

James, 16th Lord Forbes

CHAPTER XVII.

JAMES, 17TH LORD FORBES.

Born, 1725. Succeeded, 1761. Died, 1804.

JAMES, born 1725, 17th Lord Forbes, succeeded his father, the Jacobite, in 1761. He had early followed the traditional Whig principles of his family, for as Master of Forbes he had already joined the king's army before 1745 and had been, at 21, gazetted a captain in the 25th Foot in 1746. What he thought of his father's earlier Jacobite activities has not been left on record; they were probably never mentioned.

He married in January, 1760, Catherine, only daughter of Sir Robert Innes of Orton and Balvenie.

Innes had been in early life in very reduced circumstances and had enlisted as a trooper in the Dragoons. Marjory Winram, daughter of the colonel of the regiment, discovered that he was a gentleman, induced her father to procure him a commission, and became his wife.

Catherine was their only surviving child.

She was a considerable heiress, by the will of her mother's uncle, General Andrew Bisset, after whom she named her third son. The provisions of the General's will are to be found in the Appendix (p. 277).

Lord Forbes had been, as seen, in the army as a boy. Later, he was in the Marines, and in February, 1763, he writes that his company is *not* to be reduced, and "by the friendship of Admiral Forbes (Granard) I am to stay at home this year," but two months later he writes again:—

"The Lords of the Admiralty have been so unkind as to take my commission from me, because I could not leave my Family at present and go to sea. So now I am out of Commission and out of pay, which is not a little hard and severe upon me, but I must have patience."

But, in the following year, interest was made to reinstate him in the army and he was appointed Deputy Governor of Fort William. He hated the place and his enforced residence there. On hearing that there were five or six candidates for the post of chaplain to the fort, he wrote, "this is a sign they don't know the place!"

Shortly after his father's death Lord Forbes appointed a chaplain for himself.

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" To all to whom these presents shall come, etc.

" James Lord Forbes sends greeting

" Know ye that we the said James Lord Forbes for and in consideration of the probity of Life, Integrity of morals and Learning of the Rev. William Lloyd ; Clerk M.A. Rector of — in the County of Carnarvon, have made, appointed, retained and admitted and by these presents do make, appoint, retain, and admit the said William Lloyd one of my domestic chaplains — To the end that by the vertue hereof it shall and may be lawful for him the said William Lloyd to have hold, enjoy and maintain all and singular the privileges, benefits, liberties, preheminences and Immunities whatsoever given and granted by the statutes of this realm to the Chaplains of the Barons and Peers thereof, to all intents and purposes of Law whatsoever

" Given under our hand and seal at arms 10 June 1761.

" Forbes,

" Thos. Gordon witness

" Jos. Innes „ "

Some further delightful letters from Lord Forbes to William King of Newmiln throw much light on the conditions of life in his day.

These have been preserved at Kininvie, as was the case with those quoted in the last chapter.

" Putachie, Dec. 24th 1761.

" Dr. Sir,

" You would hear of our neighbour Lord Kintore's sudden death,¹ I went to his Burriall this day sennet and next day to Aberdeen, from whence I only return'd yesterday : and if the weather will allow us to travail, and no accident prevent us, we intend to set out for Aberdeen on Monday sennit the 4th of January, be at Castle Fraser that night and next day in Town : for it is probable that I shall set out for Ednr. the 8th or 10th with my neice Molly Ereskyne, who is just recovered from the Smallpox : my Wife holds out very well but very Heavy ² and has got a little of the Cold. Her Mother has been and still continues much out of order, and seems to be declining fast, which distresses my Wife a good deal."

" Aberdeen. Saturday Feby. 13th 1762.

" My Dr. Willie,

" This morning at one a clock my wife was safely deliver'd of a fine sturday Girl ³ and both Mother and Child are thank God in a good way.

" I hope now my Dr. Sir that your Father's health and your business will

¹ The 4th Earl of Kintore, William, younger son of the Kintore of 1715. He died without issue, and the estates then passed into the possession of George, 10th Earl Marischal, who though he had lost his own estates by attainder after 1715, had recently been pardoned, and granted the right to inherit any estates left to him. He was great-nephew of the 1st Lord Kintore. He resided at Keith Hall for some years, refusing to take the title of Kintore. At his death in 1778 the title and estates passed to a cousin, Anthony Adrian Falconer of Halkerton.

² The daughter, Marjorie, was born two months later.

³ Marjorie, married 1st Lord Macleod, son of the attainted Lord Cromarty, and secondly, as his second wife, John, 4th Duke of Atholl, grandson of Lord George Murray.

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admitt of your coming to see us, which you know will make us all happy and I do entreat it as a great favour.

" On receipt of this be so good as order James Cumine to mount his horse and go west with the four enclos'd cards to my Friends, and please take the trouble to acquaint all our Good Acquaintances in Elgin ; the Rascall Forsyth the Carrier went away yesterday without calling for Mrs. Macleod's or Altyr's Packetts, but they will be sent next occasion ; with best Compliments to all your Good Family I ever am My Dr. Sir, your affectt Friend & Servant,

" Forbes."

" Aberdeen, Feby. 24th 1762.

" Dr. Sir,

" I had the pleasure of yours by David Wilson and this goes by him as I Reckon it will be as soon with you as by the Fridday's post ; as you make no mention of your Family's Health, I hope all are well : Thank God all here goes on Bravely, my Wife finely recovered and the Child thrives vastly. Honest Lady Innes got a very unlucky fall down a Stone Stair of ours last night Head foremost ; byt by Good Providence broke no Bone, tho' much Bruised which will confine her to her Room for some time : I desir'd Jane Cumine to tell you that I had a vast fine Puppy here of Dutchess, if you choose to accept of him for the Mother, I would either educate him for you here, or send him by the first Carrier to you : But altho Dutchess is a Favourite of all the Ladys yet as I have no pretensions to keep her, She shall be return'd if you desire it. Only if not inconvenient for you, will beg you will favour us with a visit that I may make an appology in person for being so rude as to keep Dutchess so long : in any event you can't think how anxious I am to see you, so is my Wife, as both of us have severall things to talk about, has happen'd since we parted : my Wife begs you'll tell old William that how soon the season for grafting comes in, he will come directly to Putachie with a number of Grafts of all kinds of Pears ; especially of those in our old garden at Elgin ; The Maid of the House must have forgot to tell Sandy of my calling, it was the very evening before I left Edinr. and desir'd him to Breakfast with me at Ramsays, next morning by 8 a Clock,

" Forbes."

