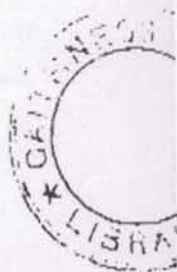

ACCOUNT

OF THE

ROTHSAY AND CAITHNESS FENCIBLES.



[Drawn up by Colonel Sir John Sinclair, in regard to the Memory of his First Battalion of Fencibles; and particularly addressed to the Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Private Soldiers of that Battalion, that they may remember they have belonged to so respectable a Corps.]

With a Representation of the Uniform.

THIS Regiment was raised in consequence of Letters of Service, granted to Colonel Sir John Sinclair, dated on the 7th March, 1794, and it claims the merit of being the first regiment of British Fencibles; the fencible corps previously embodied, having limited to the service of the Northern part of the Kingdom.

Both the officers and men being principally natives of the county of Caithness, the corps would have been known under the name of "The Caithness Fencibles," had not His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales been graciously pleased to give permission, that they should be called *the Rothsay*, as well as *Caithness Fencibles*, as a proof that His Royal Highness, as Duke of Rothsay (which is his principal Scotch title), had taken the corps under his special protection.

The corps was inspected at Inverness, in October, 1794, by Lieutenant-general Sir Hector Munro, and passed with considerable eclat. It was particularly distinguished for the gigantic size of the officers, about twenty of whom were, on an average, about six feet in height. The Highlanders in the town and neighbourhood of Inverness, were thence led

led to give them the name of the "*Thier-nau more,*" or "*The great Chiefs.*" After the inspection, the corps marched to Dundee, where it remained during the winter; and, in the course of the ensuing spring, Sir John Sinclair raised a second battalion for the service of Ireland, which was inspected at Forfar, by Major-general Hamilton, and thence was immediately ordered to the North of Ireland, where it remained about two years. When at Armagh, the Magistrates of the County unanimously voted their thanks to the corps in a manner as creditable, and in expressions as flattering, as any corps ever received in similar circumstances. The following are the terms in which that honourable testimony to this deserving body of men, was drawn up:

At an Adjournment of a Session of the Peace of the County of Armagh, held at Armagh, on Friday, the 16th Day of December, 1796.

LORD VISCOUNT GOSFORD, in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously,

That the following Address be presented to Lieutenant-colonel FRASER, commanding the ROTHSAY and CAITHNESS FENCIBLES.

SIR,

WE, the Magistrates of the County of Armagh, beg leave to testify our highest approbation of the conduct of the Rothsay and Caithness Regiment, under your command, during a period of fourteen months, and under circumstances of peculiar difficulty.—Divided, from the unfortunate necessity of the times, into various cantonments, and many of them stationed in a manner most unfavourable to military discipline, they yet preserved the fidelity of soldiers, and the manly rectitude of their national character.

It is with equal pleasure and satisfaction we declare, that the tranquillity which this county is now happily beginning to enjoy, must, in many respects, be ascribed to the ready obedience, and proper deportment of the officers and men under your command.

For reasons thus honourable to them and grateful to ourselves, we return you our most sincere thanks; and request you will communicate to the Officers, non-commissioned Officers and Soldiers, this testimony of our esteem and acknowledgement of their exemplary conduct.

GOSFORD, Chairman.

ON various other occasions, this respectable corps have received similar marks of the esteem and regard of the districts where they were quartered.

The

The first battalion was encamped near Aberdeen, in the summer of 1795, under the command of Lieutenant-general Sir Hector Munro, and after having been quartered at Fort George, Glasgow, Berwick, and Morpeth, during the years 1796 and 1797, was again encamped in the summer and autumn of 1798, at Blyth camp, near Newcastle, under the command of Major-general Lord Viscount Fielding, and during the winter and spring following, lay at Sunderland and South Shields.

Government having resolved to disband all the Fencible Regiments, whose services were limited to Great-Britain, this battalion was of course included in the number, and it was marched to Scotland accordingly, for the purpose of being disbanded. The first division arrived at Edinburgh, on Wednesday the 1st of May, 1799; and, on the 6th of that month, the corps was disbanded at Bruntsfield Links, near Edinburgh, by Major-general Vyse.—The following were the orders issued by that respectable officer, upon that occasion, which it may be proper to record, as the form of disbanding a corps, adopted at this time, and which seems to be well calculated for conducting such a transaction with proper solemnity.

Orders for the Disbandment of the Rathsay and Caithness Regiment of Fencible Infantry.

“ THE regiment to be drawn up in open column of companies, grenadiers in front, every man, including drummers, pioneers, &c. to be with his company; sergeants on the right, corporals, drummers, and men, alphabetically.

“ The Officers commanding companies to have two rolls of each company, with the signature of each man opposite to his name. Upon the General coming to the company, he will deliver one to him, and with the other, begin calling over their names, and as they answer to them, another officer will deliver their discharge to each.

“ A state of the regiment, in the form of a monthly return, to be given in, including only the men on the strength of the regiment, when disbanded.

“ No man who has enlisted into the regulars, to be brought to the ground, but to be previously discharged, and, opposite to his name, in the roll of his company, put down,—
Discharged, being enlisted into Regiment of .”

The Major-general addressed each company separately, in nearly the following words :

“ COMPANY,

“ I have it in command from His Excellency the Commander in Chief, to express to you his best thanks for your services in behalf of your King and Country, and the very favourable opinion which he entertains of your conduct and behaviour, ever since you were connected
connected

connected with the Regiment. I have also to state, that from the now happier situation of the country, and the arrangements which have of late been made by His Majesty's Ministers, your services, in your present capacity, will no longer be required. I have had peculiar pleasure in observing, with what order and regularity you have just settled your claims upon the corps; and I take this opportunity of declaring, in presence of your honoured Commander, and of all the Officers in the regiment, that if any man among you has any further claim, or any complaint to make, he is entitled to bring it forward, notwithstanding his discharge, and that it will be considered and decided upon with every degree of attention and impartiality. Having stated this, I have finished what my duty requires on the present occasion; and I take leave of you, wishing that you may all enjoy health, happiness and prosperity, in whatever situations you may hereafter be placed."

The General, and the officers and privates of the company, remained uncovered during this address, and it was followed with three cheers.

It is a singular circumstance, that though the route from Sunderland was a rapid one, (the march from Berwick to Edinburgh, which is 55 miles, being accomplished in three days) and, though it took place in very bad weather; yet, when the regiment was disbanded there was not a sick man in the whole battalion.

In consequence of a supplementary letter of service, Sir John Sinclair obtained permission to augment his second battalion to a thousand men, and, as above one half of the first battalion entered into the second, it will probably be a corps distinguished for its appearance, discipline, and good behaviour, and will, it is hoped, do credit to North Britain.

