

SOME  
PARTICULARS  
OF THE  
Secret HISTORY  
OF  
WILLIAM MURRAY  
Of BRUGHTON, Esq;  
Late SECRETARY to the  
YOUNG PRETENDER

In a LETTER from a Young Gentleman  
at *Edinburgh* to his Friend in *London*

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# SOME PARTICULARS

OF THE

## Secret HISTORY

OF

*William Murray, &c.*

SIR,

 Had the Favour of your's of the 20th *ult.* to which I would have returned an Answer sooner, only that I waited to pick up some Particulars relating to Mr. Murray, late Secretary to the young Pretender, about whom you seem curious to have some Information. You are not to expect, that I can give you all the minute circumstances of that Gentleman's Life: He lived too obscure; and the Sphere he has moved in, till of late, has been so low, that every Thing relating to him cannot be supposed to have come to the Knowledge of the Publick; and a great Part of what might be known is so trivial, that I suppose you would not thank me for being very particular in my Detail: All I

intend is, to communicate to you such Anecdotes, as I have gathered from my own Knowledge of the Man, and the Information of his particular Acquaintance, as may serve to let you into the Character of that Gentleman, who has lately made so great a Noise In this Country, and whose Discovery I understood takes up Part of the Conversion in your Part of the World.

Mr. *Murray of Brughton* is descended of the House of *Athol*, and sprung immediately from the Branch of *Auchtertyre*. His Estate lies in the West of *Scotland*, and his Rent-Roll may amount to between fifteen-hundred and two-thousand Pounds a Year.

He has had a very liberal Education. He went thro' a Course of Philosophy at the University of *Edinburgh*; and afterwards, according to the Custom of this Country, attended the Classes of the Civil and Municipal Law; but his Acquaintance alledge, that from Want of Application rather than Capacity, he made very little Progress in the Knowledge either of Law or Philosophy. His Genius seem'd rather turn'd for Languages than Sciences; and accordingly he acquired a tolerable Notion of *Greek* and *Latin*, and soon became Master of *French* and *Italian*: When I say Master, I do not mean, that he ever pretended to be a Critic in the dead, or modern Languages; he satisfied himself with being able to speak them fluently; but I doubt much if he could pretend to write them accurately.

After he had attended the Law-Classes for two or three Sessions, he made the Tour of *Europe*, under the Tuition of Mr. *A—r S—r*, a Gentleman of great Learning and Capacity, perfectly acquainted with Men, as well as Books; one who had travelled with several young Noblemen, and, by that Means, very

well versed in the Manners and Customs of the several Courts of *Europe*: In a Word, a Tutor every way qualified to render Travelling useful, as well as entertaining: But amongst all the Tutor's good Qualities, he had one bad one, which counterballanced all the rest; he was a violent *Jacobite*, and a bigotted high-flown Church of *England* Man.

Mr. *Murray*, hitherto like all young Gentlemen of his Years, had not as yet troubled his Head much about Politics, and less about Religion; he was indeed bred up in the Doctrine of the Church of *England*; that is, he did not go to the Established Church; and whenever he was disposed to attend Divine Service, he went to an Episcopal Meeting, purely because his Parents had used him to it; but I dare swear from no Conviction, or indeed any Sense of the Difference betwixt that and the *Kirk*.

This early Prejudice against the Established Kirk of *Scotland* might have this Effect to instill into his Mind some early Notions of *Jacobitism*; for it's well known, that in *Scotland* to be of the Church of *England*, and a *Jacobite*, are almost Terms synonymous; as not one in ten of the Episcopal Clergy take the Oaths, or pray *nominat*, for his Majesty; they pray indeed for the King, and the Royal Family; but in such equivocal Terms, that it's easy to observe, that they mean some other Family, than that illustrious Family which now fills the Throne. To these Words, *May he overcome all his Enemies*, they add the Particle, YET: *May he yet overcome all his Enemies*; placing upon on the Particle *yet* a strong Emphasis so that none of their Audience can be at a Loss whom they mean. As young Minds are easily capable of Impressions, it is natural to suppose, that a Youth who has been used,

during his Infancy, to attend these Meetings, must naturally imbibe an Aversion to the Established Government, as well as to the Established Church; and that this Aversion grows up insensibly, and gathers Strength before we are aware of its Consequences; and in the end becomes too strong for our Reason to get the better of it.

