

Part of the document text that refers to Johnston on the battlefield at Culloden, the death of his friend Scothouse and his escape from the battlefield.

**Source: *MEMOIRS of the Chevalier de Johnston in Three Volumes. Translated from the original French M. S. of the Chevalier by Charles Winchester, Advocate, Aberdeen, printed by D. Wylie & Son, Booksellers to the Queen, 1871, Volume 2 pages 8 to 13.***

NOTE: Johnston wrote his manuscript some 40 years after the event. Researchers contest his dates in the manuscript and some other events pointing to a story rather than actual facts. Notwithstanding that, the reader must bear in mind that such an event as he describes in the following text must be accurate and be treated as a fact.

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My friendship for the unfortunate Macdonald of Scothouse, who was killed at my side at the Battle of Culloden, had engaged me to accompany him to the charge with his regiment. We were on the left of our army, and at the distance of about twenty paces from the enemy, when the rout commenced to become general, before even we had made our charge on the left. Almost at the same instant that I

saw poor Scothouse fall, (the most worthy man that I had ever known, and with whom I had been allied in friendship the most pure from the commencement of the expedition) to the increase of my horror, I beheld the Highlanders around me turning their backs to fly. I remained at first immoveable and stupefied. I fired with fury my blunderbuss and pistols upon the enemy, and I endeavoured immediately to save myself like the others; but having charged on foot and in boots, I felt myself so fatigued by the marshy ground, in which there was water up to my ankle, that in place of running, with pain could I march. I had left my servant, Robertson, upon the eminence with my horses, where the Prince was during the battle, about three hundred toises behind us, ordering him always to hold by the servants of the Prince, in order that I might be able more easily to find my horses in case I should have need of them. My first attention on returning was to fix my eyes upon that eminence, to discover Robertson. It was in vain. I neither saw the Prince, nor his servants, nor anybody on horseback - all being already gone and out of sight. I only saw a terrible platform - the field of battle, from the right to the left of our army, all covered with Highlanders dispersed and running all that their legs could carry them, to save themselves. Not being able longer to sustain myself upon my legs, and the enemy always advancing very slowly, but redoubling their fire - my mind agitated and fluctuating with indecision, in doubt whether I should be killed or whether I should surrender myself a prisoner, which was a thousand times worse than death upon the field of battle - all on a sudden I perceived a horse about thirty paces before me, which had not a horseman upon it. The idea of still having it in my power to save myself, gave me new strength, and inspired me with agility. I ran and seized the bridle, which was entangled about the arms of a man extended upon the ground, whom I believed to be dead; but I was confounded when the cowardly

poltroon, who had no other hurt than fright, dared to remain in the most horrible fire to dispute with me the horse, at about twenty paces from the enemy, all my menaces not being able to make him quit the bridle. While we were disputing together, there came a burst of a cannon charge with grape shot, which fell at my feet, and which covered us with mud, but without making any impression upon this original, who remained constantly determined to retain the horse. Fortunately for me there passed close to us, Finlay Cameron, an officer of the regiment of Lochiel, a big, young man, of about twenty years of age, six foot high, brave, and heroic. I called him to mine aid - "Oh, Finlay," said I to him, "this man will not give me up this horse." Poor Finlay joined me at the instant as a shock of lightning, presented a pistol immediately at the head of this man, and threatened to blow out his brains if he hesitated a moment to quit the bridle. This man, who had the appearance of a servant, then took his resolution to take himself off with a good grace. In possession of the horse, I attempted, with many ineffectual strides, to mount on horseback, but I made these ineffectual attempts in vain. Finding myself without strength, and totally done up, I recalled again poor Finlay, who was already some paces distant from me, to assist me to mount. He returned, lifted me up easily in his arms like an infant, and placed me on the horse, across as a sack full, giving, at the same time, a stroke to the horse to make him go off, then offering me his wishes that I might have the good fortune to escape, he flew off like a hart, and was instantly out of sight. We were not at the time more distant from the enemy than about twenty-five paces when he left me. When I found myself about thirty or forty paces off, I then adjusted myself upon the horse, placed my feet in the stirrup, running as fast as the bad jade was capable of. I was under too much obligation to Finlay Cameron not to have searched continually to inform myself of his fate, but without ever

