

**ALLEGED LETTER BY FREDERICK
OF PRUSSIA
TO PRINCE CHARLES STEWART.**

The [following copy of a translation of a letter in French](#), alleged to have been sent by Frederick of Prussia to Prince Charles Stewart, has gone the round of most of the public journals. A few lines are prefixed by way of explanation, evidently to give a semblance of truth to the document. It is represented as having been translated by Lord George Murray, and enclosed in a letter to the person for whom it was intended. Both letter and translation had been, it is asserted, entombed in an old black letter Bible. It will be observed that neither the original translation or the alleged letter are described as autograph. The date is November 8, 1746—not quite six months after the defeat at Culloden (April 16, 1746).

**FREDERICK, KING OF PRUSSIA, AND THE
YOUNG PRETENDER.**

The following letter from Lord George Murray to a friend, enclosing a translation of a letter from Frederick of Prussia to Prince Charles Stewart, has been found recently within the leaves of an old black-letter Bible:—

“My Lord,—Though this letter hath been so long kept in secret, and hid from the public, I give you my honour it is genuine. It was with great difficulty I obtained it, and though I am not perfect master of the French language, I attempted the translation of it, and if it is not so correct or sublime in the English tongue as in the original, yet it will in a great measure discover the real sentiments of his Prussian Majesty to the unhappy family of Stewart:—

“The King of Prussia's Letter to his Royal Highness Prince Charles.

“Most beloved Cousin,—I can no longer, my dear Prince, deny myself the satisfaction of congratulating you on your safe arrival in France, and though the connection I have with the reigning family did not permit me to rejoice too openly at the progress of your arms, I can assure you, on the word of a King, I was sincerely touched with your misfortunes, under the deepest apprehensions for the safety of your person.

“All Europe was astonished at the greatness of your enterprise; for though Alexander and other heroes have conquered kingdoms with inferior armies, you are the only one who ever engaged in such an attempt without any.

“Voltaire, who of all poets is best able to write, is above all men more indebted to your Highness for having at length furnished him with a subject worthy of his pen, which has all the requisites of an epic poem, except a happy event.

“However, though fortune was your foe, Great Britain, and not your Highness, are the only losers by it, as the difficulties you have undergone have only served to discover those talents and virtues which have gained you the admiration of all mankind, and even the esteem of those amongst your enemies in whom every spark of virtue is not totally extinct.

“The Princess, who has all the curiosity of her sex, is desirous to see the features of a hero of whom she has heard so much, so that you have it in your power to oblige both her and me in sending us your picture by the Count de ——, who is on his return to Berlin; and be assured I shall esteem it the most valuable acquisition I ever made. You are frequently the subject of conversation with General Keith, whom I have had the good

fortune to engage in my service, and, besides his consummate knowledge in military affairs, he is possessed of a thousand amiable qualities, yet nothing endears him so much as his entertaining the sentiments with regard to your Royal Highness that I do.

“Was I differently situated to what I am, I would give you more essential proofs of my friendship than mere words; but you may depend on any good offices I can do with my brother of France. Yet I am sorry to tell you that I am too well acquainted with the politics of that Court to expect they will do you any solid service, as they would have everything to apprehend from a Prince of your consummate abilities and enterprising genius placed at the head of the bravest people in the world. Adieu, royal hero, and assure yourself that no change of fortune can make any alteration in my esteem.

“From our Court at Berlin, November 8, 1746.”

It is odd that this affectionate and confidential communication has the word “Prussia” at the end. It is not usual for monarchs to subscribe or superscribe papers of any kind after this fashion. Neither the kings of England, Scotland, nor France signed as “England,” “Scotland,” “France.”

Now the letter and prefatory observation were printed and attempted to be circulated more than one hundred and twenty years ago. The writer has in his possession one of the printed copies seized by order of the magistrates of Edinburgh on June 29, 1748; and the only difference of the slightest moment, between the original version and the modern copy, is the date—the former being “November the

8th, 1747,” and the latter “November 8, 1746.”

In consequence of intelligence received by the magistrates of Edinburgh that a document of a seditious tendency was privately in circulation, an inquiry was set on foot by them, and four witnesses were examined on the subject, whose depositions were to this effect:—

Upon June 29, 1748, John Loch, keeper of the Laigh coffee-house, was examined in presence of the Lord Provost and Magistrates. He deponed that he had seen the MS. of the letter three or four months previously—

“That being in his coffee-house this morning, between nine and ten o'clock, a boy, whom the declarant, knows not, came into the coffee-house, and put into his hand four copies of a printed paper, which the declarant, without looking to, put into a press in the coffee-house where he keeps his sugar and coffee.”

With a singular want of curiosity, he asserts he never looked into them, and could give no information about the boy who brought them. On the same day the constables came with a search warrant, when Loch put the papers into his pocket, refused to give them up, and only produced them when brought before the council. One copy was marked by the clerk of the court, signed by Loch, authenticated by Baillie James Stewart, and is the one above referred to.

Patrick Arthur, “keeper of the British coffeehouse,” was next examined. He declared that the previous night, between the hours of nine and ten, a printer's boy with his apron on came to the coffee-

house, and gave *thirteen* copies of the letter of the King of Prussia to the servants. These were delivered to him, whereupon they were instantly locked up, and shown to no person. He delivered the copies to the constables when they came, but could give no account of the printer's boy, as all he knew on the subject was communicated by his servant.

Next day brought out the name of the printer, who turned out to be Robert Drummond, whose apprentice, John Livingston, stated that one John Henderson brought the MS. to the printing house of his master, where it was printed.

David Ross, the pressman of Mr. Drummond, spoke as to the delivery of the MS. and the order by John Henderson to have it printed, which was obeyed, and five hundred copies thrown off and delivered to Henderson. He concluded his declaration by asserting "that Henderson, upon bringing the MS. to the printing house, say'd that he had got it from one Mrs. Nicol." Who this female was (if such a person did really exist) is not explained.

The seizure of this seditious fabrication was in June, 1748; and the paper printed is dated in Nov. 1747. The recently discovered MS., now reprinted, is dated in Nov. 1746.

It congratulates Prince Charles on his safe arrival in France, which occurred in that year, and the printed letter does the same a year later; whilst the deposition before the magistrates establishes that the MS. letter and introduction were not in type until May or June, 1748.

If genuine, this document is an early specimen of Prussian double-dealing, worthy of the present refined age. But we have no little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that it is a fiction: one of those devices not unfrequently practised to influence the public mind, and prepare it for a subsequent rising. That the government, upon learning its existence, issued those orders to which the magistrates of Edinburgh gave effect, plainly evinces a belief that a new rebellion of the Jacobites was in contemplation.

Had the letter been a veritable one, it would never have been subscribed "Prussia."

[J. M.](#)