



The True Witness

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For the True Witness.

A. SQUIB.
BY FAGAN.

Could it be Sir Gall
Was tipping the malt
When writing his miserable pun;
And Huntington, too,
Was more than half blue
When firing the Argenteuil gun.
Those gentlemen both
Appended to be wroth
At something they did not explain,
But both are in dread
Of breakers ahead—
Their troubles are Ultramontane.
If Bishop Bourget
Would only forget
His duty as Pastor of souls,
Those sceptical boys,
Would soon banish God from our schools.
Poor Chiquy's ruse
Is raiment and shoes
To comfort the creatures who come;
Two hundred are there,
All hungry and bare,
Denouncing the errors of Rome.
When branches decay,
We lop them away,
The canker might spread and do harm;
But while the main stock
Draws life from the Rock,
We care not for hell's blackest storms.

WINIFRED, COUNTESS OF NITHSDALE.

A TALE OF THE JACOBITE WARS.

BY LADY DACRE.

CHAPTER XI.

There's some say that we wan,
Some say that they wan,
Some say that none wan
At a, man!

But one thing I'm sure,
That at Sheriff Muir,
A battle there was,
Which I saw, man.

And we ran, and they ran,
And they ran, and we ran,
And we ran, and they ran,
Awa, man.

Battle of Sheriff Muir.

The Duke of Argyll had not yet been reinforced by the Irish or the Dutch troops. This would indeed have been the moment for the insurgents to make themselves masters of all the West of Scotland; but, as Lord Nithsdale informed his wife, the English counsels prevailed.

Letters were confidently asserted to have been received from Lancashire, declaring that twenty thousand men would immediately join the army upon its appearance in that county; and the various advantages attending a speedy march into England were urged with much vehemence, that the troops most in advance were suddenly recalled, and appointed to meet the main body at Langtown in Cumberland.

But the Highlanders, under the influence of the young Earl of Wintoun, who was intimately convinced of the difficulties into which they were heedlessly plunging themselves, and the favorable occasion they were throwing away, halted a second time. Many then deserted, and chose rather to surrender themselves prisoners, than to go forward to what they looked upon as a certain destruction.

The Earl of Wintoun himself, finding that all his efforts to alter the destination of the army were fruitless, returned to the main body; but from that time he was never called to assist in a council of war; indeed, a reckless levity was henceforth visible in his whole demeanor, and he seized upon every opportunity of idle amusement, which chance

threw in his way, in a manner scarce befitting one engaged in an important and perilous enterprise.

Not so Lord Nithsdale; for, having little hope that the most prudent course could bring the undertaking to a successful termination, he felt less keen disappointment at the rejection of any of his counsels. In sad but conscientious devotedness, with out anger or personal mortification, he patiently strove to smooth ruffled feelings, to accommodate jarring interests. It was principally through his influence that the ardent and intemperate young Earl of Wintoun had been induced to rejoin his companions in arms; and it was he who prevailed on some of the Highland troops to accompany them, upon the condition of receiving sixpence per day from the time they crossed the border.

The task of tracing the progress of the insurgents through Carlisle, Penrith, Appleby, Lancaster, &c., is relinquished to those who are more capable of describing the military movements and the political intrigues of such stirring times. It is enough for us that the next advices which the Countess of Nithsdale received from her husband were somewhat less gloomy in their tenor. Although the expected risings in England had not proved so numerous or so general as the Scottish leaders had been taught to expect, still they met with no serious opposition. They had proclaimed King James at Lancaster; they had levied the public revenue in his name, and they were rapidly advancing towards Preston.

Mar, meanwhile, had established his headquarters at Perth; and he made some attempts to fortify that city, as a place of defence in which the chevalier might be received upon his expected landing.

The decisive morning of the thirteenth of November approached; the day on which the battle of Sheriff Muir was fought in Scotland, and on which the Jacobites surrendered at Preston in Lancashire.

In the battle of Sheriff Muir the Earl of Mar displayed that energy and that decision which are requisite qualifications for the head of an insurrection. His eloquent and animated address to the Chieftains in council awakened a corresponding ardor in the bosoms of all, except, perhaps, Huntley and Sinclair; and when he wound up his appeal by briefly stating the question in the words, "Fight or not?" the whole assembly answered at once with a universal shout, "Fight!"

This resolution, reaching the lines as they were drawn up in order of battle, was welcomed by loud and continued huzzas, and a general tossing up of hats and bonnets.

