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THE LAST DAYS OF CLEMENTINA WALKINSHAW.

Clementina Walkinshaw, Prince Charlie's mistress, on her flight from him, received from the Emperor Francis I. the title of Comtesse d'Albestroff,¹ and on the adoption of her daughter, Charlotte Stuart, by her father, who created her Duchess of Albany, retired first to Paris and then to Switzerland, where, on her daughter's death, she lived on a pension paid in accordance with her daughter's will by the Cardinal York. The Coutts' MSS., edited in *The Life of Thomas Coutts, Banker*, by Mr. E. Hartley Coleridge, cast some new light upon her latter days and also on the character of the Cardinal.

The Comtesse d'Albestroff lived 'chez La Veuve Frioud, pres de St. Nicholas, at Fribourg in Switzerland' in 1793, and Thomas Coutts the Banker, in London, kept up a friendly correspondence with her. He was in Scottish fashion, through his relations the Stuarts of Allanbank, the Setons of Touch, the Walkinshaw Crawfords of Crawfordland, her 'cousin,' and he felt all the obligations of kinship. 'The unhappy affairs in France' rendered her position and circumstances 'very cruel and distressing,' and Mr. Coutts wrote 1st April, 1794,² telling her that he had used his influence with Monsignor Erskine, 'lately appointed auditor of his Holiness the Pope,' to help her 'in regard to the Cardinal,' no doubt concerning the pension which Cardinal York was charged to pay her, and which was already in arrears. On 10th August, 1795,³ he sent her twenty-five guineas (the first of many remittances), and wrote: 'It made Mrs. Coutts and my daughters very happy to hear you was in good health, tho' we were much mortify'd with the behaviour of the Prince Cardinal, who's High Birth & misfortunes should make him feel more for others.'

On the 4th August, 1796, Mr. Coutts wrote a letter to William Wickham, Esq., to recommend the Comtesse. 'She is,' he wrote, 'born of a very respectable family in Scotland and I am confident will always be found in every respect deserving of your protection.' He kept her supplied with money and news about his family from time to time. In January, 1799, she was, in spite of the war terrors, still at Fribourg, and we find him writing: 'May Heaven give you the comfort which this vile world denies.' On 26th December of that year, dating from Bath,⁴ he sent her twenty-five guineas with this news: 'I have had the pleasure to hear that His Majesty with His usual goodness has extended His bounty to the Cardinal Duke and that Lord Minto, Minister at Vienna, has been ordered to pay him £2000 & to assure him He will receive the same sum half-yearly that is four thousand pounds a year. Surely He cannot refuse a small degree of Humanity towards you—when he is receiving it so liberally himself, from our most amiable and best of Kings.'

On the 15th July, 1800,⁵ he was forced to write, however, sending the usual sum: 'I have always been in hope to hear that the Cardinal on receiving from our most amiable Sovereign a very liberal allowance of Four Thousand pounds per annum, had ordered your Pension to be regularly paid—and even that He might have ordered me to pay it to your order out of the sum he receives from this Country.'

I think you should write him a letter stating that you know the generous allowance made to him from England and implore his justice and generosity to make you an allowance out of it, adding that 'tho' you are almost forgotten in England, yet still you have some friends left there, to whom you may represent the hardship of your situation. That you hope He will prevent the necessity of your doing so by writing to *Mr. Coutts Banquier de la Cour a Londres* to pay your

¹ Ruvigny's *Jacobite Peerage*, p. 190a.

² *Life of Thomas Coutts*, vol. ii. pp. 33-54.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 67, 69.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 109.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 113-4.

small annuity out of the allowance made to His Eminence—as it must make His Eminence appear in a bad light to refuse such a trifle to the Mother of the Duchess of Albany, especially as he inherited all her effects & was charged with the support of her Mother, who is now distressed and languishing among strangers in a foreign land.’

The Comtesse wrote later to say that she had heard that the Cardinal had refused ‘The Bounty of England,’ but Mr. Coutts corrected this on 1st January, 1802¹ you may be assured you have been misinformed & that His Eminence has received it regularly—at two payments in the year, each of them two thousand pounds. He is always solicitous to have it, and I believe his agent Mr. Sloane at Rome sometimes has advanc’d the money by anticipation.

I receive it here and am now assured of receiving £2000 in a few days. The period of payment being the 5th of this month. He might surely out of such a sum pay your pittance 1500 livres—which you inform me he offers, he reduces to 500 livres, even that trifle perhaps does not pay punctually.

His conduct is shameful and cruel.’

Had it not been for Mr. Coutts’ remittances, which amounted at least to £50 a year, the poor Comtesse would have been in sad straits. On 16th November, 1802, he wrote again, sending her her money, and ended his letter² with the criticism: ‘The Cardinal Duke must have outliv’d all sense of shame.’ Clementina Walkinshaw died in the same month and year. She died aged and poor, but bequeathed to her kind benefactor, Thomas Coutts, a small gold box ‘comme petit gage de ses bontés pour moi.’

Among the Coutts’ papers there is, in addition, a curious note³ of ‘Money generously sent by Thomas Coutts Esq. to my poor Grand Mother, the Countess of Albestroff,’ amounting from 1795 to 16th November, 1802, in all to 250 guineas. The note ends ‘£262 10 shs. which amount my strongest desire is to repay. I have however every reason to believe that more money has been paid to my grand-mother, and I hope, one day to come to be able to know and settle the whole. R.’

Who this grandchild could be might be a mystery were it not for a letter from Thomas Coutts’ daughter, Lady Bute, to her father, 19th September, 1815,⁴ which gives her account of his origin. ‘I am most happy you approve of my having refused to lend money to Le Baron Roehenstart: he is a gentlemanlike man, very like Madame D’Albestroff. It seems his mother, the Duchess D’Albany, married Mons. Roehenstart.’

The Duchess of Albany (through a marriage to a Prince of Sweden, Adolph, Duke of Eurhes, Gothland, brother of Gustaf III., was once talked about and who in consequence saw many Swedes) mentioned neither marriage nor child in her will, naming only her intimates, her household, and her uncle the Cardinal. The Cardinal she made her heir, but provided for her mother, to whom she desired an annual pension of fifteen thousand francs to be paid for her life, with the power of disposing at her death of fifty thousand francs in favour of her necessitous relations.⁵ A Swede, Charles Edward Stuart Baron Rohenstart, who at the age of seventy-three was killed by a coach accident in Perthshire, 28th October, 1854, and buried in Dunkeld Cathedral, claimed, it is said, to be a grandson of Prince Charlie, and, as we have just seen, perhaps was so. It does not seem, however, that his mother ever acknowledged him or that his grandmother left any

¹ *Life of Thomas Coutts*, vol. ii. p. 130.

² *Ibid.* p. 142.

³ *Ibid.* p. 142-3.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 333.

⁵ Will of the Duchess of Albany, *Miscellany, Scottish History Society*, vol. ii. pp. 433-456.

memorandum about his origin. Clementina Walkinshaw, indeed, in her will, made the following pathetic note about her Scottish kin only: "To each of my relations should any of them still remain I give a Louis, as a means of discovering them."¹

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¹ Dennistoun's *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange*, ii. Appendix vi. p. 324.