

## TALLEYRAND.

CHARLES-AURICE-TALLEYRAND DE PERIGORD, the present representative of the King of the French at the Court of St. James, was born at Paris on the 7th of March, 1754. This highly talented man, whose political career is, perhaps, unequalled in the annals of history, is descended from one of the most ancient families in France. He is the eldest son of a younger branch of the Counts of Perigord, who, three centuries ago, were sovereigns of a country in the south-western part of France, still called Perigord; while the celebrated Princess des Ursins, who, during the war of the Succession, played so prominent a part at the court of Philip V., was among his ancestors on the maternal side.

Being what is commonly called club-footed from his birth, he became an object of dislike, and a sort of outcast. He was never suffered to enjoy the comforts of living in his father's family. It is said he never slept under the paternal roof. He was educated at the seminary of St. Sulpice at the same time with the Abbe Sieyes, and was there remarked only as a silent and haughty youth, who passed all his time among his books. At the proper age he was compelled to embrace the ecclesiastical profession, in opposition to all his own wishes. These early facts are the more necessary to be noticed, seeing that such irreparable injustice cannot fail to have given a powerful bias to a naturally strong character.

At the usual age, however, he took orders; and his splendid talents, backed by the interest of his family, procured him rapid advancement. The Abbe de Perigord was only in his twenty-sixth year when he was nominated agent-general of the clergy; but in this important post he displayed as much aptitude in practice as he had before evinced ability in theory. It was in this distinguished situation that he addressed to the clergy his famous "Discours sur les Loteries," which first announced his talents to the world, and opened to him the highest dignities of the church. In surveying the moral and political horizon, he clearly perceived that a mighty change was at hand; and whether that change was to be effected by a violent convulsion, or by the slower influence of opinion, he resolved to direct it to his own purposes. Adapted for any part in the great drama, he watched the progress of events with a calmness inspired by the confidence which he felt in his own powers. His future eminence was predicted by those who could best read human nature. Even at this early period, his friend and companion Mirabeau designated him, in his correspondence with Berlin, as "one of the most subtle and powerful intellects of the age."

The laxity of his opinions on certain tenets of the Roman Catholic religion, which the Abbe did not at all affect to disavow, might have been expected to impede, if not destroy, his hopes of advancement in the church. Such, however, was not the case. He belonged to a political party

which, at the time, was very powerful at court, and clamorous for his promotion. Louis XVI. objected to his consecration as a prelate; but in spite of royal opposition, the Abbe de Perigord found himself, at the age of thirty-four, Bishop of Autun.

After a lapse of nearly two hundred years, the States-General met at Versailles, in May, 1789, and M. de Talleyrand was returned thereto by the clergy of his diocese. The superiority of his genius, and the uncommon dexterity with which he handled the most momentous subjects, greatly extended his popularity among all who wished well to the revolutionary cause. The youthful bishop was not satisfied with foreseeing; he was anxious to hasten what he considered to be inevitable.

In July of the same year he voted that the clergy should be united with the communes, which had just been formed into a National Assembly; and in August he proposed that every citizen, without distinction or exception, should be admissible to public employments. As a member of the committee of government he also proposed the abolition of tithes, and, with a zeal not exceeded by the most violent of his coadjutors, he would have the vote pass unanimously. In November he brought forward in the National Assembly his memorable project for the confiscation and sale of the property of the French clergy, which, after a debate of ten hours, was carried by a large majority. In vain did that body, and especially the priests of his own diocese, petition and remonstrate. He saw that the measure must eventually be passed, and he was determined to have the credit of introducing it.

He now turned a deaf ear to complaints of every kind and from every quarter, and pursued his own path unmoved amid the storm which surrounded him. The numerous reforms which he projected, the many reports which he delivered on the state of the finances, and the system of organization which he recommended in that and in other departments, prove the astonishing versatility of his talents. In December he was appointed by the assembly one of its commissioners to examine into the situation of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, or discount bank, established by M. Necker during the American war. In January, 1790, he became a member of the committee of imposts, in which capacity, Madame de Stael says, he was "decidedly averse to lotteries as the means of raising a supply for the service of the state, from its being a mere game of chance;" and in February he was called to the chair of the presidency, and drew up the famous address to the French nation, which the assembly ordered to be published, to remind the people of what its patriotic labours had already effected for them, and the grand achievements it was still preparing. This address is extremely curious and instructive, whether considered with regard to the subsequent career of its distinguished author, or the

very brilliant portion of all those eternal institutions" which he then held out as so many "invaluable" blessings to the nation.