Thus we may say, that Mr. *Murray* was bred a *Jacobite*; at least, that whatever political Notions he had when he began to travel, seemed to be determined that Way: He had not indeed formed any System, nor asked himself what Quarrel he had with the established Government; he only disliked it, because the Parson he had heard oftenest, did not pray for it; and perhaps in his Conversion had made it the Object of his Raillery, while he made the Pretender the Object of his Wishes.

But so soon as Mr. *Murray* came under, the Direction of his travelling Tutor, he learned new Maxims; and was taught by him to hate both the Established Church, and our happy Constitution from Principle: What before was the Effect of Chance, and the Prejudice of Education, receives new Strength from plausible Doctrines, seemingly founded on the Nature and Justice of Things. However fallacious the Reasoning might be, yet the Prepossession which filled his Mind originally, and the Opinion which the Pupil had of the Tutor's Wisdom, made Sophistry pass for sound Reasoning; and the grossest Absurdities, and most manifest Contradictions are adopted as infallible Axioms; and Mr. *Murray*, in a little Time, became bigotted to the Hierarchy, an Enemy to Parity and *Presbytery*, and a thorough-paced *Jacobite*.

The Tutor's Conversation, had great Influence to

keep him steady to these Principles; but the Conversation of some of these unhappy Gentlemen, who were Fugitives from their native Country on Account of the Rebellion in the Year 1715, still confirmed him the more; for the Tutor took Care, that wherever any of these unhappy Gentlemen were to be met with, that they were the constant Companions of his Pupil; and Railings against the present Government no doubt took up great Part of their Conversation.

When at *Rome*, he in private was introduced to the Chevalier *de St. George*; but he was too young as yet to form any Scheme, or to be trusted with any of the Secrets of the Party: Yet he gave the Pretender full Assurance of his Attachment to his Person and Interest; And tho' nothing passed at the private Interview, but what is common in Visits of Ceremony, yet it so turned Mr. *Murray's* Head upon Politics, that he fancy'd himself from that Day, a Statesman of great Importance; and from this Period, we may believe he laid the Plan of his own Ruin, and that of many others who followed his Advice in this last mad and unnatural Rebellion.

After visiting the several Places which employ the Curiosity of young Travellers, he returned; being absent about three Years, very little improv'd, except in his Antipathy to the Establish'd Government in Church and State, and a strong Conceit of his own Ability, for Matters of the highest Consequence, especially in Politics of which he fancy'd he had a sufficient Fund of Knowledge to govern Kingdoms.

He was in Pain till he had communicated to all his Acquaintance (whom he thought could be trusted with such a Secret) that he had had the Honour of

kissing the Pretender's Hand, and had been admitted to a private Audience; and made them believe that the Conversation turned upon the State of his Affairs in *Scotland*, and that his Majesty, as he termed him, had communicated to him his Intention of making suddenly a Push to recover Possession of his Dominions, and made him great Promises of Preferment, upon his Restoration.

This gained young Mr. *Murray* the Confidence and Esteem of all the old Women in the Neighbourhood, who crowded to see the Man who saw the King: He appeared to them as the Pretender's Plenipotentiary in those Parts, and they thought themselves happy in the good Graces of a Man in such eminent Favour; the Women converted their credulous Husbands, and persuaded them to make their Court to Mr., *Murray*, as the only Man who would be able to make their Fortunes in a short Time: An Incident happen'd to raise Mr. *Murray's* Reputation amongst these People, and convinced them that he was really very much in Favour with the Chevalier; the titular Bishop of *Galloway* happened at this Time to die, and Mr. *Murray* took upon him to write to one of the Pretender's Domesticks, with whom he had scraped an Acquaintance at *Rome*, recommending one *Moxwell*, a Non-juring Clergyman, who officiated as his Chaplain, to this Dignity; Mr. *Murray's* Correspondent was so happy as to succeed; and the Chaplain was nominated to this vacant See: So considerable a Promotion, by Mr. *Murray's* Influence, made the poor People, who were let into the Secret, believe that there was nothing impossible for his Worship; and he himself fancied that he should soon be a very considerable Man, and

therefore applied himself to make all the Proselytes he could to his Master's Interest.

