BARING-GOULD SABINE

HISTORIC ODDITIES AND STRANGE EVENTS

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Содержание

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PREFACE

A reader of history in its various epochs in different countries, comes upon eccentric individuals and extraordinary events, lightly passed over, may be, as not materially affecting the continuity of history, as not producing any seriously disturbing effect on its course. Such persons, such events have always awakened interest in myself, and when I have come on them, it has been my pleasure to obtain such details concerning them as were available, and which would be out of place in a general history as encumbering it with matter that is unimportant, or of insufficient importance to occupy much space. Two of the narratives contained in this work have appeared already in the "Cornhill Magazine," but I have considerably enlarged them by the addition of fresh material; some of the others came out in the "Gentleman's Magazine," and one in "Belgravia." With only two of them – "Peter Nielsen" and "A Wax and Honey-Moon" – are the authorities somewhat gone beyond and the facts slightly dressed to assume the shape of stories.

S. Baring Gould.

Lew Trenchard, N. Devon,

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The Disappearance of Bathurst

The mystery of the disappearance of Benjamin Bathurst on November 25, 1809, is one which can never with certainty be cleared up. At the time public opinion in England was convinced that he had been secretly murdered by order of Napoleon, and the "Times" in a leader on January 23, 1810, so decisively asserted this, that the "Moniteur" of January 29 ensuing, in sharp and indignant terms repudiated the charge. Nevertheless, not in England only, but in Germany, was the impression so strong that Napoleon had ordered the murder, if murder had been committed, that the Emperor saw fit, in the spring of the same year, solemnly to assure the wife of the vanished man, on his word of honour, that he knew nothing about the disappearance of her husband. Thirty years later Varnhagen von Ense, a well-known German author, reproduced the story and reiterated the accusation against Napoleon, or at all events against the French. Later still, the "Spectator," in an article in 1862, gave a brief sketch of the disappearance of Bathurst, and again repeated the charge against French police agents or soldiers of having made away with the Englishman. At that time a skeleton was said to have been discovered in the citadel of Magdeburg with the hands bound, in an upright position, and the writer of the article sought to identify the skeleton with the lost man.[1]

We shall see whether other discoveries do not upset this identification, and afford us another solution of the problem – What became of Benjamin Bathurst?

Benjamin Bathurst was the third son of Dr. Henry Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, Canon of Christchurch, and the Prebendary of Durham, by Grace, daughter of Charles Coote, Dean of Kilfenora, and sister of Lord Castlecoote. His eldest brother, Henry, was Archdeacon of Norwich; his next, Sir James, K.C.B., was in the army and was aide-de-camp to Lord Wellington in the Peninsula.

Benjamin, the third son of the bishop, was born March 14, 1784,[2] and had been secretary of the Legation at Leghorn. In May, 1805, he married Phillida, daughter of Sir John Call, Bart., of Whiteford, in Cornwall, and sister of Sir William Pratt Call, the second baronet. Benjamin is a Christian name that occurs repeatedly in the Bathurst family after the founder of it, Sir Benjamin, Governor of the East India Company and of the Royal African Company. He died in 1703. The grandfather of the subject of our memoir was a Benjamin, brother of Allen, who was created Baron in 1711, and Earl in 1772.

Benjamin had three children: a son who died, some years after his father's disappearance, in consequence of a fall from a horse at a race in Rome; a daughter, who was drowned in the Tiber; and another who married the Earl of Castlestuart in 1830, and after his death married Signor Pistocchi.

In 1809, early in the year, Benjamin was sent to Vienna by his kinsman, Earl Bathurst, who was in the ministry of Lord Castlereagh, and, in October, Secretary of State for the Foreign Department. He was sent on a secret embassy from the English Government to the Court of the Emperor Francis. The time was one of great and critical importance to Austria. Since the Peace of Pressburg she had been quiet; the Cabinet of Vienna had adhered with cautious prudence to a system of neutrality, but she only waited her time, and in 1808 the government issued a decree by which a militia, raised by a conscription, under the name of the "Landwehr," was instituted, and this speedily reached the number of 300,000 men. Napoleon, who was harassed by the insurrection in the Peninsula, demanded angrily an explanation, which was evaded. To overawe Austria, he met the Emperor Alexander of Russia at Erfurth, and the latter when sounded by Austria refused to have any part in the confederation against Napoleon. England, in the meantime, was urging Austria to cast down the gauntlet. In pledge

[1] The discovery of a skeleton as described was denied afterwards by the Magdeburg papers. It was a newspaper sensational paragraph, and unfounded.

[2] Register of Baptisms, Christchurch, Oxford, 1784, March 14, Benjamin, s. of Henry Bathurst, Canon, and Grace his wife, born, and bap. April 19.

of amity, the port of Trieste was thrown open to the English and Spanish flags. In December, a declaration of the King of England openly alluded to the hostile preparations of Austria, but the Cabinet at Vienna were as yet undecided as to the course they would finally adopt. The extreme peril which the monarchy had undergone already in the wars with Napoleon made them hesitate. England was about to send fifty thousand men to the Peninsula, and desired the diversion of a war in the heart of Germany. Prussia resolved to remain neutral. Napoleon rapidly returned from Spain, and orders were despatched to Davoust to concentrate his immense corps at Bamberg; Massena was to repair to Strasburg, and press on to Ulm; Oudenot to move on Augsburg, and Bernadotte, at the head of the Saxons, was to menace Bohemia. It was at this juncture that Benjamin Bathurst hurried as Ambassador Extraordinary to Vienna, to assure the Cabinet there of the intentions of England to send a powerful contingent into Spain, and to do all in his power to urge Austria to declare war. Encouraged by England, the Cabinet of Vienna took the initiative, and on April 8 the Austrian troops crossed the frontier at once on the Inn, in Bohemia, in Tyrol, and in Italy.

The irritation and exasperation of Napoleon were great; and Bathurst, who remained with the Court, laboured under the impression that the Emperor of the French bore him especial enmity, on account of his exertions to provoke the Austrian Ministry to declaration of war. Whether this opinion of his were well founded, or whether he had been warned that Napoleon would take the opportunity, if given him, of revenging himself, we do not know; but what is certain is, that Bathurst was prepossessed with the conviction that Napoleon regarded him with implacable hostility and would leave no stone unturned to compass his destruction.

On July 6 came the battle of Wagram, then the humiliating armistice of Znaim, which was agreed to by the Emperor Francis at Komorn in spite of the urgency of Metternich and Lord Walpole, who sought to persuade him to reject the proposals. This armistice was the preliminary to a peace which was concluded at Schönbrun in October. With this, Bathurst's office at Vienna came to an end, and he set out on his way home. Now it was that he repeatedly spoke of the danger that menaced him, and of his fears lest Napoleon should arrest him on his journey to England. He hesitated for some time which road to take, and concluding that if he went by Trieste and Malta he might run the worst risks, he resolved to make his way to London by Berlin and the north of Germany. He took with him his private secretary and a valet; and, to evade observation, assumed the name of Koch, and pretended that he was a travelling merchant. His secretary was instructed to act as courier, and he passed under the name of Fisher. Benjamin Bathurst carried pistols about his person, and there were firearms in the back of the carriage.

On November 25, 1809, about midday, he arrived at Perleberg, with post-horses, on the route from Berlin to Hamburg, halted at the post-house for refreshments, and ordered fresh horses to be harnessed to the carriage for the journey to Lenzen, which was the next station.

Bathurst had come along the highway from Berlin to Schwerin, in Brandenburg, as far as the little town of Perleberg, which lies on the Stepnitz, that flows after a few miles into the Elbe at Wittenberge. He might have gone on to Ludwigslust, and thence to Hamburg, but this was a considerable détour, and he was anxious to be home. He had now before him a road that led along the Elbe close to the frontier of Saxony. The Elbe was about four miles distant. At Magdeburg were French troops. If he were in danger anywhere, it would be during the next few hours – that is, till he reached Dömitz. About a hundred paces from the post-house was an inn, the White Swan, the host of which was named Leger. By the side of the inn was the Parchimer gate of the town, furnished with a tower, and the road to Hamburg led through this gate, outside of which was a sort of suburb consisting of poor cottagers' and artisans' houses.

Benjamin Bathurst went to the Swan and ordered an early dinner; the horses were not to be put in till he had dined. He wore a pair of grey trousers, a grey frogged short coat, and over it a handsome sable greatcoat lined with violet velvet. On his head was a fur cap to match. In his scarf was a diamond pin of some value.

As soon as he had finished his meal, Bathurst inquired who was in command of the soldiers quartered in the town, and where he lodged. He was told that a squadron of the Brandenburg cuirassiers was there under Captain Klitzing, who was residing in a house behind the Town Hall. Mr. Bathurst then crossed the market place and called on the officer, who was at the time indisposed with a swollen neck. To Captain Klitzing he said that he was a traveller on his way to Hamburg, that he had strong and well-grounded suspicions that his person was endangered, and he requested that he might be given a guard in the inn, where he was staying. A lady who was present noticed that he seemed profoundly agitated, that he trembled as though ague-stricken, and was unable to raise a cup of tea that was offered him to his lips without spilling it.

The captain laughed at his fears, but consented to let him have a couple of soldiers, and gave the requisite orders for their despatch; then Mr. Bathurst rose, resumed his sable overcoat, and, to account for his nervous difficulty in getting into his furs again, explained that he was much shaken by something that had alarmed him.

Not long after the arrival of Mr. Bathurst at the Swan, two Jewish merchants arrived from Lenzen with post-horses, and left before nightfall.

On Mr. Bathurst's return to the inn, he countermanded the horses; he said he would not start till night. He considered that it would be safer for him to spin along the dangerous portion of the route by night when Napoleon's spies would be less likely to be on the alert. He remained in the inn writing and burning papers. At seven o'clock he dismissed the soldiers on guard, and ordered the horses to be ready by nine. He stood outside the inn watching his portmanteau, which had been taken within, being replaced on the carriage, stepped round to the heads of the horses —*and was never seen again*.

It must be remembered that this was at the end of November. Darkness had closed in before 5 P.M., as the sun set at four. An oil lantern hung across the street, emitting a feeble light; the ostler had a horn lantern, wherewith he and the postillion adjusted the harness of the horses. The landlord was in the doorway talking to the secretary, who, as courier, was paying the account. No one particularly observed the movements of Mr. Bathurst at the moment. He had gone to the horses' heads, where the ostler's lantern had fallen on him. The horses were in, the postillion ready, the valet stood by the carriage door, the landlord had his cap in hand ready to wish the gentleman a "lucky journey;" the secretary was impatient, as the wind was cold. They waited; they sent up to the room which Mr. Bathurst had engaged; they called. All in vain. Suddenly, inexplicably, without a word, a cry, an alarm of any sort, he was gone – spirited away, and what really became of him will never be known with certainty.

Whilst the whole house was in amazement and perplexity the Jewish merchants ordered their carriage to be got ready, and departed.

Some little time elapsed before it was realised that the case was serious. Then it occurred to the secretary that Mr. Bathurst might have gone again to the captain in command to solicit guards to attend his carriage. He at once sent to the captain, but Mr. Bathurst was not with him. The moment, however, that Klitzing heard that the traveller had disappeared, he remembered the alarm expressed by the gentleman, and acted with great promptitude. He sent soldiers to seize the carriage and all the effects of the missing man. He went, in spite of his swollen neck, immediately to the Swan, ordered a chaise, and required the secretary to enter it; he placed a cuirassier and the valet on the box, and, stepping into the carriage, ordered it to be driven to the Golden Crown, an inn at the further end of the town, where he installed the companions of Bathurst, and placed a soldier in guard over them. A guard was also placed over the Swan, and next morning every possible search was made for the lost man. The river was dragged, outhouses, woods, marshes, ditches were examined, but not a trace of him could be found. That day was Sunday. Klitzing remained at Perleberg only till noon, to wait some discovery, and then, without delay, hurried to Kyritz, where was his commandant, Colonel Bismark, to lay the case before him, and solicit leave to hasten direct to Berlin, there to receive further instructions what was to be done.

He was back on Monday with full authority to investigate the matter.

Before he left he had gone over the effects of Mr. Bathurst, and had learned that the fur coat belonging to him was missing; he communicated this fact to the civil magistrate of the district, and whilst he was away search was instituted for this. It was the sable coat lined with violet velvet already mentioned, and this, along with another belonging to the secretary, Fisher was under the impression had been left in the post-house.