In June, M. de Talleyrand gave in to the assembly the project of a decree for establishing a uniform system of weights and measures, and a second relative to the mode of celebrating the federation of the 14th of July, at which religious ceremony he was deputed by the municipality of Paris to officiate pontifically. The assemblage of the national militia was to take place in the Champ de Mars; and it being necessary to erect around this extensive space eminences of green turf to contain the spectators, "such," says Madame de Staël, "was the patriotic enthusiasm, that women of the first rank were seen joining the crowds of voluntary labourers who came to bear a part in the preparations for the fête."

On the appointed day all Paris moved in a mass to the federation, just as it had moved the year before to the destruction of the Bastille. In a line from the Military School steps had been raised, with a tent to accommodate the king, queen, and court: at the other extremity was seen an altar prepared for mass, where M. de Talleyrand appeared at the head of two hundred priests, dressed in white linen, and decorated with tri-coloured ribands. When about to officiate, a storm of wind took place, followed by a deluge of rain; but, heedless of its peltings, the Bishop of Autun proceeded in the celebration of the mass, and afterward pronounced a benediction on the royal standard of France, and on the eighty-three banners of the departments which waved around it before the altar.

Among the other ceremonies of the day of federation, M. de Talleyrand administered to the representatives of the people a new oath—the fourth within the twelvemonth—of fidelity to the nation, the king, and the law. He also consecrated, shortly after, in the metropolitan church of Notre Dame, the constitutional bishops—a step which brought forth a monition from the pope, complaining loudly against him as "an impious wretch who had imposed his sacrilegious hands on intruding clergymen," and declaring him excommunicated, unless he recanted his errors within forty days. Upon this he resigned his bishopric, and directed his whole attention to secular affairs.

In March, 1791, M. de Talleyrand was chosen a member of the departmental directory of Paris, in which situation he proved himself the warm friend of religious toleration, and drew up an address on the subject, which was greatly admired for its eloquence and reasoning. In April he was called to the sick bed of his friend Mirabeau, and received nearly the last words of that extraordinary man. "The National Assembly," said the dying orator, "is occupied in discussing a law concerning wills. I have for some time been employed in composing a speech on testamentary devises, and I bequeath to your friendship the trouble of reading it at the tribune." M. de Talleyrand lost no time in complying with this injunction. In September he made, in the

name of the Constitutional Committee, his celebrated reports on the subject of public instruction, which were afterward printed in pursuance of a decree of the assembly. It was about this time, also, that he projected a National Institute, for the promotion of arts and sciences, and, five years after he had the satisfaction of seeing most of his suggestions carried into effect by the Directory.

In May, 1792, Louis XVI. appointed M. Chauvelin minister at the British court, and united M. de Talleyrand in the mission. Upon this occasion the monarch addressed a confidential letter to the King of England, in which, after thanking him for not becoming a party to the plans concerted against France, he solicits the mediation of his majesty, and proposes an alliance between two sovereigns who had distinguished their reigns by a constant desire to promote the happiness of their subjects. "I have every reason," he adds, "to be satisfied with your majesty's ambassador at my court. If I do not give the same rank to the minister whom I have sent to yours, you will nevertheless perceive, that, by associating with him M. de Talleyrand, who by the letter of the constitution can sustain no public character, I consider the success of the alliance, in which I wish you to concur with zeal equal to my own, as of the highest importance."

M. de Talleyrand assisted M. Chauvelin in drawing up his official notes, and was admitted to several interviews with Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville: but his situation at this time was not enviable; for, while the emigrants on this side the channel represented him as a jacobin, the republican party in France denounced him as a royalist. He was even charged in the convention, by a deputy named Rullu, with belonging to the Orleans faction, and being in the pay of that prince; in consequence of which an act of accusation was passed against him in December, and his name was inscribed on the list of emigrants.

