefs of clans, till the whole country was practically in his power. The process was gradual, and the King was very young. He had a boy's admiration for another boy five years his senior, who perhaps seemed to him the embodiment of all that was chivalrous, adventurous, and splendid. Many of the King's friends

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, born at Holyrood, 16th October 1430, died an infant. James, afterwards James II., died 1460.

must have seen with great satisfaction the preparations of Douglas for a pilgrimage to Rome, and secretly hoped that he would stay away for the three years his safe-conduct permitted.

Douglas chose nineteen companions for his pilgrimage, and among them was young Oliphant of Aberdalgie. They started in August 1450, a princely train—including James, the brother of Douglas, Lords Hamilton, Gray, Salton, Seton, and Forbes. The *cortège* rode away through Flanders to Paris,<sup>1</sup> where they were received with marked honour by the French King.

Italy, then basking in the afterglow of her great outburst of creative genius, was going proudly forward into the Augustan age that was soon to dawn. The travellers from rugged Scotland saw all the splendour of her transition from the one to the other—and beheld the wonders of the Renaissance. But to Douglas and his companions the lessons of Italy were not wholesome. Douglas saw in every great central city the triumph of the system his whole race had for generations been trying to impose upon Scotland. Each town was controlled by a powerful family of huge wealth and absolute rule. He realised the sovereignty of the Medici at Florence, the Sforza at Milan, the Estes at Modena, the Gonzagas at Mantua. Everywhere he would see the results of soldiers of fortune founding petty kingdoms, and he would see these kingdoms, each centres of light and learning, rising successfully into independent powers. Doubtless, the old hereditary ambitions, the old dreams must have stirred his restless soul. In spite of all the honour which he and his companies received at Rome both from the Pope and the great Roman families, the splendour of their reception, the charm and novelty of life in Italy, they remained there only a few months. Douglas may have suspected that absence from Scotland meant mischief to his interests there, and in this he judged rightly. At

<sup>1</sup> In Paris Douglas took his youngest brother George, a child of thirteen, away from school, and carried him with him towards Italy. To the great grief of Douglas the boy died on the way. Godscroft, vol. i. p. 385.

all events Oliphant rode with him in the spring, when he went back to the tragic death that awaited him at the hand of his friend and master. Although he was made Lieutenant-Governor after his return, it was not long before Douglas found his power at Court a thing of the past. Tongues had been busy with his name; the King was little more than a boy, easily swayed and prejudiced, and he had been shown whither the pretensions of Douglas were leading. He was taught that the Crown was not able to bear the encroachments of Douglas ambition, the increase of Douglas power. Probably he had never decided on the death of his friend. Douglas was with the King in Edinburgh in January 1452. A month later came his last fatal interview at Stirling—the two young men in furious quarrel, and the end of the claims and the life of Douglas at one stroke of the King's dagger.

The event threw the great families of Scotland at once into two camps; those who drew to the King's side, and those, like Angus and Huntly, who followed the standard of the four young Douglases, brothers of the murdered William, in their campaign of vengeance. Oliphant must have made his choice also; whatever may have been his private feelings about the death of William Douglas, his travelling companion and friend, he chose what was in the end the winning side.

In the Parliament held by James III., in 1463, Laurence Oliphant appears as Lord Oliphant. The precise date when James II. conferred the title is not known. Shortly after Oliphant received this honour, he married Isobel, the daughter of the Earl of Errol, Constable of Scotland.

The records of the day give an idea of Lord Oliphant's appearance when he first took his seat in Parliament. In 1455 an Act had been passed regulating the dress in which the members were to appear.

"Ane mantill of rede ryth sa oppinnit before, and lynyt with silk or furryt with cristy gray, grece or

purray, togidder with ane hude of the samyn clath and furrit as said is."

If any lord appeared without this dress he was fined ten pounds.

Three years before, in 1460, Laurence Oliphant had founded a monastery at Perth. There had been no Franciscan Order of Greyfriars there till this time.<sup>1</sup> The building stood near the walls at the south side of Perth, and existed for a hundred years; but, as its records perished in the tumults of the Reformation, nothing is known about it. The monastery was attacked and pulled down by a fanatic mob in 1559. Its grounds lay vacant for twenty-one years, when the waste space was turned into a public graveyard.

For some reason not now traceable, the burghers of Perth appear to have been at feud with Lord Oliphant. What the quarrel was about will now never be known, but in a document still extant, Lord Oliphant absolves the Alderman and Council of Perth—

"for now and ever of the doune casting of the House of Dupline and of the spoilyation of it and Aberdalgie in special, and of all and sundrie actions, quarrelis, and pleyis, debatis, questionis and demandis depending betwixt us and them."

Dupplin was afterwards rebuilt by Lord Oliphant, who may have made it his chief residence. Sir John Cunningham, writing two hundred years later, tells us that Lord Oliphant adorned

"one of the seild rooms in Dupplin, now demolished by ane enemy to antiquity, with the names of his ancestry. All the original wreats and evidents of these lands before King David the Bruce his days supposed to have been burnt and destroyed at the burning of the House of Aberdalgie."

The next mention of Lord Oliphant is in 1467, when

<sup>1</sup> Mr Maitland Thomson, in the Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 540, points out that the date is too early; but sees no reason to doubt that Lord Oliphant was, at some time, the founder of the Perth Greyfriars.

he was present at the debate concerning the marriage of James III. with Margaret, Princess of Denmark. The marriage was celebrated four years afterwards, at Holyrood, when the King was seventeen. In 1471 Lord Oliphant was placed on the Committee of the Estates, one of those to whom was given

"the ful power and strength of the hale thre Estates of this realme, beand gatherit in this present parliament to advise, determyne, tret, and conclude eftir as thai fynde in their wysdomys, the materis concerning the weillfare of ane Soverane Lord."

It is evident that Oliphant stood high in the King's counsel from this time till the end of the reign. His name appears now and again in the accounts of the Lord Treasurer, and as having attended Parliaments. He was appointed one of the sixteen who in 1482 tried Lord Lyle for treason. In 1484 he was sent as ambassador with nine others to the Court of Richard III. at Nottingham. Richard gave safe conduct for the escort of two hundred horsemen. They reached Nottingham on 11th September, and next day the ambassadors went to the King.

"The King beyng in his gret chamber, undyr his clothe of ryall estate, and ther one of the ambassadors purposyd a oracyon, and delyvered to the King's grace a commissyon under the gret Sell of Scotland for the abstyness of were (war) by tweyen England and Scotland, and another commissyon for the marriage tweylene the prince of Scottis and one of the Kyngnes blood."<sup>1</sup>

The negotiations were happily concluded by the signing of a treaty of peace, and a compact of marriage between the young Prince of Scotland (afterwards James IV.) and Anne, King Richard's niece.<sup>2</sup> Lord Oliphant was one of those named to act as guardians of the truce between the two countries by land and sea. He was

<sup>1</sup> Gairdner's Letters of Richard III.

<sup>2</sup> The marriage never took place. Richard III. fell at Bosworth field four months after the treaty was signed. Lady Ann was the only daughter of John, Duke of Suffolk.



also appointed one of the Commissioners for settlement of the marches, and to depute certain persons to see that the bounds of Berwick were marked out according to the stipulations of the truce.<sup>1</sup>

A change of sovereign brought no change in the fortunes of Lord Oliphant. He seems to have been a man marked out for distinction and honour, whatever the party in power. It is certain he faithfully served James III., but after the tragedy of the King's murder at Beaton's Mill in 1488, we find him high in the councils of the young James IV. The boy having been led or coerced into the fatal rebellion against the father whom he had never seen, experienced the pangs of a lifelong remorse, and showed it by seeking advice and help, not from the rebel lords whose plots had placed him on the throne, but from those tried friends and servants of his father whose help was still available. Lord Oliphant's name appears again and again in the Parliaments of the new King in appointments as Judge, Sheriff, and Justiciar. Moreover, in 1489, when the King, then sixteen years old, set forth on his enterprise of war to the Castle of Dumbarton, Oliphant went with him.<sup>2</sup> The stronghold was held by the rebel Lennox and others. The young King besieged it himself for six weeks, and finally took the castle. The great gun, "Mons Meg,"<sup>3</sup> went with him to do the work at Dumbarton. The gunners got eighteen shillings of drink-silver for carting her.

In 1491, Lord Oliphant was one of the Lords of the Privy Council, and in the following years was one of the Commissioners who were sent to search the Continent of Europe to find a suitable queen for James IV. The Commission and a train of a hundred men went through England, with a safe conduct from Henry VII. They went no further than France to find the bride. The three estates voted extra money for the "honourable hame-bringing of a queen."

<sup>1</sup> The Oliphants in Scotland, p. xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer, vol. i. p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Now at Edinburgh Castle.

Lord Oliphant and the rest were in Scotland again before the close of the year in time to sign and seal the truce between Scotland and England. In the next year Oliphant was still on the Committee of Estates in connection with arrangements for the King's marriage. It might have meant a better fate for James had the French alliance been possible. He did not marry for twelve years, and in a Tudor wife experienced the discomforts of all the Tudor headstrong passions and prejudices. But Oliphant did not live to see his master married. In 1495 Lord Oliphant and Lord Drummond are styled in a Decree of Privy Council "Venerable faderis in God." On 24th August 1497 Lord Oliphant sent a present to the King, perhaps from his gardens at Dupplin. There is record of a payment in the Lord Treasurer's accounts "to ane man of Lord Oliphant that brocht plowmis to the King."<sup>1</sup>

This detail brings to a close nearly all that is known of the first Lord Oliphant. He must now have been an old man. He lived till the close of the century, though he was not living in April 1500. His life had been full of interests and excitement; he had his full part in national affairs.

Nothing was more fatal to the peace of the country and to the royal supremacy in Scotland than the system of *manrent* which, continuing for some centuries, gave to subjects the powers of a King,—practically conferring on an overlord the control of an army at demand. The position of a noble was decided by the number of agreements he had been able to obtain from less powerful chiefs. It meant allegiance to the greater, and protection to the lesser, magnate; a network of alliances for the support of feudal authority. Successive royal governments were unequal to the task of checking a system so harassing to the Crown.

"There is nothing manifests the power and greatness of this noble Lord (Oliphant) more than the Bonds of

<sup>1</sup> Plums were again brought from the second Lord Oliphant in 1503. Lord Treasurer's Accounts, vol. ii. p. 385.

Manrent he had of many gentlemen of the first rank, who were obliged to attend and serve him in peace and war, when required."<sup>1</sup>

In the Gask charter chest is a collection of fifteen of these Bonds of Manrent—the first dated 1468, and the last 1547.<sup>2</sup>

This power, wielded by one man, might have led to mischief enough; but Oliphant was a Royalist and a courtier. His power, however objectionable to the Burghers of Perth, was at the service of the throne.

He had served four King James's, and outlived the tragic deaths of three of those victims of evil destiny. In spite of insurrections and aggressions, he had seen the fortunes of his country grow steadily towards security and importance. He died full of years and honour; but there is no record to show where or when he died, or where is his place of burial.

To Laurence, Lord Oliphant, and his first wife, Isobel Hay, daughter of William, first Earl of Erroll, were born the following children:—

1. John, who was second Lord Oliphant.
2. William, who by marriage with Christian Sutherland of Duffus, Strabrook, and Berriedale in Caithness, became Oliphant of Berriedale, and was ancestor of the Oliphants of Gask.
3. Laurence, appointed by the Pope Abbot of Inchaffray, 16th November 1495. He was killed at Flodden.
4. George, known as Oliphant of Balmakcorne.
5. Margaret, contracted to George, Master of Angus, in 1485; but the match was broken off.

The second wife of Lord Oliphant was Elizabeth Cunningham of Glengarnock.<sup>3</sup>

There are two mentions of John, the eldest son of

<sup>1</sup> Douglas.

<sup>2</sup> For a full list of these bound to serve Lord Oliphant *see* the Oliphants in Scotland. His immediate neighbours, the Rollos of Duncrub, and Moray of Abercairny, were among them.

<sup>3</sup> She survived him, and was married again to Sir John Elphinstone of Airth. Scots Peerage, vol. vi.

the first lord, during his father's lifetime; one in a suit against him by the Abbot of Lindores in 1488, and again in 1492, when an action was brought against him, together with his father, for "the inordinate execution of thare office of Sherefschip." A bond of mutual manrent between Lord Graham and John, Lord Oliphant, in April 1500, proves that the first lord was then dead. John outlived him only sixteen years. He was present at the Parliament held at Edinburgh in 1503, and was a witness to James IV.'s marriage settlement with Margaret Tudor in March. In the Treasurer's accounts, dated 20th February 1506, is the following entry:—

"To Johne Beg, messenger passance to the Beschopes of Dumblane Dunkelden the Lordis Oliphant and Drummond to cum to the Cristenyng of the Prince 10s."<sup>1</sup>

Seven years afterwards, all his hopes shattered, his hearth bereft, Oliphant was at the first Parliament of the infant James V. at Perth.

John Oliphant had married, in his father's lifetime, Elizabeth Campbell, daughter of Colin, first Earl of Argyll. The children were:—

1. John, engaged in infancy to marry Margaret, daughter of William, first Lord Ruthven. She was required by her parents to fulfil the contract, 15th June 1494. She refused to do so as she had no carnal affection for the said John, who may be said to have had a lucky escape. She afterwards married four times, about 1499, 1508, 1518, 1534. Three of her husbands died violent deaths, and one was divorced. John must have died without issue before 1505.
2. Colin, who was killed at Flodden, married Lady Elizabeth Keith,<sup>2</sup> and left two sons, Laurence, afterwards third Lord Oliphant, born about 1505, and William, born after 1506.

<sup>1</sup> This was Prince James, son of James IV., and Margaret Tudor, born at Holyrood, February 1506, who died within a year—one of the five children of the family, who all died in infancy.

<sup>2</sup> She survived him, and married secondly William, Lord Sinclair.

3. John, a Burgess of Perth, in July 1531. He married Margaret Swinton, and left children. Nothing remains to show when they were born or where the family lived.

The shadow of Flodden falls at this time upon the history of Scotland. It was the last enterprise of a king whose sympathies were rather with deeds of ancient chivalry and the days of knighthood than with the intriguing and vehement spirit of the sixteenth century. Henry VIII. was threatening France with invasion, and France turned to her old ally, Scotland, for help. The Scottish King replied in the old way by at once invading England. It was a wonderful host that arose at his call—a mighty feudal army a hundred thousand strong. The great vassals of the Crown called out the lesser vassals, the Highlands and Islands sent their men, every family sent its soldier, all Scotland contributed to swell the host that at the heels of the impetuous James poured over the Border, on a quarrel that was none of theirs. But there was no enthusiasm for the cause, for a war undertaken at the call of a foreign power, to settle a far-off quarrel between two alien nations. Two hundred years before the field of Bannockburn gathered together the “flowers of the forest.” But Bannockburn was fought on a national issue, and resulted in national independence. Flodden neither avenged nor undid the work of Bannockburn; it left no fruits of victory. The tragedy of Flodden is that it is a history of life sacrificed in vain; a great disaster that leads nowhere and to nothing. The fight lasted three hours, and ten thousand Scotsmen fell on the field. Happy for the knightly spirit of the King that he himself was among the dead. In every household there was mourning; over all Scotland clung the dire shadow of bereavement. The best, the noblest, the strongest had answered to the King’s call, and marched away under his standard never to return.

The House of Oliphant was left desolate as the rest. Lord Oliphant had sent forth his son, the Master, and his brother, the Abbot, and both were killed; the father

did not long survive. He died in 1516, three years after the death of his son, leaving his name and great possessions to his grandson Laurence, the third Lord Oliphant, then eleven years old.

Never was an emptier victory to England than that of Flodden; though the results of the battle were, it is true, greatly to the detriment of Scotland. The death of the King placed once more an infant on the throne, and threw the power of the kingdom into the hands of whoever could manage to retain the guardianship of the baby King. Queen Margaret, then in her twenty-fourth year, seemed to the people, in the first flush of their despair after Flodden, the fit Regent and guardian of her own royal child. She was a capable woman, but resembled her brother, Henry VIII., in so far that treachery was natural to her; she trafficked with England almost openly. The nation saw the danger in time. Henry's anxious effort was to get the little King and his brother, the infant Duke of Ross,<sup>1</sup> into his power, by inducing Margaret to bring them across the Border. Instantly the nobles and gentles of Scotland were divided into two camps—those who supported the Queen, and those who were resolved against her influence and England's interference. The hopes of this latter party lay with the Duke of Albany, son of a brother of James III., and the next heir to the throne, who lived in France, and who was now summoned to return to take up the reins of the Regency.

Meanwhile, within a year after Flodden, the Queen Widow of James IV. had married again. She chose as her husband the young Earl of Angus, representative of the great House of Douglas—a bad choice for Scotland. For a short time the supreme power of Scotland was in the hands of Angus and the Douglases. What fatality might have ensued we do not know had Margaret remained on good terms with her young husband; but their interests were soon divided. When Albany came,

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Stuart, Duke of Ross, sixth child of James IV. and Margaret Tudor, born 1514, and died the following year.

Parliament settled to remove the King and his infant brother, the Duke of Ross, from the dangerous custody of the Queen, but in the years that followed James V. was the hapless pawn in the game played by all the nobles in their contentions and ambitions—now in the power of one faction, now of another—till he won his own freedom at last by escaping out of the hands of the Douglas family when he was sixteen years old.

At Dupplin or at Aberdalgie the whole training of the two Oliphant boys would be devoted to strengthening loyalty to the Scottish party and the King. Nearly the whole nobility was ranged on the side of Albany against the Queen Mother and Angus. The struggle over the person of the King, and between the rival factions of a distracted country, went on from the time that Lord Oliphant was eight years old, all through his youth, till manhood fitted him to take a part in his country's affairs.

The shadow of Flodden hung darkly over his early years. He and his brother were old enough to know the sad meaning of the name, and to realise that all the happenings of which they heard in childhood—the tales of raid, slaughter, burnings, sieges, and retreats, the cruel violence of the times, the uncertainties and treacheries which shadowed their horizon—were traceable to the bitter disaster which had left them fatherless. The boys were probably sent to school, for Scotland, in the midst of her calamities, had part in the general revival of interest in classical learning, the advances of printing, and the onward movement of intellectual life all over Europe. In 1499 an Act was passed decreeing that all barons and freeholders must send their sons to school at eight or nine years, to stay until they knew Latin. Afterwards they were obliged to study law for three years.

While their education went on, the two boys would soon learn on which side their sympathies were to be thrown, in the vehement disputes which distracted the country. Brought up to fidelity to the ancient church

of their race, they would see with distrust the immense changes of the Reformation beginning to work and to grow. Over the civilised world the agitations of the new thought were changing all political and social life. The Oliphants were staunchly Catholic; they served a Catholic King and a Catholic Government, and believed in the possibility of turning back the great tide of national religious thought which was soon to begin to set steadily towards reform.

Lord Oliphant was seven years older than the King, and attained manhood just as James V. emerged from childhood and knew himself a prisoner. It was a great hour for the loyal nobles when the emancipation came, and he finally threw off the thralldom of Angus and the Douglasses. The Parliament of 1528 was the most momentous of the reign, a triumphant scene for Lord Oliphant and the other Royalists present, when the Bill of Attainder was passed against Angus, which set James finally free, and declared the Douglas land, life, and goods to be forfeit. Angus entered upon an active rebellion; but rebellions were everywhere. The King was destined never to know peace; the desolation of civil war swept unceasingly over his kingdom. He never forgave the Douglasses, who had caused him to pass his youth in a torment of captivity under the name of protection.

Lord Oliphant attended the Parliament which met at Edinburgh in 1541—the year before the King's death. The laws against heresy had been strengthened, and the clergy warned to amend the scandal of their lives, which brought endless discredit on the ancient Church. The Government now proposed to pass a law enforcing respect

“for the honor of the haly sacramentis, for worship to be had to the Virgin Mary, and that na man argun the Pope's auctorite.”

James V. never realised the difference in the national characteristics that made English methods impossible



in his own kingdom. To so devout a son of the Church the shadow of heresy was one of the darkest that gathered about him in the last dark days of his life. The inglorious defeat of Solway Moss added the last touch to the endless bereavements and distresses of his career. He had no longer any hold on life. True to the destiny of his race, he was fated, while still young himself, to leave his kingdom to the inevitable stress and storm of successive regencies, under the nominal reign of an infant. This had been the history of the Crown for a hundred and thirty-six years.

Most of the chief nobles of Scotland had ridden forth in the raid that ended in the disaster of Solway Moss. Lord Oliphant was among those taken prisoner; others were Cassilis, Glencairn, Maxwell, Fleming, Somerville. Thomas Dacre writes from Lanercost, about the battle, to the Privy Council on 9th December 1542:—

“Besuching your good Lordships for the love of God that every mans service that was doon that day may be trewlye tryed. . . . I besuche your good Lordships to be good lords to this berer this gentilman, who has done the Kings Majestie good service at all times, and specially at this last journey, and he can declare as miche thereof as any man can, for he was bothe at the begynnyng and at the ending, and he tuke the Lord Oliphant prisoner, and delivered him to Maister Wardein to send to the Kings Majestie.”<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the King's death at Falkland, three weeks after the battle, Oliphant was on the southward road on his way to an English prison. Dacre appointed his own servant, George Pott, to attend on Lord Oliphant. On 16th December Dacre and his prisoners were at Newark upon Trent.

“Therle of Glencarne, the Lord Olyphant and dyvers others be *crased*, so that we think it wolbe Tuesday late at nyght befor we can come to London.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Papers, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 385.

On 20th December he was in the Tower of London with the others who had ridden with him. Afterwards they were confided to the care of English noblemen. News came to him of the King's death, and of the birth of his daughter, the Princess Mary; also a report of Mary's death, which must soon have been contradicted. The captivity to which all these Scots prisoners were subjected was made as pleasant as possible. Henry VIII. saw in them the prospect of powerful help, and had no desire to embitter the existence of men who might, with a little tact, be made convenient instruments towards the absorption of Scotland. He saw, too, that they might be more useful to his cause if at home in Scotland rather than scattered throughout English castles. Therefore the Scots' lords were well entertained, given presents by the King, and pleased with promises of liberty. All were exceedingly anxious to get home to Scotland, for in those days to be away from his estates might mean danger and loss to a man who had won and held them at the sword's point. Henry knew their anxiety, and did not intend to let his valuable prisoners go for nothing. The annexation of Scotland had never seemed so near. Nothing but the frail life of the baby Mary stood in the way. If she died, so much the better; if she lived, she could be married to his son Edward.

To Henry it seemed as if the dream was to come true at last. From the prisoners disgraceful promises were extorted. They were to help Henry to get possession of the person of the baby Queen, and of Cardinal Beaton, with others who might stand in Henry's way, and to betray the chief fortresses of Scotland into his hands. In return he offered them liberty and peace. The prisoners were then set free. The group of traitors went back to Scotland,<sup>1</sup> having agreed and set their hands to an article binding them to support Henry in Scotland. Cassilis, Glencairn, Maxwell, Fleming, Somerville, Grey, Erskine, Angus, and Bothwell, some of the proudest names in Scotland's history, are on this

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Papers, p. 367.

roll of shame. The signature of Lord Oliphant is not there; he, too, won liberty and rode back to his home, but not by this base betrayal. Whatever may have been the means of his freedom, he never signed the discreditable document.

The old custom of leaving an eldest son as hostage still prevailed. Lord Oliphant and Lord Fleming were obliged to yield their boys in order to regain liberty. At this time, however, such captivity entailed no hardship. The young Master of Oliphant, then fifteen years old, was merely sent into the household of Lord Duresme at Darlington, a small sacrifice to secure his father's liberty at a time when his absence might mean ruin to the house. It is not known how long the boy may have remained in the charge of Lord Duresme. When in the August after the meeting of the first Parliament of Queen Mary's reign, 1543, the treaty with England was ratified at Holyrood, Arran, then Governor of Scotland, sent word to the King of England,

"to keep the Lord Fleming's heir, and the Lord Oliphant's heir, which do now by pledges in England, for the Governor would be loath to ly in pledge any other of his friends, and he will enter bonds for the payment of their ransoms."<sup>1</sup>

The Governor also writes to the King on 25th August 1543:—

"We desire that it suld stand with the plesoure of your Majesti to reserve the sonnys of the Lords Flemyng, Erskin, and Oliphant, lying all reddy in England, for to be ostages in the roume of the thre baronis; quhilke beand done sall not alanerlye (only) halde the saidis Lordis (now being in number of thame that has usurpit,) in grett feir and dreid to attempt aganis the Commoun weill of this realm, but sall unliknis keipe utheris noble men at home, whose power and counsale is necessar to the dounsetting of this insurrection."<sup>2</sup>

We have Sir Ralph Sadler's account of this first

<sup>1</sup> Sadler's State Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton Papers, p. 661.

Parliament, March 1543. He gives the names to Henry of those who might be open to a bribe; but again the name of Oliphant was not among them. Sadler describes Oliphant as "most hard to manage," and Lord Herries chronicling events says that

"many noblemen and in special those who were prisoners and had left their sons pledges for them in England, repented their hasty conclusion and by general consent resolved to cross the business."

The promise to yield up the "Daughter of Scotland" at ten years old to England was the clause that caused "great sticking among them." The Solway prisoners who had been ready to betray their country were now as ready to break their word. But even had they kept troth, the country would never have ratified the terms of Henry's proposals. Lord Oliphant signed the answer of the Scottish lords in January 1542-1543. The nobles must have known enough of the general temper of the country to be aware that any promises made to Sadler to part with the baby Queen Mary would not be redeemed. Nevertheless, the farce went on, and Sadler was able to write to the King of England, on 25th August 1543, that the treaties were ratified and confirmed in Edinburgh,

"which was solemnly done at the High Mass, solemnly sung with Shalms and Sackbuts in the Abbey Church of the Holyroodhouse."

But Henry VIII. got neither the castles nor the crown, nor Cardinal Beaton, nor the little Queen, for Mary, then seven months old, was carried away by her loyal subjects from Linlithgow to Stirling Castle, her engagement to Henry's son broken off, and her coronation solemnised. Scotland kept her independence; paying for it with the distresses of a five years' war with England. In December 1543 Lord Oliphant was present at the Parliament held at Edinburgh. The Reformation was gaining ground, for among the lords there "was gret murmure that heretikis mair and mair rises and spreadis." Oliphant lived to hear of the doings of the Parliament of

1560, which turned Scotland officially into a Protestant country. He did not himself attend the Parliament, and he remained a Catholic. There is no record of what part he may have taken in national affairs during the regencies. He lived to see the young Queen married to Darnley in 1565, and died the next year.

The third Lord Oliphant married Margaret, daughter of James Sandilands of Calder. His children were:—

1. Laurence, afterwards fourth Lord Oliphant.
2. Peter, who got the lands of Turin and Dromy, and was the ancestor of the Oliphants of Langton.<sup>1</sup>
3. William, who died without leaving legitimate children.<sup>2</sup>
4. Catherine, married first to Sir Alexander Oliphant of Kellie, and secondly to George Dundas of Dundas. She died 12th December 1602, leaving issue.
5. Margaret, married first, 1553, to William Moray of Abercairney, and secondly to James Clephane of Carselogie—by whom she had six children. Thirdly to Ninian Bonar, younger of Keltie, without issue. She died 1580.
6. Jean, married 1550, to William Moncrieffe of Moncrieffe, and had issue.
7. Lilius, married 1561, to Robert Lundie of Balgonie. They had five sons and eight daughters. She died before 1588.

Of Laurence, the fourth Lord Oliphant, born in 1529, we hear first in 1543, as an hostage for his father, at the house of Lord Duresme at Darlington. The records of his career show him to have been an ardent supporter of Queen Mary. As the point in the history of the Oliphants is now reached where the Oliphants of Newton and Gask make a distinct branch, it is not possible to follow out the history in detail of the Lords Oliphant;

<sup>1</sup> He married first Jean Hepburn, natural daughter of Patrick, Bishop of Moray, and widow of Ross of Craigie; secondly, Agnes Collace, widow of James Rollok of Duncrub. By his first wife he had six sons.

<sup>2</sup> He left a son Walter, and a daughter Catherine; the latter married in 1607 Andrew Miller, tailor, South Queensferry.

but it must here be told that the fourth lord who succeeded his father in 1566 was one of those who assisted at the mock trial of Bothwell for Darnley's murder, 12th April, and was one of the nineteen lords who signed the fatal bond to Bothwell at "Ainslie's supper" (19th April 1567), with all its wicked clauses, declaring it inexpedient that the Queen, then nine weeks a widow by the death of Darnley, should remain unmarried, and that their host, Bothwell, was not guilty of Darnley's murder, and was fit to be the Queen's husband. This was the bond which Bothwell, five days later, showed to the despairing Queen to induce her to consent to the marriage, when he had carried her off to Dunbar. Events followed fast in the dark days of Mary's downfall; a flood of disastrous circumstances sweeping her away to destruction.

Lord Oliphant, only three months after Darnley's death, was present with eight other Scottish lords at the grim Protestant wedding, where "neither pleasure nor pastime was used"—the blackest spot in all her tragedy. The day after the wedding Oliphant was admitted by the Queen to be of her Privy Council. He was one of those who had two secret meetings with Bothwell to discuss how she might be delivered from Lochleven, and his name is among the twenty-seven who entered into a bond, at Hamilton, to stand by her. Again he was one of the twenty Scottish lords who wrote to Queen Elizabeth from Largs, 25th July 1568, when Mary had been two months a prisoner in England, to ask for her release. He was one of the sixteen appointed by Queen Mary in her prison at Bolton Castle, 1569, to advise with Chatelherault, Huntly, and Argyll on the affairs of the kingdom. Six months afterwards Lord Oliphant was at Inverness with the Regent Moray in the baby King's service. But the murder of the Regent early in 1570 raised the Queen's men again into activity. Lord Oliphant joined in the march on Edinburgh from Linlithgow in April; by September he would seem again to have relapsed, and to have "becum obedient."

His history from first to last is a stirring record, on account chiefly of private feuds; his character is indicated in the following account:—

“Few gentlemen of his surname and soe of small power, yet a house very loyall to the State of Scotland, accounted no orators in their words, nor yet fooles in their deeds.<sup>1</sup> They do not surmount in their alliances, but content with their worshipfull neighbours.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Oliphant raised a fine monument to his name in the Castle of Newtyle in Forfarshire, which he built to command the pass from Strathmore to Dundee. It is a noble ruin still bearing the date 1575, the oldest specimen of any Oliphant building still remaining. It was afterwards sold to Halyburton of Pitcur, and is now the property of Lord Wharncliffe.

<sup>2</sup> MS. in the Public Record Office, London.

## CHAPTER IV

### OLD LIFE OF SCOTLAND

To understand the double descent in male and female line of the Oliphants of Gask from the Lords Oliphant, it is necessary to go back to William, the second son of the first lord, who married Christian Sutherland of Berriedale in Caithness, and was afterwards known as William Oliphant of Berriedale.

The story of the life of Christian Sutherland—this remote ancestress of the Gask family—is an illustration of the evil times that could fall to the lot of a woman in those early days, if she had the misfortune to own property. Caithness, in the last half of the fifteenth century, was the scene of perpetual feudal warfare, of endless feuds, of wild aggression, of fierce revenges. Generations were to pass before this remote district was to be brought into line with the requirements of modern civilisation, and meantime, it merely formed the ground for the hostilities of several great families — first the Cheynes and the Guns, and later the Sinclairs, Sutherlands, and Keiths. Christian was born into an extremely undesirable inheritance, having the misfortune to be a great heiress. She inherited Duffus in Moray, Strabrock in West Lothian, and Berriedale in Caithness.

The date of Christian's birth is not known; but her father, Alexander Sutherland, died in 1480,<sup>1</sup> while she was still a minor. After his death "her marriage was in the King's hand." James III. made the most of the valuable asset of the person of Christian and her broad acres. He sold her to Laurence, first Lord Oliphant, who paid a

<sup>1</sup> Acta Dominorum Concilii, p. 63.



heavy price to secure her in marriage to his second son William. The marriage was accomplished before 1489, as there is a charter<sup>1</sup> of that date regarding any heirs that might be born. No sooner had the marriage taken place than her uncle, William Sutherland of Quarrelwood, in Caithness, a younger brother of her father, brought a case to prove Christian illegitimate.<sup>2</sup> Quarrelwood seems to have borne some implacable grudge against her. The illegitimacy suit was a serious affair, not only for her peace of mind, but also for Lord Oliphant, who must have felt that his money had been riskily invested. The case came before the Sheriff, and was given in her favour in April 1494; but an appeal was made to the spiritual court, and it was finally carried to Rome and fought out during several years, till settled by a decree arbitral about 1507, when Duffus went to the opposing claimant, and Christian got the Caithness lands.

The expense of the defence fell upon Lord Oliphant. During the progress of the litigation he extended his protection to the unhappy Christian, and to his son, her husband, William Oliphant, maintaining them in his own house. Doubtless it was a large gathering for which he made himself responsible, and the hospitality was a strain on the family resources. Whether the home was made at Dupplin or at some of the other Oliphant strongholds, does not appear, nor are dates available to place these events exactly. Perhaps the eight children of William and Christian may have been born during this troublous time, when the wife did not know that she could claim any of her inheritance or even her name. The children were:—

1. George, died 1511.
2. Charles, died 1517-1518.
3. Andrew. He contracted to marry any one of the three sisters of John, Earl of Caithness, in 1520—the sister to be chosen by the Earl. Andrew died before March 1529-1530.

<sup>1</sup> Martin's Coll. of MSS, Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.

<sup>2</sup> The circumstances are mentioned in a deed given in the Oliphants in Scotland, charter 114.

4. Laurence.<sup>1</sup>
5. Helen, married Thomas Mowat.
6. Katherine, married — Isoun.
7. Janet.
8. Another daughter, said to have been married to George Gordon of Coclarachie.

There is a charter, dated 12th August 1497,<sup>2</sup> granting the lands and barony of Strabrock in Linlithgow, and also Caithness estates to William and Christian and their son George, and failing him, to Charles. There is no mention of Andrew, who may not have been born at the time. A picturesque glimpse can be seen of Christian on her lands in Caithness.<sup>3</sup>

“Sasine given by Cristane Sutherland of Duffus, lady superior of the half lands of Reis and Akirgill, who passed with John Mowat as Bailie to the ground of Akirgill and there near the toft (?) of the House of Knappo, she gave possession to Alexander Birsbane of the Akirgill, commanding the bailie to do the same in name of William Oliphant her spouse, which he did, a fire there being first extinguished and again lighted in name and on behalf of Birsbane. The bailie then passed to the town of Reis, and there without delay at the Hall of Reis, gave Sasine to Birsbane of half the lands of Reis by earth and stone, first extinguishing the fire and again kindling it in the name of Birsbane; the bailie then taking a great horned ox with a mixture of red, feeding on the lands and leading it away with him in token of such sasine. Done on the lands 15th March 1497-1498.”

George Oliphant, the eldest son, was alive in 1507,<sup>4</sup> and died in 1511. His brother Charles was murdered by his great-uncle, William Sutherland, or his friends and successors in Caithness. William Oliphant, the father,

<sup>1</sup> Laurence, third Lord Oliphant, in an obligation to Andrew Oliphant, promises to hold this Laurence in household with “ane honest servand, and gyff he plecis nocht to remain wyth me, I sall gif him yeirlye twenti £1 monie efter the said Andrew’s decess he havand no aris maile.” Oliphants in Scotland, charter 113.

<sup>2</sup> Oliphants in Scotland, charter 63.

<sup>3</sup> Laing’s Charters, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup> Martin’s Coll. of MSS.

was dead when this deed was done. He died in 1509.<sup>1</sup> Christian and the one remaining son, Andrew, were left to seek what vengeance they might, but justice was not easily obtained. The case was submitted to the arbitration of John Lord Forbes and two others, 17th March 1517.<sup>2</sup> The end of the affair has not come to light. Christian, who had married again Sir Thomas Lundin of Pratis, died between 1517 and 1526, leaving Andrew to the storms and inquietude of his great inheritance. He bore the strain and stress for a very few years. His uncle, John, second Lord Oliphant, died in 1516. Andrew waited only till the third Lord, born in 1505, attained his majority in 1525, and he then took measures to rid himself of what he felt was an intolerable burden. He did not feel capable of protecting his vast possessions, and he had no son to inherit them. Nothing is known of his marriage, except that he had three daughters, Margaret, Katherine, and Helen. It is evident he had no wish to see them, as heiresses, suffer as his mother had suffered. He therefore resigned his estates in Caithness to his cousin, the third Lord Oliphant. The document<sup>3</sup> of Confirmation under the Great Seal of a charter by Andrew Oliphant of Berriedale in favour of Laurence Oliphant of the lands of Berriedale and others, is dated 20th May 1526. All the sorrows and bitterness of Andrew's heart are in the paper. He sets forth the array of the family misfortunes: the deadly enmity of Quarrelwood, the painful dependence of his parents during the lawsuit, the dreadful and cruel death of his brother Charles, the impossibility of living on his own estates "without the danger of death from the insults and plots of his enemies." Still a young man, his words are those of one who has suffered the storms of a long and unhappy life; he is only anxious to shake off his responsibilities, to make some reparation to the successors of his grandfather, the first Lord Oliphant, for all the impoverishment the Caithness affairs had caused. Lord Oliphant, on his

<sup>1</sup> Gask Papers.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* charter 114.

<sup>2</sup> Oliphants in Scotland, charter 111.

side, was to undertake to find husbands for Andrew's three daughters ;

“giff it sall happin the said Andro mane Eemm to deces and nodet have na aris maile to be gottin of his body, that I and my aris sall of nyne and that cost and expenss caus be maireit all the dochteris gottin or to be gottin lauchfullie be the said Andro apon laudit men, as mony as the said Andro providis nodit in his tym.”<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to understand why Andrew, who at this date was probably about twenty - eight or less, should have given up all hope of male heirs ; his daughters<sup>2</sup> must have been little children at the time. However, no son was born, nor did he find prospective husbands for his little daughters before his death in 1529. Nineteen years after Lord Oliphant got the Caithness estates, he was called upon to fulfil the obligation towards the three cousins. He lost no time in doing so. It would seem natural enough to give the eldest daughter Margaret to his own brother, William Oliphant of Newton, thus keeping the promised dowry in the family. She was married to him between June 1545 and the following January. Very soon after the second sister Katherine was married to James, son of Andrew Oliphant of Binzean. The contract of marriage<sup>3</sup> is dated 12th January 1545, and James Oliphant engages to

“contract marriage and solemnyssat the samin in face of halye Kirk” “betwix this and the fest of Candilmas nixttocum.”

Neither bride nor bridegroom could write their names. The contract is signed James Oliphant and Katherine Oliphant, “with our handis *led at the pen* be me Sir James Fentton Notar Publict.”

As to Helen, the last of the three sisters, record is silent, but in all likelihood Lord Oliphant found a “landit man” for her also.

<sup>1</sup> Oliphants in Scotland, charter 113.

<sup>2</sup> There were five daughters altogether, but two died young. Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 542.

<sup>3</sup> Oliphants in Scotland, charter 122.

The descent in the male line of the Gask family from the Lords Oliphant is in William Oliphant of Newton the husband of Margaret Oliphant of Berriedale. He was the second son of Colin, the Master of Oliphant, who fell at Flodden. The following list of the children of William of Newton and his wife Margaret, the daughter of Berriedale, will show how many of the Oliphant families derive their descent from the second Lord Oliphant.

1. Laurence, from whom are descended the Oliphants of Gask, the Oliphants of Orchardmill, the Oliphants in Holland, the Oliphants of Ure, the Oliphants of Souterton, and Tomperran.

2. John.

3. A son whose name has not been discovered. Alexander Albany Herald *is claimed* to have been the third son, and the father of the first Laird of Condie. Alexander's wife was Janet Oliphant, and their son Laurence, first of Condie, was undoubtedly grandson of William of Newton, but whether on father or mother's side is not known. From this couple are descended the Oliphants of Condie, the Oliphants of Rossie, the Oliphants of Kinnedder, in Fife.

4. Colin.

5. Andrew, styled fifth son.

The life story of William Oliphant of Newton is not easy to see clearly. The date of his birth, as before-mentioned, was between 1506 and 1513. His boyhood was probably passed at school, according to the law of the land, and his home would be with his brother, the third Lord Oliphant, at Dupplin. Nothing is recorded of him in his youth; the first glimpse is in a charter<sup>1</sup> dated 1538. In 1543 he had acquired right to the west half of the Newton of Forgandenny lands, lying across the river from Aberdalgie and Gask. From this possession he was styled Oliphant of Newton; the charter is from Crichton of Freudraught, and is dated 22nd

<sup>1</sup> Oliphants in Scotland, p. 349

November 1545. It is said that the House of Condie was built about 1545 by William Oliphant of Newton,<sup>1</sup> and was then called Newton House. If so, it is probable, as 1545 was the year of his marriage, that he and his wife Margaret lived there, and that their five sons were born there.

Looking to the latter half of his life, the only part of which record remains, it is clear that William Oliphant was not a man of peace. Whether from their own aggressions, or from the turbulence of neighbours, both he and his nephew, the fourth lord, were always to the fore in the private feuds and skirmishes of Perthshire and Caithness. One of the first documents of the reign of James VI. concerns a quarrel between the Oliphants and Lord Ruthven, Patrick Murray of Tippermuir, and others. The King was a year old—he is called in the document, which is dated 27th July 1567, “King of Scottis,” although the coronation did not take place till two days later.

William, fourth Lord Ruthven, afterwards first Earl of Gowrie, has been described as having a keen appetite for private revenge.<sup>2</sup> What the original dispute with the Oliphants was about is not now discoverable. The wonder is that Ruthven, then deeply implicated in the stormy events of the history of the day, could have had time to do the work of a private thief in a cellar.<sup>3</sup> He was a son of the third Lord Ruthven, who, a dying man, had broken tempestuously into Queen Mary's presence, clad in armour and without announcement, to lead the murderers of Rizzio. He is described as a man of savage manners, and perhaps on that account was felt to be a suitable gaoler; the Queen was placed at Lochleven under his charge and that of Lord Lindsay. On the 1st July Ruthven insisted on being present when Melvil interviewed the Queen, and on the 24th played his part in forcing her deeds of abdication.

<sup>1</sup> Or and Sable, p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser Tytler, *Hist. of Scot.*

<sup>3</sup> It is strange that the traitor Ruthven should, through the marriage of his daughter, have been the grandfather of the great loyalist, Montrose.

On the 29th he was present at the coronation of the baby King. Between these two events he had, on the 21st July, been in Perth with Patrick Murray, Thomas Monypeny, Williame Flemyng, and Walter Pyper, burgesses, and certain other persons, and had

“spulzeit and tuke fra the said William Oliphant out of a cellar ‘certain vittal with gold, silver and other geir belonging to him, being for the time in the said cellar, and they knowing perfectly that the complainer would sue them therefore,—thereupon they daily sell, annul, dispose and put away their lands, heritages corn, cattle and goods in defraude of the said complainer their creditor,’ ‘tending thair throw to frustrate him alluterlie, to his grete hurt and skayth and expres againis justice.’ ”

It was ordered to be proclaimed from the Mercat Cross at Perth, and other places, that the offenders should not be allowed to sell, pawn, or dispose of any of their property, nor should their “bairnis” or their “friendis” receive any property from them. Nothing more of the story is recorded. Possibly William Oliphant got his cellarful of valuables back again, or their equivalent; but the Oliphants continued on bad terms with the Ruthvens till a reconciliation, fifteen years later.

William Oliphant and his nephew, the fourth lord, appear about this time to have been specially tempted to violence, generally traceable to differences of religious opinion, in an age when tolerance was unknown. Two episodes concern Gask itself, of which there is at this period so little recorded, that the stories are here given, as they appear in the “Register of Privy Council.” The date is 25th September 1570.

“Complaint at the instance of John Duncan ‘Auld Jhonne’ in the Kirkland of Findogask against Laurence Oliphant and Gilbert Young, Walter Perny and John Stewart of Nether Findogask. They came at Lord Oliphant’s instigation to the old man’s ‘maling’ at 11 o’clock at night while he was ‘uponne his own rig, looking at the corn, Soliter his alane in sober and quyvet manner.’ There they set upon him, striking him with

their 'battones and blunt end of their staffis and wappins, bostit straik and dang him on his bak, face and schulderis,' and then carried him away prisoner to Dupplin Castle<sup>1</sup> 'where he is still a captive.'"

No light is thrown upon the motive for the outrage or upon the character of Auld Jhonne. Nothing appears to have been done, beyond ordering his release from Dupplin.

Again, on 16th August 1571, at the instance of William Melrose, minister at Findogask, the following persons were summoned, Laurence, Lord Oliphant, William Oliphant, his "father-brother," John Oliphant, his servant, and various other Oliphants and Friskens. The complainer appeared personally and said:—

"On 4th August they came to the Manse of Findogask and there masterfully destroyit and pat to the ground his nail chamber, cuttit the ruife of it and destroyit the lofting of the same. So that the same William, being true Minister of the Word of God, was utterly destitute of a place wherein he might study and make his residence, for serving of the 'parochinaris' of Findogask, both to his utter 'wrak and heirship' and to the 'parochinaris' great loss of wanting of his accustomed service in the said Kirk.'"

The indignant minister got justice. Lord Oliphant was ordered by the Regent and Council to pay him within twenty days thirty pounds for damage done, and to permit him to

"cast fail and divot and to win stanes within my pairt of the said chalmer again."

The aggressors had carried away all the timber "quhilk was portabill." The origin of the attack is not stated. This was in August; a far worse affair is recorded on 20th September—when Lord Oliphant with various members of his family, including his uncle, William of Newton, was said to have killed James Ross, son of

<sup>1</sup> There was a "Thievis Hole" at Dupplin.



the deceased Thomas Ross of Maitlands. The story is difficult to disentangle, owing to the confusion of fierce feudal disputes between neighbours and kinsmen. The original quarrel seems to have been between the Oliphants and a branch of the Rosses of Craigie. John Ross of Craigie was Governor of the Spey Tower in Perth, a strong prison, only demolished a hundred years ago.

In July 1571 the Rosses expelled Jane Hepburn, widow of Thomas Rose, now wife of Peter Oliphant of Turingis, from the house and fortalice of Malare. Probably Jane had been left in possession under the will of her first husband, and saw no sense in giving it up when she chose a second.

On the 20th September of the same year, the Oliphants were concerned in a broil with Ross of Maitland, in the course of which James Ross was killed. A year passed, and again in September Lord Ruthven and the Ross party, two hundred in number, went to Dupplin and besieged it, hoping to have killed Lord Oliphant. They took some of the servants prisoners and kept them in irons at Perth.

The career of the fourth Lord Oliphant was certainly not wanting in interest and excitement. To the private quarrels, battles and revenges which made up the ordinary life of a Scottish country gentleman in those days, were added a part in all the great historical developments of the hour.

Of his domestic life little is known. He had married, in 1551, Margaret Hay, daughter of the seventh Earl of Erroll. She died before 1593. Their children<sup>1</sup> were:—

1. Laurence, Master of Oliphant, married, 1576, Christian, daughter of William Douglas of Lochleven.
2. John, who was of age in 1588. His father gave him a charter of a great part of the Oliphant lands, including Newtyle, a powerful stronghold. Though only a younger brother of the real

<sup>1</sup> A natural daughter, Katherine, married first James Weymss of Lathockar, and second Hugh Hay.

master and an uncle of the fifth lord, he is styled Master of Oliphant, which has given rise to some confusion.

3. William, styled "of Gask" 1595. He married Katherine, daughter of John Brown of Fordell.
4. Elizabeth, married William, tenth Earl of Angus.
5. Jean married, 1586, Alexander Bruce of Cultmalundie.
6. Euphame, married James Johnston of Westerhall.

The Lords Oliphant were among the largest landholders in Caithness. The property included six castles, of which Berriedale and Auldwick were the strongest. Accounts of all that went on there in the way of feud and foray make it easy to realise that it was not a desirable heritage. The Sutherlands in Duffus must have been unpleasant neighbours, nor did the absolute rule of the Earl of Caithness tend to promote the ends of peace and justice. At the fortress of Auldwick, which still exists, Lord Oliphant was besieged in 1569 for eight days, by John, Master of Caithness. There was no well in the keep, which accordingly was taken. The Caithness possessions caused infinite uneasiness in one way and another. No man could hope to hold the aggressions of his neighbours in check unless he lived on the land and could command his feudal army in person.

As it was impossible for Lord Oliphant, with all his Perthshire interests to protect, to do more than make occasional visits to his northern castles, it was decided at last that his uncle, William Oliphant of Newton, should take charge of the Caithness estates. This was about the year 1583. William Oliphant was at the time at least seventy years old—perhaps nearer eighty—a very great age in those days, and it was no light task to take control of such property.

In the month of July 1583 he was established in the house of Thrumster with his household of servants. The Sinclairs at the time had just had their hereditary powers of life and death reduced, by decret of the Lords of Council and Session, "as a power strange and

unsufferable." The Earl of Caithness, then a minor, had appealed to be appointed Justiciar as his fathers had been. The Council decided against him. It is not recorded in what way the Oliphants were involved in the matter—but the year following, in July 1583, David Sinclair, a natural brother of the young Earl of Caithness, came with a body of men at night and forcibly turned William Oliphant and all his servants out of his house of Thrumster, seizing the crops and all the goods and gear. In September following the same David came to the fortress of "Tusbuster and Braiwin," and violently ejected Lord Oliphant's servants, taking possession of goods and gear. Dame Margaret Hay, Lord Oliphant's wife, who was in Caithness "for doing of her lawfull affairis," could not remain in the country. Lord Oliphant carried the matter before the court, and obtained decree against the Earl of Caithness, who took no notice, but continued to harry the Oliphant lands. He was then "put to the horn," and charged to go into prison in the Castle of Blackness.

Very little more is known of William Oliphant. In 1586 he bound himself to infest his eldest son Laurence in Newton. He died in 1588, leaving, as already stated, five sons.

Possibly after his death, the fourth Lord Oliphant was obliged to go personally more frequently into the wild Caithness country. He died there on 16th January 1593, and was "buried in the Kirk of Wik."

Of Laurence, Master of Oliphant, eldest son of the fourth lord, several exploits are on record, ending in the tragedy of his disappearance.

He married in 1576 one of the "seven pearls<sup>1</sup> of Lochleven," Christian, the second of the seven daughters of William Douglas<sup>2</sup> of Lochleven. The bride must

<sup>1</sup> The other six "pearls" were (1) Margaret, married 1574 to John Wemyss; (2) Mary, married in 1582 to Lord Ogilvy of Deskford; (3) Euphemia, married 1586 to Thomas Lyon, Master of Glamis; (4) Agnes, married 1592 to seventh Earl of Argyll; (5) Elizabeth, married before 1590 the ninth Earl of Erroll; (6) Jean, died unmarried.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards fifth Earl of Morton.

have been very young;<sup>1</sup> but she would be able to remember Queen Mary at Lochleven. There were two children of the marriage:—Laurence, afterwards fifth Lord Oliphant, born 25th March 1583; Anna or Agnes, who married in 1599 John, eighth Lord Lindsay of the Byres.

Christian's short married life was chequered with a thousand anxieties, for her husband, the Master, was seldom out of trouble, being as full of rash and headstrong plans, as given to violent methods, as ready to take offence, as were any of his forebears in wilder times. The first of his fatal quarrels was the slaughter of Traquair.

The Earl of Mar was married at the Castle of Kincardine in Strathearn, the seat of the Earl of Montrose in October 1580. Among other guests, the young King James was there, for the bridegroom of eighteen was his old playmate and schoolfellow "Jockie o' the Slaits." The bride was Anna Drummond second daughter of David, Lord Drummond.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Ruthven was present with his retinue at the festivities, and when these were over he rode with his eighty followers on the homeward road to Perth. The direct route lay past the lands of Dupplin, where his enemies, the Oliphants, watched the *cortège* riding through the valley. Ruthven was imprudent enough to approach too nearly the stronghold of Dupplin Castle. Probably no harm was intended; but at all events the presence of the little party so near the gates was interpreted as an act of bravado. An infuriated band of Oliphants and retainers led by the Master rode forth from the gates, prepared to fall upon Ruthven's little force, which, totally unprepared for hostilities, broke into flight, their leader among the rest. Five or six horsemen, however, stood their ground. Among these was young Alexander Stewart of Traquair, who without the slightest intention

<sup>1</sup> Her parents were married in or before 1565.

<sup>2</sup> She died before 1592, for in that year Lord Mar married again, Marie Stewart, daughter of the Duke of Lennox. One child was born of the Drummond marriage, John, Earl of Mar.

of showing fight, desired to remonstrate with the Master for a violent and unprovoked attack. While holding his ground with this view, the young man was unfortunately shot dead, by one of Oliphant's followers. The deed, says Godscroft, was "sore against Oliphant's mind and to his great grief." The Master was brought to trial in the following December for the murder of Traquair "with a poisoned bullet"; the criminal proceedings came to nothing, either through powerful influence, or because of evidence that the Master had given no orders to fire.

The Oliphant's feud with the Ruthvens debarred the family from taking part in the great doings of the day. Eventually the Master of Oliphant brought the quarrel to an end in his own way.

"On the night of the 20th of March 1582 at nyne hours, the Master of Oliphant came to the Lord Ruthven, now Erle of Gowrie, his chamber, without sword or aine other weapon and offered himself to his will."

The result was a complete reconciliation. The sequel was the Raid of Ruthven.

It is obvious that by this time the Oliphants had abandoned the faith of their forefathers, for the raiders represented the Protestant party, dividing sharply the two factions, and making Scotland realise that her questions of politics were in fact questions of religion. No Catholic was among the little group who held the King prisoner at Huntingtower, and went with him to Perth and Stirling.

The Raid of Ruthven was a bold and well-contrived plot which placed the Presbyterian party in full power for nearly a year. The Master of Oliphant was among the leaders of those three thousand armed men who, intercepting the King, who had been to Perth on a hunting expedition, on his way back to Edinburgh, carried him a prisoner to the Castle of Ruthven. It seems at this distance an almost incredible feat for a handful of subjects to possess themselves of the person of the Sovereign and to wield through him the supreme

power of the realm. The young King, a mere pawn in the game, was wholly at the mercy of his captors; he did as he was directed, and said what he was told to say. The Master of Oliphant attended the Parliament held in Holyrood on 19th October 1582, when the King was made to say that the Ruthven raiders had done "the dewtie of maist loving subjectis to their soverane Lord in their repairing and abiding with His Majistie." Not till June of the following year did King James, eluding the grasp of the Protestant lords, escape to St Andrews, and call to his side his old friends and favourites.

A new plot was formed within a few months to overthrow again the power of the King's advisers, and specially the inordinate influence of Arran. One of the objects of the conspiracy was the seizure of Stirling Castle, and in this attempt the Master of Oliphant was again to the fore. Most of his fellow conspirators fled to England; but, unfortunately for the House of Oliphant, the Master and young Robert Douglas of Lochleven, his wife's brother, obtained license to travel for three years, 24th December 1584. Neither of these young men was ever heard of again. They were reported to have perished in a fight with the Dutch, and their young widows<sup>1</sup> lost no time in marrying again. Christian Oliphant only waited one year. She married, 9th January 1586, Alexander, first Earl of Home.

No proof of the death of either Oliphant or Douglas was ever brought forward. Many years afterwards, about 1600, there was a rumour that the two men were known to be alive as captives at Algiers. A petition was presented to Queen Elizabeth that an expedition should be sent

"for the relief of the Master of Oliphant and the Master of Morton reported to be made slaves by the Turks and to be now detained in captivity in the town of Algiers, on the coast of Barbary."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Douglas had married in 1582 Jean Lyon, second daughter of John, eighth Lord Glamis. There was an only son, William, afterwards sixth Earl of Morton. After her husband's disappearance she married in 1587, Archibald, eighth Earl of Angus, and again in 1593 Lord Spynie.

<sup>2</sup> The document is printed in the *Oliphants in Scotland*, p. 141.

There is no evidence that anything was done in the matter, and it is possible that the gallant spirits of the two adventurous Scots were ground under the iron heel of the cruellest captivity then known to the world. A tablet has been placed in the English church at Algiers to their memory,

“1584. Laurence, Master of Oliphant, the Master of Morton and other banished Scottish gentlemen enslaved at Algiers, whence they were probably never released.”

The end of the terrible story will never now be known. Its results, as far as the Oliphant family was concerned, were disastrous. The death of the fourth lord in 1593 left the family honours and estates in the hands of the unfortunate Master's young son, then ten years old. His upbringing would be Protestant, as it was in the hands of the Douglasses, his mother's family. At the age of fifteen he was sent abroad,<sup>1</sup> and seems to have returned from his travels a Catholic. Owing to this change the fifth lord never took his position in the councils of his country. He seems to have had but little regard for public affairs. He married, in 1603, Lilius Drummond, eldest daughter of James, first Lord Maderty, and had an only daughter Ann, who married, as his first wife, in 1624, Sir James Douglas of Mordington.

In spite of a feud between himself and his uncle, John,<sup>2</sup> who was slain before 1604, Lord Oliphant wished to preserve the peerage in the male line. He therefore resigned his honours in favour of Patrick Oliphant, his first cousin, and son of his uncle, John. This arrangement seems somewhat strange, as he had in the month of May, 1617, attempted to murder Patrick. Patrick, however, was not killed, and it must be supposed the

<sup>1</sup> There is a passport, dated 8th December 1598, authorising “the bearer hereof the Lord Oliphant Scochman presently travelling to the Court with three servants, to be provided with four sufficient able post horses and a guide.” *Calendar of Border Papers*, vol. ii. p. 581.

<sup>2</sup> John called himself Master of Oliphant, and was so called by courtesy. He and his nephew lived in open hostility. John came to the Castle of Newtyle “violently brake up the yettis, surprised and took the Castle, stuffit it with men, victual and armour and held it for a long space thereafter.” *Oliphants in Scotland*, p. 64.

quarrel was patched, since Lord Oliphant subsequently did all he could to secure to Patrick the honours of his house, in preference to his own daughter Ann.<sup>1</sup>

The fifth Lord Oliphant died in 1630, and leaving no heir male, was succeeded in his estates by his first cousin, Patrick, whose right to the title was the subject of a celebrated Peerage case between Patrick and Ann. The decision of the court was in the following terms:—

“They found that none of the said parties could claim the said honours, but it remained with the King which he might confer to any of them that he pleased.”

The honour was therefore merged in the Crown. Patrick Oliphant was by a new patent created Lord Oliphant, 1633, as Charles decided that the heir male should have the title, and Sir James Douglas, Ann's husband, should be called Lord Mordington, with the precedency of Lord Oliphant.

All the great estates of the Oliphants were dissipated by the fifth lord. A paper in the Gask charter chest calls him “ane base and unworthy man,” apparently on the grounds of his spendthrift proclivities. He certainly did get rid of large tracts of land, and reduced the main line of the family from affluence to poverty, but except for this, there is nothing worse in his record than belongs to the record of most men of his time and class.

Muirhouse was sold in 1605; the dissipation of the Caithness estates began in 1606; Kellie<sup>2</sup> in 1613; Newtyle and Auchtertyre in 1617. Aberdalgie, Dupplin, Gask, and Kinprony followed as the years went on.

In the year 1625 Lord Oliphant's cousin, Laurence Oliphant, grandson of William Oliphant of Newton, bought the lands of Gask.

<sup>1</sup> Ann Oliphant, born after 1603, married Sir James Douglas of Mordington, as his first wife, in 1624. Their children were William, second Lord Mordington, born 1626; James, born about 1638; and Anne, married seventh Lord Sempill. Lord Mordington married again after Ann's death, Elizabeth Hay, widow of Hugh, Lord Sempill, and died 11th February 1656.

<sup>2</sup> Kellie had been in the Oliphant family for two hundred and fifty years. The dormer windows of the castle are said to be the work of the fifth lord in 1606.



## CHAPTER V

### THE HOUSE OF GASK

WE now come to the story of Gask. It is easy to cherish remembrance of all in our ancestry that was self-sacrificing and courageous, and to bring to those great memories the best reverence of the heart. But the past claims more than this. Much of what happened in the far-off days, in the lives that were lived from the earliest glimmerings of history, the words spoken, the actions done, bring a sense of shame and wonder. In this record there are deeds of which we cannot be proud, deeds from which have sprung only sorrow and loss.

But, still in the half darkness, the race was struggling towards a better understanding of life and what life means. The progress grows clearer as the student watches one generation after another arise and pass away, playing their parts through the storms of feud and war, and the perilous times of peace, towards the broadening out of national life.

It will be remembered that William Oliphant of Newton was the younger son of Colin, Master of Oliphant, who fell at Flodden. He died after 1588, and was succeeded by his son, Laurence, known as Lang Laurence. His other children have already been mentioned. The first glimpse of Lang Laurence is as a witness to a deed in 1571. He was pursued before the Sheriff in 1576 "touching the spoilation of Henry Ogilvy of ane grey horse." He married Mary Rollo,<sup>1</sup> daughter

<sup>1</sup> There is a letter in the Gask charter chest from George Crawford, the Peerage writer, to Laurence Oliphant, sixth Laird of Gask, stating that Crawford had seen the contract of marriage in Lord Rollo's charter chest. There is also a deed proving the marriage in possession of the Oliphants of Condie. (MS. by James Robertson of Lude, 1839.)

of Andrew Rollo of Duncrub. Dates of his birth, marriage, and death are wanting; but he was dead in 1601. His children were:—

1. Laurence, afterwards the first Laird of Gask, supposed to have been born about 1575.
2. William of Orchardmill, ancestor of the Oliphants of Orchardmill and of the Oliphants in Holland. His will is proved 7th August 1674.
3. John, of whom nothing is known except that he had a son, Laurence, who was at Insterbrig in Prussia in 1641.
4. Margaret, married 1594 to Robert, illegitimate son of Robert Scott of Easter Balbarton (of the Balwearie family).

Laurence Oliphant of Ross and Lamberkin, and afterwards of Gask, eldest son of Lang Laurence, married before 1606, Lilius Graeme of Inchbrakie, the widow of William Colville of Condie. Lilius Graeme was the youngest of the five daughters of the second Laird of Inchbrakie and his wife, Marjorie Rollo.<sup>1</sup> Lilius had two daughters by her first husband, Catherine and Marioni Colville of Condie, and he was alive in 1601, as that was the year in which he sold Condie to Laurence Oliphant, servitor of William Oliphant, King's Advocate. Between 1601 and 1606 there is no exact evidence of the events in the life of Lilius,<sup>2</sup> but during those years her husband died, and she married Laurence Oliphant. His cousin, the fifth Lord Oliphant, was disposing of his great estates, and bit by bit Laurence Oliphant bought the lands of Gask; first, the lands of Ross in 1610, then Lamberkin in 1614, then Keirprow, Clathybeg and Keirwoodhead. He bought Cowgask from John, Earl of Montrose. His Great Seal charter is dated 1625, from which date he is known as Oliphant of Gask. The home of the family was at the house of Ross during the first

<sup>1</sup> The other daughters were Cristane, married to Drummond of Balloch; Nicholas, married to Maxtone of Cultoquhey; Annas, married to Robertson of Fascally; and Catherine, married to Campbell of Monzie (Or and Sable).

<sup>2</sup> 14th August 1606 Sasine in favour of Laurence Oliphant in Alchanaschie, and Lilius Graeme, his spouse, in the sunny half of the mains of Cultoquhey.

twenty years of their married life. From Ross the two Colville daughters of Lilius were married; the youngest in 1613 to Sir James Murray of Tippermuir, the eldest<sup>1</sup> in 1621 to Mr John Murray, minister of Kinkell and Gask.<sup>2</sup> The six children of Laurence and Lilius Oliphant, four boys<sup>3</sup> and two girls, were all probably born at Ross:—

1. Laurence, second of Gask.
2. Patrick, who is described as a “son of Laurence Oliphant of Gask, and a sister of Bishop Graham,” was laured at the University of St Andrews in 1632, and being at the New College there, was certified for probationary trials to the Presbytery of Perth, 29th January 1634. He was afterwards minister of Fetlar and Unst in Zetland. He married Margaret, daughter of James Mowat of Barrafirch. He left a son, Thomas, who was a sailor on board the *Unicorn*, belonging to the Company of Scotland, trading to Africa and the Indies, and a daughter, Lilius, who, in 1708, was resident at Suttertown (Souterton) in Strathearn.<sup>4</sup> Patrick had also a daughter, Katherine. He was the ancestor of the Oliphants of Ure.
3. James,<sup>5</sup> who married Janet, daughter and heiress of Henry Riddoch of Tomperran; she survived him, and was alive in 1706.<sup>6</sup> He was styled of Tomperran, and afterwards of Souterton. He held a commission, dated 4th February 1669, in the Perthshire Militia. He was buried in “the Laird of Gask, his brother’s sepulchre” at Gask, 5th April 1676.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Colville was still alive in 1672, when she writes a letter to Laurence Oliphant “my brother Germane.” He was, however, only her step-brother. She had at least two sons.

<sup>2</sup> See page 98. Mr Murray was the illegitimate son of William, second Earl of Tullibardine.

<sup>3</sup> There was also an illegitimate son, Alexander, mentioned in 1621.

<sup>4</sup> Fasti. Scot., vol. v. p. 444.

<sup>5</sup> Major Robertson of Lude, in his MS., states that James left two sons, William (who had a son, Laurence, married to Beatrix Drummond), and Laurence, who was a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh.

<sup>6</sup> Macfarlan’s Geneal. Coll., vol. ii. p. 124.

<sup>7</sup> Session Records.

4. William, mentioned in 1629 as portioner of Craigs of Madderty. He was in Germany in 1635. His only son, William, married his cousin, Katherine, daughter of Patrick Oliphant minister of Fetlar. She was alive 1682.
5. Jean, married before 1629 to John Drummond of Pitkellony, who was killed at Charlemont in Ireland, where he was besieging the rebels in 1644. There was one child of this marriage, a daughter, Lilius. Jean married, secondly, Gavin, son of John Drummond of Culdees, and had a son, Gavin.
6. Margaret, married February 1627, Alexander Inglis<sup>1</sup> of Craigmakerran, Sheriff-Clerk of Perth. He died before 1st July 1653. She died 30th May 1663 leaving a daughter, Lilius. A son, Laurence, was alive in 1634. In 1663 an "only son," Alexander, is mentioned.

The years of the married life of Laurence and Lilius Oliphant were certainly not without troubles. Laurence Oliphant himself seems to have been of a fairly peaceable disposition; but he certainly was involved in the feud which caused the killing of Gilbert Gray in 1605. Patrick Gray of Bandirran includes him in the discharge he granted to Lord Oliphant in 1617. The William and Laurence Oliphant, styled *of Gask*, who were implicated in the murder of the boy Toscheach, of Monzievaired, in 1618, were uncles of the fifth lord—not to be confused with Laurence of Ross and Lamberkin, and his brother, William of Orchardmill. The charter of the barony of

<sup>1</sup> "In 1644 there is a complaint by Patrick Martin in Campsie against Alexander Inglis for assault and robbery. 'Tho the bearing of Hagbuts and pistols and convocation of the lieges is strictly forbidden by law,' yet Alexander came on horseback and did pursue the said Patrick upon the mures of Craigmakerran, where Patrick was casting turfs, and Patrick, 'fearing his invasion,' ran away, but was caught and robbed of sword and pistols. A few days later Inglis came again with thirty followers, burgesses of Perth, and his wife, Margaret Oliphant. They took away fifteen head of cattle, which the Lords of Council ordered to be restored. Alexander said he had a right to the cattle by virtue of a decree obtained before the Sheriff of Perth, and Patrick contended that the said decree was illegal because he was cited on Sunday, 'being ane unlawful day.'" (Privy Council Records.) Major Robertson in his MS. states that Margaret Inglis left two daughters, and that the eldest, Margaret, married Archibald Butter of Pitlochry, ancestor of the present Butters of Pitlochry and Faskally.

Gask was on the old lines of that historic charter granted two hundred and seventy years before to "our beloved and faithful Walter Olyfaunt and his spouse, Elizabeth, our beloved sister."<sup>1</sup> Lord Oliphant now gave a charter of Gask with all its woods and fishings, and special liberty of fishing in the water Earn for three days in forbidden time,

"to be held of the King in blench ferm fee, for yearly rendering, if asked, at the feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist, of a chaplet of White Roses."

It is after the final purchase of Gask by Laurence Oliphant from his cousin the fifth lord, in 1625, that the Old House is seen inhabited. Part of the building is of so much earlier a date that it must have been a habitation for generations before; but it is not possible to know who lived there and what happened there. As soon as the place of their dwelling is clear it seems as if the story of the Oliphants emerges into light, for they are no longer figures in an historical pageant, dim outlines in some record of feud or battle, signers of obscure charters, witnesses of forgotten deeds.

When Laurence and Lilius are established in the House of Gask there rises about the records of them a sense of reality. They were in middle life. Jean and Margaret, their daughters, were still with them. All their sons were grown up. The days of their historical importance were past; they were settling down to quieter times, to the serene life of country people, at a time when rights and property were beginning to be more respected. Now were formed those staunch friendships with other old families of Strathearn, the Murrays, the Drummonds, the Graemes, the Robertsons, which were to outlast many generations. Doubtless, too, the Oliphants would be intimate with their neighbours and kinsmen across the Strath, six miles away—the family of Montrose at Kin-cardine, where the seven children would be of about the same age as some of the Gask sons and daughters. The

<sup>1</sup> See page 35.

Earl of Montrose rode about the country on his great horse "Grey Oliphant," and by his side, on a grey pony, rode the only son, destined to so splendid a career. Probably the Gask stables were famous for some breed of grey horses, for in several of the early Wills of the Lairds there is special mention made of these.

All the married life of Laurence and Lilius Oliphant was passed in a time of peace; Lilius alone was to see the "Great Troubles."

Laurence Oliphant, the first Laird of Gask, died 22nd July 1632. He had been possessor of Gask only five years. The following is an extract of his will:—

"I, Laurence Oliphant of Gask, being seik in bodie, hail always in spirit and of perfytt memorie . . . recommend my saull to God Almightye and ordeins my bodie to be bureit in the earth within the Kirk of Gask, reverently."

He left a legacy to Lilius Drummond of Pitkellony his "oy" in remembrance of his love. His executors are to "cause bild above my buriell plaice ane sufficient and cumlie yle (aisle) with ane loft above the same."

This is the first record of family burial in the Kirk of Gask, where so many of his line were to lie in days to come. To-day all is swept away, the old kirk with its "cumlie yle," and the loft. Within a stone's throw of the House of Gask it stood in its graveyard, only the road and a stretch of grass between, and thither, through the generations, the dead of the name were born for two hundred and seventy years.<sup>1</sup> The southern portion of the cemetery was considered the place of honour; but in the case of the Laird, the burial was inside the church, and the spot chosen probably immediately under the family pew. It was also thought more respectful not to bury too deep. It is possible to form a picture of the scenes at a funeral in those days. Crowds of beggars

<sup>1</sup> The old kirk was pulled down about 1801. In 1845 an Episcopal chapel was built on the site by James Blair Oliphant, tenth Laird of Gask, and Lady Nairne.

surrounded the house from far and near, and within the doors the real mourners were overwhelmed in a mighty gathering of friends and acquaintances, whose absence would have been looked upon as an insult, and for whom the funeral ceremonies meant an orgy of eating and drinking prolonged for several days.<sup>1</sup> There was no religious service; that had been swept away as savouring of popish practices. By the Church's austere decree it was a heathen festival.

Over twenty long years of widowhood lay before Liliás Oliphant. There is a document with her signature in the Gask charter chest, dated 1653. She watched Scotland through the greatest crisis of her story. The peaceful years were over. The Great Troubles affected Gask as they affected all the land. The general clamour of the landowners, over the proposal of Charles I. to make them surrender Church tithes to the Crown, must have found an echo there; but it was nothing compared with the general frenzy of determination that episcopacy should not be forced upon the country.

There could have been small sense of peace in the five years between the death of the first Laird and the signing of the Covenant in 1638, for in those five years Scotland was fermenting stormily the struggle between the churches; her people thrown from one principle to another in the worst of all contentions. England was in a tumult of discontent, though civil war was not to break out for years yet. There was no sense of security anywhere.

Laurence, the eldest son of Laurence and Liliás Oliphant, was established as second Laird of Gask in August 1632. His Great Seal charter is dated 9th March 1633. He married eighteen months after his father's death Liliás,<sup>2</sup> the eldest daughter of his cousin

<sup>1</sup> The traveller, John Burt, in his Letters, written about 1726, describes the *pyramids* of cakes and sweetmeats which after the funeral are put into your hat, or thrust into your pocket. This last homage they call the "Drudgy." He supposes it to be some survival of the *dirge* anciently sung at the conclusion. The word "Drudgy" in his pronunciation, was, however, doubtless "Drage," a kind of spice, or "Dragée," a small comfit.

<sup>2</sup> For marriage contract, see Oliphants in Scotland, p. 231.

Patrick, sixth Lord Oliphant. Her father was three times married, first to Elizabeth Cheyne of Esslemont, who died 1616—the only child of this marriage was Lilius; secondly, to Margaret, only daughter of Menzies of Pitfoddell, by whom he had one daughter, Margaret; thirdly, about 1643, to Mary, third daughter of James Crichton of Fendraught. The children of this marriage were four sons and two daughters:—Charles, seventh Lord Oliphant,<sup>1</sup> Laurence, William, ninth lord, Francis, the father of the tenth lord, Elizabeth, and Anna.

In view of the part subsequently taken by his descendants, it is strange to learn that Laurence Oliphant of Gask signed the Covenant; but then so did his brilliant kinsman across the Strath, Montrose, and so did many who were afterwards distinguished Royalists. There were circumstances which made it not strange that some of the best blood and the bravest hearts in Scotland should be on the side of what appeared to be liberty and justice. The Covenant was the charter of all that was dearest to the national character—it was to safeguard the royal interests; and when Montrose first drew his sword in its defence, numberless gentlemen rose with him in a tumult of enthusiasm, without seeing whither the Covenant was going to lead. It was not easy to see issues clearly in those days.

Laurence Oliphant probably signed the Covenant at Perth, when it was

“read sworne and subscryvit be the town of Perthe be standing up and everie man upholding their hands; the women also were movit to stande and sweir.”

If his mother Lilius, and his wife Lilius, were among these enthusiasts, when Laurence Oliphant signed the Covenant, will never be known.

His wife must have had a busy life among her children; to her and her husband were born in course of time nine children. The dates of their births have not come to light.

<sup>1</sup> The seventh Lord Oliphant married Mary, daughter of John Ogilvy of Milton, and widow of Peter Meldrum of Leathers. He had two children, Patrick, the eighth lord, and James,



1. Patrick, whose history will follow.
2. Laurence, who was apprenticed in 1656 to Robert Wallace, W.S. He died before his father on 20th August 1772, and is buried at Gask. He married, July 1661, Anna, daughter of Sir George Preston of Valleyfield, and left three sons and two daughters.
3. Andrew, in a document dated 1659 designed a Writer to the Signet,<sup>1</sup> who was dead 15th March 1666.
4. Archibald, who was apprenticed to David Scott, apothecary in Edinburgh, in December 1664. He was of age before 1667, and was afterwards a chemist and burghess of Edinburgh. He married at Edinburgh, 1669, Anna, daughter of John Drummond, in Fintloch, who survived him and died 1694. He died without leaving children before 1686.
5. Charles.
6. David, who was a merchant burghess of Perth, and was in the Perthshire Militia in 1680. He died at Edinburgh, 2nd November 1707, and was buried in the Greyfriars.
7. Lilius, married November 1668, to James Graeme of Orchill. They had six children, of whom four survived their parents. James Graeme died June, 1707, and his wife Lilius survived him.
8. Anna, married April 1672, to Colin Campbell<sup>2</sup> of Monzie.
9. Elizabeth, married May 1676, to Gavin Drummond of Belliclone. Both were dead in 1733.

The childhood of all these children was passed in an atmosphere of war. Within the peaceful walls of Gask House must have been discussed all the momentous events of the reign of Charles, the bitter religious controversies, the swaying to and fro of public thought. Here, too, must the news of Montrose's decision to throw himself

<sup>1</sup> Gask Papers.

<sup>2</sup> He was born 1635 (Or and Sable). Their son became a Lord of Session by the title Lord Monzie.

on the side of his King, have been received with perhaps concealed exultation. The father of the family did not, as far as is now known, throw in his lot with Montrose.<sup>1</sup> Evidence that he was of Royalist sympathies lies in the fact that he signed the "Engagement"—that treaty with the Scots by which the hunted and despairing Charles, in his imprisonment at Carisbrook, agreed to the Solemn League and Covenant, and to the establishment of the Presbyterian religion at least for a time. The Scots in return engaged to restore him by force of arms. This "Engagement" was presented in due course to the Scots Parliament, and was approved by the most moderate of the Presbyterians. Less moderate men declared the King's concessions not sufficient to warrant further war with England. But Parliament gave orders, and soldiers were enrolled. The clergy were furious. The downfall of the Engagers was prayed for and prophesied in the churches.

Laurence Oliphant was not among the rigid Presbyterians led by Argyle; but neither was he in the gallant ranks of the absolute Royalists<sup>2</sup>—the followers of Montrose. In a less daring degree he had the same aim, though he lacked the fiery ambition and steady purpose of the King's great champion. It is to his credit that he signed the Engagement, and doubtless held himself ready to support it, and disappointing to find him only a few months afterwards apologising to the Presbytery of Auchterarder for having subscribed to this treaty. The Church chose to declare it "ane unlawful bond," and charged those who had signed with sin. Oliphant explained that

"in the day of temptationne, being threatened with loss of life and fortune, he did put his hand to that bond, yet he did then protest before the Committee of the shire that he did it only in so farre as it agreed with the Covenant."

<sup>1</sup> Laurence Oliphant was not the "Gask" who is said to have caused the loss of the battle of Tippermuir to the Covenanters by deserting and going over to Montrose. Gask was one of the Atholl titles.

<sup>2</sup> He was a known adherent of the Royal Family, and was subjected to the enormous penalty of twenty thousand merks as a fine—by Oliver Cromwell.

He said he was "sorrowfull and grieved at his soull," but that there was no public Act of the Kirk to prevent his action.<sup>1</sup>

That Sir Laurence had parties of soldiers quartered at Gask during the Troubles is proved by the following account :—

"*Item*: for ye quarteris of 60 horse with ye Byden of my lord Lanerkis owne troupe ye space of thrie days ye 25 May, 1646.

"*Item*: for assisting quarteris to ye troupe of ye Marques Argyles Lievegaird in ye month of May.

"*Item*: to four trowpers of Dalhousie's Regiment fra the 8 of Marche to the 14 thairof, 17 bollis aittis, 2 bollis peas with 40 threaves of straw."

On 2nd January 1651 Charles II. was at Perth with the Committee of Estates. His affairs were desperate enough. Cromwell held Edinburgh Castle, and the King was firmly in the toils of the Covenanters. Worst of all, the great Montrose was dead. Laurence Oliphant went over to Scone, where the King was, with other gentlemen, and there received the honour of knighthood at the King's hand.<sup>2</sup> Perth, itself, was soon to fall into the destructive hands of the enemy, when the ancient tomb of the Oliphants was destroyed, and the monastery walls pulled down.

The Gask children were born into the "Great Troubles," and through life must have carried the recollection of early years passed in an atmosphere of stormy contentions, and the passion of causes that seemed to change from good to bad. These were the first "bairnies" of the "Auld Hoose," the first little voices that sounded on the stair, where from generation to generation the light footsteps were to fall, and the voices call in the garden, as group after group through the long years were born, and lived, and died within the old walls.

<sup>1</sup> An account of the affair will be found in the Oliphants in Scotland, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Laurence paid a hundred pounds *Scots* as fee "to James Balfour Lyone." The grant of his coat of arms, "his true and unrepealable coat and bearing for ever," is signed Ch. Araskine Lyon.

These were the first young eyes that looked from the narrow deep-set windows across the road and field, down the slope to the kirk, and across the strath to the shining Earn, and the Ochils beyond.

To be always upon the brink of war must have seemed to these children a natural state. There would be much talk of great affairs; all the eager partisanship, the vividness, that belongs to life in action, and to history in the making. The causes of conflict were no doubt dreary enough to the children; then, as now, the dry differences between two forms of service could not appeal to their sympathies. But the picturesque aspect of war, the alarms, the anxieties, the riding forth of soldiers, the chivalrous adventures, the desperate escapes, all these the girls, as well as the boys, at Gask, would eagerly follow, even though the father did not follow the fortunes of Montrose. It is easy to see how the blood of these children, passing into other generations, made for those qualities of loyalty to a cause and tenacity of purpose in the face of lost fortune, which so distinguished the family in time to come.

Kincardine Castle, the home of Montrose, was only six miles away; the smoke of it when it fell in the flames kindled by the Covenant was visible from the House of Gask. At Inchbrakie, a few miles to the north, Gask's cousin, George Graeme, fourth Great Baron, and his wife, Margaret Keith,<sup>1</sup> were attacked, and the estate "ruined and spoiled by violence." How well the children would know the story of Margaret Graeme, when her husband was in prison, left exposed to hardship and attack, bravely defending her husband's property. One of the blackest stories against the Covenanters would be, in the thoughts of these children, that which tells of Lord Balcarres stealing Inchbrakie's favourite grey mare out of the stable, "his wyffe, knowing that he lovit the beast" riding off on her own horse to the enemy's camp at Balloch to get it exchanged for

<sup>1</sup> Mother of the celebrated "Black Pate," Graeme of Inchbrakie, the counsellor and companion of Montrose. She was a Keith of Ludquhairu.

her husband's favourite. The chivalrous Covenanters seized the lady's own horse, and would not give up the mare. She was forced to walk the ten miles home on foot.<sup>1</sup>

At Dunning, the little town to the south of the Earn, within sight of the windows of Gask House, the amusing disorders of 1652 would be the talk of the countryside. A memorable meeting of the Synod of Perth and Stirling was to be held at Dunning; but the assembled ministers were utterly routed by a Cavalier party, under the command of Mrs John Graham, consisting of a "tumultuous multitude of women with staves" who refused to let them enter the church. The brethren, it is recorded, retired to a house and called upon the name of God. They also resolved instantly to quit Dunning, "there being violence offered to all and done by the said women to some of the ministers upon the streets, by beating, persuing and spulzeing and taking from them their cloaks, and from some their horses."

So they fled, but thirteen of them made a rally four miles away, and voted that Dunning should be accursed, "and that although in the years 1638-9 the godly women were called up for stoning the bishops, yet now the whole sex should be esteemed wicked."

The news, doubtless, went up to Gask very quickly, and we can fancy the laughter and the exultation at the discomfiture of the brethren.

The mania for destroying witches was at its height during the early years of the Oliphant children. Under the reign of the clergy the superstition grew and flourished, and caused the death of numberless wretched men and women. All social life was under the control of the clergy and their theological ideas; "the more vividly the torments of hell are realised" says a writer "the more callous do men become to human sufferings in this world."

There is a witch-knowe at Gask itself to the north of the Roman road, where human remains are said to

<sup>1</sup> Or and Sable.

have been found, and indeed old records show that Sir Laurence Oliphant had an active part in the dreadful dramas of the suppression of witchcraft, and that Gask itself was specially the haunt of witches. In 1662 commission<sup>1</sup> was granted to Lord Rollo, Sir Laurence Oliphant of Gask, David Drummond of Invermay, Harie Drummond of Pitcairies, William Oliphant of Cultochar, and others, or any five of them, for trying and judging witches. Some of the poor women must have been Sir Laurence's own tenants; Janet Robe in Findogask, Janet Martin, Janet Bining, and Agnes Ramsay in Clathymore.<sup>2</sup> Imagination pictures the little trembling band summoned for judgment before the laird—he to whom they had always looked for succour and support. A little later, Laurence Oliphant with his neighbours, were ordered to pronounce and execute the sentence of death upon eight poor creatures—two of them were Gask women.

Tragedies like these would cause no surprise to the Gask children; they were being enacted all over the country, for the people were in the grip of a gross superstition fostered by the Church, and neither reason or mercy could stand against its decrees. The lives of all were lived out under the eye of the Church, and to these children religion would be a stern reality. The bell of the little church within sight of the windows recalled in season and out of season the fact that liberty of thought and action was only a name. The bell rang continually, and the Church courts enforced attendance at every service. Those who were absent suffered public accusation. Regularly as the bell clanged must the group of Oliphants have crossed the slope and reluctantly taken their places. No one was allowed to go to sleep during the long dull services; this having become

<sup>1</sup> In 1643 the General Assembly recommended that the Privy Council should institute a standing commission of any "understanding Gentleman or Magistrates," to try witches. The popular madness reached its height in 1659 and the following year. The commission went on till 1668 when credulity began to abate; but a witch was burnt in Scotland in 1722. Enlightened Germany burnt a witch at Wurtzburg as late as 1749.

<sup>2</sup> Register of Privy Council of Scotland.

the comfortable habit of many worshippers, especially women under the shelter of their hoods, it was enacted that women were not to wear plaids or hoods on their heads in church. The beadle was provided with a long pole to rouse the sleepers, and also "to tak down their plaidis from their heads."<sup>1</sup> In a certain parish the beadle was supplied with a pint of tar to put upon the women who covered their heads with plaids. The astonishing thing is that Scottish character and independence bore the endless tyrannies of the clergy, and that it was the English Commonwealth that swept away to a great extent the degradation of Church discipline in Scotland. The very soldiers of Cromwell would not see it tolerated. As late as 1664, there is a licence to Sir Laurence Oliphant to permit him to eat flesh in Lent with his family and servants,

"William Lord Bellenden of Brughton, etc., Treasurer deputie of the kingdom of Scotland doeth heirby give libertie and licence to Sir Laurence Oliphant of Gask with his family his servants and all such as shall accompanie him at table to eat flesh in this forbidden tyme of Lent and on all other forbidden days untill Lent next ensuing in the year 1665 without any hinder impediment or danger to be incurred by him or them for the same. Notwithstanding of any Act or Acts of Parliament made or to be made in the contrare. Given at Edinburgh the twentie fourth day of februar 1664  
BELLENDEN."

Not till 1690, however, were the civil consequences of the Church's sentence of excommunication done away, and the claws of the Church cut. Meanwhile, social life had been made as dreary as possible, and amusements strongly discouraged. Both music and dancing were banned, and only regained their lost ground quite at the end of the seventeenth century. The consequences of the cutting off of all beauty and light in social life was peculiarly disastrous to the Celtic temperament. The evils of drink and immorality grew to great heights

<sup>1</sup> Kirk Session Record of St Andrews, 1649.

in the absolute reign of the Church. That the spirit of intolerance stalked unchecked all through the land in the swayings of public thought, and was equally virulent on both sides, there is abundant evidence in the numerous pasquils and satires of the day. The following is entitled "*Ane Prophecie concerning the Prayer-books*"

" Filthie leachers  
False teachers  
Cursing preachers  
Never calme.

" Be hook or crook  
Ye'll never brook  
The service book  
In this realme.

" Spyte of the Whigs  
Your cantings, jiggs  
And Bothwell Briggs  
And all your worth.

" The Common Prayer  
Shall mount the stair  
Both here and there  
In South and North.

" Railing Ranters,  
Covenanters  
For all your banter  
This I foretell,

" The Book shall spread,  
And shall be read  
Spyte of your ded  
The deill of hell."

Festivities at Gask all through the seventeenth century would be rare, and not of a desirable character. The occasions would be a coming of age, a marriage, a christening, or the starting forth in life of a son of the family. Everything would be under the inquisitorial eyes of the elders of the Church, on the look-out for scandal. Excess in eating, and specially in drinking, would be the



marked features of all the social gatherings. There was nothing else to do.

All through the years that Lilius Graeme survived her husband there was never any cessation of the struggle between one kind of service and another—grounds not only for fierce debate, but for the distresses of civil war. To Lilius Oliphant, still in her youth, the movement of the time must have brought manifold disquietudes, for the private quarrels of Sir Laurence can be traced in family papers all through the years.

The following letter is doubtless one of many that she received on like subjects.

It is dated from Balgonie, 21st September 1651, and is addressed to Lady Gask.<sup>1</sup>

“MADAME,—I received your Ladiships letter. As for that word I sent to your Ladiship concerning Drumkilboe<sup>2</sup> I hear that he continues malicously disposed against your husband. The furie of yane fule is more dangerous (than) the wrath of yane lion. My oppinion is to your husband that he come not shortly hame will he heare some farther. I hop in God or it be long we shall heare better newes the journall that came owt last the speech of it is verie dangerous. If he could get wurd to your husband that he would come heir along to me whilk he may easily doe riding without airms, I would speak more to him than I will wreat I knowe, he and I both had not many freinds for the present quhom we may trust in to reveall our mynds, especially to mean of owre own name. God mak us thankful. The lose of Sir John Browne is the lose of the best freind who culd trust to in earth. My oppinion is that your Ladiship keep still with your brother James Hay,<sup>3</sup> whom I know to be ane understanding gentleman who has witt enough, in case as God forbid that one

<sup>1</sup> The wives of the large landowners in Scotland were invariably addressed in this way till the close of the eighteenth century. Without exception, all the letters in the Gask collection are directed to “Lady Gask,” when intended for the wife of the laird. The title was, of course, never added to the name, but only to the name of the estate.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Laurence was engaged for years in a troublesome lawsuit with John Tyrie of Drumkilbo and Douglas of Kilspindie, who was assisted by the Marquis of Douglas.

<sup>3</sup> This must refer to a son of the first marriage of Elizabeth Cheyne of Esslemont, the mother of the Honourable Lady Oliphant. She was the widow of Peter Hay of Megginch.

happie man Drumkilboe should come to your fields to put by his furie. Your Ladiship writts to me for yane servant. Of a trewth I knowie none in your fields for that service except this bearer's brother who is my servant and served me for that use. Notwithstanding for the present no man will quit any servant that he has. Yet if he can please your Ladiship I am content that he keep him. Being laith to trouble you any further for the present committing your husband, your self and all your children to the protection of Almightye God to whom I shal wish all happiness as to myself I rest your ladiship most assured lovinge cousinge to be commanded to the uttermost of his power. WILLIAM OLYPHANT."<sup>1</sup>

To the same year belongs the letter now in the Gask charter chest from General Monck:—

*“To all officers and souldiers whom these may concern.*

“These are to require all officers and souldiers under my command neither trouble nor molest, nor to offer or doe any violence or injury to the person of Sir Laurence Olyphant K<sup>nt</sup>. his Lady and children, servants, tenants, Lands or Houses, nor to seize or take away any horses, cattle, sheep or other goods belonging unto him or any of them; but to suffer and permit the said Sir Laurence Olyphant to weare his sword, and both him and them to dwell and reside within their several habitations, as also freely and quietly to passe and repasse into any place or places within our quarters, and to follow their lawful occasions without lett or molestation. Provided they act nothing prejudiciall to the Commonwealth of England.

“Given under my hand at Dundie, the 21st Oct. 1651.”

It is likely that Lilius Graeme spent the long years of her widowhood at Gask, thus beginning that precedent of the old remaining with the young that gives the place so many of its charming associations. In piecing together the family life within those grey walls it is striking to note how many of the Oliphants came back to Gask. There scarcely ever was a time when an old person was not living there side by side with the children. When old age came, they gravitated back to the old home. Some who did not end their days there, were brought to the

<sup>1</sup> Of the Condie family.

ancient churchyard for burial. It was a place, then as now, that appealed to the imagination, with a charm that laid hold of the roots of life. Thoughts and longings turned thither as the days darkened.

Men entered upon life early in those days; the boys must have been very young when their apprenticeship began. Of the manner of their education no record remains. There must have been plenty of companionship with the Rollo and Graeme cousins near at hand, and the nine brothers and sisters filling the little house. There were groups of first cousins too, James Oliphant, the brother of Gask, and his family lived at Souterteron near by, another brother, William, at the Mylne of Gask, and Andrew Oliphant in Overgask. Countless Oliphants were scattered over the country, many not traceably connected with the Gask family; but there would be clanship among them all.

Lilias Oliphant, the elder, died after 1654. Her daughter-in-law, Lady Oliphant, lived till January 1669, when there is record of her burial in the kirk of Gask. She lived to see one of her daughters married, Lilias Graeme of Orchill. The marriage took place only two months before her mother's death.

The domestic life of the Oliphant household had been clouded for the last years of her life by an unhappy quarrel between Sir Laurence and his eldest son, Patrick, who must have been very young when the difficulties arose which ended in his disinheritance, and the passing away of the lands of Gask from the lawful heirs for fifty years. At this distance of time, and with imperfect record of what did really happen, it seems as if Sir Laurence dealt very hardly with his eldest son, who was at the outset of the trouble only about twenty-two years old. An old document in the Gask charter chest<sup>1</sup> gives a version of the story as follows:—

“Laurence Oliphant . . . inveigled himself in a foolish trifling plea, which occasioned his attendance for thirty

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the Jacobite Lairds of Gask.

sessions before the Lords of Session at Edinburgh, and to assist him in the gaining of it he proposed a match betwixt his eldest son Patrick and a sister of the Marquis of Douglas, and made up the Bargen without having advised with his son, who had never seen the Lady; when he informed him of it, his son refused to comply, because he was not sure if he should like her, and that it must be the ruine of his family to mak such an unequal match."

So far, sympathy must be entirely with the young man. He was twenty-one; he had never seen the lady. The first Marquis of Douglas had three sisters; but the only sister alive in 1656 at the date of the Gask dispute was Mary who had been married in 1620 to the second Earl of Linlithgow, and was left a widow about 1645. Her father had died in 1611, so that she could not have been less than forty-five. Quiet resistance and refusal to consider the match would have been a safe and natural course; but Patrick adopted the headstrong expedient of marrying some one else. Probably he already knew, and perhaps loved, Margaret Murray, the daughter of John Murray, minister of Gask and Kinkell. It will be remembered that the minister had, in 1621, married Catherine Colville, daughter by her first husband of Lilius Graeme, Mrs Oliphant of Gask. It is not known that Sir Laurence's father raised any objection to the match for his step-daughter. Margaret, Patrick's choice, was probably her daughter. The birth of the minister, who was an illegitimate son of the second Earl of Tullibardine, only became a drawback when it concerned an alliance with the heir of the name and lands of Gask. He had obtained letters of legitimation in 1634; but there were other reasons why the match was distasteful. John Murray<sup>1</sup> had brought an action against Sir Laurence

<sup>1</sup> A few details of John Murray's life are recorded. He had great difficulty in getting the roof of Trinity Gask church repaired. October 11th 1660, "The Synod being informed at the censure of the Presbytery of Auchterarder that Mr John Murray when he celebrate the Holy Communion did, in the verie time of action, vent scandalous expressions—to wit, when bread was wanting, he said, 'Is the bread done already? I cof't three loaves,' and yet the people sat still at the table till they sent to a Browster House for more bread" (Reg. of the Synod of Dunblane, p. 239). Murray died December 1662 aged about seventy-one. He left sons and daughters.

in 1656. The date of the marriage of Patrick and Margaret has not come to light, but doubtless it was before May 1657, at which date the estates of Gask and Cowgask with the family honours were settled by Sir Laurence on his second son Laurence, who was apprenticed to a Writer to the Signet at the time. Patrick, the disinherited, himself witnessed the contract.<sup>1</sup>

Five years before Sir Laurence had bought the lands of Williamston with other estates, and he made the promise of these lands also to the second son. Possibly there were other reasons why Patrick could not be looked upon as an appropriate Laird of Gask. His father's attitude was not one of undiluted wrath. In May 1657 he grants a permission to Patrick to cast turf in the parish of Madderty "for the love I bear my son." Not until 1669, however, twelve years afterwards, did the father do his eldest son the tardy justice of settling him in the lands of Williamston. Thenceforward Patrick, the rightful heir of Gask, is known as Oliphant of Williamston. His brother Laurence, who was preferred before him, never lived to take up the family honours. He had married, presumably to the satisfaction of his father, in July 1661, Anna Preston, second daughter of Sir George Preston of Valleyfield. During the eleven years of his married life three sons and two daughters were born to him.

1. George, who succeeded his grandfather, and was third Laird of Gask.
2. Laurence, a student at St Andrews, who died in Edinburgh in February 1684 unmarried.
3. William, who succeeded his brother as fourth Laird of Gask, and died unmarried 1704.
4. Anna, born 1671, who married Patrick, brother of James Hay of Pitfour. Her husband was afterwards Provost of Perth, and was knighted by James III. and VIII. in 1715. A son, Patrick Hay, was alive 1728.
5. Katherine, born 1672, married, 12th March 1711,

<sup>1</sup> Oliphants in Scotland, p. lxxv.

to Hugh Peterson, surgeon, in Edinburgh. In 1710 she was sole heir of line to her brother William. Hugh Peterson was a man of some distinction. There is a fine portrait of him, painted probably by Medina, in the Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. Hugh Peterson and Katherine Oliphant left at least two sons.

Some quaint details<sup>1</sup> are preserved of the last illness and death in 1684 of young Laurence, the student at St Andrews, who died and was buried in Edinburgh. There is the bill of "dispursements of Laurence Oliphant be the Land Lady."

"For milk and eall to his posets.

For wine and sugar and mes and bread to his beries.

For a boult of broad knittings to row about in his Cheircloath.

For two pecks of brand to put in ye cofing.

For four gallens and four pints of eall from Wadensday to Seterday.

To Agnes Whyt at the same date is paid

For the making of the dead Linnen.

For a pair of Shivreins."

To judge by the amount of medicines, cordial powders, and so on, young Laurence must have been ill for a considerable time. He left a few debts for clothes to be paid by the Laird, his brother, among which were the following:—

"1 dusson of justicoat buttons.

1 skin for pocketes.

1 Cantbeck hatt."

The funeral, which appears to have been in the Greyfriars of Edinburgh, was made one of the indecently festive occasions when eating and drinking were the main attraction. The following is an abridged list of food consumed during the six days the body lay in the church before burial.

<sup>1</sup> Given in the Oliphants in Scotland.

“ 2 puttages.

A large dish of tonge and Louer.

Boyld Beif and turnenips.

A leg of weill and cutlets.

Salmond.

A dish of henes.

A dish of wild foull.

Aigs.

Bread and Alle and tost in the morning and at dener.

Wine and seck in the morning and at dener and ye afternon.

Renets.

Wyne that came to the lodging at severall times.

Two pecks and two syds of shortbread.

A peck of candied penkies.

Tobaco and pyps at the ledquack.”

“Thir accompts,” says a note, “is besyd drink money must be given to the women quho attended the Land Ladyes trouble blood-letting, the appothequories servants drink money and other contingent expensis.”

£56 (Scots) was “payed to the wright for a fyne coffin lyned with base and frenzies.”

The following is a letter, dated 23rd February 1684, from a Laurence Oliphant—the branch of the family is not given—addressed from Edinburgh to “my much honoured cousin, the Laird of Gask,” intimating Laurence’s funeral. He calls him “my dear sweet Laurie.”

“ EDINR., 23rd Febr. 1684.

“MUCH HONORED CUSENG, — I received yors of the 17th inst., and your brother was very honourable and decently buried, and if he had bein all my kindred in on person, I could have done no more to him for I loved him dearlie, and I am content to be secured by his Mother’s relations, the ladyes Cardross, Innergelly, Pitfoddels and severall others quho were present at his putting in in the coffin, and Mr Alexander Malcome and others that saw and knew quhat deuty was done.”

The lives of Patrick Oliphant of Williamston and his wife, Margaret Murray, were passed within the sight of

the lands which should have been theirs; their children would know every acre of the fair inheritance that was lost to them. During their father's lifetime they were too young to understand the sorrow and injustice.

The seven children were probably all born at Williamston—the quaint house still standing a mile or two to the north of Gask House.

1. James, born about 1666, afterwards the fifth Laird of Gask.
2. Laurence, who was apprenticed to Robert Ranken, a skipper in Dundee 1697, but broke his indentures the next year.