The amazing part of the matter is that the city authorities – and, indeed, on his return, Captain Klitzing – for a while confined themselves to a search for the fur coat, and valuable time was lost by this means. Moreover, the city authorities, the police, and the military were all independent, and all jealous of each other. The military commander, Klitzing, and the burgomaster were in open quarrel, and sent up to headquarters charges against each other for interference in the matter beyond their rights. The head of the police was inert, a man afterwards dismissed for allowing defalcation in the monies entrusted to him. There was no system in the investigation, and the proper clues were not followed.

On December 16th, two poor women went out of Perleberg to a little fir wood in the direction of Quitzow, to pick up broken sticks for fuel. There they found, a few paces from a path leading through the wood, spread out on the grass, a pair of trousers turned inside out. On turning them back they observed that they were stained on the outside, as if the man who had worn them had lain on the earth. In the pocket was a paper with writing on it; this, as well as the trousers, was sodden with water. Two bullet holes were in the trousers, but no traces of blood about them, which could hardly have been the case had the bullets struck a man wearing the trousers. The women took what they had found to the burgomaster. The trousers were certainly those of the missing man. The paper in the pocket was a half-finished letter from Mr. Bathurst to his wife, scratched in pencil, stating that he was afraid he would never reach England, and that his ruin would be the work of Count d'Entraigues, and he requested her not to marry again in the event of his not returning.

The English Government offered £1,000 reward, and his family another £1,000; Prince Frederick of Prussia, who took a lively interest in the matter, offered in addition 100 Friedrichs d'or for the discovery of the body, or for information which might lead to the solution of the mystery, but no information to be depended upon ever transpired. Various rumours circulated; and Mrs. Thistlethwaite, the sister of Benjamin Bathurst, in her Memoirs of Dr. Henry Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, published by Bentley in 1853, gives them. He was said to have been lost at sea. Another report was that he was murdered by his valet, who took an open boat on the Elbe, and escaped. Another report again was that he had been lost in a vessel which was crossing to Sweden and which foundered about this time. These reports are all totally void of truth. Mrs. Thistlethwaite declares that Count d'Entraigues, who was afterwards so cruelly murdered along with his wife by their Italian servant, was heard to say that he could prove that Mr. Bathurst was murdered in the fortress of Magdeburg. In a letter to his wife, dated October 14, 1809, Benjamin Bathurst said that he trusted to reach home by way of Colberg and Sweden. D'Entraigues had been a French spy in London; and Mrs. Thistlethwaite says that he himself told Mrs. Bathurst that her husband had been carried off by *douaniers-montés* from Perleberg to Magdeburg, and murdered there. This it is hard to believe.

Thomas Richard Underwood, in a letter from Paris, November 24, 1816, says he was a prisoner of war in Paris in 1809, and that both the English and French there believed that the crime of his abduction and murder had been committed by the French Government.

The "European Magazine" for January, 1810, says that he was apparently carried off by a party of French troops stationed at Lenzen, but this was not the case. No French troops were on that side of the Elbe. It further says, "The French Executive, with a view to ascertain by his papers the nature of the relations subsisting between this country and the Austrian Government, has added to the catalogue of its crimes by the seizure, or probably the murder, of this gentleman."

If there had been French troops seen we should have known of it; but none were. Every effort was made by the civil and military authorities to trace Bathurst. Bloodhounds were employed to track the lost man, in vain. Every well was explored, the bed of the Stepnitz thoroughly searched. Every suspicious house in Perleberg was examined from attic to cellar, the gardens were turned up, the swamps sounded, but every effort to trace and discover him was in vain.

On January 23, 1810, in a Hamburg paper, appeared a paragraph, which for the first time informed the people of Perleberg who the merchant Koch really was who had so mysteriously vanished. The paragraph was in the form of a letter, dated from London, January 6, 1810 – that is, six weeks after the disappearance. It ran thus: "Sir Bathurst, Ambassador Extraordinary of England to the Court of Austria, concerning whom a German newspaper, under date of December 10, stated that he had committed suicide in a fit of insanity, is well in mind and body. His friends have received a letter from him dated December 13, which, therefore, must have been written after the date of his supposed death."

Who inserted this, and for what purpose? It was absolutely untrue. Was it designed to cause the authorities to relax their efforts to probe the mystery, and perhaps to abandon them altogether?

The Jewish merchants were examined, but were at once discharged; they were persons well-to-do, and generally respected.

Was it possible that Mr. Bathurst had committed suicide? This was the view taken of his disappearance in France, where, in the "Moniteur" of December 12, 1809, a letter from the correspondent in Berlin stated: "Sir Bathurst on his way from Berlin showed signs of insanity, and destroyed himself in the neighbourhood of Perleberg." On January 23, 1810, as already said, the "Times" took the matter up, and not obscurely charged the Emperor Napoleon with having made away with Mr. Bathurst, who was peculiarly obnoxious to him.

In the mean time, the fur coat had been found, hidden in the cellar of a family named Schmidt, behind some firewood. Frau Schmidt declared that it had been left at the post house, where she had found it; and had conveyed it away, and given it to her son Augustus, a fellow of notoriously bad character. Now, it is remarkable that one witness declared that she had seen the stranger who had disappeared go out of the square down the narrow lane in which the Schmidts lived, and where eventually the fur coat was found. When questioned, Augustus Schmidt said that "his mother had told him the stranger had two pistols, and had sent her to buy him some powder. He supposed therefore that the gentleman had shot himself." Unfortunately the conflict of authorities acted prejudicially at this point, and the questions how the Schmidts came to know anything about the pistols, whether Frau Schmidt really was sent for powder, and whether Bathurst was really seen entering the alley in which they lived, and at what hour, were never properly entered into. Whatever information Klitzing obtained, was forwarded to Berlin, and there his reports remain in the archives. They have not been examined.

Fresh quarrels broke out between Klitzing and the Burgomaster, and Klitzing instead of pursuing the main investigations, set to work to investigate the proceedings of the Burgomaster. So more time was lost.

On Thursday, November 30th, that is to say, five days after the disappearance of Bathurst, Captain Klitzing ordered the town magistrates; 1. To have all ditches and canals round the place examined; 2. To have the neighbourhood of the town explored by foresters with hounds; 3. To let off the river Stepnitz and examine the bed. Then he added, "as I have ascertained that Augustus Schmidt, who is now under arrest for the theft of the fur coat, was *not at home at the time that the stranger disappeared*, I require that this fact be taken into consideration, and investigated" – and this, as far as we can ascertain, was not done; it was just one of those valuable clues which were left untraced.

The whole neighbourhood was searched, ditches, ponds, the river bed, drains, every cellar, and garden, and nothing found. The search went on to December 6, and proved wholly resultless. It

was not till December 16 that the trousers were found. It is almost certain that they were laid in the Quitzow wood after the search had been given over, on December 6th.

As nothing could be proved against the Schmidt family, except that they had taken the fur coat, Frau Schmidt and her son were sentenced to eight weeks' imprisonment.

The matter of the pistols was not properly cleared up. That, again, was a point, and an important point that remained uninvestigated.

The military authorities who examined the goods of Mr. Bathurst declared that nothing was missing except the fur cloak, which was afterwards recovered, and we suppose these pistols were included. If not, one may be sure that some notice would have been taken of the fact that he had gone off with his pistols, and had not returned. This would have lent colour to the opinion that he destroyed himself. Besides no shot was heard. A little way outside the gateway of the town beyond the Swan inn is a bridge over the small and sluggish stream of the Stepnitz. It was possible he might have shot himself there, and fallen into the water; but this theory will not bear looking closely into. A shot fired there would certainly have been heard at night in the cottages beside the road; the river was searched shortly after without a trace of him having been found, and his trousers with bullet holes made in them after they had been taken off him had been discovered in another direction.

The "Moniteur" of January 29 said: "Among the civilised races, England is the only one that sets an example of having bandits[3] in pay, and inciting to crime. From information we have received from Berlin, we believe that Mr. Bathurst had gone off his head. It is the manner of the British Cabinet to commit diplomatic commissions to persons whom the whole nation knows are half fools. It is only the English diplomatic service which contains crazy people."

This violent language was at the time attributed to Napoleon's dictation, stung with the charge made by the "Times," a charge ranking him with "vulgar murderers," and which attributed to him two other and somewhat similar cases, that of Wagstaff, and that of Sir George Rumbold. It is very certain that the "Moniteur" would not have ventured on such insulting language without his permission.

In April Mrs. Bathurst, along with some relatives, arrived in Perleberg. The poor lady was in great distress and anxiety to have the intolerable suspense alleviated by a discovery of some sort, and the most liberal offers were made and published to induce a disclosure of the secret. At this time a woman named Hacker, the wife of a peasant who lived in the shoe-market, was lying in the town gaol – the tower already mentioned, adjoining the White Swan. She was imprisoned for various fraudulent acts. She now offered to make a confession, and this was her statement:

"A few weeks before Christmas I was on my way to Perleberg from a place in Holstein, where my husband had found work. In the little town of Seeberg, twelve miles from Hamburg, I met the shoemaker's assistant Goldberger, of Perleberg, whom I knew from having danced with him. He was well-dressed, and had from his fob hanging a hair-chain with gold seals. His knitted silk purse was stuffed with louis d'ors. When I asked him how he came by so much money, he said, 'Oh, I got 500 dollars and the watch as hush-money when the Englishman was murdered.' He told me no more particulars, except that one of the seals was engraved with a name, and he had had that altered in Hamburg."

No credit was given to this story, and no inquiry was instituted into the whereabouts of Goldberger. It was suspected that the woman had concocted it in the hopes of getting Mrs. Bathurst to interest herself in obtaining her release, and of getting some of the money offered to informers.

Mrs. Bathurst did not return immediately to England; she appealed to Napoleon to grant her information, and he assured her through Cambacières, and on his word of honour, that he knew nothing of the matter beyond what he had seen in the papers.

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[3] When, in 1815, Napoleon was at St. Helena, on his first introduction to Sir Hudson Lowe, he addressed the governor with the insulting words, "Monsieur, vous avez commandé des brigands." He alluded to the Corsican rangers in the British service, which Lowe had commanded.

So the matter rested, an unsolved mystery.

In Prussia, among the great bulk of the educated, in the higher and official classes, the prevailing conviction was that Napoleon had caused the disappearance of Bathurst, not out of personal feeling, but in political interests, for the purpose of getting hold of the dispatches which he was believed to be conveying to England from the Austrian Government. The murder was held to be an accident, or an unavoidable consequence. And in Perleberg itself this was the view taken of the matter as soon as it was known who the stranger was. But then, another opinion prevailed there, that Klitzing had secretly conveyed him over the frontier, so as to save him from the spies, and the pursuit which, as he and Bathurst knew, endangered the safety of the returning envoy.

In Perleberg two opinions were formed, by such as conceived that he had been murdered, as to the manner in which he had been made away with.

Not far from the post-house was at the time a low tavern kept by Hacker, who has been mentioned above; the man combined shoemaking with the sale of brandy. Augustus Schmidt spent a good deal of his time in this house. Now shortly after this affair, Hacker left Perleberg, and set up at Altona, where he showed himself possessed of a great deal of money. He was also said to have disposed of a gold repeater watch to a jeweller in Hamburg. This was never gone into; and how far it was true, or idle rumour, cannot be said. One view was that Bathurst had been robbed and murdered by Hacker and Schmidt.

The other opinion was this. Opposite the post-house was a house occupied at the time by a fellow who was a paid French spy; a man who was tried for holding secret communication with the enemy of his Fatherland. He was a petty lawyer, who stirred up quarrels among the peasants, and lived by the result. He was a man of the worst possible character, capable of anything. The opinion of one section of the people of Perleberg was, that Bathurst, before entering the carriage, had gone across the square, and had entered into conversation with this man, who had persuaded him to enter his door, where he had strangled him, and buried him in his cellar. The widow of this man on her death-bed appeared anxious to confess something, but died before she could speak.

In 1852 a discovery was made at Perleberg which may or may not give the requisite solution.

We may state before mentioning this that Captain Klitzing never believed that Bathurst had been spirited away by French agents. He maintained that he had been murdered for his money.

