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RECOLLECTIONS OF A
DIPLOMATIST



Horace Rumbold

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RECOLLECTIONS OF
A DIPLOMATIST

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SIR HORACE RUMBOLD, BART., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
SOMETIME H.M. AMBASSADOR AT VIENNA

VOL. I

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P R E F A C E

MANY years ago, at a time of great bereavement, I began jotting down these Recollections of a long life, two-thirds of which have been spent in the diplomatic service. My purpose then was to find some relief from the present in living over again, as it were, the remoter, untroubled past.

Later on, under very different and happier circumstances, I was led to complete the narrative. The earlier part of it¹ required much revision, and some portions had to be entirely re-written. My story must now stand as it is, with all its imperfections, and, I think I may fairly claim, its sincerity.

¹ I began writing these Recollections at Nice in the early part of 1873.



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RECOLLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMATIST

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

OWING to a wholesale and, it seems to me, unwarrantable destruction of family papers, I for many years knew very little of the lives of those who preceded me, and of the parents I lost in early infancy. Possibly the somewhat roving existence of scattered members of the family may be held as some excuse for this, but it makes me the more desirous to leave to my own sons some record of a life which has been not altogether uneventful.

I was born at Calcutta on the 2nd of July 1829, the last but one of a large family of whom only four were still living at the time of my birth. The eldest of my brothers and sisters, William Frederick and Flora, had only attained the respective ages of fourteen and sixteen, and several others had died in infancy.

My grandfather, Sir George Rumbold, was disinherited under the will by which his father, Sir Thomas, left his entire fortune to his children by a

second marriage, and directed his estate of Woodhall Park, Hertford, to be sold for their benefit. He soon went abroad with his young wife from motives of economy, and seems to have settled for some time at Dijon in France. Here his eldest son, my father, was born in May 1787. Among the few letters of my grandmother which have come to me, several—written from Dijon, or addressed to French friends there—afford proof that she had seen much of the society of the Burgundian capital, which, like other provincial centres in pre-Revolutionary France, was the habitual resort of the *noblesse* of the region.

My father was partly educated at Hamburg—where Sir George held a diplomatic appointment for a few years—and afterwards at a private tutor's in England, going later on to Cambridge. In 1804 he obtained a commission in the 1st Footguards, but sold out in 1809, when he married Harriet Parkyns, second daughter and eventual co-heiress of Thomas Boothby, Lord Rancliffe, of Bunney Park, Notts.

My mother had been left an orphan at an early age, and, with her two sisters, afterwards Lady Levinge and Princesse de Polignac, was brought up by Lord Moira, who was an intimate friend and connection of the Parkyns family, and the guardian of Lord Rancliffe's children. Her marriage took place at Castle Donington on the 13th of July 1809, and Lord Moira (afterwards Marquess of Hastings) going out to India as Governor-General in 1813, my parents accompanied him, my father holding an

honorary appointment in his household. Wishing, not long afterwards, to improve the prospects of the young couple,¹ Lord Hastings recommended my father to join the banking house of William Palmer and Co., which was at that time doing a large business at Hyderabad in the States of the Nizam. Thus commenced a connection which was destined to be disastrous to my family, its consequences having, I may truly say, cast a gloom over the whole of that generation of it to which I belong. This is no place for the intricate history of the ruin of Palmer & Co. It is sufficient to say that, after prospering for some years, the fortunes of the firm rapidly declined. Certain arbitrary and, as it afterwards proved, illegal measures taken against it by the Government of the East India Company, and inspired by their Resident at Hyderabad, led to the failure of the house in 1824. In the following year my father made his last visit to England. During his stay of four years at home he used the most strenuous efforts to obtain the reversal of the decisions which had been so fatal to W. Palmer & Co., and, thanks to his energy and the support of influential friends, so far succeeded that he went back to India in 1828 with a fair prospect of recovering something for his family out of the general wreck. In connection with this last journey of my parents to India, I may mention a somewhat re-

¹ He speaks of my mother, in one of his letters, as "almost a daughter to me."

markable circumstance, related to me afterwards by my father's sisters. The ship that took them, after being delayed for some days by contrary winds, finally sailed on a Friday, and the well-known superstition attaching to that day was noticed by my mother, half jestingly, in the last letter she wrote on starting. As a matter of fact not one of the party returned home. My sister Flora died on the way out, my mother's favourite maid was carried off by cholera soon after landing, my father's French valet was killed by a tiger at a great hunt got up for the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, and both my parents found early graves in India within a few brief years.

A short time after my birth at Calcutta my father removed to a house near Ootacamund, in the Neilgherry hills, where, on the 3rd of September 1830, my brother William (the second son thus named) was born. Five days later my mother died. She is buried in the old church at Ootacamund, where a tablet is put up to her memory. The first three and a half years of my life must have been passed at Hyderabad, but at the beginning of 1833 my father resolved to send me and my brother William to Europe, whither he hoped soon to follow us. He appears at this time to have seen his way to a successful termination of the arduous and exhausting struggle in which he had been so long engaged, and was looking forward impatiently to a peaceful life at home.

free from the cares and anxieties which had made India so justly hateful to him. In one of the few of his letters in my possession—written to his sister, Madame de Delmar, on the 3rd of March 1833—he says:—

“Perhaps in eight months from this time I may be once more among you all, and once more surrounded by beings to call forth my affections and make life of some interest to me. I shall have done with all the troublesome part of my long and odious fight with the Company, and shall be contented, whether rich or poor, to live upon what means I may have.” Further on he writes: “My hope is that when this reaches you my two poor little babies, last sent, will be with dear Maria¹ and Arabin at Paris.” He then speaks of the life he looks forward to at home among kind friends, of his wish to visit Switzerland, the Rhine, &c. “You will see by all this,” he concludes, “how my head is trying to free itself from present misery by indulging in pictures of home and of Europe.”

The “two poor little babies,” in charge of a trusted friend, Mrs. Sargent, reached England in June 1833, after the long journey of those days round the Cape of Good Hope. The faithful sister and her husband, Captain (afterwards Admiral) Arabin, were waiting for them in London, at Hawkins’s Hotel in Albemarle Street, and, after

¹ His second sister.

a short stay in London, conveyed them to their home in Paris (No. 6 Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré).

Scarcely were we settled here, when news of sad import to us unconscious infants followed us from India. Our father, worn out by anxiety and work, had not been spared to save any remnant of his fortune or to spend the remainder of his days in peace at home. On the morning of the 24th August 1833 he was found dead in his bed at Hyderabad,¹ and with him vanished all hope of recovering anything out of the complete wreck of Palmer & Co. The death of my father was the more disastrous to the family fortunes that he was evidently on the point of reaping some reward for his untiring exertions. A letter in which Lord William Bentinck, a very sincere friend of his, announces the event to the Duke of Devonshire, shows this very clearly. "Although both from Madras and Bombay," he writes, "from their greater contiguity to Hyderabad, the melancholy intelligence contained in the enclosed must reach England sooner than from hence; yet, at the request of Captain Oliphant, I am induced to address you as one of poor Sir W. Rumbold's best friends. The loss of the kind, warm-hearted man to the cause to which he had devoted such incessant anxiety and labour, crowned at last with success, will be irreparable. I have no

¹ He died in his forty-seventh year, and is buried in the cemetery in the grounds of the Residency.

official account of the effects of Charles Grant's" (President of the Board of Control, and afterwards Lord Glenelg) "recent minute in favour of the House of Palmer & Co., but I hear that both Sir W. Rumbold and Mr. W. Palmer, the partner at Hyderabad, wrote to their correspondent here in terms of satisfaction with their progress in settlement of their affairs. I hope, therefore, that out of this wreck something may be coming to Sir William's family."

These expectations were not destined to be realised, but, although left orphans at the respective ages of three and four, my younger brother and I fortunately found with the Arabins a permanent home where the greatest care and affection were bestowed upon us. Of my deep obligations to them I cannot speak too strongly.

Meanwhile my three elder brothers, Cavendish, Arthur, and Charles, and my sister, Emily, had remained in England under the charge of our great-aunt, Mrs. Rigby,¹ and her daughter, Lady Rivers.² Thus, for a season at least, we were all six provided for, and, as regarded the future, we were each of us entitled to a share of what money our mother had inherited as co-heiress of our grandfather, Lord Rancliffe, and which, being strictly settled upon her, had escaped the general family ruin.

I may as well give some account here of my

¹ Daughter of my great-grandfather, Sir Thomas Rumbold.

² Widow of my godfather, Horace Beckford, 3rd Lord Rivers.

principal relations, on my father's and my mother's side, living at that period.

My father left three sisters, all married and settled in Paris. The eldest, Caroline, was the wife of Colonel Le Couturier de St. Clair, formerly of the Garde Royale, who had been severely wounded at the Revolution of July 1830, and whom I remember a handsome Frenchman of the florid type, above the usual height and size of his countrymen, and *un tant soit peu bellâtre*. The St. Clairs had a son, Ferdinand, of about the same age as my brother William and myself, who was one of our chief companions in childhood, but who later on turned out unsatisfactorily, and of whose subsequent fate I am entirely ignorant. My aunt was a clever and accomplished woman, and her *salon* was frequented by some of the best known artists and *littérateurs* of the day, foremost among whom was the great Balzac. She herself dabbled in literature, and was the writer of an historical romance, entitled, "Marston Moor," a book now entirely forgotten, although not without merit. She remained in Paris until her death, which took place in that same February of 1848 that witnessed the downfall of King Louis Philippe. Her husband had been killed some years before by a fall from his horse in Ceylon, whither he had gone to superintend the coffee estates belonging to his brother-in-law, Baron de Delmar.

Of my father's second sister, Mrs. Arabin, I

have already spoken. She proved an admirable mother to her brother's infant sons.

The third sister, Emily, was married to Baron de Delmar, a wealthy Prussian, of whom and of his home in the Avenue de Marigny at Paris I shall have occasion to speak at length later on.

Of my nearest relations on my mother's side a few words will suffice.

Maria, my mother's younger sister, was married twice—first to the Comte César de Choiseul, and, after his death, to Prince Jules de Polignac, Ambassador in London, and later on President of the Council in the reign of Charles X. When I first reached Paris, Prince Polignac, who had been impeached and condemned after the events of 1830, was still confined in the fortress of Ham, where my aunt shared his captivity. My aunt had four sons and a daughter. The eldest, Alphonse, was an artillery officer, and served with distinction on the staff of Marshal Pélicissier at the siege of Sebastopol. The second son, Ludovic, a colonel of the État Major, has seen a great deal of service in Algeria, and spent many years of his life among the Arab tribes. Camille, the third son, born during his father's imprisonment at Ham, joined the Confederate forces in the American Civil War, and commanded a division under Beauregard. During the Franco-German War he served with much credit in the Armée de la Loire, and greatly distinguished himself at Beaune-la-Rolande and in other actions.

The youngest son, Edmond, is a very accomplished musician and composer and the wittiest of men.¹ The only daughter, Yolande, I well remember as a lovely girl, who had inherited the beauty of her grandmother, the intimate friend of Marie Antoinette. She married Sosthenes de la Rochefoucauld, now Duc de Doudeauville, and died in 1855, leaving a daughter who is the present Dowager Duchesse de Luynes.

I never knew my mother's eldest sister, Elizabeth, Lady Levinge, nor did I ever see much of any of her numerous children, with the exception of her namesake, Elizabeth, with whom I became intimate in later years.

Of my mother's only brother, the last Lord Ranelagh, I shall speak later on. I will only further mention here Lord Rokeby and his sisters, who were my father's second cousins. The friendship of the Montagu family was invaluable to me in after life, and I came to look upon Lord Rokeby and his daughters in the light of near and dear relations.

The first events of any importance that have impressed themselves on my memory are the funeral of General de Lafayette, who died on the 20th of May 1834, in the same house in the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré in which my relations occupied an apartment, and whose interment was attended with much pomp and ceremony; and, in July of the following

¹ Edmond de Polignac, to whom I was much attached, died in August 1901.

year, the regicide attempt of Fieschi and his fellow-conspirators. I well remember my eldest brother, Cavendish (then barely twenty), who had come over from England on a visit to us, rushing into the room, from the Boulevards, to tell our uncle and aunt of the frightful scenes which had taken place at the explosion of the *machine infernale*. Linked with my recollections of this event, I can trace, in looking back, a vague sense of the uneasiness and insecurity that pervaded the first years of the reign of Louis Philippe, which were likewise the first of our residence in Paris. As we children lay in bed at night, it was no unusual thing for us to be roused from our first sleep by the drums beating the *générale*, or the clatter of mounted troops riding down the Faubourg St. Honoré towards the restless suburbs of St. Antoine or St. Marceau, where the smouldering flames of insurrection periodically threatened to burst forth.

In considering what is now generally accounted to have been the peaceful and somewhat humdrum régime of the citizen monarch, we are too apt, I think, to lose sight of the risings, and the attempts on that sovereign's life, which marked, at such frequent intervals, the opening years of his reign. On my boyish imagination they made a deep impression. The memories of the Great Revolution were still so vivid in those days that they cast a lurid light on current events in France, and lent an additional terror to anything like insurrection. My

aunts, as young girls, had known many of the *émigrés* who had sought refuge in England, and had, later on, become intimate with Parisian society under the reactionary rule of the Restoration. They were full of anecdotes of the Revolutionary period, and we were thus brought up in holy horror and detestation of its excesses. Our relationship to the Polignacs of course further strengthened these feelings, and helped to make my brother and myself as thorough-paced young Legitimists as our cousins or our other playmates of the *noble faubourg*.

Probably my earliest inkling of foreign political events, other than those passing in France, arose out of the Civil War then raging in Spain. My uncle watched the fortunes of Carlists and Christians with great interest, and my youthful curiosity was awakened in seeing him pore over a large map of the seat of war, on which he used carefully to mark the positions of the contending forces by pins headed with tiny white or red flags.

Some of my first recollections, too, bear witness to the Anglophobia which still survived the great contest of the beginning of the century with England, and was rampant among the lower orders of the French capital. Many a time have I and my brother been jeered at by diminutive Parisians, our contemporaries, and rudely saluted as *goddamns* or *sacrés Angliches* when passing through the streets with the short frocks, bare legs, and big turn-down collars, which in those days were exclu-

sively typical of the juveniles of our nation. English fashions in clothes for men and boys, after having been the rage at the period immediately preceding the Great Revolution, had been dethroned and had not recovered favour—far less attained the undisputed sway they can boast of at the present time *regnante* Poole. We were still then, in French estimation, a very peculiar people in dress as in other things, and man, woman, and child of English breed seemed, in the eyes of our lively neighbours, to be perfect figures of fun. Those were the days of the *Anglaises pour rire*, and of the legendary *milord* of fabulous wealth and ludicrous generosity who, although he might occasionally condescend to trifle with dainty Parisian dishes, was well known to gorge on a diet of underdone beef and porter, and, when in the mood, might any morning dispose of the wife of his bosom at *Smiffield* to the highest bidder. The “silver streak” at that period, and indeed down to the Crimean War, was but a feeble symbol of the abyss of mutual ignorance and dislike which divided the two nations.

In 1836 our family circle in Paris received a new and important addition in the person of my only sister, Emily, who at the death of my great-aunt, Mrs. Rigby, was sent over to the Delmars, who had long wished to adopt her. She was twelve years old at this time, and the day we went to the Delmar house to welcome her on her arrival was to us boys full of joy and excitement.

About this time, too, I first became acquainted with my three elder brothers, though I was not destined to become intimate with any of them, partly on account of the disparity of age between us (Cavendish was fourteen, Arthur nine, and Charles seven years older than myself), and partly owing to the wandering lives they led at a distance from home. What I have to say of them had best be put down here. Cavendish had great advantages of looks and manner, together with natural gifts of no common order. Throughout life I have seldom come across a more strikingly handsome face and figure than his. He was full of charm and talent, had read extensively and with profit, and was, among other things, an accomplished linguist. At my father's death, which occurred when Cavendish was barely eighteen, he was most kindly taken in hand by his godfather, the late Duke of Devonshire, one of my father's most intimate friends, given rooms at Devonshire House, and thus as fairly launched in the world as any youth of his age could be. Unfortunately he did not profit by these advantages, took to a life of dissipation, forfeited the good opinion of the duke and other influential friends, and speedily ran through his small fortune. He married, when scarcely of age, a daughter of Admiral Manby. The union was childless and ill-assorted, and soon led to an amicable separation. I met Cavendish at rare intervals, and chiefly after he had become a confirmed invalid; but the kind

way in which I have heard him spoken of by some of his contemporaries, such as Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Alfred Montgomery, shows him, with all his failings, to have had many engaging qualities.

Arthur, too, and Charles, never lived much with us. Arthur passed through Sandhurst, and at the age of eighteen obtained a commission in the 51st Light Infantry, then quartered in Van Diemen's Land. After serving for some years, and exchanging from one regiment into another, he sold out to relieve himself from the difficulties he had got into, and was finally appointed to a stipendiary magistracy in Jamaica, whence he rose to the rank of Administrator of the Governments, first of Nevis and then of the Virgin Islands, which latter post he held till his death in 1869. I got to know him better much later in life, and ever think of him as one of the most warm-hearted and affectionate but at the same time the most injudicious and unfortunate of men. I shall have more to relate of him presently.

Charles was partly brought up in Paris, first at a school at Choisy le Roi, and then at a *pension* in the Rue de l'Enfer, whence he attended the *cours* at the Collège Louis le Grand. At the unripe age of seventeen he was sent to try his fortunes in sheep-farming in Australia. This ill-advised venture ended as might have been foreseen. He fell into bad hands, was speedily fleeced of the little he possessed, came home penniless, and for many

years, till his death in 1877, vegetated in one of the inferior departments of the War Office. Poor Charles had considerable abilities and a very pleasing address, and deserved a happier fate than the one which attended him through life.

In 1838 we migrated from our first abode in the Rue d'Anjou to No. 13 in the Rue d'Aguesseau—a street well known to English visitors to Paris as containing the Embassy Church—which became our home for nine consecutive years, and with which the memories of my boyhood are mostly bound up. Here we occupied a spacious apartment on the first floor, overlooking a garden which lay between the house and the Rue du Marché d'Aguesseau. The owner, a Comte d'Espagnac, lived on the ground floor, where he had a fine collection of pictures; and another apartment in the house was occupied by the Léautaud family, who, a few years later, had the misfortune to be mixed up in the great Lafarge poisoning case.

An important event now marked our onward progress. From the exclusive care of French maids and nurses we passed into the hands of a tutor, an excellent fellow of the name of Wilhelm Nolte, a Hanoverian by birth, to whom we owe much valuable instruction, and chiefly a competent knowledge of German, which, added to the French we had unconsciously imbibed in the nursery, at once gave us linguistic attainments far less common than at the present time.

I have strong convictions as to the disadvantages which, for an Englishman, are inseparable from a foreign education; but since it was our lot to be brought up abroad, I gratefully admit that we gained something in the process. Much of the enjoyment, and, indeed, of what little success I have had in after life, I undoubtedly owe to my early familiarity with foreign forms of speech, and to the insight I thus obtained into foreign modes of thought and sentiment. I might thus lay fair claim to some of the advantages of so-called cosmopolitanism, were I not of opinion that a cosmopolite is on the whole a poor creature, and that—to express myself in French (in which language I occasionally detect myself thinking)—*Il faut être tout à fait de son pays pour être quelque chose.*

May 1840 was made memorable to us by a sad event in our small family circle. On the 26th of that month one of the most brilliant of our commanders in the great struggle with Revolutionary and Imperial France passed away under our roof after a very short illness. Admiral Sir William Sidney Smith, G.C.B., had married my grandmother, the widow of Sir George Rumbold. After her death in Paris, in 1826, he had continued to live on there with his step-daughter, Maria Arabin, and her husband, who had been one of his favourite officers. Notwithstanding the loving care bestowed upon him, his declining years had been darkened by distressing circumstances. With him, as with others

of the like heroic temperament, vanity was the one besetting failing. Excessive confidence in a set of unscrupulous adventurers, who gathered round him and, by their flatteries, gained a pernicious influence over him, led him into much extravagance, ending in considerable financial embarrassment. Only a few days before he was seized by his last fatal illness, he had got into serious trouble, and had been rescued by Arabin out of the clutches of some of the disreputable lot by whom he had been victimised. Of his utter carelessness and unbusinesslike habits in money matters no better instance can be given than what occurred with respect to a large tract of land, situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro, which had been presented to him by King John VI. of Portugal, in recognition of his services in conveying that monarch to Brazil, when driven by the French out of his European dominions. When the title to this very valuable property, which he made over by deed shortly before his death to Captain Arabin, was afterwards inquired into, it was found impossible to prove it, owing to Sir Sidney's neglect to have it registered, or to comply with any of the legal formalities requisite for obtaining due possession of the estate. At the same time, while so regardless of his own interests, his generosity was unbounded, his purse being only too readily open to all who appealed to him for assistance.

We boys were great favourites with him, and

we made frequent inroads into his rooms, chiefly attracted thither by the knowledge that he kept there a variety of models of vessels and rafts, together with toy horses and camels, carts, guns, &c., which he made use of to illustrate schemes of his invention for crossing rivers, or for saving life or property at sea. He had been singularly good-looking, and in old age his was still a very striking countenance, showing both refinement and dauntless determination. A medallion portrait in bronze, done of him at this period by the sculptor, David d'Angers, does full justice to the fine, clear-cut features and resolute mouth, set off by wavy, silver-white hair carelessly brushed off a massive forehead. In all his bearing, too, he remained the true naval knight-errant he had approved himself throughout his career, when manning the deadly breach at Acre, or recklessly attempting to destroy the giant flotilla, moored on the coast at Boulogne, and watching for the signal to carry the *grande armée* over to the English shore. Down to the close of his life he was much engrossed by somewhat fanciful philanthropic schemes, such as an international crusade against piracy and a general understanding for the suppression of the slave trade. These Quixotic fads of his, as they were accounted by the Parisians, met with but little sympathy, and, while put down to insular eccentricity, led to his being rather shunned in society, and indeed, I fear, voted a bore — often the fate of persons

wrapped up in one absorbing idea. There is little doubt, nevertheless, that his attempts to found an Anti-Piratic League in Paris did indirectly contribute to the French expedition to Algiers, and the destruction of the Corsair power, which had been too long tolerated in the Mediterranean.

Great honours were paid him by the French Government at the end. French admirals and generals were among his pall-bearers when he was carried to the grave at Père la Chaise, where he lies by my grandmother; and I can well recall the impression made upon me by the sombre pageant of the funeral, the brilliant uniforms, the velvet trappings of the hearse, the crowd that thronged our otherwise quiet street.

What, however, can be more fleeting than such impressions in childhood? My next recollection of those days is one of boyish licence and plunder, on which I look back with amazement. Sir Sidney had won, at the point of the sword, some of the principal foreign military decorations, and also ranked very high among Freemasons and Knights Templar. The cupboard in which the insignia of his various Orders were kept was left open to us after his death, and we were unaccountably allowed to parade the house, decked out in all this finery and bedizened with *grands-cordons* and masonic aprons. Specially do I remember, as forming part of our spoil, the broad yellow riband, edged with blue, of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and

Sword, which had been conferred on Sir Sidney by John VI., and a large enamelled Cross, to which the name of "Cœur de Lion" was attached, in memory of his successful defence of St. Jean d'Acre. I cannot understand our being allowed to make playthings of these mementoes of a splendid career, which, for their historical value alone, should have been treasured in the family, but were in the end, I believe, sold in Paris by public auction.

Much the proudest of the old admiral's distinctions, however, was that of Knight Grand Cross of the Swedish Order of the Sword, which recalled the earliest and very remarkable part of his naval adventures, when he served as a volunteer under Gustavus III., in that monarch's last campaign in Finland; the order being given him after the signal engagement fought at Svenskasund, on the 9th of July 1790, in which he greatly contributed to the destruction of a large part of the Russian fleet, under the Prince of Nassau. The insignia of the Order, which could only be conferred for some *action d'éclat*, simply consisted of a silver sword, with the point uppermost, embroidered on the coat or uniform. Quite recently I obtained from a distinguished Swedish diplomatist some very curious particulars about Sir Sidney, at this most venturesome period of his life. The Swedes, it seems, when he joined them, were amazed by the striking likeness he bore to their national

hero, Charles XII.; and this, with the gallantry and utter contempt of danger he afterwards showed, caused the Illuminati—at that time so influential in Swedish society—to conceive the strange notion that the soul of the “madman of the North” had passed into his body. According to them, there were only three persons then living worthy of the transmigration of that heroic soul,¹ the probability being that the intrepid young Englishman was the one who had been favoured by the great warrior. King Gustavus, although not himself imbued with the tenets regarding the transmigration of souls held by the Illuminati, was none the less sufficiently struck by Sir Sidney’s resemblance to his great predecessor, to have a copy made for him of a portrait by Dahl, which is one of the few existing likenesses of Charles XII.² The assassination of the king, in 1792, prevented his intentions being at once carried out; but his brother, the Regent, afterwards Charles XIII., who was a fervent disciple of the mystic sect, caused the picture to be sent to England and handed to Sir Sidney by the Swedish Envoy in London, Count Engeström. That diplomatist relates all the circumstances in his memoirs, adding that Sir Sidney was so delighted by the honour bestowed upon him that he,

¹ My authority was unable to give me the names of the other two persons.

² This picture, no doubt sold after Sir Sidney’s death, with too many other things that had belonged to him, is, I believe, now the property of Sir Edward Malet.

characteristically, then and there changed his way of doing his hair, and took to wearing it *en coup de vent, à la Charles Douze*.

One highly interesting relic of the old hero came to me in later years, in the shape of a case of pistols that had belonged to him, and to which a singular history attached. Sir Sidney was captured by the French early in the war, when engaged in a desperate expedition in boats up the Seine, and was confined for two years in the prison of the *Temple* at Paris. Strenuous efforts were made to deliver him, Paris being then full of English emissaries and persons in the pay of the British Government. After many ineffectual attempts, a plot for his release was set on foot, in which the chief persons engaged were some actors of the Comédie Française, all of them devoted Royalists, under the guidance of a French Vendéen officer of the name of De Phelypeaux, who afterwards took a distinguished part in the defence of St. Jean d'Acre. Rooms were hired by the confederates opposite the prison windows, whence they established communication with Sir Sidney by preconcerted signs. Eventually, by means of unstinted bribery, a *bonâ-fide* order for the transfer of the prisoner to another place of confinement was procured from the Ministry of the Interior; and, armed with this, the worthy comedians, disguised as Municipal Guards, extracted Sir Sidney from the *Temple*, and conveyed him safely from Paris to Rouen, whence he reached the coast in an open boat, and

was picked up at sea and landed at Portsmouth by the British cruiser *Argo*.

France being no longer a safe place for his liberators, they soon followed Sir Sidney across the water. According to the family tradition, the Commodore took some of them with him as his guests when he embarked soon afterwards, in 1798, in the *Tigre*, for his memorable cruise on the coast of Syria; and on parting from him it was, according to the same tradition, that they presented him with these pistols, which were handsomely inlaid with gold, and bore the inscription: "Boudet, Directeur Artiste." Only a short time after these interesting relics of the defender of St. Jean d'Acre had come into my possession, I had the misfortune to lose them during the removal of my effects when I left the Legation at Vienna for China in 1859.

It is a somewhat remarkable circumstance that my step-grandfather and grandfather had both been inmates of the famous prison of the *Temple*—Sir Sidney Smith from 1796 to 1798, and Sir George Rumbold during a few days in 1804. The particulars of my grandfather's seizure by the French at Hamburg, where he was British Chargé d'Affaires, are sufficiently well known, the gross infraction of the law of nations thereby committed having produced a great sensation at the time, and being recorded by all the historians of that period. Some particulars respecting it, which I gathered from my aunts, are nevertheless worth relating.

According to his daughters, it was my grandfather's firm belief that he had been pointed out to the French Government as a man whose capture would repay them, by a lady with whom he was on very intimate terms, and who was remarkable for her beauty as well as for the romantic circumstances attending her birth and after life. That this person was accessory to the seizure of the British representative seems partly confirmed by the fact that she was closely connected with the Irish refugees then residing at Hamburg, on whom it was part of my grandfather's duty to keep a strict watch. His removal, in fact, was a matter of importance to these fugitives from British rule. Sir George was released, at the end of three days, after having undergone a searching interrogatory by Fouché, the Minister of Police, which, together with an examination of the correspondence seized with him, no doubt convinced the French authorities that they wrongly believed him to have been implicated in any way in the Cadoudal conspiracy so sternly suppressed six months before. He principally owed his release, however, to a peremptory summons from the King of Prussia, who, as Director of the Circle of Lower Saxony in the German Empire, was bound to take cognizance of the outrage committed, and threatened war if his demand was not complied with. Before being released and sent under a strong guard down to Cherbourg, Sir George was made to sign a so-called *déclaration d'honneur*, by which he engaged

not to reside at any place situated "within fifty post leagues of the present station of the French armies during the war." This he did on the distinct understanding that his papers would be returned to him. At the last moment, however, the French police broke faith with him on this important point, the consequence being that, on his reporting himself at the Foreign Office in England, he was severely censured for having accepted his liberty under such conditions.

The unfortunate man volunteered "to return to France under a flag of truce, and to reclaim the *déclaration d'honneur* so strongly objected to," by "returning to his confinement in the *Temple*."¹ This proposal was, however, rejected, and as he had bound himself by the terms of the document not to serve again at Hamburg, at the very gates of which lay the French forces which occupied Hanover, he lost his appointment and remained unemployed. From England he soon went abroad again, and took up his abode at Berlin, whither he had at first gone to thank the king for his intervention in his favour. The Prussian Court received him very kindly, and, like all those who had the privilege of approaching her, he became a devoted admirer of the lovely and unfortunate Queen Louise. Jena and the disastrous events that ensued still found him at Berlin; and, with two or three other English familiars of the Court, he followed the royal family in their retreat. first

¹ Quoted from his letter to Lord Hawkesbury.

to Königsberg and finally to Memel.¹ At the latter place he died, very unexpectedly, in December 1807, of a fever, during which he was assiduously nursed by Prince Augustus of Prussia.

Some seventy years after his death I endeavoured to trace his papers in the State Archives at Paris. I had considerable difficulty at first in obtaining leave to search for them, they being classed among the documents belonging to the secret police, but, thanks to Lord Lyons, then Ambassador at Paris, at last attained my object. The papers I was allowed to see and take copies of were of no real importance, although of some family interest to me. They were in an extraordinary state of confusion—washing bills, accounts, lists of books for the use of my father, then a lad at school, being jumbled up with drafts of despatches and secret reports from agents told off to watch the Irish refugees at Hamburg. All the papers, in short, remained apparently as they were when Sir George had been dragged out of bed in the dead of night, his drawers ransacked, and their contents tied up in sheets and hustled, together with him, into the post-chaise waiting at the door with its escort of French Dragoons. Judging by those I looked through, I feel morally certain that most of the papers were withheld from me, and will never see the light again.

¹ The late Emperor William told me many years afterwards that he remembered, as a child, often seeing my grandfather.

One more curious circumstance in connection with this affair perhaps deserves mention. On a journey home from Sweden a few years ago I happened to pass through Hamburg. Not being familiar with this somewhat complicated route to England, I had arranged by telegraph to meet at Copenhagen a Stockholm friend who had often made the journey. We travelled together as far as the old Hanseatic city, reaching it early in the morning, and, having a couple of hours to spare, went to breakfast at that well-known tavern Wilken's Keller. All at once, in the midst of our sociable meal, it crossed my mind that this was the first time I found myself at Hamburg, and that my companion—a most agreeable one—was no other than the grandson of the man who had been mainly instrumental in causing my grandfather to be kidnapped in this very place.

CHAPTER II

HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE—SOCIETY UNDER LOUIS PHILIPPE

ALTHOUGH our excellent relations seem themselves to have had no liking for country life, and were content to remain on in Paris all the year round, we small boys were generally sent out of town with our tutor during the great heat of July and August. Lodgings were taken for us one year at St. Germain, and the next at Versailles, and a third year we went down to a village called Breval, on the borders of Normandy, between Mantes and Bonnières. Joyous days were those we spent wandering in the leafy depths of the noble forest of St. Germain, feasting on gingerbread at that curious local fair the *Fête des Loges*, or watching from the terrace the winding river and the great city glittering on the horizon in the rays of an August sunset. As delightful, and far more crowded, are my recollections of Versailles. The stately, almost empty avenues, and vast untenanted buildings, the gilded railings of the immense *cour d'honneur*, the terraced gardens with their dazzling wealth of marble fountains and statues, I can see them now in all their deserted splendour.

We had a private key of the reserved *bosquets*, as they are called, of the Royal Park, as well as

of the pleasure-grounds of both the Trianons; and, thanks to a taste for reading which I acquired early, and have rather lost than improved upon in after life, I was able to figure to myself, amidst the scenery in which they had been set, the world-renowned events of the old Monarchy which had risen here to such wondrous grandeur, and here too had drained the dregs of such bitter humiliation. In our daily rambles through the glorious park, the "Roi Soleil" and his successors, their courts and surroundings, La Vallière, Condé, Louvois, Pompadour, were constantly present to my mind, giving life and colour to the neglected shrubberies, the quaintly clipped hedges, the weather-stained and mutilated divinities that had witnessed the stately pageant of their lives. Most fascinating of all were the shady walks of the Petit Trianon, the dairy and Swiss cottages, the mill and the farm, where the martyred queen had played at Arcadia in those brief, thoughtless years that ushered in a fate the most completely tragical—it has always seemed to me—known to modern times. Of surpassing interest, too, were the recently restored galleries of the Palace, with their splendid, not over-truthful records of the national glories (specially hateful to my boyish John Bullism were the battle-pieces of Fontenoy, Hastenbeck, or Neerwinden, those few fights in which the British arms had succumbed); and yet, when latterly¹ I have pictured to myself

¹ Written in 1873.

Versailles tenanted by German conquerors, it has been with a certain sense of mortification which proves how strong must have been my early French sympathies and associations.

Of our summer experiences, those we acquired in the village of Breval were of a very different order, and, though not so instructive, were assuredly more uncommon. Our being sent thither at all was in itself odd enough. Our aunt's maid, a worthy soul yclept Baugrand, but *née* Renoult, had near relatives—well-to-do farmers and shopkeepers—in that village and its neighbourhood, and a lodging, both healthy and economical, was engaged for us in one of the Renoult houses. Here we were, therefore, not only thrown into the very midst of French bucolic life, but leading that life ourselves, hand and glove with the Renoults and other Gallic Hodges; at playtime helping them to bring in the hay, to lead the horses to the watering-place, or to despoil the orchards of the fruit which produces the famous Norman cider and *poiré*; and on Sundays or other high-days feasting with them at those interminable feeds so dear to country bumpkins all the world over. A more rustic but at the same time warm-hearted lot than our worthy friends it is difficult to conceive, and if there be such a thing as killing with kindness, we ought not by rights to have survived our sojourn amongst them.

Our village was at that time still very secluded and primitive, lying as it did some way off the

Paris and Rouen railway, in a district—not devoid of historic interest—which had formed part of the Vexin, that borderland of the ancient provinces of the Isle of France and Normandy. It had thus preserved unimpaired many of the older aspects of French country life. It is indeed probable that the manners and customs of the rural population of France differed but little some thirty years ago from what they had settled into after the radical changes of the Great Revolution. The French peasant is at heart one of the most conservative, as he certainly is the most thrifty, of human beings. Thus, when in later years I read with delight George Sand's peasant tales—to my mind the most perfect of her works, especially those which, like the *Maîtres Sonneurs*, are laid in pre-revolutionary France—I recognised in them much that I had myself witnessed in my Norman village. The Sunday dance with its *bouffées*, the *ménétrier* who played for the company; the village courtships between the services; the *fête patronale*; down even to the local squire who, with the “glorious days” of July fresh in the national mind, was still spoken of as the *seigneur du village*—all these flourished at Breval as, for all I know, they may yet flourish in remoter French hamlets. Railroads and telegraphs, however, not to mention the working of universal suffrage and a licentious radical press, are profoundly modifying all French social aspects.

I have said that the country-side round Breval

was historically interesting. Every inch of ground of the Vexin had been fought over again and again in mediæval times. In our *arrondissement* was Mantes, where the Conqueror got his death-wound, and Meulan thrice taken and thrice lost. Close to our village, deeply buried in wood, were the massive ruins of an old keep destroyed in the "English war," as the natives still called it. *La tour des Anglais, le chemin des Anglais*, are names of frequent occurrence in that region, as indeed in most parts of France.

Nor were other points of interest wanting in the neighbourhood. One day we were jolted in a country gig over to Anet, where stood the remains of the Château of Diane de Poitiers, shorn of its beautiful *façade*, which had shortly before been re-erected in the Court of the *Beaux Arts* at Paris; on another occasion we picnicked on the very field of Ivry-la-Bataille; we visited the grand pile of La Roche Guyon, and once we got as far as Chartres and Dreux, where we wandered about the splendid old cathedral and marvelled at the tracery in the chapel, then in course of building over the royal vault of the Orléans. At last we went back to Paris, and though Nolte was not a little disgusted, and with good reason, with the illiterate *milieu* into which his pupils had been cast, we, at any rate, brought home with us a store of rude health, and experiences to which I have ever since looked back with unmixed pleasure.

We now resumed our studies, which were sufficiently varied, though not to be compared to the extensive *curriculum* through which the youth of the present age are supposed to pass. With Nolte we chiefly worked at Greek, Latin, German, history, and geography. We had besides special masters for French, Italian, and mathematics. Our French teacher, Monsieur Dubois, was a quiet, harmless man, who conscientiously put us through a very complete course of the French classical authors; but Monsieur St. Omer, who taught us mathematics, was enough of an *original* to deserve some notice. A diminutive creature, big-headed and mild-visaged, with tufty, sandy hair, spectacles, and a voice that would have made his fortune in burlesque. His chief peculiarity, however, was his accent. He had been desired to impart his instruction through the medium of English, which, being married to an Irishwoman, he spoke very fluently. His accent was an astounding mixture of Irish brogue and French intonation, and, added to his native squeakiness and a solemn and emphatic delivery, had an irresistibly comic effect. The mild St. Omer was a ferocious Radical of the reddest dye, and loved to spout revolutionary and communistic platitudes—a failing we had early detected in him, and which my brother William, who to a hearty distaste of Euclid joined a lively sense of the ridiculous, encouraged to the best of his ability. Our delight was to catechise St. Omer

on the various points of his revolutionary creed, and an effectual method of doing this was to put to him the most absurd and impossible questions, which he would gravely ponder over and reply to. On one occasion he had been rhapsodising over the joy with which he would hail a fresh Revolution and the proclamation of a Republic. So happy would he be, he said, that, in his delight, he would embrace the first man he met in the street. Whereupon Master William calmly put the following poser: "Well, Monsieur St. Omer! but supposing the man you met was a *vidangeur*,¹ would you embrace him?" "A *vidangeur*?" he exclaimed with dismay, but with undiminished earnestness, "A *vidangeur*!" Then, after some cogitation, and in mournful accents: "Well, no! I could not! I know he is my brother—my equal! but I could not! I feel it is wrong, it is wicked—but a *vidangeur*! No, I could not!"

This queer little revolutionary abortion had a son who was as the apple of his eye, and whom he had christened—a misnomer this, for the brat had probably never known the rite of baptism—Émile, as he told us, in memory of the "immortal Jean Jacques." I strongly suspect that this youth—if indeed he lived to adorn his generation—developed into an individual of that same very uncommon name of St. Omer who was shot at Satory in the autumn of 1871 for participation in the glorious deeds

¹ A man employed in the sewers at Paris.

of the Paris Commune. I fear that our mathematical training was altogether of an unprofitable kind.

Signor Orlandi, our Italian teacher, was likewise an enthusiastic Liberal, but of a milder type, who had found it advisable to leave his native country after one of the revolutionary movements of the Carbonaro period. He was a gaunt old man, with a very red face, very snuffy and very dirty, with a grand voice and the purest and most melodious of Roman accents, and his delivery *ore rotundo* of certain bits from Ariosto and Petrarch so fastened on my ear that to this day I know the passages by heart, although I have scarcely set eyes upon them since.

It strikes me that, on the whole, our surroundings were singularly Radical, considering that our excellent uncle was a Tory of the Tories, and that our relations were among the few foreigners who mixed much with Legitimist society. Nolte himself was a Radical, as became a Göttingen student; but his Radicalism was chiefly of the *Grossdeutsch* pattern, which in those days partook of the character of mild lunacy. He had published a volume of would-be stinging verse on the Prussian king and government of the day. These feebly subversive rhymes, which an intelligent and discriminating censorship had deemed worthy of prohibition in the Fatherland, were entitled *Nachtigallenlieder*, from a biting allusion to a recent royal edict for the better protection of those interesting songsters, and

Nolte took no little pride in their recital. If I recollect right, they were the very weakest of Heine—or say Freiligrath—and water; but they found a congenial audience in the circle of German teachers and tutors—all ardent patriots and lovers of liberty—with whom Nolte associated, and whom he occasionally regaled of an evening on Arrack punch and doubtful baccy.

One result of the political convictions of our excellent pedagogue was to create in me a firm and abiding belief in the irresistible forces that even then were tending towards German unity, foremost among which was the craving for a return to the old *Reich*, more perhaps as an outward symbol to other nations of the greatness of the German race than as a bond of union between its many fractions. The events of our own time thus found me in great measure prepared for the resurrection of the Empire, although I have none the less marvelled at the skill and boldness with which that consummation of the national desires has been turned to account for its own ends by the deservedly least popular, but most energetic, portion of the German people. At this early period, too, I was made aware of the depth and bitterness of the German hostility to France and the French, for which the name of *Franzosenhass* had long been coined, but which was, nevertheless, so blindly ignored by the French Government down to the very eve of the late war.

Our worthy tutor was an indefatigable book collector, and we frequently came home from our walks with him laden with dusty volumes he had picked up at the book-stalls on the Quays, or in the narrow streets that formed so intricate a network round the Carrousel and Palais Royal. In this way I came across a good many German books, probably little known to later generations of readers, and, in desultory fashion, acquired a tolerably fair knowledge of German literature.

Our wanderings through the Paris of Louis Philippe bring most forcibly to my mind how entirely the outward aspect of the great city has changed since then; so much so, I venture to think, as to have lost much of its charm and all its originality. I confess that the gigantic *boulevards* and rectangular streets of Imperial Paris are to me somewhat wearisome; and since events have shown them powerless even to ward off insurrection, or to save their creator from the fate of his predecessors, I have lost all interest in them.

How charmingly quaint and suggestive were, on the other hand, the crooked, narrow, irregular streets of the Paris of my childhood! Unbroken links they were, connecting it with the terrible and captivating city of the Ligue, of the Fronde, of the Convention, or the Great Empire. It is true that they were badly lighted and worse paved, drainless and malodorous. Their tortuous

course and frequent angles made Paris the city *par excellence* of barricades, and, as such, they were doomed to destruction, but they were far more engaging and picturesque than the splendid thoroughfares which have taken their place. The very houses had an air of individual life and character, while the crowds that thronged the pavements bore, it seems to me, a more simple, cheerful, easy-going aspect, in great contrast to the set, anxious look of latter-day Parisians in their restless pursuit after wealth or pleasure. Certainly the Empire has left its mark on Paris in more ways than one.

Our walks with Nolte were in every way delightful and interesting, being diversified by visits to the Louvre, to the Bibliothèque Royale, to the Invalides, to the Bastille, and to that charming old Jardin des Plantes, with its attractions of rarest plants and beasts, its museums, stocked by generations of naturalists, such as Buffon, Lacépède, Cuvier.

Our principal playground, however, was the garden of the Tuileries. There, for some years, we used daily to meet a very mixed crowd of boys, with whom we played at different games, the chief of which was *barres*, a French variety of prisoners' base.

Of our playfellows of that period I best remember Roger d'Aldenburg, who has since penned many a weighty despatch in the Vienna Chancellerie; stout, cheery Raoul de Grandmaison, heir to a large fortune, who, although the picture of

health, was carried off by typhoid fever when barely fifteen; Arthur de Lauriston, whom his adventures and eccentricities made notorious even under the Second Empire; and Arthur Schickler, now one of the most successful of French sportsmen. *J'en passe et des meilleurs*. But our associates were not all of so high a grade in the social scale, for there was Zizi, the upholsterer's son, as fleet of foot as the great Achilles himself; and Noireau, the grocer's boy, formidable at marbles, and somehow always contriving to pocket our best agates in exchange for his own more vulgar "alleys."