There is a disposition, dated 14th January 1701, by him to his brother, James Oliphant, on account of his being about to leave the kingdom and travel abroad, appointing James as his only executor in case of his not returning, or of his death. He was afterwards a sailor on the ship *Caledonia*, and died abroad before 1708.

3. Thomas.
4. David buried at Gask, September 1675.
5. Anna, died at Monzie in July 1697.
6. Liliias, married 1694, contract dated 20th November 1694, to David Shaw,<sup>1</sup> minister of Aberdalgie. Her married life was short. A son, Thomas, was baptized 9th February 1696. A few weeks after, on 4th March, Mrs Shaw was buried at Aberdalgie. The son lived at least till 1709.
7. Margaret, born 1663, and died at Gask 1714.

Of the mother, Margaret Murray, nothing is known beyond the one remark in the family records that she was "a good woman." No doubt there would be constant intercourse between the houses of Gask and Williamston, for there is no evidence that the disinherited Patrick and the usurper Laurence were not on the best of terms, and the two groups of cousins, much of the same ages, would naturally live in daily companionship.

<sup>1</sup> David Shaw married again in 1704 Margaret, daughter of Sir David Carmichael of Balmedie. He died 1729.



Patrick must have looked upon the house and lands of Williamston as the ultimate home of the elder branch of the family which he represented. As he watched the growing family of his younger brother at Gask, he could never have dreamed that after all, *his* children, and not the children of Laurence, were to carry on the family name and honours. Yet time was to set right the wrong, and the process had begun before Patrick's own death in 1689, though he did not live to see his own son succeed to the Gask estates.

The history of Laurence's children shows how strangely sometimes circumstances will readjust an injustice. Laurence himself, as we have seen, died, still a young man, in 1672, leaving a widow and five children.<sup>1</sup> Anna Preston gives a bond, dated 2nd September 1672, that she will maintain and educate "Mr" and Anna Oliphant—two of their children. At the same time Sir Laurence and his eldest son, Patrick, undertake to maintain and educate Laurence and Katherine. This arrangement leaves out one of the three sons. Probably they were all sheltered at Gask by Sir Laurence, especially after the mother<sup>2</sup> married again in 1678. The year after that Sir Laurence died, and his grandson George succeeded to the estates as third Laird of Gask. He could not have been more than seventeen at the time, and he was only nineteen when he married, in 1686, Anna, eldest daughter of John Malcolm of Balbeadie. There was no child of this marriage, and the wife only lived two years. George, a widower at twenty-one, lost no time in marrying again. Four months after the death of his wife he married Jean,<sup>3</sup> fourth daughter of John,

<sup>1</sup> He left also an illegitimate daughter, Joan, married in 1676 to John Taylor in Gask. To the marriage contract is affixed the signature of Anna Preston, Laurence's widow.

<sup>2</sup> She married again, 17th July 1678, James Hay of Pitfour.

<sup>3</sup> There is a discharge Mrs Jean Balfour, relict of said George Oliphant of Gask, to William Oliphant now of Gask, her brother-in-law, for her mourning, and four hundred merks as the expenses of her inlying of her daughter, Jean Oliphant now deceased, being the only child of the said George Oliphant, and born after his death, and for her nurses and doctors, fees, and funeral expenses, and also of £100. Dated at Burleigh, 18th May 1686. Lord Burleigh and the Master sign among the witnesses. George Oliphant died 7th September 1684. In May 1688 his widow married Robert Douglas of Kirkness.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh. In this year his name is found as a captain in the Perthshire Militia; but in the following November, 1684, six months after his second marriage, he himself died. There was one posthumous child of this marriage, Jean, who died before 1686. His next brother, Laurence, who would have succeeded to the estate, had died in Edinburgh in the spring of the same year, so William, the third and last brother, became fourth Laird of Gask. He came of age presumably in 1687, when he was served heir to his brother George. Of this laird very few traces are to be found in family papers. He represented the county of Perth in Parliament in 1703. Many of the books in the Gask library bear his name and the date 1698. He never married,<sup>1</sup> and died still a young man in 1704.

Thus, through the deaths without heirs of three young heirs of Gask, the injustice done by Sir Laurence was after fifty years righted at last. James Oliphant of Williamston, the eldest son of Patrick, inherited the lands of Gask from his first cousin William.

<sup>1</sup> He left two illegitimate sons, Thomas and David. The latter was afterwards a glover in London. Both these sons were of age in 1718. Their father bequeathed each one thousand merks.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RISING TIDE

IT was on 16th July 1689, the year of his father's death, that young James Oliphant married Janet Murray of Woodend, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, Anthony Murray. The family was well known in Perthshire. The estate of Woodend, which is in the parish of Madderty, close to Gask, had been acquired by the Murrays of Dollerie in 1597. On the death of Janet's only brother the estate came into her possession.

The married couple began life at Williamston, and soon a second generation of Oliphant children was filling the little house. The names of the fifteen sons and daughters are here given in their order of birth.<sup>1</sup>

1. Jean, born at Williamston, 14th November 1690, died at Gask, unmarried, 17th March 1718.
2. Laurence, whose history follows, afterwards sixth Laird of Gask, born at Williamston 29th December 1691.
3. Thomas, born at Williamston 30th May 1693, married Janet, daughter of Peter Meldrum of Leathers, died 4th September 1740, leaving no children.
4. Margaret, born at Woodend 22nd December 1694, died unmarried 1712.
5. Anne, born 22nd April 1696, married 22nd January 1719, to John Drummond of Colquhalzie, died 6th April 1740, and left sons and daughters.
6. Lilius, born at Woodend 16th August 1697,

<sup>1</sup> From the Family Bible of the Woodend family.

- married,<sup>1</sup> August 1718, to Laurence Oliphant of Condie, who died in 1726, and afterwards in 1729 to Mr Bethune, Comptroller of the Customs. She died at Perth 11th April 1732, leaving one son, Laurence Oliphant of Condie.
7. James, born at Kinloch 29th March 1699. He married, June 1731, Janet Austin of Kilspindie. Died 6th May 1765, leaving four daughters and three sons.
  8. Anthony, born at Woodend March 1701, died 23rd March 1702.
  9. Helen, born 8th July 1702, died the first Sabbath in September of the same year.
  10. William, born at Woodend 23rd September 1703, died in Jamaica 21st June 1738.
  11. Janet, born at Edinburgh 13th January 1705, educated at Edinburgh; died unmarried in 1723.
  12. Patrick, born at Woodend January 1707, died unmarried at Bagdad, 20th December 1750.
  13. Katherine, born at Edinburgh 18th May 1709, married Robert Graeme of Garvock 18th April 1736, died 1775, leaving four sons and two daughters.
  14. Alan, born and died unchristened, 1711.
  15. Ebenezer,<sup>2</sup> born at Gask 7th March 1713, died 26th October 1798, married Amelia Belches, a daughter of Alexander Belches of Invermay. There were five children, none of whom survived him.

Considering the heavy infantile mortality common in those days, it is remarkable that of the eight sons of Gask six grew to manhood, and that among the seven daughters only one died as an infant, and two as young girls.

<sup>1</sup> Her father leaves a record, "I payed the sum of four thousand merks, Scots, in name of dole and tocher with my said daughter."

<sup>2</sup> The child was perhaps saddled with this name in compliment to Ebenezer Erskine, then a noted and fashionable preacher. In the next generation one of the Condies received the same name. Afterwards it was luckily only once repeated in the family.

There exists a charming portrait of Jean, the eldest of the family, as a child or very young woman. A companion portrait represents her brother Laurence, the next in age, one year younger. Jean died young; but lived to see how the trend of thought in the Gask family, the interests of her brothers, the sympathy of her father, turned to the Stewart cause. She and her two eldest brothers were old enough at the time of the Union to share in the passionate resentment to which it gave rise.

“From forced and divided Union  
And from the Church and Kirk Communion  
Where lordly Prelates have dominion  
Libera nos, Domine.

“From a new transubstantiation  
Of the old Scots into ane English nation  
And from all foes to Reformation  
Libera nos, Domine.

“From paying as our Darien costs  
By laying on cess and new imports  
From the English ruling Scots rosts  
Libera nos, Domine.

“From innocent men laying snares  
And killing Glenco men by pairs  
From sudden death, like the Earl of Stairs.  
Libera nos, Domine.”<sup>1</sup>

All parties, even though of widely opposing interests, joined in the storm of protestation, and the country for a perilous moment hung on the verge of general revolution. That danger averted, there remained a strong party, for the most part of Jacobite sympathies, who resolved upon quieter means of frustrating the measure. Petitions were unnoticed, threats firmly put down. It was decided that such of the nobility and gentry of the realm as were hostile to the Union should meet in Edinburgh on a certain date and go in person to the

<sup>1</sup> Mylne's MSS.

Lord Commissioner to remonstrate against the passing of the Union, until the Queen should answer a national address. Some four hundred of the leading men in Scotland accordingly gathered in Edinburgh. The Duke of Atholl<sup>1</sup> took a prominent part in gathering together as strong and as representative a group as possible. In the following letter he sends a summons to the Laird of Gask.

“EDINBURGH, 13th September 1706.

“Sir,—I designed to have sent an express to you to acquaint you that the Addresses from the several Shires having been little regarded there are several gentlemen coming in to address personallie the Commissioner and Parliament concerning this great affaire of the Union. Wherefore, I earnestly intreat and expect you will come here against Wednesday and also any of your neighbours that can come that you and they may serve your country, when our all is at stake. I am your real friend and humble servant,

“ATHOLL.”

Unfortunately the counsels of the deputation were divided, some of the movers wishing to insert a clause in the address by which the succession of the House of Hanover was agreed upon. This was, of course, totally opposed by the Jacobites. Eventually, Atholl quarrelled with the Duke of Hamilton, and the lords and lairds went home.

Whether James went to Edinburgh with the rest will never be known. The part he played in life was that of a quiet country gentleman; busy, no doubt, with his estates and the management of a very large family.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A malicious pasquil of the day commenting on the Union Parliament gives the following verse.

“If the gallant and great but mysterious Duke  
Designe the true heir his kingdom should bruik,  
Or if coin and commission be the bait for his hook,  
He is wiser than I can tell.”

MYLNE'S MSS.

<sup>2</sup> A perusal of the boot bills for his brood makes the reader realise the size of that family. William Steuart was the bootmaker. There were twenty-one new pairs in 1716 besides repairs. The men's boots cost £1, 10s. (Scots), the women's rather less. “Ten pairs of Bairn's shoes at 14 shillings scots each pair.” Five long hides could be purchased for £4 Scots, and an ox hide at £5.

He moved naturally from Williamston to the House of Gask on succeeding to the estates in 1704, and once more the old rooms were filled to overflowing.

Some idea of the size of the "Auld Hoose," in which his sons and daughters were brought up, is gathered from entries and inventories in old wills. In James Oliphant's day there was the low dining-room, with arras hangings, ten faced pictures, and four oval tables, the high dining-room, the drawing-room, and the bedroom off the drawing-room, the library with a wainscot table and a Russia leather chair. There was the low east bedchamber in the north side of the court, the middle room, the cabinet room, and the little room. The "pantree" room had a red bed in it, and the north room a blue bed flowered with white threads. There was also a men-servants' loft, and a *women-house*, a stone room, and kitchen and laundry. The rooms were small, and it must have been a tight fit; but tastes were simple, and conditions of life had reached no luxurious standard in a country so impoverished as the Scotland of that day.

While still living at Williamston, James Oliphant had applied to the Scot's Parliament in October 1690 for an Act to compel all the neighbouring heritors to drain the River Pow at Inchaffray, as it sometimes flooded all the countryside. "This is the only instance on record of a great agricultural improvement having been made under the authority of the Scottish Parliament."<sup>1</sup> This matter would, no doubt, occupy a great deal of James Oliphant's time and thought. There is record also of a keen quarrel with Sir Henry Stirling of Ardoch, caused by the erection of a dam dyke and a new mill across the Earn. After succeeding to the Gask property James bought in 1709 certain Oliphant lands in Banffshire from the eighth Lord Oliphant. In 1711 Lord Oliphant resigned in his favour the "honour, title, dignity of Lord Oliphant with the rights, privileges, and precedency due and belonging

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 8.

thereto," in return for a certain sum of money from Gask.<sup>1</sup>

The owners of Gask had, during the troubled years of the seventeenth century, been chiefly engaged in the improvement of their estates and the acquiring of lands. Though the second laird, Sir Laurence, had been captain of a company of the Perthshire Militia for the last ten years of his life, and though the third laird was in the same company for a few months before his death, it cannot be said that the Gask branch of the family bore any distinct part in the military doings of the day, although in July 1652 the lords of estates of Scotland became bound to repay Laurence Oliphant of Gask £1,800 Scots lent by him for maintaining of the armies that went to England and Ireland in August 1644.

The revolution of 1688, which convulsed the Empire, had not caused the laird, William of Gask, to take part in military action—yet at the beginning of the struggle to restore the Stewarts, the family seemed ready to adopt the Jacobite activities with headlong enthusiasm. It is natural to look for the influences that inspired this change—and these are found in three sources. The first had its root in national sentiment. Scotland had been roused to a sense of her wrongs, which were very real. The injustice and tyranny to Scotland in the events after 1688 seem injustice and tyranny still. No justification has ever been shown for the tragic betrayal of Glencoe, the contemptible and cruel spirit that wrought the ruin of Scottish finance in the destruction of the Darien<sup>2</sup> colony—nor has the judgment of time written its approval of the unfair terms of the Union. To the men of the hour it seemed unbearable that the rights of Scotland should be so disregarded. The name of William III., stained with the infamy of Glencoe and Darien, was bitterly hated. Anne was neither respected nor

<sup>1</sup> Lord Oliphant died in 1720, and Gask asserted his rights against an imposter, Andrew Oliphant, an officer in the Army, who claimed the title. The real heir was an uncle of the eighth lord, the Colonel William Oliphant who fought under Dundee and was a staunch Royalist.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix.



beloved.<sup>1</sup> In spite of her Stewart blood, she had no right to the throne.

There can be little doubt that if the abortive Jacobite enterprise of 1708 had gone only a little further, the whole country would have rallied to the Stewart Standard. But James VIII. sailed passed the Firth of Forth, driven by the gales that were always against him in all he attempted, and lost the chance of his life. Seven years were to pass before he tried again, and in that seven years the irritations of the country had somewhat died down. Only in some quarters they smouldered still. The ancient independence of the Scottish race, once roused here and there, remained alight till action was possible. The feudal instincts woke again, the restless ambitions called once more, and the promised coming of a Stewart renewed the old impetuous questions. The Oliphants, after generations of inaction, felt the old blood stirring. The distresses of the country prepared the way; but personal influences counted too. Foremost among these was the example of Colonel William Oliphant,<sup>2</sup> the tried soldier, whose whole career was a living testimony to the sincerity of his political opinions.

Probably a strong influence towards Jacobite sentiment in the young Oliphants was brought to bear by Margaret, Lady Nairne, who may justly be called the mainspring of the movement in Perthshire. As the Nairnes were closely associated with the Oliphants of Gask, both by ties of friendship and blood, through the years to come, the following particulars will be of interest.

Margaret Nairne was the only surviving child of Robert Nairne of Strathord and Margaret Graeme, a daughter of the Royalist, Patrick Graeme of Inchbrakie,

<sup>1</sup> King George naturally met with a still fuller measure of dislike.

“God in his wrath sent Saul to punish Jewry,  
But George to Britain in a greater fury,  
For he in sin as far exceeded Saul  
As Gibby Burnet did the great St Paul.”

MYLNE'S MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards ninth Lord Oliphant. He was half-brother of Lilius Oliphant, wife of Sir Laurence, and therefore step great-uncle to the Oliphant boys and girls.

known as "Black Pate." Robert Nairne had suffered ten years' imprisonment in the Tower of London after being captured at Alyth in 1651. Margaret Graeme followed him to London, and married him in the Tower, remaining there till the Restoration. On his return to Scotland he was made one of the Lords of Session, and after twenty years was granted a peerage and the title Lord Nairne of Strathord. An infant, born 1669, died the next year. Another child, Margaret, was born in 1673, twelve years after the marriage. The title was granted to her, after her father "and thereafter to any heir of her body by marriage with Lord George Murray or any of Atholl's younger sons." The first Lord Nairne died in 1683, when she was ten years old, and for seven years Margaret was Lady Nairne in her own right. At the age of seven years she had been contracted to the three year old George Murray; but, as he grew up, his health failed, and the heiress was given instead to his elder brother William. The marriage was in 1690, and from that time Lord William Murray was known as Lord Nairne, in right of his wife.<sup>1</sup> Between 1690 and 1714 twelve children were born at Nairne. The following list is given to show how widely spread, as time went on, was the Nairne influence and interest in Perthshire.<sup>2</sup>

1. John, born 30th December 1690, afterwards third Lord Nairne. Engaged in the rising of 1715, and also 1745. He married in 1712 Catherine Murray, third daughter of the first Earl of Dunmore. He had eight sons and two daughters.<sup>3</sup> He died exiled at Sancerre in France 1770.

<sup>1</sup> Many genealogical works make the mistake of asserting that the Nairne peerage was granted to William Murray. He only held it in right of his wife.

<sup>2</sup> The dates of the Nairne births are taken from a list in Lady Nairne's own handwriting, now in possession of the writer.

<sup>3</sup> 1. James, born 1714, died 1737.

2. William, born 1715, died 1729.

3. John, afterwards fourth Lord Nairne, but never assumed the title, born 1716, died 1782.

4. Charles, born 1718, died 1795.

5. Robert, of whom nothing is known except that Laurence Oliphant of Gask wrote to Captain Patrick Graeme in 1739 asking him to take Robert on his ship as a common sailor. He died before 1755.

2. Margaret, born 19th August 1692, married, 1712, to William Drummond, fourth Lord Strathallan. She took an active part in support of Charles Edward in 1745, was taken prisoner, and remained in Edinburgh Castle for several months. Her children<sup>1</sup> were seven sons and six daughters. She died at Machany, 1773.
3. Robert, born 1st October 1697, married, 1720, Jean Mercer,<sup>2</sup> the heiress of Aldie, when he assumed the name of Mercer. He took a prominent part in the Jacobite rising, and was killed at Culloden,<sup>3</sup> 1746. He left two sons and a daughter.<sup>4</sup> From the younger son the present Lord Lansdowne is descended, the representative of the House of Nairne.
4. Amelia Anne Sophia, born 29th December 1698, married, 1719, Laurence Oliphant of Gask, the Jacobite Laird. She endured many years of exile. There were four children, one son and three daughters, whose history follows. She died at Gask, 1774.

6. Edward. He died before 1755.

7. Thomas, born 1723, died 1777.

8. Henry, born 1727, died at Perth, 1816.

9. Margaret, born 1713, died 1729.

10. Clementina, born 14th May 1722, died at Sancerre in France, 17th January 1767.

<sup>1</sup> 1. Margaret, born at Machany, 24th April 1714.

2. Anne, born at Nairne, 3rd June 1715.

3. Katherine, born at Edinburgh, 7th August 1716.

4. Mary, born at Nairne, 23rd September 1717.

5. Clementina Maria, born at Machany, 29th March 1721.

6. James Francis Edward, born at Machany, 10th June 1722, died at Sens.

7. Twins { Charles Edward Louis Casimir John Silvester Mary, died an infant.

8. William, born 23rd January 1724, died 1772.

9. John, born at Machany, 22nd June 1725, died in London 1743.

10. Andrew, born at Machany, 17th September 1726, died an infant.

11. Amelia Anne Sophia, born at Machany, 27th October 1727.

12. Robert, born at Machany, 12th November 1728, afterwards of Cadlands.

13. Henry, born at Machany, 7th February 1730, afterwards of the Grange.

These dates are taken from an MS. in the Strathallan family.

<sup>2</sup> Her mother Helen, also the heiress of Aldie, had married the heir male, Sir Laurence Mercer. James, their only son, succeeded in 1720, but dying the same year was succeeded by his eldest sister, Jean.

<sup>3</sup> A suit was raised to prove he was not killed at Culloden. See Appendix.

<sup>4</sup> 1. James, born 1724, who died unmarried 18th December 1758.

2. William, who married Margaret Murray of Pitcaithly.

3. Margaret, who married her cousin, James Robertson of Lude.

5. William, a sailor, born 1st October 1700. He was captain of the Swedish India ship *Calmar*, and died off St Helena on a homeward voyage, 25th March 1743.
6. Catherine, born 1st June 1702, married, 1719, William Murray of Taymount, afterwards third Earl of Dunmore, one of the Jacobites sentenced and reprieved in 1746. He died in prison in 1756. The children were three sons and four daughters.<sup>1</sup> She died 20th July 1782.
7. James, born 11th September 1704. An officer in the British service, the only Whig of the family. He married Mary Wood, 1748, and had one daughter, Mary, who married Lieutenant Cook and died without issue. He died 5th October 1788, aged eighty-four.
8. Marjory, born 14th January 1706, married, 1739, Duncan Robertson of Drummachin, afterwards of Strowan, and suffered with him a long exile. She died 1793. Her children were two sons and three daughters<sup>2</sup> (one of whom married the younger Jacobite Laird of Gask).
9. Charlotte, born 24th July 1707, married before 1736 John Robertson of Lude.<sup>3</sup> She was an

<sup>1</sup> 1. John, afterwards fourth Earl of Dunmore.

2. Charles, born 1732.

3. William, born 1734, died 1786.

4. Margaret, born 1736.

5. Catherine, born 1739, married John Drummond of Logie Almond, and died 1791.

6. Jean, born 1741, died, unmarried, before 1771.

7. Elizabeth, born 1743, married, 1763, to John Murray, afterwards Dean of Killaloe.

<sup>2</sup> 1. An infant girl who died May 1745.

2. Margaret, born 1740, married, 1755, her first cousin, Laurence Oliphant of Gask, died 1774.

3. Alexander, recovered the Strowan estates in 1784, died 1822 unmarried.

4. Walter Philip Colyear, an officer in the Dutch service, died in 1818 unmarried.

5. Charlotte, born 1745, died in France 1765.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs Robertson was left a widow about 1743. Having no husband to represent her in the struggle of the '45, and her son being then only five years old, she played a militant part. It is said her hand fired the first shot at the Castle of Blair when the Jacobite forces besieged it in 1746.

ardent Jacobite. Her children were a son<sup>1</sup> and a daughter.<sup>2</sup> She died 1787.

10. Mary, born 27th April 1709, died at Gask, unmarried, 1774.

11. Louisa, born 17th June 1711, married as his third wife, 1748, to David Graeme the Jacobite Laird of Orchill. They had three sons.<sup>3</sup> She died 1782.

12. Henrietta, born 3rd March 1714, died at Gask, unmarried, 1802.

It seems to have been the object both of Lord and Lady Nairne to fill the lives and minds of their children with the high traditions of the past history of their race. In the blood of these children the noble strain bequeathed by "Black Pate," on the one hand, met with the equally heroic inheritance of Charlotte de la Tremouille, Countess of Derby, the spirited defender of Lathom House in 1644, and her husband the gallant Lord Derby,<sup>4</sup> who gave up his life for the Cause in

<sup>1</sup> James Robertson of Lude, born there August 1740. He married his cousin, Margaret Mercer, when very young in 1758, and died 1804. A son was born at Lude in 1742, when Lord Nairne attended the christening. There is no other trace of this child.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Robertson of Lude. She married Robert Robertson of Tullibelton on 3rd December 1762, and died before 1799, leaving two sons and two daughters.

<sup>3</sup> 1. William, born 1749, married Mrs Campbell 1778.

2. David, born 1750, died 1775.

3. Charles, born 1751, married Elizabeth Saunders 1773, died 1833.

<sup>4</sup> The spirit of Lord Derby, who in the end laid down his life for the Cause, is traceable in many of his descendants in Jacobite times. The following is his dignified and spirited reply to the summons to surrender the Isle of Man, by Ireton, the Parliamentary General.

"I received your letter with indignation, and with scorn return you this answer; that I cannot but wonder whence you should gather any hopes that I should prove like you, treacherous to my Sovereign, since you cannot be ignorant of my former actions in his late Majesty's service, from which principles of loyalty I am no whit departed. I scorn your proffers, I disdain your favour, I abhor your treason, and am so far from delivering up this Island to your advantage, that I shall keep it to the utmost of my power to your destruction. Take this for your final answer, and forbear any further solicitation; for if you trouble me with any more messages of this nature, I will burn the paper, and hang up the Bearer. This is the immutable resolution and shall be the undoubted practice of him, who accounts it his chiefest glory to be His Majesty's most loyal and obedient subject.

DERBY.

"From Castle Town this 12th of July 1649."

The Derby family ruled the Island of Man under the title of Kings of Man. On the death of the tenth earl without issue, in 1735, the second Duke of Atholl, descended from the youngest daughter of the hero, became Lord of Man. The Atholl family sold the Island to the British Government in 1765 for £70,000.

1651. Towards developing all that was noble and chivalrous in the natures of the young Nairnes their education and training was directed, and the parents had the happiness of seeing them grow up true to the ancient family traditions. No regret for the part they played, no regret for lost fortune and broken career sullied the triumph of Margaret Nairne in her children's achievements. As the long years went on, she watched without flinching the ruin of those dearest to her, as one after another threw in their lot with the perilous enterprise. Her sorrows were her glories too. The capture and imprisonment of her husband, with the frightful anxieties of his condemnation and sentence so nearly carried into effect, the exile of her eldest son, the death of Robert Mercer and of her son-in-law Strathallan at Culloden, the ruin and exile of her son-in-law Laurence Oliphant, the condemnation of her son-in-law William Murray, the broken lives of her daughters Marjory and Amélie—all these griefs were met with resolute spirit. There was nothing to regret, nothing to withdraw even in thought.

But not only among her own children are the traces of her influence. Something in her personality, in the living steadfastness of her principles, enabled her to draw men to the standard of the Stewarts, and to set their feet upon that hazardous path, as if inspired by her own passionate sincerity. No one will ever know how greatly her power and influence lay at the root of the Jacobite activities of the day. Women played large parts on that stage of glory and defeat, and Margaret Nairne gave good account of hers. Mar, in one of his letters, expresses the wish that all the men under his command had the spirit of Lady Nairne. The Duke of Atholl, her brother-in-law, attributed "the ruine of my three sons" to her influence,—Tullibardine, Lord George and Lord Charles Murray, who

For the descent of the Oliphants of Gask, through Lord Derby, from Henry VII., see De Ruvigny's *Blood Royal of Britain*.

Through Charlotte de la Tremouille the Oliphant and Nairne connection were all descended from the Prince of Orange, whose daughter, the Princess of Nassau, married the Duc de Thouars. They were the parents of Charlotte.

forsook the principles of their father to support the Stewarts. The following letter, addressed to Lady Nairne from Harie Machany at Perth, dated 22nd October 1715, shows that her opinion carried weight with the leaders of the enterprise.

“MADAME,—I have spoke to the Earle of Mar who is extremely pleased with your Ladyship’s generous undertaking and has promised to make a minute in writting of the instructions necessary, and will wait on you once this evening at your Lodging to inform you of everything may be proper on the occasion and the affair you are going about. I shall wait on your Ladyship this night and receive your commands and am, Madame, your Ladyship’s obedient and most humble servant.

“HARIE MACHANY.”

It is easy to imagine that there would be constant intercourse between Gask and Williamston and the Nairne<sup>1</sup> family, living only a few miles away. James Oliphant, the fifth laird, and William and Margaret Nairne, had married nearly at the same time, and their large families were contemporary—the boys and girls companions and playfellows. Doubtless Margaret Nairne used her powers upon the minds of James Oliphant’s young sons, Laurence and Thomas, and as they grew up, made the thought of another possible struggle for the Stewarts one of their dearest hopes. With Colonel William Oliphant, on one side, with his personal experiences, his tales of Dundee, his unquenchable spirit, and on the other the magnetic personality of Lady Nairne under the spell of a romantic cause, it is no wonder that the young Oliphants burned with enthusiasm, and that they were willing to risk and lose all, when the enterprise of 1715 took shape, and the call came.

It was in the month of May 1715 that the Jacobites showed their first definite activity. John Erskine, eleventh

<sup>1</sup> The family name of the Nairnes was naturally Murray; it is curious that it was never used by any member of the family. Their letters are invariably signed *Nairne*, except when Amélie Oliphant wished for a disguise, and signed herself “Sophia Murray.”

Earl of Mar, was the head and front of the rising. For a long time the Jacobites in Scotland had fixed anxious eyes upon him. Mar was, however, no single-hearted devotee of the Stewart Cause. He had played many parts, and played them on opposing sides. Considering the efforts he had made in furthering the hated Union, it is wonderful that Scotsmen gathered to a standard raised in an enterprise designed not only to restore the Stewarts, but to cancel the Union. But Jacobites both in Lowlands and Highlands were ready for war, as far as national sentiment and discontent with existing powers could make them ready. Certain of a general insurrection in England, and elated at the prospect of having amongst them King James himself, the clansmen were ready to welcome any leader. The old men in many a glen remembered Montrose and the glories of his brief career, the memories of Dundee were fresh yet in the minds of many who were still able to fight, the Highland chiefs still had the power of calling to arms their vassals and clansmen. As if the old days had come back, the old wild glories risen again, the men of Scotland yielded to the spirit of adventure.

Mar was at Dupplin in the middle of August. He had married Lady Margaret Hay, a sister of Kinnoull, and knew that he could count on support there. It may be supposed that the young Oliphants of Gask would go over to Dupplin—their own stronghold through so many centuries—to meet Mar, join in the councils, and there offer the service of their swords.

Perhaps the brothers rode away with Mar to Perth, and on to the great hunting match at Braemar on 27th August,—the rallying point of the movement. With young Laurence and Thomas his brother rode also the Lords Nairne, Rollo, Drummond and Strathallan. Soon the Fiery Cross was summoning men from all quarters. On 6th September Mar raised his consecrated standard at Kirkmichael, in the presence of two thousand men. Everywhere enthusiasm grew. To strike a blow now would be to place the Cause at once in the forefront of



politics throughout the Kingdom. Vigour and courage had been shown; Highlands and Lowlands were impatient for battle, a battle too long delayed. Forced inaction told heavily on the spirits of the adventurers. King James was being proclaimed at the chief towns, Perth was taken, reinforcements had come up, the King was coming. On 10th November Mar broke camp at Perth and advanced by Auchterarder to meet the enemy. Laurence Oliphant and his brother marched among the clansmen, past the fields and woods of Gask, where perhaps his parents and brothers and sisters watched from the windows the progress of Mar's forces along the Strath below. The battle of Sheriffmuir was fought on Sunday, 13th November. "Fight or not?" Mar asked his men, relying on the answering shout, "Fight!" Laurence Oliphant held a commission in Lord Rollo's regiment and was on the left wing, which was practically the defeated side. The complete victory, claimed by both, lay with neither army; the mismanagement of the confused affray called forth the cry which has helped to make Sheriffmuir immortal, "Oh for one hour of Dundee!"

Mar drew back to Perth, his object defeated. On the way the Jacobite army burned Auchterarder and Dunning. From Gask the flames could be seen. No renewal of an attempt upon Stirling was possible because of the lack of provisions for his army. There must be more weary waiting in Perth, more effort to keep the undisciplined forces together, more heart-burnings and bitter impatience. But the King was coming, and on that promise Highlanders and Lowlanders fed their dying hopes.

The King landed at Peterhead at last on 22nd December 1715, and proceeded to Scone Palace, within sight of Perth. He remained in Scotland until 4th February. His visit of one fortnight revealed to him all that his advisers had endeavoured to cloak. He fought no battle, he was the centre for no wise scheme. There never had been any seed of victory in the rising. He came too late.

Perhaps Laurence Oliphant and the other adherents recognised this when they went to Scone to meet at last the young King for whom they had been willing to spend their all. It must have been hard to let him know that Sheriffmuir meant nothing, and that another battle was not imminent. James, with all his ill-health, was full of warlike courage, the great quality he never lacked. He was now condemned, at the most crucial moment of his life, to dreary inaction.

Laurence acted at the time of the Royal visit as one of the garrison adjutants at Perth, and was much about the person of the King, who remembered him fifty years after.

In the private note-book of young Laurence are found some entries<sup>1</sup> regarding the orders of the day.

“Scoon, 12th Jan. 1716.

“Parole. Drummond.

“Countersign. Stobhall.

“That intimation be made to all the inhabitants of Perth that when any stranger comes into their houses to lodge, that they give in his name immediately in writing to the Governor. Any that does not observe this carefully will be looked upon and treated as enemies to the King and Government.”

On the 17th January there is another entry:—

“Parole. Erskine.

“Countersign. Alloa.

“That no fewer than 20 gentlemen besides officers mount the King's guard of horse and allways on horseback, and that at relieving, the Guards draw out one against another, and the Captain that is relieved leave all the orders with the other Captain, and that the Centinells be very punctual to let no strangers pass.”

On the 22nd January the following orders are given:—

“That all the commanding officers call in all their people immediately. That the King may have his army as strong as possible to beat the Rebels who threaten to march immediately against us. And all the army to

<sup>1</sup> These entries are printed in the Jacobite Lairds.



*Laurence Oliphant.*

6<sup>TH</sup> LAIRD OF GASK.

1691 - 1767.



hold themselves in readiness to march against them on an hour's advertisement. That the artillery Company do no other duty but break the ice as the Governor orders them."

The last entry in this journal, dated at Scone, 30th January 1716, has a special interest.

"Parole. Perth.  
"Countersign. Scoon.

"All the army to hold themselves in readiness to march upon a call.

"His Majesty has been pleased to give commission to Captain Arthur Elphinston<sup>1</sup> to be Lieutenant Colonel to that regiment which is forming out of those Officers and souldiers that come from the Usurper's army to serve their rightfull King."

Laurence would keep all his life remembrance of the King as he saw and knew him at Scone, tall, thin, pale, grave of speech, silent, and composed. His air of dejection would be no matter of surprise in the circumstances, though his inability to throw off a brooding habit distressed those who wanted him to be popular with his army and his friends. But blow after blow deprived him of any remnant of hopefulness. He realised that he had no general ready with a stroke of genius, no army large enough to strike definitely, no great party in England waiting his word; above all, no help from France. The Fates as usual seemed leagued against him, for the Highland roads were blocked with snow, chiefs who had promised support did not come, and the ship bringing treasure for his use was wrecked off Dundee.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Balmerino, who laid down his life in the Cause thirty years later on 18th August 1746 in the Tower. Doubts have been expressed as to the place of his burial. In a letter from Lady Catherine Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Galloway, to Miss Mercer of Aldie, written 31st October 1746, she quotes the following lines as being inscribed on his tomb:—

"Here Arthur lies, the rest forbear,  
There may be treason in a tear,  
But yet this Rebel may find room,  
Where sceptered monarchs seldom come."

Unfortunately, Lady Catherine does not mention where the tomb is, but it is now generally admitted that Balmerino lies in the Tower church.

In the midst of all these distresses, the King was making preparations for his coronation. He fixed the date. Even before he landed, all his friends knew that Perth must be abandoned as soon as Argyll was ready to advance, as no defence was possible, and that the coronation was a baseless dream. It had to come to the King's knowledge at last. He urged resistance, and would have fought to the death. But his Council prevailed and the campaign was abandoned. To the bitter wrath of the Jacobite forces, the fight for which they longed was denied them. Had there been consulted only the King and his army, who knows to what unexpected triumphs he might have led his men, finding perhaps for himself a glorious death? But between himself and his army, leaders and generals interposed, and he could but follow their advice. Even now, the King, consenting to the retreat northwards, could only gradually have dreamed that it meant the end of the campaign, the final acceptance of defeat. Mar got the King to go to Montrose with him, instead of turning northwards, and next day, 15th February, when the enemy were close on their heels, within four miles of Montrose, Mar induced the reluctant sovereign to go to board the *Maria Theresa* of St Malo, and sail away for France.

The King had spent a fortnight of torture in his own kingdom. He fled now in bitter grief, leaving his adherents to the fury of the Government. Deeper still his griefs were to go when he heard of the execution of Derwentwater and Kenmure, the ruin and exile of those who had fought in his cause. After the King's departure, when the remnant of the Jacobite forces retreated across the frozen Tay, and all hope was over, young Laurence Oliphant and his brother went into hiding. Of the place of their shelter and of the adventures that befel them, no echo remains. It was necessary to disappear for a time till the storm blew over. When they did return it was to find themselves in better plight than many of their comrades.

James Oliphant had taken the precaution of executing a deed of entail of the lands and baronies of Gask and Cowgask in favour of his wife in life-rent and James Oliphant, his third son, then a boy of eighteen, excluding his elder sons until they were purged of suspicion of being concerned in the Jacobite rising. This saved the estates.

The date of the return of the two soldier sons is not recorded, though there is reason to think they were still in hiding in August 1716. The first actual evidence of their being at Gask is found in a letter from young Laurence, dated 17th March 1718.

Jean, the first born, was dead. There is no other word concerning her but what this one letter contains.<sup>1</sup> Nothing but the charming portrait of the young girl remains to show she ever lived. Laurence writes from Gask to his brother James at Edinburgh.

“DR B<sup>a</sup>,—I give you by this the melancholy accounts of my sister Jean her death which happened this morning about seven of the clock.

“We are to have our mournings from Perth because it is not possible to be provided so soon from Edinburgh, how soon this comes to hand take of cloathes for yourself, buy three mourning swords for my Father Brother and myself and also take my Aunt & Mrs Ann Murray’s advice in providing a sett of wine-glasses<sup>2</sup> of the most fashionable kind, I believe there would need to be 2 doz. of the same bigness, but your two advisers will best direct you about them. If Mr Murray provides us in Chirrey let it be at Couling Cellar at Kirkcaldy Wednesday by twelve of the clock. . . . Your sister’s interment will be on Friday, so fail not to come off in time.”

The next family event was in 1719, when young Laurence married Amélie Anne Sophia Murray, the

<sup>1</sup> Two books which belonged to Jean are in the Gask library,—the Psalms in Latin and a Greek Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Wine-glasses were articles of luxury by no means common in Scottish households. It was as well to have a supply for Jean’s funeral. Eight pints of brandy, twenty-eight gallons of ale and three dozen bottles of wine were consumed. James Drummond’s account for making “ye chest” was £15 (Scots). There was a stone of Caudle custom, and two pair of mufles for Jean’s sisters.

second daughter of William, Lord Nairne. The marriages of Amélie's brothers and sisters have already been given, so it will be realised that this marriage linked together in stronger bonds than ever all those interests which centred in the Stewart Cause. But Laurence achieved more in his choice of a wife than the strengthening of his position as a Jacobite. He won a woman whose qualities of courage and fortitude, linked with enduring nobility of character, render her justly the pride of her descendants. Her memory shines through all change, unchangeably steadfast. Her picture shows a handsome woman, dark-eyed and dark-haired, with delicate but decided features and a fine countenance, where both sweetness and character are written.

From her cradle Amélie lived in the atmosphere of Jacobite tradition. Her training and her education had been directed to developing her mind towards those loyalties which were the guiding stars of her mother Margaret Nairne's existence. Young as she was at the time she became Laurence Oliphant's wife, she had already paid her share of the heavy price of the family principles. She had endured the trial of her father's and brother's capture and captivity after Preston; she had known of her father's condemnation, and lived through the dreadful hours which were to have been his last. Perhaps she was one of the two daughters of Nairne who visited him to bid him farewell, on the eve of his execution.<sup>1</sup>

But even after so much endurance, such an early overclouding of her skies, she was only at the beginning of the sacrifices she was to make all through her life for the family principles. The comforts of middle age, as well as the careless joys of youth and the peace of old age, were to be offered on the altar. Looking back along the road of life Amélie could see from first to last how great was the sum of what had been yielded

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte, afterwards Mrs Robertson of Lude, was one of the daughters who visited her father in prison. She was a young child at the time. There used to be a portrait of "Lady Lude" at Tulliallan Castle, painted by Kneller. She is represented as Diana with bow and quiver and a crescent on her forehead.



up, how endless the sorrows and submissions of her lot. But no other life could so well have suited her fine temperament. In the face of distress and disaster she was possessed by the spirit of energy and courage, tenacity of purpose and masculine grasp of affairs. Fitted in every fibre to be the wife of a hero, the mother of heroic sons and daughters, the ancestress of those who keep sacred through the generations the memories of honour and sacrifice, she kept alive also the fire upon the household altar, the traditions of the home. As her story is traced through the years, and the splendid position she made for herself as helpmate and counsellor unfolds, there unfolds too the record of achievements that were "pure womanly."

Amélie had the highest happiness of life,—she was mated with one who fulfilled her ideals. There are two portraits of Laurence Oliphant. One as a little boy, evidently painted as a companion picture to that of his sister Jean, an attractive little fellow in coat and wig. Later in life he appears as a ruddy-faced gentleman, his countenance not handsome, but its plainness redeemed by a kindly, genial expression. This portrait was doubtless painted at the same time as that of his wife. Laurence Oliphant, known in Jacobite story as the "Auld Laird," began life as we have seen, with a practical evidence of his loyal principles, and through life never departed from these. The following words about him express the feeling of his descendants:—

"A shrewd Scot, swayed through life by the two overmastering principles, Chivalry and Religion: a man, free, open-handed and great of heart; careless of renown, but most heedful of his good name; willing to starve or to lose his beloved Perthshire acres, rather than tell a lie or become a burden on his King; . . . a good specimen of that breed of men who were the main strength of the armies of Charles the First and who fought for his sons, his grandson and his great grandson . . . never has more chivalrous loyalty or more unflinching self-sacrifice been witnessed."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds of Gask, p. 351.

The Oliphants took no part in the rising of 1719, the Spanish scheme, the third of the century, and the only expedition really backed by ships and men from any foreign power. Again the elements fought against King James, so that only two frigates out of the fleet reached the west coast of Scotland. The news of the fallen enterprise wrapped the King yet deeper in the gloom that had become second nature. All over Scotland it was felt that the time was not yet ripe for another attempt. The fires of enthusiasm burned low.

It was in this year that Laurence Oliphant married. The marriage negotiations did not run quite smoothly. Many years afterwards Amélie wrote:—

“My Mother’s Uncle Newton<sup>1</sup> made a great bustle about our settlement, in so much that the marriage was given up, and I was ordered by my parents to tell Mr Oliphant not to speak to me any more upon the subject, which in obedience to them I did.”

Laurence Oliphant told his father that if the Nairne proposals were not accepted, he would leave the country. The father in consequence “caused a Tailzie of his Estate to be made,” but this document was never signed.

Quite up to the marriage day there seem, however, to have been some difficulties. Lord Nairne writes to the bridegroom from Nairne, 18th September 1719.

“SIR,—Tho’ I have all imaginable esteme for your Father and you as being men of honour and as such have entirely trusted my daughter’s settlement to you, and should have been glad to delivered her to you to-morrow, ye same day of ye week I had ye happiness to be married to her mother, yet for decencies sake, since so much time and talk has alrade passed about your contracts, you might even have patience untill they be ready, which I hope may be again to-morrow seunight.”

Laurence and Amélie were married<sup>2</sup> at Nairne on 29th September, and settled at Williamston. It is easy

<sup>1</sup> Sir David Falconer of Newton, Lord President of the Court of Session.

<sup>2</sup> In the same month, September 1719, James VIII. was married at Montefiascone to Clementina Sobieski.

to picture the welcome home the pair would receive from parents and brothers and sisters at Gask, eight of whom were still under the family roof at the time.

The account of expenses incurred still lies among the Gask papers.

“ For horse hyre to Mr Oliphant and his brother.<sup>1</sup>  
 A coach hyre to Edinburgh.  
 Cleaning two pair pistolls.  
 Two pair red stockings to groom and footman.  
 Two wooling night capes.  
 A footman’s cap and riband.  
 For a pound of tea, eighteen shillings.  
 A yard and six nails camerick for six pair ruffles.  
 Seven yards three nails Holland for six night cape covers.  
 Making the coursee shirts at 15 pence.  
 Drink money to taylors, 12 pence.  
 A velvet night cap, £5, 8s.  
 A small stone to a ring, £2, 14s.  
 Men and women’s gloves from Perth.  
 Silver crampet, twenty-eight shillings.  
 Scabbard.  
 Pair Duncyster stockings, five shillings.  
 Horse hyre from North Ferry, £4.  
 To music at Nairne, 29th September, 2 gineys.  
 Drink money to servants at Nairne, £14.  
 October 12th, for music at Gask, a giney.  
 To Alice Carryer for bringing ye wedding clothes and others, £12, 12s.  
 For a wedding Ring and small Ring, £17.  
 For a diamond Ring, twenty-five pounds.  
 A gold watch, twenty-eight pounds sterling.  
 October 22nd, to Clark Richardson for writeinge ye contracts of marriage, five Gineys.  
 To his son George, two Gineys.”

This marriage was not the first in the family, for in August of the year before the fourth daughter, Lilius, had been married to Laurence Oliphant of Condie, but the marriage of the heir<sup>2</sup> was of course a great

<sup>1</sup> The sums paid are partly indecipherable.

<sup>2</sup> Two years before the date of the marriage James Oliphant recorded what he meant to do for his eldest son. He was to settle the estate upon him and his heirs. “The casualities payable out of the said Barronie are two mill swine, 36

family event, and probably attended by important festivities.

The following is a list of the children of Laurence and Amélie.

1. Margaret, born at Nairne 22nd June 1720, married, June 1748, to Patrick Graeme of Inchbrakie, died 1785. They had three sons and three daughters.
2. Janet, born at Williamston 21st July 1721, married at Paris, 1st January 1758, to William Macgregor Drummond of Balhaldie, died at Corbeil 8th December 1758, leaving one son.
3. Laurence, born at Williamston 25th May 1724, "the young Laird"; married Margaret, eldest daughter of Duncan Robertson of Strowan, 9th June 1755, died 1st January 1792, leaving six daughters and two sons.
4. Amelia Anne Sophia, born at Williamston 29th January 1730, died 22nd January 1734.

Interest has so centred in the lives of the two Jacobite lairds, that the simple record of James's quiet life affords little material in comparison. There are not many letters in his writing, nor many addressed to him. He was a steadfast man, with a keen eye to the family interests, not only those of his own branch. With his wealth and strong family loyalties he seemed, in an unquiet age, a rock on which to depend. The Lords Oliphant were for long almost dependent on the Oliphants of Gask, who had for two generations been busily gathering, while the scions of the main branch were scattering. The following letter, from Laurence Oliphant, younger of Gask, to Mr Drummond, is evidence that James Oliphant helped his cousin for years.

capons, 75 keek hens, 69 chickens, 378 poultrie, 149 load of coals and 360 load of peats." "Gask will dispone to his son the Heritable Office of Bailliery of all and hail the lands lying within the Abbacy of Inchaffrie." "Mr Oliphant is to have the full and free disposal of his wife's portion, both principal and interest, for the behove of the children of the marryage. Mrs Oliphant is to have of jointure during the lifetime of the present Lady Gask twelve hundred merks of annuity, and after the said Lady's decease, a hundred pounds sterling of Locality out of Lands that are of that yearly rent."

“ Lord Oliphant<sup>1</sup> had in the year 1708 or 1709 gote a promise of a Captain’s commission in Orkney’s Regiment (after haveing incumbered his small estate almost to ye value) but could not obtain to be put in possession without a sum of money for buying his equippage &c. for this he applyed to the Gentlemen of the name, but they would do nothing altho my Father offered to advance ye one half if ye other Gentlemen would give as much; then his Lordship tryed his friends and acquaintances in the North to gett his lands sold but could find none to give such a price as would clear all ye debts. . . . He again applyed to my Father, disponed him his Lands almost exhausted with heritable debts, and got from him 4000 merks in ready money.”

Other letters<sup>2</sup> show how frequently such help was given.

The House of Gask, once filled to overflowing, became stiller as the years went on, and the sons and daughters went out into life one after another. In 1729 the wife, Janet Murray, died. In the Gask accounts, carefully preserved, are found the expenses of her funeral. It was a stately and expensive affair, to judge by the large quantities of food ordered. As soon as a death happened, the minds and time of the survivors were wholly taken up with the necessary arrangements for the county gathering that ensued. In the handwriting of Laurence Oliphant, the younger, is a closely written list of goods ordered for his mother’s funeral. These include

“ A dozen lobsters, three large cods and a few small fish of what kinds can be gott, and a dozen of habets, if it is possible to gett a few oysters or crabs.”

These were to come from Crail. From Edinburgh he ordered anchovies, capers, olives, bottled cucumbers, “ six forren mangoes,” a mutchkin of walnuts, a pot of barberries, seven hundred pickled oysters, six neats tongues,

<sup>1</sup> Patrick, eighth Lord Oliphant. He had a commission as Captain in the 1st Battalion Royal Scots in 1708. See Scots Peerage, vol. vi. p. 557.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in the Jacobite Lairds of Gask, and the Oliphants in Scotland.

a "mutchkin of sweet oyll," two pounds of "marmallit of oranges," spices, sweets, "half a pound of truffles and the same of morells," "and a chopen bottle of good snuff." He also gives an order.

"That the room be hung of black garge (gauze) and the Kirk seats and pulpit. That ye Isle be plaistered and painted black, with white tears, also the ston room doors and windows and the door of the church."

The amount of food was astonishing. For meat there was a hind leg of fine beef from Perth, a fine veal, a cow to be killed at Gask, a roast of pork, four muttuns, two dozen choice hens, six capons. The drink supplied included ten dozen of strong claret, five dozen small, two dozen chirrey, two dozen brandy, a barrel of brandy. It was also an occasion for replenishings throughout the house. Knives, forks, and spoons were bought, and six dozen wine-glasses, but the extra chairs required were borrowed from Lord Rollo and from Millearne. The Charley Murrays lent a cook to help the Gask and Williamston cooks.

Laurence ordered for his father's mourning,

"A mourning night-gown and bell for Gask and a black big coat, and a hole of saddle furniture covered with black."

His mourning cost £2, 2s. Scots, but this included "black for the chaplain, crape for the servants' hatts etc." An idea of the ladies' mourning is given by the dressmaker's bill of Katherine, Gask's daughter:—

"4½ black ferret for the pettycoat . . .	9 shillings.
1 yard fine norage crape . . .	8 shillings.
1 pair black gloves and a drop scarf . . .	19½ shillings.
17 yards fine Camerick for a head suit, ruffles and napkin . . .	£11, 5s.
For making the tail of the gown . . .	16 shillings.
For making a calamancoe pettycoat . . .	8 shillings."

Every arrangement had to be made for the comfort and convenience not only of friends, but of the crowds of servants, retainers, and beggars who flocked to the

house. The little girnell house and barn were set apart for the country people, grooms, and footmen. As the crowning preparation, the Gask stable was to be cleaned.

For nearly three years James outlived his wife. He died at Gask, 10th April 1732. By a strange coincidence his daughter, Lilius Bethune, died at Perth the next day. Of his fifteen children eight survived him, but not one would be living at Gask,—he had no unmarried daughter, and the sons were scattered. There must have been comfort in the nearness of Williamston, the attentions of Laurence and Amélie, and the sight of the children there, who would in these last days come often up the hill and over the ridge to the house of Gask. The last days came, and again in the younger Laurence's hand are all the funeral accounts:—

“April 9. To a servant sent express  
 for doctors . . . . six shillings.  
 To Dr. Fleeming . . . . two guineys.  
 300 nails to the coffin . . . . 12 shillings.”

The usual enormous supplies of food were ordered. The wine supplied cost £450, 14s. Scots. The kitchen furniture was borrowed from Dupplin.

One entry shows a glimpse of young Laurence's tenderness for his little son, then six years old, who was evidently to follow in his grandfather's funeral procession.

“To walk before ye corps, Mr M'Leish, Thomas Oliphant, William Thompson, James Oliphant, James Ranken, Peter Red. Mr M'Leish *to take care of my son at the kirk stile.*”

The life of James Oliphant bridged the gulf between the old Scotland and the new. He could remember the persecutions, the blood and horror of the “Killing Time.” He lived to see the birth, so long delayed, of a spirit of religious toleration, and the grimness of dismal discipline relaxed. He witnessed conditions of life and government that made possible the tragedies of Glencoe and Darien. He heard the distant thunder of the

Revolution<sup>1</sup> of 1688 in England, and the nearer sound of war when Dundee made his desperate stand for King James. He saw his country making her last struggle for the national independence she had maintained through a thousand years of war. He saw her pass, in spite of all, through the humiliation and loss of the Union in 1707; he watched her grow again, stronger in many essentials, into the beginnings of commercial success. He saw fighting cease to be the universal business of every man who could bear arms, new interests, new energies, new ambitions, coming in upon the rising tide of prosperity. He lived through the greatest of revolutions,—the change in national character, the development in men's thoughts, habits, and aims. Two centuries ago events moved swiftly; in later days so complete a change could not come in the space of a single life.

As regards the absorbing political interest of the family, James Oliphant was an onlooker in three unsuccessful Jacobite attempts. He had seen the fortunes of the Stewarts sink to the depths, but he lived to see them rising like a star, though at the date of his death the hopes of their adherents hung on the frail lives of the boy princes at Rome.

<sup>1</sup> William of Orange was cordially hated in Scotland from the first. The following is a coronation song of the time:—

“The 11th April has come about,  
To Westminster went the rabble rout,  
In order to crown a bundle of clouts  
A dainty fyne King indeed.

“He has gotten part of the shape of a man  
But more of a monkey, deny it who can,  
With the head of a goose, but the legs of a cran,<sup>1</sup>  
A dainty fyne King indeed.

“In Hide Park he rides like a hog in armour,  
In Whitehall he creeps like a country farmer,  
Old England may boast of a goodly Redeemer,  
A dainty fyne King indeed.”

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<sup>1</sup> A *cran* is the iron instrument placed across the grate to support a pot or kettle.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE OLD LAIRD

LAURENCE and Amélie did not, on the death of the fifth laird, take up residence at Gask at once. Perhaps they left their first married home with reluctance. The earliest recollection of their children would be of Williamston, where three of them were born. Two girls, Margaret and Janet, came first, and then, in 1724, Laurence, the "young laird" of Jacobite history. The baby girl born in 1730 died at three years old. Of the three children who lived, each one through life was a devout adherent of the Stewarts. The training began in very early youth, when it would be easy for the parents to fill the little minds with stories of the '15, with the glamour of the past, and with brave hopes for the future, giving them an absorbing interest in the child prince Charles Edward, who, born in the same year with Margaret Oliphant, was now the shining star of Jacobite fortunes. They would be taught to think of him as longing, in his Italian home, for the hearts and hills of Scotland. They would think his thoughts, making him a real playfellow, the chosen topic of their childish talk, the honoured guest of their imaginations. The children would be told of the new star that appeared the night of his birth: through good and ill, in days to come, their eyes never ceased to watch the star, their feet never were weary in following it. Help to the imagination lay in the fact that Margaret was the same age as the Prince; he would be measured by her height, and as the years went on, her childish progress would be his also; it seemed possible to watch him growing

as she grew. Charming accounts came from Rome of the brilliant boy, vigorous in health and spirit and daring, and later of his brother Henry, in whom there was a new source of comfort and rejoicing and hope for the future. Though there came no call to arms, the home at Williamston was the shelter of many a passionate hope, of many a whispered scheme.

It is possible to form an idea of life at Williamston; the old house is still there, and in 1723 Laurence drew up an inventory of its contents. Some of the items are as follows:—

“Arras hangings for the rooms, a walking chair for the bairns; pewter trenches; a punch bowl; four drinking jugs of earth, silver forks and spoons; a spinning wheel and six big bobbins; christening clothes; a cradle from Perth; a little boat for salting salmon; a little handy for washing the bairns.”

True to the traditions of his house, young Laurence opened hospitable doors to relatives and friends. To Williamston came the Aunt Margaret, daughter of Patrick the disinherited, who, born in 1663, the year after the Restoration, lived to see the children of a fourth generation and the triumph of the House of Hanover. Close by, at Machany, the Strathallans, a family of boys and girls, children of Amélie's sister Margaret, were growing up with the same secret hopes, the same aims as the Oliphants; the Nairne cousins also came and went, bringing with them the atmosphere of their enthusiasm in the Cause. Margaret Lady Nairne would be often there to see Amélie and the little grandchildren, rejoicing in the chance of imbuing a second generation with her own steadfast loyalty.

While the Gask branch of the family were living prosperously in the quiet shelter of home, the chiefs of the race were falling more and more into obscurity and distress. The following letters give some idea of the dismal histories of the last Lords Oliphant. Patrick, the eighth Lord Oliphant,<sup>1</sup> died in poor circumstances in London in 1720.

<sup>1</sup> He was unmarried, but left a natural son Charles.

He was succeeded by his Uncle William, then Colonel Oliphant, who was living at Orléans. In the following letter his landlady in London announces the death of the eighth lord.

“*Jan. 30. 1720. From Isabella Harrison in  
London to Col. Oliphant at Orleans.*”

“MOST HONOURED SIR,—But I believe you are now the Right Honourable Lord O. I had the honour to have your nephew in my house when he died 14th of this instant and was buried the 18th in the vault of St. James Church where I hope he wont be long, but be buried among his ancestors. He had no relation about him but strangers but had a decent private buriall: he came sick to my house and laboured seven weeks under a sore distemper which was a dropsie, a hectick fever and consumption. I found your letter after he was ded and thought it was charity as well as duty to acquaint you of this last mournful scene for he was mallancholy to the highest degree he was carfully, tenderly took care on while he was here and had all his desires accomplished. as to what he profest, he made his agent his exciter whose name is Mr Joseph Wildigos who undertook to pay and receive what me Lord was indebted and what was due to him being acquainted with all the Lords affairs. He never write to any of his relations because he was not capable of doing it himself by reason of his weakness, but as much in his right reason to the hour of his death as he was in his best health. I could have had a letter pen'd more suitable to his quality and yours, but I chused to do it myself, because I would make nobody acquainted in his secret and yours: both is as safe in my brest as in your own being your countrywoman born within 12 miles of me Lord. Me Lord gave God thanks heartily for casting his lot by providence in my house which was perfectly to satisfaction. You were so earnest in your requests to my Lord for an answer that I thought it my duty to answer it since I knew none to do it but myself, and if you have to say or write to me what you would have done, I'll serve you faithfully to the utmost of my power, which is all from your obedient servant to serve you,

“ISABELLA HARRISON.

“Bery Str. St. James next door to the  
White Swan near St. James’ House.

“I understand you desire mightily to know me lord’s circumstances; he had a pension of the Government of two hundred a year due which at lady day next will be three hundred and by his Captain and lieutenants place 3 hundred a year at half pay, which amounts to five hundred a year sterling money, but what me Lord owes I am not shure of, but they say 5 hundred pounds is the outsidess.”

On receiving this letter, Colonel Oliphant gave up his commission in the French service, returned from Orléans to Scotland, took up the honours and title of Lord Oliphant, and coming to live with his relatives at Williamston, ended his days in that friendly shelter.

With a quaint disregard of hereditary right and the claims of a nephew, he made a resignation of the honours and dignity of the title in favour of James Oliphant of Gask.

While in the Spanish service, Colonel Oliphant had married Marie Magdaleine Elinga, a Frisian lady, described as daughter of a councillor of Ghent. An only daughter<sup>1</sup> was born, Marie Jeanne, who married at Orléans, in 1710, Louis Grenolias Sieur de Cournou. The old Colonel lived with his daughter and her family of three sons and two daughters, until the death of his nephew, the eighth lord, decided him to go back to his own country.

Few records remain of the life and correspondence of Colonel Oliphant, but the following letter which reached him at Orléans is of interest, and must have caused the heart of the old Jacobite soldier to rejoice:—

“A Monsieur Oliphant,  
“Collonel. Orleans.

“25th May 1719.

“DEAR SIR,—Lett me know as soon as possible all the news about ye marriage of the Princesse Sobieski

<sup>1</sup> The ninth lord also left an illegitimate daughter. Thomas Stewart, writing to him in August 1728, says in a postscript: “Your Lordship’s natural daughter is still alive and has behaved herself very well and is married in Bamff.”

with our King. She stole away from Inspruke the 28th of April, and arrived in Boulogna in Italy the 2nd of May about 2 hundred miles, she wrote to Rome, and Mr Murray my Lord Stormont's brother came and married her in the King's name the 9th. So now she is Queen, and gone to Rome, from there to Spain, if she gett a good occasion, and poor lady if they have no assistance will be in a bad condition.

"Adieu, assuring my compliments a Monsieur and Madame de Cornou, . . .

"CH. WHYTFORD."

While Colonel Oliphant lived at Orléans with his daughter, Madame de Cournou, her husband, and the group of grandchildren, he received the following letter from Isabel Crichton,<sup>1</sup> who signs herself as his aunt:—

"PARIS, Sept. 28, 1716.

"I intreate you make my compliments most hartily a hundred times over to Monsieur decornou and Madam, espetially to him for she dus not deserve ye tender concern I have for her, being ither unkind or laesy in writeing like you; but for Monsieur: I love esteame and honours him with all my hart. No man can be better breed, and in reallithey he is truly Master of all ye good qualifications that a man of qualitie and honour ought to have; and crouns them all by ye grate kindness to his Lady, notwithstanding ye litle likelihood at present of any fortin with her."

In a postscript she adds:—

"Pray kis ye Mother and all ye litle deare angels for me, who I long al my hart to see."

Colonel Oliphant and the De Cournous lived in the Rue Colombiers at Orléans. There is now no trace of the family to be found there. No one knows the fate of the "litle deare angels," or what became of these

<sup>1</sup> Isabel Crichton may perhaps have been the third wife of James Crichton, first Lord Fendraught. In this case she had been at least fifty years a widow at this date, as he died before 1665.

direct representatives of the Lords Oliphant. They are mentioned only once again, years after, in a letter from Laurence Oliphant of Gask to the tenth lord in 1736.

Laurence Oliphant announces the death of the ninth lord in the following letter to his brother Patrick at Leyden:—

“WILLIAMSTOUN, 11th January 1729.

“This gives you the account of Lord Oliphant’s death. He came here in a chaise Wednesday morning the 20 Dec. to Christmas with me and was verry chearfull and seemingly in good health all that day and the next. On Sunday morning he had been out walking before I got up and breakfasted so heartily that it surprised us. He and I walked together about half an hour before dinner, but at dinner we observed him out of order . . . he continued to have a shivering and coldness . . . being put to his naked bed<sup>1</sup> and getting a warm drink . . . but to our great surprise he dyed about half an hour after eleven at night without the least agony and pain. . . . He was buried at Gask on Thursday the 2 Jan.”

Margaret and Janet Oliphant would carry through life a clear remembrance of the old man who had seen so much and fought so often. The boy Laurence was only four when he died, so could have only the mistiest recollection of his great grand-uncle.

The old man had a room at Gask as well as his quarters at Williamston, for Laurence Oliphant drew up a list of the effects he left at his death at both houses. Among the personal possessions<sup>2</sup> at Williamston were the following:—

“A silver watch with a silver chain and Peast seal sett in silver of Massies make worth £4.

A small walking sword with a gilded steel hilt and silver wear handle with a plain lether belt.

<sup>1</sup> The use of the night-gown or night-shirt was not usual at this date. The night-gown constantly mentioned in old records was what is now called a dressing-gown. Even in the civilised French Court this garment was unknown either for men or women till after the time of Louis XV.

<sup>2</sup> The list is given in the Oliphants in Scotland.

A silver seal with three sides and a lether case  
worth only its weight in silver.

A gold ring with a cornelian ston.

A silver pick-tooth case with the Coat of Arms on  
the one end and a sypher on the other.

Ane old horn snuff-box.

A silk purce with two old fourteen pieces in it.

Thomas a Kempis in French.

A leather wieg box.

Ane old red clock bag."

These were pathetic possessions for one who represented a family that had once owned vast tracts of land, whose scions had been counsellors and champions of successive sovereigns, and wielded a mighty power in Scotland.

William was the last but one of the Lords Oliphant ; not again was the name to be written on the records of the country. He would have been succeeded by his younger brother, Francis, had he survived.

Francis, who was born about 1661, was a lieutenant in the Scots Guards in 1696. He died in September 1708, having married in London, in November 1689, Mary Riddell. She also died before 1712. Three orphan children were left, a daughter, Mary, of whom nothing is known, William, and Francis. William, as the eldest son, was on the death of his mother taken into the household of Æneas Oliphant of Balgonie, one of the Condie family. James Oliphant of Gask took him from some unsuitable position in the Balgonie household, and sent him to school at Foulis, where he remained till 1714.

The following is one of the school accounts sent in by Mr Coldstream of Foulis :—

"Ane account of money received by Mr John Coldstream, Schoolmaster at Foulis from the Laird of Gask on account of William Oliphant, son to Captain Francis Oliphant from his first entry to the School of Foulis (Mart. 1712) to his removal therefrom (Lambmass, 1714) as follows :—

"Dec. 18. 1712. For mounting the said William

Oliphant in Coat, Vest and Hat Stockings Shoes and Breches Shirts and Cravats, as per particular accompt given up, £25, 18s. 2d.

“More for his first quarters board from Mart. 1712 to Candlemass 1713 and for School dues, paper pen and ink, as per accompt given up, £12, 10s.

“Nov. 25. More for mounting the said William in a Kelt coat for winter and for shirts shoes and cravats and making the said cloaths as per part. accompt given up, £9.

“Mar. 3. 1714. More for ane other half years board, school dues, paper pens and ink and other small necessaries from Lambmass 1713 to Candl. 1714, £25, 10s.

“Aug. 2. For ane other half years board, school dues, paper pen and ink and some other small necessaries from Cand. 1714 to Lamb. 1714 about which time he went away, £25, 7s. 6d.

“To ane express to ye said William’s master from Perth given to himself when sent to Kirkaldy, 005. 17. 00.

“Sent with him to his merchants to buy sea-cloathes, fifty markes.

“*Item*: Payed for hys apprentice fee at sea, ane hunder marcks, which is to be stated in Mr Oliphant’s accounts from Jan. 1st 1715.

“Suma of money given out upon William Oliphant, 230. 08. 06.”

This brief notice is the last record of the young boy-heir to the empty honour of the Oliphant title. He went away to sea, and not one word or one tradition remains as to his fate. He was never heard of again; it is known he was dead before 1721.

Francis, his younger brother, afterwards tenth Lord Oliphant, was not so fortunate in finding relations to succour him. The following letter<sup>1</sup> gives an idea of the upbringing of this child. He must have been not less than seventeen at the time. It is addressed from the Canongate, to Lord Oliphant at Gask, and dated 6th August 1725:—

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 78.



“MY LORD,—Mr Oliphant told me that your Lordship desired me to make enquiry about that poor child your nephew Francis, who stays with one deacon Lauthor a shoe-maker that lives at the foot of the Canongate in the horse-wynd. I went myself as your Lordship desired and called for him who I found in a very mean condition. About two years ago one Robert Oliphant a Hatter in London that lives at Charin-cross, you may remember him, when he was hear heard of the boy and called for him, and seeing him so destitute without cloths, clothed him from tope to toe, but now they are all worn out to rags, only ye Deacon has given him a course coat but he hath neither breeches, shoes, nor stockings but what is all in pieces and not so much as a cravat about his neck. Were it not for the charitable Deacon who has taken what care has been, or els he had lyne in the street and sterved. I askt him if he had ever been at school, he said that he could read and write som, this is all the account I can give of him . . . my Lord yr lordships most humble serv.

“MAR. GARIOCH.

“Francis goes by the name of my Lord Oliphant<sup>1</sup> and so call'd by everybody, but in the meantime he will go in an erend for any bodie for a babie.”

This poor boy writes the following letter<sup>2</sup> to his cousin, the Laird of Gask, in October 1729, from Edinburgh.

“DEAR COUSIN,—I doubt not but that you may take it as a surprise that I have used the freedome to write you unacquainted, but the worthy character you and your family have borne for some hundreds of years, and also considering the old relation between the family of Oliphant and yours will I hope attone for this time.

“I do acknowledge it as a great part of my unhappiness that I have never seen you or any of your family, of which I should be most ambitious.

“I had a designe to have come over to Gask and had the satisfaction to have seen you, your good lady family and friends, I being intended very shortly to go for London to try what kind providence will do for me. But my present circumstances with the many hardships

<sup>1</sup> He became actually Lord Oliphant in less than three years.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 81.

I have been left under and obliged to suffer by the early loss of my parents, and otherwise since I was a child, makes me very unprepared for either a long or short journey.

“And that which adds to my affliction is the loss of the Dear Countess of Mairshall<sup>1</sup> who took care of me and my education for about three years before her decease.

“But after all before I proceed to any journey I desire your assistance and good advice in whatever terms you may please to signify it to me in writing by the first conveniency and in the meantime I remain, Dear Sir, your most affectionat Cusin and hearty well-wisher,

OLIPHANT.

“If you please to write Direct for me at Mrs Kirkwoods the first stair above the foot of Peebles wynd.”

This was in truth the last Lord Oliphant. He lived until April 1748, having married in 1747 Mary Linley of York, who survived him. There were no children.

William, fifth son of Charles Oliphant of Langton, claimed the right to assume the title on the death of his kinsman. He was fifth in descent from the third Lord Oliphant. He was then a very old man. He lived only till 1751 and left no children. Though he never assumed the title, he voted at a peers' election in 1750. David Oliphant of Bachilton claimed the titles, and succeeded in voting at an election of Scottish peers in 1761. Dying in 1770, his sister's son, John Oliphant of Carpow, claimed the succession and styled himself Lord Oliphant, but never voted at an election of peers. Several letters are extant<sup>2</sup> addressed to a correspondent and signed “Olyphant,” and docketed “From Lord Oliphant,” covering some fifteen years before the death

<sup>1</sup> Lady Mary Drummond, eldest daughter of the fourth Earl of Perth, born 1675. She married about 1690 the ninth Earl Marischal, who died 1712. She died 7th March 1729, and is buried in Holyrood Chapel. She was the mother of two sons, the tenth Earl Marischal and the celebrated Marshall Keith, and two daughters, Mary, married to the sixth Earl of Wigton, and Anne, who married the Earl of Galloway.

<sup>2</sup> See article signed W. T. M. in Notes and Queries, 4 S. ix. 1872. The letters were addressed to the grandfather of W. T. M.

of David. His nephew and successor writes ten years after to the same correspondent:—

“PITHEARLES, 3 Jan. 1781.

“DEAR SIR,—I now acquaint you that I was this night married to my housekeeper Jaennet Morton. And in all appearance, as I am not long for this world, give me leave to recommend her and my son John Olyphant by her, or any other she may have by me, to your Protection, and it will be greatly serving an old acquaintance who sincerely wishes you and yours well, and I am with great regard, Dr Sir your most obedient servant,  
“OLYPHANT.

“P.S. — Thomas Stewart and Patrick Stewart his brother, both of Perth, were witnesses to the marriage.”

He afterwards told his friend that he had lived with Janet Morton, his housekeeper, “in habits of familiarity,” and that she had borne a son, and expected another child, and these children he desired to legitimise. He died in the following March. There is no trace of his son John, but his posthumous daughter, Janet, married the eighth Lord Elibank in 1803.

Having thus traced the fallen fortunes of the main branch of the House of Oliphant till its extinction in 1748, and beyond this date for the thirty-three years which saw three doubtful claimants assume the ancient title, we now turn back to earlier dates and the simple home life of the Gask family.

Laurence was sent to school<sup>1</sup> at Dunfermline at eight years old. The following letter<sup>2</sup> is from Mr Paterson, Laurie’s schoolmaster, dated 7th October 1732:—

“MADAM,—I thank God your son continues in perfect good health and is a very fine Boy. I do not see that he is at all given to any sort of ill tricks and he is very willing to learn ; however, I cannot say he learns fast.”

<sup>1</sup> Gask paid six guineas a quarter for his son’s schooling.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in full in the *Jacobite Lairds*.

Long years afterwards, when a very old man, Laurence wrote about his childhood and youth:—

“Christianity was my birthright. I was reared up by most carefull virtuous and indulgent parents. In the small-pox by their intercessions brought back from the verge of the grave and trained up to youth by their example in virtue. Bliss the Lord, praise him and magnefie him for ever.

“Then I went astray after different sins,—yet the Lord did not cast me out. . . . I vexed my very dear Mother by a foolish liking for a country girle Betty Lion. . . . I was proud and passionate. . . . In the midst of my folly the Lord sent a cure and also granted my most earnest wishes.”

A few family letters of this time are given here of domestic rather than historical interest.

The Duke of Atholl writes from Edinburgh to Gask:—

“20th April 1713.

“SIR,—I doubt not but you’l be glad to hear that I came safe here this night with my wife. I brought with me my commission for being Privy Seall, since the Queen has given me that post I could not decline to serve her again as Commissioner to the General Assembly which meets Thursday nixt. I shall be gladd to have your assistance now as I hade last time if you can conveyntly come. When you come I shall acquaint you with something which I’m persuaded is for your interest which I designed to have told you before I went to London.”

Robert Mercer<sup>1</sup> of Aldie writes, evidently not in best of tempers, in spite of the happy event he announces. The letter is addressed to Laurence Oliphant at Williamston from Aldie, 8th July 1724:—

“I send this to acquaint you my wife was safely brought to bed of a sone<sup>2</sup> this morning. . . . I can not

<sup>1</sup> The second son of William, second Lord Nairne, and Margaret Nairne. Aldie Castle is quite fifteen miles from Gask, through Gleneagles on the road to Dollar.

<sup>2</sup> James Mercer, died at Meikleour 18th December 1758, unmarried. He left an illegitimate son, Charles Mercer, who was long factor on the estates.

say my wife and I are much obleaged to my sister and you when neither her lying in nor my wanting you here about business would fetch either of you. The young Laird is to be christened on Tuesday when we shall be glad of both your companies."

There is an unsigned letter in the handwriting of Lady Nairne from Glamis, 15th May 1728, and addressed to Mrs Oliphant. The letter concerns Charles, fourth Earl of Strathmore, who was killed in a scuffle between James Carnegie of Finhaven and John Lyon of Brighton on 11th May. The occasion was the funeral of a young girl at Forfar, which formed, as usual, the excuse for an orgy of eating and drinking, especially the latter. Carnegie was endeavouring to kill Lyon in the street, and making a pass at him, ran his sword through Lord Strathmore's body.

"I know, Dear Amelia, just now, it would take a volum to describe the melancholy condition of the family from the Highest to the lowest, but no words could express poor Lady Strathmore's<sup>1</sup> sorrow, nor can any but such, unfortunately, as I comprehend it. The state of her health is bad enough she has a vilent cough . . . you may be sure no care in my power will be neglected, and I have some influence with her by the unhappy sympathy in our conditions<sup>2</sup> so that often we cry together, —then I endeavour to amuse her with idle stories, for I know by dear-bought experience, in vain weak reason would command when love has led the way.

"I thank you for the kind intention . . . but they have employment enough here. Katy is with Lady Kathy<sup>3</sup> and Lady Strathmore often, but Mary is her principal favourite, her Lord was so fond of her, . . . (on tuesday se-night he told me he would wade up to the neck in watter to serve Miss Mary). Charlotte<sup>4</sup> is all the housewife. We have to make tea in the drawing-room

<sup>1</sup> Lady Susan Cochrane, second daughter of the fourth Earl of Dundonald. She married Lord Strathmore in 1725. There was no issue. She married again, in 1745, Mr George Forbes, her factor, and had a daughter. She died at a convent near Paris, June 1754.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Nairne had been widowed about two years.

<sup>3</sup> Probably Lady Katherine Cochrane, married, 1729, to the Earl of Galloway.

<sup>4</sup> Katy, Mary, and Charlotte were three of the Nairne sisters.

for Lady Mary Lyon<sup>1</sup> is so ill she keeps her Bed. You have heard the dismall story very wrong, for Bregton I believe would as soon hurt himself as Lord Strathmore and so he thought and to the last was very fond of him. It was Pemrron who without any previous warning ran him throw and throw the Body (and no sword drawn but his own) as he was walking on the street in Forfar after a Burrial he had been at, whether it was premeditated malice or mad fury I know not. I shall make your compliments. . . . Lady Tweedal<sup>2</sup> and Lady Ann Hay came here last night."

Robert Mercer, writing to his mother, Lady Nairne, from Aldie, on the same event, says:—

"His friendship for which he was so conspicuous, for a more sincere friend never was, must alass have a hand in his exit, for by what I can understand, had he had less of humanity to his murtherer and less friendship to his relative, we might still have had the dear Strathmore."

The following is a letter to Garvock in Gask's handwriting, dated Gask, 3rd June 1724:—

"DR BROTHER,—He, Mr John Graeme is desired not to admitt you to the H—— Sacrament till he get a letter under your hand to be sent the Bishop acknowledging your fault in swearing and declaring your repentance for it; As to Condie, Mr Graeme is desired not to admitt him till he confess, before witnesses his fault in joyning in worship with Mr Semple and promise he shall never doe so again, nor countenance Mr Semple. Of this you will inform Condy. I wish your Lady a happie hour, and am—your affect.  
BROY."

A note with its scraps of country gossip is from Miss Anne Drummond of Logiealmond, writing to Mrs Oliphant in 1731.

"Is it possible that I am ordered to write to Gask by

<sup>1</sup> Sister of Lord Strathmore.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Susan Hamilton, widow of John, second Earl of Dundonald, in 1690, and widow of Charles, third Marquess of Tweeddale in 1715. She died 1737. Lady Strathmore was her granddaughter.

<sup>3</sup> The date must be a mistake, as the Garvock marriage, which made Laurence Oliphant his "brother," was not until 1738.

Perth was ever the like of that heard,—send a letter 16 mile in order to goe three,—but them that does bidding needs nay dinging. Well, to begin—Tibie's return cheer'd us all up to hear that you my dear Madam was none the worse of your black Mare Lord be thanked. . . . Tell Sir Laurence I am not to be friends with him these seven years with his nesty paper exactness . . . Monsieur is gone to bury Mr Ca Maxton. . . .”

The next letter concerns a friendly fishing dispute between Duncrub and Gask.

The Master of Rollo writes to Laurence Oliphant from Garvock, 11th June 1731 :—

“DE SIR,—When I came home here on Tewsday I was surprised to hear that, some of your people have been fishing my watter of Erne, on the lands of Dalreoch. I did not incline to give any Disturbance to it at first lest it might have been for the devertion of any of you family, but hearing it is of ane other Design I choosed to take the neghboury and friendly way to Desire such things may be prevented, I having an undoubted right to the fishings etc. from my Author the Duke of Atholl as to the lands . . . my wife's humble service and mine to your Lady, yr most obliged etc.  
ROLLO.”

“DEAR MASTER” (replies Oliphant),—“If any of my Father's people have been fishing the Earn where it does not belong to himself its I believe without his knowledge and I'm sure its without mine, so that you injure us both if you think we have any desire of encroaching upon a different proprietor,—but I'm afraid you will find yourself much mistaken if you believe you have any fishing on Earn by your purchase of Dalreoch, for Ardoch the common purchaser both of West Gask and Dalreoch from the Duke of Atholl, did reserve the fyshings of Dalreoch when he sold these lands to Glenaggie and I suspect they must continue still for Harie Stirling property. That point you have to settle with my Freinds. My wife and I offer our humble service to you and the mistress of Rollo.”

Lady Strathallan writes from Machany to her mother, Lady Nairne, at Lude, July 1733.

"I was at Drum. last week and all there enquired for your Ladyship and my sisters: My Lord and Lady Maxwell<sup>1</sup> are there just now and Lady Margaret Stewart<sup>2</sup> and all ye Abercairnle folk were there too. Both ye Abercairnle folks and us was there on invitation to my Lady Maxwells marriage day<sup>3</sup> and Lady Mary Drummonds<sup>4</sup> birthday. They were both on the 27th, and a terrible day of thunder and lightning it was there and rain which has done a good deal of mischief, for ye watters rose so high in a sudden that there is several people lost, and many bridges taken away, and a great deal of damage done to several little country houses with ye rain. There was a child in a cradle taken away with ye watter about a mile or two above Stirling, and was got out near Stirling alive which was a great wonder."

The next letter is interesting, as it gives a glimpse of Margaret and Janet Oliphant. They seem to have been sent into lodgings in Edinburgh, not apparently of the most comfortable type.

Monroy writes from Edinburgh, 5th February 1734:—

"DR SIR,—This goes by our Friend Soutertoun<sup>5</sup> who wants now to get the last moyetie of his lairdship he is in the greatest haste, and ye will never have peace till ye be quit of him and give him by degrees as ye can till he have noe more to say to you and after can say little for his conduct.

"Your daughter last night was at a Play and is very well only its a bad Close and cold Roume they are in, but I hope the next choice for you will be better."

The following letter, though of a later date, is added here as it gives further history of the Souterton family. The letter to Laurence Oliphant of Gask is endorsed in

<sup>1</sup> William Lord Maxwell, son of the fifth Earl of Nithsdale, who escaped from the Tower of London when under sentence of death in February 1716. Lady Maxwell was Catherine Stewart, daughter of the fourth Earl of Traquair.

<sup>2</sup> One of the twin daughters of the fourth Earl of Traquair.

<sup>3</sup> 27th June 1731.

<sup>4</sup> Third daughter of the fourth Earl of Traquair and wife of the Duke of Perth.

<sup>5</sup> Oliphant of Souterton.



his writing "from Soutertoun's wife," and dated 20th January 1743 at Edinburgh.

"HONOURED SIR,—I sent you ane letter of thanks for the kindness shoven me at my husband's death. It is 14 months since and the poor child being but 3 years of age and very tender takes clos attendance soe as I can not goe abroad to Earn anything by my handy labour to support us. I wrote your honer there was £12 Scots due for hous rent and I was obliged to pawn my body cloaths for it, or be thrown with my child to the street and now he is seized with the Pox and nothing earthly to support us emboldens me to trouble your Honor trusting to your sympathising Christian disposition to all in distress, and my boy having the honour to be your distant relation hopes you of your goodness will order me some supplies as you shall think meet or if your Honour would Recommend me to the Barrons of Exchequer as I may have some of the King's bountie to bring up my child<sup>1</sup> as is usual upon recomendation from any gentleman of Noat as you are.

"Beging pardon for this trouble I am with profound respects etc.  
LILLEAS OLIPHANT."

Oliphant of Rossie sends a messenger, Gilmor, with the following message to Williamston, 18th February 1734.

"SIR,—I'm desired by Rossie is intreat of you the Loan of two sallie-mans<sup>2</sup> Gowns Capes and Battons for service at his Ladie's funerals."<sup>3</sup>

J. Robertson writes to Laurence Oliphant from Nairne House, 26th October 1734 :—

"SIR,—I presumed to speak to you at Perth about the master of Nairn's<sup>4</sup> allowance. It was alwise my notion he was to have 30 pounds a year and a suit of cloathes or 40 pounds, and shall be sorry if convenience

<sup>1</sup> There is an entry of 8th April 1743 in the Greyfriars Burial Register in Edinburgh, "a child of widow Oliphant, pensioner."

<sup>2</sup> Sallie or Saullie, a hired mourner walking before a funeral procession. The name perhaps came from the "Dule weeds," in Anglo-Saxon "Sal," black, or from the often-repeated prayer chanted in Romish times with the refrain "Salve Regina."

<sup>3</sup> Jean Colville of Blair.

<sup>4</sup> James, son of John, third Lord Nairne. He died young in 1737.

wont allow this to hold. . . . It were a thousand pities so hopeful a youth especially of his Rank should not be above want on the most material period of his Life, I mean the time of education. I rather be called officious than be silent upon this. . . .”

Charles Oliphant<sup>1</sup> writes from London, 15th May 1735 :—

“HON<sup>BLE</sup> SIR,—I was some months ago honoured with a letter from you and an enclosed to his Grace the Duke of Atholl<sup>2</sup> which I delivered but had no answer being I did not see the Duke altho I calld often at his Grace’s lodgings.

“But as I have since been in Scotland and seen the Dutchess of Gordon<sup>3</sup> and I find her Grace would easily agree to my haveing the home I proposed but upon due consideration of your Honour’s wholesome advice and the Bad usage I seed some of the Murray lairds get in the midle of an inland countrie from the Highlanders at the last Nairn Election gives me a sufficient disgust for ever thinking to live amongst such a sect of Lawles Ruffians. . . . The usage my Lord had from those people has since turned him an honest man or at least it have helped to open his eyes, for he seems now to see clearer, being he now votes the other way.”

Jacobite hopes and plans were again fermenting. News from Italy brought accounts of the enthusiasm of the “Prince of Wales,”—his fitness in all things for the throne of his fathers. The long years went by and the ’15 had become an old story, a dim memory to many. The eyes of the loyal were fixed on the future. Janet Oliphant, at the age of fourteen, wrote the following verses ; they are certainly not poetry, but they breathe the spirit of

<sup>1</sup> A son probably of James Oliphant of Ure. He had been apprenticed to a saddler in Edinburgh by James Oliphant of Gask in 1707. He was afterwards a lieutenant in Lord John Drummond’s regiment in the ’45 and was condemned to death. Through the intercession of Brodie of Brodie he was not executed, but was transported to America. He married a Drummond, and left a family whose descendants have not been traced.

<sup>2</sup> James, second Duke of Atholl.

<sup>3</sup> Lady Henrietta Mordaunt, second daughter of the Earl of Peterborough and Monmouth, widow of Alexander, second Duke of Gordon. She died in 1760.

life at Gask, and are the only record of Janet's ardent girlhood.

"THE SINCERE WISHES OF A CHEARFUL LOYALIST  
UPON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1735

"Hail, might for Peace, All hail O Prince Divine,  
Whose righteous reign would make our Isles to shine,  
For Whiggish broils say nothing can us save  
But calling home James, the safe and brave.

"May some kind Nymph his nuptial Bed adorn<sup>1</sup>  
And lend him aid to dash the Whiggish scorn,  
May Charles improve in glorious arts of War  
The bloody Rebels violence to dare,  
May Henry live and like a Lion roar,  
Frighting the Whigs from shedding Purple gore.

"Kind Heavens! look down upon our times  
And free us from those hellish crimes,  
Restore our rightful injured King,  
And pull away the German Thing."

Janet's lines were perhaps in imitation of those of the Poet Chief Strowan, of which a small manuscript collection is among the Gask archives. The following lines are there:—

"SCOTLAND'S NEW PSALM. JUNE 10

"How long shall perjured Knaves, O Lord,  
Exile our righteous King?  
Send home the spurious race, O God,  
Despatch the German Sting.  
Then peace and justice shall return  
And flourish us among,  
Thy praise we will proclaim aloud  
In a Seraphick song.

"How long shall righteous Jacob grieve  
To see his people's fate,  
Oppressed with Bondage and the woes  
Of an improv'rish'd State?"

---

<sup>1</sup> There is some impatience here. The wife of James VIII. had only been dead five months.

O Pow'r Eternal! hear my sighs  
 And grant me this Request,  
 Set Him, whose right it is to reign  
 In place of hornéd Beast."

About the year 1736 Gask, in selecting a tutor for his children, kept strictly in mind those principles which were the mainsprings of his own thought and action. His choice fell upon one whom the taste of to-day would scarcely have ratified as a companion for young children. William Meston was a burlesque poet, the son of a blacksmith. He had been tutor to the Marischal family and Professor of Philosophy in the Marischal College. But these recommendations were as nothing compared to the fact that he had been out in the '15, held Dunottar Castle in the Chevalier's name, and fought at Sheriffmuir. Attachment to the Stewart Cause was a supreme qualification. He was, however, a good classical scholar, and could impart both philosophy and mathematics. His drawback as a companion for the youthful Laurence and the two girls was simply that his conviviality, his wit, and his muse, were of a coarse description, even for an age when coarseness was more easily tolerated. But he was "good company" and doubtless enlivened the days of a very quiet country life.

The family, which had now removed from Williamston to Gask House, could have had no very frequent distractions. The main interest of life must have lain in the visits of the neighbouring families of Nairnes, Drummonds, and Murrays, and in the constant letters from relations and friends.

The following is from Jean, Duchess of Atholl, the Mrs Lannoy who is said to have been the original heroine of the song "Hunting-tower":—

"MADAM,—I have bin wishing for some settled weather that I might Do myself ye honour of Waiting on your Ladship to take Leave for some Years but still hope to meet again in ye Land of Cakes it wou<sup>d</sup> give me great

Concern Did I imagine I was to give an Eternal farewell to this Country and those friends w<sup>b</sup> I have Rece<sup>d</sup> so many Civilitys and favours from.

“I have great hope that ye weather may be favourable either Friday or Saturday that I might venture to bring my young folks who are teizing me every Day for to make my promise good to your Ladiship, & I shall be as glad as they to have a fair Day for so agreeable a purpose. I hope Mrs Murray Continues in a good way towards increasing ye Leiges. My most Humble service attends her and Mr Murray and ye young Ladies and I am with great Respect, Madam, Your Ladiship’s Most Obedient & most Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>,

J. ATHOLL.

“DUNKELD, Feb. 14th, 1739.”

The same lady writes to Gask again a few months after. This time the letter is addressed to Margaret, Lady Nairne:—

“MADAM,—I return your Ladiship thanks for ye honour of your Letter, & Congratulate you on ye birth of your Grandson.<sup>1</sup> I am very glad Lady Lude<sup>2</sup> & the little Gentleman is in so good a way & give your Ladiship Joy on ye happy Recovery of Mr Mercer’s<sup>3</sup> family from that Dangerous Distemper & that it has not spoiled Miss Mercer’s<sup>4</sup> Beauty. I heartily wish Mrs Murray a happy moment w<sup>b</sup> I hope will be over long before your Ladiship receives this. Your Ladiship’s regard for your family will Certainly inable you to go thro’ y<sup>r</sup> fatigues of guiding so large a houshold as you judge it to be ye most prudent way to join all your family together. I should be mighty sorry Mrs Mary Nairne’s eyes should receive any prejudice by ye piece of work Designed only as an amusement for her. Y<sup>r</sup> Ladiship mentioned Lady Jane’s<sup>5</sup> learning to sing she has begun and as she has an exceeding good ear I

<sup>1</sup> James Robertson. He married, in 1758, the Miss Mercer mentioned in this letter, and died 1802, having been sixty-two years in possession of the Lude estate.

<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Nairne.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Mercer, Lord Nairne’s second son, who married the heiress of Aldie. He was killed at Culloden.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Mercer. See note p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> Lady Jane Murray, born 7th June 1730. When seventeen years old she eloped with John, twentieth Earl of Crawford, and was married to him 3rd March 1747. She died of fever the same year. Crawford was much older than his bride and in great straits for money.

hope she may attain to sing agreeably to entertain her friends with Ballads; as for Italian I am very easy as few voices can come up to perform it in perfection & takes so much application & time I think that Labour better bestowed upon her harpsicord w<sup>h</sup> she begins to be very fond off by Judges I am told it will be her own fault if she is not one of the best female players in a few Years in Britain. Lady Charlot<sup>1</sup> was very desirous to learn but has not so much attention yett as her sister, they both play sometimes on the Organ when its very Comical to see ye little fingers tweedling on that Great instrument. My Lord went to portsmouth ye 31st of July & returned here ye Wensday following on Sunday ye 3rd he saw four Regiments embarked<sup>2</sup> & all appeared in top spirits proposing great Glory and much Riches from their extended expedition. Ye wind continues contrary for Sir John Norris and Lord Cathcart. Our neighbouring Camps att Hounslow engages all ye Common people who in flocks by land and watter makes them daily Vissetts, if this Rainy weather that we have now continues both officers and soldiers will be in a bad Condition ye ground where they are in camp being quite a morrass in wett weather my Curiosity is satisfied with seeing them once ye Camp I saw in hide park being to my mind much a finer sight. There's no news here to afford your Ladiship diversion. London is very empty and what conversation passes is on our warlike preparations. I heard last post that Lord George Murray's Daughter had ye small-pox. God send it well over. I pitty Lady George<sup>3</sup> for its a Dreadfull Distemper & in all likelihood her sons<sup>4</sup> will take it. My poor eldest nephew Frederick is dying of a Dropsy att his sister Humes in Kent & she is vastly ill. Lady Frederick has bin there 3 months attending them and very much fatigued with her distrest family.

“Your Ladiship I judge has heard of Mr Alexander

<sup>1</sup> Lady Charlotte Murray, born at Dunkeld 2nd October 1731, married John Murray of Strowan, afterwards third Duke of Atholl.

<sup>2</sup> The troops to be engaged in the war with Spain, declared by Walpole in October 1739. The Spaniards cut off Captain Jenkin's ear, which act of aggression was the cause of the campaign. The English, under Admiral Vernon, captured Porto Bello.

<sup>3</sup> Lady George Murray was Amelia, daughter and heir of Dr James Murray of Glencarse and Strowan.

<sup>4</sup> John Murray, born 6th May 1729, and James, born 1724. Another son, George, was born after this date in 1741.

misfortune att paris of being quite Broke & De Costa ye Jew went off here much about ye same time. Ye Prince<sup>1</sup> had a very fine entertainm<sup>t</sup> at Clevden ye first and second of August in honour of Lady Augusta's birth Day and his R—H & ye Lord Mayor joined in Chorus that Britains never would be Slaves. Happy for us such noble sentiments possesses ye hearts of ye Great. I believe your Ladiship's patience will be tyred by this time & shall only beg leave to assure you that I am with very great respect, Madam, Your Ladiship's Most Obedient and Most Humble Servant,

J. ATHOLL.

“HAMMERSMITH, ye Augs<sup>t</sup> 14<sup>th</sup>, 1740.”

Across the Strath at Ryecroft a group of Graeme cousins were within easy reach of Gask. Inchbrakie Castle having been burned after Sheriffmuir, and the new house of Inchbrakie not yet built, the Graeme family sheltered at Ryecroft, the nine boys and girls near enough of an age with the Oliphants to be playfellows and companions. Of these children, Patrick Graeme, the eldest son, born 25th January 1717, afterwards eighth Baron of Inchbrakie,<sup>2</sup> must have well known the road, if any road existed, between Ryecroft and Gask. In 1748, in the darker days when Jacobite hopes were extinguished, he married Margaret Oliphant of Gask.

But the days of failure and despair were yet far distant while Laurence and Amélie Oliphant watched their son and daughters growing from the eager partisanship of children into earnest Jacobite men and women. In time to come they were to endure much, to surrender much, but meanwhile life was coloured with a thousand rainbow hopes.

When Laurence was studying Latin at school, the education of the two girls went on at home. The book learning would be of a rudimentary character. They could read and write, and Janet played the flute, but the homely accomplishments of sewing, knitting, and spinning occupied most of their time. The clothes worn by the

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Prince of Wales. His eldest child, Augusta, was born 11th August 1737.

<sup>2</sup> He succeeded his grandfather, 1740.

girls and their mother would be made of wool spun by themselves or their women servants. Plaids of silk were worn by ladies till the middle of the century, though the Gask family would probably not wear tartan.

The following is a dressmaker's bill for goods supplied to Mrs Oliphant by Janet Cumingham in 1721 :—

“For making a sprig'd morning gown for whyte			
Callicoe to face the broast . . . . .	. 2	6	
Glouvos . . . . .	. 2	0	
For linnen to make out ye body linning . . . . .	. 0	8	
For new making a brocaded mall-borrow gown			
lyn'd with yellow mantua silk and alter-			
ring ye petty coat . . . . .	. 5	0	
For makeing a whyte satinott morning gown . . . . .	. 2	0	
For makeing a yollow cotton satin morning			
gown . . . . .	. 2	0”	

Aunt Margaret Oliphant got her clothes from William Fergusson, a merchant in Perth. She got fifty-one Elms of white linnen at one time, nine yards of Blew Callimancoe, ten yards Musselbrough stuff, two yards Black Mantua silk, and one pair of large white silk gloves.

At all ceremonies, even at funerals in the earlier years of the century, gay clothes and brilliant colours were worn. The dresses lasted a lifetime. Fashions changed slowly even in the days when political and public events moved with strange rapidity.

The social stagnation that had reigned under the autocracy of the Church was passing away. Roads were wretched still, and journeys dangerous adventures, but the old prejudices against every form of relaxation and change were broken through.

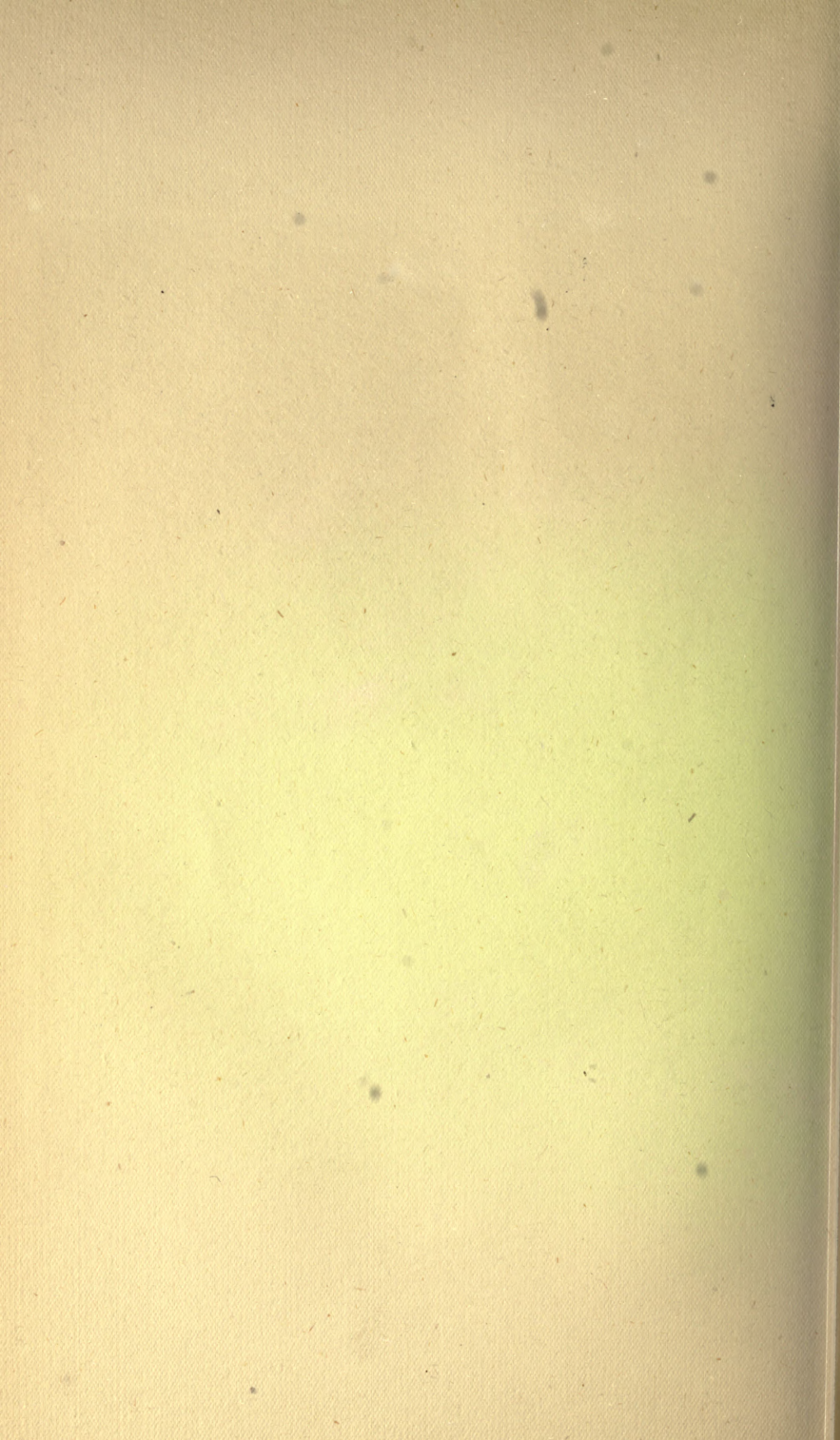
The following were the expenses incurred by Laurence Oliphant, when he took his wife and two daughters to attend the Perth Races in September 1739.

“4 tickets to 1st Assembly night . . . . .	£6	0	0
Ditto 2nd Ditto . . . . .	6	0	0
Ditto 3rd Ditto . . . . .	6	0	0





*Hon. Amélie Nairne.*  
WIFE OF LAURENCE OLIPHANT,  
6<sup>TH</sup> LAIRD OF GASK,  
1698 - 1774.