" Putachie April 25th 1762.

" My Dr. Sir,

". . . The Sunday before I came away (from Edinburgh) having Din'd at Leith and Drunk hard with Captain Falconer, my nephew Sir William Forbes,¹ and some other Friends ; upon my coming up to Town, Sir Wm. and I in our Drink first call'd upon Mrs. Irvine, Kingcaucies Daughter (whom I had also forgot, being at Ednr) and then for Sandy at Mr. Brodies, but miss'd both and I believe we forgot to leave our names owing to our being so much by the Head, and this is the plain Story ; For Surely I was incapable to forgett or offend intentionally any one of your Family. . . . I have had terrible work with the

¹ Monymusk. The mother of James, 17th Lord Forbes, was Mary Forbes, daughter of the 3rd Lord Pitsligo, and widow of John Forbes, younger of Monymusk. The 5th Bart. of Monymusk was therefore half-brother to Lord Forbes, and the 6th Bart. his nephew.

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Lady Dowager,¹ trying to make up all our matters, but the Treaty is now over and we must again go to Law with great violence ; the particulars of the Story are too long for a letter, but I shall communicate the whole when I have the pleasure to see you at Elgin : you would hear that Pittuly had very near gone off in a nervous Feaver, but He is now better : Honest L. Pitsligo is Slipping away fast but very Easily.² All hopes of an Indemnity is over for this year . . .

“ Forbes.”

“ Keith Hall, July 13th 1765.

“ Dr. Sir,

“ I was vastly sorry that you got so very bad an afternoon on Wednesday, after your Complaisance to me, and will be glad to hear you did not suffer by it : On my getting to the Castle ³ I found no body but the Duke, Lady Susan ⁴ and Lord George ; neither Lady Fife, nor the Dutchess were there : I mett with a most gracious and kind Reception, was press'd to stay all night which I did : next morning got away airy, and first breakfasted at Keith, where I shav'd and shifted and then call'd upon David Tulloch,⁵ and so went to Huntly Lodge to Dinner ; where I was much press'd to stay, but being anxious I went to Cobairdy and so came here last night about 7 a Clock : Thank God found my Wife and the Children all well and Lady Innes no worse, but little or no Chance of a Recovery, and she may go off the first Astmhatick Fit or She may Linger for weeks or even months, but her Situation will confine my Wife very much. We have Captain William Innes and Mrs. and Miss Watt here with us, the Captain goes to Alves next week, to make some stay. There is no news, but very bad Rainy weather which is hard on the Hay and Peats, and the Crops in Generall not so well as in your Country. I wish you would come over a few days either before or after Harvest, and take a little Diversion of Shooting. I always am,

“ My Dr. Sir,

“ your much oblig'd Friend and humble servant,

“ Forbes.”

“ Keith Hall, October 1st 1765. Tuesday.

“ Dr. Sir,

“ As I always was and hope ever will be very sensible of yours and your Familys Friendship to my Wife and me and as I know the Regard your Good Mama had for Honest Lady Innes, I would not Loose a post to inform you of that worthy Lady's Death, which happen'd yesterday Forenoon at eleven a Clock ; She had suffer'd much and Long, and soon after her Legs broke they mortified from her toes up to her knees. But at last she slipt off very easily without pain or a Groan sitting in her chair and all of us about her ; She is to be bury'd privately on thursday the 3rd at Putachie beside my Father : ”

An interesting fact which emerges from the above letter and another written by Lord Forbes to Captain John Forbes of Newe at Beaufort, is

¹ Dorothy Dale. (See above, page 258.)

² He died December 21st, 1762.

³ Gordon Castle.

⁴ Afterwards Duchess of Westmoreland.

⁵ The veteran Jacobite, younger brother of the better-known Thomas Tulloch of Tannachy.



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CATHERINE INNES, WIFE OF 17TH LORD FORBES.

(From portraits at Castle Forbes.)

that in the years 1765-66 Forbes had become a tenant of the Earl Marischal at Keith Hall.

He writes from there again on the 30th of January, 1766 :—

“ We have not heard any more from Lord Marischal,¹ but if he does not send Mr. Scott in here we are resolved to walk out and go where we will. In any shape we are sufficiently tired of the place. My Aunt² says now that she does not want to hinder me from going to Putachie, only as she is told it is difficult to remove a proprietor in case of a sale (which by the by is nonsense) she will have me find security to remove when she pleases. This is so wild a scheme that I can't agree to it, nor will I go there unless I get a life rent tack of the whole estate or at least of the house, and all the farms Customs peats and services. But we must wait with patience—only it will be hard to let two good houses go to ruin and not let me and my family have the benefit of either, even though I am willing to pay for them, as she knows that my living here is both disagreeable and more expensive than I can afford as I have no farm. If my wife and the children are well she and I still, please God, will be at Fort William, but she does not lie in till the 20th May³ or thereabout so it will be July before we can get out.”

In the following year he was established at Putachie again and writes :—

“ Putachie, Friday, August 7th 1767.

“ My Dr. Sir,

“ I have the pleasure to Acquaint you, that this morning about half an hour after two a Clock, my Wife was safely deliver'd of a Fine Sturdy Boy.”⁴

and again—

“ Putachie, Thursday, August 4th 1768.

“ My Dr. Sir,

“ Thank God my wife and the Five Bairns are all bravely ; and a Sixth⁵ advancing fast.” . . .

“ Putachie, June 5th 1769.

“ My Dr. Sir,

“ On Wednesday last I arrived at Aberdeen where my Wife mett me on Thursday, she and all the Bairns are bravely, Except the eldest girl Maysie,⁶ who has been and still continues much distrest with worms and other Complaints. This hurry'd us home, so we arrived here on Saturday night ; the child is rather

¹ Who had returned to Potsdam for good, in the end of 1764, after having occupied Keith Hall for some time.