Such demonstrations of eagerness for the onset promised well for the result, and for a time the insurgents bore down all before them. But though the left wing of the Duke of Argyll's army was routed, his right wing in its turn, put to flight the left wing of the Earl of Mar's; and to the English remained the solid fruits of victory, inasmuch as they retained the position by which they defended the Lowlands. Both generals, however, claimed the advantage; and to a party which had struggled with so many adverse circumstances, the fact of having withstood the royal forces in a pitched battle gave some confidence for the future.

To Lady Nithsdale's hopeful heart the battle of Sheriff Muir appeared a glorious victory, which was to change the aspect of affairs. With the buoyancy of youth and loyalty, she exulted in the idea that her husband and the Scottish army were marching triumphantly through England while the English army was sustaining a defeat in Scotland. She dwelt with pride and delight on the individual acts of prowess which came to her knowledge; and Amy hastened to her lady with every fresh piece of intelligence she could collect from chance comers to the castle gates, thus endeavoring to beguile the tedious hours of sickening expectation, and hope deferred, in which her mistress wore away her days.

"Did you hear, my lady, how the McLeans, with one accord, joined their old chief the moment he set foot among them? for all the Isle of Mull belongs now to the Duke of Argyll himself!"

"Indeed, Amy! And so the tie of clanship was stronger than interest, or than duty to their new landlord. And, moreover, Sir John McLean has been living for many years in France, and on an allowance, too, granted him by Queen Anne."

"However that may be, he soon raised a regiment of eight hundred men; and when they were prepared for battle, all the speech he made to them was, 'Gentlemen, yonder stands MacCallummore for King George, and here stands McLenn for King James. God bless McLean and King James! Charge, gentlemen!' And on that rush-like wild creatures it was in that very charge the gallant young Clanronald was killed by the heavy fire of the regulars. But Glengarry would not give them time to be disheartened, but cried out, 'Revenge! revenge!—to-day for revenge, and to-morrow for mourning!'"

"Yes, yes! there is some of the true spirit left!" exclaimed Lady Nithsdale, exultingly; then, with a changed voice, she added, "But, alas for young Clanronald! he was a brave youth, and I have heard my lord say, a complete soldier; he had been trained in the French guards. When he received the Earl of Mar's summons, he replied, 'That his family had ever been the first on the field, and the last to leave it!' and he has proved but too well that he was a worthy scion of that noble house!"

"Yes, my lady; and they say that as he fell out of the ranks, after he had got his death wound, the Earl of Mar met him, and asked him why he was not in front. 'I have had my share,' said the poor young man, and dropped dead at the Earl's feet. Oh, my lady! a battle is a shocking thing! and though one is so glad to hear of a victory, and one thinks nothing of hundreds of the enemy being killed, yet when one pictures to one's self, one fair and gallant youth lying pale, and stiff, and cold, and bloody, on the bare ground, oh! one's heart sickens within one, and one wonders how one could ever wish the king should come back among us, to cause bloodshed and slaughter!"

Lady Nithsdale answered not. The words "pale, and stiff, and cold, and bloody, on the bare ground," had conjured up an image to her mind which seemed to curdle the very life-blood in her veins. She clasped her hands closely, and pressing them

tightly on her knee, she sat with fixed eyes, and lips compressed striving to exclude from her mind thoughts which would rush into it.

"Oh, say no more, dear Amy; I cannot, must not think. Each day, each hour, may bring us news of a battle in England. How do we know what may be the result? Alas! if it were not for the blood which runs in my veins—if I were not a Herbert—if I were not married to a Maxwell, I too might wish that— But no, I will not utter what would be in me, a dereliction of duty—treason to the cause my lord upholds. I will remember that my lord has done that which he deemed his duty to do; and for the event, we must leave it to Providence. We must submit, and only pray for strength to perform the part [that may be allotted to us, whatever that part may be. It is but two days since I received such a letter from my dear sister, the abbess, as should teach me to trust and to submit. Oh! if I could but look, as she does, on all earthly and temporal concerns! but, alas! how can one wear one's self so entirely from this world, when it contains one's soul's treasures? Lucy has no husband! Lucy has no children! Alas! these things hold me down so tight to earth, that not all Father Albert's ghostly advice, are enough to detach my heart from it; I cannot fix my thoughts as they bid me, on Heaven, and Heaven alone."

"Nay, my lady, nor is it fitting you should. It is for priests and nuns to be much better than other people: it would never do for those who have to wrestle with the world as it is, not to have their thoughts somewhat in it."

"Yes; but, Amy, the more our affections are set upon things which are not of this world, the more thoroughly we shall be enabled to do our duty here."

