ANECDOTAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

COMTE A. DE LA GARDE-CHAMBONAS

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ANECDOTAL

RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

CONGRESS OF VIENNA



FRANCIS I, EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA.

ANECDOTAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

CONGRESS OF VIENNA

BY THE

COMTE A. DE LA GARDE-CHAMBONAS

WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY THE

COMTE FLEURY

Translated

BY THE AUTHOR OF

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE COMTE AUGUSTE DE LA GARDE-CHAMBONAS

Auguste-Louis-Charles de La Garde,[1] a man of letters and a poet of some repute in his time, was born in Paris in 1783. The following is a copy of his certificate of baptism:—

THE OLD PARISH OF SAINT-EUSTACHE.

ANNO 1783.

(REGISTRY OF PARIS.)

On Wednesday, the fifth day of March of the year seventeen hundred and eighty-three, there was baptized Auguste-Louis-Charles, born on the previous day but one, the son of Messire le Comte Scipion-Auguste de La Garde, chevalier, captain of Dragoons, and of Dame Catherine-Françoise Voudu, his wife, domiciled in the Rue de Richelieu. Godfather—Messire Jean de la Croix, captain of Dragoons; Godmother—Dame Elisabeth Vingtrinien, wife of M. Etienne-Antoine Barryals, Bourgeois of Paris.[2]

The child’s mother died in giving it birth. The

father only survived the beloved young wife for a little while, and feeling his end to be near, confided the orphan to the head of his family, the Marquis de Chambonas (Scipion-Charles-Victor Auguste de La Garde), camp-marshal (equivalent to the present grade of general of brigade), and subsequently a minister of Louis XVI.[3]

M. de Chambonas took charge of the infant, looking upon it as a second son, and treating it with the most constant affection. Consequently in all his works, and in his *Unpublished Notes*, Auguste de La Garde always refers by the name of 'father' to the relative who had replaced his dead parents.[4]

During his early childhood, he was often entrusted to his godmother, Mme. de Villers.[5] She was the friend of Mme. Bernard, the wife of the Lyons banker, whose daughter was to attain such great celebrity under the name of Mme. Récamier. Brought up together, as it were, these two children conceived for each other a sincere affection, which neither time nor distance ever cooled. When, on his return from foreign parts, Auguste de La Garde came to Paris in 1801, he at once took up his abode at Mme. Récamier's, who, moreover, gave him the support so necessary to the youthful wanderer who possessed no resources of his own. Hence, it will cause no surprise to meet in the *Recollections of the Congress of Vienna* with pages breathing a profound sense of gratitude to Mme. Récamier.

Young La Garde began his studies under the guidance of the Abbé B——, after which he was sent to the College of Sens. (His 'father' had been governor of the town in 1789, and its mayor in 1791.) M. de Chambonas, after having commanded the 17th division of the army of Paris for a very short

time, was called to the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the 17th June 1792, to replace Dumouriez, who had resigned. His stay there was also very short. Having been denounced publicly in the Legislative Assembly for having withheld information with regard to the movements of the Prussian troops, and becoming more and more suspect every day, he quickly abandoned the post.

On the 10th August he was among those who endeavoured to defend the Tuileries, and was even left for dead on the spot. It was only towards the end of 1792 that M. de Chambonas made up his mind to quit Paris. He did not cross the frontier, but managed to reach Sens; where, in safe hiding, he succeeded in spending unmolested the years of the Reign of Terror. He had taken with him his son, who subsequently married Mlle. de la Vernade, at Sens (and who was the grandfather of the present Marquis de Chambonas), and also his adopted son.

How did the erewhile minister of Louis XVI. succeed in passing unmolested through the Terror? It seems almost incredible. This was one of the exceptions the particulars of which have been traced by memoirs that have recently come to light.[6]

During the Directory, in fact, M. de Chambonas floated absolutely to the top, and at one time there was talk of sending him to Spain as ambassador. The plan fell through, and after the *coup d'état* on the 18th Fructidor (4th September 1797), M. de Chambonas, considering himself no longer safe, hurriedly left Paris to avoid arrest.

Behold our wanderers at Hamburg, and afterwards in Sweden and Denmark. Auguste de La Garde in his somewhat florid style will tell us many amusing anecdotes; on the other hand, the

bombardment of Copenhagen by the English fleet in 1801 affected him sadly.

A few months later, the lad of eighteen is sent to France by M. de Chambonas in order to obtain the removal of the sender's name from the list of *émigrés* —he had been considered as such while he was in hiding at Sens—and to claim the estates the nation had confiscated. Auguste de La Garde is hospitably received by Mme. Récamier, who, while bestirring herself in behalf of the 'father,' takes the son in hand with regard to his education. Through her influence, La Harpe assists him with his counsels, and the best professors direct his further studies. As for the property the restitution of which is claimed by his 'father,' by that time established in England, all idea of it had to be abandoned; and young La Garde himself, his mind precociously ripened by his exile, was compelled to look to his own independent future.[7]

His personal charm, his natural gifts, and, in short, the useful connections he rapidly made for himself, soon procured him employment and a start in life. At the outset, he obtained through the goodwill of Prince Eugène missions to Italy, to Marmont in Dalmatia, to the Court of King Joseph at Naples, and finally to Rome, where he was cordially received by Lucien Bonaparte and his family. The pages, whether in his *Recollections of the Congress of Vienna* or in his *Unpublished Notes*, referring to his primary benefactors, go far to exonerate him from the charge of ingratitude, for he lavishes upon those benefactors all the ornaments of his rhetoric; at any rate, nearly all, for the greater part of the acknowledgment of his indebtedness goes mainly to Field-Marshal Prince de Ligne, who was his

protector, his beneficent and ... very useful relative, a member of the Chambonas family, having, as we already stated, married a Princesse de Ligne.

La Garde first met with the Prince de Ligne in the Eternal City. He soon became a familiar visitor to the octogenarian prince, who, like the generous Mæcenas that he was, gave him a pressing invitation to come and settle near him in Vienna. The young fellow was too sensible to make light of an offer insuring material welfare and a regular existence after years of uncertainty. He, therefore, settled in Vienna near to his benefactor, yielding for the matter of that to the spell exercised over every one by that very superior specimen of manhood, and requiting his kindness with an affectionate veneration increasing as time went on. The whole of the first part of the *Recollections* attests a boundless gratitude; and if on the one hand that work constitutes the brightest ornament of our author's literary crown, it constitutes on the other the most complete panegyric of the prince who had become 'his idol.'

From Vienna, the Comte de La Garde passed into Russia, where he met with a cordial welcome from the elegant society of St. Petersburg. In 1810 he published there a volume of poems, which obtained a most signal success. Subsequently invited to Poland by the Comte Félix Potocki, and treated with the most generous hospitality, he was enabled to devote himself to numerous literary works; and as a mark of gratitude to his hosts, he translated into French Trembecki's poem dedicated to the cherished wife of Comte Félix, the celebrated Sophie Potocka.

The *Recollections of the Congress of Vienna* contains frequent references to the 'superb Sophie,' who was born in the Fanariote quarter in

Constantinople, and whose singular career was solely owing to her beauty. She married in the first place the Comte de Witt (of the family of the Dutch Great State-Councillor, whose descendants had entered the service of Russia). The Comte de Witt enticed her away from a secretary of the French Embassy in Constantinople; Comte Félix Potocki, in his turn, eloped with her while she was Comtesse de Witt, and married her, thanks to an amicable arrangement nullifying the first marriage. Comtesse Sophie, celebrated throughout Europe—her loveliness had even compelled admiration from the Court circle at Versailles—lived on a regal footing on her estate of Tulczim, and dispensed her hospitality to the French *émigrés* in a manner calculated to dazzle many of them. The *Mémoires* of General Comte de Rochechouart and the present *Recollections* are specially interesting on the subject. The success of the poem, 'Sophiowka,' was such as to gain for its adapter the honorary membership respectively of the Academies of Warsaw, Cracow, Munich, London, and Naples.

The Comte de La Garde was to receive another flattering testimonial in Poland, many years later, on the occasion of the appearance of his poem on the 'Funérailles de Kosciusko' (Treuttel & Wurtz: Paris, 1830). Its several editions by no means exhausted its success; the senate of the republic of Cracow conferred upon him the Polish citizenship, while the kings of Bavaria, Prussia, and Saxony complimented him by autograph letters.

La Garde was the author of a great number of songs; and the most renowned composers of the period competed for the honour of setting them to music. Many of these romances were dedicated to

Queen Hortense, whose acquaintance he made at Augsburg in 1819. This led to his collaboration in 'Loi d'Exil,' and 'Partant pour la Syrie'—the latter of which became the national hymn during the Second Empire. In 1853, there appeared *L'Album artistique de la Reine Hortense*, a much prized collection of the then unpublished songs of the Comte de La Garde, with their music by the queen, and charming reproductions of tiny paintings, which were also her work.[8]

This was the last time the name of the Comte de La Garde appeared in print. A short time afterwards his wandering life came to an end in Paris, which during the latter years of his life he inhabited alternately with Angers. He had adopted as his motto: 'My life is a battle'; he could have added, 'and a never-ending journey'; for his constitutional restlessness prevented him from settling permanently, no matter where. He never married. The few documents he left behind, including some momentoes, represented the whole of his property, and went to his cousin, M. de La Garde, Marquis de Chambonas.

In addition to the afore-mentioned works and the present one, *Recollections of the Congress of Vienna*, which originally appeared in Paris in 1820 (?), M. de la Garde was the author of the following: *Une traduction de Dmitry Donskoy* (Moscow, 1811); *Coup d'œil sur le Royaume de Pologne* (Varsovie, 1818); *Coup d'œil sur Alexander-Bad* (Bavière, 1819); *Laure Bourg: roman dédié au Roi de Bavière* (Munich, 1820); *Les Monuments grecs de la Sicile* (Munich, 1820); *Traduction des Mélodies de Thomas Moore* (Londres, 1826); *Voyage dans quelques parties de l'Europe* (Londres, 1828); *Brighton, Voyage en Angleterre*,

(1830); *Tableau de Bruxelles (prose et vers), dédié à la Reine*; *Projet pour la formation d'une Colonie belge à la Nouvelle Zélande*, etc.

In all those works, and notably in the most important, namely: *Brighton*, and *Souvenirs du Congrès de Vienne*, M. de La Garde shows himself to be endowed with the faculty of observation and with tact. Unfortunately his matchless kindliness prevents his criticisms from departing from the laudatory gamut.

We must not look in these *Recollections* for important revelations concerning the diplomatic conferences which engaged the attention of the whole of Europe in 1815; we shall only meet with delightful anecdotes and portraits of *grandes dames* and illustrious personages. There will be many silhouettes of figures that have been forgotten since, but which, while they belonged to this world, were worthy of notice. To appreciate them we should bring to the perusal of this volume the quality which presided at its composition: namely, the kindliness of an observant man of the world.

Since their appearance in 1820, these *Recollections* had been absolutely forgotten. It seemed to us and to M. le Marquis de Chambonas La Garde, to whom we owe the principal facts of this notice, that the chapters were worthy of being resuscitated. Though we have omitted from these *Recollections* some dissertations more or less obsolete, which would be of no interest to-day, we have throughout respected the style and the ideas of the author; only adding to his narrative the necessary notes on the principal personages of the action.

FLEURY.

ANECDOTAL RECOLLECTIONS

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

Introduction—A Glance at the Congress—Arrival of the Sovereigns—The First Night in Vienna.

The Congress of Vienna, considered as a political gathering, has not lacked historians, but they were so intent upon recording its phases of high diplomacy as to have bestowed no thought upon its piquant and lighter social features.

No doubt they feared that triviality of detail might impair the general effect of so imposing a picture, and they were satisfied with reproducing and judging results, without caring to retrace the diverse and animated scenes where these results were obtained. Nevertheless, it would have been curious to go more or less deeply into the personal lives of the actors called upon to settle the future interests of Europe. At the Vienna Congress, hearts hitherto closed, nay, wholly inaccessible, to the observation of the outer world, were often laid open.

Amidst the confusion of all ranks, their most transient movements revealed themselves, and lent themselves to being watched, as if taken off their guard in the irresistible whirl of uninterrupted pleasures.

Doubtless, at no time of the world's history had more grave and complex interests been discussed amidst so many fêtes. A kingdom was cut into bits or enlarged at a ball: an indemnity was granted in the course of a dinner; a constitution was planned during a hunt; now and again a cleverly-placed word or a happy and pertinent remark cemented a treaty the conclusion of which, under different circumstances, would probably have been achieved only with difficulty, and by dint of many conferences and much correspondence. Acrimonious discussions and 'dry-as-dust' statements were replaced for the time being, as if by magic, by the most polite forms in any and every transaction; and also by the promptitude which is a still more important form of politeness, unfortunately too neglected.

The Congress had assumed the character of a grand fête in honour of the general pacification. Ostensibly it was a feast of rest after the storm, but, curiously enough, it offered a programme providing for life in its most varied movements. Doubtless, the forgathering of those sovereigns, ministers, and generals who for nearly a quarter of a century had been the actors in a grand drama supposed to have run its course, besides the pomp and circumstance of the unique scene itself, showed plainly enough that they were there to decide the destinies of nations. The mind, dominated by the gravity of the questions at issue, could not altogether escape from the serious thoughts now and again obtruding themselves: but

immediately afterwards the sounds of universal rejoicing brought a welcome diversion. Everyone was engrossed with pleasure. The love-passion also hovered over this assembly of kings, and had the effect of prolonging a state of abandonment and a neglect of affairs, both really inconceivable when taken in conjunction with upheavals the shock of which was still felt, and immediately before a thunderbolt which was soon to produce a singular awakening. The people themselves, apparently forgetting that when their rulers are at play, the subjects are doomed to pay in a short time the bills of such royal follies, seemed to be grateful for foibles that drew their masters down to their level.

Meanwhile, the man of Titanic catastrophes is not far distant. Napoleon steps forth to spread fire and flame once more; to make an end of all those dreams, and to invest with a wholly different aspect those voluptuous scenes, the diversity of which could not even save their participants from the weariness of satiety.[9]

I arrived in Vienna towards the end of September 1814, when the Congress, though it had been announced for several months, was not yet officially opened. The fêtes had, however, already commenced. In the abstract of the proceedings, it had been said that the conferences would be of very short duration. Business according to some, pleasure according to others, and probably both these causes combined, decided things otherwise. Several weeks, several months, went by without the question of dissolution being broached. Negotiating as from brother to brother, in a manner that would have rejoiced the heart of Catherine the Great, the sovereigns amicably and without the least hurry

arranged ‘their little affairs’; they gave one the impression of wishing to realise the philosophic dream of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre.[10]

The number of strangers attracted to Vienna by the Congress was estimated at close upon a hundred thousand. It ought to be said that for this memorable gathering no other city would have answered so well. Vienna is in reality the centre of Europe; at that time it was its capital. A Viennese who had happened to leave the city a few months before would have had some difficulty in identifying himself and his familiar surroundings amidst that new, gilded, and titled population which crowded the place at the time of the Congress. All the sovereigns of the North had come thither; the West and the East had sent their most notable representatives. The Emperor Alexander, still young and brilliant; the Empress Elizabeth, with her winning though somewhat melancholy grace, and the Grand-Duke Constantine represented Russia. Behind these were grouped a mass of ministers, princes, and generals, especially conspicuous among them the Comtes de Nesselrode, Capo d’Istria, Pozzo di Borgo, and Stackelberg, all of whom were marked out from that hour to play important parts in the political debates of Europe. These statesmen must be passed over in silence. I must not be equally silent with regard to the friends whom I met once more, and who during my wanderings in Germany, Poland, and Russia, had entertained me with such cordial affection. There was Tettenborn, as devoted and warm-hearted after many years of separation as if we had never parted; the Comte de Witt, the Prince Koslowski, both of whom were to die prematurely; and Alexander Ypsilanti, fervent and generous as of old, and fated to meet with such a cruel end in the prisons of

Montgatz and of Theresienstadt.

The King of Prussia was accompanied by the Princes Guillaume and Auguste. Baron de Humboldt[11] and the Prince d'Hardemberg presided at his councils. The beautiful queen who in the negotiations of 1807 employed in vain all her seductive grace and resources of mind against the will of Napoleon, was no more.

The King of Denmark, Frédéric VI., the son of the ill-fated Caroline Mathilde,[12] also repaired to the Congress, which, luckily for him, he was enabled to leave without his modest possessions having aroused the cupidity of this or that ambitious neighbour.

The Kings of Bavaria and Würtemberg, the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Hesse-Cassel —in short, all the heads and princes of the reigning houses of Germany—were there. They also wished to take part in the political festival, and were anxious to know how the supreme tribunal would trim and shape the borders of their small States.

The King of Saxony, so ardently worshipped by his subjects, had at that time retired into Prussia, while the Allied Armies occupied his kingdom. That excellent prince, whom Napoleon called 'le plus honnête homme qui ait occupé le trône,'[13] was only represented at the Congress by his plenipotentiaries.

The representatives of France were the Duc de Dalberg, the Comte Alexis de Noailles, M. de la Tour-du-Pin, and the Prince de Talleyrand. The last-named maintained his high reputation with great dignity under difficult circumstances, and perhaps conspicuous justice has never been done to him. The English plenipotentiaries were Lords Clancarty and Stewart, and Viscount Castlereagh.

Among these notable men it would be ingratitude on my part not to name the Prince de Ligne, of whom frequent mention will be made in these *Recollections*; and the reigning Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg [1814]. A brave soldier, the latter prince earned his grade of field-marshal on the battlefield itself, and moreover proved his talent as a remarkable administrator by promoting in many ways the happiness of his subjects.

The whole of this royal company met in the capital of Austria with a hospitality worthy of it, and worthy also of that memorable gathering. The Kings of Würtemberg and Denmark arrived before any of the others. The Emperor Franz proceeded as far as Schönbrunn to welcome each of them. The interview between those princes was exceedingly cordial, and free from diplomatic reserve; but the ceremony which by its pomp and splendour was evidently intended to crown the series of wonders of the Congress was the solemn entry of Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia.

Numerous detachments of guards of honour had been posted on the routes these two monarchs were to traverse. The whole of the garrison was under arms at the approaches to and within the capital. The emperor, attended by his grand officers of state, both military and civil, the archdukes, and other princes of the blood, proceeded for some distance to meet his hosts. The meeting took place on the left bank of the Danube, at the further extremity of the Tabor bridge. There was an exchange of most affectionate and apparently most sincere greetings, and the three rulers held each other’s hands for a long while.

An immense crowd lined the banks of the stream, and rent the air with cheers. Undoubtedly it was a

sight as remarkable as it was unheard-of, that gathering of sovereigns tried by severe misfortune for twenty years, and who, having vanquished him who had been for such a long time victorious, seemed astonished at a triumph so dearly bought, so unexpectedly obtained.

The three monarchs, in full-dress uniforms, meanwhile mounted their horses and rode slowly on amidst the booming of the artillery. The infinite number of generals, belonging to all the nations of Europe, riding behind them, their brilliant costumes glittering in the sun, the joyous cries of the crowds, the clanging of the bells of all the steeples, the air resounding with the firing of the cannon, the sight of that population frantically hailing the return of peace —in fact, the whole scene, even the cordial demeanour of those sovereigns, constituted the most imposing and eloquent spectacle.

The welcome to the Empress of Russia on the following day was marked by a ceremonial of a less grandiose but more graceful nature. The Empress of Austria, surrounded by the whole of her Court, went to meet her a long distance out of the capital. A short time after she started, the two emperors proceeded in the same direction, and the two processions joined hands, as it were, close to the church of Maria-Brunn. An open calèche was in waiting to convey the empresses; their august husbands took their seats with them. A detachment of the Hungarian Guards, another of Uhlans, and a great number of pages made up the escort. The carriage, on reaching the outer gates of the court, was met by young girls dressed in white, offering baskets of flowers. A dense crowd lined the avenues leading to the palace, and everybody admired the spontaneous cordiality, the

good-will altogether without etiquette, lighting up the faces of all those grand personages, so little adapted to manifestations of equality.

From that moment Vienna assumed an aspect which was as bright as it was animated. Numberless magnificent carriages traversed the city in all directions, and, in consequence of the restricted size of the capital, constantly reappeared. Most of them were preceded by those agile forerunners, in their brilliant liveries, who are no longer to be seen anywhere except in Vienna, and who, swinging their large silver-knobbed canes, seemed to fly in front of the horses. The promenades and squares teemed with soldiers of all grades, dressed in the varied uniforms of all the European armies. Added to these were the swarms of the servants of the aristocracy in their gorgeous liveries, and the people crowding at all points of vantage to catch a momentary glimpse of the military, sovereign, and diplomatic celebrities constantly shifting within the permanent frame of the varying picture. Then, when night came, the theatres, the cafés, the public resorts were filled with animated crowds, apparently bent on pleasure only, while sumptuous carriages rolled hither and thither, lighted up by torches borne by footmen perched behind, or still preceded by runners, who had, however, exchanged their canes for flambeaux. In almost every big thoroughfare there was the sound of musical instruments discoursing joyous tunes. Noise and bustle everywhere.

Such, for over five months, was the picture represented by the city, a picture of which only a poor idea can be conveyed by my feeble attempts to reproduce some of its features.

The immense number of strangers had soon

invaded every available hotel and private lodging. Many notabilities were obliged to take up their quarters in the outskirts. Prices ruled exorbitantly high; in order to judge of this I need only state that the rent of Lord Castlereagh's apartments was £500 per month—an unheard-of price in Vienna. It was calculated that if the Congress lasted only four months, the value of many houses would be paid to their proprietors in rent. I should, perhaps, have been deprived of witnessing a scene which only a chain of extraordinary circumstances could have brought about, and which probably will not be renewed for many centuries to come; but my intimate friend, Mr. Julius Griffiths, who had lived in Vienna for several years, had anticipated my coming, and in his magnificent residence on the Jaeger-Zeill, I found all the *comfort* which he had transported thither from his own country; both the word and the condition of things it represented being little known throughout the rest of Europe.

Mr. Julius Griffiths, who ranks among the best educated of Englishmen, has made himself widely known in the world of letters by works of acknowledged merit. He has travelled all over the globe, and deserves to be proclaimed the greatest traveller of his time. His social qualities and his lofty sentiments have conferred the greatest honour on the English character outside his native country. His friendship has been for many years the source of my sweetest happiness. I am enabled to confess with gratitude that he was instrumental in convincing me of the mendacity of the precept, 'not to try one's friends if one wishes to keep them.'

The thing I stood most in need of, after the first greetings of such a sincere friend, was rest and

quietude; hence, at the moment I did not in the least resemble the ‘inquisitorial traveller’ mentioned by Sterne, and I retired to enjoy that rest, most intensely conscious of the delight of having reached port. In spite of this, sleep failed to come. Too many thoughts came crowding in upon me; my mind was divided between the pleasure of meeting once more with so dear a friend and others scarcely less precious to me, and the hope of being a witness of a scene which hitherto was without a precedent. Were I possessed of the talent with which Dupaty has described his ‘Première nuit à Rome,’ I should endeavour to paint the stirring emotions of this ‘first night’ in Vienna.

A volume of Shakespeare lay close at hand; I opened it at random and read: ‘You who have not seen those feasts, you have lost the sight of what is most brilliant of earthly glory. Those perfectly magnificent scenes surpassed all that the imagination can invent. Each day outvied the previous one, each morrow shamed the pomp of its eve. One day those demi-gods on earth resplendent with precious stones and silken stuffs; the next the same pomp more oriental than the orient itself. You should have seen each world-ruler dazzling like a statue wrought of gold; and the courtiers resplendent like their masters; and those dames so delicate and so slight bend beneath the twofold burden of their pride and their ornaments; those sovereigns, stars of like magnitude, mingle their rays by their presence. No calumnious tongue dared wag, no eye that was not dazzled by those sights. You should have witnessed also the tournament and the heralds of arms, and the prowess of chivalry displayed. The old history of our story-tellers has ceased to be fabulous. Yes, henceforth I shall believe all that those story-tellers have told us.’[14]

Those lines from an immortal poet, I read again and again; and swayed by those powerful impressions, I owed to them the conception of noting down my recollections, convinced that in times to come, *i.e.* at a period to which I looked forward courageously, I should be delighted to refer to them as the sole food for my thoughts.

CHAPTER I

The Prince de Ligne—His Wit and his Urbanity—Robinson Crusoe—The Masked Ball and Rout—Sovereigns in Dominos—The Emperor of Russia and the Prince Eugène—Kings and Princes—Zibin—General Tettenborn—A Glance at his Military Career—Grand Military Fête in Honour of Peace—The Footing of Intimacy of the Sovereigns at the Congress—The Imperial Palace—Death of Queen Maria Carolina of Naples—Emperor Alexander—Anecdotes—Sovereign Gifts—Politics and Diplomacy—The Grand Rout—The Waltz.

Speaking of the Great Wall of China, the famous Dr. Johnson said somewhere that the grandson of a man who had caught a mere glimpse of it might still be proud of the opportunity vouchsafed to his grandsire. The exaggeration, Oriental like its subject, might strike me as excusable if the drift of it were applied, not to a monument capable of standing the test of ages, but to one of those men who appear at long intervals, or in connection with events that change the face of the world. Personally, I may confess to remaining more or less proud of my presence at the Congress of Vienna, and of having been privileged to see the many celebrities that forgathered there. But the most gratifying

recollection, and also the one dearest to my heart, is that of the goodwill incessantly shown to me by the Prince de Ligne. For over two months I had the happiness of being admitted to his greatest intimacy, seeing him every day and at all hours, gathering from his lips the clever sentences and spontaneous sallies which he so lavishly dispensed. To-day, after many years, the indelible impression of his personality tends to reanimate my recollections, and lends life to the scenes I am endeavouring to reproduce.

The Prince de Ligne[15] was then in his eightieth year; in spite of this there is no exaggeration in saying that he had remained young. He had preserved the amiable character and the fascinating urbanity which had lent so much charm to his society. Hence the title of 'the last of French knights' was unanimously accorded to him.

At that period all the strangers, whether most celebrated in virtue of their rank or of their mental qualities, nay, the sovereigns themselves, made it a point, as it were, to show their reverence for him. He was still possessed of that freshness of imagination and inexhaustible, exquisite gaiety which had always distinguished him. His humour, kindly withal, though somewhat satirical, was principally directed at the really strange aspect the Congress began to assume, pleasure being seemingly the most important business. Amidst this general intoxication, amidst this uninterrupted series of entertainments, banquets, and balls, it was certainly not the least curious and interesting contrast to behold the imposing figure of the old marshal, occupying no official position, yet eagerly welcomed everywhere, and often painting the situation by an epigram, by a

clever and pertinent remark, which went the round in no time.

The French were above all most eager for his society, and, in their turn, could reckon on the most cordial welcome. His journey to the French Court a few years previous to the Revolution had left the most heartfelt recollections; and his letters to the Marquise de Coigny[16] at that period show in every line his regret at being compelled to live away from a country and a people that had inspired him with such an ardent sympathy. In a word, the Prince de Ligne belonged to France both by the nature of his worth and by the quality of his mind.

My family having the honour of being allied to that of the Prince, he presented me on my first visit to Vienna in 1807 at the Court and everywhere as his cousin. From that moment until his death, his courtesy and goodwill never failed me at any succeeding visit. I was never tired of listening to him, and especially when his thoughts reverted to bygone times, which he had so long and so closely observed. He took delight in improving my mind with the treasures of his own, and in enlightening my youthful inexperience with the counsels and fruits of his own observation. Hence, to speak of the Prince de Ligne is simply, on my part, the acquittal of a debt. As a matter of course, my first call was due to him, and on the morrow of my arrival I made my way to his home.

'You are just in time to see great doings,' he said. 'The whole of Europe is in Vienna. The tissue of politics is embroidered with fêtes, and inasmuch as at your age one is fond of joyous gatherings, balls, and pleasure, I can assure you beforehand of a series of them, because the Congress does not march to its

goal; it dances. It is a royal mob. From all sides there are cries of peace, justice, equilibrium, indemnity; the last word being the new contribution of the Prince de Bénévent to the diplomatic vocabulary. Heaven alone knows who shall reduce this chaos to some semblance of order, and provide dams for the torrent of various pretensions. As for me, I am only a well-meaning and friendly spectator of the show. I shall claim nothing, unless it be a hat to replace the one I am wearing out in saluting the sovereigns I meet at every street-corner. Nevertheless, in spite of Robinson Crusoe,[17] a general and lasting peace will no doubt be concluded, for a feeling of concord has at length united the nations which were so long inimical towards each other. Their most illustrious representatives are already setting the example of it. We shall witness a thing hitherto unheard of: pleasure will bring in its wake peace, instead of strife.'

After this, he started asking me, with all the impetuosity of youth, a series of questions with reference to Paris, my travels, and my own plans, until he was interrupted by his servant informing him that his carriage was at the door.

'You'll come and dine with me to-morrow,' he said; 'and then we'll go to the grand rout and ball. You'll see the most practical common-sense of Europe wearing the motley of folly. When there I'll explain to you in a few moments the curiosities of that grand piece of living tapestry composed of the most notable personages.'

The prince had kept to his habit of dining early: it was four o'clock when I reached his pretty house on the Bastion. It contained but one room on each story, hence he called it jocularly his 'perch.' His

friends knew it by the name of ‘L’hôtel de Ligne.’ Shortly after my arrival he sat down to dinner, surrounded by his charming family.[18] Candidly speaking, the repast, like the well-known suppers of Madame de Maintenon, when she was still Widow Scarron, stood in need of the magic of his conversation to make up for its more than scanty fare. And although he himself ate nearly all the little dishes that were served, his guests were so thoroughly engrossed and delighted as to be rendered oblivious of the unsubstantial nature of the entertainment—until the end of it.

In the drawing-room we found some visitors; they were strangers of distinction, who, called to Vienna from every coign and nook of Europe, had craved an introduction to this living marvel of the previous century. Their number also contained several ‘lion-hunters,’ obtruding their presence from sheer curiosity, and for the sake of being enabled to say: ‘I have seen the Prince de Ligne,’ or else for the purpose of ‘rubbing minds with him,’ by carefully picking up his anecdotes and his sallies, which they afterwards hawked about, considerably disfigured, among their own sets.

Having quickly paid his voluntary toll in the shape of some witty or polite remark to each of those groups, he left them, as if his task had been fulfilled, and came up to his grandson, the Comte de Clary, with whom I happened to be chatting. ‘I remember,’ he said, ‘having begun one of my letters to Jean-Jacques Rousseau with a—“As you do not care, Monsieur, either for demonstrative people or for demonstrations....” A few notes couched in similar terms would not be out of place among some of the notable people here this evening; but they are so

inflated with their own merit as to be unable to decipher their own addresses. And as, moreover, they are most obstinate and difficult to shake off, let us go and have a look at others where there will be a little more elbow-room. The ball is waiting for us. Come along, my lads, I'll give you a lesson in taking your leave in French fashion.' And this man, extraordinary in every relation of life, flitting away with the light step of a mere youth, suited the action to the word and positively ran to his carriage, laughing all the while at the boyish trick and at the disappointment of all those insipid talkers who merely courted his society to make him listen to their vapid utterances. It was nine o'clock when we reached the imperial palace, better known as the Hofburg.

That ancient residence had been specially chosen for those ingenious *momons*, character-masques in which the incognito of the domino often lent itself to political combinations in themselves masterpieces of intrigue and conception. The principal hall was magnificently lighted up, and running around it, there was a circular gallery giving access to huge rooms arranged for supper. On seats, disposed like an amphitheatre, there were crowds of ladies, some of whom merely wore dominos, while the majority represented this or that character. It would be difficult to imagine a scene more dazzling than this gathering of women, all young and beautiful, and each attired in a style most becoming to her beauty. All the centuries of the past, all the regions of the inhabited globe seemed to have appointed to meet in that graceful circle.

Several orchestras executed at regular intervals valses and polonaises: in adjoining galleries or rooms

minuets were danced with particularly Teutonic gravity, which feature did not constitute the least comic part of the picture.

The prince had spoken the truth. Vienna at that time presented an abridged panorama of Europe, and the rout was an abridged panorama of Vienna. There could be no more curious spectacle than those masked or non-masked people, among whom, absolutely lost in the crowd, and practically defying identification, circulated all the sovereigns at that moment participating in the Congress.

The prince had a story or anecdote about each. ‘There goes Emperor Alexander. The man on whose arm he is leaning is Prince Eugène Beauharnais, for whom he has a sincere affection. When Eugène arrived here with his father-in-law, the King of Bavaria, the Court hesitated about the rank to be accorded to him. The emperor spoke so positively on the subject as to secure for Eugène all the honours due to his generous character. Alexander, as you are aware, is worthy of inspiring and of extending the deepest friendship.

‘Do you know the tall and noble-looking personage whom that beautiful Neapolitan girl is holding round the waist? It is the King of Prussia, whose gravity appears in no wise disturbed by the fact. For all that the clever mask may be an empress, on the other hand it is quite on the cards that she is merely a grisette who has been smuggled in.

‘That colossus in the black domino, which neither disguises nor decreases his stature, is the King of Würtemberg.[19] The man close to him is his son, the Crown Prince. His love for the Duchesse d’Oldenbourg, Emperor Alexander’s sister, is the cause of his stay at the Congress, rather than a

concern for the grave interests which one day will be his. It is a romantic story, the *dénouement* of which we may witness before long.

'The two young fellows who just brushed past us are the Crown Prince of Bavaria and his brother, Prince Charles.[20] The latter's face would dispute the palm with that of Antinous. The crowd of people of different kind and garb who are disporting themselves, in every sense of the word, are, some, reigning princes, others archdukes, others again grand dignitaries of this or that empire. For, except a few Englishmen, easily picked out by their careful dress, I do not think there is a single personage here without a "handle" to his name.

'This room in particular only represents a picture of pleasure, my dear boy....'

The moment the prince left me to myself I began to wander about, and if I had made a series of appointments, I could not have met with more acquaintances hailing from Naples to St. Petersburg, and from Stockholm to Constantinople. The variety of costume and languages was truly astonishing. It was like a bazaar of all the nations of the world. Honestly, I felt that for the first time in my life I was experiencing the intoxication of a masked ball. My brain seemed to reel under the spell of the incessant music, the secrecy of disguise, the atmosphere of mystery by which it was surrounded, the general state of incognito, the uncurbed and boundless gaiety, the force of circumstances, and the irresistible seductiveness of the picture before me. I feel certain that older and stronger heads than mine would have proved equally weak.

In a short time I had quite a group of friends around me.

Taking advantage of a moment when the Prince de Ligne was less hemmed in, I begged of him not to worry about me for that evening, and flung myself headlong into the whirl of gaiety, freedom from care, and happiness, which seemed the normal condition of this extraordinary gathering.

By and by I met with more friends, and between us we ‘improved the shining hours’ preceding the supper, when we sat down, about a score in all, to wind up the joyous evening. As a matter of course, during the first part of the repast I was plied with questions about my doings since we had met, and I was scarcely less eager to question the questioners. This or that one from whom I parted as a sub-lieutenant had become a general; another who was an attaché when last I saw him was now himself ambassador, and the majority were covered with orders, conferred for their courage or their talent. And amidst the general animation produced by the champagne, they took to recounting, ‘harum-scarum’ fashion, the happy circumstances to which they owed their rapid promotion.

Among those rapid and brilliant careers there was, however, none that caused me greater surprise than that of Zibin. In 1812, when, yielding to a desire for travel, I quitted Moscow to visit the Crimea, Ukraine, and Turkey,[21] Zibin had been my companion. In that long course across the steppes of Russia, his constant gaiety and his clever sallies did much to beguile the tedium of the journey, and to revive my courage. Eighteen months had scarcely gone by since our return from Tauris and our parting at Tulczim, he to follow Countess Potocka to St. Petersburg, I to make my way to the Duc de Richelieu at Odessa, and thence to Constantinople.

At that period, Zibin had not joined the army; in spite of this, he was now a lieutenant-colonel, aide-de-camp to General Ojarowski, and on his breast glittered several orders.

Zibin had not been in St. Petersburg many days without becoming aware that an idle life in society would not be conducive either to consideration or glory; hence, he changed his civilian clothes for the uniform of a non-commissioned officer of hussars. At the beginning of the campaign he was made an ensign; a short time afterwards he got his company. One day, his general commanded him to make a reconnaissance with fifty Cossacks in order to bring back some malingerers. At a couple of miles distance from the encampment, Zibin notices a black mass hidden among the reeds. They turn out to be guns left by the enemy before retreating. There were sixteen of them. The troops dismount, the horses are put to the gun-carriages, and a few hours later Captain Zibin returns in possession of a small but complete artillery park, practically fished out of the marshes.

The Emperor was not far away, and Zibin himself was instructed to convey the particulars of his capture. Alexander read the report, and, giving the young hussar the credit of a success solely due to chance, conferred upon him there and then the rank of major, at the same time taking from his own breast the Cross of St. George and fastening it into the buttonhole of the freshly promoted officer. The rest was mainly the natural consequence of this first piece of luck: new orders were added to that one, and as it never rains but it pours, Zibin, during the many leisure hours in camp, had gambled, and won not less than four hundred thousand roubles. The

Prince de Ligne was not far wrong in saying that glory was a courtesan who gets hold of you when you least expect it.

Towards the end of the evening another lucky chance made me run up against my excellent friend, General Tettenborn. ‘We have got a good deal to tell each other,’ he said. ‘It’s of no use starting here. Let us go and dine to-morrow by ourselves at the Augarten; it is the only means of not being interrupted.’

Naturally, I accepted, and Tettenborn was punctual to the minute.

‘Though as a rule, the Viennese restaurateurs do not give you a good dinner,’ he began, ‘I happen to have been in their good books here for many years, and Yan has promised to do his best.’ And in fact, quantity made up for quality. When we got to the dessert, and some Tokay was put before us, my friend at once began his interesting story.

‘Since I saw you last, the events of my life have followed each other in as quick a succession as the circumstances that gave them birth. You are aware of my having accompanied Prince Schwartzenberg on his mission to Paris. I was still there when the King of Rome was born, and I was selected to carry the news to our emperor.’

‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘and I read in all the newspapers that you made that journey of three hundred and twenty leagues [about nine hundred and sixty miles] in four days and a half.’

‘That’s easily explained. As far as Strasburg, I had the race-horses of the prince, and from the Austrian frontier I had the horses of his brother, Prince Joseph, from stage to stage, as far as Vienna.

‘I’ll spare you the particulars of my stay in Paris. It was a perfect whirl of excitement from beginning to end. Society was the brilliant reflex of the astounding prosperity of France, of her numerous victories, and her enthusiasm for everything pertaining to art. Our Austrian legation met with a specially cordial welcome. It was a succession of entertainments similar to those you are seeing here, but with different capitals for their *locale*. After having accompanied Prince Schwartzenberg a second time, but on that occasion to St. Petersburg, I exchanged the delightful life of society and drawing-rooms for that of the barracks of my regiment, then quartered at Buda. The transition could not have been more startling if I had retired into a Trappist monastery, when suddenly the whole of Europe breathed fire and flame.

‘I was thirty-four years old, and although the first days of my youth were not idly spent, chance has done more for me during the latter period than I had reason to expect. My mind was soon made up. I decided to go to the spot where the fire raged most fiercely, to embark upon a life so entirely at variance with my former habits. I was living with Baron de ——, a friend of my childhood, who was a major in my regiment, and who like myself was calculating the few chances of rapid promotion in the Austrian service.

‘“This,” I said to him one morning, “is a unique opportunity to provide for the future. Let us go to the Russians and offer them our swords as partisans. This bids fair to be an easy and lucrative campaign, likely to lead to many things by its quickly succeeding phases. Besides, it is sometimes sweet to embark in adventures, and to trust everything to fate. As for

me, I have made up my mind to go. Will you, too, come?"[22]

'The decision of a moment in one's life often shapes the rest of it. My friend hesitated and left me to go alone. Alas, his regrets proved too much for him.'[23]

'Yes,' I replied, 'I know he regretted it. The regret was intensified by the news of your success, which the papers published in all its detail. He practically lost his head over it, for on no other theory can one account for his suicide, which, curiously enough, happened while I was at Pesth, on my return from Constantinople. He blew out his brains in a room next to my own at the inn where I was staying, and I was told that despair and tardy regret had led him to commit the deed.'

'No one has regretted this more than I,' said Tettenborn, 'for he was a devoted friend as well as a distinguished officer. I have not the least doubt that circumstances would have served him as well as they did me, but one must go with the tide in order that the tide may carry you. When I reached the Russian headquarters, I received orders to raise a regiment. That was soon done, and they gave me the command of it. Three months after I left Buda, I was a general, and empowered to grant commissions equal in grade to that which I held when I turned my back upon my garrison. The papers, perhaps, informed you how I got hold of the private chest of Napoleon. A part of that immense loot came to my share. An attempt to take Berlin by surprise, though it failed, brought my name to the front. At the head of four regiments of cavalry, of two squadrons of hussars, and of an equal number of dragoons, with only two pieces of artillery, I marched on Hamburg. After several

engagements, the city surrendered on the 18th March 1813. The inhabitants received me with the greatest enthusiasm, and I was, as others had been before me, the hero of the hour. When appointed military governor of the place, I rescinded the severe orders Marshal Davoust had deemed fit to impose. The grateful Hamburgers conferred upon me the freedom of their city, and sent me the document to that effect in a magnificent golden casket.

'Events have marched very rapidly, and by their side strode glory and rewards. I have had most of the military orders bestowed upon me, and now the allied sovereigns have still further shown their good-will by presenting me with an estate consisting of two convents in Westphalia, the rent-roll of which will certainly amount to no less than forty thousand florins. Those various bits of success have had the happy result of reducing my affairs to something like order; and, inasmuch as there comes in every man's life a period for settling down, I, my friend, am going to get married. I simply worship my future wife. There are no regrets about the past, there is no fear about the future, and as far as I can foresee, I'll let fate take care henceforth of my existence. And albeit the *dénouement* may appear somewhat abrupt to you, you will admit, I feel certain, that the story promises to be none the less happy.'

'At which happiness, my dear general, all your friends will rejoice.'

The narrative, which I have abridged here, was, however, recounted at much greater length, and in yielding to the fascination of this cordial and confidential talk we had let the time slip by, and the clock struck nine when we reached the Carlenthor theatre. The performance consisted of Haydn's

celebrated oratorio 'The Creation.' The house, lighted up by countless wax candles, and the private boxes sumptuously draped, presented a magnificent sight. Several of these boxes had been set apart for the sovereigns, others were filled with the members of the Corps Diplomatique. As for the floor of the house (*le parterre*), it was crowded to such an extent with people blazing with orders that it might safely have been described as a parterre of knights, just as the floor of the theatre at Erfurt had been called a parterre of kings and princes. 'In the presence of such a number of ribands,' said Tettenborn, 'it would be hazardous to conclude that they are all due to merit.'

'Signal distinctions, my dear general,' I replied, 'are like the Pyramids; only two species can attain them, reptiles and eagles.'

'I'll be with you to-morrow at ten,' said General Tettenborn when we parted, 'and we'll go together to the grand military fête in honour of the peace. Before laying down their arms, the sovereigns wish to offer their thanks to Providence for the great favours vouchsafed to them.'

Sharp to the minute, like an Austrian *Rittmeister* (cavalry-captain), Tettenborn was at my door. It was a bright and mild October morning, and shortly afterwards we were galloping towards the gentle slope between the New and the Burg Gates. On our way we fell in with some acquaintances, attracted thither, like myself, by curiosity. Tettenborn wore his general's brilliant uniform; a profusion of military orders on his breast certainly attested the kindness of Dame Fortune, but also her discrimination in having favoured him. Immediately on our reaching the ground, he was obliged to leave us in order to join the suite of Emperor Alexander, but I remained

surrounded by friends, and advantageously placed to observe all the particulars of that beautiful function. Although in an essentially military epoch similar solemnities had often been seen, I doubt if that one was ever equalled with regard to its *ensemble* and its majestic pomp. The war, the terrible struggle the relentlessness and duration of which had astounded the world, was just at an end. The glory-compelling giant was, if not vanquished, at any rate overcome by numbers; and the intoxication and the enthusiasm consequent upon the success were sufficient to prove the strength of the adversary and the unexpected joy of the triumph.

Several battalions of infantry, many regiments of cavalry, among others the Schwartzenberg Uhlans, and the cuirassiers of the Grand-Duke Constantine, the brother of Alexander and the sometime Viceroy of Poland, were massed on an immense field. All these troops wore most brilliant uniforms.

The sovereigns came on the ground on horseback, and the soldiery formed a huge double square, in the centre of which stood a vast tent, or rather a temple erected in honour of the general pacification. The columns supporting the structure were decorated with panoplies of arms, and with standards fluttering in the breeze. The lawn immediately around was strewn with flowers and foliage. In the middle of the tent there was an altar covered with rich cloths, and set out with all the ornaments of the Roman Catholic ritual, magnificently chased, either in gold or silver. Countless wax tapers shed their light, somewhat subdued by the rays of the sun standing brilliantly in the sky. Red Damascus carpets covered the steps of the altar.

Shortly afterwards there was a long string of open court carriages, each drawn by four horses, and containing the empresses, queens, and archduchesses, who on alighting seated themselves in velvet-covered chairs. When everybody had taken up the position assigned to them—the crowd of military, courtiers, equerries and pages constituting a matchless spectacle—the venerable Archbishop of Vienna, who, notwithstanding his great age, had insisted upon officiating, performed High Mass. Practically the whole of the Vienna population had repaired to the spot to enjoy the spectacle.

At the moment of blessing the Bread and the Wine, the guns thundered forth a salute to the God of Hosts. Simultaneously, all those warriors, princes, kings, soldiers, and generals fell on their knees, prostrating themselves before Him in whose hands rests victory or defeat. The feeling of reverence had evidently communicated itself to the huge mass of spectators, who spontaneously bared their heads and also knelt in the dust. The cannons became once more silent, and their thunder was succeeded by a solemn hush, amidst which the high priest of the Lord raised the sign of the Redemption, and turned towards the army to confer the supreme benediction. The religious ceremony was at an end. Amidst the clanking of swords and the rattling of muskets, the huge gathering rose to its feet; and then a choir intoned in German the hymn of peace, which was accompanied by an orchestra of wind instruments. Without any pre-meditation the strains were taken up by the voices of the numberless spectators. No human ear ever heard anything more imposing than this spontaneous and harmonic praise of peace and the glory of the Highest. That hymn of gratitude and adoration rising upon the air amidst the smoking

incense, the thunder of the artillery, the ringing of the bells of all the churches; the princes surrounded by their resplendent staffs, the multi-coloured uniforms, the arms, glittering breastplates, and sombre bronze of the cannons lighted up by the brilliant sun; the white-haired priest blessing from before his altar the prostrate crowd; the mingling of the symbols of war and peace—constituted a unique picture not likely to be seen again, and which no painter's brush, however powerful, could adequately reproduce. It constituted a poetical and sublime sight, baffling description.

After the religious ceremony, the sovereigns and all the princesses took up a position on a knoll near the Burg Gate, the troops marched past, the Grand-Duke Constantine and the other princes at the head of their own regiments. The air rang; with unanimous cheers and wishes for the consolidation of peace, that first and foremost necessity of peoples. Such, sketched in brief, was the fête invested with a particular character and fitting in so well with the series of magnificent pageants and dazzling entertainments. The Austrian Court, in fact, dispensed the hospitality of its capital to its guests with truly fabulous pomp. Memory almost fails to recall, for the purpose of recording, all the brilliant details. The imagination is virtually powerless to reconstruct the dazzling splendour of the picture as a whole.

To beguile the leisure of those kings who, it would be thought, ought to have been surfeited with the counterfeits of battles, twenty thousand picked grenadiers had been quartered at Vienna. There was, moreover, the announcement of a camp to be formed of sixty thousand troops with a view of having grand

manœuvres. The superb ‘nobiliary guards’ had been considerably increased by the joining of young men belonging to the most distinguished families of the monarchy. The whole of the troops had been provided with new uniforms: there was an evident desire to remove all traces of warfare, so as not to sadden those participating in the feasts and entertainments exclusively designed to celebrate peace and to promote pleasure.

All the stud farms of Germany had been requested to send their most magnificent horses. The grand dignitaries of the crown held ‘open house’ each day for the eminent personages of the suites of the various sovereigns. The Court had invited the Paris Opera dancers of both sexes to come to Vienna; and the Austrian Imperial Company had also been reinforced. The most celebrated actors of Germany had likewise been ‘commanded,’ and they appeared in new pieces, appropriate to the universal rejoicing, and calculated to prevent that joy from getting fagged.

Emperor Franz had thrown open his palace to his illustrious guests. At a rough calculation, the imperial residence held, at that particular moment, two emperors, a similar number of empresses, four kings, one queen, two heirs to thrones (one royal, the other imperial), two grand-duchesses, and three princes. The young family of the emperor had to be relegated to Schönbrunn. Attracted by the novelty of all this, an immense crowd surrounded the palace at all hours, eager to catch a glimpse of the members of a gathering unique in the annals of history.

The Viennese seemed justly proud of having had their city selected for the holding of these grandiose states-general. In fact, the forgathering in the self-

same capital of the first powers of Europe constituted one of the most extraordinary events of all the ages. The Congresses of Münster, of Ryswick, and Utrecht had only been plenipotentiary conferences. One had to go back for three centuries, as far as 1515, to find a similar assembly of crowned heads, when in that same city of Vienna Maximilian had entertained the Kings of Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland. And it was remembered that the presence of these monarchs had been attended with the most salutary results to the grandeur of Germany.

In order to convey an idea of the expenses of the Austrian Court, it will suffice to say that the imperial table cost fifty thousand florins per day. This was keeping 'open table' with a vengeance. Hence, it is not surprising that the extraordinary expenses of the fêtes of the Congress, during the five months of its duration, amounted to forty millions of francs. It remains to be asked whether the purport of that great gathering, and the gravity of the circumstances, justified such joyous lavishness immediately after the termination of a war which had lasted for a quarter of a century and which seemed to have dried up the sources of wealth and of pleasure?

If we add to the expenses of the Court those of more than seven hundred envoys, we may get something like an accurate idea of the extraordinary consumption of all things in Vienna, and of the immense quantity of money put into circulation. In fact, the influx of strangers was such as to increase the prices of all commodities, and especially of wood for fuel, to an incredible degree. As a consequence, the Austrian Government was obliged to grant supplementary salaries to all its employés.

In the long run, the imagination was at fault in

projecting new entertainments for each day: banquets, concerts, shooting parties, masked balls and musical rides. Following the example of the head of their noble family, the princes of the House of Austria had distributed among themselves the various parts of hosts, in order to entertain their company of illustrious guests with becoming pomp and dignity. There was such a dread of an interruption of those pleasures as to prevent the Court from going into mourning for Queen Maria-Caroline of Naples.[24] It should be said, though, that this last daughter of Maria-Theresa ended her life before the arrival of the sovereigns. To save appearances, they avoided notifying her demise officially, lest the sombre hues of mourning should cast a sad note on gatherings devoted exclusively to joy and freedom from care.

The intercourse of the sovereigns was marked by a condition of unparalleled intimacy. They vied in showing reciprocal friendliness, attentions, and in anticipating each other's wishes. Not a day went by without interviews conducted with a cordial frankness worthy of the age of chivalry. Were they bent upon disproving all that had been said about the want of mutual understanding, the ambitious views, the motives of personal interest which generally distinguish a congress of crowned heads? Or did they yield to the novelty and charm of a mode of living and a feeling of brotherhood contrasting so forcibly with the frigid etiquette of their Courts?

In order to avoid the restraint of a rigorous ceremonial and of questions of precedence, it had been arranged between them that age alone should decide points of priority in everything, at their entering and leaving apartments, at the promenades

on horseback, and in their carriage drives. The decision, it was said, was due to the initiative of Emperor Alexander. The following are the ranks as they were settled according to age:—

1. The King of Würtemberg, born in 1754.
2. The King of Bavaria, born in 1756.
3. The King of Denmark, born in 1768.
4. The Emperor of Austria, born in 1768.
5. The King of Prussia, born in 1770.
6. The Emperor of Russia, born in 1777.

This precedence was, however, only observed in the pleasure parties. As for the official deliberations of the Congress, the sovereigns did not attend any.

One of their first acts of courtesy was the reciprocal bestowal of the badges and stars of their Orders. Those various decorations of all shapes and denominations became a positive puzzle, for besides a long list of the saints of the calendar, there were some of the strangest names, like *the Elephant*, *the Phœnix*, *the Black, Red, and White Eagles*, *the Sword*, *the Star*, *the Lion*, *the Fleece*, *the Bath*, etc. This exchange was the prelude to others somewhat more important, such as the presents of kingdoms, provinces, or a certain number of inhabitants. One of the ceremonies of that kind most frequently referred to was the investment by Lord Castlereagh, on behalf of his sovereign, of the Emperor of Austria with the Order of the Garter. The Prince de Ligne, who was one of the eyewitnesses, told me that this solemnity was conducted with much pomp and circumstance. Sir Isaac Heard, Garter Principal King of Arms, came expressly from London. It was he who invested the Emperor with the dress of the Order, and attached that much coveted insignia; after which Lord Castlereagh presented the latest recipient with the

statutes of the Order. As a fit acknowledgment of the courtesy, the Emperor conferred on the Prince Regent and the Duke of York, his brother, the rank of field-marshal.

After having exhausted the series of their decorations, the sovereigns began bestowing upon each other the colonelcies of the various regiments of their armies. When the honour had been bestowed, the recipient made it a point of appearing almost immediately in the uniform of his regiment. Models were produced in hot haste, for it was essential that not a button should be wanting. Tailors, escorted by favourite aides-de-camp, immediately reconnoitred the ground, called upon the possessors of those precious regimentals, and took note of the minutest details in connection with them; after which the work commenced—a pacific labour, notwithstanding its bellicose appearance, to be terminated by the production of a complete dress from the spur of the boot to the obligatory plume of feathers.

In accordance with these prescriptions, the Emperor of Austria conferred upon his ‘good brother’ the Emperor of Russia, the Hiller Regiment, and upon the Crown Prince of Würtemberg that of the Blankenstein Hussars. Alexander returned the compliment by the bestowal of one of his regiments of the Russian Imperial Guards; and to show the importance he attached to the gift he had received, he desired personally to present his new soldiers with their standard. This standard had been magnificently embroidered by the Empress of Austria. It displayed the words: ‘Indissoluble Union between the Emperors Alexander and Franz.’ The regiment was drawn up in battle order on one of the lawns of the Prater; a great crowd had gathered to

witness the ceremony, and Alexander, after receiving the colour from the hands of the Empress of Austria, advanced towards the troops and presented it. ‘Soldiers,’ he said, ‘remember that it is your duty to die in defence of this and in defence of your Emperor and of your colonel, Alexander of Russia.’ It will be easily understood that words like these from the lips of the Czar, who at that period was as handsome as he was chivalrous, were calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of the soldiers to whom they were addressed and of the numerous spectators privileged to listen to them.

On the morning after this ceremony Alexander went on foot to Field-Marshal Prince de Schwartzenberg’s, dressed in his new regimentals, the only decoration on his breast being the metal cross of the Military Order of the Austrian Army. To please General Hiller, his new titular chief, he made him a present of ten thousand florins, and in addition sent a thousand florins to each of his officers.

The habits of the sovereigns were those of private individuals. It was evident that they were only too pleased to shake off the burden of etiquette. Very often the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia were to be seen strolling about the streets arm-in-arm and dressed in mufti. Emperor Alexander similarly often took walks with Prince Eugène.

They paid each other visits and prepared surprises for one another like cordial friends of old standing; in a word, royal good-fellowship reigned throughout. On Emperor Franz’s fête-day[25] Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia bethought themselves of surprising him as he left his bed, and made him a present, the one of a dressing-gown lined with Russian sable, the other of a handsome silver

basin and ewer of exquisite workmanship and made in Berlin. The accounts of those cordially intimate scenes found their way to the public and formed the subject of general conversation.

Foremost among those sovereigns shone the King of Bavaria, the King of Denmark, and the Emperor of Russia: the first in virtue of his kindness, the second in virtue of his brilliant and subtle repartees, the third in virtue of his courtesy and affable manners. Of all the foreign princes, Frederick[26] was the most assiduous visitor to the monuments and public institutions of the capital; and wherever he went, he left traces of his liberality. As for Alexander, he never missed an opportunity of showing the delightful grace of manner which at that time won all hearts.

During a promenade on horseback in the Prater, the Emperor of Austria, wishing to dismount for a moment, looked round in vain for some one of his suite, from which he had got separated by the crowd. Alexander, guessing his intention, nimbly jumped off his horse and held out his hand to his fellow-sovereign, just as on a memorable occasion the Great Frederick held the stirrup of Joseph II. As a matter of course, the little scene drew unanimous cheers from all sides, showing the appreciation of the crowd for the gracious impromptu.

On another occasion, at a review, a number of people pressed around Alexander, eager to catch a glimpse of his face. A countryman seemed even more anxious than the rest, trying to elbow his way through the serried mass. Alexander caught sight of him. ‘Friend,’ he said, ‘you wished to see the Emperor of Russia; now you can say that you have spoken to him.’

To the foreign visitors, an easy life like this,

constantly enhanced by entertainments, really constituted a delightful existence. In order fitly to celebrate that memorable gathering, Vienna appeared determined to increase the programme of recreations it generally afforded. Situated in the centre of Southern Germany, the city provided, as it were, an oasis of delightful calm and 'happy-go-lucky' leisure amidst the grave, scientific, and philosophical occupations of the neighbouring countries. Wholly given up to the pleasure of the senses, its existence was composed of fêtes, banquets, dances, and above all, music. It had pressed into its service as an auxiliary that excellent wine of Hungary, calculated to give an extra zest to rejoicings of all kinds. Thus provided, it glided smoothly on, allowing itself to be governed with the gentle impassiveness bred of material satisfaction.

Strangers are generally well treated in Vienna. The inhabitants are cordially hospitable; the authorities conciliatory and frank. In return for this, strangers are only asked to abstain from speaking or acting against the Government. On those conditions the welcome never fails; but woe to the stranger who transgresses those laws of prudence. He immediately gets a little note inviting him to present himself next morning before the magistrate entrusted with the police supervision of the capital. In the sweetest tones imaginable he receives a hint of his passport 'not being quite in order' and that by this time the business which brought him to the city must be terminated. In vain does he remonstrate, and protest his loyalty to all constituted authorities. In vain does he insist upon his simple wish to enjoy the sweet life of the capital. It is all ineffectual, he is bound to depart.

This, at normal periods, is the method of the Vienna police. It is, however, easy to understand that at the time of the Congress, and amid so many questions of intense interest, it would have been difficult to prevent political speculation and conversation. Fortunately, the Austrian Government found a powerful auxiliary in the general pursuit of pleasure. In reality, little or no attention was paid to diplomatic discussions. With the exception of some idlers or journalists who had selected the Graben for their meeting-place and rostrum, society was engrossed with the pleasures of the fête of the hour, or with preparations for that of the next day.



COUNT NESSELRODE.

The utmost secrecy was observed with regard to the deliberations taking place at the official residence of the Chancellor of State. M. de Metternich presided at these. His colleagues had wished to bestow that honour upon him in recognition of the gracious hospitality accorded to them. It had been agreed, however, that the chairmanship implied no supremacy in favour of the Austrian crown. The plenipotentiaries were: for Russia, the Comte de Nesselrode[27] and the Baron de

Stein; for France, the Prince de Talleyrand and the Duc de Dalberg; for Prussia, the Prince d'Hardemberg; for Austria, M. de Metternich; for Würtemberg, the Comte de Wintzingerode; for Bavaria, the Prince de Wrède; for Spain, the Chevalier de Labrador; for Portugal, the Duc de Palmella; for Sicily, the Commandeur Alvaro Ruffo; and for Naples, the Duc de Campochiaro. What happened at those most secret sittings of these famous diplomatists? It is not my province to speculate upon the subject; it belongs to posterity to appreciate the grave results.

Meanwhile the sovereigns generally spent their mornings in reviewing the troops at parades, and at shooting-parties, either at the Prater or at this or that royal demesne. On the other hand, they forgathered every day for an hour before dinner, and were supposed to discuss the subjects that had occupied the attention of their plenipotentiaries. The carping outside world maintained, however, that politics were the thing least talked of in that august Olympian assembly, and that the announcement of a forthcoming pleasure party more often than not monopolised the conversation. Business was ousted and the gods became simple mortals.

Of all the entertainments at the Austrian Court, the most brilliant were unquestionably the grand routs at the Imperial Palace. Thanks to the Prince de Ligne, I was privileged to see the smaller masked rout on the occasion of the arrival of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia. At the latter kind of reception, the sovereigns either wore masks or remained nominally incognito by other means. At the grand routs, on the contrary, they appeared in all their brilliancy and displaying all their orders, while

the princesses blazed with diamonds.

I was unable to witness the first of those grand routs, hence I became most anxious not to miss the second. The excellent Prince de Ligne once more undertook to introduce me and to be my guide; and together we made our way to the Burg. The sovereigns had as yet not made their appearance. I had therefore ample time to feast my eyes upon the unique sight before me, which after many years I still consider the most dazzling *ensemble* I ever saw, in the matchless splendour of its decorations, the richness and variety of the dresses, and the illustrious conditions of the personages. To the grand hall had been added two adjacent smaller ones, connected by a gallery. The hall originally set apart for the smaller routs had also been thrown open. Finally, the Imperial Riding-school, a masterpiece of architecture, had been transformed into a ball-room. To enumerate all the particulars of the interior decorations would be practically an impossible task. The staircases and the galleries were positively covered with a profusion of flowers and plants, the latter of the rarest description. The principal drawing-room was reached by an avenue of orange-trees; immense candelabra, holding wax tapers and placed between the boxes, lustres, with thousands of crystal drops, shed a fantastic light amidst the foliage of those splendid trees, throwing into relief their branches and blossoms. The small hall was decorated with huge baskets of flowers, the blending of whose colours invested the whole with the appearance of a fairy garden. The hangings were of some silk material of the purest white, set off by silver ornaments. The seats were upholstered in velvet and gold. From seven to eight thousand wax tapers shed a light more brilliant than that of day. Finally, the

strains of several bands heightened the effect of that marvellous spectacle.

In the riding-school a platform had been prepared for the sovereigns. It was decorated with panoplies and standards, and, as in the grand hall, its hangings were of white silk fringed with silver.

The diversity of uniforms, the profusion of orders and decorations were, however, as nothing to the gathering of charming women. If it was true that at the particular moment Europe was represented at Vienna by her celebrities in every walk of life, it was equally certain that female beauty had not been excluded in deference to fame. Never did a city hold within its walls as many remarkable women as did the capital of Austria during the six months of the Congress.

Suddenly there was a blast of trumpets; the sovereigns made their entrance conducting the empresses, queens, and archduchesses. After having made the round of the hall amidst general acclamations, they proceeded to the riding-school and took their seats on the platform. In the first row there were the Empresses of Austria and Russia, the Queen of Bavaria and the Grande-Duchesse d'Oldenbourg, the well-beloved sister of Alexander, whose likeness to Alexander was so striking. Then came the Archduchess Beatrice, Grand-Duchess of Saxe-Weimar.

The seats on the right and left were occupied by the galaxy of women who at that moment disputed the palm of beauty and elegance with each other: the Princesse de la Tour et Taxis, the Comtesse de Bernsdorff, the Princesse de Hesse-Philippstal, in all the splendour of her imposing and statuesque loveliness; her two daughters, bidding fair to rival

their mother; the Comtesse d'Apponyi, tall and lithe, with most expressive eyes; the Princesses Sapieha and Lichtenstein, whose beauty was of a more regular and gentler cast; the Comtesse Cohari, the Princesses Paul Esterhazy and Bagration; the daughters of Admiral Sidney Smith;[28] the Comtesse Zamoyska, *née* Czartoryska, tall, fair, with a skin of dazzling whiteness, who in herself virtually represented every kind of Polish female beauty. There were many more whose names and portraits will often recur in these *Recollections*.

Meanwhile, to the sound of inspiriting dance strains, there entered a group of masked children in fancy dress, who performed a Venetian pantomime, followed by an extensive ballet. The expressive attitudes, the varied evolutions and steps of those youthful performers seemed to afford great enjoyment to the illustrious spectators.

After the departure of the sovereigns the bands struck up a series of waltz tunes, and immediately an electric current seemed to run through the immense gathering. Germany is the country that gave birth to the waltz; it is there, and above all in Vienna, that, thanks to the musical ear of the inhabitants, that dance has acquired all the charm inherent in it. It is there that one ought to watch the apparently whirl-like course, though in reality regulated by the beat of the music, in which the man sustains and carries away his companion, while she yields to the spell with a vague expression of happiness tending to enhance her beauty. It is difficult to conceive elsewhere the fascination of the waltz. As soon as its strains rise upon the air, the features relax, the eyes become animated, and a thrill of delight runs through the company. The graceful gyrations of the

dancers, at first somewhat confused, gradually assume accurately timed movements, while the spectators whom age condemns to immobility beat time and rhythm, mentally joining in the pleasure which is bodily denied to them.

The pen fails to reproduce that enchanting scene of beauteous women covered with flowers and diamonds, yielding to the irresistible strains of the harmony, and being carried away in the strong arms of their partners until sheer fatigue compelled them to pause. The pen fails to reproduce the magnificent sight, to which daylight streaming through the windows put an end.

CHAPTER II

The Drawing-rooms of the Comtesse de Fuchs—The Prince Philip of Hesse-Homburg—George Sinclair—The Announcement of a Military Tournament—The Comtesse Edmond de Périgord—General Comte de Witt—Letters of Recommendation—The Princesse Pauline—The Poet-functionary and Fouché.

Among the most distinguished women of Austrian society was the Comtesse Laure de Fuchs, of whom the numerous visitors to Vienna during the Congress have preserved the most delightful recollection. Graceful and witty, she conveyed the highest idea in her own person of the courtesy of her country. Foreigners considered it a signal honour to be admitted to her receptions. In 1808 and 1812, I, and the few Frenchmen who were in Vienna at this period, met with the most cordial welcome on her part. Among those who composed her most intimate circle, all the members of which were friends, special mention ought to be made of the Comtesse Pletemberg, her sister, the wife of the reigning comte of that name; the Duchesses de Sagan and d'Exerenza, and Madame Edmond de Périgord,[29] a niece, by marriage, of Prince de Talleyrand. They were all three born Princesses de Courlande, and were called the Three Graces. In addition to these,

there were the Chanoinesse Kinski, belonging to one of the most illustrious families of Hungary; the Duc de Dalberg, one of the French plenipotentiaries; Marshal Walmoden, the three Comtes de Pahlen,[30] the Prince Philip of Hesse-Homburg, the Prince Paul Esterhazy, subsequently Austrian ambassador to the Court of St. James; the Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, the Russian general Comte de Witt,[31] M. de Gentz,[32] the secretary of the Congress, and the intimate friend of M. de Metternich; General Nostiltz, the clever man of letters; Varnhagen (von Ense), the poet Carpani, Doctor Koreff, the Baron d'Ompteda, former minister of Westphalia at Vienna, whom the fall of his sovereign had left without an embassy, and who attended this great diplomatic Sanhedrim as a simple amateur.

A sweet and gentle animation pervaded those gatherings, which were never interrupted by irritating political discussions. With her charming grace, the countess imposed on all her friends a law of mutual intimacy; consequently, they unanimously bestowed on her the title of their *queen*, a title she had accepted, and which she bore with a kind of serious dignity.

Her family as well as the number of her friends had increased during my absence from Vienna. The former were growing into beautiful beings, the latter, of whom she gave me some short biographical sketches, were as devoted as ever. Fortune, thanks to the rapidly succeeding events of the last few years, had forgotten none of them. All had become generals, ambassadors, or ministers.

The one to whom I felt most attracted was the Prince of Hesse-Homburg, then occupying a rank far distant from his exalted position of to-day. Parity of

age, of tastes and of ideas drew me towards him. Like many of the princes of German sovereign houses, his fame was solely due to himself.

Having joined the army at fifteen, he became a prisoner of the French in one of the first wars of the Revolution, and was taken to Paris, where he was confined in the Luxembourg. He had the luck to have his life spared. Some time afterwards there was an exchange of prisoners, and he resumed his military career. All his grades were conferred upon him for distinguished services in the field, and at the period of which I am treating he was numbered among the most meritorious generals of the Austrian army.

When, subsequently, he became a field-marshal, he was sent to the Emperor of Russia, during the latter's campaign against the Turks in 1828. To-day (1820) as Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg, Prince Philip is respected and worshipped by his subjects, whose happiness is his foremost thought.

Mme. de Fuchs asked me if I had seen anything more of George Sinclair, the young Englishman whose adventure with the Emperor Napoleon had at first drawn attention to him in Vienna, a few days before the battle of Jena. Mr. George Sinclair, who was on his way to Austria, was arrested by French scouts, and taken to headquarters on the suspicion of being a spy.

'Whence came you, and whither are you going?' asked the Emperor in a tone which foreshadowed a death-sentence. Sinclair, who spoke French with great facility, answered as briefly. 'I have come from the University of Jena, and am going to Vienna, where letters and orders from my father, Sir John Sinclair, are awaiting me.'

‘Sir John Sinclair who has written frequently on agricultural questions?‘[33]

‘Yes, sire.’

The Emperor said a few words to Duroc, and continued his interrogatory in a kindlier tone. Mr. Sinclair, who was barely eighteen, was exceedingly well versed in geography and history. His conversation fairly astonished Napoleon, who, after talking with him for a couple of hours, ordered Duroc to give him an escort as far as the outposts, and to let him resume his journey. It was altogether an unexpected favour, and wholly due to his own worth.

I had practically lost sight of him altogether, but I knew that after a journey through Italy he had entered Parliament, where he had become one of the followers of his friend Sir Francis Burdett, and had gained a brilliant reputation as a speaker in the Opposition.

Two events of a wholly different order occupied people’s minds at that moment: the future destiny of the kingdom of Saxony, and the announcement of a musical ride, a fête of knightly prowess which was contemplated from the very first days of the Congress, and was to take place in the Imperial Riding-school. Saxony came in for a scant part of the conversation, but the preparations for the tournament were discussed at great length. It was to be one of the most magnificent entertainments hitherto projected, and there were frequent consultations of the printed and engraved descriptions of the famous *carrousels* of Louis XIV., which were to be eclipsed in splendour.

The Comtesse Edmond de Périgord, one of the

twenty-four ladies who were to preside at the fête, told us that the dresses which were being prepared for it would surpass in richness everything that had been handed down concerning the elegance and the splendour of the Court ladies of the Grand Monarque.

'I really believe that we shall be able to display all the pearls and diamonds of Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria combined,' she said. 'There is not a relative or friend of these ladies whose jewel-case has not been laid under contribution; and this or that heirloom in the way of precious stones, which has not seen the light of day for a century, will glitter on the dress of one of us.'

'As for the knights,' said the young Comte de Woyna, 'in default of gorgeous dresses, they'll certainly have magnificent horses. You'll behold them go through evolutions and dance minuets with as much grace as the most nimble gentlemen of the Court.'

After this there was some animated conversation about the colours of the different quadrilles, and the supposed skill of the champions. Mottoes were quoted, and the ladies tried to get at their hidden meaning. The excellent King of Saxony and his states were absolutely forgotten; their cause had to make way for the more important discussion.

On leaving Mme. de Fuchs's, I caught sight on the Graben of General Comte de Witt—a piece of luck, for the meeting reminded me of those happy and delightful days I had spent in Ukraine, at the hospitable and magnificent domain of Tulczim, the home of the Comtesse Potocka, the comte's mother.

The only son of the first marriage of his

handsome mother with General Comte de Witt, the descendant of the Grand Referendary of Holland, Comte de Witt's military career was as rapid as it was brilliant. A soldier from his childhood, he was a colonel at sixteen, and at eighteen commanded one of the most splendid regiments in Europe, namely, the cuirassiers of the Empress. The campaigns of the last three years had given him excellent opportunities of distinguishing himself. In six weeks he had raised and equipped at his own cost, and on his mother's property, four regiments of Cossacks, which he had taken to the Emperor, who made him a lieutenant-general, and entrusted him with the organisation of the military colonies. In 1828, in the war against the Turks, he re-entered the service and commanded the army of reserve. After the Peace of Varna, there was every prospect of his happiness, when death removed him unexpectedly and at an early age.

Comte de Witt had married the Princesse Josephine Lubomirska, one of the most distinguished women of Europe. Charming and graceful, her quick and well-read intellect only equalled by her inexhaustible kindness—such was the portrait of the Comtesse de Witt traced by all those who had the privilege of coming in contact with her.

Mme. de Fuchs had kept up the habit of supping, a habit so dear to our fathers, and the disappearance of which is so much regretted by those who are fond of joyous, frank, and unrestrained conversation, inspired by the gaiety of the moment.

At one of those gatherings I had been placed close to the Comte de Witt.

That same morning I had had a strange visit. I was just stepping out of bed when told that a young

Frenchman wished to speak to me. The caller turns out to be a man of good appearance, who presents me with a small parcel he is carrying. 'This,' he says, 'is a letter M. Rey, the advocate with whom you dined at M. de Bondy's, the Prefect at Lyons, has asked me to hand you.' While I motion him to be seated I open the epistle, in which M. Rey, after the usual greetings, asks me, supposing I should be in Vienna, to interest myself for the bearer, M. Cast ... in order to get him some employment.

'By the date of the letter, monsieur, you must have left Lyons some time.'

'Yes,' replies the visitor, 'having the whole of the world thrown open to me to choose a *habitat*, I made my way to the present one on foot.'

'You have no doubt other recommendations?'

'None whatever.'

'Allow me to compliment you on your courage. To do three hundred leagues on foot simply on the strength of a letter from a person whom I have only seen once, and without even the certainty of finding me—assuredly you ought to succeed! In spite of this, I can give you but little hope. If you came to the Congress to claim a kingdom, a province, an indemnity, you would probably be listened to, but a post for a Frenchman in the Austrian States—that, I am afraid, will be a difficult thing to get. Nevertheless, I will do all I can for you. What have you done up to the present?'

'I have served in the Guards of Honour.'

'What sort of post have you in view?'

'I am not at all particular. I can be a secretary, or pretty well fill any kind of post, whether it be civil or

military.'

'You are certainly determined to make the best of things,' I could not help saying, for that particular aptitude for making the foot fit the boot in a cheerful and intelligent way is unquestionably French. I felt decidedly interested in my young compatriot, and I asked him to give me a few days to look round for him. Meanwhile I took his address, though with considerable doubt about the final result of his bold journey.

At supper the conversation happened to turn on the sudden resolutions and the unhoped-for and unexpected bits of daring that often determine a man's whole existence. As a matter of course, instances were quoted, and notably that of General Tettenborn, who, in something like four months had worked his way from major to general-in-chief.

'I could mention a trait of courage and a reliance on luck which, save for the favourable results to come, is worth all those we have mentioned.'

On being questioned, I told them all about my visitor of that morning, about his economical journey with nothing at the end of it but a simple letter of introduction, and about the coincidence of his reaching Vienna but a couple of days after my own arrival. The Comte de Witt had listened very attentively.

'Your young man's courage is worthy of consideration,' he said, 'and inasmuch as he has been in the Guards of Honour, he is probably at home on horseback. Send him to me to-morrow morning; I'll find him something to do.'

I thanked the comte; then, turning to the other guests: 'This is my countryman's second step on the

road of chance in one day,' I said, 'You'll admit that if a letter of recommendation is often addressed at random, it now and again happens to get into the hands of Dame Fortune.'

'Yes,' remarked the young Comte de Saint-Marsan, 'a letter of recommendation sometimes constitutes a whole fortune. Would you like to have an instance of this?'

And without further ado he told us with his habitual grace and sprightliness the following anecdote in connection with a period which already seemed far removed from us in the past, although the actors had scarcely left the stage.

'A young Parisian poet,' began Marsan, 'named Dubois, who was probably as poor in wit as he was in money, had exhausted all his faculties in singing the powers that were without getting the smallest favour. As a forlorn hope, he addressed an ode to Princesse Pauline, the favourite sister of Napoleon. In his poetical confusion, and without reflecting upon the fate of Racine when the latter presented to Louis XIV. his *Memoir on the Wretched Condition of Peoples*, Dubois mingled with his praises of the princess counsels to Mars, embroidered on a philanthropic dream of universal peace. The greatest effects are often due to the most trivial causes. It so happened that one of the princess's waiting-maids was a distant relative of the poet, and she seized a favourable opportunity of presenting the epistle to her highness, who only read the rhymes of "Pauline" and "divine," recurring at almost every strophe, and promised her influence to the author of such beautiful and kind sentiments. "But where is he?" asked Princesse Pauline. "There," said the relative, pointing to the ante-chamber. "In that case let him come in,"

remarked the princess, and in less time than it takes to tell, the poet enters the perfumed boudoir of Pauline, and finds himself *tête-à-tête* with his future Providence. “Well, what can I do for you?” asked the princess, after having listened to the usual compliments. “If Madame by her influence could get me some small post in this or that government office, I should for ever be grateful to her.” “A letter of recommendation to Fouché may do the thing. Not later than yesterday he said that I never asked for any favours. I’ll put him to the test. Do you think that this would suit you?” Naturally the poet replied that such a letter could not fail in its effect, and that it would make him the happiest of mortals. Handsome Pauline Borghese immediately opened her escritoire, and being in one of the happy moods when sentences shape themselves on paper, in her petition to his Grace of Otranto she spoke of M. Dubois as a man of superior gifts, apt at many things, and in whom she took the greatest interest.

‘An hour afterwards the protégé was at the door of the dispenser of favours, but being unknown to the ushers, and not specially recommended to them, it may easily be imagined that he got no further than the ministerial ante-chamber, and that he was obliged to remit his letter to the hands of those who did not care a jot. As a matter of course, it was flung with many others into the basket set apart for such epistles, which as often as not went straight from the receptacle into the stove of the ante-chamber. Nevertheless, when Fouché returned that evening from the Council of Ministers, and the basket was, as usual, set in front of him, by the merest accident his eye fell on the paper displaying the imperial arms. Naturally, he opened it at once, read it from the first line to the last, and immediately ordered four

gendarmes to accompany his carriage at nine in the morning. Among his *entourage* it was taken for granted that he was proceeding to Saint-Cloud for some communication of great importance; hence the surprise of his servants was intense when they were ordered to take him to a mean street in the neighbourhood of the Halles. It was there that our favourite of the Muses had established his aerial quarters on the sixth floor.

'There was neither porter nor number to the entrance of that residence, and inquiries had to be made of the baker of the quarter as to the domicile of M. Dubois, a man of letters.

'"There is," answered the baker's wife, "a person of that name, very poor, who inhabits an attic in the place. I do not know whether he is a public scribe, but he owes me two quarters' rent."

'And issuing from her shop, she begins to bawl out the name at the top of her voice. The poor poet puts his head out of the window of his garret, and espying below a carriage escorted by gendarmes, comes there and then to the conclusion that the boldness of his remarks with regard to a universal peace has been badly received by Jupiter the Thunderer, and that they have come to arrest him in order to make him expiate his audacity at Bicêtre.

'Prompted by his fear only, Dubois considers it most prudent to hide under his bed. Fouché, receiving no answer to the summons of the baker's wife, makes up his mind to mount the six flights. A courtier does not stop at that when it becomes a question of proving his zeal to those in power. It would want the facetious genius of Beaumarchais or Lesage, or the comic talent of Potier, to paint the originality of the scene, and of the Minister finally

discovering the protégé under the worm-eaten wooden structure that served him as a couch. Hence I abridge the particulars. Fouché reassures Dubois, and induces him to come forth from his improvised hiding-place. Regardless of the poet's very profound *négligé*, he places him by his side in the carriage, which takes its way to the Ministry, where luncheon is soon served.

"'What would you like to be, M. Dubois?" asks his Excellency in the interval between a dish of cutlets *à la Soubise*, made short work of by the famished poet, and a *salmis de perdreaux* equally appreciated, at any rate ocularly. "Now tell me what can I do for you?"

"'I'll be whatever your Excellency likes; and I shall be grateful for any kind of post."

"'Well, would you like to go to the island of Elba? I can give you the appointment of commissary general of police."

"'I'll go to the end of the world in order to please your Excellency," replies the poet, not quite sure whether for the last hour or so he has been awake or dreaming.

"'Very well then, I'll go and make out your nomination, and you'll start to-morrow. On reaching Porto-Ferrajo you'll find further instructions. Meanwhile take this on account of your stipend." Saying which, Fouché presses a roll of napoleons into the poet's hand. The latter's luggage was the reverse of voluminous; it would have filled a big snuff-box, and did not take long to pack. Dubois engaged a place in the diligence, and, in imitation of the awakened sleeper, departed, like Sancho, for his island, which he reached without any further

adventures.

‘It so happened that at that identical moment, two competitors were endeavouring to get the concession of the iron-ore mines of the island of Elba, the yield of which is very considerable. The new commissary-general of police seemed to enjoy immense credit in Paris. He was entrusted with an important charge in the administration of the island, and each of the competitors tried to secure his goodwill. One of these offered him an interest in his enterprise in return for his influence. The new functionary, who perceived himself to be on the high road to fortune, took particular care not to refuse the offer. He promised everything, and wrote to Paris whatever the speculator directed. Whether it was sheer accident or his recommendation that finally procured the concession for his partner will, perhaps, never be known, but the merit of it was attributed to the child of the Muses. He was, however, sharp enough to be aware of his utter ignorance with regard to the working of mines in no way connected with those of Parnassus, and sold his interest in them for three hundred thousand francs, which with equal good sense he invested in government securities, thus making his newly acquired wealth safe against all vicissitudes.

