

## The White Cockade.

Since, in the opinion of all reasonable men, no further attempt is ever likely to be made to place one of the Stuart family on the throne of Great Britain, at least by force of arms, I can, now, without prejudice to any one, tell the story of the strange adventure which brought me face to face for the first and last time with Charles Edward Stuart, commonly known as the Young Pretender.

Late in the afternoon of Sept. 22, 1750, I received the following letter:

"DEAR FRIEND: By the time this is placed in your hands I shall be at sea on my way to Antwerp. It is all over. Under the name of John Douglas the Prince has been in London for nearly a week, and nothing has come of it. There is no prospect of a rising. Gentlemen of quality and influence, however devoted to the Prince, have no mind to risk their lives and estates by marching on London unless supported by a strong body of regular troops, believing that exile, or more probably the scaffold, would be the sure and certain end of any such rash undertaking. To speak the plain truth, I am much of that way of thinking myself, and, having wife and child, will not draw my sword until I perceive some fair prospect of success."

"I write to warn you of that which concerns you nearly. The other day the Prince came unexpectedly to a party at Lady Primrose's, greatly to the consternation of her ladyship and of most of her guests. Indeed, he met with but a cold reception from any but your betrothed Miss Kate Gordon, and her cousin, Andrew Macintyre, who were both present."

"Miss Gordon went down on her knees before them all and kissed his hand. It was very bravely done and moved him greatly, but, indeed, it was scarcely prudent. Macintyre followed her example, and I heard him whisper to the Prince that if his Royal Highness would deign to honor his poor house with a visit this evening (ye 22d) he would meet with a very different kind of welcome. Learning that Miss Gordon would be present, the Prince consented."

"Now a word in your ear. This Macintyre is not to be trusted. I have information from a sure source that he is a spy in the pay of the government, and that the man with one eye, the odious creature, Donald Fraser, who follows him about like a shadow, is, if possible, a more infamous wretch than himself."

"The house is in a lonely situation, and I am convinced that these scoundrels are concocting some plot to betray the Prince, and are making use of Miss Gordon's grace and beauty and well-known devotion to the Jacobite cause to entice him into a trap. I tried to give the Prince a hint of this, but he listened to me coldly, and, indeed, of late he has become notoriously impatient of advice from his best and truest friends."

"That Miss Gordon should be made an accomplice in this villainous scheme will, I know, be hateful to you, and I doubt you will do what lies in your power to prevent it. Yours most faithfully,

Matthew Fielding."

My blood boiled as I read this letter. I was no friend to the Stuarts, and, indeed, cared little whether the Pretender was taken or not; but that Kate should be involved in this infamous plot was indescribably painful to me, and I resolutely determined that she should never be it word or act of mine could prevent it.

Yet it was no very pleasant task for me to interfere in the matter, for there had already been a sharp quarrel between Kate and myself with regard to this Macintyre and her passionate devotion to the cause of the unhappy Stuarts. She was an orphan, and Macintyre, being her cousin, had undertaken to act as her guardian, a piece of presumption which I bitterly resented, for I had good reason to believe that he hated me, and meant, by fair means or foul, to supplant me in Kate's affections, and win her and her small fortune for himself. But he had been out with the Highlanders in '45, and the courage he had then displayed and his hypocritical professions of attachment to the Prince, cast a glamour about him in the eyes of a young and romantic girl. Nothing I could say would induce her to put an end to their friendship, and we had finally parted with bitter words on both sides.

But Fielding's letter drove my anger to the winds. Come of it what would I was resolved to go boldly to Macintyre's house and insist upon her leaving it at once. I would escort her to the lodgings of my aunt, Lady Chester, who would, I knew, receive her gladly.

So I buckled on my sword, procured a coach and drove quickly to Macintyre's house, which lay some distance from the city. Within 200 or 300 yards I alighted, and, leaving the coach hidden in a lane near the road, walked forward by myself.