To three chairs from and return to the Dutchess of Hamilton <sup>1</sup> for my wife and daughters . . . . .	£1 16 0
Drink money to Mr James Oliphant's maids	3 12 0
Lodgeing for my daughter and ye maid . . . . .	9 12 0
To my son . . . . .	7 4 0
My own charges two nights . . . . .	15 12 0
Charges of Horses . . . . .	6 12 0

“*N.B.*—This besides a side of Beef and a Mutton sent in to Brother James.”

Especially amongst Episcopalians, civil and religious life became less austere: and to the dismay of the older generation, their form of worship was permitted. The Oliphant children were born to an inheritance of toleration that would have seemed a national provocation for God's vengeance in plague and tempest a few years before. Even Sunday was no longer a day of dread and boredom. The Oliphants would ride<sup>2</sup> over to the Episcopal church at Muthil or to Crieff, an expedition to which they looked forward as an occasion to meet with others of like faith, both in religion and politics. Amongst those who espoused the Stewart Cause there was a kinship, a special loyalty, a sacred tie. The prayer-books the Oliphants used on these occasions are among the treasured relics of their descendants, the name of King George pasted carefully over, and King James's name written instead. The family can be pictured at their prayers, making mental reservations here and there.

His schooldays over, young Laurence was sent to Edinburgh University. He boarded at Mr Hunter's private college, Cowgate. In 1741, when he was seventeen, his first cousin, Laurence Oliphant of Condie, writes to Gask:—

“Your son is, I believe, the most regular young man

<sup>1</sup> This lady was either Elizabeth, daughter of the fourth Lord Gerard and widow of the fourth Duke of Hamilton, who was killed in a duel with Lord Mohun in 1712 (she lived till 1744): or else Anne, daughter of Edward Spense of Rendlesham and third wife of the fifth Duke of Hamilton. She died 1771.

<sup>2</sup> There is a description of a saddle made for Margaret in September 1739. “A new hunting side saddle with a green cloth cover mounted with green fringe and house the same, and very naite blacke furnishin.” It cost £3, 15s., and was supplied by Walter Marshall of Perth.

in Edinburgh, and at the same time very thrifty and not scrub. He has been at all the public diversions, but none of them can force him to stay out after eight o'clock."

The extreme propriety of the behaviour here recorded is, however, hardly borne out by the journals of young Laurence himself; his disposition tended towards all that was lively and high spirited, and his "diversions" were not always such as a friend and cousin would describe to the parents at home. But in spite of faults and follies his character was strikingly developed in all chivalrous and courageous qualities. The high hopes of Laurence and Amélie in their only son were destined to full realisation.

Imagination sees young Oliphant at this time, in the brave uniform of the Royal Company of Archers at Edinburgh, marching out to Musselburgh to shoot for the "Silver Arrow," in company with other Jacobite gentlemen, many of whom were soon to prove, with sacrifice of fortune and life, the reality of their loyal professions. They wore tartan trimmed with green silk fringe, blue bonnets with green and white ribbons and the badge of St Andrew. Bows and swords had green and white ribbons. There were eight brigades, and they must have made a gallant stir in the grey streets of the town, with their colours and their music.

Long years afterwards the daughter<sup>1</sup> of the Young Laird would hear from his lips stories of the old days of the Archers, and it would be his figure she saw in imagination as she wrote:—

"Archie's an Archer, and a gude shot is he,  
 But tho' he's hit mony, he never hit me;  
 How handsome he looks, how stately his mien  
 Wi' his bannet and feather and braw coat o' green!  
 Wi' his white gauntlet glove, an' his stiff staunin' ruff,  
 His clear shining buckles, his neat turned cuff;  
 Wi' his bow, and his quiver, a' filled wi' his darts,—  
 O! leddies, beware, beware o' your hearts!"

---

<sup>1</sup> Carolina Oliphant, afterwards wife of fifth Lord Nairne.

The life at Gask was very quiet all through the long peace, but domestic events must have filled the years with interest, both of those joys and sorrows inevitable in such large families. A strong family feeling, loyalty of kinship between the two sets of brothers and sisters, was characteristic of both Nairnes and Oliphants, — a powerful bond of union. The marriage of two of Amélie's sisters, Charlotte to John Robertson of Lude before 1736, and that of Marjory to Duncan Robertson of Drummachin in 1739, strengthened the Jacobite interests of the family. For Marjory, eight years her junior, Amélie Oliphant had a special affection. Through the long intimate letters between these two sisters, numberless details have survived of daily family life both at home and in exile. The fate of Marjory closely resembled that of her sister. The following touching letter from Duncan Robertson to his wife was doubtless put away among the Gask papers by Amélie herself.

*“ To Hon. Mrs Robertson at Cary from Robertson  
of Drummachin from Taymount. 1 May 1745.*

“ MY DEAREST,—This evening as I guess about an hour ago, being 5 o'clock in the evening, I received yours to the Bailie,—my greatest grief is that I cannot bear the whole weight of yours, for my dear Infant is delivered from a corrupt world and safe in the hands of her creator, to whom she has been devoted day and night ever since her birth. Consider that from a distressed child she is now become a happy spirit and pities the condition of her disconsolate Parents still puddling in the mire of the world . . . I strongly feel the tenderness of a parent and yet perceive a Ray of Joy when I consider the happy exchange my dear Infant has made. My great pain anxiety and vexation is for you, lest you should give way to grief. . . . My next shall be from some place nearer you. I thank God the rest of your family are in good health. I am ever, my Dearest, The loving partner of your grief,  
ROBERTSON.”

Another daughter was soon to fill the empty cradle.

Robertson<sup>1</sup> of Drummachin writes from Nairn, 2nd July 1745, to the Laird of Gask:—

“DEAR SIR,—About 7 this morning I had a young daughter . . . the child was christened this afternoon by the name of Charlotte: I insisted for Amélie, but was over-ruled on account of the great intimacy betwixt my wife and her sister of that name—in short I did not care to use my natural authority.”

<sup>1</sup> For the list of children of Drummachin see note 2, p. 114.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME FAMILY LETTERS

BEFORE following Laurence and Amélie through the long years of life that lay before them, it will be well to sketch briefly the lives and fates of the younger children of James and Janet Oliphant.

Thomas, born in 1693, the young soldier of the '15, was, as we have seen, the second son. He lived at Ross near Gask, and after his father's death owned Cowgask, which came eventually back to his brother Laurence. He married Janet, daughter of Peter Meldrum of Leathers. She was already twice a widow, having been the wife of Laurence Oliphant, Younger of Condie, and of David Drummond of Invermay. Thomas and Janet Oliphant had no children. The following letter was written by him to Gask, his brother. It is dated from Edinburgh, 18th March 1714:—

“Dear B.,—I received yours and am glade ye are all well. The seeds you wrote for nowe afforded me a good deal of travel to-day and all to little purpose for theres neither Cypress, seed, Ackorns, nor wallnuts in the whole town, but by good luck I fell upon a hundred chestnuts.

“For publick news there are none considerable only it seems to be confirmed on all hands that the King of Sweden<sup>1</sup> has at last taken leave of the y. Seignior and is on his way homeward<sup>2</sup> having left that court incognito attended by K. Stanislauss<sup>3</sup> and 26 other gentlemen,<sup>4</sup> a

<sup>1</sup> Charles XII. was taken by the Turks at Bender 12th February 1713, and kept a prisoner at Adrianople.

<sup>2</sup> He did not set forth on his return journey till 1st October 1714.

<sup>3</sup> King Stanislaus was not with him.

<sup>4</sup> For Charles XII.'s remarkable methods of selecting his twenty-six companions, see Browning's Charles XII., p. 303.

great reason as it is conjectured of the Sultans so easily parting with him is a prodigious commotion in his own territories there being no less than 200,000 men in the field in open rebellion against the Turk and at Babilon. —I had almost forgott to tell ye that this night are to be celebrated the nuptials of Bell Skeen with the Laird of Pitladie, having no more light this is from, Your affectionat Brother, and humble servant,

“THO. OLIPHANT.

“The chestnutts cost two shillings and the barley as much, so theres a shilling to be compted for at meeting.”

Thomas Oliphant died 6th September 1740, and was buried at Gask 9th September. The tombstone that marks his resting-place lies among the Gask graves to the right of the chapel door. His portrait is at Ardblair.

James, the third son, was made a merchant in Perth. Very few careers were open to younger sons of good family, if their sympathies were Jacobite and Episcopalian. The Church and the Bar were alike closed to those who had scruples in taking the oath of allegiance to the House of Hanover. All Government employment was impossible, whether civil or military. Therefore it became quite a common custom to start the boys of a family in trade, serving apprenticeship to jewellers, drapers, or grocers in Edinburgh, or the country towns, in preference to keeping them idle at home, or eking out a spare existence on a farm. James Oliphant followed the example of many of his neighbours when he made a merchant of James, a goldsmith of Ebenezer, and sent Patrick abroad to study medicine.

James stood staunchly by his brother, the Jacobite laird, when governor at Perth in 1746, and he was afterwards denounced to the Government for having instigated his brother to fire on his assailants, “and also for having sided with the Jacobites in attacking those who were keeping King George’s birthday on 30th October, and trying to protect his brother ‘the rebel governor.’” James suffered a year’s imprisonment in



consequence. Very little is known of him, beyond the fact that he married Janet Austin<sup>1</sup> of Kilspindie in 1731.

Papers in the Gask charter chest prove that he had certainly three sons<sup>2</sup> and four daughters.<sup>3</sup> A list of "notorious Jacobites," given by the Duke of Atholl in 1746, includes James Oliphant, merchant, brother to Gask.

The portraits of James<sup>4</sup> and his wife, now at Ardblair, show a handsome couple. James wears a wig and a suit of armour. A little light is thrown on his career in a letter from his son James, which is given here, though it is of a much later date. It is endorsed, "Letter from Nephew James (James' son)" and dated 4th July 1749. It is addressed to M. Laurence Oliphant at the Café d'Angleterre, Paris:—

"DEAR UNCLE,—I had a letter from Papa dated at Leith May 13th, informing me that he has taken a house and shop in Edinburgh to dale in the grocery way. . . . Direct for me Cadet in Lieu : Generall Halkets Regiment in Garrison at Ypres."

<sup>1</sup> She was alive in 1783.

<sup>2</sup> 1. James, who married at Newcastle, where he was settled as a doctor. His children were:—(1) John (who married his cousin, Janet Oliphant, in 1790, and had issue an only daughter Janet, who died 1797); (2) James; (3) Ebenezer; (4) Austin; (5) Janet, who married a Mr Richard Bell in Workington.

2. Laurence, who settled in Jamaica, married, and had a son and a daughter, James, a doctor in Jamaica, and Janet who, as mentioned above, married her cousin John Oliphant.

3. Thomas, who died at sea.

<sup>3</sup> The four daughters were:—

1. Janet, married Dr Nesbit and had no children.

2. Christian, died unmarried.

3. Cecilia, died unmarried at Perth, 14th June 1789.

4. Charles, died unmarried. She lived with Miss Findlater as companion at 32 Blackfriars Wynd, Edinburgh; her apartments were on the first landing of a large tenement bearing date 1616. The lodging afforded a fair example of the mixed company to be found under one roof in Edinburgh tenements of the day. On the flat above was the Roman Catholic chapel in which the French princes used to worship. Below in the cellar lived a well-known old woman called Hen Kirsheu, a poulterer, who was also a *spae-wife*. Charles's uncle, Ebenezer Oliphant, left her the bulk of his property at his death; she had lived for years with him. When she died she bequeathed the Blackfriars Wynd house to her friend Miss Findlater, who was living there as late as 1825; at that date the doorplate still bore the name of Miss Oliphant, who died in 1812, and was buried in Greyfriars in Mr Findlater's tomb. It is probable that her testamentary provisions for the Findlater family procured her this sepulchral hospitality.

<sup>4</sup> Any male descendant of James Oliphant living in 1847 could have claimed the estate of Gask under the will of James Blair Oliphant, the tenth laird.

James Oliphant gave up the grocery shop in 1751. In 1755 he asked his brother Gask to get a commission for his son James in the Spanish service. He said he had difficulty in getting his young children clothed and educated.

In another letter from young James in 1750 he mentions his two brothers Laurie and Thomas. From the following letter the father seems to have been something of a family trial. The writer is Laurence Oliphant of Condie to young Laurence Oliphant of Gask on 24th June 1762:—

“Your Uncle James is at present in this house with his lady and four daughters.<sup>1</sup> I find he is wearied of the place of his abod and hinted as if he wanted to stay at Mr Whytt’s home<sup>2</sup> to which I made him no answer. . . . I think it a ridiculous project for him. . . . Poor man he is both misfortunate and thoughtless . . .”

Subsequent correspondence shows that Laurence Oliphant, who was in exile at this date, definitely refused to allow his brother James to live at Gask.

The next mention of James is three years later.

Laurence Oliphant writes to “Mr John Brown”<sup>3</sup> at Gask:—

“7th May 1765.

“SIR,—As it is absolutely necessary to have poor Uncle James interred and as you could not be up, I have sent you a Bureal letter that you may know the hour of the interment and another for Capt. Graeme of Inchbrakie, which I hope you’ll send him this night by express as none of the people about Balmanno will take in hand to go that lenth.”

James lies buried in the church of Dron.

Long years afterwards a grand-nephew of James Oliphant, Laurence Oliphant of Gask, “the young laird,”

<sup>1</sup> Mrs James Oliphant and her four daughters set up a school in Perth in 1768.

<sup>2</sup> Gask House. Whytt was the name adopted by the Laird of Gask after the '45, when disguise was necessary.

<sup>3</sup> Laurence Oliphant, Younger of Gask, adopted this name under the same circumstances.

then an old man, wrote a letter which throws another more agreeable light upon the career of James. Mr John Oliphant<sup>1</sup> of Tobago had written to the laird claiming cousinship, and received a reply as follows:—

“7th February 1782.

“My Father’s brother James, whose eldest son your Father<sup>2</sup> is, was very active at Perth in the ’45. He bred up his children in his own principles, and sent your Father to the Dutch service, the seminary then for Jacobites in the Scots Regiments.”

Concerning the death of little Anthony, the fourth son of James Oliphant and Janet Murray, who was born and died in 1701, there is the following letter, addressed to Mrs Oliphant from her mother, Jean Murray of Woodend, then living in the Canongate.

Out of the many thousands of babies who passed year by year into the darkness, this baby keeps his tiny spark of remembrance in the one little letter which enshrines his memory:—

“25th April 1702. CANONGATE.

“DEAR DAUGHTER,—I am heartily sorie for the death of your son, tho ye was not pleased to acquent me with it, yet I am sure non of all your rellations will simpthies mor with you than I doe, yea for anie of yours but most espacillie for him who was named after your father; but it is the Lords doing, who can do nothing wrong to you and yours. I hope you will take it out of his hand by submission to his holy will. I long to hear how ye are and the rest of your family. Your affectionate Mother, etc. JEAN MURRAY.”

Of William, the fifth son of Gask, very little is known. Born in 1703, he began life in 1721 as an apprentice to James Smith, a surgeon in Perth. In February 1728 William went abroad “prosecuting his studies and

<sup>1</sup> This John Oliphant of Tobago married Janet Oliphant, a great-granddaughter of James, fifth Laird of Gask, *see* note 2, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> The younger Gask wrote to his cousin Condie from Villeneuve, 27th October 1749:—“Mr Whytt has lately several letters from your acquaintance Jamy Oliphant. He has got a pair of colours, and if one can judge by his pritty way of writing, he will one day prove an honour to his name.”

improving himself." His father gave him part of his patrimony for the purpose. In 1732 he went to Jamaica, where he died at Kingston in June 1738. The family letters make scarcely any mention of him; but his brother James, writing an account of his death, describes him as "spent to an anatomy." He was supposed to be unmarried; but a letter dated at Perth, 9th May 1738, from a Laurence Oliphant to the Laird of Gask, is endorsed, in Gask's handwriting, "From Laurence, son to William."

The next brother, Patrick, the sixth son, born 1707, had a more interesting career. He was apprenticed in 1722, at the age of fifteen, to Archibald Arnot, surgeon in Kirkcaldy, and six years later was sent to Leyden to continue his studies in medicine. Laurence, the elder brother, writes to scold Patrick for lending money to fellow-students at Leyden.

He writes as follows to his sister-in-law Amélie:—

"LEYDEN, 2nd March 1729.

"I wish the late Lady Katharines Cochrane<sup>1</sup> and Lord Gardless all manner of happiness, but I should not desire to be the first bringer of the news to your Brother Mr William, your first accounts of whome and Mr James I hope shall be very good."

In this letter Patrick gives a long description of the plague hospital at Leyden, empty of patients, but ready in case of emergency, and specially of the consulting room of the doctors, where he saw what he describes as two very remarkable pictures:—

"Upon one is represented four phisicians sitting in judgment, surly enough like fellows (they might not improperly be called Glouming Doctors) yet haveing something of a smile in their countenance at sight of an old man who comes in with his little son in his hand, whom they had cured of the plague, to return them

<sup>1</sup> The youngest of the three beautiful daughters of the fourth Earl of Dundonald married 5th January 1729, as his second wife, Alexander Lord Garlies, afterwards sixth Earl of Galloway. She died at Bath, 15th March 1786. William Hamilton of Bangour celebrated her in verse.

thanks, and I suppose from the old fellow's countenance, somewhat more. This piece is thought to be tolerably well done, but the keeper could not tell me the name of the painter.

“The other is lookt on as a piece inimitably well done, and entertains us with a very different object, moving so much as at the same time to draw almost the tears from our eyes, yett strikes the mind with abundance of veneration and respect, at once commanding the greatest love and the utmost pitie. For on this canvas is represented a Comely Gentle woman in a reclining posture, supported by an old woman who sits in the Bed behind her; the features, still so good, must once have been beautified with a blooming and agreable complexion, now alas how faded! how wan the once sparkling eyes, these luminarys of the Lillie world and perhaps once deceivers of a great many, now lose their lustre are flatned on their surface and sunk within their sokets, while the weared Eye-lid hovering over them wails the command of Death to shut them up in eternall shade: upon one of her thighs sits her own child of about two years old weeping very bitterly, streaching up its hand toward the Mother's Breast either out of kindness or as willing to tear away the plague Spot (which is a little higher upon the chest) the onely perceptible illness of ye Mother. The Limner has so well hit the collour that you see one alive as if at least ten days dead. In short the whole is so moving that for my part I have not seen anything like it in painting, and I don't mind if ever I will. These two pices were done from the life last time the Plague was in Leyden, and are still reserved in this house, which the Toun caused afterwards build for the use of those whose sad fate should be to labour under this Distemper in future ages. The Gentlewoman is said to have been Lady to a British Captain. I forgott to tell you that there are four attendants looking over her standing around the bed stopping their mouths and noses with napkins.<sup>1</sup>

“I wrote to my Father by the last post of the Straits a poor honest Man, who is attainted and dares not return home labours under. I refer you to his for ye particulars

<sup>1</sup> It would be interesting to know if these masterpieces are still extant. Nearly a hundred years before Patrick wrote this letter Evelyn mentioned in his diary having seen at Leyden some dreadful relic of an operation, and a picture of the “Chyrurgeon and his Patient.”

and shall not doubt but you will contribute somewhat to his relief, and I hope not the less that I desire it. You may tell Lady Innermay I am sure she will not have confidence to offer less to the man than a guinea, and Brother Thomas I am sure will give two for Cowgask—for he can well afford it. Without jesting the poor Man is in very great misery, nay, next to want itself and whatever is sent I dare say will be very acceptable. I dare say if you should ask her, Aunte herself won't scruple at half a G. for the good old Cause."

"LEYDEN, 23rd March 1729.

"My dear sister's last of the 26th January gave me a great deal of satisfaction as the least scrap of a pen from her always yealds me infinite pleasure. Yett methought some of the latter part of it seemed to be writt as (if) something had disturbed that calmness of thought and sedateness of mind you are generally blessed with, or cast a cloud upon that countenance always so serene in itself and discovering so much goodness kindness and affection to me; to make the comparison that paragrafe of yours which I mean mead me think I seed the sun shining throw a sommers show'r. I have very good reasons to belive your goodness will excuse what drops from an unthinking pen. . . . I am extreamply vexed not to have had a letter from my Father but once since I came to Holland. What is the matter I don't know, whether he has heard any bad, tho I daresay false reports of my conduct, or perhaps disoblighd with the sum I have drawn for since I came here which I cannot at present help dureing my stay in this place, but hopes I shall make it all up ere I return, since I am firmly resolved to try both East and West rather than come Home without a competent portion of that necessary Divill called Money—or if there is anything else in it I beg you would quietly and without any takeing, learn out the causes and let me know, for I must own you are my greatest nay sole confident which were it knowen whould disoblige a great many. I can the less conceive it that both my Brother and you inform me he is in ordinary health. I must own it is my temper and perhaps a fault which I dont doubt some would call silly and mean to be zealous of disoblighing my friends. . . .

"PATRICK OLIPHANT."

He was in London for a short time in 1729, and while there he received the following letter<sup>1</sup> from his brother Laurence. It is somewhat of the parental order, but Laurence was seventeen years older than Patrick, and evidently the tone of patronage was not resented. It is addressed to Mr Patrick Oliphant, to the care of Mr Oliphant, Hatter, near Charring Cross, London, and is dated from—

“WILLIAMSTON, 6th September 1729.

“DEAR BROY,—I had yours of ye 19 part on the 2nd current after I had returned from ye worst Mercat I ever had at Falkirk. . . . My Father gote ye letter with Boerhave’s advice for my Mother, as did Mr Mercer of Aldie ye other, which was much spoilt with the rains however, I was able to make out ane exact copy, which I did in case his Phisitians had not gote throw it. Your letter from London to my Father he remitted me, but the third part of it was not legible, which I suppose is the reason he has not yet given a return; and both ye letters you wrote last have been certainly spoilt before they reacht Perth, since my Fathers could not have suffered so much in being carryed to Gask. Your Patient lady happened to be at her journey’s End before yours came to hand I thank God without the least inconveniency, and for the medicines, they have been discontinued these three months past, she having hearty tyred of them. . . . All that I have to add at this time is; to carry yourself civilly and affably to everybody, especially those from whom you may expect services, and when in company with Physitians not to be tenacious of your own oppinion and contradict their’s tho yours sh<sup>d</sup> be ye better; live as privatly and sparingly as you can, till something cast up, and be most carefull to avoid all kinds of bad company in which you cannot be furthered in ye main desire.”

Patrick in answering this letter says:—

“Were I now to do you justice, I should without Flattery say I dont believe there is a more Fatherly elder Brother perhaps in all the world besides, than I have

<sup>1</sup> Printed in full in the *Jacobite Lairds*.

always experienced you, both in your generous actions and most friendly advices unto me at all times."

The letter goes on to make the announcement that he intends going to the East to seek his fortune. While still in London he writes:—

"Pray let me at least know of my Father and Mothers health since nobody from Gask writes me as much as one scrap."

Three months later, after he had emigrated, his mother died. He never saw any of his family again.

He sailed in 1729 as surgeon to the East Indies on a ship belonging to the East India Company. The fortune was never made, and he never returned. There are, however, glimpses of Patrick here and there, in letters and records, through the twenty years of his exile. He writes from Bussorah on 15th March 1746 to his sister-in-law at Gask:—

"MY DEAREST MADAM,—The news I have not from any of my relations but the publick Gazettes has flung me into the utmost anxiety of mind, I am rent between two. My Blood perhaps is at stake and my country in ashes. Myself when a boy have already seen it Flames and now again who can tell the direfull consequences of this civil war. For Gods sake write me, perhaps by returning it may be in my power to serve my family. . . . Let me know my Dearest sister how it fairs with your family and mine. I purposely avoid writing to my Brothers you can judge the reason: write me instantly and if necessary I will be in Europe as soon as possible."

Patrick here alludes to the sight he must have seen as a child of eight years old, when the Jacobite forces burnt Auchterarder and Dunning after Sheriffmuir, both towns being visible from the windows of Gask House. A great longing to come home fills all his later letters; but the dream was never accomplished. He lived till 1750, having thus spent twenty years in the East. Bussorah in Khuzistan, where he seems to have settled for



a while, must have been an uncivilised spot. Even in 1813 a traveller describes it as "a very filthy town." It was also in a perpetual state of revolution, and at that date only three or four English ships came up the river in a year. Fifty years earlier, in Patrick's day, however, the Turkish fleet was strong enough to repress the pirates in the Persian gulf, and Bussorah was of considerable importance as a trading centre. The greatest of its industries was the pearl fishery, the pearls found there being of special whiteness. Doubtless it was a consignment of these, perhaps with bales of raw silk, that he was reported to have bequeathed to Gask. For long after his death at Bagdad reports came of this fortune; but neither money or treasure ever reached Scotland.

James Oliphant writes from Edinburgh to his brother Laurence at Versailles, 19th May 1751 :—

"This brings but melancholy news: Last Post we had advice from our ffreind att Aleppo that our dear Brother Patrick Dyed at Bagdad towards the end of last year—his letter is dated 29th January last but mentions nothing of particulars; some time ago I had a letter from the same hand advising me of his being recovered of a dangerous dropsy, and this is the next after giving the sorrowful news of his death. . . . The good wife and all our young folk join me in most kind compliments, etc."

The seventh son of Gask was Alan, of whom the only memorial is a note in the family Bible that he was born and died unchristened in 1711. Did he lie, as the church then decreed, "under the dropping of the church roof"?

Ebenezer, the eighth son and the youngest child of the family, was apprenticed at the age of fifteen for seven years to James Mitchelson, goldsmith burgess of Edinburgh. His shop was in the Parliament Close. Ebenezer had a prosperous career as a goldsmith, and became the one member of the family who had money at command. Nevertheless he had money troubles, too, in early days. There is a curious "Horn Bond" among

the Gask papers, dated 15th January 1747. Ebenezer owed money to Marjory Banks (or Marjoribanks?)

“And because the within and above named and designed Ebenezer Oliphant hath disobeyed the charge given to him, therefore upon the 8th day of June 1751, I Nichol Nesbit past to the Mercat Cross of Edinburgh and that after my crieing of 3 several Oyes’s, open proclamation and publick reading of the written letters, I denounced the said Ebenezer Oliphant his Majesty’s Rebell and put him to the horn, by 3 several blasts of an horn for his disobedience.”

He married, at a date not discovered, Amelia Belches, daughter of Alexander Belches<sup>1</sup> of Invermay, and was the father of five children, all of whom died in his lifetime. Two letters among the family papers tell of the deaths of two sons in an interval of thirteen years. Ebenezer writes from Edinburgh on 26th December 1744 to his brother:—

“DEAR BR.,—After Mrs Oliphants compliments and mine to yourself Lady and family and referring you to my last directed to her, this serves to advise that your little nephew James<sup>2</sup> died this morning at two o’clock after a very sevar conflick of three days and three nights during which time he never shut an eye nor had the smalles Ease or Reast which you may believe was a very mouving specteckle. . . .”

A later letter is from Laurence Oliphant to his brother Ebenezer on the loss of his son—from Corbeil, 17th March 1757:—

“DR SIR,—The account you gave my wife Feb. 24 of the death of your son the beginning of that month gave all of us here extream uneasiness and we very much sympathise with your great loss, to be sure none can know the affliction that the death of one only son gives but they who are visited with it; I’m sure both you and Mrs Oliphant have felt it in a most sensible manner, but all of human race must lay their account with crosses, etc.”

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Belches was Sheriff-Clerk of the county of Edinburgh. He died 19th April 1755.

<sup>2</sup> This child was buried in the Greyfriars, Edinburgh. Another of Ebenezer’s children was buried there in April 1748.

There is one glimpse of Ebenezer in his home in Edinburgh. The Lady Stewart<sup>1</sup> mentioned was the heroine of the celebrated trial which went on for eight years. The letter was written by Margaret Oliphant. Ebenezer's house in Edinburgh was a rallying point for members of the family then scattered:—

*“23rd June 1763.*

“I suped last night with Ebenezer. Aunt and me had a tough battle about Lady Stewart<sup>2</sup> that she saw here 30 years agoe, she ouns she was a beauty but for the rest of her character she made very free with it, came home near eleven got a can of foul water on my black silk gown, etc., these are the cleanly folks.”

For many years Ebenezer was an office-bearer in the Episcopal church of Old St Paul's, Carrubbers Close. His niece Charles, a daughter of his brother James, lived with him in his last years. His wife died in 1779. He died in October 1798 at eighty-five, having outlived all his brothers and sisters by many years. He was buried in the Greyfriars, where his wife also lies.

The name of Ebenezer Oliphant stands high in the family estimation. His nature had the loyal strain that gave the family its distinction. Taking up the trade of a goldsmith, he applied himself so earnestly to business that he made a fortune, and so was able, when the stress came, to come to the rescue of his brother and nephew, and to save Gask. Without his help it could not have been done.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Jane Douglas, daughter of the second Marquis of Douglas, born 7th March 1698, married Sir John Stewart of Grantully, 4th August 1746. Her twin sons were born 10th July 1748 when she was fifty. She died 22nd November 1753. Archibald Stewart, the surviving twin, was in 1761 served heir to the last Duke of Douglas. The guardians of the young Duke of Hamilton disputed his right, on the ground of the unusual circumstances of his birth. Carried to the House of Lords in 1769, the case was given in favour of Archibald Stewart, who was afterwards raised to the peerage with the title Lord Douglas of Douglas. He died in 1827.

<sup>2</sup> “Nothing is talked of now at all the tea-tables but ‘the Douglas story,’” writes one of Amélie's correspondents from Edinburgh in June 1763; “I asked Mr Aikin's opinion of it, he says there seems to have come of late a great change in the affair, that it was now confidently said that he would be proven an impostor. Lord Galloway indeed told me there would come out a scene that would surprise all the world. Yett there is a woman in this town that has given her oath she saw Lady Jean bear these two children, and *that* when she was thought to be dying, though now recovered.”

There remains one exquisite specimen of his art, a Jacobite ring of gold and white enamel, bearing the initials of twenty-one Jacobite martyrs.<sup>1</sup>

He made a sword for Patrick Graeme about 1741, a wine-filler for Patrick Graeme in 1783, and a little silver folding knife for Janet Oliphant, his niece, in 1736. The story of how, in 1745, he saved his nephew the young laird's life after Prestonpans will be told later.

Of the daughters of the Gask family the eldest, Jean, as we have seen, died unmarried in 1718. Of Margaret's life, and of her death at the age of eighteen, no echo remains. The third daughter Anne, born in 1696, married in 1721 John Drummond, Younger of Colquhailzie. She left sons and daughters, and died in 1740.

Lilias, the fourth daughter, born in 1697, married in August 1718 Laurence Oliphant of Condie. Left a young widow by his death in 1726, with an only child, a boy, she married again after an interval of three years, not, it seems, to the satisfaction of her family. Her husband was Mr Bethune, Comptroller of the Customs. His employment by an obnoxious Government was perhaps the reason of the strong opposition of her family.

The following letter from Lilias to her mother is endorsed "To Lady Gask, from Lady Condie, upon her marriage with Mr Bethune":—

"PERTH, 7th June 1729.

"DEAREST MOTHER,—The continued Indulgences and affection you have shoven me in all the Circumstances of Life I have gone through have made me send out this my Boy to express my Gratitude in the most duty full acknowledgments I am capable off in a particular manner for your kind enquiry about Mr Bethun's and my wellfares which affords me the most satisfaction that even at a juncture when the most part of my Relations are Dissoblidged with my marriage, you retain that eveness and Equality of temper that justly makes you the Delight

<sup>1</sup> This ring was lost to the family for over twenty years after the death of the widow of James Blair Oliphant of Gask in 1886. Through the courteous consideration of the kinswoman into whose hands it fell, the ring has been restored to the family. Mr Stirling of Kippendavie possesses another ring exactly the same, which must also be the work of Ebenezer Oliphant.

of all who know you; and I am hopefull that both my Husband's and my actions shall correspond with so good a Patern. Whatever dissobligationes my Brother may give us who are taking a Course I don't think will be much for the interest of my son detaining him from me. However all the affronts they can put upon me shall never alter or diminish my affection to him and I heartly wish they may consult his real interest as much as I have done. Mr Bethune joins me in his hearty and dutyfull respects to my ffather and you and service to my Brother and Sister and beg you'll be perswaded of the esteem with which I am D. Mother      Your affect: Dau<sup>er</sup> . . .

“I would have sent out my Dear Laurie Cloaths that I provided for him at this time But I suppose my Brother would not allow him to wear them and I have no doubt but he will keep him much more handsome than it was ever in my power to do, so soon as I return from the goat milk I'll be sure to wait of my ffather and your Ladyship. Adieu Dear Mother.”

This pathetic letter is the only record of her life. Mr Bethune had only three years in which to do his best to make up to his wife for all she lost in the support of her family, for she died in 1732. Her boy, Laurence Oliphant of Condie, found firm friends in his Gask relations. His uncle Laurence Oliphant, then of Williamston, seems to have treated him as a son, as subsequent letters will show.

The fifth daughter Helen died as an infant in 1702.

Of Janet, the sixth daughter, little is known beyond the facts that she was born in 1705, educated in Edinburgh, and died unmarried at Gask at the age of eighteen. The accounts for her funeral expenses are in the handwriting of her brother Laurence:—

“*At Mrs Janet's Burial. May 1, 1723.*

“To John Tayle for mending ye windows at Gask <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	£2, 14
To him for a mutchkin bottle of snuff . . . . .	18
To a poor man . . . . .	6

<sup>1</sup> Possibly, if Janet died in one of the smaller rooms in a turret, the windows would be removed to let the coffin be passed through.

To Abercairnie's cook . . . . .	£3
To my Lord Strathallan's cook . . . . .	3
To McClairan's cook . . . . .	A crown.
To two poor people . . . . .	12
For a pound of tea . . . . .	4, 16
To the Ochterarder Mortcloath <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	3"

Katherine, the seventh daughter, born in 1709, married in 1736 Robert Graeme, the tenth laird of Garvock, the Jacobite "Glaud." She died in 1775. Her children were four sons and two daughters.<sup>2</sup>

This brief account of the fifteen children of the fifth Laird of Gask may perhaps be found interesting, and supply clues to those of the name who are believed by tradition to be linked with the Gask family. It will be seen that both James and William Oliphant left children whose descendants have not been traced.

<sup>1</sup> Gask was later than most parishes in getting a mort-cloth of its own. In May 1726 "The Session having bought a new mort-cloathe in Perth and paid the same price, one hundred and forty-three pounds twelve shillings and sixpence (Scots) and all the Session agreed the use of the mort-cloath should be one pound for within the paroch, and one pound ten without the paroch." (Gask Session Records.)

<sup>2</sup> (1) James, eleventh Laird of Garvock; (2) Laurence; (3) Charles James Stewart; (4) Robert; (5) Amelia Ann Sophia; (6) Margaret.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STAR RISES

THE matter which brought Jacobite plans again to a head was the war between Britain and Spain which broke out in 1740. France, eager to strike a blow at England at this good moment, entered into protracted negotiations with the Jacobites, through Macgregor of Balhaldie, the agent in Paris. The young Chevalier was summoned from his Italian exile to Paris, a French fleet was placed at his disposal, and French troops were in readiness. Once more the elements fought against the Stewarts,—a tempest drove the fleet back to the shores of France. The disaster threw the Jacobites, whose hopes had been keenly awake, into a momentary despair, for the attempt seemed to be at an end. But the flame was to be rekindled by the hand of Prince Charles Edward himself.

The first news of the rash and hazardous plan formed by the sanguine courage of the young Prince struck consternation into the ranks of the Scottish Jacobites. As in the West Highlands, so at Nairne, Strowan, Lude, Gask, Machany, there would be family councils of dismay when the news of the desperate scheme was known. They had expected an army, a fleet, ammunition, foreign support, all the things so often promised, so often delayed. Now the prospect of these was swept aside. Alone, unequipped, unsupported, the King's son was coming to snatch a kingdom for his father from the hands of an organised Government. There was something in the desperate scheme that appealed to knightly instinct with the charm of audacity, and although all over the country there were meetings and confabulations among the loyal

in which the action was deplored and censured, very few were found to dissociate themselves from the movement, when once the clans had begun to gather. Charles landed at Moidart on 25th July 1745. From that moment there was no real doubt at Gask as to what part the Oliphants would play. The heart of the young laird, then just twenty, would be full of the tide of enthusiasm, full of gladness that he was at last to draw the sword he had so often unsheathed in his dreams. To Laurence Oliphant, his father, things would wear a different aspect. Though it was thirty years since he went out in the '15, the memory would still be poignant, the experience still real and clear. In the mind of the boy an event that happened nine years before his birth belonged as much to the dead fires of the past as the wars of Montrose. The father had hoped just such fiery hopes, had seemed to stand on the threshold of just so bright a fulfilment, but there had been defeat and loss—he had looked upon the face of failure, and the tragedy of it was a seal on his heart for ever. Father and son represented the movement of Jacobite feeling at the moment. Scotland was alight, on the one hand, with the fires of youth, eager for the sword, and on the other lit by the steady shining of those minds in whom the righteousness of the great restoration was a settled political conviction, but over whose steadfast hopes hung the cloud of doubt as to whether so rash an undertaking could have a real chance of turning the old defeat into a prelude of glory. Father and son, says family tradition, paced together hour by hour the terrace by the great holly hedge<sup>1</sup> in the old garden at Gask, taking counsel together as to whether the son should join the Prince's standard, and the father stay at home, and so save the estate. From the first, however, though other plans might be discussed, the upshot was a foregone conclusion. To the nature of the "Old Laird" half measures were not possible. He rose to the need of the hour with completeness of surrender from the first,

<sup>1</sup> Cut down by T. L. Kington Oliphant in 1887. It was said to be the finest specimen in Scotland.



offering not only his personal service, but the service of his only son; not only his own security, but the security and comfort of wife and daughters, risking lands, liberty, life — everything in his world. Nairnes, Strathallans, Robertsons, Mercers, Drummonds, Graemes stood by him, ready with the same unquestioning sacrifice, ready with the same answer to that rash call to arms. By the side of these soldiers stood the mothers, wives, and sisters, throwing in the weight of their eager partisanship on the side of instant and complete support of all that their Prince might demand. Foremost among the loyal women of the hour stand Margaret, Lady Nairne, in her old age, and her daughters, all giving what they had, putting aside all considerations that did not bear on the cause of their hearts. The girls, Margaret and Janet Oliphant, shared keenly in the exultation, in the joyful tumult of the time. From the young Laurence no one would expect the prudence that counts the cost; to him it was all glory, all hope, a chance which lost itself in a splendid dream of achievement. Years afterwards he writes the simple record in his journal: “1745. *He sent our Lawfull Prince amongst us, and I followed him.*”

Details of the first activities of the campaign are given in a short diary he kept at this time, of which the following are extracts: <sup>1</sup>—

“*Sunday, Augt. 4th.* — Mr Camble young Glenlayen cam and halted with 16 men before Gask, and this serymony the three Highland companies performed at most of the Gentlemen’s houses in Strath Ern.

“*Friday, 9th.*—Heard the newes of the Prince’s landing; the same day the Duke of Perth came to Machany about making an attempt to tak Stirling Castle, which was so much reinforced that he could not attempt anything.

“*Wednesday.*—Heard that the Prince was well, the Clans joining him. Two companys of the Royals that went by Blair to the Hilands commanded by a second son of Scotestartets, taken prisoners by ye Camerons,

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the Jacobite Lairds of Gask.

and that the Prince was on his march and would soon see us in Strath Ern.

“As soon as the Prince and his companie were landed, he took off his bonet, kneel’d down and gave thanks to God for his safe arivall, and he told those that were with him, that as it had pleased God to land him safely in Scotland, he would never leave it while there was life in his body, but if he should die, he had a brother to suckceed him that deserved the love and obedience of his subjects.

“*Tuesday, 27th.*—An Express arrived from the Prince to tell all was well, desiring all his Friends to hold themselves ready in an hour’s warning.”

September 1st was the day that decided finally the fortunes of the family. The old laird on that day made his wife factor over his estate and set forth with his young son to Blair to meet the Prince. The young Laurence writes:—

“*Sunday, Sept. 1st.*—I went up with Lord Nairne to Blair in Athol, where the Prince was with the Hiland army consisting about that time of about two thousand five hundred men. I had the Honour to kiss his Royal Highness hand, kneeling on one knee, and soopt with him afterwards.”

So the great moment came—the event for which all the influences of his simple life had been a preparation. Commissary Bissett, in a letter<sup>1</sup> to Humphrey Harrison from Dunkeld, written on 1st September, the very day that the Oliphants went up to join the army at Blair, gives one glimpse of the family party:—

“About 9 this forenoon I was werry impatient for some accounts to send His G. and I made a step over to . . . to see what I could pick up. I returned a little after tea, when I heard that Lord Nairne was at Mr Scots and had sent for me. I immediately went to Mr Scots where Lord Nairne, Mr Mercer of Aldie, the young Laird of Gask was going to take their horses and set out for Blair to join the Rebell army. His Lordship and his company was in top spirits.”

<sup>1</sup> Atholl Chronicles, vol. iii. p. 16.

Gask received three days later a letter from his brother-in-law, Nairne:—

“The Prince will dine at Nairne, either tomorrow or Thursday; I hope my sister and nieces will be there either this night or tomorrow morning; I wish you and your son could continue to be there also.”

It is not known if Amélie, with Margaret and Janet, were able to profit by this invitation; in all probability, however, they rode to Nairne for this great event, when Margaret, Lady Nairne, would collect round her as many as possible of her children and grandchildren to do honour to the young royal guest, who had already enjoyed the hospitality of members of the family at Blair and at Lude. After the dinner at Nairn, he rode into Perth, escorted by what might be called a family party—the Duke of Perth, James Drummond, Mercer of Aldie, and the two Oliphants—to be joined there by Robertson of Strowan and Lord George Murray. From Blair to Perth young Laurence Oliphant rode at the side of the Prince, who, without promise of effective help, almost without funds, gay, good-humoured, bravely dressed, full of the vital personal magnetism which he knew so well how to use in his cause, secured without effort the heart's devotion of young Laurence. What marvel indeed if he held the boy captive, when men of sober years, tried soldiers in life's battle, statesmen, and men of affairs, were irresistibly attracted? The fire of his charm wrought more fiercely on the boy of twenty, untried in all sobering experiences, and if the Cause shone clearly enough even to those older counsellors, not blind to the possible issues of so hazardous an enterprise, it rose before the imagination of Laurence Oliphant with dazzling effect. The hour of his life had come. This was life's height, this the fulfilment of all the prayers and promises and aspirations of a childhood and youth spent in the one light, bent towards the one aim. The hour had come—and there was the companion of his whole inner life, there was the object of devotion close beside him in the flesh. In

the eager cavalcade round about the Prince were the well-known faces of kinsmen—graver, perhaps, than his own, but satisfied to be counted in that train, to make the great quarrel their own at last, to be done, in a measure, with the talking and scheming, and riding forward to the music of their hopes, in the throb of full reality. The Prince was there at last, and Laurence Oliphant knew the desire of his soul.

Foremost among the older group of adherents rode the elder Gask, with maturer judgment, a riper sense of all that was involved, perhaps a heavier heart. A feudal overlord to the utmost fibre, he had confidently expected his tenants to rise to a man to follow him on the great enterprise. There was, however, little in Lowland interests to correspond with the spirit of the Highlands. It was not so easy there to rouse the slumbering loyalties of ancient tradition to the point of activity. To read of Gask's action when he found his tenant farmers insensible to the call of duty, and unwilling to embark on the adventure at the laird's bidding, is to be carried back a hundred years into the days of feudal authority. He refused his tenants permission either to gather in their harvest or to feed their beasts upon the corn, when hanging ripe. To this arbitrary decree the farmers appear to have submitted. The situation gave rise to one of those simple yet princely acts on the part of Charles Edward which live on in story through the centuries. Riding through the pleasant lands of Gask he saw the golden corn dropping and heard the story. Exclaiming "*This will never do!*" he leapt from his horse, and going into the field he gathered a handful of corn, and gave some to his horse, and then made the bystanders understand that, with his royal authority, the farmers were now at liberty to gather in the harvest.

It was on 11th September, the last of the eight days that Charles Edward remained in Perth for the drilling of his wild troops and the gathering of further reinforcements, that he rode over to the house of Gask, and breakfasted there on his way by Dunblane to Edinburgh

—a proud event, to be remembered and handed down through the generations. Amélie, with Margaret and Janet, would be early astir, busy with their eager preparations. The picture rises to the mind of the three gentle women, full of happy pride, at the low door, now and again looking along the road to Perth for the first sight of the expected horsemen.<sup>1</sup> No doubt the two Laurences would escort the royal guest from Perth. Breakfast was set in the “low drawing-room.” The table, inscribed with the fact, the chair on which he sat, the spurs he exchanged with his host, became treasured relics,—pathetic memorials now of those fiery hopes that once lit these simple lives with so intense a glow. Strangely dreamlike it must have seemed to the younger generation to see there, in the flesh, breaking bread at their table, the young man with whose life all their young lives had been linked ever since they could remember. They had grown up with him, played with him in his Italian home, fought beside him at Gaeta, endured his disappointments, lived upon his hopes. Now they really touched his hand, looked with their true eyes into his eyes, and everything fell away but the enchantment of his presence.

To Amélie and the old laird, doing the simple honours of their house, thoughts were rooted in a far past. In remembrance the laird was again a young man, waiting upon the Prince’s father, recognising, even in the gay charm of the son—so different in all respects—some trace of the grave pathos of the silent sovereign he had loved and served thirty years ago. Here was Charles Edward, fearing nothing, doubting nothing, equipped with the nameless attraction that drew men and women so readily to his standard, engrossed with the pleasure of the moment, happy in the confidence of a shining future; but the old laird would see all the bright picture against the background of a tragic past. The thirty years of peace melted away; he stood, as it were, between the two young men—the father and

<sup>1</sup> Lord Nairne and William Murray of Taymount were at Gask on this occasion with the Prince.

the son—between the saddest of all remembrance, and the happiest of all anticipation. The dark destiny of his race threw shadows already across the path Charles had chosen. The thoughts of Laurence and Amélie surely went back to old suffering and forward to possible mischance. But meanwhile it was a golden day that gave their ancient house so dear a guest. All was joy in the thought of the lasting honour, not to be taken away by any stroke of fate.

Out of the old windows the Prince must have gazed across the slope to the lime-trees that sheltered the little church, rising among the myriad graves where lay so many who had, in a forgotten past, fought for his fathers. Beyond, he looked down the valley, beautiful beyond words in its autumn wealth, across to the blue Ochils, whither thirty years before, the loyal troops of his father's army had marched on their way to Sheriffmuir; there they had retreated, marking their path with flames and desolation. No record remains of any acts or speech. But there is no need to wonder of what guest and host spoke on that morning at Gask. Clearly through the years their voices rise to the imagination sounding out of that undying past: "Thither we marched; there we halted,—thus and thus the clans were disposed,—far away to the right, where the valley is misty, lies the battlefield, almost in sight. The Prince will pass it on his way to Edinburgh." The little group, thrilling at the words, saw, at the sound of them, the young Chief's plans "soar up again like fire." The spirit of that little breakfast-party in the low drawing-room clings yet to the old stones, the ruined walls and empty windows, and will still be there in association when all has mouldered through the ages into nothingness.

Then he was gone, and only the memory remained, only the resolve to make that memory a cherished possession while the house of Gask should endure. Father and son rode away with their Prince on the road to fortune and misfortune. Amélie, Margaret, and Janet stayed behind in the house that for them could never

now be empty. They, too, were to bear an active share in the '45, when their time came, and they had to face, amidst the ruin and distraction of their ordered lives, the cruel realities of war. But they faced it with a sense of personal service, in a spirit that the young Chief himself had given. In the dreary years of poverty and exile, the little scene in the Gask drawing-room must often have "flashed upon the inward eye," making self-surrender seem right and natural.

The morning at Gask was the beginning of Charles Edward's triumphant progress from Perth to Tullibardine and Dunblane, over the field of Bannockburn, to Edinburgh. As in the Highlands, so in his march through the Lowlands, men came to his standard every day, so that an ever-increasing host poured across the Ford of Frew, eight miles above Stirling. The retreating Government troops left the way open for the Highland army, already a victorious band without having drawn sword. In each town the leader found consternation and fear, and left behind him a ferment of excitement the reverse of hostile. In the submission of Stirling and Linlithgow he could read something more than the forced surrender of inadequate means of defence. There was everywhere a rising tide of sympathy with his cause. There is no record of what part the Laird of Gask and his son played in the taking of Edinburgh, or in the march thither; of that journey, so full of proud excitement and historical interest, no word remains. Both received distinguished posts in the campaign. The elder Gask, who held a commission as Lieutenant Colonel in the Perthshire Squadron commanded by his brother-in-law, Lord Strathallan, was made joint Governor of Perth with him, both also acting as treasurers.<sup>1</sup> It was an important trust, involving responsibility for the military and civil government of the north. The Prince sent them back from the army to take over the duties at Perth, which they reached on 4th October. Young

<sup>1</sup> Gask's accounts are given at great length in the Jacobite Lairds of Gask.

Oliphant, whose commission was also in the Perthshire Squadron, was made aide-de-camp to the Prince after Prestonpans, and in that capacity saw every phase of the campaign from that time till Culloden. He has, fortunately, left a description of his adventures at and after Prestonpans.<sup>1</sup>

“*Friday, 20th.*—Marcht from Dudedstoun to meet Cope who we heard was on his march towards us. About twelve we came in view of his army which was drawn up in order of Battle between . . . Grange on the right and Seaton on the left, the sea in the rear and a morass with ditches throw it on the south, above which lays ye toun of Tranent. The grand army marchd east throw Tranent and drew up in order of battle in the twilight. The Athol men were sent to secure the enemy’s right, that they might not get to Edinburgh. About three of the clock next morning the men were ordered to joine the army and form the second line. The Army begun to march, as soon as they could see one another to the East, and pass’d the morass on the Enemy’s flank, upon which the Enemy changed ye disposition and formed a line from South to North: our men did the same; the enemys Hors were posted on the two wings, and a reserve in the center behind the first line. The Highlanders advanced, fir’d at a pretty great distance, and then went in sword in hand and put the enemy to root in three minutes time. There was of our men kil’d four officers and about thirty men, and 70 wounded; of the Enemy about forty officers kill’d, fourty wounded and taken, five hundred kill’d and wounded and about a thousand taken prisoners.

“*Sunday, 22nd.*—We marcht back to Muslebrugh, the Prince lay at Pinkie.

“*Monday, 23rd.*—In the evening we came to the Abby of Holyrood Hous.”

No particulars are given in his journal of his own services in the engagement. Many years afterwards, when he was sixty years old, he was asked to give an account of these, and this he did in the following words:<sup>2</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 111.



“To begin the day before it was light the Atholl men that were quartered twixt Gl Cope and Edinburgh arrived in the Prince’s Camp, which had the appearance of a long ridge of pease sheaves, the Prince lying in the middle of them on ye ground with white great coat spread over him above his plaid. He and his little Army started up from a sound sleep. It may be asked how I should know they slept. Answer, I was sent soon after ye Prince encamp’d to order the Athol men to remain on their Post and to march early and join ye Prince. On my return, perhaps about twelve, all was so quiet and still, that had it not been for our small party of horse, I would have had difficulty to find ye Army (tho ye night was tolerably clear) along the lines of which I walked; all lay dead asleep wraped in their plaids, and I was shewn by ye Sentinells where ye P. was. The Army started up and were in motion in an instant, with the greatest silence passed ye bog, going through which the Prince missed one of the stepping stones, and one of his legs went in near to the knee. Cope changed his front, the Action begun and soon ended favourably, before the Prince could run up to the Enemy’s guns. In going I was ordered to Edenburgh as fast as I could to get out Surgeons, cause shut ye ports against Straglers etc. etc. The Execution was a little hazardous; in Tranent I was hard on the Dragoons that went off in a body, before I was awar. I took a different lane and avoided them and as I came on my servant and I disarmed all the fugitives I met with, not to give them an opportunity of firing after me. Numbers of young Lads were on the road, to whom I gave the arms and 2 or 3 Dragoon horses, ordering them to the Prince, and allowed ye Troopers to shift for themselves. A servant going off with a led powny would not halt; I fired my side pistol after him in the air, which brought him to. Entering ye Netherbow, a most agreeable prospect opened; the windows on both sides up to the Lucken booths full of Caps and the street of Hatts and Bonets, and when I now and then call’d out Victory, the air seemed to rend with ye hearty huzza. I alighted at Lucky Wilson’s below ye Lawen Market and sent for the Magistrates, who came immediatly. I delivered them my orders, particularly to guard ye Nether Bow

port and keep out Straglers, which they promised to do directly. While I was busy breakfasting, and answering many questions, Mr Halyburton came in and told me there were some Dragouns and soldiers coming up ye street. Vex't that my orders were not executed, I jump'd up, went out, I believe without my bonnet, follow'd by Sir James Stewart, Mr Ebenezer Oliphant, and I don't know how many more, and met the Party a little below the mouth of the close consisting, I think, of seven or eight foot, and two Dragouns. I ordered them in the Prince's name to surrender; they stopt and the Dragouns were dismounting, when one of the foot, presenting his Pies, I snapt my side Pistol at him, in my hurry forgetting I had emptied it at ye servant coming into Town; perhaps it was lucky. The soldier fired, as did severall. I got a shot through ye lap of my vest, a slight stroke on ye left arm with a sword, and the buckel of my shoulder belt on my breast cut and bent by another. I then made my retreat and heard balls strike on ye wall above me, as I entered ye close. I was told the Dragouns and foot hasted up toward ye Castle and one soldier was following me in the close, when my Uncle Mr Ebenezer Oliphant did me the good service to grasp him in his arms and said 'What want you, friend?' upon which he snaked off.

"The Prince slept at Pinkie and next day when he entered his apartment at Hollyrood house, there was laid on his table a Laurel Crown; few people coming in with his Royal Highness, I used the freedom to present him with the Crown; he bowed his head and let me put it on, so that ye only Fugitive had the honour to crown ye future King."

Fresh from the clash of arms, the exaltation of success, the sounding street full of its acclaim, the wild music still insisting "*The King shall enjoy his own again,*" the two young soldiers stand in this picture face to face in an intimate personal relation. Yesterday young Laurence lived through the glory of that wild galop up the steep street, ringing with his shout of "Victory!"—to-day he is almost alone with his prince, and there lies the laurel crown, and there the hero's brow is bent to receive it. His hand was to be the hand fated out of all the world

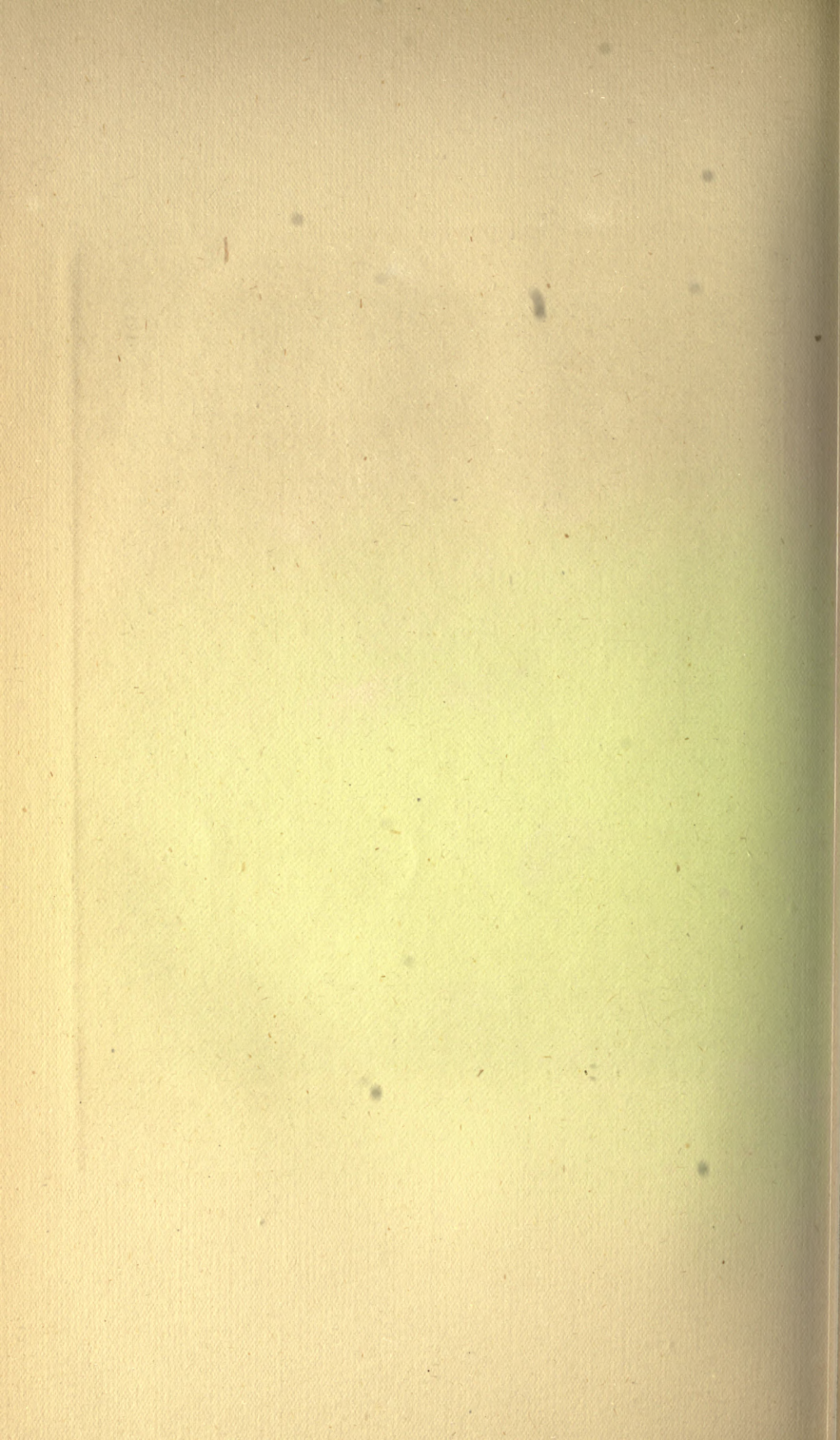


*Laurence Cliphant.*

7<sup>TH</sup> LAIRD OF GASK.

AIDE-DE-CAMP TO PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD.

1724 - 1792.



to place there the frail crown that was only the symbol of one that should not perish. In that moment, so lit with romance and devotion, no misgiving foretold the desolate truth, that the crown of laurel was the only crown he was destined to wear.

The ladies of the Gask household were probably in Edinburgh during the days of triumphant excitement that followed. There is a strong family tradition in the Inchbrakie family that Margaret Oliphant attended the balls of Holyrood. The dress she wore was embroidered by herself and is still an heirloom in the Graeme family.<sup>1</sup>

The march to Derby, that extraordinarily audacious invasion which remains the chief wonder of a wonderful campaign, began on 31st October, when, full of high hope, the Prince left Holyrood, counting as he turned southward on the loyalty of English and Welsh Jacobites, who would, he thought, flock to his standard as he pursued a victorious progress to London. With him rode young Laurence Oliphant,<sup>2</sup> bearing a part in all that followed—the taking of Carlisle, the success at Manchester—the month of onward marching, when the spirits of the little army were high and the incredible seemed possible, even to the tried soldiers and advisers of the Prince. He had his part, too, in the mournful retreat from Derby, when spirits flagged and the star of Charles's rising fortunes seemed to suffer eclipse.

While Laurence Oliphant the younger was thus engaged all the winter months in the Prince's service, his father, as we have seen, held the difficult and dangerous post of Governor at Perth and Treasurer to the Jacobite forces. Many a name known in Jacobite annals appears in his carefully-kept accounts, giving receipts or details of men who had been sent to Perth to join the standard. The following records give the

<sup>1</sup> One of Margaret Oliphant's daughters lived till 1841, so many now living will have heard the tradition from her. All Margaret's letters were destroyed by dry rot in the store where they were placed when Inchbrakie House was pulled down in 1882.

<sup>2</sup> He went back to Perth from Edinburgh before 24th October, on which day he was sent to receive £200 from Lady Methven, but he got back to his Prince in time to ride southwards with him.

names of adherents perhaps lost to history save for these scraps of paper, besides many names well known in Jacobite history—Glengarry, Nairne, MacLachlan, Clanranald, Glencoe.

“Eight Pounds Sterling was paid ‘to the Boatmen upon the Ferry betwixt Perth and Bridgend of Tay, being twenty-three in number,’ by the Right Hon. William Viscount Strathallan present Governor of the Toun of Perth, and that for rowing over great commands both of Horse and Foot, likewise Artillary since the date of his Highness Prince Charles coming to this place Perth 23 Dec. 1745.

“Likewise leaves it to be considered the loss of a boat bringing over the last Artillary valued a hundred pounds Scots.”

A letter reached Oliphant dated :—

“DUMBLANE, 20 Dec. 1745.

“SIR,—As the men which I command here have received pay only till Sunday night, I have sent Lieu. MacKenzie to bring up more for them, which you’ll please send with all expedition, as it is impossible for me to advance them any, or for them to live without it. Captain Murphy who left us this day will acquaint you of our situation, and how necessary it is to be reinforced with the outmost expedition, especially as we learn by our Scoots this night that the Dragoons are returned to Stirling from Lithgo and Falkirk. You’ll please communicate this to the Generals, that they may take their resolution accordingly. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,  
MACLEOD.”

Another order upon Lord Strathallan is dated :—

“BLAIR CASTLE, 27 Jan. 1746.

“MY LORD,—Please give the bearer Col. Richard Warren, my aid-de-camp, one hundred and fifty pounds sterling to be employed in paying the men who are guarding the Prisoners and passes in this Country.

“ATHOLL.”

The following is part of a letter from Macdonald of

Barisdale. It is addressed to Oliphant of Gask, and dated Perth, 17th January 1746.

“SIR,—I beg you will be pleased to excuse this trouble. . . . I fforgote to state the ffive men I gote of the Inverurie presoners, and a young youth came to me that same Sunday evening, recommended to my caire, the onlie son of MacDonald of Lemok in the island of Egg, who I suported as a gentleman volunteer at a shilling a day.”

Oliphant had charge of the English officers taken at Prestonpans.<sup>1</sup> On the very day that the Prince and his forces moved southwards, Gask was in difficulties at Perth, whose citizens, however humbly they had truckled to Charles Edward when he was among them, were certainly not in sympathy with his cause when Prince and army were out of sight. October 30th, being the birthday of George II., was chosen by the mob as a fitting opportunity for rebellion against the Jacobite government, and the powers instituted by Charles. Laurence Oliphant was alone that day, for Lord Strathallan was in the country. The populace, led by the chief burghers, signified the spirit of the hour by breaking into organised revolt, disarming the patrol, and demanding that Gask should deliver up all the arms and ammunition in his charge. The intention was to take him prisoner, and get him on board the *Fox* man-of-war, then lying off Leith. Gask chanced to have only nineteen men at his command, and his chance of holding off the rebels must have seemed small; but with this handful of men he went to the Council house, where the arms were stored, and through a whole night defended it against all attacks. At midnight the rebels rang the fire-bell to summon their whole force. The best description of the affair is given in a

<sup>1</sup> Among them was Colonel Whyteford, who is the “Colonel Talbot” of Scott’s “Waverley.”

A few months after their capture the Duke of Cumberland threatened with the loss of their commissions any of these officers who should regard their parole and refuse to serve against the Jacobites. “The blackest stain that ever sullied the honour of the British army.” Jacobite Lairds of Gask, p. 122.

letter or journal of events written by Gask's daughter, Margaret Oliphant.

“As they were coming down ye street Gask and his men fired on them, and killed and wounded a great many; but when they came near, they stood behind forstairs, and shot out at windies upon them abone 300 shot and kil'd one of ye French gentlemen.<sup>1</sup> One of ye rabel's arm was shot of, just as he was going with a wisp of hather to blow up the hous. They had a boat ready to take Gask to ye *Fox* man-of-war. At daybreak they went off but they were resolved to have it more efectual next, and had a great number convind; ye Nairne men came in that night, and they got them drunk, and was to have gone on, had not 300 McIntoches come in, which put a stop to all their mailles. The prisoner officers, which were taken at Gladsmoor and was at Perth on parole, was much blam'd for spireting up the mob, which had ye aperence of ending very tragickly.”

Margaret's letter has more than once been printed. It breathes that spirit of devotion stirring so many hearts to the depths.

“I am a woman, not designed for war; yet could this hand (weak as it is thought), nerved by my heart's companion resolution, display the Royal banner in the field, and shame the strength of manhood in this cause.

“‘Let Charles encounter with a host of Kings  
And he shal stand the shock without a terror.’”

Then she goes on to detail the actions of “our glorus Prince.”

The events of this momentous winter must at least have satisfied Margaret's family pride. While her father was holding Perth, her brother was in the thick of the fighting with the Highland army, had marched through Clydesdale upon Glasgow, and on to Kilsyth and Bannockburn, and seen the bloodless capture of Stirling town and the abandoned siege of the Castle. His own account of the battle of Falkirk is here given, in a letter

<sup>1</sup> Two Frenchmen had come in the day before with fifteen of Pitsligo's men.



written on the evening of the battle to his mother at Gask:—

“The Army march’t from a field east of Banackburn, about twelve, this day, for Falkirk, where the enemy lay encamp’t; after we had cross’d the water Carron, and march’d up the hill southwest from Falkirk, we perceived the Enemy marching from their Camp to attack us, we march’d up the hill and drew up in order of Battle, South and North; the Dragoons, to the number of three or four hunder, were opposite to our right, where Lord George commanded, and was with him Mr of Strathallan and Capn Harie. We are all perfectly well. We advanced and the Dragoons advanced likeways. The enemy kept up their fire till we were very near them, and we both fired, and immediatly they run for it; there was not above twenty or thirty killed and wounded, and not one of ours killed. They say there was not above a thousand foot of the enemy engaged; they were likeways put to the Rout and about a hunder and fifty killed; they say about thirty of ours nobody of note killed; but this account of the battle must be imperfect as we have not had time to know circumstances. I’ll refer that to my next. We took five or six Cannon, a great many waggons and baggage. The enemy retired to their camp, we did not pursue them, the men were so much straggled. There was great fires in their camp as it begun to turn dark; and upon sending to Falkirk to enquire, we gote intelligence the enemy were marching very fast out of town toward Linlithgow, and had burnt all their Tents upon which the army marcht into town, where we are just now very well. I know not whether we are to pursue them. All friends are well. The Prince was in the second line. I’m sleepy just now, so shall add no more.<sup>1</sup>

“FALKIRK, *Friday, Jan. 17th, 1746.*”

Doubtless the young aide-de-camp after the victory would share in the contention of opinion among the leaders of the campaign which ended, to the despair of Charles Edward, in the retreat to the north. On 3rd

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Correspondence Atholl Family, p. 142. The letter is also printed in the Jacobite Lairds of Gask. “The original letter, being wrote in a hurry, is not very legiball to those that dont know the hand,” Lord Strathallan writes to the Duke.

February he would be at Crieff with his master, and would doubtless find time to ride the nine miles over to Gask to see his mother and sisters. It was at Crieff that the policy was decided of dividing the Jacobite army in two portions, the clans, under command of the Prince, to take the road to the north by Cope's road, and the Lowland regiments, under Lord George Murray, to march by the coast of Angus and Aberdeenshire. The two divisions were to meet at Inverness. The Duke of Cumberland, with a large force, was only a day's march behind the Prince's army at this time. But both the clans and the Lowlanders rose to the occasion, and performed a retreat masterly in organisation, considering the material of which the troops were composed. It is not known in which division young Laurence went to the north—whether as aide-de-camp he remained by the Prince, or as a Lowlander went with his cousin, Lord George.

Meanwhile the elder Gask remained at his post at Perth till the approach of the Duke of Cumberland and his forces on 6th February, when it was evident that the city could not be held by the Jacobites. There is one personal glimpse of the old laird from the evidence of John Gray of Rogart, a Highland drover, examined in the House of Commons in 1746. Gray, when asked, "What do you know of Laurence Oliphant of Gask, and did he wear highland cloathes?" answered that he had been pointed out to him outside the prison window, and he had on a "laced hat and long cloathes."

Oliphant was then under orders to rejoin his regiment of Perthshire Horse, on the road to Aberdeen,<sup>1</sup> under Lord George. With dark misgivings he must have quitted the neighbourhood of Gask House, and his wife and daughters, left totally defenceless, and exposed to the retribution sure enough to fall on such a Jacobite stronghold. While father and son marched to the north, the vengeance of the Government fell on many of the

<sup>1</sup> He continues his accounts as Treasurer until the day before Culloden. Extracts will be found in the Jacobite Lairds of Gask.

castles and houses whose men had gone forth to the Prince, and whose women could do nothing to save goods and gear.

To Amélie Oliphant and her daughters at Gask the events of these months must have been of thrilling interest, though full of acute anxiety, with the husband and father in so important a position at Perth, and the son and brother on the perilous road to glory with the Prince. Besides these of her immediate household, Amélie had two brothers in the forefront of the movement — Lord Nairne<sup>1</sup> and Robert Mercer<sup>2</sup> — while the husbands of three of her sisters — Lord Strathallan,<sup>3</sup> William Murray of Taymount,<sup>4</sup> Duncan Robertson<sup>5</sup> of Drummachin — were in the field, besides the Atholl brothers, who were her first cousins, and her nephews, Lord Fincastle,<sup>6</sup> the Master of Strathallan,<sup>7</sup> and Willie Drummond.<sup>8</sup> Yet these first anxious days were also full of proud hope at Gask, of eager watching for scraps of news, of exultation in the record of those victories which were to prove only empty and temporary triumphs.

Meanwhile Lady Gask's part was that of factor over her husband's estates. It might have been an easy task, but she was harassed in her duties by the minister of Gask, Mr M'Leish, the venom of whose attacks was more felt by the family than the rancour of their enemies. In 1740 the laird had made a most unfortunate choice in electing M'Leish, against the wishes of all the parishioners. The objections of the people he overrode with a touch of that deeply-rooted feudal authority which was a marked characteristic of his dealings.

“Common sense,” he writes, “must tell them that it is madness to oppose their master and disoblige him, when

<sup>1</sup> Attainted and died in exile.

<sup>2</sup> Killed at Culloden.

<sup>3</sup> Killed at Culloden.

<sup>4</sup> Afterwards Lord Dunmore. He was arraigned for high treason, was found guilty and respited, but kept a prisoner for life.

<sup>5</sup> Afterwards of Strowan. He was dispossessed of his estates, and was in exile thirty-one years till his death.

<sup>6</sup> Attainted and died in exile.

<sup>7</sup> Page of honour of the Prince at Holyrood. Attainted and died in exile in 1765.

<sup>8</sup> Exiled for many years.

that minister, whom the Earle of Kinoul and Gask are for settling, will be placed here, whether they will or not."

The prejudices of the tenants were justified, and their instincts proved truer than the laird's judgment. M'Leish was a thorn in the side of the family, to whom, in spite of kindness and support, he bore a deadly enmity. He must at the time of his appointment have successfully concealed the fact of his violent opposition in principle to the Stewart restoration, or Gask would never have sanctioned it. But he was a proved liar in other matters, and it would be easy to change his political views when once he had gained his post and could not be turned out. He ceased to pray in the church for the Oliphant family, an overt act of defiance, and showed a more definite hostility in riding to Perth to give information to the Government, and in using what influence he had to dissuade the Gask tenants from paying their rents to the laird's wife. "That ingrate man's actings have tryed my patience more than all that has happened me," writes Gask. The troubles of Mrs Oliphant, set forth in her own writing, show that M'Leish repeated and enlarged upon all gossip calculated to injure her and throw her into discredit. In ways too petty to merit repetition, he harassed and annoyed the brave and gentle woman to whom he owed so much. He said it was against the law to protect a rebel lady or anything she had, and was sure the Duke of Cumberland would not have done it. At this distance of time it is impossible to read of M'Leish and his sayings and doings without contempt, yet the old laird, whom he had wronged in word and deed, forgave him, out of his generous heart. Writing years afterwards to his wife, in 1762, he says:—

"As to Mr M'Leish, I'm sorry to learn he has been so much distressed in his health. It will perhaps be agreeable to him to let him know that I do heartyly forgive him all the injuries he has done me undeservidly."

Perth being now evacuated by the Jacobite garrison, was occupied by the troops of the Government. Early

in February 1746 the Hanoverian soldiers descended upon the house of Gask, ransacking and plundering. Though the occurrence may have brought terror and indignation to the women there, it certainly brought no surprise; it was a foregone conclusion that if the Jacobite army could not leave garrisons in every private house, the non-combatants in their homes must pay the penalty. By this time both the old laird and the young laird were attainted, and the estate declared forfeit. The grey house in its gardens lying on the hillside, defenceless, and in view of the valley, tempted the marauding troops. The laird has left a note of one loss which shows that it was not only private soldiers who did the looting.

“ Collonell York did in the beginning of the year 1746 carry away from Gask a small Japan'd brown Box, with the coat of arms on the lidd, being gules three crescent argent. In which were contained; The originall Charter of the Land of Gask from K. D. Bruce dated 1364. The patent of the Lord Oliphant; some papers dated about the year 1500, and my Commission from the Prince to be Lieutenant Collonell to the Perthshyre squadron of Horse.”

Chief among the treasures guarded by the ladies at Gask were the colours taken from the enemy at Prestonpans, sent back by Laurence Oliphant to be cherished in his own house after the victory. It was known that the colours were there, and a rigorous search was begun. The plenishing of the house offered in other ways chances to the plunderers. The soldiers, among other goods, got hold of the wearing apparel of the young laird. Miss Annie Graeme<sup>1</sup> of Inchbrakie was at the time a guest at Gask. The story of how this spirited young woman saved his archer's uniform is best told in the young laird's own letter, written thirty years afterwards. He had been asked to lend his old uniform,<sup>2</sup> when the Royal Company of Archers was revived.

<sup>1</sup> She was born 16th February 1719, and died unmarried April 1799.

<sup>2</sup> It was lent, but never returned. The coat is still to be seen at the Archers' Hall, Edinburgh.

“It is pretty odd if my coat is the only one left, especially as it was taken away in ye 46 by ye Duke of Cumberland’s plunderers; and Miss Anny Graeme Inchbrakie, thinking it would be regrated by me, went out to ye court and got it back from a soldier, insisting with him that it was a Lady’s riding habit; but putting her hand to the Briches to take them too, he with a thundring oath asked, ‘if ye Lady wore briches.’”

When the alarm was given that the soldiers were coming, one of the servants in the house seized the cherished Colours and hid them in the pump. The name of this resourceful girl was Emily Dewar. She afterwards married an Italian refugee, De Maria.<sup>1</sup>

But even with Hanoverian soldiers quartered upon them, the time had not yet come when the goods and gear of Jacobites were fair game for any thief. The story of the looting of Gask House reached the ears of General Huske, then in command at Perth, who caused the following letter<sup>2</sup> to be sent to Amélie Oliphant:—

“PERTH, Feb. 17, 1746.

“MADAM,—General Huske being informed that an officer who went to your house to search for arms, papers, etc. had taken away some money, Linnens, and severall other things which belonged to you and daughter as ladys, the General desires you send Acct of the particulars that this officer had taken from you. I mean what entyrelly belong’d to you as ladys by this express. I am Madam your most Obed. and humble servant,

“ARCH. MACLACHLAN.”

Lady Gask writes back the following dignified and temperate letter in reply:—

“SIR,—Nothing but obedience to General Huske’s orders could prevail upon me to have mention’d these

<sup>1</sup> He was courier to Macgregor of Balhaldie and was obliged to leave Italy owing to the part he took in an insurrection. His son, Louis, held a good position in the Register House, Edinburgh, and was alive in 1805. There is a tradition that Janet Oliphant dreamt that she had been presented with two love-knots, one for herself and another for her maid, and the dream proved true, for the laird (Macgregor of Balhaldie) married the lady, and his *cousin* and courier married the maid.

The historic colours have unfortunately disappeared.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 201.

triles that the officer who came here had taken, and I really do not know exactly what they were, except two peices of cotton cloth; in one of the peices I believe there was ten yards, much less in the other peice; he demanded ten guinies from me to give the soldiers that were here, which I ingenously told him I had not; one of my Daughters gave him a three pound 12 pice she had in her pocket, which was all the money he got; now, Sir, you will allow me to give you the trouble to thank all these good officers that were here, in all our Names, for there great civilitys to us and General Huske in particular for the Gaurd he was so good as place here. We have injoind a perfect tranquility ever since, and believe me we shall never be ungrateful for the favor which we hope by your intercession his Excelency will be so good as to continue."

Authorities in Perth were still, however, not satisfied to allow the matter to rest. The Duke's aide-de-camp was three days later instructed to write again.

"PERTH, Feb. 20, 1746.

"MADAM,—I am commanded by His Royal Highness to inform myself from you, whether the officer who was sent with a Detachment to Gask, when the Army march'd by, did take the money he is charged with or not; whether he ever returned it, and if he did, at what time it was. Every *Gentleman* in the Army is concerned that any violence is offer'd to the Fair Sex, and it is absolutely contrary to His Royal Highness's intentions. I am Madam Your most Humble servant,

"JOSEPH YORKE.

"The Express who is order'd by H.R.H. to carry this to you will wait to bring back your answer."

The lady's answer was to repeat what she had written before. The upshot of the matter was that the officer in charge of the party of men who had been at Gask lost his commission.

So far it seemed as if the Government intended to defend no lawless depredations, but the English troops, under General Huske, marched away northwards in pursuit of the Jacobite forces. In their place came

Hessian troops under the Earl of Crauford. John Stewart, the Quarter-Master-General, writes<sup>1</sup> to Mrs Oliphant on 8th March as he has been asked for a guard for her house and family:—

“Tho I venture to pass my word it is not needfull, as the most absolute orders are given and will be punctually obeyed, not in any shape to molest any person who is not found in arms or acting against the Interest of His Majesty with the ladies especially I assure you we shall make no warr. . . .”

In her answer she tells how she had resolved to “take my hasard,” but had been so insulted by the common soldiers,

“which is inavoidable, as they goe to and fro and therefore begs of you to send us a safe gaurd; one that is almost quit useless to you will doe with us.”

On 11th March Lord Crauford issued his own orders:<sup>2</sup>—

“All soldiers and others under my command are herby strictly forbidden under pain of the severest punishment to molest or do the least harm to the Lady Gask, her Family, House, Furniture, or anything belonging unto her by marauding or plundring either by stealth or open violence any things belonging to the said House under what pretext soever, and that none may pretend ignorance I have given this order for protecting the said Lady, her house, and effects under my hand and seal at Perth this eleventh day of March 1746, CRAUFORD.”

The German commander of the Hessian troops gave a protection, and Lord Albemarle also did good service in offering security. The Gask family had a friend and protector too in their kinsman and near neighbour, Lord Monzie. The following letter is from Mr John Graham, at the Royal Bank, Edinburgh, and is addressed to Lord Monzie,<sup>3</sup> 22nd August 1746.

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Campbell, second son of Anna Oliphant, daughter of Sir Laurence Oliphant, who married in 1672 Colin Campbell of Monzie. Patrick was admitted advocate 30th November 1709, and took his seat as Lord Monzie, 10th June



“MY LORD,—Mr Campbell yesterday put in my hands a letter of your Lordships desiring me to speak with Laurie Dundas and inform what orders and instructions he has about forage etc. belonging to Rebels; he came to town last night with Lord Albermarle. I saw him this morning . . . he says he has no directions from the Duke nor any of the Generals to seize anything, and is very positive that none of them will for the future give directions to seize anything, but allow the Law to take place. . . . As for the Hay taken at Williamston he says it was by Brigadier Mordaunt’s order who had been told that if he did not give orders about it, it would be lost for that nobody would cut it down or take any care of it. . . . When the army went first to Perth he had the D. of Cumberland’s order to take into the magazine and keep an exact account of all forage . . . seized from those in the Rebellion for which the Duke told him he was to account, . . . the money still lys in his hands payable to who shall have right,—Creditors or the Crown. . . . Williamston Hay was weighed over to the clerk of the magazine at the sight of the people at Williamston. . . . Upon the whole I see no danger to the Tennant to hinder his cutting down and gathering in the corn as usual.”

From the glory of Prestonpans to the consternation of the retreat from Derby, from the brief revival of hope in the victory of Falkirk to the dark hour of Culloden, Amélie and her girls went through all the alternations that make up the story of that year, enduring a double suffering in the wreck of the Cause and the peril of those dearest to them. As the long winter went by, now and again scraps of news would reach them from the Jacobite forces in their northern retreat, but all communication was stealthy, and often dangerous. Within the memory of the present generation there were Gask tenants who boasted of how their grandfathers, at the risk of life and liberty, carried letters in their shoes between the laird and the anxious lady at home. There were anxieties nearer home too. Lady Strathallan had aided

1727. He died 1st August 1751, aged seventy-six. He was succeeded in the estate of Monzie by his only son, Patrick. Lord Monzie staunchly befriended his cousins the Oliphants of Gask.

the Duchess of Perth in raising men for the Prince. The Duke of Cumberland<sup>1</sup> wrote to the Duke of Newcastle from Crieff, 5th February 1745:—

“The old Lady Perth<sup>2</sup> and her daughter are left at Drummond Castle, and I have let them know they had best write to Lord Perth to release all our officers and soldiers who are prisoners at present, else I shall burn and destroy the Castle immediately, and I have ordered a subaltern and 22 Dragoons to remain with her till answer comes to her letter.

“I hope His Majesty will approve this proceeding of mine, but I thought it a pity to let this troublesome old woman escape without making some use of her.”

Both she and Margaret Strathallan were seized on 11th February and shut up in a small unhealthy room in Edinburgh Castle. Lady Catherine Stewart mentions in a letter, dated 31st October 1746, that she went up to the Castle to keep Hallow Even with Lady Strathallan in prison. While still there, away from her children and all those who could comfort her, Margaret must have received the news of her husband's and brother's death at Culloden. She was not liberated till November. The sacking of her house was done at the same time as her sister's home at Gask, when the house of Garvock was also looted.

“The parties spared not the body cloathes of the ladies and they destroyed such provisions as they could not either consume or carry off with them, breaking the bottles and other vessels full of liquor, as if they intended that the poor ladies their children and servants should be all starved to death for want of cloathes meat and drink. Party after party came to the said houses and took away such gleanings as had not been observed by the former party, or any small stock of provisions the ladies had procured after the first rummaging bout.”<sup>3</sup>

Nairne House was plundered with the rest. Lord

<sup>1</sup> History of the Eleventh Hussars, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> This was Jean Gordon, only daughter of the first Duke of Gordon, and widow of the second Duke of Perth, born circa 1683, died 1773.

<sup>3</sup> Letter in the Appendix to Brown's Hist. of the Highlands, 5th February 1751.

Nairne wrote years later to the Chevalier about his wife and children:—

“They stayed in Scotland until all the money they could get for any little plate or moveables the troops had left, after plundering my house, were exhausted, and in their plundering they went so nearly to work that they even took Lady Nairne’s watch and clothes.”

Then with the news of Culloden the last blow fell. Till then, all had been bearable, for hope lit the way; but now stark disaster and ruin had fallen upon the Cause, and the Jacobite adherents stood face to face with abject poverty, homelessness, and outlawry. Culloden defines sharply the great change in countless families from fortune to direst distress. To none was the contrast more marked, the fall more stunning, than in the case of the Oliphants of Gask.

## CHAPTER X

### ECLIPSE

FATHER and son had, as we have seen, ridden away northwards with the Prince's army early in February. The old laird continues his accounts as treasurer, and through these it is possible to catch glimpses of him on his way, but no journal or account was left by either of the Oliphants of the northward march, nor any description of the battle of Culloden. A single sentence, in a retrospective sketch of the younger Laurence, gives the only indication that both father and son fought there.

It is possible to form an idea of what the winter was like at Inverness. The months that were dreary to non-combatants at home, anxiously awaiting events, were full of hope and enterprise for the leaders of the army. The clansmen also were happy in the prospect of battle before long, and solaced, meanwhile, with a series of brilliant sorties and forays. The Prince was among them, a daily inspiration, a visible reason for all that was endured. The city had fallen easily into the hands of Charles Edward, who in the few weeks between 20th February and 10th April experienced perhaps the happiest time he was ever destined to know. He seemed in a little kingdom of his own. Everything was of the simplest, and life reduced to almost primitive conditions. There was no road within forty miles of Inverness, and all round him the country was in the hands of Jacobites. A hundred miles to the south practically every man was in sympathy with the Cause. There were gaieties at Inverness, balls at which

the Prince himself danced. His naturally high spirits found an outlet in such simple social gatherings as were possible. But sad news reached him there, the definite decision that France would not help him either with men or money. Yet to maintain the war was still fixedly the purpose of the Prince and his generals, and while that purpose remained, there was always eagerness, excitement, and enthusiasm.

But round his little kingdom at Inverness were slowly closing, from north and south, the powers which were to crush him. Cumberland waited at Aberdeen for the slow late spring to melt the snow from the hills and make the country possible for the advance of his force. Then it was inevitable that a battle must be fought, and that it must be decisive.

Young Laurence Oliphant, the aide-de-camp, was doubtless at the side of his Prince when, with colours flying and pipes playing their wild acclaim, he led his little army from Inverness to Culloden, and beyond to Drummoissie Moor. Perhaps he stood with him on the rising ground in the rear of the clansmen, watching the gathering troops of Cumberland take battle array, and rode with him along the Scottish lines to inspire and encourage the hungry but eager fighters, before the fray began.

Little is known of what individual part the two Oliphants played at Culloden. Young Laurence's position as aide-de-camp would cause him to see the fight from a different point to his father, who was with his own regiment of Perthshire Horse. This squadron, numbering seventy men, was posted on the right of the second line, in the rear of Atholl's brigade. When the Colonel of the regiment, Lord Strathallan,<sup>1</sup> was

<sup>1</sup> Lord Strathallan fell, mortally wounded, but not instantly killed. He received communion from a Catholic priest who was on the field. There were no elements at hand, but the priest hastily procured oatmeal and water from a neighbouring cottage, and administered the last rites. This is the story as told in Chambers' History of the Rebellion, but it presents points difficult of comprehension. There were certainly four Catholic priests at the battle of Culloden. All suffered afterwards in some form for their allegiance to the Jacobite Cause. But Lord Strathallan was not a Catholic, and under no

killed, Gask, being Lieutenant-Colonel, must have taken control and brought the squadron out of action when defeat was clear.

“It kept its ranks well and was most useful, in common with the rest of the Lowland Horse, in checking Cumberland’s pursuit.”<sup>1</sup>

The main body was brought off with little loss after leaving the field.

A man Moncrieff, an excise officer, in Perth, whom in distress the old laird befriended two years later, had joined the Perthshire Horse on its retreat to the north, and fought at Culloden. The young laird told his father:—

“I took the standard from one of the squadron whom I mett as he was going back to the field of Battle, and think it was from Mr Moncrieff.”

This statement gives the only glimpse of young Laurence on that great and disastrous day. It is known, however, that he lingered with the Prince, his master, late on the field, after all hope was over, and perhaps joined his entreaties with those of other friends, to induce the stunned and despairing Charles to quit the scene. Nothing the Oliphants have left in writing gives any indication that they witnessed the cruel and barbarous end of the day—the flying fugitives cut down, the wounded murdered—all the thousand horrible details which marked Cumberland’s triumph, and have made his lasting disgrace. If they were witnesses of these things, they drew close a veil of silence.

Family memoirs present a moving picture of the miseries endured by the two Oliphants during the next six months, which were spent in hiding among the hills. The later years passed in dependence on foreign princes and in the restlessness of exile were, however, bitterer far to the two soldiers than those few months of danger,

circumstances could a Catholic priest administer the Viaticum to any one outside the Church. It is far more propable that he received the last rites from one of the Scottish Episcopal clergy. See an interesting article by the Rev. Father Macdonell in the publication “Au Deo-Graine.”

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 135.

and sometimes of want, among the glens of their own country. This is made very plain by a few sentences out of the young laird's journal, which, though written years afterwards, must be accepted as setting forth the true state of the case. The young laird, now an old man, is remembering all the mercies of God, and in his simple fashion recording his gratitude.<sup>1</sup>

“In the Rout at Culloden I met my Father when least expected, eight months we wandered. I was often distressed, yet had my kind Father for a support and comfort.

“We were cherished in distress; though hunted after yet the fears of imprisonment or Death never brook our balmy rest. In our situation we enjoyed remarkable Repose. My Malady increased. I thought more upon my ways, and we were wafted to a land of safety.

“The Deep raged, but did not preveal against us.”

From the scraps of information available, it would seem that Gask and his son went first to Moy, eight miles south of Inverness. There they would find temporary shelter with Lady M'Intosh, the heroic woman who had raised a clan for the Prince. The Oliphants' stay must have been brief, and the departure hurried, as he left a note of things left there, and in other hiding-places:—

“My little clog-bag at Lady M'Intoshe's at Moy, my silver hilted Broad Sword at Borlom M'Intoshe's at Reats; my other Broad Sword at Alexander Winter's at Bredowny in Clova, which is krooked. Deliver'd to Mrs Gordon at Birkhall: A sute of Hyland Cloaths and Phylibeg. A coarse night-gown, a Buff coloured Weastcoat. A brown Weastcoat with gold buttons. A pair red everlasting britches. Two pair Pistolls, a shabble with hart-horn hilt mounted with silver, a Hatt with the gold tracing that was upon it, a pair silver buckles; All left with her in a cloch-bag. And a Mear (light brown) with a bell in his face which the Lady said she sent to

<sup>1</sup> The writer omits the religious ejaculations which follow almost every entry, “O my soul Bliss Bliss the Lord, Praise him and magnefie him for ever.”

Mr Forbes of Balfor, and that he would not return it to her when sent for,<sup>1</sup> and a silver watch sett on dimonds sent to Aberdeen to mend."

The pair seemed to have hidden for some time near Birkhall. On 18th July the young laird sent a letter<sup>2</sup> to his sister at Gask.

"We still keep our healths very well; both your letters came safe to hand. I have very little worth writing to you. We have still thoughts of going from this country, so you will not be uneasy, though you should be longer of hearing from us than ordinary; but where ever we go, you shall hear from us as soon as we can." On 20th July he adds: "A party that we were afraid of is gone bake to Mac yesterday, so I hope we will get leave to stay here some days in peace."

On the same piece of paper is copied in Margaret's handwriting.—On 15th August

"some Privateers arived in Nates (?) as well as at St Malo, the Captains of which declare that they had been out as farr as the Western Isles of Scotlan where they learned that Prince Edward was not only in that Kingdom, but that far from seizing the opportunity he had to get off he had run through most of the said islands in hopes of finding partizans therein and then returned into the mountains of Lochaber. His brother, Prince Henry, is still at the castle of Navarre, a country seat belonging to the Duke of Bouillon."

The father and son were at one time at Glenisla in the Ogilvy country, but more exact knowledge of their hiding-places is not available. It was at this time that each assumed a new name, the elder Oliphant became "Mr Whytt," and his son "Mr Brown," and this disguise was used for twenty years. Most of their friends were

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Gordon wrote a long letter to Mrs Oliphant at Gask (after the two Oliphants had left the country), who had written asking for this mare, telling how it had been carried off. She mentions a silver snuff-box which the old laird gave her "as a memorandum off him." *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Part of this letter is given in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 189.



driven to the same necessity.<sup>1</sup> One faithful follower from Gask went with them in their wanderings—David Buchan, who belonged to the old order of feudal retainer, taught by hereditary tradition unquestioning devotion to the family he served. From one Highland fastness to another, among the wild hiding-places of Aberdeenshire he toiled, doing his best to lighten the hardships of that retreat.

Once the little party were so hard pressed by a band of the Government soldiers, that David was near enough to hear one trooper say to another, "There's Oliphant." While his companion paused to ask at which man he should level his musket, David contrived to offer him a gold piece, which was accepted, and the shot was not fired. The homely talk of this servant and friend gives the only personal glimpses of the two Oliphants in their wanderings. The following, as a story, little merits repetition, but there is something in the clear simplicity of his joy in service that should find its record here:—

"We came late one night to an inn. My Master always ordered a bottle of wine for the good of the house, but never had more than two glasses of it, and I took none. I went to see if his bed was free from damp, as he was ill. Our landlord was crusty, and said they had no warming pan. I found another inn, and tried to borrow a warming pan. I got one at the Manse, and filled it with cinders. If ever my master had a comfortable bed, it was that night."<sup>2</sup>

"Oliphant is King to us," was the watchword of David Buchan and his family.

The estates of forty-three Jacobites had been declared forfeit by the Government, and Oliphant was thus deprived of every acre of land in Scotland. He and his son were attainted of high treason, in having taken up arms on or before 18th April 1746. Some suggestion had been made

<sup>1</sup> Inchbrakie became "Black Pate," Robertson of Strowan "Lindsay," Oliphant of Condie "Symon," Graeme of Garvoek "Glaud," Lord George Murray, "Kateson," the Prince himself, "John Douglas." The Drummonds of Strathallan sometimes signed themselves Campbell. Mrs Oliphant of Gask signed herself "Sophia Murray."

<sup>2</sup> The circumstance was first told in the memoirs of Lady Nairne.

—of which the details are not now available—by which a possibility was offered to the old laird of saving the cherished lands of Gask. His wife had contrived in September to get this proposal conveyed to him. His reply is here given,<sup>1</sup> embodying as it does his whole attitude towards life:—

“MRS SOPHIA,—After thinking a little about the writing of the papers, I have come to a fixed resolution of not signing them; if I should be robbed of my all, I'll never give a lie under my Hand. It, however, does not a little vex me that you and the girls should share in the misfortunes of the Times. I am—Your most sincere Well-wisher.

“You'll know the Hand and Seal.

“Mr Brown is vastly better, since we came to our new quarters and I hope we shall be able to keep them for some time.

“To Mrs Sophia Murray.”

Lady Gask, who was henceforth to be known as “Sophia Murray,” managed with her usual cleverness to get an interview with her husband and son, a few days before they sailed away from Scotland. The time and place will never be known. Into the hurried secrecy of that interview, what confidence, what explanations, what plans, what expressions of love and pity were crowded! Husband and wife were not to meet again for two years. All the mirror of life lay shattered before them, and they could form no idea what kind of existence could possibly be shaped out of the fragments. Though they may still have cherished hope, still imagined that the dead ashes could be blown to flame again, it was a dark hour.

The main result of the seven months wandering on the delicate constitution of the boy of twenty-one was ill-health that lasted his whole life. In everything he did or attempted from this time his health had to be made the first consideration. No hero of the '45 endured a more lasting misfortune than befel young Laurence.

At last came the chance of escape from Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 199.

“The Oliphants,” writes Albemarle to the Duke of Newcastle, “went from Arbroath in small boats on board a Danish ship and each paid £15 for their passage. But where bound is unknown to the informer, this might have been prevented if the officers of the Revenue had done their duty, who never acquainted their Principals with it, but no better can be expected from them, as most of them are Jacobites.”

It was on 5th November that the old and young laird took ship for Sweden, and sailed away from the land they were not to see again for seventeen years. A little gathering of exiles and near relations watched with them the shores of Scotland sink. Lord Nairne, his son Harie,<sup>1</sup> Willy Drummond, and Robert Graeme of Garvock were on board the same ship, and all landed at Maisterland on 10th November. From this date the old laird began a journal in which he sets down every remarkable sight he saw. A single extract<sup>2</sup> will give an idea of the nature and scope of this work :—

“On the 14th, to Gothenburg, being the second town in Sweden. The Garison is said to consist of fifteen hunder men. . . . The Swedes are in church from eight to ten in the morning, and goe to the afternoon’s service at one. This is over by three in the afternoon, and thers no more of Sunday either in Town or Country, and the people fall to working, dancing or any other diversion. . . . All the Gentlemen wear swords or hangers, as doe some Merchants, Physicians and Surgeons. The Boors are mostly strong, tall men, their Cloaths of a dark hoddan grey, made much like to the Quakers coats; they are continually smoking of Tobacco when at work, and that in the hottest days . . . The Ladys have their heads and hair much after the British way. When you’r introduced to them, they never salute you by giveing you a kiss, and this is also the practice in Germany. The countrey women thresh the grain, work on the Highways (which are extremely good all over Sweden) and sometimes hold the Plow. . . . Caperkellies are frequently sold in mercat, and there is a bird called Yerpas about the size of a

<sup>1</sup> Henry Nairne, born 1727.

<sup>2</sup> Long extracts from this journal are given in the Jacobite Lairds.

partridge, which are kill'd in Oct. sunk underground with their fetters which are dug up in Feb. and eaten at Stockholm and Gothenburg. . . . The Inhabitants have a particular care of Magpies, as they never suffer to kill any of them. They will not touch a man that has made away with himself, nor any creature that dyes; they ly exposed to the air till the Hangman is sent for to bury them."

Young Laurence had a severe illness while at Gothenburg. He was taken ill on 23rd December, and the doctor was in constant attendance till early in February. The New Year brought troubles and vexations of another kind. Gask was obliged to pocket his pride and ask for money from the French Ambassador<sup>1</sup> at Stockholm.

"As I was attainted by Parliament, and had my Estate of about a thousand pounds ster. pr. annum seised and my Home plundered and I obliged to leave my countrey in disguise, your Excellency will judge I could bring but little money along, haveing lurked in the hills of Scotland from the fatall Battle of Culloden the 16 Apr. 1746 to ye end of October. I hope your Excellence will think fitt to allow me what sum you shall judge proper to carry me and my son to Paris with a guide. As I find the distance much the same to Rome, I wish to goe there first to see my King having had the honour to be with him at Perth in the year 1715; but I leave it to your Excellence to determine me in the rout I shall take; you'l be so good to give me a Pass for myself, my son, and a Guide."

The Ambassador wrote to refuse the help asked, and deeply wounded Oliphant by quoting an extraordinary statement that Oliphant was in correspondence with the authorities at Copenhagen to make his peace with King George:—

"My enemies," wrote Gask, "might have been satiated when they Forfeited my Life and Estate, without wounding my Honour, which I esteem dearer to me than both the former."

The lie was traced to a Doctor Blacvel, then a prisoner

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Laumary. This letter is given in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 216.

at Stockholm. Why he should have invented the story does not appear, but he admitted the falsehood. "My honour has been blasted by your lyes," wrote Gask.

The Ambassador, convinced at last, gave the required assistance, and Gask and his son, under the name of Glandine, set forth on their further travels. Their conveyance was a Berline, holding four persons inside. Two servants, Jean and Louis, went with them. They were in Berlin in July, and by the end of August reached Paris.

Charles Edward was at St Ouen at the time, and on the third day after the Oliphant's arrival in Paris, father and son went thither to see their Prince. The old laird in his journal makes the brief entry,

"*Sept. 7th.* Went to St Oyne, waited on the Prince, and dined with his Royal Highness."

It must surely have been the saddest little party that ever gathered round a royal table. They had not met since Culloden, and now they were face to face again in a strange land, under the shadow of that tragic day, broken men, ruined, hunted, exiled. The Prince had endured, and was enduring, one of the heaviest sorrows of his sorrowful life. He was bearing, as best he might, the desertion of his brother Henry, and facing, all through the long months, blow after blow as it fell in the news of the trials and pitiless execution in Britain of so many of his loyal followers. Death and destruction had everywhere followed the progress of his enterprise, and now the men who surrounded him were those whose energies had been spent in his cause, beggared in all but honour, with lives torn from the roots, careers destroyed, ambitions lost. So among the little group of exiles the Oliphants came to him whom they loved and served, bringing the treasure of humble hearts that had no longer arms and men and fortune to offer—the clasp of hands that could no longer draw the sword in his quarrel. As they spoke, perhaps of other things, in the ears of young Laurence must have sounded the echo of the last words he had heard his Prince say on the lost field of Culloden;

“No help for it. God is all powerful, who can give us the victory another day.”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Charles, whose soaring temperament was as yet very far from yielding to despair, was able to kindle in these hearts some flame of hope, leading the talk forward to possibilities of a future attempt to win his throne. How otherwise could the exiles and their defeated Chief have spoken any words at all, out of their sorrow and their pity?