On April 15, 1852, a house on the Hamburg road that belonged to the mason Kiesewetter was being pulled down, when a human skeleton was discovered under the stone threshold of the stable. The skeleton lay stretched out, face upwards, on the black peat earth, covered with mortar and stone chips, the head embedded in walling-stones and mortar. In the back of the skull was a fracture, as if a blow of a heavy instrument had fallen on it. All the upper teeth were perfect, but one of the molars in the lower jaw was absent, and there were indications of its having been removed by a dentist. The house where these human remains were found had been purchased in 1834 by the mason Kiesewetter from Christian Mertens, who had inherited it from his father, which latter had bought it in 1803 of a shoemaker. *Mertens, the father, had been a serving man in the White Swan at the time of the disappearance of Mr. Bathurst.*

Inquiry was made into what was known of old Mertens. Everyone spoke highly of him as a saving, steady man, God-fearing; who had scraped together during his service in the Swan sufficient money to dower his two daughters with respectively £150 and £120. After a long illness he had died, generally respected.

Information of the discovery was forwarded to the Bathurst family, and on August 23, Mrs. Thistlethwaite, sister of Benjamin, came to Perleberg, bringing with her a portrait of her brother, but she was quite unable to say that the skull that was shown her belonged to the missing man, whom she had not seen for forty-three years. And – no wonder! When Goethe was shown the skull of his intimate friend Schiller he could hardly trace any likeness to the head he remembered so well. Mrs. Thistlethwaite left, believing that the discovery had no connection with the mystery of her brother's

disappearance, so ineradicably fixed in the convictions of the family was the belief that he had been carried away by French agents.

However, let us consider this discovery a little closer, and perhaps we shall be led to another conclusion.

In the first place, the skeleton was that of a man who had been murdered by a blow on the back of his head, which had fractured the skull. It had been stripped before being buried, for not a trace of clothing could be found.

Secondly, the house of the Mertens family lay on the Hamburg road, on the way to Lenzen, outside the Parchimer Gate, only three hundred paces from the White Swan. In fact, it was separated from the White Swan only by the old town-gate and prison tower, and a small patch of garden ground.

At the time of the disappearance of Mr. Bathurst it was inhabited by Christian Mertens, who was servant at the White Swan. No examination was made at the time of the loss of Bathurst into the whereabouts of Mertens, nor was his cottage searched. It was assumed that he was at the inn waiting for his "vale," like the ostler and the *Kellner*. It is quite possible that he may have been standing near the horses' heads, and that he may have gone on with Mr. Bathurst a few steps to show him the direction he was to go; or, with the pretence that he had important information to give him, he may have allured him into his cottage, and there murdered him, or, again, he may have drawn him on to where by pre-arrangement Goldberger was lying in wait with a hammer or hatchet to strike him down from behind. Considering how uneasy Mr. Bathurst was about the road, and how preoccupied with the idea that French spies and secret agents were on the look-out for him, he might easily have been induced by a servant of the inn where he was staying to go a few steps through the gate, beyond earshot of the post-boy and landlord and ostler, to hear something which the boots pretended was of importance to him. Goldberger or another may have lain in wait in the blackness of the shadow of the gateway but a short distance from the lights about the carriage, and by one stroke have silenced him. It is possible that Augustus Schmidt may have been mixed up in the matter, and that the sable coat was taken off Mr. Bathurst when dead.

Again, Mertens was able on the marriage of his two daughters to give one 150*l.* and the other 120*l.* This would mean that Mertens had saved as boots of the Swan at the least 300*l.*, for he would not give every penny to his children. Surely this was a considerable sum for a boots in a little inn to amass from his wage and from "vales."

Mrs. Thistlethwaite asserts in her Memoirs of Bishop Bathurst that shortly after the disappearance of her brother the ostler – can she mean Mertens? – also disappeared, ran away. But we do not know of any corroborating evidence.

Lastly, the discovery of the trousers in the wood near Quitzow points to the traveller having been murdered in Perleberg; the murderers, whoever they were, finding that an investigation of houses, barns, gardens and stables was being made, took the garments of the unfortunate man, discharged a couple of shots through them to make believe he had been fired at by several persons lying in wait for him, and then exposed them in a place away from the road along which Mr. Bathurst was going. The man who carried these garments was afraid of being observed, and he probably did not go through the town with them, but made a circuit to the wood, and for the same reason did not take them very far. The road to Lenzen ran S.W. and that to Quitzow N.W. He placed the trousers near the latter, but did not venture to cross the highway. He could get to the wood over the fields unperceived.

Supposing that this is the solution of the mystery, one thing remains to be accounted for – the paragraph in the Hamburg paper dated from London, announcing that Mr. Bathurst was alive and had been heard of since the disappearance.

This, certainly, seems to have been inserted with a design to divert or allay suspicion, and it was generally held to have been sent from London by a French agent, on instruction from Paris. But it is possible that the London correspondent may have heard a coffee-house rumour that Bathurst was still alive, and at once reported it to the paper. Its falsehood was palpable, and would be demonstrated

at once by the family of the lost man to the authorities at Perleberg. It could not answer the purpose of arresting inquiry and staying investigation.

It remains only to inquire whether it was probable that Napoleon had any hand in the matter.

What could induce him to lay hands on an envoy? He could not expect to find on the person of Mr. Bathurst any important dispatches, for the war was over, peace with Austria was concluded. He was doubtless angry at Austria having declared war, and angry at England having instigated her to do so, but Mr. Bathurst was very small game indeed on which to wreak his anger; moreover, the peace that had been concluded with Austria gave great advantages to France. He can have had no personal dislike to Bathurst, for he never saw him. When Napoleon entered Vienna, Bathurst was with the Emperor Francis in Hungary, at Komorn.

And yet, he may have suspected that Austria was insincere, and was anxious to renew the conflict, if she could obtain assurance of assistance from England. He may have thought that by securing the papers carried to England by Bathurst, he would get at the real intentions of Austria, and so might be prepared for consequences. We cannot say. The discovery of the body in Mertens' house, under the threshold – supposing it to be that of Bathurst, does not by any means prove that the murder was a mere murder for the purpose of robbery.

If Napoleon had given instructions for the capture of Bathurst, and the taking from him of his papers, it does not follow that he ordered his murder, on the contrary, he would have given instructions that he should be robbed – as if by highwaymen – and let go with his life. The murder was against his wishes, if he did give orders for him to be robbed.

The Bathurst family never doubted that Benjamin had been murdered by the agents of Napoleon. It is certain that he was well aware that his safety was menaced, and menaced at Perleberg. That was why he at once on reaching the place asked for the protection of a guard. He had received warning from some one, and such warning shows that an attempt to rob him of his papers was in contemplation.

That caution to be on his guard must have been given him, before he left Vienna. He probably received another before he reached Perleberg, for he appeared before the Commandant in a state of great alarm and agitation. That this was mere spiritual presage of evil is hardly credible. We cannot doubt – and his letter to his wife leads to this conviction – that he had been warned that spies in the pay of the French Government were on the look-out for him. Who the agents were that were employed to get hold of his papers, supposing that the French Government did attempt to waylay him, can never be determined, whether Mertens or Augustus Schmidt.

In 1815 Earl Bathurst was Secretary of State for War and the Colonial Department. May we not suspect that there was some mingling of personal exultation along with political satisfaction, in being able to send to St. Helena the man who had not only been the scourge of Europe, and the terror of kings, but who, as he supposed – quite erroneously we believe – had inflicted on his own family an agony of suspense and doubt that was never to be wholly removed?

The Duchess of Kingston

Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol and Duchess of Kingston, who was tried for bigamy in Westminster Hall by the Peers in 1776, was, it can hardly be doubted, the original from whom Thackeray drew his detailed portrait of Beatrix Esmond, both as young Trix and as the old Baroness Bernstein; nor can one doubt that what he knew of his prototype was taken from that scandalous little book, "An Authentic Detail of Particulars relative to the late Duchess of Kingston," published by G. Kearsley in 1788. Thackeray not only reproduced some of the incidents of her life, but more especially caught the features of her character.

Poor Trix! Who does not remember her coming down the great staircase at Walcote, candle in hand, in her red stockings and with a new cherry ribbon round her neck, her eyes like blue stars, her brown hair curling about her head, and not feel a lingering liking for the little coquette, trying to catch my Lord Mohun, and the Duke of Hamilton, and many another, and missing all? and for the naughty old baroness, with her scandalous stories, her tainted past, her love of cards, her complete unscrupulousness, and yet with one soft corner in the withered heart for the young Virginians?

The famous, or infamous, Duchess has had hard measure dealt out to her, which she in part deserved; but some of the stories told of her are certainly not true, and one circumstance in her life, if true, goes far to palliate her naughtiness. Unfortunately, almost all we know of her is taken from unfriendly sources. The only really impartial source of information is the "Trial," published by order of the Peers, but that covers only one portion of her life, and one set of incidents.

Elizabeth Chudleigh was the daughter of Colonel Thomas Chudleigh, of Chelsea, and his wife Henrietta, who was his first cousin, the fourth daughter of Hugh Chudleigh, of Chalmington, in Dorset. Thomas was the only brother of Sir George Chudleigh, fourth baronet of Asheton, in Devon. As Sir George left only daughters, Thomas, the brother of Elizabeth, whose baptism in 1718 is recorded in the Chelsea registers, succeeded as fifth baronet in 1738. Unfortunately the Chelsea registers do not give the baptism of Elizabeth, and we are not able to state her precise age, about which there is some difference. Her father had a post in Chelsea College, but apparently she was not born there. There can, however, be little doubt that she saw the light for the first time in 1726, and not in 1720, as is generally asserted.

Her family was one of great antiquity in the county of Devon, and was connected by marriage with the first families of the west of England. The old seat, Asheton, lies in a pleasant coombe under the ridge of Haldon; some remains of the old mansion, and venerable trees of the park, linger on; and in the picturesque parish church, perched on a rock in the valley, are many family monuments and heraldic blazonings of the Chudleigh lions, gules on an ermine field. Elizabeth lost her father very early, and the widow was left on a poor pension to support and advance the prospects of her two children. Though narrowed in fortune, Mrs. Chudleigh had good connections, and she availed herself of these to push her way in the world. At the age of sixteen – that is, in 1743 – Elizabeth was given the appointment of maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, through the favour of Mr. Pulteney, afterwards Earl of Bath, who had met her one day while out shooting. The old beau was taken with the vivacity, intelligence and beauty of the girl. She was then not only remarkable for her beauty, delicacy of complexion, and sparkling eyes, but also for the brilliancy of her wit and the liveliness of her humour. Even her rival, the Marquise de la Touche, of whom more hereafter, bears testimony to her charms. Pulteney, himself a witty, pungent, and convivial man, was delighted with the cleverness of the lovely girl, and amused himself with drawing it out. In after years, when she was asked the secret of her sparkling repartee, she replied, "I always aim to be short, clear, and surprising."

The Princess of Wales, Augusta, daughter of Frederick of Saxe-Gotha, who with the Prince, Frederick Lewis, had their court at Leicester House, became greatly attached to her young maid

of honour. The beautiful Miss Chudleigh was speedily surrounded by admirers, among whom was James, sixth Duke of Hamilton, born in 1724, and therefore two years her senior.

According to the "Authentic Detail," the Duke obtained from her a solemn engagement that, on his return from a tour on the Continent which he was about to take, she would become his wife. Then he departed, having arranged for a mutual correspondence.

In the summer of 1744 she went on a visit to Lainston, near Winchester, to her maternal aunt, Anne Hanmer, who was then living at the house of Mr. Merrill, the son of another aunt, Susanna, who was dead.

To understand the relationship of the parties, a look will suffice at the following pedigree.[4]

Mrs. Hanmer, a widow, kept house for her nephew, who was squire. At the Winchester races, to which she went with a party, Elizabeth met Lieutenant Hervey, second son of the late John, Lord Hervey, and grandson of the Earl of Bristol. Lieutenant Hervey, who was in the "Cornwall," then lying at Portsmouth, a vessel in Sir John Danver's squadron, was born in 1724, and was therefore two years the senior of Elizabeth; indeed, at the time he was only just twenty. He was fascinated by the beautiful girl, and was invited by Mrs. Hanmer to Lainston. "To this gentleman," says the "Authentic Detail," "Mrs. Hanmer became so exceedingly partial that she favoured his views on her niece, and engaged her efforts to effect, if possible, a matrimonial connexion. There were two difficulties which would have been insurmountable if not opposed by the fertile genius of a female: Miss Chudleigh disliked Captain Hervey, and she was betrothed to the Duke of Hamilton. To render this last nugatory, the letters of his Grace were intercepted by Mrs. Hanmer, and his supposed silence giving offence to her niece, she worked so successfully on her pride as to induce her to abandon all thoughts of the lover, whose passion she had cherished with delight."