In spite of my antipathy to Macintyre, I confess there had been moments when I could scarce believe him capable of the infamy of which Fielding had accused him; but when in the gathering dusk I reached the gate in a high stone wall which encircled the spacious garden, all my doubts vanished at the sight of the isolated house, the lighted windows of which were barely visible through the thick foliage of the trees that surrounded it on all sides. No cry for help would be heard beyond the walls. The victim once inside that lonely building, and sword or bullet might do its work and none be the wiser.

My heart beat quickly as I passed through the gate. Such a man as Macintyre was not unlikely to clutch at any means of getting rid of a dangerous rival, and I knew well that I carried my life in my hands. I thought I might be refused admittance, but the gate stood wide open

and no one appeared or challenged me. But that brought me little comfort. It is ever an easy matter to enter a trap. It is when you seek to leave it that the difficulties begin.

Still I went doggedly on, though as I approached the house I was confident that I could hear a faint rustling in the bushes to right and left, as though invisible spies were stealthily dogging my footsteps. Then a thing happened that confirmed my worst suspicions. The door suddenly opened and was swiftly shut again, but not before I caught a glimpse of two or three figures slipping hurriedly inside. What could these things mean if they did not indicate treachery and foul play?

I am not ashamed to say that my limbs trembled and the cold sweat stood on my forehead, as, after a moment's hesitation, I set my teeth, and stepping quickly forward, knocked at the door. It was opened by a man with a very evil and forbidding countenance and but one eye. He was no other than Donald Fraser, the detestable parasite of Andrew Macintyre, against whom my good friend Fielding had particularly warned me. It might have been fancy, but it seemed to me that his greenish gray eye sparkled with a kind of malignant triumph at the sight of me. I think a spider might so regard the fly that ventured innocently among the meshes of his web.

Yet he readily made way for me to enter and went at my request to tell Kate that I wished to speak with her. He was gone some time and I was sure that he was informing Macintyre of my presence before carrying the message to Kate. It would have surprised me little had I been refused speech with her; but presently I could hear her fresh, girlish voice, high and sweet and clear, singing 'The White Cockade.'

"I'll sell my rock, I'll sell my reel  
My rippling loom and spinning wheel  
To buy myself a tartan plaid,  
A broadsword, dark, and white cockade.  
O he's a rascal, roving blade!  
O he's a briske and bonnie lad!  
Betide what may, my heart is glad  
To see my lad wi' his white cockade."

She sang it defiantly as she came down the wide staircase, a flush on her brave young face, her eyes shining with a kind of passionate enthusiasm, the sweetest maid, it seemed to me, in all broad England, and to my mind, at that moment, the fooliest. She seemed like a reckless child playing with fire, and I could have snatched away the white cockade she wore at her breast and crushed it beneath my heel.

Yet as she came nearer I was convinced that she was but playing a part, for more than once I noticed her glance apprehensively about and I felt her hand tremble as it clasped it in mine. Yet even at that moment, in a position, as I believed of imminent peril, my heart leapt with joy to perceive that all trace of the coldness that had been for some time between us had passed away, and that she was unalteredly rejoiced to see me.

"This is a pleasure I did not anticipate," she said in a formal voice, and with a slight side glance at Fraser, who stood again leaning beside the door. "Will you come this way please?"

She led the way upstairs, and I followed her into a sitting room brilliantly lighted with wax candles as though for the reception of a distinguished guest. I closed the door behind me and was about to speak to her, when she laid her finger on her lips, and taking one of the candles, looked beneath the table and behind the couch and even opened the door of an empty cupboard and glanced hurriedly inside. She was very pale, and the candle trembled in her hand as she returned it to its place. Then she suddenly sank into a chair, covered her face with her hands and broke into stifled sobs.

"Why, Kate," said I, "this is not like you. What is the matter?"

"Indeed, I—I scarce know, Frank," she faltered, raising her pale face and smiling faintly through her tears. "It is very silly and childish of me, but I—I am frightened. Andrew and his mother are out, and all the servants have been sent away, and I have been alone in the house for hours, with no one to speak to but that odious wretch, Donald Fraser—and—and I got nervous and began to think I could hear strange noises, whisperings at the door, and footsteps on the stairs, until I was quite sure there were strange men in the house. I thought one might be in the cupboard there, watching us and listening to all we said. I think it must have been fancy. If not, what can it all mean?"