A pathetic little group of Stewart adherents rallied in and about Paris, to be near their young Chief—names of honour and renown never to be forgotten. The gentle Lochiel<sup>2</sup> was there, then nearly at the end of his days; Lord Nairne, Lord Ogilvie, Gordon of Glenbucket, Lord Lewis Gordon, Maxwell of Kirkconnel, among others. For the most part these men were penniless, except for the support of the French Government which, while steadily refusing Charles any help in men and arms, apportioned 34,000 livres among the Jacobite officers. The Prince did what he could to help them, but all were in truth dependent on the charity of the French court—a bitter position for men whose independence had been an honoured point of pride all their lives. While France and England drew daily nearer to the peace that was to sound the passing bell of all Jacobite hopes, and news from home showed that the Highlands were daily becoming more completely disarmed, the spirit of the young Chief never sank, his vigour never abated; not only was he still the centre of a loyal host, but his invincible charm secured for him the adulation of the people of Paris.

“He now became an object of even more attraction than the King himself. Whenever he appeared upon the public walks the whole company followed him. When he entered the theatre he became the sole spectacle of

<sup>1</sup> The record of this is a scrap of paper in the Gask charter chest in the writing of Margaret Oliphant, headed “P. to L. O. the 16th of April 1746.”

<sup>2</sup> The Lochiels, father and son, died in 1748, in consequence of all they had undergone in the '45. The father died first. The son had been desperately wounded at Culloden, and died of brain fever at Borgue, 26th October.

the place. On all occasions he seemed the only person who was insensible to the sorrows of his fate; . . . no one could speak of him without admiration, and some could not behold him without tears."<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1748 the dreaded peace really came, and the Treaty of Aix was accepted, with its stipulation that Louis XV. should no longer shelter Prince Charles. His arrest, imprisonment, and banishment occurred while the two Oliphants were at Avignon, whither they had journeyed on 11th December. Laurence Oliphant's journal contains no word of the Prince's arrival at Avignon, and only one letter touches on his stay in that city, though they were there during all the two months that Charles remained. Then followed the year of his disappearance.

On 7th April the Oliphants heard the report, unfounded as it proved, that the Prince was married in Poland to the daughter of Prince Radzevill. The old laird evidently wrote to Kelly, the Prince's secretary, to ask for information on the point, and received the following letter from Mr George Kelly, Avignon:—

*"27th April 1749. A Monsieur Oliphant de Gask,  
gentilhomme Ecossois a Toulouse.*

"SIR,—I am sorry I can give you no satisfactory account of the Prince's journey or marriage, for we are as great strangers to both as you are; 'tis true the report of the latter was confidently given out at Paris, but that was founded upon some letters from England, and has been droped for some time without adopting any other in its place, but the truth is that nobody knows either the place to which he is gone or his business; we now begin to be in pain for him, but hope that will soon be made easy by having news of him when he returns. I will not fail laying your former letters before him and informing you of H.R.H.'s answer. My kind complements to Mrs Oliphant conclude with sincere esteem, etc.

GEORGE KELLY."

That by July his friends knew of the Prince's

<sup>1</sup> Chambers' History of the Rebellion, chap. xxx.

whereabouts, is proved by the following letter from Laurence Oliphant to Mr Bryce, 7th July 1749:—

“SIR,—I had yours of the 24th of June and it gave me and my son much pleasure to know that the Prince was well, chearfull and hearty when you saw him the 23rd. . . . I congratulate his Lordship (Nairne) upon his sister's<sup>1</sup> marriage, and am fond to hear that my Lady Nairne and her daughter are well.”

At home in Perthshire there was little cheering news to send the exiles. Amélie Oliphant and her daughters were at home at Gask, but dispossessed by the Government of the income of the estate, and striving with scanty means of living, against the vicious enmity of M'Leish. It can only be conjectured that the families of the attainted Jacobites must have helped each other with money and supplies as occasion offered; yet Amélie managed now and again to send small sums of money to France.

At the end of 1747, while the exiles were at Avignon, a heavy bereavement fell upon those families most intimately connected with the movement. Margaret, Lady Nairne, died at Nairne House. She was old, and had at the close of her life seen so much sorrow that though her heroic spirit could never sink, her frame could physically bear no more. Culloden had rent to pieces her hopes and destroyed her family. She saw her eldest son pass into exile; she knew of Robert's death on the field; she saw her daughter, Margaret Strathallan, widowed in the same catastrophe, and Amélie Oliphant bereft of husband and son. She saw her daughters, wife of Robertson of Strowan, the widow of Robertson of Lude, and Catherine, wife of William Murray<sup>2</sup> of Taymount, fugitives from the law, swallowed up in the general confusion of ruined lives and broken fortunes. No more tragic figure than that of Margaret Nairne stands out on

<sup>1</sup> Louisa Nairne married David Graeme of Orchill 1748.

<sup>2</sup> William Murray of Taymount took no leading part in the rising, but served as a volunteer, surrendered, was tried, and pleaded guilty. His life was spared, and he was allowed to succeed to the title and estates of his brother, the second Earl of Dunmore in 1752. But he was kept a prisoner in England for the rest of his life, and died at Lincoln 1756.



this page of history. All her life had been one long self-surrender, offered in absolute faith, in unquenchable steadfastness, and she died with nothing realised, nothing achieved, at the lowest ebb of the fortunes of the cause that she held most sacred.

Laurence Oliphant writes<sup>1</sup> on 1st January from France to his wife about the death of this heroic mother:—

“You'r not to lament it, as she is happy, free of the solicitous cares of this worthless world, and I believe now knows the events that are to happen to our country and what regards it, which I pray God may be, and they will be, suitable to his Infinite Goodness.”

Yet all her children must have lamented her with passionate regret when, in reviewing all the aims and efforts of her life, they recognised that in the end she had seen defeat. At the heart of the movement were hundreds of spirits like hers, whose devotion to the Stewarts was something apart from worldly interests, not a political creed, but a religious duty. The cause had been so linked with religious life that the adherents claimed an immortality even for the struggle.<sup>2</sup> A faith which always saw the sympathies of the Almighty definitely ranged on the side of the Stewarts, could easily pierce the veil and feel it to be natural that the clans should muster again in immortal fields, and see their loyal dead in imagination still supporting the cause, not only by their intercessions but by their swords. Even at this distance of time, when all the Stewart attempts are seen in their true proportion, and all the brave stirring hearts have so long been still, thought follows Margaret Nairne to a life that includes sacrifice and strenuous effort—a life where the Jacobite sons of Scotland, those of her blood and of her faith, rally round her in some sphere where the old defeats are explained and the old losses made good.

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup>“O hold me not, dear Mother Earth,  
But raise me with the Duke of Perth  
With many another loyal lad,  
To wear again the white cockade.”

is an inscription on the tomb of a soldier at Cumbernauld.

## CHAPTER XI

### IN EXILE

“WE met with friendship and support in foreign lands,” wrote the young laird in November 1749 in his journal, “and my Mother with pain and labour supplied us from home. We traveled and saw diverse countries. Exile and proscription sat easy on us and we were plentifully supplied with Bread. My health recovered greatly, and my Mother and sister Janet came to add to our comfort.”

Sir John Graeme, the Jacobite agent, wanted young Laurence to go into the French service: “I cannot bring myself to agree to it,” his father wrote. The same letter<sup>1</sup> shows that the Oliphant family was among those for whom the court of France had not provided.<sup>2</sup>

Long before the ladies at Gask made out their journey, there had been plans and counterplans for the reuniting of the family in France. The old laird wrote:—

“French and English privateers are much on the catch, and show no civility even to ladies; and French and German hussars very little regard even passes from their own generals.”

Perhaps Amélie and her daughters would have risked all, but other events happened, and Margaret was destined never to make the journey, for in June 1748 she was

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Ultimately the English Government gave Amélie Oliphant, who was described as “an object of uncommon distress” a grant of forty thousand marks, in consideration of her heavy losses. It was obtained through the indefatigable exertions of her nephew, Henry Drummond, the Banker, and his interest with the Duke of Grafton and Mr Bradshaw of the Treasury.

married to Patrick Graeme of Inchbrakie, and Janet and the mother alone set off from Gask.

The father and son spent nearly the whole year 1748, and most of the following, in travelling about to different towns in France, and the old laird continued his diary, steadily reporting everything that struck him as strange or wonderful. In June they arrived at Villeneuve, St George, where they stayed in "Earle of Nairne's<sup>1</sup> hyred house" on the Seine. The seven leagues of the Forest of Snarre were near enough to afford pleasure for walking, and also for the sport of hunting the red deer. On the 10th of August befel an adventure<sup>2</sup> which the old laird reports at length:—

"Lord Nairne my Son and I gote hyred hunters from Paris, rode up to the Forrest of Snarre about twelve, saw the King,<sup>3</sup> the Dauphin<sup>4</sup> and Dauphiness,<sup>5</sup> the eldest Mademoiselle<sup>6</sup> (marrayed to Don Philip of Spain) and other three Madams<sup>7</sup> of France, come up in coaches. The King, Dauphin and his Madames took horses, and the rest of the Ladys hunting coaches; there were many persons of distinction, both rideing and in coaches. We had a fine occasion of seeing all the Royal family, as they stopt a good time before they knew where to follow the game. Lord Nairne and I followed the Chace for some hours, but my Son kept in with it till a Hart was killed; and in the returning, after leaveing the Forrest, he gote a fall from his Horse, which gave such a concussion in the head, that he appear'd almost Dead. He happened to give a Cry in the fall, which made the King turn about and order care to be taken of him, and the Infanta and Mesdames gave spirits to be poured on his head and breast. We had gone down to Monseron where the King etc. were to take coach, and heard Him

<sup>1</sup> The titular King James III. had created his father Earl of Nairne in 1721.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Louis XV.

<sup>4</sup> Louis, only son of Louis XV., born 1728.

<sup>5</sup> The Dauphin's second wife, Maria Josepha of Saxony.

<sup>6</sup> Louise Elisabeth de France, eldest daughter of Louis XV., born 1727, when her father was sixteen. She died of smallpox, 4th December 1759.

<sup>7</sup> Henriette, twin to the above, born 1727, died 1752 unmarried; Adelaide, born 1732; Victoire, born 1733. The other daughters of Louis XV. were Sophie, born 1734, and Louise, born 1737.

tell some of the Dukes that were waiting him there, that a stranger Gentleman had got a fall, and order his Surgeon to go and attend him. My Lord and I immediately took horse and gallop'd up to the place where he was lying, and the King's Surgeon being there, he let him blood in the arm plentifully. One of the King's coaches was waiting to carry him from the place, but my Post Chease coming up, I got him into it and carryed him to Villeneuve St George. He had not recovered his senses all the time, so much as to know me, was carried up to his room and put to bed. He recovered his senses next morning, and was blooded in the foot. The King sent his Surgeon three times to wait on him (who found no fracture or bruse in his head) and the Madames sent a Page twice to ask about him. About eight days after, his head was quite free of pain and confusion."

"On Sept. 19th the Earle of Nairne and my Son were introduced to the King by Marishal the Duke of Richelieu, to thank his Majesty for his great goodness to my son, when he got the Fall from his Horse in the Forrest of Snarre."

A few days after this entry on 30th September he writes:<sup>1</sup>—

"On this day, being Saturday my wife and second daughter Janet arrived at Villeneuve St George before noon. They had left their own house of Gask July 13th; stay'd at Edinburgh to Aug. 1st when they sett out for London, stopt at Lincoln four nights with Mrs Murray, and got to London the 15th August, from which they sett out the 23rd Sept. and were at Paris the 29th. They had nothing remarkable in their journey, but that crossing the Humber at night about seven, the Boatmen went off in their Yoal, leaving the two Lady's alone to the care of two Boys, who did not bring them to land at Barton till ten. And in crossing from Dover to Calais, the Wind being high and contrary, they were forced to take a Yoal and landed five miles from Calais, which they were obliged to walk that night, thro sands and several little burns, which they waded thro; they

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 247.

had been all wett with the sea water they got in the Yoal. They came here with Lord Strathallan."

It is easy to picture the family meeting, the joy, the eager talk, but not so easy to form an idea of what the new life in strange surroundings meant to the two Scottish ladies, taken away from all the simple interests that had made their happiness. Yet, though strangers in a strange land, they were at last reunited, after two dangerous and difficult years, to the father and son for whose welfare they had endured so many anxieties. The family remained in the Nairne's house till early in January 1750, when they set out for Paris, Amélie and Janet in a post-chaise, and the men on horseback. They found a lodging in the Rue Vaugirard.

The old laird was happier in Paris than anywhere else in France. His tastes were those of an antiquary and genealogist. He frequented the Scots College, and took copies of numerous ancient charters there. The Scots College was a rallying point of all Scotsmen, and especially of the exiled Jacobites. The good Fathers made all comers welcome.

In February the Oliphants left the Rue Vaugirard and took a house at Versailles.

"We hyred a house of five rooms and a kitchen, but were obliged to buy furniture for it. We paid 240 Livres per Ann."

From the following letter can be gathered a little family news, as well as news of the Prince's affairs:—

*"From W. Fleetwood at Rome, 14th April 1750 to  
Laurence Oliphant at Versailles.*

"SIR,—Give me leave to congratulate you with sincerity upon your sons happy recovery,—if you knew how great a value (I may say tenderness and affection) I have for him and the rest of your good family (tho. unknown) you would easily imagine the pleasure I received by your last. . . . When I first came here, I was in hopes of having presently some news to entertain my friends with but was vastly mistaken: the Prince's name has not once

been mentioned at the King's table since he left France, all we know of him is, that hes in good health and some of his friends here in great spirits. Sir Hector Maclean<sup>1</sup> and two of the Highland chiefs arrived here last week but upon what account is not known. . . .”

Amélie Oliphant spent only seven months with husband and children in France. Having an idea that all was not lost in Scotland, as far as family fortunes were concerned, she felt that by her presence at home she could best serve their interests. Another reason for her return was that Margaret Graeme was expecting her first child, and to be with her at Inchbrakie the mother was willing to undertake the manifold fatigues and discomforts of the long journey, with neither husband or child beside her. The following is the letter Amélie writes to her husband to announce her safe arrival. It is dated 9th June 1750, and addressed to “John Whyt” at Versailles:—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have the pleasure to tell you I arrived safe here on the 7th and found Megie as well as can be expected.<sup>2</sup> . . . I cannot express to you the joy Mrs Whytts arrival gave her and to the Captain, much more than I expected, he is gone this day to Kippenross burial. You will have heard before this of Lady Clanronald's death and Mrs Ratray Craighall died last week of her eleventh child and first son. Lady Deskford<sup>3</sup> has a son to the great joy of that family. I

<sup>1</sup> Fifth baronet and Chief of the Clan Maclean. Imprisoned after the '45. He died in Paris 1750, unmarried.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs Graeme of Inchbrakie, whose daughter was born 2nd July.

Inchbrakie and Margaret's children were as follows :

Amelia, born 2nd July 1750, married Campbell of Monzie 1777, and after Graeme of Orchill 1778.

George, born 23rd May 1753, died 1840.

Patrick, born at Inchbrakie 17th February 1755, died 1784, unmarried.

Margaret, born at Inchbrakie 22nd July, 1756, died 12th November 1819.

Laurence, born 4th June 1758, died 1783.

Louisa Maria Henrietta, born at Inchbrakie 30th November 1760, died 1841, married, 1792, Captain Robert Stewart of Fincastle.

(The above dates are taken from Or and Sable.)

<sup>3</sup> Lady Mary Murray, eighteenth child of the first Duke of Atholl, born 1720, married at Huntingtower 9th June 1749 to James, Lord Deskford, afterwards sixth Earl of Finlater and Seafield. “His solemn Scotchery is not a little formidable,” says Horace Walpole. She died in 1795. The son here mentioned is James, seventh Earl of Finlater and fourth of Seafield, born 10th April, died 1811 without issue.

hear no word of her good sister<sup>1</sup> being like to have any. . . . Honest Antony Aber: and Lady Tran: came yesterday to see me and I behoov'd to promis to dine at Abercairny to-morrow. Balgoun<sup>2</sup> was here yesterday by accident. Megie's neighbours are all very fond of her and her nearest very kind. . . . I have wrote to my good Friend, Mr Graeme in London by this post the Capt send a hundred p<sup>d</sup> to the goldsmith last week to be remitted to Mr Whyt. My blising to dear Jenny and Bro. I ever am my dear Sir,—Most dutifully your  
 “SO. MURRAY.”

The following is from Laurence Oliphant to his wife from Versailles, 14th June 1750, directed to the care of Ebenezer Oliphant, goldsmith in Edinburgh:—

“DEAREST MADAM,—Your Daughter had yours from Calais by which we were fond you had got safe there. . . . We can give you no news, but that after your leaving us we saw the Procession of the Fait d'Dieu,<sup>3</sup> when I walked along after the Royal family (for the most part just after Madam Victorine) for about a quarter of a mile to the Parish Church to which the King, Dauphin, Queen, and the Madams walked on foot; they returned in coaches with eight horses five dapled greys, but the King and Dauphin went from the church in a coach with two horses to show their humility, fine tapestry was hung on both sides the streets they passed. We saw the 8th day after, when the Ceremony would have been repeated, if it had not been a rainy morning. In the afternoon Review of the Musqueteers (about five hunder) . . . The Duke de Trimouille (13 years old) is one of them and marched on foot with the other three young lords in the last rank.

“Offer my hearty good wishes to Anton and tell him I have copyed 42 Charters from the originals in the Scots College which gives me one Authentick Charter, at least, for every King, beginning at David the first to

<sup>1</sup> Lady Deskford had no sister alive at this time. The lady referred to must have been a sister-in-law.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, sixth Laird of Balgowan, married Lady Christian Hope, died 1766. He was the father of Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch.

<sup>3</sup> Fête d'Dieu.

James the 2nd of them one is that of K. Rob. the 2nd which clears to demonstration the Legittimacy of his son by Elizabeth More: and ane other is the original Instrument by which Edward the 3rd of England quitts all claim to superiority over the Kingdom of Scotland, if he wants a copy of these I shall send them, tho' both are very long."

The summer went by, with the frequent despatching and receiving of letters, which made the chief events of the exiles' days. The old laird continued his diary, with chronicles here and there of the doings of the court.

"*July 1750.*—Were at Trianon and its gardens and went into the other gardens lately made, in which is a house of one story, new built, being a dome in the middle, off which are four little rooms . . . the whole being a miniature of the first story of Marly. Here are also houses built for a Dairy and rooms for the maids, hen-houses and little Courts for the poultry. Its said the King has given Trianon and this place to the Queen, she was viewing it this day when we were there."

"*August 15th, 1750.*—The Dauphiness was delivered of a Princess<sup>1</sup> about 6 at night. The Chancellor of France (whom the King cannot put out of his office) the Princes of the Blood and their Princesses, the Polish Ambassador and Marishall Saxe<sup>2</sup> attended in her bed-room."

"*October 4th, 1750.*—Mr Godar showed us the Queen's little Apartments which consist of 5 or 6 rooms—one of which is a Baithing room, another seems to be a working room or musick room, in it is a chak reel and several wheels, one with a silver pirn and one with a gold pirn.—There is a Herpscord 2 Lyirs and a Gitar."

"*January 24th, 1751.*—I saw the King, Dauphiness

<sup>1</sup> Marie Zepherine. She died young. This is the child described at six months by her mother (Marie Josepha de Saxe): "She is very ugly, and they say she resembles me as much as one drop of water resembles another. For the rest very wilful and as naughty as a small Dragon." (The Dauphines of France, F. Hamel.)

<sup>2</sup> The distinguished soldier, said to be one of the three hundred natural children of Augustus II. of Poland and Saxony, who commanded the French army at Fontenoy, and captured Brussels in 1746. He died in this year, 30th November 1750. He was in command of the French expedition in support of the claims of the Chevalier which was wrecked in 1744. Afterwards he defeated the Butcher Cumberland in three battles. The Oliphants met him several times.



and 5 Madames<sup>1</sup> and other Lords and Ladys of the Court Drive in sledges upon the snow from the Castle down thro the gardens from which they drove to the Menagerie, then crossed the foot of the long canal and went to Trianon then came up thro the gardens and drove 5 or 6 times round the ponds facing the west front of the Castle. There were 17 sledges. The King and eldest Madam in one, preceded by Count Noailles Governor of Versailles. The Dauphin and second Madam with him after the King, the third Dame alone, the 4th and 5th Dames sitting with their faces to each other. Then the Lords and Ladies in 10 sledges, each sledge had but 1 horse, 1 was driven by a man standing behind the seat and all of them had a pole sett up in the middle with colours flying, which had all different devices painted on them. One of the sledges had a statue of a deer before the seat, ane other a swan, ane other the statue of some monstrous creature and ane had three masts. The 17 horses that drew the sledges had rich harness and housings and their heads deck't with tufts of feathers, many knotts of ribands of different hues and bells hanging round their trappings."

"*April 20th, 1751.*—Earle Nairne, my son and I were in the castle, saw the King dressed, his waistcoat of purple put on, the Orders of the Golden Fleece and the Cordon Blue then his purple coat (being in mourning) and his hayre tyed behind and put in a bag, after which he went up to the side of his Bed, kneeled and said his prayers, several clergymen attending and kneeling along with him. Ane hour after the Queen passed us thro the gallery to the Chapel and the King followed in a short time, preceded by the Dauphin and the Dames walked after him. He had a short sword with a silver hilt."

"*June 9th, 1751.*—My son was at the Convent of St Cyr in the afternoon (where that day had been performed the ceremony of consecrating the Archbishop of Tours, which the King and Dames witnessed), and saw the large table at which the clergy had dined, on which was ane artificial garden with walks, grass plotts, hedges, cascades etc. He went thro several of the bedrooms and saw about fifty beds in one room with white hangings.

<sup>1</sup> The daughters of Louis XV.

Then he went into the garden, at the entrey of which he met with about 200 of the young Ladys coming out and saw in the Garden about a hundred more danceing and diverting themselves; they came about him, and he had some discourse with the sisters that had the care of the Ladys."

"*Monday, September 2nd, 1751.*—The Dauphiness was delivered of a son."<sup>1</sup>

The old laird writes in November to Robert Campbell:—

"We have seen your young Master the Duke of Bourgondy, he is a fine sturdy thriving child. The King said the day after he was borne that his hand was as big as his. He is ten stages prittyer than his sister. The part of ye great stables that were burnt the day of his birth is not very considerable, it broke out immediatly after ye Fireworks in ye Place des Armes was finished. It is not well known how ye Fire took."

In young Laurence's journal there is a note—"one of the rokets fell in a heay-loft"—which would account for the disaster.

"*October 24th.*—Saw an extreme fine firework and illumination which was given by the Duchess of Lorayne. The Dauphin and Dauphine had also a fine supper from her that night; the whole cost the Duchess a thousand sterling. The Dessert was the Duke of Burgoundy in his Cradle etc. etc. The sweet meats were mostly holy, and little printed biletts put within them."

"*January 30th, 1752.*—Madame Henriet<sup>2</sup> eldest daughter of the King and twin with M. Don Philip<sup>3</sup> died of a high Feaver ye 7th day; had a sort of Leperesy in the head.<sup>4</sup> Madame Henriets body was exposed some hours in the evening dressed as if alive, carried about 12 to Palais of the Tuileries at Paris, and exposed all next day face bare, after that embalmed, laid in the coffin, and

<sup>1</sup> Duc de Bourgogne. He died 1762.

<sup>2</sup> The second daughter and favourite child of Louis XV. She was twenty-five and unmarried.

<sup>3</sup> Twin with the wife of Don Philip, the Duchess of Parma.

<sup>4</sup> Madame Henriet's hair had been falling out and she applied a lotion given her by her sister, the Duchess of Parma, which caused blood poisoning.

put *en dépôt*, room hung with white. 15th The Dauphin and all the Royal family except the King and Queen (they were already in mourning for the Duke of Orleans 1st Prince of the Blood), put on mourning for the sister six weeks. The Court wore black full mounted coats black stockings swords and buckles friengd linnen. Then the Dauphin and Dames went and threw holy water on their sisters Coffin. M. Henriet was not buried till Mar. 9th when the Dauphin and 3 dames attended the funeral services at St Denis."

Janet and her brother attended a masked ball at the Castle in September, and the whole party were often invited to Court festivities. They lived in daily intercourse with the Nairnes, who were settled near them at Montreuil, half an hour's walk from Versailles. James, the fifth Lord Strathallan (born 1722), had married, under extraordinary and romantic circumstances, Eupheme, daughter of Gordon of Aberfeldy. After the battle of Culloden, he escaped with Archibald Primrose into the wilds of Aberdeenshire, where, disguised as a shepherd, he wandered until he met with George Farquharson, who took him for safety to his house. It happened that the two Miss Gordons had been sent thither also from Aberfeldy for safety. In this enforced retirement the young Strathallan fell in love with Eupheme, and persuaded her to a marriage. The ceremony was therefore performed by a clergyman called Rose or Ross, who was himself afterwards exiled. The young man, George Farquharson, who has left all this upon record in a manuscript belonging to the Strathallan family, says that the ceremony of his own baptism took place at the same time as this marriage, and that bride and bridegroom stood sponsors.

Archibald Primrose, wearying of an inactive part, insisted on leaving the Farquharsons' friendly shelter. He was seized near Aboyne by the Government and executed. Lord Strathallan waited his opportunity and escaped to France, where Eupheme<sup>1</sup> must shortly have joined him.

<sup>1</sup> Eupheme died in 1796.

Laurence Oliphant, younger, writes to Lord Strathallan, his cousin, 16th July 1751:—

“There seem to be several accounts agreeing in the Prince’s being at Paris about the time King George was so ill, one man told me he had it from the person in whose house he slept three nights, but I cannot give you this for absolute fact; it seems to be on better authority that he was on your coast. . . .”

Also on 6th August 1751, the same to the same:—

“My Lord and Lady Nairne were dining here when I received the agreeable news of the birth of your Dear Twins;<sup>1</sup> we had a bumper immediately to their health and the wife upon the straw; there has really been no time lost as its in the ninth month hope there will be no bad consequences.”

The unfailing interest taken by the old laird in all the branches of his own family and in that of his wife, lent a keen zest to his life. To Laurence Oliphant of Condie especially his heart went out. It will be remembered that when his sister, Liliast Oliphant of Condie, had married again, Gask had sheltered the little boy and gave him probably the only home he knew. As years went on the boy looked to his mother’s brother for advice in all the affairs of life, and his cousin “Mr Brown” seems also to have been in his confidence. Brown writes to beg Condie to come and see them at Versailles, and gives a sketch of what the journey would entail.

“You would not find the journey so long nor ye expense so great as you imagine. We would crack together of Auld Lang Sine and walk and ride up and down and when you were tired you would go home again. You would come in a ship to Boulogne for two Guineas at most, and from that to Paris in ye coach, in which there generally are people that speak English, would coast you only thirty shillings at ye outside, and your

<sup>1</sup> A boy and a girl. With other children the Strathallans had James, born 1752, who died unmarried 10th December 1775, and Andrew John, died unmarried 20th January 1817. Margaret, who married George Augustus Haldane of Glen-eagles, and died 1821, and Elizabeth, who died unmarried 1831.

meat which you must have at home, and when you came here a sute of cloathes and a wegg would be your greatest expense. Our house would hold a little bed for you, and our beef and broth would maintain you, so you have only to take your foot in your hand and away. You may be back long before harvest, and you would be twice as fond of hame afterwards. Along, Nutcracker, pluck up spirits and lets see you!"

The following letters show a quaint anxiety on the part of both the Gasks to see the young man safely married. Condie's uncle, Laurence Oliphant, writes from Versailles in April 1752, mentioning an illness

"that to which I attribute it most is your solitary way of living and your want of a right person to entertain and divert you, and have care of your dyet that it be good and regularly taken. Wherefore I advise and conjure you without loss of time to find out a fitt mate for yourself. If her person and humour is good and good qualities please you, no matter how small her portion. You can have no notion of the satisfaction a pleasant constant companion does give. Beside its a duty you owe to endeavour to propagate mankind, and continue your family in your own person."

Amongst Jacobites young Condie was known as "Symon," and under this name he writes from Edinburgh to his cousin "Mr Brown," 26th January 1751.

"MY DEAR FRIEND BROWN, — A few days ago I received Mrs Whytt's kind letter. . . . The affair she wanted to know of I am of opinion will not answer, for tho' I have in a manner obtained the parants consent, and the young Lady 'tis possible might go on to it, to oblige her Father, yet I am positive that She has no maner of Liking for me . . . and it is her darling Brothers constant topick of Discourse to ridicule me for narrowness low-lifed education etc. and as it is very possible that I may receive slights of that sort from her and her friends after Matrimony I think it is much more expedient to turn Madwater than go forward and Drown.<sup>1</sup> For you know

<sup>1</sup> He was drowned in the little river May when in flood, twenty-one years later.

very well that I would not choise to be eather slighted by her ritch friends for my poverty or trated like a chyld by her Mother, and by their conduct since Mr Brown left this place I am positive both these things must happen. Mrs Whytt was so good as take the trouble to brotch the affair both to the young Lady and her parants, at my desire. . . . I wish that I had a Lass of my own principals that I liked and that liked me, tho' she had not a sixpence. . . . The Goldsmith's<sup>1</sup> son is recovering that was once given over by all the doctors. . . . Glauds<sup>2</sup> familie are also in their ordinary. Tell Glaud that I am affraid his children will get the better of their Mother, for the eldest Boyie<sup>3</sup> and eldest Girill<sup>4</sup> are come a very good length, and I think it is almost time the Boyie is put to an apprinticeship."

Mr Brown replies, 23rd February 1751 :—

"I received yours of Jan. 26th all your friends here were in great hopes it would have been in a very different strain and are afraid that too scrupulous a temper and listening to surmises not well founded have occasioned the delaying your happiness. The Parents have too much religion and good sense to give their consent to a match in which they did not believe their daughter would be happie . . . her seeming want of Kindness for you should rather be imputed to modesty, which is the most amiable quality of the sex,—tho I have not the experience, I am informed of a pair of your friends that had no violent affection for each other when they first went together, and yet their love increased every day after, by their mutual caresses and right behaviour to each other founded on solid reason. . . . You must judge for yourself since its a matter for life, only if you love us or yourself be sure to act in the whole affair according to the nicest rules of honour. Do not delay to take your measures and let us hear the result. . . . Inconvenience may arise with regard to Mrs Whytt's affairs but your friends here are resolved to run all risques of interest where your happiness is concerned,—at the same time leave no stone unturned."

<sup>1</sup> Ebenezer Oliphant.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Graeme, tenth Laird of Garvock.

<sup>3</sup> James, after eleventh Laird of Garvock, born March 1737, died 1812.

<sup>4</sup> Amelia Ann Sophia.

Though belonging to a later date, the following letters concerning the matter of Symon's marriage projects are given here. Laurence Oliphant of Gask writes to his nephew, Condie, from Corbeil, 25th July 1757:—

“ You want no more as to temporals but a consort that will make you happy: in your situation you have no use for money, and you should not study it. If you are engaged with any young woman that pleases, I shall say nothing, but if you are still at freedom, I must, as you are the man I wish best to on earth, next to my Son, remind you that I did not think you gave up your addresses to Miss Camp: sutable to what I thought strict Honour. You was certainly somehow vastly misled in that affair, and I will only mention one thing (which I wish I had done sooner) which was, that when some of the friends were against the match, the Lady declared that she would marry you though they should be all against it. This, Im certain is fact and is a sure proof that you could not fail to be happy in haveing her for your wife. According to the notions I have, I think you have a great Conscern in that affair, and wish you would try in earnest to bring it to a bearing; you must by this time be better acquainted with her Brother who, as I have heard, gave you the greatest disgust at that time. I could never find fault with you in any other action of your life.—If you incline I should write to the brother on the subject, Ill doe it with all my soul.”

The following is Condie's reply to Laurence Oliphant, 22nd August 1757:—

“ I was favoured with yours a few days ago . . . and was much bound to you for the advice you gave me in a Matrimonial affair . . . but the case is much altered, for on Tuesday last the Lady's Brother dyed suddenly at his own house by whose Death she fals in to a vast deal of more money than I can expect with a wife, yea, more than I could spend,—so my making addresses to her would be to no purpose and would make the world say that I had renewed my Addresses on her getting her new fortune.

“ The longer I live I see the plainer that happiness does

not consist in money, and am but tender and not cut out for high life. I prefer my solitary life, provided I had an agreeable young Woman for a companion."

Symon's marriage is announced at last. His choice fell on Grizel, daughter of Anthony Murray of Dollerie. His uncle Gask writes to him, 29th December 1759:—

"The accounts I have of your marriage and the Lady whom you have made your choice are to me most agreeable. I pray God both of you may continue happy in that state to an advanced old age. Offer my kindest services to the young Lady and her honest Grandfather."

Young Gask adds to his father's letter:—

"I was agreeably surprised some days ago with the news of your marriage with the grand-child of, I may safely say, one of the Honestest men in Scotland. . . . May you both be as happy as I wish you and increase the name from whence you sprung with many honest men to support it."

Margaret Graeme writes to her mother, 16th February 1760:—

"Simon's wife is about 22, much about my size, she is not reconed pretty, but I think she is very well, a good deall like her brother . . . he is turned out a very pretty lad, and I think her a very prudent fine Girle. We was all very merry at the infair, plenty of company, meat and musick. . . . We hear a clatter as if Miss Susan were going to be married to the Laird off Blair and Miss Ann Stirling to the Laird of Arth."

After following Symon to the end of his matrimonial enterprises the story goes back to the party at Versailles.

The same catastrophe which had thrown the Oliphants into exile had involved nearly all their relations. United in a common ruin, the various members of the family gathered in France, so that the old intimacies of family life went on as of old in Perthshire. The Nairnes were at Montreuil. Of the third lord's eight sons and two



daughters, only four sons and one daughter, Clementina, remained. The eldest son, John, was in the British service, and it is probable he was not of the party at this time, but Thomas, who had taken active part in the Jacobite rising, Henry,<sup>1</sup> who went into the French service, and Charles, who was in the Dutch service, must from time to time have been with their parents.

The Strathallans at Boulogne, with their growing family of sons and daughters, kept up the affectionate intimacy which had linked the families in Perthshire. The origin of the old family joke of Strathallans and Oliphants calling each other "Brother Nut" is now lost, but it was a term of great affection. When Lord Strathallan married he wrote to thank his cousin, Laurence Oliphant, "for promoting my wife to the order of the 'Nut.'"

The Robertsons of Strowan were still in Scotland and in danger of arrest, but soon they also were to escape to France, and add to the little colony of Jacobites.

Amélie Oliphant having passed the summer of 1750 in Scotland, rejoined her family at Versailles, 17th November 1750. She left for Scotland again, 6th October 1752, this time with a definite plan in her mind for getting back the estate of Gask, which had now been forfeited for six years. Lady Gask remarks in one letter, "Women make a sad figure travelling alone," but as a matter of fact she and Janet, who went with her, generally accomplished the journeys quickly and without adventure. She always, however, suffered severely from sea-sickness, and it is not the least of her heroisms that she crossed the sea ten times during the seventeen years of her husband's exile. On this particular journey in 1752 her tireless energy made nothing of all fatigues and hardships, for hope was awake, and her brave spirit set on a certain line of action, which should restore home and happiness to those she loved.

There is no doubt that Lady Gask had an extra-

<sup>1</sup> Henry Nairne, born in 1727, was with his King and master, Charles III., when the end came in 1788. Henry Nairne lived till 1818.

ordinary capacity for business, a fitness for positions of trust and situations demanding not only practical ability, but the charm that could induce men to lend their help in furthering her wishes.

“My mother went home,” writes Laurence in his journal, “and with surprising assiduity surmounted great obstacles and difficultys and bought back the forfeited inheritance. She did wonders, her God was with her, she found favour with men, and a Retreat was provided where we might one day rest.”

Husband and son both realised her commanding talent and gave her full powers for its exercise; all the letters and papers of this time reveal an absolute belief in her judgment and capacity. Her spirit would not accept defeat and poverty for her beloved; she raised their lives from the dead level of hopeless exile to that of expectancy, keeping their eyes fixed on a future that should give them back to the cherished shelter of their own country, and call them at last again to the joys and occupations of home.

Mother and daughter arrived at Margaret's home at Inchbrakie by 20th December, and on that date Amélie wrote a long letter to her husband, containing very good news. The friends of the family were coming forward to help in the redemption of the estate of Gask, which the Government were now preparing to sell to the highest bidder.

Mr Campbell of Monzie, Graeme of Orchill, Oliphant of Condie, Patrick Graeme of Inchbrakie, and Ebenezer Oliphant the Goldsmith, resolved to combine together and purchase the estate from Government. For this purpose they were to borrow money from the Bank, or some other source, and

“to pay themselves back, they purpose to sell what lays on the Pow and the Barrony that joins Monzie, both of which they think will sell at a high price considering they are situated near rich Lairds who want to purchase them.”

The scheme, depending in this manner on the generous

feeling of the family friends, was not carried through without many drawbacks, disappointments and fears. Yet the plan succeeded, and on 17th February 1753 the whole estate was bought from the Barons of Exchequer by Laurence Oliphant of Condie at £14,372, and the trees at £757. Subsequently the purchasers sold Cowgask and Williamston. The rest of the estate was given back to the old laird. The story is short and simple, but has no equal as a record of warm, disinterested friendship.

With a thankful heart must Amélie have written the good news to Versailles. Part of her mission was now accomplished; but she had two other ends in view,—to get a pardon for her son, and to find him a wife. Young Laurence, however, refused to apply to the Government for pardon, unless he obtained not only the consent but the approval of King James. As to a wife, he had already made search for himself, but with no success. A few months before the restoration of Gask he had, with the Strathallan family, stayed at Emmerich on the Rhine with Lord George Murray, whose widowed daughter, Amelia,<sup>1</sup> was staying there at the time. She had been for seven months the second wife of the Master of Sinclair, a man forty years older than herself, with a strange record of violence and bitterness. He died in November 1750. Laurence, while describing the widow as “no beauty,” writes to his father:—

“The young lady, to give her her due, is as fine a well tempered straping girle as one could wish to see. I have made no steps yet and if it should not succeed I’m not in the least fear of being love-seeK.”

The young man proposed and got a flat denial, “as she never liked to keep her lovers in suspense.”

Mrs Oliphant writes from Edinburgh to her husband in France, 7th January 1753:—

“If he (her son) goes into the Scheme as I hope he will of allowing his freinds to procure his pardon he may then doe it with a much better grace if his taste be for

<sup>1</sup> She married again, 1734, James Farquharson of Invercauld and had a large family. She died at Marlee 1779.

a Scots lass which I own to you would be my inclination. What would he think if it could be brought about and that she would goe to France with his Mother or Symon's Mistress that he wrote off; I daresay her Mother will make her a very good fortune, she has many good freinds it is the prevailing name at present. Its true she is a good deal older but is far from being old-like. She has red hair and is no beauty at the same time far from being disagreeable she has a great stock of good sense and can behave herself in any company. Or whom would he like? The old Capt. Graeme's daughter now is a fine girl and has a very good education, she will be worth four thousand pounds sterling. She is 16 years old."

Young Laurence writes on the subject to his father, 27th February 1753:—

"If the young ladys mentioned are not to your mind I fancy they will not be to mine either, as I have no particular attatchment to anyone, yours and my Mothers opinions and experience in those matters will be my fittest guide."

The matrimonial fate of young Laurence was not to be decided for two years, and when the time came his choice was destined to fall on one who had no fortune at all, except in the graces of all that is gentlest and best in womanhood.

In April 1753 Mrs Oliphant was still in Scotland. She wrote to her husband from Inchbrakie:—

"If you knew the many batles I have to fight, you would pity me; you may depend I shall looss no time nor stay a day after my affairs will alow me to leave this countrie, which is so far from being agreeable that it seems to me a desert. My only comfort is dear Megie."

A great many anxieties beset her. Rumours of another intended rising made the Government keep up a strict search for hidden Jacobites, and she knew that Robertson of Strowan and his family were in danger. It was at this time that Archibald Cameron ventured back

to Scotland and met his death. Gask's brother-in-law, the "Glaud" of Jacobite story, Graeme of Garvock, who, having escaped with him to Sweden in 1746, had also risked returning home, was seized and imprisoned.

James Oliphant writes to Laurence Oliphant at Paris, 19th March 1753 :—

"DEAR SIR,—On Thursday night last Capt. Robert Graeme was made prisoner and taken out of his own house by a party of one hundred men. Hes to be brought over here Wednesday first. This I thought proper to advise you of that necessary measures and proper application be made for his deliberation and that he may be timeously claimed as a French officer. Theres a very strict search at present over all this country. . . ."

The prisoner himself writes to Condie from the house of Newtown, 25th March 1753 :—

"SIR,—I am just now at your house on my way to Perth with a party, I hope so soon as this comes to your hand you will see to come and meet me and send a message to Abercairnrie and ane other to Balgown and beg they will come in to Perth and do what they can to get me put at Liberty.

"I have the Sergent's consent to stay at this place till you come, so heaste."

Mrs Whytt writes on 23rd May 1753, that Glaud is still in the same quarters, "he desires that Mr Brown would gett a new Congie for him which in his situation I hope will be easily granted."

On 29th June he is still a prisoner ; "Mr Graeme getts liberty to walk in the Inch with a proper gaurd."

Poor "Glaud" did not get out of prison for two years.

One of the chief family events of this year was the arrival in France of Duncan Robertson of Strowan and his family. The Robertsons had for generations shown loyalty to the Stewarts.

The following letter, found among papers at Gask, is

from John Hay,<sup>1</sup> addressed to Robertson of Strowan at Orléans, the old Poet-Chief who died in 1749:—

“ROME, Aug. 29, 1724.

“SIR,—I have the favour of yours of the fourth August, and am here to acquaint you with the satisfaction the prosperous account you give of your private affairs has occasioned to the King<sup>2</sup> our master. His Majesty likewise orders me to assure you how sensible he is of the late mark you have given him of the strictest Loyalty, and longs to be in the situation, when honest Strowan will not want, to present a petition to the King of England, for obtaining the greatest favour he can ask of him.

“You have here enclosed a bill for 600 £ which you may dispose of as you think convenient either in part or whole to Capt. Charles Robertson, and you may be assured the King will always be glad to shew his regard for your relations.

“You can't imagine my dear Strowan, the pleasure the hopes of seeing you gives me, the meeting would be more agreeable in our own country where I don't despair of seeing you before I dye, however since that can't be now think on't seriously and take a trip into this country. I'll get you absolved for all has past and to come, but it may be you don't think that worth the trouble of so long a journey.

“The King and Queen have numbers of dogs of all kinds, but none so pritty as I hear yours are, therefore you'll do well to bring them along with you. I am, Dear Sir your most obed. and most humble serv<sup>t</sup>,

“JOHN HAY.”

The successor of the Poet-Chief, Duncan, took the same part and shared in the family ruin. He wrote to Mr Edgar, the Prince's Secretary, from Montreuil, 28th September 1753, giving an account of the part he had played:—

“Had the Prince landed in Scotland with a powerful army, any little service I could have done might have

<sup>1</sup> Third son of the sixth Earl of Kinnoull, born 1691. He played an active part in 1715 and was attainted. James III. created him Earl of Inverness in 1727. He died 1740.

<sup>2</sup> James III. and VIII.

been dispensed with, and indeed nobody expected I should have joined as I laboured at that time and some years after under an ailment that made me quite unfit for the field, nor was I then the head of the Clan; but as I saw the Prince's real person engaged and other gloomy circumstances, I thought it my duty to use the little influence I had amongst my friends and country men."<sup>1</sup>

Robertson had a commission from the Duke of Atholl to raise a regiment. He escaped the Bill of Attainder, but his name was excepted in the Act of Indemnity, and he skulked in the Highlands for years.

"I ordered my wife and children to repair to Carie and possess a little Hutt that was built after the burning in 1746. The tenants of the Estate, alwise attached to their lawful masters received them with open arms and cheerfully paid their rents to the Trustees approved by me. This was galling to the ministry ever intent upon the destruction of all the ancient Highland families." [The Government revoked the grant which made it possible for these rents to be paid in spite of the struggles of his friends.] "Sentence after sentence was past against them and even my wife and children were threatened with military execution, if they remained anywhere upon the ground of the estate beyond the time limited. They were obliged to yield, not knowing where to put their heads. . . . At length, my funds being exhausted, and my person hunted as a fox, I had no resource at home. . . . I arrived with my wife and children at Paris 18 days ago after tedious and expensive travelling by sea and land, and at this moment I possess 39 Louis, which is all I can command at home or abroad for subsistence to my family and the education of 2 sons and 2 daughters."

The letter goes on to remind the Prince of the part the Robertsons had played at the head of the Atholl men supporting the royal cause under Montrose, and of the wounds, imprisonment, and banishment of Duncan's

<sup>1</sup> The letter is given in full in the Appendix of Brown's History of the Highlands.

father in 1715, and the loss of his uncle, "cruelly butchered in calm blood at Preston." "As for me, I was born in the dregs of time, but thank God, my heart is sound."

The Robertsons' perilous adventures were now at an end. They went into an exile that lasted for thirty-one years. Duncan himself had written to his brother-in-law, the old Laird of Gask, at Paris, to ask to have a homely habitation found for him. A house was taken at Montreuil. With him travelled his wife, Marjory Nairne, and his four children, Margaret, the eldest, being then thirteen years old. The journey was accomplished in August 1753, when Amélie Oliphant had so far arranged family affairs that she was able to travel with her sister and the rest of the party as far as Dunkirk.

No record remains of Amélie's joyful meeting with husband and son, for whom she had accomplished so much in the months of her absence. Laurence Oliphant was "Gask" again, and his son, though still unpardoned, no longer dispossessed of all prospects in life. The old laird had been much alone<sup>1</sup> during the past months, for young Laurence spent six months with the Strathallan family at Boulogne. Family events during the year had

<sup>1</sup> Robertson of Blairfetty, an offshoot of the Strowan family, was a staunch Jacobite, and the constant companion of the exiled Oliphants. His letter to Charles Edward is preserved among the Gask papers :—

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—I beg leave to implore your Royal highness protection to obtain a suteable retreat for me from the Court of France, being rendered incapable of my continuing in the service, by reasons given in a memorial which my Lord Ogilvy my Collonel attested and delivered to General Rothe in June 1758, and General Rothe told myself in June last that he gave in the memorial, but had no suteable answer, by reason of my short service, an exact Coppy of which memorial I presume to present herewith! I am hopfull there may be some consideration for my having a family and being encumbered with sixtie nine years of age, besides some other infirmity, and the too unlucky occasion of my being in the Service, and that your Royal Highness will consider that never has been the least occasion for shewing our Loyalty and attachment to the Royal Family since the beginning of King Charles the First's misfortunes, but my grandfather, my father or myself have always exerted ourselves to the best of our power. I desire nothing more than that God may give me a favourable occasion to spend the remainder of my life in serving as far as in my power, my King and Country, and forwarding that happy and long wished for work, which has been my principal study and desire my whole Life. I have with trew Loyalty, the great honour to be Sir, Your Royal Highness' most devoted and most obidiant Servant,  
BLAIRPHEATIE.

"DUNKIRK, 8th September 1759."

Robertson of Blairfetty was specially excluded from the Act of Pardon in 1747. He had been a major in Lord George Murray's regiment.



been the death of Patrick Oliphant at Bagdad, and some excitement in view of the fact that there were rumours (perfectly unfounded) of a large fortune bequeathed to his brother, the laird, and the new year began with the death of the old Aunt Margaret, at the age of ninety-one, the one remaining child of the disinherited Patrick Oliphant of Williamston. She was buried at Gask, where she died on 27th January. No record shows if she had lived at the house of Gask all through the troubles, and she remains a shadowy figure with nothing but the dates of birth and death, and one dressmaker's bill, to give her memory a living interest.

Gask records in his journal:—

“*February 22nd, 1754.*—Xavier Marie Joseph, Duke of Aquitaine, died aged 5 months 19 days.”

“*March 26th.*—Hamilton of Bangour died at Lyons.”

“*May 4th.*—The Court took mourning 11 days for the Duches of PenthiEVER, which day my Lady Nairne was taken ill.”

“*May 9th, 1754.*—At Eleven at night Lady Katrin Murray,<sup>1</sup> Wife to the Earle of Nairne, dyed at Versailles, and was Buryed the 12th at Paris in the Buryal place for Forreing Protestants, near the Port St Martin at 10 of ye clock, at Night. Strowan, Mr Maitland (a clergy man) and I were in the same Coach with the Body and I acted the chief Mourner, carrying her head to the grave.”

“*June 15th.*—Madlle. Alexandrine<sup>2</sup> dau. to M. de Pompadoure by Mr de Tiole, died at Paris aged about twelve.”

“*August 23rd, 1754.*—The Dauphiness was safely delivered at six in the morning of a son,<sup>3</sup> and the King being then at Choisse, when he came to the castle at ten, he named him the Duke of Berry. There was a Fire-work and illumination in the evening.”

<sup>1</sup> Third daughter of the first Earl of Dunmore, born at Godalming, 10th January 1692, married her cousin, John, Master of Nairne, 3rd November 1712.

<sup>2</sup> Madame de Pompadour's little daughter by her husband, Lenormant d'Etoiles. The child was engaged to marry the Duc de Picquigny on attaining her thirteenth year. The Pompadour had vainly endeavoured to marry her to the eldest son of the Duc de Richelieu.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Louis XVI. He was the third son of the Dauphin, and styled Duc de Berry.

In 1755 the Oliphant family removed from Versailles after five years' residence there.

"I with my family flitted from Versailles to live at Corbeil, at nine Leagues distance, and on the banks of the Seine. We were in a Coach drawn by four horses and mett the King and his retinue."

In this year Mary Nairne, Amélie's sister, writes some family news from Stanley, 17th April 1755:—

"I believe it will please you and my other friends to notify Nice Megge Mercer's<sup>1</sup> marriage. Her cousen James Robertson of Lude, who has been long in love with her, had the good fortune before he made his proposals to be very much esteemed so that when he did, she could not put him off as she had done many others, but pity, reason, and a thousand imaginary difficulties tormented her to such a rate that sister Catherine<sup>2</sup> with whom she was, writes that had she not put an end to it by having them married, she believed it would have proved fattal to her, as she had wore herself to skin and bone. It was concluded on the 4th of this month, she adds, to their mutual satisfaction and her daughter Meggy says that they both seem to have attained to the height of this worlds felicity. I hope from both their extraordinary virtues it will ever last in spite of the disparity of years. Their brother Willie<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Margaret, only daughter of Robert Mercer (Nairne), who was killed at Culloden, and his wife, the heirsch of Aldie. Meggie was probably much older than the bridegroom, as her parents were married in 1720, while James Robertson's parents were only married about 1736. Meggie became the mother of six sons, of whom five were in the army. The sixth, Charles, was bred for the Church, but died at twenty-two. All the sons died unmarried except William, the eldest, who was a Lieutenant-General and a distinguished soldier. This son, William Robertson, inherited Lude from his father. He was thrice married: first, to Miss Wright, their children were, a son who died in infancy, Louisa Ann (born 1800, married Donald Kelly and left issue), and Margaret Mercer, born 1802, died 1848; second, to Miss Haldane of Gleneagles, by whom he had two sons, James Alexander, who served in the Crimea, and William Drummond, who died unmarried; third, to Miss Menzies of Culdaires, but had no children by her. James Alexander Robertson succeeded his father in the estate of Lude, which, however, he sold to the M'Inroys in 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Dunmore.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel William Mercer. He married, in 1762, Margaret, daughter of William Murray of Pitcaithly, and died in 1790, leaving three daughters, of whom the eldest, Jean, married 1787, George Keith Elphinstone, Viscount Keith. Their eldest daughter, born 1788, succeeded to her father's titles. On the death of William, sixth Lord Nairne, she became Baroness Nairne, which title is now held by Lord Lansdowne, her grandson.

would not come to see them married, but was reconciled immediately after and made them a handsome present of tea plait, and goes along with them to Aldie to stay till she can look on her acquaintance with a little more confidence and then goes to Lude. Niece Catherine (whom I have not yet seen, but sister Henrietta and every body that has, says she is to a wish in body and mind) is to be with them. All the rest are very well in their healths, but that weakness in the eldest daughter and youngest sons limbs."

While the Robertsons of Strowan were at Paris, Laurence had naturally been much thrown with his cousins, a party of children whom he would delight to amuse and protect, although all were strangers to him, for he had seen nothing of the family for ten years. When the party had first arrived, in August 1753, Margaret, the eldest girl, was thirteen years old. She was just fifteen when she was betrothed to her cousin Laurence. His was a love-match after all, for the bride had not a sixpence, and no prospects—bringing only her pretty face and charming personality into the Gask family, together with the strain of Celtic blood that was to find so fine an expression in one of her children. But all concerned were delighted. Amélie and her sister Marjory were devoted to each other, and rejoiced in the family tie that would make their interests still more identical. There is no whisper in any letter throwing doubts either on the wisdom of the union of first cousins, or of the expediency of marriage for a child of fifteen. The pair were of the same "principles," and though Laurence was double Margaret's age, all their thoughts and training had sprung from the same root, all their aspirations were towards the same object. Their married life, which lasted for nineteen years, was one of happiness and confidence.

Young Laurence writes to his cousin Condie, 7th April 1755:—

"DEAR SIR,—It is a confidence I owe you, to inform you that I intend to marry my cousin Mr & Mrs

Gray's<sup>1</sup> daughter, a familiar and intimate acquaintance with her has given me an opportunity of knowing her thoroughly and I may without stretching a point that she is a virtuous healthy sensible well-tempered pritty young woman, which are qualities you'll allow may make any reasonable man happy. There is nothing wanting but the money which you desired me in your letter to my Father of 15 Dec. 1753 not to make my Object. I take your advice and I wish you would likewise take it to yourself. The parents on both sides have given their consent, to be sure we will be obliged to live very sparingly and even poorly, but we must make up all our wants with content, and I hope it will be a satisfaction to you to think there is a prospect of continuing the family in the direct line, if it please God to bless us with Children, I'm determined they shall be born in Britain, if we can possibly spare as much as to answer the expense.

"I daresay this project will give pleasure to dr Meggy and her husband. . . . When the marriage is made out it shall be with as little expense as possible not even of a wedding coat or a bridle dinner."

Robertson of Strowan, father of the bride, writes to his brother-in-law, Oliphant, father of the bridegroom, 3rd June 1755:—

"I pray God to give his blessing to the intended match, that the young folks may pass together a long calm and chearfull life; I confess I see no appearances against their enjoying a happy life, but the Scarcity of a certain Article in which it is not in my power to assist them at present; but . . . I dont know another family on earth to whom I would have given my child without asking some previous questions, as there are but few that have principles to supply the place of Bargains."

The bridegroom writes to Condie on 12th June:—

"The 9th, the day I was christened, I had the happyness of being united to my dear Meggy at her Fathers house. We came here next morning and mett

<sup>1</sup> One of the disguises assumed by the Robertsons of Strowan.



*Margaret Robertson of Strouan.*

WIFE OF LAURENCE OLIPHANT.

7<sup>TH</sup> LAIRD OF GASK.

1740 - 1774.

Gray's daughter, a familiar and intimate acquaintance with her has given me an opportunity of knowing her thoroughly and I may without stretching a point that she is a virtuous, healthy, sensible well-tempered pritty young woman, whose other qualities you'll allow may make any reasonable man happy. There is nothing wanting but the money which you desired me in your letter to my Father of 12 Dec. 1738 not to make my Object. I take your advice and I wish you would likewise take it to yourself. The parents on both sides have given their consent, to be sure we will be obliged to live very sparingly and even poorly, but we must make up all our wants with content, and I hope it will be a satisfaction to you to think there is a prospect of continuing the family in the direct line, if it please God to bless us with Children, I'm determin'd they shall be born in Britain, if we can possibly spare as much as to answer the expense.

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The bridegroom writes to Condie on 12th June:—

"The 20th day I was christened, I had the happiness of being present to my dear Meggy at her Father's house. We were here next morning and mett

† The name of the bridegroom is given by the Robertsons of Strowan.

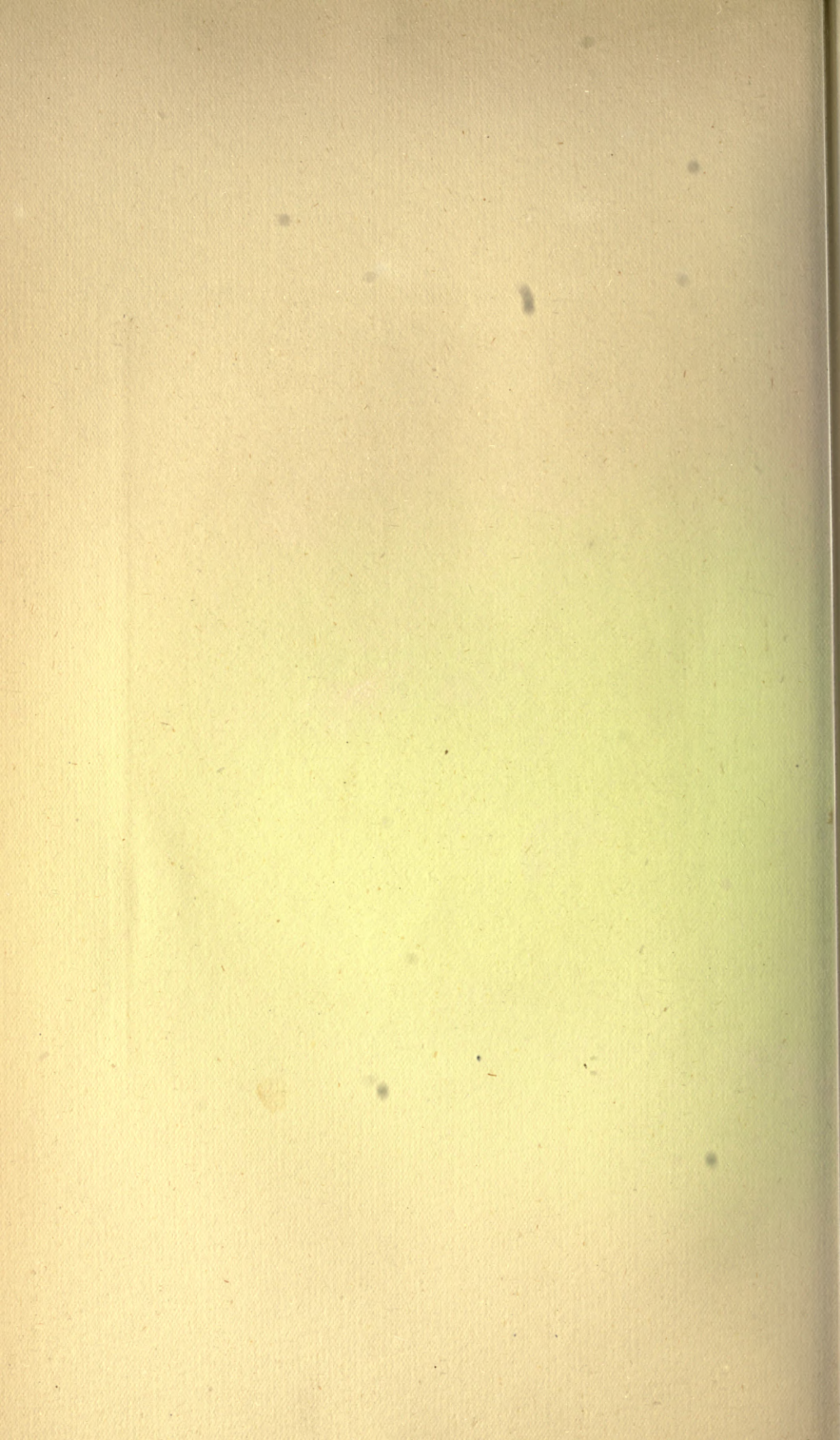


*Margaret Robertson, of Strouan.*

WIFE OF LAURENCE OLIPHANT.

7<sup>TH</sup> LAIRD OF GASK.

1740 - 1774.





with the hearty welcome we expected from our kind parents. . . . I find Meggy a more agreeable wife than she was a Mistress."

The young couple lived at Corbeil with the old laird and his lady, who highly approved of her daughter-in-law.

"I must say," she writes "that I think my son has been very happy in his choice. She is as well looked a young woman as you can see and has a great share both of good sense and good nature, and of a very saving temper, which is very lucky in our situation."

The time came when it was decided to send Margaret to England, in order that the expected heir might be born on British soil. Amélie was to travel with her on the road which by now she knew so wearily well. Young Laurence also went through France with the party, which he had refused to augment, as the following letter shows; Lady Kenmure,<sup>1</sup> hearing that the party were starting for England, wished to accompany them. But young Laurence makes the following objections:—

"It is very true that my Mother and wife intend soon to set out for England and would think it very agreeable to have the honour of my Lady Kenmure's company, but as I do not like to go about the bush, I shall tell you freely my Father's objections and mine, which is, that as this is a time nobody would chuse to go to Britain without a necessity for it so one may suppose my Lady Kenmure is charged with some privet commissions which in my wife's situation might bring on great inconvenience, should your ladyship be taken up on arriving at London where my wife thinks to ly in, it may hapen that though my Mother and wife go alone they may be taken up, but as they are to pass by their own names and to have no letters or papers about them, its to be hoped when they tell their real errand there will be no difficulty in liberating them.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Mary Dalzell, daughter of the Earl of Carnwath, and widow of the sixth Viscount Kenmure, executed in 1716 at the Tower for his share in the Jacobite rising. Lady Kenmure survived her husband sixty-one years, and died at Terregles in 1776. She saved the family estates for her son; but outlived her children.

If my Lady Kenmure find any strength in this objection I hope she will pardon what at first view might seem to savour very little of politeness to a Lady of her Loyalty, Rank and character."

The little party set out from Corbeil 30th July 1756, did the sights of Paris on the way, were overturned in a coach near Bouvray, and Margaret fell from her horse when riding behind her husband; the crossing from Boulogne was very bad, and the ladies were very ill. The ship was becalmed off Deal for six hours, and they had to land in a small boat; crossing Blackheath by coach on their way to London there were two alarms of highwaymen. All these difficulties and mishaps were safely surmounted, but the recital raises wonder as to whether the birth of a child in one country or another could warrant so many hazards and discomforts. In addition it must be remembered that the young husband dared not venture to England; he accompanied his wife only to Boulogne.

The following is young Laurence's letter to his father when on the journey with his wife, 7th August 1756:—

"BOUVRAY.

"We arrived here this night all very well. Meggy found it a little tiresome sitting so long in the coach so I got a pad made, and to-day she rode behind me near two leagues, before and after dinner. There is in the coach along with us an Abby and an old dotted Chevalier of St Louis but very polite, there are besides an officer of Dragoon going to Calis to join his regiment for the first time, formerly a Gard de Corps and a merchants son at Boulogne; add to this two droll women. By my being a horse-back, I got in before to bespeak some little thing and therefor we have hitherto sat by ourselves Meggy and I have been just now seeing the Cathedral, the choir of which is very statly. . . . The table is covered for supper,—veal steakes in paper, roasted pigeons and a salad with cherrys and biskets for desert, we have three mutchkens 20 sol wine. . . ."

Perhaps at no moment could his long exile have

seemed so bitter as that in which he saw his child-wife leave the shores of France, and might not follow her, because to set foot on British ground would mean imprisonment and perhaps death. He returned to his father at Corbeil, there to await tidings.

On 27th September Margaret's first child, a boy, was born at the Drummond's house in London, and was christened Laurence. The sixteen-year-old mother returned with her treasure to France on 15th November, the centre of family congratulations and rejoicings. This child, so ardently longed for and so welcomed, lived only one year. In the old laird's journal is found this entry written on the day of the funeral:—

“*October 8th.*—At half ane hour after six in the morning, the Dear Boy my Grandson Laurence Oliphant dyed. . . . All these distempers seem's to have proceeded from teething: four appear'd the week before he dyed and other five were pushing but he fail'd in strength to bring them out. I grudge much that he got not in time Medicines. He was buried in the Church of St Jacque in Corbeil.”

The father of this little child, in his own notes, written years after, sums up the pathetic story of the first years of his marriage:—

“1755.—I was married to an agreeable Consort, my vows were heard, a son was given us to the joy of all the six Parents. We doated too much on him, he was taken from us, yet Blessed be the Lord. . . . Grief insued and in me immoderate. I found fault therefor I offended, it hurt my health. . . . I was a heaviness to my self and others, yet in time it was turned to my good and helped to detach me from the world.”

His father in a letter to one of the Drummonds describes the pitiful state of the parents:—

“The distress our family has been in for these seven months past. Not long after the poor child's death, his Father took a lingering fever, which brought him very

low, so that we had our fears for him; his wife has been in a drooping way for several weeks, but is now, I thank God, much better."

Thus Margaret Oliphant, at seventeen, had won the most poignant experience life can hold, a clouding of her bright skies that all the coming years of full and happy life as wife and mother could never quite clear away. For five years the cradle was empty.

The next family event was the marriage in the Swedish chapel at Paris of Janet Oliphant to William Macgregor Drummond of Balhaldie. Her father writes to Condie, 6th January 1758:—

"I inform you by this that my Daughter and Balhaldie had taken a liking to each other which they signified to the Mother and me. We had a good opinion of the man and as she has been deprived of her portion, which we told him and his answer being that it was not the portion but the woman he wanted, the proposal was agreed to, and they were marryed by the form of our church at Paris the first of this month."

The bridegroom was in reality the Chief of the great Clan M'Gregor.<sup>1</sup> The name of Drummond had been assumed when the law came into force which robbed the Jacobites even of their ancient names. Having acted for years as the chief Jacobite agent in France, he had been excepted from the Act of Pardon of 1747. His earlier years had been passed as a Jacobite agent<sup>2</sup> between Scotland and Italy. He had fought at Sheriffmuir, playing his part well, and was left stranded, with broken health and fortunes, now that the tide of success had ebbed. He was twenty-three years older than his bride Janet Oliphant, who was, however, no longer in her first youth. Her father writes that the marriage put him

<sup>1</sup> His mother was Mary Cameron of Lochiel.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Edward slept at Balhaldie's house in Dunblane on 11th September 1745, the same day that he breakfasted at Gask. Balhaldie was abroad, but Lochiel, his first cousin, did the honours. From his house in Paris David Balfour and Catriona Macgregor are supposed to have married in R. L. Stevenson's romance.

to a little expense in providing her with necessaries that were "absolutely needful, and everything turned extravagantly dear." Janet's wedding dress was supplied by Madam Finot—a gown and coat of "Dauphine noire et rouge," costing 221 francs.

Again the shadow of sorrow and bereavement was to cloud the exiles' path. There are but one or two glimpses of Janet after her marriage. When she had been married a month she wrote one little letter to her mother, and another in May—both are on the interesting topic of Balhaldie's cough. On 7th October her child was born at Corbeil, a boy, who received the names Alexander John William Oliphant.<sup>1</sup>

The following gives some details of the baby's outfit:—

"Fine muslin for his linnings.  
Lawn and edgering.  
Hyre of the ass that brought his nurse.  
Flowered red ribbon.  
Makeing two scullscaps and a pair of mittons lined with furr.  
A pair stays to him.  
Buckles and a rattle.  
9½ ells check and a pair of green silk leaders.  
A quilled cap.  
For a little chair to him.  
Some stamp cotton for a clock to him.  
Putting feet to his new cradle."

The trousseau cost ninety-four francs. The last sad little entry, in December, tells its own story.

"A black ribbon to him."

"The first three days she seemed in a fair way of recovery," writes her mother on 2nd December; "but

<sup>1</sup> He succeeded to the Balhaldie estate on the death of his father in 1765. He was brought up at Inchbrakie, entered the army, and was a captain in the 56th Regiment of Foot. He was distinguished for gallant conduct at the capture of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and died in the West Indies of "military fatigue" in 1794. He married, in 25th December 1781, his cousin Mary Drummond Macgregor, daughter of Donald Drummond of New York, and left five sons and four daughters. William, his eldest son, born 1782, was an ensign in his father's regiment at the age of fourteen.

ever since that has been feverish . . . she is turned very weak, so that God only knows what the event may be, we still hope for the best . . . the child is very thriving."

She died 8th December.

"Her Body was carry'd in a fitt machine attended by the Earl of Nairne, her Father, and brother and Mr Duncan Robertson of Strowan in a Remise Coach and interred the 11th in the Protestant Burying place in Paris near the Port of St Martin. The King's order of the 9th Dec. was obtained for burying her there without molestation by the way."

Life must have settled to a sadder level in these days for the old laird. Margaret and the children he had never seen, were far away at her home in Scotland, the little grandson was dead, and now Janet was dead, and distant as ever seemed the prospect of the pardon that should restore him to his own country, there to live out his last few years. One comfort remained, the cheering presence and spirited counsels of Amélie, who would never let hope die, or own defeat. How often must she have reminded him that the dear lands of Gask were still his. The following letter to Condie, to whose hands affairs at Gask were confided, shows how wistfully thoughts went homewards:—

"I hope you will take all the care possible of preserving the old house, if the furniture that remains will not absolutely keep, you will inform Mrs Whytt and she will send an order to have it disposed of, but you know what a difference there is betwixt buying and selling. The House of Duplin is a much damper situation and there has been no family living in it for many years. Could there be no method fallen upon to preserve ours in the same way? . . . Everything should be carried out of the low drawing-room, this I imagine might do, with the addition of a friend going now and then to indulge a melancholy thought in these Auld Avenues, once delightful groves."

Amélie must have been at her husband's side with encouragement and approval when he drew up the paper,

“What I resolve to do, with the Help of God, if I ever return to Scotland,” giving a list of all the simple, wise, generous measures he meant to take. Thirteen years had passed since he looked his last on the lands of Gask.

The tedium of life at Corbeil, and elsewhere in France where the Perthshire Jacobite families were gathered, was relieved in 1759, not indeed by good tidings, but by the necessity of combined action in saving young Charles Nairne, son of Lord Nairne, from the consequences of his folly. Charles, like many of the young exiles, was serving in the Scots Brigade in the Dutch service, and managed to get into mischief, as the following letters will show. The first two are written by Mrs Johnstone, an old friend, a relative of the Nairnes and Oliphants. She was Jean Rollo,<sup>1</sup> daughter of the fourth Lord Rollo, and married her cousin Robert Johnstone of Wamphray.

Mrs Johnstone wrote from Breda, 13th August 1759, to Lady Gask:—

“MY DEAR MADAME—I had the pleasure of a letter from you some time ago which was extremely acceptable as it gave me agreeable accounts of you and all my other friends. I must now inform your Ladyship that your nephew Mr Charles Nairn joined the Regiment some months ago and has thought proper to give marriage lines to a Low triffling Creature in this town, and by the law of this country nothing can stop the marriage but an absolute refusal from his Father; as soon as I heard of his marriage I sent for him and Mr Johnstone and I did all in our power to persuade him to the contrary. Colonel Mackay having great interest in the town has got the magistrates to delay the marriage till a letter comes from my Lord Nairne; which I daresay he'll write his son Charles discharging him in the strongest terms to marry, and that he'll never see him etc. and any little money he has he'll take it from him (for it seems Charles told them he has money independent of his Father) her Mother keeps a little shop, one of her Brothers is a common Cannoneer the other apprentice to a copper-smith. What a disgrace he proposes to bring upon

<sup>1</sup> Jean Rollo was born in Edinburgh Castle in May 1717, her father, the fourth lord, being then imprisoned there.

his Friends. At the same time I desire my Lord to write a letter to Mr Johnstone in french thanking Colonel Mackay and begging he'll use his interest with the magistrates to stop the intended marriage, and at the same time if the Colonel would get him his pension and send him over to Scotland. . . . Now my Dr Madam I have informed you of the whole affaire, you must not lose a moment . . . y most aff. etc.

“JANE JOHNSTONE.<sup>1</sup>”

“P.S.—The woman's name is Ida Boskaam.”

Mrs Johnstone writes again to Lady Gask, 4th October 1759:—

“MY DEAR MADAM,—In my last I gave you an account of the begening of your Nephew Mr Nairn's unlucky affair, I'm sorrow I cannot inform you its ended, for poor Charles is like to meet with a great dell of trouble besides expense, Mr Johnstone got it put off till Mr Nairne should receive his Fathers Answer as soon as he got my Lords Letter, he resolved to be off with it, and said he never would do any thing against his Fathers Commands, beside he now finds what a Sad Creature she is, by taking all advantages of him, made him buy her Cloths, would not return him mony he gave her to Keep &c. &c. upon this I imaditly got him to leve the house, and since that time he has not seen her, she finding he was wishing to get off with it, summons Charles befor the Grand Court Marchall at the Hague to make him perform his promiss of Marrage, he received a short time ago a leter from the Court Marchall, ordering him to give his Reasons for not marring her, Mr Nairne was extremly alarm'd at this, brought the letter to Mr Johnstone, the Captain imployd a Lawer to draw up his petition in form, and in the throughest manner showd them the unequalness of the match, his being allied to the Prince of Orange, translated my Lords Letter into *Duck*, wherein he discharg'd him to marrie her wrote to General Marjoribanks, and got a gentleman to speak to the President of the grand Court Marchall, in his favours. Charles had a tree of the

<sup>1</sup> It has been found necessary to tone down Jane Johnstone's spelling, as it renders her meaning obscure. She died in London in 1780. Her husband out-lived her only six weeks.



Family of Atholl by him, which I carried to the Prince of Hess Philipsdall our Governor, and told him, as Mr Nairne was my Blood Relation I interested my self very much in his affair, showd his Highness the tree of the famelly and begd him to write to the Prince of Wolfenbattelle in his favours which he did, but we are still afraid, as the Laws of the Country are very severe; I assure you my dear Madam I have done every thing in my power for him, & Mr Johnstone has Left no Stone unturnd, to save him from being Rewend.

“My reason of writing just now is, you’ll imadilly forward this Letter to My L. Nairne with my Kind compliments, I desire his Lordship to go to Paris, and aske of the Great people at Court that is his friend, to go with him to the Dutch Ambasadure Barron Berkenrode, and tell him the story of his son, and beg of him to write to the Grand Court Marchall, or the Prince of Wolfenbattelle or any body that the Ambasadure thinks most proper to get a bill of Reliffe from his promes of marrage, (of which there is severall excempels in this Country when the match is unequal) this doing will free Charles at wan strock and save all the expenses of the Court which I’m told is very high.

“It is thought necessary incase the prosses goes on, that the inclosd must be made out in form by a Notary Publick and signed by my Lord Nairne & two witnesses and Returned back to Mr Johnstone.

“Your Ladyship inquerd Kindly after my son in your last he is in this Country a fine Litle fellow as can be, he speaks the Dutch perfetly and begins to understand the french. My litle doughter is with Mama, them two is all my familly, your Cusson my Lady Rollo, is very well, she was at Duncrub with us all the sumer befor I left Scotland my father Mother & the extreme good friends, her Ladyship comes to Duncrub at Whitsunday & my mother goes to Masterfield, my Lord my Brother is at Liensburg, Lieut: Colonel to Whitmors Regt: his son a tall hansome young fellow with his eldest Lieut: & Quartermaster in the same Regt: I beg to be remembered in the Kindest manner to all my friends with you, and remains with all regard & esteem My Dear Madam your most affect & most Humble Sert

“JANE JOHNSTONE.

Clementina Nairne, Lord Nairne's daughter, writes to Mrs Oliphant from Sancerre, 20th October 1759 :—

“DEAR AUNT,—My Pappa desires me to answer your last letter . . . he begs you will returne Mrs Johnstone and the Cap: a thousand thanks for their trouble about Brother Charles, but as for Pappas making gurnay of a hundred Leagues to Paris is what he cannot think off, nor if he could afford the expence and trouble he has little hopes of having any interest with the Duck Ambassadure as for the paper to be made out by a Notary Publick and signed by him, wherein he would engage both his person and biens to pay the expenses of the Law sute at the Hague is what he will never agree too. . . . We have drunk all your healths in Arach Punch after eating part of the best and fatest hind I ever saw in france. . . I ever am Your Aff. neace and Humble Sarvant  
CLE. NAIRNE.”

Mrs Johnstone writes, again 12th December 1759, to Mrs Oliphant :—

“Mr Johnstone is very vexd that letter I demanded from the Dutch Ambassador is not come to hand—for poor Charles has got another summons to appear so nothing now can save him from being forced to Marray her but a letter from Mr Berzenrode the Dutch Ambassador to some of his friends in Holland. . . . For Gods sake Madam if his Father has a mind to do anything for him, lose not a moment.”

The whole family now set to work to try and save Charles from the toils of Ida Boskaam. Endless letters were written, endless arguments brought forward which should convince the Dutch authorities of the impossibility of the marriage. Amongst those who helped in this cause, or took part in the discussion, was the Duc de Bouillon, the Comte D’Affry, French Ambassador to the States General, Lord Ogilvy, Principal Gordon, Prince Louis of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, and of course all the families of Oliphant, Drummond, Robertson, and Murray. The affair ended in Lord Nairne finding the money to buy Ida

off. In his circumstances, which were poor to a degree, it was a hardship.

“I suspected from the beginning of Charles’s Affair,” he wrote in February to young Gask, “that I would be brought to bear the burden—I have sent you a bill on Scotland payable to Mr Silvein for £3000.”

Perhaps the soothing reply from his cousin was a comfort:—

“Your Lordship, though you lost your fortune in your Country’s Cause, has by a blessing from above upon your being in your Duty, never wanted, and the making this effort to extricate your son will, I dare venture to say, never make you poorer in the end, and the reflection on a good deed will give you pleasure within.”

The receipt of this money by the Boskaams does not seem to have closed the incident at once, as Mrs Johnstone writes again to Mrs Oliphant, 27th September 1760:—

“NYMEGEN.

“The Regiment march’d to this place and Mr Johnstone managed matters so that he got liberty for Mr Nairne to go to Scotland. As soon as Ida Boskaam heard of his being gone to Scotland she applied to the Court Martial who got an order to make him return from Scotland till she was satisfied—which order is sent him. Upon this order coming Mr Johnstone wrote to his advocate at the Hague desiring him to . . . acquaint Ida Boskaam’s lawyers that since he was gone to Scotland perhaps his friends would not let him return so she would lose everything and better take six or eight hundred guilders as risque that. Her answer was she would take nothing less than twelve hundred Guilders, or be married.”

Willy Drummond writes to Laurence Oliphant in the same year:—

“We never had heard anything of that foolish affair of poor Charly Nairne. I have no doubt of Mrs Johnstone behaving as she did, as she was the means of stopping just such another affair he had brought upon himself about 6 or 7 years ago.”

The too susceptible Charles Nairne retired from the Dutch service and lived at Silverwells, Perthshire, where he died in 1795, and was buried at Auchtergaven. He never married.

Sometimes the loyal hearts of the exiles were comforted by messages from King James. In 1760 the King was pleased to send the old laird the Patent of the Peerage he had conferred upon him, in recognition of his services.

“JAMES R.

“James the eight, by the grace of God, King of Scotland, England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith; whereas we are fully sensible of the constant duty and attachment of our trusty and well-beloved Laurence Oliphant of Gask and of his family towards us, of which they have given us many and distinguished proofs, and in consequence of which the said Laurence and his Son are both attainted by the present usurpation . . . we have therefore thought it proper to confer and bestow on him and the heirs male of his family the title and honour of Lord Oliphant. . . . Given at our Court of Rome the fourteenth day of July 1760 and of our reign the fifty-ninth year.  
J. R.”<sup>1</sup>

With the Patent came a letter from Lord Alford (Sir John Graeme), the King’s Secretary, which requests Gask not to use his new title “untill a proper time when it may be of advantage to you.”<sup>2</sup> The time never came.

“My son is always in a ticklish state of health.” Amélie writes. It was decided to try a change of climate, and the little party, the old laird and his lady, young Laurence and his wife Margaret, left Corbeil in the autumn of 1761, and went for two years to Charleville on the Meuse. The Robertsons of Strowan had moved in the same year to Givet, to be nearer their sons Alexander and Colyear, who were serving in the Dutch service.

<sup>1</sup> The document in full, with a quaintly inaccurate genealogical sketch, is given in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> In mentioning his titles to the Peerage of Oliphant years later, Gask put in as fourth claim, “By a permission from the present King, in a letter dated Rome, 8th June 1751, which I intend not to use till I see my Country happy under their lawfull Princes.”

In the old Castle of Bouillon, within ten miles of Charleville, Prince Charles Edward had taken up his abode. "*De vivre et pas vivre est beaucoup plus que de mourir,*"—the scrap of his writing sums up better than pages of explanation the state of his mind and of his fortunes. He was alone. Clementina Walkinshaw had deserted him at last, and in her flight to Paris had carried away his only child. It is hard to picture the life he made for himself: hunting in the forest of Ardennes to pass the long hopeless days, receiving now and again groups of these faithful Scottish gentlemen to whom he still represented all that remained of hope for the future, and who helped him to believe still that he was designed for some splendid fate. To the grim castle came the two Oliphants among others. They, also, were not happy, as the lights of life were lowered one by one in griefs and disappointments. Above all, the health of the younger man was a never-ceasing anxiety. The following words, written when he was an old man, reflect the state of his mind and body at this time:—

"Vapours and discontent continued while surrounded with comforts amusements and blessings. The management of my Fathers mony was given me, Horses and a chaise were provided and no expense grudged for my health and amusement, yet sharp was my temper as a razor; Meg<sup>1</sup> vext me; I fretted at her, at all the family and at every servant, often was I sullen (distress contributing) yet the Lord spared me. Meg . . . was seduced to change her religion and carry'd off to a convent which encreased my Shagreen, my health suffered, insensible of my happy state. . . . We went North to Flanders, my Parents thinking it for my health, were honoured and caressed by the Inhabitants, had particular marks of regard from our Prince in the neighbourhood, yet vapours remained."

At about this time Robert Forbes, Bishop of Ross

<sup>1</sup> Meg was a young girl brought from Scotland in 1756 by Mrs Oliphant. She seems to have been employed at Corbeil in household work, but she was a near relation of the family. She gave a great deal of trouble and ran away, entering an English convent in Paris. Afterwards she married in France and had children.

and Caithness, began to be a regular correspondent of the Oliphant family. Forbes, who was born in 1708, was the son of a schoolmaster in Aberdeenshire, and was ordained as an Episcopal clergyman in 1735. Throughout his life he was an ardent Jacobite, suffering imprisonment at Stirling in the '45. His later years were passed in furthering one scheme after another to restore the Stewarts. He is chiefly known as the collector and compiler of the *Lyon in Mourning*.

Bishop Gordon was his chief correspondent, but between both these bishops and the Oliphants there existed a strong bond of sympathy. It was at this time that they formed a double plan to further the Stewart interests,—to obtain Prince Charles's consent to declare himself a Protestant,<sup>1</sup> and to marry him to a wife of the same faith.

A brave beginning was made in 1762, when the old laird drew up the following document<sup>2</sup> to the dictation of the Prince:—

“Assure my friends in Britain that I am in perfect good health; and that they must not lose hopes for that I expect all things will go well. That I hope it will come some day like a Thunderbolt; and that I shall not neglect to recompense every worthy subject as soon as it shall be in my power, which I hope will be soon. They may be assured I shall live and die in the religion of the Church of England which I have embraced, and that no Kind thing can be said but what I wish to all my Dear friends, for whose good I wish more to be amongst them, than for any advantage it would be to myself, as I have no great ambition except for their welfare.”

This was written by Gask entirely at the desire of the Prince himself. When the writing was finished, the Prince asked him to read it over and said: “It is

<sup>1</sup> Though the action was not made public, the Prince had adopted the Protestant creed in 1750. It is said he was admitted to the Anglican communion in the New Church in the Strand in 1753. See *Life of Charles Edward Stewart*, by Andrew Lang, p. 365.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in the *Lyon in Mourning* and in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 322.

very well." He then desired to read it himself, and having done so said: "It is perfectly right. Let it be sent as it is."

So far the schemes promised well; the creed settled, the question of the wife must now be taken in hand. This proved a long business, and the occasion of a long correspondence between Amélie Oliphant and the Bishop.

One or two letters on family and domestic events at this time, are here given.

Margaret writes to her father Strowan in 1759:—

"I am glad you begin to have a good opinion of the Invasion. I dare say it is what won't be attempted without a proper quarter-master, and one who knows the language, when that happens, you will be present to take care of your own affairs and enlarge your claims: that business is mismanaged when people are absent and their backs at the wa', is what we are all too well acquainted with.

"If I do not prove a good wife, as you wish I may, it will not be for want of two as good examples as, I do not say France, but even Scotland affords: and had I been so unhappy as to have had neither, the letter you gave me 4 years ago would still have kept my duty in my eye: and sure I must be a perfect shrew if I am an ill wife to the husband kind Providence has bestowed on me.—Your dutiful daughter and most humble and obedient servant,

M. OLIPHANT."

Young Laurence writes to Symon Oliphant of Condie, 29th January 1761, a letter of congratulation on the birth of a daughter.<sup>1</sup> His young wife, Margaret Oliphant, adds a line "To Lady Condie."

"Without having the pleasure of being personally acquainted with you, dear Madam, permit me to wish you all the Joy the three happiest States in Life (a wife a Mother and a Nurse) can give. Accept at the same time my acknowledgments for the honour you do me

<sup>1</sup> Margaret, who became the wife of the ninth Laird of Inchbrakie. Laurence Oliphant of Condie and Grizel Murray had a family of three sons and four daughters. The two eldest boys died, one on the 10th and one on the 13th November 1769. See p. 287.

in giving me the Name of my little Cousin. I assure you, I am not a little flattered with it, especially as she is the Daughter of Persons for whom I have so much esteem. It would be very ingrate in me not to be sensible of and thankfull for the care and trouble her Papa takes in managing the Affairs of the Family."

Margaret writes to her mother :—

" RUE DE TURENE, PARIS,  
" Sept. 27 1761.

" DEAR MAMA,—As this will probably be the last letter you will receive from us dated Paris, I was resolved to say something, tho' when I sat down I knew not what, but to begin Balhaldy and his son were here taking their leave, and stay'd 10 days, Sandy is every way the finest boy ever I knew of his age and very healthy. Balhaldy never mentioned to any of this family what he intended about sending him home so I believe it is quite uncertain, but he says his sister you mention'd has nothing in her power more than the rest. We were yesterday seeing the Dames pass in their way from Plombiers, the Dauphiness<sup>1</sup> and their other 2 Sisters pass'd in the morning and din'd with them some place without the Town, so we saw them all about in Doctor Hosty's Coach with his Wife, who is the best little woman I believe in France. Stanislas<sup>2</sup> is just now at Versailles, and they speak of a marriage between the King of Spain<sup>3</sup> & M<sup>me</sup> Victoire so I think this is all my news, but that we, I mean Gask, Lady Gask and your hum : Ser<sup>t</sup>, intend to set out from this wednesday ye 14th Oct. being a week after Mr Oliphant. Adieu  
D<sup>r</sup> Mama, M. O."

Margaret Graeme of Inchbrakie writes to Lady Gask, 18th January 1762 :—

" There has been more deaths than marriages in our neighbourhood for some time past. Honest old Antony<sup>4</sup> and his good companion slipt off within 14 days of others, but to make some amends his Grand Daughter has a

<sup>1</sup> Maria Josepha, Princess of Saxony, second wife of the Dauphin. She died 1767.

<sup>2</sup> Ex-King of Poland, Ruler of Lorraine.

<sup>3</sup> Charles III.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Murray of Dollerie.



young son,—to the no small joy of his Papa. . . . I hope I shall soon hear of a third young Laird & Cousin.”

Young Laurence writes to congratulate Condie on the birth of his heir, 12th March 1762, and announces his own hopes of another child.

Lord Alford wrote, 1st June 1762, from Rome :—

“I told the good news to the King who ordered me to make you and all concerned a kind compliment upon this occasion.”

Margaret Graeme writes to her mother, 31st March 1761 :—

“Monzie has changed its master once more my Lords nephew who was married to Miss Poly Stirling dyed at Ardoch, never being able to come the length of his own town, and him they call mickle Mungo succeeds,—his son is in the Dutch service.”

Of all the Oliphant correspondence of this time the most striking is the letter<sup>1</sup> written by the younger Gask to Lord Alford at Rome on 9th September 1762.

“MY LORD,—As I know it will be agreeable, I write this to inform your Ld that my Mother and Wife set out from this the 7th Aug. went by water to Namure arrived at Flushing ye 25th, to which place Captain Robertson, Strowans brother, conducted them; luckily ye Yaucht did not sail till next day, ye 26th aboard which they went with a fair wind at 5 in ye morning and landed at Dover by 4 o'clock ye same evening and arrived at London by the flying coach ye 27th. My Wife made out the voyage extremely well. I have heard nothing from Scotland for a great while; I believe, if possible the Ladies will be tempted to go that length. . . .

“. . . I hear frequently of the health of a certain person in this neighbourhood; he is very well, but his situation is most dismal; a P. in the flower of his age, without Company, no turn to books, nothing to think on but his melancholy situation. O my Dr Friend, might I conjure you to get something done to bring him out of

<sup>1</sup> This letter and the following are printed in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 333.

it. These are matters I do not like to presume to meddle in, but it makes the heart bleed to think on the way he is in, if nobody will attempt to get him satisfied, how melancholy is the prospect. Your Rank, my Lord, puts it in your power to do a great deal; for God's sake think seriously upon it and attempt it; no doubt Mr Alex. Murray would acquaint you with the answer was delivered me to a letter I carry'd from him to the P.

“*Tell him that he may write Mr Campbell for answer, that I will come into no Schemes with the Court of France or my Country people, till such time as my Daughter is restored and Satisfaction given me for the affront of carrying her off. . . .*”

“Is there no possibility of the Child's being sent back to make up matters? No one sure would think it too great a condescension when there is so much at Stake; two days ago I went with another letter, the answer was *‘That though there should be a thousand letters writ, and a thousand people should come, it was all to no purpos as his Resolution was taken.’*

“Is the Heir to the Crown to be left in such a state, because he put on a Resolution perhaps too rashly, and pushes it too far? Surely your L<sup>p</sup>. cannot be of that opinion. . . . You know His natural sweetness of temper and several that have been with him during his Incognito, especially Mr Murray, have told me often he does not know any one thing about ye P. that he could wish different, except a tendency to ye Bottle; and Mr Stewart that is with him just now (and very lucky it is that he has so faithful and worthy a lad about him) told me only two days ago that he continues to have as fine a sweet temper as possible, and no one vice; as to the drinking he says that anyone who knew him thoroughly would find there was very little in that; for what it would take to quench another's thirst affects Him, which hinders it from hurting his health, and that the P. has told him often that he knew very well that it was wrong, and that if his situation was altered, he would give it up, but at present a Glass now and then helped to pass the time which hung very heavy on him; for some weeks pass'd Mr Stewart told me he has given up drinking any Vin de Liqueur after meals, and lives regularly and rarely exceeds.

“I have, my Dr Lord, given you my thoughts freely on this very important Subject, and though the form and expressions may not be proper, hope you will find the intention good, and be assured that I am with the greatest respect and friendship,—My Ld, Etc.”

Lord Alford's answer to this was very naturally a proof. It is always to be regretted that Laurence saw fit to write the last part of the letter.

“I suppressed your letter,” writes Alford, “for fear of making you incur the Kings displeasure. Let me beg of you to beware of meddling in this critical conjuncture, and of advancing such topics as those contained in the exclamatory part of your letter. The course you propose would widen the breach in place of shutting it.”

In 1761 Amélie Oliphant, with her husband, son, and daughter-in-law, went for some months to Paris. Margaret writes as follows to her mother, Mrs Robertson, at Givet:—

“PARIS, 12 *May* 1761.

“DEAR MAMA,—You will easily believe it is our being much hurried with first packing & removing, and then unpacking, has made you so long of hearing from us. Gask, Lady Gask, & I left Corbeil tuesday the fifth. Mr Oliphant came here on horseback the day before, all arrived in pretty good health, except colds that Gask and Mr Oliphant catch'd by the way. Lady Gask was likewise much fatigued. Lady Gask & I drank Tea with her Grace the Dutchess of Hamilton<sup>1</sup> Friday last, she came to France in the beginning of winter for the recovery of her health along with her Husband, (who since the death of the D. of Argyle is called Marquis of Lorn, his Father having taken the Title of Duke) and her daughter Lady Betty,<sup>2</sup> she has one

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Gunning, one of the celebrated beauties. Married in 14th February 1752 to the sixth Duke of Hamilton. He died in 1758. Their children were Elizabeth, born 1753; James George, seventh Duke of Hamilton, born 1755; Douglas, eighth duke, born 1756. The Duchess married again, in 1759, John, Marquis of Lorne, afterwards fifth Duke of Argyll. Their children were Augusta, born 31st March 1760; George, born 1768, who died the next year; another son, George, afterwards sixth Duke of Argyll; John, seventh duke, and Charlotte Susan Maria, born 1775.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth, then aged eight. She was heiress to her brothers the seventh and eighth Dukes of Hamilton. In 1774 she married Edward, twelfth Earl of Derby, and died in 1797. Six weeks after her death Lord Derby married Miss Farren, the well-known actress

Daughter<sup>1</sup> of the second marriage ; it seems she has never been well since she lay in of her. Lady Coventry<sup>2</sup> died about the same time which made it still harder upon her Grace ; she is very thin and they say does not look near so well as before. I certainly think I have seen Women both in Scotland & in France handsomer,<sup>3</sup> Lady Betty is not at all pretty but like her Father's Family. Dr Hope who presented us to the Dutchess has done poor Mrs Rollo a good turn, it seems their affairs were going wrong at Sens so she came to Paris some months ago with an intention to perfection herself in manteau making and follow her business. Mr Hope was so good as acquaint Dutchess Hamilton with her story, her Fathers being executed, &c. She who as Mr Hope says desires nothing more than to do good to her Country people, immediately said she wou'd take Mrs Rollo in the ship with her (which waits her at Callais) give her her protection. Mr Hope is to carry her in a coach with him to Callais, as he too is going to Britain, so if Mrs Rollo knows her trade she need never want good bread, her husband and two daughters stay behind, so much for them. Adieu &c. &c. &c., M. O."

Some months were passed in Paris, but when there were definite hopes of another child in the Gask household, it was decided once more that Amélie and Margaret should go to Scotland for the event. Mr Whytt and Mr Brown were left at Charleville. By the end of October the two reached Gask. It must have been Margaret's first view of this beloved place, the home of her husband, and the promised land which engrossed all the wistful thoughts of those dearest to her in exile. She wrote to her husband, dating her letter from the Old Hall, then the

<sup>1</sup> Lady Augusta Campbell, born 31st March 1760, married Colonel Henry Clavering. She died 22nd June 1831, leaving issue. Another daughter was Lady Charlotte Susan Maria Campbell, born 18th February 1775. She married John Campbell, 21st June 1796, and second, 1818, Rev. E. J. Bury.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Coventry was Maria Gunning, said to have been the most beautiful of the sisters. She was born 1733. She married within three weeks of her sister Elizabeth, in 1752, the sixth Earl of Coventry, and died in 1760, leaving five children.

<sup>3</sup> This is also the opinion of Horace Walpole, who in describing the Gunnings called them "Two Irish girls of no fortune, who are declared the handsomest women alive. I think there being two so handsome and both such perfect figures is their chief excellence, for singly I have seen much handsomer women than either." (Letters to Sir Horace Mann.)

name by which Gask House had long been known. The letter has disappeared, but Mr Brown's reply carries a reminder of the youthfulness of Margaret, who had now been a wife for seven years, and was twenty-two.

"I hope now you are runing about through the fir park, down to the denn, up to the barns and byers or perhaps playing hide and seek in the Serpentine walk and thicket with Lady Bunzian and Miss Jeany Graeme. Well, hand ye merry till I see you."<sup>1</sup>

On 22nd October 1762 a daughter was born at Gask, Marjory Ann Mary. The person entrusted with the task of sending the longed-for news to the father and grandfather at Charleville omitted to mention either the sex, or the date of birth. These details were not received until 21st November. Young Laurence writes to his wife:—

"Your Gazet, as you call it, was most agreeable. I must begin with commending you for a fine clever wife, and hope since you are adroit, you will practice often and fill the dining-room at last."

This seems the right place to give the list of the children of Laurence and Margaret Oliphant.

1. Laurence, born in London 20th September 1756, died at Corbeil 8th October 1757.
2. Marjory Ann Mary, born at Gask 22nd October 1762, married Dr Alexander Stewart of Bonskeid November 1799, died 19th June 1819.
3. Amelia Ann Sophia, born at Gask 19th August 1765, married Charles Steuart of Dalguise 2nd July 1794, died 9th April 1808.
4. Carolina,<sup>2</sup> born at Gask 16th August 1766, married, June 1806, William, fifth Lord Nairne, died at Gask 27th October 1845.
5. Laurence, eighth Laird of Gask, born 29th April 1768 at Gask, married, 1st November 1795,

<sup>1</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 328.

<sup>2</sup> In the Family Bible this birth is recorded, "Carolina, after the King." Charles Edward had been the titular King since 1st January of this year.

Christian Robertson of Ardblair, died in Paris 6th July 1819 and was buried in Père la Chaise.

6. Margaret Euphemia Janet Charlot Alexandria, born at Gask 29th July 1770, married, April 1811, to Alexander Keith of Ravelston, died 10th September 1847.

7. Charles, born at Gask 8th June 1772, died at Gask 23rd July 1797.

The first accounts of Margaret's recovery were good, but soon her husband had reason to be alarmed. He writes in his journal:—

“When but recovering cold and fatigue brought upon her a disorder which was succeeded by a delirium, yet the Lord shewed us wonderful mercy and loving kindness. The Tidings came to Charleville. I heasted to see her and no accidents or obstructions came in the way. After seventeen years absence, I again pressed my native soil and the roof of my hospital ancestors received me. Bless Him who brings poor exiles home. Joy at my arrival gave a new relaps to my wife's distress. My Mother's anxiety of mind and fatigue of body were very great, yet she fainted not. . . . My humour was bad. I heightened by it my Mother's distress. I was vexed to think from the clatters of the country that I should be supposed to be here by the permission of the powers that are. . . .”

The young laird had come home without the pardon after all; Margaret's danger put aside all other considerations; but as a matter of fact there was politically little risk at the moment. Home was sweet, and only one member of the little group was far away, the old laird, still near his Prince at Charleville.

“My Mother notwithstanding my Father's frequent writing that we should return to him pressed that I would stay, and she would go and see to bring home my Father. Very reluctant I was, to think of leaving our Prince and a Land where we lived at ease and freedom near him, and could avow our Principals. The change of diet to my Parents, to live without the freedom even

to transact our own privat affairs etc. etc. All these crowded in upon me, I was much difficulted, I ventured to cast Lots, with a petition, as I had of late practised, being often embarassed, and it came up 'Yes.'"

In June Amélie set off again on the long, well-known journey, with all its fatigues and risks.

"My Mother went to joyn her Husband and was safely conveyed to him at Charleville.

"During the season my wife and I drank Goat Whey at Callander . . . her health was confirmed, and we enjoyed the company of a dear friend, the Elect Lady.<sup>1</sup>

"1763.—My Father and Mother arrived in safety. His coming was approved off by his King and Prince, and their situation since has shown we did nothing wrong.

"Nov. 12.—My Father arrived at Gask,—what a tender and indulgent parent and guardian he has been to me,—my Mother how affectionate. Ten times did she cross the Chanel out of love to her husband, me and mine, though for many years before distressed, and rarely stirring from home. She traveled in her old age and wasted her strength for us, she wearied not, she with great assiduity and anxiety gathered together her family and seated them in their old habitation procured by her, she applyd for her jointure to add to their subsistence, all her endeavours were crowned with success. . . . Thus the gracious Lord brought comfort out of distress. Much did my wife's illness grieve us all, heavy was it espatialy upon my Parents, yet it brought about what they wished very much, their return to their own country, and he added to it that they found her in health."

