

Memoirs of the Court of St. Cloud (Being secret letters from a gentleman at Paris to a nobleman in London) — Volume 5 eBook

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Being Secret Letters from a Gentleman at Paris to a Nobleman in London

Volume 5

BOOK 2.

LETTER I.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—Since my return here, I have never neglected to present myself before our Sovereign, on his days of grand reviews and grand diplomatic audiences. I never saw him more condescending, more agreeable, or, at least, less offensive, than on the day of his last levee, before he set out to be inaugurated a King of Italy; nor worse tempered, more petulant, agitated, abrupt, and rude than at his first grand audience after his arrival from Milan, when this ceremony had been performed. I am not the only one who has made this remark; he did not disguise either his good or ill-humour; and it was only requisite to have eyes and ears to see and be disgusted at the difference of behaviour.

I have heard a female friend of Madame Bonaparte explain, in part, the cause of this alteration. Just before he set out for Italy, the agreeable news of the success of the first Rochefort squadron in the West Indies, and the escape of our Toulon fleet from the vigilance of your Lord Nelson, highly elevated his spirits, as it was the first naval enterprise of any consequence since his reign. I am certain that one grand naval victory would flatter his vanity and ambition more than all the glory of one of his most brilliant Continental campaigns. He had also, at that time, great expectations that another negotiation with Russia would keep the Continent submissive under his dictatorship, until he should find an opportunity of crushing your power. You may be sure that he had no small hopes of striking a blow in your country, after the junction of our fleet with the Spanish, not by any engagement between our Brest fleet and your Channel fleet, but under a supposition that you would detach squadrons to the East and West Indies in search of the combined fleet, which, by an unexpected return, according to orders, would have then left us masters of the Channel, and, if joined with the Batavian fleet, perhaps even of the North Sea. By the incomprehensible activity of Lord Nelson, and by the defeat (or as we call it here, the negative victory) of Villeneuve and Gravina, all this first prospect had vanished. Our vengeance against a nation of shopkeepers we were not only under the necessity of postponing, but, from the unpolite threats and treaties of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg with those of Vienna and St. James, we were on the eve of a Continental war, and our gunboats, instead of being useful in carrying an

army to the destruction of the tyrants of the seas, were burdensome, as an army was necessary to guard them, and to prevent these tyrants from capturing or destroying them. Such changes, in so short a period of time as three months, might irritate a temper less patient than that of Napoleon the First.

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At his grand audience here, even after the army, of England had moved towards Germany, when the die was cast, and his mind should, therefore, have been made up, he was almost insupportable. The low bows, and the still humbler expressions of the Prussian Ambassador, the Marquis da Lucchesini, were hardly noticed; and the Saxon Ambassador, Count von Buneau, was addressed in a language that no well-bred master ever uses in speaking to a menial servant. He did not cast a look, or utter a word, that was not an insult to the audience and a disgrace to his rank. I never before saw him vent his rage and disappointment so indiscriminately. We were, indeed (if I may use the term), humbled and trampled upon en masse. Some he put out of countenance by staring angrily at them; others he shocked by his hoarse voice and harsh words; and all—all of us—were afraid, in our turn, of experiencing something worse than our neighbours. I observed more than one Minister, and more than one general, change colour, and even perspire, at His Majesty's approach.

I believe the members of the foreign diplomatic corps here will all agree with me that, at a future congress, the restoration of the ancient and becoming etiquette of the Kings of France would be as desirable a point to demand from the Emperor of the French as the restoration of the balance of power.

Before his army of England quitted its old quarters on the coast, the officers and men often felt the effects of his ungovernable temper. When several regiments of grenadiers, of the division of Oudinot, were defiling before him on the 25th of last month, he frequently and severely, though without cause, reprobated their manner of marching, and once rode up to Captain Fournois, pushed him forwards with the point of a small cane, calling out, "Sacre Dieu! Advance; you walk like a turkey." In the first moment of indignation, the captain, striking at the cane with his sword, made a push, or a gesture, as if threatening the person of Bonaparte, who called out to his aide-de-camp, Savary:

"Disarm the villain, and arrest him!"

"It is unnecessary," the captain replied, "I have served a tyrant, and merit my fate!" So saying, he passed his sword through his heart.

His whole company stopped instantly, as at a word of command, and a general murmur was heard.

"Lay down your arms, and march out of the file instantly," commanded Bonaparte, "or you shall be cut down for your mutiny by my guides."

They hesitated for a moment, but the guides advancing to surround them, they obeyed, and were disarmed. On the following afternoon, by a special military commission, each tenth man was condemned to be shot; but Bonaparte pardoned them upon condition of serving for life in the colonies; and the whole company was ordered to the colonial

depots. The widow and five children of Captain Fournois the next morning threw themselves at the Emperor's feet, presenting a petition, in which they stated that the pay of the captain had been their only support.

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“Well,” replied Bonaparte to the kneeling petitioners, “Fournois was both a fool and a traitor; but, nevertheless, I will take care of you.” Indeed, they have been so well taken care of that nobody knows what has become of them.

I am almost certain that I am not telling you what you did not know beforehand in informing you that the spirit of our troops is greatly different from that of the Germans, and even from that of your own country. Every one of our soldiers would prefer being shot to being beaten or caned. Flogging, with us, is out of the question. It may, perhaps, be national vanity, but I am doubtful whether any other army is, or can be, governed, with regard to discipline, in a less violent and more delicate manner, and, nevertheless, be kept in subordination, and perform the most brilliant exploits. Remember, I speak of our spirit of subordination and discipline, and not of our character as citizens, as patriots, or as subjects. I have often hinted it, but I believe I have not explained myself so fully before; but my firm opinion and persuasion is that, with regard to our loyalty, our duty, and our moral and political principles, another equally inconsistent and despicable people does not exist in the universe.

The condition of the slave is certainly in itself that of vileness; but is that slave a vile being who, for a blow, pierces his bosom because he is unable to avenge it? And what epithet can be given him who braves voluntarily a death seemingly certain, not from the love of his country, but from a principle of honour, almost incompatible with the dishonour of bondage?

During the siege of Yorktown, in America, we had, during one night, erected a battery, with intent to blow up a place which, according to the report of our spies, was your magazine of ammunition, *etc.* We had not time to finish it before daylight; but one loaded twenty-four pounder was mounted, and our cannoneer, the moment he was about to fire it, was killed. Six more of our men, in the same attempt, experienced the same fate. My regiment constituted the advanced guard nearest to the spot, and La Fayette brought me the order from the commander-in-chief to engage some of my men upon that desperate undertaking. I spoke to them, and two advanced, but were both instantly shot by your sharpshooters. I then looked at my grenadiers, without uttering anything, when, to my sorrow, one of my best and most orderly men advanced, saying, “My colonel, permit me to try my fortune!” I assented, and he went coldly amidst hundreds of bullets whistling around his ears, set fire to the cannon, which blew up a depot of powder, as was expected, and in the confusion returned unhurt. La Fayette then presented him with his purse. “No, monsieur,” replied he, “money did not make me venture upon such a perilous undertaking.” I understood my man, promoted him to a sergeant, and recommended him to Rochambeau, who, in some months, procured him the commission of a sub-lieutenant. He is now one of Bonaparte’s Field-marshal, and the only one of that rank who has no crimes to reproach himself with. This man was the soldier of a despot; but was not his action that of a man of honour, which a staunch republican of ancient Rome would have been proud of? Who can explain this contradiction?

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This anecdote about Fournois I heard General Savary relate at Madame Duchatel's, as a proof of Bonaparte's generosity and clemency, which, he affirmed, excited the admiration of the whole camp at Boulogne. I do not suppose this officer to be above thirty years of age, of which he has passed the first twenty-five in orphan-houses or in watch-houses; but no tyrant ever had a more cringing slave, or a more abject courtier. His affectation to extol everything that Bonaparte does, right or wrong, is at last become so habitual that it is naturalized, and you may mistake for sincerity that which is nothing but imposture or flattery. This son of a Swiss porter is now one of Bonaparte's adjutants-general, a colonel of the Gendarmes d'Elite, a general of brigade in the army, and a commander of the Legion of Honour; all these places he owes, not to valour or merit, but to abjectness, immorality, and servility. When an aide-de-camp with Bonaparte in Egypt, he served him as a spy on his comrades and on the officers of the staff, and was so much detested that, near Aboukir, several shots were fired at him in his tent by his own countrymen. He is supposed still to continue the same espionage; and as a colonel of the Gendarmes d'Elite, he is charged with the secret execution of all proscribed persons or State prisoners, who have been secretly condemned,—a commission that a despot gives to a man he trusts, but dares not offer to a man he esteems. He is so well known that the instant he enters a society silence follows, and he has the whole conversation to himself. This he is stupid enough to take for a compliment, or for a mark of respect, or an acknowledgment of his superior parts and intelligence, when, in fact, it is a direct reproach with which prudence arms itself against suspected or known dishonesty. Besides his wife, he has to support six other women whom he has seduced and ruined; and, notwithstanding the numerous opportunities his master has procured him of pillaging and enriching himself, he is still much in debt; but woe to his creditors were they indiscreet enough to ask for their payments! The Secret Tribunal would soon seize them and transport them, or deliver them over to the hands of their debtor, to be shot as traitors or conspirators.

LETTER II.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—I am told that it was the want of pecuniary resources that made Bonaparte so ill-tempered on his last levee day. He would not have come here at all, but preceded his army to Strasburg, had his Minister of Finances, Gaudin, and his Minister of the Public Treasury, Marbois, been able to procure forty-four millions of livres—to pay a part of the arrears of the troops; and for the speedy conveyance of ammunition and artillery towards the Rhine.

