

ТОМАС КАРЛЕЙЛЬ

HISTORY OF FRIEDRICH
II OF PRUSSIA —
VOLUME 07

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History of Friedrich II
of Prussia — Volume 07

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Thomas Carlyle

History of Friedrich II of Prussia — Volume 07

BOOK VII. — FEARFUL SHIPWRECK OF THE DOUBLE-MARRIAGE PROJECT. — Feb.-Nov., 1730

Chapter I. — ENGLAND SENDS THE EXCELLENCY HOTHAM TO BERLIN

Things, therefore, are got to a dead-lock at Berlin: rebellious Womankind peremptorily refuse Weissenfels, and take to a bed of sickness; inexpugnable there, for the moment. Baireuth is but a weak middle term; and there are disagreements on it. Answer from England, affirmative or even negative, we have yet none. Promptly affirmative, that might still avail, and be an honorable outcome. Perhaps better pause till that arrive, and declare itself? —Friedrich Wilhelm knows nothing of the Villa mission, of

the urgencies that have been used in England: but, in present circumstances, he can pause for their answer.

MAJESTY AND CROWN-PRINCE WITH HIM MAKE A RUN TO DRESDEN

To outward appearance, Friedrich Wilhelm, having written that message to Baireuth, seems easier in mind; quiet with the Queen; though dangerous for exploding if Wilhelmina and the Prince come in view. Wilhelmina mostly squats; Prince, who has to be in view, gets slaps and strokes "daily (JOURNELLEMENT)," says the Princess,—or almost daily. For the rest, it is evident enough, Weissenfels, if not got passed through the Female Parliament, is thrown out on the second reading, and so is at least finished. Ought we not to make a run to Dresden, therefore, and apprise the Polish Majesty? Short run to Dresden is appointed for February 18th; [Fassmann, p. 404.] and the Prince-Royal, perhaps suspected of meditating something, and safer in his Father's company than elsewhere, is to go. Wilhelmina had taken leave of him, night of the 17th, in her Majesty's Apartment; and was in the act of undressing for bed, when,—judge of a young Princess's terror and surprise,—

"There stept into the anteroom," visible in the half-light there, a most handsome little Cavalier, dressed, not succinctly as Colonel of the Potsdam Giants, but "in magnificent French style.—I gave a shriek, not knowing who it was; and hid myself behind

a screen. Madam de Sonsfeld, my Governess, not less frightened than myself, ran out" to see what audacious person, at such undue hour, it could be. "But she returned next moment, accompanying the Cavalier, who was laughing heartily, and whom I recognized for my Brother. His dress so altered him, he seemed a different person. He was in the best humor possible.

"I am come to bid you farewell once more, my dear Sister,' said he: 'and as I know the friendship you have for me, I will not keep you ignorant of my designs. I go, and do not come back. I cannot endure the usage I suffer; my patience is driven to an end. It is a favorable opportunity for flinging off that odious yoke; I will glide out of Dresden, and get across to England; where I do not doubt I shall work out your deliverance too, when I am got thither. So I beg you, calm yourself, We shall soon meet again in places where joy shall succeed our tears, and where we shall have the happiness to see ourselves in peace, and free from these persecutions.'" [Wilhelmina, i. 205.]

Wilhelmina stood stupefied, in silence for some moments;—argued long with her Brother; finally got him to renounce those wild plans, or at least postpone them; and give her his word that he would attempt nothing on the present occasion. This small Dresden Excursion of February, 1730, passed, accordingly, without accident, It was but the prelude to a much grander Visit now agreed upon between the neighboring Majesties. For there is a grand thing in the wind. Something truly sublime, of the scenic-military kind, which has not yet got a name; but shall soon have a

world-wide one,—“Camp of Muhlberg,” “Camp of Radewitz,” or however to be named,—which his Polish Majesty will hold in those Saxon parts, in a month or two. A thing that will astonish all the world, we may hope; and where the King and Prince of Prussia are to attend as chief guests.

It was during this brief absence in February, or directly after Friedrich Wilhelm had returned, that Queen Sophie had that fit of real sickness we spoke of. Scarcely was his Majesty got home, when the Queen, rather ambiguous in her sicknesses of late, fell really and dangerously ill: so that Friedrich Wilhelm, at last recognizing it for real, came hurrying in from Potsdam; wept loud and abundantly, poor man; declared in private, “He would not survive his Feekin;” and for her sake solemnly pardoned Wilhelmina, and even Fritz,—till the symptoms mended. [Wilhelmina, i. 306.]

HOW VILLA WAS RECEIVED IN ENGLAND

Meanwhile Dr. Villa, in England, has sped not ill. Villa's eloquence of truth; the Grumkow-Reichenbach Correspondence in St. Mary Axe: these two things produce their effect. These on the one hand; and then on the other, certain questionable aspects of Fleury, after that fine Soissons Catastrophe to the Kaiser; and certain interior quarrels in the English Ministry, partly grounded thereon:—“On the whole, why should not we detach Friedrich

Wilhelm from the Kaiser, if we could, and comply with a Royal Sister?" think they at St. James's.

Political men take some interest in the question; "Why neglect your Prince of Wales?" grumbles the Public: "It is a solid Protestant match, eligible for Prince Fred and us!"—"Why bother with the Kaiser and his German puddles?" asks Walpole: "Once detach Prussia from him, the Kaiser will perhaps sit still, and leave the world and us free of his Pragmatics and his Sanctions and Apanages."—"Quit of him? German puddles?" answers Townshend dubitatively,—who has gained favor at headquarters by going deeply into said puddles; and is not so ardent for the Prussian Match; and indeed is gradually getting into quarrel with Walpole and Queen Caroline. [Coxe, i. 332-339.] These things are all favorable to Dr. Villa.

In fact, there is one of those political tempests (dreadful to the teapot, were it not experienced in them) going on in England, at this time,—what we call a Change of Ministry;—daily crisis laboring towards fulfilment, or brewing itself ripe. Townshend and Walpole have had (how many weeks ago Coxe does not tell us) that meeting in Colonel Selwyn's, which ended in their clutching at swords, nay almost at coat-collars: [Ib. p. 335.] honorable Brothers-in-law: but the good Sister, who used to reconcile them, is now dead. Their quarrels, growing for some years past, are coming to a head. "When the firm used to be Townshend and Walpole, all was well; when it had to become Walpole and Townshend, all was not well!" said Walpole

afterwards.

Things had already gone so far, that Townshend brought Chesterfield over from the Hague, last Autumn;—a Baron de Montesquieu, with the ESPRIT DE LOIS in his head, sailed with Lord Chesterfield on that occasion, and is now in England "for two years;"—but Chesterfield could not be made Secretary; industrious Duke of Newcastle stuck so close by that office, and by the skirts of Walpole. Chesterfield and Townshend VERSUS Walpole, Colonel Stanhope (Harrington) and the Pelhams: the Prussian Match is a card in that game; and Dr. Villa's eloquence of truth is not lost on Queen Caroline, who in a private way manages, as always, to rule pretty supreme in it.

There lies in the State-Paper Office, [Close by Despatch (Prussian): "London, 8th February (o.s.) 1729-1730."] without date or signature, a loose detached bit of writing, in scholastic style, but brief and to the purpose, which is evidently the Memorial of Villa; but as it teaches us nothing that we do not already know, it need not be inserted here. The man, we can perceive farther, continued useful in those Official quarters, answering questions about Prussia, helping in the St.-Mary-Axe decipherings, and in other small ways, for some time longer; after which he vanishes again from all record,—whether to teach English farther, or live on some modicum of pension granted, no man knows. Poor old Dove, let out upon the Deluge in serge gown: he did bring back a bit of olive, so to speak;—had the presage but held, as it did in Noah's case!

