



Eng^d by A.H. Ritchie.

ch. mau. Talleyrand.

©

L I F E

OF

PRINCE TALLEYRAND,

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS SPEECHES AND WRITINGS.

BY

CHARLES K. McHARG.



C NEW YORK:

C. SCRIBNER, 377 & 379 BROADWAY.

1857.

P R E F A C E .

IN the following work the attempt is made to give an account of the life of Talleyrand, as full and as correct as the means of information within reach of the writer would allow. The materials were collected and the work was executed, in the main, three years since. Its publication has been deferred for various reasons; chief among which has been the feeling, that from lack of material and of time at the disposal of the author, that fullness of narration, discussion, and illustration due so famous a subject had not been possible. This deficiency has been but slightly supplied by delay. The materials for the life of Talleyrand are much more scanty than would be imagined, when we consider his eminence as a public man, and the space he really fills in the history of Europe. Careful inquiry has failed to bring to light any complete biography of him in either French or English. The nearest approach to one is to be found in a series of papers published in the Dublin University Magazine, not long after his death, and entitled "Leaves from the Life of Prince Talleyrand." These papers, however, valuable as they are, pass very briefly over some important portions of his life.

It is somewhat surprising that no extended biography of so celebrated a Frenchman has appeared in his

own land and language. Possibly the anticipated publication of his own "Memoirs" has had much to do with this want in French literature. But by the terms of his will these "Memoirs" cannot be made public till 1868, when the required thirty years from the date of his death will be completed. It is supposed that his Autobiography is very complete, graphic, and racy, full of anecdotes of his times, ably vindicating his own political course, and canvassing with great freedom the important personages with whom he had relations during a life of over eighty years' duration. His intimate friends, claiming to have seen or listened to portions of it, so speak of it as to awaken these expectations.

A little must be said regarding the sources whence this work is drawn. About the time of the elevation of Bonaparte to the imperial dignity, there appeared in England a small work, purporting to give an account of Talleyrand's private life and character. It was evidently the production of a French royalist pen. It collects all the scurrilous stories that were current regarding its subject; and on its face appears so bitter, prejudiced and partial, as to destroy its own credibility. It has, therefore, been very sparingly and cautiously used. A French work of much later date, and both much more full and candid, was translated and republished in this country; but its narrative, at least in the American edition, breaks off at the time when Talleyrand took office under Bonaparte. It has furnished some of the speeches, quoted as delivered by Talleyrand in the National Assembly, and also some of his public papers, with many facts and several anecdotes. The Magazine articles referred to indicate great intelligence and command of the facts of his life, a warm admiration of his character, candor and ability in the discussion of

controverted points, and a generous disposition to do ample justice to his memory. They have been relied upon as among the best authorities on the subject, and have, therefore, been very freely used; two or three chapters being in large part composed of the very language of these papers, sometimes given in full and again condensed. The acknowledgment of indebtedness and of appropriation is here made, as it could not be conveniently done in the text. This acknowledgment extends also to several of the works used in the preparation of this life.

A more modern work has appeared in England under the following title, "Revelations of the Life of Prince Talleyrand. Edited from the Papers of the late M. Colmache, Private Secretary to the Prince. London, 1850." This production was well received and commended by the English press. It is very fragmentary, and without any order; but it is full of interesting gossip and important facts, given in a very lively, sketchy, and pleasing style. We have regarded it as worthy of credit, and as being particularly valuable in giving so much of the conversation of Talleyrand, and of his more private traits, acts and manners. It reveals the aged and sagacious diplomatist in the freedom of social intercourse and of domestic life, amusing and instructing his friends from the rich stores of his own experience and meditation. Whoever reads the following book will find, that whatever interest it may have is greatly due to the numerous extracts which are given from these "Recollections." They are noted when they are given in the narrative. A collection of apothegms and some speeches are also quoted from this work of Colmache.

The general histories of French affairs during the life

of Talleyrand, as well as the various memoirs of cotemporaries, have been resorted to for many facts in which his acts were connected with public transactions. No original papers and documents have been searched, for in this country that would be simply impossible. The writer has sought not to wander far into general history, in maintaining the connection of an individual life with the transpiring events of the nations of Europe. It is not easy to sift out the truth respecting such a life as that of this able and renowned French statesman. To make an authentic and interesting narrative has been the honest aim of the author.

IRVINGTON, N. Y., *August*, 1856.

C O N T E N T S .

CHAPTER I.

The French Revolution and the Aristocracy—Talleyrand's birth—Banishment from Home—Visit of his Uncle—Return to Paris—Sent to the College of Louis le Grand.—Deprived of his birthright—Condemned to become a priest—Education continued at the Seminary of St. Sulpice and at the school of the Sorbonne—Mental development—Moral training, its deficiencies—Precocious Immorality—"Lettre de Cachet"—Castle of Vincennes—Ordination—Enters the World as Abbé de Perigord—Coadjutor to his Uncle—State of Society—Lafayette and Talleyrand—Début into Parisian Society—First *don-mot*—His Popularity—His first Benefices and rising Fortunes—Interview with Voltaire, 1

CHAPTER II.

Talleyrand's study of life and character—His adoption of liberal opinions—Financial studies—Mirabeau's recommendation—Appointed agent of the clergy—Increased income, and enlarging reputation—Effect of American Revolution—Talleyrand and the privateer—His political relations and intrigues—The Queen's necklace—Madame de La Motte—His connection with the first popular journal in France—His social position and reputation—His admiration for the society of the old régime, 88

CHAPTER III.

The Revolution—Louis XVI.—Character of the King and state of his Kingdom—Financial Troubles—Talleyrand's Speculations—Abbé de Perigord now becomes Bishop of Autun—Convocation of the Notables—Talleyrand Questioned by the Count d'Artois—Joins the Party of the Duke of Orleans—Necker Minister again—Convocation of the States-General—Talleyrand Elected a Deputy—His Reminiscence of the Opening

46) Scenes—Grand Procession—Bishop of Autun in the Ranks—Description of him by La Clos—Meeting in the "Hall of Menu"—Demands of the "Third Estate"—First Struggle—Talleyrand goes over to the Side of the Commons—Overtures of the Court—Talleyrand's moderate views, 49

CHAPTER IV.

Instruction of Representatives—First Speech of the Bishop of Autun—His merit as an Orator—His Increasing Reputation—The Revolution Progresses—Talleyrand on the Committee on the Constitution—His Influence in Reforming Aristocratical and Ecclesiastical Abuses—Abolition of Tithes—Rights of Man—Financial Discussions—Confiscation of the Ornaments of the Churches—Talleyrand's Speeches on the Confiscation of the Lands of the Clergy—Opposition and Personal Hostility of the Clergy—His Separation from his old Colleagues—A Thorough Radical—Speech on a National Bank, 66

CHAPTER V.

His continued Labors as a Legislator and Reformer—His able Report on Education—Elected President of the Assembly—His Address to the People and Defence of the Assembly—Grand Fête in the Champ-de-Mars—The Bishop of Autun performs Mass—Difficulties with the Clergy—Civil Organisation of the Clergy—Mirabeau and Talleyrand—Anecdote—Talleyrand's account of their last interview, and of Mirabeau's Death—He reads Mirabeau's Speech in the Assembly—Archbishopric of Paris and Gambling—The Bishop of Autun's Letter of Defence—His Excommunication by the Pope—Resigns his Episcopal office and retires to Civil Life, 83

CHAPTER VI.

Entrance on diplomatic life—Departs for England—Interview with Pitt—Reception of the French legation by the English—Countess de Flahaut—Their singular acquaintance, and subsequent intimacy—His return to Paris, and opportune escape—Execution of the King, and Reign of Terror—Talleyrand's embarrassed situation in England—Writes a book, but does not publish—Is impeached before the Convention, and his name placed on the list of emigrants—His Intrigues in England—Ordered to quit England—Engages in Commercial Speculations—Singular Occurrence in New York—His Political Intrigues in the United States—His Poverty—Efforts for his Return—His Petition—Chénier pleads for him—His Recall—His Opinion of Madame de Stäel—Witticisms on Madame Necker—Anecdote of Madame de Stäel, 107

CHAPTER VII.

Talleyrand's return to Europe—Sojourn at Hamburg—Secret services there and at Berlin—Returns to Paris—Welcomed to society—Suspicious of politicians—Carnot's hostility—Acquaintance with Bonaparte—Addresses before the National Institute—

Need of him in the government—Carnot warmly opposes his appointment—Majority appoint him Minister for Foreign Affairs—Revolution of the 18th Fructidor—Talleyrand's activity and success—Corresponds with Bonaparte in Italy—Reception of the "Conqueror of Italy" by the Directory—Talleyrand's speech on the occasion—Opinions of it—Anecdote—Celebration of the death of the King—State of the country—A picture of the Directory—Increasing tyranny—Society of Paris—Talleyrand and the coach-maker—Expedition to Egypt—Policy in relation to foreign affairs, . . . 184

CHAPTER VIII.

Labors as minister—Directions to diplomatic agents—Corruption and weakness of the Directory—Treatment of the United States—Naval war—Talleyrand's rapacity—Attempts to extort money from the American commissioners—Sièyes a Director—Attacks on Talleyrand—Forced to resign—Obliged to publish a defence of himself, 157

CHAPTER IX.

Bonaparte's return from Egypt—Talleyrand joins his party—Conversation with Madame de Staël—Reconciles Sièyes and Bonaparte—Takes care of Barras during the revolution of the 18th Brumaire—Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs—Sagacious remarks made to Bonaparte—His admiration for the First Consul—Pun on Sièyes—New difficulties between the Consuls—Correspondence with the English government—Improvement of society—Josephine's debts—Joseph's embarrassments—Bonaparte's satisfaction with Talleyrand—Pun on Andréossy—Talleyrand and Fouché—The Russian ambassador—Treachery of a clerk—Letter on the affairs of Spain—Talleyrand and the church of Rome—Conferences at Lyons on Italian affairs—Diplomatic dinner—Account of the tragical death of the Archbishop of Milan, 170

CHAPTER X.

Elegant flattery—Talleyrand's wealth and luxurious mode of living—Madame Grandt—Talleyrand's singular interview with her—Subsequent intimacy—Bonaparte's remarks—Their marriage—Anecdotes of Madame Talleyrand—Robinson Crusoe—Napoleon offers Talleyrand a cardinal's hat—Troubles in the ministry—Calonne's intrigues—Fouché's dismissal—Rupture of the peace of Amiens—Talleyrand's exertions to avoid a rupture—War declared—Anecdote, 301

CHAPTER XI.

Arrest of the Duke d'Enghien—Talleyrand's connection with the affair—He favors the establishment of the Empire—Aids in forming the grand dignities—First disappointment—Created Grand Chamberlain—Napoleon's letter to Talleyrand on the war—Campaign of Austerlitz—Talleyrand follows the Emperor—His grand project for the permanent pacification of Europe—His plan for a Peace Congress—Napoleon's praise, 222

CHAPTER XII.

Created Prince of Benevento—Various diplomatic labors—Death of Pitt—Fox opens a correspondence with Talleyrand—Talleyrand seeks to obtain peace through Lord Yarmouth—Campaign against Prussia—Talleyrand again follows the army—Severe labors—Temporary Quartermaster in Poland—Letters of the Emperor—Negotiations at Tilsit—His last official act—Conversation with the Emperor—Obtains the dignity of Vice Grand-Elector, and retires from the ministry—Motives for this step—Spanish affairs—Conferences at Fontainebleau—Various projects—Talleyrand's connection with the invasion of Spain—Differs from the Emperor—Loses favor, 235

CHAPTER XIII.

Valençay—Letter of the Emperor, appointing Talleyrand keeper over the Spanish Princes—Estrangement between the Emperor and Talleyrand—His high position, notwithstanding—Napoleon takes him with him to Erfurth—His intrigues there—Increasing bitterness of feeling between Napoleon and Talleyrand—Campaign against Russia—Napoleon offers him the Ministry for Foreign Affairs—His open hostility to the Emperor—Threatened imprisonment, yet appointed one of the Council of Regency—Stormy interview, 248

CHAPTER XIV.

Alleged intrigues with the Bourbons—Napoleon's reverses and position—Talleyrand's position—His connection with the allies and the Bourbons—The party of the Restoration gathers around him—The Emperor Alexander a guest in the Hotel Talleyrand—The conference of the allies—Talleyrand's speech—Declaration against Napoleon—Talleyrand assembles the Senate—Speech to that body—Provisional Government, and Talleyrand at the head of it—Project of a charter—Proclamation of the Provisional Government—Adherence of different bodies—Anecdote, 258

CHAPTER XV.

Fears of Talleyrand and the allies concerning Napoleon—The emperor's abdication—His commissioners obtain an interview with Alexander—Talleyrand's efforts to secure a liberal constitution—Count D'Artols enters Paris—The Senate and the Count—Talleyrand signs the capitulation with the allies—Speech at St.Omer—Minister for Foreign Affairs—Pecuniary forces in diplomacy—Supreme influence of Talleyrand—The Congress of Vienna—His high position there—His difficulties—His able movements—The splendid festivities at Vienna—His gossiping letters to Louis XVIII. 271

CHAPTER XVI.

News of Napoleon's escape from Elba—Talleyrand's composure—Conferences with Metternich and Castlereagh—Dangers which now threatened France—Talleyrand's activity and discouragements—His own embarrassing position—The Congress

undecided—His eloquent and convincing speech—Declaration of the Congress against Napoleon—Napoleon's efforts to gain Talleyrand—Mission of Montrond—Napoleon's censure of Talleyrand—Talleyrand's opinion of Napoleon, 268

CHAPTER XVII.

French judgments on Talleyrand's course—His remonstrance with Louis XVIII.—Opinion of the Duke of Wellington—Unjust conduct of the Allies toward France—Talleyrand's earnest remonstrances—Refuses to sign the treaty, and compelled to resign office—Interview with the King—Talleyrand allowed to retain the dignity of Grand Chamberlain—His opinion of Louis XVIII.—Dinner at Compiègne—Talleyrand in the Chamber of Peers—Freedom of the press—War with Spain, 266

CHAPTER XVIII.

Revolution of 1830—Talleyrand's connection with it—Scenes at his hotel during the "Three Days of July"—The king flies—Talleyrand's message to Louis Philippe—His advice as to accepting the crown—Louis Philippe proclaimed King—Talleyrand appointed ambassador to London—Anecdote—Negotiations, 318

CHAPTER XIX.

Final retirement from political life—Last public appearance at the Institute—Eulogy on Count Reinhart—Illness—Preparations for death—Religious profession—Declaration of his political principles—Visit of Louis Philippe to the dying statesman—Death—Will—Funeral at Paris—Titles and Honors; 331

CHAPTER XX.

Talleyrand's literary labors—Description of the American backwoodsman—Opinion of Fox—Collection of his apothegms—Anecdotes respecting him, peculiarities, treatment of his domestics—*Bon-mots*—Habits of composition—Personal appearance—Mental characteristics—Lord Brougham's opinion—His merit as an orator—Lord Brougham's description of his conversation—His political reputation—His private friendships—Napoleon's opinion of him—His religious and moral character—His claims upon the admiration and the memory of mankind, 346

PRINCE TALLEYRAND.

CHAPTER I.

The French Revolution and the Aristocracy—Talleyrand's birth—Banishment from Home—Visit of his Uncle—Return to Paris—Sent to the College of Louis le Grand.—Deprived of his birthright—Condemned to become a priest—Education continued at the Seminary of St. Sulpice and at the school of the Sorbonne—Mental development—Moral training, its deficiencies—Precocious Immorality—"Letter de Cachet"—Castle of Vincennes—Ordination—Enters the World as Abbé de Perigord—Coadjutor to his Uncle—State of Society—Lafayette and Talleyrand—Début into Parisian Society—First *bon-mot*—His Popularity—His first Benefices and rising Fortunes—Interview with Voltaire.

PERHAPS no destruction of a social class was ever more complete than that suffered by the French aristocracy in the great revolution. Exiled, guillotined, driven into obscurity, impoverished, the old nobility was well-nigh exterminated. The very names, around which gathered the glories of ancient greatness and worth, were obliterated. The aristocracy of that age, unhappily for themselves, deserved but little favor from the nation which they despised and oppressed. Yet the revolution not only spared, but rendered illustrious, some individuals of the doomed and proscribed class; or to speak more strictly, they saved themselves by taking the front rank of the revolutionary

agents. They fought with and for the nation, and thus escaped the fate of their order.

It is an interesting fact that the three men most prominent in the commencement of the revolution, Mirabeau, Lafayette, and Talleyrand belonged to the ancient *noblesse*. Of these, Talleyrand was ultimately the most successful and powerful, though he possessed neither the eloquence of Mirabeau, nor the virtue of Lafayette. He, however, by his peculiar talents, secured his own eminence and influence in the State throughout all the changes of administration undergone by his country during his long life. The man must have been remarkable, who was a favorite in the court of Louis XVI., and then a prominent reformer of the abuses of the monarchy—a foreign ambassador under the Assembly, yet escaping the perils of the “reign of terror”—the chief director of the intricate diplomacy of the empire, yet not involved in the mistakes and the fall of the Emperor—the principal agent in the restoration of the Bourbons, the mediator between victorious Europe and subdued France, yet an opponent of that insane policy which led to another revolution—an adviser to Louis Philippe when his advice secured a crown, and finally at the close of his public life, as he had been at the beginning, an ambassador to England, bearing messages of peace to the government which had once refused him an asylum, and against whose power the most strenuous efforts of his keen and restless mind had been put forth.

A life reaching over such a period of time, and in some way connected with all the events which make that period memorable in the history of Europe, must merit some attention. With this persuasion the following sketch of this noted man is made.

CHARLES MAURICE TALLEYRAND DE PERIGORD was born in

Paris on the 13th of February,* 1754. He was of an ancient, noble, but impoverished family. It claimed in its remote history alliance with the royal house of Bourbon. The Perigords once held the feudal sovereignty of a small province, called Quercy; and in maintaining that independence, which was long claimed by the feudal lords of France, came in various instances into open collision with the forces of the monarchs.

But the rank of his family was of no advantage to the youthful Talleyrand. The fashion of the aristocracy immediately separated him from his mother, who, like the ladies of her class in society, knew nothing of domestic duties, virtues, or pleasures. The child, who was destined to make the name of the family famous, was but little loved, and received no parental care, beyond being committed to the charge of a hired nurse. It is even asserted that Talleyrand never slept under the roof of his father's house. Perhaps Charles Maurice was not a favored child, because of a deformity in one of his feet, which, never cured, rendered him perceptibly lame for life. This deformity arose, when yet a babe, so some writers assert, from the carelessness of his nurse; while others state that he was born with what is termed a club-foot.

His years of boyhood, until he reached the age of twelve, were passed in a perfectly secluded village in a distant province. Here he was joined when seven years old, by his next younger brother, Archambaut. For the physical education of the children no better place was needed, and to the naturally delicate frame of Charles, this country air and freedom were a great blessing. The influence of his early rural life upon his imagination and taste might also, we think, be traced in his mature

* It is not easy to establish the date of this event. Good authorities give the above. Others say the 7th of March.

character. When he was twelve years old, there came to visit the children an uncle, the Bailli de Talleyrand, the youngest brother of their father, a kind and brave man, and at the time an officer in the marine of France.

This visit marked an era in the life of the boy, and a very pleasing account of it is given in the work of M. Colmache. It is here introduced also, as furnishing a description of the person of young Talleyrand, and as relating his return to Paris and the commencement of his regular education.

“Just at a turn of the road which led down into the village, the bailli bethought himself that he knew not the way to the house of the Mère Rigaut, the nurse to whom he had been directed ; and he checked his steed, to gaze around and see if any one was in view who could assist him. While he thus paused, there came hobbling up the hill a pale, delicate-looking boy, with long ringlets of very fair hair, hanging loose over his shoulders, and an indescribable look of gentility, which the bailli perceived at once—at least he always said so afterward. He carried a bird-trap in his hand, for he was just going out to seek for larks among the snow. The bailli called to him to come on faster ; but, alas ! as he drew near, he perceived that he was very lame, and that he bore a little crutch, which, however, he did not always use, but sometimes walking several steps without its aid, would flourish it before him as if in defiance, until a roughness in the road, or a loose stone, compelled him to place it again beneath his arm.

“‘Hallo, my boy !’ shouted the bailli, ‘will you tell me the way to the house of the Mère Rigaut ?’

“‘That I will,’ cried the boy, eyeing the bailli askance and smiling slyly ; ‘and, moreover, I will conduct you thither, if you will give me——’

“ ‘Ay, ay,’ said the bailli, ‘never fear; but make haste child—the wind blows cold and sharp, and you shall have no cause to complain of my want of generosity.’

“ ‘Nay, nay,’ replied the boy, coloring, ‘I meant to have asked you but for a ride on your steed to Mother Rigaut’s door.’

“ And as the child spoke, he looked with envy at the rough post-horse, which, all unkempt and shaggy as he was, appeared far superior to the rude animals employed in plough or cart—the only ones ever seen in that distant village.

“ ‘Is that all?’ said the good-natured bailli, ‘then come along—mount—quick, my lad—there—jump up in the twinkling of an eye.’

“ The boy, lame as he was, sprang into the saddle, but the portly person of the bailli prevented him from taking a safe seat, so he leaned his little crutch upon the toe of the bailli’s boot, and grappled the horse’s mane with a firm grasp, almost standing upright; while the bailli, heedless of his perilous situation, trotted over the rough stones of the village pavement, the bells at the horse’s bridle jingling merrily, and the loud laugh—half fear, half delight—of the bold urchin echoing far and near. Of course the whole village was roused in an instant, and the astonishment was great at beholding Mother Rigaut’s ‘Charlot’ trotting down the street upon a strange gentleman’s steed, his long fair hair blown about by the wind, and his face shining and glowing amid the golden masses of silken curls which fell over it.

“ The bailli stopped at Mother Rigaut’s door, but so little was he prepared to meet the truth, that he bade the boy, with whom he seemed mightily pleased, hold the horse while he entered the house to speak to the good woman, who was already

standing on the threshold, all smiles and courtesies, to welcome the strange gentleman. The bailli entered and closed the door after him. What passed within none can tell. It must have been an extraordinary scene, for the sound of voices in high dispute was heard for some minutes—a sound of sobbing and of wailing, and of loud expostulation; and presently the bailli was seen bursting from the cottage, and rushing upon the boy, and hugging and embracing him with transports of affection; then, all pale and trembling with emotion, he waved back with his riding-whip the advances of Mère Rigaut, who was pressing forward to clasp the child in her arms, and, seizing him in a sturdy grasp, he threw him on the saddle, and sprang up after him. But this time he allowed him room enough to ride at ease, and bade him sit in comfort, and then he placed his brawny arm round the boy's middle with solicitude, to keep him firm upon the saddle, and, putting spurs to the capering post-horse, he dashed out of the village without even asking news of any other child, or suffering the boy to take a last farewell of the Mère Rigaut, who followed him with shrieks and lamentations until he was lost to sight.

“It was not till they had arrived at the little town, distant about two leagues from the village wherein Charles Maurice de Talleyrand—Mother Rigaut's ‘Charlot’—had passed these first twelve years of his eventful life, and which he was destined to behold no more—that he was informed that the strange gentleman who had carried him off so abruptly, and in such a storm of indignation that he had not even stayed to see the little Archambaut, was his own uncle, the Bailli de Talleyrand, his father's brave and loving brother, whose generous heart had glowed with such indignation at sight of the unheeded state in which the poor child had been left, crippled for life through

the awkwardness of the ignorant nurse, that, without hesitation, without permission, he had torn him from his misery, and, although greatly disappointed in the hope he had conceived of being able to take him on board the ship he commanded, in consequence of his infirmity, yet he would not suffer him to remain a moment longer abandoned to the ignorant kindness of which he had so long been a victim.

“As he was compelled to delay his return to Paris for some little time, he immediately wrote to the count, to inform him of the circumstances in which he had found his nephew, Charles Maurice, and his intention of bringing him at once to Paris. The letter reached its destination some days before the worthy bailli, accompanied by his young charge, drove into the courtyard of the hotel where the Comte de Talleyrand resided. Here, to his great mortification, he found that the count was absent with the army of Flanders; the countess was also absent on duty at the palace, it being her week of service, and not for worlds would she neglect her duty. She had, however, with an affectionate foresight, worthy of the greatest praise, appointed a gentleman to receive the boy from the hands of the bailli—a professor, who was to be his tutor at the College Louis le Grand, whither he was immediately to conduct his pupil, arrangements having already been made for his reception. The bailli sighed as he consigned the lad to the care of another stranger, and, taking an affectionate farewell, which was his last, immediately set off for Toulon, where he embarked, and was drowned at sea some few months afterward.

“Had the worthy bailli lived, the destiny of Charles Maurice would have been far different, and the fate of Europe have been changed. He would have found protection and support in his own family—in one of its members at least—and they

would not have dared to wreak upon his head that deadly wrong, which changed the whole current of his existence, and compelled him to struggle and toil for that which was by right his own. However, bad as matters were, they certainly might have been worse; for the gentleman to whose care Charles Maurice was confided, was at all events a kind and liberal person, and soon became greatly attached to his pupil. I have frequently seen him at the Hotel Talleyrand, even so lately as the year 1828. He was but a very few years older than the prince, and it was like a dream of other days to hear the ancient pupil and his more ancient tutor discourse for hours together of those early times, so long gone by, and of their friends and companions, all, with a very few exceptions, long since in the grave. I have often thought that it must have been to the society and counsels of this most excellent man that the prince chiefly owed the softness and humanity of his character, which even his enemies, amid all their absurd accusations, have never been able to deny.

“I have heard the prince, even very lately, speak of this dear Père Langlois, as one of the most benevolent and pure-minded of men, and his friendship and affection for him knew no change, through all the vicissitudes of fortune, or the changes in politics. The prince, I believe, allowed him a very handsome income up to the day of his death; but this circumstance did not prevent him from sometimes indulging his quondam pupil with a few gentle remonstrances, whenever, by any misplaced word, or ill-timed reflection, he wounded the old professor's prejudices; and it was a most curious sight to witness the deference with which his observations would be received by the prince, who, so strong was the power of old association, bowed his mighty intellect, and submitted to the reprimands of the

obscure and dependent professor. I have often been present at his visits, and alway took most especial delight in witnessing the kindly feeling, the true affection, which existed between the pair. M. Langlois still wore, in 1828, the costume he had worn before the revolution, when, as professor of rhetoric at the college of Louis le Grand, he had undertaken the care and education of the poor neglected boy from the distant village in Perigord—a long-skirted black coat, without a collar, and buttoned up to the chin, black knee breeches and silk stockings, with large shoes and bright plated knee-buckles.

“ At the college, Charles Maurice devoted himself most manfully to study. This is proved by the fact of his having obtained, the second year of his admission, the first prize of his class, although competition must have been hard with boys who had been in the college for many years, while he had been running wild and barefoot on the plains of Perigord. Three years passed away cheerily enough at the college. His life of study had, however, but little variety, for he was during that time one of the unfavored few who were compelled by the arrangements of their parents to remain at the college during the short vacation. His mother came but seldom to visit him, and never came alone. She was mostly accompanied by an eminent surgeon of Paris, who examined the boy’s leg, and bandaged it, and pulled it out to force it to match in length with the other, and burnt and cauterized the offending nerve until the poor fellow learned to dread with extreme terror the summons to the parlor, and the announcement that his mother was awaiting him there. I have often heard him tell of the agony of these visits, and of the disappointment which he experienced on seeing all his playmates depart to their various homes for the holi-

days, but I never heard him utter a single complaint or condemnation of his mother's conduct.

“It was at this time that his father died from the consequence of an old wound received in a skirmish some years before, and Charles Maurice was now the Comte de Talleyrand, and head of that branch of the family to which he belonged. Meanwhile, the younger son, Archambaut, had likewise returned from his most refined and tender nursing; but *he* had had the better chance; *his* limbs were sound and well developed, as God had made them. No dire accident, the consequence of foul neglect, had marred his shape or tarnished his comeliness. So, one fine day, and as a natural consequence, mark you, of this fortunate circumstance, when Charles Maurice, the *eldest* son, had finished his course of study at Louis le Grand, having passed through his classes with great *éclat*, there came a tall, sallow, black-robed priest, and took him away from the midst of friends to the grim old seminary of St. Sulpice, and it was there that he received the astounding intimation, from the lips of the superior himself, that, by the decision of a family council, from which there was no appeal, his birthright had been taken from him, and transferred to his younger brother.

“‘Why so?’ faltered the boy, unable to conceal his emotion.

“‘He is not a cripple,’ was the stern and cruel answer.

“It must have been that hour—nay, that very instant—the echo of those heartless words—which made the Prince de Talleyrand what he is even to this very day. Who shall tell the bitter throes of that bold, strong-hearted youth, as he heard the unjust sentence? None will ever be able to divine what his feelings were, for this one incident is always passed over by

the prince. He never refers to it, even when in familiar conversation with his most loved intimates. It is certain, therefore, that the single hour of which I speak, bore with it a whole life of bitterness and agony.

“It is evident, as usual with him throughout his whole life, that his decision, however, was taken on the instant. He murmured not—he sued not for commutation of the hateful sentence. He knew that it would be in vain. He even sought at once to conform, outwardly at least, to all the tedium of the endless rules and regulations by which the house was governed; but his whole character was changed—his very nature was warped and blasted. Whatever historians may write, and credulous readers choose to believe, he was *not* a ‘silent, solitary boy, loving to muse while his comrades played around him,’ as I have seen it written in a recent account of his life. Just the contrary. While at Louis le Grand, he was remarkable for his skill and dexterity at all kinds of games requiring either fleetness of foot or strength of limb; which fact was so extraordinary, from his infirmity, that the tradition has been preserved in the college. He was strong and hardy in spite of his lameness. This he owed to the fresh air and free exercise he had enjoyed in his early childhood.”

It was thus by parental injustice and tyranny that Talleyrand, first deprived of his rights as the eldest son, was subjected to the training requisite for admission to the priesthood, the resort of such younger members of the aristocracy as could not secure commissions in the army or navy.

Education rapidly developed the powers of his active and acute mind. Of quick perception, it was never necessary that he should be a close and severe student in order to appear first amid his companions, in all branches of learning appropri-

ate to his age. In the further prosecution of his education he passed from the ecclesiastical seminary of St. Sulpice to the celebrated school of the Sorbonne. His advantages were not neglected. Though no moral predilections or religious convictions attached him to the profession to which he had been devoted by family policy, still the opportunities for intellectual culture, presented by a richly-endowed ecclesiastical system, were not wasted by young Talleyrand. He proved himself capable of application, though naturally of an indolent disposition. His mind was rendered more acute and patient by the scholastic discipline, which still remained a prominent means in the education of the clergy. His temper, naturally rash and impetuous, was also favorably affected by his peculiar training. He became contemplative, cautious, and circumspect, and early acquired that mastery of himself which distinguished him in after life. Separated from his family, receiving no notice or encouragement from those who should have been most interested in his youthful progress, he was thrown upon his own resources, and thus became the more self-reliant and conscious of his powers. This course of early life, resulting from parental neglect and an unkind disregard of his inclinations, was therefore really a benefit to him in its intellectual effects. It laid the basis, in the habits of his mind, of his future distinction. Instead of a condemnation to obscurity, as intended, it became the concealed promise of his renown.

The fame of his skill in argument, his subtlety in "wrangling," had reached beyond the walls of St. Sulpice, long before he himself had left it for the Sorbonne. The *conférences*, or public discussions, which took place weekly in the halls of the Seminary, had brought out his powers of persuasion, and his great quickness of fancy and wit,

which displayed themselves admirably in pointed epigram and brilliant repartee. These discourses were always read in public from a manuscript, and were preserved in the archives of the Seminary, until the Revolution dispersed the whole of the property of the establishment.

It was while he was studying at the Sorbonne that the first shocks of the new era were beginning to be felt; but young Talleyrand, as yet, took little interest in the struggle. His whole ambition for the moment was devoted to adding to his knowledge of literature, and he was known to say that the happiest days of his existence were spent alone, in the gloomy library of the Sorbonne, seated coiled up on the steps of the library ladder, while his cousin went abroad to pick up the news, and bring home reports of the progress of events. The practical knowledge of books which he acquired in this way was large, and served all through life to season his conversation with apt and brilliant quotations.

But the progress of his moral education was not so gratifying. If the character of Talleyrand became, in the opinion of the world, identified with dissimulation, we may find that the foundation for such a deformity was early laid. The necessity imposed upon him, of an apparent conformity to the rules of an ecclesiastical life under the Romish system, when his heart felt no attachment to the ritual, or to the spiritual aims of religion, must have had an unhappy influence upon his character. Concealment and deception respecting his actual feelings must have been an early and frequent demand of his position. This outward falsity, reacting upon the conscience and sensibilities, could not but give a serious and melancholy bias to his pliant disposition. There was nothing to check, but everything to encourage and hasten, this depravation of the

conscience. No better principles had been instilled by parental piety and solicitude, watching over childhood's tendencies and dangers. No remembrance of the holier examples of home rose up to rebuke and withstand the temptations, which approached, clothed with the strength of interest, and offering the apology of necessity. Pure morals are not apt to flourish under hireling culture; and this is all that Talleyrand ever enjoyed. As soon, therefore, as he came to understand his destination in life, and to be capable of conjecturing its want of congeniality with his feelings, his tastes, and his talents, he was under temptation to practice dissimulation, and to discharge the duties of a religious calling with a conscious deficiency of moral principle. Hypocrisy became thus interwoven with the fabric of daily life. Yet we must somewhat modify our opinion of the actual debasement wrought on a soul by the influence of such a training, when we consider that the formal and heartless ministration of a religious service, where it is the doctrine that the service is spiritually valid when the form is properly maintained, cannot produce that sad effect upon the conscience, which must result from a similar ministration under an opposite doctrine. This was just the case with Talleyrand. The Romish system in his day could furnish abundant satisfaction to a conscience more tender than his was. It was not exacting in its demands upon the sincerity of even its highest ministers. In fact, sincerity diminished as you ascended the scale of its dignities. It was more likely to be found in the obscure *curé*, than in the Pontifical sovereign—under the grey cowl of the monk, than under the scarlet hat of the cardinal. The priest, who performed his functions with rubrical propriety, was not trained to look in upon his spiritual experience, and question rigidly his motives. The Romish priesthood was a

profession sought by members of the aristocracy, mainly as an avenue to the treasures of the State. Spirituality, and even morality were not indispensable qualifications for this profession, when an aristocratic family coveted for a younger son some productive benefice, or the broad acres of an Episcopal See.

Precocious as, without doubt, was the moral laxity of Talleyrand, we are by no means disposed to cast the entire blame respecting it upon either parental neglect, or the religious system for whose ministry he was intended. That his heart was far from being devoted to the quiet duties of his compelled seclusion, is manifest from the fact, that while a student at St. Sulpice he frequently left his cell in the evening, clambered over the garden-wall, and made his way to the theatre, where a favorite actress, Mademoiselle Contat, was delighting the pleasure-loving Parisians.

He had some excellent instructors, who were pained at the sight of his youthful immoralities, and sought, by such discipline as they thought judicious, to correct his tendencies. The state of the society into which, while yet a very young man, he was ushered, was, however, hostile not only to all high moral practice, but, indeed, to the semblance of moral decency ; while it presented every species of incentive to the passions of the unprincipled. But previous to his introduction into this seductive and dangerous circle of friends, he had given some indications of a tendency to profligacy. On this ground of private life, however, there is an obligation, resting on any one who inquires into the character of Talleyrand, to come to conclusions quite cautiously.

After he had risen into prominence at the period of the Revolution, various publications were issued, purporting to give revelations of his private life. Those hostile to him personally,

or to the liberal principles he so heartily espoused, gathered up all the scandal regarding him that was in circulation, and how much they invented we may readily imagine. It is not probable that they were very careful in the examination of evidences, when from the covert of anonymous publications, they could attack a public man, unfortunately too vulnerable. Discrediting, therefore, to a great extent, the details of his profligacies, and judging that they could serve no good purpose could they even be correctly stated, it may still be regarded as beyond dispute that the early life of Talleyrand was stained with great immoralities. He was a youth of strong passions, ardent temperament, and loose moral principles. Temptations to sensual indulgence found ready susceptibilities in his nature. Debauchery, licentiousness, and dissoluteness reigned all around him in the corrupted life of Paris. Yet even in the course of immoral pleasures his constitutional caution did not desert him. He never went to those excesses in indulgence in which Mirabeau habitually lived, and which so suddenly broke down his herculean powers in the prime of his manhood. Yet like Mirabeau he became, it is said, in consequence of his criminal courses, the subject of arbitrary arrest, and a tenant of a cell in the state-prison at Vincennes.

The story runs thus; though, it must be said, the authority for it is very questionable. After his father's death, young Charles Maurice was taken under the care of an uncle, the Count de Perigord, by whom his subsequent education was superintended. When but sixteen years of age, a series of most profligate acts was brought to the knowledge of his uncle, which seemed to call for some severe measures, and it was decided to apply to the king for a "*lettre de cachet*." This being granted, the unruly nephew was arrested at a gaming-

house and conveyed to the Bastile; where he remained for two months, when he was transferred to the Castle of Vincennes. Here he remained in confinement for an entire year. The failure of so severe a discipline might safely have been predicted. It did the young profligate no good. It, in fact, furnished but the incentive for cunning and dissimulation, in order that, by a seeming repentance and promised reform, he might escape from a duress so irksome to a youth just tasting the most captivating pleasures of the world. But at length his assumed penitence operated upon the feelings of his uncle and procured his release. He then immediately continued his studies, and finally completed them in a college at Toulouse, and in 1773 was ordained to the priesthood by Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, and afterward a cardinal and a cabinet minister under Louis XVI. The title under which he entered the world was *Abbé de Perigord*. His first ministerial services were performed in the capacity of coadjutor to his uncle, the Archbishop of Rheims.

It was toward the close of the reign of Louis XV., when the gay, witty, handsome and profligate Abbé was introduced into the higher society of Paris. He had the example of prominent ecclesiastics to sanction his devotion to the pleasures of the gay and fashionable world. Corruption to an extreme degree and in the worst forms then characterized the courtly society of the most polished nation of Europe. During the reign of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., the process of deterioration had been going on; until the form and pretence of virtue were not maintained among the aristocratic men and women, who surrounded the throne, and fostered the vices of the royal profligate, in order that they might the more freely indulge their own.

A young man with the personal charms and brilliant talents of Talleyrand was a welcome acquisition to such society.

A characteristic picture of the times is given by Lafayette. Speaking of his earlier life, he says :

“ When I was first presented to his majesty Louis XV., I well remember finding the eldest son of the Church, the King of France and Navarre, seated at a table between a bishop and a courtesan. At the same table was seated an aged philosopher, whose writings had conferred lustre on the age in which he flourished; one whose whole life had been spent in sapping the foundations of Christianity and undermining monarchy. Yet was this philosopher at that moment the object of honor from monarchs and homage from countries. A young abbé entered with me, not to be presented to royalty, but to ask the benediction of this enemy of the altar. The name of the aged philosopher was Voltaire, and that of the young abbé was Charles Maurice Talleyrand !”

The following account of Talleyrand's entrance into society, is given in the work of M. Colmache. It serves to illustrate some of the salient points in the Parisian society of that day, as well as to evince the immediate and flattering success of the young abbé.

“ Talleyrand had the good fortune to enter the world of fashion under the very best auspices. It was at the house of the Marquis de Brignolé, one Saturday evening in the year 1772, that he made his *début* on leaving the seminary. It was a memorable event in his life, of quite as great importance as any of those which have succeeded it, and he felt far more emotion on this occasion than he did when, some thirty years later, he stepped forward to receive the key of grand chamberlain, or the portfolio of foreign affairs. He was a remarkably handsome

youth, and his fresh complexion and long golden hair must have appeared to great advantage among the crowd of withered *savans* in powdered wigs, with which the *salon* was already filled. To hear him relate the adventures of this his first *soirée* is like reading a page torn from some old memoir, and can seldom fail to inspire a feeling of interest almost akin to awe in the mind of the listener. He tells a story, too, with peculiar gusto, and seems to grow young again in the memory of the circumstances which marked his first appearance in society.

“Madame de Brignolé was one of the most witty, clever women at that time in Paris, and held a peculiar position in society, from having had the address to shake off the trammels of caste and clique, and to avow herself the admirer of all that was admirable, whether it proceeded from this set or from that, from the daring skeptic or shrinking believer. All agreed to consider her *salon* as neutral ground, and to accept at her hands the flag of truce, which she held out to each with so much grace and affability. It happened that the reception wherein the young Abbé de Perigord made his first appearance was a peculiarly brilliant one, owing to the return of Baron Holbach, after a long absence from Paris. It was on this occasion that he made the acquaintance of the Chevalier de Boufflers, one of the leaders of fashion of the day. Their friendship commenced with a quarrel, and lasted through every change of circumstances until the death of Boufflers, which happened during the Restoration in 1815.

“It would delight you to hear the prince relate this story. He laughs even now at the boyish waggery, although expressing great contrition for the horrible pun which passion and circumstance wrung from him in the heat of the moment. It was his first, and he says it was his last also, although its great

success might certainly have warranted many a repetition of the attempt. The young abbé had ensconced himself in a vacant seat, quite aloof from the rest of the company, being bent on observing all that passed, and caring not for a share in the conversation. He had not long been seated in this place when he was accosted by Philidor, the renowned chess-player, who, like himself, was a man of few words, and of most modest and retiring habits. He was an old frequenter of the house, and therefore a valuable neighbor for our young novice, and they soon fell into close and friendly conversation. D'Alembert was there, and Diderot, and many other of the bright particular stars of the day, and Philidor, with good-natured attention, pointed them out to the abbé, much diverted with the great interest the latter seemed to take in each illustrious individual, who swept past him on his way to lay his homage at the feet of the lady of the house. They had been some time conversing thus, when their retirement was invaded by two young officers, the one an hussar, the other belonging to the regiment of Royal Cravatte, poor Marie Antoinette's favorite regiment, and the most insolent and saucy one in the whole service. They were evidently very deep in the enjoyment of some good story, for they were speaking low and laughing heartily.

“ ‘Let us get a seat down yonder against the wall,’ said the one to the other, ‘and I will tell you the rest of the joke. I should not like it to be overheard.’

“ ‘But I see no room,’ replied his companion; ‘there is Philidor down there, talking to some unfledged blackbird from the seminary.’

“ ‘No matter, we must have the place. Philidor will soon yield, and the abbé cannot hold out against us.’”

“They advanced straight to where Philidor and his com-

...ratte thereupon grew angry; he was a Cadet d' long arrived from Normandy, and had not yet a ble Norman drawl.

"Say, then, my dear abbé," said he. "Perhaps just born, you may not yet have been to school; I don't learn many things, Monsieur l'Abbé, among whi don me," interrupted the abbé, starting up, with color, and with flashing eye, and mimicking the nasal twang of the officer, "I have been to school, learnt my letters, and know that an abbé (AB) is not éder (OP), and 'tis not your épée (EP) can make (OP)."

"The loud voice and insolent gesture of the officer caused a little knot of assembled guests to gather round this sally was received with roars of laughter. Bouillon who never could resist pleasantry, seemed more diverted than any one present; and, while the discomfited Raucourte stood among the company, unable to bear mockery which she wily retort of the abbé had brought upon him, Spalliers stood him dearily by the hand, and applauded the act with right good will.

"This is the very first instance of the prince upon record, s... ashamed of its perpet... his reputation a... The story, of t... military ins... when... wi... the wi... ins...

vatte thereupon grew angry; he was a Cadet de Montigny, not long arrived from Normandy, and had not yet lost his miserable Norman drawl.

“‘Say, then, my dear abbé,’ said he. ‘Perhaps, as you are just born, you may not yet have been to school; you have yet to learn many things, Monsieur l’Abbé, among which—’ ‘Pardon me,’ interrupted the abbé, starting up, with heightened color, and with flashing eye, and mimicking the lengthened nasal twang of the officer, ‘I *have* been to school, and have learnt my letters, and know that an *abbé* (AB) is not made to *céder* (CD), and ’tis not your *épée* (EP) can make me *ôter* (OT).’

“The loud voice and insolent gesture of the officer had caused a little knot of assembled guests to gather round, and this sally was received with roars of laughter. Boufflers, who never could resist pleasantry, seemed more diverted than any one present; and, while the discomfited Royal Cravatte slunk among the company, unable to bear the mockery which the witty retort of the abbé had brought upon him, Boufflers shook him heartily by the hand, and applauded the jest with right good will.

“This is the very first *bon-mot* of the prince upon record, and although he expresses himself heartily ashamed of its perpetration, yet it was the means of establishing his reputation as a person not to be slighted, one with whom it would be necessary to reckon before venturing on pleasantry. The story, of course, went round the *salon*, to the infinite delight of the *savans*, who were enchanted at witnessing the military insolence of the Royal Cravatte receive a check from a quarter whence it would have been so little expected. Rumor of the witticism soon reached the ears of Madame du Deffand, who instantly

requested that the young abbé might be presented to her. It was the Chevalier de Boufflers himself who undertook the office, and, with a fluttering heart young Talleyrand walked across the *salon*, and accosted the venerable lady, whose great fame for making reputations had reached even to the seminary from which he had just escaped. It was an awful moment of his life, and he describes it as one of the greatest emotions he has ever experienced.

“Madame du Deffand was at that time the oracle of the witty circles of Paris; her verdict was sufficient at once to make or mar the reputation of a man of wit; and it cannot be wondered at, therefore, if our young *séminariste* approached with reverence the high *fauteuil* in which the lady sat, as it were enthroned, presiding over the assembly with undisputed sway, nor if the whole scene should have produced an impression upon his memory which time has not even yet been powerful enough to efface. Madame du Deffand was surrounded by a select circle of her chosen friends, the favorite few whom she honored with especial notice; and in the midst there stood, beside her chair, a low stool, reserved for those with whom she wished to hold more private converse than could possibly be enjoyed with any member of the circle. It was to this seat that the Chevalier de Boufflers led the young Abbé de Périgord, who thus in a moment found himself the object of curiosity and criticism to the whole collection of *beaux-esprits*, who served as a kind of body-guard to their queen elect. The abbé was, however, at the moment, but little occupied with the effect which he might produce upon the company; his attention was entirely absorbed by Madame du Deffand herself; and if he *did* experience a slight nervous agitation as he took his seat beside her, it was in dread of her all-powerful verdict alone.

“It was almost impossible to imagine a countenance of greater benignity than that of Madame du Deffand ; she was a complete specimen, both in person and costume, of venerable beauty ; and as the abbé gazed upon her, he *felt* that there was no longer ridicule in the platonic love of Horace Walpole, or in the enthusiastic passion of her later admirers. She had been totally blind for many years, and this infirmity, instead of being a disfigurement, as might be imagined, seemed to increase the mild placidity of her features almost to beatitude. At the moment of young Talleyrand’s approach she was still under the influence of the delight which his boyish retort had inspired, and, as soon as he was seated, she bade him recount the story, which he was fain to do, and, aided by her encouragement and the applause of the circle, he told it with so much rapture and good-humor, that his success was complete. He was welcomed among the *coterie* as a kindred spirit, and from that hour was considered an acquisition to that choice ‘circle.’ He was thus thrown at once into the midst of the society of the men of letters of that epoch, the most brilliant ever registered in the annals of the world. The schoolboy pun of Talleyrand is forgotten now—lost amid the more sterling wit of the many *bon-mots* and trite aphorisms to which he has given utterance, and which have become popular in every country. Not so the *naïve* exclamation of Madame du Deffand upon the occasion, when she learned the fright and sudden retreat of Philidor. ‘That man was born a *fool*,’ said she ; ‘nothing but his *genius* saves him !’

“I have heard from another quarter of the judgment of the prince’s character pronounced by the blind woman on that very same evening, and which, if true, ought to stamp her fame as a physiognomist beyond compare. After having passed her

hand slowly over the features of the young abbé, as was her wont when any stranger was presented to her notice, she exclaimed, 'Go, young man. Nature has been lavish of her gifts, and your own foresight will render you independent of those of fortune.'

In the society of the palace, Talleyrand attached himself to the circle of Madame Du Barri, who was then the favorite of the king; and during the ascendancy of this influential lady he was ever to be found among the constant attendants in her boudoir. A not very delicate *bon-mot*, uttered in her presence, and reported to the king, is said to have laid the foundation of his fortunes. The dissolute monarch was delighted with an abbé whose wit was well set off by his irreligion. He could not allow such an ecclesiastic to go unbeneficed. He conferred upon him two *abbayes*, which produced him a yearly income of about twenty-five thousand francs. Thus was Talleyrand early admitted to share the wealth of the proud and corrupt Gallican Church, in whose destruction he was soon to be the most active and zealous agent. His spiritual incumbency, assumed at the age of nineteen, imposed no labors, but simply furnished him with means to gratify his love of pleasure, and to urge his way to the possession of still richer royal favors. Connected already with these gifts, he had received from the king the *survivance*, or reversion, of the bishopric of Autun, of which See he was afterward the incumbent.

His rank and position at Court brought young Talleyrand into contact with nearly all the celebrated characters of the day. Voltaire was now closing a life, the powerful influence of which was to be felt upon the succeeding age, more even than it had been upon his own. Talleyrand sought an opportunity to pay

his homage to that genius which had impressed its stamp so deeply upon the literature of his country. The account of the interview is given from his own lips.

“It was in 1778, the year before his death, that I had the singular good fortune to obtain an audience of the great philosopher. He lived at the corner of the Rue de Beaune and the quay which has since been called by his name. He had intimated to my friend, Champfort, his great desire to become acquainted with me, and I, who all my life had been tormented with the wish to behold this greatest genius of the age, the master spirit of his own time, the guide of that which was to follow, did not need a second bidding.

“The philosopher received us with great urbanity. He had been prepared for our visit in the morning, for he still loved dearly all kinds of form and ceremony, and, to the very last day of his life, set a higher price upon his title of *M. de Voltaire* (which, by the by, was usurped), than on the popular and honorable abbreviation of ‘*Voltaire*,’ by which he was designated long before his death. *M. de Voltaire* was seated on the edge of his bed, attired in one of those short loose dressing-gowns much worn at the time, and which displayed his spindle legs and shrunken feet in all their unveiled ugliness. Never have I beheld a form so withered, so diminished; every vein in his whole frame was visible and defined, like those in an anatomical study. The later portraits of *M. de Voltaire* give a very just idea of his appearance, but they generally fail in expressing the singular look of the eyes—an expression which I never have seen in any one since that time—an anxious, unquiet, restless look—a hungry, thirsty, keenly-searching glance (hunger and thirst of praise), and searching with avidity for admiration, which, such was the Voltairian fever of the time, he never failed

to obtain, and yet, as 'the appetite grows in eating,' never wholly satisfied his craving.

"The room wherein the great man received his visitors was entirely darkened (such was his whim), save where one single shutter, folded back, allowed the light to stream in through a long, narrow aperture, immediately opposite to which he himself was placed, so that he became thus the sole object clearly visible in the apartment. And here he sat to receive visitors, although, the sun shining at the moment, the light was so strong, that it must almost have blinded him. His niece, Madame Denis, '*belle et bonne*,' was seated at the foot of the bed near the chimney, attired in a dimity camisole, rather soiled, and her hair, escaping in disorder from the little cap placed on the top of her head, was tied in a fantastical top-knot with a faded blue ribbon. She was no longer young, poor *belle et bonne*, and her sedentary life had induced a degree of corpulence which made her look older still. She had certainly forfeited all pretensions to her first title, and there was much in her face that to a physiognomist would have given a flat contradiction to the second. She had evidently been engaged in writing from M. de Voltaire's dictation, for she had risen from the bureau, and turned to the fire, where there was placed some cooking utensil to which she soon directed her attention.

"But it was not long before I had forgotten the very existence of Madame Denis, in the interest of the conversation with M. de Voltaire himself. He spoke quickly and nervously, with a play of feature I have never seen in any man except him. His eye kindled with a vivid fire almost dazzling, as it danced in the ray of sunlight from the window, and moved about from one to the other of his listeners, rapid and quivering like the summer lightning. He had just been receiving, that very

morning, a deputation from the Théâtre Français, begging permission to commence the performance of 'Zaïre' that evening with a complimentary address to himself, which permission of course the poet had granted with an enviable self-satisfaction, merely requesting that the verses should be submitted to his own inspection, and subjected to his own corrections and improvements, if any such were needed. He was in high good humor at this mark of honor and distinction, for, as I have said before, flattery had become of more importance to his existence than the very food and nourishment of each day.

"When the great man had conversed for some little time with my friend, with whom he had been intimate for many years, he turned to me, and, after courteously expressing the pleasure which my visit gave him, he added, 'I had desired to see you, M. de Perigord, to communicate to you a fact concerning your family, which happened some years ago, and may be of importance to you hereafter. As you are the youngest of your family, you may one day like to be its chronicler.

"He then commenced the relation of some interesting particulars regarding the Talleyrands and Perigords, intermixing, with a precision of memory quite marvellous, the different branches and connections either by birth or marriage. All these, of course, were familiar to me, but, as it was not natural that a narrator like M. de Voltaire should ever tell a story without a point, all this preamble ended in a tale of interest and wonder which completely riveted my whole attention, and kept me in a thrill of delight, not so much by the story itself, which, however, was full of most powerful interest, as by the irresistible charm of the diction. I can safely affirm that M. de Voltaire spoke with even more ease and grace than distinguished his writings. I think he would have made a

splendid orator. His words seemed to *fly* from his lips, so rapid yet so neat, so distinct and clear was every expression. His meaning was so precisely defined, that you never had an instant's doubt or hesitation whether you were quite sure that you fully understood him. The language of Champfort, bold and vigorous as it was—full of fire and passion—seemed to lack energy and spirit as he answered M. de Voltaire. The fire of the one was like the red beacon light, steady and strong, lurid and fierce ; the other was the treacherous spark which, flying upwards in seemingly harmless sport, yet driven this way or that by the most trifling breeze, may spread ruin and devastation wherever it may chance to fall.

“ We remained for more than an hour with the great philosopher. *Belle et bonne* had completed the cooking of her chocolate, and M. de Voltaire had taken it, without the slightest ceremony, in our presence. Letters had arrived, to some few of which he had dictated short replies through the medium of his niece. I had listened in rapture to the story which I had come to hear ; Champfort had already been twice confuted in argument, and M. de Voltaire obliged once to yield, before we arose to depart, and even then I think we were hurried away by Madame Denis, who reminded her uncle, with a look full of meaning at us, that it was just the hour for his siesta ; which clear, unmistakable hint, of course, we immediately took, and left him to enjoy his repose unmolested. I looked at him long and earnestly as he shook me cordially by the hand, and bade me a most paternal farewell. Every line of that remarkable countenance is engraven on my memory. I see it now before me—the small fiery eyes staring from the shrunken sockets, not unlike those of a chameleon ; the dried and withered cheek traversed in every direction by deep-cut

lines ; the compressed lips and puckered mouth, round which played a perpetual, sarcastic smile, giving him altogether the air of a merry fiend. Every feature of that face is as present to my memory now as it was at that moment while I was gazing on it, impressed with a kind of sorrowful conviction that I should behold it no more.

“The event proved that I was right in my presentiment : M. de Voltaire, soon after that, denied himself entirely to strangers, and none but his intimate friends were admitted. These, however, were sufficiently numerous to form a little court around him, and to do him all the honor which he so much loved, and amid which he died, surrounded by flatterers and sycophants until the latest hour of his life.”

“Now, if it is not an indiscretion, do tell us the story that he told you, prince,” exclaimed the Princess de C——, as Prince Talleyrand concluded his recital ; “do tell us the tale that Voltaire could think worthy a place in his memory : it must be a curious one. Try and recount it in the same manner that he used when telling it to you. I am sure you would imitate it admirably.”

The prince smiled (he never laughed), as he replied, “Now have I to make a strange confession, for which I know you will never pardon me, and which I would willingly have been spared. Indeed, had it not happened to myself, I could scarcely have credited it. On leaving Voltaire, Champfort and myself had separated ; he had taken the direction of the Tuileries, and I had sauntered along to the Palais Royal, thinking all the while of the great man to whose presence I had just been admitted, and retracing in memory every word, every gesture, he had used during the interview. In the garden I was accosted by the young Duc d’Aiguillon, who had

just arrived from Versailles, and who began in his usual rattling manner telling me a long story about the ball which had taken place the evening before in the Orangerie, of which story, mark you, I remember every word. It was about the Duchesse de Levis, a sort of court butt just at that time, and the changing of her shoulder-knot by some wag, which pleasantries had caused the most laughable mistakes during the whole ball.

“When I had got rid of this wild talker, I adjourned to the hotel of the Marquise de J——, where there was a grand reception, followed by *grand jeu* and *souper*. There I remained until a late hour of the night, alternately winning and losing considerable sums at the faro table, until I rose winner of a hundred and twenty louis d’or from Maurice Duvernay, of which he paid me seventy down, but having lost immensely, wrote an order for the rest on the back of one of the Queens of Diamonds.

“I tell you all this to show you that I can, to this very hour, account for every minute of that day, one of the most memorable of my whole life, from the moment of my leaving M. de Voltaire; and when I returned home, late as was the hour, before retiring to rest, I sat down to begin a letter to my uncle, the Cardinal de Perigord, in order to recount to him the adventure of the morning, and above all, to tell him the anecdote concerning our family, which M. de Voltaire had related, and in which I knew my uncle would take a most peculiar delight, both from the source whence it came, and the personal interest inspired by the subject. Judge, then, of the mortification I experienced upon finding that, in spite of all my endeavors to collect my wandering ideas to the one point in question, I could not recollect the story which M. de Voltaire had been at so much

pains to tell me, to which I had listened with so much attention and with such extraordinary relish; I could not even write in my letter the immediate object of the story—neither detail, nor hero, nor point (which last I remembered had diverted me beyond measure), would present itself to my remembrance; and, after much vexation of spirit, I was fain to leave my letter unfinished, until I had met with Champfort, whose memory I doubted not would be fully able to supply the deficiency of mine.

“I was determined to lose no time in assuring myself of this, and called upon the poet the very next day. What, think you, was his answer to my earnest entreaties that he would assist me! ‘Parbleu, my dear, I was too much occupied in thinking what I should say to M. de Voltaire to notice what *he* was saying to you. I heard not a word of his story, but you must own that I completely succeeded in proving the false quantity in the second canto of the *Henriade*.’

“He had not even heard the story! so there was no hope in that quarter, and I was obliged to content myself with the trust, that at some future day I might be fortunate enough again to meet M. de Voltaire, and induce him to tell the tale once more. As I have already said, however, I had not the good fortune to see him afterward.”

CHAPTER II.

Talleyrand's study of life and character—His adoption of liberal opinions—Financial studies—Mirabeau's recommendation—Appointed agent of the clergy—Increased income, and enlarging reputation—Effect of American Revolution—Talleyrand and the privateer—His political relations and intrigues—The Queen's necklace—Madame de La Motte—His connection with the first popular journal in France—His social position and reputation—His admiration for the society of the old régime.

THOUGH pursuing apparently but the life of a voluptuary, Talleyrand in reality was not allowing his energies to waste away under the spell of pleasure. If he was not a cloistered student, he was one who was rapidly acquiring that knowledge of men, and that skill in the management of the feelings and passions of the human heart, which can only be attained by active intercourse with the world. Real life, alternately brilliant and sombre, beautiful and monstrous, attractive and repulsive, beguiling and portentous, smooth-flowing, and then checked by immovable obstacles—this was his library, and its volumes he mastered thoroughly. He studied men and principles in an age when power gave freedom and fearlessness, and wealth furnished means, and passion stimulus, to an exhibition of the possible excesses of depravity in high life.

He possessed the sagacity to perceive, from a very early period, that the existing system of society was tottering, that a government, composed of princes and nobles, who sought nothing but frivolity and pleasure as the grand business of life, was

already too imbecile to sustain its arrogant pretensions, and oppressive claims. The philosophic doctrines of Voltaire and his school, relating both to religion and politics, had become familiar to the courtiers and the higher ecclesiastics. These doctrines were discussed, applauded, and adopted by the very men who were to suffer most by their practical application. The quick mind of Talleyrand may be supposed to have received these ideas very readily. No spiritual affinity attached him to the Church ; no generous loyalty bound him to the throne. While thus involved in manifold intrigues with the beauties of the Court, he was making more thorough observations, than any around him imagined, on all the significant events which were hastening on the great convulsion. After Louis XVI. ascended the throne, and by his own purity of morals placed some restraint upon the manners and practices of his courtiers, Talleyrand was obliged at different times to withdraw from Paris, in consequence, so it is asserted, of the infamous notoriety of some of his intrigues. On these occasions he retired to Autun, of which diocese he was the prospective bishop. It is maintained by those who pretend to give the incidents of his private life, that his female admirers were bold enough to follow him even to within the precincts of the episcopal residence. Be this as it may, the active-minded abbé found leisure for directing his studies into the subject of the national finances, which now began to alarm the government with their stubborn perplexities. This subject he pursued with great interest and thoroughness, and attached himself nominally to the school of the "economists," of whom the minister Turgot was the most able and practical representative. It is somewhat difficult to decide whether Talleyrand ever evolved any valuable system of financial principles ; as he lent the aid of his versatile pen suc-

cessively to the administrations of Necker, Calonne and Brienne, and again to Necker before his final fall. When Calonne was minister, he desired Mirabeau to draw up a paper on the finances of the country ; the latter, declining the service himself, thus directed the attention of the minister to Talleyrand : “ You have stated to me the regret you experienced at my unwillingness to devote my feeble talents to the embodying of your high conceptions. Permit me, sir, to point out to you a man more deserving, in every respect, of this proof of confidence. The Abbé de Perigord unites great and tried abilities to profound circumspection and unshaken discretion. You will never find a man more trustworthy, more religiously devoted to the dictates of friendship and gratitude, more desirous of giving satisfaction, less envious of the glory of others, and more convinced that such glory is essentially due to him who possesses the capacity to conceive great designs, and the courage to execute them.”

Thus enthusiastically did Mirabeau write in the ardor of their first acquaintance ; and on some points he surely judged his friend too carelessly or too kindly. He on another occasion spoke of Talleyrand, as possessing “ one of the most subtle and powerful intellects of the age.”

With a mind which readily seized upon the main points of a subject, and a memory that firmly retained all that was essential for practical purposes, the Abbé de Perigord obtained such an understanding of financial subjects, as qualified him to be a useful ally to any party which assumed the management of this difficult matter. That he was more than a mere frivolous courtier, and already had given evidence of his administrative talents, appears from the fact that in 1780, when only twenty-six years of age, Louis XVI. appointed him agent of the

clergy, on the recommendation of that body. The importance of this office at that time may be estimated from the fact, that the revenues of the church, derived from tithes, amounted yearly to the sum of 130,000,000 francs, of which but 42,000,000 were in the hands of the parochial clergy; the whole number of ecclesiastics of all grades being about eighty thousand. But this income gives no idea of the actual wealth of this privileged class. Their territorial possessions embraced nearly one-half of the entire land of France. This vast property was managed by the clergy themselves, and was placed under the superintendence of a general agent, who held his office for five years, and reported the condition of the revenues to an assembly of the church, held at the end of that period. Talleyrand must have shown both address and capacity of a high order, to obtain so responsible an appointment at that early age. The office produced him some forty or fifty thousand francs a year. He held it until 1785, and his report was the last one presented to the clerical convocation, as before the lapse of another five years, the revolution had directed the revenues of the clergy into the exhausted exchequer of the State, and had destroyed the integral existence of the ecclesiastical body itself.

Talleyrand in executing the functions of his office, added much to his reputation as a financier, and as a man fitted for the practical duties of ordinary life and of the higher departments of civil affairs.

A property so enormous as that belonging to the French clergy, and principally concentrated in the hands of the higher ranks of the body, could not but produce a secularizing and demoralizing effect upon these dignitaries. A rather singular evidence of this effect is afforded in an anecdote respecting

Talleyrand himself. He indeed made no pretensions to piety, but he wore the clerical dress and was a good representative of a large portion of his colleagues. The war of the American Revolution excited great interest and sympathy in the very centre of the French aristocracy. It furnished an opportunity to vent the ancient spirit of hostility to England. It opened a path to service and renown for young military aspirants, and it also presented inducements to cupidity by the prospect of rich gains from the injury of British commerce. The last motive operated upon the young Abbé de Perigord; and though his ecclesiastical character debarred him from service in the field, it did not prevent him from entering into some private speculations upon the ocean. In connection with a friend, Count de Choiseul Gouffier, he fitted out a privateer, to sail on a cruise against English merchantmen; the Minister of Marine, Marshal de Castries, furnishing the guns for the vessel. The success of the enterprise is not stated; but its conception and execution by a minister of the French Church is certainly characteristic of the times and of the man. It is generally and correctly supposed that Talleyrand was very successful in the accumulation of property through all the alternations of his life, though exposed to the catastrophes of revolutions and the perils of an oft-changing allegiance; and, while princely in his tastes and lavish in his expenditure, it is quite certain that the love of wealth was no subordinate passion in his mind. It was a passion early developed, and sometimes, as in the above instance, taking means for its indulgence not comporting with his assumed clerical character. It is related that Pope Benedict XIV. thought proper to pass censure upon this warlike enterprise of the Abbé de Perigord, and that the abbé defended himself in a reply so replete with wit and eloquent pleading, sustaining

his course by so many examples from the history of ecclesiastics, that the good-natured Pontiff owned himself vanquished, and withdrew gracefully from the contest.