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Immediately after his arrival here, Bonaparte sent for the directors of the Bank of France, informing them that within twenty-four hours they must advance him thirty-six millions of livres—upon the revenue of the last quarter of 1808. The president of the bank, Senator Garrat, demanded two hours to lay before the Emperor the situation of the bank, that His Majesty might judge what sum it was possible to spare without ruining the credit of an establishment hitherto so useful to the commerce of the Empire. To this Bonaparte replied that he was not ignorant of the resources, or of the credit of the bank, any more than of its public utility; but that the affairs of State suffered from every hour's delay, and that, therefore, he insisted upon having the sum demanded even within two hours, partly in paper and partly in cash; and were they to show any more opposition, he would order the bank and all its effects to be seized that moment. The directors bowed and returned to the bank; whither they were followed by four waggons escorted by hussars, and belonging to the financial department of the army of England. In these were placed eight millions of livres in cash; and twenty-eight millions in bank-notes were delivered to M. Lefevre, the Secretary-General of Marbois, who presented, in exchange, Bonaparte's bond and security for the amount, bearing an interest of five per cent. yearly.

When this money transaction was known to the public, the alarm became general, and long before the hour the bank usually opens the adjoining streets were crowded with persons desiring to exchange their notes for cash. During the night the directors had taken care to pay themselves for the banknotes in their own possession with silver or gold, and, as they expected a run, they ordered all persons to be paid in copper coin, as long as any money of this metal remained. It required a long time to count those halfpennies and centimes (five of which make a sou, or halfpenny), but the people were not tired with waiting until towards three o'clock in the afternoon, when the bank is shut up. They then became so clamorous that a company of gendarmes was placed for protection at the entrance of the bank; but, as the tumult increased, the street was surrounded by the police guards, and above six hundred individuals, many of them women, were carried, under an escort, to different police commissaries, and to the prefecture of the police. There most of them, after being examined, were reprimanded and released. The same night, the police spies reported in the coffee-houses of the Palais Royal, and on the Boulevards, that this run on the bank was encouraged, and paid for, by English emissaries, some of whom were already taken, and would be executed on the next day. In the morning, however, the streets adjoining the bank were still more crowded, and the crowd still more tumultuous, because payment was refused for all notes but those of five hundred livres. The activity of the

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police agents, supported by the gendarmes and police soldiers, again restored order, after several hundred persons had been again taken up for their mutinous conduct. Of these many were, on the same evening, loaded with chains, and, placed in carts under military escort, paraded about near the bank and the Palais Royal; the police having, as a measure of safety, under suspicion that they were influenced by British gold, condemned them to be transported to Cayenne; and the carts set out on the same night for Rochefort, the place of their embarkation.

On the following day, not an individual approached the bank, but all trade and all payments were at a stand; nobody would sell but for ready money, and nobody who had bank-notes would part with cash. Some Jews and money-brokers in the Palais Royal offered cash for these bills, at a discount of from ten to twenty per cent. But these usurers were, in their turn, taken up and transported, as agents of Pitt. An interview was then demanded by the directors and principal bankers with the Ministers of Finance and of the Public Treasury. In this conference it was settled that, as soon as the two millions of dollars on their way from Spain had arrived at Paris, the bank should reassume its payments. These dollars Government would lend the bank for three months, and take in return its notes, but the bank was, nevertheless, to pay an interest of six per cent. during that period. All the bankers agreed not to press unnecessarily for any exchange of bills into cash, and to keep up the credit of the bank even by the individual credit of their own houses.

You know, I suppose, that the Bank of France has never issued but two sorts of notes; those of one thousand livres—and those of five hundred livres. At the day of its stoppage, sixty millions of livres—of the former, and fifteen millions of livres—of the latter, were in circulation; and I have heard a banker assert that the bank had not then six millions of livres—in money and bullion, to satisfy the claims of its creditors, or to honour its bills.

The shock given to the credit of the bank by this last requisition of Bonaparte will be felt for a long time, and will with difficulty ever be repaired under his despotic government. Even now, when the bank pays in cash, our merchants make a difference from five to ten per cent. between purchasing for specie or paying in bank-notes; and this mistrust will not be lessened hereafter. You may, perhaps, object that, as long as the bank pays, it is absurd for any one possessing its bills to pay dearer than with cash, which might so easily be obtained. This objection would stand with regard to your, or any other free country, but here, where no payments are made in gold, but always in silver or copper, it requires a cart to carry away forty, thirty, or twenty thousand livres, in coin of these metals, and would immediately excite suspicion that a bearer of these bills was an emissary of our enemies, or an enemy of our Government. With us, unfortunately, suspicion is the same as conviction, and chastisement follows it as its shadow.

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A manufacturer of the name of Debrais, established in the Rue St. Martin, where he had for years carried on business in the woollen line, went to the bank two days after it had begun to pay. He demanded, and obtained, exchange for twenty-four thousand livres—in notes, necessary for him to pay what was due by him to his workmen. The same afternoon six of our custom-house officers, accompanied by police agents and gendarmes, paid him a domiciliary visit under pretence of searching for English goods. Several bales were seized as being of that description, and Debrais was carried a prisoner to La Force. On being examined by Fouche, he offered to prove, by the very men who had fabricated the suspected goods, that they were not English. The Minister silenced him by saying that Government had not only evidence of the contrary, but was convinced that he was employed as an English agent to hurt the credit of the bank, and therefore, if he did not give up his accomplices or employers, had condemned him to transportation. In vain did his wife and daughters petition to Madame Bonaparte; Debrais is now at Rochefort, if not already embarked for our colonies.

When he was arrested, a seal, as usual, was put on his house, from which his wife and family were turned out, until the police should have time to take an inventory of his effects, and had decided on his fate. When Madame Debrais, after much trouble and many pecuniary sacrifices, at last obtained permission to have the seals removed, and reenter her house, she found that all her plate and more than half her goods and furniture had been stolen and carried away. Upon her complaint of this theft she was thrown into prison for not being able to support her complaint with proofs, and for attempting to vilify the characters of the agents of our Government. She is still in prison, but her daughters are by her orders disposing of the remainder of their parents' property, and intend to join their father as soon as their mother has recovered her liberty.

The same tyranny that supports the credit of our bank also keeps up the price of our stocks. Any of our great stockholders who sell out to any large amount, if they are unable to account for, or unwilling to declare the manner in which they intend to employ, their money, are immediately arrested, sometimes transported to the colonies, but more frequently exiled into the country, to remain under the inspection of some police agent, and are not allowed to return here without the previous permission of our Government. Those of them who are upstarts, and have made their fortune since the Revolution by plunder or as contractors, are still more severely treated, and are often obliged to renounce part of their ill-gotten wealth to save the remainder, or to preserve their liberty or lives. A revisal of their former accounts, or an inspection of their past transactions, is a certain and efficacious threat to keep them in silent submission, as they all well understand the meaning of them.

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Even foreigners, whom our numerous national bankruptcies have not yet disheartened, are subject to these measures of rigour or vigour requisite to preserve our public credit. In the autumn of last year a Dutchman of the name of Van der Winkle sold out by his agent for three millions of livres—in our stock on one day, for which he bought up bills upon Hamburg and London. He lodged in the Hotel des Quatre Nations, Rue Grenelle, where the landlord, who is a patriot, introduced some police agents into his apartments during his absence. These broke open all his trunks, drawers, and even his writing-desk, and when he entered, seized his person, and carried him to the Temple. By his correspondence it was discovered that all this money was to be brought over to England; a reason more than sufficient to incur the suspicion of our Government. Van der Winkle spoke very little French, and he continued, therefore, in confinement three weeks before he was examined, as our secret police had not at Paris any of its agents who spoke Dutch. Carried before Fouche, he avowed that the money was destined for England, there to pay for some plantations which he desired to purchase in Surinam and Barbice. His interpreter advised him, by the orders of Fouche, to alter his mind, and, as he was fond of colonial property, lay out his money in plantations at Cayenne, which was in the vicinity of Surinam, and where Government would recommend him advantageous purchases. It was hinted to him, also, that this was a particular favour, and a proof of the generosity of our Government, as his papers contained many matters that might easily be construed to be of a treasonable nature. After consulting with Schimmelpenninck, the Ambassador of his country, he wrote for his wife and children, and was seen safe with them to Bordeaux by our police agents, who had hired an American vessel to carry them all to Cayenne. This certainly is a new method to populate our colonies with capitalists.

LETTER III.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—Hanover has been a mine of gold to our Government, to its generals, to its commissaries, and to its favourites. According to the boasts of Talleyrand, and the avowal of Berthier, we have drawn from it within two years more wealth than has been paid in contributions to the Electors of Hanover for this century past, and more than half a century of peace can restore to that unfortunate country. It is reported here that each person employed in a situation to make his fortune in the Continental States of the King of England (a name given here to Hanover in courtesy to Bonaparte) was laid under contribution, and expected to make certain douceurs to Madame Bonaparte; and it is said that she has received from Mortier three hundred thousand livres, and from Bernadotte two hundred and fifty thousand livres, besides other large sums from our military commissaries, treasurers, and other agents in the Electorate.

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General Mortier is one of the few favourite officers of Bonaparte who have distinguished themselves under his rivals, Pichegru and Moreau, without ever serving under him. Edward Adolph Casimer Mortier is the son of a shopkeeper, and was born at Cambray in 1768. He was a shopman with his father until 1791, when he obtained a commission, first as a lieutenant of carabiniers, and afterwards as captain of the first battalion of volunteers of the Department of the North. His first sight of an enemy was on the 30th of April, 1792, near Quievrain, where he had a horse killed under him. He was present in the battles of Jemappes, of Nerwinde, and of Pellenberg. At the battle of Houdscoote he distinguished himself so much as to be promoted to an adjutant general. He was wounded at the battle of Fleures, and again at the passage of the Rhine, in 1795, under General Moreau. During 1796 and 1797 he continued to serve in Germany, but in 1798 and 1799 he headed a division in Switzerland from which Bonaparte recalled him in 1800, to command the troops in the capital and its environs. His address to Bonaparte, announcing the votes of the troops under him respecting the consulate for life and the elevation to the Imperial throne, contain such mean and abject flattery that, for a true soldier, it must have required more self-command and more courage to pronounce them than to brave the fire of a hundred cannons; but these very addresses, contemptible as their contents are, procured him the Field-marshal's staff. Mortier well knew his man, and that his cringing in antechambers would be better rewarded than his services in the field. I was not present when Mortier spoke so shamefully, but I have heard from persons who witnessed this farce, that he had his eyes fixed on the ground the whole time, as if to say, "I grant that I speak as a despicable being, and I grant that I am so; but what shall I do, tormented as I am by ambition to figure among the great, and to riot among the wealthy? Have compassion on my weakness, or, if you have not, I will console myself with the idea that my meanness is only of the duration of half an hour, while its recompense-my rank-will be permanent."