On Sundays we dined, as a rule, with our Delmar uncle and aunt at their house in the Avenue de Marigny, usually, too, spending the afternoon there with our sister and her friends, the most intimate of whom were Ida and Léontine de Gramont—sisters of the duke who was afterwards so fatal to the Empire—and Lory de Stackelberg, since better known to her generation as the Baronne Lory Decazes. Sometimes, too, the Delmars took us long Sunday drives in the delightful country round about Paris, in a well-appointed barouche and four—the Baron's carriages being, like the rest of his establishment, remarkably well turned out. I remember well that one fine summer evening (July 13, 1842), as we drove into the *porte cochère* of the *hôtel Delmar*, on our return from one of these excursions, we were met by Séglas, the house-steward, with the dreadful news that on that very

afternoon the heir to the French throne had been run away with in the Avenue de Neuilly, and, jumping out of the carriage, had been picked up unconscious and dying. This event—the consequences of which have been so far-reaching, since, had he lived, the Duc d'Orléans would probably have peacefully succeeded his father—greatly shocked all those who, like our relations, had well known the very gifted prince thus suddenly cut off in his prime. Deeply though it was to be deplored, however, his removal at that time may have been not unfavourable to English interests; for the duke, either out of the spirit of opposition traditional in heirs-apparent, or with a view to courting popularity, made no secret of his dislike to our country. One winter afternoon, I recollect, I had been taken by Mrs. Arabin to see a great friend of hers, the Comtesse de Lalaing d'Audenarde, when presently His Royal Highness was announced. He motioned to us all to resume our seats, and sat down himself like any ordinary visitor, for he affected a great impatience of etiquette. It was dusk, the lights not having yet been brought in, and the conversation taking, I forget now what turn, the duke gave vent to some very bitter expressions about England and the English. Becoming, however, aware of the presence of my aunt, he hastened to apologise to her most gracefully for the asperity of his remarks. This, if I mistake not, must have been about the time of the

Pritchard "difficulty" at Tahiti, when the popular feeling in France was running very high on the subject of perfidious Albion and her policy. The Duc d'Orléans, as the friend and disciple of Thiers and the sworn enemy of Guizot and the *entente cordiale* with England, played no inconsiderable part at this period, and caused serious embarrassment to his father.

The *hôtel Delmar* and its owners occupy so great a part in my recollections of the first thirty years of my life that some description of them is indispensable to this purely personal narrative.

As I have said before, my father's youngest sister, Emily, had married, somewhat late in life, a Prussian of large fortune, Ferdinand Baron de Delmar. His father had been the head of a Berlin banking firm which for several generations enjoyed the confidence of the royal family of Prussia. During the disastrous campaign that followed the crushing defeat of Jena, Delmar spontaneously placed very large sums at the disposal of King Frederick William, without requiring any security whatever for his advances. His loyal services, to which he owed his Prussian title, were not forgotten at Berlin, and the late Emperor William on various occasions showed a lively sense of them. After the close of the war in 1815, though still occasionally interesting himself in large financial operations, he gave up the banking-house and settled in Paris, mixing in the best society of the French

capital, to which his riches and intelligence, together with a remarkably distinguished air, had procured him ready access. Here, in 1827, when already well past middle age, he met and married my aunt Emily, still then in the heyday of a beauty of no common order.¹ Somewhere about the time of my arrival in Paris, he had finished building a very large and admirably designed house, which was situated in the Avenue de Marigny, opposite the grounds of the Elysée Palace, with a large garden stretching down to the Avenue Gabriel and the Champs Elysées. The plot of ground on which it stood originally formed part of the old estate of the Ducs d'Aumont. Many years afterwards this extremely valuable property was sold at a ruinous loss, and turned into building lots by the purchasers, the greater portion of it being at present taken up by the sumptuous residence of Baron Gustave de Rothschild.

The Delmar house, as I remember it, was remarkable for the perfect proportions and unusual height of its apartments, and was probably the first *hôtel* on so large a scale that had been built in Paris since the fall of the First Empire. It was most luxuriously furnished in the style of the period, and, with its reception rooms thrown open

¹ At the Congress at Vienna, whither, as Emily Rumbold, she had accompanied her step-father, Sir Sidney Smith, she figured as Diana in the *tableaux vivants* representing Olympus and its gods. Varuhagen von Ense and others speak of her great beauty.

and lighted up, certainly looked very well. Over all this splendour, however, there brooded the shadow of a heavy affliction. Delmar's eyesight had for some time been rapidly failing him, when one afternoon in November 1835—shortly after his return from a journey undertaken to consult the best oculists in London, Berlin, and elsewhere—as he was sitting with my aunt, just after the candles had been brought in and the curtains drawn to shut out the dull autumn twilight, he suddenly exclaimed: "Why have they put out the lights?" He had been struck blind, with that sudden, incurable form of blindness known as *amaurosis*, and for which human skill has no remedy. His despair was boundless. Only a few days before, the decoration of the state-rooms in his house had been completed, and just as he was on the point of enjoying the home he had made for himself, blessed as he was with a charming wife and a large fortune, he found himself wrapt in the gloom of a night that would never pass away this side of the grave. For a long time he would receive no one, listen to no reason, accept no comfort. His misery took a peculiarly morbid form. He gave strict orders that the most sumptuous of the drawing-rooms should be closed, the shutters kept to, and no one allowed to enter it with a light. I remember this well, for, so scrupulously was the strange whim respected, that through this large mysterious room one literally had to grope one's way when passing from my

aunt's apartment at one end of the house to her husband's at the other. When, after his death, the costly contents of this state-room—including among other things a *bas-relief* by Thorwaldsen, which adorned the mantelpiece—were sold, they literally went for a song, without ever having been seen by any one or borne witness to the refined tastes of their owner.

But even despair such as his must in time give way to affectionate and soothing influences. Partly buoyed up by the hope of cure—they never dared confess to him the hopelessness of his case, and spoke of cataract and miraculous operations—partly interested in the education and prospects of his adopted child, my sister, of whom he had become excessively fond, he took to life again, and consented to receive his friends. He now and then gave little dinners—perfect of their kind; my aunt's *salon* was open every evening to a few *intimes*, and on Sundays the best part of Parisian society crowded the house. It was both remarkable and gratifying to note how at these receptions the most charming women and the most distinguished men—such was the good breeding of those days—would take their seat by him in turns and seek to lighten at least one hour of the blind man's weary darkness. But he had indeed great and attaching qualities, and in his happier moods his wit shone forth as keen and bright as ever. Endowed with a wonderfully

tenacious memory, he was inexhaustible in anecdote and full of playful sallies, which fell with a sad grace from his thin, smileless lips. But I have dwelt too long on my recollections of a man in many ways remarkable, my intercourse with whom was certainly not without influence on my mental and moral development, and will now turn to the *habitués* of his house.

The special merits of the *salon Delmar* were its being, so to speak, neutral and *très bien composé*. One met there, besides French people of many shades of politics, foreigners of distinction from all countries. In its cosmopolitanism it had all the variety of a foreign—as distinguished from a purely French—house, and yet was rigidly guarded from those doubtful elements too often met with in foreign houses abroad. My dear aunt was sometimes charged with impertinence for declining to extend too much the circle of her acquaintance, but her invitations were all the more prized and sought after. Next to such a model Embassy as that of Lord Granville—Embassies of that pattern are now, alas! quite extinct—or the smaller, mostly political *coteries* of the Princesse de Lieven and Mesdames de Flahaut and de Castellane, the *salon Delmar* might well be considered a valuable institution in Paris life. It is true that it was favoured by exceptional circumstances. Society in France had been rudely overthrown by the events of 1830. The old *noblesse*, the Faubourg St. Germain, had

withdrawn to their gloomy houses on the *rive gauche* and closed their doors in high dudgeon and disgust. The *bourgeois* monarchy had not yet created a society of its own, although the elements of one were not wanting in its camp. The world of the *haute finance*, which has since built up its empire out of the ruins of more exalted societies, had not asserted itself as yet, and even the Rothschilds had not then attained their present social distinction. Thus the want of a *salon* was greatly felt, and a foreign house of unusual luxury and refinement, whose owner had become all but a Frenchman, afforded a convenient and pleasant ground on which all could meet without *arrière pensée* or surrender of principle.

In reality it was in the main a Legitimist house, and its reputation for what, in the slang of the present day, is termed smartness, required that it should be so. Among its chief frequenters were the Gramonts, parents of the late Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Prince and Princesse de Poix, with their son, Mouchy (father of the present duke), and their handsome daughter, Sabine, afterwards the wife of Lionel Standish; the Vicomtesse de Noailles, too, a most charming woman and one of my aunt's greatest friends, whose entire family had been massacred in the Revolution; and the old Duchesse de Maillé, a singularly perfect type of the witty French *grande dame*, who, like Lady Salisbury, was burnt to death in a gallery of her

ancient *château*, having set fire to her dress with a bedroom candle. Of the men, I best remember the Marquis de Balaincourt, a *preux chevalier* who had shown the greatest personal courage in saving life in one of the most terrible inundations of the Rhône, and later on at the fearful accident on the Versailles *rive gauche* railway, where he extricated several hapless passengers from the pile of burning carriages; all the talented tribe of the La Ferronays; the Comte Joseph d'Estourmel, a delightful *causeur*, who left behind him some charming recollections of his Préfecture under the Restauration, but who, in my memory, is inseparable from a friendly little note of the old Duchesse de Liancourt, who, sending back to him a cloak he had forgotten at her house the previous evening, wrote, "*Quand on s'appelle Joseph, on ne laisse pas son manteau dans l'anti-chambre d'une honnête femme!*" the Marquise de Caraman, *née* de Béarn, a woman of most varied accomplishments, and her pretty sister, the Duchesse de Vallombrosa; the twin brothers de Nadaillac, who remind me of that Mrs. Malaprop of French society, Madame de Bélissen, who, struck by the wonderful likeness between them, exclaimed, "*Dieu! que ces Nadaillac se ressemblent! surtout Sigismond!*" Monsieur de la Châtaigneraie, with his very handsome wife, who having a lawsuit about the Principality of Pons, to which he laid claim, was dubbed by a malicious friend, "*le Prince de Pont suspendu.*"

But I must close this enumeration, which reads as pompously and as dully as a page from d' Hozier.¹

The foreign element was headed by diplomatists, such as the Sardinian Ambassador, Marquis de Brignole, owner of the *Palazzo Rosso*, and most dignified and benevolent of Genoese *grands seigneurs*, whose daughter (wife of de Ferrari, Duc de Galliera) was perhaps the most intimate friend of both my aunts, and was afterwards celebrated for her benefactions and the artistic treasures she bequeathed to the city of Paris; de Tschann, Minister from the Swiss Diet, one of the last patrician representatives of his country; the Austrian Ambassador, Count Apponyi, whose son, after long representing his sovereign at our Court, is now² renewing in Paris those traditions of kindness, high breeding, and refined hospitality that so distinguished his father's Embassy. Here, too, were the Russian Minister, Count Pahlen, and his brother, Nicolas, who in later years made England the home of his choice; and the Koenneritzs (from Saxony), whose daughter, Countess Bernstorff, was afterwards so well known in London.

Besides these there were the foreign settlers in, or visitors to, Paris, among them the beautiful Comtesse Delphine Potocka, and that most agreeable woman, Madame Narischkine, whose

¹ The celebrated French genealogist and compiler of the *Armorial général de France*.

² Written in 1879.

niece, Nadine Lobanow, married my brother William, and whose charming granddaughter, Princesse Irène Paskevitch, it has since been my privilege to number among my most valued St. Petersburg friends; and, to close my foreign list, that gnome-like oddity, Prince Tufiakine, of the wry neck, better known, by an inevitable Parisian corruption, as "le Prince Tout-faquin," whose carriage having one day upset a *dame de la halle*, to whom, in his concern, he offered to send his doctor, she answered him, "Ah bien! merci! si c'est lui qui t'a arrangé le cou comme ça, je n'en veux pas!" I had almost forgotten Princesse Louise Schönburg and her eminent brother, Prince Felix Schwarzenberg, who, among other eccentricities, was at that time deep in anatomical studies, and one evening much disgusted my aunt and other ladies present by dropping a finger-bone that had got entangled in the folds of his pocket-handkerchief.

Of our countrymen residing in Paris, it is enough to mention Lord Hertford; Spencer Cowper and his beautiful wife, Lady Harriet d'Orsay; cynical old Lady Aldborough; Mrs. William Locke (mother of one of my oldest and kindest friends, Lady Walsingham); and Henry Greville, then Paid Attaché to the Embassy, whom I saw much more of in later years. At the Delmars', too, one was sure to meet most English people of distinction who came over on a visit to Paris. Lord and Lady

Palmerston, very old friends of my aunts, who were afterwards to be my kindest friends and patrons; the Londonderrys; the Ailesburys; the Duke of Devonshire, whose former intimacy with my father made him a tried and constant friend of my father's sisters; the lovely Duchess (Constance) of Sutherland; Lord Ossulston (now Lord Tankerville); George, Lord Rivers, in whose marriage with Lord Granville's daughter my aunts took an active, cousinly interest; and others whom it would be too tedious to enumerate.

Its concerts were no doubt the chief glory of the Delmar house. Rossini, who was *l'ami de la maison*, sometimes helped to arrange these entertainments, which were often on a magnificent scale. Haydn's "Creation," for instance, was sung there, the Conservatoire furnishing its choruses and orchestra, led by Habeneck, and the solo parts being taken by Lablache, Tamburini, Madame Persiani, &c. Here, too, the great maestro's *Stabat Mater* was given almost for the first time. Rossini also lent his countenance to some amateur music in which both my aunt and sister took part, one of the numbers of his melodious *Soirées Musicales* being dedicated to Madame de Delmar. Some years later, I can well remember a very different voice holding us all under its spell—that of Mademoiselle Rachel, then quite a young girl and relatively unknown, whose deep, thrilling tones and impassioned delivery at once revealed her as gifted

with the rarest tragic powers. That charming composer, Bellini, likewise came often to the Delmar house. Although already stricken by the malady which carried him off at so early an age, he was at that time bringing out those singularly melodious and pathetic operas which so far have somehow continued to hold their own in spite of all their flimsiness and poverty of orchestration. The "Swan of Pesaro,"¹ who was not above *la jalousie de métier*, was prone to speak contemptuously of them, and one day pardonably said of that noisy and vulgar *motif* "*suoni la tromba*" of the *Puritani*: "Quand on le chante à Paris, je l'entends à Bologne!"

My sister was herself no mean musician, and was at one time a favourite pupil of Chopin. Music, too, formed part of the education of us boys, and we were early taught the piano. Unfortunately I never had the patience to overcome the technical difficulties which stand in the way of all good pianoforte playing. Still music has been to me one of the great solaces and interests of life, and it is probable that what slight natural gifts I have lie in that direction. Somehow—to borrow Lord Fitzwilliam's saying about his coal-mines—I feel that in musical power and perception I have owned a bank on which I have never fully drawn.

Before leaving this subject I may mention that one of our earliest musical delights was being some-

¹ Rossini.

times taken on Saturdays to the Delmar box at the Italian Opera (or the *Bouffes*, as it still was called), then for a season housed in the Odéon theatre. Here we heard the marvellous, and probably unrivalled, quartett, composed of Rubini, Lablache, Tamburini, and Madame Grisi—to whom I may add that accomplished singer, Madame Per-siani. Nor can I forget the very unpromising *début* of the great artist who of all has most charmed English society, and whom I have since had the pleasure of reckoning among my friends—I mean, of course, Mario of the glorious voice and unapproachable grace of manner. Probably, however, the most curious of my musical recollections is having once heard Adolphe Nourrit and Mademoiselle Falcon in the *Comte Ory*. I doubt if French Opera has since known interpreters as talented as these artists, who flourished in a by-gone age.

CHAPTER III

BREAK UP OF THE PARIS HOME

AMID these brilliant surroundings and refining influences it was our fate to grow up, and there is no denying that, although we may have derived from them some culture, the education and training given us were not the best calculated to fit us for the rough chances of after life. The system followed with us was, indeed, from a matter-of-fact English point of view, simply absurd, and I have had bitter cause since to lament the lack of really sound discipline that formed part of it. I hasten, at the same time, to explain that, although treated with that extreme indulgence which is too striking a feature of family life on the French pattern—being, for instance, allowed to dine late and spend the best part of the evening with our relations, instead of being packed off to bed and kept much more strictly to the schoolroom—we, of course, took but a very small part in the social doings I have endeavoured to describe. As, however, of a Sunday, which was the Delmar reception night, we were always included in the family dinner-party at the Avenue, and were not sent home till past ten o'clock, we had excellent opportunities of

seeing something of the world our people mixed with.

Perhaps, as a *laudator temporis acti*, I may be unduly partial to what I can recall of the French society of those days; but I own that it seems to me to compare very favourably with that which I found in its stead when in later years I revisited Paris. I may, in fact, boldly assert my conviction that both the French women and men of my first youth were far better-looking and had more distinction of manner and greater charm than their successors under the Second Empire. I see no French ladies now who for real beauty or *grand air* could be named with the Duchesse d'Istrie, the Comtesse de Beaufort (*née* Châteaubriand), or Madame de la Châtaigneraie, or for wit and conversational powers with Madame de Menou, or the old Duchesse de Maillé; nor do I meet men of the carriage and bearing of the old Duc de Mouchy, the Marquis de Biencourt, the Duc de Maillé, or the Comte Lionel de Bonneval. The traditions and even the physical attributes of *la grande et bonne compagnie* seem to me to be fast disappearing in France. Are they, however, faring much better elsewhere?

Of our own special home in the Rue d'Aguesseau I have little more to relate. Besides ourselves, there lived in the house the families of the Comte de Léautaud and of the Comte de Kersaint. The Léautauds are connected in my recollections with the Lafarge *cause célèbre*. Madame de Léautaud had been a

friend of Madame Lafarge, and the loss of some jewels, that were afterwards traced to Madame Lafarge, first awakened suspicions as to that person's character. This affair was a kind of prologue to the great poisoning case which interested all classes of society in France as perhaps no crime has done since. It was the talk of all Paris, and I can remember the very shopmen discussing the guilt or innocence of Madame Lafarge with their customers while handing goods across the counter for approval.¹

Our other neighbours, the Kersaints, had two sons, Léon and Henri, who were our habitual playfellows, together with a choice band composed of Octave de Bastard, afterwards terribly maimed in the Franco-German war; Gaston de Ludre, since married to a Princesse de Beauvau; the brothers d'Aramon, and poor Albert de Balleroy, full of artistic gifts which his early death prevented from bearing fruit. Our chief associates besides these were of course our cousins, Camille and Edmond de Polignac and Ferdinand de St. Clair, and likewise André de Ferrari, the only child of the Duc and Duchesse de Galliera, a lad of great promise, who was cut off in his seventeenth year by scarlet fever.

¹ Madame Lafarge was tried in 1840 for poisoning her husband, and condemned to imprisonment for life. She was pardoned by the Prince-President in 1852, and died a year later at the baths of Ussat, in Auvergne. To the end she maintained her innocence of the crime imputed to her.

Much about this time we were taught to ride and to swim. As far as I am concerned, I was not very successful in either of these exercises. I was, and have remained, an indifferent rider—though at times, as in Greece and South America, I have been a great deal on horseback—and I can barely support myself on the water. Physical development was certainly not the most brilliant part of the training we received, and on this score I owe my worthy relations a very serious grudge. A purely foreign education is, in my opinion, a misfortune to any young Englishman, and on no point more than on this. I look, therefore, with a satisfaction somewhat tempered by envy, on the very different experiences of my own sons.

About this time, in the summer of 1846, I had much outgrown my strength, and the doctors having counselled change of air and sea-bathing, we went to Boulogne-sur-Mer, where the Delmars had also hired for the season a large house known as the Château de Capécure. Here we spent some pleasant, healthful weeks, the bracing sea-breezes soon setting me up and proving that I was affected by no serious mischief. My brother Charles joined us, fresh from the Antipodes and as light of heart as of purse, poor fellow! With him we took long rides on the heights above Boulogne, dipped in the sea, and otherwise disported ourselves to the best of our ability. We posted both to and from Boulogne (then a matter of twenty-four hours), and I well re-

member the charm and excitement of the journey—above all the quaint old inn at Abbeville (which I fondly pictured to myself as that immortalised in the “Sentimental Journey”) where we passed the night on our return, and whence my Aunt Delmar, with my sister, preceded us on the road back to Paris, turning off shortly before Beauvais to pay a visit to the Vicomtesse de Noailles and her daughter at the Château de Mouchy.

On the 29th of March 1847, the Prince de Polignac, who was married to my mother’s youngest sister, died at St. Germain-en-Laye after a short illness. After being released from his confinement in the fortress of Ham, where my aunt shared his captivity, and where indeed one of my cousins (Camille) was born, he resided for a time in Bavaria on an estate called Wildthurn, near Regensburg, which he had purchased when driven into exile. After a few years, however, he was allowed to return to France on the sole condition of not taking up his abode in Paris. I remember him well: a charming, kindly old man, with all the *ancien régime* air to be expected of the son of Marie Antoinette’s most intimate friend. His headstrong policy had brought about the fall of a master to whom he was devotedly attached, and his name has been handed down to posterity in terms of severe, and possibly not wholly undeserved, censure. He, nevertheless, acted throughout life on strictly honourable even though somewhat narrow convictions, and it may

in truth be said of him that he was a perfect type of the high-minded, loyal, deeply religious *grand seigneur* of the old school. No man had known greater adversity, or borne it with nobler or more Christian fortitude and resignation. He had been twice sentenced to death, and twice a State prisoner : for six years at Vincennes, after the conspiracy of George Cadoudal (the same plot for supposed complicity in which my grandfather, Sir George Rumbold, was seized at Hamburg), and again, as I have said, after the July Revolution, in the fortress of Ham. I have a lithographed portrait of Prince Polignac, with the facsimile of an autograph in which he briefly and strikingly sums up his chequered existence :—

“ En résumé la carrière que j’ai parcourue présente à peu près toutes les vicissitudes que la fortune peut réserver à l’homme. J’ai connu l’exil, la proscription, la captivité ; j’ai habité dans les palais des Rois ; les richesses et la pauvreté m’ont visité tour à tour ; j’ai connu l’agitation des camps, j’ai goûté les douceurs de la vie intérieure. Enfin, j’ai occupé le premier poste à l’Etranger, et le premier dans mon pays. Aussi puis-je dire avoir éprouvé presque tous les genres de prospérité et tous les genres d’infortune. J’ignore quel sort la Providence me tient en réserve ; mais il n’en est guères, heureux ou malheureux, dont le passé ne me retrace l’image.”

We went down to the funeral at St. Germain with Agènor de Guiche, afterwards Duc de Gra-

mont, who was a great-nephew of Polignac's, and who took charge of us boys for the day. Shortly after her husband's death my aunt removed with her family to Paris, and took apartments in the Rue de Berri, where I often visited her in later years.

In less than a twelvemonth from Polignac's death, the monarch to whom he owed his imprisonment, and whom the events of July 1830 had placed upon the throne, was, in his turn, driven into exile.

I have little more to relate of our home in Paris, destined soon to be broken up. In the winter and spring of 1846-47 we were, far too indulgently, taken to a few balls and parties, where we youngsters must have been thought strangely out of place. I remember a very pretty ball given by the Lauristons, the parents of our old playfellow Arthur, in a house in the Champs Élysées, since well known under the Empire as the Hôtel d'Albe, and a fête at the Duchesse Pozzo di Borgo's (a niece by marriage of the eminent statesman and diplomatist), who was then fast taking the lead among the great ladies of the *noble faubourg*. Best of all do I recollect a great ball given by the Duchesse de Galliera (the mother of our great friend, André Ferrari), who had now become one of the leaders of Orleanist society. The Galliera house in the Rue d'Astorg being too small for a fête on so large a scale, a temporary ballroom and supper-rooms had been built out into the garden

and decorated with hangings and draperies. Shortly after midnight, when the gaiety was at its height, there was an alarm of fire, and the helmets of the Paris fire-brigade appeared amongst the throng of dancers. Some curtains in a passage off the ball-room had been set alight—one of the few guests who showed presence of mind, and climbed up a ladder to help to drench and pull down the burning stuff, being a young officer of about twenty-three, in colonel's uniform, who was no other than the Duc de Montpensier, King Louis Philippe's youngest son. It might, by the way, be said of His Royal Highness that he has since then shown less zeal in checking the flames of civil war in the country of his adoption. The fire was insignificant and was easily put out, but an uncontrollable panic had spread throughout the company. The more elderly people croaked forth reminiscences of the Schwarzenberg ball,¹ and there was a general rush to the street and to the carriages, which all the entreaties and assurances of host and hostess were powerless to arrest. The *sauve qui peut* was complete. And this reminds me that in the crowd of fleeing guests was old Prince de Montléart, a wizened little man with a crooked leg, who better than any one had cause to remember the disastrous fête at the Austrian Embassy, for, as a mere *cadet de province*, he had

¹ The fête given by the Austrian Ambassador, Prince Schwarzenberg, on the occasion of the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise, when Princess Schwarzenberg was burnt to death.

been maimed for life that night, in gallantly rescuing from an upper window of the burning house a princess of Savoie-Carignan (the sister-in-law, I believe, of King Charles Albert), who, out of gratitude, married him and procured him his princely title.

Shortly after this untoward occurrence we were asked to join the Gallieras and their son André in a party to the play. The theatre was the *Théâtre Historique*, just opened by the elder Dumas, and the piece given was an adaptation by him of his historical novel *La Reine Margot*. It was magnificently put on the stage, with all the spectacular effect of splendid scenery, and gorgeous, curiously correct dresses, since rendered familiar to the British public by Kean, Fechter, and other enterprising managers. I have a vivid recollection of Rouvière's impersonation of Charles IX. ; his jerky utterance, nervous, pettish gestures, pale face, and haunted look making up a perfect picture of that crowned stripling of sinister memory. It was altogether an evening to impress itself on youthful minds, and it is all the more present to mine because, only a few days later, we heard that our favourite friend and playfellow, André Ferrari, was ill with scarlet fever and had been brought home from school, and then again in a few days that he was no more—cut off in his youth and strength from all the promise of vast wealth which his exceptional intellectual gifts would have enabled him to apply to the noblest uses. To

his mother, who worshipped him, the blow was simply crushing, and she never quite got over it. Strange it was that not long afterwards—at an interval of nearly eighteen years from the birth of André—she had another son who, although he has none of the charming qualities of his brother, equally became her idol, and is heir to an enormous fortune for which he is said to profess utter contempt. I entirely lost sight of Madame de Galliera in after years, great though had been the intimacy between our families. She was a woman of remarkable gifts and attainments, though, in certain respects, somewhat strange and eccentric, and was at one time deeply in the confidence of the Orleanist party. Her splendid charities and donations will always preserve for her a place among the greatest benefactors of her time.

Before closing this frivolous record of Paris gaieties, I may mention one more pleasant evening, that of the dress-rehearsal of some private theatricals given at the English Embassy (where Lord Normanby had succeeded Lord Cowley), when the principal play performed was "The Merry Monarch," with Henry Greville, Windsor Hencage, and the lovely Miss MacTavish (soon to become Mrs. Henry Howard, and but too well known from her after adventures) in the leading parts.

Grave anxieties had meanwhile come over our happy household, although we boys were unconscious of them at the time. Arabin had incurred

heavy pecuniary losses, which made it advisable that he should break up his establishment in Paris and seek—for some time at least—a cheaper and quieter place of residence. There was no help for it. The apartment in the Rue d'Aguesseau had to be given up, the furniture sold, the servants discharged; and it was determined that we should first remove to Nice, the climate of which place was recommended to our uncle, whose health had been delicate of late years.

On the morning of the 17th of August 1847 we began our journey south, and did so in very unusual fashion. My dear aunt, with her many perfections, had one peculiar weakness. She had an almost morbid dread of both dogs and horses. She never allowed a dog inside the house, and gave a wide berth to any she met out of doors. But in a certain station of life horses cannot be dispensed with so easily as dogs, and she had got accustomed to a pair of steady old bays, who dragged her slowly and majestically through the streets of Paris in a blue landau of antediluvian proportions. She likewise had unbounded faith in Joseph, the coachman, who drove these trustworthy cattle in true patriarchal style. It was determined, therefore, that in this equipage we should be driven down to Nice by easy stages, and certainly—had the thing been feasible—it would have been by no means an unpleasant way of performing the journey.

Of course our excitement as the day of our departure drew near bordered on the delirious, and I grieve to say that we felt little or no regret at leaving behind us our snug and happy home. Early in the morning, as the carriage was being loaded, the Delmar *maître d'hôtel* came round with some last message or other, and from him we heard of the murder of the Duchesse de Praslin, which had taken place a few hours before at her house in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, close by. Our relations had known the unfortunate lady well, and the news made a most painful impression upon them, though they were far from divining the fearful circumstances attending the crime.

At last we were off! Down the street which for nine years had held our cloudless lives and had seen us ripen from childhood into youth; past the little church where we used to worship on Sundays; past the hospitable English Embassy; down the Faubourg St. Honoré into the Rue Royale, and thence into the Place de la Concorde; past our old playgrounds in the Tuileries gardens; and then along the line of quays to the Barrière de Charenton, where we got on to the Route d'Italie (what magic in the name!) and fairly left Paris behind us—and, with Paris, the unbroken sunshine of our youthful days.

“Ah, happy years—once more who would not be a boy!”

That day we stopped to lunch and bait the

horses at Villeneuve-le-Roi, and, as evening closed in, drove up to the old inn at Melun. Here we found great excitement about the Praslin murder; for Vaux—the old domain of the Surintendant Fouquet, now the property of the Praslins—is in the immediate neighbourhood, and the landlord, while attending to our wants at dinner, expatiated on the horror of the crime and on the despair it would occasion to *ce pauvre Duc!* Next day we continued our journey—not without some ominous grumbling from the patriarch at first starting—and halted at Moret for our midday rest. That evening we reached Sens, and the long-suffering bays were unharnessed, never to put on collar again in our service; for after dinner the patriarch was ushered in, and declared that, unless it were wished to *faire crever ces pauvres bêtes*, we must give up our present mode of locomotion. There was nothing for it but to take to posting, and to us of course this was simply delightful. How our poor dear aunt's consent was obtained to this complete change of arrangements is more than I can attempt to explain. The next two days were enchanting. We drove, in perfect weather, through the heart of the richest Burgundian districts, through smiling vineyards purple with the promise of the coming vintage, past Joigny and Auxerre, till we reached our night-quarters in the little town of Avallon. As the diligence thundered down the narrow street after us, and disgorged its passengers at the inn door for

supper, the inn-keeper observed to us, with rueful mien, that this was the last coach on the road, as the railway trains would run from the morrow regularly as far as Tonnerre. On the second day of posting we got to Châlon-sur-Saône, where we rested over the Sunday and found news of the arrest of the Duc de Praslin on suspicion of the murder of his wife. Early the following day we went on board the steamer for Lyons. How often since then, when being whirled to or from Paris in the hot, dusty, rattling train, have I looked back with regret to our snail-like progress all along this road, and especially to those picturesque river journeys down the Saône and Rhône! We stayed a couple of days at Lyons at an inn in the Place Bellecour, which has probably long ceased to exist, and then, in the foggy dawn, embarked on the steamer bound for Avignon. Here again we tarried a day or two, exploring the old city with Nolte, and visiting the grim *Château des Papes*, with its gloomy halls and foul mediæval dungeons, and, most ghastly of all, its *glacière* of revolutionary memory.

A serious difficulty now arose. We had left the blue landau at Châlon, and thus had no carriage in which we could post onwards. *Vetturinos* there were none at Avignon, nor were there in the town any conveyances for hire. At last, after long and fruitless search, a small omnibus was discovered, the owner of which undertook to convey us in four days to our journey's end. Now there is nothing objec-

tionable in an omnibus taken by itself, but when a vehicle of that humble class flaunts its vulgarity and seeks to attract attention by such a title as *le Zéphir Arignonnais*, painted in bright red letters on a canary body, one's finer sensibilities may well feel aggrieved. Our mortification was very keen, while our excellent aunt, on the other hand, exulted over the safe and ponderous aspect of the *Zéphir* and the meek look of the steeds that were to waft it along. Into this ignoble conveyance we were all packed, and in it made, it must be owned, a very pleasant journey. Our first day's stage, ending at the sleepy old city of Aix en Provence—whence, by the way, the Arabins, originally Huguenot *Provençal noblesse* driven out at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, derive their ancestry—was marred by a violent *mistral*, that scourge of the valley of the Rhône; but the rest of our progress was perfect. We slept at Brignolles and at Fréjus, and halted for our midday meal at St. Maximin, which owns a grand church worthy of more extended fame, at Vidauban, and at Cannes—then but an insignificant place, the charms of which had, up to that time, been solely revealed to Lord Brougham. On the fourth day at sunset we reached the Var, and with it the Sardinian frontier. Here our passport was asked for and examined, and odd-looking custom-house officials, in uniforms unknown to us and therefore full of interest, made a pretence of searching our luggage. Then a few more miles

of dusty road skirting the darkening sea, a long straggling suburb, and at last we drove up, in all our ignominy, to the door of the Hôtel de France, where M. Bonaccorsi stood bowing and smiling, and doubtless wondering at the strange equipage and the still stranger people who had selected a torrid August to visit Nice.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE ON THE RIVIERA

THE Nice we found at this period was so unlike the southern French Brighton that has since sprung up on its site, that it is, in a measure, difficult for me to realise the identity of the two. It was almost entirely confined to the old town on the left bank of the Paillon. On the right bank it could show little more than one row of buildings—most of them mean and dilapidated—extending from the old bridge, down the Quai St. Jean Baptiste and the Quai Masséna, as far as the corner of the present Promenade des Anglais; and at the back, stretching farther on, the suburb of the Croix de Marbre, containing a sprinkling of good houses, such as the Maison Masclet, the Maison Guiglia, and the Villa Avigdor, with gardens reaching down to the shingly beach. Of the vast *quartiers* of St. Etienne and Carabacel; the network of streets round the Boulevards de la Gare or Dubouchage; the handsome buildings along the quays; the square of the Jardin Public; and, above all, the Promenade des Anglais, with its trim, dainty villa residences and splendid hotels—a drive in itself worthy of a great capital—there was no trace at the time I speak of.

Nice was then probably one of the dullest and most neglected of Sardinian cities. It had little trade and no industry, but few shops and only two inns of any standing,¹ no hackney carriages, no roads to speak of, no gas, but little water, and no press. On the other hand, it could boast of a considerable Piedmontese garrison, a military governor with a brilliant staff, shoals of priests, delightful donkeys, sedan-chairs, a free port, the moon and stars in all their southern brilliancy to light its streets, and a climate the most delicious I can remember—and which likewise seems to me to be a thing of the past. *Nous avons changé tout cela!* Nice since then has been haggled for and sold, has found new rulers and lost her commercial privileges. She now wears the gilded fetters of Imperial France, while feigning to sigh for her old Italian masters; and has strayed from her sleepy, Arcadian innocence into the most naughty and luxurious of nineteenth century ways. When first I knew her she was governed by a de Maistre.² When last I saw her she professed in her heart to worship Garibaldi, but was fast yielding to the blandishments of her neighbour Monsieur Blanc.

We settled down in our new home — an *en-*

¹ The very comfortable Hôtel de France on the Quai Masséna (which has kept up its position to the present day) and the Hôtel des Etrangers in the inner town.

² Nephew of that eminent Catholic writer, the Comte Joseph de Maistre, author of the *Soirées de St. Petersbourg, Du Pape, &c.*

tresol in the Maison Corinaldi at the corner of the Quai Masséna and of the Rue du Paradis—and, when the great heat had passed away, derived much pleasure from our walks and excursions in the lovely neighbourhood. The town was nearly deserted when we first arrived, but we, nevertheless, soon made acquaintances among the few foreign residents, some of whom were English. Among them were Adolphe Lacroix, the British Consul, and his family, and a clergyman of the name of Slinger, the happy father of three charming girls, one of whom, Isabel, was quite Hebe-like in her beauty. As winter drew near, the influx of strangers began, and our relations soon found themselves surrounded by a pleasant foreign *coterie* which frequently met of an evening, either at our house or at some other of the set. Here I first met the Comte de Ribeaupierre, *Grand Maître de la Maison* of the Empress of Russia, whose handsome daughter Sophie, wife of Comte Kutusoff, late Russian Military Plenipotentiary at Berlin, became my aunt's great friend, and whose other daughters afterwards married the Prussian diplomatist Brassier de St. Simon and the millionaire Prince Youssouppoff. These, with the Marquis de Massigny, Charles de Viry (both Savoyard subjects of his Sardinian Majesty), and the Carlist General Elio, formed a small circle of *intimes*, which before long received a charming addition in the Comtesse de Sonnaz—*Madame la Gouvernante* as she was styled in Piedmontese French—the wife

of the general who succeeded M. de Maistre in the Government of Nice.

The local society at this time owned for its head a remarkable old lady of illustrious descent, Madame de Ste. Agathe, great-granddaughter of Madame de Sévigné. Her receptions in the Rue du Pont Neuf were attended by the more distinguished foreign visitors—her daughter, Madame de Cessole, then a very pretty woman, helping to do the honours of the house. The principal English people of this winter season of 1847-48 were Sir Charles Burgess Lamb and his wife, Lady Montgomerie, mother of the late Lord Eglinton. Sir Charles was as eccentric as heart of man could desire, but of a jovial, hearty disposition. He was a great promoter of picnics and riding parties, at which he took care to be surrounded by a bevy of young ladies, somewhat, it was said, to the discomfort of his elderly spouse. His rough country clothes and bluff, loud manner had obtained for him from the natives the appellation of *milord-paysan*, and he was dreaded by the rude muleteers, whom he would charge along the dusty roads and lanes, laying about him with his heavy hunting-crop to make them clear the way. Another character was deaf old Captain Grindlay, who, during the winter season, gave weekly afternoon concerts in an apartment on the Quai du Midi, at which all the musical *dilettanti* of the place were laid under contribution. Captain Grindlay's water-colour sketches of India, where he had long resided,

are among the most brilliant amateur performances I have ever seen. Nor must I forget, among my remarkable characters, the renowned Sir Charles Napier, on his way home from the East, and on a visit to his brother Sir George—that other son of the charming Lady Sarah—who lived on the first floor above us in the *Maison Corinaldi*, and was a friend of my relations. The victor of Meeanee, despite his Scindian laurels, looked—with his shabby, untidy clothes, hooked nose, ragged white beard and portentous mustachios tied up behind his ears—the Jew Fagin all over. Of all diversions in the world, a subscription ball was given in honour of this hero at the brand-new *Hotel Victoria* opened that same winter. I ought before this to have mentioned Colonel Peregrine Cust and his family, if only out of respect for the memory of his son, and my namesake, Horace Cust. We were much of the same age, and became great friends, and many were the scrambling walks and drives we took together. Poor fellow! I can well remember the glee with which he one day announced to us that he had been given a commission in the *Coldstream Guards*. He was destined to be the first officer to fall on the deadly slopes of the *Alma*.

We had now entered on the memorable year 1848, and it may easily be imagined how anxiously we old Parisians watched the surprising events of February. Brought up as we had been in holy horror of the execrable excesses of the first Repub-

lican era, it was not without something like disgust and dismay that we convinced ourselves of the violent change that had taken place, by riding down to the Var to see *République Française, Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, daubed in large letters on the guard-house and custom-house buildings at the farther end of the bridge. But other, and, to us more immediately stirring, occurrences were yet to come. In that same eventful February news reached Nice of the granting of the Sardinian *Statuto* or Constitution, and its effects on the indolent Niçards were truly marvellous. Citizens of all ranks joined in forming a National Guard, and paraded the streets to the sound of martial music; new life appeared to be instilled into the whole community; and if brilliant illuminations, windy orations, open-air banquets, and midnight shouting be the true expression of public joy, never were people more deliriously happy than Charles Albert's much-neglected subjects of the county of Nice. But soon came tidings of still greater moment. The rising at Milan, the retreat of the Austrians: in an instant, throughout its entire length and breadth, Italy swayed and heaved with long-pent-up revolutionary action.

Whatever the after-judgment of history, it must be confessed that the first dawn of a national movement brings with it an intoxication which it is hard to resist. In these days pseudo-Italian Nice went fairly mad, with the rest of the cities of the Penin-

sula; and when the die was cast and Charles Albert had come "down like the wolf on the fold," invading the territories of his kinsman and ally without a note of warning, the frenzy was complete. The troops quartered in the town were hurried up to the front, escorted along the Corniche road by crowds of citizens and Civic Guards plying them with wine, showering flowers on them, and cheering them deliriously on their march. Then the entire land burst forth into song, and day and night our quiet streets re-echoed the strains of the *Inno a Pio Nono*, and of many another patriotic chant which has now vanished from memory with the wreck and disappointment of that daring but abortive enterprise. There is a swing and a ring about some of these long-forgotten songs which, even at this distance of time, make those hot-fever days stand out before me as clearly as though they were of yesterday, and set my middle-aged feet keeping time to their martial cadence¹:—

"Se ti sfidi la rabbia straniera,
Monta in sella e solleva il tuo brando
Coll' azzurra cocarda e bandiera
Sorgereu tutti quanti con te
Voleremo alla pugna gridando
Carlo Alberto s' è strinto con Pio
Viva il Rè, viva il Rè, evviva il Rè ;
Viva l'Italia, evviva il Rè !"

Long life to the warrior king! Blessings on the patriotic Pope!

¹ Written in 1873.

What has been the fate of the liberators? The sombre monarch dying in self-imposed exile on a distant foreign shore; the Pontiff shorn of all his temporalities, a captive at large in his Holy City, reduced to the creation of fantastic and mischievous dogmas, or the *bruta fulmina* of an impotent wrath! The songs alone survived, and, notwithstanding the too speedy and bitter confutation of their promise, they helped to keep alive in the hearts of that much-tried generation an unshaken faith in the achievement of national unity and independence, though many a long year and many a bloody struggle had to be passed through before these were finally attained. Strange indeed is the spell of melody in times of political trouble. Think of the wonders of the *Marseillaise*, of the Hymn of Garibaldi, of the Chant of Luther, of the *Wacht am Rhein!* Men sing when marching to death, when bursting their bonds, when mounting the scaffold, when culling the palms of martyrdom. They may fall or fail, but the sound ever ascends; music is of divine essence, and soaring, seeks the higher regions whence it sprang.

But to return from this flight to my sober narrative. As spring advanced apace, Nolte showed signs of a restlessness which foretold that his long, and to me most valuable, connection with us was drawing to a close. He had indeed devotedly applied himself to his task, and if his conscientious labours led to no very brilliant result, the fault is to

be sought rather in our want of receptiveness and our too worldly surroundings, than in his lack of ability to train or teach. His pupils were now indeed beyond control, and no doubt he was aware of it. Then, too, he was irresistibly drawn to make a tour in Italy, for which the opportunity now offering was not likely to recur. So, some time in the month of May, we parted, and the day on which he bade us farewell was a sad one to him and to us. I have since had the pleasure of seeing the excellent fellow again at Frankfort, where, I am glad to say, he has prospered as he deserved. I hold him in most affectionate remembrance.

Our acquaintance with the Slinger family had now ripened into intimacy. We spent most of our evenings at their house on the Quai du Midi, and made delightful excursions with them, sometimes to St. Salvador, to Tourettes, and other lovely spots inland, more often towards Beaulieu, St. Jean, or St. Hospice, where we lay in the shade of the giant olive trees, gazing across to that beautiful line of coast, wondrous in its mixture of softness and boldness, stretching as far as the eye can reach, headland upon headland, with golden beach and sapphire bay, away to the marble palaces of the Ligurian queen, of her whom her children justly proclaim "the Superb." Our junketings seldom took us to any great distance, the ladies riding on donkeys, while we trudged gallantly at their saddle-bow. Those were modest but joyous

picnics, such as the fastidious taste of modern Nice would scorn to descend to now. Champagne luncheons, a band of music, *des toilettes à tout casser*, when in the bucolic vein; or else the express train to Monaco, extravagant dinners in a stifling restaurant, cheek by jowl with vice and folly; and, at parting, the inevitable tribute to Monsieur Blanc—such are the present delights of the sojourner in this land of the orange and myrtle. The Mignons who visit it are not troubled with excess of sentiment. At the same time it seems to me that the climate itself has sadly deteriorated. In the good old simple days you could safely appoint your trysting-place by some cool fountain or by the rippling sea a fortnight beforehand, assured that refulgent skies and balmy breezes would make the venture perfect, albeit the calendar swore 'twas mid-January. Leaden clouds and chilling rain, or a parching sun and biting wind, with at intervals, it is true, a sequence of days that seem borrowed from Paradise—but no more to be counted on than a run at *rouge et noir*—such is too frequently the average of modern winters in the sunny South. The weather varies as much as the numbers at *roulette*, and too often the stake involved is some delicate constitution which, through injudicious advice, is exposed to the vagaries of one of the most treacherous of climates.