Is this story true? It seems incredible that Mrs. Hanmer should have urged her niece to throw over such a splendid prospect of family advancement as that offered by marriage with the Duke of Hamilton, for the sake of an impecunious young sailor who was without the means of supporting his wife, and who, at that time, had not the faintest expectation of succeeding to the Earldom of Bristol.

It is allowable to hope that the story of the engagement to the Duke of Hamilton, broken through the intrigues of the aunt, is true, as it forms some excuse for the after conduct of Elizabeth Chudleigh.

It is more probable that the Duke of Hamilton had not said anything to Elizabeth, and did not write to her, at all events not till later. She may have entertained a liking for him, but not receiving any token that the liking was reciprocated, she allowed her aunt to engage and marry her to young Hervey. That the poor girl had no fancy for the young man is abundantly clear. The Attorney General, in the trial, said that Mrs. Hanmer urged on the match "as advantageous to her niece;" but advantageous it certainly was not, and gave no prospect of being.

In August, Augustus John Hervey got leave from his ship and came to Lainston. The house, which had belonged to the Dawleys, had passed into the possession of the Merrills. In the grounds stands the parish church, but as the only house in the parish is the mansion, it came to be regarded very much as the private chapel of the manor house. The living went with Sparsholt. There was no parsonage attached, and though the Dawleys had their children baptized in Lainston, they were registered in the book of Sparsholt. The church is now an ivy-covered ruin, and the mansion is much reduced in size from what it was in the time when it belonged to the Merrills.

"Lainston is a small parish, the value of the living being £15 a year; Mr. Merrill's the only house in it, and the parish church at the end of his garden. On the 4th August, 1744, Mr. Amis, the then rector, was appointed to be at the church, alone, late at night. At eleven o'clock Mr. Hervey and Miss Chudleigh went out, as if to walk in the garden, followed by Mrs. Hanmer, her servant – Anne Craddock, Mr. Merrill, and Mr. Mountenay, which last carried a taper to read the service by. They

[4] In Col. Vivian's "Visitations of the County of Devon," the pedigree is not so complete. He was unaware who the wife of Thos. Chudleigh was, and he had not seen the will of the duchess.

found Mr. Amis in the church, according to his appointment, and there the service was celebrated, Mr. Mountenay holding the taper in his hat. The ceremony being performed, Mrs. Hanmer's maid was despatched to see that the coast was clear, and they returned into the house without being observed by any of the servants." This is the account of the wedding given at the trial by the Attorney General, from the evidence of Anne Craddock, then the sole surviving witness.

There was no signing of registers, Mr. Amis was left to make the proper entry in the Sparsholt book – and he forgot to do this. The happiness of the newly-married couple lasted but a few days – two, or at the outside, three; and then Lieutenant Hervey left to rejoin his vessel, and in November sailed for the West Indies. The "Authentic Detail" declares that a violent quarrel broke out immediately on marriage between the young people, and that Elizabeth declared her aversion, and vowed never to associate with him again.

So little was the marriage to her present advantage that Elizabeth was unable to proclaim it, and thereby forfeit her situation as maid of honour to the Princess, with its pay and perquisites. Consequently, by her aunt's advice, she kept it concealed.

"Miss Chudleigh, now Mrs. Hervey, – a maid in appearance, a wife in disguise, – seemed from those who judge from externals only, to be in an enviable situation. Of the higher circles she was the attractive centre, of gayer life the invigorating spirit. Her royal mistress not only smiled on, but actually approved her. A few friendships she cemented, and conquests she made in such abundance that, like Cæsar in a triumph, she had a train of captives at her heels. Her husband, quieted for a time, grew obstreperous as she became more the object of admiration. He felt his right, and was determined to assert it. She endeavoured by letter to negotiate him into peace, but her efforts succeeded not. He demanded a private interview, and, enforcing his demands by threats of exposure in case of refusal, she complied through compulsion."

The Duke of Hamilton returned from the grand tour, and he at once sought Elizabeth to know why his letters had not been answered. Then the fraud that had been practised on her was discovered, and the Duke laid his coronet at her feet. She was unable to accept the offer, and unable also to explain the reasons of her refusal. Rage at having been duped, disappointment at having lost the strawberry leaves, embittered Elizabeth, and stifled the germs of good principle in her.

This is the generally received story. It is that given by the author, or authoress, of the "Authentic Detail," usually well informed. But, as we have seen, it is hardly possible to suppose that Mrs. Hanmer can have suppressed the Duke's letters. No doubt she was a fool, and a woman, when a fool, is of abnormal folly, yet she never loses sight of her own interest; and it was not Mrs. Hanmer's interest to spoil the chances of her niece with the Duke.

After the Duke of Hamilton had been refused, and his visits to her house in Conduit Street prohibited, the Duke of Ancaster, Lord Howe, and other nobles made offers, and experienced a fate similar to that of his Grace of Hamilton. This astonished the fashionable world, and Mrs. Chudleigh, her mother, who was a stranger to the private marriage of her daughter, reprehended her folly with warmth.[5] To be freed from her embarrassments, Elizabeth resolved to travel. She embarked for the Continent, and visited Dresden, where she became an attached friend of the Electress of Saxony.

On her return to England she was subjected to annoyance from her husband. She could not forgive him the deception practised on her, though he was probably innocent of connivance in it.

"Captain Hervey, like a perturbed spirit, was eternally crossing the path trodden by his wife. Was she in the rooms at Bath? he was sure to be there. At a rout, ridotto, or ball, there was this fell destroyer of peace, embittering every pleasure and blighting the fruit of happiness by the pestilential malignity of his presence. As a proof of his disposition to annoy, he menaced his wife with an intimation that he would disclose the marriage to the Princess of Wales. In this Miss Chudleigh

[5] Mrs. Chudleigh died in 1756, and her will mentions her daughter by her maiden name.

anticipated him by being the first relater of the circumstance. Her royal mistress heard and pitied her. She continued her patronage to the hour of her death."

In 1749, Elizabeth attended a masquerade ball in the dress, or rather undress, of the character of Iphigenia. In a letter of Mrs. Montague to her sister, she says, "Miss Chudleigh's dress, or rather undress, was remarkable, she was Iphigenia for the sacrifice, but so naked, the high priest might easily inspect the entrails of the victim. The Maids of Honour (not of maids the strictest) were so offended they would not speak to her." Horace Walpole says, "Miss Chudleigh was Iphigenia, but so naked that you would have taken her for Andromeda." It was of her that the witty remark was then first made that she resembled Eve in that she was "naked and not ashamed." On May 17th Walpole writes: "I told you we were to have another masquerade; there was one by the King's command for Miss Chudleigh, the Maid of Honour, with whom our gracious monarch has a mind to believe himself in love, so much in love, that at one of the booths he gave her a fairing for her watch, which cost him five-and-thirty guineas, actually disbursed out of his privy purse, and not charged on the civil list. I hope some future Holinshed or Speed will acquaint posterity that five-and-thirty guineas were an immense sum in those days."

In December 1750, George II. gave the situation of Housekeeper at Windsor to Mrs. Chudleigh, Elizabeth's mother. Walpole says, "Two days ago, the gallant Orondates (the King) strode up to Miss Chudleigh, and told her he was glad to have the opportunity of obeying her commands, that he appointed her mother Housekeeper at Windsor, and hoped she would not think a kiss too great a reward – against all precedent he kissed her in the circle. He has had a hankering these two years. Her life, which is now of thirty years' standing, has been a little historic. Why should not experience and a charming face on her side, and near seventy years on his, produce a title?"

In 1760 she gave a soirée on the Prince's birthday, which Horace Walpole describes: "Poor thing," he writes, "I fear she has thrown away above a quarter's salary!"

The Duke of Kingston saw and was captivated by Elizabeth. Evelyn Pierrepoint, Duke of Kingston, Marquis of Dorchester, Earl of Kingston, and Viscount Newark, was born in 1711. Horace Walpole says of him that he was "a very weak man, of the greatest beauty and finest person in England."

He had been to Paris along with Lord Scarborough, taking with him an entire horse as a present to the Duke of Bourbon, and was unable to do this without a special Act of Parliament to authorise him. The Duke of Bourbon, in return for the compliment, placed his palace at Paris, and his château of Chantilly at the disposal of the visitor.

The Duke was handsome, young, wealthy and unmarried. A strong set was made at him by the young ladies of the French court; but of all the women he there met, none attracted his attentions and engaged his heart but the Marquise de la Touche, a lady who had been married for ten years and was the mother of three children. He finally persuaded her to elope with him to England, where, however, he grew cold towards her, and when he fell under the fascinations of Elizabeth Chudleigh he dismissed her. The Marquise returned to France, and was reconciled to her husband; there in 1786 she published her version of the story, and gave a history of her rival, whom naturally she paints in the blackest colours.

Now follows an incident which is stated in the English accounts of the life of Elizabeth Chudleigh; but of which there is no mention in the trial, and which is of more than doubtful truth.

She had become desperate, resolved at all hazard to break the miserable tie that bound her to Captain Hervey. She made a sudden descent on Lainston – so runs the tale – visited the parsonage, and whilst Mr. Amis was kept in conversation with one of her attendants, she tore out the leaf of the register book that contained the entry of her marriage.

This story cannot possibly be true. As already said, Lainston has no parsonage, and never had. Lainston goes with Sparsholt, half-a-mile off. But Mr. Amis never held Sparsholt, but acted as curate there for a while in 1756 and 1757. Lainston had no original register. What Elizabeth did was probably

to convince herself that through inadvertence, her marriage had not been registered in the parish book of Sparsholt.

In 1751 died John, Earl of Bristol, and was succeeded by his grandson, George William, who was unmarried. He was in delicate health; at one time seriously ill, and it was thought he would die. In that case Augustus John, Elizabeth's husband, would succeed to the Earldom of Bristol. She saw now that it was to her interest to establish her marriage. She accordingly took means to do so.

She went at once to Winchester and sent for the wife of Mr. Amis, who had married her. She told Mrs. Amis that she wanted the register of her marriage to be made out. Mr. Amis then lay on his death-bed, but, nevertheless, she went to the rectory to obtain of him what she desired. What ensued shall be told in the words of Mrs. Amis at the trial.

"I went up to Mr. Amis and told him her request. Then Mr. Merrill and the lady consulted together whom to send for, and they desired me to send for Mr. Spearing, the attorney. I did send for him, and during the time the messenger was gone the lady concealed herself in a closet; she said she did not care that Mr. Spearing should know that she was there. When Mr. Spearing came, Mr. Merrill produced a sheet of stamped paper that he brought to make the register upon. Mr. Spearing said it would not do; it must be a book, and that the lady must be at the making of it. Then I went to the closet and told the lady. Then the lady came to Mr. Spearing, and Mr. Spearing told the lady a sheet of stamped paper would not do, it must be a book. Then the lady desired Mr. Spearing to go and buy one. Mr. Spearing went and bought one, and when brought, the register was made. Then Mr. Amis delivered it to the lady; the lady thanked him, and said it might be an hundred thousand pounds in her way. Before Mr. Merrill and the lady left my house the lady sealed up the register and gave it to me, and desired I would take care of it until Mr. Amis's death, and then deliver it to Mr. Merrill."

The entries made thus were those:

> "2 August, Mrs. Susanna Merrill, relict of John Merrill, Esq. buried.
>
> 4 August, 1744, married the Honourable Augustus Hervey, Esq., in the parish Church of Lainston, to Miss Elizabeth Chudleigh, daughter of Col. Thomas Chudleigh, late of Chelsea College, by me, Thos. Amis."

Unfortunately this register book was taken up to Westminster at the trial of the Duchess and was never returned. Application was made to Elbrow Woodcock, solicitor in the trial, for the return of the book, by the then rector and patron of the living, but in vain; and in December, 1777, a new register book was purchased for the parish.

The Earl recovered, and did not die till some years later, in 1775, when Augustus John did succeed to the earldom.

In 1751, the Prince of Wales died, and this necessitated a rearrangement of the household of the Princess. Elizabeth was reappointed maid of honour to her, still in her maiden name. Soon after – that is, in 1752 – the Duke of Hamilton married the beautiful Miss Gunning.

