



General Percy Kirke and the Later Stuart Army

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General Percy Kirke (c. 1647-91) is remembered in Somerset as a cruel, vicious thug who deluged the region in blood after the Battle of Sedgemoor in 1685. He is equally notorious in Northern Ireland. Appointed to command the expedition to raise the Siege of Londonderry in 1689, his assumed treachery nearly resulted in the city's fall and he was made to look ridiculous when the blockade was eventually lifted by a few sailors in a rowing boat. Yet Kirke was closely involved in some of the most important events in British and Irish history. He served as the last governor of the colony of Tangier; played a central role in facilitating the Glorious Revolution of 1688; and fought in the majority of the principal actions and campaigns undertaken by the newly-formed standing armies in England, Ireland and Scotland, especially the Battle of the Boyne and the first Siege of Limerick in 1689.

With the aid of his own earlier work in the field, additional primary sources and a recently-rediscovered letter book, John Childs looks beyond the fictionalisation of Kirke, most notably by R. D. Blackmore in *Lorna Doone*, to investigate the historical reality of his career, character, professional competence, politics and religion. As well as offering fresh, detailed narratives of such episodes as Monmouth's Rebellion, the conspiracies in 1688 and the Siege of Londonderry, this pioneering biography also presents insights into contemporary military personnel, patronage, cliques and procedures.

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