The emoluments of his benefices and his office furnished a handsome income to one even of his extravagant desires. Yet the indulgence of his vices was a heavy tax upon his income. In a merely worldly view, however, he appears to have been at this period a very fortunate young man. He had pushed himself by the force of his own talents into a prominent position in the State, where, without dangerous responsibility, he could effectually work for his own advancement. He could observe all courses of policy, without committing his own reputation to the hazards of a choice between them. He could serve one minister, and thereby gain the greater capacity to serve his successor. So that during the short reign of the unfortunate Louis, he furnished in advance an epitome of his entire career. He never became so identified with any one of the shifting cabinets of this monarch, but that he could transfer his influence with ease and success to any other, as in turn it tried its skill in curing the evils of the nation. So did he quietly, safely, and prosperously pass from one dynasty to another as they followed one another in the public experience of France. He trod on, without a halt or a failure, from one position of power to another—always prominent until the very moment of peril and on the very turning-point of revolution, and then suddenly in full favor with the powers which proscribed his colleagues. The rudimental principles of such a career were fashioned and confirmed amid the varieties and intrigues of his court life ; where the wasting forces of an imbecile nobility and a senile monarchy furnished adequate stimulus to the ingenuity, tact and audacity of a talented and ambitious young man, whose future

success was to be achieved amid the stirring events and battling elements of one of the most convulsed periods of human history.

But while his peculiar opportunities thus sharpened his perceptions and enlarged his capacities, this very process advanced under such auspices as to undermine his integrity of character and leave him still more destitute than ever of any stable moral principles. He was charged with consummate duplicity, the suspicion of which certainly cannot be averted by his most partial admirers. He was accused of being employed by Cardinal Brienne, when minister, as a spy upon the parliament of Paris; by the parliament as a spy upon the proceedings of the court; and by the court as a spy upon both the parliament and the prime minister ! That he should be at the same time in the interest of two opposing parties would have been entirely consistent with his character and the genius of his mind, as exhibited in many other similar circumstances. He was a diplomatist by his very constitution from his first entrance into public life ; and unhappily in his time diplomatist was but too often a synonym for deceiver.

That Talleyrand perceived the approach of some revolution, mighty in its forces and extensive in its results, there can be no doubt. A remark made by him, at the time when the affair of the queen's necklace was producing an immense excitement at Paris, and indeed throughout the kingdom, evinces this reach of his sagacity. This necklace was one of diamonds of beautiful pattern and great value, made by a Parisian jeweller, and much coveted by Marie Antoinette. The king had offered it to her, but she, with quite remarkable self-denial for a queen, had declined receiving it, on account of the already embarrassed state of the royal treasury. The necklace mysteriously disappeared

during the negotiations as to its purchase, and Cardinal de Rohan, grand almoner to the king, informed the owner of it that it had been sent to the queen. This afterward proved to be untrue. The cardinal and other parties were arrested, but the principal severity of punishment fell upon Madame de la Motte, who was supposed to have stolen the costly and tempting ornament. This occurred in the summer of 1785. The rather extraordinary excitement caused throughout the country by this affair arose, not only from the high position of those concerned in it, but from its being regarded by the people as an evidence of the continued extravagance of the court, notwithstanding the professions of reform and economy.

Though comparatively insignificant in any national respect, it doubtless gave strength in the hearts of the people to the hostility smouldering there against a government and a nobility who could waste upon such costly toys the money wrung from a nation daily sinking into deeper degradation and poverty. Talleyrand foresaw this serious influence of a comparative trifle. "Attend narrowly," said he, "to that miserable affair of the necklace; I should be nowise surprised if it overturned the throne."

When questioned many years after, as to the guilt of Madame de la Motte, Talleyrand gave his opinion in an undecided manner, as follows :—

"There is a degree of mystery throughout the whole transaction, which is, perhaps, destined never to be cleared up. Had Madame de la Motte possessed the cunning of the arch-fiend himself, she could not have been guilty of one-tenth part of the baseness which was imputed to her in the act of accusation; there were impediments both social and commercial to many of

the manœuvres, which were proved against her on her trial. You can form no conception of the excitement produced by this event. The whole kingdom was divided for her sake into two sects, the unbelieving and the credulous; those who believed her guilty, and those who knew her to be innocent. For myself, I have heard so much on both sides, that my opinion is scarcely stable even now. It is a singular fact that all the persons who visited her were fully convinced of her innocence, and fought like lions in her defence.

“The Abbé de Kel, the almoner of the Bastille, and confessor of Madame de la Motte, told me himself, that his firm opinion in the case was this: ‘That, had she not been unfortunate enough to have already obtained the recognition of her title,* she would not have been condemned.’ Monsieur de Breteuil, the great enemy of the cardinal, and favorite of the queen, was most active in procuring materials to inculcate this unfortunate woman, and this circumstance having got abroad, greatly contributed to excite suspicion against Maria Antoinette. But the circumstance which, in reality, formed the basis of her ruin, was the denial of the cardinal that he had ever furnished her with money. *This must have been false*, for, long before her arrest, she was living in splendor, had an hôtel in the Place Dauphine, with servants and equipages, was richly attired, and covered with jewels, and all this, forsooth, upon her husband’s limited income, and her own pittance of eight hundred livres! I remember being told that the furniture of her hôtel equalled in richness that of the palace at Trianon. Mention was made of polished steel mirrors, set in gold, and of a famous bed, the hangings of which were worked in seed pearl, which was bought

* She claimed to be a princess of the blood royal, though left in childhood in abject poverty.

for an enormous sum by Madame du Barri, the late king's mistress.

“ Another mystery, which completely baffles all speculation, is the total disappearance of the necklace itself, the object of all this turmoil. It was a jewel so well known among the trade in Paris that every single stone would have been recognized. There was scarcely a person of any note in the capital who had not seen it, as it had lain at Boehmer's, the jeweller, for more than a year, open to the inspection of any one who chose to ask for the sight of it. I recollect having seen it not a long while before it created so much disturbance. Boehmer had been employed to furnish the wedding jewels for one of my relations, and the morning that he came to deliver them, he brought the necklace for us to view, as a curiosity. Neither in the workmanship nor the size of the stones did it give any notion of the immense value which was set upon it. I believe, however, that this consisted in the stones being all brilliants of the first water, and, as a collection, the most perfect and free from blemish (so Boehmer told my aunt), in the whole world.

“ There is one more story connected with the jewel, which greatly complicates the mystery of the whole transaction, and which is known but to few persons. During the time that I held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, I received a letter from our ambassador at one of the northern courts, wherein he announced to me, with great excitement, the arrival at his court of the Count de M——y and his wife. They had been presented by himself to the sovereign ; for, although they might, strictly speaking, have been considered emigrants, not having returned to France during the reign of Napoleon, yet, as the count was not at that time the head of his family, and had never meddled in politics, he had a right to claim the protec-

tion of the ambassador of his country. The lady had chosen for her *début* at court the occasion of a royal birthday, and she had made her appearance laden with all her jewels, and, 'upon her neck,' wrote the baron, 'she wore a necklace of the exact pattern of that, concerning which all Europe had been roused before the revolution—that is to say, the only difference being, that the three small ornaments which are so remarkable, and to which I could swear as being the same, are held by a chain of small rose diamonds instead of the rivet, by which they were joined before.'

"The letter gave us all great diversion at home, from the excitement in which it was written ; but the emperor, to whom I of course communicated the fact, took it more gravely, and begged me to ask for a drawing of the necklace, which the ambassador found means to obtain, and which was found to correspond with that preserved among the papers in the Archives ; moreover, on its being submitted to young Boehmer, he declared his full and entire conviction that the jewel was the same, from the remarkable circumstance of a mistake having occurred in the execution of the middle ornament, one side of the scroll containing two small diamonds more than the other, and which he remembered had much distressed his father, but which could never have been discovered save by a member of the trade. It was then remembered, and by the emperor himself first of all, that the lady's mother had been attached to the person of Marie Antoinette, and that she had retired from court and gone to reside abroad soon after the trial of Madame de la Motte !

"So you see there is another link in the chain of evidence which historians, when writing any future history of the Diamond Necklace, would do well to examine.

“Louis XVIII. was evidently aware of the history, for I remember once being struck with a conversation reported to me by the Marquis de F——. The young Count de B——, one of the most notorious blockheads at court, said one day in the presence of the king, ‘I wonder why the M——y family do not come back to claim their hereditary charges at court? What pleasure can they find in the horrid country they have chosen?—I could not live there for a single hour.’”

“‘Perhaps you could not,’ returned Louis XVIII in his penny-trumpet voice, and with his childish titter, ‘but the Count de M——y *can*—for it is a woody country, and unlike France, *on y brûle la bûche et jamais LA MOTTE.*’”

“The Marquis de F—— had applied to me to know the meaning of the pun. The ambassador’s letter immediately flashed on my memory, but I did not choose to have the affair discussed with my name, so I held my peace.’”

Thus passed the life of Talleyrand, until he had attained more than thirty years of age. With young and vigorous powers, he was entering into political life amid the perils of a declining monarchy. But he did not become so far identified with the interests of rank, or even so devoted in loyalty to the sovereign, as to compromise his position with the approaching revolution. He never attained the chivalric spirit of loyalty to any individual or representative sovereign. This spirit, flowing from deep moral causes, must ever possess dignity and sacredness in the estimation of mankind, even though it may often become unreasonable and narrow in its attachments. But there was no place for it in his nature. And even had he possessed more susceptibility to such a spirit than he did, his circumstances hindered its development. When he

began to take an active interest in the affairs of the State, the nation and the throne were coming into conflict. He was called upon for his allegiance by two great competitors. With his usual caution he gave it in a qualified form to his legal sovereign. Had he been more enthusiastic, and at the same time more conscientious, he might have found it difficult to give in his adhesion more cordially to a throne, which, by ponderous exactions accumulated through centuries, was already crowding out of the national heart the appeal of justice and the threat of vengeance. His position somewhat compelled and justified his slender attachment to the nobility and the king. About this period, Talleyrand also formed an intimate acquaintance with the Abbé Cerutti, the friend and colleague of Mirabeau. In connection with these two ardent apostles of reform and revolution, he was concerned in the establishment and publication of the first popular journal ever issued in France. It was specially addressed to the inhabitants of the more distant provinces of the kingdom, and supported by the talent of such men, it immediately obtained a success seldom if ever equalled in this species of literature. Its influence in arousing the public mind to the evils of the government, was undoubtedly great ; yet it was unjustly charged with having caused the subsequent atrocities of the Revolution. It expressed the strong convictions of earnest men, with great force of reasoning and charm of eloquence.

With all his personal ambition, love of ostentation, and worse vices, it must also be admitted that Talleyrand, throughout his life, evinced a sincere love for just, equal, and mild government. He was politic and therefore not tyrannical—he controlled others by management and profound art of persuasion, and not by force. His theory of government was like his

character. Though not a rigid republican, he was yet an advocate of free principles. These principles he imbibed early, and that too in the atmosphere of a court. Though aristocratic in his bearing and in the tone of his mind, he inherited nothing of the political sentiments of the old French nobility.

The influence of his associations and social habits, formed while there was yet a throne to attract around it the most polished society of a naturally polite people, ever remained with him. The elegance and urbanity of his manners, an inheritance in part of his noble birth, were perfected by that secret potency which inheres in a highly artificial and refined state of society. No innovating rudeness of democratic supremacy, seeking, in the fury of its vengeance, the obliteration of every trace of monarchy, could ever debase the manners of the courtly abbé de Perigord, though, transformed, as he nominally was, into the citizen Talleyrand. The formal rules of the society in which he was trained, readily moulding his plastic disposition, induced in him an habitual self-control, a consummate mastery of his own feelings, and a patient waiting for the natural progress of events. Propriety curbed the natural precipitancy of his temperament. Gentility required in public the suppression of his impulses. The king must be addressed with dignity, grace, and self-command. Long audiences imposed the necessity of patience, of endurance under constraint, of the calm and complacent discharge of trivial and irksome duties. The intrigues of jealous, ambitious, unprincipled courtiers, both male and female, demanded diplomatic skill as the prime requisite for attaining or securing a position. All this was more than mere formality, frivolity, or disagreeable tedium to the susceptible mind of our aspiring abbé. It was a grand process in his education. If his morals suffered, as undoubtedly they did,

his fitness for the life into which he was to be thrown, by the convulsions of a nation's agonies and hopes, was augmented by it. The promise of his own advancement grew brighter amid that very court-life, which, by its overgrown vices, was heaping up the condemnation of the privileged classes, to both of which he belonged.

In his old age, Talleyrand frequently expressed regret at the loss of many peculiarities and excellences, which attached to the society of Paris previous to the Revolution. The "art of conversation" was an accomplishment, which he maintained was never regained after that radical social change. In a manner partially ironical, he was accustomed to give vent to these regrets. "How has that poor age been calumniated," said he, gaily, "and yet, after all, I do not see that the *productive* power of your system equals that of the one you so much condemn. Where is the wit of your *salons*, the independence of your writers, the charm and influence of your women? What have you received in exchange for all these, which have fled for ever? Were I young I should regret, and wish that I were old, to enjoy, at least in memory, the delicious *existence morale* of *my* time. I would not give the remembrance of those times for all the novelty and what you call *improvements* of the social system of to-day, even with the youth and spirit necessary to enjoyment. 'Tis true there were abuse and exaggeration in many of our institutions, but where is the system in which these do not exist? If our people were devoured with misery and taxes, yours are wasting to the core with envy and with discontent. Our *noblesse* was corrupt and prodigal, yours is *bourgeoise* and miserly—greater evils still for the prosperity of the nation. If our king had many mistresses, yours has many masters. Has *he* gained by the exchange? Thus

you see it clearly demonstrated that not one of the three orders has advanced in happiness by these wonderful *improvements* which you so much admire." Again he remarked: "Could I, by forfeiting the memory of that brief space of light and glory, add thrice the number of years so spent to my existence *now*, I would not do it. I hold too dear even the privilege which I possess of exclaiming with Ovid, '*Vidi tantum*,' and often mourn those days in the very words of old Brantôme: 'Nothing is left of all that wit and gallantry, that vast expenditure of bravery and chivalry. What good remains to *me* of all this pomp? None—*save that I have seen it!*'"

CHAPTER III.

The Revolution—Louis XVI.—Character of the King and state of his Kingdom—Financial Troubles—Talleyrand's Speculations—Abbé de Perigord now becomes Bishop of Autun—Convocation of the Notables—Talleyrand Questioned by the Count d'Artois—Joins the Party of the Duke of Orleans—Necker Minister again—Convocation of the States-General—Talleyrand Elected a Deputy—His Reminiscence of the Opening Scenes—Grand Procession—Bishop of Autun in the Ranks—Description of him by La Clos—Meeting in the "Hall of Menu"—Demands of the "Third Estate"—First Struggle—Talleyrand goes over to the Side of the Commons—Overtures of the Court—Talleyrand's Moderate views.

LOUIS XVI. came to the throne pure in morals, generous in impulses, and anxious to rule justly. But how could he act the benevolent and kind prince, when he was the heir to ages of feudal injustice, royal absolutism, aristocratic corruption, and financial disorder? He had neither the sagacity nor the firmness for the crisis. He in his intentions or his personal acts did nothing to provoke a revolution. But all the circumstances of his history stood in portentous and overpowering antagonism to his own mild and amiable disposition. A revolution in ideas had long been progressing, which his mind could not comprehend. While the higher classes indulged the new theories of society and government with a hearing, because they furnished a new species of excitement to the tedious indolence of life, the middling classes had already enshrined these bold principles in their hearts, and had begun to pledge to them a

secret allegiance which evinced the decrease of their hereditary loyalty. Could a prince, who was a better mechanic than political philosopher, withstand a revolution which had an undiscovered but omnipotent force treasured up in the hearts of an estranged people? Incapable, from the very lumber of a monarchical education, of comprehending the ideas which were working among his subjects, could he be expected to be capable of controlling these ideas, when they became concrete in the fierce outcries and stern purposes of political reform? The hopes of the throne had long been running down the swift and deep current of popular power—the king did not perceive the motion till he was tossing amid the breakers of universal revolt, and knew not his impotence till he was on the verge of the cataract.

The king changed his ministers without obstinacy as he saw the new phases which the necessities of the State assumed. In some instances he was well, in others, poorly served. Men of ability and integrity came to his rescue. But the nobility and the clergy destroyed all the prospects of the most honest and economical ministers. The privileged classes ruined the monarchy. Their selfishness, and not the king's weakness, brought the revolution to its head. No potent charm of the best financier could redeem a State from bankruptcy, when two-thirds of the national wealth was sheltered from taxation behind the arrogant privilege of rank. Could the highest science of calculation or of economy evoke wealth from poverty, already laden with burdens too heavy to be borne? The financial crisis during the reign of the unfortunate Louis was not so appalling because of the magnitude of the deficits. The English or the American government would have quietly and easily restored the balance. Any nation, well governed, whose in-

dustry was not cramped and destroyed by the very effort of avaricious rank to extort its products, and whose resources were allowed a natural development, would have cancelled the indebtedness by a donation which would have cost no self-denial. But the great mass of the French nobility was as selfish and blind, and cursed with the insatiable love of money and luxury before the revolution opened, as it was pusillanimous and devoid of patriotism after it put on its savage features. It clung with desperate tenacity to its ancient usurpations, and claimed its unjust privileges at a time when its very existence was endangered. So in the end the budget overturned the monarchy.

These financial disorders could not go on without the observation of Talleyrand. It has already been stated that his pen was made to do service for rival ministers and their equally unavailing schemes. But he became more deeply interested in these fortunes of the declining State, then merely to find in them an occasion for literary labor and honor. He entered deeply into the money speculations which naturally arose out of these embarrassments of the national funds. He became a famous stock-jobber and gambler in funds—a character in which he appeared at times all through his long life. He became as skillful and ambitious on the *Bourse* as he had been in the *Salon*. Success, as usual, attended his bold schemes. Led on by so reckless an associate as Mirabeau, we can readily imagine into what mazes of speculation and hazard he plunged.

The Abbé de Perigord had now attained his highest ecclesiastical honors. Henceforth we must know him by the title of Bishop of Autun, until the titles of a new dynasty were conferred upon him for his civic services. In 1788, M. de Marbœuf, the incumbent, died, and in January, 1789, Talleyrand

was invested with the Episcopal office, having then reached the age of thirty-four years. The virtuous Louis XVI., well acquainted with the private life of Talleyrand, objected with some strenuousness to conferring upon him an office, which should be dignified with at least external morality. But strong family influence supported the claims of the gay aspirant, and the nomination and promise of Louis XV. had considerable weight with his grandson; so that his objections were set aside, and his royal confirmation was reluctantly accorded. Worse men than Talleyrand had filled higher positions in the Papal Church, and the age of Louis XVI., and the eve of the revolution was not the time when any radical reform could be effected in the hierarchy.

In 1787, the king convoked the assembly of the Notables of his kingdom to deliberate upon the state of affairs. Calonne was now minister of finance, and it was his hope that the generosity of the aristocracy would furnish some relief to his embarrassments. This minister was accustomed to say to the queen, when she asked the means for the indulgence of her extravagance, "If what your majesty asks is possible, the thing is done; if it is impossible, it shall be done." He was necessarily, as long as he could furnish the money requisite for the splendor of the court, a popular minister. But when credit could be gained no longer, and he approached the Notables with the petition for assistance, his popularity departed. These chosen counsellors of the king soon evinced a most selfish opposition to the government. They came together to acquire, and not to concede. They manifested neither sympathy for the king, nor a prudent foresight for themselves. So little was their own position understood, and the actual condition of the country comprehended, that one of the bishops con-

ceived that it was a good opportunity to make the people assume the debts of the clergy!

Talleyrand's position during this exciting crisis of affairs was not well determined. He knew the need of caution, and he exercised it. It is said that the court desired to draw him over to their interests, and that the young Count d'Artois, afterward Charles X., had an interview with him, during which the following conversation took place. The count had solicited Talleyrand's advice.

"Two heads must fall; two—no more—later, a much greater number will be requisite," he remarked.

"And whose heads?" asked the count.

"The Duke of Orleans', and Mirabeau's."

"I am of your opinion; but my brother will never consent to it," replied D'Artois.

"Are you certain of that?" said Talleyrand.

"Too certain," was the reply.

"In that case I shall go over to the other side," was the polite, though discouraging rejoinder.

And he did, in time, go over to the other side—the safe, the triumphant side; where, indeed, in after life he was always to be found, however the fortunes of parties varied.

The party with which Talleyrand was really on terms of intimacy during these prefatory scenes of the great drama, was that of the Duke of Orleans. This prince, the cousin of the king, and the father of Louis Philippe, was in the last degree profligate, reckless, disloyal, and ambitious. Though immensely wealthy, his vices and intrigues exhausted his revenues, and he held in his pay a large and mercenary party, which desired and hastened the calamities of the State, from the basest motives of personal advantage. It is not to be concealed that with

men of this stamp the Bishop of Autun associated, whatever might be his motives. The Palais-Royal, the hereditary palace of the Orleans family, was the rendezvous of this party, and for a time was almost the residence of Mirabeau, Talleyrand, the Lameths, and others who attained prominence in the subsequent changes.

The Notables were dismissed, and with reason, for what little of energy and wisdom they possessed was not devoted to the relief of the State. They embarrassed, rather than aided the king.

Necker was again reinstated in his place as minister, and fiscal contriver for bankrupt royalty. He was now aiming at a wider popularity, and for a time he gained it. The measures for the assembling of the States-General were now adopted. A hundred and seventy-five years had elapsed since a king of France had met a convocation of these representatives of the great classes of his kingdom. Countless papers issued from the press, arguing the main question of the constitution of this body—the question, which enveloped in itself the destinies of France.

The first triumph of the people was won in the decision of the government, that the "Third Estate," or in other words, the entire body of the nation, aside from the nobility and the clergy, should have a representation equal in numbers to that of the two other orders combined. The elections were held in the midst of great popular excitement. Already was the mass of the nation waking up to a consciousness of its strength and its rights.

Talleyrand now entered upon his open political career. He had attained too much prominence to be overlooked in the selection of deputies. He had evinced capacity in the manage-

ment of the affairs of the clergy, sufficient to recommend him to the notice of the electors among that class. His avowed principles of hostility to the usurpations both of the throne and the nobility, made him acceptable to those of liberal views. He was consequently elected to represent the ecclesiastics of his diocese in that branch of the States-General, to which his Episcopal rank attached him. His foresight, however, indicated to him which would be the dominant party, and it will be seen that he soon found his way into it, and to the head of it.

In conversation, many years after, when almost all except himself of those who took part in these brilliant and momentous scenes had passed away, Talleyrand thus recalled the impressions he received from the opening act of the great drama :

“ I arrived at Versailles the day before the procession from the Palace of St. Louis, and was walking arm in arm with Siéyes upon the lawn, gazing with curiosity on the scene. The day was heavenly (it sometimes seems to me as though we have no such weather now, as we had then), the lawn was crowded—courtiers in their court costume—officers in uniform—the higher clergy attired with the brilliant tokens of the rank each held in the Church—were all gathered in groups, either sauntering beneath the shade of the *charmille* hedge, where the first tender buds of May were just sufficient to screen the promenaders from the rays of the spring-tide sun—or else seated on the stone benches along the alleys, conversing with the ladies, who, all adorned in the gayest colors, and wearing the brightest smiles, seemed bent on rendering the holiday as brilliant as it possibly could be.

“ On the other side (the truth *may* be told now without mischief), avoided by the rest, as though they bore the seeds of pestilence within them, the members of the *tiers état* (Third

Estate) conversed in busy, whispering knots; no merry laughter was heard from *them*, no pleasant trifling or mirthful jesting was seen lighting up *their* discourse. All was dark and gloomy, care sat on every brow, and that their converse was of weighty matters, was evident, by the tone of mystery in which it was carried on, and the sudden silence which took place among them whenever any stray member of the *noblesse* happened to pass by to join the glittering throng on the other side. Their very costume contrasted strongly with that of their contemptuous superiors; they all wore, and contrary to anticipation, were *proud* to wear the dress to which they had been condemned—the black hose and surtout, and short black cloak, which, by the antique sumptuary law, denoted the vile, base-born plebeian.

“It was altogether a scene such as I shall never forget while memory has power to act. I never remember in my whole life to have been inspired with so profound a sentiment of melancholy as at that hour. I could scarcely refrain from shedding tears, at perceiving, by what was already taking place, what must of necessity come to pass before long. As we drew near to the palace, the long windows of the suite of apartments looking toward the *Pièce d'Apollon*, and then known as the apartments of the Dauphin, were thrown open, and out rushed, like a flight of butterflies, the whole bevy of court beauties, all in high glee, in towering spirits, elated at the prospect of the morrow's pageant, which they evidently looked upon but as a show wherein they were to see much that would amuse, and wherein they should be seen to the very best advantage, as, fortunately, the Hall of Menu was lighted from *above*, which was so much more favorable to the effect of rouge and patches than the broad, glaring, side light of the Grand Gallery.

“I cannot tell you how the sound of that joyous laughter grated on my ear, as it caused both Sièyes and myself to pause while we watched those light forms, as they playfully chased each other on the terrace among the flowers. The queen was with them there; and I think I see her now, as she stood leaning for support against the pedestal of the statue of Silenus, opposite to the marble staircase, so greatly was she overcome by the fit of laughter into which she had been thrown by some absurd mistake on the part of the Countess de Provence, for her ringing voice and childlike accent reached our ears as we stood close below the balustrade, as she exclaimed, pointing to her sister-in-law. ‘this dear sister will *never* learn to speak French!’ That radiant face and beaming eye could not at such a moment be seen without exciting a feeling of *pity*, and this I know was shared by Sièyes, for, without uttering a word, he pressed my arm significantly, and led me from the spot toward a group of the *tiers-état* who were standing by the entrance of the groves. As we drew near, I descried the Abbé Maury, who was, as usual, declaiming with all his might, although in a low tone, to an eager crowd of listeners.”

On Saturday, the 2d of May, 1789, Louis XVI. gave audience to the deputies in the palace of Versailles. He welcomed them with expressions of kindness and of hope. On Monday, the 4th, the grand procession was formed and defiled through the streets of Versailles to the church of St. Louis. Great was the splendor of the scene. It was the last gala day of the old monarchy. The same costume and etiquette were enforced as in the last States-General of 1614. The commons wore plain black mantles and hats without feathers—an imposed badge of the inferiority, which they were yet made to feel and to admit. The nobles glittered in their costly and

gorgeous dresses. The higher clergy moved by in stately pomp in their violet robes, followed by the humbler curés in their homelier garb. Louis with his brilliant court, and the beautiful Marie Antoinette, with her maids of honor, closed the imposing array.

The deputy who drew all eyes upon himself, with eager curiosity and vague fear, was Mirabeau. But we are looking for our deputy from Autun. Here he appears, in a picture drawn by the rough but graphic pen of Carlyle :—" But yonder, halting lamely along, thou noticest next Bishop Talleyrand Perigord, his Reverence of Autun. A sardonic grimness lies in that irreverend Reverence of Autun. He will do and suffer strange things ; and will become surely one of the strangest things ever seen, or like to be seen. A man living in falsehood, and on falsehood ; yet, not what you can call a false man ; there is the speciality ! It will be an enigma for future ages, one may hope : hitherto such a product of Nature and Art, was possible only for this age of ours—an age of paper and of the burning of paper. Consider Bishop Talleyrand and Marquis Lafayette as the topmost of their two kinds : and say once more, looking at what they did and what they were, *O Tempus ferax rerum.*"

A writer of the time, La Clos, an intimate of the Duke of Orleans, published a work entitled " Gallery of the States-General ;" in which under fictitious names he described, with considerable talent and vividness, the prominent characters who figured in that body. Talleyrand is thus described, under the pseudonym of Amène—" Amène is gifted with those charming qualities which would embellish even virtue itself. The first instrument of his success is his excellent understanding. In his judgment of men he exercises that indulgence, and

in his estimate of events that *sang-froid*—in all cases he observes that moderation, which are the genuine marks of wisdom. He does not imagine that the structure of a great reputation is to be raised in a day. But he will assuredly accomplish that object, for he will never fail to seize those occurrences which Fortune so frequently offers to those who do not violently assail her. Amène yields to circumstances and to reason ; he justly thinks that he may make timely sacrifices to peace and concord, without descending from the principles which he has invariably made the ground-work of his conduct, as well as the moral basis of his politics. He has against him the mildness of his manners, the winning expression of his countenance, and the charm of his conversation. I know people whom such external advantages put upon their guard ; they feel prejudiced against a man who unites them to the useless accident of high birth, and the most essential qualities of the mind ; they comfort themselves, however, by looking for his faults, or even for what is ridiculous in him, for want of finding worse imputations. What can be expected of Amène, in the States-General ? Nothing, a very little, if he should receive the impetus from his own order ; a great deal, if he act by himself and under the persuasion that citizens alone ought to appear in the hall of the National Assembly. He knows men too well to become the dupe of praise ; and if he smiles at the illusions of friends, he casts back the loathsome tribute of flatterers. It is not reputation alone that has weight with us ; and if Amène has by chance perceived this rather late, he will never forget it."

The religious ceremonial at the church of St. Louis was conducted in a manner, to impress all attending with the importance of this unusual and potential device of the govern-

ment. The formal opening of the vast representative body took place on the 5th of May, in the "Hall of Menu" the largest room, not within the palace, in Versailles. Here the king pronounced the opening speech; followed by Barentin, the keeper of the seals, in an address laudatory of His Majesty, and by Necker in a long and elaborate financial *exposé*.

The first movement of the deputies of the "Third Estate" revealed their intention, and their consciousness of power wherewith to effect it. During the discussions which had preceded the convoking of the States-General, the Abbé Sièyes, in a work which had its effect upon the public mind, had put these questions and had maintained these answers—"What is the Third Estate?" "Nothing." "What ought it to be?" "Everything." And now it rapidly became "everything." When the different orders assembled in separate apartments, the commons were assigned the same chamber in which the opening had taken place, and where it was intended the assemblies for united deliberation should be held. This gave them an immediate advantage, at least in the eyes of the unreflecting multitude. Here was the hall of the States-General, and here were the commons always to be found. The "Third Estate" occupied the chamber which would naturally be the rallying-point of visitors.

But this nominal advantage was but the prelude to a more real and vital one, gained after a severe struggle by the popular branch.

The verification of the elections, or the proof of the genuineness of the credentials of each member, was an essential preliminary to the organization of the assembly. The commons maintained that this should take place in a general meeting of all the orders. The nobility and clergy disdained to have the

commons vote on their right to seats, and maintained that this first step toward organization should be taken by each order separately.

Now commenced the contest, and that too at the very point which was the key to all the positions of hereditary privileges on the one hand, and of popular rights on the other. The supremacy of the old or of the new ideas was the real question at issue. The "Third Estate" quietly waited for the other orders to come into the general hall to effect the verification, not even asking for the credentials of its own members. It then sent requests, and resolutions, and deputations; still maintaining and urging its high claim. This firmness began to alarm the other orders and the court. It was hardly expected that the untitled deputies of the people would assert such extreme pretensions in the very presence of rank and royalty. To yield to this first demand was, indeed, to resign the control and the decisions of the States-General into the hands of these plebeian deputies. For the latter followed up this preliminary doctrine by the more comprehensive one, that all the orders constituted but one body, whose decisions must be authoritative, and unqualified by any veto of a separate order.

The nobles and clergy perceived that this doctrine, carried out, would nullify their importance, for, while the "Third Estate" but equalled in numbers the two co-ordinate branches united, there were enough possessing popular sympathies among the higher orders to give, in all cases, the actual preponderance to the lower body.

We find Talleyrand, by no means to our surprise, actively working among the clergy to induce them to consent to the verification in general assembly. He was by his principles identified with the popular party. Nor did his sagacity fail

him in this crisis. His position was such as to give him a wide survey of the field of conflict, and his almost intuitive judgment in such cases accurately indicated the party destined to triumph. He exerted all those powers of persuasion, which have since been felt so often in the politics of Europe, and after a time, succeeded in obtaining a majority of votes in favor of the common verification. This decision of the clergy was announced on the 22d of June to the commons—who by this time had resolved themselves into the “National Assembly,” and had taken several fearless steps in defence of their rights as the legitimate representatives of the nation—by a deputation headed by the venerable archbishop of Vienne. As the clergy entered and took their places they were greeted with loud and universal acclamations by the assembly, which could now more easily dispense with the presence of the still obstinate nobility. However, the act of the clergy had its effect upon the nobles. On the 24th of June, the Duke of Orleans and forty-six members of that order repaired to the hall of the National Assembly, and gave in their adhesion to the rising and resistless power of the people. They were received with transports of delight by the triumphant “Third Estate.” The king, having in vain sought to prevent this union, now for the sake of concord which he yet fondly hoped for, commanded the remaining deputies of the nobility and clergy to join the assembly. This order, which virtually extinguished the ancient power of rank in France, they mournfully and reluctantly obeyed.

It would be impossible to sift out the actual truth embraced in the many stories told of Talleyrand, during a period so rife with every kind of report touching men of prominence. Still the idea is certainly probable that the court would make great

efforts to attach to its interests a man like the Bishop of Autun, deeply concerned on a superficial view of affairs in the continuance of the existing arrangements of society. Overtures without doubt were made to him, for he was still in a position, which, to those anxiously looking for supporters to the tottering throne amid the nearly universal defection, might appear rather favorable to their wishes. To the proposal that he should exert his influence with the clergy, against the demand of the commons for a general verification, the proposal being accompanied by a large offer of money, he is said to have replied—"I shall find in the treasury of public opinion infinitely more than you offer me. Money received from the court would only be a cause of ruin to me; and, as I want to enrich myself, I must build my fortunes on a more solid basis." The virtue of the first portion of this reply is quite thoroughly eliminated by the manifest selfishness of the closing idea.

A cotemporary writer, remarking upon Talleyrand's union with the "Third Estate," at this critical period of the Revolution, observes—"The conduct of the Bishop of Autun, and of the prelate who seconded him, is to be accounted for by the circumstance of Necker's having, from the commencement of the union of the orders, formed the project of dividing the Assembly into two chambers. There were to have been senators; this dignity would have been the highest in the State. The most influential of the nobles and clergy were to be the first called to the upper house. It is therefore not to be wondered at, that the Bishop of Autun acted in apparent opposition to the interest of his order on an occasion, the result of which would have proved both honorable and profitable to him." Whether this does fully account for Talleyrand's course in these events is questionable. There is but little doubt that his views of a

representative legislative assembly were formed on the English model. The idea of a single assembly certainly does not agree with the genius of Talleyrand's mind, which sought rather after those checks and balances of power in politics, which he made so effective in diplomacy. The English Constitution had been his study. It comported with his tastes, manners, education and hereditary sentiments, in its strong and stable aristocratic element, in its conservative adjustments, in its cautious modes of progress, and in its general spirit of justice. To his mind, turbulence and ultimate despotism could not but issue from a single assembly, with very ill-defined powers on paper, and with none of those rigid restraints of precedents and of a general legislative consistency and integrity, which are insensibly but firmly drawn around the Parliament of England, or the Congress of the United States. And certainly all history, and especially that of the French people, has confirmed the apprehensions of the sagacious Bishop. Yet if it was the hope of Talleyrand, that two chambers on the British model, the one hereditary and the other elective, might be formed, as a product of the Revolution, it was not an evidence of his foresight to counsel the higher orders to lose their identity in a great democratic assembly. By what power or management could he expect to evoke a superior body, from that mass of ardent democrats, flushed with triumph in a conflict, by means of which they had engulfed in a rigid equality everything but the throne? If at the time the hope of causing this body to retrace its steps was indulged by Talleyrand, it must soon have been abandoned. We rather judge that necessity was the motive that influenced the Bishop of Autun in joining the "Third Estate"—that with no very definite idea of the tendency of things, he gave in his

adherence, lest he should be left behind by his competitors in the race of reform. There was room for his ambition in a democratic movement—there was none in the ranks of hereditary conservatism. Doubtless his political preferences were for a limited and constitutional monarchy. But his ruling preference was for a high command in the victorious army, which now happened to be that of progress. He always contrived to be on the winning side, be his preferences or principles what they might.

CHAPTER IV.

Instruction of Representatives—First Speech of the Bishop of Autun—His Merit as an Orator—His Increasing Reputation—The Revolution Progresses—Talleyrand on the Committee on the Constitution—His Influence in Reforming Aristocratical and Ecclesiastical Abuses—Abolition of Tithes—Rights of Man—Financial Discussions—Confiscation of the Ornaments of the Churches—Talleyrand's Speeches on the Confiscation of the Lands of the Clergy—Opposition and Personal Hostility of the Clergy—His Separation from his old Colleagues—A Thorough Radical—Speech on a National Bank.

THOUGH entering the Assembly with the reputation of a man of marked abilities, Talleyrand's position as an orator had yet to be won. His influence had hitherto been with individuals ; whether it could be extended with equal success over a deliberative body, composed of men highly susceptible to the power of eloquence, was still a question. He seldom sought to operate upon masses of men by the power of oratory ; evidently conscious of his lack of ability in that direction. He was neither a demagogue nor a popular orator. Neither his nature, his habits of mind, nor his elocution fitted him for either character.

He, however, did aspire to the rank of a leader in the Assembly ; and in order to be this, it was necessary that his voice should be heard upon the many novel questions which were to press themselves upon the notice of the inexperienced legislators. One of the first of these questions was, whether

the deputies were to obey implicitly the instructions given them by their constituencies when authorized to represent them in the national council. This became an important question, as the Assembly was already entering upon so different a course from what had been contemplated in the royal summons. Upon this subject Talleyrand delivered his "maiden speech." There was a stir in Assembly when he ascended the tribune. He was cordially received and attentively listened to ; and at the close of his remarks he was warmly applauded. He took the ground that the Assembly could not allow itself to be controlled absolutely by a strict obedience of the mandates of the constituent bodies ; and that it could not expose itself to the hazard of having its acts nullified or its efficiency diminished by the withdrawal of deputies in obedience to instructions.

He proposed a declaration that all instructions were null and void which might suspend the activity of the Assembly, and which set up a particular will against the general opinion. His proposition was not adopted, as it was deemed advisable to leave each deputy free to decide for himself the limits of his obligations as a representative. The fragments of his speech remaining to us furnish no indications of the true parliamentary debater or popular speaker. They probably do not do justice to the whole composition. It was written out and read, and might more properly be classed with legal pleas than with popular arguments. Yet it evinces care in the structure, and elaboration in the thought; an aptitude for analysis, a good insight into the theory of morals and of politics, and a keen logical faculty.

By this speech the sagacious Bishop showed that he possessed powers, which the Assembly would be compelled to recognize

and glad to use. It was also apparent that he could hold no position beside his friend Mirabeau, and others in the body, on the ground of oratory. Scenes and subjects which were inspiration to the fiery genius of the Demosthenes of the Assembly, were contemplated by Talleyrand with his eminent calmness. Yet the latter soon found his proper place among his colleagues, and ably filled it.

Great changes now followed each other with astonishing ease and in terrifying haste. Daily was the Assembly magnifying itself. The control of it was already out of the hands of its originators. It steadily enlarged the scope of its investigations, absorbed minor parties, established its prerogatives, encroached upon the ancient rights of the throne, and became more executive as well as legislative.

On the 14th of July, the Bastille was stormed and taken. The mob of Paris then discovered its power, and began to use it with unscrupulous energy. The army faltered in its spirit of subordination, and whole regiments espoused the cause of the people.

The taking of the Bastille deeply agitated the Assembly. It feared that physical force so energetically and wildly developed. In order to know accurately the real state of affairs in the Capital, it sent thither a deputation of its members, which with others included the Bishop of Autun. The next day, the 15th of July, the entire body visited Paris, and was received with every possible demonstration of joy and honor by the exulting democracy.

In the meantime, Talleyrand was becoming more and more an object of attention in the Assembly. His influence rapidly increased, and he was now in the foremost rank. Very soon

he received a high mark of the esteem and confidence of his colleagues. He was appointed one of the committee of eight to whom was referred the important task of framing a constitution. This step shows what progress the Assembly had made in the work of reform. No such radical change as this was contemplated, when the States-General were summoned to deliberate upon the affairs of the nation. Yet it was a noble undertaking—thus to define the rights of the nation, and the powers of its government. It would have been a glorious achievement, if the French character had been at all equal to the capacities of its statesmen.

Talleyrand labored hard with his colleagues in the work of forming a constitution. He also devoted special and close attention to the subject of the national finances, which had so long been his favorite object of study. An opportunity was soon presented for him to express his views on these vital questions, and to sustain measures that swept away at a single blow the accumulated abuses of centuries.

During the session of the 14th of August, a motion was made that a preamble should be added to the proclamation of the Committee on the Constitution, to the effect, that taxes should be paid by all proprietors, and in equal proportion to their incomes; that no classes should be exempt from the public charges; that feudal rights might be redeemed by the commons, and that all personal service to the lord of a manor, whether secular or ecclesiastical, should be for ever abolished. Talleyrand was the first to rise and support with all his talent these propositions, which affected him personally both as a noble and as an ecclesiastic. The Bishop of Chartres also proposed the abolition of all game laws, and the Bishop of Autun ably seconded this proposal. In addition to these,

motions were made, at the same sitting, to abolish the quality of serf or local slave to the clergy, which had been established for purposes of agriculture ; to allow every citizen to be eligible to any military or civil office ; and to establish a gratuitous administration of justice, and to suppress the venality of office. All these motions were passed, and the Bishop of Autun was as influential as any other member in effecting their passage. He thus took rank among the most radical of the reformers. He cut himself loose from those aristocratic orders to which he had been attached. He aided, moreover, in removing those artificial but important props which had so long sustained the monarchy of France, and without the support of which it soon fell into the deep abyss of anarchy. He certainly could not perceive all the consequences of his acts. He knew that unwonted restraints would be placed upon the caprices of the king, but he could not anticipate that his person would be disregarded, and his life be terminated on the scaffold. He, therefore, is to be commended for those sentiments regarding popular rights and national freedom, which he thus practically vindicated in his own self-sacrifice. He discerned the spirit of his age. He knew that privilege must sink before the ascendancy of right—that reason must overrule prescription—that national prosperity was a worthier motive than aristocratic pleasure. His visions of the people's good, indeed, melted away in the brooding blackness of the Reign of Terror ; his anticipations of constitutional liberty were met only by the glorious slavery of a military despotism ; yet his impulses in this work of demolishing the old oppressions were generous, and his ambition was dignified by a magnificent temptation—that of applause, won in the service of millions of his fellow-countrymen.

In a single night was destroyed the work of ages—by a vote were severed the chains, which had been forged and welded by the skill and power of lords and statesmen and men of royal blood. Yet the wedge had been but entered ; the blows were yet to be struck, which would drive it, riving and splintering, through the massive structure of the State and of society.

A few days after the preceding resolutions had been enacted, the movement was commenced which soon devoted the treasures of the church to the necessities of the State. And with admirable consistency, Talleyrand played a prominent part in this work.

The clergy had very coolly voted away the privileges and the possessions of the nobility, and now the nobles as coolly returned the compliment. The commons aided with great complacency, while their ancient superiors thus brought each other down to the general level. A Marquis now took the place of a Bishop, and moved for adoption propositions which involved these ideas—that the property of the clergy belonged to the nation ; that tithes should be suppressed ; that the ministers of religion should receive pensions ; and that the monastic orders should be broken up. An appeal was made by a provincial deputy to the clergy, that they should come forward and generously make to the nation the gift of that property which the nation had originally bestowed upon them. To this appeal the Bishop of Autun promptly responded. "This step," said he, "would do infinite honor to the French clergy. I hasten to meet the wish of the deputy, and to acknowledge that it is a general feeling which he has expressed, and for the accomplishment of which we must immediately find adequate means." On this occasion Talleyrand was not so heartily sustained by his own order as he had been before.

Many of the clergy shrank from the consequences of such a vote. The instinct of self-preservation was aroused. The movement was sweeping too far. But resistance was vain. The current had acquired its direction and a good share of its momentum. The alarmed were borne on by the pressure of the venturesome. Talleyrand did not hesitate. He strove for the most conspicuous place among the destroyers of the dominant power of the church, and, Bishop though he was, he gained it, and with it a most singular notoriety.

The propositions were adopted.

In a debate soon after, Talleyrand made some noble observations on the rights of man, and obtained an unanimous assent to the following proposition : "The law being the expression of the general will, all the citizens ought to concur in its formation, either by themselves personally, or by their special representatives. It ought to be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens being equal in the eyes of the law, are qualified to fill all offices of public employment, according to their capacity."

On the 25th of August, Necker, still minister of finance, presented to the Assembly one of his elaborate papers on the fiscal interests of the country. He showed a deficiency in the revenues, which could be provided for only by a loan of eighty million of francs. This opportunity Talleyrand could not allow to pass, without displaying his ability in handling his favorite subject. The points he urged were, that the loan asked for should be authorized, leaving to the executive the choice of the mode of borrowing it ; that additional declarations should be made of the determination of the State to keep full faith with its creditors, and to make no reduction or repudiation of the public debt ; that an extraordinary committee on finance

should be appointed with large powers ; and that Provincial Assemblies should be established throughout the country, in order to give more complete local effect to the decisions of the National Assembly. Though meeting opposition to his project as a whole, Talleyrand succeeded in obtaining the assent of the body to the first two of his propositions.

The subjects which he at this time discussed evinced his ability to take broad, and statesman-like views of national policy ; and also revealed that reasonable and well-balanced conservatism which, in the midst of all the deeds of an apparently ruthless spirit of destruction, actually characterized him.

Thus far his political career had been decidedly successful. He had shown himself to be an active, industrious, capable and influential representative. He had won, in fact, the position of a leader, welcomed from the ranks of privilege to those of progress.

The question of national finances still pressed with all its perplexities upon the government. The uncertainty of affairs did not tend to augment the revenues, nor to strengthen the credit of the State.

During the discussion on the law, asked for by Necker, one of the members mentioned the fact of the existence of nearly two hundred million sterling of gold and silver in the various churches of the kingdom, and suggested that it could be made much more useful than it was in its present form. This hint was quickly caught up by the Bishop of Autun, and made the basis for a most prodigious display of generosity on the part of the clergy. In connection with the Archbishop of Paris, he sustained the following resolution—"That it was the wish of their clergy, and of all the clergy of France, to support the State

with all the costly ornaments of the church, which were not necessarily requisite for the purposes of divine service." The Assembly assumed this as an expression of the wish of the vast body of the national clergy, and ordained that all gold and silver vessels and ornaments not necessary for the decent performance of the service, should be sent to the mint and coined into money. It is absurd to call this forced relinquishment of property a donation. It was done in obedience to a mandate, which the clergy did not dare disobey. Talleyrand gained increased credit with the revolutionists by this movement. But his detachment from the clergy was not yet complete. He seemed resolved to destroy the overgrown power of the class into which he had been so unfeelingly and unfitly thrust. The measure which confiscated the church plate, was but the prelude to a still more sweeping attack upon ecclesiastical property. In this movement Talleyrand took the lead. On the 10th of October he entered into a thorough discussion of the necessities of the State and their remedies. Pronouncing the total inefficiency of present means, he made his startling proposition in these words :—

"An immense resource, notwithstanding such a dismal picture, does still exist, which can be conciliated with the respect due to property : it consists in the possessions of the clergy. A great operation upon that anomalous tenure of land is inevitable, were it but to replace the tithes which are become the property of the State. The object is not to impose any new charge upon that order, a political charge of contribution to the State being no real sacrifice.

"The clergy are not proprietors, like any other members of the community. The nation, enjoying a very extensive right over every other body, has a more direct right over the clergy ;

it can at all times destroy any particular institution belonging to that order, which may appear to it useless, and necessarily, the property of those institutions belongs to the nation. In like manner, the nation may abolish all church benefices where no duty is performed. As a consequence of this reasoning, it is entitled, even now, to seize upon those estates which are vacant, or may happen to become so in the course of time. No difficulty exists on that head ; but is the nation equally entitled to encroach upon the revenue of the active ecclesiastic, wholly or in part ? I know all that has been said with a plausible appearance of reason, against this complicated question. I know what has been written upon it by men whose talents I esteem, and whose principles I feel myself honored by professing, and often following. Therefore, before I deliver my opinion upon the subject, I must premise, that I have long meditated upon it, long had misgivings with regard to my own judgment ; but being at length convinced of its fitness as well as its justice, I have made up my mind in irresistible conviction.

“ However sacred may be the nature of a possession legally acquired, the law cannot assume to maintain more than the intention of the founder of the said possession. A portion of land for a quarry having been granted to a clergyman, what is necessary for his subsistence, of course, belongs to him, and what remains, it is understood, becomes the property of the church and of the poor. If the nation, then, secures that subsistence to the clergy, which they are entitled to—if that which in reality belongs to them remains untouched—if, moreover, the nation undertakes to fulfill the other intentions of the founder, to provide for the repairs of churches, and the relief of the poor, the intention of the founder not being defeated, justice is not violated.

“The nation, then, may first appropriate all that belongs to the religious institutions it intends to suppress, by securing the subsistence of those individuals who lived in them ; secondly, it may seize on all benefices without functionaries ; and thirdly, it may reduce, in a given proportion, the revenues of the actual beneficiaries, taking upon itself the obligation to discharge the conditions which have been imposed upon such estates. By such means the nation will become the sole and only proprietor of all the clerical land in the kingdom, as well as of the tithes, of which that order has so nobly made the sacrifice.”

It may readily be supposed that such a proposition would be received by the majority with great approbation, and that the opposition from the clergy would be earnest and nearly unanimous. The clerical party was led by the eloquent Abbé Maury, who, in the tribune, was greatly the superior of the Bishop of Autun. The argument of the Abbé Maury produced so much effect, that Talleyrand found it necessary to reply to it. One or two passages in this reply rise into eloquence :—

“I warn my colleagues, the members of the order to which I have the honor to belong, to bear in mind the actual danger of our situation. The clergy, in fact, are no longer an order of the State, but a class of the community. They possess no longer an administration of their own ; they have lost their tithes, which formed at least half their revenues, and it would be the height of madness to think they will ever recover them. The clergy, then, have become purely dependent on the good will of the nation, which has taken the engagement, it is true, to provide a substitute, though not an equivalent—for thus must the decrees of the Assembly be explained, as they admit of no other possible interpretation. In this entirely new order of things, which it seems to me people are but too apt to forget,

the clergy have only kept possession of their lands ; and it is after deep reflection that I have brought myself to think that it would be better to abandon these lands altogether, with a view of improving the condition of the whole body." * * *

"A few more attempts at resistance in so unequal and degrading a struggle, and we shall lose for ever the fruits and honor of a generous resignation. Boldly to face necessity is the only way to appear not to fear it ; or, to speak in a manner more worthy of you, is not to fear it in reality. The real sacrifice is not being dragged by force toward the altar of the country, but carrying to it a voluntary offering. Why delay this any longer ? How much of disturbance and misfortune might have been avoided, if what has been forcibly given up, during the last three months, had been sacrificed at first with good grace ? Let us show that we intend to become citizens, and remain nothing but citizens ; that we are anxious to form part of that national unity which makes France a whole. It is then that the clergy will have justified, by the greatness of its sacrifices, the honor it formerly enjoyed, of being considered the first order of the State. In fine, it is by ceasing to be an external object of envy and hatred, that the clergy will become an assemblage, it may be said, of much better materials, an assemblage of citizens, and the object of the eternal gratitude of their country."

It was by a measure thus uncompromising and hostile, supported by an oratory skillful and plausible, that Talleyrand broke the ties that had bound him to the ecclesiastical system. He saw that it must inevitably fall before popular enthusiasm on the one hand, and philosophical infidelity on the other. It was as corrupt as was the monarchy, to which it clung as an enfeebling parasite. In itself it was no great loss to humanity ;

and it was a temptation to infidelity rather than a barrier against it. Talleyrand took good care to escape from the crumbling edifice, while none were more energetic and zealous than he in tearing away its ancient and massive supports.

The act of sequestration of the immense estates of the church was long and warmly discussed, and was finally adopted under a stormy burst of eloquence from Mirabeau. When Talleyrand thus broke with the party of the *noblesse* and the clergy, he became the immediate object of a fierce and relentless hostility. His was not the defection of an ordinary man. The most malicious instincts, which are apt to inhere in privileged classes, long indulged and flattered with a servile submission, manifested themselves against a member who thus skillfully deserted at the most critical point in the contest. He was even in danger of assassination. Yet it is apparent that thus far Talleyrand acted with entire consistency. He early showed popular sympathies. His political affinities were with the reform party. It cannot be made to appear that his personal interest lay in the destruction of those distinctions in society, which thus far had been to him the source of honor and emolument. He himself suffered directly by his own success. His zeal exacted the same sacrifice from himself which it demanded from others. His policy may have been mistaken, but his motive, so far as appears in his legislative career, was a commendable patriotism. The appearance of disinterestedness may at least be asserted of his course. Or if we must think that he was governed by profound selfishness, which knew how to make sacrifices in such a way as to convert them into ultimate gains, then, while we especially admire his sagacity, we must rejoice that it could be allied at intervals with a magnificent generosity.

Talleyrand's union with the progressive party was now complete. He had committed political sins, which, as no signs of repentance were exhibited, wholly separated him from his former aristocratic colleagues. His entire project in relation to the sale of the property of the church was not carried out. The manner in which the sale was effected was by the issuing of *assignats*, each of which expressed the amount to which the holder was entitled against the property to be sold. Thus was an immense and sudden addition made to the paper currency, and this currency was forced into circulation: Talleyrand predicted the usual and inevitable results of this monstrous experiment. His predictions were verified. National credit was seriously shattered by so unwise a measure.

Into the discussion of the policy of establishing a National Bank, Talleyrand also entered with great thoroughness and ability. His views upon this question appear to have been well matured. As they relate mainly to the abstract principles of credit and banking they would not be generally interesting. A few sentences seem worth quoting, as showing his style of address upon such a subject, and the general reasonableness of his opinions. His speech was delivered to the Assembly on the 4th of December.

“Many persons who entertain sound views on the subject of credit, consider such an establishment as indispensable, while even those who are least acquainted with the subject—those who scarcely know what a bank is, and who are totally ignorant of the organization suitable to a national bank, seem to derive confidence, amid the present want of credit, simply from understanding that the National Assembly contemplates the establishment of a national bank. It would indeed seem as if the mere name of a bank were alone sufficient to settle every-

thing ; but we must be careful to observe that it is only a well-constituted bank that ought to be established, and not a national bank of any sort. Banks are by no means simple institutions ; their object is indeed everywhere the same—to facilitate the circulation of exchanges, and to lower the interest of money ; but the means they employ must vary extremely. Banks may be likened to highly-tempered instruments, which must be managed with caution and skill, because either great good or great evil may result from their use. Here, above all, you must be upon your guard against the various systems suggested by cupidity, by superficial knowledge, or by that half-acquaintance with the subject which is so common and so dangerous.”

“The more we reflect on the true principles of credit, the more are we convinced that there exists in this respect no difference between a nation and a private individual. A nation, like a private person, possesses credit only so long as it is known to have the will and the power to pay. A nation, like an individual, can do nothing better toward its creditors than to pay in ready money its engagements when due. If, through some unfortunate circumstance, the means of payment in cash are wanting, the best, the only course which a nation, like an individual, can then adopt, is to propose to its creditors only such arrangements as are secure of being carried into effect for nothing destroys confidence like exaggerated promises.

“Rest assured that every mechanical means of bringing about the re-appearance of specie, such as the melting down of plate, the purchase of materials at a great expense, or other such temporary expedients, though they may afford the appearance of relief, have really nothing substantial or durable in their

nature. When once the public feeling leads to the hoarding or the exportation of specie, that which you produce in this way will speedily be withdrawn from the circulation like the rest. It is only by securing public opinion, and by furnishing irresistible motives of confidence, that credit can be ensured ; and those who fear that, even after the restoration of order, the specie which seems to have vanished from among us will not reappear, are mistaken. Gold and silver are necessarily transported, like other articles of merchandise, wherever there exist the will and the power to pay for them ; they are even transported more readily by reason of the ease with which they are removed. So long as the nation has a surplus to dispose of, the gold and silver required will always be procured ; for it must not be forgotten that, if gold and silver are the purchasing medium for all other things, all other things are equally the purchasing medium for those metals. For a nation that has nothing to give, there can be nothing to obtain ; but those nations which have an immense surplus, cannot long want anything which may be purchased, and, least of all, gold and silver.

“ Since the position of your finances compels you to be debtors to other nations, prove yourselves to be the best possible debtors ; you have the means to do so. Only show that you know how to set about it, and you will soon see flowing into the country the capital of the foreigner, who only awaits that moment to come and exchange it for your effects. You will see immense sums brought to light which are at present yielding nothing, and which would be gladly exchanged for productive securities bearing annual interest, when once it is felt that the payment of that interest is certain, and that the capital will not be endangered.”

In conclusion, the Bishop of Autun submitted to the National Assembly a series of articles having for their object the establishment of a sinking fund for the gradual extinction of the public debt, the means of raising the necessary portions of which for each succeeding year were to be determined at the commencement of each session of the legislature.

CHAPTER V.

His Continued Labors as a Legislator and Reformer—His able Report on Education—Elected President of the Assembly—His Address to the People and Defence of the Assembly—Grand Fête in the Champ-de-Mars—The Bishop of Autun Performs Mass—Difficulties with the Clergy—Civil Organization of the Clergy—Mirabeau and Talleyrand—Anecdote—Talleyrand's account of their last interview, and of Mirabeau's Death—He reads Mirabeau's Speech in the Assembly—Archbishopric of Paris and Gambling—The Bishop of Autun's Letter of Defence—His Excommunication by the Pope—Resigns his Episcopal office and retires to Civil Life.

THOUGH still a bishop, Talleyrand was far from being a bigot. His amiable disposition had nothing akin to the intolerant spirit of the Papal church. The occasions were repeated on which he evinced his political and religious tolerance, and his just sense of natural right. One occurred toward the close of the year 1789. The Jews of certain cities petitioned for a recognition on the part of the Assembly of the civil rights, which had been accorded them by the kings of France, and an admission of their political equality with the mass of their fellow-citizens. The debate originated by this petition was of considerable length, and drew out the respective advocates of freedom and of restriction. We find Talleyrand on the side of the widest extension of civil and political rights. He earnestly pleaded the cause of this long-oppressed people; and the Assembly granted their prayer.

The labors of the Bishop of Autun as a legislator were

constant, and distinguished by an enlightened and practical aim. He proposed the adoption of an uniform system of weights and measures, founded on some natural and unalterable principles. The French system, adopted through his exertions, looks to uniformity among all nations, and has proved itself the one most worthy of universal use. He also proposed the abolition of lotteries, showing the enormous unfairness of these systems, considered as games of chance, and their immorality as means of revenue. In these views he was much in advance of many statesmen and moralists who have succeeded him.

But a more onerous duty, as well as a more eminent honor, was placed upon him by the Assembly. The work was no less than the extraordinary undertaking of elaborating a plan of public instruction, which should prepare for their civil duties the entire youth of the nation in all coming generations. The demand of the Romish Church had ever been that education should be exclusively in the hands of the clergy. This demand had been conceded throughout France. The first step in the project of Talleyrand was to make general education a duty of the State, and the agencies of it an institution of government.

The report which he presented to the Assembly on this subject has surrounded his name with merited renown. In it education was considered in its origin, its object, its organization and its methods. It was the first time, in Europe at least, that the subject had been so treated, with an immediate view to the service of a great people. Not neglecting the fine arts and the highest branches of ancient and modern literature, the author never forgot that the first and greatest object was to acquire that knowledge, which is necessary to constitute a useful citizen and a good man. A complete system, from the primary schools to the universities, was arranged, calculated

to furnish the most fit and thorough development to all classes of minds and all varieties of tastes. The system was marked by one capital defect. Its moral ideas were formed by the modes of thinking peculiar to the age, and to the philosophic portion of the people. Interest was distinctly presented as the highest sanction of virtue; the work of conscience was resolved into a process of selfish calculation. The moral sphere was wholly worldly, and the moral rule was the fallible judgment. Materialism and infidelity gave tone to the projected system. Hence it must have failed so far as the best effects might be anticipated. However, it never went into operation. The revolution moved on and afforded no place for it. After the revolution of 1830, the main features of the plan were introduced into the system of national instruction, adopted and carried out under the administration of Guizot.

The President of the Assembly was elected every fortnight. During the month of February, 1790, Talleyrand was honored by being elected to this office. A few days previously he had executed another important task—the composition of an address to the people of France in defence of the Assembly. When the importance of the reforms effected by this body is considered, in connection with the abolition of the privileges of large classes consequent upon them, it is not surprising that a formidable opposition was manifested against it. It had virtually usurped all power in the State.

It became necessary, by some strong appeal, to rally the mass of the people to the support of the acts of their representatives. Talleyrand's address was adopted by the Assembly, amidst the most enthusiastic manifestations of admiration and applause. As this address has been deemed a masterpiece of

parliamentary writing, in its sentiments, reasoning, style and eloquence, several extracts will here be in place.

Having correctly and concisely recapitulated the truly valuable reforms effected by the Assembly, he exclaims :

“ And yet what has not been said, what has not been attempted, in order to diminish the impression which so much good could not fail to produce upon your minds ?

“ It has been asserted that we have destroyed everything—it was because everything was to be reconstructed. And what is there that can excite so much regret ? Must you be informed of it ? Let those men be questioned who reaped no benefit from the object reformed or abolished. Let the consciences even of those benefited by them be appealed to. Let those be put aside who, to enoble feelings of personal interest, now shed their sympathy upon the individuals who, in other days, were indifferent to them, and it will be seen that the reform of each of these objects does unite every suffrage worthy of being taken into account.

“ We have acted, it is said, with too much precipitation, and many others have reproached us with too much dilatoriness ! Are they not aware that it is by attacking and overthrowing at once every abuse, that we can alone hope to be for ever free from them ?—It is then, and only then, that every one will feel interested in the establishment of order. He will feel that slow and partial reforms have always ended in nothing ; and that the abuse maintained is the sole support, and will soon become also the restorer of those which were thought to have been destroyed. Our assemblies are tumultuous, it is said. And of what consequence is this, provided the decrees which issue from them are good and wise ? We are, however, far from desirous of presenting to your admiration the details

of our debates. More than once we have felt grieved at them, but at the same time we have felt that it was a great injustice to lay any stress upon this circumstance, and that, after all, impetuosity was the almost inevitable consequence of the first struggle that perhaps ever took place between every principle and every error.

“We are accused of having aimed at a chimerical perfection. This extraordinary reproach is evidently nothing more than an ill-disguised wish for the continuation of abuses.

“It is impossible, it has been said, to regenerate an ancient and corrupt nation. Let those who think so learn that corruption exists only among such as wish to perpetuate demoralizing abuses, and that a nation becomes young again when it has resolved to become free. Look at the rising generation; see their hearts beating with hope and joy! How pure, how noble, how patriotic are their feelings! With what enthusiasm are they seen each day claiming the honor of being admitted to take the oaths of citizens! But why should we answer such a base accusation? Shall the National Assembly be reduced to justify itself for not having despaired of the French people?

“Nothing has been yet done for the people—exclaim their pretended friends; yet it is the people’s cause which is every where triumphant. Does not every abuse which has been destroyed, bring with its abolition the certainty of an amelioration in the people’s condition? Was there a single abuse which was not felt by the people?

“The people did not complain, say they—it is because the excess of their misery stifled their complaints. But now the people are unhappy—say rather that they are still miserable; but they will not long remain so—this we solemnly aver. We have destroy-

ed the executive power, exclaim our detractors. No ; say that we have annihilated the ministerial power, which has destroyed and frequently degraded the executive. We have enlightened the executive power by showing it in its true power, and we have above all, given it more dignity by making it recur to its true source of authority, the will of the people.

“The executive is powerless—that is true ; it is impotent against the constitution and the law, but it will be more efficient than ever, when employed to defend them.

“The people have armed themselves. Yes, the people have armed themselves ; it was necessary to do so ; but in several places misfortunes have occurred. Can the National Assembly be reproached with them ? Can those disasters be imputed to our body ? It deplors them ; it has endeavored to prevent them by the force of its decrees ; and they will no doubt cease with the existence of the union, henceforward firm and enduring between the two powers, and the irresistible action of all the national forces.

“We have exceeded our powers—the answer to this is quite easy. It is incontestable that we were deputed to form a constitution ; this was the anxious desire and the want of the whole country. And how would it have been possible to create that constitution, to form even an imperfect whole, or to frame constitutional decrees, without the powers we have exercised ? We will say more : without the National Assembly, France was lost. Without the principle which submits everything to the plurality of free votes, it is impossible to conceive a National Assembly ; it is impossible to conceive, we will not say a constitution, but even the hope of effectually rooting out the slightest abuse. This principle is founded upon eternal truth ; it has been recognized throughout all France ; it has repro-

duced itself in a thousand forms in those numerous addresses of adhesion which were constantly met by a host of libels taxing us with having exceeded our powers. What a confirmation of those very powers which some have endeavored to deny us, are those addresses, those congratulations, those homages, and those patriotic oaths !”

The address then declares the purposes of the Assembly as to the institutions to be established, clerical, legal, and educational ; and proceeds to an earnest exhortation to the nation, to rally around the Assembly and the King.