Summer was now fast coming on, with its fierce midday heat and intolerable glare, and, to our great

sorrow, the Slingers prepared to return to England. They were to go by easy stages in a *vetturino* as far as Genoa, and thence home by Turin and the Mont Cenis. On a cruelly lovely morning they started, and we rode, as in duty bound, in mute dejection by their side the greater part of the way to La Turbie. Then, with ill-concealed emotion, a last wring of the hand, and a muttered "God bless you!" we turned our horses' heads and galloped desperately homewards to find all light and joy fled — it seemed for ever! — from each familiar spot. So great was our dejection that it required little coaxing to obtain the consent of our indulgent relations to the daring scheme we had revolved in our minds, that namely of overtaking our fair friends by the mail-coach and, with them, visiting Genoa, where they proposed staying a few days.

Accordingly, very early on the 1st of June we took our seats in the coupé of the *Corriere*, and, to realise the full extent of our delight, it should be borne in mind that not only had we so enchanting a vista at our journey's end, but that the journey itself was the first we had undertaken entirely by ourselves.

It was simple rapture! Often since have I travelled the same road, in the diligence, by *vetturino*, with post-horses, and never have its beauties palled upon me. One journey in particular I treasure up among my most cherished

memories. But on the occasion I speak of all was new and fresh, lighted by the magic sunshine of an Italian June, and by that other yet brighter sunshine which all but an unhappy few bear within them at eighteen—that age when “our bosom’s lord sits lightest on his throne.”

We sat in the coupé of the *Corriere*, now and again taking our turn to climb the box-seat by the driver. High above the carriage floated the folds of the new-born Tricolour. It was Sunday, and all along the road we bore to the holiday folk the tidings of some evanescent triumph of the day—Goito, was it, or Peschiera? Rattling through the narrow, cool, shady streets of San Remo and Porto Maurizio; along the beach at Diano Marina and Finale, past knots of excited fishermen and children cheering madly as we passed; by painted palaces and black hulls drawn up on the sands, cut out, they might have been, from some canvas by Claude; thundering down the thronged thoroughfares of porticoed Oneglia and Albenga of the many towers; while all day long and half through the night the war melodies that greeted us in town or village kept ringing in our ears and chiming in with rolling wheels and jingling harness:—

“Viva, viva, il Subalpino
Che fratel ci diede Iddio,
Viva il senno del gran Pio,
Viva Italia, viva il Rè!”

Reaching Savona towards break of day, we got

out to stretch our cramped limbs while fresh horses were being put to, and at the inn door, in the tranquil dawn, espied—oh ecstasy!—the very carriage that had borne its charming freight thus far, the dear ones sweetly slumbering above, behind green venetian blinds just tipped by the rising sun. It seemed a long day at Genoa as we sat in the cool rooms of the *Croce di Malta* or wandered listlessly about the streets, counting the hours till evening when our friends were due at their journey's end. I need not dwell on the surprise and delight of our meeting.

I have a weakness for Genoa. I have never made more than a passing stay there, but it has always been in pleasant—once in very precious—company. I like its devious streets and lanes, its churches and palaces, its quiet galleries, its busy harbour and fort-crowned steeps. I like chaffering at the filigree stalls in the goldsmiths' street; I am not above lounging with the *jeunesse dorée* of the place by the railings of the *Fontane Amoroze*; I enjoy a dinner at the Concordia, and an evening stroll up the Acqua Sola hill. We “did” the sights very thoroughly with Hebe and her amiable sisters, including, of course, a visit to that strange mixture of splendour, childishness, and bad taste, the Villa Pallavicini at Pegli. A few perfectly happy days, a tender farewell, and we were once more on our way to Nice. I wonder, whether in some quiet nook of old England, where, I sincerely trust, our

friends have been living happily since then, their thoughts have ever turned in kindness to the boyish admirers of their youth !

“Madame la Gouvernante” was a charming woman. By birth a Clermont de Vars, of the best blood of chivalrous Savoy, and at this time in the season of womanhood the most dangerously seductive of all to the young and inexperienced of our sex. She was not, strictly speaking, pretty, but there was witchery in her soft, dark eyes and in the masses of raven hair which she wore in plain *bandeaux* after the fashion of the day. Add to this a graceful figure, a lovely hand and foot, perfect charm of manner, a delicate scent of verbena, and a thrilling voice, that gave Schubert’s *Adieu* and *La plainte de la jeune fille* (*des Mädchen’s Klage*) with much feeling and expression. Of course we were devoted to her, and she was doubtless much diverted—maybe a little touched—by our devotion. The summer wore away ; the town had become perfectly empty, but seldom did an evening pass without our *aimable Comtesse* coming to the house, or our going to hers. She cordially disliked Nice and the Niçards, and was glad to escape from them into more congenial society. A charming woman was “Madame la Gouvernante,” and it was no doubt fortunate for my peace of mind that events soon removed me from the potent spell of her presence.

Towards September, news came from England of our sister’s engagement. This intelligence brought

about a crisis in my fate. I was undoubtedly idling away my time at Nice, and, to say the truth, was not a little impatient to be up and doing. No settled plans had been formed as to my future career, though a promise had been obtained from Lord Palmerston that my name should be put down for an Attachéship. It was very essential, however, that I should get to know something of England, and the approaching marriage furnished an excellent motive for sending me thither to the Delmars, who had left Paris the preceding autumn, and were still kept in London by the troubled state of affairs in France. My journey was decided upon, and despite a natural eagerness to plunge into the world—above all to become acquainted with my own country and people—I can hardly say how great was the wrench of separation from my relations, and the brother who had been my constant companion from his birth. Brought up by wanderers, I have myself since been such a wanderer through life—the cheerless fate of most of my name for some generations—that I have never known the blessings of the long-settled family home as they are understood by our home-loving, home-abiding people. Still the home, such as it was, made for us by the Arabins had been a thoroughly happy one, and my thoughts, as I write, go back to it very thankfully and tenderly.

The evening before my departure the faithful Comtesse came round to our house, partly, no

doubt, with the kind intent of helping to divert our thoughts from the trying parting close at hand. As usual in such cases, it was poor work pretending to be occupied with anything but the one absorbing topic; so towards eleven o'clock our guest took leave, and I asked to be allowed to escort her home, as I had often done before—the soft, brilliant, southern nights tempting her to walk to and from her house, followed by a footman, and escorted by one or other of the few men of our *coterie*. At the gate of the Governor's Palace (now the French Préfecture) we parted. But few words had passed between us by the way—those commonplace remarks in which we all seek refuge when anxious or heavy at heart—but her voice was low and earnest, and as I looked into her face, after bending over the small, ungloved hand, the light in her eyes seemed softer to me than ever, although somewhat dimmed—by the shadow, was it, of her black-lace hood? One more gentle pressure, a hastily murmured farewell, and she had vanished in the sombre gateway. I was left alone in the little moonlit square, a faint scent of verbena lingering with me, and that melody of Schubert haunting me vexingly as I stood. A very charming woman was “Madame la Gouvernante.”

On the morrow I was rumbling north in the diligence. The partings were over; my final glimpse of my brother was somewhere beyond the Var, whither he had ridden, poor boy, to see the

last of me. I was off alone into the unknown world, stored, no doubt, with excellent precepts and bright examples of rectitude and virtue, but, I much fear, ill prepared for the battle of life by a home which had been all kindness and indulgence.

CHAPTER V

MY FIRST VISIT TO ENGLAND

OUR road lay by Lyons and Moulins to Bourges, where we found the newly-opened railway to Paris. Whether I was too absorbed by the sadness of leaving home, or whether the fatigue of the journey dulled my senses, certain it is that it left no impression on me, and I can call to mind no single incident of it. On reaching Paris I found a room ready for me in my sister's apartment at the Avenue de Marigny. I stopped here, I think, two or three days, and spent most of my time with the Polignacs. One day there at dinner, I remember having a lively altercation with the eldest of my cousins, Alphonse. The events of the preceding February were fresh in my mind, and I expressed to him in strong—and no doubt youthfully indiscreet—language my surprise at his conduct in entering the Palace of the Tuileries with the triumphant mob, and sitting down to a piano in one of the rooms to play the *Marseillaise* for the benefit of the scum of the Faubourgs. I urged, with some truth and probably no little priggishness, that a man who bore his name should never have lowered himself so far as to join in these *saturnalia* of the dregs of the populace, and that

although he might well in his heart rejoice at the fall of an usurper and a personal enemy, so to speak, of his father, his principles ought logically to make all revolutions hateful, instead of welcome, to him. Of course there was a general "row," my excellent aunt soundly rating me for daring thus to speak to her favourite son. I recollect, however, that Jules de Polignac (since dead), a nephew of the late prince,¹ who was present, and of riper age than we disputants, sided with me, and allowed that there was force in my arguments. I must add here of Alphonse de Polignac, with whom I was but seldom thrown after this time, that although he had made a foolish exhibition of himself in February, he afterwards greatly distinguished himself during the terrible June days, when he stormed the Pantheon at the head of a battalion of Mobiles. He subsequently went into the Artillery, and served with much credit on Marshal Pélissier's staff at the siege of Sebastopol, dying very shortly after his marriage to Mdle. Mirès, at the early age of thirty-seven. He was a man of great and versatile talents, though in some respects of an eccentric turn of mind—a mathematician of the first order, an excellent linguist, and the author of a remarkable French translation of Faust. *An Ihm ist viel verloren gegangen*, a German would say. He left a charming daughter, married to the Vicomte d'Oilliamson,

¹ Son of Comte Melchior de Polignac, a younger brother of the prince.

a cadet of the French branch of the Scotch Williamson family, who descend from an ancestor who came to France as far back as the days of Charles VIII., and served in the Scottish bodyguard of that king. Another poor fellow who fell heroically in that same deadly conflict in June deserves a passing tribute from me here, Léon de St. Clair, a son of my Aunt Caroline's husband by a previous marriage. As boys, we had known and liked him much, although he was our senior by several years. He was a young man of very pleasing manners and exemplary conduct—in every way a great contrast to his half-brother, Ferdinand. Serving as lieutenant in an infantry regiment of the garrison of Paris, he was killed when gallantly leading on his men against one of the formidable barricades of the Rue Mouffetard.

Oddly enough, the rest of my journey to England has also left a blank in my memory, except my arrival in London, the first impressions of which I can recall most vividly. The foggy atmosphere; the strange look of the houses and buildings—so unlike those to which I had been accustomed in Paris or at Nice; the huge omnibuses and wonderful hansom cabs; the earnest, active stream of life; the curious mixture of order and uproar; the grim and stalwart police; the sprinkling of scarlet coats, whose deeds of prowess I had been brought up to admire (my worthy uncle was a sturdy John Bull, and cordially detested the French foes of his fighting days), and

whom I now for the first time exultingly beheld in the flesh; all those subtle and undefinable sensations of novelty to sight and scent and hearing that strike us so forcibly in new places; and, above and pervading all, a proud and happy sense which can be thus expressed: This then is thy country, these thy people!

I was driven to the Clarendon Hotel, where I was warmly welcomed by my aunt and sister, as well as by Delmar, with whom I was somewhat of a favourite. The Delmars had now been in England upwards of a year, and my aunt had renewed many old friendships and intimacies in her native country. She and my sister had but recently returned from Chatsworth, where Emily's marriage had been finally arranged through the intervention of the old duke, who took a great interest in it. Both that autumn and the year before this, they had been on a tour of visits, staying, among other places, with the Londonderrys at Wynyard, where Emily had made the acquaintance of Prince Louis Napoléon, with whom she struck up a considerable friendship. He took to her at once, on account of her familiarity with French and her knowledge of Paris, and as he was voted tiresome and disagreeable by the rest of the guests, the other ladies were only too glad to be relieved of his company by my sister. According to her, even then (in the autumn of 1847) this singular man talked constantly of the destiny that

awaited him, expatiating on the schemes to which he would apply himself, *quand je serai Empereur*, with a calm assurance that made him appear to her a strange but harmless visionary. Years afterwards, at the Tuileries, he laughingly reminded her of those talks at Wynyard, and, with that faithful recollection of past days which was one of the most amiable traits in his character, he most generously, at her request, came to the assistance of her adopted father in the difficulties that beset him just before his death. In confirmation of my sister's account of the future emperor's false position in English society at that time, I may here relate an anecdote which I have good reason to believe authentic. The prince had one day placed his box at Covent Garden at the disposal of a great lady of his acquaintance, who, in her turn, had asked one of her friends, another great lady, to accompany her. The prince himself occupied a stall, but in the course of the evening entered the box to pay his respects to his guest. On seeing him, the other lady—with gratuitous and inconceivable rudeness—observed quite audibly that if she could have foreseen such an intrusion she would not have come. After a short stay the impassive visitor withdrew. When the *coup d'état* had made the prince the master of France, the lady in question was one of the first English of note who asked to be presented to him at the Elysée. As she approached, he came forward to meet her with the smile peculiar

to him, and before even the Ambassador could mention her name, said: "Je suis heureux, miladi, de voir que vous ne me gardez pas rancune!"

My sister's wedding took place on the 16th of October. It was quite private and confined to immediate relatives, and, on account of Delmar's ill-health and infirmity, was performed by special licence by the present Bishop of London, Jackson (then rector of St. James's, Piccadilly), in my aunt's drawing-room at the Clarendon. The bridesmaids were Caroline Cavendish and Mary and Harriet Montagu.¹

The young couple went to Chiswick for the honeymoon. A fortnight or three weeks later—for Delmar could ill spare his adopted child, who was likewise his most trusted private secretary—we all removed to Brighton, where a house had been engaged for the winter. I remember that it went by the name of Nevill House, and was in Kemp Town, at a short distance from that belonging to the Duke of Devonshire. Here I was by way of reading and generally improving myself, with the view of going to Oxford, or else being entered as a student at Lincoln's Inn; but the vagueness of the schemes entertained for me, and the novelty and attraction of this my first winter in England, were not precisely conducive to diligent study. I

¹ The two eldest daughters of Lord Rokeby, afterwards married to Lord Winchester and to Lionel Seymour Dawson Damer, now Lord Portarlington.

much preferred roaming about in the pleasant company of Richard Metternich, my intimacy with whom dates from this period.

The revolutionary events in Austria had driven the celebrated statesman and his family into exile, and they were now living in a house in Brunswick Terrace at Brighton. The Delmars had known them formerly, and I personally found a ready introduction to their house through my old Paris playfellow Roger d'Aldenburg, a grandson of the old prince, who was on a visit to them from Paris. Richard Metternich, Roger and I, soon formed an inseparable *trio*, and, in American parlance, "had a good time" together. Metternich was an excellent musician, and one of our chief amusements was to go to a musicseller's in one of the streets off the King's Road, and there play Vienna waltzes on two pianos, to an obligato accompaniment of drum and fiddle by the two younger Metternichs, Paul and Lothaire, who were then quite boys. These orchestral entertainments drew crowds round the shop door, and became, no doubt, paying advertisements to the owner. Besides thumping waltzes on the piano with Richard Metternich, I sang duets with his sister Mélanie (now Countess Joseph Zichy), who, without being precisely pretty, had fine eyes, a lovely figure, and all the charming *bonhomie* and frank simplicity of manner natural to Vienna ladies, and which, by the way, her mother, the princess, somewhat carried to excess

—calling a spade a spade, and occasionally something more. Princess Metternich, of course, felt very bitterly her fall from what had been so exalted a position, and I can hear her now, while she turned over the pages of an album of very interesting lithographic portraits of her friends and acquaintances by that clever artist, Kriehuber (photographs, I need hardly say, were then in their infancy), exclaiming, as she came upon one or other of those who had deserted “the good cause” or shown weakness: “Das war eine Canaille!” “Voilà encore un misérable!”

She had been a remarkably pretty woman, although at that time already a wretched invalid, and her enthusiasm about Radetzky’s army, which had swept Lombardy clear of all invaders, and was fast restoring the tottering Empire by its valour and loyalty, was so infectious that, added to my *culte* for the *beaux yeux* of Princesse Mélanie, it was within an ace of making me enter the Austrian Service. My *Schwarz-gelb* proclivities, to which I frankly own, date from this period.

There was much pleasant society this winter at Brighton. The Duke of Devonshire gave frequent dinners and dances, one of which, I remember, was in honour of the young Duke of Lucca and his wife, “Mademoiselle,” sister of the Comte de Chambord. A madcap was this young prince, destined to so tragical an end, and both he and the princess fully entered into the frolic of the cotillon led by Richard Metternich with my assistance. Nor was he want-

ing in wit of the coarser kind, as may be gathered from the reply he once made, when Duke of Parma, to a friend who had remonstrated with him for distributing decorations to persons quite unworthy of them. "I have hung crosses on them," he said in language that can only be paraphrased, "for the same reason that you see them painted on the outer church walls, to protect them from desecration." This princely *gamin* had just left solemn and decorous Windsor, where his antics had caused some surprise, not to say dismay. It was whispered that he had actually turned somersaults on "the slopes" in the most august of presences.

To return to the gaieties at Kemp Town, I am reminded that the great Coote, of Coote and Tinney's (most vapid of British imitators of Strauss), began life much about this time as *tapeur* in ordinary to the old duke, and to his inspiriting strains it was that we used to dance. Of my other Brighton recollections worth recording, as being links with a long-past age, I may mention that I had the honour of being presented to the last surviving daughter of King George the Third, the Duchess of Gloucester, at a small party given by Her Royal Highness in honour of her niece, Princess Mary. The late Duke of Gloucester had been an intimate friend of my great-aunt, Mrs. Rigby, and had stood godfather to my eldest brother, William Frederick.¹ I remember too that I once sat at dinner next to

¹ He died of scarlet fever at the age of fourteen.

“Hadji Baba,” at some house in Eastern Terrace, where the Mahons, parents of my friend Philip Stanhope, were also among the guests, and that I was sent one day by my relations to inquire after Lord Alvanley, then very ill in Regency Square, and at the close of a long career of wit and fashion. From this period, too, dates my first acquaintance with Lady Alwyne Compton, then the beautiful Miss Florence Anderson,¹ who was a great favourite at Kemp Town, and who has since been the kindest of friends to me and my sons.

In March 1849 my relations deemed it judicious to send me on a visit to my maternal uncle, Lord Ranelagh, at Bunney Park. I accordingly wrote to propose myself, and received gracious permission to come down. My road to Nottinghamshire lay through London, where I somehow contrived to miss the train. Going on by the next one, I reached Loughborough late in the evening, and, after a long drive through the dark, arrived at Bunney to find that its inmates had all retired to rest. The butler gave me some supper, and showed me to a bedroom where I got but little sleep, excited as I was by the novelty of my first visit to an English country house, and that too the home of my maternal ancestors. Those only who have the ill fortune to belong to a practically homeless, erratic race like mine can form any conception of my thoughts and feelings. I went downstairs in the morning with

¹ Wife of the present Bishop of Ely.

a mingled sense of apprehension and curiosity. I had never set eyes upon my uncle, and what little I had heard of him was scarcely of a nature to reassure a raw, nervous youth of an over-sensitive disposition and foreign education. Rancliffe had been lord-in-waiting, and boon companion of his godfather the Regent; an associate of Byron and the wild crew that had scared England with its licence and charmed it with its song. He was witty, inimitable in Irish anecdote, a very fine horseman (the first of "light weights"), in politics a Radical (he sat for Nottingham after the Reform Bill), in private life a cynic and of that easy good-nature which often consorts with perfect egoism. He was childless, having separated soon after marriage from his wife, Lady Elizabeth Forbes,¹ and had long been entirely under the influence of a person of humble extraction whom he had installed at Bunney in the teeth of the county and to the confusion of all decorum. When his nephews visited him—and all the Levinges, all the Polignacs, as well as my elder brothers, had done so by turns—they might be more or less well received, but were all certain to be objects of suspicion. Rancliffe very pardonably felt that a good income and an old family estate² at his free disposal made him a

¹ A daughter of the 6th Earl of Granard. Lady Rancliffe lived for years in Paris, and died there in 1850, surviving her husband only a few months. I remember her, but saw little of her.

² The Parkyns family had been seated at Bunney since 1560 or thereabouts.

veritable *oncle d'Amérique* whom his relations thought it well to court and conciliate and nothing more. Possibly my own visit had been planned by my friends not without some such reflections; but, for myself, I can honestly affirm that it seemed to me so natural a thing to seek out my mother's only brother, that I went to Bunney without the slightest *arrière pensée*.

I stood in the empty library under a portrait which I instinctively felt must be that of my mother.¹ As I turned away, my uncle entered the room and gave me a very hearty welcome, dwelling much on my likeness to his "favourite sister." We at once got on well together, and even Mrs. ——— received me graciously enough. After dinner, when he dealt rather freely with the bottle, his lordship sometimes became cantankerous, and on one occasion alluded very disparagingly both to my father and to M. de Delmar. I took up his remarks somewhat warmly, saying that he must pardon me for objecting to listen to any censure of my father, even though I had not known him, while, as regarded the Delmars, I reminded him that I was then living under their roof and indebted to them for much kindness. The following morning he greeted me with marked cordiality, observing that he had been glad to see me stand so staunchly by my friends. His manner towards me became almost affectionate.

¹ This picture—a very poor one, painted in India—was afterwards sent me from Bunney.

He kept me a good deal about him, drove me into Nottingham, made me a present of a driving-coat I had admired, and altogether seemed to be taking me into special favour. My visit, which had now extended over several days, would probably have lasted some time longer, had not an incident occurred where my unfortunate foreign training led me into difficulties which an ever-watchful adversary was not slow to turn to account.

The Quorn hounds were to meet at Bunney, and my uncle offered me a mount. I pleaded poor horsemanship, but was told I might have the quietest animal in the stables. On the eventful morning the horse was brought round—a bright bay with white stockings, bearing the ominous name of “Confusion.” There had been a severe frost for some days before; the animal was as fresh as paint, and as soon as I was in the saddle, took to bucking and rearing in a way that attracted the notice of even the knowing ones of the field. Some charitable soul next to whom I was riding suggested that I should dismount and let the groom give him a good canter before I went on. I accepted the advice, the field meanwhile moving on to draw the coverts, and stood by the garden fence watching the bay being bucketed at a sharp pace up and down the somewhat broken ground of the Park. Presently he came back, but as he neared me, I at once noted with dismay that he was going very tenderly on his off hind leg!

Unfortunately I was no longer sole spectator of the scene. Mrs. — stood on the other side of the fence, and hardly was the groom within hearing when she saluted him with a volley of not over-choice vernacular, asking him, “What he meant by it, how he dared,” and so forth. When I interposed in favour of the man, urging that he had only acted on my request, she turned savagely upon me, whereupon *I* turned on my heel, declining any further discussion, and went indoors and to my room. A couple of hours later I received a message summoning me to his lordship, who had returned after seeing the hounds throw off. He at once assailed me violently: charged me with insolence and rudeness to “a lady for whom I ought to entertain great respect,” said I was as good for nothing as every one else of my name, like my father (whom he had, it seems, always detested), like my brother Cavendish, and much more in the same strain. I denied the charge of rudeness, and expressing regret that he should for the second time have put my deference for him to the test by speaking unkindly of those whom I was bound to defend, withdrew, not, I flattered myself at the time, without a certain amount of dignity. Of course I felt I could not stay on after what had occurred, so rang the bell, packed up my things with the help of the servant, and, having secured a scratch conveyance to take me to Nottingham, was off that afternoon on my way back to Brighton. I never

saw my uncle again, and was only once at Bunney for an hour or two, some years ago,¹ on what I might call a pilgrimage I made there from Castle Ashby, where I was then staying. It is a charming old place, and I am glad to think that it will some day come back to the rightful family in the person of my cousin, Sir William Levinge,² the representative of Rancliffe's eldest sister. It is difficult to say whether this untoward equestrian episode had any influence on my future fortunes, though it may very well have strengthened the almost morbid distrust of his nephews which a designing woman lost no opportunity of fostering in the old man. Certain it is that the strange will, by which everything was left absolutely to Mrs. ——, was not made till upwards of a year afterwards, within a few months of my uncle's death, in November 1850. Some ten years later, an ill-advised, and still worse managed, attempt was made by my brother Arthur to wrest the property from the person to whom Lord Rancliffe had left it. Some account of this, however, will come in its proper place.

Our stay at Brighton now came to an end. The Delmars went back to the Clarendon, and it being resolved that I should be entered as a student at Lincoln's Inn, board and lodging were sought for me in London. For £200 a year these necessaries were secured in the family of a surgeon who lived

¹ Written in 1878-79.

² Dead since this was written.

at the upper end of Sloane Street, in one of the houses beyond Cadogan Place. I don't think I quite got my money's worth out of this gentleman and his acid, scraggy wife. A back bedroom on the third floor with an attic window, and two joints a week served up in the customary dreary routine of roast and boiled and hashed and cold; the flattest of beer, and on Sunday the most fiery of bucellas—somehow I feel comfort in the assurance that, during the six months it lasted, Mr. —— was no loser by our connection.

For another £100 a year I had been taken in as a pupil by Mr. Arthur Burroughs, a distinguished conveyancer, whose chambers in Lincoln's Inn were in Stone Buildings, overlooking the Quadrangle and the fine Hall, then only recently completed; and as I sat poring over deeds and indentures, the jarring din of the town reached me through the open window, tempered by intervening space, and rendered soothing and tuneful by the song of birds and the rustling leaves in the square gardens. My fellow-pupils were two quiet, gentleman-like fellows of the name of Luard and Bailey; the former the son of a solicitor, the latter a son of Sir Joseph Bailey, and uncle, I believe, of the present baronet of that name. I have entirely lost sight of them since. My cousin, Edward Levinge, also had chambers in Stone Buildings, but I saw comparatively little of him. On the whole I think I liked my legal apprenticeship—short and unprofitable though

it was destined to be. I kept three terms, paying the usual fees, and conscientiously eating my way through the due number of dinners in Hall.

The life I now led was in every respect one of marked contrasts. Pleasant were the walks to and from chambers through the parks in all the beauty of their summer garb, along the bustling, roaring Strand, or by the quieter line of Piccadilly, Coventry Street, and Long Acre. Still pleasanter it was to leave Chitty and "Stephen on Blackstone" behind one, and, bending one's steps westwards once more, to end the day by a lounge in Rotten Row, rushing home with appetite sufficient to face even the cold mutton and doubtful tablecloth provided by my thrifty landlady. Greatest contrast of all, to climb the attic at ten o'clock or so, when the worthy couple had retired to rest, don the carefully kept evening suit, and hailing the first "bus" bound Piccadilly way, be landed in the neighbourhood of some great house, or perhaps at no great distance from the sacred precincts of Almack's. For, thanks to my aunt, I had invitations to the best balls and parties of the season, and from the fusty straw of the Putney or Hammersmith omnibus passed into dazzling halls of light, to dance and flirt with young ladies who would have indeed turned up their delicate noses could they but have guessed whence I emerged. It were bootless to put down here the names of those by whom I deemed myself enslaved. Nevertheless, I may say that the

daughters of the two severest and most awe-inspiring matrons of their generation, Lady Londonderry and Lady Clanricarde, were among my habitual partners. Lady Adelaide Vane was quite charming, and certainly Lady Emily de Burgh was in all conscience pretty, clever, and high-bred enough to make an impression on hearts far less susceptible than was mine. A great "chum," and, in after years, very valued friend of mine, too, was Miss Graham, eldest daughter of the distinguished statesman, Sir James Graham of Netherby.

The amusements of this season were made memorable in a certain sense by that man of real genius, Johann Strauss the elder, who had come over from Vienna with his band, and who for the first time, I believe, taught our languid youths and their partners what marvellous *entrain* lay in the genuine rhythm of the *walzer* as played by the sons of the Danube. These magic strains may be said to have been poor Strauss's *schwanenlied*, for, at the close of the season, he went home to die shortly afterwards, when still in his prime, leaving his wonderful orchestra and much of his genius to his son and namesake. I well remember how admirably he played at Almack's, at Lady Marian Alford's, and at a beautiful fête given by Sir Richard Sutton. But if he could play, we could dance in those days, and, should my word be doubted, I would point to my veteran friend and contemporary, Augustus Lumley, who, unlike me, has never

deserted the field we entered together, and to this hour charges with undiminished grace and vigour through the effete throngs of juveniles of the period.

Among the persons I saw most of at this time I must not omit to mention the Dowager Lady Rivers. She had been much attached to my father, her first cousin, and there had been at one time, I believe, some talk of a marriage between them. My elder brothers had been brought up more or less under her roof with her sons, George and Horace, the two last Lords Rivers,¹ and their sister Harriet, afterwards Mrs. Bruce, and I was always certain of a kind welcome at her house in Grosvenor Place. The circumstances attending the death of her husband² had cast a sad gloom over her life. He had been one of the wild, prodigal set who, with Sir Henry Mildmay, Berkeley Craven, and others, had led the fashion in the earlier days of the Regency, and with them had been a constant habitu  of Crockford's. After many heavy losses he had entirely given up play, signing a bond to one of his most intimate friends that he would never again touch card or dice. He had scrupulously kept his promise for a considerable time, till one evening he was led into playing, incurring only some trifling loss. He said nothing

¹ George, Lord Rivers, left a son, Henry Peter, who only held the title for a few months, and succumbed, when barely eighteen, to the same mysterious malady that had carried off his three elder brothers at the same early age, entirely sparing the daughters of the family, who all grew up strong and handsome girls.

² Horace Beckford, 3rd Lord Rivers, was my godfather, while his son, Horace, in his turn, stood godfather to my eldest boy.

of this to his family, but the next day he went out late in the afternoon and did not return home for dinner. Search was made for him everywhere, his body being at last found in the Serpentine, with a note stating that, after his failure to keep his pledged word, he felt he could no longer struggle with the fatal passion, and preferred death to certain ruin and disgrace.

Shortly before the long vacation I caught a violent chill, and was laid up for some time with bronchitis. As soon as I had sufficiently recovered, I went down to Richmond to the Delmars, who had taken rooms for the summer months at the Castle Inn. At Richmond, too, the Metternichs were staying, and I kept up my intimacy with Richard and with Alexander Schönburg (an old Paris playmate),¹ who was now attached to Count Colloredo's Embassy in London. At the Metternich house it was that I first became acquainted with Edmond St. John Mildmay, an ex-Austrian Hussar and *beau des beaux s'il en fût jamais*, whom I later got to know and like still better. My cough continuing troublesome, I was sent down to Nice for a few weeks. I found my relations established there in a new apartment looking on to the Jardin Public—at that time a mere heap of stones and shot-out rubbish—and of course my meeting with them and with my brother was a very happy one. My stay at Nice was but short, for I was soon restored to my usual

¹ Afterwards President of the Austrian Herrenhaus, and father of the present Prince Schönburg Hartenstein.

health and on my way back to England, being summoned thither by a letter from Lord Palmerston to my aunt, announcing that he had recommended me for an Attachéship. My official appointment was dated the 4th September, and I was named to Washington, whither I would shortly have to proceed with Sir Henry Bulwer. When I reached England the Delmars had removed to a house on Richmond Hill (Mansfield House, if my memory is correct) nearly facing the "Star and Garter," where the Cavendishes were staying with them. A room was given me here, and from Richmond I went up to the Foreign Office every morning to work at my apprenticeship, returning home to dine and sleep.

My joy at entering the Diplomatic Service was naturally very great; and looking back over the twenty-four years¹ I have spent in it, I have little but good to say of it on the whole. I have certainly been fortunate in my colleagues. Of the men of all grades with whom I have served—from Ambassadors down to Attachés—I can scarcely call to mind one my intercourse with whom has left me any but pleasant memories. Among my many chiefs and fellow-workers, I have known men gifted with rare powers and attainments (too many of these, alas! gone before their time), with others cast in more ordinary moulds. By the side of scholars, of thoughtful statesmen, of accomplished linguists, I have met with pompous mediocrities,

¹ Written in 1873.

and indeed sometimes—though rarely—downright nonentities. But taking them all in all, I could hardly quote one of whom, in common parlance, it would not have been said that he was “a good fellow” and, above all, a gentleman in the best acceptance of the word. Diplomacy no doubt always was, and has fortunately remained, a comparatively exclusive profession, a wise distinction having at all times been shown—more especially in the old pre-examination days—in the selection of candidates for it. There still linger about it the traditions of a long-past age in some ways more exacting and fastidious than the present one, and to this it owes much of its high tone and charming *camaraderie*. While, as for general efficiency and devotion to the interests of the crown and the country, I venture to affirm that it challenges comparison with any branch of our public service. I esteem it an honour, as well as a good fortune, to have served under such men as Sir James Hudson, Sir Andrew Buchanan, Sir Henry Elliot, Sir Frederick Bruce, or Sir Hamilton Seymour; and my thoughts revert affectionately—too often mournfully—to days spent with companions like Grey, Odo Russell, French, Edward Herbert, or Julian Fane. Even as I write, the news of poor Henry Wodehouse’s untimely death reaches me from distant Greece. He too is gone in all the blitheness of his prime—gone to join Fane, Grey, Herbert,¹

¹ Edward Herbert was one of the victims of the murders by the Greek brigands at Oropos in 1870.

fouly murdered in the same country which has now proved fatal to him. There is sad truth in the poet's words :—

“ . . . The good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket.”

The old Foreign Office in Downing Street was remarkable both in itself and in its occupants. A stately palace has since been reared on its site—somewhat of a failure, by the way, in my humble opinion—and London knows it no longer. Yet an instructive parallel might well be drawn between the two buildings. The one, of massive proportions, costly in material, ambitious in design, with lofty halls, monumental staircase, and wide, echoing corridors—no unfit symbol of the policy of a proud and generous nation. The other, dingy and shabby to a degree, made up of dark offices and labyrinthine passages—four houses, at least, tumbled into one,¹ with floors at uneven levels and wearying corkscrew stairs that men cursed as they climbed—a thorough picture of disorder, penury, and meanness. Yet which of the two was the great Foreign Office, whose influence was felt all the world over, and held the balance in the councils of Europe; whose masterly and fearless policy called forth new

¹ It used, I believe, to be said that the old Foreign Office was made up of no less than seven houses. I am assured, however, on very competent authority, that it only comprised four, of which two were entered from Downing Street, while the original approaches to the other had been in Fludyer Street.

and prosperous kingdoms, helped to free oppressed races, and equally checked aggressive Democracy in the far West, and Absolutism brooding in its ancient strongholds in the East? Those ramshackle tenements in Downing Street had known the sway of Castlereagh and of Canning,¹ and, for a brief period, even that of the great duke himself. When I first beheld them, their presiding genius was a man—perhaps the most truly national, as he assuredly was then the most popular, of British Ministers—in whose time the prestige and rightful authority of the country rose to an altitude that can best be measured by the depth to which they have since sunk.² This is no place for political disquisitions, but of the undoubted success of Lord Palmerston's policy I will only say that it was due to his absolute faith in, and regard for, the greatness of the nation. Like the admirable sportsman he was, he always ran the good horse England straight, and with a perfect reliance on its mettle and powers. He was, in fact, largely imbued—perhaps unconsciously—with that truly Imperial spirit without which no great Empire can be rightly administered—a spirit which it is very much the fashion now to ridicule and cry down, yet which, out of England,

¹ Mr. Canning himself resided in the principal house which looked out on St. James's Park, many alterations being made in it when he took up his abode there some time in the twenties. The Foreign Office was removed to these buildings about the beginning of the century from its former quarters in Cleveland Row, St. James.

² Written in the winter of 1872-73.

has no mightier and more admired exponent than Prince Bismarck.

Speaking from the narrower standpoint of one who has spent his life in the Diplomatic Service, I would also say that that service never had a better friend than Lord Palmerston. His unswerving faithfulness to those whom he employed is proverbial; its good effects on the service are perhaps less widely understood. Under him a man who had acted rashly or unwisely might be disapproved, but was never openly disavowed—never had the heart taken out of him, so to speak. Thus there reigned in his time, throughout the profession, a sense of security—of solidarity between chief and subordinates, if I may thus express it, which has since in some measure deserted it. The cause of this chiefly is that Ministers, as a rule, shrink from questions in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston knew how to face them boldly, and was always ready to shield and uphold those serving under him whose action had led to unfriendly criticism.

Again, he took a strong personal interest in his subordinates, encouraging in them habits of self-reliance, and giving free scope to ability where he recognised it. He knew the value of agents not haunted by the fear of responsibility, and capable of taking the initiative in an emergency. This age of rapid communication, of what I would call the telegraphic demoralisation of those who formerly

had to act for themselves and are now content to be at the end of the wire, has served to strengthen the ingrained Foreign Office prejudice against agents of that type. But comparisons are odious and unprofitable, and I will bring mine to a close. I have been led into them because I entered the service in its palmiest days, and have lived to see it shorn of much that lent a charm to it and made it of real national value.

No pleasanter lot can well be conceived than the staff of the Foreign Office when I first remember it. Seldom since have I met with a goodlier company than that which numbered in its ranks Dick Wellesley, Dolly Oom, Greville Morier, Spring Rice, Spencer Ponsonby, and John Bidwell—young John of those days. Of these only one now survives, but I feel sure that he would bear me out in saying that among them were men of infinite wit and humour, while for pleasant *camaraderie* and flow of spirits they were indeed a noteworthy set. There was at that period, of course, nothing like the stress of heavy and yearly increasing correspondence which now makes the Foreign Office one of the hardest-worked of departments. Those were the days of the “nursery,” as they used to call a smoking-room at the top of the house to which congenial strangers were admitted, and whither, at leisure moments, the choicer spirits of the Office repaired to have their whiff, or indulge in some refreshment; for the “nursery” was, I fear, rather a thirsty place. Its

walls were adorned by many a clever caricature, and by curious prints, chiefly presented by the Chanceries abroad, or brought home by Queen's messengers. What jests and waggery and peals of laughter those walls re-echoed in the old cheery time I speak of! Certainly, as long as it lasted, there was no more popular lounge in all London than the "nursery" at the old Foreign Office. It was soon, however, closed by order—during Lord John Russell's first tenure of office, if I am not mistaken.

I was put to work in the French Department, of which James Murray (afterwards Assistant Under-Secretary of State) was the head, with Coles and Pennell under him. One day, at the end of October, Forster, one of the most amiable of the senior clerks, sent for me to his room, I forget under what pretext, and I found there with him a carefully dressed gentleman of middle age, with delicate features, prematurely white hair, and emaciated, slightly bent frame. "This," said Forster, in introducing me to him, "is Mr. Abercromby, her Majesty's Minister at Turin." I was being "trotted out," as it afterwards appeared, and met with approval, for a few days later I heard to my great joy that my destination was changed, and that I would shortly have to go out to Turin with Mr. Abercromby, instead of to Washington with Sir Henry Bulwer.

Early in November I started on my way to my post. The day on which I left Richmond was that

on which my sister's eldest child (born on the 4th October) was christened; indeed, I went straight from the church to the railway station. I was sorry to part from Emily and the Delmars, but everything of course was merged in the excitement and delight of being launched on a public career. It had been arranged that my brother Charles, who was in London in indifferent health, should accompany me as far as Nice. We accordingly started together, spending a couple of days with the Polignacs in Paris, and travelling thence by the railway to Tonnerre in the same train that was taking Mr. and Lady Mary Abercromby on their way to Turin by the Mont Cenis. At Tonnerre our diligence was taken off the railway truck, and we found that we were to have for travelling companions Mr. Warren Hastings Anderson, who had known us as boys at Paris, and one of his daughters. We broke the journey several times, and a very merry one it was, not a little enlivened by the flirtation that sprang up between Master Charles and the vivacious Miss Anderson. From Nice my road to Turin lay over the Col de Tende and through Coni. I made a very early start, I remember, yet the Consul, Adolphe Lacroix, kindly came to see me off at the diligence office in the Place St. Dominique, and at parting thrust into my hand a flask of whisky, which I was very grateful for afterwards, the cold in the mountain passes being already very great.

CHAPTER VI

MY FIRST POST—TURIN, 1849-1851

IT was a long, weary drive from Coni to Turin, the *Corriere* rumbling into the Piedmontese capital at last in the raw, foggy dawn of a November Sunday. I was glad to tumble into bed for a few hours at the Hotel Trombetta, but, after breakfast, at once sallied forth in quest of the Legation, which then occupied part of the Palais La Cisterna at the corner of the Rue St. Philippe and the Rue Madonna degli Angeli. When I was ushered into my chief's library, I found him on the point of reading the Morning Service (there being no English chaplain or congregation at Turin), and feeling somewhat shy and ill at ease, I was not sorry to have to drop on my knees without further ceremony. I fear I paid but little attention to my devotions, for, in the midst of them, there came crashing down the street a military band (next to the Austrian, the Sardinian bands were of rare excellence) playing—how strange it seems that, at this distance of time, I should still remember it—the march out of Verdi's "Macbeth." The band passed by, and, the short service being soon over, I was introduced to Lady Mary Abercromby,¹ and to my

¹ *Née* Elliot, eldest daughter of the 2nd Earl of Minto.

fellow Attaché, de Salis. The Elliots are a remarkably swarthy, Southern-looking race, and Lady Mary had the family complexion and dark, lustrous eyes, which at once beamed on me with kindness. Indeed, I never had a truer or more valuable friend than she proved to the raw, inexperienced youth I still was at this time. She was gentleness, tact, delicacy, and sound womanly sense personified. A clever, though somewhat ridiculous, American lady once said of her in my hearing that she was "a singularly well-balanced woman," and allowing for the oddity of the expression, it well described a nature in which both heart and head happily combined, neither encroaching unduly on the realm of the other. Of my first chief and his wife I shall ever preserve a grateful recollection. Abercromby was thoroughly amiable and considerate, and treated me from the first as one of the family. Among other traditions of a former age, he kept up the good old habit of having his staff, which consisted of Lettsom, de Salis, and myself, to dinner with him every day—a custom more honoured now in the breach than in the observance. *Autres temps autres mœurs*; the patriarchal element has disappeared from diplomacy no less than from other walks of life.

De Salis looked after me for the rest of the day, making me acquainted with some of the junior members of the Corps Diplomatique—such as the Belgian Secretary, Pycke van Petteghem, and the Spaniard, Ligués y Bardaji—and taking me to the

theatre in the evening. I can see the house now with its utterly foreign, Italian aspect as though it had been yesterday, although of the performance I remember nothing. In my juvenile self-consciousness I myself was to myself "the star" of the evening. Was not this my first appearance on the public stage, in the character of no less a personage than an *Attaché d'Ambassade*? I recollect the wife of a distinguished diplomatist once saying to me that she knew of only two really enviable positions in the service—those of an Attaché and of an Ambadress. I can never hope to test the delights of the latter station, but cannot help indulging in a retrospective smile of pity and amusement at thoughts of the intoxication with which I was filled by the former—*Gaudeamus igitur, juvenes dum sumus!*

From my new colleagues I heard little that was favourable of the native society, but prudently resolved to judge of it for myself. At first, of course, I lived mostly in the diplomatic set, which contained many pleasant elements. The Prussian Minister, Count Henry Redern, a somewhat pompous type of the old diplomatist, in striking contrast to his charming, lively Austrian wife (a Princess Odescalchi), kept the best house in the place. The Rederns were soon rivalled in hospitality by my kind friends the Apponyis, who came, about this time, to renew the diplomatic relations that had been broken off by the war which ended on the field of Novara. The French

Minister, when I first arrived, was Prince Lucien Murat, whose beautiful and accomplished daughter afterwards married the young Duc de Mouchy, but who, personally, was not remarkable for much dignity or refinement. Nevertheless, I recollect a neat, though singular, reply he made one day to Count Apponyi, who, when encomiums were passed on the nerve which young Joachim Murat, then quite a boy, had shown in riding a very unmanageable horse in the public promenade of the Valentino, observed that pluck was to be expected of one who bore his name. "Oui," replied the father, "il en est du courage comme de la goutte; il saute une génération." This son of the brilliant Hussar King of Naples had the foolish weakness to wear habitually the very unbecoming uniform of a colonel of a Legion of the Paris National Guard, which made him somewhat ridiculous in the eyes of Piedmontese military society. He soon resigned his diplomatic appointment, and was succeeded first by Ferdinand Barrot (a brother of Odilon), and then by Hys de Butenval, one of the most physically hideous but most amusing of Frenchmen. We had, too, a Portuguese Minister of the name of Lobo de Moira; a stout, quick-witted Southerner, who was excellent company, and was as popular at Turin as he afterwards became at St. Petersburg, where he died a few years ago.