Mortier married, in 1799, the daughter of the landlord of the Belle Sauvage inn at Coblenz, who was pregnant by him, or by some other guest of her father. She is pretty, but not handsome, and she takes advantage of her husband's complaisance to console herself both for his absence and infidelities. When she was delivered of her last child, Mortier positively declared that he had not slept with her for twelve months, and the babe has, indeed, less resemblance to him than to his valet de chambre. The child was baptised with great splendour; the Emperor and the Empress were the sponsors, and it was christened by Cardinal Fesch. Bonaparte presented Madame Mortier on this occasion with a diamond necklace valued at one hundred and fifty thousand livres.

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During his different campaigns, and particularly during his glorious campaign in Hanover, he has collected property to the amount of seven millions of livres, laid out in estates and lands. He is considered by other generals as a brave captain, but an indifferent chief; and among our fashionables and our courtiers he is held up as a model of connubial fidelity—satisfying himself with keeping three mistresses only.

There was no truth in the report that his recall from Hanover was in consequence of any disgrace; on the contrary, it was a new proof of Bonaparte's confidence and attachment. He was recalled to take the command of the artillery of Bonaparte's, household troops the moment Pichegru, George, and Moreau were arrested, and when the Imperial tide had been resolved on. More resistance against this innovation was at that time expected than experienced.

Bernadotte, who succeeded Mortier in the command of our army in Hanover, is a man of a different stamp. His father was a chair-man, and he was born at Paris in 1763. In 1779 he enlisted in the regiment called La Vieille Harine, where the Revolution found him a sergeant. This regiment was then quartered at Toulon, and the emissaries of anarchy and licentiousness engaged him as one of their agents. His activity soon destroyed all discipline, and the troops, instead of attending to their military duty, followed him to the debates and discussions of the Jacobin clubs. Being arrested and ordered to be tried for his mutinous, scandalous behaviour, an insurrection liberated him, and forced his accusers to save their lives by flight. In April, 1790, he headed the banditti who murdered the Governor of the Fort St. Jean at Marseilles, and who afterwards occasioned the Civil War in Comtat Venaigin, where he served under Jourdan, known by the name of Coup-tell, or cut-throat, who made him a colonel and his aide-de-camp. In 1794, he was employed, as a general of brigade, in the army of the Sambre and Meuse; and during the campaigns of 1795 and 1796, he served under another Jourdan, the general, without much distinction,—except that he was accused by him of being the cause of all the disasters of the last campaign, by the complete rout he suffered near Neumark on the 23d of August, 1796. His division was ordered to Italy in 1797, where, against the laws of nations, he arrested M. d'Antraigues, who was attached to the Russian legation. When the Russian Ambassador tried to dissuade him from committing this injustice, and this violation of the rights of privileged persons, he replied: "There is no question here of any other right or justice than the right and justice of power, and I am here the strongest. M. d'Antraigues is our enemy; were he victorious, he would cause us all to be shot. I repeat, I am here the strongest, 'et nous verrons'."

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After the Peace of Campo Formio, Bernadotte was sent as an Ambassador to the Court of Vienna, accompanied by a numerous escort of Jacobin propagators. Having procured the liberty of Austrian patriots, whose lives, forfeit to the law, the lenity of the Cabinet of Vienna had spared, he thought that he might attempt anything; and, therefore, on the anniversary day of the fete for the levy en masse of the inhabitants of the capital, he insulted the feelings of the loyal, and excited the discontented to rebellion, by placing over the door and in the windows of his house the tri-coloured flag. This outrage the Emperor was unable to prevent his subjects from resenting. Bernadotte's house was invaded, his furniture broken to pieces, and he was forced to save himself at the house of the Spanish Ambassador. As a satisfaction for this attack, provoked by his own insolence, he demanded the immediate dismissal of the Austrian Minister, Baron Thugut, and threatened, in case of refusal, to leave Vienna, which he did on the next day. So disgraceful was his conduct regarded, even by the Directory, that this event made but little impression, and no alteration in the continuance of their intercourse with the Austrian Government.

In 1799, he was for some weeks a Minister of the war department, from which his incapacity caused him to be dismissed. When Bonaparte intended to seize the reins of State, he consulted Bernadotte, who spoke as an implacable Jacobin until a douceur of three hundred thousand livres—calmed him a little, and convinced him that the Jacobins were not infallible or their government the best of all possible governments. In 1801, he was made the commander-in-chief in the Western Department, where he exercised the greatest barbarities against the inhabitants, whom he accused of being still chouans and royalists.

With Augereau and Massena, Bernadotte is a merciless plunderer. In the summer, 1796, he summoned the magistrates of the free and neutral city of Nuremberg to bring him, under pain of military execution, within twenty-four hours, two millions of livres. With much difficulty this sum was collected. The day after he had received it, he insisted upon another sum to the same amount within another twenty-four hours, menacing in case of disobedience to give the city up to a general pillage by his troops. Fortunately, a column of Austrians advanced and delivered them from the execution of his threats. The troops under him were, both in Italy and in Germany, the terror of the inhabitants, and when defeated were, from their pillage and murder, hunted like wild beasts. Bernadotte has by these means within ten years become master of a fortune of ten millions of livres.

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Many have considered Bernadotte a revolutionary fanatic, but they are in the wrong. Money engaged him in the cause of the Revolution, where the first crimes he had perpetrated fixed him. The many massacres under Jourdan the cut-throat, committed by him in the Court at Venaigin, no doubt display a most sanguinary character. A lady, however, in whose house in La Vendee he was quartered six months, has assured me that, to judge from his conversation, he is not naturally cruel, but that his imagination is continually tormented with the fear of gibbets which he knows that his crimes have merited, and that, therefore, when he stabs others, he thinks it commanded by the necessity of preventing others from stabbing him. Were he sure of impunity, he would, perhaps, show humanity as well as justice. Bernadotte is not, only a grand officer of the Legion of Honour, but a knight of the Royal Prussian Order of the Black Eagle.

LETTER IV.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—Bonaparte has taken advantage of the remark of Voltaire, in his “Life of Louis XIV.,” that this Prince owed much of his celebrity to the well—distributed pensions among men of letters in France and in foreign countries. According to a list shown me by Fontanes, the president of the legislative corps and a director of literary pensions, even in your country and in Ireland he has nine literary pensioners. Though the names of your principal authors and men of letters are not unknown to me, I have never read nor heard of any of those I saw in the list, except two or three as editors of some newspapers, magazines, or trifling and scurrilous party pamphlets. I made this observation to Fontanes, who replied that these men, though obscure, had, during the last peace, been very useful, and would be still more so after another pacification; and that Bonaparte must be satisfied with these until he could gain over men of greater talents. He granted also that men of true genius and literary eminence were, in England, more careful of the dignity of their character than those of Germany and Italy, and more difficult to be bought over. He added that, as soon as the war ceased, he should cross the Channel on a literary mission, from which he hoped to derive more success than from that which was undertaken three years ago by Fievey.

To these men of letters, who are themselves, with their writings, devoted to Bonaparte, he certainly is very liberal. Some he has made tribunes, prefects, or legislators; others he has appointed his Ministers in foreign countries, and on those to whom he has not yet been able to give places, he bestows much greater pensions than any former Sovereign of this country allowed to a Corneille, a Racine, a Boileau, a Voltaire, a De Crebillon, a D’Alembert, a Marmontel, and other heroes of our literature and honours to our nation. This liberality is often

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carried too far, and thrown away upon worthless subjects, whose very flattery displays absence of taste and genius, as well as of modesty and shame. To a fellow of the name of Dagee, who sang the coronation of Napoleon the First in two hundred of the most disgusting and ill-digested lines that ever were written, containing neither metre nor sense, was assigned a place in the administration of the forest department, worth twelve thousand livres in the year—besides a present, in ready money, of one hundred napoleons d'or. Another poetaster, Barre, who has served and sung the chiefs of all former factions, received, for an ode of forty lines on Bonaparte's birthday, an office at Milan, worth twenty thousand livres in the year—and one hundred napoleons d'or for his travelling expenses.

The sums of money distributed yearly by Bonaparte's agents for dedications to him by French and foreign authors, are still greater than those fixed for regular literary pensions. Instead of discouraging these foolish and impertinent contributions, which genius, ingenuity, necessity, or intrusion, lay on his vanity, he rather encourages them. His name is, therefore, found in more dedications published within these last five years than those of all other Sovereign Princes in Europe taken together for the last century. In a man whose name, unfortunately for humanity, must always live in history, it is a childish and unpardonable weakness to pay so profusely for the short and uncertain immortality which some dull or obscure scribbler or poetaster confers on him.

During the last Christmas holidays I dined at Madame Remisatu's, in company with Duroc. The question turned upon literary productions and the comparative merit of the compositions of modern French and foreign authors. "As to the merits or the quality," said Duroc, "I will not take upon me to judge, as I profess myself totally incompetent; but as to their size and quantity I have tolerably good information, and it will not, therefore, be very improper in me to deliver my opinion. I am convinced that the German and Italian authors are more numerous than those of my own country, for the following reasons: I suppose, from what I have witnessed and experienced for some years past, that of every book or publication printed in France, Italy, and Germany, each tenth is dedicated to the Emperor. Now, since last Christmas ninety-six German and seventy-one Italian authors have inscribed their works to His Majesty, and been rewarded for it; while during the same period only sixty-six Frenchmen have presented their offerings to their Sovereign." For my part I think Duroc's conclusion tolerably just.