‘Meanwhile the Princesse Borghese went to Bagnères to take the waters, and it was some time before Fouché met with her at the Tuileries.

‘“I trust your Highness is pleased with the manner in which I have been able to provide for your protégé;” said the minister. “What protégé, M. le Duc?” answered Pauline. “I am afraid I do not understand.” “But, madame, I mean M. Dubois.” “M. Dubois? I don’t think I know any one of that name.”

“Does not your Highness recollect a letter sent to me about three months ago, most pressingly recommending a M. Dubois, a man of letters, in whom your Highness took the greatest interest?” “One moment,” said the princess, and then a smile overspread her beautiful features. “My protégé, M. le Duc, was a poor poet, a relative of one of my maids, who sent me an ode. What have you done with him? Have you given him a stool in one of your departments?”

‘The minister, nettled at having been duped in that way, took particular care to suppress the fact of his having made a grand functionary of Dubois. Unfortunately, Fouché’s friends at Court got wind of the thing, and there was an end of the secret. Napoleon himself was vastly amused at it, and bantered his minister, whose habits, as every one knows, were not of the bantering kind.

‘Naturally, Dubois’s order of recall was despatched with the same promptitude as that for his departure. Our poet fell from his commissaryship-general as Sancho had fallen from the governorship of his island, and become a nonentity as before. But the three hundred thousand francs had been paid to him and properly invested, and on his return to Paris, he was enabled to pursue in peace his cultivation of the Muses, and we may be sure did not lack for parasites to applaud his verses and share his dinners, which were amply defrayed by the iron-mines of Elba.’

Thus far the narrative of the Comte de Marsan, to whom I leave the responsibility for the story, although I have no doubt of its veracity, for Fouché, the Terrorist of old, was an excellent courtier.

M. Cast***‘s progress on the road to fortune was

not as rapid as that, yet sufficiently rapid for him to look back with satisfaction on his pluck, as exemplified in his journey to Vienna. His interview with Comte de Witt resulted in his appointment as his secretary. He came to tell me of his wonderful piece of luck, and that same night went to the Leopoldstadt theatre and was arrested by the police, who in Vienna were very severe with foreigners. He showed fight, received several blows, was bound hand and foot, and flung into a cell pending inquiry. When brought before a magistrate next morning, he referred to his new patron, the Comte de Witt, belonging to the suite of the Emperor of Russia, and on the deposition of the general, was set at liberty. Not being provided with a passport, he would, had this happened one day earlier, have been taken as a vagrant to the Austrian frontier.

Subsequently, I was told by the Abbé Chalenton, the tutor of the young Polignacs, that M. Cast***, having accompanied the Comte de Witt to Russia, married at Tulczim a Dutch girl of excellent birth, with an income of two thousand Dutch ducats, and on that occasion the abbé, at that time the tutor of Comtesse Potocka's children, gave the bride away. M. Cast*** returned afterwards to Lyons in a different condition from that in which he had left it three years previously.

The moral of all this is that, thanks to a plucky resolve, he also had his share in the good things which were going at the Congress of Vienna. Who after this shall deny the workings of chance on our destinies and the usefulness of letters of introduction?

CHAPTER III

Reception at M. de Talleyrand's—His attitude at the Congress—The Duc de Dalberg—The Duc de Richelieu—Mme. Edmond de Périgord—M. Pozzo di Borgo—Parallel between the Prince de Ligne and M. de Talleyrand—A Monster Concert.

Since my arrival in Vienna, I had given myself up so wholly to the pleasure of meeting with old friends that I had only been able to pay a 'duty' call at the French Legation. Although several friends, among others MM. Boigne de Faye and Achille Rouen, formed part of it in different capacities, I had not been able to have a confidential chat with any. I had begun sincerely to regret having missed the opportunity of going to M. de Talleyrand's receptions, when he divined my wishes, and with his well-known and exquisite courtesy sent me an invitation to dinner. As may be imagined, I did not fail to respond to it, impatient as I was to observe from near at hand a man whom I had not seen since my early manhood, and who had been so largely mixed up with the chief events of the time. It is a memorable thing in a man's life to be able to approach closely to an actor who has played a principal part on the world's stage. It makes an impression which only ceases with life or with the

loss of memory. I reached the embassy early, and from M. Rouen's private apartments made my way to the reception-rooms. There was no one there but M. de Talleyrand, the Duc de Dalberg, and Madame Edmond de Périgord, whom I had already met at Mme. de Fuchs's. The prince bade me welcome with the exquisite grace which had become a second nature to him, and taking hold of my hand with the kindliness reminiscent of a bygone period, he said: 'I had to come to Vienna, then, Monsieur, in order to have the pleasure of seeing you at my home?' I may have been mistaken, but at that moment he certainly belied the axiom so long ascribed to him, namely: That words were given to man to enable him to disguise his thought. Without awaiting my answer, which, judging from my embarrassed look, he fancied would not be quickly forthcoming, he presented me to the Duc de Dalberg with a few flattering and gracious words.

I had not seen M. de Talleyrand since 1806; but I was struck once more with the intellectual subtlety of the look, the imperturbable calm of the features, the demeanour of the pre-eminent man whom I, in common with all those forgathered in Vienna, considered the foremost diplomatist of his time. There were also the same grave and deep tone of voice, the same easy and natural manners, the same ingrained familiarity with the usages of the best society—a belated reflex, as it were, of a state of things which existed no longer, and of which one beheld in him one of the last representatives. In that room, and face to face with such a man, one could not help yielding to an irresistible feeling of timidity and awe.

The panegyric of the French plenipotentiaries at

the Congress is practically contained in their names; nevertheless, M. de Talleyrand, in particular, seemed to dominate that illustrious assembly by the charm of his mind and the ascendency of his genius. Always the same, he treated diplomacy as he treated it formerly in his drawing-room in Paris and at Neuilly. Yet, France's *rôle* was rendered not less difficult by the circumstances from without than by the confusion from within. Hedged, as it were, by numberless obstacles, the inevitable consequences of a new organisation, and of the little harmony such an organisation is likely to command, France was virtually incapable of showing any *virile disposition*. It was an open secret that such a display was beyond the power and beyond the will of her government. The great European states, the arbiters of the Congress, proceeded with a common accord of which hitherto there had been no instance in diplomatic annals. It seemed as if nothing could either break or detach a single link of the chain. Hence, the representatives of France were bound to make up, either by the resources of their genius or by talent of the first order, for the obstacles opposed to them by a quadruple alliance applying to the deliberations the whole weight of its actual importance and of its unassailable union.

The force he could not look for from his government, M. de Talleyrand found in himself; for it is no exaggeration to say that the whole of the French mission at the Congress seemed personified in him, whatever may have been the merit of his colleagues and the consideration attached to their personality. With the marvellous intuition which was the particular dower of his intellect, and which seemed not only to foresee events but to dominate them, he soon recovered the position belonging to

France. Admitted to the directing committee, composed of the four great Powers, he completely changed its ideas and its tendency. 'I bring to you more than you possess, I bring to you the idea of "right."' He divided those Powers, hitherto so united; he, as it were, raised the spectre of a disproportionately aggrandised Russian weight on the rest of Europe, and the necessity of edging her back to the north. He caused Austria and England to share that conviction. Hence, Emperor Alexander, who under the influence and in the drawing-room of M. de Talleyrand had, six months previously, decided upon the restoration of the House of Bourbon, saw, not without annoyance, his projects stopped by the representative of a state which owed its existence to him. 'Talleyrand enacts the part here of Louis XIV.'s minister,' he said more than once with a show of bad humour.

I have no intention of enumerating the labours of M. de Talleyrand at the Congress of Vienna, or the important acts in which he took a part. Still less do I intend to trace a portrait of that celebrated man. Apart from the consideration that such a task would entail infinite developments, M. de Talleyrand henceforth belongs to history; and history alone, with inflexible truth, can describe and make known one of the most historical personages of modern times. But, having been an eyewitness at that trying period of his often successful efforts at raising and reinstating the nation which he represented, I find it difficult to resist the temptation to record the vivid impression produced by his imperturbable calm, his attitude, and the whole of his personality.

It has been said often, and with considerable truth, that at no period did Talleyrand appear more

conspicuously great than at the moment of France's disasters in 1814. I had seen him eight years previously as Minister of France, then all-powerful, and dictating his laws to the whole of Continental Europe. At Vienna, as the plenipotentiary of a vanquished people, he was the same man, and as absolutely confident of himself. There was the same noble dignity, perhaps with an additional shade of pride, the same confidence essential to the representative of a nation which though vanquished was necessary to the maintenance of the European equilibrium—of a nation which might gather strength from the very consciousness of her defeat. His demeanour was, in one word, the most eloquent expression of the grandeur of our country. In watching the look which adverse fortune had been unable to disturb, the impassiveness which nothing could disconcert, one could not but feel that this man had still behind him a strong and powerful nation.

Just as his high renown, and the authority attached to his name and experience, made themselves felt in the deliberations of European politics, so did his noble manners, the manners of the grand seigneur, and his urbanity stamp his private receptions and his daily life with a character of gravity wholly in harmony with his diplomatic rôle. At no moment in Vienna did he deviate from the habits contracted in Paris and in the century that lay behind. Every morning while he was dressing, visitors were admitted, and often during the operation of shaving and attending to his hair by his valet, discussions of the utmost gravity, though in the guise of mere talk, were engaged in. I have frequently seen him in his drawing-room seated on a couch by the side of the beautiful Comtesse Edmond de Perigord, and surrounded by bearers of the most

eminent political names, the ministers of the victorious Powers, who, standing, conversed with him, or rather listened, as to the lessons of a teacher. In our century, M, de Talleyrand is perhaps the only man who constantly obtained such a triumph.

M. le Duc de Dalberg was well worthy of figuring by the side of M. de Talleyrand. Sprung from one of the oldest and noblest families of Germany, he contributed powerfully on the 31st March to the resolution which brought back the Bourbons to the throne; at the same time, he had pronounced in favour of constitutional measures calculated to reassure public opinion, and to make France rally to the restored régime. Sharing the views and wishes of M. de Talleyrand at the time of the Restoration, the same bond of union drew them together at the Congress. The heartfelt aim of both was to restore to France the rank of which her misfortunes had deprived her among the Powers.[34]

M. de Talleyrand, before proceeding to Vienna, had drawn up his own instructions. It was said on excellent authority that he strictly adhered to them, and that the various phases of the negotiations had been foreseen and indicated by him with marvellous sagacity. What is not generally known is the existence of two different sets of private correspondence addressed to Paris by the French plenipotentiaries; one, partly from the pen of and edited by M. de la Besnadière, and exclusively anecdotal, was sent to King Louis XVIII. M. de Talleyrand positively besprinkled it with those witty and original sallies, those subtle and profound remarks, characteristic of him. The other, exclusively political and principally indited by the Duc de Dalberg, went straight to the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs.[35]

On the day in question, there were few guests to dinner at M. de Talleyrand's. This afforded me the opportunity of observing more attentively and of listening more carefully: each figure of such a picture could be studied separately and with greater advantage.

In addition to the members of the French Mission, there were only a few strangers, namely, the Comte Razumowski, General Pozzo di Borgo, and the Duc de Richelieu. When I parted from the last at Odessa in 1812, he was in a position most trying to a governor-general.[36] The plague was ravaging his provinces of the Chersonese and the Taurida, and it required all his energy to get rid of such an importunate visitor. In those cruel circumstances he displayed the most admirable courage.

My questions followed each other most rapidly, as my pleasure at seeing him again was great. I was seated between him and M. de la Besnadière, and we went back with great interest to the days of our past dangers; we chatted about the ravages of the plague as sailors preserved from shipwreck would have spoken of the hidden rocks on which their craft might have gone to pieces.

All those who have known the Duc de Richelieu are aware of the sincere friendship he was apt to inspire. Few men in their public capacity have shown a nobler character, and in their eminent functions a stricter disinterestedness. The esteem of all parties was his reward.

It is to him Russia owes, in the founding of Odessa, one of her most precious commercial centres. Up to that period, the duke was only

distinguished for his military exploits. Having been sent to the shores of the Black Sea by Emperor Alexander, who understood all the importance of the site, Richelieu displayed in his fresh sphere of activity the greatest talent, from an administrative standpoint. In a few years, a harbour without life, and a few houses without tenants, were replaced by an accessible and spacious port and a rich and elegant town. The loyalty of his character contributed to draw around him merchants and colonisers. In spite of the plague and of the suspension of all commercial operations, Odessa, under his firm and enlightened administration, instead of declining, increased each day in prosperity. At present it is one of the most important points of the East.

Thereafter, M. de Richelieu passed from the government of the Taurida to that of his own country. He hesitated for a long while before assuming a burden he fancied to be beyond his strength, and only yielded at the repeated instances of Emperor Alexander. Obliged, in virtue of his office, to sign the disastrous treaties of 1815, he bore with patriotic fortitude their odious consequences. Students of history will remember his efforts at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), and the happy results which crowned them. History may not, perhaps, acquiesce in his sufficient knowledge of the men and places which he had governed, but she will always refer with grateful remembrance to his sterling virtues and his exalted patriotism.

The conversation became general, and followed the direction given to it by the personages, interesting in so many respects, taking part in it. M. Pozzo di Borgo, whom I saw on that occasion for the

first time, seemed to me to unite the finesse, the liveliness of intellect, and the imagination of his countrymen. An avowed enemy of Bonaparte since the beginning of his career, he had never disguised his joy at the latter's fall. In a few words he summed up all the causes which were inevitably to lead to the acceleration of that great catastrophe.[37]

At that time a simple general of infantry in the Russian service, M. Pozzo di Borgo never deviated from the line of conduct which led him subsequently to exercise such a great influence on the destinies of Europe. Born in Corsica, and deputy for the island in the Legislative Assembly, he held the same ardent opinions which had made him conspicuous in his own country. It was he who in July 1792 induced the Assembly to declare war against the German Emperor. After the revolution of August 10th, his name was found mentioned in the papers of Louis XVI. A fellow-deputy for Corsica, one of the commissaries entrusted with the examination of those papers, informed him, it was said, of the danger he might be running, and prevailed upon him to leave Paris. On his return to Corsica, he changed his colours. Resolved to support the designs for rendering the island independent, he joined the party of Paoli, and in 1793, the Convention summoned him, as well as the general, to its bar, to account for his conduct. Neither obeyed the summons: the English army occupied the island, and M. Pozzo di Borgo was appointed president of the Council of State under Eliot, who was raised to the dignity of viceroy. Nevertheless, during his tenure of office there arose so many complaints against him that Eliot advised him to retire, at the request of Paoli, who had become afraid of the number of enemies his protégé had managed to array against himself. M.

Pozzo di Borgo then went to London, where he was employed by the government in the secret diplomatic service. The British Government itself subsequently admitted that, thanks to the influence of Prince Czartoryski, Pozzo di Borgo had passed into the secret political service of Russia. The same good fortune that attended him in his political functions remained by his side on the battlefield: he obtained rapid promotion, and at Leipzig he fought as major-general under the orders of another Frenchman, to-day King of Sweden.[38] It was Pozzo di Borgo who in 1814 settled the question of the Allied Powers marching upon Paris, and who in their deliberations removed all apprehension on the subject. Every one remembers the dignities with which he was subsequently invested, and the various phases of his political career. Already at the Congress he was credited with a sentence which he never denied, and which laid bare his thoughts. 'France,' he said, 'is a seething saucepan; whatever comes out of it ought to be flung back into it.' M. Pozzo di Borgo's conversation did not lack piquancy; nevertheless, it did not take long to find out that the learning he somewhat ostentatiously displayed was neither solid nor extensive, nor profound. He had a mania for quoting, but not the talent of varying his quotations. For instance, at M. de Talleyrand's, he supported an argument by a passage from Dante, a phrase of Tacitus, and shreds from English orators. M. de la Besnadière told me that every one of those citations had already done duty two days previously at the Prince de Hardenberg's.

When we went into the drawing-room, a good many distinguished personages were already there. In fact, to see this forgathering of the majority of the members of the Corps Diplomatique grouping

themselves around M. de Talleyrand, the supposition would have been pardonable that his residence was the *locale* of the Congress.

Mme. la Comtesse de Périgord received her relative's guests with a charming grace. Her brilliant and playful intellect tempered from time to time the gravity of the political matter gliding into the conversation. There was, however, this difference: under M. de Talleyrand's roof the discussion was ever serious, and never deviated from its aim; while in the other drawing-rooms of Vienna, politics were treated as an accessory, and in an airy fashion, during the rare intervals not devoted to pleasure.

On the evening in question, Saxony was once more the subject of the conversation. Louis XVIII. had declared himself strongly opposed to the maintenance of Frederick-Augustus on its throne. He wished that prince to be punished with the loss of his kingdom for his faithful support of Napoleon. The utmost Louis would concede was the restricted sovereignty of Frederick-Augustus over some small patch of territory on the left bank of the Rhine. The execution of that plan would have involved the incorporation of the whole of the Saxon States with Prussia. The latter Power claimed them energetically as a compensation guaranteed to it by the Treaty of Kalisch. Alexander, who at that time was nursing the idea of a kingdom of Poland comprising the Polish provinces that had formerly lapsed to Prussia, had pronounced in favour of that incorporation. Austria, however, looked askance at this scheme of aggrandisement, while the minor German princes were positively afraid of such a spoliation, which seemed to them the precursor of their destruction. M. de Talleyrand, on the other hand, sided with Saxony,

sustaining its rights on every possible opportunity with as much dignity as healthy logic.

There was a very lively discussion between Lord Castlereagh[39] and the French envoys. England at that time, though having no direct interest in the question, seemed inclined to favour Prussia's pretensions. A few months later, there was a reversal of her policy. But however interesting King Frederick-Augustus's cause might be to me personally, it seemed to me that the atmosphere in which I had hitherto lived at Vienna excluded all political affairs, and I had drawn aside with the Duc de Richelieu. He gave me some particulars of the brilliant military career of his nephew, the Comte de Rochechouart, with whom I had spent so many happy moments at Odessa;[40] and then talked to me about the handsome Mme. Davidoff,[41] and of her famous friend Mme. la Comtesse Potocka. Surrounded by all that was most brilliant and accomplished in European civilisation, our thoughts yet went back to the deserts of the Yeddisen, and when we returned to the group of diplomatists, the prince had vanquished the grand sophist, and equity had scored a triumph over arbitrariness.

Although M. de Talleyrand was both in bearing and in temperament naturally cold and indifferent, his great reputation and his uncontested merit caused him to be assiduously courted. That apparent coldness, in fact, still further enhanced the special marks of his interest or of his affection. The words falling from his lips, a benevolent smile, a sign of approval—in short, everything emanating from him was calculated to fascinate. His was the flexible intellect which without effort and without pedantry can, on notable occasions, show itself the master of

the situation, and which, in more familiar intercourse, knows how to lend itself with inimitable grace to the lightest banter. Full justice has never been done to his goodness of heart. He repaid hatred and slander by clever sallies; he never emphasised or paraded the services he rendered; and in general his kind actions were performed with such simplicity as to make him easily lose the recollection of them.[42]

At that period I often tried to establish a parallel between the two men who, even in that gathering of so many illustrious people, powerfully attracted and captivated everybody's attention, namely, the Prince de Ligne and M. de Talleyrand. Both, having lived in contact with the celebrities of the eighteenth century, seemed to have been bequeathed to the new generation as models and ornaments; both were representatives, though in different styles, of that witty society—the one of its lighter and more sparkling phase, the other of its easy, graceful, and noble phase; both had the secret of pleasing by the charm of intellect: the first was more brilliant, the second more profound. M. de Talleyrand seemed born, as it were, to captivate his fellow-men by the strength of an ever-direct and luminous reason; the Prince de Ligne fascinated and dazzled them by the sparkle of an inexhaustible imagination: the latter bringing to bear upon the different branches of literature the subtlety, sparkle, and gracefulness of the *habitué* of Courts; the former dominating over the most important concerns with the easy calm of a grand seigneur and the imperturbable moderation of a superior intellect; the one and the other lavishly scattering around them clever sentences, happy sallies, original and piquant traits, graver and more individual in the case of the statesman, more spontaneous and brilliant in the case of the soldier:—

both, in fine, animated with the sympathetic benevolence which is the appanage of the well-born man, and which was more contained with the first and more expansive with the second. ‘Happy ought the man to be who finds himself placed near the Prince de Ligne in the morning, and in the evening near M. de Talleyrand,’ I said to myself. ‘If the one be apt to enlighten his mind by the lessons of a long experience and a succession of true pictures, the other may purify his taste by the never-failing tact, the judicious observation which takes in everything, and the magic charm of a conversation which has the faculty of subjugating listeners even where it fails in convincing them.’

The reception on the evening in question did not last as long as usual, Mme. de Périgord, like the majority of us, being due at the Burg, to attend a monster concert. Nothing, it was said, could convey a better idea of the marvellous results of the practice of music in Vienna. We left the prince engaged in his game of whist, in which he indulged every night with a particular fondness and with superior skill, and made our way to the Imperial Palace.

In one of the vastest halls, that of the States, there were a hundred pianos on which professors and amateurs performed a concert. Salieri, the composer of the *Danaïdes*, was the conductor of that gigantic orchestra. To tell the truth, however, save for the general scene, which in all these fêtes was always dazzling, that matchless charivari, in spite of the superior talent of the maestro directing it, was more like a huge display of strength and skill than a concert of good taste. This new surprise was, nevertheless, such as might have been expected from a committee appointed by the Court. To justify the

confidence placed in it, it had ransacked its imagination for something unforeseen and unprecedented, something altogether out of the ordinary. It had succeeded to perfection.

CHAPTER IV

The Prince de Ligne's Study—A Swimming Exploit—Travelling by Post—A Reminiscence of Mme. de Staël—Schönbrunn—The Son of Napoleon—His Portrait—Mme. de Montesquiou—Anecdotes—Isabey—The Manœuvring-Ground—The People's Fête at Augarten.

When I went to pay my daily visit to the prince, he was still in bed, and I made my way to his library, where they had placed his couch. The room in which a famous man spends the greater part of his time is always interesting. The signs of his particular tastes are everywhere; the special character of his genius reveals itself in the smallest details; and the objects surrounding him supply food for our curiosity or attract our attention. With his books and manuscripts scattered here, there, and everywhere, the Prince de Ligne gave one the impression of a general in his tent among the trophies of his victories and the weapons worn in everyday life.

Abusing somewhat the licence accorded to poets, with whom 'a beautiful disorder' is accounted an artistic effect, the prince lived amidst a kind of litter which was not altogether devoid of gracefulness. Here, Rousseau and Montesquieu lying open beside a batch of love-letters; there, scraps of paper covered

with verses close to a couple of military volumes of Archduke Charles; further on, letters just begun, and poems and works of strategy in a similarly initial condition. An admirable amalgam of the grand seigneur, the soldier, and the man of wit, the Prince de Ligne presented a type the like of which we shall not see again; now captivating the most distinguished women by the charms of a most brilliant conversation, then astounding the most consummate generals by the justness of his conceptions; and again delighting the greatest intellects by the subtlety and the truth of his comments.

He had a writing-desk before him when I came in. His intellect, aglow with a wholly youthful imagination, just as his heart was aglow with kindness, seemed to live against time; hence, no day ever passed without his throwing on to paper some judicious or playful, some brilliant or profound remarks, such as those with which his conversation was studded.

'I'm going to Schönbrunn to-day,' he said, 'and I should like you to accompany me. I am performing *ad honores* the office of introducer to the little duke who was born a king. I only want to finish this chapter on the events of the moment, and then I am at your disposal.

'I'm throwing my thoughts on to paper anyhow lest they should escape my memory,' he added. 'The grand picture we constantly have before us has the faculty of inspiring me; I fancy that amidst all these delirious joys a thought may now and again strike me which in days to come will either give pleasure or be productive of some good. Though yielding to this whirl of phantasms, I have not ceased to

observe. Though an actor in the piece which is being played, I consider the whole of what is passing around me a simple kick in an ant-hill.'

Saying which he resumed writing. All of a sudden, being apparently in want of a reference of some kind, he looked up. 'Be kind enough to give me that manuscript volume on the third shelf.' I got up, but uncertain which volume to take, I hesitated for a moment. Thereupon he jumped out of bed and hauled himself up by the cornice of the bookcase, got hold of the book, and was back again between the sheets in less time than it takes to tell; I looking on in sheer surprise at the agility of a man of his years. 'The fact is,' he said, 'I have been most nimble all my life, and my nimbleness has been exceedingly useful. During that kind of fairy journey when I accompanied the great Catherine to the Taurida, the imperial yacht was doubling the promontory of Parthenizza, where, according to tradition, the Temple of Iphigenia formerly stood. We were discussing the greater or lesser probability of that tradition, when Catherine, stretching forth her arms towards the coast, said: "Prince de Ligne, I'll bestow upon you that contested territory." No sooner had the words dropped from her lips than I was in the water, in full uniform, my hat on my head, and in a few moments I stood on *terra firma*. "Majesty," I cried, drawing my sword, "I am taking possession." Since then that Taurida rock is named after me, and I keep the land.

'This, my young friend, shows that bodily agility may be attended with excellent results, and that there is nothing in life like prompt resolution. A few years before the outbreak of the Revolution, I happened to be in Paris. In the happiness of the

hour, and with the carelessness of youth, I had committed a few excesses; I had, moreover, forgotten the state of my finances, and my purse was as empty of coin as my heart was full of joy and my mind of illusion. Nevertheless, I was expected in Brussels the next day to dine with the archduchess-governess of the Southern Netherlands. A total stranger in the vast city, I felt sorely embarrassed. I was on terms of intimate friendship with Prince Max, the present King of Bavaria, at that time a colonel in the French service.[43] You are aware of his generous and devoted disposition. During the whole of his life he was willing to share with his friends whatever he possessed. Naturally I went to him, but our excellent Max was not at that period a king, and had no minister of finances to direct and to take care of his savings. It just happened that his purse was as light as mine. What was to be done? A post-boy is the most inexorable of men, and at each stage he comes pitilessly, though hat in hand, to claim his salary. I was told that my cousin, the Duc d'Aremberg, much more sober in conduct, was starting that same evening for Brussels. I immediately made up my mind what to do. "I shall be there before him," I said; and without a moment's delay I transformed myself into a forerunner, and, booted and spurred, presented myself at the posting-office. I told them to give me a horse, and set off at a gallop to the next stage to order relays. In that way I performed the journey to Brussels, always a few minutes in advance of him, and seeing to the providing of his horses all along the route. My cousin, who had not despatched a forerunner, was unable to make out the providential arrangement to which was due the promptitude that thus shortened his journey. At his arrival I told him the ruse, at which we both laughed

heartily, and thanks to which I managed to dine with the archduchess.'

While talking, he had dressed himself. When he had finished putting on his uniform of colonel of trabans, and had hung half-a-dozen grand crosses and ribands of various orders upon his breast, he suddenly stopped.

'If illusion could provide me to-day with its mirror,' he said, 'how gladly would I exchange all this splendour for the simple dress of an ensign in my father's regiment! I was only sixteen when I donned that dress for the first time; I imagined then that at thirty one must be very old. Time changes everything. To-day, at eighty, I think myself still young, although some cavillers say that I am too young. It does not matter, I am doing all I can to prove that I am still young enough. After all, my career has been a happy one, and neither remorse nor ambition, nor jealousy has troubled its course. I have steered my barque pretty evenly, and until I enter that of Charon I shall continue to fancy myself, in spite of those who insist upon considering me as old.'

Even while bantering himself in that way, there was a charm about his words of which it is difficult to convey an idea. I kept telling him that age had glided off him without leaving a mark, and that time honoured him by forgetting him. He believed my words, and his handsome face was lighted up with happiness.

On going downstairs we found some of the savants who constantly worried him, and his features lost their happy expression, although he managed to dismiss the intruders with a few polite remarks, and went on his way. 'How I detest those savants of

verbosity, those gatherers of clever sayings, those walking dictionaries, whose sole stock-in-trade in the matter of genius is their memory! The best book to study is the world itself, but that book will always be a closed one to them,' he said.

In a few moments we were rumbling in the direction of Schönbrunn. Unfortunately, the prince's carriage did not deserve the compliment I had just addressed to the prince himself. It was impossible to believe that the vehicle had ever been young, and its springs piteously cried out to be exchanged for a set more elastic and in keeping with the requirements of our own time. I can still picture the cumbrous, grey conveyance drawn by two bony white horses. The panels displayed the prince's scutcheon, surmounted by the motto of the House of Egmont, whence the prince sprung:

'*Quô res cumque cadunt, semper stat linea recta.*'

Behind this ancient coach stood a kind of footman, an old Turk, six feet high, a present from Prince Potemkin at the assault of Ismaël, and who bore the name of the conquered town. The marshal, however, had the art of abridging distances, just as he had the art of supplying the scantiness of his dinner-entertainments, by his conversation. The journey of nearly an hour seemed very short, and it was with some surprise that I beheld the gates of the imperial country-seat.

Schönbrunn, the building of which was begun by the princes of the House of Austria, was the object of Maria-Theresa's particular affection. It was she who completed it, and, in order to accelerate the work, part of it was done by torchlight. The castle is delightfully situated on the right bank of the Wien.

The majestic *ensemble* of its architecture proclaims it at once to be a royal residence. The gardens, nobly and most gracefully planned, interspersed with sheets of limpid water skilfully disposed, planted with trees of the most luxuriant vegetation, and studded with most precious marble and bronze statuary, harmonise most imposingly with the magnificence of the palace itself. The park is alive with deer of all kinds, the peaceful tenants of those beautiful spots, and they, as it were, seem to invite the approach of the visitors. Every day and at all hours these glades and avenues are open to the public. Numberless carriages and horsemen are constantly there. The park is surrounded by pleasaunces, the inmates of which in the milder season are the eye-witnesses of a succession of fêtes and rejoicings. The sound of those rejoicings pierces the walls of the imperial habitation, and adds by its animation to the charms of the noble pile.

The apartments of the palace are spacious and furnished with exquisite taste. There are several rooms entirely draped with black: they have remained in that condition since the death of Maria-Theresa's husband. A small study is decorated with drawings by the various archduchesses. This is the room where Napoleon, during his sojourn at Schönbrunn, retired to work. It is there he beheld for the first time the portrait of Marie-Louise, and perhaps conceived the idea of a union which had such an influence on his destiny.[44]

A staircase leads from that room into the garden. On a wooded height stands a charming pavilion built by Maria-Theresa, and called 'La Gloriette'; that elegant structure of fairy-like design, composed of arcades, colonnades, and trophies, bounds the vista

and constitutes one of the most delightful pieces of decorative architecture. It is at the same time a palace and a triumphal arch. It is reached by a double staircase. The view from the principal drawing-room defies description: there are immense masses of green as far as the eye can reach, and at the horizon are the city of Vienna, the course of the Danube, and finally the high mountains whose outlines constitute the background of the magnificent landscape. It is difficult to imagine a more splendid panorama.

The greenhouses of Schönbrunn are perhaps the most beautiful in Europe. They contain precious samples of the vegetation of the universe. It was there that Emperor Francis, who had a particular liking for botanical pursuits, himself attended to the rarest plants.



MARIA LOUISA, ARCHDUCHESS OF AUSTRIA.

Not far from there is the zoological collection, disposed in a circle around a pavilion forming the centre, as it were, of the various sheltered enclosures for the animals. Each species has its *habitat* and its garden, with the plants and trees proper to the country of its birth. There, though prisoners, the animals apparently enjoy their liberty.

Close to the castle there was a small railed-off plot, carefully tended, which was the garden of the son of Napoleon. It was there that the young prince cultivated the flowers which each morning he gathered into bouquets for his mother[45] and his governess.

While crossing the courts, which are very spacious, the prince pointed out the spot where, while Napoleon was inspecting some troops, a young fanatic attempted to kill him about the time of the battle of Wagram. If a crime of that nature is calculated to inspire anything but a feeling of indignation, that young fellow might have been pitied in virtue of the courage and fortitude he showed at the moment of his death.

It was in those courts that, at the same period, Napoleon gave orders to his ordnance-officer, the Prince de Salm, to put through its drill a regiment of the Germanic Confederation, and to give the command in German. The Viennese came down in shoals, this little amenity on the part of the victor having made them forget that their capital was in the hands of the enemy.

In the hall a French servant, still wearing the Napoleonic livery, came towards us. He knew the marshal, and immediately went to inform Mme. de Montesquiou of his arrival.

'I trust we'll not have to wait,' said my companion, 'for, as I have told you, I am almost like the Comte de Ségur of Schönbrunn.' He alluded to the position of grand-master of the ceremonies that nobleman, whom he had known at the Court of Catherine, had occupied near the person of Napoleon.

A few moments later Mme. de Montesquiou came to apologise for being unable to introduce us immediately. 'The little prince,' she said, 'is sitting for his portrait to Isabey, which is intended for the Empress Marie-Louise. As he is very fond of the marshal, the sight of him would only make him restless. I'll see that the sitting is as short as possible.'

'You know what happened at my first visit?' remarked the prince, after Mme. de Montesquiou had left us. 'When they told the child that Marshal Prince de Ligne had come to see him, he exclaimed: "Is it one of the marshals who deserted papa? Don't let him come in." They had a good deal of trouble in making him understand that France is not the only country where they have marshals.'

A short while afterwards Mme. de Montesquiou took us to the apartments. When young Napoleon caught sight of the Prince de Ligne he slid off his chair, and flung himself into the arms of the old soldier. He was indeed as handsome a child as one could wish to see, and the likeness to his ancestress Maria-Theresa was positively striking. The cherub-like shape of his face, the dazzling whiteness of the skin, the eyes full of fire, and the pretty fair curls drooping on his shoulders, made up one of the most graceful models ever offered to Isabey. He was dressed in a richly embroidered uniform of hussars, and wore on his dolman the star of the Legion of Honour, '*Bon jour, monsieur*,' said the little lad, 'I like the French very much.'

Remembering the words of Rousseau to the effect that people do not like to be questioned, and least of all children, I stooped down and kissed him.

The son of Napoleon is no more; pitiless Death cut short at twenty-two a life begun on a throne; and

at the moment when the brilliant qualities of the prince bade fair to make that life illustrious, and when his noble sentiments had begun to win all hearts. Everything connected with this offspring of so much glory, a victim from his cradle of a fatal and unprecedented destiny, only presents itself to the memory with a deep respect mingled with a tender pity.

His intellect was quick and precocious; all his words struck the listener by their justness. Both his memory and his faculty for acquiring knowledge were astounding; he learned German in a short time, and after that spoke it with the same ease as French. His character was firm, and his resolutions, only arrived at after serious reflection, were unshakable; his slightest movements were stamped with grace; his gestures, when he wished to emphasise his words, were already grave and solemn. His liking for the science of warfare showed itself both in his eyes and in his speech. ‘I want to be a soldier,’ he said, ‘I’ll lead the charge.’ They suggested that bayonets might oppose his progress. ‘But surely,’ was the answer, ‘I’ll have a sword to put aside the bayonets.’ His curiosity with regard to the history of his father was extreme; the Emperor, his grandfather, convinced that truth must constitute the basis of every education, and notably that of a prince, determined not to leave him in ignorance upon any subject.[46] The child listened eagerly to the story of a life which, in the space of twenty years, seemed to have exceeded the measure of both belief and of history. The exuberance of his joys, his impatience at being baulked of his wishes and of all opposition to his will, were those of a child, while his intense anxiety to learn, his habitual calm and reflection, attested a more advanced age. Everything in him led

to the belief in the theory of hereditary genius.

His instinct, as is well known, showed itself under memorable circumstances. On the 29th March, 1814, when the Empress Marie-Louise abandoned the Tuileries for Rambouillet, and when they wished to take the child to his mother, who was waiting for him, he opposed a stout resistance to being removed; shouted that they were betraying his papa, and refused to stir. Mme. de Montesquiou's moral influence over the lad was brought to bear in vain; she only succeeded by force, and even then she had to promise to bring him back soon. The poor lad guessed, as it were, that he would never more behold the Tuileries.

His quickness of intellect showed itself in everything connected with his illustrious and ill-fated sire. On the day before our visit, the English commodore, Sir Neil Campbell, who accompanied Napoleon to Elba, was presented to his son. 'Are you not pleased, prince, to see this gentleman, who left your father only a few days ago?' asked Mme, de Montesquiou, presenting the officer. 'Yes,' was the answer, 'I am pleased.' Then, putting his finger to his lips, he added, 'But we must not say so.'

The commodore took the child into his arms. 'Your papa has told me to kiss you for him,' he said, suiting the action to the word, after which he gently put him down. The child had a German top in his hands. He flung it down with such force as to break it to pieces. 'Poor papa!' he gasped, bursting into tears.[47]

What were the thoughts that moved him, and how, at his tender age, could he grasp the whole extent of the ambiguous and false position of the son of Napoleon being a prisoner, as it were, in the

Austrian palace of Schönbrunn!

With regard to the loss of the sovereignty bestowed upon him at his birth, he expressed himself with a melancholy and touching resignation. ‘I see very well that I am no longer a king,’ he repeated during his journey from Rambouillet to Vienna; ‘I have no longer any pages.’[48] The Prince de Ligne having shown him some medals struck on the occasion of his birth, he remarked, ‘I remember them; they were made when I was king.’

This plucky resignation, which was the most conspicuous trait of his character, abided with him up to his last moments. When, at the age of twenty-two, undermined by a most painful malady, he was dying at that same palace of Schönbrunn, and beheld Death advancing slowly but surely, he, handsome, young, talented, and the offspring of a great man, talked of his impending end with those surrounding him, taking, as it were, a cruel pleasure in dispelling all the illusions of hope.

We stepped up to Isabey, who had just put the finishing touches to the portrait of the young prince. It was a striking likeness, and, in common with all his works, pervaded by an exquisite grace. It was the identical picture he presented to Napoleon on the latter’s return from Elba in the following year. ‘What I like best in this portrait is its wonderful resemblance to that of Joseph II. when he was a child, which was given to me by Maria-Theresa. After all, this resemblance to a great man is a happy augury for the future.’

Then the prince complimented the painter on the perfect finish of his work, adding a few happily-chosen words on his European reputation.

‘I came to Vienna, M. le Maréchal,’ replied Isabey, ‘with the hope of being allowed to reproduce the features of all the celebrities that are here, and without doubt I ought to have started with yours.’

‘Assuredly, seeing that, in virtue of my age, I am the dean.’

‘No,’ retorted Isabey, who was also known for his ready wit, ‘not in virtue of your age, but as the model of all that is illustrious in this century.’

Meanwhile, young Napoleon had gone to a corner of the room in search of a regiment of wooden Uhlans which his grand-uncle Archduke Charles had sent him a few days previously. Set in motion by a piece of simple mechanism, the troopers, stuck on movable pins, imitated every military evolution, breaking the ranks, deploying into line, forming into columns, etc.

‘Time to begin our manœuvres, prince!’ shouted the marshal in a tone of command. Immediately the Uhlans were taken from their box and disposed in battle order. ‘Attention,’ cried the marshal, drawing his sword and assuming the attitude of a general on parade.

Stolidly attentive and grave, like a Russian grenadier, the child took up his position to the right of his troop, his hand on the spring. No sooner has the word of command left the old soldier’s lips than the movement is carried out with the utmost precision. A second order meets with similarly prompt obedience; the chief and the subaltern are equally grave. To watch the charming face of the child lighting up at this mimic piece of drill, and, on the other hand, to watch the aged and illustrious relic of the wars of the past becoming animated at

the child's grave demeanour, was a sight never to be forgotten. It looked as if the one had inherited the irresistible passion of his sire for the science of warfare; as if the other, suddenly growing younger by a couple of decades, was going to recommence his glorious campaigns. It was a delicious contrast, fit to inspire the genius of our greatest painters.

The grand manœuvres were interrupted by the announcement of the empress's coming. She liked to be alone with her son, whose education she superintended.[49] Hence we retired, leaving Isabey to show her his work.

No sooner were we seated in our carriage, still deeply moved by what we had seen, than the Prince de Ligne said: 'When Vienna surrendered to Napoleon at Schönbrunn, when he planned his memorable campaign of Wagram there, when in those spacious courts he reviewed his victorious phalanxes in the presence of the astounded Viennese, little did he foresee that in this same palace the son of the victor and the daughter of the vanquished would be held as hostages by one whose fate was then in his hands. In my long career I have seen many instances of extraordinary glory, and nearly as many of crushing reverses, but nothing to compare to the history of which we have just witnessed a chapter.'

As we were crossing the glacis between the faubourgs and the city, we espied an open carriage, very low on its wheels. There seemed scarcely room enough in it to hold its one huge occupant.

'Let us stop and perform our salutations,' said the prince. 'There goes another majesty by the grace of God and of Robinson Crusoe (Napoleon). There goes the King of Würtemberg.

‘Up to the present,’ he went on, ‘you have only seen royal fêtes. To-morrow I mean to take you to an entertainment for the people. So much has been accomplished through the people that they can well afford to do something for it. I’ll see you to-morrow.’

The people’s fête is one of the most brilliant solemnities of Vienna. It had been eagerly looked forward to for some time.

Anxious to profit by the invitation of my illustrious guide, I was at his place before midday. Shortly afterwards we set out for the Augarten, where the fête was to take place.

The Augarten is situated on the same island of the Danube as the Prater, by which it is bound on the east. The park, with its thickly-wooded retreats and clumps of trees, presented the most varied and beautiful vegetation, interspersed in all directions by magnificent avenues. The palace, due to Joseph II., is a specimen of simple and elegant architecture. An inscription over the front entrance tells the fact that this amiable prince-philosopher gave up the building for the amusement of the nation.

There was an immense crowd; the weather was splendid; the stands erected for the sovereigns and the celebrities of the Congress were filled with most elegantly dressed spectators of both sexes. The Prince de Ligne preferred to mingle with the crowd, and I was glad of it.

The Austrian veterans, to the number of four thousand, had been invited to the fête. To the strains of military music they marched past the stand of the sovereigns, and afterwards took possession of a number of spacious tents, set apart for their special use. There were military sports at frequent intervals

throughout the day.

They opened with foot races, after which came races with small Eastern horses, after the manner of the Barbary horses that contest for speed in the Corso in Rome. In an open-air circus, the trick-riders and acrobats of Bach, who are the rivals of Franconi and Astley of London, performed all kinds of exercises on foot and on horseback. Further on, the Turnplatz was occupied by young men who, to the delight of the spectators, went through a series of gymnastics. To the left of the palace, on a magnificent greensward, there stood a pole a hundred feet high, surmounted by a huge wooden bird with outspread wings. It served as a target to a company of Tyrolese archers, experts with the cross-bow. The prize was a beautiful silver-gilt vase. It was hotly contested for, and finally fell to a son of the celebrated Tyrolese Hofer.

Finally, an enormous balloon rose in the air. The aeronaut's name was Kraskowitz, and he proved a worthy emulator of Garnerin and Blanchard, for a short time after his ascent he soared majestically above the crowd, waving a number of flags of the various nations whose representatives had forgathered in Vienna.

An hour later, the aeronaut, after a unique view of a splendid scene, came gently down in the island of Lobau, the spot connected with one of the remarkable military feats of modern history.

Then there was an interruption of the games. Sixteen large tables were spread on a vast lawn, the four thousand veterans sat down to a profusely served repast, while from several bandstands, decorated with standards and panoplies of war, there uprose the strains of military symphonies. In another part of the park, four elegantly decorated tents in

which companies of Bohemians, Hungarians, Austrians, and Tyrolese respectively, in the picturesque dresses of their countries, performed national dances to the sound of their own particular instruments, diversified by their patriotic songs.

The sovereigns during the whole of the time wandered about, unescorted, taking stock of everything, and chatting familiarly with the veterans, many of whose faces were absolutely riddled with scars. There was something patriarchal in their thus mingling with the crowd, which eyed them curiously, respectfully following them everywhere.

When night fell, a hundred thousand lamps converted the Augarten into a blaze of light, and then there were magnificent fireworks in front of the palace. The principal pieces represented the monuments of Milan, Berlin, and St. Petersburg. There was an immense crowd in the avenues of the Augarten, but at no moment was order disturbed in the slightest. This popular rejoicing was marked by a serious and thoughtful calm, for which the German character alone, perhaps, can offer a model.

At the termination of the fireworks, the sovereigns strolled through the streets, and were everywhere hailed with unanimous cheers. Then the entire Court repaired to the theatre of the Carinthian Gate to witness the performance of the ballet *Flore et Zéphire*. All the palaces, mansions, and private dwellings were most brilliantly illuminated; and ‘transparencies,’ bearing enthusiastic mottoes, had not been spared. Dancing and music went on throughout the whole of the night; it was, in fact, an uninterrupted scene of magnificence and happiness. Joy prevailed everywhere, a joy due less perhaps to the fête that had been offered to the people than to

the hope of a durable peace, the price of which had been paid by many years of constant sacrifices.

CHAPTER V

The Prater—The Carriages—The Crowd and the Sovereigns—The Sovereigns' Incognito—Alexander Ypsilanti—The Vienna Drawing-Rooms—Princesse Bagration—The Narischkine Family—A Lottery.

I had promised to meet Alexander Ypsilanti in the grand avenue of the Prater, and at the appointed time I was there. To me the beautiful spot teemed with delightful recollections; each scene reminded me of a fête, of a love-tryst, or of a meeting with friends, of dreams, of hopes, of illusions, perhaps gone for ever.

During a long pilgrimage in my younger days, I have seen all the renowned public promenades of Europe, and everywhere the people maintained that the one adorning their own capital was superior to any other. I have always preferred the Vienna Prater to the Bois de Boulogne, to Kensington Gardens, to the Wood at the Hague, to the Cascines of Florence, and to all the other vaunted resorts whether at Moscow, Petersburg, or Constantinople; for in the first-named spot are united the beauties of nature that delight the eye, and the sight of a happy condition, comforting and refreshing to the soul.

The Prater abuts on the faubourgs of Vienna. It is

situated on one of the islands of the Danube, which virtually constitutes its boundary. It is throughout planted with century-old trees, affording a majestic shade, and preventing the huge greensward from being scorched by the sun. It is crossed in every direction by imposing avenues. As at Schönbrunn, and at the majority of like resorts in Germany, herds of deer browse peacefully on the heights or disport themselves in the flatter parts, thus imparting life and motion to the delicious solitude. These are properly the aspects of a mild and virgin nature, but at the same time they are embellished by all the resources of cultivation and art. To the left of the Prater, on entering it from the city, there is an immense lawn, set apart for the display of fireworks; to the right there is a circus capable of accommodating several thousands of spectators; facing one, a large avenue of chestnuts, bordered on each side by elegant constructions, including a number of shops, cafés, and casinos where the Viennese can indulge to their hearts' content in their well-known love for music.

In the avenue of chestnuts, constantly filled with sumptuous carriages and with riders managing their mounts of all breeds with that peculiar Hungarian skill, the wealth and display of all the neighbour-states of Austria seem to have forgathered. The emperor himself drives an unpretending 'turn-out' with the simplicity of a well-to-do tradesman bent upon an airing; while a hackney-cab, taken by the hour, and fearing no competition, gets right into his imperial majesty's road, and is itself overtaken by the vehicle of a Bohemian magnate or by a Hungarian palatine tooling a four-in-hand. In a lightly-built *calèche*, drawn by horses with manes streaming in the breeze, are seated women with complexions like

lilies and roses, and presenting the appearance of baskets of flowers. The constant variety of the scenes, the animation of the pedestrians, the general bustle, increased by the presence of numberless strangers, but tempered by the constitutional gravity of the Germans themselves, constitute a most lovely and stirring picture; it is a scene by Teniers, framed in a landscape by Ruysdael.

The life of the Viennese in the Prater is a pretty faithful image of their own government, a despotic government, no doubt, but which, for all that, has only one aim—the welfare and material prosperity of the country. Differing from other states, and notably from France, whose administration, constantly libelled and insulted, takes its revenge by making the 'governed' its enemy, the public powers in Austria, subject to no control, assiduously endeavour to be the protector and the guide of the people. That protection is accepted with joy; and if despotism is now and again constrained to show its teeth, its dictates are, as it were, carried out in the family circle and with the lesser or greater consent of the calm and thoughtful people itself. Consequently, the alien, watching them under those magnificently umbrageous pleasure resorts, and beholding the emperor, his family, and his ministers mingling with the crowd, unprotected either by guards or escorts, is tempted to envy them such a genuine and solid happiness.

During the period of the Congress the Prater became more brilliant than it had ever been before. Vienna was so full of strangers, coming from all countries to be the eyewitnesses of an assembly supposed to be the fitting termination to an epoch replete with prodigious events, that the number of

carriages had incredibly increased. There was an infinite variety of dresses, Hungarian, Polish, and Oriental, an infinite number of uniforms whose wearers hailed from every part of Europe, and who dazzled the sight with their splendour. Masses of people, driving, riding, and walking under the still warm rays of an autumn sun, imparted to the beautiful spot even more than its ordinary animation.

What struck me most, at the first sight, was the great number of carriages of the same shape and colour, and all drawn by two or four horses. It was simply the result of another exquisitely courteous attention of the emperor, who made it a point that the sovereigns and the members of their suites should be provided solely from the imperial stables, and as such ordered three hundred conveyances of an identical form to be built and to be held, day and night, at the disposal of his guests.

This living panorama enabled me to review, in the space of a few minutes, all the sovereigns and celebrities contained within the walls of Vienna. A prominent figure among these was Lord Stewart, the English ambassador, himself driving a team of four horses which would have won the approval of the *habitués* of Hyde Park. Almost immediately behind him, in an elegant chaise, came the Emperor Alexander, his charming sister the Duchess of Oldenburg seated next to him; while on one side of the conveyance Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, and on the other the Crown Prince of Würtemberg, both on horseback, pay their court, though for different motives, to the illustrious pair. Alexander had dispensed with all his decorations, except one, that of ‘l’Épée’ of Sweden, which, to speak the truth,

shone with great elegance and brilliancy on his dark green uniform. A little further on, in an open *calèche*, I caught sight of Alexander's second sister, the Grand-Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, no less charming and graceful than her elder. Following these comes Emperor Francis in an unpretending phaeton, accompanied by his young and sweet consort, his third wife, Marie Louise of Austria-Este, her comely features beaming with happiness.

At that moment, the crowd of pedestrians instinctively stops with a feeling of pride and respect to watch Prince Charles (of Bavaria) himself driving his family in an unpretentious conveyance.

Zibin, dressed in his brilliant uniform of hussars, is borne along swiftly on a Ukrainian charger; his hat is surmounted by a plume of feathers which might easily be mistaken for the tail of a hirsute comet. The grand berline, with its panels decorated with large—somewhat too large—scutcheons, contains Sir Sidney Smith, conspicuous by the liberal display of his quarterings amidst this very modest company. The King of Prussia gallops with a solitary aide-de-camp, and close to him come the Prince of Hesse-Homburg and Tettenborn, to both of whom I send a fraternal salute.

Lord Castlereagh showed his long-drawn face, with *ennui* stamped on every line of it, from a *coupé*. It did not even light up when a hackney-cab ran into the *calèche* of the Pasha of Widin. After this came the carriages of the archdukes, keeping religiously in line, and, as far as their amusements went, claiming no privileges beyond those of simple private individuals. 'Only using their rights when discharging the duties attached to them,' as Mme. de Staël expressed it.

At the turning of an avenue, I caught sight of Alexander Ypsilanti. Five years had gone by since our parting at St. Petersburg, when he was only an ensign in the regiment of the ‘Chevaliers Gardes,’ and now he was a major-general, covered with well-earned orders, but minus an arm lost at the battle of Bautzen. We strolled away from the crowd, the better to enjoy the pleasure of our re-union. His good fortune had not changed the qualities of his heart, ever open to noble feelings and ever responsive to the words ‘friendship’ and ‘country.’ He was the son of the Hospodar of Moldavia and Wallachia.[50] His father, overthrown by one of those palace revolutions so frequent in Turkey, was obliged to fly. Alexander, who was only sixteen, placed himself at the head of a troop of Arnauts of eight hundred men, escorted his father across the Carpathian mountains, and saved his life when escaping from the eunuchs of the seraglio. He came to seek refuge in Russia. Educated and brought up under the care and through the generosity of Emperor Alexander, the young prince entered his service, and in a short time opened a brilliant career for himself. His generous disposition, his bold and enterprising mind, his open character strongly appealed to me, and we became close friends. As a matter of course, we wished to prolong the pleasure of this, practically our first meeting after many years, so we went to dine at the tavern named the ‘Empress of Austria.’ This was the usual resort of most of the strangers who were not on the budget of the Court or who wished to avoid the etiquette almost inseparable from its hospitality. This gathering, almost unnoticed at first, became soon afterwards a kind of debating centre, and had, if not a voice in the deliberations of the Congress, at any rate, a certain importance.

We took our seats at a table, already occupied by at least a score of diners belonging to various nations. In spite of the difference of interest and of position in a country distant from their own, strangers were most eager to associate with each other: generals, diplomatists, and simple travellers were mingled together at this impromptu banquet. Some were ordnance officers of the sovereigns that had come to shear; others, advocates of those who were being shorn. The first part of the repast was, as usual, rather serious; people were taking stock of each other, and the music of an excellent band made up for the lack of conversation. They all seemed bent upon a diplomatic reserve.

I was seated near young Luchesini, who had arrived a few days previously, and who was sent to Vienna by the Grand-Duchess of Tuscany to concert measures with M. Aldini on the subject of Mme. Bacciochi's claims on the grand-duchy and of the principality of Lucca.[51] I had seen M. Luchesini when he was very young at his mother's in Paris; but for the moment I did not recognise him. The notable changes, both in his fortunes and in his person, were sufficient to justify my lapse of memory. His father, the Marquis de Luchesini, for many years the Prussian ambassador at the Court of Napoleon, had enjoyed great consideration in Paris,[52] a consideration well deserved in virtue of his conspicuous diplomatic talent and his intellectual attainments as a private individual. He had paid great attention to the education of his son, who, endowed with all the advantages calculated to ensure success, started in life under the most auspicious circumstances. Presented by his family at the new Court of Tuscany, and attracting the notice of the sovereign of the hour, he was appointed grand

equerry. It was said that love, which abridges social distances, had made the young favourite the happiest of mortals. I soon discovered that his delicate position somewhat tied his tongue in his conversation with me. He informed me that his family was living on their beautiful estate near Lucca, and after a few general observations, we exchanged addresses, promising to meet again.

To the hundred thousand strangers in Vienna, the Congress was rather an immense pleasure-gathering than a political assembly. Truly, each sovereign had his ambassadors and ministers, but each country had also sent representatives of its best society. Upon the first-named devolved the discussions of international interest and the settlement of international problems; upon the second the more pleasant duty of giving fêtes, entertainments, and holding receptions. Among the plenipotentiaries of this drawing-room diplomacy stood foremost the Comtesse Edmond de Périgord for France; for Prussia, the Princesse de la Tour et Taxis (Thurn und Taxis); for England, Lady Castlereagh; for Denmark, Comtesse de Bernstorff.

The upper stratum of German society was divided into several factions or circles, and each had its particular shade and physiognomy. At the Princesses Marie Esterhazy's, de Colloredo's, de Lichtenstein's, and at the Comtesse de Zichy's, great courtesy and grace were added to the minutest and numberless details of an ever-watchful hospitality. At Mme. de Fuchs's, the whole was on a less ceremonious footing; while, on the contrary, the acme of ceremoniousness was attained at the Princesse de Fürstenberg's. Distinguished both for her learning and for her energy, the princess's

habitual guests were princes many of whom had become subjects. The handsome Duchesse de Sagan's receptions were eagerly attended. She was a most intellectual woman, and could have exercised great influence on all serious affairs, inasmuch as her judgment was considered in the light of an authority, but she rarely made use of her advantages. The diplomatic celebrities forgathered at M. de Humboldt's or at M. de Metternich's, the latter of whom, undoubtedly, ought to have been named first. In fact, though his residence was the central point of affairs, he still found it possible to welcome strangers with the most indefatigable politeness.

The Russian drawing-room *par excellence* was that of the Princesse Bagration, the wife of the field-marshal of that name. She, as it were, enacted, though informally, the part of principal hostess to her countrymen who happened to be in Vienna. She was one of the most brilliant stars in that number of constellations the Congress had attracted. She seemed to have been singled out by the charm and the distinction of her manners to transfer thither the polished form and the aristocratic ease which at that time made the drawing-rooms of St. Petersburg the foremost of Europe. In that respect no minister-plenipotentiary would have used his opportunities to better purpose.

The Princesse Bagration, who since then has been much admired in Paris, was at that period in the zenith of her beauty. A young face, white like alabaster and slightly tinted with pink, small features, a sweet, though very feeling expression, to which her short-sightedness gave an air of timidity and uncertainty; of average height though exquisitely proportioned, and the whole of her personality

pervaded by a kind of Oriental languor joined to an Andalusian grace—such was, without exaggeration, the charming hostess entrusted that evening with the amusement of those illustrious personages often as much bored as the 'unamusable' lover of Mme. de Maintenon.

When Prince Koslowski and I entered the drawing-rooms, the Emperor Alexander, the Kings of Prussia and of Bavaria, several other princes and sovereigns, and a considerable number of strangers of distinction had already arrived. The whole of the Russian aristocracy and the Russian celebrities at that moment forgathered in Vienna seemed to have appointed to meet there. MM. de Nesselrode, Pozzo di Borgo, the Comte Razumowski, Russian ambassador to the Austrian Court, and the Prince Volkonski were simply a trifle more conspicuous than the rest; but among this crowd of familiar faces I might well have fancied myself transferred to one of the hospitable palaces of St. Petersburg four years previously.

Among this crowd of notabilities, special mention should be made, in virtue of their high position and their intellectual charm, of the various members of the Narischkine family.

The Narischkines are closely related to the Imperial House of Russia. The mother of Peter the Great was a Narischkine; hence they consider themselves of an origin too noble to have any need of titles. In fact, that of 'prince' is so common in Russia as scarcely to constitute a distinction. The elder of the two brothers enjoyed the reputation of being the wittiest man at the Court of Emperor Alexander. His conversation was as varied as it was amusing, and a collection of his witticisms and

epigrams would make a bulky volume, though they were neither as subtle nor as brilliant as those of the Prince de Ligne, not to mention those of Talleyrand; but when by chance, during the Congress, these three men were together, then, unquestionably, there was a real display of intellectual fireworks.

His daughter, the Princesse Hélène, had, in addition to great physical beauty, a naturally brilliant intellect and a noble, sympathetic heart. She married the son of the famous General Souvaroff, but her husband was drowned during a journey in Wallachia. In spite of the warning of his post-boy, he insisted upon crossing the little river Rimnik when it was swollen by the rains and had become a downright torrent. He was carried away by the current, without the slightest possibility of any one coming to his aid. At the time of Paul I.'s death, the princess's father occupied an apartment exactly under that of the emperor; she herself was a mere babe. Awakened by the noise and tumult that followed the assassination of Catherine the Great's son, her nurse took her into her arms, and in her fear hid her in an isolated and disused sentry-box, where she was only found next morning.

The grand-chamberlain had been a favourite with Paul and managed to preserve the favour of his son Alexander. The footing on which he lived baffles description: he literally kept open house, the stir and bustle of which never ceased; one could have called it a caravanserai of princes. The plants, the flowers, the constant song of birds, conveyed the impression, even in mid-winter, of a spring day in Italy. He was as generous as he was lavish, and his prodigality often reduced him to sore straits. The following is one instance among many. Emperor Alexander had

given him the star of the Order of St. Andrew, magnificently set in diamonds. Being pressed for money, he had raised a considerable sum upon it; and when the empress's fête-day came round, he felt in a terrible predicament, for he was unable to redeem his pledge and he could not appear without it in full dress at the palace. The only 'plaque' like it was that of the emperor himself. At an utter loss to get out of the difficulty, he got hold of the emperor's valet, and by dint of promises, cajoling and the like, prevailed upon the servant to lend him his master's decoration. The man got frightened, however, at the possible consequences of what he had done and informed the sovereign.

Alexander did not breathe a single word, but as a punishment did not take his eyes off the 'plaque' during the whole of the evening, examining it minutely through his glasses whenever his chamberlain drew near.

M. Narischkine accompanied Empress Elisabeth on her journey from St. Petersburg to Vienna. When Alexander entrusted him with the mission, fifty thousand roubles in paper were handed to his chamberlain, together with directions for the route to be followed. A few days later, the emperor took Narischkine aside. 'You had the parcel I sent you, cousin mine?' asked the emperor.

'Yes, sire, I received and read the first volume of the Itinerary.'

'Already? And you are waiting for the second?'

'A second edition, sire, rather than a second volume.'

'I see what you mean. A second edition, revised and augmented.'

The second edition was handed to him a couple of hours afterwards.

His brother, the ‘grand veneur’ (say, ‘Master of the Buck Hounds’), was the husband of that magnificent Marie Antonia, *née* Princesse Czerwertinska, one of the loveliest women in Europe, who for such a long period held captive the heart of the handsome autocrat. Though not endowed with as much wit as his elder, the younger Narischkine was by no means devoid of it. He proved it by the philosophic manner with which he bore his conjugal misfortunes. Often, in his replies to the emperor, he put them in a naïve and diverting light. It was not the grovelling acquiescence of a man who glories in his dishonour, but the resignation to an evil which he could neither prevent nor mend.

One day Alexander was asking him for news of his children. ‘Of mine, sire, or of those of the Crown?’ was the counter-query.

On another occasion, there was a similar inquiry about his family and about his two daughters. The emperor, meeting him, made some kindly reference to them. ‘But, sire, the second is yours,’ replied the ‘grand veneur.’ Alexander’s sole retort was a smile.

Of course, the satire of the elder, which spared nobody, was not particularly lenient with regard to the younger. The latter took great pains with his hair, which was always dressed and curled with the utmost care. Some one having made a remark to that effect in the hearing of the grand-chamberlain, got his answer pat. ‘It is not surprising; my brother’s head is arranged by the hands of a master.’[53]

During this long liaison, and notwithstanding the sway handsome Mme. Narischkine exercised over her

illustrious lover, the latter was ever careful to save appearances. Amidst those quickly succeeding entertainments and receptions at the period of the Congress, during that daily and hourly existence of often relaxed etiquette. Empress Elisabeth would have been necessarily and frequently brought face to face with her rival, and would naturally have felt the slight. Mme. Narischkine did not appear at the Congress.

Close by the Emperor of Russia sat the Princesse de la Tour et Taxis, *née* Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and sister-in-law to the King of Prussia. That sovereign had practically transferred to her all the affection he bore to his lost wife: the princess had a remarkable influence over him, and she never requested a favour in vain. Gifted with a superior intellect, and a beauty that had become proverbial, though it did not equal that of her dead sister, the princess, by her charming manners, even more than her stately bearing, compelled instantaneous admiration and genuine respect. Among the many distinguished personages assembled in Vienna, she shone with unusual brilliancy in virtue of her combining every good quality.

I was placed close to Prince Koslowski and the Baron Ompteda, and felt confident that among so numerous a company ample material would be afforded to them for their faculties of clever observation.

‘Just cast your eye behind the chair of Emperor Alexander,’ remarked the Baron to me; ‘and look at his brother, the Grand-duke Constantine. He is the third personage of the empire, and probably the heir-presumptive to the throne. Nevertheless, observe his servile attitude, and the affectation with which, as it

were, he proclaims himself the Czar's first subject. One would think him permeated with the sentiment of submission as others are with the feeling of liberty. Personally, I fail to understand this voluptuous enjoyment of obedience. And now,' he went on, 'glance at that other personage close to him; that is the young Prince de Reuss, the twenty-ninth of the name. In his case, it's a horse of a different colour. He has tumbled or drifted into the dreamland of I do not know what kind of German sect or school, and has become imbued with a sort of affected sentimentalism calculated to spoil the most sterling and happiest gifts of nature. This vague sentimentality, which he professes in and out of season, inspires him with the strangest ideas. A few days ago, he wrote to a lady, seated not far away from us: "Hope constantly renewed and equally constantly destroyed only keeps one alive to languish suspended like Mahomet's coffin between heaven and earth. It is for you to decide ... it is a question of your love or my death." He has not had the one given to him, and he has taken good care not to inflict the other upon himself. And thus, from sheer lightness of heart, people adopt ridiculous fads, far often less pardoned by the world at large than real faults. His uncle, Henri XV. or Henri XVI., the actual civil and military governor of Vienna, is somewhat more positive. Frederick the Great one day asked him if the princes of his house were numbered like hackney-carriages. "No, sire, not like hackney-carriages, but like kings," was the answer. Frederick must have been somewhat embarrassed at the reply; nevertheless it pleased him, as everything witty and spontaneous did, and from that moment Prince Henri always enjoyed his favour and goodwill.'

Shortly afterwards Prince Koslowski drew my

attention to a lady placed near Empress Elisabeth. It was the Comtesse Tolstoy, *née* Princesse Baratynski, the wife of the grand-marshal. Her mother belonged to the Holstein family, and was a cousin once removed of Catherine II.

'You are probably aware,' he said, 'that the marshal is in disgrace?'

'Yes, prince,' I answered; 'but I do not know the cause.'

'The cause is this. Tolstoy, emboldened by the emperor's indulgent manner towards him, thought fit now and again to adopt a tone of remonstrance which few sovereigns would have tolerated. He opposed him in almost everything. Alexander often laughed at his fretful remarks; at rare intervals he got angry, and retaliated in his own way. When both happened to be travelling in an open sledge and Tolstoy's cavilling put the czar out of patience, he simply gave him a push which sent him sprawling in the snow, and left him to run for a few minutes after the light conveyance. When he considered that the punishment had lasted long enough, he pulled up his horses, and the marshal, grumbling all the while, resumed his seat by the side of his master, and the matter was at an end. Convinced that things would go on for ever in that way, Tolstoy raised an opposition to Alexander's appearance at the Congress. According to him, the emperor's rôle there would not be consistent with his dignity. Weary at last, the emperor this time took the matter seriously and parted with his grand-marshal, who, it is said, will not be comforted in his disgrace. The moral of all this is: "Put not your trust in the friendship of princes."'

In fact, a little while afterwards, the Comte

Tolstoy, unable to survive the loss of his sovereign's favour, died at Dresden, whither he had retired.

All at once a great silence fell upon the room. A young French actress, Mme. L——, a pupil of Talma, and a protégée of the Princesse Bagration, was going to recite. She had only recently arrived from Paris. Though French tragic poetry stands essentially in need of the illusion of the stage and the advantage of costume, that kind of entertainment was not indulged in so lavishly as it is to-day; hence, the handsome actress commanded great attention. She recited with much feeling some strophes from *Zaïre*, and did great credit to her tutor in the beautiful scene of the '*Songe d'Athalie*.' She was cordially applauded and complimented, and never had a *débutante* such an audience to judge her.

After this, the guests crowded round a table set out with rich and elegant objects. There was to be a lottery, a kind of elegant diversion revived from the Court of Louis XIV., whose love for Mlle. de la Vallière had first suggested it to him. Then, as now, it was a favourite recreation with women. Each sovereign contributed to these lotteries one or more presents, which, falling to the lot of the lucky ones, afforded these an opportunity of presenting them to the ladies of their thought. That kind of amusement was frequently repeated during the Congress. The most remarkable lotteries were those drawn at the Princesse Marie Esterhazy's and at Mme. Bruce's, *née* Moushkin-Poushkine. The mania for them spread from the drawing-rooms to less distinguished places, and subsequently became the cause of an adventure which aroused much excitement.

Some of the prizes were magnificent, the Grand-duke Constantine won two magnificent vases

contributed by the King of Prussia from the royal porcelain works at Berlin. He offered them to our charming hostess. The King of Bavaria won a handsome box in mosaic, which he begged Princesse Marie Esterhazy to accept; and the Comte Capo d'Istria drew a casket beautifully worked in steel, which he presented to the Princesse Volkonski. Two small bronze candlesticks fell to the share of Emperor Alexander. He gave them to Mlle. L——, to whom, it was said, he had become very attentive. 'His majesty's love affairs are not likely to entail any considerable draft on the imperial treasury,' some one whispered close to me. 'He had just made Mlle. L —— a present, by means of the candlesticks, of a few louis. This must be accounted as a piece of tremendous generosity, for as a rule he receives more than he gives. All the linen he wears is from the deft needle of Mme. Narischkine; he not only accepts the workmanship, but he always forgets to refund to her the cost of the material. The charming favourite makes no secret of it. Louis XIV. frequently crops up in conversation in connection with his fêtes at Versailles. Our sovereigns would do well to imitate them. However artistically chased those candlesticks may be, Mlle. L—— will not be prepared to think them as valuable as the diamond bracelets the Grand Monarque won at Madame's lottery and which he offered in such an exquisite manner to La Vallière.'[54]

'All this,' said Prince Koslowski to me, 'is certainly in excellent taste, but these fêtes are absolutely nothing in comparison with those given by Potemkin to Catherine in the Taurida and after the taking of Oczakoff. Our mothers are never tired of talking of them. There was also a kind of lottery, but skill instead of chance presided at it. In the ball-room there was a long row of marble columns,

positively hung with garlands composed of jewels and trinkets. The dances were arranged so that every gentleman passing near these columns could detach from them some precious ornament which he offered to his partner. As you may imagine, that courtly fashion of offering presents was intensely relished by the fair sex, and Catherine herself discharged their debt of gratitude by heaping still greater riches on her favourite. That's what I should call amusements fit for sovereigns. After all, we are becoming very mean.'

A great many prizes of minor importance were subsequently drawn for, and there was a kind of mild 'give and take' in connection with them. The room was so crowded that I only caught sight of Ypsilanti when he came forward to receive a sable cape which he offered to the Princesse Souvaroff. Taking advantage of a momentary thinning of the crowd, I drew up to them to say a few words to Princesse Hélène, whom I was sincerely pleased to meet again. 'I dare say we have a lot to tell each other,' she said. 'Come with Ypsilanti to luncheon to-morrow. We'll be more at our ease than here, and by ourselves. We'll have a talk about bygone days.' I accepted gladly, confident that her conversation would remind me of my stay in Russia, which constituted one of the best periods of my life.

When the sovereigns had retired, there were some music and dancing, followed by an elegant supper, without restraint and during which one could gossip to one's heart's content. It was, in short, one of those series of fleeting hours which at Vienna seemed to be woven of gold and silk by fairies in the loom of pleasure.

CHAPTER VI

The Castle of Laxemburg—Heron-Hawking—The Empress of Austria—A Royal Hunt—Fête at the Ritterburg—A Recollection of Christina of Sweden—Constance and Theodore, or the Blind Husband—Poland—Scheme for her Independence—The Comte Arthur Potocki—The Prince de Ligne and Isabey—The Prince de Ligne's House on the Kalemberg—Confidential Chats and Recollections—The Empress Catherine II.—Queen Marie-Antoinette—Mme. de Staël—Casanova.

'These sovereigns on their holidays,' as the Prince de Ligne called them, had to be constantly amused, or at any rate prevented at all cost from being bored. The committee appointed by the emperor, and composed of the most eminent personages of the Austrian Court, cudgelled their brains to devise a new diversion for each day. They were, above all, very busy with the preparations for the great imperial tournament which, it was intended, should constitute a never-to-be-forgotten feature of the brilliant functions of the Congress. The cut, the shape, and the colour of the dresses were matters of incessant study; the horses were drilled every day; the champions spent many hours rehearsing the various movements and passes which

were to remind all of us of the ancient days of chivalry; the ladies tried on the magnificent gowns and ornaments, the historical accuracy of which was to carry the suffrages of everybody by pleasing the eye. But pending the termination of those busy preparations, a big hunt had been organised in the woods and park of the imperial residence, Laxemburg, and numerous invitations issued.

Laxemburg is about six miles from Schönbrunn. The park is laid out on English models. There are densely-wooded plantations at irregular intervals, further on vast lawns leading to thick and sombre forests; swelling tracts of ground ingeniously arranged, and masses of rocks; everywhere the most varied and unexpected vistas. In one word, art has combined in a restricted space the different beauties of nature. The most conspicuous feature, though, is a magnificent piece of water, one might call it a lake, the aspect of which reminds one of the landscapes of Switzerland. On its limpid surface there lay at that period a miniature frigate with its cannon, masts and rigging, and other small craft, the brilliant bunting of which imparted life and colour to the rippling, dancing wavelets.

Schönbrunn had been the object of Maria-Theresa's predilection, consequently Laxemburg had suffered as a residence at the cost of its neighbour. Emperor Francis made up for the undeserved neglect. On a slope some short distance from the lake, he erected the 'Ritterburg,' which has become one of the principal sights of Austria. It is an exact imitation of one of the sombre castles or forbidding manors of mediæval feudalism. The massive walls, flanked by crenellated towers, are surrounded by a deep moat filled with water. The inner court, with its pavilions,

its barriers, the whole arranged for single combats and tournaments, forms the lists. The halls are in keeping with the court; they are filled with stands of arms, coats of mail, breastplates, lances, etc. From its Gothic pillars hang panoplies; from its ogival arches are suspended banners, their staffs adjusted amidst turbans, richly embroidered, Oriental vestments, the spoil wrested from the infidels; in short, the relics of the victories that saved Christianity.

In another hall are preserved weapons, dresses, and other venerable remains of the heroes whose prowess founded the German Empire, of Rudolph of Hapsburg, of Maximilian I., and of Charles V. Still further on, there is a hall hung with the cloaks of the first Knights of the Golden Fleece. In a hall leading out of that one stand the white marble effigies of the emperors sprung from the House of Austria. These are succeeded by a series of vast reception rooms, several of which are most admirable in virtue of their decoration. There is no longer an attempt at imitating the Gothic style; they are filled with the marvels of art of the period itself—that is, the masterpieces spared by the hand of time, most exquisite specimens of sculpture, delicately-worked panels, whole ceilings. All these precious relics were collected from the convents suppressed at the period of the building of the 'Ritterburg.' Everything calculated to heighten the illusion was conveyed to the 'Ritterburg.' In one spot there is a narrow winding stair, leading to a dungeon, or rather a torture-chamber, with its massive doors, its irons and chains, and even its instruments of torture. Crouching against the further wall, there is the figure of an ill-fated prisoner, dressed as a Knight Templar and bending beneath the weight of his fetters. By some ingenious mechanism, he slowly and painfully

drags himself with an effort from his sitting posture to hold out his arms to the spectator. The gruesome imitation is so perfect as to produce a shudder in the beholder.

The topmost story of that tower is a spacious room called the Hall of Judgment. Narrow ogival windows admit only a sparse light. Twelve stone seats are ranged in a circle along the walls. In the centre there is a round table with a circular hole in it, big enough to admit a human head and no more. On the day of his trial the accused man was bound to a chair; by means of a contrivance consisting of ropes and pulleys, he was quickly raised to the summit of the tower, and suddenly his head emerged from the hole in the board. Before the interrogatory, he was asked the whole truth; he replied, knowing that at the slightest sign from his judges the rope attached to his chair could be cut and he himself be flung from a height of two hundred feet on to the stones of his dungeon. Nothing could give a more striking idea of the terrible ‘proceedings’ of feudal justice in the Middle Ages than this mechanism.

The committee entrusted with the programme of the fêtes had, it was said, entertained the idea of giving a representation of a judiciary ascension as described; the scene had even been cast. The Empress of Austria was, however, of opinion that such a picture of anguish and torture would only mar the brightness of the fête she was preparing for her guests.

The chapel of the ‘Ritterburg’ is not the least of its curiosities. It is the same which was constructed by St. Leopold in the twelfth century at Kloster-Neuburg. The materials were transferred piecemeal to its present site, and the monument is in perfect

keeping with all those relics of past days.

Among the many works of art in the Castle of Laxemburg itself, there are several paintings by Canaletto; amongst others views of Schönbrunn, of the Graben, and the Church of the Capuchins.

Maria-Theresa came now and again to Laxemburg to exchange the cares of state for the relaxations of hawking. The 'Ritterburg' had not been built then.

When, amidst the difficulties of finding new recreations, the fêtes committee conceived the project of bringing the guests of the Congress to Laxemburg and entertaining them there, the idea of 'flying' the hawk naturally presented itself. In the vicinity of that Gothic castle nothing could be more in harmony with the style of its construction than an amusement borrowed from the traditions and manners of the feudal ages.

The place of meeting was on the banks of the lake, not far from a marshy spot tenanted by numerous flocks of water-birds. Foremost among the company was the lovely Empress of Austria, famed for her love of sport and her marvellous skill, the graceful Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, Queen Caroline of Bavaria, her sister, and a number of ladies, several of whom wore the elegant costume of the sixteenth century. At the head of the sovereigns on horseback was Emperor Francis, unflaggingly hospitable. Amidst them, in a low-wheeled *calèche*, is the enormous King of Würtemberg, famed for his former hunts and hunting exploits, and anxious to witness tranquil amusement, altogether unlike the fatigues and perils he was wont to court.

The huntsmen in their handsome uniforms,

holding their dogs in leash, come first; then come the falconers with their hooded birds on their wrists, and behind these the eager mass of spectators.

At a spot where the reeds and rushes impede the view of the lake, there is a halt, and the dogs' leashes are slipped to start the birds. The air rings with barking, and all eyes are strained upward in expectation of the struggle, somewhat novel to the majority. All of a sudden, a grey-plumaged heron takes its flight, at first slowly, heavily, and with listless movement; then spreading its wings it rises rapidly. At the sight of the bird, promising not an easy victory but a protracted struggle, the falconers get ready, encouraging *their* birds with their cries, awaiting a signal from the empress to give the first pursuer flight.

The signal is given, and in the twinkling of an eye the hood is removed from one of the hawks and it is set free. The falconer points to the fleeing heron, the impatient hawk shakes its pinions, utters a cry, and quick as lightning soars aloft. The affrighted heron tries in vain to rise higher than his pursuer, but the latter directs its flight in such a manner as to be constantly hovering above its quarry. Each attempt of the heron meets with a counter-move on the part of the hawk, compelling its victim to descend. If the heron shows signs of returning to the starting-point where the hunters are, the hawk, swift as a flash, bars its progress in that direction and forces it to take the opposite one; it keeps worrying the other bird, tiring it and practically dazzling it by the repeated beating of its pinions, until it finally brings it back to the point within an easy view of the spectators of the struggle. The heron at length determines upon resistance. Steadily pursuing its

course, and apparently motionless, it presents its long bill, sharp like a sword, to its foe. The hawk, on its part, decides upon attack. Rapidly wheeling round and round the heron, it lowers its flight, then re-ascends and all at once grips the flanks of its victim. Then begins a veritable struggle at close quarters, with all its fury and all its rapidly changing incidents.

The heron has the first advantage; it aims a terrible stroke at its adversary, piercing it between the neck and one of its pinions as if with a dagger. The hawk, nevertheless, clings to the heron and rends the latter's flesh with its beak. The heron quickly follows up its strokes; compelled to fight and at the same time to carry the weight of its foe, it multiplies its attack without getting rid of its assailant, and the blood of both stains their plumage crimson. In spite of this, the hawk looks like getting the worse of it. There is a longer interval between its attacks, which are neither as fierce nor as sure as heretofore, and the victory bids fair to remain with the heron, when the falconer despatches a second hawk from among those which, though hooded up to now, seem aware of the struggle going on, to judge by the flapping of their wings and the sudden stiffening of their feathers. The freshly-despatched combatant is a hen-bird, easily recognised by its beautiful brown plumage, for it is noteworthy that among this species the females are bigger, stronger, and bolder than the males. No sooner is the hood removed than the female rises into the air and, disdaining all preliminary evolutions, fastens its beak into the neck of the heron. The air is rent by the cries of the hunters, the barking of the dogs, and the braying of the horns. The heron's resistance is, from that moment, useless. The new assailant virtually

smothers it, and, moreover, digs its claws into the heron's back, while the male, its strength revived by the timely aid of the female, renews its attacks. It becomes merely a question of seconds with the ill-fated heron. After a few spasmodic movements, rendered uncertain by the loss of blood, it finally closes its eyes and drops to the earth. The two hawks utter screeches of victory, tear their victim's eyes out, and without letting go of it for a moment, drag it to the falconer's feet.

According to the ancient usages of the chase, a huntsman stepped forward at that moment, and, plucking from the heron's neck its fine and elegant plumage, constituting as it were a natural aigrette, he handed it to Emperor Alexander, who, in his turn, immediately offered it to the lovely Empress of Austria. The horns sounded 'the death,' while the birds devoured their quarry, and the illustrious guests crowded round the falconers to compliment them.

This, after all, was only the prelude to a more important sporting item of the programme. Every care had been taken to ensure its success. The signal for a new start was given, and we moved towards another part of the park, where on an immense lawn surrounded by trees a vast arena had been arranged for the guns. At one side there was a circular stand for the guests of the Court. The sovereigns and the high personages in whose honour the entertainment was given took up their positions, each one provided with four pages charged with loading the guns, in order to spare the principals the slightest fatigue.

The general beating-up had taken place on the previous night. At the word of command from the empress the circle of beaters drew in, and at the

same moment from all the outlets of the wood, there emerged a numberless quantity of wild-boars, deer, hares, and game of all kind, which in a few moments were killed by the privileged marksmen, amidst the general applause of the lookers-on.

My friends and I had taken up our positions a little distance away from the Empress of Austria, who was using only a musket, loaded with ball, and who aimed exclusively at hares or small game, which she never missed.

This file-firing, or rather this kind of slaughter, only ceased when the number of animals killed amounted to several thousands. Once more the forest rang with the barking of the dogs, the cries of the spectators, mingled with the sound of hunting-horns. The ground literally disappeared under the heaped-up game, its blood still trickling. Truly, after the noble struggle we had just witnessed, it became difficult not to admit that the amusements of our fathers were superior to ours.