I have not yet spoken of my own immediate colleagues of the Legation. De Salis left Turin and the

service so soon after my arrival that my acquaintance with him was but short, but he was much liked by all who knew him.¹ The paid Attaché, William Garrow Lettsom, was my first teacher, as it were, in the routine of diplomatic work—a very efficient and kind one, although with him the bitterness of hope deferred and the sense of ill-requited service had done their best to sour a most amiable disposition. He was many years my senior, and at heart hated the profession that had used him so ill. His passion was astronomy, and his nights were mostly spent in serene contemplation on the towers of the Palazzo Madama in company with the illustrious Plana. He retired on a pension not long ago, after holding for ten years the post of Chargé d’Affaires and Consul-General at Montevideo.

Much the most notable character of the Legation was its First Secretary, Dick Bingham, a man of great parts, but of violent passions and utterly ungovernable temper. He was at daggers drawn with Abercromby, whom he systematically opposed in everything. In politics he was Austrian to the backbone, and spent the best part of his time at Milan, in the intimacy of Radetzky and his staff. In order to understand how distasteful this was to our excellent chief, it should be explained that Abercromby was a Whig of the Whigs, the son-in-

¹ Count John Francis de Salis, who was the head of the English branch of the great Grisons family, died some years ago on his estate at Hillingdon, near London. His son has succeeded him in our Diplomatic Service.

law of Lord Minto, "of the sentimental journey,"¹ and that both by his sympathies and by his instructions he was bound to the Liberal movement, which had already turned despotic, priest-ridden Piedmont into a fully developed constitutional State, and was ere long destined to make it expand into united and independent Italy. But if Bingham's public attitude irritated Abercromby, his private peccadilloes with still better reason shocked our chief's propriety and sense of decorum. Poor Dick's pecuniary obligations were numerous and his creditors rabid. The walls of the Legation were nightly covered with such uncomplimentary inscriptions as "Bingham *ladro, assassino, truffadore*," and so forth, which, however carefully effaced in the morning, invariably reappeared the next day.

For my own part, I own that I had a real liking for my dissipated and eccentric colleague, whom I saw at rare intervals, but who, besides being the best possible company, was extremely good-natured to me. I have a vivid recollection of his gaunt, Don Quixote type, fierce looks, and black wig surmounted by a broad-brimmed Panama straw hat. I shall never forget my dismay and his rage when, having one morning occasion to speak to him about some Chancery work, and rashly entering his bedroom without sufficient warning, I dis-

¹ The witticism is Mr. Disraeli's, if I err not, and referred to the special Mission to the Italian Courts with which Lord Minto was charged in September 1847, and which certainly not a little contributed to raise the hopes of the Italian Liberals.

covered him sitting up in bed with spectacles (which he never wore in public) and a skull as naked as my hand. He swore at me terribly, but snatching up his Panama hat, clapped it on and then coolly listened to what I had to tell him. He generally stalked about armed, and, I firmly believe, would have shot a man down as soon as look at him. In his youth he had fought a celebrated duel at Madrid with Grouchy, a son of the notorious Marshal, the circumstances of which he used to relate with great gusto. As usual, a woman—a Spanish great lady—was at the bottom of it. His chief, Addington, had sent him away to Italy to keep him out of mischief, but, before starting, Dick had bound his French rival over on his word of honour not to go near the lady during his absence. A kind friend wrote to apprise him that the promise had been broken, and he forthwith returned post haste, only to be *mis aux arrêts* by Addington and kept a close prisoner in the Legation. There happening one night to be a gala performance at the opera-house, Addington was induced to relax his rigour and allow poor Dick to go to it. He reached the theatre late, and only found one stall vacant. “I took my seat,” he said, “and after that can remember nothing more. I found the fellow sitting next to me, and all I know is that I was pulled off him by sheer strength just in time to save him from being strangled.” Bingham, who later on became Minister to Venezuela, died in London not

long ago ; I have a vague idea that he had so far altered his ways as to have given up spending money and taken to lending it. Of such types as his our decorous service has for many years been entirely free.

The Abercrombys were both in delicate health, and therefore did not entertain much ; but they kept an excellent cook, and gave occasional dinners which were admirably served, and Lady Mary was at home every evening to those who chose to drop in according to the pleasant Italian custom of the place. Their house was mostly frequented by persons belonging to the Liberal party, although they were much respected by society of all shades and opinions. Here I met the men who had stood in the van of the Liberal cause and had chiefly contributed to bring about the new order of things, such as Cesare Balbo and Massimo d'Azeglio, as well as the Cavours and the La Marmoras. The party whose watchword still was "Italy for the Italians" had received a desperate check at Novara ; but their faith in the future remained unabated, and the Liberals of Piedmont, like Russia after her Crimean disasters,¹ were trustfully biding their time and husbanding their strength for a renewed effort, meantime keeping as firm a hold as ever on the affections and sympathies of their own immediate countrymen. The crushing defeat at the hands of Austria had not been followed by any reaction at home ; neither the dynasty nor the country allowing themselves to be turned by this

¹ "La Russie ne boude pas, elle se recueille."

reverse from the path upon which they had resolutely entered. The Piedmontese, indeed, gave ample proof at this time of those eminent qualities of sound political sense and patient, indomitable tenacity with which they were in due course to leaven and energise the heterogeneous elements that go to make up the Italian people. The only, self-appointed, victim of the national disaster was King Charles Albert himself, who, in a sombre fit of dejection, laid down his crown and withdrew to Oporto, where he shortly afterwards died of a broken heart. It is not to be supposed, however, that social life at Turin had not been affected by these grave events. There was a marked schism between the Liberals and the *Codino* (retrograde) or Opposition party which, with a good many exceptions, numbered in its ranks the bulk of the old aristocracy. Their unshaken loyalty to the House of Savoy kept the *Codini* within certain bounds, and made of them *frondeurs* rather than active Oppositionists, but they were none the less charged by their adversaries with a leaning towards Austria and with an undue subserviency to the Church, which, till quite recently, had been all-powerful in Piedmont, and was of course bitterly opposed to the Liberal movement. Although Abercromby's avowed Liberal sympathies were very repugnant to the Opposition, Lady Mary herself was so generally liked that her *salon* became a neutral ground for persons of all parties. Here, then, I also became acquainted with the powerful

Codino families of d'Arvillars, Revel, and Boyl, with the Marquis Scarampi, the wittiest member of the influential club of the *noblesse*, and with Cardenas, whose trenchant pen did good service in the columns of the clerical organ, the *Armonia*.

The aspect of the highest Piedmontese society at this period was both curious and interesting. By certain traits it greatly reminded me of the Faubourg St. Germain—only a Faubourg St. Germain that had not withdrawn from the field and still kept its hold on the Court and Government. The aristocracy were alarmed and discontented by the progress and spread of Liberalism even in their own circle, but as yet they boldly and, in appearance, successfully maintained their supremacy and their exclusiveness, though in reality they were fast losing ground and being swamped by the irresistible tide. The *noblesse* of Piedmont come of a warlike stock, and from St. Quentin to Novara have freely shed their blood in every quarrel in which their restless, grasping masters have been engaged. A tablet in their club at Turin proudly records the names of those among them who fell in the campaigns of 1848 and 1849. Their example at the head of the army had been the more praiseworthy because they fought in a cause which they disliked and for principles they both dreaded and despised. A proud and poor race, with whom loyalty was a passion and military honour the *summum bonum*, many of them were burly, stalwart men, of rough speech and stiff gait and manner ;

shy and distrustful of strangers, but kind and true when once the ice was broken. The ladies, on the other hand, were charming, and singularly refined in appearance. Indeed, I never lived in a society that, for its size, could show a greater number of pretty, high-bred-looking women. Madame de Carpenet, the Marquise Scati, the exquisitely lovely Madame de Lovensito, Madame de Ternengo, the piquante Comtesse Mestiatis—what a gallery of beauty they make up in my recollections of those days! In my eyes the Piedmontese ladies would have attained perfection but for two failings—their love for their native dialect and their passion for that indigenous fungus the white truffle. It was somewhat trying at first to hear such uncouth sounds uttered by rosy lips fragrant with a perfume which all too closely resembles that of garlic! I grew to like, indeed to find a bewitching cadence in Piedmontese, but to the disenchanting tuber no power on earth could reconcile me.

Turin has a reputation for dulness of which, having seen it through the bewitching medium *de mes vingt ans*, I am not competent to judge. To me it seemed a city of delights, and, like the veriest of “Giandujas,”¹ I was quite content to pace its broad streets and shady porticoes, to sip my morning chocolate at the Café Suisse, lounge in the afternoon in the Rue du Po, and eat ices in the evening at the “Canton d’Fiorio.”² I know few more striking and

¹ The national nickname of the Piedmontese.

² “The corner of Fiorio,” the principal café of Turin.

charming views than those from the Collina, especially the prospect as one looks down upon the city from the hill of the Vigna della Regina; and, for one of nature's grandest displays, commend me to an October sunset watched from the Piazza d'Armi, when the blue shadows come creeping up from the Lombard plain, while—in a hemicycle of 130 miles from Monte Rosa to the Col de Tende—the mountains, peak after peak, seem to light their watch-fires, bidding, as it were, a peaceful good-night to the fair land they guard, till at last, with a great leap, the sun vaults over Monte Viso, leaving it quivering and suspended in mid-air like a pyramid of fiery cloud. Nowhere is the outline of the great chain of the Alps more beautiful than as seen from Turin, and I felt early drawn towards those glorious mountains, as though I divined what happy, though all too short, days were in store for me among them in after years.

Deaf to the warnings of my colleagues, I plunged into native society, and never had cause to regret having done so. The Benevello family was among the first with whom I became intimate. I sang a good deal with Cecilia Benevello, afterwards Marquise del Borgo, and was enrolled in the youthful band that gathered at night at the house of her widowed elder sister, the Marquise Doria de Cirié—"la Pomposa" or "la Grande Marquise," as she was termed—most amiable and simple-minded of creatures, with her Rubens-like carnation

and wealth of tawny locks. Her *salon*, with its band of juvenile admirers—mostly young lieutenants of the Guards and other crack regiments—had been mischievously nicknamed *la scuola infantile*. Here, too, one was sure to meet some of the prettiest women in Turin, such as the *mignonne* Comtesse de Ternengo and the handsome but noisy French wife of de Sonnaz, now a cavalry general of some renown, and nephew of my friend *Madame la Gouvernante* of Nice. This small set was none the less pleasant for being a little “fast,” or, more correctly speaking, slightly *régence* in its tone, for though anything but strait-laced in manner and conversation, there was about it none of that offensive familiarity or absence of courtesy which is too often seen in the gayer circles of the present time. Indeed, the company assembled in the old-fashioned boudoir, with its lovely rococo ceiling and panellings and genuine eighteenth-century furniture, rather carried one back to the days of Louis Quinze, and only some powder and patches and a few embroidered coats were wanting to make the illusion perfect. A faint perfume of *ancien régime* and old-world gallantry still lingered about the Turin *beau monde* of those days. Alas! poor “Grande Marquise!” on her, too, the pains and pleasures of this world were to close a very few years later.

These Turin coteries are, or rather were, very difficult of access. Every one in them was somehow related to every one else, and *tout s’y passait*

en famille. In no society that I have known was the genus "cousin" more numerous or of a more dangerous type. As a rule, foreigners were but charily admitted to these family gatherings, but when once received they were so most heartily. The two leading political *salons* of the day were those of the Comtesse de Robilant, who had stood very high in favour with the late King Charles Albert, and of the Marquise d'Arvillars, a woman of pungent wit and a perfect type of great lady of the old school, who was *Grande Maîtresse* of the Royal Household and was supposed to be deep in the councils of the ultra-Conservative party — a party which, having formerly leaned on Austria, still had marked Austrian proclivities.

The theatre plays as great a part in life at Turin as elsewhere in the Peninsula. At the Regio, which is one of the finest of Italian houses, we had Madame Barbieri Nini, an admirable singer, with features so repulsive that she made it a condition never to appear for the first time before a new audience excepting as "Lucrezia," winning her way to all hearts under the mask which in the first act conceals the Borgia. We also had Baucardé in the prime of a splendid tenor voice, as well as Fraschini with his high clarion notes. I can well recall to mind the sensation made by the first-named of these two tenors in the *Ballo in Maschera*, then given almost for the first time; while Fraschini, the following year, brought down the house in

Donizetti's *Poliuto*. Few people now could sit through one of those operas with pleasure or even patience. The Regio was likewise remarkable for the excellence of its ballets, and, between the acts, a sight not to be forgotten was Massimo d'Azeglio, sage and statesman, mobbed behind the scenes by a crowd of little *danseuses*, and his pockets rifled of the bonbons with which they were known to be well stuffed. But the best fun we had was not at the stately Regio, but at inferior theatres such as the Carignano, the d'Angennes, with its French company, or the plebeian Teatro Gerbino, where the best seats cost a *muta* or eightpence. When I say "we," I mean the set of contemporaries, chiefly colleagues, with whom I mostly went about. A curious character amongst them was an excellent fellow of the name of Hill, a gigantic ex-Dragoon Guard, who was a natural son of Lord Berwick—for many years our Minister to the Sardinian Court—and a Genoese lady. With the rest of us he patronised little Citterio, a minor ballet-star of the day, whom the *plebs* of the pit and galleries at the Carignano persistently hissed because she came from Milan and was said to have had an Austrian admirer. One evening the fight grew so hot that the passage at the back of the box we occupied was invaded by our adversaries, when the door suddenly opening disclosed Hill's giant frame in pugilistic attitude. He addressed them in the purest Piedmontese, garnished with a few British expletives, and it

was quite delightful to see them slink away, leaving us masters of the situation.

When I first arrived, the Court was in deep mourning for King Charles Albert, and even for some time afterwards continued very quiet and lifeless. King Victor Emmanuel, as is well known, hates all display and ceremony, and his consort, patient, much-tried Marie Adelaide, led a life of austere piety and retirement till her early death in 1855. The most popular member of the royal family was the king's brother, the Duke of Genoa, whose marriage with Princess Elizabeth of Saxony was the occasion of the only Court festivities that took place during my stay. A great breakfast was given at Stupinigi, a palace some distance out of Turin, to which we diplomats were all asked—a dull, solemn affair, as was likewise a ball given later at the palace at Turin. This breakfast, by the way, produced a duel between Count Piatti, a Lombard *officier d'ordonnance* of the king, and the Codino Count Cardenas, who, as I have already said, was one of the ablest contributors to the clerical newspaper the *Armonia*. The latter had made some disparaging remark as to an Austrian refugee like Piatti venturing to escort Comtesse Apponyi to her seat at the breakfast-table. The affair ended in a slight wound received by Cardenas, but it kept the town on tenterhooks for several days.

At the Court ball I remember being struck by the king's too evident look of boredom, and

being still more disgusted with his bad taste, when asked what he thought of one of the loveliest of his subjects, the Marquise de Lovensito. She was simply radiant that evening, dressed to perfection in clouds of white *tarlatane*, fresh from Paris, and in the opinion of all who were present it was impossible to imagine a more refined and faultless style of beauty than hers. His Majesty, however, when consulted, merely shrugged his shoulders and growled some coarse remark. The *Re galantuomo* is certainly not conspicuous for taste or refinement, but it would be unfair to judge him by ordinary standards. Never had man a harder bringing up. His father's dislike of him was notorious. "Le roi ne lui parlait que la cravache à la main"—to use the words of one who knew—and he was kept in schoolboy subjection till the day on which he was called upon, at twenty-nine, to ascend a throne shaken to its base by Custoza and Novara. No wonder if the rougher, grosser part of his nature got the upper hand. At the same time, although he had known little kindness, he was himself far from unkind, and touching stories are related of his tenderness for his youngest crippled child, Prince Odo. Very different was his brother, the Duke of Genoa, Charles Albert's favourite son. Tall, good-looking, well-bred, every inch a prince, he was beloved by the army and the nation, and his premature death was a real loss to the dynasty. I saw a great deal of the gentlemen of his household, and a gallant band

they were: Victor de St. Marsan, carried off by cholera a few years later in the Crimean campaign; Laval, Léon Doria, and others. They all worshipped the duke, who had, they said, but one defect — curiously untidy habits and a marked aversion to ablutions and clean linen!

Many were the anecdotes I heard at this time of King Charles Albert from officers who had served on his staff in 1848 and 1849. His harsh, gloomy, self-contained nature made him unpopular, but invested him with a certain tragic grandeur not unlike that of Schiller's Wallenstein. In his youth he had been steeped to the lips in treason, and he preserved to the end the reticent, distrustful ways of the confirmed conspirator. On the other hand, he was, by all accounts, absolutely fearless, and of a disdainful courage not always pleasant for his *entourage*. At the siege of Peschiera he was riding at a foot's pace along the *glacis*, in a most exposed position, and soon got under heavy fire. His escort, perceiving this, quickened their speed into a trot, when they were checked by a stern "Au pas, Messieurs!" from their grim, impassive master. This dauntless bravery no doubt endeared him to his troops, but he seldom found a gracious word to say in recognition of good service. At Goito, for instance, one of his intimates, General de Robilant, riding up to report on a decisive and critical strategic movement which had just been successfully accomplished, received, by

way of recognition, a plain "Bon jour, General! Avez vous de bonnes nouvelles de la Comtesse?" It should be added that there were special circumstances which made the above dry greeting singularly thankless, not to say cynical. The king was, however, notoriously indifferent to the feelings and susceptibilities of those who served him.

The winter and spring passed away, and most of my friends left town. The Abercrombys had taken a house for the summer at a place called Caluso, in one of those lovely valleys that come down from Ivrea and Aosta, where I used to go and stay with them for a few days at a time. As a rule, however, the routine work of the Legation tied me down to Turin, where I had a small lodging in the Maison Seyssel, Rue Madonna degli Angeli, not far from the club. At this establishment (a very comfortable one, by the way) I mostly lived, and there fell in with a rather shady set of men, considerably older than myself, who gambled a good deal and drank not a little. The most orderly of us come into this world with a certain stock of wild oats, and I sowed a good portion of mine at this time. *Il faut que jeunesse se passe.* Amusing, though unprofitable, company some of my friends certainly were; three of them as perfect adventurers as ever came out of *le beau pays de France*. Paul de Juigné, Breteuil, and Perrot de Thannberg made up this trio, or *liederliches Kleeblatt*: the first two very well born, the

latter of doubtful parentage. Juigné and Thannberg had joined the Sardinian army just before Novara, and having "left their country for their country's good," continued on at Turin with nominal appointments on the *Etat Major*. Juigné later expiated his youthful errors as a volunteer in Algeria and the Crimea, while Thannberg, I believe, afterwards took to profitable speculation in Portugal. As to Breteuil—who was by way of being on a visit to his sister, married to the distinguished Piedmontese General Biscaretti—I know nothing of his after fate, but he certainly was one of the most accomplished rogues I ever came across in polite society. He lived entirely by his wits, and the most curious part of it was that he seemed to have none. He so successfully put on a simplicity bordering on idiocy, that he became the habitual butt of our set, one of our favourite amusements being to get him to take the most impossible bets, to be paid for in iced champagne. It being very sultry weather—for the dog-days at Turin are worthy of the tropics—we thought it good fun to quench our thirst at our friend's expense, till one fine day he levanted *sans tambour ni trompette*, leaving us to settle his bets and club account, and to get over, as best we could, the loss of any little advances we might have made him on the strength of his innocent ways. The principal Turin shopkeepers had shown even greater credulity than ours, and were very hard hit indeed.

About this time I was introduced to the Marquise Ippolita d'Adda, as fascinating and remarkable a woman as ever crossed my path. By birth a Trivulzi, of one of the greatest Milanese houses, she had separated from her husband, after a short and unhappy marriage, and taken up her abode at Turin, where she lived in great affluence, but met with a cool reception in society. Although the Piedmontese ladies thought fit to give her the cold shoulder, she was so wonderfully pretty and high-bred, so full of natural cleverness and charm, that to know her was to succumb to her attractions. We met nightly at her house after the theatre, keeping frightfully late hours, and frequently not separating till daylight, after noisy suppers at which she presided with infinite tact and decorum, herself touching nothing but water and keeping us in perfect order. I never saw greater skill in the management of a wild crew of young and not over-scrupulous men. Of course we were all desperately in love with her, while she carefully abstained from marking a preference for any of us, excepting perhaps St. Marsan and Robilant. Her nerves must have been the finest tempered steel, for, after sitting up all night, she would go for a long ride in the cool of the morning, then snatch a few hours' rest, and by three in the afternoon be ready to receive her impatient court, looking as fresh as a rose, her hand as cool as ice, and her violet eyes as bright and clear as the summer skies they reflected.

Truly a very Circe. Grave, saturnine, Charles de Robilant,¹ a hero of Novara, who, when his left hand had been shattered by a round shot, coolly walked to the ambulance, where he was amputated seated on a camp stool—lifting his hat as he passed the royal staff and shouting “Vive le Roi!”—Robilant, whose impassiveness nothing could disturb, lay at her feet a devoted slave; so too, in a lesser degree, Victor de St. Marsan, the flower of Piedmontese chivalry, destined ere long to be laid low by cholera in a Crimean grave. I too was enthralled with the rest, and grieve to relate that I signalled my twenty-first birthday by a grand banquet given at Trombetta’s in honour of the enchantress, at which I did not preside with as much self-possession and dignity as might have been desired by my well-wishers.

Enough, however, of this record of youthful folly. In August, when the hot plains had become unbearable, I made a trip to Aix-les-Bains with St. Marsan, attracted thither in a great measure by the same allurements, and from thence went with the Marquise, the Kutusoffs (my old Nice friends), Robilant, and Greppi²—a fellow-refugee of the lovely Marquise and the most ill-used of her admirers—by the Lac du Bourget and the Rhône to Lyons, returning by way of Geneva in the diligence. This was my first visit to a city and

¹ Afterwards Italian Envoy at Vienna, and Ambassador in London, where he died.

² Count Greppi has since filled various important posts in the Italian Diplomatic Service.

a country since endeared to me by many recollections.

A life of dissipation and excitement told upon me in the long-run, and a severe chill I caught in November (just a year after my arrival in Turin) induced an attack of my old enemy bronchitis, and brought me to dire extremity. Under Providence I owe my recovery to George Keith, kindest of fellows, who was Abercromby's private physician, and lived in his house. He treated me with great skill and nursed me with unremitting care, and, when it was possible to remove me, travelled with me down to Genoa, whence I went on to Nice to avoid the rigour of the Turin winter. Keith has since achieved considerable distinction at Edinburgh in the eminent school formed by the late Sir James Simpson. When I reached Nice I was still so weak and my cough was so severe that my lungs were believed to be affected, and my friends betrayed by their looks how serious were the fears they entertained. Wonderful, however, are the powers of recovery in youth, and wonderful too was the effect of the Nice climate of those days. Ere long I was up and out, and able to take long rides in the company of Augustine Fitzgerald and his wife, and one of the most accomplished of horsewomen, Lady K. With us rode Devlet Kildeef (Devil-kill-devil, as we called him), a huge harum-scarum descendant of the Khans of Crim Tartary whom the Russian service had only half

tamed, and Felix Meyendorff, an astute youth of that race of Baltic nobles who have had so large a share in the government of Russia since the days of Peter, and whose unenviable distinction it was to offer a marked slight, when Chargé d'Affaires at Rome, to a Pontiff¹ whom even his bitterest enemies are wont to respect. Pleasant rides among the hills, with my lady leading us helter-skelter up and down the most break-neck places. Where she led, who would not have followed? Surely a pretty Englishwoman looks nowhere better or more at home than in the saddle, and this one seemed the very queen of them all.

But as I look back now to this winter-time at Nice, it is another and a very different figure that rises up and fills my thoughts—that of the dear old man² who had brought me up and had stood me in a father's stead. Had I the skill to portray him, I would use none but the softest, most delicate tints, for in this veteran of our greatest naval struggles, who had landed with Abercromby in Egypt, had fought at Maida, had forced the Dardanelles with Duckworth, had followed Sir Sidney Smith in his adventurous career, there dwelt a soul as tender and gentle, a mind as pure and unselfish as we are wont to associate only with the most perfect of woman-kind. Precious to me, therefore, is the recollection

¹ Pope Pius IX.

² Admiral Arabin, the husband of my father's sister, with whom I was staying.

of the last winter I spent with him at this time ; I still weak and ailing, but he fast breaking up, yet far more thoughtful of my condition than of his own heavy load of trouble and ill-health. Some years later I met with him again in fiction, and, with strange emotion, traced the same tender yet valiant heart, the same simplicity, the same unselfish, over-confiding nature sketched to the life by the great novelist in that most pathetic of his creations, the elder Newcome.

In April I had to return to my duties, retracing my steps by the Corniche to join the Abercrombys at Nervi, near Genoa, where they had wintered. I had now with me one of the most excellent servants I ever knew, Emmanuel Perrini by name, whom I had engaged at Nice, and who for years after faithfully served me in many a clime and country.

Of all the beautiful Ligurian seaboard no point is more lovely than Nervi. The garden of our villa sloped down to the shore, where it was bounded by one of the numerous old martello towers which stud that coast and carry the mind back to days when the pirate barks of Barbarossa harried the land, and Doria's avenging galleys sallied forth against them from the neighbouring Genoa. Behind the house rose hills "wooded to the peak," with many a white casino gleaming through the trees, and tiny chapels set in olive groves. From thence the view embraces a vast expanse of sea and coast from distant Savona to the bold and beautiful promontory of Porto Fino

looming close at hand. Down below, along the shore, the highroad from Chiavari and Spezzia runs past old, dilapidated villas with painted fronts peeling in the blistering noontide, past Quinto with its Palazzo Spinola, past the beach and tiny harbour at Quarto, whence, nine years later, Garibaldi and his *mille* were to embark for the conquest of Sicily, till it reaches the gates of the proud city then still sullenly smarting under the recollections of its recent siege and capture.¹ Six weeks spent among these scenes, and the quiet, even tenor of life beneath the hospitable roof of my chief, restored me to full strength, while the gentle influence of my hostess helped to calm down what feverish excitement I had brought with me from my winter round of gaiety. In June we all returned to Turin, and much of my time during the ensuing summer was again passed with the Abercrombys at a country house they had taken at Pessione, on the line of railway to Alexandria. I was soon to lose their kindly converse and friendly guidance. In November 1851, Abercromby, who had been made a K.C.B. and become Sir Ralph, was appointed to the Hague, and he and Lady Mary soon left Turin for their new destination.

¹ After the disaster of Novara the city of Genoa was seized by insurgents who drove out the garrison and proclaimed the Ligurian Republic (April 3, 1849). A few days later Genoa surrendered to General la Marmora.

CHAPTER VII

FLORENCE AND PARIS, 1851-1852

I SHOULD not easily have consoled myself for the departure of the Abercrombys had they not been succeeded by that most genial of men and prince of chiefs, Sir James Hudson. Under this ablest, perhaps, and most successful of English diplomatists of our time it was my lot to serve for too short a period ; long enough, however, to win my affection and make me look back to those few brief months with exceptional pleasure and gratitude. Sir James Hudson is too well known to require description, nor shall I attempt a task to which I could render but scant justice. An admirable portrait of him by a master-hand is to be found in "Tony Butler." It is sufficient for me to say that he was beloved by all who approached him, and that for sweetness and liberality of disposition, perfect charm of manner, playful—indeed boyish—humour, no man with whom I ever stood in official relations equalled him. Withal bold as a lion and "inflexible as steel." The magnitude of his share in the important transactions that led to the formation of the Kingdom of Italy is well known and generally acknowledged, although those transactions are perhaps as yet too

near to us to be clearly and impartially judged. The skill displayed in them by Hudson will be better understood hereafter; in my belief he in a measure divides with Cavour the glory of Italian redemption. Indeed, he to a certain extent made Cavour, by giving him a lift into the saddle at the right moment. I can well recall to mind the satisfaction with which he announced to us that d'Azeglio was to be succeeded by Cavour as Prime Minister. He had largely contributed to the change, having, I think, no great liking for d'Azeglio, and having divined the genius and great statesmanlike qualities of the other man, and how admirably fitted Cavour was to carry out the policy they both had at heart.

But it is when considering the difficulties with which he had to contend that the work of Hudson can best be appreciated. As an instance of these I may mention what he himself told me shortly after his arrival at Turin in November 1851. On taking leave of Lord John Russell, then Prime Minister, who was hurrying him out to his post, he endeavoured to discover to what extent he would be justified in holding out to the Sardinian Government hopes of English support in case of emergency. For some time he could elicit nothing from Lord John beyond a general statement that he might assure the Cabinet of Turin of the sympathy of her Majesty's Government, of their "moral support." "But," said Hudson, "what am I to do if

Austria takes to coercing Sardinia, if she threatens her with invasion, and so forth?" "Well," was the reluctant reply, "then you might send for the Mediterranean fleet to Genoa." He could extract nothing further, nor was he told what he was to do with the "fleet at Genoa" when once he got it there, though of course it was something to have wrested thus much from official reserve. He laughed, with a joyous laugh peculiarly his own, when relating this, and I cannot but think that the circumstance goes some way towards showing how great must have been his weight and influence with the Piedmontese Government and people, since, with so slender and almost illusory a backing, he was able to persuade both them and also the world at large that England stood behind Sardinia and was prepared effectually to aid and protect her.

It seems to me that there are few instances on record of what I may call the personal initiative of a diplomatic agent achieving such success. Indeed, it almost puts Kinglake's "Great Eltchi" in the shade, for Lord Stratford de Redcliffe really had the might of England at his back, as the event most fully proved. No doubt Hudson had with him the cordial good wishes of Lord Palmerston and the vague sympathies of the British public (what the latter are worth Danish and Franco-German wars have since shown), but I cannot but think that he gave a body to them, as it were, and made them yield fruit beyond what could have been

expected from anything so shadowy and unsubstantial. My opinions on these transactions may be worth little, but they have at least the merit of impartiality. I am a Conservative by temper and conviction, and was at first an utter disbeliever in Italian unity. Even now, after its successful achievement, I regret and strongly disapprove some of the means by which that unity was brought about, but I cannot withhold my admiration for the skill, the boldness, the constancy of its authors, in the first rank of whom I would place my respected chief, Sir James Hudson.

The staff of the Legation was renewed at this time. Mad Dick was transferred to Naples, and was succeeded as Secretary of Legation by Edward Erskine, who later had to bear so terrible a load of responsibility in Greece at the time of the Oropos murders. Henry Capel Lofft came out as Unpaid Attaché with Hudson, and Barron was summoned from Florence to take up the duties of Paid Attaché in the place of Lettsom. He had been some months before lent to the Legation at Florence, which happened to be short-handed at the time, and had in fact never joined his proper post. He showed exceeding reluctance to leave Florence, though several times requested to do so, and I think the night of his arrival was the only occasion on which I saw Hudson thoroughly angry. We were all sitting at dinner with our chief at the Hotel Feder, when Barron was announced. "Show him in," said Hud-

son; then turning to him: "Mr. Barron," he said, "you appear to prefer Florence so much to Turin that it seems to me the sooner you go back there the better. Good evening!"

Beyond a flying visit to Nice (the last occasion on which I saw my excellent uncle), whence my brother William—who had entered the Grenadier Guards and was on leave from his regiment—accompanied me on my return to Turin, the winter and spring passed without anything worthy of special record. One of my great friends, Madame de ——, returned, after an absence of several months, to her dreary home and her coarse, unsympathetic husband. Indeed, it is not without a pang that, even at this distance of time, I call to mind all the unhappiness she later on underwent, until driven to seek refuge in a convent—

"And thus wear out in almsdeed and in prayer,
The sombre close of a voluptuous day."

It was no doubt well and wisely ordained that at this time I should have been removed from Turin and its perilous fascinations, and transferred to the Mission at Florence.

By some inscrutable Foreign Office arrangement our monthly Queen's messenger was likewise the bearer of despatches for the Florence Legation, but did not take them on himself. Some junior member of the Legation at Turin was sent down for the purpose, and brought back the Florence bag for

home ; a pleasant trip to which none of us objected. Being now permanently appointed to Florence, it was arranged that I should take on the despatches there, and I was furnished at the same time with instructions to the truant Barron to return forthwith to his proper post and bring the bag for home with him. At the beginning of May 1852 I bade a reluctant and affectionate farewell to my chief and to the town where I had entered public life under such happy auspices, and was off in sorrowful mood in the train to Genoa, travelling thence by diligence to my destination through Spezzia, Sarzana, Carrara, and Massa. I well remember passing through the picturesque mountain villages, with their marble workshops, where first I heard from peasants and postillions the liquid Tuscan tongue, so great a contrast to the Piedmontese and Genoese dialects with which I was familiar. I put up at the Hôtel d'Italie in the Borgo Ognisanti, and went in quest of the Legation. Apparently there was none, or rather it was concentrated in the person of Barron. The Mission—vacant by the death of Mr. Sheil, and only recently filled up by the appointment of Sir Henry Bulwer, who was still in England—had no official residence, and the Secretary of Legation in charge, Scarlett,¹ was away at Pisa, and, as it turned out, seriously ill.

Barron received me with as much cordiality as

¹ The Hon. Peter Campbell Scarlett, a son of the 1st Lord Abinger, afterwards Minister at Athens and at Mexico.

lay in him, took charge of my despatches, promised to report my arrival to Scarlett, but expressed no intention of complying with the message I delivered to him from Hudson. On the third or fourth day he came to me with a bag of despatches and a verbal message from Scarlett, to the effect that he begged I would go back to Turin as bearer of them. I vaguely felt that there was something wrong about this arrangement, but was too inexperienced to fight out the point with Barron, besides being—to say the whole truth—little loth to return to my old haunts. When I reached Turin and told my story to Hudson, he was highly indignant, went to his desk, knocked off a hurried draft, and, handing it to me, said: “There! copy that and sign it!” It was a formal despatch to Lord Malmesbury (the Tories had come in shortly before),¹ in which I stated that I had obeyed Scarlett’s instructions in coming back to Turin as bearer of despatches, but that I would at once return to my post, relieve Mr. Barron, and take charge of the Mission should Scarlett still be unable to attend to his duties. The document was written with Hudson’s accustomed vigour, and was not calculated to do poor Barron much good. On my return to Florence, I went at once to Barron and inquired how matters stood. Scarlett was still ill, he told me, and had asked him to attend to the business of the Legation. I politely, but firmly, requested him to hand over the

¹ This was Lord Derby’s first Administration.

archives to me, and he, as firmly and politely, declined doing so. Here was a pretty predicament! I think I should not have moved further in the matter, had not one Gasperini, a kind of Chancery servant and drudge of the Legation, come to me, a few days after my arrival, and assured me that the settlement of some important questions in course of debate with the Tuscan Government—the Mather case, namely, and the case of the brothers Stratford¹—was retarded for lack of any British representative with whom that Government could communicate officially, they well knowing that Barron did not properly belong to the Legation.

I now thought it my duty to inform them that they might have the privilege of conferring with no less a personage than myself, and, armed with the despatch containing my appointment, proceeded to call on the Duc de Casigliano, at that time Minister for Foreign Affairs. Casigliano received me with great, though slightly ironical, politeness, and informed me that he had already concluded the matters in question with Barron. I left the Foreign Office somewhat crestfallen, and uncomfortably conscious that I had made an ass of myself and had been thought one. I felt it, however, incumbent

¹ Mather, a young Irishman, had been brutally cut down by an Austrian officer, without any provocation, while following a military band through the streets of Florence. The Stratfords (illegitimate sons of Lord Aldborough) were accused of revolutionary plotting and had been arrested in arbitrary fashion. In both cases satisfaction was obtained from the Tuscan Government.

on me to report home officially the course I had followed; and, having done so, deemed it only fair to Barron to let him see what I had written. He thanked me for my open dealing, and engaged on his part to show me anything he might write home respecting our controversy. I think I wrote two or three despatches, all of which I showed to him. We continued on good terms, and nothing further occurred till Sir Henry Bulwer's arrival some ten days later. We went to meet him at the station, and almost the first words he uttered in his blandest tones, as he feebly emerged from the railway carriage, were: "I understand, gentlemen, that there has been some little difference of opinion between you; I think the least said about it the better." We bowed in silent acquiescence. A week afterwards there came a Foreign Office despatch addressed to me (in reply to the letter dictated to me by Hudson), approving my intention of returning to Florence to take charge, sharply censuring Barron, and instructing me, in the event of Sir Henry Bulwer's arrival, to place the despatch in his hands. "I am very sorry," said I to Sir Henry, "but I cannot help referring to a subject on which you had enjoined silence." "Dear me!" he replied, "this seems to have been more serious than I anticipated; what have you written?" I went for my despatches, and, on my return, found Barron, seated with a bundle of drafts of *private* letters before him, which he silently pushed across the

table to me. Such was his interpretation of the understanding between us that each of us should show the other what he had reported home, and, writing in a private form, he had been able freely to indulge in reflections on my attitude in the controversy which afterwards drew upon me some official censure. The whole incident is of course puerile in the extreme, and, looking back upon it, I cannot but smile in pity at my juvenile zeal and ardour. At the same time my worthy colleague's share in it has always seemed to me less creditable to his candour than to his training at the hands of Jesuit Fathers. I met Barron but seldom in after years. He has not been fortunate in his career, although possessed of no ordinary abilities. His financial reports from Constantinople, where he was Secretary of Embassy for some years, were models of their kind.¹

I cannot say that I took a great liking to Florence during this my first short stay there. I was ill most of the time, and in a condition of nervous depression that precluded all enjoyment. Nevertheless, I became acquainted with some pleasant people, and certainly society at Florence in those days, though hardly to be termed strait-laced, was superior to that which later on turned that charming city into a *refugium peccatorum*. One of the great merits of the place at that time was its extreme cheapness. I

¹ Sir Henry Winston Barron, Bart., was afterwards Minister at Stuttgart, where he died.

joined two or three young fellow-countrymen in taking a spacious furnished apartment on the ground floor in the Piazza Maria Antonia, where we clubbed together and lived in princely style at fabulously small cost. Our *phalanstère* was for a short time composed of that delightful fellow, Reggie Capel,¹ who later on acted as a Queen's messenger for a few years, and who with his wife, Mary Fazakerly, long after did admirable work under the Red Cross in France after the terrible battles round Sedan; a Yorkshireman of the name of Weatherby, who afterwards entered the Austrian service; and the O'Donoghue, of whom no one at this time would have predicted the future parliamentary career. The O'Donoghue owned a coach with a team of screws with which he one day tried his best to do for us all—possibly as hated Saxons—driving us back into town by the narrow, tortuous drawbridge and gateway known as the Porticciola (long since pulled down) and very nearly pitching us into the mill-race beneath; as hare-brained a piece of coachmanship as I ever care to witness.

From this time dates my acquaintance with Charles Lever, whose pen, with all its brilliancy, gives but a partial idea of what a wealth of wit and fun there was in the man, what charm in his unctuous brogue, what fascination in "the smile that expanded his mouth and showed his fine white teeth, the musical, ringing laugh that stirred every

¹ The Hon. Reginald Capel, uncle of the present Lord Essex.

heart.”¹ I see him now, riding into the Piazzone at the Cascine with his wife and daughters, all mounted on horses of variegated hues and graduated sizes—piebald, dappled, cream-coloured and chestnut, from the raw-boned old hunter down to the shaggy little Sardinian—the strange collection giving the whole cavalcade a decided look of the circus.²

There could be no more charming sight than that presented by the Piazzone on a fine evening in May. Here, in a smart barouche, are seated side by side a mother and daughter, both of such rare attractions that it would be hard to award the palm to either. The daughter, then barely sixteen, has since won for herself the renown of the most faultlessly beautiful woman of her day, while, as for her adventures and eccentricities, are they not chronicled in the book of the Second Empire? Some years ago I remember Madame de Castiglione coming to London and being asked to a great dinner at Cambridge House, to which, in honour of her, Lady Palmerston had likewise invited Prince Napoleon and some of the great London beauties of the day, such as her Grace of Manchester, Lady Augusta Sturt, and, I think, Lady Constance Grosvenor. The usual Saturday evening drum followed, and truly the staring at and mobbing of the lovely and somewhat fantastically dressed foreigner

¹ “A Sketch of Charles Lever,” *Fraser's Magazine* for February 1873.

² Miss Mary Boyle, in her charming recollections recently given to the world, likewise notes the circus-like appearance of the Lever family.

exceeded even what is too often seen on occasion in London "good society." I remember dear old Lady Palmerston telling me how distressed she had been by the failure of her dinner-party. Plon-Plon and Madame de C., so it turned out, were not on speaking terms, while, as for the London beauties, they felt themselves so hopelessly "cut out," and extinguished in the rays of this surpassing loveliness, that they did not quite like it, and no wonder. For my part I declare that I never set eyes on a more gloriously beautiful creature, nor one who seemed to me so deficient in that indescribable attribute which is known as charm.

But—to return to the Piazzone—there are other faces here worth noting besides Madame Olduini and her daughter—pretty women like Madame della Gherardesca and the fair but frail Marquise Pucci, the charming English sisterhood composed of Madame Baldelli, Mrs. White, and Mrs. Fleetwood Wilson; or men like the Poniatowskis, the Corsinis, Bentivoglio, &c. One feature there is about the gay scene which saddens even me with my *Codino* tendencies. The magnificent band, whose instruments crash and vibrate in the clear evening air, wear the white tunic of *Graf Kinski Infanterie*, and, riding in and out of the rows of carriages, are dashing officers of the Hungarian Hussars and *Toscana Dragoner*—Tassilo Festetics, Piré, Paul Metternich, and others. The Grand Duchy enjoys the full blessings of Austrian military

occupation. Yet the Florentines seem not to care. They laugh and flirt and eat ices and talk scandal quite unconcernedly, and many of them are doubtless glad to know themselves safe from political trouble and revolution while 10,000 *Tedeschi* bayonets keep order, though it be order somewhat after the kind of that which "reigned at Warsaw," but let that pass! I find here none of the patriotic ardour of Piedmont, and can hardly wonder at Metternich's contemptuous saying that Italy was "but a geographical expression." The passionately indignant outburst of Leopardi comes to my mind:—

"O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi
E le colonne e i simulacri e l'erme
Torri degli avi nostri,
Ma la gloria non vedo."¹

Of Florentine society I have but little to relate, for my residence in Florence was destined to be short. Of course I was taken to the house of Madame Ricci (mother of the Comtesse Walewska), whose *salon* was at that time the leading one of the Tuscan capital, and often went to the nightly receptions of that most entertaining and distinctly original woman, Lady Walpole, with whom the Austrians were in especial favour. But my health prevented my going out much. Even my chief I saw but seldom, for he was at the Baths of San

¹ Opening lines of *All' Italia*: "Oh! my country, I see the walls and arches and the columns and the statues, and the deserted towers of our forefathers, but their glory I see not."

Giuliano during the greater part of my stay, with that perfect pattern of private secretaries and most charming of men, Fenton, with whom it was to be my good fortune to serve again so many years afterwards.