M. de Talleyrand remained in England till April, 1794, when, with many others, he was ordered to leave the country within twenty-four hours. He saw the blackening of the thundercloud in France, and he dared not return. He therefore embarked for the United States, and thus escaped the fury of Robespierre and his accomplices.

In 1795, when the reign of terror was at an end, he petitioned to be allowed to re-enter his native country. His friends, and more especially Madame de Staël, exerted themselves with the new government to procure his recall; and, at the request of the lady, the poet Chénier made a motion to that effect in the convention. To the objections urged by the republicans against the exile, Chénier opposed his great talents, his numerous services to the cause of liberty, and the further and still more important benefits which he might hereafter render it. The convention consented to annul the decree of accusation, and his name was struck off the list of emigrants. No sooner was he made acquainted with the fa-

valuable result of his friends' application on his behalf than he hastened to embark, and landed at Hamburgh, where he remained for some months, and formed a connexion with Madame Grandt, the lady whom he afterward married.

Shortly after his arrival at Paris, M. de Talleyrand was chosen first a member, and afterward secretary of the National Institute, to which he presented an essay, written with great ability, entitled "*Des Travaux de la Classe des Sciences, Morales, et Politiques*," in which he endeavoured to show the advantages of the sciences and of liberty, and recommended the continuance of a republican government, with an elective executive and legislature. His next production was an essay "*Sur les Colonies*," containing a deduction of the advantages which would accrue to France, from a careful attention to the colonial system, and pointing out the principles which should guide her in the formation of new settlements. He also read at the Institute, about the same time, a memoir "*Sur les Relations Commerciales des Etats Unis avec l'Angleterre*," written with the view of recommending, by a practical exemplification, the genuine principles of colonization. He asserts, as a truth beyond dispute, that, "sooner or later, the emancipation of the negroes must overthrow the cultivation of the sugar colonies." The result of the inquiry is an inference in favour of agricultural settlements, in which the natives of the soil shall be able to cultivate it, and a warning against all such schemes as those to which the negro system owes its origin. He evidently points to Egypt as the proper spot where these plantations should be settled; and it is worthy of remark, that the French expedition to that country was undertaken a few months after this memoir had been read before an assembly at which the great captain of the enterprise assisted, and that the author of the piece was actively engaged in the government which planned the conquest.

Though M. de Talleyrand had now been a twelvemonth returned from America, so powerful were his enemies that he remained unemployed. At length, the well-disposed part of the nation becoming desirous of peace with Europe, it was thought that the author of memorials at once distinguished for the force and eloquence of their style, and for their more substantial merits as sound and ingenious speculations on subjects of difficulty and importance, could not but be an able negotiator. M. de Talleyrand seemed, then the best possible choice for the department of foreign affairs; and the daughter of Necker served him effectually in this respect, by procuring for him an interview with Barras, to whom she had strongly recommended him. "He wanted aid," says the lady, "to arrive at power, but, being once there, he required not the assistance of others to maintain him in it."

In 1797 he was accordingly appointed to the important situation; and shortly after, as we are instructed by the journals of the day, a ludicrous scene occurred in the hall of the Directory, when the ex-bishop of Autun, habited in the blue Na-

tional uniform, with a sword by his side, presented to his masters, on one and the same morning, the nuncio of the Pope and the ambassador of the Grand Seigneur. It fell also to his lot to introduce Bonaparte himself to them, on his return from dictating peace at Campo Formio. In his address upon the occasion he termed him "the liberator of Italy and the pacificator of the Continent; and he assured them that the general detested luxury and splendour, the miserable ambition of vulgar souls, and loved the poems of Ossian, *because they detach us from the earth!*"

M. de Talleyrand had not been long in office before an outcry was raised against the appointment, by those who dreaded his power; and, so strong did he find the opposition, that in July, 1799, he gave in his resignation, but not before he had published a tract, entitled "*Eclaircissemens donnés par le Citoyen Talleyrand a ses Concitoyens*," in which he laid down his political creed, and repelled, by arguments and facts, the charges adduced against him.