He formed a Kind of Cabal, or Club which met at his House once a Fortnight; where they spent their Time laying Schemes for the Restoration; reviling the Government, and drinking the Pretender's Health: The Club consisted of some Country Farmers, two or three small Fewers, or Vassals of his Estate, his Worship's Barber, his Chaplain, and the School-master of the Parish, with about a Dozen of old Women; His Worship was President of this learned Assembly; and opened their Sessions constantly with a learned Speech, full of Invectives against the present Government, and pointing out the Happiness they should all enjoy, in case the Pretender should be established upon the Throne. The Chaplain and the School-master generally answered his Worship's Harangue with one of the same Kind; differing only in the Compliments they were pleased to pay their President, upon his great Abilities in State-Affairs, and the great Eloquence he shewed himself Master of in his Speeches from the Chair: This Ceremonial Part of their Business discussed, they generally proceeded to enumerate the National Grievances, and then to enumerate all the Friends they might expect to join them in the .great Work of a Restoration: They had formed to themselves a List of the Names of all the Great Men in the Kingdom, and found some Argument or other; to flatter themselves, that every one of them would join in the *good old Cause*.

They went on: at this Rate for two or three Years, but without any considerable Addition to their Numbers; which, however, did not discourage them; for, this wise Assembly look'd upon themselves as

the Representatives of the whole. Kingdom; and I believe very little would have persuaded them to take upon them the Name of a Parliament: But, about the latter End of the third Year of their Sessions, an Accident happen'd, which disturb'd this wise Senate, and disconcerted some very great .Projects they had formed: Mr., *Murray* happened to be at *Edinburgh*, and in his Absence the Club met according to their usual Adjournment, and the Chaplain filled the Chair; the Barber, that Night, introduced a Stranger to the Club, a Fellow who carried on a Smuggling-Trade between the *Isle of Man* and the West-Coast of *Scotland*; the Smuggler was a hasty, honest, drunken Companion, lov'd his Bottle and his Friend, but had not Brains turned for a Politician; and in Reality was no Enemy to the Establishment: Yet, to promote his Trade of Smuggling, could rail at the Ministry, and sometimes talk Treason, if he thought it agreeable to his Company: This had prevailed on the Barber to think him a fit Member of this secret Assembly. This new Guest admitted, the Company fell to their usual Custom of railing at the Government, and talk'd Treason by Wholesale: when they had drank plentifully, they curs'd his Majesty, and drank a Health to the Pretender, with all his Titles, upon the bare Knee; the Smuggler made some Scruple to go thro' this Part of the Ceremony: But, at last, partly by Persuasion, and partly by Threats from the Chair, he comply'd, but was no sooner dismiss'd; but the Fellow rode that Night to a neighbouring Justice of the Peace, and gave Information of the Proceedings of this Assembly: the Justice, who ow'd Mr. *Murray* a Spite, granted Warrants against Numbers of them, and the Chaplain, titular Bishop of *Gallway*, was

taken into Custody: Mr. *Murray* was soon informed of the Fate of his Friends, and was struck with a Pannick, lest some of them, to save their own Bacon, would impeach him: His Fear was not groundless and this good Church-man made no Scruple to discover the whole Intent of the Assembly, and the Part Mr. *Murray* acted; and did not forget that he had procured for him the Pretender's Nomination to the Bishoprick of *Gallway*: All this amounted to no less than High-Treason: However, some of Mr. *Murray's* Friends, who knew his Weakness, and did not desire the Ruin of his Family, found Means to stifle the Information, upon Condition that the Club should be discarded, and the titular Prelate should voluntarily absent himself from the Country, and Mr. *Murray's* Company.

This was the Issue of this political Assembly; and one would have imagined that the narrow Escape he had made would have taught Mr. *Murray* more Wisdom for the future: But he had got such an Itch to be dabbling in Politicks, that he had no Relish of Life but when he was plotting; tho' hitherto his Brain had not been very prolifick, yet he hoped Time and Opportunity would furnish him with Materials, to atchieve something very great in Favour of the Pretender.

The Ill-Blood which the Excise-Scheme bred in the Nation had not yet subsided, when the unhappy Affair of Capt. *Porteous* gave fresh Discontent, Mr. *Murray* believed that to be a proper Time to attempt something in Favour of the Pretender; for this Purpose he was not idle in blowing the Coals of Sedition, and fomenting the Flams which that unhappy Affair had railed in the Minds of many, otherwise very well affected to the Establishment;

