BEAU BRUMMELL AND HIS TIMES

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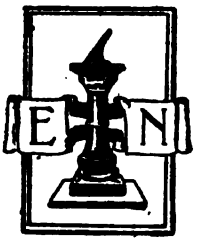

BEAU BRUMMELL AND HIS TIMES

INTRODUCTORY

DRESS AND THE DANDIES

It is a prevalent belief that worship of dress is the monopoly of Woman, but when the Preacher denounced *all* as vanity he was both truthful and wise, because he included Man in his category.

The Hebrew Sage was, of course, unacquainted with Narcissus, the first of the Dandies, or he would no doubt have been more explicit; obviously his mind was dwelling on the extravagance of "the purple and fine linen" worn by his contemporaries. However, it is a fact that since the far-off times of the Preacher, and the beautiful Greek youth, men have displayed at different epochs as much, nay

more, personal vanity than the most luxurious beauties of ancient or modern ages.

To trace the progress of Dandyism in Europe would be an interesting task, but it would make too long a curtain raiser for the accompanying study of George Brummell. The Beau represents, with Sir Lumley Skeffington, Lord Alvanley, "King" Allen, Count D'Orsay, and a few others, the apogee of the cult of fashion. These dandies considered dress and demeanour fine arts, and when they died the picturesque Man about Town became a thing of the past.

There is of necessity a commencement to all eccentricities. Doubtless some prehistoric males had a way of wearing their skin garments which was the despair and envy of their fellows, and the ancient Briton whose distinctive treatment of woad showed a fertile imagination in patterns must have inspired the envy and respect of those less imaginative, who painted themselves without due regard for colour effect.

When the Roman legions set foot on English soil, and their settlements grew, the conquerors lived side by side with the conquered,

who discarded their woad and skin trappings, and the sons of the chieftains, according to Tacitus, gradually adopted Roman dress.

The year 785 A.D. marked an era of splendour in men's attire, especially among the Anglo-Saxon clergy, whose extravagance was denounced at the Council of Cloveshoe by some austere members who did not approve of beaux among the bishops.

The Danish dandies completely eclipsed the Saxons, for the young Danes delighted in display; and Canute himself wore most costly raiment, while his flowing locks were slavishly imitated by his courtiers.

With the Norman Conquest French modes were introduced into England, and general luxury prevailed. In 1104 an ardent priest named Serlo, who strongly disapproved of the then "Smart Set's" vagaries, braved the wrath of Henry I., and preached a sermon before the King in which he inveighed against the prevailing fashion of wearing long hair. So eloquently did he preach that the long-haired ones wept over their follies, whereupon Serlo, who was a man of action, promptly descended

from the pulpit, whipped out a large pair of shears, and then and there close cropped the locks of his untrimmed congregation.

Henry III. was somewhat of a dandy, and favoured a special material known as "cloth of Baldekins," which was woven at Baldeck (Babylon). Velvet and ciclaton and costly fur-lined mantles were worn by the King, whose sumptuous garments were rivalled by the vestments of his clergy, gleaming with gold and gems massed among intricate and exquisite embroideries.

Dandyism received a check at the accession of Edward I., who detested foppery; but his son inherited all his grandfather's love of dress. At the Court of Edward II. Piers Gaveston was a worthy exponent of fashion. "None,' writes an old chronicler, "came near Piers in bravery of apparel." His costumes were remarkable for their prodigal luxury, and, as he was the King's intimate companion, the fashions set by the monarch and his favourite were naturally followed by the ruling classes.

There is no doubt that this period was pre-eminently favourable to the dandy. Every

impetus was given to display by the recurrent tourneys and jousts, to which knights came from foreign countries wearing quaint and costly devices in new fashions; and the English nobles, not to be outdone, vied with the strangers in sumptuous and varied habiliments.

In 1363 the House of Commons passed an Act prohibiting the wearing of furs and cloths of silver and gold among those whose yearly incomes did not justify such lavish expenditure. The fine for disobedience was not imposed in money, but the prohibited luxuries were confiscated instead. However, laws are made to be broken, and the beaux of Richard II.'s day defied the sumptuary statutes, and extravagance ran riot. The most dainty raiment from Italy made vivid masses of colour in the dark London streets, and the King was the greatest dandy at a Court of dandies.

Richard seems to have had all the qualifications of an artist in dress, for he invented wonderful combinations of colour and design. The King's state robes were dazzling with precious stones; he devised special initial borderings which edged his surcoats and

mantles, and his badges of the white hart, the sun, and the broom-plant were constantly the decorative motifs in the embroideries of his magnificent ceremonial garments.

Henry IV. revived the strict sumptuary edicts, but the warlike times of his son's reign did not foster men's vanity. Henry VI. was averse to extravagant attire; Edward of York was no dandy, and his brother Richard seems to have had no liking for elaborate dress.

The Court of Henry VII. was austerely plain and guiltless of dandyism, and although Henry VIII. loved to make a brave show, he enforced certain laws to check extravagant leanings on the part of his subjects.

When Queen Elizabeth succeeded her embittered and melancholy half-sister, dress reasserted its importance at Court, and the Spanish fashions introduced by Mary's husband were discarded in favour of the modes in vogue with the gallants of Italy and Venice. The Elizabethan elegant was a wonderful vision in his exaggerated ruff, his Italian doublet and fine leather shoes, and it is said that Lord Leicester brought into favour the wearing of

long stockings to set off his fine legs, of which he was childishly proud. Corsets, too, were worn by these Court dandies, whom Hall satirised in the following biting lines :—

> "What monster meets mine eyes, in human show?
> So slender waist with such an abbot's loin
> Did never sober nature so conjoin."

Even Sir Walter Raleigh was a corset wearer, and so girt in was his waist that it rivalled that of a slender girl. When James of Scotland came over the Border, the courtiers did not abandon this disfiguring custom, which any King more of a man than James would have discountenanced.

In the early days of Charles I. the fashionable noblemen wore long earrings, which they thought became them mightily; they covered their own hair with scented perruques; they sported spangled garters which dangled nearly down to their rosetted shoes, and their loose knee breeches replaced the disproportionately padded trunks of the previous reign.

The Cavaliers were negligently artistic with a studied negligence, and they made graceful figures at Court and in the "tented field."

Introductory

Never surely did more picturesque soldiers meet their fate than those devoted men who fought and died at Naseby and Marston Moor.

The stern Commonwealth vetoed beautiful attire. The gay Court butterflies had disappeared, their wings torn and stained by the storm of civil war, and in their stead moved dull, prosaic figures, whose presence cast an added gloom over the sour days in which they lived.

But the spring-time of the Restoration was in the air, and joy-bells rang in the revival of fashion with the return of the exiled Stuart.

The dark-browed monarch with his cynically humorous face came back to his kingdom to inaugurate new extravagances, and at his accession dandyism once more revived.

The splendid Court of Louis XIV. was the fount whence the English courtiers derived their inspiration for fine clothes. Cobwebby and priceless lace fell in its own inimitably graceful folds under the velvet collars, sleeves, and knee breeches of the nobles; gold lace was thickly massed on their cloaks, and their

flowing French periwigs were topped by broad-brimmed hats decked with drooping plumes.

The immortal Pepys was a great dandy, for he spent much time and thought on his clothes. When he walked in the New Exchange, wearing his best black suit with scarlet ribbons, a velvet cloak, and a new beaver, he doubtless looked, as he described himself, "very noble."

This period showed a distinct artistic improvement in its dandyism, and its influence has lasted to the present day, for many of our most popular costume plays and fancy dresses are Carolean.

It was not alone at Court that the taste for gay attire was in vogue. On the bloody and powder-grimed decks over which floated The Jolly Roger, underneath blue West Indian skies, the buccaneer captains swaggered in Utrecht velvet and Malines lace as foppishly as did the beaux of Whitehall. Fashion with these desperadoes proved an exacting mistress, and they courted her more ardently than the brazen Molls they wooed on shore.

But here the velvet coats and lace ruffles

of dandyism were often stained with innocent blood. Foppery was a death's head, grinning over the shoulder of Vanity, only to disappear when the chains of the Port Royal gibbets swung to and fro with the weight of rotting bodies and tattered rags that once were silk and satin.

Men's dress did not vary appreciably during the reign of James II. William of Orange, with his phlegmatic temperament, was not the monarch to devote any of his leisure to the allurements of fine clothes. The only concession shown to dandyism was to be seen in the gentlemen's wigs, which were worn longer and larger than ever, and it became the fashion to comb the masses of false hair in public with special "wig combs" sold for the purpose.

Queen Anne, who had something of her uncle's taste for finery, encouraged her entourage to dress smartly. The courtiers' shoes were gay with scarlet and blue heels, and there was a famous shoemaker's place in Pall Mall much frequented by persons of quality.

Dress and the Dandies

Dandyism developed a new phase of quiet richness during early Georgian times, and the Court exquisites were stately figures in finely laced shirts, long-skirted coats, and gold-clocked stockings. The hats worn by the beaux were modified reproductions of those in fashion at Versailles, and the art of wearing them was shown by the tilt; in fact, different angles in the tilt identified the wearer's status and locality.

Fashion did not show any marked change during the first twelve years of George III.'s reign. The King was not imaginative, and startling innovations were unwelcome to his somewhat stolid mind; the courtiers therefore varied the monotony of the prevalent modes by allowing their extravagant taste to find vent in beautiful lace, delicate brocades, and the finest silk and tinsel embroidered waistcoats.

In 1772 dandyism became again paramount. A band of young bloods returned from an extended tour abroad, and while in Italy they had contrived to get several new ideas about dress into their somewhat empty heads.

Fired with an ever growing sense of their own importance as arbiters of fashion, they formed themselves into a group known as the Macaroni Club, in contradistinction to the good old-fashioned Beef Steak Club of London.

The Macaronies dressed their hair in enormous side curls, with a hideous knocker-like twist at the back. With this exaggerated coiffure a tiny hat was worn, which it was correct for the wearer to raise with his tasselled cane.

A soft white handkerchief was tied in a huge bow under the Macaroni's chin; his coat was short, and his tight knee breeches were made of striped or flowered silk. Thus garbed, with innumerable dangling seals, two watches at least, silk stockings, and diamond-buckled shoes, the dandy walked abroad, eminently satisfied with himself, and quite convinced that his appearance was greatly envied.

The Macaronies were not displaced until about 1786, when fashion once more changed. The elegants then wore buckskin breeches,

exceedingly long-tailed and deep-collared coats, and large-brimmed round hats.

This was altogether a far more becoming style of dress than the wholly artificial modes of the Macaronies, and with this change we find ourselves within measurable distance of the later days of dandyism and its ruling spirit —George Brummell.

When the Prince Regent first saw young Brummell among the pastoral surroundings of his aunt's dairy farm, there is no doubt that the precocious boy at once gauged the measure of his royal patron, and even then resolved to profit by the impression he had made.

George Brummell started his career most favourably for a man of no family. He was accepted in Society on the strength of the numerous good acquaintances he had made at Eton and Oxford; and the fortune he inherited from his father easily enabled him to keep up a good establishment. His popularity steadily increased, and after a time Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire admitted him to her ultra-fashionable circle. This was a crucial

test, but Brummell emerged from it triumphant, and as a result he was overwhelmed with invitations to all the modish assemblies. His social success was finally assured when the Prince Regent gave him a commission in his own regiment, the 10th Hussars, and evinced the greatest friendship for his new favourite.

The level-headed usually have no sympathy or tolerance for a "hero" of Brummell's type. "Why," they say, "write about a man who was only the bell wether in a flock of dandies? Is any practical result achieved by dealing with such a useless life?"

The answer to these critics must be the plea that any kind of force deserves recognition, and George Brummell was certainly a force. He possessed a curiously complex personality; a vulgarian and coward at heart, he showed at every turn the bullying instinct with which the coward and vulgarian is usually imbued. He was often witty; he could be charming, but it was solely by his consummate insolence that he swayed his world. There must have been in him some of the elements

that make commanders of men, although Brummell did not aspire to command in the best sense of the word.

The peculiar quality in man or woman that can hold the attention of the crowd must be a forceful one. We may abuse Brummell's methods of procedure as heartily as we like, but the undisputed fact remains that the large following who were literally at his beck and call comprised men of genius, and certainly men of common sense. . . . Although they must have seen George Brummell as he really was, they endured his arrant bullying (which was perfectly amazing in its audacity); and strangely enough, the objects of his gibes and sarcasms hardly ever resented his rudeness. The man who could, unrebuked, order a duchess to walk backwards out of a room because her back offended his eye was an artist in insolence, and it is surprising that nobody present had the courage to give Brummell the thrashing he richly deserved: this one anecdote alone serves to illustrate the completeness of his social dominion.

The downfall of such characters never arises

from loss of admirers; Nemesis comes in the shape of some sordid catastrophe. Beau Brummell's career has had a curious parallel in the rise and fall within the last few years of a man of letters who possessed all the audacity with which Brummell influenced Society. The impudence in his case took the form of polished epigram; he posed in exactly the same way as did the Beau; he had the same personal magnetism; but here the resemblance ends, for between the perverted genius and George Bryan Brummell there is no further comparison, save that both men died as exiles from the London that had witnessed alike their triumph and their ruin.

The dandies naturally frequented the best clubs, the most exclusive houses, and the most fashionable places of amusement. They were the finest connoisseurs of good living in existence; they betted heavily; they drank heavily; they played high; they posed at every given opportunity, and yet they represented the follies and failings of their age perhaps with more dignity and suavity than their descendants of to-day. Their

Dress and the Dandies

London was the then uninvaded London of the rich alien and the millionaire parvenu. "I liked the dandies," wrote Lord Byron, "they were all civil to me. I had a tinge of dandyism in my minority, and probably retained enough of it to conciliate the great ones at five-and-twenty." "Monk" Lewis, "Poodle" Byng, "King" Allen, Alvanley, and their associates would be a positive boon were they to reappear in Society to-day. We might vote them bores, but I think, after the predominant Hoggenheimer element, we should most cordially endorse Byron's opinion, and "like the dandies."

But what a roistering life they led! There was Carlton House, with its royal host and his hard drinking brothers, open to the most favoured of the "Prince's set," who went with him to Brighton, where he gathered his boon associates in the hideously grotesque Pavilion. The dandies behaved at Brighton exactly as they behaved in London, and George Brummell bullied the acquaintances he met on the Steyne as insolently as he bullied them in Bond Street.

Introductory

The modern young man motors to Brighton, wearing odd fur garments, and staring from his begoggled eyes with an expectant, nerve-racked expression. His progress to the sea is often marked by destruction to man and beast, and he occasionally suffers from the penalties of exceeding the speed limit. His looks, after a wet or dusty journey, are not attractive as he slows up in front of the best hotel! He is no dandy, like his great-grandfather, who tooled along the road in "The Brighton Age," and stopped at the good old-fashioned inns to hear and to retail the latest gossip. His travelling roquelaure was well fitting, his hessians were polished to perfection, and his smart beaver was set jauntily on his pomatumed head. Despite rain, burning sun, or cold wind, he arrived at his destination much more artistically and comfortably than his descendant does to-day.

George Brummell's downfall was beyond redemption when he lost the Prince's favour, and we cannot but pity him in his ruin. We may detest many of his qualities, but when

he left the world of Society, that constituted his idea of all that made life worth living, he must have felt the chill of utter despair pierce his hitherto invulnerable armour of selfishness.

We can trace his later career, step by step, until the final goal of the Asylum at Caen was reached, and it is impossible to read the record and not to feel sorry for him. We hear of his pitiful contrivances to indulge his passion for dress; sometimes we note his utter ingratitude to those kindly souls who helped him in his distress, and sometimes we see glimpses of his old bullying nature. The whole is tragic in its complete desolation.

What sadder spectacle can be thought of than the imaginary receptions held in the candle-lit salon, at the Hotel d'Angleterre, when doddering, imbecile George Brummell announced his guests who never came. Georgiana, the lovely, wilful Duchess of Devonshire, was a familiar name. She had long been dead, but perhaps her pale wraith smiled at the lonely man across the gulf that

separates the spirit world from the living. Alas! it was the Dead only, the unresponsive Dead, that Brummell imagined around him, until at last pitiless Reason thrust her shafts into his disordered brain, and showed him that *all* indeed was vanity.

The tears of the aged are bitter tears; doubtless kind-hearted M. Fichet thought so when he led the sobbing old man out of that empty room in the grey of morning.

George Brummell went unaccompanied by wife or mistress into his exile. During his brilliant career he was well known as being immune from any of the usual affairs which fell to the lot of most men of his social standing and personal attractions. Perhaps he thought that a woman's influence would be too exacting and would interfere with his selfish mode of life; perhaps there is some truth in the story that his one love was the Duchess of York. . . . If this was the case, Brummell always displayed a chivalrous reticence about his liaison, and carefully destroyed all the known correspondence that passed between them, even to the verses written by her for his Album. It is a fact

The Entrance Gate of the Asylum du Bon Sauveur, Caen.

that M. Armstrong, the Caen grocer, who displayed such generosity to the fallen favourite, possessed a gold snuff-box and casket full of love letters written to Brummell by a lady of high rank. After M. Armstrong died, a mysterious stranger arrived in Caen and claimed the snuff-box and the casket, doubtless acting on the instructions of the writer, who knew that the letters existed, and desired the records of her intrigue to be destroyed.

George Bryan Brummell lies in the Protestant Cemetery at Caen, where a plain headstone marks his resting-place. It is a melancholy spot, surrounded by dark trees, where the Beau sleeps after a fate which does much to make the critical look with a lenient eye on his follies and affectations.

When he left England, dandyism languished for lack of a leader. . . . Later, Count D'Orsay revived its glories, and he was indeed the last of the dandies.

Lord Lamington in his charming book, *In the Days of the Dandies*, has very aptly summed them up. "Men" he writes, "took

great pains with themselves; they did not slouch and moon through life; and it was remarkable how highly they were appreciated by the crowd, not only of the upper, but the lower classes." He then describes riding to Richmond with Count D'Orsay. "As he rode through Kensington and Brompton, he excited general attention. I was greatly interested in noticing the admiration with which he was regarded."

Times are changed. . . . London has no room for the dandies. If Count D'Orsay were to ride to Richmond through Kensington and Brompton to-day, he would pass through a maze of unspeakably smelling motor traffic, and he would be jeered at by the descendants of the lower orders, who once admired him, and who now send their own class to Parliament.

Man still loves to play to the gallery, and deep in his heart dandyism exists, never to be uprooted. But the fine art of everyday dress, as expounded and practised by Brummell and his contemporaries, is no more.

Do we regret the dandies? . . . Sometimes, when glancing round places where the much

paragraphed foregather, one idly wonders how some of the "smart" men would look dressed as the habitués of Crockford's and White's. However, a rapid scrutiny convinces one that few could possibly stand such a transformation.

MARY CRAVEN.

CHAPTER I

In the Green Park, during the eighteenth century, near a lake which has now disappeared, and hard by Clarges Street, lay hidden amid the trees a rustic house where Art, to use the language of the time, had preserved some respect for Nature. It was a thatched homestead, with rose-trees climbing up the walls, and a cow-byre within its modest precincts. The occupant of this farm was a certain Mrs. Searle, and notwithstanding the lapse of years idlers could perceive even so late as 1815 the old lady's upright figure as she went about her business, with her tall lace bonnet and hooped skirt in the style of Louis xv.'s reign. About the time of the American War, King George iii. had placed her in charge of this little domain, and his daughter, Princess Mary, had even condescended to supervise the decoration of the

house. Thus Mrs. Searle became the fashion, and distinguished people soon began to visit her: the Court ladies on leaving St. James's rarely failed to knock at her door that they might enter and extol the charms of a country life.

One day a lady of marvellous beauty happened to pass. She was accompanied by a young man who was tall and well made, with noble features, an easy bearing, and a gay and careless look. His white wig was heavily curled. He wore leather knee-breeches, long riding-boots, and a coat carefully buttoned up to his throat and fitting him extraordinarily well. Around his neck was a deep muslin stock, rising almost above the chin. This couple, as they crossed the Green Park, had conceived the idea of visiting Mrs. Searle, and doubtless as she came to meet them she was deeply flattered to learn that her guests were the Marchioness of Salisbury and the heir to the throne, the future Prince Regent.

It was then the moment for milking the cows; the Marchioness pulled up her skirts in eagerness to learn the details of country

life and went into the byre, while His Royal Highness remained chatting in the yard with a youth who seemed to be a member of the household. "This is my nephew, George Brummell," said Mrs. Searle; "he has just left Eton, and is to enter the University of Oxford this year." The Prince continued his conversation with the young man, obviously pleased with his handsome curls and his knowing air. He seemed, however, to be yet more attracted by the assurance of the boy, his charm of manner, and the indefinable combination of audacity and respect which his answers betrayed. "Well, what do you wish to be when you leave College?" asked the Prince. "I should like to serve the King in the army." The Marchioness had now reappeared, delighted with her experience of country work. "George," concluded His Royal Highness, "when you leave Oxford, apply to me. I will give you a commission in the 10th Hussars, my regiment." The two noble visitors then took their leave of the mistress of the Green Park Farm, and went back to find their carriage.

Possibly the nephew of Mrs. Searle had already observed his future colonel on horseback in Hyde Park, brilliant, graceful, and surrounded by his court of handsome young men; possibly he had seen, in crossing Pall Mall, the grey liveries of the carriage bearing the master of Carlton House.[1] Though George Brummell was little more than a schoolboy, he cannot have been ignorant of the current gossip concerning the youthful adventures of the heir to the throne. In any case, the head of a lad of fifteen years was likely enough to be turned by such an offer of patronage from the first subject of

[1] Carlton House was built in 1709 by Henry Boyle, Baron Carlton. From the possession of Lord Burlington this residence came into the hands of the Royal Family in 1732, and was occupied by the Princess of Wales, the mother of George III. In 1783 it became the property of the eldest son of George III., who restored the old residence from top to bottom at enormous expense. He made a collection of the armour of every age and every country, including the swords of Bayard, Marlborough, Louis XIV., and Charles II., and also collected a series of Flemish pictures. There he received Walter Scott, and invited Louis XVIII. and the exiled French princes in 1811. His house was pulled down in 1827, and has been replaced at the present day by Carlton Terrace and the Athenæum Club. If the palace of George IV. still existed, it would stand precisely opposite to Waterloo Place. (H. Wheatley, *Round about Piccadilly and Pall Mall*, p. 342 ff.)

the realm, the brilliant Prince Florizel, the darling of society and the adoration of every heart.