"I am sure, my lady, there is no need for anybody to her duty better than you do; and whichever way your heart is set, it must be the right way," replied Amy, whose devoted attachment was such that she did not like to hear it implied, even from her lady's own lips, she was capable of improvement.

"I must not value myself according to your estimate, Amy," replied Lady Nithsdale, smiling, "or I shall be sadly lacking in that first of Christian virtues—humility."

It was not many days after the battle, or as the Jacobites termed it, the victory of Sheriff Muir, that vague rumors reached Torreagles of disaster and defeat at Preston.

Lady Nithsdale was struck with the pale countenance of Amy when she had summoned her, ostensibly to assist in arranging some household matters, but more in fact, that she might hear a friendly voice, and look on an affectionate countenance. She was still more struck with the haste in which Amy wished to depart, instead of gladly lingering, pleased and honored at being admitted to share the counsels and the feelings of her mistress.

"Think you not, Amy, that these damask hangings will make my lord's apartment look exceeding handsome? and to my mind the old pictures which adorn his study will show well upon the deep crimson. He will be pleased, when Heaven vouchsafes him a safe return, to find we have been mindful of his comfort. I would gladly turn these hangings to so good account. What think you, Amy?" and Lady Nithsdale gazed inquiringly in her face.

"Yes, madam, in sooth they are as good as new," replied Amy, with a hurried voice; and her eye avoided that of her lady; her fingers trembled as she smoothed the fringe, and kept her head bent low, as though examining the texture of the damask.

"Amy, you have heard ill news that you fear to communicate," said Lady Nithsdale, laying her hand firmly on Amy's trembling arm, and looking in at her fixedly. "Speak! I charge you, speak! I can bear anything but suspense. Let me know the worst!" and she grasped her, almost convulsively.

"Oh, my lady, do not look thus at me; truly, you fright me. In every truth, I know nothing, nothing for certain."

"Amy, Amy, this is not like yourself; you are trifling with me!"

"We must not heed every silly report that comes from so far off, my lady."

"Then it is of the army in England?" and Lady Nithsdale dropped into a seat. "Speak! speak! tell me all!"

"Indeed, I have but little to tell. They said there had been an engagement; but we have often heard that before, my lady; and people make so much of a little thing; and the news comes through Dumfries, and the people they tell every thing their own way."

"And they say, then, that we have been defeated?" continued Lady Nithsdale, striving to appear perfectly tranquil. "Tell me, Amy; you see I am quite calm."

"Why, yes; I suppose it is as your ladyship says, for they seem marvelously well pleased."

"And are King James's forces retreating?"

"Not that I know of, my lady."

"What do they still hold Preston, then?"

"Why no, my lady. I believe what they call the Royalists have possession of it now."

"Then where is our army?"

"Alas! dearest madam, I cannot justly say. Indeed, indeed, my lady, those who told me do not seem to know themselves, and I dare swear it is not half true."

"Amy, you have heard more; I am sure you have! Is my lord—Have they told you anything? I cannot, cannot ask. Oh, Amy! answer me, and answer the truth, or I think I shall die!"

"Nothing, my lady! They never mentioned my lord's name one way nor another; indeed indeed they did not."

"Thank Heaven so far!" and Lady Nithsdale closed her eyes for a moment, as if to regain composure and resolution.

"And you know, my lady, ill news travels fast enough, and everybody hereabout would be curious enough about my lord; so pray set your mind at rest."

Lady Nithsdale looked at Amy with a sad, withering smile. "At rest, Amy! at rest!" and pressing her hand upon her bosom, "it is long since this heart has been at rest, and I am much mistaken if it will be so for many a long day yet. If there

is any truth in what the people of this country call second-sight, I have much to suffer yet; but I will despair. I place my reliance above; I will confide in Him who will not abandon the humble, even when all human succors fail."

CHAPTER XII.

When the day is gone, and night is come,
An' a' folk bound to sleep,
I think on him that's far awa,
The lee-lang night an' weep, my dear,
The lee-lang night, an' weep.

Jacobite Song.

It is singular how the first vague rumor of a great event travels faster than can almost be accounted for by human means, and how much time sometimes elapses before the real and authentic account is received! Two nights and a day of dread and uncertainty did Lady Nithsdale endure before any further details reached Torreagles.

The honest Amy's face soon betrayed that fresh intelligence had arrived, and that intelligence unfavorable. Almost before her lady could question her, she said—

"My lord is well, madam, my lord is safe!"

"Oh, dearest Amy, thanks!" and her eyes flashed with joy. "But why this sad countenance, then? Look cheerful, girl, for your face belies your words. You are not deceiving me?"

"No, no, indeed, madam. He is unhurt; not a wound, nor a scratch, as I believe."