So ended the seventeen years of banishment. Poor, discouraged, attainted, all that remained of the family group gathered again in the little grey house, whence they had set off in such gallant array, in "top spirits," full of eager enterprise, full of resolution, afire with the rapture of action in a cherished cause. Now with wild hopes turned into darkened memories, with quenched

<sup>1</sup> Mary Nairne, the sister of Amélie Oliphant.

activity, broken health and fortunes, held in the cold grip of defeat, they crept back.

Yet still there remained a little sweetness in the cup of life, still a little strength in the bruised hearts to lift up a word of gratitude even now: "Bless Him who brings poor exiles home."



## CHAPTER XII

### HOME

STRANGELY unfamiliar must the old haunts have looked to the eyes that for seventeen years had only seen them in dreams. The trees were grown, thicket and under-wood made dark the neglected avenues, garden-closes and paths bore the sombre charm as of lost hopes and promises long delayed. The house, bare now of all the old simple luxuries of appointment, dark and cold with rooms so long empty of voice and footfall, yet opened to the wanderers the treasure of past association, the silent sympathy of its remembered places.

It was joy to be there again, in whatever circumstances of doubt, under any cloud of danger. Only as the days went on, and life began to resume some of its old routine, all the loss and change must have struck at the hearts of the exiles. So much was gone of lands, of goods and gear. Williamston, the first married home of the old laird and Amélie, the birthplace of their children, had passed into strange hands; Cowgask, the fair barony to the north-west, and Woodend, the inheritance of the old laird's mother, were both swept away. Gask itself, though in reality his own property, was in the hands of trustees and not under the laird's control, so that he could not do as he would with his own. He neither fretted nor complained. In the record of his life there is no note of self-pity. His fortitude was rooted in the profoundest instincts of his soul. Nearly all the events in which he had taken part throughout his long life had brought sorrow and distress, but he believed in the sacredness of his cause as wholly as he believed in the

goodness of God. The last glimpses of the old laird show him in the place where he longed to be. No longer the centre of eager Stewart adherents, riding to and fro from one Jacobite stronghold to another, full of brave schemes and wise counsels, he still remained a landmark and rallying-point for the fast-fading hopes of the Cause. Though he had watched sink one by one all the stars in whose light he had lived, in the great aspiration of his life he never recognised failure, or dreamed that Scotland could not kindle again the flame of wild adventure. Now, when for him the fighting was over, he leaned on the tranquil sense of having, through his own influence, left behind him at the Castle of Bouillon a Protestant Prince, from whose claim to the throne of Britain the great disability was now removed. Young Laurence thus describes the returned exiles' life at Gask:—

“Mr Whytt and his wife made out their journey as well as could be expected. They live quietly at home, see only particular friends, and amuse themselves with their family affairs, putting them in as good order as their situation will permitt. Nothing can give them so much satisfaction as hearing of their absent friends.”

Now all wanderings were over. Three years he lived in the house of Gask with Amélie, Laurence, and Margaret, everything over and done with, except the simple tranquillities that come to the old, in spite of all distresses. Three little granddaughters were there to lighten his last days, the little Marjory who had been there to welcome him when he came home, then Amelia in 1765, and within a year, Carolina, who some day was to teach in song what he had learned in suffering.

Amélie, now restored to the calm of home life, had been too long accustomed to constant activities of mind and body to accept the inaction of old age. She seems to have taken frequent journeys to Edinburgh, and sends home budgets of news. She writes thus to her son's wife on 20th June 1763:—

“Saturday Mrs Forbes came for me, so we went

together to Leith that afternoon. I went and visited Lady Stewart who stays there. She is eldest sister to . . . Carmichael, was carried up prisoner to London in the '46, her husband died there in prison. She is a very good sort of woman. She dined and supped with us and sent two bottles of fine rum, which she said was designed for to-morrow. . . . *Tues.* 21st. I past this day very agreeably with the Duchess of Perth<sup>1</sup> and her sisters, and two or three more such like. I had a visit last night from my Lady Galloway,<sup>2</sup> who invited me to brakefast with her this morning which I did, Her Lord and eldest son and myself. I sent to her after I came away for some franks, which you will see I got. . . .”

The affairs of her Prince engrossed much of Amélie's time, as shown by her long correspondence with Bishop Forbes touching the royal marriage. To get a wife of English or Scottish birth for Prince Charles was now the dearest object of her heart. The innocent plot occupied a great deal of the time both of the Bishops and the Oliphants. Mrs Oliphant had a long interview with Bishop Gordon in London when bringing the old laird home from Charleville. “O Madam! if this same con-fabulation between you and me should happily end in a real match, how joyous should we be!” “Ay that is true indeed!” said she. “God grant success!” Through-out these letters, the Prince is called “Cousin Peggie,” and “my Favourite Lady.” Not for nearly ten years was Amélie to see the wish of her heart realised in the marriage of her Prince. She died before the disastrous ending of that enterprise.

Family events filled the last three years of the old laird's days. Janet's husband, Balhaldie, died at Chailly, near Fontainebleau, 18th December 1764, and the little son,<sup>3</sup> then six years old, was brought over to Scotland,

<sup>1</sup> There were at this time three Duchesses of Perth, all widows : Jean Gordon, widow of the second duke ; Elizabeth Middleton, widow of the sixth duke ; and Mary Stuart, daughter of the fourth Earl of Traquair, widow of the fifth duke. The Duchess mentioned in Amélie's letter is the latter lady. She had five sisters.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine, youngest daughter of the fourth Earl of Dundonald, second wife of the sixth Lord Galloway.

<sup>3</sup> In 1776, before he was of age, young Balhaldie raised a claim for his full share of the forty thousand merks which the Government had granted Amélie Oliphant, his grandmother. She had bequeathed ten thousand merks to her

to be educated with the Inchbrakie children. So all Gask's grandchildren were near at hand in the closing scenes of his life.

Margaret Oliphant's younger sister Charlotte Robertson died in 1765. There are few traces of this daughter of Strowan in any of the very numerous letters that passed between the families. She neither writes nor receives messages. She is once mentioned in one of her father's letters from Givet in 1764:—

“She has the whole charge of the menage, and I must own that she makes a good proficient in the business of housewifery.”

She was then nineteen. Margaret, her husband says, felt her sister's death very much. In July of the same year Amélie's nephew, Lord Strathallan, died.

Lady Gask writes to Mrs Drummond, July 1765:—

“DEAR MADAM,—I received your very melancholy letter giving me account of my dear Nephew's Death, you may be sure very affecting to all here . . . but alas when I reflect upon the condition of the poor Mother and Widow who have met with so heavy and unexpected a stroke, all other griefs vanish like smook before the wind. . . .”

The following letters belong to this period, and though they have no special bearing on life at Gask, they are here given as showing the interests of the family.

Bishop Forbes writes to Mrs Oliphant at Callander, 18th July 1763:<sup>1</sup>—

“By no means use my name in this matter, as parties run desperately high. It is affirmed strongly that Miss Hewitt<sup>2</sup> demeaned herself with the utmost courage and

daughter, Margaret Graeme, and only eight thousand to young Balhaldie, as the son of her daughter, Janet Macgregor. The case was settled by arbitration; it was decided that Lady Gask had a right to dispose of the money as she saw fit.

<sup>1</sup> This letter concerns the celebrated Stewart trial.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Hewitt, for many years an attendant on Lady Jane Douglas. She swore positively that she was present at the birth of Lady Jane's twin sons on 10th July 1748. She was very old and infirm, and thought to be dying at the time she gave her evidence. To her last hour she affirmed the truth of what she had said. (See *The Douglas Cause*, edited by Francis Stuart.)

Resolution and with great accuracy and exactness; but Time must try all, and clear up the dark Cloud. Sir John Stewart is to be examined to-morrow before the Fifteen with shut doors likewise. . . . God bless you all and all you are concerned in. All good wishes from my Friend to you all, A Dieu, my dear Sir, A Dieu."<sup>1</sup>

Lady Jane M. writes to Lady Gask at Gask, 18th November 176—:—

“I make no doubt my Dear Aunt and all our well-wishers will be shocked to hear that our poor infatuated sister Margaret went off in the dead of the last night with (as we have too much reason to suspect) a servant man! Judge of my dear Mother’s concern, and you may judge of ours upon her account. I pray God support her and enable us if possible to make amends for one of the most ungrateful of children. Pray forgive haste and all other faults your dutyfull and aff. neice  
J. M.

“I am thankfull Charles still continues better—but God only knows what consequence this dreadfull stroke may have on his good heart.”

William Drummond writes from Sancerre, 6th October 1763 to his “dearest Laurie” :—

“To acquaint my first friend and the best friend I ever had that I was made happy on the 30th of last month by being married to dear Anny Nairne<sup>2</sup> the young woman in the world I ever had the greatest attachment for. It was an honest Scots episcopal minister that joined our hands in my Uncle’s house here. Dear Laurie, I never knew what happiness was till now.”

Anne Drummond, the bride, adds a line, hoping that Laurence’s friendship may be extended to her.

Life at Gask went quietly forward, brightened here and there by the intimate events of home, and by letters from abroad, where the Robertsons and Nairnes were still in exile. Duncan Robertson, so bound by ties of blood

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Forbes never signed one of the letters sent to the Gask family.

<sup>2</sup> Second daughter of Brigadier General David Nairne of the French Service. She died in 1782, leaving two sons. From the younger son the present representatives of the Strathallan family are descended.

and mutual interest to the Gask family, was one of the best of correspondents; he used however, such large sheets of paper that even his busy pen could not fill them, and each member of his family must add something to the packet. The handwriting of his son Colyear is one of the clearest and most beautiful imaginable; but fortunately all wrote very legibly. To the quiet party at Gask there was a flow of amusement and interest in the friendly intimate letters, of which an example is here given—a specimen of scores of others carefully preserved.

“3 March 1767.

“*From Mrs Robertson of Strowan to her daughter  
Mrs Oliphant of Gask. Postmark, Namur.*

“We have the pleasure my Dear D. of the 29 Jan. which gives great joy to hear that all the Family are so well. I hope you will excuse my not writing any in the last sent you as it was all filled. . . . I suppose my Brother has wrote to you of his poor Daughter's<sup>1</sup> Death the 17th of Jan.; one of his Sons wrote and let us know she Dyed quit sensible and had been so for some time before her death. Henry wrote too, by his father's orders, desiring us all to go where he is next summer to make them a visit for some months, but you know travelling is very expensive, and we have no money to bestow but where it is absolutely necessary, so we must not think of that journey, though, poor Soul, he is much to be pitied for the loss of his daughter, as she was so very great a favourite of his from her very infancy. . . . I think I see your dear Young ones when you write that the Eldest is walking about with her sister, though I do believe if I saw them I should be very feared they would fall, as no doubt you are. . . .”

On the same page Duncan Robertson continues:—

“By the accounts we had some time ago of the Duchess Dowager's<sup>2</sup> health we had small hopes of her recovery. I wonder if she has left anything to her

<sup>1</sup> Clementina Nairne, who died at Sancerre. She was the only surviving daughter of John, third Lord Nairne.

<sup>2</sup> Mary, daughter of William, Lord Ross of Halkhead, second wife of the first Duke of Atholl, married 26th June 1710. She died at Huntingtower, 17th January 1767. She was the mother of seven of the Duke's nineteen children.

grandson the Major. . . . Your Mother and I are much the same as when I wrote you last, that is without any manner of ailment, thank God: she is spinning hard while I am writing. Your Brothers are above stairs, probably in the work-house, they are both very well, and not so thin as you imagine."

Colyear Robertson continues the letter:—

"The greatest news I have to tell you is that I have been at hard work for some time past making Pirns for Mother, the rainy weather depriving us of our walks in the Fields. My brother has taken a Master for the Fiddle and has made such surprising progress that he plays already Italian Sonatas, tho he has got but four lessons. . . . I wonder you don't learn to play upon the Guitarre as you could learn it almost by yourself; it is a very pretty instrument for a Lady, but indeed your young folks will give you amusement enough, and Musick too perhaps sometimes. . . ."

Mrs Robertson writes again to her daughter Mrs Oliphant:—

"16 Mar. 1767.

"My dear daughter's of Feb. gives us all amusement. I believe you can hardly imagine how fond all here are of the chat of your eldest and of every motion either of the others takes till they have the use of their tongue. You guess very well it gave me joy to hear that Carolin<sup>1</sup> has got a tooth so easily. I shall long to hear that the small-pox are past without coming your length. . . . I am spinning both warp and waft for a web of cottonad. . . . I intend to make pretty coats and little gowns of it. . . ."

Colyear adds to the same letter:—

"The Prince whom Madlle. de la Tremouille wrote the letter to four years ago, gave us marks of his good will upon many occasions, but unluckily for us, tho his Brother-in-law is now of age, the Tutor continues to have the management of affairs, and the other Prince will not stoop to ask a favour of him, having already been refused more than once. That Prince was so

<sup>1</sup> Carolina, born 16th August 1766. Afterwards the well-known song writer.

condescending as to tell us frankly, when we were last at the Hague that in the situation he was in he could give us nothing but his good wishes, and that we must absolutely make application to the Duke. The Person upon whose interest with the Duke we now depend told us that Captain's rank would signify nothing without companies and that he would do what lay in his power for us in case of an Augmentation, but that there was nothing to be done at present. He did not seem much to regard the Duke of A's letter, but that will need to be kept a great secret, as likewise all the rest of the *Affair*."

This last letter must have reached Gask just before the death of the old laird. He was ill at the last only twelve days, and died on 1st April 1767, aged seventy-six. His son wrote in his journal these words concerning his death:—

"My dear Father, of twelve days Illness. In his life God was gracious to him, and at Death made his passage easy; a fond father and a good man, he got his wish to be gathered to his Fathers and if it be permitted to departed spirits, he still watches over his family."

The following letter from Strowan to his daughter, dated 24th April 1767, concerns his death:—

"MY DEAR D.,— . . . I suspected from what you wrote me more than once that my dear worthy friend would not be long a being freed from his weaknesses and troubles, and the more so now that you had considerably passed your ordinary time of writing. The Event, as it is joyful to him, ought to be so to his friends, but allowances must be made for the weakness of human nature. We are loath, and no wonder, to part with a man of his eminent virtues,—virtues so rarely centred in one person. I greatly loved and esteemed him and so did my wife and children, and I hope God, whom he sincerely served, without noise or affectation, will bless his family and posterity and give comfort to them all, particularly to the worthy Lady who has parted with a companion so loving and faithfull."



Bishop Forbes writes to Laurence Oliphant, 9th April 1767 :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—Yours of the 2nd instance did not at all surprize me as it contained nothing but what I looked for. Well, the worthy person is gone. I hope to a far better world and we must in due time go to him, but he cannot come to us. All of you are present with me in thought, but the good Lady dwells in my mind, as her connection was the nearest and dearest of all. . . . You have forgot to let me know your Father’s age. I have noted down the day of his death in a bound Book. Pray then let me have the year and day of his Birth that I may add them to that same note. His memory will be ever dear to me For,

“‘Inspired we say, the memory of the Just  
Will live and blossom in the mouldering dust.’

When therefore we bedew the friendly dust with Tears, let us moderate the Watery Eye and put a stop to the flowing stream in Time. . . . It is truly surprising how things at no small Distance will happen to tally and coincide. The very day that fetch’d yours to me, brought one from our friend at London, in which are the following words, ‘I long greatly to hear of Mr Brown, Father, son, Mother, Daughter and all their connections for tis a Family I highly value and esteem, nay, and love too. I think I can truly say, they are daily in my thoughts. God bless them all.’ I would not by any means Dear Sir, have you disquieted by any clash from abroad or at home, about your poor Cousin Peggie<sup>1</sup> who, poor thing, is greatly to be pitied, having many things laid to her charge from which on account of her unhappy and (as she says) unchosen situation. She has it not in her power to exculpate herself. Disagreeable things are put upon her continually and bear them alas! She tells us she must, for the present at least. You will pardon me, but to compare small things with great, poor Peggie’s circumstances put me very much in mind of Charles II.’s situation in Scotland. He was watched, he was baited, he was driven. Have compassion then on poor Cousin Peggie and believe not every report, though appearances,

<sup>1</sup> Prince Charles Edward.

she confesses, may be some times against her, and these magnified in every respect to her disadvantage. She wishes and entreats yourself and family to believe her steady and unalterable. What signifies what Miss this, or Miss t'other may say thro' vanity or jealousy or really through ignorance of Causes. This much our worthy friend of Mar. 31.

“Methinks I could attempt a character of your Father in Latin, fit to be inscribed on Brass or Marble and placed upon his Tomb; but the iniquity of the Times will not hear the Truth; and therefore we must let that alone and bear in mind, with Silence, what we dare not exhibit in words. God bless you all. Amen. A Dieu, Dear Sir, A Dieu.

“APRIL 9.”

The epitaph of the old laird has never been written in Latin or even in English; no stone marks the spot where he lies in the green silence of the Gask churchyard; but none of all his line is so sure of an immortality in the story of his country, and in the proud remembrance of his descendants.<sup>1</sup> In the estimate of the lives and achievements of most men there is something to wish different, some flaw of character, some motive it would be well to forget. In the character of the old laird there is nothing to regret—no spot in all his record where honour might have been better vindicated, higher standards attempted, better ideals achieved. Great of soul, tender of heart, staunch, steadfast, brave, his life from childhood to old age was lived for others, and lived in the wider sense of responsibilities beyond the interests of those immediately dear to his heart. His sympathies were quickened by the universal spirit that reached beyond self into the greater issues of national life. Living at a time and in a country beset with difficulties and distresses, in which his fortunes were involved from first to last, he played his simple part on a stage, great enough to afford scope to the noble impulses of his soul.

<sup>1</sup> In 1826 Charles Steuart of Dalguise records in his diary that he saw an old man, David Buchan, aged eighty-two, at Williamston, who well remembered the old laird, and the high esteem in which he was held. Asked to describe his appearance he said he was “a princely-looking man.”

Never would he have admitted, like Strowan, that he "lived in the dregs of time." He looked back gratefully on the years that had brought him so many chances of proving his principles. Born before the tragedy of Glencoe, he remembered in the dim mists of childhood the despair of the Darien failure, the passionate resentment of the Union, and his boyhood held remembrance of the hot exaltation of the '15, the field of Sheriffmuir, the brief companionship with the King his Master at Perth. Then came the long calm of the home years full of that domestic happiness that is only known to the chivalrous of heart, to the soul that knows how to achieve perfect sympathy with a woman, and perfect friendship with children.

What those quiet years at Gask did in preparing the way for the heroisms of the '45 can only be partly realised. The centre from whence radiated a steady light of hopefulness and resolution, all his nearest and dearest shared his high unwavering loyalty; among the group of wife, children, brothers, friends there was not one to disappoint, not one to call in question the justice and need of sacrifice when the call came. He saw the decline of the Stewart enterprise with sorrow, but without misgiving as to ultimate triumph. To him the Cause was so identified with the interests of religion and liberty that it could no more fail, in the long run, than could God's promises fail. With absolute faith his eyes were fixed upon the goal he was never to reach, and he died before events made manifest that it would not be attained at all. He never realised that the dark cloud over-shadowing the fortunes of the Stewarts was never to lift again.

Before death came to take away this tender and chivalrous spirit, he saw gathered round his knees a group of his children's children. The youngest, Carolina, was only a few months old. Something of the fineness of his spirit perhaps passed into the new little soul. The tried soldier could not have chosen for his descendant a choicer gift than that of lyrical expression, which should render immortal not only the Cause he loved, but all the simple

and noble emotions which had made his campaigns possible.

So, in spite of the keen sorrow of bereavement, life went forward at the House of Gask. With the happy unconsciousness of childhood in all that concerns death, the three little girls would doubtless rouse the sorrowing Amélie from her grief, and expect games and cheerfulness from their parents as usual. A letter from Margaret to her mother at Givet shows how, a month after the old laird's death, life had resumed its normal routine:—

“ 3 May 1767.

“MY DEAR MA,—I find it is come to the ordinary time of writing so will delay it no longer as I know you will be thinking I ought to let you hear how Mrs Whytt etc. have been of late: why really tolerably well considering all, a little dull as is no wonder. . . . The children are just now much in our usual . . . Amelie<sup>1</sup> . . . began to speak all of a sudden, and calls after her woman—calls her eldest sister Meg and the little one Caine. We changed Car's nurse for one with younger milk, which was a risk, but she has grown fat upon it, and is a sturdy tod. The smallpox and chincough are both going round us in a favourable way. . . . Lady Inchbrakie is sometimes troubled with a stuffing in her breast, like her brother's, but not so bad. . . . I thought to have had some little story of her (May) to tell, but remember none just now but an ill trick. Her and the new nurse do not agree very well; it happened one day that their heads rapt together by chance, so the nurse says I wonder which of our heads is hardest, if I had that stick I would try it on yours; this was the pestle of a mortar. May says nothing, but slips for it and gives the Nurse's head a good knock till it raised a lump, for which the dame was to blame.”

She continues the letter to her father:—

“There is still a talk of the Perth Estates and all the annexed Estates being to be sold, there was a say at Edinburgh too that Lord Chatam, the late Mr Pitt, had proposed giving them back gratis to the proper

<sup>1</sup> Born August 1765.

owners, but I doubt this news is too G. to be T. My young woman of this month (May) asked me lately when Ame's and Caroline's months would come, for she knew hers was May, but, little smatchet, she told a deliberate Lye to-day, for which she is in disgrace."

The health of Laurence, the new laird, was still the main anxiety of Amélie and Margaret. He was never well, and seldom free from the asthma contracted in 1746. Change of air and scene were necessary both for mind and body. The summer after the death of the old laird was occupied in trying the mysterious benefits of drinking goat's whey in the Highlands, a strange and inconvenient remedy, then so much in vogue that most of the letters of the time contain some reference to the supposed effects. The Oliphants had been accustomed to go to Callander for this rite, but this year they went no further than Comrie—a short drive from home. Perhaps a simple and limited diet, with milk instead of the inevitable "glass," and life in the open air, produced real effect. Money affairs were a perpetual source of anxiety, never to be lifted in Laurence's lifetime. "Embarassed about the settlement of Temporals and forty merks debt hanging over at Dunkeld," he writes. "Mr Henry Drummond generously said, 'I'll get you a grant of it,' and soon he made his promise good. My mother distressed, apprehensive, but the Lord revives her and preserves her in life for the comfort of her family." The family letters from Givet continue all the time. Mrs Robertson writes to her daughter Mrs Oliphant:—

"Aug. 10 1767.

"I rejoice to hear that your dear Carolin is so well recovered of the smallpox and that the other two dear ones are well. I hope I will remember to drink the health of the little dear ones born in this month. . . . I wrote to you in my last that I was bringing up silk worms, by the by if I had thought they would have been so troublesome and I have so little profit I'd not have been at the pains. I do not believe I shall have half a pound pure silk, and it is a plague to wind it, there

is only about 1000 Cocons in all and some of the worms have not yet begon to make their silk and I have been their slave for two months. So much for experiments."

Mrs Oliphant writes, 21st September 1767, in a letter full of items of news about neighbours:—

"Miss Drummond,<sup>1</sup> Machany, is here with us, she is realy a fine good natur'd Girle, she is quit streight, her head is very big occasioned they say by crieng when she was nurcing which opened her head.

"You would have been pleased had you seen my little woman sitting on a chair as prim as any there at the reading this evening being Sunday, understand she cannot, but keeps her eye generally fixed on her Papa who they are all very fond of as they get sense, the two eldest very solicitous which shall get first into the castle, as they call it between his knees. May is turned very useful to me, going errands thro any part of the house realy a sharp clever monkey."<sup>2</sup>

"God bless the dear Tods and their Castle," the grandfather writes back.

In the spring of 1768 the boy so long desired was born.

"Last April," wrote the father, "the Grandfather died, this one the Grandson is born; the Lord gives and the Lord taketh away."

The thoughts of Margaret must have travelled back over the ten eventful years that had passed since last she held a son in her arms, to the little grave at Corbeil where lay the other baby Laurence. Young herself, she was fated to know nothing but the exquisite promise of young life in her children, nothing but the first freshness of motherhood, for she did not live to see any one of her babies grow up.

Margaret writes from Gask to her mother at Givet, on 31st August 1768:—

"I believe I told you last that Lady Graeme, Mr O. and I had all been waiting on Lady Elizabeth Drummond

<sup>1</sup> Either Margaret or Elizabeth, daughter of James, fifth Lord Strathallan.

<sup>2</sup> Some phrases of this letter are printed in Roger's Life of Baroness Nairne.

after which they went and stayed a fortnight at Dunkeld and visited Blair, then returned by Meikleour, and Logie, were a night in Tullybelton House in Perth, came back to Machany and dined here next day, with my good old aunt and all the bairns she had in Scotland except little James who was thought it seems too young to visit. We had dinner in the low drawing-room for the first time that a meal had been eaten in it since a breakfast<sup>1</sup> that you perhaps have been at 23 years ago, when the pick of all the Gentlemen we had the other day, were present, my cousins Dunmore and Nairne being of the company; this I told Lady Elizabeth who pressed me much to come to Machany. Mr O. and 18 more of us mett the 17th in the forenoon at Inchbrakie in our way to dine at Abercairne: my aunt was one, but would not go there with them, before she had been visiting our young Laird<sup>2</sup> as she calls him, is it not lucky he's not of an age to be vain, ah no, he's not twelve years of age, but sure we may be thankfull even for the past<sup>3</sup> for the invisible should not be reckoned lost, nor do I reckon them so, thank God.

“Mrs Mercer Aldie is brought to bed of a 4th daughter<sup>4</sup> the other three are unluckily not healthy.”

Amélie adds a word:—

“Mrs Oli: will have me say something to my dear sister after she has told all, except that your old acquaintance Mrs James Oliphant<sup>5</sup> and her four daughters are come from England to live at Perth, they have taken up a boarding scool for young ladies, which I hope will be bread to them. She was here lately but is turned very old like. I beg you would not eitt porrage at work but goe about to lay in a stock of health for the winter.”

The state of Gask's health compelled Margaret to spend many months away from her children in this year.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the occasion of Prince Charles Edward breakfasting at Gask, 11th September 1745.

<sup>2</sup> The boy MacGregor of Balhaldie.

<sup>3</sup> This is in allusion to Margaret Oliphant's own boy, who died a few months before young Balhaldie's birth.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs Mercer was Margaret Murray, heiress of Pitcaithly. Only one of the Mercer children married, Jean, who married George Viscount Keith, second son of Charles Lord Elphinstone of Cumbernauld. The four daughters were Margaret, born 1763, died unmarried. Jean, born 1765. Cochrane, died 1801 unmarried. Catherine died 1822 unmarried.

<sup>5</sup> Janet Austin, widow of the old laird's brother. See page 163.

Fortunately Amélie was a devoted grandmother, and the mother could not have entrusted them to more loving care; but it must have seemed hard to quit the old house and set forth on the quest of health in distant countries. The laird writes in his journal:—

“Asthma and its attendant made me often suffer; upon Petition lessened and frequently removed. Except on Oct. 9 when that night distressed in bed, I thought of Naples for health, approved by my Mother, next day money got without difficulty, with my wife sett out the 22nd.”

They went first to London, where they stayed with the Drummonds, from whence Margaret writes to Amélie:—

“Lady Elisa: went last night to Drury Lane on purpose to take me with her, and so I have seen Mr Garrick act and do admire him, as I did likewise a *Scot* in the full Highland dress, who acted up to the native bravery, though they chose a very indifferent figure of a man and to be sure set him on the stage by way of ridicule; the play was, ‘*She was the wonder*’ or ‘*A secret kept by a woman*’ who indeed acted her part well.”

The Oliphants went to Paris, where they were received at Court, and from thence to Sancerre, where the Nairnes were still living. Mrs Oliphant writes to describe the family party there, and the old man, the third Lord Nairne, whose long years of exile were drawing to a close:—

“Our cousins are the same as ever, and say they have got headaches, drinking to the eight Aunties.”

It was a remarkable circumstance that all the eight daughters of the second Lord Nairne were still living at this time. From Sancerre the pair travelled on into Italy. The mother’s heart is always at Gask with the “dear Tods.”

“We are thinking long for a letter, but cannot hope for it yet. Has the little man any teeth yet? I hope in God we need not fear for the girls, except poor Cary’s



eye which I'm a little uneasy about. Please to tell May and Ame that Papa and Mama do not forget them and will bring them a little box and a flower."

Mrs Oliphant writes from Naples at Easter, 1769 :—

"We saw the King<sup>1</sup> of Naples on Thursday wash the feet of 12 old men, that is, he kisses their feet after they are washed before him. There was a very fine supper prepared for them which the King handed the first service of to servants who set it on the table and the Karls sat down with great ease as its called a supper they have a number of wax lights and lusters about the room which only serves to burn daylight. The Queen<sup>2</sup> stood behind His Maj: with her Ladies and was a spectator she seemed highly entertained with the ceremony the first of the kind she had seen here. In the afternoon they visit seven churches on foot . . . the procession was one of the finest I ever saw, the officers of all the different cors, the whole of them were drest in black velvet, the Gentlemen had brocade weastcoats and cuffs, and the Ladies in the Court dress brocade cuffs too and all their diamonds, the Queen by much the prettiest woman. All the town wore black the 3 last days of lent and yet were very fine."

About the same time she writes a note to her little girl:—

"To May. I beg you will read to her every morning. I am very glad to hear from your grandmama that my dear Lassy reads so well, and I think I may be sure that you behave as a young lady of your age should do, and take care that your little sisters do nothing wrong when they are left to your charge, and that Lady Gask drinks no punch; tell her you are sure your Papa would be very sorry if she did. I hope your nurse and Meg Stuart are well. I hope you do not scold anybody in the nursery, and that you do everything Grandmama bids you without grumbling. I will not forget the little box of flowers I promise to bring you. I pray God bless you and make you a good woman."

<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand IV., third son of Charles III. of Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Marie Caroline, daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa and sister of Maria Antoinette, born 1752, married in April 1768 to the King of Naples. She was afterwards the mother of eighteen children.

The object of this winter's journeyings was not only the health of the laird; it was a pilgrimage having for its goal the shrine of Jacobite worship at Rome. To see the King and, after seven years of separation, to offer homage once more to the idol of their hopes, was the real reason of the long arduous fatigues of the journey across France and Italy. The wish was fulfilled, and a last intercourse held with the Chief for whom they had made all their lives such countless sacrifices. Though no letters give full details of all that befel Laurence and Margaret at Naples and Rome, a little is known through the pages of the Lyon in Mourning.

They had several audiences with King Charles, dining twice at the royal table. To Laurence, the King poured forth his troubles, his difficulties as to religion, the countless anxieties of his position. The Oliphants brought forward once more their great project—a Protestant bride. On 16th April they parted, never to meet again.

Mrs Oliphant writes from Naples to her father:—

“MONSIEUR ROBERTSON DE STROWAN,  
“a Givet,  
“Flandres.

“DEAR PAPA,—the situation of this City is very fine. It and the suburbs, taking in Portici where the King has a palace, makes a half Circle on the edge of the bay which we have here in full prospect, the noise of the sea continually dashing against an old castle call'd del Ovo which is built about a cannon shot from the shore, is very agreeable, there is also the breadth of the street or quay between us and the water and we hear any ships of consequence that come in salute our little Chateau. It is very hard to get riding horses here, and what they do hire are very indifferent and very dear. Mr O. try'd them but one day, so we are oblidg'd to keep a coach in pay, in which our ordinary airing is thro' a Grotto dug out of the rock about half an English mile to a place where there are sulphur stoves, they are very hot within and Mr Oliphant has not ventured yet to get into them, but walks above where it comes out like smoak, has a strong

smell of sulphur and he thinks himself sensible of its doing him good, the Doctor he consults is of the same opinion and has advised us to take a house on that side of the Grotto near Poudsolla where there is likewise a place call'd Solpatara but that is not decided yet. . . . There have been and are a good many English nobility and Gentry here who, as well as Mr Hamilton the late Lord Archibald's son, the minister and his Lady, are very polite to us. The only Scots besides us are Lord Fortrose and Mr and Mrs Lockhart of Carnwath who came about a fortnight ago from Pisa near Florence, he is now General, a very frank good like sort of man as his Lady likewise appear to be, I have only met them in odd places, having mist them and been mist at home. Mr Oliphant and I keep the best hours of any in Naples which is necessary, their's being very late. We only twice have been out pretty late ye 1st. to be at the Opera on the King of Naples birthday when he and the Queen were present, the house is vastly large and so not too hot, Oval and is lin'd with mirrors between each of the six rows of boxes which were illuminated as it was that night gilt, and all the people in Galla made the finest show imaginable. The 2nd night we stay'd out was at a private Ball at Mr Hamilton's where we had Minuets Country dances Reels and Straspeys of wh. I was the only woman had ever seen one and was sorry I could not dance them better; we had a letter from Lady Gask yesterday wrote on Christmass, you will probably have latter accounts before this reaches you. The children were then well, thank God, Lady Gask mentions poor Condy's having met with a great stroke by the death of his two eldest sons of the rush fever and sore throat; he has one left. Lady Gask was so cautious she did not write of it the letter before tho' they died the one the 10th and the other the 13th of Novr. till the distemper was out of the Country which she hopes it was by that time. It has raged a very long time.

“Mr Oliphant joins me in dutys and best wishes to all the family, says that we will endeavour to be a day or two with you in passing, but cannot promise, and that he will be disappointed if the young men are not there, I hope it will happen that they are, and ever am to you and Mama most affectly your obedient Daughter

“M. OLIPHANT.

Gask's journal describes the end of the journey:—

“*Ap.* 16. Returned to Rome. Took leave of the King and left His Majesty in perfect health. From Rome by Venice and Turin back to Paris. Then to London, the amiable Drummonds giving credit all along, and receiving us most kindly. Home to Gask July 10th where we found the Grandmother and children well, having kept my health and no astma worth mentioning since Rome. . . . Yet no sooner arrived but Family affairs about settlements discomposed me, — vapours returned, though I found in Mr Drummond of Logie a substantial friend, offering and engaging to advance money to a great extent. . . .

“*July* 29.—Meggy<sup>1</sup> born and my wife had a good recovery. Gracious is the Lord and gave a very sturday child.”

Amélie Oliphant writes to her sister, Mary Nairne, concerning two family events—the death of Lord Nairne, and the birth of a daughter at Gask:—

“*Aug.* 7 1770.

“We have been week after week expecting to hear from my dear sister, which made me delay writing till now that I have the pleasure to acquaint you that this is the 10th day since Mrs Oliphant was safely delivered of a daughter, she has recovered as well as possibly could be expected, and who do you think has supplid your place but good Lady Strathallan, we are really very much obliged to her. The child is a fine Todd, was cristened Margaret Euphemia Janet Charlotte Alexandrina 1st day of Aug. Now my dear sister tho your journey has been no doubt chargeable and very fatiguing to you, I daresay you do not grudge it since you have had the satisfaction to be with our dear Brother in his last moments, the very thought of it makes me happy that he was so well attended tho I am certain his sons would do all in their power. We all imagined you would set out directly to come home as I hope you are by this time, . . . Mrs Oliphant wishes you would come by Givet. My son has been much in his ordinary way since you left us. The children are thank God well,—most affectionately yours,  
AMÉLIE OLIPHANT.”

<sup>1</sup> Margaret, afterwards Mrs Keith of Ravelstone.

Mary Nairne was known in the family as the Elect Lady. The origin of this term has not come to light, but it is certain that at all times of family stress, her presence was looked upon as indispensable. As a girl she had been in the thick of Jacobite activity, and was with her mother at Nairne when the tenants were sent for by the old lady, and ordered to go to Perth to assist the Governors Oliphant and Strathallan. The Elect Lady is said to have joined her mother in threatening that "if they did not take up arms and go, she would cause Drummawhine's rebels plunder all their goods, and throw them to the door."<sup>1</sup> When called upon to make the long weary journey to Sancerre,<sup>2</sup> to attend her brother's dying bed, she was sixty-one years old, and was soon to take up her abode at Gask to end her days there. No less than four of the eight Nairne sisters died at Gask.

Another family event of this year was the death of Laurence Oliphant of Condie, he whose early years had been so specially associated with the Gask family.

"My Friend Condie's death," writes Gask in his diary, "being drowned." Mention is made of the event in a letter from Duncan Robertson to his daughter, Mrs Oliphant, 5th February 1771, from Givet:—

"I think, my D. D. this world is a great deal madder than it was in my young days; In this little place where there is no Business or Manufacturies, the poor people are starving for want of employment and the little Burgers who are just above want, run up and down calling, feasting and masquerading. It is commonly said of old people that they see the world through their own sickly greenish opticks and that is all the difference, but there is evident demonstration that the parts of the world we know best are immensely sunk in their moral character within my memory. . . . The accompts of poor Condie are dismal and shocking; it is even surprising that a man of his

<sup>1</sup> Albemarle Papers, vol. i. p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> There had been for years a considerable Jacobite colony at Sancerre. In 1777 it was reduced to four: Sir Alexander Dalmahoy, Mr Neil MacDonald, Mr M'Nab, and Henry Nairne. The latter mentions in a letter that he has many friends in the neighbourhood, "Yet I resemble the Israelites, as I long for the Land of Cakes, as they did for the onions of Egypt."

sense and discretion should have exposed himself without necessity to a ragin water in a speat, for the Water of May is but a burn for ordinary."

Condie had been the nominal owner of the estate of Gask for years, and it was feared his death would be the cause of long complications, but Gask writes that it

"was not productive of the inconveniency to me that many imagined. His sons Tutors did their part in conveying the Estate from him with remarkable expedition and alacrety, and on June 27 this long spun out transaction was finished by the old Purchasers disponing it to my Mother and Wife in life-rent, and to Mr Will. Drummond and others in Fee for my sons' behalf; although one of the old Purchasers, Ebenezer, dissented, yet all was ended in the way I desired; . . . and a burthen that perhaps discomposed me more than religion allows, taken off, and my affairs being now settled, I at freedom to depart without anxiety whenever the call may come."

The year passed otherwise without event. This was the last they were to spend all together. It must have been a period of quiet happiness for the laird and his wife, and for Amélie also among the little children she loved. Marjory was now nine years old.

Colyear Robertson writes to his sister, 23rd September 1771, about his niece at Gask:—

"I observe by Miss May's manner of writing that her present language is very broad Scots which, being that of her nurses and servants, could hardly be otherwise. That Dialect will not be gracefull in a young Lady of her Birth some years hence, for I imagine the language we improperly call Scots can at present be looked on in no other light than the Patois of Gascony or Provence in France."

All the group were growing into spirited, attractive children, though Colyear's remonstrance about the Scots tongue was probably well founded. The girls were musical and clever; there are many glimpses of them in the letters that passed between Gask and the Robertsons at Givet.

Colyear Robertson writes from Givet to his sister, Mrs Oliphant:—

“MY DEAR SISTER,—M., who is just now spinning lint, desires me to make her appology for not writing any this time. She says P. has wrote everything she has to say, except the Story of the Spindle and Spinning wheel which I am just going to have the Honour to relate. Before your letter came with the description of the Spindle, Bolsters and Bands of a Cotton-spinning wheel, and of the manner in which the said spindle runs upon the said Bolsters, M. had given over spinning upon the cotton-spinning wheel and was begun to spin upon the lint-spinning wheel, so that she has not yet made the experiment of the cotton-wheel. . . . M.’s reason for giving over spinning upon the cotton-wheel and for beginning to spin upon the lint-wheel is as follows. The Cotton-wheel by its form and structure obliges the Spinstress to sit far from the fire, or at least to reach far from it, which M. found to be very inconvenient on account of the excessive cold weather—though the fires (which I saw the wood of) are none of the least. S. and I have not been out of doors for many days past, there being no amusement in the fields great enough to engage us to wade through the snow. The sort of game this country abounds in most is Wolves, which are just now going about in little armies, and howling in the night-time round the villages. We had a villager here two days ago shewing the head of one which he had killed; if you had it, it would do very well to frighten any of your young Ladies into good humour when they are a little peevish; I only mean the two youngest, for the eldest is too much of a woman now to be ever out of humour. I am not surprised that she was sorry for the tragical end of the poor Cow that could not be kept within bounds. I think Miss’s song is well chosen, but these two ‘*A Lady lookit out at a Castle Window*,’ and the ‘*Gipsies*,’ which were my favourite songs when I was her age, are in my humble opinion prettier.”

Duncan Robertson writes, 13th June 1772, to his daughter:—

“I heard of the chevalier’s marriage before it was in the publick news; The Duchesse de Bournsaville had it

from Brussels where, it seems, it was first contrived, and that lady told it to a friend of mine at Tournay; that was all that ever I heard of it, except that the Gazettes carry everywhere; for I have no correspondence with any body excepting my own immediate family."

In the same letter his wife complains:—

"My dear Daughter writes none of the chit-chat of our dear little bodies, which is a great loss to me as I read what they say over and over. I suffer a good deal for the loss my eldest sister<sup>1</sup> made lately, pray God comfort her. O what a number of misfortunes she has had; good Lady Mary is always with the afflicted."

The matter of Charles Edward's marriage was naturally of absorbing interest to the Gask family. All the innocent plotting in which Amélie had engaged for so many years was now at an end; she had her desire in knowing that her beloved Sovereign was married, though not to a Scottish or English lass, as she had so earnestly wished.

She writes, 9th May 1772, to Bishop Gordon:—

"We have got intelligence by this time of . . . marriage. I do assure you it is only from him (Bishop Forbes) by your means that we know anything certain about it except what everybody must know. I would be glad to know her Christian name, as you know there is one expects a little body soon. I leave it to you to find out the name if you can."

Bishop Gordon writes to Forbes from London, 4th June 1772:—

"Within these two hours I have been enabled to inform you that the Lady's name is Louisa. . . . Pray my best respects and every kind wish to the worthy Lady who has been so anxious to know the name, and to all that worthy family, whom I love and esteem."

In full faith that all was well, Oliphant writes in his journal:—

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the death of Lady Strathallan's son, Willie Drummond.



“Every year brings blessings and comforts and this spring a very remarkable one. The King was marry’d by Proxy, Mar. 28th, and consumate April 17 at Magerate.<sup>1</sup> Bless the Lord who revives our Royal Family. Bless and Praise him for ever.”

Margaret Oliphant writes to her father at Givet, 10th May 1772 :—

“We have seldom had a newspaper for some time without mention being made of a marriage between the Chevalier St. George and a Princess of Stolberg, whose Mother is said to be of Scots extraction. People here are curious to know more particulars about the story which, if you can give by any accident, will be oblig’d for, what her Xtian name is, her age. We hear they call the Lady, Ann. There is an acquaintance of yours that will perhaps be so fond of the novelty as to give her a name daughter some time in June, unless she have an opportunity of paying such a compliment to the husband. *May 30.* How little do we know what a few days will produce, when this was begun all our neighbours and friends were in their usual health, but Sunday 24th we received an express from Machany with accounts that our dear friend Mr William Drummond was in such a fever that there were little or no hopes of his recovery. Mr Oliphant went there immediately found him bedfast but quite calm and sensible, but that night he turned insensible, and knew not his old friend and cousin when he returned on the Monday to see him, but died that afternoon before Mr Oliphant came home, with a heavy heart to be sure, tho he carried it surprisingly, and acted yesterday as chief mourner at the burial of his honest hearted friend, who every one that knew justly regrets, but it is the will of God, and as such my dear Aunt bears the stroke—most unluckily Mrs Drummond is abroad, she went by London to Sens where Mr T. Nairne lives. Lord grant her strength to bear this greatest of all afflictions.”

The baby then expected at Gask was not to be named

<sup>1</sup> Maserati.

after the new Queen. A boy was born 8th June 1772. The father wrote to Bishop Forbes:—

“The child is to be named Charles to-morrow, and an oak-bough is to be his chief ornament. I know the name-father likes the boys best, therefore will not grudge that his Royal Consort does not get the name-daughter till next occasion.”

But Charles was the last of the laird's family.

Mrs Robertson of Strowan writes to her daughter at Gask about the birth of Charles,<sup>1</sup> 10th July 1772:—

“I need not repeat what pleasure and joy it gives us to hear of dear Charles' birth and your being in so good a way of recovery. I will be impatient to hear how Lady Gask is. I am afraid she is at too much trouble with the dear little ones and gets cold. I do not think they should any of them ly in her room, I am sure she will be getting up some times in the night if they should want for anything and that must do her harm. I am glad for more reasons than one that you had a son rather than a daughter since it has pleased God to send you one. The Gent that gave me Mr H.'s letter told me he saw two letters since that Lady<sup>2</sup> was married that you intended to call your Daughter after, her name is Louise, as he says both these letters agrees in it. Lady Orchal<sup>3</sup> will get many namesakes if that be. Pray make my kind compliments to good Lady Inchbrakie and tell her I wish her much joy of her nephew Charles. I know she is very clanish and I want to hear how her Daughter has profited at Edinburgh and if she continues to be very pretty. I am afraid Brother James<sup>4</sup> has done wrong in taking away his daughter from Taymount; what education can he give her? The accounts I have from Lady Mary of your dear little ones is charming. I wish you would give your young horsewoman a sheet of paper and let her fill it up with whatever comes in her head and send it

<sup>1</sup> Charles lived till 1797 and died unmarried.

<sup>2</sup> Louise Stolberg, wife of Charles Edward Stewart.

<sup>3</sup> Louisa Nairne, wife of Graeme of Orchill.

<sup>4</sup> James Nairne married Mary Wood. He had an only child, Mary, who married Lieutenant Cook.

me when it is quite full. I will be very poor before I grudge paying the postage and I will not trouble her with long answers."

A great many of the Givet letters are taken up with details of health and remarkable remedies proposed for illness of all kinds. These are better omitted, but it is tempting here and there to give a complete letter, or series of letters, with all the inconsequence, the gossip, and small intimate details that make them alive. The following, dated 2nd November 1772, was addressed to Mrs Oliphant at Gask by her father, Duncan Robertson, at Givet:—

"MY DEAR D.,— Your letter of Oct. 12 arrived Thursday last, we were impatient for it as your dear little man<sup>1</sup> did not seem to be quite out of danger when you wrote before; now we are at ease. I am sorry for Lady Gask's troublesome cough, when it is attended with defluxion that carries off freely it is dangerous to bind it up unless the defluxion is drove to a different course by other medicines. I take laudanum to be a desperate remedy, in any case I have been frequently sensible of its harm but never of its good. I wish Lady Janet had some of the Swedish Elixir. Your Mother found the immediate benefit of it twice or thrice that she had felt some uneasiness. I take it frequently that is when I find the smallest disorder, where there is nothing violent. I cannot imagine what has given all his friends such a terrible aversion to that poor Mr Murray; Colyear has been battered at different quarters about his staying some time at Lille, and last of all, as soon as Mr Mercer arrived at Tournay he sent him a message to come immediately about pressing business, and the pressing business was just to bring him to his garrison.

"Saturday night I had a letter from your brother Alexander dated at the Hague the 26th Oct. I suspect he is still in his garrison, for the Prince of Orange told him flatly that he would not give him leave of absence unless he found another Captain of the Regiment to supply his place; he had wrote to another Captain do

<sup>1</sup> The baby Charles had been inoculated for smallpox.

him that favour, but was very doubtful of success. There is a certain number of officers allowed to be absent upon furlough from the time of exercise till the first of April next year, and they take it by turns, unluckily it is not Al's turn this year, and the Prince will not diminish the number of officers that is appointed to remain with the corps, especially in those seaport towns where the service is strictly observed and of some importance now. Here is a detail that perhaps you did not know before: very true, say you, but what business with those details? Why, if it signifies no more, it will help to prevent your running down the poor Prince of Orange. I hope your next will inform in that Lady Dunmore has got the better of her unlucky accident. We have had as fine a harvest and the finest vintage time ever known, but we find the prices of things little diminished; the last sack of wheat I got a few days ago, stands me just 16 shillings sterling, it weighs 200 pounds. Many good wishes to all friends and blessings to you and yours from, my dear D.,  
 ever affect.,  
 DUNCAN ROBERTSON."

"I have a long story to tell you of the virtue of fir-buds to be taken by way of tea, but I defer it at present. My Author says Russian fir-buds, but I believe those of Rannoch are as good, such as grow in low deep grounds. The juice of fir in many shapes is well known to be salutary."

On the same sheet Mrs Robertson writes to her sister, Amélie, at Gask:—

"I give my dear sister thanks for the few lines and am glad to hear of your being in the garden with your dear little ones. Long may you be together, you cannot want amusement as one or other of them will be always saying some diverting thing. I am fond of hearing what they say at second hand. Wishing you and yours all happiness, I only add that I ever am, dear sister,  
 aff. yours,  
 MARJORY ROBERTSON."

Duncan Robertson finishes the sheet:—

"Ame's speech to Jacky<sup>1</sup> would make an excellent

<sup>1</sup> There is no record of what Ame said to Jacky.

subject for a long dissertation; having too much of our own will or eagerly grasping at more of our own will, or grumbling and fretting when anything crosses our will constitutes the bulk of human misery. I am very glad to hear Lord Rollo<sup>1</sup> is well; he and I were at school at the same time, and tho not very intimate then, because he was too young, we were much so afterwards, and I was very fond of him for his honest kind friendly heart. His brother Harry<sup>2</sup> and I were much of an age and in the same class when we contracted a friendship that lasted while he lived. I catch myself now playing the old man in earnest, for old people are fond of dwelling upon the remembrance of their young days. We had Kingsburgh's<sup>3</sup> Death in the *Cologne Gazette*, with the sum of what was remarkable in his history. I find writing uneasy 1st because a few minutes leaning forward hurts me so that I write upon a broad book I hold in my hand, supported by the back of a high chair. The high chair is one of two that your Mother made up for herself and me and covered with a very good tartan night-gown, which was made into a gown much about the time you came into the world (1740) and has been my very useful companion many a cold night, but now degraded. Adieu, my dear Daughter."

A little later there is a letter from Colyear to his sister, dated 20th December 1772, referring to the Murray episode, which, however, remains obscure:—

"I am sorry to find that all Mr Murray's friends (I mean Lady Elizabeth's husband<sup>4</sup>) have such an unfavourable notion of him. I went to make Lady Elizabeth a visit whenever I heard she was come to Lille. I knew nothing of their circumstances nor of their reason for leaving England, but found them in great distress for want of friends and for want of language. I never was

<sup>1</sup> John, sixth Lord Rollo, succeeded his brother Andrew 1765, and died 1783.

<sup>2</sup> Henry, second son of the fourth Lord Rollo. He married Anne, daughter of the second Lord Ruthven, and died without issue.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Kingsburgh died 13th February 1772.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Elizabeth was a daughter of Lord Dunmore, born 1743. She married, 24th July 1763, Mr Murray, a son of Lord Edward Murray, one of the Duke of Atholl's younger sons. He was in the 42nd Highlanders, but took orders in 1770, and afterwards was Dean of Killaloe. There were two daughters of the marriage, Charlotte, who died unmarried 1819, and Harriet, who married, first, Captain Lindley, and second, John T. Staveley.

so much solicited and pressed to stay anywhere in my life and I believe indeed I was of some little use to them, for the people seemed to think there was no great harm in imposing upon a Milord Anglais! I procured Mr Murray an exemption from Duty by getting another officer of our Regiment to join with me in signing an Attestation of his Noblesse; I introduced him to M. le Comte de May, Lieutenant-General of the Province of Flanders and Commandant of Lille, whom it was necessary that he should be known to. I likewise wrote a letter for him to the Prince de Soubise, which procured him a very polite answer from that Prince and a privilege of Hunting. But I'm afraid that if his Relations will not take the trouble to sollicit a living for him, or an annuity for Lady Elizabeth, whom they have nothing to say against, his Birth being so well known at Lille will be no advantage. Had I received time enough some intelligence which was given me afterwards I might possibly have prevailed upon them to remove from Lille to some more obscure place conformable to their situation."

So the letters came and went, bringing small excitements and interests, keeping up the sense of family union.

But over the little group at Gask the clouds were gathering, even while they lived their happy simple days in that dearest spot. For the last time they are seen together—Amélie always a lonely figure in her old age, even though the six grandchildren gather round her; Mary Nairne, the Elect Lady; Laurence the Laird, and his wife Margaret; the broken ruins of the old home seem full of these presences to-day, the woods remember them, the grassy avenues wait still for their unforgotten voices. But the group disperses, melts, reforms again into a changed circle. Swiftly and silently the old order is changed.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE LAST OF THE JACOBITES

A DEEP cloud of anxiety hung over the little family at Gask, and this time the fear was not on behalf of the laird, whose health had been the centre of all thought for so many years. The health of the young mother, Margaret Oliphant, began to decline, and she developed a "stubborn cough." The remedy was sought in foreign travel. In spite of the endless fatigues, the discomforts, the bad food, the bad housing, then involved, it was thought the only hopeful course. Modern science would have prescribed life in the garden at Gask, and open bedroom windows, but in those days the treatment of her dread disease was calculated to hasten the end. It was decided that the winter was to be spent in Portugal, and that Amélie and her sister, Mary Nairne, should remain at Gask in charge of the five younger children. Marjory, the eldest girl, then nearly fourteen, was to travel with her parents. They set forth in October—the laird and his lady bidding adieu for ever to the mother who had been the star of their joint lives.

Under the date, 3rd October, Sunday, 1773, Laurence Oliphant writes in his journal:—

"Mr Erskine to give us Communion to-morrow before our intended journey.

"Remember a thoro resignation to the will of the Father in all things, and stedfast trust and faith in Him for bestowing everything proper for us upon our earnest and humble petitions, in particular just now to beg my wife's health may be strengthened and confirmed. Strive

against fieryness and fretfulness of temper, cheque appetite at meals, no salt Fridays, that it may be kept more under command.”

They went first to the Drummonds at Wimbledon, and sailed for Lisbon on 13th November.

The time of Amélie's departure was drawing near, and rather than follow the adventures of the travellers, imagination clings to the last days of the gentle and spirited woman, who almost for the first time in any family crisis was assigned the inactive part. When son and daughter and the little granddaughter had ridden away down the hill on the first stage of their long journey, she would turn back to the household duties, to daily cares for the sister she loved, and for the five little ones, with an accustomed sense of responsibility. All her life she had borne burdens for those dear to her heart, and life was prized for the chances it offered of enfolding them in a care that knew neither discouragement nor the need of rest. To the very end she was at work. Very eagerly must all the party at Gask have looked for the letters of the travellers, and the following, from little Marjory to her grandmother, would be full of interest and amusement to the children.

“HARTFORD,  
“(40 miles from London),  
“Nov. 9, 1773.

“DEAR GRANDMAMA, — We was at Wimbeldon yesterday with Mr Hary Drummond and Elizebes,<sup>1</sup> and came today from that place to Hartford. Sir William Stirling and his Lady was there too. Mama's cough is better, in general, and very seldom sleeps ill. Papa has had nothing of the Astma since we came to London, and I as fat as a pig. We went to see our namesakes the Elephants at Bukinggam house, they are monstrous Creatures indeed, they would about stand in the high Dining room at Gask, they have short but stout legs, are of a mouse colour with only a few scating hairs, in short

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth, daughter of the Hon. Charles Compton, and wife of Henry Drummond. She died 25th March 1819.



you will find them described in the book of Beasts. please ask Miss Anny how she would like to ride in a castle upon their backs. I admire the whispering Galery at St Pauls and the Geamethricall stair. I am glad to hear my Brothers and Sisters are well—I am teething to keep Charles Company. I saw a fine Lion in the Tower. I am Dr G. your most aff. Grand child,

“MARJORY OLIPHANT.”

Mrs Oliphant writes to her mother-in-law from Lisbon, 8th December 1773:—

“Tho it is not yet 2 months since we left you, dear Madam, and the little bodies, it appears like a long quarter of a year since we arrived in this large, irregular, confused and very stinking city.—We had a visit from General Maclean our Countryman, who is at present the principal commander of all the troops in Portugal, the Count de la Lippe being absent, who is the only one above him. He remembers Inchbrakie when in the Dutch service. The General and all the Scots to be found in Lisbon were invited to dine with Mr Mayne the Banker on St Andrews Day, we were about 30 in all,—only 3 ladies including May.”

In January little Carolina, then seven years old, had the following letter from her sister at Seville; it is perhaps the first letter she ever received:—

“DR CAROLIN,—I wrote to Ame last and will to Laurence next. We have been in the Kings Gardens<sup>1</sup> here which are finely ornamented with orange and lemone trees, and walls in their hygest Bauty though no flowers. I am your aft. sister,  
M. O.”

She continues to her grandmother:—

“I dont well know what to say but however will pretend to it.—This is a very dirty place and cold sometimes. We went to see two gardens of the Kings and one of his brothers. At the Kings there was an elephant in better order but not so tall as the one we saw at London.”

<sup>1</sup> The King of Portugal had a wooden palace at this time, not having had a solid one built since the earthquake.

Though Lady Gask had now reached what was in those days considered extreme old age, she yet retained a firm grasp upon the practical management of the household. A hundred and forty years ago there existed in the relations between mistress and servants a note of personal interest, now lost,—a survival of the old Scottish days, fading even then into the grey shadows of a far past, when the lady and her maids shared the occupations of life in the long hours of spinning, weaving and preserving, when she sat among them, not only as a monitor, but as a companion. With the decline of feudal feeling, the possibility of this intercourse also declined. But in the second half of the eighteenth century, individual character and opinion had not ceased to count in the estimate of a servant's capacity for usefulness. If unflinching devotion to duty was expected on the part of a maid, on the part of the mistress there must have been that living and personal interest which has in some manner dropped out of modern domestic life. The following memorandum, in Amélie's handwriting, while showing that the "servant question" existed even then, also shows the relation in which employed and employers stood.

"As Margaret Campbell's principles both in church and state were agreeable to my own, I proposed to have kept her with me till my death, as I hate changes of servants especially about myself, and did my best to shew her the faults she is most adicted to. But pride is so predominant a fault in her that tho she had more good qualitys than she has, they are all swallowed up in that Devilish and most intolerable fault of pride, of which I could give many instances, and indeed hardly a day passes without some, which I often tell her of, but I see it is too deeply rooted in her to be removed, at least by me, as she seems to be quite careless of any advice I give her. Fain I would have had her learn, first to know something of the kitchen that in time she might be capable at least of helping to direct another, and this task Mrs Oliphant was to take upon her, no, she said that was far below her and would be very sorry if any friend she

had would know ever she was in a kitchen. She was indulged in that, and never after desired to do anything of the kind. When washing, which she seems to like as ill, absolutely refused to wash any of the other servants linins, said she wondered they had the face to bid her. When dressing, Mrs M'Donald who is a very good Dresser and was desired to learn her and was shewing her how to do, she said she could dress before she came here, the fact is, she cannot dress a shirt near as it ought to be, no starch and fining at all.

“*N.B.*—The linins she refused to wash was, Beaty Clarcks. What made it the odder Beaty Clarck went to the kitchen, tho unwilling, in Pegie Frasers place, whom Meg Campbell sett of, and made the poor girl take an oath that she never would enter the kitchen door, tho Meg Campbell was the one that brought Pegie Fraser here on purpose for the kitchen. Mrs Oliphant thought her too young for the charge, but Meg insisted she would do very well, intreated Mrs Oliphant to take her, which she did intirely on Meg Camps account. This was the return Mrs Oliphant met with for her good nature.”

About another servant old Lady Gask writes, July 1773:—

“Harriot has the inclination to do well, but one more ignorant I never saw, very dull at taking up, she can neither wash nor dress. I made a trial of her of my two capes you gave the borders to, she made them a rare figure. She said she did not give herself out for a washer and dresser, because of her principles. I thought she might be useful about the three eldest children but I find she is much troubled with scurvy—which makes me uneasie for poor Jeany that sleeps with her.”

In the same letter she says:—

“It is a pity you canot get a peep of our Drawing room just now, it is so well filled with Ladys and Gentlemen who I left just now to end my letter—Miss Ayton and Miss Johnston, the eight newe chairs<sup>1</sup> filled besides

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Ayton, a frequent visitor at Gask, mother of the Poet Ayton, embroidered seats for eight chairs in the Old House. They are now at Ardblair Castle.

three armed ones and the couch. They have been very diverted with Laurie chusing a wife, which he was to do by throwing his handkerchief."

The last gardening account of old Lady Gask belongs also to this year. The plants—the descendants of some of them doubtless are still flourishing in the glades of Gask—all came from Cultoquhey and were supplied by Margaret Eagle.

“100 large larch trees, ten shillings.  
 60 spanish chestnuts.  
 Horse Ditto.  
 Holly hocks, 1s. 1 Peach.  
 1 Plumb, 9d.  
 1 Double Sweet briar.  
 1 Double Blush sweet briar.  
 100 fine English chestnuts, one and sixpence.  
 2 lbs. Irish whins.  
 200 fine Artichock.”

The following is Amélie's last letter from Bishop Forbes. It is dated “Aug. 1 after Vespers 1773.”

“MADAM,—Having got notice of a private Bearer to get off early to-morrows Morning, and though little time be allowed me, yet I cannot fail to acquaint your Ladyship that last week I had in my custody for two days an excellent miniature picture of a certain aimable lady,<sup>1</sup> commonly called in the place where she resides THE QUEEN OF HEARTS. Tho' the picture be very beautiful yet tis strongly affirmed, that the Original far exceeds it. I sighed for an invisible Cloak and a pair of wings to take a sudden Flight to Auld Hall<sup>2</sup> and to return after feasting some eyes, as suddenly; but wishes are vain and misgiving. Some Anglicans have taken a trip to — on purpose to see the charming Fair — God bless you and all yours. In haste, but most cordially. A Dieu, Dear Lady, A Dieu.”

The long winter wore on. The laird and lady with Marjory were at Seville. Margaret sent home verses to

<sup>1</sup> Louise Stolberg, wife of Charles Edward Stewart.

<sup>2</sup> Gask House.

Gask describing the hardships of these travels. One or two entries in Laurence's journal throw light on the progress of events:—

“1774. Begun the year at Seville by my being fretted and out of humour at our situation. Yet so-so private lodgings were got, and a coach.”

“*Feb.*—My wife recovered considerably.”

“*Mar.*—Not so well. Cough returned on catching cold and anxiety of different kinds with accounts of my Mothers illness gave distress.”

“I was scrimpt in money partly by my own thoughtlessness and thereby a journey home by land prevented.”

The slow spring was just touching the trees and hills of Strathearn into a renewal of life, when Amélie Oliphant sunk under her last illness. Her son and his wife and child were turning their faces homeward, but they were destined to find a changed circle.

The Gask household at the time consisted of the five children, their great aunts Mary and Henrietta Nairne and Amélie herself. She was in failing health, but not acutely ill. One morning her sister Mary, the Elect Lady, came into her room before breakfast, and Amélie asked her to say a prayer, which she did, extempore, as there was no book in the room. She told Henrietta afterwards that she had made it out better than she expected, as she had never tried before. An hour or two afterwards, while writing a letter in her room, Mary herself was taken ill. Some inflammatory trouble was the cause, and she lived only seven days. Henrietta wrote<sup>1</sup> to Mrs Robertson at Givet:—

“She was quite sensecable and distink to the last and as you know, good soul, it was a period she had long been wishing and expecting; Dy'd resigned and composed as she had lived. She dy'd the 2 of March. As I know it was her inclenation to be buriead at Achtergeven (tho on her death bed she said 'were the Pig breaks, let the sheles lye') there she was caread in a Hearse, and

<sup>1</sup> The letter is printed in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 380.

according to a plan she had drawn some years ago of the Ile there, which she had always in her pocket book, was she laide beside my Father and dear Nephew James Nairne.”<sup>1</sup>

The strange part of the story is that Amélie never knew of her sister's death, or even of her illness. The House of Gask was not large, and it is difficult to understand how Amélie, who all through her own illness was for the most part conscious, could have been unaware of so severe a sickness near at hand, and that all the stir and sounds inevitable in removing the body in a hearse, could not have penetrated to her own sick-room. Yet she heard and saw nothing. Fourteen days afterwards she also was carried from the house to her last resting-place in the churchyard of Gask.

The letter written on the occasion by Bishop Forbes to Bishop Gordon is here given, though it has been already printed more than once:<sup>2</sup>—

“Alas dear Sir, Lady Gask is no more; She expired after five weeks illness on the 18th instant half after two o'clock afternoon having received the Viaticum, and was sensible and distinct to the very last, aged about seventy five. I may with great truth say: ‘Woe is me, for the faithful are minished from among the children of men.’ The Church never had a more faithful daughter, nor the King a more steady and loyal subject. She bore up under all the trials and difficulties of life with a firmness and constancy, a mildness and cheerfulness of mind, not to be outdone by any other. When her Ladyship was in use of coming over from foreign parts to do the business of the family, she displayed a fortitude, calmness and application, endearing and instructive. I admired, I respected her. Gone she is, I hope, to reap the fruit of her labours, and may all her descendants tread in her steps. Be she with God and God with her.”

No letter records the grief of her devoted son. He

<sup>1</sup> James Nairne, eldest son of the third Lord Nairne. He died unmarried, 1737.

<sup>2</sup> In the Jacobite Lairds and the Lyon in Mourning.

was on his way home, having received the news of the death of the Elect Lady, and of the serious illness of his mother. On 23rd April he records:—

“Got accounts of my dear dear Mother’s death as we were going aboard the *Susana*, Captain Dobson, for London. Her illness and fever began with a bad cold on Feb. 13th.”

His grief was soon to be swallowed up in another and deeper bereavement:—

“*May 28.*—Came ashore at Dover after a passage of thirty-six days. My wife always sick, but free of cough during the voyage, not so well after landing.”

“*30.*—Arrived in London. While there my wife feverish and her cough returning. Better twelve days at Wimbleton.”

“*June 23.*—Set out for Scotland, were at Edinburgh, Orchil and Inchbrakie.”

“*July 4.*—Came to Gask, and for some days all went pretty well, but much affected with remembrance of my Mother.”

Yet the sad blank of the homecoming must have been lightened by some joys. All could not have been tears and sorrow, when Margaret greeted her children once more after so many months of separation. But there was little else to cheer the wanderers. The hardships of the journey from Spain—the storms and discomfort of six miserable weeks, had reduced Margaret’s health to a desperate condition. She must surely have known that she had come home to die. Comparatively little is known of her inner character, until this last illness brought into pathetic relief the gentle fortitude of her nature. In the midst of the group of little children so urgently needing her, with the invalid husband dependent on her care, surely these last weeks at Gask must have been full of anguish. No word of it escapes her, nor is there any echo of self-pity or complaint. The story of her death has been often told; but no excuse is needed for re-telling it in the actual words of those who were with her.

“*July 17.* My wife thought dangerously ill.”

“*29.* Carry’d to an airing in the garden and turned astmattick.”

“*Oct. 23.* The last day with us at dinner and remarkably cheerful with Inchbrakie, yet declining fast.”

“*25.* Came to sleep below stairs—no more airings in the chaise.”

“*29.* Very weak. Received the Communion Mr Erskin.”<sup>1</sup>

“*Nov. 4.* Died easily and quite sensible about 7 at night. Burry’d in the grave of Laurence, my great-great-grandfather, who by his will ordered the isle, which his widow executed.”

Another hand left a record of the last details :—

“Mrs Oliphant gave her Husband several months before being indisposed, on the day they were wrote, the following lines to the tune of an air she had heard at Venice :—

“‘O may I be continued in this state of life,  
The mother of fine children, my husband’s happy wife,  
Until the day I’m called away from all that’s here below,  
That day will be, most blest to me, I humbly hope it so.

“‘Dictated by a serene heart and wrote with a steady hand  
March 1773.’

“Ten days before her death, said to prepare her husband that he seemed, as well as her Aunt Henret, not to think her so ill as she was, added, ‘It’s hard to regrate my going to be happy, as I hope to be.’ He said he hoped the separation would not be long—replied she hoped it would for the children’s sake.

“The day before her death desired the six children might be brought to her, embraced each of them, and as they were going away said, ‘See who will be the best child and stay most with their Papa.’ Said to her husband when they were gone, ‘You see how easily I can part with the children; I know they are in good hands.’ That day her Husband endeavouring to make her easy, said, ‘We will not be long parted, the time

<sup>1</sup> The Episcopal minister at Muthil and the staunch friend of the Gask family.



will appear short, I'll keep up well and only suppose you to be gone to a foreign country for health.' 'Yes,' she answered, 'and you'r sure I'll find it.' He observing to her that she was going to meet with a sister, a Boy, and many dear friends to be happy with, answered, 'No doubt I'll be glad to see them all, but when I see our Saviour I'll probably be little taken up with them.'

"The forenoon of her death Friday Nov. 4, 1774, took from her husband two small bits of Bisquit dipt in a glass of Tent and water; he drank the remainder of the glass to their merry meeting again, and she thanked him.

"He desired of her after death to ask of her Creator to be allowed to come and be about him to keep him from many faults he might fall into, said she would, and that it might be, that spirits would be allowed to be about their friends here.

"Among the last distinct things she said in the afternoon betwixt five and six to the Clergyman after a prayer, 'I have hardly breath, Mr Erskine, to thank you for your coming.'

"Died calmly between seven and eight as the recommendatory prayer was saying; about an hour before said, 'Is it not time now meet for the recommendatory prayer?' Dr Wood who attended her, but was not present at her death, wrote from Perth: 'I never saw young or old resigne life in so dutyfull and so becoming a manner.'

"Mrs Oliphant a few days before her death asked to see some of the old Scots Magazines and in the year 1750, page 360, found the Dying Christian's Soliloquey, a poem which she was then able to read over herself and had it read to her several times afterwards by others, twice by her Husband.

"'The world recedes, it flies from view.'"

The children, too young at the time to understand all their irreparable loss, fulfilled in time to come the wishes of the dying mother. Not one of the four daughters married in the father's lifetime, nor did either of the sons embark on a career away from home. Laurence outlived his gentle wife for eighteen years, and the story of these

years, traced in his journal and in the family letters, though one of purely domestic interest, yet shows how strenuously still the true Jacobite clung to the faith.

On the last day of this year of bereavement he wrote:—

“Nineteen years and a half did I enjoy the blessing of a good wife too little prized, therefor must say I merited the loss. . . . In the meantime I'm favoured with six fine children, easy circumstances, and a dear good Aunt Lady Herriot to manage the family and be a guardian to the children.”

Years after he wrote:—

“Tuesday I made my weekly visit to the graves of my worthy Parents and dear wife, but nought save the rubbish of them lies there, only fit to keep in mind they were. The noble parts enjoy the Vision of the Saviour and are employed as the Creator sees fitt. I desired my wife when dying to ask of that Glorious being to be permitted to be about me. . . . And I have no doubt that infinite Goodness has permitted it,—the more as she is part of me, and we designed to be united in the strictest union for ever.”

The widower was not left to face the problem of managing a house full of servants and six young children by himself. The youngest of the Nairne sisters, Henrietta,<sup>1</sup> consented to take charge of the establishment, “to continue my comfort and comforter till May becomes a woman.” It seems that Henrietta never gave any definite promise to remain at Gask, and a fear that she will leave her post and his affairs be left to the tender mercies of Marjory, his eldest girl, then evidently at a trying stage of development, tinges his letters and journals with anxiety, as some of the following extracts show:—

“1775. This year has calmly passed, nothing remarkable and good health added. . . . Comfort in my six fine

<sup>1</sup> Henrietta Nairne was then sixty. She remained at Gask till her death in 1802.

children and their kind guardian, inward satisfaction. In place of this year moving heavily as I might naturally expect, it has run prodigiously, the employments that succeed one another makes time pass rapidly, no vapours, no languid hours, a gentle hurry, though alone, pushes on the day and night comes wellcom."

"Nov. 18. Bishop Forbes died, soon followed by his mate."

The following were addressed to the Robertsons at Givet, and dated 2nd March 1775:—

"DEAR SISTER,—When Davie Graeme<sup>1</sup> left Scotland Mr Oliphant was so kind as write Orchil and his Lady and eldest son to pass a week hear which they did, the poor lady is a good deal in the dumps you can easily believe, on her son's going on such a disagreeable hazardys expedition; I dont know if you have heard of the increase of Lord Dunmore's family, his Lady is delivered of a 4th. daughter, who is named Virgine.<sup>2</sup> I leave you to make my kindest good wishes were due except of the same to yourself from my dear sisters,—aft.

"HENTTA NAIRNE."

"DEAR GRAND MAMA,—If Uncle Colyear had not been gone I intended to have wrote a few lines to him in this letter; That he might not think I had taken the pet again; but since my Uncle is gone it is not my fault, though indeed I might have wrote long ago. I have begun lately to one of your works, I mean the spinning. I like it very well, tho' I make but little hand of it, for I have spun but about five hairs. Both my sisters intend to write, so must leave room for them. Your dutifull grand-child.

MARJORY OLIPHANT."

"DEAR GRAND MAMMA,—Your not writing to us will never hinder us from writing to you, if my dear Papa will allow. I have a great many Valantines and among the rest I have all Inchbrakie's sons and I have Mr Rollo's son, he has but one son, and I have likewise

<sup>1</sup> David, second son of Louisa Nairne and Graeme of Orchill. He sailed at this time with the transports for America, and was killed at Bunkers Hill, July 1775.

<sup>2</sup> Virgine, ninth child of the fourth Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia. By official request she was named after the Colony. She died unmarried.

the Duke of Hamilton<sup>1</sup> who is a very good man, for Aunt Heriot recommends him greatly. Please give my duty to G. P. and my Uncle. I am your most humble servant and Dutiful Grand-child.

“AMELIA OLIPHANT.”

“DEAR GRANDMAMMA,—This is the first time ever I wrote to you, but I hope it will not be the last. please give my duty to G.P. I am dear G.M. your aff. G.C.

“CAROLINA.”

This last written in a very large hand is perhaps Carolina's first letter.

Another letter belonging to this year is from Bishop Forbes (unsigned as usual) to Laurence Oliphant at Gask, 25th September 1775 (Monday):—

“I heard lately of your Favourite Family<sup>2</sup> they are in good health and still at Florence. I doubt not of your remembring Thursday<sup>3</sup> last in a proper manner. The American affair is every day turning more and more serious, printed papers are flying throughout England tending to excite a Rising. One of them has a peculiar Title *Sidney's Exhortation*, as if his ghost were come from the dead to awaken and rouse in the cause of boasted Liberty.

“Commending you and all yours to God and his protection. A Dieu, Dear Sir, A Dieu.”

A page or two of the laird's record of events gives the best idea of these early years of his widowhood:—

“*Ap. 1777, Sat.* In the evening Lady Henrietta talking as if Marjory might now answer to keep the house in her place alarmed me. . . . I will hope that my dear Aunt's heart will be turned to continue with the children till our gracious Father makes us all to be happy together.”

“*June.* James Moray Abercainey carry'd off by a fever after a few days illness and no lucid intervals; how watchful and prepared should we passengers be.”

<sup>1</sup> The eighth Duke of Hamilton, at this time nineteen years old.

<sup>2</sup> The Royal Stewarts.

<sup>3</sup> September 21st, the date of the victory of Prestonpans.

"*Sat.* Reproved Marjory for improper speech day before going to Invermay (Her aunt Henrietta not here) was sensible, bless the Lord."

"*Sun. 29th.* Laurie made a glaring lie about Pitkeatly water, powered it in the ashes and said he had drank it. Chastised and sensible of fault."

"*Nov.* Marjory I think considerably better of her wrong contradicting humour."

"*Thurs. Xmas.* Glorious day beginning with rather more cheerful sense of the day than usual, but sadly damped at dinner Lady Henrietta talking of Marjory<sup>1</sup> being put at the head of the table, sometime hence, showing by that still to have the intent of leaving me. A considerable change for the better in Marjory's behaviour.

"Tho my three great requests do not fulfill so far as perhaps I could wish yet they'll be accomplished in their season or their equivalent, and the 4th too, for the Restoration of the Royall Familie and virtue to these nations. Amen.

"This year ends the Dizaine too and little I have gained in ten years space, only that my cross firy humour is a little softened and my thoughts more off the things of this life since my dear wife's death. How tolerably has Laurie advanced in his learning without a preceptor by Mr Kemp's help, so as at least to equall severall of his age at school in the neighbourhood, and his morals in Loyalty and Religion guarded by being at home.

"Marjory too turning gradually to a more engaging behaviour. And how great fleets and armies yet little bloodshed."

"1780. Continued in peace and plenty with the comforts of the dear Aunts and children. Marjory doing better and the Penitential letter she wrote her Aunt Henrietta showing her intention good.

"Among the deaths of the year, Jamy Menzies of Woodend formerly one of my earliest companions. Women and wine led him astray and a consumption in consequence."

<sup>1</sup> Aunt Henrietta's estimate of Marjory was higher than that of the child's father. She writes to her sister: "Your grandchild May is realy a fine discret girle and does and knows things I must say more than could be expected from one of her years, so I am hopefull the time is not far distant when she will be capable to be much more usefull than I can be as she is rising to maturity and I going down the brea as fast as she is coming up."

“1781. Not remarkable for events. In February Caroline fell down the back stairs, an accident common in the family. She suffered little by it. A little discomposed with Laury and Charles triffling and laughing at lessons.”

“*June.* Remember the many thoughtless misbehaviours I committed while serving the King, then Prince, the only way to atone is by much fervour in my Prayers for his Majesty’s health and comfort here and eternall happiness in Heaven.”

“20. My dear Aunts Orchill and Henrietta left me to go to Crieff. What great obligations have I to dear Lady Henrietta who has acted the part of a Mother to her grand nephews and nieces for seven years past.”

A letter from Louisa Nairne shows he did not let them settle at Crieff without an effort to uproot them. She writes to Gask from Crieff, 5th December 1781:—

“MY DEAR NEPHEW,—I had the pleasure of yours last week with a kind invitation to my sister and me to go to stay for some time at Gask. I thought to have got myself something settled at Home this winter tho I have been here some time I cannot say I have yet got done, but as you think it would be a favour our going to stay a while shall comply with your request, tho it should be inconvenient, as I am and always shall retain a Gratefull sence of your kindness to me, so I intend, and my sister if in health, to wait on you against Christmas and stay till the beginning of March, and if it is not inconvenient to the famile bring my maid along with me and pay my Board as formerly.—Your ever afft. Aunt and most obedient humble servant,  
LOUISA GRAEME.”

While on this visit Louisa died at Gask on 5th April, and was buried at Aberuthven on 9th April 1782. Her host and nephew says:—

“Of my two dear Aunts that favoured me with their company the one, Lady Orchill, took an illness and died, I hope from no mismanagement here. Her patience in sharp pain was remarkably edifying.”

The house at Crieff was evidently given up, and Henrietta remained at Gask.

In the same year are the following records:—

“*Nov. 22.*—Mr Maxtone, Cultoquhey died at eleven of ten minutes illness. How soon may my happy hour come!”

“*Dec.*—Birthday and last of the year. Several of our neighbours did me the favour to come and drink His Majesty’s health, now 61. All went pretty well and we loyal closed the year.”

Laurence Oliphant had also endeavoured to get Charlotte Robertson, “Lady Lude,” to fill the blank in the household when Henrietta left. He addresses her as “dear loyal Ladie”:—

“Will my dear Aunt come and be a companion to me and a guardian to them and keep them loyal? in which I shall assist you, and we shall drink to the King and his happy Restoration every day till it be over.”

Though the letters and journals of the laird are often pitched in a minor key, and though the young lives were shadowed by the loss of the mother and the ill-health of the father, the House of Gask must have been full of eager active life and merriment as the six fine children grew up. As to their education, the best of what was then thought essential was given. There was a governess, Mrs Cramond; a tutor, Mr MacDonald, who was also chaplain; a dancing master; and regular visits from a fiddler for practise in this last accomplishment. A gay little letter<sup>1</sup> from one of the girls gives an idea of their amusements:—

“Neil Gow, a famous Highland fiddler, having been appointed to be at Orchill last month, I was asked there in hopes of having a fine dance, and Neil ran in my head for several days. Well, away I went, but no Neil that day; well, to-morrow will bring him; but to-morrow came and went in the same manner. At last comes music at supper the second day; but alas! it was a scraper, the only one of three or four that were sent for that were not

<sup>1</sup> Written by Margaret, afterwards Mrs Keith of Ravelston. The letter is printed in Roger’s Memoir of Lady Nairne.

engaged ; but however the spirit moved us and away with tables chairs and carpets in a moment ; we had but three beaus ; one of them, not liking the music, took a sprained ankle ; the other bassed to the fiddler in hopes of improving him ; Meggy Grahame could not dance, so that our ball was principally carried on by three, for the storm froze up the company as well as Neil Gow. I can dwell no longer on the subject though it produced great mirth."

The old Laird of Strowan writes to one of his granddaughters at Gask in 1778 :—

"I'm curious to hear Niell Gow that you commend so much that I might compare him with Kennedy and old Cattenach, who were the best hands at country music that I ever heard . . . you say the Minuet is wearing out of fashion, which is a mark of bad taste in dancing. As to the behaviour of the Gentlemen in the Edinburgh Assemblies, it shows that they hold the society of the Ladies too cheap, therefore I think the Ladies, in justice to the respect that is naturally due to them, should give up that Assembly. It was a very decent genteel meeting of good company fifty-two years ago, when it was first set up."

The following is an extract from a letter from Colyear Robertson to Marjory Oliphant, at Gask, 8th March 1779, giving an idea of Paris fashions :—

"If I had thought of it in time I would have sent you a drawing of a cap which I have got from Paris, a commission I undertook for a young Lady in Holland. It is the admiration of all Beholders, being in the newest and most Court-worn taste.

"It has a tow'ring feather on the Right, a drooping one on the Left, and a bouquet of Jasmin in the Centre. Likewise a Bouquet of Hyacinths towards the Left, and a fine Gilly flower with Buds almost hid behind the high Feather on the Right. The whole is surrounded with a row of large Pearls (not real) from which hangs down at the left side and far back, a dangling Bunch of Pearls something like a Bell. There is a great deal of Blonde and Gaze bunching out on all sides—I was obliged to send for a Wright to open the Box to satisfy the curiosity of some that wanted to see it."



Altogether it was not an unduly sober and subdued household in which Carolina Oliphant spent her childhood and youth. Her father kept up a keen interest in friends and neighbours, in old family history, and in his duties to tenants and dependents.

In this year he records:—

“The particular satisfaction of fifty seven children of this Parish Inoculate here.

“*Oct. 17.* Christy Moryce gave the hint. All took the infection save one and all hapily recovered.”

Amelia years afterwards describes this event:—

“My father sent for a Physician from Perth who with one or two apprentices gave the infection to about sixty children at Gask in one day, (besides many others at their own homes about the same time) from a young lad who was brought to one of the offices, having the natural smallpox upon him, of a very favorable sort.”

In the handwriting of the laird is a prayer he used on this occasion, beginning:—

“O Lord from whom health only can come, look favourably on the endeavours used to soften the effects of a loathsome disease to the children of this Parish and neighbourhood, and grant thy blessing on these endeavours.”

The following batch of family letters speak for themselves. A letter dated at Gask, 9th August 1782, begins with the laird to Duncan Robertson:—

“DEAR SIR,—Though I have not yet received your July letter I begin to write, least you should think something were the matter with us. As Marjory wrote you from Taymount I need not mention good Lady Dunmore’s<sup>1</sup> death, who gently dropt, a ripe fruit in comfortable old age. . . . You will remember that Mrs Lindsay had two daughters to Mr John Graeme of Dubheads, the eldest Mary died long ago, the 2nd Amelie was married, I suppose five years ago, to Mr Ratray of Dalrulzien, lived there, had three daughters but miscarried

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Nairne, Dowager Lady Dunmore. She died 20th July 1782.

of a son July 22, died, the child lived a short time. Mr Graeme is supporting the loss surprisingly. Mrs Mary is still going about at Perth fatt and fair, and Mrs Graem, Capt. Peters of Inchbrakie widow, stays there too and is well. Lady Blairfetty in good health just now at Tullybelton keeping company to Lady Lude<sup>1</sup> who has got her great-grand-daughter Menzies inoculated there tother day.—Yrs. LAURENCE OLIPHANT.”

On the same sheet Amelia writes :—

“My dear Grandmother is I hope by this time perfectly recovered of that troublesome fall you had some time ago. We have not been at nor heard of any dance lately worth describing to you. The Harpsichord goes on but *soberly* at present for want of a master, however we expect one soon. . . . I am just come upstairs a moment from the dancing. . . . There generally comes a fidler once a week to keep us in mind of our dancing. . . . A. O.”

Another hand adds :—

“Your nephew Strathallan<sup>2</sup> got in May or June rank of Lieut. Coll. and not a month after a Company in the first Regt. foot guards, and without purchase and about the same time Henry Russell infest him in Lands and Estate of Machany. Old Clark Russell is dead some years.”

Marjory next writes her line :—

“MY DEAR GRAND MAMA,—It is very long since I had the pleasure of writing to you, we have always hopes of seeing our dear Parents sometime or other though we have been in suspense very long. . . . My sister Amelia is grown very tall this while past. I suppose Carolina will be near as tall. . . .”

Carolina writes herself :—

“Since Margt. mentions growing tall, I must inform

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Robertson of Lude's daughter, Margaret Robertson of Tullibelton, had a daughter Charlotte married to Menzies of Culdares.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew John Drummond, second son of James, fifth Viscount Strathallan and Eupheme Gordon. He petitioned fruitlessly in 1787 for a restoration of the family title and honours. He died unmarried in 1817, when the representation of the family devolved upon his cousin James Andrew, the son of William Drummond and Ann Nairne, to whom the title was restored in 1824.

you that she has got the start of Lau, and will be very soon taller than your dutifull afft. Grandchild,

“CAROLINA OLIPHANT.”

Laurence Oliphant writes<sup>1</sup> to the same again on 27th February 1783:—

“We have lost our Minister Mr Erskine, he died the 2nd after a months distress very painfull to him towards the end, but continued perfectly sensible, ordered every-thing about his funeral, and spoke to his son not five minutes before his death. He is a promising boy Willy<sup>2</sup> about 12, an excellent scholar has a Bursary at Glasgow College; he has left a daughter<sup>3</sup> and a young son, was 73, and had been at Muthil 50 years. . . . No further accounts of Nephew Pety Graeme’s death, and still some faint hopes of his brother Laurie<sup>4</sup> as it is said Lord Keppel told several that the ‘Ville de Paris’ and ‘Glorieux’ were both safe in a Neutral port, but kept the name of the place private for their security.”

The following is addressed to Laurence Oliphant, Gask, from William Murray:—

“DONCASTER, August 3rd 1783.

“MY DEAR SIR,—You will be surprised to hear I am so far advanced into England when I had not mentioned my intention to you before, it was neither from a want of confidence or affection which will ever be very great to one I so highly regard and esteem, know this my dear Sir, I am so far on my way to fullfill a very old engagement not less than 14 years standing, which would have taken place long since had prudence not prevented it, from which you will easily guess its matrimony I mean, and with confidence I say with one of the most amiable of women near my own age, whose affection no misfortune that ever befell me could ever diminish, on the contrary my most unlucky fall last Autumn has I think added to it. Two friends that are sollicitors to join their little stocks together, and contribute to each others happiness by

<sup>1</sup> Part of this letter is given in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> William Erskine, born 1768. Margaret Oliphant of Gask was his god-mother, and Laurence Oliphant and Willie Drummond were godfathers. He was christened by the Jacobite Bishop Forbes. Afterwards he became Lord Kinnedder, the friend of Sir Walter Scott.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Mrs Colquhoun of Killermont, the friend of Carolina Oliphant.

<sup>4</sup> Both these sons of Inchbrakie were dead.

every means in their power. Can you thus, my dear Sir, be surprized that I should be most anxious to procure such a friend for Life who is most capable and willing to soothe and alleviate my feelings which, from the peculiarity of my unfortunate shake, I must be sensible of, and by that means make me not only resigned but most thankful for God's Goodness to me? To you who have such a just value for merit I am persuaded it will not hurt so much as it will some of my Relations to be told her line of Life is the charge of eight young Ladies education, for which she gets eight hundred guineas a year, a hundred for each. Her health may be an inducement for me to wish she would not continue it long, as I believe the anxiety of it is too great for her, she already possesses near £2000 reckoning every thing, so I hope it will not be necessary on that account for an after provision in case any thing happens to me. Please acquaint my Aunt Harriot with it, if I have the approbation of you and her and all other good People, I shall the less regret those whose pride will be alarmed at my being united to one who is inferior to me in birth, but whose merit makes her my superior in every other particular, indeed its a subject I cannot say too much on, so am hopefull will make an ample compensation for what can neither add nor diminish to happiness. I wish the first intelligence of this affair to come from my Brother whom I have acquainted with it, so beg you will not mention it but to your own Family in confidence, tho' should you see the amiable Miss Stewart she will give you a fuller account of the person I am attached to than I can by writing. I shall be happy to hear from you as soon as you conveniently can, directed to be left till called for at the British Coffee house, Cockspur Street London, and believe me very sincerely with every good wish for all my Dear Friends health and happiness at Gask, your very affectionate and most humble servant,

WM. MURRAY."<sup>1</sup>

Ebenezer Oliphant writes to his nephew Gask :—

“DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure of yours of the 29th of December last and was already glad to know by it that

<sup>1</sup> William Murray, third son of the third Earl of Dunmore. He was born 1734, and entered the Navy. He married at Kensington, 11th August 1783 Sarah Mease, and he died 25th December 1786. Sarah Mease married again in 1802, at the age of fifty-eight, George Amst of Chelsea. She died in 1811.

your self and all the good Family wer there in good health but as we have had since that time the most severe Winter I ever felt except the year 40 I have given you the trouble of this to know how you have been yourself during the Severity of the Storm and how Lady H's coal has held it out. For the young folks, their youth was a Preservative to them and therefore I was less afraid of their health being affected by it. I have for my own part kept pretty well, and am so at present for which I am very thankfull. Your last letter testifies sufficiently your Stench Loyalty and anxiety for the King, and as you desired me to give such information as I could gett I must here advise you with sorrow that the last accounts of him wer melancholy viz. : that he had died of a Apoplectik fitt the midle of last Mounth and that Prayers wer ordered to be put up to Almighty God for the repose of his Soul, and this information I am afraid is too good, however there has been a report since that he is still alive.

“God grant it may be trew, but I am much Afraid of the Worst and the reason of fear is this, that his Brother The Duke went express to see him, found him alive at the time but had no hopes of his recovery, and this particular Sercomstance is come directly from Rome. God be Merciful to this Poor Country for I am greatly Afraid we shall be involved in great Calamity soon; but I trust in his Goodness all Honest Men will be taken care of. I spose your Pouple<sup>1</sup> James Oliphant will before this time be Saled for Jamaica I had a letter from him about the beginning of this year telling me he was preparing for it and waiten only for Letters of recommendation from Mr Drummond, but have heard nothing of him since. Please make my most Respectful Compliments to Lady Harriot and best Wishes for all the young folks and Accept the same yourself from, My Dear Sir, your most Obedient Humble Ser<sup>t</sup>.

“EBENEZER OLIPHANT.

“EDR. *March 10th 1784.*”

Amelia writes to Givet, 11th June 1782 :—

“Aunt Harriot and I were three weeks lately at Taymount and left all our Friends there in pretty good health. They would (I suppose) have a dance yesterday

<sup>1</sup> Pupil or nephew.

it being my Aunt Dunmore's birthday when her Ladyship entered the 80th year of her age. But no one to see her would find out that she was so old. I ever am my Dear Uncles most dutyful niece. AMELIA OLIPHANT."

"Lord Dunmore's eldest Daughter is married to Mr Bonvery a Brother of Lord Radnor hes in parliament. As my Aunt Inch: has not added a P.S. this is to tell you of her sons. George well at Gibraltar esteemed by everybody and will soon have his company free. No letters lately from Major Peter, Mr Lau. off Antigua a prisoner; but expects soon to be relieved.

"MARJORY OLIPHANT."

The foregoing letter refers to a family tragedy at Inchbrakie. Margaret Oliphant, Mrs Graeme, whose early years had been so brimful of happy enthusiasm, was destined before the end of her life to know sharp sorrow. George, her eldest son, born 1753, joined the army, and was besieged at Gibraltar. At the same time his brother Patrick was on his way to India to join his regiment, the Black Watch, and Laurence, the sailor son, had started in his ship to join Lord Rodney's fleet in the West Indies. Neither Patrick nor Laurence ever returned—Laurence went down with his ship, the *Ville de Paris*, and Patrick died of fever. Their mother did not long survive the loss of the two boys, for she died 6th July 1785. The Laird of Gask was now the last survivor of the children of Laurence, the old laird, and Amélie.

Charles Oliphant, aged twelve, writes, 15th January 1784, to Givet:—

"We drank Lord Strathallan's health, this being his birthday. Carolina is just now playing, '*My wife's lying sick I wish she ne'er may rise again, I'll put on my tartan trews and court another wife again.*' It is a very good tune, and I wish you would come to hear it."

On the same page is a letter from his brother Laurence, fourteen years old:—

"DEAR GRANDMAMA AND UNCLE,—As I have no other news to entertain you with I begin a Journall of

my visits since the New Year. The first visit I made was to Lord Kinnoull<sup>1</sup> to whom I repeated an Ode of Horace and was agreeably detained all night being very well entertained with the Miss Hay's<sup>2</sup> playing and singing. I returned next day to breakfast. Soon after I went to Lawers to drink Mr Henry the Junior's health upon his birthday where I met with Captain Nairne and Mr John Drummond who seem to be a jolly young man he is grandson to Mr Andrew Drummond.<sup>3</sup> Mr Drummond, Lady Strathallan, and her daughter were in good health. . . . LAU. OLIPHANT."

Young Laurence was sent to the College at St Andrews. His father's journal relates:—

"Oct. 1784. Laurie passed sixteen and gone to College which I delayed last winter in hopes of departure, and to strengthen him in good maxims to withstand the temptations there feared. Lord Kinnoull much for the college and said to Laurie he would sleep better that night when told it was resolved on. Mr William Drummond of Logie, a good young man, at St Andrews and his Preceptor Mr Dow to have charge of Laurie, which happened and I received very flattering accounts of my dear Boy's good behaviour and application the remainder of this year, he attending the non-juring meeting house."

Young Laurence writes<sup>4</sup> to his father from St Andrews:—

"3 March 1785.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—As I have nothing particular to write I shall begin with giving you some account of my studies. I find everything go on easily except the Greek which I find very difficult and do not think I make great progress. . . . I sometimes feel my application fail, then I go to something that shoots me more. . . . I read some of Shakespear's tragedies being thought

<sup>1</sup> The ninth Earl of Kinnoull, born 4th January 1710, died at Dupplin 27th December 1787. He was distinguished both in the fields of literature and politics. His only son died an infant in 1743.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the Ladies Abigail and Elizabeth, sisters of Lord Kinnoull. They were old ladies at this time.

<sup>3</sup> A brother of the fourth Lord Strathallan. He was a goldsmith in London and founder of the Banking House. Though he did not play a militant part in the Jacobite risings, he was of great service to the party in London.

<sup>4</sup> Part of this letter is given in the Jacobite Lairds.

good and what every body has read and therefor one looks foolish when they know nothing about them. I think I know too little of the history of my own country and have therefore got a volume of Hewm's history . . . I know he lies in some places, and so do they all. . . . I read French every afternoon off the Bible to Mr Dow and he is very regular in his attendance except when he is attacked with his stomach complaints. Your most dutiful son etc.

LAU. OLIPHANT."

A letter, dated 26th September 1787, is endorsed "Charley equivocating and concealing the taking of an apple and peach from the wall." Poor Charles writes:—

"MY DEAR FATHER,—As such a fault can hardly be pardoned by words I write these lines assuring you with what hearty sorrow I ask your pardon for what I have committed and with a firm resolve never to desemble in any way . . . etc. etc."

There remains one last glimpse of the old laird in social surroundings. Every year a little group of devoted Jacobites were in the habit of meeting in Edinburgh, at the house of James Steuart in Cleland Gardens, on the 31st of December, the birthday of Charles III. To this little gathering<sup>1</sup> in 1787 attaches a peculiar interest—it was the last birthday of the Chief who, in his wretchedness and exile, was still the object of an undying devotion. To this simple festivity Laurence Oliphant of Gask was bidden. In spite of failing health, he must have ridden to Edinburgh, perhaps in company with his son, whom at the time he was establishing at College there, to take his place among the loyal few to whom the day was still sacred. Other guests at Mr Steuart's table on this occasion were Robert Gray, Mr Erskine, afterwards Earl of Kellie, and last but not least, Robert Burns, who in accepting the invitation wrote as follows:—

"SIR,—Monday next is the day of the year with me hallowed as the ceremonies of religion and sacred to the

<sup>1</sup> The details of this festivity and the Burns letter and verses were kindly communicated to the writer by Francis Steuart, Esq.



memory of my King and my forefathers. The honour you do me by your invitation I must cordially and gratefully accept.

“Tho something like moisture conglobes in my eye,  
 Let no one misdeem me disloyal  
 A poor friendless wand’rer may well claim a sigh  
 Still more if that wand’rer were royal.  
 My Fathers that name have revered on a throne  
 My Fathers have died to right it,  
 Those Fathers would spurn their degenerate son  
 That name should he scoffingly slight it.

“ST JAMES SQUARE,  
 “Wednesday evening.”

One member of the laird’s family was with Charles Edward Stewart at the time of his death on 31st January 1788; Henry Nairne, who, with his brother Charles, was the only survivor of the third Lord Nairne’s large family. A portrait<sup>1</sup> of Charles Edward, painted a few months before his death, bears the following inscription:—

“This picture was done at Rome in 1787 for Prince Charles Stewart and sent as a present to Lady Lude by Mr Henry Nairne son of John Lord Nairne, which gentleman lives at present with the Prince. Given by James A. Robertson, Esq. to me. August 1828.

“J. STEUART.”

The following letter<sup>2</sup> was addressed by Henry Nairne to Mrs Robertson of Lude from Rome, 26th March 1788:—

“MY DEAR MADAM,—Having contracted a fluxion in one of my eyes during the late Count’s illness, and having neglected it in the beginning, it prevents me now entirely from either seeing to read or write, but I would not delay longer the honor of addressing you and therefore I rather chuse to employ another hand.

“As I make no doubt but Mr Oliphant was so good as communicate to you the melancholy news that I imparted to him, when the fatal event happened,

<sup>1</sup> This portrait is perhaps Pompeo Battone’s, and is identical with that in the National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh, bought at the Logie Elphinstone sale. The picture in question was sold at the Dalguise sale in 1904, and is now the property of Francis Steuart, Esq.

<sup>2</sup> Found among the MSS. at Machany.

therefore I shall say but little upon that dismal subject. Altho' the Deceased had been but in a bad state of health for many years, yet the fatal moment is always striking and affecting. I shall only add that I believe there are few that feel it more sensibly or are more nearly touched with that irreparable loss than I am. The misfortunate Personage did not survive long his very good friend and acquaintance my dear Aunt.<sup>1</sup> They were two heavy strokes, the one succeeding the other upon me, but we must submit with patience and resignation to the divine mandate.

“By a letter I had from Gask I was happy to learn that you were well at Lude the beginning of the present year. As I have now no more attachment in this country I shall remain here as short time as possibly I can, and return to France. It will make me happy and give me great pleasure if I find letters from you on my arrival there, and if you honour me with any letters, please continue to direct for me to the care of the Scotch College at Paris.

“The only thing that can make me regret the leaving this country so soon is the pleasure I might have of seeing your son here. But when he arrives please direct him to call on Mr Byres and you may be sure that is sufficient to him to know that he is of your family, and I flatter myself his knowing the honor I have of so near a connection with you will not diminish his attention towards my young cousin. Mr Byres could not have the pleasure of waiting on you in Atholl as his Mother's death detained him much longer in his own country than he expected, therefore he was obliged to push forward as soon as possible.

“Please offer my compliments to Mr Robertson in the most aff<sup>t</sup> manner as likewise to all your young family and I presume I need not make use of many words to assure how much I am, my dear Madam, your most aff<sup>t</sup> cousin and most humble servant,

“H. NAIRNE.”