On his return from Egypt, Bonaparte, finding this dexterous politician at variance with the Directory, readily passed over some personal grounds of ill humour against him, and replaced him in his former situation, where he soon became the soul of the consular government. He perceived that the country had need of peace, and he obtained it with Austria at Luneville, and with England at Amiens.

He was not, however, so absorbed in public business as to be entirely unmindful of his own domestic concerns. At the time of the concordat, Napoleon wished to make him a cardinal, and to place him at the head of ecclesiastical affairs; but his aversion to the profession was unconquerable. Having, however, signified to Pius VII. his desire to be readmitted into the bosom of the Catholic church, his holiness, in June, 1802, sent forth a brief directed to "our very dear son in Christ, Charles Maurice Talleyrand," annulling the excommunication, but enjoining him, as the price of reconciliation, to give certain sums to the poor of the diocese of Autun. Being thus restored to secular life, the first use which the ex-prelate made of his liberty was to enter into the matrimonial bond with Madame Grandt, the beautiful lady with whom he had been so long connected.

About this time the treachery of one of his secretaries had nearly proved fatal to the minister. A treaty had been concluded between the First Consul and Paul of Russia, the conditions of which were to be carefully concealed from England. The ratifications were, of course, deposited in the foreign office; but what was Bonaparte's surprise upon Fouché's presenting him with an exact copy of the treaty, which he said he had received from one of his agents in London! His first impulse was to arrest M. de Talleyrand; but an investigation being set on foot, it was discovered that one of his clerks had copied the document, and sold the secret for thirty thousand francs. It is, however, generally believed, that the whole was a contrivance of the artful police

minister, to remove the man of whose genius and influence he stood in constant dread.

M. de Talleyrand's ascendancy with the First Consul, which had gone on increasing since the peace of Amiens, was become so powerful that it decided the disgrace of Fouché and the suppression of the odious ministry of police. When, in 1804, the nation conferred on Napoleon the imperial title, he was made grand chamberlain of the empire, and, in 1806, he was raised to the dignity of sovereign Prince of Benevento, but still retaining the portfolio of foreign relations.

Napoleon, in the spring of 1806, having evinced a disposition to make peace with England, M. de Talleyrand neglected nothing for the attainment of that object. Knowing that Lord Yarmouth\* was in Paris, he sounded the inclination of the noble earl to become the bearer of pacific overtures. For some time hopes of a satisfactory result were entertained; but on the death of Mr. Fox the conferences were broken off. The bitterest enemies of M. de Talleyrand acknowledge, however, that he "urged things forward with the utmost activity, and assured all who would listen to him, that, without peace, there was no security for the emperor."†

Soon after this, his credit with Napoleon declined; and, in August, 1807, he was unexpectedly deprived of his situation, but raised to the dignity of vice-grand-elect, a post which gave him the entree of the council. By his friends his disgrace was attributed to his opposition to the meditated Spanish usurpation; while his enemies asserted, that, so far from being opposed to it, he dictated all the preliminary steps; and it was charged against him, that, at the very conjuncture when Napoleon had most occasion for the resources of his great mind, he had voluntarily retired from public affairs.

From this moment a sort of warfare commenced between the emperor and the ex-minister, of which *salons* were the theatre, and raillery and epigram the artillery, and in which the conqueror of Europe had generally the mortification to see himself vanquished. He took pleasure in insulting him before the whole court, and would say the most galling things to him; but the wary diplomatist watched his opportunity, and when he had found out the flaw in the armour, took ample revenge on his assailant by a few flashes of wit which stung the mighty emperor to the quick. On hearing that M. de Talleyrand continued to speak of the war with Spain in terms of disapprobation, Napoleon, "from a kind of spite,"‡ sent the Spanish princes to reside at his chateau of Valencay, and made its owner their jailor.