In a word, the English Sovereignities and Ministries have determined that an Envoy Extraordinary (one Hotham, they think of), with the due solemnity, be sent straightway to Berlin; to treat of those interesting matters, and officially put the question there. Whom Dubourgay is instructed to announce to his Prussian Majesty, with salutation from this Court. As Dubourgay does straightway, with a great deal of pleasure. [Despatches: London, 8th February; Berlin, 2d March, 1730] How welcome to his Majesty we need not say.

And indeed, after such an announcement (1st March, 1730, the day of it), they fell into cheerful dialogue; and the Brigadier had some frank conversation with his Majesty about the "Arbitration Commission" then sitting at Brunswick, and European affairs in general. Conversation which is carefully preserved for us in the Brigadier's Despatch of the morrow. It never was intrinsically of much moment; and is now fallen very obsolete, and altogether of none: but as a glance at first-hand into the dim old thoughts of Friedrich Wilhelm, the reader may take it with him:—

"The King said next, That though we made little noise, yet he knew well our design—was to kindle a fire in other parts of Lower Germany. To which I answered, That if his Majesty would give me favorable hearing, I could easily persuade him of the peaceable intentions of our Allies. 'Well,' says he, 'the Emperor will abandon the Netherlands, and who will be master of them? I see the day when you will make France so powerful, that it will be

difficult to bring them to reason again.'—DUBOURGAY: 'If the Emperor abandoned the Netherlands, they would be governed by their own Magistrate, and defended by their own Militia. As to the French, we are too well persuaded of the benefit of our Allies, to—' Upon which the King of Prussia said, 'It appeared plainly we had a mind to dispose as we pleased of Kingdoms and provinces in Italy, so that probably our next thought would be to do the same in Germany.'—DUBOURGAY: 'The allotments made in favor of Don Carlos have been made with the consent of the Emperor and the whole Empire. We could not suffer a longer interruption of our commerce with Spain, for the sake of the small difference between the Treaty of Seville and the Quadruple Alliance, in regard to the Garrison,'"—to the introducing of Spanish Garrisons, at once, into Parma and Piacenza; which was the special thunder-bolt of the late Soissons Catastrophe, or Treaty of Seville.—"'Well, then,' says his Prussian Majesty, 'you must allow, then, there IS an infraction of the Quadruple Alliance, and that the Emperor will make war!' 'I hope not,' said I: 'but if so, a Ten-Years War, in conjunction with the Allies of Seville, never would be so bad as the interruption of our Commerce with Old and New Spain for one year.'

"The King of Prussia's notion about our DISPOSING OF PROVINCES IN GERMANY," adds Dubourgay, "is, I believe, an insinuation of Seckendorf, who, I doubt not, has made him believe we intended to do so with respect to Berg and Julich."

Very probably:—but Hotham is getting under way, hopeful to

spoil that game. Prussian Majesty, we see, is not insensible to so much honor; and brightens into hopefulness and fine humor in consequence. What radiancy spread over the Queen's side of the House we need not say. The Tobacco-Parliament is like to have a hard task.—Friedrich Wilhelm privately is well inclined to have his Daughter married, with such outlooks, if it can be done. The marriage of the Crown-Prince into such a family would also be very welcome; only—only—There are considerations on that side. There are reasons; still more there are whims, feelings of the mind towards an unloved Heir-Apparent: upon these latter chiefly lie the hopes of Seckendorf and the Tobacco-Parliament.

What the Tobacco-Parliament's specific insinuations and deliberations were, in this alarming interim, no Hansard gives us a hint. Faint and timid they needed, at first, to be; such unfavorable winds having risen, blowing off at a sad rate the smoke of that abstruse Institution.—"JARNI-BLEU!" snuffles the Feldzeugmeister to himself. But "SI DEUS EST NOBISCUM," as Grumkow exclaims once to his beautiful Reichenbach, or NOSTI as he calls him in their slang or cipher language, "If God is with us, who can prevail against us?" For the Grumkow can quote Scripture; nay solaces himself with it, which is a feat beyond what the Devil is competent to.

EXCELLENCY HOTHAM ARRIVES IN BERLIN

The Special Envoy to be sent to Berlin on this interesting occasion is a dignified Yorkshire Baronet; Sir Charles Hotham, "Colonel of the Horse-Grenadiers;" he has some post at Court, too, and is still in his best years. His Wife is Chesterfield's Sister; he is withal a kind of soldier, as we see;—a man of many sabretashes, at least, and acquainted with Cavalry-Drill, as well as the practices of Goldsticks: his Father was a General Officer in the Peterborough Spanish Wars. These are his eligibilities, recommending him at Berlin, and to Official men at home. Family is old enough: Hothams of Scarborough in the East Riding; old as WILHELMUS BASTARDUS; and subsists to our own day. This Sir Charles is lineal Son of the Hothams who lost their heads in the Civil War; and he is, so to speak, lineal UNCLE of the Lords Hotham that now are. For the rest, a handsome figure, prompt in French, and much the gentleman. So far has Villa sped.

Hotham got to Berlin on Sunday, 2d April, 1730. He had lingered a little, waiting to gather up some skirts of that Reichenbach-Grumkow Correspondence, and have them ready to show in the proper Quarter. For that is one of the chief arrows in his quiver. But here he is at last: and on Monday, he is introduced at Charlottenburg to the Prussian Majesty; and

finds an abundant welcome to himself and his preliminaries. "Marriage into that fine high Country (MAGNIFIKE LAND) will be welcome to my Daughter, I believe, as flowers in May: to me also how can it be other than welcome!—'Farther instructions,' you say? Yes, surely; and terms honorable on both sides. Only say nothing of it, I had rather tell the girl myself." [Ranke, i. 284.] To that frank purport spoke his Majesty;—and invites the Excellency Hotham to stay dinner.

Great dinner at Charlottenburg, accordingly; Monday, 3d April, 1730: the two English Excellencies Hotham and Dubourgay, then General Borck, Knyphausen, Grumkow, Seckendorf and others;—"where," says Hotham, giving Despatch about it, "we all got immoderately drunk." Of which dinner there is sordid narrative, from Grumkow to his NOSTI (to his Reichenbach, in cant speech), still visible through St. Mary Axe, were it worth much attention from us. Passages of wit, loaded with allusion, flew round the table: "A German ducat is change for an English half-guinea," and the like sprightly things. Nay at one time, Hotham's back being turned, they openly drink,—his Majesty in a state of exhilaration, having blabbed the secret:—"To the health of Wilhelmina Princess of Wales!" Upon which the whole Palace of Charlottenburg now bursts into tripudiation; the very valets cutting capers, making somersets,—and rushing off with the news to Berlin. Observable, only, that Hotham and Dubourgay sat silent in the tripudiation; with faces diplomatically grave. Several points to be settled first; no

hallooing till we are out of the wood.