George Prince of Wales was now thirty-one years of age, and even ten years previously his gallantries had been the constant theme of journalists and caricaturists. The story is well known of his passion for Mary Ann Robinson,[1] which was conceived one evening at Drury Lane, when he saw her playing in *A Winter's Tale*. Notes, meetings by night, and excursions upon the Thames followed. The whole town pursued the spectacle of the love intrigue of Florizel and Perdita, the romantic adventure inspired by Shakespeare. No less well known are the anger of Queen Charlotte and the indignation of the old King, George III. On August 28, 1781, he was obliged to buy back his son's

[1] Of Irish birth, Mary Ann Robinson was born at Bristol in 1778. She came out at Drury Lane in the part of Juliet, and proved a great success by reason both of her abilities as actress and her marvellous beauty. On December 3, 1779, she played Perdita before the Royal Family. The Prince of Wales had no hesitation in declaring his admiration, but he grew tired of her no less quickly. Mary Ann Robinson wrote a book entitled the *Memoirs of Perdita*.

letters for £5000, and wrote as follows: "I am sorry to mention a subject which has long caused me great vexation, but I prefer writing to a personal interview." In this melancholy and scandalised tone the letter continues. "Farmer George"[1] was both a good Christian and an honourable man, but his views were very limited; having no moral failings himself, he could not understand them in another. The whole of his life was spent in the blind worship of conventionality, and he strove with all his might to force his opinions on those about him. He had been severely brought up, and wished in his turn to bring up his large family with equal severity. Unfortunately, he found that he had to deal with young princes who were naturally disobedient. His Prussian system of education produced most disastrous results, and no one had more reason to admit the

[1] This nickname had been given to him upon the occasion of a speech from the throne at a time when the American War was causing great anxiety; he had then treated the Parliament to a long discourse upon the subject of cattle disease. He was always fond of a country life, and when walking in the neighbourhood of Windsor iked talking with the country people. (Thackeray, *The Four Georges*, George III.)

fact than the old King himself. His sons and daughters, with few exceptions, resolved upon clandestine marriages, and gave him no voice in the matter. But the Prince of Wales was the son who caused him the most constant anxiety.

His adventure with Mary Ann Robinson is but an insignificant episode among his numerous love affairs. To the day of his death he continued to fall in love with miraculous ease, and a long list might be made of those whose favours he sought. When his designs were opposed, his ardour was augmented, and he would turn his passion to account by artificial means to make himself appear interesting. He had himself bled three times in one day that his pale and feeble appearance might soften the hearts which he hoped to win by pity.[1]

One evening at the Opera, in the box of Lady Sefton, he met Mrs. Fitzherbert,[2] who

[1] Ch. de Rémusat, *Du gouvernement parlementaire en Angleterre.* (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 15, 1866.)

[2] Maria Anne Fitzherbert, born in July 1756, married Edward Weld, Esq., who died in the year of their marriage. In 1778 she married as her second husband Thomas Fitzherbert, Esq., who also died soon afterwards. Mrs. Fitzherbert was then in all the splendour of her beauty, was well known and very

was then a widow for the second time, and a lady of great beauty. The Prince was immediately seized by a new passion. Upon this occasion, however, the lady was careful not to yield at the first onset. She flatly refused him, took to flight, and settled in Lorraine. The Prince overwhelmed her with letters, and she returned. Then he played a tragic scene, and stabbed himself in the breast; he bled profusely, but did not die of the wound; and Mrs. Fitzherbert, greatly shaken, fled once more, abandoning the Prince to his torments, which were extreme. His Royal Highness spent his days with Mrs. Armstead, the mistress of Fox,

popular in society. (*Morning Herald*, March 20 and July 27, 1784.) The following year there appeared in the *Morning Post* (December 17): "A very extraordinary treaty is at this time on the *tapis* between a beautiful young widow who resides about ten miles from London in the county of Surrey and a gentleman of *high rank* in the neighbourhood of St. James's. Fame speaks highly of the lady's virtues and her accomplishments," etc. The marriage with the Prince followed shortly afterwards. For the position of the heir presumptive, this clandestine marriage was the more serious as Mrs. Fitzherbert was a Roman Catholic. Notwithstanding their frequent quarrels, they were not finally separated until 1811. Mrs. Fitzherbert died in 1837 at Brighton. She enjoyed the esteem of almost all the members of the Royal Family, and especially of William IV., brother and successor of George IV.

where he cried aloud, beat his head, tore his hair, rolled on the floor, and spoke of nothing but renouncing the crown, selling his plate and jewels, and gathering sufficient money to escape to America with the object of his adoration.[1] However, Mrs. Fitzherbert returned, and her marriage with the Prince, which was at first kept secret, soon became the talk of the whole town.

It will readily be understood that such adventures were by no means to the taste of George III., and contributed to complete his aversion for this wild and libertine son, who was moreover invariably head over ears in debt. As he was unable to agree with his father, he was equally unable to retain the respect of the nation for any length of time, and his romantic passions, his perpetual outbreaks, and his theatrical manners soon met with indulgence only among the fashionable classes. A characteristic feature of George IV. was the fact that without intention and quite naturally he continued to play a part from his childhood to his death. Whether Whig or Tory,

[1] Ch. de Rémusat, *loc. cit.*

whether the friend of Fox or of Brummell, the lover of Mary Ann Robinson or the husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert, he threw himself so completely into every part which he liked to play that the cleverest people were often so far deceived as to take him seriously, and indeed he deceived himself. If he went to make a speech upon liberty in Ireland, he would shed tears; no sooner was he in love with Mrs. Fitzherbert than he swore to stab himself. It is true that he could change his intentions with miraculous rapidity, for he was utterly fickle, inconstant, and false.

He had friends as well as mistresses, but whether men or women, he deceived everybody with equal disregard. Among his immediate friends the first in point of time was the Duke of Cumberland,[1] an accomplished drunkard and

[1] Horace Walpole, *Journal of the Reign of King George III. from the year 1771 to 1783*, vol. ii. pp. 416, 449, 457, 480, 502.

The Duke of Cumberland (1744–1790) wished to marry a certain widow named Anne Luttrell, much older than himself and of lower social status. George III. became deeply irritated in consequence, and forbade his brother to appear at Court thereafter. He also passed the Royal Marriage Act, by which no member of his family could marry without his consent and that of the Parliament.

an insensate gambler, who had quarrelled with his brother George III.; he and his wife undertook to debauch the heir to the Crown. The task was easy and was speedily accomplished, thanks to the example of the Duc de Chartres, afterwards Philippe Egalité, who was accustomed constantly to cross the Channel at that time; in 1784 we find him at Brighton races with Lauzun, Ségur, and Conflans.[1] About this time also Florizel must have become intimate with Fox, Sheridan, and the whole of the Whig party. It is indeed astonishing to meet these distinguished names among the dancing and singing masters or pugilists who daily visited Carlton House and the Brighton Pavilion, and to see them side by side with Angelo the swashbuckler and Jack Radford the stud groom, Davidson the tailor and Weltjie the chef, who became in turns the confidants and go-betweens of His Royal Highness. In any case, we must take Fox for what he was, the most gifted and admired character of his time, recognised at the age of twenty-one as the

[1] Croly, *Life and Times of George IV.*, pp. 226, 227. *Brighthelmstone Intelligence*, July 2, 1784; August 25, 1785.

leader of a great political party and as the chief orator of his day; we may also remember that before reaching his majority he had incurred debts amounting to £100,000 or more, that he would remain at the gambling-table for seventy-two hours continuously, sleeping and dining upon the faro-table, and would borrow money even from the Club waiters when he was ruined. Sheridan is a similar character, a gambler, and head over ears in debt. It is said that drink had given him a red nose and a ruined digestion; this fact, however, did not seem to diminish his taste for the pleasures of the table, and finding it to his advantage to visit Carlton House, "Sherry" seized the first opportunity of installing himself as a permanent guest.

He was not the only guest, and every evening the Prince's table was surrounded by the same regular comers—a strange table of political orators and bumptious fops, men of letters and idlers, eccentric rakes such as the Duke of Norfolk,[1] who might be met any

[1] The Duke of Norfolk (1746–1815) was very intimate with Fox throughout his life. He was a great collector of books

evening in the thickest of crowds and the lowest of places, dressed either as a clergyman or a jockey; or the Marquis of Queensberry,[1] known as "old Q," who spent his last days ogling the women in the Park from his window. There were also Lord Onslow, *alias* Tom Tandem,[2] proud of his new system of harnessing and tooling through the town in his black phaeton, drawn by four horses of the same colour; Lord Barrymore,[3] who thrashed the watch at night and put on his livery in the daytime to wait upon

and pictures, and encouraged the publication of various archæological works; unfortunately, drunkenness was hereditary in his family, and is said to have been transmitted from generation to generation since the days of the Plantagenets. In the *Times* of February 17, 1794, we read: "The Duke of Norfolk has just been attacked by hydrophobia, and cannot bear the sight of water; his doctors have therefore prescribed wine. The Marquis of Stafford, the Marquis of Bath, and Lord Thurlow, who were present at the consultation, have given their full approval of this treatment."

[1] The name of this old rake is to be found in every chronicle of the age. He seems to have been a man of unparalleled ill-temper, but to have possessed some sense of humour. He was the acknowledged protector of Mlle. Duthé, the former mistress of Comte d'Artois, when she went into exile during the Terror. (Fitzgerald, *Life of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 62.)

[2] Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. ii. p. 113.

[3] Raikes, *Journal*, vol. ii. pp. 61–64.

the bailiffs in possession of his house; Francis Rawdon,[1] afterwards Lord Moira, future Governor of Bengal, and meanwhile boon-companion of His Royal Highness; Lord Cholmondeley;[2] and finally George Hanger,[3] last Lord Coleraine, the intimate friend and evil genius of the Prince.

"The English are worthy people," exclaimed the last named, "but only fit for making kitchen pokers." The fact is that at this time Anglomania was not the best of taste, at any rate in the Prince's circle. On the contrary, it was usual for men to go on the Continent to acquire a proper finish of polite manners. French taste, French

[1] Francis Rawdon, first Marquis of Hastings and second Lord Moira (1754–1826), distinguished himself in the American War, and afterwards entered Parliament, where he proposed to entrust the regency to the Prince of Wales at the time of the madness of George III. In 1812 he received the Order of the Garter, and was appointed Governor of Bengal.

[2] "Lord Cholmondeley was well known in French society before the Revolution. He was a very agreeable man, and full of anecdotes." (Cornelia Knight and Thomas Raikes, *Personal Reminiscences*, pp. 317–318.)

[3] George Hanger, fourth and last Lord Coleraine (1751–1824). Served in the American War, and was afterwards distinguished as one of the wildest spirits either at London or Brighton. (R. Huish, *Memoirs of George IV.*, vol. i. pp. 80, 97, etc.)

thought and social standards, and especially the French theory of the rights of man, then enjoyed high credit. Many of these lords were well acquainted with Versailles; they had known the delights of the Petit Trianon, the promenades on the terrace, the bands of the Orangerie, the magnificence of Fontainebleau, and the hunting-parties of Saint-Hubert and of Choisy. They had known Lauzan, Richelieu, Boufflers, and the Comte d'Artois, and attempted, with more or less success, to model themselves upon these men. Such was the fashion of the day, and though George IV. had never been to Paris, he none the less claimed some acquaintance with the highest French society and with the *ancien régime*. He is even said to have had the unfortunate habit of quoting names and events with greater readiness than accuracy.

He was, however, lacking neither in ease of manner nor in courtesy, and made a point of laying great stress upon these characteristics in other men. He took pleasure in the society of the poets and wits of the time; but the smallest merits were sometimes enough to

secure his patronage, and he would be won by any novelty, by any seasonable innovation, by a certain form of whimsicality, or by smart bearing and address. Such was the origin of his liking for Lord Barrymore, Colonel George Hanger, and many others. And such was the secret of his friendship for George Bryan Brummell, for the little schoolboy whom he met one fine evening in the Green Park Farm, and who, though a man of no account, without birth or fortune, was yet to become the leader of fashion, to tyrannise over the proud and exclusive Society of England, and to begin a struggle with Royalty itself, in which the private individual defeated the King.

CHAPTER II

We have now to ask who this George Brummell was who appears so prominently in all contemporary memoirs, and whom Byron once compared with Napoleon. What actions of his gave rise to praise so pompous, and enabled him to leave a name oft quoted to-day? We know already that one of his aunts held the post of mistress farmer to the King. His father was secretary to Lord North; his grandfather was a confectioner, with a shop in Bury Street. These are no great advantages in a country which usually attaches much importance to birth. It would seem that Brummell must have counterbalanced his low birth by some personal merit. When, however, we follow the details of his life, we are forced to recognise that he was the least energetic of mankind. It might be urged that he was a wit, and his contem-

poraries support the statement. I am inclined, however, to think that his style of humour would have aroused more astonishment than admiration at Paris.

Yet if Brummell's existence is by no means eventful in the ordinary sense of the term, it is sufficiently remarkable when regarded as a whole. Even more astonishing than his prodigious success is the fact that it appears to have depended solely upon a number of insignificant details, upon his attitude, bearing, and other trifles of the kind, so that ultimately, and in view of his uniqueness, we are almost inclined to lament the fact that he never displayed any more positive capacity.

His University career does not seem to have been marked by any extraordinary event. He was a well-dressed and personable young fellow, a trifle stiff in manner, and as careful of his language as of his dress. With an air of complete assurance, he was accustomed to utter certain witticisms which evoked laughter by contrast with his serious demeanour. He was able to please. As, moreover, the elegance of his taste was striking, he was

speedily able to dominate the society of the fashionable young men of wealth and title. Doubtless at the University he met certain friends of his youth, but as these latter possessed neither houses nor fortunes he speedily broke with them.

The word "snob" was not yet in current use; none the less, snobbery had existed long before. Granted that every character contains the possibilities of snobbery, Brummell at first sight would seem to have been endowed in this respect out of all proportion. None the less, the characteristic which usually distinguishes men known as snobs is speedily recognised. Such men are invariably unaware of their shortcomings, or refuse to admit them when brought to their notice. The originality of Brummell was that he boasted loudly of them, made them a doctrine and a system, and pushed audacity so far as to consider them an art in themselves. "If," he used to declare, "you should ever meet a vulgar fellow who has no fortune to waste, cut him directly." This principle he carried out with such effrontery that we eventually

find ourselves asking whether he had himself any great faith in these uncompromising methods. Was he a sincere and convinced snob, or did he think it his duty to parade the most cynical opinions for the purpose of hiding unpardonable scepticism? Though the English show indulgence to any extravagance in line with prevailing fashion, they will stand no trifling with fashionable usages and customs, or, in short, with all that is usually known as social prejudice. I do not think that Brummell blindly shared their point of view; but he doubtless thought it politic to make a show of submission upon points to which the greatest importance was attached. Thus at certain times he made no difficulty in explaining his real thoughts and proving his point. One day when he was talking with Lady Hester Stanhope, chance obliged him to give some explanation of his general conduct. They were in Bond Street, and the Beau was leaning upon the door of the lady's carriage, whispering to her the secret of a marvellous perfume, when a young colonel passed whose name was then in all mouths.

"Who ever heard of his father?" murmured Brummell. "And by the way," replied Lady Hester, "who ever heard of yours?" This retort might have gone round the clubs and produced an unpleasant effect. The "sublime dandy" therefore bent once more towards the lady and delivered this short argument: "Ah, my dear Lady Hester, who indeed ever heard of my father, and who would have ever heard of me, if I had been anything but what I am? But, you know, my dear Lady Hester, it is my folly that is the making of me. If I did not impertinently stare duchesses out of countenance and nod over my shoulder to a prince, I should be forgotten in a week; and if the world is so silly as to admire my absurdities, you and I may know better, but what does that signify?"[1] Sincere or not, Brummell had his programme perfectly

[1] *Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope*, vol. i. p. 281. Forgues, *Originaux et beaux esprits de l'Angleterre* (chapter on Lady Hester Stanhope). Another day, when Lady Hester had been urging him to be more modest, "My dear Lady Hester," he replied, "if I were to do as you advise me, do you think I could stand in the middle of the pit at the Opera and beckon to Lorne on one side and Villiers on the other, *and see them come to me?*" (Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 531.)

arranged. At an early date he had evidently formed an ideal of graceful insolence, which he embellished, completed, and brought to perfection at his leisure, until this model became the mainspring of his every act. Thus we find him at the University, and afterwards in his regiment, constantly attentive, master of himself, watching over the least of his gestures, and soon playing his part as a hero of frivolity with incomparable repose of manner. This ideal man of pleasure is an Englishman. This Englishman has laid down for himself a law of life, and will follow his preconceived idea blindly to the end. To this consideration all else is bowed and subordinated, and we seem to catch him every moment casting a quick glance upon these marching orders, and instinctively falling into line with them.

In 1794 he entered the 10th Hussars. The Prince of Wales had not forgotten his visit to the Green Park, and when he learnt that Mrs. Searle's nephew was on the point of leaving Oxford, he kept his word, and offered him a commission in his regiment. Admission

to the 10th Hussars was a great favour, and was usually reserved for the younger sons of the nobility. However, the young cornet did not appear to be greatly startled by this piece of good fortune. He was introduced into the best society, admitted to the intimacy of Petersham, Somerset, Charles Kerr and Robert Manners, and soon became the friend and favourite of the Prince; all this he accepted without the smallest perturbation, as if the world were already his own. Hitherto his affected insolence, his ironical retorts, and the languid repose of his manner had produced the desired effect. He therefore proceeded to accentuate the disdain of his bearing, and appears in London drawing-rooms and in the regimental mess, calm, supercilious, and imperturbable. He was disdain personified. In March 1795 the *fiancée* of the heir presumptive, Caroline of Brunswick, disembarked in England. There was great excitement at Carlton House to know what ladies would be chosen to go and meet the Princess, and what gentlemen would be entrusted with the duty of escorting her to

St. James's. Wild rumours and intrigues were the order of the day, until George Brummell found himself nominated, in preference to the greatest names of the realm, among the noblemen entrusted with this honour. Of all concerned, it was George Brummell who was the least astonished by such absurd good fortune. It seems as if nothing could equal the expectations of this young fop, while his own assurance was so perfect that all around him were convinced. A cornet at sixteen and captain at eighteen years of age, his military duties troubled him little. He was rarely at his post, and when he felt a whim to appear upon parade he came when he pleased, ignored any orders that were given, and dismissed his men in the midst of a manœuvre. It was disdain, contemptuous and perfect. He was scarcely able to recognise his own men, and were it not for the existence of a hussar provided with a "blue nose," he would be hanged if he knew what troop he was to lead. The colonel might thunder and storm, but Brummell preserved his serenity. A word

of excuse uttered with a smile, a piece of insolence delivered with an air of profound respect, and the colonel abandoned his fulminations once more.

The Hussars were stationed alternately at London and at Brighton.[1] One fine evening

[1] It was in 1782 that the Prince went to Brighton for the first time with the object of seeing his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, who was accustomed to spend the summer there. Brighton was then a mere fishing village, buried in the country and completely unknown. However, the Prince returned the next year, and conceived the idea of building the absurd Pavilion, the construction of which was to complete his ruin. The building was finished in 1787, but the Prince soon grew tired of it, and resolved to rebuild the whole from top to bottom. Nash, the fashionable architect, was entrusted with this confidential task, and nearly every month for twenty years the Prince introduced modifications into the plan. The fact was that he prided himself upon his architectural eye, and if Nash may be believed, was endowed with an imagination which outran practical possibility. So much became obvious as this heterogeneous mansion arose, combining as it did every style of Oriental architecture from Chinese to Turkish. Within the building, thanks to the coloured glass which filled the windows, the visitor imagined himself within a magic lantern. After the death of George IV., the Royal Family speedily got rid of this encumbrance, and under Queen Victoria, in 1849, the Pavilion was purchased by the town of Brighton. "Anybody," says Thackeray, "can see the place now for sixpence: they have fiddlers there every day, and sometimes buffoons and mountebanks hire the Riding House and do their tricks and tumbling there." (*The Four Georges*, George IV.) Brighton grew with its Pavilion, and in a few years the village became a town, and the town a centre of fashion.

an order suddenly arrived for them to go North upon garrison duty, to the ends of the earth, or, in other words, to Manchester, a hideous manufacturing town, commercial and vulgar to the last degree. Brummell declined to contemplate such a possibility for a moment, and the next day betook himself to His Royal Highness at an early hour. Surrounded by four vast mirrors, the Prince was superintending the progress of his toilet, and when he expressed some surprise at so early a visit, "Good Lord," declared the young Captain, "people say we are to go to Manchester!" The Prince nodded. "Really, sir, you cannot believe how disagreeable I find such a prospect." The Prince admitted with another movement of his head that the prospect was not indeed particularly attractive. "No, really," pursued the young Captain, "the more I think of it, the less I can realise such a notion. Just think, sir, Manchester! And then," he concluded, with a sigh, "you would not be there." Nothing more was required to mollify his patron and bring him over to his side. It was indeed a more insinuating method than to talk of London,

and London was the chief attraction for Brummell, with its sumptuous clubs and its aristocratic parks, with its proud and splendid mansions, the doors of which were beginning to open before him, with its streets and promenades, where already idlers began to point at the new companion of the Prince.