“Frenchmen! see the glorious, the happy prospect which opens before you. You have still some steps to make, and it is there that the detractors of the revolution are waiting for you. Be upon your guard against an impetuous vivacity; above all, avoid violence, for disorders may become fatal to liberty. You cherish your liberty—you now possess it; show yourselves worthy of preserving it. Be faithful to the spirit, and to the letter of the decree of your representatives, sanctioned by the King. Distinguish carefully between the rights abolished without purchase, and the redeemable rights still existing. Let the former be no longer required, but let the latter not be refused. Think of the three sacred words which guarantee these decrees; the Nation, the Law, the King. The nation is yourselves; the law is yourselves; it is your will; the king is the guardian of the law. Whatever falsehoods may be asserted, place reliance upon the nation. It was the king who was deceived, it is now you who are misled, and the king’s goodness deplures your error. He wishes to preserve his people against the flatterers whom he has discarded from his throne, and he will preserve from their baneful influence the youth of his son; for in the midst of your representatives he has de-

clared that he has constituted the heir to his throne the guardian of the constitution. * * * *

“With regard to ourselves, continuing, as we do, our laborious task—devoted, as we are, to the great works of the constitution, as much your work as ours, we will terminate our labors with the aid of every enlightened mind in France; and overcoming every obstacle, satisfied with an approving conscience, happy at your approaching felicity, we will place in your hands this sacred constitution, under the safeguard of your newly acquired virtues, the seeds of which lying dormant in yourselves, have now germinated in the first days of liberty.”

The 14th of July, 1790, was the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille. The Assembly determined that it should be celebrated by a grand federation of the entire nation in the Champ-de-Mars. The decree for this act of patriotism was drawn up and presented to the Assembly by Talleyrand, and in the *fête* itself he was appointed to fill one of the most conspicuous parts. The scene presented one of those gorgeous displays, for which Paris has become noted over every other capital of modern Europe, and which appear to reconcile the French to monarchical, military, or democratic despotism.

For weeks had an immense army of workmen been employed in excavating the centre of the area and conveying the earth to the sides, thus constructing a vast amphitheatre. Early on the morning of the 14th, the turf seats of this amphitheatre were occupied by some three or four hundred thousand of the population of Paris.

An antique altar of large dimensions, surmounted by a cross, formed the central figure of the scene. The king, the Assembly, the throng of federates, representing the eighty-four departments of the kingdom, the officials of

all kinds, a hundred thousand soldiers of the National Guard, and the army, constituted the actors in this astonishing performance. Though the rain descended in torrents, the people were enthusiastic in their demonstrations of patriotism. Talleyrand, in his capacity of Bishop of Autun, performed mass at the altar, at the corners of which were ranged three hundred priests in white surplices, girt with broad tri-colored scarfs. This ceremony completed, the bishop blessed the royal standard of France, and the banners of the respective departments. Twelve hundred musicians played the hymn, *Te Deum laudamus*. Lafayette, as commander-in-chief of the National Guard, and accompanied by the deputies of the army and navy, then approached and took the oath of fidelity to the nation, to the law, and to the king. The same oath was repeated by the president and deputies of the Assembly. The king rose, and in a loud voice said, "I, king of the French, swear to employ the power delegated to me by the constitutional act of the State, in maintaining the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by me." The queen, lifting the dauphin in her arms, said, "Here is my son; he joins, as well as myself, in these sentiments."

It is related that Talleyrand, as he was approaching the steps of the altar to perform his part of the service, met Lafayette, whom he cautioned not to look at him, for fear of making him laugh. He doubtless deemed the whole display as fulfilling its purpose, if it served to amuse the people, and captivate their imaginations with the dazzling visions of national freedom and prosperity. He is said to have expressed himself, in a letter to a female friend, to this effect—"If you were as much pleased with the place provided for you, at the ridiculous ceremony of yesterday, as I was myself to see and admire you

in the seat which you occupied, you must have borne the storm with the same composure that I did." We can hardly believe him guilty of the impiety of another sentiment purporting to be in the same letter, but we insert it as a specimen of the sentiments and sayings which were attributed to him at the time—"I hope your usual penetration has not misled you with regard to the divinity, to which I was addressing my prayers and my oath of fidelity, and that you knew that you were truly that supreme being whom I do and shall ever adore in my heart."

It is not proposed to follow Talleyrand through his entire course in the Assembly. Sufficient has been detailed to show the position which he had gained among his colleagues, and the relations he held to the great revolution. In the course of the year 1790, a question arose which ultimately led him into so many difficulties with his ecclesiastical brethren, that he was compelled to resign his episcopal office, and to separate himself from the service of that church, into whose ministry he had been forced when a mere boy. To complete the civil organization of the Church, it was proposed to place the clergy in submission to the State, by imposing on them a solemn oath of allegiance. Although Talleyrand did not propose this obnoxious measure, he gave it his earnest support, and thereby augmented the number and stimulated the acrimony of his enemies. His support of this proceeding was, however, in some measure redeemed by his exertions to throw protection round the retusant clergy. He urged, with all his eloquence, the expediency of still allowing those who refused the test and declined to submit to the new law, to enjoy, nevertheless, its protection, and to continue freely the exercise of their sacred functions. Almost all the bishops refused to take the oath proposed by the Assembly, and the electors nominated their

successors, to whom the Bishop of Autun and the Bishops of Lydda and of Babylon gave canonical institution.

It was impossible that two spirits such as Talleyrand and Mirabeau could move in the same political arena without being either allied by friendship or opposed by enmity. They maintained an intimate correspondence before the outbreak of the first violences of the revolution. Mirabeau had been sent on a mission to Berlin—an appointment which he owed to the influence of Talleyrand. While there their correspondence was continued. Soon afterward, obeying one of those inexplicable impulses, by which he was sometimes moved, and forgetful of the rights of friendship, and the common principles of honor, Mirabeau sold and published the private correspondence which took place between them during his residence at Berlin, which contained many secret anecdotes of that court, at the epoch of the death of Frederic the Great. As nothing could excuse or palliate so flagrant a breach of confidence, this step on the part of Mirabeau produced an immediate estrangement between them, and their friendship terminated.

There is an account of a sarcastic saying, addressed to Mirabeau and attributed to Talleyrand, which we quote for its stinging sarcasm, even though Talleyrand may not have expressed it. When questioned years after by Lord Holland, he did not entirely disclaim it. It arose from the vanity of Mirabeau, which was often very conspicuous.

At some critical time in public affairs, he was giving to a circle around him his views of the qualities needed by the minister who would be suited to such an emergency. He remarked that he should possess extensive knowledge, striking genius, the ability to write and speak eloquently, some connection with the higher classes, and popularity with the lower. It

was apparent to those who listened that his real feeling was that these were just the qualities he possessed, and that he was the man for the crisis. A listener, said to be Talleyrand, remarked—"All this is true, but you have omitted one of his qualities." "No—surely! What do you mean?" "Should he not be very much pitted with the small pox?" The fact was, that Mirabeau was unusually marked with the effects of this disease.

Talleyrand and Mirabeau appear to have become reconciled and friendly in their intercourse; as, upon his death-bed, the latter committed to his former intimate his last wishes and injunctions of a public character. This final interview, with their intercourse immediately preceding the last sickness of Mirabeau, as also some interesting particulars of his sickness, are described in the following language, attributed by his secretary to Talleyrand himself.

"Petion was the greatest scoundrel this country ever produced. Mirabeau, whose greatest defect in political conduct was the extraordinary facility with which he gave himself entirely up to the first person possessed of the slightest show of talent, who could take off his own hands any part of the labor, had grown infatuated with Petion. For it was extraordinary that Mirabeau, whose mental vigor could, Atlas-like, have borne the world, was yet possessed of so much physical indolence that he was seldom known to carry out his own gigantic designs. From the moment that such men as Petion, Brissot, and Condorcet, began to surround Mirabeau, and were admitted into his privacy, with Cabanis, whom he had chosen as his medical attendant, I augured ill for the future fate of my friend. Already were Mirabeau's views and principles grown too tame, too reasonable, for these infuriated demagogues, and they had several times received with ill temper his biting

sarcasms at what he called their *exaltation républicaine*. I remember the effect produced upon one occasion at a private meeting of his friends, and the gloom and murmurs of rage with which the concluding words of a speech he had risen to make were received. '*Even supposing, my friends, that royalty were now to be abolished, it is not a republic that must be established—we are not yet ripe for this—it must be a commonwealth.*' From that moment, such is my firm belief, his ruin was decided; but whether he really did meet his death by unfair means, or whether it was the consequence, as was proclaimed at the time, of excitement and fever of the blood, brought on by over-exertion and anxiety, none can tell to this hour. The circumstances of his death will certainly justify, both to his friends and to posterity, every suspicion of poison; while, on the other hand, there were no symptoms which could not be accounted for by the complaint under which it had from the first been proclaimed that he was sinking.

“It was just such an evening as this, warm, glowing, early spring, when the fiery spirit of Mirabeau was passing away. The whole thing had been so sudden, so unlooked-for, that we could scarcely believe him in danger, before we learned that he was gone. It was the 2nd of April (1791) and but two days before, he had come to take me, full of life and spirit, to dine in the Palais Royal with a party of friends, to talk over the proposition of a law of succession, which he had had for some time under consideration, and which it was his intention to present to the National Assembly. We walked together from my lodgings to the *restaurateur* Robert's, where dinner had been ordered. I thought, in the conversation concerning his project of a law, that Mirabeau was somewhat more depressed than usual, and that his words came less freely and less flowing

from his tongue. He certainly did complain of oppression and pain in his head, and, although the evening was far from sultry, he walked without his hat. I was particularly struck with the lassitude and weariness which he seemed to experience when we had arrived at our destination, and which could not be accounted for by our short, slow walk from the Rue St. Honoré. He flung himself listlessly upon one of the benches beside the fountain in the middle of the garden of the Palais Royal, and said, sadly, that he was well pleased that our friends had not yet arrived at the rendezvous, for he was desirous of having a few moments' private conversation with me, not, for once, about public affairs, but concerning his own. 'Is it not strange,' said he, 'that I, who am about to present to the Assembly a law, and to pronounce a speech, the result of long study, upon wills, should never, during my whole life, have given one single thought to the making of my own? Do you not think that it is growing high time to think of *every possibility*, with such strange proceedings going on around us—eh, my friend?'

"I was surprised at this sudden revolution in Mirabeau, for of all men on earth, he had ever been one of the most thoughtless as to the future, caring little indeed even for the present, living from day to day, heeding not if the morrow never came; and I could only attribute his unwonted depression to over-exertion and fatigue.

"I tried to cheer him with soothing words, and told him it was likely that his day for thinking of this sort of thing was yet far off; that it was a mere fit of depression which caused him to dwell upon such gloomy possibilities; and I ventured to assure him that a good dinner and a glass of our friend Robert's best Chambertin would soon produce a good effect in calming his sudden misgivings about the future.

“ He shook his head mournfully : ‘ These are common phrases, and you know it,’ said he; ‘ they are unworthy of you. I am neither a child nor a woman, and fear not to listen to the whispering voice of my own soul. The truth is, I *do* feel, at this moment, most singularly overcome by a sadness hitherto unknown—as if my task, being, as it were, but just begun, needed no longer my exertions to finish it.’ He laid his hand upon my knee, and looked in my face, wherein must have been expressed some anxiety, for I knew not what to think of the mood in which I beheld him, and added, gently, ‘ Should anything happen to me before long, you will think of what I have been saying.’ * * *

“ He then spoke long and earnestly about his political career. In the single hour that we passed, thus seated side by side, amid the hurry and bustle of the crowds who were hastening on all sides to the different *restaurateurs* beneath the galleries, did we converse together upon the splendid past, the exciting present, and the *terrific future*. We spoke in earnest whispers, pre-occupied and abstracted from all around, as though we had been conspirators in the bosom of some forest solitude. The whole scene—the day—the hour, I can conjure up in colors fresh and vivid, as though they had vanished but one moment ago, and nothing else had been impressed on the canvas of my memory during all the long years since.

“ I had never been thoroughly inspired with the conviction of the Herculean powers of the man until this conversation. He seemed to toy with difficulties ; nothing was beyond his grasp ; nothing beyond the power of his will to bend. There is scarcely a single prophecy of his which time has not realized, and often am I startled even now at events, which, seemingly the consequence of yesterday, had been foretold by him that

evening, beside the fountain in the Palais Royal. He gave me many kind admonitions and warnings against some who were in our intimacy, and whom he deemed unworthy of friendship. He counselled me respecting the path that I should take in case this 'something serious,' which seemed to haunt him so strangely, should take place, while affairs were in such a troubled state. In every case did I follow this advice, and in every case had I cause to rejoice that I had done so. Mirabeau was certainly inspired that evening: he was sublime. I remember being struck with a saying of his, which I have since found of the greatest value. After having traced out for me a plan of conduct, in case public events should take the turn he was anticipating, he concluded by saying solemnly, 'But above all things, my friend, slight not public opinion. Listen with open ears to the public clamor: for remember that the voice of the people is the *voice of God.*'

"It was thus we conversed for more than an hour, during which I learned more of Mirabeau than I had done during the many years of strict friendship in which we had lived together. I should have regretted him far less, had this confidence never taken place, for I should less have learned to estimate his stupendous intellect, and the grandeur of his mighty heart. Soon afterward, our two other friends joined us, and we adjourned to Robert's, at that time the first *restaurateur* in Paris, where we found dinner waiting.

"The dinner was gay enough. I alone, of all the company, was sad, and spoke but little. Mirabeau, at first absorbed and pre-occupied, gradually yielding to the influence which he never could resist, that of wine and good fellowship, by degrees shook off the recollection of the colloquy we had had together so short a time before, and became as usual, the light and life of

the *réunion*. It would be a hopeless task to endeavor to recall one tithe of all the brilliant sayings, the startling epigrams, uttered by Mirabeau during this, his last flash of existence. I had never beheld him so excited, so madly gay. He drank largely, and the wine seemed to inflame his blood until his excitement bordered on delirium. He raved—he sang—he spoke in loud harangues—he laughed fiercely at us all—at the court, at the people, at himself, in short, at everything ; and our companions hailed with loud shouts and applause every *bon-mot* that he uttered. I alone could not share in this strange mirth, for I was yet shaken by the solemn foreboding, the dismal presentiment with which he had inspired me.

“ At about four o'clock in the morning, the spirit, no longer to be controlled even by the gigantic physical strength which he possessed, gave way at last. He complained that his head felt heavy, and said that the daylight, which was just beginning to peep in from the window opposite, fatigued his sight. Coffee was then proposed before we parted, and Mirabeau eagerly took a cup, which he himself poured out and sweetened. His hand trembled violently as he raised it to his lips, and he had scarcely replaced the cup upon the table, when he fell forward with his head upon his hands, exclaiming, ‘ My God ! what new strange pain is this ? ’

“ He rallied again, however, presently, and bade the waiter fetch a coach instantly, saying that he foresaw an attack of spasms in the chest, and that he knew his remedy, which was a hot bath and fumigations as quickly as possible. He requested me alone to accompany him, and from that moment until his death I never left his side. We drove to the public baths on the Boulevard, opposite to the street where Mirabeau then lived. Here his sufferings increased to such a frightful degree,

that I sent for Cabanis, who, however, did not arrive until the patient had left the bath, after having taken, against my most earnest desire, a large bowl of milk and cocoa, of which he was extremely fond. Strange to say, he was considerably better after this, and left the bath for his own house, *on foot*. It is this circumstance, I have no doubt, which has given consistency to the belief that he had been poisoned, as it is averred that, had the mess of milk not been absorbed as antidote, Mirabeau must, in the state in which he was at the time, have died immediately on taking it. Such sweeping reasoning as this is, of course, beneath comment.

“ It was with some difficulty that he could be prevailed upon to go to bed. He resisted to the last, declaring that the bright morning sun, which by this time was streaming in glory through his windows, would renovate him better than any physician’s advice. Soon after he had lain down, however, a change, from which he never rallied, came over him, and he continued to get worse until he died. It was a dreadful sight to behold his face, all swollen and bloated, and speckled with livid spots, and the white foam which gathered upon his lips as fast as his attendants could wipe it away. It certainly should not have been made a public show, which, before the end of the day, the death-bed of poor Mirabeau had become. Those foul suspicions of treachery and poison had their origin, I doubt not, in the extraordinary symptoms which his disease presented.

“ Never from the first instant did Mirabeau deceive himself, or shrink from the decree. It has never been my lot to witness a death so dignified, so sublime. In the morning, through the day, surrounded by friends and admirers, all was well; but then came the silent watches of the night, when his whole heart was bared to me, his only comforter.

“If popularity could have satisfied the soul of Mirabeau, he surely must have died content. His house was besieged, and, from the moment he was declared to be in danger, the very street became impassable from the crowd of messengers who thronged his door. High and low, rich and poor, felt alike an interest in the fate of the great man who was to protect them between monarchy and anarchy, which it is certain the mighty intellect of Mirabeau would have made an easy task.

“He lingered thus in pain and agony during the whole of this day and night, and died in my arms on the following morning at eight o'clock, having preserved his firmness of intellect until the very last moment. It is true (for there were some absurd stories afloat), that, about five minutes before he actually expired, he wrote on a piece of paper (for speech was already gone), these words : *‘It is far easier to die than to sleep!’* The movement which he made to place the paper in my hand was his last. He never stirred afterward. During his illness, he frequently reverted to the conversation which had passed between us on the bench at the Palais Royal. He told me that he then already *knew* that his fate was sealed, and dared me to maintain a conviction of the contrary.

“The generation of to-day, contrary to anticipation, has learnt to undervalue Mirabeau ; but I think a re-action may come even in your time, because he was not a mere orator, whose fame must die when his powers of speech are gone, but he was also the greatest thinker of his age. How would the face of the country have been changed had he lived but a few months, nay, even a few weeks longer ! This has been so strongly felt by all parties, that there were many who blindly rejoiced at his death, even among those who had known and loved him ; while those who had most cause to mourn, declared, in their terror, that he must have been poisoned.

“I have told you all the facts connected with his illness and his death, and with me you will cease to feel astonishment that the suspicion of such a crime should have gone abroad, when you consider the suddenness of his illness, its short duration, and the dreadful sufferings amid which his life was closed. These must have been terrific ; for, about an hour before his death, he turned angrily round to Cabanis, and said, ‘ A physician who is a true friend to the patient would not hesitate at giving a dose of opium strong enough to quiet such pain as this for ever.’

“The public grief at the death of Mirabeau told more for his worth and greatness than whole volumes of written eulogium could now do. Perhaps there never before was an example of a party leader having been mourned as sincerely by the adverse party as by his own. The court was in consternation ; the queen concealed not her despair, for she foresaw the dread consequence ; the last barrier between the furious people and the angry *noblesse* was down, and the bitter tide would, ere long, rush in through the breach which the falling of this goodly corner-stone had made. I myself was so overcome by regret at the sudden loss which I had sustained, that I retired for some little time to Auteuil, scarcely daring to look at the future, or to speculate for an instant upon what was next to happen.”

During the session of the day on which Mirabeau died, Talleyrand rose in the Assembly and said : “I went yesterday to the house of Mirabeau ; a great concourse filled it ; and I entered it with a feeling still more painful than the public grief. He asked for me. I will not pause to mention the emotion which several things he said excited in me. Mirabeau was still at this moment a public man, and it is as such that the last words which fell from him may be considered a

precious relic. Concentrating all his interest upon the labors of this Assembly, he learnt that the order of the day was the law of succession. He evinced his regret at not being able to be present at the debate, and it was with the same regret that he appeared to meet the approach of death. But as his opinion on the question now before us is written, he has confided it to me, in order that I may read it to you in his name. I will fulfill this duty ; each applause which this opinion must draw from you will find an echo in every heart. The author of this opinion is no more ; I bring you his last labors, and such is the union of his feelings, and his thoughts, both equally devoted to the common cause, that in listening to it, you are present, as it were, at his last sigh." He then proceeded to read Mirabeau's discourse, which was listened to in the most profound silence, and was received at its conclusion with the liveliest acclamations.

Talleyrand's labors, as a legislator, in connection with the Revolution, in the production of which he had been so zealous an agent, terminated with the dissolution of the National Assembly. He was elected under the Legislative Assembly, one of the Directors of the department of the Seine ; and a civil career opened before him under the most favorable auspices.

About this time, however, the metropolitan see of Paris having become vacant, a report was spread that it was the object of the Bishop of Autun's ambition ; it was even asserted that he had solicited his place in the department of Paris, solely with a view of facilitating his design. It was, moreover, said that he was addicted to gambling, which was true, for gambling was ever one of his ruling passions. Enormous winnings were talked of ; they amounted, according to public

report, to more than six hundred thousand francs. As the public press was at that time perfectly free, and did not disdain any species of scandal likely to feed the malignant curiosity of the public, Talleyrand was loudly accused, and the attacks upon him became so virulent and constant, that he thought it necessary to answer them, which he did by publishing the following letter :

“ I have just read in the *Journal de Paris*, that I am pointed out as the future Bishop of Paris. In seeing my name joined to that of M. l'Abbé Sièyes, I could not but feel proud of the competition. Some electors have, indeed, intimated to me their wishes, and I think it my duty to publish my answer.

“ No ! I shall not accept the honor which my fellow-citizens would deign to confer upon me. * * * * * I here announce to those who, fearing what they call my ambition, unceasingly calumniate me, that I shall never conceal the offices to which I may have the pride to aspire. As a consequence of those false alarms spread on the approach of the nomination to the vacant bishopric of Paris, it has been reported that I have gained between six and seven hundred thousand francs in the gambling houses. Now that the fear of seeing me raised to the dignity of Bishop of Paris is dispelled, I trust I shall be believed. This is the exact truth : I have now, in the course of two months, not in gambling houses, but in company, and at the chess-club, which has almost always been looked upon from the nature of its institution as a private house, gained about thirty thousand francs. I here assert the precise fact, without seeking to justify it. The love of play has become unfortunately prevalent in society. I never was fond of it, and therefore reproach myself the more for not having sufficiently resisted the temptation. I blame myself

as a private individual, and still more as a legislator, convinced that the virtues of liberty are as severe as its principles ; that a regenerated people ought to reconquer all the severity of moral virtue, and that the attention of the National Assembly should be directed to those baneful excesses so prejudicial to society, as they tend to cause the inequality of fortune, which the laws ought to endeavor to prevent by every means compatible with respect for property, that eternal foundation of social justice. I therefore condemn myself, and feel it a duty incumbent upon me to own it ; for as the reign of truth is arrived, the most honest way of repairing our errors, whilst we must renounce the impossible honor of committing none, is to have the courage to avow them."

Talleyrand's position, especially in his ecclesiastical relations, had now become unpleasant, and positively difficult. He was exposed to attacks on every side, and was embroiled with the clergy of his own diocese, who entered into a sharp controversy with him in consequence of the political course he had pursued. In the midst of all other troubles, there arrived a brief from the Pope, excommunicating "His Reverence of Autun," unless within forty days he repented of his many sins against the papal church. Having declined being a candidate for the archbishopric of Paris, he now seized upon the long coveted opportunity to throw off the clerical yoke entirely, by resigning the bishopric of Autun, and retiring into civil life. When the brief of the Pope, threatening excommunication was received, he wrote to a friend in these jocose terms :—" You know the news ; come and console me, and sup with me. Everybody is going to refuse me fire and water ; we shall therefore have nothing this evening but iced meats, and we shall drink nothing but wine." It would have been hard,

indeed, in Paris, at that time, to make an act of excommunication severe in practice against any one, and especially against the witty and sociable ex-bishop. The anathema of the Pope was to him a dispensation from an employment ever repulsive to his feelings.

CHAPTER VI.

Entrance on diplomatic life—Departs for England—Interview with Pitt—Reception of the French legation by the English—Countess de Flahaut—Their singular acquaintance, and subsequent intimacy—His return to Paris, and opportune escape—Execution of the king, and Reign of Terror—Talleyrand's embarrassed situation in England—Writes a book, but does not publish—Is impeached before the Convention, and his name placed on the list of emigrants—His Intrigues in England—Ordered to quit England—Engages in Commercial Speculations—Singular Occurrence in New York—His Political Intrigues in the United States—His Poverty—Efforts for his Return—His Petition—Chénier Pleads for him—His Recall—His Opinion of Madame de Staël Witticisms on Madame Necker—Anecdote of Madame de Staël.

AN occasion now arose for Talleyrand to appear in a new character—that of a diplomatist; in which character he afterward gained his world-wide fame. He was selected to conduct an important mission to England. As the members of the Assembly had most unwisely bound themselves, before their dissolution, not to hold office under the new constitution, he could not accept the appointment of ambassador. The Girondist ministry, however, were so persuaded of the benefit of his talents in the mission, that they contrived to elude the difficulty by giving the title of ambassador to M. de Chauvelin, a young man without abilities or importance, leaving the actual functions of the legation to be discharged by Talleyrand. During the journey the nominal ambassador manifested so much delight at his high honors, and in so childish a manner, that Talleyrand remarked to their travelling companions—“He is like a school-boy, going home for the holidays.” He left

Paris, on the 5th of January, 1792, specially accredited to the Court of St. James, to negotiate a national alliance.

The uncertain state of political affairs in France, and the violent disagreement between parties, left the English government little disposed to contract a close union with France. But a strict neutrality in case of war, which, at the moment, was the policy of England, was not difficult to be obtained. In this Talleyrand fully succeeded. The object of the continental powers, at that epoch, was to suppress the revolutionary movement in France, by the combined operation of their own armies and the navies of England. This object was frustrated by a declaration of neutrality, which Talleyrand procured from the English Cabinet. Such was the negotiation with which this illustrious diplomate commenced his career.

On the occasion of this visit to the British metropolis, he was, as might be expected, coldly received by the Tory party, who then had almost a monopoly of office. He was, however, cordially received by Fox and Sheridan, with whom he contracted a friendship, and left among the Whig party recollections which were revived, when, at the end of another half century, he was called on to fill the office of French Ambassador at London, and bring the two nations into that close alliance, which, in all the political changes which he witnessed and in which he participated, had ever been a favorite object of his policy.

Lamartine gives a fine description of Talleyrand's appearance and capacities at the time of his mission to London. "M. de Talleyrand made his *début* at this period in those political intrigues and negotiations which he has since directed and contrived, without intermission, during more than half a century, and which he only resigned with life. He was then only thirty-eight years of age, and his fine delicate face revealed in his blue

eyes a luminous, yet frigid understanding, whose perspicacity was never dimmed by sensibility. The elegance of his figure was scarcely injured by a slight lameness; but this infirmity seemed like a voluntary hesitation, and he knew how to convert into graces even his personal defects. This physical deformity had prevented his entering the army, and he possessed no weapon, save his mind, to make himself a name in the world; he had, therefore, enriched, polished, and sharpened it for the combats of ambition, or the conquests of intelligence. His voice was grave, soft, tender, and seemed to carry with it the conviction that he was the man who would gain the most readily the ear of all powers, nations, tribunes, women, emperors, and kings. A sardonic smile, with which was mixed a visible desire of fascinating, played around his lips; this smile seemed to indicate the secret purpose of deceiving men, while he charmed or governed them."

Talleyrand's first interview with Pitt put his diplomatic skill to a severe trial. The English minister was cold and haughty in demeanor on all occasions, and was watching the French Revolution with a distrustful eye. Talleyrand sought by all arts of persuasion to accomplish the much-desired alliance. He described with great enthusiasm the high honor which would be accorded to that statesman, who should accomplish the cordial reconciliation and union of the two nations. Pitt manifested indifference and incredulity, while his reply offered but slight encouragement to the young diplomatist. "This minister will be a fortunate man; I fain would be a minister at that period." "Is it possible," replied Talleyrand, "that Mr. Pitt believes this period so remote?" "That depends," said the cautious premier, "on the moment when your revolution is finished, and your constitution made available."

Talleyrand had known Mr. Pitt in his youth, during a short stay which the latter had made in France, at the residence of his uncle, the Archbishop of Rheims. He had there spent several weeks with him in a kind of familiarity. During the interview we have just related, the only one he had with that minister, he thought that it was Mr. Pitt's place to recollect this—for which reason he did not mention it. On the other hand, Pitt, who did not wish for any renewal of intimacy, did not even allude to the circumstance, nor speak to him about his uncle.

An anecdote quoted from the recollections of Dumont, may illustrate the state of feeling toward the French existing at the time among the English, and will also show the self-command, for which Talleyrand was remarkable.

“I recollect,” says he, “one day during the fine season, shortly after the arrival of M. de Talleyrand and M. de Chauvelin, when Ranelagh was quite in vogue and much frequented, that having dined at Chauvelin's, it was proposed we should spend the remainder of the evening at this place of general resort. It consists of one large round room, with open boxes similar to those at the theatres, and the orchestra is placed in the centre. The company walked continually round and took refreshments, when so inclined, in the boxes. On our arrival we heard a general buzz of voices saying, ‘There is the French embassy.’ Curiosity, in which there seemed a mixture of kindly feeling, immediately directed every eye upon our battalion, for we were eight or ten in number. In a very short time we could plainly perceive that we should have the promenade to ourselves, for, as we advanced, every one drew back, right and left, as if we had brought contagion with us. Our battalion now became the object of general remark, it being completely insulated from the crowd, and forming a clear space

wherever it came. One or two courageous persons spoke to M. de Talleyrand and M. de Chauvelin. A few moments after, we discovered a man wandering about in perfect solitude; he was repulsed by every one, but from other motives. This was the Duke of Orleans, whom every one shunned with special care. Tired at length with being the objects of so much annoying attention, we separated for a moment. I mingled with the crowd, where I heard several persons express themselves in their own way respecting the French embassy; and shortly after we retired, remarking that M. de Talleyrand did not seem in the least affected or disconcerted, while M. de Chauvelin appeared much vexed."

During the period of his residence in London, Talleyrand was in a singular manner brought into correspondence with a lady, whose admiration for him had an important influence upon his fortunes at a very critical juncture. It is maintained by some writers that the intimacy commenced long before this period, and they quote from many letters which purport to have passed between them. The peculiar interest of their relation to each other commences at this point, and consequently the account, as given by Talleyrand's private secretary, is here inserted as the most reliable.

"The next link in these voluntary bonds was that woven by beauty and talent combined. Young as he was, he was already too old to be captivated by wit alone. The *liaison* to which I now refer has made much noise in the world, and were I attempting to represent the prince, not as he really is, but as I should wish to find him, I might gloss over the one spot of this kind which has darkened his career, or endeavor to wipe off the reproach which he has incurred; but I will give you the facts as they really were, leaving you to make your own comments.

“It would appear that, contrary to the usual theory, the fascination entered neither by the eye nor by the ear ; it was the result of fanatical admiration of his great powers of mind. This lady was married, at the age of fifteen, to the Count de Flahaut, who was fifty-eight. It was not till after the death of her husband, who perished on the scaffold in '92, that she became acquainted with M. de Talleyrand, having been in active correspondence with him during the whole period of his exile, and having saved him, by her timely information of the state of feelings and parties in Paris, from acting with precipitation, and from yielding to the treacherous invitations of false friends, who advised his return to certain destruction. He had received, for many months, regular intimation of all that was passing in the capital. At first he had paid but little attention to these anonymous epistles, but, by degrees, as he beheld the realization of all the previsions put forth by the unknown writer, he took confidence, and resolved to abide by the counsels expressed in the mysterious letters, and so blindly did he rely upon the correctness of the information contained therein, that, being twice upon the point of re-crossing the channel, he twice deferred the step in obedience to the advice of his anonymous friend, and each time had cause for rejoicing that he had thus acted. ✓

“Madame Champion, at that time, like himself, an exile in London, was his only confidant in this affair, and to her alone did he communicate his embarrassment touching the author of the correspondence. I have spoken to you before about the singular fatality which has sometimes attended upon the steps of M. de Talleyrand, and which must be attributable to his surprising memory and great powers of observation. In this instance did he once more experience its influence, and by its

aid alone, I have often heard him declare, did he discover the name and station of his benefactor.

“He had one day been speaking with Madame Champion upon the subject, and in his perplexity was enumerating the relations whose affection would be likely thus to render them vigilant and clear-sighted ; she had called over successively every degree of relationship—aunt, uncle, cousin, brother. But to every new suggestion, M. de Talleyrand discovered some well-founded objection, until, at last, Madame Champion cried, laughingly, ‘Well, it is evident, then, you have, as in the good old fairy tales, some wise and powerful *Marraine*’ (God-mother). M. de Talleyrand shook his head. ‘Alas, Madame, neither *Marraine* nor *Filleul*’ (God-son), returned he, quoting from Beaumarchais’s ‘*Figaro*,’ and the subject dropped.

“It was soon after this that the unknown friend advised his return to Paris, and, as he had hitherto found benefit in following the counsels thus conveyed, he hesitated not in this instance. Upon his arrival in the capital, he found everything in the state in which he had been led to expect it, and his greeting was such as to make him rejoice that he had not lingered in the execution of the step suggested by his well-wisher. After this, he was indefatigable in his researches. He kept the adventure no secret, but told it in every circle he frequented ; hoping thereby to obtain some clue to the discovery of his benefactor. He felt sure that the letters were written by a female, not from the hand-writing, nor from any peculiar refinement of style, but from the singular mixture of boldness and timidity which was evident in every line. The deep interest expressed for his safety, and yet the kind of awkward fear lest this interest should be exaggerated in the mind of the reader ; in short, whether it was that the conviction of M. de Talleyrand

led him to believe that such disinterested sentiment could emanate from none but a woman, I know not, but it is certain that never did his suspicion light on an individual of the other sex, while, from the very moment of his return to Paris, did he begin to look around among the women of his acquaintance, and to fix suspicion upon each, until further research displayed the futility of his surmises.

“He had already been for some time at Paris without being able to obtain a clue whereby to form any probable conjectures upon the subject, when, one evening, being by chance at a *soirée* given by Barras, his attention was attracted to a young lady whom he had at first observed with that languid indifference with which one is apt to survey a stranger, where there is nothing in particular to arrest the attention. M. de Talleyrand had been standing, half hid by a curtain, in a recess of one of the windows, talking to Count Réal, and the lady had left her seat at the further end of the room, to take one close beside him. He had paid but slight attention to this circumstance, and after the departure of Réal, went to join the group of talkers assembled in the doorway.

“He had not been here many moments, before he observed the same pale lady in deep black move stealthily from the place which she had occupied, and where she had been listening with glistening eyes and heaving bosom to the various questions of interest which he had been debating, and again seat herself close to his side. M. de Talleyrand, struck with the pertinacity with which she seemed to follow his movements, was naturally led to examine her with more attention. She was of small stature, and delicate in feature, with eyes of most peculiar lustre, and the sable weeds in which she was attired added to the interest inspired by her youth and pallid countenance.

'Who is that lady?' asked M. de Talleyrand, abruptly, of the person with whom he was conversing. The lady blushed deep as scarlet. It was evident that she had heard the question. 'She is the widow of the Count de Flahaut,' was the reply; but it conveyed no association to the memory of M. de Talleyrand, and he shook his head, endeavoring to recall to mind the name at the old court, when suddenly his informant continued, 'You surely must remember her marriage? It is not so very long ago. She was a *Demoiselle Filletul*, a name of no importance—second-rate provincial squires.'

"The word acted like magic upon the whole nervous system of M. de Talleyrand. By some unaccountable chain of thought the laughing observation of Madame Champion recurred to his mind, and he inquired more fully concerning the lady. Everything he heard tended to confirm the idea which had so strongly taken possession of his mind with regard to her identity with his unknown protector. His first step, of course, was to get himself presented to her. And how could he, with his tact and observation, fail to perceive the strong emotion visible in her manner of acknowledging his attentions, and the faltering, unsteady voice in which she answered his seemingly careless, though strictly polite address? He steadfastly avoided, however, in this first interview, any allusion to his journey to London or to his return—he was fearful of creating embarrassment—fearful of exciting alarm or suspicion of his real motive for seeking her acquaintance, and he was aware of the necessity for prudence and discretion. He dispatched a note the next morning to inquire at what hour he might be permitted to present himself at the lady's house. This was done designedly.

"The handwriting of the few lines of cold politeness which he received in answer, confirmed at once the bold hope he had

entertained ; and he hurried to the appointment, with what feelings of tenderness and gratitude may well be imagined. In all the conversations which I have held with him upon the subject, he has never been led into betraying the particulars of this interview—no one can tell how he first broke to the lady the discovery he had made, nor how she received his warm and trembling thanks ; but from that hour her spirit had found its master, and bowed to his own, held captive and enslaved.

“The faith and devotion of the fair young countess were never belied through the long years of trial and vicissitude which followed, and instances are recorded of her risking hopes of fame and fortune, nay, her very life itself, to aid the prince in the struggle against destiny which he had so bravely undertaken. She twice made the journey to England alone, without protection, going round by way of Holland, to serve him, and when, by the sale of her first novel in England, she had realized a small sum of money, it was shared with him, who, she declared, to the latest hour of her life, had more right to it than she herself, for he it was who had caused her to exercise the talent which Heaven had bestowed, and the existence of which she would never have known, had it not been for the taste and cultivation which he had imparted.

“Their double marriage was a double error, which has never been satisfactorily accounted for, and which must remain a secret. In the case of the lady, it brought rank and affluence, but neither ease of mind nor happiness, while in that of the prince, which followed soon after, the consequences were humiliation and disappointment.”

Having returned to Paris a short time before the 10th of August, he witnessed the catastrophe of that memorable day. This, and the terrible proceedings which immediately succeeded it, inspired him with the strongest desire to quit the scene

of events which he could neither approve, nor effectually oppose. Being unable or unwilling to associate himself with the party of the emigration, of whom he had already incurred the hatred, he solicited of Danton, then a member of the provisional executive Council, a passport, to return to London, and to act there in a semi-official capacity, to prevent a rupture between England and the new government at Paris. Here, although not charged with any real functions, yet, desiring to be useful to his country, at least by his counsels, if not by his acts, he addressed to it rules for its foreign policy, marked by most prudent and enlightened moderation. On the new republic he endeavored to impress the policy of showing itself disinterested in its triumphs. He showed that the territory of France was sufficient for her greatness, and for the future development of her industry and wealth; that her interest as well as her honor was engaged, not to attempt acquisition by conquest; that every addition she might make to her actual territory would be a new source of danger to her, by raising against her a swarm of enemies, and a stain upon her glory, by belying the solemn declarations made by her at the commencement of the Revolution; and in fine, that her policy should be directed, not to the acquisition of territory, but to the emancipation of other nations.

Talleyrand's situation now became very embarrassing. Cut off from means of support from home, he was obliged to live quite frugally; and to do this even, he was compelled to sell his library. A friend, Ex-President Beaumetz, a gentleman of some literary acquirements, was his companion in his retirement. They had together composed a memoir of the life of the Duke of Orleans; Talleyrand furnishing the facts, and Beaumetz performing the work of composition. Their necessities became

so urgent, that they had entered into negotiations for the publication of this production ; but Talleyrand reflected on what might be the future consequences of such a work on his own fortunes, should he ever return to France, and therefore, persuaded his friend to suppress it.

The tempest of passion and anarchy now swept over France. The king executed, the nobility banished and proscribed, the party which embraced the men of moderation and true patriotism dissolved, the most cruel tyranny possible the chosen means of administration on the part of an incompetent government, naught remained which could be deemed a home to Talleyrand. But his country had not merely lost its attractions—it became positively hostile, refusing to receive him back. Some letters found at the Tuileries, were considered by the Convention as implicating Talleyrand in intrigues with the king and the royalist party, and a decree of impeachment forthwith passed. Talleyrand, on receiving information of this fact, addressed a letter to the Convention, in which he fully exculpated himself, showing that an unjust construction was put upon the language and the facts. Yet his defence was not successful. His name was placed upon the fatal list, and he was banished from his country. Nor would England any longer shelter him.

There is reason to think that the passage of the alien law was effected by Mr. Pitt's ministry, principally for the purpose of obliging Talleyrand to leave the country. He was the first victim of any prominence under its operation, and, in fact, but few were made to suffer from it. It was charged upon the wily diplomatist that his proscription by the Assembly was published at his own request ; in order that under the name of an emigrant he might be allowed to remain in England, and thus

secretly render aid to the revolutionary government. This seems improbable ; for Talleyrand certainly never sympathized with the radical democrats, at this time in power ; else, when expelled from England, why did he not return to France ? If willing to serve his government in England, would he not, when his attempts in this direction were hindered, have been willing to do the same at home, where, on the supposition of a cordial fellowship with the regicides, honors certainly awaited him ?

That he was deeply engaged, in connection with the opposition or reform party in England, in plotting against the ministry of Pitt, there can be but little doubt. Though condemning that series of violent acts, which finally led to the execution of the king, he had been too prominent an actor in the opening scenes of the Revolution, to be classed now, in the view of a Tory Administration, with the royalist party. He knew that destruction was certain if he should return to France. Pitt suspected and feared his influence in British politics. No resource was left, but to place the ocean between himself and his distracted country, and practice the virtue of patience, which he always claimed, and with justice, he possessed in perfection. He fled to the United States.

An act of female heroism and maternal devotion, on the part of a relative of Talleyrand, is worthy of record here, as we are passing through the period when the sufferings of the French of all classes reached their height. The young and beautiful Countess Archambaut de Perigord, the wife of Talleyrand's brother, even more distinguished by loftiness of soul than by antiquity of descent, had, like most of her friends of rank, fled from France in company with her husband. In her place of exile she learned that a decree of the Convention confiscated the property of the emigrants. She immediately resolved that

her name should be no longer upon the fatal list. She returned to France, against all the remonstrances and entreaties of her friends ; that, at the sacrifice of herself, her children should not be deprived of their maternal inheritance. On her arrival she appeared before a revolutionary tribunal, and after a short imprisonment was tried and condemned to death. "The last drop of the blood of the Sullys was shed by the revolutionary axe, but the estate of Rosny was preserved for her children."

No country in Europe offered an asylum to Talleyrand. He was more unfortunate in this respect than most of the exiles. He, therefore, directed his course, with hurried preparations, toward America. Respecting the portion of his life passed in this land of his exile there is very little information to be obtained. His situation was such that he was obliged to turn his attention to the work of repairing his shattered fortune. The principal period of his sojourn was spent in the cities of New York and Philadelphia ; though he performed one tour at least into the interior of the States of Pennsylvania and New York, then just emerging from its wilderness condition. He visited settlements of his countrymen in the vallies of the Susquehanna and Chenango rivers, and penetrated as far as the little village then springing up on the border of the romantic lake of Otsego, since rendered classic by some of the best of the romances of Cooper.

He himself relates one incident of his sojourn in America, which occurred while he resided in New York. His friend Beaumetz, who was still his companion in exile, had a melancholy connection with the incident. Talleyrand made this relation during a conversation at his château on the subject of "second sight."

"Somnambulism, and the waking sleep, might account for the origin of such a wild belief," said one of the company.

"Or the faculty of fixing the mind with straining energy on one point," said another.

"Or, perhaps the sudden light—the quick, vivid flash, which reveals to some strong and powerful minds the *Possible*, the *True*," said Talleyrand.

"I remember," continued he, "upon one occasion having been gifted for one single instant, with this unknown and nameless power. I know not to this moment whence it came ; it has never once returned ; and yet, upon that one occasion it saved my life ; without that sudden and mysterious inspiration, I should not now be here to tell the tale. I had freighted a ship in concert with my friend Beaumetz. He was a good fellow, Beaumetz, with whom I had ever lived on the most intimate terms ; and, in those stormy times, when it needed not only friendship to bind men together, but almost godlike courage to dare to show that friendship, I could not but prize most highly all his bold and loyal demonstrations of kindness and attachment to me. I had not a single reason to doubt his friendship ; on the contrary, he had given me on several occasions most positive proofs of his sincere devotion to my interests and well-being. We had fled from France together, we had arrived at New York together, and together we had lived in perfect harmony during our stay there. So, after having resolved upon improving the little money that was left us by speculation, it was still in partnership and together that we freighted a small vessel for India, trusting all to the goodly chance which had befriended us in our escape from danger and from death, to venture once

more together to brave the storms and perils of a yet longer and more adventurous voyage.

“Everything was embarked for our departure ; bills were all paid and farewells all taken, and we were waiting for a fair wind with most eager expectation—being prepared to embark at any hour of the day or night, in obedience to the warning of the captain. This state of uncertainty seemed to irritate the temper of poor Beaumetz to an extraordinary degree, and, unable to remain quietly at home, he hurried to and from the city, with an eager, restless activity which at times excited my astonishment, for he had ever been remarkable for great calmness and placidity of temper.

“One day, he entered our lodging, evidently laboring under great excitement, although commanding himself to appear calm. I was engaged at the moment writing letters to Europe, and, looking over my shoulder, he said, with forced gayety, ‘What need to waste time in penning those letters ? they will never reach their destination. Come with me, and let us take a turn on the Battery ; perhaps the wind may be chopping round ; we may be nearer our departure than we imagine.’

“The day was very fine, although the wind was blowing hard, and I suffered myself to be persuaded. Beaumetz, I remembered afterward, displayed an unusual officiousness in aiding me to close my desk and put away my papers, handing me, with hurried eagerness, my hat and cane, and doing other little services to quicken my departure, which at the time I attributed to the restless desire for change, the love of activity, with which he seemed to have been devoured during the whole period of our delay.

“We walked through the crowded streets, to the Battery.

He had seized my arm, and hurried me along, seemingly in eager haste to advance. When we had arrived on the broad esplanade, the glory then, as now, of the city of New York, Beaumetz quickened his step yet more, until we arrived close to the water's edge. He talked loud and quickly, admiring in energetic terms the beauty of the scenery, the Brooklyn Heights, the shady groves of the island, the ships riding at anchor, and the busy scene on the peopled wharf; when suddenly he paused in his mad, incoherent discourse, for I had freed my arm from his grasp, and stood immovable before him. Staying his wild and rapid steps, I fixed my eyes upon his face. *He turned aside, cowed and dismayed.* 'Beaumetz,' I shouted, '*you mean to murder me—you intend to throw me from the height into the sea below. Deny it, monster, if you can!*'

"The maniac stared at me for a moment, but I took especial care not to avert my gaze from his countenance, and he quailed beneath it. He stammered a few incoherent words, and strove to pass me, but I barred his passage with extended arms. He looked vacantly right and left, and then flung himself upon my neck and burst into tears. 'Tis true—'tis true, my friend. The thought has haunted me day and night, like a flash from the lurid fire of hell. It was for this I brought you here. Look, you stand within a foot of the edge of the parapet—in another instant, the work would have been done!'

"The demon had left him; his eye was still unsettled, and the white foam stood in bubbles on his parched lips; but he was no longer tossed by the same mad excitement under which he had been laboring so long, for he suffered me to lead him home without a single word. A few days' repose and silence, bleeding and abstinence, completely restored him to his former self, and, what is most extraordinary, the circumstance was

never mentioned between us. My fate was at work. It was during those few days of watching by the bedside of poor Beaumetz, that I received the letters from France which announced to me the revocation of the decree which had sent me a wanderer to America. The Directory had relented, and I was invited to return with all speed. I sought not to resist the appeal, and at once decided on leaving Beaumetz to prosecute our speculation alone, and on returning to Paris immediately.

“The blow was cruel to poor Beaumetz, who was fully persuaded, I have no doubt, that it was in dread of another attack on his part that I had now the wish to leave him. No argument I could make use of, no assurances of unchanged friendship, could shake his opinion, and our parting was a most stormy and painful one. I made over to him my interest in the ship which we had freighted together, and he departed for India, while I bent my course once more toward my *belle France*.

“Once more in a position to assist my friends, my first thought was of Beaumetz, and one of my first acts was the cancelling of his death-warrant. I wrote to him to announce the joyful news, addressing my letter to the merchant at Calcutta to whom he had been recommended. In due time, receiving no answer, I wrote again; but my letters were returned, with the information that the ship, which had sailed from New York some months before, and of which M. Beaumetz was supercargo, had not arrived, that no tidings had been received of its fate, and that great fears were entertained of its total loss. The apprehension was justified, *for from that day to this no tidings have ever been received of the ship, nor, alas! of my poor friend Beaumetz!*”

During his residence in America the conduct of Talleyrand is

represented as having been quite inconsistent and uncertain in its political bearings. He was charged with wearing the white cockade, the badge of loyalty to the Bourbons, and it is observed that he could find no better argument against the accusation than to deny formally having worn it at Hamburg—a species of argument not very conclusive. Exiles, both from among the old nobility, and from among the revolutionists who had been in the Constituent Assembly, met in this land of refuge. Talleyrand's position among them was not free from embarrassment. None could tell but what from the changes of every month the restoration of royalty might rise upon the ruins of revolution, for terror and anarchy soon wear out the patience of the most servile nation. In a letter to Madame de Genlis, Talleyrand wrote, "I bestow but little thought on my enemies; I occupy myself in re-establishing my fortune."

To define a course for so uncertain a future was a task difficult even for his sagacity and wisdom. The position he should assume in America would affect his future standing with parties at home. As it was, the conduct he exhibited in reference to public affairs was judicious in the light of policy. As American politics at this period took a decided hue from the public acts of France during the few preceding years, the presence of a man, who, like Talleyrand, had mingled his influence so prominently in those acts, could not be unnoticed. He was supposed to be deeply engaged in those efforts, which were made by many celebrated American politicians, to compel the administration of Washington to adopt a line of policy more favorable to the progress of republican principles in France and in Europe. At the time of his arrival in America the important commercial treaty between the United States and Great Britain, consummated finally through the skill and per-

severance of John Jay, was in process of negotiation. He is represented as making use of all his well-known dexterity, diplomatic talent, and social influence to delay, if he could not prevent, the conclusion of the treaty. Nor did he conceal his vexation at his failure to defeat the project. It is said, that in the circles of Philadelphia he loudly asserted that the Americans, sooner or later, would repent of their imprudent obstinacy. The measures of the Directory a few years after, by which American commerce suffered so severely and unjustly, and in which Talleyrand, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, had without doubt, a hand, have been deemed by some a retaliation on his part for the refusal of the Americans to follow his advice in their foreign relations.

It has already been seen that Talleyrand had ventured into commercial speculations for the improvement of his fortunes in the land of his exile. An anecdote, asserted to be authentic, reveals the fact, that at this period his condition was at one time actually and painfully destitute. In Philadelphia he resided in a small attic-room of a house in Goddard's Court, between Front and Second streets. He was very poor; all his furniture consisting of one arm-chair, and a straw cot bed; and his means of subsistence being derived from some of the French residents. Opposite Christ Church, in Second street, was a small store kept by an individual, since a wealthy merchant, where Talleyrand and his companion, a French general, frequently stopped on their walks. One cold morning in December, Talleyrand came into this store, and offered his watch in pledge for a small sum of money, as he was starving and without fire. The money was given him, and he was referred to a watchmaker, who lived nearly opposite, to dispose of his watch.

Talleyrand's name was on the list of the proscribed emigrants, and the sentence of banishment was in force against him even after the fall of Robespierre. When this welcome event gave promise of better days for terrified France, he addressed a petition to the Convention, demanding that his name should be erased from the list, on the ground that he had never in fact emigrated, having been sent in an official capacity to England, and been prevented from returning by the violent and unjust proceedings of the Terrorists. An answer to this petition was long delayed. Meanwhile, however, influential friends were active in his behalf. And foremost among them was Madame de Stäel. This distinguished woman, to whom Talleyrand found it difficult afterward to be as warm in his gratitude as he should have been, associated with herself in this undertaking another lady, more retiring, yet more fascinating than herself, Madame de la Bouchardie. Their united influence was exerted upon Chénier, the poet and dramatist, and an ardent republican. Madame de Stäel also had much influence with Barras, which she exerted most kindly and zealously, in behalf of the exile.

The petition of Talleyrand was in these words:—

PHILADELPHIA, 28th *Prarial*, Year III.
of the French Republic.

Maurice Talleyrand Perigord, formerly Bishop of Autun, quitted France on the 10th of September, 1792, provided with a passport from Government with orders to proceed to London. The object of this mission was to prevent a rupture between France and England. Circumstances did not allow Talleyrand's efforts to be crowned with success; but the envoys charged with the mission from France to England will bear witness to the true patriotic zeal which Talleyrand constantly displayed for the Republic.

During the period of the mission itself, on the 5th of December, a de-

creed of accusation was passed against him; and this decree was founded upon so frivolous a pretence, that the committees to whom the drawing up of the accusation was entrusted, were never able to find materials sufficient to compose it, and it no doubt would have been repealed had it not been for untoward circumstances which thwarted the ends of justice.

Was it possible for Talleyrand to return without being made acquainted with the heads of the act of accusation thus decreed against him? Was he to constitute himself a prisoner, at the very time when the prisons were violated? The National Assembly, while it deplored, had found it impossible to prevent the massacres committed in them. It had thus restored to each individual his natural right of defending himself. And can there exist a natural right more evident than that of flying from those prisons in which massacres had taken place, and where there was no guarantee against their again occurring? The British Government, being perfectly well acquainted with Talleyrand's patriotism, had availed themselves of the power they had acquired from the alien bill, and ordered him to leave England in three days.

Talleyrand proceeded to the United States, where he still resides, until he receives permission to return to his country, and is acknowledged worthy by his principles and opinions to join his fellow-citizens. Talleyrand represents that the quality of contumacious, and that of emigrant cannot be united in the same person; that the flight caused by the decree of accusation, and consequently an absence prolonged through this motive, can have no connection with the voluntary departure which constitutes the crime of emigration; that the National Convention has recognized those who since the 31st of May had been prosecuted by warrants of arrest, denunciations, etc. as authorized to reappear. Talleyrand, accused by a decree since the 2d of September, 1792, is exactly in the same predicament; for the prisons were at that period what the whole of France afterward became under the tyranny of Robespierre, and it would have been an act of madness to have constituted himself a prisoner, in the midst of the troubles to which the Republic was then a prey.

Ch. MAURICE TALLEYRAND PERIGORD.

Chénier, long appealed to by his female friends, finally appeared in the tribune, and thus sustained the petition of Talleyrand. The day before, a decree had been passed authorizing M. de Montesquiou to return to France. The orator took his text from this circumstance, and said :

“The equitable decree which you yesterday rendered in favor of the *ex-General Montesquiou*, imposes upon me the duty of claiming a similar one for a man whose distinguished talents and the services he rendered as a member of the Constituent Assembly, will place him among the founders of liberty. This man is Talleyrand de Périgord, formerly Bishop of Autun.

“Our different ministers in Paris bear witness to the excellence of his conduct, and to the value of his services. I have in my possession a memoir of which a duplicate may have been found in the papers of Danton. This memoir, dated on the 25th of November, 1792, proves that he was occupied in consolidating the republic when, without any previous report and without notice, a decree of accusation was issued against him. The act of accusation is still to be drawn up.

“At the same time that Robespierre and Marat proscribed him in France, Pitt proscribed him in England. It is in the heart of a republic, in the country of Benjamin Franklin, that he has contemplated the imposing sight of a free nation, and awaited the time when France should possess judges, and not assassins ; a republic and not a constituted anarchy.

“I claim Talleyrand of you. I claim him in the name of his numerous services—I claim him in the name of the national equity—I claim him in the name of the republic, which he can serve by his talents ; in the name of the hatred which you bear

the emigrants, whose victim he would be as well as ourselves, if cowards could obtain a triumph."

"He is not an emigrant," added Boissy: "if he had returned to France after the decree against him, he would inevitably have been sacrificed, and you would have had the loss of one more man of genius to lament. Since you would have given your tears to his memory, why should you not be just to himself and to his talents, which may be rendered so useful to the Republic? I move that the decree for his recall be put to the vote." The resolution was carried by acclamation, on the 4th of September, 1795, and was expressed in the following flattering terms:—

"Citizen Talleyrand Périgord having powerfully seconded the revolution, by his noble conduct as a citizen and an ecclesiastic, and the motives which have made him remain out of the country being duly appreciated, he is hereby authorized to return to France."

Talleyrand's ingratitude toward Madame de Stäel, may appear inexcusable—it certainly was not in any way creditable. But in extenuation, it may well be borne in mind, that she possessed an excess of that susceptibility, which made her overvalue her success, and never cease bringing her services to the memory of the person obliged. He had never the same high opinion of her which the world professed. He thought her style pedantic and affected, and would complain, when any of her compositions were read to him, of their total want of nature and of true coloring. He was accustomed to say, that those who read the writings might fairly boast of knowing the writer, for that nothing could more resemble Madame de Stäel herself than the false, exaggerated sentiments and superficial eru-

dition of her compositions. Of her mother, Madame Necker, he once remarked "She has every virtue, and but one fault, and that is, she is insupportable!" The good lady never forgave his comparing her "to a frigate riding at anchor, and receiving a salute from a friendly power," when she stood upon her own hearth-rug at the Hotel Necker, upon the occasion of her weekly receptions; her ample proportions obscuring the light of the fire, as with pinched-up features and prudish smile, she listened to the compliments of the academicians, whom she assembled but for the delight of her own vanity.

He related to his friends an amusing adventure of Madame de Stäel herself, in which he was a party. It occurred upon her first entrance into Parisian Society, before the Revolution, at a rural fête, given by Madame Helvetius in the garden of her château. His account is thus repeated by one of these friends:—

"On her first appearance at the réunion, Madame Helvetius had, of course, with well-bred courtesy, paid her most particular attention, but having other guests to welcome, had left her after a while, to superintend the distribution of the amusements about the grounds. Once or twice she had passed Madame de Stäel sitting gloomily on the bench where she had left her, and at last sent Talleyrand to keep her company; but Talleyrand had tact enough to know that, being himself no literary lion, he was no company for Madame de Stäel, and so immediately went in quest of society more congenial to her taste. He soon returned, in company with the Abbé Monti, whose poems were at that time the rage all over Europe, and whose coming put the fair authoress in the best of humors. Talleyrand sat down on the bench beside them, in silence, feeling himself quite extinguished by so much talent, and remained a passive listener,

anxious for improvement. The conversation was overwhelming with erudition, and then the compliments were poured forth like rain from an April sky—the abbé ‘had never reckoned upon so great an honor as that of meeting the first writer of the age;’ Madame ‘little dreamed when she arose that morning, that the day would be marked by so auspicious an event as the meeting with the abbé.’

“‘I have devoured every word that has escaped from Sappho’s pen,’ said the abbé.

“‘I cannot sleep until I read the charming odes from the Italian Tyrtæus,’” said the lady.

“‘Have you seen my last endeavor?’ said the abbé.

“‘Alas! not yet,’ sighed the lady, ‘although report speaks of it more highly than of any which have preceded it.’

“‘I have it here!’ exclaimed the abbé, eagerly drawing a small volume from his pocket. ‘Allow me to present it to you, madame; a poor homage, indeed, to so much genius, but it may prove interesting to one who has had so much success in heroic poetry.’

“‘Thanks, thank you,’ cried Madame de Stæel, seizing the little volume with every demonstration of overpowering gratitude. ‘This is indeed a treasure, and will be prized by me far beyond gold or jewels.’

“She turned over the leaves slowly, while the delighted abbé watched her with a charming self-complacency—then suddenly dropping it into her lap, she exclaimed, turning on the abbé a languid glance, ‘You were talking of heroic poetry, dear abbé; have you seen my last attempt—a dramatic scene, “l’Exilé”—a slight and poor imitation of some of your own?’

“‘I have not been so blessed as to obtain a copy,’ replied the abbé.

“‘How fortunate that I should have one in my reticule!’ said madame, hurriedly seizing the strings of the bag suspended from her arm, and drawing forth a thin volume in boards. The abbé bent low over it as she presented it, and kissing it with reverence, placed it by his side, and the conversation—that is to say, the complimenting—was continued with redoubled vigor.

“Talleyrand then departed, and did not return till the company broke up, when he found that they had both left the bench whereon they had been seated so long together, leaving, however, the ‘precious treasures,’ which they had received from each other, with so much gratitude, behind them! Talleyrand seized upon them with inexpressible delight, thinking that they would furnish matter for innocent jeering, when the loss came to be remembered by either party. But the thing was complete—they were never sought and never asked for, and he has them now in his library, and loves to show them as he tells the story of their coming into his possession.”

CHAPTER VII.

Talleyrand's return to Europe—Sojourn at Hamburg—Secret services there and at Berlin—Returns to Paris—Welcomed to society—Suspensions of politicians—Carnot's hostility—Acquaintance with Bonaparte—Addresses before the National Institute—Need of him in the government—Carnot warmly opposes his appointment—Majority appoint him Minister for Foreign Affairs—Revolution of the 18th Fructidor—Talleyrand's activity and success—Corresponds with Bonaparte in Italy—Reception of the "Conqueror of Italy" by the Directory—Talleyrand's speech on the occasion—Opinions of it—Anecdote—Celebration of the death of the King—State of the country—A picture of the Directory—Increasing tyranny—Society of Paris—Talleyrand and the coach-maker—Expedition to Egypt—Policy in relation to foreign affairs.

PERCEIVING that matters were not yet ripe for his return to Paris, Talleyrand entered Europe by way of Hamburg, where he remained for some time, watching for the favorable moment for his appearance once more on that stage where for upward of half a century he was a chief actor. In the meanwhile, he already busied himself in behalf of the Directory in his favorite pursuit of intrigue and diplomacy.

Prussia was no longer at war with the French republic. The nephew of the great Frederic, the first sovereign of Europe after the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, had just concluded peace with France. Talleyrand being reinstated in his rights of French citizen thought he might find occasion to make himself welcome to the Directory, by presenting to the Pentarchy some documents upon the state of opinion in the kingdom of Prussia and at Berlin in particular. The Directory naturally

disposed to intrigue, both from necessity and from inclination, did not refuse the assistance of a man whose dexterity was known to every one of their members, and whose talents were appreciated by most. Talleyrand was therefore entrusted with a secret mission in Prussia, bearing some resemblance to that which Mirabeau had fulfilled, three years prior to the Revolution, and still more to the equally secret mission he had himself been entrusted with in England, from the month of September, 1792, to the period of his departure for America.

During this mission he won the confidence and friendship of M. d'Hangwitz, the most influential minister in the Prussian cabinet. From this intimacy he was able to acquire certain information respecting the inclinations and intentions of Prussia toward France, and to satisfy the Directory upon the important point of the determination of the king to maintain a strict neutrality.

Before Talleyrand quitted the neighborhood of Hamburgh, he had several conferences at the house occupied by Madame de Genlis and General Valance, with Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, and other Irish patriots. The relative situation of the patriots in England and Ireland was there examined, and the means weighed by which the project could be renewed of bringing on a general insurrection in Great Britain and establishing the independence of Ireland. These conferences enabled him to acquaint the Directory through the medium of Barras, with the real feelings of the Irish; and it is well known that the Directory was perfectly willing to promote their views—a thing which after all may be looked upon as a very justifiable mode of warfare, at a time when the British government was adding fuel to the fire not yet completely extinguished in La Vendée, and taking into its pay

every one throughout Europe who chose to declare himself the enemy of France.

The Directory on receiving such precise information, gave orders to Reinhart, minister of France at Hamburgh, to make that city a sort of head-quarters for all the malcontents of England and Ireland. It became the point of communication through which the correspondence between London, Dublin, and Paris was carried on under the semblance of trading communications. General Hoche was even sent in disguise to meet Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor in Switzerland. After their interview and in consequence of it, the expedition to Bantry-Bay under General Hoche took place in December 1796. The ill success of that expedition is well known. Under Talleyrand's administration, the Directory renewed the attempt under General Humbert, but it again failed.

Such were the services which preceded his return to Paris. His arrival once more in the capital was marked by considerable sensation in both social and political circles. Vivid impressions remained upon the minds of many of the part he had played in the early history of the Revolution, and the reputation of his wit and other fine social qualities readily opened the way for his entrance into the existing heterogeneous society which filled the saloons of Paris. He soon established a connection with the Director Barras, with whom he had already corresponded in reference to the objects of his service at Hamburgh and Berlin. He was welcomed to the society which frequented the houses of Madame de Stäel, Madame Tallien and Madame Beauharnois. His intimacy with Bonaparte now also commenced; and he is said to have exerted his influence in promoting the matrimonial alliance

between the rising general and Josephine. But his political course was not so smooth as was his social. The Republicans were shy of him ; remembering his descent and former close connections with the nobility and the court. Though a revolutionist, he had ever at heart favored a moderate and constitutional monarchy. He had not baptized his republicanism with the blood of the king, nor sealed it with the massacres of his fellow-citizens. The Director Lareveillère respected, and even liked him, for being a priest who had cast off his gown. Rewbel considered him a consummate diplomatist, who in difficult negotiations might prove of great service to the Directory. But his inflexible opponent was Carnot, and his fast friend was Barras. Carnot said to Chénier, speaking of Talleyrand—"That man brings with him all the vices of the old régime, without having been able to acquire a single virtue of the new one. He possesses no fixed principles, but changes them as he does his linen—adopting them according to the fashion of the day. He was a philosopher, when philosophy was in vogue ; a republican now, because it is necessary at present to be so, in order to become anything ; to-morrow he would proclaim and uphold tyranny, if he could thereby serve his interests. I will not have him at any price ; and as long as I am at the helm of State he shall be nothing." Carnot acted on this opinion ; being himself a man of rigid republican principles, and one of the most consistent and honest, as well as capable men who have ever figured in any of the administrations of France. His opposition to Talleyrand was so determined, and even violent, that it prevailed for a long time against the favor of a majority of his colleagues. In the meantime Talleyrand was entertaining the society of Paris with his *bon-mots*, and was employing all those arts for ingratiating

himself with influential men and women, which he so well understood. He had already discovered the superior genius of Bonaparte, and he urged upon Barras the necessity of giving him the important command of the army of Italy, which the ambitious young officer eagerly coveted. He said to the Director—"This man is your own; he has fought and conquered for you; he has made you what you are, and gratitude is the first of virtues." When Barras remembered that fearful morning when the young general, appointed to the defence of the Convention through his own recommendation, defeated the mob of Paris and averted another reign of terror, he must have felt the force of this remark of Talleyrand. The Directors were grateful, and acted wisely for France, though they paved the way for their own overthrow, when they conferred on Bonaparte the command he sought.