News came to Berlin Schloss, doubtless at full gallop, which would only take a quarter of an hour. This is Wilhelmina's experience of it. Afternoon of Monday, 3d of April, 1730, in the Schloss of Berlin,—towards sunset, some ornamental seam in one's hand:—

"I was sitting quiet in my Apartment, busy with work, and some one reading to me, when the Queen's Ladies rushed in, with a torrent of domestics in the rear; who all bawled out, putting one knee to the ground, 'They were come to salute the Princess of Wales.' I fairly believed these poor people had lost their wits; they would not cease overwhelming me with noise and tumult, their joy was so great they knew not what they did. When the farce had lasted some time, they at last told me"—what our readers know. What the demure Wilhelmina professes she cared next to nothing about. "I was so little moved by it, that I answered, going on with my work, 'Is that all?' Which greatly surprised them. A while afterwards my Sisters and several Ladies came also to congratulate me. I was much loved; and I felt more delighted at the proofs each gave me of that than at what occasioned them. In the evening I went to the Queen's: you may readily conceive her joy. On my first entrance, she called me 'her dear Princess of Wales;' and addressed Madam de Sonsfeld as 'Milady.' This latter took the liberty of hinting to her, that it would be better to keep quiet; that the King having yet given no notice of this business, might be provoked at such demonstration, and that the least trifle

could still ruin all her hopes. The Countess Finkenstein joining her remonstrances to Sonsfeld's, the Queen, though with regret, promised to moderate herself." [Wilhelmina, i. 215.]

This is the effulgent flaming-point of the long-agitated English Match, which we have so often caught in a bitterly smoking condition. "The King indeed spoke nothing of it to us, on his return to Berlin in a day or two," says Wilhelmina; "which we thought strange." But everybody considered it certain, nothing but the details left to settle. "Hotham had daily conferences with the King." "Every post brought letters from the Prince of Wales:" of which Wilhelmina saw several,—this for one specimen, general purport of the whole: "I conjure you, my dear Hotham, get these negotiations finished! I am madly in love (AMOUREUX COMME UN FOU), and my impatience is unequalled." [Ib. i. 218.] Wilhelmina thought these sentiments "very, romantic" on the part of Prince Fred, "who had never seen me, knew me only by repute:"—and answered his romances and him with tiffs of laughter, in a prettily fleecing manner.

Effulgent flame-point;—which was of very brief duration indeed, and which sank soon into bitterer smoke than ever, down almost to the choking state. There are now six weeks of Diplomatic History at the Court of Berlin, which end far otherwise than they began. Weeks well-nigh indecipherable; so distracted are they, by black-art and abstruse activities above ground and below, and so distractedly recorded for us: of which, if it be humanly possible, we must try to convey some faint notion

to mankind.

Chapter II. — LANGUAGE OF BIRDS: EXCELLENCY HOTHAM PROVES UNAVAILING

Already next morning, after that grand Dinner at Charlottenburg, Friedrich Wilhelm, awakening with his due headache, thought, and was heard saying, He had gone too far! Those gloomy looks of Hotham and Dubourgay, on the occasion; they are a sad memento that our joyance was premature. The English mean the Double-Marriage; and Friedrich Wilhelm is not ready, and never fairly was, for more than the Single. "Wilhelmina Princess of Wales, yes with all my heart; but Friedrich to an English Princess—Hm, na;"—and in a day more: ["Instruction to his Ministers, 5th April," cited by Ranke, i. 285 n.] plainly "No." And there it finally rests; or if rocked about, always settles there again.

And why, No?—Truly, as regarded Crown-Prince Friedrich's marriage, the question had its real difficulties: and then, still more, it had its imaginary; and the subterranean activities were busy! The witnesses, contemporaneous and other, assign three reasons, or considerations and quasi-reasons, which the Tobacco-Parliament and Friedrich Wilhelm's lively fancy could insist upon till they became irrefragable:—

FIRST, his rooted discontent with the Crown-Prince, some

even say his jealousy of the Crown-Prince's talents, render it unpleasant to think of promoting him in any way. SECOND, natural German loyalty, enlivened by the hope of Julich and Berg, attaching Friedrich Wilhelm to the Kaiser's side of things, repels him with a kind of horror from the Anti-Kaiser or French-English side. "Marry my Daughter, if you like; I shall be glad to salute her as Princess of Wales; but no union in your Treaty-of-Seville operations: in politics go you your own road, if that is it, while I go mine; no tying of us, by Double or other Marriages, to go one road." THIRD, the magnificence of those English. "Regardless of expense," insinuates the Tobacco-Parliament; "they will send their grand Princess hither, with no end of money; brought up in grandeur to look down on the like of us. She can dazzle, she can purchase: in the end, may there not be a Crown-Prince Party, capable of extinguishing your Majesty here in your own Court, and making Prussia a bit of England; all eyes being turned to such sumptuous Princess and her Crown-Prince,—Heir-Apparent, or 'Rising Sun' as we may call him!"—

These really are three weighty almost dreadful considerations to a poetic-tempered King and Smoking Parliament. Out of which there is no refuge except indeed this plain fourth one: "No hurry about Fritz's marriage; [Friedrich Wilhelm to Reichenbach (13th May), *infra*.] he is but eighteen gone; evidently too young for housekeeping. Thirty is a good time for marrying. "There is, thank God, no lack of royal lineage; I have two other Princes,"—and another just at hand, if I knew it.

To all which there is to be added that ever-recurring invincible gravitation towards the Kaiser, and also towards Julich and Berg, by means of him,—well acted on by the Tobacco-Parliament for the space of those six weeks. During which, accordingly, almost from the first day after that Hotham Dinner of April 3d, the answer of the royal mind, with superficial fluctuations, always is: "Wilhelmina at once, if you choose; likely enough we might agree about Crown-Prince Friedrich too, if once all were settled; but of the Double-Marriage, at this present time, HORENIT, [Ranke, i. 285 n.] I will have nothing to say." And as the English answer steadily, "Both or none!"—meaning indeed to draw Prussia away from the Kaiser's leading-strings, and out of his present enchanted condition under the two Black-Artists he has about him, the Negotiation sinks again into a mere smoking, and extinct or plainly extinguishing state.

The Grumkow-NOSTI Cipher Correspondence might be reckoned as another efficient cause; though, in fact, it was only a big concomitant symptom, much depended on by both parties, and much disappointing both. In the way of persuading or perverting Friedrich Wilhelm's judgment about England, this deep-laid piece of machinery does not seem to have done much, if anything; and Hotham, who with the English Court had calculated on it (on their detection of it) as the grand means of blowing Grumkow out of the field, produced a far opposite result on trying, as we shall see! That was a bit of heavy ordnance which disappointed everybody. Seized by the enemy before it

could do any mischief; enemy turned it round on the inventor; fired it off on the inventor, and—it exploded through the touch-hole; singeing some people's whiskers: nothing more!—

A PEEP INTO THE NOSTI-GRUMKOW CORRESPONDENCE CAUGHT UP IN ST. MARY AXE

Would the reader wish to look into this Nosti-Grumkow Correspondence at all? I advise him, not. Good part of it still lies in the Paper-Office here; [Prussian Despatches, vols. xl. xli.: in a fragmentary state; so much of it as they had caught up, and tried to make use of;—far too much.] likely to be published by the Prussian Dryasdust in coming time: but a more sordid mass of eavesdroppings, kitchen-ashes and floor-sweepings, collected and interchanged by a pair of treacherous Flunkies (big bullying Flunky and little trembling cringing one, Grumkow and Reichenbach), was never got together out of a gentleman's household. To no idlest reader, armed even with barnacles, and holding mouth and nose, can the stirring-up of such a dust-bin be long tolerable. But the amazing problem was this Editor's, doomed to spell the Event into clearness if he could, and put dates, physiognomy and outline to it, by help of such Flunky-Sanscrit!—That Nosti-Grumkow Correspondence, as we now have it in the Paper-Office,—interpretable only by acres of British Despatches, by incondite dateless helpless Prussian

Books ("printed Blotches of Human Stupor," as Smelfungus calls them): how gladly would one return them all to St. Mary Axe, there to lie through Eternity! It is like holding dialogue with a rookery; asking your way (perhaps in flight for life, as was partly my own case) by colloquy with successive or even simultaneous Rookeries. Reader, have you tried such a thing? An adventure, never to be spoken of again, when once DONE!