Ypsilanti seemed surprised at the remarkable skill of the Empress of Austria, and at the steadiness of her aim. Without for a moment wishing to detract from either, I told him what I had seen in the arsenal at Stockholm, namely, a long carabine which was loaded with a single pellet of the smallest shot, and with which, it is said, Queen Christina amused herself by bringing down the flies on the walls of her rooms without ever missing one.

Soon after the termination of the sport, night set in rapidly. Suddenly, as if at the touch of a magic wand, the lawn and the avenues of the park were lighted up by enormous ‘pitch-pots,’ known in Turkey as *machala*, the blaze of which carries very far. At the same moment, the inside of the

'Ritterburg' was illuminated from roof to basement for the reception of the illustrious guests who were going to assemble there. When Emperor Francis constructed the castle as an exact illustration of the ideas prevailing during the feudal era, he certainly did not foresee the forgathering under its roof in one day of such a number of illustrious personages, from emperors to knights. Though only those provided with invitations had been admitted to Laxemburg, their number was so great as to make perambulation in the various halls and reception rooms exceedingly difficult. The animated crowd, and the profusion of light constituted the strangest and most striking contrast to the sombre arches, the panoplies, the dresses and the ornaments of mediæval times.

The lovely imperial hostess did the honours of the feudal manor with her usual grace. A magnificent collation was served, to which succeeded a concert of a peculiar kind. In a corner of the principal hall there was an enormous organ; its construction, sound, and ornaments faithfully recalling the machines with brass pipes and bellows with which the piety of our forefathers provided the cathedrals of the Middle Ages. The deep tones of the organ were accompanied by a band of wind instruments, played by musicians expressly brought from Bohemia, where instrumental music appears to have reached perfection. To complete the illusion, they had selected some of the old national melodies, the traditions of which have been preserved for centuries. In the intervals, huntsmen, placed on a tower overlooking the castle, played hunting tunes that sounded like an echo coming from the skies.

On several occasions during previous concerts, I had noticed a young man whose eyes were covered

with a black bandage, and who was guided through the crowd by a young lady with an elegant figure, but whose face was hidden by a thick veil. This time they were close to the organ, and they evidently enjoyed the music greatly. I asked the Comte François de Palfi who were these young people, imparting an air of sadness to a fête rather than partaking of its joys.

'That young man,' he answered, 'is the Comte Hadick, the young woman is his wife, and their story is most interesting.

'Bound by a very close friendship, additionally cemented by long and important services to each other, the Comtes Hadick and Amady made up their minds to tighten these bonds still further by uniting in marriage their children, who were about the same age. Théodore Hadick, the only offspring of the illustrious family, was in consequence brought up with young Constance, who from her infancy bade fair to be as kind in disposition as she was beautiful in face and figure. At fifteen the feelings of these two young people were already what they would continue to be all their lives. The castles of the two magnates were practically adjacent to each other. Constance, by being present at the lessons of her young friend, easily learned all those exercises calculated to impart both bodily and mental gracefulness without being hurtful to beauty. What united them still more was their passionate fondness for music, which passion appears innate with the Hungarians. They were held up everywhere as models of perfection and virtue, and their fathers were already discussing the time of their wedding, when the war broke out.

'As you are aware, the laws of Hungary compel

every noble personally to fight for his country; and in the periods of great danger, when the whole of the nation rushes to arms, the magnates march with their banners at the head of their vassals. The Comte Hadick, jealous for the honour of his house, was very anxious for his son to share the forthcoming campaign. Constance, hiding her grief, and solely occupied with the future and the glory of her betrothed, watched with great courage the preparations for a parting which the chances of war might prolong and render eternal.

'Theodore, impatient to devote himself to his country, hurried the moment that was to afford him the chance of showing himself still more worthy of the girl whom he loved, and the day of his departure was finally fixed upon. The previous evening, though, the betrothal took place at the castle, and it was with the certainty of Constance's hand that the young count at the head of his vassals went to join the Hungarian army at Pesth. You know the result of the campaign. The Hungarians kept up their reputation for brilliant valour. Théodore, in virtue of several signal actions, deserved the cross conferred upon him by the chapter of the Order of Maria-Theresa, a distinction considered one of the foremost in the annals of chivalry.

'But while the young man supped full with glory, Constance had been carried to the brink of the grave by a cruel illness. Stricken down by an attack of most virulent smallpox, she hovered for a long time between life and death. The doctors, while saving her, could not prevent the face which had been one of the most beautiful from becoming almost hideous. She was only allowed to look at herself when she was on the high road to recovery.

‘The sight, as you may imagine, filled her with despair, and, convinced that Théodore could no longer love her under such conditions, she ardently prayed for death.

‘In vain her father and the Comte Hadick tried to reassure her. Haunted by the horrible dread of being no longer worthy of her betrothed, she refused to be comforted, and the young girl was simply dying of despair, there being not the faintest hope left.

‘Nevertheless, one morning, when she was nestling in the arms of her father, who bade her live at least for him, the servant who had accompanied Théodore to the war suddenly rushed into the apartment, announcing the immediate coming of his master, whose voice, a moment afterwards, was heard outside.

‘“Constance, Constance, where art thou?”

‘At that voice so dear to her, the young girl, lacking the courage to fly, covered her face with her handkerchief and her hands.

‘“Do not come near me, Théodore, I have lost my beauty. I have no longer anything to offer thee but my heart.”

‘“What do I hear? But look at me, Constance!”

‘“No, no, thou wouldst only recoil at seeing me.”

‘“What does it matter, if thy love is the same, Constance. Constance, I can no longer see thee.”

‘She raises her eyes and looks. Théodore was blind. The charge of a musket had deprived him of his sight.

‘“God be praised!” exclaimed Constance, falling on her knees. “Théodore, we shall be united, for thou

canst still love me. I shall be thy guide; yes, I shall be to thee as I was in the first moments of our love, and thou shalt be able to love me still."

'Shortly after that they were married. Never was there a couple so deserving of happiness more really happy than they. The comtesse takes her husband everywhere, never leaving his side for a moment. He is the object of her most delicate attentions; her love for him seems increased by his terrible affliction. She does not wear that veil to hide her scarred features, but because she is afraid that the remarks of the crowd on her vanished beauty may sadden the heart of the husband whom she worships.

'The young comte's passion for music appears to have increased since he lost his sight. He regularly attends every concert; and his faithful companion, who appears only to live for him, is always at his side.'

The concert came to an end just as the comte finished his touching story. Then the windows were opened and magnificent fireworks let off on the lake. The sheaves of fire crossing each other and being reflected in the water; the numerous craft, illuminated and streaming with bunting; the masses of light standing in relief against the sombre background of the forest; the sound of the horns mingling with the shells and fusees—all this combined produced a truly magical effect.

Finally, after this well-spent day we began to think of getting back to Vienna, probably to recommence next morning the pursuit of the apparently inexhaustible round of pleasure.

The next day, however, I had promised to spend with the Prince de Ligne at his house on the

Kalemberg. When I got there, I found the prince in company with M. Nowosilitzoff, a Russian statesman of great ability and a trusty adviser of Emperor Alexander, who, it was said at the time, was deeply interested in the future of Poland. The constitution of that country, its organisation and its institutions, which were to reinstate her in her former rank among the European nations—in short, her destiny—was one of the gravest questions submitted to the deliberations of the Congress. A most confidential councillor of the czar and a member of the provisional government of Warsaw, M. Nowosilitzoff was at that period engaged in drawing up the constitution intended by the czar for his new kingdom.

The Prince de Ligne professed an ardent sympathy for Poland. He admired her chivalrous and hospitable customs, and above all that frankness which forms the chief trait of the Polish character. Added to this admiration was his gratitude to a nation which had formerly admitted him among the ranks of its nobility. Consequently, he sat listening attentively to the projects of Alexander, projects which just then inspired a certain belief. As for me, the subject appealed to me like everything connected with the country in which I spent some of the best years of my youth.

‘After so many unprecedented efforts, after so many disappointed hopes and useless sacrifices, Poland bids fair to breathe at last,’ said M. Nowosilitzoff. ‘Deceived for many years by the man who had the misfortune to consider his will as a ruling principle, his power as a proof of his statesmanship, and his success as a reason for it, the Poles were not altogether unjustified in believing in

promises tending to reinstate them as a nation.'

'There is no nation on the face of the earth who would not have made the same sacrifices for so noble an illusion,' remarked the prince.

'No doubt, but constantly letting their thoughts run back, as they do, to the brilliant periods of their history, they would fain see their country assume the proud and independent attitude it adopted under the Bathoris, the Sigismunds, and the Sobieskis; and in this beautiful dream of the past, and, moreover, deceived by the actual state of politics in Europe, they will not stop their ambition at the point imposed by their geographical position. They will only find a country in the strictest sense through us and with us,' the councillor went on. 'Poland, completely independent and organised on the very risky basis of its erewhile constitutions, would only secure an ephemeral existence; she would carry her own germ of destruction. Is she to form a permanent camp in the centre of pacified Europe, or shall she arm all her nomadic sons like the Sarmatians of old, in order to make up by living ramparts for the natural frontiers and fortresses she lacks? She must have a support in order to insure her independence. Truth, I know, can only triumph slowly over the power of prejudice; but what is there to oppose the fact which henceforth is only too palpable? The hope of a better future, a hope which can only be indulged by unthinking creatures whom the disasters of their country have failed to restore to reason and coolness of mind.'

'Burke has said somewhere,' replied the prince, 'that the division of Poland would cost its authors very dear; he might have said the same of the defenders of the nation, for it is probable that the

active share of Napoleon in the affairs of Poland has contributed in no small degree to his downfall. May the projects of Alexander remain exempt from a similar fatality! Everything will depend upon the guarantees given for the maintenance of the Polish nationality! A people may resign itself to having been vanquished; it will never resign itself to being humiliated.'

'The solicitude of the emperor for his new subjects admits of no discussion,' observed M. Nowosilitzoff. 'To be convinced of this, you have only to glance at this manuscript. It is the draught of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Poland, and it is corrected by the hands of Alexander himself. If it be true that great thoughts proceed direct from the heart, there is ample evidence here of the nobleness of Alexander's. The laws and the constitution of the kingdom will be the keystone of the peace of Europe.'

In fact, the few pages he read to us from the manuscript redounded as much to the honour of the statesman as to that of the philanthropist. Poland would indeed have been a happy country, if an erroneous policy had not struck all those dreams of a moment with utter barrenness.[55]

The commentary of M. Nowosilitzoff, which followed upon the reading of the document, was interrupted by the arrival of the Comte Arthur Potocki, the youthful friend of the Prince de Ligne. Though a Pole, and animated by the most generous feelings towards his country, his presence vexed the privy councillor to such an extent as to cause him instantly to roll up his manuscript without adding another word, and to leave us shortly afterwards.

The Comte Arthur Potocki, son of the Comte

Jean of the illustrious family of that name, and one of the best educated men in Europe, had a noble face, an elegant figure, and a cultivated mind. At an age when most men spend their time in pleasure and frivolous pursuits, he was conspicuous for a sterling judgment, a wide knowledge, and the most exquisite politeness. It is not surprising then that he was one of the most notable men in Vienna society, and eminently fit to occupy a similar position everywhere. The Prince de Ligne was very fond of Arthur, whom he called his Alcibiades, and who in his turn worshipped the bright and witty octogenarian, so indulgent to young men.

'Everything has been finally arranged for the imperial *carrousel* (musical ride), which is irrevocably fixed for next week,' said the young comte, 'and I have brought you the tickets which the Grand-Marshal Trauttmansdorff has told me to remit to you. It will be one of the most brilliant spectacles ever witnessed. To-morrow night everybody in Vienna laying claim to be somebody is going to the Court to see the "living pictures" arranged by Isabey. They will be followed by romances sung and enacted by the handsomest women of the Court, the lovely Duchesse de Sagan, the Princesse Paul Esterhazy, the Comtesse Zichy, and several of our most elegant fair ones. Do not fail to come, gentlemen; you had better take advantage of the joyous hours. It is rumoured that the Congress will terminate on the 15th December. Good-bye, until to-morrow. Let the thought of the closing of the Congress be with you every moment, as it is with me.' Saying which, he took his departure.

The prince reminded me that I had promised to spend a few hours with him on that day at his house

on the Kalemberg. Before going thither he wished to go to Isabey's to sit for his portrait, and he asked me to accompany him.

'During that hour of torture to me,' he laughed, 'you will have an opportunity of looking at a series of portraits from his brush. Isabey is the recorder of the Congress in pigments. And inasmuch as he is almost as clever with his tongue as with his brush, you'll not waste your time.'

In a short time we reached the artist's quarters in the Leopoldstadt. The front of the house was provided with a barrier to prevent the deadlock of the visitors' carriages. Isabey's arrival at Vienna had been preceded by his deserved reputation.[56]

Presented by the Duc de Sérent to Marie-Antoinette, Isabey, at the age of twenty, painted the portrait of the lovely and ill-fated queen, who treated him with the utmost kindness, and always called him her little Lorrain. Subsequently, having become the painter-in-ordinary of Napoleon, he reproduced the features of all the celebrated men and all the handsome women of the Empire. It was he who superintended the fêtes of that brilliant and short-lived era.

At Vienna, all the European celebrities solicited the distinction of reproduction by his brush, and he could scarcely comply with all their requests. The number of portraits he painted at that period is positively surprising, and supplies a proof of his talent having been as fertile as it is graceful. Whenever there was a question of organising this or that entertainment for which the Congress was the pretext, the artist who had drawn the designs for Napoleon's coronation was, as may be imagined, considered in the light of a 'God-send.' Nothing was

done without consulting him.

According to Isabey himself, it was M. de Talleyrand who had prompted the idea of his going to Vienna; and art is indebted to that journey for his remarkable and historical drawing of a 'Sitting of the Plenipotentiaries at the Congress.'

The fall of Napoleon deprived Isabey of nearly all his functions. One day, in the study of the statesman who at that time was supposed to have mainly contributed to that catastrophe, the artist spoke regretfully of a restoration which, as far as he was concerned, spelt ruin. On one of the walls of the room hung an engraving of the 'Peace of Munster,' after Terburg. Pointing to it, Talleyrand said, 'A Congress is to be held at Vienna. Why not go there?' The few words were as a ray of light in the darkness to Isabey, and from that moment his mind was made up. Talleyrand did more than give a hint. He gave him a most cordial welcome, and proved a kindly and appreciative patron.

On Prince Eugène's arrival in Vienna, one of his first calls was upon Isabey. In his equivocal position, he felt only too glad to see somebody reminding him of his younger days. The painter by his bright recollections often dispelled the sadness of the prince. It was Eugène who shortly afterwards took Isabey to Emperor Alexander. Isabey's conversation was always interesting, but it became positively sparkling and historically valuable when recounting the marvellous details of the coronation, which, as has been said, were arranged by him. Isabey was not less delightful when recalling the familiar and every-day life at Malmaison.

Already in 1812, during a tour through Germany, Isabey, being in Prague, had made a sketch of the

Prince de Ligne, which sketch he carefully preserved and which hangs to this day (1830) in his studio. Notwithstanding the seventy-and-eight years of the model, the sketch shows the noble and delicately cut features which to the end were the object of everybody's admiration. At that period the Prince de Ligne only knew Isabey by reputation. One morning he called upon the artist, who happened to be out. But his album lay open near his easel. Instead of leaving his card, the prince took up a pen and wrote a dozen tripping and sparkling lines, describing Isabey's talent, finishing up with:

'He constitutes as great an honour to art as to his country;
And in virtue of this impromptu, I also am a painter.'

This tribute to Isabey's talent on the part of the Prince de Ligne is only one of the valuable testimonies contained in Isabey's album. Every important personage in Europe, ministers, generals, artists, ladies of high degree, have equally considered it a pleasure to testify to their admiration and their esteem.

Isabey had been quartered magnificently, like Benvenuto Cellini in days of yore, at the Louvre. His studio, hung from floor to ceiling with sketches, drawings, and portraits in a more or less advanced stage of completion, impressed one with the idea of a magic lantern, representing in turns all the notable personages who at that moment had forgathered in Vienna.

The hour taken up with the prince's sitting seemed short to me. Every now and again the work was interrupted by this or that subtle remark or lively reminiscence. The conversation ran principally

on a little adventure in connection with the game of 'leap-frog,' which caused such a stir in Paris at the period of the Consulate, and which was obstinately believed in, in spite of Isabey's denials. Here it is in its original version.

Bonaparte, as is well known, was in the habit of walking with his arms crossed upon his chest, and his head slightly bent forward. Isabey was at Malmaison, and he and some of the First Consul's aides-de-camp were having a game of leap-frog on the lawn. Isabey had already jumped over the heads of most of them, when, at the turning of a path, he espied the last player who, in the requisite position, seemed to be waiting for the ordeal. Isabey pursued his course without looking, but took his flight so badly as only to reach the other's shoulders, and both rolled over and over in the sand, and to Isabey's consternation, his supposed fellow-player turned out to be Bonaparte. At that period, Bonaparte had probably not pondered the possibility of a 'fall'; hence, it was said, refractory at this first lesson, he got up, foaming at the mouth with anger, and drawing his sword, pounced upon the unfortunate leaper. Isabey, luckily for himself better at running than at leaping, took to his heels, and jumping the ditches dividing the property from the high road, got over the wall and never stopped until, breathless, he reached the gates of the Tuileries. Isabey, it was added, went immediately to Mme. Bonaparte's apartments, and she, after having laughed at the mishap, advised him to lie low for a little while. It was still further reported that it wanted all Josephine's angelic goodness of heart and cleverness, besides her usual influence over Bonaparte, to appease the latter's anger and to obtain the painter's pardon. Bonaparte at that moment was only 'Consul

for Life,' but people already foresaw the Empire, and the section of Paris society which was not too well pleased at the prospect of a possible return to former ideas naturally made the most of the anecdote of Malmaison. The denials of Isabey, who took good care to make short work of all the detailed rumours, found little or no belief; the adventure was considered extremely diverting, and Isabey's contradiction of it had no effect.

In the course of our conversation with Isabey, the Prince de Ligne pressed him very closely on the subject, as if the *definitive* fall of Napoleon sufficed to restore to Isabey all his freedom of speech and all his frankness on the matter. Isabey, on the other hand, kept on defending himself with no less energy.

'That adventure of Malmaison,' he said, 'is an invention from beginning to end. It is ridiculous, and one of those semi-historical exaggerations which have grieved me more than I can tell. Napoleon was made to play a part utterly at variance with his character. When that story was bruited in Paris, I had not set eyes upon him for more than six weeks. The moment I heard of it, and of the particulars with which it was embellished, I went to St. Cloud. As soon as he saw me, he came up to me, and I had no difficulty in convincing him that I had no share in the matter; it really seemed to aim at ruining me for ever in his estimation. He was exceedingly kind, and reminded me of the well-known rejoinder of Turenne, when his valet struck him by mistake, and apologised by saying he fancied it was a fellow-servant (called George). "And supposing it had been George, there was no need to strike so hard," said Turenne. But,' observed Isabey, 'refuted or not, the stories that pander to people's spitefulness are

repeated, and finally remain as quasi-truths.'

'Had I been in your place,' said the prince, 'I should not have taken the trouble to refute the fable. If it had been attributed to me, I should have accepted the part. It would have been rather interesting to jump like that on the shoulders of him who so unceremoniously jumped so well on the shoulders of others.'

Afterwards the conversation drifted to young Napoleon, whose portrait we had admired a few days previously at Schönbrunn.

'That child,' said Isabey, 'has only one thought occupying his mind, the recollection of his father. One morning as he was sitting to me, there was the sound of bugles; the Hungarian Guards were passing down one of the courts. He immediately glides off his chair, runs to the window, comes back, and taking my hand, says, "Here are papa's lancers going by."'

The portrait of the Prince de Ligne was already sufficiently advanced to enable one to judge of the likeness, and I complimented Isabey upon it. All those who knew the admirable old man were struck with the marvellously faithful reproduction of him as a whole.

In a few moments we gaily resumed the course of our little pilgrimage. The Kalemberg is a hill overlooking Vienna, and offering a most picturesque birdseye view of the city. The prince had established his summer quarters there some years ago, dividing his time in the delicious retreat between art, pleasure, and the delightful society his fame constantly attracted thither.

On our way we chatted about the pastimes and diversions of Vienna, and he gave me a rapid picture

of them, for it could be said absolutely of him what he said of Casanova: ‘Each word is a sketch, and each thought is a book.’

‘Fitly to describe the fairy scenes succeeding each other here without interruption would want an Ariosto, that magician of poesy,’ he said. ‘In fact, I shall not be surprised at the festal committee shortly issuing a proclamation, to the sound of trumpets and through all the towns and villages of the monarchy, promising a prize to the fortunate man devising a new pleasure for the assembled sovereigns.’

‘Thoroughly to enjoy oneself in Vienna, prince, one ought to know German somewhat better than foreigners as a rule know it,’ I answered. ‘Their want of familiarity with the language prevents them from catching the subtle shades of the joys and manners of a class of the population which, though not the foremost, is unquestionably not the least interesting to study and to observe. In connection with this, I may be permitted to quote the reply of Bacon to a young man, who, not knowing any foreign language, consulted him on his plan of travels. “Go to school, young friend, and don’t go travelling,” remarked Bacon.’

‘What would he have said to Metastasio, who, after living for twenty years in Vienna, had not mastered as many words of German, which quantity he considered sufficient to save his life in case of need?’ laughed the prince. ‘Besides, you find your own tongue the only one adopted here, not only in society and at all the festive gatherings, but also at all the conferences of the Congress. That much, indeed, was due to its precision and its universal use. It was necessary to establish a general means of communication between so many strangers; without

this the Congress would have become a Babel.'

'And also, prince, because no language lends itself more easily to the biting epigrams and sparkling repartees which are, as it were, like a bottle of champagne that's being "uncorked,"' I replied. 'The proof of it is in your recent answer to the Baron de ——, when he told you that the emperor had made him a general. "He has appointed you to be a general, he could not make you one," is a fair sample of the pliability of French.'

Chatting like this about many trifles, which on his lips became interesting subjects, the prince rapidly reviewed the foremost figures of society, generals, statesmen, elegant women, etc.

'This Congress, with its intrigues of all kinds hidden by fêtes, is decidedly like Beaumarchais' *La Folle Journée*. It is an imbroglio with ever so many Almavivas and Figaros. As for the Basilios, one runs against them at every turning. I sincerely trust people may not be compelled to exclaim by and by with the joyous barber: "Whom, after all, are they leading by the nose?"'

We soon got to the courtyard of his modest residence. The house was small, but comfortable, and the prince might have easily realised the wish of Socrates by filling it with true friends. It had been built on the site of a monastery founded in 1628: Leopold rebuilt it after the siege of Vienna; Joseph I. enlarged it; Joseph II. suppressed it. Since then, the prince had bought it. On the front door was engraved his favourite sentence:—*Quò res cumque cadunt, semper stat linea recta.*

'I so thoroughly feel the barrenness of everything,' he often said, 'that there is no merit in

my being neither envious nor spiteful, nor vainglorious.'

He began by taking me into his garden. 'I should fail in all the traditions of ownership if I did not start by making you acquainted with all the details of my principality. Inasmuch as my house with its enclosure is scarcely more spacious than the domain allotted by the people to the president of the loftily perched republic of San-Martino, we'll go the round of it in less time than an act of mental contrition would take. Nevertheless, such as it is, the place enables me to escape from the bustle of fêtes, from the fatigue of pleasure, and from the crowd of majesties and highnesses. Here, and here alone, I am enabled to enjoy my own society. I come here to get the fresh air, and to recruit the strength I spend every evening on the incessant festivities of the Congress.'

At the end of the garden, he opened the door of a pavilion, positively suspended over the Danube, and from which the whole of Vienna could be taken in at a glance.

'This,' he said, 'is the spot whence John Sobieski started at the head of his brave Poles, and with less than thirty thousand men saved the empire by routing all the Ottoman forces of the Grand-Vizir Kara-Mustapha. Sobieski's faculty of instantly perceiving a situation was so sure and so thorough that at the sight of the enemy's dispositions, he coolly said to the generals surrounding him that those dispositions were defective, and that infallibly he would beat his foes. It was impossible to say of him what is commonly said of kings, namely, that they have won a battle personally, when they have only looked at it from afar. They may have won the

battle personally, but not by their presence. Sobieski won his battles in person, and by his presence.

'I like the letter he wrote to the queen, his wife, on the day after the victory, which was dated from the tent of the grand-vizir himself. There is genuine greatness without the slightest admixture of false modesty in the following words: "Let Christendom rejoice and give thanks to the Lord; the infidels can no longer insult us by saying: 'Where is now your God?'"

'Sobieski had one of the greatest gifts ever vouchsafed to a commander—the faculty of inspiring confidence in his troops. The Polish cavalry which came to the rescue of Vienna had no doubt a most martial look; they were mounted on the handsomest horses, and their arms were magnificent. This was by no means the case with the infantry; one regiment in particular was in such a sorry plight that Prince Lubomirski advised their crossing the Danube at night, for the sake of the nation's honour. Sobieski simply smiled. "As you see them," he said, "they are invincible: they have sworn not to change their clothes except for those taken from the enemy. In the last war they only wore the Turkish uniform." Sobieski's remark did not, perhaps, provide his soldiers with clothes; it did better than that: it ran from mouth to mouth, and the regiment performed deeds of unsurpassed valour. You are aware that after that brilliant feat of arms which was the signal for the relief of Vienna, they applied to the Polish hero the words of Pius v. with regard to Don Juan of Austria, after the battle of Lepanto: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." What an admirable quotation!' wound up the prince.

'Austria had no doubt forgotten the application

of that sentence of gratitude when, later on, she effaced from the rank of European nations the country of her deliverers!' I remarked.

'Go and remind her of it, and see what you'll get for your pains. Furthermore, you must expect her to answer in the way of a set-off to the advocates of Poland: "You take care to remind us of your saving Vienna in 1683. We are certainly very grateful to you, but each time you mention it, we are bound to tell you that Austria delivered you out of the hand of Sweden, which had conquered you in the reign of Charles-Gustavus; hence, we are quits."'

'To this, prince, Poland could reply both in virtue of priority of age and of the number of her services, that the aid she lent to Austria, notably to her founder, Rudolph of Hapsburg, largely contributed to place Austria among the most powerful monarchies of Europe. Be that as it may, in this iniquitous proceeding, Austria plays the part of the dog in La Fontaine's fable, who carries his master's dinner round his neck: she interfered in order to take her share of the spoil; it would have been more noble to prevent the spoliation.'

By that time it was three o'clock, and we partook, in a small room adjoining the library, of the provisions which we had brought with us in the prince's carriage. It was one of the most delightful collations I remember. The prince was fond of telling stories; his way of narrating them was so delightful and admirable that I was only too pleased to listen. This added to his own enjoyment, and his well-stored memory poured out tale after tale without the slightest effort.

'One of my sweetest recollections,' he said, 'was my first journey to France as the bearer of the happy

news of the battle of Maxen. My entrance upon the scene was entirely to my taste. I was received everywhere, in Paris, Versailles, and at the Trianon, by the Baron de Bezenval, the Comte de Vaudreuil, the Comte d'Adhémar, the Princesse de Lamballe, the fascinating Mme. Jules de Polignac; then at the beginning I was presented to La Harpe at Mme. du Barry's, to D'Alembert at Mme. Geoffrin's, to Voltaire at Mme. du Deffand's. Mme. du Deffand was probably gifted with more natural grace and power of fascination than any woman of her time.'

After this he gave me some brilliant sketches of many of the celebrities who, during his long career, had honoured him with their friendship. Empress Catherine, whom he called 'his living glory'; Emperor Joseph II., 'his visible providence'; Frederick the Great, 'his claim to immortality,' and finally Marie-Antoinette, of whom he related many charming traits, always 'harking back' with the greatest delight to the Court of France, where he had met with such a distinguished welcome.

'The love of pleasure and the attractions of society took me to Versailles,' he said; 'gratitude brought me back to it. My lad, judge for yourself how far I was justified in yielding to illusion, that ruler of the world. Presented to the Comte d'Artois, I naturally began by treating him like the king's brother, and we finished up by his treating me as if I were his brother. Later on, I happened to be present at the meeting of Joseph II. and Frederick II. The latter notices my liking for great men, and he invites me to Berlin. My son Charles marries a Polish girl;[57] knowing that I am in the good books of Catherine, they imagine, perhaps, that I might make a King of Poland, and they confer the honour of Polish

citizenship upon me. I arrive in Russia, and the grandeur and simplicity of Catherine win my heart. She selects me to accompany her to the Taurida, during that journey which seems to belong to fable rather than to history. In consequence of my taste for the "Iphigenias" of literature, she gives me the site of the temple where Agamemnon's daughter officiated as priestess. Finally there is the paternal kindness of Emperor Francis I.; the maternal kindness of that grand Maria-Theresa, and the sometimes fraternal kindness of immortal Joseph II. There are the confidence and friendship of Landon and of Lasey; the familiar intercourse with Marie-Antoinette; the cordial intimacy of Catherine the Great; the goodwill of the great Frederick; my conversations with Jean-Jacques Rousseau; my stay at Ferney with Voltaire, and, fitly and gaily to wind up, after the great events of the last twenty years, the marvels and diversions of the Congress. Such in brief is my life. My memoirs would be most interesting. During the whole of that time I have seen calumny, ingratitude, and injustice assail everything I loved and admired.'

He seemed buried in thought for a few moments. 'No,' he said at last, 'men's idiocy and ill-nature respect nothing. In Catherine's case these two have endeavoured to sully the grandeur one admires; in Marie-Antoinette the grace and beauty one worships. France has a few pages in her annals which one day she will wish to tear up. After having most grossly slandered the most beautiful and the most sympathetic of queens, whose goodness of heart, which was that of an angel, no one could appreciate better than I, and whose soul without reproach was as pure and as white as her face, the cannibals immolated her as an offering to their bloodthirsty liberty.'

At these words his voice grew low, and his eyes filled with tears. The tears of such a friend, of an old man and a wise one, were the most eloquent tribute to Marie-Antoinette's memory.

'This is my study,' he said, opening another door, 'and here I am free from the intrusion of all those parrots who besiege me in my little house on the wall. Here I let my pen wander as my imagination and whim prompt me.' He showed me a great many works completed, and a number of unfinished manuscripts.

'All this has been written for myself, to satisfy the cravings of my own heart. They are what actors would call "my asides."'

I asked him if the world at large was not to benefit by his lessons of experience.

'No, no,' he replied, 'I have too often had proof that here below a man's reputation depends upon those who have none. And what, when all is said and done, is this glory before which one bows down, and which one pursues with all one's might? The same day witnesses its birth and its death, so short, after all, is life. Ypsilanti, about whom we have chatted so often, has gloriously lost his arm. When at present he makes his appearance in a drawing-room, he is surrounded, he is pointed out to public curiosity, and people tell of the battle in which he distinguished himself. To-day he is a young hero; before many springs pass over our heads, and they pass very quickly, people will call him the old cripple.

'Never had a woman a more glorious welcome than that accorded to Mme. de Staël in Vienna six years ago. Her arrival and her stay constituted, as it were, a date, for people still say—"When Mme. de

Staël was here." Well, the enthusiasm was soon succeeded by a spirit of criticism the reverse of good-natured. Nevertheless, if there be anything in this world which is *not* all vanity, assuredly it is the admiration one inspires; but how long does that admiration last? At the outset Mme. de Staël carried all hearts, and conquered all minds.'

'Not in virtue of her personal attractions, for even in her portraits she did not seem to me sufficiently good-looking to please.'

'That's true, she could never have possessed a pleasing face; her mouth and nose were ugly. But her magnificent eyes marvellously expressed everything that went on successively in that brain so rich in lofty or virile thoughts; her hands were beautifully shaped, hence the care she took to direct attention to them by her habit of constantly fingering a branch of poplar provided with a few leaves, the shaking of which, according to herself, was the necessary accompaniment to her words. Her conversation was simply dazzling; she discussed every subject with a marvellous facility; she expressed herself in an animated, brilliant and poetical manner. The larger her audience, the loftier did her genius soar. She was only at her ease with men capable of judging her, but on such occasions she was truly great.

'Well, all those titles to admiration were soon made light of. The human mind, by an inevitable reaction, passes from enthusiasm to carping. In a short time people laid stress on Mme. de Staël's defects; her brilliant qualities were no longer taken into account. In general conversation, it was said, she showed herself more anxious to dazzle than to please; her monologues reduced her interlocutors to the roles of complacent listeners; when she addressed

a question to some one, she rarely waited for the answer. She was fond of society in which she was calculated to shine, but she did not care for the society of women, which, as a rule, affords fewer resources to an intellect like hers than that of men. And the women have not forgiven her, however much her genius may have conferred honour on her own sex.

'Hence, she gradually saw a diminution of her celebrity, a celebrity which had become necessary to her, and which, nevertheless, was not to her the road to happiness. She constantly regretted France, from which she was irrevocably exiled, in consequence of her opposition to the government; she had designated Bonaparte as Robespierre on horseback. It may therefore be said that she served her own cause when endeavouring to overtopple the obstacle to her return to Paris; and on the task she set herself, she brought to bear all the energy of a genius, stimulated by the hatred of a woman.

'I have much admired Mme. de Staël; I still admire her, and I strongly suspect that the author of the *Dialogue sur l'enthousiasme* wanted to paint me in the character of Cleon.' The prince, when uttering those last words, glanced at me smiling. 'She felt much vexed at some one daring to question merit which at that time everybody agreed in pronouncing incontestable. That little bit of criticism was the first. The author particularly censures her novel *Corinne*. In that respect he was wrong. Wishing to attack her, he had no business to attack her writings. That, assuredly, was not her vulnerable side. But he would have been justified in blaming the pretension to refer everything to herself, the inconstancy of opinion which was so dangerous to her friends who took her

at her word, the pedagogic and biting tone, the histrionic elation, in the manner of Corinne, her neologism in intellectual matters, which was so utterly antipathetic to me, and the craving to appear on the boards, where she displayed not the slightest talent, inasmuch as her true vocation lay in acting in real life. On all those points he would have been justified in venting his spite either in prose or in verse. You are aware that we were within an ace of falling out for ever in consequence of a spiteful remark which was told to her as coming from me. After the performance of her tragedy, *Agar dans le Désert*, in which, to be frank, she seemed more ugly than usual, some one, who was not the Prince de Ligne, is reported to have said that the proper title of the piece ought to have been *La Justification d'Abraham*. She sulked for a long time, and I had much difficulty in convincing her of my innocence.'

After that the prince showed me a small manuscript, which has been published since, and which he had then just finished. Its subject was the Venetian Casanova. When that famous adventurer was tired of hawking about Europe his projects, his magic secrets, and his striking personality; when, in fact, he felt old age creeping over him and poverty staring him in the face, he applied to the Prince de Ligne. Almost as a matter of course, the latter made him welcome, bestirred himself on his behalf, and got him the post of librarian to his nephew, the Prince de Wallstein. Casanova's curiously chequered career appealed to the imagination of the old marshal. He also had had many adventures during his existence. He liked the ready and biting wit of the Venetian, his profound and varied learning, and his philosophically-turned and ever fresh comments.

‘Yes,’ said the prince, ‘Casanova was the most diverting individual I have ever met with. It was he who said that a woman is never older than her lover fancies her to be. His inexhaustible recollections, his imagination, which was as vivid as it had been at twenty, his enthusiasm with regard to myself, won my heart. He often read his memoirs to me. They partake of the nature of those of a knight-errant and of the “Wandering Jew”; unfortunately they’ll never see the light.’[58]

His writing-table was littered with verses, the greater part unfinished.

‘You are looking at those sketches,’ he said. ‘It is because I am unable to work like the majority of poets. There are two dictionaries at their disposal, the dictionary of the heart and the rhyming dictionary. When there is no longer anything in the first, or when they can no longer read it, they open the second. When my heart no longer dictates, I leave off writing.’

We spent a little more time in examining several charming portraits of women with whom he had been in love, and a rich collection of letters written by the sovereigns and the most illustrious personages of Europe during half a century.

The hour for returning struck, and we left the delightful retreat which, one day, will become historical. But amidst those brilliant reminiscences of the Vienna Congress, my grateful memory could not omit that day wholly passed in familiar conversation with the Prince de Ligne.

CHAPTER VII

A Court Function—The Empress of Austria—The Troubadours—Amateur Theatricals—The Empress of Russia—The Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg—Tableaux-Vivants—Queen Hortense's Songs—The Moustaches of the Comte de Wurbna—Songs in Action—The Orphan of the Prisons—Diplomacy and Dancing—A Ball and a Supper at Court.

The fêtes succeeded each other uninterruptedly; the time not given to pleasure was looked upon as wasted. Every week there was a grand reception and ball at the Court. Taking their cue from highest quarters, the foremost members of Austrian society also had their appointed days for welcoming in their drawing-rooms the numberless strangers whom business or pleasure had brought to Vienna. On Mondays the Princesse de Metternich threw open her house; on Thursdays the Master of the Horse, the Prince de Trauttmansdorff, did the same, and on Saturdays, the beautiful Comtesse Zichy followed suit. As a return for this gracious hospitality, the ambassadors and representatives of the great Powers on their side gave most brilliant entertainments. In virtue of this constant exchange of magnificent functions, the days went by without counting, and everybody appeared to have adopted the maxim—

the first necessity of mankind is to be happy.

The Empress of Austria was practically the soul of that succession of balls, banquets, receptions and masques. Born in Italy, and sprung from that illustrious House of Este, sung by Ariosto and by Tasso, she had, as it were, inherited from her ancestors the taste and the instinctive feeling for everything pertaining to art. Her goodness of heart was beyond compare, her youthful and fresh imagination took a delight in the arrangement of all those joyous details. She was admirably seconded by two French artists, M. Isabey and M. Moreau—the latter a most talented architect—who were her usual auxiliaries. She invented and ordained; their task consisted in faithfully reproducing and carrying out her bright ideas.

One of her favourite pleasures was the giving of theatrical performances in her apartments. Defying the difficulties attached to the rôle of *impresario*, she had succeeded in recruiting and composing a company of amateur actors. Some among these would have done credit to any stage, no matter where. In this company figured the most aristocratic names: the Comtes Ojarowski, Stanislas Potocki, de Wallstein, Woyna, Mmes. Edmond de Périgord and Flora Wurbna, shone in comedy; opera had its interpreters in the Prince Antoine Radziwill, the Marquis de Salvox, the Comtes Petersen de Bombelles,[59] the Comtesses d'Apponyi, Charles Zichy, de Woyna, and the Princesse Yblonowska; while German tragedy fell to the lot of the Comtesse Julie Zichy, the Comtesse Esterhazy and the Comte Zichy. Our theatrical literature, so rich in all genius, was especially laid under contribution; often there was a mixed performance of German and French

pieces. At one of those performances, Schiller's *Wallenstein* and the charming comedy of *Rivaux d'eux-mêmes* were played with really remarkable casts.

Some young men, as a relief from the arid labours of diplomacy, which at that period, it was said, constituted by no means a lively pursuit, had organised among themselves an artistic gathering, which was called the 'company of Troubadours.' Foremost among these were the Prince Radziwill, the Comtes Batthyani, Zichy, and the Prince Leopold de Saxe-Cobourg. It was a graceful revival of the chivalrous and poetic customs of the Middle Ages. There was, furthermore, the 'Festal Committee,' appointed by the emperor, and composed of the foremost personages of the Court. It really did appear as if the whole of society was wrapped round by a vast association, the bright network of which spread everywhere, and which had but one aim—the pursuit of pleasure.

The entertainment offered by the Court on that particular evening was of an entirely novel kind as far as the majority of the spectators were concerned. It consisted of the representation of pictures and of songs put into action by living personages. The Prince de Ligne and I went early to the Imperial Palace. Though the performance had not commenced, the rooms were full. Thanks to the Comte Arthur Potocki, we were enabled to get to the seats he had reserved for us between the Princesse Marie Esterhazy and the Prince Leopold de Saxe-Cobourg. It was the first time I met this young man in society; he was known to the Prince de Ligne, who soon made us acquainted with each other. At that time, he seemed to me as timid as he was handsome.

Never did noble birth and blood show themselves more conspicuously than in the distinguished air and easy bearing of this scion of an illustrious house. At that period he was doubtlessly far from foreseeing the fortunate position destiny had in store for him, by uniting him at first to a great princess, by placing him afterwards on the throne of regenerated Belgium, and finally by giving him as consort an accomplished princess from the blood royal of France. To-day the future happiness of two families, of perhaps two peoples, is centred in him.[60]

After having exchanged a few courteous words, Prince Leopold left us to prepare for his part in one of the tableaux; we remained with the Princesse Esterhazy.

The illustrious and princely House of Esterhazy has so often been described as to render the task of adding anything fresh to those descriptions a difficult one. Everybody knows that its noble origin is virtually lost in the mist of ages, and that its power equals that of kings. Its magnificence, its wealth, and the splendour of its establishment are such as to convey but a faint idea to those who have not seen them, and those who have are tempted to consider them as so many parts of a fairy dream induced by the reading of some fabulous story. Its territorial possessions comprise more than a hundred villages and burghs, something like forty townships and over thirty castles and fortresses.[61] The country seats which constitute, as it were, the capitals of those veritable states comprise an enormous number of apartments, picture-galleries and theatres. The Hungarian hussar's dress, entirely embroidered with pearls, which is transmitted in the family from father to son, is estimated at four millions of florins, and

costs twelve thousand florins to repair each time it is worn. On those vast domains the Esterhazys exercise the power of life and death; they have troops and guards in their own pay. Moreover, an imperial decree, dating from 1687, conferred upon them the right to mint their own money and to grant patents of nobility. Many sovereigns would be tempted to exchange their crowns for the lot of such subjects.

The Princesse Marie Esterhazy, *née* Princesse de Lichtenstein, though at that period no longer in the flush of youth, was still possessed of a charming grace. She was above all endowed with that winning kindness which imparts a charm to women who physically are least attractive. Her equable temperament and her fascinating kindness induced me to seek her society on all possible occasions. Some years before I had met her husband, the Prince Nicolas,[62] in Paris, at Mme. Récamier's, that friend of my childhood, the most beautiful of women and the most worthy of admiration and respect. An enthusiastic and enlightened amateur of every branch of art, and above all of music, the prince was the Mæcenas of literary men and artists. He treated them as a connoisseur and rewarded them like a king.

I was very fond of the society of Prince Paul, their son, whose senior I was by a few years. Our tastes and habits were pretty well the same. I often met him at the house of Mme. de Fuchs, who was the friend of both. Since then called in virtue of his name and his solid attainments to most important diplomatic positions. Prince Paul[63] has shown a constant moderation and a rectitude of thought and judgment which only belong to a noble disposition and a superior intellect. He is one of the men who

during the recent negotiations have contributed most to the preservation of peace in Europe.

Our conversation with the Princesse Marie turned on the kind of amusement the Court of Austria was providing for us that evening. She told us that she had often organised similar tableaux at Eisenstadt in a rotunda constructed for the purpose in the midst of a lake, and that during the performances Haydn, the director of her private band, improvised on the organ some pieces in keeping with the optical effects, and which added marvellously to the illusion.

The sovereigns gradually made their appearance and took the seats reserved for them, the Emperor of Russia being as usual by the side of the Empress of Austria. By a curious freak of nature, both were somewhat hard of hearing, the emperor on one side, the empress on the opposite side. Etiquette required their being seated side by side in such a manner as not to be able to hear each other; consequently, they always seemed to be playing at ‘cross purposes.’ Alexander at that period was remarkable for the beauty of his face and the elegance of his figure; and he was by no means indifferent to the flattering remarks addressed to him on the subject. On the other hand, it would have argued an inexperience of Courts to betray either by word or sign the knowledge of his auricular infirmity.

By the Emperor of Austria’s side sat the Empress Elizabeth of Russia. That angel on earth had everything calculated to insure her husband’s happiness and hers.[64] She was endowed with a charming face, her eyes reflecting the purity of her soul. She had magnificent auburn hair, which, as a rule, was allowed to fall loose on her shoulders. Her

figure was elegant, lithe, and supple, and even when she wore a mask, her walk revealed her identity in a moment. No woman realised more thoroughly the line of Virgil:

'Incessu patuit Dea....'

To a most delightful disposition there were added a cultivated and quick intellect, a passionate love of art, and a boundless liberality in money matters. The graceful elegance of her person, her noble bearing, and her inexhaustible kindness won her all hearts. Neglected almost from the first hour of her union by a husband whom she worshipped, her solitude and grief had bred a kind of melancholy. Stamped on every feature, that feeling lent to the accents of her voice and to her slightest movements an irresistible charm.



ALEXANDER I.

A symphony for horns and harps preceded the rise of the curtain. The candles in the house were extinguished in order to give greater brilliancy to the light thrown on to the stage. The first picture was the reproduction of a subject painted by a young Viennese artist, 'Louis XIV. kneeling at Mme. de la Vallière's feet.' The actors of that scene were the young Comte de Trauttmansdorff, son of the grand-marshal, and the charming Comtesse de Zichy. Both

were so eminently attractive, there was such an ardent expression of love on the face of the young noble, and so much modesty, fear, and innocence on the delicious face of the comtesse, as to make the illusion complete.

The second picture was a reproduction of Guérin's beautiful composition, 'Hippolytus refuting Phedra's accusation before Theseus.' The Princesse Yblonowska represented the daughter of Minos, and the young Comte Woyna, Hippolytus. The eyes and features of the one were stamped with ardent passion struggling against remorse, while the other, by his calm and classical attitude, by the signs of his respectful grief, only seemed to invoke for his defence the purity of his heart. Though shorn of the charm of its magnificent poetry, Racine's conception had never more eloquent interpreters than these two.

The subjects of these pictures, reproduced by the most distinguished personages of the Court, the brilliant and accurate dresses, the perfectly arranged light, the whole of the *ensemble* so artistically arranged, produced the most lively admiration on the part of the spectators.

After this, the stage was got ready for the songs to be enacted; an orchestra, composed of the most celebrated instrumentalists of Germany, played symphonies by Haydn and Mozart.

The first song was the 'Partant pour la Syrie,' the charming music of which, by Queen Hortense, has become popular throughout Europe. Mlle. Goubault, a young Belgian, who to an agreeable face added a charming and expressive voice, sang the words, while the Princesse de Hesse-Philipstadt and the young Comte de Schönfeldt represented the characters. At the verse of the marriage, a chorus of

the most beautiful personages of the Court grouped themselves around the principal actors. This profusion of delicious faces, the perfect unison of the voices, and the expressive pantomimic action of the two lovers—in short, the whole tableau, was enthusiastically applauded.

I was too far away from Emperor Alexander to hear what he said to Prince Eugène, who was seated close to him by the side of his father-in-law, the King of Bavaria. I could, however, easily perceive by the face of Eugène, beaming with pleasure and gratitude, that the praise bestowed by the emperor on the musical composition was accompanied by flattering and kindly expressions concerning his sister.

The second song was that of Coupigny, a 'Young Troubadour singing and making war.' It was represented by the Comte de Schönborn and the Comtesse Marassi. The third song was again one of Queen Hortense's, 'Do what you ought, let come what may.' It was as well sung as ably mimed by the handsome Comtesse Zamoyska, a daughter of Marshal Czartoryski, and by the young Prince Radziwill. Like the first, it was enthusiastically listened to and greatly praised. The author's name was on the lips of every one, and vociferous applause frequently broke forth.

'This is a sceptre which will not be broken in the hands of Mlle. de Beauharnais,' said the Prince de Ligne. 'She is still a queen in virtue of her talent and her charm when she has ceased to be one by the grace of God. I confess to a liking for women who are fond of music, and above all for those who compose music, as she does. Music is a universal language, harmoniously recounting to all of us the sensations of our lives. Only the malicious and

spiteful could have said evil of the sometime Queen of Holland, and only imbeciles could have attached any belief to what they said. As for me, I am always glad to applaud and to give homage to fallen greatness, especially if the fallen ones have done honour to the rank in which fate placed them.'

'I cordially agree with you, prince,' I said. 'I often had the opportunity of seeing Queen Hortense at the beginning of her grandeur. During the rapid advances of her fortunes she did not change, and amidst all the imperial pomp and splendour she remained natural and unaffected. She seems to have been born with an instinctive feeling for art and with the germs of talent; she sings and plays on several instruments the charming music of her own composition. She draws with rare perfection. More precious than all this, though, is her sprightly kindness, which her mother appears to have transmitted to her. Both, while attaining the highest positions it is given to mortals to reach, lost none of the qualities which compel affection in the most obscure conditions.'

'I am pleased to hear you speak like that. I am of opinion that the most admirable quality of mankind is the faculty for admiring. I detest people who are always looking for the interest underlying a good action. Bear this in mind: only grovelling natures seek to disparage talent; and fools only applaud the envious.'

The curtain had been lowered to set the final picture which was to conclude the whole of the spectacle in a most brilliant manner. It was to represent Olympus with all the mythological divinities. Nothing had been neglected to make the execution worthy of the grandeur of the subject.

There had, nevertheless, been a temporary apprehension with regard to the smooth progress of its course. There had been for two whole days negotiations far more difficult and delicate in their nature than those usually pending between diplomatic celebrities; and it wanted nothing less than an intervention from high quarters to settle a question which the sapient assembly would probably have failed to bring to a satisfactory conclusion.

The facts were as follows: All the rôles of the tenants on Olympus had been distributed. Prince Leopold de Saxe-Cobourg, in consequence of his remarkably handsome presence, had been cast for the part of Jupiter. Comte Zichy was to represent Mars.

The company was, however, short of Apollo; and among the troubadours the young Comte de Wurbna was the only one who could efficiently fill the part. It had been offered to him and accepted. But the Comte, who combined in every respect the requisite qualities for the brilliant impersonation allotted to him, had unfortunately something not contemplated in the programme. His upper lip was ornamented by a delightful pair of moustachios, and he valued them as one values things that do not detract from one's appearance. It was very certain, though, that whether taken in connection with his luminous chariot or in the simple guise of a shepherd, no one could conceive the god of day with this hirsute ornament of a captain of hussars.

The stage manager entrusted with the carrying out of the tableau bore the name of Omer, which lent itself marvellously to all kind of witticisms. Omer, then, was deputed to enter into negotiations with the young Comte and to induce him to part with the

inconvenient ornament. In spite of his poetical name (irrespective of its orthography), Omer found but an indifferent listener in the young man. In vain did he cajole, argue, and supplicate. In vain did he point out to the young man the impossibility of representing the tableau. His words did not produce the slightest effect. Inexorable, like Achilles sulking in his tent, young Wurbna seemed to have taken an oath not to part with his moustachios while alive.

The rumour of this curious obstinacy spread with the rapidity of bad tidings; there is great agitation and anxiety, people are inquiring of each other the latest particulars of the affair, every other pleasure is forgotten; the Congress, too, would have been forgotten if any one had thought it worth while to remember that there was a Congress. Those moustachios have become the subject of every conversation and of universal concern.

Finally, in view of the gravity of the circumstances, recourse is being had to a supreme appeal: the empress is informed of the affair. Entering frankly into the plot, the charming princess, on the very evening, so effectively cajoled the young recalcitrant Comte that, vanquished, or rather won over, he absented himself for a moment, to reappear with a clean and smooth upper lip like that of a young girl. Thus fell, at a single word from Louis XIV., the woods interrupting the view from the seat of Petit-Bourg. Truly, sovereigns, and especially female sovereigns, have for the purpose of upraising or cutting down magic and powerful words, denied to other mortals.

The sacrifice was consummated, and we knew that, thanks to the happy conclusion of that negotiation, Omer had been enabled to carry out to

the best of purposes his Olympian production. At last the curtain rose, and the assembly of the gods met the eager gaze of the spectators. The queen of the gods was represented by the daughter of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, Venus by Mme. de Wilhem, a lady of honour to the Princesse de la Tour et Taxis, and Minerva by the lovely Comtesse Rosalie Rzewuska. The eyes of the spectators, delighted at first by the matchless beauty of the picture, finally contemplate nobody but Apollo, standing forth in all his glory, and well rewarded for his obedience by sweet and august smiles.

During the representation of that tableau, a young Frenchman, the Baron Thierry, attached to the Portuguese Legation, played a solo on the harp. The young fellow, who was brought up in England, whither he had accompanied his parents at the time of the emigration, had assiduously practised that instrument, and attained a degree of perfection on it which at that period was very rare. He was well built, with an interesting face, and one of the most admired of strangers in Viennese society. His solo, played with all the perfection his instrument would permit, produced the greatest effect, and was cordially applauded, the signal for the applause coming from the royalties themselves. Even Olympus itself appeared to be moved by it. Finally the curtain fell amidst unanimous signs of approval; the sovereigns rose, and we passed into an adjoining hall sumptuously arranged for the ball.

‘You probably do not know the story of the beautiful Comtesse Rzewuska, whom you have just admired in the character of Minerva. She is the daughter of the Princesse Rosalie Lubomirska, who was guillotined during the Terror. The child, after

the death of her mother, on the 12th Messidor of the Year II. (30th June 1794), was taken home and brought up by a laundress, and by the merest accident discovered by her uncle, the Comte Chodkïewicz, who had been in search of her for many years, and finally taken back to Poland. It is the most startling drama in real life.'[65]

Meanwhile dancing had commenced, and I went to offer my arm to the Princesse Esterhazy, whom I had the honour to escort during part of the evening. She conversed about art with the greatest facility, her remarks being emphasised by eminently just quotations altogether exempt from the slightest pedantry. Her comments on society were marked by a similar justness of observation, none the less just for being tempered by great forbearance. Her beautiful features bore the unmistakable signs of her being an irreproachable wife, a most affectionate mother, and a most devoted and sincere friend. As a consequence, her conversation seemed to me infinitely preferable to the somewhat boisterous amusements of that evening.

All those who had taken part in the tableaux and in the illustrations of the songs had retained their costumes. There was a considerable number of them. They organised quadrilles which lent a new attraction to that fête, namely, that of variety. It seemed as if grace, that divine part of beauty, had been equally divided, though under different forms, among the dwellers in every climate. Never was this fact more pertinently felt than at those fêtes of the Congress, at which the most remarkable women of the various countries of Europe shone with equal, though distinct, splendour.

We, the Prince de Ligne and I, wandered through

those drawing-rooms, ablaze with light, passing in review those delicious faces, representing all kinds of beauty as they successively went by. The Princesse Marie de Metternich and the Comtesse Batthyani, with wistful and somewhat melancholy features, tall, slight, and flexible like reeds; the two charming sisters Eléonore and Pauline de Schwartzenberg, beaming with youth and freshness; the Princesse Yblonowska, the Comtesses Sophie de Woyna and Louise de Durkeim, both distinguished by their slightly dreamy looks; the Comtesse Julie Zichy, captivatingly graceful; the Comtesses de Marassi, d'Urgate, de Schönborn, and the Princesse Hélène Souvaroff, whose portrait I have already sketched; and the Comtesse de Paar. In short, we feasted our eyes on delightful faces, lighted up every now and again by rapid smiles, or positively basking in the full light of careless joy and happiness—faces that soothed the mind and captivated all glances.

Emperor Alexander had opened the ball with the Empress of Austria with a 'polonaise,' a kind of dancing march, the regular preamble to every Court ball. In an adjoining room some members of the corps diplomatique were gravely engaged at whist, a recreation which also seemed an indispensable part of the European transactions in progress. The 'polonaise,' though, soon interfered with the silence necessary to the game. The band had given the signal and, too cramped in the principal room, the long file of dancers marched along under the guidance of the czar, invaded the whole of the palace, and twined round and round the serious quartets of the players, and by an enormously round-about way returned to its starting-point in perfect order, never ceasing the course of its graceful evolutions. Towards the end of the evening, the guests formed themselves here and

there into groups. Some young men arranged pleasure parties for the next morning, while the representatives of Europe gravely discussed the burning questions of the moment.

In one part of the room, M. de Talleyrand, ensconced in an armchair, is talking to the Prince Leopold of Naples, while M. de Labrador, the Chevalier de Los Rios and the Cardinal Gonzalvi, the Marquis de Marialva, the young Comte de Luchesini and Charles de Rechberg, in a circle, are standing around. The conversation runs on King Murat. With his habitual phlegm, M. de Talleyrand drops some of those grave and prophetic sentences which, rightly interpreted, might be considered the forerunner of that improvised sovereign's fall.[66]

M. de la Tour du Pin, the ambassador of France, was the centre of another group, composed of his colleague, M. Alexis de Noailles, MM. de Wintzingerode, Pozzo di Borgo, the Marquis de Saint Marsan, the Comte de Rossi, etc.

Lord Castlereagh, erect and leaning against a mantelpiece, seems to listen with a glacial air to the King of ——. The crowd has retired to a respectful distance. His majesty, on the other hand, appears to speak with a certain warmth, although his attitude is that of a petitioner, or rather a pleader, intent upon convincing his judge. One can catch the words, 'Poland—indemnity—Treaty of Kalitsch.' His lordship vouchsafes only few words in reply to his august interlocutor. Looking at them, one is reminded that if the Coalition has had the victory, it was England who paid the soldiers.

Lord Stewart wanders listlessly from one room to another. He is simply anxious to be seen, and they have bestowed on him the sobriquet of 'the golden

peacock.'

At midnight a magnificent supper was served. Of course, the sovereigns occupied the table set apart for them, but the other guests seated themselves wherever they liked, without the slightest ceremony or considerations of etiquette. The gaiety of that collation, absolutely free from restraint, afforded greater facilities for confidential and familiar talk. All those banquets were alike. Always the same display of apparently inexhaustible wealth and the same magnificence; consequently, although the Congress was but a few days old, people had ceased to estimate the expenses of the Court.

To make up for that, they freely spoke of the number of strangers who, either on business or pleasure, were located in Vienna. We know the means by which Colbert filled the empty coffers of his master. But what, after all, were the *carrousels* of Louis XIV. compared to this magnificent series of fêtes?

The hour for retiring struck at last, and people went home to recruit their strength for the next day by much-needed sleep.

CHAPTER VIII

Prince Eugène de Beauharnais—Recollections of the Prince de Ligne—The Theatre of the 'Ermitage' and of Trianon—The Baron Ompteda—some Portraits—The Imperial *Carrousel*—The Four-and-twenty Paladins—Reminiscences of Mediæval Tournaments—The Prowess of the Champion—Fête and Supper at the Imperial Palace—The Table of the Sovereigns.

One morning, a few days after the last-described event, I called upon Prince Eugène de Beauharnais. Our acquaintance dated from my youth, and whenever circumstances brought us together either in Paris, Milan, or Vienna, I, like all his other friends, had ever found him kind, helpful and sympathetic. The bonds of sympathy so quickly contracted in youth had never been severed by the difference in rank. It had not been his fault that his rule in Italy had been fruitless to me as far as a brilliant administrative career went. And these proofs of his affection had made me deeply grateful to him.

On the occasion of my visit he was slightly ill, and it did not take me long to discover that the cause of his indisposition was mental rather than physical. It was not surprising, considering the misfortunes that had accumulated around him. There were the

disasters of France, the fall of Napoleon, the loss of a brilliant position, and, to fill his cup of grief, the death of his mother, whom he worshipped.

His position at Vienna was constrained and more or less false. His reception there had been the subject of diplomatic discussions; but for the persistence of his father-in-law, the King of Bavaria, and the affection of Emperor Alexander, he would probably have been excluded. In spite of this, the fact of his being the adopted son of Napoleon could not be forgotten. It was, moreover, well known that his noble character would never belie itself, and that he would bring all his influence to bear in favour of the man who had been his benefactor. Between the Powers celebrating France's reverses with fêtes and the representatives of the government of the Bourbons, he seemed isolated amidst that crowd and in that whirlpool of pleasure.

He welcomed me in his cordial and amicable way. Glad to find somebody with whom he could talk about his recollections, he referred to his past, which was so brilliant and glorious. His attitude and the expression of his face were stamped with a melancholy that could not fail to win one's heart. We went over the various phases of his military career, when all at once he became most animated. Yielding to a strong emotion, he carried me with him to Egypt, and began to describe the loss of his first friend, killed by his side by a cannon ball at the battle of the Pyramids. At the last words of that mournful story I noticed his eyes filling with tears, which he vainly endeavoured to repress. In order to divert his thoughts to brighter subjects, I spoke to him of our first meeting at a luncheon given by Mme. Récamier during the short-lived Peace of Amiens, a

luncheon graced by the presence of all the celebrities of France and England. As a matter of course, our conversation drifted to all the gay doings of Vienna during the last few weeks, and also of those to come. I soon noticed, though, that all those functions, so intoxicating to the majority of both actors and spectators, constantly reminded him of the sad cause nearest to his heart. I was not sorry, then, when we were interrupted by the servant announcing the Emperor of Russia, who, according to his custom, came to take him, without any ceremony, for a walk in the Prater. I took my leave of him, after he had made me promise to come and see him often. I need not say that I gladly acceded to his request, and that the duty really became a pleasure.

On leaving him, I went to pay my daily visit to the Prince de Ligne. I delighted in giving him an account of my previous day's doings. Although at that happy period my occupations mainly consisted of a life spent away from my own quarters and in consorting with my young friends in the pursuit of pleasure, it was like a lullaby to me to go to him to gather from his lips some of his witty and subtle sallies, and to study in a familiar way a small section of that living panorama.

The little house was as full as it could hold, and the amiable host was, as usual, dispensing large doses of wit and wisdom to his visitors. His never-failing spirits and the brightness of his recollections reminded his listeners that though the body might be tottering, he prevented it from collapsing. No one conveyed a more accurate idea of the sparkle and the almost indefinable grace of the French intellectual qualities of former days. Hearing the Prince de Ligne talk, I always fancied I was going back a century in

the history of French society.

The prince's visitors were repeating to him some of the rumours with which the amateur politicians of the Graben kept public curiosity alive. After having distributed crowns and allotted states, the quidnuncs and newsmongers had taken it into their heads to try their hand at match-making. According to them, the King of Prussia was reported one day to be betrothed to the Grand-Duchess of Oldenburg, the next to one of the Austrian arch-duchesses.

'Those gentlemen strangely put our credulity to the test,' remarked the Comte de Witt. 'Nothing less will satisfy them than the divorce of Marie-Louise, so that she may be joined in matrimony to his Majesty of Prussia.'

'Mirabeau was in the habit of saying that there is no piece of idiocy, however crude, that may not find acceptance on the part of a clever man, provided one gets his valet to repeat it to him every day for a month,' laughed the prince. 'I am afraid, though, that the Viennese journalists credit us with a somewhat too robust faith. I am not at all certain how "Robinson" on his island of Elba would appreciate the joke?'

The conversation drifted to the theatrical performances the Empress of Austria was offering at the Imperial Palace.

'No stage can dispute the palm with yours,' said the prince, turning to me. 'I have seen your pieces played everywhere. In Prussia before the great Frederick they only performed the masterpieces of the French stage; in Russia at the "Ermitage" theatre [the palace and museum of the Hermitage at St. Petersburg] I have seen *Le Philosophe Marié* and

Annette et Lubin performed before Empress Catherine, whom nature had eminently fitted to appreciate grace and subtlety as well as grandeur and brilliancy. I well remember the select company of that most brilliant Court when Ségur's *Crispin Duègne* was produced, and Cobentzel gave his admirable interpretation. Then there was my own play, *L'Amant Ridicule*, whose author, I am afraid, was, perhaps, more ridiculous than the lover. The most amusing part of the entertainment, however, was enacted in the house itself with its throng of cranks, faddists, and eccentric characters, each of whom had supplied me with a kind of model, and who, as everywhere, applauded like mad without recognising themselves. Most vivid to my mind is the theatre at Ferney, where Voltaire himself played before us the most comic scenes from Molière, and was convulsed with laughter, which rather spoilt the effect he aimed at. Then came Trianon, "Trianon with an angelic queen playing royally badly before a crowd of courtiers intoxicated with her beauty."'

After that, with his essentially eighteenth century grace, he recounted to us some of the conversations of Versailles, redolent of wit and cleverness.

'These are admirable recollections, prince,' said the Comte de Witt.

'Yes,' was the reply, 'I have opened my eyes and ears a great deal, and I have an excellent memory. My stories are only reproductions.'

That day was spent delightfully among friends. In the evening I went to admire the expressive pantomime of Bigottini in *Nina*, and I wound up by going to the Comtesse de Fuchs's. Her drawing-room was crowded as usual; fortunately I managed to find a seat near the Baron Ompteda. With the serious face

of an ancient augur, Ompteda was one of the most originally clever men I have ever met. No one could sketch a portrait in a few words better than he. People dreaded his tongue as much as his sketches. But a staunch friend withal, whose epigrams were due to a twist of the intellect rather than to a deficiency of heart.

While the crowd was buzzing around us on every side, Ompteda took to reviewing some of our acquaintances that were there and also those who entered subsequently.

'Since you were last in Vienna,' he said, 'the capital has suffered a siege and a foreign occupation; nevertheless, you'll find few changes. Matters lending themselves to ridicule are as plentiful as ever; they are practically the image of the immobility of the Austrian government. Only, they are becoming more apparent, in consequence of the century's progress.

'The drawing-rooms of society are just as you left them. The one in which we are seated has not ceased to be the special resort of the friends of our charming *queen*. Never was a title more deserved, and her subjects have never revolted against her yoke. I have seen few women who have as many friends as she; but, what is more rare, she has the talent of binding them so closely together that in spite of events and absence they never become strangers to each other. A common affection for her seems to be the basis of her government; our union is its strength, and our happiness a guarantee of its duration. Honestly, I do not think there is a more easy despotism than hers, or a code more gentle to observe. In her empire, you'll find, as always, politeness without sham, frankness without abruptness, mutual regard without

flattery, and willingness to oblige without constraint.

‘There is, on the foremost plane, dear Major Fuchs, the happy and peaceful possessor of this treasure. We all envy him. He continues, as of old, the enthusiastic champion of the organisation of the Vienna Militia, to which he owes his grade, and on which, he maintains, depend the glory and the salvation of the Austrian monarchy.

‘Next comes the Comtesse Laure, his wife, ever the same, kind and good, and wholly unaffected. Her girlish face seems to be the mirror of her excellent heart. There are women whose features are more regularly beautiful, but hers are stamped with a sweet and animated expression which the mere art of pleasing would vainly endeavour to imitate. And the real secret of keeping her friends attached to her for all time lies probably in her conciliatory disposition, which, however, is not marked by any weakness where firmness is required.

‘Here is the Chanoinesse Kinsky, whose expression of unaffected kindness imparts a charm to her face to such a degree as to hide the ravages of gradually advancing years.

‘Here are the Princesses de Courland. In the first place, the beautiful Duchesse de Sagan, with her ardent admiration for everything that is grand and heroic. Her exceeding loveliness is only the least of her qualifications. Her sister, the Comtesse Edmond de Périgord, presents an indefinable but charming whole by reason of her gait, movements, bearing, and voice. Both her face and her figure possess the irresistible charm without which the most perfect beauty is practically powerless. It is a flower seemingly ignorant of the perfume it emits. Finally, there is the third of the Courland Graces, the

delightful Duchesse d'Exerenza, in whose person are united all the admirable attributes of the other two.

'On the second plane stands Walmoden, who in spite of his being a field-marshal to-day, has remained the simple and good-natured creature of former times. The same may be said of the Prince de Hesse-Hombourg. Military glory has not induced pride; his noble and stately manners are altogether tempered by a sweet and affectionate disposition. Prince Philippe is one of those men whom neither spite nor sarcasm can touch. In his familiar intercourse with his fellow-mortals, he is as distinguished for the noble impulses of his heart as he is famed on the battle-field for his brilliant valour and his promptness of perception.

'Reuss is always in the clouds; I do not pretend to follow him thither. Not having travelled, he has had little opportunity of seeing things; consequently, he mistakes the effects of his imagination for the results of learning, his desire to know for the elements of science, vagueness for tact. In short, he is the living proof that with much cleverness and the germ of talent, a man may make himself unbearable in society by the constant display of small defects calculated to irritate those around him.

'Just cast your eye in the direction of the Courland princesses, to the Prince de Lichtenstein seated near them, who is as much at home in the drawing-room as on the battle-field. They call him the "monster-prince," but I can assure you he is an Azor who has captivated many Zémires.[67] He counts as many successes with the fair sex as mentions in the "orders of the day."

'The Duc d'Exerenza, the happy husband of a charming woman, is one of the mortals who, as

Figaro has it, “gave themselves the trouble to be born.” All things considered, he is not a “bad sort.”

‘De Gentz is the custodian of all the secrets of Europe, just as in a short time he’ll possess all the orders of it. One of the many voices of that silent being constitutes the Austrian government; what with his manifestoes, his newspapers, and his proclamations, he has, perhaps, been as formidable an opponent to Napoleon as the snow-bound steppes of Russia. The honours and the ribands are, however, not exclusively the things he wants. The sovereigns are also aware of his love of money, and they simply gorge him with it. Overwhelmed with work and business, satiated with pleasure, he has, nevertheless, flung himself into the maëlstrom of society in the hope of finding some excitement which will take him “out of himself.” It is most doubtful whether his road to happiness lies in that direction.

‘Ferdinand de Palfi is as sprightly as a fairy figure: his cousin is a living Pactolus. The first gambles, wins much money, and with his gains has built himself a magnificent mansion, which people call “a house of cards.” He welcomes his friends there with the happy face he wears to-night, and his friends are legion. François is handsome among the handsome, very lavish with women, who simply worship him. Both, it is no exaggeration to say, are under a lucky star.

‘Prince Paul Esterhazy is kind and affectionate, but somewhat distant in manner. He also has only to let life glide by without taking trouble. Assuredly, he has a unique future before him. I asked Malfati yesterday how Paul’s father, Prince Nicolas, who is no longer young, can keep up with all these gay doings without impairing his health. “It is his

happiness that keeps him up," replied the physician. Happiness considered in that light is, unfortunately, not as yet a medical prescription.'

Just as the baron had finished his portraits, supper was served.

The principal topic of conversation was the imperial *carrousel* which was to take place the next day. The young Comte de Woyna, who was to be one of the twenty-four knights, gave us all the particulars of the preparations, and was eagerly listened to, for the interest and curiosity of the moment centred there. Even business and pleasure paled before that memorable fête, which in itself was to condense all the splendour of the Congress.

The day so much longed for broke at last. The preparations had occupied so many weeks as to leave no doubt about the intentions of the Court to display all the marvels of its pomp and the resources of its wealth. The fête was to conjure up all the brilliant and poetical traditions of the past. The last traces of the recreations of ancient chivalry were effaced before the last vestiges of feudalism. Our age, wholly practical in war as in love, no longer lends itself to those ingenious and delightful theories of mediævalism. The enthusiasm of the heart, the elevation of thought, and the abnegation of passion have disappeared from our manners and customs, and been replaced by a serious and polished selfishness. One is no longer the chosen knight of this or that fair one. One no longer maintains, lance in hand, the superiority of her charms against all comers; one no longer risks one's life for a scarf embroidered by her fingers. Love nowadays avoids attracting attention; it is only an accessory of life, and its first care is to wrap itself round as if with

some mysterious veil.

The manners and customs of ancient chivalry are, nevertheless, deserving of regret. Love, thus understood and openly professed, was not only the life of the heart but the source of great thoughts and noble passions. It must have been grand to proclaim one's disinterested courage, one's contempt of danger, when the sole recompense hoped for was a word or a smile from the woman beloved.

The fair sex especially must regret those changes in our social habits. Ever since the levelling tendency of general civilisation lowered the standard of our feelings, women have lost that ideal empire in which they reigned as sovereigns; they have descended from a throne to be confounded with the crowd. It is not difficult, then, to imagine their interest in the preparations for a fête the object of which was to bring back to the mind, and to revive, as it were, the forms and spirit of the age of chivalry.

The Prince de Ligne had presented me with one of the tickets sent to him by the great Marshal Trauttmansdorff. At seven we were on our way together to the Burg.

'Do not imagine,' said the prince while we were trundling along, 'that you are going to witness a combat to the death. It will be neither a *pas d'armes* [the disputing of a passage by one or several knights], nor, least of all, an appeal to "the judgment of God," in which the vanquished could only redeem his life by entering a monastery. Those serious contests have been replaced by more graceful and less violent exercises. Our modern redressers of wrongs in their tournaments uphold the incomparable beauty of their lady by the power of their lances in as peaceable a manner as the

champions of old defended a thesis at the "Courts of Love." Hence, we need apprehend no fatal accident like that which put an end to the life of Henri II., and caused the abolition of the lists of the Middle Ages.'

Several officers, under the orders of the grand-master of the ceremonies, the Comte de Wurmbrandt, were ready at the doors to conduct the guests to their seats. General curiosity had reached so high as to lead, it was said, to the forging of tickets, which were sold at an enormous price. In consequence of this the police of Vienna had been compelled to institute the most minute researches. The imperial riding-school, constructed by Charles V., and ever since called the 'Hall of the Carrousel,' had been set apart for the function. The structure, the vast interior of which is as spacious as an ordinary church, has the form of a long parallelogram. All around it there runs a circular gallery communicating with the apartments of the palace. Seats for twelve hundred spectators rose in a magnificent sweep of tiers. The gallery was divided into four-and-twenty sections by as many Corinthian columns, against which were hung the scutcheons of the knights with their arms and mottoes.

At each end of the vast arena two stands, occupying the whole length of the building, had been erected. They were draped with the most gorgeous textile stuffs; the one set apart for the sovereigns, empresses, queens, and reigning princes; the other, exactly facing it, intended for the ladies of the twenty-four paladins about to prove that they were the fairest among the fair. Above these stands were the orchestras, in which forgathered all that Vienna could boast in the way of distinguished musicians.

One of the lateral galleries was reserved for the

ambassadors, the ministers, and the plenipotentiaries of Europe, for the military celebrities, and for the illustrious foreign families. The Austrian, Hungarian, and Polish nobles occupied the other gallery. Immediately under the imperial stand was the row of rings to be carried away by the competitors at full tilt. Ranged round the arena on pillars were Turkish and Moorish heads with the traditional turban, equally intended to serve as targets for the combatants. No doubt the hatred of the Teuton warriors for their invaders and implacable foes was kept up in days of yore by similar devices. Finally, in order to prevent accidents, the floor of the riding-school was hidden beneath a layer of fine sand, half-a-foot deep. At the door of the hall there was a barrier, marking the entrance to the lists. Behind that door were posted the heralds-of-arms with their trumpets and in gorgeous costumes. Numberless lustres and candelabra holding wax candles shed through this huge interior a light scarcely inferior to that of day.

We were seated between Field-marshal Walmoden and the Prince Philippe de Hesse-Hombourg. Near us was the Prince Nicolas Esterhazy in his uniform of the Hungarian hussars, the magnificent embroidery of which was in itself sufficient to excite the greatest curiosity. The first row of our gallery was occupied by the handsomest and most eminent women of Viennese society: the Princesses Marie Esterhazy, de Wallstein, Jean de Lichtenstein, de Stahremberg, de Colloredo, de Metternich, de Schwartzenberg, the Comtesses Batthyani, de Durkeim, etc. The opposite gallery held the foreign ladies. In the back rows, the ‘highnesses,’ the diplomatic ‘excellencies’ of every country, of every degree of importance, constituted an almost

unbroken line of glittering gold and diamonds in their Court dresses and uniforms disappearing beneath their orders and embroideries. A relief was afforded by the red of Cardinal Gonzalvi's dress; and a little further on by the turban of the Pasha of Widdin, the caftan of Mauroyeny[68] and the colpack of Prince Manug, Bey of Murza. These seemed to supply a kind of variant to this incomparable splendour.

'Just look at Lady Castlereagh, close to the stand of the sovereigns,' said the Prince de Ligne. 'She is wearing her husband's Garter in diamonds as a kind of tiara. That is a little bit of facetious vanity, not contemplated by courteous Edward III. when he picked up the blue ribbon that fastened the stocking of the handsome Alice of Salisbury. Pride, when it wishes to make itself conspicuous, often plays us some scurvy tricks.'

At eight to the minute a blast of trumpets by the heralds announced the arrival of the twenty-four ladies, escorted by their valiant champions. They took their seats in the first row of their stand.

All, in virtue of their grace and beauty, deserved the name of 'belles d'amour' that had been given to them. They were the Princesses Paul Esterhazy, Marie de Metternich, the Comtesses de Périgord, Rzewuska, Marassi, Sophie Zichy, etc. It is impossible to imagine a more gorgeous and at the same time graceful spectacle. These ladies were divided into four quadrilles, each distinguished by the colour of their dresses, namely, emerald green, crimson, blue, and black. All their dresses were made of velvet, trimmed with priceless lace and sparkling with precious stones.

The whole of their costumes had been copied in

the minutest details from those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The quadrille that had adopted emerald green wore the Hungarian national dress. It consisted of a long open tunic over a petticoat of white satin, fastened from the bust to the knees with diamond pins. Placed at regular intervals, the openings between these pins disclosed the satin, the dazzling white and glimmer of which presented a most delicious contrast to the rich green of the velvet. Other diamond hooks likewise marked openings from the waist to the shoulder. The bodice itself, flat-busted, was covered with valuable gems. A principal wide and floating sleeve of velvet, opening from the shoulder, fell along the arm; beneath was another ample sleeve of white satin, embroidered like the bodice, but in gold and coloured jewels. On their heads they wore velvet toques, entirely covered with precious stones. Finally, a long gossamer veil, picked out with gold, fastened to the head-dress, and descending as far as the feet, enwrapped the wearer in a kind of beautiful haze.

The other quadrilles had chosen respectively the Polish, Austrian, and French costumes of the Louis XIII. period. A glance at them easily induced the belief that all the trinket-caskets of the Austrian monarchy had been ransacked. The ornaments worn on that evening by these two dozen fair ones were estimated at thirty millions of francs. Those of the Princesse Esterhazy, *née* Tour et Taxis, figured in that estimate for about six millions.

As soon as the ‘love beauties’ had taken their seats, presenting, as it were, a line of angelic faces, all eyes were turned towards them. Motionless, and enveloped in their long, transparent veils, they seemed to await with the utmost calm the moment of

their triumph. A second blast of trumpets announced the arrival of the sovereigns. At their entrance everybody rose, the four-and-twenty ladies flung back their veils, and stood forth revealed in all their beauty, and were greeted with unanimous applause, mingled with the acclamations due to the presence of the monarchs.

The Emperor of Austria took his seat in the centre of the stand, with the two empresses by his side; the other sovereigns and reigning princes being placed according to their precedence. The seats, upholstered in velvet, were resplendent with gold and embroidery. The Emperor of Russia, confined to his apartments through indisposition, was not present at this fête, but another was given in his honour a few days later, at which the details of the first were reproduced with mathematical precision.

The illustrious guests of the Austrian Court in their most brilliant uniforms, or with their most magnificent ornaments, constituted an imposing sight. In the front row of the imperial stand, to the right and to the left of the empresses, were the Queen of Bavaria, the Duchesse Béatrice d'Este, the Grande-Duchesse d'Oldenbourg, and her sister, Marie de Weimar; behind them sat the Kings of Prussia, Würtemberg, and Denmark; the Princes of Prussia, Würtemberg, and Bavaria, the Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, and finally the Arch-Dukes Charles, Albert, Ferdinand, Maximilien d'Este, Jean, and Regnier.

There had been whispers to the effect that Marie-Louise and her young son would be present at these fêtes, but they neither came to this one nor to the other. Marie-Louise, in fact, was in such a false position as to have considered it simply consistent

with her dignity in misfortune to live in retirement.[69] Consequently she rarely left the Palace of Schönbrunn. The Prince de Ligne told me, however, that in the company of her father and of her young sisters she had been present at several of the rehearsals.

The sovereigns and the spectators being seated, the building immediately rang with stirring military music, and the twenty-four champions appeared at the barrier. They were the pick of the nobility of Europe. The majority had gained their spurs elsewhere during the recent wars. If all shone in virtue of their personal glory and their illustrious birth, they were not less distinguished by their physical advantages. It was said that there had been rivalry in earnest in pursuit of the honour of filling a rôle in the scenes imitated from ancient times. Finally the choice, which was tantamount to a patent of elegance and grace, was fixed on the youngest and handsomest. Foremost among them were the Princes Vincent Esterhazy, Antoine Kadziwill, Leopold de Saxe-Cobourg, the Comtes Felix Woyna, Petersen, the Vicomte de Wargemont, the Prince Charles de Lichtenstein, Louis de Schenye, Louis de Schönfeldt, and young Trauttmansdorff, the son of the Master of the Horse.

The dresses of these knights had been exactly modelled on those of the reign of François I., *i.e.* of the period when 'chivalry,' after a last short blaze, was extinguished for ever. Like their fair dames, the knights were divided into four quadrilles, each being marked by the colour adopted by the corresponding feminine quadrille. The dress was composed of a velvet doublet, tight at the waist, with puffed sleeves, and lappets lined with satin. The front of the

doublet was fastened with buttons and laces of gold; below this came the close-fitting hose and trunks, with yellow boots reaching to the calves, and provided with gilt spurs. The hands were cased in gloves of a similar colour, embroidered with gold, and ending in gauntlets; while on their heads they wore large hats turned up in front, with the plume of feathers drooping from the side and fastened with a diamond buckle. The swords were suspended from baldricks encrusted with precious stones. Each fair one had presented her knight with an ample band of stuff embroidered in silk and gold. The scarf was tied in a bow at the side of the sword-hand. The knights bestrode Hungarian horses of the rarest beauty, and remarkable for their quickness of movement and their perfect training. Their sleek coats, black as ebony, were almost entirely hidden beneath their rich caparisons. Each knight carried a long lance 'in rest' on his knee. Four-and-twenty pages with banners displayed preceded them, while in their wake came an equal number of squires, dressed Spanish fashion, their bucklers inscribed with emblems and mottoes.