The National Institute had now been founded but a short time, in accordance with that broad plan of public instruction, which Talleyrand had originally devised and presented to the Assembly. This body honored him with an election before his return to Paris. The class to which he was assigned was that of moral and political sciences. Shortly after his return he was chosen the secretary of this class, and read a report upon "the labors of the class of moral and political sciences." In this report, written in perfect good taste, and in a tone of moderation which, since the triumph of exaggerated eloquence, had become extremely rare, he pointed out with great talent the advantages of political freedom, and its influence upon the progress of human knowledge. He supported with great strength of argument the superiority of a republican government, where the legislative and executive powers are the result of election. He attacked hereditary right, as incompatible

with the improvements which society called for, and inconsistent with the dictates of common sense : " The history of all ages," he said, " sufficiently proves that eminent virtues and superior talents are not transmitted from generation to generation."

A short time after, he read another report upon the commercial relations of the United States, of which the " *Moniteur*" gave at the time the following account :

" Citizen Talleyrand Périgord read an excellent report upon the commercial relations of the United States of North America. He showed that the similarity of laws, and constitution, the use of the same language, the perfection attained by British manufacturers powerfully assisted by the most ingenious machinery which made up for the high price of manual labor, and the facility which large capital gives to British merchants of allowing long credits, will always, or at least for a great length of time, secure to Great Britain the advantage of supplying the American trade.

" Citizen Talleyrand gave a most perfect picture of the peaceful, serious, indifferent, and even selfish character of the American people. He showed the happy effects not of mere toleration, but of perfect religious freedom, which prevents, even in the interior of families, the slightest disputes relative to the different modes of worship followed by individuals united by the nearest ties of blood.

" He described all the shades which exist between the civilized and the savage state, and are found in America at intervals of five or six leagues, from the sea-ports to the forests inhabited by the Indians. One picture especially elicited much applause—that of the primitive manners of the wood-cutter and the fisherman ; the former scarcely belonging to society, the latter possessing no country."

Talleyrand's reputation had now evidently been strengthened,

in spite of the hostility of Carnot. Indeed his presence in the administration of the government had become a matter of necessity. Delacroix, the incumbent of the office for foreign affairs, was ignorant and wholly incompetent, and complicated questions of foreign policy were pressing for a settlement. The relations of the Directory to the majority of the Councils of the Ancients and the Five Hundred, were in a very critical condition, and demanded that an able corps of administrators should surround the heads of the government. Talleyrand was already one of the founders of the club, called the Constitutional Circle, embracing among its members the majority of the Directory, and formed to counterbalance the club of Clichy, which at this time controlled the Councils. Thiers says of Talleyrand—"The vanity of the Directors was flattered by attaching to themselves so distinguished a personage; and they were, moreover, sure that they were committing the foreign affairs to a clever, well-informed man, and one who was personally acquainted with the whole European diplomacy." Yet Carnot contended against the appointment to the last. At the sitting of the Directory, during which the selection was finally made, a scene of amusing excitement is said to have been produced through the unyielding animosity of the stern republican. Laréveillère presented the claims of Talleyrand with great dexterity; but the very name of the ex-Bishop of Autun had an electric effect upon Carnot. He agitated himself in an extraordinary manner on his chair, and even uttered some energetic oaths. "What," he exclaimed in a rage, "what! are we to have this priestling, this man of artifice, who would sell us one after another, at noon-day, if it served his interests!" "And whom has he sold?" asked Laréveillère. "Whom?" replied Carnot, "why he began by selling his

God." "He did not believe in God——." "Then why did he serve him? But he sold his order." "A proof of his philosophy." "Say rather of his ambition." "He sold his king." "But surely *we* have no right to reproach him with that." "Hear me, Laréveillère; compare me to the devil, and I will laugh at it; but I shall be angry with you if you put me on a level with that man." Carnot, however, was obliged to yield to the majority, and the portfolio of the minister for foreign affairs was put into the hands of Talleyrand. This occurred in the latter part of July, 1797.

About a month after, the Directory and the Councils came into collision, and the majority of the Directory, Barras, Rewbel and Laréveillère triumphed. A royalist plot, headed by Pichegru, was brewing. The Jacobins were seeking to bring on a convulsion, by means of which they might again rise to power. These two extremes worked together for the overthrow of the Directory, which nobly stood by the constitution. Gen. Hoche, pledged to Barras, had moved a large body of troops to within easy march of Paris. Angereau, a violent republican, but calmed down to the requisite degree of moderation by Laréveillère, for the Directory wished to enforce their authority without bloodshed, had been sent to Paris by Bonaparte, who was in close correspondence with Barras, to take command of the troops of the line. In all these measures Talleyrand was the active co-adjutor of the majority which had placed him in office. On the evening of the 17th Fructidor, Barras, Rewbel and Laréveillère met at the house of Rewbel, and sent for the ministers. Talleyrand came with the other heads of departments; and all went busily to work to prepare the requisite orders and proclamations. During the night Angereau disposed his troops so as to invest the Tuileries, where the Councils held

their sessions. The guard appointed for the protection of these legislative bodies, and consisting of about twelve hundred grenadiers, had, however, been roused, and stood in apparent readiness to resist the violation of the rights of the representatives. Deeply anxious to avoid bloodshed, the Directory had already detached enough of the officers and soldiers of this corps from their special allegiance to the Chambers, to reduce the entire guard to inefficiency, overawed as they were by several thousand of Augereau's troops. The Directors triumphed without a conflict. The obnoxious members were banished, and the Councils were re-organized so as to give the Directors the support of a majority. Carnot fled without waiting to be arrested and banished. Talleyrand's position for the present was, therefore, secure—he was as usual on the winning side. Thus was achieved the revolution of the 18th Fructidor, that by it the way might be prepared for the 18th Brumaire, when the enfeebled republic passed into the strong grasp of the conqueror of Italy and of Egypt.

At this important juncture, occurring at the outset of his administration, Talleyrand directed the cabinet with a talent and subtlety, which even his enemies could not but acknowledge. He became, in reality, the influential man in Paris, and Barras had reason to pride himself upon a choice which was sanctioned by public approbation.

Bonaparte, in Italy, was already attracting the eyes, not only of France, but of Europe. He had favored the events of the 18th Fructidor. At the request of Barras, he had sent Augereau from his own army, nominally to present some of the colors taken in the Italian campaigns, but actually to assume the command of the troops in behalf of the three Directors. He had also promised them funds from the contributions of the

conquered States. These transactions opened the way for a correspondence between Bonaparte and Talleyrand, which became quite active. In a letter, transmitting the proclamation issued by the Directory, on the occasion of their triumph, the successful diplomatist says to the victorious general:—

“ You will see by this proclamation that a real conspiracy, wholly in favor of royalty, was formed against the constitution; indeed, it no longer attempted concealment; it had become visible to the most indifferent spectators. The word patriot had become an insult; all the republican institutions were degraded; the most irreconcilable enemies of France returned, and were caressed and honored. A hypocritical patriotism had already carried us back to the sixteenth century; the Directors were divided among themselves. Men duly elected in consequence of instructions from the pretender, and whose notions were full of royalism, sat as members of the legislative body. The Directory, availing itself of the knowledge it possessed of all these circumstances, caused the conspirators to be arrested, in order at once to crush the hopes, and silence the calumnies of those who so ardently desired, and could still anticipate, the ruin of the constitution. The pain of instant death was pronounced against every person who should endeavor to recall royalty, the constitution of 1793, or d’Orleans.” * * *

Another confidential letter from Talleyrand to the general-in-chief of the army in Italy, contains the following:—

“ On our part, we are using every effort to conciliate the opinion of Europe, already in a great measure in our favor. This is a means, or rather a weapon, which must not be neglected. Our intention is to disseminate publications, in which it shall clearly appear that the courts of Vienna and London supported the faction which has just been crushed here. The members of

Clichy and the imperial cabinet had evidently the joint intention of re-establishing royalty in France."

Though thus congratulating his correspondent upon the success of the Directory, the foreign minister was too far-sighted not to perceive the approaching fall of the government under which he served, nor did his sagacity fail to recognize, in the victories of Italy, the harbingers of that great power, which was soon destined to leave such memorable traces in the annals of Europe. When the preliminaries of the peace of Campo Formio arrived, Talleyrand became unusually extravagant for him, in his expressions of praise for the hero himself. He wrote—"Peace is concluded, and a peace *à la Bonaparte*. Receive, General, my heart-felt congratulations. Language is inadequate to express to you everything which might be said to you on this occasion. The Directory is satisfied, and the public is delighted. Everything is in the best possible condition. Some Italians may, perhaps, clamor, but that is of no moment. Adieu, General Pacificator, adieu. Friendship, admiration, respect, gratitude! I do not know where to stop in this enumeration."

Bonaparte dispatched Berthier and Monge as bearers of the preliminaries of peace. He had disobeyed the express orders of the Directory as to the terms of a pacification, and the messengers had reason to fear that the Directory would seize upon the occasion to embarrass the progress of the General, who was now becoming so formidable. But the first intimations of peace rumored among the people, produced such demonstrations of excessive delight, that the Directory found it impossible to withstand the popular impulse. The people were satisfied that Bonaparte would be abundantly scrupulous of the glory of France in conducting the negotiations.

At that period, the Directors, who were fond of show, had adopted on great occasions the plan of State sittings, to which the public were admitted. They did not fail to seize the opportunity afforded them by the arrival of Berthier and Monge. Talleyrand introduced these envoys of Bonaparte to the Directors on the occasion of their public reception. His speech was highly laudatory of the officers, and especially of the general who sent them.

But when the victorious general himself arrived in Paris, after having gained five pitched battles, destroyed four hostile armies, taken one hundred and fifty thousand prisoners, a hundred and seventy standards, and above six thousand cannon, forced the Italian governments to submission, and signed a peace with Austria, he became at once the centre of all hopes and the object of unbounded admiration. The Directory prepared a triumphal festival for the delivery of the treaty of Campo Formio. It is thus described by Thiers. "It was not held in the grand audience chamber of the Directory, but in the great court of the Luxembourg. Every arrangement was made for rendering this solemnity one of the most imposing of the revolution. The Directors were seated on a raised platform at the further end of the court, at the foot of the altar of the country, and habited in the Roman costume. Around them, the ministers, the ambassadors, the members of the two councils, the magistrates, the chiefs of the administration, were placed on seats, arranged amphitheatrically. Magnificent trophies, composed of numberless colors taken from the enemy, rose, at a little distance from one another, all around the court; beautiful tri-colored hangings adorned the walls. The galleries were filled with the best company of the capital; bands of musicians were placed in the area, and a numerous artillery was drawn

up around the palace to add its thunders to the sound of the music and the din of acclamations. Chénier composed one of his finest hymns for this occasion. It was the 20th of Frimaire, year VI. (December 10th, 1797). The Directory, the public functionaries, and the spectators having their places, waited with impatience for the illustrious man whom few of them had ever seen. He appeared, accompanied by M. de Talleyrand, who was commissioned to introduce him, for it was the negotiator who was congratulated at the moment. All who were present, struck by that slender figure, that placid Roman visage, that piercing eye, still talk to this day of the effect which he produced, and of the indescribable impression of genius and authority which he left upon the imagination. The sensation was extreme. Unanimous acclamations burst forth at the sight of so simple a person surrounded by such renown ; shouts of '*The Republic forever!*' '*Bonaparte forever!*' arose on all sides." Talleyrand pronouncing the following speech, introduced Bonaparte :—

"CITIZENS DIRECTORS:

"I have the honor to present to the Executive Directory, Citizen Bonaparte, who brings with him the ratification of the treaty of the peace concluded with the Emperor of Germany.

"In bringing us this certain pledge of peace, he calls to our recollection, in spite of himself, the innumerable wonders which have brought about this great event. He may make himself easy: I am willing to remain silent on this occasion concerning everything which will form the honor and admiration of posterity. I will even add, in order to satisfy his impatient wishes, that this glory which sheds so brilliant a lustre over the whole of France, belongs to the Revolution. In fact, without that revolution, the genius of the conqueror of Italy would have languished in vulgar honor. This glory belongs to the government which, like himself, owing its origin to the great social change that has signalized the end of the

eighteenth century, has known how to appreciate Bonaparte and strengthen him with its unlimited confidence. It belongs also to those valiant soldiers whom liberty has transformed into invincible heroes. It belongs, in fine, to every Frenchman worthy of the name; for it was also, and we cannot doubt it, to acquire their love and their virtuous esteem that he felt anxious to conquer; and the acclamations of true patriots at the news of a victory, being carried back to Bonaparte, became the pledges of another victory. Thus, has every Frenchman conquered with Bonaparte; thus is his glory the glory of all—there is not a single republican who cannot claim his share.

“It is true that we must allow as his own, that piercing glance which left nothing to chance, and that foresight which made him master of the future; those sudden inspirations which baffled, by unhopd-for resources, the most scientific combinations of the enemy; the art of reanimating in an instant wavering courage, whilst he never lost his own cool intrepidity; those acts of sublime daring which made us tremble for his life, even long after the victory; and that heroism so novel, which more than once imposed a check upon victory, at the very moment that it promised him its most glorious laurels. All this no doubt was his, but still it was the consequence of that insatiable love of his country and of humanity, that fund of patriotism which virtuous actions, far from exhausting, seem rather to increase, and whence every one may derive treasures of virtue, of true greatness, and of magnanimity.

“It must have been remarked, and perhaps not without surprise, that all my efforts tend on this occasion to explain, and almost to lessen the glory of Bonaparte. But he will not feel hurt. Shall I own it? For a moment I felt toward him that jealous uneasiness which, in a young republic, becomes alarmed at everything that may be considered an attack upon equality. But I was wrong: personal greatness, far from encroaching upon equality, constitutes its noblest triumph; and at the present moment the French republicans may look upon themselves as greater than ever.

“And when I reflect upon everything he does to make his glory forgiven—upon his simplicity of taste, worthy of the ancients; upon his love of abstract science; upon the author of his selection, that sublime Ossian which seems to detach him from earth; when nobody is ignorant

of his profound contempt for pomp and show, that miserable ambition of vulgar minds—ah! far from fearing what has been termed his ambition, I feel that it will perhaps become necessary some day to solicit him, in order to tear him from the sweets of studious retirement. France will be free: he perhaps will never be so—such is his destiny. At this moment a fresh enemy appears, known for his profound hatred of the French people, and his insolent tyranny toward all the nations of the earth. Let that enemy, by the genius of Bonaparte, be quickly punished for both; and may a peace worthy of all the glory of the republic be dictated to this tyrant of the sea; may it avenge France and tranquillize the world.

“But, carried away by the pleasure of speaking of you, General, I perceive too late that the immense crowd which surrounds us is impatient to hear you, and you must yourself reproach me with delaying the pleasure you will experience in listening to him who has a right to address you in the name of the whole French nation, and at the same time the happiness of speaking to you in the name of an old friendship.”

This speech has been judged somewhat differently by different writers. Some say that it was thought insipid and not suitable to the occasion; and it was even deemed inferior to his other productions, because this, it was said, was his own composition, while his other speeches had been prepared for him by some skillful subordinate. Thiers characterizes the speech as “neat and concise,” while Talleyrand “seemed desirous to spare the modesty of Bonaparte, and with his accustomed intelligence, to divine how the hero would like to be spoken of before his face. What M. de Talleyrand had said was upon all lips, and was repeated in all the speeches delivered at this great solemnity. Everybody declared, over and over again, that the young general was without ambition, so afraid were they that he had it.”

As to Talleyrand's habits of composition, an anecdote is related, which may very probably be true, though the authority is not altogether satisfactory. One day, being sent for unex-

pectedly to the Directory, Rewbel ordered him to write there immediately a report upon the Barbary States, and to give also his advice upon an important affair then negotiating at Algiers. "Here are paper and pens," said Rewbel, "sit down at that table and write a report." The minister for foreign affairs immediately began. He scribbled away, erased, and turned his paper in every direction. The work proceeded but slowly; Rewbel became impatient, and treated in a very unceremonious manner the minister of the directorial diplomacy. At last Talleyrand informed the Director that such a work could be performed only with a cool head, and in the silence of the closet. "People are continually coming in and out of this place," said he; "I will go home, and in a very short time bring back what you require." At the expiration of two hours he delivered to the Directory an excellent report. The implication is that some one else wrote it. It is certain that Talleyrand, in the discharge of the high duties successively confided to him, never thought proper to do himself that which might be done by subordinate agents. He gave his own ideas and explanations, and left his secretaries to give them a suitable form. Napoleon was obliged often to do the same, though in many cases his secretaries followed his dictation as closely as possible.

While "the conqueror of Italy" was in Paris at this time, the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI. occurred; respecting which Napoleon remarked at St. Helena:—"It was then customary to celebrate the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI., at which Talleyrand wished that I should attend. I replied, that I had no public functions; that I did not like the ceremony; that fêtes were celebrated for victories, but that the victims left on the field of battle were lamented

with tears ; that celebrating the death of a man was not the policy of a government, but that of a faction. Talleyrand maintained that it was just, because it was politic ; that all countries had rejoiced at the death of tyrants, and that my presence was expected. After a long argument, it was arranged that the Institute should attend, which I was to accompany as a member of the class of mechanics to which I belonged. Although I avoided public notice, the multitude, which paid no attention to the Directory, but had waited to see me go out, filled the air with cries of, ' Long live the general of the army of Italy.' ”

To be a minister under the Directory at the time Talleyrand took office was no sinecure. The state of public affairs was in every department most discouraging. This is exhibited in a confidential report, which he himself made to the Directory, from which these passages are given :

“ All branches of the public service suffer ; the pay of the army is in arrear and the defenders of their country exist in the horrors of nakedness. Their courage may, from one moment to another, become unnerved by the pressure of their wants ; and this causes a fearful desertion among the conscripts. The hospitals are all full, and in want of the most essential requisites, such as beds and medicines. The establishments of charity are in such a state of destitution that the most indigent cannot get admittance into them nor receive from them any relief. The creditors of the State and the public contractors refuse to make any further advances, because they are not reimbursed, or receive, after infinite trouble, only small sums on account of what is due to them ; they are therefore afraid to give further credit, and their example deters other speculators from undertaking fresh contracts. The roads are infested with malefactors, a circumstance which in some parts of the republic interrupts

communications. The salaries of a great number of public men are not paid, whence results the crying injustice of seeing public officers, administrators, and magistrates, in many places, reduced to want, or the alternative of suffering shameful exactions. There is a part of France where robbery and murder are daily committed, as if in pursuance of an organized system. The police deprived of the necessary funds is without strength, and is powerless to apprehend the guilty and equally so to prevent new crimes."

This disorganized condition of the State became more complete and hopeless after the departure of Bonaparte for Egypt. He had sagaciously perceived that the "pear was not yet ripe," and therefore continued to surround his name with glory, that at the proper time it might merit the prominence, which he coveted.

A picture of the Directory, in which Talleyrand is made to figure, was sketched by Lavalette, whom Bonaparte had sent to Paris, previous to the 18th Fructidor, for the purpose of furnishing him accurate information of the state of affairs. "I saw our five kings dressed in the robes of Francis I., his hat, his pantaloons, and his lace; the face of Laréveillère looked like a cork upon two pins, with the black and greasy hair of Clodion. M. de Talleyrand, in pantaloons of the color of wine-lees, sat in a folding-chair, at the feet of the Director Barras, in the court of the Petit Luxembourg; and gravely presented to his sovereigns an ambassador from the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, while the French were eating his master's dinner, from the soup to the cheese. At the right hand there were fifty musicians, and singers of the Opera; and the actresses, now all dead of old age, roaring a patriotic cantata. Facing them, on another elevation, there were two hundred young and

beautiful women, with their arms and bosoms bare, all in ecstasy at the majesty of our Pentarchy and the happiness of the republic. They also wore tight flesh-colored pantaloons with rings on their toes ! That was a sight that never will be seen again. A fortnight after this magnificent fête, thousands of families wept over their banished fathers ; forty-eight departments were deprived of their representatives ; and forty editors of newspapers were forced to go and drink the waters of the Elbe, the Sinnamari, or the Ohio. It would be a curious disquisition to seek to discover what really were at that time the republic and liberty !”

The Directors, after their success of the 18th Fructidor, pursued a system of most despotic measures. Among other acts of tyranny, they promulgated a new and more rigorous law for the banishment of the nobles and priests, who had, in considerable numbers, returned to France. The nobles were to be considered as foreigners, and to be required, in order to recover their quality as citizens, to submit to severe terms of naturalization. An exception was made in favor of those who had usefully served the republic in the armies or the administration. Barras, who was a noble, and his friends, including Talleyrand, were saved in consequence of this exception. Says Alison :—
“ Two hundred thousand persons at once fell under the lash of these severe enactments. Their effect upon France was in the last degree disastrous. The miserable emigrants fled a second time, in crowds, from the country of which they were beginning to taste the sweets ; and society, which was reviving from the horrors of Jacobin sway, was again prostrated under its fury. Finally, the councils openly avowed a national bankruptcy ; they cut off forever two-thirds of the national debt of France, closing thus a sanguinary revolution by the extinction of

freedom, the banishment of virtue, and the violation of public faith."

During the reign of the Directory, society at Paris presented a singular appearance. Even the parties given by the aristocrats were destitute of aristocratic etiquette. People had suffered so cruelly during the terror, that they thought themselves happy in being able to breathe. Freedom did not really exist, but people imagined themselves free when they compared the present with the past. The great advantage enjoyed by the Directory, was, that it succeeded the Convention. All classes of society, thus thrown together in confusion, sought less to distinguish themselves from each other than to enjoy the pleasures of life together ; and balls were established, as well as clubs. But very few persons were rich enough to give splendid parties at home ; others deemed it prudent to conceal their affluence. Therefore a sort of association for amusement was formed, which gave rise to subscription balls, where ladies of the ancient *régime* consoled themselves for the loss of their fortunes, by contrasting their graceful and elegant simplicity with the gorgeous toilets of vulgar *parvenues*, raised to sudden opulence by government contracts and stock-jobbing. The individuals of this class, thus suddenly elevated, sought to polish their manners somewhat, but could not entirely shake off their native coarseness ; so that Talleyrand said of them:— " It is easy to perceive that they have not long trod upon carpets." He never danced, for a very obvious reason, but from the period of the Directory, the balls given by him were distinguished, above all others, for their good taste, and especially for the graceful reception every one was sure to meet. It was, therefore, considered a piece of good fortune to obtain an

invitation to them, and an exquisite of that time felt quite proud when he could say to his friends—"I was last night at Talleyrand's ball."

It is quite certain that Talleyrand's fondness for play, and his love of luxury and splendor, frequently involved him very deeply in debt. On such authority as accompanies many of the anecdotes regarding him, the following one is related, as illustrative of the perfect politeness and coolness he could exhibit, under that most disagreeable of all inflictions to men in his condition—an importunate creditor. When he took office, his resources were very slender. His situation, however, obliged him to keep up a certain state, and a carriage became indispensable. As the equipages with which the Directory furnished its ministers were of truly republican simplicity, Talleyrand had a very elegant white carriage built for his private use, and very shortly his taste became an object of general admiration. But this carriage had been purchased on credit, and at last the coachmaker became pressing for his money; still none was forthcoming, and one day, this impatient creditor, summoning up all his courage, glided unperceived into the hotel whilst the porter had his back turned, and succeeded in reaching the minister's ante-chamber. He had seen the elegant carriage, the bill for which he held in his pocket, standing before the steps leading to Talleyrand's apartment. There could be no doubt that the minister was just going out. The coachmaker placed himself in a corner; the doors of the minister's apartment were thrown open, and the tradesman advanced with his bill in his hand, demanding his due.

"Nothing can be more just," replied Talleyrand; "I am in your debt, and you must be paid."

“Ah ! Citizen Minister, how greatly am I obliged to you ! The times are so hard ! You would really confer an obligation upon me.”

“There is no obligation in the business ; when a man is in debt, he must pay.”

With this sort of conversation, the minister reached his carriage, when the coach-maker said to him:—

“You will pay me, Citizen Minister, but when?”

“When ? You are really very curious !” said Talleyrand, seating himself quietly in the carriage. A footman in blue—there were no liveries at that period—closed the door, leaving the mortified coach-maker to enjoy the pleasure of remarking that his carriage ran smoothly on the pavement.

With respect to the expedition to Egypt, Bonaparte had consulted Talleyrand. The latter wrote to him—“With regard to Egypt, your ideas upon the subject are great, and their utility must be admitted. I will write to you further upon the subject, and I limit this communication to telling you that if the conquest of Egypt were effected, it would defeat the intrigues of the Russian and the British, so often renewed in that unfortunate country.” Talleyrand also furnished Bonaparte, from his office, papers relating to Egypt, containing much information collected by Magallon, Consul-General of the republic in that country.

The old powers of Europe acknowledged the revolution only when their thrones were menaced by the military successes of Moreau, Hoche, and Bonaparte. At the time Talleyrand took charge of the foreign office, Spain, Prussia, and Sardinia formed treaties of amity with France. While he labored in the service of revolutionary power, it was his favorite theory that the mission of France was the emancipation of nations, and the

establishment of peace upon the basis of constitutional liberty. And he ever took advantage of his position as the chief of the diplomacy of his country, to endeavor to realize this theory. His policy may not always have been in consistency with so benevolent and noble a political design, and his own wishes and purposes were, undoubtedly, often overruled by the executive power, which he was obliged to acknowledge ; yet, his strenuous efforts, in numerous instances, to prevent or to conclude hostilities, by the establishment of strong guaranties of peace, were no less honorable to his heart, than they were creditable to his skill.

CHAPTER VIII.

Labors as minister—Directions to diplomatic agents—Corruption and weakness of the Directory—Treatment of the United States—Naval war—Talleyrand's rapacity—Attempts to extort money from the American commissioners—Siéyès a Director—Attacks on Talleyrand—Forced to resign—Obliged to publish a defence of himself.

THE pacific temper of Talleyrand, just spoken of, did not by any means render him incapable of a hearty patriotism, ready to endure the evils of war in defence of French principles and rights. He partook somewhat of the embittered feeling, so prevalent among his countrymen, toward England, now that the policy of the government of that country had become settled into a fixed antagonism to the revolution, and to the progress of Republican sentiments. He, moreover, had some personal causes for hostility to the administration of Pitt. Under his direction, therefore, in January, 1798, a circular letter was addressed to all the diplomatic and consular agents of the French republic, which contained some remarkable sentiments and instructions. Some extracts will evince its character.

“Of all the powers coalesced against French liberty, Great Britain alone remains to be conquered. She is our eternal enemy. A powerful expedition is preparing against her. The national wish hastens this armament. All the trusty servants, all the functionaries of government ought to aid on this occasion, the views of the Directory. In a word, every part of the French republic ought at this moment to wage war against Great

Britain. In this general movement, you cannot, you must not remain inactive ; you must, on the contrary, take a notable share in the success of the undertaking. You know that during a considerable time, the diplomatic weapon, terrible in the hands of the British ministry, has remained blunt and powerless in ours. The Executive Directory is determined to restore to this department its pomp and vigor. The peace of Campo-Formio shall mark that epoch ; the congress of Radstadt shall seal it, and you must each of you lend your aid.

“ Now, citizens, each of you, undoubtedly, has formed an idea of the greatness and strength of the French republic. Foreign nations are aware of it, and it is useless to remind you that you represent the first nation in Europe—a nation composed of thirty millions of men, and whom nothing on the continent has been able to resist. How then does it happen that Great Britain, a power inferior in means and material strength, even during the monarchy, has for more than a century past counteracted in everything, and even succeeded in humbling France ? Her insular situation, and that notion of freedom of which she boasts, have not contributed alone to so unaccountable a result. It has been principally the effect of the diplomatic system pursued by her councils. But this very strength is fictitious, like all the rest of her power. It is easy for any one to convince himself of it, by reading the history of England since that nation first meddled with the affairs of Europe. It was their Protector, Cromwell, who first gave a character to their diplomacy. Calling to his aid the vigorous and republican pen of the celebrated Milton, Cromwell dared to speak to all the cabinets in their own haughty language, which, ever since that period, the cabinet of St. James has always kept up, and which, being at first merely the

insolent boast of a too successful usurper, appeared afterward the energetic and proud accents of a people calling themselves free. The governments of Europe, involved in wars, the long series of which began and terminated the age of Louis XIV., thought those extremely powerful who gave themselves out as such. They suffered themselves to be awed, and yielded, without examination, to the pretensions of a court which demanded with threats.

“Make a resolution, Citizens, to answer worthily the calls of your high mission! Let the pen and language of French negotiation correspond with the courage, and help the swords of our defenders.

“The more the British agents show themselves impetuous, false, and stirring, the more you ought to show honesty, frankness, and that moderation which, much more than haughtiness, is the characteristic of true power. Watch all their actions; prevent their contriving any new plot against the republic; let them meet you everywhere, and at all times, in their way. Follow them unceasingly even to the interior of foreign cabinets; know how to attack them in their last intrenchments. Be intent to discover, and careful to prevent their dark cabals, the calumnies and intrigues, the perfidious snares and frightful projects which their secret agency vainly attempts to conceal. Do not cease to act against their influence, not by petty chicaneries and trifling means, but by rational and wise representations.”

Talleyrand's entrance into the service of the Directory, without doubt, imparted a temporary strength to that inherently incapable form of government. But diplomacy could not work miracles for a system which did not and could not retain the public confidence; neither could any man, possessed even

of the highest genius, save the State, if condemned to fill a subordinate station. As Sièyes truly observed, "we want a head and a sword." Whether he meant that the two should be combined in one individual, is not clear ; but they soon found that combination in Bonaparte. It was obvious to all that the government was daily growing more weak and corrupt, and that it must soon give way to some new form, and be administered by a more vigorous hand. While the capacity of Talleyrand was important, it cannot be said that his influence contributed to the purity, justice, and moral dignity of the administration. This must be the conviction produced by an examination of his management of the following affair, pertaining strictly to his own department.

Democratic sympathies, in spite of great dissimilarities, drew the United States and France together. Yet the policy of the Directory was so unjust and arrogant, that without any actual declaration of war, the two countries were engaged in frequent hostile meetings upon the ocean during the years 1798 and 1799. The origin of these difficulties was a decree on the part of the French government, issued in January, 1798, which directed "that all ships, having for their cargoes, in whole or in part, any English merchandise, should be held lawful prize, whoever was the proprietor of that merchandise, which should be held contraband from the single circumstance of its coming from England, or from any of its foreign settlements; that the harbors of France should be shut against all vessels which had so much as touched at an English harbor, and that neutral sailors found on board English vessels *should be put to death.*" As the United States were at this time the great neutral carriers of the world, this iniquitous decree struck at a vital point in their maritime power. The French depredations upon their

unprotected commerce soon became immense. Exceedingly reluctant to break the bonds of ancient amity, the American government proceeded very cautiously in authorizing measures of retaliation, and sent commissioners to Paris to remonstrate against the course of the Directory. While Talleyrand must certainly have acquiesced in these measures, we would not hold him in any special degree responsible for their enactment; but in the further prosecution of the controversy, he, from his position, acquired an individual prominence, and displayed a spirit most unworthy and unjust. The American envoys, denied an audience with the Directory, were approached by Talleyrand and his agents in a manner which demonstrated that the avenue to justice could be opened only by money. The official report of the plenipotentiaries reveals the whole of this dishonorable intrigue. In this report, it is stated that "on the 18th of October, the plenipotentiary Pinckney received a visit from the secret agent of M. Talleyrand, M. Bellarni. He assured us that Citizen Talleyrand had the highest esteem for America and the citizens of the United States, and that he was most anxious for the reconciliation with France. He added, that with that view, some of the most offensive passages in the speech of President Adams must be expunged, and a *douceur* of 250,000 dollars put at the disposal of M. Talleyrand for the use of the Directors; and a large loan furnished by America to France. On the 20th, the same subject was resumed in the apartments of the plenipotentiary, and on this occasion, beside the secret agent, an intimate friend of Talleyrand was present; the expunging of the passages was again insisted on, and it was added, that, after that, money was the principal object. His words were, 'We must have money, a great deal of money.' On the 21st, at a third conference, the sum was fixed at

32,000,000 francs (6,400,000 dollars, as a loan, secured on the *Dutch contributions*, and a gratification of 250,000 dollars in the form of a *douceur* to the Directory." At a subsequent meeting on the 27th of October, the same secret agent said, "Gentlemen, you mistake the point; *you say nothing of the money you are to give. You make no offer of money. On that point you are not explicit.*" "We are explicit enough," replied the American envoys; "we will not give you one farthing; and before coming here, we should have thought such an offer as you now propose would have been regarded as a mortal insult." When the American envoys published this statement, Talleyrand disavowed all the proceedings of these secret agents; but M. Bellarni published a declaration, "that he had *neither said, written, nor done a single thing without the orders of Citizen Talleyrand.*" When these disgraceful offers were indignantly rejected by the plenipotentiaries, they were informed, "that if they would only pay, by way of fees, just as they would to a lawyer who should plead their cause, the sum required for the private use of the Directory, they might remain at Paris until they had received further orders from America as to the loan required for government." Of course, without submitting to any such conditions, degrading to their own country as well as to the Frenchmen who proposed them, the American representatives departed for home, and the singular state of *quasi* war still continued, until Bonaparte, as First Consul, quickly and honorably settled the dispute, and made reparation for the injuries committed.

Whether, throughout this transaction, Talleyrand acted really under arrangements with the Directors in this persisting effort to extort money, or was availing himself of their name for his private emolument, the whole affair in every aspect

places his character in no admirable light. The rights of individuals were disregarded, their property was seized, and, if resisting, their lives were sacrificed, under an ill-controlled system of privateering, when the chief Minister of State was striving to barter away the influence and dignity of his office for the gold of an ancient and an injured ally. Certainly, a share, at least, of these coveted bribes was to go into the hands of the minister for foreign affairs. Without doubt, his influence with the Directory, on a subject which thus came within the sphere of his special administration, was supreme and decisive. If he disagreed with his masters on the justice of the commercial policy adopted, he should either have resigned, or gratuitously and gladly labored for its alteration. He would then have been both the admirable advocate, and the honored dispenser of the justice of his country. If, on the contrary, he sustained the policy of the government, as founded in right, and sanctioned by international law, then he is on the other horn of the dilemma—willing to sell the just rights of his country. Well did the Directory merit the universal distrust and contempt, of which it was now the object, when the most capable man in its councils was so manifestly open to corruption.

The Hanse Towns fell under the same maritime despotism, without the power of the United States to resist it with success. They obtained the privilege of navigating the high seas in safety, only by the payment of a large sum to the men who held the powers of government in France.

By one of the frequent changes in the Directory, Sièyes obtained a seat in that body. The condition on which he took office was the removal of Talleyrand from the ministry. They were fast friends before and after the commencement of the Revolution; but Sièyes had lately, for some reason, become

cold and distant toward his former colleague. Talleyrand's influence was rapidly on the wane ; and, most unjustly, the faults of the entire government were charged upon him. His diplomacy had, indeed, been baffled. The Congress of Radstadt had been dissolved by the influence of Great Britain, and all hopes of a general peace were dissipated. The conferences, which had been opened at Lille with Great Britain herself, had led to no pacific result. Europe, which had been on the eve of pacification, was again in flames, and the combination against France was more formidable than ever. The Mediterranean, traversed in triumph by the fleet of Nelson, rolled between France and her greatest general. All these complicated difficulties were ascribed to the want of capacity in the minister for foreign affairs. There was a unanimous expression of reproaches and of serious charges against him. Some maintained that he had concluded a treaty with Louis XVIII. ; and so certain did they profess to be of the terms, that they asserted, that he was to restore that prince to the throne in consideration of receiving twelve hundred thousand francs a year, or twelve millions at once. Others maintained that valuable estates were also to be added. However, the royalists were full as fierce in their attacks as the republicans ; so that the charges of the one party seemed rebutted by those of the other. The press enjoyed full freedom at that period, as an extract will evince :

“ It is said, and as a fortunate circumstance for us, that our squadron, that is to say, the unfortunate remains of our navy, is actually placed in deposit at Carthagena, with our good and naturally sincere ally, the King of Spain ; whilst toward the north a formidable army, belonging to another of our good friends, the King of Prussia, appears quite ready to take as a

deposit and under its royal safeguard, certain portions, no doubt diplomatically disposed of, of the left bank of the Rhine. * * * We will ask Talleyrand, since he still so conveniently unites the ministry of marine to that for foreign affairs, whether the very satisfactory coincidence we have just exposed is the effect of mere chance, or whether there exists with our good allies a project similar to that of 1791, a pacific *mezzo termine* which would consist in interposing their kind offices to guarantee to us our ancient limits. Perhaps, as an especial favor, there is something more : the safe return of our navy to France—for after all we conceive this country to be its proper place—on the simple condition of accepting a regular government for a short time, otherwise * * * confiscation of the fleet for the benefit of the good cause, and the Russians at Paris. Pray, Talleyrand, give us some explanation of all this.”

Talleyrand tendered his resignation to the Directory ; but that body at first declined to accept it, and he made an attempt to weather the storm. But his opponents only redoubled their exertions, and he was obliged at last to yield, and to demand a release from the responsibilities of an office, in which he had acquired both popularity and unpopularity. The reply to his communication was as follows :

“The Executive Directory, Citizen Minister, had received the resignation you addressed to it on the 25th of Messidor last. In consequence of the renewal of your demand to the same effect, it has accepted your resignation, and bestowed your office upon Citizen Reinhart, minister plenipotentiary at the Helvetic republic. The Directory considers it an act of justice to express to you, on this occasion, how greatly it is satisfied with the unremitting zeal, civic virtue, and enlightened knowledge you have displayed both in the duties of your

ministry, and in those of the department of marine, which was temporarily confided to your charge. The Directory requests however that you will continue the duties of your office until the arrival of your successor. It confidently relies upon your continued zeal during that interval."

But resignation did not give the unpopular minister peace. The attacks of the press followed him to his retirement. He was finally driven into making a defence of his policy and his acts. In his publication he passes over in silence the charges, universally circulated and believed, of his unscrupulous manner of acquiring wealth, because he, undoubtedly, found that it would be difficult to make even a plausible defence on that point. But it were better that he should speak for himself. These are some of the points of his defence. He sets out with remarking that all who accuse him are ex-priests, or ex-nobles, or princes, or foreigners essentially agitators, and who having by address and suppleness re-entered France, now audaciously arrogate to themselves the right of teaching the French nation in what manner they are to be free at home.

"What then," he adds, "do these men say, who are not French, or those Frenchmen whose sincerity they have imposed upon? That I was a member of the Constituent Assembly? I was well aware that, in their hearts, they would never forgive those whose names are conspicuous among the founders of liberty. I knew perfectly well that the men who did not partake of the first enthusiasm of the French nation in 1789—that those who were at this period seen to join in the heartless raillery by which the noble enthusiasts of freedom were insulted—that those, in short, who have appeared only at periods of the revolution when they hoped that, although powerless to impede its progress, they might at least succeed in rendering it

odious—I well knew, I say, that these individuals were secretly indignant against the Assembly, for having taken the lead in proclaiming the declaration of the rights of man. I knew that they granted much more favor to the anti-revolutionary party in that Assembly, than to that party which had formed the cradle of the revolution. But I was not aware that they would dare publicly, and without disguising the openly aristocratic feeling implied by the reproach, to accuse a citizen of having been a member of the Constituent Assembly ; and that is, nevertheless, what I find among the numerous attacks of their favorite journal. * * * *

“When one reflects, that those who dare so unaccountably to reproach me with having provoked the war, are the very men who unceasingly added fuel to the fire of discord, were clamorous in their cries for war, impatient to see it extend its ravages all over the world by revolutionary movements ; who insulted most inconsiderately and injudiciously all the foreign powers ; who seemed to have nothing in view but to thwart every negotiation ; who spread with unremitting care, in all public periodicals, that assertion so fatal to the repose of Europe, that republicans and kings were necessarily at war with one another—when it is remembered that I myself was continually occupied in repairing so many breaches of decorum, and so much folly, by calming the envoys of neutral, as well as of friendly powers—always ready to take alarm at such demonstrations—when we dwell upon these facts for a moment, we are struck with astonishment at perceiving that those men, who are intent upon accusing me of having co-operated in the coalition project, do not know upon how many grounds such an imputation might be retorted against them * * * *

“I am accused of the expedition to Egypt, which it is well

known, however, was prepared before I took office, and not at all proposed by me. But if this expedition, in which the genius of Bonaparte, and that of his invincible army ensured us and still ensure us such success, had not been sent, and if it was alleged with equal foundation that I opposed the project, those same men who now accuse me, would think themselves warranted in telling me, that doubtless, from secret and anti-Gallican views, I had, in spite of the opinion of all enlightened men, contrived to deprive the republic of the most magnificent settlement in the world—a settlement, the object of which was to inflict a terrible blow upon British power in India. * * *

“After such reasonings, what else could excite surprise? Will it appear extraordinary that the same men should impute to me all the operations of the government, those of the minister of war, those of the minister of finance, those of the minister of police; the dismissal of generals, the appointment of commissioners, the nomination of purveyors—in a word, all that has or has not been done, within or without the limits of the republic, since I became minister? Is it extraordinary that they ask me why the Grand-Duke of Tuscany was kept as a hostage?—as if I gave instructions to the generals. Is it surprising, hardened as they are against all fears of reproach, by the very multiplicity of their lies and contradictions, that, when they accuse me of the coldness of a neutral power, they should themselves make incredible efforts to embroil us with Spain and Prussia? Can we wonder that, shutting their eyes against all evidence, they dare affirm that it is I who have alienated from us the United States, when they knew, at the precise moment they were printing this strange reproach, that American negotiators were arriving in France, and when they cannot be ignorant of the share I may claim in that event, from the language

full of deference, moderation, and I dare assert of dignity, which I held to them in the name of the French government, while those who attack me now, were desirous, at that period, of making harsh and irritating communications.*

“Is it surprising that I am called to account for the cession of the duchy of Benevento to the King of Naples, and the duchy of Benevento was never ceded to the King of Naples? Is it surprising that they confuse everything, alter everything, and are ignorant of everything; that they place the Portuguese ports in the Mediterranean; that they mistake Citizen Eymar, ex-ambassador in Piedmont, for the Abbé d'Eymar of the royalist side of the Constituent Assembly; that they suppose I entertain intimate relations with a man whom they name, and with whom I never had any communication since I was a minister; that they pretend that I invoked against Citizen Fouquet a kind of severity, which always appeared to me inexcusable, while a thousand voices would be raised, if necessary, even his own, to free me from so absurd a calumny?”

In this public manner, Talleyrand was obliged to enter upon the defence of his administration. That administration was unfortunate, not through any deficiency of tact or ability on his part, but in consequence of the actual febleness of the system of government itself. The skill of Talleyrand was destined soon to find its counterpart in the energy of the returned conqueror of Egypt.

* Whatever may have been the character of Talleyrand's official correspondence on the affairs of the United States, the report of the American negotiators, previously quoted, shows that his private mode of diplomacy in the case could not be defended so easily as he here defends his public course.

CHAPTER IX.

Bonaparte's return from Egypt—Talleyrand joins his party—Conversation with Madame de Staël—Reconciles Sièyes and Bonaparte—Takes care of Barras during the revolution of the 18th Brumaire—Appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs—Sagacious remarks made to Bonaparte—His admiration for the First Consul—Pun on Sièyes—New difficulties between the Consuls—Correspondence with the English government—Improvement of society—Josephine's debts—Joseph's embarrassments—Bonaparte's satisfaction with Talleyrand—Pun on Andréossi—Talleyrand and Fouché—The Russian ambassador—Treachery of a clerk—Letter on the affairs of Spain—Talleyrand and the church of Rome—Conferences at Lyons on Italian affairs—Diplomatic dinner—Account of the tragical death of the Archbishop of Milan.

Six months after the resignation of Talleyrand, Bonaparte unexpectedly returned to France. In a week from the time of landing at Fréjus he reached Paris, welcomed by the acclamations of the entire people on his route. On the night of his arrival, he slept at the house, in the Rue Chantreine, which his wife had purchased from Talma; the next morning he awoke in the *Rue de la Victoire*. The name of the street had been changed during the night, and Talleyrand is said to have had an influence in offering this original and happy compliment.

The ex-minister found himself in a somewhat perplexing position. He became directly devoted to Bonaparte; yet he felt it necessary not to break entirely with the Directory, which had still the advantage of the possession of the place of authority, and was supported by many ardent and influential republicans. He kept up relations with Barras through Madame

de Stäel, who, with all her acuteness, did not think that the fall of the Directory was at hand. It is stated that Talleyrand attempted, in the following manner, to open the eyes of his friend, who had not the slightest suspicion of the change about to take place :—

A few days before the 18th Brumaire, Madame de Stäel had a conversation with Talleyrand on the events of the day. This lady having proposed that the diplomatist should attach himself more closely to Barras and the majority of the Directory, he asked her, with his usual coolness, whether there was still a Directory?

“What do you mean by that question,” replied Madame de Stäel, with surprise; “is France, then, without any government?”

“I see five ministers,” said Talleyrand, “who are lodged, fed, kept in fuel, clothed, and shaved, at the expense of the State, and like peacocks, still expand their tails at the Luxembourg; but to fancy them an executive power, is impossible for me. Do you know, madam, where that power exists now? In the Rue de la Victoire.”

“So then,” sharply replied the Swedish ambassadress, “the little man has usurped already.”

“He has not yet taken possession, to speak correctly.”

“And does he flatter himself that the Directory, the councils, the army, France, and Europe, will suffer him to attain this end? Will you support him, you, who most certainly have not lost all remembrance of the good offices which Barras has personally rendered you?”

“I have so strong a recollection of those good offices, that I mean to acknowledge them by a friendly return.”

“What return?”

“That of treating with him about his place on the best possible terms. Let him give me the office and the conditions shall be excellent. There is yet time for it.”

Madame de Stäel was astonished, and argued warmly upon the subject ; she still cherished the hopes of saving her dear Directory.

Of Bonaparte and Talleyrand, at this critical moment in the fortunes of both, Thiers remarks—“M. de Talleyrand relied for a favorable reception upon his talents, his reputation, and his importance. These two men liked one another too well, and felt too much need of each other's friendship, to part with one another.” Fouché, so deeply concerned in the intrigue himself, observes in his memoirs—“It was Talleyrand who disclosed to Bonaparte's view all the weak points of the government, and made him acquainted with the state of parties and the bearings of each character.”

Sièyes, who was a theoretical statesman of talent, learning, and moderate views, was not on terms of friendship with Bonaparte, at the time of the latter's return. They feared each other. They were the two most prominent men in the nation at the moment, and they naturally felt themselves to be rivals. Talleyrand was impressed with the importance of their reconciliation, and he undertook the work. He and Sièyes, it will be remembered, were old friends in the days prior to the revolution, and in the National Assembly, and though the latter had demanded the dismissal of Talleyrand as a condition of assuming the office of Director, all hostility from this source seemed to be forgotten amid the changes which were once more re-organizing the political forces of France. The feeling of distrust between Bonaparte and Sièyes had become so confirmed, that when they met at dinner, at the nouse of Director Gohier,

they did not speak to each other. They both retired in a rage. "Did you notice that little insolent fellow?" said Sièyes; "he never so much as saluted the member of a government which ought to have had him shot." "What could people be thinking of," said Bonaparte to his friends, "to put that priest into the Directory? He is sold to Prussia, and unless you take good care, he will deliver you up to her." Talleyrand's task, therefore, though not an easy one, was earnestly undertaken, and successfully performed. The two aspirants agreed to act in concert, and to give to France a more energetic and stable government. Incompatible as they were in nature and temper, they were well adapted to the complex character of the emergency. And without the influence of Sièyes, Bonaparte could not control a majority of the Council of the Ancients.

In the various conferences, held for the purpose of arranging the plan for overthrowing the government, and of considering the form and character of the authority to be substituted in its place, Talleyrand took an active part. And on the eventful morning of the 18th Brumaire (November 8th, 1799), he was at the house of Bonaparte, amid the crowd of civilians and generals, who had either attached themselves definitely to the cause of the military chieftain, or had been drawn toward the central point of public hope by the uneasy apprehension of some great change. It is not necessary to recount here the events of the two days which marked a new era in French history. On the evening of the 19th Brumaire, Bonaparte returned from St. Cloud, to his modest dwelling in Paris, actual absolute ruler of France. Talleyrand had meanwhile been specially occupied with Barras, whom he obliged to resign the office of Director, and then dispatched to his country-seat; thus, in consequence of the previous resignation of Sièyes and Ducos, leaving the

Directory without a constitutional majority and necessarily powerless. This was an essential service, as it left no rallying point for those who opposed the schemes of Bonaparte.

The next day, the Consuls met to deliberate upon the confused affairs of a great nation. Bonaparte took the chair, rapidly discussed and decided many important questions without waiting for the opinion of his colleagues, and evinced his ability and purpose to be the leader of the administration. In the evening, Sièyes said to Talleyrand—"We have a master who knows how to do everything, who can do everything, and who will do everything." The composition of the ministry was the first question of importance to be settled by the new rulers. The most difficulty occurred as to the disposition of the claims of Fouché and Talleyrand. The former was retained, as the minister of police, by the influence of Bonaparte, who owed him much for the services he had performed in his behalf in the revolution which had just taken place. The indebtedness of the victorious general was perhaps as great to Talleyrand, and he was as disposed to acknowledge it as he had been in the case of Fouché, but so strong was the opposition of the revolutionists to Talleyrand, because of his known moderate views, that it was deemed necessary to dispense with his valuable services until the new rulers were more firmly established in their seats. Reinhart, who had succeeded him in the office of foreign affairs, was therefore retained a fortnight longer.

Bonaparte's first endeavor was to conciliate parties in France, and to accomplish a general pacification of Europe. For the latter work, especially, he felt the need of Talleyrand. He, therefore, hesitated no longer to call him to the post for which he was so well fitted. The portfolio of the ministry for foreign affairs was consequently again placed in his hands. On

receiving this appointment he remarked to the First Consul—“You have confided to me the administration of foreign affairs. I will justify your confidence. But I deem it my duty at once to declare, that I will consult with you alone. That France may be well governed, there must be unity of action. The First Consul must retain the direction of everything, the home, foreign, and police departments, and those of war and the marine. The Second Consul is an able lawyer. I would advise that he have the direction of legal affairs. Let the Third Consul govern the finances. This will occupy and amuse them. Thus you, having at your disposal the vital powers of government, will be enabled to attain the noble object of your aims, the regeneration of France.” On Talleyrand’s departure, Bonaparte remarked to his secretary—“Talleyrand has detected my views. He is a man of excellent sense. He advises just what I intend to do. They walk with speed who walk alone.” When some adviser objected to the appointment of Talleyrand, saying, “He is a weather-cock,” “Be it so,” replied Bonaparte, “he is the ablest minister for foreign affairs in our choice. It shall be my care that he exerts his abilities.”

Upon this act Thiers remarks—“No person more conciliatory, or better fitted to treat with Europe, more skilled to please, or even to flatter her, could have been placed in that office, and that too without lowering the French cabinet from its elevated position. It will be enough to say at this moment that the choice alone of this person clearly proved that, without falling from energy into weakness, the government was passing from the politics of passion to the politics of calculation. There was nothing in M. de Talleyrand, even to the exquisite elegance of his manners, which was not an advantage to the

new position which the government was desirous of assuming with regard to foreign powers."

Talleyrand was at this time a sincere admirer of Bonaparte. He could appreciate the activity and energy of his intellect, his almost intuitive knowledge, his decision and firmness of will, his really grand views of national policy and welfare. He was satisfied that he was the most capable man in France to rule the nation, and he cordially devoted his services to the furtherance of his designs. Of Sièyes, Talleyrand had uttered a pun, which circulated widely, and perhaps at the expense of the political philosopher. An ardent admirer of the former was lauding him extravagantly in the presence of the latter. His extraordinary talents, and admirable diplomatic abilities were highly extolled, and the depth of his views dwelt on with special praise. To all these commendations Talleyrand listened with patient civility, veiling his own opinions under polite answers, until his companion, with a burst of intense admiration, exclaimed—"Quelle profondeur!" "Une véritable cavité!" replied Talleyrand, with an emphatic gesture. Lucien Bonaparte says—"We all laughed at the *bon-mot*; which did not prevent our knowing that the heads which were really *hollow* were those who took a pun for reasons." Undoubtedly Talleyrand himself was not misled by his own witticism. He knew Sièyes to be a man of ability, one who had thought long and carefully on the science of government, and whose chief defect was that his theory of power was too good for practical development in his own distracted country. While Sièyes labored on his great work of a constitution for his country, Bonaparte was as intently occupied in reducing the actual evils of the nation, and in consolidating his own power. Rumors reached him respecting parts of Sièyes' plan, which were

evidently framed to limit his ambition and fetter his energies, and he speedily exhibited his dissatisfaction. A dissension was threatened between the chiefs of the government, which if actual and overt must have been disastrous at that juncture. Talleyrand, with Roederer and others, perceived the tendency of the difference in the views of the two leading minds in the government, and set about to check it at the outset. This was not easy. At the first interview Bonaparte was violent and dogmatic; Sièyes was excited, lost his self-possession, and was incapable of explaining his ideas and of defending them. Talleyrand still labored as the peace-maker, knowing that now, at all events, the two men were essential to each-other. Future conferences, conducted in a better spirit, led to a reconciliation. When the project of Sièyes was discussed in full council, the principal portion of it was adopted; but that relating to the executive power, which most concerned Bonaparte, was modified so as to conform to his wishes and favor his ambition; while by the change was secured that strong central government which the nation required.

One of Bonaparte's first acts with reference to foreign countries was the transmission of an autograph letter to the king of England. This letter was characteristic in style, and distinguished by noble sentiments and generous overtures for peace. If the British government doubted the sincerity of the writer, as they appear to have done, they were certainly greatly mistaken, for peace was then, for obvious reasons, the earnest desire of Bonaparte. We are not much surprised that the king of England did not choose, or was not permitted by his ministry, to depart from the long established usages of national etiquette, but left the reply to Bonaparte's note to Lord Grenville. A king, who maintained as a vital point of policy, that

the only sure guarantee of peace was the restoration of the Bourbons to the throne of France, could hardly be expected to enter into direct communication with the plebeian general who had seated himself on that ancient throne. It is hardly possible that Bonaparte himself could have expected an autograph answer. The dispatch of Lord Grenville recited the principles on which England had entered into and still prosecuted the war, maintaining, of course, that revolutionary France was the aggressor, the grand disturber of European affairs. The correspondence had now fallen into the usual course. To the letter of the British secretary, Talleyrand replied, entering earnestly into a defence of the French republic and its policy:—"Very far from France having provoked the war, she had, it must be recollected, from the very commencement of the revolution, solemnly proclaimed her love of peace, her disinclination for conquests, her respect for the independence of all governments; and it is not to be doubted that, occupied at that time entirely with her own internal affairs, she would have avoided taking any part in those of Europe, and would have remained faithful to her declarations.

"But, from an opposite disposition, as soon as the French revolution had broken out, almost all Europe entered into a league for its destruction. The aggression was real long before it was public; internal resistance was excited, its opponents were favorably received, their extravagant declamations were supported, the French nation was insulted in the person of its agents, and England set, particularly, this example, by the dismissal of the minister accredited to her; finally, France was, in fact, attacked in her independence and her honor, and in her safety, long before war was declared.

"Thus it is to the projects of dismemberment, subjection and dissolution which were prepared against her, and the execution

of which was several times attempted and pursued, that France has a right to impute the evils which she has suffered, and those which have afflicted Europe. Such projects for a long time, without example with respect to so powerful a nation, could not fail to bring on the most fatal consequences. Assailed on all sides, the republic could not but extend universally the efforts of her defence, and it is only for the maintenance of her own independence, that she has made use of these means which she possessed in her own strength, and in the courage of her citizens. As long as she saw that her enemies obstinately refused to recognize her rights, she counted only upon the energy of her resistance; but as soon as they were obliged to abandon the hope of invasion, she sought for means of conciliation, and manifested pacific intentions; and if these have not always been efficacious—if, in the midst of the critical circumstances of her internal situation, which the revolution and the war have successively brought on, the former depositaries of the executive power in France have not always shown as much moderation as the nation itself has shown courage, it must, above all, be imputed to the fatal and persevering animosity with which the resources of England have been lavished to accomplish the ruin of France.

“ But if the wishes of his Britannic majesty, in conformity with his assurances, are in unison with those of the French republic for the re-establishment of peace, why, instead of attempting the apology of the war, should not attention be paid to the means of terminating it? The First Consul of the French republic cannot doubt that his Britannic majesty must recognize the right of nations to choose the form of their government, since it is from the exercise of this right that he holds his crown; but he cannot comprehend how, after admitting this

fundamental principle, upon which rests the existence of political societies, how he could annex insinuations which tend to an interference in the internal affairs of the republic, and which are not less injurious to the French nation and its government, than it would be to England and his majesty, if a sort of invitation were held out in favor of that republican form of government, of which England adopted the forms about the middle of the last century, or an exhortation to recall to the throne that family whom their birth had placed there, and whom a revolution had compelled to descend from it." The home-thrust in this last paragraph was very skillfully made.

When Bonaparte was once fairly established in the Tuileries, he made it an object of no small anxiety and care, to bring again into use the forms which had distinguished the courts of the kings of France. In this work, he relied greatly upon the name, the influence, and the manners of Talleyrand. No public man then in the enjoyment of office, had possessed the advantages of society in an equal degree with him. The presence of a member of the old aristocracy in the saloons of the First Consul, was adapted also to draw around his court the few remaining nobility who were willing and able to give their support to the new sovereign. The condition of French society was, at this period, truly deplorable, and Napoleon made extraordinary and commendable efforts to improve it. He invited the proscribed emigrants to return to their country, and so far as could be done, he restored to them their estates. He sought to efface the traces of the revolution and of the Jacobin rule. In all these endeavors to meliorate the social state of the country, he found an adviser and assistant in the ex-bishop of Autun, who had ever preserved himself unspotted from the

bloody excesses of that great political convulsion which he had labored so earnestly to originate. The most brilliant parties given by the members of the administration, are described by contemporaneous writers, as having taken place at the elegant mansion of the minister for foreign affairs. He possessed admirable skill in the arrangement of the details, which could give effect to such scenes. His urbanity and conversational powers placed his guests at their ease, and added unusual charms to his hospitality.

The relations of Talleyrand to the family of Bonaparte, became necessarily of a somewhat intimate nature, and sometimes required of him the discharge of duties of great delicacy. It is well known that Josephine had an unconquerable passion for acquiring whatever pleased her fancy, or suited her refined taste. In consequence of this disposition, she was for ever becoming involved in debt. At one time, when Bonaparte was desirous of retrenching the expenses of the Consular government as much as possible, and when, indeed, his personal revenue required economical management, the creditors of Josephine were becoming clamorous. This had a bad effect in Paris upon the reputation of Bonaparte himself. It was no pleasant task to reveal to the husband the injudicious extravagance, and annoying indebtedness of the wife. Bourrienne, Bonaparte's private secretary, through fear of displeasing him, delayed making the revelation. It was with great satisfaction, therefore, that he learned that Talleyrand had anticipated him, and at the risk of offending the First Consul, had been bold enough to tell him that a great number of creditors had expressed their discontent in loud and bitter complaints.

While Joseph Bonaparte was the French envoy at Luneville, treating for peace with Austria, in 1801, he invested extensively

in State funds, expecting a rise on the declaration of peace. The speculation was unsuccessful, and Joseph lost largely. Bonaparte was unable to assist him at the time, and in his anxiety to aid his brother applied to Bourrienne for advice. Bourrienne advised him to consult Talleyrand, who had often given him good advice. He did so ; and Talleyrand, in his peculiarly cool manner replied—"What ! is that all ? Oh ! that is nothing. It is easily settled. You have only to produce a rise in the funds." "But the money," says Bonaparte. "Oh, the money may be easily obtained. Make some deposits in the Mont-de-Piété, or the sinking fund. That will give you the necessary means to raise the funds ; and then, Joseph may sell out and recover his losses." The advice of Talleyrand was adopted, and all succeeded as he had foretold.

Bourrienne, whose opportunities for information were good, however we may distrust his judgment, gives some facts of interest regarding Talleyrand's connection with Napoleon. "M. de Talleyrand was almost the only one among the ministers who did not flatter the First Consul, and he was, certainly, the minister who best served both the First Consul and the Emperor. When Bonaparte said to M. de Talleyrand, 'Write so and so, and send it off by a courier immediately,' that minister was never in a hurry to obey the order, because he knew the character of the First Consul well enough to distinguish between what his passion dictated, and what his reason would approve ; in short he appealed from 'Philip drunk to Philip sober.' When it happened that M. de Talleyrand suspended the execution of an order, Bonaparte never evinced the least displeasure. When, the day after he had received any hasty and angry order, M. de Talleyrand presented himself to the First Consul, the latter would say—'Well, did

you send off the courier?' 'No'—the minister would reply, 'I took care not to do so before I showed you my letter.' Then the First Consul would usually add—'Upon second thought, I think it would be best not to send it.' This was the way to deal with Bonaparte. When M. de Talleyrand postponed sending off dispatches, or when I myself have delayed the execution of an order, which I knew had been dictated by anger, and had emanated neither from his heart nor his understanding, I have heard him say a hundred times—'It was right, quite right. You understand me; Talleyrand understands me also. This is the way to serve me: the others do not leave me time for reflection; they are too precipitate.'

After the peace of Amiens, Bonaparte made a change in the representative of his government in England; replacing M. Otto, a very capable diplomatist, by General Andréossy, a brave officer, but a man of no skill in civil affairs. Before this appointment, he was conversing one evening at Malmaison with Talleyrand, when the subject of an ambassador to England was discussed by them. After mentioning the names of several persons, the First Consul said—"I believe I must send Andréossy." Talleyrand, who from his own judgment did not favor such a selection, remarked in his cool, sarcastic manner—"You must send André *aussi!* (also) Pray, who is this André?" Napoleon replied; "I did not mention any André; I said Andréossy. You know Andréossy, the general of artillery?" "Ah! true; Andréossy; I did not think of him. I was thinking only of the diplomatic men, and I did not recollect any of that name. Yes, yes; Andréossy is in the artillery."

The only two members of the government, not cast into the shade by the brilliancy of the First Consul's talents and his vast capacities for administration, were Fouché and Talleyrand.

The former, as minister of police, was as essential to the consolidation of the power of Bonaparte, as he had been useful in perfecting the plan for its establishment. Bonaparte knew the value of his services, but had no esteem for him. Talleyrand, though by no means originating or directing the whole foreign policy of the government, for that Bonaparte did himself, was, nevertheless, possessed of those qualities of self-control, patience, mildness, love of peace and insinuating address, which made him a necessary negotiator in all important transactions with other States. He aspired to moderate the impetuosity of his master, and his courage in this respect was often rewarded with success. Fouché and Talleyrand, totally dissimilar, and cordially disliking each other, were thus from their circumstances contributing to the harmony and efficiency of a government, upon the stability of which their only hope of profit or of safety rested.

It would not be interesting, even if possible, to follow Talleyrand through all the details of his diplomatic transactions, as they extend over that series of years which witnessed the rapid growth of the ambition, and the dominion of the most remarkable sovereign of modern Europe. A uniform success is not claimed for the minister who was required to manage so vast a scheme of national policy. He made occasional mistakes, was sometimes out-manceuvred, and often needed all his talent in order to extricate himself from the difficulties incident to the political changes of the continent. Yet his reputation as a diplomatist steadily increased, his influence in the government was more manifest, and his consideration abroad was more distinguished. He felt the dignity of his position as the minister of a great nation, and knew how to maintain that dignity in his intercourse with the representatives of great powers. In

1801, M. de Kalitscheff was the Russian Ambassador near the French government, and in the haughty spirit of his sovereign, took it upon himself to be the protector of some of the feebler states, and to question the justice of the First Consul's treatment of them. His notes became so improper in their tone that Talleyrand ceased replying to them. The tragical death of the Emperor Paul occurred, and Alexander succeeded him. The Ambassador, without waiting for further orders, and desirous of extricating himself from an embarrassing position, renewed his points of complaint, and his demands with great peremptoriness. Talleyrand answered instantly that the dispatch was ill-timed and wanting in the courtesies becoming independent nations ; that he would take upon himself the responsibility of destroying it, without showing it to the First Consul, to whose dignity and character it was insulting ; and that the Ambassador might consider it as not having been received, while he was informed that his demands, presented in a proper form, would be submitted to the First Consul. This spirit on the part of Talleyrand was the more independent and admirable, since the policy of the new Emperor of Russia was not yet developed, and it was of great importance for Bonaparte to secure the friendship of that government.

