

# Invasion

## In Wesley's Day

ON September 6, 1745, Horace Walpole wrote to his friend Sir Horace Mann describing the universal panic caused by the long-feared invasion of Prince Charles Edward Stuart. He writes with unusual agitation:—

"The confusion I have found, and the danger we are in, prevent my talking of anything else. The Young Pretender, at the head of three thousand men, has got a march on General Cope, who is not eighteen hundred strong; and when the last accounts came away, was fifty miles nearer Edinburgh than Cope, and by this time is there. The clans will not rise for the Government. . . . I look upon Scotland as gone!"

He goes on:—

"But all this is not the worst! Notice came yesterday, that there are ten thousand men, thirty transports, and ten men-of-war at Dunkirk. Against this force we have—I don't know what—scarce fears!"

His last phrase is, "Hope if you can!"

The Young Pretender had landed on the Moidart Peninsula on July 25 with a modest invasion army of seven men, but the clans were speedily rallying around the captivating twenty-five-year-old adventurer. By now things were admittedly beginning to look serious. General Cope was mishandling his small army of regular soldiers, which included some Methodists, and the relief army from Flanders was still on its way. On September 4 the rebels had taken possession of Perth, the Old Pretender being proclaimed King, while his son described himself as "Charles, Prince of Wales, and regent of Scotland, England, France, and Ireland, and of the dominions thereto belonging."

English fears were mingled with loyal thanksgiving, however. Had not their

king—this same "Elector of Hanover," but to them George the Second of England—just returned safely from his perilous visit to the Continent? A spate of congratulatory addresses greeted him, including a poem, dated September 6, and printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*:—

"While George abroad employs his princely care,  
Upon our coasts young Pompey threatens war,  
Buoy'd up with hope, oh! may that hope prove vain!  
The crown his grandsire quitted to regain,  
Bourbon sworn foe to Britain puts him on,  
With a few restless Scots to faction prone,  
But George returning to defend his isles,  
The phantom's vanish'd, and safe Britain smiles."

The Methodists showed their loyalty both by praying for their King and by preparing for his enemies. Charles Wesley, recuperating at Fommon from a badly-sprained ankle, records how on this same day of foreboding: "The night we passed in prayer. I read them my heavy tidings out of the north." On the following Sunday he describes how "the spirit of supplication was given us in the Society for His Majesty, King George; and, in strong faith, we asked his deliverance from all his enemies and troubles."

John Wesley and the London Methodists had similarly spent Friday, September 6, as a "solemn fast-day," while his *Journal* notes that on the Sunday—

"In the evening I desired the society to stay, that we might commend each other to God, as not knowing how He might see good to dispose of us before we saw each other's faces again."

The black rumours of invasion could certainly not easily be shrugged away, even though time was to prove that the situation was not quite as bad as the Methodists, in common with their fellow-citizens, had feared.

F. B.

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