having had the least light thrown upon it. This trait was far more noble and generous on his part, as I had never any particular connection with him. How difficult it is to know men! I had always known from the commencement of our expedition that I was aide-de-camp to Lord George Murray, a character pleasant, honest, and brave; but he never made me the smallest demonstration of friendship, notwithstanding I was indebted to him for my life in exposing generously his own to save me! There was every appearance that I saved also the life of this poltroon by awaking him from his terrific panic, for in less than two minutes the English army would have passed over his body. The cowardice of this man has furnished me since with materials for reflection, and I was very much convinced that for one brave man who perished in the routs, there were ten cowards. The greater the danger that flashes upon the eye of a coward blinds him, and deprives him of reflection, renders him incapable of reasoning with himself upon his position. He loses the power of thinking, with the presence of mind so necessary in great dangers, and seeing everything troubles, his stupefaction costing him his life as well as his honour; in place of which a brave man firmly and determinedly sees all the peril in which he finds himself involved, but his coolness makes him remember at the same time the means of extricating himself out of a bad case, if he has any resource, and he profits by it.

When I was beyond the reach of this horrible fire of musketry, I made a stop to breathe and deliberate upon the course I should take, and the route I should follow. During the stay that our army made at Inverness, I have been often in a pleasure party at the mansion of Mr. Grant of Rothiemurchus, which is in the middle of the mountains, about six leagues from that city. This worthy man, then aged about sixty years, of pleasing manners, formed an affection for me, and often repeated to me assurances of his

friendship; also his eldest son, with whom I had been a comrade at school, but who was in the service of King George. Rothiemurchus, the father, was a partisan of the house of Stuart; but from prudence did not declare himself openly; neither did his vassals, who remained neuters with their chief during the whole expedition. His castle is in the most beautiful situation, surpassing imagination, and which answers poetic descriptions the most romantic; situated upon the banks of a most beautiful river, the Spey, which winds in serpentine curls in the midst of a verdant plain, extending to about a quarter of a league in breadth to about two leagues in length. All around this plain one beholds the mountains, which rise in an amphitheatre, the one above the other, the summits of some of which are covered with wood, and others present the most beautiful verdure. It seems as if nature had wearied itself in forming so beautiful a retreat, in lavishing with profusion all that one could imagine of the beauties of the country, which enchanted me above all that I had ever seen. During two months that our army reposed at Inverness, on its return from England, I passed as much as possible of my time in these delicious scenes, which I quitted always with regret, and I found myself at the Castle of Rothiemurchus when they came to announce to us that the Duke of Cumberland had passed the Spey with his army on the side of Elgin, and that he approached towards Inverness. I departed at once to rejoin our army, but with a sensible regret at quitting these beautiful scenes, and the society of Rothiemurchus, the most amiable man in the world - mild, polite, upright, of an equable character, naturally jovial, of much spirit, with a great fund of good sense and judgment. On bidding him adieu, he clasped me in his arms, embraced me tenderly with tears in his eyes, saying to me, "My dear boy, if your affairs should take a bad turn, opposed to the English army, as that may possibly happen, come my way to conceal yourself at my dwelling, and I will

be answerable for your safety, life for life." The Highland hills being in effect a sure asylum against all the searches which the English troops could make, I decided without hesitation to take the road to Rothiemurchus, which was on our right from the field of battle; but I had not made a hundred paces when I perceived a corps of the enemy's cavalry before me, which blocked up the road. I then retraced my way, taking that which led to Inverness, which I followed just until I saw an eminence on which the bulk of our army had thrown itself on that side, and I judged consequently that the principal pursuit of the enemy would be on the road to Inverness. I quitted likewise the road, and crossed straight through the fields without any other design than that of distancing myself from the enemy as much as I possibly could.

Having arrived on the border of the river Ness, a quarter of a league higher than the town of Inverness, and about as far from the field of battle, I stopped to deliberate upon the route which I ought to take, the cavalry of the enemy upon the road to Rothiemurchus having totally disconcerted me - my mind agitated and tormented to know where to go in an unknown place, having never been in that part of the mountains, or west of Inverness. I heard all at once a very brisk firing at the town, which lasted for some minutes. As one is inclined in misfortunes to fill the imagination with vain hopes, I thought at first that it was the Highlanders that were defending the city against the English, and I regretted exceedingly having quitted the road to Inverness. I was descending a footpath which led to the town by the side of the river, where I had passed many times in going to fish; having found it, I plunged into it, without giving myself time for reflection that it was by no means susceptible of defence, not being surrounded but by a wall, proper only for any enclosure, and I proceeded forward along this footpath in order to bring myself with despatch to Inverness.....