During this portion of the administration of Talleyrand, the treachery of one of his secretaries nearly proved fatal to him. A treaty had been concluded between the First Consul and the Emperor Paul of Russia, the concealment of which from the knowledge of the English ministry, was of the utmost importance. The ratifications were deposited in the office for foreign affairs, as the proper place of safety, when Bonaparte was surprised by Fouché's presenting him an exact copy of the treaty, which he said he had received from one of his secret

agents in London. Bonaparte's first suspicion rested upon Talleyrand, as the responsible custodian of so important a paper, and his arrest was very near following the suspicion. It was discovered, however, that one of his clerks had copied the document, and had sold the secret for thirty thousand francs. There is reason to think that the plot was deeper than this—that Fouché, in fact, had ventured upon so subtle and hazardous a contrivance, in order to bring disgrace and ruin upon his great and dreaded rival.

In 1801, France and Spain were closely allied, and the latter was carrying on war against Portugal, the ally of England, with the aid of the troops of the former. Bonaparte's policy was to hold Portugal as a check on England; but in the meantime, Lucien Bonaparte, ambassador to Madrid, concluded with Portugal a treaty on the part of his brother, in connection with Spain. The arrival of this treaty for ratification, excited an outburst of indignation from the First Consul against his brother, who had been thus unwittingly subserving the interest of Spain in her perfidious treatment of France. Talleyrand was on a visit to a watering-place, to recruit his health, and the First Consul wrote him for his advice. Without following the intricacies of the negotiation, and as a specimen of Talleyrand's style of correspondence with his distinguished master, the reply is here inserted.

“ July 9th, 1801.

“GENERAL:—I have just read, with all the attention I possess, the letters from Spain. If an answer for the sake of one only is required, it is easy for us to be in the right, even by referring to the letter of the three or four treaties made this year with that power; but those would be mere pleas. We must consider if this is not the moment for adopting a decisive line of conduct with this unhappy ally.

“ I start from the following data :—Spain has waged, to use one of her own expressions, a hypocritical, &c., war against Portugal ; she wants now to make peace. The Prince of Peace is, as we are informed, and as I easily believe, parleying with England. The Directory thought he was bought by that power. The king and queen depend on the prince ; he was nothing but a favorite ; he is now, in their opinion, a statesman and great warrior. Lucien is in an embarrassing position, from which he must be extricated. The prince uses with some skill, in his letters, these words :—‘ *The king has decided upon making war on his own children.*’ These words will have some weight upon public opinion. A rupture with Spain is a laughable threat, when we have her ships at Brest, and our troops in the heart of her kingdom. Such, methinks, is our position with regard to Spain ; now, what have we to do ?

“ I now perceive, that for two years, I have been no longer accustomed to think alone. Without you, my imagination and understanding are without a pilot ; hence I shall probably write some foolish things, but it is not my fault—I am not myself when far from you. It seems to me that Spain, which, in the various treaties of peace, has embarrassed the Court of Versailles by her enormous pretensions, has completely absolved us from all contracts. She has even marked out to us a course to be pursued ; we can do with England what she has done with Portugal ; she sacrificed the interests of her allies, and this places at our disposal the island of Trinity, in our negotiation with England. Should you be of this opinion, it would then be necessary to hurry somewhat the treaty at London, and be content with exercising diplomacy, or rather cavilling at Madrid, confining yourself always to friendly discussions, gentle explanations, satisfying them as to the fate of the King of Tuscany, treating only of the interests of the alliance, &c., &c. In short, to lose time at Madrid, and hurry it at London. It would be unadvisable, under these circumstances, to change the ambassador, and it should not be done, if, as I propose, you attempt temporizing. Why could you not permit Lucien to go to Cadiz to see the fleet, and travel to the different forts ? During this time, the English affairs will be advanced : you would prevent England from stipulating with Portugal, and he could return to Madrid to treat finally of this peace.

“ I am much afraid, General, that you will find upon my opinion the

impress of the shower-baths, and baths which I take very punctually. In seventeen days I shall be better. I shall be very happy to renew to you the assurance of my devotion and respect.

“CH. MAUR. TALLEYRAND.”

Up to this period of time, Talleyrand's relations to the Church of Rome remained much the same as they had been left by the Revolution. By his own act he had separated himself from her communion, and in a manner which precluded his retaining her favor. His influence in the National Assembly had established a system of measures, which had, with fatal rapidity, accomplished the demolition of the Gallican Church, and had, to the same extent, destroyed the influence of the Pope, in the affairs of France. There can be no doubt but that this ruthless sweeping away of ancient institutions, had a very injurious effect upon the moral and religious character of the nation ; especially as they were replaced by nothing better. In all the changes he urged, Talleyrand did not contemplate leaving the nation without any religion. But the Revolution took religion and all else out of the hands of its agents. Bonaparte had observed this, and his attention was early directed toward the worthy undertaking of healing the religious differences, and the consequent corroding animosities, which the cruel folly of the ultra revolutionists had originated. In his Council of State, he conversed profoundly, independently, and nobly, upon this subject. He did not pretend that his motives in this effort were religious, but candor must allow that they were humane and generous. With great patience and calmness, he endured the scoffs of his many infidel advisers, whose hatred to the very name of religion made them almost forgetful of his presence. But few of his friends sustained him ; and among these we do

not find the name of Talleyrand. He differed, with the great majority, from the First Consul, in the ideas and plans which finally led to a reconciliation with the Pope, under the famous instrument, entitled the *Concordat*.

Such had been the changes in national and personal history, that it now fell to the lot of Talleyrand to be the medium of communication, on the part of France, with that same spiritual power, by which he had been, but a few years before, excommunicated. The *Concordat* itself was prepared under his own direction, and by a gentleman attached to his own office, M. de Hantevive, who had himself laid aside holy orders. As, however, various important negotiations were going on at this time, Talleyrand was not the active agent in settling all the terms of this religious restoration. Indeed, his entire agency was rather a matter of compulsion. He had discovered that the Court of Rome was not inclined to be as indulgent as he had hoped. That power would not consent to the declaration of the absolution of bishops who had married being included in the treaty. It was even disposed to refuse the absolution entirely. And in this class of former ecclesiastics, was Talleyrand himself. He, therefore, really sought to baffle the negotiation, though he had commenced it with apparent good will, as he would a usual subject of diplomacy. The opposition, which in a secret way was working to thwart the design of Bonaparte, numbered him among its members. When he was obliged to resort to the baths on account of his health, he left with the First Consul a project of union with Rome, which was so designedly arbitrary and uncompromising, as to leave no question of its rejection by that court. Though sensible of the wisdom of the First Consul in signaling the restoration of order, by the formal recognition of religion, Talleyrand allowed very natural

and strong personal feelings to bias, yet, not to master, his customary principles of policy.

In January, 1802, Bonaparte left Paris for Lyons, in which city he met the Italian representatives, who were to arrange with him the constitution of the Italian Republic. In this transaction, the talents of Talleyrand were again required. He preceded Napoleon to Lyons, in order to bring the matter into such a form, that it would be only necessary for the latter to affix his sanction to the political scheme agreed on. The constitution adopted, resembled, in its essential features, that then possessed by France, with some improvements on the plan of Sièyes, suggested by the experience of the First Consul. Talleyrand was also instructed to admit all the propositions made by the Italian representatives, which did not prejudice the fundamental principles of the project. He managed the whole affair ably, and displayed special adroitness in obtaining a cordial election, on the part of the Italians, of Bonaparte as the President of the new republic. This was the first occasion on which the names *Napoleon* and *Bonaparte* were used together. And after this, Napoleon was substituted for Bonaparte, in designating the First Consul.

During this consultation on Italian affairs, the Archbishop of Milan, one of the many Italian dignitaries brought together by an occasion so interesting to their country, died in a fit of apoplexy, at the temporary residence of Talleyrand, in Lyons. This death occurred in the course of a diplomatic dinner; and as the description of it is given in the language of Talleyrand, it is here inserted, especially for the insight it affords into the means of diplomacy resorted to by this eminent negotiator, and acknowledged by him as often essential to the success of his schemes.

“People talk of the *sublime* and ridiculous ; but the *horrible* and ridiculous which were mingled in that scene rendered it altogether one of the most powerful and extraordinary of any I have ever witnessed, either mimicked on the stage or played in real life. I must tell you that I had considered myself extremely fortunate in my transactions with the representatives of the different Italian States, who had assembled at Lyons to negotiate for the protection of their liberties by France. There remained but one clause of our treaty to be disputed—the most knotty point of all, and the one which I felt would exercise my utmost powers of persuasion when it came to be discussed in council. In order to conciliate as much as possible the opposing belligerents, I had been obliged to have recourse to the bait which seldom fails, if well ordered and well executed, that of a *dîner diplomatique*, trusting to my worthy ally, Carême, who, in cookery, had talent enough in his own person to finish what our united talents in diplomacy had so well begun.

“The dinner, then, was decided on ; the day had arrived ; and I was alone in my study, composing myself for the great struggle which was about to take place, when M. de la Bernardière came hurrying in, pale and breathless. ‘Well, we have committed a pretty blunder,’ said he ; ‘only see ; with all the “very clever men” by whom we are surrounded, what great fools we must be.’ He placed upon my desk an open letter which he had just received. It was from the secretary of the Archbishop of Milan to M. de la Bernardière, who was then supposed to be acting as my secretary. A letter purporting to be written in the strictest confidence, from ‘one gentleman to another,’ from a secretary to a man of honor, holding the same important office, having the same ministerial functions to fulfill, &c.; containing a sort of mysterious warning;

a kind of covert denunciation against the whole proceedings of the Consulte ; a threat of failure in all our schemes ; an assurance that all the ambitious views of France were perfectly understood ; and the letter concluded by declaring that they would be unmasked if the Archbishop of Milan was not invited to the dinner ! I must own that this announcement took us rather by surprise ; we had reckoned upon the Archbishop of Milan as one of the firmest allies of France, and it was, indeed, by a most inconceivable oversight that he had been left out. It must have occurred, no doubt, through some awkward mismanagement on the part of the servants ; but, whatever the cause, and it was then too late to enter into any examination, it became evident that the remedy must be applied at once, and that the company of the archbishop must be secured without delay.

“ It was M. de la Bernardière, then, who was commissioned to be the bearer of our humble excuses for the neglect of which the servants had been guilty, and our humble request that his Highness would overlook the awkwardness of our domestics, and accord us the advantage of his presence at the dinner, which certainly would not be complete without his company. I must confess that I awaited the return of La Bernardière with the greatest anxiety, as I was quite as fully aware of the necessity of securing the good-will of the archbishop as the officious secretary himself could possibly be. La Bernardière, however, returned triumphant, and the description which he gave us of his visit added to the amusement caused by our groundless fears. He had found the archbishop attired in flowered dressing-robe and brodered slippers, reclining on an ottoman of curious workmanship, which had been presented to him on that very morning by a deputation of the manufacturers of the

good city of Lyons, and the scene altogether had reminded him of an episode of the middle ages. His Highness the Lord Archbishop was a singular-looking personage ; the melancholy expression of his countenance contrasting with ludicrous effect with the fat, rubicund jollity of his form and features. He was a large, heavy man, with a look of absolute despair, and perpetual groans issued from his brawny chest, like the angry bellowings of Mount Vesuvius.

“ He sighed sorrowfully when La Bernardière was announced, and received him with many a lugubrious lamentation on the miserable weather, which, by the bye, was beautiful ; then he groaned deeply at the badness of the music of the mass at the cathedral on the day before, which, being of the very best order, and under the superintendence of the chapel master of the Emperor of Austria, had been by every one else considered excellent ; then he moaned at having been induced to leave his own country to come to such a place as Lyons, where it was evident his presence was neither sought nor needed, and finally pronounced a most bitter archiepiscopal curse upon the miserable fare of the hotel where he was staying, regretting, with most sublime energy, that he should ever have been induced to travel without his own cook, and vowing before the Virgin that he never would do the like again.

“ This was the opportunity for La Bernardière to press his suit and to pray forgiveness for neglect, and to urge his presence at our table with many an assurance of the utter discomfiture and despair which his refusal would occasion. The countenance of the worthy archbishop lighted up at the mention of the dinner. He was evidently a *bon vivant* of the first class, and it was doubtless to this quality that he owed both the rotundity of his person and the mournful discontent under which he labored.

He apparently deemed, however, that a little hesitation was necessary to preserve his dignity in the eyes of La Bernardière, and he summoned his secretary to learn from him if it were possible to accept an invitation upon so short a notice—if there were no other engagement to interfere with his desire to prove his respect and consideration for M. de Talleyrand, by accepting both the invitation and the excuses so courteously conveyed. Of course the secretary was too well schooled to decide precipitately ; he had to consult his registers, his list of invitations for the week, &c. ; however, La Bernardière soon perceived that there was little danger of refusal. The prospect of a real French dinner, Carême and Minguet, was too much for the philosophy of the archbishop ; and as La Bernardière had anticipated, he ended by not only accepting the invitation, but almost excusing himself for having hesitated.

“ It was a real satisfaction to learn the acquiescence of his Highness, for we had waited in fear and trembling the return of La Bernardière. It was immediately resolved among the little knot of gentlemen gathered in the saloon that it would be necessary to display even more courtesy toward him at the dinner-table in consequence of this involuntary neglect ; and thus, much to my subsequent discomfiture, it was agreed that the poor archbishop was to be placed at my right hand. I was exceedingly diverted at the extreme self-complacency with which he received all our demonstrations of respect, all our contrivances to do him honor—a mixture of embarrassment and haughtiness which I have never seen equalled. But at sight of the dinner all stiffness and formality were banished. His heavy countenance brightened, and he exhibited the most lively interest in every arrangement, tormenting me terribly to know the name of every dish which was handed to him, then ques-

tioning the servant who presented it upon the nature of the ingredients employed in its composition, and finally calling, in a shrill tone, for 'Nino,' the short fat man who stood behind his chair, dressed in a livery which, I believe, is called heraldic, and which is all striped and cross-barred with every color in the rainbow—red, yellow, blue, white, as many, in short, as there may be quarterings in the escutcheon, producing an effect more resembling that of the pictures on playing cards than anything else that can be imagined.

"This 'Nino' would stoop forward and lean his chin upon the shoulder of his Highness, and his Highness would point with a fat, white, stumpy finger to some particular dish upon the table, and after a few moments whispered conversation between the pair, Nino would disappear for a short time, and then return all in a heat and blaze. He had evidently been dispatched to the kitchen for information respecting the origin and composition of the approved morsel, in order that it might be reproduced at some future time upon the archiepiscopal table. His delight at every new discovery of this nature was perfectly uncontrollable, and he would chuckle and clap his hands like a child whenever a fresh dish, wearing a tempting exterior, was placed before him.

"To me his Highness was unfolding a new chapter in the eternal history of human eccentricity, and I watched every motion with the most intense interest. Toward the end of the repast, the ecstasies with which he had greeted the endeavors of our French *artistes*, and, perhaps, also the enormous efforts which he had used to prove his admiration of their talents, had produced a state of excitement which rather began to alarm me, the more so as even La Bernardière had not been able to win a moment's attention, so absorbed had he been with the

culinary excellence of our political system. Every dish had been discussed by the archbishop ; neither *entremets* nor *hors d'œuvre*, however insignificant, had escaped investigation, until, at last, I grew perfectly amazed at the quantity which had been absorbed, and perceived, with an indescribable feeling of terror and dismay, the hue of dark purple, which, beginning with his ears, had gradually overspread his whole physiognomy, and more particularly the look of stolid dullness with which he now eyed the table.

“ ‘Your Highness is ill,’ said I, in a whisper ; ‘allow me to order yon window to be opened above your head, or would you prefer to retire for a moment to breathe the air upon the staircase ?’ ”

“ ‘No, no,’ returned the archbishop, ‘I have not finished dinner yet,’ and immediately helped himself most copiously to a dish of *artichauts à la Barigoul* (a dish for which, by-the-by, my cook was famous), and fell to eating once again, as if refreshed by the pause he had been compelled to make. I was verily astounded ! He seemed to have reserved all his energies for the *artichauts à la Barigoul*, and devoured them with as much gusto as though he had eaten nothing since morning.

“ It was during the mastication of this most approved morsel, that La Bernardière at last succeeded in making the little request in favor of our country, which had been hovering on his tongue during the whole dinner. His Highness hesitated not ; he was ready to grant everything ; he could refuse nothing to any one in this hour of plenitude and satisfaction, and I, in my turn, plied him with propositions and demonstrations, to all of which he assented by a dignified inclination of the head. Emboldened by the view of my unexpected success, La Bernardière took up the burden of my discourse, with an increase of vigor and an

increase of presumption, as is invariably the case with solicitors when undisturbed by opposition. Question after question was proposed to the archbishop, who assented to all our demands in the same quiet manner, until I advanced to the culminating point of our requests, which really did seem to stagger him, for he raised his head suddenly, and remained an instant gazing on me with a vacant stare, then bent forward, as I thought, to whisper his objections more closely into my ear, and to my terror, as I looked up to listen for his answer, fell forward with his face upon my bosom, without sense and without motion, the dull, gurgling sound in his throat alone giving assurance that life still remained !

“I cannot describe to you the alarm and horror of that moment. I could not shake him off. I had not strength to move the weighty mass. I dreaded, of all things, making a scene and disturbing the whole company, and called as loudly as the immense weight pressing upon my throat and bosom would allow me to do, for ‘Nino !’ But, alas ! Nino had been deputed to the kitchen a few minutes before, in search of a receipt for the *artichauts à la Barigoul*, and I was, therefore, compelled to support this ponderous mass unheeded, unobserved. In spite of the alarm and the personal inconvenience which I felt, for the big drops of perspiration were rolling down my face, and every muscle was strained to the utmost, yet was there something so ridiculous in the whole scene, that had it not been for that livid countenance so close to my own, those goggling, protruding eyeballs so close to mine, it would almost have created laughter ; but it was too horrible ! I shall never forget the expression of that face ; it will haunt me to my dying day.

“How long I might have remained in this ludicrous position

I know not, for every one was busy and boisterous, chatting and laughing with his neighbor ; even the traitor, La Bernardière, had turned away, and was now in full heat of a good story, which he was recounting to his companion on the other side, leaving me, as he imagined, fully occupied with the seduction of the archbishop. At length my deliverance was accomplished ; the ever-watchful Nino, all breathless and panting hot from the kitchen, perceived my danger even from the door of the banqueting-hall, and, bounding across the floor, seized his master by the collar, and pulled him backward, with violence, into his chair, where he lay, motionless. By a simultaneous movement, as if attracted by some magic spell, the whole company turned at once toward us ;—a cry of horror burst from the guests, at the contemplation of that ghastly countenance. The confusion, of course, became general, every seat was abandoned, and the guests crowded round us with recommendations and offers of assistance ; but the screaming voice of the piebald ‘ Nino ’ was heard loud above the hubbub and confusion. ‘ Leave him to me ; I know him of old. Stand back. Lord, as if this were the first time ! You see, he only wants to breathe, and he can’t, because his teeth are closed.’ With these words, he seized upon the poor archbishop, and after looking round the table in vain for an instrument, he drew from his pocket a huge iron door-key, and attempted, with the effort of a Hercules, to force it between the set, clenched jaws of the archbishop. But alas ! they were already set and clenched in death, and no human power could now avail.

“ His Highness was dead ! the melancholy fact was too visible to all present, excepting, indeed, to the obtuse perceptions of ‘ Nino,’ who, in spite of remonstrance and opposition, would insist on repeating his experiment, until at last, with a

horrible crash, the strong front teeth of the archbishop gave way ; and roused by the certainty of his misfortune, the unhappy Nino burst into a yell of despair, which echoed to the very roof of the apartment. I leave you to judge of the effect of the whole scene, and of the extent of the appetite with which we returned to the table, when the ugly sight was removed ; and yet, no sooner had the ghastly corpse, borne on men's shoulders, and followed by the howling Nino, passed through the yawning door, than the conversation was resumed, perhaps even with more energy than before : the jingling of glasses, the clatter of knives, were renewed with even more noisy glee, and soon, to all appearance, the very memory of the awful circumstance to which we had all borne witness, seemed to have been forgotten, for the laughter and the shouting, the eager gesture and the noisy discussion were resumed, as if nought had happened to disturb the harmony of the meeting.

“The due meed of lying toasts were likewise bawled forth : vows for the ‘*Fraternity of Europe,*’ and ‘*Universal Union,*’ &c., with some few favorite names, were also shouted with much riot and applause. Disputes of the most animated kind, concerning the rival merits of divers of our public men, were also started and quelled, but never once was the subject with which every heart must have needs been full, made the topic of a single observation. I observed that many, while loudest and most clamorous in their discourse, would cast a shuddering glance toward the chair which had so lately been filled with the violet robes and portly dignity of the Lord Archbishop, and which stood now empty and reproachful by my side ; then, by a sudden effort, turn away, and grow more clamorous and noisy than before ; but, as I have already said, not once was the subject of his miserable death alluded to in any one of the num-

berless speeches which were subsequently uttered. One would have thought that he had been forgotten on the instant, although his cover still remained upon the board, and his jewelled snuff-box still sparkled beside it. While yet the very presence of the man hovered round us, he was, to outward seeming, as much unthought of, as though he had never been."

CHAPTER X.

Elegant flattery—Talleyrand's wealth and luxurious mode of living—Madame Grandt—Talleyrand's singular interview with her—Subsequent intimacy—Bonaparte's remarks—Their marriage—Anecdotes of Madame Talleyrand—Robinson Crusoe—Napoleon offers Talleyrand a cardinal's hat—Troubles in the ministry—Calonne's intrigues—Fouché's dismissal—Rupture of the peace of Amlens—Talleyrand's exertions to avoid a rupture—War declared—Anecdote.

It is quite evident that the minister for foreign affairs exerted over the First Consul a salutary influence. He won upon him by the admiration he manifested for his talents, which was sincere, as well as by his general accordance with his views at that time. He rarely left him, and during his absence for the benefit of his health during the year 1801, he wrote in the following affectionate and flattering strain—"I leave Paris full of regret at being removed from you, for my devotion to the grand views which animate you is not without its use in promoting their accomplishment. But even if what you think of, what you meditate, or what I behold you do, were only a spectacle to me, I should still feel my present absence the most severe privation."

The ministers of Napoleon did not neglect their opportunities for adding to the ordinary salaries of their offices such emoluments, as those favored by their services were disposed or obliged to offer them. The gossiping stories in circulation at the time cannot be admitted as very reliable authority on the details of such pecuniary transactions. Yet being satisfied

respecting the general practice from other more authentic sources, we may believe that these stories contain in them some truth. We know, on the best of testimony, that Talleyrand perverted the facilities of his public position, to the enriching of his private purse ; and, therefore, are almost inclined to credit the account of a contemporaneous writer, who gives the specific sums received by him for certain treaties, and other transactions connected with his department of the State. This writer charges him with the extortion of nearly four millions sterling, in the course of five years, from 1797 and onward. The same authority asserts that these statements were divulged to Fouché by a confidential secretary of Talleyrand ; and that the items were printed and fell accidentally, or more likely designedly, under the eye of the First Consul, who remarked to his minister—"Should this account be correct, your private property is greater than what I and all the members of my family together possess." "Sir," answered Talleyrand, "my enemies are more malicious than dextrous ; they might as easily, and with equal truth, have added a couple of cyphers more to each article, and made me at once richer than all the sovereigns of Europe *en masse*." And so the subject was dropped. Quite elaborate descriptions are given of the elegant and luxurious style of living which distinguished the hôtel of the minister ; and these are in the main accurate. The ex-Bishop was, throughout his life, a most refined sensualist, retaining, by freedom from too exhausting excesses, an exquisite relish for luxuries even to advanced age. His table was with reason esteemed the best in Paris. His parties were always attractive, for the urbanity of the master of the mansion diffused a spirit of grace and kindness through the company which frequented it.

Yet, with all his opportunities for acquiring wealth, Talleyrand appears to have been frequently deeply embarrassed. At one time, Savary asserts that he himself ventured to speak to the Emperor respecting threats of prosecution by some of Talleyrand's creditors. In consequence of Savary's representations, the Emperor was induced to purchase the Hôtel de Valentinois, completely furnished, which belonged to Talleyrand, and for which he gave him the sum of 2,100,000 francs ; allowing him at the same time to remove the furniture. The generosity of Napoleon was the more conspicuous, as this transaction took place after Talleyrand had resigned his office, and when they were by no means on very amicable terms.

The marriage of Talleyrand to Madame Grandt, which took place while Bonaparte was First Consul, presents a singular passage in his life. She was beautiful, graceful, pleasing, indeed, but ignorant almost beyond belief, devoid of virtue, of wit, and of all high or even moderate domestic and moral qualities. She had already deserted one husband in India, and possessed no excellences adapted to attach permanently to herself a man of Talleyrand's mind and character. From the work of M. Colmache an account of Talleyrand's first interview and subsequent connection with this lady is extracted.

He had been playing at the faro-table late into the night. Some peculiarly exciting incidents had marked the game, and Talleyrand had hastened home to seek relief from the turmoil of emotion which had been aroused in his breast.

“ He was harassed and fatigued ; and, eager to gain the quiet and solitude of his own chamber, was hurrying to repose, when, judge of his annoyance, his servant informed him that a lady was waiting to receive him in his study, whose business was of so much importance, that having called late in the evening with

the hope of finding him at home, she had preferred awaiting his return, even although it should not take place until dawn, so great was her fear of losing the interview she had come so far to obtain.

“It was thus with more vexation than curiosity that M. de Talleyrand entered, therefore, the study—where the stranger, according to the account of the servant, had already been awaiting him for *five* long mortal hours! without any of the *prestige* which had usually accompanied his introduction to a stranger of the softer sex, perhaps even *his* calm temper a little ruffled at the unseasonable hour and the unexpected interview.

“The shaded lamp upon the chimney-piece threw but a dim light around the room, and some few moments elapsed before he could even perceive the lady, who was seated in the large arm-chair by the fire, her figure enveloped in the mantle worn at the time, wide but not long, reaching only to the knees, and displaying the gauze and gold tissue of the ball-dress worn beneath. It was evident that the fair stranger, exhausted with fatigue and watching, had fallen into a sleep so sound, that not even the entrance of M. de Talleyrand, nor his approach, nor his convenient fit of coughing, had power to rouse her. A letter addressed to himself lay upon the table, and he opened it, hoping that the noise which he made in moving to and fro would awaken her. It was a letter from Montrond, introducing to his acquaintance the bearer, Madame Grandt, who wished to confer with him upon urgent business, and to seek his advice in an affair concerning which none but himself could give information.

“The name of Madame Grandt immediately awakened all the dormant curiosity of M. de Talleyrand, and he now turned toward the fair stranger with a feeling of interest far different

from that which he had experienced on his entrance. He had heard much of her extraordinary beauty, and had long desired the opportunity of judging whether the reputation were well earned. The whole scene was unique of its kind, and never before had M. de Talleyrand felt so much embarrassment as when the servant, after having in vain endeavored by every innocent artifice to awaken the lady, left the room with an ill-suppressed titter at the novelty of the situation in which his master was placed. The noise of the door, however, which the cunning varlet took care to close with as loud a report as possible, succeeded at last in awaking the fair stranger, who started to her feet, surprised and terrified to find herself thus discovered in slumber by a stranger, whom, however, she instantly knew to be M. de Talleyrand, from the description which she had already received of his appearance. The impression he produced upon her mind, startled and alarmed as she was at the moment, was one of awe and veneration, while the effect which she created in his was that of admiration so intense that he has called it instantaneous devotion.

“Madame Grandt was at that time in the full zenith of her beauty, and of the kind of loveliness most rare and most admired in France. I have heard that she was of English origin. This is not true. Her maiden name was Dayot, and she was born at l’Orient ; but her connexion with India, where a great part of her family resided, and the peculiar character of her beauty, would seem to have been the groundwork of the supposition. She was tall, and, at that time, slight in person, with that singular ease and languor in her carriage which have been considered the peculiar attributes of the Creole ladies. Her features were of that soft and delicate mould but seldom seen in Europe ; her eyes, large and languishing, were of the

deepest black, while her hair played in curls of brightest gold upon a forehead of dazzling whiteness, pure and calm as that of an infant. Throughout her whole person was spread a singularly childlike grace, which at once interested the beholder infinitely more than the sublime beauty which distinguished her great rivals for the admiration of the worshippers of fashion at that day, Madame Tallien and Madame Beauharnais.

“ M. de Talleyrand, who, with remarkable independence of spirit, talks of the princess without the slightest prejudice, observed to me, while describing this scene, that when she first threw aside her hood and disclosed to view that lovely countenance, all blushing with shame and with surprise, the effect was such that even he, man of the world, *blasé* and *désillusionné* as he already was, felt himself completely deprived, for the moment, of his usual self-possession, and stood before her almost as abashed as she herself. It was some time, indeed, before he recovered sufficient self-command to give utterance to the phrases of politeness usual on such occasions, and to offer his services in whatever manner would facilitate the business concerning which she had sought him at this hour.

“ If he had reason to be astonished, first of all, at the singular time of night she had chosen for the execution of her errand, then more astonished still at sight of her wondrous beauty, most of all did he own himself astonished when he came to listen to her description of the purport of her unseasonable visit. With the credulity which suited so well with the childlike beauty I have already remarked, she proceeded to relate to him, with much trembling and with tears, all the alarm she had experienced upon hearing the report which had been afloat at the assembly at Madame Hamelin's (where she had been spending the evening), concerning Bonaparte's

intended invasion of England, and his promise of delivering up the Bank to pillage as a reward to his successful soldiery. So great, indeed, had been her terror at this news, that she had involuntarily let slip a secret which she had hitherto most religiously kept : ' that, in fact, she had long ago lodged the greater part of her fortune, and the whole of her plate and jewels, in this very Bank of England, which Bonaparte had so generously promised to abandon to the pillage of his victorious troops as the reward of their valor.' This announcement had been received at the assembly with shouts of laughter ; and again did she burst forth in bitter weeping when complaining of the cruelty displayed toward her by such untimely levity.

" So great was the power of her tears, that M. de Talleyrand began to press more than ever to be informed in what manner he could be of service in this matter. She then intimated to him that at sight of her grief two or three of her tried and valued friends, foremost of whom stood M. de Montrond, had recommended to her to hurry immediately to M. de Talleyrand, for that he alone had power to save her property ; that, from his situation, he could even make himself responsible for its safe delivery into her hands ; and for this purpose M. de Montrond had immediately penned the letter which she had brought, begging her to fly with it immediately to his house, and not on any account to leave it until she had obtained the guarantee.

" Although, of course, highly diverted at the mystification, and somewhat embarrassed at the situation in which he found himself, yet M. de Talleyrand was too gallant to disclose to the fair lady that she had been the dupe of her own fears and of Montrond's insatiable love of practical fun ; and in order to quiet her nerves, he instantly drew up in due form a security,

signed and sealed, for the safe delivery of her plate and jewels into the hands of any person she might choose to appoint to receive them, as soon as ever Bonaparte's triumphal army had entered the city of London. The fair applicant, highly delighted at the success of her petition, left the house, reading again and again with confidence the writing he had given her, and perfectly insensible to all his gallantry and admiration amid the joy inspired by his kind proceeding.

“Such is the history of the first interview of M. de Talleyrand with Madame Grandt. I know it to be true, for I had it from the lips of the prince himself, who enters with the keenest relish into the ridicule of the whole scene, sparing himself as little as the princess. The mystification was completely successful. Madame Grandt was fooled to the top of her bent by the perpetrators, but the affair had a far different sequel from that which had been anticipated, for M. de Talleyrand became most passionately attached to the fair solicitor, and to the surprise of all Paris, he who had resisted the refined beauty of Madame Tallien, the elegance of Madame Recamier, and the wit and fascination of Madame de Stäel, fell an easy victim to the more plain and unsophisticated graces of Madame Grandt. It is certain that not one of the ladies who had laid siege to his heart had managed to obtain so strong a hold upon his affections or to keep them so long; and I can only account for this by the *naïveté* which gave so strong a tinge of originality to all she said or did, so unlike the slavery to forms and etiquette which must ever influence professed ‘women of the world,’ such as those by whom he was surrounded.

“So much has been said about her ignorance and stupidity, that they have passed into a proverb, while, in reality, she was neither ignorant nor stupid; but there was certainly an *inex-*

perienæ in the social traditions of the world into which she was ushered through the influence of M. de Talleyrand, which gave rise to much amusement among the wits who frequented her society. It would be difficult to account for the strength of the attachment with which, from the very first, she inspired the prince. It certainly was the longest and the strongest that he ever experienced. Various have been the conjectures respecting the causes of his marriage, but the story which was told me by one who was a confidant of the prince at the time, is, I think, the best calculated to unravel the mystery which still hangs over it.

“Madame Grandt was, as I have told you, unrivalled in the tact and agreeableness with which she received company, dispensing politeness to each and all alike, contenting every one and displaying so much cleverness in her management of the fiery spirits who frequented her *salon*, that it was impossible for those who knew her then to deem her either ignorant or foolish. It was this peculiar talent which had induced M. de Talleyrand, who was quick both to perceive any peculiar excellence and also to turn it to account, to hold his receptions at her house instead of at his ministerial residence. He had already done so for some time without having been subjected to remarks; for the system was, alas! too common at the period to excite the slightest degree either of condemnation or surprise. Fouché, ever on the watch to injure Talleyrand, had taken care to apprise the First Consul of this arrangement. The information, which had excited no interest at the moment, was not wholly lost, however; and a short time afterwards, having been foiled in some of his projects by the policy of England, he sent for Talleyrand, and, puzzled to find a subject which he could use as a pretext for venting his spleen upon his minister,

remembered the tale borne by the enemy Fouché. 'It is no wonder that we are abused and vilified by England,' said he, showing a paper in which appeared a scurrilous article upon the First Consul—'when we expose ourselves to such attacks as these, and even our public ministers give public example of disorder and ill-conduct.' The minister looked his inquiry concerning the meaning of this outburst. 'Yes,' continued Bonaparte, waxing warm, as was his wont, with his own words, like an ill-disciplined schoolboy—'yes, it has reached me that you hold your receptions at Madame Grandt's, and thus the envoys and ambassadors from foreign courts are compelled to wait upon your mistress. This must not continue.' 'Neither shall it,' returned the prince, coloring slightly; 'they shall henceforth be spared; they shall wait no longer on Madame Grandt, but on Madame de Talleyrand; no longer on my mistress, but my wife.'

"The marriage took place before the following week's reception, and it is said that Bonaparte was so vexed and irritated at his own littleness, that he even condescended to *lie* in order to cover it. 'What can have caused Talleyrand's abrupt and extraordinary marriage?' said Barras, one day, soon after the event. 'My *promise* to ask from the Pope "absolution" and the cardinal's hat as a reward for his services, returned the First Consul, quickly, and immediately changed the conversation.

"Whatever may have been the conduct of Madame Grandt, however reprehensible her facility of morals before her marriage, it cannot be denied that, from the very hour in which this event took place, it became irreproachable. M. de Talleyrand himself loves to render her every justice on that score. She was too proud of the name she bore ever to disgrace it by any action

which she would have deemed unworthy. Like *parvenus* in general, she grew rather intoxicated when arrived at the summit of honor, for as Princess de Benevento, her high look and insolence at the court of Napoleon became proverbial, and many amusing anecdotes are told of her absurd pretensions to royal privileges, her pages and her maids of honor, her chamberlain and mistress of the robes.

“To a mild and conciliating nature like that of the prince, and above all with his keen sense of the ludicrous, such a disposition must have been peculiarly irritating, added to which, Madame’s jealousy of every member of his family to whom he showed affection grew too irksome to be endured, and for their mutual comfort it became advisable to have separate establishments. But even amid the bitterness and soreness of feeling to which such an arrangement cannot fail to give rise in every family where it unhappily takes place, did the prince, with true generosity and liberality of sentiment, endeavor to render justice to her undeviating devotion to his interests, by making a settlement even too magnificent in proportion to his income; more, in fact, than it could comfortably bear. I frequently saw her after her separation from the prince. So far from having retained either rancor or ill-will against him, there was something touching in the eager interest with which she listened to the slightest details concerning him. She spared not questioning, and seemed never weary of listening to my report of his health and well-being. Everything in her apartment bore witness to her constant remembrance of the days of her happiness and grandeur; the rug before the fire, the embroidered cushion upon which her feet were rested, the lawn handkerchief in her hand, the clock upon the mantelpiece, all bore the impress of the arms of the Talleyrands, and ‘*Ré que Diou*’ shone forth

conspicuously on each ; while even the little cage wherein reposed a couple of snow-white dormice displayed in its mimic dome and tower a complete model of the château of Valençay.*

“As to the innumerable *naïvetés* and blunders which have gone forth to the world as hers, you must not believe one half of them. I think that many of them were invented under the erroneous impression that the surest way of annoying M. de Talleyrand would be to ridicule his wife. I once asked him if the story, which has gone the round of every newspaper in Europe, about Baron Denon and Robinson Crusoe, was really true. ‘It did not actually happen,’ replied he, smiling ; ‘the circumstance did not really occur as it has been represented, for I was there to prevent it. However, it was *guessed at*, and that was enough ; the blunder was ascribed to her without compunction.’

“I certainly remember a *naïveté* which she once uttered in the midst of a circle of savans and literati at Neuilly, which would be considered quite as good and become just as popular were it as generally known. Lemercier had volunteered after dinner to read us one of his unplayed and unplayable pieces. The company had gathered round him in a circle ; his manuscript lay already unfolded on his knees, and, clearing his voice, he began in a high, shrill tone, which made us all start from our incipient slumber, ‘*La Scène est à Lyons.*’ ‘There now, M. de Talleyrand,’ exclaimed the princess, jumping from her chair, and advancing toward me with a gesture of triumph, ‘now I knew that you were wrong ; you would have it that it was the *Saône* !’ To describe the embarrassment and consternation of the company would be impossible. I myself was perplexed for an instant, but soon remembered the difference of opinion to

* Talleyrand’s country-seat.

which she had alluded. As our carriage was crossing the bridge at Lyons, a little time before, she had asked me the name of the river which flowed beneath. I had told her it was 'Saône ;' to which she had replied, with a truly philosophical reflection—' Ah, how strange this difference of pronunciation ; we call it the *Seine* in Paris !' I had been much amused at the time, but had not thought it worth while to correct the self-confident error, and thus had arisen this extraordinary confusion in the troubled brain of the poor princess. Of course we all laughed heartily at her unexpected sally ; but we were grateful, nevertheless, for it saved us the reading of the dreaded drama, as no one that evening could be expected to regain his seriousness sufficiently to listen with becoming attention to all the terrible events which Lemer cier had to unfold.

" You see the prince had succeeded in accepting his misfortune as a man of spirit, and the keenest shafts of ridicule must have fallen pointless against one who joined with such hearty goodwill in the mirth which was thus raised, without at all agreeing with those who deemed that it was excited at his own expense."

In this connection an observation, made by Talleyrand respecting his wife, may be appropriately quoted. " My passion for Madame de Talleyrand was soon extinguished, because she was merely possessed of beauty. The influence of personal charms is limited : curiosity forms the great ingredient of this kind of love ; but add the fascination of intellect to those attractions which habit and possession diminish each day, and you will find them multiplied tenfold ; and if, besides intellect and beauty, you discover in your mistress caprice, singularity, and inequality of temper, close your eyes and seek no further—you are in love for life."

The anecdote respecting Madame Talleyrand and Denon, above alluded to, is thus given by Napoleon himself in conversation with O'Meara at St. Helena. "She was a very fine woman, English or East Indian, but foolish and grossly ignorant. I sometimes asked Denon, whose works I suppose you have read, to breakfast with me, as I took a pleasure in his conversation, and conversed very freely with him. Now all the intriguers and speculators paid their court to Denon, with a view of inducing him to mention their projects or themselves in the course of his conversations with me, thinking that even being mentioned by such a man as Denon, for whom I had a great esteem, might materially serve them. Talleyrand, who was a great speculator, invited Denon to dinner. When he went home to his wife, he said, 'My dear, I have invited Denon to dine. He is a great traveller, and you must say something handsome to him about his travels, as he may be useful to us with the Emperor.' His wife, being extremely ignorant, and probably having never read any other book of travels than that of Robinson Crusoe, concluded that Denon could be nobody else than Robinson. Wishing to be very civil to him, she, before a large company, asked him divers questions about his man Friday! Denon, astonished, did not know what to think at first, but at length discovered by her questions that she really imagined him to be Robinson Crusoe. His astonishment and that of the company cannot be described, nor the peals of laughter which it excited in Paris, as the story flew like wildfire through the city, and even Talleyrand himself was ashamed of it."

Napoleon also remarked in the same connection—"I forbade Madame Talleyrand the court, first, because she was a disreputable character, and because I found out that some

Genoese merchants had paid her four hundred thousand francs, in order to gain some commercial favors by means of her husband." Various writers assert that Napoleon was at this time seeking to infuse a higher moral tone into his court. Bourrienne, however, gives another and not so piquant an account of this whole affair of the marriage. He says—"On the 19th of July, 1802, a papal bull absolved Talleyrand from his vows. He immediately married Madame Grandt, and the affair obtained little notice at the time. This statement sufficiently proves how report has perverted the fact. It has been said that Bonaparte, on becoming Emperor, wished to restore that decorum which the revolution had destroyed, and therefore resolved to put an end to the improper intimacy which subsisted between Talleyrand and Madame Grandt. It is alleged that the minister at first refused to marry the lady; but that he at last found it necessary to obey the peremptory order of his master. This pretended resurrection of morality by Bonaparte is excessively ridiculous."

Savary asserts, that "the First Consul had, on several occasions, urged Talleyrand to return to holy orders. He pointed out to him that that course would be most becoming his age and high birth, and promised that he should be made a cardinal; thus raising him to a par with Richelieu, and giving additional lustre to his administration."

The ministry of Napoleon, though under the restraint of his strong hand, was by no means a harmonious one. Fouché and Talleyrand were irreconcilable rivals, if not open enemies. Each sought continually to supplant the other. Each had skillful agents at work to discover the most private affairs of his colleague. In 1802, M. de Calonne, the former finance minister of Louis XVI., and who for a few months revived the

hopes of the declining monarchy, came to Paris by the sufferance of Napoleon, with the ostensible object of attending to his private affairs. He, however, could not resist the temptation again to try his fortune in politics. He unwisely contrived to ingratiate himself with some of the most prominent of the old Jacobin party. Some of these revolutionists were in the cabinet of the First Consul. He formed a special intimacy with Fouché, and with him concerted a plan for supplanting Talleyrand, and for improving the financial system of the government. Talleyrand's position was too strong for all the talent of Calonne, and the intrigue of Fouché. The paper on the proposed change in the system of finance was perused by the First Consul, who answered it himself in the next "Moniteur," with allusions to the author by no means complimentary. Bonaparte expressed his disgust at this union of Fouché with Calonne, and the latter was ordered immediately to leave Paris. Talleyrand, however, treated his old friend Calonne with great forbearance, notwithstanding this intrigue, and through his influence the ex-minister was permitted shortly afterward to return to Paris, where he suddenly died immediately on his arrival.

The First Consul, of course, knew of these rivalries and jealousies between his most important ministers. On one occasion, when discussing the important changes in the government which he contemplated previously to his being chosen Consul for life, he argued that, in order to maintain the Revolution, it was indispensably requisite to protect its authors by keeping them at the head of affairs; and that without him they would all have been by this time removed from the scene by the ingratitude of the present generation. "Ask yourselves what has become of Rewbel, Barras, Laréveillère! where are they? who thinks of them? No one has been saved but those whom

I have taken by the hand, placed in power, supported in spite of the movement which carries us away. Look at M. Fouché, what trouble I had to defend him ; M. de Talleyrand inveighs against M. Fouché ; but the Malonets, the Talons, the Calonnes, who tendered me their plans and their assistance, would have soon got rid of M. de Talleyrand, if I had chosen to lend myself to it. They tolerate military men because they fear them, and because it is not easy to step into the place of a Lannes, and a Massena at the head of an army. But if they tolerate them at present, will they continue to do so long ? I myself, do not I know what they would do with me ? Have they not proposed to me to appoint me Grand Constable to Louis XVIII.?" The sagacity, which led this great man to protect and to use all parties, who would acquiesce in his reign, reveals itself in this extract.

When Napoleon was finally elected First Consul for life, Talleyrand had the gratification, for gratification we must confess he without doubt felt it to be, of seeing his rival left out of the ministry. Talleyrand's influence was certainly felt in this measure, for he had spared no pains to prejudice the mind of Napoleon against Fouché ; yet the principal cause of the step was a desire on the part of the First Consul, to evince to the nation such a confidence in its devotion to order as enabled him to dispense with a police which had become odious. The suppression of the system, which Fouché had made so efficient and so terrible, was after all but nominal. The direction of the police was attached to the ministry of justice, and the rigor of its surveillance was soon revived, and never abated throughout the period of the Empire. Fouché was by no means disgraced. He was raised to the dignity of senator, and publicly complimented for his services. Events proved this removal to be ill-

timed and impolitic, and frequently afterward his assistance was required in the administration of the intricate system which he had originated ; and his restoration soon became necessary.

In the negotiations which preceded the framing of the treaty of Amiens, and in the diplomatic passages which were connected with the rupture of the same, Talleyrand had his share of responsibility. Joseph Bonaparte obtained the credit of the treaty, inasmuch as his brother appointed him to announce the final terms, and sign the document. In carrying out the stipulations in regard to the much vexed question of Malta, Talleyrand was chargeable with neglect, in not securing the guarantee of the other great powers of Europe, to the maintenance of the new order of things established in that island. He afforded a pretext for England to defer the evacuation of Malta, and thus one of the sources of a new war originated. The First Consul resolved to impose a new constitution on Switzerland by force of arms. The English ministry protested and demanded the independence of Switzerland; but its remonstrance did not meet a very courteous reception, in the cabinet of the First Consul. An answer was dictated by Bonaparte himself, through Talleyrand, to M. Otto, the French representative at the court of St. James, which contained many sharp, and irritating threats. "You are charged to declare," says Talleyrand in this dispatch, "that if the British administration, in the interest of its parliamentary situation, has recourse to any notification, or any publication, from which it may be inferred that the First Consul has not done this or that, because he has been prevented, that very instant he will do it. For the rest, as for Switzerland, whatever may be said, or not said, his resolution is irrevocable. He will not give up the Alps, to fifteen

hundred mercenaries, paid by England. He will not suffer Switzerland to be turned into another Jersey. The First Consul does not wish for war, because he believes that the French people can find in the extension of its commerce, as many advantages, as in the extension of its territory. But no consideration would stop him, if the honor, or the interest of the Republic commanded him to resume arms. You will never talk of war, but you will never suffer it to be mentioned to you. The least threat, how indirect soever it be, must be taken up with the greatest warmth." A diplomatic intercourse, begun in such a tone and temper as this, could not promise a very pacific result. New causes of irritation arose. New perplexities pressed upon Talleyrand, in his important position. The quibbles of the British Cabinet astonished him; for his desire for peace was sincere and earnest, knowing, as he well did, that a war with England must issue in a Continental war. But he had not merely to defend the policy of his government; he had to moderate the anger of his more irritable master.

Napoleon had not the equanimity of his minister. He was incensed, that the British government persisted in imputing to him wrong motives, and in raising unexpected and unworthy objections to the fulfillment of a treaty, which it had solemnly ratified, amid demonstrations of popular joy. The influence of Talleyrand upon Napoleon, throughout the exciting scenes of one of the most important crises of his career, was exceedingly happy, and eminently favorable to the adoption of wise counsels. The praise of Thiers is thus expressed :—"M. de Talleyrand, who, under the circumstances, had conducted himself with rare discretion, had contributed more than any other person to instill these new dispositions into the First Consul." He, certainly, exerted all his ability, taxed his utmost skill, and pro-

posed every reasonable concession, in order to avert the dreaded war. A minister was never more conciliatory, calm, inventive, and ingenuous, than was he in this emergency. Even when the English ministry had risen in their demands to terms which were actually contradictory to the stipulations of the treaty, and which would not have been listened to in the original negotiations, Talleyrand, in conjunction with Joseph Bonaparte, labored most assiduously to prevail upon the First Consul to accept them. But Napoleon incessantly repeated, "Malta or nothing ; but I am resolved they shall not have Malta."

The English ambassador applied for his passports, and Talleyrand, instead of immediately granting them, said that he would lay the application before the First Consul. During the little time thus saved, he urged upon the First Consul a new proposition, and finally gained his consent to transmit it by courier, to London. The answer returned was unfavorable ; but the patience and ingenuity of Talleyrand were not yet exhausted. He again obtained the permission of Napoleon to make a new offer, designed to save the honor of both nations, but the English ambassador did not feel at liberty to entertain it ; and thus, finally, the negotiations terminated, and that long struggle commenced, which ended in the restoration of the Bourbons, and the incarceration of the Emperor Napoleon.

In an official document issued at the time of the renewal of the war, Talleyrand much underrated the power of Great Britain ; from policy, doubtless, for he was too intelligent to do so from conviction. A young French gentleman taunted Madame d'Arblay, the celebrated Miss Burney, on the subject, and asked her how the little British nation could be so mad as to attempt single-handed to cope with the mighty power of France. Madame d'Arblay was content to reply, "What would you

have, sir? The infatuation with which you so justly reproach the British nation, having lasted, without intermission, during nearly eight hundred years of incessant feuds and continual fighting with the French, I will concede to you that my countrymen are a complete set of *incorrigibles* !”

CHAPTER XI.

Arrest of the Duke d'Enghien—Talleyrand's connection with the affair—He favors the establishment of the Empire—Aids in forming the grand dignities—First disappointment—Created Grand Chamberlain—Napoleon's letter to Talleyrand on the war—Campaign of Austerlitz—Talleyrand follows the Emperor—His grand project for the permanent pacification of Europe—His plan for a Peace Congress—Napoleon's praise.

WHILE Talleyrand had the honor of in part producing the good which distinguished the new order of things, he was not free from blame regarding some of the evil movements of the new government. Bonaparte early began to undermine the public liberties. And many of those who had formerly been extravagant in their praise of national rights, and in their expressions of devotion to popular freedom, were now changed into courtiers of a military sovereign. They aided him in the destruction of what they had before labored to establish. The ex-bishop of Autun was not the least obsequious of the promoters of the schemes of the ambitious First Consul. In the defence of his position, Napoleon, in some instances, resorted to measures of the most severe character, intended and adapted to strike terror to the minds of those especially, who, from beyond the frontier, plotted against him. No act of this class has justly excited more discussion, and condemnation also, than the execution of the Duke d'Enghien. As the deed was performed when Talleyrand was one of the favorite and most influential

ministers, the question arises, what was the share of responsibility for the act, resting upon the minister, and what effect must his conduct in the case have upon our judgment of his character ?

Napoleon, in one instance, laid the chief blame of this bloody deed upon Talleyrand. Yet, in this he was inconsistent with himself, for he repeatedly declared, that he assumed the full responsibility, and defended the execution as altogether justifiable on grounds of public necessity. His life was, without doubt, constantly exposed to assassins, who received direction and support from the party desirous of restoring the Bourbons to the throne. Plots for his overthrow embraced among their abettors many men of prominence. In the course of the examination of Pichegru, Georges Cadoudal, and their confederates, it was declared by several of them, that a Prince of the House of Bourbon was expected in Paris, to direct their movements, and that he only waited a suitable moment to arrive. As the intention of these parties to direct their attack against the person of the First Consul was not concealed, Bonaparte was excited to a pitch of indignation, which exceeded all limits of moderation. It was acknowledged that a plot had been formed to assail him in one of his customary drives in the neighborhood of Paris, when escorted by his usual guards. And to this project it was affirmed a Bourbon prince was a party. Under these circumstances, the First Consul came to the resolution, to strike terror into the royalists by a signal act of vengeance. He made no concealment of his purpose. He repeated it to all who had access to him, and it would be preposterous to suppose that Talleyrand, his minister of foreign affairs, and most favored adviser, could be ignorant of it. He used to repeat in his excitement, that :

“ A Bourbon was no more to him than Pichegru or Moreau, and even much less ; that these princes, imagining themselves inviolable, wantonly exposed a crowd of inferior persons, of every rank, in the execution of their designs, while they continued themselves in fancied security beyond the territory of France ; that they would find themselves wrong in imagining that a foreign soil gave them protection ; that he would at last seize one of them, and order him to be shot as a common malefactor ; that in attacking him they would soon learn whom they had to deal with, and that he would show them that he would have as little scruple in shedding the blood of a Bourbon as of one of the lowest of the Chouans ; that he would show the world he was no respecter of persons, and that those who would draw down on their heads his formidable hand, should feel the weight of it, whosoever they might be, and that after having shown himself the most clement of men, he would prove, that on sufficient provocation, he might become the most terrible.”

It seems evident that Talleyrand did not oppose this general determination of the First Consul to make some example, though no victim was as yet selected. Soon after Napoleon's mind was impressed with the conviction that the Duke d'Enghien, a younger member of the Condé branch of the family, was the Bourbon prince referred to in the depositions of the conspirators. This impression arose from the fact that the prince was staying at Ettenheim, a place on the Rhine, not far from Strasbourg, and thus just out of the territory of France. His arrest was therefore resolved upon ; and in order to effect it, the officers dispatched to that end were obliged to violate the territory of a neutral State.

As Talleyrand had acquiesced in the proceedings of the government thus far, so must he be regarded as consenting to

o
↓
this violation of the rights of nations ; which in a man in his office was a flagrant fault. As there is no evidence that he opposed, but rather presumptive proof that he approved, the arrest, he must be deemed as sharing in all the injustice and violence of that portion of the tragedy.

But as to any further counsel or agency on the part of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in this unhappy transaction, there is no evidence. And in the absence of direct proof, the natural gentleness and moderation of his character raise a presumption against the belief that he took any part in the decision of so extreme a measure as the execution of the duke. The haste of the military trial and execution left but little time for the interposition of the influence of Talleyrand, had he been disposed to exert it in behalf of a more lenient policy.

It has been said that a letter was addressed by the prince to Bonaparte from Vincennes, which, passing through the hands of Talleyrand, was not delivered by him to the First Consul until after the murder had been committed. Such a letter is alluded to in the work of O'Meara, and it is there affirmed that it was not received by Napoleon until three days after the death of the prince. Against this statement, so far as it affects Talleyrand, there is more than one conclusive objection. First, Napoleon, in this case the highest authority of all, takes upon himself the entire responsibility of the catastrophe of Vincennes in his will, wherein he declares it to have been an act of legitimate self-defence. If it were in any way affected by the improper detention of a letter by Talleyrand, it is certain that Napoleon, at St. Helena, was in no disposition of mind to have sheltered the memory of the Prince of Benevento at the expense of his own, in a question on which he was aware that the present age and posterity would pronounce a

stern and severe judgment. But, secondly, Savary, who commanded on the occasion of the execution, declares that this report about the letter being written by the prince is erroneous, and among the persons employed in the private cabinet of the First Consul none ever saw or heard of such a letter. The prince had, as is admitted, after undergoing his first examination, demanded in writing to have a personal interview with the First Consul. But to admit, in the absence of positive proof, that Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, then at his hotel in Paris, had hindered this interview, or intercepted the request, would be manifest injustice. Such a supposition would involve many improbabilities. The passage in the Memoirs of O'Meara, to which we have referred, has been said by some to relate not to a letter of the prince, but to one addressed by the French *Chargé d'Affaires* at Baden to Talleyrand, in favor of the prince, sent after his arrest had become known, and not communicated by the foreign minister in time to the First Consul. But there is no evidence whatever that this was the letter alluded in the words attributed to Napoleon at St. Helena, or that such a letter was written at all, or if written, that it arrived before the death of the prince.

A remark, ascribed to Talleyrand, was current in Paris at the time to this effect—"That the death of the Duke d'Eng-hien was worse than a *crime*, it was a *blunder*!" Napoleon at St. Helena attributes this observation to Fouché. It certainly sounds as if it might have come from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, rather than from the Minister of Police.

When the prevalence of conspiracies against the life of Napoleon was seized upon as the pretext for rendering the government hereditary in his family, and then for elevating him to the imperial dignity, Talleyrand was among the fore-

most and most zealous to promote these objects. He presented all the advantages the nation would derive from such changes. He especially urged, that the facility for the establishment of permanent relations with foreign powers would be increased, by assimilating the institutions of France to those of the old governments of Europe. All this sounds very little like "the regeneration of Europe," which had been with him, as with the other leaders of the revolutionary party, a fond expression and favorite doctrine.

His attention in this connection, was directed also to the formation of such dignities as would surround the throne with the outward splendors which the world deems necessary to monarchy. He, in connection with the First Consul, devised six grand officers, corresponding to as many offices in the imperial household, and also to an equal number in the departments of government. These officers were styled, a grand elector, an arch-chancellor, an arch-chancellor of state, an arch-treasurer, a constable, and a high-admiral. Though interesting himself so much in the invention of these new dignities, it was in this very connection that Talleyrand met with his first disappointment at the hands of Napoleon—a disappointment which so affected his feelings, as to prepare him at last for that opposition which he openly showed to the reign of the emperor. He had, with good reason, anticipated that the office of arch-chancellor of state, which related to diplomatic functions, would be conferred upon himself. But Napoleon had established the rule, and maintained it with great stringency, that no grand dignitary should also be a minister; and he preferred to retain Talleyrand as a minister, increasing very largely his emoluments. His pride, however, was wounded, and he showed it, much to his subsequent injury. He was

afterward invested with the dignity of grand-chamberlain, which attached him more closely to the person of the emperor.

The erection of Northern Italy into a kingdom, which followed the elevation of the First Consul to the imperial throne, awakened the resentment of Austria, which merely awaited a pretext for the recommencement of hostilities. Russia was also ready to declare herself the moment she saw an advanced guard in arms in Southern Germany, and but for the admirable promptitude of Napoleon, Prussia would have fallen into this combination. Napoleon, however, with an eagle eye, saw the cloud from which the thunder was about to burst, and did not hesitate a moment to abandon his magnificent plans on the Channel, and fly like lightning to the seat of danger. Toward the last of August, 1805, he communicated his designs to his Minister of Foreign Affairs, as follows : " My fleets were lost sight of from the heights of Cape Ortegal, on the 14th of August. If they come into the Channel, there is time yet ; I embark and I make the descent ; I go to London, and there cut the knot of all coalitions. If, on the contrary, my admirals fail in conduct or in firmness, I raise my ocean camps, I enter Germany with two hundred thousand men, and I do not stop until I have *scored the game at Vienna*, taken Venice, and all that she still possesses in Italy from Austria, and driven the Bourbons from Italy. I will not allow the Austrians and Russians to assemble ; I will strike them down before they can form their junction. The Continent being pacified, I will return to the ocean, and work anew for a maritime peace."

Talleyrand, the man of peace, followed this genius of victory, ready to consolidate, by his counsels, the conquests which he awaited with that assurance then created in all minds, by the

long succession of victories which had followed the steps of Napoleon.

When Napoleon was at Ulm, Talleyrand waited at Strasburg. The whole Austrian army was soon compelled to lay its arms at the feet of the victor. At that moment, foreseeing the issue of the campaign, and regarding the moment at hand, when a general settlement of Europe would have to be made, under the dictation of Napoleon, Talleyrand addressed to the emperor the project of a treaty with Austria, in which he proposed an European arrangement, characterized by remarkable sagacity and comprehensive views. This plan, extant in the hand-writing of Talleyrand, remained unknown until after his death, when it was produced by M. Mignet, before the Academy of Sciences.

“It is not my part,” said Talleyrand to Napoleon, “to decide what is the best project of war. Your majesty shows that at this moment to your enemies and to astonished Europe. But desiring to lay at your feet a tribute of my zeal, I have meditated on the approaching peace—a subject which, falling within the range of my proper functions, has the more especial attractions for me, inasmuch as it is the more closely connected with the happiness of your majesty.”

Proceeding to develop his views, he then says, that in Europe there were four powers of the first order—France, Austria, England, and Russia; Prussia having been placed in that rank only temporarily by the genius of Frederick II.; that France was the only perfect power, because she contained, in a just proportion, the two elements of greatness, which were unequally shared among the others—wealth and population; that Austria and England were then the natural enemies of France, Russia being indirectly her enemy by the

influence of the other two powers, as well as by her designs against the Ottoman Empire ; that Austria, so long as she was not in rivalry with Russia, and Russia, so long as she remained in contact with the Porte, would be easily drawn by England into a common alliance ; that the continuance of such a system of relations between the great States of Europe would prove to be a continual cause of war ; that treaties of peace would be nothing but a succession of truces, and the effusion of blood would be incessant.

A new system of international relations was, therefore, necessary to give durable repose to Europe, a system in which a good understanding between France and Austria would be established, in which the interests of Austria would be separated from those of England, and put in opposition to those of Russia. By this opposition, the independence of the Ottoman Empire would be guaranteed, and a new European equilibrium established. Such was the problem which was about to be presented.

The solution proposed for it by Talleyrand was as follows ; —To cut off Austria from Italy, she was to be deprived of the Venetian territory ; to cut her off from Switzerland, she was to be deprived of the Tyrol ; to cut her off from Southern Germany, she was to be deprived of Swabia. By such measures she would be detached from the states then established, or protected by France, and there would consequently cease to be any natural or territorial cause of hostility between her and the French nation. As a further precaution, the Venetian territory was to be erected into a small republic, which would stand between Austria and the kingdom of Italy. Having thus despoiled Austria of territories, so extensive on the one side, it was proposed to indemnify her by corresponding accessions on

the other, in order that she should have no future pretence for an attempt to recover what she would have lost. It was, therefore, proposed to extend her limits towards the East, and to annex to her dominions, states on the banks of her own great river—Wallachia, Moldavia, Bessarabia, and the chief part of Bulgaria.

By such means he concluded the Germans would be for ever shut out of Italy, and the wars which their pretensions to that fine country had sustained for so many ages would cease. Austria possessing the entire valley of the Danube, and a part of the countries washed by the Black Sea, would be the immediate neighbor and rival of Russia, while she would be far removed from France, who would be her ally, secure from rivalry. The Ottoman Empire, by the sacrifice of provinces, on which Russia had already laid its powerful hand, would purchase security and a long future. England would no longer find alliances on the continent, or none, at least, that she could turn to profit. The Russians, forced back into their deserts, would carry their restless efforts toward the middle of Asia, and the natural course of events would bring them into collision with the English, so that the confederates of to-day would be the adversaries of to-morrow.

This splendid project was submitted to Napoleon, at Ulm, after his first great victory ; but Talleyrand was too much possessed with its importance to allow it to drop, and the day on which he received, at Vienna, the news of the victory of Austerlitz, he again wrote to the emperor.

“Your majesty can now break the Austrian monarchy or re-erect it. The existence of this monarchy is indispensable to the future safety of civilized nations. * * * I supplicate your majesty to read again the project that I had the honor of

addressing to you from Strasburg ; I venture now, more than ever, to look upon it as the best and most salutary plan that can be adopted. Your victories render it easy of execution, and I shall be happy if you will authorize me to make an arrangement, which, I am convinced, will secure peace to Europe for more than a century."

Whether Talleyrand's magnificent project were really practicable at the time it was proposed, opinions are not agreed. It is, however, hard to say what was not practicable by Napoleon on the morrow of Austerlitz. Talleyrand, following the footsteps of the conqueror, never ceased to urge his favorite theory. He wrote it from Strasburg, re-produced it from the Schoenbrunn, and finally exhausted all his arts of persuasion in urging it in the personal conferences with Napoleon at Brunn, amidst the dead and the dying, on the very field which the preceding eve had witnessed the rout and confusion of the hosts of Austria and Russia, headed by the two emperors. Thiers, while he does not deny the merit of the project, casts doubts on its practicability. Mignet maintains that at such a moment anything was possible—that the project was practicable—and that had it been carried into effect, the course of European events would have been far different from that which has actually ensued. It was not, however, approved of by Napoleon. He proceeded, as he had always done, neither destroying the conquered, nor gaining them over. He weakened, without paralyzing them. He left them strength enough to be formidable, and supplied them no motive for any cordial alliance with him. The key to his policy was the enfeeblement of great states ; its effect was the creation of powerful malcontents.

Another of the grand European projects by which the public career of Talleyrand was signalized, was the establishment at

Frankfort-on-the-Main of a permanent congress, with the philanthropic object of maintaining perpetual peace. This congress, at which each state of Europe was to be represented by a resident ambassador, was to consist of three colleges, the first composed of representatives of the four great powers, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia.

The second college was to consist of the representatives of states of the second order; and in like manner, the third was to be composed of the ministers of powers of the third order.

Thus composed, this high diplomatic body was to be authorized to decide finally and without appeal, by a sort of arbitration, and as an international court of honor, all differences which might arise between the states represented in it, and also to regulate the military contingents of each power.

This scheme was never attempted to be realized; but from it Napoleon took the idea of the Confederation of the Rhine. Talleyrand wished him to avail himself of his vast powers to establish something more permanent in its duration and more universal in its object. He, however, in connection with his chief clerk, was afterward charged with the duty of drawing up the plan of this confederation.

In all the projects and speculations of Talleyrand, traces are discoverable of the best parts of the theories of the last century, although his purposes were so constantly defeated, and even made subservient to ends of which he disapproved, by the overruling power of the events with which he was surrounded. The minister of a sovereign sprung from arms and aggrandized by victory, he loved not war. His aversion to it was not only a matter of temperament and philosophical repugnance, but even of calculation. War, as a system, appeared to him calculated only to create perpetual causes for its own reproduction,

while, on the contrary, his unceasing solicitude was to elicit from every victory consequences which would obliterate all future causes of collision.