but the Imprudence Mr. *Murray* had shewn in the Affair of the Club at his own House, made those who were really *Jacobites*, cautious in trusting him with their Sentiments, so that he could only work himself into the Confidence of a few Persons of the same Stamp, with those of the discarded Assembly; only he happen'd by Chance to get acquainted at *Edinburgh* with the Laird of *M<sup>c</sup>Laughlan*, and *Stewart*, then younger of *Appin*; the former a Man of Courage, and in his Capacity a well-meaning Country Gentleman; and the latter but few Degrees removed from a Natural; however both *Jacobites*, and considerable for their Families, and as Chiefs of Clans: Mr. *Murray* knew their Character, which neither of them attempted to conceal; and therefore soon wrought himself into their Confidence: Mr. *Murray* boasted of the Friends he could raise in the West; and the Highland Chiefs of the Strength, of their Clans, and those who were of the same Opinion with them; Mr. *Murray* made an Estimate of the Forces that could be raised in the Highlands for the Service of the Cause from these Gentlemen's Information; and they three resolved, that Mr. *Murray* should go to the Pretender, to give him an Account of the Situation of his Friends in the Highlands, and the Readiness they were in to make an Attempt in his Favour: They took upon them to write an Address in the Name of all the Highland Clans, and to recommend *Murray* as their Agent, or Plenipotentiary.

Thus, he had formerly assumed the Character of a Plenipotentiary from the Pretender, because he had been permitted to kiss his Hand; and now he assumes the Character of a Deputy from the Highland Clans, tho' its possible he never spoke

with one of them, except the two just mentioned, who are two of the most inconsiderable of their Number: but he was resolved to be a Statesman at any Rate, however qualified for the Vocation.

Besides the publick Letters of Credence, he had private Letters from the Laird *McLaughlan*, to one *C—n C—e*, Brother to Sir *D—r C—e* of *L—l*, a *Romish* Priest then at *Rome*, which happened to be of more Service to him, than any other Recommendation he carried with him.—He made some Stay at *Paris* in his Way to *Rome*; and attempted to be introduced to the *Cardinal*, in order to communicate to him the Design of his Journey; but that Minister had got Information of our Politician's Character, and could not be persuaded to honour him with an Interview; however he got some Letters from the Marquis of *Tullibardin*, old *Lochiel*, and some other Gentlemen of that Party then at *Paris*, to their Acquaintance at the Pretender's Court: Upon his Arrival there, he first applied to Mr. *Kelly*, to whom he had some Letters. This Gentleman, upon a slight Conversation, soon found the Depth and Shallows of our Politician, and gave him but a very cool Reception; and declined introducing him to the Pretender, but offer'd to deliver his Dispatches: Mr. *Murray* did not like this Method of Proceeding, and refused to trust *Kelly* with his Letters. He then applied to Mr., *C—e*, the Priest, who introduced him to my Lady *Inverness*; that is to Colonel *Hay's* Lady, who is reputed to be the Pretender's Mistress, and assumes there, the Title of Lady *Inverness*; that Lady was prevailed on to procure him a private Audience of she *Chevalier*; to whom he deliver'd his Dispatches. The Pretender, who had been prepossessed against him by *Kelly*,

did not receive him with all the Marks of Esteem, which the seeming Importance of his Commission required: He only thank'd him for the Pains he had taken, and told him he would shortly consider of the Contents of his Dispatches.

He remained at *Rome* for some Months before he could have another Audience; and at last was referred to Mr. *Kelly*, who made light of every Thing Mr. *Murray* proposed; He wanted to prevail on the Chevalier, to order a Sum of Money to be distributed amongst the Clans, both to engage them more firmly in his Interest, and to buy up Arms, in order for an Insurrection, which he represented the Spirit of the Nation in general to be ripe for. But the Politicians at *Rome* could not be persuaded to be of his Opinion; they concluded nothing could be done without foreign Force; and the Situation of the Affairs of *Europe* was then such, that they could not expect any Thing of that Kind; all that he could procure was a Letter from the Chevalier addressed to the Highland Clans, thanking, them for their proffer'd Service, and assuring them that he should always have a grateful Sense of their Loyalty, and zealous Attachment to his Person, and that he hoped in a short Time to have an opportunity of returning them his Acknowledgments, in a more agreeable Manner.

Mr. *Murray*, returned .with this to *Scotland*; and communicated this Letter, to his two corresponding Chieftains, desiring them to communicate the same to the rest of their Friends. But this gave but little Satisfaction to the Party; as Mr. *Murray*, had made them believe that this hopeful Negotiation would have ended in something more agreeable, either to their wishers or Interest—That is, that they might

either have got to answer their Necessity, or have been encouraged to raise a national Commotion, out of which they expected to fish something for their Advantage; but their time was not yet come; and happy had it been, if every Negotiator had been as unsuccessful as Mr. *Murray*.

