



The Works of M. de Voltaire

Voltaire, Tobias George Smollett, Thomas Francklin



THE
WORKS
OF
M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Translated from the FRENCH.

WITH
Notes, Historical and Critical.

By T. SMOLLETT, M. D.

T. FRANCKLIN, M. A. and OTHERS.

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CHAP. CXCI.

Of Prince Charles Edward.

Great Britain had, in this war, been upon the point of undergoing a revolution similar to that of the red and white roses. Prince Charles Edward, whose grandfather, by the father's side, was the unfortunate British monarch James II. and the great king of Poland, John Sobieski, his grandfather on the mother's side, made an attempt to reascend the throne of Great Britain, by one of those extravagant enterprizes, of which we meet with no examples except amongst the English, or in the fabulous ages of antiquity. He embarked, on the 12th of June 1745, in a small frigate of eighteen guns, without having given the court of France any intimation of his design; and having, in order to effect the conquest of three kingdoms, only seven officers, eighteen hundred sabres, twelve hundred fuzils, two thousand lewis d'ors, which he had borrowed, and not a single soldier.

After a passage wherein he was surrounded by dangers, he landed upon the south-west coast of Scotland: a few inhabitants of Moydart, to whom he discovered himself, threw themselves prostrate before him, but exclaimed at the same time, What can we do? we have no arms; we are poor, and destitute of all resource; we live only upon bread made of oats, and we cultivate barren lands. The prince made answer: "I will cultivate this land with you; I will eat of this bread; I will share your poverty; and I have brought you arms."

The inhabitants, moved and encouraged by this, took up arms in his-savour: they were immediately joined by the neighbouring tribes, which go by the name of clans. A piece of silk, which he had brought

over, served him as a royal standard. As soon as he saw himself at the head of one thousand five hundred men, he marched to Perth, made himself master of it, and there caused himself to be proclaimed regent of England, France, Scotland, and Ireland, in the name of his father James III. This title of regent of France, which was assumed by a prince who was scarce master of an inconsiderable village in Scotland, and who had no hopes of success but from the assistance of the French king, was a consequence of the custom adopted by the English kings, of assuming the title of kings of France; a custom which still subsists, though it should be abolished.

After this some Scotch noblemen repaired to his standard. He entered Edinburgh, and there caused himself to be acknowledged sovereign. The king of England's council set a price upon his head: 30000 pounds sterling (about seven hundred thousand livres) were offered to the person who should give him up, dead or alive. To this menace he answered by paining, with his one thousand five hundred Highlanders, a complete victory at Preston-pans, over an English army; and he took as many prisoners as he himself had soldiers. These Highlanders are the only people in Europe who preserve the military habit of the ancient Romans, together with the buckler; with the habit they possessed the courage of those Romans; they were deficient in nothing but discipline. The kings of Spain and France, upon this occasion, sent some pecuniary assistance to prince Edward. They wrote to him; they bestowed upon him the title of brother; two or three hundred men, of the royal Scotch regiment*, were sent to him from France, with some

* There was no such regiment in France before the extinction of the rebellion in Scotland: the few troops

piquets, who landed, after having passed through the midst of the English fleet.

The young prince subdued the whole country as far as Carlisle, and advanced within a hundred miles of London; he was then at the head of an army of about eight thousand men. Another English general, not the same that had been defeated at Preston-pans *, advanced towards Scotland. Prince Edward marched against him in the depth of winter, came up with him at Falkirk, upon the way to Edinburgh, gained a second victory, and the next day a third, over the same troops which he had beat the day before †.

This was the favourable time to complete the revolution; already a considerable part of London was, in secret, well affected to his cause ‡. That capital was full of broils and confusion. The duke of Richelieu was upon the coasts of France, ready to bring ten thousand men to his assistance; but as France was at that time in want of men of war, the enterprize miscarried, and the whole fruit of the efforts and victories of Edward was lost. The duke of Cumberland, at the head of a well disciplined army, well armed, and provided with artillery, at last defeated these Highlanders, who were destitute of every thing but courage. Prince Edward received a total overthrow at the battle of Culloden, not many miles from Inverness: his whole army was dispersed; he went through much the same adventures

that arrived as auxiliaries to the young pretender belonged to the Irish brigade.