Wilhelmina pretends to give quotations [Wilhelmina, i. 233-235.] from this subterranean Grumkow-Reichenbach Correspondence; but hers are only extracts from some description or remembrance; hardly one word is close to the original, though here and there some outline or shadow of a real passage is traceable. What fractional elements, capable of gaining some vestige of meaning when laid together in their cosmic order, I could pick from the circumambient immensity not cosmic, are here for the reader's behoof. Let him skip, if, like myself, he is weary; for the substance of the story is elsewhere given. Or perhaps he has the curiosity to know the speech of birds? With abridgment, by occasional change of phrase, above all by immense omission,—here, in specimen, is something like what the Rookery says to poor Friedrich Wilhelm and us, through St. Mary Axe and the Copyists in the Foreign Office! Friedrich Wilhelm reads it (Hotham gives him reading of it) some weeks hence; we not till generations afterwards. I abridge to the utmost;—will mark in single commas what is not Abridgment but exact Translation;—with rigorous attention to dates, and my best

fidelity to any meaning there may be:—

TO NOSTI (the so-called Excellenz Reichenbach) IN LONDON:

Gumkow from Berlin LOQUITUR, Reichenbach listening with both his ears (words caught up in St. Mary Axe).

BERLIN, 3d MARCH, 1730. "The time has now come when Reichenbach must play his game. Let him write that the heads of the Opposition, who play Austria as a card in Parliament, 'are in consternation, Walpole having hinted to them that he was about to make friends with the King of Prussia;' 'that by means of certain ministers at Berlin, and by other subterranean channels (AUTRES SOUTERRAINS), his Prussian Majesty had been brought to a disposition of that kind' [Knyphausen, Borck and others will be much obliged to Reichenbach for so writing!], That Reichenbach knows they intend sending a Minister to Berlin; but is certain enough, as perhaps they are, his Prussian Majesty will not let himself be lured or caught in the trap: but that the very rumor of its being possible for him to change" from Austria, "would be an infinite gain to the English Ministry,"—salvation of them, in fact, in the Parliamentary cockpit. "That they had already given out in the way of rumor, How sure they were of the Court of Berlin whenever it came to the point. That Reichenbach had tried to learn from 73 [An Indecipherable.] what the real result from Berlin was; and did not think it much, though the Walpole people," all hanging so perilously upon Prussia for their existence, 'affected a great gayety; and indeed felt what a gain

it was even to have renewed the Negotiation with his Prussian Majesty.' Here is a King likely to get himself illuminated at first-hand upon English affairs; by Ministers lying abroad for him, and lying at home!—

'And so the King,' concludes Grumkow, 'will think Reichenbach is a witch (SORVIER) to be so well informed about all that, and will redouble the good opinion he has of Reichenbach. And so, if Reichenbach second my ideas, we will pack Borck and Knyphausen about their business; and will do the King faithful service,'—having, some of us, our private 500 pounds a year from Austria for doing it. 'The King perceives only too well that the Queen's sickness is but sham (MOMERIE): judge of the effect that has! I am yours entirely (TOUT A VOUS). I wait in great impatience to hear your news upon all this: for I inform you accurately how the land lies here; so that it only depends upon yourself to shine, and to pass for a miracle of just insight,'—"SORCIER," or witch at guessing mysteries, Grumkow calls it again. He continues in another Missive:—

BERLIN, 7th MARCH. (Let us give the original for a line or two): 'Queen Sophie will soon rise from her bed of sickness, were this marriage done; *La Mere du Prince-Royal affecte toujours d'etre bien mal; mais des que l'affaire entre le Prince de Galles et la Princesse-Royale sera faite, on la verra bientôt sur pied.*' "It will behoove that Reichenbach signify to the Prince-Royal's Father that all this affair has been concocted at Berlin with Borck and by 71 [An Indecipherable.] with Knyphausen and 103. [An

Indecipherable.] That they never lose sight of an alliance with the English Princess and the Prince of Prussia; and flatter themselves the Prince-Royal of Prussia will accompany the Princess-Royal, "Wilhelmina, "on HER marriage there." "In a word, that all turns on this latter point," marriage of the PRINCE-Royal as well; and "that Villa has given so favorable a description of this Prince, that the English Princess will have him at what price soever. Nosti can also allege the affair of 100,"—whom we at last decipher to be LORD HARRINGTON, once Colonel Stanhope, of Soissons, of the Madrid Embassy, of the descent on Vigo; a distinguished new Lord, with whom Newcastle hopes to shove out Townshend,—"Lord Harrington, and the division among the Ministers:"—great question, Shall the firm be Townshend and Walpole, or Walpole and Townshend? just going on; brewing towards decision; in which the Prussian Double-Marriage is really a kind of card, and may by Nosti be represented as a trump card.

"The whole Town of Berlin said, This Villa was dismissed by order of the King, for he taught the eldest Princess English; but I see well it was Borck, 107, [An Indecipherable.] Knyphausen and Dubourgay that despatched him, to give a true picture of the situation here. And if Nosti has written to his Majesty to the same effect as he does to his Friend [Despatch to Majesty has not yet come under Friend's eye] on the Queen of England's views about the Prince-Royal of Prussia, it will answer marvellously (CELA VIENT A MERVEILLE). I have apprised Seckendorf

of all that Nosti writes to me." 'For the rest, Nosti may perfectly assure himself that the King never will abandon Reichenbach; and if the Prince-Royal,' sudden Fate interfering, 'had the reins in his hand,—in that case, Seckendorf promises to Reichenbach, on the part of the Kaiser, all or more than all he can lose by the accession of the Prince. Monsieur Reichenbach may depend upon that.' [Prussian Despatches, vol. xl. The second of these two Letters is copied, we perceive, by VILLA; who transmits it to Hotham's Secretary at Berlin, with great hopes from it. Letter "unsigned," adds Villa (POINT SIGNEE). First was transmitted by Townshend.—Following are transmitted by &c. &c. It is in that way they have got into the State-Paper Office,—as ENCLOSURES in the various Despatches that carried them out to Berlin to serve as Diplomatic Ammunition there.]

Slave Reichenbach at London, when this missive comes to hand, is busy copying scandal according to former instructions for behoof of his Prussian Majesty, and my Bashaw Grumkow; for example:—

TO THE HERR GRUMKOW AT BERLIN:

Excellenz Reichenbach LOQUITUR;—snatched in St. Mary Axe.

LONDON, 10th MARCH, 1730. "... Reichenbach has told his Prussian Majesty to-day by a Courier who is to pass through Brussels [Austrian Kinsky's Courier, no doubt], what amours the Prince of Wales," dissolute Fred, "has on hand at present with actresses and opera-girls. The King of Prussia will undoubtedly

be astonished. The affair merits some attention at present,"—especially from an Excellenz like me.—

[MISSIVE (body of important Grumkow Instructions just read by us) COMES TO HAND.]

LONDON, 14th MARCH, 1730. 'Reichenbach will write by the first, Ordinary [so they name Post, in those days] all that Grumkow orders. Reichenbach sees well, they mean to play the deuce here (*jouent le diable a quatre ici*): but Reichenbach will tell his Prussian Majesty what Grumkow finds fit.' Good Excellenz Reichenbach 'flatters himself the King will remain firm, and not let his enemies deceive him. If Grumkow and Seckendorf have opportunity they may tell his Prussian Majesty that the whole design of this Court is to render his Country a Province dependent on England. When once the Princess-Royal of England shall be wedded to the Prince-Royal of Prussia, the English, by that means, will form such a party at Berlin, that they will altogether tie his Prussian Majesty's hands.' A comfortable piece of news to his Prussian Majesty in Tobacco-Parliament. 'Reichenbach will assuredly be vigilant; depend on his answering Grumkow always by the first post.'