Napoleon himself has done Talleyrand the justice to admit the tenacity of purpose, with which he endeavored incessantly to moderate his military propensities. "He never ceased," Napoleon used to say, "repeating to me that I was mistaken respecting the energy of the nation, that it would not continue to second me, and that I should live to see myself at length abandoned by it. Talleyrand has never appeared to me to be either eloquent or persuasive. He used to revolve continually round the same idea." This was true, and the idea round which Talleyrand revolved was an European peace, the alliance of the great powers, the enlightenment of mankind, the advance of civilization and the arts, and the diffusion of knowledge. Although this fatigued Napoleon, he did not the less appreciate the counsels of so sage an admirer, and he never departed for a campaign without bringing in his rear, beside his legion of surgeons, his foreign minister, also skilled in the art of arresting the course of the destroyer.

CHAPTER XII.

Created Prince of Benevento—Various diplomatic labors—Death of Pitt—Fox opens a correspondence with Talleyrand—Talleyrand seeks to obtain peace through Lord Yarmouth—Campaign against Prussia—Talleyrand again follows the army—Severe labors—Temporary Quartermaster in Poland—Letters of the Emperor—Negotiations at Tilsit—His last official act—Conversation with the Emperor—Obtains the dignity of Vice Grand-Elector, and retires from the ministry—Motives for this step—Spanish affairs—Conferences at Fontainebleau—Various projects—Talleyrand's connection with the invasion of Spain—Differs from the Emperor—Loses favor.

ON the 5th of June, 1806, Talleyrand was created Prince of Benevento. This rank was one among a number, which the Emperor, after many consultations with this minister particularly, had determined to create, for the purpose of reconstituting the order of the nobility. The new titles were conferred as rewards of services, civil or military, and were accompanied with an endowment of revenue, intended to be a sufficient permanent provision for the families of those thus honored. The principality assigned to Talleyrand was situated in Italy, within the jurisdiction of the kingdom of Naples. In May, 1807, the Emperor, in a letter to his brother Joseph, then king of Naples, says, "I recommend the principality of Benevento to your care. Treat it well; for I should be sorry if you were to do anything to annoy the Prince, with whom I am perfectly well satisfied."

At the close of the Austerlitz campaign, Talleyrand concluded the peace of Presburg, signed on the 26th of December, with Austria, and at the same time aided the Emperor in bringing Prussia to terms. He then returned to his post in Paris.

The death of Mr. Pitt, which occurred in a month after the peace of Presburg, effected a great apparent change in the relations of France and England, and the advent of Mr. Fox and his party to power, offered some ground for thinking that a peace was not altogether impracticable. An accidental circumstance brought about a communication between the two governments, well calculated to mitigate feelings of mutual hostility. A miscreant had the ignorance and baseness to gain access personally to Mr. Fox, and propose to him to get Napoleon assassinated. Mr. Fox had the wretch delivered into the hands of the police, and immediately wrote a dispatch to Talleyrand, denouncing in suitable terms the proposition which had been made, and placing at his disposal all the means necessary to prosecute the author, if the thing should be regarded as worthy of serious notice.

Napoleon, sensible of this proceeding on the part of a hostile government, authorized Talleyrand to reply to it, which he did, in the following terms :—

“ I have placed before his majesty the letter of your excellency. ‘ I recognize in this,’ said the Emperor, ‘ the honor and virtue which have always animated Mr. Fox. Thank him for me, and assure him that, whether the policy of his sovereign, leads to the continuance of the war, or the quarrel, so useless to humanity, should be brought to as speedy a conclusion as both nations ought to desire, I shall equally rejoice in the new character which, by this proceeding, the war has already assumed, and which is the presage of what may be expected from a cabinet, in which I am glad to recognize the principles of Mr. Fox, who is a man so eminently fitted to perceive what is finest and most truly grand in affairs.’ ”

Mr. Fox addressed to Talleyrand a note in answer to this,

conceived in a frank and cordial spirit, in which, without reserve or diplomatic finesse, he offered peace on honorable conditions, and by means, as sure as they were prompt. A correspondence ensued between these two distinguished men, in the course of which, each of them joined to their public dispatches private letters, full of frankness and cordiality. The necessity under which the British government felt itself placed, of insisting on including Russia in the arrangements, soon appeared to constitute a formidable obstacle to any favorable issue, this being opposed by Napoleon. Talleyrand, whose dominant thought was directed toward the attainment of a durable peace, which he regarded as the highest interest of France, spared no exertions or persuasions to induce Napoleon to avail himself of the opportunity offered by the presence of Mr. Fox in power to continue the negotiations with England.

Another incident also lent itself to foster the friendly feeling which had already been produced. During these negotiations an exchange of prisoners between France and England was agreed upon. Among those detained in Paris, was Lord Yarmouth, afterward Marquis of Hertford, who was then, although a Tory, an intimate friend of Mr. Fox, and from his predilections for the Continent in general, and Paris in particular, an ardent partisan for peace. This young nobleman, who, during his detention, had moved in the best Parisian society, was well known to Talleyrand, who was an admirer of the English aristocracy. Talleyrand, with his usual tact, seized this opportunity of turning his private intimacies to the public advantage. He invited Lord Yarmouth to his hotel, and there in a conversation marked by exquisite tact, and apparent frankness, assured him that the Emperor most ardently desired peace, that he wished to put aside diplomatic formalities, and

agree frankly on conditions mutually honorable and acceptable; that such conditions could present no difficulty, inasmuch as it was no longer desired to dispute with England the possession of Malta and the Cape; that the question was, therefore, narrowed to a small compass, especially since Napoleon was willing to restore Hanover to George III.

After receiving these and other confidential communications from Talleyrand, Lord Yarmouth left Paris, promising to return immediately with the secret of the intentions of Mr. Fox. In fact, Lord Yarmouth did accordingly return with powers from Mr. Fox, and was subsequently joined by Lord Lauderdale; but notwithstanding the earnest desire of Talleyrand for peace, the complication of the affairs of the Continent rendered all these exertions abortive.

When Napoleon set out for the campaign against Prussia, in September, 1806, he took Talleyrand with him. It was after the overwhelming battle of Jena, which left the King of Prussia absolutely dependent upon the generosity of his conqueror, that Napoleon drew up and promulgated the formidable "Berlin decree," by which he replied to the proclamation of the new and extreme maritime assumptions sent forth by England. England sought, by mere proclamation, to blockade the coasts of the continent. Napoleon, in retaliation, endeavored to blockade the continent itself. This policy has had its censors and its admirers. Whatever may be its merits or demerits, Talleyrand strongly recommended it in an elaborate, and able report, made to the emperor.

Following in the track of the army, that he might be at hand to secure by his diplomacy the fruits of conquests, Talleyrand found this tour into the centre of the Continent by no means a pleasure excursion. The roads were in a miserable

condition, through the immense trains of wagons and of artillery passing over them, and the winter quarters of the troops were far from comfortable. His labors as negotiator, since the affairs of Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Poland, were in a thorough complication, were probably never before so continuous or so difficult. While at Warsaw, attending to the concerns of Poland, he was also on an emergency converted by the emperor into a sort of quarter-master for the army. The Poles had contributed but little military assistance to the conqueror, from whom they expected so much. He was desirous that they should furnish him some supplies, and therefore gave Talleyrand full powers for making bargains at any price whatever. Since this letter of Napoleon's is rather a curiosity, as between an emperor and his minister for foreign affairs, it is inserted.

OSTERODE, 12th March, 10 at night.

I received your letter of the 10th, at three this afternoon. I have 300,000 rations of biscuit at Warsaw. It takes eight days to come from Warsaw to Osterode; work miracles to dispatch 50,000 rations to me every day. Endeavor also to send me 2,000 quarts of spirits per day. At this moment the fate of Europe and the most extensive schemes depend upon supplies of provisions. To beat the Russians, if I have bread, is mere child's play. I have millions; I do not refuse to give some of them. All that you do will be rightly done; but, on the receipt of this letter, there must be sent off to me by land, by way of Malawa and Takroczin, 50,000 rations of biscuit and 2,000 quarts. It is a matter of eighty wagons per day, which must be paid for handsomely. If the patriotism of the Poles cannot make this effort, they are not good for much. The importance of what I am desiring of you is greater than all the negotiations in the world. Send for the *ordonnateur*, General Lemarrois, and the most influential persons of the government. Spend

money; I shall approve whatever you do. Biscuit and brandy—that is all we want. Those 300,000 rations of biscuit, and those eighteen or twenty thousand quarts of brandy, which may reach us in a few days—these are the things to foil the combinations of all the powers.

Provisions were plenty in Poland, but great difficulties were found in organizing the means of conveyance. Talleyrand, however, executed this unusual commission of the emperor with promptness and success.

Some extracts from another letter from the emperor to his minister, written about the same time, are interesting, especially as they furnish a good specimen of his majesty's direct and forcible style of thought and expression, and his bluntness in giving his opinion of his friends, even to their face.

OSTERODE, March, 1807.

It is true that Andréossy* is not a man of talent or a first-rate observer and perhaps he exaggerates what he perceives; but you are credulous; it is as easy to seduce you as you find it easy to seduce others. Any one can deceive you by flattering you. M. de Vincent caresses you to cheat you. Austria fears us, but she hates us. She is arming in the hope of profiting by our defeat. * * * * *

Or, in short, is she preparing to make war, to try again her strength against us, when we are fighting all the rest of the Continent? Be it so. I am ready for my new enemy. But let her not think to surprise me. Only women or children can suppose that I shall busy myself in the wilds of Russia without having taken proper precautions. Austria will not find me unready. She will find in Saxony, in Bavaria, and in Italy, armies to resist her.

She will find me fall back on her with all my weight, crush her, and punish her more severely than I have punished any of the kingdoms I

* Andréossy, who was the French Minister in Vienna, reported the increasing hostility of Austria. Vincent was the Austrian Minister in Warsaw, where Talleyrand was.

have conquered. * * * Let her explain herself. Let me know what she means.

The battles of Eylau and Friedland brought Napoleon to the Niemen, and opened the way for the conferences of Tilsit. Talleyrand, who had gone, after his arduous labors of the winter, to obtain a little quiet and recreation at Dantzic, was again summoned by the emperor to head-quarters, that he might lend his aid in the negotiations. After the ceremonies which marked the meeting of the two emperors at Tilsit, the several negotiators fell to work, and after the labor of some weeks, Talleyrand had the honor of signing the celebrated treaty. This, in fact, was his last official act as a minister of Napoleon.

While he was with the army he had, with great perseverance, urged upon the emperor the appointment of deputies to the grand dignitaries, since several of these high functionaries, as Louis and Joseph Bonaparte, and Eugene de Beauharnais, were now foreign sovereigns. These deputies were to be designated as the vice-constable, vice-grand elector, and vice-chancellor of state. Talleyrand coveted for himself the dignity of vice-grand elector; directing himself the important negotiations, and leaving to a minister the more ordinary duties of the office for foreign affairs. He claimed this position in consequence of his age, infirmities, and need of repose and relief from the more onerous duties of his office. By his management and perseverance he obtained a promise from the emperor, in part satisfactory to his wishes, though the latter did not agree to rescind the rule he laid down at the creation of the empire, that none of the high dignitaries should take an active part in the administration.

On the emperor's return from his long absence from Paris,

which was terminated by the peace of Tilsit, all who had any reason to expect rewards for their services during the late war, crowded into the saloons of St. Cloud. Talleyrand appeared among the solicitors for favors, and had the advantage of being able to remind the emperor of his promise. Napoleon was by no means pleased with the pertinacity of his minister. He said, quite sharply : " I cannot comprehend your impatience to become a grand dignitary, and to quit a post in which you have acquired importance, and from which I am aware you have reaped great advantages. You ought to know that I will not suffer any one to be at the same time grand dignitary and minister ; that the foreign affairs cannot then be reserved for you, and thus you will lose an eminent post, for which you are qualified, to gain a title which will be no more than a satisfaction granted to your vanity."

" I am worn out," replied Talleyrand, not noticing the emperor's allusion to the gains which had accrued incidentally to his administration of foreign affairs, " I have need of rest."

" Be it so," said the emperor, " you shall be grand dignitary, but not you alone." Then addressing Prince Cambacères, " Berthier," said he, " has rendered me as much service as any person whatever ; it would be unjust not to make him grand dignitary, too. Draw up a decree by which M. de Talleyrand shall be raised to the dignity of vice-grand elector, and Berthier to that of vice-constable, and bring it to me to sign." Talleyrand retired, and the emperor expressed more at length to Prince Cambacères all the dissatisfaction he felt. " It was in this manner," remarks Thiers, " that M. de Talleyrand quitted the ministry for foreign affairs, and with great prejudice to him and to public business, withdrew from the person of the emperor."

The decree, for which Talleyrand had so long sought, was signed on the 14th of August, 1807. M. de Champagny, minister of the interior, who had had some limited experience as ambassador to Austria, was appointed to the vacant post of minister for foreign affairs. The dignity now conferred upon the prince of Benevento was for life, and was rendered a more acceptable sinecure by the connection with it of a salary of about \$100,000 a year.

The retirement of Talleyrand from the active control of foreign policy at the moment when Napoleon had reached the zenith of his prosperity and popularity gave rise to many conjectures, and presents another of the mysteries which hang over various portions of his life. He was naturally indolent, and had within reach a splendid and honorable sinecure. Repose was without doubt peculiarly attractive to him. But he was ambitious too, and in the service of his ambition had labored with considerable industry through the most difficult diplomatic duties of Napoleon's reign; and, moreover, immediately on the fall of the emperor, he returned to his old post. Love of ease could not have been his sole reason for retiring. Can it be supposed, that he was gifted with such pre-eminent perspicacity as, at this period of towering grandeur and triumphant power, to be able to perceive the evidences of Napoleon's approaching decline? This, with all respect for his peculiar talents, we must consider quite doubtful. Some ascribed his retirement to his having opened negotiations for peace with England, without the cognizance of the emperor; while others have been inclined to consider the movement as one compelled by the intrigues of Fouché. Another class has sought for the cause, in the strong disapprobation which the minister entertained for the policy which the emperor pursued,

toward Spain. This matter deserves some consideration on its own account, even though it may not explain the obscure point of the resignation of Talleyrand. It does not explain this question, inasmuch as the consultations between Napoleon and Talleyrand respecting the affairs of Spain, and the difference of opinion between them touching the policy to be pursued, did not occur until after Talleyrand had retired from the foreign office. There is no evidence that Napoleon had decided the question of the dethronement of the Bourbons of Spain till after the treaty of Tilsit.

Napoleon had certainly, for some time before the invasion of Spain, cherished a purpose, quite distinctly formed, of removing the family of Bourbon from the thrones occupied by them in Europe. He had already executed this purpose in regard to Naples. On his return from Tilsit, and during a kind of pleasure sojourn of the court at Fontainebleau, he was noticed to be deeply engrossed in thought. His most intimate counsellors were unacquainted with the subject that thus manifestly weighed upon his mind. Talleyrand divined it, and led the conversation toward it. Napoleon immediately evinced signs of pleasure, and acknowledged that the affairs of the Peninsula absorbed his attention. The ex-minister, who, in consequence of the emperor's displeasure at his persisting in relinquishing the post where he was so much needed, had been treated for two months with extreme coldness, was now taken into the most intimate confidence. The two were seen constantly together. Napoleon, excited by the vehemence of his thoughts and the ardor of his ambition, would pace rapidly through the vast galleries of the palace, while Talleyrand, with his crippled foot, would labor hard to keep up with him. The affairs of Portugal were soon settled. Talleyrand's plan was not adopted, as not

being decided enough. General Junot, a favorite aid-de-camp, was ordered to proceed to Lisbon by forced marches. The reigning family hastily packed up valuables and furniture, deserted the throne in the Old World, and under the protection of the British fleet, passed over to Brazil to enjoy the remnant of their authority in the New. Napoleon's first purpose was to share Portugal with Spain, but he soon passed beyond this more moderate limit of ambition, and determined to interfere in the affairs of Spain herself. There is no doubt that Talleyrand flattered and fostered these inclinations. Napoleon's protection, indeed, was sought by both Charles IV., king of Spain, and Ferdinand, the heir-apparent, the latter of whom was very honestly desirous of removing from power Emanuel Godoy, the special favorite of the queen. This minister had dishonored the royal house of Spain in the eyes of the world by his scandalous connection with the queen; and by the inefficiency of his administration had reduced the kingdom to a pitiable condition.

The plans discussed by Napoleon and those in his confidence were three. The first was, to give a French princess in marriage to Ferdinand, without requiring any sacrifice on the part of Spain. This would rid the country of the rule of the favorite, and insure it the powerful support of the emperor, while its independence would be retained under its own sovereigns. The second was, to give a French princess in marriage to Ferdinand, and with this gift and its advantages to demand the cession of certain Spanish territory to France, and the opening of the Spanish colonies to the French.

The third plan was, to dethrone the Bourbons and to place one of the Bonapartes upon the vacant throne.

The first plan did not accord at all with the ambition of

Napoleon, though it was the one of them all which would have given the most strength to his own power ; and Talleyrand had not the courage to maintain it, though he was now somewhat anxious regarding the results likely to issue from his own influence with the emperor. He had not been contented to remain under the frown of imperial power, and he had sought a return to favor by fostering the ambitious projects of his sovereign respecting Spain. But not possessing that unreasonable confidence in the resources of the nation for universal and constant war, which became the ruin of Napoleon, he already retreated before the consequences of his own counsels. Talleyrand urged the second plan, as to his mind it was more moderate and safe. But Napoleon, both more bold and more sagacious in this matter, argued rightly that it would be as easy to hold the entire kingdom, with one of his own family at the centre of power, as it would be to keep possession of certain large provinces, the inhabitants of which would hate with ancient Spanish pride, a transfer of allegiance to France, while the Bourbons were left upon their throne. The project of dethronement, which Napoleon finally adopted and executed, the prince of Benevento did disapprove of and oppose, and to such a degree and in so open a manner, that it led to a wide and final estrangement between himself and the emperor. Yet we can see no peculiar virtue attaching to this opposition of the prince, for he actually urged the adoption of a plan, which was marked by as great injustice and absolutism as the dethronement itself. And yet Talleyrand was always able to maintain that he had not approved of the enterprise against Spain. It is certainly true that he did not approve of it in the form which it ultimately took. Yet his claim to freedom from responsibility

in the whole matter is not supported by his own dispatches nor by other testimony, and can be seen by what has now been stated to be sustained only by an equivocation.

The purpose of dethronement and the measures by which it was accomplished he always condemned. Of the seizure of the Spanish princes he spoke in the sternest terms of condemnation. When he heard this fact from the lips of the emperor himself, he is represented to have made the following sharp and courageous speech—"Sire, a young man of family may gamble away his last farthing—the heritage of his ancestors—the dower of his mother—the portion of his sisters—and yet be courted and admired for his wit—be sought for his talents or distinction—but let him once be detected in *cheating* at the game, and he is lost—society is for ever shut against him." With these words he turned upon his heel, leaving the emperor pale and quivering with rage, and vowing vengeance against the bold speaker of the unwelcome truth. So runs the story ; but in it, as in other accounts of unpleasant interviews between the two, we must suspect the presence of some degree of exaggeration.

CHAPTER XIII.

Valençay—Letter of the Emperor, appointing Talleyrand keeper over the Spanish Princes—Estrangement between the Emperor and Talleyrand—His high position, notwithstanding—Napoleon takes him with him to Erfurth—His intrigues there—Increasing bitterness of feeling between Napoleon and Talleyrand—Campaign against Russia—Napoleon offers him the Ministry for Foreign Affairs—His open hostility to the Emperor—Threatened imprisonment, yet appointed one of the Council of Regency—Stormy interview.

TALLEYRAND, by an act of the emperor's munificence, had become possessor of the château of Valençay. To this château Napoleon sent the heir of the Spanish throne, and his companions, making Talleyrand their keeper. This looks certainly like an attempt to revenge himself upon the Prince of Benevento, for his undisguised indignation at that policy which had brought this unfortunate young man into the power of the emperor. In appointing Talleyrand the custodian of these, at the time, important personages, Napoleon conveyed to him the following letter :

TO THE PRINCE OF BENEVENTO.

BAYONNE, *May 9th*, 1808.

“The Prince of the Asturias, the Infant Don Antonio, his uncle, and the Infant Don Carlos his brother, will set out from this place on Wednesday next, rest on Friday and Saturday at Bordeaux, and on the following Wednesday reach Valençay. Be there on Monday evening. My chamberlain De Tournon will proceed thither by post, in order to prepare everything for their reception. Take care that there be plenty of table and bed linen, and that the kitchen be well supplied. There will be

about ten or twelve persons in their train, and double the number of servants. I have given orders to the general who acts as chief inspector of the gendarmerie at Paris, to go thither, and organize the service of *surveillance*.

“I desire that the princes be received without external pomp, but heartily and with sympathy, and that you do everything in your power to amuse them. If you have a theatre at Valençay, and can engage some comedians to come, it will not be a bad plan. You had better bring Madame de Talleyrand thither, with four or five other ladies. If the Prince of the Asturias should fall in love with some pretty woman, it would not be amiss, especially if we were sure of her. It is a matter of great importance to me, that the Prince of the Asturias should not take any false step. I desire, therefore, that he be amused and occupied. Stern policy would demand that I should shut him up in Bitche, or some other fortress; but, as he has thrown himself into my arms, and has promised to do nothing without my orders, and that everything shall go on in Spain as I desire, I have adopted the plan of sending him to a country-seat, surrounding him with pleasure and *surveillance*. This will probably last throughout the month of May, and a part of June, when the affairs of Spain may have taken a turn, and I shall then know what part to act. With regard to yourself, your mission is extremely honorable. To receive under your roof three illustrious personages, in order to amuse them, is quite in keeping with the character of the nation, and also with your rank.”

Talleyrand did all in his power to make the stay of his distinguished guests agreeable. This became no light duty; as instead of remaining a month or so, they were prisoners in France for several years, until the decline of the empire opened the way for their return into Spain.

The estrangement between Napoleon and Talleyrand, from whatever cause it may have arisen, had a serious and unfavorable influence upon the fortunes of the former. The vast ambition and great military prowess of the emperor, and the

unequaled good sense, moderation, and coolness of his minister for foreign affairs, seemed to have been made to go together.

The latter knew how to throw obstacles in the way of his master when rage and passion carried him away, and prompted precipitate measures ; thus giving him the opportunity to recover his tranquillity, and to act with ability and dignity. Thus he could say, with some exaggeration indeed, "The emperor always compromised himself when he was enabled to do anything a quarter of an hour earlier, which I could have induced him to postpone to a quarter of an hour later."

Talleyrand, now relieved from the cares and perplexities of office, and invested with the most exalted honors of the empire, may be regarded as passing through the most prosperous period of his long career. Next in official dignity to the brother of the emperor, as Vice Grand-Elector, he was also Grand Chamberlain of the imperial court, beside retaining the principality of Benevento.

A year after his retirement from office, he was called on to attend Napoleon at the celebrated interview with Alexander of Russia, at Erfurth. He attended on this occasion, not in a diplomatic capacity, but in his official character of Grand Chamberlain, and did the honors of the imperial court at entertainments, where kings and sovereign princes were guests, and where the fate of nations was decided. In the midst of these magnificent convivialities, under the guise of which, negotiations so important were carried on, the emperor felt once more the inestimable value of the counsels of his former minister, and observed to him one day with unaffected regret, "We ought never to have lost your aid." This was, however, the last expression of accordance which passed between these illustrious men. Yet it was not possible for the ex-minister to be

present at such a conference, and entirely abstain from exerting his influence in promoting the success of his own opinions. It is even asserted that he secretly endeavored to frustrate the projects of the emperor. Lord Holland states, that "from a questionable preference of the interests of peace, to the official duties of his confidential station, he ventured secretly to apprise the Emperor of Russia, that the object of the interview was to engage him in a confederacy against Austria, and even went so far as to advise him to avoid coming to Erfurth, or, if he did, to resist firmly the instances of Napoleon to make war upon Austria. On his arrival there, he had, no doubt, frequent opportunities of communicating with Talleyrand, and that minister's sentiments,* highly flattering to Alexander, were not calculated, nor perhaps intended, to rivet or to perpetuate his confidence in Napoleon." When the conferences at Erfurth had closed, and the two carriages were drawn up to the door in different directions, to convey the two emperors to their respective dominions, Talleyrand whispered to Alexander, as he went down the stairs, "Ah! if your majesty could make a mistake in the carriage!"

A few days after Napoleon's return from the campaign in Spain, he held a grand levee, at which, in presence of the grand dignitaries of the Empire, he thus addressed the Grand Chamberlain. Having reminded him of his conduct at Fontainebleau, and of his endeavors to persuade him to commence the war with Spain, yet he told him that he did not reproach him with this as a fault, because he had afterward followed his advice. He then added: "You have changed your opinion. When you thought you foresaw a change of fortunes, you made a merit of giving me advice exactly opposed

* He was not minister for foreign affairs then.

to that which you had urged upon me for six weeks, and turned it into a fault on my part, not to have followed it. I know all; I can forget all; but when a person creates for himself interests opposed to mine, and acts against me, he ought to have the modesty to resign an office so nearly attached to my person." Talleyrand remained silent, but he readily understood that he was already dismissed. In fact, M. de Montesquieu, his successor, as Grand Chamberlain, had been in possession of his appointment for two hours. Already relieved by his own resignation from all responsibility in the government, he was now, by the emperor's act, estranged from his person. From this time Talleyrand proved to be daily more and more severe in his judgments of the emperor's measures, and Napoleon more and more distrustful of his ex-minister of foreign affairs. They fell into a continual collision, irritating to the diplomate, and undignified in the sovereign. When Talleyrand spoke, he never failed to throw bitterness into his words, and if he did not speak, there were not wanting those who put offensive language in his mouth. From this resulted often scenes of violence and maladresse on the one part, borne always with that incomparable *sang froid* which has become so well known on the other, as to be historical. Some writers represent the policy of the emperor towards his personal enemies as unwise, because too undecided; that he menaced too much, without punishing; that at times petulant and arrogant, he excited his opponents, yet left the means of retaliation in their hands. This appears to have been his course towards Talleyrand. Perhaps thinking that he had not sufficient grounds for severity, he acted as if expecting to accomplish something by mere menace. This was ineffectual with a man of the character and position of his ex-minister. Thus he wounded and irritated Talleyrand without striking

him, and actually awakened in him those views and purposes which he desired to prevent.

When the emperor decided on the expedition against Russia in 1812, attacking a power almost inaccessible at the moment when he was menaced on every side at home, the sagacious diplomatist saw the downfall of the Empire fast approaching. He resided in Paris during the five years of his estrangement from Napoleon, living in princely splendor; for independently of the wealth he had accumulated, he still held the magnificent sinecure of the Vice-Grand Electorship, with its one hundred thousand dollars a year. After the disasters of the campaign of 1813, under the pressure of his great reverses, Napoleon again had recourse to Talleyrand, desiring him to resume his charge of foreign affairs. But a long interview on the subject was attended with no result. Talleyrand's advice to the emperor at the time, was judicious, but it was not followed: "Here 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." How could he assume office, when the emperor was utterly unwilling to allow him to carry out his well-matured views of foreign policy? But beside, the emperor's offer of office was accompanied with the condition of the resignation of his dignity and income as Vice-Grand Elector. Talleyrand argued, "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." On the whole, it would have been a strange sight to behold Talleyrand attaching himself to the falling fortunes of any dynasty. He never was guilty of so absurdly disinterested a proceeding!

After this failure to come to an understanding, these eminent individuals regarded each other with increasing distrust. The sallies of temper on the part of the one, and the utterance, in private, of biting sarcasm on the part of the other, became more frequent.—“ Scarcely a day passed,” says Savary, then 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, “ This is the beginning of the end.” 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 that 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. Decrès, he one day drew that minister toward the chimney, and opening a volume of Montesquieu, said, in a 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 for the oppressed subject, except’ ” “ Quite enough !” said Decrès, “ I will hear no more: shut the book.” And Talleyrand closed the book, as if nothing had happened.

“ In short,” says Savary, “ I now began to watch him narrowly ; for he spoke a language adapted to the sentiments of every one, and was, beside, 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 Talleyrand, in the presence of several of the ministers,

he said, "I think, for my own security, 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 him a member of the council of regency, established in case of his own abdication.

Madame D'Abrantes, a clever narrator of political gossip, but one whose stories should be taken with much allowance for exaggeration, thus relates a scene at the imperial palace. It occurred just before the emperor's campaign, in 1814. "It is said that the emperor, on the eve of his departure to join the army, summoned M. de Talleyrand to the Tuileries, and there spoke to him in a tone that might be called more than firm, of the affairs of Spain. It would appear that the emperor was not at that time very well acquainted with the style of conversation which was maintained in the coterie of M. de Talleyrand, when the affairs of Spain came under discussion. 'Well, Monsieur de Talleyrand,' said the emperor, walking straight up to him, 'I think it is somewhat strange that you should allege that I made you the gaoler of Ferdinand, when you yourself made the proposition to me.' Talleyrand assumed one of his inflexible looks; half closing his little eyes, and screwing up his lips, he stood with one hand resting upon the back of a chair, and the other in his waistcoat pocket. Nothing increases anger so much as coolness. The emperor was violently irritated at Talleyrand's immovability of countenance and coolness of manner, and he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, and stamping his foot, 'Why do you not answer me?' The same silence was maintained. Napoleon's eyes flashed fire. Talleyrand became alarmed, not without reason, and then he stammered out the following

words, which were anything but satisfactory : ' I am at a loss to understand what your majesty means.' Napoleon attempted to speak, but rage choked his utterance. He advanced first one step, then a second, then a third, until at length he came close up to the Prince of Benevento. He then raised his hand to the height of the prince's chin, and continuing to advance, he forced Talleyrand to recede, which was no easy matter, owing to the defect in one of his feet. However, it was more advisable to recede than to advance, for the emperor's little hand was still held up, and was clenched in the form necessary for giving what is vulgarly called a *coup de poing*. However, it was not given. The emperor merely drove the Prince of Benevento, half walking, half hobbling, along the whole length of the large cabinet of the *Pavillon de Flore*. At length the prince reached the wall of the apartment, and Napoleon repeated, ' So you presume to say that you did not advise the captivity of the princes?' Here the scene ended. It had already been too long, and at the same time not long enough." * * * * "On the evening of the day on which this scene was acted, the Prince of Benevento had company. The chamberlain on duty at the Tuileries had overheard everything, and had repeated all he knew. * * It was reported that the Prince de Benevento had received a *coup de poing* from the emperor. One of the visitors, who was on familiar terms with the prince, stepped up to him, saying, ' Ah, monseigneur ! what have I heard ?'

" ' What ?' inquired the prince, with one of his cool, impenetrable looks.

" ' I have been informed that the emperor treated you ' —

" ' Oh !' interrupted the prince, ' that is a thing that happens every day, every day.'—The prince had heard no mention

of the *coup de poing*, of which he flattered himself nobody knew ; and when he said, *every day*, he merely meant that the emperor was out of temper, and unreasonable, every day.

“ M. de Talleyrand’s friend, however, who had no very refined notions of etiquette, as may be readily imagined from his address to the prince, took it into his head that Talleyrand was in the daily habit of receiving a blow with the fist, or, at least, a box on the ear from the emperor. This mistake gave rise to a fund of merriment, when it came to be reported that the Prince of Benevento daily submitted to the emperor’s correction with that indifference, which might be inferred from the negligent shrug of the shoulders that accompanied the words, ‘ Every day—Mon Dieu—every day ! ’ ”

CHAPTER XIV.

Alleged intrigues with the Bourbons—Napoleon's reverses and position—Talleyrand's position—His connection with the allies and the Bourbons—The party of the Restoration gathers around him—The Emperor Alexander a guest in the Hotel Talleyrand—The conference of the allies—Talleyrand's speech—Declaration against Napoleon—Talleyrand assembles the Senate—Speech to that body—Provisional Government, and Talleyrand at the head of it—Project of a charter—Proclamation of the Provisional Government—Adherence of different bodies—Anecdote.

It has been alleged, and to some extent credited, that during the two years preceding the fall of the Empire, Talleyrand had been deeply engaged in intrigues with the dethroned Bourbons, having in view their restoration. Of this charge there is no positive proof. There are many probabilities against it, furnished from his usual caution and prudence as a statesman, and from the great uncertainties of the public feeling and of the ultimate policy of Napoleon, which could not but render him above all men peculiarly circumspect. The truth seems to be this, that the ex-minister held relations to individuals connected with the allied powers and with the Bourbons, through whom he received intimations of their readiness to be served by him, without in any way actually committing himself to any party outside of France. After the allied armies crossed the Rhine, Talleyrand held more frequent and decided communication with those in whose hands it was apparent the destinies of the nation were to be placed. Yet even then it is certain that the

return of the Bourbons was thought of by all but themselves as a remote contingency. It was out of the question for so shrewd a manager as Talleyrand to be committed at that time to such an issue. He was not devoted enough to the imperial regime to desire to maintain it against the good of his country ; and the question soon was clearly reduced to this, whether Napoleon was to be sacrificed to France, or France to Napoleon. As a public man and a citizen he was wisely regarding the future of his country and of himself.

After crossing the frontiers, and transferring the negotiations to Chatillon, the allies declared openly that they separated the French nation from its sovereign ; that they were not indisposed to treat with the one on terms and conditions which would not be granted to the other. In this state of things, Talleyrand did not hesitate to listen to overtures made to him by secret agents, nor to lend himself to negotiations having for their object to substitute another government for the military dictatorship of Napoleon. He had preserved numerous diplomatic relations with the courts of Europe. August persons had regarded him with friendship, had rendered homage to his talents, and admired the firmness with which he had opposed himself to the gigantic projects of conquest in which the emperor had indulged. Communications were, in fine, opened with him at Paris by the agents of the Congress at Chatillon, and still more directly by Prince Metternich and M. Nesselrode. In these negotiations all the contingencies incidental to the fall of Napoleon were considered ; such as a regency under the Empress Maria Louisa, with the ultimate succession of the king of Rome ; a monarchy, with a new prince, to be chosen by the nation ; and finally, the restoration of the Bourbons, if that measure appeared to be most conducive to the establishment of general tranquillity.

M. Arnaud de Vitrolles had been commissioned to sound the allies on the question of the restoration. This agent, however, being also connected with the exiled family, and influenced by them, exceeded his powers, and ventured to negotiate directly for the restoration of Louis XVIII., whereas he was only authorized by Talleyrand to mention it as a contingency, and ascertain the feelings of the allies upon it. It appears that at that time his projects were but coldly received, so entirely had the principles of legitimacy been banished from the thoughts of Europe. He declared that the cabinets of the allies showed no preference for any particular system, provided that France was deprived of the power of disturbing the general tranquillity, and that even Austria was well disposed to treat with Napoleon, or with a regency. Thus, it will be seen, how little the sovereigns of Europe cared, or even thought about the Bourbons on the very eve of the restoration.

As the fall of Napoleon became more and more evident, the discussion of the measures to be taken for the security of the country in that contingency was conducted with less reserve. Talleyrand was the centre round which this movement naturally took place. His undisputed ability as a statesman and diplomatist, his participation in all that was well-ordered in the Revolution, and his abstinence from all participation in the atrocities which attended it, his aristocratic descent, and the extreme polish and refinement of his manners, the opposition which he was known to have made to the most culpable aggressions of Napoleon, especially to the invasion of Russia and Spain, all these considerations rendered him more eminently fitted than any other individual to negotiate with the invaders of France, now expected, with their victorious hosts, at the gates of Paris.

On the approach of the allies to Paris, the Council of Regency, of which Talleyrand, as Vice Grand Elector, was a member, deliberated whether, in case of the capital being declared in a state of siege, the empress and the King of Rome should remain there. It was at first decided in the affirmative, and this decision was warmly supported by Talleyrand. Joseph Bonaparte and the Arch-Chancellor Le Brun, however, produced an order of Napoleon, that the regent should quit Paris if the enemy should arrive under its walls. It was therefore ultimately decided that the regency should be transferred to Blois, attended by all the great officers of state, and functionaries of the government.

Napoleon, writing to his brother Joseph on the 7th of February, 1814, remarks: "The bad spirit of such men as Talleyrand, who endeavored to paralyze the nation, prevented my having early recourse to arms, and this is the consequence." Again on the 14th, he writes to the same: "If Talleyrand has anything to do with the project of leaving the empress in Paris, in case of the approach of the enemy, it is treachery I repeat, distrust that man. I have dealt with him for the last sixteen years; once I even liked him; but he is undoubtedly the greatest enemy to our house since it has been abandoned by fortune. Keep to my advice. I know more than all those people. If we are beaten, and I am killed, you will hear of it before the rest of my family. Send the empress and the King of Rome to Rambouillet; order the senate, the *conseil d'état*, and all the troops, to assemble on the Loire; leave in Paris a prefect, or an imperial commissioner, or some mayors."

This measure liberated Talleyrand from the immediate presence of the government in the capital, and rendered the secret negotiations with the allied powers more easy and safe.

But as a member of the Council of Regency, and a high dignity of the State, it was his duty to accompany the government to Blois. He accordingly presented the semblance of doing this, and was actually leaving Paris when he was stopped at the Barrière de Main by a company of the National Guard, and compelled to return. This proceeding had been pre-arranged by himself, and it may be easily imagined that no very serious resistance was offered to those who re-conducted him to his hotel.

In fine, the signature of the capitulation which followed the armistice concluded by Marmont, enabled Talleyrand to continue openly his negotiation with the Emperor Alexander, and the allied sovereigns. He assured them that the existing authorities in Paris could easily be brought to unite in a movement against Napoleon, and undertook to manage the affair. Alexander, on the other hand, to inspire all parties in Paris with more confidence in the power and influence of Talleyrand, consented to confer upon him the honor of becoming his guest, during his sojourn in the capital. While Alexander was approaching Paris, carefully, and with apparent reluctance, he received from Talleyrand this laconic message: "You venture nothing, when you may safely venture everything; venture once more."

Talleyrand then inhabited the splendid hotel at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli, and the Rue St. Florentin, which he continued to occupy till his death, and which still bears his name. The suite of rooms on the first floor, which overlooks the gardens of the Tuileries, was prepared for the reception of Alexander. From the windows of his apartments, he could also look out upon the old Place de Louis XV., where Louis XVI. and his queen were executed. On the afternoon of the

31st of May, 1814, after the triumphal entry of the allies into Paris, the Russian emperor took possession of the princely apartments offered him by Talleyrand.

In proportion as the clouds gathered round the imperial throne, Talleyrand saw his saloons filled with every shade and variety of opinion, from the staunch republican to the enthusiast for divine right. All assembled there pell-mell; scrutinized each other's looks, and vainly tried to read the future in the visage of their wily host. Talleyrand, with consummate tact and flexibility, had a ready reply for each inquirer, to excite their hopes, or flatter their self-love. On the night of the 30th, he prepared a proclamation, to be published in Paris by Prince Schwartzberg, in the name of the allied sovereigns, which afforded another example of his tact. In it, all parties found something to raise their hopes, or to tranquillize their fears.

The suspension of all regular government was a state too dangerous to be allowed to continue a moment longer than it could possibly be avoided. On the afternoon of the day on which the allied sovereigns had entered Paris, therefore, a conference, with a view to the immediate settlement of the government, was held in the great saloon of the Hotel Talleyrand. The Emperor Alexander paced up and down the length of the apartment in the most excited manner, declaring that he had been forced from his home by Napoleon's attack upon him, and that he only made war upon the emperor, and not upon France. He addressed Talleyrand in these words: "The French are perfectly free to chose whatever sovereign or government may be most agreeable to them."

Talleyrand now spoke, and gave to the conference a more deliberative tone. Three expedients in the existing state of affairs presented themselves. 1. To make peace with

Napoleon, exacting every practicable guarantee against his future aggressions. 2. The regency of Maria Louisa until the majority of the King of Rome ; and 3d, the recall of the Bourbons. He proceeded to show the numerous objections which would be raised against the sovereignty of Napoleon, which would impose upon the allied powers the necessity of maintaining an army of occupation, besides an exorbitant military establishment. "The allies," said he, "desire peace—a solid and durable peace, in which all Europe shall feel confidence. With Napoleon as a sovereign in France there could be nothing but a truce." He argued equally against the regency, which would, in fact, be nothing but the reign of Napoleon continued under another name. And if it were otherwise, what chance, he argued, would there be of stability for a child under age upon a throne which a great man had failed to establish? How, without the power of genius, the force of age, the resource of glory, could he resist the flood of new ideas and doctrines which was about to overspread the nation? How could he restrain the royalist party, which was already recommencing its attempts with revived hopes, and declaring openly for the return of the Bourbons, whose power, nevertheless, it was desired to limit by the establishment of national rights, and the consecration of the public liberties. In short, the re-establishment of the house of Bourbon on the throne of France was, he contended, the only solution of the question which was practicable and generally acceptable. This measure would put an end to the military dictatorship under which France had succumbed, would give every necessary guarantee for constitutional liberty, and would be the harbinger of a lasting peace. "Here," concluded Talleyrand, "is a fixed, a definite, and intelligible principle on

which we can base our proceedings—the ancient dynasty, and the ancient limits. There are,” he added, addressing himself to the Emperor Alexander, as if replying to the mention of the name of Bernadotte, which he had incidentally made—“there are only two things possible in this case; either Napoleon or Louis XVIII. The emperor can have no other successor on the throne than a king by right. Any one elevated to the rank of king by victory or genius would be beneath him. He is the first of soldiers. After him there is not one in France, or in the world, who could make ten men march in his cause.” Then summing up his opinions in a concise axiom, adapted to fix itself in the mind, he said, “Everything, sire, which is not Napoleon or Louis XVIII., is an intrigue.”

After a more general discussion and consultation, Alexander, striding rapidly up and down the room, finally repeated several times, “I declare, then, that I will not treat with Napoleon.”

“But,” interposed Talleyrand, “this declaration only excludes Napoleon himself. It does not refer to his family.”

“Ah, well,” resumed the Czar, “add—nor with any member of his family.”

Talleyrand having thus gained his point, instantly took a pen and committed the declaration to writing. M. Nesselrode made a fair copy of it after it had received some verbal corrections. It was the most important act of these conferences :

“The armies of the allied powers have occupied the capital of France. The allied sovereigns accept the wish of the French nation. They declare that they will no longer treat with Napoleon Bonaparte, nor with any member of his family. They will respect the integrity of ancient France, as it existed under its legitimate kings. They will recognize and guarantee

the constitution which the French people will frame for itself. They desire, therefore, that the Senate shall appoint a provisional government, which may at once serve to administer the affairs of the country, and prepare the constitution which it shall consider to be most suitable to the French people."

Matters were thus progressing exactly as Talleyrand desired; he worked the strings by which the movements of the actors were directed and governed. He had a two-fold object in view—to accomplish the restoration by the regular play of the constituted authorities, without an *émeute* or a crisis, and to impose on the restored dynasty such a constitution as might give all the desired guarantees for the establishment of the rights and liberties of the people. As yet, nothing was expressly declared about the Bourbons, for they would fall into their place, as a matter of course; but it was adroitly managed that the allies should pledge themselves that the Senate should decide on the constitution—such a constitution "as should appear to be suitable to the French people." Thus the constitution was put forth as the first and chief object, and left to the care of the Senate—the monarch would have to be spoken of later.

Talleyrand's object was to cause that the recall of the Bourbons should have something of a national origin. He therefore exerted all his extraordinary tact to obtain from the Senate the appointment of a provisional government, such as would open the way for that recall by the constituted authorities. But about one hundred of that body were present in Paris. Among these there were many warm supporters of Napoleon; but there was also a strong minority, who were tired of a military despotism, and desired most ardently the establishment of a well-ordered republic. Of these republicans, Talleyrand

took advantage. They were ready to pronounce the dethronement of Napoleon, and to establish a liberal constitution. These objects Talleyrand sought, keeping in abeyance the point of the restoration of the ancient dynasty. On the 1st of April, such members of the Senate as were in Paris met, when Talleyrand addressed them as follows :

“Senators : The letter that I have had the honor of addressing to you, has informed you of the object of this meeting. It is to lay before you certain propositions ; and this step itself will indicate to you the perfect freedom of action which you possess. The circumstances in which you are placed, however grave they may be, cannot be beyond your enlightened patriotism ; and you must all have felt the pressing necessity for immediate decision, so as not to allow another day to pass without re-establishing the action of the administration, that greatest of all wants, by the appointment of a government whose authority, conferred under the exigency of the moment, may re-assure the public.”

This speech, skillfully composed, was received with an unanimous expression of assent. Some members offered a few observations on the extent of the powers of the proposed provisional government. After a short discussion, the following *senatus-consultum* was adopted without any opposition :

“ A provisional government will be established, authorized to administer the affairs of the country, and to present to the Senate such a project of a constitution as may seem best for the French people. This government to be composed of five members, to wit : MM. de Talleyrand, de Beurnonville, Comte de Jaucourt, the Duke de Dalberg, and the Abbé de Montesquieu. The appointment of this government to be notified to the people by an address from the members of the government.”

The senate charged the provisional government to declare in its address to the nation—1st. That the Senate and legislative body should be declared integrant parts of the projected constitution, with such conditions as would ensure liberty of suffrage, and the free expression of opinion. 2d. That the army should retain its rank, pensions, and honors. 3d. That the national debt should be guaranteed. 4th. That the sale of the national domains should be irrevocably maintained. 5th. That no one should be prosecuted for any political opinions he may have expressed. 6th. Freedom of conscience and of the press to be established.

The next day the Senate voted, "That the Emperor Napoleon and his family had forfeited the throne, the constitution having been despotically trampled on by him, and that, consequently, the French people and the army were released from their allegiance to him."

The Senate then proceeded to the Hotel Talleyrand, and were introduced by the host to the Emperor Alexander.

A proclamation, issued to the nation, was prepared by Talleyrand in these words: "Frenchmen! Emerging from the civil discord, you selected as your chief a man who appeared upon the theatre of the world, surrounded with the characters of greatness. In him you placed all your hopes. He has disappointed you. He has not governed in the interests of the nation, nor even in those of his own dynasty. This despotism has ceased! The allied powers have occupied the capital. The senate have declared that Napoleon has forfeited the throne. The country is not for him. Frenchmen, rally round us! Peace is going to put a term to the confusion of Europe. The august allies have pledged themselves to this. The country, after its long agitations, will have repose; and having been

enlightened by the trials through which it has passed, first of anarchy and then of despotism, it will recover its happiness in the return to a paternal government."

Meanwhile most of the civil authorities of Paris gave their adherence to the temporary government. The first explicit declaration in favor of the Bourbons came from the Council General of the Seine. In various addresses there were strong expressions of hostility to Napoleon, and in some of them allusions, more or less direct, to the restoration of the ancient line of kings.

General Caulincourt relates an anecdote, which illustrates the confusion of affairs in 1814, and also, Talleyrand's mode of answering a difficult question. General Leval, a plain and brave old soldier, who had received all his honors from the rank of a sergeant from the emperor, had led his division of ten thousand men from Spain to within twelve leagues of Paris. Here he waited for orders from his superiors. Most of the officers were sending in their adherence to the provisional government. It was important to gain the support of General Leval. A certain marshal wrote to him from Paris urging him for his own safety to send in his adherence. The letter was sent by a M. de C——, who awaited the general's reply. The latter read the letter and replied—"The marshal writes to request my adherence and that of my officers; but he does not state what we are to adhere to! Will you have the goodness, sir, to tell the marshal that I can only answer his letter by inquiring, what we are to adhere to, and why?" This reply was communicated to the marshal, who seemed to be struck with a new idea. "True—I never thought of that—General Leval's question is very natural. He is quite right—Hark ye! M. de C——; go immediately to the Prince of Benevento, and tell him that I sent to solicit the adherence of General Leval

Repeat to him the answer which the general sent to my letter, and request him to give you the explanation the general wishes. It is a singular affair! 'To what,' 'why?' I will be hanged if I can answer the question."

It must be borne in mind that Napoleon had not abdicated, the Bourbons had not been proclaimed formally, and the position of the provisional government was itself both delicate and sustained by very slender authority.

M. de C—— entered Talleyrand's cabinet, and said, "Prince, Marshal —— has sent me to consult your excellency relative to General Leval's adherence." "What about it, sir, I suppose the general has sent it——." "Prince, the general declares that he does not understand what is required of him. When he read the marshal's letter, he said, with astonishment—'Adhere to what? Why are we to adhere?' The marshal has now sent me to require your excellency to ——". "You are the son of M. de C——, the master of the ceremonies, I believe," said Prince Talleyrand, interrupting the young officer. "I am, prince? The marshal requests that——" "Ah! and how is your father? Is he in Paris?" "He is very well, prince? The marshal begs——" "I should be delighted to see him." With these words, Prince Talleyrand rose from his seat, and hobbled toward the door, with his usual cool sort of air, remarking—"Please present my compliments to the marshal. Tell him the provisional government will profit by his advice, and is obliged to him." "Well, what says the Prince?" inquired the marshal eagerly, now certainly expecting to be enlightened respecting these complicated politics. "He sends you his compliments, and the thanks of the provisional government," replied M. de C——. And thus in unmeaning compliment Talleyrand avoided an answer to a troublesome question.

CHAPTER XV.

Fears of Talleyrand and the allies concerning Napoleon—The emperor's abdication—His commissioners obtain an interview with Alexander—Talleyrand's efforts to secure a liberal constitution—Count D'Artois enters Paris—The Senate and the count—Talleyrand signs the capitulation with the allies—Speech at St.Omer—Minister for foreign affairs—Pecuniary forces in diplomacy—Supreme influence of Talleyrand—The Congress of Vienna—His high position there—His difficulties—His able movements—The splendid festivities at Vienna—His gossiping letters to Louis XVIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the manifestations favorable to the project of Talleyrand, many great obstacles still stood in the way of its success. The allied sovereigns had still a well-grounded fear of the name of Napoleon, and did not readily give their co-operation to the restoration of the Bourbons. Napoleon could yet gather around him about 50,000 soldiers, and by combinations such as his genius was capable of effecting, he might possibly increase the number to 180,000 armed men. His sudden re-appearance in Paris was constantly feared by some, and hoped for by others. Those who had taken part in the provisional government wavered. The saloons of Talleyrand began to look deserted. The looks of the sovereigns and their generals were serious and gloomy, and were little calculated to re-assure those who had hastily committed themselves to the restoration. Then appeared in Paris the commissioners from Napoleon, authorized to treat regarding his abdication in favor of his son under a regency. This act of abdication was

addressed to the allies, without alluding to the Senate or any of the authorities. The marshals bearing it sought the presence of Alexander, and pleaded eloquently in behalf of their great captain and master, for whom Alexander still had the most enthusiastic admiration. The anxiety of Talleyrand during this interview may easily be conceived. He was irretrievably committed; and was lost, if Alexander should yield. He intercepted the marshals before they entered the apartment of the Czar, and showed them how many persons would be compromised if they succeeded in their mission. "You will ruin," said he, "all those who have entered this saloon." The marshals were faithful to their mission, and unanimous for a regency.

But Talleyrand and other members of the provisional government had the last word with Alexander, and finally succeeded in obtaining a reply, that nothing but an unconditional abdication would be accepted. Napoleon was obliged to yield. The important treaty of Fontainebleau was signed, the 11th of April. The emperor retired to Elba.

In all the proceedings taken by Talleyrand to accomplish the recall of the Bourbons, his great object was to couple their return with conditions which should secure a constitutional government. Of this he never for a moment lost sight. He wished to make it appear that the ancient family returned to the throne, not in consequence of any hereditary right, but on the ground of the spontaneous invitation of the nation, expressed through the proper channels. But others of influence among the authorities, clinging to the old doctrine of divine right, were unwilling to encumber the return to the throne with any conditions. Talleyrand was, therefore, compelled to compromise. The points which he obtained from the

legitimists, and which were sustained by the Senate, were these: 1. The free invitation of the Bourbons to the throne of France, by the French people. 2. The recognition of the ancient nobility, and the continuance of the imperial nobility. 3. The maintenance of the legion of honor. 4. King, Senate, legislative body, to concur in making laws. 5. Legislative body to be elective, to have freedom of discussion, and public debates. 6. Taxes to be equitable, and granted only for a year. 7. Independence of the tribunals. 8. Military ranks, honors, and pensions to be preserved. 9. Freedom of conscience and the liberty of the press.

The king was to be proclaimed as soon as he should have sworn to and signed a constitution conformable to this programme.

Between the date of the publication of this act of the Senate, and the entry of the Count D'Artois into Paris—an interval of less than a week—much disputation prevailed, and many bitter sarcasms were interchanged, between the royalists, imperialists and republicans. Nothing but the greatest caution and prudence on the part of Talleyrand prevented a fatal collision of parties, which would either have compromised the cause of the restoration, or utterly destroyed all hopes of obtaining any form of constitutional government. The Count D'Artois, when he entered France, assumed the title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. This title the Senate refused to acknowledge; and when his intended entrance into Paris was announced, the senators refused to meet him, or accompany him to the palace.

The provisional government, with Talleyrand at its head, however, met his royal highness at the barrier, where Talleyrand addressed him in these words: "Monseigneur, our felicity

will be perfect, if your royal highness will accept, with that divine goodness which distinguishes your august house, the homage of our devotion." The prince, not possessed of presence of mind or command of language, stammered out some incoherent and unintelligible reply; but in the course of the evening the following answer was written for him by Talleyrand, and, with his consent and approbation, inserted in the *Moniteur* of the following day: "Messieurs, members of the provisional government, I thank you for all the good that you have done for our country. Let there be no longer any division among us. Let peace and France be the cry. I revisit my country, and find nothing changed by my presence, except that there is one Frenchman more."

Talleyrand observing the injurious appearance produced by the marked absence of the senators from these ceremonies, endeavored to impress on the Count D'Artois the importance of his coming to a good understanding with them. After much negotiation it was at length arranged, that the Senate—rejecting as it did the right of the prince to the title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, by the appointment of his brother, who had not yet himself had an opportunity of complying with the conditions on which the throne was offered to him—should itself nominate the Count d'Artois to the lieutenant-generalship. This was accordingly done, and a deputation from the senate, was afterward presented to the prince by Talleyrand, who read an address on the occasion. The answer to his address, as usual, was prepared by Talleyrand, and read as follows by the Count d'Artois: "I thank you, in the name of the king, my brother, for the share you have taken in the return of our legitimate sovereign, and for having thus ensured the happiness of France, for which the king and his

family are ready to shed their blood. We must have henceforward but one thought. The past must be forgotten. We must be for the future united as brothers. While I hold in my hands the government, which I trust will not be a long period, I will use all the means in my power to promote the public good."

Before Louis arrived in Paris, Talleyrand, acting for the Count d'Artois, concluded with the allied powers a suspension of hostilities. This capitulation was complete, conveying to the conquerors all the fortified places in the kingdom, with the munitions and artillery contained in them. The allies agreed that their troops should evacuate France, as soon as the French troops should have delivered up the fortified places and the territories still occupied by them beyond the limits of the country, as they existed in 1792. This capitulation excited great complaint ; but it did not appear probable that a nation, whose capital contained 200,000 foreign troops, could have insisted, with much success, upon more lenient terms. And even could it be maintained that in this temporary arrangement, Talleyrand had not gained the best possible terms for his country, his successful efforts in the same behalf, at the Congress of Vienna, fully redeemed his fault.

Meanwhile, the party of the extreme royalists, was becoming more bold and imperious. They had the sympathy of the Count d'Artois ; and, therefore, Talleyrand did not urge the principles upon which his heart was set, upon the notice of this prince. He maintained a correspondence with the king himself, trusting that his better understanding would perceive the necessity of paying some regard to the progress of political ideas. The Emperor Alexander, through Talleyrand's management, met the king at Compiègne, and is reported to have

said to him, "I have promised to France, in your majesty's name, a free constitution. There must be two Chambers and a free press. I intend to grant the same institutions to Poland. Your majesty's enlightened understanding assures me that you will make this concession." The principles of the constitution were then settled by the two sovereigns, and it was decided that it should be given in the form of a charter to the nation. Talleyrand contended with unusual earnestness against this course. He desired that the charter or constitution should be imposed upon the king by the nation, when the crown was conferred, and not granted by the king to the nation. It was against all these difficulties that Talleyrand nobly struggled for the recognition of those inalienable rights of the nation, which he had aided in his early political career in wresting from the old royalists. He did not hesitate, though his success was thus far so equivocal, on every fit occasion, to remind the king of the conditions of his restoration. Thus, when the Senate was received at St. Omer, before the public entry of Louis into Paris, Talleyrand, as president, addressed him as follows :

"Sire : The return of your majesty restores to France its natural government, and gives all the necessary securities for the repose of the country, and the tranquillity of Europe. The Senate, profoundly moved, happy to mingle its sentiments with those of the French people, comes to lay at the foot of the throne the testimony of its love and respect. A constitutional charter will re-unite all interests to those of the throne, and will strengthen the highest power by the concurrence of all inferior powers. You, Sire, know still better than we, that liberal institutions, so well-tested with a neighboring people, give to sovereigns, who are friends of the laws and fathers of their people, support and not obstruction. Yes, Sire, the nation

and the Senate, filled with confidence in the wisdom and magnanimity of your majesty, desire, as you do, that France shall be free, in order that her sovereign may be powerful."

No sooner was Louis XVIII. seated on the throne of his ancestors, than he fell under the influence of those who would have him forget all that had transpired during thirty most eventful and crowded years, and reject from his councils those who had been most essential to his restoration. After all that Talleyrand had done, the king did not regard him with a friendly eye. He could not forget his share in the revolution ; and, with much reason, we must think, he had but little confidence in his integrity. It was with reluctance, therefore, that he offered Talleyrand his former position for minister of foreign affairs, the highest position in the cabinet. The king, indeed, at this crisis could not dispense with him. Thus was brought about another of those surprising changes which distinguished the fortunes of this remarkable man.

The first work put into his hands, was the management of the negotiations carried on with the allied powers, for the territorial arrangement of France. He acted with his usual ability in this matter. And although the sovereigns who had conquered France declared that she must be reduced to the limits bounding her in 1792, he succeeded in obtaining the preservation of some of the territory which had been added since that time. He also secured those works of art which were the fruits of the latest victories of the French arms.

Lamartine furnishes a fact, which reveals one of the potent agencies in these negotiations. " M. de Talleyrand, who wished to furnish an authority in his own favor, at a later period, for the diplomatic allowances assigned by usage to the negotiators of treaties of territory, distributed six or eight millions in ran-

som, to the European diplomatists who signed the treaty of Paris. Prince Metternich, the Austrian minister, Lord Castlereagh, plenipotentiary of the British government, M. de Nesselrode, and M. de Hardenbergh, the one especially in the name of Russia, the other in the name of Prussia, received each a million. The ministers of secondary powers received considerable sums, proportioned to the importance of the courts they represented. This ransom, offered and accepted as the price of peace, produced it more promptly, but made it more humiliating. As a precedent, it was shameful ; as a bargain, it was advantageous to the country ; for every day of continued occupation cost France more than eight millions."

Bourrienne thus testifies to the influence of Talleyrand in the new government : " The measures of government soon excited complaints in every quarter. The usages of the old system were gradually restored, and ridicule being mingled with more serious considerations, Paris was speedily inundated with caricatures and pamphlets. However, tranquillity prevailed until the month of September, when M. de Talleyrand departed for the Congress of Vienna. Then all was disorder at the Tuileries. Every one feeling himself free from restraint, wished to play the statesman, and Heaven knows how many follies were committed in the absence of the schoolmaster."

After he had been nominated to the ministry for foreign affairs, he went in person, as plenipotentiary of France, to the Congress of Vienna, where the territorial arrangement of the remainder of Europe was to be decided on. Arrived there later than the representatives of the other powers, he found the congress about to pronounce on the general distribution of territory, and to appropriate, at their pleasure, the spoils of the Empire, without reference either to the wishes or the inte-

rests of France. The representative of a conquered State, and a feeble government, he was not in a condition favorable to the exercise of any influence which could disturb the unanimity of the great powers, or gain for his country that position and consideration of which her disasters had deprived her.

Yet "the part which he had just played in the restoration—his influence with the Emperor Alexander—his intimacy with the principal European diplomatists—his high renown for political ability, and lastly, the confidence of Louis XVIII., with his mandate to represent, before all the crowned heads of Europe, the independence and dignity of that ancient throne, which the sovereigns could not desire to see disgraced, since they had desired its re-establishment—all these circumstances gave M. de Talleyrand one of the most exalted positions that the plenipotentiary of a conquered people had ever been able to take before their conquerors. The knowledge of his character, his taste for intrigue, his ambition, his birth, his connection as a revolutionist with the new princes, the supposed corruptibility of his character (which, if it did not positively render him liable to be seduced by the gold of courts, is said to have rendered him subservient to their seductions, and accessible to their recompenses in the form of titles, possessions, and endowments for himself and his family), all these tended to constitute M. de Talleyrand at Vienna, the prime-mover and arbitrator of the re-modelling of Europe. (Never, since the days of Charlemagne, had the whole of Europe been placed so completely at the mercy of an assemblage of princes and of statesmen.")

Like all expert diplomatists, he varied his means with the circumstances in which he found himself placed, and the parties with whom he was to negotiate. The reign of force had now

ceased ; the abuses of conquest brought that term into disrepute. Reason, justice, principle, were the leading ideas. Talleyrand, therefore, presented himself to the congress, prepared to extort from it the admission of a broad principle, which he depended on his own ability to render fertile of consequences beneficial to France. This principle was that of legitimacy as opposed to conquest. He insisted on the acknowledgment of all those rights which sprang out of the past, in opposition to claims founded exclusively on victory. The partition of territory, he contended, must be effected on this principle, and not by the mere power of armies. "I bring you," said he, "more than you imagine of an immutable right. You have only power, but I am a principle; the legitimacy of crowns, the sacredness of crowns, the inviolability of traditions in thrones." A new doctrine this for the Talleyrand of the 18th Brumaire to maintain ! It was recanted, however, with habitual flexibility of sentiment in 1830.

When he arrived at Vienna, four European powers only were represented in the congress—Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England. He succeeded in increasing the number by the addition of France, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden ; thus diminishing the preponderance of the great powers, and giving greater room for the exercise of his own arts of diplomacy. He also found that several important arrangements, respecting territories, disturbed by the wide conquests of Napoleon, were on the point of settlement. He soon succeeded in postponing and altering these arrangements by the dissensions between the great powers which he adroitly excited. He resisted the ambition of Russia, although Alexander himself sought to bring him over to his side, by calling to his recollection the services he had rendered in the restoration of Louis XVIII.,

and upon which Talleyrand had been obliged to rely in accomplishing that object. But the diplomatist was immovable; and Alexander observed, with some petulance, "Talleyrand is playing here the minister of Louis Fourteenth." By his indefatigable management he brought Austria and England to the determination to repulse the pretensions of Russia and Prussia, even by force of arms, if that should become necessary. He obtained, on behalf of France, a select treaty with Lord Castlereagh, representing England, and Prince Metternich, representing Austria, to the effect of the union of these powers in the event of a war arising from the dissatisfaction of the other States.

The session of the congress was a period of universal festivity at Vienna. Scenes of such magnificence and splendor had never before been witnessed in the capital of the Germanic empire. The theatrical performances, the masked balls, at which crowned heads mingled indiscriminately with the crowd, laying aside for a moment the ceremonial restraints which separate sovereigns from the herd of mankind, the singularity of the costumes, and the variety of manners, created at Vienna a species of enchantment. It was on this occasion that the Prince de Ligne uttered the well-known *mot*, "the Congress dances, but doesn't walk." During these festivities, Talleyrand maintained a constant correspondence with Louis XVIII., and often gratified the love of anecdote and personal gossip which distinguished that monarch, by passing before him in review, all the political personages who figured in these scenes, and narrating the gallantries of the masked balls. In one of these secret dispatches, designed only for the royal eye, the diplomat describes, with infinite humor, the mysticism of the Emperor Alexander on his knees in the cabinet of Madame

Krudener, the *bonnes fortunes* of M. Metternich, and the amours of Lord Castlereagh. At one of the most brilliant of these balls, he describes the King of Prussia allured from room to room by a black domino ; the Emperor of Austria in a Hungarian costume, with a flowing pelisse ; King Maximilian, of Bavaria, in the uniform of a colonel, which he wore with distinction in the service of Napoleon. The colossal figure of the King of Wurtemberg was ill-disguised in a domino resplendent with gold ; his majesty was flirting with the Duchess of Oldenburg, the sister of the Emperor Alexander, who was disguised as a grisette. The King of Denmark and Prince Metternich chatted in the embrasure of a window, wrapped in magnificent dominos. But it was Eugene Beauharnais that more especially fixed Talleyrand's attention, who employed special agents to watch and report his movements. The earnest and frequent conferences during the evening, between him and the Emperor Alexander, were a source of lively inquietude to the plenipotentiary of Louis, and were duly reported by him to his sovereign.

Talleyrand said nothing about his own costume on these occasions, which drew from Louis XVIII. the sarcastic remark, " M. de Talleyrand has forgotten only one thing ; that is, to tell us what character he appeared in himself ; for he is well provided with change of costume."

CHAPTER XVI.