The pages and squires drew up in line on each side of the arena. The four-and-twenty knights, two abreast, rode up first to the stand of the sovereigns, and lowered their lances in sign of salutation and obedience before the queens and empresses; the latter graciously responded with a wave of their hands. Retracing their steps, the knights direct their horses to the other stand, and offer similar homage to their ladies, who, however, rise in response, and thus give the spectators an opportunity of judging the beauty of their features, the elegance of their figures, and the richness of their dresses. After riding twice round the arena, all the paladins retire,

awaiting a new signal.

The heralds soon sound a joyous blast, which is answered by the musicians in the orchestras. The lists are open, and the different games intended to show the skill and strength of the competitors begin. Six knights, followed by their pages and squires, appear. They begin with the *pas de lance* (tilting at the ring); the horses are put to the gallop, and each knight, rapidly borne along, removes at the point of his lance one of the rings suspended before the imperial stand. Each quadrille repeats the same movement three times, until the rings have mostly disappeared, and the dexterity of the competitors has been put to a severe test. At the end of this first exercise the lances with the rings carried by each upon them are handed to the squires, and the second game begins. Each champion, armed with a short dart, flings it with consummate skill at the Saracens' heads, and without slackening his pace picks from the ground, by means of a second curved javelin, the dart he has just flung. After that, drawing their swords, and bent on the necks of their cattle, the knights gallop towards their motionless adversaries, and strike them, endeavouring, however, to cut them down altogether.

Half-a-dozen different games followed, and the whole was wound up by a cleverly simulated combat between the knights—so cleverly simulated that the Prince de Lichtenstein bit the dust, and was carried away unconscious. It was an accident which, but for the cries from the ladies' stand, would have passed unnoticed, for though the knights endeavoured, as in the jousts of old, to dismount their rivals, certain regulations strictly limiting the bounds of attack and defence had been fixed, and the moment there was

the faintest sign of their being exceeded by this or that combatant, the heralds-of-arms interfered, suspended the offender, and a new knight took his place.

The shrieks of the *belles d'amour* were altogether spontaneous, for they did not imitate their ancestresses, who in the tourneys of old encouraged their champions by their cries to do battle for their renown to the last; the modern dames and damsels confined themselves to the bestowal of expressive looks and sweet smiles. Perhaps these contained as much encouragement as the more noisy demonstrations of approval, although the Prince de Ligne, to judge from his remarks, would have fain seen the fair ones revert to the ancient customs, 'What delights me above all in these revivals of chivalric practices is the image of valour and skill inspired by love,' he said. 'Unquestionably, our ancestors understood the love-passion better than we do. They introduced it into everything—into their games and into their combats. The love-passion in those days must have been a grand and noble feeling; it was the twin-sister of glory. With us, love is only a matter of pleasure. Instead of making it, as of old, an incentive to the dangers of war or to the splendid perils of the lists, our poets and novelists have relegated it to a cottage. But "love in a cottage," as has been aptly said, "soon becomes a cottage without love." The modern taste for tournaments,' he went on, 'is no new thing. I did not see the jousts organised by the great Catherine at St. Petersburg in the first years of her reign, but I have often been told the particulars. Their most remarkable feature was the active participation of women. They competed as well as the men. The celebrated Marshal Münnich[70] was principal umpire. The favourite, Gregory Orloff,

and his brother Alexis were at the heads of the quadrilles. The first prize for skill and grace was won by the handsome Comtesse Bouturlin, the daughter of the great Chancellor Woronzoff. When handing it to her, the old marshal decided that she should distribute the rest of the wreaths to the dames and knights. It really seemed as if Catherine had exhausted all kinds of pleasure and splendour, but there is, after all, something left.'

While the prince was talking the four-and-twenty knights, this time actively assisted by their pages and squires, executed several difficult evolutions, attesting their skill and perfect horsemanship, and the whole was wound up by a kind of equine set-dance, in which the quadrupeds disputed the palm with their riders. Then the knights made the round of the arena, saluted the sovereigns and their own dames, and disappeared in the same order as they had come.

The sovereigns themselves intimated by rising that the entertainment was at an end, while the knights made their appearance in the stand allotted to their dames, escorting them to the huge rooms of the palace set apart for the ball and the supper. These rooms were filled with flowers, and decorated with exquisite taste; a flood of light as brilliant as the orb of day showed the women in all their resplendent beauty; they and their champions became the centre of general admiration, the sovereigns having resumed the incognito, some of them, by the aid of dominos, disappearing altogether in the crowd.

In the principal room there was a chief table with its service entirely of gold. It stood on a kind of platform a few feet from the ground, and was

reserved exclusively for the royal guests of the Congress. To its left there was another table almost equally magnificent, set apart for the princes, the archdukes, the chiefs of reigning houses, and the ministers of the great Powers. To the right there was a third table of forty-eight covers for the actors of the tournament. Around the room and in the adjoining ones smaller tables were spread, at which the guests took their seats without distinction of rank. The perfume of the baskets of flowers, the glitter of the ornaments worn, the brilliancy of the diamonds, mingling with the colours of the floral decorations, and constituting, as it were, ever so many shifting rainbows, the sheen of the golden fruit-baskets—in short, the whole presented the most magnificent sight hitherto witnessed anywhere. The magic of that picture transported the spectator to one of the fairy scenes created by a poetic imagination. During the collation minstrels sang, to the accompaniment of their harps, lays to the beauty of the dames and to the valour of their knights.

At the royal board the Empress of Austria was seated between the Kings of Prussia and Denmark. Emperor Francis had by his side respectively the Empress Elizabeth and the Grande-Duchesse d'Oldenbourg. A little further on was the charming Marie, Duchesse de Weimar, and by her side the Prince Guillaume de Prusse [the future Wilhelm I. King of Prussia and German Emperor]. The 'immense' King of Würtemberg looks, as usual, pre-occupied. The table, in front of him, has been cut away to accommodate his portly person. A glance at him causes one to speculate upon the potentiality of nature in stretching the human skin. King Frederick of Denmark supplies an instance to the contrary; but his intellect, his never-failing animation, his tact and

the rest of his admirable qualities, which would have transformed an ordinary individual into a remarkable man, have made of this monarch a being worshipped by everybody. Excellent Maximilian of Bavaria shows on his open face the genuine expression of satisfaction and kindness.

At the table occupied by the paladins, Mme. Edmond de Périgord is seated by the young Comte de Trauttmansdorff, her knight. As remarkable for her beauty as for her tasteful dress, she captivates everybody by the charm of her remarks, both animated and clever. The other feminine glories of the tournament vie with each other in keeping the conversational ball rolling. After the banquet a move was made to the ball-room. More than three thousand invitations had been issued. All that Vienna contained in the shape of illustrious personages, whether in virtue of their birth, rank, or functions were there forgathered. No memory could recall so many names celebrated in this or that respect. No pen could adequately describe all those statesmen to whom Europe had confided the interests of her destiny. Here, the Comte de Loevenhielm, M. de Bernstorff, and the Prince d'Hardemberg[71] calmly discussing the claim submitted to the Congress by the deposed King Gustavus-Adolphus—a claim supported by Admiral Sir Sidney Smith with more perseverance than success. There, M. de Humboldt, the Duc de Dalberg, the Baron de Wessemberg, familiarly debating the problems connected with Saxony and Poland. Further on, the Commandeur Alvaro Ruffo and M. de Palmella speculating upon the fate reserved for Italy. Still further on, M. de Metternich and M. de Nesselrode in lively conversation with Lord Castlereagh, and, to judge from the seriousness of their faces, not commenting

on the joke just perpetrated by the Englishman [Irishman?] in connection with the temporary transformation of the Garter into a tiara. While the fate of Naples, Sweden, and Poland is apparently hanging in the balance, waltzing and dancing are going on, without the least concern about all these questions. The quadrilles had been arranged beforehand. In the centre of the principal ball-room, the quadrilles of the 'forty-eight' notable figures formed the chief attraction. The sun had appeared on the horizon before the last guests left the Burg.

CHAPTER IX

Recollections of the Military Tournament of Stockholm in 1800—The Comte de Fersen—King Gustavus IV.—The Challenge of the Unknown Knight—The Games on the Bridge at Pisa.

During the next four days the whole of Vienna seemed engrossed with the accounts of the magnificence of the *carrousel*. Every particular was eagerly caught up, the names of the knights and their dames were on everybody's lips. There were frequent allusions to the accident to Prince Lichtenstein, whose life had for some time been in danger. In short, the *carrousel* was the inevitable subject of every conversation.

At a reception at the Princesse Jean de Lichtenstein's, the whole of the programme was minutely reviewed; some praised and others criticised the knights and their dames, the feats accomplished, the horses, the evolutions, etc. Nevertheless, the upshot of all the remarks was that, in respect of splendour, nothing like it had ever been seen in Europe, and that no fête of that kind had ever been attended by an equal number of spectators.[72]

'It is perfectly natural that Germany, which is the birthplace of tournaments, should endeavour to

revive their glory on such a solemn occasion,' said Prince Philippe de Hesse-Hombourg. 'I do not think that anything of the kind has ever been attempted since Louis XIV.'s time,' said the hostess. 'If Colbert had seen our knights and their fair ones, he would probably have admitted being beaten.'

I reminded them that the first years of the nineteenth century had been marked by several of those tournaments; and that I myself had witnessed one in Stockholm given by Gustavus-Adolphus IV. At the commencement of his reign that prince endeavoured to preserve in Sweden the brilliant valour and the elegant and courtly manners of which the Court of Gustavus III. had afforded such perfect models. He was passionately fond of those warlike exercises, and they generally took place at his summer residence of Drotningholm. 'Assuredly,' I remarked, 'the Vienna *carrousel* has been admirable throughout from a spectacular point of view. But that which I saw in 1800 could vie with it, not in respect of its pomp and splendour, or by reason of the eminent rank of its spectators, but through its faithful adherence to, and accurate reproduction of, ancient traditions. It was, moreover, marked by an incident which recalled the chivalric and often bloody encounters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.' As a matter of course, I was pressed to give further particulars, and this, as far as my memory serves me, is what I told them.

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The tournament was given in honour of the queen's birthday, and for several months beforehand the northern Courts had been apprised of it. The young king was to figure among the champions, and

the queen, one of the handsomest women of her time, was to crown the victor and present to him in the presence of the whole Court the reward of his skill, which consisted of a scarf wholly embroidered by her own hands. Nothing had been left undone to invest this fête with all the prestige that formerly marked those of Louis XIV., the accounts of which had fairly astonished the whole of Europe.

The Comte de Fersen,[73] whose physical advantages and lucky star had placed him in such high favour at the Court of France, came to fetch us, 'my father' [the Marquis de Chambonas, who had adopted the author] and me, to escort us to Drotningholm. Before proceeding thither, he had to take on his way the Comte de Paar, his fellow-umpire at the tournament, who, in virtue of being a 'Gentleman of the Chamber,' had been present at the rehearsal of a ballet to be given on that very evening for the first time at the opera. No sooner had we reached the doors of the magnificent structure, due to Gustavus III.'s love of art, than we were conducted to a room preceding the royal box, where a collation was awaiting us. It was there that Gustavus-Adolphus supped when he came to the theatre, and that, divesting himself of all his royal prerogatives, he became the equal of his friends. In tragic contrast with the rest of the magnificent and sumptuous furniture, with all those gold, silken, and alabaster decorations, one could not help noticing a crimson velvet couch with stains all over it. It was on this couch that Gustavus-Adolphus III. had been laid during the night of the 16th March 1792, after the exploit of Ankarstroem. The blood from his wound had practically soaked the material. Though it would have been extremely simple to remove the piece of furniture, thus effacing the trace of a crime

committed in a place devoted to pleasure, the king, from motives it was not easy to guess, had insisted upon the couch remaining there, perhaps as an object lesson or merely as a remembrance.[74]

The Comte de Paar soon joined us, and shortly afterwards we were on our way to the Queen's demesne, about four leagues from Stockholm. Numerous carriages were performing the same journey, and they rendered the picturesque Swedish country road more animated than usual.

A dense crowd had gathered since early morning around the castle, blocking up every approach to it. They were on foot, on horseback, and in every kind of conveyance; nevertheless, most admirable order prevailed throughout. Two Uhlans of the Guards and an equerry were waiting for the Comte de Fersen, who, in virtue of his functions as an umpire, was to preside at the fête.

At a little distance from the castle, in a pretty valley overlooked by wooded heights, a circus had been erected, with galleries capable of holding about four thousand spectators. Its floor had disappeared beneath a thick layer of the finest sand, and high and strong palisades surrounded it on every side. The women, in their richest apparel, were almost without exception remarkable for the beauty peculiar to their sisters of northern climes. The men were in uniform or in Court dress. A cloak of black silk lined with crimson satin was considered tantamount to gala vesture. The grandees of the kingdom had all donned the dresses connected with their functions. Stands, draped with satin, and displaying the three crowns of Sweden, were set apart for the ambassadors. The ring was hung with Swedish standards. At one end of the building was the pavilion for the queen and her

ladies of honour, particularly noticeable for the coquettish mingling of its decorations, consisting of flowers, weapons, and flags, intertwined with simple and genuine elegance. Dupré, the French architect, one of the most celebrated decorators of Europe, had superintended all the arrangements.

At regular distances there were columns, from some of which were suspended the rings for the games, while others supported the Turks' heads to be slashed at by the competitors. The banners of the knights selected to dispute the prize were first borne in procession around the arena, then fixed against the different barriers of the ring.

Before leaving us Comte de Fersen had introduced us to his friend, M. de Rozen, a young man who had taken part in the previous *carrousel*, and who was, therefore, in a position to give us full particulars of the present one. The various emblems and mottoes of the banners and scutcheons were as ingenious as they were instructive in the true spirit of chivalry. Among many I cite the following:—

A sword on a field azure.
Motto—'Je pars, je brille, je frappe.'
(I go, I shine, I strike.)
A lion on a field starred.
'La valeur soumet les astres.'
(Valour subjugates the stars.)
A fire burning on an altar.
'Ce qui est pur est éternel.'
(The pure lasts for ever.)
An ermine climbing a steep height.
'Tâche sans tache.'
(Try but keep stainless.)

Finally, another shield, checkered red and yellow, was that of Tonin, the jester of the late king.

His motto, though, would have given no clue to that effect.

It ran:

‘Tout par raison,
Raison par tout,
Partout raison.’
(Every thing through reason,
Reason in every thing,
Everywhere reason.)

Tonin only jousted with witticisms, biting remarks and wholesome truths, brought home to his hearers with a laugh; on all these points he could make sure of the victory, for he varied them like his motto. Among all these banners, resplendent with colour and embroidery, there hung a black one without a squire to guard it. We asked M. de Rozen to whom this mournful standard belonged.

‘Do you not know?’ he replied. ‘Have you not read in the papers that a knight who wishes to remain unknown has challenged to single combat the champion sufficiently bold to dispute with him the prize of the tournament? The prize, as you are aware, is a scarf embroidered by the queen. At the time fixed for calling the roll of the knights they found his glove lying in the middle of the ring, and his black banner planted where it is now; attached to it was his buckler, with the following words on a star-spangled blue ground:

‘Tra tanti una.’
(Only one among all.)

‘To add to the strangeness of the challenge is his choice of the battle-axe, which went out of use long ago. The most curious stories are going the round in

connection with the challenge of that mysterious Amadis. Among the different versions the most implicitly believed in is the following:

'A young noble, sprung from one of the most illustrious families of Great Britain, saw the Queen at Baden when she was only Princess Dorothée-Wilhelmine. He fell deeply in love with her. Considering his rank and his immense fortune, he might possibly have aspired to her hand with success. But the two sisters of our queen having married respectively the Emperor of Russia and Maximilien de Bavière, reasons of state and the fitness of things carried her to the throne of Sweden. The young lord, unable to conquer a feeling which from that moment was shorn of all hope, was mad enough to gain admission surreptitiously to our Court, and always under a fresh disguise. He was recognised by the ladies-in-waiting of our queen, and narrowly escaped the punishment due to his foolhardiness. The rumour went that he had gone to America. Informed, no doubt, with the rest of Europe of the preparations for this tournament, he wished to make an attempt to conquer or to die under the very eyes of the woman he loves. It is even said that, knowing the chivalric spirit of Gustavus-Adolphus, he conceived the flattering hope of having a royal adversary to contend with, with the possible chance of succeeding him who, as he probably thought, robbed him at first.

'The Comte de Torstenson, son of the field-marshal, has offered to take up the challenge. He has practised for some time with the battle-axe, and acquired marvellous skill with it.'

At that moment the harmonious strains of a hundred instruments announced the arrival of the

queen, and every eye was turned towards her.

Her perfect beauty and the stateliness of her person would have revealed the sovereign under the humblest dress. Surrounded by her Court ladies, she took her seat under the canopy prepared for her. Immediately the king at the head of his nobles entered the ring and rode round it, saluting with his lance all the ladies, who had risen at his coming.

Gustavus-Adolphus IV. was at that time in his twenty-second year. He was well built, had a martial bearing, and a noble and frank countenance. He was anxious to copy Charles XII., and, to enhance the likeness, he wore, as a rule, a blue coat, buttoned to the chin, and had his hair brushed up from the roots. But with the sword that performed such wonders at Bender, he lacked the strong arm that had so often made the sword victorious, and the genius that had directed it.

When he passed before the queen, in his magnificent costume, with head erect and proud mien, and holding his lance with a firm grip, his horse reared. Gustavus tried to quiet it, but an accidental touch of the spurs made matters worse, and he was within an ace of being thrown. It was the same animal he had ridden on the day of his coronation at Upsala, and which had nearly killed him—an accident that, as a matter of course, had furnished the superstitious among his subjects with a thousand conjectures regarding the future of his reign. The cause of the mishap was, however, sufficiently simple. The groom or equerry entrusted with the training of the animal for the ceremony stopped every day before the shop of a shoemaker, whose wife, a young Finnish woman, amused herself by giving it a piece of bread and salt. The handsome

charger got thoroughly used to stopping at the hospitable door, and when Gustavus, the crown on his head and sceptre in hand, proceeded to the cathedral, it refused to pass the shop without its usual ration. The king, thinking it was a mere whim on the animal's part, put the rowels into its flesh; the horse reared, crown and sceptre rolled into the dust, and without the prompt assistance of a page walking by the monarch's side, who by clutching at his boot restored his equilibrium, Gustavus would have gone the way of the royal insignia. At the news of the accident, the fortune-teller, Arvidson, exclaimed, it was said, with tears coursing down her cheeks: 'The race of Wasa has ceased to reign in Sweden.'[75] At the slightest uncommon event of that reign, the prediction of the fortune-teller was 'trotted out'; as a matter of course the spectators at the tournament at once added this omen to the rest.

Meanwhile, the barrier was thrown open to the knights in their magnificent dresses. Divided into quadrilles, they rode around the lists, and in passing before the queen they saluted by lowering their lances. All wore the colours of their dames in the form of a scarf, a veil, a knot of ribbons, or a buckle. After that, they put their horses through the boldest and most graceful evolutions. When that warlike procession was concluded, to the sound of blasts from the combined bands of the regiments of the Guards and the cheering of the crowd, they retired to await the signal for the jousts.

A herald-of-arms, taking his stand in the centre of the arena, announced the opening of the tournament, and added in a loud voice: 'In the name of the king, and according to the laws of the kingdom, it is forbidden to any subject or alien to

give or to accept a challenge to single combat under no matter what pretext. It would be senseless to imagine that an enclosure intended for the display of games of skill could with impunity serve for the shedding of blood in the very presence of the queen.'

The proclamation was received with signs of general approval. The black banner of the unknown champion was torn down, and contemptuously flung over the barrier. After which, Gustavus rode up to the Comte de Torstenson, who had taken up his position at the entrance to the lists, and who wore a brilliant suit of armour, with a magnificent breastplate, inlaid with gold, over a coat of double mail, and whose hand grasped a heavy battle-axe, which was lowered as his king drew near.

'Comte de Torstenson,' said Gustavus, holding out his hand, 'we appreciate your courage, and we thank you for it, but we reserve it for a more noble opportunity.'

The lists were declared open. The king said in a loud voice, 'Let every one do his duty.' Comte Fersen in his capacity of judge replied: 'Go.' Then the different games commenced and were kept up for four hours. As at the Vienna *carrousel*, the knights vied with each other in showing their skill, their valour, and agility. The weather was magnificent; its beauty seemed to enhance the general enthusiasm. Scarfs fluttered in the air, joyous applause and murmurs of praise broke forth at every moment from lips as red as the rose, while flowers were flung by hands trembling with emotion and fell at the competitors' feet.

The contest was a long one; the champions vying with each other in skill. Finally, Comte Piper was adjudged the victor. The judge and the heralds

proclaimed his name and conducted him to the feet of the queen, who, while complimenting him, vested him with the scarf, the reward of his skill, and held out the hand that embroidered the ornament for him to kiss. The trumpets sounded a joyous blast, while cheers broke forth greeting the victorious young champion, who was moreover pelted with flowers. His banner was hung upon a car drawn by two milk-white reindeer richly caparisoned: Comte Fersen had sent for them to his estate in Lapland to offer them to the king. The car was escorted by the whole of the Court across the park to the banqueting hall at the castle. Several tables had been spread; the king presided over that occupied by his family and the victorious knight; the chancellor and the grand officers of the crown presided over the others. Refreshments were served to the people in the garden, and when night set in, the gaiety that prevailed on the immense lawn and in the bosky dells glittering with lights invested the fête with the air of a family gathering.

After the banquet we went to the beautiful opera-house to hear the lyrical drama of *Gustave Wasa*, the music of which was by Piccini, and the libretto by the late king. Finally, a general illumination of the gardens, a torchlight procession, and enormous fireworks fitly wound up the day, which doubtless was among the small number of happy ones reserved by fate for Gustavus-Adolphus IV.

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The guests of the Princesse Jean de Lichtenstein had listened attentively to the particulars of a fête which apparently did not belong to our own times. The listeners, and especially the fair sex, had

probably expected a sequel to the challenge of the knight of the black banner, which sequel, of course, was to take the form of a ‘combat to the death.’ The pacific termination of the tournament seemed to cause more or less of a disappointment. I ventured to remark that neither the tournament at Stockholm nor the *carrousel* in Vienna could compare with the games enacted on the bridge of Pisa, which, from the standpoint of danger and tenacity of purpose, presented the most perfect image of the old wars in Italy of the Middle Ages. No one present but myself had ever witnessed these games, and I was asked to convey an idea of them.

* * * * *

The last of those games, at which I happened to be present, took place during the short-lived existence of the kingdom of Etruria.[76] They had been abolished long ago on account of the accidents to which they gave rise. The queen’s consent to their revival was obtained with great difficulty. The origin of this struggle cannot be fixed with any degree of certainty, for though it was called ‘a game’ it was in reality a battle. It is more than probable that they dated from the long distant past; according to some, they were Greek and almost as old as the Olympic Games. The Pisans maintain that in the ancient chronicles of their town there is a mention of the names of some champions of Sainte-Marie who formed part of the contingent despatched by their republic to the Crusades. In our days Alfieri has given us a poetical picture of those chivalric contests, with all their perils and the passions they aroused.

Pisa is traversed by the Arno; and a handsome marble bridge connects the two quarters of the town.

One quarter has its patroness in the Virgin Mary, the other is placed under the protection of St. Anthony. When they celebrated those games in days of old, each side chose three hundred champions to proclaim and maintain the pre-eminence of their patron's banner against all comers. Those improvised defenders were always selected from among the strongest, the bravest, and most agile young fellows of their quarter.

They were clad in armour similar to that worn by their ancestors in the palmy days of the republic. Trained and drilled long beforehand by experienced leaders, they stoutly prepared themselves both for attack and defence. A massive breastplate, a helmet, armlets, and cuish of steel constituted their means of defence; their weapon of offence consisted of a kind of club of hard wood, three feet long; one blow dealt with force and precision was sufficient to disable an adversary.

A lowered barrier in the centre of the bridge separated the combatants. At the stroke of three from the cathedral towers, a cannon shot gave the signal, and immediately the barrier was raised. Amidst a furious blast of trumpets, the struggle began, and the blows from the heavy clubs rang on the steel of the breastplates and helmets. That game, almost as barbarous as the times that gave it birth, lasted for three-quarters of an hour. At the discharge of a second shot, the barrier was lowered, and the party which had driven back the other from its position, if but the length of a foot, was proclaimed the victor. Cries of joy rang on the bank that had gained the victory, while a mournful silence attested the defeat and the disgrace of the opposite bank.

In 1805 I happened to be in Pisa, and thanks to

some friends and the kindness of M. Aubusson de la Feuillade, the French ambassador, I was enabled to witness that extraordinary fête. It had been announced throughout the length and breadth of Italy some weeks before its celebration. At the news of the forthcoming contest offered to strength and dexterity, there was a rush from all parts of combatants who had acquired a reputation for bravery or herculean strength. There was, according to report, one from Calabria, others from Ancona and Geneva; Rome had sent a couple of Transteverinos, and, wonderful to relate, the learned University of Padua added to the contingent with a professor reputed to be the strongest man of Italy. Personages belonging to the highest classes of Italian society had inscribed themselves under the name of some of their retainers: assured of preserving their incognito, thanks to the visors of their helmets, they intended taking part in the struggle, the pugilistic fever having become general. Constant practice had familiarised the athletes with the use of their clubs to such a degree as to enable them to handle these as their forefathers handled the double-edged sword in the Middle Ages. The professor from Padua talked of challenging four men armed with sabres and swords, and of vanquishing them with the sole aid of his club. The enthusiasm had turned all heads. No doubt it is a very extraordinary thing that, in an enlightened age like ours, such an amusement, with all its inevitable and perhaps fatal consequences, should have been allowed. It is, moreover, most probable that the danger involved in the whole affair added to people's curiosity. Certain is it, however, that Pisa was invaded by more than a hundred thousand strangers—an enormous number for a town the population of which did not exceed twelve

thousand inhabitants.

The week preceding the struggle was spent in warlike exercises, and the eve of the day itself in pious practices and meditation. All the combatants scrupulously kept their vigil in prayers like the knights of old, went to confession, and took the Sacrament. The bishop publicly blessed the standards, richly embroidered by the ladies of the foremost families of the land. In short, everything calculated to sustain the combatants' courage was resorted to in honour of either the patron or patroness whose banner they defended. Those who had laid wagers on the event—and their number and the amount of their bets were considerable—spared neither promises nor encouragement. During that week, each combatant was fed like a podesta; but the use of strong liquors was strictly forbidden: like Richelieu at the siege of Mahon, the chiefs intimated in the 'orders for the day' that any champion guilty of inebriety should not have the honour of competing.

From six in the morning, all the windows overlooking the Arno at that point were occupied by elegantly dressed women; these windows had been let at enormous prices. There were, moreover, stands on both banks of the river intended for spectators. The quays were absolutely black with people from the rural districts. The excursion, in their minds, was invested with the solemnity of a pilgrimage. Their varied and picturesque dresses offered a unique sight. A large stand, richly draped, had been erected for the queen, the court, the corps diplomatique, and foreigners of distinction who had come from all the Italian Courts.

Craft of all dimensions, displaying bunting from

prow to stern, and provided with elegant tents, crowded the river. They had bands on board, and a glance showed the preparations for cold collations everywhere. This flotilla alone was a delightful sight. On both sides of the bridge there were other craft: they, as it were, constituted the riparian police, and were charged with keeping both boats and spectators at a distance. Their second mission consisted in affording aid to the combatants who from some cause or other might tumble into the stream. Such accidents, to judge from a picture at the town hall, painted more than two centuries before, were by no means improbable. The canvas represented, among other phases of the struggle, two knights clinging tightly to each other, and continuing the contest, while dropping into the river.

The living picture that day was scarcely less curious, with the noise, bustle, and stir of the spectators, the constant movement on both banks of the stream, the diversity of Italian dialects, and the innumerable incidents of that outdoor life which in this sunny clime seems the most natural.

At twelve o'clock the combatants donned their armour; their trainers and chiefs crowd around them and renew their counsels and instructions. To watch the excitement of their wives and their womankind one might have taken them for so many Spartan matrons handing their bucklers to their sons and saying: 'With it or on it.'

Thus armed, the combatants repair to their respective encampments; refreshments are served out to them under tents, and this time the solids are washed down with wine from the best cellars of the town. At the bugle-call they emerge from their encampments and form in line of battle; then,

preceded by their military bands and with banners unfurled, they slowly gain the side of the bridge they have sworn to defend. The banners were attached outside the parapets. On each side plans of attack and defence had been prepared, and so carefully elaborated as to elicit the admiration of a most competent judge in military matters, namely, the General of Division Duchesne. He had made the campaigns of Italy, Holland, and Egypt, and considered them (the plans) samples of strategical skill, from the manner in which the forces were disposed for an engagement in which everything depended on physical strength.

Meanwhile the two parties had been pressing against the barrier for some minutes. Three struck from the cathedral clock; at the same time the air rings with the firing of the cannon, the signal so impatiently waited for. The obstacle dividing the two contingents is lifted, and the attack commences with a tenacity of which none but an eyewitness can conceive an approximate idea. All kinds of cries fall upon the ear. To the majority of the spectators the interest of the whole is heightened by the promptings of greed, of pride, and even of love. Each sign of success is greeted with deafening applause. The bravery of the combatants rises into frenzy, and the hand-to-hand struggle becomes a real battle with its fury and its alternating incidents.

While the two troops assail each other with equal fury, each side flings long ropes with iron crooks attached to them into their adversaries' ranks. The crook catches a leg, a man is down, and he is dragged away captive. It is simply a modification of the lasso practised by the Tartars on the Yedissen steppes: the running knot is thrown around the necks

of the wild horses and they are checked in their stampede.

The half-hour after three had struck, and the two contingents, pressed tightly against each other, seemed so many athletes who, unable to make their opponents budge, spend their strength in protracted efforts. Not an inch of ground had been gained; another ten minutes, and Victory herself, in her indecisive mood, would have claimed, as in days of old, her share of the glory.

The two masses were so tightly wedged against each other as to make fighting impossible. They were simply like the waves of two meeting streams. In order to give further weight to the men, each leader ordered his band of musicians to advance, which movement again only equalised the power of resistance. On the two banks a mournful silence followed the joyous acclamations of the previous half-hour; the general deadlock left little or no hope of a decisive result. At last two champions of the hindmost ranks of Sainte-Marie hit upon a most audacious movement. In spite of the weight of their armour, they climb on to the shoulders of their comrades, and for a few moments remain erect on the flooring of brass and steel; in other words, the large helmets so closely serried as to leave little or no space between them. Advancing carefully from helmet to helmet, they reach the first rows of their own contingent. From the height of that living fortress, as from the height of a war-chariot, they shower tremendous blows with their clubs on the heads of their adversaries. The latter, though protected by the metal covering their skulls, finally reel and fall down. The breach is made, a thousand cries of victory from the side of Sainte-Marie are

heard, and its mass advances. In a short time it has over-stepped its own line of demarcation, and the banner of St. Anthony is carried away by the two aerial champions.

The leader of the opposite forces in vain attempts a defence similar to the attack. Some St. Anthony champions also climb on to their fellows' shoulders. There is positively a second combat on the heads of the combatants, without, however, detracting in the slightest from the fury of the onslaught of those who are on *terra firma*. It was indeed something marvellous to see those two stages of warriors dealing each other blows and using all the combined resources of strength. The struggle was both violent and intense; at one moment it seemed that the banner of St. Anthony was going to be recovered. One of the champions of Sainte-Marie, the nearest to the parapet, took his club in both hands, and with a swing brought it down on the head of the adversary facing him. The latter reels, loses his balance, and drops into the Arno. Frenzied clamour from both sides rends the air. The army of the Holy Virgin redoubles its efforts and stands like a rock on the ground it has gained. Joshua was not there to stop the sun in its course. The third quarter of the hour has struck, the cannon gives the signal and the barrier is lowered. The army of the Holy Virgin remains the victor; the honour of the day belongs incontestably to it.

Immediately the victorious quarter rang with joy and inspiriting blasts of trumpets, while a mournful silence and a feeling of disgrace fell upon that of the vanquished. It is a true saying that men derive the energy of their feelings from the sky under which they were born. Hence, while the champions of the

Holy Virgin were loaded with caresses, praise, and gifts, carried in triumph and enthusiastically welcomed by their families, those of St. Anthony silently regained their domiciles, where sarcasm and reproaches awaited them, and where they perhaps deemed themselves fortunate if, for balm to their wounds, they did not get additional blows from their own flesh and blood.

At night the victorious quarter was agog with balls, concerts, music, the tooting of horns, the whole of it only ceasing with morn. On the bank opposite everything remained pitch dark. The quarter conveyed the impression of being inhabited by ghosts.

Nothing, I fancy, can be compared to that scene. For more than a century, Europe had not witnessed a similar spectacle, where everything, arms as well as wounds, was altogether serious. And he who had not seen a real battle might have well believed that he was witnessing one by going back in his imagination to an epoch when cannon was not as yet the last argument of kings.

CHAPTER X

The Prince de Ligne's Song of the Congress—Life on the Graben—The Chronicle of the Congress—Echoes of the Congress—A Companion Story to the Death of Vatel—Brie, the King of Cheese—Fête at Arnstein the Banker's—The Fête at Prince Razumowski's—The Prince Royal of Würtemberg—Russian Dances—Retrospection.

The smaller ball-room usually reserved for the masked routs was filled to overflowing. That gathering, like all those that had preceded it, was the living image of a society devoted to pleasure, to flirting, and seductive pastimes of every description.

'We have got a new guest, and, moreover, one who'll be by no means welcome at the Congress,' remarked the Prince de Ligne.

'Some deposed sovereign, prince?' I asked.

'No; a guest who means to have his share of all these rejoicings; not to mince words, the plague. At this moment it is raging in Servia, and threatens to make its entrance here in proper person and without plenipotentiaries. You may, however, make your mind easy; all precautions are taken, and we shall want neither conferences nor treaties against the unwelcome visitor.

‘Since yesterday,’ he went on, ‘this important assembly of the greatest monarchs and their august deliberations have inspired me to write, not a philosophical treatise or a serious work of any kind, either political or otherwise, but a song. At any rate, it will be a song to some, though it may be a lesson to others. It’s a popular ditty without the least pretension; I wrote it in a quarter of an hour. We may add that it was written with one of the pens of the great Frederick, the only thing I brought away with me from Sans-Souci. The quill possesses the further merit of having traced some plans of battle, and some verses which were no better than mine.’

I complimented him, laughing.

‘Don’t laugh,’ he rejoined. ‘The history of the Congress is not unlike the history of France, which, as Ménage averred, might be written with a collection of light comedies interspersed with song, to guide the author.’

Then, after a few moments of silence, ‘I’ll not admit the paternity of this trifle, except to my friends. I have not forgotten the Duchesse de Boufflers’ reward of the cocksure vanity of the Comte de Tressan.[77] I have nothing to oppose to the thousands of bayonets of the occupants of thrones but so many words marshalled in line. The struggle would not be equal.’

‘But to whom, prince, if not to you, should belong the privilege of telling the truth?’

‘You mean in virtue of my age?’

I quickly changed the subject. This excellent prince always came back to his regrets at being more or less put into the shade by men who had only recently made good their names, and his comments

on current events, though devoid of all bitterness, were stamped with a kind of sadness. I began talking to him about his military writings, which he liked best of all, and to which he attached the greatest importance. Posterity has judged differently. It has allotted the foremost place to his clever witticisms, to his remarks on the society, the manners and customs, and the artistic questions of his time, in the writing of which his imagination found full play. The soldier is almost entirely forgotten, but the sprightly and pungent literary man, the impartial and quick observer, is admired as much as ever.

'I have left my works to my company of Trabans. They are the reflections of an old soldier whose experience has been deemed superfluous. At any rate, people will profit by it after my death.'

It was evident that the prince was in one of the fretful moods that now and again assailed him as a set-off to his youthful gaiety. His features became clouded, he took my arm; we had a short stroll round the rooms, then went out and walked silently to his little house on the rampart.

Next morning when I called I found him, contrary to his custom, out of bed and seated in his library, which was at the same time his bed- and reception-room, and which, smiling, he had named the last bar of his perch.

'You have come for the song. Just listen to it.' And in a by no means feeble voice he began to sing the trifle which was soon taken up by all classes of society, including the sovereigns themselves.[78]

'Take this copy with you,' said the prince; 'my heirs will be none the worse for this liberality on my part. It is different with regard to these two

manuscripts which I am just touching up. One deals with considerations on the disastrous Austrian campaigns during the first years of the French Revolution; the other treats of the campaigns in Italy up to Marengo. Both are not without interest. But,' interrupting himself, 'while I am making songs on the Congress, what becomes of it? Have you got any news?'

'None, prince, not a syllable of what transpires leaks out. To tell the truth, people do not appear to concern themselves much with regard to it. There is, however, a great deal of talk about a ball Emperor Alexander proposes to give to the sovereigns at Prince Razumowski's mansion on St. Catherine's night, the fête-day of the Grand-Duchess of Oldenburg.'

'That's right, those poor kings ought to have a holiday. I am not certain, though, that at the end of all these entertainments any of the monarchs will be able to say to himself what my dear Joseph II. said. When he had worked the whole of the day at the reforms which, while immortalising his name, contributed to the happiness of the empire, he said, lightly tapping his cheek, "And now, go to bed, Joseph, I am pleased with your day's work."

'Amidst this cross-fire of different pretensions, have you heard anything of a claim of another kind? Trifling though it may be, it is calculated to provide some occupation for the archons of the Congress. It is a note presented by Louis Buon-Compagni, Prince of Lucca and Piombino, claiming sovereign rights over the island of Elba. He considers the investment of Napoleon with that sovereignty out of order and out of place. His claim is supported by a document, in which Emperor Ferdinand acknowledges to have

received from one of his ancestors, Nicolas Ludovisi, Duc de Venosa, more than a million of florins for the investiture of Elba and Piombino, granted to him and his descendants. Here's a pretty business—the man who ruled the world threatened with ejectment by another Robinson Crusoe! If Louis [Ludovico] Buon-Compagni would come down to the rôle of Friday, matters might be arranged. But he wants his island, and wants it all to himself. Trifling as the incident may appear, it would lend itself to a very curious chapter. It would be the height of absurdity to see the man who distributed crowns without a stone on which to put his heroic head in an unknown island.'

Coming back to his favourite topic, the prince referred once more to warlike matters, and in a manner as enthusiastic as if he were twenty. At such moments his tall and beautiful figure drew itself up to its full height, his features became animated, his eyes positively brilliant. 'Don't imagine, my dear boy, that during two days I have done nothing but concoct rhymes or epigrams on the Congress. You see these two volumes; well, I have spent the night in reading them.'

He pointed to a military work entitled *Principes de Stratégie appliqués aux Campagnes de 1796 en Allemagne*. Its author, Arch-Duke Charles, had sent them to him.

'In this book, full of curious details and profound views,' he said, 'there is only one mistake as far as I can judge. The author is too severe upon himself. There is not the faintest doubt about the transcendent military worth of Prince Charles, but it is marked by so much modesty and such simplicity of manner as to seem scarcely reconcilable with his reputation. He is not only the greatest captain of

Austria, but more than once he has proved himself a counter-balance to the genius of your Napoleon. In his valour, in his faculty of inspiring both respect and obedience in his soldiers, he is like Frederick; in his virtues, his strict integrity, and his unalterable love of duty, he is the living image of the Prince Charles of Lorraine. The frankness of his soul is reflected in his face. Some time ago I attempted to draw his portrait in verse. I sent it to him anonymously, knowing as I did that direct praise was apt to displease him. In some way, I do not know how, he guessed the authorship. No doubt my feelings got the better of my style, and I presume that the books he sent me are intended as a reply. I have just finished reading them. I feel certain of their becoming classical, for admiration instinctively follows a public man admitted, as he is, to be possessed of a grand and noble character.'

Then he drifted to the famous captains of his time and to their notable exploits; and gradually I felt his enthusiasm gaining upon me. His own genius was discernible in his looks, and electrified me. The conversation of such men as he is more apt to enlighten one and to speak louder than their books. Inasmuch as I had made up my mind religiously to garner every literary scrap from the pen of this encyclopedic man, I asked him to give me his verses on Prince Charles, and I added them to my precious collection.

'We'll meet at Razumowski's,' he said, 'seeing that, guided by pleasure only, we are evidently advancing towards the great result of this sapient assembly amidst balls, fêtes, *carrousels*, and games. No doubt the day will come when we shall be allowed to know the fate of Europe. Manifestly,

though, experience does not appear to convey any valuable lesson either to men's passions or to their ambition; and our era seems to have quickly forgotten a very recent past.

'I must leave you, to preside at a chapter of the Order of Maria-Theresa;[79] the Commandeur-Général, Ouwaroff, is to be invested to-day. From there I am going to dine with your great diplomatist.'

Since the cold weather had set in, making the Prater somewhat too chilly for idlers and loungers on foot, the latter foregathered on the Graben. The newspaper writers thronged the public resort, and, in default of genuine particulars of the Congress, retailed their so-called political information and Court stories, as devoid of probability, not to say of truth, as the rest. Outdoor life had assumed such proportions that one might have safely said to one's friends in the evening, 'I looked for you on the Graben to-day. I failed to find you, so I left my card.' The Graben was to the majority of strangers what the Square of St. Mark is to the Venetians. They spent the greater part of their time there. It was a kind of open-air club; everybody received and returned calls there; the life of the capital was practically regulated on that spot; folk appointed to meet there to discuss their future movements, and to organise pleasure parties for the evening. Hence, it would be no exaggeration to say that people lived in common on the Graben, amidst an immense group of 'loafers,' idlers, 'spouters,' and disputants.

There was another kind of store-house for news, epigrams, witty sallies, and satirical observation; a kind of 'lion's mouth' *à la Vénitienne*, less the secret denunciations. Or rather, the place was like the Marforio in Rome, I mean the statue at the foot of

which there was a constant flow of criticism both on the governors and on the governed. The second spot was the big room of the 'Empress of Austria' tavern, which I have already mentioned. Every day, at the dinner-hour, the place was thronged with illustrious and important personages, anxious to escape from the magnificent but somewhat solemn banquets of the Austrian Court. At a 'round table' the occupants vied with each other in challenges—not like those of the ancient knights of King Arthur, but in wit-combats, sarcastic lunges, and epigrams, all of them tempered by the perfect tone of Courts and of the best society.

The constant variety of its patrons invested this improvised club with the greatest interest. Among the *habitués* were the Chevalier de Los Rios, Ypsilanti, Tettenborn, MM. Achille Rouen, Koreff, Danilewski, the Prince Koslowski, Gentz, the secretary of the Congress, the Comte de Witt, Carpani, the poet, ever so many generals, ambassadors, and very often some royal highnesses. Narischkine, the great-chamberlain, came now and again, treating the company to his biting and dreaded sallies. In short, there was a never-failing muster of all that Vienna held within its walls in the way of political, artistic, and social celebrities.

The stories told there could have rightly been called the 'Chronicle of the Congress,' and even the 'Chronicles of Europe'; everybody of note, or of erewhile renown, being apparently responsible for his doings and sayings to the jurisdiction of the caustic Areopagus of that tavern.

Although the fare was in keeping with the company and the conversation, prices were comparatively modest. In spite of the number of

strangers in Vienna at that moment, in spite of their rank and their wealth, the cost of most things, except of lodgings, was moderate. The Dutch ducat was worth twelve florins in paper, which fact, doubling its value in money, increased the resources of a stranger in that ratio. The whole may be judged from the fact that meals, profusely served and supplemented with several kinds of wine, were supplied at the rate of five florins per head.

Griffiths and I took our seats at one of the tables. They were talking about the preparations for the fête next day at Razumowski's, and of the honour the emperor had bestowed upon him by creating him a prince.

'He deserved the distinction,' said Koslowski. 'The new prince, since he has been our ambassador at Vienna, has made many valuable friends. In the recent discussions on Poland, he was instrumental in restoring harmony, and in putting an end to the little pecking which threatened to become serious.'

'Added to this,' remarked the representative of a German princelet, 'there is a prerogative attached to his new title. Henceforth, when going out at night he can have torch-bearers running in front of him.'

The new prince having become the momentary target for the remarks of everybody, there were, of course, many references to his enormous fortune, which, when all was said and done, was only a fraction of the wealth of his father, the marshal, who, greatly favoured by Empress Elizabeth, became the wealthiest private individual of Europe.[80] He and Frederick had a curious little scene one day. When the marshal was in Berlin the king held in his honour a review of the troops who had gone through a score of campaigns. In Russia all the dignities and

functions are assimilated to corresponding military grades, from the lowest to the topmost rung of the ladder; nevertheless, the marshal had never seen a battlefield.

'I trust you are pleased, marshal,' said the King of Prussia at the termination of the manœuvres.

'Much pleased indeed, sire, although the whole of it is altogether beyond my competence; I am only a civil marshal.'

'You are indeed very civil, marshal; unfortunately we have no such grades in our army,' replied Frederick.

Political gossip formed the main item of our conversation that evening. 'The intervention of Razumowski,' remarked one of a group, 'and his conciliatory efforts throughout have by no means been rewarded too highly. The quarrel was getting envenomed, I have been told. One of the most eminent of European plenipotentiaries expressed himself in the course of the discussion with great firmness upon Alexander's pretensions to the throne of Poland. The Grand-Duke Constantine got angry, and showed his anger by a somewhat too energetic gesture, after which he left in hot haste. According to well-informed people, the diplomatist is meditating a piece of revenge. Considering that he is a man of wit, we may expect something odd.'

'No,' replied another, 'that's not the cause of the grand-duke's abrupt departure. The minister in question wrote to Prince Hardenberg some sentences calculated to displease the Russian monarch. By a strange fatality the document fell into the hands of Alexander, and this led to very lively explanations. Lord Castlereagh sided with Austria. Matters reached

such a point that one of the monarchs, forgetting his usual reserve, flung his glove on the table.

‘“Would your majesty wish for war?” asked the English plenipotentiary.

‘“Perhaps, monsieur.”

‘“I was not aware,” Castlereagh replied, “that any war was to be undertaken without English guineas.” And appeasement,’ added the speaker, ‘has not progressed an inch, in spite of the kindly efforts of our new prince.’[81]

‘Will the King of Saxony be reinstated in his kingdom in spite of Prussia, which covets it? King Friedrich-Wilhelm is very angry with M. de Talleyrand,’ said a third interlocutor. ‘The king lately remonstrated with M. de Talleyrand for too warmly espousing the cause of the Saxon monarch, that sole traitor, as he put it, to the cause of Europe.

‘“Traitor!” echoed Talleyrand. “And from what date, sire?” Honestly, Frederick-Augustus ought to be forgiven everything, if there be anything to forgive, if for no other reason than the justice of the repartee.’

‘That excellent prince has done much better than that,’ replied an interlocutor. ‘Lest some untoward event should happen, he has taken care to make a little purse for himself, from which he has detached a few millions for the benefit of two personages disposing of a great deal of influence in Vienna. This golden key will open the doors of his kingdom much more quickly than all the protocols of the Congress.’

All at once, and without the least transition, the talk turned on Lord Stewart and on some mishaps due to his overweening conceit. ‘For the last four

days,' said some one, 'his lordship has not been seen on foot or in his magnificent carriage. According to rumour, his face has been more or less damaged. He had a quarrel on the Danube bridge with a couple of hackney drivers, and immediately jumping off his seat, his excellency, waving his arms like the sails of a windmill, challenged his adversaries to an English boxing match. The Vienna coachman, however, knows nothing, either theoretically or practically of "fisticuffs," and consequently our two Automédons' [the French equivalent for our 'Jehu,' and an allusion to Achilles' charioteer] 'bravely grasped their whips, and first with the thongs and afterwards with the handles, belaboured his lordship with blows, without the least respect for his "pretty" face. They left him lying on the ground, bruised all over, and disappeared as quickly as their horses would take them.

'Milord has bad luck, but his conceit seems incorrigible. Lately, on leaving the theatre, he happened to be behind the daughter of the Comtesse Co—— on the grand staircase. There was a great crush, and, taking advantage of it, his lordship was guilty of an act of impudent familiarity, which he might have found to his cost could only be washed out with blood. Without being in the least disconcerted, the young, handsome, and innocent girl quietly turned round and gave him a sound box on the ears, as a warning to leave innocence and beauty alone. Naturally, his lordship has been the laughing-stock of everybody, as he often is, for nothing waits so surely upon conceit and fatuous vanity as derision.'

'Have the Genoese envoys obtained an audience at last?' asked some one, 'Or have they been driven

away from all the diplomatic doors at which they knocked for a hearing.'

'They ought to be well pleased,' was the answer. 'Weaned with their applications, M. de Metternich has given them the desired interview and overwhelmed them with his politeness. They wish to constitute themselves into an independent State. The minister listened to every word they said, and when they left off speaking, told them that Genoa would be incorporated with Piedmont. Our Genoese objected violently. M. de Metternich told them that the affair was settled, irrevocably settled, and bowed them out even more politely than he "bowed them in." He might have saved them their breath.'

'The Duchesse de ——, not to be behindhand with the Princesse de ——, who has made her lover an ambassador, has made hers a general, though he has never seen a battle. It's of no consequence, seeing that the Congress, in virtue of its wisdom, is to put an end to all war both in the immediate and distant future.'

'Love turns other heads besides these,' chimed in the first speaker. 'A great personage happened to see a Viennese work-girl somewhere on the ramparts, and has fallen a victim to her rosy face and elegant figure. There's no doubt about it; he is thoroughly in love; he lavishes presents on his very easy conquest, and altogether forgetting his rôle of sovereign, he has thrown all reserve to the winds, and given her his portrait set with diamonds. In days gone by the Court ladies would have objected to such a *mésalliance*.'

Some one threw in a word about the balls given by Lady Castlereagh, and this led to remarks on his lordship's pronounced love for dancing. 'The taste is

easily explained, it belongs to all times and all ages,' was the comment. 'Aspasia taught Socrates to dance; and when he was fifty-six years old Cato the Censor danced even more often than his lordship. It is doubtful whether either of these made himself as ridiculous as that lank body of his lordship dancing a jig, and lifting his long spindle-shanks, keeping time to the music. It is indeed a diverting spectacle. What a windfall this would be to those clever English caricaturists, if one could only get them to come to Vienna! At any rate, the dancing master of his lordship, in case of his becoming prime minister, will have no occasion to repeat what the dancing master of the [Earl?] of Oxford said on learning that Elizabeth had made his pupil her great-chancellor: "Truly, I fail to see what merit the queen could find in this Barclay? I had him in hand for two years, and was unable to make anything of him."'

'In spite of the express declaration of the sovereigns, who have settled among themselves the questions of rank and precedence in accordance with their age, disagreements on the subject crop up every day,' said somebody who had hitherto been silent. 'The bickering between the minister of Würtemberg and the Hanoverian minister is without importance; nothing has come of it save the retirement of the Würtemberger and the appointment of the Comte de Wintzingerode in his stead. But the quarrel between the Princesse de Lichtenstein and the Princesse Esterhazy is not so trivial. The one claims precedence over the other in virtue of her husband being the most ancient prince of the empire.'

'It would be easy enough to settle that matter,' was the reply from the other side of the table. 'Let them apply to those ladies the rule adopted by the

sovereigns; in other words, let age rule precedence, and you may be sure that neither of them will want to go first.'

'Here is a strange pendant to the adventure of the too conscientious Vatel, whose disappointment and death have been immortalised by Mme. de Sévigné. The *chef* at Chantilly killed himself because the fish for the dinner failed him; the Baron de —— killed himself through having eaten too much fish.'

'What's the good of joking about such a sad event?'

'I am not joking, I am telling you the unvarnished truth. The poor deceased was a slave to etiquette, and having partaken too freely of some delicious fish, he felt thoroughly uncomfortable in consequence. He was invited to make a fourth at a rubber of whist with the Grand-Duke of Baden, a Princesse de C——, and his Majesty of Bavaria; and in spite of his bodily and moral agony, he dared not refuse. But the ordeal proved too much, and when concealment of the situation was no longer possible he rushed away, went home, and shot himself. Everybody regrets his death, because he was a general favorite.'[82]

'Your great diplomatist, this time in thorough agreement with the majority of the plenipotentiaries, made another king yesterday,' said an opposite neighbour, addressing me directly.

'Is it Prince Eugène?' I exclaimed spontaneously.

'Not exactly; it's the cheese called "Brie."'

'You are trying to mystify me.'

'I should not presume to do so on so slight an acquaintance, but I can assure you that it is a fact. M.

de Talleyrand gave a dinner party, and at the dessert, all the political questions were pretty well exhausted. When the cheese was on the table, the conversation drifted in the direction of that dainty. Lord Castlereagh was loud in praise of Stilton; Aldini was equally loud in praise of the Strachino of Milan; Zeltner naturally gave battle for his native Gruyère, and Baron de Falck, the Dutch minister, could not say enough for the product of Limburg, of which Peter the Great was so fond as to dole himself a certain quantity measured with his compasses, lest he should take too much. Talleyrand's guests were as undecided as they are on the question of the throne of Naples, which, according to some, will be taken from Murat, while, according to others, he'll be allowed to keep it. At that moment a servant entered the room to inform the ambassador of the arrival of a courier from France. "What has he brought?" asked Talleyrand. "Despatches from the Court, your excellency, and Brie cheeses." "Send the despatches to the chancellerie, and bring in the cheeses at once."

'The cheese was brought in. "Gentlemen," said M. de Talleyrand, "I abstained just now from breaking a lance in favour of a product of the French soil, but I leave you to judge for yourselves." The cheese is handed round, tasted, and the question of its superiority is put to the vote, with the result I have told you: Brie is proclaimed to be the king of cheeses.'

The clever little story was the last, and the company dispersed. Griffiths and I were due at the Baron Arnstein's, who gave a fête in his magnificent mansion on the Melgrub.

At that period, the principal Austrian bankers would not be behindhand with the Court in their

hospitality to the illustrious strangers at the Congress. Of course, the enormous influx of these brought into the bankers' hands large sums of money, a considerable percentage of which remained with them. Among those princely houses of finance there were, besides Baron Arnstein, the Gey-Mullers, the Eskeleses, and the Comte de Fries. They practically kept open house to strangers. The splendour of their hospitality was only equalled by its cordiality. The mansion of the Comte de Fries, on the Joseph-Platz, was one of the most beautiful in Vienna, and in no way inferior to the most magnificent palaces. Its owner himself was as famed for his personal elegance and his charming manners as for his immense wealth. The fêtes that were given in those mansions were remarkable even among those of the Congress; and on the evening in question, the scene at Baron Arnstein's was positively fairy-like. The rarest flowers from every clime hung in profusion about the staircases and the rooms, including the ball-room, and spread their exquisite perfumes, while their tints mingled harmoniously with the thousands of wax candles in crystal sconces, and the silk and gold of the hangings. The music of a band such as at that time only Vienna could produce fell gratefully upon the ear. In short, the whole presented one of those incomparable results only to be obtained by great wealth seconded by taste.

The best society of Vienna had forgathered there: all the influential personages of the Congress, all the strangers of distinction, all the heads of the princely houses made a point of being present; only the sovereigns themselves were absent. As a matter of course, all the charming women of which Vienna boasted at that period had responded to the invitation, and among these aristocratic beauties the

hostess herself, the Baronne Fanny d'Arnstein, and Mme. Gey-Muller, whom people had named 'la fille de l'air,' on account of her ethereal face and tall, slight figure, carried off the palm for attractiveness.

The entertainment began with a concert by the foremost artists of Vienna; the concert was followed by a ball, and the ball by a supper, in the providing for which the host seemed to have made it a point to defy both distance and season. He had positively brought together the products of every country and of every climate. The supper rooms were decorated with trees bearing ripe fruit, and it was really a curious experience, in the middle of the winter, to watch people pluck cherries, peaches, and apricots as in an orchard in Provence. It was the first attempt of the kind that had ever been made, and we went home, less astonished perhaps at the ingenuity displayed than at the constant craving for the entirely unprecedented in the way of enjoyment.

The palace of Prince Razumowski was blazing with light; every room was crowded with guests. Emperor Alexander had borrowed his ambassador's residence for a fête offered to the sovereigns in honour of his sister's birthday. The utmost interest was always evinced in the charming Catherine of Oldenburg, and perhaps the more because the Prince Royal of Würtemberg was constantly by her side. At every gathering, these two young people, rarely far apart, reminded one of the couple figuring so conspicuously in the opening pages of Mme. de Genlis's novel *Mademoiselle de Clermont*.



MARIE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

Love unquestionably owed a good turn to this sweet, pretty, and graceful young woman, to indemnify her for the very unpleasant episodes of her first marriage. In 1809, there had been a question of an alliance between France and Russia, an alliance which would have consolidated peace in Europe. The young sister of the Czar was to be the pledge of that alliance. Napoleon, who at that period was justified in looking upon Alexander as a friend, caused

diplomatic overtures to be made. The Russian monarch freely gave his consent,[83] but all at once a hitherto unthought-of obstacle arose, in the shape of the invincible repugnance of the dowager-empress to Napoleon, a repugnance that ought to have been removed by Napoleon's magnanimous conduct to her son. When Alexander wished to sound his mother on that marriage by evincing a kind of partiality for it, she replied that it was henceforth out of the question, that two days previously she had given her word to the Grand-Duke of Oldenburg, to whom Catherine's hand was promised. Alexander was a most respectful and submissive son. He offered no objections; negotiations were broken off; the marriage of Napoleon with an Austrian arch-duchess was concluded, and there was a prospective sovereign for the island of Elba.

Sacrificed to a feeling of political repugnance, Catherine became Grand-Duchess of Oldenburg and established her Court at Tiver, a pretty town between Moscow and St. Petersburg—a small Court, recalling those of Ferrara and Florence during the most brilliant days of their artistic glory. Art, however, does not invariably contribute to a woman's happiness. United to a man whom she could not love, the grand-duchess fretted under her lot. At first people sympathised with her, finally they took no heed of, or became used to, her grief. Then, as if to realise sweeter dreams, came on the one hand the death of her husband, and on the other the love of a prince, young, handsome, brave, and amiable—a prince placed on the steps of a throne.

By a strange coincidence, the Prince Royal of Würtemberg had been similarly compelled to contract a marriage against his inclination.

Napoleon's will, all-powerful at that time over the king's mind, united the son, in spite of himself, to a Bavarian princess, a political alliance intended to make an end of all dissensions between the two states. From the first day of their union an unconquerable estrangement and a constant coolness had sprung up between the young couple, and consequently, at the fall of Napoleon, they were divorced. The Princess Charlotte of Bavaria returned to her father's Court. Unappreciated by a husband whose affection she had been unable to gain, she never uttered a word of reproach; her angelic temper and her unalterable kindness never failed her. Later on, the imperial crown of Austria was offered to her,[84] and eventually she shared one of the most powerful thrones of Europe. When her first husband learnt the news of the unexpected elevation of the woman he had neglected, but whose noble heart he had never misjudged, he exclaimed, 'I'll have, at any rate, one more friend at the Court of Vienna.'

Catherine of Russia and Wilhelm of Würtemberg both became free. From that moment a mutual and strong affection took possession of their hearts, which, constrained so long by the will of others, had learnt to appreciate the delights of natural attraction. How often in the shady glades of the Prater, or on the banks of the majestic stream flowing at its foot, have I seen them, emancipated for a little while from the etiquette of Courts, and yielding like ordinary mortals to the feeling that animated them. Far from the pomp and splendour of their ordinary surroundings, they perhaps confidentially made plans for the future, in the hope of a union which bade fair to be happy—the prince, young, manly, with a noble disposition and reputed for his brilliant courage; the grand-duchess conspicuous for her

intellectual and physical grace. Now and again a third came to interrupt this ‘dual solitude’; but his presence evidently made no difference; for the third comer was not only a brother, but a friend—no less a personage than Alexander himself, who appeared to be supping full with glory and happiness.

The fête given by the czar in honour of his charming sister was worthy in every respect of his brotherly affection and of its object. All the sovereigns, all the illustrious guests of the Congress, had repaired to it, and with him had come all the Russians of distinction: Nesselrode, Gagarine, Dolgorouki, Galitzin, Capo d’Istria, Narischkine, Souvaroff, Troubetzkoy, the two Volkonskis, Princesses Souvaroff, Bagration, Gagarine, and many others equally remarkable for their birth, wealth, beauty, and their distinguished manners. Practically, I found myself among all those magnificent Muscovite beings who had compelled my admiration at Moscow, St. Petersburg, and at Tulczim, at the Comtesse Potocka’s, where the year seemed to be made up of three hundred and sixty-five fêtes.

The rooms at Prince Razumowski’s were lighted with a profusion that reminded one of the resplendent rays of the sun. A vast riding-school had been converted into a ball-room; and to impart variety to the entertainment, the *corps de ballet* of the Imperial Theatre had organised a Muscovite *divertissement*, the minutest details of which were carried out with scrupulous exactness. Towards the middle of the ball, they made their appearance dressed as gipsies, and performed dances with which those supposed descendants of the Pharaohs enhance the fêtes of the rich and sensuous boyards. These dances, in virtue of their graceful movements and the

picturesqueness of the postures, are, according to that great traveller Griffiths, much superior to those of the bayadères of India.

The ball was opened by the inevitable and methodical polonaise. The fête was, however, marked in particular by a Russian dance, by one of the Court ladies of Empress Elizabeth and General Comte Orloff, one of the aides-de-camp of Emperor Alexander.[85] Both wore the Russian dress, the comte that of a young Muscovite, namely, a close-fitting caftan, tied round the waist by a cashmere scarf, a broad-brimmed hat, and gloves like those of the ancient knights; his partner was dressed like the women of Southern Russia, whose costumes vie in richness with those of all other nations. On her head, the hair arranged in flat bands in front and falling in long plaits behind, she wore a tiara of pearls and precious stones. The ornament harmonised perfectly with the rest of the costume, composed, as usual, of exceedingly bright-coloured material.

This Russian dance is absolutely delightful, representing as it does the pantomimic action of a somewhat impassioned courtship. It is like the Galatea of Virgil. The performers acquitted themselves in the most delightful manner, and were amply rewarded by the enthusiastic applause of the spectators.

The Russian dance was followed by mazurkas, a kind of quadrille, originally hailing from Massow. Among ball-room dances none demand greater agility and none lend themselves to more statuesque movements. In order that nothing might be wanting to the magnificence of this fête, there was, in accordance with the latest fashion in Vienna, a lottery. The prizes were many and handsome to a

degree. An apparently trivial circumstance lent an unexpected interest to the proceedings. Custom had decreed that each cavalier, if favoured by luck, should offer his prize to a lady. A rich sable cape fell to the lot of the Prince of Würtemberg: he immediately offered it to her in whose honour the entertainment was given. Verily, he had his reward. Handsome Grand-Duchess Catherine wore in her bosom a posy of flowers, fastened by a ribbon. She unfastened it, and presented it to the donor of the cape. The whole scene, which practically emphasised in public the existence of a quasi-secret attachment, elicited murmurs of approval and wishes for the young people's happiness. 'Hail to the future Queen of Würtemberg,' remarked Prince Koslowski to me; 'queen when it shall please the crowned Nimrod to vacate the place. In reality, no crown will have ever graced a more beautiful brow.' The episode, and the conjectures to which it gave rise, added another charm to this fête marked by so many.

The dancing had ceased, and the prince and I strolled through the vast rooms of the palace, which might easily have been mistaken for a temple erected to art, so numerous were the masterpieces collected there by its owner. Here pictures by the greatest painters of every school: Raphaels by the side of Rubenses, Van Dycks in juxtaposition to Correggios; there, a library filled to overflowing with most precious books and rare manuscripts; in a third spot a cabinet containing most exquisite specimens of ancient art and modern carving. The majority of the guests, however, seemed to prefer a gallery set apart for the marvels of the sculptor's chisel, among which was some of the best handiwork of Canova. The gallery was lighted by alabaster lamps, the soft glow of which seemed to throw into relief the perfection

of those statues apparently endowed with life.

About two in the morning they threw open the huge supper-room, lighted by thousands of wax candles. It contained fifty tables, and by that alone the number of guests might be estimated. Amidst banks of flowers was displayed all that Italy, Germany, France, and Russia had to offer in the way of rare fruit and other edibles: such as sturgeon from the Volga, oysters from Ostend and Cancale, truffles from Périgord, oranges from Sicily. Worthy of note was a pyramid of pine-apples, such as had never before been served on any board, and which had come direct from the imperial hothouses at Moscow for the czar's guests. There were strawberries all the way from England, grapes from France, looking as if they had just been cut from the trailing vine. Still more remarkable, on each of the fifty tables there stood a dish of cherries, despatched from St. Petersburg, notwithstanding the December cold, but at the cost of a silver rouble apiece. Regarding these events many years after their occurrence, I am often tempted to mistrust to a certain extent my recollections of all this lavish display.

This fête, which really deserved precedence among all the daily pomp and splendour of the Congress, was prolonged till dawn, when a breakfast was served and dancing was resumed. Only the need of rest made us regretfully bend our steps homeward and leave that magnificent palace where so many fair women and brave men had forgathered in the pursuit of pleasure.

Many years have gone by since that memorable night. The charming woman in whose honour the fête was given became the Queen of Würtemberg. Death claimed her prematurely as his victim. The

Prince Koslowski, who had been, like myself, an eye-witness of that charming love-episode at Vienna, and who was subsequently despatched as ambassador to her Court, saw her die of the same disease that carried away her brother, the emperor. And only a short time ago the son of Marie-Louise and the Comte de Neipperg[86] married the daughter of this Catherine of Russia who had been asked in marriage by Napoleon. How very truly Shakespeare exclaims: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

As for me, when my thoughts go back to that period of happiness and freedom from care called the Congress of Vienna, I always picture to myself sweet Catherine, not amidst all those fêtes, but strolling in the dusky glades of the Prater, where I so often saw her, proud of her love for the Prince Royal of Würtemberg and of her tender affection for her brother.

CHAPTER XI

The Last Love-Tryst of the Prince de Ligne—A Glance at the Past—Z——or the Consequences of Gaming—Gambling in Poland and in Russia—The Biter Bit—Masked Ball—The Prince de Ligne and a Domino—More Living Pictures—The Pasha of Surêne—Two Masked Ladies—Recollections of the Prince de Talleyrand.

I had spent the evening at the theatre of the Carinthian Gate, and was returning home by way of the ramparts, confident of meeting no one whom I knew; for on that night, in spite of the many strangers in Vienna and the multitude of fêtes, everything was unusually quiet long before midnight. It was magnificent weather for the time of the year. In the recess of a bastion jutting over the dry moat, I noticed a lank figure wrapped in a white cloak, which might easily have passed for that of Hamlet. Impelled by curiosity, I drew nearer, and to my utter astonishment recognised the Prince de Ligne.

‘What in Heaven’s name are you doing here, prince, at this hour of the night and in the biting cold?’

‘In love affairs the beginning only is delightful; consequently, I always find great delight in

recommencing. At your age, though, it was I who kept them waiting; at mine they keep me waiting; and, what's worse, they don't come.

'I am keeping an appointment, but as you can see for yourself, I am keeping it alone. Well, people forgive hunchbacks the exuberance of their dorsal excrescence; why, at my age, should not people forgive my exuberance?'

'If it be true that woman's happiness consists in the reflection of a man's glory, where is the woman who would not be proud to owe hers to you?'

The prince shook his head, and declaimed mock-tragically:

'"No, no; all things flee as age approaches,
All things go, illusion too:
Nature would have done much better
To keep that until the last."'

'I'll leave you to your appointment, prince,' I said.

'No, I'll wait no longer; lend me your arm and take me home.'

We slowly went in the direction of his house, and on the way his conversation betrayed the feeling of slighted pride; his words were marked by a tinge of melancholy which was new to me.

'I am inclined to believe that in life reflection comes as a last misfortune,' he said. 'Up to the present I have not been among those who think that growing old is in itself a merit. At the dawn of life love's dream balances its illusions on the spring within us. One carries the cup of pleasure to one's lips; one imagines it's going to last for ever, but years

come, time flies and delivers its Parthian darts; from that moment disenchantment attends everything, the colours fade out of one's existence. Ah me, I must get used to the idea.'

'But, prince, you attach too much importance to a trifling disappointment. You must put it down to the exactions of society, which those who are in it cannot always disregard.'

'No, no, there's an end of my illusions; everything warns me of the years accumulating behind me. I am no longer considered good for anything. In days gone by, at Versailles, I was consulted on this, that, and the other, on balls, fêtes, theatres, and so forth. At present my advice is dispensed with. My time is past, *my world* is dead. You'll tell me that no man is a prophet in his own country. A company of comedians has invaded the stage to drive me from it, or to hiss should I persist in remaining. My prophecies miss fire on account of the prophet's age. Tell me honestly, what is the worth of young men nowadays to justify the world in lavishing its favours on them? Envy has never entered my heart until this moment.' Then he harked back to his past, impelled by the kind of melancholy pleasure we all experience in retracing our road through life, even if it is beset with thorns.

'I had an intense admiration and passionate love for the science of warfare,' he added, 'and I may safely say that from the day I joined the regiment of dragoons from Ligne, I have won all my grades at the point of my sword. That science has been the occupation of my life; my labours have gained me many sterling friends. As a soldier and as a general I have done my duty.'

'History will forget neither the taking of Belgrade

nor the battle of Maxen, and your glorious share in both. It will also remember the brilliant welcome you received at Versailles when Maria-Theresa sent you thither bearing the news.'

'Yes, these are memories of which no one will be able to deprive me, and henceforth I'll exclusively wrap myself up in them. When the body threatens ruin, memory alone supports the structure, but merely as a hint of our being still alive. To my last moments, as a compensation for the vicissitudes of my own existence I shall be proud of having been on terms of intimate friendship with men upon whom the eyes of the universe were fixed. I may confess to having always been fond of glory; indifference to it is a mere pretence. Well, every succeeding day I become more and more convinced of the emptiness of what people conventionally call celebrity.' Then he drifted to the happy moments of his life.

'I have also passed through that delicious period of life when youth gets intoxicated with all kinds of flattering promises, which a riper age rarely keeps, and which old age altogether disperses. At that period, days fly like moments, and the moments are worth centuries. Happy he who knows how to profit by them! Life is a limpid cup which becomes troubled while one drinks from it; the first drops are like ambrosia; but the lees are at the bottom; the more agitated one's life is, the more bitter does the draught become at last. The loss, when all is said and done, is perhaps not so great. Man gets to his grave as the absent-minded get to their house. Here's the door of mine. Good-night, my dear lad. You, who are beginning your career, take care to employ every minute to the greatest advantage, and don't forget that the saddest days of our lives are counted in the

tale of our years just as much as the happiest. Delille was right when he said, “Our best days go first.”’

And I took my leave of this excellent prince, of this extraordinary man, whose only weakness consisted in not making his pleasures fit in with his age, and in persisting in keeping up a struggle with time, that invincible athlete whom, as yet, no one has conquered. Alas, he believed in the fable of Anacreon, whose love-affairs still provided wreaths of roses for his hoary locks at eighty.

This love-tryst of the Prince de Ligne was to be his last. When he talked thus of man’s arriving at the brink of the grave without thinking of it, he was far from perceiving that he himself already had one foot therein. Since then I have often reflected on the melancholy sadness of all his words, but the Prince de Ligne never seriously considered the idea of death. Not that he was afraid of it. At no time of his life did fear approach within an arm’s length of him. If now and again he spoke of old age with a kind of melancholy, it was because he dreaded the idea of not being in unison with the new generations around him, as he had been in unison with the friends of his youth. Thinking of all this, I continued my nocturnal stroll by myself, repeating the verses the prince had improvised on the subject, and I reached the hotel, the ‘Roman Emperor,’ just as the Comte Z—— was going in. To dispel the sad thoughts induced by the prince’s remarks, I accepted Count Z——‘s offer of a glass of punch and accompanied him to his apartments.

Z——,[87] the son of a favourite minister of Catherine II., had recently lost his father, who left him a considerable fortune, estimated at more than thirty thousand serfs. I had seen a great deal of him

while I was in St. Petersburg, where his birth, his gentle disposition, and his extensive attainments, much beyond his years, had made him a favourite in the highest circles. Having been appointed only a short time before a ‘gentleman of the chambers,’ he proposed to improve his education by travel, and he began at Vienna. It was starting with a most interesting preface the book of life, which, as he said, he wished to read from the first page to the last.

‘I have spent the evening at Prince Razumowski’s, who, as you know, is a relative. His palace is still littered with furniture, draperies, and flowers, the remains of the brilliant fête. Truly, the ruins of a ball are as interesting to contemplate as the ruins of monuments and empires.’

I, in my turn, told him of my meeting, and, the punch gradually dissipating my fit of melancholy, we began, like the selfish and unthinking young men we were, to joke about old men who, with the snows of many winters upon them, pretend to melt them in the sunny rays of love. I told him the adventure of the Comte de Maurepas which had so highly diverted the Court of Versailles at the period of his last ministry. Like the Prince de Ligne, M. de Maurepas, at eighty, had preserved the habits of extreme attentiveness to the fair sex which ought only to be indulged in by young men. The witty and handsome Marquise de —— was the object of those octogenarian attentions. Worried by Maurepas’ assiduities, to which there could be no possible sequel, she determined to put an end to them. The superannuated Lovelace was seated one day near her in her boudoir, and was commenting upon his unhappiness, caused by the want of feeling of the woman he adored. The marquise appeared touched

by the recital; the lover became more pressing, the marquise apparently more yielding. At last she murmured a faint consent, adding, however, 'First go and bolt the door.' Maurepas went to bolt it, not on the inside, but on the outside, and stole away on tiptoe without saying good-bye to the malicious fair one. The *dénouement* met with our full approval.

I was expecting next morning two Hungarian horses, which I had been assured were the best trotters in Vienna. Being anxious to try them at once, I asked Z—— if he would come with me to the Prater to do so. He promised. While talking about trotters, none of which in Europe come up, to my thinking, to those harnessed to the sledges at Moscow for the runs on the frozen Moskowa, the comte got into bed, being tired by the mazurkas in which he had the night before been compelled to initiate some German ladies, who experienced great difficulties in their transition from the stiff German minuet to the graceful elasticity of the Polish dance.

'Good-night, comte, I'll leave you to your well-earned rest. I'll put the lights out, and give one candle to your servant, I hope you'll have a good sleep, so that you may be ready to-morrow at twelve.' With this I left him. Next morning at twelve the horses were put to the cabriolet, and I went upstairs to fetch Z——; but when I got to his door, his servant told me he was asleep. 'What! asleep at twelve, when he went to bed before midnight. I think I'll wake him,' I said, and made my way into the room, where the curtains were drawn to exclude the daylight.

'Up, up!' I shouted, 'the horses are waiting for us. Or are you ill?'

He woke up, sat upright in bed, and began to rub

his eyes, as if to suppress his tears. ‘My dear father; why have I lost my father?’ he exclaimed.

‘Have you had a nightmare, dear comte? What has the memory of your father to do with the horses we are going to try?’

‘Alas, my friend, it’s not a dream, but a horrible reality. I lost two millions of roubles last night.’

‘Are you mad or joking? You are in bed as I left you when I put out the lights. Do you walk in your sleep, or are you not awake?’

‘No, friend, but I’m awaking from a sleep which I wish had been my last one. S—— and the Comte B —— entered the room immediately after you left it. They relighted the candles which you extinguished: we played all night, and I have lost two millions of roubles, for which I gave them my bills. Here, look for yourself.’

I stepped to the window and drew the curtains aside: the floor was littered with cards, which they must have got in the hotel, and the ruin of the young fellow had been accomplished before daylight.

‘This can only be a joke on their part, dear comte; make your mind easy. They could not possibly harbour the thought of despoiling a friend in that manner. They are also my friends, although I should certainly cease to consider them as such if they hesitated for a moment to destroy every trace of such a disgraceful night.’ Having said this, I immediately left him, to go to S——, to whom I submitted the same argument in order to persuade him to waive his claim. I said much more; I pointed out the consequences to himself if such a story came to the ears of the Emperor Alexander. Referring to the sovereign’s well-known dislike of any kind of

gaming, I did not disguise from him the possibility of the emperor taking up the matter personally, with a view of preventing such deplorable transactions in the future, and that he, S——, might be selected, not without some justification, as an example for the sake of enforcing the lesson. All my efforts to bring him to reason and to arouse a feeling of equity were in vain. He positively derided what he was pleased to call my sentimental pathos, and ended up by proposing a game for my cabriolet and horses, so that I might be enabled to preach from experience. I felt disgusted, and left him.

From the military man I proceeded to the diplomatist, who proved to be much more frigid than the other. With many fine phrases he tried to convince me that it was not disloyal or dishonourable to wake up a young man of twenty-one at midnight in order to despoil him of his fortune in a couple of hours.

'Is it worth while to make so much ado about the loss of a few *boumashkis-boumashkis?*'—being the name of Russian paper money—he said. 'We have only to look around us to find the same thing going on every day in another shape. You have merely to count the claimants to thrones they lost because the game went against them. Do you think people pay any heed to them? You may have noticed a gentleman who left when you came in. That's the Marquis de Brignoli. He came to Vienna to claim the independence of Genoa. The ambassador of a republic which is at its last gasp, he has treated the Congress to a most energetic protest, which you may read if you like, for I have it here. In spite of his logic, M. de Metternich politely bowed him out, and Genoa is to be given to Piedmont, which has won it,

and means to keep it. Venice disappears in spite of its ancient wisdom. Is it being swallowed up by the Adriatic? Not at all. It's Austria that has won it, and means to keep it. Malta only claims from the Congress its rock and arms to defend itself against all comers: England, it is told, has won it, and means to keep it. Prussia gains Saxony; Sweden gains Norway; Russia gains Poland. Europe in Vienna sits round a table covered with a green cloth; she is gambling for states, and a cast of the diplomatic dice involves the loss or the gain of a hundred thousand, nay, of a million, of heads.[88] Why should not I win a few bits of paper when luck favours me?'

'But from your friend, Monsieur le Comte?'

'They are very scrupulous about relatives here, not to say about friends, when it comes to the appropriation of thrones, aren't they. No, no, all this is so much nonsense. Figaro resolved the problem long ago: "What's worth taking, is worth keeping."'

What answer could I make to such maxims, except to treat them with contempt? I left him and went back to Z—— to inform him of the failure of my efforts.

'I felt certain it would be so,' he said. 'The sting of a serpent is less cruel than the ingratitude of a friend. There is but one way with people like this, and I'll employ it.'

He was quite himself now; he dressed and went out to call upon the grand-chamberlain, Narischkine, who was his superior in virtue of his Court charge. He intended to inform him of the disaster that had befallen him, and the means he meant to use for redress. He would not allow me to go with him; and I tried my horses by myself. I could have wished them,

in their rapid course, to carry me right away from the painful impressions of the last few hours.

Such episodes were by no means rare in Russia and in Poland. The fatal passion of gambling was carried to excess. It had become a frenzy, a positive madness. Russian and Polish society teemed with victims, the whole of whose fortunes had been lost at the gaming table in a dozen hours.

I remember that after Potocki's death at Tulczim, the children of his first marriage came into possession of his immense fortune. Two of these, educated at Leipzig, received during the life of their father only a few ducats per week for pocket-money. The moment they were the masters of their inheritance, they went headlong into all the excesses of gaming, and the elder of the two lost thirty millions of florins in three years by playing at faro with his own land-stewards. A short time after that his friend, M. de Fontenay, who had clung to him through good and evil fortune, had to borrow a hundred louis to have him buried at Aix-la-Chapelle, where he died.

Sometimes the incidents of those terrible gaming parties presented the most wonderful reversals of luck. Here is an instance. Prince Galitzin, one of the richest of Russian nobles, was playing on one occasion with the most persistent bad luck. Estates, serfs, revenues, town-houses, furniture, jewels, everything had been swallowed up. He had nothing left but his carriage. That was waiting for him outside; he staked it, and lost that in a few throws of the dice. A few minutes afterwards the horses were also gone. 'I did not stake the harness,' he said; 'it is all in silver, and has just come from St. Petersburg.'

His adversary nodded, and a game was begun for

the harness. At that moment, though, the luck turned as completely in the Prince's favour as a few moments previously it had been against him. In a few hours he not only won back the horses, the carriage, and the family jewels, but everything else he had lost so rapidly, and that, thanks to the harness, which literally seemed to be attached to the wheel of fortune. It is absolutely astounding to find that men are not positively shattered by those shocks of fortune. Galitzin was not ungrateful in his worship of the harness. In his palace at Moscow I have looked at it—in fact, it was pointed out to me, suspended in the most conspicuous spot of the building, and protected from the tiniest speck of dust by a framework of glass, like a precious relic, and as a tangible proof of the strange vicissitudes of gaming.

During my stay in Russia, that same Prince Galitzin was the victim of probably the cleverest piece of fraud ever perpetrated, in which his luck forsook him. He was a great amateur of diamonds and precious stones, and also claimed to be a judge. One day, in the card-room of the English club at Moscow, he noticed an Italian wearing a ring with a diamond of the first water, and of extraordinary size. The prince went up to the wearer of this magnificent jewel, and asked to be allowed to look at it. 'And you also, prince, are taken in by it,' replied the Italian. 'What looks to you like a diamond is only a bit of paste, very beautiful paste, but after all, paste.'

The prince shook his head. 'No paste ever sparkled like that. Will you mind confiding it to me for a few hours?' he asked. 'I wish to show it to the emperor's jeweller, in order to prove to him the rare degree of perfection imitation can attain.'