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Among all the numerous hordes of authors who have been paid, recompensed, or encouraged by Bonaparte, none have experienced his munificence more than the Italian Spanicetti and the German Ritterstein. The former presented him a genealogical table in which he proved that the Bonaparte family, before their emigration from Tuscany to Corsica, four hundred years ago, were allied to the most ancient Tuscany families, even to that of the House of Medicis; and as this house has given two queens to the Bourbons when Sovereigns of France, the Bonapartes are, therefore, relatives of the Bourbons; and the sceptre of the French Empire is still in the same family, though in a more worthy branch. Spanicetti received one thousand louis—in gold, a pension of six thousand livres—for life, and the place of a chef du bureau in the ministry of the home department of the Kingdom of Italy, producing eighteen thousand livres yearly.

Ritterstein, a Bavarian genealogist, proved the pedigree of the Bonapartes as far back as the first crusades, and that the name of the friend of Richard Coeur de Lion was not Blondel, but Bonaparte; that he exchanged the latter for the former only to marry into the Plantagenet family, the last branch of which has since been extinguished by its intermarriage and incorporation with the House of Stuart, and that, therefore, Napoleon Bonaparte is not only related to most Sovereign Princes of Europe, but has more right to the throne of Great Britain than George the Third, being descended from the male branch of the Stuarts; while this Prince is only descended from the female branch of the same royal house. Ritterstein was presented with a snuff-box with Bonaparte's portrait set with diamonds, valued at twelve thousand livres, and received twenty-four thousand livres ready money, together with a pension of nine thousand livres—in the year, until he could be better provided for. He was, besides, nominated a Knight of the Legion of Honour. It cannot be denied but that Bonaparte rewards like a real Emperor.

But artists as well as authors obtain from him the same encouragement, and experience the same liberality. In our different museums we, therefore, already, see and admire upwards of two hundred pictures, representing the different actions, scenes, and achievements of Bonaparte's public life. It is true they are not all highly finished or well composed or delineated, but they all strike the spectators more or less with surprise or admiration; and it is with us, as, I suppose, with you, and everywhere else, the multitude decide: for one competent judge or real connoisseur, hundreds pass, who stare, gape, are charmed, and inspire thousands of their acquaintance, friends, and neighbours with their own satisfaction. Believe me, Napoleon the First well knows the age, his contemporaries, and, I fear, even posterity.

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That statuaries and sculptors consider him also as a generous patron, the numerous productions of their chisels in France, Italy, and Germany, having him for their object, seem to evince. Ten sculptors have already represented his passage over the Mount St. Bernard, eighteen his passage over Pont de Lodi, and twenty-two that over Pont d' Arcole. At Rome, Milan, Turin, Lyons, and Paris are statues of him representing his natural size; and our ten thousand municipalities have each one of his busts; without mentioning the thousands of busts all over Europe, not excepting even your own country. When Bonaparte sees under the windows of the Tuileries the statue of Caesar placed in the garden of that palace, he cannot help saying to himself: "Marble lives longer than man." Have you any doubt that his ambition and vanity extend beyond the grave?

The only artist I ever heard of who was disappointed and unrewarded for his labour in attempting to eternize the memory of Napoleon Bonaparte, was a German of the name of Schumacher. It is, indeed, allowed that he was more industrious, able, and well-meaning than ingenious or considerate. He did not consider that it would be no compliment to give the immortal hero a hint of being a mortal man. Schumacher had employed near three years in planning and executing in marble the prettiest model of a sepulchral monument I have ever seen, read or heard of. He had inscribed it: "The Future Tomb of Bonaparte the Great." Under the patronage of Count von Beast, he arrived here; and I saw the model in the house of this Minister of the German Elector Arch—Chancellor, where also many French artists went to inspect it. Count von Beast asked De Segur, the grand master of the ceremonies, to request the Emperor to grant Schumacher the honour of showing him his performance. De Segur advised him to address himself to Duroc, who referred him to Devon, who, after looking at it, could not help paying a just tribute to the execution and to the talents of the artist, though he disapproved of the subject, and declined mentioning it to the Emperor. After three months' attendance in this capital, and all petitions and memorials to our great folks remaining unanswered, Schumacher obtained an audience of Fouche, in which he asked permission to exhibit his model of Bonaparte's tomb to the public for money, so as to be enabled to return to his country.

"Where is it now?" asked Fouche.

"At the Minister's of the Elector Arch-Chancellor," answered the artist.

"But where do you intend to show it for money?" continued Fouche.

"In the Palais Royal."

"Well, bring it there," replied Fouche.

The same evening that it was brought there, Schumacher was arrested by a police commissary, his model packed up, and, with himself, put under the care of two



gendarmes, who carried them both to the other side of the Rhine. Here the Elector of Baden gave him some money to return to his home, near Aschaffenburg, where he has since exposed for money the model of a grand tomb for a little man. I have just heard that one of your countrymen has purchased it for one hundred and fifty louis d'or.

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LETTER V.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—Those who only are informed of the pageantry of our Court, of the expenses of our courtiers, of the profusion of our Emperor, and of the immense wealth of his family and favourites, may easily be led to believe that France is one of the happiest and most prosperous countries in Europe. But for those who walk in our streets, who visit our hospitals, who count the number of beggars and of suicides, of orphans and of criminals, of prisoners and of executioners, it is a painful necessity to reverse the picture, and to avow that nowhere, comparatively, can there be found so much collective misery. And it is not here, as in other States, that these unfortunate, reduced, or guilty are persons of the lowest classes of society; on the contrary, many, and, I fear, the far greater part, appertain to the ci-devant privileged classes, descended from ancestors noble, respectable, and wealthy, but who by the Revolution have been degraded to misery or infamy, and perhaps to both.

When you stop but for a moment in our streets to look at something exposed for sale in a shop-window, or for any other cause of curiosity or want, persons of both sexes, decently dressed, approach you, and whisper to you: “Monsieur, bestow your charity on the Marquis, or Marquise—on the Baron or Baroness, such a one, ruined by the Revolution;” and you sometimes hear names on which history has shed so brilliant a lustre that, while you contemplate the deplorable reverses of human greatness, you are not a little surprised to find that it is in your power to relieve with a trifle the wants of the grandson of an illustrious warrior, before whom nations trembled, or of the granddaughter of that eminent statesman who often had in his hands the destiny of Empires. Some few solitary walks, incognito, by Bonaparte, in the streets of his capital, would perhaps be the best preservative against unbounded ambition and confident success that philosophy could present to unfeeling tyranny.

Some author has written that “want is the parent of industry, and wretchedness the mother of ingenuity.” I know that you have often approved and rewarded the ingenious productions of my emigrated countrymen in England; but here their labours and their endeavours are disregarded; and if they cannot or will not produce anything to flatter the pride or appetite of the powerful or rich upstarts, they have no other choice left but beggary or crime, meanness or suicide. How many have I heard repent of ever returning to a country where they have no expectation of justice in their claims, no hope of relief in their necessities, where death by hunger, or by their own hands, is the final prospect of all their sufferings.

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Many of our ballad-singers are disguised emigrants; and I know a ci-devant Marquis who is, incognito, a groom to a contractor, the son of his uncle's porter. Our old pedlars complain that their trade is ruined by the Counts, by the Barons and Chevaliers who have monopolized all their business. Those who pretend to more dignity, but who have in fact less honesty, are employed in our billiard and gambling-houses. I have seen two music-grinders, one of whom was formerly a captain of infantry, and the other a Counsellor of Parliament. Every day you may bestow your penny or halfpenny on two veiled girls playing on the guitar or harp—the one the daughter of a ci-devant Duke, and the other of a ci-devant Marquis, a general under Louis XVI. They are usually placed, the one on the Boulevards, and the other in the Elysian Fields; each with an old woman by her side, holding a begging-box in her hand. I am told one of the women has been the nurse of one of those ladies. What a recollection, if she thinks of the past, in contemplating the present!

On the day of Bonaparte's coronation, and a little before he set out with his Pope and other splendid retinue, an old man was walking slowly on the Quai de Voltaire, without saying a word, but a label was pinned to his hat with this inscription: "I had sixty thousand livres rent—I am eighty years of age, and I request alms." Many individuals, even some of Bonaparte's soldiers, gave him their mite; but as soon as he was observed he was seized by the police agents, and has not since been heard of. I am told his name is De la Roche, a ci-devant Chevalier de St. Louis, whose property was sold in 1793 as belonging to an emigrant, though at the time he was shut up here as a prisoner, suspected of aristocracy. He has since for some years been a water-carrier; but his strength failing, he supported himself lately entirely by begging. The value of the dress of one of Bonaparte's running footmen might have been sufficient to relieve him for the probably short remainder of his days. But it is more easy and agreeable in this country to bury undeserved want in dungeons than to renounce unnecessary and useless show to relieve it. In the evening the remembrance of these sixty thousand livres of the poor Chevalier deprived me of all pleasure in beholding the sixty thousand lamps decorating and illuminating Bonaparte's palace of the Tuileries.

Some of the emigrants, whose strength of body age has not impaired, or whose vigour of mind misfortunes have not depressed, are now serving as officers or soldiers under the Emperor of the French, after having for years fought in vain for the cause of a King of France in the brave army of Conde. Several are even doing duty in Bonaparte's household troops, where I know one who is a captain, and who, for distinguishing himself in combating the republicans, received the Order of St. Louis, but is now made a knight of Napoleon's Republican Order, the Legion of Honour, for bowing

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gracefully to Her Imperial Majesty the Empress. As he is a man of real honour, this favour is not quite in its place; but I am convinced that should one day an opportunity present itself, he will not miss it, but prove that he has never been misplaced. Another emigrant who, after being a page to the Duc d'Angouleme, made four campaigns as an officer of the Uhlans in the service of the Emperor of Germany, and was rewarded with the Military Order of Maria Theresa, is now a knight of the Legion of Honour, and an officer of the Mamelukes of the Emperor of the French. Four more emigrants have engaged themselves in the same corps as common Mamelukes, after being for seven years volunteers in the legion of Mirabeau, under the Prince de Conde. It were to be wished that the whole of this favourite corps were composed of returned emigrants. I am sure they would never betray the confidence of Napoleon, but they would also never swear allegiance to another Bonaparte.