"I fear there is no doubt of what it means Kate," said I, "and the time has come to speak plainly. I have learned to-night the young pretender, Charles Stewart, is coming here. I see you have tricked yourself out in all your finery, with the white cockade on your breast, to meet him. Oh, Kate you foolish child, can't you see that this vile man, this glib, plausible, double-faced spy and traitor, Andrew Macintyre, is using your pretty face and innocent enthusiasm to lure the unfortunate young prince into a trap?"

In spite of her white face, and startled eyes, she did not exhibit the anger and incredulity I had expected. Was it possible that she had already begun to distrust Macintyre?

"Oh, Frank," she exclaimed, despairingly, "surely this cannot be true. I have thought of late he was growing lukewarm, that his zeal for the cause had cooled, but he could not be capable of such treachery as this—indeed, he could not. I cannot believe it. Nevertheless I could see that in her heart she did believe it."

"The man is a spy," I said, impatiently. "I have it from a sure source, and there can be no doubt about it. Moreover, there are men lurking in the garden and about the house. I heard them snick among the bushes, and saw them slinking through the door. They are here to catch the Prince, and we are potatoes to prevent them. No one will believe in you if you accuse him if you are present when the Prince is taken, and if you do not wish your name to become infamous, you must not backbite this minute. I have a coach waiting, and will take you to my aunt's lodgings. I will bribe Fraser to let us pass before your

cousin returns, or, if necessary, run him through the body and trust to escape in the darkness."

She wrung her hands in agony. "Oh," she cried, "that I, who would give my life to save the Prince, should have been tricked by this base wretch into betraying him. Oh, this man, this man! I did not think such men lived in the world."

"Come, come," I said, impatiently, "we are wasting time and there is not a moment to lose. Your cousin may return at any moment. We must go at once."

"And leave the Prince to his fate," she exclaimed, "without making one effort to warn him? I cannot do it, Frank; indeed I cannot do it. I should loathe and despise myself ever afterward. I must do what I can to save him, and I know you will help me, Frank. You will help me, Frank, will you not?"

Now, what was I to do? As I have said, I was no Jacobite. To interfere in the matter was against both my principles and my interests. If it became known that I had assisted the Prince to escape I should embroil myself with the Government and ruin my career if I did not risk my neck. But yet—ah, well, what man with any heart could listen to the cold dictates of prudence when moved by the sight of that innocent child's face, quivering with pain and shame, and those sweet, tear-filled eyes gazing beseechingly into his? I may have been rash, disloyal, what you will, but I could not do it. God knows that, however foolish I may have thought her in the past, I loved the girl infinitely more, if that were possible, for her fidelity to the unfortunate Prince in his hour of need. Yet I knew well that it was a desperate business, and likely to end badly for both of us, however it ended.

"If we think of any plan that has the least chance of success I will do what I can to help you Kate," I answered, "but for my part I can see no way but one, and that is to intercept him before he reaches the house. For God's sake, let us get out of this vile place. The air chokes me. It reeks of treachery. Come, get your cloak, and—"

"Hush!" she exclaimed suddenly. In the silence that followed I heard steps on the path outside, a loud knock, and then the tramping of feet and the sound of voices in the hall. Kate sprang to the door which commanded a partial view of the hall, and opening it cautiously, looked out.

"Is it the Prince?" I asked breathlessly. She turned and closed the door and leaned against the wall white and trembling.

"No," she faltered, "it is Andrew Macintyre with half a dozen strange men—coarse, brutal looking wretches, with swords and pistols. Oh, Frank what is to become of you? He hates you. He told me so to-day. He threatened what he would do to you if I did not give you up. Fraser will tell him you are here, and he—they may kill you. Hush! I hear his foot on the stairs. He is coming here. You must hide—somewhere—anywhere—in the cupboard—quick, get into the cupboard."

"But Fraser will tell him I am here," I expostulated.

"Perhaps not," she exclaimed pushing me in her excitement toward the door of the cupboard. "They are not so friendly as they appear to be. Quick—quick—he is coming."