In 1760 the king was dead. "Charles Townshend, receiving an account of the impression the king's death had made," writes Walpole, "was told Miss Chudleigh cried. 'What,' said he, 'oysters?'" "There is no keeping off age," he writes in 1767, "as Miss Chudleigh does, by sticking roses and sweet peas in one's hair."

Before this, in 1765, the Duke of Kingston's affection for her seeming to wane, Elizabeth, who was getting fat as well as old, started for Carlsbad to drink the waters. "She has no more wanted the Carlsbad waters than you did," wrote Lord Chesterfield. "Is it to show the Duke of Kingston he can not live without her? A dangerous experiment, which may possibly convince him that he can. There is a trick, no doubt, in it, but what, I neither know nor care." "Is the fair, or, at least, the fat Miss Chudleigh with you still? It must be confessed she knows the arts of courts to be so received at Dresden and so connived at in Leicester Fields."

At last the bonds of a marriage in which he was never allowed even to speak with his wife became intolerable to Captain Hervey; and some negotiations were entered into between them, whereby it was agreed that she should institute a suit in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of London for the jactitation of the marriage, and that he should not produce evidence to establish it. The case came on in the Michaelmas term, 1768, and was in form, proceedings to restrain the Hon. Augustus John Hervey from asserting that Elizabeth Chudleigh was his wife, "to the great danger of his soul's health, no small prejudice to the said Hon. Elizabeth Chudleigh, and pernicious example of others."

There was a counter-suit of Captain Hervey against her, in which he asserted that in 1743 or 1744, being then a minor of the age of seventeen or eighteen, he had contracted himself in marriage to Elizabeth Chudleigh, and she to him; and that they had been married in the house of Mr. Merrill, on August 9, 1744, at eleven o'clock at night, by the Rev. Thomas Amis, since deceased, and in the presence of Mrs. Hanmer and Mr. Mountenay, both also deceased.

As will be seen, the counter-libel was incorrectly drawn. The marriage had not taken place in the house, but in the church; Mr. Hervey was aged twenty, not seventeen or eighteen; and Anne Craddock, the sole surviving witness of the ceremony, was not mentioned. The register of the marriage was not produced,[6] and no serious attempt was made to establish it. Accordingly, on February 10, 1769, sentence was given, declaring the marriage form gone through in 1744 to have been null and void, and to restrain Mr. Hervey from asserting his claim to be husband to Miss Elizabeth Chudleigh, and condemning him in costs to the sum of one hundred pounds.

As the Attorney-General said at her subsequent trial, "a grosser artifice, I believe, than this suit was never fabricated."

On March 8, 1769, the Duke of Kingston married Elizabeth Chudleigh by special licence from the Archbishop, the minister who performed it being the Rev. Samuel Harper, of the British Museum, and the Church, St. Margaret's, Westminster. The Prince and Princess of Wales wore favours on the occasion.

No attempt was made during the lifetime of the Duke to dispute the legality of the marriage. Neither he nor Elizabeth had the least doubt that the former marriage had been legally dissolved. It was, no doubt, the case that Captain Hervey made no real attempt to prove his marriage, he was as impatient of the bond as was she. It can hardly be doubted that the sentence of the Ecclesiastical Court was just. Captain Hervey was a minor at the time, and the poor girl had been deluded into marrying him by her wretched aunt. Advantage had been taken of her – a mere girl – by the woman who was her natural guardian in the absence of her mother. Such a marriage would at once be annulled in the Court of the Church of Rome; it would be annulled in a modern English divorce court.

The fortune of the Duke was not entailed; his Grace had, therefore, the option to bequeath it as seemed best to his inclination. His nearest of kin were his nephews, Evelyn and Charles Meadows, sons of Lady Francis Pierrepont; Charles was in 1806 created Earl Manners; he had previously changed his name to Pierrepont, and been created Baron Pierrepont and Viscount Newark in 1796.

The Duke was and remained warmly attached to the Duchess. She made him happy. She had plenty of conversation, had her mind stored with gossip, and though old, oldened gracefully and pleasantly. Her bitter enemy – an old servant and confidant, who furnished the materials for the "Authentic Detail," says, "Contrarily gifted and disposed, they were frequently on discordant terms, but she had a strong hold on his mind."

On September 23, 1773, the Duke died. The Duchess had anticipated his death. He had already made his will, bequeathing to her the entire income of his estates during her life, subject to the proviso that she remained in a state of widowhood. This did not at all please the Duchess, and directly she

[6] Mr. John Merrill died February 1767, and his burial was entered in it. Mr. Bathurst, who had married his daughter, found the register book in the hall, and handed it over to the rector, Mr. Kinchin. Nevertheless it was not produced at the hearing of the case for jactitation in the Consistory Court.

saw that her husband was dying she sent for a solicitor, a Mr. Field, to draw up a new will, omitting the obnoxious proviso; she was only by two years on the right side of fifty, and might marry again. When Mr. Field was introduced to the Duke, he saw that the dying man was not in a mental condition capable of executing a will, and he refused to have anything to do with an attempt to extort his signature from him. The Duchess was very angry; but the refusal of Mr. Field was most fortunate for her, as, had the will proposed been executed, it would most indubitably have been set aside.

As soon as the Duke was dead the dowager Duchess determined to enjoy life. She had a pleasure yacht built, placed in command of it an officer who had served in the navy, fitted it up with every luxury, sailed for Italy, and visited Rome, where the Pope and the cardinals received her with great courtesy. Indeed, she was given up one of the palaces of the cardinals for her residence. Whilst she was amusing herself in Italy something happened in England that was destined to materially spoil her happiness. Anne Craddock was still alive, the sole witness of her marriage that survived. She was in bad circumstances, and applied to Mr. Field for pecuniary relief. He refused it, but the Duchess sent to offer her twenty guineas per annum. This Anne Craddock refused, and gave intimation to Mr. Evelyn Meadows that she had information of importance which she could divulge.

When Mr. Meadows heard what Anne Craddock had to say, he set the machinery of the law in motion to obtain the prosecution of the Duchess, in the hopes of convicting her of bigamy, and then of upsetting the will of the late Duke in her favour. A bill of indictment for bigamy was preferred against her; the bill was found, Mr. Field had notice of the procedure, and the Duchess was advised to return instantly to England and appear to the indictment, to prevent an outlawry.

At this time – that is, in 1775 – the Earl of Bristol died without issue, and Augustus John, her first husband, succeeded to the title.

The anxieties of the Duchess were not confined to the probable issue of the trial. Samuel Foote, the comedian, took a despicable advantage of her situation to attempt to extort money from her. He wrote a farce, entitled "A Trip to Calais," in which he introduced her Grace under the sobriquet of Lady Kitty Crocodile, and stuffed the piece with particulars relative to the private history of the Duchess, which he had obtained from Miss Penrose, a young lady who had been about her person for many years. When the piece was finished, he contrived to have it communicated to her Grace that the Haymarket Theatre would open with the entertainment in which she was held up to ridicule and scorn. She was alarmed, and sent for Foote. He attended with the piece in his pocket. She desired him to read a part of it. He obeyed; and had not read far before she could no longer control herself, but, starting up in a rage, exclaimed, "This is scandalous, Mr. Foote! Why, what a wretch you have made me!" After a few turns round the room, she composed herself to inquire on what terms he would suppress the play. Foote had the effrontery to demand two thousand pounds. She offered him fourteen, then sixteen hundred pounds; but he, grasping at too much, lost all. She consulted the Duke of Newcastle, and the Lord Chamberlain was apprised of the circumstances, and his interference solicited. He sent for the manuscript copy of the "Trip to Calais," perused, and censured it. In the event of its publication she threatened to prosecute Foote for libel. Public opinion ranged itself on the side of the Duchess, and Dr. Schomberg only expressed its opinion when he said that "Foote deserved to be run through the body for such an attempt. It was more ignoble than the conduct of a highwayman."

On April 17, 1776, the trial of the Duchess came on in Westminster Hall, and lasted five days. The principal object argued was the admission, or not, of a sentence of the Spiritual Court, in a suit for jactitation of marriage, in an indictment for polygamy. As the judges decided against the admission of such a sentence in bar to evidence, the fact of the two marriages was most clearly proved, and a conviction of course followed. The Duchess was tried by the Peers, a hundred and nineteen of whom sat and passed judgment upon her, all declaring "Guilty, upon mine honour," except the Duke of Newcastle, who pronounced "Guilty, erroneously; but not intentionally, upon mine honour."

No sooner did the Duchess see that her cause was lost than she determined to escape out of England. The penalty for bigamy was death, but she could escape this sentence by claiming the benefits of the statute 3 and 4 William and Mary, which left her in a condition to be burnt in the hand, or imprisoned; but she claimed the benefit of the peerage, and the Lord Chief Baron, having conferred with the rest of the judges, delivered their unanimous opinion that she ought "to be immediately discharged." However, her prosecutors prepared a writ "ne exeat regno," to obtain her arrest and the deprivation of her personal property. To escape this she fled to Dover, where her yacht was in waiting, and crossed to Calais, whilst amusing the public and her prosecutors by issuing invitations to a dinner at Kingston House, and causing her carriage to appear in the most fashionable quarters of the town. Mr. Meadows had carried his first point; she could no longer call herself Dowager Duchess of Kingston in England, but she was reinstated in her position of wife to Augustus John Hervey, and was therefore now Countess of Bristol. Mr. Meadows next proceeded to attack the will of the late Duke, but in this attempt he utterly failed. The will was confirmed, and Elizabeth, Countess of Bristol, was acknowledged as lawfully possessed of life interest in the property of the Duke so long as she remained unmarried. Mr. Meadows was completely ruined, and his sole gain was to keep the unhappy woman an exile from England.

Abroad the Countess was still received as Duchess of Kingston. She lived in considerable state, and visited Italy, Russia, and France. Her visit to St. Petersburg was splendid, and to ensure a favourable reception by the Empress Catharine she sent her a present of some of the valuable paintings by old masters from Kingston House. When in Russia she purchased an estate near the capital, to which she gave the name of Chudleigh, and which cost her 25,000*l.*[7] The Empress also gave her a property on the Neva. She had a corvette built of mahogany which was to be a present to the Empress, but the vessel stranded on the coast of Ingermanland. Eight of the cannons out of her are now at Chudleigh, almost the only things there that recall the Duchess. She gave magnificent entertainments; at one of these, to which the Empress was invited, a hundred and forty of her own servants attended in the Kingston livery of black turned up with red and silver.

On her return from Russia she bought an estate at Montmartre, which cost her 9,000*l.*, and another that belonged to one of the French royal princes at Saint Assise, which cost her 55,000*l.* The château was so large that three hundred beds could be made up in it.

She was getting on in years, but did not lose her energy, her vivacity, and her selfishness. Once in Rome, the story goes, she had been invited to visit some tombs that were famous. She replied with a touch of real feeling: "Ce n'est pas la peine de chercher des tombeaux, on en porte assez dans son cœur."

The account of her death shall be given in the words of the author of "Authentic Detail."

"She was at dinner, when her servants received intelligence of a sentence respecting the house near Paris having been awarded against her. She flew into a violent passion, and, in the agitation of her mind and body, burst an internal blood-vessel. Even this she appeared to have surmounted, until a few days afterwards, on the morning of the 26th August (1788), when about to rise from her bed, a servant who had long been with her endeavoured at dissuasion. The Duchess addressed her thus: 'I am not very well, but I *will* rise. At your peril disobey me; I will get up and walk about the room. Ring for the secretary to assist me.' She was obeyed, dressed, and the secretary entered the chamber. The Duchess then walked about, complained of thirst, and said, 'I could drink a glass of my fine Madeira and eat a slice of toasted bread; I shall be quite well afterwards; but let it be a large glass of wine.' The attendant reluctantly brought and the Duchess drank the wine. She then said, 'I knew the Madeira would do me good. My heart feels oddly; I will have another glass.' She then walked a little about the room, and afterwards said, 'I will lie on the couch.' She sat on the couch, a female having

[7] This place still bears the name. It is on the main road through Livland and Esthonia to St. Petersburg; about twenty miles from Narwa. It also goes by the name of Fockenhof. The present mansion is more modern, and belongs to the family of Von Wilcken.

hold of each hand. In this situation she soon appeared to have fallen into a profound sleep, until the women found her hands colder than ordinary; other domestics were rung for, and the Duchess was found to have expired, as the wearied labourer sinks into the arms of rest."