While the humbled remnants of one sex of the ci-devant privileged classes are thus or worse employed, many persons of the other sex have preferred domestic servitude to courtly splendour, and are chambermaids or governesses, when they might have been Maids of Honour or ladies-in-waiting. Mademoiselle de R-----, daughter of Marquis de R-----, was offered a place as a Maid of Honour to Princesse Murat, which she declined, but accepted at the same time the offer of being a companion of the rich Madame Moulin, whose husband is a ci-devant valet of Comte de Brienne. Her father and brother suffered for this choice and preference, which highly offended Bonaparte, who ordered them both to be transported to Guadeloupe, under pretence that the latter had said in a coffee-house that his sister would rather have been the housemaid of the wife of a ci-devant valet, than the friend of the wife of a ci-devant assassin and Septembrizer. It was only by a valuable present to Madame Bonaparte from Madame Moulin, that Mademoiselle de B----- was not included in the act of proscription against her father and brother.

I am sorry to say that returned emigrants have also been arrested for frauds and debts, and even tried and convicted of crimes. But they are proportionally few, compared with those who, without support, and perhaps without hope, and from want of resignation and submission to the will of Providence, have, in despair, had recourse to the pistol or dagger, or in the River Seine buried their remembrance both of what they have been and of what they were. The suicides of the vicious capital are reckoned upon an average to amount to one hundred in the month; and for these last three years, one-tenth, at least, have been emigrants of both sexes!

LETTER VI.

Paris, September, 1805.

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My lord:—Nobody here, except his courtiers, denies that Bonaparte is vain, cruel, and ambitious; but as to his private, personal, or domestic vices, opinions are various, and even opposite. Most persons, who have long known him, assert that women are his aversion; and many anecdotes have been told of his unnatural and horrid propensities. On the other hand, his seeming attachment to his wife is contradictory to these rumours, which certainly are exaggerated. It is true, indeed, that it was to oblige Barras, and to obtain her fortune, that he accepted of her hand ten years ago; though insinuating, she was far from being handsome, and had long passed the period of inspiring love by her charms. Her husband's conduct towards her may, therefore, be construed, perhaps, into a proof of indifference towards the whole sex as much as into an evidence of his affection towards her. As he knew who she was when he received her from the chaste arms of Barras, and is not unacquainted with her subsequent intrigues particularly during his stay in Egypt—policy may influence a behaviour which has some resemblance to esteem. He may choose to live with her, but it is impossible he can love her.

A lady, very intimate with Princesse Louis Bonaparte, has assured me that, had it not been for Napoleon's singular inclination for his youthful stepdaughter, he would have divorced his wife the first year of his consulate, and that indirect proposals on that subject had already been made her by Talleyrand. It was then reported that Bonaparte had his eyes fixed upon a Russian Princess, and that from the friendship which the late Emperor Paul professed for him, no obstacles to the match were expected to be encountered at St. Petersburg. The untimely end of this Prince, and the supplications of his wife and daughter, have since altered his intent, and Madame Napoleon and her children are now, if I may use the expression, incorporated and naturalized with the Bonaparte family.

But what has lately occurred here will better serve to show that Bonaparte is neither averse nor indifferent to the sex. You read last summer in the public prints of the then Minister of the Interior (Chaptal) being made a Senator; and that he was succeeded by our Ambassador at Vienna Champagny. This promotion was the consequence of a disgrace, occasioned by his jealousy of his mistress, a popular actress, Mademoiselle George, one of the handsomest women of this capital. He was informed by his spies that this lady frequently, in the dusk of the evening, or when she thought him employed in his office, went to the house of a famous milliner in the Rue St. Honor, where, through a door in an adjoining passage, a person, who carefully avoided showing his face, always entered immediately before or after her, and remained as long as she continued there. The house was then by his orders beset with spies, who were to inform him the next time she went to the milliner. To be near at hand, he

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had hired an apartment in the neighbourhood, where the very next day her visit to the milliner's was announced to him. While his secretary, with four other persons, entered the milliner's house through the street door, Chaptal, with four of his spies, forced the door of the passage open, which was no sooner done than the disguised gallant was found, and threatened in the most rude manner by the Minister and his companions. He would have been still worse used had not the unexpected appearance of Duroc and a whisper to Chaptal put a stop to the fury of this enraged lover. The incognito is said to have been Bonaparte himself, who, the same evening, deprived Chaptal of his ministerial portfolio, and would have sent him to Cayenne, instead of to the Senate, had not Duroc dissuaded his Sovereign from giving an eclat to an affair which it, would be best to bury in oblivion.

Chaptal has never from that day approached Mademoiselle George, and, according to report, Napoleon has also renounced this conquest in favour of Duroc, who is at least her nominal gallant. The quantity of jewels with which she has recently been decorated, and displayed with so much ostentation in the new tragedy, 'The Templars', indicate, however, a Sovereign rather than a subject for a lover. And, indeed, she already treats the directors of the theatre, her comrades, and even the public, more as a real than a theatrical Princess. Without any cause whatever, but from a mere caprice to see the camp on the coast, she set out, without leave of absence, and without any previous notice, on the very day she was to play; and this popular and interesting tragedy was put off for three weeks, until she chose to return to her duty.

When complaint was made to the prefects of the palace, now the governors of our theatres, Duroc said that the orders of the Emperor were that no notice should be taken of this 'etourderie', which should not occur again.

Chaptal was, before the Revolution, a bankrupt chemist at Montpellier, having ruined himself in search after the philosopher's stone. To persons in such circumstances, with great presumption, some talents, but no principles, the Revolution could not, with all its anarchy, confusion, and crime, but be a real blessing, as Chaptal called it in his first speech at the Jacobin Club. Wishing to mimic, at Montpellier, the taking of the Bastille at Paris, he, in May, 1790, seduced the lower classes and the suburbs to an insurrection, and to an attack on the citadel, which the governor, to avoid all effusion of blood, surrendered without resistance. He was denounced by the municipality to the National Assembly, for these and other plots and attempts, but Robespierre and other Jacobins defended him, and he escaped even imprisonment. During 1793 and 1794, he monopolized the contract for making and providing the armies with gunpowder; a favour for which he paid Barrere, Carnot, and other members of the Committee of Public Safety, six millions of

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livres—but by which he pocketed thirty-six millions of livres—himself. He was, under the Directory, menaced with a prosecution for his pillage, but bought it off by a *douceur* to Rewbel, Barras, and Siyes. In 1799, he advanced Bonaparte twelve millions of livres—to bribe adherents for the new Revolution he meditated, and was, in recompense, instead of interest, appointed first Counsellor of State; and when Lucien Bonaparte, in September, 1800, was sent on an embassy to Spain, Chaptal succeeded him in the Ministry of the Interior. You may see by this short account that the chemist Chaptal has, in the Revolution, found the true philosophical stone. He now lives in great style, and has, besides three wives alive (from two of whom he has been divorced), five mistresses, with each a separate establishment. This Chaptal is regarded here as the most moral character that has figured in our Revolution, having yet neither committed a single murder nor headed any of our massacres.

LETTER VII.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—I have read a copy of a letter from Madrid, circulated among the members of our foreign diplomatic corps, which draws a most deplorable picture of the Court and Kingdom of Spain. Forced into an unprofitable and expensive war, famine ravaging some, and disease other provinces, experiencing from allies the treatment of tyrannical foes, disunion in his family and among his Ministers, His Spanish Majesty totters on a throne exposed to the combined attacks of internal disaffection and external plots, with no other support than the advice of a favourite, who is either a fool or a traitor, and perhaps both.

As the Spanish monarchy has been more humbled and reduced during the twelve years' administration of the Prince of Peace than during the whole period that it has been governed by Princes of the House of Bourbon, the heir of the throne, the young Prince of Asturias, has, with all the moderation consistent with duty, rank, and consanguinity, tried to remove an upstart, universally despised for his immorality as, well as for his incapacity; and who, should he continue some years longer to rule in the name of Charles IV., will certainly involve his King and his country in one common ruin. Ignorant and presumptuous, even beyond upstarts in general, the Prince of Peace treats with insolence all persons raised above him by birth or talents, who refuse to be his accomplices or valets. Proud and certain of the protection of the Queen, and of the weakness of the King, the Spanish nobility is not only humbled, provoked, and wronged by him, but openly defied and insulted.

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You know the nice principles of honour and loyalty that have always formerly distinguished the ancient families of Spain. Believe me that, notwithstanding what appearances indicate to the contrary, the Spanish grandee who ordered his house to be pulled down because the rebel constable had slept in it, has still many descendants, but loyal men always decline to use that violence to which rebels always resort. Soon after the marriage of the Prince of Asturias, in October, 1801, to his cousin, the amiable Maria Theresa, Princess Royal of Naples, the ancient Spanish families sent some deputies to Their Royal Highnesses, not for the purpose of intriguing, but to lay before them the situation of the kingdom, and to inform them of the real cause of all disasters. They were received as faithful subjects and true patriots, and Their Royal Highnesses promised every support in their power towards remedying the evil complained of, and preventing, if possible, the growth of others.

The Princess of Asturias is a worthy granddaughter of Maria Theresa of Austria, and seems to inherit her character as well as her virtues. She agreed with her royal consort that, after having gained the affection of the Queen by degrees, it would be advisable for her to insinuate some hints of the danger that threatened their country and the discontent that agitated the people. The Prince of Asturias was to act the same part with his father as the Princess did with his mother. As there is no one about the person of Their Spanish Majesties, from the highest lord to the lowest servant, who is not placed there by the favourite, and act as his spies, he was soon aware that he had no friend in the heir to the throne. His conversation with Their Majesties confirmed him in this supposition, and that some secret measures were going on to deprive him of the place he occupied, if not of the royal favour. All visitors to the Prince and Princess of Asturias were, therefore, watched by his emissaries; and all the letters or memorials sent to them by the post were opened, read, and; if contrary to his interest, destroyed, and their writers imprisoned in Spain or banished to the colonies. These measures of injustice created suspicion, disunion, and, perhaps, fear, among the members of the Asturian cabal, as it was called; all farther pursuit, therefore, was deferred until more propitious times, and the Prince of Peace remained undisturbed and in perfect security until the rupture with your country last autumn.