Yielding reluctantly to her entreaties, I stepped inside, leaving the door slightly ajar so that I might see what passed. Then she sat down at a harpsichord, and began to sing a rollicking Jacobite ballad, as gayly and gallantly as if the Prince had been present with all the clans around him:

"I swear by the moon and stars so bright,  
And sun that glances early,  
If I had twenty thousand lives,  
I'd give them all for Charlie.  
We'll o'er the water, we'll o'er the sea,  
We'll o'er the water to Charlie;  
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go,  
And live or die wi' Charlie."

She was still singing when the door opened and Andrew Macintyre came in. I fully expected to see him followed by his gang of hired ruffians, eager to cut my throat, but he was alone, and, to my astonishment, did not appear to suspect my presence. He was a handsome fellow, tall

and well built, though I never liked the cast of his features, his thin, cruel lips and cold blue eyes.

"Ah, Kate," said he, and I fancied I could detect a faint sneer in the tones of his voice, "I thought I heard you singing. Upon my soul, your voice sends the blood dancing through my veins. 'Tis more inspiring than a bugle call. If you would ride at the head of the troops singing your battle songs with the white cockade on your breast, the King would soon enjoy his own again. With your voice to lead him to victory, who would not live or die with Charlie?"

His eyes dwelt on her with a look that made me grind my teeth and grip the hilt of my sword. I would have given all I possessed to spring forward and settle the matter with the cold steel, but I knew that with a shout he could bring his cut-throats upon me, and my death would leave Kate defenceless in his hands.

Kate was ever quick-witted and ready of speech, but the sure knowledge of his treachery and the tragic situation in which she was placed seemed to freeze the words on her lips. She bent her white face over the harpsichord and I saw her fingers trembling as they wandered over the keys. I think 'twas the bitterest moment of my life. I could neither get her away from the house nor warn the Prince. I was not, I think, devoid of courage, and enjoyed some reputation as a swordsman, and yet I was absolutely helpless. I could do nothing that was not utterly reckless and foolhardy, and stood there grinding my teeth in impotent fury while this loathsome spy and traitor made love to my betrothed.

Macintyre glanced at the clock.

"Some few minutes to the hour at which his royal Highness promised to be here," he continued in the same tone of subdued mockery. "Let us have another song, Kate. Let us have something to stir the blood, something about the gathering of the clans, and the fluttering of the kilts, the flash of the broadswords and the skirl of the pipes. 'Twill raise the Prince's spirits if he hears you. He was dashed by the coldness with which he was received at Lady Primrose's. We must give him a heartier reception to-night."

I think from the malicious twinkle in his eyes that he knew she suspected him, and was plying with her as a cat with a mouse. Her cheeks flushed, and I thought she was about to give an angry reply, but with an effort she controlled herself, and began to play a spirited prelude. But at that moment he held up his hand.

"Hush," he said, "I hear voices at the door. I think he must have arrived."

He turned away and stepped hurriedly to the window. In a moment Kate was on her feet, darted an appealing look at me, pointed to him, and rushed to the door. I was in the room, sword in hand, before she reached it. But I was no quicker than he. I saw the gleam of his eyes and the flash of his sword before I was half way across the room. He parried the savage lunge I made at him, and leaping aside with the agility of a cat, rushed after Kate. Through the door and along the passage she went like a deer, he close on her heels and I on his. When she reached the stairs she seemed to fly down them, and beyond her I caught a glimpse of the Prince stepping into the hall.

"Go back," she cried, "go back. You are betrayed. Go back."

But she was too late. Clang went the heavy door, out from the adjoining rooms sprang half a dozen men with naked swords, and there in the middle of the hall, surrounded by a ring of steel, with a sobbing girl at his feet, caught like a rat in a trap, stood Prince Charlie.

Whig as I was, I cannot describe the sick feeling of pity and shame that overwhelmed me at the sight. 'Twould have been a fitting death for the hero of Prestonpans and Falkirk to die sword in hand on the battlefield, but it was heartbreaking to see him betrayed and trapped by this scoundrel crew of spies and traitors. And still keener was my pity for the innocent child who was sobbing at his feet, crushed with shame that her devotion to his cause should have been made the bait to lure him to the scaffold.