² Dorothea, widow of the 14th Lord Forbes.

³ His son, Robert, was born in this year.

⁴ The third son, Andrew, *d.* 1808.

⁵ William, Lt. R.N., died at Lisbon, 1792.

⁶ Marjorie, his eldest daughter, now 7. In a letter of 1769 he announces that his “ second boy, Bobbie has been dangerously ill with a worm fever, which has reduced him extremely.”

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easier but weak and Thin, and is under a course of strong Physick ; so we hope the worst is over . . . I intended being in Murray about the middle of July, but am affraid I must go back to Ednr. about that time, as the sale of the Estate of Forbes comes on the 20th and till I can make that or some other purchase, to the Liking of the Chancery, we have no Chance to get my Wife's money out of the Funds, you would hear I had some better success in my own affairs which will help us a little, but they would not give me one farthing of my Arrears of Fort William, which is full £600 guineas loss to me. . . .

“ Forbes.”

“ London, May 9th 1769. Tuesday.

“ My Dr. Sir,

“ This will be sent you by my Wife per Express, along with a Book and Plan of Fort William ;¹ and upon Receipt of it, please be so good, as get Cumming your old Governor, or some other Careful Sober Fellow to carry them to Fort William directly : and whatever the Costs are, I shall repay you with pleasure how soon I return to Scotland, which I hope will be soon now ; the Hurry about them is that Lord Lorne set out this day for Scotland, is to be at the Fort the first week of June and I became bound to his Lop. to have them there, to wait for him. I hope this shall find your good Mama, you and all friends in Elgin well : The History of my Journey and Proceedings here, must be delay'd till I have the pleasure to see you : I have had little or no Success about my Wife's money, but hope to get something done in the other affair. I leave Town next week and shall write you the moment I get home, mean time excuse hurry and give my best Compliments to your Mama ; and believe me, My Dr. Sir, your affect and oblig'd Friend,

“ Forbes.”

“ Putachie, Novr. 8th 1769.

“ My Dr. Sir,

“ This morning (being my Lady Wife's Birthday, who is now twenty nine years compleat) I was favour'd with yours dated Fridday last the 3rd. . . .

“ The day I left you I got to Foccabers about one a clock, went and Call'd upon Cose Gordon and his family, staid above an hour with him and had a long conversation : He told me He never once thought of purchasing the Estate of Forbes, spoke very Friendly and gave me several good Hints : I then went to the Castle to dinner, was graciously Receiv'd, the Duke had only come home from Turriff the night before and seem'd Highly pleas'd with the Company and Amusements : I intended to have staid Tuesday all day and Hunted with his Grace, but that morning's letters brought the dismall news of Lord Eglinton's murder² which so disconcerted all the Family, as they are nearly Related, that I thought best to mount my Horse and Rode to Cobairdy by the Boat of Rothie-

¹ This plan is still at Castle Forbes, but gives very few details.

² Alexander Montgomerie, 10th Lord Eglinton, born 1723, Governor of Dumbarton. Shot in a quarrel, Oct. 24th, 1769, by Mungo Campbell, an officer of Excise, whom Lord Eglinton had found upon his ground, with a gun, apparently poaching. The murderer escaped execution by hanging himself, February 28th, 1770.

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may for fear of the Dovert and got there to dinner, but wett to the Skin : next morning I proceeded on to Colonel Horns at Logie and got a most dreadfull fall by my Horse going in to a Bog, when I fell over his Head and He fell on above me, but Luckily escap'd unhurt, but in a sad condition and both my Horse and myself were oblig'd to be wash'd from Head to Foot, and when I found I was safe I laugh'd very heartily at the Figure we made : that night I came up to my Friend Brux at Pittodrie ; and on Thursday came home to dinner and found my Wife and all here well."

In 1770 Lord Forbes was obliged to sell and Mr. George Muir, W.S., of Edinburgh, bought from Dundas and Gregory the whole estates of Forbes, Kearn, Auchindoir and Clatt at £19,360, in four lots.

Lots 2 and 4 were sold at £9,860 to Lord Forbes, who resold them to Captain John Forbes of Newe. The latter bought lots 1 and 3, and resold Auchindoir to Jonathan of Brux and Forbes to Lord Forbes. Arbiters fixed boundaries and divided the quarry and the mosses. A long account of the proceedings over the compulsory sale of the property is interesting and is printed in an abridged form in the Appendix (page 274).

This was the occasion when the original Castle Forbes, now Druminnor, passed away from the family.

LORD FORBES TO WILLIAM KING.

" Ednr. March. 15th 1771.

" My Dr. Sir,

" . . . We have had an indifferent winter of it in our Family, owing to various complaints, but especially severe Colds and Coughs : We are 14 of Family, 8 of ourselves, and 6 Servants, and it was hard to say which was worst : My Wife was Bled, Blister'd, Vomite and Physick'd, so was I : thank God we are all now better, only I am Confin'd with the Rose in my Leg but I hope it will soon be over : The Children are all going on very well in their different Branches of Education, and tho' I am heartily tir'd of this place, and it is by far too expensive for us, yet my Wife is Resolv'd to Stay another year on the Children's account. Possibly I may be order'd to Fort William this Summer. If so, and if I am not Confin'd there, I will come Round by your Country, and take a flying view of Aberdeenshire, and so back ; but otherwise I will not be in North this year : "

" Putachie, Saturday, May 11th 1771.

" My Dr. Sir,

" . . . I have a letter last night from the Duke of Gordon. His Grace and the Dutchess are to be here to dinner next Wednesday the 15th, this prevents me from going to Aberdeen till Friddy the 17th and I must be home the 19th and set out for the Fort about the 22nd or 24th ; As I have got a letter from Captain Ross, Genl. Oughton's Aid du Camp yesterday telling me his Rout and Motions ; and as He is to be the 8th or 9th of June at Fort William it is necessary for me to be there at least a week before him : So if all be well here, I intend to be your

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guest at Elgin the 24th or 25th and shall be sorry if I have not the pleasure of your Company, tho' you should not stay 2 days with me, for as to that you shall certainly command your own time as to staying or going : At the same time if it should prove Inconvenient, don't let your promise or Complaisance lead you to do any thing that might be inconvenient, tho' I hope 6 or 7 days being absent wont hurt you, or hinder your mercate affairs : Should any thing Interfere to stop me I shall write you, and if you don't hear from me, you may expect me about the time I mention : I only propose to call at Alves, Altyr, and Dalvey, but my visits must be short : I know of no person as yet to go with me : We are as barren here of news as you can be . . .