Doubtless the neighbourhood of Pall Mall and Piccadilly has greatly changed, and it would be difficult to discover the house in which Selwyn[1] lived, or that which served as a meeting-place for the members of Watier's.[2]

[1] George Augustus Selwyn (1719–1791) studied at Eton with Horace Walpole, whose friend he became. He was elected member of Parliament in] 1747, but rarely spoke, and was almost always asleep. He was a member of White's Club, and his name is also to be found in the annals of the Jockey Club. If Walpole is to be believed, he was extremely witty, fond of gaming, of women, and professing a great affection for children. Thus he came to adopt Maria Fagniani, who married the Marquis of Hertford and became the mother of Lord Seymour, *alias* Lord Arsouille, well known to Parisians under Louis Philippe. Selwyn and the old Duke of Queensberry long disputed the paternity of Maria Fagniani, but the truth could never be determined precisely. (Jesse, *Selwyn and his Contemporaries.*)

[2] Watier's Club was situated precisely at the corner of Bolton Street and Piccadilly. It was founded in 1807, but lasted only a dozen years. The catering was admirable, and gambling for fabulous stakes went on. Brummell laid down the law there. (Cornelia Knight and Thomas Raikes, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 314.)

CARLTON HOUSE.

Of Carlton House, the Prince's establishment, not the least trace remains;[1] and a hundred modern buildings have replaced the colonnades and Greek pediments which English architecture then produced in such abundance. Many, however, are the recollections evoked by the pavements of Bond Street, the Palais Royal of the town and its very heart and soul, where towards 1795 "Macaronies"[2] and "Muscadins" jostled one another: the former were the dandies of the old school, with enormous wigs tied up behind, minute three-cornered hats, flowered waistcoats, and coloured stockings; the latter, notwithstanding the general horror of all that came from France, had adopted the latest Parisian fashion,

[1] The columns which to-day form the portico of the National Gallery are those which formerly stood before Carlton House, and were carried to their present position when the Regent's house was pulled down. (H. Wheatley, *Round about Piccadilly and Pall Mall*, pp. 342, 344.)

[2] "Macaroni" was a name first given to those who came back from the "grand tour," as the phrase then went. The English even then were great travellers, especially in Italy; hence the name, recalling a well-known Southern dish. It was soon used to denote a man who, with some slight experience of Continental life, displayed somewhat unusual refinement in manners and bearing. (John Ashton, *Old Times*, pp. 53, 54, and 55.)

to the long tail coat, the tail of hair, and the wide stock surrounding the chin with waves of muslin. The whole of London was to be seen in Bond Street;[1] from Sterne[2] and Lawrence, who lived in it by turns, to old Lord Sandwich, who smiled at the little flower-sellers and offered them gold for a rose; to the three maniacs, the "three Mr. Wiggins,"[3] otherwise Lord Llandaff and his two brothers, the Hon. Montague and George Matthews; they were similar in figure and face, dressed precisely the same, and used to spend their days in the utmost seriousness, walking arm in arm upon the pavement. Then, but a short distance away, is St. James's Street, recalling Fox's chair and Walpole's carriage, Sheridan going to Brooke's, and

[1] Bond Street was built in 1686, and owes its name to Sir Thomas Bond of Peckham, Controller of the Household of the Queen-mother. He was a favourite of James II., whom he followed into exile. Bond Street loungers are mentioned in the *Weekly Journal* (June 1) from 1717 onwards. See also the *Morning Post* for February 6, 1800.

[2] Sterne died in the first storey of No. 41. Lawrence lived at No. 24. In 1815 Sir Walter Scott stayed at Long's Hotel, No. 16, while Byron always put up at Stevens' Hotel, No. 18.

[3] H. Wheatley, *Round about Piccadilly and Pall Mall*, p. 182 ff.

William Pitt [1] striding along "sad and cynical."

Customs, together with houses, have greatly changed since those days. Contemporary chronicles provide us with some surprises in this respect, and it is obvious that the English did not then pride themselves upon that excessive reserve of which they make a point at the present day. London Society had speedily made its choice between the surly morality of the royal couple and the unbridled license of the princes. License became extreme, and Society abandoned itself without restraint. Throughout the town, in every class and at every age, pleasure seems to have been the only law towards the end of the eighteenth century; and every evening a universal bacchanalia brought together young and old, street sharpers and English peers. The

[1] "I used to see Mr. Pitt fairly often when he walked from his residence through St. James's Park to the King. Mr. Pitt dressed in black, his sword with its steel hilt at his side, his hat under his arm, went up two or three steps at a time. As he passed he met three or four *émigrés* waiting about; casting upon us a disdainful look, he went on with his nose in the air and his face pale." (Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d Outre-Tombe*, ed. Biré, vol. ii. p. 225.)

gardens of Ranelagh and the groves of Vauxhall were crowded; suppers and dancing went on; orchestras, fountains, acrobats, shadow shows produced in combination a general stupefaction; ladies in full dress, deeply rouged, jostled with the lowest of the low, and the Prince of Wales and his society fraternised with the basest tipplers. From Vauxhall they went on to the Pantheon, the new hall built at the corner of Oxford Street, under the guidance of Mme. Cornélys,[1] the Montansier

[1] "An adventurer from Zurich, named Heidegger, had introduced masked balls into London, and a foreign artiste, Mme. Cornélys, reintroduced them after an interval of fifteen or twenty years. At the time of the Lisbon earthquake London thought it was threatened with the same fate as a punishment for its sins. 'We are expiating the horrible license of the masked balls,' was the cry of the popular preachers. Their words were heard, and amusements of this kind were struck off the list of permitted pleasures for a long period. When the custom was revived, jesters spoke of giving a masked ball as 'giving an earthquake.' Mme. Cornélys found the desired pretext: she invented the charity ball, and the success is well known of this means of gaining heaven at the risk of hell. At the establishment of Mme. Cornélys social distinctions were maintained, and subscriptions were paid in advance for the whole season." (A. Filon, *La Caricature en Angleterre*, p. 180.)

In the *Times* of March 3, 1794, appears the following: "The entertainment given by the director of the Opera last Monday was one of the most crowded in recent years. The Prince of Wales was in a black domino, arm in arm with Captain Churchill and Lord George Conway; the Duke of Clarence

The Interior of the Pantheon, Oxford Road.

of the place. Masked balls were also given, as famous as those of the Palais Royal, where amid the quadrilles lords displayed extraordinary costumes and indulged in gloomy eccentricities. One would appear representing the influence of the Court, and walk on followed by Public Ruin. Another would be dressed as a corpse, and walk through the entertainment in a shroud with a coffin under his arm. Then there were the Opera, and the Mlles. Rose[1] and Parisot in the ballet of the *Three Sultans of Marmontel*; Covent Garden, where the public went to applaud John Kemble; and

spent the whole evening with Mrs. Jordan in a box. Michael Angelo Taylor was dressed in female costume, and was in consequence less talkative than usual. The supper was perfection, and the refreshments more than adequate. There were some two thousand seven hundred people at this ball, including some of the prettiest women in the town." (See also the *Times* for March 1, 1794, and February 17, 1798.)

[1] "A certain French dancer, named Mlle. Rose, had introduced flesh-coloured tights to the English stage together with certain choregraphic innovations which Vestris, 'the god of the dance,' had disavowed in the name of the art, and which provoked the outcries of the moralists. The Bench of Bishops raised an uproar: Parliament re-echoed with their complaints, which urged the claims both of morality and of patriotism. It was said that France, despairing of the conquest of John Bull, was attempting to corrupt him." (A. Filon, *La Caricature en Angleterre*, p. 179.)

Drury Lane, the theatre of Sheridan, where the divine Mrs. Siddons held sway. There were also the meetings at Almack's,[1] those famous balls over which Mme. de Liéven[2] presided about 1820, and the amateur theatricals and charades organised by the Duchess of Devonshire.

When the summer came, the whole of the fashionable clan met once more upon the sands of Margate or of Brighton, around the Asiatic Pavilion in which the Regent had sunk a fortune. Nothing could weary this society: it was an indefatigable generation of drinkers,

[1] Almack's balls were given upon the spot now occupied by Willis's Restaurant, in King Street. Chateaubriand wrote, while he was Ambassador: "Almack's public ball, under the patronage of the great ladies of the West End: both the old and the young dandies were represented; at the head of the young was to be seen Lord Clanwilliam, the son, it is said, of the Duc de Richelieu. He performed admirable feats, rode to Richmond and came back to Almack's after being twice thrown. He had a trick of pronunciation in the manner of Alcibiades, which was delightful." (*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, ed. Biré, vol. iv. p. 245.)

[2] Dorothée de Benkendorf (1785–1855) married the Prince de Liéven, who was Ambassador at London for twenty-two years. She was intimate with all the most famous people of her time in every period and of every nationality. She is said to have had an intrigue with George IV. After the death of her husband, she settled at Paris, and became the Egeria of M. Guizot, who spent all his evenings with her.

songsters, and hunters, eager for noise and physical exercise, every day inventing some new sport, and in spite of its constant excesses preserving a preference for fighting in every form, for the duel as well as for boxing. Whatever their desires may be and whatever care they take to secure them, the English can never remain inactive. Even when they have nothing to do, they preserve an amount of superfluous energy and suppressed vigour which somehow or other must be worked off, and therefore when reduced to pastimes which are ridiculous in comparison with their natural strength, they speedily outstrip the objects which they have in view. Hence, under outward politeness, exists an energy which betrays itself by excessive refinement, extraordinary costumes, adventures, bets and exploits worthy of a harlequin. Ease of intercourse, restrained elegance, and good style have never proved a sufficient discipline for these men, while the final dominating influence among them is their horror of the common and the vulgar and their furious worship of the surprising novelty.

CHAPTER III

At the age of nineteen Brummell left the Army. Not only was he strongly attracted by a life of luxury and refinement, but his responsibilities as captain soon came to seem an intolerable burden. At the same time, to accept office and undertake duties, however lax the obligation to performance, was a position not without a tincture of vulgarity. Moreover, if he took his duties seriously, he might in the long run be exposed to the risk of becoming himself as serious and ponderous as his work. Throughout his life Brummell avoided such a fate, which he wilfully disdained and affected to dislike. The trick succeeded; he became typical, and we shall see his barren renunciation and his false stoicism growing more stereotyped from year to year. One day when he was finishing his toilet, a bore forced his way into his room, and not only

wearied him with stories of a tour in Scotland, but insisted upon knowing which lakes he preferred. Brummell was busy tying his cravat, and had therefore more important matters to think about. The bore, however, persisted, and demanded a reply. Brummell then turned to his servant with a look of martyrdom, and at length deigned to speak. "Robinson." "Sir?" "Which lake do I prefer?" "Windermere, sir." "Ah, just so," repeated Brummell, "Windermere;" and he turned disdainfully to the intruder: "Windermere, will that do for you?"

Little he cared for the Scotch mountains or for romantic enthusiasm. To secure a perfectly tied cravat, to appreciate a delicate supper, to rouse the jealousy of women and the envy of men, and to enjoy the knowledge of this success in secret was always for him the chief business of life. He thus demonstrated to his audience that he was neither dupe nor fool, and granting that idleness is the least unpleasant occupation in the world, it was always possible to give proof of good taste throughout the most frivolous of lives and to display sanity of

judgment and self-restraint there as elsewhere. Moreover, certain material considerations gave him food for reflection. Mr. William Brummell had saved some money as secretary to Lord North, as is shown by the fact that he provided his son with a commission in the 10th Hussars; but when all is said and done, this fortune was not inexhaustible, and the fifteen hundred a year which George received when he attained his majority was a very meagre patrimony in comparison with the princely fortunes of those among whom he had made his way. To outrival others by means of magnificence would have been sheer madness. He therefore sought to surround himself with a luxury rather original than extravagant, and used his slender resources to such good purpose that he was able to mix with the wealthy young men of his day, to enter their clubs, share their habits and their pleasures, and become a leading figure in the world of fashion, where more than anywhere else scanty means are regarded as an indelible stain.

He lived at No. 4 Chesterfield Street,[1]

[1] In 1832 Captain Gronow also occupied No. 4 Chesterfield Street. He left valuable memoirs, and is quoted by Ville-

opposite the house which was formerly occupied by Selwyn, a "Macaroni" of the old school and the author of many witticisms. There he proceeded to arrange one of those bachelor apartments such as Lister, Bulwer Lytton, and all the novelists of the time constantly describe. The English were even then beginning to collect curiosities and trifles out of fashion, and like Horace Walpole, Brummell prided himself upon his antiquarian tastes. His inclinations led him especially to Buhl furniture and Sèvres porcelain, of which he brought together many very beautiful specimens. In other respects his room was in no way extraordinary. It was comfortable, luxurious, and in good taste. On the walls might be seen the portraits of Nelson, Lord North, and the Duke of Rutland, and of the heroes and heroines mentioned in the memoirs of the Chevalier de Grammont.[1] These memoirs

messant in his *Mémoires d'un Journalist* (Series 1, chap. ix., 1872). Captain Gronow, who lived as much in Paris as in London, was a member of the Petit Cercle. He first married Mlle. Didier of the Opera and then Mlle. de Saint Pol, and died in France on November 20, 1865.

[1] One day when he had left his uniform at Calais the Duke de Coigny, secretary to the Embassy, requested George IV. to

were then the favourite reading of the fashionable world, and held a place of honour in Brummell's library between the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Letters* of Chesterfield. Thus our hero did not neglect intellectual amusements. He was even more attentive to the pleasures of the table, and his cellar had a very complete collection of the wines of France and Spain. For horses he was accustomed to rely upon a certain horse-dealer named Fryatt, who had a good eye for a horse, and undertook to buy for Brummell. He was not fond of hunting and cared little for open-air sport, but it was a point of honour with him to have first-class animals for his use, in the best of condition.[1] We have mentioned his care in what he drank, and he brought the same attention to all that he ate. He thought it his duty not to be niggardly upon this point, and he immediately

kindly excuse him for not coming to pay his respects. The King, who knew his Hamilton, began to laugh, and replied to him immediately, "Let us hope, sir, that it will be not lost like the other, in the quicksands." (Bardoux, *La Duchesse de Duras*, p. 305.)

[1] Brummell had no carriage, and used a chair to avoid the mud. At no price would he have used any other vehicle to go out in the evening.

looked about for a chef capable of securing his gastronomic reputation. It was then customary to display the delicacy of one's palate with some ostentation, and in *Pelham*, the fashionable novel, a mother is found giving her son the following advice: "Gain as much knowledge *de l'art culinaire* as you can; it is an accomplishment absolutely necessary." Then she proceeds: "If you have any opportunity, you may also pick up a little acquaintance with metaphysics; that sort of thing is a good deal talked about just at present."

At Brummell's house there was much eating and more drinking, and both operations were performed with great judgment. He used to give little dinners where the dishes were chosen as carefully as the guests, and which the Prince Regent, who was no less famous for his gluttony, honoured with his presence. Then, when his domestic expenses had been arranged, Brummell very wisely resolved to wear upon himself, where it could be seen, a considerable part of the money he had left.

Here it must be said that current opinion would keep his name alive for the exquisite

taste which he showed in all that concerned the art of dress.[1] His attention to dress was a piece of extravagance sufficiently striking, but upon the whole it was a question of less importance to Brummell's career than was generally supposed. Fearing to seem pedantic, he declined to enlarge to any extent upon this subject, and rarely failed to evade any questions put to him by an unexpected or impracticable answer. "Blacking?" he replied to a certain young man who was fascinated by the brilliancy of his boots and displayed a burning desire to have his recipe,—"blacking, my dear sir? Well, you know, for blacking I never use anything but the froth of champagne." Another man asked him the name of his hairdresser. "I have three: the first is responsible for my temples, the second for the front part of my head, and the third for the back of it." One day in St. James's he met the Duke of Bedford wearing a coat of a new style; the Duke pressed him so earnestly to say what he thought of it that he was obliged to declare

[1] *Revue de Paris*, see Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 37.

himself one way or the other. "Give me your frank opinion," his Grace repeated. Brummell replied by stepping back several paces. With a faint gesture he indicated to the Duke that he was to turn sideways, then to show himself three-quarter face, and then once more in profile. Brummell then took the lappel of the garment in question between his thumb and forefinger, seemed to examine the material for a moment, and said with an air of supreme commiseration, "Why, Bedford, do you call this thing a coat?"

In any case, though he pretended to dress himself without paying any particular attention to the process, he showed himself equally hard to please upon this question. "We lend a hand in our toilets," the beaux used to say, "but do not give the last touches." Brummell used to add, "No scents, but plenty of linen, country bleached." Indeed, he required a large amount of that commodity to accomplish the incomparable knot which was to remain famous in the annals of British fashion. The stock was invariably of white muslin, twisted round the neck several times. An ordinary

person would probably have seen nothing uncommon in it, but if we may trust the evidence of experts, the stock had an unparalleled grace and charm, with an insolence in its two ends of unequal length, slightly curled but not rubbed, and displaying an air of carelessness and disregard within the strictest limits of propriety. The most marvellous of all sights was to see Brummell himself performing this transitory and fragile masterpiece. In less time than we can write the words, he would wind the cravat round his neck and tie the knot, pull the collar over the cravat, and lowering his chin slowly, he would crease the cravat down to the proper height by the most natural method in the world. Performed in the twinkling of an eye, it is obvious that an achievement of this nature must be successful at the first attempt or not at all. The least carelessness of movement necessitated the use of a fresh cravat, and yards of muslin were sometimes expended in order to secure a perfect knot.[1]

[1] One day a visitor met Brummell's valet coming out of his master's room with an enormous quantity of tumbled neckcloths

The Prince Regent, who also prided himself upon the care of his dress, readily fell into the habit of visiting Brummell at his dressing-hour. The Prince had a curious mind, and though he did not think it necessary to push his studies in the art of dress so far, the field of his interests remained varied. His classical education had been somewhat disconnected,[1] but he was by no means uneducated, was fond of reading, liked good poetry and could even quote it on occasion. He also showed a great love for music, played the cello better than any prince in Europe,[2] and is said to have sung extremely well. No less keen was

on his arm. "What is all that?" he asked. "Oh," replied the other, "these are our failures." (Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 42.)

[1] His tutor in Greek had been Lord Bruce, who was utterly unable to read a word of Homer. The pupil maliciously obliged his tutor to acknowledge his ignorance. (Walpole's *Journal*, see Fitzgerald, *Life of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 13.)

[2] The Regent thought a great deal of Rossini, and liked accompanying him with his violin. One day Rossini was unable to hide the annoyance which he felt because His Royal Highness would not keep time. For the Regent, though a great lover of music and not a bad player, constantly put out the maestro, to whom he at last offered an apology. Rossini accepted it with civility, and good-naturedly said, "There are very few in the position of your Royal Highness who could play so well." (Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. ii. p. 126.)

his taste for painting, and it must be remembered that at a time when the Dutch masters were not in fashion he collected in his residences a large number of their most remarkable works. Of his architectural attempts, the less said the better. The Brighton Pavilion and its adjoining buildings are sufficient proof that they were not always well conceived. The same may be said of his archæological ideas, which were vague and far inferior to his knowledge of cookery.[1] We therefore return to this art of dress, for which he invariably showed a special preference, and in which, by unanimous consent, he displayed unusual talent. The interminable

[1] The Prince also studied the art of declamation. He had taken lessons from several actors, especially from old Matthews. His powers of mimicry seem to have been unequalled. "When the Prince Regent sent for me in 1828," the Duke of Wellington relates, "he was seriously ill, although he would never admit it. I found him in bed, dressed in a dirty silk jacket, with a turban-shaped nightcap, the one as filthy as the other; for in spite of his care for his outward appearance in public, he was extremely slovenly in private life. His first words were, 'Arthur, the Cabinet is defunct.' He then proceeded to describe the way in which the last ministers had taken leave of him upon their resignation. This was accompanied with extremely clever mimicry of the voice and manners of each person, and so perfect was the imitation that it was impossible not to laugh loudly." (Ch. de Rémusat, *Du gouvernement parlementaire en Angleterre, Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 15, 1866, pp. 357 and 358.)

and magnificent display of his portraits is sufficient to convince us of the fact. He is to be seen in every costume and every imaginable dress, with powder and without it, with or without a pigtail, with fair, brown, or black wigs, as a hussar, a dragoon, a field-marshal, or a Highlander. In the painting by Lawrence in the Wallace Collection he appears in a brown laced coat trimmed with fur, knee-breeches and stockings of black silk, the garter above his knee—in short, in official dress, as in the year of his coronation.[1] Two features invariably reappear in these portraits of George IV.; the wide ribbon of the order which crosses his chest and the medal which he wears on the left side. We should, however, be mistaken in laughing too loudly at the whims of this monarch, since they were upon the whole the occasion for masterpieces which owe something to the beauty of the model.

He was one of those people who amuse

[1] He was himself so pleased with this last portrait that he distributed reproductions of it throughout the courts and embassies of Europe, and gave them to all the clubs, all the town halls, and to all his private friends. (Thackeray, *The Four Georges*, George IV.)

themselves by collecting snuff-boxes, ancient armour, or valuable furniture. Besides snuff-boxes,[1] George IV. was an ardent collector of clothes, and everything inclines us to believe that he had one of those collections of which it may be said that every article is a pattern.[2] As a matter of fact, even in his old age he would spend the best part of a morning in trying on a coat, and the garment would sometimes reach the fabulous price of £300, by reason of the infinite

[1] The Prince possessed an incomparable collection of snuff-boxes, and made it a point always to carry one about with him. "Those," Gronow concludes, "who were well acquainted with His Majesty frequently told me he took snuff for effect but never liked it, and allowed all of it to escape from his finger and thumb before it reached the nose." (Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 335.)

[2] At no price would George IV. get rid of the smallest article of clothing. He kept everything most scrupulously. In his wardrobe were "all the coats he has ever had for fifty years, three hundred whips, canes without number, every sort of uniform, the costumes of all the orders in Europe, splendid furs, pelisses, hunting coats and breeches, and among other things a dozen pair of corduroy breeches which he had made to hunt in when Don Miguel was here. His profusion in these articles was unbounded, because he never paid for them, and his memory was so accurate that he recollected every article of dress, no matter how old, and his pages were always liable to be called on to produce some particular coat or other article of apparel of years gone by." (Fitzgerald, *Life of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 434.)

number of alterations which the tailor, Davidson, was obliged to make before he could entirely satisfy his royal customer.