"Then why can you not smile? Oh, Amy! at this moment I felt how weak a sentiment is royalty to one's king, when put in the balance with love for one's husband! Still no smile! Why, we have changed characters, Amy, and you are going to school me into my due allegiance."

"Oh, my sweet lady! I joy to see a smile upon your lips; and I dare not finish my tale, for I shall banish it more quickly than I have called it up."

"You said he was unhurt; nor a scratch, you said? 'I did, my lady! but oh! can you not guess what other misfortune may have befallen him, and all of us?—oh, my lady!'"

"I am dull of comprehension; but I cannot picture any great evil, now my lord is safe!"

"He is safe, now, madam, unhurt, unvowed;—but—"

"But what, Amy? Speak—you distract me!"

"But, madam—dear madam—be and all the other lord—are—prisoners, madam—all prisoners to King George!"

"Prisoners!" and she seemed to awake as from a trance. "Prisoners to King George! then rebels! traitors! Fool that I have been! and my thought never glanced towards this! Oh! to whom can I apply for advice, or for assistance? Alas! alas! what can a poor, weak, helpless woman do? If I had wings to fly to my lord, then he would tell me how I might assist him;—then, at least, I should be near to soothe and to support him! But here, alone, and helpless," she added, wringing her hands, "what can I effect? But you know more, Amy, you can tell me more!"

"No more, madam, than that the Scots were the last to come to terms and to surrender."

"And they surrendered! yielded themselves up to the Whigs! Oh, my dear, dear lord! what must thy noble spirit have endured ere it was bowed to this! How must thy counsels have been scorned, thy hopes blasted, thy heart crushed! I know thy lofty nature well, and truly my woman's soul almost refuses itself to picture what thine must have undergone!"

Amy stood for some moments bewildered, and unable to offer consolations which she felt must be unavailing. "Then, resuming her self-possession, she urged: "Think, madam, how much worse it might have been! You forget that my lord is safe in prison."

"But, Amy, what must he have suffered in mind! And what are bodily sufferings to the tortures such a mind is capable of enduring!"

"There is one thing, my lady, for which we cannot be too grateful. He is now safe from the dangers of battle: think how you felt when we were talking of young Clanronald, so fresh, so blooming, on the bloody soil!"

"True! true! and she looked up for a moment.—

"But," and she lowered her voice, "there are other, and more inevitable perils than those which are met with in battle. If, indeed, the usurper keep the throne—if the new dynasty prevail,—then loyalty is treason, and treason, Amy!—Even King James spared not his own nephew; can we expect more mercy in the soul of a stranger than in one of our own royal blood? Oh, Heaven, be pitiful!"

"Nay, madam, but the Duke of Monmouth was the usurper himself. This case is quite different. And then there are so many of them. Mr. Forster, and the Earl of Derwentwater and his brother, and the Lords Wintoun, Carnwath, Kenmore, Nairne, and many, many more of noble and of gentle blood. King George, if indeed he is to be our king, must show mercy. He could not have the heart—"

"Amy dared not finish the sentence—she could not have uttered, her lady could not have listened to, the termination their imaginations but too well supplied.

Lady Nithsdale bowed her head in silence, and Amy feared to break in upon the sad solemnity of her thoughts. After a pause, the countess slowly rose: "I will to my closet, Amy, and there tell my beads, till I have regained composure enough to think. But fail not to let me know should further intelligence reach the castle."

Amy opened the door for her lady, and as she passed, she kissed her hand in token of obedience to her injunctions. Lady Nithsdale pressed here, and slowly, steadily withdrew. Amy watched the closing door, and then giving a full vent to her own repressed feelings, she wept and sobbed in freedom.

Every hour now brought fresh reports, each more distressing than the last. One told how fourteen hundred men were enclosed in one of the churches, where they suffered both hardships and indignities from the soldiery; how they were stripped, not only of every article of value which they might have about them, but almost of necessary clothing.

These were principally Scotch, who, having been the last to surrender, were treated with the greatest rigor; and Lady Nithsdale shrank with almost equal horror from the idea of her noble husband being exposed to the insults of the low-born and the mean,

as from the more tremendous vengeance of the law. Another report reached Scotland that the rebels were to be tried by martial law, and shot upon the spot. But the alarm which such a report was calculated to excite, was in some measure allayed by learning that this summary punishment was only to be inflicted upon those who had actually held commissions under the government against which they had borne arms. Lady Nithsdale was further reassured, when the name of Lord Charles Murray was the first mentioned as likely to suffer, for she knew well that her husband's never could have been omitted had he been in danger of such a fate.