The Prince of Benevento, now subjected to the surveillance of the police, no longer appeared at court, except when the duties of his high office required his presence; but such was the opinion entertained of his high talents, that he was frequently consulted on matters of difficulty, and many were anxious for his return to the foreign

department. Early in 1813, after the disastrous campaign in Russia, the situation was again offered him, on the condition that he should resign his office of vice-grand-elect; but he alleged, that to diminish his consideration, on giving him a place to which he was recalled at a moment when it was more difficult than ever to discharge its duties, was to deprive him of the means of usefulness. He therefore hesitated, and the emperor came to no conclusion. At the interview which took place upon this occasion, he told Napoleon some home truths. "Here," said he, "is all your work destroyed! You have no alternative but to treat without loss of time. A bad peace cannot be so fatal as the continuance of a war which must be unsuccessful." On Bonaparte's return from Leipsic, in the November following, M. de Talleyrand again implored him to make peace. "I must," said Napoleon, at St. Helena, "do him that justice. He uniformly maintained, that I deceived myself with respect to the energy of the nation, and that it was requisite for me to arrange my affairs by every possible sacrifice."§

Finding his imperial master thus resolutely bent on his own overthrow, M. de Talleyrand gave up all for lost, and began to speak out. "Scarcely a day passed," says the police minister, "without some guilty expression reaching the emperor's ears." An officer, in alluding to the confusion which then reigned in every branch of the government, having observed that he could not comprehend what was going on, Talleyrand replied, "C'est le commencement du fin." On other occasions he would exclaim, "Well! it is not to be expected that one should remain in a house that is on fire." "It must be owned we are losing the game with fine cards in our hands!" "The emperor would have done much better to have spared me his insults." The following is a characteristic instance of his tact. Being, at this time, desirous of sounding the opinion of M. Decres, he one day drew that minister towards the chimney, and, opening a volume of Montesquieu, said, in the tone of ordinary conversation, "I found a passage here this morning which struck me in a remarkable manner; here it is: 'When a prince has raised himself above all laws, when his tyranny becomes insupportable, there remains nothing to the oppressed subject except'—'Quite enough!" said Decres, "I will hear no more: shut the book." And M. de Talleyrand closed the book, as if nothing had happened.||

"In short," says the Duke of Rovigo, "I now began to watch him narrowly; for he spoke a language adapted to the sentiments of every one, and was, besides, the focus of attraction for men disposed to create a convulsion"¶ On one occasion, a short time before the emperor's departure for the army, in January, 1814, addressing M. de Talleyrand, in the presence of several of the ministers, he said, "I think, for my own se-

\* The present Masque of Hertford.

† Duke of Rovigo, vol. i. p. 171.

‡ Las Cases, vol. ii. p. 32.

§ Las Cases, vol. iii. p. 180.

¶ Las Cases, vol. ii. p. 257.

‡ Memmoires, vol. iii. p. 223.

curity, I ought to send you to Vincennes, for your conduct is very equivocal." Nevertheless, on leaving Paris, Napoleon thought it better to affect a confidence which he did not feel, and appointed the prince a member of the council of regency.

That M. de Talleyrand was deeply instrumental in the restoration of the Bourbons, is undoubted. A note from him was delivered to the Emperor Alexander, just before the final rush on Paris: "You venture nothing," said this laconic billet, "when you may safely venture every thing; venture once more." One of the czar's first questions, on reaching the capital, was, where, M. de Talleyrand was, and how he was disposed to act? and he sent a message to say, that he would take up his quarters at his hotel.

When the allies entered Paris, this accomplished politician was nominated president of the provisional government; and, in this elevated station, he succeeded in drawing all who had any influence to the new order of things. He laboured incessantly to convince the royalists, that the king must purchase the recovery of his authority by consenting to place the monarchy on a constitutional footing; and to persuade another class, that the restoration of the Bourbons was the most favourable chance for the settlement of a free system of government. In the language of Sir Walter Scott, "to the bold, he offered an enterprise requiring courage; to the timid, he showed the road to safety; to the ambitious, the prospect of gaining power; to the guilty, the assurance of indemnity and safety." Upon this occasion "he even obtained," says Madame de Stael, "the cry of *Vive le roi!* from men who had voted the death of Louis XVI." When the Count d'Artois, afterward Charles X., made his public entry into Paris, it was M. de Talleyrand who harangued him in the name of the provisional government; and it was in answer to this address that the count uttered the memorable words, considered at the time as of such good augury, and since so often referred to, and so severely commented upon—"Nothing will be changed: there is only one more Frenchman among you!"