As we reach the last years of the eighteenth century it seems as if this refinement in dress had become an actual mania, which even such influential men as Chatham and Fox could not escape.[1] Fox also devoted himself passionately to the Macaronic cult, wearing a huge wig, a minute three-cornered silk hat, red-heeled shoes, and the rest of the costume as the newspapers of the time depict him. I say nothing of the Prince's immediate associates, who rivalled one another in the extravagances of their dress, from Lord Barrymore and George Hanger,[2] whose extraordinary garments seemed to mock the surly old King at the balls in St. James's Palace, to Sir Lumley Skeffington,[3]

[1] B. C. Walpole, *Life of Fox*, 1806, p. 94 (*Morning Post*, July 4, 1789; the *Times*, June 4, 1794).

[2] Huish, *Life of George IV.*, vol. i. p. 97 ff.

[3] Sir Lumley Skeffington (1771–1850) was the friend of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons as well as of the Regent. He produced at Covent Garden *The Word of Honour*, and at Drury Lane *The High Road of Marriage* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, all with equal success. He used to wear a wig,

a beautiful little doll, dressed in rose satin and pale blue, like a Watteau shepherd. A remarkable fact was that this doll concealed an intellectual man, an enlightened patron of the arts, and a writer of merit.

It is none the less true that in many cases the rage for dress became a disquieting feature.[1] In October 1806 an individual was to be observed at Brighton, who walked out every day dressed in green from head to foot, green shoes, green gloves, green handkerchief, and other articles to match. This eccentric person lived alone, knew nobody, and in his house the curtains, the wallpapers, the furniture, even the plates and dishes and the smallest toilet articles, offered an uninterrupted sequence of green.

blacken his eyebrows, rouge his cheeks, and was full of amusing anecdotes.

[1] "Would it be believed that one day the dandies took a fancy for appearing in threadbare clothes? This was during the ascendancy of Brummell. They considered it so select to make their clothes threadbare before putting them on, that the operation was carried out over the whole garment, until nothing was left but a kind of thin lace. It was a very delicate and very lengthy business, and was usually performed with a piece of sharpened glass." (Barbey d'Aurevilly, *Du Dandysme et de G. Brummell*, p. 25.)

Having started upon his career, there was obviously no reason to stop, and with full consistency he carried his scruples so far as to eat nothing but fruit and vegetables of the same green colour. The consequences were extremely disastrous. One fine day, "the Green Man," as he was generally known, jumped from his window into the street, rushed forward, and performed a second somersault from the top of the nearest cliff. "To judge from the life which he habitually led," says the *Annual Register*, "we may conclude that he was not entirely sane. His name was Henry Cope, and it is said that he was connected with very distinguished English families."[1]

Whatever legend may say upon the matter, Brummell was very far from imitating "the Green Man" or other eccentrics of the kind.[2] He speedily dropped all exaggera-

[1] *Annual Register*, October 25, 1806.

[2] An Englishman who seems to have known him well says of him after his death, "he was better dressed than any man of his day, and we should all have dressed like him if we could have accomplished it." (Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 537.)

tions, and preserved the "most exquisite harmony" in matters of dress. The expression is Byron's. This ideal beau changed prevailing fashion to suit himself: he wore his hair short without powder, shunned staring colours, and eventually chose a style of dress to which he always clung. He was invariably to be seen in a blue coat, a buff-coloured waistcoat, and either lace boots or light pumps, according as he was going for a walk or to a ball. His trousers were black, closely fitting, and buttoned above the ankle. His charming bearing and perfect figure were his chief attractions. Though not handsome, he was incomparably distinguished from head to foot, and I imagine that it was this fact which made him the best-dressed man in London.[1] The same

[1] His tailors were Schweitzer & Davidson in Cork Street, and a certain German named Meyer in Conduit Street. These tailors also served the Prince. One day a man from the provinces came in to ask Davidson to dress him fashionably. "Why, sir," replied the artist, "the Prince wears superfine and Mr. Brummell the Bath coating, but it is immaterial which you choose, Sir John. Suppose, sir, we say Bath coating. I think Mr. Brummell has a trifle the preference." (Jesse, *Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 44.)

may be said of his face, which was less remarkable for correctness of feature than for the general expression: he was fair, almost red-haired, with a lofty brow, a thin sharp nose, lips slightly compressed, clear eyes of an undefinable shade, with a strange expression of fatuous disdain and alert irony.

Such was Beau Brummell in outward appearance. His tranquil gracefulness, his apparent prosperity, and the favour which he enjoyed with the Regent secured his reception in Society when he left the 10th Hussars. He soon established himself, not only within, but also above the society of his time. Henceforward we find him at every gathering and entertainment as a constant and familiar guest at the most important houses of England. During the winter, before the fine weather brought back to London the idlers who had dispersed to their estates, we meet him respectively at Chatsworth, at Woburn, and at Chieveley. In January 1799 he stayed with the Duke of Rutland, who celebrated his coming of age

by a party at Belvoir which included the Heir-Apparent, the Duke of Argyle, the Marquis of Lorne, and all the noblemen of the neighbourhood.

Numerous and famous as were his friends and great as was the advantage of his personal appearance, something more is required to explain the attractive domination of his character and the position which he usually occupies in the Society chronicles of the time. Greatness is not essential for the creation of a fashionable hero, and a man may easily become remarkable in London drawing-rooms; eccentricities of manner or some absurdity which flatters prevailing taste is sufficient. Though attention may thus be secured, it does not follow that envy and respect will thereby be aroused. Now Brummell possessed the special power of bending the public to his will. He was king of fashion, and reigned as an absolute monarch; he changed custom at will and pleasure, laid down the law upon subtle and unwritten points of breeding, and set up a new style of living, or rather of outward

show. He was a model, and indeed an idol;[1] restricted, futile, and empty as his influence may have been, it none the less incontestably modified the manners of his contemporaries.

One hundred and fifty years previously, Hamilton said of his Chevalier de Grammont, "He had the gift of ennobling the greatest commonplaces, and his ideas were so fashionable that not to submit to his taste was to disgrace oneself." In London the same might have been said of George Brummell from 1799 to about 1814. Grace, elegance, and easy distinction were shared by both of these men, but an attentive examination will show that these two heroes of fashionable idleness used very different methods to make their conquests. Grammont was alert, insinuating, and polished; he dressed, talked, and wrote marvellously well and without apparent effort. Brummell adopted a similar haughty repose, but in every case preserved an exclusiveness, and displayed a certain affectation. In the one man we see laughter,

[1] Bulwer, *Pelham*, chap. xxxii.

affability, cheerfulness, easy witticism. In the other man we find dry sarcasm, phlegmatic and intended to wound. We cannot say whether this perpetual aggressiveness was part of Brummell's nature. Possibly distance of time has caused his most famous utterances to lose their salt, or we are ourselves less inclined to appreciate a species of wit which speedily becomes monotonous, both in its origin and its effects.

If, however, Brummell seems to us to-day to be lacking in imagination, his other qualities counterbalance the defect. Indeed, he must have had a special gift to secure his incredible prestige. His strongest and indeed his most astonishing faculty is his imperturbable calm, his self-possession, and his invincible disdain. When it was necessary to keep people at arm's length, to wound, abandon, and overthrow them in public, Brummell was in his element. The author of *Granby* says: "No keeper of a menagerie could better show off a monkey than he could an 'original.' He could ingeniously cause the unconscious subject to place his own absurdities in the best point of view, and would

cloak his derision under the blandest cajolery." It is true that his implacable irony, his fatuity, and his unlimited effrontery might have disconcerted the most experienced.

"Brummell, where were you yesterday evening?" asked a friend; "we did not see you." "The fact is," replied the dandy, "that I was dining with a certain F——. Apparently he wished me to take some notice of him, hence the invitation. As he wanted to have something for his money, he begged me to choose the other guests myself. I therefore sent a word to Mildmay, Pierpoint, Alvanley, and some others. The dinner seemed likely to be most excellent and agreeable, but you can imagine my surprise when you hear what I have to tell you. Would you believe it, my dear fellow, the said F—— had the impertinence to sit down at table and dine with us!"

The character of his pose, which was rather insolent than witty in the true sense of the term, is here obvious. Thus, when invited by a rich but unknown City merchant, he answered with a gracious smile, "With all my heart, but swear that you will not breathe a word of it to

anybody." Then, when a nobleman reproached him with misleading his son, he answered, "Really, I did my best for the young man. Why, the other day I gave him my arm all the way from White's to Watier's." Another time, at the Ascot Races, he brought his horse before the carriage window of Lady N——, whose Society reputation was not of the best, and she accordingly expressed some surprise and satisfaction. Thereupon, assuming his most amiable air, the dandy began a little speech to prove that he was equally surprised to find himself at the side of Lady N——, but that he did not deserve her gratitude, for no one was there to see them together, and he was therefore risking his reputation in no way.

No one, it seems, could be more unlike the Chevalier de Grammont, whose cheerfulness is only completed by the happiness of others. Instead of a character light-hearted, anxious to please, polite, and giving free rein to his impulses, we suddenly find that we have to deal with a character always introspective, master of itself, and constantly working to produce

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George, Prince of Wales.

From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the National Gallery.

surprise while remaining unmoved. "I have observed," Pelham declares, "that the distinguished trait of people accustomed to good society is a calm, imperturbable quiet which pervades all their actions and habits from the greatest to the least: they eat in quiet, move in quiet, live in quiet, and lose their wife or even their money in quiet, while low persons cannot take up either a spoon or an affront without making such an amazing noise about it."[1] Brummell disdains to utter his words, but lets them drop. Nor does his insolence invariably need the help of language: it is equally apparent in his acts. The following instance related by one of his biographers is somewhat typical. In the course of a dinner at the Prince's house, he was observed suddenly to beckon to a waiter, "Tell Lord Worcester that I shall be happy to drink a glass of wine with him." As this worthy gentleman occupied a seat quite close to the dandy, it would have been simpler to address him directly. But Brummell did not think so, and as soon as the waiter returned he continued: "Now tell Lord Worcester that I

[1] Bulwer, *Pelham*, chap. i.

drink his health." Then, when this second errand had been performed, "Is his lordship ready?" and finally, with the same impassive countenance, "Then tell him I drink his health." [1] In cold print it is obvious that jesting of this kind is meaningless. Shades of manner cannot be reproduced, and the point must lie in the manner, the look, and the intonation. Although his face never betrayed more than the requisite amount of emotion, Brummell possessed remarkably expressive and mobile features. "Without affecting useless shortsightedness," says Lister, "he could assume that calm but wandering gaze which veers, as if unconsciously, round the proscribed individual, neither fixing nor to be fixed, neither occupied nor abstracted."

Indeed, however limited our experience of British customs, there is no need to be surprised at the success of George Brummell. As everybody knows, the English will never entertain a deep aversion for anything that betrays pride or obstinacy; indeed, they keep a reserve of indulgence for these faults, and

[1] Fitzgerald, *The Life of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 197.

are always ready to regard them as virtues when they see them justified by success. Notwithstanding his outward carelessness and his appearance of boredom, we can see in Brummell a man dominated by one supreme idea, a mind constantly on the alert, ready with a retort, and resolved to have the last word at any price. We must not lay too much stress upon the examples of Grammont or of the Comte d'Orsay at a later date. If these men were paramount in London by their grace of manner, they were exceptional cases. On the whole, the surest means of gaining the English heart is to use some little rudeness; extreme affability or excessive compliance can only produce a harmful effect. I am well aware that this principle might bear fruit in the most different countries of the world, but the application of it seems to me to be specially efficacious with people of British origin. On every occasion we feel that Brummell prefers to astonish rather than to attract, and that the effect produced on his side springs rather from distrust than from curiosity, from fear rather than from sympathy. In short, if we look at

him closely, we shall find, strange as it may seem, that he pleases by means of displeasing, or pleases at least only when he has displeased. It is, I believe, the most obvious of his tricks, and his usual if not his only stratagem. Bulwer Lytton defines the method when he says of one of his characters, "He gave offence too universally not to be greatly sought."

This phrase might easily be applied to Brummell; and notwithstanding the supreme indifference which he showed in choosing as his butts all about him, he was none the less the most flattered, the most favoured and courted man of fashion. At the races, at the Opera, and at balls he simply appeared. "Whenever you have not produced your effect, sit where you are; and when you have produced it, be off." The success of an entertainment depended upon the mere appearance of his blue coat. He was sparing of his speech, but a criticism or a word of praise from him could make or ruin a reputation. At that day a word from him was everything; and a story is told of a marchioness bringing

her daughter into Society and whispering in her ear, "Do you see that gentleman over there, near the door? No doubt he will come and speak to us. In that case, please try and leave him with a good opinion of you, for he is the illustrious Mr. George Brummell."

CHAPTER IV

About 1822, six years after Brummell had left England, Chateaubriand was able to say, "The dandy betrays the proud independence of his character by keeping his hat on his head, lounging upon a sofa, and stretching out his boots in the faces of ladies seated in admiration before him. He rides with a stick, which he carries like a wax taper, paying no attention to the horse which he happens to find between his legs. . . . It is said that he can hardly know whether he exists, whether the world is about him, whether it contains ladies, or whether he should greet his neighbour."[1]

It is thus obvious that Brummell's success had borne its fruit, and that his example had been unexpectedly triumphant. There was,

[1] Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, ed. Biré, vol. iv. p. 246.

moreover, no one else to serve as a model. While handsome George was reigning in Brighton, the Revolutionists in France had driven out the decent people. Most of these *émigrés* met once more in London, but wretched was their condition. Poverty-stricken and dying of hunger, they were obliged first of all to find some means of earning their living, and the cheerfulness with which all these noblemen set to work is well known. Some, like M. de Caumont, set up as bookbinders; others became coal merchants, like M. de Chavannes; others, again, dancing masters, like the Chevalier de Payen.[1] They snapped their fingers at fortune; and though constantly obliged to go without supper, they used to meet every evening to dance "to the violin of an assessor of the Parliament Court of Brittany."[2] Notwithstanding their cheerfulness, their lives were very secluded, and they were in no position to set the tone of Society. When the Court of France had been destroyed and its members scattered and reduced to

[1] Forneron, *Histoire Générale des Emigrés*, vol. ii. p. 41.
[2] Chateaubriand, *op. cit.* p. 245.

struggling for their daily bread, it is obvious that the English nobility speedily forgot the traditions of Versailles. Gentleness and affability, perfect politeness and charming geniality were graceful customs which speedily became a dead letter for the English; following their natural inclinations, they concealed themselves behind systematic arrogance, cold insolence, and a fierce scorn of vulgarity, of which characteristics Brummell himself was the marvellous personification. This new style was known as dandyism, and the dandies who modelled themselves upon the example of Beau George, even surpassing his extravagances, formed a sect, or even a dynasty, of eccentric fops, whose insolence was as phenomenal as their snobbishness was unbounded.

One of their compatriots, M. Gronow, a very young officer under the Regency, who published his memoirs about 1850, does not seem to have been favourably impressed by them. "How unspeakably odious — with a few brilliant exceptions such as Alvanley and others—were the dandies of forty years ago!

They were a motley crew, with nothing remarkable about them but their insolence. They were generally not high-born nor rich, nor very good-looking, nor clever, nor agreeable; and why they arrogated to themselves the right of setting up their own fancied superiority on a self-raised pedestal and despising their betters, Heaven only knows! They were generally middle-aged, some even elderly men, had large appetites and weak digestions, gambled freely, and had no luck. They hated everybody and abused everybody, and would sit together in White's bay window or the pit boxes at the Opera weaving tremendous crammers. They swore a good deal, never laughed, had their own particular slang, looked hazy after dinner, and had most of them been patronised at one time or other by Brummell and the Prince Regent."[1]

In the fashionable men of that age there was one point which enables us to discern one of the characteristics of that nineteenth century which promised to be the special age of upstarts. We find a considerable number

[1] Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 227.

of individuals, without birth or fortune, making their way among the titled aristocracy; for them dandyism was merely a means of distinction and of separation from the crowd. The Macaroni of earlier times was a dilettante who was himself his chief satisfaction; the dandy, on the other hand, is very often a mean, ambitious little soul, and in modern jargon, a hustler. Contemporary engravings will show him to us in a sordid garret, amid disorder of several days' standing, almost naked, busy varnishing his boots, ironing his frills, and arranging the apparatus in which he proposes to walk in the Park an hour later, in order to attract the attention of some fair one provided with this world's goods. Such a man, however, was merely the dandy of a moment, whereas Brummell, the sublime dandy, was more than this, and never deigned to cherish any ambition except such as could minister to his vanity. However, notwithstanding his dislike of intrigue, the confectioner's grandson is obviously stamped as an upstart, like the rest. Whether it be feigned or sincere, the ostentation with which he occasionally blackens

the character of those among whom he had forced his way is enough to prove our statement.

There is, however, every reason to assert that his mode of operation was original. Notwithstanding his plebeian origin and his malicious outbursts, Brummell remained a man whose inimitable grace was a constant subject of conversation. He gained credence and weight where others would have gained no more than the reputation of blockheads, and Captain Gronow gives us accurate information upon what was thought of his imitators. The strangest point is that this cynical idler did not confine his advances to the great nobles, but also made his way with great men. He whose constant care was to despise all real employment, who prided himself upon caring only for the trivialities of fashion, lived upon familiar terms with the most illustrious and upright characters of the English nation. Artists, orators, political leaders, and all the great names of his time belong to his acquaintance, and he invariably seemed to reach their level, thanks to his dexterity. We cannot

refrain from surprise at seeing him thus intimate and continually corresponding with the greatest poet and the most extraordinary adventurer of his time, the strange Lord Byron, who also had his moments of dandyism. In his case, as in others, was the same impetuosity and fire and the same blind passion. Fearful lest he should become fat, he starved himself, and then ate and drank to excess upon nights of relaxation. "The two preceding days," relates Thomas Moore, "Byron had taken nothing but a few biscuits, and had chewed mastic to stop the craving of his stomach. When he sat down to table he confined himself to lobster, and finished two or three lobsters to himself, gulping down sometimes between them a little liqueur glass of strong white brandy, sometimes a large glass of very hot water and then more neat brandy; of these he drank about half a dozen, and we then disposed of two bottles of claret between us about four o'clock in the morning."[1]

Beauty, it is said, would make Byron shed

[1] Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, vol. iv. p. 341.

LORD BYRON

From a Sketch by D'Orsay.

tears, but amid these romantic ecstasies he remained the victim of his English prejudices. His pride of rank, his vanity as a man of the world, unhinged him. He could only speak of Brummell "with trembling admiration and envy."[1] "I liked the dandies," he admits himself. "They were all very civil to me, although in general they disliked literary people, and persecuted and mystified Mme. de Staël,[2] Lewis,[3] Horace Twiss, and the like, most damnably. The truth is, that

[1] Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, vol. iv. p. 343.

[2] "It has been said that Mme. de Staël was deeply vexed at her failure to please Brummell. Her all-powerful coquetry was continually repelled by the coldness and eternal sarcasm of the dandy, and his capricious iciness. Corinne failed with Brummell as with Bonaparte, a similarity which recalls the statement of Lord Byron already quoted." (Barbey d'Aurevilly, *Du Dandysme et de George Brummell*, p. 67.) When Mme. de Staël came to London in 1814, the Regent showed a particular desire to make her acquaintance. He even invited himself one evening to a party of Lady Heathcote's in order to be introduced to her. The interview, however, did not come up to his expectations. No sooner had the conversation with the Prince begun than Mme. de Staël overwhelmed him with questions and praises, and went into such rapture over the beauty of his legs that His Royal Highness eventually felt some embarrassment. (Fitzgerald, *The Life of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 210.)

[3] Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775–1818), author of *The Monk*, *Tales of Terror*, and *Tales of Wonder*, novels which had a great success at that time. Lewis was intimate with Sir Walter Scott, whose early patron and literary guide he was.

though I gave up the business early, I had a tinge of dandyism in my minority, and probably retained enough of it to conciliate the great ones at five-and-twenty. I had gamed and drunk and taken my degrees in most dissipations, and having no pedantry and not being overbearing, we ran on quietly together. I knew them all, more or less, and they made me a member of Watier's (a superb Club at that time), being, as I take it, the only literary man, except two others (both men of the world), Moore and Spencer, in it."[1]

I fear that the poetry of the latter is no longer read, even in England; he wrote light and pleasing verse, somewhat empty and insipid, but carefully polished, and able to secure for its author the flattery and admiration of the society of his day. This William Robert Spencer[2] was characteristic of this

[1] Moore, *Memories of Byron*, vol. ii. p. 464.

[2] William Robert Spencer (1770–1834), a son of Lord Robert Spencer, himself the second son of the third Duke of Marlborough. Robert Spencer lived in London until 1825. Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, and Sydney Smith could be met at his house in Curzon Street. He only wrote occasional verse. His works were collected and published in 1835.

sect of imperturbable heroes. One day he was imprisoned for participation in a duel, and Thomas Moore came and asked to see him. Spencer thought it worth while to sacrifice a long-standing friendship to the pleasure of preserving his habitual cynicism. Without moving a muscle, he replied that he could not possibly be disturbed, as it was already midday and he must be dressed by four o'clock in any case. Like Brummell, and for similar reasons, Spencer went to France to die in solitude.

Moore alone was able to maintain his position to the end in this idle and perverse society of which he was so fond. No career could be more fortunate than that of the little Irishman, quick, lively, and brilliant, sometimes taking refuge in the country in order to put the last touches to his poems, again bringing his pleasing and seductive gaiety to the drawing-rooms of the Metropolis, always penniless, and always meeting in time some bookseller or rich lord who was able to revive his fortunes.

There is nothing surprising in an intimacy

between Brummell, Moore, and Spencer. The three were united by their own leaning to luxury and vanity. At about the same time the dandy found himself in contact with George Crabbe,[1] the author of *Tales in Verse*, *The Village*, the chaplain of the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir. Here was a good and honourable man, poor, affectionate, and thoughtful, rarely leaving his parish, and loving his garden more than anything else. We may well ask what community of taste could unite the lion of Watier's and this pastor in love with rustic life and pleased with the happiness of his own little world. It is difficult to answer the question. In any case, in his old days, when Crabbe became famous, he liked to recall his recollections of the famous Beau Brummell, then in exile and forgotten, and would readily quote examples of his fine humour, his courtesy, and his gift for talking amiably with everybody. This is indeed a

[1] George Crabbe (1754–1832) was first patronised by Burke, in whose house in London he met Fox and Sir Joshua Reynolds. His *Village* and his *Tales in Verse* were sufficient to establish his reputation. He was intimate with Moore, Rogers, and Sir Walter Scott, to whom he paid a visit at Edinburgh in his old age.

point of view from which we are not accustomed to observe our subject. It is possible that at certain times he was unable to resist the desire to forget his artifices, to throw off the mask, and to expand without fearing the mocking eye of his companions and rivals.