It is well to speak kindly of the dead. My experience of Sir Henry Bulwer as a chief was decidedly pleasant. His eccentricities amused and his conversation delighted me. His unpunctuality, on the other hand, was sorely trying. It was a bore to be shut up waiting for orders all day long, and then to be dismissed with a request to come back after dinner, when he would certainly have something to be written out, then again to wait till late into the night, and finally to have to copy the same thing three times over, thanks to endless alterations and emendations of style. But who could resist the sweet plaintive tones in which you were told, "I am so sorry to give you all this trouble, my dear boy!" There certainly was something very fascinating about Sir Henry Bulwer, and, marked as were his failings, it was impossible to feel harshly towards him. He had the precious faculty of retaining friends once made; witness Lord Palmerston, who stood by and believed in him till the last. Yet, with all his brilliant gifts and abilities, Bulwer left no mark on the service in which he rose so high. His talents adorned it, but nothing more; while of the outward results of his tenure of the Embassy at Constantinople a good deal might be said. This,

however, is no place for entering on so difficult a question, and, as I said above, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

In July I applied for leave of absence, being advised to avoid the great summer heat, nowhere more trying than at Florence, and, starting for England, I lingered on the way for a fortnight under Hudson's hospitable roof. I found my late chief comfortably installed in the Casa San Giorgio, and his house the resort of all that was most interesting in the political world of the Piedmontese capital. Massari, who, I see, has just given us his account of the life of Cavour, was a daily guest, and brought with him a full budget of Parliamentary information. Hudson's *salon*, in fact, was a sort of lobby of the Chamber where measures were talked over and questions of policy discussed. I can bring to mind no other instance of a foreign representative participating as actively as did Hudson in the conduct of internal affairs. His personal prestige and influence were indeed exceptionally great, while who, of the survivors of that period, but remembers the cheery atmosphere and genial surroundings of his home at Turin

From Turin I went on to Paris, where I stayed only a day or two, but long enough to learn that I had been transferred to the Embassy there. My brother William had now been some two years an ensign and lieutenant in the first battalion of the Grenadier Guards, and with him I spent the

few weeks of my sojourn in London. He was so popular with his comrades, who had nicknamed him the "Crapaud" in allusion to his French education, that his rooms in St. James's Place became a sort of club-house much frequented by the officers on guard and others. A merry, heedless crew were the young Guardsmen of those days; little troubled with the sterner duties of their profession, and still less weening that they would ere long have to face the ordeal of that terrible Crimean campaign:—Evelyn, of Wotton, surnamed "the child"; Beaumont Hotham, afterwards for many years Consul at Calais; Lord Balgonie, who died young after great promise of distinction; Arthur Hay (Lord Walden); my great friend and kinsman, Cuthbert Ellison, whom a mysterious affection of the brain carried off in his prime—are those I best remember of the lot. Those were the days of old Vauxhall, of white-bait junketings at Greenwich, of many a wild spree well buried in the past. The doings of the Brigade were decidedly lively, and ruinous to slender purses like that of the poor "Crapaud." Among other temptations there existed in London in those days a number of private "hells," which have since, I believe, been more or less effectually suppressed. Notwithstanding an undeniable laxity of tone among the subalterns, the senior officers took care to enforce a strict sense of honour and truthfulness, even down to comparative trifles. In the first battalion of Grenadiers, for instance, a

book of "lies and fibs" was kept, into which any improbable statement volunteered by a member of the mess was mercilessly entered. One evening William had unwarily narrated that, riding round the rocks near the harbour at Nice on a stormy day, at a spot known as "Rauba Capéu,"¹ from its excessive breeziness, he had found there so strong a wind that, when rising in the saddle at a trot, he could hardly succeed in sitting down again! "Ring for the book," said Goulburn, who presided, and, the book having been brought, the story was solemnly registered: "Lieutenant Rumbold states that on a certain day," &c.

I joined the Paris Embassy under Lord Cowley towards the beginning of September. George Jer-ningham was the Secretary of Embassy; the Paid Attachés were William Grey and William Stuart,² and Hedworth Williamson, William Tollemache, Evan Baillie, and Atlee (private secretary to Lord Cowley) made up the staff. I was in every way glad to find myself once more in Paris. The Delmars had returned, with my sister, to the Avenue de Marigny, and although they did not put me up, I dined with them when I liked and took a lodging in the Avenue close to their house. The life I now led was somewhat dissipated—the stereotyped Paris course through which most of us have passed at some time or other.

¹ Niçard *à trois*; literally "rob hat."

² The Hon. Sir William Stuart, K.C.M.G., son of the 11th Lord Blantyre, afterwards Envoy at The Hague.

We dined a good deal at restaurants, chiefly at the "Frères Provençaux," which since then has greatly fallen off from its ancient renown—sumptuous banquets ordered by William Stuart and Fred Ricardo, than whom I know no greater authorities in culinary matters. Of course I also much frequented the theatres, and more especially the Français, whither I was attracted by that paragon of *soubrettes*, Augustine Brohan, with whom I had become acquainted two years before at Turin and Aix-les-Bains, and whose silver-toned laughter and sparkling sallies made her a most seductive companion. No one has ever equalled her in such parts as the irresistibly humorous Dorine or Nicole of Molière, or the bewitching Suzanne of the *Mariage de Figaro*. Her pearly teeth and sunny smile lighted up those pompous classic boards with unwonted brightness—she seemed the Muse of Comedy in person. She was at the same time much dreaded by her fellow-actors for her cutting remarks. That very pretty simpleton, Mdlle. Théric, who was said to be high in favour at the Elysée, and whom she did not love, knocking at her dressing-room one evening, and saying, "C'est moi, ouvrez moi donc!" received the unkind reply, "Je ne suis pas une écaillière!" (an oyster woman).¹ She was equally outspoken with that eminent and pathetic actress, Madame Allan, who had come back from St. Petersburg, crowned with dramatic laurels,

¹ *Huître*. (oyster) is a common French colloquialism applied to dull-witted people.

but grown to an enormous size. "Mes enfants!" she would say to Madame Allan's children, "si vous n'êtes pas bien sages, on vous fera faire trois fois le tour de votre maman!" The two Brohans—Madeleine, though singularly handsome, was not to be compared to her elder sister for charm and intelligence—were of Irish extraction, I believe, and Augustine certainly had all the Irish grace and those lovely violet eyes, with long dark lashes, seen to such perfection in the daughters of Erin. She was at the same time painfully short-sighted, and it is sad to think that she had to leave the stage comparatively early on account of being threatened with total blindness. She then settled down at Ville d'Avray, near Paris, where her house became the meeting-place of all that was wittiest and most agreeable in the Paris world of art and literature.

I was now elected a member of the *Cercle de l'Union*, then situated at the corner of the Rue de Grammont, opposite the Maison Dorée, but since more luxuriously housed on the Boulevard de la Madeleine. Originally founded as a mixed club for the convenience of both foreign residents and Frenchmen, the French element has by degrees become preponderating in it. It is exclusive, and noted for its savage black-balling, and though never a political club, Legitimist opinions are prevalent among its members. It has always had a reputation for comfort, good cheer, and dulness. I have none the less a weakness for it, and have spent in it many a pleasant

evening. The late Lord Hertford used it a good deal, and, when in the humour, enlivened it by his witty sallies. He was almost the only Englishman I ever met who spoke French with perfect correctness and without a vestige of foreign accent, and he prided himself not a little on the accomplishment. It was amusing to hear his French friends tease him on that score. "Tenez! Hertford," they would say, "voilà un mot qui trahit un peu d'accent!" This used to vex him more than he cared to show. Lord Hertford was the strangest mixture of munificence and parsimony. He lived simply, and was never known to entertain a single creature. He would give thousands for a picture or a work of art, and to his marvellous taste and discernment the treasures of Manchester Square bear witness. His charities and acts of private kindness, too, were on a very ample scale. But he kept no carriage, and it was said of him that he never used the then *coupés de remise* at two francs an hour, remaining faithful to the ancient, musty *fiacres à 30 sous*. The tyrant of the club was the Duc de Richelieu—"Sa Grâce," as they called him—a man very much overweighted by his name, who was the terror of both members and servants and a systematic black-baller. Its standing nuisances were ancient General Fagel, who had been Dutch Minister in Paris for nearly forty years, and who used coolly to take out his teeth at dessert and wash them in the glass by his side; and old Lockwood, the father of Lady Napier

and Ettrick, who had an equally pleasant habit of spitting into his silk pocket-handkerchief and drying it at the fire in the morning-room! As a set-off against these, the club counted amongst its *habitués* many agreeable members, belonging to the best class of the French aristocracy, such as the Duc de Rivière, the Comte Lionel de Bonneval, Montfaucon, and foreigners like Spencer, Cowper, Prince Lubomirski, &c. The French, however, seem to me not really to understand club life, or rather the absolute freedom and equality on which it ought to be based. Their clubs are pleasant *salons*, scarcely homes like ours.

The condition of things in France at this period was highly curious and interesting. The Empire was drawing near with giant strides; yet few believed in it, and all but a few reviled and ridiculed it. William Grey¹ offered one day to take me to the rooms of a friend of his on the Boulevard des Capucines, whence a good sight could be had of the solemn entry of the Prince President on his return from his momentous journey to Bordeaux, where he had for the first time openly spoken of an Imperial *régime* and proclaimed it to be synonymous with peace—a peace, as it afterwards proved, diversified by such episodes as the Crimean and the Italian and Mexican campaigns. It was the usual French military pageant—the President, however, distinguishing himself by boldly riding along, on a magnificent chestnut, several

¹ The Honourable William Grey, son of the 2nd Earl Grey.

horses' lengths in front of his brilliant staff and escort. The public excitement was at its highest pitch, it being very generally believed that the legions massed all along the line of the Boulevards would there and then acclaim him as Emperor. It would be extremely interesting to know with what feelings the sight was watched by a lovely girl, of about five-and-twenty, who, with her mother, was standing at one of the windows of this bachelor apartment. The occupier of the rooms was Huddleston of Sawston, a Roman Catholic Cambridgeshire squire of good estate and very ancient lineage, hopelessly in love with his fair guest, who was no other than Mdlle. de Montijo—a few months later to become Empress of the French. The next time I set eyes on the beautiful Empress Eugénie she was in all her splendour, the hostess and centre of attraction of those delightful *Lundis de l'Impératrice*, the last fêtes to be given in the grand old palace which, together with the dynasty, was so soon to be doomed to destruction. Upwards of twenty years afterwards I had the honour of meeting her again, in the mean surroundings of an Amsterdam hotel, where she was undergoing treatment at the hands of the well-known *masseur*, Metzger. She then still retained great traces of her surpassing loveliness, with a look of settled sorrow and hopelessness not to be forgotten. Surely her lot in life has been one of the strangest; at once perhaps the most brilliant and most mournful of our time.

I was on the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville on the morning of that 2nd of December—the day of Austerlitz—when the Empire was proclaimed. Never did so great an event bear so unreal an aspect in my eyes. As a child I had witnessed the *retour des cendres* of which Thackeray has given so graphic, but at the same time so remarkably vulgar, an account. I well remembered that bitter winter's day; the huge, top-heavy car with its black and violet draperies all sown over with golden bees, followed by the feeble remnants of the *Grande Armée* in their old-world, touchingly grotesque uniforms—wizened veterans overborne by the weight of immense helmets and monumental shakos—and guarded by the spruce sailors of the *Belle-Poule*; and having thus seen the great Emperor borne to his last grave, to me the Empire might well seem for ever buried with him.

Since then, for the second time, the Empire has passed away like a dream—a fever-dream with hideous visions of bloodshed and defeat and bitter national mortification. Yet who shall be bold enough to say that it may not arise again a third time? It has strange and potent seductions, and Sedan, it is thought, may well be condoned by the nation which forgave Waterloo. For my part I am no believer in an Imperialist restoration. I cannot think that French *amour propre* will ever forget the cup of humiliation it was made to drain to the dregs in 1870. The First Empire fell under the

impact of the world in arms, and was never more glorious or more formidable than in its fall. Its splendid legend long survived it, and, as narrated by Thiers and illustrated by Vernet, kept for it a living place in the hearts of the people. The Second Empire crumbled to pieces in single combat, almost at the first touch of an adversary it affected to despise while each succeeding day has revealed more of its hollowness and delusive mirage. Its restoration appears to me a moral impossibility.

A few days after the proclamation of the new *régime* Lord Cowley had an audience to present his credentials to the Emperor, and he took with him on the occasion the whole of his staff. We stood in a row behind the Ambassador, and were much struck by the emphasis with which Napoleon, on receiving the Queen's letter from Lord Cowley's hands, said: "Je suis heureux, milord, que l'Angleterre soit la première Puissance à me reconnaître." We all knew that Antonini, Minister from the Two Sicilies, had succeeded, by sheer importunity, in getting his sovereign to recognise the Empire as soon as proclaimed, and that, alone of all the foreign representatives, he had presented his letters a day or two before. The *première puissance* must have been very galling to him. But then "Bomba" never was a Power, except it be the evil one.

After the formal delivery of his credentials, Lord Cowley had a long private audience, during which much was no doubt said of the desire of the new

sovereign to cultivate the most friendly relations with us. A thoroughly good understanding with England was the cardinal principle upon which Napoleon III. based his foreign policy, and it must be confessed that, while making skilful use of it for his own ends, as in the Crimean War, he was on the whole the staunchest friend we ever had on the French throne. Louis Philippe, too, at the commencement of his reign, had looked to the British Government for his main support against the great Continental monarchies, and more especially Russia, who gave him the cold shoulder as an unprincipled usurper. But, in the case of the Emperor, a sincere liking for England and English ways and ideas imparted a personal value and cordiality to the agreement with us. Nor did he ever play us false like Louis Philippe in Egyptian affairs and in the Spanish marriages. At the same time it may well be asked whether this leaning towards us did not distinctly detract from the popularity of both sovereigns with their subjects, so strong was, and still is, the prejudice harboured by the great majority of Frenchmen against the old hereditary foe.

About Christmas 1852, just as I was getting into the full swing and enjoyment of Paris life, I was suddenly, and, I think, somewhat arbitrarily, transferred to the Legation at Frankfort. I was under the impression at the time that my chief might have contributed to my removal, but as I am not conscious of having done anything to offend him, and

as, moreover, he and Lady Cowley afterwards always showed me great kindness and hospitality, I can only ascribe the change to one of those small jobs, not unfamiliar to the Foreign Office, perpetrated on this occasion to please the friends of those who were appointed to Paris in my stead. For Paris, as Lord Palmerston used to say, "happens to be the only place that agrees with every one's health."

CHAPTER VIII

FRANKFORT, 1852-1854

I LEFT Paris in very cold weather in the Christmas week, greatly out of sorts at my change of post.

“Im traurigen Monat November war's,
Die Tage wurden trüber,
Der Wind riss von den Bäumen das Laub,
Da reist' ich nach Deutschland hinüber,”

sings Heine in the opening lines of a poem which is the quintessence of bitterness and disenchantment, every word of it seeming to be written with gall or corrosive acid¹ in lieu of ink; and, by simply altering the name of the month, the description exactly fits my mood and journey.

Sleeping at Metz, I reached my destination on the afternoon of the second day. It was a curious sensation, after leaving French soil at Forbach, to find myself for the first time in the midst of a language so familiar to me from my childhood, and yet among scenes utterly new and strange. Like Heine again—

“als ich die deut-che Sprache vernahm,
Da ward mir seltsam zu Muthe.”

How distinctly I remember the first impression of the

¹ *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen.*

neat, trim railway stations, with their names written up in German characters; the *Restaurationen* with their foaming tankards and greasy sausage loaves; the students' caps and Berenicean locks; the greetings and kissings of the male Teutons, and the guttural gushings and general joviality of my fellow-travellers on this my first Sunday's journey through the *Vaterländische Gauen!*

I put up at the Hôtel de Russie in the Zeil, kept in those days by Sarg, and one of the most comfortable houses in Germany. Sir Alexander and Lady Malet gave me a kind welcome. His friendliness and easy good-nature tempered, so to speak, an atmosphere which her brilliant wit and inclination to sarcasm made at first rather formidable to commonplace mortals. I had the good fortune to stand well with Lady Malet, but somehow never felt quite at ease in her society. Like her illustrious step-father she could be a hard hitter, and was occasionally too heedless perhaps of the feelings aroused by her downright thrusts. I remember her on one occasion incautiously observing, within hearing of the individual concerned (the Minister from Oldenburg to the Diet, who certainly was what the Yankees term "a mean-looking cuss"): "Ce Monsieur Eisendecker a l'air d'un coquin! L'est-il?" From this sample it may be gathered that Lady Malet was on the whole rather dreaded by the ordinary run of the Frankfort world, which she on her side—brought up as she had been amid the most

interesting political and social surroundings—not unnaturally found dull and scarcely worth cultivating. She, accordingly, went but little into general society, and confined herself to her comfortable home in the Anlagen near the Mainzer Thor, where she received a small number of agreeable people, the most distinguished of whom was certainly the future Iron Chancellor, who, as his correspondence and reminiscences show, was on most cordial terms with the Malets. Some part of Lady Malet's affections was bestowed on a special and somewhat yappy breed of white Pomeranians, the patriarch of whom bore the odd name of Rook—on the principle, apparently, of *lucus a non lucendo*. But I remember her best as the most admirable and devoted of mothers, and to her thoughtful and intelligent care and guidance her younger son—quite a lad when I was at Frankfort—doubtless owes a good deal of his great and well-merited success as one of our foremost diplomatists, and, let me add, most genial of chiefs. Certainly Lady Malet was in every way a remarkable woman, and fitted to shine on a far grander stage than that of the Federal city with its fast-decaying Diet and comparatively second-rate social elements.

The Legation was further composed of the Paid Attaché, Evan Baillie, who later found a charming wife in Lady Frances Bruce; and Edward Dutton, now Lord Sherborne, who continued in the service only a very short time. Our Secretary of Legation

was Dick Edwardes, an exceedingly clever fellow, with excellent qualities, but of a somewhat cantankerous disposition. It was indispensable to "have it out" with Dick, and the sooner one did so the better. I had one grand row with him, which thoroughly cleared the atmosphere, and we afterwards remained the best of friends. Dick's touchiness and occasional tantrums were rather a trial to Sir Alexander, who was the kindest-hearted of men, and a good story is told of their parting. Dick had been named to Madrid and, before leaving, brusquely asked Malet one day what he thought of his temper. "They say it is impossible to get on with me; now what do you think?" Malet good-naturedly assured him that he had ever found him pleasant and tractable, and so forth. "Good!" said Edwardes, "if *you* say so it must be so, for I'll be d—d if ever a man tried me as much as you have done!"

I had reached Frankfort in no way disposed to like it, but the first evening I spent there went some length towards removing my prejudices. Sir Alexander took me after dinner to a reception at the house of Madame de Vrints, who was the great lady of the place and in some ways a noteworthy character. She was the sister of Count Buol-Schauenstein, afterwards Minister for Foreign Affairs in Austria, and had a good share of Austrian *hauteur*, added to a very sharp tongue and considerable mundane knowledge. The Frankfort world of bankers and stock-brokers courted her much and

stood in great awe of her. Of her two daughters, the elder—handsome, listless Thésie—was married to Baron Charles de Bethmann, while the second, Nelly—in those days a singularly pretty *blonde*—was one of the most attractive of Frankfort young ladies. Personally I found the society of the *Bundesstadt* by no means devoid of interest. First came the Diet and the *Corps Diplomatique* accredited to that august body, together with a few families of mediatised and other *noblesse*, and then, with most delicate shading, the various gradations of money-making Frankforters, from Bethmann, Grunelius or Rothschild down to the minor fry of Sterns and Metzlers and Beyfus. Most powerful of all these, and daily adding to their power, were the children of Israel; yet, at the same time, from a social point of view singularly isolated, and, in some respects, nearly as much excluded as if still confined to the narrow precincts of the ancient *Judengasse*. Even the Rothschilds found it difficult at that time to break completely through the charmed circle that fended off Jewry. The male contingent of Frankfort fashion was chiefly recruited from among the officers of the mixed Austrian, Bavarian, and Prussian garrison. I have placed them in the order of their popularity, and considering how unmistakably the Frankforters of all classes—faithful in this to ancient Imperial traditions—showed their leaning towards the white-coats and their antipathy for the *Pikelhauben*, it is scarcely

to be wondered at that they should have been hardly dealt with when their city was finally annexed and its independence extinguished. No doubt the Prussians had many an old score to settle with them.

The author and compasser of all that was to come thirteen years later was at this time installed in a house in the Gallengasse, whither he had been sent to watch and combat, first the Bohemian magnate Count Thun, and next the wily Prokesch, who were successively enthroned in the Federal Palace in the Eschenheimer Gasse.¹ Round these great stars revolved the lesser lights of Bavaria, Saxony, Würtemberg, and all the many Grand Ducal and princely nebulæ, and a very moderate amount of illumination they on the whole afforded. There was something extremely pleasant about the Bismarck of those days. His nights were no doubt tranquil, and unbroken by thoughts that "murder sleep"; and although he has since so frankly unfolded to us, in his published correspondence of that period, the deeply laid designs he already harboured, it may almost be doubted whether he himself then foresaw the gigantic future before him, or indeed quite realised what a great man *in seiner Haut steckte*. I was a good deal at his house, having struck up a great intimacy with Theodor Stolberg² of the

¹ The Presidency of the Diet, as is well known, was vested in the Austrian representative.

² Count Theodor Stolberg-Wernigerode, of the Kreppelhof line.

Prussian *Gardes du Corps*, who was temporarily attached to his Legation. Of course I thus chiefly saw what I may call the domestic side of the future Iron Chancellor, and his cordiality and rough *bonhomie* could not but impress me favourably.

He was very fond of music, and I often played and sang of an evening at his house *dans l'intimité*. I went down the Rhine to Coblenz one day with a party of which Bismarck was one, the occasion being the celebration of the birthday of the Princess of Prussia, afterwards the Empress Augusta. Bismarck was no favourite of that royal and, to my mind, rather tiresome lady. She dabbled in the shallow and turbid waters of a sentimental Liberalism, while he at this period sternly took his stand on the old feudal lines. For my part I admired him much for his dauntless bearing, when a simple *Landrath*, in the worst days of 1848; and could well picture him to myself attending the most violent Berlin Club meetings, where his head was in nightly request, coolly sitting by, listening to torrents of revolutionary abuse, his hand the while viciously playing with the well-loaded pistols in his coat-pocket. A man of jocund, *burschikos* ways, and a capital companion to sit up with half the night over Rhine wine at the *Hotel zum Riesen*¹ after a deadly dull royal party. In fact he was then, after his bluff, imperious fashion, so seductive that I have some difficulty, when looking back, in establishing his

¹ The old inn at Coblenz.

identity with the incarnation of arrogant Prussian junkerdom he afterwards showed himself, riding roughshod over everything, and dominating the century by a *régime* based on sheer brute force. Still less am I able to reconcile with my recollections of my genial, humorous host of those days, the anti-English sentiments he later on revealed, and to the inspiring influence of which we mainly owe the unreasoning hatred of us so strangely evinced by the latter-day Germans. Splendid as were his services to his country and kindred, he has, it seems to me, left behind him an evil heritage in this among other things. Of the Bismarck of that time, however, I should be indeed ungrateful were I to write otherwise than in recollection of much kindness, and in these trifling reminiscences of many people and places I feel it no small honour to be able to set down that I was a welcome visitor at the now historic house in the Gallengasse. I never came across Prince Bismarck after this time, but many years later saw a great deal of his only daughter and her husband, and thus came into touch with him again in some degree—but of this more anon.

There was plenty of gaiety at Frankfort this winter of 1852-53, and the dapper Austrian Jäger band (how well the little beggars could play, to be sure!) saw us through many a rattling cotillon. My old friend Nicolas Stolipine (then Russian Chargé d'Affaires and afterwards for many years

Minister at the Hague) and his clever little wife, a niece of the Chancellor Nesselrode, understood this sort of thing better than most people, and I nowhere remember prettier fêtes than at their house, or at Maurice Bethmann's. Beauty was not wanting to adorn the scene! here were the three handsome Lutteroth sisters—*les trois grâces, dont une maigre*, as they used to be called (one of them being very thin); Mmes. Mumm, Dufay and Metzler; pretty Nelly de Vrints and her sister, and Mme. Maurice Bethmann with her sister, Mlle. de Bose, the latter two with most lovely teeth, bright smiles, and perfect figures. Nor were tragic touches absent from these entertainments. I shall never forget the painful scene that took place at a ball given this season, when one of the most charming and accomplished of the Frankfort ladies was told *à brûle pourpoint* of the sudden death that very morning of a person to whom she was greatly attached. It was a sad and simple tale. Wedded to a harsh, unintellectual husband with whom she could have but little sympathy, she had met, not long before, a man of refined tastes and great position who fully understood and appreciated her. Their friendship—for it was nothing more—had aroused the husband's suspicions, and in his unreasoning anger he had forbidden its continuance. They had resigned themselves to this harsh decision, and, for a time, her friend had left Frankfort and gone far away, when a terrible, wasting disease

seizing upon him, which the doctors had told him must be fatal in a very short time, he had returned to pass in her neighbourhood the last few weeks left to him. They met at rare intervals, and then only in general society, where in some corner—

“Low on the border of a couch they sat
Stammering and staring: it was their last hour
A madness of farewells . . .”

The end had been fearfully sudden, for, early that very morning, the servant going into his room had found him stretched lifeless on the floor. We had all heard of the event almost immediately, the news spreading at once through the town. Yet she herself had been kept in complete ignorance of it (purposely one cannot but think) and allowed to go to this ball, where, in the midst of flowers, dance-music, and mocking mirth, the fatal news had come upon her without a single note of preparation, blurted out in her hearing by some senseless creature. Fortunately, a friendly hand was ready to support her and lead her out of the room, or she must have fainted dead away before us all. If, as was generally believed, the husband deliberately let her attend this party, knowing the cruel shock that was in store for her, it was a truly diabolical piece of revenge for an entirely imaginary wrong.

The cold was unusually severe this winter at Frankfort. The Main was so completely frozen over, that a fair was held on it. I well remember sledging up and down the river, at full speed.

between the railway bridge and the bridge at Sachsenhausen, with Edmond Mildmay, of whom I saw a great deal at this time. Although it proved to be quite safe, I don't think our example as *verrückte Engländer* was much followed. This winter too I, for the first time, tried my hand at private theatricals, an amusement for which I soon acquired a marked taste. In February 1853 we acted for some charity in the great room of the old *Weidenbusch Hotel*, and were of course highly pleased with our performance. One of the plays was that Gymnase piece, the *Piano de Berthe*, in which I took the leading part of "Frantz" to Mme. Stern's "Madame de Beaumont." She was a clever and experienced actress, but the choice of a creation of the great Bressant for my first attempt bespoke singular audacity on my part. Happy age *où l'on ne doute de rien!*

The first lodging I occupied at Frankfort had been engaged for me beforehand by my old tutor Nolte, now married and settled in the Bundesstadt, and was situated in the Kettenweg, off the Bockenheimer Chaussee. In the floor above me lived Edmond Mildmay and his family, my old acquaintance with him soon ripening into intimacy. Mildmay and I had a common bond in music, he himself being a very accomplished musician. His encouragement it partly was that made me first dabble more seriously in composition, and a few songs I wrote at this period became popular in the set in which I lived, and used to be carolled about the

streets by belated *leutnants* on their way home from some festivity. One or two of them are perhaps not quite unworthy to be preserved, and certainly were the truthful expression of much that I felt when writing them.

These were my Heine days. We most of us have known at various times the potent influence of an author or of a literary period. As a boy, I would lie for hours on the ground with a volume of Scott or Chateaubriand; I devoured the works of both—of Scott's novels, "Woodstock" perhaps making the most impression upon me, not so much on account of its intrinsic merit, but from its incidents belonging to a period which, to me, is of pre-eminent, and possibly hereditary, interest. I have somewhere among my papers the fragments of an unfinished historical romance, written in my teens, which treats of Cavaliers and Roundheads in a composite style, derived in equal portions from Scott, the great G. P. R. James, and Dickens, whose "Oliver Twist" had also much impressed me. When mixed up, and well shaken, I can warrant this to produce a very remarkable literary compound. Then came the turn of German. The wondrous tales of Tieck and Hoffmann took strange hold of my imagination, and, for a time, I lived in a world as fantastic as any that

"Youthful poets dream,
On summer eves, by haunted stream."

Fortunately, the "strong meat" of Schiller, Lessing,

Goethe, Herder, with tougher morsels from Jean Paul, provided me with more wholesome diet.

Oddly enough, among the many German poets I had got to know in hobbledy-hoydom—Uhland and Rückert, and Platen, and Anastasius Grün—Heine had had no place, and I could only remember his splendid *Zwei Grenadiere* out of some schoolboy anthology we used to read with Nolte. Thus it happened that I came across the *Buch der Lieder* for the first time at the self-same period when a certain fair maiden was greatly influencing my life and thoughts, and the poet lending voice to all I experienced—or persuaded myself that I experienced—I went through, as it were to the life, the whole of the marvellous love phases he has depicted with such strange interweaving of burning passion and iciest irony, in the cycles entitled *Lyrisches Intermezzo* and *Heimkehr*. I sighed and wept and raved, and dreamt of nightingales and love-sick lotus-flowers, and took absurd midnight strolls round the abode of the adored one, discourteously apostrophising my own shadow “mocking me in the friendly moonlight,” as *Du Doppelyänger, Du bleicher Geselle!* and “standing pillar-like” the while beneath “the window whence I knew she looked down upon me.” I missed her in her accustomed seat at the tea-table, and thought how charmingly she would have put to shame the twaddle of the other guests; in short, I underwent the whole thralldom and misery of a *grande passion*

in most approved Teutonic fashion, all the time vaguely feeling—in this more Heine-like than ever—that *la belle n'en valait guère la peine*, and that the Frankfort world was perhaps not altogether wrong in accounting her capricious and heartless.¹

Mixed up, too, with the subtle magic of these songs were my recollections of that first love-adventure of his youth which Goethe relates, with curiously restrained emotion, in the fifth book of *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. The story of the charming, but matter-of-fact, Gretchen, whom he afterwards glorified into the Marguerite of all time; that sweet, suffering, saint-like sinner, over whose frail body the powers of good and evil engage in such terrific contest, and whose temptation and fall acquire the proportions of a tragedy almost divine in its pathos. In the native city of, in the very streets trod by, the original Gretchen, the object of my worship too easily assumed her semblance in my eyes; and great as was the distance that divided the two worlds to which they respectively belonged, I could trace the likeness between them even in the slight cloud of disparagement that hung about my idol. So far is it from true that we only love those whom we deem perfect. But then there are many kinds of love, and this one was by no means of the highest order.

The tale is really not worth telling. I passed a spring and summer of feverish anxiety, none the

¹ Vide *Buch der Lieder*, passim.

less trying from my woes being mostly creatures of the brain. I was at first accepted, and then dismissed—jilted, to call a spade a spade—and, after a desperate but fruitless journey to England, with the object of obtaining promotion and making up the ill-furnished money-bags, which, alas! were of course the motive for my rejection, I gave up the struggle and sought refuge with my relations at Baden-Baden—my first visit, by the way, to that most delightful of all watering-places.

Of Baden I saw so much afterwards that I need not here speak of it at any length. I found the Delmars occupying, with my sister, apartments in the Maison Hertzner in the Lichtenthaler Allee, where my brother William was likewise staying with them. From him I now first heard of his attachment for a Russian young lady with whom his marriage was all but settled. We made many picnics and excursions in the lovely neighbourhood, partly arranged for one of the most charming of English princesses,¹ with whom I now for the first time had the honour to become acquainted. Baron de Brockhausen (then Prussian Minister at Brussels) used to be one of the party, as well as the beautiful Comtesse Lottum, who—a very Ninon de Lenclos—has, I hear, to this day preserved all her charm and most of her good looks.² My brother was much out

¹ Princess Augusta, then Hereditary Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

² Written in 1873-74.

of health, and undergoing treatment at the hands of the great Gugert—the fashionable Baden doctor of those days—so I stayed on to take care of him till far into October. I was myself considerably hipped by my "disappointment," and, for my sins, Gugert got hold of me too, and began by prescribing a compound only too well known to his many victims under the name of *jus d'herbes*—a very "hell-broth" it was, boiled, I verily believe, "i' the charmed pot" of Macbeth's witches—to be followed by that other abomination, a *Traubencur* (grape cure), after my return to Frankfort. I went conscientiously through the whole of this delectable *régime*, and thus passed a wretched autumn, but towards the winter picked up again, and boldly faced the unpleasant prospect of meeting my once intended in society. The season went off very well on the whole, and with less discomfort than I had anticipated from it; I had warm friends, whose sympathy helped me to recover my normal spirits.

The routine duties of the Chancery, too, occupied some of my time, although the work we had was never oppressive. Frankfort was distinctly what is termed, in the lingo of the profession, a *poste d'observation*. The chronic contest for supremacy in German affairs between Austria and her aspiring rival; that weary question of the Danish Duchies which no man, I believe, ever really got to understand, still less to master, but which bore in its hopeless intricacies the seeds of events that ere long

utterly transformed the face of Germany, and indeed of Europe—these had, of course, to be watched and reported upon; and there was besides a musty old claim or two to look after, such as that of a branch of the English Bentincks to the *immediate seigneurie* of Knyphausen,¹ afterwards absorbed in the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg. There was nothing very exciting about all this. Indeed, these were accounted unusually quiet times, though it proved to be the lull before the storm. We heard, indeed, of the long-drawn squabbles in the East over the Holy Places, but no one dreamt how imminent was the formidable struggle that was to arise out of them.

Early in December, with the hardest of frosts, there came a letter from my brother—who had sold out of the Guards, and had been married at Paris on the 25th of the preceding month—entreating me to meet him and my new sister-in-law at Aix-la-Chapelle, whither they were coming on their wedding-tour from Brussels. I started in glorious weather; the trees in the *Anlagen* sparkling with diamond tracery in the sun, the thermometer at ten degrees below zero (Centigrade), and the air crisp and clear and breathless, as it so frequently is with severe cold. Leaving the railway at Castell, I had to cross the Rhine to Mainz in a small boat, dodging the masses of ice that came floating down the broad, swift current.

¹ Under the old Empire the territories held immediately from the Emperor entitled their owners to certain sovereign rights.

At Mainz I took the public coach and rumbled through the bitter night, reaching Coblenz in the early morning. After breakfast and a thorough warming, I went on by *extra-post* to Bonn, in an open cabriolet; and most exhilarating the drive was through Andernach, Remagen, and Rolandseck; the cold still intense, but the river landscape looking its very best in wintry garb. At Bonn I again found the railway, and got to Aix-la-Chapelle by dinner-time.

It is no easy matter to recall our first impressions of intimate friends. So is it with mine of Nadine Lobanow, whom I now met for the first time, and who since has been mixed up with so many events of my life. To realise those first impressions, I have to summon up all that has ever been written of fairy princesses—slight, graceful, tiny creatures, the quintessence of our grosser humanity—such as “proud Titania,” Libussa of the Bohemian *Sagenkreis*, or the brighter swarm of Eastern Peris. Of this sisterhood seemed she who rose to welcome me from out of the commonplace surroundings of a German hotel sitting-room. My first inward ejaculation was: “Good heavens! what a little woman!” my second, “What a charming, sparkling, mobile face!” By the side of my worthy brother, who is of the breed of good-sized Britishers standing five foot ten in their stockings, this Russian *édition Diamant* of womankind certainly appeared the weest and most compact article that ever came out of the huge,

unwieldy Northern Empire. I had yet to learn what a marvel she was of close packing, and how prodigious was the amount of wit, fancy, artistic talent—indeed genius—that had been stowed away in her small compass by the fairy godmother who must have presided at her birth. To these varied gifts and accomplishments she added a certain directness and impetuosity of disposition not often met with in the brilliant race from which she sprang. She was frank and open to a fault, but the truest and most loyal of friends, and in times of great sorrow and distress I never knew a warmer heart than that of Nadine Lobanow.

My brother had become acquainted with her in Paris, where she was living with her aunt, Madame Narischkine, a Russian *grande dame* of the old school. She was an orphan, and of one of the few great houses directly descended from Rurik the Northman, which in Russia constitute a kind of mediatised *noblesse*. The Lobanows, although they reigned as independent rulers at Rostoff, until absorbed in the greater Duchy of Muscovy, are not among the wealthiest of Russian princes; but my sister-in-law had a snug little fortune of her own, and the young couple started in life on sufficient, though not ample, means. William had succumbed to her attractions at some private theatricals which had taken place the winter before at Paris at the house of a rich Russian widow of the name of Solovoy. On that occasion Nadine acted the part

of a dumb girl in *Yelva*, a play by Scribe now forgotten. In this most difficult *rôle* she moved the audience to tears, simply by gesture and play of countenance, and such was her natural aptitude for dramatic art that when she consulted St. Léon, the well-known ballet-master and husband of Madame Cerrito, as to the proper pantomime of the part, he told her that she had taught herself more than she could possibly learn from him. She would, I am convinced, have easily made a fortune on the stage.

I need not say that I was delighted with my little sister-in-law, and did not find much difficulty in persuading the young *ménage* to accompany me as far as Frankfort on their way back to Paris, which was to be their future home. We spent a quiet day or two at Aix-la-Chapelle, but the journey that followed was to us memorable for its length and wearisomeness. I had worked it out carefully by the primitive *Hendschel*, or German Bradshaw, of those days, and was proud to have discovered that we could reach our destination by a circuitous but unbroken line of rail (no easy problem at that time), *viâ* Düsseldorf, Dortmund, Paderborn, and Cassel. We changed carriages a dozen times in the bitter cold, were kept waiting for hours at impossible junctions, lost the servants, and finally reached Cassel very late at night.

The remainder of my Frankfort life this winter

and spring was barren of incident. There was some change, of course, in the new faces I daily met, but none in the easy routine of my duties and occupations—social and professional. The departure of the Stolipines, who were transferred to Carlsruhe, was, however, the object of exceptional demonstrations of regret. We subscribed for a great farewell dinner to them, followed by a dance at the “Russie,” and, at Madame Stern’s, a play, *Livre 3 Chapitre 1^{er}*, was acted in their honour, between two screens, by the hostess, Comte André Bloudoff—of whom I was to see more hereafter—and myself. Bloudoff had a happy turn for versification, and a *couplet de circonstance* written by him—which it fell to my lot to sing at the end of the play—seems to me exceptionally neat:—

“ Dans quelques jours, qu’avec effroi je compte,
 A nos amis nous ferons nos adieux ;
 Par la vapeur, impitoyable et prompte,
 Nous les verrons entraînés sous nos yeux !
 Le cri fatal de la locomotive
 Va nous remplir le cœur d’amers regrets !
 N’éveillez pas dans notre âme craintive
 Ces pensées là par le son des sifflets ! ”

Meanwhile the heavy cloud which had long brooded over the East had spread westwards and darkened the whole political horizon. When we parted from the Stolipines war had just been declared against Russia, and it was sad to reflect that such kind friends should of a sudden have been turned

into enemies. Not that I "fashed" my head then about such things, or cared much whether—

"Hinten, weit, in der Türkei,
Die Völker auf einander schlagen."

Still, grave events like these could not but make some impression on me, and now, perhaps for the first time, I began to note the course of public affairs more carefully, and to take a deeper interest in the trade to which I was apprenticed.

In June I went to London for a few weeks, and there saw a great deal of Mrs. George St. John Mildmay and her daughter Geraldine, now Mrs. Alfred Buckley. The Sunday "high teas" at their house were very pleasant, and so far left their mark on me as to produce a setting of Heine's delicious little lyric, *Mit deinen blauen Augen*, which is perhaps the least worthless of my compositions. I remember that on my return I travelled as far as Paris with Geraldine's charming sister, Mrs. George Barrington, and Miss Mary Barrington, now Mrs. Alfred Sartoris. They certainly were delightful company, but why should I remember such a casual circumstance when far more important incidents have passed from my mind without leaving a trace? Truly the pranks of memory are unaccountable!

In the height of summer I joined my relations at Baden. They now made up a large family gathering, for, in addition to the Delmars, my brother William and his wife were of the party.

Now, too, I became acquainted with some cousins, whose habitual home at that time was Brussels, and whom I had never met before. These were the mother¹ and sister of Cuddie Ellison of the Grenadier Guards. I was introduced to them one sunny morning in July, on that gayest of spots, the Promenade in front of the *Conversation*, and it seemed to me that from all the light and life and colour around, no prettier picture could have been singled out than the fresh English girl of seventeen, with just a touch of foreign grace, rich, clear brown complexion, teeth of pearl, laughing, dark eyes, and dark hair set off by the broad, cherry-coloured bow that fastened her bonnet, and a faultless figure clad in simple summer dress, whom they bade me salute as cousin Dot. From that day till her untimely end I kept up with her an intimacy based on very sincere affection. Dear, generous, impulsive "nut-brown maid"! I like to think of her as I knew her that first season at Baden and the next ensuing ones. There was likewise this year another face in our small circle which, for a few short weeks, appeared to me strangely attractive:—

"The sweetest flower wild nature yields,
A fresh blown musk rose!"

I speak of Miss "Lou" Heneage, afterwards Lady Essex, who, with her mother and sister, was spending the summer here. With the Heneages

¹ The Hon. Mary Montagu, sister of Henry, 6th Lord Rokeby.

and Ellisons we led an Arcadian sort of life, in great contrast with the feverish, dissipated Baden existence of later days. Much of our time was devoted to long country rambles, I myself being the most indefatigable of donkey boys, and trudging for miles beside the sober animals that bore my fair friends through wood and meadow, and over hill and dale of this loveliest corner of the Black Forest.

At the end of September 1854 I most unexpectedly received a letter from Spencer Ponsonby to say that Lord Clarendon had appointed me Paid Attaché at Stuttgart. Nothing could be more agreeable to me in every way. I had now been just five years in the service, and was fortunate therefore in obtaining promotion, nor was such an addition to my income as a salary of £250 to be despised. I had got to like Germany, and was prepared to make the best of life in a German *Residenzstadt*. It so happened, too, that I had just been reading Hackländer's charming and transparent description of society in the Suabian capital in his *Namenlose Geschichten*, and was curious to test its truthfulness. After a hurried journey to Frankfort to pack up the goods and chattels I had left in the apartment I had more recently occupied in the *Theaterplatz*, I proceeded to my new post early in October, in the best of spirits; nor was I disappointed in the expectations I had formed of it.

CHAPTER IX

STUTTGART, 1854-1856

MY new chief, George Stafford Jerningham, with whom I had only been slightly acquainted when he was Secretary of Embassy at Paris, received me very cordially. I soon discovered that he was the shyest and oddest, and at the same time, on occasion, the most amusing of men. The social duties of diplomacy were simply torture to him, and one could not but wonder *ce qu'il était allé faire dans cette galère*. He had a morbid dread of all society—especially that of ladies—hardly ever received a visitor, and carried his fear of the “human face divine” so far as seldom to venture out of doors before dark, when he would perambulate the streets till a late hour, frequently not coming home to dinner before nine or ten. Tall, gaunt, dark, and grim-visaged; very stiff and ceremonious, but withal *au fond*, extremely amiable and good-natured. Nothing could be more distressingly solemn than a *tête-à-tête* dinner with him up to the second course, when he would begin to thaw and take heart, ply one with wine, tell anecdote after anecdote, and let off a series of the most excruciating puns till well on into the night. Still,

there was something *unheimlich* about him to my mind, and not the least startling, and indeed gruesome, of his peculiarities was a way he had of getting up, in the midst of a conversation, and walking off to the window or the farther end of the room, where, with his back turned, he would draw a rapid succession of corks, like "Grip" the raven in "Barnaby Rudge." I never could fathom the cause of these mysterious sounds, but imagine they may have had something to do with his dental arrangements. Jerningham was very well read, and had a remarkably retentive memory, and his reminiscences of political gossip in the days of Castlereagh and Canning would have been as entertaining as they were instructive, but for the lugubrious tone and aspect of the narrator. Withal, as I have already said, the most polished and considerate of chiefs.

William Eden (now Lord Auckland) was my predecessor at the Legation, and in his former lodging, in a small house close to the railway bridge that spans the Kronenstrasse, I soon made myself snug and comfortable. I sometimes think that these were the happiest days of my unmarried life. My income was now amply sufficient for my moderate requirements, and although existence in a second-rate German capital affords little diversity and still less excitement, it offers enough pleasant society and intellectual resource to satisfy any reasonable being. These German *Residenzen* have

for centuries been centres of national life and culture, and, as such, have in no small degree contributed to the stupendous mental development attained by the German people. Science and art and literature flourished at Munich and Dresden and Stuttgart when huge *parvenu* Berlin was, as yet, obscure, and had barely emerged from the condition of a second-class town on the banks of the sluggish Spree. Under the fostering care of their respective Courts it was that the minor capitals diffused light and learning around them in ever-widening circles, and if the efficacy of Court influence be doubted, I would quote Frankfort, which gave birth to one intellectual giant, but is otherwise, with all its riches and civilisation and historic past, the most materialistic of German cities, Hamburg perhaps excepted. It appears to me very questionable whether the ardently wished-for unity which Germany has now attained shall not have been too dearly bought if, as is much to be feared, it entails the complete extinction of the privileged life of these towns as capitals, and their reduction to provincial centres of trade and industry. Who that has wandered over Italy has not looked with sadness on Ferrara or Mantua, and felt a pang that now too Florence and Naples are dethroned? Such, however, is the inexorable law of nineteenth-century progress, and we may cavil at it, but can hardly wish to see it checked.¹

¹ Written in the winter of 1872-73.