It is to be lamented that, with all their valuable qualities and feelings of patriotism, the Prince and Princess of Asturias do not possess a little dissimulation and more knowledge of the world. The favourite tried by all means to gain their good opinion, but his advances met with that repulse they morally deserved, but which, from policy, should have been suspended or softened, with the hope of future accommodation.

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Beurnonville, the Ambassador of our Court to the Court of Madrid, was here upon leave of absence when war was declared by Spain against your country, and his first secretary, Herman, acted as charge d'affaires. This Herman has been brought up in Talleyrand's office, and is both abler and more artful than Beurnonville; he possesses also the full confidence of our Minister, who, in several secret and pecuniary transactions, has obtained many proofs of this secretary's fidelity as well as capacity. The views of the Cabinet of St. Cloud were, therefore, not lost sight of, nor its interest neglected at Madrid.

I suppose you have heard that the Prince of Peace, like all other ignorant and illiberal people, believes no one can be a good or clever man who is not also his countryman, and that all the ability and probity of the world is confined within the limits of Spain. On this principle he equally detests France and England, Germany and Russia, and is, therefore, not much liked by our Government, except for his imbecility, which makes him its tool and dupe. His disgrace would not be much regretted here, where we have it in our power to place or displace Ministers in certain States, whenever and as often as we like. On this occasion, however, we supported him, and helped to dissolve the cabal formed against him; and that for the following reasons:

By the assurances of Beurnonville, Bonaparte and Talleyrand had been led to believe that the Prince and Princess of Asturias were well affected to France, and to them personally; and conceiving themselves much more certain of this than of the good disposition of the favourite, though they did not take a direct part against him, at the same time they did not disclose what they knew was determined on to remove him from the helm of affairs. During Beurnonville's absence, however, Herman had formed an intrigue with a Neapolitan girl, in the suite of Asturias, who, influenced by love or bribes, introduced him into the Cabinet where her mistress kept her correspondence with her royal parents. With a pick-lock key he opened all the drawers, and even the writing-desk, in which he is said to have discovered written evidence that, though the Princess was not prejudiced against France, she had but an indifferent opinion of the morality and honesty of our present Government and of our present governors. One of these original papers Herman appropriated to himself, and despatched to this capital by an extraordinary courier, whose despatches, more than the rupture with your country, forced Beurnonville away in a hurry from the agreeable society of gamesters and prostitutes, chiefly frequented by him in this capital.

It is not and cannot be known yet what was the exact plan of the Prince and Princess of Asturias and their adherents; but a diplomatic gentleman, who has just arrived from Madrid, and who can have no reason to impose upon me, has informed me of the following particulars:

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Their Royal Highnesses succeeded perfectly in their endeavours to gain the well-merited tenderness and approbation of their Sovereigns in everything else but when the favourite was mentioned with any slight, or when any insinuations were thrown out concerning the mischief arising from his tenacity of power, and incapacity of exercising it with advantage to the State. The Queen was especially irritated when such was the subject of conversation or of remark; and she finally prohibited it under pain of her displeasure. A report even reached Their Royal Highnesses, that the Prince of Peace had demanded their separation and separate confinement. Nothing could, therefore, be effected to impede the progress of wickedness and calamity, but by some temporary measure of severity. In this disagreeable dilemma, it was resolved by the cabal to send the Queen to a convent, until her favourite had been arrested and imprisoned; to declare the Prince of Asturias Regent during the King's illness (His Majesty then still suffered from several paralytic strokes), and to place men of talents and patriotism in the place of the creatures of the Prince of Peace. As soon as this revolution was organized, the Queen would have been restored to full liberty and to that respect due to her rank.

This plan had been communicated to our Ambassador, and approved of by our Government; but when Herman in such an honest manner had inspected the confidential correspondence of the Princess of Asturias, Beurnonville was instructed by Talleyrand to, warn the favourite of the impending danger, and to advise him to be beforehand with his enemies. Instead of telling the truth, the Prince of Peace alarmed the King and Queen with the most absurd fabrications; and assured Their Majesties that their son and their daughter-in-law had determined not only to dethrone them, but to keep them prisoners for life, after they had been forced to witness his execution.

Indolence and weakness are often more fearful than guilt. Everything he said was at once believed; the Prince and Princess were ordered under arrest in their own apartments, without permission to see or correspond with anybody; and so certain was the Prince of Peace of a complete and satisfactory revenge for the attempt against his tyranny, that a frigate at Cadiz was ready waiting to carry the Princess of Asturias back to Naples. All Spaniards who had the honour of their Sovereigns and of their country at heart lamented these rash proceedings; but no one dared to take any measures to counteract them. At last, however, the Duke of Montemar, grand officer to the Prince of Asturias, demanded an audience of Their Majesties, in the presence of the favourite. He began by begging his Sovereign to recollect that for the place he occupied he was indebted to the Prince of Peace; and he called upon him to declare whether he had ever had reason to suspect him either of ingratitude or disloyalty. Being answered in the negative,

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he said that, though his present situation and office near the heir to the throne was the pride and desire of his life, he would have thrown it up the instant that he had the least ground to suppose that this Prince ceased to be a dutiful son and subject; but so far from this being the case, he had observed him in his most unguarded moments—in moments of conviviality had heard him speak of his royal parents with as much submission and respect as if he had been in their presence. “If,” continued he, “the Prince of Peace has said otherwise, he has misled his King and his Queen, being, no doubt, deceived himself. To overthrow a throne and to seize it cannot be done without accomplices, without arms, without money. Who are the conspirators hailing the Prince as their chief? I have heard no name but that of the lovely Princess, his consort, the partaker of his sentiments as well as of his heart. And his arms? They are in the hands of those guards his royal parent has given to augment the necessary splendour of his rank. And as to his money? He has none but what is received from royal and paternal munificence and bounty. You, my Prince,” said he to the favourite (who seemed much offended at the impression the speech made on Their Majesties), “will one day thank me, if I am happy enough to dissuade dishonourable, impolitic, or unjust sentiments. Of the approbation of posterity I am certain—”

“If,” interrupted the favourite, “the Prince of Asturias and his consort will give up their bad counsellors, I hope Their Majesties will forget and forgive everything with myself.”

“Whether Their Royal Highnesses,” replied the Duke of Montemar, “have done anything that deserves forgiveness, or whether they have any counsellors, I do not know, and am incompetent to judge; but I am much mistaken in the character of Their Royal Highnesses if they wish to purchase favour at the expense of confidence and honour. An order from His Majesty may immediately clear up this doubt.”

The Prince of Peace was then ordered to write, in the name of the King, to his children in the manner he proposed, and to command an answer by the messenger. In half an hour the messenger returned with a letter addressed to the favourite, containing only these lines:

“A King of Spain is well aware that a Prince and Princess of Asturias can have no answer to give to such proposals or to such questions.”

After six days’ arrest, and after the Prince of Peace had in vain endeavoured to discover something to inculcate Their Royal Highnesses, they were invited to Court, and reconciled both to him and their royal parents.



LETTER VIII.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—I will add in this letter, to the communication of the gentlemen mentioned in my last, what I remember myself of the letter which was circulated among our diplomatists, concerning the intrigues at Madrid.

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The Prince of Peace, before he listened to the advice of Duke of Montemar, had consulted Beurnonville, who dissuaded all violence, and as much as possible all noise. This accounts for the favourite's pretended moderation on this occasion. But though he was externally reconciled, and, as was reported at Madrid, had sworn his reconciliation even by taking the sacrament, all the undertakings of the Prince and Princess of Asturias were strictly observed and reported by the spies whom he had placed round Their Royal Highnesses. Vain of his success and victory, he even lost that respectful demeanour which a good, nay, a well-bred subject always shows to the heir to the throne, and the Princes related to his Sovereign. He sometimes behaved with a premeditated familiarity, and with an insolence provoking or defying resentment. It was on the days of great festivities, when the Court was most brilliant, and the courtiers most numerous, that he took occasion to be most arrogant to those whom he traitorously and audaciously dared to call his rivals. On the 9th of last December, at the celebration of the Queen's birthday, his conduct towards Their Royal Highnesses excited such general indignation that the remembrance of the occasion of the fete, and the presence of their Sovereigns, could not repress a murmur, which made the favourite tremble. A signal from the Prince of Asturias would then have been sufficient to have caused the insolent upstart to be seized and thrown out of the window. I am told that some of the Spanish grandees even laid their hands on their swords, fixing their eyes on the heir to the throne, as if to say: "Command, and your unworthy enemy shall exist no more."

To prepare, perhaps, the royal and paternal mind for deeds which contemporaries always condemn, and posterity will always reprobate, the Prince of Peace procured a history to be written in his own way and manner, of Don Carlos, the unfortunate son of the barbarous and unnatural Philip II.; but the Queen's confessor, though, like all her other domestics, a tool of the favourite, threw it into the fire with reproof, saying that Spain did not remember in Philip II. the grand and powerful Monarch, but abhorred in him the royal assassin; adding that no laws, human or divine, no institutions, no supremacy whatever, could authorize a parent to stain his hands in the blood of his children. These anecdotes are sufficient both to elucidate the inveteracy of the favourite, the abject state of the heir to the throne, and the incomprehensible infatuation of the King and Queen.

Our Ambassador, in the meantime, dissembled always with the Prince and Princess of Asturias; and even made them understand that he disapproved of those occurrences so disagreeable to them; but he neither offered to put an end to them nor to be a mediator for a perfect reconciliation with their Sovereigns. He was guided by no other motive but to keep the favourite in subjection and alarm by preserving a correspondence with his rivals. That this was the case and the motive cannot be doubted from the financial intrigue he carried on in the beginning of last month.