On handing over the supreme authority to Louis XVIII., M. de Talleyrand was restored to his old situation at the foreign office. In June he was created a peer, by the title of Prince de Talleyrand; and, towards the close of the year, he was sent as ambassador to the congress assembled at Vienna. He was there in 1815, when Napoleon so unexpectedly landed at Cannes, and drew up the declaration of the allies against the usurper.

On the second restoration of Louis, he was again intrusted with the foreign portfolio; but he did not long remain in office. As he considered it his duty to withhold his signature from the treaty of 1815, he sent in his resignation, and was made king's chamberlain. He did not, however, retire until, after a severe struggle, he had succeeded in procuring the ordinance of the 24th of July, by which the list of proscribed individuals was reduced from two thousand to thirty-eight.

He would often say of the Bourbons, that, during their five-and-twenty years' exile, "ils n'avoient rien appris, comme ils n'avoient rien oublié." He never advocated the cause of any ultra party, but uniformly supported the charter as it stood.

During the reign of Charles X. he wholly abstained from interfering in public affairs. He disapproved of the system of rule adopted by that monarch, and, not being sufficiently powerful to reform it, was contented to retire into the privacy of a quiet life. At court, he was always looked up to as a sort of controlling satirist, and we are told that he sometimes indulged in that good-natured, yet poignant irony, "which, while it stung, did not poison, and while it pricked, did not wound."\* He ridiculed the idea of returning to the ancient regime, and laughed when they talked to him of *coups d'état*, and of a system of ordinances. Upon the abdication of Charles, he lost no time in giving in his adhesion to the government of Louis Philippe. On taking the necessary oath, he is said to have exclaimed, "This is the *thirteenth*: pray God it may be the last!"

Much, at different periods, has been written concerning this distinguished individual, but on very questionable authority: indeed, several publications, professing to be memoirs of him, are now known to be scandalous fabrications. The truth is, that Prince Talleyrand's career has been remarkably free from violence; and that he has swayed the destinies of France not by terror, but by the sheer strength and promptitude of his talents. It has been his constant aim to direct, not to oppose, public opinion. In a remarkable speech which he made in the Chamber of Deputies, he expressed, in a single phrase, the whole spirit of his policy—"I know," he said, "where there is more wisdom than is to be found in Napoleon, or Voltaire, or any minister, past or present—in *public opinion*."

While others have waded through blood to attain the object of their ambition, the career of M. de Talleyrand has been unstained by such excesses. It has, indeed, been charged against him, that the Duke d'Enghien penned a letter to Bonaparte, which letter, though it would have procured his pardon, was detained by the minister until the writer was no more; but De Bourrienne pronounces the charge "an atrocious absurdity," and asserts, on the authority of the unfortunate duke's aid-de-camp, who never quitted him till the last moment, that no such letter was ever written. "Every one," he adds, "who has had any connexion with Napoleon, knows how he was served; and I dare affirm, that no one would have ventured to delay the presentation of a letter on which the fate of so august a victim depended."

Bonaparte often complained of certain persons

\* "He, with a sly, insinuating grace,  
Laugh'd at his friend, and look'd him in the face;  
Would raise a blush, where secret vice he found,  
And tickle, while he gently probed the wound."

about him, that they were gifted with such a mischievous zeal, that they allowed him not a moment for reflection; so that when he would have recalled his orders in the calmer moment of reflection, it was too late. The conduct of M. de Talleyrand was very different. When Napoleon gave direction, "Write so and so, and send it off instantly by an extraordinary courier," he would, where duty required it, take his time. His secretary says, he has a hundred times heard the emperor exclaim, "Talleyrand understands me: it is thus I should be served; others leave me no time for reflection; they are too prompt." The same authority states, that of all Bonaparte's ministers, whether as consul or emperor, Talleyrand was nearly the only one who never flattered him.\*

The countenance of the prince has been described as so immovable, that nothing can be read in it. Murat used jocularly to say of him, that if, while he was speaking to you, some one should come behind him, and give him a kick, his visage would betray no indication of the affront.