Was it a touch of final malice or of real regret that caused the old lady, by codicil to her will dated May 10, 1787, to leave pearl earrings and necklace to the Marquise de la Touche? Was it a token that she forgave her the cruel book, "Les aventures trop amoureuses; ou, Elizabeth Chudleigh," which she wrote, or caused to be written, for the blackening of her rival, and the whitewashing of herself? Let us hope it was so. The proviso in the Duke's will saved her from herself; but for that she would have married an adventurer who called himself the Chevalier de Wortha, a man who obtained great influence over her, and finally died by his own hand.

Elizabeth Chudleigh's character and career have never been sketched by friends; her enemies, those jealous of her fascinations, angry at her success, discontented with not having been sufficiently considered in her will, have given us their impressions of her, have poured out all the evil they knew and imagined of her. She has been hardly used. The only perfectly reliable authority for her history is the report of her trial, and that covers only one portion of her story. The "Authentic Detail" published by G. Kearsley, London, in 1788, is anonymous. It is fairly reliable, but tinctured by animosity. The book "Les Aventures trop Amoureuses, ou, Elizabeth Chudleigh, ex-duchesse douairière de Kingston, aujourd'hui Comtesse de Bristol, et la Marquise de la Touche. Londres, aux depens des Interessez, 1776," was composed for the justification of Madame de la Touche, and with all the venom of a discomfited and supplanted rival.

An utterly worthless book, "Histoire de la vie et des Aventures de la Duchesse de Kingston, a Londres, et se trouve à Paris, Chez Quillot, 1789," is fiction. It pretends to be based on family papers. At the commencement it gives a portion of the diary of Col. Thomas Chudleigh, in which, among other impossibilities, he records his having reduced the rents of his tenants on his estates twenty per cent. because the year was bad. As it happened, Col. Thomas Chudleigh neither possessed an acre of land, nor a tenant.

In 1813 appeared "La Duchesse de Kingston, memoires rédigés par M. de Favolle," in two volumes; this is based solely on the preceding with rich additions from the imagination of the author. Not a statement in it can be trusted.

Some little reliable information may be found in the "Memoires de la Baronne d'Oberkirch," Paris 1853.

General Mallet

On the return of Napoleon to Paris from Moscow, he was depressed with news that troubled him more than the loss of his legions. The news that had reached him related to perhaps the most extraordinary conspiracy that was ever devised, and which was within an ace of complete success. It was the news of this conspiracy that induced him to desert the army in the snows of Russia and hasten to Paris. The thoughts of this conspiracy frustrated by an accident, as Alison says, "incessantly occupied his mind during his long and solitary journey."

"Gentlemen," said Napoleon, when the report of the conspiracy was read over to him, "we must no longer disbelieve in miracles."

Claude François Mallet belonged to a noble family in the Franche Comté. He was born on June 28th, 1754, at Dole, and passed his early life in the army, where he commanded one of the first battalions of the Jura at the commencement of the Revolution. In May 1793, he was elevated to the rank of adjutant-General, and in August 1799, made General of Brigade, and commanded a division under Championnet. He was a man of enthusiastically Republican views, and viewed the progress of Napoleon with dissatisfaction mingled with envy. There can be no question as to what his opinions were at first; whether he changed them afterwards is not so certain. He was a reserved, hard, and bitter man, ambitious and restless. Envy of Napoleon, jealousy of his success seems to have been the ruling motive in his heart that made of him a conspirator, and not genuine disgust at Cæsarism.

Bonaparte knew his political opinions; and though he did not fear the man, he did not trust him. He became implicated in some illegal exactions at Civita Vecchia, in the Roman States, and was in consequence deprived of his command, and sent before a commission of enquiry at Paris, in July 1807; and, in virtue of their sentence, he was confined for a short while, and then again set at liberty and reinstated. In 1808, when the war in the Peninsula broke out, Mallet entered at Dijon into a plot, along with some old anarchists, for the overthrow of the Emperor, among them the ex-General Guillaume, who betrayed the plot, and Mallet was arrested and imprisoned in La Force. Napoleon did not care that conspiracies against himself and his throne should be made public, and consequently he contented himself with the detention of Mallet alone.

In prison, the General did not abandon his schemes, and he had the lack of prudence to commit them to paper. This fell into the hands of the Government. The minister regarded the scheme as chimerical and unimportant. The papers were shown to Napoleon, who apparently regarded the scheme or the man as really dangerous, and ordered him to perpetual detention in prison.

Time passed, and Mallet and his schemes were forgotten. Who could suppose that a solitary prisoner, without means, without the opportunity of making confederates, could menace the safety of the Empire?

Then came the Russian campaign, in 1812. Mallet saw what Napoleon did not; the inevitable failure that must attend it; and he immediately renewed his attempts to form a plot against the Emperor.

But the prison of La Force was bad headquarters from which to work. He pretended to be ill, and he was removed to a hospital, that of the Doctor Belhomme near the Barrière du Trône. In this house were the two brothers Polignac, a M. de Puyvert, and the Abbé Lafon, who in 1814 wrote and published an account of this conspiracy of Mallet. These men were Royalists, and Mallet was a Republican. It did not matter so long as Napoleon could be overthrown, how divergent their views might be as to what form of Government was to take the place of the Empire.

They came to discussion, and the Royalists supposed that they had succeeded in convincing Mallet. He, on his side, was content to dissemble his real views, and to make use of these men as his agents.

The Polignac brothers were uneasy, they were afraid of the consequences, and they mistrusted the man who tried to draw them into his plot. Perhaps, also, they considered his scheme too daring to succeed. Accordingly they withdrew from the hospital, to be out of his reach. It was not so with the others. The Polignacs had been mixed up in the enterprise of Georges, and had no wish to be again involved. Whether there were many others in the plot we do not know, Lafon names only four, and it does not seem that M. de Puyvert took a very active part in it.

Mallet's new scheme was identical with the old one that had been taken from him and shown to Napoleon. Napoleon had recognized its daring and ability, and had not despised it. That no further fear of Mallet was entertained is clear, or he would never have been transferred from the prison to a private hospital, where he would be under very little supervision.

In his hospital, Mallet drew up the following report of a Session of the Senate, imagined by himself:

"Sénat Conservateur

"Session of 22 October, 1812.

"The Session was opened at 8 P.M., under the presidency of Senator Sieyes.

"The occasion of this extraordinary Session was the receipt of the news of the death of the Emperor Napoleon, under the walls of Moscow, on the 8th of the month.

"The Senate, after mature consideration of the condition of affairs caused by this event, named a Commission to consider the danger of the situation, and to arrange for the maintenance of Government and order. After having received the report of this Commission, the following orders were passed by the Senate.

"That as the Imperial Government has failed to satisfy the aspirations of the French people, and secure peace, it be decreed annulled forthwith.

"That all such officers military and civil as shall use their authority prejudicially to the re-establishment of the Republic, shall be declared outlawed.

"That a Provisional Government be established, to consist of 13 members: – Moreau, President; Carnot, Vice-President; General Augereau, Bigonet, Destutt-Tracy, Florent Guyot, Frochot; Mathieu Montmorency, General Mallet, Noailles, Truguet; Volney, Garat.

"That this Provisional Government be required to watch over the internal and external safety of the State, and to enter into negociations with the military powers for the re-establishment of peace.

"That a constitution shall be drawn up and submitted to the General Assembly of the French realm.

"That the National Guard be reconstituted as formerly.

"That a general Amnesty be proclaimed for all political offences; that all emigrants, exiles, be permitted to return.

"That the freedom of the Press be restored.

"That the command of the army of the Centre, and which consists of 50,000 men, and is stationed near Paris, be given to General Lecombe.

"That General Mallet replaces General Hulin as commandant of Paris, and in the first division. He will have the right to nominate the officers in the general staff that will surround him."

There were many other orders, 19 in all, but these will suffice to indicate the tendency of the document. It was signed by the President and his Secretaries.

President, Sieyes

Secretaries, Lanjuinais, et Gregoire

"Approved, and compared with a similar paper in my own hands,

Signed, Mallet,

General of Division, Commandant of the main army of

Paris, and of the forces of the First Division."

This document, which was designed to be shown to the troops, to the officers and officials, was drawn up in a form so close to the genuine form, and the signatures and seals were so accurately imitated, that the document was not likely at the first glance to excite mistrust.

Moreover, Mallet had drawn up an order for the day, and a proclamation, which was printed in many thousand copies.

On the 22nd October, 1812, at 10 o'clock at night, after he had been playing cards with great composure in the hospital, Mallet made his escape, along with four others, one was the Abbé Lafon, another a corporal named Rateau, whom he had named as his aide-de-camp. Mallet had just twelve francs in his pocket, and so furnished he embarked on his undertaking to upset the throne of the Emperor. He at once went to a Spanish monk, whose acquaintance he had made in prison; and in his rooms found his general's uniform which had been brought there by a woman the evening before. Uniforms and swords for his confederates were also ready. But it rained that night – it rained in torrents, and the streets of Paris ran with water. It has been remarked that rain in Paris has a very sobering effect on political agitations, and acts even better than bayonets in preventing a disturbance of the public peace.

Mallet and his confederates could not leave their shelter till after midnight, and some of them did not appear at the place of rendezvous till 6 o'clock in the morning. Indisputably this had much to do with the defeat of the plot.

The success of the undertaking depended on darkness, on the sudden bewilderment of minds, and the paralysis of the government through the assassination of some of the ministers. About 2 A.M. Mallet appeared in his general's uniform, attended by some of his confederates also in uniform, at the Popincour barracks, and demanded to see the Commandant Soulier at once, giving his name as Lamothe. Soulier was in bed asleep. He was also unwell. He was roused from his slumbers, hastily dressed himself, and received a sealed letter, which he broke open, and read:

"To the General of Division, Commandant-in-Chief of the troops under arms in Paris, and the troops of the First Division, Soulier, Commandant of the 10th Cohort."

"General Headquarters,
"Place Vendôme.
"23rd Oct., 1812, 10 o'clock a.m.

"M. le Commandant, – I have given orders to the General Lamothe with a police commissioner to attend at your barracks, and to read before you and your Cohort the decree of the senate consequent on the receipt of the news of the death of the Emperor, and the cessation of the Imperial Government. The said general will communicate to you the Order for the Day, which you will be pleased to further to the General of Brigade. You are required to get the troops under arms with all possible despatch and quietness. By daybreak, the officers who are in barracks will be sent to the Place de Grève, there to await their companies, which will there assemble, after the instructions which General Lamothe will furnish have been carried out."

Then ensued a series of dispositions for the troops, and the whole was signed by Mallet.

When Soulier had read this letter, Mallet, who pretended to be General Lamothe, handed him the document already given, relating to the assembly of the Senate, and its decisions. Then he gave him the Order for the Day, for the 23rd and 24th October.

Colonel Soulier, raised from sleep, out of health, bewildered, did not for a moment mistrust the messenger, or the documents handed to him. He hastened at once to put in execution the orders he had received.

The same proceedings were gone through in the barracks of Les Minimes, and of Picpus; the decree of the Senate, the Order of the Day, and a Proclamation, were read by torchlight.

Everywhere the same success. The officers had not the smallest doubt as to the authenticity of the papers presented to them. Everywhere also the Proclamation announcing the death of the Emperor, the cessation of the Empire, and the establishment of the Provisional Government was being placarded about.

At 6 A.M., at the head of a troop, Mallet, still acting as General Lamothe, marched before the prison of La Force, and the Governor was ordered to open the gates. The Decree of the Senate and the Order of the Day were read to him, and he was required at once to discharge three state prisoners he held, General Guidal, Lahorie, and a Corsican, Bocchejampe, together with certain officers there confined. He did as required, and Mallet separated his troops into four detachments, keeping one under his own command, and placing the others under the orders of Guidal, Lahorie and Bocchejampe.

Guidal and Lahorie, by his orders, now marched to the Ministry of Police, where they arrested Savary, Duke of Rovigo, Minister of Police. At the same time Boutreux, another confederate, had gone to the prefecture of the Paris police, had arrested the prefect, Pasquier, and sent him to be confined in La Force.

Mallet, now at the head of 150 men, went to the État-Major de-la-place, to go through the same farce with the Commandant-de-place, and get him to subscribe the Order for the Day. Count Hullin refused. Mallet presented a pistol at his head, fired, and Hullin fell covered with blood to the ground. Mallet left him for dead, but fortunately only his jaw was broken. By means of a forged order addressed to the commandant of one of the regiments of the paid guard of Paris, he occupied the National Bank, in which, at the time, there was a considerable treasure in specie.