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Foreigners have but an imperfect or erroneous idea of the amount of the immense sums Spain has paid to our Government in loans, in contributions, in donations, and in subsidies. Since the reign of Bonaparte, or for these last five years, upwards of half the revenue of the Spanish monarchy has either been brought into our National Treasury or into the privy purse of the Bonaparte family. Without the aid of Spanish money, neither would our gunboats have been built, our fleets equipped, nor our armies paid. The dreadful situation of the Spanish finances is, therefore, not surprising—it is, indeed, still more surprising that a general bankruptcy has not already involved the Spanish nation in a general ruin.

When, on his return from Italy, the recall of the Russian negotiator and the preparations of Austria convinced Bonaparte of the probability of a Continental war, our troops on the coast had not been paid for two months, and his Imperial Ministers of Finances had no funds either to discharge the arrears or to provide for future payments until the beginning of the year 14, or the 22d instant. Beurnonville was, therefore, ordered to demand peremptorily from the Cabinet of Madrid forty millions of livres—in advance upon future subsidies. Half of that sum had, indeed, shortly before arrived at Cadiz from America, but much more was due by the Spanish Government to its own creditors, and promised them in payment of old debts. The Prince of Peace, in consequence, declared that, however much he wished to oblige the French Government, it was utterly impossible to procure, much less to advance such sums. Beurnonville then became more assiduous than ever about the Prince and Princess of Asturias; and he had the impudence to assert that they had promised, if their friends were at the head of affairs, to satisfy the wishes and expectation of the Emperor of the French, by seizing the treasury at Cadiz, and paying the State creditors in vales de dinero; notes hitherto payable in cash, and never at a discount. The stupid favourite swallowed the palpable bait; four millions in dollars were sent under an escort to this country, while the Spanish notes instantly fell to a discount at first of four and afterwards of six per cent., and probably will fall lower still, as no treasures are expected from America this autumn. It was with two millions of these dollars that the credit of the Bank of France was restored, or at least for some time enabled to resume its payments in specie. Thus wretched Spain pays abroad for the forging of those disgraceful fetters which oppress her at home; and supports a foreign tyranny, which finally must produce domestic misery as well as slavery.

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When the Prince and Princess of Asturias were informed of the scandalous and false assertion of Beurnonville, they and their adherents not only publicly, and in all societies, contradicted it, but affirmed that, rather than obtain authority or influence on such ruinous terms, they would have consented to remain discarded and neglected during their lives. They took the more care to have their sentiments known on this subject, as our Ambassador's calumny had hurt their popularity. It was then first that, to revenge the shame with which his duplicity had covered him, Beurnonville permitted and persuaded the Prince of Peace to begin the chastisement of Their Royal Highnesses in the persons of their favourites. Duke of Montemar, the grand officer to the Prince of Asturias; Marquis of Villa Franca, the grand equerry to the Princess of Asturias; Count of Miranda, chamberlain to the King; and the Countess Dowager del Monte, with six other Court ladies and four other noblemen, were, therefore, exiled from Madrid into different provinces, and forbidden to reside in any place within twenty leagues of the residence of the royal family. According to the last letters and communications from Spain, the Prince and Princess of Asturias had not appeared at Court since the insult offered them in the disgrace of their friends, and were resolved not to appear in any place where they might be likely to meet with the favourite.

Among our best informed politicians here, it is expected that a revolution and a change of dynasty will be the issue of this our political embryo in Spain. Napoleon has more than once indirectly hinted that the Bonaparte dynasty will never be firm and fixed in France as long as any Bourbons reign in Spain or Italy. Should he prove victorious in the present Continental contest, another peace, and not the most advantageous, will again be signed with your country—a peace which, I fear, will leave him absolute master of all Continental States. His family arrangements are publicly avowed to be as follow: His third brother, Louis, and his sons, are to be the heirs of the French Empire. Joseph Bonaparte is, at the death or resignation of Napoleon, to succeed to the Kingdom of Italy, including Naples. Lucien, though at present in disgrace, is considered as the person destined to supplant the Bourbons in Spain, where, during his embassy in 1800, and in 1801, he formed certain connections which Napoleon still keeps up and preserves. Holland will be the inheritance of Jerome should Napoleon not live long enough to extend his power in Great Britain. Such are the modest pretensions our Imperial courtiers bestow upon the family of our Sovereign.

As to the Prince of Peace, he is only an imbecile instrument in the hands of our intriguers and innovators, which they make use of as long as they find it necessary, and which, when that ceases to be the case, they break and throw away. This idiot is made to believe that both his political and physical existence depends entirely upon our support, and he has infused the same ridiculous notion into his accomplices and adherents. Guilt, ignorance, and cowardice thus misled may, directed by art, interest, and craft, perform wonders to entangle themselves in the destruction of their country.

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Beurnonville, our present Ambassador at Madrid, is the son of a porter, and was a porter himself when, in 1770, he enlisted as a soldier in one of our regiments serving in the East Indies. Having there collected some pillage, he purchased the place of a major in the militia of the Island of Bourbon, but was, for his immorality, broken by the governor. Returning to France, he bitterly complained of this injustice, and, after much cringing in the antechambers of Ministers, he obtained at last the Cross of St. Louis as a kind of indemnity. About the same time he also bought with his Indian wealth the place of an officer in the Swiss Guard of Monsieur, the present Louis XVIII. Being refused admittance into any genteel societies, he resorted with Barras and other disgraced nobles to gambling-houses, and he even kept to himself when the Revolution took place. He had at the same time, and for a certain interest, advanced Madame d'Estainville money to establish her famous, or rather infamous, house in the Rue de Bonnes Enfants, near the Palais Royal,—a house that soon became the fashionable resort of our friends of Liberty and Equality.

In 1790, Beurnonville offered his services as aide-de-camp to our then hero of great ambition and small capacity, La Fayette, who declined the honour. The Jacobins were not so nice. In 1792, they appointed him a general under Dumouriez, who baptized him his Ajax. This modern Ajax, having obtained a separate command, attacked Treves in a most ignorant manner, and was worsted with great loss. The official reports of our revolutionary generals have long been admired for their modesty as well as veracity; but Beurnonville has almost outdone them all, not excepting our great Bonaparte. In a report to the National Convention concerning a terrible engagement of three hours near Grewenmacker, Beurnonville declares that, though the number of the enemy killed was immense, his troops got out of the scrape with the loss of only the little finger of one of his riflemen. On the 4th of February, 1793, a fortnight after the execution of Louis XVI., he was nominated Minister of the War Department—a place which he refused, under a pretence that he was better able to serve his country with his sword than with his pen, having already been in one hundred and twenty battles (where, he did not enumerate or state). On the 14th of the following March, however, he accepted the ministerial portfolio, which he did not keep long, being delivered up by his Hector, Dumouriez, to the Austrians. He remained a prisoner at Olmutz until the 22d of November, 1795, when he was included among the persons exchanged for the daughter of Louis XVI., Her present Royal Highness, the Duchess of Angouleme.

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In the autumn of 1796 he had a temporary command of the dispersed remnants of Jourdan's army, and in 1797 he was sent as a French commander to Holland. In 1799, Bonaparte appointed him an Ambassador to the Court of Berlin; and in 1803 removed him in the same character to the Court of Madrid. In Prussia, his talents did not cause him to be dreaded, nor his personal qualities make him esteemed. In France, he is laughed at as a boaster, but not trusted as a warrior. In Spain, he is neither dreaded nor esteemed, neither laughed at nor courted; he is there universally despised. He studies to be thought a gentleman; but the native porter breaks through the veil of a ridiculously affected and outre politeness. Notwithstanding the complacent grimaces of his face, the self-sufficiency of his looks, his systematically powdered and dressed hair, his showy dress, his counted and short bows, and his presumptuous conversation, teeming with ignorance, vulgarity, and obscenity, he cannot escape even the most inattentive observer.

The Ambassador, Beurnonville, is now between fifty and sixty years of age; is a grand officer of our Imperial Legion of Honour; has a brother who is a turnkey, and two sisters, one married to a tailor, and another to a merchant who cries dogs' and cats' meat in our streets.

LETTER IX.

Paris, September, 1805.

My lord:—Bonaparte did not at first intend to take his wife with him when he set out for Strasburg; but her tears, the effect of her tenderness and apprehension for his person, at last altered his resolution. Madame Napoleon, to tell the truth, does not like much to be in the power of Joseph, nor even in that of her son-in-law, Louis Bonaparte, should any accident make her a widow.

During the Emperor's absence, the former is the President of the Senate, and the latter the Governor of this capital, and commander of the troops in the interior; so that the one dictates the *Senatus Consultum*, in case of a vacancy of the throne, and the other supports these civil determinations with his military forces. Even with the army in Germany, Napoleon's brother-in-law, Murat, is as a pillar of the Bonaparte dynasty, and to prevent the intrigues and plots of other generals from an Imperial diadem; while, in Italy, his step-son, Eugene de Beauharnais, as a viceroy, commands even the commander-in-chief, Massena. It must be granted that the Emperor has so ably taken his precautions that it is almost certain that, at first, his orders will be obeyed, even after his death; and the will deposited by him in the Senate, without opposition, carried into execution. These very precautions evince, however, how uncertain and precarious he considers his existence to be, and that, notwithstanding addresses and oaths, he apprehends that the Bonaparte dynasty will not survive him.

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Most of the generals now employed by him are either of his own creation, or men on whom he has conferred rank and wealth, which they might consider unsafe under any other Prince but a Bonaparte. The superior officers, not included in the above description, are such insignificant characters that, though he makes use of their experience and courage, he does not fear their views or ambition. Among the inferior officers, and even among the men, all those who have displayed, either at reviews or in battles, capacity, activity, or valour, are all members of his Legion of Honour; and are bound to him by the double tie of gratitude and self-interest. They look to him alone for future advancements, and for the preservation of the distinction they have obtained from him. His emissaries artfully disseminate that a Bourbon would inevitably overthrow everything a Bonaparte has erected; and that all military and civil officers rewarded or favoured by Napoleon the First will not only be discarded, but disgraced, and perhaps punished, by a Louis XVIII. Any person who would be imprudent enough to attempt to prove the impossibility, as well as the absurdity, of these impolitic and retrospective measures, would be instantly taken up and shot as an emissary of the Bourbons.