At Stuttgart everything revolved round the Court, or rather round one or other of the two Courts, for we had both a *grande Cour* and a *petite Cour*. Old King William, who had fought so well at Brienne and La Fère Champenoise, was still hale and vigorous, and, although despotic at heart, exceedingly popular with his subjects, who liked him for his simple *bourgeois* ways, his antipathy to uniform and etiquette, and above all, for his Teutonic love of country. Short of stature he was, of a choleric, military aspect, with quick, shrewd eyes, high colour, and short, bristly moustache—*une figure de chat fâché*, as it was not inaptly described. It was a face not to be forgotten, and told of a will not to be trifled with. He was on indifferent terms with his son, the Crown Prince Charles, and still more so with the wife of the latter, the Russian Grand Duchess Olga. This childless, ill-assorted couple were the centre of the lesser or opposition Court, and led a life of comparative retirement, surrounded only by the patient few who were content to bide the reward of faithful service in a reign which, in the course of nature, could not be far distant.

The child “of him with whom we strove for power”—as the Laureate has it—Olga Nicolaïevna, bore the unmistakable stamp of her Imperial origin. She was the image of her redoubtable father; in stature a daughter of Anak, yet with clearly-cut features purely Hellenic. Hers was the most coldly

beautiful face it was possible to gaze upon, but, charming and fascinating as she knew how to be, a dangerous glitter in the steel-blue eye, and now and then a contraction of the faultless brow, betrayed the imperious blood that flowed in her veins. She extorted admiration, but was too unapproachable to command sympathy. Doubtless her lot in life was an unsatisfactory if not a very unhappy one. It was said that, when yet quite a child in her father's house, she had come to know, and form a girl's attachment for, a young officer of the Guards whom, in his displeasure, the Czar had ordered off to the army of the Caucasus, there to be placed in the first fighting line and singled out for perilous service. Bearing, as it were, a charmed life, he rose step by step so rapidly that, when still young, he received a Field-Marshal's baton from the son of him who had so relentlessly planned his destruction. Long ere he attained this eminence, however, a suitable royal match was found for the poor girl whose heart, we may believe, had faithfully followed the brilliant career she had inspired, and she was borne away to a foreign country and an uncongenial home. There are more of these *dramas intimes* in high places than the world knows of, and we in England may honestly rejoice at the happier and more human fate that has attended our princely wooings. At no time, probably, was life more bitter to the proud, lonely daughter of Nicholas than during the period I now speak of.

Her father, who, with all his despotic tendencies, was tenderly loved by his children, engaged in a struggle which daily went more and more against him (this was the autumn that witnessed Alma and saw the iron circle drawn round Sebastopol); the feelings of her husband's people openly hostile to Russia; her father-in-law sternly cold and distant; and, in her own home, no mother's joys or cares to gladden and absorb her. At this crisis she found comfort where she had least been accustomed to look for it. The dull-witted Crown Prince openly espoused the Russian cause—indeed, talked of going to head the Russian regiment of which he was honorary colonel—and thus, at any rate, by her own fireside she was safe from vexation and soothed by sympathy. If the Crimean War did no other good, at least it for a time brought harmony to this royal household.

Such was the Court to which I was now introduced on a genial autumn afternoon on the occasion of the so-called *Volkfest*, a great agricultural show which each year marks the anniversary of the Constitutional Charter of September 25, 1819. It is held in some meadows bordering on the Neckar near Cannstadt, the king and all the royal family attending in a stand, whence they view the prize pigs and oxen, and witness the rough racing on plough horses and other bucolic diversions of the Suabian lieges. It is a pretty *coup d'œil*, and the procession of Court carriages drawn by horses of the purest Arab breed, of which

the old king was a passionate fancier, used to be quite as well worth seeing in its way as our own royal show on a Cup-day at Ascot.

I had been but a short time at Stuttgart when, dining one day as usual at the *table d'hôte* of the old Hotel Marquardt in the Königstrasse, I made the acquaintance of a middle-aged gentleman, who turned out to be the elder brother of Hebe of my Nice recollections. Slinger had served for some years in the Russian navy, and at St. Petersburg had married a clever and agreeable lady of the name of Wolkhoff, who was the niece of Count Mathieu Wielhorski, well known in former days as a distinguished patron of musical art in Russia. Mrs. Slinger was herself an accomplished musician, and was gifted with a fine contralto voice. This pleasant—though, by the way, extremely uncomely—couple took a special liking to me, and showed me great kindness; and to them I am above all indebted for the intimacy which, at the height of the Russian war, I oddly enough achieved with some of the Russian colony, by far the most agreeable element in Stuttgart society. I should explain that, in order to do honour to the Crown Princess, the Russian Legation was unusually large and *bien composée*. Some of the most eminent Russian diplomatists won their spurs at the Court of Würtemberg, the celebrated Prince Gortchakow, and since then the able and genial Ambassador in London, M. de Staal, among others, first making their mark at Stuttgart. One

evening it was, in the Slinger rooms at Marquardt's whither I habitually adjourned after dinner, that I first met the two Princesses Scherbatoff—Sophie, by birth a Comtesse Panine, the wife of Grégoire Scherbatoff; and her sister-in-law, Marie, *née* Stolipine, a cousin of my old Frankfort friend, who was married to Vladimir Scherbatoff, a Secretary of the Russian Legation.

It seems to me difficult to over-estimate the value of the society of truly nice and refined women to a young man of the age I had now attained, especially when deprived, as I was, of the blessings of home influence. My intercourse with these ladies has left me none but the most grateful, indeed precious, recollections. They had all the inborn grace and charm of manner that so distinguish their countrywomen, together with a sincerity and purity of thought well worthy of ours. I happen to have kept a rough diary of this period of my life; and when looking through it the other day to refresh my memory, found these impressions recorded there in terms which, even at this distance of time, strike me by their perfect truthfulness. The bitter war waged between our respective countries, the angry feelings of the Crown Princess, and the strict *mot d'ordre* given to her *entourage* to avoid as much as possible all contact with the hated Anglo-French, doubtless lent the additional *attrait du fruit défendu* to the intimacy which grew up between my charming friends and myself. I was sincerely devoted to them, and confess that I have

seldom met a more lovable disposition than that of Princesse Marie Scherbatoff. Now that "years have passed o'er our heads," I may own to a very strong regard for her. Her path through life was, I fear, none of the smoothest, but she trod it firmly and unflinchingly, looking neither to the right nor to the left, but straight before her to where duty pointed. A charming woman, with lovely dark-blue eyes and chestnut hair, the lithest and most graceful of figures, a low voice, and a slight impediment in her speech which to me seemed an additional grace, giving her something childlike, and making the blood mantle her cheek in her embarrassment.

The winter came on—that long, dreary, historic winter of 1854-55. It was bitterly cold at Stuttgart, and, as I returned home late at night from balls and parties, my thoughts often turned to the poor fellows who lay out in the deadly trenches on those bleak Crimean downs. With this truly Russian weather came Russian amusements. Under the guidance of Slinger I put on skates for the first time, and soon began to move about freely enough on the frozen ponds of the Palace gardens. Great sledging parties too were got up, and on one occasion we drove out—a long string of sleighs of fantastic shapes, with jingling bells and harness—to the Curhaus at Cannstadt, where we danced till late into the night, returning home by torchlight. I was the only Englishman—or rather the only non-German or

Russian—of the party, and, on the morrow, when I went to the Legation as usual, my chief received me with enhanced solemnity, and gravely placed in my hands the drafts of some telegrams which he had thought it, he said, his duty to send the previous day to Lord Clarendon. They ran something like this: “ 11 A.M., Mr R. has just started for Cannstadt with a dozen sledges full of the Queen’s enemies;” and related hour by hour my supposed delinquencies during this treasonable junketing. He maintained such imperturbable gravity all the while, that it was difficult at first to see through his mild pleasantry.

I would not have it supposed, however, that the attractions that bound me to the Russian set made me feel less strongly on the subject of Russian ambition and Russian policy. One of the few things from my pen ever printed was a pamphlet on “Russian sympathies in Germany,” which was written at this very time, and published by Ridgway. It was a very crude, and somewhat intemperate, production, but it nevertheless showed a tolerably accurate appreciation of German public feeling at that period, as well as of the national aspirations which have since been so triumphantly fulfilled. I venture to think, for instance, that some political foresight is to be found in the following passages: “Any scheme for obtaining dominion in Germany must, to succeed, have for its auxiliary, if not for its basis, the National German feeling, that dream of German unity which, for all its disastrous failure

in 1848, is yet alive and rampant in every German brain." "To lead Germany, and ultimately to obtain absolute dominion over her, her affections must first of all be gained. A certain amount of jugglery must be employed. Germany must be led to believe that she is the absorber, not the absorbed; that the single master for whom she has exchanged her two-score potentates is her conquest, not her conqueror." Nor is the following reading of the dread of the minor German Governments of being dragged into the war without some truth in its way: "The German Governments hate war out of fear of the peace that must follow upon it. Set all the earthen pots of Germany dancing to the tune of war, and see how many will be found whole when peace has to be made! The royal potters know this well, and hence their enthusiastic adoption of the *mot d'ordre* furnished them by Russia, namely 'peace and neutrality,' which seems that most likely to put off the dreaded *dénoûment*." The Crimean War, which is now very generally admitted to have been a grave mistake, at least had the good effect of breaking the Russian spell by which the German people had remained entranced since the days of the Holy Alliance.

Indeed I may honestly affirm that my national feelings were at fever-heat all through the war. Patriotism with me is a plant of vigorous growth which no change of soil or climate has in any degree affected. In my experience banishment fosters love

of country, and I am inclined to attribute much of my old-fashioned faith in the greatness and high destinies of England to my long residence abroad. Rudely as that faith has been shaken by the tendencies of modern English policy, it yet survives, and is one of the things to which I cling in spite of all discouragement.¹

To return to my narrative. Gratitude compels me to observe that, although mainly taken up with the society of my fair "enemies" (I saw them, by the way, very much *en cachette*), I was not without other and valued acquaintances. The house of an American lady of the name of Livingstone, who had oddly enough settled at Stuttgart, was a great resource to me. Her son, a strapping youth who rejoiced in the infantile appellation of "Loulou," was a cornet in the royal *Leibgarde*. Kind-hearted Mrs. Livingstone—peace be to her ashes!—had a considerable knowledge of the world, and a truly republican passion for rank and royalty. Her tastes in this respect were fully gratified, for she was in high favour at Court, and one of the intimates of the king's eldest and very clever daughter, Princess Marie; while her house was a favourite resort of the most agreeable and highly placed people in the *Residenz*. Amiable Prince Hermann of Saxe-Weimar, one of the king's sons-in-law and brother of our Prince Edward; Charles and Jules von Hügel, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the

¹ Written in 1873-76.

latter the pleasantest of Royal Equerries; pretty Madame de Sturmfeder and witty Eveline de Massenbach of the Court of the Crown Princess; the Berlichingens, lineal descendants of Götz of the iron hand; the Wimpffens and Ellrichshausens and other Suabian *junkers* of high degree, were all *habitués* of hers. She generally had some good-looking American niece or cousin staying with her, who made the house doubly attractive, and put some animation into the otherwise sleepy, sluggish *jeunesse dorée* of the place. Two of these young ladies, Miss Fox and Miss Mildred Willing, were very handsome, and the latter, I fear, decidedly "fast." For a short time, too, Mrs. Livingstone's pretty daughter, Stéphanie, married to Baron Finot, lived with her. Altogether the *salon* Livingstone was a great institution. Our small *Corps Diplomatique* did not offer much resource, with the exception of the d'Astorgs of the French Legation and an Austrian Secretary of the name of Lago, whom I saw a good deal of, and who was afterwards mixed up, when Minister in Mexico, in the terrible tragedy of Queretaro, in which he did not play a very brilliant part.

There was not much gaiety at Stuttgart this winter, the war in the East throwing a certain gloom over everything, and dividing society into sharply defined sets that sided with or against Russia in the great contest that was being fought out. Almost the only festivities were certain sub-

scription balls that took place at the old Hotel Marquardt in the Königstrasse, and admission to which was strictly confined to the Court society. The royal family made it a point to attend these entertainments, given in a very ordinary suite of rooms, not at all in keeping with the quality of the guests. At the first of these balls I had a sharp passage of arms with the Crown Princess. Count Zeppelin, the Marshal of her Court, coming up to me, and inquiring whether I had already been presented to Her Imperial and Royal Highness, I had to own that I had not as yet had that honour, no opportunity having thus far offered. The Crown Princess, as I have before observed, sedulously tabooed both the French and English Legations. When I was led up to the corner where she was holding her Court, and had made my best bow, she at once curtly addressed me in French : “ Il y a-t-il longtemps que vous êtes ici ? ” I replied that I had arrived a few months before (of which she was, of course, well aware). “ Est-ce votre premier poste ? ” to which I replied in the negative. Then, putting on her most disdainful manner, this illustrious and beautiful, but ungracious, lady was pleased to ask whether a brother of mine was not married to a Russian. “ Yes ! I had a brother whose wife was a Princesse Lobanow.” “ Ah ! ” was the almost snappish rejoinder ; “ comment s’appelle-t-il de son petit nom ? ” (what is his Christian name ?) “ His name, Madame.” I replied, “ is William.” “ Ah !

c'est un nom de domestique!" "Oui, Madame," I rejoined, with another profound bow, "c'est possible; mais c'est également un nom de Roi." The Crown Princess bit her lip and at once dismissed me with a haughty bend of the head. It was a very unprovoked and, it seems to me, unwarrantable attack, but, fortunately for me, found me better prepared than I am on ordinary occasions. I am bound to add that, in our after intercourse, the Grand Duchess made ample amends to me for this extraordinary outburst.

Besides the Marquardt balls, there were a couple of *fêtes* at Court which were fine enough in their way, but not to be compared for smartness and finish to the model entertainments I had seen at the smaller Court of Wiesbaden, to which our Legation at Frankfort was accredited. From these *fêtes* we used to adjourn to Karl Ellrichshausen's rooms in the ghostly *Académie* (the old *Carlsschule*), traversing long, echoing passages haunted by the "black lady of the house of Würtemberg," which may well have given some of their sombre colouring to the weird drama of the *Räuber* which Schiller wrote in this very building. I may mention here *en passant* that nowhere is the tradition, attaching to many royal houses in Germany, of a familiar ghost whose appearance portends evil, more fully received than at this Court. In fact, I was assured by a credible official belonging to it that regular entries are made of these apparitions in a book

kept by the *Obersthofmarschall*. A story is related of Prince Napoléon Jérôme having been disturbed by the "black lady" one night in his quarters in the military school at Ludwigsburg, where he was educated, and of his having fired at his uncanny visitor a pistol shot, the trace of which is still visible in the wall. That same night, it is added, his mother, Catherine of Würtemberg (old King William's sister) died—in the old Schloss at Stuttgart, if I am not mistaken. For an *esprit fort* like Plon-Plon this was a singular adventure, and must have been more trying to him even than his posterior military experiences.

While speaking of these superstitions, I may put down here a very curious circumstance relating to Karl Ellrichshausen, whom I have mentioned above, arising out of those strange and mysterious forces known to us as mesmerism. One of my predecessors at Stuttgart, Lionel West, now Lord Sackville, had great mesmeric powers, which he had been led to exert on a few persons he was intimate with at the time, and among others the Crown Prince and Karl Ellrichshausen, who was a favourite of the Prince and one of his household. West, though treating the whole thing as a jest, had thus acquired a remarkable, and indeed embarrassing, influence over these two men. He had left Stuttgart for good several years before, and was serving at Berlin as First Secretary when the old King of Würtemberg died and the Crown Prince suc-

ceeded to the throne. Ellrichshausen, who at the best of times was a heavy, dull-witted creature, had been watching patiently for this event, fully counting on his devotion to his royal master now procuring for him the object of his ambition, the appointment, namely, of Marshal of the new Court. Another selection, however, was made for the post, and the disappointment, acting on a weak brain, and a probably hereditary tendency to insanity, proved too much for the poor fellow, who soon showed signs of marked mental disturbance. Very early one morning, before he was out of bed, West was surprised by his servant bringing him the card of a gentleman who had just arrived, and insisted on seeing him on urgent business. He hurriedly put on a few clothes, and went to welcome his old friend. Scarcely, however, had he entered the room—I have the story from himself—than he realised that he was face to face with a raving lunatic. Ellrichshausen at once poured forth upon him a torrent of reproaches, directly charging him with having used his influence with the Crown Prince (West had remained in correspondence with the Prince) to his, Ellrichshausen's, detriment, and being in fact the cause of the cruel injustice done to him. As he went on, the unhappy man showed increasing excitement, and at last, whipping a revolver out of his pocket, declared that he had come the whole way from Stuttgart solely to revenge himself on the author of all his misfortunes. In this alarming predicament West felt that his only

chance was to try and use some of the magnetic power he had formerly had over Ellrichshausen, and in this he most fortunately succeeded. Bringing his will to bear on the poor madman, he made him lay down his weapon, gradually soothed and pacified him, and sent him back to the railway station on his return to Stuttgart. Shortly afterwards Ellrichshausen had to be shut up in an asylum, where he soon died. To West, however, this semi-tragical incident served as a serious warning never again to trifle with the dangerous forces with which he was endowed.

To return from this digression, the most faithful of my friends has yet to be mentioned, in the shape of a bull-terrier—the flower of his species—who had been sent to me from Paris in the autumn of 1854, and for six years was my inseparable companion in my many journeyings. Of Ben I can only say that he ranged as much above the common level of dogkind in pluck, sagacity, and devotion as a Shakespeare or a Bayard above men. He was of Staffordshire breed, speckless white, all but two lovely black patches over the eyes, so evenly traced as to seem painted. He had the chest of a bull, the sinews of a tiger, the heart of a lion, the gentleness of a lamb, and the most exquisitely tapering tail, by which I have pulled him times innumerable from off the wretched tabbies which he had seemingly vowed to exterminate. Very remarkable were his originality and indepen-

dence of character, and many the incidents to which they gave rise, the most distressing of which I will herewith relate. Ben and I used every day to take a short cut across the Palace gardens from our lodgings to the Legation in the Neckarstrasse. I knew that there existed some prohibition against dogs in general entering those sacred grounds, but had somehow conceived the notion that exception was made in favour of dogs diplomatic. One fine spring morning I was sauntering along, Master Ben gambolling on in front of me, when suddenly, at a turn of the winding path, he made a frantic rush ahead as though he had sighted one of his feline foes. The trees and bushes concealed him from me, so I hurried after him, calling to him and whistling, with a sudden presentiment of evil, which was increased by the sounds of canine distress that greeted my ears. When I reached the spot I found Ben—I grieve to relate it—unhandsomely worrying a plethoric Blenheim spaniel. I at once seized him by the handle which nature had, so to speak, provided for such occasions, but, the confounded animal holding on with his usual tenacity, I lifted both him and his victim clear off the ground. Barely had I done so, when there came up a short, stoutish, old gentleman with a red face and bristly moustache, before whom I respectfully drew aside, raising my hat with one hand, while, with the other, I held up, as it were, a *bunch* of dogs. His Würtemberg Majesty in

person! and, what was infinitely worse, the pet dog of the lady who ruled the royal affections.¹ The wretched Blenheim was far more frightened than hurt, but an hour later an official communication was sent to me at the Legation, requesting me to refrain in future from bringing dogs into the royal pleasure grounds. For this act of high treason I sent Ben over to Baden-Baden the next day in disgrace, in charge of Slinger, who was devoted to him, and not long after I joined them at that delightful place.

I have endeavoured to put down these reminiscences, as much as possible, in chronological order, so will mention here the very touching death of my cousin, Yolande de Polignac, which occurred about this time (March 16, 1855). She had married some years before (in 1848) Sosthènes de la Rochefoucauld, second son of the Duc de Doudeauville. It was that somewhat rare article in France, a true love-match, and everything combined to make their future a happy one. Yolande was as lovely as her grandmother, the charming but injudicious friend of Marie Antoinette, and curiously like the portraits of the Duchesse de Polignac. As for Sosthènes, he was the beau-ideal of a young French *grand seigneur*, besides being one of the richest landowners in France. Their married life more

¹ The actress, Amalia Stubenrauch, a very sensible woman, whose influence over King William was as salutary as that of Lola Montes over his royal neighbour of Bavaria had been pernicious.

than kept all its glowing promise, but, alas! such halcyon days as theirs are seldom permitted to last long. In the early spring of 1855 Sosthènes fell dangerously ill with typhoid fever, through which his young wife nursed him day and night unremittingly, grappling, as it were, with the enemy and finally driving him from his prey. Scarcely was her husband on a fair way towards recovery when the youngest of her three children sickened with that direst of infantile scourges, diphtheria. The mother, greatly worn and weakened by all her watching and anxiety, flew to her new charge, but in vain. The child died, and when they tried to keep her away from it she eluded all their vigilance, and, in a last fatal embrace, herself took the disease, dying a few days later—conscious, however, till the end, and so serene and saint-like in her last moments, that her brothers to this day speak of her death-bed as the noblest and most hallowing experience of their lives. For many years Sosthènes de la Rochefoucauld remained constant to the memory of the lovely Yolande, and only much later married again, his second wife—a very charming woman—being a *Princesse de Ligne*.

The only surviving child of his first marriage, named Yolande after her mother, has in her turn gone through the most mournful experiences. Her husband, the young Duc de Luynes, was one of that devoted band of gentlemen who, in the darkest days of the Franco-German War, upheld the best

traditions of the old French *noblesse*. Serving with Charette's Zouaves in the army of Aurelle de Paladines, he was killed at the battle of Patay on the 2nd of December 1870. Rumours of his death having reached his wife in the country, she at once started for the neighbourhood of the battle-field, under the escort of the Marquis de Juigné. At Tours she met a colonel of Mobiles, M. de la Toyne, who confirmed the report and made over to her de Luynes' military cloak and pistols. She then went to her mother-in-law, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, at the Château de Sablé, and by her was assured that her husband's remains had been found and conveyed to Dampierre for interment. The real facts, however, were as follows: At Patay the body had remained unrecognised among the mass of the killed, and was about to be buried in the common trench when one of de Luynes' tenants, on his estate of Marchenoir, close to the scene of the engagement, identified him by a ring he wore, and carried him to his own dwelling, burying him provisionally in his garden. A Jesuit father, whom the Duchesse de Chevreuse had sent out in search of her son, heard of this, and had the remains disinterred and taken to M. de Gouvion St. Cyr's house near Chartres, where the celebrated General de Charette was in hiding at the time. After being deposited in the chapel there, they were brought first to Esclimont (a la Rochefoucauld-Doudeauville place) and subsequently to the Luynes'

ancestral castle of Dampierre, where, after lying in state for a whole day—the body being in a perfect state of preservation owing to the intense cold—they were finally laid to rest in the family vault. Few women of the young Duchesse de Luynes' rank in life have passed through a more cruel ordeal under circumstances so romantic as to remind one of some mediæval tale of war rather than of the prosaic incidents of a nineteenth-century campaign.

But to go back to Stuttgart. With the fine weather my opportunities of meeting my Russian friends on neutral ground increased, for no one could fairly criticise my casually coming across them in their walks, or overtaking them in their drives towards Cannstadt, or the Solitude, or the many other pretty spots that abound near Stuttgart. Unfortunately our intimacy was all too soon to be brought to a close. Early in May Princesse Sophie rejoined her husband at St. Petersburg, and two months later Vladimir Scherbatoff threw up his diplomatic appointment, and, with his charming wife, started on his return to Russia, where the couple have since resided almost entirely on their estates in the Government of Saratoff. It was long before I recovered the departure of my delightful friends. Marie Scherbatoff was one of the good influences of my life at a time when I had little else to guide or steady me, and I rejoice to think that her lot since then has been a happy one, and that she is

blessed with a daughter who has proved a source of concord and affection in her distant northern home. And herewith I close a brief chapter of my chequered existence which, when I lived through it, was brimful to me of the best emotions known to the human heart.

How often—when, climbing the hill of life, and pausing awhile to recover breath and look back at its verdant slopes—the “pastures green” we so recently trod seem turned by some dire magic into desolate moorland, or perhaps a wild *moraine*, and where we left freshness and the song of birds, the prospect is blotted out by murky vapours through which our ear can just discern the voices of the mountain speaking in rushing wind and water. Alas! the sad and disenchanting change is in ourselves, not in that which we leave behind us—

“And yet this time remov’d was summer’s time!”

Onward we go, passing still further from light and warmth and the stir of life; above us seem to beckon the solemn snow-clad peaks, and higher yet, thank God! there is sunshine in the clear and infinite sky.

CHAPTER X

BADEN AND CARLSRUHE, 1854-1856

IN July I went to Baden, where my relations had as usual taken up their summer quarters. Not the least of the advantages of the Legation to which I now belonged was its being accredited to the Court of Baden as well as to that of Würtemberg. Thus, when the Minister went away on leave, as Jerningham now did for a full year, the Secretary of Legation (Frederick Hamilton, who habitually resided at Baden) assumed charge of the Mission at Stuttgart; the Paid Attaché, in my person, taking his place in the Grand Duchy.

During this summer season it was that I first became acquainted with Madame Kalergis, a person so remarkable in many ways, and who, in the society of her generation, played so conspicuous a part, as almost to belong to contemporary history. In any "Dream of fair women" of her time she might well have been accounted the fairest, so tall was she and well favoured, and of a complexion so dazzling. Hers was the perfection of northern beauty. Such we can picture to ourselves Edith Schwanenhals, Thusnelde, or that "pearl of beauty" Guinevere:—

"A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair."

Of her it was that Gautier sang in sensuous rhyme :—

“ Ces débauches de chair nacrée,
Ces miracles de blancheur ! ” ¹

and Heine wrote, with his wonted *persiflage* :—

“ Die Dichter jagen vergebens nach Bildern
Um ihre weisse Haut zu schildern ;
Selbst Gautier ist dessen nicht capabel,
O diese Weisse ist *implacable* !

Des Himalaya Gipfelschnee
Erscheint aschgrau in ihrer Näh' ;
Die Lilie, die ihre Hand erfasst,
Vergilbt durch Eifersucht oder Contrast.” ²

By birth a Nesselrode—niece of the Russian Chancellor—she had been brought up chiefly in Poland, and had imbibed from her Polish mother thoroughly Polish ideas. When barely seventeen, a marriage had been arranged by her family at St. Petersburg between her and Kalergis—a Greek who had nothing but wealth to recommend him. So ill-suited were they that, after a few brief months, and before even the birth of their only child,³ they parted, never to meet again. Thus early was she left to herself in a world where fortune, beauty resplendent as hers, the keenest wit, and the most luxuriant imagination were so many sources of well-nigh irresistible temptation. Whether this wonderfully brilliant creature was as

¹ Théophile Gautier : *Emaur et Camées*.

² Heine, Romanzero *Der weisse Elephant*.

³ A daughter, now married to Count Coudenhove.

cold and passionless as the marble from which she seemed hewn, or whether she was guarded by that sense of dignity and purity which is innate in the best of womankind, it is my firm belief that she passed unscathed through the many eccentricities of a singular existence. There was probably less of sentiment about her than of fancy. Even her daily acts of charity and kindness were perhaps due less to an impulse of the heart than to a dislike to see suffering around her. If the Poles are an enslaved nation, their women, on the other hand, are enslavers *par excellence*, and she had all their indescribable charm and fascination. Probably no woman of her time was the object of more sincere and devoted admiration. Her own dream was that impossible woman's dream of affection purely "platonie," and this phantom she pursued through life—to her own great unhappiness and the misery of others—with that curious *penchant* for the unreal and the overstrained which is so marked a characteristic of the Slavonic race. She professed in turns a *culte*, as she herself would have termed it, for the pianist Thalberg, her countryman Adam Potocki, and the austere Cavaignac. Her influence with the latter during his Dictatorship was the more remarkable for being in such strange contrast with the stern rule of life of that French Puritan. When first I met her she was under the influence of a far less intelligible *penchant* for a Prussian cavalry colonel, whom she idealised into the flower of

chivalry, but who was a *beau sabreur* and little more. She firmly believed at this time that he would make her his wife as soon as ever she was released by Providence from her unhappy marriage bond. She was quite in error, and when Kalergis at last did die she married *de guerre lasse* a Russian of the name of Moukhanoff, several years her junior, whose patient constancy had in the end touched her heart.

Music was the great link between Marie Kalergis and myself. I do not think it possible to hear anything more perfectly enthralling than her rendering of the compositions of Schumann or Chopin. She had been one of the latter's favourite pupils, and, with the exception of one other person, she alone, to my mind, gave to his works their true expression. At the piano she was simply irresistible, but there fortunately ceased her charm as far as I was concerned, however sincere was my admiration of her beauty and her brilliant gifts. At Baden, where she spent several summers in succession, her house was the rendezvous of most of the distinguished French *littérateurs* and artists who frequented the place at that time. Herself a most accomplished artist, and gifted with the peculiar adaptability so characteristic of the Slavs, she managed all these various heterogeneous elements with consummate skill and tact. I shall never forget the evenings I spent there under the spell of her wondrous music, or listening to the brilliant talk of Méry or Arsène Houssaye, or the inimitable

buffooneries of that strange and talented Bohemian, Vivier, the great horn-player. Truly those were the *beaux jours de Bade!*

I must say a few words of another charming Marie—a great contrast to Marie Kalergis, but no less beautiful—with whose friendship I was likewise honoured; I mean the Princesse Paul Wiasemski—a sister of my Frankfort friend, Nicholas Stolipine—whose husband at this time was Secretary to the Russian Legation at Baden. Her life has been one of good works and charity and of devotion to home duties, over which the early death of a favourite daughter has cast a great gloom. Of recent years she has enjoyed the special confidence of that other *sainte femme*, the Empress of Russia,¹ and no better proof of this can be given than the selection of her as the trusty friend charged to conduct the “daughter of Russia”² to her new English home.

Our family party, from its numbers and cohesion, soon acquired no small influence in Baden society, and became great promoters of sociability and amusement. An institution that mainly owed its foundation to our set was the so-called “Ladies’ Club.” It was at first simply intended as a refuge from the mixed crowd that thronged the *promenade*, and from the too frequent rain and damp which spoil the Baden evenings, and was nothing more

¹ Marie Alexandrovna, consort of Alexander II.

² The Duchess of Edinburgh.

than a room in Weber's *restaurant* hired by our small circle of friends for their private use. From this humble beginning it expanded into a full-blown club with statutes, rules of admission and all the rest, and in a short time, I am sorry to say, fell into great discredit and gave rise to much unpleasantness and a dreadful amount of squabbling and scandal. The evil tongues that wagged under what was wittily called *l'arbre du bien et du mal*¹ obtained a preponderating share in its management, and from a harmless and agreeable *point de réunion* turned it into a hot-bed of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, of which the least said the better. With all the sincere regard—indeed partiality—I own to for the fairer portion of mankind, I must confess that a club in which they were to rule and legislate and blackball at their own sweet will was about as hopeless an experiment as could well have been devised.

We happened to have amongst us an unusual amount of dramatic talent. Of my sister-in-law's gifts in this direction I have already spoken, but she was now reinforced by Charles de Talleyrand Périgord,²

¹ Former frequenters of Baden would remember this tree as standing at the upper corner of the avenue leading to Weber's *restaurant*, in front of Reinhold the tobacconist's. The plain garden table that stood beneath its shade, and round which sat the male and female gossips of the place, has witnessed more real harm and mischief than even its green-cloth covered brethren indoors. It is a marvel how any other but a *Upas-tree* could have flourished in such an atmosphere.

² Baron Charles de Talleyrand Périgord, then French Minister at Carlsruhe, and afterwards Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

who is a consummate actor, and M. de Magnieu, one of the Paris *élégants* of the day *qui jouait agréablement les amoureux*. King Bénazet of Baden¹ had just before finished decorating the new rooms of the *Conversation*, and in one of them he had erected a charming theatre in which we acted twice for some charitable purpose in September and October. The first part that fell to my lot was in a play called *Brutus lâche César*, my performance in it being, I fear, execrable. Our greatest effort, however, was the very effective Boulevard drama of *Un Duel sous Richelieu*, in which Talleyrand and Nadine really acted to perfection, my brother doing the Abbé de Gondi very nicely, and I myself taking the insignificant part of one of the *cortigiani, vil razza dannata*, in which I could do no harm. As an afterpiece we had *Les Rendezvous Bourgeois*, in which I played "César" to Marie Kalergis' "Reine." Our dresses as *incroyables*, and stature above the medium, gave us both a gigantic appearance on the very cramped stage of Bénazet's theatre, which must have been extremely comical. Marie Kalergis looked as handsome as could be, but her talent for acting was about on a par with mine—*aussi n'y mettait-elle aucune prétention*. Altogether it was "excellent fooling," and brought in a considerable sum of money for the charity to which our efforts were devoted.

¹ The farmer of the gambling-tables.

In these diversions the autumn passed away, and in November I was back again in my old quarters at Stuttgart, little foreseeing the great loss that was soon to befall me in the death of my dear uncle at Nice.

At the end of January 1856 I had to take up my official abode at Karlsruhe, which of the lesser German capitals is probably the dullest. Here I must have perished of sheer *ennui*, had it not been for the society of the French Minister, Charles de Talleyrand, and his Secretaries, Reinach and Blanpré. I hired a bedroom at the Hotel *Zum Erbprinzen*, where in a private room on the ground floor we used to meet at dinner, after long walks in the country, in which we were escorted by a perfect pack of dogs of all breeds—terriers, poodles, greyhounds, &c.—or an occasional game of skittles in some beer-garden that boasted a *Kegelbahn*. One of the few redeeming points about Karlsruhe is the good looks of its female population. A large proportion of the women of all classes are decidedly pretty, and, as far as I could judge, many of those of the middle and lower orders were by no means insensible to admiration.

As for the best society at Karlsruhe, it was entirely composed of half-a-dozen families of long descent and small means, who had intermarried for generations. Whoever was not a Gemmingen was a Hardenberg, or a Dürkheim, or an Amerongen. *On n'en sortait pas*. Talleyrand, in his amusing

way, told a good story of his first visit to the theatre, where a young *cocodès* of the place was doing the honours to him. "Who," inquired he of his cicerone, "is that lady in the third box on the first tier?" "That is a Gemmingen." "And that general officer in the stalls?" "That is also a Gemmingen." And so on with each successive inquiry. "Why," said Talleyrand, "every one here seems to bear your name!" "*Oui!*" replied the youth, "*mais tous ne sont pas de pons Gemmingen; moi pon Gemmingen! Gemmingen-Gemmingen-Gutenberg!*"

If the entertainments at Carlsruhe in those days were not lively, on the other hand they were certainly not costly. The young ladies of the house would give their friends, the other young *Comtessen* and *Baronessen*, notice of their hospitable intentions, and would request their assistance in cutting the *Butterbrode* and preparing the *Gebäck* and refreshments for the evening. Washy tea for the *chaperons*, and beer and *Markgräfler* for the *Herren Leutnants* completed the sumptuous arrangements. A first-class *soirée* might be reckoned to cost some fifteen florins. It was undoubtedly a most sensible way of seeking amusement, and there was much *Gemüthlichkeit* about these parties composed of the bluest blood of the Grand Duchy. The girls were pretty and much better dressed than the majority of their countrywomen; played and danced well, and could talk intelligently on most subjects.

Politics in the Grand Duchy were not without interest. The present Grand Duke (who was then acting as Regent during his brother's confinement as a lunatic) was on the point of contracting a Prussian matrimonial alliance, and the Baden vote in the Diet was about to pass from the Austrian to the Prussian side. This was no small revolution in the policy of a State which its preponderating Roman Catholic elements and historical traditions had hitherto bound fast to Austria. Mixed up with much political intrigue, the more secret yearnings of the youthful sovereign for independence likewise played their part.

It was well known that the Prime Minister, Baron de Rüd't, owed his place and power to the ascendancy of his handsome, but somewhat *passée*, wife over the young Regent. The inner history of the Court of Baden was in fact not unlike one of the "situations" so powerfully sketched in Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*, excepting for the impatience of the prince to cast off the bonds that wearied him. The fall of Baron de Rüd't marked the commencement of a political evolution, which ere long turned this stronghold of Austrian influence into a Prussian advanced post in the heart of hostile South Germany, and ten years later proved one of the principal obstacles to the formation of a South German Confederation.

I spent the spring *à cheval* between Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. The principal event that took place

in Stuttgart society was the marriage of H el ene de Brunnov to the Prussian Secretary of Legation, Magnus. This union, which turned out unhappily, was entirely the work of the Crown Princess, who had taken charge of the very attractive but dowerless young lady when the Crimean War drove her distinguished father from his post as Russian Envoy in London. I should not mention this incident, did I not wish to pay a sincere tribute to the worth of Magnus, whom I knew well under very trying circumstances, when he revealed much generosity and nobility of disposition. These qualities it was later given to him to display signally in the sombre tragedy of Queretaro, where he was to the last Maximilian's most faithful friend, and, at imminent risk to himself, moved heaven and earth to save the unfortunate Emperor. Magnus and his charming little wife soon left Stuttgart for Brussels, where a few years later she died. Her wedded life was short and sad, but no sadder than the years of a youth spent between a father and mother for whom she could have had but little affection.

The season of 1856 at Baden was exceptionally brilliant. In addition to the Prussian royal family, who for years have made it their summer quarters, the Duchess of Cambridge and her daughters spent some weeks there. The weather, too, was unusually fine, and all minds were cheerfully disposed by the restoration of peace.

Baden life is now so entirely a thing of the past

that I may perhaps be excused for lingering over my recollections of it. Of those who remember it in all its gaiety and splendour I would ask what could be more striking, and at the same time more interesting in its way, than the aspect of the promenade in front of the *Conversation* on a fine evening in August—we will say a Tuesday, when the Austrian military band came over to play from Rastadt? In the motley crowd that thronged the broad walk, or sat in closely packed rows round the kiosk where the band was playing, or lounged by the shop of Mellerio the jeweller, or flirted and tattled at the tables under the trees, every type and class and nation was represented. We had here a perfect epitome of European society in all its shades and gradations: German royalty, French art and literature, Parisian fashion and frailty; the greatest ladies from London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg cheek by jowl with the fairest sinners from Berlin or the Quartier Breda; the impassive *croupier* and the fevered, broken gambler side by side; English black-legs jostling Frankfort Jew stock-brokers; lanky Baden dragoons mixed with the stalwart Croats of *Benedek infanterie* and the boyish-looking recruits of the Prussian regiments; and, for *couleur locale*, a sprinkling of the wonderful hats, red waistcoats, and long, silver-buttoned coats of the Schwarzwald peasantry, and the yet more wondrous huge butterfly head-dresses of their womankind. The air was full of laughter, of shrill female voices,

of the clatter of a thousand tongues in a dozen different languages, hushed now and then by the marvellous harmony that floated across from Koennemann's faultless *Kapelle*. The atmosphere was loaded with tobacco-smoke, or with subtler and more grateful perfumes as some pretty woman glided past through the ever-shifting throng; the glare of the gas fell crudely on the many-coloured multitude in all its variety of dress and ornament, here and there lighting indifferently on a rouged cheek or a sweet girlish face, flashing off a diamond trinket in some pink, shell-like ear, or giving relief to a bright patch of colour or to features strongly marked. It was a gaudy, bewildering, yet strangely intoxicating scene—essentially of the earth earthy—but set in such lovely surroundings, that when the soft moon stole over it from above the ruins of the *Alte Schloss*, tipping the tall trees with silver and marking their shadows on the quiet lawn and walks beyond, one could only revel in its singular beauty, and he must have been a churl indeed, or a pedant, who could moralise over, instead of giving himself wholly up to, its magic charm. Thus far a poor attempt to convey some idea of the *mise en scène*. Let me now seek to analyse the crowd.

That tall, upright man with open, fearless countenance, fresh and hale though verging on sixty, walking up and down by the side of handsome Princess Obolenski, is the Regent of Prussia. He is most amiable and good-natured, though curt

and somewhat rough of speech. His countenance bespeaks frankness rather than *finesse*; he may not be *un aigle*, despite the cognomen since given him by his soldiery,¹ but he has an eagle's flight before him yet. His clever, but somewhat *précieuse* princess, does not venture into the throng, but is content to watch it from her balcony in the Maison Messmer, where she has an *ästhetischer Thee* this evening, to which some of us perhaps have the distinction of being "commanded." She is fond of early hours and of granting private audiences at the Trinkhalle, while she drinks the waters. Towards this princess, with all her high culture and her passionate Goethe-worship—as a child she had sat at the feet of that stupendous genius in the old Weimar days—I never, I confess, felt the least drawn.

But, to return to the crowd, here are Méry, Tourguenieff, Winterhalter the painter; here, too, are Vieuxtemps, Vivier, and Sivori — for King Bénazet is a munificent patron of the best art, and what we lose to him at *roulette* he expects us to take out of him in music. Here again is Marie Kalergis, and with her a young Polish widow, Madame Bielinska, the prettiest woman, I think, who ever trod that gravel walk; and in their train follow the brothers Branicki, Roger de Bauffremont, Freddy St. John, George Barrington, La Redorte, Percy Ffrench. A face in the throng not to be for-

¹ Wilhelm der Adler.

gotten for its weird, haunted look is that of Home, the spiritualist, whose startling impostures are just beginning to attract public notice; while, not far from him, holding forth to a knot of French journalists and politicians, stands Emile de Girardin, thin-lipped and sour-visaged, with the true "lean and hungry" look of disappointed ambition.

Yonder stout, very slovenly man of fifty, with colossal head, thick, woolly hair, powerful face, and sensual mouth—a manner of white negro Cæsar—is Gugert, the cleverest of fashionable doctors, who, in spite of his untidiness, is said to have a marvellous magnetic influence over his fair patients, all of whom swear by him. In that group of men watching a game of dominoes opposite Gauss's counter are pompous Blucher von Wahlstatt, a nephew of old "Vorwärts"; little Falckner, probably the ugliest man in Christendom; Prince Paul Wiasemski, the son of the poet and husband of my charming friend above mentioned, a Tartar Mirabeau in looks, and the luckiest player in Baden. Not that the gambling here is carried to the same lengths as at the rival tables of Blanc at Homburg, where the maximum stake reaches the figure of twelve thousand francs instead of six thousand, and the mathematical chances against the player at *trente et quarante* are just one-half of what they are with the more cautious Bénézet.

Not the least remarkable figure in the crowd is an elderly man with bushy eyebrows, well-

fitting back clothes and shiny wig, who stands a little apart from the stream of promenaders and has just come out of the hot rooms to get a breath of fresh air. This is Martin, the Nestor of *croupiers*, who could tell curious tales of the "Cercle des Etrangers" at Paris in 1815, where he has dealt many a disastrous deal for Blücher, flushed with wine and victory, playing deep and losing furiously while Talleyrand, perhaps, or Montrond, disdainfully looked on, and now and then staked a trifle on the winning side against the northern conqueror. This Martin has a peculiar way of enticing players: "Si j'étais, monsieur un tel" (whoever the person may be whom he is addressing), he will say, "je passerais chez Mellerio et je choiserais une jolie épingle pour ce bon Martin. Cela porte bonheur!" I never could afford the experiment, so can offer no opinion as to its efficacy. A most respectable man Monsieur Martin, and *marguillier*, or churchwarden, of one of the principal Parisian churches. Beneath the ill-famed greenwood tree sit Princesse Menschikoff, a lady of masculine frame and wit, who, under the outward aspect of a grenadier, conceals *le cœur d'une pensionnaire*; pleasant, popular Lady Ely; Comtesse Stéphanie Tascher, who is taking mental notes for her *souvenirs* to be read out next winter at the *soirées intimes* of the Tuileries; graceful Louise Oriolla, not sorry to have escaped for a while from the society of her royal mistress; pretty *minaudière*,

little Madame Emile de Girardin ; and round them a flock of Frenchmen and Russians, young and old, all worshipping at the high shrine of gossip and fashion.