It was at the Regent's house and also at that of the Duchess of Devonshire that Brummell came into contact with the most famous of his contemporaries. Neither the Prince nor the Duchess had any real influence upon letters, but both seemed anxious to secure the esteem of the leading lights of literature. The banquet at Carlton House will be remembered and the toast proposed by His Royal Highness in honour of Walter Scott,[1]

[1] In 1820 George IV. conferred a baronetcy upon Walter Scott. Two years later the King of England went to pay a visit to his Scotch subjects. He was received with indescribable enthusiasm, and Scott led the manifestations organised in his honour. "You are the one Scotchman I have chiefly desired to see," said the sovereign. The two men then drank one another's health, and Walter Scott begged George IV. to give him the glass which he had just set to his lips. The favour was granted, and the poet put the glass in his pocket. Unfortunately, when he got home, he forgot to place the relic in safety, sat down upon it, and broke it into a thousand pieces. (Fitzgerald, *Life of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 302. Thackeray, *The Four Georges.*)

who came one evening to delight the company with his gentle humour and with the beautiful stories drawn from his fertile imagination. Well known, too, is the readiness with which the fair Duchess pensioned unfortunate authors, and how she supported Charlotte Smith[1] for the whole of her life. Fickle and capricious, but warm-hearted at times, the charming Georgiana is a fairly true model of the fashionable woman of the eighteenth century; she possessed considerable wealth, lived in great style, kept open house to the whole town when she led Society, painted her carriages with a new colour, introduced Nelson or Egyptian hats, translated Petrarch, studied the lyre, and dedicated her poetical attempts to the Abbé Delille.

"Vous dont la lyre enchanteresse
Unit la force a la douceur,
De la nature amant flatteur;
Vous qui l'embellissez sans cesse,
J'ose vous offrir en tremblant
De l'humble pré la fleur nouvelle;

[1] Charlotte Smith (1749–1806), prose writer and poet. Her best novels are *Emmeline*, *Ethelinda*, and *Desmond*, the latter a kind of apology for the French Revolution, and lastly, *The Old Manor House*, which was highly successful at that time.

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

From a painting by Thomas Gainsborough
in the possession of Earl Spencer.

Je la voudrais une immortelle,
Si vous acceptez le présent."[1]

With these insipid flatteries she addressed a specimen of her work to the author of the *Jardins*.[2]

[1] "You whose enchanting lyre
Unites strength and sweetness,
The loving flatterer of nature,
You who ever adorn nature,
To you I venture to offer in fear
This new flower from the humble meadow;
I would it were an everlasting flower,
If you accept the present."

[2] The Abbé Delille went into exile in 1795, and took refuge at Basle. After staying for two years at Switzerland, he went to Brunswick and thence to London, where he translated *Paradise Lost* and brought out a second edition of the *Jardins*, enriched with a description of the parks which he had seen in England and Germany. "The Abbé Delille," says Chateaubriand, "driven from the Continent by a sequence of Republican victories, had also come to settle in London. The body of exiles were proud to receive him, and the fact that he sang of our misfortunes was an additional reason for favouring his muse. He worked hard and this under compulsion, for Mme. Delille used to lock him up, and only let him out when he had gained his freedom by producing a certain amount of poetry. One day I went to call upon him; he kept me waiting, and then appeared with very red cheeks: it is said that Mme. Delille used to box his ears. I do not know the truth of this statement, but merely state what I saw. Who has not heard the Abbé Delille recite his poetry? He was a very good story-teller. His worn, ugly face, animated by his imagination, suited his whimsical style of narrative to a marvel, as it suited the character of his talent and his calling as abbé." (Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, vol. ii. p. 159.)

Like the Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Devonshire made her house a meeting-place for the Whig party. His Royal Highness, however, professed Liberalism to induce Parliament to pay his debts, whereas the Duchess was an honest partisan. The fact became obvious in 1784, when Fox began his struggle with Pitt. With a cockade in her hat and a scarf of the colours of her candidate across her breast, she was seen going round the countryside, with Lady Duncannon and the Duchess of Rutland, entering cottages and shops, strengthening waverers and collecting votes, until the day when she purchased the vote of a butcher with a kiss. Fox was triumphant in Westminster, but his party was defeated elsewhere. The defeat was to continue for a long time. He and his friends therefore resigned themselves, and the boon companions of the Prince and Duchess had no resource but to take their revenge by means of epigrams as soon as the torches had been lighted.[1]

[1] "The late Duke (of Devonshire) was one of those impassive characters who allow nothing to ruffle their serenity, high

A Caricature of Charles James Fox's entry into St. Stephen's, Westminster.

From an old Print.

At a later date, at the time of his ruin, when he was obliged to leave London, Brummell carried away with him the most valuable of his curiosities. These relics of his prosperity accompanied him to Calais, and afterwards to Caen, though their number had then grown remarkably small. The day was to arrive when of all his collections the only thing left to him was a heavy album with clasps and corners of massive silver, gilt edges, and covered with dark blue velvet. The gilt was losing its brilliancy and the velvet its nap, but Brummell continued to attach great value to it. Long before, he had gathered autographs and famous signatures in this album. Wits and poets had condescended to embellish

born, well bred, with all the formality of the *vieille cour*. He was the head of the Whig party, the Duchess the active mover in all the cabals of that day. I remember the sensation created in town by her personal canvass for the buff and blue interest at the famous election of Charles Fox for Westminster, when she drove about in a splendid carriage to solicit the votes of the different tradesmen. . . . The Duchess was a great favourite of George IV., then Prince of Wales, who derived from her society much of that high-bred manner for which he was always remarkable. At length she died, in 1806, and with her faded away the splendid gaieties of Devonshire House." (Cornelia Knight and Thomas Raikes, *Personal Reminiscences*, pp. 317–318.)

it with some of their verse, and in his gloomy solitude the old hero of Carlton House found material to flatter his insatiable pride. Before his death, however, we shall find him parting with these precious relics. "If you are fond of poetry," he wrote to Miss —— when sending her the volume, "and you have nothing more dull to read, you may perhaps find something in my old album to yawn over. What it contains was written in other and happier days, and most of them were given me by the authors *themselves*, long before their minor productions had assumed any other form than that of manuscript: such as the Duchess of Devonshire, poor Byron, Sheridan, and Lords Erskine and John Townshend—all now peacefully sleeping in their graves."[1]

It is indeed curious to turn over the leaves of this volume, for the reason that it shows us to what an extent Brummell's life was linked with that of his best known contemporaries. Byron is again one of those whom we meet among the first. Two pieces of verse from his hand occupy one page of the album. I cannot

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 105.

say whether they form part of the poet's complete works in our day, but in 1844 they existed only in manuscript. The first seems to have been composed for a girl who had taken an oath upon a lock of hair, and the second seems to apply to the same person, in view of the fact that it deals with a similar oath and that the author complains of cruel treachery. Farther on we find humorous verse from George Canning,[1] the future minister, and then a piece from the great Fox himself, in which, notwithstanding the embarrassment which his passion for cards caused him at every moment, he sings of the feverish hours spent around the green table. Then there is a long sarcastic dialogue by Sheridan, "The Eagle and the Wren," in the manner of Virgil, in which two shepherds challenge one another to rivalry on their rustic pipes. The two shepherds, however, Thomas and Richard, are none other than Sheridan himself and

[1] George Canning (1770–1827), one of the greatest of English orators. At times a poet, he used his powers of verse to ridicule his political adversaries. His parody of Schiller's *Räuber* is a biting satire upon the *sans-culottes*. He also wrote an admirable poem in another style on the death of his son.

Lord Erskine. The latter, as is probably known, served in the Navy and the Army, and then played a part of some importance in public affairs. When peace was concluded with the Directory, he went to France to act as representative at the *Fête des Industriels*, and eventually accepted the post of Lord Chancellor. But Lord Erskine owes his reputation more to his wit than to anything else.[1]

If we may trust George Brummell's collection of autographs, he seems to have had numerous rivals. Here Lord Melbourne addresses a pompous eulogy to the bust of Charles Fox, there John Townshend, a dignified and genial old gentleman, devotes some harmless verses to praising the charms of the divine Lady Besborough. Many other names of importance in the history of English society appear. Fitzpatrick, the gentleman who distinguished himself during the American

[1] Lord Erskine (1748–1824) entered the Navy in 1764 and the Army in 1768. In 1775 he changed his mind again, and entered the law. Afterwards he entered politics, and becoming member of Parliament, he was appointed Lord Chancellor under the Grenville ministry.

War,[1] Mrs. O'Neill, the Hon. George Lamb, the translator of Catullus, and finally Her Grace the Duchess of Devonshire; nor is she the only lady whose handwriting will be found afterwards among the papers of the Beau.

Once again this strange personality arouses our surprise. Nowhere does he diverge so entirely from the ordinary fashionable man as in his behaviour to ladies. Usually, at any rate among ourselves, it is understood that men who have laid themselves out to attract have always made flirtation and trifling their chief object. Handsome fortunes, unexpected conquests, passionate intrigues are their preoccupation, as any two pages of their memoirs will sufficiently show. In the case of Brummell nothing of the kind is apparent. Though his personal attractions were not small, and though he was constantly in the society of the prettiest and probably the least prudish ladies in the realm, he never showed the

[1] Richard Fitzpatrick (1747–1813), the boon companion of Fox, who brought him into political life, was a member of the House of Commons, where he opposed the American War with all his might. None the less, he took part in the campaign as a soldier, and was Minister of War in 1803.

faintest signs of libertinism. Those who speak to us of him hardly ever give us the smallest hint of any love affair on his part. Barbey d'Aurevilly speaks of a certain Henrietta Wilson whose favours he sought, but this business does not seem in any way prominent among his love affairs. Are we then to assume that his discretion in this matter was excessive? Possibly upon this subject the English hold a point of view somewhat different from ours, and strange as it may seem to Southern minds, I believe that they are less inclined to advertise successes of this nature. The Duke of Wellington, who prided himself upon his taste for female beauty, and, as Chateaubriand says, "spread his fame across the quadrilles as a kind of snare to catch ladies,"[1] was admirably careful in this respect, with the result that none of his intrigues were known during his lifetime.

I do not think that Brummell was ever obliged to take precautions of this nature. Tenderness and affection of manner, insinu-

[1] Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, vol. iv. p. 245.

ating humour, sentimental effusions, and all the other arts and crafts for the captivation of the fair sex possessed no attraction for him. It is not improbable that he thought them a ridiculous mode of trifling, and if it be true that hearts can only be won at such a price there is no doubt that he obviously preferred not to enter the competition. Constant affectation must necessarily produce aridity in the long run. As a result of his mental isolation, he was able to overpower in himself and to despise in others certain instincts, for which he regarded the vulgar as the only possible prey. Moreover, vanity left no room in him for any other sentiment. None the less, he observed the ordinary rules of politeness towards women, and usually pushed his condescension so far as to declare his admiration immediately and without concealment. The results were inappreciable, and Brummell would ask the objects of his fancy to put an end to his torments with the same carelessness as he would have said "Good-morning" or "Good-evening." This was quite in his manner.

This fact is as undoubted as it is unusual;

at the same time, it appears that he had no positive distaste for the society of ladies, and appreciated their friendship. With them his cold sarcasm and effrontery is seen at times to disappear, and he becomes attentive. He used to scribble verses for their benefit, draw little sketches, and write notes in high-flown language, utterly ridiculous but probably considered adorable by the recipients. These assiduities are so out of harmony with what we already know of his character that we should be inclined to disbelieve them had we not certain letters which give us precise information upon the question. It is extremely difficult to discover what service Brummell rendered to Miss Georgiana Seymour, but he must have shown some readiness to serve, or he would hardly have received the following letter :—

"I am more obliged to you than I can express for your note: be assured that your approbation of my conduct has given me very sincere pleasure. This is the only means I have of telling you so, for I am in such disgrace that I do not know if I shall be

taken to the play; in any case, I shall be watched: therefore accept my most cordial thanks, and believe that I shall remember your good-nature to me on this occasion with gratitude to the end of my life.

"—— does not yet know how unkindly I have been treated, but is more affectionate than ever, because he sees I am unhappy. We did not arrive in town till seven last night. To-morrow they go to Covent Garden, and perhaps I may be allowed to be one of the party.

"Please don't neglect my drawing: you would make me very happy by lending me the yellow book again; the other I don't dare ask for, much as I wish for it. Adieu! I shall be steady in my opinion of you, and always remain yours very sincerely,

"GEORGIANA A. F. SEYMOUR."[1]

Long after he had received this letter the dandy noted in a corner of it, "This beautiful creature is dead." Four years before his own death he presented it to Miss X——, who had already inherited by anticipation his album of autographs.

[1] Jesse, *Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 91.

Brummell had another friend in the clan of lady politicians as well as the Duchess of Devonshire—a friend whose eccentric talents and strange destiny made her at least as extraordinary a figure as the Duchess. I refer to Hester Stanhope,[1] daughter of Charles Stanhope, Viscount Mahon, a man who was so warm a partisan of the Revolutionists that

[1] Lady Hester Stanhope, born in London in 1776, died at Djihoum (Syria) in 1839. Her childhood was spent in the country under the care of governesses and servants, whom she treated as slaves; she grew up as she would, and gradually displayed the bold mind, the despotic character, and the indomitable pride which was to carry her through so strange a series of adventures. Her tendency to misanthropy was exceptionally developed by reason of her unusual situation in the house of William Pitt. She was all-powerful until her uncle's death in 1806, when she believed there was no further place for her in London. She left England, and her hatred of her country became in her case, as in Byron's, an incurable disease. After a series of wild adventures, she settled at Djihoum, near Saida. There, upon one of the most precipitous spurs of Lebanon, she built her strange palace, a confused mass of low huts, forming an inextricable labyrinth of hiding-places and traps. She lived amid barbarian slaves, surrounded by hostile tribes, who respected her as a mysterious being. She came to an unfortunate end. The pension which she drew from the English Government was sequestrated at the instance of her numerous creditors, and she was reduced to the utmost misery. She then dismissed her servants, slaughtered all her horses, and died alone in her roofless castle, exposed to wind and rain. Lady Hester left memoirs in which she refers to George IV. as a "worthless individual."

LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

he published from his solitude on the upper levels of democratic folly an apology for the French Revolution, in answer to the speeches of Burke. At the age of twenty Lady Hester was nearly six feet high, and was neither pretty nor amiable. She despised philanthropists, disregarded every social tenet or convention, and when it became impossible for her to agree with her father, she went to seek refuge with William Pitt, her uncle. At the age of twenty-three she knew all that a statesman could know, appointed colonels, dismissed generals, gathered partisans, and countersigned more than one ordinance in the minister's chair and under his eyes, as he watched her with a smile. The story of her travels in Asia, with their fabulous incidents, her intrigues with the Sheiks of Syria, her proclamation as Queen of Tadmor, would provide material for several volumes. Independent, unsociable, and adventurous, contemporary with Lord Byron and resembling him in more than one point, Lady Hester Stanhope is one of the most curious types of English society at the outset of the nineteenth century.

In 1838 Lamartine succeeded in paying her a visit. Some years previously a friend of Captain Jesse had been the recipient of a similar favour. Seated cross-legged, dressed in Turkish fashion, in her Oriental palace, the Queen of Tadmor received the traveller graciously, though throughout the interview she declined to talk of any other subject than the manners and customs of the Arabs. Not the smallest allusion was made to her compatriots in general. Once only did she seem to look back upon the past, to ask news of Wellington and Brummell, and wished to know what had become of the Beau. This was therefore a point upon which Pitt's niece could not conceal her curiosity.

She had known him in past days, as all had known him in the time of his prosperity, when he came to lean on the door of her carriage in Bond Street. We have referred to a sharp rebuke which his malicious observation brought down upon him, and the cleverness with which he was able to turn the point of it. If we may judge from certain letters, it seems that she was upon comparatively familiar terms

with him. "If you are as conceited as formerly," she wrote in August 1803, "I shall stand accused of taking your groom, to give me an opportunity of writing to you for his character. All the inquiry I wish to make upon the subject is, to be informed whether you were as well satisfied with James Ell when you parted with him as when he had Stiletto under his care? If so, I shall despatch him at the end of next week to Walmer with my new purchases. . . ." The letter concludes as follows: "I met with a rival of yours in affectation upon the Continent, William Hill! I fear it will be long ere this country will again witness his airs, as he is now a prisoner; this perhaps you are glad of, as the society of statues and pictures has infinitely improved him in this wonted qualification, and therefore rendered him a still more formidable competitor."[1]

Thus we see that Lady Hester Stanhope assumed a lofty tone, and although she thus constantly took the offensive, this self-willed and masculine lady could not escape the influence of Brummell. Moreover, the arrogance of the

[1] Jesse, *Life of Beau Brummell*, pp. 93 and 94.

dandy was not absolutely displeasing to her, and that scorn of their neighbour which both agreed in professing naturally provided them with an excellent ground of common interest. A few conversations had speedily brought them together, and though they persistently flung home truths at one another in private, in order to prove their independence, they were united in public by a kind of tacit complicity and sympathy which they would not have confessed to one another for anything in the world.

Among the ladies who were friends of George Brummell the most faithful and devoted was certainly the Duchess of York. She was a niece of Frederick II., and had married a favourite son of George III. This preference of his is somewhat difficult to explain in view of the utter mediocrity of the Prince. At sixteen years of age he was a colonel in command of the English troops intended to confront the armies of the Republic in Holland; notwithstanding defeats, he rose to the rank of Commander-in-Chief. His mistress at that time was a Mrs. Clarke, in whom he placed blind confidence.

The lady took advantage of this to sell commissions in the Army with the connivance of her lover. Then, when the Prince declined to pay her regular pension, she did not hesitate to reveal the secret of this combination to the public.[1] Doubtless the Duchess was well aware of the abominable traffic which her husband carried on. She was a person of great dignity, and her discreet behaviour was in admirable contrast with the society which surrounded the Princes. Rowlandson and Gillray did not shrink from displaying to the public gaze their cartoons with the Prince Regent in an attic with Mrs. Fitzherbert

[1] "When he tired of her, he dismissed his mistress with a miserable pension which he was not even honest enough to pay regularly. She complained and grew angry, and was disdainfully threatened with the whip and the pillory. She then began a frontal attack upon her former lover. He had said one day, at a time when he could refuse her nothing, "As you are my favourite, you have more power in this country than the Queen." This was true, and she gave proof of the fact. The inquiry before the Parliament showed that she had sold commissions in the English Army, and that as her business grew, like that of a successful merchant, she had also sold high ecclesiastical offices, and even the right of preaching at Court. The wave of scandal grew every day, and threatened to overwhelm every person of position and authority in England." (A. Filon, *La Caricature en Angleterre*, p. 158.)

occupied in mending his old clothes, but they invariably showed a singular respect for the Duchess of York.

Several letters of hers, written in French, remain to us; though somewhat dry and laconic, they clearly show her interest in George Brummell.

"You announce your bad news so gracefully that it loses all its unpleasantness," she writes from the country. "However, I cannot but share your regret at the loss of all our proposed festivities, which have disappeared with the loss of our lottery ticket; I send my share in this herewith, and I hope most sincerely with you that it may be Fortune's last ill turn to us, and that in every other circumstance of your life she may always be favourable to you. In justice to myself, you may be persuaded that no one can be more sincerely interested in your happiness and in all that concerns you.

"I have nothing to tell you of my lonely life which can arouse your curiosity, as I have seen no one interesting since your departure. I hope that you will soon come back to this district, and that I may be allowed to repeat

The Marriage of Mrs. Fitzherbert and George IV. ***From a Caricature.***

Charles James Fox is holding Mrs. Fitzherbert's left hand, and Colonel Hanger's head can be seen between them. Lord North is seen sitting fast asleep!

the assurances of sincere friendship and esteem with which I remain your most affectionate friend and servant, F."

Again, on her birthday, Brummell offers his patroness a present of a little dog of rare breed, which calls forth the following letter:—

"WINDSOR, *May 9th.*

"I cannot say how pleased I am by the kind wishes which you have sent me for my birthday, and the charming present which the Duke has forwarded to me from you. Pray accept my sincere thanks for the pretty little dog; it is an emblem of fidelity, and I am pleased to flatter myself that it will be emblematical of the nature of our friendship, upon which I place the greatest value.

"I have a racking cough, which seems likely to be the death of me, and if it has not finished me off by the beginning of next month, I hope to return to London by that time, and one of the pleasantest prospects of my stay will be the pleasure of meeting you, and of finding an opportunity to repeat that I am ever your affectionate friend and servant, F."[1]

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, pp. 191, 192, and 193.

It must be admitted that these letters possess no great general interest, in the usual sense of the term, but they may give an idea of the relations between Brummell and the Duchess of York. It is somewhat astonishing to see that he secured the esteem of this great English lady, who was somewhat severe and rigid upon questions of social distinction, and who would never have anything to do with the rakes of Carlton House or with the tribe of morganatic wives, legitimate or illegitimate mistresses, with which the sons of George III. were surrounded. Tradition represents her as neither a fool nor ugly, but in any case she does not seem to have been lavish with her friendship. Nor, again, was she prone to exaggeration. Upon her death-bed she wished to send a word of farewell to Lord Lauderdale, another of her intimate friends, and wrote as follows:—

"My dear Friend, — I am packing up, for I am to start immediately. Accept the good wishes of your devoted F."[1]

[1] A. Filon, *La Caricature en Angleterre*, p. 161.