“ Forbes.”

FROM LADY FORBES TO WILLIAM KING.

“ Putachie, June 12th 1771.

“ Sir,

“ I had the pleasure of your obliging letter some days ago, and at the same time that I acknowledge the receipt of it, allow me to return my sincere thanks to you and Lady Newmiln for your great care and attention to Lord Forbes in his late illness, I am sorry that business prevented you from going to Fort William, but at the same time thinks it very luckie that you went so far as Inverness with him, for when any Illness attacks him his Spirits always fail and then the Company of a Friend is of more consequence than Drugs or any thing else, I have heard from him every Post since he arrived at the Fort, and he now assures me that his arm will soon be well, and that the Surgeon there thinks it was owing to a tendon being hurt when he was blooded by Mr. Dugal, which surprizes me much as Dugal was always thought a good blooder.

“ I ever am Sir, your much obliged Humble Servant,

“ C. Forbes.”

LORD FORBES TO WILLIAM KING.

“ Putachie, Janry. 12th 1772.

“ My Dr. Sir,

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“ Perhaps you may have heard that poor Stuart Cumine ¹ my youngest nephew is still alive, but has had a hard tryall, being twice Shipwreck'd, twice Prisoner among Barbarians, and is now at Bengal a Private Cadet, in Captain James Burnett's Company, son to Mr. James Burnett, Merchant in Aberdeen. We are laying all oars in the water to get him Recommended for Bread :² among others I have apply'd to Colonel Munro : and by this Bearer have wrote my Good friend Doctor Munro and ask'd the favour of him to write the Col. in poor Stuart's favour : and if Mrs. Munro will be so good as write also it will have great weight. . . .”

¹ Son of his eldest sister, Sophia, who had married, in 1732, Charles Cumine of Kinninmonth.

² Some way of earning his living.

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" Putachie Jan 2 1776.

" My Dr. Sir,

" Allow me by this to wish you, your good Mama and all your Friends Many happy New Years and Every good thing and we will be happy to hear you are all well, and that you have Escap'd this Plague of the Influenza which Rages Every where : we kept free till last week when first the Servants took it, then Lady Forbes, and now all Children : however thank God it is not Deadly : As yet I have been well, for Ernest Gordon ¹ and I kept it off by Eating Beef, and drinking Port and Punch plentifully. . . .

" Forbes."

" Putachie, Jan. 29th 1776.

" My Dr. Sir,

" . . . I think our American matters dont seem to clear up yet, but I hope in the Spring and Summer our Troops and Ships will Reduce them to Reason : How does your County like the Militia, are you to be a Field Officer, or only a Captain under Her Boney Grace of Gordon,² I don't suppose you would dislike to be Her Aid du Camp and Train Bearer : we have not yet got Certain Accounts of Genll. Fraser's ³ Field Officers or Captains. But as to Recruiting men, it goes fast on in all Corners. As my neighbour the Laird of Tonley ⁴ with his Wife and Daughters arriv'd safe at Genoa the 15th and were to eat their Yuil Goose with His Holiness the Pope, I have no neighbour now to crack with, but that droll Fish Mr. Wilson of Finzeauch, who I dare say you have seen here : For as to Brux, I believe I have not seen him here but once these three months, and the Storm is too deep to walk to Pittodrie for pleasure : Since the new year we have had a very Smart Storm of Frost and Snow. I went to Aberdeen the 14th to qualify for Lord Dunmore's Election, and got home not without some difficulty the 16th and just now while I write the Horses, men etc. are crossing the River on the Ice below this House. What is Tanachy doing, Brodie, Gordonstoun etc : for I believe were it not for Old Parson Shaws Book, which cost me fourteen shillings, I should hardly now know there was such a County as Moray. . . . Do tell the old Parson I subscribed and bought his Book.

" Forbes."

Catherine Innes, Lady Forbes, to Mrs. Scott, mother of Sir Walter :—

" Putachie, Dec. 16 1779.

" My dear Madam,

" I have been often prevented by something or other from answering your last (I may say melancholy) letter. I congratulate you on little Anny's having got the better of her accident which was very alarming, the other two events I most sincerely regret and pity all those connected, Mr. Scott and you particularly.

¹ Laird of Park, in Banffshire.

² The celebrated Jean Maxwell.

³ Son of Simon, Lord Lovat, beheaded, 1747.

⁴ Patrick Byres of Tonley—a Jacobite exiled after the '45. His son, James, born 1734, was godson to James, 16th Lord Forbes. Having been chiefly educated in France, he became a Roman Catholic, and lived for forty years in Rome, from 1750 to 1790. He became a lay Cardinal, and there is a portrait of him in his robes at Tonley.

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" It was with pleasure I saw by Mr. Scott's letter to Lord Forbes that your son Bob is gone to sea with Captain Dickson who I daresay will take every care of him—pray when you hear how he likes the sea do let me know. My friend John I hope is perfectly stout and strong again and either he or Thom or Wattie may follow Mr. Scott's plan in the law way, if not, sweet little Daniel will, for he looks as if he would do whatever you pleased—but after all I do believe it is the best method to let each young man fix a line of life for himself—when they meet with hardships in following their own plan they feel as nothing and whatever is the consequence they have no cause to repine. I am now perfectly satisfied in letting my Bob take his own way—tho it is but very lately I could say so. The Surgeon belonging to the Elizabeth is come home on account of bad health and he assures Mr. Maitland from whom I have just heard that Bob is now well seasoned to the West Indies and was in good health and spirits the 18 of Sept. last, and what is also very agreeable, is making great Proficiency in his Business—he has been midshipman since August. I begin to suspect we shall have another sailor in this family. Willie, I hear tells everybody he will go to sea also, but as I have often said I wished each son to take a diferent employment that their interests might not interfere, Willie adds, ' but don't tell Mama.'