But still she heard not from herself, and these varying and often contradictory rumors almost wore away her soul in feverish anxiety.

The town of Dumfries was in the hands of the royalists, and it was a matter of difficulty for the prisoners to transmit any communication to their friends which was not subject to the revision of those who were in power. There was time for each hope in which she had formerly indulged to be successively crushed. That which she had fondly imagined to be a victory at Sheriff Muir, proved in its consequences to be no better than a defeat.—Dutch reinforcements joined the royal army, while scarcely a day elapsed in which some of the Lowland chieftains did not desert the standard of the Earl of Mar.

Still no succour arrived from France. It became known that the regent, Duke of Orleans, had proscribed the chevalier, and still the chevalier's arrival was delayed.

Lady Nithsdale roamed about the vast and deserted halls; the unruled book dropped from her hands; the once-loved spinnet remained unopened; the needle which she used to ply so rapidly and so dexterously, was still resorted to for occupation; but the flowers no longer grew under her fairy fingers, and the falling tears would often tarnish the colors of the silks before the loof had yet assumed its form. She started at every noise: the changing cheek, the fluttering heart, the trembling finger, the faltering voice, all spoke the heart ill at ease.—The long, long days wore wearily away; it seemed to her that each dismal winter evening closed in more slowly than the last.

Her children were far away: she could not visit their couches, listen to their tranquil breathings, and beguile the hours in watching their unconscious slumbers. Her existence would have been less irksome had there been any duty for her to perform, any exertion to be made; but in this forced inactivity of body, while the mind was distracted with doubts and fears, she endured, not so much the pangs of hope deferred, as those of protracted disappointment.

Watching the blazing logs on the hearth, and listening to the incessant whistling of the December blast, only varied by the rattling of a dry and withered stray leaf against the casement, she had sat through the early, and lengthened twilight of a Scottish winter's evening. Glad of the excuse of fading light to indulge in the idle fancies of vague dream, but most sad meditation, she had allowed the night to steal upon her unawares, till all without was darkness that might be felt, and the stone mullions of the oriel windows alone shone white in the fitful blaze of the wood fire.

She was startled from her reverie by the sound of men's voices, and the tread of a strange and heavy foot. The attendants entering, explained that a peasant was without, who insisted upon seeing the countess.

"It is the countess herself that my business is with," said the stout and rosy boor, who forced his way past the serving-man; "I was to come to the speech of the lady herself; and if you can certify to me that yonder she is, why I am ready enough to give up my packet; but I shan't let it go to any of you. How do I know what sort of jackanapes you may be?" and the peasant grinned good-humoredly, with a twinkling eye, which led to the conclusion that he had not journeyed so rapidly but that he had taken time to refresh himself on the way. He held a packet in his hand: "If it is true that you are that rebel lord's lawful wife, why, here's the letter I was to deliver safe into her own fair hands—that is, when she gave me the reward I have earned by a journey of some hundred and fifty miles."

"Oh, give it me! in mercy give it me!" exclaimed Lady Nithsdale; and, starting from her seat, she would have snatched it at once.

"Softly, fair lady," cried the peasant, withholding it; "where is the reward the gentleman promised me?"

"Oh! you shall have anything you will, only give it—for pity, give it me!" Amy! she cried to Amy Evans, who, never far from her lady's side, had by this time made her appearance; "fetch my casket; nay, here, take the key, and bring hither my purse; it is in the embossed casket, and give the fellow what he will. And now, my friend, the letter—the letter."

"I think the lady's one that loves him; but nobody has yet assured me that she is his lordship's wife," continued the undaunted boor, with a knowing glance round the room; "all wives are not in such a taking about their husbands," he added; wishing, with a sort of low craft which he deemed prudence, to delay delivering the letter till he had made sure of the money.

"Oh, trifle not with me! Give it me, as you hope to meet with mercy yourself?"

"Well, then, here it is; the poor soul shall have the letter any how." She snatched it quickly from his hand, and throwing herself upon her knees before the fire, she hastened to devour its contents—her eyes, blinded by tears, could not decipher the lines as fast as her wishes prompted.

"Bring lights?" she exclaimed; "why are there no lights?"

"The servant hastened to fetch the tapers; and the peasant remained near the door, watching the lady with an expression half compassionate, half comic.

"Sure enough, the poor soul loves that dark-browed fellow," he muttered; "she tucks back her hair as if she could tear off the curl that falls between the freight and the paper, and she thinks so more of me! But I shall not depart without the pay I have been promised, I can tell her."

Amy re-entered with the purse at the same moment that the serving-men returned with lights;