CHAPTER V

BRUMMELL attached himself more especially to the Duke of York after his rupture with the Prince of Wales; this event took place in 1811, and the breach was never healed. We have now to consider which of the two was first in the wrong. As regards the Prince, it seems to be generally admitted that he had no great scruples upon the score of loyalty, and that though his friends were numberless, he broke with them all in turn, and for no very obvious reason.[1]

Lord Barrymore and George Hanger are among the most illustrious victims of his fickleness. In any case, I am inclined to think that Brummell was the first to blame. The habit of inflicting indiscriminate and reckless affronts is bound to become pure and simple effrontery

[1] "He hates without a cause, and never forgives," said an officer of his daughter's household. (Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 534.)

sooner or later. After amusing himself at the expense of his equals and superiors, a day came when he attempted, at first unconsciously and involuntarily, to practise at the expense of His Royal Highness in person. And, finally, it is undoubted that as his taste for this practice grew, he thought such audacity smart and in the best of form.

To begin with, however, he attacked Mrs. Fitzherbert. The Prince, who amused himself without embarrassment as he pleased, never wholly abandoned his former mistress, who always preserved some attraction in his eyes. In 1811 she still possessed great influence over him, and seems to have shown singular tact in hiding his weaknesses from the world. She even supervised his correspondence, and was constantly offering advice or remonstrance: "Do not write to So and So; she is careless, and leaves her papers lying about;" or again, if he became too unreasonable: "Be quiet, Prince, you are drunk this evening."[1]

[1] *Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope;* see Forgues, *Originaux et beaux esprits de l'Angleterre*, vol. i. p. 190.

Like Thackeray, in his *History of the Four Georges*, Lady Stanhope displays great severity towards the Regent, and

It must be admitted that it was highly audacious, or, if you please, singularly tactless for Brummell to seek a quarrel in so high a place. One of the ladies in the Prince's train had attempted to figure as the rival of Mrs. Fitzherbert, and the dandy espoused her cause. From pinpricks and sarcasms they reached bitter ironies, until one evening, at a ball

relates of him certain tricks of bad taste in her memoirs. "One of his favourite jokes," she relates, "was to invite himself to dinner with those of his so-called friends whom he knew to be in straitened circumstances. The invitation included not only the Prince, but a dozen guests nominated by him; the poor wretch upon whom this so-called privilege fell, was at his wits' ends to pay the cost of the entertainment. One of these unfortunates, after running head over ears into debt, to meet such a demand upon his hospitality, relates the manner of his reward. One day he was present at the Prince's toilet. 'I wish,' said His Royal Highness, 'to show you my thanks for your civility to me.' This promising speech was accompanied by an action no less promising; for the Prince, rummaging in one of his cupboards, pulled out a box in which he proceeded anxiously to search. His guest expected some agreeable present of jewels or lace, perhaps a round sum of money frankly offered. At length, after a delay purposely prolonged, there appeared from the mysterious box a wig, of all things. 'There,' said the Prince, handing it over to him, 'as you are getting bald, is a very superior wig, made by ——;' and he named a maker who was by no means famous. The guest was obliged to lay a stern restraint upon himself, lest he should reply to this pretended generosity with an insult." (*Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope*, vol. ii. p. 100; see Forgues, *Originaux et beaux esprits de l'Angleterre*, vol. i. pp. 187 and 188.)

given by Lady Jersey, Brummell undertook to call Mrs. Fitzherbert's carriage, and substituted the word "Mistress" in place of the title ordinarily given to married ladies. It is obvious that he took great care to emphasise the distinctive syllable, and that someone was equally careful to draw the attention of the Prince to the language of his favourite. His Royal Highness displayed some ill-temper in consequence. Thereupon, as it was necessary to retain the advantage, Brummell did not hesitate to make the Prince his butt. There was at Carlton House a hall-porter of such magnificent height and corpulence that he could look over the gates of the courtyard, and could never get more than his face into his box. He was known as Big Ben. About the same time, the Heir-Apparent began to grow stout. Brummell thought it would be laughable to baptize the master with the servant's name, and as Mrs. Fitzherbert was also growing stout, he seized the opportunity of giving her the Jewish name of Benina. No malice could have been more calculated to arouse the anger of a man who claimed

to his dying day that he retained the vivacity of the youthful fop, and groaned deeply when he saw his figure gradually disappearing, as his corpulence increased.

Both parties were thus ready for a final breach, and nothing was wanting but the occasion. This was forthcoming at the house of Mr. Charles Ellis, afterwards Lord Seaford, in the course of a ball at Claremont, at which the Prince and Mrs. Fitzherbert were present. Brummell had not been invited, and the omission was apparently intentional; he therefore invited himself. He arrived from London in a post-chaise, and was preparing to cross the threshold of the house when he met His Royal Highness, who gently urged him to retire, that he might not disoblige Mrs. Fitzherbert. "If you persist in appearing," continued the Prince, "I shall stop the ball at once." Without replying, Brummell turned on his heels, entered his post-chaise, and went back to town.

Though he had had time to foresee this breach, George Brummell must have been surprised when he discovered that he had at

length exhausted the patience of someone. None the less, he put a bold face on the matter, and taking the offensive, proceeded to calumniate his master everywhere, repeating the most disgraceful scandal, and saying that now he had a firm grip he intended to make an end of his opponent. His Royal Highness replied as well as he could, but it was useless for him to repeat everywhere that Brummell "was only fit to make the reputation of a tailor"; Brummell defeated him at every turn, and finally won the victory. "I have made him what he is," he declared to Colonel MacMahon,[1] "and I can therefore unmake him." In short, notwithstanding his usually phlegmatic character, Brummell displayed so much obstinacy and so happy a mixture of hauteur and astuteness that he succeeded in securing public favour. Not content with

[1] After Brummell's disgrace, MacMahon was one of the Regent's favourites. "An Irishman of low birth and obsequious manner, he was a little man, his face red, covered with pimples, always dressed in the blue and buff uniform, with his hat on one side, copying the air of his master, to whom he was a prodigious foil, and ready to execute any commissions which in those days were somewhat complicated." (Cornelia Knight and Thomas Raikes, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 305.)

gaining the laughter on his side, he also deprived the Prince of some of his old friends, such as Sir Henry Mildmay[1] and Thomas Moore, who dedicated to him his translations from *Anacreon*, and polished his prettiest odes to Love at the table of Carlton House. On February 13, 1812, in the clubs of St. James's, a parody was passed about of a famous letter, written by the Prince to the Duke of York, his brother;[2] the following verses by Moore formed part of it:—

"Neither have I resentments, nor wish there should come ill
To mortal—except (now I think on't) Beau Brummell,
Who threaten'd last year, in a superfine passion,
To cut me, and bring the old King into fashion."

[1] Gronow quotes him among the English who came habitually to Paris under the Restoration, and were constantly present at Tortoni's. "Among the English persons of note who usually met at this place I recollect Lords Brudenell Bruce, Bingham, and Chesterfield; also Lord Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke, whom the French denominated *l'air bête*, not that the noble lord was by any means deficient in intellect, but the envy and jealousy of the French were piqued; for he was extremely handsome, and his equipages were the finest in Paris. Sir Henry Mildmay, with his beautiful and accomplished wife, created an immense sensation." (Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. ii. p. 285.)

[2] George IV. had a mania, when he was in difficulties, for writing long letters, which he arranged to meet the public eye. In the letter to which reference is here made, his political opinions were mixed up with general observations of every kind.

The following year, in July 1813, the four leaders of Watier's Club—Mildmay, Alvanley,[1] Brummell, and Pierpoint[2]—arranged to give a masked ball. All the details of the entertainment had been settled, when they met with an unforeseen obstacle. Was the Prince, who was then at variance with George Brummell and Sir Henry Mildmay, to be invited? The former, with a touch of self-conceit, declared that he was ready to forget all his differences with the Heir-Apparent. But in order to avoid a rebuff, Pierpoint was commissioned to sound the Prince upon

[1] "To Lord Alvanley was awarded the reputation, good or bad, of all the witticisms in the clubs, after the abdication of the throne of dandyism by Brummell; . . . not only was Alvanley considered the wittiest man of his day in England, but during his residence in France, and tours through Russia and other countries, he was universally admitted to possess not only great wit and humour but *l'esprit français* in its highest perfection, and no greater compliment could be paid him by foreigners than this. He was one of the rare examples (particularly rare in the days of the dandies, who were generally sour and spiteful) of a man combining brilliant wit and repartee with most perfect good nature. His manner, above all, was irresistible; and the slight lisp, which might have been considered as a blemish, only added piquancy and zest to his sayings." (Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. i. pp. 136 and 320.)

[2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 70.

the subject. It was immediately obvious that the Prince was keenly anxious to be present at the ball. An invitation was therefore sent to him, and when he arrived on the evening in his coach, each of the four hosts took a torch and went to the door to receive him. Naturally the witnesses of the scene waited impatiently to see what would be the attitude upon this occasion of "the First Gentleman in Europe." The result was disappointing to everybody. Meeting Pierpoint and Alvanley, the Prince bowed to them deeply, and exchanged very cordial handshakes. When he reached Sir Henry Mildmay, he contented himself with muttering some unintelligible words. Then came Brummell. Impassive and surly, the Prince passed him by, and affected to ignore his existence the whole evening.

"If," he said later, "George had taken to heart the lesson which I wished to give him, I should have been ready to be reconciled to him." This was but an excuse invented after the occurrence. If the Prince had really wished to renew their former

intimacy, he would have employed other methods. Moreover, he would have had many such opportunities at a later time. But he was in fact unable to pardon Brummell's mockeries, and after his accession, when he was crossing to Calais and found the Beau in poverty and misery, George IV. none the less preserved his cold, sulky, and revengeful manner.

Meanwhile the struggle continued with obstinacy, and each party strove to retain the upper hand. Some days later, Brummell was walking down Bond Street with Lord F——, and suddenly found himself face to face with His Royal Highness on the arm of Lord Moira. In conformity with his attitude upon the evening of the ball, the Prince stopped and talked for a few minutes with Lord F—— without deigning to cast a glance at the ex-favourite. Brummell with imperturbable gravity greeted Lord Moira, inquired after his health and discussed the weather; hardly had the Prince turned to go when he heard Brummell ask in a loud voice, "F——, who is your fat friend?"

Similar scenes were of constant occurrence. At every moment the Prince would run up against this miserable dandy, this impudent fop, who, notwithstanding his disgrace and approaching ruin, insisted upon having the last word. One evening on leaving the Opera, the Prince Regent found his path obstructed by an individual in a blue cloak, who was leaning with his back to him upon the checktaker's bar, and appeared to be blocking the exit on purpose. He speedily recognised this blue back, and stopped in hesitation, not knowing what to do. Never had he seemed more ill at ease, while the other, pretending ignorance and immovably rigid, continued to yawn upon the scene before him. At length a witness of the scene, a common friend, came forward to end it by tapping the unknown upon the shoulder. Then Brummell, for he it was, deigned to turn his head with his habitual condescension, his irritating and invincible scorn. Slowly he moved from the exit, but without taking his eye from the Prince, and both of them, the one motionless and the

other pursuing his road, thus continued silently to look at one another, until a crowd of playgoers separated them.[1]

Unfortunately, the struggle was conducted upon unequal terms, for reasons entirely pecuniary. As long as he "lived," if the term may be employed, at Carlton House, Brummell made so good and judicious a use of his income that he succeeded in posing as a wealthy man, and maintained his place among the greatest names of the kingdom. He was a visitor at clubs, though not a habitual visitor. At any rate, he did not go there to bet. It was not until about

[1] "That Brummell seized every opportunity that came in his way of teasing the Regent may be judged from the following circumstance which passed before my own eyes. His Royal Highness was going to the Picture Gallery in Pall Mall, and Brummell, who was walking with some other man about ten yards in front of me, was exactly opposite the door of the Exhibition as the low, dark red carriage stopped. Brummell evidently saw it and saw who was in it, although he pretended not to do so, and when the two sentinels presented arms, he, with an air of affected surprise and mock dignity which was most amusing, gravely raised his hat, as if the salute had been to him; as he did this he paused, turning his head very graciously towards the sentries and his back to the carriage window, which he was quite close to. I saw, as I passed, the angry look of the Regent, but he said nothing." (Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 536.)

1812 that he seriously began gambling. At that time many famous clubs existed: Arthur's, Almack's, and Boodle's;[1] Brooke's, where the members of the Whig party were frequently to be found, and to which Fox, Gibbon, and Sheridan used to make their way arm in arm; Watier's,[2] the dandies' club, to which Byron often refers; and finally White's,[3] in St. James's Street, which was the meeting-place of the ultra Tories. Brummell found the doors of all these establishments open to him, and gambling for exorbitant stakes was constant in every one of them. Thus Fox was able to lose two hundred guineas

[1] Boodle's Club, nicknamed the "Club du Savoir-Vivre," was situated in St. James's Street, No. 2.

[2] See p. 56, note 2.

[3] To be elected a member of White's and to be given the Order of the Garter were, according to Sir William Fraser, the two chief distinctions that a man could gain. This Club was in fact more exclusive than any other. At the time of his stay in London, Prince Louis Napoleon did not venture to appear there, and the Comte d'Orsay, whose social reputation was everywhere high, could never secure his election. (See Sir William Fraser, *Napoleon III.*, p. 16.) White's Club continues to remain in St. James's Street, opposite the Devonshire Club. Its political character has disappeared, but the famous balcony remains where Wellington, Brummell, and other dandies used to lounge.

and Gibbon five hundred in less than an hour. "Next to winning," the latter declared, "losing is the greatest pleasure on earth." At Watier's, things were the same. In the course of a few games of whist a certain baronet, a contemporary of Jesse, was relieved of ten thousand pounds.[1]

Brummell, at any rate at first, was more fortunate. He is said to have won two hundred and sixty thousand pounds at one throw—a considerable windfall for a man whose whole property cannot have amounted to much more. All his friends advised him to invest the sum. Brummell listened attentively, promised to take their advice, and three days afterwards lost the whole to the last halfpenny. Fortune, however, continued to favour him for some time. While he was taking advantage of this season of luck, he happened to be playing one evening at Brooke's with Alderman Combe, a wealthy brewer and Lord Mayor of London. "What do you stake?" cried Brummell. "Twenty-five guineas." "Done," returned the Beau. He then won

[1] See the *Morning Post* of June 30, July 8 and 15, 1806.

twelve games running, and said as he pocketed the stakes, "Thank you, Alderman; henceforward I will drink no porter but yours." "Very good, sir," replied the brewer; "I wish all the good-for-nothings in London would say the same.'

In any case, from this time forward Brummell's purse began to run dry, and the following years were marked by reverses of fortune which led straight to ruin. I refer to the years immediately before and after the battle of Waterloo. The English troops were coming back from Spain, and younger sons who had escaped the perils of La Coruña and Torres Vedras, seized the opportunity of levying contributions upon the property of their elders. The gambling mania redoubled in vigour. After the campaign in Belgium matters changed. Wellington and his lieutenants, Lord Anglesey, Lord Raglan, Sir Hussey Vivian, were followed by Blücher with the Prussian and Hanoverian commanders. In a few days the whole town swarmed with foreign uniforms, threatening busbys, gigantic plumes, shakos, and caps of every kind.

Never was a more amusing and motley spectacle to be seen than this flood of foreigners with their pockets full of money which they were ready to scatter abroad. There were festivals and entertainments, masked balls, and a perpetual round of pleasures; at Almack's balls, in the clubs and public places the Allies became the rage, and every evening before dinner they met at Hyde Park, where the Prince Regent appeared on horseback in great pomp, accompanied by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield,[1] Lord Sefton,[2] and the Ladies Molyneux. Welling-

[1] Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, another favourite of George IV., "was a handsome man, and owed his introduction at Court to his musical talents. He was a lieutenant in the artillery, and by chance quartered with his regiment at Brighton. The Prince, who was always fond of music, then gave frequent concerts at the Pavilion; someone happened to mention that a young officer of artillery was a proficient on the violoncello. An invitation was sent, the royal amateur was pleased, the visits became more frequent, and the fortune of the young lieutenant was assured." (Cornelia Knight and Thomas Raikes, *Personal Reminiscences*, p. 306.) Eventually Sir Benjamin Bloomfield became peer of England and Ambassador at Stockholm. He was as great a favourite with King Bernadotte as he had been with the Prince Regent.

[2] Though he was hunchbacked, Lord Sefton was regarded as one of the most exquisite dandies, and rode in Hyde Park every day. He had attracted attention by the excellence of his table,

ton was cheered, old Blücher[1] pointed out, as also were Lady Mountjoy, Lady Louisa Lambton, and the Duchess of Rutland in her coach, with her lacqueys powdered and looking like archbishops. Hyde Park must have been a charming place at that time, if we can trust the engravings and descriptions of the age. There was no vulgar crowd, no thronged paths, but cows and deer running amid the trees, a thousand streams crossing the grass and lawns, while hardly could the surrounding houses be distinguished through the foliage.[2]

Meanwhile what was Brummell's occupation? Unfortunately, the "sublime dandy" was doing his best to scatter to the winds the remnants

and had taken Ude, the former chef of Louis XVI., into his service. (Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. ii. p. 110.)

[1] Notwithstanding his unpolished manners, Blücher was the object of wild enthusiasm at London. One day when he was walking in Hyde Park the crowd surrounded him so closely that the veteran was obliged to put his back against a tree, in order at least to protect his rear. (John Ashton, *Hyde Park*, p. 157.)

[2] Hyde Park is the site of the old Manor of Hyde, which belonged in former times to St. Peter's Monastery at Westminster. In 1536 Henry VIII. exchanged the Priory of Hurley in Berkshire for the Manor of Hyde.

of his fortune, and the year 1815 saw the loss of "the poor ten thousand guineas" which remained at his banker. Everything turned against him in that year. He had even lost the halfpenny with the hole in it, to which he pretended to attach some special virtue since his entrance into Society. "What has become of your halfpenny?" someone asked him at a later date, in the time of his old age; "have you never heard any more of it?" "Oh yes," he used invariably to reply; "no doubt that rascal Rothschild or some of his set got hold of it."

To the end he preserved his imperturbable calm and his tranquil insolence, impartially fleecing usurers and members of Society, borrowing from anyone who would lend and troubling himself little about repayment. One day in a crowded club circle, one of his creditors conceived the unfortunate idea of asking for the return of a loan. This was a rich young man who wished to be elected to the fashionable clubs, and had thought it politic to advance a thousand guineas to Brummell. Brummell thought the joke

detestable. "Your money?" he replied, without moving a muscle. "I thought I had repaid it." The other opened his eyes wide. "When?" "Do you ask when? Why, the day before yesterday, when I was on the balcony at White's and saw you passing in the street, and said, 'Good-day, Jimmy, how are you?'"

For a few months longer he maintained his position with the help of a fictitious credit which remained to him notwithstanding his many bills. But the money-lenders could no longer be deceived, and the final catastrophe was also hastened by a slight misunderstanding. Brummell had contracted a loan in concert with a friend, and attempted to secure the lion's share for himself; his partner cried out against his meanness, and their quarrel attracted general attention. His position became untenable, and the desperate state of his finances no longer allowed him to cut a respectable figure in his usual haunts; it was therefore necessary to think of retirement. On May 16, 1816, Brummell dined upon a fowl and drank a bottle of claret. He then wrote

to Scrope Davis,[1] on the chance of securing a final loan, if possible. Scrope Davis was a rich man, very fashionable, and a great friend of Byron. That evening he happened to be dining in Charles Street with the poet. Before they had left the table a note was brought, requiring an immediate answer. Scrope glanced over it and handed it to Byron, who read it in turn.

"My dear Scrope,—Lend me two hundred guineas. The Bank is shut, and all my money is in the Three Per Cents. It shall be repaid to-morrow morning.—Yours,

"George Brummell."

The reply was:—

"My dear George,—'Tis very unfortunate, but all my money is in the Three Per Cents.—Yours, Scrope."

[1] Scrope Davis, to whom Moore and Byron occasionally refer, was acquainted with every member of Society during the Regency. He was a man of some culture and fond of literature; he was equally fond of gambling, and thus ruined himself. Like many others, he went to Paris to end his days. In fine weather he generally sat in the shade on a bench in the Tuileries. There he made appointments with passing friends who still remembered him. To occupy his time he wrote his memoirs, which unfortunately disappeared at his death.

The note was not precisely charitable or sympathetic, but at least it was not vulgar, and Brummell "was not the man to moralise upon it long." He therefore dressed himself, looked in at the Opera as usual, but did not wait for the end of the play, and without returning home, he entered a post-chaise which carried him to Dover at full speed. He reached that town as the sun was rising, and some hours later he disembarked in France.

CHAPTER VI

LITTLE remains of old-time Calais at the present day, and Sterne would have some trouble in discovering the inn where M. Dessein served him with his fricassée of fowl. However, when Brummell arrived from England in 1816 he also put up with M. Dessein, perhaps the same man who received the author of the *Sentimental Journey*. He was not to remain with him long. Near the Town Hall in the Rue Royale was a book-seller's shop with the sign of the "Pauvre Diable." The proprietor was a worthy man, M. Leleux, who had been a soldier in his youth, and was now peacefully ending his days in the sale of second-hand books. Brummell resolved to establish himself permanently in this house upon the first floor, and lived there for fourteen years. "I knew him well, if anybody did," M. Leleux used to

say at a later date; and when he showed the Beau's apartments to the curious he invariably concluded, "I allowed him to decorate the rooms in his own way, and though he did it very well, I can assure you that I was none the richer for the money he laid out. But, sir, the poor fellow was so amusing that one could refuse him nothing. Indeed, I declare I would have kept him for nothing if he would have stayed: ah! he certainly was a very droll fellow."