" I don't know when you and I shall have an other crack together—while these hard times last we dare not show ourselves in Edinburgh. I regretted this summer when we went to Glasgow that we were obliged to go round by Stirling and after all I think since I am not obliged to stay at that sad Fort William, I may be very well satisfied to stay at Putachie and what is comfortable, my two girls seem perfectly satisfied notwithstanding the dulness of this place in winter.

" Lord Forbes and my daughters join with me in kind compliments and in wishing Mr. Scott and you many happie returns of the aproaching season and with great regard I remain my dear Madam

" Your most obedient and very humble servant "

" C. Forbes." (*MS. Nat. Library, Edinburgh.*)

Lord Forbes to Wm. King :—

" Putachie, Dec. 3rd 1783.

" Dear Sir,

" . . . The same family you left here and your humble servant have all continued bravely since, nor have I been from home since and as I seldom stirr from home, I thought myself doubly unlucky in being oblig'd to go to Aberdeen that day I mett you with Lady Dowager, and would fain hope you will be so very good as Make a Stretch to see an Old Superannuate Friend about the New Year or if you can't come then, why not let us have the pleasure to see you on the 31st of January 1784, to Celebrate my 24th Marriage day : which will be Esteemed a particular Favour done Lady Forbes and me : My eldest son has not got his leave Renew'd, though we are in hopes to obtain it, as we have the Commanding Officer's Consent, and it only depends upon James getting any of his Brother Officers to do his Duty for him ; Both his and Bob's stay is so very uncertain, and so many things to do and to provide for them when they get a Call, that I dare not promise at present they can get your length, but if Ever they or I reach the Banks of the Spey, we will most undoubtedly Cross it, for the Sole purpose

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to wait upon you and your Good Mother, to both of whom Lady Forbes and I are under so many Obligations: I thank you for Paying the Two Guineas on my Son's account to Mrs. Grant. . . . [He then goes on to say that 'we have had a most Noble Season since Harvest . . . but there 'will be a scarcity of meal.'] But what is very bad there is no money to be got, so that we shall have a very bad Term, and you'll hear of many breaking and some going to the Tol-booth, so don't be surpriz'd, if you come to the Castle Street, Aberdeen, if you see my Long Nose at the Grate with the Rest: in short we have a gloomy prospect now—We must live in hopes of better times."

This is the last of the letters to William King.

The following letter at Castle Forbes, from Lord Forbes, shows some of the hard conditions of life in the winter even at the very end of the 18th century. It is addressed to the veteran Jacobite, Jonathan Forbes, last Laird of Brux, who died in Aberdeen eight years later at the age of 91.

Lord Forbes' remark about meal requisite to feed his household and retainers shows the curious 18th century use of the words "I wish," meaning in fact that "I do *not* expect."

(This letter had been torn up, as valueless, but has been repaired by the present editors.)

"Putachie, Dec. 31. 1783.

"Hogminae

"My Dr. Sir

"As this is the last letter I shall write you this year, please accept of the kind compliments and best wishes of all this Family to Lady Brux, your sister, you and all your friends and that you may all enjoy many happy returns of the season. Thank God all here are brawly, no company with us, but Mrs. Burnett and her son, so we had a very quiet sober Yuil.

"Luckily we got safe home here this day sennit but not without a good deal of difficulty and some danger for altho the snow only came on that morning, before we got to Finzauch at 2 o'clock the snow was as deep as the forewheels and all the road and path blown up; we had really a severe storm and the hardest frost I have seen since the 1760, and as all the milnes are frozen up, if it laste long the poor people will be in misery and distress for meal, and we have it not to supply them, for I wish we may have enough for our own family.

"Had the weather allow'd you'll remember I told you I was to send in a cart for bricks as last Monday, and your Mason George Logan was to have come out this Fridday to have cur'd some of our Chimneys of Smoke, so on receipt of this be so good as send him word not to Stirr till the weather and roads permitt me to send for the Bricks and when my Cart comes I shall acquaint him or beg of you to do it, as I don't know where he lives.

"I had a letter from James¹ last night, dated Tuesday sennit the 23rd. He got to Edin^g the 22 very well, and was to set off in the fly for London Christmas Day but had very bad roads, and the Fridays post to Old Nairn only got there Monday and last Mondays post, John Shand sent me word last night, would not

¹ His eldest son, James Ochoncar, afterwards 18th Lord Forbes, then 18 years old.

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be with him till this morning so bad is the road and burns. We can hardly get water here to the Beasts and to dress our Meat and if any water is left in Bottle or glass for a few hours, if not near a Fire, it bursts and cracks the Bottle so you may Judge of the Frost, and while I write just now the Drop at my nose is like to Freeze, and one side of me burning and the other shivering—so having no news to communicate shall only add that I ever am my Dr Brux your own

“Forbes.”

A letter to the Right Honourable Lady Forbes, Putachie, from John Gordon, gives interesting details with regard to the estate of Brux—now merged in that of Forbes.

“Aberdeen, 25 March 1785.

“Madam

“I take the liberty to inform your Lap/- of a circumstance of much consequence to your Family, and altho I have not liberty from Brux to mention his settlements lately made, yet I will assume that liberty on purpose that Lord Forbes and your Lap/- may by every means cultivate and improve his attachment, because his feelings are now become very much blunted and his temper much altered.

“He had made a settlement some years ago in favour of Lord Forbes’ family—from a copy that I gave him—but in the course of our conversation this winter I suspected a blunder in the execution of the Deed wrote with his own hand—He showed me the paper—and there was a very material blunder, as I guessed—his hand now shakes so much, that he cannot write—In short, his new Deed of Settlement in January last, is wrote with my hand and Executed at my sight—‘Of all his Estates Heritable and moveable in favour of your Second Son and his heirs—whom failing to your third and fourth Sons in their order, and their heirs—“whom all failing” to any second or younger son of your eldest Son, or heir of the Family of Forbes’ under condition always that the Succession of Brux shall never belong to the Peerage of Forbes, and the heir succeeding shall hold and bear the name and arms of *Forbes of Brux*.

“There is a separate Testamentary deed where in Lord Forbes and I are appointed his Executors and failing us, or either of us, our eldest sons for the Execution of his settlements.