Continues;—turning his rook-bill towards Majesty now. Same date (14th March), same time, place and bird:—

TO HIS PRUSSIAN MAJESTY (from Excellenz Reichenbach).

'... P.S. I had closed this Letter when a person of confidence came in [the fact being, my Grumkow's Missive of instructions

came in, or figuratively speaking, my Grumkow himself], and undertook to give me in a few days a thorough insight into the intrigues which are concealed under the sending of this new Minister,' Hotham, 'to Berlin; which, and how they have been concocted, he says, it will astonish me to hear. Of all this I shall immediately inform your Majesty in a letter of my own hand; being ever eager to serve your Majesty alone.'

Hotham is now fairly gone, weeks ago; concluded to be now in Berlin,—to the horror of both rooks. Here is a croak from NOSTI:—

TO THE HERR GRUMKOW AT BERLIN.

LONDON, APRIL, 1730. "... Hotham is no such conjurer as they fancy in Berlin;—singular enough, how these English are given to undervalue the Germans; whilst we in Germany overvalue them" (*avons une idee trop vaste, they trap petite*). 'There is, for instance, Lord Chesterfield, passes here for a fair-enough kind of man (BON HOMME), and is a favorite with the King [not with Walpole or the Queen, if Nosti knew it]; but nobody thinks him such a prodigy as you all do in Germany,'—which latter bit of Germanism is an undoubted fact; curious enough to the English, and to the Germans that now read in extinct Books.

Hotham, as we said, got to Berlin on the 2d of April. From Berlin comes thereupon, at great length, sordid description by Grumkow, of that initiatory Hotham Dinner, April Third, with fearful details of the blazing favor Hotham is in. Which his

Majesty (when Hotham hands it to him, in due time) will read with painful interest; as Reichenbach now does;—but which to us is all mere puddle, omissible in this place.

To which sad Strophe, there straightway follows due Anti-strophe, Reichenbach croaking responsive;—and we are to note, the rooks always speak in the third person and by ambiguous periphrasis; never once say "I" or "You," unless forced by this Editor, for brevity's sake, to do it. Reichenbach from his perch thus hoarsely chants:—

TO THE HERR GRUMKOW AT BERLIN.

LONDON, 11th APRIL. 'Reichenbach EST COUP-DE-FOUDRE,—is struck by lightning,—to hear these Berlin news;'—and expresses, in the style of a whipt dog, his sorrows, uncertainties and terrors, on the occasion. "Struck with lightning. Feel myself quite ill, and not in a condition to write much today. It requires another head than mine to veer round so often (*changer si souvent de systame*). In fine, *Nosti est au bout de son latin* (is at his wit's end, poor devil)! Both Majesties have spoken openly of the favorable news from Berlin; funds rose in consequence. New Minister [Walpole come to the top of the Firm, Townshend soon to withdraw, impatient of the bottom] is all-powerful now: O TEMPORA, O MORES!" "I receive universal congratulations, and have to smile" in a ghastly manner. "The King and Queen despise me. I put myself in their way last Levee, bowing to the ground; but they did not even condescend to look." '*Notre grand petit-maitre*,' little George, the Olympian

Jove of these parts, "passed on as if I had not been there." 'Chesterfield, they say, is to go, in great pomp, as Ambassador Extraordinary, and fetch the Princess over. And'—Alas, in short, Once I was hap-hap-happy, but now I'm MEEserable!

LONDON, 14th APRIL. "Slave Reichenbaoh cannot any longer write secret Letters to his Prussian Majesty according to the old strain, of your prescribing; but must stand by his vacant Official Despatches: the scene being entirely changed, he also must change his manner of writing"—poor knave. "He will have to inform his Majesty, however, by and by, though it is not safe at present,"—for example,—"That his Britannic Majesty is becoming from day to day more hated by all the world; and that the Prince of Wales is no longer liked by the Public, as at first; because he begins to give himself airs, and takes altogether the manners of his Britannic Majesty, that is to say of a puppy (PETIT-MAITRE); let my Amiable [Grumkow] be aware of that'—

Yes, let him be aware of that, to his comfort,—and still more, and all readers along with him, of what follows:—

'Reichenbach likewise with great confidence informs the Greatest Confidant he has in the world [same amiable Glumkow], that he has discovered within this day or two,' a tremendous fact, known to our readers some time ago, 'That the Prince-Royal of Prussia has given his written assurances to the Queen here, Never to many anybody in the world except the Princess Amelia of England, happen what will [Prussian Majesty

will read this with a terrible interest! Much nearer to him than it is to us]. In consideration of which Promise, the Queen of England is understood,' falsely, 'to have answered that they should, at present, ask only the Princess-Royal of Prussia for their Prince of Wales,' and let the Double-Marriage BE, seemingly, as his Prussian Majesty wishes it. 'Monsieur de Reichenbach, did not speak of this to his Prussian Majesty; feeling it too dangerous just now.—

'Lord Townshend is still at his place in the country [Rainham in Norfolk]: but it is said he will soon come to Town; having heard the great news that they had already got his Prussian Majesty by the nose. Reichenbach forgets if he already told Grumkow that the rumor runs, Lord Chesterfield, in quality of Ambassador to Berlin, is to bring the Princess Wilhelmina over hither:'—you did already, poor confused wretch; unusually bewildered, and under frightful eclipse at present.

Continues after four days:—

APRIL 18th. "... Lord Stratford [to me an unknown Lordship] and heads of Opposition would like to ascertain what Hotham's offer to the King of Prussia IS."

Truly, yes; they mean to ask in Parliament (as poor gamblers in that Cockpit are wont), 'And why did not you make the offer sooner, then? Friendship with his Prussian Majesty, last year, would have saved the whole of that large Waterspout about the Meadows of Clamei! Nay need we, a few months ago, have spent such loads of gold subsidizing those Hessians and Danes

against him? The treasures of this Country go a strange road, Mr. Speaker! What is the use of our industries and riches?' Heavens, yes, what! But we continue to excerpt and interpret:—

Reichenbach "has said nothing of this to his Prussian Majesty, Reichenbach has not; too dangerous in own present down-pressed state:—though amazingly exact always in news, and attached to his Prussian Majesty as mortal seldom was. Need he fear their new Hotham, then? Does not fear Hotham, not he him, being a man so careful of truth in his news. Dare not, however, now send any intelligence about the Royal Family here; Prussian Majesty having ordered him not to write gossip like a spiteful woman: What is he to do? Instruct him, O my Amiable.

"Know for the rest, and be aware of it, O Amiable, that Queen Caroline here is of opinion, The Amiable Grumkow should be conciliated; and that Queen Sophie and Hotham are understood to have been trying it. Do not abandon me, O Amiable; nay I know you will not, you and Seckendorf, never, though I am a poor man.