In his domestic habits he is said to be mild and amiable. The individuals in his employ are devotedly attached to him. Among his intimate friends he good-humouredly talks of his ecclesiastic profession. He one day expressed his dislike of a tune which was played in his hearing, as it recalled to his recollection the time when he was obliged to practice church music, and to sing at the desk. On another occasion, one of his intimate friends was telling a story during supper, while M. de Talleyrand was engaged in thought. In the course of it, the speaker happened to say, in a lively manner, of some one whom he had named, "that fellow is a comical rogue; he is a married priest." Talleyrand, roused by these words, seizing a spoon, with a threatening aspect, called out to him, "Mr. Such-a-one, will you have some espionage?" The person who was telling the story was confounded, and all the company burst into a fit of laughter, M. de Talleyrand as heartily as the rest.

The reports of his great wealth, there is reason to believe, are wholly erroneous. By the failure of his banker he lost about 60,000*l.* sterling, and his revenue was scarcely sufficient to pay the interest of the money owing to his creditors. According to Savary, who diligently watched over his motions, he was so poor, after his retirement from the ministry, as to be compelled to dispose of his residence, formerly the hotel Valentinois.

Prince Talleyrand has for some time been occupied in the composition of his political memoirs; but they are not to be given to the world until after his decease. Those of his contemporaries to whom portions of the manuscript have been read, report them to be as amusing as Gil Blas, and that the ex-bishop has drawn a most admirable picture of the court of Louis XVI., from 1775 to 1789, and of the state of society

during that period. They already extend to many volumes; and the recent appointment of the distinguished subject of them to the high situation of ambassador plenipotentiary to the court of William IV. will doubtless furnish materials for a new, and perhaps not the least important, chapter. The following is the speech made by the prince at his audience of presentation to the King of England:—

"Sire—His majesty the King of the French has made choice of me as the interpreter of the sentiments with which he is animated towards your majesty. I have accepted with joy a mission which formed so noble a termination to the last steps of my long career. Sire, of all the vicissitudes which my great age has gone through—of all the various fortunes which forty years, so fertile in events, have given to my life—nothing, perhaps, so completely satisfied my desires as the choice which brings me back to this happy country. But what a difference between the periods! The jealousies, the prejudices which for so long a time divided France and England have given place to sentiments of an enlightened and affectionate esteem. A similarity of principles now draws still closer the relations of the two countries. England, in her foreign policy, repudiates with France the principle of intervention in the internal affairs of her neighbours, and the ambassador of a royalty, voted unanimously by a great people, feels himself at ease in a land of liberty, and near a descendant of the illustrious house of Brunswick. I solicit with confidence, sire, your kindness in the relations which I am charged to maintain with your majesty, and I entreat you to accept the homage of my profound respect."

#### WOOD ENGRAVING.

THE first engraving on wood, of which there is any record in Europe, is that of "the Actus of Alexander," by the two Cunio's, executed in 1285 or 1286. The engravings are eight in number, and in size about nine inches by six. In a frontispiece decorated with fanciful ornaments, there is an inscription which states the engravings to have been by "Alessandro Alberico Cunio Cavaliere, and Isabella Cunio, twin brother and sister, first reduced, imagined, and attempted to be executed in relief, with a small knife on blocks of wood, made even and polished by this learned and dear sister; continued and finished by us together at Ravenna, from the eight pictures of our invention, painted six times larger than here represented; engraved, explained by verses, and thus marked upon the paper to perpetuate the number of them, and to enable us to present them to our relations and friends in testimony of gratitude, friendship, and affection.—All this was done and finished by us when only sixteen years of age." This account, which was given by Pappillon, who saw the engravings, has been much disputed; but Mr. Otley, in his late valuable work, deems it authentic.

\* De Bourrienne, tom. v. p. 133.