“All those deeds are now in his own custody—formally and legally executed.

“I ventured to signify my opinion, that he should mention those settlements to Lord Forbes or your Lap/-—he did not seem to comply—and therefore if he has not done it, my information by this letter must be used with much delicacy.

“I only wish your Lap/- particularly, now and then to keep up a correspondence, by enquiring abt himself, and information to him about your Sons. He puts a high value on every letter he gets from you,—I wish you to improve it, and this is my sole intention, by the information I now give—the honest man is very different from what he was, and altho his temper is varied, it must be studied—I beg my good wishes to all at Puttachie and have honour to be

“Your Lap^s/- most obed^t Ser^{nt}”

“John Gordon” (of Craig).

JAMES, 17TH LORD FORBES

A few letters from James, 17th Lord Forbes, to James, 2nd Lord Fife, and his factor, William Rose, are among the Rose papers. Some of date 1791 relate to the proposal to join the parish of Forbes to that of Tullynessle, and Kearn to that of Auchindoir. The patronage of two of these parishes was bought in 1769 by Lord Fife because, as George Burnett, who arranged the deal, wrote—"They were a pretty thing to have in a family." The proposed amalgamation would rob Lord Fife of his patronage. Should he not feel able to agree to this, Lord Forbes suggested the amalgamation of Forbes to Alford and Kearn to Clatt—"the patronages of both of which are in the Crown," but the first proposal was, by arrangement with Lord Fife, carried out, he paying Lord Forbes £200 and retaining the patronage of the united parishes of Forbes and Tullynessle.

Some of the letters are in the handwriting of Catherine, Lady Forbes, and earlier letters from her husband to Lord Fife request the loan or copy of papers bearing upon her ancestors, the Innesses of Orton, Balvenie and Innes, which latter estates had passed into the hands of Lord Fife.

Children of the 17th Lord Forbes and Catherine Innes (born, 1740, married in 1760)—3 daughters, 4 sons:—

Nov. 22nd, 1760. A daughter, died young.

Feb. 13th, 1762. Marjory, married (1) Lord Macleod, son of the attainted Lord Cromarty, and (2) as his second wife, John, 4th Duke of Atholl.

March, 1763. Mary, married 1785, Sir John Hay of Hayston.

March 7th, 1765. James Ochoncar, 18th Lord Forbes.¹

1766. Robert Alaster Cam. Capt., R.N., of the Dryad frigate, in 1790, died off the coast of Norway, 7th October, 1795, unmarried. He was present at the battle of the "glorious first of June" off Ushant, 1794.

Aug. 7th, 1767. Andrew, Chief Registrar of the Isle of Man and Captain in the Royal Manx Fencibles, died at Douglas, 1808, unmarried.

Aug. 1768. William, Lieutenant, R.N., died in Lisbon, 1st February, 1792, unmarried.

The 17th Lord Forbes died in Edinburgh, July 29th, 1804. His widow died in Edinburgh on April 16th, 1805.

James, Lord Forbes, appointed as Tutors and Curators to his children: Catherine, Lady Forbes—formerly Innes—(his wife); The Hon. John Forbes, Admiral of England and General of Marines (Granard); James Irvine of

¹ James Ochoncar, Master of Forbes, was made a Burgess of Aberdeen in 1770, at the age of 5. And his brother, Robert, at the same age, in the following year. According to the Burgh records of Banff, when the recipients of civic honours were of tender age, suitable refreshments were provided—as "Raisins and confections for the young Burgesses."

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Kingcausie ; Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Baronet ; Sir Ernest Gordon of Park, Baronet ; James Cumine of Kinninmonth, Jonathan Forbes of Brux, and Robert Barclay of Urie, " to be Tutors and Curators 30 Oct. 1782."

His eldest son, James, 18th Lord Forbes, was then 17—the three other sons and two daughters were all living.

(The 17th Lord had no brothers, hence the choice of guardians.)

According to papers at Castle Forbes a Government pension of £200 was granted to James, Lord Forbes, from 1769.

APPENDIX FOR JAMES, 17TH LORD FORBES.

DOCUMENTS, ETC.

" 1770. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF NEWE AND OTHERS AT SALE OF THE ESTATE OF FORBES."

Extracted from a MS. at Castle Forbes.

[See Lord Forbes' own letters, page 266, as to this enforced sale.]

" Many are the conjectures about the fate of the Estate of Forbes by a multitude of different people, who being intirely ignorant of the true State of the case, are very apt to put wrong constructions upon things—Some there are who blame Lord Forbes, having once betaken himself to the Lot of Kearn, and then parted with it afterwards ; Others there are, and not a few, who blame Neaw much for taking it, as he had no intention of keeping it, but behoved soon to give it away.

" When the whole Estate of forbes was advertis'd to be sold either in cumulo or Lots, Lord fforbes (as he was not equal to the whole) propos'd to purchase one of the Lots with his Ladie's money, if he could by any means get the same out of Chancery, and the Lot of Kearn was what both he and Lady forbes pitched upon, Tho they were advised again and again by some of their best friends to betake themselves to the parish of Forbes, as being by far the best Lot of the whole Estate : Notwithstanding all the Remonstrances given, Still the attachment to the Old Duchus ¹ determined them for Kearn.

" As Lord fforbes could not have immediat Access to his Ladie's money, it was agreed his friends should advance the price of his Lot, and take security upon the same, That Captain Forbes of Neaw should get the Lot of Forbes, Brux the Lot of Auchindore, Lord Forbes, Kearn, And to prevent strangers from interfering, Lord Forbes was to take his chance of selling Clatt.

" This plan being Settled Lord Forbes, Neaw and Brux were to meet at Edin^b the 8th or 9th of January 1770 as the sale came on the 17th of that month. Craig, with an uncomon disinterestedness, laid aside his own private business and went chearfully up to Edin^b with Lord Forbes and Brux to assist.

" At one of the Meetings the following proposals was agreed to, And Subscribed by Neaw, Craig and Brux, viz.

¹ First possession of the family. (See Preliminary Chapter, page 12.)