News of Napoleon's escape from Elba—Talleyrand's composure—Conferences with Metternich and Castlereagh—Dangers which now threatened France—Talleyrand's activity and discouragements—His own embarrassing position—The Congress undecided—His eloquent and convincing speech—Declaration of the Congress against Napoleon—Napoleon's efforts to gain Talleyrand—Mission of Montrond—Napoleon's censure of Talleyrand—Talleyrand's opinion of Napoleon.

NAPOLEON escaped from Elba while Talleyrand was engaged with the Congress at Vienna. The news that he had sailed from the island, was brought to Vienna in the night, by a courier dispatched from Leghorn to Lord Castlereagh. But where he intended to land was not known to any but himself and his confidants. "The Prince de Talleyrand," says Lamartine, "was still ignorant of all this, when he arose the following morning. In imitation of monarchs, the etiquette of whose levees he affected, he was making his toilet for the day amidst a circle of his intimates and secretaries, when his niece, the young and beautiful Princess de Courlande, the favorite and ornament of his house, ran in, in a state of agitation, and handed him a note, marked secret and in haste, from the Prince de Metternich. M. de Talleyrand, whose hands were bedewed with the perfumes which his *valets-de-chambre* had poured upon them, and whose head was in possession of two artists who were curling and powdering his hair, begged his niece to open and read the note herself. She did so, and turning pale,

'Heavens !' she exclaimed, more annoyed at the interruption of the fêtes of Europe, where her beauty shone triumphantly, than at the crumbling of empires—'Heavens! Bonaparte has quitted Elba! What's to become of my ball this evening ?' M. de Talleyrand, with that impassibility which is the equanimity of the soul, adequate to the magnitude of events, uttered no exclamation of surprise, and exhibited no disturbance either in his look, his smile, or his gesture; but with that slow gravity of tone which constituted half his fascination:—'Don't be uneasy, niece,' he said to the young lady, 'your ball shall take place.' He saw at a glance that Napoleon had mistaken his time, that he had yielded more to his impatience of exile than to the fitness of circumstances, and that Europe, defied in the fullness of its power and the pride of its triumph, would not a second time by its divisions give him the continent to subjugate. M. de Talleyrand did not hurry a single toilette detail of the daily ceremony of his levee; and while the sovereigns, the ministers, the courts, and the city were all talking with terror or disdain of those vessels which bore, no one knew whither, the enigma of the destiny of Europe, he shut himself up with M. de Metternich, and Lord Castlereagh, for a portion of the day, and made himself acquainted with the private opinions of these two powers. He had no difficulty in proving to a political genius so thoroughly trained as that of Prince Metternich, that to give time to such a man as Napoleon, was to give him at once all Europe and her thrones, and that to listen to a single proposition from him was a virtual abdication of all the sovereigns."

Talleyrand wrote immediately to Louis XVIII., and assured him that he might rely upon the action of the Congress. In the meantime, before the destination and success of Napoleon

were known at Vienna, Talleyrand busied himself in the special task of attaching the Emperor of Russia to the plans of England, Prussia, and Austria, of whose coalition against Napoleon he was already certain. Alexander had always been dazzled by the genius of Napoleon, and his partiality remained in some strength after all the acts of hostility in which he had been engaged against him. He had no attachment to the Bourbons, but rather a prejudice against the entire family. Talleyrand, therefore, felt that his triumph would be complete, only when he had succeeded in inflaming the mind of the Emperor with repugnance toward the man, who had dared once more to disturb the peace of Europe. And in this he finally succeeded.

The first conferences of the sovereigns, after the news of Napoleon's progress at the head of his old army toward Paris was received, were characterized by mutual reproaches. Alexander was particularly assailed for the favor he had always shown the Bonapartists, and he felt humbled. "It is true," he remarked to the Emperor of Austria, "but to repair my errors, I place myself, my empire, and my army, at your majesty's service."

The irritation of some of the powers against Napoleon, passed into an ill-dissembled anger against France herself, since she had either connived at this new revolution, or had too servilely succumbed to it. There were threats uttered of a war of destruction upon the revolutionary state, and a division of her territory among the other States, so that she would no longer have the power to trouble the Continent. It was murmured, that the Bourbons knew not how to keep their thrones, and it was useless for the allies to furnish so imbecile a dynasty any aid. Alexander, on the other hand, vacillating, according to his character, was inclined to be neutral and let the rest of

Europe contend with the Great Captain alone. "No, no," said he; "I am weary of war; I cannot employ the whole period of my reign, and the forces of my empire, in raising up in France a family which knows neither how to fight or to reign. Let them settle their affairs with their neighbors, and among themselves: I shall never draw the sword for them again."

The position of Talleyrand was now most discouraging and embarrassing. He represented a feeble family, and a hated and distrusted nation. "A negotiator less firm and less consummate, would have sunk; but he roused himself to the magnitude of the crisis, and struggled during eight days in the conferences, with a desperate constancy, which disconcerted the enemies of France and of the Bourbons, afforded time for a return of more prudent counsels, and which saved France and the Restoration from universal hatred. These struggles of one man against fortune and against Europe, were long, unequal inveterate, and frequently unsuccessful."

In pleading for the integrity of the French kingdom, and for the support of the Bourbons, he was, indeed, pleading for his own honors and fortune, and, perhaps, his head. He could expect but little from Napoleon. Yet satisfied himself that Napoleon had greatly mistaken his power to cope with united Europe in 1815, when he had shown himself unable to in 1814, Talleyrand never evinced greater love for his country than when he struggled to divert the Congress from the threatening purpose of dismembering France. The success of the allied powers in such an attempt, with their manifesto avowing such an exterminating purpose, and thus rallying every true Frenchman around the standard of their great military leader, with a new and inspiring battle-cry, would have been most problematical.

Indeed their failure would have been certain. Yet in the attempt a war hitherto unequalled, even in the history of France, must have succeeded. In diverting the enraged sovereigns from such a policy, Talleyrand, therefore, conferred a benefit, not only on France, but on Europe and on humanity. The generals, as well as the plenipotentiaries, were combined against the French minister. They called for the order for invasion. They were eager to inflict upon France a crushing humiliation.

Talleyrand presented declarations, one after another, in favor of the Bourbons, but the Congress gave them little attention. Thus day after day passed. The reports of Napoleon's success, exciting the sovereigns more and more against France, destroyed the work of the pertinacious diplomatist when it appeared most likely of completion. Finally the 13th of March was fixed upon as the day for a decision, and a declaration of some kind. Discouraged and worn down with fatigue, Talleyrand spent the night of the 12th in preparing the declaration, which he intended to urge upon the acceptance of the reluctant powers.

In the morning, on leaving his hôtel, to go to the place of conference, he agreed with his niece and secretary to give them some signal of the result, as he returned. He remarked —“ I leave you in despair ; I am going to make the last efforts ; if I fail, France is lost ; and the Bourbons and I will not have even the remnant of a country for exile. I see your impatience to know what will be our fate in a few hours. Nothing is allowed to transpire out of the hall of conference, and I cannot, therefore, send you any message during the day ; but be at the windows, that you may learn the result a few minutes before my arrival. Look out for my carriage at the hour when I shall return a conqueror or conquered. If I have failed, I shall

keep myself shut up and motionless ; but if I carry a favorable declaration, I shall wave in my hand, out of the carriage window, a paper which will contain our triumph ; some minutes less of anxiety will thus weigh upon your spirits."

Throughout the entire morning of the conference Talleyrand gained nothing. The tendency of all the Powers seemed to be toward a desertion of the cause of the Bourbons. The French negotiator then summoned all his powers of persuasion, and rising above his usual calm and sober manner, and with language more animated, direct and pointed than ever, presented those powerful considerations of policy and justice, which in the end gained the favorable declaration. His argument and appeal are thus reported :

"I can comprehend the indignation of the allied powers, of their ministers, and of their armies, against the man who has broken the ban of the world, and against the French nation and its government, which seem to have given him for the second time the throne we expelled him from ; but is the fault of this return entirely to be attributed to the Bourbons and to us ?" (At these words he looked significantly at the plenipotentiaries of Alexander.) "Was it the Bourbons, was it France, was it we, who signed the treaty of Fontainebleau ? Was it the Bourbons, was it France, was it we who allotted this exile of all Europe so dangerous a place of banishment, more dangerous, perhaps, than an empire ; for it must have been a perpetual opportunity for him to threaten them all ? Was it we who placed him in sight of our coasts, and of the coasts of your Italy ; and who furnished him with the nucleus of an army, in order that he might incessantly offer from thence that image and that fascination of glory and fidelity to the rest of the army, to seduce and draw it over to himself at the

moment it might be most convenient for him to choose? Is it we who declared his independence at Elba, and who of a captive made a sovereign? Is it we who left him millions of money and arms, the certain elements of a perpetual conspiracy? Is it we who tied up the hands of the princes of the house of Bourbon, and who, by pressing with all the weight of Europe on their councils at Paris last year, laid down to them the law of toleration toward the members of the imperial family, of which they are now reaping the reward? Is it we who have caressed, even here, the born and natural accomplices of Napoleon, and thus persuaded the army that their former chief had allies or friends among the assembled sovereigns? No; be just. These faults cannot be ascribed either to France or to the Bourbons, upon whom you now would throw the burthen. These faults, you confess it yourselves, are the result of your own magnanimity and of your own imprudence. It was impossible that a country thus offered as a temptation and a prey to an ambitious military party, having a chief in freedom at hand a few hours' sail from the coast, should not, sooner or later, have to endure an attempt upon its throne and its liberties. We are far from accusing this greatness of soul which has treated a vanquished person almost like a conqueror; but at least let us not be accused of generous imprudences which we could only admire but not prevent, and of which we are now the victims.

“Wherein lies the error of the house of Bourbon in this calamity which weighs, above all the world, upon itself? Has it not followed your counsels? Has it not given an amnesty to the empire? Has it not made a diversion from the spirit of conquest, by the spirit of liberty infused into the charter, of which you yourselves gave the inspiration? Has it not loaded

with confidence and dignities the lieutenants of Napoleon ? Has it not done everything to gain the attachment of that army which had fought against it in fighting against you ? Did it depend upon the king to change in a day the spirit of that army accustomed to another master, to extirpate its souvenirs, and to stifle its fanaticism for a man who had mingled his name with its own ? Did that depend even upon the nation, disarmed and surprised by a general defection of its troops ? Do you not yourselves know what an unarmed people is against an organized body of troops ? National insurrections against military governments require time ; but for armed insurrections an hour is enough. Bonaparte has been a thunderbolt to France ; will you punish a people for the blow that has struck them, and which no human force could ward off in twelve days ? If you punish France by dividing it after its conquest, how will you agree together in the distribution of the spoils ? And what power can ever restrain under its hand, the members still living, still convulsive, ever on the stretch to join one another, of a nation formed by ages, and which will shake, not only itself, but your own states that it may have been incorporated with ? You have nothing to dread in France but the revolutionary spirit, but you will then have to restrain and to combat at the same time the two least compressible forces in the political world, the revolutionary spirit and the spirit of independence. This double volcano will open its craters even under your own hereditary possessions. Look at Poland ! Is it not the spirit of independence which perpetually nourishes there the spirit of revolution ? The revolution was enclosed within the circuit of France, but you will have spread it all over Europe. The partition of France, were it possible, would be the ruin of the Continent.

“But I am told here every day that the question is, not to ruin France, but to weaken it so that it shall not be hurtful to other nations ; to exhaust its strength, to occupy it indefinitely, and to give it for its masters, sovereigns with a firmer hand, and a name less unpopular than that of Bourbon ! Now I would ask of those men who have, like me, had an opportunity of knowing Louis XVIII., if Providence has ever bestowed upon the family of kings, and on the difficult government of nations, a prince more mature in years, more practiced in revolutions, more imbued with the spirit of his time, more impressed with the innate sentiment of royalty, and, at the same time, more expert in making that royalty bend to the opinions and the necessities of an intractable people, than the King of France ? Who, then, except the usurper of this throne, would dare to occupy it after him ? France can only be governed by the sword or by right ; you will break the sword, but where will be the right if you remove the house of Bourbon ? And if you cease to recognize this right of the { legitimacy of kings in France, what becomes of your own in { Europe ? What becomes of this principle, or rather this religion of legitimacy, which we have found again under the ruins of twenty years’ revolutions, of subversions, of conquests, and which is become the basis of nations, the foundation of thrones, the inviolability of the kingly power ? How shall a nation, already disconcerted by so many vicissitudes in its capital, recover that faith which you yourselves will have taught them to despise ? Had the house of Bourbon become superannuated, and did it offer at this moment only enervated sovereigns to fill the throne, Europe would still be condemned to crown them or to perish ; for the cause of Europe is the cause of legitimacy, and legitimacy is synonymous with the house of

Bourbon. It owes to you its re-establishment on the throne of France—you owe to it the moral security of all thrones. But the house of Bourbon has not become superannuated ; it possesses a sage in Louis XVIII., competent to grapple with the difficulties of a restoration, and nature will give it princes to perpetuate itself in the descendants of Henri IV. What would the world say, if Europe, armed against the revolution, should dethrone, with its own hand, the race which the revolution has immolated, and thereby justify regicide and the republic ?

“No ; two things are impossible to Europe, represented by the power and the wisdom of its hereditary chiefs, assembled here to dictate to the world their will and its destiny ; the partition of France, and the dethronement of the Bourbons ; the one a crime against thrones, the other against nations. What, therefore, is possible ? That which is wise and just. To separate, in the first place, the cause of the French nation from that of the usurper, to declare personal and exclusive war against Bonaparte, and peace to France ; thus to weaken Bonaparte by showing him alone to be the obstacle to the reconciliation of nations, and to disarm France by not confounding its cause with the cause of its oppressor ! In the second place, to declare that, on the throne, in the provinces, or even in exile, Europe would only recognize the sovereignty in the king, and in the house of Bourbon !”

After this long contest, Talleyrand triumphed, and as he rode home, the concerted signal of success was shown from his carriage, to the relief and delight of his anxious friends.

The declaration prepared by Talleyrand, and adopted substantially as he presented it, was as follows :

“The sovereigns who signed the treaty of Paris assembled in congress at Vienna, informed of the escape of Napoleon

Bonaparte, and of his entrance by force of arms into France, owe to their own dignity, and to the interest of social order, a solemn declaration of the sentiments which this event has excited in their breasts.

“In thus breaking the convention which had established him at the Isle of Elba, Bonaparte has destroyed the only legal title to which his existence was attached. By re-appearing in France, with projects of disturbance and subversion, he has deprived himself of the protection of the laws, and has manifested, in the face of the universe, that peace or truce can no longer be maintained with him.

“The sovereigns declare, in consequence, that Napoleon Bonaparte has placed himself out of the pale of civil and social relations ; and that, as an enemy and a disturber of the peace of the world, he has given himself up to public vengeance.

“They declare, at the same time, that they will employ every means, and unite all their efforts, to guarantee Europe from every attempt which might threaten again to plunge the nations into the disorders and calamities of revolutions.

“And although firmly persuaded that the whole of France, rallying around its legitimate sovereign, will immediately extinguish this last attempt of a powerless and criminal agitation, all the sovereigns of Europe, animated by the same sentiments, and guided by the same principles, declare, that if, contrary to all calculation, any danger whatever should result from this event, they will be ready to give to the King of France and to the French nation, or to any other government attacked, as soon as the demand shall be made, the assistance necessary to re-establish public tranquillity, and to make common cause against all those who would attempt to compromise it.

“VIENNA, the 18th March, 1815.”

Fouché, who, after the return of Napoleon from Elba, was appointed to his former post of Minister of Police, relates that he was asked by the Emperor whether it was not desirable to obtain the services of Talleyrand in behalf of his restored government. "Certainly," replied the Police Minister.

"What do you think of my sending to him a handsome snuff-box?" remarked Napoleon. Fouché was aware of the extreme absurdity of winning a minister, supposed to be rapacious, by a present which, as a matter of course, he had received on the conclusion of every treaty, and he therefore replied, "If a snuff-box was sent to M. de Talleyrand he would open it to see what it contained."

"What do you mean?" inquired Napoleon.

"It is idle," answered Fouché, "to talk of sending to him a snuff-box. Let an order for two millions of francs be sent to him, and let one half of the sum be payable on his return to France."

"No," said Napoleon, "that is too expensive, and I shall not think of it."

However, he did think of it, for it is stated that he dispatched an agent to Vienna, with full powers to buy back his old minister. This secret agent was M. de Montrond, who had previously and for a long time been in intimate relations with Talleyrand. The knowledge that he had been a partisan of the French negotiator opened the way for him to reach Vienna without suspicion, and shielded him from the watchful eye of the Austrian police. He was authorized by the Emperor to offer Talleyrand vast wealth and promises of dignities and titles beyond all the former gifts of his old master. This was attacking Talleyrand on his weakest side—addressing temptations to his love of grandeur and of luxury. Talleyrand, how-

ever, felt that he was on the safer and the stronger side—that the honors and the wealth, gained now under imperial favor, must be ephemeral. He was too cool and cautious by nature to be seduced as the enthusiastic Ney was. Montrond gained access to him, but directly perceived that his mission was hopeless. Talleyrand's cause was now the cause of Europe, and was sustained by a million of soldiers, already in the field. He observed to his visitor and old friend, "You come too late; Europe and I have chosen our part. Remain with us, and do not mistake fortune, as the Emperor mistakes his hour of action."

Napoleon said, in reference to this part of his history, "When I returned from Elba, Talleyrand wrote to me from Vienna, offering his services, and to betray the Bourbons, provided I would pardon and restore him to favor. He argued upon a part of my proclamation, in which I said there were circumstances which it was impossible to resist, which he quoted. But I considered that there were a few I was obliged to except, and refused, as it would have excited indignation if I had not punished somebody."

It is not easy to reconcile this version of the intrigue with the assertion of others, above referred to, that an agent from the emperor, or at least from some one in his interest, did visit Talleyrand.

This intrigue evinces Napoleon's estimate of the character of Talleyrand, as well as his desire to avail himself of his abilities in support of his administration. A similar evidence of the Emperor's judgment of his minister, is furnished in some remarks, addressed by the former to a secret agent, who had an interview with him at Elba. Speaking of the restored Bourbons, he said—"Their treaty of the 23d of April has

profoundly disgusted me. With a single stroke of the pen, they have robbed France of Belgium, and of the territory she had acquired during the revolution ; they have despoiled her of the arsenals, the fleets, the dockyards, the artillery, and the immense stores which I had accumulated in the forts and harbors, which they have delivered up. It was Talleyrand who made them commit this infamy. He must have been bribed to it. Peace is easily obtained on such terms ; and if, like them, I had consented to sign the ruin of France, they would not now be on my throne. But I would sooner cut off my hand !” But the Emperor forgot to answer the question—who brought France to the condition which compelled this ignominious peace. He was certainly unjust toward Talleyrand, who was obliged to submit to the terms of the conquerors, and by his address, gained some modification of them.

Talleyrand’s opinion of Napoleon, in contrast with the preceding, possesses worth for its honesty and impartiality, as he formed it from an acquaintance of years, which opened to him most of the secrets of his cabinet. It is thus given—“His career is the most extraordinary that has occurred for a thousand years. He committed three capital faults, and to them his fall, scarcely less extraordinary than his elevation, is to be ascribed—Spain, Russia, and the Pope. I say the Pope ; for his coronation, the acknowledgment by the spiritual head of Christendom that he, a little lieutenant of Corsica, was the chief sovereign of Europe, from whatever motive it proceeded, was the most striking consummation of glory that could happen to an individual. After adopting that mode of displaying his greatness and crowning his achievements, he should never, for objects comparatively insignificant, have stooped to vex and persecute the same Pontiff. He thereby

outraged the feelings of the very persons whose enmity had been softened, and whose imagination had been dazzled by that brilliant event. Such were his capital errors. Those three apart, he committed few others in policy, wonderfully few, considering the multiplicity of interests he had to manage, and the extent, importance, and rapidity of the events in which he was engaged. He was certainly a great, an extraordinary man, nearly as extraordinary in his qualities as in his career; at least, so upon reflection, I, who have seen him near, and much, am disposed to consider him. He was clearly the most extraordinary man I ever saw, and I believe the most extraordinary man that has lived in our age, or for many ages."

CHAPTER XVII.

French judgments on Talleyrand's course—His remonstrance with Louis XVIII.—Opinion of the Duke of Wellington—Unjust conduct of the Allies toward France—Talleyrand's earnest remonstrances—Refuses to sign the treaty, and compelled to resign office—Interview with the King—Talleyrand allowed to retain the dignity of Grand Chamberlain—His opinion of Louis XVIII.—Dinner at Compiègne—Talleyrand in the Chamber of Peers—Freedom of the press—War with Spain.

Most French writers severely blame Talleyrand for the part he took in the second invasion of France by the armies of the allied powers. It is certain that his efforts hastened that combination, which the States of Europe would have been compelled to make against Napoleon, and which resulted in such disasters to the French arms. Says Mignet, condemning Talleyrand's course—"There are sentiments which are above all question ; there are principles which are above all rights, and more real than all systems. The sentiment which awakens the love of our country, the principle which forbids us to provoke against it foreign arms, are among these. The independence of the country is an object paramount to the powers of government or the interests of parties. To separate our country from the government which rules it, to say that we attack the one to deliver the other, is no excuse. These subtle distinctions lead to the ruin of States." It is contended by those favoring Talleyrand's course, that he had no reason to expect

that the allied powers would again take the field for any other purpose than to replace Louis on the throne. And he earnestly sought, while the king was subjected anew to exile and fear of the final loss of his throne, to obtain for the nation better guarantees of her liberties. He boldly stated to the king the various faults and errors committed by his government, and which had opened the way for the easy return of Napoleon. After the overthrow of the French army at Waterloo, Talleyrand came from Vienna, and joined the king at Mons, and there repeated the same unwelcome views. The estimation in which his services, not to France only, but to Europe, were held at that moment, is sufficiently manifested in a letter addressed by the Duke of Wellington to the king, in which he affirmed that his majesty stood in absolute need of "a counselor of enlightened understanding and practical capacity ; that M. de Talleyrand seemed to him to be the only person capable of comprehending the difficult position in which the house of Bourbon was placed in regard to France ; that without presuming to name to his majesty those whom he ought to take into his council, he felt it to be important to his majesty's interests, that he should remove from around him advisers who were viewed with aversion by the French people."

Notwithstanding the intrigues of the ultra-Royalists, countenanced and fostered by the Count d'Artois, directed against Talleyrand personally, and the hostile feeling which his diplomatic proceedings at Vienna had excited in the mind of the Emperor Alexander against him, the good sense of the representatives of the chief powers, united with the sheer necessity of the restoration, replaced him at the head of affairs.

The practical effects of the counsels of Talleyrand, and the influence he exercised over the mind and conduct of Louis

XVIII., in spite of the aversion with which that monarch regarded him, are matter of history. The proclamation of Cambray, in which the faults of 1814 were acknowledged, and pledges given to repair them, was of his dictation. He suggested also the ordinance in which the charter was liberalized.

But Talleyrand was not destined to remain long in office. The liberal spirit of the government was short-lived. The re-actionary party was fully in the ascendant. The foreign powers also soon threw off all disguise from their plans to humble and weaken France. They disregarded all their promises, not to make war upon the nation, but upon Napoleon. The works of art, saved by Talleyrand during the previous invasion, were sent back to the places whence they had been taken by the French armies. It was demanded that large portions of territory, which had been left to France in 1814, should be given up, that exceedingly heavy contributions of money should be paid, and that a foreign army of 150,000 men should occupy the territory of the kingdom for seven years, and at the expense of the government.

Talleyrand remonstrated against such terms in the most indignant spirit, pronouncing them insulting and oppressive, a flagrant breach of faith on the part of the allies, and the manifestation of a vindictive spirit on the part of Europe toward France, distracted and impoverished by long wars. In his diplomatic note of the 21st September, he demonstrated, that such terms could only be imposed in virtue of the rights of conquest, and that these rights, by the confession of the allies themselves, had no existence in the present case. "Conquest," said Talleyrand, "can only be made where war has been waged against the possessor of a territory—that is to say, over its

sovereign, the right of possession and sovereignty being identical. But when war is waged against one who has unlawfully usurped a throne, with the view of restoring the country to its legitimate sovereign, there can be no conquest—there is only the restoration of the territory to its rightful owner. Now, the allied powers treated the late enterprise of Bonaparte as an act of usurpation, and regarded Louis XVIII. as the real sovereign of France. They have made war in support of his rights, and they are, therefore, bound to respect them. They have recognized this obligation in the declaration which they issued on the 13th, and the treaty which they signed on the 25th of March, in which they have recognized Louis XVIII. as an ally, leagued with them against a common enemy. If conquest be inadmissible against a friendly power, it is *à fortiori* impossible against an allied sovereign.”

He entreated them to reflect that France would never cease to seek the recovery of that of which she must always believe herself to have been unjustly deprived ; that she would impute as a crime to Louis XVIII. those cessions of territory, which would be regarded as the price paid by him for foreign aid ; that they would operate as a continual obstacle to the re-establishment of the government of the Restoration ; and finally, that they would destroy that European equilibrium, so dearly purchased, produced by the extent of territory which France ought to possess, and the necessity of which could not then be denied, since it had been admitted in the territorial arrangements made the year previous.

This appeal to the public law of Europe and the faith of engagements, as well as to high considerations of policy, availed nothing against the excited passions, and the irrepressible thirst for vengeance which prevailed at that moment.

The year before, Talleyrand was sustained by Alexander. Now that monarch was openly hostile to him, because the latter had succeeded in thwarting his ambitious designs at Vienna.

Three days after sending the note just quoted, 24th of September, 1815, Talleyrand resigned office; two months before the final signature of a treaty which cost France eighty million sterling, and deprived her of more territory than she had gained in 1814. Talleyrand would not sign such a treaty. He was driven from power by the intemperate excesses of the party of the Restoration, and the unjust exactions of the invading powers.

In the last interview of Talleyrand and his colleagues with the king, when they tendered their resignations, Louis remarked—"You see how I am constrained by circumstances. I thank you for your zeal. You are all free from blame, and nothing prevents you from remaining unmolested in Paris." The indignation of Talleyrand was excited to an unusual pitch by the last expression, coming from one who had been raised by his personal zeal and abilities to the throne of one of the greatest nations of the globe. He replied with a warmth which seldom marked his words, or gestures—"I have had the good fortune to render your majesty such services as are not likely to be forgotten, and I know not what should render it necessary for me to leave Paris. I will remain here, and shall be only too happy if your majesty's advisers may not follow a course which may compromise your dynasty, and peril the country." The king affected not to attend to these words, and uttering some common-places of royal courtesy, brought the audience to a close. On leaving the king, Talleyrand, highly excited, observed to his colleagues—"We have been tricked. The intrigue has long been planned."

The retirement of Talleyrand was a source of great relief to Louis XVIII., who, notwithstanding all he owed to the great diplomatist, never could conquer his antipathy toward him. The continual presence and predominant influence of an understanding so superior, was more than Louis could endure. He complained to his more intimate friends, of the sway which Talleyrand exercised, rendered only more intolerable by the perfect courtesy of manner and respectful deference with which it was accompanied. The king complained that the minister had a way of tendering advice which gave it the effect of command. He would place a report or an ordinance on the table before Louis, and would merely say to him—"I assure your majesty that this is quite indispensable." The king signed, but champed the bit.

On his retirement, beside receiving an autograph letter of thanks from the king for his services, he was appointed to the highest court dignity not connected with the political administration—that of Grand Chamberlain, an office which he formerly held under the empire. The salary of this splendid sinecure was a hundred thousand francs. This act of justice was forced upon Louis XVIII., by the Duke of Richelieu, who succeeded Talleyrand as Premier. The king was strongly averse to it. The minister, however, plainly foreseeing the distrust and indignation which so signal an act of royal ingratitude would excite at home and abroad, declared to his majesty that Talleyrand could not be dismissed like any other minister, considering the vast services he had rendered to the house of Bourbon in 1814, and that no less a reward was due to him. The Duke of Wellington, also, seeing with unmixed regret the injustice and ingratitude contemplated toward one who had been the source of such great benefits, interfered for the same purpose.

Talleyrand reposed in the splendor of his sinecure, and enjoyed, in his magnificent hotel in the Rue St. Florentin, all the social pleasures and high consideration with which his great reputation, historic recollections, brilliant wit, and ample wealth, surrounded him. His office was the highest dignity of the court. Being asked one day in what his functions consisted, he replied, smiling—

“In the first place, I am privileged to put on the panels of my coach a coat of arms, consisting of two gilt keys crossed, just like his holiness the Pope. In the next place, it is I who have the honor of handing his shirt to his majesty. This is an honor which I only yield to princes of the blood royal, or legitimate sovereigns. At the solemnity of the coronation, I draw the boots on his majesty, and put on his tunic. Thus, you see, I limit myself to the royal toilet. But all this is confined to the coronation, and we shall not have one under this reign.”

Although Talleyrand thus spoke with a tone of levity of his functions, he nevertheless adhered with singular tenacity to their most minute observance; none of his prerogatives were permitted to become dormant. He never was absent from the royal table, where he assumed his seat of honor behind the king's chair. On these occasions it was the pleasure of Louis to inflict on such of his household as did not enjoy his personal favor, an incessant series of petty annoyances, by word and look. All this Talleyrand bore with the imperturbable serenity of manner which characterized him. He never forgot his position, or compromised his dignity. He loved to appear on all public occasions in the discharge of the ceremonials of his office, as if to throw into oblivion his real disfavor in the palace; and it was no small delight to him to count among the persons

subordinate to him, the Duke de Richelieu, one of the first gentlemen of the chamber, who succeeded him as President of the Council of Ministers.

When Talleyrand would return to his hotel, from these state observances, he never failed to indemnify himself for the self-control he was compelled to exert. There he was the centre, round which assembled the most distinguished members of the constitutional opposition. He did not scruple to make the government of the Restoration, of which he was the founder and creator, the victim of his most bitter *bon-mots*.

Talleyrand's opinion of the king is given in an interesting and forcible manner in the following extract from Colmache :

“Louis XVIII. was the veriest liar that ever trod the earth,” said the prince. “His love of falsehood was so great, that those admitted to his intimacy had grown to dread the expression from his lips of any kindness, feeling sure that disgrace was nigh. He was the greatest hater I ever met with ; cold and calculating in his vengeance, and meanly taunting in its gratification. I cannot describe to you my disappointment when I first beheld him in 1814, after the events which had changed him from a miserable exile into the sovereign of the greatest European country. He received me in the palace at Compiègne. I could judge the character of the man by the manner of his greeting. He was in the great gallery of the château, surrounded by his friends, and many of the foreign diplomates, who were all eager and forward in their congratulations—all full of hope and bright anticipations of the future. I may, without being suspected of vanity, declare that a murmur of welcome ran through the assembly when my name was announced, and the king advanced a few steps to meet me with a warm and friendly welcome. He pressed my hand with

great kindness, and drawing forward a chair which stood beside him, exclaimed, 'Prince de Benevento, be seated—and believe me, I do not forget that had it not been for your assistance in the late events, they might have turned in a different chance, and *you* might have said to *me*, "Count de Lille, be seated."'

"The phrase appeared to me so artificial, so stiff and embarrassed, that I involuntarily looked his majesty full in the face for an explanation. By that single glance I could tell that I was not destined to remain a minister of Louis, and my anticipations proved true, although he knew well that had it not been for my exertions, he would not have regained his throne until much later—perhaps, indeed, never.

"The dinner which succeeded the grand reception I shall never forget. Every one had expected that the conversation would be most interesting; that the most important topic of the day would have been duly discussed and commented upon. Each guest had come prepared with his own peculiar suggestion concerning the most effective entry into Paris. Each one had his bon-mot for approval—some appropriate phrase to be printed in the journals. I myself am forced to plead guilty to the like ambition, and obtained the honor of preference over many which, in my opinion, were far better and more piquant than my '*Français de plus*' ('one Frenchman more,') although its subsequent popularity justified, in some measure, its adoption. Whatever might have been our anticipations, it soon became evident that the monarch had learned one great accomplishment during his exile, and he ate in silence of every dish which was presented to him. The court, principally composed of men who had been accustomed to the rapid and noisy dinners of the Emperor, soon began to grow

weary of the tedious deglutition of the king, and became, ere long, the mere spectators of his enjoyment.

“Not one single word had been spoken during the whole of the first course. It would be impossible to describe the extraordinary effect of that silence, undisturbed, save by the timid rattle of the knives and forks, and the hesitating steps of the servants. We gazed at each other with embarrassment. No one dared to speak even to his neighbor save in a whisper; when, just about the middle of the second course, an event occurred which served to arouse us from the stupor into which we had fallen. The king was about to help himself from the dish of spinach which had been handed to him by the servant, when the intention was suddenly arrested by a loud exclamation from the Duc de Duras, who, rising from his chair, and leaning forward with an earnest and stricken look, exclaimed, ‘For the love of Heaven, your majesty, touch not that spinach!’ The king let fall the spoon which was already half way toward his plate, and raised his eyes in alarm—he was pale as death. There were few, indeed, at the table who did not change countenance at this unexpected exclamation. Suspicions of foul treason—of premeditated crime, immediately filled every eye, and we looked aghast toward the duke for an explanation. Even I myself, although prepared by experience for every exaggeration of court flattery, could not resist the dread of some terrible disclosure.

“‘Why not?’ faltered out the king, his nasal twang rendered even more tremulous than usual by the terror under which he labored.

“‘Oh, sire, I warn you—be advised by me; eat not of that spinach—it is dressed with most villainous butter!’

“The etiquette of the royal table, of course, prevented the

explosion of the roar of laughter with which the speech would have been greeted had it not been for the mighty presence ; and even as it was, an irrepressible titter ran round the room. The king, however, did not laugh ; the subject was of too much importance to be trifled with ; he looked first at the Due de Duras with an expression of doubt, then raised the dish to his nose, pushed it from him with a sigh, and exclaiming, ' It is, however, true ' sank back in his chair to brood upon his disappointment.

" After this event, the silence certainly still continued, but not the embarrassment, for during the rest of the entertainment, we were all convulsed with suppressed laughter, and although of course good breeding and the rules of etiquette prevented its explosion, the conviction that we mutually understood the joke made us feel its relish the more keenly. The dinner concluded while this ludicrous impression lasted, and we retired to the drawing-room, glad to be emancipated from the restraint which sitting thus face to face with royalty always occasions.

" After a moment's consultation among ourselves, we decided that it would be advisable to proceed at once to business, as many of us wished to return to Paris as soon as possible, to forward the measures concerning the public entrance of his majesty into the capital. I was spokesman upon the occasion, and ventured to suggest the propriety of at once opening the discussion at which we were all come prepared to be amicable wranglers. To our great surprise, his only answer was, '*Let us digest first ; we will speak of business another time.*'

" I leave you to imagine the effect produced by these words. The action which accompanied them was even more expressive of

his earnestness in the pursuit which he recommended, for he sank calmly down among the cushions of the sofa, and in another moment, before our astonishment had subsided, was lost in the sweetest and most quiet slumber I ever witnessed. It was the source of the greatest amusement to us all, as we moved noiselessly about the room, and spoke to each other by signs or in low whispers, in order to avoid interrupting the important slumbers of the sovereign, to behold from the windows of the palace, the eager expectation of the crowd assembled in the court below, whose anxious countenances, lighted up by the glare of the illuminations which decorated the front of the building, gave token of the intense interest with which they were regarding the moving shadows of those within.

“No doubt, they deemed that the proceedings there taking place, were big with the fate of the empire—the destiny of thousands of their fellow-countrymen. Each time that any form of more than ordinary dimensions happened to pass before the windows, it was immediately taken for that of the king, and was greeted with loud shouting and applause, which, however, failed to reach the ear of him for whom it was intended, and who still slumbered on, all unconscious, either of the disappointment of those within, or the expectation of those without.

“This apparently insipid and eventless dinner, was to me one of the most extraordinary and interesting I ever remember, and it has remained a *souvenir*, when others, more remarkable for the wit and spirit of the guests, or the generosity of the entertainer, have long ago been forgotten. It placed me at once *au courant* as to the views and habits of our ‘restored sovereign.’ In no one of the anticipations formed from this interview, was I deceived. Selfish, insensible, luxurious, ungrateful, did I ever find him. This dinner at Compiègne was the

very picture of his whole reign, and he fully justified the words of my honest friend Dunoyer—' Among the millions of human lives confided to his charge, there is but *one* of value in his eyes ; and that one the most valueless of all to the whole world beside.' ”

After his final retirement from the office for foreign affairs, Talleyrand's public connection with the political concerns of France, was maintained only by the part he took as a member of the opposition in the Chamber of Peers. His power lay not in debate in a large assembly, and he seldom spoke. On two occasions, however, his voice was heard, giving expression to counsels of moderation and wisdom. He delivered a speech against the censorship of the press, and another against war with Spain. The first speech was delivered on the 24th of July, 1821. Parts of it are deserving of quotation.

“ Representative government cannot exist without the liberty of the press, which is one of its essential instruments ; indeed, its principal instrument. Every government has its own machinery ; and it must always be borne in mind, that institutions which are salutary to one government, may be injurious to another.

“ The liberty of the press is a necessity of the age. A government endangers its stability when it obstinately refuses to grant that which the age proclaims to be necessary.”

“ The human mind is never completely stationary. The discovery of yesterday is but the medium for arriving at a new discovery to-morrow. Nevertheless, it is true that human intelligence would seem to advance by crises ; there are periods when that intelligence is urged forward by the desire of creating and producing ; and there are times when, satisfied with its acquisitions, it appears to repose within itself, and to

be occupied in arranging and setting in order the riches it possesses, rather than in earning new wealth."

"On looking back at the disasters which befell France during the Revolution, we should guard against being wholly unjust to those master spirits, whose writings gave the first impulse to that great event. We must not forget that, if those writers did not always steer clear of error, yet we owe to them the revelation of many great truths. We must bear in mind, that those men are in no way responsible for the inconsiderate precipitancy with which France, almost as one man, rushed into the career which they had merely traced out in perspective. Views which had been only theoretically developed, were suddenly carried into practical effect; and the result has shown the awful consequences which ensue, when man, prompted by insane self-confidence, ventures to go beyond the necessities of the age—the gulf of misfortune then yawns before him. But in merely working such changes as are dictated by the wants of the age, we are certain not to diverge very far from the right course."

"Society, in its progressive advance, is destined to feel new necessities. I readily admit that governments ought not rashly to acknowledge them or to convert them into laws. But when these necessities have once been acknowledged, to take back what has been granted, or (which amounts to the same thing) to withhold that which has been granted, or to suspend it unceasingly, is a dangerous course, of which I earnestly hope those who have put it in practice may not have reason to repent. A government should never compromise its own good faith. In the present age, it is not easy to carry on deception for any lengthened period of time. There is a power whose wisdom is superior to that of Voltaire, whose intelligence is

greater than that of Bonaparte—a power, in short, superior to the directors or to any of the ministers, past, present, or to come—that power is the great mass of mankind. To engage, or at least to persist, in a conflict on any question on which the majority of the world conceive their interests to be at stake, is an error, and all political errors are dangerous.

“When the freedom of the press exists, when people know that their interests will be defended, they trust that time will render them justice, however tardily that justice may come. They rely on hope, and with reason, for even hope cannot be long deceived. But when the liberty of the press is restricted, when no complaint is permitted to be heard, discontent forces a government either into too much weakness or too much severity.”

The high royalist party, having obtained the decided ascendancy in the councils of Louis XVIII. and in the two Chambers, urged on a war with Spain for the suppression of liberal principles in that kingdom, and for the maintenance of the doctrines of the Holy Alliance of despots against the people. On the 4th of February, 1823, the Chamber of Peers presented an address to his majesty in reply to the speech from the throne; in which address the majority of the Peers approved of the armament destined for the invasion of Spain. In the debate, which preceded the adoption of this address, and which was the most animated that had taken place on any subject since the Restoration, Talleyrand expressed his opinion in the following terms :

“It is now sixteen years since, commanded by him who then ruled the world, to deliver my opinion on a conflict in which he was about to engage with the Spanish people, I had the misfortune to displease him by unveiling the future, and

pointing out the multitude of dangers that would arise out of an aggression equally rash and unjust. Disgrace was the reward of my sincerity. After so long an interval, I find myself, by a singular destiny, under the necessity of renewing the same efforts and the same counsels ! The speech from the throne has almost banished the last hope of the friends of peace. It is menacing to Spain ; and I must say, it seems to me alarming to France. However, war is not yet declared. Peers of France! a moment, a single moment still remains to enable you to preserve the king, to preserve your country from the chances of so dangerous an enterprise. Hasten to fulfill the most sacred of duties ; to undeceive the king, who is mistaken with respect to the wishes of France, the wants of his people, and his own interests, no less than with regard to the state of Spain, which is represented to him as being weakened by internal dissension. The wishes of the French people—it is almost superfluous to make the assertion—the wishes of the French people are decidedly for peace. Satiated with military glory, they hoped, under the government of their king, to repair in the bosom of peace, the miseries of a thirty years war. All the parts of this vast empire, which presents so many varied interests, are unanimous on this question. Lille coincides with Strasbourg, Lyons with Bordeaux, and Marseilles with Grenoble. The most insolent party spirit cannot dispute this fact. And how should it be otherwise ? In this case, have not the ship-owners of Bordeaux and Marseilles the same interest as the manufacturer of Lyons or Rouen ? Is not the one in danger of being robbed of the treasures which he has embarked on the sea, and is not the other, by being suddenly deprived of his most important outlets, exposed to the risk of being compelled to shut up those warehouses which once

constituted his glory and the prosperity of our country? Need I mention that portion of the population who live only by their daily labor, and who, through the reduction in the price of that labor, now earn only a part of the wages necessary to support their families, and who from day to day may run the risk of being deprived of this last resource? Can you suppose, gentlemen, that the most flourishing state of agriculture can escape the disasters that assail industry and trade? In the present state of society all branches of prosperity are linked together. The losses of the merchant will in their turn fall upon the cultivator, and the agricultural class of the people will be drained of the money that will be lost on the desolated plains of Spain. Why do not the powers of the world count at this terrible moment what are the suffrages? On one side there is a whole people, and on the other—what shall I say? some individual interests which endeavor to turn to their advantage exclusively, a restoration which was intended for the benefit of society at large. I have the courage to speak the whole truth. The same chivalric sentiments in 1789 led aside generous hearts, and seduced imaginations, but they could not preserve the monarchy; they may destroy it in 1823, and legitimate monarchy is the want of France. The war is not, as some persons are pleased to say, a question relative to dynasty; it is altogether a party question. The interests of royalty are not concerned, but only those of a party, true to its ancient hatreds and its ancient pretensions, and which it is less ambitious to preserve, than to reconquer. It is wished to obtain revenge on the tops of the Pyrenees.

“What substantial motives could induce France, now so happy, so tranquil, and so prosperous, to risk the chances of a war with Spain? What has France to complain of? All her

complaints are reduced to this—the Spanish Charter is full of imperfections. I think, myself, that it is full of imperfections ; but how long is it since neighboring nations have believed themselves authorized to exact of an independent people the reformation of its political laws ? With such a theory, what would become of the independence of nations ? What singular reformers, what strange Lycurguses, a hundred thousand soldiers, speedily to be followed by as many more, would make ! Who is it that it is wished to impose upon by this political Don Quixotism ? Does any person flatter himself that the secret of this new crusade is a mystery to the people ? No : Spain with its acquired liberty, Spain without privileged orders, is an intolerable spectacle for pride to witness ; it cannot be endured ; and it is necessary to do that in Spain which it has been impossible to do in France—to effect a counter-revolution. I know well that the invisible directors of this great conspiracy against the liberty of nations, are not mad enough to hope for any success from the efforts of their partisans alone. Upon what, then, finally do they rest their hopes ? They do not know ; they would have trembled if they had taken it into consideration. The support upon which they rely is foreign support. Let it not be imagined that this is a chimerical statement ; the parricidal wish has been very recently expressed in those periodical journals which are the bare reflectors of the impure passions which agitate the face of our country. But at what price will the foreigners, upon whom the party alluded to are reduced to the necessity of relying, sell us their fatal co-operation ? Who will pay their armies ? Who will support them ? Certainly it will not be unfortunate Spain ; it has no treasures ; it scarcely can furnish its own subsistence ; it is rich only in courage. Prudence

prevents me from developing to a greater extent all the dangers of a war with Spain ; your knowledge and your reflection will suggest them to you. But I have said enough to justify the necessity of my presence in the tribune.

“ It becomes me, who am old, who respect France, who am devoted to the king and all his family, who have taken so great a part in the events of the double restoration, who by my efforts, and I venture to say, successful efforts, have established my glory and my responsibility upon the renewed alliance between France and the house of Bourbon—to prevent, as much as it is in my power, the work of wisdom and of justice from being compromised by foolish and rash passions. The king is deceived ! It is our duty to undeceive him. He is told that his people desire war, when they wish for peace. He is told that the honor of his crown would be compromised, if he did not revenge the insults which have been offered to Ferdinand VII. His ancestor Louis XIV. did not revenge insults much more heinous ; and on a point of dignity, Louis XIV. is not a model to be despised. The happiness of France—that is the glory of Louis XVIII. ; and he is worthy of enjoying such glory. It is said that Spain being a prey to anarchy, is dangerous to France. Facts are before us to answer this. Is it true that anarchical doctrines have made alarming progress in France ? On the contrary, has not power made its greatest acquisitions among us since the revolution of Spain ? Do not fear to make the truth known to the king. He will never reject it. * * I shall say only one word more, and that for the purpose of asking, if there be nowhere entertained any doubts as to the secret wish of Ferdinand VII. ? I do not presume to give a personal opinion on this subject ; I desire it from the past, which is but too well known. The king of

Spain was, doubtless, never more completely deprived of liberty than during the seven years of his captivity at Valençay, and I appeal to the recollection of some of my noble colleagues, whether at that painful period they did not find that neither their brilliant names nor their affecting attachment, were capable of inspiring that sovereign with sufficient confidence to make him regard the attempt, which they wished to make for his deliverance, as any other than an act of temerity, of which he would become the victim ; and my personal relations with King Ferdinand authorize me to believe, that his refusal proceeded only from a noble confidence in the fidelity of his subjects, to whose courage and love he wished to be indebted for his deliverance."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Revolution of 1830—Talleyrand's connection with it—Scenes at his hotel during the "three days of July"—The king flies—Talleyrand's message to Louis Philippe—His advice as to accepting the crown—Louis Philippe proclaimed King—Talleyrand appointed ambassador to London—Anecdote—Negotiations.

THE revolution of July, 1830, and its consequences, soon recalled Talleyrand from his retirement, and brought him once more, and for the last time, on the stage of European politics. With his usual sagacity, he foresaw the fall of the elder branch of the Bourbons. When the events which immediately preceded that catastrophe were developing themselves, the agitation on the Bourse was extreme, and speculations assumed vast proportions. A *coup d'état* had long been expected, and financiers left no effort untried to gain the earliest and most correct information of the movements of the cabinet. The emissaries of the great bankers besieged all the avenues of the throne. On the night of the 25th of July, Talleyrand sent for one of his intimate friends, whose fortune was largely involved in the funds, and informed him, that in the course of the day he had gone to St. Cloud, to seek an audience of the king, to confer with him on the subject of the apprehensions entertained in England; to which proceeding he had been, doubtless, prompted by the English embassy, of which, as well as of the British cabinet, he had the confidence. He was not allowed to see his

majesty. The familiars of the palace managed matters so, that he was obliged to return to Paris without the audience which he sought, and, from what he had observed, he had no doubt that the crisis was imminent. "Operate for the fall," said he to his friend. His friend did so, and was successful.

The share actually taken by Talleyrand in the revolution of July, has been a matter of considerable difference of sentiment among historians of that event. It was natural to suppose that the statesman, who had played so conspicuous a part in all revolutions, from that of 1789 to that of 1830, and whose services appear to have been essential to each successive government, in some stage, must have been concerned in the production of those causes, and the preparation of those measures, which overturned the throne of Charles X. The facts, as given, by one who claims to have been an intimate friend of the Prince, and to have been with him during the "three days of July," are thus stated. The extract is from the work of M. Colmache.

"It cannot be denied that, at the period to which I now refer (1830), the opinions of M. de Talleyrand were most unfavorable to the government of Charles X. Like every other man of sense and foresight throughout the kingdom, he beheld with dread the dissolution of the Martignac ministry, and the substitution of the Polignac administration ; but such political inconsistencies could not astonish, coming from a man of the stamp of Charles X., whose whole life had been a tissue of inconsistencies, from the famous protest of the Count d'Artois, upon the occasion of the States-General in 1789, to the fatal appointment of the ministry which was to send him forth a second time to emigration, from which he had returned once before, according to Prince Talleyrand's own expression, long previous to the catastrophe, '*having learnt little and forgotten*

nothing. M. de Talleyrand, nevertheless, did ample justice to the many good qualities which distinguished the king in private life, and the more he overwhelmed him with contempt as the head of a party, the more he was pleased to acknowledge in him a feeling and generous nature, and a faithful and grateful friend. In point of real and sterling worth, he placed him far above his brother, Louis XVIII., whom he accused of 'having no friends—only favorites,' and who, in his whole life, never had the heart to grant a pardon to a single criminal. The one was a better king, the other a far better man.

"To assert that M. de Talleyrand *conspired* against the Bourbons—that by his intrigues with the opposition, and above all, with the Duke of Orleans, he brought on the fall of the elder branch, and the rise of the younger (which, it may be allowed, he had long foretold), proves a total ignorance of the circumstances in which M. de Talleyrand was placed, and adds one more to the numerous calumnies which it has been the pleasure of so many writers to heap upon the head of this celebrated statesman. But, if the prince did not absolutely rush to meet the events of July, it cannot be denied that, with his accustomed tact, he knew how to profit by the accomplished facts, and that, being once certain of the flight of Charles X., he pointed out, with the rare sagacity with which he was gifted, and which age had rather increased than diminished, to his old friend the Duke of Orleans, the line of conduct to be pursued, in order to avoid, amid the stormy tides by which he was beset, seeming to steer his course against the will of the people.

"M. de Talleyrand was, at the time, in his hotel in the Rue St. Florentin, and on the first day, before any one could foretell the issue of the terrible drama which had just begun, far from displaying any degree of sympathy for the resistance

which was beginning to be organized in every quarter of Paris, he looked on with a feeling of terror at the unchaining of the populace ; for he had often said, that 'neither experience nor prophecy could ever calculate the chances of a dawning revolution.' The souvenirs of youth came back upon his age, and showed him the people conquering, using and abusing the right that conquest gives ; pillaging the hotels of the *noblesse*, and, in bloody triumph, sparing no superiority, either of station, rank, or fortune ; and it might be, also, if the truth were known, trembling himself lest he should be the first victim of popular rage, for he knew that the people loved him not ; he had been the instrument of the restoration of the Bourbons. Such were the thoughts which occupied his mind during the first of these days, and, with those who can bear witness to the uneasiness which he betrayed during those hours of doubt and terror, he is perfectly exonerated from the suspicion of having *prepared* the change which was taking place before his eyes.

"On the second day, the 28th, when the people were combating against the king's troops for the possession of the Hotel de Ville, while the air was filled with the old and dreaded sounds, the cannon's roar, the tocsin's boom, his confidence in the success of the king's power of defence forsook him at once, and he then pronounced the memorable sentence which has since become familiar to the readers of French literature: 'The cannon which is fired against the people cannot but shake the sovereign's throne.' At the moment when the tocsin announced the triumph of the people at the Hotel de Ville, he looked at the clock upon the mantelpiece. It was then just upon the stroke of five. 'A few minutes more,' exclaimed he, 'and Charles X. is no longer King of France.'

“ One good instance of his presence of mind occurred at this very moment, for he turned to his valet-de-chambre, and made him immediately collect together the men-servants of the hotel, and take down the words ‘HOTEL TALLEYRAND,’ which flaunted in large golden characters over the gateway, the feudal pride of other times.

“ I still maintain the perfect conviction that, even up to the very hour of which I speak, he was undecided as to the course he would adopt ; he was evidently waiting for the issue of the struggle. Public rumor has lent him a *bon-mot*, which is certainly in his style, although I was with him the whole day, and did not hear him pronounce it.

“ ‘ Hark ! the tocsin ceases—we triumph !’

“ ‘ *We* ’ who, prince ?’

“ ‘ Hush ! not a word ! I will tell you that to-morrow.’

“ If his secret wishes were really in favor of a new order of things, with his habitual prudence, he made it a duty to conceal them ; and he spent the whole of the second day fixed at the windows of the drawing-room of the hotel, which looks into the Place Louis Quinze, sending every now and then his emissaries into the divers quarters of Paris, to bring back accounts of the progress of the revolution. MM. de Broglie, Bertin de Vaux, and Sébastiani were with him, and all, excepting the prince, were of opinion that the king would attempt, before the morning, to re-enter Paris at the head of his troops. *He* knew the character of the man too well either to hope or to fear this decision.

“ By early dawn on the 30th, the people were, however, masters of Paris—of all the military posts—of all the barricades of the Tuileries—of the Louvre, and of the hotels of the minis-

ters. The royalist troops had withdrawn, and were encamped round St. Cloud, where still lingered, in faint hope, in inert expectation, Charles X. and his court.

“ Suddenly, a report arose, and spread like wildfire through Paris ! The old king, alarmed at the consequences of a civil war, had decided on immediate flight. M. de Talleyrand, at first, would give no credence to the rumors. He could not believe it possible that the king, being still surrounded by 12,000 devoted troops, would so soon abandon the chances of the game, and, before he declared himself, he sent to St. Cloud to ascertain the truth of the statement. The return of the messenger staggered us all. He brought word that Charles had fled from St. Cloud, and was proceeding, with all expedition, to Rambouillet. At that moment, M. de Talleyrand’s doubts were at an end ; he decided at once upon the course he would pursue ; and, in this circumstance, as in so many others wherein he has been accused of changing his politics to suit the hour, he might have answered as he had once done before, ‘ It is not I who desert the king—it is the king who deserts us.’

“ Now came the time when the high intelligence and marvelous sagacity of the prince were brought into action, and, I hesitate not to repeat, saved the country. M. de Talleyrand dispatched to Neuilly, with all possible speed, a little billet written with his own hand. The bearer was a person of high courage and great integrity, and was charged, should he fall into danger, or be arrested at the barrier, to destroy the billet. He could not in honor read its contents, but saw that there were but few words traced upon the paper. They were addressed to the sister of Louis Philippe, Madame Adelaide. This messenger was commissioned himself to place the billet in the hands of the princess, and to tell her that the Prince

de Talleyrand conjured her to warn the Duke of Orleans that not a moment was to be lost—that the duke might reckon upon his aid, and that he must appear immediately—that he must come at once to Paris, to place himself at the head of the movement, or all would be lost without recall. Above all, he was only to take the title of Lieutenant General of the kingdom, which Charles had conferred upon him before leaving St. Cloud: he implored him not to manifest any other intention. In this advice the old diplomatist was reserving for himself a back door to creep out at in case Charles should march on Paris.

“Madame Adelaide received the message with ill-dissembled joy. With woman’s cunning, however, she declined giving an answer in writing, as there were no writing implements in the room, and she dared not ask the servants for them; being aware that the whole house was filled with spies, she knew not whom to trust at such a moment. She even took the precaution of returning the paper received from the prince, fearing either to retain or destroy it, lest its traces might be discovered. The messenger then took back this verbal message: ‘That her brother would be most grateful for the assistance which Prince Talleyrand thus offered—that he was for the moment *absent from Neuilly*—but that she would immediately have the prince’s message conveyed to him, and would herself use her most earnest endeavors to persuade him to go at once to Paris.’ The Duke of Orleans was, before night, established in the Palais Royal, and, in a few hours after his arrival, the walls of the capital were covered with placards and proclamations, signed **LOUIS PHILIPPE, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OF THE KINGDOM.**

“Dreadful rumors of revolt and massacre were circulated on all sides, and the family of the Duke of Orleans were not

without alarm for the very life of their chief. The moment then was come at last—the moment to decide. Charles X. was taking, without resistance, the road to a new exile. From that quarter, then, all danger ceased. The deputies, now gathered together in sufficient number to deliberate, had come to offer the crown to the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. M. de Talleyrand was consulted at this crisis, and he it was who caused the faint resistance of Louis Philippe to cease, and induced him to place upon his brow the crown offered by the people, and he it was whose opinion decided the king to go at once to the Hotel de Ville, there to receive publicly the sceptre of France, and swear allegiance to the charter. This truth may be relied on ; and, moreover, M. de Talleyrand, in order to give to the new power the sanction of his old experience, appeared at the public reception of the Palais Royal for the first time since the revolution.

“Such was the part played by M. de Talleyrand in the revolution of 1830. Immense it was, if judged by its results, but neither studied beforehand nor rehearsed, as it has been so often unjustly asserted since that day. This part, indeed, was so entirely *impromptu*, that many persons of the intimate circle of the prince know that, more than once, M de Talleyrand has let fall a regret that Charles, in his blind folly, should have destroyed in three days the whole fabric of the restoration, which had been looked upon by all Europe as the masterpiece of Talleyrand’s diplomatic works. The weakness of seigneurial pride, too, the only one which, I think, he ever possessed, will sometimes cause him to sigh over the wreck of that principle of legitimacy which he had been at so much pains to re-establish in favor of the Bourbons, a principle which he still considers necessary to the repose of the country, perhaps compromised

for many generations by the events of the three glorious days."

Soon after the elevation of Louis Philippe to the throne, he manifested a strong desire to draw closer the bonds of national amity with Britain. For this purpose he ardently wished to send to London, as his representative, a diplomatist distinguished at once by great ability, by a predisposition to the British alliance, and by the respect which illustrious descent is so sure to obtain from the British aristocracy. With these views his choice fell on Talleyrand. On the 4th September, 1830, he accordingly submitted to the council of his ministers, assembled at the Tuileries, the question of nominating his highness the Prince Talleyrand to the embassy at London. This proposition instantly met serious opposition in the cabinet: M. Lafitte declared that such a choice would, in his opinion, be attended with considerable danger, inasmuch as it would be extremely unpopular. Finding such to be the unanimous opinion of the cabinet, the king put an end to the conference.

The following day, Talleyrand dined with M. Lafitte. "I thank you," said he, to the minister, "for the compliments you paid me yesterday at the palace. I know all: the king has related it to me." "You are aware, then," replied Lafitte, "of the terms in which I spoke of your capacity." "Let that pass," rejoined Talleyrand. "I added," continued Lafitte, "that I believed you to be incapable of violating your word." "That," resumed Talleyrand, "is what I meant to thank you for." "It is quite true, however," observed Lafitte, "that I spoke of your unpopularity." Talleyrand smiled, and was silent. In a few hours afterward, Lafitte learned from the mouth of the king that Talleyrand was ambassador to the Court of St. James.

A fact, evincing the extensive influence of Talleyrând's name, is thus stated. Scarcely was Louis Philippe elected king of the French, ere he sent Colonel Athalin, one of his favorite aids-de-camp, to the emperor of Russia. The aid-de-camp was the bearer of an autograph letter from the new sovereign. A fortnight elapsed, and no answer. At length the aid-de-camp received one morning the long-expected and wished-for reply. What then had taken place at St. Petersburg? The simplest thing in the world : the *Moniteur* had arrived, and the Emperor Nicholas had read in its columns, "The Prince de Talleyrand has been appointed ambassador to London." Upon this the emperor had said to his council : "Since M. de Talleyrand attaches himself to the new government of France, that government must necessarily have some chance of stability." And Louis Philippe was recognized king of the French by the emperor of Russia.

Truly, without any exaggerated vanity might Talleyrand remark, as he is said to have done to Louis XVIII. at the time of the first restoration—"Sire, there is something in me which bodes no good to the government that neglects me."

Just previous to his departure on his mission to England, it is stated that he thus expressed himself in regard to his wishes and hopes in this his last political work :

"It has ever been my dream," said he, "to behold a firm and stable alliance between England and France. I cannot live to behold what I have yearned for all my life long ; but you may yet be witness to the result to which the events of Europe have all tended for the last three centuries. There are many countries, many climes in Europe ; there will soon be but two nations—the English and the French. Before many generations have passed away, they will even stand face to face

alone upon the globe. They must become, not only allies, but friends. Already you will perceive that their mutual hatred has become tradition. The wars between these two great nations have often partaken of the chivalrous character of the ancient duel, in which the combat was carried on less from antipathy or thirst of vengeance, than from a boyish valor and love of glory. Believe me, where genius and courage are equal, peace becomes indispensable—two countries cannot make war upon each other until both fall dead upon the field of battle; destruction is not triumph. The good which has sprung up, even amidst their mutual jealousies, has been immense; much more has been sown than has yet been gathered, but the seed which has thus been buried will bring forth fruit, in its own good time, to benefit the whole human race.

“You will find, by the study of history, that they have proceeded in the goodly work together, as though by a tacit agreement, working with the same perseverance and the same success, to promote the progress of reason and the advancement of prosperity throughout the world. It was at the very same instant that the cry of horror at the tyranny and oppression of the people arose from the heart of each, and hand in hand did their philosophers and men of genius sound the first alarm at the encroachments of despotism. They are destined to regenerate the world.”

The announcement of the appointment of Talleyrand to the embassy produced a lively sensation in England; and his known inclinations in favor of an alliance between England and France gave rise to the most favorable anticipations among the commercial classes, as well as among those who looked forward to the inestimable advantages of the continuance of the general peace.

On being presented at the Court of St. James, Talleyrand delivered an address to the following effect :

“SIR: Of all the vicissitudes to which my great age has exposed me —of all the various situations into which the last forty years, so fruitful in extraordinary events, have seen me thrown, none have so entirely satisfied my wishes as that appointment which has brought me once more to this happy country. * * * * Common principles draw more and more closely together these two great nations. England, like France, repudiates the principle of intervention in the internal concerns of other nations; and as the ambassador of a royalty unanimously elected by a great people, I feel myself at ease upon a land of freedom, near a descendant of the illustrious house of Brunswick.”

His first efforts in his new capacity were directed to reproduce and realize the designs which, under less auspicious circumstances, he had urged upon the British government in 1792. More successful at the close than at the opening of his long career, he succeeded in bringing into a friendly alliance two nations which rival pretensions had so long separated, but which he contended, analogous institutions and common foreign interests ought to combine. The cabinets of Europe, seeing this aged and profound diplomatist, whose sagacity, enlarged by vast experience, and whose unvarying moderation, they so well knew, appointed to represent the revolution at one of the most distinguished of the old courts, felt a stronger faith in the stability of its results, and a more favorable disposition to be reconciled to the existing state of things, and to treat on practicable terms with the new government. Placed by the ascendancy of his renown and his talent at the head of the conference of London, Talleyrand succeeded in reconciling the powers to the dissolution of that union between Belgium and Holland, which they had established in 1814, and in procuring

the acknowledgment of the independence of Belgium, which thenceforth would cover, instead of menacing, the northern frontier of France. This object being attained, Talleyrand finished his mission, and consummated his work by signing the treaty of quadruple alliance, which united France, England, Spain, and Portugal, in a common league in favor of peninsular civilization, and opposed the league of the west to that of the north, in the interest of the cause of constitutional government on the Continent of Europe.

CHAPTER XIX.

Final retirement from political life—Last public appearance at the Institute—Eulogy on Count Reinhart—Illness—Preparations for death—Religious profession—Declaration of his political principles—Visit of Louis Philippe to the dying statesman—Death—Will—Funeral at Paris—Titles and Honors.

THE quadruple treaty was signed on the 22d of April, 1834. This was the last political act of Talleyrand's life. When this duty to his country was completed, he desired permission to return to France, and then finally retired from public life. He desired that between this world and the next a short season for reflection and repose should intervene. Nevertheless, one event was destined to draw him again from his retirement. The flame which was sinking in the socket was still to give an expiring flicker. His friend and cotemporary, the learned though unobtrusive Count Reinhart, preceded him to the tomb, at an advanced age. They had often met and co-operated in their long and eventful career. They had witnessed the same political convulsions, the same succession of revolutions; and the departure of the one from the stage of life was a knell which foreboded the speedy exit of the other. Both were distinguished members of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. It is the custom of that body, on the decease of any of its more eminent members, to cause a eulogy to be delivered by some one, selected for the purpose, among the survivors.

Talleyrand conceived a wish to offer this tribute of respect to the memory of his deceased friend, and the Academy hailed with pleasure the opportunity of hearing for the last time that voice which had so often persuaded sovereigns, and of beholding that venerable visage, the lineaments of which were associated with the great transactions of the age.

On Saturday, the 3rd March, 1838, the meeting of the Academy was held, at which it had been announced that Talleyrand would personally deliver the academic eulogy on his deceased friend. It was believed that this would be the last public appearance of the venerable statesman and diplomatist. Nothing could exceed the excitement among all the more elevated and enlightened classes, which this event produced. The meeting assumed all the external appearances of a solemnity. Long before the appointed hour, the hall was completely filled. The élite of the high and the gifted were there. The most prominent official functionaries, those most renowned in literature, science, and the arts ; the notabilities of foreign countries, the most eminent of the diplomatic corps, were all assembled, expressing in their countenances intense interest.