The Italian made not the least difficulty in

granting the request. The prince ran to the jeweller to ask him the value of the magnificent single stone. The dealer examined, weighed, and tested the thing, admitting that he had rarely seen so perfect a specimen of petrified carbon. ‘But it’s a bit of paste,’ exclaimed the prince with glee. The dealer examined and weighed again, subjected the stone to more tests, and finally pronounced the gem to be a diamond, a diamond of the first water, which in the trade would fetch at the lowest estimate a hundred thousand roubles, and for which he, if it was to be disposed of, would be willing to give eighty thousand. Galitzin makes the dealer repeat his words again and again, and finally returns to the card-room, where the Italian is engaged in a quiet game of piquet. The prince gives him his ring, asking him to sell it; to which the Italian replies that he is not in want of money, and that in any case the ring has not the slightest value. Galitzin will not take no for an answer, but cannot get the Italian to budge. He sets great store by the bauble, not because of its worth, because it has none, but for the associations attached to it, inasmuch as his mother gave it to him, exacting his promise never to part with it. Seduced by the prospect of an enormous bargain, Galitzin would take no refusal, offered ten thousand roubles, increased his offer to thirty thousand, and finally proposed fifty thousand.’

‘Very well, prince,’ said the Italian, as if weary of the struggle, ‘fifty thousand be it then; and you, gentlemen—’ this, turning to the lookers-on—‘you can bear witness that the prince compels me to sell him for fifty thousand roubles a mere bit of paste.’

‘Never mind, give me the ring,’ exclaimed Galitzin impatiently; ‘I know what I am doing.’

Thereupon the Italian took the ring off his finger and handed it to the prince, who, delighted with his purchase, gave him there and then a voucher for fifty thousand roubles, to be paid at sight by his business-manager. An hour afterwards the money was in the Italian's pocket, and the next morning Galitzin repaired once more to the jeweller's, telling him of his success in obtaining the diamond, and holding it up for his inspection.

'But this is only a bit of paste,' exclaims the dealer; 'a splendid bit of paste, but after all, paste. It's wonderful, though, how closely it resembles the single stone you showed me yesterday. It's the same size, the same cut, the same shape. It's calculated to deceive better judges than your excellency.'

His consternation notwithstanding, Galitzin soon perceived that he had been duped by an adroit scoundrel, who at the moment of handing him the ring had cleverly substituted a paste imitation of it, but an imitation calculated to impose upon all but the most expert. A hue-and-cry was raised after the Italian in Moscow, but immediately after securing the amount of his voucher, he had left. As for the prince, in addition to the loss of his money, he had the mortification of being pitied by no one; he was simply looked upon as 'the biter bit.'

The affair of Z—— made a great noise in Vienna. The enormous amount of his loss, the circumstances under which it was sustained, the place itself of the gambling transaction, everything pointed to a diabolically conceived combination, scarcely to be reconciled with the age of the gamblers, the oldest of whom was only three-and-twenty. The sequel fully confirmed my prediction to S——. Alexander had the deepest aversion to gamblers and gambling. From

that moment he withdrew his favour from S——, and eight months afterwards in Paris, in the private room of the Emperor at the Elysée Bourbon, S—— was forced to admit that he would willingly part with half of his fortune if the affair had never occurred, or if he had taken my advice about hushing it up.

Z—— and the Comte B—— fought a duel with swords, in which the latter was worsted, and the sum paid in settlement of his winnings was comparatively a modest one. The Emperor Alexander would neither forgive nor forget the affair. A few years later the young comte, knowing that in Russia it is not sufficient to be somebody, but that it is necessary to be also something, wrote to the emperor to be attached to the legation at Florence; but Alexander sent a refusal in the following terms:

'In consideration of the services rendered to our august mother by the Comte B——, your father, I excuse the glaring presumption of your request.'

Under the painful impression of that scene in the morning, I spent a sad day, full of depressing thoughts. The rapid ruin of Z——, the callousness of his two adversaries, the inevitable consequences of such a startling affair, did not make me feel disposed to enjoy any of the daily gaieties of the Congress. The arrival of Ypsilanti put an end to my serious mood. He came to take me to the masked ball given by the Court in the small hall set apart for routs, which was to be preceded by 'living pictures.' I at first refused, but was finally persuaded to accompany him.

The entertainment differed but little from similar ones that had gone before; at that period there was one almost every week. After a few turns through the magnificent rooms, which, as usual, afforded the

most complete and animated example of everything that wealth could procure and the constant craving for pleasure could relish, we went into the room arranged for 'the living pictures.' In the front rows, the emperors, the sovereigns, and queens, had already taken their seats; behind them were the political celebrities of the Congress. In a few minutes the curtain rose.

The first picture was 'la Conversation Espagnole,' and the second 'la Famille de Darius aux pieds d'Alexandre,' after the handsome painting of Lebrun. The Comte de Schönfeldt represented Alexander, and the charming Sophie Zichy impersonated Statira. The features of the male character were stamped with the gentle pride of the victor, still further tempered by the kindness and modesty of the hero; the comtesse, even more beautiful than the figure of Lebrun's painting, expressed both admiration and grief. The youngest and most charming women of the Court represented the daughters of Darius and the attendants of Statira. The heroic and touching expression of the principal personages, the numerous delightful figures, the fidelity of the attitudes, the arrangement of the light—in short, everything gave to the picture a completeness both elevated and sensuous, and it was not surprising to hear it unanimously applauded. It was followed by a performance of the sparkling comedy *Le Pacha de Surêne*, by M. Etienne. The principal parts were played by the Comtesses Zichy and Marassi, the Princesses Marie de Metternich and Thérèse Esterhazy, the Comte de Wallstein, the Prince Antoine Radziwill, and a few other distinguished personages. This pretty piece, interpreted with the ability of experienced actors, was greatly applauded.

After that we went to the ball-room. One of the first persons that caught my eye on entering was the Prince de Ligne. He was beaming with happiness, and his step was as elastic and graceful as that of any young man. It was not the same man who had confided his griefs to me on the previous night. On his arm hung a woman in a blue domino. Her figure, her voice, and the whole of her bearing fully explained the disappointment and regret of the prince at finding himself alone at the love-tryst. I brushed gently past him, and whispered in his ear: 'It appears that you were lacking in patience last night.' 'You are right,' was the answer. 'The great art of life is the exercise of patience.'

I went away, but I fancied I recognised the prince's companion. It was, unless I made a mistake, Mme. A—— P——, the young and charming Greek, who was attracting so much attention in Vienna. An unhappy love affair, of which the Prince de C—— was the hero, had aroused the interest of the fair and most impressionable half of the Austrian aristocracy; her great beauty had easily obtained for her many friends among the other half of the European celebrities. Her romantic story, which was told in whispers, was simple and touching. Having fallen a victim to the Prince de C——'s blandishments when she was still very young, she almost immediately became a mother. Both her existence and her heart were broken by desertion. There was no lack of would-be consolers; but doubtless her experience had taught her that a first lapse is only condoned on condition of its not being repeated. Unable to dispense with a protector, she judiciously chose the Prince de Ligne, whose great age, she probably thought, would silence all adverse comment. The liaison, it was said, remained strictly within the

limits of a platonic correspondence; the young Greek contributing her share by epistles such as all women of all countries and conditions know how to write; the illustrious old man replying with effusions of which he alone had preserved the secret. The latter contained the expression of a sentiment more intense, perhaps, than that of mere friendship, but tempered by the gentle logic of a wholly paternal affection.

Contrary to the invariable etiquette prevailing at state balls, where only the polonaise was danced, quadrilles were speedily organised. A few moments later I caught sight once more of the Prince de Ligne, but this time he was alone. As a matter of course, I went up to him. 'Just watch that pretty bayadère figuring in the quadrille close to us,' he said. 'Would you not take her for one of the most tantalizing girls at the ball? Well, before she had spoken three words I guessed her identity. It's young Alfred, the Comte de Woyna's brother.'

'A young man, prince?'

'A young man dressed as a girl. There's nothing surprising in that. Your celebrated dancer Duport came all the way from Paris to Vienna in woman's clothes. He alighted from his post-chaise at the Princesse Jean de Lichtenstein's, where he danced the whole of the evening, still in woman's clothes, and to the admiration of that circle of admirers, all of whom went to applaud him next evening at the theatre at the Court, where, still in female attire, he danced in the ballet of *Achille à Scyros*. Look you here, my boy: there are disguises elsewhere than at routs, and inasmuch as you have taken to collect the trifles I wrote during the spring of my life, as well as in its fall, I'll read you to-morrow one of the

transgressions of my youth, entitled, *Le Roman d'une Nuit*. Only my extreme youth can be the excuse for that.'

He referred once more to society; to the society he had bitterly stigmatised as ungrateful. 'I shall always consider myself fortunate in having been a witness of that unique spectacle, the Congress. In that varied crowd I look upon each individual as a separate page of the great book of society. Believe me, man is not as bad as he is painted. Woe to the misanthropic moralists who care to look only at the sombre side of him. They are the painters who only study nature at night.'

Amidst this boisterous, bustling throng, where people looked for their friends without finding them, though they might be elbowing each other, two female dominos came up to me and drew me away from the prince. One took my hand. 'Why were you in such a hurry to leave us?' she asked. The voice, which sounded altogether natural, was entirely unfamiliar to me. 'When a man addresses verses to a woman,' she went on, 'he assuredly does not expect her to travel three hundred leagues for the sake of thanking the author.'

'Gentle mask, Vienna is three hundred leagues from Paris, an equal distance from Naples, and as much from St. Petersburg, and in all these places I have unfortunately addressed verses to ladies. I must therefore ask you to be more explicit, for unless you are, I shall be travelling a long while in search of my unknown heroine.'

'Very well, let us say it was at St. Petersburg, and that Lafont set them to music.'

'In that case I should not be sufficiently conceited

to aspire to thanks from the object of my poetry.'

'Why not, if the verses bestowed caused pleasure?'

'Or,' added her companion, who had hitherto been silent, 'if the proof of the pleasure is the thanks offered.'

It has been said with truth that the whole destiny of a life is decided in an instant. I immediately recognised the voice, which I had only heard once before. The strange and brilliant dream of a night was about to be reproduced a second time with all its former illusions. I did not know what to say; the liberty of speech, tacitly admitted under cover of a mask, only added to my confusion. 'Have you nothing to say?' asked the same voice. 'Sweet mask,' I replied, 'the timid bird may sing at sunrise, only the eagle dare fixedly look at the sun in its zenith.'

Thereupon I endeavoured to get my two interlocutors out of the crowd, in order to be more free in the interview, which I felt was to decide the whole of my life, but Grand-Chamberlain Narischkine came up to us, recognised the ladies, took their arms and led them away. I had no longer any doubt. I had met once more the angel of a dream the realisation of which would not occur on earth.

I remained rooted to the spot, then rushed after the dominos like a madman. I saw nothing, I heard nothing except the magic words that had gone to the core of my heart. My pursuit was in vain, the crowd had parted us for evermore.

In one of the quadrangular rooms I came upon the Prince Cariati talking very animatedly to a lady disguised as a gipsy, who immediately revealed her *incognita*. It was the Comtesse Zamoyska, our

neighbour on the Jaeger Zeill.

'I wish you to join our plot,' she said; 'it 's a complicated piece of mystification, the sequel to an intrigue begun at one of these balls, which has lasted now for several weeks. The personage I wish to mystify is worthy of my attempt.' Without knowing or caring much what I did, I fell in with the wish of the comtesse, who left us, laughing.

I was getting weary of it all, when I noticed my friend M. Achille Rouen occupying a rout seat all by himself, and apparently as bored as I was. I asked him if he had seen the dominos of whom I was in search. 'If you mean the two who were with Narischkine,' he replied, giving me an exact description of them, 'they left the ball a quarter of an hour ago.'

From that moment the charm of the evening seemed to have vanished, as far as I was concerned. We began chatting about the Congress and the current news, and as a matter of course the name of M. de Talleyrand cropped up. No other name was so often mentioned in people's comments on the difficult and critical questions of the moment. Achille Rouen, who never missed a day without seeing him, was sincerely attached to him.

'It's impossible to know M. de Talleyrand thoroughly without liking him,' he said. 'All those who have come in close contact with him judge him as I do. He is an inexplicable, I might say indefinable, amalgam of simplicity and lofty thoughts, of grace and logic, of critical faculty and courteous tolerance. In one's intercourse with him, one learns almost unconsciously the history and politics of all times, and thousands of stories in connection with every Court; his company is

practically a guide through an enormous gallery, where events are as instructively depicted as personages.'

'And in spite of this, my dear Achille, how people have rent him to pieces! Is mediocrity always to exact such a heavy toll from talent for the latter's success? For, if such be the case, the only happy people are those whose obscurity does not breed envy in others.'

'History will reward M. de Talleyrand for the evil his contemporaries have said of him. When, in the course of a long and difficult career, a statesman has preserved a great number of faithful friends, and counts but few enemies, one feels bound to credit him with having been wise and moderate, honourable and thoroughly able. In the prince's case, the heart is even better than the ability. Not long ago, M. de R—— came to borrow twenty thousand francs of him. M. de Talleyrand lent them. A month later the news came that in consequence of business reverses, M. de R—— had blown his brains out. "I am glad I did not refuse him the money," exclaimed M. de Talleyrand, and one sentence like this suffices to paint the man.

'But,' Rouen went on, 'what is the circumstance to which he lately referred during a conversation, and which he said might have considerably influenced your life?'

'That circumstance, my dear Achille, never presents itself to my mind without reviving my regret at having allowed to escape one of the rare opportunities which offered themselves in one's young days. Everything in the way of creating for oneself a career, of making a friend, even a female friend, depends upon a moment. The goddess of

chance must be caught by the forelock as she rushes past; our regrets have no effect upon her when we have neglected her momentary proximity to us, I shall tell you how it happened. I had been living for something like two months at Raincy, where M. Ouvrard,[89] then at the height of his fortune, had offered me a couple of rooms in the building belonging to the fire engine. I was only seventeen; you are acquainted with the circumstances which at that period brought me into contact at such a youthful age with the whole of the society of what I must call "rejuvenated France." I had received an invitation to a dinner given by M. Davencourt, the newly appointed "Captain-General of the Hunt," in honour of his new functions. It took place in a kind of Russian hut built in the park, and at the end of a hunt. The other guests were MM. de Talleyrand, de Montrond,[90] Ouvrard; Admiral Bruix; Generals Lannes and Berthier. The only woman present was Mme. Grant, who subsequently married the Prince de Talleyrand. In spite of the many elements of interest and the clever guests, the conversation slackened; to give it a fillip, Ouvrard asked me how I had managed on the previous day to get back to Paris, my horse having got hurt while out hunting, and there being by a strange coincidence no other animal left in the stable.

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'In a very simple way,' I replied. 'As you said just now, there was not a horse to be had for love or money, and I had to be in Paris at three to meet Mme. Récamier, whom I would not have missed for anything, inasmuch as she was about to leave the capital immediately. When there is no chance of a horse or a carriage, the simplest means is to walk, so

I made up my mind to foot it. It was very hot, but at twelve o'clock I got into the plain about midway between Bondy and Pantin. I felt thoroughly knocked up, and, moreover, literally as hungry as a hunter; I stopped at a mill near the high road, and asked them to get me some breakfast. While it was being prepared, I began to think of my second want, and asked the miller if there was no means of getting a horse. "There is mine," he replied, "and for a crown of six francs it's at your service. It will take you very comfortably, and to-morrow, when I get to Paris, I'll come and fetch it from your house." The courser was brought to the door; it was about as high as an ass, and in fact performed the duties of one; it had no other equipment than a pack-saddle.

'"How am I to get on to that?" I said to the miller. "Haven't you got a riding-saddle? But there is one hanging on the wall."

'"Oh, that's my own saddle, my brand-new English saddle, and I don't let it out for hire, monsieur."

'In vain did I insist, and beg, and persuade. The miller was obstinate, and I might have saved my breath. I beheld myself riding through the streets of Paris perched on that lamentable pack-saddle, which had never carried anything but flour or manure. Assuredly the horse was of no use to me without the saddle. "Now, gentlemen," I said, interrupting my story and addressing my fellow-guests, "what would you have done in view of the miller's obstinacy?" Then I appealed to each in particular. "You, Monsieur Ouvrard, who, in virtue of your administrative capacities, admired by everybody, sustain our military glory by looking to the inner comforts of our soldiers? You, Davencourt, who, in

spite of all the ruses of the fox, put on its scent a dozen packs after they have lost it? You, Monsieur l'Amiral, who brave both the storm and the guns of the enemy? You, Generals Berthier and Lannes, who in Italy and in Egypt proved yourselves the Parmenios of the new Alexander? And finally you, Monsieur de Talleyrand, who as our Minister of Foreign Affairs have shown and continue to show your profound observation of men and things:—what would you have done to get hold of the saddle the miller refused to lend at any price?" There was no answer, they only laughed. "May I remind you," I said, "that laughter scarcely contributes a reply. I have, however, already discovered the master of all of you," I went on, turning to Mme. Grant. "Her smile shows me that she has guessed my last resource. Yes, madame, you guessed rightly; I appealed to the miller's wife, and with a few carefully chosen words, managed to enlist her sympathy. The new saddle, the horse, and the mill if I had been in need of it, were finally at my disposal. Such, in the cottage as in the palace, is the power of feminine influence."

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'No sooner had I finished my break-neck story than loud applause broke forth, followed by the drinking of my health and to the result of my negotiation. Encouraged by everybody's approval, I began to talk, like the boy I was, right and left, and my remarks were evidently relished by Mme. Grant. M. de Talleyrand, who at that period was very much in love with her, because, as he said, she had everything that completed the charm of a woman, namely, a soft skin, a sweet breath, and a sweet temper—M. de Talleyrand seemed equally pleased

with me. The rest of the guests followed his lead, considering it easier to adopt the opinion of a clever man than to go to the trouble of making one for themselves.

'When we left the table, M. de Talleyrand beckoned me to a corner of the room and talked to me for a considerable time. He seemed to enjoy the account of my travels in Sweden and in Denmark. The description of the shelling of Copenhagen, at which I was present, interested him. My remarks on all those countries, on the *émigrés* in Hamburg, and on Hamburg itself, he qualified as exceedingly just. "Come and see me in Paris to-morrow," he said. "I'll expect you. But you are very young, and perhaps you'll forget. Promise me that you'll not fail to come." Saying which he grasped my hands very affectionately. Mme. Grant, who had joined us, was equally pressing. I promised, and I ought to have kept my promise, for it was one of those lucky opportunities which often decide the whole of a man's life and which the great Frederick called "His Majesty, Accident."

'But, my dear Achille, happiness is a ball after which we constantly run and then push with our feet when we have come up with it. I did not keep my appointment with M. de Talleyrand. That unfortunate shyness which too often paralyses youth had once more got the upper hand. I'll not go as far as to say that I was practically frightened at the possible consequences of this good-will towards me. But I did ask myself what people could offer me in exchange for that constant succession of happiness, of maddening joys which at that moment made up my existence? I dreaded the end of a dream which my thoughtlessness, my ignorance of all serious

things, sought to prolong. The contact with, the goodwill of, such a man, his influence, would have given a different direction to my ideas and to my career; in short, would have finally created for me a different life. Yes, friend, the goddess of chance absolutely stood in my path, and I was foolish enough not to catch hold of her. I learnt too late that her favour has wings, as desire is said to have.'

'I am not surprised at the prince's recollection of the incident. His memory is excellent.'

'Since then I have often thought the matter over, and always regretted my neglect to let M. de Talleyrand know the causes of my apparent lack of gratitude.'

'Your story reminds me of one I heard recently in Rome in connection with the banker Torlonia, whose enormous fortune is, again, a consequence of one of those inspirations that decide the fate of a man.

'Torlonia, who sprang from very humble people, began by a small traffic of jewellery between Paris and Rome. A short time afterwards he established himself as a banker, and then an unhoped-for and altogether unexpected circumstance brought him in contact in a very strange manner with Cardinal Chiaramonti. At the death of Pius VI. the conclave for the election of a new Pope was obliged to assemble at Venice. Chiaramonti positively had not the money to pay his travelling expenses, and Torlonia advanced him three or four hundred crowns without much thought as to the small risk involved, and certainly without foreseeing the consequences. Chiaramonti proceeded to Venice, where, in the church of St. George's (?), he was elected to the papacy. As a proof of his gratitude, the new Sovereign Pontiff appointed him Court Banker, then

made him a marquis and finally a duke. To-day, thanks to that small loan, Torlonia is one of the wealthiest capitalists of Europe.'

These last words had just been spoken when Ypsilanti, Tettenborn, and some other friends came to tell us that supper was being served. We followed them to the supper-room, where the conversation turned once more on the subject of M. de Talleyrand and his remarkable influence on the deliberations of the Congress. Everybody was agreed that this preponderance was not due either to mere chance or to the just appreciation of his political knowledge, but to his character, which had laid it down as a principle that the first and foremost essential of all diplomatic negotiations was an impenetrable discretion; and to the fact of his having imbued all those whom he employed with the same reserve. In connection with this, some one cited the recent reply of M. D—— in a gathering of friends where M. de Talleyrand and the particulars of his life were being discussed.

M. D——, who had been with M. de Talleyrand for twenty years, accompanied him to the Congress. People naturally concluded that this long intimacy had made M. D—— familiar with a number of particulars of the minister's life, and bearing also upon the events with which he had been mixed up. Worried with questions, M. D—— invariably replied that he knew nothing; but the questioners would not be satisfied, and returned to the charge. 'Very well,' finally said M. D——, 'I'll tell you a peculiar and altogether unknown fact in connection with M. de Talleyrand. Since Louis XV. he's the only man who can open a soft-boiled egg with one backward stroke of his knife without spilling a drop of the contents of

the shell. That's the only peculiarity I know in connection with him.' Discretion had scored a decisive victory. From that moment the questions ceased.

The topic of M. de Talleyrand seemed really inexhaustible. More stories about him were told, and then the Prince de Reuss came up to our table, said a few words to M. Rouen, and once more left us.

'It was his father, the reigning prince,' said one of our friends, 'who at the time of the Directory began an official despatch in the following terms: "The Prince de Reuss begs to acknowledge the existence of the French Republic." M. de Talleyrand, who in his capacity of Minister of Foreign Affairs had to reply to the missive, began his document with: "The French Republic feels most flattered at making the acquaintance of the Prince de Reuss."'

On leaving my friends, I could not help reflecting with regret upon my adventure at Raincy, the recollection of which had so unexpectedly cropped up a few hours previously. I kept thinking of the chance offered to me by M. de Talleyrand, which my lack of foresight had caused me to disdain.

CHAPTER XII

Illness of the Prince de Ligne—The Comte de Witt —Ambassador Golowkin—Doctor Malfati— The Prince gets worse—Last Sallies of the Moribund—General Grief—Portrait of the Prince de Ligne—His Funeral.

One of the most painful events of my life, namely, the death of the Prince de Ligne, also damped the gaieties of the Congress. The event affected me so deeply, and it was so unexpected by me, that, after many years, I still vividly remember the particulars. I was on my way to pay my quasi-daily visit when, not far from the prince's residence, I met the Comte de Witt, who wished to accompany me. The prince was in bed and ailing. He had caught a chill at that ill-fated appointment on the rampart; and on the previous evening at the ball, where he appeared so thoroughly consoled, he had been rash enough to go out without a cloak in the bitter cold in order to take some ladies to their carriage. As yet there were no grave symptoms; he was only feverish, and had passed a very restless night.

Nevertheless, he welcomed us with the cordial grace that never failed him, and we chatted about the crowd of strangers in Vienna and the latest rumours of the Congress; and finally we got to military matters, the favourite subject of the

octogenarian marshal and of the young Russian general. To judge by his spirited remarks, there seemed no cause for anxiety, and the Comte de Witt as a parting sentence said how sorry Vienna would feel at the news of its brightest ornament being ill. He answered with a particularly atrocious pun, attributed to the Marquis de Bièvre, which seemed to afford him great amusement, and expressed the intention of getting well again in a short time if only to spite the gossip-mongers of the capital.

When the Comte de Witt was gone, the prince referred to the comte's mother, to 'his exquisitely beautiful mother,' as he expressed it, 'whose image rises before me the moment I catch a glimpse of her son and reminds me of the best years of my life. That type of beauty is lost,' he went on. 'It was a combination of Eastern loveliness and Western grace. You ought to have seen her, that Comtesse de Witt, when for the first time she appeared at the Court of France. No words of mine can convey an idea of the effect she produced, of the universal enthusiasm she aroused. I remember that, hearing her beautiful eyes —which were, in fact, the most beautiful conceivable —constantly mentioned, she imagined that the adjective and the substantive were inseparable. One day Marie-Antoinette said to her; "What's the matter, comtesse, you do not appear to be well?" "Madame," was the answer, "I have got a pain in my beautiful eyes." As you may imagine, this ingenuous, delightfully naïve reply went the round, and justly applied to the lovely creature.'

I noticed that talking seemed to tire him, and I left, not without a vague feeling of sadness and anxiety. I felt depressed all day, and in order to verify my apprehensions of the morning I went back

at night. Doctor Malfati[91] and the Comte Golowkin, known in connection with his unsuccessful mission to China, were with him, and the former was warning him against his want of care, which might be attended with serious consequences. Since the morning violent erysipelas had set in; the patient seemed much weaker. Golowkin, who had no more faith than Molière in doctors and the art of healing, was trying to dispel his uneasiness. 'With all due deference to the faculty,' replied the charming old man, 'I have always belonged to the sect of unbelievers where medicine was concerned. You know the remedies I employed during the famous journey with the great Catherine in Taurida. She was very anxious that I should submit to some of the dictates of Hippocrates. "I have got a peculiar way of treating myself," I replied. "When I am ill, I send for my two friends, Ségur and Cobentzel: I purge the one and bleed the other; and that as a rule cures me."'

'Times are changed, prince,' said the doctor, somewhat nettled; 'and if my memory does not mislead me, six lustres have gone by since then. Just let us count the years a bit. They make, as far as I can reckon——'

'Stay, stay, doctor,' exclaimed the patient in a lively tone, 'don't let's count anything; I have never counted my enemies. And you, a clever man, you are telling me "times are changed." Who in the world could persuade himself that age changes one's face. Is it not the same in the morning when we get up as it was the previous evening when we went to bed? People here imagine, perhaps, that having exhausted all kinds of pleasure, I am going to relieve their monotony by giving them the spectacle of a field-marshal's funeral. No, I am not a sufficiently good

courtier to be the complacent actor in such an entertainment. I have no wish to divert the royal pit of the Congress Theatre in that way.'

These well-known words of the Prince de Ligne have always been strangely misquoted. Historians have lent to them a kind of philosophy, desirable, no doubt, but altogether unintended by the speaker. All have made him say: 'I keep for these kings the spectacle of a field-marshal's funeral.'

Not one of those historians heard him as I did; not one of them knew or even suspected the real character of that illustrious old man.

The prince went on. 'I do not intend using the epitaph of my friend the Marquis de Bonnay for a long time to come. I'll defer the business of cutting his clever lines into marble for a while.'[92]

Malfati, though strongly recommending great care, made it a point to reassure him, and to dismiss all idea of death.

'It will have to come to that after all, I know. I was seriously thinking of it all night. Death suits many people. I once had the fancy of proving this in several articles I wrote hurriedly. I'll touch them up and complete them later on. As for you,' turning to us, 'listen and look, in order to find out if you happen to belong to these categories; don't worry about me. As for the doctor, it will serve him as a text when he wishes to preach resignation to his patients.' Saying which, he took from under his pillow a book and began to read to us. Some of his reflections, apart from their original and piquant style, had also the merit of a comforting and gentle philosophic teaching.

After that short moral lecture, Malfati left us.

Golowkin, in order to amuse the invalid, told him some of the incidents of his mission to China; the variety of the pictures seemed to brighten him. Gradually dismissing the possibility of any danger, he began to refer cheerfully to some of the circumstances of his young days.

'When I was a child,' he said, 'the dragoons of the Ligne regiment carried me in turns in their arms. My fondness for soldiers dates from that period. It's a kind of affection which, contrary to the other, has often been repaid to me in coin of sterling devotion.'

In spite of his cheerfulness, six or eight hours had sufficed to make him look gaunt and wan. He could no longer smile without an effort; there seemed to be a short but terrible struggle going on between him and bodily pain. Finally his courage and energy got the upper hand; pain was for the moment vanquished.

His daughter, the Comtesse Palfi, came in to administer the potions prescribed by Malfati; we left them. When Golowkin and I were outside on the ramparts, we did not pretend to disguise our uneasiness from each other. Golowkin was sincerely attached to the prince.

At eight the next morning I was at the prince's with Griffiths, who, having all his life made the science of healing a particular study, felt only too pleased to assist one he liked so well. The prince was very depressed; the presentiment of his end made him sad. 'I know,' he said, 'nature will not be balked. We must vacate the space we occupy in this world for some other people. We must make up our minds to it. Nevertheless, I feel this: the greatest sting of death is the fact of leaving those whom we love.' I felt the tears getting into my eyes. 'Come, come,' he

said, ‘don’t be afraid, the “camarde” will be mistaken once more.[93] To-morrow my pain will be gone like the dream of a night.’

Then he was silent for a few moments, as if pondering. ‘What a sad thing is the past,’ he remarked at last. ‘The recollection of it is horrid; if it has been a happy past, it’s hard to say to oneself, “I have been happy.” When one falls to thinking of one’s moments of glory and of happiness, of one’s first attempts, even of the games of childhood, the thoughts are sufficient to kill one there and then with regret. Nevertheless, if I could have my time over again, or could return on earth after my death, I should do almost everything I have already done. My poetry and my love-affairs are the greatest sins I have committed, and Heaven has never withheld its forgiveness for such errors. The only thing I should endeavour to do would be not to give the same persons a chance of being ungrateful to me. After all, I would only give others a chance....’

Throughout the day the greatest personages of Vienna, all the political and military celebrities and the sovereigns, sent at frequent intervals for news. The report of his illness had spread among all classes; the anxiety was general, and a large crowd gathered before his house, so intense was the interest in the remarkable man about to disappear. During the night, between the second and third day, his condition became rapidly and alarmingly worse. His family, bowed down with grief and dumb with despair, stood around his bed when Malfati came in. ‘I did not think,’ said the patient, ‘that I should make so much fuss at going. Truly, the uncertainty and briefness of our days are not worth the trouble of waiting.’ Then he began to talk with the greatest

gaiety about the bequests he had made. ‘The inheritance will not be difficult to divide; yet, it was necessary to proceed in orderly fashion. In accordance with an ancient custom, I must leave something to my company of trabans. Well, I have left them my posthumous works; the gift is worth a hundred thousand florins.’

They tried to change the conversation in order to divert his thoughts from the subject of death, but he constantly returned to it. ‘I have always liked the end of Petronius,’ he said. ‘Bent upon dying as he had lived, in the lap of luxury, he made them play some charming music and recite some beautiful verses. I’ll do better than that: surrounded by those whom I love, I’ll breathe my last in the arms of friendship. Don’t be sad,’ he said a few moments later, ‘perhaps we’ll not part yet. One illness sometimes prevents a more serious one. Take heart; doubt is a most precious gift from nature. Besides, I am by no means convinced that the prophecy of Etrella is to be realised so soon.’

‘What prophecy, prince?’ asked Malfati.

‘It dates from my last journeys to Paris. The Duc d’Orléans, to whom I was much attached, for he could be a staunch friend, took me one day on leaving the Palais-Royal to a sorcerer, a fortune-teller, whom they called the “Great Etrella.” This Parisian gipsy was perched in a fifth floor in the Rue de Froid-manteau. He foretold to the Duc d’Orléans some surprising things to which my want of faith prevented me from paying much attention. As for me, he told me that I should die seven days after having heard a great noise. Since then I have heard the noise of two sieges, I have heard two powder-magazines blown up; and I did not die of the noise. I

fancy that during the present week there has been no great noise, except about small things—rumours, balls, fêtes, and intrigues. Many people live by them and through them. I have not heard it stated that anybody died of them.' He tried to smile. Suddenly, there was an access of great weakness, which frightened us. In a short time, though, he rallied once more. 'I feel it,' he said, 'the soul has worn out its dress. The strength to live is gone; the strength to love you all remains.'

At these words, all his children flung themselves on the bed, kissing his hands and bedewing them with tears. 'What are you doing?' he said, drawing his hands away. 'I am not a saint yet, children; or are you mistaking me for a relic?'

The joke produced a more painful sensation than the most agonising cry could have done. The doctor prevailed upon him to take a draught, which gave him some hours of peaceful sleep. When he awoke he had recovered his cheerfulness; the idea of death had vanished. He began even to jest about the terrible prognostics which, in spite of his weakness, he had overheard in the morning. 'Malfati, the "camarde's" messenger has given you to understand that she might pay me a visit this evening,'[94] he said. 'A truce to that kind of gallant diversion. I have never broken my appointments, but I mean to break this one. Yes, I have adjourned the writing of the verses which, like Hadrian, I intend to address to my soul about to leave my body.'

There was a lighted candle on a piece of furniture near the window. 'Blow that candle out,' he said to his servant: 'people can see it from the rampart; they'll mistake it for a wax taper, and they'll think I am dead.

‘Did not I tell you,’ he said, addressing himself to us, ‘that the verdicts of the faculty are not invariably without appeal. Decidedly, the newsmongers and idlers of the Graben will have to postpone their comments on my demise, at any rate this time. I hear that to keep their tongues and pens going they are spreading the rumour of the Empress of Russia’s pregnancy.’

He went on in the same tone, interrupting himself to discuss the plans of his journeys for the coming spring, and the travels he wished to complete. We, alas, were far from sharing his opinion, the ravages of the disease were too plainly discernible; practically there was no hope. Malfati when leaving had pronounced the situation to be exceedingly grave.

Towards the middle of the night the doctor’s apprehensions were fast being realised. The improvement of a few hours was all at once succeeded by a thorough prostration. Suddenly his strength seemed to revive; he sat up in bed and assumed a fighting attitude; his eyes were wide open, and shone with unusual brilliancy, he gesticulated violently and shouted: ‘Shut the door, put her outside, “la camarde,” the hideous hag.’ He was manifestly struggling with all his might against the ‘hideous hag’s’ grip, and gasping forth incoherent words, while we, standing by terror-stricken and paralysed with grief, could only answer him with sobs. This last effort exhausted him completely; he fell back unconscious. An hour later, God received his soul. It was the 13th December 1814.

His daughter, the Princesse de Clary, bent over him and closed his eyes.[95] His face no longer wore the expression of terror and anger that had

contracted it a moment before his death. His features had recovered their ordinary and placid expression, and the look of youth which had been theirs so long in virtue of his peace of mind and soul. A smile hovered on his lips, and the man, so extraordinary in everything, even after his death was perhaps handsomer than he had ever been at any period of his life. His noble face might have served as a model to the brush of Lesueur for his sublime heads of Heaven's elect. In default of the halo which is the pictorial symbol of everlasting happiness, there were the beams of genius and goodness. His immortality had commenced.

At the foot of the bed an old soldier was convulsed with sobs. It was the Major Docteur whom I had often met at the house. His affection for the illustrious old man partook of the nature of fanatical worship. It was said that there were ties of close blood relationship, but whether the tears coursing down that noble, scarred face were due to gratitude or admiration, or kinship, they plainly showed the extent of his loss and the bitterness of his grief.

The princess cut a few locks of her father's white hair and distributed them among us. We received them silently, bedewing them with our tears. I doubt whether they were ever parted with by any of the recipients.

The Prince de Ligne was in his eightieth year. With him disappeared one of the most brilliant lights of his century.[96]

He was the veteran of European elegance, and at eighty had preserved the vigour of a man in his prime added to the grace of youth. He also had the tastes of the young without ever becoming ridiculous in the slightest degree in consequence. Animated as

he was by the most cordial good-will towards them, young men, whom he treated as ‘chums,’ worshipped him and were never so happy as in his company.

His was a genuine and unostentatious philosophy. The revolution in Belgium deprived him of a great part of his wealth. He bore his losses with the utmost fortitude. Lavish like most men endowed with great imagination, he had left portions of his remaining fortune in every capital of Europe, and, in spite of his extravagance, had scattered even more wit than money.

The idea of death had perhaps never presented itself to him: the extent of his knowledge, the fantasy displayed in his taste, his fondness for the worldly life led by a society of which he might rightly claim to be an ornament—all this had provided him with a freshness of imagination, a vivacity of affection, and a kind of unfailing youth, the source of which resided in his mind and in his heart. He in every respect justified the saying of Maupertuis: ‘The body is a green fruit; it only becomes ripe at the moment of death.’

The Prince de Ligne was a field-marshal, the proprietor of a regiment of infantry (raised and subsequently maintained at his own expense), captain of the trabans and the guards of the Imperial Palace, a member of most of the European Orders, and a Knight of the Golden Fleece. He took a legitimate pride in reminding people that one of his ancestors, Jean de Ligne, Marshal of Hainault, had received that knighthood at the same time as Philip, the father of Charles V.

No official mourning was ordered for the illustrious deceased, nevertheless mourning was general, inasmuch as it was in everybody’s heart. For

a great number of years, the Viennese had come to look upon the Prince de Ligne as an object of respect and admiration, a feeling which was, perhaps, still further increased by the reverence shown him by foreigners. The Viennese no doubt also remembered the friendship that had bound him to their Emperor Joseph, and the 'fraternity of glory' that had subsisted between the prince and their most famous warriors; they could not forget the familiar footing on which he had lived with them and with all the celebrities of the previous century. To part with the man who spoke so admirably of all these, and reminded them so vividly of their heroes, was like losing them a second time.

The funeral of the Prince de Ligne took place with all the honours due to his rank, and with a pomp hitherto unknown at the burial of a private individual. The procession left his house at midday. It was composed of eight thousand infantry, several squadrons of cavalry, and four batteries of artillery. His company of trabans surrounded the funeral car; its officers carried the insignia of mourning. A herald-of-arms, on horseback, in black armour, wearing a black crape scarf, baldrick-fashion, and holding a drawn sword lowered, followed immediately afterwards; and then came the prince's own battle-charger, caparisoned in black spangled with silver stars. Behind the charger, and by the side of the family, came a great number of marshals, admirals, generals, belonging to nearly all the armies and navies of Europe. Among them, the Prince Eugène, Generals Tettenborn, Philippe de Hesse-Hombourg, Walmoden, Ouwaroff, de Witt, Ypsilanti, the Prince de Lorraine, the Duc de Richelieu, and all the notable personages who at that moment had forgathered in Vienna. Some of those captains, who

had come expressly to pay their last tribute to the man who had been their model, were on horseback and carried their swords bare.

The procession traversed part of the city on its way to the parish church, called the 'Scottish Church.' After the religious ceremony, the funeral continued its route to the Kalemberg, where the prince had requested to be buried.

The funeral procession of the field-marshal passed before the sovereigns, some of whom, like the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, had taken up their position on the site of the ramparts razed by the French. There was unaffected grief on their faces. Alexander, for instance, could not help remembering the admiration of his grandmother for the illustrious dead.

When the coffin was lowered into the vault, the sun shone out at full strength, and 'it seemed,' as Gentz said, 'as though he would salute for the last time the favourite of God and men.'

CHAPTER XIII

The Fire at the Razumowski Palace—The Prince's Great Wealth—The Vicissitudes of Court Favour in Russia—Prince Koslowski—A Reminiscence of the Duc d'Orléans—A Remark of Talleyrand—Fête at the Comtesse Zichy's—Emperor Alexander and his Ardent Wishes for Peace—New Year's Day, 1815—Grand Ball and Rout—Sir Sidney Smith's Dinner-Party at the Augarten—His Chequered Life, his Missions and his Projects at the Congress—The King of Bavaria without Money—Departure and Anger of the King of Würtemberg—The Queen of Westphalia—The Announcement of a Sleighing-Party—A Ball at Lord Castlereagh's.

It seemed as if every species of amusement had been exhausted for the gratification of the illustrious gathering at Vienna. Balls, hunts, banquets, *carrousels* were only a few of the forms pleasure had adopted in its pursuit. The new year was drawing near, and in order to inaugurate it under similar auspices of gaiety and happy freedom from care, the Austrian Court had announced sixteen grand fêtes or new assemblies for the forthcoming month of January. Suddenly, on a moonless night, the palace of Prince Razumowski caught fire, and in consequence of a rather stiff breeze the mischief spread rapidly, and in

a short time looked like Vesuvius in full blast. The excitement spread in due proportion, and everybody wished to catch a glimpse of the spectacle, worthy of the brush of a great artist. In a short time the roads leading to the structure were simply black with people.

At daybreak I also repaired to the spot. The Emperor of Austria had gone thither at the first news of the disaster. Several battalions of infantry, animated by his presence, preserved order, and did all they could to check the progress of the flames, without much apparent success. From amidst the snow-covered roofs arose dense clouds of smoke, which in turns hid and lighted up the burning building itself. Every now and again an explosion more violent than the rest literally caused burning beams to drop from on high. A shower of smaller flames threatened the various parts of the pile with total destruction. The yawning walls suddenly disclosed vast rooms, superb galleries crammed with precious furniture and art-treasures, which almost immediately became a prey to the fast-advancing monster. The pictures and the statues were flung headlong into the gardens and into the courts. If they escaped destruction by fire, they were shattered to pieces on the flagstones or saturated with the jets of water and the molten snow, which had converted the ground into a kind of quagmire. One magnificent gallery, decorated with a number of statues by Canova, could not be saved. Its floor had given way; and at that moment a feeling of profound consternation seemed to have taken possession of the enormous crowd. It was not surprising, for the Razumowski Palace constituted one of the sights of Vienna. It had taken twenty years to build it. Several times since the opening of the Congress, Emperor

Alexander had borrowed it of his ambassador. It was in these vast apartments that he had given some of the fêtes rivalling in pomp and splendour those of the Austrian Court; it was at the Razumowski Palace that he had gathered around a table of seven hundred covers all the political celebrities of Europe; it was at the Razumowski Palace that, but three weeks previously, he had so fitly celebrated the birthday of his sister, the Grand-Duchess of Oldenburg. Such, in short, were the splendour and charm of this magnificent palace that Empress Elizabeth had, it was said, seriously thought of renting it during the spring as her private residence.

For many, many years Razumowski had made a point of embellishing the place with every art-treasure that wealth could buy. The rooms themselves were decorated with as much taste as sumptuousness. Side by side with galleries containing masterpieces of pictorial and statuary art, there was a library, perhaps matchless anywhere, inasmuch as the rarest manuscripts and books were collected there. In short, the building was a unique specimen of Asiatic magnificence, carefully toned down by European taste.

In the costly ornamentation of that palace, Razumowski had spent a considerable part of his fortune: it was even said that his fortune had been impaired by it. That wealth, which was enormous, came to him from his father, Cyril Razumowski, the field-marshal, and the brother of that famous Alexis who was the favourite and subsequently the husband of Empress Elizabeth, who secretly married him at Perowo, near Moscow. The vagaries of luck, which has played so important a part in the history of Russia, were for Cyril what they were for the brother

of Catherine I. When the erewhile chorister-lad of the imperial chapel, Alexis Razumowski, had sprouted into the lover and minister of Empress Elizabeth, it all at once recurred to him that he had a brother. Alexis decided upon having him sent for, in order to give him a share of some of the good things that had come to himself. The brother herded flocks somewhere in Little Russia, and had no presentiment of the marvellous destiny in store for him. On the contrary, he was inclined to look upon the imperial emissaries who had come in search of him as so many recruiting-sergeants bent on converting him into a soldier. In his opinion, the wallet in which he carried his bread while tending his flock was a thousand times preferable to the grenadier's knapsack; hence, at the approach of the men in quest of him, he escaped, and hid himself in the woods. As a matter of course, they were on his track in a few days, and after a most obstinate resistance, he was bound and laden with fetters, and in that condition he made his first appearance at the Imperial Palace, whence he issued very soon, laden with wealth and favours, a field-marshal, and invested with the restored commandership of the Cossacks, a rank abolished by Peter the Great in consequence of the Mazeppa conspiracy. In addition to the most extensive powers, the latter office conferred upon him the right of levying tithes upon all the revenues of the provinces of his government; and this naturally became the source of one of the most enormous fortunes of Europe.

Exceedingly tactful and devoid of prejudice, Cyril Razumowski succeeded in maintaining himself in his great position during the reign of Catherine II., to whose elevation he was supposed to have contributed in no mean degree. The pomp and

splendour with which he surrounded himself, as well as his personal kindness of heart, seemed to have rendered him fully worthy of such unprecedented favours. Many traits are recorded of him proving his generosity as well as his nobleness of character. He had a steward, who for many years had managed his affairs, and who had acquired great influence over him. A poor gentleman of Little Russia, a neighbour of the marshal, was at loggerheads with the business man about some land, which, though of little or no importance to the wealthy Court dignitary, practically constituted the whole of the other's patrimony. The steward insisted upon the surrender of the property. The gentleman was thoroughly aware of Razumowski's inherent sense of right and justice, and, instead of trusting his all to the chances of a lawsuit—always uncertain in Russia, and notably where one's opponent happens to be very powerful—he made up his mind to go and find the marshal at St. Petersburg, and to plead his cause with him. The steward, having got wind of the affair, is beforehand, and on his arrival in the capital stigmatises the claim of the gentleman as an utterly unfounded pretension, and extracts from his master a promise to yield neither to solicitations nor prayers, but to remain firm. A short time afterwards the poor gentleman arrives upon the scene and explains his case, and succeeds in convincing the marshal so completely of the justice of his claim as thoroughly to move him. The picture of the other's total ruin is by no means to his taste; the promise to his steward is forgotten, and without saying a syllable he leaves the room for a small one adjoining it, and there in a few lines he draws up a document granting the contested land to his adversary. At the sight of the paper, the latter drops on his knees, where the

steward, entering at the same moment by another door, finds him. 'You see,' said Razumowski smiling, 'where I have brought him to.' The scene is worthy to figure by the side of that of Sully and Henri IV. at Fontainebleau, when the king said to his friend the minister, 'Rise, Rosny, these people might imagine that I was granting you a pardon for something.'

André Razumowski, his son, who had only received his princely title some short time before from Alexander as a reward for important services, had inherited several of those qualities which seem such dignified accompaniments to great wealth. He also had a remarkable and enlightened taste for art. The genuine type of the grand seigneur, he was at the same time wholly familiar with the less redundant graces of diplomatic courtesy. Most expensive in his taste and grandiose in his projects, he noticed one day that he might shorten the distance separating him from the Prater, and had a bridge thrown over an arm of the Danube. As the ambassador to the Austrian Court, he was on the most confidential footing with Prince de Metternich, the presiding spirit; and more than once, Razumowski, by his cleverness, had dissipated the clouds gathering over the discussions of the Congress.

The fire had meanwhile been got under, but that part of the palace looking out upon the gardens was irrevocably gone. Among the crowd of lookers-on, I noticed the Prince Koslowski. After the death of the Prince de Ligne, an instinctive feeling of friendship, and perhaps sympathy also, seemed to draw me nearer to that other friend. If, in the case of the old marshal, I had admired the treasures of experience and reason and that subtle and delicate appreciation

of society, in the case of the Russian prince I found a loftiness of views, an entire independence of judgment and expression about men and political events, too rare, perhaps, among diplomatists. His sprightly conversation bound many people to him, while at the same time his frankness commanded affection.

'This,' he said, when I got up to him, 'is a chapter to add to the vicissitudes of courtly favour and disgrace in Russia. Razumowski may consider himself fortunate to be quits at the cost of a palace half burnt down. He also has known the ups and downs of favour and disgrace; he also has known the sweets of power and the bitterness of exile. The history of my country could indeed be made into a most philosophical novel; it would, above all, provide a series of excellent moral lectures on the danger of vainglory and the frequency of revolutions. The last century has offered any number of examples. There is Menschikoff, a pastry cook's lad, who becomes a prince and a general, and is suddenly exiled, dying a couple of years after, without individually recovering his position. Biren, a servant, is raised to sovereign rank, and is practically master of the empire for nine years, until the day that Münnich, his rival, claps the fetters on him in the presence of his own guards, petrified with fear. Biren, however, regains favour, while Münnich himself expiates his sudden rise with twenty years' banishment to Siberia. Surgeon Lestocq, after having overthrown the Regent Anne, practically puts the crown on Elizabeth's head, and remains one of her principal advisers during her reign. He is, nevertheless, flung into prison, then set free, and finally almost entirely forgotten. The Princesse Daschkoff, the supposed soul of the plot that dragged

Peter III. from his throne to place his wife there, is soon misjudged by her whose plans she imprudently boasted to have inspired, and to whose grandeur she professed to have contributed. Finally, the plotters who took Paul I.'s life and crown are treated with the utmost harshness by him who owes his present power to them.

'Well,' he went on, after we had left the scene of the fire, 'the elevations are often as strange in their causes as the catastrophes are terrible in their effects. Judge for yourself. In consequence of my relationship to Prince Kourakine, I began my career in the secretarial department of the great chancellor Romanzoff. One day the latter was dictating an important despatch to me. I do not know how I managed it, but in my hurry, instead of emptying the pounce over the document, I emptied the inkstand over the beautiful white kerseymeres of the chief. That inkpot, so indiscriminately emptied, decided my fate. Romanzoff, as you may imagine, did not care to keep near him a secretary with such a distinct tendency to spoil his clothes, so he gave him a position as a state-councillor, where there was a good deal to control, but little to write. But for this trifling circumstance, I'd probably be vegetating now among the subalterns.'

Few men combined like the Prince Koslowski the liking for work, and the intelligent appreciation of it, joined to a remarkable and fiery eloquence. His learning was very varied and extensive, his memory most admirable. History had no secrets for him; he had mastered all the diplomatic transactions which for many centuries had regulated the fate of Europe. His manner of judging men was that of a philosophic statesman. All the political questions so often twisted

out of their natural shape by private interest he regarded in the light of a friend of humanity. A staunch partisan of all progress, he was fond of telling how he, like another illustrious personage already mentioned, had received equally deserved chastisement at the hands of an Austrian postillion. While travelling, when very young, on the frontiers of Prussia, he had struck the driver, whose horses did not keep pace with the traveller's impatience. The driver vigorously applied his whip to the back of the 'prentice diplomatist. 'Well, it was that Austrian who gave me my first lesson in liberalism,' said the prince, laughing, a decade later.

Koslowski quickly climbed the first rungs of the diplomatic ladder. Minister-plenipotentiary to the King of Sardinia, he had the good fortune to save the lives of several shipwrecked Frenchmen who had been made prisoners. Napoleon immediately sent the Legion of Honour to the representative of a sovereign with whom at that very moment he happened to be at war. The reward redounded as much to the honour of the Russian ambassador as to that of the French Emperor. It was at Cagliari, about the same period, that the Prince Koslowski became acquainted with the Duc d'Orléans, afterwards the King of the French. A similar love of knowledge, a similar desire for fathoming most things, drew these two together. Both had spent their earlier years in serious and assiduous studies. The chequered and adventurous life of the French prince had strengthened the studies with the experience derived from misfortune. These two took long walks by the sea-shore, and passed in review the gigantic events of which practically they were the eye-witnesses. Sometimes they read Shakespeare, whose language and whose beauties were equally familiar to them; and those readings

were rarely interrupted except by the cries of admiration of the Russian diplomatist or the subtle and learned comments of the French exile.

Very often during the Congress I heard Koslowski refer to the particulars of that familiar intercourse, of which, despite the difference in their years—for that difference consisted of a decade—he cherished a lively recollection. 'The learning of the Duc d'Orléans surprises and confounds me; on no matter what subject, whether it be a scientific, an historical, or a politico-economical one, he not only holds his own with me, but beats me. What, however, I admire most in him is his courage in misfortune, and his profound knowledge of men. He sees them as they are; nevertheless, he judges them without the slightest bitterness. Proscribed from his country, he constantly has his eyes turned towards it, and has steadfastly refused to join those who would reconquer it by force of arms. The saying: "They have learnt nothing; they have forgotten nothing," does not apply to him. Both as a man and as a prince, he belongs to his time.'

The Comtesse Zichy gave a grand ball, which was to be honoured by the presence of the sovereigns. The sole topic of conversation in the capital was the fire of the previous night, which had robbed the city of one of its handsomest ornaments. The damage, estimated at several millions, was absolutely irreparable from the point of view of art. But oblivion came quickly in those days, and by evening the excitement had largely subsided, and the courtiers' greatest interest seemed to be the study of the sovereigns' faces, inasmuch as the rumour ran that the most important questions had been settled, that the sweetest accord reigned between those

rulers of the world, and that the opening of the new year would be signalised by the proclamation of some great decisions and the declaration of a general peace.

Among the crowd of notabilities grouped around the celebrities, such as M. de Metternich and the Field-Marshal Prince de Schwartzenberg, was the young Prince C—— de F——, the son of a king, the brother of a king to-be, yet who, nevertheless, was as simple and unaffected as he was handsome and clever. A circumstance most trifling in appearance had made him for the last few days the subject of all comments and the object of all observation. In the shape of a floral decoration, he wore simply a daisy in his buttonhole and nothing else. Of course, renewed each day, the modest village flower was a proof of careful search at a season when the snow-covered fields had none to offer to the rustic swain. No doubt some tender recollection, some thought proceeding direct from the heart, was hidden under this humble emblem. It was one of the many love-stories enacted while the Congress was supposed to be unravelling the tangled skein of Europe's diplomacy. The air of Vienna seemed positively teeming with them, and their secrets were not difficult to read. The latest was no exception to the others. It was soon known that the modest flower of the field reminded the young prince of a cherished name, that of the Comtesse de ——. One day these two were strolling through the imperial hot-houses, and, love being superstitious, they hit upon the idea of consulting the future with regard to the duration and the depth of a feeling constituting their happiness. The comtesse plucked a daisy, interrogated it according to usage, and the last petal brings the ardently wished-for word 'passionately.'

Naturally the word is welcomed by a mutual smile, there is an exchange of significant glances—of those glances that say as plainly as words, 'You're understood.' The prince plucks another flower and fastens it into his buttonhole. The matter, however, did not end there; the oracle had been believed; heaven had received the pledges, while the head-gardener at Schönbrunn had received something more substantial in the shape of a hundred florins for the fortunate pot of daisies. A flower placed each morning near his heart reminded the lover of a pledge which, as a rule, is kept more faithfully in cottages than in Courts.

The band had struck up the usual polonaise, and Alexander, as was his habit, marched at the head of the line of dancers. His partner was the Comtesse de Paar, as distinguished by the graces of her person as by the accomplishments of her mind. Midnight struck and the new year had commenced. In Austria, as is well known, the delightful custom of our fathers of celebrating the first hour of January amidst mutual good wishes had been piously preserved. At the sound of the clock, the comtesse stopped, and, turning towards the emperor, said, 'I am very happy, sire, to be the first to offer such a great sovereign the good wishes for the new year. Allow me also to be with your majesty the spokeswoman of all Europe for the maintenance of the peace and the union of peoples.'

Such wishes, expressed by such lips, could not fail to meet with an enthusiastic welcome. Alexander, then, accepted with much grace both the compliment and the request. He replied that all his hopes, and all his wishes tended in the direction of that much desired aim, and that no sacrifice would

be considered too great by him to consolidate a peace which was the first need of humanity.

The guests had formed themselves into a large circle, and at the last words of the imperial reply, there were slight feminine cheers from all parts; a kind of ovation which did not seem to displease Alexander. For to some of the great qualities of the Grand Louis, he made it his constant study to add nobleness of manner and ever-watchful courtesy to the fair sex. The interlude being over, the orchestra took up the interrupted strain, and the polonaise was concluded amidst joyous murmurs and mild applause.

It was thus that commenced under the most happy auspices that year 1815 which a few months later was to witness a struggle more relentless than ever, terminating in the catastrophe of Waterloo. From early morn, and in spite of the biting cold, a considerable crowd had gathered on the Graben and on other public places. Every one seemed to be waiting for the announcement of that general peace, of that general reconciliation, which, according to certain newsmongers, was to mark the advent of the new year. People kept interrogating each other with an anxiety mixed with a constantly growing incredulity. All that could be gathered was the decision of the Austrian Court, which had suppressed the customary official receptions in order to save its guests the worry of new year's compliments and the embarrassment of mendacious gratulations. As for the decisions of the Congress, they continued to be enveloped in as much secrecy as ever, and people remained free to pursue the daily comment on the dissensions of the Powers and the lukewarmness they were likely to impart to the fêtes announced for the

month of January.

A great number of carriages traversed the city in all directions, and that of Lord Stewart, the English ambassador, eclipsed all the others in virtue of its elegance and its appointments. At an early hour Empress Marie-Louise had come from Schönbrunn to offer her good wishes to her august father. Standing aloof from everything that happened at Vienna, she never attended any entertainment, Court fête, or public ceremony. Nevertheless, the greatest deference was shown her everywhere. During the first months after her arrival at Schönbrunn, she had kept the imperial arms of France on the panels of her carriage, on the scutcheons of her harness, and on the buttons of her liveries. On the occasion of a famous visit to her father, some people in the street had loudly expressed themselves on what they chose to regard as a blunder in the matter of etiquette. Marie-Louise had heard the words, and from that day she had been careful to efface the last traces of her presence on the throne of France; and when we caught a glimpse of the conveyance we noticed a new monogram instead of the Napoleonic one, and a livery not only brand-new, but altogether different in colour from the old.

Nevertheless, in spite of the unfavourable predictions current on the Graben with regard to the turn of the discussions of the Congress, the Imperial Palace from nine that evening was scarcely able to hold the enormous crowd seeking admittance. The sovereigns, the political and diplomatic notabilities, had forgathered in what was called the Hall of the Ceremonies, where the Austrian Court was giving a state ball. Not far from there the big hall usually set apart for the large routs was filled with masks and

dominos. Griffiths and I had repaired thither. It presented, as always, the most animated picture of all, and only one purpose seemed paramount, the pursuit of pleasure. After a few turns Griffiths and I left, surprised at such a total absence of care so rapidly succeeding and ousting most important preoccupations.

One of the most curious gatherings of the Congress and of Vienna was no doubt the 'pic-nic dinner' to which Admiral Sidney Smith invited the sovereigns and the political and other celebrities then within the walls of the capital. The idea of bringing together so many eminent personages, and of making each pay his share of the entertainment, could not fail to please them by its very sincerity amidst the constant gaiety which was gratuitously offered to them. Consequently, a great many had responded to the appeal.

Sir Sidney Smith had not been attracted to the Congress from simple motives of curiosity. His aim was political as well as philanthropic. And though not invested with any official mission, he had created for himself as many occupations as had the representative of the most influential Power. His projects in no way belied his adventurous life, the episodes of which savoured as much of a novel as of history.

A sailor from his boyhood, and without occupation after the American War, he passed into the service of Sweden, In consequence of the glorious naval engagement of 1791, he got the Grand Cross of the Order of the Sword, and shortly afterwards he offered his services to Turkey. Recalled after a few months by a proclamation of the King of England, he found himself, together with Lord Hood, at the siege

of Toulon. In the course of 1796, while lying before Havre, he boarded a French corsair, which only a dead calm prevented him from taking in his wake. A sailor having secretly cut the cable of the craft, manned by English sailors in replacement of the French, the rising tide drove it into the Seine, where it was attacked by superior forces and was obliged to surrender. Taken to Paris, Smith was at first confined in the prison of l'Abbaye, then in that of the Temple. It was from the latter that his friends, by means of a forged order of the minister of the police, managed to effect his escape, a circumstance apparently very simple in itself, but which later on, under the walls of St. Jean d'Acre, contributed to frustrate most gigantic projects, and perhaps effectually prevented the revolution of the East. After that it becomes rather difficult to assign great causes to great events.

On his return to England, Sidney Smith got the command of the *Tiger*, four-and-twenty guns, and was instructed to watch the coast of Egypt. After having bombarded Alexandria, he set sail for Syria, where his presence and his advice induced the pasha to defend St. Jean d'Acre. It was owing to his aid and obstinate resistance that the siege had to be raised. It was on that occasion that he was presented by the sultan with an aigrette of great price, and received from Napoleon the not less flattering remark: 'This devil of a Sidney Smith has made me miss my fortune.'

On his return to London he received the freedom of the City, in addition to a magnificent sword of honour. Elected to the Commons, he kept his seat up to the Peace of Amiens, when he obtained a new command, and in 1805 took Capri after a siege of a few hours. When, in 1807, Napoleon had deposed

the House of Braganza, he took the Prince Regent of Portugal and his family to the Brazils. Since then he had remained inactive, though, as may be easily imagined, inactivity did not suit his temperament. The Congress of Vienna offered him a magnificent opportunity for displaying his mental energy, and, as a consequence, he was one of the first to arrive. He represented himself as being vested with full powers by the former King of Sweden, Gustavus IV., who, under the title of the Duc de Holstein, had entrusted him with a claim relative to the throne he had lost. That very honourable mission had been bestowed upon him in virtue of his being a former Swedish naval officer and a knight of the 'Order of the Sword.'

At the very opening of the conferences, Sir Sidney Smith had submitted to the supreme tribunal of Europe the declaration of his august client. The moment seemed well chosen. Justice, reparation, legitimacy, were religiously invoked watchwords in Vienna. In appealing to the conscience of sovereigns, the deposed monarch brought their own arguments to bear upon them. In his note, Gustavus-Adolphus reminded them that he had been deposed only by the influence of Napoleon, with whom he had declined all relationship, especially since the death of the Duc d'Enghien. He furthermore pointed out that the Swedish nation, in excluding him from the throne, had only yielded to a political necessity and to the threats of the great Powers; that at the moment of his abdication he was a prisoner; that since then he had always refused to renounce the rights of his son; that he felt confident of this prince, when he arrived at his majority, proving himself worthy of his birth, of the Swedish nation, and of his illustrious forefathers; and that, finally, he did not claim the throne on his

own account.

In politics, however, the most logical arguments are not always the most valid ones. The days and months went by without there being the slightest question of restoring his sceptre to the deposed monarch. Practically sent away without having produced the least impression as far as his embassy was concerned, Sidney Smith was, however, not at all discouraged. 'If, contrary to all possibility, I fail with this august tribunal,' he said, 'I'll bring it without the slightest fear before the tribunal of my own country. As long as we have a Parliament in England, there will be a court of justice for the whole of Europe. I'll ask why a legitimate king comes to be deprived of his rights; I'll ask to know the reason of the most relentless enemy of Bonaparte falling a victim to his intrigues; of the abandoning to misfortune of the man who was the first to attack the Colossus with all the ardour of a knight of olden times. Do not people know that Napoleon never forgave Gustavus for having reproached him with the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, and for having sent back to the King of Prussia the Order of the Black Eagle, which he, Gustavus, declined to wear in common with Bonaparte?

'If it be objected that Gustavus signed his abdication, I'll answer that he was not a free man, that a father cannot sign away the rights of his son, that a sovereign cannot depose his dynasty. Ought not this descendant of the great Gustavus, of Charles XII., to inspire in this spot the interest inseparable from such magnificent memories? When on every side the principles of equity are loudly evoked, will they dare by the strangest contradiction to reject the most sacred, those of an inheritance founded on

glory and hallowed by ages? In fine, if history is henceforth to be the sole judge of arbitrary acts, it is to history that Gustavus-Adolphus shall appeal. Posterity, more equitable than this Congress of kings, shall say of the prince that if certain brilliant peculiarities made him, perhaps, an object of envy and enmity, it is very rarely that vice does not avenge itself upon a brilliant destiny with calumny. As for myself,' added the admiral, 'a constant courtier to fallen grandeur, I shall remain true to my affections and to my principles, and defend until the end the rights of legitimacy and evil fortune.'

In vain they told him that the interest of the nations themselves, the pledges given, and the need for peace, had also to be considered; that Europe could not annul solemn acts, and perhaps least of all those secret treaties that assured to Bernadotte and his dynasty the peaceful possession of the throne of Sweden; that Europe would never reward the eminent services he had rendered to the common cause by a spoliation; that Europe would not expel him from the prominent place of honour to which the general wish of the Swedes had lifted him in order to impose upon them the monarch they had rejected; that the sad position of Gustavus-Adolphus rendered it imperative in him to bear his misfortunes with dignity; and that, finally, when a monarch is deposed, he could only arouse compassion by avoiding to draw attention to his case. In spite of the indifference of the Congress and of the public, Sidney Smith, nevertheless, did not leave a stone unturned in favour of a cause henceforth lost.

The negotiations with regard to his pic-nic dinner had met with fewer obstacles. In Vienna, it was easier to organise a pleasure-party than to obtain

the restitution of a throne in an assembly which had seemingly taken it as a principle to despoil the feeble in favour of the strong. The aim of this general convocation was a subscription, at the head of which the admiral had placed his name. The proceeds, it was said, were to be devoted to the purchase of an immense silver lamp for the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. But it was also soon known that the sums Sidney Smith hoped to collect would be used for the repurchase of the Christians kept prisoners in Barbary. He had already proposed to the Congress a naval expedition for the purpose of annihilating those Barbary powers, of putting an end to their brigandage, and of destroying the disgraceful white-slave traffic in Africa for ever. Naturally, he was to take the command of this anti-piratic army. The Congress had, however, other things to think about than the organisation of a crusade, and this new Peter the Hermit had fain to be content with the simpler means of redeeming the slaves with the gold taken from the purses of the votaries of pleasure. Transplanting English usages into Austria, a dinner seemed to him the suitable bond for this humanitarian work.

A great number of tickets were sold and the day was fixed. The Augarten, eminently suited for such a function, had been chosen. Yan, the *restaurateur par excellence*, had undertaken all the culinary details of that philanthropic gala fête. The price of the tickets had been fixed at three Dutch ducats, that for the ball to follow at ten florins. The dinner was to be on the table at five o'clock in the beautiful hall so often used by Maria-Theresa and Joseph II. The table itself was in the shape of an elongated horse-shoe; the walls of the apartments had practically disappeared under the standards of all nations. An orchestra had

been erected at each end. The sovereigns had not only approved, but approved with great alacrity. The grand personages of the Congress, ministers, generals, and ambassadors, had been equally eager to contribute their ducats. Among the hundred and fifty guests there were as many highnesses as semi-sovereigns, great captains, and illustrious statesmen. Trumpeters on horseback, posted at intervals, announced the monarchs' arrival by loud blasts. Those 'glorious entrances' as they are practised on the English stage proved that the admiral had not forgotten the theatre of Shakespeare.

Yan had done his best, and though that best was good, and Bohemia, Hungary, and the Hereditary States had provided their most delicate edibles, a dinner at the Court would no doubt have been more perfect in every respect. It was, however, a tavern repast, where every one paid his own share; and that novelty had seemed so strange to the crowned heads, or to the heads fated to wear a crown, that no one was absent. It was, indeed, a strange and curious spectacle.

Every one remembers the banquet where Voltaire made Candide dine with seven deposed kings at Venice. Since then, no one had ever seen so many forgathered in a tavern or restaurant. If the number of those who sat down at the Augarten was not absolutely the same, at least they were not deposed, but crowned in real earnest, and very resplendent. The inverse comparison, in fact, presented itself to everybody's mind. Involuntarily also, the mind reverted to some of those functions where the kings pressed around Napoleon the victorious; a few spoke about it, but in nothing louder than a whisper.

During the first part of the repast, the music played the national airs of the different countries. At the second course, the admiral, like the good Englishman he was, and faithful to the traditions of his country, got on his legs, and spared neither the toasts nor the speeches. The subject of his own was, naturally, in connection with the object of the gathering; and though it dragged, no member of the 'Order of Mercy' could have preached with greater unction the redemption of the slaves. The result of his eloquence was calculated to flatter him, for it amounted to several thousands of ducats. The emperors had each subscribed a thousand, and the others according to their fortunes or their philanthropy.

Sidney Smith had concluded his speech, the dishes had run their course, the wines of Hungary, the Rhine, and Italy had been tasted, sipped, and lauded, according to their merit, and we were about to rise from the table, when suddenly there appeared the manager of Yan, who, between two symphonies of Haydn, claims of each of the guests the sum of three golden ducats, the price fixed for the banquet, the music, and the lights, the total amounting to about five thousand four hundred francs.

Some months later, I happened to be in London at the dinner offered to the sovereigns by the City. The number of guests, truth to tell, was somewhat more considerable; the ball may also have been somewhat more numerously attended. The expense, though the fête was in nearly every respect similar, came to twenty thousand pounds. A different spot, a different total.

A trivial circumstance which lent some gaiety to the banquet in the Augarten was entirely lacking in

London. It was an episode which, in itself, was worth a whole book, and recalls that so facetiously told by Voltaire. Not that it deals with a king tracked by bailiffs like the poor, ill-fated Theodore of Corsica, but with that most charming and most delightful of reigning kings, Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria.

Yan's manager had begun his collection, and had put the money of the Emperor Alexander and the King of Denmark in the silver dish he was carrying. When he got to his Bavarian majesty, Boniface's representative boldly presented the dish, already ornamented with the six ducats in question. The excellent Maximilian carried his hand to one waistcoat pocket, then to the other, then to the pocket of his coat. The search is absolutely fruitless —pockets, fobs, receptacles are as completely empty of money as in the days when joyous Prince Max failed to find any money-lender in Paris to line those pockets with gold. It is more than probable that this king, this very model king, had emptied the contents of his purse into some hand stretched out to him, as invariably happened at Munich, where some unhappy wretches always posted themselves on his route. At any rate, a second examination of the pockets brought the unalterable conviction that his majesty of Bavaria had not a red cent upon him.

Rather embarrassed by the situation, the king began to scan the whole length of the board, and caught sight of his chamberlain, the Comte Charles de Rechberg, at the very end of it. He felt sure that his embarrassment was at an end. Rechberg, who was there on his own account and for his own money, had not the remotest intention of attending upon his royal master in this kind of 'Liberty Hall,' and was, moreover, deeply engaged in conversation

with M. de Humboldt. Rechberg had just published an important book upon Russia, which publication, he fain hoped, would give him a foremost rank among distinguished *littérateurs*, and, naturally, he was talking enthusiastically about it to the great savant. Consequently, he did not see the signals of distress from his sovereign, and equally, as a matter of course, failed to answer them. The head-waiter, meanwhile, did not budge, holding out the silver dish for the money due to him. The king kept one eye on the collector, the other on Rechberg, and his confusion gradually became such as to attract the notice of those around him. In a little while a kind of titter was running round the table like an electric spark. To give the scene a somewhat complete likeness to the royal banquet at Venice, it only wanted a few bailiff's officers at the door, watching King Theodore. How King Maximilian would have got out of his quandary without the help of his neighbours, it would be difficult to say, for the stolid head-waiter refused to budge. A far better money-collector than courtier, he kept jingling his money against the dish, till Prince Eugène, who had been the last to get an inkling of the situation, was about to satisfy his claim. He was, however, forestalled by Alexander, who, recalling the inexorable creditor, about to move at a sign from the prince, emptied his purse into the dish, shaking, meanwhile, with uncontrollable laughter, in which the others joined. Good King Maximilian continued to look confused for a few moments, but, finally, was as amused as the others at an episode which perhaps reminded him of his youth.

At the conclusion of the dinner, and the subscriptions having been settled, we passed into the ball-room. It was a real pell-mell, less animated than

a rout, less solemn than a Court ball, but infinitely more curious to the ordinary observer. There were few ladies of high degree; they were already satiated with fêtes; on the other hand, there were a great many dames of the bourgeoisie who counted upon nothing less than a highness or an ambassador for a minuet or a waltz. Unfortunately, nearly all had spoilt their fresh and charming looks by ornaments the reverse of tasteful. Though, unquestionably, bought at a high price, these ornaments suited their charming figures far less than the classic golden cap of Phrygian shape. The sovereigns retired almost immediately after the ball opened, and the most illustrious guests followed their example very shortly. As a consequence, the young bourgeoises waited in vain for the hoped-for aristocratic partners, and they had to be content with the new arrivals in that capacity. They did not seem to mind it, for they had the full value of their ticket: daylight was streaming in before they made up their minds to leave. The whole expense of the dinner and ball combined was reported not to have exceeded fifteen thousand florins. Eight months later, the fête given by the London merchants to the sovereigns, to which I have already referred, cost twenty thousand pounds. And yet people complained about the excessive dearness of everything in Vienna! What would it have been if the Congress had been held in London? This was the fête which enabled Sidney Smith to make a long speech and to add to his titles, already more or less showy, that of President of the Noble Knights. In reality, it was a pity to see a man with real claims to distinction constantly seeking opportunities of no value as far as he was concerned and often altogether insignificant.[97] It was said that, as an auxiliary to the pursuit of his humanitarian

object, he had solicited and obtained a brief from the Pope authorising him to found a society for the purpose of abolishing slavery for evermore. What was something more practical was the aid of the Powers and their money. All the sovereigns had promptly proclaimed their adhesion to these philanthropic projects by their subscriptions and their presence at his picnic; all but two, the Emperor Francis and the King of Würtemberg. The first, confined to his room by a somewhat serious indisposition, had sent a donation of a thousand ducats; the second had, two days previously, left Vienna, and his abrupt departure formed the subject of every conversation.

Naturally imperious and irascible, the very corpulent King Frederick chafed and fretted against the slowness of the diplomatic discussions. In the state-gatherings, he always seemed to be grumbling or devoured with care. He was not the only one, for it was generally felt that the ordinary passions were pursuing their course under all those floral ornaments and decorations. There came an opportunity, however, for his impetuous character to show itself in all its violence. Among the many conflicting claims submitted to the Congress, the landed nobility of Germany herself had deemed it advisable to join the petitioners, and it had sent its deputies entrusted with the claim for recovering its ancient position and rights. During a conference attended by his majesty of Würtemberg, that claim was discussed, and there was also a good deal of desultory talk about the restoration of the Holy Roman Empire. The king was scarcely able to contain himself, and when it became a question of measures that might restrict the prerogatives of sovereigns, he rose in great anger. Before him there was a table

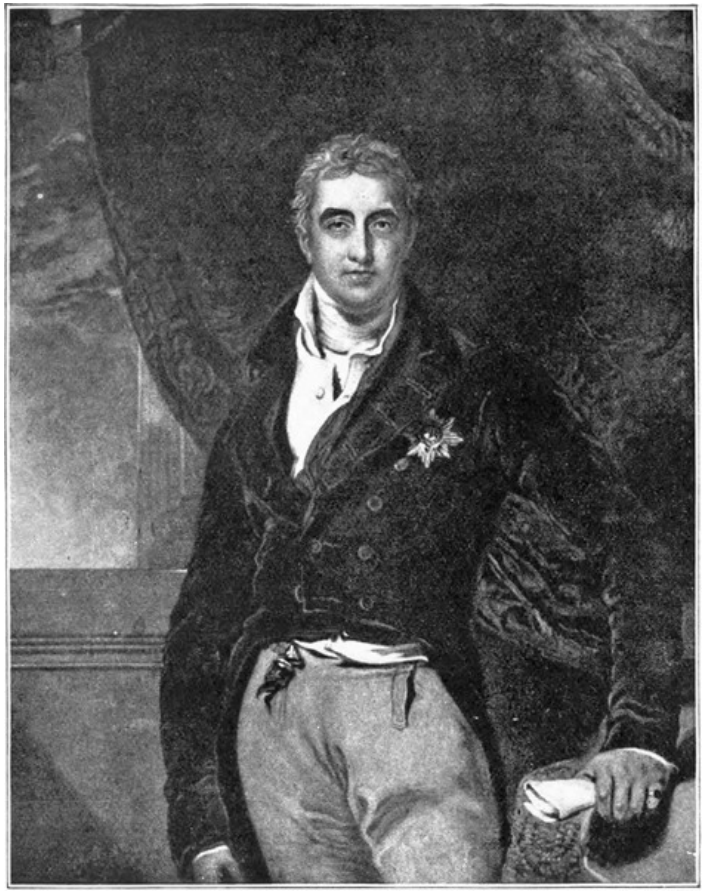
which, unlike the boards at the imperial banquets, had not been scooped out to accommodate his majesty's enormous corpulence. In his sudden movement the abdominal prominence of the king lifted the table off its legs and it fell with a crash. The mishap naturally aggravated the temper of the king, who quickly regained his own apartments, and in the evening left the capital of Austria, after having strenuously recommended his plenipotentiaries systematically to reject every demand on the part of the nobles. As for his son Wilhelm, he remained much more concerned with the handsome eyes of the Grande-Duchesse d'Oldenbourg than with the questions of the Congress.

This overbearing character the King of Würtemberg showed just as much in his relations with his family as in the exercise of his royal power. There was an instance of it when he forced his son into a marriage against his will. He acted in a similar manner with regard to his daughter when he made her marry Jérôme, King of Westphalia, the brother of Napoleon. No sooner had the latter fallen than Frederick wished the marriage to be dissolved. Attached by a sincere affection to her husband, and at any rate to her child, the Queen of Westphalia opposed a stubborn refusal to her father's demands. 'United by bonds due to politics,' she wrote to him, 'I am not going to recount the happiness of seven years; but if he had been the worst of husbands, you, my dear father, by consulting the real principles of honour, could only command me not to leave him now that misfortune has overtaken him, and considering that this misfortune is not of his own making. My first idea, my first impulse, was to go and fling myself into your arms, but accompanied by him, the father of my child. Where, in fact, would be

my tranquillity if I did not share it now with him to whom are due more than ever all my powers of consolation?' In another letter, she expressed herself as follows: 'Though I married for political reasons, it seemed ordained that I should become the happiest woman in existence. I bear my husband three feelings combined, love, tenderness, and esteem. A time will come, I trust, when you will be convinced of having judged him wrongly; and when that time arrives you shall find in him and in me the most respectful and affectionate children.' Such a noble resistance ended by disarming the father, whose children had both been forced by him into unions which were in the end to prove happy in the case of his daughter, the reverse in the case of his son.

This departure of the King of Würtemberg put an end to all the hopes of the German noblesse. A few days afterwards, the deputies, tired of being deluded with promises that had no prospect of realisation, did not wait until they were positively bowed out, but left the Austrian capital of their own accord. As a matter of course, the epigrams which generally accompany failure were not spared to them; their going was attributed to their exhausted finances, and the next morning they were forgotten.

People were merely talking about a new entertainment, namely, a sleighing party. The snow, which lay thick, and the sharp frost, which seemed to have set in for good during the last few days, favoured that kind of amusement, borrowed from the stern climate of St. Petersburg and Moscow. The Austrian Court made immense preparations, and the magnificence to be displayed was to rival that of the imperial *carrousel*.



Robert Lord Viscount Castlereagh, Marquess of Londonderry.

Pending those preparations, the fêtes and amusements announced for the month of January suffered no interruption. The fêtes which, on account of the serious turns of the discussions, were to languish, seemed, on the contrary, to be more brilliant than ever. At that period Lord Castlereagh gave a great gala-ball. At Vienna, all the

entertainments bore their particular stamp. Generally the private balls given by the illustrious diplomatic personages, though apparently modelled on the same pattern, were dissimilar in their general physiognomy or in their minute details. One might have called Lord Castlereagh's a 'vanity ball,' for if on the one hand it was very sumptuous, on the other it was serious, like pride itself, and cold, like overweening pretension. Yes, one really felt inclined to say that the pride and the pretension which Lady Castlereagh had displayed in attaching to her brow the Garter of her husband had followed her into the gilded and brilliant halls of her residence, redolent with the scent of many flowers. The sumptuousness of the supper failed to thaw the iciness of the affair. As for the host, according to his habit amidst all those animated fêtes where everything was given over to pleasure, he seemed pre-occupied and smitten with care. Even when his lordship danced, he seemed to be bent upon giving his serious thoughts the slip by the accelerated movement of his legs, disporting himself in an Irish jig or a Scotch reel. Did Lord Castlereagh really endeavour to get away from the disappointments of an insidious and miscarried policy? Did he already ponder the last scene of the political drama of his life, when the stoicism of Cato, added to the sombre results of his spleen, made him escape by suicide from tardy and by then useless regrets? History has as yet not given the key to that enigma.

CHAPTER XIV

Some Original Types at the Congress—M. Aïdé—A Witticism of the Prince de Ligne—Mme. Pratazoff—Mr. Foneron—The Old Jew—His Noblesse and his Moral Code—Mr. Raily—His Dinners and his Companions—The Two Dukes—The End of a Gambler—The Sovereigns' Incognito—Mr. O'Bearn—Ball at the Apollo—Zibin and the King of Prussia—Charles de Rechberg and the King of Bavaria—The Minuet—The King of Denmark—Story of the Bombardment of Copenhagen—The German Lesson.

This unique scene of the Congress seemed a composition of thousands of pictures forming a general view. Each separate actor was a complete novel, and the lives of most of them would have offered material for long poems. As may be easily imagined, extraordinary personalities were not wanting in this motley gathering; their presence did not constitute the least conspicuous singularity.

Among the types not easily forgotten by the visitors to Vienna in 1814–15 stood first and foremost M. Aïdé. He was one of those cosmopolitans who make up for the lack of genuine credentials and ascertained pedigree by an overweening amount of assurance. His career was a problem and his fortune

an enigma. Born at Smyrna, he came to Vienna years before the Congress and while very young. His Eastern costume and the title of Prince du Liban, which he flourished somewhat ostentatiously about then, attracted some notice. At the time of the Congress he had become more modest; he had discarded both the Mussulman dress and the princely title. He was to be met with everywhere; no drawing-room or reception seemed complete without him. Very amiable and obliging, he apparently belonged to no camp or party, though perfectly at home in every one. It was, nevertheless, noticed that he was a guest at Lord Castlereagh's more frequently than elsewhere, and it was tacitly admitted that his lordship favoured him for the sake of his private secretary, between whom and M. Aïdé there had formerly existed some commercial relations at Smyrna.