I have often amused myself in conversing with our new generals and new officers; there is such a curious mixture of ignorance and information, of credulity and disbelief, of real boasting and affected modesty, in everything they say or do in company; their manners are far from being elegant, but also very distant from vulgarity; they do not resemble those of what we formerly called 'gens comme il faut', and 'la bonne societe'! nor those of the bourgeoisie, or the lower classes. They form a new species of fashionables, and a 'haut ton militaire', which strikes a person accustomed to Courts at first with surprise, and perhaps with indignation; though, after a time, those of our sex, at last, become reconciled, if not pleased with it, because there is a kind of military frankness interwoven with the military roughness. Our ladies, however (I mean those who have seen other Courts, or remember our other coteries), complain loudly of this alteration of address, and of this fashionable innovation; and pretend that our military, under the notion of being frank, are rude, and by the negligence of their manners and language, are not only offensive, but inattentive and indelicate. This is so much the more provoking to them, as our Imperial courtiers and Imperial placemen do not think themselves fashionable without imitating our military gentry, who take Napoleon for their exclusive model and chief in everything, even in manners.

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What I have said above applies only to those officers whose parents are not of the lowest class, or who entered so early or so young into the army that they may be said to have been educated there, and as they advanced, have assumed the 'ton' of their comrades of the same rank. I was invited, some time ago, to a wedding, by a jeweller whose sister had been my nurse, and whose daughter was to be married to a captain of hussars quartered here. The bridegroom had engaged several other officers to assist at the ceremony, and to partake of the fete and ball that followed. A general of the name of Liebeau was also of the party, and obtained the place of honour by the side of the bride's mother. At his entrance into the apartment I formed an opinion of him which his subsequent conduct during the ball confirmed.

During the dinner he seemed to forget that he had a knife and a fork, and he did not eat of a dish (and he ate of them all, numerous as they were) without bespattering or besmearing himself or his neighbours. He broke two glasses and one plate, and, for equality's sake, I suppose, when he threw the wine on the lady to his right, the lady to his left was inundated with sauces. In getting up from dinner to take coffee and liqueurs, according to our custom, as he took the hand of the mistress of the house, he seized at the same time a corner of the napkin, and was not aware of his blunder till the destruction of bottles, glasses, and plate, and the screams of the ladies, informed him of the havoc and terror his awkward gallantry had occasioned. When the ball began, he was too vain of his rank and precedence to suffer any one else to lead the bride down the first dance; but she was not, I believe, much obliged to him for his politeness; it cost her the tail of her wedding-gown and a broken nail, and she continued lame during the remainder of the night. In making an apology to her for his want of dexterity, and assuring her that he was not so awkward in handling the enemies of his country in battle as in handling friends he esteemed in a dance, he gave no quarter to an old maid aunt, whom, in the violence of his gesticulation, he knocked down with his elbow and laid sprawling on the ground. He was sober when these accidents literally occurred.

Of this original I collected the following particulars: Before the Revolution he was a soldier in the regiment of Flanders, from which he deserted and became a corporal in another regiment; in 1793 he was a drum-major in one of the battalions in garrison in Paris. You remember the struggles of factions in the latter part of May and in the beginning of June, the same year, when Brissot and his accomplices were contending with Marat, Robespierre, and their adherents for the reins of power. On the 1st of June the latter party could not get a drummer to beat the alarm, though they offered money and advancement. At last Robespierre stepped forward to Liebeau and said, "Citizen,

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beat the alarm march, and to-day you shall be nominated a general.” Liebeau obeyed, Robespierre became victorious and kept his promise, and thus my present associate gained his rank. He has since been employed under Jourdan in Germany, and under Le Courbe in Switzerland. When, under the former, he was ordered to retreat towards the Rhine, he pointed out the march route to his division according to his geographical knowledge, but mistook upon the map the River Main for a turnpike road, and commanded the retreat accordingly. Ever since, our troops have called that river 'La chausee de Liebeau'. He was not more fortunate in Helvetia. Being ordered to cross one of the mountains, he marched his men into a glacier, where twelve perished before he was aware of his mistake.

Being afterwards appointed a governor of Blois, he there became a petty, insupportable tyrant, and laid all the inhabitants indiscriminately under arbitrary contribution. Those who refused to pay were imprisoned as aristocrats, and their property confiscated in the name and on the part of the nation; that is to say, he appropriated to himself in the name of the nation everything that struck his fancy; and if any complaints were made, the owners were seized and sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris to be condemned as the correspondents or adherents of the royalists of La Vendee. After the death of Robespierre he was deprived of this profitable place, in which, during the short space of eleven months, he amassed five millions of livres. The Directory, then gave him a division, first under Jourdan, and afterwards under Le Courbe.

Bonaparte, after witnessing his incapacity in Italy, in 1800, put him on the full half-pay, and has lately made him a commander of the Legion of Honour.

His dear spouse, Madame Liebeau, is his counterpart. When he married her, she was crying mackerel and herrings in our streets; but she told me in confidence, during the dinner, being seated by my side, that her father was an officer of fortune, and a Chevalier of the Order of St. Louis. She assured me that her husband had done greater services to his country than Bonaparte; and that, had it not been for his patriotism in 1793, the Austrians would have taken Paris. She was very angry with Madame Napoleon, to whom she had been presented, but who had not shown her so much attention and civility, as was due to her husband's rank, having never invited her to more than one supper and two tea-parties; and when invited by her, had sent Duroc with an apology that she was unable to come, though the same evening she went to the opera.

Another guest, in the regimentals of a colonel, seemed rather bashful when I spoke to him. I could not comprehend the reason, and therefore inquired of our host who he was. (You know that with us it is not the custom to introduce persons by name, *etc.*, as in your country, when meeting in mixed companies.) He answered:

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“Do you not remember your brother’s jockey, Prial?”

“Yes,” said I, “but he was established by my brother as a hairdresser.”

“He is the very same person,” replied the jeweller. “He has fought very bravely, and is now a colonel of dragoons, a great favourite with Bonaparte, and will be a general at the first promotion.”

As the colonel did not seem to desire a renewal of acquaintance with me, I did not intrude myself upon him.

During the supper the military gentlemen were encouraged by the bridegroom, and the bottle went round very freely; and the more they drank, the greater and more violent became their political discussions. Liebeau vociferated in favour of republican and revolutionary measures, and avowed his approbation of requisitions, confiscations, and the guillotine; while Frial inclined to the regular and organized despotism of one, to secret trial, and still more secret executions; defending arbitrary imprisonments, exiles, and transportations. This displeased Madame Liebeau, who exclaimed:

“Since the colonel is so fond of an Imperial Government, he can have no objection to remain a faithful subject whenever my husband, Liebeau, becomes, an Antoine the First, Emperor of the French.”

Frial smiled with contempt.

“You seem to think it improbable,” said Liebeau. “I, Antoine Liebeau, I have more prospect of being an Emperor than Napoleon Bonaparte had ten years ago, when he was only a colonel, and was arrested as a terrorist. And am I not a Frenchman? And is he not a foreigner? Come, shake hands with me; as soon as I am Emperor, depend upon it you shall be a general, and a grand officer of the Legion of Honour.”

“Ah! my jewel,” interrupted Madame Liebeau, “how happy will France then be. You are such a friend of peace. We will then have no wars, no contributions; all the English milords may then come here and spend their money, nobody cares about where or how. Will you not, then, my sweet love, make all the gentlemen here your chamberlains, and permit me to accept all the ladies of the company for my Maids of Honour or ladies-in-waiting?”

“Softly, softly,” cried Frial, who now began to be as intoxicated and as ambitious as the general; “whenever Napoleon dies, I have more hope, more: claim, and more right than you to the throne. I am in actual service; and had not Bonaparte been the same, he might have still remained upon the half-pay, obscure and despised. Were not most of the Field-marsals and generals under him now, above him ten years ago? May I not, ten years hence, if I am satisfied with you, General Liebeau, make you also a Field-



marshal, or my Minister of War; and you, Madame Liebeau, a lady of my wife's wardrobe, as soon as I am married? I, too, have my plans and my views, and perhaps one day you will recollect this conversation, and not be sorry for my acquaintance."

"What! you a colonel, an Emperor, before me, who have so long been a general?" howled Liebeau, who was no longer able to speak. "I would sooner knock your brains out with this bottle than suffer such a precedence; and my wife a lady of your wardrobe! she who has possessed from her birth the soul of an Empress! No, sir! never will I take the oath to you, nor suffer anybody else to take it."

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"Then I will punish you as a rebel," retorted Frial; "and as sure as you stand here you shall be shot."

Liebeau then rose up to fetch his sword, but the company interfered, and the dispute about the priority of claim to the throne of France between the ci-devant drummer and ci-devant jockey was left undecided. From the words and looks of several of the captains present, I think that they seemed, in their own opinions, to have as much prospect and expectation to reign over the French Empire as either General Liebeau or Colonel Frial.

As soon as I returned home I wrote down this curious conversation and this debate about supremacy. To what a degradation is the highest rank in my unfortunate country reduced when two such personages seriously contend about it! I collected more subjects for meditation and melancholy in this low company (where, by the bye, I witnessed more vulgarity and more indecencies than I had before seen during my life) than from all former scenes of humiliation and disgust since my return here. When I the next day mentioned it to General de M-----, whom you have known as an emigrant officer in your service, but whom policy has since ranged under the colours of Bonaparte, he assured me that these discussions about the Imperial throne are very frequent among the superior officers, and have caused many bloody scenes; and that hardly any of our generals of any talent exist who have not the same 'arriere pensee of some day or other. Napoleon cannot, therefore, well be ignorant of the many other dynasties here now rivalling that of the Bonapartes, and who wait only for his exit to tear his Senatus Consultum, his will, and his family, as well as each other, to pieces.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Hero of great ambition and small capacity: La Fayette
Marble lives longer than man
Satisfying himself with keeping three mistresses only
Under the notion of being frank, are rude
Want is the parent of industry
With us, unfortunately, suspicion is the same as conviction