So after the death of his master, Henry Nairne returned to Sancerre where his family had spent long years. His great effort since the death of his father had

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Nairne, Lady Lude, who died in 1787.

been to pay off the debts of the family, which had lived in great poverty. He was now nearly blind, but an operation restored his sight to some extent, and he wrote the following letter with his own hand:—

“I did not fail to remember you to the Personage you mentioned, and it was received in a very flattering manner and desired to be remembered to you most affectionately.”

This, it seems, was the last word of the dying Stewart to the faithful follower and aide-de-camp who was also near the end of the journey.

There are many references to Henry Nairne in letters after this date. His efforts to clear his father's debts resulted in his incurring debts for his own expenses.<sup>1</sup> He longed to come to Scotland, but could not leave France while these remained unpaid. An unknown friend in London, whose name was never discovered, offered to pension him for life, if funds were first raised to pay them off. Laurence Oliphant, long after his father's death in 1792, raised a subscription on Henry's behalf among Jacobite relatives. Needless to say the Drummonds were the principal contributors. Eventually he came to London in July 1802 and writes from Hotel Cadogan, Sloane Street:—

“We arrived in this great and splendid Capital which surpasses greatly any notion I could have formed of it in all respects. I cannot express the amicable reception I received from all my relations, friends, and acquaintances, male and female, but above all from my worthy nephew,<sup>2</sup> who I had never seen before.”

It is easily imagined that the return of this aged exile, then in his seventy-sixth year, nearly blind, pitifully broken in health and fortune, would be a pathetic event in Jacobite families. He was the sole survivor of a family

<sup>1</sup> He left a little property at Sancerre, a house and garden, “La Loge,” to his close friends the MacNabs, who also lived in exile near him.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Nairne, afterwards fifth lord, and husband of Carolina Oliphant, was Henry Nairne's only living nephew.

renowned for loyalty and tenacity of purpose and renowned also for their adversities. He had been in personal attendance on Charles III. He had been present at the last scene of all, when far away in Italy, fourteen years ago, the dying idol of the old hopes and prayers had breathed his last sigh. No wonder that hands of welcome were held out, and succour given. From London Henry Nairne came up to Scotland and settled in John Street, Perth. Doubtless he would be often at Gask, and the relatives there, young and cheerful, would make a brightness for the end of his life. It is possible some may be living still who remember the tall erect figure of Henry Nairne, his cocked hat and full Court costume of dark green satin. He died in extreme old age on 22nd February 1818, and was buried with his forefathers at Auchtergaven.

To return to the story of the family party at Gask. The education of his boys gave the old laird much anxious thought. Laurie remained at St Andrews till sent to Edinburgh in October 1786.

“Laurie sent to Edinburgh College to be under the care of Dr Webster, with whose sister he boarded. Very flattering accounts of his good conduct, and communicating regularly in Dr Webster’s Meeting House. Dr Webster writing me that my dear boy Laurie ‘as to head and heart and manner seems all that the fondest Father could wish, and such principles of Religion and Honour as rendered the eye of a Tutor unnecessary.”

Charlie, then fifteen years old, joined his brother at Edinburgh in April 1787. Their father writes:—“The two Boys pointing to law and physick”—an inclination which, however, bore no fruit.

The over-anxious father was destined on the whole to find comfort in his eldest son, whose “principles” had been the subject of much earnest prayer. Laurie was now twenty, and wished to go abroad—an idea which seems to have caused unreasonable distress to

his father. No doubt he would miss the presence and help of the young laird.

“Laurie often the Landlord,” he writes, “and yet when Company come, kept within bounds and no rioting. Bliss ye Lord for ye appearance of his Sobriety.”

Laurie was, however, allowed to go to London in 1790. He stayed with Mr Henry Drummond, the constant friend and adviser of the family. The laird gave his son a list of all the benefits the Oliphants had received from the Drummonds from the year 1753.

“Convey my thanks,” he writes “to my dear cousin Henry Drummond for his new and old favours. He is what he always was, and has been to my family, therefor I’ll say no more on the subject, but *think* the rest.”

In the same letter 14th April 1790, Carolina adds a line<sup>1</sup> to her brother:—

“May and Margaret are gone to Duncrub, this being my *Lord’s* birthday; Amelia stays at the Hill till *yours*, and I am left alone of the six.

“I went on Monday to Inchbrakie, having called at Dollerie and drank tea at Fernton<sup>2</sup> the same night. It would make you too vain to tell you how obligingly Miss Preston<sup>3</sup> asked after you. She says she is to be here soon, I hope not till *you* return. Louisa Graeme,<sup>4</sup> Catherine Preston<sup>5</sup> and I danced while the heiress played and we were very merry. Louisa Graeme and I came next to Miss Mercers where we stayed five minutes only, she being on the wing to go to Mr Samuel’s exhibition pit to see Jane Shore acted by puppets in the weavers

<sup>1</sup> Part of the letter, with names omitted, is given in Rogers Memoir of Baroness Nairne.

<sup>2</sup> Now known as Ferntower. The original name of the estate was Culter Rannoch.

<sup>3</sup> Anne Preston, heiress of Valleyfield and Fernton. She married in 1810 Sir David Baird, the celebrated soldier, and after his death in 1829 raised the granite obelisk to his memory at Monzievaird, at a cost of £15,000.

<sup>4</sup> Daughter of Patrick Graeme of Inchbrakie and Margaret Oliphant. She was born 1760, and married in 1792 Captain Stewart of Fincastle. She died in 1841.

<sup>5</sup> Sister to Anne Preston, at whose death in 1847 she inherited the family properties.

house in Crieff. Louisa and I had tickets but no chaperone, so were obliged to go home without a laugh at the tragedy. I galloped Hercules, and like him better than Glen; but you will call me quite vulgar for bringing Crieff and its environs into your mind, whilst you are shewing away in St James Square, London."

A week later the laird sent off another letter<sup>1</sup> to his son full of pained surprise. Young Laurie had been so far carried off his feet by the new London associations, and the bad example of other young men, as to wish to attend the Court of the Elector of Hanover.

"However few continued faithfull to their Prince, I never doubted but my sons and I would have been of the number; I was in hopes I had done my part to bring up my family Loyal and it was my joy and comfort to think in so generall a defection that they were so. It gives me real pain to see that I am in some measure disappointed, for had you consulted ye principle that should be within, you would have given a proper answer to the proposal yourself."

The laird absolutely forbade the presentation, and his wishes were, of course, respected by Laurie. Another letter from his father, dated a little later, throws some light on the young man's keen wish to leave Scotland for a while:—

"GASK, May 19 1790.

"Two years ago, I think, when you was wishing to be abroad and there to settle I did not well understand the meaning not having the least suspicion of your having any attachment and having solely in view the thoughts of its being too soon to go abroad . . . now marriage is very proper when a suitable alliance can be found because continuing our family is a principall duty and that it keeps off vice. Your old attachment I could not help yielding to, though the connections were not just to my mind, and had it been riveted I would perhaps have yealded had circumstances been even less to my mind, because when an affection is rooted the opposing it

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 418.

generally turns the mind from marriage to a dissipated course, but since your attachment is more at large, and unknown to the person, you are more at liberty to look about, and may find one more to your satisfaction, and in either case I heartily wish for a happy termination."

Margaret Oliphant writes to her brother Laurie:—

"Ap. 19 1790.

"You will hear of poor Sir George Ramsay's<sup>1</sup> death in a Duel with that hot-brained wretch McCrae.<sup>2</sup> If he challenges me for the above epithet I shall hire two cadets to drub him. Baron Moncrieff too is dead which is to be regretted on Lady Eliz's account as well as his own merit."

Some other letters belonging to this year are given here:—

"AUCHLEEKS, May 20, 1790.

"Mr Robertson, Auchleeks, presents best compliments to Gask he is happy to hear of his being in good health and hopes for a long continuance. Auchleeks was happy to hear by the Aide-de-Camp of King Henry the Ninth's being in good health and had taken his titles. Auchleeks joins in hopes with Gask in wishing that he may take a wife next. . . . I received the cheese you sent me, which is exceedingly good and I like it well, is greatly obliged to you for being so mindful of your fellow soldier."

The old laird writes to his son, 12th August 1790:—

"Lord Strathallans affair I shall give you as Mr James Murray, Sheriff Clerk, told it me some days after the Election; he said one of the Duke of Atholl's Brothers and another Gentleman walking together to go to the Bridge passed Camp where the minority rabble stood, who were rood to them. Col. D. who was behind going the same road with another gentleman, seeing this, came up to assist, when he got the *riding*

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Ramsay, sixth Baronet of Bamff. He was killed in a duel at Musselburgh.

<sup>2</sup> Captain James Macrae of Holmains. Having quarrelled with Sir George Ramsay over the conduct of a footman attending Lady Ramsay at the Edinburgh theatre, he killed him in a duel. He afterwards fled to France, where he died in 1820.

*stroke* as we call it, on the eye from one of the raskely fellows, when he got to his Quarters he was blooded . . . next morning his eye was so well, but very black, that there was nothing to hinder him going to Machany that day, which he did. I was sorry for the accident but cannot help thinking he deserved it, an unjust decision depriving him of his titles for the present he could not help, but I should never have debased my family by voting as a commoner, and getting the benefit of the Oaths to the bargain.”

Miss Elizabeth Drummond writes a chatty letter to Margaret Oliphant from Machany, 23rd February 1791 :—

“MY DEAR COUSIN,—Lady Catherine gives information of Lord Dunmore’s<sup>1</sup> death but is not quite so sure about his Brother Charles Murray’s<sup>2</sup> death. . . . I never heard of Sir William Stirling’s marriage till within this week. My sister spoke of it to Mrs Oliphant she said it was a false report that he was to be married to Miss M. Maxtone but spoke in a way as if he was to marry again, but not till he makes an addition to Ardoch. By your asking if I heard of Sir William Murray and Condy going to London, I suspect you have heard a very shocking report which we also did, tho fortunately not till after we had heard the real story about young Dollerie. The fact is that the ship put in to one of our ports for a trifling repair one night Mr Murray was on duty. Some of the young recruits were amusing themselves going up the shrouds or mast, I forget the exact term. Mr Murray desired them to come down—which they did not do—and he with fatal rashness shook one of the ropes, which made a young man fall on the Deck with great violence. The consequence was that in a very few days he died. When the Body was taking ashore to be buried, the Captain observed all the troops discontented and threatening to mutiny immediately, and was told Mr Murray was the occasion of their companion’s death, which surprised him much as the surgeon in his return said he had fallen over the quarter-deck and hurt himself. The Captain stopped the funeral, and a Coroners inquest and Jury sat on the

<sup>1</sup> A mistake. The fourth Lord Dunmore died in 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Second son of the third Earl of Dunmore. He may have died at this time. The date of his death is not given in the Scots’ Peerage, vol. iii. p. 387.



body and their verdict was accidental death,—which was very fortunate. Mr Murray was free to remain in the ship but the Captain advised him to leave it and go immediately to London to try and get out in another ship,—for fear of any remains of discontent amongst the soldiers, which Mr Murray did,—but I am afraid he will not get out this season as the ships are mostly gone. This is the real story from the Captain's letter and he is a very worthy good man. The report we heard was that Mr Murray had killed a man, after had quarrel'd with his captain and shot him. . . . Yr. aff.

“ELIZ. DRUMMOND.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1784 several of the forfeited estates had been given back to their owners, and among these were the lands of Strowan. The restitution came too late to gladden the heart of the old Chief, Duncan Robertson, who had died in exile just two years before.<sup>2</sup>

Charming congratulatory letters on the restitution came from all the Gask family to Givet, dated 9th August 1784. The packet begins with a note from Henrietta Nairne, goes on with one from the Laird of Gask, followed by one from Marjory, Amelia, and Carolina, who writes as follows:—

“MY DEAR GRANDMAMA,—The sentiments of all your grandchildren are so much the same in this most pleasing subject, that you will find little variety in the expression we can hardly be happier on the prospect of seeing you than your other friends here, in particular Capt. Graeme Inch, says there is nothing in the world he enjoys so much as the hopes of seeing you in Scotland, surely hope will not deceive us. I wish this may be the last time that I assure my dear Grandmama at *Givet* how much I am her most dutiful G. Daughter,

“CAROLINA OLIPHANT.”

<sup>1</sup> The present house of Machany was built as a home for this “Miss Betty.” She wrote long and amusing letters covering a great many years. In June 1829 she wrote an account of a jest played on the family of Abercairny. A report was set afloat that the Laird of Abercairny was created Earl of Strathearn. The elated villagers believed the report: “The bell of Fowlis rung a whole evening and part of next day.” “How the bodies could hear of such a thing I cannot understand,” writes Miss Betty. The same joke was played on Baird of Newbyth, who was said to have received the dignity of Viscount.

<sup>2</sup> At Givet, 13th December 1782.

The return of the Strowan family to Scotland after thirty-one years of banishment must rank, from a domestic point of view, as one of the tragedies of the family. Strowan and his wife Marjory with four children had fled to France; Marjory and her son Alexander returned alone to the old country. Since she had quitted its shores her brother and five of her sisters had died, while out of the whole group of twelve Nairne brothers and sisters only four were living. Above all, she was fated to come back without the companion of her life, the husband for whose sake she had suffered her longing thoughts to turn homewards all through the long years, for Duncan Robertson had ended his days in exile. The homecoming must have brought more suffering than joy to Marjory, now seventy-eight years old. Gask, though full of the dear voices of the grandchildren she now saw for the first time, must have yet seemed blank without the welcome of her daughter Margaret, and even to the elder girls the mother was now, after ten years, only a sweet dim memory. The old lady and her son went first to live at the Kirktown of Strowan, but Laurence Oliphant and all the family joined in begging Alexander to bring his mother to Gask. This union, for which the honest hearts had longed and prayed for many many years, was not a success.

Alexander and Colyear Robertson, though reared in the strict principles that governed the family politics, had travelled and seen much of men and cities, and in the battle of life had lost that singleness of purpose towards one object which had marked the earlier generation. When inmates of the Gask household this laxness on the part of the young men was inexpressibly sad to the mind of their brother-in-law Laurence Oliphant. Manners, education, and habits were all strange to his idea. He writes in 1786:—

“In December last my brother-in-law Strowan was seized with a Delirium and Fever at the Kirktown of Strowan, which lasted several months and proceeded from

his drinking with ye little Rannoch Gentry etc., meaning to be obliging to them on his arrival."

The old Lady Strowan attended her son in this illness. The following letter from Oliphant to Strowan recalled them to Gask. The laird writes:—

"Feb. 1786.

"Consider how happy it makes your dear Mother and mine to be with her Grandchildren going on with all their different works and all of us together at meal time and Tea. I am sure you would not wish to keep that dear dear Mother on day after you are able to travel in so confined a disagreeable situation, as you know from her tender affection she will never leave you."

Later there is another entry concerning the Robertsons:—

"I distressed by fears from Strowan's disloyal and rather loose principles. Shoked he and his Brother always naming the Usurpars K and Q, and so much talk about them, a new thing in this house. And Strowans light headed noisy servant . . . with so many visitors vexed me and fretted my temper, particularly bad example in Loyaltie to my Boys, Dogs and Greyhounds and horses giving them a wrong turn, so that these and other circumstances joined were too strong for me, and made me often less agreeable to my dear Friends taken under my roof than I should have been. . . . Yet less real mischief has happened than I expected to my young Familie so I have to Bliss the Lord forever.

"*N.B.*—What an addition of comfort would we have had in one another, had the two dear Brothers but retained the pure principles of their youth."

Some months after he wrote, evidently at the end of his patience:—

"Asked and pressed Strowan to marry, and stay as long as he pleased, and he and I to repair the Old Hall. If not, that he would think of providing a house for himself next year."

"*January 1788.*—Finding many inconveniences of two families living so long together, and no steps taken for a dwelling to Strowan, proposed to him, till he should

think of building in Rannoch, to live at Perth, a good house offering at Bridge End built by Sheriff Mercer and named Potterhill. He approved."

It was not till July, however, that the Robertson family quitted Gask, presumably carrying with them "dogs, greyhounds, horses" and the noisy servant. It must have been a great relief, but the laird reproaches himself for the state of matters which had made the change necessary.

"*July* 18th.—My Mother-in-law and son Strowan went to live at Potterhill, Perth. They at Gask, with a good many weeks interval in Ranoch, since Oct. 12th 1784. I not always in so good humour as I should have been with Strowan."

Old Lady Strowan lived till 1793, passing the last years of a life that had seen strange adventures and great adversities, in the peace of the little home, not far from her dear ones at Gask. As during the long years of her exile, the spinning wheel formed her occupation. Her picture<sup>1</sup> shows a high-featured shrewd face, worn with trouble, yet with the settled look of tranquillity that was the gift of her old age. Alexander, the Laird of Strowan, and his brother Colyear never married, and thus the Oliphant children were her only descendants. The Laird of Strowan lived till 1822, when the estates passed to a cousin Alexander Robertson. Laurence Oliphant of Gask expressly forbade his sons to accept the Robertson estates, even should they be left to them by their uncles, and told them in that case to hand over the estates to the nearest heir-male.

All descriptions of life at Gask at this time, all pictures of the little grey house on the hill set in its closes of green glade and spreading tree, centre round a single figure, and form only a background for the personality of Carolina Oliphant.

A study of the family diaries reveals something of the atmosphere of that home. Religion had for the past two

<sup>1</sup> Now at Ardblair.

generations held a leading place in the life of Gask, the practical piety of men and women of action, in whom the sentiment was inextricably bound up with the Jacobite cause. Now over all the land a wave of evangelicalism had begun to flow. To the four sisters, all sensitively open to outside impressions in the secluded inaction of their lot, the response came with an absence of all sense of proportion. A habit of introspective thought pervaded all they did, and all they wrote. The first feeling on deciphering the close thin writing in which their inmost thoughts find record, is of regret that they had not more to do, or more practical interests to take their minds off the contemplation of their own sins. A page or two of Amelia's journal is chosen as affording a quaint glimpse of life in the old house, and as illustrating the forced and unwholesome lengths to which the pious feeling of the day led the young girls.

“GASK, *Jany. 1st 1789.*”

“I waked in good humour and earnestly resolved to be so thro the day and to be as good every way as possible, and considered the particular obligation to resolve to begin the year well. I read the Psalms in the Bible for the day. My intention is to read the Psalms of the Bible for morning all January, the evening of the same for February, the Prayer-book morning Psalms for March, evening do. for April. Tate and Brady morning for May and evening ditto for June, which make the first six months. I wandered a little at first both reading the Psalms and Sherlock on Death. I did my prayers pretty collectedly and particularised all my friends. Mr Maitland gave us prayers, I wandered at first but went on pretty well after tho with many imperfections. . . . Was not out of humour as far as I can recollect. Evening devotions were short, but I hope very sincere. At evening prayers by Mr M. I was very far from being so devout and attentive as I ought; my mind wandered almost incessantly, and I could not collect my scattered thoughts. The rest of the evening passed pretty well. After I was in bed I reviewed it as well as I could to enable me to write in the morning—nothing remarkable occurred in my mind and temper.”

*“ Friday, 2 Jany.*

“I read the morning Psalms (tolerably) and read my prayers with attention. Read in Sherlock, not quite so attentively. Could not go upstairs after breakfast, my dear Father being sickish, most fervently prayed for him, and was tolerably devout at the short prayers Mr M. read in his room. When we went to dinner I was very cold and went to warm myself at ye fire before going to the top of the table (May being with Papa). Aunt Henrietta desired Meggy to sit there, which she did, and left me a colder seat at the foot. I ought to have overlooked such a trifle and have considered how much better it would be to eat my dinner contentedly and to support that equanimity of mind I had been just reading about, but the pity was I did not consider at all, and so fretted and shivered. I was indeed very cold which increased my bad humour. I ought likewise to have considered that every peevish symptom I showed must hurt Meggy who was in my seat (by desire), and she offered it twice and I fretfully refused it and whenever Car rose to relieve May I went to her seat. After dinner we were talking of a swan my brother had shot that forenoon, which I had not seen and asked Meggy to ring the bell that it might be brought in—Aunt Henrietta with a good deal of asperity objected, and said it had bled the dining-room and would not have it to dirty the drawing-room likewise. I ought to have reflected that what my Aunt said was very true though a little harshly expressed, and that it would be all one in an hour whether I had been provoked anyway or not, except with regard to the effect it had on me, and I should have remained silent, but I contrived to resent it in several little ways, which I am ashamed of, and have asked pardon of the Almighty for, as however trifling the subject, it is satisfying a spirit of revenge, that we are under every obligation to suppress by the command and striking example of the blessed Author of our holy Religion, especially when to a superior. May this be a lesson to me for the future. I tried to be good-humoured in the evening and I hope succeeded. At evening prayers tolerably attentive. To bed in good humour and recalled my thoughts from Vanities.”

There are twelve little paper volumes containing the same daily self-examination and brooding, and recording

trifling discomposures Amelia would have done better to forget at once.

This tide of religious feeling invading the household and colouring all views of life, must not be forgotten in any estimate of the character and achievements of Carolina Oliphant; the marks of it remained through life, in later years overpowering all other interests. But in the lifetime of her father she saw in him the staunch example of a creed and a cause closely linked. Numberless touches in the everyday routine recalled to the group of children what had been the great outstanding object of parents and grandparents' existence all through the long years of sacrifice. The names of the reigning family were never mentioned, the letters K and Q designating the usurpers whenever it was necessary to allude to them, and in church they used the prayer-books with the offending names pasted over, and silently transferred their prayers to one over the water. Best of all the pictures that rise through the mists of time is that showing the Laird of Gask standing surrounded by all his family at his table after dinner, turning to his boy Charlie on his right hand, as he raised the glass for the loyal toast that yet must keep a secret: "The King—Charles!"

In other households, once staunchly Jacobite, the new order of things was being gradually accepted. Minds were becoming accustomed to the idea that the Stewart days were over, and that a great change was creeping over Scotland. Gask was the last stronghold of Jacobite feeling, and Laurence Oliphant, in all the miseries of his ill-health and lessened fortunes, stood out as one of the last champions of the cause, though there was nothing to be done, no blow to strike, no battle to hope for. In his old age he collected and treasured relics of his beloved Prince—his bonnet, spurs, cockade, crucifix, a drawing in chalk, and best cherished of all, a kindly letter.<sup>1</sup>

*"FLORENCE, 21 Feb. 1783.*

"Mr COWLEY, — It gives me sensible pleasure ye remembrance of Oliphant of Gask. He is as worthy a

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the Jacobite Lairds and other publications.

subject as I have, and his family never deroged from their principals. Not douting in ye least of ye son being ye same, make them both know these my sentiments, with ye particular esteem that follows a rediness to prove it, iff occasion offered, yr sincere friend,

CHARLES R.

“For Mr Cowley, Prior,  
of ye English Benedictines at Paris.”

While clinging to his own principles, the laird expected others to be equally staunch. In 1783 he wrote:—

“Mr Erskine our Parson at Muthil died on Candlemass day. In spite of the powerfull opposition of bad principles, a non-jouror Mr Cruikshank was got settled in his place.”

At the death of Charles Edward in 1788 Mr Cruikshank, who had given every satisfaction to his Episcopal flock in conducting services at the various houses, determined to follow the tide of popular opinion and transfer his allegiance from the House of Stewart to King George. He wrote to Laurence Oliphant to notify this change, and received the following in reply:<sup>1</sup>—

“July 3, 1788.

“Mr Oliphant presents his compliments to Mr Cruikshank, and as he has incapacitated himself from officiating at Gask, his gown is sent by the carrier and the books he gave the reading of. As Mr Cruikshank has received his stipend to this Whitsuntide there is no money transactions to settle between him and Mr Oliphant.”

Years passed ere Mr Cruikshank was received back into favour at Gask, when a new generation with modified ideas had taken the place of the last Jacobite laird and his circle.

The story of the message sent by George III. to Gask has often been told:—

“Give my compliments,—not the compliments of the King of England, but those of the Elector of Hanover—to Mr Oliphant, and tell him how much I respect him for the steadiness of his principles.”

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 411.



The name of Gask is remembered by these oft-told tales—not new now to any reader—but worthy to be told yet once again, in all reverence, in all love, as part of an exquisite past whose spirit cannot come again.

On 11th September 1785, he keeps the day still held in highest honour at Gask,

“Breakfasted below in the Drawing-room in remembrance that the King, then Prince Regent, honoured it with his presence that day forty years. Accounts the King at Florence living regularly and in health. Bless'd be the Lord who preserves our King.”

“1788. The Hundredth year of usurpation.”

“*Feb 25th.*—Heard of King Charles death at Rome Jany. 31st. Henry 1st and 9th<sup>1</sup> now our King ye late King's Brother.”

“*Mar. 3.*—Put on mourning six months for the late King. The Lord gives and ye Lord taketh away blissed by ye name of ye Lord.”

“*May 25, Sunday.*—I prayed for King Henry by name, this being the day the Scots Episcopal clergy appostatized praying for the Hanoverian family by name. Non compliers only Bishop Ross at Dunblane, Mr Brown at Montrose, Mr Lindsay at St Andrews, Mr Maitland, Almoner formerly to Ogilvie's Regiment, Mr Mansefield at London and Mr — at Bath.”

“*June 21.*—The Kings Father James 3rd and 8th born, this makes the hundredth year since his birth and ye Usurpation.”

“*27th.*—I and mine always cared for in Spiritualls as well as temporalls. Communicate here with the loyal Mr Brown.”

“*Nov. 5th.*—The Elector delirious and confined this day. A memorable day, Old stile, and this year kept by the Whigs on ye new, and on which at Edinburgh they solemnized ye 100th year of ye Revolution, and the immortal memory, as they stiled it, of *Willy*, drank to and proposed to erect a column in memory of ye Wickedest of Mankind, and most dishonouring event to the Nation.”

As in youth, so in the decline of old age, when he was

<sup>1</sup> The Oliphants received much kindness from the Cardinal of York, who was said to have treated the seventh Laird of Gask “like a brother.”

sinking towards the death for which he long had prayed, the principles of his double faith upheld him. And still he must have felt there was work to do, while surrounded by his children in whose young minds he could foster the spirit of his race.

Upon the mind and character of Carolina the training of this devoted father left lasting results. The child of poetry and romance, her imagination was fed at a pure source in the story of Gask. The memories of the House of Oliphant were great memories, the training of its children from generation to generation was founded upon lofty traditions, and as the heroic times went by and parts were no longer played upon the wide stage of history, the lives were lived as simple gentlemen and women always in the light of a great past. Then there came the flowering of chivalry once more. Once more the stage widened, bringing great chances, offering a part in history again. As if the spring of their actions rested on those great unforgotten deeds of their forefathers, the Jacobite lairds answered to the call of the blood. The singular charm of the story, rounding it to a beautiful completeness, lies in the fact that after this late flowering of the ancient chivalrous spirit of the race, and at a time when it became manifest that the struggle was founded on a hope never to be fulfilled, from the blood and the name came the poet who was to help to make the cause of the Stewarts immortal. With the coming of Carolina Oliphant, the long story of distress and bereavement, of broken hopes and lost fortune, ripens and crystallises into song.

The spirit of Carolina was inherited from progenitors further back than her father, the eager soldier, the gentle invalid, to whose stories she listened; further back than the grandfather with his unstained record of honour and courage, though she shared and understood the sympathies of both. The same strain of blood that inspired the poems of the poet chief, Alexander Robertson of Strowan, beat in her veins. The voices of a still remoter age called through her lips. In a dim and far past, in the Celtic

ancestors of her mother, Margaret Robertson, and of her father's mother, Amélie Nairne, lay the sources of her power—ancestors who, voiceless in their own fierce times, lived their poetry and romance in fray and foray, and passed to other generations only the fragment of a stirring story, or the lilt of a wild song. But something infinitely more than even the primitive note of Celtic expression enriched the nature of Carolina. Linked with her great gift of song was an inherent nobleness of nature, a soul dowered with all those fine impulses which had been the guides of action in the lives of her forbears. Ancestry seldom accounts for genius; but it is part of the beauty of her story that in the clear simplicity of all she did and said and wrote, there is traceable the outstanding qualities of those from whom she came, as if all they had endured so well and yielded so nobly bore an exquisite fruit in her gifts of fortitude and sacrifice. The outcome of it all was song.

Neither father nor mother ever knew it. Carolina was only eight when her mother died, and no mention in anything her father ever wrote concerning his children indicates that he observed a special gift in any one of his four daughters. Carolina's up-bringing and education might be described as decidedly within the usual narrow bounds of girls' education in those days. She learnt to ride, to dance, to play the spinet, for all the sisters had delightful musical gifts. Aunt Henrietta Nairne, a loved companion, but the worst of spellers, was not likely to pay particular heed to the development of the children's tastes in literature or general cultivation.

The story has more than once been told of how Aunt Henrietta,<sup>1</sup> on receiving an urgent message to go to the sick-bed of her sister Lady Lude, sent a note into Perth to order the largest *chaise* that could be procured. Two men arrived at Gask staggering under an enormous *cheese*. In spite of her anxiety about her sister, Aunt Henrietta had a prolonged fit of laughing, and the journey was abandoned for that day.

<sup>1</sup> One engaging detail of Aunt Henrietta is mentioned in a letter, "She was always a great laugher."

But a high standard, even in such simple matters as writing and spelling, was not thought essential.

The young life of Carolina was completely that of a young lady in the "elegant retirement" of a country home, in the days when women's intellectual development did not absorb any attention. That she was full of life and spirits, doing everything with all her heart, is well shown in her letters and in the family story. The picture of her is of a beautiful and high-spirited girl, taking such pleasures as came her way with enthusiasm, and devoted to the arts of music and painting. She was "pretty Miss Car," the "Flower of Strathearn," the "Toast of the Countryside," "The White Rose of Gask."<sup>1</sup>

According to one slender thread of evidence, the romance of Carolina's life began in very early youth. A scrap of paper put away among other family relics and forgotten, gives the clue. On the small square of paper is written in a careful hand the verse of a song:—

"As the Thames' rolling stream moved pensive along,  
Thro' the vales, thro' the dales and the willows among,  
A swain that complained on its banks had reclined,  
He wept to the stream and he sighed to the wind.  
In vain, he cry'd, nature hath opened the Spring,  
In vain bloom the roses, the nightingales sing,  
To a heart full of sorrow no beauties appear,  
Each Zephyr's a sigh and each dewdrop a tear."

At the back of the paper, long years afterwards, Carolina added a few words:—

"Written by my desire by my then future most

<sup>1</sup> It was the fashion of the day in Perthshire to invent rhymes and nicknames. To this time belongs the well-known "Litany" of Maxtone of Cultoquhey. "From the greed of the Campbells, from the ire of the Drummonds, from the pride of the Grahams, from the wind of the Murrays Good Lord Deliver us." Miss Grace Graeme was "The Fair Maid of Craig Rossie," and Lady Charlotte Campbell "The Flower of Argyll." The following is from the diary of Charles Stuart of Dalguise:—

"The Strathearn Rose,  
The Strathallan Trout,  
The Star of the Stormont,  
And the Moor Pout."

The Rose was Miss Moray of Abercairny, the Star Miss Murray of Kincairny, the Moor Pout Miss Drummond of Pitkellony. The Strathallan Trout has not been identified.



*Carolina Nairne.*

WIFE OF WILLIAM 5<sup>TH</sup> LORD NAIRNE.

1766 - 1845.



beloved husband when I was about 17 years old (at Gask). Wished to have these lines because they seemed so beautiful when he sung them."

The singer of the song was William Nairne, her second cousin. John,<sup>1</sup> the eldest surviving son of the third Lord Nairne, never assumed the title. He married about 1756 Brabazon Wheeler,<sup>2</sup> fifth daughter of Richard Wheeler of Lyrath in Ireland. There were three children of this marriage: John, who died in America unmarried in 1781; William, born at Drogheda 1757, who was in Fraser's 71st Regiment; and a daughter, Brabazon, who died unmarried in 1783. John Nairne, the father, who was Provost of St Andrews, died in 1782. His income consisted of £150 allowed him from the Civil List, and £100 was continued to his wife. The title remained in abeyance for seventy-eight years. In the very impoverished state of the family resources it was probably as well for William Nairne that he had no honours of the kind to support. He must far more keenly have regretted his inability to marry. He and Carolina were true to each other all through the long days of youth. Twenty-three years passed from the day he sang the song at Gask, till the marriage was accomplished.

From the first beginnings of recollection life had worn for the four sisters at Gask a grave as well as a gay aspect. Their days were passed in nursing the father, whose constantly declining health, as years went on, took away all possibility of light-hearted careless joy of life. Marjory, whose conduct in early youth had drawn forth the series of unfavourable comments already recorded, developed into a tender and devoted nurse, and a fitting head to the household. Laurence Oliphant's fear that he would lose the comfort of Aunt Henrietta's help was never fulfilled; she outlived her nephew many years, and continued to the end an inmate of Gask. That he deeply

<sup>1</sup> Although his father, the third Lord Nairne, had ten children John was the only one who married; he was the third son. His eldest brother, James, died in 1737. His eldest sister and another elder brother, William, both died of smallpox 1729.

<sup>2</sup> She died in 1801.

appreciated the love and care of his children is shown in many passages in his journal:—

“What comfort in my four Girles, my servants too! no indisposed person so agreeably waited on as I, or with more alacrity and willingness.

“Four dear Girles to dress and undress and do everything necessary about me and keep me company by turns thro’ the day.”

To part with Laurie was disquieting, and the father seems in his nervous state to have allowed the proposal to cause him an access of illness. Nevertheless the young man did get leave at last to set forth on his travels. He never saw his father again, and was in Flanders when the end came.

The death so long desired came gently on New Year’s Day, 1792. So long an invalid, so long dwelling apart from the stream of action and influence, the seventh Laird of Gask seems in old age only a shadow of the “glorious, rash, and hazardous young man” riding forth with his father upon the great adventure of the ’45, or thundering up the Canongate crying his tidings of victory. But even in the pathetic helplessness of inaction and ill-health his steadfast efforts were directed towards keeping alive the dying flame of Jacobite loyalty. He lived to hear the first tempest of the French Revolution break over Europe. The very last entry in his journal bears upon the tragedy:—

*Oct. 6 1789.* “The King and Queen of France during ye night assaulted in their palace of Versailles, several of the Gard du corps killed in the apartments, and they carried off as Prisoners to the Tuileries part of the Louvre, many women, or in the habit of women, made ye assault. The Marquis de la Fayett at the head of the Paris Militia came and join’d them to carry off the King. The States Generall calling themselves the National Assembly followed to Paris.”

Laurence Oliphant was released before the great feudal traditions of Europe received their death-blow in



the triumph of the Revolution. He belonged to the old order, and was not fated to see the lowering of its standards.

Alexander Robertson writes from Potterhill to his nephew, now eighth Laird of Gask, in Flanders, 7th January 1792, when the old laird had been dead a week:—

“MY DEAR NEPHEW,— Before now you will have received the melancholy accounts from Gask. As it was not thought proper to look at any of your late dear Fathers papers without your authority, it will be necessary that you should empower such persons as you think proper to examine them. . . . your Brother and Sisters support the great loss they have sustained with as much fortitude as could be expected. Charles behaved with great propriety at the interment which took place yesterday — it was attended by Lord Kinnoull, Capt. Murray and all the relations and friends of the deceased that were in the neighbourhood.

“Your Brother is to return as soon as possible to his studies, and I believe is to be here tomorrow or the day after on his way to Edin. Your Grandmother sends you her blessing. . . . ALEX. ROBERTSON.”

A letter from Amelia to Laurie shows how life went on:—

“GASK, Feb. 8th 1792.

“My dear Brother would be agreeably surprised if he saw how tolerably cheerful we are. To be sure the loss we have suffered must fall heavy upon all our minds sometimes—but we have been supported far beyond what we could have imagined—and if we thought you were as well it would be a great comfort to us.

“We endeavour to be always employed about one thing or other and do not forget your injunctions about somebody being here so much as can be conveniently for them. Part of my amusement is to contemplate May—which I do in the same manner I would any thing I thought out of the reach of my imitation. How she kept up at the first—how she has now a constant mild serenity that often approaches to cheerfulness and seldom or never sinks—and that in the midst of her business—for she is

always attending to something and I dare say *might* often be fretted. I am often ashamed of her attention to us because it is due from us to her—especially as she is much taken up and not very attentive to herself. Aunt Harriet's anxiety you know—it has appeared very much indeed with the utmost kindness. . . .

“I suppose Car will go to the Hill soon, she has been riding a little lately. Poor Sultana has gone—she took what they thought the Batts—and died this morning, perhaps May mentioned that.

“I hope Mr Charles Graeme does not leave you time to think too much—it is good to have the mind often turned off melancholy reflections at first. There is plenty of time afterwards to indulge them—when it may be done with less hurt. However in our case I think reflection sometimes brings consolation — indeed it will always do it to us, if we look a little beyond the short term of human life. . . .

AMELIA OLIPHANT.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE EIGHTH LAIRD

THE Gask children, bereft of their chief occupation, had to recast existence into a new form. Laurie, now the young laird, came home, and the party spent the winter of 1794 in Edinburgh. For the first time the four handsome and clever girls went into the world to see and be seen. But the group was soon to be broken. Charles Steuart of Dalguise had long cherished an affection for Amelia Oliphant. He was a widower, having married in 1786 Miss Grace Stewart<sup>1</sup> of Ballechin. She lived only one year. Now his thoughts went forward to a future with Amelia, whose handsome face still is seen in her portrait at Dalguise. The match must, on the whole, have been pleasing to the Gask family, strongly united as they were, for Charles Steuart's estate lay only a few miles from home,—a pretty old house on the banks of Tay, near Dunkeld.

The young laird, who kept up a constant correspondence with his Robertson uncles, writes to Alexander from Perth in May 1794 :—

“MY DEAR UNCLE, —I am desired by Amelia to inform you that she has now accepted of Mr Steuart of Dalguise's addresses, who I must confess deserves it from his long affection for her. Amelia has no doubt of having your approbation as you seemed to wish it, when he first made his application to her. She is to have a carriage, and he is to set about building a new home immediately as soon as the Duke of Atholl and he can agree about an exchange of property which upon equal terms will be an

<sup>1</sup> Her portrait, painted by Raeburn, was sold at the Dalguise sale in Edinburgh, 1904.

advantage to both parties. Mr Steuart is to be at Gask in a few days to settle the preliminaries which from the terms in which he talks I have no doubt will make Amelia comfortable. He is a very good man tho not quite so genteel in his manners as one could wish, but it is impossible to obtain all properties, one must often be content if the leading features in a character are good. There is no day fixed as yet for the marriage but I suppose it will take place soon."

To the same :—

"July 6, 1794.

"When I arrived in Edinburgh I went to the Abbey to see my sister Carolina who has been staying with Lady Elizabeth Murray for some time getting clothes etc. for Amelia. She spoke to me concerning Mr & Mrs Lindly's<sup>1</sup> situation which being truly deplorable. I shall state to you as nearly as I can remember, which Mr Lindly begged of me to do, as he knows of no friend to apply to for advice, and he is willing to exert himself in any way that would extricate himself from his present dilemma, for he is so deep in debt that he cannot remove from the Abbey for fear of being thrown into jail, but is accommodated in the meantime with Lord Bredalbane's lodgings there, which there is no great likelihood of his being able to keep, as his lordship has use for the furniture in them."

To the same from Perth :—

"12 July 1794.

"As my sister Amelia is particularly anxious that you should be present at her intended marriage, I am desired by her to request that favour of you and as I think by the arrangement at present on foot the 22 will be the day appointed for the signing of the contract, I hope you will be able to be at Gask the day before and the ceremony will take place the day following. . . . If

<sup>1</sup> There is an entry in Laurence Oliphant's accounts : "Mar. 17, 1795. £18 paid to Mrs Lindly at the Abbey, niece to the Earl of Dunmore, in her distress." Later, in February 1796, there is a further entry : "£26 for Captain Lindly for passage money to New Providence." John Murray, Dean of Killaloe, and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Murray (daughter of the third Earl of Dunmore), had a daughter, Harriet, who married Captain William Lindly. She divorced him in 1805, and the same year married John Francis Staveley, of York.

anything should happen to prevent the marriage upon the day named I shall send an express."

Amelia's marriage was a very happy one; her letters to her husband, many of them written from Gask, show a deep and tender affection. At the same time she leaned very much on the advice and judgment of her sister Carolina in all the events of her life, and Carolina spent a good deal of her time in visiting the Steuarts. Little is known of her personality during these years. There is already a staidness, the point of view of an onlooker, in the letters she writes to Charles Steuart during Amelia's engagement. It is as if the chief events of girlhood and womanhood had passed her by, giving her no place as a central figure. Amelia's marriage and the births of her children<sup>1</sup> gave her new interests; but her own girlhood was over, and she watched others enter into their heritage of womanhood, cherishing in her own heart the steadfast romance of her love for William Nairne, the vision of the happy marriage that was not to come in youth at all. William Nairne was poor for the same reason that Carolina was poor; it was an honourable poverty, a source of simple pride, but it stood between them and their happiness for twenty-three years.

In the year and month of Amelia's marriage, 1794, Laurie, the young laird, joined the Perthshire Light Dragoons. His commission as Captain under Colonel Moray of Abercairny is dated the next year, 29th May 1795. At the original county meeting, when it was decided to raise the regiment, Laurie had offered his services. The landowners of Perthshire were to find the

- <sup>1</sup> 1. Margaret Henrietta Maria, born at Durham 1st May 1797. She died unmarried at Edinburgh 1896, in her hundredth year.
2. John, born at Ardblair 7th August 1799, married, 1829, Hon. Janet Oliphant Murray, eldest daughter of the eighth Lord Elibank. He had five daughters. He went to South Africa and was High Sheriff of the Cape of Good Hope.
3. Laurence Oliphant, born at Dalguise 1st February 1801, and died the same year.
4. Charles, born at Dalguise 2nd May 1803, died unmarried at Gibraltar 1828.

money. Three troops were thus raised under Colonel Moray, George Graeme of Inchbrakie, and Alexander Muir MacKenzie of Delvine. Early in 1795 a general augmentation of Scots Fencible Cavalry was authorised, and in June the regiment left Stirling for Aberdeen. While the regiment was there, an incident occurred which seems to have been the cause of a good deal of agitation. The *Evening Courant* of 13th August 1795 gives the following account:—

“On the first formation of the Corps, Mr Oliphant offered his services to the County Meeting to act in the Corps as a Lieutenant, which offer they accepted, and his name was enrolled as a Lieutenant in it from the very commencement. Some time afterwards Mr Steel was engaged in London to act as Adjutant, Cornet and Riding Master to the Corps, but he was soon after promoted to a lieutenancy in it, and it appears from the evidence of Major Moray, who gave him the appointment, that he meant Mr Steel to be the junior Lieutenant, as all the other lieutenancies were already filled up. When the Regiment was gazetted, it appeared that the name of Mr Steel stood before that of Mr Oliphant, on which account Mr Steel claimed rank as Senior Lieutenant, and did duty as such till the 4th of June last, when the officers were invited to drink His Majesty's health with the Magistrates of Stirling, on which occasion, after the officers had taken their places in a circle at the Cross, Lieutenant Oliphant went up and took the officer immediately above Lieutenant Steel by the arm, standing at the time before Mr Steel and, as he says, trod upon his toes. It has not appeared in evidence whither Mr Oliphant came into that situation with an intention to supercede Mr Steel and stand above him, or only to speak to the officer next him. It appears, however, that Lieutenant Steel conceived the former and said to Lieutenant Oliphant ‘Don't put me out of my place,’ to which the other answered that he ‘had as good a right to that place as he had’ on which Steel replied that ‘he was a scoundrel for saying so, or pretending so,’ and these words he repeated after the Major came up and interfered.

“After the company dispersed, the Major held a con-

sultation with the Officers of the Corps on what had passed, and they were of opinion that Lieutenant Steel should be put under arrest in the meantime, which was immediately done. . . . Lieutenant Steel declined making any apology for his conduct, unless Lieutenant Oliphant would previously acknowledge in coming up and standing before him and treading on his toes, he did not mean to insult the prisoner. But upon acknowledgment to that effect being made, he declared his willingness then to make any apology which his brother officers should deem necessary. It seems however that the corps did not think such a previous acknowledgment as the prisoner required necessary, although it was verbally communicated to him that Lieutenant Oliphant meant no offence; but this Lieutenant Steel did not deem sufficient, as he conceived Lieutenant Oliphant to be the aggressor. And thus matters stood till Lieutenant Steel claimed a trial by Court Martial."

Subsequently a court martial was held on Lieutenant-Adjutant Steel on a charge of disrespectful conduct to the commanding officer and other officers. He refused to sign any apology, and succeeded in getting a court martial held on Colonel Moray and George Graeme, which found, however, in their favour. So far the affair seems simple, but it appears to have convulsed Perthshire, and certainly caused much disquietude in the Gask household.

Laurence, the young laird, now twenty-eight years old, had engaged himself to Miss Christian Robertson of Ardblair. The Blairs of Ardblair were of a very ancient family, the property lying some thirty miles from Gask between Blairgowrie and Dunkeld. James Blair of Ardblair, born 1682, was married to Christian Forrester, daughter of a writer in Edinburgh. There was a large family, but only two daughters survived the father: Margaret, born 1721, married at Ardblair, 1765, Colonel William Fullarton, eldest son of Fullarton of that Ilk, and who died without issue, 1802; and Rachel, born 1725, who married at Ardblair, 1767, Dr Joseph Robertson. Their only child, Christian, born at Edinburgh 12th April

1769, was therefore the heiress of Ardblair, to which she succeeded on the death of her aunt, Mrs Fullarton, in 1802.

The time of Laurence's engagement does not appear, but Christian Robertson writes from Ardblair on 13th August 1795:—

“Your letter relieved us from a good deal of uneasiness by the silence you observe with respect to the disagreeable circumstance of a Court Martial having occurred, as it proves you are not in any degree concerned. . . . I am sorry I mentioned a word of my Mare's folly or rather my own want of management. She is in general the quietest creature imaginable and never attempted such a frolic before or since. . . . Believe me to be yours truly,

“CHRISTIAN ROBERTSON.”

The following is from Carolina Oliphant to her brother Laurence, from Dalguise, 19th August 1795, addressed to the camp at Aberdeen:—

“MY DEAR LAURIE,—Your letter to Mrs Steuart was a perfect cordial to us. The account we had heard just the night before for the first time was pretty just, as it was brought by Mr Elder from Lord A. Gordon, but the stile of the *Courant* was most alarming and provoking. Amelia was not the worse of the little alarm she got though I was afraid she would, and I think myself fortunate to have got off with one night's unhappiness; it would be nonsense to attempt to describe the feelings of that night; your letter came next day and all was right. I hope since the affair must be public to see a *just* account of it in the papers, for at present it is told a thousand ways. I sincerely hope if Steel is not broke he will have at least spirit enough to leave the corps. I cannot feel quite easy while he remains in it tho' I'm sure he ought not to be treated in any one respect as a gentleman and of course whatever his conduct may be in future we ought not to be alarmed. . . . When people are obliged to associate with low bred bears it is impossible to say what may happen,—in this case surely Major Moray is the person affronted and I wish that were better known. . . . What I would give to see you



*settled as we wish* at Gask. Adieu my dearest Brother,  
I never knew till Monday to what unbounded extent  
I am your most aff. sister, CARO. OLIPHANT."

Marjory Oliphant writes to her brother Laurence from Gask:—

"August 29, 1795.

". . . Miss Robertson wrote in answer to mine,—we have a charming prospect of a happy life while with her. By the by we are very well pleased she has no other sisters and I daresay you are not very sorry. . . . We were much obliged to you for writing to relieve us about Steel's business, it gave us much pleasure to hear the real way of it from yourself, as that in the papers surprised us a little. . . . Charles is just come up . . . he says he would have wrote; yet he wishes to see you before he decides—as he does not sufficiently understand the nature of the employment you point out for him. . . . I hope the reformation so happily begun will be completed as he passes these years so universally dedicated to folly by young people. Our repairs go on well, they doubtless give ground for conjectures at least, but we were surprised to hear that Lord Rollo (after calling here) had gone to Duncrub full of the marriage and the Lady too. Miss Drummond Callender writes in the same style, and we have enough to do to avoid equivocating, which however, I do not intend to do,—or tell either."

Christian Robertson writes from Ardblair to Miss Oliphant at Gask:—

"I was so unreasonable as expect to hear from you yesterday and as I was then disappointed consoled myself with the hope of having a letter today for certain and despatched a servant early to wait the arrival of the Post. He is this instant returned without one and I cannot express the uneasiness this silence has caused. Sometimes I think it may be owing to the last accounts by Charles being so favourable that you consider it unnecessary to continue their confirmation, at other times the most painful ideas of a relapse occurs to my mind and fills it with the most disagreeable sensations. For God's sake write me what is the matter and if possible

give me good news. . . . I hardly know what I say, . . . the humanity of your disposition will induce you to relieve the anxiety of your most affectionate

“CHRISTIAN ROBERTSON.”

Another letter from Ardblair, dated simply Monday night, is addressed to Laurence Oliphant:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your silence is unaccountable, and distresses me more than it is in my power to express, . . . it is eight days tomorrow since I have had any accounts from Gask, and even then they were not such as to make me perfectly at ease with respect to your Brother . . . you dont know how miserable your concealment has made me. . . .”

On the same sheet is added:—

“Ten thousand thanks for your kind attention which has so effectually relieved me. I had written the first part of this, as you will easily perceive, to your sister before I received your welcome Epistle. . . . I would fain have committed it to oblivion with the gloomy ideas that occasioned it,—but my Father, who knows I am writing, insisted I should continue on the same paper, I suppose to prepare you for the impatient—you are to expect.”

Laurence Oliphant writes to his uncle, Alexander Robertson, from Gask, 11th November 1795:—

“MY DEAR UNCLE,—I left Ardblair this forenoon, and Monday is at last fixed for the ceremony to take place which has been so long delayed upon account of my illness. It would no doubt have given both Christian and I the greatest pleasure if you would have witnessed the marriage, but owing to the smallness of the house of Ardblair, we could not think of asking that favour, but we intend to be at Gask next day, and we will earnestly expect very soon to see you here. . . .”

On 10th December the bride is established at Gask with Aunt Henrietta and the three sisters-in-law.

Laurence Oliphant writes from Gask, 14th March 1796, to his uncle, Alexander Robertson:—

“ I have been at home for about a fortnight ; but must return to Stirling upon the 21st, as Col. Moray told me I need not expect to get away again, . . . I think it is probable Mrs Oliphant will go with me, and my eldest sister. Our rank is still undetermined, owing in a great measure, I think, to our commanding officer who is very delitory in his exertions, which makes us totally in the dark what *honors* we have to look for. Since ever I went into the corps I have seen frequent proofs of insincerity amongst the officers which hurt me very much, but I have witnessed it more particularly since the plan of augmenting has been in agitation. We have now, too, got in a number of lads for subalterns not very desirable for companions . . . I have some thoughts of resigning . . . if one could look for peace soon it would be desirable to remain till we are disbanded. . . .”

He writes again to the same from Stirling, 6th April 1796 :—

“ If we were lucky in having a decided respectable commanding Officer I am persuaded much more might be made of this corps ; but from experience I have now the same opinion of Abercairny which you formerly entertained of him, and I begin to think that a man who will submit to be a jocky in horse-flesh will not scruple to assume the same character upon every occasion where his interest is concerned. Had it not been for the pusillanimous behaviour of Col. Moray I have no doubt but the unworthy member of the corps would have been dismissed from the service ;—but as that has not taken place, the corps have entered into a resolution not to associate with him, which has been invariably adhered to by us all, except when our military duty required us to speak to him. The Duke of York has written to the commander in chief in Scotland saying that he is perfectly satisfied with Col. Moray’s reasons for looking upon me as an older officer than Steel . . . and I have accordingly taken the command of him before I am gazetted as a Captain. . . . Doctor Robertson gave me four thousand pounds down with Mrs Oliphant. I have made a settlement of a thousand instead of five hundred upon each of my sisters. I am much persecuted about Charles. I have been at much trouble, and have everything in train

for purchasing a collectorship for him . . . but I understand that the oath of abjuration is indispensably necessary, which Charles I am sure would not take, nor would I desire him. . . . He has some idea of going into the fur trade in Canada. . . . He would probably get over head and ears in debt, from ignorance of business, and I am afraid might get into a habit of tipling with low bodies. . . .”

Mrs Oliphant's mother died in 1796—“went off without pain and literally fell on sleep.” In the same letter that tells this, Laurence announces to his uncle that he has hopes of an heir, and also that Steel has been dismissed the service.

A letter from Margaret Oliphant in May 1797 mentions Charles's state of health, his symptoms pointing to consumption. Charles himself writes to his Uncle Alexander giving deplorable details. He died at Gask 23rd July 1797. Little is known of his life, and any estimate of his character is built on slight foundation. That he was the hero of his father's daily loyal toast at dinner, that he stole a peach and repented, that he was an anxiety to his elder brother, and that he lived and died an unalterable Jacobite—these are the only records that remain of his short life of twenty-five years.

Carolina writes from Ardblair, 18th August 1799, to Alexander Robertson:—

“Amelia has recovered vastly well yesterday and today she has been almost constantly in the diningroom and the nice little boy is the quietest child I ever saw unless when he is hungry and then to be sure he cries very stoutly,—he is to be christened *John* after Mr Steuart's father, on Sunday next. . . . My brother regretted very much that Lord Kinnoull's yeomanry *zeal* brought him down the country so very suddenly, they are to go into quarters at Stirling on the 26 for a week that they may be all drilled together. Mr Steuart was in Perth the other day to attend in his own defence—that is to say in defence of his *probity* before the commissioners for the income tax,—his returns were so very far below what the old *liar* reported. Report had represented to them that they hinted to him he must have *misunderstood* the Act,

—he had all his proofs at hand however and completely convinced them. . . . May, Margaret and I breakfasted at St Martin's as we came home and found Amelia perfectly well—she dined and drank tea without making any complaint, and that night the young laird was born. Margaret Harriet grows very well and is I think a sweet child indeed. Nancy Stuart<sup>1</sup> is a tall genteel looking girl and promises to be very amiable. . . .

Other family events at the close of the century were the marriage of Marjory Oliphant, the eldest daughter, at the age of thirty-seven, to Dr Alexander Stewart<sup>2</sup> of Bonskeid, in November 1799, and the pulling down of the old house, an act which it is difficult for his descendants to forgive the eighth Laird of Gask. The old church went too,—a cruel change to the numberless families whose dead had been buried in the ancient yard from time immemorial.<sup>3</sup> Years passed before the tenants left off a habit of carrying their dead to the old place and burying them there in the dead of night.

The life of the eighth laird was on the whole not very fortunate or happy. Perhaps his best years were those of his very early married life, during the three years he was with the Perthshire Dragoons. Early in 1797 he marched into Westmoreland, with the object of keeping order during a ballot for the supplementary militia, and writes as follows to his Uncle Strowan ;—

“Great preparations are making to oppose us ; men are even at exercise for that purpose ; but if any resistance is made our lads will give them a complete drubbing ; numerous mobs have already assembled, but armed only with bludgeons. Lord Lansdown and the Duke of Norfolk are both great democrats and very likely abettors of the rioters.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The daughter of Charles Stuart's brother Thomas, who was dead. Charles Stuart gave a home to Nancy and her sister when their mother married again a Mr Niven. Carolina Oliphant was very much attached to this young girl.

<sup>2</sup> He was a widower. His first wife was a Miss Bisset. There were three children, but wife and children all died within a short time.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Stuart records in his diary, 1826, that there were then many gravestones bearing the name of Oliphant, and not a few with coats of arms. He found part of a pillar with initials “L. O.” and arms, but no date. There was also an old font. All these stones have now disappeared. The tombstone of Thomas Oliphant, 1740, is the only one now visible.

<sup>4</sup> Jacobite Lairds, p. 430.

“DUMFRIES,<sup>1</sup> Sept. 20th 1797.

“MY DEAR UNCLE,—I had the pleasure of receiving your letter sometime since and had not the least idea at that time I was to answer it from Scotland as when it arrived we were under orders to be ready to march at a moment’s warning, the Dutch fleet being supposed out at sea and a landing of the enemy upon some part of our coast apprehended. This false alarm had not long subsided when our route arrived for Scotland to go there to assist the pusillanimous Magistrates in the execution of their duty; but I am happy to add that everything has been quiet since our arrival and the ringleaders taken up by our lads without the smallest assistance. I understand we are soon to measure back our steps to winter in England. You have no doubt been acquainted with the very tumultuous behaviour of the Atholl men who threaten’d Atholl house and Lude with being burnt and assembled here to the number of many hundred with such intentions. Aunt Henrietta and May happened to be at Lude at the time upon a visit, and together with Mrs Robertson and Lude, at the head of near a hundred men, went down to Atholl house for safety. How time and circumstances may bring about a meeting between the most hostile families. I think it must have been an awkward first visit for Mrs Robertson at Atholl house. Every thing is now quiet there and a troop of *Dragoons* at Blair and another at Sir Jn. Menzies’s (who I am told acted as he was *ordered* by the highlanders) for the preservation of their houses and their personal safety. I am anxious to hear how my Uncle’s tenants behaved altho’ I have little doubt as to that point. Mine have been shewing their teeth too; but as such a majority of the Parishes in the County have come forward so properly I dare say the hustle is at an end. . . .

“Lord Feilding who haunted us so at Chester le Street and made us go ten or twelve miles down to Lude’s land to flank his parade, for it could hardly be called anything more, is now appointed to the Staff of Scotland and sent to turn us out very unexpectedly yesterday, for which however he is to give us all a *feed* to-day. He is a favourite of our friend Graeme’s, as he pays great attention to etiquette and is very anxious to inform himself and to

<sup>1</sup> Part of this letter is given in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 431.

learn his duty. How does the subscription go on for Mr Nairne<sup>1</sup> I propose giving £10 per ann. towards his relief and if an immediate supply were deem'd necessary I should be willing to send him what I could spare. Mrs Oliphant is just now at Fremdon Grange and our little daughter who is a fine thriving stout child. . . .

“Your dutiful nephew and most obedient and humble servant,  
LAU. OLIPHANT.”

It is hard to dissociate thoughts of Laurie, the eighth Laird, from the infinite regret of the destruction of the old house of Gask, and the removal of the old kirk. Doubtless he had his reasons. Rats seem to have taken possession of the house, and swarmed everywhere. Family tradition relates that the housekeeper, Mrs Hutton, composed a letter addressed to the Captain of the Rats, requesting him to remove with his followers, which appeal, thrust into a convenient rat-hole, was supposed to bring about the dispersal of the army. Even this desperate remedy failed, and the rats one night attacked the baby Laurence in his cradle. This seems to have been the determining point, and the old house, where eight successive generations of his forebears had been born and reared, was doomed to destruction by the Laird.

The disastrous fashion of the day was to pull down, or “improve” out of recognition, the old Scottish houses, rearing in their places dignified and cold residences, generally a great deal too large for the property. This is what was done at Gask, and thus it happened that what would to-day have been one of the most interesting memorials of old Scottish life was remorselessly sacrificed. A broken and crumbling remnant alone remains of that beautiful and curious structure, so rich in historical and tender association.<sup>2</sup> But the immortality of the “Auld Hoose” was assured. In the heart of

<sup>1</sup> See p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> In the Memoir of Baroness Nairne, the Rev. Charles Rogers raised from the dead the “Venerated Chief of Strowan, Duncan Robertson,” to carry the Family Bible from the old house to the new. He had been in his grave for twenty years when this removal occurred!

Carolina the sorrow for its loss and the charm of all its memories was deeply rooted, in time to blossom into song.

The new house was begun in 1801.

The last group of children ever reared at Gask were the children of Laurence Oliphant and Christian Robertson.

1. Rachel, born in Edinburgh 27th January 1797, died at Bath unmarried 1864.
2. Laurence, afterwards ninth Laird of Gask, born 6th May 1798, died unmarried at Torquay 31st December 1824.
3. Margaret, born 21st August 1799, married at Rood Ashton, May 1830, to Thomas Kington of Charlton House, Somersetshire, died at Teignmouth 14th September 1839, leaving issue three sons and a daughter.
4. Christian, born at Gask 12th October 1800, died unmarried at Malvern June 1830.
5. Harriet, born at Gask 20th November 1801, died unmarried at Gask 6th August 1822.
6. Amelia, born at Gask 22nd December 1802, died in London unmarried 18th October 1820.
7. James Blair, afterwards tenth Laird of Gask, born 3rd March 1804 at Christianbank, Edinburgh, married, 20th October 1840, his cousin Henrietta, daughter and heir of James Gillespie Graeme of Orchill (who survived him and died 1886). He died 9th December 1847 at Leamington, leaving no issue.
8. Caroline, born at Gask 16th January 1807, died unmarried at Clifton 9th February 1831.

It will be seen that of all this large family only one, the second daughter, Margaret, left children, and from her come all the descendants of the eighth Laird of Gask, and the direct line of the family.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE WHITE ROSE OF GASK

LIVED among the manifold interests of sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews, and a score of Perthshire relatives near at hand, riding, dancing, singing, the early life of Carolina Oliphant could have known little of dulness. In all family events hers was the judgment most valued, hers the love most sought. Her life was never at any time devoted to a single pursuit; there was no decision on her part to take up the great interests of literature, and to set herself to climb the thorny and glorious path. Nothing is known of her literary aspirations, beyond the fact that she loved Burns, and was among the first to hail the rising star of his genius. The source of her own inspiration lay in her power of perception, and this, instantly recognising the genius of Burns, aspired to the same goal of great and simple expression.

The story has often been told of the first beginning of her song-writing.

Driving once through the small village of Aberuthven, in the neighbourhood of Gask, where a fair was in progress, Carolina noticed a small yellow book in the hands of several villagers, the kind of publication sold by pedlars at that time. She bought a copy and found the little book contained a collection of songs and ballads in the coarse forms of national songs then popular. A modest ambition awoke in her mind to do something to purify these songs of her country. Her first attempt was to remodel an old song called "The Pleughman." This must have been when she was twenty-seven, for the song was first sung at the dinner young Laurie gave his tenants a year after succeeding to the estate. The laird

sang it himself and met with so much applause that he had various copies made and presented to his friends. The song became popular, and Carolina, encouraged by the modest success, began to write a great deal.

No one in those days feared in the least the accusation of plagiarism, a nightmare reserved for a later age which aims at originality at all costs. Neither Burns or Mrs Cockburn or Sir Walter himself felt a twinge of remorse in tearing the heart and refrain out of the old traditional songs, and fitting them to suit the taste of the day. The ancient song of "The Pleughman" was thus thrown into new forms at least twice before Carolina tried her hand on it. She made no claim to originality, nor sought any personal credit. Her first venture was given to the world under that strict veil of secrecy which she so much wished to hold closely drawn all through her long life. But she continued to write, and to this period belong many of her best songs, fresh with the inimitable freshness of youth. "John Tod," "The Laird of Cockpen," "The Fife Laird," all were written at this time, also the little group of Jacobite ballads which in their passionate wildness constitute the last rally of the family devotion to the Stewarts—"Wha'll be King but Charlie?" "The Hundred Pipers," "He's owre the Hills," "Will ye no' come back again?" "The White Rose of June."

Her deepest thoughts were rooted in that past which had seen her father at Culloden, had seen him wandering in the hills, had seen her best and dearest in exile for so many weary years. When Carolina was born the actual struggle was over, the pageant of war was past; the retribution and the endurance were memories too. The sense of deadness that follows on any strong excitement had settled over the country; but in her close attendance on her father she had absorbed year after year the cherished principles that were the light of his days, linking the reflective powers of her mind to the minds of those whose lives had been actively spent in the Cause. The impulse that inspired all the valour and sacrifice inspired also the haunting pathos of her song.

The tendency of thought at the time was to narrow sympathy and to limit taste. The awakening was only beginning, and Carolina came into no inheritance of wide views and habits of simple poetic expression. The words by which her name and fame abide were those of primitive thought, the purely Celtic note, sounding almost in spite of herself, the unstudied utterance of a nature rich in flashes of humour, in poignant human sympathy.

Best among all the songs she ever wrote is the "Land o' the Leal." The circumstances which called forth the lyric are well known. Carolina had a great friend in a daughter of William Erskine, the Episcopal clergyman at Muthil, Mary Anne, who in 1796 married Archibald Campbell Colquhoun of Killermont. A baby girl was born in 1797 and lived less than a year. Carolina wrote the verses<sup>1</sup> to console the sorrow of the young mother.

"I'm wearin' awa', John,  
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,  
I'm wearin' awa'  
To the land o' the leal.

"There's nae sorrow there, John,  
There's neither cauld nor care, John,  
The day is aye fair  
In the land o' the leal.

"Our bonnie bairn's there, John,  
She was baith gude and fair, John,  
And oh! we grudged her sair  
To the land o' the leal.

"But sorrows sel' wears past, John,  
And joy's a-comin' fast, John,  
The joy that's aye to last  
In the land o' the leal.

<sup>1</sup> Two verses are omitted, as they were interpolated years after, and do not maintain the same poetic standard. Four lines run:—

"Sae dear that joy was bought, John,  
Sae free the battle fought, John,  
That sinfu' man ere brought  
To the land o' the leal."

“ Oh ! haud ye leal and true, John,  
 Your day’s wearin’ through, John,  
 And I’ll welcome you  
 To the land o’ the leal.

“ Now fare ye weel, my ain John,  
 This world’s cares are vain, John,  
 We’ll meet and aye be fain  
 In the land o’ the leal.”

In the achievement of this lyric, Carolina touched the highest point her poetic spirit was destined to reach. Several of her other poems have won fame, the kind of fame she would most have valued, being sung at a thousand hearths by those who, in most cases, do not know who wrote the words. The strains of “ Caller Herrin’ ” will go on sounding when her name has sunk further into those shadows of oblivion that overtake all but the greatest singers.

“ Wha’ll buy my caller herrin’ ?  
 They’re bonnie fish and halesome farin’ ;  
 Buy my caller herrin’  
 New drawn frae the Forth.  
 When ye were sleepin’ on your pillows  
 Dream’d ye aught o’ our puir fellows,  
 Darkling as they faced the billows  
 A’ to fill our woven willows ?  
 Buy my caller herrin’  
 New drawn frae the Forth.  
 Wha’ll buy my caller herrin’ ?  
 They’re no brought here without brave darin’ ;  
 Buy my caller herrin’  
 Ye little ken their worth !  
 Wha’ll buy my caller herrin’ ?  
 Oh, ye may ca’ them vulgar farin’,  
 Wives and mithers maist despairin’  
 Ca’ them lives o’ men.  
 Buy my caller herrin’  
 New drawn frae the Forth.

And when the creel o' herrin' passes,  
 Ladies, clad in silk and laces,  
 Gather in their braw pelisses,  
 Cast their heads and screw their faces.  
 Buy my caller herrin'  
 They're bonnie fish and halesome farin';  
 Buy my caller herrin'  
 New drawn frae the Forth.  
 Neebour wives, now tent my tellin',  
 When the bonnie fish ye're sellin',  
 At ae word be in ye're dealin',  
 Truth will stand when a' things failin'.  
 Buy my caller herrin',  
 They're bonnie fish and halesome farin',  
 Buy my caller herrin'  
 New drawn frae the Forth."

It was not an age that favoured the robust in art. "Elegance" and "taste" were words much in vogue, signifying a fastidiousness and unreality which the great stream of poetic renaissance, sweeping in its current Ferguson and Burns, was soon to engulf. Now and then Carolina's verse was elegant and tasteful, and has long been forgotten. She was at her best when she wrote out of her own clear intuition in the old Scots tongue, without the *point d'appui* of a version of song to be improved or toned down. The ballad of the "Auld Hoose" was written many years after its actual destruction, but the sorrow and regret of the parting belong to this earlier time of her life, leaving its mark on thoughts and character.

"Oh, the auld hoose, the auld hoose,  
 What tho' the rooms were wee!  
 Oh, kind hearts were dwelling there,  
 And bairnies fu' o' glee;  
 The wild rose and the jessamine  
 Still hang upon the wa'.  
 How mony cherished memories  
 Do they, sweet flowers, reca'.

"Oh, the auld laird, the auld laird,  
 Sae canty, kind and crouse,  
 How mony did he welcome to  
 His ain wee dear auld hoose!

And the leddy too, sae genty,  
 There sheltered Scotland's heir,  
 And clipt a lock wi' her ain hand  
 Frae his lang yellow hair.

“The mavis still doth sweetly sing,  
 The blue-bells sweetly blaw,  
 The bonny Earn's clear winding still,  
 But the auld hoose is awa'.  
 The auld hoose, the auld hoose,  
 Deserted tho' ye be  
 There ne'er can be a new hoose  
 Will seem sae fair to me.”

This song, in its almost bare simplicity, laid hold of the national heart, striking a note that will echo as long as there are homes to be remembered and surrendered. For the “auld hoose” is not the house of Gask; it is the house of dreams, the shrine of memory for all that is most dear in the wistful association of youth—a song having for its soul the passionate regret for the “glory that has passed away from earth.” The singer has thrown a halo of immortality over the last crumbling stones of the ancient house of Gask, but she has immortalised a hundred times more fully and more poignantly the countless lost homes of all the world. Yet she had no idea that she was writing for the world. In youth as in her old age, there is in her achievements an utter absence of conscious ability. It is upon this quality of spontaneity that her claim to fame is based,—a claim never put forward by herself even in thought. A life devoted to literature would have raised that fame no higher. No shadow of tormenting doubt or of any storm and stress of thought and belief fell upon her steadfast faith and unmoved hope. Hers is the voice of an age which cherished a gentle piety as the height of womanly achievement, although this piety is not reflected in her verse. She may have had a gentle ambition to write hymns, but the fact remains that she could not write them. Her religious verses are very poor indeed. Perhaps the temperament of her genius may have been

a tragedy to her nature, impelling her to write, and denying the power of conveying religious expression. Her voice was the channel for the lawless loyalty and humour and sympathy of those songs that men sing to-day, and will go on singing while Scotland wants songs at all. Her sympathies as a poet were quite apart from the aspirations of her life. As an evangelical lady who shunned the things of the world, and lived for religion of a special kind, how came she by her passionate attachment to the romantic and reckless Stewarts, or her understanding of the doings of human nature at its simplest and most primitive? There was never any one to whom the personal appealed less urgently. The assurance of an earthly immortality of fame would not have caused her one heart-beat. From anything she said or wrote, it is not apparent that her mind ever turned to the rewards of her genius. Yet in her second self one cannot but think that some haunting desire for recognition must have found place, and that it was not possible she could have given expression to so much primitive thought, without the impulse to link it with her name on the records of her country and her time. But all is hidden, and the student of her life sees nothing but a quiet and dignified gentlewoman, a shining example of all the precise virtues then in fashion, regarding notoriety with a shudder, and taking endless pains to conceal her gift of authorship even from her nearest and dearest.

Several of the poems give evidence of the warring dual nature. A notable instance is in the last verse of the fine poem, "The Covenanter's Widow." In the published version the last verse seems to bear no relation to the wild simplicity of the others.

" For he had ta'en the Covenant  
For Scotland's sake to dee, O,  
Death to him was gain we ken,  
But oh ! the loss to me, O ! "

Among the unpublished MSS. of Carolina are two

verses infinitely more human, which originally closed the poem:—

“ It wadna’ last, the day is past  
That I had you, my deary,  
O he is gane and I’m my lane  
A waefu’ night and weary.

“ The lowly bed where he is laid  
Gin I’d been there before him !  
But he is gane and I’m my lane,  
The grass is growin’ o’er him.”

As life went on Carolina gave less and less rein to the spontaneous expression of her genius, and to the time of her youth all her best work must be assigned. Other interests absorbed her attention, and first amongst these was the steadily growing young family of her brother, the eighth laird of Gask. Early in January 1797 Rachel, the first child of the new generation, was born at Edinburgh, the only one of the large family who lived to old age. Later in the spring, Laurie’s regiment being ordered to the north of England, the family party, including Carolina, moved to Durham, where a large circle of acquaintances rapidly formed. The story is often told, though it rests only on family tradition, of Carolina attending a function at Sunderland, to celebrate the opening of a new bridge across the Weare, and dancing with one of the royal family,<sup>1</sup> who afterwards proposed marriage.

Later in the year Laurie resigned his commission, wishing to devote himself to the interests of his estate. For seven consecutive years a baby was born every year at Gask. Mrs Oliphant’s health gave cause for anxiety. Her father, Dr Robertson, lived almost constantly at Gask. After Marjory’s marriage, only Carolina and Margaret, the youngest sister, remained in the old

<sup>1</sup> The bridge across the Weare was opened 9th August 1796 by H.R.H. Prince William of Gloucester. He was son to the Duke of Gloucester (whom he succeeded in 1805), and grandson of George II. Carolina Oliphant could scarcely have taken his wooing seriously. He was twenty-one, and ten years her junior. He married, in 1816, his cousin, Princess Mary, fourth daughter of George III.



home out of all the six children of the seventh laird. A fourth generation was represented in Aunt Henrietta Nairne, who continued as an inmate of the household until her death in 1802. Hers was the last death, and the baby Amelia's the last birth, within the shelter of the old house.

Laurence Oliphant still held a commission in the Perthshire Yeomanry. The following letters are given as showing how firmly the French invasion was believed in at the time. The first letter is written to Lord Dupplin.<sup>1</sup>

“CHRISTIAN BANK, near EDINBURGH,  
“Feb. 3rd 1804.

“MY LORD,—I have had the honor of receiving your Lordship's letter of the 29 ultimo.

“In answer I beg leave to inform you that the field day of the Yeomanry, concerning which your Lordship wishes to be informed, was ordered in consequence of a communication from General M'donald to his Grace, the Duke of Atholl, stating that several of the Yeomanry corps in the country had volunteered their services to send as many of their number as should be required to be stationed at particular places upon the coast and to go express in the event of the appearance of an enemy, it would be desirable if the Perthshire Yeomanry would also make a tender of their services to relieve these other corps of part of the duty. The Duke of Atholl in passing thro Perth enquired if I was at home and finding I was not, his Grace sent an extract of General M'donald's letter, nearly on the above terms, to Captain Hay who immediately ordered the field day to which you allude, as I went home two days before the day appointed I of course as senior Capt<sup>n</sup> went to Perth and took the command. It was a very cold frosty day and as no manœuvres could be gone through on the Inch, I invited the corps to a collation (at my own expense) in the Grammar School and then made General M'donald's proposal known to them, and in which they all most cordially concurred. As there was every appearance at

<sup>1</sup> Eldest son of the tenth Earl of Kinnoull. Two months after the date of this letter he became, by the death of his father at Dupplin, 12th April 1804, the eleventh Earl.

that time of an immediate invasion from the French and the greatest probability of our being called out upon actual service and as in that event it appeared to me to be impossible that the men could serve without cloaks and necessary bags at this inclement season and as there was not time to write to your Lordship upon the subject, I went to Dunkeld and mentioned the circumstance to the Duke, who agreed with me that these necessaries were indispensibly requisite and I accordingly intimated to the corps next day that, with his Grace's approbation, I was immediately to order them and begged of him to inform your Lordship, or I should certainly have done so myself.

“One of my troop under the command of Lieut. Graeme have been stationed at different places along the coast from Montrose to the Queen's Ferry, 2 at Crieff, 2 at Auchterarder, 2 are to be relieved by 25 from Capt<sup>n</sup>. Hay's Troop.

“The cloaks and necessary bags are now all sent to Perth to the number of 190 of each: the cloaks were furnished by M'Pherson St Andrews Street Edinburgh and the necessary saddle bags by Manton, saddler there, the former are of a strong broad blue cloth the price £2, 13s. 0d. each and the taylor gives six months' credit although the cloth is furnished at the ready money price: the bags cost 17s. 6d. including two strong straps for buckling them on, the straps formerly used for the coat cases will answer for fastening the cloak before the saddle.

“May I take the liberty of saying that it is my own opinion and likewise of those to whom I have spoken on the subject, that the commanding officer of a regiment for the time being is fully entitled in the absence of his superior officer to call out the said regiment exactly in the same way and upon the same occasions as if the Commandant himself were present, and more particularly in the present state of the country, when the commanding officer must be either upon the spot or so near as to be able to join in a very short time, or the detail of the regiment must be left in a great measure to the discretion of the next in command. This is a principle so completely established that I need not enlarge upon the subject, but I will only add if your Lordship will be good enough to mention your general views regarding the Regiment, I shall act up to them as far as my abilities and the existing circumstances can enable me to do, and

may I presume to say that if your Lordship will only repose that confidence in me which the second in the command of a Regiment has reason to expect, it shall not be abused, indeed considering the intimate footing I had always the honour of being upon, not only with your Father but your Grand Uncle, should have led me to wish for a continuance of that friendship which has long subsisted between the two Families, and which a very kind letter from your Lordship soon after you received the command of the Reg<sup>t</sup>. still makes me hope you wish to be kept up. From the recollection of the contents of that letter and your being willing to suppose that many misunderstandings may have occurred (perhaps misrepresentations too) in the discussion of some late arrangements, I am willing to consign even these to oblivion now that I presume the points at issue are properly settled and your Lordship wishes to be hereafter upon that amicable footing which I should wish to subsist between us. I have now delivered my sentiments very freely and I hope what I have said shall be taken as it is meant, namely as expressing my anxiety that every degree of reserve which may have hitherto existed should be laid aside, and that we should henceforth act together with perfect unanimity—in fine I think I have done my duty in making this proffer of friendship, if it is accepted and properly followed up the happiest consequences may ensue—if not I shall at least have the satisfaction of thinking that the fault was not mine.”

Lord Dupplin replies :—

“OXFORD, Feb. 9th 1804.

“SIR,—I this morning had the honour of receiving your letter which I take the earliest opportunity of answering. Nothing could be more proper or more necessary than to order the Regiment to Perth previous to so general an expectation of their being called upon immediate actual service. I am likewise equally glad that they are all provided with Cloaks and Saddle-bags which are undoubtedly necessary, and which I had ordered in London—(but finding they were bespoke elsewhere I counter-ordered them) these measures were all perfectly necessary; but I think myself entitled (if I am to have the responsibility of the Regiment) to be informed by the Commanding

Officer on the Spot when such measures take place. So far I may say that Cap<sup>t</sup> Hay was good enough to give me a line respecting them,—but not having the command, he could not inform me positively. I shall feel myself much indebted if you will be so good as to beg the Adjutant to give me any information of this kind (if any should occur) as I shall be *sorry* to put you to the trouble of writing. I feel at a loss how to answer the latter part of your letter respecting the want of confidence on my part in you, as the officer in Command. . . . I am so far bold to say that I believe no part of my conduct since I had the honour of commanding the Yeomanry (though a very difficult and arduous task at a very early period of my life) can possibly have given the slightest degree of offence, or displeasure to anyone. I succeeded to this situation after *one* who managed the whole business with the greatest honour and credit to himself, and who will ever be felt an irreparable loss in the Regiment as long as it continues embodied.

“The Duke, in the most handsome way, as the only mark he could show in return, and as the highest compliment he could pay to my Father,<sup>1</sup> placed me (though young) at the head of the Corps. My appointment<sup>2</sup> may have been a disappointment to many, as I have no doubt it was, but think it was no more than due, to my Father and family. I must confess I ever have looked up to you, and ever shall, for assistance in the management of the Regiment, tho’ I did not while in Scotland meet with that advice which my wishes induced me to expect.

“But on no account whatever shall any conduct of mine tend to lessen that friendship, and good understanding which has long, and I trust ever will, exist between the two families, at least it will always be my greatest endeavour to preserve it, and not my fault if it does not succeed. I trust nothing that is here mentioned will give the smallest offence, at least it is not intended so to do, as I have before mentioned that the most perfect harmony between the two families should exist is my most sincere wish, all I desire is that in the con-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Kinnoull had been in command of the Perthshire Yeomanry from 1798. He resigned on account of failing health.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Dupplin, who had joined the corps as a trooper in 1801, was appointed to the command in place of his father in August 1803. For details of the Perthshire Yeomanry see A Military History of Perthshire, p. 185, by the Marchioness of Tullibardine.

spicuous situation I am placed in at the head of the Yeomanry I may be well acquainted with proceedings of the Regiment, that I may act my part with justice to myself, and credit to the Corps. I have the honour to be, Sir, your ever obed<sup>t</sup> and faithful humble ser<sup>t</sup>.

‘DUPPLIN,

“*Lt. Col. Commandant, P.G.Y.C.*”

“Capt. OLIPHANT, P.G.Y.C.”

Meanwhile the large structure of the new house of Gask grew month by month, much too large, much too expensive. At the same time the grounds were laid out in the Italian form, the public road which ran past the windows of the old house was closed and turfed, and the deep glades in their sheltering trees began to wear the aspect they wear at this day. For Carolina and Margaret the changes must have been hard to bear, and the day dreaded when ruthless hands were to make of the cradle of their race a ruin and a desolation.

Laurence Oliphant spent a great deal of time away from home. Mrs Oliphant's letters to her husband were tenderly affectionate, though containing little even of domestic interest. An extract is here given of one letter written in 1805, which shows that the Morays were following the building fashion.

“That Sir Gilbert Stirling, who you saw at Dupplin, was since at Abercairny, and had a grand Horse, which his servant was out airing, and by some accident or other he went in plump into the foundation of Aber's house, and was killed. The Knight is son to the late provost of Edinburgh.”

The long years of Carolina's engagement to William Nairne were passing by, and youth had already passed, before there was a real prospect of marriage. It was not until 1806, when Carolina was in her fortieth year, and her *fiancé* nearly fifty, that he obtained the appointment of Assistant Inspector General of Barracks in Scotland, with the brevet rank of Major, which enabled him to marry.

In the library of the new house of Gask, the spacious sunny room commanding a broad prospect of strath and hill, William Nairne and Carolina Oliphant were married on 2nd June 1806. No family record gives details of the ceremony, of which one relic alone remains—the bride's exquisitely delicate lace wedding veil.<sup>1</sup> The honeymoon was passed at Stirling.

Alexander Robertson of Strowan took a very special interest in his niece Carolina, and bought a little house for the newly married couple at Duddingston, near Edinburgh. The house still exists, and is now known as Nairne Lodge, though at the time it received the name, Caroline Cottage. Heavy sorrows were, in course of time, to cloud the spirit of Carolina, but the early years of her marriage in this little cottage stand out as the happiest of her life. She was full of interest in everything, devoted to music, to painting, to a host of friends, and, above all, absorbed in her love for her husband and child.

Of the interval between the marriage in June 1806 and the birth of her only child, William Murray, on 6th July 1808, one record has come to light, which is here given as illustrating the earnest and sober ambitions of her religious life. A small note-book, full of suggestions and materials, mentions that a clergyman named Burnet, "who had been deeply infected by infidel principles, when recovered was most anxious that others should be convinced of the truth," and in order to encourage religious study organised a competition, which was advertised in the *Christian Observer* in 1807. Competitors were to write a treatise "On the Evidence of a Supreme Being," which was to be submitted in the year 1814 to Alexander Galen, merchant, Aberdeen. The reward offered was £200. Mrs Nairne formed the project of entering for this competition, and the little note-book gives a rough outline of her plan for the work. It was to be in the form of conversations between

<sup>1</sup> Now in the possession of the writer.

*Theophilus* and his family ("none of them clergymen, or they may be thought prejudiced"); *Eusebia*, his wife; *Harroway*, a neighbour of a very melancholy cast, unhappy in his family and without the comforts of religion; *Madame Bucca*, and a poor labourer.

Mrs Nairne writes:—

"May there be many far better Treatises than mine can possibly be, for it would be a bad account of the zeal and ability of the Public were it otherwise; yet mine may happen to fall into hands that it may satisfy on the great subject."

There is nothing to show that the treatise ever went further than the notes in the little book, of which two extracts are given:—

"I observe in conversation that with many people the evils suffered by what is called innocent good people is in their minds a great difficulty with respect to the providence and goodness of God. Either they cannot or will not allow their reflections to go deep enough to discover that our Souls are the great objects of God's care, not our feelings while we are in the body."

"Did ever the dreams of the imagination invigorate the soul and fit it for any sort of proper exertion? It is well known that Love, or intoxication, or enthusiasm about Liberty or any poetic genius, or unfounded enthusiasm in what they take for religion, uniformly unfits the mind for wholesome cool exertion in the path of moral duty. As to poetry *vide* Burns."

The year 1808 brought changes to the family. In April Amelia Steuart of Dalguise died at Dunkeld of an attack of measles, caught from her children, and in this year Laurence Oliphant and his family removed from Gask and went to Durham, the educational advantages of that city being then highly praised. Rachel, the eldest child, was then ten years old, and Caroline, the eighth of the family, arrived in January, the last Oliphant child ever born at Gask. The family migration was accomplished

at the end of December, and the House of Gask stood empty for many a long year.<sup>1</sup>

The family went first to the village of Old Elvet, near Durham, and the letters from there are addressed chiefly to the grandfather, Dr Robertson of Ardblair. The house the Oliphants rented was exactly twice too large for the party, but a garden and field were valued by the children. The mother's letters are one long chronicle of family illnesses, and the distress of her continued anxieties was heightened by the fact that the husband and father was irritated and "hurt" at any illness, and resented the necessary medicines and attendants. He said the gout attacked his nerves. Under the circumstances, it was as well for the children that he spent much of his time in travelling about.<sup>2</sup> Mrs Oliphant anxiously did her best for all. Rachel was sent to Miss Chaytor's school, and Laurence, the eldest son, then nine years old, went to a day school, of which one detail finds record. Laurence's schoolfellow, Phillpotts, was flogged for going out one morning and breaking all the windows in the Abbey. "The Vergers came out and were amazed at his dexterity."

In 1809 the Oliphants left Old Elvet and rented a house in Durham. It stood in a street a little above the "Wheat-sheaf Inn." Mrs Oliphant writes a full description of every room to her father. The rent of £30 seems moderate for a house that was fitted to accommodate so large a family. Christian's letters to her father, who was most tenderly devoted to his only child, sound a note of pathos now and again. Sometimes she was in straits for money and appealed to him, always hoping to "manage better." Once he wrote recommending her not to give in to "unreasonable whims." Apparently Laurence Oliphant wished to move his family again to a distant part of the country, but here Christian took her father's

<sup>1</sup> It was let in 1814 to Mr Walter Hore.

<sup>2</sup> In this year he appears for the first time in official lists as Laurence *Blair* Oliphant. The death of his wife's aunt, Mrs Fullarton, gave her possession of Ardblair.



advice and held her own, remaining with the children at Durham till they went abroad for health in 1816.

The anxious wife and mother seldom had anything amusing to relate in her long and frequent letters, so that the following must be given a place. It is addressed to her sister-in-law, Mrs Stewart of Bonskeid, and dated 17th May 1815:—

“My Father was much shocked to see by the papers that Mr Coutts<sup>1</sup> had married an actress, little did we know then that it happened the day his wife died! or that he had kept Miss Melon for years!!! I shall copy an address recited at a masquerade by a person dressed one half in weeds and the other in bridle favours.

“A tender Bridegroom and a widower true  
I come equipped to whimper and to woo,  
    Conflicting at eternal strife  
’Twi’x a new married and new buried wife. . . .  
    ’Tis hard to hit all fancies to a tittle  
Some day I court too much, or cry too little,—  
And yet in me nor grief nor joy exceeds  
    Half clad in nuptial, half in funeral weeds. . . .  
My best leg foremost speeds the nuptial race  
Its gouty brother keeps a funeral pace,—  
    Take then which side ye will, if neither suit  
    I’ve pleased myself however,—*Coûte qui Coûte.*’

“It is mortifying when a person of respectability lays themselves open to such attacks, and it would be well if such general disgust follow in such a dereliction of duty as might deter timid sinners from such heights of wickedness,—but alas! instead of disgust they receive countenance, and in the immediate following paragraphs it is mentioned that the Dukes of York and Clarence and a large party of fashionables honoured Mr and Mrs Coutts with their company, and she is according to

<sup>1</sup> The first wife of Thomas Coutts was Susan Starkie, a servant in his brother’s household. There were three daughters of this marriage: Susan, who married in 1796 the third Earl of Guildford; Frances, married, 1800, to the first Marquis of Bute; Sophia, married, 1793, to Sir Francis Burdett.

The second wife was the actress, Harriet Mellon, who inherited all his property, and after his death in 1822 married the Duke of St Albans in 1827.

The first Mrs Coutts was buried 14th January 1815 at Wroxton Abbey, near Banbury. Four days after her funeral, on 18th January, Thomas Coutts went through a form of marriage with Harriet Mellon. On account of some informality they were remarried 12th April 1815. Thomas Coutts was seriously ill at the time of the first wife’s death, and, believing himself to be dying, wished to settle money on Miss Mellon, as her husband.

modern morals an amiable woman, very benevolent, supplying the poor in her neighbourhood with food and clothes. What a strange perversion and mixture of good and bad!"

Dr Robertson<sup>1</sup> died at Ardblair on 15th October 1815, a crushing loss to his daughter, who leaned on him for help of every kind. Perhaps the blank in her life had its part in enabling her to decide to take the whole party abroad in the following year. In this scheme she did not receive the unanimous support of her friends. Her cousin, W. Balfour, writes from Edinburgh to sympathise with her and deprecates the taking of the young people to France, as she fears "the fascinating manners of the French may steal their affections, and be thought worthy of imitation." She closes the letter by an expression of relief that Mrs Oliphant "is not a weak woman."

Carolina Nairne, whose mind was attached unalterably to the ancient associations of Gask, must deeply have regretted that her brother the laird saw fit to bring up his children so far from their home, and in complete separation from the host of Perthshire family friends and relatives, whose goodwill had been continued through so many generations. Happy in her own home and surroundings, she would yet feel loss in separation from the children she was so ready to love, but whom in their exile she never saw. During her married life she travelled remarkably little. The family means were small, and she was happiest at home. It is impossible not to regret the taste for retirement in a beautiful and gifted woman, at a time when the society of Edinburgh offered much that was interesting, and much that would have been inspiring to her faculties. The atmosphere of that peculiarly blighting form of religion then in vogue, with its teaching that practically everything pleasant was wrong, and its keen eye for "snares" in every form of relaxation, clouded expansion and darkened thought. One circumstance, almost inconceivable to modern spirits,

<sup>1</sup> He was of a great age, and had partaken of five poached eggs at a sitting. He survived this meal only a few hours.

illustrates the power of narrow ideas over a mind that was great in many essentials.

Sir Walter Scott was then the great outstanding figure in Edinburgh society. The Nairnes knew him slightly. Years afterwards Carolina said to a niece: "Poor Sir Walter! we did not put ourselves in his way, or we might have seen much of him. One so attractive as he was, and who had yet been bold enough to single out God's servants for derision, as he did the Covenanters, placing them in a light so false, would have been a dangerous friend." It is hard to recognise here the voice that had sung "He's owre the Hills" and "The Hundred Pipers." Sir Walter would, of course, have no idea that the handsome, dignified woman he met now and again had a soul of song, and a gift of simple expression after his own heart. Certainly had they really been acquainted there would have been no mutual pity; the great star would have loved and encouraged the shining of the lesser light. The world lost something in that missed friendship, and certainly Carolina's work lost a great deal in keeping itself so resolutely in the dark. Endless are the stories of inventions used to preserve her name inviolate. "I have not even told Nairne, lest he blab." She assumed the unlovely designation, "Mrs Bogan of Bogan."

Under this *nom-de-plume* she was associated, in 1821, with the Misses Hume in producing in parts a volume of Scottish songs, the "Scottish Minstrel." The publisher was Mr Robert Purdie. Anxiety lest her name should be whispered in connection with the songs robbed the venture of all pleasure to herself. Later she proposed to undertake a purified edition of Burns; but, luckily, this dire scheme was never carried out.

The year 1811 saw the marriage of the last remaining daughter of the Jacobite laird. Like her sister Carolina, Margaret Oliphant waited till middle life before changing her name. The bridegroom was Mr Keith of Ravelston, owner of a picturesque estate two miles to the west of Edinburgh. Margaret must have become acquainted

with the Keiths while staying with the Nairnes. The following description of parties at Ravelston is written by Miss Emily Taylor:—

“Mr Keith of Ravelston dwelt there with his sister. . . . He was a tall stalwart gentleman of the old school, and had many good qualities, one of which was to invite all his friends, young and old, to come to Ravelston every Saturday, if they liked during the summer. We were all young then, and as no railways impeded our progress we ran up hill and down dale very swiftly, and sat on the hillside admiring the beautiful view until the bell rang for dinner. On descending we found many acquaintances and the Hotchpotch or Cock-a-Lecky and Brose and butter was abundantly supplied, with leave to go into the garden filled with rasps and gooseberries, which was a great treat to all. At the time Mr Keith (previous to his marriage) was above sixty, but his sister always called him the ‘laddie Sandy,’ to the great amusement of the young people. *He* was very fond of music, but like Baron Hume<sup>1</sup> and other gentlemen of that time he could not endure singing with the piano. . . .”

After the Keith marriage Carolina and Margaret naturally met a great deal, the Keiths lending their house in Queen Street to the Nairnes, that they might be nearer each other. In 1814 Margaret Oliphant, the laird of Gask’s second daughter, a child of fifteen, was sent from Durham to pay a visit at Ravelston. Her host, Mr Keith, writes to her mother:—

“I have the happiness to inform you that your daughter Margaret is recovered of the small-pox and will soon be permitted to walk abroad. If I mistake not, she will be both accomplished and handsome, and she is advancing in the game of Chess, which is a good amusement for fixing the attention of young people.”

He calls her “your pleasant daughter.” She seems to

<sup>1</sup> Miss Hume writes to a friend: “My Father’s admiration of ‘The Land o’ the Leal’ was such that he said no woman but Miss Ferrier was capable of writing it. And when I used to shew him song after song in MS. when I was receiving the anonymous verses for the music, and ask his criticism he said: ‘Your unknown poetess has only *one* or rather *two* letters out of taste, viz., choosing B. B. for her signature.’”

have been the only one of the Oliphant children who knew anything of Scotland, and the two aunts, Carolina and Margaret, at this time. The following letter was written by Mrs Nairne to her friend, Miss Helen Walker, concerning her songs and their publication :<sup>1</sup>—

“MY DEAR MISS HELEN,—I return the tunes, the set I gave you I found was nothing. I have a better copy but is like this; it is needless to send it, merely changing the *accent* will make it do quite well,—it is a very fine air as I have heard it, slow. Lord Nairne is very poorly, that and my accounts from the south are not cheering. The Land of the Leal is a happy rest for the sinner in this dark pilgrimage. O yes, I was young then. I wrote it merely because I liked the air so much, put these words to it, never fearing questions as to authorship—however, a lady *would* know and took it down and I had not Sir W(alter)’s art of denying. I was present when asserted that Burns composed it on his deathbed and that he had it Jean instead of John, but the parties could not decide why it never appeared in his works as his last lay should have done. I never made but one or 2 others, I think, except at your bidding.”

The following are more undated letters from Mrs Nairne :—

“I have enquired of many people but no one can tell me of any view of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray’s tomb. One lady said she remembered the spot as being very picturesque a good many years ago but that since, many trees had been cut, and that now there is a stiff formal paling of some kind, not good for a drawing, and this I believe was poor Lord Lyndoch’s doing, I know nothing of the *reality* of their history. The ballad is I suppose comparatively modern.”

“I have received the two Lammys and will return one to you,—mean with this to send what I hope will do for the verse of Mordelia that was wanting and also Neil Gow for you to review and consider what is best to be done with it. If to be of any use to Nathaniel perhaps it should be dedicated to the Duchess of Atholl.

“I often send to Edinburgh when not conveniently

<sup>1</sup> Dr Rogers appears to have misread part of this letter in his Memoirs of Baroness Nairne.

so far as your abode, perhaps you can name a shop where anything might be left for you. How is it that our old friend Purdie does not appear on this sheet at all as far as I see,—I thought *he* was the one we were dealing with. I fear Jenny Deans story is too diffuse to be compressed into the bounds of a song, some *good* things in it however, and I rather think a true picture of the times. . . . How many songs should this series consist of? Merely guessing, name any to be extracted from the “Minstrel,” you once mentioned two on the same sheet. Do not know what to say about the duelling,<sup>1</sup> fear it is too overwhelming a subject for a Mother to sing about, or perhaps to write about. When more at leisure I may find something to say as you wish to be read to P. I do not know what young Tait died of,—but how evidently he was prepared for the event, and by (to himself) very trying means. He seems to have been so amiable, fond of friends and home. Would not singing do as well as writing that for Purdie—you know exactly and have expressed *here* my motives for this queer taste of song making. . . . I do not mention in particular to Mrs Keith anything about these things, to save her the trouble of *keeping her countenance* which has sometimes puzzled myself.”

The “Neil Gow” verses, to which this last letter refers, never saw the light. It was a set of six verses, of which the following are a sample:—

“Since first I saw fair Inver’s braes  
 It’s langer nor langsyne,  
 But days o’ youth are blythsome days  
 And oft they’ll come to mind.  
 A cot house and a wee bit land  
 ’Tween stately Tay and rumblin’ Bran,  
 As I hae lived a favoured man  
 Aneath a chieftain kind.

“And I’ve been spared a canny time,  
 My days been fair and long,  
 When thousands pu’d in a’ their prime  
 Lie cauld the clods among.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Nairne did, however, compose a song on the young officer who was killed at this time in a duel at Piershill Barracks, near Duddingston: “Fell he on the field of Fame?”

O Robbie Burns, whar are ye noo?  
 Your breast o' Highland fire was fu',  
 Gin I could ballads make like you  
 I'd dee afore my song."

Neil goes on to lament the new fashion of *Walshes* and *Kidrills*, and the modern tendency to approve the inferior quality of music from the south, and southern singers:—

"But waes me, I'm no blamin' them,  
 To brag I wad be laith,  
 They ken but what they hae at hame,  
 It's nature with us baith.  
 Gin they had torrents tumblin' doon  
 Huge rocks and wilds wi' heather broon,  
 And mountains risin' to the moon,  
 Their songs might be like ours."

Some readers may recognise a touch of her muse at its best and most spontaneous in the following few unfinished lines:—

"Bonny lass of Inchgarrow  
 Tell me your cause of sorrow,  
 Hide not aught and ere the morrow  
 Maybe I'll relieve ye.  
 "When Yarrow burn wins up the hill,  
 When husks the hungry pleughmen fill,  
 When morning dew-drops turn the mill,  
 Kind neighbour, I'll believe ye.  
 "O willow, willow, wan and weeping  
 O'er thy boughs the blast is sweeping,  
 Or lang on Death's dark pillow sleeping  
 I'll be low aneath ye."

One other unfinished fragment, striking the same note of sorrow, bears also the stamp of her genius at its brightest:—

"Come awa' to the hills, to the hills, to the hills,  
 Oh come to the hills wi' me,  
 Come awa' to the hills, to the hills, to the hills,  
 The wild deer and heath cock to see.

Oh gladly, oh gladly, wi' light bounding steps  
 Oh gladly I gaed up the hill,  
 An' far o'er the heather, tho' rough were the weather,  
 Wad mount wi' a hearty goodwill.

“Come awa' to the hills, to the hills, to the hills,  
 Oh I'd come to the hills with thee,  
 Come awa' to the hills, to the hills, to the hills,  
 But tell me wha' shall I gang wi' ?  
 Now sadly, oh sadly, where aince gaed I gladly,  
 Now lanely and waefu' 'twill be,  
 For far are they fled and lanely the bed  
 Of ane that aince wandered wi' me.”

In the year 1816 the laird of Gask and his family went abroad in separate directions. They all met in London on 12th October 1816, and went to St John's Chapel together, wondering how long a time would pass before they were united again. “When that event shall take place, God only knows.” The laird, in fact, never rejoined his family after that day. The last three years of his life were spent in travelling, and in rooms in Paris. Margaret's diary gives an account of the wanderings of Mrs Oliphant and the rest of the family.

They went to Hyères and Aix, and the next year to Geneva, and then to the Italian Lakes. They were at Carqueranne, near Hyères, in 1818. Young Laurence went home to Scotland and must have seen his father in Paris on his way. The laird controlled the doings of his family from a distance.