"Have found out a curious story, HISTOIRE FORT CRIEUSE,—about one of Prince Fred's amourettes." Story which this Editor, in the name of the whole human species, will totally suppress, and sweep into the cesspool, to herald Reichenbach thither. Except only that this corollary by the Duchess of Kendal may be appended to the thing:—

"Duchess of Kendal [Hop-pole EMERITA, now gone to devotion, whom we know, piously turns up her eyes at such

doings], thinks the Princess Wilhelmina will have a bad life of it with Fred, and that she 'will need the wisdom of Solomon to get on here.' Not a good bargain, this Prince Fred and his Sister. A dissolute fellow he, not liked by the Public" (I should hope). 'Then as to Princess Amelia, she, who was always haughty, begins to give herself airs upon the Prince-Royal of Prussia; she is as ill-tempered as her Father, and still more given to backbiting (PLUS RAILLEUSE), and will greatly displease the Potsdam Majesty.'

These are cheering thoughts. "But what is to become of Nosti? Faithful to his Grumkow, to his Seckendorf—to his pair of sheep-stealers, poor dog. But if trouble rise;—oh, at least do not hang me, ye incomparable pair!"—

THE HOTHAM DESPACHES

Slave Nosti's terrors, could he see behind the scenes, are without foundation! the tremendous Hotham Negotiation, all ablaze at that Charlottenburg Dinner, is sunk low enough into the smoking state, threatening to go out altogether. Smoke there may still be, perceptible vestiges of smoke; which indeed, for a long time, fitfully continued: but, at the time while Nosti, quaking in every joint of him, writes these terrors, Hotham perceives that his errand is vain; that properly there has as good as extinction supervened. April 3d was the flame-point; which lasted in its brightness only for a few days or hours. April is not gone, or half gone, when flaming has quite ceased, and the use of bellows,

never so judicious, is becoming desperate: and long before the end of May, no red is to be seen in the affair at all, and the very bellows are laid down.

Here—are the epochs: riddled out of such a mass of extinct rubbish as human nature seldom had to deal with;—here are certain extracts in a greatly condensed state, from the authentic voluminous Hotham Despatches and Responses;—which may conveniently interrupt the Nosti Babblement at this point.

TO MY LORD TOWNSHEND AT LONDON:

Excellency Hotham LOQUITUR (in a greatly condensed form).

BERLIN, 12th APRIL, 1730. "... Of one or two noteworthy points I have to apprise your Lordship. So soon as his Majesty was sober, he found that he had gone too far at that grand dinner of Monday 3d; and was in very bad humor in consequence. Crown-Prince has written from Potsdam to his Sister, 'No doubt I am left here lest the English wind get at me (*de peur que le vent anglais ne me touchat*).' Saw King at Parade, who was a little vague; 'is giving matters his consideration.' Majesty has said to Borck and Knyphausen, 'If they want the Double-Marriage, and to detach me from the Kaiser, let them propose something about Julich and Berg.' Sits the wind in that quarter? King has said since, to one Marschall, a Private-Secretary who is in our interest: 'I hate my Son, and my Son hates me: we are best asunder;—let them make him STATTHALTER (Vice-regent) of Hanover, with his Princess!' Commission might be made out in

the Princess Amelia's name; proper conditions tied, and so on:—Knyphausen suggests it could be done. Knyphausen is true to us; but he stands alone [not alone, but cannot much help]; does not even stir in the NOSTI or ST.-MARY-AXE Affair as yet."

Prince Friedrich to be STATTHALTER in Hanover with his English Princess? That would save the expense of an Establishment for him at home. That has been suggested by the Knyphausen or English party: and no doubt it looked flattering to his Prussian Majesty for moments. This may be called Epoch first, after that grand Charlottenburg Dinner.

Then as to the NOSTI Affair, in which Knyphausen "does not stir as yet,"—the fact is, it was only put into Knyphausen's hands the day before YESTERDAY, as we soon discover; and Knyphausen is not so sure about it as some are! That Hotham Despatch is of Wednesday, 12th April. And not till yesterday could Guy Dickens report performance of the other important thing. Captain Guy Dickens, a brisk handy military man, Secretary to Dubourgay this good while past, "Has duly received from Headquarters the successive NOSTI-GRUMKOW documents, caught up in St. Mary Axe; has now delivered them to Knyphausen, to be laid before his Prussian Majesty in a good hour; and would fain (Tuesday, April 11th) hope some result from this step." Not for almost a month does Hotham himself say anything of it to the Prussian Majesty, good hour for Knyphausen not having come. But now, in regard to that Hanover Statthaltership, hear Townshend,—condensed, but not

nearly so much so, my Lord being a succinct man who sticks always creditably to the point:—

TO THE EXCELLENCY HOTHAM AT BERLIN (from Lord Townshend).

LONDON, 27th APRIL. "Yes, you shall have the Hanover Vice-regency. We will set up the Crown-Prince Friedrich in Hanover as desired; but will give the Commission to our own Princess, that being more convenient for several reasons: Crown-Prince, furthermore, must promise to come over to England when we require him; ITEM may repay us our expenses hereafter, As to Marriage-Portions, we will give none with our Princess, nor ask any with theirs. Both marriages or none." Ann so enough.

Alas, nothing came of this; Prussian Majesty, in spite of thrift, perceiving that, for several reasons, it would not do. Meanwhile Grumkow, we learn from a secret source, [NOSTI, supra (18th April), p. 185; infra, p. 101.] has been considerably courted by Botham and her Prussian Majesty; Queen Caroline having signified from England, That they ought to gain that knave,—what price did he charge for himself? But this also proves quite unavailing; never came to PRICING. And so,—hear Hotham once more:—

TO LORD TOWNSHEND AT LONDON (from Excellency Hotham).

BERLIN, 18th APRIL. "... Grumkow is a thorn in my side: one would like to do him some service in return." 'Cannot you

stop an ORIGINAL Letter of his' (we have only deciphered Copies as yet) to that Reichenbach or NOSTI, 'strong enough to break his back?—They will try. Hotham continues in next Despatch:—

BERLIN, 22d APRIL. "Dined with the King again; Crown-Prince was present: dreadfully dejected,—'at which one cannot help being moved; there is something so engaging in the Prince, and everybody says so much good of him.'" Hear Hotham! Who again, three days after, says of our Fritz: 'If I am not much mistaken, this young Prince will one day make a very considerable figure.' "Wish we could manage the Marriage; but this Grumkow, this"—Cannot they contrive to send an ORIGINAL strong enough?

Alas, from the same secret source we learn, within a week, that Grumkow's back is very strong; the Tobacco-Parliament in full blast again, and Seckendorf's Couriers galloping to Vienna with the best news. Nay his Majesty looks expressly "sour upon Hotham," or does not look at all; will not even speak when he sees him;—for a reason we shall hear. [NOSTI, *infra* (29th April), p. 191.] can it, be thought that any liberality in use of the bellows or other fire-implements will now avail with his Majesty?

SECOND AND LAST PEEP INTO THE NOSTI-GRUMKOW CORRESPONDENCE CAUGHT UP IN ST. MARY AXE.

But at this point let our Two Rooks recommence a little: Nosti, on the 18th, we left quaking in every joint of him;—

and good news was almost at the door, had afflicted Nosti known it. Grumkow's strain (suppressed by us here), all this while, is in general, almost ever since the blaze of that Hotham Dinner went off into repentant headache: 'Pshaw, don't fear!' Nay after a fortnight or so, it is again: 'Steady! we are all right?' Tobacco-Parliament and the Royal Imagination making such progress. This is still but the third week since that grand Dinner at Charlottenburg:—

TO THE EXCELLENZ REICHENBACH AT LONDON
(from Grumkow).

BERLIN, 22d APRIL. 'King wants to get rid of the Princess' Wilhelmina, 'who is grown lean, ugly, with pimples on her face (*qui est devenue maigre, laide, couperosee,*' [This is one of the sentences Wilhelmina has got hold of (Wilhelmina, i. 234).]—dog: will nobody horsewhip that lie out of him!)—'judge what a treat that will be to a Prince of Wales, who has his amourettes!' All is right, Nosti, is it not?