The État-Major of Paris was a post of the highest importance, as it was the headquarters of the whole military authority in Paris. Before Mallet approached it, he sent a packet to the Adjutant-

General Doucet, of a similar tenor to that given to Soulier and the other colonels, and containing his nomination as general of brigade, and a treasury order for a hundred thousand francs.

Soulier, Colonel of the 10th Cohort, obeying the orders he had received, the authenticity of which he did not for a moment dispute, had in the meantime made himself master of the Hôtel-de-Ville, and had stationed a strong force in the square before the building. Frochot, Prefect of the Seine, was riding into Paris from his country house at half-past eight in the morning, when he was met by his servants, in great excitement, with a note from Mallet, on the outside of which were written the ominous words "Fuit Imperator." Now it so happened that no tidings of the Emperor had been received for twenty-five days, and much uneasiness was felt concerning him. When Frochot therefore received this notice, he believed it, and hurried to the Hôtel-de-Ville. There he received a despatch from Mallet, under the title of Governor of Paris, ordering him to make ready the principal apartment in the building for the use of the Provisional Government. Not for a moment did Frochot remember that – even if the Emperor were dead, there was the young Napoleon, to whom his allegiance was due; he at once obeyed the orders he had received, and began to make the Hôtel ready for the meeting of the Provisional Government. Afterwards when he was reminded that there was a son to Napoleon, and that his duty was to support him, Frochot answered, "Ah! I forgot that. I was distracted with the news."

By means of the forged orders despatched everywhere, all the barriers of Paris had been seized and were closed, and positive orders were issued that no one was to be allowed to enter or leave Paris.

Mallet now drew up before the État-Major-Général, still accompanied and obeyed by the officer and detachment. Nothing was wanting now but the command of the adjutant-general's office to give to Mallet the entire direction of the military force of Paris, with command of the telegraph, and with it of all France. With that, and with the treasury already seized, he would be master of the situation. In another ten minutes Paris would be in his hand, and with Paris the whole of France.

An accident – an accident only – at that moment saved the throne of Napoleon. Doucet was a little suspicious about the orders – or allowed it afterwards to be supposed that he was. He read them, and stood in perplexity. He would have put what doubts presented themselves aside, had it not been for his aide-de-camp, Laborde. It happened that Laborde had had charge of Mallet in La Force, and had seen him there quite recently. He came down to enter the room where was Doucet, standing in doubt before Mallet. Mallet's guard was before the door, and would have prevented him from entering; however, he peremptorily called to them to suffer him to pass, and the men, accustomed to obey his voice, allowed him to enter. The moment he saw Mallet in his general's uniform, he recognised him and said, "But – how the devil! – That is my prisoner. How came he to escape?" Doucet still hesitated, and attempted to explain, when Laborde cut his superior officer short with, "There is something wrong here. Arrest the fellow, and I will go at once to the minister of police."

Mallet put his hand in his pocket to draw out the pistol with which he had shot Hullin, when the gesture was observed in a mirror opposite, and before he had time to draw and cock the pistol, Doucet and Laborde were on him, and had disarmed him.

Laborde, with great promptitude, threw open the door, and announced to the soldiers the deceit that had been practised on them, and assured them that the tidings of the death of the Emperor were false.

The arrest of Mallet disconcerted the whole conspiracy. Had Generals Lahorie and Guidal been men of decision and resolution they might still have saved it, but this they were not; though at the head of considerable bodies of men, the moment they saw that their chief had met with a hitch in carrying out his plan, they concluded that all was lost, and made the best of their way from their posts to places of concealment.

It was not till 8 o'clock that Saulnier, General Secretary of Police, heard of the arrest and imprisonment of his chief, Savary, Duke of Rovigo. He at once hastened to Cambaçérès, the President

of the Ministry in the absence of the Emperor, and astonished and alarmed him with the tidings. Then Saulnier hastened to Hullin, whom he found weltering in his blood, and unable to speak.

Baron Pasquier, released from La Force, attempted to return to his prefecture. The soldiers posted before it refused to admit him, and threatened to shoot him, believing that he had escaped from prison, and he was obliged to take refuge in an adjoining house. Laborde, who about noon came there, was arrested by the soldiers, and conducted by them as a prisoner to the État-Major-Gênéral, to deliver him over to General Mallet; and it was with difficulty that they could be persuaded that they had been deceived, and that Mallet was himself, at that moment, in irons.

Savary, released from La Force, had Mallet and the rest of the conspirators brought before him. Soulier also, for having given too ready a credence to the forged orders, was also placed under arrest, to be tried along with the organisers and carriers out of the plot.

Mallet confessed with great composure that he had planned the whole, but he peremptorily refused to say whether he had aiders or sympathisers elsewhere.

Lahorie could not deny that he had taken an active part, but declared that it was against his will, his whole intention being to make a run for the United States, there to spend the rest of his days in tranquillity. He asserted that he had really believed that the Emperor was dead.

Guidal tried to pass the whole off as a joke; but when he saw that he was being tried for his life, he became greatly and abjectly alarmed.

Next day the generals and those in the army who were under charge were brought before a military commission. Saulnier had an interesting interview with Mallet that day. He passed through the hall where Mallet was dining, when the prisoner complained that he was not allowed the use of a knife. Saulnier at once ordered that he might be permitted one; and this consideration seems to have touched Mallet, for he spoke with more frankness to Saulnier than he did before his judges. When the General Secretary of Police asked him how he could dream of success attending such a mad enterprise, Mallet replied, "I had already three regiments of infantry on my side. Very shortly I would have been surrounded by the thousands who are weary of the Napoleonic yoke, and are longing for a change of order. Now, I was convinced that the moment the news of my success in Paris reached him, Napoleon would leave his army and fly home, I would have been prepared for him at Mayence, and have had him shot there. If it had not been for the cowardice of Guidal and Lahorie, my plot would have succeeded. I had resolved to collect 50,000 men at Chalons sur Marne to cover Paris. The promise I would have made to send all the conscripts to their homes, the moment the crisis was over, would have rallied all the soldiers to my side."

On October 23, the prisoners to the number of twenty-four were tried, and fourteen were condemned to be shot, among these, Mallet, Guidai, Lahorie, and the unfortunate Soulier. Mallet at the trial behaved with great intrepidity. "Who are your accomplices?" asked the President. "The whole of France," answered Mallet, "and if I had succeeded, you yourself at their head. One who openly attacks a government by force, if he fails, expects to die." When he was asked to make his defence, "Monsieur," he said, "a man who has constituted himself defender of the rights of his Fatherland, needs no defence."

Soulier put in as an apology, that the news of the death of the Emperor had produced such a sudorific effect on him, that he had been obliged to change his shirt four times in a quarter of an hour. This was not considered sufficient to establish his attachment to the Imperial government.

In the afternoon of the same day the fourteen were conveyed to the plain of Grenelle to be shot, when pardon was accorded by the Empress Regent to two of the condemned, the Corporal Rateau, and Colonel Rabbe. When the procession passed through the Rue Grenelle, Mallet saw a group of students looking on; "Young men," he called to them, "remember the 23rd October." Arrived on the place of execution, some of the condemned cried out, "Vive l'empereur!" only a few "Vive la République."

Mallet requested that his eyes might not be bandaged, and maintained the utmost coolness. He received permission, at his own desire, to give the requisite orders to the soldiers drawn up to shoot him and his party. "Peloton! Present!" The soldiers, moved by the tragic catastrophe, obeyed, but not promptly. "That is bad!" called Mallet, "imagine you are before the foe. Once again – Attention! – Present!" This time it was better. "Not so bad this time, but still not well," said the General; "now pay attention, and mind, when I say Fire, that all your guns are discharged as one. It is a good lesson for you to see how brave men die. Now then, again, Attention!" For a quarter of an hour he put the men through their drill, till he observed that his comrades were in the most deplorable condition. Some had fainted, some were in convulsions. Then he gave the command: Fire! the guns rattled and the ten fell to the ground, never to rise again. Mallet alone reeled, for a moment or two maintaining his feet, and then he also fell over, without a sound, and was dead.

"But for the singular accident," says Savary, "which caused the arrest of the Minister of War to fail, Mallet, in a few moments, would have been master of almost everything; and in a country so much influenced by the contagion of example, there is no saying where his success would have stopped. He would have had possession of the treasury, then extremely rich; the post office, the telegraph, and the command of the hundred cohorts of the National Guard. He would soon have learned the alarming situation in Russia; and nothing could have prevented him from making prisoner of the Emperor himself if he returned alone, or from marching to meet him, if he had come at the head of his shattered forces."

As Alison says, "When the news reached Napoleon, one only idea took possession of his imagination – that in this crisis the succession of his son was, by common consent, set aside; one only truth was ever present to his mind – that the Imperial Crown rested on himself alone. The fatal truth was brought home to him that the Revolution had destroyed the foundations of hereditary succession; and that the greatest achievements by him who wore the diadem afforded no security that it would descend to his progeny. These reflections, which seem to have burst on Napoleon all at once, when the news of this extraordinary affair reached him in Russia, weighed him down more than all the disasters of the Moscow retreat."

Schweinichen's Memoirs

Memoirs, says Addison, in the Tatler, are so untrustworthy, so stuffed with lies, that, "I do hereby give notice to all booksellers and translators whatsoever, that the word *memoir* is French for a novel; and to require of them, that they sell and translate it accordingly."

There are, however, some memoirs that are trustworthy and dull, and others, again, that are conspicuously trustworthy, and yet are as entertaining as a novel, and to this latter category belong the memoirs of Hans von Schweinichen, the Silesian Knight, Marshal and Chamberlain to the Dukes of Liegnitz and Brieg at the close of the 16th century. Scherr, a well known writer on German Culture, and a scrupulous observer and annotator of all that is ugly and unseemly in the past, says of the diary of Schweinichen: "It carries us into a noble family at the end of the 16th century and reveals boorish meanness, coarseness and lack of culture." That is, in a measure, true, but, as is invariably the case with Scherr, he leaves out of sight all the redeeming elements, and there are many, that this transparently sincere diarist discloses.

The MS. was first discovered and published in 1823, by Büsching; it was republished in 1878 at Breslau by Oesterley. The diary extends to the year 1602, and Schweinichen begins with an account of his birth in 1552, and his childish years. But we are wrong in saying that he begins with his birth – characteristic of the protestant theological spirit of his times, he begins with a confession of his faith.

As a picture of the manners and customs of the highest classes in the age just after the Reformation it is unrivalled for its minuteness, and for its interest. The writer, who had not an idea that his diary would be printed, wrote for his own amusement, and, without intending it, drew a perfect portraiture of himself, without exaggeration of his virtues and observation of his faults; indeed the virtues we admire in him, he hardly recognised as virtues, and scarcely considered as serious the faults we deplore. In reading his truthful record we are angry with him, and yet, he makes us love and respect him, and acknowledge what sterling goodness, integrity, fidelity and honour were in the man.

Hans was son of George, Knight of Schweinichen and Mertschütz, and was born in the Castle of Gröditzberg belonging to the Dukes of Silesia, of which his father was castellan, and warden of the Ducal Estates thereabouts. The Schweinichens were a very ancient noble Silesian family, and Hans could prove his purity of blood through the sixteen descents, eight paternal and eight maternal.

In 1559, Duke Frederick III. was summoned before the Emperor Ferdinand I. at Breslau, to answer the accusations of extravagance and oppression brought against him by the Silesian Estates, and was deposed, imprisoned, and his son Henry XI. given the Ducal crown instead. The deposition of the Duke obliged the father of our hero to leave Gröditzberg and retire to his own estates, where Hans was given the village notary as teacher in reading and writing for a couple of years, and was then sent, young noble though he was, to keep the geese for the family. However, as he played tricks with the geese, put spills into their beaks, pegging them open, the flock was then withdrawn from his charge. This reminds us of Grettir the Strong, the Icelandic hero, who also as a boy was sent to drive the family geese to pasture, and who maltreated his charge.