“Mama had always planned passing the winter at Rome, everything was ready. We had been studying Italian all summer to be able to talk a little; we had bought new dresses, we had formed fresh projects, and we waited but for Brother to carry our plans into execution,—when Papa wrote to say that he did not wish us to change our abode, or not to go further than Marseilles; this was a death-blow to all our hopes and projects for the winter. Sister (Rachel) wrote two or three letters to beg Papa to let us go, and in breathless expectation we awaited his answers.”



The father ultimately wrote giving his permission for the change, but in the meantime Mrs Oliphant had taken on the house at Hyères and the daughters decided to devote the money saved to provide Dr Armstrong with a carriage, "as he was fatiguing himself to death without one." The Armstrong family, whose acquaintance had been formed at Durham, for many years absorbed most of the spare money possessed by the Oliphants.

The following letters are the last written to his family by the Laird of Gask. He died within a few days of writing that dated 20th June.

*"From Laurence Oliphant, Paris, to Monsieur Oliphant de Gask, Junior, à Sienna.*

*"June 12th 1819.*

"MY DEAREST LAURENCE,—I have been anxiously looking for your promised letter from Hières with the sketches but it has been hitherto in vain, but Christian will soon write as she has been so very long of favouring me with a letter—I truly hope her pupil, dear little Caroline, is now able to show the same proficiency as formerly as her scholar. Tell your Mama that its the Princess de Stolberg called Countess of Albany who is at Florence, widow to Prince Charles, as the Duchess of Albany has been long dead. I wrote to Uncle C. about procuring an introduction. I daresay he will readily see the mistake and procure one if he can for the Princess de Stolberg, but the *chargé d'affair* I have no doubt will present you, and when she knows who you are and how much my poor Father was attached to her husband, I have no doubt but she will pay you every attention. I am heartily glad that dear James seems to have relinquished his *penchant* for the army. I do not know anything almost could make my life more miserable than his following that profession. I am glad your Mama unites with me in opinion that he ought to go soon to England, that is next year, I wish to submit to her to you and Christian whether as a change is to take place he might not with advantage join you in Italy toward the end of the season. I hope you will apply a little to music when you are to be in the country of it and I should arrange with James to learn some instrument as

well as to draw, but perhaps he has been going on with both in his present situation. I wrote him a long letter in answer to his but I have had no reply, I fancy he has some difficulty in writing English now, and perhaps some in reading my letters. I admire his answer very much of his being determined to fit himself for any profession he may afterwards adopt.

"I hope you may meet again with the Duc de Richlieu who seems so very amiable. Having unluckily not met with Lord St Vincent here I wrote him a letter of thanks for all his kindness towards my Family. I can hardly expect an answer from a man at his time of life.

"I go to Sir Charles Stuart's parties. Lord Mansfield has never asked me to his house nor introduced me to Lady Mansfield, altho' very polite when we meet.

"I think you ought to read an account of the great Masters of Italian School on Painting as it would be of great use when you come to see their works.

"I sincerely hope this may arrive safe but I may possibly write again soon in case it does not. God bless and preserve you all. Your ever affectionate Father,

"LAU. OLIPHANT."

"PARIS, June 20 1819.

"MY DEAREST LAURENCE,—How happy your letter from Sienna has made me. I was only counting on having accounts of you in a weeks time, and I am quite delighted that a letter may arrive from you in a fortnight, which no doubt must depend much upon the direction of the wind. . . . I had no idea Genoa was so great a place or that there was so much worth seeing in it. I shall anxiously look for another letter describing your present residence, your studies, amusements, walks, rides, drives etc. I was not sure by your going by Genoa but you might have travelled on land thro' Florence and desired Uncle Colyear to direct for you the first instant at that place.

"I was at Sir Charles Stuart's the other night when the Lady was pleased to say Sir Charles will be very happy to see you back again and Sir Charles then unburdened informally to her what he had never done before. I called once and saw her; she seems a good natured pleasing woman. I have a great notion that Lord St Vincent or one of the ladies have mentioned my

Family to Sir Cha. and Lady Elizabeth or I cannot otherwise account for the great difference of his conduct altho' indeed he has been long giving me hints when he met me of a wish I should visit him again. It is pleasant to be upon a friendly footing with him he is so very scrupulous in the choice of his company.

"I daresay dear Caroline is in perfect health again, and I have no doubt but she will be amongst the first to speak the Italian language intelligibly, she is exactly at the time of life to acquire a language easily, laying aside her quickness.

"I am writing with all my windows open. I hope you have a thermometer and mark the degrees, 71 here yesterday the foliage and verdure with you must be beautiful. God bless you, Your ever affectionate Father,

"LAU. OLIPHANT."

On 16th July 1819 Mrs Oliphant received the following letter from her husband's servant, Lucas, in Paris :—

"I am very much concerned to see the state my master is in; he is extremely ill and I am afraid in great danger. . . . There was no appearance of danger until Sunday morning. . . . Now with the greatest regret am obliged to say he is no more since five o'clock yesterday evening.

G. LUCAS.

"The funeral<sup>1</sup> is to be to-morrow and to be administered by the Rev. Doctor Foster."

The death of the eighth laird of Gask, alone and far from home, formed a melancholy ending to a life that had not known the best joys. Margaret has left an account of the reception of the news at Florence. The girls were sitting with their tutor when little Caroline came in to tell Rachel that her mother wanted her at once. The others thought some plan was afoot for a day's holiday. Amelia came into the room with another message to dismiss the tutor. Margaret writes that, hearing the word "Mama,"

"I heard no more but my imagination finished the speech. I fancied that Mama had dropped down dead.

<sup>1</sup> Laurence Oliphant was buried in Père la Chaise. Lucas wrote again in August asking for his wages, and describing the tombstone, a white marble slab, four iron bars at the corners and gilt lettering.

I sprung from my chair and flew into the drawing-room almost frantic. The window shutters were closed so as to render it almost entirely dark. Mama was laid on a sofa—I went near her,—she raised her head,—who can express my joy? I thought I then had nothing I could not bear with resignation, but alas! I had not heard that I had lost my dearest Father! . . . Yes, even I, who since I can remember anything remember that Papa never liked me as he did his other children. It is not wonderful that it was without pain that I saw him depart. How happy did I esteem all those who could be intimate with their Father, who could make him their companion and their friend,—and how did I deplore my condition, who never spoke to him without trembling,—yet when the blow came and I heard I should never see him again, my heart felt as if it burst,—certainly before I never knew what it was to love my dear Parent as I ought. . . .”

Nothing else is known of the laird’s last days except allusions in a letter written by his uncle, Alexander Robertson of Strowan, to his niece, Mrs Nairne, from Rannoch Barrack :—

“I have received Major Nairne’s letter containing *most melancholy accounts* from Paris, which God grant that you and all my other dear friends may be enabled to support with proper fortitude and resignation. By several letters which I had received from my late dear Nephew, *especially one*, soon after having an interview with his son, he seemed to have perfectly correct ideas with regard to the most material parts of religion and owned that he had derived great comfort from conversing with his son upon religious subjects. My late dear Nephew did not give me his address in his last letter, referring to that which I had received before, which was *à la Poste-Restante*. As far as I recollect the tenor of my letter was to express the satisfaction I derived from the comfort he experienced by finding that his son seemed to be everything he could wish, and that he had derived great advantage from his Son’s conversation on religious subjects.”

The bereavement was the second in the Oliphant family in 1819. On 19th June Marjory, Mrs Stewart,

after long ill-health, died at Perth. Her sister, Carolina Nairne, has left a journal describing family events at this time :—

“*Thurs. June 15th 1819.*—Major Nairne come home, —does not bring us cheering accounts of dear sister Marjory Stewart. Margaret and I propose to go to her on Thursday. Dr Stewart to go for his daughter<sup>1</sup> and hopes to bring her home on Saturday; expect to hear by him to-morrow on his way south. This a fit time to feel and say ‘Thy will be done.’ What unspeakable mercy to feel as sure of our dear Sister’s being sooner or later on the way to glory, as that our blessed Lord died for us, and that she puts her whole trust in him.”

“*Perth, June 18th.*—Came here with Mrs Keith yesterday and found our dear sister very low indeed as to strength but perfectly composed and almost without suffering . . . was truly happy to see us and as kind and careful of our comfort as ever, which is saying *very much*. Dr Wood and Dr Stewart’s Nephew attending several times a day, both very anxious for Margaret and her Papa’s arrival. . . . Doctors can do nothing ‘and they must leave her altogether to Providence.’ This Mr Stewart truly interested and says he has attended many in extreme illness but never one he thought so truly Christian, or so triumphant, he called it, as his Aunt-in-law. Mrs Keith and I low enough,—but can truly say tho’ distressed not forsaken. O Lord, support us to the end. Dear Margaret not aware how ill her most valuable and affectionate Mother is.

“Had some prayers from Mr Skeet after breakfast—a kind of mixture; in the evening, Mr William Thomson gave us a most comfortable prayer. How decided the difference is,—it puts me in mind of natives and foreigners speaking the same language, or rather *infants* and *men*,—happy if the liking is *indeed* the right language in the bud.”

“*19th.*—No visible change, unless perhaps one degree for the worse. Dear Margaret<sup>2</sup> expected now within an hour with her Papa,—observe her Mama never troubles

<sup>1</sup> Margaret, Mrs Stewart’s only child, afterwards Mrs Stewart Sandeman.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter dated 7th July Mrs Nairne describes Margaret Stewart as “a fine girl, not in the least self-sufficient though really a good deal of talent, like her beloved humble-minded mother.”

herself to mention her and only smiles after anyone talks of her or her Father. . . .

“A little after five the travellers arrived. Margaret found her Mama sitting up in bed taking a little wine and water,—she was struck with her sickly appearance but was not without hopes. After a few minutes Margaret was desired by her Mama to read to her first a psalm and afterwards preferred a Chap. in St Luke. . . . Margaret said a good many hymns and verses of her own composing on the prospect of her return home and shewed her a work bag and purse of her making. . . .

“I felt her very soon bending forward instead of sitting upright and gently laid her down on the bed—her hands felt cold, and within a very few minutes she drew her last breath. . . .”

“22nd.—To-day have had a letter from Nairne and hope to see him to-morrow to attend my *Mother-sister's* funeral on Thursday.

“My little darling well when his Papa wrote thank God.”

“*June 23rd.*—This morning I awoke long before the hour (it was six) that my dear William was born eleven years ago. What continued mercies have been showered on him, his Papa, and me from that hour to this. . . . As far as natural disposition is concerned how truly thankful ought we to be that darling William has been gifted with as affectionate a heart as I ever met with, and (apparently to me) with such a capacity as may fit him for usefulness in any line of life. His moral feelings are generally right,—he really loves truth and almost piques himself on the strict observance of it,—this, with scrupulous exactness as to *mine* and *thine* is very satisfactory.

“Between 2 and 3 Major Nairne arrived by the coach from Edinburgh,—thankful to see him well as he left William, and tells me last time he passed thro Perth my dear sister seemed to take leave of him, tho then he was unwilling to tell me so, and said ‘God bless you now and for ever.’

“I have slept with Margaret since I have been here. . . . I could not help dwelling a little, however foolishly, on what she told me with indifference, viz., that six years ago while lying in bed she had said to herself ‘I think

I shall die when I am 17,'<sup>1</sup> and then without stopping to count what year *that* would be, she said 'I think I shall die in the year 20.' When she did count and found that in 20, she would be 17, it made her unhappy and for a considerable time depressed her spirits. . . . Living and dying, O my God, bless her for Christ's sake. . . . She is at present very stout, thank God."

Mrs Nairne returned to Edinburgh after her sister's funeral. Her home was then at Holyrood, where apartments had been granted to her husband.

"*Holyrood, July 1st.*—Nairne called on Mr W. Drummond at Piershill, son of Mr Andrew, is quartered there being in the 10th Hussars. During a review of this regiment on the Portobello sands, four of the men thrown from their horses, all hurt, but only one severely,—he is since dead, and buried with all the honours that could be conferred. Singular that this man was not only at Waterloo, but in all the engagements preceding where his regiment was, and not once touched, yet killed at last on our peaceful shores by what is termed a mere accident; these things remind me of Cowper's lines:—

"The lightning may be bid to spare  
The man that's strangled by a hair."

"*July 16th.*—Yesterday in the morning received accounts that my beloved Brother died at Paris the 5th inst. Stroke after stroke it pleases our blessed Lord to lay upon us. . . . Dr Robertson of Paris first consulted the 29th of June and seems to have thought the case hopeless from the first,—do not quite understand what it was. . . . A letter from his own hand so lately before and no mention of health makes this very heavy. My letter to him announcing our dear *Mother-sister's* death he had probably not received. How very striking this nearness of time,—no pang to either for the loss of the other. Mrs Keith and I now only left of 7 brothers and sisters. . . .

"Since I left her Mrs Keith has been ailing . . . was better after a drive, though it was to desolate Gask,—received her letter describing it just after the unexpected

<sup>1</sup> These misgivings were unnecessary. Margaret Stewart Sandeman lived to be eighty.

account of its dear Master's death. Nothing pleasing to me now but to trace the weaning and blessed hand of Providence in all the events that I have witnessed in our once happy family,—so happy in that sweet spot where we were brought up that I fear we looked too little beyond it,—and now

“Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
Swells in my breast and turns the past to pain.’

This is indeed the case with regard to the earliest scenes of life, which of late rise fresh before my eyes, more fresh indeed (as is often the case) than those of maturer years, —with the exception always of whatever relates to the nearest of all ties—husband and child.”

“*July 27th.*—Yesterday we had a small picture of Major Nairne's Mother<sup>1</sup> sent home from John Watson's, who did it from a miniature and hints. Reminds us of her very much. Little darling William thought a little like her. Cannot gather resolution to write to Mrs Oliphant, or any of them,—have never felt quite *awake* from the moment I knew of my lamented Brother's death, and often feel as if my call might not be distant.”

Carolina did write, however, a few days after this entry, to the family of her brother at Florence. The ordinary pain of bereavement was, to those of her religious views, in all cases heightened and complicated by the anxieties and fears for the future state of the departed, and all friends who had been with them before death, or received letters, were canvassed for “comfortable” news of their spiritual state.

“*To Mademoiselle Oliphant de Gask.*

“FLORENCE, ITALY,  
“Friday, 6th August 1819.

“MY DEAREST RACHEL, — I have but just now received your letter of the 10th. Had *it* been the means of letting me know that I had no longer a Brother, tho' great would have been the affliction, yet the balm is with it—our first intelligence, as I daresay you by this time know, was thro' Dr Robertson who wrote to Coutts

<sup>1</sup> *Née* Brabazon Wheeler. She died in 1801.



and he to John Archibald Campbell—it was at first an unmixed shock. Some weeks after I heard from Strowan who assured me he thought my beloved Brother was quite earnest on the grand points of Christianity and that he had owned himself benefited by some conversations he had with his dear Laurence when they last met; even this was to me most soothing but what you add I would not give up for any worldly bribe—I ask but to feel that he knew himself a lost sinner, (as we one and all are) and that as such he had thrown himself altogether on an all-sufficient Saviour and I am satisfied—we have indeed in our days many who talk thus and yet do not give up their hearts but continue worldly minded and cold in his service—these I think more in danger than any, as more surely deceiving themselves than those who scarcely own his name; but I will cling to what you tell me and be thankful. I wrote to your dear Mama of what at the time was a trying scene in Perth—it was not possible to lose such a friend and not feel it, but such a heavenly conclusion to a heavenly life ought surely to be reckoned amongst our blessings and privileges to witness. I feel for you all about your lamented Papa being alone; but I almost blame you for indulging so much in regrets, as you actually did all that you could have done with any good effect. It was in our view a kind Providence that he never read my letter; it was too late to have done more than afflict him had he received it within a few days of the last, and I should have grieved to be the one who gave him the pang.

“Your Aunt Keith was still in Perth and greatly affected upon receiving the news—she had the day before gone to see Gask. She is now at Dalguise and able to walk about a good deal better than at first. Dr Stewart and Margaret came here on Saturday 30th July and the Dr looked very ill—he had over-fatigued I believe in taking long walks and had for some days lost his appetite—he and Margaret are gone on to Newcastle and I hope he may get over this debility but I had a sad fright. He threatened apoplexy here, and was twice bled the same evening and Major Nairne happened to be at Berwick but came home late that night. I felt quite sure the Dr was come to die, and both Dr Ham. and Mr Abercrombie said he had a most narrow escape—nothing

could persuade him to delay the journey beyond yesterday morning—I have a note today from Margaret saying they got well on. I mean not to despatch this till I hear from her again — or if I should not hear it will be a good sign. Poor Lady Elizabeth Murray bears the loss of her greatest earthly treasure in the most becoming manner tho' she has felt much—Charlotte's sufferings had been long protracted and very severe. On the twentieth July she was released—the day her grandmother Lady Dunmore died. As Laurence's health is not often mentioned we have been supposing him able for Oxford and James also in England and perhaps all the rest once more at home. . . . Mr Belshes of Invermay died 19th of month—liver and dropsy; I have heard nothing comfortable of him. His sons were most attentive as to his bodily health. She ill at Invermay. . . . Is it not wonderful that one even *ever dreams* of setting up our rest in this most empty world? I pray that your headaches may be cured my dear Rachael and Margaret — if really good for you, they will, and may every possible blessing be granted to each of my dear dear friends whose I am most truly and ever,

“C. NAIRNE.”

“John A. Campbell was to write I understand before letting Gask—in case of your going there . . . sorry I am to think there is no profitable Church or society in that neighbourhood. I sometimes think of your coming to Edinburgh, where both are now to be had.

“Miss Ann Colquhoun married to a Mr Long of Rood Ashton in Wiltshire; I hope a pious family. I do think her rather too young to encounter the cares and responsibilities of a family. . . .”

On 19th August Carolina continues her diary:—

“This my dear sister Amelia's birthday, but for the bright prospects of futurity, with what a heavy heart would its return afflict me! She and I like twins, in age *almost*, in feelings tastes and principles altogether. No *solid* comfort on earth but in leaning on Him who is the source of all. As one by one our refreshing streams dry up, O may my soul be drawn closer to the blessed fountain. . . .

“This morning Prince Leopold<sup>1</sup> came to visit the Palace,—received him in our diningroom with his suite only Sir Robert Gardiner and D—— travelling with him, other attendants Provost, Gen. Hope, Lord Advocate etc. His manner and appearance very interesting; took wine and water which he said was very acceptable,—that though the heat was great he enjoyed it, as sun showed the country to advantage; said he considered it a great honour that the Regent’s Bridge had been closed that he might be the first to pass. Asked if I was fond of music as he saw all the apparatus for it—said they were fine rooms, spoke of the town as being magnificent; am not sure if there was anything further. Wished to have remained in my own room, but was advised to be where he was brought, and indeed he began by saying he was very sorry to disturb me. Spoke of different things to Nairne, and seemed to think something might be done about repairing the chapel. William begged not to be desired to appear, but was observed afterwards by the Prince who asked about him and spoke very kindly to him.”

Much of this diary of Carolina Nairne is filled with lists of names of those who called upon her. Her greatest friends were Lady Elizabeth Murray<sup>2</sup> and her daughter Charlotte.<sup>3</sup> She also records the services she attended in the Episcopal church of Old St Paul’s, whither she was often carried from her rooms in Holyrood, in a chair. When George IV. decided to hold a court at Holyrood, Major Nairne was asked to surrender these rooms, and in lieu thereof was granted an annuity of £300 for life, and Mrs Nairne’s life. They returned to Caroline Cottage.

Mrs Nairne writes on 26th January 1821 to Mrs Oliphant at Torquay:—

“To-morrow I hope to get to see Laurence’s picture

<sup>1</sup> Son of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and an uncle of Queen Victoria. Born 1790. He married Princess Charlotte of England, who died in 1817, and twelve years after her death morganatically married the actress, Caroline Bauer. He was attracted by her resemblance to Princess Charlotte. He was for three months King of Greece in 1830. In 1831 he was elected King of the Belgians. He died in 1865.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Elizabeth, widow of the Dean of Killaloe, died 24th November 1820.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Murray, died 26th July 1819. Both she and her mother are buried at Holyrood.

which I hear is coming on famously and is likely to be of use in getting J. Watson much credit. Nairne dined yesterday with Mr<sup>1</sup> and Mrs Gillespie—all the dishes and covers were in Silver—most of them presents I believe for giving satisfaction as an Architect. . . . Aunt Keith and I remember happy days at Gask when there were only two silver spoons in the house, at which time I dare say my cousin Gillespie was at work with his own hands—he is very modest and deserving and has risen well. Young Henrietta<sup>2</sup> is a sweet baby—Mrs Gillespie brought her here one morning. . . . Miss Drummond Macgregor is with Mrs Robertson who has two fine boys—she desires kind Comp<sup>ts</sup>. to you and my sister Keith. I have not now room for all the loves I wish to send especially to dear Rachel with many good wishes and returns of to-morrow all blessed, and I ever am my dear sister—your affect<sup>ate</sup>.

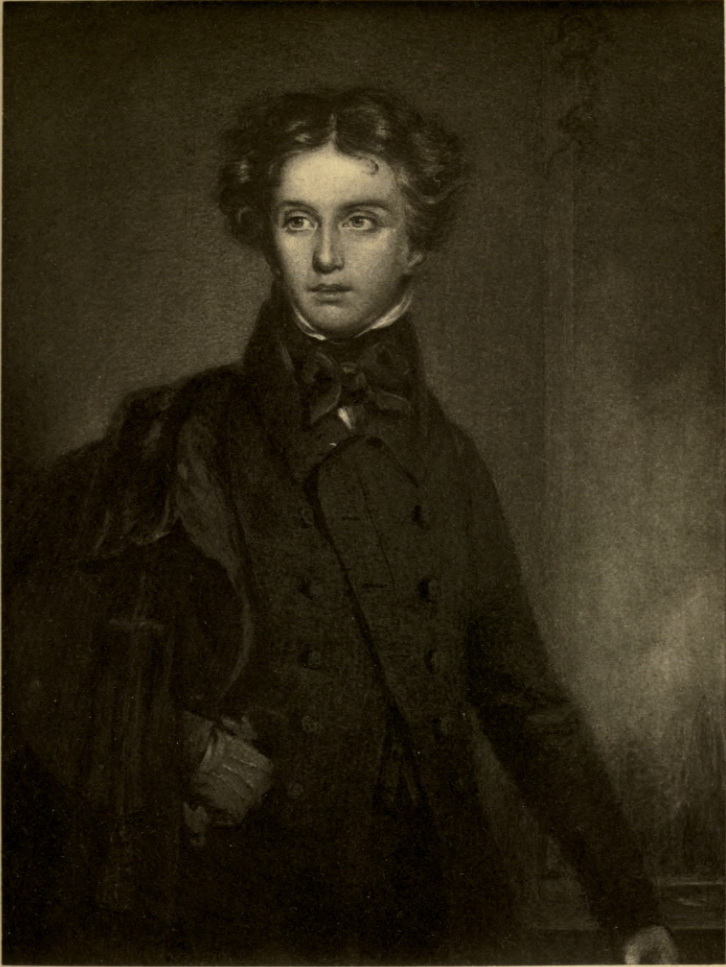
C. NAIRNE.”

Of all the lairds of Gask Laurence the ninth, who succeeded his father in 1819, was the handsomest. His portrait, in full Highland dress, shows a gallant figure. The face is the face of a dreamer; the mouth, with its charming curves, too facile in expression to denote a character formed to stand strongly either for good or evil. But he was never called upon to face the storm and stress of life. When at twenty-one he found himself head of the family, his first thought was to restore his mother and sisters to the long deserted home in Scotland. They were eager to go, to see again the glades of Gask,—only a dim remembrance of early childhood, but held in a sacred shrine of thought all through the years of absence. A note of pathos belongs to the record of that journey home. One of the little group was fated never to see the beloved place.

Mrs Oliphant, meanwhile, with her bevy of pretty, fragile girls, travelled from place to place in Italy. In Rome, early in 1820, Amelia was taken ill and for a time was in imminent danger—small wonder, indeed—for the doctors bled her constantly. The party moved

<sup>1</sup> Gillespie the architect, who assumed the name of Graeme on his marriage with the heiress of Orchill.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards wife of James Blair Oliphant, tenth Laird of Gask.



*Lawrence Cliphant.*

9<sup>TH</sup> LAIRD OF GASK.

1798 - 1824



to Frascati for health, where the landlady was not encouraging on the score of Amelia's recovery, who was only allowed nourishment in the form of asses' milk.

"The old woman begged most earnestly that we would give her food that would strengthen her, and when sister explained to her that food increased the fever, she replied, 'Oh, my dear young ladies, you may give her whatever she likes to take—she is but a lost child.'"

The sisters were hurt and angry at this plain speaking, and no doubt frightened too. Amelia got better and then worse again. Her sister's diary gives a sad little picture of the spirited young girl, then only eighteen, most naturally unwilling to face the gravity of the situation. It seems pitiful enough that she should not have been encouraged in small happinesses and interests as long as possible, but the tendency of the age was to regard death as arrayed in terror.

"She did not seem in the least afraid for herself, indeed she amused herself with buying coral and other things of a nature equally frivolous. Oh! it was most distressing to see a creature whom we all so dearly loved playing round the pit of destruction, and yet not be permitted to warn her of her danger."

At last the ship was ready. It was an English brig called *The Sisters*. The party left Naples 4th of June 1820. She grew better and then worse on the journey. Margaret was made happy by getting a chance of telling the shrinking young girl of her danger. The poor child submitted to long readings of the Bible and sermons. The family had been away from England nearly four years. It was thought that Amelia would not reach it alive, but on 5th August they all got safely to London, and the invalid was lodged in the Armstrongs' house in Russell Square.

There, on 18th October, she died—the first to go of the group of pretty children, all dowered with every grace and gift save that of health.

Scarcely had Amelia departed, when symptoms of

consumption appeared in Harriet, then nineteen years old. The family moved to Torquay, instead of proceeding to Scotland, but nothing could be done to arrest the progress of the disease. At last the doctor gave leave to go northwards. Margaret writes:—

“ We are all in high spirits at the idea of being on our way home, specially Harriet, who said to me yesterday with an expression of joy which I cannot send on paper, ‘ How glad I shall be to get myself again into the little narrow strip bed.’ ”

Perhaps the little bed was one of the few things Harriet remembered at Gask; she was only seven when she last saw it.

Mrs Nairne, at Caroline Cottage, looked eagerly forward to the arrival of her brother’s family.

“ *March 8th 1821.*—Am looking now for Mrs Keith and Christian Oliphant, hope they may be in Edinburgh on Saturday, have heard from Liverpool, all well so far, and Mrs Keith not in the least fatigued though she has travelled as much as a hundred miles in one day. Rachel not very stout and has a cough as well as Harriet, but trust they may yet be as well as Margaret seems now. Laurence quite well, which is a great blessing.”

“ *March 10th.*—Mrs Keith and Christian Oliphant arrived, and Nairne, William and I spent the day with them at Mrs Keith’s house 99 Princes Street. Christian very much like her Mother, brought me nice letters from most of the party at Torquay.”

“ *June 11th.*—I have lately had great pleasure in renewing my acquaintance with the dear Oliphants and in seeing my name-daughter Caroline for the first time. Rachel rather thin and delicate; both so truly, I am convinced, looking *heavenward*, as well as Laurence, that I found both benefit and delight in their society, indeed I trust the whole of them are in the *right way*. How soothing the conviction—impossible to think of it without giving fervent praise to the great Shepherd of the favoured flock. They tell me several pious friends were of great use to them at Torquay,—particularly the Rev. Mr Greaves and Miss Grey,—in London also Lady Lucy . . .



and Lord Rocksavage were eager to be of use to them, and I have now the unspeakable comfort of being persuaded that instead of getting harm upon their entrance into their own county they may, by the blessing of God, be enabled to do good to many. Mrs Oliphant, Margaret, and Harriet expected soon."

Mrs Nairne writes to Mrs Oliphant 25th January 1821 :—

"I had the pleasure to receive yours yesterday and beg you will thank Laurence for letting us know of his safe arrival. I am very glad you thought him looking well—it is most comfortable that his own country seems to agree with him, and I trust it may with the rest of the family. I shall be impatient to hear again of both Rachel and Margaret, I always try to figure you easily alarmed about them all, and no wonder.

"Nairne is now out, and if I thought I could get this off without his seeing it, I would just mention a little anecdote of him in his youth and about his Father, who did him so little justice that he omitted preventing the prescription of the Nairne estate which was in his power, and it is thought certainly might have brought it back to the family. He also omitted to state to Government his own services, which every one says must have brought something to his son, and at last died 7 or 800 pounds in debt, for which by law William Nairne was no way bound, but he immediately offered to sell his commission, pay this debt, and begin the world again without a *fraction*,—the plan was prevented, but it was freely offered. Yet had Lawyers been consulted I will not say that they might have failed of giving another bias. Now please do not allude to this in reply and if you saw into my heart you would see there that I mention it not by way of the smallest boast, but to endeavour to do away a *little* the hardship that is supposed in Laurence's case and which I most truly regret . . . it hurts me to think there should be a *moments* reason given for any one to suspect his Fathers affection for him who was *almost* an idol. . . . I often think of what he said to me one day, when talking of ups and downs in William's prospects, that 'he would get what was good for him' and there I rest with regard to him, and all of us. His Papa and I have had a blessing

on our basket and on our store, our going out and coming in, and you know that no worldly wise man would have sanctioned our union when it took place, but it was not without prayers. . . .”

The letter is unfinished. It relates to a point about the will of Laurence's father. The young Laird was advised not to take advantage of a point of law to evade the provisions of the will, but to let it be carried into effect, though he would be a loser.

All the family assembled at Gask in this year. A few letters remain to show how life went on there. Old tenants on the estate hand on traditions of the pretty Miss Oliphants and their fair ringlets, which the village children in Clathy copied, with the help of the long curly shavings from the carpenter's shop!

One note, in Rachel's handwriting, addressed to her brother abroad, brings quaintly to mind the fact that ninety years ago feudal traditions had still a dominating power over social conditions:—

“A few days ago Robert Arthur asked to speak with me and said he wished to go to the Highlands for a month to get *edication*. I asked if he could get ‘edication’ no nearer than the Highlands. I found by his reply that the chief object of his studies would be the bagpipes. I dissuaded him from bestowing much time upon an accomplishment which would never be of any real use to him and added that he could attend Mr M'Farlane's evening class for reading and writing, and he said that he would go, when the dancing class was over. I asked what the dancing class meant, and found that the schoolmaster had given up his room to an itinerant dancing master, who gave lessons in the evening. Mama wrote to Mr Robertson desiring an explanation of such a proceeding. He came and stated that M'Farlane had consulted him upon the subject and he had advised that permission should not be given without first inquiring into the character of the Dancing Master,—he was of opinion that as the course of lessons was begun it had better be continued without interruption. Mama was of a different opinion and sent for M'Farlane who was very

sensible of the error he had committed in taking such a measure without your concurrence, and the same evening the Dancing school was closed."

Among the most pathetic family memorials belonging to Gask is a large double case containing water-colour portraits, by A. E. Chalon,<sup>1</sup> of Amelia and Harriet, exquisite in delicacy, grace, and appealing charm; the clear sweet eyes so plainly the eyes of the dying.

In May 1822 Mrs Oliphant determined to take Harriet away by sea from Dundee to London for her health. The child was in reality beyond help. London was very hot, and her condition became steadily worse. She longed to return to Gask, and was brought back. All day long she lay on her couch on the sloping bank of the upper terrace. Her sister Rachel records that she had no wish either to live or die, but accepted her fate with perfect resignation. Just before the end came, a wheel chair was obtained, and in this she was carried by her brother James and Rachel to the garden. She had expressed a wish to see the lower end of the garden where the moss roses might still be in bloom. Thither they went on 6th August. One moss rose alone remained. Harriet greeted it with delight, but would not let her brother pluck it for her. The rose outlived her. It was her last sight of the garden she loved; her last breath of the sweet air. She was carried back to the house, but could not face the exertion of being carried upstairs, and was taken to the west parlour. That night she died.

Very soon after her death, the young Laird, the "beautiful Laurence," was attacked with the same

<sup>1</sup> Chalon was then a water-colour and miniature painter immensely in favour. Among the Kington papers there is a letter addressed to him from Sir Thomas Laurence:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am anxious that your drawing should be seen by very high Personages. Will you complete it and put it in a frame, and can you get this done by Monday night?"

"I am venturing to scold you. Those hands are not admissible from a Royal Academician, and certainly not from A. E. Chalon, Esq. You must look at beautiful nature, and the fine Antique. Believe me to be, my dear Sir, most truly yours,  
THOS. LAWRENCE."

disease. Again the poor mother was face to face with bitter sorrow. The family hurried to the South of France, in the hope of arresting the mischief.

In the midst of her own acute domestic anxieties, Mrs Oliphant had noted the talent of one of the Gask tenants, young Laurence Macdonald, who was destined to become in a few short years a celebrated sculptor. In humble circumstances, he could not hope, without help, to obtain the education necessary to develop his marked talent as a youth. It was decided when the Oliphant family left Gask for the South of France to take the young man with them so far, and then to send him on to Rome. In a comparatively short time he brilliantly fulfilled the expectations of his friends. Ten years afterwards he sent the following letter to the Laird of Gask:—

*“To James Oliphant, Esq. of Gask, near Perth.*

“EDINBURGH, 10 CUMBERLAND STREET,  
“July 6th 1832.

“DEAR SIR,—The many obligations which I am under to the family of Gask can never be forgotten by me, nor remembered without feelings of the warmest gratitude to the members of that family whose Mother was my earliest friend and best benefactor. I feel that the only way in which I can at all repay so much kindness is by rising to a high eminence in my profession. To whatever greatness I may arrive in my Art it will always be a proud feeling in my breast to know that the liberality of Mrs Oliphant laid the foundation. The peculiar constitution of my mind I hold as a trust from the Creator, it has been my aim and object to cultivate all the faculties which he has given me aright, however imperfectly I may have succeeded. My Art is the embodying of thought and feeling into material substance, and ought always to be pursued so as to lead the mind to a contemplation of purity, innocence and truth. I am dear Sir, your most obed<sup>nt</sup> and obliged servant,

“LAURENCE MACDONALD.

“TO JAMES OLIPHANT, Esq. of Gask.”

As a gift to the family of Gask, Laurence Macdonald sent his *chef d'œuvre*, the beautiful marble "Bacchante,"<sup>1</sup> now at Ardblair. A marble statue, still in the grounds of Gask, is also an example of his early work.

Young Laurence Oliphant passed the winter of 1822 in Rome, but never recovered any measure of health. He returned to his mother, and they all went to Torquay in 1823, but the family were at Gask again in the June following. One glimpse of the group is given by the well-known divine, Dr Chalmers, who at this time paid a three days' visit to Gask.

"Wed., June 23, 1824.

"I was driven to Gask, where I got a warm reception from Mr James Oliphant. It is a very splendid mansion and is situated in a beautiful country. There are four young ladies, but only three of them I suppose to be his sisters; all of them cultivated in a very high degree, and their decided tendencies are towards serious conversation. Mrs Oliphant appears a most admirable person; I should imagine sixty but still in full activity. The elder brother is confined to his room, but I have seen him though only for a few minutes. He is evidently failing very fast, but his whole heart seems to be set on right subjects. . . . Called to supper and family worship about nine and retired between ten and eleven, delighted with the quiet regularities of a pleasant cultivated family.

"*Thursday*.—The chaise came to the door and took me and two of the Miss Oliphants to Freeland, where we called on Lady Ruthven. Her ladyship is remarkably clever and was remarkably kind. . . . Freeland is quite a Paradise of beauty.

"*Friday*.—Got up at eight. Expounded at family worship for the first time. After breakfast two horses arrived at the door for an equestrian excursion between me and Mr James. Previous to that I had composed somewhat and had an interesting conversation with Mr Oliphant the invalid, more satisfactory than before.

<sup>1</sup> Henrietta Blair Oliphant (when widow of the tenth Laird of Gask) clothed the limbs of the "Bacchante" in a pink tarlatan petticoat. T. L. Kington Oliphant bequeathed the statue to the Scottish National Gallery. The trustees generously declined to take advantage of the bequest, and it remains a treasured possession in the family.

"We were soon overtaken with rain and so stopped in our excursion, but had a very good refuge in the Manse of Mr Young the clergyman, with whom we sat an hour. As the rain continued we walked home with umbrellas and sent a servant from the house for the horses.<sup>1</sup>

"*Saturday.*—The main duties of the family worship are all laid upon me, even in the presence of clergymen, and this is somewhat delicate and disagreeable. Walked about a mile from Gask to the place where the coach took me up. I took an affectionate farewell of the family. . . . They one and all of them have a consumptive hue, and I felt quite softened by such an exhibition of the fragility of our mortal nature."

The Oliphants returned to Torquay, and there the young Laurence lived out the few remaining months of his short life of twenty-six years, dying the last day of the year 1824. There are so few memorials of the character of the ninth Laird of Gask in letters or journals that the following letter is given in full. Written only three weeks before his death, it was addressed to the Rev. Thomas Young,<sup>2</sup> at the Manse of Gask, and shows the bond of tender sympathy that existed between the young laird and the minister on whom he leaned for spiritual support.

"TORQUAY, Dec. 6th 1824.

"REV<sup>d</sup>. DEAR SIR,—We received your letter of the 30th of last month this morning and were glad it contained such good accounts of yourself and family as well as of many of those in whom we feel interested. On the morning of the 23rd of November we were visited with a very severe storm amounting to a hurricane. Our house is situated within ten yards of the sea, protected only from its occasional inroads by a big wall, and facing South West. It was from this quarter the wind blew

<sup>1</sup> The Doctor must have been much averse to rain. The Manse is only one mile from Gask House.

<sup>2</sup> The letters of the Oliphant family addressed to Mr Young are among the Gask papers. He was their chief confidant and adviser, a trusted friend to whom everything could be told. Sentiments of the warmest friendship always existed between the Youngs and the Oliphants. Mr Young was minister of Gask from October 1822 till the date of his death, 5th September 1852.

and with such impetuosity that in 5 of our windows there were several panes of glass broken, and many houses were still more injured and had not our dwelling been founded *on a rock*, it in all probability must have yielded to the combined impetuosity of wind and waves. The surrounding coast in many places is quite devastated. I had hoped to renew my last year's intercourse with you by occasionally writing, but from this I am for the present excluded, at least from doing so as fully as I could wish on the most important subjects. I firmly believe that next to the prayers of my own immediate relatives, yours were the most fervent and the most availing. May I particularly request you will still continue with unremitting ardor to supplicate the Father of mercies on my behalf. My mind is still occasionally harassed and perplexed. The proofs of the natural corruptions of my heart being brought to view, is still going on; and I have not been able as yet to cast *all* my burden upon the Lord. Self still obscures my views of the sun of righteousness. I cannot, like Thomas, call him my Lord and *my* God. I think the secret cause of uneasiness is still a leaning to self justification in part, but how to rid myself of this I know not. My head tells me it is folly so to do, yet my heart still clings to this evil principle. I have of late been made to feel my natural tendency to envy. Oh! pray for me especially on this head. What I found my besetting sin last Winter is by the grace of God a good deal subdued. Being in a great measure deprived of that free disclosure of the soul I enjoyed with you last Winter, I have been more driven to secret prayer, which will I trust eventually prevail—tho' I am for the present like those that grope for the wall. It will be a source of great comfort for me to know I am still as present with you as ever in spirit—and that you always bear me in mind at the throne of Grace—and often during the day I hope you will direct your thoughts towards me—by lifting up the heart in secret devotion for my eternal welfare. Were we but in Jesus all would be well.

“Remember me very kindly to Mrs Young and to each of your children in all of whom I feel much interested. Will you mention particularly in your next how the school prospers and it would be a great comfort

to me to know you took an especial charge of it. The awfully sudden death of poor Peter's wife will, I am sure, make you feel more than ever the necessity of exhorting all to be in a state of preparation. What a strong injunction is that of the Apostle 'be instant in season and out of season.' I wrote a few lines to Peter shortly after the fatal event. God can prosper the meanest endeavours of administering consolation. Will you take a particular charge of him poor man, for I fear he is practically unacquainted with the truth. I had occasion to speak to Isaac in consequence of his taking his Maker's name in vain when angry. Will you touch upon the same subject when an opportunity occurs. I do not think he is fully aware of the guilt he incurs from so doing. From the tenor of this letter you will see it is designed only for your own inspection as I have written with the same unreserve I used to speak—remember me by name to Joseph, Isaac, Peter, Archer, in short to all who may enquire after or feel interested in the family—and beg those whom you think Christians indeed to pray for me without ceasing, among the number I may mention John Maxtone<sup>1</sup> and Hellen Johnstone.

“As I have already reached the limitations prescribed I must conclude by assuring you of the deep interest I feel in your welfare and how grateful I am for your unremitting kindness towards me during my long indisposition. I remain, Yours very sincerely,

“LAU. OLIPHANT.”

After his death, his sisters found a shorthand note addressed to them, which shows an unusual thoughtfulness. From this note it appears that the poor mother was not well understood by her children. Her many and repeated sorrows had not softened her character, but Laurence had discovered depths of unrevealed sympathy in his mother. He begs his sisters to give her more of their confidence, and to love her better.

His portrait,<sup>2</sup> with its arresting beauty, marks him as a man gifted beyond all others of his race in personal charm. His younger brother, James, then a boy of

<sup>1</sup> Second son of James Maxtone, eleventh Laird of Cultoquhey.

<sup>2</sup> Full length in full Highland dress, by John Watson. Now at Ardblair.



twenty, succeeded as tenth Laird of Gask. James was plain, possessing neither the delicate features nor the poetic aspect of his brother; but he is said to have had remarkable distinction of bearing. An acquaintance of his time writes:—

“There is something peculiarly pleasing about him; he has all the grace and elegance and taste and feeling of his family,—a great deal of the right feeling, and wish to do right,—but I should doubt the *stability*.”

An old farmer, only lately dead, thus described the personal appearance of James:—

“He was the maist gentlemanliest man ever ye see, to look at the back of his heed; but his face was no muckle.”

The year 1824 was rendered memorable to Carolina Nairne, her husband, and son, by the restoration of the Nairne title. The Bill passed both Lords and Commons and received the King's sanction on 17th June 1824. Thus after eighty years the old honours, barren as regards goods and gear, but cherished still, came back to the rightful heir. There is a pleasant family tradition that Lady Nairne's own song, “The attainted Scottish Nobles,” had been sung to George IV. and disposed him to grant the petition:—

“For old hereditary right  
For conscience sake they stoutly stood;  
And for the crown their valiant sons  
Themselves have shed their injured blood;  
For if their fathers ne'er had fought  
For heirs of ancient royalty  
They're down the day that might ha' been  
At the top o' honours tree a'.”

Other attainted families whose honours were restored at the same time were those of Mar and Strathallan. The following is Lord Mar's<sup>1</sup> letter of congratulation to Lady Nairne:—

<sup>1</sup> John Francis, born 1741. His title was restored to him as grandson and lineal representative of John, Earl of Mar, forfeited in 1716. He only enjoyed his restored honours a short time, dying the next year, aged eighty-four.

“SHANDWICK PLACE, EDINBURGH,  
“Saturday, 26 June 1824.

“MY DEAR LADY NAIRNE,—Most sincerely do I congratulate your Ladyship on our ultimate success after the procrastinating vexatious quibbles to thwart us. I have scarcely been out of the house since I had the honour of paying my respects at Caroline Cottage, and have shewn you our worthy anxious solicitor Mr Richardson’s letters to me, tho they principally regarded my own particular case, which has given him particular trouble. I am inclined to think that Lords Strathallan and Nairne have passed their time (from being on the spot) more teasingly than what we (at a distance) have done. All these vexatious procrastinations are now over and we enjoy the pleasure of knowing that this gracious boon has been bestowed on us by His Majesty himself. I had a letter about a week ago from Lord Strathallan acquainting me that it was thought proper to apply to His Majesty to know whether he would permit us to make our obeisance and return our thanks for this manifestation of his gracious favour. Whether this will be permitted or not, my Brother copeer could not say but it has probably kept them some time, or Nairne would have flown down to his happy fireside. I hope that the time will not be far distant when His Majesty’s Ministers have the courage to avow the injustice that has been to Lord Nairne and bestow on Lord Nairne an equivalent for the piece of injustice that has been done. Lady Frances joins with me in every good wish for you and yours. I have the honour to be, Dear Lady Nairne, with most respectful regards your Ladyships obedient servant, MAR.”

The days passed happily for Lady Nairne. The note of gloom and depression in letters and journals was a habit of the day, an outcome of the peculiar form of religious thought then prevalent; it was not part of the real nature of one whose wide sympathies and sense of humour made her delightful as a companion. She was happy in her devoted husband and only son, and in pursuits that she liked. She had time to devote to painting, which she did well; to music, which in her was a passion, and to verse-writing, which was the charming secret of her inner life. A certain Miss Meek, governess

in the family of Mrs Robertson of Carronvale, was once invited to spend an evening with Lady Nairne at Caroline Cottage. She writes:—

“I was greatly taken with the drawing-room chairs,<sup>1</sup> which seemed to be beautifully embroidered, the ground was black velvet and the flowers were cut out of old-fashioned silk and tastefully arranged on the velvet. I think Lady Nairne had given up drawing by that time, at least to a very limited extent, as she was afraid that her love for drawing took up too much of her precious time. . . . I was also told that when the Hon. William Nairne was a boy, his Mama allowed him great freedom of action. Miss Drummond and another friend had been in Lady Nairne’s room one day, when her son was climbing up the post of the bed. This friend gave her Ladyship a look, as much as to say ‘Do you permit this?’ Lady Nairne understood the look and replied, ‘I would rather that my son should cut chips in the dining-room table, than that he should sit in quiet idleness.’”

Unfortunately, this ideal with regard to William was not carried out. Lady Nairne, who used to speak and write about a “line of life” for him, as a matter of fact never gave him the chance of following any. Instead of being sent to school, he was kept at home with tutors, chosen with infinite pains more for their religious “views” than their suitability to develop manly qualities in a boy. The object of the devotion, the prayers, the absorbing interest of both parents, he never left his mother as long as he lived. Though his parents were satisfied with the result, William may himself have known times of dissatisfaction. Lady Nairne wrote years after to a niece:—

“I have not a single regret about Williams upbringing. He was trained for the Kingdom whither he has gone. I was laughed at for not having him taught dancing; but I knew its snares too well. What else does the Bible lead us to expect when it says—*Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not?* Yet

<sup>1</sup> Now in the possession of the writer.

there never was a merrier home than ours. Your Uncle was full of fun, and kept his best spirits for his own home."<sup>1</sup>

There were, however, restless times in William's short life, when he naturally craved for more independence, a wider outlook, and a life of his own. But to the last he never failed his mother, giving her freely his submission and his love.

After the death of young Laurence, the Gask family went away to live for a time at Clifton, hoping that the milder climate might restore the health of the girls. While at Clifton, on 24th April 1827, Mrs Oliphant died, worn out with many sorrows, and a life never free from anxieties. Her daughters continued to make Clifton their home. Gask was once more empty, except for the occasional visits of the young Laird, James, who in September 1827 sent the following account of the burning of his neighbour's house to his sisters:—

“You will be both surprised and hurt to learn the total demolition of Dupplin Castle by fire which took place the day before yesterday. I have seldom witnessed a scene of so much distress and bearing with it so poignant a moral. Lord Kinnoull<sup>2</sup> with his wife<sup>2</sup> and family arrived from London on Monday evening and on Tuesday morning by day-break they found themselves obliged to fly from a home where every comfort awaited them. Douglas, who breakfasted with me that morning, was the first notice I had of it, and the scene I witnessed on immediately arriving on the spot was really heart-rending.

“With the greatest difficulty I pushed my way through crowds of people of every description who had come from Perth and the adjacent country, some to help, others, I fear by their appearance, and those by far the greater number, to steal and pilfer, and soon reaching a miserable pantry through dust and rubbish I found the earl sitting, a spectacle really of the most abject nature you

<sup>1</sup> Memoir of Baroness Nairne, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Robert, eleventh Earl of Kinnoull, born 1st April 1785 and died in 866. He married, 1824, Louisa, daughter of Admiral Sir Charles Rowley.

can conceive. He was surrounded by many of the neighbouring gentlemen, who forgetting all their former differences had flocked to offer assistance and consolation; but the pangs of disappointment were too severe to admit of any immediate relief and he sat in the midst of us half clad, and worn out with fatigue, a lesson and oh, what a lesson! to all the pride and vain assurance of all human affairs. Lady Kinnoull with a female friend and little Lord Dupplin<sup>1</sup> were first driven to the West Wing and then sought refuge in the factor's house at Aberdalgie. Curiosity of course brought many to the spot. I considered I had it in my power to be of real use to my distressed neighbours and by an offer of my house to the *Noble outcast* thought its situation and accommodation at such a time well worthy of consideration. I trust they may act with the same sincerity which actuated myself and if they decide on remaining any time in the country after this misfortune they may perhaps become my inmates. His Lordship expresses *most feelingly* the kindness of his friends and neighbours which is always gratifying even at the time; need I say what I hope for the lasting results this accident may have upon him. And as we often see good coming of evil *all around*, have but one feeling on the subject which equally looks to our hopes being realised.

“All the bedroom pictures and furniture with half the library and many many irreparable papers and valuables are gone for ever.

“I fear Lady Kinnoull has received an impression of disgust from her stay in Scotland that may prevent her ever returning.”<sup>2</sup>

While the Oliphant sisters lived at Clifton, an acquaintance grew with the Kington<sup>3</sup> family at Charlton, an estate five miles from Bristol. The four Miss Kingtons and their unmarried brother, Thomas, had much in common with the Oliphant family in holding the same religious views. The intimacy ripened, and Thomas Kington fell in love and proposed marriage to Margaret Oliphant, who at the outset certainly did not respond very warmly.

<sup>1</sup> George, afterwards twelfth Earl of Kinnoull, born 16th July 1827, died 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Part of this letter is in the *Jacobite Lairds*, p. 446.

<sup>3</sup> For pedigree and account of the Kington family *see* Appendix.

Margaret writes to her sister Christian from Glen Uske:—

“I believe I shall send this by Mr Kington . . . he is in such miserable spirits that it quite makes one low to look at him, and he says himself that he finds he cannot command himself sufficiently even to appear to seem cheerful. . . . He says seeing and being with me only makes him more wretched. . . . I told him no one could be more sorry for him than I was; but he knew exactly the circumstances of the case, but that I really thought better for both parties to end the matter at once. He begged me not to mention such an idea. . . . O how I wish such affection had been directed to an object who could have returned it, instead of me who only feel on each successive proof of attachment that she can give little or no encouragement to his passion. . . . I am obliged to finish, for I am suffering from a severe headache; but no one seems to pity me, all the sympathy is lavished on Mr Kington,—yet from beginning to end he has cost me much.”

February 27th, 1830, James Oliphant writes to his sister Rachel about Margaret's prospective engagement:—

“From the little I saw of Mr Kington I have no reason to say that Margaret has acted unwisely in answering his proffered friendship, because I could discover in his disposition much that was amiable and kind and such as is likely to ensure the happiness of his wife. . . . Gentlemanlike in his behaviour and manners he has every right to be considered capable of maintaining her in a manner suitable to her station in the world. . . . You mention her fears respecting my prejudice for birth; I own that perhaps such nonsense has at times too great an influence over my better judgment, but well could I make this sacrifice . . . did I fancy that her future happiness would not suffer from the trial,—but what I deeply regret is the obligation Margaret would experience in lowering herself to please the caprices of a country town gossip, which to a cultivated mind would prove humiliating. You urge Mr Kington's active engagements as in his favour<sup>1</sup>—but can you believe that while he keeps

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Kington had large shipping interests in Bristol.

up his existing connections in Bristol it is possible to get rid of his old acquaintances, their families and friends?"

Margaret finally accepted Mr Kington, 8th March 1830. She writes to her sisters:—

"I went to walk with Mr Kington yesterday and you would have felt for both had you known the agitation which both seemed to partake of. By common consent, both were silent till at last Mr Kington, seeing me able no longer to bear the suspense, asked me to say but one word and make him the happiest person in the world. I tried several times, but could not articulate, and at length when the answer to his repeated query 'will you be mine,' was pronounced, it was followed by a burst of tears and hysterical fit of sobbing . . . after watching me for a few moments with great tenderness said, 'Now, Margaret, you have left me nothing upon earth to wish for.'"

Rachel, who all her life was wanting in a sense of humour, writing to console Margaret on the social disadvantages of the match, characteristically observes:—

"What would it avail to have our names emblazoned in the Red Book if they are not found in the Book of Life?"

On 26th May 1830 the marriage of Thomas Kington with Margaret Oliphant took place at Rood Ashton, the home of their firm friends, the Longs. Old Mrs Kington was too ill to be present. James Oliphant was abroad. Margaret had only her own sisters and the Longs at the ceremony. The honeymoon was spent at Berthfan, Malvern.

Christian, the sister nearest in age to the bride, was ill at the time, though able to attend the ceremony. The kind Kingtons wished her to return to Charlton afterwards, but Rachel thought her too ill, and she was carried off to Malvern to join the bride and bridegroom at Berthfan.

Lady Nairne writes, 12th June 1830, from Caroline

Cottage, Edinburgh, to her niece, Christian Oliphant, at Charlton, Wraxall, Somerset:—

“MY VERY DEAR CHRISTIAN,—It is many months since I have left off attempting to write or visit even in my former lame manner, but understanding that dear Margaret’s marriage ceremony was abridged on your account I begin to be very anxious to know something of your state of health which I had hoped was pretty good. I have been much in hopes of a letter from the bride which she promised I should receive,—much comfort may she and all of you have in this connexion which seems to be so highly approved of by all parties. As to myself I seem in the shade, and yet can enjoy sunshine in the distance. I know it would make your kind heart feel to see Lord Nairne as he is now,—feeble and emaciated beyond what you can well imagine,—yet we are thankful there is no alarming symptom in the disease itself, and if it should be permitted to give way he might in some degree pick up again tho he himself does not expect it,—at one time we were urged to try travelling about, and then William wrote to his cousin James Oliphant that Lord Nairne would prefer to all other places going for a short time to Gask,—this had not occurred to William or me, but it seemed a comfortable way of making the desired experiment,—as soon as James arrived at Paris he wrote to Lord Nairne in the most kind and friendly manner possible, approving in every respect; since then some symptoms have appeared that make it proper to delay moving from home. . . . William has proved quite indispensable to us both during this illness which began Oct. 26, and now that our friends have left Louisfield, which *must* make a great blank we three seem almost alone in the world and feel very uncertain as to whether we shall be able to try a jaunt or not. I hear from Mrs Colquhoun at times but have never been able to call upon her—I hope Christian may soon return to her improved in health. I often think of somebody’s observation that it is difficult to say whether we should call this state of existence a ‘dying life or a living Death.’ Dearest Christian, what a blessed privilege to have such a hope set before us as is freely given to the humble and contrite followers of the all-powerful Redeemer. Accept for yourself and



your sisters the kindest good wishes of the trio here. Do include also my new nephew and with my special love and Blessing believe me as ever your truly affectionate and attached,  
C. NAIRNE."

This letter must have reached Christian Oliphant only a few days before her death, which occurred just a month after her sister's marriage. She died at Malvern Wells, 28th June 1830, and was buried at Little Malvern on 5th July. On that very day, but too late, her brother, James Oliphant, returned from the Continent. By a strange coincidence, the same thing happened on the occasion of his sister Margaret's death nine years afterwards.

Lady Nairne felt keenly the death of yet another of her brother's family, but her own anxieties overwhelmed her. The happy days at Caroline Cottage were drawing to a close. On the 9th of July her husband, Lord Nairne, died.<sup>1</sup> The last entry in her journal is dated August 1830, Caroline Cottage:—

"With a heavy but I trust resigned heart have tied up these papers preparatory to leaving this once happy home,—long happy and with deep gratitude to the giver of all good, felt and acknowledged to be so thro his unmerited love. May *His* presence go with us, the widow and only child of one now I trust rejoicing among the redeemed—and O may we be safely and mercifully led thro all the trials of time to a happy immortality for his sake who has done all for us sinful creatures.

"CAROLINA NAIRNE."

<sup>1</sup> His will is dated Caroline Cottage, 15th June 1826. He left £500 to a natural son, another William, "now in the sea-faring line."

## CHAPTER XVI

### LATER YEARS

JAMES OLIPHANT, the tenth Laird, was at Gask, keeping up a bachelor establishment. The big house must have seemed empty and dreary, full of the memories of the group of sisters fading rapidly away as years went on.

The thoughts of Carolina Nairne, in the first darkness of her widowhood, turned to the home of her heart, but she went to Clifton with her boy, where her two remaining nieces were ready with a welcome. There also was a house of grief. Christian had been dead only a few weeks, and Caroline,<sup>1</sup> the youngest of the family, the most attractive of all the sisters, with her gift for verse-writing, her beauty, her lively interest in life, was too plainly soon to follow Christian. She survived her only eight months. Out of the family of eight sons and daughters, only Rachel, James, and Margaret Kington now survived.

The muse of Caroline Oliphant the younger was of a gentle and reflective order. Her verses bear no stamp of original thought, but flow pleasantly and with a ring of simple pathos belonging to a day that is past.

“The fresh winds are blowing  
O'er the orange groves of Spain,  
The waters are flowing  
That bear me home again.  
When last I left Spain's fair shore  
A mother's wail the breezes bore,  
But now in praise  
Her voice she'll raise ;

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<sup>1</sup> A memoir of Caroline Oliphant the younger, and a selection of her verses, is included in Mr Roger's Memoir of Baroness Nairne. She is buried in Clifton churchyard beside her mother. It has been said of her, "Some characters can never have any real likenesses. Nature sometimes breaks her cast, that the model may never be repeated."

For fresh winds are blowing  
 O'er the orange groves of Spain,  
 And waters are flowing  
 That bear me home again.

“The twilight is closing  
 And mists are spreading fast,  
 Our eyes are reposing  
 On the lofty hills at last.  
 The chestnut woods dimly rise  
 In shadowy streaks upon the skies,  
 I see the crag  
 The signal flag,—  
 And fresh winds are blowing  
 O'er the orange groves of Spain,  
 And waters are flowing  
 That bear me home again.

“The moonbeams are gleaming  
 On the bow'r where my sisters dwell,  
 The lattice is streaming  
 With lights that of watching tell.  
 What voices rise soft and clear?  
 It is the vesper hymn I hear!  
 Trim trim the sail  
 To meet the gale  
 For fresh winds are blowing  
 O'er the orange groves of Spain,  
 And waters are flowing  
 That bear me home again.”

The following is one of the last letters written by James Oliphant to his sister Caroline:—

“*From James Blair Oliphant, Kirk Style Inn, Ardblair.*

“6 October 1830.

“MY DEAR CAROLINE,—I came here early this morning from Murthly and met the Baronet<sup>1</sup> at Perth yesterday who insisted on my returning with him. They keep bachelor's establishment there now, as Lady Stewart<sup>2</sup> has taken up her quarters at Logie Almond, a consummation devoutly to be wished! So the poor old Duke<sup>3</sup> has departed at last. I was rather amused at his having ordered himself to be deposited in his last Home in a *larch* coffin thus keeping up his undiminished love and

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Archibald Stewart of Murthly, sixth Baronet.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Drummond, widow of Sir George Stewart, fifth Baronet.

<sup>3</sup> The fourth Duke of Atholl died 29th September 1830.

affection for his favorite timber to the last. One really is sorry to see a man thwarted in his most rational hopes and expectations which it certainly was to live to see his fine house completed (but this has been denied him) and he is now 'left alone to his glory.' His poorest cotter may probably rival him there. *C'est ainsi enfin dans les affaires mondaines.* He will be much regretted in the County where his services were so actively bestowed. My neighbour the minute peer has lost no time in showing his face in Town—as he is aspiring to be Lord Lieutenant. *Made at London, sold at Perth, Stops a bottle, etc.* What is he, abstracted from his rank title and estate, which alone entitles him to the honor, for he's without exception the veriest atom that ever existed. *A Propos* Rachel's fears will a little subside on my account when I mention that Aunt Nairne's last epistle is upon the retreating system as to instituting an attack on the Continent this year; although I never had the least fear as to being in the slightest degree molested by my old friends the French, still I thought it but fair to my aunt to state that it would be quite unnecessary increasing difficulties where there are always some exist to a first introduction to the continent, and that, if it were not absolutely needful to go at present, she had far better delay it a few months. She seems to have been biased by some candid opinions from your part of the world and talks of wintering in the South of England. How long we are to remain in the selfsame mind I would not answer for, as both Mother and Son are as unacquainted with what they will have to undergo as any blind man upon a *terra incognita*. The youthful Peer is certainly a nice gentlemanlike fellow, but abstracted from that, a perfect novice as regards even this world's policy.

"I am rejoiced to hear that Meta<sup>1</sup> is so comfortable among the Kington sisterhood. Nothing could give her friends more real pleasure after being persuaded that the *caro sposo* studies it primarily. I do hope soon to be able to pay you a visit at Clifton. I am *sorry* to say I have begun to be country gentleman in good earnest and what with Roads, County Meetings and such ignoble pursuits, I shall not be able in future to be so *agreeably idle* as I was wont. It will not do, I see, to act by proxy when

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Kington.

one's own good and that of the tenantry are concerned. Selfishness persuades everything and an Absentee is only pitied and laughed at, when he returns expecting the iota of interest which as a member of the public he was entitled to look for, has been merged by some over greedy spy into his own coffers. Respectability undoubtedly gains by it and this is the plea that all my friends urge upon me as the best sufficient reason for establishing my head quarters. I query however whether the monotony will suit my taste *mais commençons toujours, on ne devient pas sage tout à la fois* and I will say that if ever I become a sober, sedate and settled country plodder, I shall have to ascribe the change to Him who can alone change the Heart and has power to bring our wills into subjection to what his wisdom may appoint. In recommending you to the peculiar care of the Good Shepherd, whether in time or Eternity, Believe me dearest Caro, yr ever truly attached,

JAMES."

During the time of the family residence at Clifton, in the intervals of sick-nursing which formed her constant occupation, Rachel Oliphant had found opportunity to form friendships which, in some cases, lasted throughout her life. Among these were the families of Mackworth, and the Longs of Rood Ashton. The ladies of the latter family were good correspondents. Some of Miss Flora Long's letters are of interest, and are here given as throwing side-lights on the affair of the Bristol riots at the time of the Reform Bill. They are addressed to Miss Oliphant, 9 Sion Hill, Clifton.<sup>1</sup>

" ASHTON, *Novr. 2nd* 1831.

"I longed to address my beloved Friend yesterday in reply to her deeply interesting letters, but I felt I had nothing but sympathy to offer, for no expressions of gratitude could adequately convey my thanks for your kind consideration in relieving our agitating suspense by such frequent and detailed reports of the awful scenes passing around you. I fear your dear head must be the sufferer; . . . We send every evening to Trowbridge at the hour the Bristol coach comes in, for fresh intelligence,

<sup>1</sup> The Oliphants quitted one house in Clifton to accommodate Hannah More, who had been turned out of her "Paradise" (Barleywood) "but not by angels."

but the reports are so exaggerated we sh<sup>d</sup> be at much loss what to believe, but thro' your kind and circumstantial detail of the proceedings which have occurred. I trust in God the fury of the mad populace has now spent itself, and that the restraining Hand of the Almighty will subdue the further machinations of wicked ill designing men; we cannot feel sufficiently thankful that dear Mr Kington and Major Mackworth have been preserved from material injury, few perhaps have disregarded personal safety more for the sake of the public peace than they have done. I hope public notice will be taken of Major Mackworth's<sup>1</sup> gallant conduct, altho' it is not unlikely it may be stigmatized in some of the leading Journals as *butchery*. Already several of them assert that the 14th Reg<sup>t</sup> behaved most inhumanly, and the 3rd in the most feeling and conciliatory manner. I should hope Colonel Brereton's<sup>2</sup> conduct will be the subject of an investigation *at least*, altho' it may perhaps involve Major M. in unpleasant circumstances should his evidence be required. How thankful you must all feel that his dangerous and distressing duty has ceased. When he is sufficiently recruited after the great bodily fatigue he must have undergone, we trust our claims will be remembered, we shall be most anxious to hear him tell how fields were won altho' I hope it will not be necessary he should 'shoulder his *crutches*' you do not say from what weapon the injury in his leg was received, he little expected when he entered your peaceful habitation, to bear away a token of war's alarms. . . . I am surprised at the Hensman's flight, probably the clergy have felt especially alarmed from the odium which attached to their superiors and the destruction of the Bishop's Palace was consequently a sort of signal for the adoption of Bonaparte's maxim '*sauve qui peut*' . . . it must have been sufficiently harrasing to witness the awful conflagra-

<sup>1</sup> Major Mackworth was aide-de-camp to Lord Hill. He had been sent to the Forest of Dean to suppress riots there. Afterwards he came to Bristol after the mob's assault on the Mansion House. He formed the constables into detachments. On finding that the mob intended to fire the shipping, he said to Colonel Brereton "We must charge," and charged without waiting for his answer. (See Trial of C. Pinney, p. 301.)

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Brereton was in command of the 3rd Dragoons and the 14th. The men of the first were so much in sympathy with the mob that they were useless. The 14th received such treatment that Colonel Brereton withdrew them. He was severely criticised for this action and for his reluctance to fire upon the rabble. He died shortly after the riots,

tions and to know how near you were to the frightful scenes which were acting. . . . I hope dear Margaret's anxiety will now cease and that darling baby will soon recover, surely he should live chiefly on the Donkey's milk whilst there is a doubt of the other agreeing with him. I have thought not unfrequently of poor Mrs Kington Sen<sup>r</sup> who had such a presentiment of the disturbances and would have been so terrified had she known the dangers to which her son has been exposed—it is just as well she is safe in Devonshire. I hope the losses sustained by the burning of the house in Queen Sq<sup>re</sup> will not very materially affect him, but I should fear many valuable documents must have been overturned in such bustle and confusion. From the hour in Monday night we heard the report from Trowbridge of the destruction of *two* sides of the Square, until we could receive your letter next morning, we were in the greatest anxiety lest all the papers and deeds might have been consumed. . . .”

“ ASHTON, Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> 1831.

“ MY BELOVED FRIEND,—It seemed quite a blank to receive no letter from you this morning, yet as affording confirmation to the satisfactory reports wh. now reach us from many quarters of the continued tranquillity of your unhappy city. We ought to be content and thankful; very long must it be ere the desolation which the recent tragic scenes have created can be in any measure repaired, but I trust the demon of insubordination and outrage is stayed by the arm of superior force, and that rapine and violence will be heard of no more in that quarter at least. We wished your late gallant defender Major Mackworth had been here yesterday, when my dear Father (whose apprehensions are naturally on the *qui vive* from the distressing state of the country *de part et d'autre*) was more annoyed than the facts warranted, by information from various quarters, that some of the idle ill-disposed people of Trowbridge had taken up an impression that Sir Charles Wetherell<sup>1</sup> was concealed in our house and that they meant to come up in great numbers in the evening to search for him. We know what a search in these days means, or at least what it

<sup>1</sup> The Recorder whose coming to open the Assize at Bristol was the signal for the rising. He was received with insult by the populace, who thus expressed their disapprobation of his politics.

will involve, plunder and violence, and altho' at any other time such an absurd story would have been treated with derision and contempt, so many idle persons are let loose upon the country just now, and such a bad spirit always exists amongst the distressed operatives of this neighbourhood, that my Father<sup>1</sup> grew seriously uncomfortable, and was very ill pleased at any attempt of ours to dispel or ridicule his fears. It was late in the day before we heard these wild rumours, but so diligent were we in our preparations to receive the enemy that soon after dark our *forces* consisted of ten yeomanry of my Brother's Troop living at Steeple Ashton, and twelve able bodied workmen (all prepared for the onset, had it come) besides the men of our own house—making about 30 in the garrison. The night however passed as tranquilly as other nights have done, and I have no doubt it was one of the many idle reports which some people take such pleasure in magnifying. There is an assemblage of 250 persons on the road just by the Lodge this morning but they do not seem to intend violence, on the contrary they have sent a deputation to state they are colliers out of work, who are begging for relief. As this is somewhat a suspicious class of persons one may be forgiven for being a little sceptical as to the truth of the story, but it would not be politic to refuse assistance in these evil days. Lord Bath has had threatening letters, having made himself obnoxious by his vote, and is obliged to take measures of precaution in case his noble mansion should be attacked. Doubtless many bad characters must be wandering about the country, were it only owing to the late dispersion of miscreants from Bristol, and *village gossip* gathers as it goes, till 'four men in Buckram suits' soon became forty.

"Mrs Ames has been under great alarm for her Brother's safety, and went to Clifton to bring away her sister-in-law, that she might no longer be a source of annoyance to those who wished to shelter her there. Oh how are the mighty fallen! She had seen her husband once by stealth between Sat<sup>y</sup> and Tuesday *unshaven* and not having changed his clothes since that eventful day. I think he must have been rather of a *craven* spirit as well as the rest of the magistrates, tho' certainly there was cause enough for alarm. This the most painful

<sup>1</sup> Richard Godolphin Long of Rood Ashton. He died 1835 aged seventy-four.



part of the history to know that life and property might have been spared by the timely exertions of a little firmness. The paper says a number of Bank notes have been recovered which had been taken from Mr Miles's<sup>1</sup> office in Queen's Square.

"We long to know if Mr Kington is likely to suffer materially.

"I suppose dear Margaret will scarcely like to accompany you under existing circumstances, as it might be unpleasant to return alone in the dusk of the evening. I think *we* must leave Bath as early as we can to avoid being in the dark.

"Do not forget to bring your little slate. I have often missed the encouraging text since we parted. Anne has one I know, but she never shares a spiritual thought with me, and I have no pleasure in extorting communications of this sort. . . . Your ever tenderly attached

"FLORA.

"Very kind remembrances from all here to your circle including the dear Mackworths and a kiss to the darling baby."

"ASHTON, Nov<sup>r</sup> 5th 1831.

"MY DEAREST LOVE,—I cannot say I am surprised at the unwelcome announcement your dear letter of this day contains, but we are all *much* disappointed. I never saw my Father more so I think, for he anticipated Major Mackworth's visit with unusual interest, and I had rejoiced in the prospect of his hearing the present awful crisis commented upon by one whose Christian views and temperate opinions might have influenced his judgement, and quieted his alarms by pointing to that 'anchor of the soul sure and stedfast' which even the careless and the doubting may well be led to seek to for Refuge in these distressing and eventful times. But private feeling must yield to public duty, and I feel very thankful dear Major M. has a situation of command and influence, where his valuable services may still be useful. We are much surprized his name and his conduct in the late tragic scene are alike unnoticed in the public Prints, *his* heading the charge (which does actually seem to have been the turning point in the history of these dreadful disturbances) must have been publicly known, yet no mention is made of it; I am glad to perceive by

<sup>1</sup> Philip John Miles of Leigh Court. Died 1845.

the Papers today Col. Brereton's conduct is strongly animadverted upon and is to become the subject of investigation; *then*, probably all particulars will be fully made known.

"It seems to me this place and neighbourhood is at present less safe than the retreat in which you are amply guarded, not a day passes but some outrage or some threatened disturbance comes to our hearing, and altho' I trust the same Protection which has hitherto been extended to us, may be continued to our persons and our dwelling, a perpetual excitation is kept up in my Father's mind, and you have had enough alarms of late without sharing in those which may be imaginary. *Melksham* is not in a very peaceful state, Longleat is threatened, and at Shepton Mallet we hear the Jail has been destroyed and the Prisoners let loose, besides the burning of Ricks in several places in this county. . . . I am truly grieved the darling Pet is suffering and it is particularly annoying that Ayliffe's<sup>1</sup> carelessness should be the cause. It just shews what a thoughtless scatter-brained woman she is, not to be trusted out of sight . . . your own affect<sup>o</sup>,  
FLORA."

Later in the year Miss Long writes details of an accident which befell James Oliphant at Gask:—

"18 Dec. 1831.

"I shall be particularly anxious for your dear expected letter in the hope it may tell us you have heard from James and that he has not suffered from the accident. It appears that in the ardour of the chase he and others attempted to cross the Earn, when the late rains had swollen it so much as to render it unsafe to ford it. He and the Whipper-in however found the stream too powerful for them, and disengaging themselves from their horses, James made his way to a little island in the river, by which he was spared the awful fate which awaited his companion, who sank to rise no more."

There is a portrait<sup>2</sup> of James, painted by Sir Francis

<sup>1</sup> The devoted nurse who brought up all the Kington children. This remark probably applies to Ayliffe's action in holding up to a window Thomas Laurence Kington, the baby, that he might see the flames of burning Bristol. He caught a severe cold. Being about four months old, he could have derived neither pleasure nor profit from the scene.

<sup>2</sup> Now at Ardblair.

Grant, mounted on the white horse he rode on the occasion of this adventure. The moment chosen is that when the laird, waving his hat, called to the English huntsman: "Come on! will you let yourself be beaten by a Scot?"

In the year 1831 James Blair Oliphant had himself served heir to the title of Lord Oliphant. He was both heir male (as tenth in descent from Colin, Master of Oliphant, who fell at Flodden) and heir of line (as sixth in descent from Liliass, eldest daughter of the sixth lord). He never voted at any election as Lord Oliphant, nor took the final measures to establish himself in the dignity. He was unmarried at the time, and perhaps seeing difficulties ahead about the Patent of 1633,<sup>1</sup> which might in truth have debarred his claim,<sup>2</sup> he felt the doubtful result was not worth the trouble and expense entailed. He was the eighteenth in unbroken male succession from William Olifaunt, upon whom Robert Bruce bestowed the lands of Gasknes.

In the prime of life, and intending to marry, he probably thought little of the presumptive heir, his nephew, in connection with the estate, though he always seemed interested in the group of nephews and nieces growing up at Charlton.

Thomas Kington of Charlton and his wife, Margaret Oliphant, had five children:—

1. Thomas Laurence, born May 1831, married, 1856, Frances Dorothy Jebb (who died 4th November 1902). He died at Bournemouth 8th July 1902 without issue.
2. Philip Oliphant, born December 1832, married, 1859, Henrietta, daughter of William Yaldwyn of Blackdown, Sussex, and died at Datchet 2nd July 1892. Issue: one son and four daughters.
3. James William, born 20th February 1836 and died at Charlton March 1836.
4. Caroline Margaret, born 1837, married to Dr William Fyffe, 1862. She died at Clifton

<sup>1</sup> See p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> See article Oliphant in the Scots' Peerage, vol. vi. p. 552.

18th December 1897. Issue: four sons and four daughters.

5. William Miles Nairne, born 24th September 1838, married (1) 13th March 1871, Sophia Baker, who died 4th March 1881; (2) 12th July 1882, Gertrude Urmston. He died at Montreux 21st April 1898. Issue: four sons and seven daughters.

Lady Nairne saw little of the nephews and niece, descendants of her race,—the children who were destined to carry on the name. Her stay in Clifton lasted only a few months. In anxiety about the health of young Lord Nairne, she was advised to try the climate of Ireland, and at the age of sixty-five went oversea for the first time in her life. The attraction lay in the fact that her husband was born at Drogheda. They went first to Kingston, and afterwards settled in the village of Enniskerry, where they remained till 1834. It seems surprising, in view of the delicacy of the young man, that the house selected was so damp that Lady Nairne converted the black stains of moisture on the walls of the sitting-room into a picture. Mother and son led the simplest of lives; their friends and acquaintances were mostly among those whose religious views were of the same colour. They saw much of Lady Powerscourt and the “gifted clergymen” who assembled at Powerscourt House. To the young man of twenty-four, the life no doubt was very dull. He had not his mother’s keen interest in religious life, and the final move from Ireland was made at his request. His mother loved the country and was content visiting the poor and doing what she could for Protestant converts, but she recognised the claims of the young life that was linked with her own.

“Perhaps few sons would have sacrificed to an old Mother as Nairne has done, and I trust he has himself, in many respects, benefited. Besides even better things, the domestic life he has led is good, and I think he will now prefer that still to much excitement. Should he marry, which would be a happy event to me, and that I thought it eligible to leave him, who knows but that I

might come to end my days here? . . . I wish time and place to be nothing to me, but as He leads the way and appoints the time for every circumstance. If we do but belong to His family, all is well.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr Rogers, when collecting materials for his memoir of Lady Nairne, went to Enniskerry in 1870, and in a letter to the then Laird of Gask gives a picture of the life there. He made no use of this material in his book.

“On Saturday I drove to Enniskerry to see the scene of Lady Nairne’s residence in this country. The village is clean and tidy and well built, beautifully situated in a valley or hollow in the Wicklow Hills. In the immediate neighbourhood are the beautiful palaces of Lord Monk and Lord Powerscourt including the far-famed scenery on the Dargle. The spot is so lovely I should consider life banishment there no exile with a competency.

“The Cottage, a semi-detached wood-bine encircled little residence, in which Lady Nairne lived, was at once pointed out to me. An old man named Abraham Williams, who lived opposite, I was directed to as being likely to give every information. He was at home. I found a most intelligent octogenarian. ‘Well I knew Lady Nairne indeed, and she was as much of a leddy as any I ever knowed. And how’s young Lord Nairne, Sir, is he well?’

“‘Dead. He died a year or two after leaving Enniskerry.’

“‘Ah! I never heard. But he was very thin, very thin and delicate, but as fine and gentle young man as I ever knowed. A horse I bought for him it cost him thirty-five pounds, but it came down in the car one day, and injured its knees. His Lordship was offered six pounds for it by a farmer, but he took five pounds from me, because he said he knew I would be kind to it. We always called it “Lord Nairne” years and years after. Poor Lord Nairne, he had but small estate! He often told me of the forfeiture in 1745, and he was much disheartened about it. But they seemed to have plenty. There were just five altogether, and I supplied them with *mate* and milk. They used an extraordinary lot of *mate*. How five people could consume so much I

<sup>1</sup> Memoir of Baroness Nairne, p. 60.

never could make out.' [He enlarged on this; it had never occurred to him that four persons were sustained by her Ladyship's bounty.] 'She was a fine lady,' he continued, 'tall and stately, fine nose and features, and so simple. I often received orders from herself. Her servants spoke of her with great kindness. It's some years since she left.'

"'Nearly forty,' I said.

"'Ah, indeed! I just was looking over her accounts in my books the other day, shewing how much *mate* she got.'"

In 1843 mother and son were in Scotland; in the autumn of that year it was determined to go abroad. The wish was originally Lord Nairne's, but his mother could not think of letting him go without her. Mrs Keith offered to join the party and was with them for a time, and also a niece, Margaret Steuart of Dalguise. Paris, Florence, Rome, Naples, Genoa, Interlaken, Baden and Mannheim were among the places visited. All the time Lord Nairne's health was declining.

The following letter, written from Mannheim, 25th April 1836, addressed to Mrs Keith and Margaret Steuart, is a specimen of many letters sent home:—

"This is a prodigious sheet; but I think it will not be crossed, for we are busy preparing to leave Mannheim and I find endless interruptions to all my doings. I had a letter from Rachel after yours, telling me of the baby's<sup>1</sup> death. I used to think old Lady Orhill cruel for saying she could not be sorry when a child died, but now I rather agree with her. I believe she never lost one of her own either, so our philosophy has little merit,—but I hope poor Margaret Kington is comforted by this time. . . . Our first step is intended to be Baden, many are going from this there, I hear, which is scarcely a recommendation upon the whole, unless Mrs Baker is one. . . . There is a clergyman here now and we have had service for three Sundays,—he is delicate, having had a bad fall from or with his horse while *hunting*, but yesterday he gave us a good plain evangelical sermon,—

<sup>1</sup> James William Kington. He was three weeks old.

he is called Mr Martin, an Irishman. I scarcely know him, and we go so soon, no matter. Nairne and he have called on each other. I have been really interested in Mrs Hannah More. I never thought half enough of her till now, her zeal for doing good to her Country and her success are really wonderful, and so much depth and simplicity at once, not to mention true taste and the sweetest temper,—but I hope you read on and know all this, tho' I must own there is a good deal to wade through in the way of fine speeches that was the fault of the time. Her progress towards knowing the truth is strongly marked and I am glad Mr Roberts, who seems able and pious, was selected to write her life; delightful to be sure that Johnson was at last enlightened. The review in the *Quarterly* of this life of Hannah More is provoking.

“We have fought with our wicked landlord without Mr B. who was at the taking of the house. The landlords enmity against Dominick, from the day he chose to come up and abuse him, has been vehement and many a sad lie he has told, poor wretched animal. He called us all *canaille*, but he is not worth thinking of, but to be sorry for him. . . . There is service here now regularly for a time. I do not know if the parson makes his own sermons or not; they get more serious, but he plays whist all the time, and goes out to parties. . . . There is Nairne, laughing at my crossing, which he says is *cruel*,—it would be to him for he could not read it, but you are accustomed. He sometimes reads some of my little books for practice. He bids me give his kind love. I am in the middle of fifty things to arrange, and should be done. Do not know what the Nieces are about or James. With hasty love to you both, ever most aff.

“C. N.”

Lady Nairne writes from Baden to Margaret Kington, June 1836:—

“I hope the Scotch jaunt is to take place. I am always glad when James has lady friends with him and really sorry he is so long of establishing one in that sweet place where he might be so useful and comfortable as a family man. . . . Till the romance of life is over I think people have no true notions of what really conduces to

all the happiness that is permitted upon earth. If Nairne and he were well married what a relief it would be to anxious friends. . . . I trust, truly trust, for guiding in this and all our concerns at home and abroad—indeed as to home I do not know where that is with regard to us,—but that does not trouble me,—I often think of the lines on Howard:—

“‘What boots it when the high behoof is given  
Or where the ransomed spirit soars to heaven.’”

I have been much interested with Mrs H. More's Life . . . her real character all that I had imagined. There is so much high talent truth and simplicity that when I put it all together it left the impression of sublimity on my mind. I had fancied the faults in her stile were the effect of effort,—not, as I found, of the overflowing richness of her mental qualities.”

The blow that was finally to throw into shadow the remaining years of Carolina Nairne came upon her at Brussels, where she had taken a house for the winter of 1837, in the Rue de Louvain. After months of painful anxiety and agonised watching the ebb and flow of mortal disease in the one being she most adored, she stood by the deathbed of her only child. The young man died on 7th December.<sup>1</sup> He himself had hoped to the end. His cousin, Margaret Steuart, who was present, writes:—

“Probably he could never have been strong, neither were his worldly prospects bright. He himself comforted his Mother by suggesting that he was ‘provided for.’ He acknowledged that the extreme patience he showed was the result of prayer. His tenderness for his ‘Mother’s feelings was most remarkable, indeed all about him are full of affection and grief. . . . We hardly expect that dear Aunt Nairne can *ever* recover any degree of cheerful-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Nairne was buried at Brussels. Many years after, the body was taken up by the authorities and removed to another cemetery. The young man was the last of the male line of the Lords Nairne. A claim to the title through Robert Nairne or Mercer was successfully made after his death by Emily Jane Mercer Elphinstone de Flahault, Dowager Marchioness of Lansdowne. She was born 1819 and died 1895. The Nairne title is now merged in the Marquisate of Lansdowne.



ness; never were two beings so completely linked together."

"*The only son of his mother, and she was a widow;*" in that light his death strikes on the heart rather than as the last of his house to bear a title whose record includes all the pride of unstained honour and unquestioned heroism in the past.

"No one but myself can know," she writes,<sup>1</sup> "what I have lost in my darling companion of almost thirty years, as none besides could witness his never-ceasing tenderness and confidence. Whilst I had him, the thought that it was a thing *possible* that I might lose him, would at times embitter to me our delightful intercourse. This, I know now, arose from excess of attachment, and surely I have much, much reason to give thanks for the grace that enabled me to resign him at last with the full conviction that all was well for him and me."

She remained at Brussels during the first six months of her grief, and afterwards travelled about the Continent with her sister, Mrs Keith, and her nieces, Margaret Stewart of Bonskeid and Margaret Steuart of Dalguise. She did not speak of her sorrow, and her companions never saw her weep.

Sorrow and changes were shared also in the family at home. Margaret Kington from the time of her marriage had suffered from ill-health. Possibly her married life did not bring all it had promised. In the large house at Charlton lived old Mrs Kington<sup>2</sup> and four unmarried daughters: Sarah, Charlotte,<sup>3</sup> Susanna Ann,<sup>4</sup> and Emily, besides Margaret and her husband and their children. It was inevitable that there should be friction and interference, though this would be of the gentlest and most well-intentioned on the part of the Kington

<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of Baroness Nairne, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Née* Charlotte Miles, born 1775, married Mr Kington 1794. She died in 1844. The Miles family estate was Leigh Court, near Bristol.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Mrs Hales.

<sup>4</sup> The only one of the family who attained old age. She died in 1879, greatly beloved by the nephews and niece to whom she had been a mother, and by a large circle of great nephews and nieces.

ladies. The earliest recollection of Thomas Laurence, the eldest boy, afterwards eleventh Laird of Gask, was of a scene in his babyhood, when one of his aunts, having unexpectedly lifted him from the floor and the toys with which he was playing, he stretched up both hands and scratched her face, and heard his mother say, "*Sister, sister, why can't you let the child alone?*" The upbringing, though most gentle, most painstaking, and most religious, was not wholly successful; there were too many authorities. When Aunt Rachel Oliphant came to visit Charlton she found much to disapprove, and her visit could hardly have caused unmixed pleasure. She writes as follows:—

"Most of the days Mr Kington gave the children a Bible-class, for which I daily bless God, as it seemed the only means of usefulness granted to Laurence and Philip. Though the complete absence of restraint tempted the dear boys to give the full swing to their idleness and to be occupied from morning till night in the pursuit of amusement, there were moments when I was able to hold serious conversation with them. I frequently wiled them into my room and they always seemed interested when engaged in rational conversation. On one occasion I found them in the hall, both looking disappointed, but Philly crying with vexation, because as it rained heavily their Papa had refused to let them ride out to meet Sir John's hounds. Laurie was soon consoled, but Philly could not be pacified, till with my repeated intreaties he retired to his own room from whence he returned in half an hour perfectly calm and good-humoured."

Rachel notes some signs of grace—the boys read Henry Milner, and took notes of sermons. She thought Laurence regenerate, but he declined a missionary-box.

Margaret was passionately devoted to her children; but frequent illnesses rendered her unable to maintain her position as mistress of Charlton, and chief companion to the children. In 1838 her husband, her sister Rachel, and James Oliphant went with her to Madeira, but her health did not improve. In August 1839 she



*Margaret Cliphant.*  
WIFE OF THOMAS KINGTON OF CHARLTON.  
1799 - 1839.



was dangerously ill. She was removed to Teignmouth, where her sister Rachel remained with her to the end. Laurence was the only one of her children with her. Margaret had all her life suffered from an unreasoning dread of death, and as the moment approached this feeling did not abate. But the end came very suddenly and quietly.

Mr Kington writes the same day to Dr Mayo:<sup>1</sup>—

“The foregoing letter . . . will have informed you of the distressing event, which has happened in my family, but one for which our minds have been in a great measure prepared, by the gradual progress of the disease, from which my dear departed wife has been so long suffering. . . . There is much mercy in the dispensation, and in the circumstances attending her dissolution, when the extreme exhaustion of her bodily powers and her reluctance to pass over Jordan, are considered. The last portion of Scripture which the faithful Jenny repeated to dearest Margaret was the 23 Psalm—an hour before her death: she did not speak, but manifested by her look and gesture that she was able in some measure to enter into the blessed words which it contains.”

The funeral took place at the Kington burial-place at Wraxall. James Oliphant, who, having just returned from abroad, knew of his sister's illness, but had received no news of her death, was riding to Charlton. He met a funeral procession, and drew rein to allow it to pass, without knowing it was that of his sister.

From Lynmouth Rachel writes to Mrs Mayo (just after Margaret's death):—

“My poor Brother who could not take alarm in time, only arrived to meet the funeral procession on its way to the Charlton burying ground,—his agony was intense: he is now spending a little time with us in this sweet retirement.

“The valley of the shadow of Death she had always dreaded and feared to pass alone, must have been almost

<sup>1</sup> Headmaster of Cheam and a great friend.

imperceptibly passed,—not a groan or a struggle indicated the moment of the spirit's flight."

A little later Rachel writes to the same:—

"LYNMOUTH, DEVON, 11 Oct. 1839.

"Mr Kington has kindly spared Philip to enliven our party, he is the very reverse of his elder Brother in most respects, but tho' much inferior to Laurence in application, he is a far more popular character, possessing those engaging manners and endearing qualities in which poor Laurence is so eminently deficient."

Both little boys were sent to the care of Dr Mayo at Cheam, where they passed several very unhappy years. In after life neither Laurence nor Philip cared to speak of these early school days. Afterwards Laurence went to Eton, and Philip and William to Harrow.

The year after his sister Margaret's death, James Oliphant found a bride. His choice fell on his cousin, Henrietta Graeme<sup>1</sup> of Orchill. Her mother, the heiress of Orchill, married in 1815 James Gillespie,<sup>2</sup> one of the most successful architects of his day, and lived till 1826, when Henrietta became "eleventh Laird" of Orchill. There was one sister, Jane,<sup>3</sup> who died young. The following very happy letter is from James Blair Oliphant to his sister Rachel:—

"GASK, Sept. 29 1840.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—A first announcement of so important a step as I at present contemplate is not, I have felt, the time when we can cogitate sufficiently to write as we would wish. . . . I returned from Orchill this morning after spending a whole week with the object of my now hourly meditations, and as I feel that such thoughts have become confirmed and more easily expressed than they have been in my first epistle to you regarding this coming event, I think it will be satisfactory to you dear Olly to

<sup>1</sup> Henrietta was a great grand-daughter of Louisa Nairne, wife of the eighth Laird of Orchill.

<sup>2</sup> His portrait, in full Highl. and dress, is well known as the finest work of Watson Gordon. It is now at Ardblair.

<sup>3</sup> According to her portrait, now at Ardblair, Jane lacked the attractions of her sister. She died 3rd January 1845.

read them divested of the too frequent invocation or rather the accompaniment of a sentimentalism which perhaps may be natural but ought to be avoided in *sensible* love. I think I can with much truth affirm that one of the happiest weeks of my life has ended, for I have found out in the character and disposition of my dear Henrietta traits of feeling and affection to which I have hitherto been a stranger. A pure and innocent heart entirely at my disposal, with a mind endued with much more sense and judgment than I had reckoned upon. You will say you feel happy in the progress of my discoveries; but still more can I count upon your affectionate sympathy when I mention that her heart has been for 2 years impressed with the importance of those better things which the world can never give nor take away. She has had no one in whom to confide these secret workings of her pious feelings, for her step-mother is only *provisionally* a Christian, and her Father though the plain kind hearted person you know him to be, though highly correct and honourable, carries his religious professions not much further. Her young sister is of a totally different disposition from herself, but though they seem strongly attached to one another, the subject was not made common to both. . . . I am fully sensible as I told you that the example of one so much older and to whom (I must say) the dear girl looks up to, as to the reality of some ideal perfection (which pray undeceive her in when you write) must have a great influence on her conduct.

“Both sisters have been very much *kept under* by their foster-mama and Aunt, and to this I attribute the almost painful timidity which Henny evinces in company. To a casual observer this shyness would be put down to the girlish Miss, unthinking and uncaring for the topics under discussion. Her powers of observation however are great and though she has no pretensions to *cleverness* her good sense generally leads her to a right ‘envisagement’ of things, both as to persons, their characters and principles. Her Father told me the other day that he *never* had to *correct* her for any *misdemeanour*, either in the way of commission or omission, which certainly speaks well for temper and disposition. I often tell her she is but a *Scotch lassie* in her ignorance of worldly ways and

the purity of her national accent,—but who would barter the ingenuousness of an affectionate heart, amicable and sensitive to a degree, for the accomplishment (very pleasing I grant) of high bred enunciation. . . . You caught a glimpse of her face I believe the day we met them, so I need say no more on that head—*elle est assez bien pour moi*. So write to her, dear Olly. . . . The Orchill party go to Edinburgh to-morrow for a week to give orders I suppose as to the trousseau. Can you give any idea as to the general run of items on such an occasion. . . . I think Lady Elibank might be a good person to give some hints. I was asked the question the other day,—my only bargain was that everything should be of *première qualité*, sober colours and *well made*. Is £500 about the average cost of such necessary expenses or am I below the mark? Old Gillespie Graeme is quite disposed to act liberally and on this account I am the more inclined to be moderate in my exactions,—but I know nothing of the subject. The only thing that I impress upon them all is that I am determined (D.V.) to live henceforth with prudence and economy and it affords me real satisfaction to find that Henrietta in every way seconds my proposals in this respect. I told her the other day that I should look out for a pair of ponies for her (being fond of driving) when she immediately refused and said that one would be sufficient—and has almost made me promise not to get a close carriage for her, though I really think our winter prospects might be brightened by the adjunct to our future establishment.

“I asked her what *jewels* she wished for, as I was disposed to give her any ‘surprise’ in that way, she liked. A *Bracelet* and a *pair of Earrings* was all she asked, and she most religiously retains my little watch that you may remember my having years ago, in preference to my wishes of getting her a new one. These are but trifling circumstances but are valuable *to me* at least as showing the *animus* which they suggest. *You* will also congratulate me I am sure in possessing the affections of one who is not likely to be an *expensive* wife. . . . None of my immediate neighbours have expressed their good wishes in more decided terms than the old Peer of Strathallan and some of his family, and it certainly is pleasing to find the kind and staid guardian of our earlier



years willing to foster and keep up the same genuine feelings towards us in our riper years and when taking the all-important step of settling in life. The family at Inchbrakie is now broken up and *I hear* that poor Grace was rather peremptorily informed that she was not to consider it her future home. We must hear both sides of the question however, before blaming so apparently harsh conduct in the brother. I fear his affairs are in the worst possible order—I find Grace is left £100 a year which I am thankful for, as I had heard it rumoured that £20 was to be the maximum. . . . Address to me at 60 Great King Street Edinburgh, (the residence of the G. Gs.), it will find me, as I expect to be a *pretty frequent inmate* in that quarter. Adieu, my dear and only sister.”

The following is the bridegroom's letter before his wedding, dated at Edinburgh, 12th October 1840:—

“*The day is fixed at present for the 20th to-morrow week. A pink satin gown has been added to the list of trousseau items to do honor to your choice of colouring. My ideas of taste, and discernment have been so run upon that I verily believe I could set up shop as a man milliner, and I have been frequently obliged to leave the house in self-defence. . . . I gave it as my opinion that her dress on the day should be a morning one, a costume which I certainly intend to adopt in my own case. The ceremony taking place in the country and very privately (only a few neighbours being invited) I believe a blue velvet pelisse (very dark, however) with a devant of white satin is chosen. I bargained for a very pretty cap to be worn on the occasion. . . . We propose returning to Orchill on Thursday and on Friday shall go to Gask . . . where I shall be joined by my best man little George Stewart, my political enemy, but in other respects one of my sincerest of friends. I have done nothing to the house except denuding some of the rooms to fit up her dressing-room. . . . I have had Henny's pony sent over to Gask and I should not much wonder if we were to jog on in that small way during the winter.*”

This marriage, which lasted for seven years, till the death of the laird, was happy; but no children came to fill the big house of Gask. Many of the family now

living remember Henrietta Blair Oliphant in later years, her vivacious dark eyes and bright complexion even in old age giving some idea of her youthful beauty, which was of the plump and rosy kind. The Scots tongue too remained a strongly marked characteristic. One gracious act which James and Henrietta did was to recall Lady Nairne to the home of her youth. They begged her to cease the weary continental wanderings and come to end her days among the glades of Gask. She was at first unwilling, and wrote to Rachel Oliphant (at St Leonards) from Pau, 1st January 1841:—

“I have all but given up letter writing as I think you know, my dear R., but I cannot let the first day of this New Year pass away without conveying to you the earnest good wishes of our little party. . . . This morning Mr Medicote called here and rather awakened our anxiety about you all by mentioning a contagious disorder which he heard from his brother has prevailed some time in the neighbourhood of Hastings. . . . I trust the young Armstrongs come on well, sorry am I that poor Henry continues so dark,—I know nothing now of the society in and about Durham. I hope it is improved and that by some means seen or unseen he may yet be awakened. Our own excepted, I was never more deeply interested than in the Spearman family. I had a very satisfactory letter from James since his marriage,—his having a companion so much to his taste is quite a relief to my mind. He kindly invited me to reside with him but I think I quite proved to him that had I been equal to the journey I should have been found a load instead of an acquisition,—however the affectionate manner in which he made the proposal was not lost on me.”

James Oliphant and his young wife went to Paris early in 1843, and from thence brought Lady Nairne home, where they arrived on 7th August. Lady Nairne writes<sup>1</sup> to Rachel Oliphant from Gask, 21st September 1843:—

“I know how you must have sympathised with me on my return to this sweet place after so long and to me so eventful an interval. My own wish I confess

<sup>1</sup> Part of this letter is given in the Memoir of Baroness Nairne, p. 112.

was decidedly never to see Scotland again, but various circumstances—and above all dear James' kind persuasions turned the balance, and weak as I was, and am, strength was afforded, which makes me hope I am in the path of duty, tho I do not see clearly what use I am of in this world,—however since I am still left, there must be both wisdom and love in the dispensation,—more *discipline* is perhaps one reason and to me there is not a little in the endless recollections and associations that crowd upon me at every step, as well as those awakened on the arrival of various articles from my once too much beloved Home,—all this is true weaning, and I ought to be thankful for it. In the case of other mourners it has always seemed to me that when there is a good hope thro grace for departed friends, there is something selfish in our grief and that we think more of ourselves than of them,

“‘No ill can reach them now, they rest above,  
Safe in the bosom of redeeming love,’

and in this there is solid consolation, though it does not remove the rod which is appointed for good.

“For some weeks after my arrival I kept upstairs,—now can walk a little, very little way and have several times had an airing, dear Henrietta driving a nice pony, and I do not suffer much when the Roman Road is avoided, but as yet the headache follows it. I have been at Church in the afternoon but after next Sunday there will be only morning service which is too long for me. . . . James sometimes tantalises me speaking of a Chapel where the old Kirk was—how I should enjoy using my nice Prayer book that you gave me carried down there,—but, if *ever*, that will not be in my time. What do you think of our Scottish Church now? I have read much on both sides and try to be impartial, our differences seem nothing when compared with the evils threatened to the Church of England,—we have need of a few excellent changes of the Bishops,—I think Wilson, Lincoln, Winchester, these were in newspapers and perhaps abridged,—but very satisfactory so far. Our friends at Steuartfield seem well,—a bad cough which Aunt Keith took there with her is quite gone. . . . When M. A. Long does come home I wish you would ask her to write to me with a minute account of her children. I profited by your account

addressed to Henrietta of the dear Kingtons,—My blessings to them all, and kind remembrances to Mr Kington and all his family. Henrietta and James join and I ever am my dear R. your affectionate but stupid old Aunt,

“C. NAIRNE.”

Again, 25th November, she writes to the same:—

“I almost live in my rooms and go down to the Drawing-room only once about 8 in the evening, when James generally reads to Henrietta and me till prayers. . . . We have been much interested in dear Mr Kington and trust he continues to recover,—what a comfort that he is built upon the right foundation. I hope Miss Kington’s is not a serious illness and that the good old lady suffers less. Do first time you write to the Armstrongs say something very kind from me. . . . I loved their Mother very much and saw a great deal of her when quite a girl, and different as our ages were, she made quite a companion of me. Once upon a time she and I were left at Thornley (when something urgent obliged both Mr and Mrs Spearman to be absent) to take charge of the children, and her conduct towards them was very engaging. I have lately been fully employed in arranging old papers sent me from our once dear Cottage,—where the old letters and papers of grand and great grand fathers and Mothers, uncles aunts and cousins, had been deposited. There are letters more than a hundred years old which express hopes and anxieties such as our own, which has a striking effect, and makes life seem indeed a dream. I have more modern letters, which once brought gladness,—now heaviness of heart, and must be destroyed, there being no one after me to whom they can have the same interest. There is a letter from you, my dear Rachel, when you were a child, and it says ‘Do you know, Aunt, I want to have a regular correspondence with you’ and this letter appeared while I was longing to hear from you,—a few weeks ago—yes, it is wonderful how our souls do cleave to the dust,—much weaning is needed. . . . I find very few indeed of the people here who have any knowledge of me except by name, but I like to hear of them from Henrietta, as I remember many of their grand-fathers and Mothers. Everything leads me back to early youth and all that has passed between my first and last

abode at Gask seems as a mixed and wonderful dream—yet mercy and Truth have followed me all the days of my life, and will to the end. God bless you, my dear Rachel."