He stood perfectly still, pale and with flashing eyes, but without a trace of fear. "Well, Mr. Macintyre," said he, "this is a strange welcome. May I beg you to inform me what I am to understand by it?"

Brought face to face with the man he had betrayed, even Macintyre lost his nerve, though he tried to brave it out.

"You may understand," he began, and then his eyes fell and he looked moodily at the floor. "I think the situation explains itself," he said, gloomily.

The Prince drew himself up and looked at Macintyre with unutterable scorn and contempt.

"Is that, Macintyre," said he, "I have had to do with spies and traitors before, but never with one who has betrayed me. But this time, Macintyre, you have betrayed me. I will bring Fraser to let us pass before your



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The clothes come out sweet  
and white without injury to the fabric

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fool, do you suppose that I have walked blindfold into your clumsy trap? Look around you?"

Almost before I realized what had taken place, I saw Macintyre turn white, and heard the sword drop clattering from his nerveless fingers, while his accomplices glanced round about seeking a way of escape. All eyes had been fixed on the Prince, so that the men who now stood sword in hand at every door and at the head of every passage had come upon us unheard and unseen.

At a glance I recognized the faces of several well-known Jacobite gentlemen, both Englishmen and Highlanders, and I saw at once that Macintyre had been cleverly caught in his own trap, entangled in the very meshes of the web he had spun to entrap the Prince. These were the men who had lurked in the garden, who had stealthily entered the house, and the author of this plot within a plot—Donald Fraser who had betrayed the betrayer, was now leaning triumphantly at Macintyre from his post behind the door. Macintyre caught a glimpse of his grinning face and his eyes gleamed with diabolical fury.

"You bound," he exclaimed, "this is your work."

"Yes," said the Prince coolly, you forget what most of your kind would do well to remember, that it is as easy to set a spy upon a spy, as upon an honest man, and much easier to find those who will betray him. I pretended to fall into your trap in order to trap you, lest good friends of mine should suffer in future by your treachery. It would be but bare justice to hang every man of you, but your lives shall be spared for the present if you instantly lay down your arms. Take their weapons, gentlemen."

The conspirators were so thoroughly cowed that they gave up their arms without a struggle. In the meantime Kate had whispered a few words to the Prince and he beckoned me toward him.

"I find that I owe you a debt of gratitude for your conduct this night," he said graciously, "and I sincerely trust that at some future time it may lie within my power to repay you."

Then he turned to Kate.

"As for such loyalty as yours, Miss Gordon," he said, "a poor exile has no fitting reward. Nay, I think the only reward I can give you is to release you from further service to a race so unfortunate as mine. Pardon me."

He took the white cockade from her breast and handed it to me.

"See," he continued, "I give it into the keeping of your future husband, and I pray that you will not wear it again unless he himself pins it upon your breast. My errand here is accomplished, and tonight I leave London. Sloth and avarice have eaten away the loyalty of those who should have stood by the Prince. They wish to save their estates and will not thrust their heads into danger, though they would be willing enough that the poor Highland lads should leave their bones on another Culloden moor. But I will have no more useless bloodshed, please God, and so sail for France till better times. Farewell."

Kate could not speak for the sobs that choked her, and I—well, I feel no shame at the confession—knelt and kissed his hand with tears in my eyes. 'Twas the last we ever saw of Prince Charlie, the bravest and most unfortunate of all the Stuarts.

Toward Macintyre and his accomplices he behaved with his usual clemency. They were released when it was too late for them to interfere with his departure.

I have still the white cockade Kate wore on her breast that night, but I think even she has lost all desire to wear it again: for it was the hear of the once gallant Prince be true, his best friends might wish that he had died at the head of his brave Highlanders on Culloden moor.

A Higher Compliment.

"Blanche, dear," cried the enthusiastic young lover, "you are worth your weight in gold."

"Now, don't say that I am worth my weight in gold," interrupted the maiden. "I didn't intend to. I am going to pay you a higher compliment."

"Go on."

"You are worth your weight in wheat."

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