However, Mr. *Murray*, looked upon himself now as the Head of the Jacobite Faction; though not one Man of any Note, of that Party, would even converse with him, much less trust him with their secret Intentions: A kind of Schism happened about this time, in the Church of *Scotland*, occasioned by the Aversion some hot-headed Clergy had to Patronages; the Affair might have ended in some popular Disturbance, if the Ministry had not treated the Schismatical Clergy with Contempt; Mr.; *Murray*, and his little low Agents spirited up the Division, in hopes to have set the People by the Ears; and magnified his Endeavours that way to his Friends at home; But in a little time the Affair dwindled to nothing, and Mr. *Murray*, lost his Aim, as well as his Reputation for Intelligence, since nothing happened, as he had conjectured.

When the Invasion in 1743, was talk'd of, Mr. *Murray* began to muster all his forces; and wrote circular Letters to his correspondents in the *Highlands*, but they took little Notice of his Letters; however he began from this time, to enlarge his correspondence amongst the Disaffected, as he judged the War with *France* might produce something in Favour of his Scheme; some of the lesser Chiefs were prevailed on, by the travelling Romish Missionaries, with whom *Murray* corresponded, to be less reserved in their Answers to his Letters; and by this Means, before the

Breaking out of the last Rebellion, he had got some Letters from a Considerable Number of *Highland* Lairds; whom he supposed capable of raising much greater Numbers of Men, than they really were; he was so sanguine in his hopes; so credulous and so ignorant of the Nature of the Country, that in a List transmitted to the *Chevalier* of those who had engaged to him, to join his Standard upon its first Appearance, he computes, that they would raise sixty thousand Men; tho' its manifest that if every Person in that List had raised every Man, from sixteen, to sixty, upon their Estates, and actually joined the Pretender, they could not bring into the Field, two thousand Men.

However as Men are apt to give easy Credit to those things they wish to be true, however improbable, Mr. *Murray* gained Credit; and in Spite of *Kelly's* Opposition, when the *Chevalier* landed, he was made Secretary of State, for *Scotch* Affairs; But the Affairs of *England* remained in *Kelly's* Managment, who both hated and despised Mr. *Murray*.

The *Chevalier* had not been many Weeks in *Scotland*, when the Emptiness of Mr. *Murray's* Promises appeared; for either those Gentlemen he had depended on, in his great List, -joined the King's' Forces, remained Newter, or if they joined, it was with such a Force, as bore no Proportion to the Strength *Murray* had promised in their Name.

These Disappointments exposed Mr. *Murray*, to the Resentment of Mr. *Kelly*, who never feared doing him ill Offices with the *Chevalier*, while he remained with the Army; but when that Gentleman returned to *France*, to hasten the *French* Succours, Mr. *Murray* enjoyed his Place with greater Peace,

and was allowed to transact the Business of Secretary of the whole Island. But yet he wanted not Enemies who could have wished him removed from the young Pretender: He united himself with *Sullivan*, and *O-neil*, who ingrossed the Young Pretender's Favour; and this gain'd him Enemies amongst the *Scotch*; who resented that two *Irishmen*, who brought nothing to the Cause but their Persons, should be preferred to Natives, who risked their Lives and Fortunes; and charged the Secretary with Meanness of Spirit, and Treachery to his Country for allowing himself to be the Tool of these Favourites; however he found these two supported him in his Place; so like a true Statesman he despised the Complaints of his Countrymen: He became haughty and imperious; and in his Station of a Mock-Secretary of State, he behaved with as much Arrogance, as if he had been Prime Minister to the greatest Prince in *Europe*; he is naturally a Coward, and consequently cruel in his Disposition, as you may gather from the Circumstance of his Signing an Order before the Battle of *Culloden*, to give no Quarter to the King's Forces. This Story has been reported since he was taken up, and is believed by many to be true: Some who would willingly take the Odium of such Barbarity off the young Pretender, would insinuate, that the Order was Signed by *Murray* without the Pretender's Knowledge; and that when it came to be known after the Battle, *Murray* was dismissed, which induced him to leave the Highlands, and make towards the South, where he was apprehended. Others clear both *Murray* and the Chevalier of such an Order; and alledge, that it is only a Story raised to blacken the Character of the Rebels, and justify

the Military Severity that has been used since that Battle. But I suppose by this Time you will know the Fact with greater Certainty than we do at this Distance, who only argue from Conjectures.

This, Sir, is all I can inform you of relating to this famous Gentleman, from whence you may gather this general Character of him, that he is a Stranger to all Kind of Letters, except the mere Language; that he is a Bigot in his Principles of a proud, haughty, imperious, cruel Temper, weak in his Intellects, and conceited in his Opinion, but of a restless, factious, and ambitious Disposition.

*FINIS.*