His father sent Hans to be page to the imprisoned Duke Frederick at Liegnitz, where also he was to study with the Duke's younger son, afterwards Frederick IV. Hans tells us he did not get as many whippings as his companion, because he slipped his money-allowance into the tutor's palm, and so his delinquencies were passed over. As page, he had to serve the Duke at table. A certain measure of wine was allowed the imprisoned Duke daily by his son, the reigning Duke; what he did not drink every day, Hans was required to empty into a cask, and when the cask was full, the Duke invited some good topers to him, and they sat and drank the cask out, then rolled over on the floor. All night Hans had to sit or lie on the floor and watch the drunken Duke.

Duke Frederick took a dislike to the chaplain, and scribbled a lampoon on him, which may be thus rendered, without injustice to the original: —

"All the mischief ever done
Twixt the old Duke and his son,
Comes from that curs't snuffy one
Franconian Parson Cut-and-run."

The Duke ordered Hans to pin this to the pulpit cushion, and he did so. When the pastor ascended the pulpit he saw the paper, and instead of a text read it out. The reigning Duke Henry was very angry, and Hans was made the scape-goat, and sent home in disgrace to his father.

In 1564, Hans attended his father, himself as page, his father as Marshal, when Duke Henry and his Duchess visited Stuttgard and Dresden. Pages were not then allowed to sit astride a horse, they stood in a sort of stirrup slung to the pommel, to which they held. At Dresden old Schweinichen ran a tilt in a tournament with the elector Augustus and unhorsed him, but had sufficient courtesy to at once throw himself off his own horse, as though he also had been cast by the elector. This so gratified the latter, that he sent old Schweinichen a gold chain, and a double florin worth about 4 shillings to the young one.

When Hans was fifteen, he went to the marriage of Duke Wenceslas of Teschen with the daughter of Duke Franz of Saxony, and received from his father a present of a sword, which, he tells us, cost his father a little under a pound. One of the interesting features of this diary is that Hans enters the value of everything. For instance, we are given the price of wheat, barley, rye, oats, meat, &c., in 1562, and we learn from this that all kinds of grain cost one fifth or one sixth of what it costs now, and that meat – mutton, was one eighteenth or one twentieth the present cost. For a thaler, 3 shillings, in 1562 as much food could be purchased as would now cost from 25 to 30 shillings. Hans tells us what pocket money he received from his parents; he put a value on every present he was given, and tells what everything cost him which he give away.

In the early spring of 1569 Duke Henry XI. went to Lublin in Poland to a diet. King Sigismund was old, and the Duke hoped to get elected to the kingdom of Poland on his death. This was a costly expedition, as the Duke had to make many presents, and to go in great state. Hans went with him, and gives an infinitely droll account of their reception, the miserable housing, his own dress, one leg black, the other yellow, and how many ells of ribbon went to make the bows on his jacket. His father and he, and a nobleman called Zedlitz and his son were put in a garret under the tiles in bitter frost – and "faith," says Hans, "our pigs at home are warmer in their styes."

This expedition which led to no such result as the Duke hoped, exhausted his treasury, and exasperated the Silesian Estates. All the nobles had to stand surety for their Duke, Schweinichen and the rest to the amount of – in modern money £100,000.

When Hans was aged eighteen he was drunk for the first time in his life, so drunk that he lay like a dead man for two days and two nights, and his life was in danger.

Portia characterised the German as a drunkard, she liked him "very vilely in the morning, when he is sober; and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk. Set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket: for, if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge."

How true this characterisation was of the old German noble, Schweinichen's memoirs show; it is a record of drunken bouts at small intervals. There was no escape, he who would live at court must drink and get drunken.

At the age of nineteen old Schweinichen made his son keep the accounts at home, and look after the mill; he had the charge of the fish-ponds, and attended to the thrashing of the corn, and the feeding of the horses and cattle.

Once Hans was invited to a wedding, and met at it four sisters from Glogau, two were widows and two unmarried. Their maiden name was Von Schaben. Hans, aged twenty, danced with the

youngest a good deal, and before leaving invited the four sisters to pay his father and him a visit. A friend of his called Eicholz galloped ahead to forewarn old Schweinichen. Some hours later up drove Hans in a waggon with the four sisters; but he did not dare to bring them in till he had seen his father, so he went into the house, and was at once saluted with a burst of laughter, and the shout, "Here comes the bridegroom," and Eicholz sang at the top of his voice an improvised verse:

"Rosie von Schaben
Hans er will haben."

"Where are the ladies?" asked the old knight.

"In the waggon outside," answered Hans.

"Send for the fiddlers, bring them in. We will eat, drink, dance and be merry," said the old man.

But Hans was offended at being boisterously saluted as bridegroom, and he now kept Rosie at a distance. Somewhat later, the Duke tried to get him to marry a charming young heiress called Hese von Promnitz, and very amusing is Hans' account of how he kept himself clear of engagement. When he first met her at court she was aged fourteen, and was passionately fond of sugar. Hans says he spent as much as £3 in our modern money on sweets for her, but he would make no proposal, because, as he concluded, she was too young to be able "to cook a bowl of soup." Two years passed, and then an old fellow called Geisler, "looking more like a Jew than a gentleman," who offered Hese a box of sweets every day, proposed for her. Hese would not answer till she knew the intentions of Hans, and she frankly asked him whether he meant to propose for her hand or not. "My heart's best love, Hese," answered Schweinichen, "at the right time, and when God wills I shall marry, but I do not think I can do that for three years. So follow your own desires, take the old Jew, or wait, as you like."

Hese said she would wait any number of years for Hans. This made Hans the colder. The Duke determined that the matter should be settled one way or other at once, so he sent a crown of gold roses to Hans, and said it was to be Hese's bridal wreath, if he desired that she should wear it for him, he was to lay hold of it; Hans thereupon put his hands behind his back. Then he went to his Schweinichen coat-of-arms and painted under it the motto, "I bide my time, when the old man dies, I'll get the prize." This Geisler read, and – says Hans, didn't like.

Hans was now installed as gentleman-in-waiting to the Duke, and was henceforth always about his person. He got for his service free bed and board, a gala coat that cost in our modern money about £36, and an every day livery costing £18. His father made him a small allowance, but pay in addition to liveries and keep he got none. The Duke's great amusement consisted in mumming. For a whole year he rambled about every evening in masquerade, dropping in on the burghers unexpectedly. Some were, we are told, pleased to see and entertain him, others objected to these impromptu visits. The special costume in which the Duke delighted to run about the town making these visits was that of a Nun. Hans admits that this was very distasteful to him, but he could not help himself, he was obliged to accommodate himself to the whims of his master. He made an effort to free himself from the service of the Duke, so as to go out of the country to some other court – he felt intuitively that this association would be fatal to his best interests, but the Duke at once took him by his better side, pleaded with him to remain and be faithful to him, his proper master and sovereign, and Hans with misgivings at heart consented.

There was at Court an old lady, Frau von Kittlitz, who acted as stewardess, and exercised great influence over the Duke, whom she had known from a boy. The Duchess resented her managing ways, and interference, and was jealous of her influence. One day in 1575 she refused to come down from her room and dine with the Duke unless the old Kittlitz were sent to sit at the table below the dais. This led to words and hot blood on both sides. The Duchess used a gross expression in reference to the stewardess, and the Duke who had already some wine under his belt, struck the Duchess in the face, saying, "I'll teach you not to call people names they do not deserve." Hans, who was present, threw

himself between the angry couple; the Duke stormed and struck about. Hans entreated the Duchess to retire, and then he stood in her door and prevented the Duke following, though he shouted, "She is my wife, I can serve her as I like. Who are you to poke yourself in between married folk?"

As soon as the Duchess had locked herself in, Hans escaped and fled; but an hour after the Duke sent for him, and stormed at him again for his meddlesomeness. Hans entreated the Duke to be quiet and get reconciled to the Duchess, but he would not hear of it, and dismissed Schweinichen. A quarter of an hour later another messenger came from his master, and Hans returned to him, to find him in a better mood. "Hans," said his Highness, "try if you can't get my wife to come round and come down to table – all fun is at an end with this."

Hans went up and was admitted. The Duchess, in a towering rage, had already written a letter to her brother the Margrave of Anspach, telling him how her husband had struck her in the face and given her a black eye, and she had already dispatched a messenger with the letter. After much arguing, Hans wrung from her her consent to come down, on two conditions, one that the Duke should visit her at once and beg her pardon, the other that the old Kittlitz should sit at the table with the pages. The Duke was now in a yielding mood and ate his leek humbly. The Duchess consented to tell the Court that she had got her black eye from striking her face against a lamp, and the Duke ordered ten trumpeters and a kettledrum to make all the noise they could to celebrate the reconciliation.

The Duchess in an aside to Schweinichen admitted that she had been rash and unjust, and regretted having sent off that letter. An unlucky letter – says our author – for it cost the duchy untold gold and years of trouble.

The Duke had made several visits to Poland, chasing that Jack o' lantern – the Polish crown, and it had cost him so much money that he had quarrelled with his Estates, bullied and oppressed his subjects to extort money, and at last the Estates appealed to the Emperor against him, as they had against his father; and the Emperor summoned him to Prague. The Duke had great difficulty in scraping together money enough to convey him so far; and on reaching Prague, he begged permission of the Kaiser to be allowed to visit the Electors and the Free Cities, and see whether he could not obtain from them some relief from his embarrassments, and money wherewith to pacify the angry Estates of the Silesian Duchy. The consent required was given, and then the Duke with his faithful Schweinichen, and several other retainers, started on a grand begging and borrowing round of the Empire. Hans was constituted treasurer, and he had in his purse about £400. The Duke took with him five squires, two pages, three serving men, a cook, and several kitchen boys, one carriage drawn by six horses, another by four. And not only was this train to make the round of the Empire, but also to visit Italy – and all on £400.

The first visit was paid, three days' journey from Prague, at Theusing to a half-sister of the Duchess. She received him coolly, and lectured him on his conduct to his wife. When the Duke asked her to lend him money, she answered that she would pay his expenses home, if he chose to go back to Liegnitz, but not one penny otherwise should he have. Not content with this refusal, the Duke went on to Nurnberg, where he sent Hans to the town council to invite them to lend him money; he asked for 4,000 florins. The council declined the honour. The two daughters of the Duke were in the charge of the Margrave of Anspach, their mother's brother. The Duke sent Hans to Anspach to urge the Margrave to send the little girls to him, or invite him to visit Anspach to see them. He was shy of visiting his brother-in-law uninvited, because of the box in the ear and the black eye. He confided to Hans that if he got his children at Nurnberg, he would not return them to their uncle, without a loan or a honorarium.

This shabby transaction was not to Schweinichen's taste, but he was obliged to undertake it. It proved unsuccessful, the Margrave refused to give up the children till the Duke returned to his wife and duchy and set a better example.

Whilst Hans was away, the Duke won a large sum of money at play, enough to pay his own bill, but instead of doing this with it, he had it melted up and made into silver cups. When he came

to leave Nurnberg he was unable to pay his inn bill, and obliged to leave in pawn with the taverner a valuable jewel. Then he and his suite went to Augsburg and settled into an inn till the town council could agree to lend him money.

One day, whilst there, Hans was invited to a wedding. The Duke wanted to go also, but, as he was not invited, he went as Hans' servant, but got so drunk that Hans was obliged to carry him home to the tavern, after which he returned to the wedding. In the evening, when dancing began, the Duke reappeared, he had slept off his drunkenness and was fresh for more entertainment. He was now recognized, and according to etiquette, two town councillors, in robes of office and gold chains, danced solemnly before his Highness. Hans tells us that it was customary for all dances to be led by two persons habited in scarlet with white sleeves, and these called the dance and set the figures, no one might execute any figure or do anything which had not been done by the leaders. Now as Hans vows he never saw so many pretty girls anywhere as on that evening, he tipped the leaders with half a thaler to kiss each other, whereupon the two solemn dancing councillors had also to kiss each other, and the Duke, nothing loth, his partner, and Hans, with zest, his. That evening he gave plenty of kisses, and what with the many lights, and the music and the dancing and the pretty girls he thought himself in Paradise. Shortly after this, the Duke was invited to dine with Fugger, the merchant prince, who showed him his treasury, gold to the worth of a million, and one tower lined within from top half way down with nothing but silver thalers. The Duke's mouth watered, and he graciously invited Fugger to lend him £5,000; this the merchant declined, but made him a present of 200 crowns and a good horse. The town council consented to lend the Duke £1,200 on his I.O.U. for a year; and then to pay his host he melted up his silver mugs again, pawned his plate and gave him a promissory note for two months.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.