BERLIN, 25th APRIL. "King declared to Seckendorf yesterday again, He might write to the Kaiser, That while he lived, nothing should ever part his Majesty from the Kaiser and his Cause; that the French dare not attack Luxembourg, as is threatened; and if they do—! Upon which Seckendorf despatched a Courier to Vienna.

"As to Hotham, he explains himself upon nothing,"—stalks about with his nose in the air, as if there were nothing farther to be explained. "I spoke yesterday of the Single Match,

Wilhelmina and Prince of Wales; King answered, even of the Single Match, Devil fly away with it!"—or a still coarser phrase.

'Meanwhile the Queen, though at the end of her eighth month, is cheery as a fish in water; [Wilhelmina has this too, in a disfigured state (i. 233).] and always forms grand project of totally ruining Seckendorf, by Knyphausen's and other help.' "Hotham yesterday, glancing at Nosti no doubt, said to the SIEUR DE POTSDAM [cant phrase for the King], 'That great Princes were very unlucky to have ministers that durst not show themselves in good society; for the result was, they sent nothing but false news and rumors picked up in coffee-houses.'"

"Coffee-houses?" answers Reichenbach, by and by: "Reichenbach is in English society of the first distinction, and receives visits from Lords and Dukes. This all the world knows"—to be nothing like the case, as Townshend too has occasionally mentioned.

At any rate, continues Grumkow, "the Queen's Husband said, aside, to Nosti's Friend, 'I see he is glancing at Reichenbach; but he won't make much of that (cynically speaking, *ne fera que de l'eau claire*).' Hotham is by no means a man of brilliant mind, and his manners are rough: but Ginkel," the Dutchman, "is cleverer (PLUS SOUPLE), and much better liked by Nosti's Master."

ANTISTROPHE soon follows; London Raven is himself again;—Nosti LOQUITUR:—

LONDON, 25th APRIL. "... King has written to me, I AM to report to him any talk there may be in the Court here about

his Majesty! My Amiable and his Seckendorf, need they ask if Nosti will, and in a way to give them pleasure?"...

STROPHE (allegro by the Berlin Raven or Rook, who has not yet heard the above);—Grumkow LOQUITUR:—

BERLIN, 29th APRIL. "... Wrong not to write entertaining news of the English Court as heretofore. King likes it.

"What you say of the Prince-Royal of Prussia's writing to the Queen of England, is very curious; and you did well to say nothing of it to the Father; the thing being of extreme delicacy, and the proof difficult. But it seems likely. And I insinuated something of it to his Majesty, the day before yesterday [27th April, 1730, therefore? One momentary glance of Hansard into the Tobacco-Parliament], as of a thing I had learned from a spy" (such my pretence, O Nosti)—spy "who is the intimate friend of Knyphausen and plays traitor: you may fancy that it struck terribly. "Yes!" And his Majesty has looked sour upon Hotham ever since; and passed above an hour in colloquy with Seckendorf and me, in sight both of English Hotham and Dutch Ginkel without speaking to them.

"It was true enough what Nosti heard of the Queen's fair speeches, and Hotham's, to the Friend of Nosti. But it is all ended: the Queen's, weeks ago, being in vain: Hotham too, after some civilities, seems now indifferent. 'ENFIN ['Afin' he always writes it, copying the indistinct gurgle of his own horse-dialect] —AFIN FILOUTERIE TOUT PURE' (whole of it thimblorig, on their part).

"Admirable story, that of Prince Fred's amourette [sent to the cesspool by us, herald of Reichenbach thither]: let his Majesty know it, by all means. What the Duchess of Kendal [lean tall female in expensive brocades, with gilt prayer-books, visible in the body to Nosti at that time], what the Duchess of Kendal says to you is perfectly just; and as the Princess Wilhelmina is very ill-looking [LAIDE,—how dare you say so, dog?], I believe she will have a bad life of it, the Prince of Wales being accustomed to daintier meats. Yes truly, she will, as the Duchess says, 'need to be wiser than Solomon' to conciliate the humors down there (LA BAS) with the genius of his Prussian Majesty and Queen.—'As for your Princess Amelia, depend upon it, while the Commandant of Potsdam lives, she will never get hold of the Prince-Royal, though he is so furiously taken with the Britannic Majesties.'"

[Continues; in answer to a Nosti "Caw! Caw!" which we omit.]

BERLIN, 2d MAY.—"Wish you had not told the King so positively that the English say, it shall be Double Match or none. Hotham said to the Swedish Ambassador: 'Reichenbach, walking in the dark, would give himself a fine knock on the nose (*aurait un furieux pied de nez*), when,' or IF, 'the thing was done quite otherwise.' Have a caution what you write."

Pooh, pooh! Hotham must have said "if," not "when;" Swede is quite astray!—And indeed we will here leave off, and shut down this magazine of rubbish; right glad to wash ourselves

wholly from it (in three waters) forevermore. Possibly enough the Prussian Dryasdust will, one day, print it IN EXTENSO, and with that lucidity of comment and arrangement which is peculiar to him; exasperated readers will then see whether I have used them ILL or not, according to the opportunity there was!—Here, at any rate, my reader shall be free of it. Indeed he may perceive, the negotiation was by this time come to a safe point, the Nosti-Grumkows triumphant, and the interest of the matter mainly out. Farther transient anxieties this amiable couple had,—traceable in that last short croak from Grumkow,—lest the English might consent to that of the "Single-Marriage in the mean time" (which the English never did, or meant to do). For example, this other screech of Nosti, which shall be his final last-screach:—

LONDON, 12th MAY.—"Lord Townshend alarmingly hinted to me: Better have done with your Grumkow-and-Seckendorf speculations: the ill-intentioned are perfectly sure to be found out at the end of the account; and their tools will get ruined along with them. Nosti endeavored to talk big in reply: but he shakes in his shoes nevertheless; and with a heart full of distraction exclaims now, Save yourselves, save me!—If Hotham speak of the Single-Marriage only, it is certain the Prince-Royal must mean to run away," and so make it a Double one in time.

Yes, indeed! But these were transient terrors. The day is our own, my Grumkow; yes, our own, my Nosti:—and so our Colloquy of Rookeries shall be suppressible henceforth.

HIS MAJESTY GETS SIGHT OF THE ST.-MARY-AXE DOCUMENTS; BUT NOTHING FOLLOWS FROM IT

We have only to add what Hotham reports (Berlin, May 6th), That he "has had an interview with his Majesty, and spoken of the St.-Mary-Axe affair; Knyphausen having found a moment to lay it before his Majesty." So that the above Excerpts from St. Mary Axe (all but the last two),—the above, and many more suppressed by us,—are in his Majesty's hands: and he is busy studying them; will, it is likely, produce them in an amazed Tobacco-Parliament one of these evenings!—

What the emotions of the royal breast were during the perusal of this extraordinary dialogue of birds, which has come to him through St. Mary Axe—? Manifold probably: manifold, questionable; but not tragical, or not immediately so. Certainly it is definable as the paltriest babble; no treason visible in it, nor constructive treason; but it painfully indicates, were his Majesty candid, That his Majesty is subject to spies in his own House; nay that certain parties do seem to fancy they have got his Majesty by the nose, and are piping tunes with an eye to his dancing, thereto. This is a painful thought, which, I believe, does much agitate his Majesty now and afterwards.—A painful thought or suspicion, rising sometimes (in that temperament of his) to the pitch of the horrible. I believe it occasionally, ever

henceforth, keeps haunting the highly poetic temperament of his Majesty, nor ever quits him again at all; stalking always, now and then, through the vacant chambers of his mind, in what we may call the night-season (or time of solitude and hypochondriacal reflection),—though in busy times again (in daylight, so to speak) he impatiently casts it from him. Poor Majesty!