His first amusement was to furnish his rooms with the carelessness of a man who feels no anxiety whatever for the future. From the shipwreck of his fortunes he had saved a thousand guineas. This was not a Golconda, but none the less Brummell proceeded to squander the said sum with the utmost rapidity and extravagance. Indulging his taste for seventeenth-century furniture, he surrounded himself with Buhl tables and sideboards, had the ante-room flagged with black and white marble, papered the dining-room in dark crimson paper imitating silk hangings, and found himself penniless once

more in a short time. He then proceeded to borrow and to live upon credit, and throughout the time of his stay at Calais he constantly bought, and even procured from Paris, curiosities of all sorts at prices wholly ridiculous. He did not know a single soul, and as he was reduced to solitude, he resolved at least to have a refuge to his liking. The London dandy was soon the talk of the countryside for ten leagues round. People discussed his collection of Sèvres china, his snuff-boxes, his bronzes, his Chinese cabinets, and a marvellous porcelain service which he kept jealously enclosed in a cabinet, the panels of which were chased in copper. "Each plate bore a lady's portrait, and this fragile and imaginary harem included all the famous beauties of the age of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. Like a jealous sultan, he declined to allow the ordinary visitor to see these marvels, and only the highest of his visitors were allowed to cast a furtive glance upon this charming gallery." Upon the tables were, lying in confusion, a hundred other curiosities, miniatures, rings, ivory knives in gold settings, volumes in

superb bindings; here a writing-case given him long ago by the Duchess of York, there a paper-weight of Sienna marble, surmounted by the Imperial eagle, the gift of M. de Montrond,[1] the friend of Talleyrand.

All this, however, was not enough to beguile his weariness. As soon as the house was decorated according to his taste, it was necessary to live in it; but Brummell and solitude had little in common. Born for Society and living solely for it, he lost his best and his only reason for existence when he abandoned Society. Moreover, the limitations of his mind did not permit the dandy to turn his faculties to any immediately profitable

[1] M. de Montrond, who died at Paris in 1843, was the most witty of all Talleyrand's friends, and the Prince was never able to secure the last word when jesting with him. "Do you know why I rather like Montrond?" said M. de Talleyrand one day; "the reason is that he has hardly any prejudices." "And do you know why I am so fond of M. de Talleyrand?" returned Montrond; "the reason is that he has none at all." As he visited London drawing-rooms as often as those of Paris, it is probable that this agreeable rake was the lover of the Marchioness of Hertford, formerly Mlle. Fagniani, the protégée of Selwyn and the old Duke of Queensberry. It is more than probable that of this intimacy was born Lord Seymour, *alias* "Milord Arsouille," founder of the Jockey Club and a man about town well known throughout Paris under Louis-Philippe. (Villemessant, *Mémoires d'un Journaliste*, vol. i. pp. 211–213.)

end. Unable to change his idle and haughty pose, he pursued life with the monotonous routine of the Englishman on the Continent, and methodically wasted his time. Every morning he rose at nine, entered his boudoir, examined his curiosities, dealt with his correspondence, looked over the newspaper and glanced at the new books. At twelve he began his toilet, which was naturally one of his favourite occupations. At four o'clock, as smart and well dressed as when he appeared at the Club in days of yore, the dandy went out for a turn through the town. The old city of Calais was by no means gay at any season of the year; with melancholy steps, Brummell went down its narrow streets, crossed the Place d'Armes, left behind him the Hôtel de Guise and the Clock Tower, to reach the promenade upon the ramparts. There at least he found some shade, and followed by his dog Vick, he repeated the excursion of the previous day. His walks were timed with such mathematical exactitude that the dwellers in the street knew what the time was when they saw Mr. Brummell returning home. Then came the

hour of dinner, and notwithstanding his exile, his meals as well as his toilet were the objects of his scrupulous care. He spared nothing to secure the best of food, and also drank considerably. A bottle of porter followed by a little glass of brandy, and rounded off by a taste of claret, washed down the dinner provided by Dessein every evening. Finally, at seven o'clock, cheered by these copious libations, he went to his box in the local theatre.

Thus, upon the whole, the dandy continued a comparatively splendid existence, and monotonous as it was, it none the less demanded a certain income. Strictly speaking, Brummell did not possess a shilling. He was obliged to look about him ; the best means are always the simplest, and as our friend had lost his own fortune, he did not hesitate to levy contributions upon his friends.

The fact is somewhat strange that he still retained friends, even after his departure from London. Whether a man plays his part upon the stage or in Society, he is speedily forgotten so soon as he has disappeared from the scene.

Brummell, however, had gained such ascendency over his audience that even during his exile his exquisite manners were not forgotten. There was a general rivalry to provide him with means. The Dukes of Gloucester and Argyle, Lord Alvanley and Mr. Chamberlayne came forward simultaneously; and M. de Vos, the banker of Calais, was often instructed to send him certain anonymous gifts. Naturally, the Duchess of York was not the last to show her loyalty, and in the embroidered writing-cases which she used to send to her friend he doubtless found the means to satisfy the more pressing of his creditors. It must, moreover, be admitted that the dandy had shown some diplomacy in his choice of a retreat. Hardly had Louis XVIII. returned to his throne than the inhabitants of Great Britain crossed the Channel in multitudes. Calais once more became a meeting-place between London and Paris. It was usual to break the journey there and to make some short stay, and in the eyes of all Society people the little town was dignified by the presence of the "sublime dandy." All the most aristo-

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cratic travellers came and knocked at his door, and the Dukes of Wellington, Rutland, and Beaufort, Lords Sefton, Jersey, Willoughby d'Eresby, Craven, Ward, and Stuart of Rothesay did not fail to pay homage to the lord of fashion. Brummell was still king, and most effectively so; for if he received them in superb style, it is worthy of note that the reception was always at his visitors' expense. But no one conceived the strange idea of expressing astonishment; this kind of fashionable tax had become customary in the manners of the age, and was a sort of social formality, a breach of which would have been in the worst possible taste. It was impossible to resist a man who seemed to display so magnificent a confidence in the kindness of his friends, and professed such disdain for the vulgar coin with which they filled his pockets. Upon that subject there was no room for disputation, and under his dominating glance every purse opened its silken strings as naturally as the traveller's cloak in the fable of the sun and the wind. Moreover, he insisted that any attempt to

relieve his anxieties should be made with due formality. One day Lord Westmorland[1] was passing through the town, and sent a message that he would be happy to see him at dinner, and that the dinner would be at three o'clock. The dandy replied that he was not accustomed to *feed* at that hour, and declined the invitation.

Calm and magnificent, nothing in his usual manners betrayed either anxiety or embarrassment, but there are letters of his which show some secret bitterness of heart. His future was problematical, his decline inevitable, but all this he pretended to forget before witnesses. He would even laugh at the uncertainties of his fortune upon occasion. "He used to call himself," relates a visitor, "the quondam young man who spends his leisure between London and Paris. He put several discreet questions to me, inquiring what people were saying in England, and seemed remarkably well informed upon fashion

[1] John Favre, Earl of Westmorland, died in 1841. He had been Lieutenant of Ireland under William Pitt's ministry. In 1822 he was Guardian of the Privy Seal.

and politics. 'I keep in touch with everything,' he said to me; 'but what is the use? They have left me to die in hunger here.' (Brummell was exaggerating.) 'However, I expect that some fine day my old friend the Duke of Wellington will pack the Consul of this town off somewhere, to China, and will give me his post. Then I shall be all right. You must admit that in all justice, the English nation should do something for the man who brought starched cravats into fashion. How many men have I seen in London enjoying rich sinecures who had not done as much for their country.' Then, as I went towards the door, he said, 'I hope you will be able to find your way; I am afraid my footman is not there,' and concluded philosophically with the proverb, '*Point d'argent, point de suisse.*'" This took place in 1829. The Duchess was dead, as were many other friends who had hitherto shown great loyalty to Brummell. The prospects of the dandy were growing dark.

Some years previously a chance of restora-

tion had seemed possible. In September 1821 a kind of alarm had set the little town of Calais in a ferment; the authorities had donned their uniforms, the Duc d'Angoulême had arrived hurriedly from Paris, and the whole population had hastened to the harbour. The illustrious traveller for whom this pompous reception was prepared was none other than the King of England, George IV.[1] Beaming and magnificent, he took his place in the coach which was to take him to Dessein's hotel. The crowd increased as the procession approached, hats went off, cheers rose in the air, and the King bowed to right and left. Suddenly his expression changed, his eye was fixed, and he was distinctly heard to murmur, "Good God! George Brummell!" Two steps from the carriage, hat in hand and motionless, stood the former favourite. Caught in the midst of the crowd as he was returning to his rooms, the dandy had been obliged to form in line with the rest and to witness the passage of the sovereign. He turned pale, broke away, and

[1] He was on his way to visit his Hanoverian State.

took refuge in his lodging, declining to show himself for the rest of the day.

It is obvious that his friends, who saw the advantage which he could derive from a reconciliation with George IV., advised him to attract the attention of the noble traveller at any cost. Brummell, however, did not approve the plan, and as he doubtless feared a rebuff, contented himself with adding his name to the list of callers at the hotel. It was fortunate for him, for at no moment did George IV. express any wish to be reconciled with the unlucky dandy. He had thoughts of a personal interview, and it is certain that the decay of Brummell's fortunes had been explained to him, but he could not forget certain witticisms at the expense of his premature corpulence, and neither the ruin, the exile, nor the approaching poverty of the jester could calm his animosity.

The next day he started for Cassel. When he had gone, Brummell lost all hope of ever returning to England. Moreover, the Consul of Calais showed no inclination to leave this unprofitable world, and his debts were daily

accumulating. In vain did his few friends in London intrigue to secure some sinecure for him. People in high places were better occupied than in considering Brummell's affairs. However, the Duke of Wellington intervened, and on September 10, 1830, the Government entrusted to him the guardianship of the commercial interests of Great Britain in Normandy. He was appointed Consul at Caen. However, he found some difficulty in changing his residence. Aware of his intimacy with opulent lords, his creditors were quite ready to wait, but felt considerable uneasiness when they saw him preparing to depart. He was therefore obliged to put up to auction his furniture and his curiosities. Crockford Junior, the London antiquary, came to conduct the sale, and as before, upon the day following his ruin, the fashionable world fought for the remains of Brummell. George IV. bid two hundred pounds for a service of Chinese porcelain, and two vases alone made as much as three hundred guineas. Finally, when his debts were partially settled, he went off to Paris by post-chaise. There he stayed little more than a week, and

paid his respects to Mme. de Bagration,[1] appeared at the table of Lord Stuart of Rothesay,[2] and in the drawing-rooms of the Prince de Bénévent; went round the Palais Royal with Montrond,[3] and after ordering a snuff-box costing a hundred pounds from a fashionable jeweller, made a start for Normandy.

On October 5, 1830, a post-chaise announced by loud whip-cracks stopped at Caen before the Hôtel de la Victoire, near the Church of Saint-Pierre. A gentleman was seen to get out with a curled wig, a beautiful cravat, a jacket embroidered with lace, a maroon overcoat, and very pointed boots. His lofty and supercilious expression was also remarkable. After asking for the best room, the best dinner, and the best claret, he wrote his name in the hotel register — George Bryan Brummell, Consul of His Britannic Majesty.

[1] The Princesse de Bagration was the leader of the Russian colony under the Restoration with Mme. de Gourieff and the two Comtesses Potoska.

[2] Charles Stuart, born January 2, 1779, was the English Ambassador at the Court of France from 1815 to 1825 and from 1828 to 1830. He was raised to the peerage in 1828 with the title of Lord Stuart of Rothesay. He died at his estate of Highcliffe, in Hampshire, on November 7, 1845.

[3] See p. 149, note 1.

Two weeks later the new Consul sent the following letter to his colleague in Calais :—

"My dear Marshall,—You should certainly have heard from me before this, had I not been occupied and put out of my usual passive way of existence by endeavouring to settle myself in this place. After passing a week at Paris, I arrived at my destination, and underwent all the horrors and all the more horrible cheating in one of the worst hotels, I am confident, in Europe. During seven days I gnawed bones upon unwashed dowlas in this charnel-house; what a difference, after Stuart, Talleyrand, Mme. de Bagration, and Montrond! Good fortune at length led my steps to an admirable lodging, half of a house, the property of a most cleanly, devout old lady, the cousin of Guernon de Ranville, one of the condemned ministers, excellently furnished, with a delightful garden, two Angola (*sic*) cats, and a parrot that I have already thrown into apoplectic fits with sugar.

"From the letter which I brought with me from Paris to the Préfet, the General, and three or four other bigwigs, given to me by no less personages than Molé and Sébastiani, you must know that, without a sixpence in my pocket, I

am become a great man here. They dine me and fête me most liberally; and I have already been elected a member of their Club, *without ballot*, an *honour* not before accorded to any Englishman. All the newspapers and latest periodical productions are there taken in profusion, and as much franc whist, écarté, and billiards as you please. All well-educated, well-mannered, and well-conditioned people; no industrious master of arts; no superannuated imbecile clodhoppers. To-morrow I dine at a grand to-do given by the Préfet and M. de la Pommeraye[1] the député, and am preparing a *neat little extempore*, which I shall let off upon success to the commerce of the two countries being toasted. The two leading men of our compatriots here are Messrs. Villiers and Burton. Their houses, and without exaggerating they are like Devonshire House or the English Embassy at Paris, are generally open at half-past five to a well provided dinner. The French of the best class mingle much in this society, and there is always a fiddle for the amusement of the young ladies. I am doing all that I can to make all parties satisfied with

[1] Colonel de la Pommeraye served under Napoleon I. At Waterloo he commanded a regiment of heavy cavalry, and was severely wounded. In 1830 he was commissioned to escort Charles X. to Cherbourg.

me. I condole with the outs and agree with the ins: as to my own nation, I have called upon all who are worthy of such a compliment. I shake hands and gossip with the fathers and the mothers, and pat all their dirty-nosed children upon the head and tell them that they are beautiful. What can I do more with my scanty means?"[1]

As Brummell himself relates, he had been excellently well received by the chief people of the town. His reputation as a fashionable man of extreme elegance and as formerly intimate with the King of England had preceded him. Everyone was therefore anxious to add his name to the number of their acquaintances, and the new arrival soon received more invitations than he could accept. As the July Revolution was but just concluded, Society was divided into two great sections: on the one side were the Legitimists, and on the other the officials in the pay of the established Government. As Consul, Brummell was obliged to maintain friendly relations with

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, pp. 294–296; and see G. de Contades, *George Brummell à Caen*, pp. 12–14.

these latter. He cared little for their want of polish and vulgarity, and resolved to confine himself to purely formal intercourse. One day he was asked if he had been present at the Prefect's ball. "Dear me, no," he replied, "but I sent my servant." Thus having turned his back upon official Society, he was at liberty to reply to the advances of the Legitimist party, and his inflexible vanity would not allow him to commit himself to any other.

The drawing-room in which he was most constantly found at the outset was that of his landlady, Mme. de Guernon de Saint Ursin, *née* Aimable Ange Vastin, of Dutch birth. She had been adopted by two old maids called de Guernon Ranville, and had married their cousin, M. de Guernon, himself a relative of the minister of Charles x. In her rooms were to be found MM. de Saint Quentin, de Vauquelin, de Sainte Marie, de Roncherolles, and while discussing little cakes and sipping tea, the company reviled the Jacobin tendencies of the citizen-king and whispered their great hopes of the Duc de Bordeaux. Brummell became a regular attendant at these provincial meetings,

and speedily won the lady's heart. They agreed admirably together, and to please his hostess, every year upon the anniversary of the three glorious days,[1] the Consul was careful to hoist the British flag only upon a kind of out-house where he kept his official papers, thus sparing the noble residents any repulsive profanation. Such concessions secured favours in return, and the first of these was entire liberty to pay when he would. This was an item as a matter of fact which the Consul wilfully neglected from the outset, and eventually forgot entirely. However, Mme. de Saint Ursin herself pretended similar forgetfulness. Mr. Brummell was so distinguished, and showed such great kindness to her daughter—for Mme. de Saint Ursin had a daughter, Mlle. Aimable, a charming young lady aged fourteen, with whom the dandy soon became a great friend. For a time he even conceived the project of teaching her English, and some of his letters show that the young pupil displayed a real anxiety to learn at times. "You have promised," he writes to her, "to take a lesson with me to-

[1] Of the July Revolution of 1830.

morrow morning, Christmas Day! What a period of rejoicing and fête, according to the customs of my native country, this used to be to me, some years since, while now of 'joys that are past, how painful the remembrance!'"[1] Doubtless, when he wrote these lines he remembered the castle of the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir, with its decorations of holly and mistletoe, its large windows looking out upon the countryside, its hall full of guests, and its courtyard where the villagers roasted an ox whole under the light of the moon. Upon another occasion the English master changes his tone, and Brummell becomes a moralist: "Dear Miss Aimable, the study of English is no doubt valuable, but the duties of kindness must not be neglected for it. For more than a week I have seen no fresh straw in Ourika's basket, while Tigre is allowed to torment the parrot to death. I would rather preserve my feelings of humanity and tenderness for these mute domestic creatures than acquire all the languages in the world."[2]

[1] Translation by G. de Contades, *George Brummell à Caen*, p. 21. Jesse, p. 319.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 21. Jesse, p. 383.

He also wrote many letters, in his spare time, to everybody concerning everything, for he retained lady friends until his last years. Ladies of culture were to be found at Caen, and in his correspondence the Beau would discuss recently published works. "Have you read the *American Journey* of Fanny Kemble? I begin to grow a little weary of her artificial sentiment, and particularly of all the I's which overload her recollections."[1] Then he criticises Lady Blessington, the patroness of the handsome Comte d'Orsay. "Her novel, *The Two Friends*, will bore you to death. Lady Blessington, now that her beauty is vanishing, has become over saintly, like all aristocratic penitents. She wears too many hair shirts, and literally stifles one with the weight of her sermons."

In addition to the house of Mme. de Saint Ursin, Brummell was a regular visitor in the rooms of the Marquise de Sérans, a charming lady, according to report, and possessed of a delicate wit. She also had

[1] Translation by G. de Contades, *George Brummell à Caen*, p. 21.

lived in London, somewhat against her will, during the evil days of the Terror, and was never tired of relating the miseries of her exile and expressing her surprise to find the former king of fashion by her fireside, a man who had been the idol of St. James's when she herself was shivering in a Soho lodging. There were also several English families, such as the Burtons and the Villiers, where the dandy never failed to find a warm welcome.

Of all his countrymen the man whom he knew best was a certain Armstrong, a kind of general agent, who undertook business of every kind, loans, commissions, the export of champagne, the importation of tea, the sale of landed property, and above all money-lending. The British Consul had but a very modest salary, and as his extravagance was not confined to his linen, debts rapidly accumulated. After three months in Normandy, Brummell was at least as embarrassed as he had been when he left Calais. The washerwoman continually sent in enormous bills, the servant demanded his wages, and

every month, indeed every week, he sent the most urgent appeals to the money-lender.

"DEAR ARMSTRONG,—That damned ungrateful brute, Isidore, persecutes me at every instant; the fellow says he is going to Paris on Thursday, and will not depart without being paid, and I believe him capable of employing a *huissier*. I am wretchedly bedevilled and out of spirits, and hate going out of the house, or I would call and thank you for your note of yesterday. — Truly yours, G. B."[1]

Henceforward at every moment until his death Brummell continues to ask for sums of ten, five, and even two louis from this man Armstrong, who proved a real god-send to him, and who moreover constantly

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 316. Another letter is as follows :—

"DEAR ARMSTRONG,—Send me seventy-five francs to pay my washerwoman. I cannot get a shirt from her, and she is really starving on my account. I have not actually money to pay my physician, or for my letters to and from England.—Yours, G. B."

(*Ibid.* p. 344.)

showed a readiness and an honesty almost unparalleled. Unfortunately, the dandy's position was about to become yet more serious, nor was the title of Consul to be his for long. In 1832 Lord Palmerston was anxious to have a report of the year's trade, and Brummell thought it advisable to answer that trade was rapidly diminishing. His ill-timed frankness went so far as to explain the advantage, from an economic point of view, of reducing the Consulate to a Vice-Consulate, in a town where British subjects were diminishing every day. However, he was careful to conclude his report as follows: "Your lordship must be aware that by informing the Government of the inutility of a Consul at Caen I am actuated by purely disinterested motives. Your lordship will also bear in mind that my bread depends upon the trifling emoluments which I receive as Consul at Caen."[1] Whether this was real disinterestedness on his part or whether it was a scheme to obtain some better post I cannot say. The fact remains

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 342.

that after thanking him warmly for the accuracy of his information, Lord Palmerston proceeded to dismiss the unhappy Consul, and the only compensation he ever received was some empty promises for the future.

Thus Brummell one morning found himself a private individual, and as soon as the coat of arms with the lion and unicorn had disappeared from his door, anxious creditors from every side proceeded to ring the bell. A formal siege was opened, which threatened to become tragic when the bailiffs one day burst into the house and insisted upon seeing the ex-Consul in person. The horrified Mme. de Saint Ursin had no more than time to push the dandy into her wardrobe, and Brummell was thus suddenly plunged into profound darkness, stumbling over boots, and shrouded in skirts to left and right of him. "If only these scoundrels," he thought, "do not discover my hiding-place!" And feeling his way to the lock, he hissed, "Mme. de Saint Ursin, please, please, take the key!"

Notwithstanding the extreme kindness of his hostess, he could not in all conscience

involve her in scenes which, if not always so dramatic, were none the less of daily occurrence. He gave notice, and it was probably with something less than his usual assurance that he left Mme. de Saint Ursin, whose kindness not only included the loan of her wardrobe, but also went so far as to forget the existence of her bill when the day of payment arrived. She was even ready to nurse him when he fell ill, for at the time when his affairs were most deeply involved the dandy began to feel the first attacks of that malady which was to kill him by slow degrees. This event took place in the summer, when he was writing one day in a very melancholy frame of mind to Mlle. Aimable, who was then at the seaside upon her holidays. "The greatest of misfortunes," he wrote, "is to be alone and without support." At the last word the pen fell from his fingers ; he tried to rise and cry out, but in vain. Half of his face was paralysed, and only with great difficulty could he open his mouth. However, careful nursing brought him round ; he believed he had been attacked by severe rheumatism,

and it was thought inadvisable to undeceive him.

He therefore established himself in the Hôtel d'Angleterre, where he lived for some months in peace, thanks to the protection of the faithful Armstrong. But neither his health nor his creditors left him free from anxiety for long. One morning, when he was finishing breakfast in the hotel dining-room, great was his surprise to observe that the food was falling upon his shirt front instead of entering his mouth. Holding a table napkin to his face, he ran to his room, and the handsome George Brummell, looking in the glass, saw a horribly distorted, unrecognisable countenance, fearfully contracted, with the mouth rising to the ears. With some difficulty he recovered from his second attack, but from that time onwards he was under no illusions. "Do not ask me," he wrote, "anything about my health: it makes me melancholy, and that *abaissement* sometimes makes me very childish. *Addio, cara amica.*"[1]

On the other hand, his monetary distresses speedily brought him to the utmost extremity.