* He was obliged to retreat to Scotland before the troops commanded by the duke of Cumberland.

† This third battle is altogether chimerical.

‡ No symptoms of this appeared.

which Charles II. had experienced after his defeat at Worcester, wandering like him, without succour, sometimes in company with two friends, the partners of his distress, sometimes with only one: sometimes alone, walking from cavern to cavern, lying in the forests, taking refuge in desert islands, being in want both of cloaths and food; and incessantly pursued by those who were desirous of getting the reward offered for taking him. Having one day walked above thirty miles on foot, being pressed hard by hunger, and almost ready to faint, he ventured to enter the house of a person who he knew was not of his party. "The son of your sovereign, said he, comes to ask of you food and raiment: I know you are my enemy, but I believe you a man of too much honour to abuse the confidence I place in you: take the rags that cover me, and keep them; you may perhaps one day restore them to me, in the palace of the kings of Great Britain." The gentleman was moved with compassion, assisted him as far as his situation would permit, and kept his secret.

Whilst this prince, constantly pursued by his enemies, led a miserable and concealed life in the deserts, a circumstance which adds a new lustre to his glory, scaffolds and gibbets were erected in Scotland and England to punish his partizans: near eight hundred at different times suffered as traitors upon that account*.

They began on the seventeenth of August by the execution of seventeen officers, who were drawn upon a hurdle to the gallows, and after they were hanged the executioner tore out their hearts and struck their

* The number of those that suffered death by law did not amount to one hundred.

cheeks with them; which being done, their bodies were cut in quarters. This punishment is a remnant of ancient barbarism. In former times it was customary to tear out the hearts of condemned persons, whilst they were still breathing.

This custom has been preserved in appearance, in order to strike with terror the minds of the vulgar, who are not easily intimidated. The lords Kilmarnock, Balmerino, Derwentwater, and Lovat, were beheaded. When Kilmarnock ascended the scaffold, he, like one who had repented of what he had done, cried out, Long live king George. Balmerino cried out, Long live king James, and his worthy son. Derwentwater was a younger brother of another lord Derwentwater executed in 1715, for having sought unsuccessfully in the very same cause: it was desired by this elder brother, that his son, then a child, should ascend the scaffold with him: he said to him, "My intention is to cover you with my blood, that you may learn to die for your kings."

It was the fate of those who were sprung, from this family to die like heroes by the hands of an executioner. This Derwentwater had likewise a son who was born in France. "I die, like my brother, said he; I exhort my son to die in like manner, if there should ever be occasion for it; and I recommend him to the king of France." This recommendation was not ineffectual, Lewis XV. settled a pension upon this son and his sister.

Lord Lovat was executed in the eightieth year of his age. Before he received the blow, he repeated the following verse of Horace:

Duke et decorum est pro patriâ mori.

But there happened upon this occasion a very

extraordinary incident, one of such a nature as could occur no where but in England. A young student, named Painter, who was devoted to the Jacobite party*, possessed with that spirit of fanaticism which produces so many extraordinary events, intreated with the most earnest and reiterated importunity to be executed in the place of lord Lovat.

Prince Edward, after having wandered a long time upon the coast of Lochaber, at last escaped the pursuits of his enemies. A small vessel conducted him to the coast of Bretagne: he went from thence to Paris, and there resided till the treaty of Aix-la-chapelle was set on foot, by which the king of France was obliged to deprive him of that asylum, for the general good of Europe. This unhappy prince suffered in Paris more mortifications than he had undergone in Scotland after the battle of Culloden: he obstinately persisted to stay, notwithstanding the treaty, and though he was frequently urged to depart by the king. It was thought necessary to secure his person; he was accordingly carried prisoner to Vincennes, and then sent out of the kingdom. This was the very height of the misfortunes of the unhappy race of Stewart. From that time forward Charles-Edward hid himself from mankind.

Let private men, who think themselves unhappy, reflect a few moments upon the misfortunes of this prince and his ancestors.

* Painter, on the contrary, professed the utmost abhorrence of the Jacobite party. His request was the effect of madness.