The particular mania of M. Aïdé was to obtain presentations to any and every one. The moment a new drawing-room was opened, M. Aïdé's fixed idea was to find an introducer to facilitate his admission to it. He often addressed himself to that effect to people with whom he could scarcely claim acquaintance; and it was exceedingly difficult to shake him off. The Prince de Ligne, whose kindness he had often laid under contribution in this way, finally got tired of the thing, and one day, when badgered as usual, he introduced the obstinate Greek in the following words: 'I present to you a man very much presented and very little presentable.'

The excellent prince often said that he was sorry for what he had done, for the sentence was repeated, and drew still greater attraction to M. Aïdé without curing him of his mania. Some years afterwards,

while he was travelling in England, the elegant manners he had acquired in his constant intercourse with good society captivated, during his stay at Cheltenham, a young and exceedingly rich girl, whom he married. The uncertainty of his existence seemed, as it were, at an end, when he got involved in a quarrel with the young Marquis of B—— at a ball at Mr. Hope's. The cause, it was said, was most trifling—an introduction. A duel was the result, and M. Aïdé was killed on the spot.

A not less curious individuality, notably for the memories she recalled, was the old Comtesse Pratazoff, the favourite of Catherine II., near whom she had occupied a most intimate if not most important position. In Vienna she was accounted a celebrity. I was indebted for a glimpse of that relic of the past to the Prince de Ligne. 'Our acquaintance dates from very long ago,' he said, while taking me to her temporary residence one day. 'She also belonged to the company during that famous Crimean journey, not because she had any particular functions, but because the empress had got so used to talk to her, especially in the morning and in the evening, as to be unable to dispense with her. Royal favour often springs from nothing more than a mere habit on the part of the sovereign of seeing a certain person near him. In the Comtesse Pratazoff's case it was, however, something more than that.'

Catherine the Great's intimate friend had taken up her quarters at the inn. On entering the room I saw, seated on a couch, a voluminous mass filling the whole of its space. To judge from the quantity of jewels she wore, she might have passed muster as an Indian idol. From the top of her head to her waist, she was literally covered with necklets, diadems,

bracelets, pendants, brooches, earrings, etc. This jeweller's shop seemed to me about seventy.

On our entering the apartment, she made an attempt to rise, but fell back into her original position, trying, not, however, without great difficulty, to find room for the prince on the sofa beside her. Having become aware of my presence, she welcomed me with some of those ultra-polished, not to say finical, phrases the whole vocabulary of which was a very open book to the educated Russians of her time. Then the conversation drifted on to the halcyon days of the fêtes of the Hermitage. The past was dignified and the present vilified. The most curious feature of this hour's visit was the prince's seeming oblivion of the thirty years that had passed since that journey to the Crimea, and his persistent effort to treat this enormous dowager as a young and skittish thing, calling her 'my dear' and 'my little girl'; and her absolutely serious acceptance of this kind of flirting by mincing and mouthing in a most ridiculous, though to her evidently natural, manner.

When we left her, I promptly repaired home to inscribe on my notes the portrait of that puppet who had come to show Europe in Vienna the sight of her decrepit old person, her ancient jewels, and her superannuated pretensions.

Another 'character' was an Englishman named Foneron. He had been for a long time a banker at Leghorn, and had amassed a great fortune there, after which he migrated to Austria. As humpbacked as Æsop, as careful as the Phrygian, and nevertheless endowed with a sensitive heart, he had strenuously calculated the discomforts of a union with a fair one of any thing like Circassian stature. With admirable

foresight, he had looked for and found a young girl with a most charming face, but more deformed than he. He offered his hand, which was accepted, for the girl was poor. The marriage took place secretly, but there were still too many witnesses, for never assuredly was there a more strangely assorted marriage. A host with an excellent wine-cellar and an almost matchless cook is sure to meet with indulgence from every one. Mr. Foneron had both, and in spite of the far from good-natured remarks about himself and his wife, made a point during the Congress of giving the most exquisite dinners. Few strangers admitted to his sumptuous board have forgotten the Friday's fare, and the classic beefsteaks forming part of it. They might have called Mr. Foneron the cook of the Congress. Amidst that crowd of pretenders and petitioners, he asked for nothing, claimed neither indemnity nor titles, nor orders. His titles and orders were his dinners. His sole ambition might have been to preside at the Beefsteak Club of London.

At one of those receptions I met M. Ank——, a Jew by birth, who did not belie the instinct of his race for gold. He had a great quantity of it, he was literally bursting with it; but his reputation for avarice at least equalled his reputation for wealth. He took it into his head to invite me to breakfast. Curious to verify the proverb to the effect that there is nothing more lavish than a miser, I accepted the invitation. Both the size and the tidiness of the whole of his apartment produced as it were a cold shiver. There was scarcely any fire, few carpets, and some hard-worn furniture. As a kind of penance, no doubt, for the many glorious banquets I had partaken of during the preceding months, he offered me a little dubious black liquid which he called chocolate.

When I had courageously swallowed the Lacedemonian broth, he took to showing me his artistic treasures. M. Ank—— was a numismatist; he had one of the richest and most complete collections of medals in Vienna, rivalling that most celebrated one of the Comte Vitzay. After this he showed me some rather good pictures and then a heap of bric-à-brac, collected less for the love of art than from the wish for gain, for he put a madly exaggerated price on all that old rubbish. I had accepted the chocolate, I had drunk it, and I swallowed the rest of the bitter cup. When he had shown me everything, he drew from an iron chest a portfolio full of drafts to order, bills of exchange, and bills at sight. They represented an immense amount of money. 'These are no family parchments,' he said, 'or emblazoned scutcheons, but patents of nobility calculated to blanch the cheeks of the world's aristocracies, and patents of nobility which shall never derogate. There are neither misalliances nor hereditary stains of gold in that book. Gold, from the day it was first purified by fire, is the only pure genealogy, the only one retaining its pride, the only one whose brightness cannot be dimmed. Find me an aristocracy capable of vying in multiplicity of quarterings and services rendered with that one, and I'll kneel down and worship.'

And he stroked the bills of exchange, and waved the flimsy bits of paper in the air, to prove to me the enormous total of those patents of nobility of his imagination. 'With all this,' he went on, 'the world is an immense Garden of Eden, where no fruit is forbidden. Whatever the moralists of the school of Seneca may pretend, here you behold the motive of all virtue, and also the motive of all pleasure. I hold the whole of it in this hand without trouble, without confusion, without remorse—the whole of it, from

the most sumptuous palace, the most exquisitely appointed carriages, the most exquisitely prepared banquets, to the most divinely beautiful woman.' Saying which, he strained his 'bill case' to his heart with more fervour than the old man hugs his purse in the 'Scène du Déluge' of Girodet.

'I think I have heard enough, M. Ank——,' I said; 'you not only make an end of all virtue, but you would justify crime. Why should not a brigand adopt your plea after killing you, by saying that he also wishes to judge whether the reality your gold would procure could not weigh up against all your illusions?'

As may be imagined, I had had enough, and more than enough, of the man, of his breakfast, of his code of morals, and of his bill-book, and I bade him good-bye with the firm intention of never seeing him again.

Another Englishman who at that time contended with Mr. Foneron for the honour of entertaining both strangers and his countrymen was Mr. Raily. Thanks to his enormous expenditure, he was, according to some, soon enabled to beat the exquisite comfort of the family dinners of his rival. Not feeling particularly anxious to swell the number of Mr. Raily's guests, I had persistently neglected every opportunity of procuring for myself invitations, of which Mr. Raily was not sparing.

'I wish you to make his acquaintance,' Griffiths said to me one day: 'an observer must see everything and study everything. Mr. Raily, as well as several other "characters," will figure very well in your recollections; at any rate, there will be the merit of variety.'

I let Griffiths have his way, only asking him a few questions on the personage we were going to visit.

'Mr. Raily,' answered Griffiths, 'seems to me one of those mysterious and strange individuals, like the Comte de Saint Germain[98] and Cagliostro, who appear to me to live upon everything except their incomes. When you have seen him, I'll give you a more detailed biography. In all my journeys I have invariably met him living upon a footing either implying the possession of great wealth or the clever means of getting it. The first time I met him was at Lord Cornwallis's in India; since then I have seen him in Hamburg, in Sweden, in Moscow, in Paris at the period of the Peace of Amiens, when he told me he had just arrived from Spain. And now, he is here in Vienna, where he outshines the most opulent. One is almost tempted to say that he seeks to forget or to hide the origin of his wealth. His dinners are much run after; his guests are of the highest rank, for he seems to set particular store upon their quality and titles. A duke seated at his board fills him with joy, an excellency produces merely a glowing sensation of comfort; but a royal highness produces a kind of feeling no mortal pen can describe. If etiquette permitted their majesties to visit him, Mr. Raily would in a few days be bereft of his reason. You shall judge of it for yourself, for I dare say he'll invite us, if only from sheer ostentation.'

Mr. Raily had taken up his temporary quarters in the magnificent mansion of the Comte de Rosenberg. He welcomed us with the exaggerated courtesy common to all those who are not affable either by instinct or constant habit. He was very important about his house, the furniture, his horses and

carriages and the servants, which provided, as it were, the conversational transition to the dinners, and became a bore to the guests. He enumerated the highnesses and the celebrities that had partaken of his hospitality, or were about to do so, and, as Griffiths had foreseen, wound up by saying:

'If you do not mind an invitation at such a short notice, gentlemen, I shall be delighted if you'll dine with me to-day with the hereditary princes of Bavaria and Würtemberg, the Grand-Duke of Baden, Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, several ambassadors and *chargés* and other personages of distinction whom you doubtless know.'

Feeling that the gathering would present a piquant picture, Griffiths promptly accepted; and we left the happy master of the house superintending the preparations for his *serenissimo* banquet. At six o'clock we were once more in the magnificent apartments, and dinner was served shortly after. The table had been laid in a long gallery, at the end of which there was a kind of English sideboard, *i.e.* a buffet in tiers. The plate, both gold and silver, and the crystal on it attested wealth rather than taste. The host, positively beaming, had the Prince Royal of Bavaria on his right, and the Prince Royal of Würtemberg on his left; the rest, highnesses, generals, ministers, etc., took their seats according to their own sweet pleasure. A lucky chance placed me next to Admiral Sidney Smith, and his interesting conversation, ranging over a period of ever so many years, opportunely broke the monotony of the banquet. For though it is difficult to imagine a more sumptuous banquet than that, the hours went wearily, and, in spite of the abundance and the delicacy of the dishes, the aroma of the wines, and

the profusion of everything, the guests seemed anxious to come to the end of it all. No one tried to enliven the conversation, or to make it general. The majority of the eminent personages whom curiosity or the importunity of their host had gathered round the table seemed, as it were, more or less embarrassed by their position. As for Mr. Raily himself, he felt convinced that a repast graced almost exclusively by princes, diplomatists, and grand seigneurs must necessarily be one of the finest things the world had to offer. The coffee and ices were served in one of the great drawing-rooms, and, according to a Russian custom, which Mr. Raily had no doubt brought back with him from Moscow, several tables were covered with jewels, precious objects, and trifles from the many lands Mr. Raily had visited. As it happened, the display caused the impression of a bazaar rather than that of a drawing-room of good society. Nor did the music of a well-selected and numerous band succeed in checking the *ennui* and removing the constraint which had manifestly fallen upon everybody. It was nine o'clock when we rose from the table; at ten all these noble guests had left Mr. Raily's. In an adjoining drawing-room, the host had put up some whist tables, which kept in countenance those most bored. A small group had gathered round a tall, upright old man, with a pair of bright eyes and a skin as dry as a chip. It was Mr. O'Bearn, who bore the reputation of being the oldest, and was probably still the foremost, gambler in Europe. He had made gaming the occupation of his life, his sole study; he had lived by it, and was still living by it. He was fond of recounting some of his gambling stories, and even his hopeless Irish accent could not rob them of their charm. 'For many years,' he said, 'the Duke of H—— was anxious to pit

himself against me. Personally, I was willing enough to give him that little gratification. He chose piquet; we began our game at nine in the evening, and the next morning when the sun streamed through the windows I had gained more gold off his grace than his father had ever gathered during his Governor-Generalship of India. After the last hand, which was for an enormous stake, and which, like the rest, he lost, the duke got up and said: "Mr. O'Bearn, I am afraid the whole of my fortune will not be sufficient to pay you. I'll send you my steward, he'll settle with you and hand you the titles to my estates." "Very well, sir," I answered, "these are the words of an honourable man. But do not for a moment imagine that I am going to let you ruin yourself in that way. It shall not be said of me that I reduced the bearer of one of our most historic names in the House of Lords to beggary. On the other hand, as I do not wish to have wasted my night, a thing I am not in the habit of doing, I'll ask you to send for a priest and for a solicitor. Before the priest you shall take an oath never to touch another card in your life; the solicitor shall draw up a settlement giving me a thousand pounds sterling annually for life." I need scarcely tell you,' added the old gambler, 'that my conditions were accepted and strictly carried out. The Duke of H—— has never touched a card since, and for nearly half a century I have been enjoying my income.'

Then the veteran gamester told us another story, not less characteristic. 'Shortly before the Revolution, I came to Paris, and as usual took up my quarters at the Hôtel d'Angleterre. The play was very high there in those days. On the evening of my arrival, I went to the drawing-room. The tables were set out, and I sat down to one of them. Two gentlemen were playing piquet. The Duc de Gramont, who was then the king

of fashion, the type of everything that was elegant and extravagant, took a seat opposite me. He looked very fixedly at me, and then, intentionally or not, he said: “We hear a great deal of Englishmen who risk enormous sums either at cards or betting. Here we never catch sight of them.” I did not answer, and a few moments later the game took an unexpected turn. “I’d bet on monsieur’s hands,” said the duc, pointing to one of the players. “Very well,” I replied, “I’ll take the other side for eight thousand pounds sterling.” “How much, monsieur, did you say?” asked the duc. I repeated the sum in French money, and the duc felt that he could not draw back. “I take the bet,” he said. In another moment I was the winner: the duc rose and came towards me, saying, “Milord ——” “My name is Mr. O’Bearn,” I said; “I have no title. What is your pleasure?” “I may not be able to discharge this considerable sum at a moment’s notice.” “Pray do not mention it, your grace, take your own time. But please to remember that when I play, I always have the money handy in my valise.” A little while afterwards, he paid me,’ Mr. O’Bearn went on, ‘and from that moment he was perhaps a little less hasty in giving his opinions about the English. As for me, it has always been a delightful recollection, this deserved lesson to the Duc de Gramont.’

While Mr. O’Bearn was telling us his stories, the tables had gradually become deserted, and now the small group of his listeners took their leave on this or that pretext. We went away endeavouring to attract no notice, asking ourselves how people could take so much trouble and lavish so much money to arrive at a result absolutely *nil*. Each member of this gathering had appeared to ask himself during and after the dinner: ‘How and why am I here?’

‘Well, have you got the key to the puzzle?’ said Griffiths, as we were leaving the house. ‘This man, whose opulence causes surprise even here, where everything is pomp and splendour and extravagance —this man is simply a gambler. We have still got in England some samples of those characters of the bygone century. After Charles II. left to his people the terrible gambling mania, to be a gamester became, as it were, an avowable profession. You know all that has been said of the youth of the Prince of Wales, of his passion for gambling, which for him had such terrible consequences. The most deplorable effect of this passion was to gather around his royal highness a set of people whose bow it would have taken some courage to acknowledge outside the precincts of Carlton House. It was sufficient to be a gambler, and what they called a magnificent gambler, to have the doors of the royal residence thrown open to you. These gentlemen, after the journeys they made annually through England, much as the magistrates went on circuit each session, as a rule took their flight thence for their European tours. They brought back immense harvests. Mr. Raily and his guest, Mr. O’Bearn, belong to the number.

‘Mr. Raily was born at Bath, that city enjoying the foremost reputation among our celebrities of fashion. Having started life with small means, he modelled himself upon a certain Mr. Nash, his predecessor in that career. That personage, who was called Beau Nash, was for forty years the arbiter of all that was elegant at Bath. His authority in that respect was boundless, and his verdicts without appeal. They finally gave him the sobriquet of ‘the King of Bath.’ In imitation of his master, Mr. Raily posed as the prince of the drawing-rooms and boudoirs. He, however, soon grew weary of more or

less romantic love-adventures, and began to cast about for something more profitable. From his native city, he went to the capitals of the United Kingdom and then to those of Europe. He exploited them very cleverly and very luckily. At present, he has just returned from St. Petersburg. He has brought back from it all the gold plate you saw, the profusion of pearls and diamonds which convey the impression of his being a jeweller, and in addition to all this, it is said, a credit of a million of florins at the banker Arnstein's. All this seems, indeed, most fabulous. Let us trust that there will not be a verification of the old proverb: "He who wants to make a fortune in a month is generally hanged during the first week."'

Mr. Raily had a somewhat longer shrift than that, because it was fully three years before I met with him again, and then it was in Paris. But all his wealth was gone, and all the brilliant illusions, if ever he fostered any, were replaced by the most sombre reality. When he called upon me, there was no longer the confidence resulting from well-filled pockets, but the saddening humility of an empty stomach. I had scarcely time to question him; he forestalled my queries by telling me that everything was gone.

'Furniture, plate, diamonds, your infernal "Salon des Étrangers" has swallowed every bit of them,' he said, and then he gave me a description of the quickly following phases of the life of a gambler. 'I have exhausted everything,' he wound up; 'look at that bracelet, it is made of the hair of my wife; it would have gone the road of the rest, if your pawnbrokers would have condescended to lend me a crown on it.'

'But, Mr. Raily, why did you not apply to all

those celebrities you entertained so right royally at Vienna?'

'I have written to all; I have not had an answer from any.'

I offered him some pecuniary assistance, and a few years later I learnt that this man whose lavishness had astonished Vienna itself at the period of the Congress, and at whose board royalty had sat, had died of starvation.

* * * * *

Since his gambling adventure I had often seen Z ——ki. The disaster and my attempts to minimise the consequences had undoubtedly drawn us closer together. After a dinner at the 'Empress of Austria,' he proposed to take me to a ball which had recently been established in a newly-erected, magnificent building, called the Apollo Hall. In a few moments we were on our way thither.

Everything projected at that period in Vienna bore the grand stamp worthy of the time and of the guests intended to be honoured. In spite of this, to convey anything like an accurate idea of the beauty of the new establishment would require a writer capable of reproducing some of the chapters of the *Arabian Nights*, which delighted our youth. The Apollo Hall, the work of M. Moreau, the French architect, is, no doubt one of the most curious constructions of the capital of Austria. The interior, occupying an enormous space, contained sumptuous galleries and halls like those of a palace, and was practically in keeping with the noble and tasteful proportions of the outside. Emerging from these galleries, one came gently upon the rustic arbours of

a garden, and from these upon a Turkish kiosk, and further on still upon a Lapland hut. Gravelled walks, bordered by magnificent greensward planted with roses and fragrant plants, lent throughout a most charming variety. In the centre of the huge supper-room, there was an immense rock, whence, from among flowers, there sprang a fall of natural water into basins teeming with various kinds of fish. Every style of architecture had its ordained part in this huge space, and everything calculated to please the eye had been brought to bear upon the enhancing of these styles; such as, for instance, the glint of innumerable candles on thousands of different-coloured crystal sconces. Farther on, the whole became chastened by alabaster lamps shedding their gentle light, and inviting the more reposeful guests. And while without the snow covered the earth, within spring seemed to have come once more, bringing the most delightful scent of its earliest harbingers.

There was already a considerable crowd when we entered; it was said there were between nine and ten thousand persons. I am bound to admit that at no festive gathering during the Congress had I seen a more brilliant, and at the same time a stranger throng; it was a truly unique spectacle, a world in miniature. Gradually, every one seemed to settle down in his wished-for place, and circulation grew more or less easy. The first person whom I caught sight of was Zibin, promenading with the King of Prussia. Zibin was treated in that familiar fashion by his Majesty in virtue of his height. As he happened to be very short, and his Majesty very tall, Zibin's head came exactly under the king's arm. In spite of the discomfort of the position, my young courtier seemed to be so thoroughly delighted with it as to have

preferred it to one on the most luxurious Eastern divan. Z——ki had left me for some friends he had met immediately after he came in, and who were evidently expecting him. I was looking out for some one to replace him, when I ran up against General Tettenborn and the Prince Philippe de Hesse-Hombourg. I always felt much at home with them. We went the round of the whole place, and afterwards sat down at the entrance of the big ball-room to watch at our ease the new arrivals, comprising nearly all the sovereigns. The latter relished the liberty attached to their *incognito*, and immeasurably preferred it to the ceremonious etiquette of the Court entertainments of that description. In fact, in all those public gatherings the monarchs dropped their reserve, and seemed practically grateful to those who within certain limits would follow their example.

The King of Bavaria was one of the last arrivals. He was accompanied by his two sons, and his chamberlain, the Comte Charles de Rechberg, was in attendance. The last caught a glimpse of us, and leaving his Majesty for a moment, came towards us. But as his duties did not allow him to keep away for long, he pressed us to sup with him when the king should have retired. Naturally, he used every argument he could think of, and finally gave us a peroration which was, however, cut short by some one pinching his ear. ‘Come along, gadabout,’ said Maximilian Joseph, and as a matter of course, on perceiving him, we rose. ‘Don’t, gentlemen,’ he said in his kindest voice; ‘but wherever I go I have to look after him, while, unless I am mistaken, it’s his duty to look after me.’

Rechberg pleaded our unexpected meeting, and

from the tone in which the plea was allowed, it was not difficult to guess the affection subsisting between these two men. Immediately after he had gone, Comte de Witt appeared on the scene. ‘You can be our guide,’ he exclaimed on seeing me. ‘You know all about the place, for you have been here at least an hour.’ We wandered about, talking of his mother’s place in the Ukraine, and finally landed into a kind of Chinese pagoda, where there was a billiard table occupied by the King of Denmark and a chamberlain. Ypsilanti hailed me as we came in, and the king on hearing my name turned round and recognised me at once, although I had not seen him since his accession to the throne. ‘Have you learned German since your departure from Copenhagen?’ he asked me with a smile.

‘No, sire, but I have not forgotten the brief lesson you were good enough to give me.’ The king then inquired with the greatest interest after my family, questioning me as to their whereabouts, and showing by each of his questions that the cultivation of a good memory is one of the foremost requisites of an amiable ruler.

Frederick VI. was a pattern of amiability and frankness combined. He was hail-fellow-well-met with the humblest without ever losing his dignity, and his learning was manifold and solid. He took greater trouble to please people than the most obtrusive courtier. Advancing age had produced no change outwardly. He was then, as he always had been, very slight, with a pale face, a very long nose, and hair almost bordering on white, though in reality fair, which militated against his appearance. It was, in fact, the same figure which some years previously had aroused both my mirth and my fear. But while

his features reminded me of a painful circumstance of my life, they also recalled a memorable episode, and an act of generosity and indulgence on his part, both of which will sketch him better than a volume of praise could do.

'What did you mean by talking to the king about your first German lesson?' asked the Comte de Witt, when his Majesty had gone. 'I am not surprised at his recognising you as if he had left you a week ago; as a rule, sovereigns have excellent memories, but what about that German lesson?'

'The king has just reminded me of a circumstance the story of which would be somewhat long. Allow me to postpone the telling of it until to-morrow.'

After this we went into the great ball-room, where, mingling with the crowd, there were kings, generals, ordinary individuals of the middle class, and statesmen, rubbing shoulders with working men, flirting with little shop-girls, but all seemingly very happy, notably the illustrious personages playing at Almavivas, and evidently more flattered by the preference of some ingenuous Rosinas than by the studied glances of admiration from the most expert Court beauties.

Zibin, who had succeeded in getting his head out of the royal hug of his Majesty of Prussia, soon joined us, and I complimented him upon the particular attention of which he had been the object. In order to swell his pride, and give him the opportunity of having the delicate juxtaposition renewed, I cited some of the recommendations of the Prince de Ligne, our common master. 'Be moderate in your praise. Kings are no longer caught with words. The only thing to which they are not absolutely proof is a peculiar kind of look of

admiration. But that's all. The sort of praise so lavishly used by Lauzun would not seduce our modern Louis XIV.'

In company with several 'majesties' we stood watching some of the worthy knights of Vienna going through the traditional minuet. 'Who would believe,' said Zibin, 'that this dance saw the light in a village? To watch its ponderous monotony no one would imagine that in principle it was exceedingly bright and gay. Introduced to the Court, its sprightliness has been changed into gravity, and now it is sufficiently doleful to make people ill with melancholy.'

'If that incomparable Prince de Ligne had not been taken away from us, he would recall for us the minuets he danced at the Grand Trianon with the charming Marquise de Coigny,' said the Comte de Witt.

'The Prince de Ligne himself voted the minuet a bit of *stupid* gracefulness,' replied Zibin.

'His qualification dated from the period previous to his having danced it himself,' I remarked. 'I am inclined to think, with you, that they acquitted themselves somewhat better at it at the Court of France than they do to-day in Vienna. But be assured that the old traditions of stately dances are not lost beyond redemption.'

'But where is one to look for the traditions?' was the general cry around me.

'Well, if it will afford you any pleasure, I shall enable you to judge'; saying which, I took a few steps to the young Princesse de Hesse-Philippstadt, of whom I had just caught sight, accompanied by her mother. 'Princess,' I said, walking up to her and

holding out my hand, 'will you do me the honour to convince these gentlemen that the Court minuet is not altogether a lost art?'

The princess accepting, Zibin lent me his hat, and, mindful of the lessons of Abraham, who had been her teacher as well as mine, we went through the figures of that character-dance with a good deal of precision. As for my charming partner, the suppleness and grace of her steps might have tempted another Juan of Austria to come *incognito* all the way from Brussels to see her perform them, as the original one came all the way to the Louvre for Marguerite de Bourgogne. Our critics were not sparing in their praise, and were obliged to acknowledge that the much-abused minuet was not as yet dethroned.

Meanwhile, the Comte de Rechberg, who was trying to find his supper-guests, had no idea of my upholding in the centre of the principal ball-room the prestige of classic dancing. When I had taken the young princess back to her mother, he, so to speak, dragged us to the supper-room. At the table next to us were the Prince Koslowski, Alfred and Stanislas Potocki, some Russians from Emperor Alexander's suite, and a little further on, Nostiltz, Borel, Palfi, and the Prince Esterhazy. There were many toasts and many clever sallies, wit sparkled on the lips as champagne sparkled in the glasses.

The two princes of Bavaria supped with us. Chance had placed me near the younger, Prince Charles, who, as a youth, had the most charming face imaginable, although he evidently set little store on this physiognomical advantage, and seemed rather inclined to place his trust in the mental powers with which he was liberally endowed.

Thanks to my former stay at Munich, I was enabled to converse with him about men and things interesting to both of us. I reminded him of that terrible disaster of the Isar bridge being carried away by the stream, and in which he himself under my very eyes had played so glorious a part. Then we began talking about Vienna, its pleasures, and the charming women gracing it at that moment, although I knew that there was a girl of sixteen at Munich whose image could not be ousted from the young prince's heart.

The Prince Royal of Bavaria, the present king, was seated next to his father's chamberlain. Though he was less handsome and less brilliant than his brother, his knowledge was very profound and varied, and he also cultivated the Muses.[99]

With such auxiliaries, Rechberg found no difficulty in making his supper-party very lively. Before breaking up, our company was reinforced by the two tables next to us, and the fresh supply of liquor being decidedly in proportion to the number of the recruits, the retreat was not sounded until three in the morning.

Z——ki and I got separated from each other in the crowd. As I was crossing the by no means deserted ball-room, I caught a glimpse of him and of a companion, a tall, slight, and elegant woman. Their conversation seemed most animated. I waved my hand to him from the distance, wishing him all the compensations love is supposed to reserve for unlucky gamblers.

In the morning, the Comte de Witt was true to his appointment. 'You promised to explain to me,' he said, 'the meaning of his Majesty of Denmark's words about your progress in the German language.' 'You

know,' I replied, 'that often a word, a movement, or a simple inflection of a voice suddenly recalls scenes of our life which had practically vanished from our memory. The past starts up vividly with all its colours; the impressions that had gone to sleep awaken there and then, and their power is such as to give a kind of voluptuous or sensuous delight in retracing the most painful episodes and the most cruel losses. Nay, the very tears caused by these seem sweet. That's what I felt yesterday.

'During the course of the French Revolution, my father, or the one who stood me in stead, had constantly refused to emigrate. Proscribed for being guilty of (the wrong) patriotism and devotion, he only managed to save his head from the guillotine by hiding in a friend's house. When the delirium of blood was over, he considered himself justified in claiming his nationality, which he had never forsaken by abandoning his country. But placed once more on the fatal lists of *émigrés*, pursued by blind and relentless hatred, once more proscribed after 18th Fructidor, he was obliged to fly in order to escape an equally horrible death. We managed to get as far as Hamburg, where we experienced all the privations attached to that kind of voluntary and hurriedly projected exile. Invited by the Comte de Fersen to come to Sweden, we left the Hanseatic city, and made our way on foot across the flats of Holstein to Copenhagen. Our exceedingly restricted resources did not admit of any other mode of travelling.

'My "father," at the period of his tenure of the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, had been most intimate with the Comte de Lowendahl in Paris, and he welcomed us with every mark of goodwill. In his former diplomatic relations with Denmark my

"father" had been enabled to make himself particularly agreeable to that Court, and on the strength of this he ventured to request from the prince royal some pecuniary assistance, urgently needed in consequence of our precarious position. The comte offered to present me to his royal highness and to second our petition as far as lay in his power. On the day previous to the promised audience, I was strolling by myself in the park of the royal residence, Fredericksborg. At the bend of a path, I suddenly caught sight of a young man dressed in light grey, skipping about rather than walking, carrying an umbrella under one arm, the other being held by a very pretty young woman. The face of the young man seemed so peculiar to me that, my French levity and my schoolboy gaiety getting the better of me, I stopped to contemplate him at my case, and immediately a fit of uncontrollable laughter ringing out loud informed him of the result of my examination. His angry look ought to have told me of his resentment of this impertinent scrutiny on my part, but the angrier he got the more ridiculous his face became to me, and my insolent laughter did not cease until the couple were fairly out of sight.

'Next morning, on the recommendation of the Comte de Lowendahl, I was to have my audience at the palace. The guards let me pass, and in a little while, crossing a series of resplendent galleries, I reached a velvet curtain giving access to a drawing-room. A page-in-waiting led me into the throne-room, adjoining the private audience-chamber of the prince, and then, my petition in my hand, I waited to be admitted to his royal highness's presence. In a few moments the doors were thrown open, and a chamberlain called out my name and beckoned me across the threshold. All at once, at the end of the

apartment, I beheld, standing upright, the young man I had so grossly insulted the previous day. There could be no mistake about it. It was the same face, the same grey Court dress, but the embroidered star on his breast and his wide blue sash left no doubt about his being the Prince Royal of Denmark. I need not try to depict my feelings to you. Struck with terror, as if I had stepped on a serpent, I recalled both my unseemly laughter and the anger it had aroused. Standing stock-still, and undecided whether I ought to advance or retreat, I was almost expecting immediate punishment for my ill-timed levity of the previous day. I cannot say how long I should have remained in this position, notwithstanding the repeated signals of the chamberlain to draw closer to his highness. Luckily, the young girl to whom the prince had given his arm the previous day, and who was none other than his charming sister, the Princesse d'Augustembourg, just then crossed the room on her way to the inner apartments of her brother. More or less reassured by her angelic face. I practically followed in her footsteps, trusting to make her, as it were, a shield against a stern reprisal, which, in our condition, would have absolutely filled the cup of our misfortunes.

'Crimson with confusion and with drooping eyes, I tremblingly held out the petition given to me by my "father." The prince looked fixedly at me and undoubtedly recognised me, but not a muscle of his face testified as much. On the contrary, he attentively read the document, then handing it to his sister he said, "One more victim of that French Revolution."

'After that he asked for some particulars about our situation, and equally kindly inquired about our

resources and plans. Emboldened by his kind tone, I told him all we had suffered since our departure from France, our painful pilgrimage across Germany, our intention to get to Sweden, and our hope of securing the goodwill of the Comte de Fersen in my "father's" behalf.

'The princess had listened with the utmost attention to the recital of our misfortunes. When I came to the description of the journey on foot and to the enumeration of all our privations, the prince asked me, "But, no doubt, you know German?" "Alas, no," I was obliged to answer, "and that's what made our travels so terrible." "Poor child," said the princess, "you are somewhat too young to have suffered so much, and those dreary roads across our sandy plains must have seemed wellnigh endless to you."

'There were tears in her voice as she asked me other questions about my family, my education, and recollections of my country. The prince himself had meanwhile written some words on my petition. "I'll reply to-morrow to your father," he said, returning the document to me. "If you will go from here to my 'privy purse office,' they'll give you a hundred golden Fredericks, which will enable you to proceed a little more comfortably." "And I, monsieur," added the princess, "I wish you every happiness; but should you fail to find some of it in Sweden, return to Denmark for an asylum, and you will, at any rate, find rest."

'The prince called his chamberlain to intimate that the interview was at an end, and told him to take me to his treasury. You may imagine that this lesson of a prince thus avenging himself for the impertinence of a stranger was not lost upon me.

Young though I was, I promised myself never to give way again to such exhibitions of offensive hilarity, and I have kept my word.'

'I can see the lesson in politeness,' said the Comte de Witt, 'but I fail to see the lesson in German.'

'I am coming to it. A few days later, my "father" booked our passage for Stockholm, but contrary winds delayed our departure. In the night of the 2nd April 1802, we were suddenly awakened by the noise of a well-sustained bombardment. Naturally, we all got out of bed and went on deck to make inquiries. The slowly-coming dawn confirmed our uncertainty. The whole of the English fleet, under the command of Admirals Parker and Nelson, and favoured by the wind and tide, had defied the batteries of Kronenburg and forced the passage of the Sound, an enterprise hitherto deemed impossible. The formidable squadron, perfectly visible from the city which it could shatter to pieces, came to summon Denmark to give up her fleet or to dissolve there and then her treaty with Sweden and Russia.

'Consternation became general among us; it only wanted a sign from the English admiral to capture or to sink us. Nelson scorned such a cheap victory, and during the *pourparlers* sloops were sent to tug in the merchant craft. A few moments later we were in port, and immediately afterwards the naval engagement began. If the attack was headlong and well-directed, the defence was not less heroic. Every inhabitant rushed to arms to repulse the odious aggression; all ranks commingled; there seemed no difference between noble and artisan, merchant and ordinary burgher. They were full of zeal; their hats displayed the motto: "All for one; one for all." The

royal prince showed the greatest courage during this bloody struggle, a struggle so little expected by him. A descendant in a direct line from the English sovereign, his capital and fleet were suddenly threatened by the orders of his uncle without there having been anything hostile to lead up to this catastrophe. As far as the peace of states is concerned, there does not seem much to be gained by family alliances and ties of blood.

'It would have been dangerous not to take part in this enthusiastic resistance, and the moment we had regained our inn I asked my "father" to let me have my share of the fighting, to which proposal he offered not the slightest objection. Armed with a sword which might well have dated from the period of King Knut, which had been lent to me by our hostess, I repaired to the jetty. It was from that point I beheld a naval battle in port, the most horrible spectacle, I should say, the imagination could conceive.

'Never had Denmark been engaged in such a murderous struggle; never, perhaps, had the Danes an occasion to display their national courage more nobly. Ardent and indefatigable, to judge by the enthusiasm that animated them, they might easily have been mistaken for a population of heroes. As for me, standing stock-still at the far end of the jetty, my long sword, which might well have served as a lance, balanced on my shoulder, I felt that I was doing outpost duty. No one seemed surprised. Younger lads than I contended for the honour of being entrusted with such perilous positions.

'The city was in flames; it rained shells everywhere. The Danish war-sloops answered bravely to the fire of the English vessels. Suddenly a

shell struck the Danish craft *Indfoedstretten*, and blew it up. A horrid, lurid light illuminated the sky, and immediately both the sea and the shore were covered with human and different wreckage, the blood of the former tinging the green waves. Had the explosion occurred a few moments earlier we also should have been victims of it, for while they were towing our Dutch vessel into port, we had been compelled to go on board the *Indfoedstretten* to have our passports examined.

'Meanwhile, the fighting became more terrible and relentless, and I, scarcely more than a lad, stood looking on, rooted to the spot and spell-bound, when suddenly some one tapped me on the shoulder, addressing me in German at the same time. I looked round and beheld the prince royal, who, in the confusion of the moment, had got separated from his suite. He still had his grey dress on. When he recognised me, he addressed me in French. "What are you doing here?" he asked. "I am trying to acquit part of my debt, monseigneur," I answered. "Very well," he retorted; "try to get this paper to Captain Albert Turach. Look, follow my finger. He is standing there on the shore, ready to take the command of a floating battery. Run as fast as you can, and remember the word *Augenblicklich*."

'"How did you say it, prince?"'

'"*Augenblicklich.* It signifies instanter. You'll simply tell him the word, and hand him my order."'

'I was already on the run. Turach received the order, and flung himself into a skiff whose men were only waiting for a leader to push off. When I came back to my former vantage-point, the prince royal was gone. I noticed him on a floating battery, whence he contemplated the action and animated by

his presence and example the proud and generous populace ready to give their lives under his eyes. To me personally, the sight of this young and valiant prince was practically a second expiation of my mocking laughter in the park of Fredericksborg.

'I need not remind you of the results of that action; the Danes covered themselves with glory, but the slaughter was terrible. More than six thousand men perished in it. The city was burning in ever so many places. Burghers, soldiers, students harnessed themselves to the pumps, carried barrels of water, and unsuccessfully tried to extinguish the flames. Finally, Nelson, to stop the bloodshed, and to prevent the wholesale destruction of Copenhagen, sent a *parlementaire* to the prince royal.

'The prince promptly sent his reply, and at once the sanguinary drama, which had the port and the city as its *locale*, ceased. Nelson came on shore, and repaired to the palace between two lines of an exasperated populace. Calm and proud, he walked along as if he were still on his own battleship. Following in his footsteps, I managed to elbow my way through the crowd, and succeeded in getting inside the private apartments. The prince royal took Nelson to his father, whose mental state, however, prevented him from knowing and from appreciating the disasters of the capital.

'There was no alternative but to accept the conditions imposed by England. The offensive and defensive treaty between Denmark, Sweden, and Russia was rescinded. The prince royal showed himself as noble and dignified during the conferences as he had shown himself courageous and resourceful during the battle.

'Since then Frederick has ascended the throne,

and though, by the side of the vast kingdoms that have sprung up, Denmark can scarcely claim to be more than a magnificent, lordly domain, enhanced by a royal crown, all these various events have not impaired the excellent prince's memory. You noticed for yourself how he remembered an apparently frivolous circumstance, but one which remains indelible in my mind.'

CHAPTER XV

Religious Ceremony for the Anniversary of the Death of Louis XVI.—Reception at Talleyrand's —Discussion on the Subject of Saxony and Poland—The Order of the Day of the Grand-Duke Constantine—A Factum of Pozzo di Borgo—A Sleighing-Party—Entertainment and Fête at Schönbrunn—Prince Eugène—Recollections of Queen Hortense—The Empress Marie-Louise at the Valley of St. Helena—Second Sleighing-Party—A Funeral.

An important ceremony put a stop to all these entertainments. Twenty-two years had gone by since the ill-fated Louis XVI. lost his head on the scaffold, and his memory had not as yet received the expiation of a solemn and public mourning. At the moment when all those kings were working in unison for the pacification of Europe, they could scarcely refrain from protesting by a ceremonious manifestation against a fact which, causing all their thrones to shake on their bases, seems to have been virtually the signal of all these disastrous wars. Consequently, when Talleyrand, as the head of the French Legation, invited the consent of the Austrian government to a memorial service on the anniversary of the fatal twenty-first of January, his request was granted with a kind of melancholy zeal. Nay, more,

Emperor Francis made a point of having the service celebrated in the Cathedral of St. Stephen, so that it might be marked by extraordinary pomp, and that its expenses should devolve upon the imperial treasury.

MM. Isabey and Moreau were entrusted with the plans and preparations for the ceremony. In accordance with the emperor's wish, the former displayed the greatest magnificence, and that funereal pomp inseparable from the obsequies of kings. In the centre of the old Basilica there stood a baldachin sixty feet high, and ornamented with all the insignia of royalty. Four colossal statues, placed at the four corners of a cenotaph, represented respectively France, dissolved in tears; Europe, contributing its meed of regret; Hope, guiding the soul of the virtuous monarch to the abode of everlasting bliss; and Religion, holding in her hand that last will, the sublime model of charity and pardon. The nave of the cathedral was entirely covered with one immense hanging of black, richly embroidered with silver. From each pillar was suspended the scutcheon of the House of France. Numberless wax candles and tapers shed a dazzling light across those sombre walls, closed to the orb of day.

A stand, entirely draped with black velvet, embellished with silver fringe, had been prepared for the sovereigns. The nave and the choir were reserved for the specially invited guests, and the lateral parts of the sacred building for the public.

Long before the hour fixed for the ceremony an immense crowd blocked up the approaches to the Gothic fane. Every Frenchman in Vienna, no matter what his rank, had received an invitation, and not one failed. The Knights of the Golden Fleece and the

ambassadors in full Court dress occupied the foremost rows of the choir. Behind them were all the notabilities, all the princely guests, and the authorities of the city of Vienna. A detachment of the regiments of the Guards and another of the Hungarian Nobiliary Guard were on duty round the catafalque, as at the funeral of emperors. Emperor Francis himself intended this as the highest expression of his personal sentiments. In the nave stood a considerable number of ladies attired in mourning and wrapped in long crape veils.

At eleven o'clock a blast of trumpets heralded the arrival of the Emperor Francis, the Emperor of Russia, the Kings of Prussia, Bavaria and Denmark; of the Queen and of the Empress of Russia. The Empress of Austria, confined to the palace by ill-health, was the only one absent from the ceremony. The Prince Léopold de Sicile, as the only member of the House of Bourbon, and M. de la Tour du Pin stood at the portals of the cathedral and conducted the sovereigns to the imperial stand. Immediately afterwards, the celebration began. In spite of his eighty-four years, the venerable Archbishop of Vienna, Prince de Hohenwarth, had made it a point to officiate. A profound respect, an intense and reverent emotion, pervaded the immense assembly at the sight of the royal sarcophagus and of the white-haired priest praying for divine pity on the virtuous monarch. It would be difficult to guess the feelings of all those monarchs, reverently prostrated not far from the catafalque, recalling such a great misfortune and such a great event in the history of France. All were more or less related to the illustrious house of France, the most ancient of Europe.

M. Zaiguelius, vicar of Sainte-Anne in Vienna, and of French origin, delivered an address in French, noticeable for its many beauties, and some people pretended that M. Talleyrand was not altogether a stranger to its composition. The text was, 'Let the earth know the fear of the name of the Lord.' In this very remarkable address, the speaker was particularly anxious to show the hand of God, which raises up and overthrows thrones. Then, after the prayers for Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette, he concluded by reciting the principal passages of the will, which has rightly been called the most heroic code of charity. This was, in fact, the most beautiful funeral oration of Louis XVI., and when M. Zaiguelius descended from the pulpit there was not a dry eye in the place. After this, two hundred and fifty voices sang, without accompaniment, the 'Requiem,' composed by Neukomm, a pupil of Haydn. The musicians had been reinforced by amateurs; they constituted two separate choirs, of which one was conducted by Salieri, the Director of the Imperial Music. Its effect was admirable. Listened to with the most reverential silence, the hymn of sorrow seemed less a prayer addressed to Heaven for a virtuous victim than a sequel to the sublime words of pardon to which we had just listened. The cost of this funereal solemnity amounted to nearly a hundred thousand florins, and was entirely defrayed by the Austrian Court.

An express order of the emperor had suspended for that day all the ordinary entertainments. During the evening there was positively a crowd in M. de Talleyrand's drawing-rooms. Everything was most sedate, as usual, for political discussions were the order of the day there rather than those connected with fêtes and gaiety. The Polish question was more

than ever to the fore, and apparently as far as ever from being settled. The incorporation of Poland with his empire had been the ardent aspiration of Alexander from the very beginning of the Congress of Vienna. Supported in that claim by the King of Prussia, to whom, as a set-off, he sacrificed and abandoned Saxony, he had not reckoned upon any particular resistance; but it became manifest at the very outset of the discussions that there would be a lively opposition to this dual spoliation and the kind of bargain it involved. In the matter of Saxony, both Metternich and Talleyrand strenuously opposed the overthrow of a prince sincerely beloved by his subjects, and who during forty years had honoured the throne by his uprightness and by a combination of many virtues. These two statesmen fostered the hope that by denying Saxony to Prussia they would contribute to a rupture between the czar and King Frederick William; and that in consequence of this the Congress would be enabled to cut an independent Polish kingdom out of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. England, which in principle seemed favourable to the pretensions of Russia and Prussia, had, however, been persuaded by the arguments of the Austrian Minister and his French colleague, and had taken sides with them. The discussion became very envenomed, in spite of the kindly efforts of Prince Razumowski. It was during one of those stormy conferences that the Grand-Duke Constantine became very angry with M. de ——. Finally, during another sitting, Alexander, addressing Lord Castlereagh, had not scrupled to affirm that at his voice eight millions of Poles would not hesitate to arise in order to sustain the independence of their country.[100]

Behind this question of Poland there loomed,

however, another question much more important and far-reaching for European equilibrium. Napoleon had as yet not uttered the famous words, that before fifty years Europe would be French or Cossack. But already many far-seeing minds had become alarmed, and not without reason, at seeing Russia assuming the mastership on the Vistula. With the object of 'forcing her back towards her inhospitable climate,' and of plucking Poland from her domination, Austria, France, and England made a secret treaty on the 10th of January 1815. Talleyrand's influence had determined that compact, for he already inclined towards an English alliance, to the realisation of which he looked so hard fifteen years later. That self-same treaty which the ministers of Louis XVIII. left behind them at the time of their flight on the 26th March 1815, and which Napoleon promptly sent to Alexander, was the cause of Alexander's resentment against Talleyrand, which was never overcome. It was one of the causes which, after the second Restoration, kept the French diplomatist away from the ministry and from public affairs.

Nevertheless, it was supposed that the Grand-Duke Constantine, who had left Vienna in deference to his brother and master's will, was only occupied with reviews and manœuvres, the supposedly exclusive objects of his passion. Nobody thought of war, and everybody ardently desired peace. Suddenly there came to Vienna a proclamation addressed by the Grand-duke to the Polish nation, which was tantamount to an appeal to arms. This strange manifesto was composed as follows:—

> 'To the Polish Army.—His Majesty the Emperor Alexander, your powerful protector, appeals to you by this. Gather round your

> standards, take up arms to defend your country and to maintain your political existence. While this august monarch prepares the happy future of your country, show the world that you are ready to sustain his whole efforts with the price of your blood. The same chiefs who during the last twenty years have led you on the road to glory will know how to lead you thither once more. The emperor is fully cognisant of your valour; amidst many disasters of a most fatal war he has seen your honour survive events which in no wise depended upon you. Signal feats of arms conferred distinction upon you in a struggle the motive of which was foreign to you; at present, when your efforts are directly devoted to your country, you will be invincible. Soldiers and warriors of all arms, be ye the first to give the example of all the virtues which should inspire your countrymen. A boundless devotion to the emperor, who has no other aim than the welfare of your country, an unalterable love for his august person; obedience, discipline, and courage—these are the means to ensure the prosperity of your country, which is under the ægis of the emperor. It is only by those means that you can attain the happy situation which others may promise you, but which he alone can bestow. His power and his virtues will be the guarantee of it to you.'

Two points in this document, more than any other, aroused profound astonishment. The Grand-duke, in inciting the Poles to rally around his brother the emperor, in soliciting their devotion to his person, forestalled, as it were, the supreme decision of the Congress. The question was practically pending before the sovereign tribunal, no decision whatsoever had been taken, nevertheless Constantine virtually proclaimed his brother the Protector of

Poland. Secondly, what construction was to be placed on those threats of war, on that appeal to arms, when the whole of Europe was ostentatiously looking at the consolidation of a general appeasement? Against whom, then, were the Poles, guided by the Russians, to take up arms? Against the other Powers, who refused them their independence? Did Constantine in reality flatter himself that he was imposing upon the Poles and hoodwinking them by garbling the truth? Could she (Poland) be blinded by those protestations in favour of her nationality?

Since the proclamation, denied for a moment, had acquired the stamp of authenticity, the discussion provoked by it stifled all others. In Talleyrand's drawing-room it was the subject of all conversations. He was known to be a partisan of Saxony and Poland. It was also known that, together with Metternich, he was the soul of that far-seeing and imperturbable resistance to Russian projects.

'Have you read a statement drawn up by M. Pozzo di Borgo in connection with Poland?' said M. L —— to a group surrounding him. 'The political world is very much concerned about it. The author aims to show that, for many reasons, this country must not be granted its independence, but must be entirely incorporated with Russia.'

'It is but natural,' was the answer, 'that M. Pozzo di Borgo should have posed as the enemy of both the principles and the person of Napoleon. This is easily conceivable and easily explicable by allowing for the poison of the Corsican vendetta, which becomes an heirloom from generation to generation. In his country hatred is a family inheritance: God alone knows how far it goes back and where it will end. But what has that ill-fated nation done to M. Pozzo

that he should oppose the good-will shown towards her here?'

'M. Pozzo defends the cause of the country which adopted him. Employed by Russia, he has become a Russian.'

'But is not this carrying devotion to ingratitude? Is it possible, then, that the recollection of past benefits is denied to the political writer to such a degree as to make M. Pozzo forget that Prince Adam Czartoryski virtually "picked him up" on his arrival in Russia; that he took him and, as it were, guided him to that temple the first steps of which he aspired to ascend? When M. Pozzo came back from Constantinople, where his efforts to ingratiate himself with Admiral Siniavin had been paralysed either by the intrigues or by the real merit of M. le Comte Capo d'Istria, he was bound to make up at St. Petersburg for the check he had received at the Bosphorus by a fresh attempt. Prince Adam was, for the travelling diplomatic apprentice, a veritable godsend. To write a diatribe against the country of the prince is tantamount to attacking his own star. From a political point of view it is, perhaps, very clever. I scarcely care to ask what it is from an ethical point.'

'You know that M. Pozzo claims the priority of the idea of having directed the march of the allied armies on Paris?'

'Yes; but it is also said that after the event the claim was preferred by the other prophets. If it had failed, there would doubtless be fewer oracles to-day.'

'Well, it is probable that M. Pozzo will go very far before we have finished with him. To succeed in

politics, one must forget family and country, tread underfoot gratitude, stifle the dearest affections, deny the principles of one's life, and at that price only glory and success come within one's grasp.'

An untoward fate seemed to dog the sleighing-party projected by the Austrian Court. It had been postponed several times in consequence of a change of temperature. One day the cold seemed to promise for the next the hard and polished surface necessary to those northern chariots, then a thaw would set in and soften the layer of ice spread on the earth. Finally, a downright frost began, preceded by an abundant snowfall, and the imperial promenade was once more fixed. From early morning an immense crowd gathered on the Josef Platz, where the sleighs were to meet. Nearly all had been refurbished; those intended for the emperors and sovereigns were in the form of a *calèche*, and were decorated with a taste and lavishness productive of the happiest results. They sparkled with the brightest colours, enhanced with gold. The cushions, of emerald-coloured velvet, were trimmed with fringe of the same metal. The harness, displaying the scutcheon of the imperial house, was hung with silver bells. The sleighs of the high personages of the Congress and of the Austrian nobility vied both in richness and elegance with those of the sovereigns: silk, velvet, and gilding everywhere, while every sleigh was drawn by horses of price, caparisoned with tiger skins and rich furs, their flowing manes plaited with knots and ribbons. They were with difficulty kept in hand, the tinkling of the bells rendering them more spirited than usual, and anxious to get away with the light loads behind them.

While awaiting the signal to start, the privileged

promenaders had forgathered within the Imperial Palace. At two o'clock the order was given, and the illustrious company came down, taking their seats, the sovereigns in accordance with the rule of precedence prevailing in their case, the others according to the rank determined by mere chance. To each cavalier a lady is assigned by lot as his companion on the road. A blast of trumpets is heard, and the procession begins its march.

A detachment of cavalry comes forward, preceding the sergeants and sergeants' caterers of the Court, mounted on richly caparisoned cattle. They are followed by an immense sleigh drawn by six horses and containing an orchestra of kettledrums and trumpets. The grand equerry, Trauttmansdorff, on horseback, and followed by his men-at-arms, comes afterwards, then immediately after that, the sleighs of the sovereigns. The first sleigh is that of the Emperor of Austria, piloting the charming Elizabeth of Russia. In the second was Emperor Alexander with the Princesse d'Auersberg; then came the King of Prussia with the Comtesse Julie Zichy, the King of Denmark with the Grande-Duchesse de Saxe-Weimar, and the Grand-Duke of Baden with the grand-mistress of the Court, the Comtesse Lazanski. Twenty-four young pages, richly dressed in mediæval costumes, and a squadron of the Hungarian Nobiliary Guards provided the escort for the sovereigns' sledges.

The Empress of Russia was wrapped in a large coat of green velvet lined with ermine; on her head she wore a toque of the same colour with an aigrette of diamonds similar to that usually worn by the great Catherine. The other ladies were equally provided against the cold with velvet coats of the richest

colours; the Grande-Duchesse de Weimar's being pink, also trimmed with ermine, a fur which in Austria is exclusively reserved for personages of royal blood. The other colours such as purple and amaranth were all relieved by the rarest and most elegant furs.

Then came the other sledges, to the number of thirty, holding the principal Court personages and the princely guests for whom this entertainment had been projected. The procession crossed the city at only a walking pace, thus enabling the crowd to recognise and to salute those who in a little while will be carried away at a gallop. The Archeduc Palatine has by his side the Grande-Duchesse d'Oldenbourg wrapped in a blue velvet mantle, the shade of which blends most happily with her charming face. Behind these the Prince Royal of Würtemberg has for his companion the Princesse de Lichtenstein. Handsome though his companion is, he does not take his eyes off the sleigh containing the woman he worships, and he looks as if inclined to quarrel with fate for having served him so niggardly. Our charming 'queen,' as we call the Comtesse Fuchs, has fallen to the lot of the Prince Guillaume de Prusse. The Prince Léopold de Sicile is with the Princesse Lubomirska, the Prince Eugène with Mme. Apponyi, the Prince Royal de Bavière with the Comtesse Sophie Zichy, the Archeduc Charles with the Comtesse Esterhazy, the Prince Auguste de Prusse with the Comtesse Batthyany, the Comte François Zichy with Lady Castlereagh, the Comte de Wurbna with the Comtesse Walluzen, the Duc de Saxe-Cobourg with the handsome Rosalie Rzewuska. The dresses of all those ladies were elegant beyond description; the men wore Polish coats trimmed with the most beautiful fur.

After that followed a squadron of grooms wearing the imperial livery; then the procession was closed by several reserve sleighs and another huge six-horsed sledge carrying a band dressed in Turkish uniforms and playing warlike tunes. After having slowly traversed the principal streets of Vienna, the procession ranges itself in two lines, and at a signal the horses start at a gallop on the road to Schönbrunn.

In a few moments, the magnificent line of sleighs reaches its first stage. As, however, there had been some slight contretemps with those frail 'turn-outs,' there was a half-way halt near the monument erected to King John Sobieski for his deliverance of Austria. It is a triangular pyramid constructed on the very spot where the Grand Vizier Kara-Mustapha had erected his tent during the siege. When the brilliant string of sleighs had vanished from our eyes, there was a unanimous cry of admiration from the numerous spectators at the unique beauty of the sight. The fact of so many illustrious personages being brought to the spot was considered as worthy of admiration as the magnificence and pomp displayed by the Austrian Court and noblesse. Of course it required a solemn function like the Congress to rally so many crowned heads, celebrities of all kinds, and remarkable women. It was, indeed, a picture which for many centuries will not be repeated.

The Empress of Austria, the King and Queen of Bavaria, besides several other personages in far from robust health, who feared the cold, had gone to Schönbrunn in closed carriages. A magnificent fête had been prepared and many invitations issued. The return was to take place at night and by torchlight.

After the banquet to which all those who made up the sleighing party were invited, the principal Viennese actors presented one of the prettiest pieces of the French stage, the *Cendrillon* of M. Étienne, which had been translated into German. A grand ball was to wind up the entertainment. The Prince Koslowski, the Comte de Witt, and I repaired betimes to Schönbrunn.

The sleighs on their arrival formed into a circle around the frozen lake of Schönbrunn, which was like a polished mirror, and was covered by skaters in the most elegant costumes of the various countries of Northern Europe. The scene was very animated, with the various sledges in the shape of swans, gondolas, etc., and reminded one of a Dutch kermesse, especially in respect to the itinerant vendors of fortifying drinks patronised by the energetic performers. The picture was in reality unique in virtue of the various servants in livery, both on foot and on horseback, and the sleighs of the Court itself, not to mention the enormous crowds of spectators who had come all the way from Vienna.

A young man attached to the English embassy, Sir Edward W——, a member of the London skating-club, and accustomed to astonish the promenaders in Hyde Park on the Serpentine, executed some wonderful feats in the way of figures, pirouettes, and single and double curling. Like the Chevalier de St. George, who on the pond at Versailles traced the name of Marie-Antoinette, Sir Edward traced the monograms of the queens, the empresses, and other female celebrities, who left their sleighs to admire his skill. Others, less perfect than he, no doubt, but very skilful nevertheless, performed Chinese and European dances, including a waltz. The latter was

danced by two Dutch ladies in the picturesque dresses of Saardam milkmaids, to the applause and admiration of everybody.

I may dispense with a description of the theatre: it was dazzling as usual, but the aspect of the adjacent rooms was truly delightful. The rarest plants of the imperial green-houses—myrtles, orange-trees in full bloom—hid the walls of the staircases, the vestibules, and the ball-rooms; it was a decoration all the more appreciated in virtue of the temperature outside. After the performance of *Cendrillon*, to which some gracefully designed ballets had been added, the crowd repaired to those drawing-rooms, where the perfume and the variety of the flowers reminded us of the most clement season of the year. They only went through a few polonaises.

'I am bound to admit,' said Comte de Witt, 'that this sleighing party has been a beautiful, marvellous, and elegant affair, even to us Russians, who are accustomed to that kind of magnificence. I also admit that this fête, recalling as it does the spring, is equally worthy of the rest. In truth, at the pace we are proceeding with our amusements, it will not be surprising if surfeit breed disgust. Nevertheless, in order to add something new to all that has been offered to us, and to complete this winter fête, they ought to have constructed on the Schönbrunn lake a palace of ice to receive and entertain our royal company.'

'Entirely of ice, general?'

'Yes, like that which Empress Anne constructed on the Neva. But you, who have lived in St. Petersburg, did you never hear of that fête?'

'No.'

‘There was at Anne’s Court a Prince de G——, who had practically become its jester. The empress wished to get him married, and they chose him a wife more or less likely to fall in with his eccentric habits. In order fitly to celebrate the nuptials, they constructed, as I told you, a palace of ice on the Neva. The columns, the walls, the wainscoting, the furniture in the interior, such as the tables, the lustres, and even the bed of the newly-married couple, was absolutely of frozen water, shaped by cunning artificers. In order to give more variety to this extraordinary construction, blocks of coloured chiselled ice had been employed in the ornamentation of the structure. When sumptuous carpets had been spread in the apartments, and thousands of wax tapers had been lighted, the Court repaired in sleighs to this fantastic place, and the fête commenced. Cossack dances to the strangest music were performed, then there was a supper, partaken of by ever so many guests. In the midst of the banquet four Cossacks brought in with great pomp a whole ox with gilded horns, which had been roasted on the ice in the court of the palace. After having made the round of the table, this monstrous roast was given to the servants. Then came the moment for putting the newly-married couple to bed; the signal was given with a salvo of artillery from ordnance made of ice.

‘Up to that moment everything had gone well with poor G—— and his wife. But when they had been undressed and put to bed, and the ice began to melt around them, their gestures and countenances were not in the least expressive of the tender passion, whether hallowed or not. And as, according to ancient usage, all this was taking place in the presence of the Court, they did not dare to leave

their couch, and were by no means pleased with this bit of imperial recreation. Save the wedding-ceremony, however, the tradition of this extraordinary and magnificent palace has been kept up to the present day, and I am sorry the members of the fêtes-committee did not revive the spectacle of an immense castle built of ice.'

While Comte de Witt was telling me all this, I had caught sight of Prince Eugène by himself, and I went up to him. With his usual kindness, he reminded me of my not having been to see him for a long while, although we had frequently met at our friend Comtesse Laura's. Wherever Prince Eugène was compelled to appear, his calm dignity never forsook him; and in spite of his equivocal situation at Vienna, he made many, many friends. I have already touched upon Emperor Alexander's sincere affection for him, a friendship redounding to the honour of the deposed prince and the powerful emperor. This friendship and interest of the czar extended to Queen Hortense. Knowing her impulsive disposition, and how much she stood in need now and again of disinterested advice, Alexander had despatched to Paris a diplomatic agent, named Boutiakine, with the mission to take care of her, and to guide her in all things.

Eugène had just received some letters from this cherished sister, who appeared to have inherited all the feminine graces of her mother. Hortense fully unbosomed her griefs, which at that moment were very poignant. The family dissensions, the death of her mother, the threat of being deprived of her children, everything seemed to aggravate the loss of her brilliant position. The prince, in mentioning all these, could scarcely restrain his emotion; and from

that moment I promised myself to make those confidences a passport to the friendship of the woman to whom the loss of a crown seemed the least of sorrows. My wish was realised later on, not in Paris, as I had hoped, but in the spot which at the time served her as an asylum. It was in 1819, when she was in exile. I had just returned from Poland, where I had spent several years, and was preparing to go back to France. Being at Augsburg, I was informed that she, who no longer bore any other title than that of the Duchesse de Saint-Leu, was living there. In days gone by she had set some of my romances to music. The latter circumstance, together with the good-will shown to me by her brother during the Congress of Vienna, emboldened me to request the honour of being presented to her; her immediate answer virtually enhanced the favour accorded.

At that time I only knew Queen Hortense by repute, and from the frequent allusions to her made by her brother; but from the very first it seemed to me that I was meeting with an old friend after a long absence, and that I was indebted for her cordial welcome to the bonds of an old friendship. Everything in her harmonised perfectly—the sweet expression of her features, her conversation, the gentleness of her voice and of her character. Every kind and affectionate word that fell from her lips was all the more precious, inasmuch as it was dictated solely by her heart; she imparted such animation to her pictures as to imbue the spectator with the idea of being an actor in, or at least a looker-on at, the real scene. She had a kind of personal magic in communicating information and in fascinating those with whom she came in contact, and that artless power of seduction took deep root in people’s hearts.

It was during the short moments of a confidential conversation that I was enabled to judge of her absolutely genuine qualities. She was deeply moved at all the memories of the past, but one idea—the insatiable craving for another glimpse of France, seemed uppermost.

During the evening tea was served. ‘It’s a custom I brought back with me from Holland,’ she said, ‘but do not suppose that it is in order to remind me of that brilliant and, alas, so far distant period.’

Several visitors came from the immediate neighbourhood, others from Munich. They were cordially welcomed, and she felt, no doubt, flattered by the consideration with which she was treated, inasmuch as that consideration could be due to esteem only, and not to intrigues or adulation, of which she felt so weary both at Saint Cloud and at the Hague. During the evening she showed me some good pictures by painters of the various schools, and a collection of art objects which had been considerably increased by that left by her mother. The majority of those brilliant trifles were connected with certain periods and celebrated people, and they might well have been called a summary of modern history. After that we had some music. The duchesse sang to her own accompaniment, and she put as much soul into her singing as into the compositions themselves. She had just finished a series of drawings for her ballads, and the next morning she sent me the pretty collection, which time will render all the more precious.

At midnight I took my leave, without much hope of seeing her again. But that particular day will for ever be stamped on my memory. It is a pleasure to pay one’s homage of respect to fallen grandeur,

when, as in Hortense's case, natural and amiable genius is added to the fascination of a kindly nature.

Meanwhile the sleighing-fête was over, and a blast of trumpets gave the signal for the return to Vienna. Wrapt in their cloaks, the illustrious guests proceeded towards the court of the palace. Ranged in two lines, their sleighs were waiting for them. Everybody resumed the position of the morning. A martial strain gave the signal for the start, and the vehicles disappeared at a gallop, leaving on the horizon a trail of light across the snow and the hoar frost of the trees.

While the palace of Schönbrunn was the scene of these intoxicating pleasures, how were those occupied to whom it represented only a prison? Avoiding all contact with the joyous guests of the Congress, Marie-Louise and her son preferred to get away from a pleasure party which could only awaken sad recollections. Early in the morning, they departed in sleighs to the smiling valley of St. Helena, near Schönbrunn, where they passed the day —the empress offering dinner to her small Court— and returned to Schönbrunn in the evening. A strange coincidence of names between the valley of St. Helena where Marie-Louise went to hide her grief, and that famous island, also called St. Helena, where her husband, a few months later, buried both his glory and his disasters.

The next morning the Emperor of Austria made a present to Alexander of the gilded sleigh in which the latter had ridden. To show his appreciation of the gift, the czar had it carefully packed and sent to St. Petersburg. The expenses of that sleighing-party and the fête following it were estimated at three hundred thousand florins. Many years have passed since that

joyous period of the Congress of Vienna. Many of those whom I saw so gaily carried away by the tinkling-belled coursers have been pitilessly carried away since then by relentless death. How many perished before their time! Emperor Alexander, whose courtesy and youthful spirit were the life of all those parties; the Emperor of Austria; the Kings of Prussia and Bavaria; Prince Eugène, so kind and cordial—all are lying in their graves. The Empress of Austria, so graceful, and such a beneficent friend to art; the charming Elizabeth of Russia; her sister-in-law, the Grande Duchesse d'Oldenbourg; the Comtesse Julie Zichy; Madame de Fuchs—all were taken away as prematurely as unexpectedly. How many other women in the zenith of their beauty, whose grace enhanced those gatherings, followed them when their life was scarcely more than half run! And among the political or military notabilities, de Wrède, Schwartzenberg, Talleyrand, Castlereagh, Dalberg, Capo d'Istria, besides the friends so dear to my affection, such as Koslowski, Ypsilanti, de Witt! In truth, the almost imperceptible track of the sleigh gliding on the polished snow was the image of our rapid passage, or rather of our short-lived apparition, on this earth.

CHAPTER XVI

Reception at Madame de Fuchs's—Prince Philippe d'Hesse-Hombourg—The Journalists and Newsmongers of Vienna—The French Village in Germany—Prince Eugène—Recollection of the Consulate—Tribulations of M. Denville—Mme. Récamier—The Return of the *Émigré*—Childhood's Friend, or the Magic of a Name—Ball at Lord Stewart's—Alexander proclaimed King of Poland—The Prince Czartoryski—Confidence of the Poles—Count Arthur Potocki—The Revolutions of Poland—Slavery—Vandar—Ivan, or the Polish Serf.

At one of the *soirées* at the Comtesse de Fuchs's, the whole of the coterie had gathered round her—for she also had her coterie. In default of diplomatic treaties, her grace and friendship constituted its bond. The conversation had turned on some news which, it was said, had leaked out from the high deliberations of the Congress.

They were asking Prince Philippe d'Hesse-Hombourg if the fate of his family's Landgravate had been fixed, either by the decisions on the Graben or by those of the more serious Congress.

'Nothing as yet has transpired,' he answered, 'but it is generally expected that the Principality will receive a slight increase.'

Thereupon he gave us some particulars as to the origin of his house, one of the most illustrious in Germany, both in virtue of its age and of its alliances; though he himself had probably no idea of being one day called upon to play the part of its ruler.

'The Principality of Hesse-Hombourg,' he said, 'presents one of the most curious freaks of modern times. It is a small colony of French Huguenots, which settled there at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Landgraf Frederick cordially welcomed those unhappy victims of their king's intolerance. He gave them land to till, and sold his silver to come to their aid. They founded a village to which they gave the name Friedrichsdorf. The most curious thing is that for more than a hundred years they have preserved, without the slightest alteration, the language, the manners, the costume, in fact everything connected with their country and their century. It is a kind of republic, governed by their minister. Isolated in their valley in the centre of Germany, these men, though practically at the door of their country, appear to have had no part or parcel in the great events that have just been accomplished. They have simply ignored the French Revolution, or if not that, have heard little or nothing of it. Though French at heart by habits, traditions, and origin, they no longer think of the country which in days gone by expelled their fathers.'

'In my travels,' I said, 'I likewise found a similar colony, but one that pushed further on than the other. It carried its household gods as far as Macarief in Russia, It, also, preserved the language and customs of its time, without even omitting the

voluminous wig which everybody knows.'

I had drawn close to Prince Eugène. Most cruelly upset by the events in course of completion, he, as it were, instinctively turned to the past. His memory striding, so to speak, across the decade of Empire, went back with a sort of melancholy regret to the period of the Consulate, which to him was a period of happiness, for it had been that of hope. In truth, those four years constituted a remarkable period; everything seemed eager for a new birth, to emerge altered, if not purified, from the confusion into which the saturnalia of the Directorate had plunged it. At that moment nothing had acquired any stability, but those who had eyes to see perceived well enough that they were advancing with giant steps towards a social regeneration. There was a general, an irresistible, yielding to pleasure. It was not the licence which had preceded it; it was like the distant and expiring sound of that licence assuming a regular cadence day after day. Lavishness was extreme; gold seemed, as it were, to flow; military and administrative fortunes had been made so rapidly as to leave people virtually in doubt as to the real price which had been paid for them. Numberless *émigrés* setting foot once more in their country, and finding their property practically unimpaired, made up by constant enjoyment for the cruel privations they had experienced in an alien land; others, happy to have escaped either that or proscription, followed suit, and freely scattered their fortunes, which they had been within an ace of losing for ever. Finally, as if everything conspired to the glorifying of that period, consider this further: that it counted, perhaps, the largest number of celebrated beauties. Not that chance had absolutely provided a most remarkable type of woman, but gold flung about by

handfuls brought to the fore women who, if they had remained in an obscure position, would have probably passed unperceived; placed on pedestals, they borrowed from the world by which they were surrounded part of the brilliancy which dazzled the beholder. We reviewed all the joys of that remarkable period, and we naturally came to the recollection of the woman who was *the queen then*—Mme. Récamier. It was at her house that forgathered the best society of the time, and all that Paris held in the way of illustrious strangers. In her seemed incarnated the elegance and pomp of the moment. Prince Eugène had often been a guest at those receptions, which Europe has not yet forgotten.

'That period,' I said to the prince, 'will always remain stamped on my memory, not only in virtue of the brilliance of its fêtes or the glamour of our military glory, but in virtue of a circumstance which formed an epoch in my existence. You know, prince, there are moments when fortune, weary as it were of taking you for its play-ball, suddenly lifts you from the depths of despair to the heaven of glory. At that time I had a very curious experience.'

'Which is the circumstance?' promptly exclaimed the Comtesse Laura. 'You must tell us.'

'It is a very long episode; nevertheless, if you will grant me your attention for a while, I will obey.

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The most unforeseen resolutions are often due to the most trifling causes: it was perhaps one word, a single word, which decided my future. Everybody knows the awkwardness of those pet names that one gives to children, which continue up to a time when

what was once pretty and graceful becomes intensely ridiculous. It was formerly the fashion in France, as it was here, and for the matter of that everywhere, to confer upon the very young that second baptism of friendship. Of course it seems the most natural thing in the world to do to-day what we did yesterday. Consequently, in Paris as in Vienna, they called tall, grown-up men, Fanfan, Dédé, Lolo, and other sobriquets, very sweet, but utterly unsuited to the men themselves. I ought to be a good special pleader of that cause, for I also have been called by one of those pet names, and I made a fine thing of it by remembering it on one of the most eventful days of my life. Yes, that rather ridiculous name was for me a talisman worth all the charms of the fairies. Napoleon had overthrown the contemned government of the Directorate. Sufficiently strong to be merciful, he allowed all those who had abandoned their country in order to save their heads to come back again. I had just left my ‘father’ in Amsterdam, he having resolved to send me to Paris in order to see his business man, and to find resources which were absolutely lacking in the alien land. He confided me to one of our countrymen, M. Clément, whose acquaintance we had made in Holland, and who was going back to France. We started together for Paris. We took up our quarters at the Hôtel de Paris in the Rue Coquillière. M. Clément found letters from his family, who had a few days previously left for Dijon, bidding him to follow them instantly. On leaving me, he entrusted me to the care of the manager, M. Chandeau, a pastry-cook by trade, who was willing to keep me there, though my appearance by no means promised a profitable customer, or even one able to settle a little bill. Nevertheless, I had a modest room on the fifth floor at a rental of twelve

francs per month, and as for my meals, I arranged them very much in accordance with the slenderness of my purse. I prefer not to dwell upon this more than precarious existence.

Nevertheless, at the first going off, I thoroughly felt the intoxication of being once more in my native land. I had saluted Paris with the enthusiasm that causes the sailor to shout 'Land, land!' after a long absence. I was very young, but I had lived a good deal in a few years. Storms and hurricanes, privation and struggle, even hair-breadth escapes from death—I had known them all. And yet it seemed to me that as recently as the night before I had wandered under the chestnut-trees of the Tuileries, and in the galleries of the Palais-Royal, where I now found myself after a three years' exile. I was very excited while traversing the Passages, the Places, the bridges, and I ran along them quickly as if in deadly fear of their escaping me once more. I looked at the Seine as if she were an old friend, and still everything was new to me, everything touched a chord of tenderness —even the discordant cries of the itinerant vendors with whom the streets of Paris swarmed. I felt as if I were taking possession of it once more. At sixteen there seems to be such a very long future before one. All that is probable seems possible. One feels unconsciously that by the right of one's youth the command of the world must devolve upon one. The awakening from this dream was indeed very sombre.

I began by calling upon the business people whose addresses my 'father' had given me. Some were absent, others pretended to have lost all recollection of us. I took care not to call upon my school-fellows in order to arouse their pity, for I remembered the words Colville had constantly

repeated to me at Hamburg: ‘Try to dispense with everything rather than ask a service of the man whom you consider your best friend.’ Consequently, as a rule, I ascended to my perch dead with fatigue, and not at all disposed to say with Pope ‘Whatever is, is right.’ It is true that I got some sympathy from our poor servant, Marie, to dispel the dejection plainly visible on my face. The excellent creature always chose stories calculated to make my blood curdle. ‘A few months ago,’ she said to me, ‘a young and handsome boy, named Denville, lived in this very room. From morn to night he wrote—he was a savant—and then, in order to get a little recreation, he sang, accompanying himself on the guitar. Besides being a savant he was an artist. All this was very well, but though he spent very little, the poor boy never settled his bill, and during the seven months he lodged at the hotel no one had ever seen the colour of his money. He promised well enough, but he wrote in vain to his family, who lived in Rheims. There is none so deaf as those who won’t hear, and not a cent came from Champagne. There are some very hard-hearted parents—very hard-hearted indeed. And that’s why the young fellow so often repeated that no parent comes up to a louis d’or, and that the staunchest friend is the pawnshop.

‘M. Chandeau, furious at getting nothing but promises, lost patience, and only waited a favourable opportunity to cease being made a dupe of, as he said. One evening, when M. Denville had gone downstairs in dressing-gown and slippers to buy some trifling thing at the stationer’s opposite, M. Chandeau promptly mounted the stairs, put a padlock on the door, and practically sequestrated in that way the whole of his lodger’s luggage. When the latter came back, purchase in hand, he found on the

landing his pitiless creditor, telling him to seek shelter elsewhere.

'It's inhuman, isn't it, monsieur, to send one's debtor away like that, practically naked? Prayers, promises, threats were not of the slightest use. The young fellow was obliged to make the best of it, to go down into the street, to promenade up and down like a ghost, with the additional chance of perishing with cold, for it was the middle of November. It struck ten o'clock, and the shops began to close. The poor young man did not know where to look for a shelter, the only hope of such presenting itself to him being the arch of a bridge, or the guard-room of a military post. When he got as far as the Point St. Eustache he was accosted by a poor woman—a working woman—who, touched by the story of his deplorable situation, took him to her room, gave him some supper, and kept him like this for a month, sharing everything with him. But the most surprising part of the story is the end. The lover of this poor girl was the servant of a general. The general was looking out for a secretary. The servant was sufficiently interested in this protégé of Providence to share his clothes with him, just as the poor girl had shared her crust of bread, after which he presented M. Denville to his master. The general took a fancy to M. Denville's face, and engaged him, and took him to the army in Italy, in which he was to command a division.

'You must know, monsieur, that everybody who goes to Italy and doesn't happen to be killed, comes back rich. That's what happened to M. Denville. On his return, he was absolutely bursting with gold. He paid everything he owed to M. Chandeau. Better still, he bought, exactly opposite the hotel, a little

mercer's shop to make a present to the young girl who had so charitably picked him up.'

As may easily be imagined, that kind of picture did not give a particularly agreeable tinge to my dreams. This great man, expelled from the room that I was living in, and promenading down below in the street in white, grasping his roll of paper, appeared to me like the statue of the Commander to Don Juan. In my anxiety I now and again substituted the face and figure of my landlord, holding in one hand his little bill, and the padlock in the other. I no longer slept, and I scarcely ate. The mind was killing the body, and I was certainly getting the worst of this terrible struggle, of which I failed to see the end.

I had been to the Hôtel Choiseul, which had been inhabited by my family, and had been transformed into an auction-mart. I wandered through its rooms, every one of which was crowded with furniture and goods offered to the highest bidder. (Subsequently, part of the Opéra was built on the site.) Alas, throughout my wandering I did not find a stick that belonged to us; even the porter had changed, and, however improbable and romantic it may seem, my only friend of old was Castor, the poor watch-dog, who still occupied his kennel. Pricking up his ears and wagging his tail, Castor licked my hands when I began to stroke him.

Perhaps Castor's friendliness directed my thoughts to the old friends of my family. Among them I had heard M. Récamier cited as the richest banker of his time, and his wife as the foremost woman of fashion. I knew Mme. Récamier before her marriage, and when she first came to Paris. When we both were children our parents lived in the same house. Our games and our studies were often

interrupted by the scenes of the Revolution. I remembered the incidents of those first years most vividly; but would she remember them? I had lost sight of her completely during those six years so crowded with events. A kind of false shame kept me back. I could not make up my mind to go and see her, amidst all her opulence, in a condition bordering so closely upon a state of poverty as mine. The days went by meanwhile, and I had practically exhausted my last resources. In vain had I tried to borrow money on the portrait of Louis XVI., the last gift of the ill-fated prince to my 'father,' his faithful and devoted minister. What interest had those money-changers in a prince who was only great by his virtues, and who already belonged to history?

I informed my 'father' of my position; told him of my various unsuccessful attempts, and asked him for fresh instructions. I received in reply a letter dated from Holland. He told me to remain for a little longer in Paris, but if I did not succeed, to come back to Amsterdam, where M. Vandenberg, the landlord of our inn, would procure me the means to join him, my 'father,' in England, whither important affairs compelled him to proceed immediately.

I shall never forget the night I spent after that letter. There are situations too painful for description, griefs that may be conceived, but cannot be expressed. I already beheld myself without the slightest resources in Paris; without a mother, without relations or friends, and like those who seek but do not find, who cry and who are made sport of, who would fain attach themselves to some one, and are despised. I was told to start for Amsterdam. How could I? I could imagine what it must have cost my 'father' to write that letter. Perhaps he believed that

experience had already given me the wisdom which, as a rule, only comes with years, and that the journey of a thousand leagues which I had made with him had taught me to vanquish obstacles. On that occasion, though, I was not alone: his courage sustained mine. In the present instance, his absence left me no other support than the future and God.

My sleep was disturbed and agitated; it was not rest, it was simply the temporary forgetfulness of my trouble. I was looking forward to the cruel struggle with the world; I beheld myself flung amidst the crowd to dispute for a crust of bread with the rest of mankind. The days went by like centuries, for if it be true, as the Prince de Ligne said, that happiness has wings, misfortune has legs of lead. Poor misguided creatures that we are! at fifteen we fancy that we have exhausted fate; at the slightest storm we bend our heads and say, 'There's no longer any hope.' And at sixty we still go on hoping.

One resolution came from all those conflicting ideas. It was high time; for I no longer saw the faintest chance of staving off the crisis, or of temporising with M. Chandeau, whose face became more sour every day. I resolved to go to Mme. Récamier, whom I knew to be at her country house at Clichy-la-Garenne. I made up my mind to go and implore her help, as one implores that of an angel from heaven when everything on earth has failed.

One fine May morning, I started from the Rue Coquillière for Clichy. On my way, I tried to screw my courage to the sticking-point by recalling the happy times of my early youth, and in the conjuring up of those pictures, the image of Mme. Récamier, who had been the companion of my liveliest joys and of my short-lived griefs, re-appeared continually.

Recalling, one by one, the proofs of her genuine affection, always so lavishly bestowed, I dismissed all fear that her immense fortune, her high social position, would cause her to deny the friend of her childhood, coming to her homeless, proscribed, and unhappy.

When I had reached the barrier which majestically dominates Paris, I continued my route between some sparse and poverty-stricken sheds across the fields. I little dreamt that in a comparatively few years there would arise on the spot a pretty town of fifteen thousand inhabitants, with its cafés, its baths, and its theatre, that would dispute with Passy the advantages of being the Tibur of the literary men and artists of Paris, frightened at the hubbub of the city. At the other side of the hill which I had slowly mounted, the soft and gently sloping greensward landed me in the Avenue de Clichy. I felt as light of heart under those century-old trees as if I were returning to the paternal manor after a morning's sport, but at the sight of the gate of the mansion, my assurance forsook me.