But here are the last bars of Koennemann's *galop final*. The groups are breaking up, the crowd is turning towards the playrooms, and we will take refuge from the crush in the restaurant, on the steps of which poor Vincent de Tuyll, the handsomest of Dutchmen, with a kind of dare-devil corsair look seldom to be met with in society, is lounging with that most perfect *grand seigneur* of his generation in looks and manners, the late Duke of Hamilton. *Arcades ambo*, both taking life easily and with but a short span of it before them ! A few minutes more and the band have gone, perhaps to play at a private subscription dance in the *nouveaux salons*, the crowd has melted away, and the moonlight shines on the deserted promenade. But from Weber's rooms, from the "Victoria," or the "Angleterre," with the lights from its open windows reflected in the rippling Oos, the "sound of revelry" will be kept up till long after the sun has begun to climb the eastern slope of the Mercur. We turn these hot summer nights into days at Baden, and leave early hours and the dewy walks round the Trinkhalle to Gugert's victims and Her Royal Highness of Prussia.

The visit to Baden of the Cambridge royalties was the occasion of numerous picnics and other

entertainments, which that most charming of royal ladies, Princess Mary, well knew how to enliven and make pleasant to all. Among the most successful of these were a kind of *déjeûner dansant* arranged by my brother and his wife at Eberstein Schloss, and a ball given in the quaint old Château of the Favorite near Rastadt by Mrs. Villebois, a lady who afterwards achieved for herself no small position in London society. In September of this year I made a somewhat more fortunate attempt at acting in one of the most absurdly amusing of old Palais Royal farces, *Embrassons-nous Folleville!* As usual, our performance was in aid of some charity—the inhabitants of a burnt-down village in the neighbourhood, if I recollect right—but the Cambridges having been obliged to leave Baden for the Castle of Rumpenheim, near Frankfort, before our theatricals came off, we conceived the bold scheme of going over to Frankfort, like a company of strolling players, and giving a night in their honour at the house of Maurice Bethmann, who put up a stage for us in his ballroom. This little expedition was most successful.

Before closing this record of the gay, *insouciant* life we led in those days, I cannot entirely pass over a more distant excursion I had made in the course of the summer. It was the year of the great Coronation at Moscow, which I was longing to see, Russia just then still having strong attractions for me. Hearing that Lord Granville was going

through a course of the Carlsbad waters before starting on his Embassy, I determined to seek him out and ask him to take me on his staff. I made a hurried journey to Bohemia, staying in all only two days at Carlsbad, where I found fat, witty Lord Ely and his wife, who did their best to further my negotiation, and the Duchesse d'Istrie, and a whole tribe of La Ferronnays, who likewise plotted in my favour in the kindest way possible. For thirty-six hours Lord Granville was besieged by my friends, but none the less not unnaturally declined to increase the already very large and brilliant *cortège* that was to accompany him. His refusal, however, was conveyed in terms of such perfect suavity that I really did not feel quite sure at the time whether he was not conferring a favour on me by it. Lord Granville, who had known me as a child in Paris, did me various kindnesses afterwards, and I always found him the pleasantest, as he was the most accomplished, and by no means the least able, of the different Secretaries of State under whom it has been my fate to serve.

My chief had now returned to his post after a year's absence, and I joined him at Stuttgart in October. Not for long, however, for on the 13th of the following month I received a letter from Francis Cavendish (then précis writer to Lord Clarendon) inquiring whether I would like to exchange my present post for the second Paid Attachéship at Vienna. I was somewhat loth to leave Stuttgart,

but, on the other hand, the charms of Vienna, which William Grey had extolled to me many a time at the Paris Embassy, together with the Austrian proclivities to which I have already confessed, made the proposal too tempting a one to be rejected.

I think it was the evening of the day following that on which this offer reached me that I received an invitation to tea at the Galitzines', of the Russian Legation, to meet the Crown Princess. Since the restoration of peace this illustrious lady had come forth from her seclusion, and was once more the centre and chief adornment of Stuttgart society. In May she had given a charming breakfast at the royal studfarm at Weil, on which occasion she had been most gracious to me, rejoicing, as she was good enough to put it, "*Que nous puissions maintenant nous voir.*" She had placed my name on the list of those persons whom it was agreeable to her to meet when, as she was fond of doing, she sent word to one of her *intimes* that she was coming to spend the evening with them. I had thus got to know her pretty well, and to appreciate the great charm of her manner towards those to whom she was well inclined. I had mentioned my transfer to Vienna to some of my friends, and Her Royal Highness was now pleased to express in very kind terms her regret that I should so soon be leaving Stuttgart. "By the way," she added, "who is your new chief?" I replied that it was Sir Hamilton Seymour. "Indeed!" she said, and abruptly turned away, an

ominous change coming over her countenance when I pronounced Sir Hamilton's name. A gleam in the eyes and a sudden gathering of the brow plainly told how hateful to her was the mere mention even of the man whom she looked upon as having betrayed her father's confidence.

I must add that I again had the honour of seeing the Grand Duchess Olga a couple of years later, when going over from Baden to pay my respects to her on the occasion of a ball she gave in celebration of her birthday. She then received me with the greatest possible kindness, saying that she was glad to note that I did not forget old friends, and graciously adding: "*Nous danserons le cotillon ensemble.*" The last time I saw her was at Constantinople, in the spring of 1872, when she sent for me to the Russian Embassy, where she stayed a few days on her return from St. Petersburg and Moscow. She had then been eight years a queen, and, to judge by her gaunt look, and worn, though still faultless, features, the crown had weighed heavily upon her. Indeed, her life was doomed to be one continuous disappointment. The power to which she had looked to compensate her for her effacement under the old king's reign, and of which she would have doubtless made admirable use, escaped her when just within her grasp. With her husband's accession to the throne the influence she had exercised over him seemed all at once to vanish, King Charles falling into the hands of a series of unscrupulous adven-

turers, and scandalising the world by the vagaries, not to say worse, of his private existence. It was a bitter experience to go through, and from it the proud queen sought refuge in a life of charity and good works that will keep her memory green for many a long day in the hearts of the Suabian people.

The southern line of rail from Stuttgart to Munich and Vienna did not exist at that time, so that I had to take my way by Frankfort, Leipzig, and Dresden. I started on the 20th of November, and spent a day at Dresden with the Metternichs. My friend Richard, whom I had left an Attaché in Paris only a few years before, was now Envoy Extraordinary to the Saxon Court,¹ and a married man into the bargain. His wife, whose name is inseparably associated with the grandeur and brilliancy of the Second Empire, was likewise his niece, being the daughter of his elder half-sister, Comtesse Sándor. Princesse Pauline Metternich is far too well known to require description, nor would I attempt to record my impressions of her, did I not believe that, as is too frequently the case with persons in such conspicuous positions as hers, scant justice has been done to her. I am indebted to her for so much kindness in the past, that I will endeavour to pay her some slight tribute in these recollections. When I was introduced to

¹ This too had been the first post to which his father, the celebrated statesman, was appointed in 1801.

Princesse Pauline at Dresden, she was *la plus jolie laide* (we have no rendering for this in English) it was possible to imagine. Fine dark eyes, sparkling with wit and intelligence, very pretty hair, a figure the most perfectly graceful—tall, slight, and thorough-bred, shapely hands and feet, and, to crown all, *le plus grand air du monde*—more than carried off the irregular features, which made her say of herself: “*Je suis le singe à la mode!*” A supreme *instinct d’élégance*, bordering on genius, well entitles her to rank among the leading artistic influences of the age, even though the novel departures in dress and manner, and the freedom of speech she occasionally indulged in, may have led to regrettable eccentricities of style and taste on the part of too many of her would-be imitators. That which, in her, was the exuberance of invention and fancy, the spontaneous outcome of a temper the most vivacious and original, too easily degenerated with them into sheer vulgarity or caricature. It may perhaps be granted that the models she held up to the town were not always formed on the most approved canons of art, but it would be hard to hold her in any way answerable for the offences against good taste of those who, in their clumsy efforts to copy, simply parodied her. Like a comet she was at times fantastic in her course. but as a comet, too, brilliant and splendid, and of a lustre beyond compare in the firmament of fashion. She is certainly not to blame if the

trumpety stars which she crossed in her path went gyrating after her in such painfully erratic style. Those only who know her well can say how straight and fearless has been her course through life ; how great her devotion to that most charming of men, her husband ; and can testify to her faithfulness to her friends, her downright sincerity and dislike of all humbug, her sound judgment when not carried away by passion or prejudice. I enjoyed the privilege of her friendship for years, and never knew her otherwise than true and frank and loyal, and, for one in so prominent a position, singularly unaffected and unspoilt. Last, but not least, she is the best of company, and amusing beyond words.

Princesse Pauline at once received me on the footing of one of her husband's old friends, and gave me many useful hints about the new society into which I was about to be launched. At parting she volunteered to give me a letter of introduction to an intimate friend and relation of hers, which she assured me would be of the greatest service to me. Of course I thankfully accepted, and found that it was addressed to the Comtesse Julie Festetics.

CHAPTER XI

VIENNA IN 1856

No European capital, not even excepting Haussmanised Paris, has undergone such thorough transformation as Vienna.

“S gibt nur a Kaiserstadt, 's gibt nur a Wean!”

But the present brand-new Austrian metropolis, with its magnificent Ringstrasse, its sumptuous rows of public buildings, its beautiful *Votiv Kirche*, its splendid Opera-house and *Burgtheater*, is a very different place from the tangled coil of narrow, dark, crooked streets and lanes, broken here and there by half-a-dozen quaint, irregular *places*, with stately, old palaces dotted about it, poky theatres, dingy inns, and the gayest of shop windows—the wondrous spire of St. Stephen's rising high above all the noise, and bustle, and dirt—in which some 50,000 Viennese were pent up “to stew in their own broth”—as Bismarck would have it—by the same old bastions that had withstood the Turk. For this inner town alone was true Vienna, and the great, straggling suburbs of Mariahilf, Landstrasse, Wieden, Leopoldstadt, and others, with their hundred thousands, although they laid claim to being

part and parcel of the Kaiserstadt—a claim allowed by ignorant geographers and hand-book writers—were not really esteemed pure Viennese, but were looked upon somewhat in the light of country cousins, and kept at a respectful distance by the broad belt of *glacis* that surrounded the venerable ramparts aforesaid.

To this peculiar arrangement old Vienna owed a *cachet* of its own, which it has entirely lost by the kernel city being merged into the great mass of *Neu-Wien*. No town of its size could show so striking and picturesque a promenade as that afforded by the ancient bastions, whence the eye ranged over the green, park-like foreground of the *glacis*, laid out in avenues and public gardens, and fringed in the distance by the white masonry of the *faubourgs*, which stretched all round like the countless battalions of some rebellious army in the national equipment,¹ drawn up for assault on the Imperial city and turned to stone in the midst of its impious design. It is true that to this same arrangement Vienna likewise owed its being as over-crowded, ill-ventilated, unhealthy a place of residence as could well be found in this age of sanitary science. Providentially the great draught of air through the valley of the Danube, which caused it to be a very temple of the winds, in some measure preserved it from grave

¹ The white uniforms of the infantry and of many of the cavalry regiments—alas! too, a thing of the past.

epidemics, while making it highly dangerous in all pulmonary complaints. Rents were enormous, and lodgings—bad out of all proportion to their cost—most difficult to procure. Add to this the din and clatter of the streets; the risk to life and limb, which, but for the extreme dexterity of the drivers, would have been considerable; the damp, and cold, and gloom of well-like houses to which the sun had scarcely any access; and it will be seen that there were serious drawbacks to the enjoyment of this gayest and most fascinating of cities.

It was a dreary November morning when I reached the old-fashioned *Römische Kaiser*, after a day and night passed in the train from Dresden, and the look-out from my bedroom window over the *Freiung*, ankle-deep in slush from the first winter's snow-fall, with the big *façade* of the Palais Harrach opposite just visible through the murky fog, was not precisely cheerful or enlivening. Having ascertained that the Legation was but a short distance off, in the Palais Clary in the *Herrngasse*, I presently proceeded to report myself to my new chief. I was already prepared to respect and look up to him for the decision and frankness he had shown in his dealings with the Emperor Nicholas at the time of the celebrated conversations about the sick man's inheritance, but my service under him more than confirmed the judgment I had already formed of him.

Sir Hamilton Seymour was a *diplomate pur sang* of what is commonly, and rather disparagingly, termed

“the old school.” Which amounts to saying that he was a keen, observant man of the world, rather than an *homme de cabinet*—still less a crammer or compiler of Blue Books. A true patrician by birth and temper, and of that purest shade of Whiggery which is really the quintessence of exclusive Conservatism, he inclined to cynical and contemptuous views of the world that was fast outstripping him. For the rest, a master of his craft when truly it still was one. Himself the soul of compromise and conciliation; a delightful *causeur*, with an inexhaustible fund of anecdote set off by great powers of mimicry; a favourite with womankind, and skilled in all the arts which were the stock-in-trade of that bygone epoch of diplomacy when war was declared in *boudoirs* and peace signed in *alcoves*, when great events were shaken out of the folds of a silk petticoat and the fate of Cabinets sometimes turned on the flutter of a lace-trimmed bodice. He had few strong convictions, and fewer prejudices, and was at times not over-scrupulous in the choice of a means to a right end. He had broken open a despatch-box to save a dynasty.¹ At the same time, he held somewhat obsolete views as to there being but one code of honour for both public and private transactions. He believed in the sanctity of international obligations and the policy

¹ Sir Hamilton Seymour was our Minister at Lisbon in 1847 at the time of the Miguelite conspiracy against the Queen Donna Maria da Gloria. He obtained access in the manner above described (he told me the story himself) to some papers disclosing the plans of the Miguelites, which he was thus enabled to defeat.

of enforcing them. He was incapable, I fear, of sympathising with the more advanced public opinion which condones the breach of treaty engagements and warns defaulters off a race-course. Although the most peaceable of men, he would argue in favour of duelling, as purifying society of its worst braggarts and bullies, and preserving to it certain amenities of intercourse thought little of in these non-fighting days. Very good-humoured and very firm; *blasé* at heart possibly, and cold in manner, but with warm spots about him, and in his domestic circle the kindest and best of husbands and fathers.

When I first knew Sir Hamilton he was a man verging upon sixty, who had been charming at Carlton House and would have been still more at home at Versailles. I can see him now in a blue dress-coat, with gilt Queen's buttons and high collar of ancient cut, and fancy velvet waistcoat. His countenance would have shown little power, except for marked lines of determination about the mouth; but it was incomparable for its air of *finesse*; and a bird-like trick he had of cocking his head on one side, and looking at you with a merry twinkle in his eye, was irresistibly humorous, and must have tried the solemnity of foreign negotiators. I need hardly say that he was the pleasantest as well as the most instructive of chiefs; indeed, he had but the one defect of being too indefatigable a writer. Thanks to a curiously retentive memory, his despatches were models of accurate narration, but

scrawled as they were triangle-wise across the paper in a cramped, almost indecipherable hand, they seemed to our lazy Chancery to flow somewhat too freely from his pen.

Lady Seymour had great remains of beauty, was an excellent *maîtresse de maison*, and did the honours of the Legation with perfect grace and just enough *hauteur* to please exclusive Vienna society. Of Miss Seymour, now Lady Delamere, I can only say that we were all of us her humble and devoted worshippers. The dismal, dirty backyard in which we worked and smoked and chatted in our Chancery three storeys high, borrowed much of its light and sunshine from a certain window on the first floor opposite where she would sit—a living Greuze in a tender frame of climbing plants and flower-pots and birdcages—bending over her work or book, and not wholly unconscious, perhaps, of a respectfully admiring public over the way. When there was a “row” in the Legation—and where is there not, even in so “happy a family” as ours?—some difference of opinion, some grumbling over the work, who but she to smooth the ruffled tempers and throw oil on the troubled waters? Who but she to stand up for the last, new, raw Attaché; to sit bravely through the evening by some poor girl whom the unkind little *Comtessen* chose to account *schmudel*,¹ and would hardly bow to, far less allow

¹ A slang Vienna term applied to persons who, although forming part of the best society, are not considered to be sufficiently smart.

to join their sets; to do a thousand simple little acts of kindness and charity, shedding gladness wherever she went with the frank, blue eyes and quick, bright smile that told of the honest little English heart whose impulses she followed? I wonder does she ever think of those days in the grey walls and sylvan glades of her home at Vale Royal?

I have said that we were "a happy family" in the Legation, and truly such was the case, curiously dissimilar as were its various elements. Of the Secretary of Legation, Henry Elliot (afterwards Sir Henry and Ambassador at Constantinople), we saw but little, as he was a good deal absent on leave, and was promoted in the spring of 1858 to the Mission at Copenhagen. It is not for me to speak of his distinguished political career, but I have known few men who were so single of purpose or had so high a sense of duty. He was, among other things, a fine rider and a keen sportsman, and had had an adventure in Russia with a bear which it was very difficult to get him to tell, but which, having once succeeded in obtaining from his lips, I will here relate. When Paid Attaché at St. Petersburg he had gone on a bear-shooting expedition—by no means his first, for he had shot several bears before, and had, in fact, acquired great confidence in his knack of rolling the animals over. On this occasion he availed himself of an offer made to him by an old resident at St. Petersburg, "Jack" Hamilton, who was renowned for his exploits in the chase,

that whenever he went after bears he should use his (Mr. Hamilton's) dogs and snow-shoes. He sent word to his friend's men in one of the villages to meet him at a given place, where they accordingly appeared, bringing with them, in addition to the snow-shoes, a spear belonging to Hamilton which Elliot had not asked for, but nevertheless took with him when going to the post assigned to him in the drive. Knowing by experience how wary the beasts are and how easily turned by the least noise or the whisper even of an officious loader, he went to his place alone and without a second rifle. Presently a bear came crashing through the dense thicket of pine and birch in a straight line with him. Elliot coolly waited till the animal was at thirty paces and then let fly at him both barrels in succession—the first without effect, the second shot, as it afterwards appeared, striking the brute in the jaw, whereupon he gave a savage growl, shook himself, bounded forward, and came on with a great rush at his now utterly defenceless adversary.

A few paces only divided Elliot from the wounded and enraged animal. He instinctively jumped back to gain time, and found, planted in the snow and at his very hand, the weapon he had disdained and which now offered his only chance of safety. He seized hold of it, dropped on one knee as if to receive cavalry, and in a moment more lay on the ground overborne by the huge weight of the brute, but still keeping a firm purchase of the spear on

which the bear had literally spitted himself. Then came what to Elliot seemed the agony of hours, though it can have barely lasted a few minutes. The brute had fastened on his left arm, which Elliot had lifted to guard his face, and kept gnawing at it (fortunately with a broken jaw), working downwards to the slender part above the wrist, till Elliot felt that with a little more it must snap in two under the horrid pressure. In his dread of this, he contrived to give a tremendous kick which diverted the bear's attention and made it let go the arm and seize instead on the leg, Elliot meanwhile steadily working away with the spear, which was buried deep in the brute's chest. Suddenly, in the midst of this exhausting struggle, the bear relinquished its hold, lifted its head for a moment, a film coming over its eyes, and then, with a great thud, fell over on its side, some vital part having been at last reached by the spear.

When the other sportsmen hurried up, attracted by the shots, they found Elliot with one foot on the neck of his enemy, and in a state of triumphant excitement over his hard-won victory. He was none the less laid up for some weeks, and ever afterwards bore marks of the desperate encounter on his leg and arm. Few men have had a narrower escape, or shown greater nerve and presence of mind in such deadly peril. It is a very remarkable circumstance—since related to me by Sir Henry—that many years later, in the early seventies, three Ambassadors

met one day on the quay at Therapia, each of whom had been hugged by a bear. The Marquis de Vogüé, who then represented France at Constantinople, had been saved when in this predicament by a shot from Count Bylandt, later on the most popular of Dutch Ministers in London. Rustem Pasha, at that time on leave from the Turkish Embassy at St. Petersburg, owed his life in like manner to a fellow-sportsman. Sir Henry Elliot was the only one who had come forth unaided from the terrible ordeal.

Besides Elliot, we had as first Paid Attaché Douglas Irvine, a quaint, middle-aged Scotchman whom we all liked but "chaffed" mercilessly, and had nicknamed "the inspector" in his capacity of head of the Chancery. Then came Robert Burnett Morier, Gerald Gould, and Henry Wodehouse. Morier is, perhaps, next to Odo Russell and Robert Lytton, the most prominent member of our diplomatic body. He has at his service an exceptionally powerful brain, unflagging industry, an iron will, and an ambition that nothing can well arrest. Higher destinies are probably reserved for him than those to which he has yet attained. We were on terms of great intimacy for some time at Vienna, but our tempers somehow clashed and could not bear the severe test of sharing, as we did for some months, the same set of rooms. Probably in any disagreement between us the main faults may have been on my side, but I can honestly affirm that I never bore Morier any ill-will, while he in those

days, I think, could not quite forgive me for being his senior in the service, although his junior in years. There was in him at this time a prodigious fund of untamed spirits that made him the most entertaining, but not always the safest, of companions. A curious compound he was of the thoughtless, thriftless Bohemian and the cool, calculating, aspiring man of the world. A giant in frame and intellect ("Mount Moriah," John Bidwell called him), yet full of delicate, poetic fancies, alternating with the most daring flights of licence. Of an imperious and not over-tolerant disposition, but altogether a most remarkable man, and, when he chose, a *grand charmeur*. During my stay at Vienna he made several extensive journeys in South Hungary and the Banate and in the Croatian border districts, and traversed the whole of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, returning by way of the Adriatic. These tours furnished the materials for two exhaustive reports on the organisation of the Austrian military frontier and on the history and political aspirations of the Southern Slavs that were masterpieces of their kind, and opened up subjects respecting which very little was known at the time, much as the world was to hear of them thereafter. Since then he has made himself a thorough master of German politics, and is, I believe, one of the few men whom Prince Bismarck fears and correspondingly detests.

But my great friend and favourite among my

colleagues was poor Henry Wodehouse. When I look back to those days, all their light-heartedness and gaiety seem somehow personified in him. He had the most joyously contagious laugh, the keenest sense of humour, and great artistic taste. His love of music was in itself a *trait d'union* between us, and I believe that my encouragement contributed to his cultivating a very good tenor voice with which he was gifted. Few among my many fellow-workers in diplomacy have left me more delightful recollections. To a singular sweetness of disposition he united such shrewdness and powers of observation as would in time have made him a very valuable public servant, and his removal in his prime was not the least of the losses our service has sustained of late years. A very interesting diary which he kept during the siege of Paris has since been printed for private circulation by his kinsman, Philip Currie.

Wodehouse and I were great admirers of Johann Strauss (the son) and his marvellous band, and at balls would often sit together listening to the charming orchestration of his waltzes—perfect symphonies some of them—rather than dance to them, irresistibly though their rhythm *einem in die Füsse ging* as they say at Vienna. I own to having a sufficiently frivolous taste in music to consider the Strauss aforesaid one of the most original and talented of living composers. The first Sunday afternoon I spent in Vienna my colleagues took

me to a concert in the great hall of the Volksgarten, and I shall never forget the ovation with which Strauss, who had been absent some months starring it abroad, was greeted by the closely packed crowd as he entered the orchestra. For a minute or two he stood there evidently much moved by the welcome, and then, turning to the good men and true behind him, and grasping his fiddle, he played the opening bars of the *Juristenballtanze* with such thrilling power and sweetness, with such a volume of sound from his own bow, that he might have seemed a seraph leading a company of common fiddlers were it not far more graphically true to say *qu'il avait le diable au corps*. But the real places to hear Strauss were saloons like "Sperl's" or the "Grosse Zeisig." There—amidst the fumes of tobacco and of Dreher's malt liquor, in long, shabby rooms, imperfectly lighted, full of tables crowded with gay, heedless couples whose union had begun with the first waltz that evening, and would barely survive the last polka of the week—a perfect electric current seemed to reign between him and his audience: one favourite piece would follow the other in quick succession, greeted with such delirious cheering, such stamping of feet, such improvised choruses joining in the pet bits, that floor and ceiling, bottles, glasses, chairs, tables, chandeliers, man, woman, and child, seemed to sway and reel, and finally to turn in more and more rapidly eddying circles under the power of his

magic bow. The fact is that the very air of Vienna was melodious with his music, and existence there was set to his swinging *Dreiviertel Tact*.

We had a very cheery Christmas this year at the Legation. The Seymours' youngest schoolboy son, George—now one of the daintiest *élégants* about London¹—had come out for the holidays under the protecting care of one of the Queen's messengers, and a grand Christmas tree was got up for him and the young ladies. To this we made the following odd contribution: we bought up every box of tin soldiers in English, French, or Russian uniforms we could find in the place, and spent the whole of Christmas Day in setting them in array on a large dining-table in the ballroom in mimic representation of the battle of the Alma. No less a personage directed us than Sir Hugh Rose (afterwards Lord Strathnairn), then on a military mission at Vienna and temporarily attached to the Legation; and the whole Chancery engaged with these toys, under the command of so redoubtable a warrior, was unquestionably a very funny sight. I must say, however, that our military arrangements had an extremely pretty effect. Large cushions covered with a green tablecloth furnished the deadly slopes manned by the Russian army; the line of the Alma was marked by trees; scraps of cotton wool, scattered about, figured the smoke from cannon and musketry: there were the attacking columns of the Allies, with their

¹ He died in 1884 at the age of thirty-six.

camps in the rear; the French and English staffs; the Russian masses drawn up on the heights; the fight round the Telegraph and at the great redoubt; and, in the far distance, that mythical *corps d'armée* of Osten-Sacken which was always said to be on the march from Odessa, but somehow never came up!

Sir Hugh Rose, whom we, of course, saw a great deal of this winter, was an immense favourite in Vienna society. His gentle, insinuating address, beautiful white hands and snowy wristbands—he had a curious finikin way of stroking back his coat-sleeves and crossing his hands in his lap just above the wrist—quite captivated the middle-aged *Fürstinnen*, and it was not a little amusing to hear their exclamations of incredulous dismay when, a few months later, news came of his—to say the least severe—proceedings during his brilliant campaign in Central India. “*Comment? c'est ce charmant Général Rose qui a fait pendre et fusiller tant de monde!*”

The most agreeable and amusing *salon* at Vienna in those days was unquestionably that of Comtesse Hélène Esterhazy, a wealthy widow of Russian birth, whose daughter by her first marriage with a Comte Apraxine, Julie, was the wife of Arthur—or, as he was always called, “Turi”—Batthyanyi. I had known the Batthyanyis at Baden, and they received me with the greatest cordiality; and here again my recollections are dashed with sadness.

Ruin has since then come on this house in every shape, Vienna knows it no longer, and as for gay Julie of the lovely arm and perfect, rounded figure, it will scarcely do to ask what became of her in her subsequent erratic course of life. Of the *coterie* which habitually gathered under Comtesse H el ene's hospitable roof, the most striking person perhaps was Princesse Julie Obrenovitch, *n ee* Hunyadi, the wife of the Prince Michael, who was afterwards so foully murdered at Belgrade, beautiful above all others, and with a stately grace all her own. She was taxed with coldness and want of expression, and the criticism was not altogether without truth. The fact is that she, with several others of the prettiest women of Vienna, were remarkable instances of the reaction frequently produced on one generation by the follies of that which has preceded it. She and her contemporaries were as *sages*, and indeed strait-laced, as their mothers were said to have been the reverse, and though her childless union with her semi-barbaric Servian husband was reputed to be none of the happiest, scandal was hushed in her presence, and no "faintly-venomed points of slander, glancing here and grazing there," were ever aimed at her fair and gracious person. Partly in allusion to her, I amused myself in setting to music at this time those deliciously mocking lines of Heine that begin with—

"Es liegt der heisse Sommer
Auf deinen W angelein,"

and which I will give here in their charming literal rendering by Julian Fane—

“ The light of golden summer
Is on thy fair cheek still ;
But in thy wee little heart, dear,
Is all the winter’s chill.
Yet that will change, believe me,
Beloved as thou art,
The winter will reign on thy cheek, dear,
All summer in thy heart ! ”

She was much diverted by this pleasantry, but I have not heard that the prophecy it contains was ever verified.

Julie Turi had a passion for theatricals, which, indeed, in her later eccentric career, went so far as to make her study for the stage in Paris and aspire to act at the *Comédie Française* of all theatres in the world. In the spring of 1857 she got up a *spectacle de société* in a miniature theatre belonging to a Baron Dietrich in the suburb of Mariahilf, the most novel feature of which was a regular *ballet* in which she was *première danseuse*, seconded by a number of little *Comtessen*. The *primo ballerino* was Count Pölzig, a very good-looking young Saxon officer, who afterwards fell in a cavalry charge at Sadowa, and Henry Wodehouse and one or two other Attachés were among the *ballet-corps*. It was a bold performance, but eminently successful, and nothing could be more laughable than the rehearsals directed in broken German by a despotic old Italian ballet-master from the Kärnthner Thor.

I was pressed into the service on the same occasion, and entrusted with a Lovelace part in a Louis Quinze *vaudeville* called *Dieu vous bénisse!* There was in it a frightfully difficult "situation" consisting of a *déclaration à genoux* (*les seules bonnes et valables!* Marie Kalergis used to say) in the course of which I had inadvertently to take a pinch from a snuff-box maliciously filled with betony (the most potent of sternutatories) by the watchful sister-in-law (Julie Batthyanyi) of my would-be victim. My passionate utterances were in consequence interlarded with sneezes, and my previously dangerous suit was brought to an ignominious end. This absurd scene naturally involved a lot of rehearsing which gave me opportunities of learning what a truly charming, unspoilt creature was my princess of the wintry heart, for she was the object of my *déclaration*. Certainly in all my recollections I can call to mind nothing more dazzling than her appearance on the night of the performance in a white-silk Pompadour costume, with powder and a wealth of pearls—herself the pearl of rarest beauty. Later on she took to politics during her husband's short reign in Servia, and was charged to plead the cause of that Principality with the Western Powers. She made a great sensation in London, whither she came, it was said, partly to consult the eminent Sir Charles Locock about a due succession to the Servian throne, and this inspired one of Lord Palmerston's funniest sayings, which, unfortunately, will not bear repeating.

The more serious *salons* at Vienna were those of Princess Lori Schwarzenberg and of Princess Schönburg, sister of the celebrated Felix Schwarzenberg. They were both most clever and agreeable women, and I had known the latter in my childhood at Paris, while Princess Lori (who died recently) had made a sensation in London by her *éclat* and beauty at the time of the coronation. The most interesting of all was the *salon* Metternich in the Rennweg, of which my old Brighton friend, Princess Mélanie (now married to Comte Joseph Zichy), did the honours, and where one could hear history by the hour from the deaf, and now somewhat prolix, old statesman. One of his stock anecdotes was, of course, his momentous interview with Napoleon at Dresden, when the baffled and enraged conqueror, who saw that Austria was about to join the Allies, threw his hat down, in one of his feigned tragedy passions, hoping that Metternich would pick it up, and wishing thus to test his pliancy. Unfortunately, I kept no notes of what occurred to me in those charming, heedless days, so that many were the things worth recording I saw and heard which are now irretrievably lost to me.

Old Prince Metternich had some capital stories about the half-witted Emperor Ferdinand which are fresher in my memory, having since been retailed to me by his son Richard. They were very laughable, told in pure Viennese, but of course lose a great deal by translation. One day Metternich

had occasion to go to his sapient master with some papers of the highest importance, respecting which he required the immediate Imperial sanction. He found his Majesty standing at a window overlooking the inner court, or quadrangle, of the Burg, which, under the easy paternal Habsburg rule, has long been one of the principal thoroughfares of Vienna. The Imperial fingers were beating a tattoo on the panes of glass, the Imperial gaze was steadfastly directed on the stream of carriages and foot-passengers, and the Imperial lips were muttering unintelligible sounds at regular intervals. "*Majestät!*" said Metternich, "I humbly crave a few moments' attention." "*Lassen's mi aus!*" (*Anglice*, Don't bother!) was the august reply, given without even a turn of the head. Metternich respectfully represented the urgency of the case. "*Lassen's mi aus!*" repeated the heir of the Cæsars with marked irritation. The Minister summoned patience and waited. After a few minutes the august countenance was turned towards him with a radiant smile, the Emperor triumphantly exclaiming: "*Hundert fünf und Dreissig!*" His Majesty had made a bet with himself that the *fiaker* bearing that number would pass within a given time, and he had just won the bet, as he now explained with great glee to the astonished Chancellor. On another occasion, at a State ball, the Emperor was seeking relaxation in a quadrille, when his partner—one of the prettiest women in Vienna—noticed that he

looked unusually glum and depressed. Evidently trouble somewhere in the Empire! She ventured to ask what was the cause of his Majesty's low spirits. "*Ach! Gräfin!*" he replied with a sigh, "*i hab' a faule Wurzel!*" (literally—I must be excused the translation—"I have a rotten root," or tooth); and then, with a touching appeal to sympathy grown out of possibly kindred misfortune, he inquired: "*Haben's auch a faule Wurzel?*" (Have you also got one?) This monarch, too, it was who, when the pianist Thalberg had been playing his best at Court, went up to him and said: "*Ah! wirklich ausserordentlich!*" (truly wonderful), adding, as the artist bowed low and expressed his sense of the gracious approval: "*Ja! ja! i hab' schon viel spielen g'hört, aber g'schwitzt wie Sie hat noch keiner!*" (I have heard many persons play, but I never saw any one sweat (!) like you).

Such a *fainéant* reign as that of the poor, half-witted Ferdinand would have been barely possible anywhere out of Western China—as Austria, under the old *régime*, has been not inaptly termed. In Vienna itself the Imperial family have ever enjoyed great popularity, and the easy-going, humorous Viennese, no doubt, had a kind of contemptuous tenderness for the harmless, vacant creature who lived in their midst, while they held in deepest reverence the august character with which he was invested. Indeed, excepting for petty police vexa-

tions, press restrictions, and, now and then, acts of severe repression (chiefly, be it remembered, directed against Italians or Poles), the worst evils of absolute government were little felt throughout the Austrian Empire, and the Habsburg sway must on the whole have been very endurable. Less bearable in some ways was the state of things in existence during my stay at Vienna. The Administration to which Baron Bach has given his name was in full vigour, and reaction and, above all, excessive centralisation were the order of the day, especially in Hungary and its dependencies. At the same time it was part of Bach's system to allow considerable latitude to the press, and it was difficult for a stranger to reconcile the unfettered criticism of Vienna or Pesth journals—then already in the hands of the Jews—with the real existence of the arbitrary *régime* on which they passed judgment with such impunity. I have since noticed the same curious phenomenon in Russia, where, under the severest despotism, things are both said and written that would scarcely be tolerated under far freer institutions. The fact is that really vigorous governments can afford to put up with a great deal of openly expressed discontent, and have of late years learnt the lesson that free discussion within certain limits is a safety-valve, and that little danger is incurred from talk so long as the will and power exist to prevent action.

Strange though it may appear, the brightest

spot in the Empire in those days was to be found in the Italian provinces, where the Archduke Maximilian was winning golden opinions from all classes, and, by his wisely liberal measures, was in a fair way towards finally reconciling the mass of the population to Austrian rule. So languishing seemed the national cause in the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, that I remember Elliot telling us, on his return from Florence, where he had spent the winter with his father, that the Liberal leaders, whom Lord Minto saw a good deal of, were in perfect despair, and confessed that the policy of conciliation followed by the Archduke must ere long extinguish in Lombardy all desire for liberation from Austria. Then it was that in an evil hour the Emperor, alarmed, it was said, by purposely misleading reports furnished to him as to the ill effects of his brother's Liberal policy, sent Giulay to Milan as *adlatus*, with instructions to check the Archduke's proceedings. Maximilian threw up the Viceroyalty in disgust, and the old *Schlendrian*¹ of mismanagement went on again as of old, to culminate in Magenta and Solferino.

These Italian occurrences remind me of one of the grandest and most impressive military pageants I ever witnessed. Radetzky died in Italy in January 1858, and his body was brought home for interment. The Emperor resolved to receive the remains with

¹ Almost untranslatable, but applied disparagingly to an old custom or system.

exceptional honours. On the day of the funeral the garrison of Vienna, strengthened by the troops quartered in the neighbourhood, some 40,000 men in all, were drawn up in massive columns on the Burg Glacis to receive the funeral car which had been deposited in a neighbouring church. When all was ready and the procession duly marshalled the Emperor rode out of the Burg, attended by a single aide-de-camp, and took command of the entire force. I watched the *cortège* from the windows of an apartment in the Leopoldstadt. It was a cold, dark day and light flakes of snow were whirled about by the bitter gusts of wind. For hours the troops went past; horse, foot, and artillery; Hungarians, Italians, and Croats; renowned regiments like *Deutchmeister Infanterie* or the veteran Marshal's own Hussars; Dragoons and Lancers, Jägers and Cuirassiers—all in winter campaigning dress, with no gold and no glitter, but the absolute perfection of military trim and equipment. Dead silence in the crowd that thronged the pavements on the line of march, and no sound but the rumble of the artillery waggons, the tread of the battalions, the clatter of horses' hoofs, the clanking of spur and scabbard, the roll of the muffled drums, and—most striking to me of all—the music of the bands playing a solemn strain which seemed strangely familiar and yet had a new and unaccustomed rhythm. Some clever Capellmeister had had the simple, but ingenious, thought

of adapting old Strauss's brilliant Radetzky march to a minor key and a dirge-like measure, and, as regiment after regiment filed by, there came up through the frosty air a fresh wail of this famous melody, with just enough of its old original fierceness and wildness left in it to carry the mind back to the days when they had hoisted the octogenarian into his saddle at Custozza or Novara, the troops as they passed him cheering like mad for "Vater Radetzky," and pressing onwards with such irresistible *élan*, to the sound of that diabolical *Sturm-marsch*, as to drive their gallant foe from position after position till all was over and the Kaiser held his own again in Italy.

Thus they bore him in sternest military pomp to the Northern Railway station, whence he was to be taken to his ancestral vault in Moravia, and surely never were honours better bestowed. Radetzky and the 40,000 faithful men whom he kept to their standards saved the Monarchy at its darkest hour, when all around was crumbling to pieces, when Vienna and Prague were at the mercy of the mob, when Hungary was in flames, and the Emperor a fugitive at Olmütz. It is no exaggeration to say, in the words of Grillparzer,¹ that the Empire was for a time in his camp alone, and that in reconquering Italy he remade Austria.

¹ *In deinem Lager ist Oesterreich.*

CHAPTER XII

VIENNA GAIETIES

I HAVE come to a halt and have been looking through the preceding pages, and am painfully conscious of the frivolity of most of their contents. They are indeed but an empty record of the vanities of "society," a chronicle *à la Jeames* of idle doings now buried in the past; and, as I turn them over, they seem to emit a faint, sickly odour of extinguished wax-lights, faded flowers, and perfumes that have long lost their strength. The only "grace" about them is that "of a day that is dead!" It is with considerable diffidence, therefore, that I return to the subject of Vienna festivities. Yet what is Vienna without its carnival or *Fasching*, and how thoroughly delightful were Vienna carnivals in my time! I will then boldly and unblushingly plunge into some account of them. Alfred de Musset, I think it is, who writes:—

" Le seul bien qui me reste au monde
Est d'avoir quelquefois pleuré ! "

and there is a touching force in this which must come home to many of us. But I would add that it is well, too, to have laughed and been merry, and gaily to have taken such gaiety as Providence has vouchsafed to us in our time—even to

have danced with all one's might and main as I did with the prettiest Vienna *Comtessen*—alas! how matronly they now must look!—when Strauss wielded the bow and Berlichingen led the revels, and there were forty or fifty or eighty feet of clear *parquet* before one—a fair field and no favour!

In our own overgrown society, too, it is the fashion to herd together night after night during the hottest season of the year in so-called “mansions” under the pretence of a ball. What is there of a ball about these gatherings? Neither dancing-space nor music with any true rhythm in it, and but few men or women who can really dance. Little but a mass of struggling couples, shoving and pushing and trampling on each other's toes, or rushing wildly about, keeping no time, and occasionally upsetting whatever comes in their way. I once saw the venerable Lord Lyndhurst felled to the ground at a dance in his own house, and what little breath was left in his poor old body knocked clean out of it. Think what an indecorous ending this might have been to so dignified a life—almost as bad as that of poor Pyrrhus brained by the base utensil of the patriotic Argive dame!

At Vienna they manage these things very differently. When people meet at a ball they *mean* dancing, and have the sense to make everything subserve the end in view. Now the main conditions of this possibly frivolous but assuredly harmless amusement may be said to be space, order, and

proper training. In order to secure the first, the ballroom is held sacred to the dancers; chaperons or lazy loiterers are scarcely allowed inside it. These may sit and talk scandal, or play cards or watch their respective charges from afar in the other rooms, but on no account must they crowd the privileged precincts. The next important requisite of order is obtained by a delegation of absolute authority to that eminent functionary the *Vortänzer*. The office is one of great dignity and trust, and deserves explanation. Erudite *Professoren* would have little difficulty in showing that the institution is of great antiquity, extending indeed as far back as the Jewish kingdom—did not King David himself “dance before” the Ark? In the modern Imperial city of Vienna the chief *Vortänzer* holds his appointment from the Court. Other inferior *Vortänzer* there are besides in the lower strata of society, but I speak here only of the most exalted. The duties then of this master of the revels at Court, and in the private houses where he condescends to officiate, may be most conveniently described by stating what occurs in the case of some foreign Embassy about to give a ball.

The first step of the Ambassadors is to write to the *Vortänzer* and invite him to confer with her. The great man of course calls and assures her Excellency of his devotion to her orders, and lays before her his programme for the occasion. On the day itself he is in attendance half-an-hour before the

time for which the invitations have been issued. From the moment he enters the house he takes, as it were, the command. For instance, he has arranged the order of the dances: so many quadrilles, so many waltzes, so many polkas; he sees to the dances not exceeding a certain time, and a sufficient but not too long an interval of rest being allowed between each. The orchestra obeys his signal alone—the Olympian Strauss himself bows to his directions—and woe betide the unfortunate hostess who should presume to question his arrangements! Lady Westmorland once did this, and the *Vortänzer*, with becoming spirit, threatened to withdraw on the spot; a threat to which she was obliged to yield, for its immediate consequence must have been a general strike of the *Comtessen*, who would not have danced a step without their leader. Then, too, as regards the paramount point of order, he takes care to limit the number of couples dancing at the same time, and restrains, by physical pressure if necessary, any awkward creatures who attempt to crowd the floor instead of keeping along the walls. In all these proceedings his authority is unquestioned, and the fiercest Uhlans and Dragoons, fellows who have had a dozen affairs of honour, submit to him like lambs. His chief responsibility, however, consists in leading the cotillon, and to do this well at Vienna is indeed a triumph of art. Here he has to show both energy and tact, together

with great inventiveness—for new figures have to be devised for the most critical and fastidious of publics who are at the same time performers in them—in fact, the science of a tactician with the gifts of an able commander.

I had the good luck to witness the last years of the reign of the great Berlichingen (the poor fellow died some years afterwards of fever caught during the Sadowa campaign), and it was almost worth a journey to Vienna to see him acquit himself of his duties. To begin with, although then on the shady side of forty, he was the smartest-looking soldier it was possible to see, and wore his becoming uniform of major of Uhlans with inimitable grace. He was one of the best riders in Austria, and, with his tall figure and clean, well-knit limbs, bronzed features and long, tawny moustache, was the perfect type of a doughty knight, such as his own famous ancestor of the iron hand—or even the great Sir Lancelot himself, except that it is hard to realise Sir Lancelot leading a cotillon! As for his dancing, it was the poetry of the art—if art it be. No wonder those dear little Viennese girls idolised him! He had drilled them to such perfection that they marched and countermarched, massed themselves into column, deployed in line and formed square as well as any regiment in the K. K. service, and their Amazonian manœuvres were the prettiest sight imaginable.

All these Mitzies and Resies and Tonies¹—bless

¹ Diminutives of Marie, Thérèse, Antoinette.

their hearts—were the most charming of partners, and for good looks and breeding, simple, artless ways, cheeriness and innocent fun, could well hold their own with most of our London young ladies. I have mentioned that Princesse Metternich had furnished me with a letter to a friend and relation who, I had concluded, must be a matron of influential position. Comtesse Julie Festetics, as it turned out, was a charming, unmarried lady; but, as Princess Pauline had predicted, my introduction to her was of great value to me. Thanks to her patronage, I was at once admitted into the most exclusive *coterie* of *Comtessen*, and the partners with whom I had *fixe Tünze*¹ were, I may truly say, a credit to the Legation. One young lady there was, Comtesse Mariette Hoyos, long since married to Denesch Szechényi—who danced like a fairy, and sang softly to herself like a bird the whole time—how can I ever forget my *zweite Polka* with her! Quite as delightful too—the daintiest of Dresden *figurines* in appearance—was little Princesse Ludwiga Lobkowitz, the brightest of the bright, and most constant of friends, as I have since learnt to know.