But figure Grumkow, figure the Tobacco-Parliament when Majesty laid these Papers on the Table! A HANSARD of that night would be worth reading. There is thunderous note of interrogation on his Majesty's face;—what a glimmer in the hard puckery eyes of Feldzeugmeister Seckendorf, "JARNI-BLEU!" No doubt, an excessively astonished Parliament. Nothing but brass of face will now serve the principal Honorable Gentleman there; but in that happily he is not wanting.

Of course Grumkow denies the Letters point-blank: Mere forgeries, these, of the English Court, plotting to ruin your Majesty's faithful servant, and bring in other servants they will like better! May have written to Reichenbach, nay indeed has, this or that trifling thing: but those Copyists in St. Mary Axe, "deciphering,"—garbling, manufacturing, till they make a romance of it,—alas, your Majesty? Nay, at any rate, what are the Letters? Grumkow can plead that they are the foolishlest insignificant rubbish of Court-gossip, not tending any bad road, if they have a tendency. That they are adapted to the nature of the beast, and of the situation,—this he will carefully abstain from remarking.

We have no HANSARD of this Session; all is conjecture and tobacco-smoke. What we know is, not the least effect, except an internal trouble, was produced on the royal mind by the St.-Mary-Axe Discovery. Some Question there might well be, inarticulately as yet, of Grumkow's fidelity, at least of his discretion; seeds of suspicion as to Grumkow, which may sprout up by and by; resolution to keep one's eye on Grumkow. But the first practical fruit of the matter is, fierce jealousy that the English and their clique do really wish to interfere in our ministerial appointments; so that, for the present, Grumkow is firmer in his place than ever. And privately, we need not doubt, the matter continues painful to his Majesty.

One thing is certain, precisely a week after, his Majesty,—much fluctuating in mind evidently, for the Document "has been changed three or four times within forty-eight hours,"—presents his final answer to Hotham. Which runs to this effect ("outrageous," as Hotham defines it):—

"1. For Hanover and your great liberality on that score, much obliged; but upon reconsideration think it will not do. 2. Marriage FIRST, Prince of Wales to Wilhelmina,—Consent with pleasure. 3. Marriage SECOND, Crown-Prince Friedrich with your Amelia,—for that also we are extremely wishful, and trust it will one day take effect: but first these Seville-Treaty matters, and differences between the Kaiser and allied English and French will require to be pulled straight; that done, we will treat about the terms of Marriage SECOND. One indispensable

will be,—That the English guarantee our Succession in Julich and Berg." [Hotham's Despatch, 18th May, 1730.]

"Outrageous" indeed!—Crown-Prince sends, along with this, a loving message by Hotham, of earnestly deprecating tenor, to the Britannic Majesty; "begs his Britannic Majesty not to reject the King's Proposals, whatever they may be,—this for poor Sister Wilhelmina's sake. 'For though he, the Crown-Prince, was determined to lose his life sooner than marry anybody but the Princess Amelia, yet if this Negotiation were broken off, his Father would go to extremities to force him and his poor Sister into other engagements.'"—Which, alas, what can it avail with the Britannic Majesty, in regard to such outrageous Propositions from the Prussian?

Britannic Majesty's Ministry, as always, answers by return of Courier:—"MAY 22d. Both Marriages, or none: Seville has no concern with both, more than with one: DITTO Julich and Berg,—of which latter indeed we know nothing,—nor (ASIDE TO HOTHAM) mean to know." [Despatch, Whitehall, 11th May (22d by N.S.)]. Whereby Hotham perceives that it is as good to throw away the bellows, and consider the matter extinct. Hotham makes ready for an Excursion into Saxony, to a thing called CAMP OF RADEWITZ, or ENCAMPMENT OF RADEWITZ; a Military Spectacle of never-imagined magnificence, to be given by August the Strong there, whither all the world is crowding;—and considers any Business he had at Berlin to be as good as done.

Evidently Friedrich Wilhelm has not been much wrought upon by the St.-Mary-Axe Documents! One week they have been revolving in the royal mind; part of a week in the Smoking Parliament (we know not what day they were laid on the table there, but it must have been a grand occurrence within those walls!)—and this already (May 13th) is the result arrived at: Propositions, changed three or four times within forty-eight hours, and definable at last as "outrageous;" which induce Hotham to lay down the bellows, and prepare to go his ways. Our St.-Mary-Axe discovery seems to have no effect at all!—

One other public result there is from it, and as yet one only: Reichenbach, "from certain causes thereto moving Us (*aus gewissen Uns dazu bewegenden Grunden*)," gets a formal Letter of Recall. Ostensible Letter, dated Berlin, 13th May, and signed Friedrich Wilhelm; which the English may read for their comfort. Only that along with this, of the same date and signature, intended for Reichenbach's comfort, the same Leather Bag brings a Private Letter (which Dickens or another has contrived to get sight of and copy), apprising Reichenbach, That, unostensibly, his proceedings are approved of; that he is to continue at his post till further orders, all the same, "and keep watch on these Marriages, about which there is such debating in the world (*wovon in der Welt so viel debattirt wird*); things being still in the same state as half a year ago. That is to say, I am ready for my Daughter's Marriage with the Prince of Wales: but for my Son, he is too young yet; *und hat es damit keine Eile, weil ich*

Gottlob noch zwei Sohne hab (nor is there any haste, as I have, thank God, two other sons,"—and a third coming, if I knew it):—"besides one indispensable condition will be, that the English guarantee Julich and Berg," which perhaps they are not in the least hurry for, either!—

What does the English Court think of that? Dated "Berlin, 13th May:" it is the same day when his Majesty's matured Proposals, "changed thrice or oftener within the forty-eight hours," were handed to Hotham for transmission to his Court. An interesting Leather Bag, this Ordinary from Berlin. Reichenbach, we observe, will get his share of it some ten days after that alarming rebuke from Townshend; and it will relieve the poor wretch from his worst terrors: "Go on with your eavesdroppings as before, you alarmed wretch!"—There does one Degenfeld by and by, a man of better quality (and on special haste, as we shall see) come and supersede poor Nosti, and send him home:—there they give Nosti some exiguous Pension, with hint to disappear forevermore. Which he does; leaving only these St.-Mary-Axe Documents for his Lifemark in the History of Mankind.

What the English Answer to his Majesty's Proposals of Berlin, May 13th, was, we have already seen;—dated "London, 22d May," probably few hours after the Courier arrived. Hotham, well anticipating what it would be, had already, as we phrased it, "laid down the bellows;" left the Negotiation, as essentially extinct;—and was preparing for the "Camp at Radewitz," Britannic Majesty being anxious to hear what Friedrich Wilhelm

and August the Strong have on hand there.

"The King of Prussia's unsteadiness and want of resolution," writes Hotham (Berlin, 20th May), "will hinder him from being either very useful to his friends, or very formidable to his enemies." And from the same place, just about quitting it for Radewitz, he writes again, exactly a week after ("Berlin, 27th May"), to enclose Copy of a remarkable Letter; remarkable to us also;—but which, he knows and we, cannot influence the English Answer now close at hand. Here is the copied Letter; copied in Guy Dickens's hand; from which we translate,—and also will give the original French in this instance, for behoof of the curious:—

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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