Will she receive me? Will she recognise me? My blood, overheated by my rapid march, froze in my veins at the question. I should probably have turned back, but for the knowledge that to advance was the only chance of finding an asylum.

When I got to the porter's lodge I pulled the chain, producing but a faint tinkling of the bell. It had, nevertheless, been heard, for a voice from inside told Laurette to open the gate. 'Laurette,' I said to myself; 'that name, no doubt, belongs to a young girl, and the sympathy between our ages will probably get me a favourable reception.' The illusion vanished almost immediately, and I should have been the first

to laugh at my blunder if at that moment my poor heart had been at all susceptible to any kind of joy. Instead of the little Laurette I expected—namely, a kind of *opéra-comique* shepherdess, with a beflowered and beribboned crook—I beheld an old peasant woman, wrinkled and bent down with years. Laurette was dressed in a black and white striped kirtle, and her crook was represented by the ponderous key of the gate. In answer to my inquiries, she pointed to the door of the hall; but her second reply convinced me that she was deaf, for she kept gently shaking her head and softly slapping her ears with her fore-finger.

Trembling and uncertain, I stood rooted to the spot, dreading to advance; for it is a cruel thing to come to a friend's door in the guise of a suppliant. But the massive gate had turned on its hinges and closed once more while Laurette re-entered her pavilion, and I was thus compelled to advance.

Hence, I took my courage in both hands and slowly crossed the court, still further slackening my pace in ascending the steps of the ancient residence of the Ducs de Lévis, both fearing and dreading to reach the top. I rang the bell, and in answer a servant appeared. Doffing my tri-cornered hat, considerably too big for me, with that air of humility which renders the man down on his luck so awkward, I asked him, in a voice which I tried in vain to steady, if I might see Mme. Récamier. From the way in which he began to 'take stock' of me, I imagined that he was in the habit of seeing many needy creatures steer for this haven, and that, naturally, he classed me among the crowd of the wretched which each day solicited the inexhaustible charity of his mistress. 'I'll see if madame is at home,'

he said; ‘but what name shall I say?’ I gave him mine, and, apparently satisfied on that point, he bade me take a seat. A few moments passed, and Joseph—that was the name of the domestic—did not return. Devoured with anxiety, I rose from the seat, which offered no rest, and strode up and down the large hall, paved with marble and hung with sombre portraits, paintings of another age, worn out like the past, forgotten like the past, and on the faces of which I tried in vain to catch a favourable smile.

Every one knows with what minute attention a man coming to ask a favour scans the spot where he awaits his fate. At last Joseph came back; but it was no longer the semi-benevolent face that welcomed me on my entrance.

‘Madame is very sorry not to be able to see you to-day, monsieur. Not having the honour of your acquaintance, she would ask you to write to her about the motive of your visit.’

‘Not know me!’ my lips painfully murmured, stupefied. I felt like one suddenly blinded. Everything in this world seemed to fail me at once—the present, the future, friendship, and my courage withal. Tears, but badly hidden by the brim of my hat, coursed down my cheeks. At sixteen one does still shed tears. One has not acquired the courage which is only learned in the school of adversity.

Though distressed beyond measure at my own weakness, I could not make up my mind to leave the place. In fact, by that same wonderful process of the imagination which in a few moments of sleep shows you a long series of diverse objects, my imagination pictured to me spontaneously the steep and winding staircase leading to the attics of the Hôtel de Calais, and my relentless landlord waiting there, my bill in

his hand, in order to bar further progress, as he had barred it to my expelled predecessor. There was more than this, however. Some horrid words had in reality fallen upon my ear. Juliet, the friend and companion of my infancy, no longer remembered even my name. During this mental colloquy, Joseph, rigid, motionless, constantly watching a curtain in the hall, showed but too plainly his impatience to close the door upon me for ever. In spite of his looks, I did not budge. I felt it impossible to abandon my last hope. All at once, by one of the spontaneous inspirations often due to desperate positions, it flashed upon me that during my infancy I bore only a pet name, and that Mme. Récamier never called me by any other. That was enough. Tightly grasping Joseph's arm, I exclaimed:

'Please, monsieur, go back to Mme. Récamier, and tell her that it's Lolo who has come back from Sweden, who begs of her to see him for one moment.'

To judge by Joseph's face at this new request, I felt certain that he considered me bereft of my senses. The man was, no doubt, asking himself what possible connection there could possibly be between Lolo, Sweden, and his mistress. Consequently, he did not seem disposed to attempt this new message, but I begged so hard that finally he decided in my favour, just as one grants to a patient whose physician has given him up the last whim from which he expects his cure.

Behold me alone once more, striding up and down the huge hall, not even trying to restrain my fears now that there is no stranger to witness them, and recommending myself to that Providence which hovered over our vessel in the storm-tossed Baltic,

which had protected me at Copenhagen, and from Whom at that moment I seemed to request a miracle not less decisive than any of the former to which I owed my life.

'It often takes no more than a minute to settle a man's destiny,' says an Arab poet, just as it suffices for one ray of light from heaven to disperse a cloud. At the most exciting part of my mental soliloquy I heard in the distance a concert of feminine voices shouting in all keys. One, however, dominated the rest; and such a voice! That of the heavenly spirits painted by Milton never made a more charming impression. I recognised it at once. Then, immediately afterwards, the door was flung open, and Mme. Récamier, surrounded by three young girls as beautiful as herself, rushed towards me, crying, 'My friend, my poor Lolo, so it's you!' and her eyes, fixed on mine, grew moist, while the most grateful and refreshing tears I ever shed in my life coursed freely down my cheeks. 'Yes, it is I,' I said.

This, ladies, is one of the chapters in my chequered life. You wished to hear it, and fashion alone must be the excuse for telling it.

This little story wound up the evening.

* * * * *

Next day the majority of us met once more at a fête the dazzling pomp of which did not come up to the more intimate happiness of the small circle at the Comtesse de Fuchs's. Lord Stewart, the English ambassador, gave a grand ball at the magnificent Stahremberg mansion, his residence, to celebrate the birthday of his sovereign. Nothing had been neglected to make the entertainment worthy of the

memorable circumstances, and of the power represented by his lordship. Lord Stewart displayed a magnificence—or, to speak correctly, a profusion—of which few fêtes offered an example. His excellency, however, who loved to be eccentric in everything, and whose eccentricities were not always successful, had hit upon the idea to add to his invitation a courteous injunction to come to his ball in the costume of the time of Elizabeth. His countrymen understood him easily enough, and they were numerous in Vienna. The remainder of the guests had not complied with the request, but those who had adopted the costume were sufficiently numerous to produce a very remarkable effect. As to his excellency himself, he wore his uniform of colonel of hussars, the scarlet of which was covered with embroideries, and a great number of orders, civil and military, to such a degree as to have led one easily to mistake him for a living book of heraldry. Save for that singularity the ball was like any other: a great many sovereigns, princes, 'grandes dames,' political celebrities; a marvellous supper; a charming lottery of English trifles, which a lady dressed exactly like Queen Elizabeth distributed to the guests. After which we danced until daylight, a proceeding becoming rarer and rarer every day in Vienna, where the Court balls were seldom prolonged beyond midnight.

While all this was going on, the uncertainties of the Polish question had ceased. The result of the conferences of the Congress, which both Europe and Vienna awaited with equal impatience, was at last known. Alexander had been proclaimed King of Poland. During four months this had been the exclusive aim of his thoughts. His efforts, the ability of his ministers, the profound correctness of their

views, had been crowned with success. The Duchy of Warsaw and the handsomest part of the Polish territory were definitely incorporated with his empire. The gate of the West was open to him. Among the various phases of that negotiation, two things could not fail to strike the mind—the clever diplomacy of the Russian Government, and the confidence of the Poles. When the fall of Napoleon dispelled the last hopes of the Poles, they instinctively turned their regard towards Alexander. Persuaded that he would restore to them their ancient position, that he would reconstitute in Poland an independent kingdom, they transferred to him their affection and their hopes. Neither the recollections of the past nor the lessons of history, nor the warnings of some sagacious minds had succeeded in opening their eyes. Alexander and his ministry, it should be said, had carefully exploited that disposition. A great parade was made of moderation. The most seductive promises were lavished on the Polish nation. Their dreams of independence, their ideas of a free constitution, were constantly flattered. The Russian officers in Poland received orders to show the utmost deference to the civil and military authorities. Finally, in the month of September 1814, even before Alexander crossed Poland to appear at the Congress, when General Krazinski entered Warsaw with his division, the Field-Marshal Barclay de Tolly at the head of his staff had been the first to congratulate him. The most cordial union apparently existed between the generals of the two nations.

But from the first conferences of the plenipotentiaries, and in spite of the protestations of the czar in favour of the Polish nation, Alexander's system of aggrandisement was soon discovered.

In vain did the King of Prussia, in close agreement with him, support all his demands. The Congress resisted a long while before giving its assent. France, Austria, and England opposed an absolute refusal. We have already seen how Alexander declared one day that he would maintain, arms in hand, his pretensions regarding the freedom of Poland. Finally, thoroughly tired out, the Congress gave way, and the country of the Jagellons and the Sobieskis was united to Russia. The decision had scarcely been made public when Alexander announced it to the government of Warsaw. In an autograph letter to Comte Ostrowski, President of the Senate, the czar expressed himself as follows:

'In assuming the title of King of Poland, I desire to satisfy the wish of the nation. The Kingdom of Poland will be united to the empire by the bonds of its own constitution. If the supreme interest of a general peace has made it impossible for all the Poles to be united under one sceptre, I have made it a point to soften the rigours of that separation, and to secure for them everywhere a peaceful enjoyment of their nationality.'

Faithful to his system, Alexander shouted very loudly from the house-tops the word 'nationality' at the very moment when was accomplished and consecrated the division which was to make havoc of the word itself. Among the Polish notabilities in Vienna who had defended the cause with most intelligence and courage, one must mention in the first rank the Prince Adam Czartoryski. The passionate defender of the independence of his country, he for one moment fostered the illusion of having found the regenerator in Alexander. When the emperor, during his voyage from Russia to Vienna,

stopped at Pulawi, the residence of this ancient family, the princess-dowager, her two sons, Adam and Constantine; her two daughters, the Princesse de Würtemberg and the Comtesse Zamoyska, had prepared the most brilliant reception. In their eyes it was Alexander whose hand was to raise their country from its ruin. Alexander, on his side, professed a great esteem for the character of Prince Adam. Even at the Congress the rumour ran for a moment that he was going to appoint him his Minister of Foreign Affairs, instead of M. de Nesselrode, and that he reserved the vice-royalty of Poland for him later on. It was never known how far those rumours could be substantiated. Was it a tribute to the loyalty and talent of Prince Adam? Was it a means of leading people astray? Afterwards Europe learned how that prince became the martyr of the cause to which he had devoted the whole of his life. What, in the future, was to be the upshot of that decision of the Congress? Placed under the sceptre of the Russian autocrat, would Poland once more find her level among the rank of nations, or, like the streams which lose both their name and their substance, was Poland to be swallowed up in the immense boundaries? Such were the questions discussed one day in the most lively manner at Princesse Sapieha's. Around her were the Comte Arthur Potocki, the Comte Komar, the Prince Radziwill, the Prince Paul Sapieha, the Princesse Lubomirska, the Comtesse Lanskarouska, and several other ladies. Illusion is nowhere so thoroughly permitted as when it becomes a question of country; in that gathering, all hearts were generally open to the hopes of a political restoration, all minds believed in the realisation of Alexander's promises.

CHAPTER XVII

The Emperor Alexander, the King of Prussia, and the Naval Officer—Surprise to the Empress of Russia—More Fêtes—A Ball at M. de Stackelberg's—Paul Kisseleff—Brozin—Fête offered by M. de Metternich—The Ball-room Catches Fire—Fêtes and Banquet at the Court—Ompteda—Chronicle of the Congress—The Tell-tale Perfume—Recollection of Empress Josephine and Madame de Tallien—A Romantic Court Story.

One morning the Comte de Witt burst into my rooms holding his sides with laughter. He scarcely waited for me to ask him the reason.

'It's a story just told to me by Ouwaroff. It's very funny, but though he got it direct from Emperor Alexander, it is scarcely credible. A protégé of the Comte de Nesselrode, a young sailor, who, curiously enough, had never been to St. Petersburg and did not know the emperor, had been sent with important despatches to Vienna. Alexander, here as well as in his capital, loves to wander about the streets. This morning his Majesty, dressed in a simple military great-coat, on leaving the palace caught sight of a young naval officer, booted and spurred, apparently trying to find his way, and examining the entrance of the imperial residence, totally at a loss how to set his

helm. “You seem to be looking for something,” said the emperor. “That’s true,” answered the sailor. “I have got a despatch to remit personally to the Emperor of Russia. They told me to go to the Burg, and here I am; but as I am a stranger in Vienna, I haven’t got a soul either to guide or to introduce me.” Alexander was delighted with the frank and open face of the young fellow, and just for the fun of the thing thought he would keep up his *incognito* a little longer. “You’ll not find the emperor now,” he said. “He’s not at the palace, but at two o’clock he is sure to receive you.” The conversation went on in the same amicable and familiar tone for several minutes, the czar interrogating the officer on his family, his career, and his prospects. The young fellow tells him that, having entered the service when he was very young, he has never been to Court and has never seen his sovereign. Finally, after half an hour’s walking about in conversation, Alexander, turning to the young salt, says in an affectionate tone, “You can give me your letter, sir, I am Alexander.” “That’s a clever joke,” replies the other, laughing, “but you don’t expect me to believe it.” “You may believe it or not, but I am the Emperor of Russia.” “I dare say—just as I am the Emperor of China.” “Why shouldn’t you be the Emperor of China?” Alexander, getting thoroughly amused with an adventure which promises to become very comic, makes up his mind to continue it a little longer. In a short time they reach the fortifications, and Alexander espies the King of Prussia coming towards him. “Do you know German?” he asks of his companion. “Not a word,” replies the other. Immediately Alexander takes a few steps in front of him, and says a couple of words in German to Frederick-William, then he comes back to the young sailor, and takes him by the hand. “Here’s

an excellent opportunity of presenting you to the King of Prussia," he remarks. "Sire, an officer of my fleet, whom I have the honour to present to your Majesty." "We are getting on rapidly," says the young fellow. "This gentleman is the King of Prussia, you are the Emperor of Russia, and I am the Emperor of China. Three sovereigns. After all, why not, seeing that my captain says that after God he is king on board his ship? Oh, by the by, how are things in Prussia? Everybody all right in Berlin? In truth that *was* a hero, and no mistake, your predecessor, the great Frederick. Just like your ancestor, Peter the First, of glorious memory," he said, bowing to Alexander. "But great though they may have been, I doubt whether they would have imitated my grandfather, who at the battle of Tchesmè blew up his vessel and himself rather than surrender to the Turks."

'Although the talk savoured somewhat of insolence, it was delivered by the sailor with that frankness and gaiety which seem almost inseparable from his profession. Not only were the two sovereigns unoffended, but their laughter showed that they were highly amused at it.

'Meanwhile, they had arrived at a little drinking-shop. The officer most politely invited his companions to sit down and to continue the conversation glass in hand. Yielding to the fascination of the moment, the two sovereigns accepted. Refreshments were served. They sat down, and clinked glasses familiarly, continuing their conversation without the slightest restraint, and absolutely with the *abandon* of a royal freak, in such a place. "To your health, brother," says Wilhelm of Prussia to Alexander of Russia. "'Pon my word," is

the latter's answer, "it only wants the usual salute from the batteries of our capitals to complete the ceremony of that toast." "So be it, then," says the sailor, taking hold of his pistol, and preparing to load it. He was going to fire, and thus draw a crowd, which would have transformed a comic adventure into a scandal. They had a great deal of trouble to prevent the danger of such a noisy demonstration. Finally, they leave the place, but the sailor obstinately insists on paying the expenses, and they are bound to give in. At last they get outside the tavern.

'Scarcely have they advanced a few steps on the ramparts, when the crowd begins to surround the two monarchs, with their accustomed marks of deference. M. de Richelieu advances hat in hand, and addresses Alexander as "your Majesty." The young officer, who had served under the Duke of Odessa, recognises him at once. He goes very pale and confused, for he begins clearly to perceive that he has been the victim of a royal mystification. He is, however, soon reassured by the kindly look of Alexander, and he promptly remits his despatches to him. The emperor takes them with a gracious and significant smile, and with the most kindly gesture dismisses the young sailor, after having given him an invitation to dine for that day. One thing is very certain—this bit of royal pastime will push the other a great deal further than twenty years of service, or the most signal action on board his ship. He will have no need to go and seek his recompense in heaven by the aid of a barrel of gunpowder.

'But while our kings amuse themselves,' the general went on, 'the empresses and queens refuse to remain behind. You know that to-day is the birthday

of the Empress of Russia? Now, it has been written that all the birthdays and all the holidays of the calendar should be converted into opportunities for pleasure; and pleasure seems to take good care that none shall be overlooked. Yesterday morning the Empress of Austria, the Grandes-Duchesses d'Oldenbourg and Saxe-Weimar, dressed out in the strangest manner, requested an audience, under assumed names, of the Empress Elizabeth. After a little hesitation, there was a mutual recognition, a great deal of laughter, a great many magnificent presents were offered, and, like the surprise, were accepted with the utmost grace.'

'The Prince de Ligne, my dear general, in talking of all those sovereigns, who appeared to be so thoroughly intoxicated with pleasure, called them "kings on their holidays." In truth, seeing them play pranks like children, we might call them "schoolboys on their holidays."'

The comte was anxious that I should accompany him that evening to a grand ball at M. de Stackelberg's, the Russian Ambassador, in honour of his sovereign's birthday. I promised to do so, as it was said that this was to be the last Russian fête; for according to rumour the whole of the business of the Congress would be finished before the carnival. Several sovereigns were already thinking of leaving Vienna, and Lord Castlereagh was called to London by the opening of the English Parliament.

Although similar rumours had run almost from the very outset of the Congress, this time they were invested with a kind of probability. Four months had gone by since pleasure had thrown open to the representatives of Europe the doors of the sanctuary in which her fate was going to be decided. Peace,

and a durable equilibrium, would most likely be the result of this long gestation. There remains nothing to be said of M. de Stackelberg's ball which has not been said of any of the others. It really seemed as if the representatives of the great Powers were determined upon a contest in good taste and magnificence.

One of the first persons I noticed in this dazzling crowd was General Ouwaroff, standing stock-still and rigid according to his habit. He wore on his finger that mysterious ring, which never quitted him, and on which a death's head was engraved. Was it a reminder of the death of the Princesse S——, who had poisoned herself for love of him? I have never been able to discover. Close to him were Colonel Brozin and the Comte Paul Kisseleff, both aides-de-camp of Emperor Alexander. The first, a handsome and brave soldier, had later on the dangerous honour of succeeding his master in the heart of La Belle Narischkine, for it was only given to Louis XIV. to be beloved by a La Vallière, by a woman who gave herself to God when she ceased to belong to her king. The second, a soldier of the highest distinction, has since then won for himself a well-deserved reputation as an administrator of Wallachia and Moldavia. He at once evoked one's sympathy for his intrepid and brilliant character. Enthusiastic for everything which was grand and noble, he had really a god-like reverence for Alexander, whom he loved as a benefactor, and whom he cherished in consequence of the natural attraction which attaches two souls apt to understand each other. General Paul Kisseleff has married since the eldest daughter of the celebrated Sophie Potocka. He is entrusted to-day with one of the most important portfolios of the Russian empire.

Here was the Prince Dolgorouki, the son of that handsome Princesse Dolgorouki, to please whom Potemkin had the fortress of Oczakoff shelled for a whole night. He was surrounded by a numerous circle, among whom one might easily distinguish the Princes Gagarin and Troubastköy; the aide-de-camp Pankratieff, etc.

A little further on, Talleyrand is calmly conversing with MM. de Wintzingerode and d'Hardemberg. Amidst the noise and the animation of all this pleasure his impassive features preserve the same calm visible thereon in the Congress-room.

Many waltzes and polonaises had been danced when they asked the Princesse B—— to dance the tarantella, that pretty Neapolitan dance which, in her infancy, her young companions of the Parthenope danced with her under the beauteous sky where she was born. Acquiescing in a general wish, she placed herself in the middle of the ball-room, made one or two graceful bows, then seizing a tambourine, gave the signal for the music to begin; and then performed those voluptuous, light, and animated movements so thoroughly in harmony with the air of Naples.

Very often, when my recollections brought me back to those fêtes in which I have seen the Russian nobility at St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Vienna display so much wealth and elegance, I have been reminded of what my friend Count Tolstoy told me about the difficulties of Peter the First to make his Boyards amuse themselves in a European fashion. The opposition was so violent that he could only get the better of it by publishing a long regulation, and whosoever deviated from it exposed himself to the most severe punishments. Although his inflexible will had decided that those fêtes should have a European

character, they were too near to barbaric times not to be tainted with their spirit. It was to the sound of the drum that the Court balls were announced in the city. The ladies repaired to them at five o'clock in the evening. They had to be dressed in the fashion prevailing in the Courts of Europe. Only the empress, who was a Narischkine, was exempt from the general law, and permitted to keep to the dress of the Russian ladies. Peter, who never tried to avoid the orders he imposed on others, stood sentry at the door of the palace, a partisan in his hand. Thus did Louis XIV. stand guard at the door of the St. Cyr Theatre on the occasion of the performances of *Esther*. The grandes-duchesses offered refreshments to the guests: French wines, hydromel, and strong beer. At the entrance door, facing the emperor, stood a chamberlain, holding two urns containing a great many numbered tickets. Each cavalier and each lady, on entering the ball-room, drew one, and willy-nilly found him- or herself associated with the corresponding number, as in days gone by the athletes of the pugilistic exercises in the Olympic Games. The masked balls were still more extraordinary. Disguise was resorted to by way of the most curious costumes, and the rejoicing and the dances were in harmony with the costumes.

Only a very few years went by, and the tactics of the illustrious reformer began to bear ample fruit. Under Catherine I. and under Elizabeth, pleasure followed the same direction as Russian influence and power. The latter princess was especially fond of masked balls. She gave a magnificent one on each New Year's Day. The ladies were bound to appear as men, and the men as women. The Empress, who looked very well in male attire, was particularly fond of that disguise. Then came the reign of Catherine II.

which seemed fated to exhaust all kind of glories and pleasures. Apart from her magnificent carousals, one is reminded of her receptions and balls at Tzarskoë-Selo, and of the fêtes of Potemkin in the Palace of the Taurus. Beyond these, imagination cannot go. Finally, during the first years of this century, and at the period of the Congress of Vienna, there was no nation which understood pleasure better than the Russians, and stamped that pleasure with such extreme politeness and grandeur.



Prince Metternich.

Consequently, each day saw a new fête succeed to that of yesterday, without this continuation appearing to bring satiety. While M. de Stackelberg celebrated the birthday of his sovereign, Emperor Francis invited for the same purpose the crowned heads, the princes, and the other political or military notabilities in one of the great halls of the imperial residence. A splendid dinner had preceded the concert. Two days before, the Prince de Metternich had also given a great ball at which the majority of the guests of the Austrian Court had been present. It has just struck me that I am nearing the end of my course, and that as yet I have not spoken of one of the most conspicuous personages of our epoch. Almost everybody has tried to portray M. de Metternich. Like M. de Talleyrand, he has had all the honours of history bestowed upon him during his lifetime, but although his portrait has been traced more than once by more skilful hands than mine, I cannot resist the desire to show him as I was enabled to judge him—behind the glamour of power and political reserve in which he has lived since his youth. At that period M. de Metternich might still pass muster as a young man. His features were perfectly regular and handsome, his smile was full of graciousness, his face expressed both benevolence and the most delicate intelligence. He was of average height, and of elegant proportions. Both his gait and demeanour were marked by much nobleness. It is, above all, from the handsome design of Isabey, representing the plenipotentiaries at the Congress, that one may gain a more or less exact idea of all those outward advantages of which he himself was by no means insensible. At the first glance, one felt

delighted at seeing one of those men to whom nature had vouchsafed her most seductive gifts, and whom nature, as a rule, seems to take a delight in calling only to the frivolous successes of a society life. It was when attentively scanning his physiognomy, at once supple and firm, and carefully scrutinising Metternich's looks, that the superiority of his political genius at once became manifest to even the superficial observer. 'The society man' disappeared, and there remained nothing but the statesman, accustomed to rule men and to decide important affairs. Mixed up for twenty-five years with the gigantic commotions that disturbed Europe, M. de Metternich showed the lofty aptitude of his mind, and that rare penetration and sagacity which can foresee and direct events. His decision, the result of long meditation, was immovable. His words were incisive, as they ought to be from the lips of a statesman sure of the drift of everything he says. I may add to this that M. de Metternich is one of the most charming story-tellers of our epoch. In politics he has been reproached with his subserviency to the Law of Immobility; certainly a lofty mind like his understood well enough that it is impossible for man to remain stationary, and that, in our age, to remain stationary would be tantamount to retrogression. But he also knew that sudden shocks do not constitute progress, and that, in the government of man one ought to take count of their habits and of their real wants. If it be true that the moment has not yet come to judge M. de Metternich definitely, contemporary history will be bound to admit the calm and cloudless happiness which his immobile and silent government has succeeded in imparting to the hereditary states of Austria. That happiness, which seems to suffice them, is already a title of glory one

cannot easily deny.

The fêtes of M. de Metternich during the Congress bore a peculiar stamp, altogether in harmony with his personality, if one may express it in that way. To the most thoroughly experienced lavishness, to an extreme minuteness of detail, there was added a grandeur absolutely without embarrassment. It was towards the end of January that this fête took place. The *locale* chosen was M. de Metternich's country estate, a short distance from Vienna. Though the cold was excessive, the number of guests was immense, and, as usual, comprised all the illustrious personages of Europe and the handsomest women of the moment. The prince and princess discharged their social duties with a certain coquettish grace—a grace which tends to disappear now that people believe they have done everything by throwing open their drawing-rooms. Truly, watching this illustrious host, and the pains he took to please his guests, one could but remember how, at the beginning of his career in Paris, he had shone by the brilliancy of his manners. And, though his position had become immeasurably greater since then, it had made no difference to a courtesy which must always be a powerful auxiliary in the hands of such a man. A magnificent ball-room had been constructed for that fête in the garden itself, and had been decorated with all the pomp and lavishness that had really become a matter of course. The stands were tenanted by women dazzling in youth and elegance, who vied with the masses of colour supplied by the uniforms, decorations, and embroideries occupying the middle of the floor.

Next morning an alarming rumour spread that this elegant ball-room had been partially ruined

during the night by a fire. Vienna is quite as prolific in superstitious people as other places, and the untoward event served as a text for several prophecies. They recalled the accidents that had marked the marriage of Louis XVI.; they recalled the fire at the mansion of the Prince de Schwartzenberg at Paris at the moment of the union of Napoleon with the daughter of the Cæsars—a sad analogy with the fates occasioned by his fall in the capital of his father-in-law, and not far distant from the place of exile of his wife and his son. The high position of M. de Metternich in the debates of Europe; the presidency which his colleagues had spontaneously and simultaneously conferred upon him—all this was calculated to give still greater consistency to all those lugubrious conjectures.

A few days later, without taking the slightest notice of any of the predictions of the Viennese Nostradamuses, the Austrian Court joyfully celebrated the birthday of the King of Denmark, of the Queen of Bavaria, of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, and of the Grand-Duke of Baden, all happening on the same day. A grand state-fête, to which the public were admitted as spectators, united all the crowned heads. I followed the crowd, anxious to witness a sight which was not likely to renew itself within my days. It was in reality something very important, that banquet, both by the number and rank of its guests.

‘Sire,’ ‘your majesty,’ might be heard at each corner of every table; royal highnesses, imperial highnesses, grand dukes, dukes, etc., were practically speaking, so many small-fry. If one added to all this the rank of the officers in attendance, equerries, cup-bearers, pantlers, most of these holding high rank; if one still further adds thousands of wax candles,

causing the crystals to glint and to sparkle, and reflecting their light in the massive gold plate; if we still add the perfume of flowers mingling with the harmony of the instruments, the sweet familiarity, the intimacy of those masters of the world tempering the majesty of their gathering—if we consider all this, it will be admitted that the spectacle was likely to remain a unique one.

It was during these gala-fêtes that they served those famous Tokay wines, the exorbitant price of which is estimated at between a hundred and twenty and a hundred and fifty florins a bottle. The emperor had some in his cellars which was more than a century old; the precious nectar was only brought forth on solemn occasions, when it was necessary to drink the health of this or that sovereign, or to celebrate this or that grand anniversary. Chance had placed me not far away from the Baron Ompteda. We left together to go to the theatre of the Carinthian Gate. The main attraction was *Flore et Zéphire*, a ballet performed by the dancers of the Paris Opéra. The house was full, as usual. Indifferent to the entrechats and the pirouettes, I strolled about with Ompteda, pretty well certain that, if he were in the mood, I should soon be posted in all the particulars of the Congress, no one being more capable than he of attractively dishing up both the news of the Graben and of the drawing-rooms.

'What is the news?' I asked of my sprightly companion.

'Everything is over or nearly over. All the clouds are dispersed. Europe owes the happy issue of the negotiations to the departure of Lord Castlereagh.'

'Was Milord, then, the only obstacle to peace?'

‘No, you are wrong. It is not that. For the last four months they have been debating without coming to an agreement. All at once Lord Castlereagh is called to England for the opening of Parliament. You may easily conceive that he couldn’t return empty-handed; consequently he put some life into the deliberations, and hurried the conclusion of affairs, in order to show some results. What a pity it is the other nations haven’t some parliaments to be opened!

‘The Austrian Court is right enough,’ the Baron went on. ‘The European Areopagus has decided upon the fate of Naples and its imprisoned King Joachim. Its throne is going to be restored to the Bourbon branch. You are aware that the Imperial Chancellery decided not to notify officially the death of Queen Caroline, not knowing what title to give her. That bit of awkwardness has disappeared too.’

‘Yes, I remember that they took hold of a very honest pretext. The Court, it was said, would not cast a damper on the fêtes of the Congress by shedding official tears for the daughter of Maria-Theresa. In reality, the Court did not dare, or did not want, to decide the question of etiquette reserved for diplomacy, and now they are going to assume mourning for the poor queen at the moment when it would be more sensible to sing a *Te Deum* for the return of her husband to the throne of his fathers.’

‘One of your influential diplomatists here has a sweet trick of his own to get news from Paris to Vienna for the purpose of dishing it up in a peculiar fashion. He sends to his wife, Madame la Duchesse, the draught of a despatch. The docile secretary transcribes it, and a week after the carrier brings it back. Then they show, under the seal of the greatest

confidence, notes from the Court of the Tuileries which have neither been dictated nor put in cypher there. In reality, they might save them the jolting of the journey.

'Oh, by the by, have you heard of the duel which has just been fought between the Prince de ——, and the Comte ——?'

'Yes, I have heard that the two champions were both wounded, but were so little hurt that their friends are not in the least uneasy.'

'The Vienna public,' remarked Ompteda, 'would indeed be surprised if it knew the cause of the quarrel. The wife of one of these gentlemen has an unfortunate mania for scents, or rather for one scent of which she claims to be the inventor. It's a mixture of rose-water and musk, sufficiently strong to set all the Italian women troubled with vapours running. Inasmuch as the lady, who is still very good-looking, though by no means in the first flush of youth, goes out a great deal, that undesirable perfume is so well known that she couldn't enter a room without her presence being betrayed by it. It so happened that one fine morning her husband, the Prince —— walks into the rooms of his friend the Comte ——. In less than a second his nostrils are assailed by a scent which he knows but too well, and he exclaims, "My wife has been here." "Your wife," replies the comte. "Not at all." "You deny it! Well, then, she is still here, and if I begin to look for her, the scent will do the rest for me very shortly." In consequence of this violent explanation, in which the one denies and the other affirms, the two friends draw their swords in the room itself, and while each wounds the other, the lady escapes by a back staircase. The mishap ought to have cured her. She continues, nevertheless,

to drench herself with that damnable perfume, which might well be called the Tell-tale Scent.'

'People are very sorry about the accident which cost the young Duc Louis d'Aremberg his life. You know that he was thrown from his horse on the flagstones of the Josef Platz, and when they lifted him up he was dead. It appears that birth is no guarantee against the thunders of the gods. The father of the young duke lost his life out hunting. His mother was guillotined in France. His brother was exiled in consequence of a duel in which he killed his adversary; his sister perished in the historic ball given by Prince Schwartzenberg in Paris. Was it worth while to call oneself d'Aremberg to be a prey to all these misfortunes?'

'You were not at the last ball of Gey-Müller, the banker?'

'No, but I was at the similar fête at Arnstein's, and it was really a curious sight to me to see the financial world rivalling the Austrian Court in display, and perhaps surpassing it.'

'The most particular feature of the Gey-Müller ball was not so much its profusion, its elegance, its exquisite supper, as a fall—not the fall of an empire, to which people are pretty well used by now—but the fall of the handsome Madame Pereyra, the daughter of Baron Arnstein. She was waltzing with Prince Dietrichstein. Carried away by the rapidity of that Russian waltz, which is like a whirlwind, and getting caught in the folds of her dress, she fell with her partner, and both rolled amidst the crowd. You may imagine their confusion. Truly, princes with the name of Maurice seem to be pursued by a kind of fatality. At the imperial *carrousel* you saw Maurice Lichtenstein flung into the middle of the arena with

his horse, and now there is this other Maurice who gyrates on his back instead of turning round on his legs. However, there is no accounting for taste.'

'Don't joke about it, dear baron, for you are unwittingly stoning me. A similar adventure happened to me in the Salon des Étrangers at Paris. Fortunately, my pretty partner was masked, which saved her the trouble of blushing. I, moreover, owed to this fall the overhearing of a conversation which, at that period, had all the interest of a scene from a drama.

'It was during the first years of the Consulate. The best society of Europe flocked to Paris. France, probably anxious to get as much joy out of life as she could after the bloody scenes of the Revolution, seemed to do everything to forget. The rooms at Frascati were the resort, or rather the temple, of pleasure. In one part of the building people of every rank and of both sexes came to risk, under the disguise of a domino, the fruits of twenty years' work, or the product of more ingenious speculations. In another spot, screened by a slight surface of cardboard and a silk wrap, the most piquant, political, or amorous intrigues went on. Further on, quadrilles, in which figured Vestris, Bigottini, and Millière, displayed all their grace and suppleness. I was waltzing with Madame R——. The crowd surrounding us was immense. Getting caught in the folds of her domino, my partner stumbles, falls, and bears me down with her. We were immediately on our legs again, but, somewhat excited by the accident, Madame R—— asked me to take her outside the room. Fortunately for us, we ran against the Marquis de l'Ivry, who had us taken to his own apartments higher up. The purer air and some

stimulant soon got the better of the discomfort of Madame R——. We were just getting ready to go down to the ball-room again when we heard a lively conversation in the adjacent apartment. Beaumarchais has said that in order to hear, you must make up your mind to listen. Persuaded that it was nothing but a ball intrigue, we got nearer to the partition, and through its very thin substance we distinguished two female voices. We were about to draw back disappointed, when the name of Bonaparte struck our ear. That name, the talisman of the period, having attracted our attention once more, we heard one of the ladies say—"I give you my word, my dear Teresina, that I have done everything friendship could expect of me, but that it's all in vain. This morning I made a new attempt, but he will not listen to anything. In fact, I have been asking myself what could have prejudiced him so strongly against you. You are the only woman whose name he has struck off the list of those admitted to my familiar intercourse. Being afraid of his affronting you personally—a thing for which I would never console myself—I ventured to come here alone with my son. At the Château they think I am in bed, but I wanted to see you to quiet your own mind, and to justify myself."

'"I have never doubted either your heart or your affection, Josephine," replied the other lady. "Their loss would be a thousand times more painful to me than Bonaparte's prejudices. My conduct has been sufficiently dignified to make my visits appreciated, and certainly I shall pay you none without his knowledge. But does he not remember that the first step of Tallien after the 10th Thermidor was to open for us the cell where we were both awaiting our death sentence? Can he forget that the man whose

name I bear provided for your children throughout your captivity? Those children—his own now—were, without doubt, not consulted before he forbade you my company. He was not Consul when I shared with you—but pardon me, Josephine, O, forgive me!"

'Here there was a burst of sobs, preventing me hearing every word.

'"Calm yourself, my dear Teresina. Let us allow the first storm to go by, and everything will turn out for the best. But above all, don't let us irritate him still further. He is very incensed with Ouvrard, and people say he is at your house, or expected."

'"Oh!" replied Teresina, indignant, "is that it? Does he pretend to tyrannise over our hearths because he happens to govern France? Must one sacrifice even one's dearest and closest affections?"

'As she spoke these words there was a knock at the door. It was Eugène de Beauharnais, who came to fetch one of these ladies.

'"Let us go," he said. "You have been here more than an hour. The Council is perhaps finished, and what would the First Consul say if he failed to find you at home?"

'We stole away on tiptoe, Madame R—— and I.

'"Let's leave the ball," I said, going down. "Whatever we may see there is not worth what we have just heard."

'One of these ladies was Josephine, she who in a short time was to be Empress. The other was Madame Tallien, as famous for her striking beauty as for her energetic character; to whom France owed the overthrow of Robespierre.'

CHAPTER XVIII

The Comte de Rechberg's Work on the Governments of the Russian Empire—The King of Bavaria—Polish Poem of Sophiowka —Madame Potocka, or the Handsome Fanariote—Her Infancy—Particulars of her Life—A Glance at the Park of Sophiowka—Subscription of the Sovereigns—Actual State of Sophiowka.

The Comte Charles de Rechberg had written an interesting work on the fifty-two governments of the Russian Empire. The book, both historical and picturesque, deals with the ethnology of the peoples from the Great Wall to the Baltic, and from the Crimea to the Pole. It contains an exact description of the various provinces considered in their political and commercial aspects, and researches on the archæological curiosities still to be found there, which study is calculated to elucidate some migrations of the primitive peoples. The greatest lavishness had been displayed in this publication, which was enhanced by magnificent coloured engravings. The price, which varied from 1800 to 2500 francs, might have been an obstacle to the success of the work; fortunately Rechberg found one of the most powerful auxiliaries in his sovereign, the King of Bavaria. From having been the patron of the

Altar, that excellent prince wanted to become the patron of the Book. He recommended it everywhere, with that particularly happy-go-lucky and paternal unaffectedness which made him positively worshipped by every one. He solicited subscriptions, and thanks to this benevolent intervention, the comte disposed of a great number of copies. Such a success, obtained in a gathering of so many diverse personages, gave me the idea of likewise printing a work, inspired by the Muse of Poetry. In 1811 I had spent at Tulczim, the seat of Comtesse Sophie Potocka, a twelvemonth which was practically tantamount to a whole lifetime if counted by the happiness vouchsafed to me then. Very often I accompanied the countess to Sophiowka, a garden situated close to Humeng, and one of the most charming creations the mind could conceive. The Comte Félix Potocki, in order to immortalise the woman whom he worshipped, had given proof of a magnificence in taste which surpassed everything Europe had to show of that kind. Trembecki, the most celebrated poet of Poland, had at the age of seventy recovered all the fire of his youth, and composed on that garden a poem which practically passes for a masterpiece. There are, in fact, few educated Poles who do not know some fragments of that poem by heart.

This double claim to immortality was worthy of the woman whose beauty was proverbial, and whom fortune had been pleased to guide from an obscure position to the summit of the most opulent and conspicuous nobility of Europe. Her history would constitute a remarkable episode of her own time if there were nothing in her life but the extraordinary fact of having been sold twice—in the first place by her mother, in the second by her husband. But when

one has seen, as I have, the pomp of her fêtes, the unprecedented value of her precious ornaments, the grandeur of her palaces, and the extent of her power, then one becomes confounded at those elevations of fortune due to love—to nothing but love, that magician without a rival. Madame Potocka was born at Constantinople. It is well known that the great Greek families residing in that city have experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune as a consequence of revolutions. It is not surprising, therefore, to see in the Fanariote quarter the members of those ancient and princely races pass, at one fell stroke, from extreme opulence to extreme poverty, and often be obliged to engage in this or that profession, if not in a downright trade. In a small street, not far from the palace of Sweden, there lived a poor artisan, though he was an undoubted descendant of the Commenius family. He had several children, and among these a girl whose nascent beauty was the admiration of the whole of the neighbourhood, and the envy of all her companions. M. de B——, a French gentleman, secretary to the embassy, was one day slowly riding through the streets of Pera, accompanied by a janissary of the Palais de France. Near the tomb of the Comte de Bonneval, who became a Turkish subject, the rider perceived a group of children, and among them a young girl, between thirteen and fourteen, such as only the beautiful race of Greece can produce. Struck by her beauty, he gives her a sign to come up to him, and, a diplomatic functionary being a kind of power at Pera, the child obeys. The marquis gets off his horse, asks the child's name, and begins to inquire about her family. 'My name is Sophie,' replies the child. 'We are Greeks by origin, and from what my mother says, well born, but a series of misfortunes has reduced us to work

for our living. My father is a baker.' The marquis is absolutely dazzled by the child's beauty, he is touched by the sound of her voice, he admires her mind, at once innocent and precocious. After a few other questions, he leaves Sophie, telling her, however, that he will expect her mother at the French Embassy. Next morning the poor woman is true to the appointment. Interrogated about her position, she confesses, amid bitter tears, that they are very poor, and that their labour is insufficient to keep the relentless creditors from the door. Thereupon the marquis proposes to take care of her daughter, to take her to France, and winds up by offering the mother fifteen hundred piastres to provide for her most pressing needs. The mother at first refuses. There is, however, to begin with, the money which would put an end to their difficulties; and, moreover, the brilliant future for her well-beloved daughter. Finally, after many tears, hesitations, and heart-burnings, she gives her consent to the great sacrifice. The document surrendering her daughter duly signed and sealed, she receives in exchange the fifteen hundred piastres—a very feeble compensation for the treasure she was handing over: a monstrous transaction from our point of view no doubt, but less surprising in a country where one is accustomed to see a woman become an article of barter. Invested with paternal rights, M. de B—— scrupulously discharged them. He improved Sophie's education, which, as may be easily imagined, had been more than neglected. He lavished all his care upon her, gave her professors, and, art seconding nature, Sophie at sixteen had grown into a model of beauty and perfection in every *genre*. At that time he was recalled by his Court, and, to spare his pupil the dangers of a sea-voyage, he intended to come back

by way of Poland and Germany. After traversing European Turkey, he reached Kaminiek Podolski, the first fortress of the Russian frontier.

The Comte Jean de Witt, the descendant of the great Dutch Pensionary, was its governor. He welcomed the noble traveller with the utmost courtesy and attention, and induced him to stay for some little time at Kaminiek; but the desire for the marquis's company and the consideration due to his rank were not the only causes of the comte's pressing invitation. The general had not been proof against Sophie's charms, and had become passionately enamoured of her. Informed by her of her real position, knowing that she was neither servant nor mistress, but simply a kind of chattel for fifteen hundred piastres, he did not scruple to follow up his love-declaration by an offer of marriage. The comte, a very handsome man, and barely thirty, was already lieutenant-general, and in great favour with Catherine the Second. The far-seeing Greek girl was sensible enough not to refuse this first chance, and without a moment's hesitation she accepted the hand offered to her.

Nevertheless, it was perfectly plain to both that the diplomatist would not willingly part with a possession on which he set so much store. The general-governor therefore bided his time until his excellency took a solitary ride outside the fortress. To guard against surprise, he had the drawbridges raised, then repaired to the church with Sophie, and a priest gave the young couple his blessing. While the ceremony was drawing to an end, to the ringing of all the steeples of Kaminiek, his excellency presented himself before the moat of the place, asking to be let in. He was informed of what had

happened, and to corroborate the story they showed him the marriage-certificate duly signed and sealed, and in accordance with the *dénouement* of every well-constructed comedy.

And in order to spare the handsome delinquent the severe reproaches which in reality her ingratitude and her hurried desertion would have fully justified, the general sent word to the members of his excellency's suite to pack up their traps and to join their chief without the walls. They were also to take back all the gifts Sophie had received from the marquis, not even excepting the fifteen hundred piastres of the primary contract; and the young bride added a letter full of excuses for having disposed of her hand and heart without the permission of her second father. M. de B—— could only give vent to his anger, not unjustified, by imprecations on and reproaches to those who were not to blame. Perfectly convinced, though, that he could not remain all his life contemplating the walls of the fortress, and that there was no probability of the two Courts suspending amicable relations to revenge an affront without a remedy, and to enforce restitution of another Helen to another Menelaus, the marquis pursued his journey, determined not to be caught a second time trafficking with a merchandise no doubt precious in its way, but only precious when it is given and not sold.

After a honeymoon which lasted several years, and during which a son was born to him, the Comte de Witt obtained leave of absence, and journeyed to all the Courts of Europe with his beautiful Greek. Practically, theirs was a triumphal procession. The wondrous beauty of the girl, enhanced by all the sensuous and piquant charms of the East,

transformed the tour into a kind of series of fairy tales. It was at that period that the Prince de Ligne, who at first gave me all those particulars, afterwards confirmed by Sophie herself, saw her at the Court of France. He subsequently saw her at the siege of Ismaël, where she was particularly distinguished by Prince Potemkin. Kings, statesmen, warriors, philosophers—all gave one the idea, in their intercourse with the beauteous Sophie, of Socrates, Pericles, and Alcibiades crowding around Aspasia to purify their taste and to sharpen the edge of their oratory.

The second period of her life was practically a marvellously fit completion of the first. The Comte Félix Potocki, at the commencement of the troubles in Poland, had, by the influence of his rank and his immense fortune, gathered around him a great party. Momentarily absent from his Court, he was on his way back from Italy when, at Hamburg, he fell in with Comte and Comtesse de Witt. He became ardently enamoured of Sophie, and without entering into the details of a story which, though short enough, was full of incidents, I pass to the *dénouement*, which he accelerated in a novel fashion. Nothing is easier in Poland than a divorce. The abuse of the law is carried to such an extent that I have known a M. Wortzel who had no fewer than four living wives bearing his name. The Comte Potocki took advantage of this state of things. Having taken all the necessary measures beforehand, he went to see the Comte de Witt one morning.

'I can no longer live without your wife,' he said. 'I am certain that I am not indifferent to her. I prefer to owe my happiness to you, and to preserve an eternal gratitude. Here are two documents. The one

is an act of divorce, and only wanting your signature; your wife's is already there. The other is a voucher for two millions of florins to be paid by my banker this morning. Let us terminate this affair in an amicable way, or in another way if you like, but let's terminate it.'

The husband, no doubt, remembered the drawbridges of Kaminiek. He made the best of a bad business, like the French embassy-secretary, and signed; and handsome Sophie, from Comtesse de Witt as she was, became that same day Comtesse Potocka, this time adding to the prestige of her beauty the advantage of a wealth which had not its equal in Europe. At one moment there seemed even a higher destiny in store for her, when in 1791 the majority of the grandees of Poland had agreed to sacrifice a part of their privileges to procure the appeasement of their country. Catherine, to give more importance to this confederation, decided that Potocki should be its chief. To induce him to accept the position, she even dangled the crown before his eyes. One day, at the end of a solemnity, she took her diadem from her brow and placed it on the head of Potocki, saying, 'This would suit you admirably well, comte.'

Everybody knows the sequel of this comedy, and how the pledges were kept. When that dream was over, Potocki simply studied to make the woman he idolised thoroughly happy. The art, the talent, the pomp and splendour of various parts of the world were all called into requisition to add to her happiness. To satisfy her desires and her slightest fancies, he absolutely realised all that the imagination may conceive in the way of fairy tales. One day she expressed a wish for a set of pearl

ornaments. The count asked for a twelvemonth to offer one worthy of her. He sent to every capital of Europe and Asia the drawing of a pearl, and informed the jewellers that he would pay a thousand louis for each one that equalled the model in size and brilliancy. They gathered a hundred, and at the next St. Sophia's day he clasped round the charming neck of his wife a necklace worth a hundred thousand louis.

At the death of Comte Potocki, Sophie practically found herself at the head of his colossal fortune, either in virtue of direct personal gift or as the trustee of the children born of her second marriage. It was shortly after this that I made her acquaintance at St. Petersburg, and accompanied her to her estate at Tulczim. Even at that period the celebrated Sophie was a most ravishing creature. Her beauty was really marvellous, and reminded me of nothing so much as the models the Greek statuaries of old must have employed to create their divinities.

It would require volumes to convey an idea of the life led at Tulczim. Sophie saw life from so high a point that she no longer seemed to belong to the world surrounding her, which her beauty kept incessantly at her feet. It was not that she was vain or imperious, but she was beautiful, and she knew it. This never-ceasing worship had made an idol of her, and from the altar on which they had placed her, she paid the incense with a look and the praise with a smile. Queen in virtue of her beauty, she seemed to say, 'The world—I am the world!' Her palace was the temple of hospitality. The stranger who came to ask an asylum was royally put up for a fortnight: horses, carriages, and servants were placed at his disposal, without his being obliged to show himself to his

hostess, but on the sixteenth day he was to present himself, if only in order to take his leave. And that sort of thing, be it remembered, was practised, not under the tent of the Arab of the desert, nor in the hut of a Laplander, but in an enchanted palace of which Sophie was the Fairy Queen. No wonder that she often said, 'People have paid me visits at Tulczim which have lasted for three years.' I remember, among others, a fête she gave to Madame Narischkine, Alexander the First's friend. It lasted for three days. About the same period I accompanied her on a journey to the Crimea, to take possession of some territory which had been granted to her by an imperial favour, and on the site of which she wished to found a town named Sophiopolis.

At the eastern point of the Crimea there uprises a double promontory. On that spot stood the temple whose priestess was Iphigenia. Between those two promontories lies the delightful valley where reigns eternal spring. The olive- and orange-trees grow wild. The Greeks, fitly to render homage to the beauty of the spot, called it Kaloslimen. It was there that Sophiopolis was to be erected. We got to the summit of Cape Laspi. The countess built a pavilion there whence she could inspect the works. It was on the same spot that Catherine II. was struck with admiration at the sight of the picture unfolded before her, regretting that the Euxine, which rose to the horizon, hid Constantinople from her.

Wishing to perpetuate the memory of the woman whom he had so deeply loved, Comte Potocki decided that the gardens should bear the name of Sophie, and should surpass in magnificence, as well as in taste, all that antiquity and modern times had that was most remarkable. To realise this project he

chose a vast space, where savage nature could lend itself to the embellishments of art. He employed two thousand peasants as navvies for ten years, and spent twenty millions. Enormous masses of rock were transported and rivers turned out of their courses. Finally, near a spot which is only known by the exile of Ovid, he realised among the steppes of Yedissen what the imagination of Tasso could lend to the gardens of Armida.

During my stay at Tulczim, I often visited that beautiful garden, and I always remained in ecstasies before that unique creation. I did not wonder that it had revived the septuagenarian muse of Trembecki. Seduced by the hope of acquitting towards that noble family of Potocki a debt of gratitude, I attempted, during my stay at Tulczim, to translate into French verse the beautiful inspirations of the Polish bard. When my task was finished, I desired to enhance the work, by investing it with a splendour that might complement its literary merit. The Comte Jean Potocki came to my aid with his profound knowledge, and Mr. William Allan, an English landscape-painter, to-day the President of the Royal Academy of Painting in Edinburgh, lent me the magic of his brush. I intended to publish the work in France, when the desire to witness in Vienna the unique scenes being enacted there brought me to the capital of Austria. Having witnessed the success obtained by the Comte de Rechberg, thanks to the assistance of King Maximilian, surrounded by all the masters of art grouping themselves around this gathering of sovereigns, I bethought myself of placing my verses under the patronage of the European celebrities whom the Congress had brought together. I began to take steps, and to solicit, with the hope of inscribing them at the head of my

translation, names of celebrity which should serve it as an ægis. The familiar footing on which everybody was living with every one else in Vienna obviated much of the difficulty which my efforts would have cost elsewhere. With nearly all the sovereigns it was sufficient to present oneself to be received, without asking for a special interview. In a few days my subscription list was full. The Emperor and Empress of Russia were the first to put their names down for several copies. The Kings of Prussia, Denmark, Bavaria, and, in short, every illustrious personage in Vienna, followed suit. I had Polish type cast. The printing was confided to the presses of the celebrated Strauss. Krudner did the engravings. Nothing was spared to invest the publication with all the beauty to which it could lend itself. The first copies had just been 'pulled' when the news reached us of the landing of Napoleon at Cannes. From that moment people troubled very little about literature and poetry, but there were a great many diplomatic conferences, declarations, and preparations for war. Nearly all the subscribers left Vienna without taking their copies. I myself left the city a little while afterwards to go to Paris; and of the whole of my attempt there only remained the recollection of the gracious reception of the sovereigns, and one of the most curious collections of autographs in the hands of any author. Men in Vienna—Russians and Poles—without distinction subscribed for the publication of the songs of Trembecki. People little dreamt that, fifty years later, that beautiful garden would be taken away from the family of its founder, confiscated in consequence of the last revolution of Poland. Sophieowka has been added to the domains of the Emperor of Russia. They have even taken away its name, which it owed to love. To-day it is

called Czaritzine-Gad (the garden of the Czarina). There is, however, something more powerful than arms, than conquests, than the decrees of kings. It is the empire of memory and of poesy. The beautiful verses of Trembecki will endure, and in ages to come people will always pronounce the name, and the only name of Sophieowka.

CHAPTER XIX

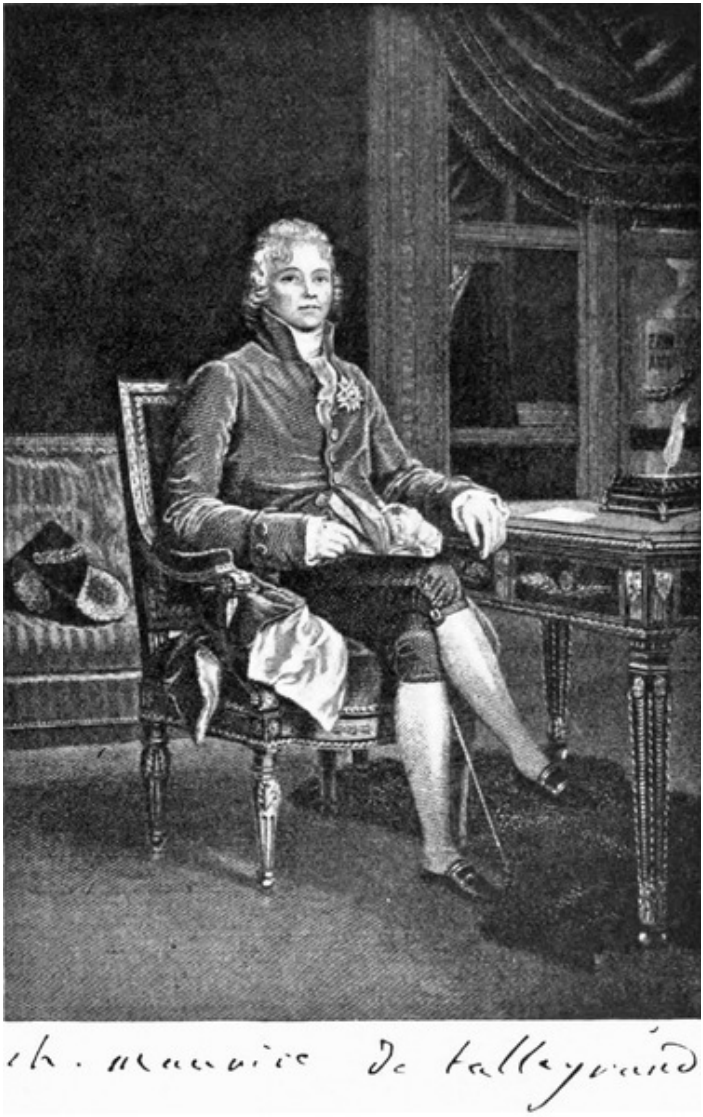
A Luncheon at M. de Talleyrand's on his Birthday —M. de Talleyrand and the MS.—The Princesse-Maréchale Lubomirska—The New Arrivals—Chaos of Claims—The Indemnities of the King of Denmark—Rumours of the Congress—Arrival of Wellington at Vienna—The Carnival—Fête of the Emperor of Austria —A Masked Rout—The Diadem, or Vanity Punished—A Million—Gambling and Slavery: a Russian Anecdote.

Among the memories of the Congress which I recall with the utmost gratitude is that of a very familiar—I might almost say a family-fête at M. de Talleyrand's. It was a luncheon, partaken of solely by his ambassadorial staff, a few of his intimate friends, and a still smaller number of notable Frenchmen, then in Vienna. This matutinal entertainment was given in honour of his birthday; the prince was entering on his sixty-first year. Those who are fond of collecting the smallest particulars about a celebrated man have not forgotten to note the minute details of the Prince de Talleyrand's toilet, and the 'coquettishness' of his rising. In fact, it partook of the peculiarities both of Mazarin's and of Madame de Pompadour's. Somewhat anxious to study its details, I followed to the great man's

bedroom MM. Boyne de Faye and Rouen, who were going to present their good wishes to their illustrious patron.

At that moment the model diplomatist pushed his head between the heavy curtains of his bed. A small number of the most privileged were already assembled. Wrapped in a plaited and goffered muslin *peignoir*, the prince proceeded to attend to his luxuriant hair, which he surrendered, not like the man in La Fontaine's fable, to two women, but to two hairdressers, who, after a great deal of brandishing of arms and combs, ended by producing the *ensemble* of wavy hair with which everybody is familiar. Then came the barber's turn, dispensing at the end a cloud of powder; the head and the hands being finished, they proceeded to the toilet of the feet, a somewhat less recreative detail, considering the by no means pleasant smell of the Barège Water employed to strengthen his lame leg. When all this was accomplished with the greatest care, we, though not valets, were enabled to judge the hero of diplomacy in his dressing-gown. To me personally, he looked better than in his ministerial court-dress. He looked the natural man: the model of that noble and courteous manner is no longer anything but a memory. When all those ablutions of water and perfume were terminated, his head servant, whose only function consisted in superintending the whole, came forward to tie his stock into a very smart knot. Then came the other parts of the adjustment. I am bound to say that all these transformations were carried out with the ease of a grand seigneur, and a nonchalance never over-stepping the good form which only permitted us to see the man, without having to trouble about his metamorphosis. At table, M. de Talleyrand not only showed his customary

grace and urbanity, but he was in reality more amiable than in his reception-rooms, where, in spite of his free and easy demeanour, one always felt conscious that he kept a check upon himself. It was no longer that habitual silence which, as has been said, he had transformed into the art of eloquence, just as he had transformed his experience into a kind of divination. Though less profound, his talk was perhaps all the more charming. It came straight from the heart, and flowed without restraint.



Ch. Maurice de Talleyrand

Although Madame de Périgord was present, the duties of the table entirely devolved upon the prince.

He served all the dishes, suggested all the wines, addressing each guest in a few sprightly and kindly words. If, perchance, some one attempted to turn the conversation into the channel of politics, which in Vienna is a very habitual weakness, at that very moment he began to talk of this or that thing so utterly foreign to the question just broached as to cause one to think that diplomacy was altogether antipathetic to him. He told us that he was so fond of receiving birthday wishes that, as a rule, he kept up two days, the Saint Charles and the Saint Maurice, without forgetting his real birthday.

'Those two saints,' he added, 'would always prove the best landmarks in my recollections, if ever the fancy took me to write my own life. With their aid I could co-ordinate all my years, happy or sad, and I should be able to say where I was on the days of their appearance in the calendar.'

Madame de Périgord told us that she had received that very morning a Latin manuscript on the history of Courland. It was dedicated by the author to Prince Louis, the husband of her mother.

'A manuscript!' interrupted the prince, somewhat excitedly. 'That reminds me of one of the most curious circumstances of my life. When, after my return from America, I was in Hamburg, I made the acquaintance of a gentleman who, like myself, lodged at the inn of the Römische Kaiser. We had met at the *table d'hôte*, and he had asked me to read the manuscript of a work of his—I no longer remember the subject. I accepted the ordeal, and went to my room. It so happened that on that same day I had been to MM. de Chapeau-Rouge, my bankers, and taken from the remains of a very small credit about fifteen louis. When I got to my room, I

opened the manuscript to read it, and between its leaves I deposited my small treasure, wrapped in a sheet of paper. At six in the morning there was a violent knocking at my door, and my author rushed in to inform me that he was going to take ship at that very moment for London, and that he would be pleased to have his manuscript. Half awake and half asleep, I made him a sign to take his manuscript, which was lying on his table, and half sarcastically called to him, "A pleasant journey." Then I turned round in my bed and fell asleep again. Alas, the wretch took my money with him, and chance did for him what no publisher would have done for his manuscript. I never saw him again, or my fifteen louis, and was obliged to return to my bankers in a sad frame of mind to withdraw the rest left to me, promising myself that they would not catch me examining manuscripts again.'

We went into a small drawing-room, where on a table were all the presents that had been sent from Paris. There were some from the Duchesse de Luynes, from the Princesse de Vaudémont, from Mme. Jyskewicz, and from many other ladies, who, knowing his fondness for those delicate attentions, never failed to send them at the three periods to which he had referred during luncheon. On a couch were laid out all his orders, and there were enough and to spare. Odd to relate, the most brilliant ones in the way of precious stones had been given by the minor princes.

M. de Talleyrand went on chatting to us for a little while, his most casual sentences being marked by a graceful unaffectedness, so strongly contrasting with his diplomatic reputation. His expressions were, however, always simple; they, as it were, derived

their value from the attitude and the courtesy of the grand seigneur, which were not at fault.

When he finally left us to go to M. de Metternich's, I was not at all in agreement with what was said about him. People pretended that M. de Talleyrand in his dressing-gown was, as far as intellectual conversation went, a different man from M. de Talleyrand in Court dress; in a word, that the latter was practically indispensable to him. Personally, I have seen him in the political drawing-rooms of Paris, London, and Vienna, and only once was I received amidst his nearest and dearest. Well, among my recollections of that celebrated man, the last-mentioned is unquestionably the most constantly present to my mind, and also the most vivid.

Among the drawing-rooms capable of vying with that of M. de Talleyrand in the matter of 'exquisite form,' elegance, and delicate observance of society's unwritten code, one was bound to name, first of all, that of the Princesse-Maréchale Lubomirska.[101] Having taken up her residence in Vienna, she appears to have accepted the task of keeping open house for all the strangers who wished to be presented to her. No one could convey a more exact idea of the fabulous existence of all those Polish grandees in their most splendid days. She, as it were, combined within herself all that was known about the grandeur of the Potockis and the Czartoryskis, the magnificence of the Radziwills, the noble splendour of the Lubomirskis, and of all the others, the recollection of whom has become imperishable. Her palace situated near the fortifications, her servants, the footing of her establishment, in fact everything, represented a partly European, partly Asiatic whole. Being particularly intimate with her

grandson Frederick, I had been welcomed as an old acquaintance.

The month of February, which had brought us back a few rays of sunshine, had also brought back to the Graben the swarm of idlers and newsmongers who had been dislodged by the cold and the snow. Added to this, there was a considerable influx of newcomers, more numerous perhaps than in the first days of the Congress. These had been attracted to Vienna by the carnival. The promenades, the public places, and the fortifications were positively swarming with people, and the theatres, balls and entertainments, somewhat neglected during the few previous weeks, had recovered all their former favour. It was a revival of pleasure, and as if the whole of Europe had made it a point to send representatives to this joyous pilgrimage at Vienna, there was no longer a mention of the termination of the Congress, so often foretold and so often denied.

It was really the realisation of the Prince de Ligne's words: 'The Congress does not march along; it dances along'; and they might easily have written up the words they painted in large characters on the site of the dismantled Bastille, 'Dancing going on here.'

Prince Koslowski kept me posted in all the particulars of the endless sittings. 'Are the other arbiters agreed?' he said, in answer to my question. 'Not in the least. The Polish question has been settled; but all the others are as far as ever from being settled. The fate of Saxony and of its king is by no means decided. Prussia asks for the ancient Belgian provinces, the territory of Treves and Cologne. France, who is not at all anxious for that neighbour, does not want Prussia on the left bank of

the Rhine. On the other hand, she insists upon the throne of Naples being restored to the Bourbon branch. Take it all in all, it is nothing but a tangled skein. And to crown it all, the King of Denmark is joining the throng, and is asking for what each sovereign is pleased to call his indemnities.'

'That is certainly an imprudent request. Frederick ought to think himself very lucky to have passed unperceived amidst this chaos of pretensions.'

In fact, among all those sovereigns who were to leave Vienna with the spoils of some of their neighbours, the King of Denmark alone was fated to remain strictly within his old territorial limits. Consequently everybody repeated his reply to Alexander when they parted. 'Sire,' said the czar, 'you carry all hearts away with you.' 'All hearts possibly, but not a single soul,' answered the king, with a significant smile. To understand the witty allusion of the word, I must again remind the reader that the word 'soul' means 'subject,' and that all the decisions of the Congress were based upon the number of inhabitants of the countries that changed rulers. From that point of view, the King of Denmark had been the least well treated.

'And now the Duke of Wellington has come to Vienna. He arrived yesterday, and the diplomatists depend much upon his co-operation. They hope that the esteem in which the sovereigns hold him will remove many difficulties retarding the progress of the deliberations, and that he will be able to obtain sacrifices which seem beyond the power of Lord Castlereagh.

'Milord, it is said, takes his departure loaded, not with diplomatic trophies, but with presents. To the orders which he still lacked, and which the

sovereigns, large and small, have now promptly sent him, the Empress of Austria has added two magnificent vases from the porcelain works. My lady will be very pleased with this imperial gift.

'Are you going to the rout to-night?' asked the prince, leaving me. 'Wellington is going, and of course all Vienna will be there.'

Odd to relate, in a town at that moment sheltering all the illustrious men of Europe, the arrival of Wellington had set both the Court and the diplomatic centres agog—the Court, because it supplied something new, for which they were really at a loss; diplomacy, because it was assured that he came to replace Castlereagh, whose policy was generally blamed, and because it was no small thing to have to treat with a new colleague. Mr. Wellesley-Pole, a member of the House of Commons and a relative of the duke, arrived at the same time. He was one of the most brilliant Englishmen in Vienna, the owner of an immense rent-roll, and endowed with a varied and deep knowledge. He was an honour to the nation he represented. Curiosity, therefore, was excited to the highest degree. Everybody wished to know a man to whom the fortunes of war had been so constantly favourable, who, by his doggedness and perseverance, had been able to hold in check the genius of Napoleon. The sovereigns called upon him, and he was literally loaded with honours. In the evening, when the rumour ran that he was going to the rout, between seven and eight thousand spectators rushed into the place. When he made his appearance, accompanied by Lord Castlereagh, a masked lady, supposed to be Lady Castlereagh, hanging on his arm, the whole of the crowd rushed towards them. They were probably

accustomed to that kind of reception, and must have felt flattered at such a proof of popularity. Finally, not the least curious result of his arrival was the fluctuation in the public securities, which caused a loss and gain of several millions in a few days; for in Vienna as elsewhere, stock gambling seized the slightest occasion to bring about those rapid fluctuations.

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The birthday fête of the Emperor of Austria, which happened to come amidst all these rejoicings, was spent in the privacy of his family. His health did not permit it to be celebrated with all the pomp generally displayed. The reception, in spite of its being less numerous, nevertheless presented a most rare spectacle. Nearly all its members called each other ‘brother’ or ‘cousin,’ and those brothers were the most powerful sovereigns of Europe. In the morning, Emperor Alexander had preceded them all, wearing the uniform of an Austrian general, and giving his arm to his charming wife. He tendered his wishes and offered his bouquet with that cordial simplicity that adds so delightfully to the expressions of friendship. For some time those monarchs had each adopted a particular society in which they lived on a most familiar footing. Nevertheless, when they assembled together their affectionate familiarity was very genuine.

The masked routs were more numerously attended than ever. Griffiths and I went one evening to one of those gatherings, which might fitly be termed the magic-lanterns of the Congress, in virtue of the number and variety of the personages present. The crowd was so considerable that, after having

opened all the rooms, they were obliged to shut the outer doors and to refuse admission to a great number. Nothing could convey an idea of the happy-go-lucky animation presiding at this gathering of so many diverse elements. In the crowd I ran up against Prince Koslowski.

'To watch on all sides this exchange of sweet smiles and sweet looks, and hand-pressures sweeter still, one might call the Vienna rout an exchange for the traffic of amorous assets.'

'Beaumarchais said that before you about the Opéra of Paris, but you could add, as an appendix, that all such kinds of assets are marketable on all the dancing exchanges of Europe.

'Just watch that young woman, so simply disguised as a Calabrian peasant,' the prince went on. 'She seems to remember how dearly her mother once paid for an impulse of vanity. That mother, who was distantly related to my family, found out that an imperial diadem may often cruelly hurt the head, even if politics are altogether foreign to the attempt to wear it.'

The lady was pretty, the anecdote promised to be interesting. I asked my bright interlocutor to tell it to me. He complied with my wish.

'One day Empress Catherine made up her mind to clean the enormous mass of jewels of all kinds buried in the coffers that, since the reign of Peter the Great, had swallowed up enormous treasures of which there seem to be scarcely any knowledge in the palace. Dreading some theft during that general overhaul, the emperor appointed two captains of the guards to superintend the work. The father of our pretty mask was one of them. The view of all this

wealth produced such a fascination in the eyes and the minds of the two inspectors that they also conceived the fatal idea of robbery. They agreed to abstract part of those treasures, hoping that the theft would pass unperceived. The spoil was divided between them. The one to whom came a lot of pearls lost no time in sending them to Amsterdam by a man in his trust. There, sold secretly, the money he received was employed by him in the repurchase of some family estates, which, however, he had the prudence to settle on his son. The other, whose share consisted of diamonds, waited for spring to proceed to England, promising himself to dispose of them to greater advantage than through the intermediary of an agent.

'Among the number of stolen objects there was a diadem whose value exceeded a hundred thousand roubles. All these objects had been carefully hidden in the remotest corner of his apartments. Fatality, however, always dogs crime, and his wife discovered the hiding-place. In vain did her husband swear to her that the diadem did not belong to him, and that it was entrusted to his honour to keep for awhile. She begged of him, not to give it to her, but to let her wear it, if only for a moment, at one of the Court balls. He resisted, but she worried, begged, and wept to that extent that the captain, madly in love with his wife, unhappily gave in, trusting that the jewel, which had not seen daylight for perhaps a hundred years, would escape recognition by a person of the new generation. The young woman, who did not perceive that this diadem was metaphorically searing her forehead, got as far as the ball-room of the Hermitage. I need scarcely tell you of the looks of admiration and envy that marked her appearance. Up till then everything had gone well, but just

amidst her greatest triumph old Mme. Pratazoff, standing behind the chair of the empress, hears Catherine go into raptures about the brilliancy of those stones.

‘“Madame,” says her confidante, bending over her, “there is no occasion for your majesty to be astonished. That diadem belonged to your majesty’s aunt, the empress. I have seen her wear it a score of times.”

‘The words supplied, as it were, a flash of light to Catherine, who got up, drew near to the young woman, who, delighted with her triumph, had, like Cinderella, forgotten her promise only to wear the jewel for a moment.

‘“May I ask you, madame,” said the empress, “who is the jeweller who mounted these stones?”

‘The young woman, in her confusion, names the first jeweller she can think of. The empress, after a few insignificant remarks, leaves her, and meanwhile the young woman continues to dance with the ill-fated diadem fastened to her head, more threatening than the sword of Damocles, The empress at once sends an aide-de-camp to inquire of the jeweller in question since when, and for whom, he had mounted that diadem. The jeweller of course denies all knowledge of the affair. The reply comes back immediately. Once more the empress interrogates the young woman.

‘“You have played the fool with me. Your jeweller denies having sold you this diadem. I am determined to know whence it came to you.”

‘The severe tone put an end to the young woman’s faint show of confidence. She stammered and stuttered, and Catherine’s suspicions were soon

changed into certainties. The order was immediately given to arrest the two unworthy inspectors. Both, judged and proved guilty, were sent to Siberia; but by a strange freak, he who had sold the pearls in Holland, and transmitted their proceeds to his son, was left in possession, while the diamonds found in the house of the other were carefully brought back to the treasury. When, after some years of expiation the empress pardoned the two culprits, the first might well lay the flattering unction to his soul that justice was, after all, only a fable. The other would for ever curse his want of firmness, which had cost him his reputation and his future career. As for the young woman, she dearly paid for the short-lived satisfaction of her vanity, and the momentary gratification of outvying her rivals.'

After having made the round of the rooms once or twice, Griffiths and I left the Burg early. It was a beautiful evening, and we walked back to the Jaeger-Zeil. Passing before the mansion of the Comte de Rosenberg, we noticed that it was ablaze with light. Servants in resplendent livery crossed the courts carrying salvers with ices and fruits, while from the inside arose the strains of a harmonious band and the sound of many joyous voices.

'It seems to me,' I said to my companion, 'that your countryman, Mr. Raily, treats his royal guest more sumptuously than usual to-day. If he goes on in that way his credit of a million at Arnstein's won't go far.'

'When that's gone there will be more,' replied Griffiths. 'The career of professional gamesters is so thoroughly made up of unforeseen events and strange episodes, fortune comes so often to their aid, that the words "ruin," "chance," "audacity,"

"opulence" are practically present in every line of their biography. Sometimes among all this there is also a flash of generosity, of devotion, and of downright magnanimity on their part. If the common observer had the clue to the enigma of these existences, then assuredly would vanish the fantastic prestige he fancies he sees in the fate of those Bohemians of Courts, of gambling hells, and palaces.

'The origin of that credit of a million of florins is connected with a fact which Mr. Rally has told me since our last visit to him,—a fact which marvellously characterises the infinite possibilities of gambling. One morning, an elegant carriage, with four superbly caparisoned horses, their manes flowing in the wind, stopped at the door of Mr. Rally's temporary residence in Moscow. A man of about thirty, with a frank and open countenance, alighted from it. He sends in his name, and presents himself, with those easy manners which are always a passport for a man who has no other recommendation. "Pray excuse my visit," he said to Mr. Rally in very pure French, "but I have had the advantage of meeting you now and again in public, and I have presumed upon the circumstance to call upon you. I hope you will excuse the liberty." When he had seated himself he went on. "The matter I wish to speak to you about is of the highest importance to me, but allow me to ask you for a promise that, whether you consent or refuse to render me the service I have come to ask, you will keep the secret." Mr. Rally promised at once, and the young man went on. "My name is Soueskof-Feodorowich. I am a merchant of the first class. You are no doubt aware of the rank we occupy among the bourgeoisie. I live in your neighbourhood, but my business house and my habitual home are at Toula. You are, I have been

told, an English gentleman who has taken up his quarters for a few months in Moscow, and, like most of your distinguished countrymen, you play heavily and in the noblest manner. That is what is done in Russia, and, for the matter of that, everywhere. But I have been told moreover, monsieur, that you play carefully, and allow me to congratulate you on the fact, for this gives you a great guarantee against being duped. You'll excuse me if I add that this reputation induced me to present myself to you." Mr. Rally was somewhat surprised at this preamble, but before he could translate his surprise into words his visitor resumed, "I, monsieur, never gamble. I do not even know a game, but I come in furtherance of an attempt, the success of which will depend upon you, in which gambling will play a part. I have heard you praised for your noble character; I have perfect faith in it, and I have come to place in your hands a possession prized highly by every Englishman—namely, liberty. That word, from my lips, may seem strange to you. The first gift of God after life is liberty. Well, sir, that liberty, without which life is nothing, I am for ever deprived of. I speak of it as the blind hankers after the light. I am a serf, and perhaps it is reserved for you to efface from my forehead that ignominious stigma, that mark of opprobrium which the law compels us to engrave on our doors, that scutcheon of infamy which we inherit from generation to generation, like the sign that God's finger set on the brow of Cain. My request to you is this. In this vortex which one calls grand society you no doubt meet now and again the Comte K——, an ensign in the regiment of Chevalier Guards. He is one of the young men most in renown at the English Club. He astonishes by his audacity, his display, and his arrogance the most adventurous gamblers!"

“‘It is true,” said Raily, “ours is a very intimate acquaintance.”

“‘Oh, it is, after all, without importance, I dare say, for the real basis of it—esteem—is wanting. You cannot possibly esteem the comte, and in this you are only following common opinion. His vanity, which he mistakes for pride, his impertinence, which he mistakes for courage, his cackle, which he mistakes for learning, are all he possesses. Beyond that he has absolutely nothing: neither heart nor soul, nor bowels. Such creatures may become acquaintances, they can never be our friends.” “Your portrait is the reverse of flattering,” said Raily; “but what does it all amount to?” “It amounts to this, monsieur; I am bound to tell you with shame on my face and hell in my heart that I am that man’s slave, that he is my master.” His excitement got the better of him for a moment, then he went on. “The comte’s father lived on one of his estates near Orel. My father, who while very young had become attached to him personally, served him most faithfully—so faithfully, in fact, that the old man at his death left him a considerable sum of money, without, however, giving him his liberty. Like many other serfs, my father employed the money in trafficking in furs and skins with Eastern Russia. Having been very successful in trade, his fortune increased rapidly; and as a matter of course, his establishment assumed a proportionate footing. While I was still a mere lad, my father gave shelter to a victim of the French Revolution, many of whom exile had brought to our country. M. de B——, a man of great parts, looked to my education. He was like a second father to me, and whatever I am, I practically owe to him. Being aware of our position, he often suggested to me to put an end to it, by accompanying him to some

foreign land. I should, however, have had to leave my own country; my father would have been responsible for my doings; and the least punishment that he would have suffered would have been to leave his magnificent home in order to resume his labour as a serf. Another cause, based upon something more powerful than reason, bound me to this ignominious vassalage—love. I loved, monsieur, and was beloved; and though I recoiled from the thought of associating with my fate a young and well-born woman, who in uniting herself to me would have ceased to be free, I cherished the flattering hope that time would abolish those iniquitous laws, that sooner or later Emperor Alexander, the moral regenerator of his country—as his illustrious ancestor Peter the Great was the regenerator of his people—that Alexander would break our iron yoke, that he would treat us like the peasants living on the shores of the Baltic, or like the serfs on some of his own imperial domains; that, in fact, ere long the country would be indebted to him for the moral emancipation of forty millions of thinking beings, whose intelligence is crushed in the vice of an arbitrary power. Our masters, however, would sooner forgive him the greatest excesses of that arbitrary power than the exercise of that same power in favour of the humbler class of his subjects. In short, I hoped that, free at last, I should be able to lead Eudoxia to the altar, not sullied with the woollen band of the slave, but beaming beneath the white and pure wreath attached to the head of the free wife. Up to this day, I have hoped in vain. My father died; I not only continued his commerce, but extended it to the East; and in a few years doubled the very considerable fortune he left me."

"'Why not propose to the comte to buy your

freedom?" remarked Mr. Raily.

'"He would refuse. He is not one of the owners who would support a rational system of emancipation," was the answer, followed by a most sombre picture of the condition of the serfs; and he finally added, "Well, monsieur, the end of all this wretchedness, the possession of the woman I worship, who'll die of grief if we cannot be united—in short, liberty, all this I may possibly owe to you; and in that case you will have been to me more than a man, more than a friend, you will have been nothing less than a god." "What am I to do?" asked Mr. Raily. "I am disposed to help you, but you must explain?" "You are fond of gaming, monsieur. What's merely a pastime with you, is a frantic passion with the Comte K——. He sacrifices everything to it; and it will infallibly lead to his ruin. Nothing, therefore, will be easier than to get him to play with you. Get him to stake a small estate he has on the banks of the Volga; it's a village counting no more than fifty households, and the industry of which consists in making nails. That estate he'll not sell at any price; but for that, it would have been mine long ago. But in the feverish excitement of the game, he may be brought to stake it, he may lose it, and all my hope is there. If that village, where my father and I were born, where the rest of my relations are living—if that estate becomes mine, we shall all be free. And now, monsieur, you have my secret, and you are the arbiter of my fate. If you consent to come to my aid, your word will be sufficient for me, and you may raise your stakes to any amount, double them, increase them fourfold, as long as you get your final triumph. You have got an unlimited credit on my bank, and I wish you to make use of it unreservedly. Whatever may be your luck, if it remained

persistently contrary—even if it ruined me—I should still be eternally grateful to you for having understood me, for having listened to my prayer, and for having attempted to make me happy and free."