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“ ‘ The Estate of Forbes in the Parishes of Forbes, Kearn, Auchindore and Clatt is to be sold in Cumulo, and sett up at the sum of £17000 ; if it shall not sell in that way, then it is to be exposed in Lots as follows

‘ Kearn at	£5560
‘ Forbes at	6733
‘ Auchindore at	1600
‘ Clatt at	2930

£ 16903 [sic]

“ ‘ As there is a very great probability of an interfearence with Lord Forbes in whatever way the Estate is sold, whether in Cumulo or Lots, And if it should happen to be carried off by a Stranger, his Lop/ may be deprived of any particular Lot which he wished to have, Therefore and in order to avoid any such hazard so far as lyes in our power we do make the following proposals

“ ‘ If it shall be thought adviseable by his Lordship and his friends that he should purchase the whole and afterwards sell off such parts as he does not choose to keep, we shall most chearfully concur with his Lordship and his other friends in that purchase. But if it shall be thought too great an undertaking, and that it is more eligibile, and less hazardous to contrive some measure for securing the Lot of Kearn to Lord Forbes, We do further propose that the whole Estate when exposed in one Lot shall be purchased by his Lordship or by some other person in his name, And if it is carried at the upset price of £17000 str. he shall have the Lot of Kearn at the upset price of £5560 str.’

“ The sale came on the 17th January 1770 and was carried by Muir writter in Edin^b at £19360 str,¹ a very high price it must be allow’d. In two days after, it was offered Lord Forbes at the same price and which by the advice of his friends he accepted of, and all things then was to go on among the contracting parties as formerly concerted.

“ Neww in the beginning appear’d very Solicitous about Lord Forbes affairs, for as far back as the 30th Aprile 1769 in a letter from him to Brux mentioning Lord Forbes situation he said ‘ I need not enter into particulars but upon the whole I think there is a chance of preserving the old Duchus.’ Lord and Lady Forbes had among all the Lots of the Estate of Forbes, fix’d their choice upon Kearn, not that they were ignorant that it was not the best Lot, but because the old Duchus was upon it, which had been for many centuries the seat of the Cheifs of the name. Lord Forbes Chose that, than any other, as he was not in a capacity to buy back the whole, and he rejoycd that the bulk of the rest was to fall into the hands of Forbeses, whom he look’d upon as his real friends, and might keep possession of it untill some of his ofspring might be in a capacity to buy it

¹ Auchindore	£1954 7 6
Forbes	7466 15 0
Clatt	3598 9 4
Kearn	5940 8 2
Mercats	400 0 0

£19,360 0 0

back again, should any of them choose to sell, In any event it was still a great satisfaction to him that it was in such hands rather than absolute strangers.

“ In this situation it may be very well presum’d that any man of the least feeling and Delicacy would have been very loath to have given the most distant hint to separate Lord Forbes from the thing he had so much at heart even suppose he could have made a trifling advantage by the Exchange.

“ But Neaw had no Idea of this piece of Delicacy when it interfer’d with interest, and therefore as he saw that he could not have Forbes upon his own Terms, he propos’d to exchange the Lot of Forbes with that of Kearn and Clatt, and he would give Lord Forbes £960 more than he had put upon them in his plan, this he thought would infallibly secure him in the Lot of Forbes, on his own Terms (as he had silenced his friend Brux before) never imagining that Lord Forbes would part with the Duchus on any terms; but if he should, he would then get possession of Kearn and Clatt, that he believed of such high value, but Lord Forbes friends saw the advantage, and persuaded him to accept Neaws proposal, And in this new bargain it was thought Neaw was miserably disappointed; The crafty are often caught in their own Nett, and so it happen’d him, for Lord Forbes readily accepted the offer, and this made matters easy for the Arbiters, who had nothing further to do than separate the Lots and set marches.

“ Neaw, when Brux at first propos’d his buying the lot of Forbes, alledged it would be rather too much for his finances, Brux from the beginning wanted much that friends of the family of Forbes should buy all of the Estate that Lord Forbes was not for, and in order to induce Neaw to purchase he offered to go halves with him in it, This Neaw declin’d as there was little to be made that way. But for as short as he pretended his finances to be, yet before the Month of August was well begun, he gathered a great stomach for land and was very nigh getting possession of a good deal more than the lot of forbes, No doubt he meant to sell off again, whenever a Merchant should cast up, which plainly shows he had no intention of Keeping any.

“ When the agreement for Kearn and Clatt in exchange for Forbes was finished twixt him and Lord Forbes, he then said (by way of a blind as was suppos’d) that he would order his Son down to reside at Castle forbes, (Druminnor) and that he was to sell the Estate of Neaw forthwith, as he could not keep both, This his Son confirmed afterwards, and told they would see the Lands of Neaw in the Ab^{dn} Journals immediatly. All these farces look’d very odd, as it appear’d none of them were ever intended. Such clashing contrarieties must be very supprising to every body, to be carried on by a man of Neaw’s sense, and cannot fail to lessen him much in the eyes of every considerate person, and will show to the world that tho he be a man of Knowledge, yet he is very unsteady in his resolution.

“ By all his Couping and Jockeying or what ye please to call it, by all his bustle and pretence to friendship throw the course of the whole transaction, what has he done? He bought the lot of Forbes for himself. And Anchindore, which he disposed to Brux, made him pay betwixt 3 and £400 str more.

“ Whatever advantage Neaw and his friends may alledge Lord Forbes got by this exchange, its realy thought by not a few, that Neaw’s behaviour from his

first coming with Craig at Castle Forbes when the Arbiters met, and his conduct all along after that, plainly shewed there were none meant. And it would likewise appear that his proposal for such an exchange was a premeditated and settled plan, As his own Brother Major Forbes going up to the hill of Correen, the first day the Arbiters went there, told Brux that he understood the lands in the North side of the hills, meaning Kern and Clatt, were far better than those in the south side, meaning Forbes, And that his brother would willingly give £1000 for the exchange, and it seem'd all their Jealousie were so much awakened then that the Major could not help expressing his suspicion of Craig, and was surpris'd his brother had not a Lawyer there on his side, as Craig was there for Lord Forbes. These estimates and Calculations about Land could never enter the Major's head as he was quite a stranger to all the lands thereabout, had he not heard them about his Brothers home.