When the chair was taken by the president, the venerable wreck of all the revolutions entered, leaning on the arm of M. Mignet, the permanent secretary of the Academy. He took a seat which had been prepared for him, facing the president. He was costumed and coifed as a high noble of the ancient régime, exhibiting to the attentive eyes of the numerous auditory that impassible serenity of look that no catastrophe was ever able to discompose. With a firm and clear voice, and perfect articulation, he read an elegant discourse, in which he noticed the various public functions which his late friend had fulfilled,

and the eminent abilities he displayed. This gave occasion for general reflections on the qualities necessary to a minister of foreign affairs, and every order and class of diplomatists, from a consul upward. Reinhart had in early life, like Talleyrand himself, studied theology. This afforded an occasion for some curious reflections on the benefit which a statesman and diplomatist must derive from the early discipline of an ecclesiastical education.

Observing on the qualities displayed by M. de Reinhart, when he was minister of foreign affairs, Talleyrand said :

“ A minister of foreign affairs ought to be endowed with a sort of instinct which shall warn him against compromising himself before serious discussion. He must have the faculty of appearing frank and open when he is really impenetrable ; of maintaining the most absolute reserve with the manner of the most complete *abandon*. He must display his ability even in the selection of his amusements. His conversation must be simple and varied : his remarks unexpected, but still natural and *naïve*. In a word, he must not allow himself, for one moment, day or night, to forget that he is minister of foreign affairs.

“ Nevertheless, all these qualities, however rare they may be, can avail nothing, if good faith do not give them the support of which they stand in need. I desire to insist the more on this, in order to remove a prejudice which generally prevails. No ! Diplomacy is not a science of duplicity. If good faith be necessary anywhere, it is eminently so in political transactions, because it alone can render them solid and durable. Stratagem is often confounded with reserve. Good faith can never permit the one, but it fully warrants the other. Reserve is even to be the more recommended, because instead of destroying, it augments confidence.

“ Ruled by the honor and interest of his country, and by the honor and interest of his sovereign—by the love of that liberty which is founded on order and on the rights of all—a minister of foreign affairs, who is thus qualified to fill his office, is placed in the finest position to which an elevated mind can aspire.”

At the conclusion of this discourse, M. Droz, the president, expressed to Talleyrand with much dignity and grace the thanks of the Academy, and the octogenarian retired loaded with the felicitations of the most eminent individuals of his auditory.

Notwithstanding his advanced age, such was the vigor of his faculties, and the brilliancy of his wit, that his friends had no apprehension of the near approach of his departure from this world. It was about two months after this memorable meeting of the Academy, that he felt the sudden attack of the malady which was destined to bring his mortal life to a speedy close. He bore, with a tranquil resignation and firm courage, which never deserted him, the agony of several cruelly painful operations.

During his last illness, the mind of the great statesman and diplomat continually reverted to the past, and his tenacious memory revolved before him the several events which he had witnessed, and in most of which he had borne a distinguished part. His nights, often sleepless from bodily suffering, were occupied with these meditations. A paper was found on his table one morning, on which he had written, by the light of the lamp, such lines as these :

“ Behold eighty-three years past away ! What cares ! what agitation ! what anxieties ! what ill-will ! what sad complications ! and all without any result, except great fatigue

of body and mind, and a profound sentiment of discouragement with regard to the future, and disgust with regard to the past !”

For three months, he had been in constant communication with the Abbé Dupanloup, with whom he conversed daily on the subject of religion. This was not a movement of the moment, prompted by the approach of death, or induced by the feebleness of age and the prostration of bodily indisposition—it was a step he had long contemplated. On the occasion of delivering his eulogy on Count Reinhart, he was heard to say, as he left the hall, “I have still one duty to perform, and I will do it.” That duty was his re-establishment in the communion of the Catholic Church.

In accordance with the determination which he had taken, he waited until he became sensible of the near approach of the moment of his departure from this life. He then directed a few of his most confidential friends to be called round his bed, and in their presence, and that of his domestic attendants, solemnly signed two documents, which he had previously written. One was a declaration of the principles which had guided him in his political career ; and the other a letter to the pope, declaring his faith in the Roman Catholic religion, and expressing repentance for certain acts of his public life, in regard to the Catholic Church.

This declaration of his principles was also annexed to his will, in which it was expressly directed that it should be read in the presence of his family. The following is a summary of this declaration :

That in all his public conduct, he was guided by a preference of the interests of France to all other things, and to all personal considerations.

That he maintained invariably that the Bourbons were restored to the throne, not by an acknowledgment of any hereditary right, but because it was deemed that the arrangement, in the circumstances then existing, was most beneficial for France—that he had declared this to Louis XVIII. and to his family, and had earnestly counselled them to adopt a system of liberal policy in accordance with such a principle ; that he denies ever having betrayed Napoleon, he abandoned him only when he saw that it was impossible that he could be at once attached to him and to France ; and that even then he did not leave him without the most lively grief, seeing that he owed to him almost his whole fortune. He enjoined his heirs never to forget this; to repeat it to their children, and to their children's children, and to let it go down from generation to generation—that if ever one of the name of Talleyrand witnessed one of the name of Bonaparte in need, they must regard it as a sacred duty to give assistance to him.

To those who reproach him with having served all governments, he replies that he had no scruple in doing so ; that he acted so because he considered, that in whatever situation the country might be placed, it was always his duty to render it his services to the utmost extent of his power, and that, according to his judgment, such was the duty of every citizen.

The letter to the Pope was an explicit acceptance of the Roman Catholic faith, in which he was prepared to die. These documents were signed by him on the 16th of May, 1838, in the presence of eight witnesses.

His disease rapidly progressed, and it was apparent that mortification was extending to the more vital regions. On the 17th, the last rites of the Catholic Church were administered to him. During the day, the Archbishop of Paris called to

inquire after him, and on hearing of his expected decease, observed—"For M. de Talleyrand I would give my life." This was repeated to the dying man, who with characteristic quickness, remarked—"My lord, the archbishop, has a better use to make of his life."

On the last day of the life of the aged statesman, Louis Philippe paid him a farewell visit.

The description of this interview is extracted from the work of Colmache, as also some interesting facts respecting the closing hours of this remarkable life.

"The slumber, or rather lethargy, into which the prince had fallen, had continued for about an hour after my arrival, and it was curious to observe, as time drew on, the uneasiness which was manifested, even, alas! by those nearest and dearest, lest this repose, however salutary, should endure beyond the hour fixed by the king for his visit. It was with some difficulty that he was aroused from this oblivion, and made to comprehend the importance of the event which was about to occur. He was scarcely lifted from his reclining position and seated on the edge of the bed, when, punctual as the hand upon the dial, his majesty, followed by Madame Adelaide, entered the apartment. It was a study both for the moralist and painter to observe the contrast between these two individuals, as, seated thus side by side, beneath the canopy of those old green curtains, they seemed grouped as for the composition of some historical picture. It was startling to turn from the broad, expansive forehead, the calm and stoic brow, and the long and shaggy locks which overshadowed it, giving to the dying statesman that lion-like expression of countenance which had so often formed the theme of admiration to poets and to artists, and then to gaze upon the pointed crown, well-arranged *toupée*, the

whole outward bearing, *tant soit peu bourgeois*, of the king, who, even at this early hour of the morning, was attired, according to his custom, with the utmost precision and primness. Despite the old faded dressing-gown of the one, and the snuff-colored coat, stiff neckcloth, and polished boots of the other, the veriest barbarian could have told at a glance which was the 'last of the nobles,' and which the 'First Citizen' of the empire. His majesty was the first to break silence, as in etiquette bound to do. It would be difficult to define the expression which passed across his features as he contemplated what might be called the setting of his guiding-star. Perhaps he could not himself have rendered an account of the exact impression which the scene produced upon his mind.

" 'I am sorry, prince, to see you suffering so much,' said he, in a low, tremulous voice, rendered almost inaudible by extreme emotion.

" 'Sire, you have come to witness the sufferings of a dying man, and those who love him can have but one wish, that of seeing them shortly at an end.'

" This was uttered in that deep, strong voice so peculiar to himself, and which age had not had the power to weaken, nor the approach of death itself been able to subdue. The effect of the speech, short as it was, was indescribable—the pause by which it was preceded, and the tone of reproach, calm and bitter, in which it was conveyed—produced an impression which will not be soon forgotten by those who were present.

" The royal visit, like all royal visits of an unpleasant nature, was of the shortest duration possible. It was evident that his majesty felt it to be an irksome moment, and that he was at a loss what countenance to assume; and, after uttering some expressions of consolation, he rose to take his leave, but too

visibly pleased that the self-imposed task was at an end. Here the prince once more, with his usual tact, came to his relief, by slightly rising and introducing to his notice those by whom he was surrounded—his physician, his secretary, his principal valet, and his own private doctor ; and then a reminiscence of the old courtier seemed to come across him, for with his parting salutation he could not forbear a compliment—‘ Sire, our house has received this day an honor worthy to be inscribed in our annals, and one which my successors will remember with pride and gratitude.’

“ I should not perhaps have deemed it necessary to record thus minutely the particular details of this scene, had not it already been so much dwelt upon in another light. Astonishment and admiration, frivolous and exaggerated, have been expressed with regard to this remarkable act of condescension on the part of Louis Philippe, as though royalty were alone exempt from the debt of manly and honorable gratitude. Why, there is not one of the sovereigns beneath whom Talleyrand had lived, who would not have hurried to show respect to the death-bed of this truly great statesman ; and yet all had not been raised to the throne by his means ! Napoleon, the stern—the iron-hearted—even he would not have hesitated, because he scorned not to avow that he had owed as much of his political success to the timely counsels of his minister for foreign affairs as to his own skill and foresight. Louis XVIII. —neither would he have deemed such a step beneath his dignity : he, too, needed no reminding that he was deeply indebted to the Prince de Talleyrand, not perhaps for zeal and activity, but for what, according to time and circumstance, was to him of far more value—his wise, discreet, and generous forbearance : while Charles X. would have come, with pious

resignation, to mourn the quenching of this last beacon of the old French aristocracy, and would have rejoiced that by his means it should have been extinguished amid becoming dignity and honor.

“It was shortly after the departure of the king that the first symptoms of dissolution were observed by the physicians. The whole family, every member of which had been apprised of this, immediately gathered around the prince. The Duke de P—— was there among the number, and I could not forbear a smile as I remembered the satirical observation made by the prince himself, a short time before his illness, upon the occasion of rather a ceremonious visit from this personage—‘Just leaves me in disappointment,’ said he, as he departed; ‘one would think, by his melancholy visage and his lugubrious costume, that he was deputed hither by some undertaker of funeral pomps.’

“Toward the middle of the day, the prince began to grow more restless and feverish. I could not resist the temptation of seeking relief from the stifed air of that close chamber, and passed through to the drawing-room. I was verily astounded at the scene which there met my eyes. Never shall I forget the impression produced by the transition from that silent room—that bed of suffering—to the crowded apartment where ‘troops of friends’—all the *élite* of the society of Paris—were assembled. There was a knot of busy politicians, with ribbons at their button-holes—some with powdered heads, some with bald heads—gathered around the blazing fire; their animated conversation, although, by the good taste and feeling of him who directed it, conducted in a low tone, filling the apartment with its unceasing murmur. I observed, too, some of the diplomatist’s oldest friends, who had come hither from real and

sincere attachment, and who took no part in the eager debates of these political champions.

“Among others the Count de M——, he whom I had never seen but as the prime wit of all joyous réunions—whose pungent joke and biting sarcasm have become the terror of bores and twaddlers, for they cling for ever, like burs, to those against whom they are hurled—the only man, in short, with whom the prince himself dared not, upon all occasions, to measure himself in the keen skirmish of intellect, now sat silent and sorrowful, apart from the rest, apparently lost in thought, nor heeding the various details of the scene which was enacting around him, and which, had it been elsewhere, would not have failed to call forth some of the sharp and bitter traits of satire for which he is so much dreaded. In one corner was seated a *coterie* of ladies discussing topics entirely foreign to the time and place. Sometimes a low burst of light laughter would issue from among them, in spite of the reprimanding ‘hush’ which upon such occasions arose from the further end of the room. On a sofa near the window lay extended, at full length, the youthful and lovely Duchess de V——, with a bevy of young beaux—all robber-like and ‘*jeune France*,’ kneeling on the carpet beside her, or sitting low at her feet on the cushions of the divan.

“The scene was altogether one of other times. It seemed as though the lapse of centuries might be forgotten, and that we were carried back at a bound to the days of Louis XIV., and to the death-bed of Mazarin. There was the same indifference, the same weariness of expectation. Some were gathered there from propriety, some from courtesy to the rest of the family; many from curiosity, and some few from real friendship; while none seemed to remember that a mighty

spirit was passing from the world, or that they were there assembled to behold a great man die. Presently, however, the conversation ceased—the hum of voices was at an end—there was a solemn pause, and every eye was turned toward the slowly-opening door of the prince's chamber. A domestic entered with downcast looks and swollen eyes, and advancing towards Dr. C——, who, like myself, had just then sought an instant's relief in the drawing-room, whispered a few words in his ear. He arose instantly and entered the chamber. The natural precipitation with which this movement was executed but too plainly revealed its cause. It was followed by the whole assembly. In an instant every one was on the alert, and there was a simultaneous rush to the door of the apartment. M. de Talleyrand was at that moment seated on the side of the bed, supported in the arms of his secretary. It was evident that Death had set his seal upon that marble brow, yet was I struck with the still-existing vigor of the countenance. It seemed as if all the life which had once sufficed to furnish forth the whole being were now centred in the brain. From time to time he raised his head, with a sudden movement shaking back the long grey locks which impeded his sight, and gazed around; and then satisfied with the result of his examination of that crowded room, a triumphant smile would pass across his features, and his head would again fall upon his bosom. * * *

“If there be truth in the assertion that it is a satisfaction to die amid the tears and lamentations of multitudes of friends and hosts of relatives, then indeed must his last feeling toward the world he was for ever quitting have been one of entire approbation and content, for he expired amid regal pomp and reverence; and of all those whom he, perhaps, would himself have called together, none were wanting. The aged friend of

his maturity, the fair young idol of his age, were gathered on bended knee beside his bed, and if the words of comfort whispered from the book by the murmuring priest failed to reach his ear, it was because their sound was stifled by the louder wailings of those whom in life he had loved so well.

“Scarcely, however, were those eyes, whose every glance had been watched so long and with such deep interest, for ever closed, when a sudden change came over the scene. One would have thought that a flight of crows had suddenly taken wing, so great was the precipitation with which each one hurried from the hotel, in the hope of being first to spread the news among the particular set or coterie of which he or she happened to be the oracle. Ere nightfall, that chamber, which all the day had been crowded to excess, was abandoned to the servants of the tomb; and when I entered in the evening, I found the very arm-chair, from whence I had so often heard the prince launch the courtly jest or stinging epigram, now occupied by a hired priest, whispering prayers for the repose of his departed soul.

“It was after the death of the prince that the awe and devotion with which he had inspired his household became evident. Not one of the domestics left his station upon any pretext whatever. The attendants waited, each in his turn, and at the same stated hour, to which he had been accustomed during his life. I myself saw the cook, punctual to the hour in the morning at which he had for so many years been summoned to receive his orders, now followed by his bevy of scullions, with their snow-white costumes and long carving-knives, walk with solemn step to the foot of the bed, and, kneeling down with cotton cap in hand, breathe a short prayer: each sprinkled the corpse with holy water, and then the whole

procession withdrew in the same silence with which they had entered. I was deeply struck with the mixture of the sublime and the ludicrous in this scene."

At half-past four o'clock, on the afternoon of the 17th of May, 1838, Talleyrand closed his eyes in death ; completing a life of eighty-four years and three months.

By his will, dated in 1836, he made his niece, the Duchess of Dino, his residuary legatee. Legacies were left to his grand-nephew, the Duke of Valençay. His will is all in his own hand-writing ; and to it he annexed the declarations of his political principles, and of his belief in the Roman Catholic faith. His memoirs, written by himself, are said to be deposited in England, and his family are prohibited from publishing them until thirty years have elapsed from the time of his death. He also directed that his remains should be interred on his estate of Valençay.

His funeral took place on the 22d of May ; the process of embalming the body causing this delay. The troops of the garrison of Paris formed the escort, while Peers, Deputies, Ministers of foreign governments, the most distinguished members of the Institute, and the most eminent men in literature, science, and the arts, constituted the solemn procession. The pall was borne by the Duke Pasquier, President of the Chamber of Peers, Marshal Soult, the Duke de Broglie, and Count Molé. The body was deposited, until its removal to Valençay in September, in the Church of the Assumption.

The titles and orders borne by Talleyrand, were as follows : Prince of Benevento, Chevalier of the Order of the Holy Ghost, Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor in France, also, Grand Cross of the Orders of the Golden Fleece, St. Stephen (Hungary), the Elephant (Denmark), Charles III. (Spain), St

Sauveur (Greece), the **Sun** (Persia), of the **Conception** (Portugal), of the **Black Eagle** (Prussia), of **St. André** (Russia), of the **Crown** (Saxony), and of **St. Joseph** (Tuscany). He was also a member of the **Academy of Moral and Political Sciences** of the **Institute of France**, and **Vice-Grand Elector** and **Grand Chamberlain** of **France** under the **Empire** and the **Restored Monarchy**.

CHAPTER XX.

Talleyrand's literary labors—Description of the American backwoodsman—Opinion of Fox—Collection of his apothegms—Anecdotes respecting him, peculiarities, treatment of his domestics—*Bon-mots*—Habits of composition—Personal appearance—Mental characteristics—Lord Brougham's opinion—His merit as an orator—Lord Brougham's description of his conversation—His political reputation—His private friendships—Napoleon's opinion of him—His religious and moral character—His claims upon the admiration and the memory of mankind.

THE fame of Talleyrand rests to a large extent upon tradition. The conviction of his ability is produced by the reminiscences and opinions of others, rather than by the study of any thoroughly established political work of his own creation, or of any literary efforts attesting his research and industry. The negotiation of treaties may require great talent and sagacity, but the proof of them remains in the condensed result ; that portion of the evidence being lost which lies in the long preparation, the skillful discussions, the triumphs of argument, tact and ingenuity. Diplomacy must generally conceal its own tracks, thus destroying much of the evidence needed for the judgment of history upon many important characters. The literary remains of Talleyrand are exceedingly scanty, considering that he was a man of the cabinet and not of the field, a thinker rather than an actor. During the latter part of his life he was somewhat occupied in the writing of his personal memoirs. These, if ever published, may add the lustre of

literature to his great reputation as a statesman. They will undoubtedly furnish the explanation of many a problem in his wonderful career, and afford such means for a complete view and correct judgment of his life and character as do not now exist. His political works have mostly been successively swept away by the various revolutions of his country ; while some of them were so intermingled with those achievements which created the renown of a greater name, as hardly to be recognized as distinctive monuments to his own honor. His greatest triumphs in his favorite art have been honored with a praise, which in history is itself subservient to the glory of another's reign. His deeds appear but as an episode in the majestic and gloomy epic which celebrates the course of astounding revolutions. That this episode should find a place in a story so grand and deeply colored, is evidence of its intrinsic merit, and, indeed, of its absolute necessity, as a part of the history of the times.

Of the following description, taken from one of his early reports before the French institute, Lord Brougham remarks, "Writers of a less severe school may envy its poetical effect, and, perhaps, learn how possible it is to be pointed and epigrammatic without being affected, and sentimental without being mawkish."

"The American backwoodsman is interested in nothing ; every sentimental idea is banished from him ; these branches so elegantly thrown by nature, a fine foliage, a brilliant hue which marks one part of the forest, a deeper green which darkens another—all these are nothing in his eye ; he has no recollections associated with anything around him ; his only thought is the number of strokes of his axe which are necessary to level this or that tree. He has never planted ; he is a stranger to

the pleasures of that process. Were he to plant a tree, it never could become an object of gratification to him, because he could not live to cut it down. He lives only to destroy. He is surrounded by destruction. Hence every place is good for him. He does not love the field where he has expended his labor, because his labor is merely fatigue, and has no pleasurable sentiment attached to it. The work of his hands is not marked by the progressive circumstances of growth, so interesting to the agriculturist. He does not watch the destiny of what he produces. He knows not the pleasures of new attempts ; and if in surrendering his home he do not leave his axe behind him, he leaves no regrets in the dwelling in which he may have passed years of his life."

His opinion of the British statesman, Fox, is given in the following language, which purports to be a "fragment from his memoirs."

"I have just heard of the death of Mr. Fox. It is now fifteen years since I was introduced to him by Mr. Ogilvie, the husband of his aunt, the Duchess of Leinster. It was at his own house, in South street, and, I think, in June, 1791.

"Shortly before his death, false reports led him to form an unjust opinion of me ; yet, my regret for his loss is not the less deep and sincere, and I feel a firm conviction that, had his life been spared, he would have rendered me justice.

"Mr. Fox united in his own character the apparently incompatible qualities of the mildest of men, and the most vehement of orators. In private life he was gentle, modest, kind-hearted, and remarkably simple in his manners. His dislike of ostentation, and of any approach to dogmatism, sometimes gave to his conversation an air of listlessness ; his superiority was manifested only by the information he diffused around him, and by

the generous feeling which always prompted him to direct the greatest share of his attention to the most obscure members of the company in which he happened to be. The simplicity of his manners did not, in the least, detract from that urbanity, and perfect politeness, which resulted more from the gentleness of his nature, than from his familiar intercourse with the most polished society of Europe. His conversation, when not restrained by the languor arising from fatigue, or by his delicacy toward others, was truly charming. It may, perhaps, be said, that never was the pleasantry of a man of wit so perfectly natural, as that of Mr. Fox ; it seemed more like the outpouring, than the creation of his fancy. He had lived on terms of close intimacy with all those of his cotemporaries most distinguished for talent, learning, and political eminence. For the space of thirty years, he maintained intercourse with almost every man in Europe whose conversation and correspondence were of a nature to fortify, enrich, or polish the intellectual faculties. His own literary attainments were varied and profound. In classical erudition, which in England is specially understood by the term learning, he was not inferior to some of the most distinguished scholars of his day. Like all men of genius, he was passionately fond of poetry ; the study and cultivation of that branch of literature, formed his favorite source of recreation, amidst the fatigues and annoyances of public life. His own poetic effusions were easy and agreeable, and deserving of a high place in that class of writing which the French call *vers de société*. The character of his mind was manifested in his predilection for the poetry of two most poetic nations (or at least most poetic languages) of eastern Europe, viz.: the ancient Greek and modern Italian. Fox did not like political

discussions in conversation, and he never voluntarily took part in them.

“Any attempt to render justice to his oratorical talents, would carry me far beyond the limits of these brief remarks. He was always, and everywhere, natural; and, in public, his manner and appearance were stamped with much of the simplicity which characterized him in private life. When he began to speak, an ordinary observer would have supposed him to be laboring under embarrassment, and even a discriminating listener would only have been struck by the just accuracy of his ideas, and the lucid simplicity of his language; but, after speaking for some time, he was transformed into another being. He forgot himself, and everything around him. His thoughts were wholly absorbed in his subject. His genius warmed as he advanced, and his sentences flashed like rays of light; until at length, in an impetuous and irresistible torrent of eloquence, he carried along with him the feelings and the conviction of his hearers. Fox certainly possessed, beyond any public speaker of modern times, that union of reasoning power, of simplicity, and of vehemence, which characterizes the prince of orators. Next to Demosthenes, he was the most Demosthenian of public speakers. ‘I knew him,’ observes Mr. Burke, in a pamphlet written after their unfortunate difference, ‘when he was only nineteen years old. From that time he continued rising, by slow degrees, until he has now become the most brilliant and accomplished debater that ever lived.’

“The tranquil dignity of mind (never disturbed but by great causes)—the total absence of vanity—the contempt of ostentation—the hatred of intrigue—the candor, the honesty, and the perfect *bonhomie*, which were the distinguishing

qualities of Fox, would seem to render him the faithful representative of the old national English character—a character which it would be presumptuous to hope can be succeeded by anything better, were it ever to change. The amiability of his disposition inspired confidence—the ardor of his eloquence excited enthusiasm—and the urbanity of his manners invited friendship. Mr. Gibbon has truly observed, that in Fox the highest intellectual powers of man were blended with the engaging gentleness and simplicity of childhood. No human being, he adds, was ever more free from every trace of malignity, vanity, or falsehood. The combination of so many admirable qualities of public and private character, sufficiently accounts for the fact that no English statesman, during so long a period of adverse fortune, retained so many attached friends and zealous adherents, as Charles Fox. The union of great ardor, in the sentiments of the public man, with extreme gentleness in the manners of the social being, would appear to have been an hereditary qualification in Fox, whose father is said to have possessed the same power of winning the attachment of all who knew him. Those who are acquainted with another generation of his descendants, must feel that this engaging quality is not extinct in the family.

“Nothing, perhaps, can more forcibly portray the impression produced by this peculiarity in the character of Fox, than a remark made by Burke. In 1797, six years after all intimacy between Burke and Fox had ceased, the former, speaking to an individual honored by the friendship of the latter, said, ‘Certainly, Fox is a man formed to be loved;’ and these words were uttered with a warmth and emphasis, which precluded all doubt of their cordial sincerity.

“The few lines I have here hastily traced, have been

written under feelings too sorrowful and serious to admit of any intention to exaggerate ; and the affection which I cherished for Mr. Fox will not suffer me to profane his memory by any allusion to the factious contentions of the day. The political conduct of Fox belongs to history. The measures he supported, and those he opposed, may divide the opinions of posterity, as they have those of the present age ; but Charles Fox will, assuredly, command the unanimous respect of future generations, by his pure sentiments as a statesman—by his zeal for the civil and religious rights of all mankind—by his advocacy of liberal government, the free exercise of human faculties, and the progressive civilization of the human race—by the ardent love he cherished for his country, whose welfare and happiness can never be disconnected from his glory—and by his profound veneration for that free constitution, which, it will be acknowledged, he understood better than any politician of his time, both in its legal and in its philosophical character.”

Talleyrand’s wit and wisdom, as well as his literary capacity, appear in sentences and condensed sayings rather than in lengthened discussions. These sayings are reported from his conversations or found scattered through his writings. A conversation which was characterized by them, though it may have had the appearance of being studied and elaborated, must still have presented peculiar charms. In this art Talleyrand was without dispute pre-eminent. Several of his maxims are quoted for their intrinsic value and beauty, as well as for the insight they give into his character and talent. Those which follow are gathered in the work of Colmache.

“ Our welcome of a stranger depends upon the name he

bears—upon the coat he wears : our farewell upon the spirit he has displayed in the interview.”

“There is so great a charm in friendship, that there is even a kind of pleasure in acknowledging oneself duped by the sentiment it inspires.”

“Unbounded modesty is nothing more than unavowed vanity : the too humble obeisance is sometimes a disguised impertinence.”

✓ “The reputation of a man is like his shadow—gigantic when it precedes him, and pigmy in its proportions when it follows.”

“The ‘point of honor’ can often be made to produce, by means of vanity, as many good deeds as virtue.”

“More evil truths are discovered by the corruption of the heart than by the penetration of the mind.”

~ “Beauty, devoid of grace, is a mere hook without the bait.”

“Schismatic wranglers are like a child’s top, noisy and agitated when whipped, quiet and motionless when left alone.”

“He who cannot feel friendship is alike incapable of love. Let a woman beware of the man who owns that he loves no one but herself.”

✓ “The rich man despises those who flatter him too much, and hates those who do not flatter him at all.”

“The spirit and enterprise of a courtier are all expended in the search after place and preferment ; nothing remains for the fulfillment of the duties to which success compels him.”

“The Count de Coigny possesses wit and talent, but his conversation is fatiguing, because his memory is equally exact in quoting the date of the death of Alexander the Great, and that of the Princess de Guéméné’s poodle.”

“The imagination of men is often the refuge of their prejudices.”

“To contradict and argue with a total stranger, is like knocking at a gate to ascertain if there is any one within.”

“That sovereign has a little mind who seeks to go down to posterity by means of great public buildings. It is to confide to masons and bricklayers the task of writing history.”

“Love is a reality which is born in the fairy region of romance.”

“The love of glory can only create a hero ; the contempt of it creates a great man.”

“The mind of the Duc de Laval is like a dark lantern, only capable of lighting his own path.”

“The errors of great men, and the good deeds of reprobates, should not be reckoned in our estimates of their respective characters.”

“A court is an assemblage of noble and distinguished beggars.”

“Theologians resemble dogs, that gnaw large bones for the sake of a very little meat.”

“The stream of vice will flow as naturally into palaces, as the common sewer flows into the river, and the river flows onward to the sea.”

“It is sometimes quite enough for a man to feign ignorance of that which he knows, to gain the reputation of knowing that of which he is ignorant.”

“A long continuance of wise administration is the best and

surest means of arriving at despotism. Our present government gives us no alarm !”

“ Both erudition and agriculture ought to be encouraged by government ; wit and manufactures will come of themselves.”

“ The endeavor to convince a *bel esprit* by the force of reason, is as mad an undertaking as the attempt to silence an echo by raising the voice.”

√ “ Metaphysics always remind me of the caravanserais in the desert. They stand solitary and unsupported, and are therefore always ready to crumble into ruin.”

“ A man should make his *début* in the world as though he were about to enter a hostile country ; he must send out scouts, establish sentinels, and ever be upon the watch himself.”

√ “ Too much sensibility creates unhappiness ; too much insensibility creates crime.”

“ What I have been taught, I have forgotten ; what I know, I have guessed.”

“ An elderly coxcomb may be compared to a butterfly deprived of wings—he becomes a caterpillar once more.”

√ “ Certain acts may be rendered legal, but can never be made legitimate.”

“ Human life is like a game at chess ; each piece holds its place upon the chess-board—king, queen, bishop, and pawn. Death comes, the game is up, and all are thrown, without distinction, pell mell into the same bag.”

“ The bold defiance of a woman is the certain sign of her shame—when she has once ceased to blush, it is because she has too much to blush for.”

✓ "Life, to a young man, is like a new acquaintance, of whom he grows disgusted as he advances in years."

"When certain absurd opinions become too generally adopted, they must be replaced by less noxious errors—that is the best way of arriving at Truth."

"It is an attribute of true philosophy, never to force the progress of Truth and Reason, but to wait till the dawn of Light ; meanwhile, the philosopher may wander into hidden paths, but he will never depart far from the main track."

"Prudence in a woman should be an instinct, not a virtue."

"Churchmen and men of letters have peculiar difficulties in the world—the first are continually divided between scandal and hypocrisy, the second between pride and baseness."

"The thought of death throws upon life a lurid glow, resembling that of a conflagration, lighting up that which it is about to devour."

"In love we grow acquainted, because we are already attached—in friendship we must know each other before we love."

"A great capitalist is like a vast lake, upon whose bosoms ships can navigate, but which is useless to the country, because no stream issues thence to fertilize the land."

"With a great seigneur, there is more to be gained by flattering his vices, than by improving his estates."

"Truth and virtue can do less good in the world, than their false well-acted semblance can do evil."

"A generous man will place the benefits he confers beneath his feet—those he receives, nearest his heart."

√ “If you wish to appear agreeable in society, you must consent to be taught many things which you know already.”

“In reading over the memoirs of the reign of Louis Quatorze, we find many things in the worst manners of that day, which are wanting in the very best society of our own.”

√ “I remember having often been told in my youth that the love of glory was a virtue. Strange must be that virtue which requires the aid of every vice.”

“There are two things to which we never grow accustomed—the ravages of time, and the injustice of our fellow men.”

“The written memoirs which a man leaves after him, to serve for the history of his life, and, above all, to serve for the history of his vanity, always remind me of the story of that saint, who left, by will, a hundred thousand crowns to the church, to pay for his canonization.”

“To succeed in the world, it is much more necessary to possess the penetration to discover who is a fool, than to discover who is a clever man.”

“Experience teaches us indulgence; the wisest man is he who doubts his own judgment with regard to the motives which actuate his fellow men.”

“There are many vices which do not deprive us of friends; there are many virtues which prevent our having any.”

√ “Nothing succeeds so well as success.”

Talleyrand, like all persons renowned as wits, has had the honor of numerous sayings being attached to his name, respecting the authenticity of which it is often impossible to determine. He has, without doubt, received credit, in some

instances, where it was due to others. Such anecdotes respecting him, and such puns and witticisms, beside those which have been already related, as appear to be justly ascribed to him, are here introduced :

The Marquis de N——, Talleyrand's cousin, died at Paris, some years since. He was well known at the café Valois, of which he was one of the most constant political frequenters. He was a curious type of a royalist noble. He was a libertine, a gambler, and addicted to the pleasures of the table, but would not suffer anything to be said in his presence against the king or the church. Not a day passed but he pointed out the line of conduct which the king ought to follow, and which consisted in *driving away all the scoundrels*, without reflecting that by so doing his majesty would have run great risk of depopulating his kingdom. But the marquis was admirable whenever he spoke of Talleyrand, who allowed him a pension of a hundred louis a year. "Yes," he would say, "I do receive it, and in allowing it to me, Talleyrand does nothing but his duty ; but to go and see the scoundrel—I will never do it !—he is a Jacobin, and a married priest ; he has deserved to be hanged twenty times over !" Talleyrand was aware of this ; he laughed at it, and did not discontinue the punctual payment of his cousin's pension.

It is said that Talleyrand could not hear the word "death" pronounced without changing color, and that his domestics scarcely dared to place before him letters sealed with black, conveying the intelligence of the decease of friends, relations, or diplomatists ; and on this account, the death of some of them was concealed from him for years.

The relations of a man of celebrity to those who are in habits of daily intercourse with him, and who are also depen-

dent and inferior, frequently afford interesting illustrations of his character. His peculiarities in private are not affected by the restraints which may modify his forms of public conduct. In this view, the following extract is of value :

“The prince had always been accustomed to treat his chief domestics as persons worthy of confidence, and many a subject of the highest importance, which had been nursed with the greatest secrecy through the bureaux of the foreign office, has been discussed at full length, and with full liberty of speech, before his valet-de-chambre. It was, indeed, his custom, for many years before his death, to select the hour allotted to his toilet for the transaction of the most important affairs, and the discussion of the most weighty politics, and never, upon any occasion, was he known to dismiss his valet from the chamber. Perhaps some apology may be found for this apparent carelessness, in the fact of his trust having never been betrayed.

“The most remarkable of the whole tribe was, decidedly, the venerable Courtiade, one to whom, by reason of his long services and devoted attachment, the prince allowed a greater latitude than to any other, and whose homely remarks and shrewd observations upon passing events, afforded him the greatest amusement. The prince would take a peculiar delight in recounting to strangers the story of his flight to America, when, in obedience to a secret friendly warning, he resolved to take his immediate departure. Courtiade was with him at the moment that he received the letter which was the cause of this decision, and the prince immediately confided to him the step he was about to take, at the same time advising him, as he had a wife and family to whom he would, doubtless, wish to bid adieu before venturing on so long and perilous a journey, more

especially, since the period of his return must be distant and uncertain, that he should let him depart at once, and follow in the next packet which should sail. 'No, no,' replied Courtiade, in the greatest agitation; 'you shall not leave the country alone and unattended—I will go with you; but only leave me till to-morrow night!'

"That cannot be, Courtiade,' returned the prince; 'the delay will endanger our position, without being sufficiently long to be of service to yourself and your wife.'

"Bah! there is little trouble on the score of my wife,' exclaimed the valet, with the tears rushing to his eyes, "it is that accursed washerwoman, who has got all your fine shirts, and your muslin cravats, and how, in Heaven's name, will you be able to make an appearance, and in a foreign country, too, without them!'

"I shall never forget my first interview with the prince, nor the singular impression which this very Courtiade then produced upon me. I was admitted, as was usual with all persons who came upon affairs demanding attention and privacy, at the hour of the prince's toilet. It was a little while after the revolution of July, and just before his embassy to London. I found the renowned diplomatist seated tranquilly at his bureau, which mostly served him both for writing and dressing table. It was, I believe, upon the very day that the prince was to take his farewell audience of Louis Philippe, ere he set out for England, and he was to appear upon this occasion in the usual court costume. One valet was busily occupied, with a most serious countenance, in powdering, with might and main, the thick masses of his long grey hair. Another was kneeling low at his feet, endeavoring, although with difficulty, from his constrained position beneath the table, to buckle the

latchets of his shoes. His secretary was seated at the bureau beside him, occupied in opening, one after the other, a huge collection of letters, with astonishing rapidity, scanning the contents of each, quietly throwing some into the waste-paper basket, and placing the rest in a pile beneath for the inspection of the prince. I could not but admire the *sang froid* with which, while listening to my errand, to him personally of the highest importance, he suffered himself to be invested with the embroidered paraphernalia of his official uniform. When the attire was completed, the door of the chamber opened, and in stalked, with tottering steps, the aged weather-beaten Courtiade, laden with divers small boxes, of various forms and sizes. These were filled with the ribbons and insignia of the multifarious orders with which the prince was decorated. It was curious to witness the total indifference with which he suffered himself to be ornamented, as contrasted with the eager solemnity of Courtiade, to whom the desire to fill this office with becoming dignity (for it was the only duty which, in his latest years, devolved upon him) had become the chief aim and object of existence."

✓ Talleyrand, being vexed by a man who squinted awfully, with several importunate questions concerning his leg, which it will be remembered was lame, replied, "It is quite *crooked*—as you see."

Being, on another occasion, somewhat out of patience, through the persevering solicitations of an English nobleman for his autograph, he promised to send him one in a few days. His promise he redeemed as follows:—"Dear sir, will you oblige me with your company to dinner on Wednesday, at eight o'clock? I have invited a number of exceedingly clever persons, and do not like to be the only fool among them."

Napoleon once said, rather irreverently, of his father-in-law the Emperor of Austria, "Francis is an old granny." Some friend repeated the remark to Maria Louisa. The empress sought an explanation from Talleyrand. "Monsieur Talleyrand, what does that mean—an old granny?" The cunning diplomatist, more polite than conscientious, answered, with his most serious air, "It means, madame—it means a *venerable sage*."

Of Caroline Bonaparte, Talleyrand observed, "She has Cromwell's head on the shoulders of a pretty woman." Eliza Bonaparte he termed, "The Semiramis of Lucca."

After the death of Napoleon, numerous publications issued from the press, pretending to give revelations of the private history of the emperor and his court, on the authority of persons who had been employed about his person or his palaces. With these ridiculous productions in his eye, Talleyrand, on being asked if he intended shortly to publish his memoirs, replied, "I have not made up my mind on that point; I only know that my cook's Reminiscences are in the press."

Napoleon, in 1811, rewarded Maret, who had served him with the most unbounded fidelity and devotion as secretary and administrator in many affairs, with the title of Duke of Bassano. His abilities were certainly moderate, and it was a matter of great surprise, that, with the dignity of duke, the emperor also conferred on him the appointment of minister for foreign affairs. His honors elated him exceedingly, and he evinced his weakness in the increased arrogance of his demeanor. Talleyrand was prepared with his sarcasm on this development of Maret's character. He observed, "In all France I know but one greater ass than Maret, and that is the Duke of Bassano."

During the early revolutionary measures in the assembly of 1789, Matthew de Montmorency, the representative of a highly illustrious house, proposed that the nobility should renounce their titles. On the evening of the day when this proposal was made, Talleyrand, then Bishop of Autun, met Montmorency at a select party, and addressed him, with intentional irony, by his plebeian title—"How does Matthew Bouchard?" "Bouchard?" replied the noble, "my name continues to be Montmorency. It is not in my power to disavow my ancestors, I cannot help being descended from the good constable, who contributed so powerfully to the gaining of the battle of Bouvines, under Philip Augustus. I descend equally from that other constable who was surnamed the Great, and met his death on the field of St. Denis. I descend also"——

"Very well, very well, my dear Matthew," said the Bishop, interrupting him, "but you are also the first of your house who has laid down his arms."

✓ A gentleman, in company, was praising with great self-complacency the beauty of his mother. Dwelling upon his theme to a tiresome extent, it became apparent to the listeners that he desired them to infer that this portion of the inheritance had descended to himself. Talleyrand relieved the circle from further annoyance by the remark—"Then, sir, it was your father who was not so good-looking!"

In the latter portion of his life, the celebrity of Chateaubriand who was with all his genius exceedingly vain, began to wane. About the same time he complained bitterly of becoming deaf. This infirmity being alluded to in conversation, Talleyrand archly observed—"I understand; since they have ceased talking about him he thinks himself deaf."

The princess of Sweden, the wife of Marshal Bernadotte,

used to complain feelingly of the *ennui* of the frigid and gloomy court of Sweden, the members of which, she remarked, never were excited, except to shoot kings at masked balls. Hearing this remark, Talleyrand sought to console the princess by saying—"But really, madame, that is very well for a beginning!"

Rulhières, the author of a work on the Polish Revolution, having said—"I have never committed but one wicked act in my life;"—"And when will that act be completed?" was Talleyrand's inquiry.

When Madame de Stäel published her celebrated novel, "Delphine," she was supposed to have painted herself in the person of the heroine, and Talleyrand in that of an elderly lady, who is one of the principal characters. "They tell me," said he to her, "that we are the only two in your romance who are disguised as females."

One day when Marshal Davoust excused himself for being too late, because he had met with a "Pekin," who detained him, Talleyrand begged to know what he meant by that word. "We call Pekin everything not military," said Davoust. "Ah, yes," replied Talleyrand, "as we call everything *military* which is not *civil*."

"I have turned many a woman's head," boasted a young French nobleman. "Yes," said Talleyrand, "away from you." The Count de F—— was an antiquated bean, who after the triumphs of forty years still sought to maintain his position in the society of Paris. Having made a new conquest in the person of a lady of talent, rank, and fashion, and a conquest which he desired to retain, he applied to Talleyrand for advice in this difficult undertaking. "I should like to give the lady of my heart something that would please her," said the count, "do assist me, prince; what could I procure that would be

most rare—something unique of its kind—something that is but seldom seen, of which the like could not be brought to her from anybody else?" The prince reflected a few moments, and then joyfully exclaimed—"I have it—I have it." "What? tell me quickly. I will go this moment and procure it." "No need to stir," replied the prince, drily; "give her one of the hairs of your head—if you can; it must indeed be a thing unique of its kind, and of which no one could bring her the fellow." This allusion to his baldness was overwhelming to the poor count, and the *bon-mot* drove him from society for a time.

The personal habits of men of celebrity are ever interesting. One claiming to have been admitted to the intimacy of his society at the château, thus writes of Talleyrand's business habits.

"I have known him sign and send off an entire bag full of letters, not one of which was dispatched without having first been carefully perused and corrected by himself. The facility and precision with which he could always find the exact word which was needed, and which his secretaries would, perhaps, have been seeking for some time in vain, was matter of the greatest admiration to all who witnessed it; but he could neither write nor dictate with ease; the most trifling little note which, when completed, appeared the very model of graceful *laisser-aller* and badinage, often gave him as much trouble to indite as one of his most complicated dispatches. This, I think, may be attributable to the neglect of his early education. Subsequent study and careful reading may impart taste and erudition, but can rarely give facility. He has been known to remain for more than a week upon the composition of a letter of condolence or congratulation, if it chanced to be addressed to a brother wit, or one of whose criticism he might happen to stand in awe. In these cases, he would cause his secretary to write two or three letters, in different styles, upon the subject

he had at heart, and would then compile from the number, one in his own writing, with his own piquant additions and improvements, which was soon bandied from hand to hand, and quoted in every *salon* as a *chef-d'œuvre* of wit and epigram. Those who were in the secret would smile at the unbounded praise bestowed by the journals upon the composition of his dispatches (some of which are really master-pieces), and the wording of his protocols; for they well knew that they would scarcely have attracted a single moment's notice had the truth been known."

His personal appearance, as well in youth, in manhood, and in old age, was remarkable in attractions, and interesting as a study. It is thus described by the same writer: "Those who are accustomed to the bland and polished courtesy of his old age, can readily imagine that in youth his influence must have been all-powerful. With this fascination of manner, he must have also been possessed of the most aristocratic and handsome person, from the dignity of which, strange to say, the deformity of his foot never detracted. He was very fair, of most brilliant, yet delicate complexion, with eyes of a soft dark blue, much covered by the lids, which contributed greatly to the air of quiet reflection, misconstrued by many into an expression of cunning, which was habitual to him. His hair has always been considered one of his greatest attractions, being of the bright golden hue, so uncommon even in the north; and when he wore it loose over his shoulders, neither discolored by powder, nor disfigured by the torturing iron of the perruquier, it must have been most beautiful. Even to this very hour, you cannot fail to remark its rich luxuriance. It is not yet wholly white, but merely grey, and its original golden color still shines bright amid the silver.

"I have seen several portraits of the prince, taken in his youth. There is one, a miniature, which, set in a bracelet, has

met my eye every day for some years past, upon the arm of the fair Duchess de D., which never fails to arrest my attention, and to inspire me with the same interest, the same dreams and illusions of the past, as though, upon each occasion I behold it, it were for the first time. The likeness may be strongly traced even now. The features are moulded with a delicacy peculiar to the race of the Perigords, and the countenance is one which might certainly have been suspected of having greatly aided his varied talents and endowments, in the success for which he was so applauded and so envied. The costume in this picture is of about the year 1775, when Talleyrand was in the prime of youth, and when he had not long emerged from St. Sulpice ; and yet the portrait is rather that of a young man of fashion of the time, than of a youth vowed to a life of penance and austerity. The hair, of which he was always proud, hangs loose and unshorn over his embroidered coat ; no sign of monkish scissors or of priestly tonsure is there. There does not exist a picture of the prince either as Abbé de Perigord, or as Bishop of Autun. So completely did he ever separate himself from the state of life into which he had been thrust by the force of circumstances, that he never would consent to have a palpable record of his profession brought in after times as a memorial against him. There is a beautiful portrait of Talleyrand when Prince de Benevento and Vice Grand Elector, painted by Gerard, and one of the best performances of that artist, now at Rochecotte, wherein the countenance bears the most lively and *spirituel* expression that could possibly be represented by art. The painting by Sheffer, which has been engraved in London,* is the best in existence as

* The engraving in this work is a copy of this.

to the likeness, which is most striking. The artist has represented, in a manner almost sublime, the peculiar mixture of melancholy and *finesse* which the countenance of the prince always wears when in meditation—an expression which sometimes inspires me with a feeling of the deepest sadness ; it is the cheerfulness of the mind contending against physical infirmity and pain.”

Talleyrand, like Napoleon himself, has been the subject of most widely different and opposite opinions as to character and abilities. In early biographical accounts, published about the period of the establishment of the Empire, both these prominent actors on the stage of French affairs, are made the objects of the most severe, malicious, and monstrous imputations. It is actually amusing to observe the capacious credulity exhibited by French and English royalist writers, when any most improbable piece of scandal is connected with these illustrious names. Time, subsequent development in actions, and more accurate information, enable us to form a more correct estimate of character in both cases. The account of the principal labors and results of Talleyrand's life, presents the material for each reader's own judgment of his capacity and his character. It is believed, that no dispute can now be raised on the question of his intellectual abilities. Mirabeau designated him, in the outset of his career, as “one of the most subtle and powerful intellects of the age.” And certainly the works of riper years have not disappointed this promise of his youth. With that substantial quality, pre-eminent good sense, he was able to match the genius or the enthusiasm, the powers of intrigue or the eloquence of his competitors. Always in contact with men great in position and in talent, his inferiority, had it existed, must have been the inevitable

disclosure of some juncture of circumstances. But no change found him unsupplied with an expedient—no opponent could rejoice in an uncontested triumph. His intellect was given to observing rather than to originating, to reflecting more than to inventing. It was patient in meditation, penetrating in investigation, sagacious in judgment, logical in process, and independent in decision. Yet it was not original, independent, and powerful in the high sense which is characteristic of genius. He was a better judge of events than of principles. His thought was the offspring of circumstance more than of abstract reason. The productions of his mind and of his policy evince this. The culture of his mind was acquired in society, and not in seclusion. From the period of his entrance upon active life he was no longer studious, and therefore, was never really learned, though thoroughly intelligent. Physically indolent, he cannot be considered as having indulged in indolence of mind. Considering his habits of ease, of pleasure, of sociability, and of exertion merely when events were demanding activity, and then estimating his real intellectual attainments and labors, so varied and so profound of their kind, we are, indeed, affected with admiration for the intrinsic vigor and force of his talents. A mind of unusual capacity could alone have accomplished so much against the disadvantages of an inactive temperament on the one hand, and the pressing demands of political events on the other. His penetration was startling. It was the secret of his political success, and the strength of his diplomatic talent. Yet it was no supernatural insight. It was a product rather than a gift; resulting from his habits of accurate and calm observation, from his general acquaintance with human nature, and his careful study of the peculiarities of individual cases, from his sedulous colla-

tion of hints and suggestions, and what others would consider trifles, and from his profound judgment of the necessary force of evident facts. While there was instinct in his penetration, there was also far more of culture. So severe and competent a judge as Lord Brougham, thus characterizes his intellectual merit : " His capacity was most vigorous and enlarged. Few men have ever been endowed with a stronger natural understanding, or have given it a more diligent culture, with a view to the pursuits in which he was to employ it. His singular acuteness could at once pervade every subject—his clearness of perception at a glance unravelled all complications, and presented each matter distinct and unenumbered ; his sound, plain, manly sense, at a blow, got rid of all the husks, and pierced immediately to the kernel. A cloud of words was wholly thrown away upon him ; he cared nothing for all the declamation in the world—ingenious topics, fine comparisons, cases in point, epigrammatic sentences, all passed innocuous over his head. So the storms of passion blew unheeded past one whose temper nothing could ruffle, and whose path toward his object nothing could obstruct. It was a lesson and a study as well as a marvel, to see him disconcert, with a look of his keen eye, or a motion of his chin, a whole piece of wordy talk and far-fetched and fine-spun argument, without condescending to utter, in the deep tones of his most powerful voice, so much as a word or an interjection, far less to overthrow the flimsy structure with an irresistible remark, or consume it with a withering sarcasm. Whoever conversed with him, or saw him in conversation, at once learned both how dangerous a thing it was to indulge before him in loose prosing, or in false reasoning, or in frothy declamation ; and how fatal an error he would commit, who should take the veteran statesman's good-

natured smile for an innocent insensibility to the ludicrous, and his apparently passive want of all effort for permanent indolence of mind. There are many living examples of persons not meanly gifted, who, in the calm of his placid society, have been wrecked upon such shoals as these."

All candid historians acknowledge the sagacity always displayed by Talleyrand in politics and diplomacy. The entire field covered by these subjects was his constant study. In this field his reputation and his claim to a place in history were won, and won by vast exertions and in conflict with most able and earnest competitors. His chief merit is made by some to consist in the skillful and unscrupulous practice of dissimulation, from which no moral considerations restrained. Admitting all that is charged, it may be asked very pertinently, what was diplomacy in his day and on the part of his opponents but the art of dissimulation, and was he, who outwitted others so frequently, ever thoroughly outwitted himself? Yet it would be judging Talleyrand very superficially to imagine that he was never frank, open, communicative and candid. The excellence of his sagacity was that he knew when to manifest these traits, that he was not so weak as to act upon the shallow principle that an advantage can never be gained except by deception. This much must be credited to his good sense, though it may add no great merit to his morality.

Napoleon said of Talleyrand—"His circumspection was extreme. He treated his friends as if they might, in future, become his enemies, and he behaved to his enemies as if they might, some time or other, become his friends. Mademoiselle Raucourt, a celebrated actress, described him with great truth. 'If you ask him a question,' said she, 'he is an iron chest, whence you cannot extract a syllable; but if you ask him

nothing, you will soon be unable to stop his mouth, he will become a regular gossip.' This was a foible which, at the outset, destroyed my confidence in Talleyrand. I had intrusted him with a very important affair, and, a few hours after, Josephine related it to me word for word. I instantly sent for the minister to inform him that I had just learned from the empress a circumstance which I had told in confidence to himself alone. The story had already passed through four or five intermediate channels. The countenance of Talleyrand is so immovable that nothing can ever be read in it. Lannes and Murat used jocularly to say of him, that if, while he was speaking to you, some one should come behind and give him a kick, his countenance would betray nothing."

Talleyrand was never a popular orator. He made no attempt to be one. His voice was not adapted to a public assembly. He made several creditable speeches in the National Assembly, but they were rather arguments addressed to the reason, than appeals adapted to stir the enthusiasm and the impulses of men. He was overshadowed by Mirabeau, and many other orators of the Revolution were his superiors in the tribune. He spoke like a sage in the Chamber of Peers, but the vigor of youth had left him, and he was too wise to undertake that in his old age which he had failed to achieve in the fullness of manhood's strength. It was the consciousness of his inability to maintain the measures of his administration in the presence of a representative assembly, where ministers under the new charter were to be held responsible for their advice to the sovereign, that made him so ready to resign office after the second restoration of Louis XVIII. He had not the courage, the skill in public debate, the fire of eloquence, the infinite resources acquired only in a long career of professional service,

to be an able parliamentary minister. Had he persevered in holding office, and had he entered the arena of the Chamber, without the unreserved confidence of the king, and unsustained by colleagues of the first parliamentary talent, his failure to conduct the government would have been unavoidable. He wisely retired, and with abundant justification. He had an eloquence suited to affect such minds as he met in council and in the conferences of diplomatists; and with such audiences it was quite uniformly successful, and on some occasions truly brilliant in its triumphs.

Lord Brougham, who speaks from a personal and delightful intimacy, thus eulogizes his practice of the art of conversation : " Of his truly inimitable conversation, and the mixture of strong masculine sense, and exquisitely witty turns in which it abounded—independently of the interest, and the solid value which it derived from a rich fund of anecdote, delivered in the smallest number possible of the most happy and most appropriate words possible—it would indeed be difficult to convey an adequate idea. His own powers of picturesque, and wonderfully condensed expression, would be hardly sufficient to present a portrait of its various and striking beauties. Simple and natural, yet abounding in the most sudden and unexpected turns ; full of point, yet evidently the inspiration of the moment, and therefore more absolutely to the purpose than if they had been the labored effort of a day's reflection—a single word often performing the office of sentences, nay, a tone not unfrequently rendering many words superfluous—always the phrase most perfectly suitable selected, and its place most happily chosen—all this is literally correct, and no picture of fancy, but a mere abridgment and transcript of the marvellous original ; and yet it falls very short of conveying its lineaments,

and fails still more to render its coloring and its shades. For there was a constant gaiety of manner which had the mirthful aspect of good humor, even on the eve or on the morrow of some flash in which his witty raillery had wrapped a subject or a person in ridicule, or of some torrent in which his satire had descended instantaneous but destructive ; there was an archness of malice when more than ordinary execution must be done, that defied the pencil of the describer, as it did the attempts of the imitator ; there were manners the most perfect in ease, in grace, in flexibility ; there was the voice of singular depth and modulation, and the countenance alike fitted to express earnest respect, unostentatious contempt, and bland complacency ; and all this must really have been witnessed to be accurately understood."

* ↓ Many have judged the character of Talleyrand from an exclusive consideration of the prominent fact of his employment by so many successive governments of his country. Such an ambition and success induce a conviction of the want of stable principles, and the possession of a spirit so compliant and changeable as to be wholly without moral dignity. This conviction has in it a degree of truth. He was not the devoted lover of any system, nor the enthusiastic champion of any set of political principles. He attacked the ancient monarchy and aided in its destruction ; he embraced, eulogized and served the republic ; aided in overturning that and in consolidating the empire ; he then manifested a love for legitimacy, which he had never loved very ardently before the revolution ; and finally yielded this late preference of his life to the claims of a new revolution. Such a course appears to evince that he possessed no political ideas to the advancement of which he devoted himself throughout his long career at much sacrifice of personal interests. His was a life of

expedients, and not of principles. He had a profound philosophy applicable to events, but one which had very slight dealings with metaphysical causes.

Yet much may be said in his behalf, in a review of his relation to the government of his country. He was not an unscrupulous politician, in the common acceptance of such a character. His memory is not stained with the atrocities of the convention. He was too averse to blood and violence to be a regicide. He had the moral courage to differ from Napoleon, when he was the most powerful and the most tyrannical. He preferred to relinquish the service of the Bourbons rather than sign a treaty which was oppressive and humiliating to his country. He could resign office, when the mere lover of place and power would have held on. He could consider his country's interest as well as his own; at least he often made them agree. In appreciating the real character of this facility in changing allegiance, should we not also take into view the peculiar history of France during the period covered by these changes? Talleyrand took advantage of events, but he had very little to do with forming them. In no instance was he the creator of a revolution. His mind had no inclination in that direction. Even in the work of restoring the Bourbons, wherein he was more influential and prominent than in any other great national movement, his agency was subordinate to the power of preceding events. He had the sagacity to perceive the possibilities and the necessities of the case, and the skill to adapt measures to demands, and to direct irresistible forces to practicable ends, and herein lay his merit. But the French nation passed through changes to which every public man was obliged to adapt himself, or otherwise to renounce his nationality, if, perchance, his life even was spared him. When Talleyrand, on

taking the oath of allegiance to Louis Philippe, observed, "It is the thirteenth—I pray Heaven it may be the last," the reproach in the fact no more appertained to him than to the nation—indeed, it applied rather with special severity to the successive governments, which had neither power, wisdom, liberality, nor attachment to the people, adequate to the task of perpetuating themselves. Possessing ability and experience in public affairs; called by those who had liberty of choice to the post of responsibility; sincerely desirous of the peace and glory of France; what could Talleyrand do in the dilemma of changes so sudden and comprehensive? What rule of honor, or what precept of patriotism laid an interdict upon his compliance, when summoned to give in his adhesion to a new representative of sovereignty? Surely, love of country is superior to loyalty to the chief individual or family of that country. What is to become of the individual, with his intelligence, his conscience, his responsibilities, and his talents, if he is not to form his opinion of what is essential to the welfare of his country, and to act upon that opinion in the bestowal of his services? Talleyrand's career, as an exponent of his character, should be judged by principles and considerations such as these. In this manner his friends and defenders argue, and certainly with considerable plausibility. Yet the main article of his political faith was self-advancement. He was inspired by no heroism of benevolence. In one act of his life, he stood in an attitude of nominal hostility to France—when he joined the allied powers in their contest with Napoleon, after the return from Elba. Yet it should be remembered, that in this act he opposed what he deemed a mere military revolt, for the nation had not invited the emperor back, neither would they have received him had they not been overawed by the army,

once more in ecstasies at seeing its idolized chief at its head. Talleyrand contended against the French army in behalf of the French people ; and but for his efforts, the people would have been identified with the army, in the hostile policy of the allies. In all the other political decisions of his life, he certainly succeeded in making the interests of France coincident with the aims of his ambition, and this is more than can be claimed for many of the men of his age. Though not entirely exempt from the dishonor of some of the acts of the governments with which he was connected, and principally responsible in some cases of unjust policy, he still never continued to serve any of the successive governments when they had become abandoned to a course of administration systematically hostile to the welfare and the honor of the nation. He was no longer connected with the revolution when it plunged into the anarchy of Jacobinism ; he withdrew from the service of the Directory, when the errors of its imbecility became a settled policy ; he had no agency in those wild efforts of Napoleon which exhausted the patience and the power of France ; he was found no longer in the councils of the Bourbons when he discovered their inaptitude to the circumstances of a restoration after such revolutions. He was ever fortunate in his retirement from office, as well as in his acceptance of it. Yet he was more wise and far-sighted than merely fortunate. Such favorable accidents could not occur with such regularity, and for so long a period, in the life of a public man. His decisions were the result of his quick apprehension of the tendency of events, and his entire readiness to wait till they assumed a more favorable aspect. If no man was ever more dependent on events, no man ever knew better how to avail himself of them so safely and pertinently.

But while the public integrity of Talleyrand has been so much doubted and questioned, the character of his private friendships has never been the subject of suspicion. In the intimate relationships of life, he is described by all who knew him as eminently constant and faithful, devoted and generous. His manners, his hospitality, and the attractions of his conversation, drew around him numberless friends, whom his solid worth, discovered on a nearer approach, did not fail to retain. A man who could number so many really ardent friends, could not be so thoroughly devoid of truth, honor, consistency, and affection in private life, as some who represent his character are determined to consider him.

Lord Brougham remarks—and he speaks from the best information, and with admirable justice: “If it be true, which is, however, more than questionable—that a life of public business hardens the heart; if this be far more certainly the tendency of a life much checkered with various fortune; if he is almost certain to lose his natural sympathies with mankind, who has, in his earliest years, tasted the bitter cup of cruel and unnatural treatment, commended to his lips by the hands that should have cherished him; if, above all, a youth of fashionable dissipation and intrigue, such as M. de Talleyrand, like most of our own great men, undeniably led, has, in almost every instance, been found to eradicate the softer domestic feelings, and to plant every selfish weed in the cold soil of a neglected bosom; surely, it is no small praise of his kindly and generous nature, that we are entitled to record, how marked an exception he formed to all these rules.”

Napoleon, when at St. Helena, frequently spoke of Talleyrand, and with great severity. Condemning, in terms of exceeding harshness, the points in his character which were,

indeed vulnerable ; we must think he was occasionally apt to judge his character, as a whole, with injustice. Their former confidence had been converted into bitter and open hostility, and the feelings of the emperor were, perhaps, peculiarly irritated by the fact, that Talleyrand's predictions respecting his policy, had proved too true for his own self-love to relish. Napoleon was not very cautious or charitable in his judgment of others, profound and perspicacious as he was in the apprehension of character. Nor was he, by any means, always consistent in his observations. At one time, he casts the responsibility of the execution of the Duke d'Enghien upon Talleyrand ; at another, he assumes it all for himself. But when, in the same breath, he praises Talleyrand's talents and censures his rapacity, he combines no inconsistent facts. He observes : "Talleyrand really possessed my confidence for a long time, and was frequently acquainted with my projects a year or two before I put them into execution. Talleyrand is a man of great talents, although wicked, unprincipled, and so covetous of money as not to care by what means he obtains it. His rapacity was so great, that I was obliged, after having in vain warned him several times, to dismiss him from his employments. Sièyes also possessed my confidence, and was a man of great talent, but, unlike Talleyrand, Sièyes was an upright man. He loves money, but he will not try to obtain it otherwise than by legitimate means ; unlike the other, who will grasp at it in any form."

Though dying in the profession of the Romish faith, Talleyrand evinced, throughout his entire life, a destitution of any serious religious convictions. The religious confession made on his death-bed, was considered, even by his intimate friends, as submitted to, in order that any difficulty as to his burial,

which might be embarrassing to his relatives, should be avoided. Early disgust with the priesthood appears to have ripened into confirmed unbelief. A life of immorality, when his passions were ardent, and of luxurious ease when they were satiated, was not favorable to the decrease of a skepticism originally fostered in the school of Voltaire. We doubt whether he possessed much of that responsive sensibility to the august and solemn suggestions of the religion of nature, which, at times, moved the mighty soul of Napoleon. Without faith in a traditional Christianity, he was almost inevitably devoid of all ideas of a spiritual and practical Christianity. His moral life felt this lack of profound religious persuasion. In the garb of a chief minister of a religion, which pretended to draw its inspirations from the holy teachings and life of the Son of God, he is represented to have perpetrated deeds of impurity, perfidy, and covetousness, unsurpassed by any who wore the badge of courtier. When divested of his priestly character—which act of renunciation may well be commended—he did not abate his pursuit of immoral pleasures. With moral ideas more correct than his religious ones—the result, doubtless, of policy and natural conscience, as often is the case—he nevertheless gave way in his habits to the temptations of a capital the most corrupt known to modern history. In no sense can he be called a *good man*, after subtracting the natural amiability and tenderness of his disposition from the estimate of his character. Impassive in countenance and polished in manner, the dignity of his demeanor possessed not that additional charm of moral grandeur, which can be imparted only by the consciousness of sterling and incorruptible virtue.

It is impossible to give the mind up to an ardent admiration for Talleyrand. The reserve of his nature seems to communi-

cate itself to our hearts as we contemplate him. There is no gathering of a multitude of emotions, struggling for expression, at the view of any of the scenes of his career, or of the combined achievements which have placed him in the rank of illustrious men. It is not thus that we look at Washington, or even at Napoleon. We are suspicious of Talleyrand, even when he is doing his best works. We suspect policy, even though he eloquently asserts principle. We cannot believe that we see all—there must be something hidden. We are on the alert, lest we be tricked. His fairness we dread as we do the known deceit of others. We feel too much restraint, more effective from its very vagueness, to praise him in the unqualified terms which are natural when applied to some men. We study him as we would a statue, rather than as we do a man. He has an artificial cast to his whole character. The rich chasings of nature are overlaid with a too specious gilding of culture. He disappoints and suppresses the very admiration he excites.

He was a useful, talented, highly cultivated man ; yet not a truly great man. He lacked originality, courage, enthusiasm. He was amiable, charitable, witty, sociable, hospitable ; yet not a truly good man. He was selfish, and thoroughly destitute of any exalted love of virtue. He was an epicurean in his tastes and philosophy. Yet he was princely in his distribution of pleasures, knowing well how to augment his own delight by the gratification of others. Loving peace as a part of the policy of his ambition, he dedicated his longest continued and most able services to an empire which subsisted on conquests. Commencing life a revolutionist, he closed it, as well he might close such a life, the most rigid of conservatives. Yet his dream of legitimate monarchy has been dispelled by another

revolution, and his favorite work of "restoration" is buried deep under the throne of another Bonaparte. While thus the labors of his life appear so evanescent, and the permanent re-construction of Europe is a problem for future statesmen, or rather for Divine Providence, to solve, there is still no change of states, no fallacy of history which can deprive Talleyrand of the well-earned title of the **PRINCE OF DIPLOMATISTS.**

T H E E N D .

X