'Raily promised everything, and the two men parted, and that will explain to you how he and the Comte K—— soon confronted each other at the gaming table. Manœuvring very cleverly, the Englishman at the outset suffered defeat upon defeat. His adversary, intoxicated by his success, literally clung to him like his shadow. He followed him everywhere—at the hunt, at the ball, at the promenade: he never left him. No courtier of Versailles or St. James's was more exact at the rising and retiring of a sovereign. The game of faro, then very fashionable at Moscow, was, as a matter of course, that selected by the two antagonists. The comte held the bank. The sum lost by Raily already amounted to fifty thousand roubles. The Russian had tasted blood and liked it, but at last it came to the other one to deal the cards, and from that moment the luck turned. One day after dinner the game went so much in Mr. Raily's favour that he won everything the Comte K—— possessed in roubles, in paper-money, in objects of art, even to the holy images, richly chased in gold and precious stones, on which Russians set such store. Raily won everything; and when daylight appeared the heap of riches lay around the table which had served for their game. Nevertheless, the comte proposed to continue the game, but only in 'white money'; that is, figures serving as stakes drawn in chalk on the cloth, and in reality meaning credit. Mr. Raily pretended to have had enough of the game, and to ring for his servants to take to his carriage all that was portable of his rich and extensive loot. Seeing which, the comte

renewed his insistences to persuade him to stay. He prayed so humbly, then so passionately, for his revenge, that Raily judged the occasion favourable and the moment decisive to carry out the promise he had given to his young protégé. Gold, jewels, and bank notes, everything was placed on the table. Then Raily turned to his adversary. “You see, comte,” he said, “that I play the game in no niggardly spirit, and I will give you a new proof of it. I have taken a fancy to be a Russian landowner, if only for the strangeness of the fact. You have got a small estate on the banks of the Volga. If you like, I will stake all that’s there against it.” If at that moment Lucifer had offered the comte to stake his soul against a ducat, he would not have hesitated to accept. Without replying, the comte rushes to his writing-table, takes from it the title-deeds of his property, and flings them with a kind of feverish joy on the gold covering the table. The chances still remained in favour of Mr. Raily. The game had not been resumed ten minutes ere he was the master of that Promised Land, and the much desired aim had been attained. Taking up the contract which entitled him to the property and the fifty thousand roubles he had lost previously, he said, “Now, comte, I’ll play you double or quits for the rest.” The comte named the colour, and was right this time. “Take back all this,” said the Englishmen; “my night has been sufficiently well paid.” Then they parted the best friends in the world, the Russian enchanted with his prompt and generous revenge, Raily delighted at the prospect of the happiness he was to confer on his new friend. That very day the lucky gambler wrote to Féodor, sending him back his fifty thousand roubles, and informing him that he held at his disposal the title-deeds of the estate on the Volga. A few hours later Féodor stood in his

presence, holding by the hand a young girl, beautiful, fresh, fair, like all the girls of the north, whom he presented to him. It was Eudoxia, she who loved him, she whom he had loved so much. Both fell at Mr. Raily's feet. "You are our master, our father," they said. "Give us your blessing, and finish your sublime work of regeneration." Raily extends his hands, takes them in his arms, he himself surprised at the tears coursing freely down his cheeks. "Let him owe his happiness to you alone," he said, addressing Eudoxia, and handing her the title-deeds of the property. "An iniquitous law, a law iniquitous even in its foresight, forbids an emancipated slave to possess property. But you are free, madame, and noble, and the same law nevertheless permits that the serf of your lands, raised to the rank of your husband, becomes also freed from this unjust exclusion. You are now a landowner in virtue of these title-deeds—take Féodor to the altar; henceforth he will bear no chains but yours." "Monsieur," said the young merchant, "she and I will never be strong enough to remain under the burden of such a gratitude all our lives. You must, therefore, accept some feeble tribute of our feelings towards you, for it is only on that condition that you can really make us happy." Mr. Raily a few days before leaving Moscow received a pocket-book, which contained a million roubles, with the following words inscribed upon it: "To the free man who has made me a free man."

CHAPTER XX

Isabey's Study—His Picture of the Plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Vienna—The Imperial Sepulchre at the Capuchins—Recollections of the Tombs of Cracow—Preacher Werner—St. Stephen's Cathedral—Children's Ball at Princesse Marie Esterhazy's—The Empress Elizabeth of Russia—The Picture-Gallery of the Duc de Saxe-Teschen—Emperor Alexander and Prince Eugène—The Pictures of the Belvedere—The King of Bavaria—Anecdotes.

One of the memorabilia of the Congress of Vienna which had the advantage of uniting all suffrages, a privilege not generally granted to all the transactions of that august Areopagus, is the historical and beautiful drawing of Isabey representing a sitting of the plenipotentiaries. The artist was then putting the last touches to it. One morning, Griffiths and I went to his house. His gallery of portraits, which contained all the celebrated personages of Europe, was already very considerable, but our attention was attracted at once by the drawing which, under the title of 'The Congress of Vienna,' will connect his name with the illustrious men he has portrayed there. Everybody knows that composition, representing the room of

the Congress at the moment Prince de Metternich introduced Wellington.

Theoretically, Lord Wellington had no right to figure in that production, inasmuch as he only arrived in Vienna in February 1815, and then it was to replace Lord Castlereagh. His arrival necessitated an important change in the picture—the introduction of a new personage. That was the motive which made Isabey choose that particular moment, inasmuch as it enabled him to leave all the other figures in their original places. Isabey explained to us very charmingly the discontent of the new arrival at finding himself relegated to a corner of the composition, where he can only be seen sideways. The clever artist had ingeniously explained the situation to the English general, apparently with great satisfaction to both. Another particular incident had marked the preliminaries. Among the number of European celebrities Baron Humboldt was necessarily a figure. They had told Isabey that he would meet with great resistance on the part of this statesman, who had a thorough aversion to having his portrait taken. He had even refused that favour to Princesse Louisa Radziwill, the sister of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia. Warned of this singularity, and even somewhat intimidated by it, Isabey presented himself at the diplomatist's. His real or simulated embarrassment increased the partial good humour of the baron, who, fixing his large, blue-goggled eyes on him, replied, 'Have a good look at me, and then you'll be bound to admit that nature has given me too ugly a face ever to spend a penny on it for its reproduction. Nature would in reality have the laugh of me if she could convict me of such foolish vanity. She ought to be aware that I fully recognise the trick she has played me.' Struck by the reply, the painter

looked with stupefaction at the extraordinary face of the minister, but immediately resuming his gaiety and quickness of wit, he retorted, ‘But I am not going to ask your excellency the slightest recompense for the pleasant trouble I am going to take. I am only going to ask the favour of a few sittings.’

‘Oh, is that all? You can have as many sittings as you like. You need not stint yourself in that respect, but I cannot abandon my principle of not spending a penny on my ugly face.’

In fact, the witty diplomatist sat as many times to the painter as he wished. When the engraving appeared, his was found the most striking likeness of all, and he often said, ‘I have not paid a penny for my portrait by Isabey. No doubt he wanted to avenge himself, and he has made an excellent likeness of me.’

Leaving the painter’s study, we went citywards, and on the bridge over the Danube we fell in with Princesse Hélène Souvaroff, General Tettenborn, and Alexander Ypsilanti. They were going in the same direction, and told us that they were making for the church of the Capuchins to see the tombs of the imperial family. They proposed that we should accompany them, and we accepted.

When we got to the chapel, a monk, after having lighted a large torch, preceded us to the crypts. There were nine tombs of emperors, thirteen of empresses, and in all about eighty of the members of the imperial race. ‘It was in this subterranean chapel,’ said our guide, ‘that every day during thirty years Maria-Theresa heard Mass before the sepulchre she had erected for herself by the side of that of her husband.’

‘This trait of Maria-Theresa,’ said Tettenborn, ‘reminds me of one of the clever answers of Joseph II. When he had granted the public admission to the Augarten, a lady complained that she could no longer stroll about there among her equals. “If everybody were restricted to the society of his equals,” replied the emperor, “I should be reduced for a bit of air to the crypt of the Capuchins, inasmuch as it is only there that I should find mine.”’

After contemplating for a few moments those magnificent monuments of marble and brass, we slowly ascended the steps of the crypt, when the light of several torches told us of the arrival of a numerous company; and it would appear that these excursions had all been postponed to the end of February on account of the weather, for soon Messrs. Nesselrode and Pozzo di Borgo, the Duc de Richelieu, and M. Amstedt passed us on their way. Then we went to the ramparts. The conversation had taken a serious turn, in accordance with the objects we had just left. The Princesse Hélène compared these crypts with those of the monastery of Petchersky at Kion, where most of the saints of the convent are placed in open coffins. Those precious relics draw to the ancient capital of Moscow a number of pilgrims, who proceed on foot from Casan and other towns close to Italy.

‘There is no greater proof of the strength of religious feeling than that,’ said Princesse Hélène. ‘It is at the bottom of all those distant pilgrimages, which, without it, would seem impossible. But,’ she added, ‘the hope of future recompense assuages present evils.’

‘When I was at Cracow,’ I said, ‘I also paid a visit to the subterranean vaults of the cathedral, where

the Kings of Poland rest. The coffins are similarly open, and the bodies are embalmed. Time seems to have respected their forms, and they are still vested with all the attributes of royalty. The ermine cloak, the sceptre, the diadem sparkling with precious stones, all those baubles of a vanished power present a striking contrast to the relentless aspect of death. Nevertheless, such images of the past are less terrible when brass or marble disguises, as it does here, the visible effects of death, or when the monuments are inscribed with a line recalling a glorious reminiscence, like that of the Narischkine family in the Church of the Annunciation at St. Petersburg.'

It was a holiday, and the streets were filled with a great crowd, mainly of artisans, apparently very happy and prosperous.

'Truly,' said Griffiths, as I pointed this out, 'one rarely meets with a beggar in Vienna. The charitable institutions are administered with much order and much liberality. Public benevolence in particular seems to be directed with a great sense of justice. The people, having in general more industrial aptitude and commercial intelligence than the other populations of Germany, seem to conduct their own affairs very well, and it may safely be said there is no capital in Europe which can be compared with Vienna for its sights, and the happy-go-lucky existence of its inhabitants.'

The spire of the cathedral was standing against the cloudless sky.

'Don't you feel tempted,' said I to Princesse Souvaroff, 'to be present at one of the spectacles which just now seem to cause, rightly or wrongly, a great excitement—I mean a sermon by the Rev. M. Werner?'

The princess had heard the name, and she fell in with my view, anxious, like ourselves, to know this simple priest, who, amid so many great interests and varied amusements, had still found a means of arousing the enthusiasm of the crowd.

Before he had followed in the footsteps of Massillon and Bossuet, M. Werner had been a Lutheran and a dramatic poet. He was the author of several successful tragedies, which he had treated in the most romantic way. Importing into his theatrical compositions all the energy of his religious convictions, he had made it a point to paint the commencement of Lutheranism in the most seductive colours. A circumstance both poetical and romantic marked the history of his conversion to Catholicism. One evening he was strolling in the Cathedral Square in Vienna, a prey to one of those sombre reveries so peculiar to German poets. In his emotion, he stood contemplating that imposing mass and the Gothic towers, the summits of which are lost in the clouds. All at once the door opened, and a venerable priest, dressed in white, and escorted by two young children, appeared on its threshold, and started for the couch of a moribund to administer the supreme rites of his faith. A torch left a trembling but luminous trace behind. Struck by the spectacle, the Lutheran poet stops and wistfully looks after the vanishing procession. His imagination has been fired, the inmost recesses of his heart are moved; the grandeur and sublimity of the Catholic religion are revealed to him by the very simple fact of an old priest carrying the last sacrament to a man on his deathbed. From that moment, M. Werner practically became a Catholic. He left Vienna, went to Rome, and abjured his errors in the Basilica of St. Peter. Then after having lived for some two years in a

monastery at the foot of Vesuvius, he came back to Germany, and, discarding the theatre for the pulpit, began to preach. The peculiar nature of his conversion, his talent as a preacher, apart from his diction, which still showed the lofty thoughts and the alternately brilliant and sombre colours of his former poesy—everything, in fact, combined to bring him into relief. Whenever he was announced to preach, the church could scarcely hold the crowd of both pious and merely curious. The theatrical directors, seeing the success of the preacher, conceived the idea of reviving the tragedies of the poet, and made an excellent thing out of them. In the morning the public hurried to listen to the words of the new St. Paul, and in the evening, with minds still full of quotations from Holy Writ and the Fathers, the same audiences went to applaud *Attila*, *Luther*, and other works of the converted heretic. Sorely grieved at this applause, M. Werner felt compelled to denounce from the pulpit his former errors, which he would fain have destroyed altogether. But the more he fulminated, the more piquant seemed the contrast, and his dual success as an author and as a preacher hourly increased.

The crowd in the cathedral was so dense as to make it difficult for us to find room. There were princes, generals, ‘grandes dames,’ and, what was not less strange, people belonging to every Christian community. After a while the apostle appeared, and delivered a long sermon in German, of which I did not understand a word, though I was probably not singular in that respect among that particular audience that morning. In spite of this, the effect seemed no less satisfactory. The hollow voice of the speaker, his tall, lean, and wan figure, his deep-set eyes, all seemed to accord with the fane, whose

interior he caused to resound with his voice. The cathedral of St. Stephen, in fact, artistically sculptured outside, is dark within, and that obscurity, itself so favourable to meditation, seemed to add something sepulchral to the utterances of the preacher.

'Well,' said the Princesse Hélène to me when we were coming out, 'what do you think of the preacher?'

'I have only been able to judge partly of his eloquence, and I should think there would be little fault to find with the moral drift of his discourse, inasmuch as his dogma is no doubt irreproachable. Nevertheless, his violent tone and gestures do not inspire me with a desire to see his theatrical works. If you'll follow my advice, we'll go to the theatre of the Court to see *Cinna* or *Le Misanthrope*.'

At parting, we said a few words about soon meeting again at the Princesse Marie Esterhazy's, who was about to give a children's ball, which after the many splendid receptions of grown-up people could not fail to excite great curiosity. Expectation was thoroughly realised, for the princess's rooms presented the most animated and graceful picture. All the young offshoots of the aristocracy had been invited to take part in the entertainments projected for their edification. The crowned guests at Vienna (reduced this time to the rôle of spectators), all the illustrious political and military personages, followed suit and gathered round the young ones, endeavouring, perhaps, to snatch an imaginary glimpse of their own youth in the contemplation of the unaffected gaiety and games. The apartments of the palace had been so cunningly arranged as to lead the young guests from surprise to surprise. Jugglers'

fantoccini, magic-lanterns succeeded each other. And when all those joyous pastimes were exhausted, they finally came upon the big ball-room, where the dancing immediately commenced, not with strict adherence, perhaps, to the programme, but with all the more gracefulness and absence from constraint. The costumes, which, as may easily be imagined, were all magnificent—Turks, knights, Albanians, mediæval, Louis XIV., Russian, Polish—were worn with comic importance by those Liliputian highnesses. Amidst all these little angels it was easy to perceive that the demon of Pride had exercised his dangerous seductions. One of those female highnesses got into a great rage with a companion of inferior rank. The quarrel became so embittered, neither of them being willing to give in, that it occasioned some trouble at the ball. It reminded me of the anecdote told me by Lord Stair, which a few years before had vastly amused all England. It was during the infancy of the Princess of Wales(?). They had given her as a companion the daughter of a musician who had acquired a great reputation by playing the organ at St. Paul's. The children quarrelled about a toy, of which each wanted to get possession. The small wranglers claimed privilege in identical terms. 'How dare you resist me?' said the princess. 'Don't you know that I am the daughter of the Prince of Wales?' 'What's that to me? Don't you know, yourself, that I am the daughter of the organist of St. Paul's?'

Dancing was interrupted by the arrival of the Tyrolese singers, who were then causing a great sensation in Vienna. They were seven fine men and ten women, and wore the picturesque costume of their mountains. A few years before, they had come from the Tyrol as simple journeymen watchmakers,

and in the evening they met together to sing their national songs. The effect was such as to cause immense crowds to follow them through the streets. The police were obliged to give them an escort to prevent disorder. The directors of the Wieden Theatre engaged them to sing on their stage. The enthusiasm was such as to make them repeat the same airs half-a-dozen times: the highest society engaged them for their evening parties, and everywhere they were equally applauded. During the Congress they had returned to the scene of their first glory.

After that the children went into a room which till then had been closed to them. A big tree with golden branches was bending beneath all kinds of toys; amongst others those pretty boxes made out of Vienna paving-stones. A lottery was drawn. Before the little ones retired, they danced a waltz. The sovereigns and the whole of the Court seemed to share those childish joys, and to forget for the moment their own agitated existence at the sight of so much innocent happiness. Only the Empress Elizabeth of Russia preserved an appearance of melancholy. One could perceive that she envied the joys of maternity. Her affection for the emperor was such that, when she met with the daughter he had had by Madame Narischkine, she smothered the child with caresses, trying to cheat her own aspirations as wife and mother.

To whatever political opinion one may belong, one is always glad to be able to speak of those who have occupied the world's stage. Thanks to the Congress of Vienna, it has been vouchsafed to me to approach some of the men who have left their names on the pages of contemporary history; hence the

anecdotes which follow.

One bright February day, Zibin, Luchesini, and I were wandering through the residence of the Duc de Saxe-Teschen. Among the mass of precious objects there is a collection of about twelve thousand original drawings, and a hundred and thirty thousand engravings after artists of various countries. We were courteously received by M. Lefèvre, the custodian of these treasures, of which, he told us, he was going to publish a description in chronological order, according to the schools. At the end of a gallery arranged to hold these rarities, we caught sight of the Archduke Albert, who was doing the honours to Emperor Alexander, accompanied by General Ouwaroff and Prince Eugène. We drew near as they were examining a collection of military maps, the most complete in Europe.

'Cities have been destroyed,' said Archduke Albert. 'Empires have toppled over. Tactics have changed, but military positions remain the same.' He added: 'Several comparisons prove that the same chances have often produced the same results.' Nevertheless, it was on the scene of the last war that the attention of his guests seemed particularly riveted. Nothing equals in interest the remarks of Emperor Alexander on inspecting those plans of battles.

'There,' he said, placing his finger on a certain spot, 'this or that corps made this or that mistake. This or that battery took up a wrong position—this or that charge decided the action. Here, at Austerlitz, we might have retrieved the game, but Kutusoff stopped too far away from Mortier, and those frozen lakes of Augezd and of Monitz, in giving way under twenty thousand men and fifty pieces of artillery,

completed our disaster.'

'Nevertheless,' said Prince Eugène, 'we should perhaps have lost the battle if the emperor had attacked a few hours earlier. The chances of war are determined by very small incidents.'

'There, at Friedland,' Alexander went on, everything was lost by a false cavalry manœuvre, of which they took advantage, and by the retreat of Korsakoff on Friedland. Consequently, the whole of his *corps d'armée* was surrounded, and in endeavouring to find an issue across the waters of the Alle, it found its death. Take it all in all, we fought well, but we had to deal with cleverer players than we were.'

He passed from the campaigns of Italy to those of Germany, tactfully avoiding speaking of the disastrous Russian war.

The emperor and Prince Eugène vied with each other in courtesy; the archduke put an end to the subject by showing them a descriptive catalogue compiled by himself, which, despite his great age, he continually revised. To enumerate the treasures contained in this gallery, one ought to have copied that catalogue from beginning to end. Some of the drawings dated from the year 1420: there were more than a hundred and fifty, many of them by Albert Dürer, and the majority drawn with the pen, the figures richly coloured, especially some birds of an admirable finish. A still more particular interest attached to the engravings of this illustrious master, inasmuch as they once constituted his own collection. The duke pointed out to us several drawings by Raphael, and fifty sketches by Claude Lorrain.

The emperor came up to us, and spoke very kindly to Zibin, and presented him to Prince Eugène as the youngest Knight of the Order of St. George. Having overheard the name of Luchesini, he asked him if it was his father who had been plenipotentiary at the celebrated Congress of Sistow under Frederick II.

'Yes, sire.'

'And where is he now?'

'On his estates at Lucca.'

'If he writes his recollections,' remarked Alexander, 'they will be very interesting, for he has seen and observed much.'

We afterwards paid a visit to the sumptuously decorated apartments. In one of these a panharmonium, composed of a hundred and fifty wind-instruments, played symphonies and marches, accompanied with admirable precision by an automatic trumpet. We left the archduke with his illustrious visitors and went to the Belvedere in order to see a collection of pictures which had been largely increased by Joseph II. at the suppression of some convents. The palace of Belvedere requires no description. Its curator, M. Fugger, was kind enough to serve as guide, and specially pointed out to us the Titians, Rubenses, and Vandykes. In the evening we went as usual to the Comtesse Fuchs's. There I met Prince Eugène, and the conversation turned on the treasures collected at Malmaison, which were thoroughly appreciated by Prince Gargarine and Colonel Brozin, who had become acquainted with them during Alexander's several visits to Josephine.

CHAPTER XXI

Ypsilanti—Promenade on the Prater—First Rumour of the Escape of Napoleon—Projects for the Deliverance of Greece—Comte Capo d'Istria—The Hétairites—Meeting with Ypsilanti in 1820—His Projects and Reverses.

I had missed Ypsilanti from his usual haunts for a considerable time, and on the rare occasions that I caught a glimpse of him, melancholy seemed to have taken him for its prey. I attributed this to a more than usually serious love affair, but I had no idea that his projects for the deliverance of Greece were the cause of his constant absence. At the moment when the Congress laboured at the consolidation of a general peace, the realisation of his generous plan seemed to recede further into the distance. It was improbable that Europe, even in the interests of Miltiades and Themistocles, would allow the equilibrium to be disturbed and risk once more the world's repose. One morning I was riding through the Prater, after a stormy night which had burst over Vienna and occasioned much damage. The sky was bright, and the sun glinted through the trees. I saw Ypsilanti close to a path where I had seen him just five months previously, dawdling along, the reins on his horse's neck, and, as usual, his face overcast with care. Thinking the moment opportune to ask him the

cause of an estrangement I regretted, I rode up to him.

'My mind,' he said, 'is occupied entirely by something which, as yet, is a secret that does not belong to me alone. I know your affection for me, and I will not hesitate to tell you my thoughts the moment I can do so without damage to a sacred cause, or without breaking my pledge.'

His solemn tone surprised me, and I asked him to speak plainly, but he opposed a determined silence. His head hung on his breast; his thoughts were engrossed by something he could not shake off. Suddenly, he beckoned to his attendant, jumped off his horse, and invited me to do the same. We strolled down a solitary avenue, and after a few steps stopped short. He fixed his piercing eyes on me, violently clutching my arm.

'Napoleon has left Elba,' he said.

'Dear prince!' I exclaimed. 'Are you sure?'

'Absolutely!' was the answer. 'A courier despatched from Florence to the English Embassy brought the news this morning. Emperor Alexander and M. de Nesselrode were informed immediately. There were no further particulars.'

'But this means Europe on fire once more, and a struggle more terrible than ever.'

'Yes. We are about to quit opera for tragedy. The moment has come in which I feel bound to act. I have spoken to you of my plan to free Greece. Henceforth, favoured by this tremendous event, it will be my business to break her fetters, and to replace her in her former rank among the nations.'

'A noble project. One might call it sublime. But

have you calculated the means necessary to ensure success?'

'I have no doubt about them. That dream of my very youth, that dream of my early years, will soon be a reality. War will set Europe again in a blaze; faithful friends as well as myself are only awaiting that signal.'

'Dear Alexander! Your enthusiasm is nothing new to me, nor your military talents, nor your patriotic devotion, but I feel bound to point out to you the dangers of your project, and the impossibility of its success.'

I spoke to him for fully half an hour, without shaking his decision in the least, when suddenly at the winding of the path, we perceived two men on horseback. I fancied one of these was the Comte Capo d'Istria.

'Oh!' he exclaimed, 'they have kept their word!' and without another syllable he ran to his horse, flung himself on it, and disappeared. Returning to Vienna, I went to Prince Koslowski, naturally impatient to know the particulars of the news which was soon to engross the world's attention—the departure of Napoleon from the island of Elba. Amidst the grave interests which were then paramount, the Greek question passed unperceived. But when it assumed the grand proportions it did assume, and aroused the sympathies of the whole of the civilised world, history carefully collected every particular connected with this glorious emancipation. History has revealed the secrets which Ypsilanti could not entrust to one of his dearest friends, and later on I knew the men on whom he counted to second his efforts. 'We shall meet again,' Ypsilanti had shouted as he disappeared. Alas! we were only

to meet once more, five years later. It was in 1820, on my return from Carlsbad, when I was on my way to Louiseburg, near Alexanderbad, in Bavaria. I had been wandering at random for several hours about the somewhat melancholy spot, and had reached the summit of Louiseburg with its famous cross, when at the foot of the monument I perceived, seated, a fellow-wayfarer, wrapt in an ample cloak. He was writing in a book, which he closed as I drew near. He had, no doubt, been warned by the sound of my footsteps, for he turned round, and I recognised Ypsilanti. The five years that had gone by since that memorable morning towards the end of the Congress had left profound traces on his features. He was no longer the young and brilliant soldier, the life and soul of every drawing-room. But although the face was deeply lined, and the eyes were hollow set, there was still the lofty animation pervading the handsome physiognomy. He explained to me that his wounds had necessitated a journey to Carlsbad, and that while waiting for some friends, he had pushed as far as Louiseburg, at the recommendation of the King of Prussia. In a few moments, the subject ever present to his thoughts was on his lips. This time, for delivering his country from the foreign yoke, he counted on the sympathy of Alexander. I asked him if he had considered what would happen in the event of a reverse, and endeavoured to point out to him the improbability of Russia's allowing an independent state to be carved out of some of the most beautiful provinces of the Turkish Empire. Nothing that I could say would induce him—not to abandon his enterprise, I had no sanguine expectations to that effect, but to postpone it until a more favourable moment. All he would do was to confide to me a manuscript setting forth the principal events of his

life, but the narration of which does not come within the scope of this work.

CONCLUSION

Napoleon has left Elba—Aspect of Vienna—Theatricals at the Court—Mme. Edmond de Périgord and the Rehearsal—Napoleon's Landing at Cannes—The Interrupted Dance—Able Conduct of M. de Talleyrand—Declaration of the 13th March—Fauche Borel—The Congress is Dissolved.

My task is nearly at an end. Five-and-twenty years have gone by since the occurrence of the magic scenes part of which I have endeavoured to reproduce. There only remains to sketch the last one.

Prince Koslowski, to whom I went after Ypsilanti bade me such a hurried farewell in the Prater by jumping on his horse, confirmed the news told me by the latter. Napoleon had indeed left Elba. 'The master and the prisoner of Europe in one,' as he had been energetically called, had left his prison armed with nothing but his own glory, and, like Cæsar, had entrusted himself and his fortunes to a frail barque.

'The news,' said Koslowski, 'was brought here by a courier despatched by the English ambassador in Florence to Lord Stewart. The English consul at Leghorn had in the first instance transmitted it. Lord Stewart, who naturally was the first to open the despatch, informed M. de Metternich and the

sovereigns. The ministers of the great Powers were told immediately afterwards. It is not known which road Napoleon has taken. Is he coming to France, or does he wish, as has been stated, to get to the United States? For the moment there is nothing but conjecture. But who shall preserve him from the storm rumbling and gathering over his head? Will fortune be able to place on his brow the lightning-conductor to avert the course of that storm? The high and mighty arbiters of the Congress desire that the news shall not be spread before they are able to take measures dictated by the gravity of the circumstances.'

Whether the secret had been carefully kept, or whether the intoxication consequent upon the many months of festivities had not altogether worn off, it is impossible to say; but the capital preserved its usual aspect. The ramparts and the Leopoldstadt faubourg leading to the Prater were teeming with strollers, evidently anxious to profit by the first rays of the spring sun. There was no sign of the thunderbolt having produced its echo: joy and careless gaiety everywhere.

In the evening the company of amateur comedians was to give a performance in the palace of the *Barbier de Seville* and of a vaudeville very popular at that time, entitled *La Danse Interrompue*. The Prince Koslowski had offered to accompany me to the imperial residence. Anxious to study the general physiognomy of the illustrious gathering, and also hoping to gather some fresh news in connection with the great event, I had accepted. The gathering was as brilliant and as numerous as usual. There was, however, no longer the careless calm of the morning. Slight clouds, but clouds for all that, darkened their

brows. The company stood chatting in groups, and here and there the probable consequences of Napoleon's departure were discussed with more than ordinary warmth. 'He cannot elude the English cruisers,' said one. 'M. Pozzo di Borgo maintains,' replied another, 'that if he sets foot in France, he'll be hanged on the nearest tree.'[102]

Everybody, it seemed, wished to shirk the reality of the awakening. 'We ought to think ourselves very lucky,' said some partisans of the Bourbons of Sicily. 'Truly Bonaparte is playing our game admirably. He may set his helm for Naples; and if so, the Congress will be obliged to take measures for the expulsion of that usurper and intruder, Murat.'

Suddenly the conversations ceased. The Empress of Austria had entered the room and taken her seat, and at a signal from her the curtain rose. 'We'll just see,' I said to Prince Koslowski, 'if this event, apparently so unforeseen, has not bred confusion in the illustrious company of players.'

'You may spare yourself such a mistake,' was the answer. 'It would need the enemy at the gates of Vienna and the thunder of the cannon to rouse them from their obstinate sleep. When the news came this morning to M. de Talleyrand, he was still in bed. Mme. Edmond de Périgord was seated by his pillow and brightly conversing with him when a letter was brought in from M. de Metternich. "This is to tell me the hour fixed for the Congress to-day," said the prince, leaving the handsome comtesse to open the epistle, which, as a matter of course, she does mechanically. In a moment or so, though, she opens her eyes very wide and reads the big tidings. She also had to go during the day to M. de Metternich's, but it was merely to rehearse a farce—*Le Sourd, ou*

l'Auberge pleine. "Bonaparte has left Elba," she exclaims. "Oh, uncle, and my rehearsal!" "Your rehearsal, madame," is the quiet reply, "will take place all the same." And the prince was right; the rehearsal took place just the same. Europe is, perhaps, on the verge of a general conflagration, but the confidence of our comedians will not be disturbed by so small a matter as that.'

Everybody was studying the faces of the political notabilities, as a rule so very impassive; people scanned their looks and tried to read their thoughts. They all affected a confidence probably far removed from the reality. The absence of M. de Talleyrand was noticed, and the preoccupation of Emperor Alexander.

What had caused this supreme resolution on the part of Napoleon, the consequences of which were so fatal to France? Did he expect, in spite of the enfeebled condition of France, to hold his own once more against coalesced Europe? Was he so blind as to entertain the possibility of henceforth living in peace with all those sovereigns to whom he had formerly dictated, and whom he had taught the road to Paris? Or was not his flight from Elba an act of despair in order to escape a captivity which, six years later, was to make an end of him on the rock of St. Helena?

Certain was it that the presence of the Emperor of the French in the midst of the Mediterranean, and the independence, nay, the shadow of power which was left to him, had aroused the alarm of the Congress. It was well known that there existed in Paris a centre of intrigues and correspondence having for its aim the restoration of the imperial *régime*. Queen Hortense was the soul of that

conspiracy, which was known to everybody except the blind Bourbons. During the stay of Queen Hortense there, in August 1814, Madame de Krüdener, so celebrated subsequently in consequence of her mystic connection with Emperor Alexander, had foretold to her the return of Napoleon. Hence, from the beginning of the conferences, the question of choosing another place of exile, or rather of transportation, was broached, though the strictest secrecy was kept about the matter. Nevertheless, it was only towards the end of January that St. Helena was mentioned by M. Pozzo di Borgo, who professed to have received letters informing him of the arrest at Genoa, at Florence, and on the whole of the coast, of the emissaries of Napoleon. 'Europe,' Pozzo had said, 'would not be at rest until she had put the ocean between herself and that man.'

It was asserted that Prince Eugène owed the revelation of that important secret to his intimacy with Emperor Alexander, and that he lost no time in informing Napoleon. The latter no longer hesitated, and made up his mind to return to France. From that moment, Alexander became most cool and distant towards Eugène.

Vienna remained without further news for nearly five days, during which the receptions and entertainments went on as if nothing had happened, the general concern apparently becoming less and less. Finally, though, there was no possibility of denying the truth; the thunderclap came: Napoleon was in France. The adventurer, as Pozzo di Borgo dared to call him, was welcomed everywhere by frantically enthusiastic populations. The soldiers rushed to meet their general; there was no obstacle to his triumphal march. The fall of the Colossus,

which had appeared incomprehensible, was less surprising than the resurrection of his power.

The news of Napoleon's landing at Cannes came while the ball at M. de Metternich's was at its height. The tidings had the effect of the stroke of the wand or the whistle of the stage-carpenter, which transforms the gardens of Armida into a wilderness. In fact, the thousands of candles seemed to have gone out simultaneously. The news spread with the rapidity of an electric current. In vain did the orchestra continue the strains of a waltz just begun; the dancers stopped of their own accord, looking at and interrogating each other; the four words, 'He is in France,' were like the shield of Ubaldo which, presented to the gaze of Rinaldo, suddenly destroyed all the charms of Armida.

Emperor Alexander took a few steps towards the Prince de Talleyrand. 'I told you that it would not last,' he said. The French plenipotentiary did not move a muscle of his face, and simply bowed without replying. The King of Prussia gave a sign to the Duke of Wellington, and both left the ball-room together, followed almost immediately by Emperors Alexander and Francis and M. de Metternich. The majority of the guests seemed bent upon disappearing unnoticed, so that finally the place became deserted save for a few apparently terror-stricken talkers.

The Prince Koslowski, whom I saw during the evening, was unable to add anything to the news already current among the public. 'This is an excellent opportunity for the players to give us a second performance of that charming vaudeville *La Danse Interrompue*. Comte Palfi, who played the part of Wasner so brightly, might well sing:

‘“Enfin voilà la danse interrompue;
Comment tenir à cet incident-là?”

The chorus, I am afraid, will probably be accompanied in a short time by the thunder of a hundred thousand firearms. This news,’ he went on, ‘will no doubt remind you of the tidings of the taking of Amiens by the Spaniards, told to Henri IV. in the midst of a ballet in which both he and Sully were dancing, though it is difficult to imagine Sully disporting himself in that way: he was certainly not famed for that kind of thing. “Mistress mine,” said the king to “la belle Gabrielle” (d’Estrées), taking her hand, “we are bound to give up our dancing and our games; we must to horse, and recommence another war. There’s a truce to the joys of love.” It would be well, perhaps, to translate the phrase into several languages for the benefit of some of the would-be Henri Quatres assembled here.’

It would be impossible to depict the aspect of the Austrian capital from that moment. Vienna was like an individual who, lulled to sleep by dreams of love and ambition, suddenly found himself violently awakened by the rattle of the watchman or the clanging of the belfry warning him that his house was on fire. The various guests from all parts of Europe could not recall without dread the phases of the period that had just gone by. The constantly renewed disasters of a quarter of a century of war; the invaded capitals; the battlefields bestrewn with the dead; commerce and industry paralysed; whole families, nay, whole nations, in mourning—all this presented itself simultaneously to their minds; and the recollection of the lurid flames of Moscow lent additional terror to the picture. No doubt there had been recent reprisals on their part; and the presence

of the Allied Armies in Paris proved to a certain extent that the terms ‘unvanquished’ and ‘invincible’ were by no means synonymous. This, however, rendered their anxiety all the greater. To fell the Colossus to the ground, it had required a conjunction of circumstances, and, moreover, an accord of sentiments and ideas, which had increased the strength of each individual nation tenfold. At present those nations had assumed an observant attitude towards each other; the stern reality only showed the certainty of evils which had been considered as dispelled for ever.

Under those grave circumstances, M. de Talleyrand gave proof of an ability and a strength of will that had the effect of carrying all before it. Never was there a more difficult rôle than his. He was, as it were, the buffer betwixt the government he represented and France, whose interest he wished to save, and the inimical Powers, which confounded in the self-same ban Napoleon and the country which once more had welcomed him. I was not in Paris at the time of the first Restoration; Talleyrand’s conduct, therefore, only came to me through contemporary accounts, not always to be depended on for their veracity. But having been an eye-witness of what he did in March 1815 for his country and for the Bourbons, I have no hesitation in saying that the latter were indebted to him a second time for their crown; and that France, perhaps, owed to him her existence as a nation. He understood, with marvellous intuition, that these two facts were narrowly bound up with and emanated from each other. Hence his attitude, and his efforts to obtain the declaration of the 13th March.

That famous act, so differently appreciated,

claims its mention here. The irritation in Vienna was at its height, and kept up by the prospect of a relentless war. The enthusiasm aroused by Napoleon's presence, the welcome given to him by the various populations, the rallying around him of the army—all these things combined caused the French nation to be looked upon as an accomplice to the breaking of the much desired peace. There was, moreover, the dread of a revival of the Revolutionary ideas, the delirium of which had struck terror throughout Europe. The Emperor of Austria, addressing the czar, had said 'Behold, sire, the result of your holding your hand over your Paris Jacobins.' 'That's true, sire,' was the answer, 'but to repair the wrong, I hold myself and my armies at your Majesty's disposal.'

The quarrel on the point of breaking out was, therefore, between France on the one side, and the whole of Europe on the other; a duel to the bitter end, which could only cease with the death of one of the combatants. I also heard the word 'partition' mentioned, and the example of Poland was there to prove that a nation may be struck off the European family register.

M. de Talleyrand, on the contrary, laid down the principle that in 1815, as in the previous year, Europe could be at war with Napoleon only and not with France. He manœuvred with so much skill or so much luck as to overcome all obstacles and entirely to change the intentions hostile to France, and finally to obtain the acceptance of his principle. A score of times the Congress was about to separate without having made up its mind to anything save a blind and relentless war; a score of times he rallied around him opinions fundamentally opposed to each other. I

am aware of the repugnance of certain dogmatic minds to these compromises inspired by prudence. Over and again it has been said that it would have been better for France to accept a declaration of war —a threat of extermination addressed to herself. In her hour of despair, the country would have found a supernatural force; she would have perished in the struggle or obtained a glorious triumph.

M. de Talleyrand was swayed by too much moderation to risk this; he had too correct a notion of the enfeebled condition of France to fling her once more into violent and desperate adventures. He himself beheld Europe ready to rise as one man; he directed the rise against an individual instead of against a people. And in this he acted rightly. His conduct was appreciated and admired in Vienna as the triumph of reason and of an enlightened patriotism. More than once he returned from the Congress to his residence utterly discouraged. On the morning of the 13th March, the day appointed for the signing of this important act, he was by no means sure of his success. Meanwhile, everything depended on it. When he was ready to go to M. de Metternich, his *entourage* could not refrain from showing a natural anxiety. 'Wait for me here,' he said, 'and in order not to try your patience by as much as a minute, watch for my return at the windows. If I have succeeded, I'll show you from the carriage the treaty on which shall depend the fate of Europe and of France.'

A few hours later, when coming back, he waved the roll containing the signatures of the arbiters of peace who had become the arbiters of war. For a moment, though, the accord obtained with so much labour was on the point of being broken. It was when

the Congress heard of the flight of Louis XVIII. from the Tuileries without an attempt at striking a blow, and of Napoleon's taking possession of the palace. Emperor Alexander, in particular, failed to understand the tame submission of the Bourbon family and the absence of a single defender.

One morning I ran up against General Ouwaroff. 'The czar,' he said, 'has not recovered from his surprise. He is tired of war, and just now he repeated to me at least a dozen times, "Never shall I draw the sword for them."'

M. de Talleyrand, in addition to this, performed wonders of skill and patience in the retying of the loosened 'Congress bundle' and in directing the various wills of which it was composed towards one common aim. If, on the one hand, the masses beheld with terror the horizon becoming once more dark with threatening clouds, the men devoured with ambition rejoiced at the probable revival of a time of glory. For, disguise it as one will, the intrigues which were already set on foot to overthrow or to support Napoleon offered a prospect of a prompt result in the way of grandeur and riches. Among the many ambitious ones of various ranks who rushed in crowds to Vienna, the ubiquitous Fauche-Borel, the secret agent of the Bourbon princes during the emigration, was foremost. He came once more to offer his fortune, his devotion, and even the blood of his family for a cause in which he had sacrificed everything. No one had a greater right than he to call kings 'the illustriously ungrateful.' His adventurous life, his expensive tastes, had promptly swallowed all the sums he received from the house of Bourbon and from the British Government. His was indeed a strange destiny. The crowning of his efforts turned

out to be a disaster to his personal fortune. For twenty years his numberless creditors had awaited patiently the day of his success. Scarcely were the Bourbons seated on the throne, the access to which had been facilitated by him, than everybody imagined the ill-fated bookseller of Neufchâtel to be loaded with gold and honours. Pressed on all sides and but meanly remunerated, his position was a thousand times harder than it had been before. Hence, he was going to resume his life of intriguing and hopes. If a warning were needed for the ambitious against their all-engrossing craving to be somebody or to appear to be somebody, no more striking example could be advanced than that of Fauche-Borel putting an end to his disappointed ambition by committing suicide, and by that death setting the seal on everything that has been said about the ingratitude of princes.

'The Congress is dissolved,' Napoleon had said, on setting his foot on French soil at Cannes. Meanwhile, on the 11th March, in the midst of the general consternation, a company of amateurs still played in the Redotto hall *Le Calife de Bagdad* and *Les Rivaux d'eux-mêmes*, and, strange though it may appear, there was a larger audience than might have been expected. It was, however, the final flicker of the expiring lamp; the last feeble sound of the broken instrument. Pleasure took flight. 'The Congress is dissolved.'

THE END

FOOTNOTES

[1] Throughout this translation I have left many of the nobiliary titles and names of the Continental aristocracy in their French garb; those of the English personages mentioned I have reduced to their original expression.

[2] Bourgeois was then, as now, the appellation commonly bestowed upon the members of the middle classes.—Transl.

[3] The marquisate was created in 1663, and was registered in the Parliament of Languedoc. It was bestowed upon Louis-François de La Garde, chevalier seigneur de Chambonas, son of Antoine de La Garde, married to Charlotte de la Beaume de Suze. The title passed to his nephew, Scipion-Louis-Joseph, who was brigadier in the king's armies in 1744, and who died 27th February 1765. He married: First, Claire-Marie, Princesse de Ligne; second, Louise-Victoire-Marie de Grimoard de Beauvoir du Roure, daughter of the Comte du Roure, lieutenant-general in the king's armies, and of Marie-Antoinette-Victoire de Gontaut Biron. The issue of the second marriage was two boys, one of whom was Scipion-Charles-Victor-Auguste, Marquis de

Chambonas, Baron de Saint-Félix and d'Auberque, Comte de Saint-Julien, who married on the 2nd April 1774, Mlle. de Lespinasse de Langeac. (*Administrative Archives of the Dépôt* (Ministry of War and La Chesnaye des Bois), 3rd edition, Article 'La Garde.')

[4] In the few passages of the *Recollections of the Congress of Vienna*, where the author refers to his childhood and his family, he deliberately throws a veil over both subjects. Without the *Unpublished Notes*, the pages of which bearing upon the present publication were kindly communicated to us by the present head of the family, M. le Marquis de Chambonas, we should have failed to pierce the darkness in which certain parts of our writer's life are wrapped.

[5] I can only follow the original. This is not the name of the godmother mentioned in the certificate of baptism; but Mme. Barryals had probably contracted a second marriage.—Transl.

[6] I am preparing for publication the *Mémoires du Général le Marquis d' Hautpoul*, who, as a child, spent the whole of the Terror in the neighbourhood of Versailles with his relatives, including his father, a former colonel. It should be said, though, that a member of the Convention had made them adopt the disguise of gardeners.

[7] From that moment, M. de La Garde's information about the Marquis de Chambonas becomes very scant. In his *Unpublished Notes* there are a couple of

grateful references to his ‘father,’ but that is all. We are left in ignorance about the disparities of character which appear to have parted them for ever. All that is known about M. de Chambonas is due to the documents (*dossier*) relating to him, preserved in the Archives of the Ministry of War. He seems to have settled definitely in England. Wrecked in health, and even paralysed, it is from there that he petitions in 1816. Finally, he obtained a modest pension with the superior grade of lieutenant-general. He died in Paris, not in 1807, as is stated by one biographer, but in February 1830.

[8] The *Album* contains, moreover, a short biography of the queen, some of her letters to M. de La Garde, and a facsimile of his handwriting; the whole on vellum-made paper, with gilt ornamental borders. The book is very rare. M. le Marquis de Chambonas has a copy of it belonging to his uncle. I have the good fortune to possess another.

[9] It is well known that the first words of Napoleon on setting foot on French soil in 1815, were: ‘The Congress is dissolved.’

[10] Not to be confounded with Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the author of *Paul et Virginie*. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre’s literary fame mainly rests on a book entitled *Projet de Paix Perpétuelle*. M. Bloch, the Russian Utopist of to-day, has invented nothing.—Transl.

[11] Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt, eminent diplomatist and statesman, celebrated

philologist, born at Potsdam in 1767, died in 1835. He took part in the Conferences of Prague, Châtillon, Paris, and Vienna. He left valued works on the primitive dwellers in Spain, on the Chinese language (letters written in French to M. A. de Rémusat), and a collection of studies on æsthetics, etc. 6 Volumes. Berlin 1841–48.

[12] She was the sister of George III., and became involved in a love-affair with Struensee, her husband's prime minister. Struensee was beheaded, and she was sentenced to divorce and exile.

[13] The sentence may be interpreted in two ways. The absolutely modern version would be 'the most honest man'; the Molièresque sense, 'the most accomplished man of the world.'—Transl.

[14] I have re-translated the passage as closely as possible, although perfectly aware of its being neither a faithful French rendering nor even a passably brilliant paraphrase of the original in *Henry VIII.*, Act I. I had no choice in the matter. It does not transpire whether M. de La Garde was responsible for it, or whether he copied it from a French version of the play.—Transl.

[15] Charles Joseph, Prince de Ligne, whom the Comte de la Garde mentions so frequently, and always in terms of the deepest veneration, was indeed a grandiose figure. Born in Brussels in 1735, he entered the service of Austria, and distinguished himself in the Seven Years' War. He was made a major-general in 1766, a lieutenant-general in 1771, and the campaign of 1778 only

increased his military reputation. Subsequently he travelled in Italy, in Switzerland, and in France; at Versailles he was thoroughly appreciated as a very able, amiable, and witty grand seigneur. In Russia, whither he was sent in 1782 on a mission, he became *persona gratissima* with Catherine the Great, who bestowed upon him an estate in the Crimea. He was present, as a general, at the siege of Oklakoff, directed by Potemkin, and at some of the actions of Laudon. In consequence of the part borne by his son in the insurrection of the Netherlands (the provinces now constituting the kingdom of Belgium), against Austria, he was removed from public life, and, though a field-marshal in 1808, he had no longer a command. The Prince de Ligne was an able and profound tactician. He left a great number of writings both in German and in French. They are replete with witty and pungent remarks, but the style is incorrect and diffuse. Under the title of *Mélanges militaires, littéraires et sentimentaires*, there are thirty volumes (1798–1809). His *Journal des Guerres* and *l'Essai sur les Jardins* are worth keeping. In addition to these he published in 1809 a *Vie du Prince Eugène de Savoie*. Madame de Staël, Malte-Brun, and Lacroix, have published either *Lettres* or *Fragments*, which were well worthy of being preserved, and which have practically become classics. His *Lettres de Russie à la Marquise de Coigny* have been published by Lescure, Librairie des Bibliophiles, and M. Lucien Percy has just published his *Lettres à Catherine II.*

[16] *Née* de Conflans d'Armentières, perhaps the

only woman who succeeded in being *platonically* beloved by Lauzun. Paul Lacroix published these letters in a strictly limited edition of a hundred copies. The Marquise's daughter married the well-known General Sebastiani, and died in giving birth to the future Duchesse de Praslin, who met with such a tragic end.

17 The Prince de Ligne had bestowed the sobriquet on Napoleon, in allusion to his departure for Elba, and not from scorn, for nobody professed a greater admiration and more genuine sympathy than he for the most illustrious and most ill-fated figure of modern times.—Note of the Comte de la Garde.

18 The Prince de Ligne had three daughters—the Princess Clary, the Comtesse Palfi, and the Baronne Spiegel; and two sons, Charles and Louis, of whom the former married the exquisitely sweet and pretty Hélène Massalska, and the latter, whence sprung the present Princes de Ligne, died prematurely.

19 Frederick I., Duke, afterwards King, of Würtemberg, became in 1805 the ally of Napoleon, who created his royal title and gained his admission into the Confederation of the Rhine. In 1813 he joined the Allied Powers against France. After a somewhat despotic reign, he granted his subjects a constitution in 1815. One of his daughters, Catherine, married Jérôme Bonaparte, some time King of Westphalia, and proved herself a woman of exemplary moral worth and courage under most trying circumstances.

[20] See *infra*, the biographical notes on these princes.

[21] M. de la Garde published an account of that journey.

[22] Tettenborn was to the last very outspoken. At the time of his stay in Paris, court dress was *de rigueur* at the Tuileries for civilians and military, even if the latter belonged to foreign armies. Tettenborn was a superior officer of hussars; nevertheless he complied with the regulations, but he did not shave his moustache. Napoleon remarked upon this in a bantering tone. 'You'll admit,' he said, 'that a pair of moustachios goes badly with this costume.' 'Pardon me, sire, it's the dress which looks ridiculous with a pair of moustachios,' was the prompt answer.

[23] The Comte de Las-Cases, in his *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, reports another case of the freaks of fate. 'Serrurier and the younger Hédouville,' said Napoleon, 'were marching in company with the intention of making their way into Spain, when they met with a patrol. Hédouville, younger and more nimble than his companion, managed to cross the frontier, and considering himself lucky, vegetated for a long time in Spain. Serrurier, compelled to turn back, became a marshal of France.'—*Author's Note.*

[24] She was, nevertheless, an aunt (by blood) of Emperor Franz, and one of his mothers-in-law. Students of history know the adventures of the sister of Marie-Antoinette, of her compromising relations with Nelson, and her strange affection for Lady Hamilton. King Ferdinand had just been

restored to his throne when the queen died (7th September 1814).

25 In Roman Catholic countries the day of the saint after whom the person is named, rather than the birthday, is kept.—Transl.

26 Frederick VI., King of Denmark, born in 1768, died in 1839. His father, Christian VII., became impaired in intellect, and the Queen Dowager took the reins of government. Frederick deprived her of the Regency in 1784 and ascended the throne in 1808. In the following year, he imposed upon the Swedes, who wished to dispossess him of Norway, the Treaty of Jongkopping. He contracted a durable alliance with France, which was made a pretext by the European Coalition for punishing him by giving Norway to Sweden (Treaty of Kiel). But he received in compensation Rügen and Swedish Pomerania, which in 1816 he exchanged for the Duchy of Lauenburg.

27 Charles Robert, Comte de Nesselrode, born in 1780, died in 1862; a most able Russian diplomatist. After having filled several posts in Germany and at the Hague, he was Councillor of Embassy in Paris in 1807. As early as 1810 he was enabled to warn his sovereign with regard to the secret armaments of Napoleon in view of a rupture with Russia, and from that moment his credit with Alexander I. grew immensely. Nesselrode was called to the Chancellorship of State, and subsequently shared with Capo d'Istria the direction of Foreign Affairs. It was he who inspired the Coalition against France in 1813, and signed the Convention of Breslau, the

Treaty of Subsidies with England, and the League of Toeplitz. In 1814, he accompanied the Czar to France, signed the Treaty of Chaumont, and negotiated the capitulation with Marmont. He played an important part at the Congress of Vienna. Subsequently at Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), at Laybach (1821), and at Vienna (1822) he exercised a preponderant influence. Under Nicholas I., who maintained him in his functions, Nesselrode practically established Russia's influence on 'young' Greece, and was the author of two treaties humiliating to Turkey, viz., that of Adrianople (1829) and that of Unkiar-Skelessi (1833). In 1840 his diplomatic skill kept France excluded from the European Concert. He succeeded in preventing the European Powers from intervening in the affairs of Poland (1830–31), and in 1848, after for some time merely preserving a watchful attitude in Hungarian affairs, he finally flung Russia's power in the balance in Austria's favour, and increased his master's influence in the East. He was a partisan of a peaceful settlement of the difficulties cropping up in 1854, and endeavoured to avoid a conflict between France and Russia. His last political act was the conclusion of peace and the Treaty of Paris, after which he retired, though preserving the titular Chancellorship of the Empire. His despatches are models of conciseness.

[28] The defender of Saint Jean d'Acre against Bonaparte, and one of the signatories of the Convention of El-Arish; Kleber being the other. He assisted the King of Portugal in his departure for Brazil in 1807, and

accompanied him thither. He retired from the service in 1810, and spent his time mainly in philanthropic work. Admiral in 1821, died in Paris, 1840.

29 Subsequently known as the Duchesse de Dino, and afterwards de Talleyrand. She was supposed to be the Egeria of the Prince de Talleyrand, and kept house for him, either at Valençay, Paris, or London, during his embassy in the latter capital in 1830. She was a pre-eminent and exceedingly cultivated woman.

30 The name of Pahlen recalls the conspiracy of March 1801, which put an end to the days of Emperor Paul I.

31 The son of Comtesse Sophie Potocka by her first husband.

32 Frédéric de Gentz (1764–1832) author and diplomatist, the principal projector of the Coalition of the Holy Alliance. He was the defender from conviction of all the absolute monarchies; pensioned by Pitt during the Revolution; Aulic Councillor in 1805 at Vienna, and in the interval staunchly devoted to the interests of Prussia. It was he who was entrusted with the drawing-up of the manifesto of the Powers in 1813. From that moment he exercised great influence on the diplomacy of Europe, and was present, in one or the other capacity, at all the Congresses. He published several political works, one of which was written in French, viz., *Journal de ce qui est arrivé dans le Voyage que j'ai fait au Quartier Général de S. M. le Roi de Prusse*, Oct. 1806. Mention should also be made of a series of brochures

on *The Rights of Man*, *The European Equilibrium*, a *Life of Marie Stuart*, etc. Comte Prokesch-Osten (the son of the friend and confidant of the Duc de Reichstadt), published with Plon in 1870 *The Unpublished Despatches of the Chevalier de Gentz to the Hospodars of Wallachia*.

[33] Sir John Sinclair was the president of the Agricultural Society of Edinburgh. The story of young Sinclair is in all the *Memoirs* of the First Empire. See, above all, an account of the whole affair written by young Sinclair himself in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1826.

[34] Emeric Joseph, Duc de Dalberg, was the nephew of the Bishop of Constance, who was Elector of Mainz and Prince-Primate and Grand Duke of Frankfurt-on-the-Main, and in his various dignities gave such startling proofs of his honesty in private life and his high intellectual culture. The nephew, at first Baron de Dalberg, after having represented the Margraviate of Baden in Paris, became a great friend of Talleyrand, married the Marquise de Brignole, lady of honour to the Empress Josephine, took out letters of naturalisation and obtained the title of duc with a counsellorship of State. He was one of the negotiators of the marriage of Napoleon with Marie-Louise, but in 1814 promptly deserted the fortunes of Napoleon. He was one of the five members of the Provisional Government, and took part in the Congress of Vienna as a plenipotentiary. Subsequently he was created a peer of France and appointed to the ambassadorship at Turin. Born in 1773 at

Mainz, he died at Hernsheim in 1833. His ducal title went to his nephew, the Comte de Tascher de la Pagerie.

35 This correspondence has been annotated and published by M. Pallain, (Plon, 1888). The correspondence of M. de Talleyrand with Louis XVIII. forms part of the third volume of the Talleyrand *Memoirs*.

36 Known at first as the Comte de Chinon, and subsequently, up to the death of his father in 1791, as the Duc de Fronsac, Armand Emmanuel Sophie Septimanie, Duc de Richelieu, and grandson of the famous marshal, was born in 1776, and died in 1822. He was the First Gentleman of the Chamber of Louis XVI. at the moment the Revolution broke out. He emigrated and entered the service of Catherine II., and distinguished himself under Suvaroff at the siege of Ismaël, and subsequently commanded an army corps under Condé before Valenciennes in 1793. Having returned to Russia, where they gave him a cavalry regiment, he fell into disgrace during the reign of Paul I., and went back to France in 1801. He declined, however, to renounce foreign military service, and was compelled to leave; when he placed himself at the disposal of Alexander I., who appointed him Governor of Odessa. His services to New Russia in general, and to Odessa in particular, are well known; but on the restoration of the Bourbons in 1814, he re-entered France with them and had a peerage conferred upon him, while at the same time he was appointed First Gentleman of the Chamber. During the

Hundred Days he followed Louis XVIII. to Ghent, then at the second Restoration was given the Presidency of the Council (Premiership) with the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. He rendered eminent services, in using his credit with Alexander I., by reducing the War Indemnity, and the occupation of France by foreign troops from seven years to five. When he resigned the Ministry in 1818, the Chambers voted him an income of fifty thousand francs as a national reward; he employed those sums for the foundation of an asylum for the aged at Bordeaux. In 1820, after the assassination of the Duc de Berry and the disgrace of Decazes, he once more accepted the Presidency of the Council, but his difficulties with the Chambers made him resign in 1821. He died in the following year, universally esteemed and regretted. He had been a member of the Académie Française since 1816. Several memoirs of recent works have contributed much to bring his figure into relief: the *Mémoires of General Comte de Rochechouart; Le Duc de Richelieu*, by M. R. de Cisternes; *Louis XVIII. et le Duc Decazes*, by M. Ernest Daudet, etc.

[37] Charles André, Comte Pozzo di Borgo, born in Corsica in 1764, died in Paris in 1842. He began his career as an advocate at Pisa, and was secretary to Paoli, member of the Corsican Directory in 1790, deputy in 1791 of the Legislative Assembly. At his return, he openly declared himself the enemy of the Bonaparte family, and seconded Paoli, who wished to deliver Corsica to the English. Having become the creature of Lord Eliot, the viceroy, he was the cause of

the recall of Paoli to London. He himself was bound to fly before the hatred of his countrymen. As a secret diplomatic agent, he served in turns Prussia, England, Austria, and Russia. Expelled from Russia in 1807 at the demand of Napoleon, he was obliged to retire to Constantinople. In 1813 he was recalled to Russia, and in the following year was sent to Louis XVIII. as ambassador. He took part in all the Congresses of the Holy Alliance, and in 1823 was entrusted with the surveillance of the French army in Spain. In 1835 he was the Russian ambassador in London, and retired from public life in 1839.

[38] Written about 1830. Charles XIV. (Bernadotte), who died in 1844.

[39] Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, afterwards Marquis of Londonderry, English statesman, born in 1769, died in 1822. In the Commons he supported the policy of Pitt; sent to Ireland in 1797, his administration was marked by extreme violence. He joined one of the Cabinets of Fox as Minister of War and of the Colonies, resigned his portfolio in 1806, resumed office in the following year, and became the directing power of England's policy. He was the relentless enemy of the Revolution and of Napoleon, and granted subsidies to all the powers arrayed against him. At the Congress of Vienna, where he sacrificed Poland, Saxony and Belgium, he incurred great hatred, and his acts were strenuously opposed in Parliament itself. His anti-liberal government rendered him unpopular, and besides his weakness for the Holy Alliance,

his malignant persecution of Caroline of Brunswick, the Consort of George IV., and his brutality towards the poorer classes made him generally disliked. He killed himself in a fit of insanity. Castlereagh had a great reputation as a political orator, but though more fluent than Canning (with whom he fought a duel in 1806), his speeches lacked the charm of the latter's. His son, the Marquis of Londonderry, ambassador and political writer, distinguished himself in the House of Lords by a violent Toryism and his hatred of France.

[40] See the *Mémoires du Général Comte de Rochechouart* (Plon, 1895).

[41] Mme. Davidoff was a daughter of the Duc de Gramont and of the Duchesse, *née* de Polignac.

[42] It is difficult to take this panegyric at its own estimate. M. de La Garde had been well treated by M. de Talleyrand, and his rare gratitude does him infinite credit; but to lay stress on M. de Talleyrand's heart is a dubious piece of flattery.

[43] Maximilian-Joseph, Elector, and subsequently King, of Bavaria, under the title of Maximilian I., son of Frederick, Prince des Deux-Ponts Berkenfeld. He was born in 1756, and died in 1825. He at first served in the French army, became colonel of the regiment of Alsace, and remained at Strasburg from 1782 to 1789. He succeeded his brother, Charles II., in the dukedom of Deux-Ponts, and his uncle, Charles Theodore, as Elector of Bavaria, and as

Duke of Berg and Juliers in 1799. In 1805 he threw in his lot with the Confederation of the Rhine, and at the Peace of Presburg received the title of king. In 1806 he married one of his daughters to Eugène de Beauharnais, and the other to the Emperor Francis of Austria. In 1813 he joined the coalition against France. In 1818 he gave a Constitution to his subjects; he made some salutary reforms in the administration, and greatly encouraged art and science.

[44] At nine o'clock on the evening of the 10th May 1809, shells are thrown into the city of Vienna. At that moment the young Archduchess Marie-Louise was lying stricken down with illness in the paternal palace. The circumstance having been brought to Napoleon's knowledge, the direction of the projectiles was immediately changed and the palace respected. Oh, the happy day! Who would have told Marie-Louise then that in a few months' time those same hands that caused Vienna to shake would be weaving crowns for her brow, that at the palace of the Tuileries she would reign over those Frenchmen who inspired such fear.—Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*.

[45] A couple of years often went by without his mother seeing him and scarcely concerning herself about him. The Comte de La Garde Chambonas sometimes out-Herods Herod as a courtier.—Transl.

[46] Those are not exactly the bases of M. Rostand's *Aiglon*. He supports the contrary thesis. It would be well to strike an average with the chapters of Prokesch-Osten on the

Duc de Reichstadt and with the book of Montbel on the same subject. The latter work is in turns inspired by Metternich and Prokesch.

47 Sir Neil was one of the eye-witnesses of the heart-stirring scene at Fontainebleau when Napoleon, straining the imperial eagles to his breast, yielded to his own emotion and waved his hat, crying like the rest, 'Long live the Emperor!' The *Revue Britannique* published in 1894 Sir Neil Campbell's narrative.

48 The words are historical. See *Recollections of Méneval*, vol. iii.

49 This is another statement of the author in direct contradiction to absolutely authenticated facts. The scene described must have taken place at the beginning of October. Napoleon abdicated at the latter end of April, and during that interval she made a journey of more than two months, visiting Aix, the Righi, Berne, in the latter of which places she fell in with George IV.'s wife. The greater part of that time was spent in the society of Neipperg.—Transl.

50 Constantine Ypsilanti was a Greek, of a family originally hailing from Trebizond, whose members performed the functions of dragoman at the court of the Sultans. Alexander entered the Russian service. He subsequently took part in the Greek insurrection and was compelled to take refuge in Transylvania (1783–1828). His son (younger brother?), Demetrius, was for a short time generalissimo of the insurgents of Morea.

[51] Two separate works have lately appeared within a short time of each other on Elisa Bacciochi, Princess of Lucca and Grand-Duchess of Tuscany. One is by M. Paul Marmottan (Champion) and the other by M. Rodocanachi (Flammarion).

[52] M. de Luchesini by his charming conversation enhanced that of the King of Prussia. He knew the subjects on which the king liked to be drawn out, and he also possessed the art of listening, an art never possessed by a fool. M. de Pinto advised the king to make an ambassador of M. de Luchesini, 'because,' as he expressed it, 'Luchesini was a man of wit.' 'That's why I keep him with me,' was the answer.—Author's Note.

[53] The sentence in French runs: 'Mon frère est coiffé de main de maitre. It is impossible to give an English equivalent for this, except at the risk of making it coarse and spoiling it into the bargain. The deceived husband is said to be 'coiffé' by his wife's lover.—Transl.

[54] It was, in fact, the fashion at Versailles and at Saint-Cloud. The most brilliant of all the lotteries was that offered by Monsieur (the king's brother), on the 9th August 1689, on the occasion of the reception of the Venetian ambassador. The Court ladies had some most magnificent presents.

[55] In a memoir, written twenty-six years previously, *i.e.*, in 1788, the Prince de Ligne had weighed with great sagacity the questions which were from that moment inseparable from the fate of Poland. The

preamble describes in delightful and rare terms the Polish character, and conveys a lofty idea of the author's charm of expression in dealing with his brilliant pictures. 'Who,' he exclaims, 'can fail to love Poland, the Poles, and, above all, Polish women, the mental qualities and courage of the men, the grace and beauty of their fair companions?'—Author's note.

[56] M. Edmond Taigny, Isabey's nephew, published in the *Revue Européenne* in 1858 some interesting particulars of the early life of the great artist, from the latter's manuscript notes. The period dealing with Isabey's sojourn at Vienna during the Congress contains several references to the present work.

[57] Hélène Massalska, whose interesting correspondence was published by M. Lucien Perey under the title of *Histoire d'une Grande Dame au XVIII^e Siècle* (Lévy, 2 vols.).

[58] *Les Mémoires de Casanova de Seingalt*, edited by Henri Beyle, were published at Leipsig in 1826, and in Paris in 1843 (5 vols.). Some years ago, Flammarion brought out a new edition.

[59] Son of the Marquise de Bombelles, *née* Mackau, the friend of Madame Élisabeth and of the marquis who was ambassador at Venice at the outbreak of the Revolution. He had his children educated in Austria, and took holy orders after the death of his wife. He became Bishop of Amiens. The Bombelles have remained Austrian. The brother of the Comte de Bombelles in question was the third husband of Marie-

Louise.

60 Princess Charlotte, daughter of the Prince Regent, died a twelve-month after her marriage, 1817. Princesse Louise d'Orléans, died in 1850. Leopold I., King of the Belgians, died 1865.

61 The forty townships are an exaggeration, but the head of the Esterhazy had twenty manorial lordships, sixty burghs with market places and four hundred and fourteen villages.

62 The Prince Nicolas Esterhazy (1765–1833) was an enlightened patron of art, and founded the picture-gallery of the Garten-Palace at Vienna. It was he who offered Haydn the hospitality of his estate at Eisenstadt. In 1809, he refused the crown of Hungary, offered to him by Napoleon.

63 Prince Paul-Antoine Esterhazy (1786–1866) was ambassador in Dresden and in London.

64 She was the daughter of the Margrave of Baden.

65 It would be, but for the fact that, as the French editor, Comte Fleury, remarks, there is scarcely a word of truth in it except the beheading of the mother. Comte Fleury gets very angry with the author, dead though he is, for foisting such a fantastic tale on the Prince de Ligne. The child was handed over, six or seven weeks after her mother's execution, *i.e.*, on the 2nd Fructidor, Year II. (corresponding to the 19th August 1794), to a relative, Isabel Leczinska, who took her with her to Poland, where subsequently she married her cousin, the Comte Rzewuski. Long before the publication of the books

whence M. Fleury obtained his information, the truth was known to most students of history.—Transl.

66 At the Congress, M. de Talleyrand perseveringly supported the claims of the King of Naples against the partisans of Murat. The grateful monarch, in 1817, offered him the dukedom of Dino. M. de Talleyrand requested its transference to his nephew, the Comte Edmond de Périgord, who since then has borne the title.—Author.

67 Two characters of Grétry's opera *Zémire et Azor*. It is doubtful, however, whether the sobriquet is applied in that sense here. The French frequently bestow the name on dogs; and, in that case, the meaning is plain enough.—Transl.

68 The son or the grandson of Nicholas Mauroyeny, Hospodar of Wallachia, who was executed in 1790 at Constantinople.—Transl.

69 Her liaison with Neipperg had already begun, and she had ceased to write to Elba. See Ernesto Masi, *Li Due Moglie di Napoleone I.* Bologna, 1889.—Transl.

70 Burchard-Christopher, Comte de Münnich, 1683–1767, officer of engineers under Peter I., marshal under Anne, fell into disgrace under Joan VI., recovered favour under Catherine II.

71 Hardemberg (Prince d'), 1750–1822, Prussian statesman and diplomatist. He held the premier's portfolio several times, but in 1804 he was replaced for a short time by the Comte de Haugwitz. When he returned

to power he greatly contributed to sustain Friedrich-Wilhelm III.'s courage. He fell into disgrace in consequence of Napoleon's objections to him after Tilsitt, but he returned to power in 1810 for good. He was very relentless with regard to France, and at the Congress of Vienna demanded her dismemberment. He was also present at the Congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle, Verona, and Laybach. He left important papers, a portion of which were published in thirteen volumes in 1838 under the title of *Mémoires Tirés des Papiers d'un Homme d'Etat.*

72 This latter statement is only true with regard to indoor *carrousels* up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. There are records of three open-air *carrousels* in Paris during the seventeenth century, at which the spectators numbered thousands. —Transl.

73 The Comte Jean Axel de Fersen, the commander in France of his own regiment, the 'Royal Suédois,' distinguished himself by his devotion to the royal family, which he served as a guide during the fatal journey to Varennes. Having escaped from the storm-tossed events of the Revolution, he perished a victim to the agitation which prevailed in Stockholm in 1800. The people, irritated against him, assailed him with stones during the funeral procession of Prince Charles of Augustenburg, and finally killed him amidst the most horrible tortures —Author's Note.

The political and private correspondence of Fersen was published by Colonel Klinkowström in Paris under the title of *Le*

Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France (2 vols.) —Firmin Didot. It is also interesting to consult M. Paul Gavlot's *Un Ami de la Reine* —Ollendorf. On the death of the grand-marshal, read the introduction to the first-named work.

74 Gustavus III., most friendly disposed towards monarchical France, had declared himself violently opposed to the Revolution. He was about to despatch troops to the French frontier when he was assassinated during a masked ball at Stockholm on the evening of the 16th March 1792, as a result of a conspiracy among the nobles of his Court. See Geffroy, *Gustave III. et la Cour de France* and the *Memoirs* of the Duc Cesdars, who at the time of the death of King Gustavus was the envoy of the princes at Stockholm.

75 The prediction was realised. Gustavus IV., son of Gustavus III., at first reigned under the guardianship of his uncle, the Duc de Sudermanie (Sudermanland). During his reign Sweden was despoiled of Finland by Russia, and threatened with war by Denmark. The dissatisfaction of his subjects led to a conspiracy against the king, which succeeded. Gustavus was imprisoned, and then exiled for ever in 1809; the Duc de Sudermanie was proclaimed king with the title of Charles XIII. Being without issue, he at first adopted the Prince Christian Augustus of Holstein-Augustenburg. After the sudden death of that young prince, Charles XIII. hit upon the strange idea to appoint the French Marshal Bernadotte. Under the title of Charles Jean, Bernadotte

reigned from 1818 to 1844; the present king, Oscar II., is his grandson. There are no more male Wasas; Queen Caroline of Saxony is the granddaughter of Gustavus IV.

[76] In consequence of the Treaty of Luneville in 1801, the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany was taken away from Ferdinand III., and, under the title of the kingdom of Etruria, bestowed on the Spanish branch of Parma, whose states were united to the French domains in Piedmont. King Louis having died in 1803, his widow, Marie-Louise of Spain, took up the reins of government for her son Louis II. In December 1807, Etruria was given up in exchange for the newly-created kingdom of Lusitania (Portugal); a few months later it constituted three French departments, under the government of Elisa Napoleon Bonaparte, who had become Grand-Duchess of Tuscany. See the excellent work of M. Marmottan, *Le Royaume d'Etrurie*, Ollendorf, 1896; *Elisa Napoléon en Italie*, by M. E. Rodocanachi, Flammarion, 1900; and the *Carnet Historique et Littéraire*, 1900.

[77] Some one had written a song about the Duchesse de Boufflers, subsequently the wife of Marshal de Luxembourg. Suspecting the Comte de Tressan to be the author, she said to him: 'Do you know this song? It is so well written that not only would I forgive the author, but I'd even embrace him.' 'Well,' said Tressan, tempted like the crow in the fable, 'I wrote it, madame,' Thereupon she slapped his face.

[78] Here is the song, composed by the old man a fortnight before his death:—

1ST VERSE.

Après une longue guerre
L'enfant ailé de Cythère
Voulut, en donnant la paix,
Tenir à Vienne un Congrès.
Il convoque en diligence
Les dieux qu'on put retenir,
Et par une contredanse
On vit le Congrès s'ouvrir.

Translation of 1st Verse.—After a long war, the winged child of Cytherea wished, in bestowing peace, to hold a Congress at Vienna. He summoned in hot haste every god that could be had, and, with a Roger de Coverley, the world beheld the Congress opened.

2ND VERSE.

Au bureau de Terpsichore,
Dès le soir, jusqu'à l'aurore,
On agitait des débats
Sur l'importance d'un pas.
Minerve dit en colère:
'Cessez, au moins un instant,
Si vous ne voulez pas faire
A Vienne un Congrès dansant.'

Translation.—At Terpsichore's quarters, from night until dawn, debates were regulated on the importance of a step. Minerva got angry and cried, 'At any rate, stop for a moment, unless you wish to hold a dancing Congress at Vienna.'

3RD VERSE.

Vénus et la Jouissance,
Qui savaient bien que la danse
Ajoutait a leurs appas,

Voulaient qu'on ne cessât pas.
'La Sagesse doit se taire,'
Dit en riant le Plaisir,
'A Vienne l'unique affaire
Est de traiter le plaisir.'

Translation.—Venus and the Goddess of Indulgence, who knew very well that dancing enhanced their charms, made up their minds that there should be no cessation. 'Wisdom must hold its tongue,' said Pleasure, laughing. 'The sole business at Vienna is to devise about enjoyment.'

4TH VERSE.

A ces mots on recommence,
Les masques entrent en danse;
Mars, Hercule, et Jupiter
Valsent un nouveau landler.
Soudain Minerve en furie,
Dit dans son courroux: 'Je crois
Qu'à ce Congrès la Folie
Présiderait mieux que moi.'

Translation.—The words were the signal for recommencing. The masks resume the dance; Mars, Hercules, and Jupiter whirl round in a new landler. Suddenly Minerva got furious, and in her anger cried, 'I believe that at this Congress Folly would better preside than I.'

5TH VERSE.

'Taisez-vous, Mademoiselle,'
Lui dit l'enfant infidèle;
'Laissez ces propos oiseux,
Et livrez vous à nos jeux:
Assez longtemps sur la terre
Votre sœur nous fit gémir,

Laissez-nous après la guerre
Respirer pour le plaisir.'

Translation.—'Hold your tongue. Mademoiselle,' said the recalcitrant child; 'stop your useless chatter, and join us in our games. Your sister has left us long enough to moan on this earth. And now after the war, let us get back our breath for enjoyment.'

6TH VERSE.

A l'instant à la barrière,
Pour entrer dans la carrière,
S'offrent trente chevaliers
Le front couvert de lauriers.
On lisait sur leurs bannières.
Ces mots: *Loyal et fidel.*
Ce sont les chargés d'affaires
Du Congrès au Carrousel.

Translation.—In a moment at the barrier, thirty knights present themselves, their brows encircled by wreaths, and eager to enter upon the career. (This is imitated from a strophe of the 'Marseillaise.') Their banners displayed the words: 'Loyal and staunch.' They are the chargés d'affaires of the Congress at the *carrousel.*

7TH VERSE.

Enfin de tout on se lasse:
Les bals, les jeux et la chasse
Avaient été discutés
Et résumés en traités.
'Que ferons-nous d'avantage?'
Dit l'Amour. 'Donnons la paix,
Et cessons ce badinage
En terminant le Congrès.'

Translation.—People get tired of everything. The balls, the games, and the chase had been discussed and embodied in treaties. 'What else remains to be done?' said Cupid. 'Let us proclaim peace and cease this trifling by winding up the Congress.'

The reader will kindly excuse this bald translation. I have simply aimed at giving a literal one.

79 To obtain the Order of Maria-Theresa, one of the first among the military orders of Europe, the recipient must, by his own initiative, have gained a battle or carried to a successful issue some state affair without previous instruction from his superiors. After that, his claim is submitted to the chapter of the order, which discusses it, grants the claim after discussion, or dismisses it.—Author.

80 His fortune yielded an income of 17,000,000 francs. See *infra* the particulars of Razumowski, the favourite of Elizabeth, and the father of the ambassador.

81 The official despatch of the ambassadors of the French King at the Congress of Vienna reports the incident as follows:—

The Emperor of Russia.—'I have pledged my word and I shall keep it. I promised Saxony to the King of Prussia the moment we joined each other.'

Talleyrand.—'Your Majesty has promised to the King of Prussia between nine and ten millions of souls. Your Majesty can give them without destroying Saxony.'

The Emperor.—'The King of Saxony is a traitor.'

Talleyrand.—'Sire, the qualification of traitor can never be applied to a king; and it is important that there shall never be any necessity for applying it.'

After a few moments of silence the czar resumed:

'The King of Prussia shall be King of Prussia and of Saxony, just as I am Emperor of Russia and King of Poland.'—*Mémoires de Talleyrand*, vol. ii.

Finally, the interests of Saxony and Prussia were settled, 'not to the satisfaction of the one and the other, but by agreement between them,' *i.e.* Prussia acquired the two Lusatias, part of Thuringia, and Torgau and Wittemberg (Treaty of 18th May 1815).

[82] I have suppressed the particulars of the story, which I considered unfit for publication.—Transl.

[83] La Garde exaggerates. Napoleon merely expressed a desire, and overtures were eventually made at Erfurth. The veto of the dowager-empress nipped the affair in the bud. Later on, there was an attempt to reopen the question, but the Emperor of Austria had almost immediately replied to Talleyrand's *pourparlers*, and arrangements were concluded at the moment when Russia seemed inclined to yield. See on those long hesitations the first volume of M. Albert Vandal's *Napoléon et Alexandre*, vol. I. ch. xii.—French Editor.

M. Vandal is as misleading as La Garde,

and for the truth of that episode no French author of any kind should be consulted, and least of all those who have written on Russia during the last twenty years. The German works are much more trustworthy, for the refusal of Napoleon's hand was inspired by Germany.—Transl.

84 She became, in fact, the fourth wife of Emperor Francis.

85 Alexis Orloff, born in 1786, grand-nephew of the famous favourite of Catherine II., had a magnificent military record. He had specially distinguished himself during the campaign in Russia, having been wounded in seven different places at Borodino, and during the campaign in France. After that he performed many remarkable feats of courage in the Turkish war, fulfilled several missions, and, in 1830, negotiated the marriage of Alexander II. with a princess of the House of Hesse. He died in 1861.

86 Transformed into a Prince de Monte-Nuovo.

87 This must be the son of Zawadouski, who was the favourite in 1776 and 1777.

88 The word 'heads' was invariably used in all the stipulation of exchanges, divisions of territory, and dismemberment of states.

89 The famous speculator.

90 The Comte de Montrond, the inseparable companion of Talleyrand.

91 The same Malfati who left some notes on the death and post-mortem examination of the Duc de Reichstadt, which were published in *Le Carnet Historique* during 1900.

[92] Here is the epitaph in question, which it is practically impossible to translate into English that would sound like sense:—

'Ci-gît le Prince de Ligne,
Il est tout de son long couché,
Jadis il a beaucoup péché,
Mais ce n'était pas a la ligne.'

'Pêcher à la ligne' means angling with a rod or with a line. The prince's name, literally translated, means 'the prince of line'; a change of accent on the verb would make it mean 'transgressing.'

[93] 'Camarde,' death. The word has passed into thieves' slang now, but in former centuries it was used by poets: Scarron used it. It derives its origin from *camus*, flat, to denote the flat nose of a skeleton.—Transl.

[94] The words are historical. 'Camarde' is feminine.—Transl.

[95] The Prince de Ligne left three daughters, the Princesse de Clary, the Comtesse Palfi, and the Baronne Spiegel, all of whom founded families in Austria. His eldest son, Charles, who married the beautiful Hélène Massalska, whose *Mémoires* have been published by M. Lucien Percy, was killed by a cannon-ball at the passage of la Croix-aux-Bois in the Argonne in September 1792. A daughter, Sidonie, was born of that marriage. His second son, Louis, who also preceded his father to the grave, had by his wife, Louise de Duros, Eugène-François-Lamoral-Charles, Prince de Ligne, d'Amblise, d'Epinay, who was Belgian ambassador-in-extraordinary in England and in France. By his first wife, the

daughter of the Marquis de Conflans, the Prince de Ligne had a son, whence sprang the actual Prince de Ligne and the Prince Ernest de Ligne. By his second wife, the daughter of the Marquis de Trazegnies, he had a daughter, who became Duchesse de Beaufort. By his third wife, a Princesse Lubomirska, he had the Princes Charles and Édouard de Ligne and the Duchesse de Doudeauville.

96 'With him went the last flower of the age of chivalry,' wrote Franz Gaeffer in his *Memoirs*—Kleinen Wiener.

97 Sidney Smith's conversation did not exactly shine by its conciseness. As may be imagined, the defence of Acre was one of its ever-recurring topics. The Prince de Ligne, who had been compelled to listen to Smith's prolix recital more than once, called him 'Long Acre,' which the author defines as one of the longest streets of London.

98 The Comte de Saint Germain pretended to be two thousand years old, and many people believed him.

99 Louis I. (1825–1848), when he abdicated in favour of his son Maximilian II. King Louis, who was an enlightened patron of art, frequently came to Paris. He died in 1868.

100 Finally, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw became the Kingdom of Poland, under the protection of Emperor Alexander, with the Grand-Duke Constantine as its Viceroy.

101 The memoirs of the time often mention this Princess Lubomirska, whose title was Princesse-Maréchale. Elizabeth Czartoryska, Princesse Lubomirska, was a cousin of King

Stanislas-Augustus, who often mentions her in his correspondence, and constantly deplores her restlessness. From recent publications, it would appear that, though endowed with many superior qualities, she was also profoundly disagreeable. She loved neither her children nor her country, and from sheer *ennui* she was always 'on the move.' She disliked everything save the traditions of the French Court during Louis XIV.'s reign, which traditions she knew better even than the events which had so profoundly disturbed her country. She detested every new idea, and her hatred of Napoleon was intense. To the *émigrés* she was most charitable.

[102] When the Duc de Dalberg heard what Pozzo di Borgo had said, he shook his head. 'M. Pozzo is not a prophet. In a short time Napoleon will be in Paris,' he remarked.—Author.

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Throughout this translation I have left many of the nobiliary titles and names of the Continental aristocracy in their French garb; those of the English personages mentioned I have reduced to their original expression.

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Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced single and double quotation marks retained unless the correction was unambiguous.

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Index not systematically checked for proper alphabetization or correct page references; many entries in the Index are spelled or accented differently than on the pages they reference.

Page 118: “oppose the fact” was printed as “oppose to fact”; changed here.

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