Having paid a sincere tribute of admiration to my little Viennese friends, I must in truth add that they erred sadly on the score of excessive pride of birth. I fancy that the Chinese wall which then

¹ "Fixed dances." At Vienna engagements used to be made for a given dance—such and such a waltz or quadrille, as the case might be—for the whole season!

surrounded the Vienna *crème de la crème* has since been a good deal breached, but in my time it was intact, and effectually kept out all those whom these exclusive people were pleased to taboo as not being one of themselves. It is difficult to imagine a greater social trial than that endured by Mdlle. Louise de Rothschild, for instance, on the rare occasions when she could be persuaded to go to balls and parties. Here was a most attractive girl—admirably brought up like all the ladies of her family, clever and accomplished, and with the greatest expectations into the bargain—whom some of the young *Prinzessinen* or *Gräfinnen* would scarcely speak or even bow to, and who seldom got a partner except it was one of us foreigners. I frequently made music with Mdlle. de Rothschild, and have most grateful recollections of the kindness shown to me at the old house of Baron Anselm in the Renngasse. At the same time, it must be owned that the world of the *haute finance* and *bourgeoisie* in some degree deserved such treatment for the lack of dignity they would show on occasion. I can scarcely think without embarrassment of a delightful dance given by the prettiest of little Jewish ladies—Madame K., the wife of a wealthy banker—where a select few of us were placed at supper in a room whence all the other male guests were rigidly excluded, because we were “swells,” forsooth! and *Gesandtschafts-kavaliere*; the hostess, covered with diamonds, and with good looks far rarer than dia-

monds, insisting on waiting on us with her own fair hands like any *Kellnerin*. Notwithstanding all this pride of birth, however, I doubt whether the same antagonism between classes exists in Austria as in Prussia. The Austrian and Hungarian nobles show the most perfect breeding, as a rule, and have an easy *bonhomie* of manner which makes them popular with all ranks of society; they are very different in this respect from the northern *junkers* whose overbearing ways have sown dislike of the Prussian name throughout the Fatherland.

A few more words of the great Vienna houses and I have done with this frivolous portion of my reminiscences. Except at St. Petersburg, I never saw more beautiful *fêtes* than those given at the Palais Liechtenstein or Schwarzenberg, or at the Auerspergs or Pallavicinis. The host of Läufer (runners) *leibhusaren chasseurs* and other gorgeously liveried folk lining the staircases; the proportions and splendid adornment of rooms where each article of furniture, every work of art bore the stamp of long descent and wealth; the brilliancy of the lighting; the lavish profusion of the suppers at which all the guests were seated at small tables—all was in keeping with the historic names and social standing of the givers of these entertainments. Perhaps the Russian receptions may be more complete in detail, uniting with the same sumptuousness the most *recherché* modern refinements, but they are deficient in the stately, old-world grandeur which

at Vienna already existed when Petersburg was yet but a dreary swamp and Moscow a semi-Asiatic capital. The grandees of the Imperial Court certainly did things in perfect style, while, as for that Court itself, the rare functions to which such humble folk as Attachés were admitted were equally splendid in their way. The State apartments of the Hofburg are replete with historical associations, and full of beautiful and interesting old furniture and of almost unique tapestry. The ceilings of most of the rooms are not very lofty, but the *Rittersaal* and the former *Redoutensaal*, used on great occasions, are of magnificent proportions. A State ball was therefore a wonderfully fine sight, to which the perfect uniforms of the best-dressed army in Europe, and the unparalleled display of diamonds and other jewels of the great ladies and of the Hungarian magnates, lent exceptional *éclat*. The most dazzling vision of all was the Imperial lady whose brows in those days were the loveliest that wore a crown, her transcendent beauty far exceeding, to my mind, that of the Empress Eugénie. The Emperor, then only in his twenty-seventh year, with his slight, elastic figure, his wonderful carriage and most winning, gracious countenance, and his consort in all her radiance, were indeed a striking couple. Little could those who beheld them in those early days of their married life foresee the troubled and deeply tragical future in store for them. As for the external aspect of the Imperial residence, it scarcely seemed to

me in keeping with its august traditions. The Palace is a vast pile of ancient buildings without much unity of design, but to which a certain powder and pig-tail air imparts character,¹ and the impression it produces of caducity without much dignity is well conveyed by the artless exclamation of Napoleon's old *grognard* on first beholding it: "*La voilà donc cette vieille maison d'Autriche!*"

The etiquette of the Imperial Court was in some respects peculiar. Secretaries of Embassy and Legation, for instance, were not admitted to it, not being considered *hoffähig*, while plain Attachés were asked to the great official balls. The explanation of this strange anomaly was that in the Austrian Diplomatic Service, as organised in those days, the Secretaries were looked upon as mere employés and were taken as a rule from the upper middle class and seldom promoted to the higher ranks of the profession. Attachés, on the other hand, mostly cadets of the first aristocracy, became Envoys and Ambassadors without having to pass through the intermediate grades. When I first got to Vienna this strange regulation, as applied to foreign diplomatists, was still in force, but was suppressed during my stay there. As an instance of its working I may mention the case of a Belgian Secretary of Legation, whose wife—an Austrian lady belonging

¹ The Imperial Hofburg, which I was destined to see again many years later, has now been entirely transformed by the splendid additions which have been made to it.

to one of the greatest families and possessed of any number of quarterings—ceased to be received at Court from the moment she married. It will scarcely be believed that the worthy Belgian, who had a turn for acting, none the less consented to take part in a theatrical performance at the Archduchess Sophie's (mother of the Emperor); his wife by special favour being allowed to be present at the dress rehearsal, though rigidly excluded from the performance.

But he who would see Vienna at the best of its hearty, rollicking carnival mood (very different, by the way, from the refined viciousness *à froid* of Paris under similar circumstances) should leave the stately *fêtes* above described towards "the small hours," and, jumping into his *fiaker*, be driven down to the Sophienbad or Dianabad, or wherever the law students (*Juristen*) or the sawbones (*Mediciner*) of the University, or maybe the pupils of the Polytechnic school (*Techniker*), happen that day to be holding their yearly revels. The sight of these enormous rooms as you enter them when the dance fever is at its height; when Strauss, enthroned at the far end—apparently miles away—drunk with his own music, is playing his last new waltz composed expressly for the occasion; when three hundred couples are whirling past on the floor which in summer will make way for the hugest of swimming-baths; when the supper-tables in the side galleries are crowded with decently amorous

folk, and with the pick of the prettiest women of the dozen different races of the Empire—this sight truly is one not to be forgotten, and makes you, despite your British phlegm, exclaim: “Yes, indeed, *'s gibt nur a Kaiserstadt, 's gibt nur a Wean!*”

At any rate we all plunged madly into the vortex at the time I speak of, and I can affirm that during the last fortnight of the two carnivals I spent in Vienna none of us were in bed much before seven or eight in the morning. It was hardish work, for by twelve at latest we had to be grinding away in the Chancery till dinner-time, frequently returning there again after eight o'clock in the evening, and on messenger nights being sometimes kept there writing and cyphering till 3 or 4 A.M. Unfortunately for me I had acquired a knack of rapid translation from the German which brought me additional work, my chief frequently giving me long “leaders” from the newspapers to turn into English. Nevertheless, our labours were on the whole instructive enough. The eternal Eastern question, with all its ramifications; the Danubian Principalities, then in course of being organised; that greatest bore of any, Schleswig-Holstein (who in those days, except perhaps Lord Palmerston, dreamt of all it would bring in its train!); German affairs, Polish affairs, Italian affairs, each in turn furnished matter of interest. Most curious, I remember, were Sir Hamilton's reports of his conversations with the old Neapolitan Envoy, Prince Petrella, whose confidences were, to say the

least, unusual, and who predicted his master's downfall several years before it happened. The foreign relations of Austria were fraught with latent danger, although outwardly calm. Russia was sullenly biding the day of reckoning for the pattern ingratitude of Schwarzenberg; Prussia could not forget the humiliation of Olmütz; and Napoleon III. was maturing his Italian designs. The hostility of the Tuileries was masked by the personally friendly attitude of its representative, Baron de Bourqueney; but it was a distinctive vice of the Second Empire generally to have in its employ two diplomacies—a public and a secret one—and while M. de Bourqueney was treating the Austrian Government to the most exquisite dinners, and, in perfect good faith, assuring them of the sympathies of his master, that plotting sovereign was preparing for the great rupture of 1859, and endeavouring to bribe Russia to join him by the offer of Austrian Poland. As one of Prince Gortschakoff's confidants years after textually expressed it to me at St. Petersburg: "He" (the Emperor Napoleon) "was constantly thrusting a thousand franc note into one's palm to commit some infamy or other."

The Cabinet of Vienna was fortunately well served by its Minister for Foreign Affairs. Count Buol Schauenstein (a brother of my old Frankfort acquaintance, Madame de Vrints) was a singular mixture of adroitness and conciliation in public affairs and insupportable arrogance in private life.

He shook hands with Ambassadors and Envoys from great Powers like Sir Hamilton, gave three fingers to the Ministers of smaller Courts, sometimes bestowed a forefinger on a Chargé d'Affaires, and simply ignored the diplomatic groundlings. We used to make bets that we would force him to return our bows at his weekly Sunday receptions, and we sometimes succeeded, but only by firmly planting ourselves in front of him and making a series of marked salutations accompanied each time by a very audible "Bonsoir, M. le Comte!" We forgave him much, however, for the sake of the pretty dances he gave at his official residence on the Ballplatz, and his still prettier daughter. It was an evil day for Austria when he retired from her councils and made way for Count Rechberg.

In May 1857 the treacherous Vienna spring brought on another attack of bronchitis, and I obtained leave of absence to recruit. I first bent my steps by way of Prague to Dresden, whither I was attracted by the presence of my Stuttgart friends, the Scherbatoffs. In the most glorious weather, the squares of the pretty Saxon capital one mass of lilac and honeysuckle, I spent here a delightful week, during which our whole party made a walking tour through the loveliest part of Saxon Switzerland. Hence I went to England by Ostend and did a month of the season in London, crossing over to Trouville, where I again found the Scherbatoffs, and, after three weeks' sea-bathing,

went on to Paris. One night, while enjoying the buffoonery of some Palais Royal farce, I met my old Paris playfellow, Rainulphe d'Osmond, who persuaded me to spend a few days with him at Pontchartrain. His abode was a perfect specimen of the ancient French château, and as such quite charmed me. There were only three of us besides our host, the other two guests being a Piedmontese Secretary of Legation, Count Puliga, whom I had known at Turin, and Périer, a distinguished musician and first violin of the Paris Grand Opéra. I see the place now with its Louis Quatorze architecture, stiff garden laid out by Lenôtre, mossy walks, rococo fountains, and a large sheet of water surrounded by splendid woods, from the recesses of which, in the moonlight nights, Rainulphe with his huntsmen would send forth melancholy fanfares on that dreamy, sweetly false instrument the *cor de chasse*.

These old French homes, which are disappearing apace, have a curious *ancien régime* charm very unlike anything we are accustomed to in English country houses. On crossing the threshold you are carried back a century or so up the stream of time. The same feeling comes over you that you would experience when, rummaging in a dusty old garret, you light upon the picture of some long-forgotten grandam, the canvas all dingy and discoloured, but the face, with its quaint accompaniments, alive and speaking—your own daughter's

face maybe. The link between the living and the dead brings the past home to you with such force that for the time, as it were, you live in and clearly realise it. The daub in its simple pathos has taught you more than many books. The stately, ancestral homes of England, with all their antiquity and splendour, convey no such feeling of an order of things long dead and buried, because their owners have kept step with the age, and, mixing freely with the outer world, have ever remained in harmony with it. There is no break as yet in the social history of the country. Class divisions indeed we have—nowhere perhaps are they more strongly marked—but caste feeling is happily unknown. The spirit of caste, on the contrary, always reigned supreme in France, and though driven out of the open field and ruinously vanquished, still defiantly holds its own in French private life. Thus, within the narrow precincts of their mutilated parks, the crushed descendants of the proudest and most lavish *noblesse* of Europe live simply and inexpensively, but with as much of the outward form and ceremony—nay, even of the well-bred impertinence—of their ancestors as they can possibly maintain. They *tutoyer* their few domestics, keep up a considerable etiquette, deny themselves to all society but such as they deem sufficiently well born or right-minded, and exact great deference from all who approach them. In fact, if they never left their faded homes they might well dream that, except

that the times are hard and money scarce, nothing is changed; that the king reigns at Versailles, and France is still St. Louis' and the Holy Virgin's.

But once outside their gates and all is reversed. Not so much as a cap is lifted to Monsieur le Marquis, or Monsieur le Comte, as he tools his four-in-hand in perfect style over the narrow bridge and through the village street. The group of blue blouses drinking at the door of the *Cheval Blanc* defiantly puff their pipes and look moodily on while the smart team clatters past; and Jean Pierre, fresh from Paris, raises a guffaw among his pot-companions when he mutters something ominous of what may yet be in store for the *sacrés aristos*. Monsieur le Curé, indeed, gives a paternal salute from the tiny plot of garden in front of his vicarage, and two or three giddy young creatures giggle and blush as the whip is lowered to them in token of admiration, but then women and the Church are ever on the side of tradition and sentiment. *C'est déjà beaucoup!*

Not far from Pontchartrain is Montfort l'Amaury, and under the shadow of the crumbling tower whence sprang the mighty Leicester there resided at this time a velvet-eyed Italian widow whom we saw a great deal of. Pleasant musical evenings with her and Périer, and drives all over the quiet, luxuriant country-side, filled up these few brilliant August days. I left Pontchartrain with sincere regret, and am sorry to think that the fine old place has since unaccountably passed away from the d'Osmonds and

into the hands of a *demi-monde* celebrity who purchased it out of the spoils of Count Henckel von Donnersmarck.

The end of August saw me again in my old haunts at Baden, where I found the usual family gathering further increased by my Aunt Arabin, who had left Nice and joined her sister after the admiral's death. At this time we first became vaguely aware of the difficulties of Monsieur de Delmar's position caused by heavy losses on his Ceylon property. These led to his determining, early in September, to go to Berlin, whither he had never returned since the loss of his eyesight. I was about to go back to my post, and it was arranged that I should accompany him and my aunt on my way there. During the week I spent with him at Meinhart's Hotel, Unter den Linden, the Prussian royal family showed the blind old man great kindness. The Regent came to see him, and my aunt was asked to dine *en famille* at Charlottenburg. Most important of all was the success of a negotiation by which, on the royal guarantee, a large advance was obtained from the *Seehandlungsgesellschaft*.

CHAPTER XIII

VIENNA AND RAGUSA : MONTENEGRIN COMPLICATIONS, 1857-1858

I WAS back again in my lodgings at Vienna the last week in September. And this reminds me that I have as yet said nothing about them. The house was in the Löwelgasse, at the corner of the Kreuzgasse, close to the Minoritenplatz. From my sitting-room on the third floor I had a perfect view over the bastion (the *Löwel Bastei*) to the *glacis* beyond, and, in fine weather, with open windows, could hear the music in the Volksgarten and watch the white battalions manœuvring in the early morning. It was a charming apartment, but decidedly expensive, and, being too large for me, I underlet part of it, first to Morier and then to Gould. Here I lived happily for upwards of two years; my rooms, which I had made fairly comfortable, being much resorted to on off evenings, after the theatre, by a small set composed of some of the junior *diplomates* and a few of the young Austrians whom we of our Legation—which has always been a favourite with Vienna society—saw most of at this time. Count Franz Deym, then quite a youth, and his elder brother Ferdinand; Prince Adolf Schwar-

zenberg, shortly afterwards married to one of the Liechtenstein princesses; Baron Otto Walterskirchen, of the Imperial Foreign Office; Prince Hermann of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, and Count Franz Hohenstein—the two latter both serving in the Emperor's Bodyguard, or *Garde Gendarmerie* as it then was called—are those I remember best at these gatherings, where, between music and Morier's sallies and somewhat racy anecdotes, the hours sped on their way cheerily and all too fast.

It is interesting at this distance of time to take count of the subsequent fate of those I have mentioned. Count Deym, after a distinguished diplomatic career, has become the most popular of Ambassadors in London; his brother, as member of the Reichsrath, was an influential leader of the moderate Constitutional party in that Chamber;¹ Prince Schwarzenberg has long succeeded his father as one of the greatest Austrian territorial magnates; Baron Walterskirchen was many years after one of my most valued colleagues as Minister at The Hague; while Prince Hohenlohe (a nephew of her late Majesty) is now Statthalter of Alsace-Lorraine. Count Franz Hohenstein—destined to become Duke of Teck, to marry one of the most accomplished and charming of our princesses, and to be the father of the Princess of Wales—has almost alone of these passed beyond this world

¹ Count Ferdinand Deym died, very generally regretted, at Vienna in 1898.

and its joys and troubles. The remaining few who remember him at the period I speak of will not have forgotten his marvellous good looks, and simple, cheery ways. I should be forgetful indeed did I omit to mention in our set one of my most pleasant colleagues then, and best of friends in after life, Christian de Falbe, Attaché to the Danish Legation, subsequently so well known in England as the representative of his country and the most perfect of hosts in London and at Luton Hoo. He too has gone before, but, when I first knew him, was as strikingly good-looking as handsome "Frantzi" Hohenstein. A stiff knee brought back from some hard-fought field in Schleswig-Holstein gave him a certain halo of romance, but did not prevent his being *le plus beau des valseurs*.

On the first floor of the house in the Löwelgasse lived Count Edmond Zichy, one of the best-known characters in Vienna. We were on very cordial, neighbourly terms, and one night he gave a charming *costumé* supper, preceded by an allegorical charade, in honour of little Mdle. Gossmann of the *Burgtheater*, who was the star of the period, and has since married a son of Baron Prokesch, the veteran diplomatist who presided the Diet in my Frankfort days. At this time I lived a good deal in the theatrical world, which at Vienna is full of variety and interest. I don't remember to have seen anywhere—not even at the *Théâtre Français*

or *Gymnase*—a more perfect company than that of the *Burg*. Their renderings of Shakespeare, in Schlegel's model translation, far surpassed all Charles Kean's meritorious revivals. Who has not seen Anschütz as King Lear or Fichtner as Hamlet cannot, to my mind, have fully realised the beauty and deep meaning of those parts. The care and completeness, too, with which the great Shakesperian histories were given, were above all praise. For instance, in the "Second Part of King Henry the Fourth," Meixner and the other leading comic actors of the company did Falstaff's recruits. Equally good was Schiller's *Wallenstein*, the prologue in the camp especially being put on the stage with extraordinary vividness and historical accuracy. Grillparzer's fine drama of *König Ottokar's Glück und Ende* was no less excellently rendered. I don't believe that even the renowned Meiningers have surpassed the careful *mise en scène* at the *Burg* in those days. The plays, however, which interested me most were those in which Mdlle. Gossmann acted the leading parts, and her impersonation of *die Grille*—an adaptation by Mme. Birch-Pfeiffer of George Sand's *Petite Fadette*—was exquisitely true to life, and as touching as anything I have ever seen on the stage. What admirable artists too were Mme. Heitzinger, Laroche, and Beckmann. The last-named comedian was a general favourite on account of his wit and humour, and was a special protégé of the Schwarzenbergs.

He had been given the run of Prince Schwarzenberg's coverts, having a *passion malheureuse* for shooting, which inspired him with the following epitaph upon himself:—

“ In diesem tiefen Loch
Liegt ein Komiker und Schütze ;
Die Witze die er machte,
Die Hasen die er jagte,
Sie leben alle noch ! ”

Equally clever in broad farce was the company which, under old Nestroy and Treumann, made the *Karl Theater* nightly resound with peals of laughter. These Vienna *possen* and burlesques in the local dialect, of which the *Karl Theater* was the home, are inimitable in their way. Of Nestroy—then almost an octogenarian—the stories told are legion, but unfortunately much too broad to be retailed. He had an incorrigible habit of loose improvisation, which cost him many a fine, and more than one night's lodging in the police-station. He was a tall, bony, sad-visaged man (a confirmed hypochondriac, it was said), and had many traits in common with Sainville, the most amusing actor I ever saw in old days at the Palais Royal, and who had never been known to smile in private life. But the old opera-house of the *Kürnthner Thor*, long since pulled down, is the theatre to which I look back most kindly. Here I heard Madame Czillag, Madame Titiens, and Mdlle. Liebhardt, long before their fame had extended beyond Vienna; and here

I met that charming artist, Mathilde Wildauer, of whom I ever think with affectionate regard. Her voice, a lovely mezzo-soprano, was rather on the wane, but still wonderfully sweet, and from her I first learned those wild, thrilling Austrian *patois* carols which were arranged for her by the composer Baumann, and made the *Versprechen hinter 'm Herd* and *Das letzte Fensterl* the most popular of *operettes* in an age as yet undebauched by Offenbach, Hervé, Lecocq, and other writers of riotous "can-can" music. Poor Mathilde, winsome and fair, and still extremely attractive, although a good deal past thirty—the most perfect type of the sprightly, warm-hearted *Wienerin*—might, any day she liked, have become the wife of Prince August Liechtenstein, but preferred such independence as was left her by two tabby old aunts, whom she harboured on the fifth floor of a house literally overlooking, so high up was it, the roof of the quaint, little, old church of Maria Stieg'n—a gem of Gothic architecture, by the way. Here she gave one the heartiest of welcomes over a cup of weak tea and exquisite *pumpernickel* sandwiches, and here I occasionally met *Terpsichore en retraite* in the person of Fanny Elssler, then on the verge of fifty, but still very taking and wonderfully ladylike. Fanny had a court of ancient worshippers, such as old Marshal Walmoden, of Waterloo renown, General Reischach, and other bigwigs, whom it was an established custom with her to ask to dinner every

year on her birthday. At dessert she would withdraw, and presently returning in Spanish costume, would once more—for the benefit of this faithful *vieille garde*—perform the wonderful *Cachucha*, with which she had first charmed and enslaved them all, and thousands besides, a full quarter of a century before, in the palmy days when she played so great a part in the sad, short life of the Duc de Reichstadt. I never was present at these performances, but it seems to me that there must have been something naïvely touching about them.

I pass over the winter of 1857–58, which closely resembled its predecessor. The early spring brought in a Tory Government, and with it many changes in our Diplomatic Service. Sir Hamilton, who for some time past had talked of resigning, now took the final step, to our great sorrow, and, indeed, to our indignation, when we heard that Lord Augustus Loftus had, by a most unusual course of promotion, been appointed to succeed him. In April the Seymours left Vienna for good, and to me, for many reasons, their departure was a real grief. Up to the last we could scarcely bring ourselves to believe in our chief's definitive retirement. I have since heard from himself the answer he gave the Queen on his return to England, when her Majesty expressed her regret that she should have lost his services so soon, and asked what had induced him to resign. "The fact is, ma'am," he replied, "I had kept the Queen's Arms abroad for so many years that I

thought it was time for me to come home and set up a family hotel." In truth, he was tired of the service, weary of the restless sense of wandering it entails, and impatient to return to the easy comforts of a London home, and the delights of field sports, especially fishing, of which he was passionately fond. In his old age he came into a very considerable fortune under peculiar circumstances. As is well known, he contested the Hertford Irish estates, then worth some £60,000 a year, with Sir Richard Wallace, and was beaten twice in the Courts. A final appeal to the House of Lords was now alone left to him. A few days before this came on he met at the Queen's Concert an ex-Lord Chancellor, with whom he had but a slight acquaintance. "Sir Hamilton," said this dignitary, "excuse my volunteering a piece of advice, which I will put to you in Scriptural language: 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him.'" Sir Hamilton went straight home and made an appointment for the next day with his lawyer, and, having obtained his eldest son's concurrence, agreed to the terms of a compromise that had long before been offered him, and by which he got, if I am not mistaken, no less a sum than £400,000, of which one-half was paid down.

I am afraid Lord Augustus had anything but a gratifying reception from us on his arrival. We were hurt and humiliated in the person of our old chief, who, as he expressed it, "had, after forty

years' service, obtained his Field-Marshal's baton in the Mission at Vienna," and we resented his being succeeded by a man twenty years his junior, and of only six years' standing as Secretary of Legation. We soon discovered, however, that our new chief had excellent points, and I incidentally owe to him some part of such success as I have achieved in the service. War on the Montenegrin frontier was the occasion of his bringing me more prominently before the Foreign Office authorities.

The chronic state of latent hostility always existing between the Turks and the unruly mountaineers, whom they vainly claimed as vassals, had recently turned into open warfare, brought about by some contentions about the border district of Grahovo. The Turks had collected a force in the disputed territory, where, by clumsy generalship, they had allowed themselves to be cut off from their base at Trebigne, and from the fortress of Klobuk whence they derived all their supplies. They were thus in a critical position and anxious to retreat. Some severe but indecisive fighting had been followed by a kind of truce, in the course of which an emissary of Prince Danilo of Montenegro had come to the Turkish camp and had assured the commander, Hussein Tcherkess Pasha, that his march would be unmolested. On this understanding the Pasha commenced a retrograde movement but no sooner had his troops entered the defiles than they were attacked on all sides by the Mon-

tenegrins and slaughtered in great numbers, a small remnant alone succeeding in cutting their way through to Trebigne with their commander. The accounts that reached us at Vienna of these events pointed to so much intrigue on the part of the French and other Governments that Lord Augustus telegraphed home suggesting that some one should be sent to the spot to report on the real state of affairs. His proposal meeting with approval, he kindly selected me for this duty. I left Vienna the second week in May, very much elated by the task confided to me, and embarked at Trieste for Ragusa in one of the Austrian Lloyd coasting steamers, taking with me the faithful Perrini. Summer skies and seas, the novelty of the expedition, and the picturesque scenery of the coast and of the different harbours we put into, made the journey delightful.

Singularly lovely are some of these Dalmatian havens, and among the many changing scenes that crowd my memory I well recollect our gliding one hot, drowsy, Sunday afternoon into the landlocked bay of Sebenico, the entrance to which is barred by a rock crowned with an ancient fort, on which the Lion of St. Mark still proudly rears his head. At Zara I stumbled on Baron Piré, who commanded the garrison, and whom I had often met some years before at Lady Walpole's at Florence. A capital breakfast he gave me, I remember, the only thing really eatable I got throughout my expedition, for the primitiveness of the land as regards food was

distressing, and one had to put up with horrible garlicky messes that would have been trying to far less of a Sybarite than a dainty Viennese Attaché. On reaching Gravosa (the harbour of Ragusa) we found there an Austrian gunboat commanded by Baron Sterneck, afterwards one of the heroes of Lissa; H.M. despatch vessel *Coquette* (Commander Henry Carr Glyn),¹ and two French line-of-battle ships (the *Friedland*, I think, and the *Marengo*), under the command of that distinguished officer, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière. The presence of the French squadron in these waters was extremely distasteful to the Austrian authorities; but one of the French liners was said to require repairs, and permission had been duly asked from Vienna by telegraph for her to remain at Gravosa for that purpose.² It had been courteously granted, the Emperor himself replying: "*Que le bien portant entre avec le malade,*" though considerable, and, I should add, intelligible, suspicion attached to the movements of the French squadron. So great was already the tension between the two Governments (more than six months before the celebrated New Year's Day scene with Baron Hübner), that I remember an Austrian artillery officer telling me that his battery at some point in

¹ Afterwards Vice-Admiral and father of the present Lord Wolverton.

² There existed in those days a regulation by which foreign men-of-war were not allowed to sojourn for any length of time in Austrian harbours without special leave.

the Bocche di Cattaro (Budua, I think) had been supplied with red-hot shot to receive the Frenchmen, who had manœuvred so near the land as to lead to the belief that they were about to force a passage.

My first object on reaching Ragusa was to find out Churchill, our Consul at Bosna Sera, who had come down to the coast to watch events. Churchill, who had distinguished himself at Kars under Williams, greeted me very cordially, and was of the greatest assistance to me in my mission. I had brought a cypher with me from Vienna, and at once set to work telegraphing information to my chief. In a house with loose gunpowder lying about in every corner, such as the Ottoman Empire, the least spark will do the work of an infernal machine, and here were all the materials of as pretty a conflagration as could be wished for. The immemorial racial and religious hatred between Turks and Montenegrins had burst into open and bloody hostilities which foreign agents were busily engaged in keeping alive. Danilo of Montenegro had placed himself under the protection of the Tuileries, and his wife—an intriguing lady whom I came across some years later at Corfu—had, in a journey she had shortly before made to France, won the special good graces of the Empress Eugénie. Consul Hecquard, one of that numerous class of unscrupulous inferior agents which the Tuileries unfortunately too often employed to do its dirty work—it

being of course convenient to be able to disavow them when necessary—was secretly abetting Montenegro and betraying the confidence of the Turks. He was hand and glove with Delarue, a French secretary of Prince Danilo (the very man who had lured the retreating Turkish column into destruction at Grahovo), and now, still further to complicate matters, a French naval force appeared off the coast, and Admiral Jurien selected this moment to go up in state to Cettinje to pay his respects to the prince. He was good enough, by the way, to propose that I should accompany him, but I was not sufficiently gullible to fall into so obvious a trap, much as I should have liked to penetrate the then but little-known fastnesses of the Black Mountain.

During the fortnight I spent at Ragusa I collected a good deal of information respecting all these machinations, and embodied it in a confidential memorandum which afterwards met with approval at the Foreign Office. The French were really at the time acting as cat's-paw for the Russians and subserving the traditional Russian Eastern policy, in the hope, as it afterwards appeared, that in return the Cabinet of St. Petersburg would not oppose the designs of the Emperor Napoleon against the integrity of the Austrian dominions in Italy. As for the Turks, they were blind and incompetent as usual, and sorely tried the patience of their Austrian well-wishers. They had been allowed to land several

battalions on Austrian soil at Gravosa, and instead of marching them up at once to Trebigne to reinforce their beaten commander, they kept them dawdling on the beach for days, under pretence that the mountain passes into Turkey were in the hands of the Montenegrins. Meanwhile a suspension of hostilities had been agreed upon, and Churchill having gone up to Hussein Pasha's headquarters at Trebigne, I resolved to seek him out there, and hand over to him the cypher I had brought with me, before returning to Vienna.

I undertook this trip in no adventurous spirit, although the Austrian general and other friends I had made at Ragusa did their best to dissuade me from it, alleging the road to be unsafe, which indeed it must have been in public estimation, for I had some difficulty in securing a guide and horses. I could not see that I ran any risk from the Montenegrins, even supposing I were to fall in with them, for it was unlikely they would dare to molest an Englishman passing through their lines in an official capacity, during a period of truce. Although the distance between Ragusa and Trebigne is probably not more than thirty miles as the crow flies, it is a long day's journey, so high and rugged is the mountain range to be traversed. I made an early start, and had at once to quell a mutiny on the part of the worthy but corpulent Perrini, who, unused to equestrian exercise, and alarmed by the gossips of the place, showed great reluctance to mount the

stead provided for him. I told him he might stay behind if he was afraid, so, for very shame, the poor fellow climbed into the saddle, where he cut a comically imposing figure with a double-barrelled rifle at his back. Once on the road, his spirits rose apace, and for years afterwards this ride into Turkey was one of his proudest and most-prized recollections. It was a lovely but very hot day, and after ascending for some time, the fairly good zigzag road came to an end at the last Austrian guard-house, after which we had to climb along the barren mountain-side and in and out of ravines by breakneck paths, frequently having to dismount and lead our horses over the slippery boulders on which the sun beat with noonday fierceness. It was toilsome enough; but as long as the sea remained in sight, the views of the boundless expanse of turquoise blue and of the beautiful and strangely jagged line of the Dalmatian coast more than repaid the exertion. Issuing from this wilderness of rocks, at the foot of the descent on the Turkish side, we found a tumble-down building—half guard-house and half “Khan”—at the entrance to a narrow defile, which was occupied by a wild crew who turned out to be an advanced post of Bashi-bazouks belonging to Hussein’s force. This ragged gentry received me with great respect, and with the inevitable pipes and coffee, and when, after baiting the horses, we again mounted and entered the defile, amused themselves by discharging their

matchlocks in my honour as a kind of *feu-de-joie*, which, re-echoing among the rocky windings of the pass, sounded to my inexperienced ear unpleasantly like a sudden attack by the Montenegrins. With the setting sun we issued forth into the broad valley of Trebigne, and, passing into the grey, walled town, soon dismounted at a rambling, ramshackle, old Turkish house where the vanquished Hussein Tcherkess Pasha had taken up his quarters.

After what to my sharpened appetite seemed an excellent Turkish repast of *kebabs*, roast lamb, and *pilaff*, my host—a tall, wiry Circassian of middle age and of great personal gallantry—proceeded to give me at length, Churchill acting as interpreter, the full particulars of his disaster at Grahovo and of the treachery that had led to it. I took notes of his narrative, at the time, which I afterwards made use of in my confidential report to the Foreign Office. At daybreak the following morning Hussein took me for a stroll through the town, while the horses were being got ready, and as we passed a long, one-storeyed building which had been turned into a hospital, he pointed out to me, on a balcony overlooking the street, a group of poor wretches whose faces were bandaged right across so as to leave only the eyes and chin exposed. These were some soldiers of his force who had been taken in action by the Montenegrins and sent back to him, after having their noses and ears cut off. With this ghastly sight haunting me, I took leave of the ill-fated Turkish

commander, and was glad to find myself once more in the saddle and moving homewards through the cool morning air. At the half-way house, where I had rested the preceding day, and where I now parted with the escort that had voluntarily attached itself to me, I bargained with a ragamuffin belonging to it for his long Albanian matchlock, which I have kept to this day as a souvenir of my expedition. There being nothing now to detain me further at Ragusa, I took the first steamer for Trieste, having previously had the satisfaction of calling on the Pasha, who was still encamped at Gravosa, to tell him that the road to Trebigne was quite safe and clear, and that Hussein hoped he would expedite his movements. General Mamula, Governor of Dalmatia, whom I went to see at Zara on my way back, was much amused, I remember, when I told him of my interview with this over-prudent Turk.

Soon after I got back to Vienna Lord Augustus Loftus went on leave, and Julian Fane, who had succeeded Elliot as first Secretary, took charge of the Legation. Poor Julian!¹ I sometimes think that, of the many various natures and dispositions with which I have been thrown in contact during my long service, his was the brightest and most taking of all. His name will long be preserved in the affectionate pages which an intimate friend and

¹ The Hon. Julian Fane, fourth son of the 11th Earl of Westmorland, died in 1870 at the age of forty-two.

brother poet¹ has dedicated to his memory, but of his brilliant gifts and abilities—above all of his strange, almost feminine charm—what words can convey any adequate idea?

Certainly, this summer and autumn of 1858, as well as the greater part of the following year, were among the most restless periods of my life. I find, by reference to some old jottings, that during a twelvemonth I was scarcely more than six weeks in any one place. By the middle of July I was off again to England, where, partly owing to the kind backing of my old friend, John Bidwell, I found Lord Malmesbury, now at the Foreign Office, very kindly disposed towards me. In fact he paid me the then unusual compliment of directing a sketch I had drawn up of Montenegrin history to be published in the Blue Book of Reports by Secretaries of Embassy and Legation.² After a stay of a few weeks in London, I joined my relations as usual at Baden, and, when October drew to an end, returned to Vienna *via* Dresden, where I found the whole Metternich family on the point of starting for their Bohemian estate of Plass, near Pilsen. It required little persuasion to induce me to accompany Prince Richard and his wife thither, and we all travelled together as far as Prague. Here the old prince parted from us on his return to Vienna, and I saw the venerable and benign statesman for the last time.

¹ Robert, Lord Lytton.

² I then only held the rank of second Paid Attache.

From Prague to Plass was a good day's posting, and it was quite dark by the time we reached our destination—a vast, rambling building, which had been a monastery for centuries before being turned into a *Schloss*, and looked grim and comfortless enough in the damp October evening. Yet nowhere have I passed a cheerier week. The only guest besides myself was a Saxon *élegant* of the name of Lüttichau—a very good fellow, by the way, and a capital shot. It was my first experience of Austrian battue shooting on a great scale, and far more delightful, I found it, than the slaughtering of tame pheasants in well-stocked preserves such as old Prince Paul Esterhazy's at Pottendorf, near Vienna. At the same time, it certainly was bitterly cold work trudging through the underwood ankle-deep in the freshly fallen snow ; or standing for an hour or more on a bleak, wind-swept plateau waiting for the closing in of the army of beaters employed in these big *Kessel* or *Kreisjagden*, where hundreds of hares, and perhaps a few roe-deer, are driven over the great plains from miles around. Neither was it precisely transcendent sport to shoot down the wretched, scared creatures that came blindly cantering up to the very muzzles of our breech-loaders in groups of tens and twenties. Nevertheless the solemn depths of the Bohemian woods ; the silence broken only by the crack of the guns or the call of the beaters in their soft Slavonic ; the crowd of foresters in green and grey ; the mid-day halt for

lunch in some wild, sheltering ravine, together made up a Freischutz *mise en scène* that was picturesque to a degree and not readily to be forgotten. The snow fell so heavily during the last two days of our sojourn at Plass, that Lüttichau and I, driving away after dinner in the dark, had the greatest difficulty in reaching Pilsen, being upset several times in the deep drifts that concealed the wayside ditches, and, thus missing the coach to Prague by several hours, had to sleep at Pilsen and post on as well as we could in a hired conveyance the next day.

I now counted upon being in snug winter quarters for some months, but had been little more than a fortnight at Vienna when I was summoned away by telegraph on account of M. de Delmar's dangerous illness. Before I could reach Paris the old man was no more. His death marked a decisive turning-point in our family life, although the extent of his difficulties, to which I have before referred, was not fully known, even to his widow, until later on.

On my arrival late in the evening, two days before the funeral, I found the family party assembled as usual in the familiar *salon jaune*. The old man's green leather arm-chair was, it is true, empty, but then its occupant might well have bid them all good-night but a few minutes before, and, on the arm of his ancient soldier-valet, Mann—grimpest of Brunswick's *Todeshusaren*—have passed out through the heavy curtains to his own rooms, and to the misery of the long, sleepless night-watches.

A certain stillness and solemnity had always pervaded the blind man's house, and, in our daily communion with his affliction, we had acquired something of that hushed demeanour which even the most thoughtless unconsciously put on in the presence of death. Everything, therefore, seemed unchanged this night, and it was hard to realise that the central figure of all had left us for good. The heavy curtain had indeed been lifted for his passage, and from hopeless darkness he had passed into rest and light unquenchable. There sat my dear aunt, handsomer than ever, I thought, in her widow's weeds, pale, calm, and resigned; yet with that piteous look of a creature struck to the heart which those who have once seen it cannot forget. Woman's devotion is a theme on which, to my mind, no eloquence can well be wasted, for it indeed "weaves heavenly roses into our earthly lives,"¹ but such devotion as hers to the blind man, who might have been her father, and had been a somewhat exacting husband, was most touching and beyond all praise.

Then came the funeral to which all Paris society flocked as was his due, seeing that for full twenty years they had enjoyed his too lavish hospitality. We buried him at Montmartre on a bitterly cold winter morning.

¹ "Ehret die Frauen! Sie flechten und weben
Himmliche Rosen in's irdische Leben."

—SCHILLER, *Würde der Frauen*.

A few more days passed, which to me brought welcome and, at the same time, exciting tidings. John Bidwell telegraphed that Lord Malmesbury offered me the Secretaryship of Embassy (the rank of the Mission afterwards turned out to be a mistake) in China, with a salary of £800 a year. I could but jump at such unexpected promotion, although very reluctant to leave Europe in the midst of this crisis in the family affairs. My appointment, meanwhile, made it indispensable that I should go to England and report myself at the Foreign Office.

My time was now taken up preparing for the expedition. So little comparatively was known of Peking at this period, that there was considerable excitement and interest on the subject at the Foreign Office. It was clear that everything for our use must be taken with us, but if I had listened to one tithe of the advice given me, I should have filled a good-sized steamer with my goods alone. Fortunately, I was guided in my purchases by my chief, Mr. Bruce, who was in London making his own arrangements. The £300 allowed me for my outfit were soon expended. One item of it deserves mention, namely, a square piano, by Broadwood, which was afterwards taken off my hands by my chief, and was, I believe, the first instrument of the kind introduced into the mysterious Chinese capital.

Mr. Bruce, for whom I afterwards conceived

feelings of the most sincere respect and admiration, did not at first impress me very favourably. The fact was, that my appointment was not altogether welcome to him, for the very good reason that he expected little useful co-operation in the arduous mission before him from so confirmed an European *flâneur* as myself. Eventually, however, we got on together far better than his first reception of me led me to hope, and it so happened that I came to know him best at a time of exceptional trial, borne by him with singular fortitude, when he cannot have doubted my desire—however small my ability—to assist and serve him.

Two things it was impossible to forget in him: his eyes, which were truly “dark-splendid,” in Tennyson’s phrase, and his deep, tuneful voice. No one that I can remember ever had at his service more wonderful instruments of persuasion and command. In argument—of which he was very fond—he had a peculiar way of fixing and looking through you, as it were, at the same time bringing his fist down on the table with a vigour that was only equalled by the unadorned emphasis of his language. Everything about the man was grand and massive, and, but for a certain leonine indolence of nature, he must, I think, have achieved great things, had he been spared longer to this world and to his country. Certainly no one was better fitted for dealing with, and brushing aside, so to speak, the puny wiles of

Chinese negotiators or the pettifogging chicane of Yankee lawyers.¹ I may be prejudiced by my admiration of him, but, as far as I can judge, though less well known to the public than his brilliant and distinguished elder brother, he was decidedly the abler, as he was the more genial and prepossessing, of the two. It was agreed between us that we should rendezvous in Paris for our final start for the East in the early spring.

I may incidentally mention that it was during this stay of mine in London that the well-known and popular St. James's Club first came into existence. It owed its origin to some friction at the Travellers, in consequence of which most of the Diplomatic Corps withdrew for a period from that club, and it certainly met a great requirement. At this time it was content with a small house in Albemarle Street, was mostly used by foreigners, and ruled by D'Azeglio, the Sardinian Minister, who was really its founder. Here I first met the Marquis de Jaucourt, of the French Embassy, who, of all Frenchmen of my acquaintance, achieved perhaps the greatest success in English society, and—a strange contrast to him—little Count Corti, of the Sardinian Legation. These foreign seceders from the Travellers had previously clubbed and messed together for a few months in a couple of rooms in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, where Jaucourt

¹ Sir Frederick Bruce was afterwards Minister to the United States, where he died in 1867 at a comparatively early age.

one day played Corti an amusing practical joke. The latter had a certain amount of fussy importance about him—a failing not uncommon in the junior ranks of diplomacy, but somewhat irritating to his colleagues. He happened to be left in charge of the Legation at the dead time of the year, when nothing was stirring in the political world, and yet had an aggravating habit of having his letters and despatches brought to him at the diplomatic mess-table, where he would open them with a weighty mien. Jaucourt accordingly laid a trap for him in the shape of a telegram, written on a genuine telegraph form, and enclosed in a regulation envelope, which Corti's servant was instructed to bring to the club at the usual dinner-hour. Of course the members of the mess had been previously let into the secret. Corti opened the telegram, read it, laid it down by his plate, took it up again, carefully conned its contents, looked horribly puzzled, and at last, handing it to his neighbour, said: "*Lisez! qu'est-ce que cela veut dire?*" "*Quoi donc?*" was the reply: "*Il y a: 'ne perdez pas un instant et agissez dans le sens convenu, Carour.'* Eh! bien, *il s'agit évidemment d'une démarche à faire. Vous devez savoir ce qui en est.*" "*Mais non!*" blurted out poor little Corti, "*je n'ai aucune affaire à traiter; il ne se passe absolument rien!*" a confession which, as may be supposed, was saluted with peals of laughter. Corti, who was an extremely clever fellow, and afterwards had a distinguished career,

finally becoming Italian Ambassador in England, took the joke in exceedingly good part. Among his other weaknesses, well known in London society, where he enjoyed great popularity, was an honest conviction that he was irresistible, whereas in reality he was dreadfully disfigured by a broken nose—the result of an accident in childhood—and was, altogether, the ugliest little man it was possible to behold, though at the same time brimful of wit and intelligence.

When I had completed my various arrangements I returned to Paris, and thence to my old post to sell off my things and pack up. I left Vienna and my many friends there with sincere regret, but had no time to linger over the partings.

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