“ Upon the whole facts before narrated the impartial can easily judge what complements Lord Forbes has received from or what obligations he lies under to Neaw, throw the whole course of the transactions which are here fairly and candidly stated. Neaws profits he knows best himself.”¹

An interesting detail of the sale of the estates concerned the value placed on the profits of Bartholomew Fair and Play Saturday Fair.

The rights to these, inherent in the Lordship and Barony of Forbes, have been handed down from time immemorial; they had originally been an item in Royal Charters. (See page 206.)

In 1626 Alex., Master of Forbes, denuded himself of the same—for the benefit of Mr. John Strachan, parson of Kincardine. In 1770 when the Lordship and Barony of Forbes were sold, Mr. George Muir, W.S., bought it and sold it in parcels, as seen above; the lot comprehending Fair and markets was bought by James, Lord Forbes—the said privilege being valued at £400 sterling.

In 1775 the Rev. William Morris prohibited the holding of the Fair, but in 1775 and 1776 it was held as usual. The dispute lasted until November 1779, but meantime the Fairs continued to be held, as the matter appears to have been decided in favour of Lord Forbes, but in course of time the Fair was discontinued.

WILL OF GENERAL ANDREW BISSET.

General Andrew Bisset (sometimes spelt with 2 t's) was born 1660 and died 1742. It is conjectured that he was of the Aberdeen family of Bisset, of which was William Bisset, son of Andrew, who was made a Burgess of Aberdeen on 10th May, 1668, and subsequently became Dean of Guild. William had a son, William, who was probably the father of Andrew. It

¹ As seen on page 37. Captain John Forbes of Newe did resell the old Duchus lands immediately, and they thus passed out of Forbes' hands, but Lord Forbes seems to have had no ill-feeling about it.

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is not known how Andrew was uncle to Marjory Winram, Lady Innes, but the fact is stated in his Will, now at Somerset House. He leaves to her a messuage in Queen Street, Westminster, and all the furniture she shall think proper, also £1,000, and after several specific legacies, the whole of the rest of his estate is to be invested, and the half of the yearly income to be paid to " Dame Marjory Innes, or to her son Andrew, my godson now an infant," the other half to Marjory's other children, sons and daughters, but these, if any, as well as Andrew, died young, as the whole estate came eventually to Catherine, the only survivor.

General Andrew Bisset was a distinguished soldier, whose first commission as Ensign in the Coldstream Guards was dated May 1st, 1688. In 1717 he became Colonel of the 30th Foot, and at his death on August 22nd, 1742, was a Lieut.-General of seven years' standing. He was 82 years of age.

He is buried in the East Cloister of Westminster Abbey.

From the large picture of himself and family, now at Castle Forbes, he must have had three children, but only the names of two are known: a son, Andrew, who was buried at Chiswick, July 7th, 1702, and a daughter, Constance, baptized at St. Margaret's, Westminster, July 8th, 1705. His wife, also named Constance, was buried there, September 18th, 1720. At his death he was a childless widower. His day-book is at Castle Forbes, but gives no further information as to his family, only amusing details of his own and his wife's expenditure on clothes and food, etc.

" CATHARINE LADY FORBES: HER LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT SIGN'D AT ABERDEEN MARCH 29TH 1766.

" I Catharine Lady Forbes, Spouse to the Right Honourable James Lord Forbes, and only Child in Life of the marriage betwixt Sir Robert Innes of Balvenie, Baronett, and Dame Marjory Innes deceast his Spouse, Neice of the also deceast Andrew Bissett of Twickenham Esqr, in the County of Middlesex;

" Being resolv'd to make a Settlement of my Means and Estate which is now at my own disposall, by the Death of my Mother who Life rented the Same, and that I am now past the age of Majority Do therefor make my Latter Will and Testament as follows; I hereby Nominate and appoint, the Said James Lord Forbes my Husband, to be my Sole & only Executor & universal Legator, and Intromitter, with my whole goods, Debts, Effects, Sums of Mony, Pictures, Plate, Household Furniture, and all other Chattells & Effects whatsoever, Real or personal, at present pertaining to me or which shall happen to pertain, & be resting & owing to me at the time of my Death, or whereunto I Can or may Succeed, by virtue of any Settlement, or Deed, made by my deceased grand uncle Andrew Bisset or otherways; And I do hereby leave, bequeath and devise the Same, to the Said James Lord Forbes my Husband; But with the Burdens, under the Conditions, & for the uses, Ends and purposes, after mention'd, allnlarly & no other Ways, I leave and bequeath, one half of the whole of my Said Money, Fortune & Effects to James Ochonchar Forbes, the only Son at present

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of the marriage betwixt me and my Said Husband, and failing the Said Son by death ; or that there shall happen to be more Sons of our marriage than one, I leave the Same, to my Eldest Son in Life, at the time of his Father's death, but Subject as aforesaid, to his Fathers Life rent ; And the Other half of my Said money, Fortune & Effects, I leave & bequeath to the other younger Children of our Said Marriage, whither Sons or Daughters, to be divided among them, by Such proportions, as my Said Husband and Executor, Shall think proper, by any writing under his Hand, but failing thereof, the Same Shall belong to the Said younger Children, Equally & proportionally, Share & Share alike ; And in Case of the death of the Said James Ochonchar Forbes, or that there shall be no Son or Sons of our Marriage in Life, at the time of my Said Husbands death but Only Daughters ; Then & in that Event, I leave & bequeath & appoint my Said Executor to pay to the Said Daughters, as follows ; If only one, the Sum of Four thousand pounds Sterling to her ; If two Daughters, the Sum of two thousand Pounds Sterling to Each of them ; If three Daughters, the Sum of Fifteen hundred Pounds Sterling to each—in Witness whereof (wrote upon this, & the three preceding Pages of this Sheet of Stamp'd Paper, by John Gordon of Craig advocate in Aberdeen) I have Subscrib'd the Same at Aberdeen, the Twenty Ninth day of March, One thousand Seven hundred & Sixty years, before Witnesses, Robert Simon Servant to my Said Husband, & the Said John Gordon of Craig ;

' C. Forbes.'