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 377.

One fine day in May 1835, shortly after sunrise, he found at his bedside a man of unpleasant appearance escorted by two gendarmes. Shaking him roughly, this visitor explained the object of his arrival, and informed him that his creditors had lost patience, and had resolved to send him to prison. Brummell, who probably did not clearly understand, and felt ill at ease without his wig, requested that they would first allow him time to dress; but the unpleasant-looking man ordered him to follow immediately. Then, for the first time in his life, Brummell broke down. Was it not enough for him to be sent to prison? Must he also put on his clothes in public, hurriedly, and without time for due thought? Our hero lost all self-restraint and all power of self-command. He prayed, groaned, lamented, and finally gave vent to the most trivial despair. Matters were considerably worse when he reached his new apartment. At that time debtors and political prisoners were confined together with ordinary malefactors. We may imagine Brummell's state of mind when he was obliged

to eat and sleep side by side with all the verminous criminals and ragged malefactors of the province. It was more than he could bear: his desperation was unbounded, and the countless letters which he sent from his prison show that he was reduced to a condition bordering upon imbecility. Fortunately, he recognised in the prison a Legitimist journalist, the manager of the periodical *L'Ami de la Vérité*, M. Godefroy, who spent most of his time in prison as a punishment for the excessive freedom of his language. This journalist enjoyed, as a regular inhabitant, a kind of room, which he thoughtfully placed at the service of the retired Consul by day; during the night, in order to escape the neighbourhood of his repulsive companions, Brummell arranged his sleeping-place in a narrow corridor, where he saw through a skylight the female prisoners busy spinning in the courtyard. Naturally, Armstrong did not forget his compatriot at this time. His first care was to send him his wardrobe, with the necessaries of his toilet, and the dandy forthwith recovered some of

his dignity. "He invariably spent," M. Godefroy relates, with great detail, "several hours upon this task. He shaved every morning, and washed himself all over every morning with the help of an enormous basin belonging to an ancient washing-stand which had followed him to prison together with a dressing-case full of bottles of scent and cosmetics. For the performance of these ablutions, unparalleled in the annals of the prison, twelve to fifteen litres of water and two litres of milk were regularly brought to him by his valet-de-chambre, his Lafleur, as he jestingly called a retired drum-major, Paul Lépine, who was at that moment a political prisoner, and was in his service and his pay."

However, in the town the misfortunes of the dandy aroused great sympathy, especially among the ladies, who sent in delicacies, notes, and novels, with one accord. Their husbands displayed less zeal. Some of them, it is true, in view of Brummell's weak health, sent in a request in his name that he might be transferred to the hospital. The Prefect, however, whose drawing-rooms the ex-Consul

had formerly abandoned for those of the Legitimist party, declined to interfere in any way. He even carried his irony so far as to visit Brummell in his prison. "He dared to tell me," writes Brummell in a fury, "that he did not know I was here, and asked if I was comfortable. What a villain he is!" Once more it was Armstrong who relieved his anxieties; he went to London, and appealed to the liberality of his former Club companions. His Norman creditors had counted upon some such step, and the results of it surpassed their expectations. More than twenty years had elapsed since George Brummell had left Great Britain, but on hearing of his condition all the nobles in the realm made a point of subscribing to the list opened by the Duke of Beaufort and Lord Alvanley.[1] William IV., the brother and successor of the Prince Regent, who probably knew very little of the dandy, offered a hundred guineas from his private purse, and the Public Treasury two nundred; these sums, with the other subscriptions, were sufficient

[1] See p. 132, note 1.

to satisfy both the money-lenders of Calais and Caen.

As soon as this welcome news reached the latter town, the apartment of M. Godefroy was the scene of one of those wild revels which were to become traditional among the inhabitants of Clichy. During his captivity Brummell's intimacy had been confined to the manager of *L'Ami de la Vérité*, and to a certain Bassy, a cook who was in disgrace; but towards the end of his stay an unexpected visitor appeared, the Baron de Brémesnil, who had considered the moment when his tilbury met the Prefect's carriage a good time to shout, "Long live Henry v.!" Consequently, he was awarded six days' imprisonment; in other words, six days of festivity, one of which was devoted to the honour of the dandy's release. A supper was ordered from Longuet, the best caterer in the province, and round a table were gathered the ex-Consul of England, the Legitimist journalist, the quondam cook, and the Norman noble. The rarest wines speedily opened all hearts, and the four prisoners drank one another's

health at intervals which grew steadily shorter.

At length, on June 21, early in the morning, after three months' confinement, Brummell was officially informed that he could leave the prison when he wished. He consequently spent four hours instead of three at his toilet, and it was not until the afternoon, properly shaved, barbered, and groomed, that he entered the town and proceeded at his leisure to resume possession of his room at the Hotel d'Angleterre. In the evening he unexpectedly appeared at a ball given by Mme. F——. At the sight of him the quadrilles stopped, and the violinists ceased playing in astonishment. "Ladies," he said, "I am much obliged to you for your kindness, and delighted to find myself once more among you. I can assure you that it is the happiest day of my life, for I have just come out of prison." His expressions of gratitude were confined to these words. Both in London and in Normandy many of his compatriots, and even many Frenchmen, had spared neither time nor money to help him. With complete self-assurance, Brummell

accepted their help in the manner of a sovereign accepting his taxes. Doubtless he thought it necessary when occasion arose to express his gratitude to some of them, but it was pure kindness of heart on his part. Obviously, the former dandy of Watier's divided men into two general divisions—those who borrow and those who lend, and regarded the former as suzerains by birth, and the latter as beings who could be taxed at leisure, it being apparent that Brummell belonged to the former of these categories. A short time after he had left the prison, he met a worthy magistrate who had largely helped to get him out of his difficulties. "Ah! my dear Areopagiticus," he cried, "I am very sorry that I have not yet been able to call upon you, but the fact is that the cards I have ordered in London have not yet come."

Brummell most certainly remained Beau Brummell, "the sublime dandy," as he was still known in London. With his liberty, he immediately recovered his cynical affectation and his unbearable effrontery, "and seemed more than ever," says a lady friend, "to be a

man defying Fortune and laughing at her blows." We now know that this defiance was by no means real, and that the sight of the bailiffs could easily change his manner; but in public the darker the horizon seemed to grow, the greater was the arrogance of our Englishman and the sturdier his pretended stoicism. M. P. Scudo, who came to Caen to give a musical evening, was introduced to him at the house of the Marquise de Sérans. Drawing from his pocket a packet of banknotes, about three hundred, he held it out to Brummell like a hand of cards, with the obvious intention of offering him some. Brummell quietly appropriated the whole packet with a single movement. "He never paid them back," said M. Scudo, "but it was admirably done, and I gained some additional knowledge of England in return for my money."[1] At the same time, his care of his person became a kind of monomania and obsession. When walking, he would not have anyone near him for fear he might

[1] Barbey d'Aurevilly, *Du Dandysme et de George Brummell*, p. 91.

be splashed, and on no pretext would he take off his hat lest he should disarrange his wig, but confined himself to a languid gesture of the hand. These affectations actually became sheer madness, and indeed madness was speedily to overcome him permanently. First, however, he was to witness his own final downfall and to have full knowledge of his last agonies.

Lord Sefton[1] and some other men had undertaken to supply his most urgent needs, and as a measure of prudence had entrusted Armstrong with the funds. This precaution was useless. At the end of a few weeks Armstrong was besieged with bills of every kind, by no means in consonance with the position of his client. Brummell had made no change in his habits, and continued to import his aromatic oils and essences at great expense from Paris, and a large amount of Guiton varnish for his boots. He also used eau-de-Cologne instead of water, and insisted on having thirty-six changes of linen a day, as in former years. Upon these lines the

[1] See p. 140, note 2.

rest of his existence was arranged. Advice, remonstrances, and threats proved useless. To the end he seemed to have resolved to live comfortably as a dandy. However, the moment arrived when the dilapidated state of his wardrobe necessitated some extraordinary expenditure, and Armstrong, who already had a number of tradesmen to satisfy, sent word round town that he would not undertake to meet any fresh expenses at the moment. Our hero may be imagined with boots down at heel, waistcoat threadbare, shirt frills starchless, and none the less continuing to play his part with unending persistence. He writes secretly to his usual source of money: "I have not a single shirt that will hang to my back, nor are my socks and drawers in a better state. . . . After the experience I have met with in this place, I have a horror of contracting new debts (thus casually does he refer to debts), and yet during the last two months I have not possessed five francs for the most indispensable purposes."[1] To Lord Alvanley, his old associate, he sent the

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 476.

same doleful confidences, concluding with a cry of distress uttered upon this occasion in sincerity. "My old friend King Allen[1] has given me to understand that he will send me something to clothe my unhappy body, which is at this moment as naked as a new-born babe. Think, Alvanley, of the dandy that I used to be!"[2]

His cravat and its incontestable authority was left to him, with its three turns round the neck, its weighty and majestic dignity. It, too, was unfortunately to perish in the storm, and a day arrived when Brummell felt that it was falling away from him, and was forced to rush into the nearest shop. With a heroic

[1] Viscount Allen, nicknamed "King Allen," resembled, according to Gronow, an old grey parrot, both in the aquiline outline of his features and in his peculiar mode of walking. "He was not a man of great readiness," adds Gronow, "but no one was better able to say the most disagreeable things at the most unpleasant moment. He had served under Wellington in Spain, and had fought at the battle of Talavera with incredible boldness. This old dandy made it a principle never to leave White's Club except to go to Crockford's, and never to leave Crockford's except to go to White's; he was, however, an intimate friend of Sir Robert Peel, the statesman who belonged to the ministries of Liverpool and Wellington." (Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. ii. pp. 84 and 86.)

[2] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, p. 387.

gesture he untied his scarf, and a wave of yellow linen, a disgraceful rag, was seen to fall upon the floor. Seizing at random a piece of silk, he put it round his neck and appeared with a black cravat for the first time. The same evening he drew in the album of a friend an aged Cupid above a broken bow with the punning inscription, "A broken bow" (beau).

From that day onwards Beau Brummell was certainly broken for ever. He had realised the impossibility of outliving his traditions of dandyism, and decay of mind and body rapidly followed decay of dress. His malady had made some inroads while he was living in the Rue des Carmes; prison-life and the repeated embarrassments which followed his release secretly undermined his health. He lost his memory, his mind gradually gave way, and by degrees he began to wander. His conversation became wholly disconnected. Meeting a certain Colonel B——, he spoke to him at first very gravely, then leaning towards him, said, "Colonel B——'s wife came to see me yesterday;" then he uttered in a confidential tone, "and between ourselves, she

VISCOUNT ALLEN ("King Allen").
From a Sketch by D'Orsay.

likes my society; but you had better not say anything to her husband, the creature is so jealous." Another time, when dining out, he suddenly turned towards his neighbour: "What on earth are we eating?" he asked. "Roast beef," replied the other. "Good Lord, how tough it is!" said Brummell loudly; and when the following dish arrived, "What is that?" "Turkey," was the answer. "What! you call that hairy old rooster turkey?" Similar comments accompanied the rest of the dinner. The lady of the house wept bitterly, and was doubtless careful not to invite so tactless a guest thereafter. He also became, as we can well believe, the most wearisome of hosts, sleeping three parts of the time, and only opening his mouth to boast continually of his past successes. Finally, he lost all his teeth, and even when he was not eating or talking, his jaw continued to work mechanically and actively. No spectacle is more likely to get on anyone's nerves, and one evening in the middle of a concert his neighbour lost patience entirely, and said to him aloud, "My dear Brummell, if you must chew, chew in time."

After that, he lived a lonely life. He might be seen wandering through the town, bent double, walking with the feeble step of an old man, and leaning against the walls. The street boys shouted after him in amusement at the dazed air and the miserable dilapidation of the old dandy. He was indeed a lamentable and grotesque figure, a walking caricature, with clothes of obsolete fashion, white at the knees, out at elbows, with his wig put on backwards, falling over his face. A little tailor of Caen attempted to alleviate his misfortunes, and inspired by profound compassion, offered to mend his rags for nothing. "I was ashamed," he used to say, "to see so celebrated and distinguished a man, who had made himself a name in history, reduced to so pitiable a condition, and though I was not rich enough to clothe him, I often asked him to send me his clothes, and undertook to mend them for nothing." Upon these occasions Brummell stayed in bed, as he had nothing but bedclothes to wear.

If his name was still remembered in London,

it is quite obvious that no one troubled about his affairs. However, some who remembered the time of the Regency, used to go and inquire for the old king of fashion as they passed through Normandy. One morning in January, M. Fichet, owner of the Hotel d'Angleterre, saw a lady arrive in very simple style, and though not young, of attractive appearance. "Sir," she said, "I should like to see Mr. Brummell without being seen." "Madame, nothing is easier. Will you step into this room and leave the door half open? Mr. Brummell's room opens on to the same corridor. At five o'clock he will come down to dinner. I will meet him as if by chance, and detain him as long as you like." All fell out as had been arranged, and when the hotel-keeper went to see what had become of his visitor, he found her lying at length upon the ground, her face wet with tears. The identity of the mysterious stranger was never discovered; possibly it was Mme. de Bagration, Lady Jersey, or some other patroness of Almack's. Lord Stuart of Rothesay also wished to see the man whom he had

welcomed eight years previously, during his stay in Paris. "You will find him greatly changed," said M. Fichet to him. Making their way to the chamber of the Beau, they found him busy oiling his wig before the window; this was one of his favourite amusements. "Good-day, Mr. Brummell," said the hotel-keeper. "How are you to-day?" There was no answer. Then wishing to attract his attention by any means, he said, "Mr. Brummell, do you know the news? King George IV. is dead." Still no reply. "George IV.," went on the innkeeper, "the Prince Regent, Big Ben!" But without turning his head, with fixed gaze and shaking jaw, the unfortunate man continued to anoint his wig with all his might.

Sometimes, however, memory came back to him with recollections of Carlton House and Brighton and visions of his former triumphs. In his hotel room he would arrange the furniture and the lights, open his door and announce all the London celebrities who had formerly idolised him, all his former subjects in the realm of fashion. "His Highness

FRANCES, LADY JERSEY.

the Prince Regent, Lady Conyngham,[1] Lord Yarmouth,[2] Lady Jersey,[3] Her Grace Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire." He would then

[1] Lady Conyngham, wife of the Marquis of Conyngham, had been a mistress of the Prince Regent. In the journal of Charles C. F. Greville, Secretary of the Privy Council, her name is often mentioned. Greville writes under date May 2, 1821: "Lady Conyngham lives in one of the houses in Marlborough Row. All the members of her family are continually there, and are supplied with horses, carriages, etc., from the King's stables. She rides out with her daughter, but never with the King, who always rides with one of his gentlemen. They never appear in public together. She dines there every day. . . . She comports herself entirely as mistress of the house, but never suffers her daughter to leave her. She has received magnificent presents, and Lady Elizabeth the same; particularly the mother has strings of pearls of enormous value." Mme. de Liéven said they were finer even than those of the grand duchesses.

[2] Lord Yarmouth, afterwards Marquis of Hertford, who had married Mlle. Fagniani, was a favourite of George IV. None the less, he spent a great part of his life at Paris. Wellington and Sir Robert Peel thought a great deal of him, and always regretted his absence from the House of Lords. (Gronow, *Reminiscences*, vol. ii. p. 233.) On the other hand, Villemessant relates that Lord Hertford entirely disinherited Lord Seymour (Arsouille, see p. 56, note 1), in the conviction that he was not his son. Fortunately for the latter, his mother, who had a private fortune from George Selwyn and the Duke of Queensberry, left him property amounting to a million. (Villemessant, *Mémoires d'un Journaliste*, vol. i. pp. 211, 212 ff.)

[3] Lady Jersey was mistress of the Prince of Wales at the time of her marriage. She had also been appointed Lady of Honour to Caroline of Brunswick, and had been nominated to accompany her from Greenwich.

hasten forward to meet the imaginary visitor. "Ah! Madame, how kind of you! how good of you to come at such short notice! Pray make yourself comfortable in that easy-chair, the gift of my beloved patroness the Duchess of York." Then, in his madness, he would continue to see the dandies of St. James's pass him one by one, the old beaux of the Regency. Finally would appear a dandy of supreme splendour in a blue coat and buff waistcoat, with black breeches setting off his legs. His scornful eye dominated the groups, and as he walked forward in the pride of conquest, the company relapsed into silence, and every eye was turned upon him. Then the miserable imbecile would announce loudly, "George Bryan Brummell." Thereupon his voice failed him, his dream passed away, he understood the horror of his position, and staggered to collapse in an arm-chair, where the hotel servants would find him in tears the next day.

Soon he lost even his recollections of the past, and fell into complete idiocy. The only characteristic that remained to him was his

gluttony, which speedily degenerated into bestial voracity. At meal-times his habit of rushing at a dish and gulping down slices of roast beef became so repulsive that it was necessary to confine him to his room. Not content with gorging himself in seclusion, he regularly went down after his meals to the shop of M. Madeleine, the pastry-cook of Caen, and seized everything that he could reach—nougat, biscuits, sweets, and pralines. He would have run any distance for a glass of Maraschino, and sacrificed even his watch, his chain, and his rings to satisfy his abject gluttony. When he had sold his last snuff-box and the pastry-cook had shut him out of doors, he used to go to an old woman who kept a little shop near the Place Royale. She gave him credit, but sometimes handed him her account to remind him of his debts. Brummell would vaguely nod his head and mutter idiotically, "Yes, madame, at the full moon, at the full moon!" As, however, his malady increased, he was confined to his room, occupied by the manias of madness and busied in the methodical destruction of his books, his albums, and the

various autographs which remained to him of Byron, Sheridan, Mme. de Staël, and the Comte d'Artois. Thus it was that his memoirs disappeared which he had written at Calais: the Duchess of York had begged him not to publish them, and he had refrained from doing so, in spite of the offers of booksellers.[1] At the same time, his chief amusement continued to be the task of oiling his wig. Persuaded that everyone wished to steal it, he became most ingenious in finding absurd hiding-places for it, and when he could not find it himself he alarmed the hotel by shouts of "Thieves!" As he could barely stand on his legs, and sometimes fell against the windows, a nurse was ordered to look after him. He never ceased to overwhelm her with insults, and the uproar of their disputes often reached the streets, where the lunatic could be heard yelling at the top of his voice, "Ah, you cursed hag! do you imagine you are my mistress?"

Weary of so turbulent an invalid, M. Fichet thought the moment had come for his transference to the hospital. There was an establish-

[1] Jesse, *The Life of Beau Brummell*, Preface, pp. vi and vii.

The Asylum du Bon Sauveur at Caen.

ment founded by the Abbé Jamet, the Asylum du Bon Sauveur. This naturally seemed to be the proper place for the ex-Consul. One morning Fichet went into his room and told him a carriage was waiting at his door, if he would like to take the air. Brummell, however, was entirely absorbed in looking for his wig, which he had carefully hidden under the mattress, and was not disposed to reply. "Mr. Brummell," resumed the hotel-keeper, "you promised to go with me, and I have ordered a carriage." "What carriage?" "The carriage which is to take us for a drive." "Not to-day, Fichet; not to-day." As he obstinately declined to stir, two waiters were obliged to carry him down to the cab. A struggle took place on the staircase, during which the wretched man thought that he was being taken to prison, and uttered dreadful cries. "Let me go, scoundrels! let me go! I am innocent; I have paid my debts." The cab, however, started, and from anger the poor man soon passed to mystification. At the Place Royale he recognised M. de Sainte Marie, who was walking rapidly on foot; with a final touch of bashfulness, the old

dandy shrank to the back of the carriage, murmuring, "Good Lord, supposing M. de Sainte Marie were to see me dressed like this!"

He was admitted to the Asylum, and placed in the ward where Bourrienne, who had also gone mad, had come to die a few days before. Before the windows was a sunlit flower garden, with straight walks bordered by edges of box. There, upon fine days, old Brummell was taken round in his bath chair. He faded by degrees, and died peacefully on March 30, 1840.

Such was the end of George Brummell, and M. de la Palisse might easily have made his death the text for divers moral maxims. Practical people will naturally fail to see that his mode of life contributed anything to the general sum of human happiness, nor would it be astonishing if in the last resort they also characterise as immoral the means which he used to pay his debts. Arguments of this nature, however, will possibly be too matter of fact or pedantic for the present subject, and seem in any case to be in a certain degree in-

applicable. It is indeed undoubted that any ordinary man would have had no excuse for declining to work and to justify his existence according to custom. But Brummell, Beau Brummell, was it possible for him to submit to ordinary laws, and can we descend to the level of the pedant or the usher by judging him as we judge the ordinary man? Let it not be forgotten that Brummell was a dandy, and that the characteristic of a dandy is before all else to be good for nothing.

Further, for the benefit of his future biographers, we may point out what difficulty he would have caused us if he had compromised the fair consistency of his career by the smallest profitable or sensible action, what regrets we should have felt if he had stupidly shattered his future by some tardy reformation! How inconsistent and how piteously opposed to the whole of his past would such action have been! Those, indeed, were not wanting who attempted to model themselves upon his example, but those of them who are worth remembering added

very different talents to these snobbish tendencies. Such were Byron and Robert Spencer. Brummell and Brummell alone was simply and solely a dandy, but he was "the sublime dandy." It is from the exceptional nature of his character that his strength or authority are derived, and we may conclude with these words of Barbey d'Aurevilly,—indeed, to attack such a subject after his treatment of it is somewhat presumptuous on our part,—"George Brummell was a great artist in his own style. He gave pleasure by means of his person as others give pleasure by means of their works. His value consisted in himself." Unfortunately, the specialist of this nature is in the position of a famous singer or a great actor: his strength is also his weakness, and his weakness consists in the fact that he can leave nothing behind him except his memory and his name.

George Brummell's Grave in the Protestant Cemetery at Caen.

INDEX

Index

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