"Dec. 13th 1844.

"I am not sure if you knew Nelly Oliphant<sup>1</sup> who died lately, her Niece Grace Graeme<sup>2</sup> says happily well prepared—she has left her furniture to Grace and I am told £300, most of her money left to Condie about £6000,—it seems she had a talent for accumulating. Mrs Graeme<sup>3</sup> recovers slowly, dear Henrietta has seen her twice, George is an anxious attentive husband. I grieve to learn from you that young Laurence is to be removed from Mr Mayo's school. Mr Kington seldom writes and never has mentioned this circumstance. I trust it will be over-ruled for good, but I feel as if the happy would be in danger of being sacrificed to this suffering scene.

"We are busy every evening with Luther and find it extremely interesting especially since his almost inspired character has been developed. If we had him now our Scottish Church would not wear the Romish aspect that it does,—not to mention the English. . . . I am thankful to say I still find dear Gask a Mansion of Peace."

She writes on 19th February to Rachel Oliphant again, sending £20 for a charity at Bristol and £20 "to the interesting Armstrongs."

"The £40 will be in your name at your Bankers in London. The Post waits for this so I have only time to say yours ever very aff. C. N.

"You see I am alive this 19 Feb., but weak as water."

Supported by the solace of the religious conviction that never had wavered all through her long life, she awaited the end.

"This life is indeed a dream. It will be over soon," she said. She lived through the summer of 1845. Some pleasures remained, the simple joys of the fresh air and

<sup>1</sup> Helen Oliphant, daughter of "Symon," Laurence Oliphant, seventh Laird of Condie.

<sup>2</sup> Grace Graeme, born 1794, died 1854, daughter of the ninth Laird of Inchbrakie. "The Fair Maid of Craig Rossie."

<sup>3</sup> Marianne Drummond, daughter of Lord Strathallan, married, 1842, to George Graeme, the tenth Laird of Inchbrakie.

lovely surroundings, hill and hollow, leafage and stream, bringing the old comfort which had been hers in childhood. A great source of interest was the building of the little Episcopal chapel on the site of the old kirk, removed forty years before. The expense of the building was borne jointly by herself and her nephew James, the laird. All her life she had remained attached to the Episcopalian form, and the last act of her life was to ratify and confirm that attachment. She has left a memorial of it in the little chapel,—her last interest on earth. But her large generous sympathies went out to the outcast ministers of the Church of Scotland, who, in the closing years of her life, made real sacrifices to maintain their principles. All that was fine in the Disruption movement appealed to her fine nature. Her charities were never-ending, and her wish to give much exceeded her means of giving. She sent some of her plate to be turned into money to help the Sustentation Fund of the new Free Church. To her great-niece, Mrs Barbour, she wrote about

“the old forks, spoons, etc., which I shall now no more require. Take them to any silversmith who will give the value for old silver. It will be just as well if they are melted, as they have the crest. Of course you will not say where they come from.”

On 25th October, in her wheel chair, she made her last journey through the grounds of Gask, and with James Oliphant halted at the door of the chapel.<sup>1</sup> She asked James if he had arranged for the consecration. In reply he quoted the lines:—

“Jesus, wher'er Thy people meet,  
There they behold Thy mercy-seat;  
Wher'er they seek Thee Thou art found  
And every place is hallowed ground.”

She said “Amen,” and added: “The place will soon be

<sup>1</sup> The chapel was finally opened 24th March 1846. The foundation stone had been laid 23rd April 1845. Occasional services have been held at intervals in the chapel ever since. It was used only once for a wedding, that of James Maxtone Graham and Margaret Ethel Blair Oliphant, the present writer, on 5th September 1893.

ready for me." Then for the last time she looked upon the glades and shadows of Gask and the broken walls of the old house, as she was wheeled back to the new. The next day she died.<sup>1</sup> There had been no death at Gask since that of little Harriet, the young sister whom James had wheeled in her chair to look at the moss roses a few hours before the end, twenty-three years before. To Carolina Nairne the end came with the same tranquillity.

The story of her life is a story of consistent effort towards all things that are pure. Yet her nature was a dual nature—on the one side the mind was that of a woman cast in a deeply religious but narrow mould, which though great in generous charities of act and judgment, and wide in sympathies, spent itself in furthering, by every gentle and unobtrusive method possible, the mild evangelical aims of those whose "views" coincided with her own. Her other personality, that of the God-gifted poetess singing from the depth of uncontrollable inspiration, is what is left to her country and her race. Strongest in her youth and prime, this greater personality faded gradually away under the weight of her years and her griefs. But in both lives there never was a time when she was not most steadfast to the light, and most true to her trust. All the enthusiasms, the proud loyalties, the young passionate sympathies that once lit her soul, centred at last in a complete holiness of faith.

No estimate of her literary work is needed now. She wrote little, and the best of what she wrote takes a place in the foremost rank of letters, among the achievements that for ever must remain beautiful, new, and appealing. Her voice has survived the fluctuations of taste and feeling in the public mind for a hundred years, and has never suffered eclipse. For a hundred years the voices of her country people have sung "The Land o' the Leal" and "Caller Herrin'." Generations yet to come will sing them still. They belong to the heart of humanity.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Nairne was buried in the Chapel at Gask. A cross was raised to her memory in the grounds by her grand-nephew, the eleventh Laird of Gask.

## CHAPTER XVII

### “THE END OF AN AULD SANG”

THE tenth Laird of Gask, head of the male line of the descendants of William Oliphant of Newton, and of unbroken male descent from the first Lord Oliphant, was fated to die without children. He outlived Lady Nairne only two years, but was not fortunate, like her, in ending his days in the place most beloved. Though only forty-four, his health had for some time been an anxiety to himself and his friends. In the autumn of 1847,<sup>1</sup> he and his wife left Gask to try the effect of the milder climate of Leamington. On 22nd November he wrote to Rachel:—

“We have a nice small lodging in this crescent (8, Lansdown Crescent) which is out of the bustle of the town and almost claims credit of being in the country from its retiring locale within half a minutes walk of the private allies and promenades which the environs of this sweet place afford. The effect that this change of air has had upon me is rather weakening than otherwise. . . . I do not know whether Doctor Jephson<sup>2</sup> has over-rated his estimate of my ailments, but I must confess that his almost inattention by delaying his visits, and the passing thought that he bestows upon my case when I go to his house for the consultations makes me believe that they are more of a trivial nature than I was led to suppose. . . . it seems to me as if he did not treat the case *con amore*.”

<sup>1</sup> In September his Aunt Margaret, Mrs Keith of Ravelstone, died at Clevedon in Somersetshire, and was buried in the Kington vault at Wraxall. She was the last survivor of the seven children of the “young Jacobite laird” and his wife, Margaret Robertson of Strowan.

<sup>2</sup> A medical man, whose advice was much sought at the time by various Perthshire lairds.



Another letter to Rachel, written from Leamington on 3rd December 1847, was probably the last he ever wrote. He never "cleared the distance" to Scotland.

"LEAMINGTON, 8 LANSDOWN CREST.,  
"3rd Dec. '47.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—Your very kind offer of a welcome at the Grove has arrived rather late for our taking advantage of it, since my last visit to Dr J. was an index which we looked for as sanctioning our journey Northward in the course of next week (D.V.). We shall not be sorry to wend our steps Gaskward, for I do not think this place agrees with me, though I think I have derived benefit from the Dr.'s advice—but neither the climate nor the waters have the least credit for bringing about the change—I look forward to a good hard frost as a greater panacea than aught else for my complete restoration to health and strength, if God so wills it. We shall therefore D.V. bid adieu to these parts next week and return with renewed pleasure to *our* peaceful and happy home. I should have liked to have seen the Boys<sup>1</sup>—had that been possible—but must look forward to their paying us a visit at Gask, if permitted so to do in the Summer vacation—a more propitious season for visiting than the present one.

"This is a sad muddy day w<sup>h</sup> does not at all suit my nervous system. I shall be thankful to be off again from the place—they say they can clear the distance to Edinburgh in one day. Farewell, my dear R., Y<sup>r</sup> affect<sup>ate</sup> brother,  
JA. BLAIR OLIPHANT."

The end came suddenly on 7th December. The following letter from his brother-in-law, Thomas Kington, to Rachel gives all the particulars now known:—

"LEAMINGTON, Decr. 12th '47.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—In accordance with the arrangement made with Mrs T. I left Bristol for this place at 4 last evening and arrived at 8—on coming to this hotel I found all the sad circumstances well known, and that this dispensation had created much sympathy. After hearing that Mrs O. had left on Thursday for Gask with Mr Oct<sup>s</sup> Winston (the Author) and that the remains

<sup>1</sup> His nephews the Kingtons.

of your poor Brother were sent away on Friday, I went to the scene of the sad event and there learnt all the circumstances which are briefly as follows—The dear deceased had fully made up his mind to start on Wednesday for Scotland, and had been occupied in seeing his friends and paying bills all the morning, about 4 o'clock he came in and was in the drawing room with Mrs O. and the Murrays who were paying a visit: He suddenly left the room, and after the visitors had departed Mrs O. called for him *in vain*—The butler at length found him, evidently under the influence of a fit, and not able to articulate—assistance being procured they removed the almost lifeless body to the adjoining room and there he breathed his last about 6 o'clock—just an hour after the first discovery of his situation. He was apparently conscious to the last, but only uttered the word 'Lord' once. He showed by signs that he partly knew what was said. He was asked more than once if he recognized the Lord's hand in such an inscrutable affliction, to which he replied by a sign which could not be mistaken. Poor Mrs Oliphant had been compelled to quit the dreadful scene—Jephson was with him and every endeavour to restore animation was used; but the decree had gone forth, and the result was an apoplectic seizure. The Landlady describes the whole scene as awfully sudden and terrible. I saw Jephson this morning and went to Church with him. He was kind and communicative. He had predicted this result of your brother's illness in Sept<sup>r</sup>, and has no doubt the improper exposure to cold on Tuesday, hastened the catastrophe. At one o'clock the same day he told the D<sup>r</sup> he had not felt so well for months and was in great spirits at the idea of going home. Little did he then think that his spirit was on the eve of its flight to the upper world. Mr Winston told me he had a deeply interesting and searching conversation with your Brother between one and two *on Tuesday*, in which he opened his mind to him in a remarkable manner—his deep humility being especially apparent. Your Brother received the Sacrament at Dr Marsh's Church on Sunday last! I hope to hear Mr Winston this evening—he preached a sermon this morning in reference to this melancholy event text Isai. 26, 'Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, etc.'

“Dr Jephson feels nearly certain that we shall find a will.

“This must be expected from one who *wished* for sudden death, which I hear was the case.”

The body of James Oliphant was brought to Gask, and on 17th December laid within the little chapel before the altar, close to the grave of Lady Nairne, where they sleep amid the dust of scores of their ancestors. Only once more after this was the chapel opened to allow a burial, when, after nearly forty years of widowhood, Henrietta Blair Oliphant was laid beside her husband in 1886.

The short seven years of married life had been, in a sense, happy to James and his wife. Yet according to the letters of Rachel, now his only sister, they lived in a state of thraldom, under the rule of certain servants, who held an undefined position in the family, and this condition of affairs was so marked and so uncomfortable that after one visit in 1844 Rachel never returned to her brother's house. There was certainly no love lost between the sisters-in-law, in whose ardent religious professions was apparently no room for love and toleration. In Rachel's letters she habitually refers to her brother's wife, and the general conditions at Gask, as *this humbling dispensation*. When in the general confusion and consternation caused by the last will of James, Rachel unearthed the fact that her brother, between 1834 and 1837, had formed an attachment in Scotland, and was the father of children, her anxiety, even in the midst of pious horror, was to set on foot an enquiry to prove, if possible, an irregular marriage, and so produce a legitimate heir, to the utter confusion and undoing of her brother's widow. But the matter was hushed up, and except in one letter from Rachel, no record remains of the discovery.

Mr Kington was right in his surmise regarding a will. James Oliphant had left a will of which the remarkable provisions furnished a great deal of trouble to the family and a great deal of work for lawyers. But nothing took

effect in the lifetime of his sister Rachel, who lived till 1864. James provided for his wife, leaving her the life-rent of the house and policies of Gask, and an annuity out of the estate. But to his sister Rachel he left the bulk of the life-rent of the estate. He appointed four trustees to carry out the provisions of his will: Lord Elibank, the Master of Strathallan, George Graeme of Inchbrakie, and William MacDonald of St Martins. The estate of Ardblair, his mother's property, was to be sold to pay off the debt on Gask. Rachel, however, successfully contested his power to alienate Ardblair, and ultimately resigned her right to the rents of Gask and established her claim indisputably to the smaller estate. On her death in 1864 she bequeathed Ardblair to her eldest nephew, Thomas Laurence Kington, but with the proviso that on coming into possession of Gask, it was to pass to the next brother, Philip Kington.

The will was dated 29th August 1846, and destined the estate, after the heirs of his body,

"to the heirs male of the body of the deceased Dr James Oliphant, eldest son of the deceased James Oliphant who was younger son of the deceased James Oliphant of Gask, my great-great-grandfather, the said Dr James Oliphant being cousin-german to the deceased Laurence Oliphant of Gask, my grandfather, and the heir to whom the estate of Gask was destined by my said Grandfather failing the heirs of his own body; whom failing to my heirs male whomsoever, whom all failing to my own heirs whomsoever and their assignees."

This James Oliphant, whose heirs were thus to succeed to Gask in preference to the children of the testator's own sister, was born in 1699.<sup>1</sup> Trace of his heirs had long been lost. James Blair Oliphant, still a young man when he made his will, and with a young wife, had, of course, not relinquished hopes of an heir himself. He had, to an unreasonable degree, the feeling, that died so hard in feudal Scotland, of the inviolability

<sup>1</sup> For the account of his life, see p. 163.

of male succession in a family. His will is evidence of this sentiment carried to an extreme. Doubtless he expected to leave his land to children of his own. He could have had no personal grudge against his sister Margaret Kington's children; the eldest boy, Laurence, was only sixteen when the will was made.

It was, however, made so as to exclude him effectually. No male heirs of his forefather James Oliphant being discoverable, there still remained the barrier of "the heirs male whomsoever." A glance at the family tree shows what a very wide field of enquiry was here opened.

The trustees of James Blair Oliphant are supposed to have made extensive investigations in order to discover whether there existed any person entitled to the character of heir male of the body of the long dead James Oliphant mentioned in the deed of entail, or to the heir male whomsoever of the testator. They instituted a search, extending back to the middle of the sixteenth century, in the public records and private papers of the Gask family, but without result. They also for several years advertised in Scottish, English, Colonial, and American newspapers, calling upon any person having a right to either of these characters to come forward and substantiate their pretensions. Needless to say, various claimants came forward, but none with so strong a claim as the family of the Oliphants of Condie.

Laurence Oliphant, eighth Laird of Condie, believed himself to be the nearest lawful heir male of the testator James Blair Oliphant, and on 11th August 1848 he obtained decree of service in absence before the Sheriff of Perthshire, decerning him nearest and lawful heir-male.

The descent claimed was through William Oliphant, the second son of that Colin, Master of Oliphant, who fell at Flodden. The eldest son of the Master was the third Lord Oliphant. It will be recalled that William Oliphant married Margaret, eldest daughter of Andrew Oliphant of Berriedale. The children of this marriage were five

sons. From Laurence, the eldest, the Oliphants of Gask descend. John was the second son; the name of the third son has never been positively ascertained; the fourth was Colin, and the fifth Andrew.

The son through whom the Oliphants of Condie claim descent was the nameless third son. Endeavours were made to prove that this third son was Alexander, Albany Herald, and that his son was the first Laird of Condie. But through all the years of research and litigation, no evidence could be obtained that the Albany Herald was a son of William Oliphant of Newton. It is, however, certain that William Oliphant was designed "guidsyr" to the first Oliphant of Condie, and this would have been accepted as proof, but for the fact that the Herald had, before 1565, married Janet Oliphant, so that the relationship might have been on the mother's side. Notices of Alexander Oliphant, Albany Herald,<sup>1</sup> are numerous in old deeds. In these he is either styled "Albany Herald," or "occupier of Lord Oliphant's lands in the east end of Lammerkin Wood," or "Albany Herald in Lammerkin." He is also called "Albany Herald and servitor to Lord Oliphant" and "household and domestic servant of Lord Oliphant,"—but he is never, in any document, designed as a son of William Oliphant of Newton, or as a relation to Lord Oliphant. In a deed dated 19th December 1586 William Oliphant of Newton bound himself to infest his son Laurence and heirs male of his body, whom failing his son John and his heirs male in the lands of Newton. Alexander Oliphant, Albany Herald, and Colin Oliphant, his son, are mentioned in this deed, as heritable creditors holding a small annual rent of six bolls three firlots, affecting the lands of Newton, but no reference is made to any relationship between them and William Oliphant and his sons Laurence and John. In other deeds, it is proved that the first Oliphant of Condie, son of Alexander

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Oliphant was also Clerk of the Cocquet and Searcher of the Burgh of Perth. He was appointed to the latter office by James VI., on account of the "good true thankful service to his Majesty and his predecessors."

Oliphant, Albany Herald, was a servitor to Mr William Oliphant of Newton, Advocate. Thus the claim of Condie was from the first defective in one essential point, namely, in establishing the connection of the first Oliphant of Condie with the alleged common ancestor of both families.

Nevertheless, the case dragged on for twenty years. The eighth Laird of Condie, Mr Laurence Oliphant, died in 1862, while it was still in progress, and the case was continued on behalf of his son, the ninth laird, then a minor. How long it might have gone on no one knows; the discovery of a Dutchman's claim to the estate brought it to an end, and the Condie case was dropped from the Debate Roll in 1867.

The death of Rachel Oliphant in 1864 was a turning-point in the affairs of Gask. At about this time, seventeen years after the death of the testator, a nearer claimant than Condie appeared in the field. A Dutchman, Carl Naret Oliphant,<sup>1</sup> residing at Leyden, brought forward undeniable proofs of direct descent in the male line from William Oliphant of Orchardmill, brother of the first Laird of Gask. If his connection stood the test of rigid enquiry there could be no doubt as to his right to the estate. The particulars of his story are as follows:—

Laurence Oliphant, the first Laird of Gask, had a brother William, who married Janet Cuthbert. He was a Burgess of Perth in 1618. He had two sons, Laurence, and William (who died without children, 1666). Laurence married Catherine Murray, and had five children—Laurence, James, William, George, and Margaret. Of these the third son, William, became a merchant in Perth and married Ann Duncan. There were four children of this marriage—Andrew, Grizel, John, and Margaret. John, born in 1677, was Dean of Guild in Dundee. He married Elizabeth Craigie, had several children, and settled in Rotterdam with his

<sup>1</sup> It is said that the celebrated writer and mystic, Laurence Oliphant of the Condie branch of the family, was the means of discovering the Dutch claimant to the Gask estate.

family. In July 1723 John Oliphant and his wife, Elizabeth, with six children, are admitted citizens of Rotterdam for one year. During that year the wife, Elizabeth Craigie, died. James Oliphant, the youngest child of the family, lived in Rotterdam, but removed to Leyden, where he married Catherine de Graaw. James was a perukemaker. In 1775 he is discharged from the guard at Leyden as being sixty years of age. He died 22nd July 1797. James and Catherine de Graaw had two sons—James, a professor of Latin (who died childless, 1815), and Nicholas, born 20th January 1750, who married in 1778 Anna Maria Naret. Their children were Carl Naret Oliphant, born 1783, and a daughter Maria.<sup>1</sup> Nicholas died 25th August 1797, within a month of his father's demise. Carl Naret Oliphant, sixty-seven years later, was the claimant to the Gask estates. He was married and had two children, a daughter, Jeannette Madeline,<sup>2</sup> and a son, Charles Agathon Guillaume. At the time of coming forward as claimants the father was a very old man, being over eighty. The son was married and had a daughter, Wilhelmina Agatha Oliphant,<sup>3</sup> but no legitimate son.

As far as their own descent proved, this Dutch family stood a very good chance of succeeding to the estate of Gask. It is, however, a little difficult to believe that no nearer heirs existed. Whether the trustees had taken trouble to exhaust the male line of the Oliphants of Ure and the Oliphants of Souterton, before admitting the claims of so very distant a branch, may be questioned. Nor do the family papers show why the Oliphants of Leyden waited seventeen years before coming forward to make their claim. At all events, while Thomas Laurence Kington (who on succeeding to the

<sup>1</sup> These two gave testimony that they lived with their grandfather as children, and heard him say that his father had fled from Scotland after the Rebellion in 1715.

<sup>2</sup> Jeannette Madeline Oliphant married Professor Cobet and had three children, one daughter, Mary, being married to H. P. Staal, a lieutenant in the Dutch service.

<sup>3</sup> Wilhelmina Agatha Oliphant married in 1867 Gustaaf August Rodenburg Hellmund, merchant in Curaçoa. She had a son and a daughter.



estate of Ardblair in 1864 assumed the surname Blair-Oliphant) and Mr Oliphant of Condie were still contending as heirs, and while their proceedings were in dependence, Carl Naret Oliphant of Leyden intimated that he believed himself to be heir-male, and so heir of entail, to the late James Blair Oliphant. An examination of his pretensions convinced the lawyers that he had at least a very strong case. Both Dutchmen came over to London to make good their claim. They were kindly received by members of the Gask family, and proved themselves to be upright, honourable, and reasonable men. The father was a very old man, the son also well advanced in years and in bad health. To avoid litigation<sup>1</sup> they resolved to make an arrangement with Thomas Laurence Kington Blair Oliphant, who made up his title to Gask and conveyed it to trustees, the purpose of the trust being to provide to the two Dutchmen the greater part of the income of the estate of Gask receivable during their lives, leaving a small portion to go towards the reduction of the debt on the estate. On the death of the last survivor of the two, the trust was to terminate, and Thomas Laurence Kington Blair Oliphant was to possess the estate.

All this happened in 1865 and the year following. The son Charles paid a visit to Gask, of which only one glimpse is obtainable in the family papers, in an unsigned letter written in a strange hand:—

“Colonel Hunter is here bringing us a deal of news from Gask. The Dutchman is living with Mrs Oliphant, has given her new seats in the church, and wishes to do everything that Mrs Oliphant would have done,—Mr Peacock<sup>2</sup> with him. He is the landlord, visiting all the tenants in his carriage. Mrs Oliphant is so delighted with her guest, quite excited. Mind, this is no gossip, Colonel Hunter says, for he asked Mrs Oliphant if he was to repeat it, and she said ‘Certainly.’ Mrs Oliphant seems to be entirely superseded. The Dutchman only

<sup>1</sup> T. L. K. Oliphant's negotiations with the Dutchmen cost him £2000.

<sup>2</sup> Messrs Skene & Peacock, W.S. were the lawyers in Edinburgh employed in the Dutchmen's case.

wishes to know how he can serve Mrs Oliphant and the people on the Estate. He is rich,<sup>1</sup> his daughter married, so they have plenty of money and no cares. She was asked to say what she wished, so she named Gates, so as to keep strangers out of the Polissy and mill-dam, which he and Peacock went to look at. She should not mind the expense, only must see that anything he did, did not entail borrowing on his succeeding. All the Tenants are so pleased with him and his liberality and he takes on as their landlord and means to come back next year to see them all. Mrs Oliphant was dressed up and radiant with pleasure."

The truth was that Henrietta Oliphant had no attachment to the Kington family at this time. Their cause was zealously but indiscreetly championed by her sister-in-law, Rachel, for whom she had an active dislike. When an heir appeared, though so remote a connection, she was ready to welcome him as one who would succeed under the will of her revered husband, and enable the terms of that will to be strictly carried out. The negotiations which ended in her husband's nephew succeeding as eleventh Laird of Gask must have been distasteful to her. She would have preferred the line of the Dutchmen.

Neither of the Oliphants of Leyden had any wish to live at Gask, where the house, indeed, was not available, for the widow, Mrs Oliphant, was in occupation, and had the liferent. They professed themselves satisfied with the terms that gave them the rents, and no doubt the bargain might have been satisfactory to them both. Fortune, however, was not on their side. A year after the contract was made, in September 1867, the old man, Carl Naret Oliphant, died. In less than a year after, his son followed him to the grave.

The story of the Dutch Oliphants is too strange and romantic for fiction; such unexpected twists of fortune belong rather to actual life. In humble circumstances, their immediate ancestor being a wig-maker in the city of Leyden, the family seemed unlikely ever to be lifted

<sup>1</sup> A mistaken idea.

from the level of the commonplace. In a remote past, of which they sometimes spoke, was a tradition of Scottish ancestry. But the family had been away from Scotland for a hundred and forty years. In a hundred and forty years the tradition of a strain of blood would grow very confused indeed, when interests, trades, speech, and marriages had for generations been Dutch. Old Carl Naret Oliphant lived his humble and obscure life nearly to its end before the prospect suddenly opened before him of wealth in a strange land. It must have seemed like a dream, this unexpected lifting of his family out of the simple conditions of Dutch tradesmen into inheritors of ancient lands far away. The dream came true. For one year he lived in affluence as the real possessor of Gask; for a year longer his son succeeded. Then death came, and the reign of the Dutch Oliphants was at an end.

When the idea was first suggested to the old man to trace his connection with the Scottish Oliphants is not now known. It must certainly have taken a long time to get together all the irrefutable written evidence of his own descent from the brother of the first Laird of Gask, which was produced when he made his claim. But besides proving his descent, he would have to extinguish a series of elder brothers' families in successive generations. William, the merchant in Perth, for instance, was only a *third* son, and in the next generation another ancestor, John, born 1677, was a *second* son. James Oliphant, Carl Naret's own grandfather, was the youngest of *six* children. Strange indeed was the combination of circumstances that placed his name at the head of the ancient family. The whole story is strange and not to be easily understood. A question arises as to the Dutchman's remarkable abandonment of his ultimate right to dispose of the estate of Gask as he pleased. Why did he and his son agree to compound with Thomas Laurence Kington Blair Oliphant,<sup>1</sup> giving

<sup>1</sup> "Blair" was dropped from his surname in 1867 when the estate of Ardblair was passed on to his brother Philip Kington, who then assumed the surname Blair Oliphant.

up all rights and interest in the property after their own deaths, thus disinheriting any descendants they had or might have? Why did both sign away their inheritance, leaving widows and a child almost in penury?<sup>1</sup> There is no rational explanation of all this, except in the suspicion that theirs was not an unchallengeable right, that due search had not been made to exhaust all possible lines with prior claims, and that the two men made the best bargain they could with a claim that might be over-set if efforts were made to unearth a nearer heir. The nearer heir, however, has never been found, and on the death of Charles Agathon Guillaume Oliphant, the nephew of the testator, after twenty years of litigation, took possession of the estate, which thus for the first time descended through the female line.

While in the Law Courts the fight went on, and arguments and contentions ebbed and flowed through the long years of interminable proceedings, of endless research, nothing could touch or break in upon the dignity and peace of the house of Gask, where the widow of the last laird reigned alone for forty years. At his death, the long dark years closed in upon the house and upon the young life that would not stir from the shadow. With drawn blinds, like a face without eyes and without expression, the cold house showed a faint stir of life, dim signs of human hopes and energies still alight in the gloom, as the long widowhood of Henrietta wrote its history on the glades of Gask. She was only twenty-eight when the death of her husband left her desolate, with the burdensome liferent of a home much too large for her, and no experience of life to teach her how to develop the best of her inheritance. It would have seemed most natural and most happy for her to leave Gask and to have returned to her own old home. Some years after her widowhood she succeeded to the Orchill estate, as sole heir of her mother, upon the death of her father, Gillespie Graeme, who had liferented it. But her temperament was not one that could content itself

<sup>1</sup> T. L. K. Oliphant gave £1000 in support of the two Dutch widows.

with a memory, and turn into other paths. She sold the estate of Orchill<sup>1</sup> in 1865, and lived on at Gask in the loneliness and silence. She would not close the chapter, and although she lived on for many a year, she never did close it. Through youth and middle age, till old age and death overtook her, she lived in the awed silence of a house of mourning. The small personal belongings of her husband, scattered about the house, were left just as he had used them when he left Gask for the last time. Some members of the present generation of the family well remember, as children, the awed feeling of the first approach to the house with the closed blinds, then of entering the cold hall, where Uncle James's sticks, whips, and hats still kept a ghostly place. No one was allowed upstairs, or indeed into any room but the drawing-room and dining-room. Well remembered, too, is her kindly welcome, in the good Scots tongue that her husband had pronounced no defect, her round, rosy, comely face all smiles for the young people, the grandchildren of James's sister, Margaret Kington. Tea would be set in the dining-room, a ceremonious meal. Afterwards all moved to the drawing-room, and then came the crowning joy of the visit; the blinds would be drawn up—the little figure stands out clearly in remembrance performing this unusual rite—and the box of Jacobite relics would be brought out, and one by one the dear faded memorials of Prince Charlie handled with love and reverence—his bonnet,<sup>2</sup> his brogues,<sup>3</sup> the lock of his long fair hair,<sup>4</sup> his white cockade,<sup>5</sup> the spurs<sup>6</sup> he exchanged with the Auld Laird, the

<sup>1</sup> Orchill had been in the hands of the Graeme family since 1560.

<sup>2</sup> A blue lowland bonnet with a small red tuft given by the Prince to Sir Stewart Thripland, who medically attended him.

<sup>3</sup> The pair the Prince discarded in Kingsburgh's house. Kingsburgh gave them to Flora MacDonald, who gave them to James Moray of Abercairny, who in turn gave them to Laurence Oliphant of Gask.

<sup>4</sup> Given to Marjory Robertson of Strowan the day it was cut by John Stewart, the Prince's attendant.

<sup>5</sup> Embroidered in silver. A paper is attached bearing the words "Wore by the King 1745."

<sup>6</sup> A pair of steel-plated spurs worn by the King when Prince Regent at Perth, September 1745, then given to Gask. Gask in exchange gave a pair of silver spurs.

drawing<sup>1</sup> he made as a child. After they were all<sup>2</sup> put away again, Aunt Henrietta would move to the old grand piano and sing; it was generally the same song, "*Tak ye're auld cloak about ye.*" Then sometimes she would be persuaded to take the keys of the chapel, and we sat in the cool twilight there while she played the organ and sang the hymns she loved in a high thin voice. The little organ was the chief solace of her lonely days, and many hours she spent in company with her dead, going back to the house when the dusk fell, through the deep thickets and overhung glades.

Unforgotten, too, is the figure of Aunt Henrietta, irresistibly suggestive of Queen Victoria in her little black bonnet and white strings, well known in all the countryside, as she drove her low pony carriage with the brown ponies Romeo and Juliet, using a whip with a parasol affixed. On Sundays this equipage carried her to the Free Church at the village of Aberuthven—the one break in a day kept with dismal strictness. Once, it is said, the front door bell rang on a Sunday afternoon. The agitated butler hurried to the door and found an Orchill relative, who had walked many miles in order to call upon his cousin. The butler asked for his card, and left him standing on the doorstep. In a short time he returned, and handing the visitor back his card remarked: "The lady doesna know ye, and receives no one on the Sawbath."

This butler was also the coachman and general factotum. His reign was autocratic. "Ye canna to Perth to-day, for I'm awa' masel," was a frequent remark, and he was overheard to reply to an order for the carriage, "Look up at the clouds and ask yersel' is this a day for pleasurin'?"

<sup>1</sup> "Head drawn by the King when a boy, given by Mr Edgar, the late King's Secretary, to John Edgar, Esq., of Rathwell, when at Rome, and sent by him to Gask to Mr Oliphant the 14th July 1787."

<sup>2</sup> There were many other relics, including the table at which the Prince breakfasted on 11th September 1745. All were bequeathed by the last Laird of Gask to the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh, who generously refused the bequest, and the relics remain in the family and are now at Ardblair.

As time went on she was almost completely dominated by her servants, and, submitting more and more to the thralldom begun in earlier days, lived in that fatal subjection till the very end, when she died alone in their hands. In old age her nature and affections expanded, but it was too late to struggle for freedom.

She never had a child, or any keen joy in life, except the memory of her seven years of married happiness, and even these had been tempered with the growing sense of disappointment as time went by and no child came. Her pleasures and interests circled in the narrowest boundaries that ever enclosed a human soul. Her kindness was unfailing, her charities generous, her nature simple and frank, but beyond constituting herself a perpetual adorer at the shrine of the memory of James, she could not rise to form anything that could be called a life for herself. Gask was the haunt of memories. She made others see it in that light, and the shadow of her forty years of loneliness will never be lifted in thought from the associations of the place.

In the woods and grounds under her sway nothing was touched, no branch pruned, no undergrowth thinned. To young eyes it offered the fascination of a tangled forest, rich in mysterious charm. The dark shadows of the place, the wild sweet disorder, the drifts of sunshine piercing the branches of yew and holly, and thrown across arch and glade, the sense of mystery round the ruins of the old house and the old graves clustered about the little chapel,—all who remember the charm of these, keep it in a shrine of remembrance and wistful regret. There have been improvements since, necessary no doubt; but nothing in the ordered beauty of Gask grounds, as seen to-day, displaces in the memory the look of the neglected groves and recesses, the deep secret shadows of brake and pathway, the profound sense of sorrow and of peace.

These calm days of Gask lasted until the gentle presence of Henrietta Blair Oliphant vanished. In the most lonely circumstances she looked her last on the

world. Young relatives, in pity and distress at the utter loneliness of her prospects for that winter and her obviously failing health, offered to remain at Gask with her to relieve the long dull months. Very wistfully she admitted that the proposal was pleasant, but after a delay, asked for, no doubt, to give her time to consult her masters in the household, she sorrowfully said it was not possible. A month before her death she stayed for a week at Cultoquhey—an unwonted gaiety in her sober life—taking with her a favourite great-niece, Lilian Blair Oliphant. She was happy and in good spirits, but not well in health. The end came suddenly from heart failure on 9th December 1886.

All who knew Gask felt that a chapter had closed in her death. She belonged to the old type of Scotswomen now fast disappearing, never to revive. Beyond her own home she was not known, but in many a poor cottage at Gask her help, her kindly interest and sympathy, were deeply missed. She was laid beside her husband within the little chapel at Gask,—the last to be buried inside the walls.

Some familiar figures rise to the memory belonging to Gask. Chief among these is that of Mr Martin, for years the minister of Gask. He succeeded Mr Young, who, as has been recorded, was a close friend of the Oliphants, a chosen confidant not easily replaced. Gask was again particularly fortunate in the choice of a minister. Mr Martin was the ideal of a parish priest,—one to whom the people would carry their joys and adversities, and on whose judgment they would rely. His death in 1907 left a great blank. His kindly presence and warm interest in the rising generation of Oliphants will always be gratefully remembered.

William Keir, the head-keeper, was a personage who also will be held in kindest remembrance by those who knew him. Members of the present generation of the family he faithfully served during a long life, recall with pleasure the happy hours spent in his home at the Lodge, where his daughter, Jessie, who kept his house,



was always ready to teach the fascinating art of tying salmon flies. Happy and exciting days on the river with Keir keep a special niche in recollections of Gask. Many a young keeper in Perthshire owes success in life to his excellent training. His keenness for sport lasted all his life, but besides being a noted sportsman, he had a delightful and genial personality, a kindly open-heartedness to which no one appealed in vain. To the young people of the family, Gask never seemed quite the same after Keir died.

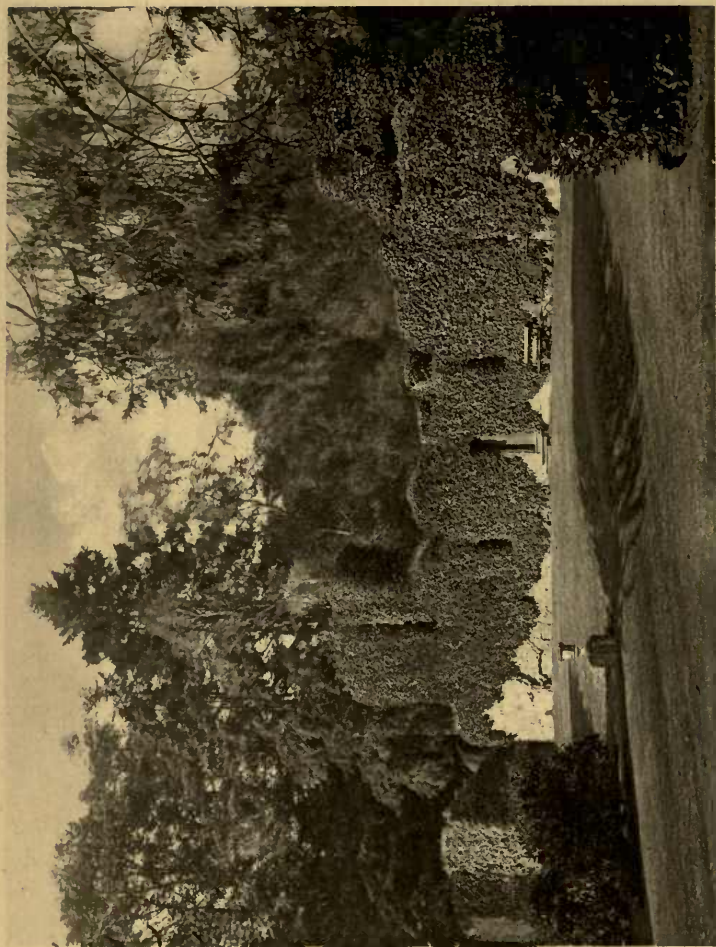
There remains only to be told the record of the eleventh and last Laird of Gask, Thomas Laurence Kington Oliphant, the nephew of the tenth laird.

It has been shown that his life did not start prosperously. Brought up in the natural supposition that he was to be his uncle's heir, he was sixteen when the blow fell, and Uncle James's will made plain that only by a highly unlikely combination of circumstances could the boy inherit Gask. All his youth, all his young manhood was passed under the galling anxieties of litigation. Those who know what twenty years of litigation means, in wear of spirits and temper, can judge if these early years were happy. After leaving Cheam, he went to Eton, and in 1850, at the age of eighteen, matriculated at Balliol College, Oxford. He took his B.A. degree in 1854, and his M.A. degree in 1858, and in the same year became a barrister-at-law of the Inner Temple. In that profession, however, he never made progress. The bent of his mind was towards the study of history and philology. His first book, the *Life of Frederick II., Emperor of the Romans*, was published in 1862. This was followed in 1870 by a volume of which the materials were collected from the Gask charter chest, *The Jacobite Lairds of Gask*. In 1873 was published his best work, *The Sources of Standard English*. In 1875 he produced a volume of essays, *The Duke and the Scholar*. He never left his study of philology, but while engaged on historical work, always continued to collect materials for his books, Old

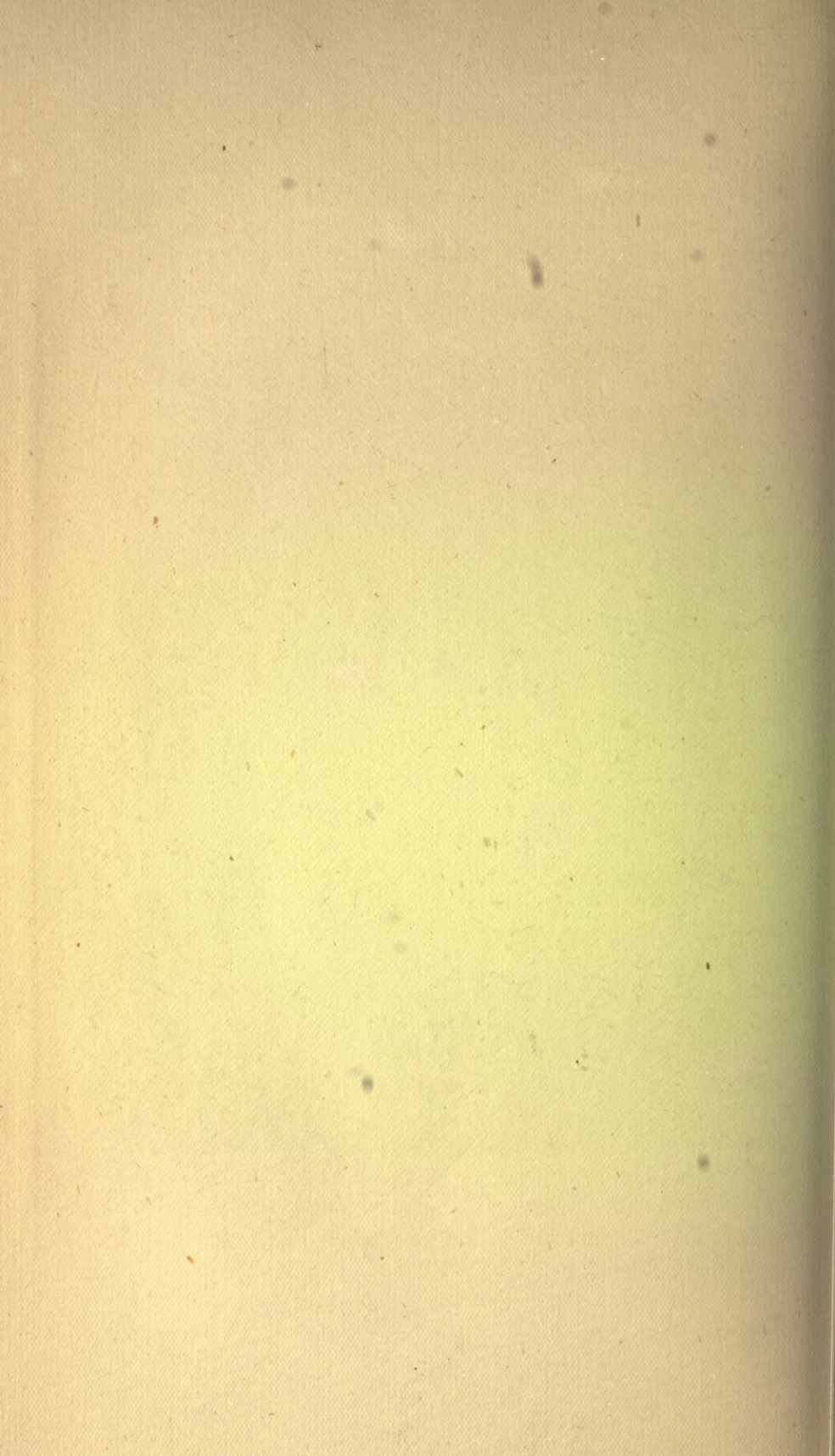
and Middle English and The New English, both of which have won an acknowledged position in the field of philology.

His literary interests enabled him to form a life for himself. In 1857 he married Frances Dorothy Jebb, and his choice fell on one who, from the moment of marriage, devoted every fibre of herself and her energies to his service. But here again life assumed an arid aspect. He desired children, and no children were born to him. He had no real home, though he built himself a large villa at Wimbledon; for the shadow of Gask was over all his plans. It seemed scarcely worth while to settle anywhere. Yet even if he got Gask, his uncle's widow was there for her life. The years dragged on, and the Condie case was about to be settled at last. Then the Dutchmen came forward. Again his vision of possession vanished. The terms he made with the Dutch Oliphants was to endure for their lifetime; the younger of them might have lived twenty years. As a matter of fact both men died in a year. Without unkindness, it may be said that these demises formed the only stroke of fortune ever vouchsafed to Thomas Laurence. He was now, in 1867, really the owner of Gask; under the terms of his aunt's will he passed on the estate of Ardblair to his younger brother, Philip, and again found himself waiting another twenty years for his home. Experiencing a good deal of inconvenience in having no house on the estate, where his duty often obliged him to be, and his aunt never extending to him the hospitality of the house of Gask, he built himself, in 1878, a good-sized villa, a mile distant from Gask House, now known as Charlesfield Lodge. It is not an attractive piece of architecture, but the windows command a fine view of the Ochils and Strathearn. Here he took up his abode, and lived until the death of his uncle's widow in 1886, when he moved with his wife to Gask House, and spent there the last fifteen years of both their lives.

His literary labours continued to the end. The last



*Remains of the Old House of Gook.*



ten years of his life were devoted to a lengthy work containing much religious controversy, entitled *Rome and Reform*. The final chapter was written just before his last illness began. It was published after his death.

Though in the closing fifteen years of life the last laird attained his wishes, and was established in full and undisputed possession of his forefathers' lands, the fulfilment came too late to transform life. The early years had been anxious and dreary, and he did not possess either the social charm which distinguished his brothers and sister, their vivid love of music and of sport, or the deeper interests of their growing families. He did not readily form friendships or attract the minds of those who attracted him. He was a looker-on at the game of life, where he would fain have played a part. He gave freely what he had; his charities were wide and unostentatious to a degree; an appeal to his generosity was seldom made in vain.

A welcome was always ready at Gask House for the children of his brothers and sister, and many of these will carry through life recollections of happy days there; of the joys of wood and river, and the simple homely life of the house, lighted by the constant kindness of "Aunt Fanny," the laird's wife, who, in spite of very bad health, kept an unflinching interest in all that concerned his relations. Her taste for writing long letters every day made her a centre in the family. She was the first of all the wives of the eleven Lairds of Gask who was not of Scottish race. No one had ever chosen an English wife before. The circumstance certainly made no difference to the endless hospitalities of Gask. The laird was the only one of Margaret Kington's family who attained old age. His brother, Philip Blair Oliphant, died first of the group, in 1892, Caroline Fyffe died in 1897, and William Kington in 1898. All three were aged fifty-nine. The laird himself lived to be seventy.

It was a hundred and ten years since any Laird of Gask had died in his home there, and history was again

to repeat itself. The last illness of the eleventh laird began at Gask, but he got rather better and insisted on going south to pay visits; he caught cold on the journey and died at Bournemouth 8th July 1902. His body was carried back to Scotland and lies in the little graveyard near the chapel at Gask, and there his broken-hearted wife was soon laid beside him. She only survived him four months, dying at Mortimer Cottage 11th November 1902, tended to the last by the devoted love and care of the little group of Graeme cousins, who have kept intact the ancient traditions of loyalty and steadfast friendship between the houses of Gask and Inchbrakie.

As to the ultimate destination of the estate the childless last Laird of Gask had always kept silence. His nearest and dearest knew nothing of his intentions. So much had been sacrificed, so many anxious thoughts expended in the winning of it, it had so overpowered all other interests in life, that the possession might have seemed something to be infinitely valued, a trust to be handed down intact to the next heir, as a treasure almost wrested from fate. He spent all the last years of his life and all his available means in improving the estate. Forty years of neglect had left a great deal to be done in the grounds. In planning alterations, in cutting and pruning so as to reveal a view here, or the opening of a glade there, he found endless occupation and the most settled happiness his life had known. To all appearance he loved the place and valued its associations. But over his mind the old bitterness of his uncle's injustice held sway to the very last. In the depths of a reserve that no one ever penetrated, the wry twist given to life at its outset could never be quite set straight, and in the dim labyrinth of thoughts never communicated, he doubtless justified himself for an action that bitterly wronged his brother's son<sup>1</sup>—as he himself had been wronged. He made himself the last Laird of Gask, and decreed that the property was to be sold at his death. The bare fact is

<sup>1</sup> Philip Laurence Blair Oliphant, of Ardblair, only son of Philip, the brother of the eleventh Laird of Gask.

best so recorded and so left undiscussed, for no one will ever fully understand for what reason the possessor of the ancient heritage, with one stroke of his pen, brought to an end the line of Oliphant owners, after their long reign of nearly six hundred years.

## EPILOGUE

THE last word is the most difficult to write, for it brings the story of loss and sorrow, the "end of an auld sang" that has made music through long generations. It is hard to record that the lands of Gask have passed away, and that the voices and footsteps of the ancient race shall sound there no more. Yet to the children of Gask, exiled and dispossessed, in the old sense to which we cling, there falls a measure of human comfort; the last thrill of possessive pride, not only in the old glories of field and foray, not only in the strain of an undying song, but in the realisation of a living present, linked with a noble past that is unalterably ours,—an inheritance that cannot be taken away by any stroke of fate.

The crumbling walls of the old house, standing in the green silence, seems the appropriate dwelling for last thoughts. Everything now is of the past,—all the dear dim memories, all the stories of ancient energies, of strenuous life, lived out here on this spot of ground, all the wild high hopes, the slow fulfilments, the dewy eagerness of youth, the divine patience of old age. The birch and the alder are growing where the low drawing-room sheltered Prince Charlie; moss and lichen have crept, inch by inch, over the stones with their unspoken story, over the hearth where gathered, at a thousand twilights, so many leal hearts in council. The doors that opened and closed on a myriad scenes of life and death have long since dropped from their hinges, and every wandering wind blows through the empty opening of door and lattice, as if all secrets were given up, all hope abandoned. So the winds of time, blowing hither and thither, visit as they will the old fading story of Gask.



Those of the race and the name cannot close the door upon these old griefs and joys, these old activities of life and death. Love and memory and reverence gather here, into the little compass of the old rooms, the spirits that once made it home, drawing them across the sunken threshold, uniting them round the deserted hearth, and bidding them look again from the empty windows over the old glint and gleam of river, and shadows of glade and hill. Summoned from a far country, from the activities of unknown spheres, from the gardens of Paradise they have won, from the fields of battle where they yet strive, our thoughts unite them here, in the old shelter they loved—the soldiers, the enthusiasts, the singers, brave women, strong and tender men, groups of little children born here, whose tiny outlook on life never went beyond the span of green grass between the old house and the old graveyard; old wise souls, weighed down with the burden of all they have seen and all they have endured, who have waited here for the last call; passionate young souls alight with brilliant hopes, ready for eager service. As we call them home once more, kindling again the fire, spreading again the table, we listen for their message. It will not be a message all of sadness, though surely they are sad—nor all of pity, though surely they are pitiful. We pour the wine, and standing with them at the table, await the word that shall tell what toast is to be honoured. Surely out of the group of shadowy feasters some voice will utter a name pledged a thousand times in this deserted house, or some hand will raise a goblet with the sober word, "*The Past.*" But this is not the message. Out of the silence a voice of long ago proclaims the toast, instantly honoured with acclaim by all the throng, "*The Days to come.*"

For one thing they know in their immortal wisdom, and one solace they leave with the children of their blood and race. All that has been great in the past stretches down fibres to be entwined in the new characters that are forming, the new sympathies, the new aspirations. These

children of the past know that the book cannot be closed. They know also that the best in all the story of Gask cannot be taken away, that no will can alienate it, no action obscure it, no time cover it. Everything that is noblest is possessed as freely as the beauty of a sunset, or the charm of spring. Not only in memory, not only in wistful retrospection, the traditions of Gask are ours to-day.

## APPENDIX I

LETTER ON DARIEN AFFAIRS. *7th Nov. 1699*

THE following letter bearing on Darien affairs, which is probably an example of the "news letters" commonly sent to Scotland and passed from hand to hand, is among the papers in the Gask charter chest:—

*"LONDON, the 7 Nov. 1699.*

"DEAR CUSIN,—Tho my dependance obliges me to be frequently at Court yet you know I never had capacity nor inclination to medle in anything of Politicks or State affairs, nor do I indeed think it prudence in any man who is not immediately conserved to trouble his head very much about such matters; for the truth is both the politicks and politicians of this age are such abstruse mysterious incomprehensible and dangerous things that no man dare venture either to speak or write truth about them without incurring at the same time the displeasure of his superiors and perhaps the hatred of his best friends and relations. But after all I confess the natural affection which every good man ought to bear towards his native country has moved me at this time to be more curious about your affrican Companys state than ever I was about anything; and the entire confidence that I have in your tenderness for my safety and in your Discretion in respect to everything also has made me (I know not which way after much struggling with myself) resolve upon telling you now as follows, which you can depend upon to be true, if I can believe my own ears and eyes.

"You know very well the noise which this business of your affrican Company has made, not only here but over all Europe and America and what mighty expectations most people had of its success, and how of a sudden the news of your Colony's desertion has made not only the Company but even all Scotsmen the common jest of everybody here; its true many sober men do regrate these misfortunes and are very sorry too that so much of the blame thereof is laid at the King's door, and I wish there were not so much ground for so doing as Im affraid there is; tho I know measures are taken to place the blame elsewhere and I dread, nay, tremble to think how greedily the heedless inconsiderate braulers (?) mobb will catch the bait without so much as dreaming how the hook thats under it will catch themselves, which is the chief yea the only motive that prompts me to this bold adventure. But while my hand is in I

shall make so clean a breast all at once, that you must not expect to hear one word more from me upon this subject whatever further may happen.

“The Pacquet which brought the Councell Generall of your Companys Petition to his Majesty arrived here late on Thursday night the 26th of the last month, and my Lo: Secretary having previous notice of the said Petition sent to have the Pacquet brought to himself next morning early, tho it was my Lord Carmichel waiting month; and without signifying one word thereof to Carmichel for a whole day and night (nor after) went immediately to Mr Secretary Vernon and from him directly to Hampton Court where the King was and got him to sign an order for adjourning of your Parliament, that the same might be despatched from this before to know anything of your Petition and after his return from Hampton Court made a great deal of fum faro at the Duke of Queensberrys and Lord Carmichel about the presenting of your petition which was by them all three presented on Thursday last and this, by the by makes some here begin to believe that honest Carmichael will be treated much after the same manner that Tullibardine was, tho its doubted whether he'd be so touchy upon the head as Tullibardine was. Queensberry signified to his Majesty that you were all in such a ferment about your losses and disappointment upon this occasion: that he'd humbly thought it necessary for his Majesty's interest and for the peace of the Kingdom to grant at least some small mark of his loyal favour to your Company<sup>1</sup> at this time; whereupon the King took him a little short, and asked him what he would advise him to grant them? The Duke replied that His Majesty had three small frigates lying wholly useless and rotting in Scotland, and that though they were of small value yet that such a concession might be improved (?) by his Majesty's friends and servants in the government, so as to disprove all the misrepresentations of his Majesty's enemies upon account of your American Company. At which the King seemed to fret and said that as he did not expect any such proposition from his Lp so he would grant no such thing upon any account because (said his Majesty) not only the Company but the whole world might then say that he did it for fear of these . . .: but his Majesty instead thereof was pleased to sign an answer, which Secretary Sefield had prepared before your petition was so solemnly presented to him, but how satisfactory that answer may be, or how far it may answer your present occasions, I cannot tell: only I know people talk here variously about it but you'll be best able to judge when you see it, which (I question not) you will before this come to hand; for my part, were it not signed by His Majesty I would give you my opinion freely about it, but however I find it is determined, you must take it all for good coyn, or otherwise be looked upon as disaffected persons, and the worst of men: for you must know, that our politicians have agreed upon several topics to be propagated both here and with

<sup>1</sup> The entire monopoly of the trade in Asia, Africa, and America, for a term of thirty-one years, was granted to the Company.

you which must be crammed down your throats like so many gospel truths.

“That there is more in this matter than everybody sees, for that certainly there is a Jacobite design to overturn the present government. And that they make a handle of the treatment which your company met with and that severall persons are coming with letters and instructions from France to blow the coal.

“That the pretended grumblers upon account of your Company have a mind, by the way, to overturn Presbytery and that they endeavour to lay a snare for severall honest well-meaning Presbyterians to join with you in mutinous murmuring upon this occasion: but that its hoped the Presbyterians will be so just to themselves as to consider how much they owe in gratitude to His Majesty for establishing the Presbyterian Government in Scotland, etc.

“That the Company owes all its misfortunes to the unaccountable malversations and mismanagements of directors, for that one half of them are fools and the other half Knaves, so that they may blame themselves and nobody else for what has happened to their colony.

“That the coast of Darien where your company settled their Colony is so very unwholesome that it is but a murdering of the Kings subjects to send any of them thither.

“That all those whom you sent to settle as a colony in Darien were a pack of loose vagabonds, poor, scoundrels, fellows who had nothing to lose and had neither sense, honor, nor honesty: and that it is not so much a wonder how they came to disert so soon, as that they stayed there so long as they did.

“That the company’s affairs are in so great despondency that nothing less than ruin can follow and that they are actually ruined already and that it is but madness in anyone to throw away more money upon it.

“And lastly (which to say the truth is the most pernicious of all) that some of your greatest men who set up most for patriots at this time, and are mighty pretenders for carrying on the designs of your company are working underhand to get themselves into favour by selling the company to gratify the humour of the Court: but this must only be whispered by way of secret from one to another. And you’ll find it also insinuated to the most credulous of your people that the King God bless Him! is a good friend to your company and would willingly do it all the acts of kindness lies in his power underhand, but that he lies in such circumstances with the English, French, Spanish, Dutch, that he dare not appear openly your friend lest he should disoblige them by it.

“A certain person to whom indeed, I owe obligations spoke to myself very seriously, on all these topics and I thought myself obliged in kindness to seem as seriously to believe them though at the same time I should be heartily sorry if all or any of them were true. As for the matter of Jacobitism I hope none of you are such fools as to expose either your own or your company’s interest on so ridiculous and desperate a foot; for since the discovery of the private articles of the last treaty of peace, especially since the death of ye Duke of Babarias son, any body that has but half an eye may safely see

that K. J. is chained up like a mastiff dog, to be let loose for a bug-bear upon some certain occasions.

“As to the other topics you know best how justly they are grounded. I am a stranger to your transactions, any more than what I hear at random, so can say little or nothing, tho I want not my own thoughts upon every one of them.

“Your friend and mine, Mr Carstairs, let me see a memorial sent to him from his brother-in-law Mr Dunlop, regarding the distracted humour which you are all in, by reason of your Collony’s abdication, and the most proclamations: that nobody stands on speaking treason openly in your streets and that none of the Kings best friends dare say its ill done. That he himself was affronted for giving his opinion against petitioning the King; and therefore earnestly desired that Mr Carstairs might use all the interest he had here to prevail on the King to do something that might allay the madness and discontent of your people on this occasion: I know not how far the Kings answer to your Petition may do it, but I have some ground to believe that whatever be in it you owe the getting of it, so speedily more to Mr Dunlop’s letter than to anything that was contained in the petition itself. I saw two or three more letters much upon the same strain, but none of them so pungent as Mr Dunlop’s. I hear everybody agree that your Petition is in very smooth terms, but it were ane odd thing if you should out do us courtiers at smooth words, whatever our performances may be, if I am not mistaken the Kings answer is as smooth as your petition.

“About five or six days ago there was a most scurrilous pamphlet published here not only libelling the management of your company both abroad and at home in a stile full of buffoonery and bantring personall reflections but also in a most Blasphemous manner mocking the dispensations of Providence, and ridicouling even the sacred History and the present Established Church government. Its said to be done by one Harris who served your Company. In truth he is a most malicious fellow and gave memorially for composing that part of it which relates to the transactions of your Company, which are inserted with little or no variations, but the preface and close of it are done by a hackney scribe for the Court: I know he was several times at Secretary Sefeld, Vernon, and Blathwate about it and got—pounds Ster. for owning of it and allowing it was in his name because thereby it might pass the better upon the world, everybody knowing him to be a person thats disobliged and full of revenge: but the best of it is, he is likewise known to be a most notorious and consumat villain: and will therefore I hope never be credited by any sober and thinking people. The fellow is already become so very ignominious even with them that make use of him for a tool that nobody keeps company with him openly but such as are strangers to his character, and may be somewhat curious to hear him prattle so maliciously about your Company and the most honourable persons concerned in it, as he commonly does not a great deal of impudence.

“I need not tell you from whom this comes, you know my hand and seal and because possibly some others might know it too if they saw it, I confine you by all the ties of friendship and gratitude to

commit this to the flames ; but if you design to make any other use of the contents, you had best take a copy thereof in a strange hand and then burn mine. I would not have you return me any other answer to this but that ye received my letter of this date, of which I shall be impatient to know the certainty for fear of miscarriage. This being a greater stretch of Freedom than ever I ventured upon, or intend to do in heaste again at least in writing; but if you have any particular confidant here and give him a token to me I shall not stand upon letting him know by word of mouth whatever may occur to my knowledge about your Company; and let him take his own way of conveying it to you without ever mentioning my name. Adieu."

## APPENDIX II

EVIDENCE IN THE CASE UNSUCCESSFULLY INSTITUTED BY  
THE GOVERNMENT IN 1749 TO PROVE THAT ROBERT  
MERCER OF ALDIE (ROBERT NAIRNE) WAS NOT KILLED  
AT THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN

ROBERT NAIRNE OR MERCER was killed at Culloden. His body was never found. The Attainder, by which the Jacobites lost their fortunes and estates by the express words of the Act, was to take effect from the 18th day of April. Culloden being fought on the 16th, those killed there were neither forfeited nor attainted. Robert Mercer's widow in 1749 contested the right of the Crown to touch the Estates of Meiklour, Aldie and others. The Crown brought forward witnesses to prove that he was not killed at Culloden, while the widow produced others who saw him killed. Eventually she succeeded in her claim and saved the estates.

Some of the evidence on both sides is here given :—

“THOMAS STEWART in Meiklour in the Parish of Kinclaven depones, That he knew the said Mr Mercer of Aldie for 17 years before the battle of Culloden, being his servant all these years; that the deceast was Colonel of the Brigade of *Athol* men, then at the Battle of Culloden, and that the Deponent was in his company, and next man to him, when he seed the Deceast shot with a musket ball through the Head at the Battle, and see'd him fall; and upon the Deponents going a little on with the rest of the Men, he came back to see if his Master was dead or alive, and took him by the hand, and looked in his Master's face, and observed the wound in his head, and that his Master was truly dead, and the Deponent left him in the field, and never see'd him more. *Causa scientiæ patet*. All which is truth, as he shall answer to God.”

“JOHN SPALDING in Ennoch in Gillichacy depones, That he knew Mr Mercer of Aldie three quarters of a year before the Battle of Culloden, the Deponent having been enlisted by him of that space, to serve in the company of Captain Murray, which was one of the companies of the first Brigade of *Athol* men, which was commanded by the late Mr Mercer of Aldie as Colonel; that the said Mr Mercer



was killed at the Battle of Culloden, and the Deponent believes was by a musket shot, the Deponent being so near him, as to fall over him; upon which the Deponent tried to lift him, but the Deceast's feet folded under him, upon which the Deponent let him drop, and the Deceast gave a groan. Thereafter the Deponent went on a little with the rest of the men, and upon his return he observed the Deceast lying as he had left him, and verily believes he was dead. Depones, That he never saw him after that, nor heard of his being alive by any report."

"DONALD MACGREGOR, servant to John Macdonald of Glengary depones, That he knew the said Mr Mercer of Aldie for two years before the Battle of Culloden, the Deponent being servant to Mrs Robertson of Falskelly, for these two years, when and where he see'd the said Mr Mercer frequently a visiting. Depones, he the Deponent was a common soldier in Lord George Murray's own Company, and was with that Company at the Battle of Culloden; and upon his retreating from before Barrel's regiment he fell over Mr Mercer of Aldie, who was lying in the field, and he believes he was killed in that Battle; that he looked him in the face, and knew it to be Mr Mercer, and never see'd him since syne; nor did he hear by any report that he was alive since that day."

"JAMES ROBERTSON of Gillichacy in the Parish of Logierate depones, That he knew Mr Mercer of Aldie formerly mentioned for 17 years before the Culloden, having frequent occasions to see him at his own house and several other places. Depones, that the Deponent was a common Soldier in Lord Nairn's own Company commanded by him at the Battle of Culloden; and that he the Deponent was wounded there himself by a musket shot, which made him fall down and ly a little but upon his rising and flying away as he could, he observed the said Robert Mercer of Aldie lying upon the field of battle; and the Deponent verily believes he was dead, having observed no signs of life about him and the Blood coming from about his Mouth and Nose, towards his Neck and his throat. Depones, he never saw him since that day, nor did he ever hear by any report that he was alive since that time."

"CHRISTIAN CAMPBELL, servant to Thomas Downie weaver in Cairniehill depones, That she knew Robert Mercer of Aldie very well, long before the Rebellion; that she had occasion to see him several times, so oft as she cannot number them, in the House of Laurence Alexander in Glessybarns, two miles above Dunfermling. That the said Robert (Laurence?) Alexander had formerly been a tenant of Aldie's in a place called the Righead of Aldie, from which place he came to Glessybarns and that it was there she several times saw Aldie as aforesaid. Depones, that the last time she saw him was crossing Tay in the boat near to Kenmuir or Taymouth, the ordinary Ferry there; that there were several persons in company with him, particularly the Duke of Perth, that there was one person

in the boat disguised in women's clothes, whom she knew to be a man by his face, that this was three or four Days after the Battle of Culloden, she is not positive which of them, but is sure it was some days after the Battle of Culloden; that she knew the Duke of Perth very well, having lived seven years in his ground, and that the Duke spoke to her at the time he crossed in the boat over Tay, as aforesaid; that after these Gentlemen crossed Tay, they went up to a House near the Ferry, and drunk somewhat, but did not light, and after that they (particularly Aldie) went the Road straight towards Perth: and being interrogate, how she knew at that time the Battle of Culloden was over, depones, she knew but too well, for her Master was at it, and that some time before she saw Aldie cross the Tay, as aforesaid, some of the MacGregors, particularly three of Rob Roy's sons had past that way, and told the Battle was fought; that she did not see Rob Roy's sons herself, but heard the accounts of them, and the News they had spread, and that Rob Roy's sons, so far as she was informed, past at the West End of Loch Tay; and further, she knew Mr Mercer of Aldie, as well as the Glove in her hand, and that there was nobody with her when she saw them cross in the boat, but saw the Landlady of the House, bring them Drink to the Door. And further depones, that Aldie was in Highland clothes, and that she had seen him formerly in Highland clothes, particularly when he went out to the Rebellion: And being interrogate on the part of the Claimant what Time of Day it was she saw Aldie cross in the boat, depones, she knows not the precise time, but it was about the Height of the Day; being further interrogate, what was the Occasion of her going there that Day, depones, she was going with a letter from John Campbell, my Lord Breadalbane's Factor, to Sir Robert Menzie's House near the Bridge of Tay, that she did not see Sir Robert, nor knows whether he was at home or not, but got the Answer of the Letter. And being interrogate, if she told to anybody afterwards, that she had seen the Duke of Perth and Aldie, and to whom—depones, she warrants, and no doubt she would tell it to some, but does not remember to whom; and being also interrogate whether since she was cited to be a witness in this case, anybody had endeavoured to persuade her not to be a witness in this matter. Depones that after she came to Edinburgh, some People came in to her, and a Man that was with her in a House in the Grassmarket, that the man that was with her was John Thomson; that these persons that came in, drunk some Strong Drink, and gave them some; and said, she was going to say wrong, for that they never knew anybody say, that they had seen Mercer of Aldie, since the Battle of Culloden, save herself; that she did not know the names of the Persons that came in, but heard one of them was a Chairman's wife, but that they who came in paid the drink, and that she heard one of the persons was Aldie's Man, but she knew him not.

“And upon a further interrogatory depones; that Sir Robert Menzies' house, which she meant, is the Big House with the trees near to the Kirktown of Weem; and that when she saw the Gentlemen, as above, crossing the water, she was returning with the answer of the Letter from the Chamberlain's House on the

South side of the Water, and depones she does not remember what Day of the Week she saw the Gentlemen cross the Water."

"JOHN THOMSON Wright in Crossfoord depones, that he knew Robert Mercer of Aldie very well while he lived at the House of Aldie, and the Deponent at Morlich, a little from it; that he knew him for three years before the late Rebellion. And being interrogate, if ever he saw Aldie since the Battle of Culloden depones, that one Day, as he was coming from the Fair of Auchterarder, along by the Pow-mill, he saw one in Gentleman's habit passing along, who went off by the Road towards some Houses in a little Village near by, but does not know whether he went in to any of the Houses or not; that the Gentleman was on foot, and that the Deponent thought it was Aldie, and no other Man, but as the Gentleman was going from him, and that he had not occasion to see his face, he cannot positively swear that it was him. That it was after the Martinmas which immediately followed the Battle of Culloden, and that the Gentleman was in Highland clothes; that he cannot precisely tell the time of day he saw him, being a Rainy Day, and did not see the Sun, but is positive it was before dinner time.

"Depones, that since he came to this Town when he and Christian Campbell, the former witness, were in a House in the Grassmarket called Mrs Keltie's, there were two persons, a Woman and a Man, in that House with them. That they talked a great deal to her in *Irish*, which he did not understand, but that they asked him what he had to say about Aldie, and said, he would say wrong if he said Aldie was alive; that he did not know the persons, or their names, but that he did not like such Company, and that he went out of the house and took Christian Campbell along with him. . . . And being interrogate if he had any information from other people of Aldie's being alive, depones, he had not."

"JOHN KELTIE of Newbigging depones, That he has been Factor upon the Estate of Aldie, which is about 18 miles from the House of Meikleour where the Family of Aldie resides, since the year 1740, and has continued to be Factor under the Family of Aldie till he was lately nominate by the Barons of Exchequer; that he cannot be positive how soon after the Battle of Culloden Thomas and Alexander Stewart returned home, which two are witnesses that have been formerly examined in this Cause, nor can he say with any certainty how soon he saw them, or either of them, after that Time. That it is possible one or other of them might have come to Aldie, with James Mercer of Aldie in the Summer after the Battle, but that he cannot say positively that they did, but says that in January, or thereabout 1747, he received a letter from the said James Mercer, desiring him to advance a certain sum of money, which was to be applied for buying Mournings for the Family in regard that he had then received certain information of the Death of his Father.

"And further depones, that some Time after this, having occasion to meet with Mr Mercer aforesaid, he asked him what the reason

was, why the Family had not sooner gone into Mourning for his Father; to which he answered that he never was certain of his Father's death, till his brother Captain Mercer<sup>1</sup> who is in the Dutch Service, came to Scotland and assured him, that the officers of the King's army, who he had met with in Holland, told him that his Father was killed at the Battle of Culloden, and that as far as the Deponent's Memory can serve him, they said they saw him fall; and this account the said Captain Mercer confirmed to the Deponent in December last."

"JOHN CRAIG Smith in Easter Haltoun depones; That he knew Robert Mercer, Laird of Aldie for 24 years at least before the last Rebellion, and that he knew him perfectly well, as well as he could know any other man; that he had seen the said Robert Mercer alive since the Battle of Culloden; that he saw him one Sunday morning as he, the Deponent, was walking along the Tay side to the Kirk of Cargill, in the Harvest time after the Battle of Culloden; that the said Aldie was walking on the side of the River Tay, below a Brae, and that he, the Deponent, was walking on the other side of the River, close by the water, on the Brink of the Bank, and that the water was not broad at that place, but the breadth that a man could throw a stone over it. That Aldie had a suit of brown clothes upon him, and that he and the Deponent walked about a quarter of a mile together on the different sides of the river, but that they did not speak to one another; that he was a tall man, and somewhat lout-shouldered, and the Deponent perfectly knew him, and that after they had walked so long over against one another, the Deponent walked away quicker than Aldie, and so left him. Being interrogate if ever he saw Aldie at any other time since the Battle of Culloden depones, that about a fortnight before the Sunday mentioned in the former part of his Oath, he and another man, John Carse were walking together, and as he thinks, saw Aldie at about a quarter of Miles distance, but being at so great a distance he cannot be positive that it was Aldie; that the Man he thought was Aldie had then a suit of brown clothes upon him, which he thinks was the same clothes . . . and that the place he thinks he saw Aldie this first time was about a quarter of a mile further west, or down the water from the place he saw Aldie on the Sunday as before mentioned. And being interrogate what distance the Deponent's House is from the Kirk of Cargill depones; that it is about a mile up the water from the Church, and that the place on the river side where he saw Aldie, and where they walked over against one another, is from the church about half a mile. Depones that the common Road to the Church is about a Ridge-length distant from the side of the water, and that he did not see or observe any people or persons walking along the Road to the Church at the time he saw Aldie. . . ."

"Besides what appears from the Oath, as above set down, is, that

<sup>1</sup> Colonel William Mercer, afterwards of Aldie and Meikleour. Through him the line of the family was carried on.

he lived these 37 years past within a mile of Aldie's House of Meikleour."

"ALEXANDER SCOT, Tenant in Kirktoon of Kinclaven depones That he knows and knew Aldie perfectly well many years before the late Rebellion for that he lived within half a mile of Aldie's House of Meikleour for 16 years; that he cannot be sure or positive whether he saw Aldie since the Battle of Culloden or not, but that one morning betwixt 7 and 8, during the Bean seed-time or in the month of May after the Battle of Culloden, as the Deponent was watering his ploughing cattle in the River of Tay, he saw a Gentleman with a brown coat come down from Aldie's house of Meikleour, to the side of the River Tay, and wash his hands and face in the River; that by his stature he took it to be Aldie, but could not distinctly see his countenance, he the Deponent being on the other side of the water from him, and there being a Mist or Scum upon the water. . . ."

"JAMES MACLACHLANE *alias* VOEDUSKIE depones That as he was coming through Glen Feshie on Sunday after the Battle of Culloden, he overtook a man riding on a brown Horse, whom he knew not, nor whether he was a Gentleman or an ordinary man; that the man seemed very distress and weary and said to the Deponent that as he was all alone, and as the Deponent could guess something of the road, he wished he would stay and take him along with him. That accordingly they came on together to the Head of Braemar, and it falling late, they stopped at a little cottage to rest for the night. That some time after they went into the cottage five or six men came riding up to it, and came in to them, and some of them seeing the Man that was along with him, asked how he did, and what way he came off, calling him *Mr Mercer*, but the man made no answer; that afterwards these men called for a dram, but finding there was none, they immediately took their horses and rode off. That the Deponent and the man with him staid there all night, but slept none; that he desired the Deponent to conduct him to *Charletoun of Aboyne*, which the Deponent did, where they staid some few hours, and then the Deponent left him. Depones, that neither in the cottage beforenamed nor at Charletoun of Aboyne had they any conversation as to what place the man came from, or what he was; but that the man asked the Deponent whom he belonged to, and he told to *Maclauchlane*, but that after that the man did not ask him any questions about Maclauchlan, or whether he was killed or not, nor did the Deponent tell him anything about that. That the man had a blue outer coat upon him, and that after the Deponent left him at Charletoun, he never saw him after."

"JOHN EDWARD of Solgirth depones, That he was very intimately acquainted with Robert Mercer of Aldie, twenty years before the late Rebellion, but that he never saw him since the Battle of Culloden. Being interrogate by the Procurators for the Claimant, as

to Aldie's make and stature, whether he was a tall man or a short man, whether he was lout or lowering shouldered? Depones, that he was a pretty straight man of an ordinary thickness, not very tall nor very short, and he is sure that he was not so tall as he, the Deponent, and that he did not think he was lout-shouldered."

"JOHN FREER, formerly merchant in Lethindy, now tenant at the Mill of Goddens, depones, That he was acquainted and knew Robert Mercer of Aldie, that he lived in the neighbourhood, and has seen him several times, and has sometimes spoke with him; that one day in October 1746 in the Evening, but in full daylight, as the Deponent was standing near his own house at Lethindy, he saw a Gentleman in black clothes pass by him, within about 20 yards of him, whom he took to be Robert Mercer of Aldie, and that Alexander Gall, Brother to John Gall of Kinloch, was in company with that Gentleman whom he took to be Mercer of Aldie, and that the Deponent that same night told Margaret Gibb his wife, that he thought he had seen Robert Mercer of Aldie, and thinks he might have told his Father, the Minister of Lethindy, that he had seen the said Robert Mercer. And upon an Interrogator for the Claimant depones, that he neither spoke to Alexander Gall, nor to the person he took to be Robert Mercer of Aldie at the time; and that the said Person whom he took to be Robert Mercer of Aldie was walking across where the Deponent stood at the time he saw him, with the side of his face towards the Deponent.

"[Before finishing the foregoing Proof Mrs Jean Mercer, the Claimant, died at Edinburgh, 1st December 1749. Her eldest son, James Mercer, having insisted in her Claim, he gave in a Petition to the Lords, craving a further Proof for supporting the Proof already brought by his mother, and for taking off some Presumptions against it arising from the Proof brought by the Lord Advocate, which being allowed him, he adduced the following witnesses, who depone as follows; and first, for proving that Christian Campbell, the first witness brought by the Lord Advocate, behoved to be in a mistake with regard to the persons she saw at the Ferry Boat of Kenmore.]"

"JOHN DRUMMOND late principal servant to James, Duke of Perth, depones That he was servant for five years and a half to James Drummond commonly called Duke of Perth, before the Battle of Culloden, and was with him at that Battle; that on the night of the Battle he went along with his master to a place near the Laird of Macintosh's House, where they staid all night, and next night they went together to Ruthven in Badenoch, and the night thereafter they went to a public house near *Chuny Macpherson's* House, the day thereafter they went to the Castle of Glengary and staid two nights there, and the day thereafter they went to Lochiel's house where they staid one night, and from that they went next day to a shealling belonging to Doctor Cameron, where they staid several days, till they heard of two French ships being on the coast, and went directly from that

house aboard one of these ships called the *Mars of Nantz*, upon the 3rd day of May 1746, and the Deponent continued on board that ship till he died. Depones, that his master was, from the time of the Battle till his death, in a very weak and sickly condition, in so much that when he was on horseback he was frequently supported by men on each side of him. And depones that he was never absent from his master from the Battle of Culloden until his death, above half an hour at a time. And being interrogate for His Majesty's Advocate depones, that he knew Mr Mercer of Aldie that he never saw him since the Battle of Culloden, and heard by report that he was dead."

"JOHN BAIN Residenter in Edinburgh depones, That he knew James Drummond commonly called the Duke of Perth very well, and saw him on the Day of the Battle of Culloden, near the field, before the action began, and did not see him after that till about the 21st or 22nd day of April 1746, when he saw him at a Farmers house near the Castle of Glengary. Depones, that he afterwards saw the said James Drummond at Lochiel's house, and at another Gentleman's House of the name of Cameron; and that he the Deponent helped the said James Drummond into the Boat of a French Ship about the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th days of May after the said Battle; and that he was then in a very weak and sickly condition."

"MARY CAMPBELL spouse to John Haggart at the Boat of Kenmore depones, That she did not see Robert Mercer of Aldie pass the Boat at Kenmore, nor at her House since the Battle of Culloden; that she knew Aldie very well, had oftentimes seen him, and would have known him if she had seen him since the Battle of Culloden.

"[For proving who the Person was that James Maclauchlane, *alias* Voeduskie (7th witness by my Lord Advocate), met in Glen Feshie the Sunday after the Battle of Culloden, and that he was not Robert Nairn, *alias* Mercer of Aldie.]"

"GEORGE MACKENZIE Writer in Edinburgh depones, That a few days after the Battle of Culloden he met a Gentleman of the name of Mercer at Charletoun of Aboyne, and that the Gentleman was Thomas Mercer, merchant in Aberdeen; that he was drest in Highland cloathes; that it appeared to the Deponent that he had been at the Battle of Culloden for that he told the Highlanders were beat, and several other things to that purpose. . . ."

"FRANCIS FARQUHARSON of Finzean depones That the Tuesday of the week after the Battle of Culloden, he saw Thomas Mercer, merchant in Aberdeen, at the Deponent's own house. That the said Mr Mercer told him he had been at Charletoun of Aboyne, and staid there a night; that he also told of the Battle of Culloden and gave the Deponent an account of it; that when he saw the said

Thomas Mercer, he was drest in a Farmers dress and a gray coat upon him.

“[For proving who the person was that John Freer (9th witness brought by Lord Advocate) saw passing his house, along with Alexander Gall, and that that person was not Robert Nairn *alias* Mercer of Aldie.]”

“ALEXANDER GALL Brother to John Gall of Kinloch depones That he knew and was acquainted with Robert Nairn *alias* Mercer late of Aldie, that he never saw him after the Battle of Culloden; that he the Deponent did pass one evening about sunset, in the latter end of the month of October 1746 years by Lethindy, and the Kirk-toun of Lethindy; that there was a gentleman in his company, viz., Alexander Blair, son to Dr John Blair, Physician in Dundee, and no other person whatsoever; that the said Alexander Blair wore either a black or a blue coat, but which of the two Deponent does not exactly remember, and that the Deponent did not pass by the said town or Kirk-toun of Lethindy at any time in the year 1746, nor since, except in the month of October as aforesaid. *Causa scientiæ patet.* And this is truth as he shall answer to God.”

The Law report here breaks off, and no further details are obtainable. It is only known that James Mercer won the case, and the family remained in possession of the Estates of Meikleour and Aldie.



### APPENDIX III

LETTER FROM PROFESSOR SAMUEL GRANT OLIPHANT OF  
OLIVET COLLEGE, MICHIGAN, ON THE SUBJECT OF  
MEMBERS OF THE OLIPHANT FAMILY IN AMERICA

THERE are branches of the Oliphant family now in America, and several of these believe themselves, according to family tradition, to be off-shoots of the Gask stock. Hoping some reader may possess the necessary information to supply the link in this chain of family history, the writer subjoins parts of a letter recently received from Professor Oliphant in Michigan, who, on hearing of the proposed book about Gask, kindly communicated the following particulars:—

“There are, at a conservative estimate, nearly 5,000 Oliphants or descendants of Oliphants in America. These represent three main lines and a number of more recent immigrants, that is, those who have come within a century, or since 1800, from Scotland and England. The so-called main lines represent immigrants in the early colonial period of America.

“The investigation into the family history of these American Oliphants is beset with peculiar difficulties, owing to the absence, in most cases, of authentic family records in the earlier generations and to the commingling of family traditions. The earlier immigrants had turned their backs resolutely on the past. Their descendants were concerned only with the problems of their own lives and times in the new lands, and made little attempt to keep up any connection with kinsmen in the homeland. The few who cared to preserve any knowledge of their connections with the family at home, occasionally met either other Oliphants, or those who knew of others, and as the age was uncritical in such matters, many family traditions became hopelessly intermingled and confused. Public records, too, are scanty, as so many of the court-houses and other depositories of civil and church records were burned by the British in our Revolutionary war. An exacting search for such records as have survived, and a careful study of these as they are found from time to time serve, however, to clear up many of the puzzling questions and give promise ultimately that we shall be able to recover the bare essentials for the history of the earlier immigrants and their descendants.

“The first Oliphant to come to America was William Oliphant, ‘The Covenanter,’ who was arrested in June 1685 for attendance at a conventicle, or meeting of the Presbyterians, imprisoned with others at London, Leith and Dunottar Castle, and then exiled to His Majesty’s plantations in East Jersey, under sentence of death should he return to his native land; which sentence was abrogated a few years later on the accession of William and Mary. The ship sailed from Perth, 5th September 1685, and reached New Jersey the following December, after a voyage replete with harrowing incidents of storm, plague, machinations of evil men, etc. Many of the religious exiles, already of impaired vitality and broken constitutions by the unutterable horrors of their imprisonment at Dunottar, died on the passage over from the plague. William, however, survived, and appears on extant public records as a landholder in New Jersey until 1702, the last mention of him.

“Very shortly after William was sentenced to exile, his parents, John and Janet (Gilchrist) Oliphant of Pencaitland, indentured themselves and their minor daughters, Margaret and Janet, to John Hancock, of Edinburgh, to serve him for four years in New Jersey, for their passage over.

“Tradition says that John had lost his property because of the heavy fines imposed upon him by the English because of his loyalty to the Presbyterian cause. No records have yet been found which tell us more of John Oliphant and Janet Gilchrist in this country, but there are records showing the marriages of the two daughters Margaret and Janet, and of their relationships to William.

“Duncan Oliphant of Amwell, Hunterdon County, New York, my ancestor, is supposed to have been a brother of William and son of John, and either an infant at the time of their coming to America, or else born after their coming. He died in 1732, apparently a comparatively young man, as of his seven children the majority (apparently six) were minors. The eldest daughter and child, Margaret, was at that time married to Thomas Gordon, son of Thomas Gordon the Proprietor of East Jersey. The eldest son David was born in 1713. The other children were John, Ephraim, James, Mary and Ann, all mentioned in the father’s will. Of the four sons, I have a complete genealogy and record of David, the eldest, and James the youngest. Of the other two there are extensive but not yet complete lists of descendants.

“David, my ancestor, married Ann Lee, and had Jonathan, Hosea, John and Jerusha. Jonathan, my grandfather’s grandfather was a Revolutionary hero, a captain of the New Jersey troops, who spent all his great fortune in equipping and maintaining them in the field against England, a truly worthy descendant of his martial ancestors in old Scotia.

“Ephraim’s eldest son, Samuel, too young to be accepted as a soldier, was a drummer boy in the Virginian army, in the closing days of the Revolution.

“James’s eldest son, Peter, was one of the victims of the infamous prison-ship *Jersey* during the same war.

“One of John’s descendants was the late General Samuel Duncan

Oliphant, a hero of our Civil War. Another was Andrew Stewart, for many years a member of Congress, the father of the American Protection Tariff, and who came within one vote of having been chosen Vice-President of the United States.

"The American Oliphants have borne an important part in the military, civil, political, professional, ecclesiastical, educational, scientific and commercial life of our nation. They have fought, bled and died in all of our wars. Though none has written his name in flaming letters on the history of the new country, yet nearly all have lived honourable lives. . . . Few American families can show as creditable a history when the whole is told. . . . If none have attained distinction of the first magnitude, many more than usual have risen above the common mediocrity. They are as a rule (the writer has seen hundreds of them) men large of body, fair complexioned, vigorous of constitution, large of mind and heart, loyal to sentiment, and gifted with the finer attributes of spirit. The women have the corresponding qualities and a reputation for loyal wives and noble mothers. We treasure our heritage of a noble ancestry, and few of us have disgraced it.

"I should have said before that the other two main lines of the family are of our South in their origin, representing an early immigration to the Southern colonies. I have records of some hundreds of descendants, but it is very difficult to trace connections and early history as our South-land has been ravaged by both the Revolutionary and the Civil Wars. Records have perished in consequence. The two lines may ultimately be found to blend, in early colonial history, but at present indications favour two independent settlements, one in South Carolina, the other not yet determined.

"There is a rather persistent belief that we of the New Jersey line are descended from a younger scion of the House of Gask.

"Very truly yours,

"SAMUEL GRANT OLIPHANT.

"OLIVET COLLEGE,

"MICHIGAN, U.S.A., 13th September 1910."

## APPENDIX IV

### GENEALOGICAL SKETCH OF THE KINGTON FAMILY

THE Kingtons were a Wiltshire family, and appear to have held landed property in that county for several generations. They were owners of Notton in the parish of Lacock. Half-way between Chippenham and Melksham appear the ruined walls of the ancient Nunnery of Lacock,<sup>1</sup> and the immensely old village of that name which dates from Saxon times. Notton is a small village adjoining Lacock, and there is also a mansion and estate of the name which appears to have been the seat of the Kington family.

The oldest will in the family archives is dated 1710, and is that of

ANTHONY KINGTON, described in a deed of January 1698 as "Son of Richard Kington, the elder of Notton in the Parish of Laycock." He married Mary Lee, who survived him. There were of this marriage three sons and five daughters:—

1. Richard died before his brother.
2. Anthony (of whom below).
3. Thomas, born 1700, married Jane Guppey, and died 1757 without issue.
4. Joan, born before 1710.
5. Phillis, born before 1710.
6. Gratian, born before 1710. Her will proved 1768.
7. Mary.
8. Jane, who was alive 1764.

Anthony Kington was dead in 1716, and was succeeded by his eldest surviving son.

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of Lacock and the story of Ela, only child of William, Earl of Salisbury, who founded the nunnery, see History of Lacock Abbey, by the Rev. W. L. Bowles.

ANTHONY KINGTON of Corsham, born 1711. He married Anne House. Their children were three sons and seven daughters:—

1. Jean, born 1737. She was dead before 1764.
  2. Thomas, born 1738 (of whom below).
  3. John, born 1740. He is described as a mariner. He made his will before sailing in 1766, and died at sea in that year.
  4. Ann, born 1742, died 1789.
  5. Gratian, born 1743, died 1815.
  6. Richard, born 1745. Presumably dead before 1764, as he is not mentioned in his father's will.
  7. Phillis, born 1747.
  8. Mary, born and died 1750.
  9. Mary, born 1752, died 1769.
  10. Elizabeth, born 1754, died 1817.
- Anthony Kington died before 1765, and was succeeded by his eldest son.

THOMAS KINGTON, who was born 1738, and married in 1769 Susanna Goodwin, youngest daughter of Austin Goodwin of Bristol. She was the heiress of the estate of Charlton in Somersetshire, five miles from Bristol, which thus came into the Kington family, as shown below.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Yate purchased the estate of Charlton from the owner, Edward Gorges, in 1694. The Gorges were a very ancient family and had held the estate from early times. His son, Robert Yate, was a well-known citizen of Bristol, and was Mayor in 1693. He sat for Parliament from 1695 till 1708, and was colonel of a regiment raised for the protection of the State, for which he received the thanks of King William III. and his portrait (now at Ardblair). He married Miss Jackson, but left no issue. His brother left the following children:—

1. Elizabeth, married to John Day. They had a son John, who married Miss Eltridge, but left no children, and a daughter Ann, who married — Host, and had a daughter who married an Eltridge, but had no children.
2. Mary married Mr Chauncy, and had a daughter who died unmarried.
3. Sarah, married to Peter Mugglesworth. Through the descendants of Sarah the Charlton estate was handed down to the Kingtons. The Mugglesworth children were:—
  1. Peter, married Miss Baines, no issue.
  2. Ann, married to Austin Goodwin of Bristol (of whom below).
  3. Mary, married first — Brayne, second — Wilkie, no issue.
  4. Henry, married Miss Weekes, no issue.

Ann Mugglesworth and Austin Goodwin had children as follows:—

1. Mary, married first — Lowe, second — Sundbury, third Dr Shellard, but had no issue by any marriage.
2. Robert, married Elizabeth Basmajor, no issue.
3. Peter, married Rachel Hardwick, no issue.
4. Henry, married Miss Dixon. They had a daughter, Susanna Ann, who married Jasper Leigh Goodwin (no relation), and died without issue.
5. Susanna, married Thomas Kington, and must have survived all her brothers and sisters, as she inherited the estate of Charlton.

Their children were:—

1. Ann, born 1770, died young.
2. Thomas, born 1771 (of whom below).
3. Anthony, born 1772, died May 1775.
4. Henry, born 1774, died January 1775.
5. John, born 1775, died 1814, unmarried.
6. Peter, born 1777, married 1799 the Marchioness of Clanricarde. He was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the 6th Dragoon Guards, and was wounded and died at Buenos Ayres in the expedition under General Whitelocke. Of his marriage there was an only child, Urania Mary Ann, married to Henry Campbell Wyndham. She died without issue in 1868.
7. Mary Ann, born 1775 (?), died 1814, unmarried.
8. Susanna, born 1779, married first Robert Bayley, and second John Whetham, leaving by this last marriage a son, Arthur, who died young, and Maria Agatha, born 1818, who married Alexander Beddoe.
9. A child not traced.

Thomas Kington was buried in the Church of St Mary le Port, Bristol, where a monument has the following record:—

“To the memory of Thomas Kington of Notton, Wilts, Esq., who changed this short life for a blessed immortality, October 15, 1786, aged 48 years. He married Susanna, youngest daughter of Austin Goodwin Esq., formerly one of the Sheriffs of this city; by her he had nine children, four of whom he buried with him in the same vault. Under the deepest sense of her own and of her children’s loss, his afflicted widow inscribes this stone to the best of husbands, and the best of fathers.”

Thomas Kington of Notton was succeeded by his eldest son.

THOMAS KINGTON of Charlton, born 1771. He married in 1794 Charlotte Miles. Their children were as follows:—

1. Thomas, born 1795 (of whom below).
2. William Miles, born 1796, died 1840, unmarried.
3. Sarah Susanna, born 1797, died 1849, unmarried.
4. Robert, died young.
5. Charlotte Ann, born 1799, married 1845 Rev. John Dixon Hales, and died 1858, no issue.
6. Elizabeth, died young.
7. Susanna Ann, born 1802, died 1879, unmarried.
8. Emily, born 1804, died 1840, unmarried.
9. Philip, died young.

Thomas Kington of Charlton died 1827, and was succeeded by his eldest son.

THOMAS KINGTON of Charlton, born 1795, married, 1830, Margaret Oliphant of Gask, who died 1839. Thomas Kington, died 1857. Their children were:—

1. Thomas Laurence, born 1831, afterwards eleventh laird of

Gask. He married, 1856, Frances Dorothy Jebb. On succeeding to the estate of Ardblair in 1864 he assumed his mother's name of Blair Oliphant. He died in 1902, leaving no issue.

2. Philip Oliphant, born 1832, educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. He married in 1859 Henrietta, daughter of William Yaldwyn of Blackdown, Sussex. He assumed the name of Blair Oliphant on succeeding his brother, Thomas Laurence, in the Ardblair estate in 1867. He died 1892 and is buried at Wraxall. His children were as follows:—
  1. Emily Caroline.
  2. Margaret Ethel, married, 1893, to James, third son of James Maxtone Graham of Cultoquhey and Redgorton. Their children are as follows:—
    1. *Ysenda Mabel.*
    2. *Rachel Caroline.*
    3. *Anthony James Oliphant.*
    4. *Laurence Patrick.*
  3. Lilian, married, 1897, to Saxon Gregson Ellis. Their children are as follows:—
    1. *Philip George Saxon.*
    2. *Mary Henrietta Christian.*
    3. *Lilian Nairne.*
  4. Mabel Henrietta, died aged fourteen at Clevedon, Somersetshire, 1879, and is buried at Wraxall.
  5. Philip Laurence, married, 1901, Laura Geraldine Bodenham. Their children are:—
    1. *Philip James.*
    2. *Lilias Graeme.*
    3. *William Yaldwyn.*
3. James, born and died in 1836.
4. Caroline Margaret, born 1837, married William Johnstone Fyffe in 1862, died 1897 and was buried at Wraxall. Their children were as follows:—
  1. William Kington, M.D.
  2. Bertram Oliphant of the Gloucestershire Regiment.
  3. Marian Annie.
  4. Margaret Caroline.
  5. Rollestone Sterritt, now Bishop of Rangoon.
  6. Gratian Emily, died 1895. Buried at Wraxall.
  7. Evelyn Nairne, died an infant in 1879.
  8. Bruce, died 1903. Buried at Delhi.
5. William Miles Nairne, born 1838, educated at Harrow, was in the 5th Dragoon Guards, and afterwards in the 4th Hussars, was Adjutant of the Yeomanry at Cheltenham 1874, and died 1898 at Montreux. He was twice married, first to Harriet Sophia Baker in 1871. She died in 1881, leaving children as follows:—

1. Norah Skye, married, 1894, to Rev. Frederick Anstruther Cardew. Their children are:—
  1. *Brutton Anstruther*.
  2. *William Victor*.
  3. *Hugh Bruce Oliphant*.
2. Kathleen Frances, married, 1900, Rev. Arthur Evan David. Their children are:—
  1. *Gwynaeth*.
  2. *Arthur Meuric Nairne*.
  3. *Edgeworth Beresford*
  4. *Bronwyn*
 } twins.
3. William Miles, married, 1908, Edith Soames, and has issue,  
*William Beresford Nairne*.
4. Hugh Beresford, died 1907.

By his second marriage in 1882 to Gertrude Elizabeth, daughter of Colonel H. Brabazon Urmston, Colonel Kington had the following children:—

1. Phyllis Nairne, married, 1907, Edmund William Neel; issue,
  1. *Laurence William*.
  2. *Marjorie Nairne*.
2. Gertrude Joan.
3. Marjory Oliphant.
4. Cicely Brabazon, died an infant, 1893.
5. Philip Urmston.
6. Joyce Adelaide.
7. Stewart Brabazon.

The above gives the names of all the descendants of Laurence Oliphant, the eighth Laird of Gask, who died in 1819, and was the last of the lairds of that family who left children.



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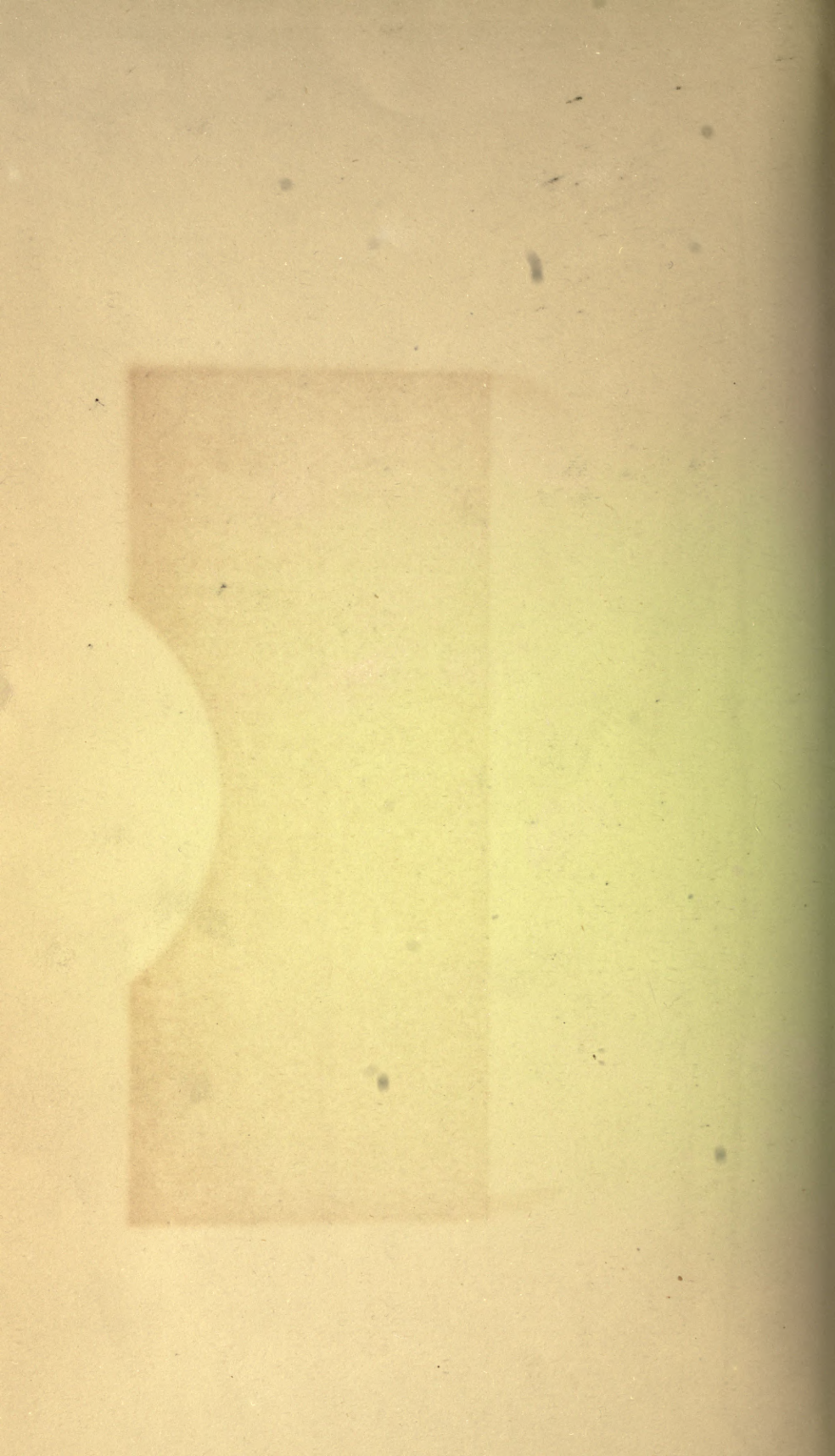
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